

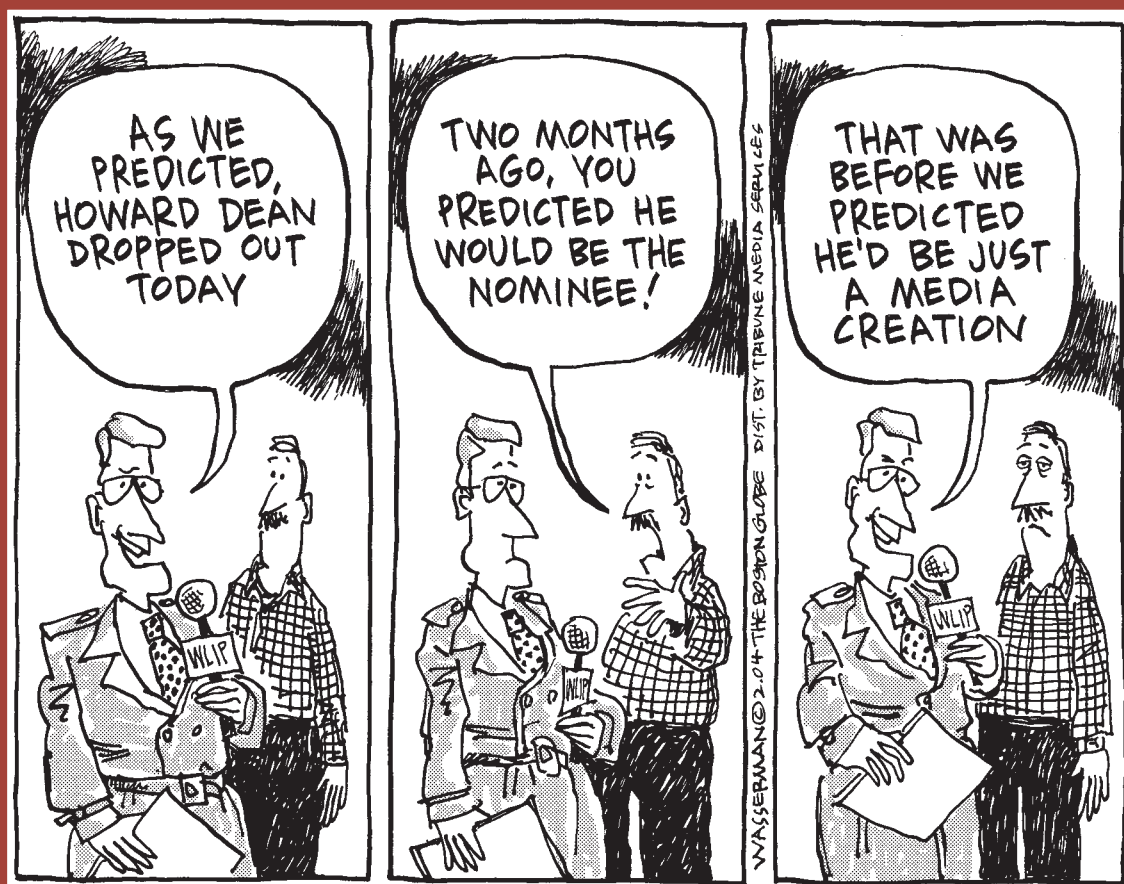
NIEMAN REPORTS

THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION FOR JOURNALISM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

VOL. 58 No. 1 SPRING 2004

Five Dollars

Stories About Campaign Coverage From BlackBerries and the Web to Images and Ideas



International Journalism: China Through the Camera's Eye

Words & Reflections: War and Terror

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

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

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Editor Melissa Ludtke
Assistant Editor Lois Fiore
Editorial Assistant Elizabeth Son
Design Editor Deborah Smiley

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Editorial
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Thinking About Storytelling and Narrative Journalism

At a seminar with Robert Coles, the topic is stories and how they are best told.

By Bob Giles

On a bone-chilling January morning, the Nieman Fellows gathered around a warm fire at Lippmann House with Robert Coles, the professor who has taught at Harvard both in the fields of psychiatry and social reflection and who has spent a lifetime listening to children and women speak about their lives, absorbing their attitudes and experiences, and telling their stories in a remarkable collection of books.

Coles was talking about stories that formed the basis of insights he has contributed to our understanding of children's lives. These stories stuck in his memory through a lifetime of teaching and had, by his own admission, complemented his work as a child psychiatrist. Truth is to be found in what people experience and tell, he explained, rather than in the therapist's interpretation of what might be true.

In the introduction to his five-volume collection, "Children of Crisis," he elaborates on the art of telling stories: "The stories develop their own energy; they take over—leaving me behind. I read them, afterwards, and hope I will forget that it was me, me, me—me going to visit patients, me glad when I could be of help to them, and me driven to write about them and proud that I could."

To our ears that morning, Coles was evoking a value of storytelling that held particular resonance for our craft. We were listening to an eminent psychiatrist and teacher talk about his research in a manner that offered lessons in storytelling for journalists. He came to know children in their homes and schools and, as he wrote about them, he was able to convey their thoughts and feelings and describe the conditions of life that were challenging them. The beauty of a story, as he once wrote, is in its openness and how readers can take it in and put it to use in their own lives.

Coles's method of working with children is not directly transferable to journalistic practice, of course. Reporters seek to establish trust essentially to assure a source that information shared is not going to be misused, rather than as a way to be a friend and confidant. Nor does Coles's approach of engaging with his young patients require the detachment expected of journalists.

Along the way, Coles's conversation with the Nieman shifted to journalism. At one point, he lamented the ways in which media—primarily television—belittles the telling of human experience. Later, one of the fellows asked what kind of journalism he found effective. "Journalism that tells stories," he replied. He marveled at the transformation of The New York Times in this regard. "The Times used to be just the paper of record" and now it is a place where readers also find "wonderful stories."

There were nods around the room, for without using the word, Coles was emphasizing the power of narrative, drawing a connection between the stories he hears and writes and uses in his teaching and stories in our newspapers. He was describing the transformative power of stories, reminding us how stories about others can lead us to discoveries about ourselves and how they absorb the reader into the emotions of the characters. At that moment, Coles brought together the relationship between his stories as a teacher and writer and the stories we publish that inform and enlighten readers. He was applauding a growing trend in journalism, of which the Times has become a leader, to sustain reader interest and deepen coverage by telling stories in a style that is different from the way they are usually told in newspapers.

This is the time of year when journalists assess one another's work in awarding prizes that bring recognition and stature to individuals and news organizations. The prizes are a refreshing reminder of excellence readers can find in the pages of newspapers and magazines. In describing their decisions, award juries often write about effective storytelling standing alongside exhaustive reporting. Such was the case as the American Society of Newspaper Editors recognized Anthony Shadid of The Washington Post for deadline reporting for his coverage of the war in Iraq: "Shadid delivered from Iraq with an enormous descriptive range and great lyrical power. He did it all from the base of great reporting strength."

We take these signs as encouragement for the Nieman Foundation's commitment to narrative journalism in which the rigor of journalism and the craft of storytelling come together. The intensive interest in the annual Nieman Conference on Narrative Journalism, where last December on a weekend of deep snowfall 1,000 journalists and writers gathered in Cambridge, affirms that what Coles was on to all along is now becoming properly and increasingly embedded in daily journalism.

At a Nieman narrative conference a few years ago, Jacqui Banaszynski of The Seattle Times was talking about why we need stories. She began by quoting Mary Lawrence, a journalism teacher at the University of Missouri: "We're fooling ourselves if we think we communicate primarily by bursts of information. We live for stories—whether they're movies or TV shows or plays or poems or even newspaper pieces. We want stories told to us over and over. ... They comfort us, they arouse us, they excite us and educate us, and when they touch our hearts we embrace them and keep them with us." ■

✉ giles@fas.harvard.edu

Reporting From the Campaign Trail

No reporting beat, with the possible exception of covering a hometown team, is as closely watched, as thoroughly analyzed, and as consistently driven by what the new technology allows journalists to do as is political reporting. In his essay “Only a Lunatic Would Do This Kind of Work,” **David M. Shribman**, executive editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, captures the essence of what motivates political journalists. “They have an ethos,” Shribman writes. “They believe in inquiry. They believe in the value of the pointed question. They believe in catching their prey in an unscripted moment or in a lie. They believe in asking impertinent questions of their social betters. They believe small deviations from a candidate’s basic stump speech have grave implications.”

Walter R. Mears reported political news for 45 years, nearly all of them for The Associated Press. Having retired (and written the book, “Deadlines Past: Forty Years of Presidential Campaigning: A Reporter’s Story,” about his work), Mears casts an observer’s eye on this cycle’s coverage. One complaint: “I am frustrated as a reader when I see stories that cry for background, statistics, history—explanatory touches that put the event of the hour into perspective. Those added words are worth the space and the effort to get the data. It isn’t difficult.” **John Harwood**, political editor of The Wall Street Journal, first experienced a political campaign when he accompanied his father, Richard Harwood, also a political reporter, in 1968. When his father filed stories, his son writes, they “contained news of first impression for his editors and the vast majority of his readers.” With cable TV and the Internet, that is no longer true so, as Harwood observes, “stories I write must command the attention of readers less by the news they contain than by the analysis they offer.”

When **David Yepsen**, political columnist for The Des Moines Register, looks at reporters’ analyses, he often wishes they had spent less time following candidates and more time learning from voters. “It’s time for more of us horserace journalists to get down into the paddocks, talk to the jockeys, the owners, and the breeders as well as the fans,” he writes. **Terry Michael**, executive director of the Washington Center for Politics & Journalism, argues that in their role as handicappers of the political race, journalists should focus on themes other than money, ads, staff and calendar. Four key factors he urges them to rely on during primary campaigns are what he describes as base, biography, edge and effort.

When North Carolina Senator John Edwards became a presidential candidate, **John Wagner**, a Washington-based reporter for The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer, went on the road to cover his campaign and report to home state readers. After more than two years of doing so, he raises a fundamental question about such coverage when he asks of his newspaper’s coverage: “Are we covering the presidential race, or are we covering how Edwards fares in the presidential race? Or both and, if so, how do we strike a balance between these two objectives?” **Steven Scully**, C-SPAN’s political editor, uses his network’s experience as a window to explore many of the changes in how New Hampshire’s presidential primary race is covered. Most noteworthy is the digital revolution “making it possible for hundreds of local, international and alternative media to cover the race right alongside the national media.”

Michael Tackett, the Chicago Tribune's political editor, describes how "technology is transforming the coverage of politics for reporters and not necessarily for the better." Given the speed with which news is transmitted, he writes, "too many of us are forced to react now and reflect later Often we spend too much time electronically chasing many rabbits within and among campaigns and too little time talking to voters who decide elections." **Mark Seibel**, who directed The Miami Herald's review of the disputed Florida ballots in the 2000 presidential election, explains why reporters should be focusing attention not only on what happens on the campaign trail but also in the voting booth, where changes in technology are creating new, faster and potentially more unreliable balloting systems.

The Web has arrived as a powerful political medium. For reporters, its allure is in its easy accessibility, its connective links, its abundant analysis, and its research capability. But as **Adam Reilly**, a first-time political reporter at the Boston Phoenix, reports, his daily look at political Web sites became an obsession and, in turn, a reporting liability. "... what I'd envisioned as background reading to help me do my job more effectively was eating into valuable reporting time," he says. **Elizabeth Wilner**, political director of NBC News and coauthor of its Web publication, First Read, tells how and why the networks publish these daily mixtures of reporting and analysis. "This investment of time yields original content, and that adds cachet to the Web site," she writes. **Chris Lydon**, who in the 1970's wrote about presidential campaigns for The New York Times and now does so on his Weblog, writes about the role the Internet plays in campaign coverage and how it is not possible to separate the "'political' and 'media' tracks of the Howard Dean campaign's offensive." **Wayne Woodlief**, who was chief political columnist with the Boston Herald for 27 years, writes about the difference between interviewing a Dean supporter online and then going to a coffee bar to listen to voters. And **James W. Pindell**, managing editor for PoliticsNH.com, describes how "portable gadgets—my cell phone, BlackBerry, wireless e-mail device, and a laptop" enable him to report and run the Web site from his on-the-road newsroom.

Meryl Levin and **Will Kanteres**, whose upcoming book "Primarily New Hampshire" documents the day-to-day experiences of campaign staffers, share photographs and words they collected in the year leading up to the New Hampshire primary. **Luis Rios**, director of photography for The Miami Herald, explores how photographers and photo editors try to overcome the strategic efforts of political operatives to arrange only flattering photo-op images. "When editors make decisions day after day to publish photographs that are conspicuously photo ops, over time they send a message to readers about the kind of images they think worthy of publication," he writes. **Kenny Irby**, visual journalism group leader at The Poynter Institute, details essential questions for editors and photographers to ask in deciding whether to publish pictures from the campaign trail. And **Dan Habib**, photo editor for the Concord (N.H.) Monitor, describes how his team of photographers gained access to the presidential candidates to offer their readers unexpected and unscripted views.

We end by offering a political reporter's toolbox, assembled in a roundtable discussion with veteran reporters convened by the **Committee of Concerned Journalists**. Among the tools are ways to "find the invisible campaign," to use polls more productively, to examine their biases, and to identify (and avoid) the meta-narratives of the campaign. ■

'Only a Lunatic Would Do This Kind of Work'

A journalist offers his perspective on the perspective of political journalists.

What follows are excerpts from an essay written by David M. Shribman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who is now executive editor for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and published in "The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2004," edited by William Mayer (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

By David M. Shribman

Political journalism, much revered among its practitioners and much reviled among scholars, is an art form that is meant to be ephemeral. It is written by men and women in a hurry, working under impossibly trying conditions, and it is meant to be read by men and women in a hurry, reading under impossibly trying conditions; sometimes it is skimmed by well-meaning people hanging onto a subway strap but not hanging onto every word and not even gleaning the meaning

This art form, if the phrase be permitted, is occasionally fun to write and less often fun to read. It is often indispensable to insiders and inconsequential to others. It is indecipherable to many. It is difficult to produce and easy to ridicule. It is intertwined with the important questions of the day, and its importance has often faded by nighttime. It is produced for the literate class, but its quality almost never approaches literature.

But no one argues that it is unimportant. The founders conceived of a political system based on the considered views of an informed citizenry. The modern American system is a republican form of government with a democratic foundation; the notion that voters should be informed about their choices is implicit in our politics, and in an era of mass culture and mass media the opportunities to be informed are nearly without limit. Even so, the

elect class and those who vote for its members depend on an unelected class of journalists for the information they need. It is a formula for tension among competing interests and for resentments among all the principals. It is also a formula for a fascinating struggle played out, as all American civic dramas are, in public

They [political reporters] think they have a broad outlook, but they think narrowly. They believe it is common knowledge that the second congressional district in Oregon borders Washington, and it is a matter of orthodoxy among them that everybody knows that South Dakota has only one member of Congress. They think that the people they stop at a shopping center care as much about the election that is approaching as their editors do. They labor under the conviction that theirs is the most important, most selfless, most vital work performed by anyone in the nation. They believe it is possible they are wrong about some things, but they think that the matters they are wrong about are little things, like how many votes Eugene V. Debs got in 1912 or how many ballots it took the Democrats to nominate John W. Davis in 1924.

In an age of doubt, they believe. They believe in the virtue of free exchange of information and ideas. They believe in the virtue of newspapers. (They are less sure about cable television.) They believe in their right to ask candidates their views on all manner of subjects. They believe in their right to ask candidates whether they think their poll ratings are so low that they ought to drop out of the race. They believe that political candidates will actually tell them the truth, even when the question is about whether they think their poll ratings are so low that they ought to drop out of the race. They believe that politicians should respect their deadlines. They believe that poli-

tics is important

They have an ethos. They believe in inquiry. They believe in the value of the pointed question. They believe in catching their prey in an unscripted moment or in a lie. They believe in asking impertinent questions of their social betters. They believe small deviations from a candidate's basic stump speech have grave implications. They believe they are independent thinkers, even though their work is filtered through several layers of editors who adjust their language, trim their excesses, and assure their copy conforms with the version produced by the wire services.

Theirs is hard work, but it is meant to be read easily. They endure physical strains, mostly exhaustion, but they have an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the story. They believe that exhaustive coverage is the very best coverage. They believe, in fact, in the broader definition of coverage—that there should be nothing about politics that should remain uncovered. In non-election years they are far less orthodox about that doctrine; the thought of blanket coverage of Washington's regulatory agencies, where real political dramas of a different sort are played out day by day, often without press witness, fills them with a primeval fear. There is no meeting of a regional governors' association that is too obscure for them to attend. There is no meeting of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that is important enough for them. They know how members of the Republican National Committee are chosen, but they are less sure about how the members of the Federal Highway Administration are chosen. They attach great meaning to the selection of the honorary chairman of the Democratic National Convention but are not sure how long the chairman of the Federal Aviation Administration serves.

They believe their jobs confer upon them immense social status. They be-



The television crews and some still photographers covering the Howard Dean rally in Manchester after the New Hampshire primary, January 27, 2004. *Photo by Dina Rudick/The Boston Globe.*

lieve that at their college reunions their classmates who head billion-dollar mutual funds or played in the World Series or Super Bowl would gladly swap lives with them for the chance to go to the Iowa straw poll, where a meaningless event has been infused with great meaning. Their editors tell them, and they believe, that they are the people's representatives, traveling to remote country crossroads so they can tell the rest of the country what America is like Behind all of their bravado, however, political reporters have a deep sense of insecurity. In some of them it is actually a sense of inferiority. They know that, unlike doctors, dentists and lawyers, they are required to have no formal training. There is no licensing authority, no qualifying boards. They like to think of themselves as professionals but in truth their profession is more of a craft. They learn on the run,

not in laboratories or libraries

Bias in Political Reporting

Journalists indeed do have a strong bias, but that bias is more a bias toward change than it is a bias toward either of the political parties or toward the right or the left. The entire premise of journalism is change; journalists chronicle how the world is different today from the way it was yesterday. In years of Democratic rule, that bias often takes the form of a subtle preference for Republican gains. In years of Republican rule, that bias often takes the form of a subtle preference for Democratic gains This bias toward change doesn't grow only out of the journalistic desire for something new. It also grows out of journalists' inclination to be distrustful of established authority, which is itself a bias.

Political journalists are more vulnerable to the notion that they are inclined to fit much of what they see on the campaign trail into a narrative they have established in their minds beforehand. This critique has bipartisan support. In the 2000 election, the supporters of Al Gore believed that reporters approached the campaign with the fixed idea that the former vice president was prone to exaggeration. Similarly, George W. Bush's supporters were convinced that reporters believed he was uninformed and careless with language. As a result, according to this argument, every time Gore committed even a meaningless exaggeration, members of the traveling press jumped all over it as evidence of their theory. The pattern worked the same way with Bush; whenever he bungled a sentence or his syntax, reporters seized on the episode as evidence of his intellectual

shallowness.

Journalists are also vulnerable to charges that they are captives of their sources and of their relationships in the political establishment. This argument holds that political journalists are in too cozy a dance with politicians, that they socialize with them too intimately, that they identify with their interests too closely. Indeed, sometimes there is an unmistakable sense of we're-all-in-this-together among politicians and the journalists who cover them. This sense is reinforced not only on the campaign trail, where as traveling companions they are thrust together

in work and social settings—and often in settings where it is impossible to distinguish between the two.... A more serious problem might be the notion that political journalists and politicians share many of the same assumptions about life. They do read the same materials, see the same polls, talk with the same people, travel to the same places. They identify, moreover, with some of the same values and inclinations—big ones (like the importance of politics in the life of the nation) and little ones (like an obsession with the intricacies of public opinion research or the utility of negative campaign advertising).

In short, they share the same view of the world and they share the same shorthand.

The careful journalist takes knowledge from these shared views but resists identifying with the interests of a politician or of the political class as a whole. This requires enormous discipline and vigilance. But the journalist who succeeds in achieving this can remain an outsider even while understanding the mind of the insider. That is the ultimate challenge of political reporting today.

So what are we to make of the modern journalist in the modern age?

The Political Journalists' Canon

Political scientists and political journalists share one thing in common—a respect for a body of literature that can be described as a “canon.” These are different canons, to be sure. The one revered by journalists is, not surprisingly, produced mainly by journalists. But an observer of American political journalism can better understand the genre if he understands what journalists know and revere. Even if all political journalists have not read all of these volumes, they have been taught, or reprimanded, or mentored by journalists who have. The ideas in these books are embedded in the consciousness of every political journalist. They are as much a part of his tools as his notebook, his computer, and, of course, his cell phone.

The first entry in this canon is Theodore H. White's “The Making of the President 1960.” For political reporters, it is the equivalent of “Beowulf,” the “Chanson de Roland,” “The Canterbury Tales,” “King Lear,” and the King James Version of the Bible—combined. Much imitated and much derided, it nonetheless survives, for conventional political correspondents at least, as the founding document of their craft.... Its emphasis on the small observation, on the daily de-

tails of campaign life, continue to this day. ... At the heart of this technique was the notion that great truths about a candidate could be found by examining not only how his mind worked, not only how his campaign style worked, but also how the mechanics of his campaign worked. The logic is tenuous, but the dramatic appeal is undeniable.... The effect of the White book on political correspondents cannot be overemphasized. Suddenly news sto-

The ideas in these books are embedded in the consciousness of every political journalist.

ries were full of insider stuff—so much so that these details (what the candidate wore off camera, whether there was cantaloupe or honeydew on the fruit plate) became standard, almost clichés....

The bookend to the White volume might be Hunter S. Thompson's “Fear and Loathing On the Campaign Trail '72.” The Thompson book, perhaps the high point of “gonzo journalism,” portrayed the presidential election in all its insanity, in all its frenzy, in all its dehumanizing and preposterous excess. That, of course, was its appeal,

even to mainstream journalists who couldn't have persuaded their editors to print even a single paragraph of reportage in the Thompson style even if they were capable of producing one. But Thompson also expresses the political reporters' frustration... “Only a lunatic would do this kind of work: twenty-three primaries in five months; stone drunk from dawn till dusk and huge seed-blister all over my head. Where is the meaning?”....

The place of “Fear and Loathing” in the journalists' pantheon illuminates another aspect of the political reporter's character—his knowledge that, for all the earnestness he brings to bear on his written product or his television spot, the process of electing a president is itself a portrait in absurdity.... The Thompson book also underlines another aspect of modern political correspondence, the tendency of journalists to become marinated in the meaningless blather of the conventions of politics. These conventions include rhetorical offensives known popularly as “spin:” the overly cautious language of candidates whose thoughts and words are controlled by overly cautious handlers; the mind-numbing repetitiveness of the ordinary campaign day, and the effort to

That he or she must navigate a difficult passage, between the knowledge of the insider and the outlook of the outsider. That he must be vigilant against bias even in its most subtle form, the bias toward change that is embedded in the business of journalism itself. That the zeal of the journalist—to know, to understand, to ferret out, to write—is at once the cause of admiration within his profession and suspicion outside of it. That the work of the journalist is hard but exhilarating, that it offers an intoxicating sense of variety and a mind-numbing repeti-

tiveness, that it is critical to the operation of democratic rule but that it is open to the criticism that is inherent in any democratic society. That the modern journalist examines the story of our time, but sometimes operates in a world whose language and assumptions are part of a small elite. That, above all, the political journalist practices an imperfect art chronicling the work of imperfect people in an imperfect system. ■

These excerpts are published with permission of Rowman & Littlefield

from David Shribman's essay, "Only a Lunatic Would Do This Kind of Work: A Journalist's Perspective on the Perspective of Journalists," included in "The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2004," edited by William Mayer.

✉ dshribman@post-gazette.com

make a process that has become a mass-marketing exercise look and feel like a mom-and-pop retail operation. Campaigns were always manipulative; the whole point is to persuade people to perform something they might not otherwise be disposed to do. But in recent years, the level of manipulation has grown substantially while the entire process has become laced with cynicism

But political correspondents bear some measure of the blame. They perpetuate stereotypes that conform to their own romantic views of the story they are covering, writing, for example, of the public's rabid interest in the political process when reports prepared by the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate show a steep and alarming drop in voter participation. In this regard, most political journalists have sinned. They have written of communities seething with political passion, of huge masses of voters who immerse themselves in political literature, of spontaneous coffee shop debates about taxation or war. By and large this phenomenon does not exist.

A third element of the political canon is Timothy Crouse's "The Boys on the

Bus: Riding with the Campaign Press Corps," which reporters like in part because it is about them. In truth, the Crouse book elevated reporters from mere spectators in the political drama to full participants. In that regard, Crouse merely acknowledged the obvious, though he did so with style and depth. But he also helped contribute to the new image of news reporters—an image that would only be burnished by the Watergate scandal, which el-

And they're *not* being honest. Their so-called objectivity is just a guise for superficiality. They report what one candidate said, then they go and report what the other candidate said with equal credibility. They never get around to finding out if the guy is telling the truth. They just pass the speeches along without trying to confirm the substance of what the candidates are saying. What they pass off as objectivity is just a mindless kind of neutrality." ...

The cover of the accounts of the 1960 and 1964 elections, White's "The Making of the President," featured the seal of the President of the United States. The most memorable account of

the next election was "The Selling of the President 1968," by Joe McGinniss. On its cover was a pack of cigarettes with Richard M. Nixon's face. Later books by Germond and Witcover had titles such as "Wake Us When It's Over" and "Blue Smoke and Mirrors." And, of course, the big book from the 1996 election was called "Showtime." From "The Making of the President" to "Showtime" in one generation—the titles themselves are a portrait in the decline of politics. ■ —D.S.

... the Crouse book elevated reporters from mere spectators in the political drama to full participants.

evated news reporters into modern-day crusaders for all that is right and pure, or at least that is the way reporters see it

Crouse understood, too, the limits of the genre. In his book, he quotes a young assistant to Jack Anderson named Brit Hume, who would later win celebrity as a gritty ABC News White House reporter and now as managing editor and chief Washington correspondent of Fox News: "Those guys on the plane," said Hume, "claim that they're trying to be objective. They shouldn't try to be objective, they should try to be honest.

With Deadlines Past, a Journalist Observes the Coverage

‘There are far too many campaign media people quoted in the copy for my taste.’

By Walter R. Mears

After 45 years of reporting and writing political news, I’m reading it now at a distance, usually admiring the work of my successors, sometimes grumbling over my coffee about the stories I think are flawed—convinced that I could have done it better. Retirement does that to a newsman—and although at 69 I know it is the turn of another generation of reporters to chronicle campaigns and elections, I still envy them their seats on the bus.

I also gripe when I see obvious errors or read things I consider worthless, as when people identified only as campaign veterans or Democratic managers deliver ponderous statements of the utterly obvious. I saw one of these veterans quoted the other day as saying that the rival Democrats were struggling for early position in an unpredictable contest. Which is to say that they don’t know how it’s going to come out until the voters decide. Some insight.

My daily campaign reading is of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Associated Press*. I’m biased toward the AP and not only because I spent my professional life there. I prefer copy that is concise and precise. *The Times* and the *Post* are encyclopedias of political coverage, often so voluminous that I read in 400 words or so and then start skimming the copy to see if there is anything I need to know buried down there in the 20th paragraph. Usually, I conclude not.

At the same time, though, I am frustrated as a reader when I see stories that cry for background, statistics, history—explanatory touches that put the event of the hour into perspective. Those added words are worth the space and the effort to get the data. It isn’t difficult. Especially with the Internet. Back in my typewriter era, it took time and telephone calls to get background

information. Now it takes only a few minutes on a laptop.

Background and explanation is one of the things print can provide that seldom is part of the radio and television coverage. TV does great work on breaking news, and I watch it for that and for the interviews and live events that show readers some of the raw material of political reporting. The non-stop cable outlets prefer to spend much of their time on shout shows and opinionated commentators who don’t want to be bothered with details that might intrude on what they know, which they seem to think is everything. They are entitled to their clamor. I am entitled to ignore it.

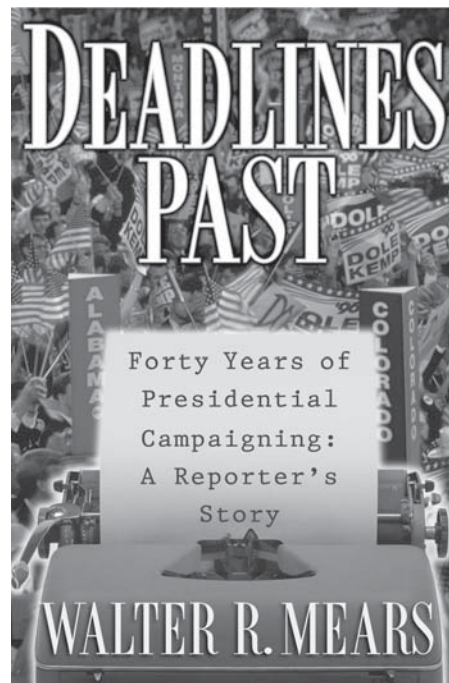
Context and Accuracy Matter

Now that I’m out of the action, I can see more clearly the impact of starting-point assumptions on campaign coverage. I read more adjectives than I would

have been comfortable writing. Howard Dean’s opponents call him the angry candidate and, in time, the coverage treats that not as an accusation but as a given. I see copy that describes President Bush as a wartime President—just the image the White House wants. You don’t change commanders in chief in the middle of a war. But most days, the war—on terrorism or in Iraq—seems almost incidental to the President’s agenda. Senator John Kerry was tagged as starchy and remote—a stiff, who couldn’t connect with voters. Until he did. As a reader, I wish the coverage would show me how Dean is angrier than his rivals, how Bush is operating as a wartime President, what Kerry was doing that made him stiff. I think the presumptions get in the way of straight reporting.

When images and accusations become part of the campaign shorthand, the coverage suffers. I read a lot on the question of whether Dean is another George McGovern—both antiwar, both considered left of the mainstream. (Curiously, I didn’t read much when McGovern endorsed General Wesley Clark for the nomination.) In fact, McGovern’s overwhelming defeat as the 1972 Democratic nominee had more to do with his shaky economic proposals and his post-convention switch in vice presidential nominees than with his opposition to the Vietnam War.

All of that doesn’t have to be part of the story—but it would be good background to consider when using the “another McGovern” tag. And it certainly ought to be in any story purporting to explore the comparability of the two candidates. *The New York Times* did such a piece without that part of the background and, worse, with an inaccurate account of one of the episodes that helped McGovern to his



nomination: the Edmund S. Muskie crying episode outside The (Manchester) Union Leader before the 1972 New Hampshire primary. The Times's piece said that Muskie cried as he protested the Union Leader's publication of a letter denouncing his wife. What's more, the story went on, the letter turned out to have been written by Nixon operatives.

Wrong, and wrong again. The Union Leader story involved was a reprint of a reprint—a Women's Wear Daily piece critical of Jane Muskie. Newsweek picked it up, and The Union Leader picked up the magazine version. There was a Nixon dirty tricks letter to The Union Leader about Muskie—but not about his wife.

When I start reading a story and bump up against an error like that, I stop reading. If the writer can't take the time to check the record and get the facts straight, I won't take the time to read his or her coverage. Background facts, names and numbers, help make coverage authoritative. I'd like to see more of that, with more precision.

Surfing through cable TV, I came across a Fox News Channel interview with former Senator Eugene McCarthy and stopped to watch the man I covered in 1968. An underline gave background—erroneously noting that McCarthy won the 1968 New Hampshire primary. Fair, balanced and wrong. McCarthy did not win, although he came close enough to show Lyndon Johnson's vulnerability.

I know that the reporters covering the 2004 campaign have a problem I didn't face until late in my career. There are simply too many of them, or at least too many people who claim to be covering the story for somebody. It makes legitimate reporting more difficult, and it also distorts the campaign, especially in the early states, Iowa and New Hampshire, where voters like to get up close with their own questions. They seldom can, except by prearrangement, because of the media mob. I don't know any answer to that one. The only thing worse than having too many people covering or pretending to cover a campaign would be to have some official empowered to say who could and

couldn't be there.

But I fear that the media hoards have become part of the insulation the candidates use, or try to, in order to ward off questions they don't want asked or answered. Candidates always have tried to put the campaign coverage on their own best terms. They are trying to win,



Maine Senator Edmund S. Muskie denounces The (Manchester) Union Leader on February 26, 1972. *Photo courtesy of The New York Times.*

not to illuminate the process. I always accepted that and figured the latter was my job. So I wasn't outraged when they ducked a hard question—I just pointed it out in print, which is the best comeback we have.

Connecting Quotes With Names

There are far too many campaign media people quoted in the copy for my taste. In some stories, they get in without being quoted by name—a press secretary for a rival candidate is one construction, a Democratic strategist working for another campaign is another. I wouldn't use those quotes without a name and campaign address on them. Adam Nagourney of The New

York Times got crossways with the Kerry campaign when one of the press secretaries there sent an e-mail attack on a rival, a handout saying it could be attributed only to a spokesman for a Democratic campaign.

Nagourney was right to ignore the attribution note and identify the source—PR people don't get to make those calls. My rule was that if you want to talk on background, tell me and I'll decide whether to proceed with the interview or not. For a few days of his campaign in 1964, Barry Goldwater's people imposed a rule that he couldn't be quoted, only identified as a source, when he answered questions or made unscripted comments. I was appalled at the number of people in the press who agreed to go along with that. I refused, and the AP spiked a Goldwater story that got Page One play in The New York Times, rather than use it attributed to a source familiar with Goldwater's views, the outlandish wording the campaign wanted. The Goldwater people soon dropped the whole ruse.

I think of that now when I read a story delivering the opinions of a campaign veteran, or a Democratic manager, or a White House strategist, or any other of the myriad guises in which anonymity appears. It has its place—on matters of fact, not opinions or judgments. I believe in the AP rule: Unattributed material has to be fact, not opinion, it has to be significant news, and it has to be unavailable from any on-the-record source.

I also have a problem with stories that let the press secretaries do the talking the candidates ought to be doing. When I was reporting, what counted was what the candidate said and did, not what his hired hands thought. I see copy now with quotes from campaign spokespeople because they will talk tougher than the candidate will.

When Senator Tom Harkin endorsed Dean in his home state of Iowa, Richard Gephardt's campaign manager, Steve Murphy, was quoted in The Washington Post as saying Dean was grasping at straws because of the gaffes that showed he was not the best candidate.

Next paragraph: “Gephardt was a bit more restrained, acknowledging that he was disappointed not to get the endorsement” Politicians usually want it both ways. I don’t think reporters should help them.

The Expectations Game

These observations don’t even get to the cliché complaint about reporters covering the campaign like a horserace and ignoring the issues. It is a horserace, or at least a race, and the coverage I saw and still see does not ignore the issues. The best of it couples the issues with the race and the candidates, so that you can weave the intensity of the competition together with an account of rival proposals, a combination that keeps readers reading.

One of the most suspect features of what political reporters do is the scorekeeping, the attempt to say who did well short of victory in a presidential primary, where winning isn’t everything. In this election cycle, like so many others, the talking heads on television were trying to set expectations long before the voting began, and so were print analysts, sometimes quoting purported experts—although I don’t think there are any. I never knew anybody who could say reliably that it would be good enough for one candidate or another to run second or third or a close fourth. Not unless the candi-

date, like Gephardt, said himself that he had to win or come close in Iowa, where his far-back fourth forced him out of the campaign.

My way of handling that part of the story was to keep close track of everything a candidate’s managers said on the record about what they expected to do in a primary. That’s still the expectations game, but now it is based on their expectations, not yours. It’s harder to get the forecasts of the campaigns now that they all know the downside—guess high and the campaign can only lose, guess way low and it won’t be credible. But there are still people in the campaign organizations who will give an honest assessment or blurt a forecast despite the risk to their candidate. One of Muskie’s managers in New Hampshire in 1972 said that if he didn’t get at least 50 percent of the vote, she’d cut her wrists. He didn’t, and she didn’t.

The public opinion polls also are a piece of the expectations game, simply because they set benchmarks. The trouble is that the polls are written in sand, and the next high tide can wash them out. Kerry’s victory in Iowa demonstrated that.

As I read about the polls now and see them built into the coverage, I have to confess to overwriting them sometimes when I was on the job. I tried to be careful and usually was, and the copy I respect now observes that restraint. Too many people put too much

stock in them, forgetting that the polls that were supposed to be most reliable, the exit interviews on Election Day 2000, produced the erroneous early call for Al Gore in Florida and, hours later, the premature TV calls for George W. Bush.

As I look back at this, it sounds like the work of an old curmudgeon. I only wish that I were a young curmudgeon, back on the bus and covering 2004.

For all my gripes, I respect and appreciate what the political reporters now are delivering about this crop of candidates. Having been there myself for 11 campaigns, I know how hard it is to accurately and fairly tell readers about the people who want to be President. Today’s solid political reporters are providing what I need to know. I admire what they are doing and, I have to admit, envy their assignment. ■

Walter Mears reported on national politics for The Associated Press from 1960 to 2001. He received the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 1977 for coverage of the 1976 presidential campaign and election. His book, “Deadlines Past: Forty Years of Presidential Campaigning: A Reporter’s Story,” was published in 2003 by Andrews McMeel.

✉ wmeears@ap.org

Tracking Generational Change in Political Reporting

Displacing news reporting with analysis provides ‘the possibility of a far different sort of bias than coziness with a candidate.’

By John Harwood

There’s plenty I don’t remember about my first presidential campaign. I was in the sixth grade, after all, joining my dad, Richard Harwood, a 1956 Nieman Fellow, as he covered the race for The Washington Post. The year was 1968. What I do remember, and what I’ve learned as I

followed my father into this sometimes-exhilarating and sometimes-dispiriting business, provides a window through which to see how much has changed about political journalism. And how much hasn’t.

Start with the relationship between the candidates and the reporters who

cover them. It was deeper and more honest then. My dad, who barely knew Bobby Kennedy at the start of his 1968 primary campaign, had become close to him by the time Kennedy was assassinated—so close that he asked the Post to take him off the campaign because he felt he could no longer be

objective. Back then, reporter and politician spent a lot of time together in unguarded settings, which were both on- and off-the-record.

In the hothouse atmosphere of today's campaign, reporters and candidates spend much less time together. And the time we do spend is mediated much more heavily by the armies of communication strategists that each campaign employs to guard against verbal missteps. Considering the ubiquity and speed of correspondents filing for the wires, the Web, and for cable TV, not to mention newspapers, campaigns have good reason to be so cautious. The result is that I don't know any of the 2004 candidates as well as my dad knew Bobby Kennedy.

Prevailing rules of journalistic ethics would say that's a good thing. In 1968, I appeared in Kennedy's TV ads after my politically active mother volunteered me to join a group of kids in a filmed roundtable discussion with Kennedy. Dad had nothing to do with this, but the ads ran in contested primaries that he was covering. If it came to light today that my daughter was appearing in ads for Howard Dean or George Bush, other reporters would cover it as a minor scandal, which is why it wouldn't happen.

Does this heightened ethical sensibility produce a truer report for readers, listeners and viewers? Maybe, but maybe not. The reports my dad filed almost invariably contained news of first impression for his editors and the vast majority of his readers. When he took me once to a dreadfully hot state fair to hear George McGovern, standing in for the fallen Kennedy, his technological equipment was limited to a portable typewriter; he could dictate, if he could find a phone, or file to the Post from a Western Union office. Those techniques of transmitting news were glacial by today's standards, but they contained a crucial element that is harder to come by today: Facts were the news, and the news was fresh.

Stories that I file from the 2004 campaign trail usually do not contain news of first impression—for editors or for readers. This is because of changes in technology and the media business.

Nearly anything important that a candidate says today is covered live by CNN or MSNBC or another cable outlet. In fact, I might well have discussed whatever I am writing about on television even before I start writing; The Wall Street Journal, like other newspapers looking to stem readership declines by building brand identity, sends people like me in front of television cameras more often than my dad could ever have imagined. Sometimes I do a half-dozen "talking-head" appearances in a day.

As a result, stories I write must command the attention of readers less by the news they contain than by the analysis they offer. That introduces the possibility of a far different sort of bias than coziness with a candidate; it is the bias of analysis in my idiosyncratic conception of what are the most relevant and important trends I see in the campaign and the country. Which reportorial bias is more pernicious? It's a tough question to answer.

While we are less familiar with candidates, we are more familiar with the legion of media consultants, pollsters and strategists who are the mercenary soldiers of the permanent campaign. In my dad's day a candidate's innermost corps of advisers usually consisted of longtime, loyal aides from the candidate's home city or state; today these advisors are hired strategists who are as much of a fixture within the Beltway culture as the lobbyists swarming Capitol Hill. Within a few weeks in 2003, one communications strategist had left Senator John Kerry's campaign and gone to work for his rival General Wesley Clark. If there's a coziness problem in political journalism today, it is the coziness among reporters and these political consultants, who often have agendas distinct from those of the candidates they briefly serve.

The culture of the campaign press corps has changed as much as the culture of campaigns themselves. That's largely because of the women's movement. With some exceptions like the great Mary McGrory, the campaign planes, buses and trains of my dad's generation were almost entirely male domains. That's no longer true. Chang-

ing gender roles also mean the male reporters are much less inclined to stay out on the long, guilt-free trips that my dad used to take. A colleague yearning for the good old days of long, whiskey-soaked road trips once wrote a piece making fun of me for leaving George Bush's campaign plane to go home for Halloween trick-or-treating with my children. But I'm far from the only one making such detours home. And while on the road, reporters of my generation spend a lot more time working out than drinking whiskey.

Evolving technology means that even when we are away from the candidates, we are never truly away from the campaign. When my father traveled—long before anyone dreamed of cell phones—campaign reporters were incommunicado for long stretches, and when they left the campaign, they were disconnected from being able to report on it. Today, C-SPAN brings campaign events into one's living room, and communications with campaign strategists continue apace with blizzards of campaign e-mail messages appearing at all hours of the day and night. The constant buzz of a vibrating BlackBerry, the ascendant vehicle for e-mail interviews and campaign attacks alike, has become a hated sound for family members of political journalists who rarely leave home without these wireless devices. At night, they put them next to their bed.

Some media observers complain that political punditry now plays an outsized role in the election process, lifting favored candidates and burying disfavored ones long before ordinary voters are paying the slightest attention. But this is where things haven't changed all that much. The dominant media paradigm—before the Iowa caucuses or New Hampshire primary were the focus of much attention—was that former Vermont Governor Howard Dean had seized control of the Democratic nomination race. Yet in the first election test in Iowa, Kerry's convincing victory and Senator John Edwards's strong second-place finish proved that the voters have minds of their own, just as they did in 1968 in pressuring President Lyndon Johnson out of the race for his party's

nomination.

What this tells us is that political reporters like me need to constantly be willing to question our assumptions and revisit the analytical frameworks that we use to predict the future. I have access to so many more polls than my dad ever did, and they offer me and other reporters snapshots of how and

what voters are thinking about the election that lies ahead. But what voters decide can erase any of those snapshots as easily as I can delete a digital image from my laptop computer. That's still the good news—the exciting news—about the craft of political journalism that I am fortunate enough to practice. ■

John Harwood, a 1990 Nieman Fellow, is the political editor of The Wall Street Journal. Based in Washington, he is covering the 2004 presidential campaign for the newspaper.

✉ John.Harwood@wsj.com

Shoe Leather Beats BlackBerries

Too much time is spent with candidates, not enough learning from voters.

By David Yepsen

When Theodore H. White wrote his landmark book, “The Making of the President 1960,” he helped invent a new style of political journalism. His insider, fly-on-the-wall style of reporting made for fascinating, insightful reading, and the rest of us have been imitating him ever since.

But now, it's become too much of a good thing in the Iowa caucus campaigns. One reporter quietly hanging around the candidate and a campaign can provide useful reading at the end of the campaign. Hundreds crowding around that candidate—now outfitted with a body microphone or two—and filing instantly and constantly into the 24-hour news cycle changes the very nature of the story. Here, caucus campaign events are no longer quaint, intimate gatherings of neighbors who talk politics before passing a verdict on candidates. Often, they are mob scenes.

For better or worse, an early test of presidential candidate strength occurs in my backyard—Iowa—every four years. This year 124,331 Iowa Democrats trekked to 1,991 precinct caucuses to pass judgment on their party's presidential candidates. This verdict was covered by about 1,200 media people—an average of one journalist for every 100 caucus-goers and about 240 per each of the five candidates who actively

campaigned here. It's a bit much. Too much. The crush of media attention, while welcomed by Iowa's hotel and restaurant businesses, has changed the nature of presidential politics in these early caucuses.



Senator John Kerry put his feet up and made phone calls during a day of campaigning in New Hampshire in November. *Photo by Jim Korpil/Concord Monitor.*

This evolution from intimate to intimidating started after 1972, when a young Gary Hart engineered one of those “unexpectedly strong second-place showings” by George McGovern against Edmund Muskie in the Democratic caucuses here. That winter about a dozen journalists showed up to chronicle the campaign events. McGovern then went on to upset Muskie for the nomination that year, and in doing so he put Iowa's precinct caucuses on the map as a test of strength. The verdict in Iowa now meant something.

Four years later, Jimmy Carter raised the Hart/McGovern strategy to an art form, with many more media people watching. When Carter went from obscurity in Iowa to the White House in Washington, we knew that in 1980 events here would get even more attention. They did, and each election cycle more and more reporters arrive to watch Iowans quiz the candidates and attend their caucuses.

It's a not-so-virtuous circle. It feeds on itself. The selection of a President is a big story. So it's natural journalists want to cover it, and new technologies make it easier for more people to do. New media outlets—like Web sites and 24-hour cable TV—create a never-ending demand for content. Other states, jealous of the media attention given

the early states of Iowa and New Hampshire, have moved their caucuses and primaries closer to the two leadoff events and triggered the law of unintended consequences. Now the political community puts forward the expectation that candidates must do well in Iowa and New Hampshire in order to stay alive and go on to win in later contests; they have no time to recover if they don't. Therefore, candidates increase their spending and campaigning time in Iowa, with a growing cadre of digitized journalists in hot pursuit.

What were once small meetings of party activists held in living rooms have morphed into large gatherings that candidates work hard to pack with their supporters. Only four percent of the caucuses this year were held in living rooms. No longer do candidates quietly move around the state as Carter did in 1975. Only in the very earliest days do you see that sort of campaigning here, but it's not long until C-SPAN, the cable networks, and the Webcasters show up to beam these events to the rest of the world.

The smallest gaffe can become magnified. Suddenly, the off-Broadway performances that Iowa and New Hampshire used to afford candidates have become the main event themselves. Yet this isn't all bad. After all, this is the start of a presidential campaign, and whenever and wherever the nation starts picking a President it's going to be a big story. Move the start to some other state and the same media overkill will happen there.

Improving Horserace Journalism

But I come not to damn horserace journalism but to praise it. I'm a great practitioner of horserace journalism. In a presidential campaign, the big story is always who is most likely to win. I've covered politics in Iowa for 30 years, and every four years all sorts of people come up to me with one question: "Who's going to win?" That's understandable. They want to know who their President is going to be. No one has ever come up to me and asked: "What's Howard Dean's infrastructure

policy?"

What I'd like is for horserace journalism to be better than it is now, and that does not mean just packing more handicappers into the press box. Every four years the nation's best political writers and reporters—well, most of them—trek out here, but they spend too much time on the candidates and not enough on the voters. (There are some who think they can cover Iowa by sitting in their offices in Washington and Manhattan just reading the polls, The Hotline, or ABC News's The Note. Such reading is required, but so is some lab work.)

It's time to break up the press pack. Let wire service reporters or pools of journalists do the "death watch" and the "gaffe watch" on candidates. (Let's admit that's why much of that pack is there, waiting for one of those two things to happen.) It's time for more of us horserace journalists to get down into the paddocks, talk to the jockeys, the owners, and the breeders as well as the fans. By spending an evening with a bunch of vets at a Legion Hall in Osceola, Iowa, I learned much about Senator John Kerry's growing appeal to veterans. They'd gathered to hear Kerry's old friend, former Vietnam vet and senator from Georgia, Max Cleland. Veterans from a variety of wars—along with their spouses—complained about the direction of the country they'd fought for, the poor treatment they felt veterans are getting, and the need to do something about this. It became clear to me that something was going on here, and the candidate wasn't even around.

During this campaign, nearly every political journalist wrote (and then wrote some more) about the explosion of Internet-based politics, thanks to Dean and his first campaign manager, Joe Trippi. Perhaps that story was overdone. Before the caucuses, about 60 percent of likely caucus-goers told the Iowa Poll they had gotten no information about the campaign from the Internet. While we are entranced with our BlackBerries, most voters aren't. They still make their decisions the old-fashioned way—by reading, watching TV, and by talking things over with kin,

friends and neighbors. In Iowa, what turned out to be the most effective weapon wasn't the Internet organization that Dean used to raise money and recruit volunteers. It was the personal networks of veterans and local firefighters that Kerry built.

Did the political press make too much of the Internet effect on this campaign and not enough of the old-fashioned, personal work of campaigning? Perhaps. Had I spent more time in Legion halls and less time on the Internet, I would not have gone on "Fox News Sunday" the day before the caucuses and flippantly predicted a Dean win in Iowa. (Kerry won.) When it comes time for my job review, I will point to the prescient column I wrote in December—in part based on that Legion Hall experience—about Kerry's rising fortunes in Iowa and just hope the boss wasn't watching "Fox News Sunday."

It turns out that Iowa's caucus-goers had moved beyond anger at President Bush over the Iraq War to a desire to do something about it, like defeat him. As the Iraq War's beginning diminished as a top voting issue, Kerry's locally built organization and his sharper message turned out to be much more effective than the one Dean built over the Internet.

It's back to the future next time. Shoe leather beats BlackBerries for getting to the bottom of the story. And next time seems to be happening earlier than we might like. The 2004 Democrats cleared out of here just two weeks ago, and now signs of the early stirring for 2008 can already be found: Rudy Giuliani was down the street last night speaking at the local chamber of commerce dinner. It was his second visit to Iowa this month. ■

David Yepsen is The Des Moines Register's political columnist. He has covered Iowa politics for 30 years, and in the fall of 1989 he was a fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

✉ dyepsen@dmreg.com

Why Political Journalism Fails at Handicapping the Race

There is too much focus on campaign tactics, not enough on voters' concerns.

By Terry Michael

Money, ads, staff and calendar. Those themes dominate much of political journalism in the months before a presidential election cycle really kicks in. And they are pushed by reporters acting as horserace handicappers, trying to determine the main contenders and which candidates have what it takes to win the nomination and even the fall election.

It's a kind of "supply-side" approach to political reporting. Figure out who has the most money, the cleverest commercials, the most seasoned operatives, the advantages of early caucus and primary dates—and reporters have the data they think they need to predict likely winners.

This approach sounds reasonable, but I would argue it usually leads the best and the brightest of political journalists down a blind alley, somewhere in Des Moines, Iowa or Manchester, New Hampshire. What ought to replace this customary campaign coverage is a "demand-side" model that begins analysis by focusing on concerns voters feel should be addressed and framing stories with an understanding of what fuels voters' passions.

The handicapping role of political journalists, while it might not be as important as their civic education responsibilities to readers, viewers and listeners, is more than just an exercise in amusing political junkies. Smart analysis of which candidates are connecting with voters and why helps determine whether the press pack affords too much ink and airtime to those who aren't striking a responsive chord and too little to those who are.

A Plethora of Irrelevant Reporting

When one considers the confluence of players in the tiny echo chamber where political information gets exchanged—



Senator Joseph Lieberman entering the "spin room" following the January 22, 2004 debate held in New Hampshire at St. Anselm's College. Photo by © Meryl Levin.

political reporters and columnists, operatives, fundraisers and gossip regurgitation conduits like The Hotline and the cable-babble networks—it is easy to see how political journalism gets bogged down in misleading insiders' minutia.

Take the topic of campaign money, for example. The Washington, D.C. ethics industry, which regards dollars as the root of all electoral and governance evil, provides easy story lines for skeptical-to-cynical reporters. A quick stop at the Federal Election Commission Web site gave reporters "proof" in mid-2003 that Senators John Kerry and John Edwards might be the top contenders for the nomination simply because each had piled up lots of cash. And conversely, journalists sent out the message that a little-known former governor of an unimportant little state had little chance of connecting with voters because he wouldn't be able to

raise money.

Journalists' obsession with "following the money" begets the kind of misleading reporting that touted the prospects of a President John Connolly in 1980 and a President Phil Gramm in 1996. History tells us that Connolly and Gramm were both candidates who quickly failed to convince voters of their inevitability and whose money couldn't buy an attractive message. Yet history repeats as money-obsessed reporters refuse to learn a simple truth: Message is what attracts money, not the other way around. A strong connection with supporters allowed Dean to raise \$40 million; John Kerry mortgaged his house to fund his Iowa campaign.

In this election cycle reporters have also supplied us with an orgy of stories that focused on commercials, staff and calendar—on such inconsequential events as a Gephardt-friendly indepen-

dent expenditure group's nasty attack ad against Howard Dean; a week or so of pack journalistic attention to Kerry firing his campaign manager, Jim Jordan, and the rules-junkie gotcha' reporting about Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe's minor tinkering with the party's primary and caucus calendar. However, the truth is that the attack ad neither helped Gephardt nor hurt Dean; Kerry's campaign manager had nothing to do with the candidate's failure to connect with voters early in the process, and show me one time national party rules or the order of delegate selection contests has *ever* changed the outcome of a nomination battle.

While these kinds of stories were probably interesting to insiders, it's disheartening how little of a window they opened to how the race for the Democratic nomination was really shaping up in 2003. Comparable story lines failed to produce useful insights during other election walk-up years, when Jimmy Carter, Gary Hart, and Bill Clinton were pulling surprise ascents like Dean's, which seasoned reporters remained all but blind to before they became too obvious to ignore.

Beginning instead with the voters—learning about their lives, desires and concerns—rather than harping on campaign tactics seems a better direction in which to head. In covering primary campaigns, in particular, I would suggest that journalists gear their reporting to assessing four key factors, which I call base, biography, edge and effort.

- **Base:** Is the base burning, or is it bored? Is it demanding big changes in policy direction, or does it just want to get out of the wilderness and end a string of defeats? In this cycle, the Democratic Party base is energized like it hasn't been in decades by anger about the Iraq War and a Justice Department threatening (at least in the liberal imagination) individual choice and liberty. A candidate tapping into those feelings, even one from an unimportant little state like Vermont, should have been taken more seriously from the start than a bunch of members of Congress not willing to rock the status quo boat.

- **Biography:** How does a candidate's past, his core beliefs and issue positions and his personal style, fit the issue environment of this race? The Vietnam era generation of reporters and editors now dominating the senior levels of American journalism quickly concluded that Vietnam veteran John Kerry possessed the magic bullet to challenge former weekend-warrior and commander in chief, George Bush. This one-dimensional assessment failed to factor in how passionately activist Democrats wanted a candidate who really did oppose the war, rather than one who might look good against Bush. Think back to the many mistakes journalists have made in the last two decades in assessing the need for Democrats to nominate a military or war hero: Annapolis graduate Jimmy Carter was defeated by silver screen warrior Ronald Reagan; space hero John Glenn was crushed in 1984 by Corporal Walter Mondale, a 1950's Army draftee; Navy SEAL Bob Kerrey was drowned by draft-evading Bill Clinton, and Vietnam volunteer Al Gore was defeated by National Guard, Vietnam-evader George W. Bush. Biography is important in assessing viability, but mostly in judging whether a candidate appears sufficiently likeable, authentic and spontaneous, rather than whether he or she fits a simplistic stereotype. And biographical attributes that appear potentially lethal (draft evasion, womanizing, noninhaling) can be overtaken by the cognitive dissonance of voters who are willing to ignore personal questions if the person has something to offer that they believe is more important than his or her indiscretions.

- **Edge:** Is there enough of an edge to a candidate's message to make it penetrate? Or is a candidate so polished that the words flow through the ears of voters without slowing down for impact? Message edge is key to understanding why congressional candidates are almost always defeated by governors. Members of Congress spend their lives in Washington talking to organized interests, using smoothly polished words full of deniability. This is done to make the National Associa-

tion of This and the American Council of That each believe they are on its side. Governors, who need popular followings if they are to successfully pursue policy agendas in state legislatures, are much more accustomed to speaking in language real people understand.

- **Effort:** If the candidate has to win a close election, has he or she put together a sufficiently strong tactical effort to do so? This is where some of the insider factors, like money and staff, are of importance. But they're most important on the margins in tight races, when the base is unmotivated and candidates have little to say or lack the ability to use language that conveys attitude. Journalists who focus on fundraising, the creative use of new tactics like interactive, voter-mobilizing Web sites, strong field operations, and skillful campaign commercials should place such tactical considerations in broader context. By itself, this kind of reporting tells voters very little, since these tactics might be in use by a campaign whose candidate hasn't understood what the base wants and doesn't have the biography and the communication edge that would make them matter. In the end, flawed candidates are their own worst enemy.

Covering the General Election Campaign

There are a similar set of tools reporters can use to assess general election presidential campaigns: They are what I call party, personality, times and tactics. (By "times," I mean the issue environment in which the race is taking place.) Here are some questions worth keeping in mind:

- **Party:** Is the party label an advantage for the Democrat or Republican with persuadable, independent-minded voters? Or are the parties at near parity, as they are now nationwide? This can be a big variable, and well worth watching, as the party nominees factor this in when deciding how much attention is needed to shore up their bases, as compared with trying to expand the base to reach those more casual and independent voters.

• **Personality:** Are the candidates' personalities evenly matched? Or does one stand out for any particular reason? What's important for reporters is figuring out if a candidate crosses the threshold of likeability. For example, in 2000 Bush, who often seemed bumbling, defeated Gore, who voters viewed as the class know-it-all, always trying to show how smart he was.

• **Times:** Is the issue environment rich? Is the nation at war? Has an incumbent been disgraced? Is inflation out of control, or are voters enjoying the calmness of peace and prosperity? The answer to this key question points the way to how voters feel about maintaining the status quo or seeking new direction. The times in which a campaign is waged—recall “it’s the economy stupid” in 1992—can drive a race with such great velocity that no brilliant countermove, such as trying to talk about Clinton’s character, can change where voters are headed.

• **Tactics:** Finally, we’ve arrived back at tactics. When parties are at parity and the candidates are equally boring and times are quiet, journalists can start to focus a little more on tactical advantages. Such was the case in 1988 when smart tacticians conjured up nonissues like Willie Horton, the Pledge of Allegiance, and American Civil Liberties Union to define an opponent before he defined himself. In the 2004 race, tactics may be unusually important; with each party near parity, they will have to engage in a sophisticated tactical “ground war” to mobilize and turn out their base voters. But they’ll also have to address independents and those who are leaning one way or the other, with a more strategic air campaign (consisting mostly of free media, not the paid commercials to which reporters pay far too much attention in presidential races).

Base, biography, edge and effort in

primary campaign coverage. Party, personality, times and tactics when reporting on the general election. These are not brilliant intellectual constructs, but they are better indicators for journalists to use when letting voters know which candidates are viable contenders than the current focus on raising money, running ads, hiring and firing staff, and insider nonsense like the order of primaries and caucuses. ■

Terry Michael is executive director of the Washington Center for Politics & Journalism, where he runs The Politics & Journalism Semester to teach college journalists about politics. He is a former press secretary for the Democratic National Committee (1985-87) and communications director for the 1988 Paul Simon for President campaign.

✉ terrymichael@wcpj.org

For Whom Is Political Coverage Written?

In this new Web era, reporting on a hometown candidate means serving different audiences in print and on the Internet.

By John Wagner

It's shortly after 10:00 in the evening on the last Friday in January as I start banging this story out with two thumbs on my BlackBerry and sip cheap Chardonnay. I'm on a chartered flight from Columbia, South Carolina to Albuquerque, New Mexico, keeping tabs on presidential hopeful John Edwards, whose fate will likely be known long before anyone reads this. At the moment, he still has a plausible case for emerging as the Southern alternative to Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts for the Democratic nomination. Or so that notion keeps us going.

Campaign coverage is a bit unusual for me. I first started covering Edwards in my capacity as Washington correspondent for his hometown paper, The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer.

Edwards was a first-term senator from North Carolina, and I spent most of my time covering Congress. But when he started venturing out to test the waters for a presidential bid more than two years ago, I followed him. What's most different now is how much company I have. On this flight, a few dozen journalists are in various states of slumber and alcohol-enhanced, late-night analysis of how the campaign is going. Part of me longs for the days when it was just me and the senator and an aide or two in a minivan.

This has been a long—sometimes turbulent—ride that has raised in my mind some provocative questions about the way papers should cover a home-state candidate who runs for President. It would be hard to over-

state the number of times I have cringed when national reporters I bump into ask me how “your guy” is doing. The last thing journalists should be doing is championing a candidate because he happens to hail from our circulation area. But the truth is that my midsized regional paper never would have invested so heavily in coverage of the presidential race if “our guy” hadn't gotten into it.

Covering the Hometown Candidate

This raises a fundamental question that I'm not sure my paper ever fully resolved: Are we covering the presidential race, or are we covering how Edwards fares in the presidential race?

Or both and, if so, how do we strike a balance between these two objectives?

Such questions became increasingly difficult to answer during the long summer as Edwards struggled to gain traction in the polls, while we remained at his side, watching every step along the way. Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean's ascendancy was the major story line elsewhere. Were we skewing the reality of the race for our readers by writing so much about Edwards? On the other hand, didn't we have an obligation to scrutinize his candidacy in a way unparalleled by any other paper in the country? (One Edwards aide actually referred to us as the campaign's "inspector general" early on.)

The deck was completely reshuffled when Edwards came in second in the Iowa caucuses. Suddenly he and his candidacy were relevant again in terms of the overall race, and this prompted a whole host of editors at the paper to weigh in again with sometimes conflicting thoughts about which of the objectives ought to be our major focus—the presidential race or how Edwards was doing in it.

Early in the campaign, one point seemed indisputable: There really is no longer any such thing as a local paper when it comes to political reporting. This is because of the advent of the many Web-based publications like *The Hotline* and ABC News's *The Note* that direct readers who are anywhere and everywhere to political pieces written in papers like ours. During these very early stages of the race—what *The Note* dubbed "the invisible primary"—it soon became clear to me that I had two audiences. There was our usual readership back home, reading the "paper" paper, and then there was the online community, some of which was directed to our newspaper stories by *The Note* and other similar intermediaries.

The two audiences had different interests in and tolerance levels for coverage of John Edwards. The online readers—a small but devoted audience paying close attention to the race—couldn't get enough details about the campaign and its inner workings. Many

of our print readers thought we were giving them way too much John Edwards coverage and didn't hesitate to tell us so through the letters-to-the-editor column.

Partly because of these diverging interests, late in 2002 the newspaper decided to launch a Web site on which the news and information would be devoted exclusively to Edwards. Eye on Edwards debuted a few weeks before Edwards made the announcement of his candidacy in January 2003. The site gives readers links to all of our Edwards coverage from the newspaper, but also includes several online-only features. A running column called *The Buzz* features news nuggets such as new poll results, staffing hires, and the latest back-and-forth between candidates. Another section, called *How He's Playing*, has links to stories about Edwards that have appeared in other publications.

As influential as we might fancy ourselves to be, the *How He's Playing* section was a recognition that Iowa caucus-goers' views of Edwards would probably be informed more by *The Des Moines Register* than *The News & Observer*. The site is, however, a useful

outlet for the insider tidbits that we accumulate in the course of our reporting that might not have found a natural or immediate home in our paper.

The only downside to having this Web site is it has become another proverbial beast that needs to be fed, and I am usually the one responsible for doing so. It can be quite a challenge to find the extra energy to file updates on days when we shove off at eight in the morning and arrive at the hotel around midnight.

The Journalist and the Campaign

Some truth in advertising: A few days have passed since I started writing this article, and I'm finishing it on a laptop, not my Berry. Now I am sitting in a hotel in Blacksburg, Virginia, which seems to have endured an ice storm last night. (It's another pre-8 a.m. shove off, and I haven't ventured outside yet.) We're just a couple of days past the South Carolina primary, which Edwards won rather decisively. That primary was one of seven nominating contests that Tuesday.

While on a chartered jet the next



A weary John Edwards sits with his 3-year-old son, Jack, and former New Hampshire State Senator Caroline McCarley in the back of his campaign bus shortly after his family joined him in Nashua in August. *Photo by Dan Habib/Concord Monitor.*

day, the candidate wandered to the back of the plane to visit with press and asked me how his hometown paper played his victory. I imagine you had nothing nice to say about me, Edwards said, joking, but only kind of, I think. "What was the headline?" he asked.

"Edwards loses another six states," I said, prompting some laughter from both him and those around us.

Having covered Edwards so closely for so long has led to some rather strange relationships, both with the candidate and his longer-serving aides. Recently, I've been spending far more time with these people than my own

family or friends. Living in our insular world, we now share campaign-related jokes that only we could possibly think are funny. There are other moments of shared joy, like discovering the hotel for the night has laundry facilities.

It's also true that Edwards's fate in this race could play a role in what I do with my career. It certainly has affected that mightily for the past two years. Yet as time goes by, I think I'm more cognizant than ever about the professional distance that needs to be maintained. There's no better reminder than the occasional chill on the morning a story runs that the campaign thinks has hurt

them. Only recently, I've started wondering what it will be like to return to a more normal life. It's what I crave, yet I fear the transition will be difficult.

Of course, at this point, that could take place in a week or in January 2013, at the end of Edwards's second administration. ■

John Wagner is a Washington-based reporter for The (Raleigh) News & Observer. He is now covering Senator John Edwards's presidential campaign full-time.

✉ jjwagner@mcclatchydc.com

Media Access to the Political Process Expands

From bloggers to videojournalists, the digital revolution is transforming how campaigns are covered.

By Steven Scully

The campus of Southern New Hampshire University lies at the end of hilly roads lined with tall pines. At 8 a.m. on the Sunday before the 2004 Democratic primary, it is New England picture-postcard beautiful, snow-dusted pine limbs breaking into a cloudless blue sky. It is also take-your-breath-away cold with temperatures hovering around seven degrees.

The guard at the university's entrance gate is already bored with the monotony of repeating his directions. "Just follow those cars," he says, as we crack the window of our rented SUV. Topping the hill, we can see that hundreds of cars already fill the parking spaces, 90 minutes before the start of this morning's "Women for Dean" rally.

Three satellite trucks are parked outside the University's Hospitality Center. Inside, the room is elbow-to-elbow and anxious aides have set up an overflow room with a television tuned to C-SPAN, which is also filling up fast. Ultimately, when that room reaches capacity, Dean aides have the unhappy task of turning aside another hundred or so arrivals on this critical final week-



Voters in Salisbury, New Hampshire, were among those who cast votes in the state's first-in-the-nation primary on January 27, 2004. Residents of Salisbury went to the town hall, which was built in 1839, and votes were collected in a century-old ballot box. *Photo by Dan Habib/Concord Monitor.*

end of campaigning.

Equally as impressive as the voters willing to brave the frigid Sunday morn-

ing temperatures is the crush of media trailing the former Vermont governor. A dozen television cameras are lined

up, aimed at the waiting podium. Our network, C-SPAN, has sent two cameras, a satellite uplink, two producers, an interviewer, and six technicians whose task it is to beam the event live to 80 million C-SPAN homes across the country; to listeners on WCSP, the FM station C-SPAN operates in Washington, and to Web users, who favor the network's nonstop video stream of political events at C-SPAN.org. We will transmit live for nearly two hours—following Governor Dean through the crowd until the last voter hand is shaken. At this point in the campaign, it is the unscripted interaction between the candidates and voters that brings us our best material.

Governor Dean's traveling press arrives with the candidate, grumbling about a room unable to fit them. Local police repeatedly clear the hallway of people attempting to jam themselves in the room's three open doors and threaten to remove still photographers who have climbed on folding chairs at the back of those crowds, angling for a decent shot.

Standing outside, with Governor Dean's stump speech echoing in the hallway, is a feast for political and media junkies. Republican pollster Frank Luntz circles, looking for a way to circumvent the closed-off access. Newsweek's Jonathan Alter arrives, spouse and children in tow; MSNBC's Chris Matthews talks it up with veteran television booker Tammy Haddad, then gets pulled aside for an interview with a Portuguese television crew. ("Not to worry, we have a translator," he's told.) A Boston TV anchor leans against the wall, gossiping about station politics with his predecessor, who is on hand to cover the event for the cable network he now works for. A radio reporter from India, tape recorder in hand, is unable to get inside the room and anxiously asks if she can plug her device into C-SPAN's audio mult box. Numerous individuals are recording the scene with pocket-size video recorders or sending photos home instantly via cell phone.

It is a scene repeated throughout the day and for every one of the top Democratic candidates battling for

position in this year's competitive primary. By 7 p.m., when Massachusetts Senator John Kerry arrives more than an hour late for a rally at a Hampton fire hall, organizers are boasting of "another thousand people watching down the road on television." Kerry's advance aides direct the overflow crowd to a school gymnasium to watch C-SPAN's live coverage of the senator's question-and-answer session.

C-SPAN and the Primary, Then and Now

What has happened to this once-folksy first-in-the-nation primary? C-SPAN's first foray into New Hampshire was in 1984. It was still the "boys on the bus" generation, when print reporters trailed the candidates, scribbling observations in wire-bound reporters' notebooks. Cable was the new technology then: We'd been created by the cable television industry in 1979 and CNN, having come along in 1980, was newer still. Back then, C-SPAN's cameras were often the only ones out in the field, viewed a little skeptically by the likes of longtime political reporters like Jack Germond, David Broder, Mary McGrory, and Roger Simon.

As a nonprofit always looking to conserve operating funds, C-SPAN's headquarters that year was borrowed space from Manchester's now defunct Amoskeag National Bank. Our studio control was literally set up in the bank's telephone hub room. One big-dish satellite uplink was parked for the week in the vacant lot across from the bank, transmitting live studio productions and any candidate events we had recorded that day. Our entire staff for primary week consisted of 18 people.

New Hampshire 2004 for C-SPAN entails a glass-walled studio at the Center of New Hampshire Holiday Inn, a 40-member crew, 12 cameras, a couple of video journalists working with palm-sized digital cameras, three mobile uplink trucks, and the traveling C-SPAN School Bus. And our contingent is dwarfed by the several hundred people at each of the New Hampshire studios of the three broadcast networks, Fox News, CNN and MSNBC. ABC News

alone has three "Vote 2004" buses plying Granite State highways uplinking field reports to its news programs.

As C-SPAN's political editor since 1990, I have overseen the increase in our political troop strength for four presidential cycles. During this week between Iowa and New Hampshire, C-SPAN's schedule is filled with political programming. Live multi-hour studio productions begin and end each day. Camera crews are dispatched to cover multiple candidate events. The New York Times, in an article published the day before the primary, captured the essence of our approach: Reporter Lynette Clemetson, who interviewed C-SPAN viewers in Miami Beach, wrote that "political junkies can 'embed' themselves in campaigns through television vehicles like 'All Politics Weekend' on C-SPAN." For us, this is the culmination of more than three years of New Hampshire campaign coverage. Our first camera crews were dispatched here in January 2001 to follow prospective candidates. It's just over nine months until the election and already we've produced almost 1,000 hours of political programming.

On Tuesday, primary day, I'll try to make sense of what's happening here for the 25 University of Denver (DU) students I'm teaching in a course called "Money, Message and the Campaign Process." It's a distance learning course, a cooperative project of C-SPAN, DU, and the Denver-based Cable Center, which I teach twice weekly by fiber connect from Washington. This week, we're using fiber to link the students in Denver with me in New Hampshire. Jack Heath of PrimaryPolitics.com and Craig Crawford of Congressional Quarterly are our guest speakers.

We'll talk with the students about the societal, political and technological trends that have all conspired to turn this year's first-in-the-nation primary into a weeklong national media event. Democratic Party chief Terry McAuliffe's decision to front-load the primaries, combined with a field of seven competitive candidates who have raised and spent millions of dollars, has guaranteed a horserace. Then there are the three all-news cable networks

that, in an ongoing battle for ratings, work to outdo one another this year in live event coverage, news reports, and political punditry from and about New Hampshire politicking.

Perhaps most importantly, we'll talk about the digital revolution, exploding even since the 2000 race. Technology continues to get smaller, better and more affordable, making it possible for hundreds of local, international and alternative media to cover the race right alongside the national media. Inexpensive satellite time now makes it possible for a single correspondent armed with a digital video camera to capture the race for viewers of mid-size and even small TV stations. Increasingly affordable international satellite time, inexpensive cell phone service, and high-speed Internet connections have increased the foreign entourage. And then there's the Internet itself, which has become a big player in this year's election, with millions of pages of data on the candidates produced by the campaigns, the conventional media, alternative media, and individuals.

Howard Dean's exuberant response to the Iowa caucuses demonstrates the speed and influence of the digital revolution: C-SPAN (and others) televised his concession speech live. Soon, the clip of Governor Dean's now-famous "scream" was airing relentlessly on cable news networks, providing much fodder for the pundits who filled the airwaves before the New Hampshire

primary. And just as quickly, creatively edited versions, often set to music, bounced so incessantly around the Web that Governor Dean, in his appeals to supporters, took to citing a Web site (deangoesnuts.com) that collected them all for easy viewing.

For C-SPAN, digital technology is allowing us to cover more candidate events this year with the same sized staff. More events are transmitted live. And events that in past elections were covered with one camera have become switched camera feeds, allowing us to capture more reaction from voters attending the events. Digital streaming and archiving has put all of C-SPAN's coverage on the Internet allowing anyone—reporters, students, political operatives, interested citizens—to research a candidate's statements over time.

Our regular telecasts of the candidates' stump speeches can present new challenges to the campaigners. Witness the undecided voter interviewed live on television after coming in person to hear North Carolina Senator John Edwards campaign. "I already heard this speech twice on C-SPAN," she announced to the interviewer. "I came here hoping to hear something new."

How does all of this new intensity affect the campaign? Officials say that voter turnout in New Hampshire this year set a new record. Was it the wider coverage that brought people out to

the polls? Craig Crawford believes not, and other political analysts I spoke to agreed. What brings people to the polls, they say, remains much the same as always—an interesting race and effective get-out-the-vote efforts.

The fate of the New Hampshire primary is already being debated, as it seems to be every four years. What the future holds politically and technologically can only be imagined. What we know at C-SPAN is that the continual campaign is a fact of life and the race for 2008 has already begun. Prospecting candidates have already booked themselves in New Hampshire venues later this month. And if the political parties decide that there will be a future for this small state, where politics is a retail game, C-SPAN will be there, as we have been since 1984. In the early days of New Hampshire politics single C-SPAN video journalists with small cameras will ply the small towns, clipping wireless microphones to the lapels of the early contenders as they make appeals to the hardest of the party faithful, capturing it all for our audience of political junkies long before the media circus comes to town. ■

Steven Scully is C-SPAN's political editor and also holds the Amos P. Hostetter chair at the University of Denver, teaching political communications courses via satellite.

✉ sscully@c-span.org

Political Reporting Happens Faster. But Is It Better?

'... too many of us are forced to react now and reflect later.'

By Michael Tackett

When David Broder covered his first presidential campaign in 1960, he typed his story on a manual typewriter, then searched for the nearest Western Union office to send it. Nearly two decades later, Al Franken, when he was known merely as a comic instead of a best-selling pundit, did a "Saturday Night Live" skit

in which he purported to be the first fully synergistic TV reporter as he wore a small satellite dish on his head while reporting live.

Today, we are much closer to Franken's parody than to Broder's reality.

Once again, technology is transforming the coverage of politics for report-

ers and not necessarily for the better. With the campaign's remarkable velocity, too many of us are forced to react now and reflect later. News cycles now exist within news cycles. Often we spend too much time electronically chasing many rabbits within and among campaigns and too little time talking to voters who decide elections. Our re-

porting obsessions tend, too, to be about many of the wrong things: Think about how many words were devoted to Howard Dean's new approach to raising lots of money and how few were written about his message. Had reporters done more of the latter, it might have helped us—and voters—to see earlier on that his campaign was in trouble.

Today, reporters who don't have an Air Card, WiFi, a BlackBerry and a Web-enabled cell phone and think "Soapbox" is a rhetorical platform, not a wireless outlet, are decidedly behind the times. With wireless access, reporters can get rapidly to the rich resources of the Web and use those to be their own truth squad when a candidate makes a promise or launches an attack. With constant access to e-mail, instantaneous responses to what one candidate has said arrive from other campaigns in time to be part of the story. No longer do reporters have to wait for calls to be returned. All of this makes the job easier to do and churns news reporting at a faster pace, but something important is being lost in the process—human contact and interaction.

Technology Evolves

In my first presidential campaign, in 1988, some reporters were fortunate enough to have cell phones—the large clunky brick-like phones—and a few of the TV types rigged them so they could actually send text messages on their battery-powered laptops. By then, the manual typewriters of "The Boys on the Bus" had given way to large, clunky "portable" computers. The idea was to speed transmission, but it didn't always work out that way. On some models, the delete button was right next to "print." At least one reporter for a major metro newspaper hit the wrong one, right on deadline, during a presidential debate.

"I remember in past cycles writing about the nifty new toys that all reporters had to have: First there was the micro-cassette recorder, then the famous Radio Shack Trash 80," said Roger Simon, political editor for U.S. News &

World Report and author of three books about presidential campaigns. "But the technology has exploded in a single cycle It is sometimes difficult to keep in mind that we're not getting any better, however, just faster."

Speed certainly does not equal depth. And as reporters are called upon more and more frequently to write for their paper's Web sites or to do interviews for television or radio broadcasts, they spend less time reporting the kind of stories that bring greater meaning to potential voters.

In some ways, technological change is serving us well, at least in how we manage to do our jobs. No longer do I have to rely on the kindness of convenience store operators, restaurants or other strangers to use their phone lines to send my story. Using my wireless modem, I file from anywhere I can get a connection. But having this technology means there is no "off" button. Cable TV has its 24-hour news cycle, but is staffed differently to handle this known schedule. Today, print reporters—without the same kind of built-in, back-up support—often respond to similar news demands as they constantly file updates for their newspaper's Web site.

This technology is also changing the culture of campaign reporting. In the past, we tried to stay in the hotel with the best bar—like the Wayfarer in Manchester, New Hampshire or the Savery in Des Moines, Iowa, and there we would trade gossip and talk to politicians. Now we stay at hotels with the best Ethernet connections or, better yet, free wireless. It used to be that we'd enjoy having dinner and drinks after meeting our final deadline. Now, even as we sit down to eat, a buzz, a chirp, a song, or a vibration from one of the many devices clipped to our belts signals an end to that ambition. New ledes and inserts, new "spin" and new truths, are always an option, as news travels instantly via cable TV to editors back home. And with so many reporters carrying cameras these days, all of us need to be nearly as guarded about what we say as the candidates we are covering.

Most reporters embrace the changes

brought by technology, even if there is such a thing as being too easy to reach. My colleague Ellen Warren, a senior correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, is a wonderful example of the new reporting *and* the new demands on reporters. She is covering the Democratic race for our Web site and for our television stations. A cameraperson, a soundperson, and a producer do not accompany her. Rather, with her on the campaign trail is videographer Brad Piper, who carries a small digital video camera capable of quickly transferring files to a laptop and onto the Web.

"I am absolutely Al Franken, and the only thing I am missing is the satellite dish strapped to my noggin," Warren said. "Fortunately, that comes in the embodiment of Brad Piper. With the stuff he carries around in his backpack, he can take the pictures and the sound, edit it into a package and transmit it. All by using essentially a Mac."

Warren covered her first campaign in 1976 with a pad and pen. "In 1976, there weren't as many reporters and there was no technology," Warren noted. "Back in those days, I was writing one news story for a specific deadline that was somewhere in the vicinity of 6:30 to 9:30 at night. In my current duties, I have the ability to go into what I am writing, the Internet stuff, as many minutes as there are in the day." But the Web site filing is only one of her duties. Her video files also appear on Tribune television stations, and she is writing a blog to go with her other reports. She still also files to the ink-on-paper Chicago Tribune.

Many presidential campaign cycles have been the showcases for some kind of transformative technology. This is the first cycle to truly be the platform for convergence. There are few reporters today who only file for a newspaper. Some days, I start with a television interview, followed by a radio interview, followed by feeding Warren's blog, and then, finally, writing a story for the paper.

Campaigns know how to exploit the technology and the ways we use it. If Howard Dean makes an allegation at the start of a speech, John Kerry's campaign can send a rebuttal via BlackBerry

to reporters covering Dean, even before Dean's speech is finished. In 1988, Michael Dukakis's campaign claimed to have invented the concept of rapid response, but in those days that meant a round of phone calls or perhaps a broadcast fax. The practice evolved dramatically in Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign. That same year, President Bush's campaign could be reliably expected to respond, in kind, with the acid pens of Mary Matalin and Victoria Clarke, who produced an afternoon screed against Clinton and faxed it to newsrooms around the country. But those faxes often signaled the end of the news cycle for that day.

Connectivity has also brought some benefits to reporters. During the 2000 campaign, most reporters called cam-

paigns to get a candidate's schedule. Now they click through their e-mail to find it. "The positives are obvious: efficiency and flexibility," said Jon Margolis, who was my mentor as a political writer for the Chicago Tribune and now covers politics as an avocation rather than an occupation. "With computers, a reporter doesn't have to spend time and effort finding a phone, sitting or standing at it for 15 or 20 minutes while a receptionist at the other end locates a transcriber, and then reading his or her story to said transcriber, who often gets a word or two wrong. I remember quoting Ham Jordan telling an associate 'smoke one for me,' after Carter won the 1976 Florida primary, only to see it appear in the paper as 'smoke won for me.'"

But merely because information pours forth with dramatically greater speed and scope does not necessarily mean that the words reveal a deeper level of coverage. It is possible to be hijacked by the technology if we are not careful. Now when I hear reporters complain that their Air Cards aren't getting a signal in the Waterloo, Iowa area, I want to say, "Ever heard of a phone?" ■

Michael Tackett, Chicago Tribune associate editor in its Washington, D.C. bureau, also serves as the Tribune's political editor.

✉ mtackett@tribune.com

Making Reporting About Voting Part of the Political Beat

From punch cards to touchscreens, journalists are tracking potential problems with how people vote.

By Mark Seibel

Some years ago, before the ill-fated presidential election of 2000, a woman I'd met at a breakfast meeting of political activists in Miami Beach called me to complain about the way ballots were counted. She was the sort of person all journalists have in their lives—a single-minded proponent of her cause whose sanity might be in question. I don't remember her name.

But I sure remember the conversation. "You've got to investigate the way they count ballots," she said. "We're being cheated." I said I couldn't believe that was true. "Just go into the room where they run them through the machines," she responded. "The air is full of little bits of paper. It's like snow. Those ballots are being changed."

At the time, I had no idea what she was talking about, though of course everyone now would realize she was

talking about the infamous chads of punch card ballots and the way they flew off the punch cards as they were passed through the counting machines. I couldn't imagine that anything serious was happening to the ballots. If there were such a problem surely our elected officials would have taken note long ago.

So who was crazy?

We now know that punch card balloting is a terribly flawed technology. While the snowfall of chads my caller described was not exactly the problem, it was symptomatic of a balloting system that couldn't be counted on always to record precisely what a voter intended. Chads can fall off, hang on, refuse to be punched through. My caller was right: Every ballot a chad dropped from was altered forever, and no amount of examination in the future would let us know how the voter had

meant to vote. And some chads would never drop off, and no one could ever be certain whether the voter had wanted them to or not.

If any of us had bothered to research the subject thoroughly prior to November 7, 2000, we would have known that questions about the accuracy of punch card balloting had been around since the technology was introduced in the 1960's. A federal report even had warned of the problems, and if we at The Miami Herald had been more on the ball, we would have known that some election officials in South Florida had been pushing for the money to replace the system, but were turned down regularly by their elected bosses. Obviously, the system didn't need replacing if it had elected them.

Fast forward to 2004. In Florida, California, Georgia and Maryland, the punch card ballot is gone. Maryland

and Georgia have statewide computer voting systems, as do most of the largest cities in Florida. And while punch cards are still being used in at least parts of 22 states, according to the Election Reform Information Project, a tracking effort sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts through the University of Richmond, steps are being taken to upgrade balloting systems throughout the country.

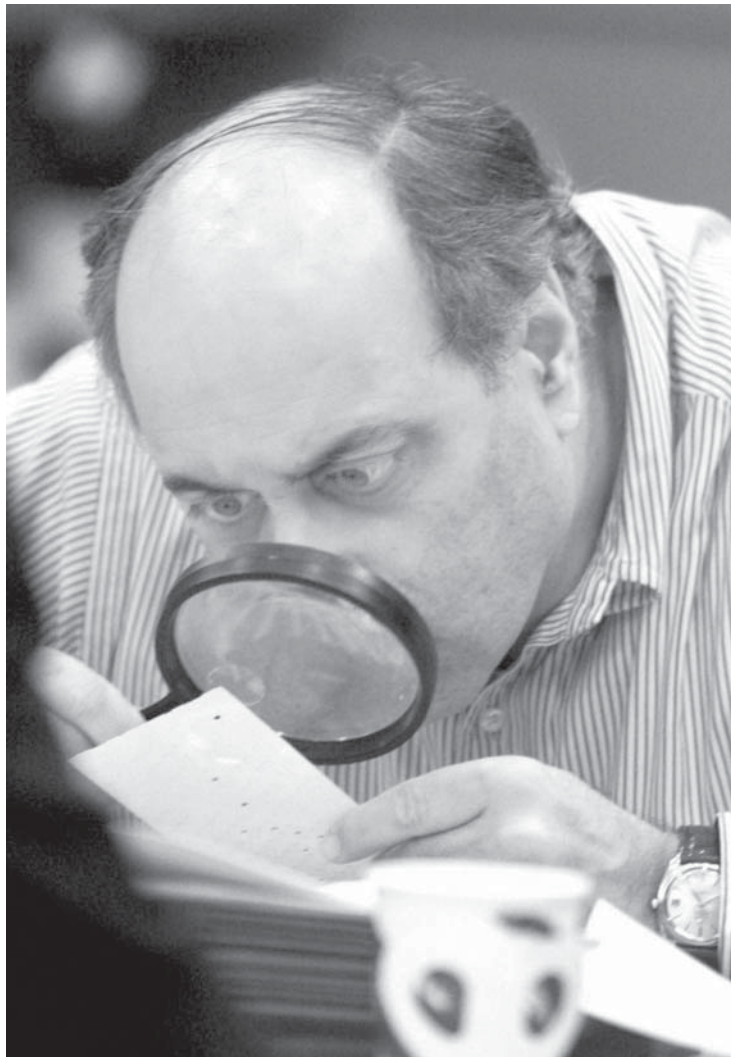
Problem solved? Well, not exactly.

Touchscreen Voting

It turns out the touchscreen voting systems that are replacing punch cards may also be prone to error or tampering. And unlike the punch card, which could be physically looked at to see if the voter's intent can be divined, there's nothing to look at in many of the touchscreen systems. Sure, state laws may call for recounts in close elections, but when the voters' preference is recorded as an electric pulse on a silicon chip, what is it exactly that you recount? The best you can do is simply rerun the software; unless the machine's hardware is flawed, you'll get the same answer.

The problem is not merely theoretical. Already in Florida (South Florida, no less) the downside of touchscreen voting has been given concrete expression. On January 6th of this year, voters went to the polls in northwest Broward County to fill a vacant seat in the state legislature. There were seven candidates in the race. Touchscreen machines manufactured by Election Systems & Software (ES&S) were used, and the winner won by 12 votes.

Unfortunately, the results showed that 134 voters who went to the polls didn't actually record a vote in the election. With so close a result, the



An official examining one of the ballots questioned by the canvassing board in Broward County, Florida, during the contested 2000 presidential election. *Photo by Walter Michot/The Miami Herald.*

second-place candidate called for a recount of the ballots—something that Florida election law also required. The candidates, election officials, party representatives, and reporters gathered a few days later in the warehouse of the elections supervisor to review the ballots. As reporter Erika Bolstad noted in *The Miami Herald*, there was an eerie sense of *déjà vu*.

Here was what was different: There were few actual ballots to look at—a handful of absentee ballots. Since most of the voting had occurred electronically, the best election officials could do was simply run the counting program again. It came up with the same result.

And the ballots of the 134 voters

who recorded no vote at all? Florida law requires that such ballots, known as “undervotes,” be reviewed individually. That requirement was the result of the Election 2000 controversy in which Democrats demanded that the ballots be looked at to see whether some of them might have been obvious attempts to vote for Al Gore, but simply hadn't been counted by the machines. Republicans opposed that effort, saying most of those ballots were probably cast by people who just didn't want to vote in the presidential elections. The battle was waged in courts for days and ultimately was the issue that the U.S. Supreme Court seized on to stop the Florida recount, citing the lack of statewide standards for judging the validity of a partially punched ballot.

To its credit, the Republican-dominated Florida legislature realized that it was unfair to voters not to examine a ballot before concluding that it shouldn't count and so after Election 2000 it made mandatory the physical inspection of any “undervote” ballot. But when it came time to carry out the legislative mandate in the Broward County State House race, there was nothing to examine. The results stood.

So why weren't the voting intentions of 134 citizens recorded? There are two theories. The first, laughably put forward by ES&S officials in an election in which there was no other issue on the ballot, was that those voters simply weren't interested in casting a ballot in that race. Later, they suggested a different reason: The voters had failed to press the red “vote” button, per instructions, after reviewing their choices, and election officials at the polls, who are instructed to press the button before clearing the machine

for the next voter, failed to do so. So as in Election 2000, the failure of a vote to be recorded was laid to voter error or, possibly, to election staff error.

Not surprisingly, machine error is not suggested, either by ES&S, which would have no interest in suggesting its system might fail occasionally, or by elections officials, who had just spent

safeguards in the software to make sure that hackers, or people with more malevolent motives, could not tamper with the results.

Diebold immediately countered that the software the researchers had used to conduct their tests was first generation and that Diebold had fixed the problems. But in late January, a group

... I always will wonder if there was something I as a journalist could have done that would have changed the way ballots were counted in the 2000 election.

\$17 million to buy the machines. Yet as we all know, computers sometimes don't do exactly what we ask them to do, and if there was one thing I came away with from the Herald's review of presidential ballots in Florida in 2000 it was this: Voters don't go to the polls, in a presidential race or any other, with the intention of not voting. While many of the punch card ballots bore no signs of a presidential preference, I am convinced that was the result of machines that hadn't been properly maintained.

There's a push now in Florida, and in many other states, as well as in Congress, to require that touchscreen voting machines provide a paper printout stating the preferences of a voter. The printout would become the ultimate check of the voter's preferences. Nevada and California require such printouts now. Other states should.

There is another issue about touchscreen voting machines that is more difficult to resolve, however, and the debate over it is an important one for journalists to follow. Just how secure are the machines themselves from tampering?

Much of the attention on this issue has involved machines manufactured by Diebold, Inc. of North Canton, Ohio. Maryland and Georgia have chosen Diebold machines as their balloting system statewide, and other states are using them in some jurisdictions. Last July, university security experts accused Diebold of not having enough security

of security experts hired by the Maryland legislature issued a report that found that Diebold software still didn't do enough to prevent outsiders from tampering with the machines. They said machines could be reprogrammed fairly easily to make a vote for one candidate count for another.

The researchers suggested some temporary fixes that would increase the machines' security in time for Maryland's March primary and the November general election—something Diebold saw as an endorsement of its system. Diebold noted that if there was no tampering the tests showed the machines accurately tabulated votes. Hurrah.

Reporting on Voting

But the fact that we are about to head into a new election, with the likelihood of another close presidential race, with balloting systems that either are known to be flawed (punch cards in 22 states) or are largely untested and likely to be flawed (touchscreens) is an unnerving prospect, at best.

Is there anything that can be done now? Probably not. The hopeful sign is that the balloting in the few primaries held as I write this have had few problems. Dan Seligson, the editor of electionline.org, the Web site of the Election Reform Information Project, says he's gotten few reports of serious difficulty. Missouri's voting has at this

writing been the biggest test so far and that went smoothly, though, as Seligson noted, it also wasn't close.

And there's another hopeful sign. News media interest in the actual process of balloting seems to be high. Seligson says reporters are talking to him on a regular basis about balloting issues. "There seems to be a much greater awareness" of the potential for problems. "They are hungry for information."

Let's hope so. Voters who are informed by an aggressive and interested news media will be forewarned about possible problems and make certain they don't occur. Thinking back on that call I got about the flurry of paper in the Miami-Dade County ballot counting room, I always will wonder if there was something I as a journalist could have done that would have changed the way ballots were counted in the 2000 election. Maybe not.

But with so much on the line, every one of us should make certain that the basic right to vote, and to have our votes counted, is not thwarted because of simple errors that could have been corrected. That means paying attention not just to whom people are voting for, but also the kinds of machines they are voting on, the procedures by which those votes are counted, and the safeguards in place to make sure the results of close contests can be verified.

To do otherwise would, in fact, be crazy. ■

Mark Seibel, a 1992 Nieman Fellow, directed The Miami Herald's review of disputed Florida ballots after the 2000 presidential election. He is managing editor/international in Knight Ridder's Washington bureau.

✉ mseibel@krwashington.com

The Allure of the Web

A rookie political reporter retreats from his early reliance on political Web sites and blogs.

By Adam Reilly

For me, the entry into covering the presidential primaries was abrupt, and the learning curve was a steep one. While some of the candidates were still declaring their intent to run, I was working as a municipal reporter at a small Boston-area daily newspaper. But during the late summer, I switched jobs and now report on politics—local, state and national—at the Boston Phoenix, an alternative weekly with a reputation for strong political content.

With New Hampshire so close to us and the Democratic National Convention in Boston, the primary races have become a major focus of my reporting. To help me make the transition from covering zoning disputes and school board meetings to presidential politics, I turned to the vast array of Web resources—but lately I've become increasingly ambivalent about my reliance on them.

A Web Obsession Develops

Actually, my embrace of these Web resources of political reporting began a bit earlier. In fact, these sites helped me to get my job. While I had been reasonably informed by what I'd heard and read in the traditional print and broadcast media, I wasn't a compulsive consumer of political news. But during the interview process, whenever I had a spare moment, I'd head to the Internet to delve deeper into the national political scene and generate story ideas. Before long, sites like Salon and Slate assumed a prominent place in my daily news-consumption routine.

Shortly after I got to the Phoenix, the balance between traditional and Web-based media shifted decisively. A politically savvy friend in Washington, D.C. sent me a list of must-read politi-

cal Web sites. I put aside some slight moral pangs and started to use my friend's password to read the subscription-only Web publication, The Hotline, the National Journal's mid-morning omnibus of daily political news. Worried I might miss something important, I made sure to read the Journal's shorter morning and afternoon Web briefings. I also became a compulsive reader of ABC News's The Note, another Internet catchall for things political. Between reading that site's commentary and using its many links to access stories by writers at newspapers throughout the country, The Note, alone, often took up huge chunks of my time each morning.

My growing obsession didn't stop there. Each day, it seemed, I learned of another must-read Weblog, a place I could go and find new information along with sharply opinionated analysis. These blogs were hard to keep track of, but they all seemed important, so I made a point of visiting sites like the Daily Kos, Talking Points Memo, and Andrew Sullivan.com whenever possible. Online sites of influential magazines like The New Republic, The Washington Monthly, The Weekly Standard, and National Review were also regular destinations: First I targeted their free content, then schmoozed my way into passwords that allowed me to access subscriber-only material. Reading the magazines at the library would probably have been easier, but then I might have missed a vital bit of Web-only content that I felt I couldn't afford to not read.

As I look back, this campaign of mine to catalog and visit every worthwhile political Web site—a campaign that was bound to fail—served a valuable purpose. It tossed me headlong into an unfamiliar world where I be-

came saturated with massive amounts of information and forced to master a new vocabulary. Ten years ago, such an immersion would have left me surrounded by stacks of newspapers, with a sore finger from clicking across the spectrum of TV news shows and political roundtables and with a radio dial worn down by my effort to hear more coverage. While those news sources are still available, heading to the Internet made this journey one I could accomplish at my desk and on my computer. And I was able to achieve my goal of learning as much as I could as fast as I could more quickly.

That's the good news.

The Obsession Becomes a Liability

The bad news is that at some point—and I don't know exactly when—my gung ho approach became a liability. Put simply, the bevy of Internet-only news sites and magazine Web sites and blogs, which once seemed so enticing, started to feel oppressive. For one thing, there was never enough time. Whenever I thought I'd managed to assemble a comprehensive list of must-read Internet sites, I found a new one to explore. And there was always one more blog or article to read as links at one site herded me to another with the lure of one more Web exclusive that I felt I needed to check out. Soon, what I'd envisioned as background reading to help me do my job more effectively was eating into valuable reporting time.

As the number of Web sites I visited daily increased, I also found I was processing their content less and less effectively. I've always preferred reading hard copies of articles, because I feel that I engage the material more fully than if I'm staring at it on a computer

screen. Now my ability to absorb what I was reading was decreasing exponentially; often, I'd finish reading an article or blog and struggle unsuccessfully to remember what the point of the piece had been. The various elements of my Web regimen were converging into the verbal equivalent of white noise: Certain vague impressions stayed with me, but few concrete details were being retained.

Sites like The Note presented a particularly difficult challenge. Though I still read The Note religiously, find it entertaining and informative and plan to keep reading it, I sometimes wish I didn't know it existed. Quick—imagine any primary election story you might want to write. Odds are that The Note A) has at some point during the past week synopsised several stories on this topic and identified their shared conclusions and unique arguments, or B) will provide such a comprehensive synopsis within the next few days.

This can create problems on a few levels. On one hand, there seems an implicit pressure to move in the same direction. If the big names in political journalism are writing this story, who am I—a newcomer to this stuff—to ignore this collective wisdom? Of course, if I decide to head in this direc-

tion, The Note allows me easy access to all of their stories without getting up from my desk. For me not to read each one of them seems negligent. But paradoxically, an opposite pressure can be created. If I decide—on my own—to write a story about Wesley Clark's comeback, for example, then learn 11 political reporters chose to write about this on the same day in December, as a novice it's tempting to throw up my hands in despair and scramble for something else.

It's true that I write for a weekly, and as a reporter for this paper I have the freedom to write long and inject my voice into articles. But it's easy to lose sight of these advantages and fret instead about the seeming impossibility of coming up with a piece that covers the same essential ground as these hypothetical 11 articles but also moves beyond them in a substantive way.

After six months as a political reporter, and with the presidential primaries entering their stretch drive, my Web experiences have led me to identify two goals. First, I need to become a much more discriminating consumer of Web-based political news. After my protracted binge session, I came to realize there's enough overlap on these sites and blogs that I ought to be more

selective. This selectivity might mean that I miss an argument or fact on a given day. But it's fair to say that when I do miss things one day, I will almost certainly encounter them a day or two later. Second, I'm taking the time I devoted to this quest for encyclopedic knowledge of the Internet's political buzz and using it, whenever possible, to watch candidates in action, to gab with supporters and undecided voters, and kibitz with as many political consultants and analysts and campaign workers as I can.

Of the primary election stories I've written so far, my best ones offer readers a close-up description of how a candidate interacts with people. As I look back, I wish I'd gone to a few more rallies and candidate house parties in New Hampshire, even if I wasn't going to use what I saw there for a story. And I wish I'd spent fewer hours staring at the screen. Fortunately, though, the political season is still young. ■

Adam Reilly began his journalism career as an editorial assistant at Nieman Reports. He is now a political reporter for the Boston Phoenix.

✉ reillyaf@yahoo.com

Network Web Sites Influence Political Reporting

By compiling coverage and adding original news and analysis, the networks acquire a new niche audience—including political journalists.

By Elizabeth Wilner

This year will be remembered as the time when the Internet arrived as a major force in presidential politics. And it won't be just because of Howard Dean's pathbreaking, online fundraising. The Web has also changed the way the media cover the campaign. Part of this change is occurring at newspapers, where reporters are using the Web to break news faster and display coverage

that print editions would otherwise leave on the cutting-room floor. But a more intriguing development is underway at major television networks, which by using the Internet have found a new way to influence the campaign's media dialogue and agenda.

It happens at online publications like First Read, which I coauthor for NBC News. At ABC News, it's The Note. CBS News and CNN have their versions

as well, and many Webloggers do this, too. Each is designed to synthesize major campaign developments and try to signal—some would say, direct—the next turn in the story. Distributed by e-mail and displayed on network Web sites, these daily messages reach tens of thousands of readers, including political reporters, opinion leaders, strategists for the candidates, and political junkies.

This new niche audience for the networks—a boutique corner of a business usually oriented to audiences of millions—is a relatively new entity. It began four years ago at my former employer, the ABC News political unit, and was intended to be used solely as an internal news planning document. To create this, my colleagues and I awoke at a painful predawn hour and forced ourselves to think hard about politics while showering, shaving and brushing our teeth. When we reached our offices, we'd comb through wire service reports and campaign schedules and e-mails we'd received overnight. We'd race through newspapers online looking for underlying themes and pieces of news within the news, then we'd check hard copies of papers for story placement and graphics not found online. While doing this, we'd track key interviews on the morning shows. Adding into the mix our own reporting, we'd distill the most keen insights we could muster for the army of people involved in preparing our network's newscasts.

At first, we distributed *The Note* throughout ABC News. Then it was sent by e-mail to favored sources outside the network, in addition to those at the network. Then ABCNews.com asked us to take *The Note* public on its site.

The Note's expanding audience, and the insider buzz it generated, soon spawned similar efforts at ABC's competitors, including my next and current employer, NBC News. Each of these Web publications differs in tone, format, length and audience. *The Note*, for example, plays up the inside-baseball details about the campaign, unwrapping its leads in a smart if not straightforward way. It is now written mostly for an audience outside of ABC News. CNN's *The Morning Grind* reports one or two political threads about what to expect during the day, often breaking minor news in the process and offering links to key news clips. My Web publication, NBC News's *First Read*, is written with its internal NBC audience in mind, laying out three to five stories and themes in politics on any given day. It assumes a politically

savvy readership but leaves out the inside-ball references that are unlikely to make it into the newscasts that day.

The Web Publications' Impact

What the daily political Web publications have in common is an element of original reporting and analysis. They've become outlets for the small—and once in awhile, big—pieces of political news and analysis that we report but don't find time to broadcast. *First Read* also incorporates the reporting of MSNBC's campaign embeds—young producers hired as freelancers or from within the network—who are constantly on the trail with each of the presidential candidates. Equipped with digital cameras, these embeds serve as the network's around-the-clock eyes and ears. (Not only is their reporting used in *First Read* and their footage on MSNBC, but the embeds and their video also occasionally are featured on NBC *Nightly News*.) By using the embeds' and other sources' information to shape our Web publications, we add layers of reporting rather than just recycling what has already been reported. The online newsletter *The Hotline*, which is distributed by National Journal, also in recent years has been folding original reporting and analysis into its compilation.

Because we forage far and wide for political news, *First Read* gives prominence to local and alternative media reporting that the national press might otherwise ignore and adds an outside-the-Beltway context to ongoing stories. This is a benefit a site like ours offers. But along with this ability comes a concern—expressed by some media observers—that by packaging political reporting, these publications reinforce the insularity and groupthink of the press pack. The opposite argument also can be made—that by knitting together various observations and pieces of news, we lay out a broader, cohesive picture that extends from within Washington to outside of it.

What is clear to us are the ways in which campaigns change their routines in response to these Web publications.

Not long after *The Note's* online debut at ABC News, advance texts for speeches and other bits of news and spin started arriving by e-mail overnight. Some press secretaries made us part of a new regular morning rotation. With a deadline of roughly 9 a.m., we find our cell (or office) phones ringing at 8:00, 7:00, even 6:30 a.m., as campaigns work to get us information and offer their responses to stories in the morning papers before we send out our message summarizing them.

Our network Web publications are now an appendix to the morning news cycle. We hear from campaigns about how we spooled out this angle or that, as well as about our original reporting. And those reporters whose efforts we include also get back to us about how we worked their material into the ongoing picture.

This new role we have assumed at the network is why executives, even in an era of squeezed budgets and diminished numbers of employees, allow news division staffers like me to dedicate eight, 10, even 12 hours each day to these publications. What they see is that this investment of time yields original content, and that adds cachet to the Web site. For those of us doing this work, it's a remarkable way to connect with valuable news sources. For political journalists, who loom large in our readership, the Web publications provide a lightning-quick, high-value target for news and spin that technology makes possible. ■

Elizabeth Wilner is political director of NBC News and a coauthor of First Read, the political Web publication that appears weekday mornings at www.firstread.MSNBC.com.

✉ Elizabeth.Wilner@nbc.com

When Old Media Confronted Howard Dean

‘Dean scares the institutional media out of their wits . . . because of what he and Internet democracy say about them.’

By Chris Lydon

Here’s what I’m learning: For those of us who like the sound of “Internet democracy,” who yearn for political and cultural renewal and “transformation,” the entrenched obstacle is not the old politics—it’s the old media. And the 2004 campaign has been about the power of that media all along.

If our politics has been about only one thing since September 11th, it’s been about the fight to rescue a Republic (“of the *people*, for the *people*, by the *people*”) from the temptations of Empire (of the foreign oil, for the corporate class, by the military). But if our politics is about more than one thing, then its next most important fight is about the voices in this democracy. Who gets to speak? Who gets to exercise more than a vote? Who is empowered to join the conversation that defines the problem and makes a priority list of responses? Who gets to feel the rush of public engagement?

The Internet invites a vast expansion of that expressive franchise. For the Internet-minded, the core issue in 2004 lies outside party lines or the standard list of left-right choices. As blogger Matt Stoller has written, “We are witnessing a nonpartisan war between those reactionaries who reject the widening spatial boundaries of politics and those visionaries who embrace them.” Not the least of the Internet’s charm is that it reminds us subliminally of a beloved myth—the open American frontier. It reconnects us with both the free speech and community of town meetings. It fires up again the self-reliant Emersonian dream of a liberated nation of vocal nonconformists. “The Internet, like the frontier, is about creation, growth and open spaces,” Stoller observes. For all those reasons, it is scaring some people and

some interests half to death.

The Howard Dean campaign (much more than Dean himself) has come to stand for the possibility of an Internet democracy. From the beginning there was no separating the “political” and “media” tracks of the Dean campaign’s offensive. Didn’t he say early on that he was running for President because the alternative was to spend the rest of his life yelling at the TV set? Dean began his campaign with a bold exercise in definition—a job of critical journalism that big news organizations don’t perform these days. His defining thrust was against the war in Iraq, in which even before it began the traditional media were embedded. He sounded an antiwar alarm that the institutional media had muffled. Millions of people knew intuitively that his warning was wise; millions more know it now. In large dimensions and small (like his chippy defiance of “Meet the Press” moderator, Tim Russert), Dean’s campaign was a critique of the somnolent self-satisfaction that runs through our housecat press. And lots of people loved him for it.

My two-track verdict on the Dean campaign (through New Hampshire) is this. The politics of it is powerful—in a real sense triumphant. But its gamble on flying under the radar screen has proved dangerous, maybe terminal. A lot of wise heads in the political machine surrendered to Dean before Christmas, starting with the Al Gore endorsement, but the ugly old media machine rose up in January and very nearly destroyed him.

What happened to Dean in Iowa and New Hampshire was not as much about politics as it was about an assault by commercial media on the very idea of a self-willed, self-defining citizenry. Dean scares the institutional media out

of their wits—not because of who he is or what he might do as President, but because of what he and Internet democracy say about them. And because Dean is their worst nightmare, they tried to crush him like a bug.

In September 2002, right about the time Dean was deciding to run, the nonpareil media critic Jon Katz wrote prophetically on the New York University Web page: “The flight of the young has become central for our understanding of what journalism is or needs to be. The young drive our new information culture. They invented and understand new forms of media—especially the Net and the Web. . . . They understand, too, the extraordinary power and meaning of interactivity and how it is redefining narrative and storytelling. . . . But journalism doesn’t get it, and has resisted the idea fiercely. Newspapers, newsmagazines and TV networks haven’t radically changed form or content in half a century, despite their aging audiences and growing competition from new media sources. They are allergic to interactivity. Increasingly, it appears they are incapable of it.”

Katz forecast it well. The Dean campaign is everything that contemporary journalism is not. Almost every touch from “big media” has been to lessen the Dean cause, to miss the point, or to find some personal excuse not to notice the Dean movement. Late in the fall, Samantha Shapiro’s cover story about the Dean campaign in *The New York Times Magazine* was, oddly enough, a high and a low. She captured well the brainy idealism that had drawn young computer geeks from all over the country to Dean’s headquarters in Burlington, Vermont, but she and the *Times*’s photographer left the strong impression that these were strange barefoot nerds who had concluded that

The Blogging of the President: 2004

... notes on the transformation

 <p>Chris Lydon Audio Interviews...</p> <p>NOW HEAR THIS:</p> <p>The Blogging of the President: 2004, a live radio special. Sunday, Jan 25 9-11pm EST</p> <p>Zephyr Teachout The soul of a new machine.</p> <p>The Talk of Iowa: Hope on the Wind We came to Iowa for home truths of the heartland and got a stiff surprising dose this morning....</p> <p>Bahh, Humbug Gore Vidal gives a charmingly vindictive and pessimistic rendition of our transformation into Empire.</p> <p>PRESstink BY JAY ROSEN</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Feb 11 , 12:49 PM</p> <p>A Clark Post Mortem by David Billings</p> <hr/> <p>In mid-December, I wrote that Retired General Wesley Clark was back on the rise and was in a strong position to win the nomination. I also decided to thumb my nose at loyal <i>BOP News</i> readers and say that the internet and blogs was not key to the nomination.</p> <p>Now that he has dropped out of the race, it is time for me to admit where I was wrong and reassess my entire argument, so here goes.</p> <p><i>More</i> by David Billings Feb 11 , 12:49 PM Comments (2) , Trackback (0)</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">Feb 11 , 5:44 AM</p> <p>Sydney's Seven Deadly Sins by Stirling Newberry</p> <hr/> <p>In the race of 2004, Joe Lieberman, John Kerry, Wesley Clark, Howard Dean, and George W. Bush Jr. share a distinction - front runners who stumbled. Kerry proved that one can, if not get a second act, at least get a second scene, and George W. Bush Jr. may well come back now that he has clearly set foot on the campaign trail. By Joe, had no place to go, and Howard Dean soldiers on because of the cause - now Clark has gone home.</p> <p>Lessons? Many of them. But one problem with connecting the public with politics is that people matter. And the only way to find out which people did</p>	<p>Chris Lydon Sphere About Us Blog Audio Blogradio BOPnews BOPnotes ChristopherLydon.org Lydon Interviews... Whole Wide World</p> <p>Transformation Blogs Buzzmachine Change for America Daniel Drezner Jay Rosen Napsterization.org Open Source Politics Perry Barlow Scripting News</p> <p>Communities Billmon Blog for America Blogs for Bush Clark Communities Daily Kos Democratic Underground Edwards Campaign Blog Free Republic From The Roots Kerry Blog Left Coaster Tacitus</p> <p>The New AP Atrios</p>
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A page from Chris Lydon's Web site.

a political campaign was a way to get laid.

In January, *Time* asked on its cover, "Who is the Real Howard Dean?" One week later *Newsweek*, on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, put "Doubts About Dean" on its cover. In Iowa, NBC Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw asserted that he hadn't been able to discover any Internet effect on voting. And on the night of the caucuses, Chicago Sun-Times columnist Bob Novak averred on CNN that there never was any such thing as a Dean movement. These might well be the famous last words from the dinosaurs.

Then came the infamous scream on caucus night in Des Moines. Here's a test of news judgment: If you'd been in the frenzied hall with the Deaniacs that night and heard the candidate's finale, would you have called home to report it? I saw a performance quite like it the night before in Iowa City and thought nothing of it. Yet there it was, on a

ridiculous clip of party tape—a lot less embarrassing than, say, President George H.W. Bush upchucking in Japan—but in a few thousand repetitions a new character was launched—the "red-faced ranter," accompanied now by somber doubts that he could be "presidential."

The televised coverage of the New Hampshire primary returns was appalling. The big three networks stuck with prime-time entertainment, leaving viewers stuck with cable pundits—hyperactive, talking all about themselves and not about us or the country and using a stream of clichés. No end of trite phrases were turned to trivialize Dean and his effort. Though he'd had never been adequately credited with courage or forethought in crystallizing the dangers or doubts around Iraq, on the occasion of his second-place finish in the primary, he was being demeaned as a mere antiwar candidate, a latter day George McGovern. He was dissed

continually as a caricature of "anger," no matter that a large plurality of New Hampshire Democratic voters told the exit pollsters that they were angry, too. The *Weekly Standard's* editor William Kristol made the only memorable point: that as long as Iraq remains a bleeding wound, John Kerry's vote on the war leaves him wide open to Dean's critique.

Days before the New Hampshire primary, author and syndicated columnist Richard Reeves made the shrewd observation on our "The Blogging of the President: 2004" broadcast that something fundamental had changed since John F. Kennedy and television exalted each other in 1960. Since then TV networks have discovered that American audiences are more interested in football than in politics. Sure enough, as the Democratic candidates headed out of New Hampshire, the media were conditioning us to understand that everything that happens in the Super Bowl is more important than almost anything that is at stake in the presidential campaign.

It's a dismal moment in American media—just the right time to be developing a real conversation on the Web. The revolution will not be televised, but maybe it will be blogged. ■

Chris Lydon's observations on the 2004 presidential campaign are found at www.christopherlydon.org, including "The Blogging of the President: 2004." From the Washington bureau of The New York Times in the 1970's, Lydon covered the presidential campaigns of George McGovern, Hubert Humphrey, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, among others. This is a revised version of an article that can be found at www.bopnews.com/archives/000231.html#000231 and includes the author's views on the political dimensions of the Democratic primary race.

✉ chris@christopherlydon.org

Going Online, Going Downtown

In two interview situations, a political writer observes differences in reporting.

By Wayne Woodlief

Just when I thought I might be a troglodyte, fully convinced that reportorial shoe leather and old-fashioned eyeball-to-eyeball interviews were still the truest way to report on a political campaign, I got the opportunity to conduct my first online, InstantMessage interview. Aha! Now I had the chance to reassess my long-held belief and explore this new reporting tool called the Internet.

The setting was intriguing enough in the boiler room of Democratic presidential hopeful Howard Dean's New Hampshire primary headquarters in Manchester on a freezing day in early January. No need to just interview outside in the cold when a computer hook-up could transport me anywhere I wanted to go to interview Dean supporters. Everywhere around me people were typing at computer screens displaying a colorful array of pages. As the date of the first primary neared, dozens of workers were scouring voter lists and setting up targeted appeals to Dean supporters on the scores of "unofficial" Web sites backing his campaign: Doctors for Dean, Deadheads for Dean, Dykes for Dean, Geeks for Dean. On and on and on. Even the graffiti in the men's room wasn't graffiti at all, but spoofs from Internet columns—Salon's Where's my Dean Meetup man?—and cartoons of chatroom techies from the Doonesbury strips about the most Internet-driven candidate of all—"People-Powered Howard."

Being curious to learn more about how and why these so-called "Deanie Babies" got hooked on their champion, I asked for help in setting up an

online interview. And that's how I talked to "Outlandish Josh" from San Francisco with whom I exchanged messages for 30 minutes. After a short time online with him, Josh, whose full name is Josh Koenig, didn't seem so outlandish after all. He is 24 years old, a graduate of New York University with a bachelor of fine arts degree in theater, and he's active in the music promotion business.

And it was the role the Internet played in getting him hooked on Dean that impressed me. Josh typed for me the story of how he heard of Dean in the fall of 2002. Turns out that he

Dean gospel on the Internet.

As Josh was sending his messages to me, I felt his excitement because of how intensely his words were written, even though his voice was silent. "I was immediately excited because he [Dean] was saying everything I had been saying, down to using some of the same words and phrases, but I'd never heard anyone in a position of any authority saying them before," Josh typed to me, in reply to one of my questions.

This exchange left me with a sense of the Internet's power as a tool for both campaigning and for covering campaigns. Josh helped me understand

what it could be like to become enthralled by a candidate while you are at home watching him on your computer. And it gave me an inkling, for the first time, of what a fine tool the Internet can be for journalists in capturing some of the color of a campaign.

I'm not fully converted to online interviewing, nor do I expect ever to be, but working on it in New Hampshire was fast, and its accuracy is guaranteed with a verbatim printout in my hand about a minute after we said goodbye. What an online interview isn't, however, is as spontaneous and warm as face-to-face encounters. I have little doubt that spotting voter trends works much better by getting away from a computer and talking with people in diners or malls or at their doorsteps. Long ago The Washington Post's David Broder started to knock on doors and really talk with voters, and I usually know I'm on the right track when I bump into Ron Brownstein of the Los Angeles Times interviewing voters in the Mall of New Hampshire in Bedford.

 <p>Outlandish Josh would like to remind you to Reclaim the Dignity of Your Own Experience.</p>	<p>Monday, Feb 9 - 2004</p> <p>Ghastly Mess [General] - (permanent)</p> <p>This is my new favorite read: The Ghastly Mess LiveJournal. I've been hoping Nick would publish himself, and apparently he's been at it for a while. He's blending the tools of the early 21st century with the style of the late 1990s, check it out.</p> <p>Comments (2) TrackBack (0)</p> <p>Digital Democracy Teach In [General] - (permanent)</p> <p>Pushing my memes in San Diego. Some of them are catching. It's exciting. A lot of good stuff.</p> <p>Comments (0) TrackBack (0)</p>	<p>[XML RSS Feed]</p> <p>NFA - Music and Other Social Causes</p> <p>Cause 181 I went to my local caucus training last week (not necessary, but def. fun & helpful) and was pretty ...</p> <p>Clark Drops Out: 3 Candidates Remaining in Democratic Primaries General Wesley Clark dropped out of the race for the Democratic presidential nomination after losing ...</p> <p>Dept. of Homeland Security Funds Not Disbursed; Iron Ridge Prepares To Hold Ba... Iron Ridge reports that 8-9 billion dollars earmarked for Homeland Security, some as far back as 2002...</p> <p>Tennessee, Tennessee, Ain't No Place I'd Rather Be Except perhaps Virginia, the other state that is holding its Democratic Primary today.</p> <p>Now that y'a...</p> <p>It's the Economy, Stupid Abanell runs two interesting summary pieces. The first explores the continued decline of oil flu.</p> <p>Joe Trippi Talks About</p>
 <p>Outlandish Josh Works He Ass Off For Music For America</p>  <p>Outlandish Josh Endorses Howard Dean</p>	<p>Friday, Feb 6 - 2004</p> <p>Going Good [General] - (permanent)</p> <p>Word. Seattle is nice; full of classy brick buildings and pretty women. I cracked the front page of the Daily Kos with the graph I reproduced for an upcoming NFA issue card. Our ad went up on kiss.net. One more concert tonight - Dell - and then I've got Saturday to sleep and then down to San Diego for the Digital Democracy Teach-In. Should be fun. Franz and I are going to tag team it to make a splash.</p> <p>This will be my second weekend working in a row, and the rest of February is only going to be more intense it seems. I probably miss you, so tell me how you're doing.</p> <p>Comments (1) TrackBack (0)</p>	
<p>Outlandish: The blog About: Who is this guy? Life: The adventure of a lifetime Ask: My shush People: Make it worthwhile Politics: The art of controlling your environment Work: Necessity, purpose, honor Contact: Only connect</p>	<p>Wednesday, Feb 4 - 2004</p> <p>Big Time [General] - (permanent)</p> <p>On Friday NFA is having an event in Seattle with Del the Funkies Homosapien aka Debruvil30. I'm going to do the on-stage song and dance for the organization. Oh man. Pumped. Gotta prep.</p> <p>Comments (2) TrackBack (0)</p> <p>The Burning Man Tapes [General] - (permanent)</p>	

OutlandishJosh.com is the Web site of the Dean supporter whom Wayne Woodlief interviewed online.

found out about Dean when he began protesting the looming war in Iraq. "I'd never been a protester before but I couldn't stand just watching, and people mentioned that Dean had opposed the war," Josh told me. But it wasn't until Josh saw Dean speak—watching him online on C-SPAN.org three weeks after he'd delivered a rousing, antiwar speech at the California Democratic Convention—that Josh turned into an ardent spreader of the

In the hours I spent at the coffee bar at Harvey's Bakery in Dover, New Hampshire, on the same day Josh and I talked online, enough customers told me about their increasing admiration for Wesley Clark, a four-star general who is preaching peace, that I didn't need the political polls published two days later to convince me that he was passing Senator John Kerry in New Hampshire.

Just when I was about to close my notebook, Darrell Howard, a businesswoman visiting from Arizona, told me she is a registered Republican, "but I'd vote for Hillary Clinton. She's smart

and tough, and she'd get things done." Maurice Richard of Dover, New Hampshire, who had been lauding Clark, perked up when he heard Howard say this. "I'd vote for her, too. Anybody who'd put up with Bill this long deserves a chance to run the country." He seemed to not be entirely speaking in jest. Waitress Bobbi Best chimed in, "She [Hillary] has the strength and the ability."

It was like a sudden verbal brushfire, the kind of spontaneous eruption I can't imagine online interviews producing. So I'll take these online exchanges, with their speed and the re-

trieval capacity of the Net, and use them as wonderful adjuncts to our craft. But don't count me among those who are going to put aside the basic tools of our trade—a ballpoint pen, a good notebook, and a willing ear. ■

Wayne Woodlief, a 1966 Nieman Fellow, has been a reporter and chief political columnist with the Boston Herald for 27 years. In 2004 he will pursue independent writing opportunities and write a weekly Herald op-ed column.

✉ wzwoodlief@aol.com

The Internet Beat on the Campaign Trail

'Political journalists are using Web sites to tell stories they didn't have room to tell in their newspapers.'

By James W. Pindell

After the 2000 presidential election cycle, news organizations and political campaigns learned how to make the Internet play a critical role in their work. From that cycle to this one, no one development has more influenced how campaigns are run and how political journalists work than the Internet.

Strategists for former Vermont Governor Howard Dean's presidential campaign found a new way to use the Internet to perform very old campaign routines: raising money, signing up and facilitating discussions with supporters, and organizing a grass-roots community to contact voters and knock on doors.

Political journalists found an easy way to read lots of newspapers and follow political developments in other states by tapping into Web sites that overflowed each day with stories about the campaign. By doing so, many reporters gained a deeper understanding about the potential of their beats.

And in New Hampshire, PoliticsNH.com—an aggressive, fledgling Internet news organization—

sprang up with little overhead and demonstrated new ways of reporting and documenting the state's presidential primary process—quickly, comprehensively and accurately. In doing so, it offered political junkies, journalists and campaigns a fresh approach to covering elections.

PoliticsNH.com Is Born

In July 2002, I became PoliticsNH.com's first and only full-time reporter. When I arrived to operate the Web site, one person worked on it, and he did so in his spare time. It had an audience of about 500 people per month. During the next 18 months, our staff grew to include five other full-time reporters and, in time, attracted an average of more than 20,000 unique visitors daily—without spending any money on advertising.

PoliticsNH.com's growth and popularity can largely be explained by a series of factors:

- Our target audience—of leading politicians, opinion makers, political

activists, and journalists—is already very connected to the Internet.

- New Hampshire is a small state, and this allows one reporter to easily cover what happens in it.
- The state's political establishment is inclusive, so phone numbers and campaign information are easily shared.
- Besides one dominant TV station, New Hampshire's media are made up of a number of small news outlets with limited resources and a lack of commitment to constantly updating their Web sites.

These realities created the opportunity to fill a breaking political news vacuum. While in Iowa, The Des Moines Register invests the resources to cover politics far beyond what its rivals attempt, in New Hampshire, Manchester's Union Leader is the only paper with a statewide circulation—and it still only reaches 66,000 readers. (The Concord (N.H.) Monitor, known for its political coverage, reaches 22,000, and The Boston Globe has significantly cut its number of New

Hampshire reporters.) In the summer of 2002, with the first whiff of campaigns in the air, I sensed there were a lot of reporting opportunities to be had and an audience—both in New Hampshire and with political junkies everywhere—waiting to be built.

To succeed, we became different. News organizations—with a responsibility to explain issues and track what candidates say for their readers—geared their coverage to what voters needed to know. PoliticsNH.com would have a different responsibility because the site would attract a different group of readers. Those who came to our site would already be in tune with politics, and most likely they'd know whom they'd be voting for or didn't care who would win. Many were working or advising campaigns or were the journalists covering the campaign.

I could almost see my journalism and political science professors cringing when I was quoted in the Concord Monitor as saying, "I don't care about policy" in the context of what I do for the Web site. But our audience already knew what they wanted to know about issues, so I focused our site's reporting on the inside-baseball game of politics. We didn't do candidate profiles, but we did do profiles of the campaign managers. We didn't report any specifics about candidate's health care plans, but we did pass along what we found out when we talked to those who helped to craft these proposals. We never did try to tell the what-this-campaign-means story, but we covered campaign office openings in Nashua.

Reporting Inside the Political Bubble

What happens in politics exists within an informal "bubble" of activists, politicians and opinion makers. I saw my job as a PoliticsNH.com reporter was to move around within that bubble and explain what was happening inside of it to our audience. But I found—as I worked within this bubble—that it got very, very crowded as a lot of political journalists spent a lot of time doing just what I was doing. This surprised me because I expected that most politi-

cal journalists would be working outside of the bubble to bring news about the campaign, candidates and issues to their nonpolitically active audience.

Technology also helped PoliticsNH.com to create this new political beat. In 2000, when I covered my first presidential campaign, choices were more limited for political journalists: stay in the newsroom near to a phone, e-mail and fax and follow news events or go out in the field with a candidate and listen to the same stump speech again and again. But in this campaign, I could take my portable gadgets—my cell phone, BlackBerry wireless e-mail device, and a laptop—and report and administer the PoliticsNH.com Web site from the road and never leave *my* newsroom.

Having this flexibility allowed me to meet the needs of political junkies both outside and inside New Hampshire, a state where politics is its major league sport. It's a place where elections occur often: its House of Representatives has 400 members, and most of the state's elected officials have two-year terms. This means an election is always just around the corner. And because it hosts the state's first-in-the-nation presidential primary, the country's political elite follow state's political happenings closely.

The public appetite for Web-based political news—combined with my willingness (as a single man in my mid-20's) to work around the clock and my passion as a political junkie, as well as my ability to gather sources and news—gave the project its chance to succeed. PoliticsNH.com is a for-profit business, set up with the hope of creating a long-standing framework in which the larger story of New Hampshire politics continues to be told. Already, by illuminating the grass-roots and insider stories of this race, we were able to influence ways in which the primary was covered by other journalists.

In the spring of 2003, when there were few ways to gauge how a campaign was doing, several newspapers quoted how many endorsements each candidate received on a chart we'd made of the 105 most influential people in the state's Democratic presidential

primary. Out-of-state journalists covering their hometown candidate's campaign used PoliticsNH.com to get a feel for how the candidate was doing. National journalists used PoliticsNH.com to get a reading on which campaign was putting together a better ground game.

Certainly, we aren't the only ones trying to use the Web in new and different ways during this election cycle. Political journalists who write for newspapers use their paper's Web sites to tell stories they didn't have room to tell in print. For example, John Wagner, who is covering his home state's U.S. senator and presidential candidate, John Edwards, for The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer, tracks many details of his campaign (that he doesn't file to the paper) on the paper's Web site. [See John Wagner's story on page 18.] St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times reporter Bill Adair kept an online diary on the Times's Web site while he covered Florida Senator Bob Graham's campaign travels. The Des Moines Register gave its caucus campaign reporter, Tom Beaumont, an online column.

One thing seems clear: In the future, political journalists will need to understand better how to use the Internet and how to make it work for them—and their readers—in this era of ever quicker news cycles, limitless amounts of information, and increased competition. In tracking political process and the horserace aspects of coverage—by keeping watchful eyes on money, endorsements, polls and staff changes—the Internet can be an ideal tool. ■

James Pindell is managing editor for PoliticsNH.com in Manchester, New Hampshire. He is a graduate of both Drake University and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

✉ pindell@politicsNH.com

'Primarily New Hampshire'

An upcoming book looks behind the scenes of a presidential primary.

Since February 2003, Meryl Levin and Will Kanteres documented the day-to-day experiences of staffers, who are the backbone of presidential campaigns. Their book "Primarily New Hampshire" and an accompanying exhibition will be released in this summer. The authors note that "Rather than focusing on the candidates themselves, we chose to document in photographs and their own words the experiences of more than 25 young politicians who dedicated a year of their lives to working on the various presidential campaigns in New Hampshire." The following pages feature work from this project.

By Meryl Levin and
Will Kanteres

Every four years dozens of political activists decide to give up a year of their lives to be a part of our democratic process. During this time, they will eat, drink and breathe politics. Their birthdays will pass uncelebrated, and relationships with friends who aren't political (or who

aren't registered to vote in New Hampshire) will be neglected.

These are the characters in the passion play we have chosen to explore. The inspiration that drives these campaign workers varies as much as their individual talents, techniques and personalities. Yet they share similar missions—to communicate their candidate's message, gather support from the state's voters, deliver voters to the polls on Election Day, and ultimately to win the most votes.

The work performed on the campaign is a lot like an iceberg, where the general public only sees 10 percent of what goes on and most of the energy, testing and workload is in the 90 percent that goes unseen. "Primarily New Hampshire" reveals the culture, skills and commitment that develop among young staffers in New Hampshire's political boot camp.

This project exists, in part, out of our concern that the democratic process is gradually becoming more alien and less accessible to the American public. (Only 50 percent of eligible voters participated in the last presidential election.) Our hope is that by shar-

ing these photographs and young people's words Americans will gain a better understanding of the level of commitment this kind of engagement requires. We hope, too, that "Primarily New Hampshire" inspires more people to become involved in the democratic process or, at least, fulfill their fundamental obligation of citizenship—by casting a vote. ■

Meryl Levin is a social documentary photographer whose work has focused mainly on issues of health care and social welfare, housing and education. Her photographic essays, including material from her book, "Anatomy of Anatomy" (2000), have been published worldwide. Will Kanteres, a New Hampshire native, has been active in presidential and local politics for more than 20 years. "Primarily New Hampshire" is made possible in part by support from the New School University. To see more of the photographs in their original color and read additional text, go to www.PrimarilyNewHampshire.com.

✉ info@PrimarilyNewHampshire.com

"Only in New Hampshire can a young activist with just a few years experience be hounded by each and every campaign, receive calls, letters, postcards from the candidate and members of his family, and be lobbied by prominent state politicians from every angle. I quickly became desensitized to all the correspondence. I remember being nonplussed one afternoon upon receiving a call from John Kerry himself, even as I was deciding whether I wanted to take a job on his campaign. I knew things were getting intimate when Mrs. Lieberman said in a message, 'We need you on our team, honey.'" —Christopher Pappas, April 2003, deputy field director, Joe Lieberman campaign



Photograph © Meryl Levin/Primarily New Hampshire. As in the upcoming book, the speaker in the caption is not always the same as the person in the photograph.

“Running an event is like cooking. You have to have a sense in advance of what the ingredients are; what has to be done; how long each step will take, and what this final product is supposed to look like.

“You have to be able to do several things at the same time—keep reporters abreast of what will happen, make sure the visual is laid out right, and make sure the participants are in the right spot. Then you have to be able to monitor everything and make sure nothing is ‘burning’ (too small of a crowd, an embarrassing backdrop, a late-breaking story that one reporter is working on). And like any good cook, you have to taste along the way, adding a bit more here or there, prompting a question and then bringing the event to a close.

“Also like cooking, the hardest part is usually timing. Far too often, it’s (past) time to go, and no one wants to leave. Edwards wants to keep taking questions, the audience wants to keep asking them. The reporters want to grab him by the door and meanwhile another event on the other side of town is supposed to start right about *now*. You do your best to plan the times right in advance, but you end up slightly off in the end, and you struggle to make sure the steak is ready and at the same time the side dish is warm.”

—Colin Van Ostern, May 2003, *New Hampshire state press secretary, John Edwards campaign*



“In my few years working on campaigns, I’ve heard one phrase over and over: The most important things in any political race are people, money and time. And I’ve learned that everything else you want or need to do stems from these three. You can always find more people and money—you can’t find more time. Time—months, days, hours, minutes—and how you utilize it until the voting booths close on Election Day is the most critical aspect of any race. In the life of an individual staffer, that means that time spent not working is potentially hurting the candidate and the campaign. There is always more to do, and there is pressure on all of us.

“Yet this obsession with time makes you realize that time is passing not just inside the campaign world, but outside in the ‘real world’ as well. I find that I feel guilty whatever I choose to do, because I know that I won’t be able to get back the time I’m missing in either world. I try to maintain a balance, knowing that campaigns are always short-term. Losing myself in the campaign is a sacrifice I’ve made in order to be in this business and to be part of the democratic process. I just hope that I can find my way home when all this is over.”

—Emily Silver, July 2003, *New Hampshire state deputy campaign director/chief of staff, Joe Lieberman campaign*



“July 4: Everybody loves a parade! Close to 100 people march with Governor Dean in the Amherst and Merrimack parades. We have the loudest, proudest float. The most signs. The most energy. And Dean is awesome. Senator Graham is a nice guy, and he says a genuine hello to everyone, including the crowd on the Dean truck. Lieberman is nice, too, but he only says hello to nonpolitical floats and folks. Kerry stays with his team for most of the time. But Dean, he’s everywhere. Shaking hands. Waving at everyone. Giving impromptu speeches from the bullhorn. It was awesome (but the sunburn will last a week).”

—Tom Hughes, July 2003, *New Hampshire state field director, Howard Dean campaign*



“In the middle of the afternoon on July 10th, I answered my phone and heard Governor Howard Dean’s voice on the other end of the line. He had called to ask if I had chosen to stay on the campaign after the summer to work as the office manager and statewide volunteer coordinator until the primary. I said yes. It was the first time I had said it out loud to anyone. Up until then I had toyed with the idea of taking time off to continue working, but when others asked me about my decision I usually said, ‘I’m still thinking about it.’ I’d roll my eyes at the thought of dealing with my supportive but concerned family, explaining my nontraditional semester to my friends, and pleading with Hamilton College to allow me to stay on the campaign and still graduate with my classmates.

“On the back wall of the office, tucked in an unseen corner, is a timeline of our campaign. The most important pictures and dates in the lifetime of Governor Dean and the campaign are represented. Since May 19th, a small Polaroid picture of my face has been a part of that colorful, handmade poster. Since then, many pictures and milestones have happened, and I can’t imagine not continuing to participate in the story of this campaign. It feels good to have made a choice about what to do this fall. Watching the excitement of this campaign from my dorm room in Clinton, New York would never have been an option.”

—Rachel Sobelson, July 2003, *operations manager/volunteer coordinator, Howard Dean campaign*



“I think that a certain culture definitely begins to take shape on a campaign. ... The field staffers, average age of about 25, are the privates. They won’t fraternize with Judy or Ken [senior staff]. The field director deputies are like sergeants, they lead two squads of field staffers. I’m like a captain, I oversee the field deputies, but will have increasingly less and less interaction with the field staffers. And Ken is the general, overseeing not only the field staff, but also the other divisions of press and politics, each of which will have their own hierarchy.

“It’s also interesting to watch the interaction of the field staffers. Because they are so young and for the most part from out of state, they have no friends or family in the area except for their coworkers. So they spend nearly all their time with other campaign staff. I am from New Hampshire and go home to my wife every night, something that I’ve always done on campaigns.”

—Nick Clemons, May 2003, New Hampshire state field director, John Kerry campaign



“Sometimes, as I walk the streets of Nashua, I feel as if I, as if we, the politicians, are the only ones out there. All alone, going door-to-door.

“I knew enough to not expect a warm welcome—I’d canvassed for several campaigns in Missouri while I was in college. But something about this election—the presidential, and this state, New Hampshire—led me to believe that maybe, just maybe, folks would be excited. For the most part, the doors I knock on are answered by average citizens, no more or less engaged than my parents or their friends. ‘It’s awfully early,’ many begin. And not because they don’t like my candidate, but because they don’t particularly like politics, the pursuit of power. But when I get into my spiel—Dean balanced the budget 11 years straight in Vermont, health care for virtually all children, 92 percent of adults, etc.—they get interested. Start criticizing Bush, embracing the doctor.

“The early evening is already my favorite time of the day to canvass. I’m three-quarters of the way into my shift. Signed up a supporter or two, converted an ex-Kerry backer, got a couple doors slammed in my face—the whole range of responses. But I invariably get a second wind. Talking to a young voter I persuade to register. Learning about how a single mom without health insurance is getting by. Conversing with a man fixing his car and persuading him to pause for a moment, to learn about the governor.

“As I walk by the apple orchard, the sun sets. A beautiful scene. The sky is a million shades of red, pink, blue. But all is quiet. And I keep walking.” —Yoni Cohen, June 2003, Salem/Derry field staff, Howard Dean campaign



Photographers Try to Avoid Staged Moments

‘Political operatives use increasingly sophisticated techniques to give candidates the most favorable media exposure possible.’

By Luis Rios

These days it is difficult to find anything but flattering photographs of any Democratic presidential candidate in the newspaper. Hugging babies, kissing grandmas, and flashing the proverbial thumbs up make up the daily collection of photographs filed from the campaign trail. But are these images as spontaneous and genuine as they appear to be?

The answer is no. Political operatives use increasingly sophisticated techniques to give candidates the most favorable media exposure possible. And the result is a lessening of the credibility that newspapers can offer readers in accurately portraying who the candidates are and what their campaigns are about. The ubiquitous “photo-op” images make this problem more transparent and troubling.

Ever since President Ronald Reagan’s circle of media advisors set out to transform events into carefully choreographed visual experiences, rarely does any major candidate appear without an advance team having prestaged the location. By the time the candidate arrives with the press photographers, there are strategically placed placards with catchyslogans and either a huge American flag or lots of smaller flags in place, and the effect is amplified by lighting professionals. This preparation makes it nearly impossible to avoid emerging from the event with an image the campaign wants to convey.

In most cases, campaign handlers are there to advise photographers about what the “throw,” or the distance from their shooting positions to the candidate, will be. Handlers have even told photographers before they get to their assigned spot how long of a lens will be necessary from that position. In some cases, certain photographers are granted predetermined, strategic positions away from the pen where other photographers are stationed.

In fairness, candidates do make impromptu stops and visits in the frenzy of the daily campaign. And these spontaneous moments, these candid slices of life, make for better documentary photographs. But at the end of a reporting day, when most newspaper editors need to make decisions about what the paper’s political coverage is

going to look like, these more candid pictures usually don’t win out over the more elaborate, well-crafted photo op from a scheduled campaign stop where a speech was made or a major rally held.

The impact that news photography has on readers is as vital to a newspaper’s mission as are the words its reporters write. When editors make decisions day after day to publish photographs that are conspicuously photo ops, over time they send a message to readers about the kind of images they think worthy of publication. Such a cavalier approach to the photo editing process strikes at the integrity of the newspaper.

The Photo-Op Dilemma

Of course, there will be days when the only photograph relevant to the news story of the day is limited to a photo op. Then the decision isn’t difficult. “If it is the only photo you have, you go with it,” said Joe Elbert, assistant managing editor/photography at The Washington Post. “However, the burden is on us [as editors] to be more discriminating about the photo selection.” Yet as Elbert acknowledged, the constant deadline pressures and daily demands on photo editors to produce relevant, newsworthy images can leave little or no time for meaningful discussions regarding the photographs’ impact on read-



Wesley Clark gestures to supporters during a campaign stop in Pembroke, New Hampshire. The Miami Herald did not publish this photograph: The oversized American flag adorns the back wall, and the only visible face is that of the candidate. The audience is too far away to be in focus. The positioned campaign signs frame Clark nicely. *Photo by Charles Dharapak/ Courtesy of The Associated Press.*

ers. Elbert refuses to publish photographs from staged events; the Post does not have a full-time White House photographer and covers the White House only when heads of state visit Washington. Elbert said that the newspaper mostly relies on the major news services to determine what it will use in its daily campaign photo coverage.

There is one question that at some time most newspapers will have to deal with: How does a photo editor—or more importantly, a newspaper—address the ethical dilemma presented by a “must have” photograph when the editor knows it is nothing more than a “photo op” that puts the candidate in a favorable light?

Executive editor of The Miami Herald, Tom Fiedler, is a veteran of the national political wars dating back to his days of reporting from the campaign bus and also serving as the editor of the newspaper’s editorial page. Covering a presidential candidate “is the hardest assignment a news photographer can get,” said Fiedler. “Sometimes you are stuck with the photograph the campaign wants you to have.” When it is apparent that campaign handlers controlled the situation, an editor must decide whether the overall tone of the photograph or the nuance of the captured moment deliver an accurate message. For such occasions, an editor can have a written policy dictating that the use of such a photograph must be fully discussed before a decision is made. Once a decision is reached, the deliberations should be documented as precedent to help shape a response to similar situations in the future. Concern about the perception of bias toward a candidate should be the overriding criteria in deciding to publish or not publish a particular photograph.



This photograph of Senator John Kerry at a rally in Waverly, Iowa, is staged for the television cameras and photographers. The Miami Herald did not publish this photograph: Kerry’s supporters hold campaign signs, and his campaign bus serves as the backdrop for the candidate and his message.

Photo by Jeff Haynes/Courtesy of AFP.

Covering the President

A first-term President is perpetually running for reelection and therefore is looking for images that convey the qualities of his leadership. On two occasions last year, President Bush got help from reporters and photographers in doing just this. In May, the President showed himself acting as a wartime commander in chief when he landed on the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Pacific Ocean to address the troops heading home after the Iraq War. He approached the aircraft carrier at the controls of an S-3B Viking, though the plane’s pilot landed the plane. He then emerged onto the deck dressed like a “Top Gun” pilot, an image that was transmitted around the world.

The second of these occasions was during the President’s high-secret and later much-publicized Thanksgiving Day event at the Baghdad airport. The image of that day was of a smiling President carrying a large turkey on a platter to hungry but wildly enthusiastic troops. Little did it matter that days later the national media revealed that the turkey dinner the President posed with was, in fact, only there for decoration. Stars and Stripes also reported

that the cheering soldiers were prescreened and some who had shown up for the meal were turned away. [See layout of photos from this event on page 41.]

Photo editors walk a fine line when covering an incumbent during a presidential election year. The photographs they publish should help readers to make the distinction between Bush’s official function as President and his role as the candidate for the Republican Party. These two news events blurred those lines. Even though nearly every newspaper published both of these photographs, many editors were left feeling as

though they were misleading their readers because of the staging of the events.

The Digital Revolution

Nowadays, speed is of the essence on the campaign trail, but it makes for a bumpy ride for photographers when it comes to accurate and responsible coverage. The days of campaigns unfolding at a slower pace are gone, along with the Telex and fax machines once used to transmit stories back to newspapers, as well as the rewrite desks for taking dictation from reporters. New and speedier technologies are imperative for reporters and photographers if they are going to work in the dynamic environment of these modern-day campaigns when candidates are on the road from daybreak into the late hours of the night, and media coverage is their constant companion.

The impact of new technologies on those who use them and those who receive their product is nowhere as evident as it is with photography. The digital revolution in photography, coupled with the increasing use of wireless transmission, makes some aspects of the newsgathering almost seamless. However, for photographers, these



The Miami Herald published the wire photograph of President Bush visiting the U.S. troops for Thanksgiving dinner at a Baghdad airport. Bush kept his visit secret from even his closest advisers. The surprise trip and subsequent photo op were later criticized by the national media. *Photo courtesy of The Miami Herald.*

technological changes mean that their work is more labor-intensive and their time more pressured. To meet early deadlines, photographers rush to shoot, rush to download, and rush to edit, caption and transmit what they've shot for their newspapers or news agencies. Rarely do they have the luxury of time to reflect on the relative importance of the numerous events they are shooting. Sometimes a political rally becomes little more than a blur in the viewfinder by the end of a 16-hour day.

Given these circumstances, newspaper editors—both print and photography—are obligated to make accurate and fair decisions about how to convey and display the day's coverage. To do this, editors ask themselves some very difficult questions. These include:

- What is the big picture and story we should be offering readers the next morning?

- Are the photographs a representative and accurate interpretation of the day's developments?
- How has the newspaper played similar photographs and situations in the past days or weeks?
- Are the photographs filed by the news agencies becoming redundant in the tone and message that they are projecting?
- Is the distribution of space for these images being done in direct relation to the news and those candidates making the news?
- Are certain photographs really what they appear to be?
- Is a photograph calling undue and not newsworthy attention to a situation or candidate because of its composition and artistry?

In its daily coverage—or even in the course of a week—newspapers cannot give equal play to the entire field of Democratic presidential contenders. What editors should strive to do is to visually capture what they understand is the defining message from that day's campaign trail. It is a misguided attempt if editors try to have the paper's photographic coverage be all-inclusive, for example, by publishing as many candidates' photos as possible on a given day. To do so means that newspapers end up misconstruing the idea of "balanced coverage" that was never intended to mean "when you run one candidate, run 'em all." Yet there will be days—such as the final day of campaigning in Iowa—when it might make sense to show all of the leading contenders. In that case, "fair and balanced" does not mean that each photo needs to be the same size. [See accompanying visual of a Miami Herald page from January 19, 2004.]

Improved planning for daily and weekly photography coverage also helps editors avoid having to run a prestaged photo op simply because the newspaper is compelled to run that particular candidate on that day. The need to do "Day in the Life" photography essays on the candidates is as crucial as the obligatory profiles that most newspapers run on the candidates. Doing such essays helps to offset



On the final day of campaigning for the Iowa caucuses, The Miami Herald published photos of the four Democratic frontrunners on the jump page. The newspaper's coverage was balanced in its photo selection and play of Governor Howard Dean, Senator John Edwards, Representative Richard Gephardt, and Senator John Kerry. Being fair does not mean that all the photos have to be the same size and dimension. *Photo courtesy of The Miami Herald.*

the staged photo ops that grow more intense as the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary near. Editors would be wise, too, to find alternative sources to the traditional wire services such as The Associated Press, Agence France-Press, and Reuters that now provide the brunt of the photography. Daily and weekly newspapers and other news outlets reporting from their respective cities can be helpful in sometimes providing a more critical and fresh eye. ■

Luis Rios is director of photography at The Miami Herald.

✉ LRios@herald.com

When Seeing Is No Longer Believing

Photographers and photo editors have the obligation of accuracy.

By Kenny Irby

The confluence of politics, photojournalism and ethics creates a strange potion. During the campaign season those who take photos and those who make decisions about which ones to publish confront some difficult challenges. Among the tougher ones is the constant need to determine whether the strategic staging of events interferes with the journalist's mission to provide an accurate portrayal of the day's events. One reason such deliberations are essential is that in our visually driven culture, images drive voters' decisions and sway public opinion. And a photographic image can be more powerful in its message-sending capacity than the ephemeral glimpse of a few frames from the same event shown in a video report.

Though it was not called a "campaign event," President Bush traveled secretly on Thanksgiving Day to visit the U.S. troops in Baghdad. And the still image that emerged from that day's trip—a photograph published in newspapers throughout the world—was of the commander in chief smiling broadly as he carried a giant turkey to the troops on a silver platter. That the soldiers didn't actually eat *that* turkey (it was a decorative one) or even share their meal with the President, who was on his way home soon after he arrived, were subtleties lost as the power of the image subsumed such details.

Pablo Martinez Monsivais, The Associated Press's photographer, was one of the five photographers on that trip. "We had no idea that the President would do what he did once we entered the mess hall," recalls Monsivais. Though some who were with the President in Iraq believe this photograph captured a spontaneous moment, others have doubts. But there was no question that it was *the* evocative picture to come out of the event.

How then do photo editors decide

whether such a photograph is appropriate to use, when it is known how hard the Bush team works to orchestrate photo ops and maintain control over the President's image?

In this situation, several key considerations and questions are raised in deciding whether to take and/or publish this photograph.

- Because most political events are staged to some degree, photographers and editors need to reflect on whether the staging involved in producing this image is acceptable in letting them meet their obligation of accuracy.
- If photo editors knew at that time that the turkey platter photograph was set up to some degree, should they have used it?
- Should a caption be used to clarify what the photo is showing?
- What if a photographer writes an accurate caption, but the photo gets picked up and used by newspapers without the clarifying text accompanying it?
- If a photographer decided the visual image was a staged set-up shot and decided not to take the photograph, what would happen to this photographer when his press pool colleagues take the picture and theirs appear on the front pages of newspapers the next day? How will his paper or news service react?

How photographers and editors resolve these issues will vary, but what remains constant is the intensity of pressures faced by both of these journalists to bring people compelling, evocative and dramatic images. And the commercial forces with which photographers and editors contend are so strong, too, that often a photograph like the one from Baghdad will be taken and published, even when one

concludes that it was staged.

To gain the kind of access photographers need to capture more genuine moments from a campaign, they need to negotiate with candidates and their staff to gain access that goes beyond staged events. This requires delicate balancing of building relationships while at the same time maintaining editorial independence. But our credibility relies on our audience's belief in the accuracy of what they see.

Here are a few questions photo editors might ask as a way of ensuring that their newspapers' images will offer readers a fair and accurate view of the day's political events:

- Have I taken the necessary steps to provide balanced coverage with respect to various candidates?
- Have I talked with the photographer about these issues? Do I trust the photographer to make good news decisions?
- Have I considered publishing explanatory captions? These captions could illuminate how the photograph came to be taken, which might not be apparent by looking at it. Would such captions help put the image into a broader, more accurate context?

As the Election Day approaches, Americans will sift through lots of images. They ought to be able to trust that photographers and editors have thought enough about their choices to give them ones that illuminate what they need to know about the candidates and how they present themselves to the people. ■

Kenny Irby is visual journalism group leader at The Poynter Institute for Media Studies.

✉ irbyman@poynter.org

Flapjacks and Photo Ops

Concord Monitor photographers worked hard to bring readers behind the scenes of New Hampshire's primary campaign.

By Dan Habib

Covering the New Hampshire primary is a tense dance between photographers and campaign staff. Campaigns carefully plan events and arrange settings to mold how they'd like to convey the candidate's image, while photographers seek out engaging moments to communicate a truer nature of the candidate and the campaign. The images we publish at the Concord (N.H.) Monitor matter because potential voters—short on time and attention—often rely on them to arrive at judgments about candidates' temperaments, stature and work ethics. In our visually driven culture, images influence voters.

Campaigns know the photographs they'd like us to print. In them, there'd be hundreds of swooning supporters cheering and waving signs. But for our purposes, photographs of candidates smiling near sign-waving supporters are stale. This goes for flapjack flips and when campaign buses are used as props.

For us to give our readers the fresh look at the candidates that they deserve means that campaigns—which crave high visibility in local media—need to find more creative photo ops, provide a lot of unscripted access to the candidate, and have steady, spontaneous contact with voters.

Negotiating for Access

During each primary season, Monitor photographers negotiate with each candidate to get one day of unfettered access to the campaign. Although campaigns take some risk in granting this behind-the-scenes access, they also stand to gain by it if we can come away with photographs that give readers insight into the political process and the personality of the candidate and their



Governor Howard Dean jokes with New Hampshire state campaign director, Karen Hicks, after officially signing up for the New Hampshire presidential primary in Concord in November 2003. *Photo by Dan Habib/Concord Monitor.*

staff. In 2000, Senator John McCain gave the media, in general, nearly unlimited access during his New Hampshire primary run, and his openness was one reason he beat George W. Bush in the primary by 18 points. To voters, whatever else they thought of him, they believed he wasn't hiding anything.

During November 2003, candidates came to the New Hampshire State House to file papers to appear on the primary election ballot. Each campaign took a different approach in trying to create a worthy photo op. Senator Joe Lieberman brought his mom along. Senator John Kerry brought a group of veterans from Massachusetts. Several days before former Vermont Governor Howard Dean's filing, I spoke with his campaign to arrange time in the candidate's van between events. I shot the filing event, including a short speech made to scores of supporters outside

the State House. During my 10 minutes in the van, I made a photo of Dean grabbing lunch as Karen Hicks, his state campaign director, laughed next to him.

On the next day's front page of the Monitor that photo appeared. Hicks asked me why we used the van picture rather than a shot of him and his supporters. I explained that this image offered readers a more unusual and real glimpse of Dean and what it was like for him to campaign. Since there was no story planned that day, it was either that photo on Page One or no photo at all. "I'll take it," she said.

The Staging Game

The Monitor's ethics policy forbids reporters and photographers to stage, alter or re-enact news events. Though not everyone in the media subscribes to this practice, we do not ever stage direct the candidates.

An example of such stage directing happened when members of the media gathered for General Wesley Clark's State House arrival. They were told he'd be entering by a back door. A TV reporter protested that it would be a much better visual if Clark walked up the front steps. Campaign cell phones buzzed, and the plan changed to having him walk up the front steps. On another day, Congressman Dennis Kucinich was part of a blind date, arranged by PoliticsNH.com. This breakfast get-together grew into a major publicity stunt. As he left the date, Kucinich gave Gina Marie Santore a parting kiss near about a dozen cameras. "Do it again, we missed it!" a television reporter shouted. Kucinich and Santore obliged.

When I criticized the practice of stage directing recently to a magazine photographer colleague, he said that if he didn't come back with pictures to publish, he wouldn't get paid. Others in the media argue that because events are so staged anyway, why not help the campaigns do it better?

The Final Stretch

There are really two primary seasons in New Hampshire—the one before Iowa and the one after Iowa. When candidates start visiting the state about a year before the primary, our newspaper's photographers encoun-

When I criticized the practice of stage directing recently to a magazine photographer colleague, he said that if he didn't come back with pictures to publish, he wouldn't get paid.

ter few other cameras at campaign events. Of course, as months pass, the media pack grows, but before the Iowa caucuses it rarely exceeds a dozen cameras at any event. After Iowa, it is not uncommon to have 50 or more cameras at a major candidate's event.

This year we tried several approaches



Dennis Kucinich kisses Gina Marie Santore of New Jersey after a breakfast first date at the Holiday Inn in Concord, New Hampshire. Santore was selected from an online "Who wants to be a first lady?" contest conducted by PoliticsNH.com. *Photo by Dan Habib/Concord Monitor.*

to make sure that during that post-Iowa week the newspaper had strong, original photography. Throughout the primary we published a photo column called Primary Life: Scenes from the edge of the campaign trail. In it, we featured interesting people and moments from the campaign that didn't involve the candidates. Day-in-the-life photo pages that we'd shot in December

and early January ran on the seven days leading up to the Election Day. On the day when votes were cast, we focused on the voters and published a page of images taken in polling places throughout our region.

Most importantly, during that final week we called upon a year's worth of relationships that we'd built with top campaign staff. We negotiated hard with the campaigns for extra access each day. As a result, that week photos

of Kerry slugging down water on his campaign bus or of Dean huddling with top staff after the Iowa embarrassment led section fronts. Conventional photo ops, contrived by the campaigns, were often bypassed or buried inside.

On the night of the election, however, our photographers were relegated to the risers along with dozens of others. After all, Wednesday morning's photos would not bring any of the candidates a single extra vote. ■

Dan Habib is photo editor of the Concord Monitor. Working with staff photographers Elaine Skylar, Preston Gannaway, Ken Williams, and intern Jim Korpi, Habib has just finished his fifth New Hampshire primary for the Monitor. This is an updated version of a story that appeared in the Monitor on December 14, 2003. Some of the Monitor's photo coverage of the primary campaigns can be viewed at www.concordmonitor.com.

✉ dhabib@cmonitor.com.

A Political Reporter's Toolbox

The Committee of Concerned Journalists suggests campaign coverage strategies based on the advice of veteran political journalists.

Before many reporters were out on the presidential campaign trail, the Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ) gathered some of the nation's top political journalists to talk about campaign coverage. Out of these conversations emerged approaches that offer reporters ideas about how to improve what they do and expand the breadth of their coverage. As the CCJ writes on its Web site (www.journalism.org) as it introduces this toolbox of ideas, "... in an age of political alienation and declining voter turnout, journalists need to examine whether the conventional ways of doing the job are adequate." What follows are some suggestions made by these political reporters and compiled by CCJ.

Ruts, Traps and Thinking Outside the Box

In the day-to-day of campaign coverage it is easy to lapse into oversimplifying the issues and people. Campaigns become games that we know so well we begin to think we know the answer to every question. And we write about it that way. Below are some ways of avoiding the kind of coverage that comes with over-familiarity.

Examine Our Most Cynical Assumptions

Phil Trounstine, former political editor, San Jose Mercury News

There is a difference between being skeptical and being cynical. The skeptic has an open mind; he or she is unsure and wants to take into account all possible answers to a question in order to be sure. The cynic has a closed mind; he or she assumes they already know the answer—and often it is the worst. In the day-to-day of coverage it is easy to get locked into a view of politicians as being “corrupt” in some way—pandering to voters, to big busi-

ness, to big donors. But part of being skeptical is being skeptical of your own thoughts and biases and considering other interpretations of the action. It's quite possible, for instance, for a politician to take a position because he really believes it, then receive money from lobbying interests for doing so, and to please his constituents at the same time. That is, actually, how the political system was designed to work. All three things can coexist at the same time. Just because the politician profits from doing this does not necessarily mean that profit is his only motivation. Various journalists told us: Review your stories for cynicism. Most often, taking the cynical view may make you feel like a hard-bitten realist, but it may actually be simplistic. Read Trounstine's thoughts on cynicism versus skepticism at www.journalism.org/resources/education/forums/speeches/trounstine.asp

Policy as a Character Issue

Paul Taylor, former reporter, The Washington Post

See policy and platform as a frame to understand character. More important, and more useful, than just what position a person has on an issue, is what that position says about someone. How did they come to this position? Why do they feel this way? Have their views changed? How steadfast are they on it? How extreme or moderate? How does it differ or reinforce other positions on other issues? How does it fit into the history of thinking in their party on that issue? How does it fit into their worldview? What experiences or what in their biography led them to this? Suddenly, policy and issues come to life, become people stories and take on an authenticity that they lack in the abstract. This approach may also be the key to unlocking whether a candidate really means something or whether he

or she just adopted a position for an electoral purpose or to satisfy a constituency or lobbying interest.

Find the Invisible Campaign

Bill Kovach, CCJ chairman

Talking to voters is a way to find out what will decide the election, but who is talking to them and how? Are we missing the story because campaigning has disappeared into the private sphere, with candidates increasingly making appeals via direct mail, e-mail, CD-ROM, etc.? Reporters might want to troll the Internet during the campaign, not just to write a “technology and the campaign” story, but to find out what people are talking about. Reporters might want to register with different campaign Web sites and find out what kinds of messages they get. They could check with community members who have registered to see if different localities and social groups get different types of messages, or ask a group of voters to collect all the direct mail they get.

Get Beyond Liberal/Conservative Paradigm and Look at Problems and Issues From New Angles and in Broader Terms

Bill Kovach

Issue coverage is about more than presenting two voices disagreeing with one another. Look at the root causes of the issues being discussed. Look at how other countries, state or municipalities handle them. Focus on possible solutions people can choose between rather than just partisan acrimony.

Using Polls and Talking to Citizens

The reporters CCJ assembled said that political reporting is often too focused on polls. They become the prism

through which we journalists see everything. “Candidate X” is doing this because he’s behind in the polls. He took this position because it appeals to a voter group he is lagging with in the polls. But poll reporting turns the public into an abstraction. People and issues become numbers that have no depth and no complexity, no explanation of why people are reacting the way they are. Below are some ways to get beyond poll-centric reporting:

Don’t Just Reprint Polls—Understand Them

National Council on Public Polls

Just running numbers can miss the key points of a poll. Talk to pollsters about how best to use polls, how to read methodology, what kinds of things you should look out for in judging how well a poll was conducted, what you should disclose to the public in regards to sample size, etc. The National Council on Public Polls has put together a list of “20 Questions Journalists Should Ask About Polls.” Some of the questions on its list: Who did the poll? Who paid for the poll? How were the interviews conducted? What is the sampling error? What questions exactly were asked? The entire list of questions with explanations is on Public Agenda’s Web site at www.publicagenda.org/aboutpubopinion/aboutpubop1.htm.

Don’t Treat Every Poll Like ‘News’ (Put Your Poll Coverage in Agate)

Jack Germond, former (Baltimore) Sun columnist

When looking at poll results ask yourself if they are telling your readers anything new. Unless a given poll produces unique, interesting results the poll results might not always be the story. One way to handle the steady flow of polls that come at election time may be to create an agate box and have them there for readers to review them, à la sports box scores. This will allow readers to access the polls without having them be a defining aspect of your coverage.

Cover the Things That Matter Most to People

Don’t just cover what the candi-

dates want to talk about. Identify and cover what affects the most people in your community and what matters most to them. That involves, of course, having some way of identifying what those things are, which is a reporting challenge all its own. You will benefit from taking the trouble to find out.

Talk to Voters

David Jones, The New York Times

Cover voters, not polls. It is voters—what they think, how they live, what they are worried about—that are important (and also more interesting). Polls turn the public into an abstraction, reacting to questions and constructs of the pollster/journalist. But voters/citizens may have very different constructs. Ultimately, why people think what they do is more interesting than simply what they think (i.e., whether they support a certain policy or not), since their opinion (“I approve of the President”) may change. Understanding when and how will depend on the reasons for their support in the first place. Polls are only a tool to get at voters and only one tool. Relying on that one tool too much will bias your coverage. Other tools include focus groups, or panels (a recurring group of voters you visit), knocking on doors, talking to people in malls, talking to people at rallies.

How to Knock On Doors

Paul Taylor and Jack Germond

Knocking on doors may be becoming a lost art among political reporters. But here is the counsel of two old-school scribes on how to do it: Hang out with different groups of people and have informal conversations. Go to nursing homes and play checkers. Talk to union workers. Talk to people at random. Go in flat. Don’t use political jargon. Go in without an agenda. Don’t be there to find out how they respond to the appeals of the different campaigns. Ask them what’s on their minds. Let them lead the conversation. In two days, you should have 30 to 35 people who you talked to long enough to have notes on them. And, if you find you’re hearing the same thing from four or five of them, pay attention. You

will know, at the end of that time, what’s going around. (In 1992, one journalist first knew George Bush was in trouble when he asked a hotel manager how business was. “Great,” was the answer. “I thought the state was in financial trouble,” the reporter said. “We’re full up with federal and state bank regulators here because of possible bank failures,” the hotel manager said. That was when the reporter knew the New England economy was in worse shape than anyone knew.)

Stay Behind After the Campaign Leaves

Paul Friedman, former ABC News executive vice president

Often when a candidate makes an appearance it is like the carnival coming to town. Everyone seems to be paying attention, and people are excited. But what happens when the show leaves town? It’s often worth it to stay behind and find out. Wait a day, or even just a few hours, but see what people say later, what they think, whether the campaign stop really related to the community, or whatever story strikes you. This will let you get beyond the spin and spectacle and focus on the voters.

Broaden Your Source Base

No matter how good your questions are or how well you think you understand a race, if you aren’t talking to the right people, or to enough people, there will inevitably be holes. Below are some tips on finding those people and making sure you don’t lose them once you’ve talked to them.

How Big Is Your Rolodex, or Who’s in Your Rolodex

Marty Tolchin, New York Times correspondent, former editor of The Hill

There may be people in there you only talk to once every five or six years. There should be. You need to have a complete range of voices in there to cover politics. Not just the standard party voices and academics. Do you have the political mechanics, the dreamers, the movers and shakers, the ethics cops, the religious people, the busi-

ness people, the money people? If your Rolodex is light in certain areas, you should be able to identify where and make it a mission to fill it in when you can.

Talk to the Secret Wise Folk

Jack Germond

Some of the best sources for any political reporter are former elected officials who are not vested in a campaign or a debate but are able to tell you what is going on and give you a starting point. Make sure you talk to people who were very active in politics but who are now no longer in a position to speak publicly. Judges, university presidents, retired politicians, disgraced politicians, etc. These are people you cannot quote, but they know everything. They are starved for attention. Do it in person. Do it at some length. It will be a great lunch or a great dinner. They will be flattered and tell you more than you expect, especially once they know you. Imagine Bill Clinton and Bob Dole telling you everything they could off the record before the next election for President ever started.

Get Character Sources

Jim Doyle, former Boston Globe political writer, former Army Times editor

Similar to Germond's "Secret Wise Folks," but this is about character in particular. These are people whose judgment you trust about other people. They were once the people who helped decide things in the smoke-filled room and who know how people, including your candidate, play the game. They are the ones whom financial people consult in deciding whom to back. They'll tell you what they see in the soul of candidates. These are, once again, background people. They are not on the record.

Escaping the Campaign Bubble

Spending everyday covering campaign events or traveling on the bus with the other reporters can create a kind of tunnel vision about the campaign you

are covering. Watching the same speech repeatedly and talking to other reporters may give you a unique perspective on the race, but at some point it can create a myopic view of the campaign. Below are some ways to break out of the campaign cocoon.

Identify the Meta-Narratives of the Campaign

Tom Rosenstiel, director of Project for Excellence in Journalism

Each campaign takes on meta-narratives, or story lines. Al Gore is a liar. George W. Bush is dumb. Jesse Ventura can't win. Mike Dukakis is a competent technocrat. But are these meta-narratives valid? Or are they distortions? These story lines are the modern version of pack journalism, in an age when journalists spend a lot of time reading other coverage and synthesizing it. Was it true that George W. Bush is basically a pragmatist with no real ideological agenda? Sometimes, too, the meta-narratives change radically and make the press look foolish. In 1988, the early meta-narrative was that George Bush was a wimp, and Mike Dukakis was a skillful pragmatist. Months later George Bush was thought to be a manipulative campaigner and Mike Dukakis a wimp.

Examine Your Own Biases

Paul Taylor

Periodically examine yourself for bias building up as the campaign proceeds; do not deny that you have your own views but understand what they are and why you have them in order to keep them under control. Who do you personally dislike? Why? How might that be coloring your judgment? Is your reaction to a candidate on a more personal level influencing your reporting? Who do you disagree with ideologically? Understand who you are. Do it privately. But do it seriously. Don't pretend that your professionalism is protecting you. Don't be in denial. "Don't," as Walter Lippmann once said, "confuse good intentions with good execution." Good intentions are not enough. Create a discipline for coming to grips with your personal feelings and parking them in the back of your own head. Take stock of the total im-

pression you have of these candidates or this race so far. Maybe even make a list of the stories you've done as you go through this process.

Modesty is the Key to Good Political Reporting

Marty Tolchin

If you come into anything with a preconceived attitude, whether it's liberal or conservative or something else, you're being lazy. It allows you to skip on the hard work of reading and talking to people and learning everything you can about all the different ways to approach an issue. Understand that however long you've been covering your race or candidate, you don't know everything. Don't assume you know. Ask questions and report.

Your Reporting Might Also Benefit From Another Set of Eyes

Remember that you are a very specific audience for the race you are covering. You come from a specific background and are focused intently on the issues at hand. If an ad or speech doesn't resonate with you that doesn't necessarily mean it is a failure. The speech or ad may not be meant for you. Run your ideas and reporting by a colleague with a different background, or ask a voter what he or she thinks.

These Are Ordinary People You're Covering

Jack Germond

Whatever office the candidate is running for, remember that he or she is, in the end, just a regular person. Don't be too impressed. Do not be intimidated by them. Do not treat them as different or above regular folks. Most importantly, get at the real person. Not being awed doesn't mean treating a candidate poorly, it means treating them like a person, not a myth. It also means not cynically dismissing them. ■

To read CCJ's complete campaign reporting toolbox go to www.journalism.org/resources/tools/reporting/politics/default.asp

War and Terror

In Nieman Reports's continuing effort to chronicle the various ways in which journalists are approaching coverage of war and terror, **John Koopman**, a features writer at the San Francisco Chronicle, describes how, when he returned home with reporting he did while embedded with a Marine regiment in Iraq, his notebooks were transformed into a thematic narrative series at the behest and with the help of his editors. "Without consciously trying to do it, I'd written in a rhythm," Koopman says of the 27,000-word story he produced. "Events built up to a climax, or a conclusion, sometimes with a resolution. And that's one of the things that made the series work. It was more than just one long story. Every installment brought something new and ended in a rousing fashion. Some more than others. But it kept readers coming back for more."

Rick Rodriguez, executive editor of The Sacramento Bee, explains why his newspaper decided to allocate its resources in a different way during the war in Iraq. Rather than embedding its reporters with the military, the paper published stories and photographs from other McClatchy papers and wire services. He shares why he made this decision and describes the series, "Liberty in the Balance," that resulted from it. "Instead of incurring the large cost of covering the war, I wanted to concentrate our newsroom's limited resources and time on a story of major national import that I thought wasn't receiving the kind of scrutiny it deserved: the increasing controversy surrounding the USA Patriot Act, which Congress passed in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks," he writes.

In Canada, the home and bureau office of **Juliet O'Neill**, a reporter at the Ottawa Citizen, were searched by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police after she used secret documents in reporting a story about a Syrian-born Canadian citizen who was arrested in the United States as a suspected al-Qaeda terrorist. In her published account of this five-hour search, "It Felt Like Slow-Motion Robbery," which first appeared in the Citizen, she writes: "The material they carted away from my home and office are the tools of my trade: names, phone numbers, written and recorded notes. It left me feeling stripped."

From Pulitzer prize-winning cartoonist **Doug Marlette's** book, "What Would Marlette Drive?: The Scandalous Cartoons of Doug Marlette," come words from an essay he wrote in response to criticism he received about a controversial cartoon published in his paper, the Tallahassee Democrat, and reprinted in many others. Thousands of readers demanded an apology. Instead, Marlette explained why he wouldn't. "In this country, we do not apologize for our opinion. Free speech is the linchpin of our republic. All other freedoms flow from it. After all, we don't need a First Amendment to allow us to run boring, inoffensive cartoons. . . . We need constitutional protection for our right to express unpopular views. If we can't discuss the great issues of our day in the pages of our newspaper, fearlessly and without apology, where can we discuss them?"

Michael Persson, a freelance writer and photographer, writes about “War,” a photo-documentary book that begins at Ground Zero on September 11, 2001 and ends 414 pages later with an image of a boy on a rooftop in Iraq. It is the collection’s impartiality that Persson admires most. He observes that the book is “hard-hitting, but impartiality always is. Through the images captured by VII, a photo agency renowned for its collection of veteran photographers, ‘War’ brings to our attention every vivid detail, whether we like it or not.”

Books

Steve Oney, a former reporter at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and author of “And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank,” describes how newspapers published increasingly sensational stories, headlines and commentary about this early 20th century murder trial and lynching. While local papers used their coverage to compete for readers, The New York Times used its editorial power to argue the view that “Frank was not only innocent but the victim of an anti-Semitic plot . . .” But Times’s publisher Adolph Ochs soon found out that his paper’s advocacy was regarded by many in Georgia as intervention as it was denounced. In the press’s treatment of this story, Oney finds “the prototypic American convergence of journalistic excess and legal tragedy.”

In reflecting on Ken Auletta’s book, “Backstory: Inside the Business of News,” **Everette E. Dennis**, who is Felix E. Larkin distinguished professor of communications and media management at Fordham Graduate School of Business, compliments the author on his keen understanding of the business of news. Dennis goes on to explore how journalists’ usual aversion to “structural or stylistic change” might affect their ability to respond and react to rapid business changes. “Sorting out the role of the individual journalist in the midst of these seismic changes in the structure and ownership of the business warrants deep thinking,” he writes, “and Auletta facilitates that process.”

“‘City Room’ is an easy read,” writes **Robert H. Phelps**, a retired editor of Nieman Reports, about The New York Times’s former managing editor Arthur Gelb’s recent book. “Anecdotes tumble over each other in the style now called narrative journalism . . .” In his review, Phelps, who worked briefly for Gelb on the Times’s metropolitan desk, shares newsroom stories from the book, including ones Gelb tells about some of the more difficult times he had with Scotty Reston, Max Frankel, and Abe Rosenthal.

In the wake of Columbia University’s recent task force discussions about the future of its journalism school, **Jeffrey Scheuer**, author of “The Sound Bite Society: How Television Helps the Right and Hurts the Left,” reviews James Boylan’s book, “Pulitzer’s School: Columbia University’s School of Journalism, 1903-2003,” with an eye toward connecting the school’s history to its present circumstance. A century after Joseph Pulitzer set forth his idea of establishing a school of journalism that, as Scheuer writes, “might elevate journalism to the status of professions such as business and law,” this vision might finally be realized as the school’s new leadership “will attempt, where so many have failed, to bring scholarship and journalism together for the public good.” ■

Iraq Reporting Becomes a Literary Portrayal of War

His editor said to him: 'That's your story. Man's fascination with war.'

By John Koopman

I never set out to write a serial narrative about the war in Iraq. I never planned for it, and I never considered writing anything more than daily stories from the battlefield. But something happened when I got back from Baghdad. I started writing about the war, putting it all together and adding my own experiences. And I just couldn't stop. I wrote and wrote and wrote and when it was all done, I had 27,000 words spread out over six days, covering about 700 column inches.

The project began in the fall of 2002, when the San Francisco Chronicle's foreign and national editor, Andrew S.

Ross, asked me if I'd be interested in covering the war in Iraq, which appeared imminent. Ross wanted me because I'd spent four years of precious youth in the Marines, and I had a fair amount of experience as a reporter.

So I was to be an embedded reporter. I was lucky that I got the nod early enough and knew about how the military works. It allowed me to spend some time scouting the 1st Marine Division and finding a good, solid infantry battalion. I met these guys, the Third Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment, at Twentynine Palms, California, conducting desert training. I told the

division public affairs office that, if war came, I wanted to go with Three-Four.

This was useful because it meant I could spend the entire war, and preparation for war, with one unit. Later, I saw a lot of embedded reporters hopping from unit to unit, trying to get to where the action was. But they never had much time to get to know anyone, and I think the reporting was not as in-depth as it could have been.

In San Francisco, I met with my editors to plan for war coverage. We had a new managing editor, Robert Rosenthal, former executive editor for The Philadelphia Inquirer and a former



Two dead Iraqis lie huddled in a fighting hole outside Kut, Iraq. The Iraqis had ambushed a column of Marine tanks and infantry, resulting in a firefight that killed one Marine and a dozen or more Iraqis. *Photo by John Koopman/San Francisco Chronicle.*



A man and his son ride in the back of a Marine amphibious assault vehicle. The father was shot in the arm after he approached a building that was being looted. *Photo by John Koopman/San Francisco Chronicle.*

foreign correspondent. Rosenthal had some good ideas, but we didn't get too detailed in the planning. We figured that all our plans would likely go out the window once the war started. My thinking was, "Go check things out, and look for good stories."

I'm a metro reporter. I like a good feature story, but the ones I normally

do go on for 35 or 40 inches. A really big story is 50 inches. Usually I write daily stories and the occasional Sunday story. As far as I was concerned, I would cover the war in Iraq the same way. Someone would, no doubt, write a great narrative or magazine-style piece. But it wasn't going to be me. Just give me a daily deadline, and I'm happy.



Tanks and other armored vehicles move down a highway in Kuwait, on their way to the Iraqi border, a day before the start of the war. Photo taken from the backseat of Lt. Col. Bryan P. McCoy's Humvee. *Photo by John Koopman/San Francisco Chronicle.*

Reporting From the War

And that's the way I worked it, first in Kuwait as the troops prepared for war and later, after they crossed the border and attacked Iraq. I wrote features, mostly, in Kuwait and daily dispatches from the front in Iraq. It was immediate and timely.

But something happened about a week after the war started. I found my voice. It was after the battle for Diwaniyah. It was a brutal fight, and I saw a lot of dead Iraqis. The Marines pounded them. The battle was over about two hours before sunset, so I had a chance to set my folding stool in the dirt and compose something a little more eloquent than the spot reports I'd done previously.

A couple of days later, I was there when the driver of the Humvee I rode in was killed in an ambush. A few days after that, the Marines were fighting for control of a bridge outside Baghdad when an Iraqi artillery shell hit a Marine armored vehicle. The blast killed two Marines and struck so close I got sprayed with hot engine oil. And a few days later, these Marines helped pull down the statue of Saddam Hussein.

Despite all this, I never wanted to write in the first person. I didn't feel worthy. I wasn't out there killing and dying. As tough as it was on me, I wasn't walking guard post or spending the night writing up battle plans. The story belonged to the Marines and later to the Iraqis themselves.

In Baghdad, I got an e-mail from Rosenthal. He said I should conduct interviews and gather background so I could return to San Francisco and do a larger story, "putting it all together." That sounded fine to me, but I was still thinking 80 or 100-inch story, just stringing everything along in chronological order.

And then I met an editor who would destroy all my notions: Carolyn White, a former book editor and features editor at the *Inquirer* and *Rolling Stone*. She'd been hired as assistant managing editor for features while I was away. Rosenthal introduced me to her when I got back. He told us to get together and write something about the war

that would be similar to what he saw Mark Bowden do for the *Inquirer* when he wrote a narrative series called “Blackhawk Down.”

Hey, no pressure there.

Carolyn and I got together to talk about the project. She was a book editor and so used books as tools for structure. She brought out some of the better war literature, including “Dispatches” and “Jarhead.” Don’t read them, she said. “I’ll read them and pass on concepts to you.”

I wasn’t sure where this was all going, but the ride seemed like fun. I sat down and started cranking it out. It grew and grew. To 10,000 words. Then 15,000. I would show Carolyn what I had, and she would simply say: “Great. Give me more.”

Rosenthal, meanwhile, wondered if I should try to tell the story of the war through the eyes of the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Bryan P. McCoy. The idea was sound. I’d spent a lot of time with McCoy and knew him well. But I hadn’t spent all my time following him, and now that the Marines were back in the United States, my access to McCoy was much more limited.

I knew that the best story I had was the one I’d seen first-hand. Now I wanted to write a first-person narrative, because I felt it was the only way I could really make the war personal. To bring out detailed, descriptive pieces of Iraq, the Marines, the sand and the heat, I believed I had to tell the story through my voice. Though this realization helped me overcome my earlier insistence that I would not write about this in the first person, what I didn’t want to do was to make myself the center of attention. The idea was to show how others fought, acted and interacted through the camera lens of my eyes.

Carolyn was with me. But we both knew that I had to pull it off and convince Rosenthal, or the whole package might not fly.

Time passed. Carolyn was busy putting together her department, and I sometimes got called away to write other stories. I started to worry that we had missed the boat. The offensive war was long over. The story in Iraq was



A Marine found a chunk of concrete to lift when he had a few moments after his unit crossed the Dyala Canal Bridge. *Photo by John Koopman/San Francisco Chronicle.*

now about the occupation and roadside bombs. Carolyn said it wasn’t important. She wanted a literary story, one that told the tale of Marines at war. It wasn’t about news by then, she said. Either we could produce a well-written series that would capture readers’ attention and give a timeless, gripping account of combat, or we’d just spike it and move on.

So I wrote 20,000 words and then 25,000. I told Rosenthal how long it was. He told me to keep going.

Fresh Memories of a Memorable Time

Carolyn took the work home one weekend and immersed herself. The following week, she invited me to lunch on the roof. She brought with her two copies of “Moby Dick.” After we ate, she asked me to read aloud the introduction in “Moby Dick.” I was game, so I did it. That introduction, after “Call me Ishmael,” was all about man’s preoccupation and fascination with the sea. Carolyn just said: “That’s your story. Man’s fascination with war. The war is the whale. Write an introduction that emulates Melville, and structure your chapters the way he does.”

It was like a bell went off. I wrote an

introduction that spoke of men and war, and I recast some of my chapters. I wrote new passages that focused on small but important details. Of the Marines, their habits, sights, sounds and smells. I added passages from my own experience. What it’s like to be in the Marines. How much I missed my son. Some of the physical hardships we had to endure.

Some of this came from my notes. I had plenty of material that I’d never used in daily stories. But most of it was the fresh memory of a memorable time. I’d told and retold the stories hundreds of times since returning from Baghdad. And I could retell it again on paper. I would double-check some vignettes by calling people who were there and going over it with them. I only had to change one or two things by using this system.

I turned in 27,000 words and then sat and waited. By this time, I hated the story, couldn’t stand to read a word. It got so that I would think of something I wanted to add and tell Carolyn. She would say, “It’s already in there.” I had no idea what I had, or how I’d gotten there.

In the front office, Rosenthal and Carolyn discussed the story, how it was written, where it would run and when.

Rosenthal was fine with my approach. But he told me he didn't want to run the story on the front page. It would go in our features section, called Datebook, with a front-page reference.

He said the decision wasn't meant to diminish the work. He said it was because the story was in first person and literary in nature. I had no problem with that. With as much real estate as they planned to give up, it could have run in the classified section for all I cared.

Carolyn got the story in one long take. I'd written a couple dozen chapters, some just a few paragraphs, others several pages long. She cut it into six sections. It cut rather well. She looked for natural breaks, letting the rise and fall of drama dictate where

each day would end. Without consciously trying to do it, I'd written in a rhythm. Events built up to a climax, or a conclusion, sometimes with resolution. And that's one of the things that made the series work. It was more than just one long story. Every installment brought something new and ended in a rousing fashion. Some more than others. But it kept readers coming back for more.

After it appeared in November, we received more than 600 e-mails and letters. They're still coming in.

Despite my background as a city desk reporter, I thoroughly enjoyed writing the series. I had the opportunity to use a lot of writing tropes that are usually not associated with journalism, like dialogue and metaphor. It was

also cathartic. I had a few demons to exorcise from the war, too. Writing about my experiences helped.

So after it was all done, the paper moved me to the features department. They want more narrative writing. And I've got a new beat: the underground sex scene. It looks like we'll be pushing some boundaries. ■

John Koopman is a features writer with the San Francisco Chronicle. The narrative series described in this article, "McCoy's Marines: Darkside Toward Baghdad," can be found at www.sfgate.com/koopman.

✉ JKoopman@sfchronicle.com

'Liberty in the Balance'

The Sacramento Bee investigated what's happening to civil liberties instead of sending reporters to cover the war in Iraq.

By Rick Rodriguez

It wasn't a particularly popular choice in some parts of the newsroom: The Sacramento Bee would not be sending any reporters or photographers to Iraq to cover the impending war. Yes, it was a huge story that would receive worldwide coverage. And yes, many large and medium-sized papers were sending staffers to Iraq either as embedded reporters and photographers or as unilateral reporters. There were certainly valid arguments for doing so, but these were not part of the reasoning I, as executive editor, used to arrive at the decision I did. And I reached this decision, in part, because I trusted that our readers would not be short-changed. I knew that we'd give them a solid selection of stories and photographs from reporters being sent by McClatchy papers and the dozen or so wire services to which we subscribe.

Instead of incurring the large cost of covering the war, I wanted to concen-



Pakistani parents pick up their sons at an elementary school they attend in Toronto. The family is seeking asylum in Canada after their visa expired in New York. *Photo by Paul Kitagaki, Jr./The Sacramento Bee.*

trate our newsroom's limited resources and time on a story of major national import that I thought wasn't receiving

the kind of scrutiny it deserved: the increasing controversy surrounding the USA Patriot Act, which Congress passed

in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks. At a paper of our size—295,000 daily—editors often have to make choices on how best to deploy resources to deliver the most impact to readers. I knew that to do this story properly would require several months of investigative reporting; if reporters were in Iraq covering the war, the newsroom would not have the resources to enable a team of reporters and editors to take on this assignment.

Because of concerns I had about the lack of press attention to what might be happening with civil liberties in this country since the act's passage, in February 2003 I asked senior writer Sam Stanton to begin taking an in-depth look at this issue in various communities around the country. I also told the editor of this project, Deborah Anderlueh, to let the reporters travel to wherever they needed to go and to use reporters she needed to use to be sure the story would be fully told. Soon, immigration reporter Emily Bazar and photographer Paul Kitagaki, Jr. joined Stanton to make this a three-person reporting team.

During the next several months, Stanton, Bazar and Kitagaki traveled across the country and to Canada as



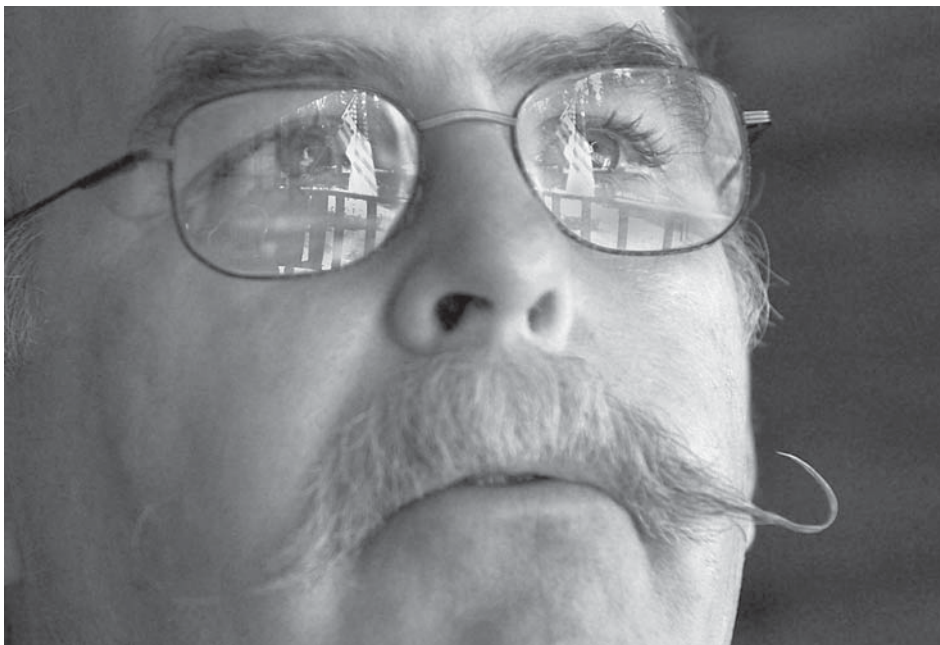
Marion Kanemoto, who now lives in Sacramento, was 14 when she was interned in the Minidoka Internment Camp in Idaho. Her father decided to repatriate the family to Japan before the end of World War II. In the photo she holds, Kanemoto is with her brothers and mother at the internment camp. *Photo by Paul Kitagaki, Jr./The Sacramento Bee.*

they searched for information about and examples of how people's lives have been affected by the USA Patriot Act. Their reporting led them to conclude that this legislation and a host of

related government regulations was having a profound effect on many people's lives. They found immigrants, primarily Muslims and others from the Middle East who legally immigrated to the United States, who were moving to Canada because they feared a government crackdown against them. They located immigrants who had overstayed their visas—a violation that in the past might have been ignored—who were now in jail as they awaited deportation hearings. They reported on immigrants who were being held incommunicado for indeterminate amounts of time.

But what became a four-part series of Page One stories went far beyond observing the impact this law was having on immigrants.

- The reporters interviewed two Americans, both of whom were anti-war activists, who were blocked from boarding a plane in San Francisco because they were on a government-sanctioned “no-fly list.”
- They spoke with a man who was questioned at his home by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on the day after he and six others,



Tim Armstrong, a Vietnam veteran and Bronze Star Medal winner, lives in Juneau, Alaska, where the city council wanted to pass a resolution against endorsing the Patriot Act, a position Armstrong favored. *Photo by Paul Kitagaki, Jr./The Sacramento Bee.*

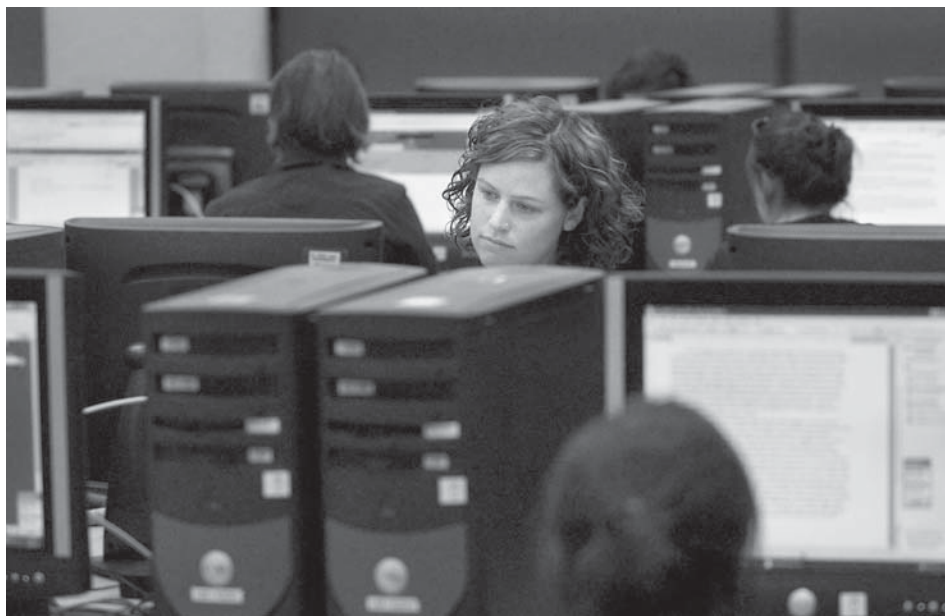
while working out in a gym, had engaged in a heated debate about religious fanaticism and the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan.

- In Santa Fe, New Mexico, they found a former assistant public defender who was using a computer in the library at St. John's College to search the Internet, when he was suddenly surrounded by four Santa Fe police officers who told him he was being detained by order of the FBI. He was taken to the police department and interrogated for more than an hour before being released.
- They found peace groups who had been infiltrated by law enforcement officers and mosques that had been subjected to FBI surveillance.

Documenting experiences such as these and others led our reporting team to understand that forces leading to a growing resistance to the erosion of civil liberties were emerging from both ends of the political spectrum. In Juneau, Alaska, diehard conservatives were rallying against these new policies, while in Salinas, California, the liberal-learning city council took a stand against the erosion of civil liberties. In the Bee's own backyard, in the small Northern California community of Nevada City, more than 100 citizens packed a meeting hall in early March to debate these issues.

As our reporting continued, what became even more obvious to us than the reactions we were finding to this law was an absence of news about it. We could find no other news organization covering this story either nationally or as comprehensively as we'd set out to do. To track our findings, the reporters set up a computer file where each day they filed their notes, ideas and suggestions for graphics to accompany their words. The project's editor met periodically with Managing Editor Joyce Terhaar and me to provide updates and receive feedback. It was a process that worked well.

While the reporters were finding many instances of how the law was interfering with civil liberties, documenting and quantifying its impact was harder. It was tough to convince immi-



Students work on computers at the Sacramento State University library, where privacy policies were reviewed. *Photo by Paul Kitagaki, Jr./The Sacramento Bee.*

grants, some of whom were the most severely affected by the new policies, to talk with us on the record. They feared retribution by the government. But with the help of community activists, lawyers and others, the reporters gained the immigrants' trust, and they did not use information from anyone who would not go on the record. Figures were difficult to find, for example, to show the extent of detentions caused by implementation of this law or to determine how many people were on no-fly lists. This was caused, in part, by the government's refusal to release much information, despite our newspaper filing of several Freedom of Information Act requests. When officials refused to disclose how frequently the USA Patriot Act had been used to require libraries to reveal what patrons were reading, Bazar convinced the California Library Association to survey its members for the Bee.

As a result of this reporting, in the same week Attorney General John Ashcroft reported to Congress that the FBI had never used the USA Patriot Act to gather information from libraries, the Bee was able to let its readers know that 14 libraries in California had been contacted by the FBI for patron information and that 11 had complied.

After we published this series of

stories in September 2003, we received a tremendous response from throughout the country and the world. Some comments were negative, accusing us of being unpatriotic or "giving aid and comfort to the enemy." But many expressed gratitude that these issues were being examined. Writing about the series in *Editor & Publisher*, columnist Nat Hentoff noted, "The Sacramento Bee did more than any daily newspaper I've seen to clarify the effects of the domestic war on terrorism on citizens and noncitizens." And former President Jimmy Carter, who was sent a reprint of the series, penned a note to the reporters telling them, "I'm grateful you and the Bee have done this. Finally, the courts seem to be restraining Bush, Ashcroft and others who are chipping away at the Bill of Rights."

Receiving such responses told me that we had made the right choice to concentrate our resources on reporting an important story that wasn't being followed instead of following the obvious story and then being part of the pack. ■

Rick Rodriguez is The Sacramento Bee's executive editor and senior vice president.

✉ rrodriguez@sacbee.com

'It Felt Like Slow-Motion Robbery'

On January 21st, officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) searched the Toronto home of Juliet O'Neill, a reporter with the Ottawa Citizen. They also searched her desk at the paper's city hall bureau. The RCMP's search warrant alleged that O'Neill violated Section 4 of the Security of Information Act by using secret documents to report a story about Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian citizen, arrested in the United States as a suspected al-Qaeda terrorist.

The RCMP conducted its criminal investigation in an effort to learn the identity of O'Neill's sources in obtaining information from the secret documents. The newspaper's owner, CanWest Global Communications Corp., launched a court challenge against the raid on O'Neill's home and office, attacking the constitutional validity of Section 4. According to CanWest attorneys, this section "jeopardizes and interferes with journalists' ability to receive information from

confidential sources on matters of grave public concern and importance." This criminal offense carries a 14-year prison term.

On January 23, a story O'Neill wrote about the experience of having her home searched was published in The Citizen. O'Neill's words are reprinted below with the express permission of "Ottawa Citizen Group Inc.," a CanWest Partnership.

By Juliet O'Neill

My house is small, a downtown gem, close to cafés and the art gallery, my family and closest friend, a private sanctuary—until the doorbell began ringing over and over, insistently, on Wednesday morning. There are six rooms in my little house. There would be more than one Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) person per room to rifle through the intimate stuff of my life.

When the doorbell rang, I peered out through my bedroom blinds, a tiny movement I would later discover was among the details recorded, in elegant handwriting, in Staff Sgt. Gary Legresley's notebook. He jotted it down when I peered out at 8:12 a.m. and again at 8:16 a.m. He was the New Brunswick officer in charge of a five-hour search of my Ottawa home conducted by 10 RCMP investigators. My office at City Hall was being searched at the same time. I discovered this by phoning a colleague who had been locked out of the Citizen's office. It had been deemed a "crime scene."

A group of RCMP from New Brunswick had been seconded to Ottawa for an investigation into the leak of a document pertaining to Maher Arar. Staff Sgt. Legresley told lawyer Wendy Montgomery, who came to my home, that the New Brunswick contingent has been living at a hotel in Ottawa for a month.

When I asked if I had been under surveillance, I was told yes, I had been, for some weeks.

Before I answered the door, I decided to have a shower and get dressed. I had a wild hope that the men on my stairwell, and the people I could barely make out inside the unmarked police cars parked in my driveway, would be gone by the time I had dried my hair. By the time I got out of the shower, the doorbell ring was incessant and the phone was ringing, too. The normally cheerful sounds of my household seemed ominous. I tied my wet hair back, went downstairs and pulled up the front blind. Then I answered the door.

Staff Sgt. Legresley showed his ID through the window. I opened the door. Two others entered with him. I didn't let them close the door behind them completely at first. Already it felt crowded, a little stifling. The seven other officers followed after I had been handed and read the search warrant, read my rights, and given time to call a Citizen lawyer. I was told I could make the call in private, but an RCMP officer would have to be nearby.

Two of the 10 RCMP were women, one a computer wizard who straight away accompanied me to my laptop computer, saying the first important thing was to get me offline—in case I had alerted someone who could re-

move files from a remote location. I have a dial-up connection to the Internet, and I wasn't online. She told me that she, too, has a dial-up connection at home, that since she spends all day in front of a computer at work, who needs a full-time connection at home?

The other RCMP woman will be remembered as "the underwear lady." It was no comfort that she, and others, wore white gloves as they went about their business. She rummaged through my lingerie drawer, my socks and t-shirts, jewelry, cosmetics and hair mousse, handbags, clothes closets, pockets, shelves of sweaters, linens and towels. It was when I saw her pulling back the quilt on my bed that I felt shock. I realized I did not wish to express my emotions and so held them in check. I went back downstairs for another chat, this time with Staff Sgt. Robert McMillan.

Staff Sgt. McMillan's card said he was a program manager from the "Truth Verification Section" of the RCMP's Behavioural Sciences Branch. He was the man who proposed that since the search would take several hours, he and I should just leave them to it and drive to his office where we could talk in a more serene setting about a leaked document and the source for it. I had reported the contents of the document in a story about the Maher Arar case on November 8th.

I told him I couldn't leave my home full of strangers.

I've never been robbed, but people who have been robbed tell of feeling violated that persons unknown have rifled through their things and taken the valuable bits away. That was how it felt: like a slow-motion robbery. It took five hours.

Every once in a while, Staff Sgt. McMillan said it was going well. He was pleased with the pace and, when it was almost done, he sat down with lawyer Wendy Montgomery and me to say his piece again. "The most intrusive part is over," was how he started.

The press corps began gathering in my driveway soon after I alerted an editor and the Citizen lawyer what was happening. The word spread quickly. As the press crowd grew, my emotional armour hardened. My phones began ringing off the hook. Each time I looked out, my distress eased. I felt protected by the sight of all the reporters and photographers from the Citizen, Global TV, CBC, CTV, The Globe and Mail, and other news outlets. I felt sorry that they had to stand outside in the bitter cold and thought of one of the inside jokes of the news business: "Hurry up and wait."

I was surprised when an RCMP officer offered to move the media mob, already restricted away from the house, even farther away. "Those are my friends and colleagues," I told him. When one of them closed a blind against the long lens of a camera, I immediately opened the blind back up. He didn't look me in the eye but he smiled and went back to taking my laptop apart on the dining room table. I realized that the RCMP group inside my home was fortified by two RCMP outside, one to keep the press at bay, the other a "media liaison officer" to appear on camera.

During the search Staff Sgt. McMillan explained that this was part of a "high level investigation." They were looking for a document and who leaked it to me. "My understanding is that you will be charged with an offense," he told me. The search warrant specified three offenses under the Security of Information Act, which boil down to communicating and receiving secret informa-

tion and possessing a secret document. A lawyer later told me the maximum sentence on conviction is 14 years in prison. "Ultimately it's going to be your decision where you want to go with this," Staff Sgt. McMillan said. He said he had been investigating for two months, the document had passed through many hands in many departments and too many people were under suspicion. "We want to put this to bed," he said. "I'm not pussyfooting around."

There was a strange combination of order and chaos during those five hours. My only small act of defiance was to drink a coffee without offering one to everyone else. One of my cats, Purra, pitched in by brushing up against the cat lovers among them, leaving tufts of white hair on freshly pressed black pants. One of the RCMP men who politely removed his shoes knocked over the cats' water bowl and didn't respond when I asked if his feet were soaked. I wiped the water up and gave Purra a pat on the head.

Wayne Lang was the assignment man, telling who to work in which room. During a burst of small talk about pets, I mentioned that my cats were from Moscow, where I had been posted for a few years for Southam News. Insp. Lang said he had been there when I was there, on RCMP detail during a visit by then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. It was too long ago to remember his face, but for a moment I thought I did. What a small world.

The major target—three of them went in together—appeared to be my home office: my laptop and Filofax, files, notebooks, cassette tapes, address books, contact lists, bookshelves, photo albums, newspaper clippings, tax files and utility bills, bank and mortgage statements, letters, and my wooden box of treasured mementoes from anniversaries and other special occasions, and love letters from my great friend, James. I cringed when I saw them reading postcards and old letters from pals who now use e-mail. I'd left a pile of photos from an outdoor family birthday party on my desk. I wished they wouldn't look at them.

My office is cozy. I can see the

steeple of the cathedral through the window when I'm writing at home. It was too cosy for them. The two experts in such things, the young woman and a young man, took my laptop down to the glass dining table and proceeded to take it apart with cute, miniature tools. When I caught a glimpse of what they were doing with the tools, their own laptops and a jungle of wires and imaging devices, I had to push away a surge of anger.

They honoured my request to please not seize my laptop on condition they copied the hard drive for seizure. They seized two copies of the hard drive, along with a box of notebooks, address books, contact lists, and microcassette tapes, all neatly packed in plastic envelopes, like blood samples at a medical lab. The material they carted away from my home and office are the tools of my trade: names, phone numbers, written and recorded notes. It left me feeling stripped.

I will remember what happened to me as part of how the post 9/11 world works. Some Canadians of Muslim faith and Middle Eastern origin have told of the early morning knock on the door from the RCMP. Because of my everyday work as a journalist, I've now experienced myself something that I realize would be more difficult to endure without a lawyer, without knowing my rights, and being confident of media attention.

When they entered, one of them videotaped the entire house. That was so that they could tape it before they left and prove they had not ransacked the place, if it ever came to that. They did put things back in order, except my bookshelves were dishevelled and here and there were envelopes of floppy discs from the dinosaur era. I had told them they were so old they were of no value. They apparently agreed.

When it was over, Staff Sgt. Legresley thanked me for cooperating. Not that I had a choice, I thought. I shook his outstretched hand and said: "I can't bring myself to thank you." ■

The Voice of Independent Journalism

‘Political cartoonists push the limits of free speech daily.’

Last year Doug Marlette drew a cartoon depicting a man dressed in Middle Eastern apparel at the wheel of a Ryder truck carrying a nuclear warhead with the caption, “What Would Mobammed Drive?.” Marlette and his paper, the Tallahassee Democrat, received more than 20,000 e-mails demanding an apology for what was seen as his misrepresentation of the Prophet Mobammed. Marlette believed that an apology was not in order. The following are excerpts from the introduction to “What Would Marlette Drive?: The Scandalous Cartoons of Doug Marlette,” published by Plan Nine Publishing in 2003. In them, Marlette describes how he replied to the criticism of that cartoon and talks about the importance of editorial cartoons.

My answer to the criticism was published in the Tallahassee Democrat (and reprinted around the country) under the headline “With All Due Respect, an Apology Is Not in Order.” ... In my 30-year career I have regularly drawn cartoons that offend religious fundamentalists and true believers of every stripe, a fact that I tend to list in the “Accomplishments” column of my resumé. I have outraged Christians by skewering Jerry Falwell, Roman Catholics by needling the Pope, and Jews by criticizing Israel. Those who rise up against the expression of ideas are strikingly similar. No one is less tolerant than those demanding tolerance. Despite differences of culture and creed, they all seem to share the egocentric notion that there is only one way of looking at things, their way, and that others have no right to see things differently. What I have learned from years of this is one of the great lessons of all the world’s religions: We are all One in our humanness. ...

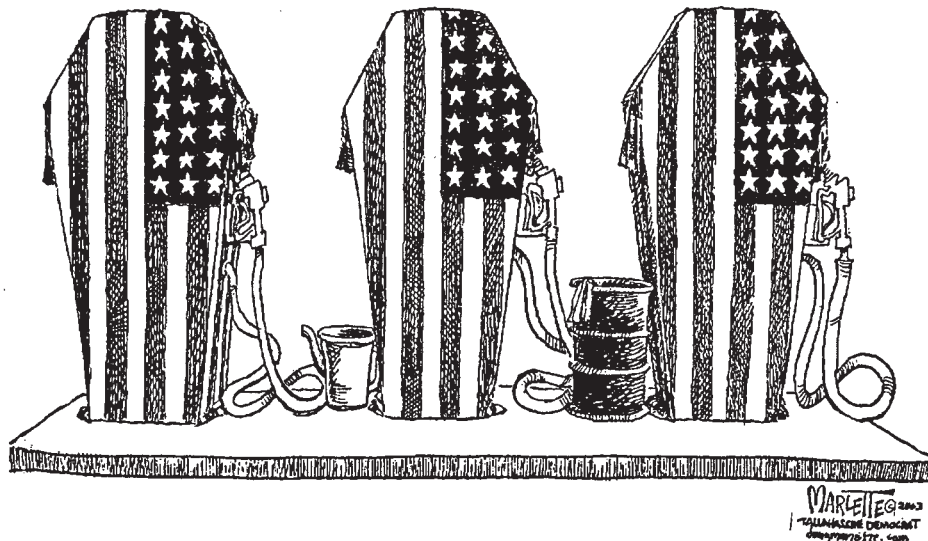
And then I gave my Journalism 101



Cartoon by © 2003 Doug Marlette.

lecture on the First Amendment, explaining why an apology was not in order: In this country we do not apologize for our opinions. Free speech is the linchpin of our republic. All other freedoms flow from it. After all, we don’t need a First Amendment to allow

us to run boring, inoffensive cartoons. We don’t need constitutional protection to make money from advertising. We don’t need constitutional protection to tell readers exactly what they want to hear. We need constitutional protection for our right to express un-



Cartoon by © 2003 Doug Marlette.

popular views. If we can't discuss the great issues of the day in the pages of our newspapers, fearlessly and without apology, where can we discuss them? In the streets with guns? In cafés with detonator vests and strapped-on bombs? ...

Political cartoonists push the limits of free speech daily. They were once the embodiment of journalism's independent voice, the gadfly spirit, the pride and point men of a vigorous free press. Today they are as endangered a species as bald eagles. The professional troublemaker has become a luxury that offends the bottom-line sensibilities of corporate journalism. Twenty years ago, there were 200 of us working on daily newspapers. Now there are only 90. Herblock is dead. Jeff MacNelly is dead. And most of the rest of us might as well be. Just as resumé hounds have replaced news hounds in today's newsrooms, ambition has replaced talent at the drawing boards. Passion has yielded to careerism, Thomas Nast to Eddie Haskell. As a result, quality is down, the currency devalued. With the retirement of Paul Conrad at the Los Angeles Times, a rolling blackout from California has engulfed the country, dimming the pilot lights on many American editorial pages. Most editorial cartoons

Homeland Insecurity



FEAR ITSELF

Cartoon by © 2003 Doug Marlette.

now look as bland as B-roll and as impenetrable as a 1040 form. Even the controversies aroused by editorial cartoons these days are often as much a result of the ineptness of the artist as of the substance of the opinion. ...

Why should we care about the obsolescence of the editorial cartoonist?

Because cartoons can't say "on the other hand," because they strain reason and logic, because they are hard to defend, they are the acid test of the First Amendment, and that is why they must be preserved. ...

What would Marlette drive? The absolute, self-evident, unalienable American way that we as a young nation discovered and modeled and road-tested for the entire world: the freedom to be ourselves, to speak the truth as we see it, and to drive it home. ■

Doug Marlette, a 1981 Nieman Fellow, has been editorial cartoonist for the Tallahassee Democrat since 2002. Before that, he was with The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and New York Newday. He won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning.

✉ yardsale@dougmarlette.com



Cartoon by © 2003 Doug Marlette.

Visualizing the War on Terror

The book, 'War,' offers an impartial look at its realities.

By Michael Persson

It is said that history is written by the winners of its wars. History is war's ultimate prize, since for the victor, it is his to shape. Often, what forms the content of history comes from the daily accounts amassed by the winning side's journalists. If journalism can be described as the minute-taker of human existence and history is its library, what happens when a historical document conveys no point of view, when it tells only about universal truths? Whose library will it then belong in? Who will identify and claim it as theirs?

The coverage of America's war on terrorism began on September 11, 2001

with an image of a plane flying into the World Trade Center's south tower. To the citizenry of earth this image was as unbelievable as Neil Armstrong's 1969 moonwalk. A few days later, an image from Ground Zero showing firemen hoisting the Stars and Stripes equaled that of the doomed jetliner splash in its surrealism, mirroring what had been done on Iwo Jima 60 years earlier and making the case for manipulation. Or was it just media déjà vu? Soon the faces of Muhammad Atta, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and John Walker Lindh, "the American Taliban," would fill our screens like wanted post-

ers on the saloon doors: Dead or Alive. And finally, the statue of the dictator himself toppling over, replayed again and again, symbolizing the end of a speedy war, when in truth things were only just getting started.

The last two years can be summarized this way, along with the headlines, catch-phrase journalese, and partisan slogans of "Shock and Awe," and "Mission Accomplished." Never had a war been so widely reported on, and yet never before had the people understood so little. The logic appeared to be that to reveal anything more would mean the terrorists had won.



An American flag raised by New York City firemen at Ground Zero on September 11, 2001. *Photo by © James Nachtwey/VII.*

“War” is a photo-documentary book published by de.MO and dedicated to this recent slice of history. In it, clichés and icons are omitted, replaced instead by skepticism and everyday facts. In its 415 pages of pictures and narrative, “War” provides evidence based on the principles of physics, not on subjectivity, showing effects from consequences and actions causing reactions. It’s hard-hitting, but impartiality always is.

Through the images captured by VII, a photo agency renowned for its collection of veteran documentary photographers, “War” brings to our attention every vivid detail, whether we like it or not. Working side-by-side with other journalists and photographers, the men and women of VII photographed that which sought to show rather than tell. “There was a consensus made by all the photographers and myself that this book needed to be impartial,” says Giorgio Baravalle, de.MO’s editor and publisher. And the book adheres to these principles as it moves through the events of September 11th to the White House and war room at the Pentagon, then captures the reaction of the Taliban and its supporters’ anti-American fervor, before ping-ponging from these shores to the deserts and mountains of the Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia, returning home again, and then on to Iraq.

The publisher makes no apologies for the book’s length, something almost outdated with news these days. “The reason why it’s big, thick and heavy is because the subject matter is big, thick and heavy,” Baravalle notes. To see the book is to know how true this is, and to look inside is to know this is also an understatement. In one picture, an Iraqi rolls around in agony, gripping his leg, as a G.I. stands poised, his weapon raised. In another, a U.S. soldier lies dead and twisted, as his platoon members scamper around cleaning up. And in another photograph, a soldier holds in his hand the charred lower half of a man’s leg still with its shoe and sock on.

But there’s more to “War” than just the slathering of shock. History should be more than specific events targeted



The Adhamiya district of Baghdad, July 2003. *Photo by © Antonin Kratochvil/VII.*

to a particular audience. It should be the aggregate of past events as they relate to the human condition and therefore must digress and put events in context while also satisfying curiosity and offering insights along the way. Unfortunately, only in a perfect world do such progressions exist. Baravalle knew this from the outset. “Impartiality isn’t appreciated at all,” he said.

“But it’s something that needs to be done. Who wants to read a history book that has no answers?”

A white horse gallops through a battered landscape and offers balance to the bullets. Balloons dissect a foreign horizon to underscore a military show-down. These images, along with those of families in the midst of war, show the Western reader that our enemy is



Idi Amma, left, an elderly Afghan refugee from Erat, by the small mud house she and 34 other Afghan refugees share in the Ghoussabad neighborhood in Quetta, Pakistan, September 2001. *Photo by © Alexandra Boulat/VII.*



Northern Alliance fighters drive a captured Taliban tank back to their lines in Kunduz, Afghanistan, November 2001. *Photo by © James Nachtwey/VII.*

no less human than we are ourselves. “Agendas dictate content ... and the war was covered on the principle of what would sell,” says Chris Anderson, a VII photographer. “This book gave us a chance to do what we wanted ... [to] show what we really saw.” Here it is, the crux of the matter: News is a product and adheres to the dictates of the marketplace. Its cut-down form reflects the way news has had to adapt in order to be profitable and survive. Eye-grabbing icons and sensational copy too often transform print journalism into a vehicle for the dramatic, catching the moment, while missing the larger point: War is hell.

A Book Without an Ending

War is about taking sides and often, so is journalism. We are told we learn from history, that history helps us in

not repeating the mistakes of the past. And yet, we don’t learn, and history doesn’t help while there are sides taken. On the front page of New York’s Daily News in November 2003 there was a full-page picture of a G.I.’s smoldering remains in the city of Mosul, Iraq. The headline read “Bastards!” Journalism stirs, but does so for the wrong reasons. In times of war, the skeptic is quieted, shipped off, and ignored.

“Americans don’t want to buy a book that reminds them of the reality outside their country,” says Baravalle. “War” is a book that does this and has looked into the heart of the matter and done it proud, if that is the right feeling one should have after closing its covers.

There are two images that speak volumes for what “War” strives to do. From just above the rubble of the towers stands Old Glory. The flag is small,

insignificant, but provides what color there is in the chalky white of what was downtown, while above, a blue-black sky amplifies the starkness. The scene is empty, void of life. It is a quiet image despite the colossal devastation, focusing the eyes to linger. Here the epic begins. Four hundred and fourteen pages later an image of an Iraqi boy standing on a roof, grabbing at something in the sky, brings the curtain down on all of the photographs that have come before. The picture implies nothing, is noncommittal and open-ended in an unsettling sort of way. Antonin Kratochvil, another VII photographer, says that this last image, which he took, and the many pictures like it in the book, move beyond the immediacy of first impression. “The last image is about transcendence. It’s why we chose it,” he says. “We knew putting this book together that the war

wasn't over, and wouldn't be ... for a long time. The boy represents what remains no matter which side you're on ... he represents the human spirit."

There is no end to "War," be it in the book itself or in the practice thereof. Unfortunately for the book, its commercial success depends on its ability to engender in readers a sense of hope and be able to offer guarantees. This it can't do. It doesn't have answers for which we are so desperate. Journalists working on both sides of the war were embedded in the field, their words and images censored to greater or lesser degrees, and then, on return, censored again by their publications, in order to do just this—reassure. As Anderson says: "You shoot for yourself when you're out there. And even though that's

my intention, I'm always thinking 'I have to please my client.' After all, they're paying."

What "War" achieves and what gives it its strength is its adherence to what the photographers saw. Their images convey the outsider's point of view, straddling the "pros," "antis," and "nons" of every movement—and that of the skeptic—avoiding the usual finger pointing and rose-colored perspectives.

"If you have children you'll understand, this is for them," says Baravalle. History is what our children inherit from us, but it also can be the looking glass in which we see ourselves. "No one won this war," reflects Anderson. If the image of Flight 175 crashing into the south tower left you shocked at

what one side could so quickly inflict, Baravalle and VII's "War" will do the same. Except, this time, the shock will be all encompassing, a feeling we should all have if history is to serve us well. ■

Michael Persson is a freelance writer and photographer, who has been published widely on topics of photojournalism and media. He worked as a photographer during the fall of the Berlin Wall, through the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe, the first Gulf War, the breakup of Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, as well as in South Africa during its path to democracy.

✉ mfpersson@yahoo.com

Murder Trials and Media Sensationalism

The press frenzy of a century ago echoes in the coverage of trials today.

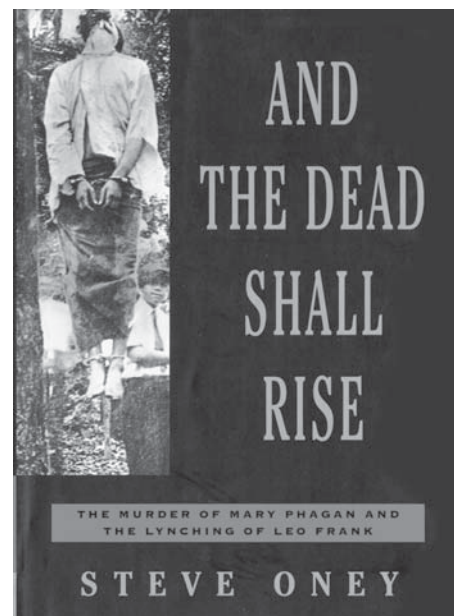
By Steve Oney

For all the media frenzy swirling around the trial of Scott Peterson for the murder of his wife, Laci—or, for that matter, all the coverage accorded the O.J. Simpson case a decade ago—the prototypic American convergence of journalistic excess and legal tragedy occurred in the early years of the 20th century, and it was played out not on television or radio but in the medium of print. That this case, involving the 1913 murder of a 13-year-old Atlanta factory worker named Mary Phagan and the subsequent lynching of her convicted killer, a Cornell-educated Northern Jew named Leo M. Frank, would point the way to much that has followed seems, in retrospect, not so surprising.

For one thing, an Atlanta Constitution reporter accompanied the officers who responded to the 3 a.m. call that the girl had been found brutally slain in the basement of the National Pencil Company, of which Frank was the superintendent. By dawn, the Constitution had an "Extra" on the streets. For

another, an Atlanta Journal reporter—none other than the young Harold W. Ross, who in a few years would found *The New Yorker*—was hot on the competition's trail. Though the Constitution got the scoop, the Journal—thanks to Ross's light-fingeredness around newsworthy documents—got possession of one of two enigmatic notes discovered by the victim's body and immediately splashed it atop its front page.

Ultimately, though, it was a third party that ratcheted up the action. On the morning Mary Phagan was found murdered, William Randolph Hearst had been the owner and publisher of *The Atlanta Georgian*—with a circulation of 38,000, the weakest of the city's three dailies—for just over a year. During that time, he'd staffed the paper with hardened veterans of his New York and Chicago operations. According to Herbert Asbury—one of the most talented of these imports and the future author of such roguish books as "The Gangs of New York"—Hearst's



journalistic storm troopers had been sitting around Atlanta bored out of their minds, waiting for something to happen. Word that a virginal child laborer had been found slain in a child-

labor factory thrilled them. “We played the case harder than any Hearst paper had ever played such a case anywhere,” Asbury would later write.

The Georgian’s coverage of the Phagan murder employed almost every armament in Hearst’s arsenal. Stripped down the center of the paper’s first front page devoted to the story was a photo of Mary Phagan’s body snapped at the morgue. A banner headline emblazoned over the masthead offered a “\$500 Reward” for exclusive information leading to the perpetrator’s arrest and conviction. Despite the fact that the weather was dry, a feature story quoted the victim’s grandfather demanding vengeance while standing in a torrential downpour. (“It wasn’t raining, but it might have been,” the reporter who wrote the article confessed years later.)

The most shocking aspect of the Georgian’s performance involved the number of Extras it published. Nearly every hour, a new edition—each topped with crimson streamers—rolled off the presses and was in the hands of newsboys. Little wonder that Herbert Asbury would subsequently recall: “Our paper was, in modern parlance, a wow. It burst upon Atlanta like a bomb and upon the Constitution and the Journal like the crack of doom.”

A Competitive Spiral of Sensationalism

As the investigation into the Phagan murder progressed, the Constitution and the Journal attempted to emulate the Georgian. “Frank Tried to Flirt with Murdered Girl, Says Boy Chum,” declared the Constitution in a front-page

headline. “Was Factory Used as Secret Rendezvous?” asked the Journal. Yet despite such efforts, the Hearst paper owned the story—much to Leo Frank’s misfortune. On the morning the superintendent was arrested, the Georgian ran a Page One banner that over a large picture of Frank unequivocally proclaimed: “Police Have The Strangler.” A greater lapse in journalistic practice would be hard to imagine.



A headline from the Hearst paper in October 1914.

Predictably, the surfeit of headlines implicating Frank in the crime convinced many Atlantans of his guilt before the first word of testimony was uttered. (Less predictably, a protest by the city’s Jews against the Georgian’s



A headline from an extra edition of The Call in August 1915.

irresponsible coverage prompted the Hearst paper to reverse course; thereafter, it not only editorialized in Frank’s behalf but slanted news stories in his favor.) There was also a related impact. Summarizing an interview with a source who ultimately admitted that the information she claimed to possess came to her in a dream, a Pinkerton detective hired by Frank noted:

“This is an intelligent woman. She reads all the news on the Phagan murder case, and I think she drew these conclusions and thinks of them so much

that she does not know whether she read them or whether someone told her. That is, she is well-read to the extent that she is crazy.”

Thus 70 years before the term “information overload” was coined, the symptoms of prolonged exposure to the sort of raw information the mass media too often disseminate were already in evidence.

The disorienting bombardment continued unabated during Frank’s month-long trial. As frequently happened with celebrated legal proceedings of the day, the Constitution, the Journal, and the Georgian covered the trial in a fashion not dissimilar to the way “Court TV” presently operates. Reporters in the courtroom took notes in shorthand, which copy boys rushed by foot to the papers’ respective newsrooms. There, as compositors set the “Q&A” in type, rewrite men pounded out fresh leads. Meanwhile, plates were engraved from sketches produced by courtroom artists. The result: Lavishly illustrated Extras were available almost hourly.

As one might expect, Hearst’s sheet excelled at this kind of thing, publishing editions on the fly both when events warranted and when they did not. The upshot: Readers fell in love with the Georgian. On the day of Frank’s conviction, the paper printed 131,208 copies—more than triple its pre-Hearst circulation.

Prior to and during Frank’s trial, sensationalism was the chief failure of Atlanta’s newspapers. To the extent that there was bias in the coverage, it was mostly in Frank’s favor, as both the Georgian and the Journal, evincing the prejudices of the time, ridiculed the state’s star witness—a black factory jani-

tor named Jim Conley, who accused Frank not only of Mary Phagan's murder but also of sexual perversity. The Constitution, which was politically allied with the prosecution, largely eschewed race-baiting.

News Media as Advocates

After Frank was convicted and sentenced to death, however, the coverage took a decidedly different turn—the glandular excitements of yellow journalism gave way to the white heat of advocacy and muckraking. The view that Frank was not only innocent but also the victim of an anti-Semitic plot was first voiced by various Atlanta Jews, but it was promulgated by two powerful media barons—Albert D. Lasker, president of the Chicago-based Lord & Thomas Advertising Agency (predecessor to Foote, Cone and Belding) and Adolph Ochs, publisher of The New York Times.

Lasker, who was responsible for some of the most successful ad campaigns (Sunkist Orange Juice, Budweiser Beer) of his day, worked his multiple connections in journalism and in Hollywood. In short order, publications such as Collier's Weekly and various newsreel companies leapt to Frank's aid. To win such support, Lasker spent more than \$100,000 (in 1999 dollars, approximately \$1.66 million) of his own money.

As big a part as Lasker played in the campaign to free Frank, his role ultimately paled in comparison to that of Ochs. Though the publisher initially resisted overtures from Frank's backers because, as an assistant put it, he didn't want the Times to become "a Jewish newspaper," by early 1914 he had decided to devote the resources of both his news and editorial staffs to the cause. During the next year and a half, the Times would publish hundreds of articles and editorials about the case.

While some of the pieces strove for balance, many were one-sided, quoting defense lawyers at length while failing to seek comment from anyone connected with the prosecution. There were only three days during December 1914, with the campaign hitting full stride, that the paper did not publish a major story concerning Frank's battle to win a new trial. Sample headlines from the month give an accurate sense of the Times's point of view: "Lawyers Unite For Frank," "Friends Plea For Frank," "Georgians Urged To Plead For Frank," and "Atlanta's Mob Spirit."

After Frank was convicted and sentenced to death, however, the coverage took a decidedly different turn—the glandular excitements of yellow journalism gave way to the white heat of advocacy and muckraking.

On New Year's Day, Frank wrote Ochs a note of thanks: "I think that a more thorough understanding of the issues in the case among the people throughout the United States has been brought about to a great extent by the space you have so kindly given to it." Several days later, in response to a letter from Frank in praise of the publisher, Albert Lasker concurred: "I quite agree with you that Mr. Adolph Ochs, through his espousal of the 'cause of an innocent man,' largely made possible the progress we have made."

Unfortunately for Frank, however, the Times's decision to put its powers to such use produced an unintended and damaging backlash. Not only did a vast majority of Georgians believe the factory superintendent was guilty of the murder of Mary Phagan, but at a time when the bruises of the Civil War were still painful, they resented a Northern newspaper dictating to their courts. They viewed Ochs's coverage as "outside interference." Articulating this stance was the legendary populist Thomas E. Watson, who had served as William Jennings Bryan's vice presi-

dential running mate in 1896 and published an influential weekly paper called The Jeffersonian. Beneath the banner headline "The Leo Frank Case. Does the State of Georgia Deserve this Nation-Wide Abuse?" Watson declared:

"Mr. Adolph Ochs, a most useful servant of the Wall Street interests, runs a Tory paper in New York whose chief end in life seems to be to uphold all the atrocities of special interest and all the monstrous demands of Big Money."

And so the battle was set. To each article or editorial championing Frank in the Times or in The Atlanta Journal (which also became a forceful advocate for the defense), Watson responded with an article or an editorial asserting—often in anti-Semitic tones—Frank's guilt. The fight

raged for a year, with the Times holding sway in the North and The Jeffersonian—whose circulation jumped from 25,000 to 87,000 during that period—holding sway in Georgia. Following the decision of Georgia Governor John Slaton to commute Frank's death sentence to life imprisonment, Watson called for a lynching. On August 16, 1915, that call was answered when Frank was abducted without a shot being fired from a state prison in the middle of Georgia and driven 150 miles through the dead of night to Marietta, the hometown of Mary Phagan, northwest of Atlanta. He was lynched at dawn the next morning.

All three Atlanta newspapers strongly condemned the lynching, as did most of the South's other major dailies. So, too, did The New York Times. Then, for a combination of reasons, the coverage stopped. For the Constitution and the Journal, the crime literally struck too close to home—the publishers of both sheets had relatives involved in either the lynching or a later attempt to desecrate Frank's body. For the Georgian, the vulnerability was fi-

nancial—people in Atlanta began boycotting the paper.

Denouncing the Times's Intervention

The Times was stilled by a different consideration, one articulated in two powerful pieces of writing. The first was by a Times's correspondent named Charles Willis Thompson, who was reporting from Georgia. In explaining why Frank had been lynched, Thompson adduced a number of reasons. Among them was one that shook Adolph Ochs:

"The bitter resentment over what everybody in Georgia calls outside interference; and this does not mean only the 'interference' by the New York newspapers by a long shot, though Tom Watson has done his level best to make it appear that the New York newspapers are attempting to govern the state of Georgia."

Heretofore, Ochs had regarded his role in the Frank affair as that of a crusader, never considering how it all might have appeared to the opposing side.

The other piece of writing that was a factor in the Times's decision to drop the case was produced by a Georgian. In the immediate aftermath of the lynching, Ochs had ordered his staff to distribute the Times's editorial denouncing the crime to all of the state's papers. The hope had been that they would reprint the broadside, but there had been no takers. In fact, W.T. Anderson, editor of the anti-lynching Macon Telegraph, was so alarmed by the publisher's thinking that he wired him back. In his diary, an assistant editor at the Times named Garet Garrett summarized the wire's contents:

"The message ... said that for the sake of the Times and Mr. O., [the Telegraph] would not print the edito-

rial as requested to do, and for the sake of the decent people of Georgia and especially for the sake of the Jews in Georgia, would Mr. O. not stop this offensive propaganda. It was the outside interference of the Jews, led by the Times, that had made it necessary to lynch Frank."

The next morning, the Telegraph gave prominent play to an eloquent restatement of these sentiments:

"As it now stands [in Georgia], Israel itself stands indicted and is the object of a great deal of indignant anger, but

tained denunciation of this state, Thomas E. Watson will, with a quick eagerness, accept what he will consider a gage of battle thrown at his feet, and he will answer in kind—more than in kind.

"Watson will be answered in kind, and so it will go on until the time will come when he will tell the people of the state of Georgia that the rich Jews of the nation have bought up the press of the Republic to vilify and blackguard the state of Georgia in revenge for the killing of Leo M. Frank. And when that charge is brought it will be passionately and plausibly presented—and Georgia generally will believe it.

"What will follow such a charge? Anti-Semitic demonstrations? Certainly. Anti-Semitic riots? Probably. Actual violence to Jewish citizens? Possibly.

"The men responsible are ... the Ochses, the Pulitzers and other leading Jews of New York and the East generally. These men now hold the comfort, safety, peace and happiness of the Jews of Georgia in the hollow of their hands."

Following so quickly upon Charles Willis Thompson's dispatch, the Telegraph's reaction deeply troubled Ochs, awakening in him not just the realization that he might share some of the blame for Frank's fate but the fear that by aligning himself so thoroughly with the poor man he had endangered the Times itself, coming perilously close to making the sheet the one thing he'd never wanted it to be—a Jewish newspaper.

At a subsequent editorial conference at the Times, the debate was sobering. Some in the room argued that the Telegraph's wire was "but a kind of intimidation," maintaining that if Ochs genuinely believed Frank was innocent, he should continue to demand that the Georgia authorities prosecute his murderers. Others, among them Garrett, advanced the



The Leo Frank story dominates the front page on July 18, 1915.

the individual Israelite is liked and respected.

"Against the race generally, there is, however, a sentiment of anger, a proneness to denunciation, which is at the present in quiescent status quo.

"If among the outside newspapers generally there is any attempt at sus-

opposite view:

"I said we should consider a few simple facts. Mr. O. was the most prominent newspaper publisher in the country. He was a Jew. The Times had printed more stuff for Frank than any other newspaper It was clear what a great many people would make of those facts."

After listening to the back-and-forth, Ochs rendered his judgment—the Times would halt its coverage of the Frank case. Wrote Garrett:

"Mr. O. ... has really a remarkable gift of putting himself in the other man's place. He said that if he were a Georgian he would have resented the outside interference

"So perishes a great enthusiasm for the sake of The N.Y. Times."

The press's wholesale abandonment of a topic that had made front-page headlines for two years was little noticed in the larger scheme of things.

The conflict that would become World War I had started, and coverage of the fighting and of America's likely participation dominated the news. Yet those who'd been involved in the Frank drama understood that they'd been shunned—they just didn't understand why. In a note to Frank's widow written a month after the lynching, a family member uncomprehendingly observed: "Strange to relate, the 'N.Y. Times' does not carry anything these days."

And so the caravan moved on. Unlike today's press, that caravan was not composed of satellite trucks, mini-cams and all the other obtrusive electronic gadgetry. And the sort of advocacy journalism practiced in this instance by the Times seems anachronistic—although maybe the folks at the Augusta National Golf Club who bridled at the paper's recent coverage of attempts to enroll a female member wouldn't think

so. Nonetheless, the Frank case remains emblematic. This was a modern media frenzy, and while the medium was, in contemporary terms, an old one, the effect was startling and new and feels very familiar. ■

Steve Oney, a 1982 Nieman Fellow, was a reporter for Atlanta Weekly, the Sunday magazine of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, for five years. He also was a senior editor at California magazine and a senior writer at Premiere. He is the author of "And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank," published by Pantheon Books in 2003. Oney spent 17 years researching and writing "And the Dead Shall Rise."

✉ steveoney@dslextre.me.com

Ken Auletta's 'Backstory' Reveals Insights About the Business of News

What happens when the romance of journalism collides with the reality of business?

Backstory: Inside the Business of News

Ken Auletta

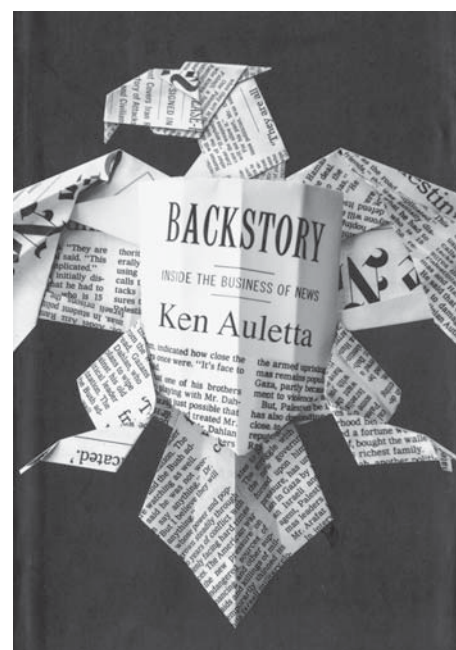
The Penguin Press. 296 Pages. \$24.95.

By Everette E. Dennis

No reporter, in my opinion, has a better understanding of the business of news than Ken Auletta, The New Yorker's media critic and analyst. Over the years, in careful probes into the boardrooms and executive suites of U.S. media companies, he has made his readers eyewitnesses to crucial decisions affecting print and electronic media as well as digital communication. To do this he has painstakingly earned exceptional access and remarkable rapport with all sorts of media owners and executives without ever

forgetting that he is first and foremost a journalist. Indeed, even in the face of his own celebrity, the lure of television and the speaking circuit, Auletta's work has deepened and matured. No matter what, he is always the thoroughgoing investigator, offering multiple sources and detailed assessment, when other media critics take shortcuts.

His latest offering, "Backstory: Inside the Business of News," published in 2003 by The Penguin Press, does not disappoint. While "Backstory" is largely a collection of published articles from



The New Yorker with updated postscripts, they warrant reconsideration individually and as a purposeful look at the writer's capacity to chart change, whether radical or incremental, in the media and entertainment industries.

Still, there is a wistful tone in Auletta's romance with journalism set against business realities in this caveat:

"As a reporter, I've learned it's the nature of corporate executives to extol the virtues of synergy, profit margins, the stock price, cost cutting, extending the brand, demographics, ratings and getting on the team. Journalists rarely share these concerns, so we often denounce what we see as dumb corporate decisions that do violence to journalism. We would do better to recognize that this is the nature of the business culture and figure out how to translate our journalistic concerns into language corporate executives can understand. Since they write the checks, somehow journalists must persuade our corporate chiefs to broaden their too narrow definition of success."

Unfortunately, Auletta makes this plea at a time when journalism (the news and information function of the media) has clearly been demoted, when journalistic competence is rarely the route to top leadership in the corporation, and when technology and formats often triumph over substance and content. Since many universal values and certitudes that journalists hold dear were fashioned in an era when newspaper companies (and their subsequent corporate owners) were led by executives who emerged from the newsroom, it is not surprising that those assumptions are no longer embedded in the minds and hearts of their successors who are increasingly drawn from the business side—and even from other industries. Any assessment of corporate and journalistic values must begin with some semblance of mutual understanding and recognition that few me-

dia companies are now led by former news executives.

Persuading owners and executives in commercial enterprises that they should find broader measures for success that go beyond the profit motive seems a hard sell, and it begs the question of whether journalists as advocates for their own interests, which they believe to be the public interest, are sufficiently impartial as witnesses of change in the media industries.

Nonetheless, "Backstory" offers rich detail on the rise, operational style, and eventual demise of Howell Raines, the brilliant and ultimately dethroned executive editor of The New York

Any assessment of corporate and journalistic values must begin with some semblance of mutual understanding and recognition that few media companies are now led by former news executives.

Times. The book opens with a 62-page explication of the "Howell Doctrine," which accurately captures the editor's creative flair, deeply held values, and missteps as a manager and leader. Another lengthy chapter takes us back to the early days of Publisher Arthur Sulzberger, Jr.'s reign and sets the stage for ultimately understanding the underlying rationale for his less-than-adroit handling of the Jayson Blair fiasco a decade later.

Both pieces are worthy entreaties reminding us of the "gold standard" value of The New York Times, but also serve as case studies of mangled management when good intentions had unintended consequences. Sometimes forgotten is the fact that this undisputedly great newspaper might be the model for the beneficent owner, but has rarely been an early initiator of change in journalism, whether in developing special sections, welcoming lively writing, introducing color and vivid graphics, or other innovations that typically happen elsewhere first, then are later (and often grudgingly)

adopted by the Times.

Juxtaposed with the good values of The New York Times—and I do believe they are—we are reintroduced in freeze-frame, circa 1997, to Times Mirror's Mark Willes, a gifted packaged foods executive, but hapless in his efforts to meld business and journalistic values at the Los Angeles Times. Willes's seemingly radical and widely publicized efforts to break down the walls between editorial and advertising functions and Auletta's reminder of the celebrated Staples Center incident might seem dated now, but offer a cautionary tale for executives who fail to understand the power journalists

wield when insisting on the primacy of journalistic values and ethics. It is naive, though, to think that there are not coexisting ethical values among business professionals and journalists. Sometimes their values do conflict, but because there are few absolutes, compromises can occur.

And in all instances, it's not a matter of moralistic right and wrong.

While Auletta has written extensively about synergies and convergences, that topic is only gently explored here in a piece called "Synergy City," which surveys the highly successful strategies and outcomes of the Tribune Co. and its integration of content and technologies between and among publishing, broadcasting and Internet investments. Auletta argues that the flagship Chicago Tribune is better than it once was (even a decade ago), but not as good as it could be. This assessment is based on extensive interviews and a careful reading of the Chicago Tribune and three other newspapers that fly the Tribune flag. What emerges is the best business case study I've seen on the balance between journalistic integrity and profitability. Auletta rightly sizes up the quiet confidence of the Tribune Co., juxtaposed against the more transparent and less effective efforts of Times Mirror and Mark Willes, who became a symbol of corporate values run amok. Parenthetically, Tribune Co. later ac-

quired Times Mirror.

There is time for journalism's idiosyncrasies in Auletta's journey as well with a superb and previously unpublished study of the tabloid wars in New York City and pieces on radio shock jock Don Imus and Fox News. As always, the people behind the paper or the box (Imus or Fox's Roger Ailes) get thoroughgoing scrutiny. If other critics are wont to give these two a pass as media eccentrics, Auletta is not and measures them up against their claims. Imus emerges as an amusing (or maddening) curmudgeon while Ailes and the content he has wrought (including Bill O'Reilly) fail on the journalism metric even while being acknowledged as successful in the counting house. Other pieces in the book include Auletta's well-known critique of undisclosed speaking fees by journalistic celebrities and a thoughtful reflection on presidential campaign coverage, albeit circa 1996.

Journalists' Reluctance to Change

While Ken Auletta is as good as media reporters/critics get, there are times when I wish his passionate defense of journalistic certitudes and moral imperatives made him more empathetic with industry innovators and visionaries who cross swords with the status quo. As Auletta knows as well as anyone, the reportorial culture is rarely innovative or open to structural or stylistic change since change often is perceived as a devaluation of journalistic values. Ironically, he expresses admiration for such stylistic pioneers as Gay Talese and Lillian Ross and other New Journalists of the 1960's and 1970's. I say this is ironic because during that period, in a study of New Journalism, I interviewed many top editors whom Auletta would also presumably admire, and most decried the innovations of New Journalism that are now commonplace. It turns out that

people interested in readership, ratings and compelling coverage were more likely to recognize this as a worthwhile and progressive change than were the grumpy denizens of the newsroom who believed these and other writers were defiling the journalistic temple. By the same token, Auletta doubts that many of the experiments today with synergy and convergence might ultimately have value.

It is certainly true that journalists are sometimes shortsighted and business side people are sometimes more willing to take risks—even if sometimes they turn out badly. In recent interviews at the 25 top U.S. media

... the reportorial culture is rarely innovative or open to structural or stylistic change since change often is perceived as a devaluation of journalistic values.

companies, corporate executives frequently asserted that journalistic skills are rarely useful for people developing digital strategies for journalistic content. The possible reason is that journalists have a harder time seeing the forest from their perch in the branches of the trees. And to some media executives it seems that journalistic competencies and perspectives can run counter to what is needed for clear strategic thinking, which requires an openness to new formats and forms in the midst of changing styles and standards of journalism. It is wise to remember that every major change in journalism, from the invention of the copy desk to the new technologies of the Internet, was fiercely resisted before it was eventually accepted and integrated.

In an era when ever-larger media companies are being created, are journalists—many of whom have vested interests in retaining the status quo—able to offer reliable assessments about the impact of this change? Perhaps it was always this way, but it seems today

that journalists, who feel increasingly dissatisfied with their role in the corporation, are hardly in a position to offer impartial analysis of the changes they are experiencing.

Sorting out the role of the individual journalist in the midst of these seismic changes in the structure and ownership of the business warrants deep thinking, and Auletta facilitates that process. When journalists ask media executives to be more flexible and open-minded, it is not such a stretch that they will ask the same of journalists, in return. That need not be a Faustian bargain, though that possibility exists.

A comprehensive journey through the history of journalism shows, on balance, progress and improvement. The truth is that journalists lack a pervasive theory and accept change slowly while business-side managers can move more strategically and swiftly. We should remember that neither is right all of the time and that the clash of values can sometimes be beneficial. But reconciling differences is more than a matter of journalists persuading owners that their short-term, profit-oriented thinking is wrong. Journalists think in short cycles too, though for different reasons. That is why Auletta's take on the business of news is so important—and must engage the interest of others who aren't in this business if the public is truly to be well served. Fortunately, Auletta demonstrates persuasively why the bargaining game between journalism and business is more than "inside baseball" and warrants continued public attention—and citizen engagement. ■

Everette E. Dennis is Distinguished Felix E. Larkin professor of media and entertainment industries at Fordham's Graduate School of Business in New York and the author of many books and articles about journalism and media industries ranging from the New Journalism to convergence and digital strategies.

✉ dennis@fordham.edu

Friendships, Feuds and Betrayal in the Newsroom

Arthur Gelb's memoir reflects on The New York Times's inner workings.

City Room

Arthur Gelb

G.P. Putnam's Sons. 664 Pages. \$29.95.

By Robert H. Phelps

First, disclosure: I worked for Arthur Gelb on the metropolitan desk of The New York Times for a little over a year in the early 1960's. I liked Arthur but not my job. Second, for nearly a decade I was the news editor of the Times's Washington bureau, which Arthur singles out for harsh criticism in this recounting of his 45-year love affair with the former gray lady of 43rd Street. However, I am not mentioned in this memoir, a fact that Nieman Reports believes qualifies me, at least from the standpoint of reasonable purity, to write this review.

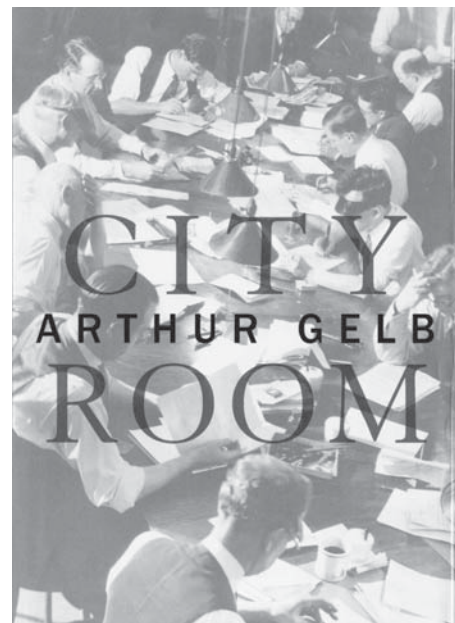
"City Room" is an easy read. Anecdotes tumble over one another in the style now called narrative journalism, from the first day gangly 20-year-old Arthur Gelb set foot in the newsroom in 1944 to Abe Rosenthal's wistful 80th birthday party in 2002. The tales pile up while the years roll on. As Arthur, the coruscating metropolitan editor, tells it, he and Abe, the brilliant managing editor, take over and make over the paper—well, most of the paper.

Only a hardened Rosenthal hater would doubt that the Times is a far better newspaper now than it was three decades ago. While the Federal Trade Commission could cite it for false advertising in its slogan, "All the News That's Fit to Print," it gives the reader, day in, day out, far more information than anyone can absorb. Old-timers grouse about the content of some of the weekday sections, but the additions have extended the Times's reach in medicine, health, science, electronics and culture, as well as sports and entertainment. The clammy hand of rule-bound editors has been loosened,

and good writing is encouraged throughout the paper. Artists, having taken control from the makeup editors, transform pages into attractive layouts that entice readers to stay with the paper long after the coffee has grown cold. Moreover, the staff charges out of the starting blocks much faster than in the old days.

Who gets credit for this giant leap forward? For Gelb, Rosenthal led the way. In his summing-up of his former boss, Gelb, although still hurt because he felt Rosenthal betrayed him, puts it this way: "It would be an egregious disservice not only to Abe, but to the history of American journalism, not to acknowledge his immense contribution to the evolution of contemporary newspaper writing and editing."

In discussing the expansion of the paper, Gelb concedes that the business side, through Walter Mattson, a senior vice president (later president), and John Pomfret, assistant general manager (later general manager and executive vice president), eventually convinced Abe and him that the news department would not lose its independence if it cooperated with the advertising department in going to a four-section newspaper. The additional content, which, in this case, is a better word than "news," increased circulation and advertising (with a timely assist from the economy) and thereby helped rescue the Times from the dire financial straits of the mid-1970's. Gelb does not say who first proposed the four-section idea, but Mattson and Pomfret, who made the first move, were masters in human relations and likely talked the two editors into thinking they did. In any event, both sides



contributed to the successful expansion. However, Gelb leaves no doubt that, in his mind, he deserves major credit because he developed the editorial concepts (he does not say that many ideas came from Mattson and Pomfret) and gave birth to the sections. Indeed, they are his legacy.

Rosenthal and Reston

Media watchers will not be surprised that Gelb joins the deconstructionists in maligning the once sainted James (Scotty) Reston, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes, who more than anyone brought thoughtful analysis to the news pages. After all, Reston worked for years to break up the Rosenthal-Gelb double helix. Many readers, however, will be startled by Gelb's tarnishing of his sidekick Rosenthal. They had grown into journalistic Siamese twins. Often, Gelb writes, "I felt as though Abe and I were two halves of the same person." No wonder, then, that Gelb, on tour in Venice in 1969, was shocked when Rosenthal called with the news that he was becoming managing editor and that Seymour Topping would be his

assistant managing editor.

“My heart dropped,” Gelb recalls. “I couldn’t believe that Abe, with whom I had worked as closely as a brother since we started together on the metropolitan desk in 1963, would wait until the last possible moment to spring this news—first, that he was moving to the top, and, second, that he was not designating me as his deputy.

“Remember,” Abe said in the phone call, “Scotty made you a pretty clear promise [of being Sunday editor], and I’m sure he’ll stand by it.’ I tried hard to accept Abe’s reassurance and consoled myself with the fact that I did, after all, still have the job I treasured as metropolitan editor. Nevertheless, I felt betrayed.”

Days later, in London, Abe explained that Scotty, then executive editor, had been “dead set” against Gelb’s appointment as assistant managing editor and “less than thrilled” that Abe was going to be managing editor. Later, Gelb says, he learned that Reston had unsuccessfully urged the publisher, Arthur Ochs (Punch) Sulzberger, to appoint Max Frankel, the Washington bureau chief, managing editor. “Scotty was still determined to break up Abe and me as a newsroom team, fearing we were too aggressive a combination and would try to impose our own overachieving style on the paper,” Gelb writes. “Separately we would be contained, Scotty evidently believed, but together we would be overwhelming.”

Three years later, Reston, although no longer executive editor, persuaded the publisher to name Frankel Sunday editor, despite his promise to Arthur. “I was angry, at what I saw as yet another double-cross, and I seriously considered leaving the paper,” Gelb writes. Wisely he stayed on as metropolitan editor.

Gelb recognizes Rosenthal’s explosive temper and also indicates that his pal eventually became jealous of him. In a revealing anecdote he tells of a dinner he and Abe had at the Algonquin Hotel with Joseph Papp, the Public Theatre director. Papp explained to Abe why he had dismissed his right-hand man. “Smart executives like you and me eventually have to learn about

keeping anyone nipping at our heels too close to us,” Papp said, obviously referring to Abe’s refusal to insist on Gelb as his assistant managing editor. Gelb joined in the laughter but writes that “nonetheless the pain of the betrayal lingered.”

Yet Gelb, in situation after situation, sets aside his hurt to express a loyal preference for Rosenthal over Frankel, although the latter gave him the title of managing editor.

If there is a villain in this book, it is Scotty Reston. Abe and Scotty shared characteristics, Gelb says, as sons of struggling immigrant parents, with a strong love of the United States and the Times. “But while Scotty had aspired to blend in with smooth upper-class Washington, Abe had retained his unvarnished gutsy New York attitude. The two had tried to mask an ever-growing dislike for one another—and mostly managed to keep peace for the sake of the paper.” If an “unvarnished gutsy New York attitude” means dining day-after-day at Sardi’s and the Four Seasons with the beautiful people, literati and movers and shakers, which is what Abe and Arthur did, then it’s a step or two down in food and ambiance to dine with smooth Washington upper-class government officials and politicians at the staid Metropolitan Club in Washington, which Reston did. In both cases their dining companions were their friends, as well as their sources and the readers they most valued, all of which adds up to an elite journalism that raises troubling ethical questions on both sides.

Gelb sees Reston as deteriorating so badly when he moved to New York that he lost his news judgment. He mentions the story that Scotty, vacationing on Cape Cod, wrote on the death of Mary Jo Kopechne, the passenger in the car that Senator Edward Kennedy drove off a bridge at Chappaquiddick. It began, “Tragedy again struck the Kennedy family.” Rosenthal, Gelb says, gently insisted on a rewrite on the basis that the story concerned the death of a young woman by an influential senator. Reston complied but objected when Rosenthal said he was sending Joseph Lelyveld to follow the story,

seeing it as simply a one-day story about a tragic accident.

Not the first to say so, Gelb calls Reston a failure as executive editor. “Scotty presided over meetings with his top desk editors like a pipe-puffing professor leading a seminar. At times he seemed shrouded in Presbyterian rectitude. Seated at the conference table straight-backed, he’d often stare into the middle distance, as if pondering the world’s destiny, puzzling over the grand scheme of things, talking about ‘finding America.’ He would make suggestions for coverage that were vague and abstract, more appropriate for an academic monthly magazine than a daily paper whose lifeblood was in hard news for the next day’s editions. Bewildered glances were exchanged among the editors, as all waited for Scotty to come to his point. He rarely did. While he had once been an inspired Washington correspondent, it was clear he didn’t have the instincts for running a complex daily operation like the Times.”

Perhaps Gelb does not understand what Reston, never a hands-on editor, was trying to do. By sitting at a desk in the middle of the newsroom instead of in his executive office, Reston was sending a message that he was the point man, available to all. He wanted that because in Washington he had often complained that Clifton Daniel, as managing editor, was not managing or editing the paper. Yet it could not have taken him long in New York to understand why each of his two predecessors, Turner Catledge and Daniel, decided to act as chairman of the board and not as chief executive officer. There was too much to do in both roles. The newsroom needed a vision of where it was going and a field general to take it there. Reston tried to provide the vision of a chairman while sitting in the chair of the CEO. Reston’s inability to do both jobs, while struggling unsuccessfully to continue his Washington column by phone, provided the opening for Rosenthal to dominate the newsroom by acting as CEO, thus clearing the way for his ultimate rise to the very top when Scotty returned to Washington 13 months later.

Although Gelb entitles his book “City Room,” its reach is wide enough to embrace the Pentagon Papers, Watergate and the Washington bureau in general. And his reach exceeds his grasp. He goes out of his way to denigrate the bureau, attributing its catch-up response to the Watergate scandal to the risible idea that it lacked the phone number of the District of Columbia police. Actually, the bureau did quite well in mining the police department and prosecutor’s office. It was the lack of sources in the Nixon administration that hobbled the bureau’s coverage. Abe was “gnashing his teeth” as *The Washington Post* broke one story after another, Gelb said, adding: “At one point, he considered sending me to the bureau to head up the coverage ... but I believed my going would be of little avail, because once a story as big and complicated as Watergate gets away from you, it’s virtually impossible to catch up.”

Abe told Arthur much later that not removing Frankel as head of the Washington bureau during Watergate was the greatest mistake of his career. Gelb does not say whether Abe suggested Frankel’s removal to the publisher. Fear of Reston and of a bureau uprising similar to the 1968 uproar over replacing Tom Wicker as bureau chief certainly were factors in holding Abe back.

Gelb touches lightly on the damage suffered by the staff under his and Rosenthal’s prodding. Throughout the book he refers to “my reporters” and “my staff,” even “my paper,” a disturbing frame of mind for a leader of equals, but then, perhaps, although he fondly remembers many of them, he does not consider the reporters his equals. Yet he speaks frankly, saying he can see why some reporters were “ambivalent about me.” And even more frankly, “I’m not at all sure I’d have wanted to work for me when I was an editor.” Rosenthal was even more difficult to work for. The two apparently were blind to the low morale in the newsroom. But the publisher, informed by Reston, was not. In his memoir Frankel says that when he succeeded Rosenthal as executive editor, Punch asked him to restore staff morale, which he did.

Failures on Some Stories

Gelb is justly proud of his career, but he seems oblivious to the ethical questions raised by his personal ties to the artistic crowd both as cultural news editor and as metropolitan editor. While he and Rosenthal deserve high praise for invigorating the Times’s coverage of local news, he neglects to explain some of the stories the metropolitan desk tripped up on during his watch. Here are examples from just two tests of their leadership:

- The fiscal crisis of 1975, which suddenly brought New York City’s government to its knees: For the most part the Times was asleep, like the rest of the press, until the danger of bankruptcy became clear. The Times eventually did a good catch-up job, which was better than nothing but a poor substitute for the watchdog role it should have played in previous years. In the end, Gelb concedes, the Daily News headline on President Gerald Ford’s rejection of aid was the most powerful journalistic achievement of the crisis: “Ford to City: Drop Dead.”
- The Blood Brothers stories of 1964: Gelb emphasizes the Times’s requirement for rigorous checking, but he fails to explain why he and Abe did not insist on multiple sourcing before running Junius Griffin’s reports that a gang of militant black youths was roaming Harlem streets seeking to kill whites. It is more than interesting that the exclusive stories remained exclusive. No other paper could discover the gang, leading some on the Times to doubt its existence. Gelb concedes that at times he harbored doubts. Twenty years later, in talking with Griffin, those doubts still bothered him, and he again asked the former reporter about the stories. Griffin, he said, “insisted that every fact in his stories had been true.” Gelb hedges his conclusion: “Overall I found Griffin’s sincerity convincing.”

The reader should be thankful that Gelb’s editor, Marian Wood, did not

delete the anecdotes he had squirreled away because they shed so much light on the reporters who, in the end, were the key elements of the Times in those days—fun-loving Mike Berger, cynical Homer Bigart, dogged Peter Kihss, pert Edith Evans Asbury, influential Brooks Atkinson, giggly Craig Claiborne, astute Charlotte Curtis, relentless Nicholas Gage, stylish Gay Talese, poetic McCandlish Phillips, generous Irving (Pat) Spiegel, and many others. (Is it quibbling to ask how Gelb is able to recreate, decades after events, word-by-word conversations? Did he really find time after 16-hour workdays to jot down not just those stories, but also the exact words?)

Gelb even finds room in the last few pages to express dismay over the Times’s apology—four pages of “self flagellation”—for a young reporter’s fake stories that led to staff complaints about Howell Raines, the executive editor, who, with the managing editor, Gerald Boyd, had to resign. Gelb said he tried to alert Raines to the staff’s grievances, but there were extenuating circumstances that absorbed his attention, including the terrorism story, the death of his mother and father and his marriage. If Gelb, who was certainly a moderating influence, had only alerted his buddy to the stress, anger, even terror that Rosenthal’s intense personal style created in the newsroom, would Abe have listened? Shock therapy would have been necessary, for Abe thought those who disagreed with him were less loyal to the paper.

Rosenthal and Gelb stand tall in the history of the Times. How much taller both would stand if Arthur had tried—and convinced—his friend to change his ways. ■

Robert Phelps is the retired editor of Nieman Reports. After leaving The New York Times, Phelps moved to The Boston Globe, from which he retired as executive editor after 11 years.

✉ rhpelps@mindspring.com

The Idea of Educating Journalists

Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism travels a long, bumpy road to approach its founder's vision.

Pulitzer's School: Columbia University's School of Journalism, 1903-2003

James Boylan

Columbia University Press. 337 Pages. \$37.50.

By Jeffrey Scheuer

A century ago, Joseph Pulitzer had a grand idea: to establish a school of journalism. And not just anywhere, but at Columbia University in New York, coupling a great center of learning with a vast urban laboratory for the gathering of news. Pulitzer, the publisher of the *New York World*, boldly conceived that such a school might help elevate journalism to the status of professions such as business and law. But in order to house it on Columbia's expansive new uptown campus—in fact, right by the main gate at 116th Street and Broadway—he had to deal with an equally ambitious university president, Nicholas Murray Butler, then at the beginning of his 43-year tenure.

It wasn't easy. After envisioning a "School of Journalism" in a now-landmark essay that appeared in the *North American Review* in 1904, it took several years for Pulitzer to sell the idea to Butler and for their two outsized egos to come to terms. In the end, Pulitzer decided the school shouldn't be launched until his death, and so the Columbia School of Journalism finally opened its doors in 1912. By then, the University of Missouri had beaten Columbia for the honor of being the first school of journalism in America.

What exactly did Pulitzer have in mind? This is what he wrote: "It is the idea of work for the community, not commerce, not for one's self, but primarily for the public, that needs to be taught. The School of Journalism is to be, in my conception, not only not commercial, but anticommercial." That suggests an interesting idea: that in a democracy, journalism, like education,

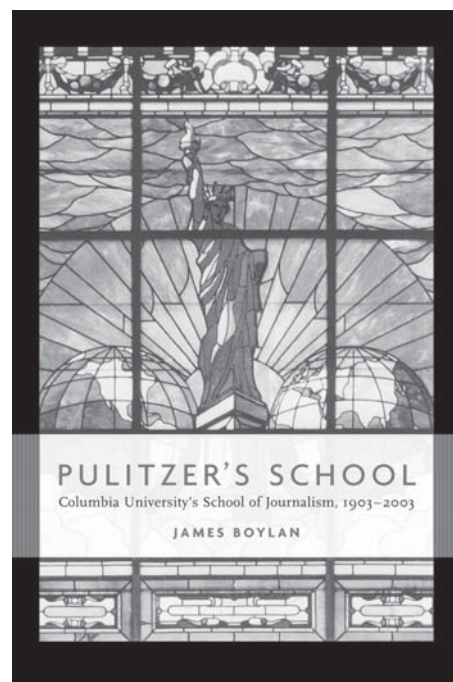
is too important to be left to the private sector.

The J-School's History

But only now, a century after it was articulated, is the school edging back toward Pulitzer's vision. And what a tortuous century it has been. That's one of the many ironies underscored in "Pulitzer's School," James Boylan's well-timed history of the "J-School." Indeed, the title itself is an ironic reflection of how the school, after failing to take its founder's name, suffered the indignity of being overshadowed by (despite close cohabitation with) the Pulitzer Prizes.

Boylan, who taught at the school from 1957 to 1979, was founding editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*—perhaps the school's most palpable achievement. Richard T. Baker wrote a history of the school in 1954, but a fuller treatment was overdue, and "Pulitzer's School" is a balanced, meticulous book, and a service to the troubled and problematic cause of journalism education.

A year after opening for business under its imperious first director, Talcott Williams, the School of Journalism moved into its present building on 116th Street. It was beset with contradictions from the outset. The original plan was for a four-year undergraduate liberal arts curriculum to prepare students for the practice of journalism. But by 1919 it had evolved into a two-year course for upperclassmen. Already it was beginning to look like a trade school and loosen its ties to the univer-



sity at large. The relationship with Columbia's administration has been contentious ever since.

The journalism school's pretensions were mocked by the likes of H.L. Mencken and A.J. Liebling, among many other critics, yet it gained prestige. A supposed center of enlightened journalism, it reflected the antipacifism and anti-Semitism of the university during the First World War. Almost from the first, it was fraught with uncertainty about what exactly it should teach, what degree it should award, and whether it should focus on general knowledge or the practice of journalism: the high-minded vision of its all-but-irrelevant founder, or the more mundane predilections of the press.

The first and most durable dean, serving from 1931 to 1956, was Carl W. Ackerman, a talented and ambitious leader who brought the school to greater prominence but neglected the curriculum. His major innovation was the conversion to a one-year graduate program in 1935. The school's core mission became fixed: to provide a graduate year of journalistic work on the simulated-newsroom model. The (New York) Daily News commented tartly: "We consider that a step in the right direction, but believe that the course is still one year too long."

That model has been questioned and criticized ever since: Why should "knowledge of the craft" be taught at a major university? Why should it be taught at the expense of the vast array of learning that the university has to offer, much of it relevant to developing good journalists? And why should it be taught at all, when it can be learned by on-the-job experience at smaller newspapers and broadcast stations?

Much of the history that Boylan relates is of institutional drift and infighting among faculty, deans and presidents. There was a somewhat bizarre sideshow during World War II, when the school sponsored a satellite school of journalism in Chungking, China under the auspices of Chiang Kai-shek's ministry of propaganda, with secret sponsorship by the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency. It lasted two years, producing a rich assortment of conflicts and a heavily censored newspaper. The account of that dubious enterprise is one of the more entertaining parts of the book.

Ackerman was thwarted in seeking a two-year graduate program, but the conversion to a graduate school was surely justified: If nothing else, journalists should have a liberal arts education before undertaking professional training. His final act was perhaps his best: standing up to McCarthyism when many in the university did not.

A string of able and dedicated deans succeeded Ackerman without fundamentally altering the school. During the 1950's and 60's, Edward Barrett enriched the curriculum, but he, too,

failed in the effort to add an additional year. In more recent decades, Elie Abel, Osborn Elliott, Joan Konner, and Tom Goldstein were caught up in the perennial conflicts with the faculty (increasingly capable but resistant to the scholarly model), the university administration, and the other tenants of the Journalism Building on 116th Street. Those media organizations—including the American Press Institute, the Gannett Foundation's Media Studies Center, and the Pulitzer Prizes—were often hostile to the school despite their natural affinities to journalism education. Only in 1995 did the school gain full control of its building.

"Pulitzer's School" often reads like a textbook of academic politics at its worst. But Boylan also notes the brighter side of the ledger. That Columbia's School of Journalism has survived at all despite its weaknesses, its critics, and slim support from the university, is something of a marvel. It has enjoyed a national and international reputation that many of those critics consider outsized. And it has a deeply devoted following among its alumni/ae, particularly those who are working journalists.

Moreover, the school has attracted distinguished faculty members through much of its curious career, including such scholars as Douglas Southall Freeman, Walter B. Pitkin and Henry Pringle in the early decades, and in later years the likes of Fred Friendly, Melvin Mencher, Penn Kimball, and Kenneth K. Goldstein. (Each of the latter, and Goldstein in particular, managed to inspire this wayward reviewer.) And in the past decade, two top-notch media scholars have been added, James W. Carey and Todd Gitlin.

Returning to Pulitzer's Vision

The final chapter of "Pulitzer's School" recounts the recent dramatic events at the J-School: how Lee C. Bollinger, newly installed in 2002 as Columbia's president, abruptly called off the search for a new journalism dean, created an elite task force to contemplate the mis-

sion of journalism education and, in 2003, selected Nicholas Lemann to lead the school. Late in 2003, it was announced that a two-year program would begin on a small scale, to further augment the reporting curriculum with substantive scholarship. Perhaps Pulitzer's dream of training thoughtful, knowledgeable journalists will finally be realized.

Boylan's history of the school is full of ironic subtext: how it drifted from Pulitzer's vision to become a trade school; how it missed the chance to carry his name; its uncertainty and mediocrity, especially early on, despite being the sole journalism school on an Ivy League campus and widely considered the nation's best; its failure to successfully meld with that university, and the recent shift back toward Pulitzer's vision of teaching knowledge as well as skills.

Ultimately, "Pulitzer's School" is about a basic and corrosive cultural rift. It's not just the various cultural and intellectual barriers between professors and journalists, although that looms large; many fine minds have passed through schools of journalism, as teachers and students. It is the wider failure of American culture to reconcile journalism and academe as broad—and ultimately connected—avenues for inquiry and pursuit of truth in the service of democracy. Columbia now has an opportunity to contribute to such a reconciliation. Bollinger and Lemann will attempt, where so many have failed, to bring scholarship and journalism together for the public good. "Pulitzer's School" is an excellent preface to that great enterprise. ■

Jeffrey Scheuer, a 1978 graduate of Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, is the author of "The Sound Bite Society: How Television Helps the Right and Hurts the Left," published by Four Walls Eight Windows in 1999 and Routledge in 2001. He is writing a book on journalism and democracy.

✉ jscheuer1@aol.com

Images From China

During the most turbulent years in China's recent history, photojournalist **Li Zhensheng** documented the "human tragedies and personal foibles" of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath for the Heilongjiang Daily in Harbin, China. Now many of these images and interviews with him are published in "Red-Color News Soldier, published by Phaidon." Robert Pledge, director of Contact Press Images, which worked to bring this collection together, writes in his introduction that "We will be forever grateful to Li for having risked so much to doggedly preserve the images in this book at a time when most of his colleagues agreed to allow their negatives to be destroyed." Four photographs and excerpts from Pledge's introduction begin a series of documentary photo essays and stories that Nieman Reports is featuring on China's past and present.

In "Morning Sun," a documentary film about the Cultural Revolution, **Carma Hinton** and her production and directing colleagues looked for ways to tell the complex stories on film about what happened in China without having available to them a lot of archival footage from that time. ("Morning Sun" does use many of Li Zhensheng's photographs.) They decided to, in Hinton's words, "weave together diverse personal stories with period footage, relying heavily on cultural productions of that time to chart the psychological and emotional topography of high-Maoist China." Two feature films—which "echo the mental landscape of the young generation that participated in the Cultural Revolution"—serve "as historical metaphor and provide a narrative structure" for this film.

Chinese photographer **Zhou Hai**, who works independently out of Beijing, has focused his camera on laborers who work in factories and mines. In a touring exhibition he calls "The Unbearable Heaviness of Industry," Zhou Hai wants those who look at these images to be able to understand more about the enormous sense of loss and frustration that many such workers in China feel. Once respected, they've been marginalized in the country's rapidly changing economy. As he writes: "When labor is a source of pride, material return is less of a concern for the laborers. When this pride wears out in the course of time and as money sneaks in to be a standard measure, the glory is lost and survival instincts take over."

Zhang Zhen, who teaches cinema studies at New York University, writes about the film work of **Ning Ying**, whom she calls "China's premiere woman director." Ning Ying does both fictional and documentary films. In her feature-length documentary "Railroad of Hope," Ning Ying conveys "a searing portrait of internal mass migration in China," as she filmed and interviewed agricultural workers who were leaving Sichuan Province for a three-day train ride in search of work. Photographs from this journey accompany Zhang Zhen's words. ■

‘Red-Color News Soldier’

From the mid-1960’s to the early 1980’s, Li Zhensheng, a photojournalist, took thousands of rolls of film for the Heilongjiang Daily, the leading newspaper in Harbin, China. He was able to document the “human tragedies and personal foibles” of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath. Many of his photographs and interviews with him are published in “Red-Color News Soldier.” What follows is an excerpt from the book’s introduction, written by Robert Pledge, cofounder and director of Contact Press Images, and four of Li Zhensheng’s photographs.

“Red-Color News Soldier” is the literal translation of the four Chinese characters printed on the armband first given to Li Zhensheng and his rebel group in Beijing at the end of 1966, eight months after the launch of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. ...

For a long time in the Western world, Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution were perceived with amazement and fascination; only very rarely with horror. ... Even today, all the chaos of that period can seem somewhat romantic and idealistic in comparison with the contemporary Chinese society we



Organized in production brigades, peasants were assigned backbreaking farm work such as constructing pigsties at the Liaodian commune, Acheng County, in May 1965. *Photo by © Li Zhensheng/Contact Press Images.*

see and hear about.

With this in mind, it was necessary to produce a clearer and more truthful image of the turmoil that turned China upside down during the Cultural Revolution. Li was the one person who, through his exceptional photographic legacy, could convey this truth on the printed page. ...

Over a period of several years, Li delivered to the offices of Contact Press Images in New York approximately 30,000 small brown paper envelopes bound together with rubber

bands in groups according to chronology, location, type of film, or other criteria that changed over time. Each envelope contained a single negative inside a glassine pouch. Some of these had not been removed since Li had cut them from their original negative strips and hidden them away 35 years earlier. On each envelope Li had written detailed captions in delicate Chinese calligraphy. Communes and counties, people's names, official titles, and specific events were all carefully noted....



Party officials filled the mourning hall at the office building of the Heilongjiang Party Committee in Harbin in September 1976. Photo by © Li Zhensheng/Contact Press Images.

For three years, from 2000 to 2003, a small group ... met nearly every Sunday to collectively piece together this history of a largely unknown era. In these exhausting and, at times, animated sessions, we pored over a variety of archival and scholarly documents, conducted interviews, reviewed images, and even listened to Li sing revolutionary songs from the time. ...

But thanks to Li, seemingly anonymous faces and places take on names and identities. Li shows the surreal events to be all too real. ... We will be forever grateful to Li for having risked so much to doggedly preserve the images in this book at a time when most of his colleagues agreed to allow their negatives to be destroyed. ... History is indeed Li Zhensheng's paramount concern and this book's main purpose: to remember and revisit those haunting and tragic events that were the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. ■

"Red-Color News Soldier" by Li Zhensheng, published by Phaidon, September 2003, www.phaidon.com. Photographs and text courtesy of Phaidon. Li Zhensheng is currently living in New York City engaged in research and writing.



On National Day, October 1, 1966, schoolchildren carried red-tasseled spears and wore Red Guard armbands as they paraded through the streets of Harbin. Photo by © Li Zhensheng/Contact Press Images.



Top Party officials are denounced during an afternoon-long rally in Harbin's Red Guard Square in August 1966. Photo by © Li Zhensheng/Contact Press Images.

A Visual and Visceral Connection to the Cultural Revolution

'Morning Sun' explores the psychological and emotional topography of Mao's China.

The world belongs to you.

It belongs to us as well, but ultimately it's yours.

You young people are ... just like the morning sun.

You embody the hope of the future.

— Mao Zedong

It was an age ruled by both the poet and the executioner. The poet scattered roses everywhere, while the executioner cast a long shadow of terror.

— Zhu Xueqin, interviewed in "Morning Sun"

By Carma Hinton

Few events of the 20th century have so dramatically engulfed such a large proportion of humanity as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Millions suffered and an untold number of others died, yet the Cultural Revolution remains only barely understood. There is little agreement on when it began (1964 or mid-1966), how long it lasted (three years, 1966-69, or a decade, 1966-76), what it was about (culture, revolution, power struggles, or Mao Zedong's monomania), or what it achieved (a true Marxist-Leninist revolution, the prelude to the reform era, or just a meaningless period of political zealotry and chaos).

This time in China's history presents serious challenges to conventional historians, who work primarily with words. But for documentary filmmakers the challenge is greater, for we rely on images to render the past. One of the most difficult problems we faced in making "Morning Sun"—a film about the Cultural Revolution—was the lack of archival footage from this period.



This is a 1967 poster celebrating a short essay Mao Zedong circulated within a major Party Conference in August 1966, entitled, "Bombard the Headquarters: My Big Character Poster." In the essay, he directed scathing criticism towards "certain party leaders" for suppressing the masses and obstructing the Cultural Revolution. Although Mao didn't write the essay with a brush but scribbled it on the margins of an old Beijing Daily, the image of Mao wielding a brush and changing the course of history captured popular imagination. Numerous posters, woodcuts, oil paintings, and traditional Chinese style paintings portrayed Mao in this heroic pose.

And what was available (with few exceptions) told the story from a single perspective—that of the government. At that time, there was no film equipment in private hands, and cameramen working for state-owned studios were required to register the film stock they took and return every roll of film after their job was done.

In making "Morning Sun," we grappled constantly with the issue of how to tell complex stories with limited visual data. We made choices that maximized the strength of film as a medium to convey history. "Morning Sun" is, therefore, not a chronological and comprehensive recounting of political events of the period (most of which left very little visual record), but

rather an inner history of the age of the Cultural Revolution. We weave together diverse personal stories with period footage, relying heavily on cultural productions of that time to chart the psychological and emotional topography of high-Maoist China. We provide a multiperspective view of a tumultuous period as seen primarily through the eyes of people who came of age during the 1960's, and we reveal the complex motivations behind their actions.

Two Films Frame the Mental Landscape

Throughout "Morning Sun" we use feature films from the 1950's, 60's and 70's, to echo the mental landscape of

the young generation that participated in the Cultural Revolution. We use two films, in particular, to act as a framing and commentary device. In addition to representing specific historical events in “Morning Sun,” these two films—“The East is Red” and “The Gadfly”—serve as historical metaphor and provide a narrative structure for our film.

“The East is Red” is a film version of a musical extravaganza that was produced in 1964 for the 15th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. It featured Mao as the singular, ever-victorious and unassailable leader of China’s 20th century

revolutionary struggle, eclipsing all other leaders in its colorful narrative. A significant milestone in the ascendancy of the Mao cult, it foreshadowed the ever more blatant rewriting of history by those in power in the ensuing years. While it was being staged another revolution was getting underway.

Young audiences who watched “The East is Red” would go on to become Red Guards. They wanted to re-enact the kind of revolution that was depicted in that movie. Those we interview in our film speak of the profound impact the film had on them, as they sought to give their lives meaning by

connecting with something larger than themselves. For them, revolution, as part of the Marxist concept of “the law of history,” was tantamount to religious faith. “Morning Sun” repeatedly returns to scenes from “The East is Red” as it follows personal stories of these young people, evoking the complex relationship between the fictional stage and the historical stage, between play actors and historical actors.

“The Gadfly,” a 1955 Soviet film that was dubbed into Chinese, was based on the novel of the same name by the English author Ethel Lilian Voynich, published in 1897. The novel, also



This is a 1967 poster depicting Red Guards speaking through a megaphone and distributing leaflets. Their poses are part of a standard iconography that run through many different forms of revolutionary art, including films, plays, paintings and sculpture. This type of pose became the body language that was embraced by many young enthusiasts during the Cultural Revolution, in a process of life imitating art.



Red Guards denounce a group of Franciscan nuns in front of their desecrated church in late August 1966. The nuns were expelled from China with great fanfare a few days later. These nuns had remained in China after the Communist victory in 1949. They ran an English school, which many children from Western embassies attended. During the Cultural Revolution their presence in China became evidence to the Red Guards that the revolution was not thorough enough.

translated into Chinese, enjoyed an unrivalled place in the hearts and minds of young participants in the Cultural Revolution. Almost everyone we interviewed named “The Gadfly” as one of the two or three most influential books during their formative years. The innocent and wide-eyed romantic, Arthur, who becomes a battle-scarred revolutionary, the Gadfly, struck a profound chord with the adolescents of China.

Over the years, however, as they experienced the revolution for themselves, the meaning of the book changed. In their earlier, simpler reading, the Gadfly’s eventual rejection of the Catholic Church and his dedication to the revolutionary cause fit well with the teachings of the Communist Party. Later, however, they began to see parallels between the Catholic Church (exemplified by the ambitious and unprincipled Cardinal Montanelli, the closeted father of Arthur) and the Communist Party (and the ultimate father figure of the Chinese revolution, Mao Zedong). The same heroism embodied in the figure of the Gadfly now became an inspiration that sustained many young people in their resistance against the tyranny of the Party.

The theme of parent and child is also played out on another level through a 20-year saga of rejection and reconciliation between Li Nanyang and her father, Li Rui, Mao’s one-time secretary who was denounced and sent into exile when his daughter was nine years old. One key element of “Morning Sun” is its tracing of a parallel narrative of the personal and the cultural-political trajectories of the Cultural Revolution era. We do this by using the Gadfly’s story as a multifaceted metaphor.

Through using “The East is Red” and “The Gadfly,” as well as many other film and stage productions, “Morning Sun” demonstrates the cultures and convictions that created the language, style and content of a mass movement. The films and plays, the music and ideas, the frustrations and fantasies, as well as the rhetoric and the ideologies are at the heart of a story about a new revolution that attempted to remake



In a 1967 photograph, workers of the Shanghai No. 3 Steel Mill attend a meeting held in their neighborhood to denounce “China’s Khrushchev,” the term used to describe head of state, Liu Shaoqi, before the official press printed his real name in denunciation pieces. The banner behind the table reads, “Family Repudiation Meeting.”

revolution itself. It is a film about the promise of a secular form of the sublime and how that promise and its frustration have created the China of the 21st century. ■

Carma Hinton, who produced and directed “Morning Sun” with Geremie Barmé and Richard Gordon, was also the interviewer (in Chinese) for the film. She was born in Beijing in 1949 and lived there

through the early years of the Cultural Revolution. Her other films include “The Gate of Heavenly Peace” (with Gordon and Barmé), which won a George Foster Peabody Award, “Abode of Illusion,” and a three-part series, “One Village in China” (with Gordon.) This essay is based on contributions made by all three directors of “Morning Sun.”

✉ carma@longbow.org

'The Unbearable Heaviness of Industry'

'In China, the road to full industrialization is gradually but surely unveiling itself.'

Photographer Zhou Hai's images of factory workers and miners in China are part of a touring exhibition called "The Unbearable Heaviness of Industry." In an interview with The New York Times, Zhou Hai, who works independently out of Beijing, said, "As our society has developed, so many workers have been marginalized, and fewer and fewer people care about them. So I felt a need to record this era and these people." More of his photographs from this project can be found at www.zhouhai.com.

By Zhou Hai

Industry provides the impetus for social development. The industrial establishments upon which modern civilization is built—such as steel-making—impose a heavy toll on those who take part in the process. These people form the very basis of an enormous infrastructure, yet they are also seen as outcasts having to endure pain, physical or mental, in this great industrial age.

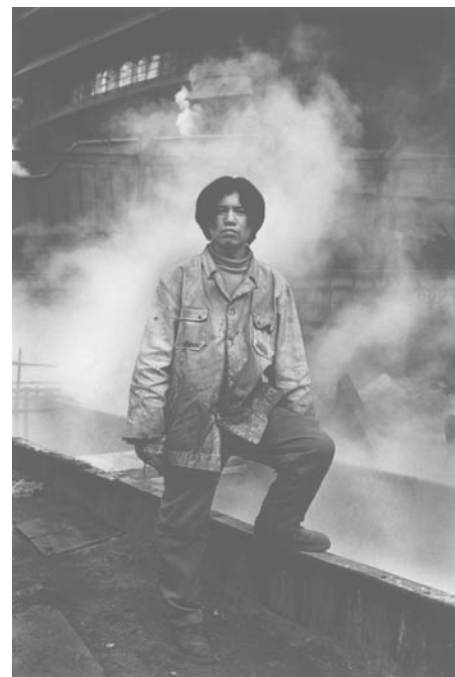
In China, the road to full industrialization is gradually but surely unveiling itself. There was a time when people on this road felt great pride. Now a market economy pervades and so does a sense of loss and frustration for the laborers.

We do not know how we become unaware of the unbearable heaviness of industry and industrialization. What wealth can they create, what a wonderful world, we tell ourselves. What we do not see is this: In many of the industrial sectors, what people have

been doing is not only physically demanding. Fumes and dust are but physical proof of the hardship. One may be surprised to notice the absence of machinery where it should play a role. When labor is a source of pride, material return is less of a concern for the laborers. When this pride wears out in the course of time and as money sneaks in to be a standard measure, the glory is lost and survival instincts take over.

The Chinese industrial labor force is being pushed to the banks of mainstream society. Victimized by the dull and repetitive pace of their work and living in an ever-fixed social space, these laborers find it hard to fit into China's fast-paced, ever-changing economy.

While our vision is blurred by the drastic social changes brought about largely as a result of industrial development, we need to wake up to the heaviness of labor and survival that has been haunting us for so long. ■



A worker near a scruff drain of an iron-melting furnace at Capital Steelworks in Beijing in December 1997.



Workers at an iron-melting furnace at Anshan Steelworks in Anshan, Liaoning Province, in September 1999.

Photos by © Zhou Hai.



These coal miners work for a small coal mine in Hebi, Henan Province, that is operated by local people and does not have good safeguards. Compared with what they could earn in agriculture, their incomes of \$75 to \$125 per month are quite high. July 1999.



A painter climbed over the railing of a bridge at Anshan Steelworks in Anshan, Liaoning Province, November 2001.

Photos by © Zhou Hai.

Woman With a Movie Camera

Ning Ying's cinematic visions document a rapidly changing China.

By Zhang Zhen

Recent visitors to China, especially to her cities, cannot but notice the breathtaking changes in skylines and infrastructure as well as in social and cultural life since the country embraced the enterprise of “transformation” (zhuaxing) in the early 1990's. This top-down process entails the overhaul of the socialist planned economy, the systematic shift to the market, and ensuing structural changes in every sphere of Chinese life.

At the same time, a new generation of filmmakers has emerged out of the shadows of the Fifth Generation giants such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige with their epic tales set in rural China and in a distant past. The young filmmakers insistently trained their cameras instead on the changing face of the cities. Their films offer poignant portraits of ordinary people and their environment, irrevocably altered by forces beyond their control. Ning Ying, China's premiere woman director, is one of them. Her films, fictional or documentary (or combinations of both), stand out because they form a unique, consistently evolving body of work that is infused with a deep social commitment and a penetrating yet playful cinematic vision.

Born in Beijing, Ning Ying studied at Beijing Film Academy and later at Italy's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. Her training included working as assistant director for Bertolucci's 1987 film, “The Last Em-

peror.” Soon after, she embarked on her own directing career in China. To date, Ning Ying has made five feature films (the most recent one is in post-production), and numerous documentaries. On the international level, her best known films include “For Fun” (1992), “On the Beat” (1995), and “I Love Beijing” (2000), known together as the “Beijing Trilogy.” All of them have garnered festival prizes and have been showcased at major art cinema

a form of life that is rapidly vanishing. When I heard Ning Ying talk about her films, she said, “I first set out to explore Beijing in 1992 with ‘For Fun,’ a comedy about disappearing traditional ways of life. In 1995, with the black-humored ‘On the Beat,’ I focused on the emerging new reality and the difficulty of coping with it. In ‘I Love Beijing,’ the magnitude of changes shaping our lives and the anxieties of the new generation are represented in a rhapsody form, through the eyes of a young, restless taxi driver.”

At the center stage of “For Fun” are Old Han, former gatekeeper of the Beijing Opera Academy, and a group of opera aficionados who form a club to sing, play and quarrel. The film is as much a homage to the old Beijing as a commentary on the tenacity of the bureaucratic mindset, a legacy of the Mao era. “On the Beat” continues Ning Ying's anatomic vision of the social system in transition, this time through a cinema vérité-style chronicle of the bland or absurd routines of the cops at the Deshengmen Precinct, which include chasing a rabid dog and

arresting a migrant artist peddling seminude calendar posters. “I Love Beijing,” last in the trilogy, shows a Beijing whose pace and scale of change could now only be frantically captured through the window and reflection mirror of one of the thousands of taxis on Beijing's highways. Following the cabbie Dezi, we are taken on a voyage across Beijing. He is always on the move, people and places flow quickly



Migrant workers wait for days before being able to get on a train. Photos by Ning Ying, from “Railroad of Hope,” © Eurasia Communications Ltd.

venues worldwide.

Recently this trilogy was shown at the Harvard Film Archive. Together the films record and comment on the tremendous changes in the capital that has undergone a major surgical operation during the 1990's, in both its physical and moral topography. The trilogy is thus both a historical document of the transformation of the filmmaker's native city and her cinematic eulogy to

in and out of his life. Dezi's restless search for love and stability amidst chaos and flux mirrors Beijing's own ambitious yet confused search for identity between a disappearing world and an unknown future.

The triptych of the city registers the emergence of new urban identities and globalized lifestyles as China marches into the market and the world at large. But they also reveal the human cost of such "surgical operations" and the disintegration of the social and moral fabric of the city and the nation.

Ning Ying's sociological and anthropological interests and approaches evidenced in the trilogy—such as using nonprofessional actors and extensive location shooting—are more directly expressed in her documentary work beyond Beijing and urban life. In several short programs, commissioned by UNICEF, her films depict urgent social issues and uneven development in China, such as HIV/AIDS, women's trafficking, and street children.

In 2001, Ning Ying made a feature-length documentary, "Railroad of Hope," a searing portrait of internal mass migration in China. Following hundreds of agricultural workers from Sichuan Province to Xinjiang, China's northwest frontier, a journey of more than 3,000 km, Ning Ying spent three days and nights in the crowded train befriending and interviewing these hopeful peasants with their many dreams for the future, some shared and some diverging. Most of them, especially the young women, are on their first trip away from their native villages as well as their first time on a train. "Railroad of Hope" was awarded the Grand Prix du Cinema du Reel in Paris in 2002. The award citation calls the film "outstanding for the power of its images, its full and deeply penetrating vision A film that sweeps us up into stories and energy of life, over and beyond the simple duration of this journey toward hope. ..." ■

Zhang Zhen teaches cinema studies at New York University. Information about Ning Ying's films can be found through her Beijing-based company at eurasia@public3.bta.net.cn.



When interviewed during filming, one woman said, "I don't know even what it means, the word 'happiness.' People are happy when they can stay at their home."



Passengers are excited to have arrived in Xinjiang after traveling for three days.

All photos by Ning Ying, from "Railroad of Hope," © Eurasia Communications Ltd.

Elements of a Free Press in Indonesia

By Bill Kovach

When Tom Rosenstiel and I wrote “The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect,” we felt pretty confident there would be an interested audience among journalists in the United States. But since its publication in 2001, we’ve been surprised that the book is attracting a wide international audience. As of the beginning of this year, the book is being published in 18 countries.

From November 30 until December 17, 2003, thanks to Andreas Harsono, a 2000 Nieman Fellow, I had a chance to see how concepts rooted in 17th and 18th century Western thought appear to journalists of a newly emerging Eastern press. Andreas had arranged for the translation of the book into Bahasa Indonesia; organized an intense island-hopping five-city schedule of university lectures, working lunches, and visits with media owners, and accompanied me as interpreter.

Judging by the challenges and questions I received, two of the elements described in the book—“a discipline of verification” and “journalism’s first obligation is to the truth”—were of most interest to the journalists there. One element prompted skepticism, the other generated confusion.

The skepticism focused on verification as a defining element of journalism primarily because of their own observed behavior of the American press as represented by the widely reported scandals of Stephen Glass at *The New Republic* and Jayson Blair at *The New York Times*. This allowed me to use the Committee of Concerned Journalists’ Traveling Curriculum, inspired by the book, which we have

presented in newsrooms around the United States. The part we focused on there included the idea of “transparency,” a concept informed by the simple idea that you never deceive your audience. And you do this by making sure each story meets these needs:

- That you tell your audience what you know but also what you don’t know about the subject of the story;
- That you never imply more knowledge than you actually have;
- That you tell whom your sources are, how they are in a position to know, and what potential biases they might have.

Stephen Glass and Jayson Blair might never have been published had the transparency standard been applied to their work. The Indonesian audiences seemed to find that concept worthy of consideration, but I can only wonder what they thought later when they read about Jack Kelley at *USA Today*.

The notion of truth led to confusion because of years of post-modern philosophical debate about the nature of truth. At almost every stop we engaged in lively discussions as I tried to explain the “practical truth” of journalism: a truth obtained over time by the careful accumulation of evidence. Methods of arriving at the truth include continual reporting, calls, letters and op-ed articles from the public, with follow-up reporting. The story is always subject to revision as new evidence is discovered.

The most encouraging thing to me was that in the largest Muslim nation in the world and one that has been free of dictatorial government for only six

years, these and other basic ideas about journalism in a free and open society were matters of active engagement and serious discussion at every university and news organization in every city I visited on the islands of Java, Sumatra and Bali.

Certainly there were insistent challenges about the way journalists in the United States perform. The challenges focused on coverage of the Middle East, especially Israel, and our coverage of the war in Iraq. But their questions and challenges were little different in kind, tone or relative number, than they would be here in the United States.

Another encouraging thing to me was that Indonesia, which has had no long history of a free press, after only five years of legally free publication is at about that same level of development I have seen in the same time frame in eastern and central Europe, areas that have had a previous history of press freedom. The Indonesian press may be a bit more unruly and more tenuous but with the same penchant for soft porn, gossip and rumor, including the virulently persistent rumor that 4,000 Jews did not go to work in the World Trade Center on September 11th. And like some countries in Latin America, they are still plagued with “envelope journalism,” a practice of dictatorial governments that has spread to commercial interests to reward journalists for favorable treatment, a practice that allows press owners, in turn, to pay scandalously low wages. But all of these seem to be transitional growing pains, and all are under lively and serious debate among journalists.

Another troublesome trend I saw is the fear of Indonesia’s political leader-

ship of too much freedom. As the country moves toward its first free election of a president there are renewed efforts to return more government control. These fears spawn multiple efforts that loom like a three-headed dragon over Indonesia's free press and include:

- A government commission to define and enforce the licensing laws for electronic press enacted in the post-Suharto reforms is only now being named, and some of the appointees being discussed share a fear and disdain of the free press;
- Legislative proposals are pending to extend to the print press the requirement already in the law for licensing of the electronic media;
- A series of as many as 70 changes in the criminal code of provisions spe-

cifically designed to restrict press freedom.

On my last night in Jakarta, I was lucky enough to be part of a reunion of the country's Nieman Fellows Sabam Siagian '79, Goenawan Mohamad '90, Ratih Hardjono '94, and Andreas. It was a warm evening of fellowship fueled by good food, good wine, good memories, and a conversation that helped me put two and a half weeks in Indonesia into some perspective. My conclusion that I jotted down as I flew back home was this:

The future of a free press and freedom of expression in Indonesia still hangs in tenuous balance. The problems I cited, exacerbated by a difficult economic climate and the chronic instability of civilian control generated

by the terrorist threat, are each serious enough to stop or even reverse its continued development.

But the journalists are reporting on these issues. They are debating and analyzing them with an energy, intelligence and skill that, at their best, can easily compete in the current international communication's climate. Equally important, they are beginning to build the infrastructure of independent organizations needed to spread and protect shared values over a sprawling and diverse region just as others are building nongovernmental organizations that nurture a free society. ■

Bill Kovach, a 1989 Nieman Fellow, is chairman of the Committee of Concerned Journalists and former Curator of the Nieman Foundation.

—1951—

Angus MacLean Thuermer writes that since retiring some 20 years ago, he is active in civic affairs in the small town (877 inhabitants) of Middleburg, Virginia. He serves, for example, on the Board of Advisors of the Mosby Heritage Area Association and assists in A & A Associates, his wife, **Alice's**, P.R. outfit. He is still writing and has done a few travel pieces for The New York Times: London-to-Hong Kong by train and a story of septuagenarians traveling Paris-Budapest-Moscow-St. Petersburg *without*, he says, "having to be hand-held by a tour leader."

—1954—

Richard Dudman, who lives in Ellsworth, Maine, has been writing two editorials a week for more than three years for the Bangor (Maine) Daily News. He proposes topics each Monday—on local, national or international affairs—and e-mails the copy in usually no later than Wednesday. He alerts the editor when an editorial is timely, but many of them are evergreens. He continues to see old Washington friends at the annual Gridiron Dinner and travels to St. Louis once or twice a year to see

former Post-Dispatch colleagues. He and his wife, **Helen**, are in good health and hike almost every day in nearby Acadia National Park. They spend the warm months at their summer place on Islesford (Little Cranberry) Island.

Doug Leiterman brings us up to date: "... I retired from the documentary film, TV, movie and bonding business in 2000, selling my company to London Guarantee Insurance Company, now a division of St. Paul Ins. I do occasional TV interviews and consulting now, but most of my time goes to a book I'm working on about my experiences in the movie business, including a sci-fi film I produced entitled 'Millennium' for 20th Century Fox, which if anyone has an idle moment they can pick up at Blockbuster. The movie has an intriguing script, and Cheryl Ladd and Kris Kristofferson starred. ... The rest of my time is spent operating our horse farm near Campbellville, Ontario and repairing tractors. ..."

Wayne Whitt writes: "I retired from The Tennessean in April 1990 after 43 years there—30 years as a reporter and then my last 13 years as managing editor. **Mildred** [his wife] and I are now living in Park Manor, an independent

complex, and we are crazy about it.... This past July I had both of my knees replaced at the same time and have done real well.... When we were at Harvard we had an infant daughter who now lives in Peachtree, Georgia, and is a CPA for the Centers for Disease Control. Our son, born in 1956, has just been transferred from Atlanta to cold and snowy Chicago, where he is a vice president of CSX Railway."

—1957—

Dietrich Schulz reports that after living in Northern Virginia for 34 years he has moved to the eastern shore of Maryland. He retired in 1991 from his job as Washington correspondent for the newspapers of Axel Springer Publications (Hamburg and Berlin), became an American citizen in the mid-90's, and over the years met Nieman classmates in Washington, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Cambridge and on Vinal Haven Island in Maine. Schultz writes, "I got the Washington assignment (which I kept for 22 years) after one of the senior editors in my company discovered my Nieman past. 'You know America,' he said. 'Would you like to go back?' The answer, of course, was *yes*. And so it was that I came to

cover five presidents, from Nixon to Bush One. I loved the job, exciting and fascinating it certainly was. All I can say is: Thank you Nieman Foundation for letting me be part of the '57 class."

—1958—

J. Lloyd Marshall died on February 7, 2004 in Armadale, Western Australia. He was 84.

Marshall joined the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II and later became a flight lieutenant radar leader of the elite Pathfinder Force of Bomber Command. He was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Permanent Award of the Pathfinder Force Badge.

Upon his discharge, Marshall returned to Australia to work on West Australian Newspapers. His 55-year career began with the breaking of stories on the Australian oil search and discoveries of world-class mineral deposits. He covered the Nevada nuclear tests and was the only Australian journalist to cover the Apollo 11 moon landing. In 1969 he joined the Sunday Independent in Perth and, when the newspaper closed in 1979, became an international analyst at Hancock Prospecting. He never retired.

Among other accomplishments, Marshall masterminded the lighting up of Perth so John Glenn could see it during his 1962 orbit around the earth. He produced an analogue computer for the Pathfinder Force that calculated an accurate navigation wind every minute even if one's precise location was unknown. Marshall also invented a computer program called CORGI (Computer Oriented Graticule Information), which eliminates entrenched corruption in mining claims practices.

Marshall received the Lovekin Prize for Best Story of the Year five times and received a special prize in the 1966 Jetro Awards for Australian journalists.

Marshall is survived by his wife, **Dorothy**, and three children.

—1961—

Lewis Nkosi, critic, essayist and novelist, has been doing research in Basel,

Switzerland, since his retirement in 1999 from teaching at the University of Wyoming. He also is a visiting professor at the Universities of Cape Town and Durban-Westville, South Africa.

Nkosi's second novel, "Underground People" (Kwela Books 2003), was short-listed for a Boesman Prize in South Africa. "Underground People," Nkosi says, is the "story of a search for a guerrilla leader by an international humanitarian organization (cum Amnesty International) during the period of resistance in South Africa. Presumed to be held in police custody, he is actually working underground." Nkosi's first book is the award-winning "Mating Birds" (St. Martins Press, 1986).

—1962—

Murray Seeger spent four weeks in Moscow in December, leading a four-person team hired to evaluate media training programs for the U.S. Agency for International Development. The trip marks the fourth decade that Seeger has been to Russia or the Soviet Union: the 1970's and 80's as correspondent; 1990's for the International Monetary Fund, and now, he says, "the 2000's to see your (and my) tax dollars at work."

—1968—

H. Brandt Ayers, CEO of Consolidated Publishing and publisher of The Anniston (Ala.) Star, and his wife, **Josephine**, have established a foundation that will support the Ayers Institute. Joining with The University of Alabama (UA), the institute will set up the nation's only honors master's program in community journalism. UA students and faculty will have access to the new \$16 million facilities and staff of The Anniston Star as a "teaching newspaper," according to the Communicator, the UA alumni/ae newsletter.

During his announcement in a UA commencement address, Ayers said, "As our day lengthens into twilight, we want to leave something worthwhile—an institute that will keep our newspapers from becoming just an undistinguished link in a long corporate chain and, in partnership with the university

and the Knight Foundation, advance the art of community journalism."

Thomas Blinkhorn writes, "I have recently moved from Washington, D.C. to Hanover, New Hampshire, where I am resuming newspaper work with the Valley News."

Floyd McKay, professor of journalism at Western Washington University, plans to retire in June 2004, after 14 years of teaching. He has already begun a return to his journalism career, by writing a regular (every other Wednesday) op-ed for The Seattle Times. He plans to add some other writing projects, and he and his wife, **Dixie**, will continue their travels.

—1974—

Ellen Goodman, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for The Washington Post Writers Group and The Boston Globe, has a new book out, "Paper Trail: Common Sense in Uncommon Times" (Simon & Schuster 2004).

"Paper Trail" is Goodman's first collection of published columns in over 10 years. Beginning with the era of the Clinton scandal to September 11th and the war on terrorism, Goodman deals with such issues as abortion, gay marriage, struggle for civil liberties, and biotech babies.

Goodman says: "When I went to pick a name for my book some of my friends said that to fit in with the tenor of the times and the tone of the bestseller lists I should call [it] 'I'm Right, You're Wrong, and Shut Up.' That's not exactly my style. I guess I write for people who argue with both hands and sometimes end up clasping them together. Anyway, I don't do food-fight journalism. I decided to call this 'Paper Trail' after someone said of a politician: 'He'll never make it. He has a paper trail a mile long.' A paper trail is a liability? I don't think so. In any case, this is a trail, a record of where the country's been and where I've been over the last decade."

Goodman, with Nieman classmate **Patricia O'Brien**, also wrote "I Know Just What You Mean: The Power of

Friendship in Women's Lives" (Fire-side 2001).

—1976—

Janos Horvat, chairman of a cable platform in Budapest, Hungary, started transmitting a new cable channel, Humor1, on January 1, 2004. With a penetration rate of 33 percent into the Hungarian market, Humor1 runs 16 hours a day with reruns. Horvat says that the programming is well-known among Americans with such shows as "Cheers," "The Cosby Show," "Cybill," "Taxi" and "Candid Camera." This is in addition to British and Italian sitcoms and Hungarian programming. Humor1 is in Hungarian with dubbed American programs. Three years ago Horvat established a sports channel, Sport1, and next year plans to launch a new film channel. He is also part of a three-member committee preparing the new media law in Hungary.

—1977—

From José Antonio Martínez Soler:

"What is now Madrid's leading daily paper and Spain's second largest paper by readership—with editions in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville and Zaragoza—was conceived in our home office in late 1999. I'd been fired from Spanish Television (state controlled TVE) by the new conservative government in 1996, following a pre-election interview I did with candidate Jose María Aznar, who won the election. Although I won the suit filed against the TVE, hard times followed, as it was difficult to return to journalism. I retreated to the University of Almería where I taught economics and Ana, my wife, set up a home office.

"But tensions eased and, in late 1999, Ana and I founded a small company, Multiprensa y Mas, collaborating on a project for the first high-quality free paper in Spain. She then sold the company—with me as CEO—to a group of Spanish institutional and private investors willing to finance the project.

"The first edition, then called Madrid y Mas (Madrid and More), was born with a staff of 30 journalists in February

2000 with 100,000 copies in Madrid. By November, we were publishing another 100,000 copies in Barcelona (Barcelona y Mas). We invented a strategy of free distribution with courteous students in snappy bright red vests and caps handing out the paper to commuters and pedestrians at busy street corners in the city.

"In July 2001, Norway's leading press conglomerate, Schibsted, which had launched free dailies under the brand name '20 minutes' in Switzerland and Germany, bought a majority stake in the company. The Madrid and Barcelona editions morphed into '20 minutos Madrid' and '20 minutos Barcelona' maintaining the original staff (including me as the CEO) with circulation jumping to 500,000 copies between Madrid and Barcelona. A Web site (www.20minutos.es) was created in 2002. In March 2003 the Seville edition was launched, followed in September by another edition in Zaragoza. We then had a total circulation reaching 600,000 copies and 60 journalists. Readership today has been measured at 1,430,000 people daily, making us Spain's second leading paper (after El País), and we are number one in Madrid. Future plans include new editions in other major Spanish cities. Multiprensa y Mas is already making money. Quite a feat for an idea that started in our home office!

"After our success, the Swedish press multinational Metro stepped into the market, becoming our main competitor. Although newspapers that charge their readers initially complained, they are gradually coming to see that rather than competing with them, we have opened new markets of young and urban readers.

"I still continue to teach part-time at the University of Almería in the winter/spring term commuting once a week for Monday classes. Ana, who left the Board after Schibsted took over, has retired from active journalism and has taken up painting."

—1981—

Gerald Boyd is now a part-time administrator for the Columbia School

of Journalism. In this position, he will write up to four case studies to be used in the school's new case-method approach to teaching. The case studies will present students with real or simulated situations that they might face as journalists. While at Columbia, Boyd will also be writing a book about his newspaper career and, more broadly, the challenges that journalists face. And Universal Press Syndicate announced that Boyd will write a weekly media analysis column that "will act as a kind of national ombudsman . . . by bringing readers on the inside of journalism's most heated controversies and covered topics." The column is to start in March.

—1982—

Chris Bogan writes: "We're all well, flourishing in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. **Mary Jo** and I have 3 children: Evan—16, Will—10, and Anastasia—7. The milestones of our lives are now largely marked by their passages through life. We used to be a match for them when it was 'man for man' or 'parent to child;' ever since they advanced to three—and we transitioned to a 'zone defense'—we've been sadly outnumbered, outplayed and outmaneuvered. I think this may be every parent's lament.

"On the professional side, the company I founded in 1992—Best Practices, LLC—continues to grow and flourish. It has grown into a healthy niche media company providing business-to-business research, consulting and publishing services and products to global corporations. Who would ever have guessed this would be my path when I was a Nieman Fellow? Actually, my Nieman year did provide me opportunity to spend time at the Harvard Business School, which proved a seminal event for me, since it inspired me to return to the HBS for my MBA some years after my Nieman year. The marriage of those journalistic and business experiences also led to writing two business books. My days are filled with management and leadership stuff; my heart is forever bound to writing! Walter Lippmann remains my patron saint."

—1985—

Bernard Edinger reports from Paris that he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur, France's national order, with the rank of "Chevalier" (Knight) on January 1. The award was made on the recommendation of the French Ministry of Defense for whom Edinger has worked since he took early retirement from Reuters in April 2001. He says his tasks have included media training in English for would-be press officers, lectures on media-military relations, and writing for ministry publications on military history or about foreign armies. Reporting trips have taken him to Britain, Germany (separate visits to the German and U.S. military), Denmark and Belgium. The Defense Ministry functions were a return to his first love for Edinger who, before a 32-year career at Reuters reporting from nearly 50 countries on four continents, served as a French Marine paratrooper from 1961-1963.

—1988—

Frank del Olmo, an associate editor and columnist for the Los Angeles Times, died on February 19th of an apparent heart attack. He was 55.

Del Olmo's impact on the Times and the city of Los Angeles was deep and strong. Friends and colleagues spoke not only of the high quality of his journalism but of his unstinting work and support for the Latino community and Latino journalists. In the Times's account of del Olmo's death, Editor John Carroll said, "The number of Latino journalists who hold good jobs today because of Frank is beyond calculation." And friend and journalism professor Felix Gutierrez said, "He was always representing those who couldn't get in the room."

Del Olmo spent nearly 34 years at the Times, starting as an intern, then moving to staff writer specializing in Latino issues and Latin American affairs, an editorial writer, deputy editor of the editorial page, a Times Mirror Foundation director, and an assistant to the editor of the Times. He was the first Latino to be listed among the

Nieman Foundation Hires Development Officer

Curator Bob Giles announced in February that Dolores Johnson is joining the staff of the Nieman Foundation as development officer. She will be working with Giles on fundraising initiatives, including fellowship endowment, foundation programs and estate planning, as well as major gifts in connection with naming opportunities for the new space at Lippmann House.

Johnson has a degree in economics from Howard University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. She has broad experience in marketing and developing strategic partnerships through her work as an executive with Digital Equipment Corporation and Lotus Development Corporation. More recently, she was a vice president for two start-up companies, SourceGate Systems and Avaya Communications, Inc. For the past two years, she has

been president of Johnson Consulting, providing marketing services and diversity programs for new companies and managing fundraising for nonprofits.

Johnson has served as an advisor to corporate presidents on diversity policies and strategies, and she is a member of the board of trustees of Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she created scholarships for African-American students and raised funds for those scholarships. She organized and directed fundraising programs for the United Negro College Fund of New England.

Giles adds, "Dolores Johnson has extensive experience in nonprofit board service and will bring to our fundraising challenge a wealth of experience in communications, outreach marketing, and strategic planning." ■

paper's top editors.

Julio Moran, executive director of the California Chicano News Media Association, said del Olmo was "the Latino conscience at that paper." In 1994, del Olmo's conscience led him to the edge of resigning from the Times over the newspaper's endorsement of Governor Pete Wilson for a second term in office. Wilson supported Proposition 187, a ballot initiative that would have had a negative impact on "apparent illegal aliens." Instead of resigning, however, del Olmo was persuaded by then Editor Shelby Coffey III to take some time off to reconsider. On his return to the paper a few weeks later, del Olmo chose not to quit, and instead wrote an op-ed column strongly critical of Wilson, calling Proposition 187 "the mean-spirited and unconstitutional ballot initiative that would deprive 'apparent illegal aliens' of public health services and immigrant children of public education." The proposition passed, but a year later key sections were struck down by a U.S. District Court judge.

In 2002, del Olmo was inducted into the National Association of His-

panic Journalists' Hall of Fame. In 1984, he shared a Pulitzer Prize for meritorious public service for the series "Southern California's Latino Community." In 1975 he won an Emmy Award for writing "The Unwanted," a documentary on illegal immigration. And in 1972 he was a founding member of the California Chicano News Media Association.

Del Olmo is survived by his wife, **Magdalena**, a son and a daughter.

Gene Weingarten, who writes a humor column, *Below the Beltway*, for *The Washington Post Magazine*, has written a book with Gina Barreca, also a humor columnist, called "I'm with Stupid: One Man. One Woman. 10,000 Years of Misunderstanding Between the Sexes Cleared Right Up" (Simon & Schuster 2004). "I'm with Stupid"—the first book about men and women written by a man and woman who actually have a sense of humor, says Weingarten—asks such questions as, "Why do men feel guilty about nothing and women feel guilty about everything?" The book's subject matter ranges from science and technology to

sex and sexuality. Weingarten adds: “[I] feel that it is the duty of all Nieman Fellows, past and present, to purchase five copies apiece as a sign of their allegiance to the program. It has nothing to do with me; it is all about *you*.” Weingarten has also written “The Hypochondriac’s Guide to Life. And Death” (Simon & Schuster 2001).

—1989—

Rodney Nordland, former correspondent-at-large for Newsweek, will be working in Iraq as their Baghdad bureau chief until 2005.

—1991—

Rui Araujo’s newbook, “Predador,” a thriller, is to be released in March by Oficina do Livro, Lisbon.

Nanise Fifita is now chief editor at the Tonga Broadcasting Commission.

Tim Giago, CEO and publisher of Lakota Media, sold his company to the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe in December 2003. Lakota Media owns the Pueblo Journal and the Lakota Journal, which purchased the King Press from the Durango Herald last spring.

“We’ve only had our printing press up and running since April, so we have a lot of potential with that printing press,” said Giago, founder of the Lakota Journal. “I’d like to see those presses running five days a week . . .”

According to an Argus Leader article, the tribe hopes that this purchase “will give Native Americans a greater voice in the news media and enhance economic development on the reservation” with possibilities of tribal government printing contracts and printing jobs for casinos in South Dakota. Giago will continue as publisher as the newspaper makes this transition.

—1994—

David Lewis, class scribe, sends updates on some of his classmates:

Lorie Conway, who is baking up a series on the history of bread for PBS

called “The Bread Also Rises: Breaking Bread in America,” is waiting to hear if the NEH will be wise enough to give her production funds to go along with their development funds to finish “Hope & Healing: The Untold Story of the Ellis Island Hospital,” and may be going to the major leagues with a reality series that will follow two minor league players for the Red Sox.

From **Sam Fulwood**: “Hmm. Well, this winter-spring, I’ve been named one of a dozen inaugural Presidential Fellows at Case Western Reserve University. As such, I’m teaching a course on media literacy to a seminar of freshmen and sophomores. This is a program begun by the university to expose students to professionals and life lessons in addition to their traditional classroom experiences. For more details see: www.cwru.edu/sages.

“I have a contract for a collection of my (Cleveland) Plain Dealer columns that’s scheduled for publication in September. The tentative title is ‘Full of It: Fresh Thinking and Strong Words.’ The publisher is Gray & Co., a small regional press based in Cleveland.

“I’ve also become a Weblogger. My company-supported blog is tied to my column and is a place for me to talk about my work and other issues of personal concerns. I try to keep it focused on the professional, limiting personal stuff only to chatter that highlights my columns. You can check it out at <http://www.cleveland.com/weblogs/samfulwood/>”

Frank Gibney lives in Brooklyn with his wife, **Carrie**, and daughter, Greer, 5. His son, Will, is now 12. Gibney left Time in 2002 to write a book about corporate accountability focusing on the AOL Time Warner merger.

Ratih Hardjono is living in Jakarta with husband **Fajrul Falaakh**, who is a constitutional lawyer and vice dean of law at Gajah Mada University. He’s a legal reformer, which makes him almost as popular with the military as Ratih is. She spent six months working for President Wahid—the first democratically elected leader in Indonesia

for 30 years—pulling away layers of military control that are endemic in Indonesia. Her first task was removing the rule that required journalists to have a clearance from Indonesian Intelligence before reporting on political issues. She then succeeded in getting civilians to run the Presidential Office for the first time since 1965. Ratih and her husband had twin boys in June 2002, who are closing in on the “terrible two’s” and keeping Ratih on her toes even more than the military did.

Jerry Kammer now works for the Copley News Service out of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. This means he can crash events and regularly get free cubes of cheese and beer. He learned these skills at Lippmann House. Jerry also edited a book, “El Oso y el Puercoespín” (The Bear and the Porcupine) that was published in Mexico and will soon be out in the United States. It’s a memoir by the former U.S. Ambassador, Jeffrey Davidow, looking at the relationship between the two countries.

Katie King has parlayed her NewMedia experience into a private consulting business in the two years since she left Reuters. Her clients have included Stateline.org, Congressional Quarterly, and [NF ’89] **Bill Kovach’s** Committee of Concerned Journalists, where she helps as a trainer with the Traveling Curriculum program. Katie recently teamed up with some former Reuters’ colleagues in a “virtual consultancy” to form a group called Digital Channel Consulting (www.digitalchannelconsulting.com). She says consulting is liberating, creative, challenging and, yes, fun. It’s a good combination.

Christina Lamb and **Paulo Anunciacao** are living in Portugal and have been busy. Son Lourenco is 4. He arrived three months early “obviously in a hurry to get here having been dragged around in his mum’s womb to report on banana wars in the Caribbean, the fight for oil in the Nigerian delta, South African elections, madness of Mugabe, etc. . . .” Christina has

recently covered wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and been winning all the British foreign correspondent awards for her Afghan coverage. Her 1999 book, "The Africa House," was a bestseller and "The Sewing Circles of Herat," about Afghanistan, was published all over. She's now writing "Painting the Amazon" between jaunts in nasty places. Paulo is balancing this journalistic partnership in a very wise manner by "writing weekly columns on his twin loves, football and cocktails."

David Lewis left CNN three years ago to hang out an independent documentary producer shingle. He has journeyed to Lebanon for a "Frontline" documentary on Hezbollah, done "20/20" and "60 Minutes" pieces, watched food drop into Afghanistan from a C-17, and senior produced a series of Fox News Network specials for the unique Bill O'Reilly. He's currently producing a film about stand-up comedians tour-

ing Israel and the occupied territories. Among the projects in development are: a series on the drug war and a series on one of the oldest terrorist groups; one-hour films about the most-decorated case officer in the CIA's history; Vietnamese catfish, and a finishing school for rap musicians.

Barney Mthomboti left the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), where he was chief executive of the news division last July. He's now the editor of the Sunday Tribune in the coastal city of Durban. He says it's nice and relaxed. Barney was elected to the board of the International Press Institute this fall. Of particular concern to him is what is happening to human rights and the press in neighboring Zimbabwe and the lack of response from the South African government.

Carlos Pauletti left El Pais after 19 years and launched a career in TV. His

son, Alejandro, graduated from college with an economics degree last year and his younger son, Juan Andrés, is now 5. **Ana**, Carlos's wife, is a lawyer.

—1995—

Kathryn Kross is no longer Washington, D.C. bureau chief for CNN. David Bohrman has become vice president of news and production/Washington bureau chief in a restructuring of the network's D.C. bureau.

—1997—

Richard Read, senior writer at The Oregonian, was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters by Willamette University in 2003.

Debbie Seward, Moscow bureau chief for The Associated Press since 2000, has become their international editor. Before joining the AP in 1988, Seward worked for Newsweek. She has reported from the Berlin, Paris and Moscow AP bureaus.

Seward writes: "... I moved from being Moscow bureau chief for AP to international editor in New York, responsible for directing the reporting of AP's overseas bureaus. AP is seeking to strengthen its global reach, and the post is a fantastic opportunity to participate in shaping the agency's future.

"My husband, **Nicholas Pyregov**, is finishing his second novel, 'The English Lesson.' Our daughter, Anna, 9, is at the U. N. International School."

Mathatha Tsedu is now editor of City Press, a Sunday publication in Johannesburg, South Africa. He had been editor of Sunday Times. Since his days as a fellow, Tsedu has been moving around and has in the past four years worked as deputy editor of The Star and as deputy head of news at the country's public broadcaster SABC, where he deputized for another Nieman Fellow, **Barney Mthomboti** ('94).

—2000—

Thrity Umrigar, a former Akron Beacon Journal reporter and current

Letter to the Editor

Your coverage entitled "Reporting California's Recall Election" was interesting but not particularly relevant. As a journalist who has covered elections from small town city hall to presidential campaigns, I feel much like Solomon in the Old Testament, "Is there nothing new under the sun?"

Dan Walters piece, "Celebrity Transforms Political Coverage," could have been written about Ronald Reagan, or about Richard Nixon, who enjoyed a national celebrity. Was his charm and TV good looks responsible for electing John Kennedy? And could the anger of California voters have been written about Minnesota voters when they elected a World Wrestling Federation retiree instead of a Democrat or Republican? George Lewis, of all people, knows how powerful images are in *all* television journalism, not just in this past election. If this were not so, would "NBC Nightly News" be in business?

After reading this review, my question is whether California and national journalists are frustrated because they

didn't affect the outcome of the election in a different manner. Did they report expecting to dissuade Californians from casting their votes for Arnold?

One more question: Why is there no mention of the Los Angeles Times's efforts to slant their coverage of this election against Governor Schwarzenegger? Certainly people in California are aware of the Times's efforts and still talk about it. Is this why younger readers are tuning out newspapers? They may be young, but they are not dumb. Do today's journalists "get it"? Maybe it's time to take the agenda out of journalism. If not, are we any better than Rush Limbaugh? Or are we what he says we are—"out of touch mainstream journalism?"

These are serious questions that deserve a serious examination by the Nieman Foundation and others.

Dave Walker
CEO, Walker Communications,
Lubbock, Texas

visiting assistant professor of creative writing at Case Western Reserve University, recently published her first memoir, "First Darling of the Morning: Selected Memories of an Indian Childhood" (HarperCollins India 2003). In this book, Umrigar tells what it was like to grow up as a Parsi girl in Bombay in the early 1970's, taking the reader through her college years and her decision to continue her education at Ohio State University. The memoir ends with Umrigar's departure for the United States to attend Ohio State, where she received a M.A. in journalism.

Umrigar's first book is "Bombay Time: A Novel" (Picador USA 2002).

—2001—

Kirstin Downey Grimsley has a contract to write a biography of Frances Perkins who, as secretary of labor during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, was the first female cabinet member. Downey, a reporter with The Washington Post, circulated a 100-page proposal that drew bids from six publishers. The book is due out in 2006.

—2002—

Geraldo Samor started a new job in March as a staff reporter for The Wall Street Journal, based in Brazil. This assignment comes five and a half years after Samor joined the International Financing Review (IFR), which he left in January. Samor says, "I think the Nieman year advanced my personal and professional growth, preparing me to take on this new challenge, and I am thankful for that opportunity."

Matt Schofield, former senior writer at The Kansas City Star, is now European bureau chief for Knight Ridder [KR] in Berlin, Germany. He writes: "My job includes organizing coverage and writing about Europe from an office in Berlin. The location, by the way, places the Schofield family about a mile from **Jeff Fleishman**, also '02, and his family.

"The bureau chief deal is mostly symbolic, as it's a two-person operation, me and an office manager, so

really I'm a correspondent, but all of Europe is included in my territory. I came to the KR job after a year back with The Kansas City Star, a chunk of which I spent in Iraq. This followed on the heels of a great Nieman year. Of course, **Lorelei** and the kids are here as well, all four of them, the older three are attending the Kennedy School in Berlin. The youngest dresses up in superhero costumes."

—2004—

Santiago Lyon, an Associated Press (AP) photo editor for Spain and Portugal since 1995, is the AP's new director of photography. Lyon comes to his new position with 20 years of professional experience as a wire-service photographer and photo editor.

Lyon started working in July 1984 in Madrid for United Press International and then for Reuters from 1985 to 1991. He joined AP in 1991. He has covered news in Mexico, Central and South America, the Balkans, the Middle East, and Africa. It was during one of his many assignments covering conflict that Lyon was wounded by mortar shrapnel in the leg while on assignment in Sarajevo in 1995. Lyon also covered the Taliban takeover of Kabul despite the Taliban ban on photography of people in 1996, as well as the war and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Albania in 1998 and 1999.

At the end of his Nieman year, Lyon and his wife, **Emma Daly**, also a journalist, and daughter, Sara, 2 1/2, will relocate to New York. ■

Ann Simmons, 2003 Nieman Fellow, Wounded in Iraq

"... At the end of last year I was sent on assignment to Iraq to assist with our paper's [Los Angeles Times] coverage of the crisis there.

"Much to my horror, I was the victim of a suicide bomb attack outside a restaurant in Baghdad on New Year's Eve. Eight people were killed in the blast and several Iraqis and Los Angeles Times staff injured.

"I don't remember the sound of the explosion, just a blistering heat scorching the right side of my face, which was sprayed with debris and glass from the window of the car where I was sitting and subsequently buried for several minutes.

"For a while, my colleagues thought I was dead. When I regained consciousness, I couldn't move due to the shock. I thought I was blind. My eyes and mouth were full of blood and gravel.

"An Iraqi stranger pulled me from the wreckage, threw me on the back of a pickup truck, along with one of my colleagues, and took us to an Iraqi hospital, where doctors stitched a wound in my face without anesthesia.

"Hours later, one of the Times's

local staff commandeered an ambulance and took my two American colleagues and me to Baghdad's so-called Green Zone, where the U.S. military has a field hospital. There, doctors put another three stitches in my head—using anesthesia, of course.

"I was eventually flown to Basra in southern Iraq, then evacuated to the U.K. by the British Royal Air Force.

"I spent a couple of weeks with my family in England before returning to Los Angeles in early January. I am now back at work, covering my new beat—immigrant communities and immigration-related issues.

"I've made a speedy recovery, and I feel truly blessed. I know that had my colleagues and I arrived at the restaurant just 60 seconds earlier, we would likely have been killed, because we would have been standing outside the car and taken the full impact of the blast.

"There is still glass in my face, which I'm told will eventually ease its way out. Luckily, I won't need plastic surgery. I thank God every day for sparing my life." ■ —Ann Simmons

Reflecting the Floating City

The magic of networking offers pathways to the real Venice.

By Frank Van Riper

When it was The Most Serene Republic, a community of art and achievement that valued the individual and barely tolerated the Pope in Rome; when it was the undisputed nexus of eastern and western trade; when Lord Byron or Wagner or Dickens tarried in creative leisure among its palazzi and canali—when Thomas Mann’s doomed, depressive Aschenbach came to seek solace, only to find death—the traditional approach to the city was by boat and virtually the only point of entry was through the Plaza that honors St. Mark.

So begins the final draft of the introduction to “Serenissima: Venice in Winter,” my book-in-the-making and a labor of love with my wife, Judy Goodman. This project began quite unexpectedly 20 years ago, when Judy and I delayed our Italian honeymoon so I could cover the 1984 presidential campaign.

Back then, I had no inkling I would become a professional photographer, much less one who did photography books. But, in fact, the freedom to scratch this photographic itch, which had been with me since childhood, came five years before we went to Venice, during my Nieman year.

The time I spent that year in the darkroom at the Carpenter Center began to push me with unobtrusive force away from covering politics for the (New York) Daily News and into joining my photographer wife in a commercial and artistic partnership that, like the marriage, has endured—even

prospered—during these past two decades.

The Venice book was our first joint artistic venture. If there were bumps early on, I have forgotten them; the project simply has been too damn enjoyable. Sometimes we made two trips to Venice in a year and took up residence for as long as a month in an apartment in the sestiere of Santa Croce. On each trip, armed with research we’d done during the preceding months from books, interviews, films and chance encounters, Judy and I plotted a short list of places and people we needed to find—people at work, people shopping at La Pescaria, people enjoying a sunny Sunday in Campo Santa Margarita or at Il Giardino.

Doing this preparatory research confirmed that the reporting of a story can be as important as the end result. And it convinced me of the exponential magic of networking. For example, to make pictures of real glass blowing on Murano—not snapshots of some fellow fashioning a tiny glass horse before an audience of tourists—we followed the lead of one of our American clients. He told us of his neighbor Giovanni. Giovanni’s brother Giampaolo, it turns out, is one of Venice’s premier glass brokers. I called Giovanni, who called Giampaolo, who ultimately told us, “With me, you can do anything.”

He was right. After several hours watching and photographing some of the greatest glass artisans in the world, Giampaolo asked: “Would you like to see a palazzo?” And later that week, we did, and also met and photographed

the count and countess who owned this stunningly restored palace in the heart of the city.

To document a key part of Jewish life in the world’s first ghetto, we talked with a photo lab owner (and orthodox Jew), who recommended we take a guided tour of the old Jewish cemetery on Lido. Two years later, that same guide led me to Rabbi Elia Richetti, who graciously let us photograph one of his afternoon Hebrew classes.

In the years since I left the Daily News, I have been able to pursue my twin loves of photography and writing, often while working on the same project. This has opened creative and artistic possibilities I never imagined that will soon culminate in the publication of this Venetian adventure. And to think it all began on those days when I went timidly but excitedly into the darkroom during my Brigadoon year at Harvard. ■

Frank Van Riper, a 1979 Nieman Fellow, is a photographer and author and, since 1992, photography columnist for The Washington Post. He previously was a Washington correspondent and editor in the (New York) Daily News’s Washington bureau. His current book, “Talking Photography” (Allworth Press, 2002) is a collection of the first 10 years of his photography writing.

✉ gvr@gvrphoto.com



In the Venice Ghetto, Rabbi Elia Richetti teaches a Hebrew class of young boys and girls. *Photo by © Judith Goodman.*



White-clad mimes pose during Carnevale in Piazza San Marco, with three masked figures in the background providing counterpoint. *Photo by © Frank Van Riper.*



A gondolier plies the Venetian lagoon on a cold winter night as the church of La Madonna Della Salute looms in the background. *Photo by © Frank Van Ripper.*



A traghetto (a smaller gondola) is the crosstown bus of Venice. For a very small fee, you can cross the canal without having to walk to a bridge. Many Venetians do this standing up. *Photo by © Frank Van Ripper.*



This is a late-night time exposure of the Bridge of Sighs between Doge's Palace and the prison where unfortunates often would spend the rest of their lives. "Sighs" refers to an expression of despair from those glimpsing the light of day for the last time. *Photo by © Frank Van Ripper.*