

# COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

MAY/JUNE 1975  
NATIONAL MEDIA MONITOR/PRESS • RADIO • TV

## RON NESSEN'S BRIEFINGS

the missing  
questions  
(and answers)



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*Julius Ferrante*

# Saving energy

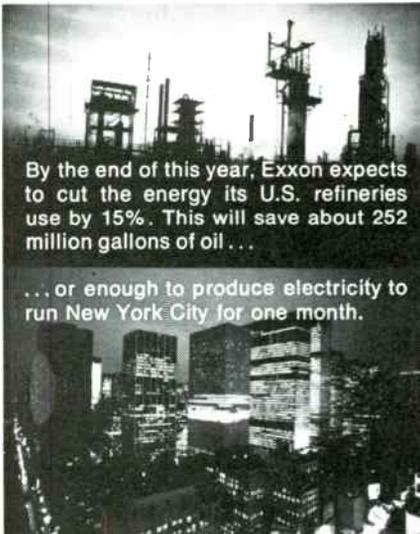
## American industry offers a tremendous potential for energy savings right now.

One way to reduce our dependence on foreign oil is to use energy more efficiently. This means using less electricity and heating oil in our homes and saving gasoline in our cars.

American industry also offers a great potential for using energy efficiently. Why? Because industry uses at least one-third of all the energy consumed in the U.S. today.

### Exxon will save enough energy to run New York City for 30 days.

All major industries require large amounts of energy. In fact, 25 percent of all our energy is consumed by just six industries: farming and food pro-



By the end of this year, Exxon expects to cut the energy its U.S. refineries use by 15%. This will save about 252 million gallons of oil...

...or enough to produce electricity to run New York City for one month.

cessing, aluminum, chemical, iron and steel, paper, and petroleum refining.

In the case of Exxon, we use energy to make energy. But, by the end of this year Exxon expects to cut energy usage at our U.S. refineries by 15 percent of what we used in 1972. The energy we save could heat the homes in Pittsburgh for one year or provide enough electricity to run New York City for one month.

### No more "full speed ahead."

A ship captain can save fuel the same



Exxon's U.S. tankers reduced fuel consumption by 5.5 million gallons last year...

...or enough to fuel 5700 average-sized farm tractors for one year.

way you save gasoline in your car. By slowing down our U.S. tankers and towboats and by cutting nonessential power demands, Exxon saved 5.5 million gallons of fuel last year. That is enough to power 5700 farm tractors for a year.

Last year, our 54-story headquarters in New York cut energy requirements by nearly 35 percent. Our Houston office reduced consumption of electric-



Exxon's Houston office has reduced its annual electric consumption by 7.3 million kilowatt-hours...

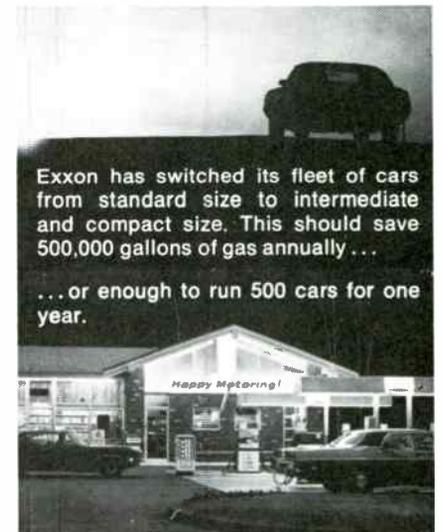
...or enough to provide electricity for 575 average-sized homes for one year.

ity by 7.3 million kilowatt-hours. That is enough electricity to power 575 average-sized homes for one year.

Recently Exxon switched all company cars from standard size to intermediate or compact size. We expect that this will save 500,000 gallons of gasoline annually—or enough to run 500 cars for one year.

### There is evidence of progress.

As a nation, there is evidence that we are making progress on curbing



Exxon has switched its fleet of cars from standard size to intermediate and compact size. This should save 500,000 gallons of gas annually...

...or enough to run 500 cars for one year.

energy use. Figures from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the American Petroleum Institute show that demand for energy dropped 3.3 percent in 1974 as compared to 1973. Gasoline consumption alone dropped 2 percent.

Take a good look at how you run your operation, whether it's a corporation, a small business, or a home in the suburbs. We think you'll be surprised at the ways you can use energy efficiently to conserve our nation's energy supplies. And you'll save money too.



# More Passengers-Less Fuel

When it comes to fuel, the nation's scheduled airlines are doing much more with much less.

The airlines in 1974 carried 208 million passengers, about six million more than the year before, while consuming about one billion fewer gallons of fuel. Despite this billion-gallon reduction, the airline fuel bill rose almost \$1 billion over 1973.

The airlines now account for more than 75 percent of all the intercity passenger miles provided by public transportation in this country, carry most of the first class mail and thousands of tons of freight. All this while using only about four percent of petroleum consumed nationally.

Working closely with flight crews, ground personnel, and the government, airlines in 1974 adopted additional fuel conservation measures, always consistent with safety requirements. Flight schedules were carefully modified to cut fuel consumption, with a reduction of more than 400,000 flights during the year. This action alone saved some 700 million gallons of fuel. Few other industries can match this fuel conservation record.

Government reports show domestic airline jet fuel use was down 13% in the first 9 months of 1974. This compares with a 3.4% decrease in gasoline use.

Examples of airline fuel saving measures include:

- Greater use of flight simulators for pilot training eliminates thousands of landings and takeoffs annually, and saves millions of gallons of fuel.

- Expanded use of computers in flight planning selects altitudes that will get the flight from here to there with reduced fuel consumption.

- Shutting down one or more engines as the aircraft taxis to the arrival gate, or when there is likely to be a delay on takeoff.

- Reduction of cruise speeds to the most efficient levels, with the loss of only minutes per flight. Two examples:

Cutting the speed of a daily DC-8 flight from 544 miles per hour to 530 gets the aircraft from Chicago to Los Angeles only four minutes later, but saves 60,000 gallons of fuel annually.

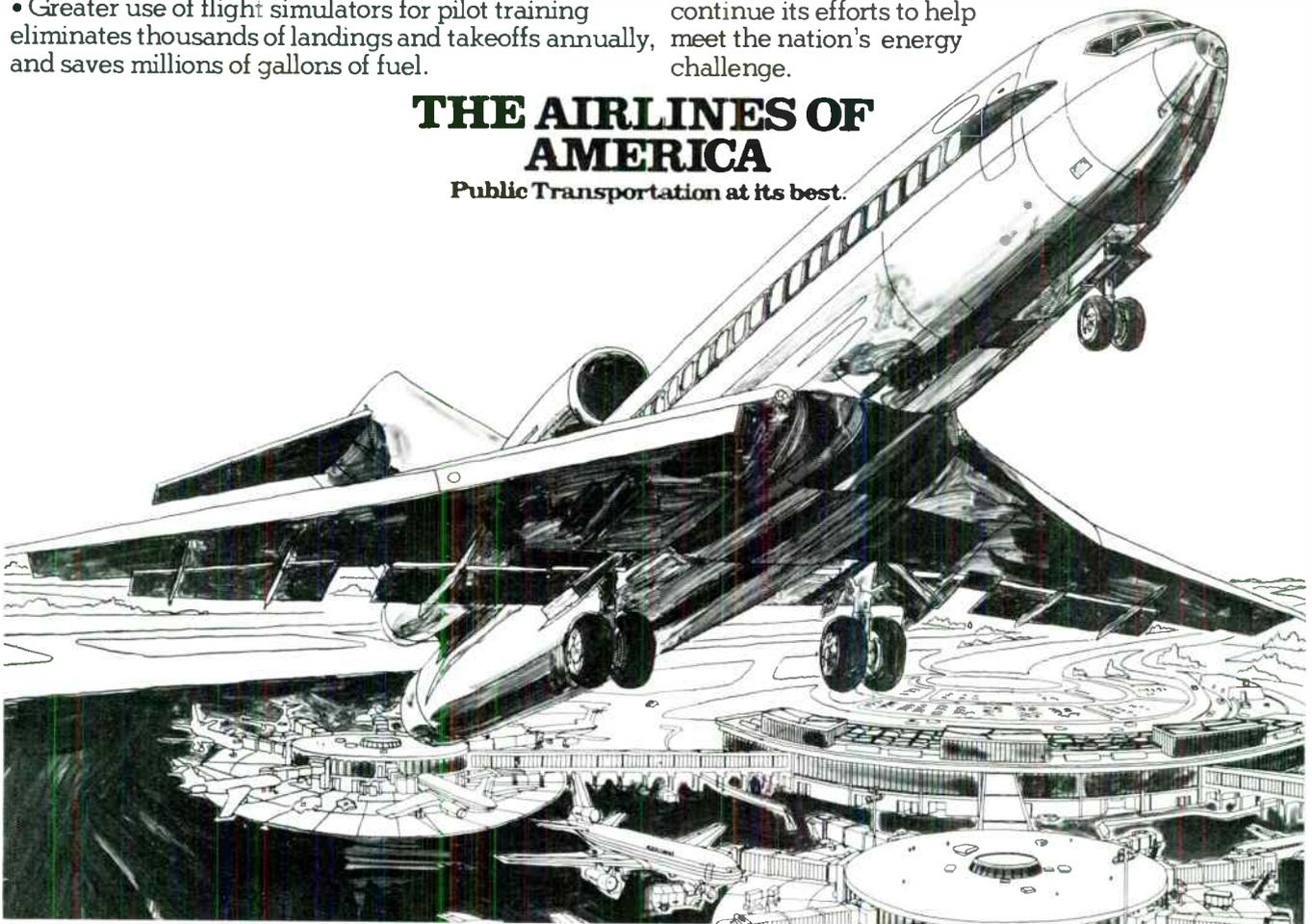
For a 737 on a 500 mile flight, reducing cruising speed from 520 to 500 miles per hour adds only three minutes but reduces fuel consumption by seven percent.

Modified flight schedules and conservation measures in the operation of aircraft are saving about three million gallons of jet fuel a day.

The U.S. scheduled airline system, flexible and responsive to the nation's public transportation needs, will continue its efforts to help meet the nation's energy challenge.

## THE AIRLINES OF AMERICA

Public Transportation at its best.



Air Transport Association, 1709 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

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"To assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest responsible service . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent."

—Excerpt from the Review's founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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# IBM Reports

## From \$1.26 in 1952 to 1 cent today

**W**hile the cost of just about everything has risen dramatically in recent years, the cost of doing things by computer has been a noteworthy exception.

Although computers have become increasingly useful as their speed and capacity have multiplied, their cost per operation has declined sharply since the first commercial computer was installed less than 25 years ago.

For example, in 1952 it cost \$1.26 to do 100,000 multiplications on an IBM computer. Six years later, the cost had dropped to 26 cents. By 1964, those same 100,000 multiplications could be executed for 12 cents—and by 1970, for 5 cents. Today, they can be done for a penny.

All this against the current of inflation that has seen an 80% rise in the government's Consumer Price Index over the past twenty years.

This astonishing reduction in a computer's per-function cost has led to important savings in the overall cost of doing a given data processing task. It has been brought about by technological advances such as the miniaturization of computer circuitry. Such advances have made possible vast increases in computation speed—from about 2,000 multiplications a second on an IBM computer in 1952 to more than 2,000,000 a second today.

These improvements have resulted from constant pioneering by hundreds of companies in the data processing industry, pioneering that continues today. Over the years, IBM has invested more than \$6 of every \$100 of gross income in research and development.

Lowered computation costs make it practical to use computers in an ever-widening range of applications—resulting in such benefits as faster handling of airlines reservations, better use of resources in manufacturing, and the saving of human lives through swift medical diagnosis.

Further reductions could bring about still greater benefits—benefits that will be seriously needed. Should the world's population increase by some 800 million people by 1985 as expected, there will be unprecedented demands for food, shelter, clothing, medicine, transportation and other necessities of life. The computer can greatly aid productivity in each of these areas.

In the future, as in the past, the lower the cost of computing, the more significant the computer's contributions to society can be.

# IBM



## He worked all day for Lederle— then he worked all night to help save a little girl's life.

It was a cold Monday night in Tyler, Texas.

H. C. Rodgers, a Lederle Laboratories Medical Service Representative was relaxing after a full day calling on physicians, pharmacists and hospitals. The phone rang. It was the emergency room of a community hospital 70 miles away. "We need anti-rabies serum for a little girl. And we need it fast!" Emergency calls to a Lederle representative are not unusual. Mr. Rodgers' reply was immediate — "I'll bring it to you personally." He called the Lederle Distribution Center and arranged to meet a fellow Lederle employee 30 miles outside of Dallas. The coordination between Mr. Rodgers and the Distribution Center saved over 60 minutes when every minute was crucial. He would still have to drive over 150 miles to the hospital.

By 12:30 A.M., after a five-hour race with death, Hal Rodgers delivered the serum.

Several hours later and finally home again he received another call. "Thanks. She's out of danger."

**Lederle is on call 24 hours a day.**



LEDERLE LABORATORIES. A Division of  
American Cyanamid Co., Pearl River, New York 10965

# COMMENT

## Darts and laurels

*Dart:* to the Pasadena *Star-News*, for its April 2 street-sales headline, MARINES TO VIETNAM. (The small type below said: "Will Guard U.S. Ships.")

*Laurel:* to Dolly Katz, the science editor of the *Detroit Free Press*, for her series on abortion clinics. After doctors certified that she was not pregnant, she visited ten abortion clinics. Five told her she was pregnant. Her stories resulted in a state investigation and, a month later, a bill was signed into law requiring state licensing of outpatient surgical clinics.

*Dart:* to *Philadelphia* magazine. Its restaurant listings contain this notice: "Because of limited space, we are obligated to confine our dining listing to those restaurants that have indicated a desire to reach the Philadelphia Magazine audience by becoming advertisers." Will movie listings be next?

*Dart:* to *The Denver Post*, which did not inform readers about the layoff of forty-two of its own Newspaper Guild employees until the story had received prominent notice in other Denver media. The *Post* did finally report the layoffs — in a five-inch story at the bottom of page 65.

*Laurel:* to *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*, which has become the West Coast's most perceptive and persistent media monitor. In a recent issue, for example, the biweekly *Guardian* reported that the California Newspaper Publishers Association was selling \$50 corporate "sponsorships" of award plaques for journalists.

## The trouble with fairness

"It was in 1963," Fred W. Friendly informs us in "What's Fair on the Air?" [*The New York Times Magazine*, March 30], "that the [Federal Com-

munication Commission's fairness] doctrine began to change from a vague public-interest policy to an instrument of politics and inhibition." President Kennedy wanted to make sure that the Senate would ratify the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and he feared that unless advocates of the treaty were given air time to state their (and his) side of the issue the treaty might not be ratified. The fairness doctrine was invoked; advocates spoke on stations to which they otherwise would have been denied access; the treaty was ratified; and, Friendly writes, "The White House believed this political use of the fairness doctrine had made an important contribution to the eventual Senate vote to ratify." The first step had been taken. In the summer of 1964, by which time Senator Goldwater had been nominated as the Republican presidential nominee, "the Democrats decided to expand the fairness doctrine effort."

A crucial part of that effort, as Friendly shows, was devoted to investigative reporter Fred Cook's attempt to win in court the right to air a reply; he had been attacked by the Rev. Billy James Hargis in a program broadcast, among other places, on radio station WGSB, in Red Lion, Pennsylvania. It has not been generally known that Cook's effort, eventually successful, was politically inspired, backed by the Democratic National Committee, and aimed at conservative commentators. Yet the Red Lion case received wide coverage, and it developed over a long period — from November 1964, when Hargis delivered his attack, until June 1969, when the Supreme Court upheld the FCC's right to order WGSB to grant Cook reply time. Why, one wonders, did no reporter dig beneath the surface during the five years? The failure illustrates the need for journalism to do more investigating within its own ranks.

As luck would have it, of course,

once such political usage of the fairness doctrine had been established by Kennedy and Johnson, it became available to Richard Nixon, who sought to apply it in retaliation for news coverage he didn't like.

Richard E. Wiley, chairman of the FCC, has been quoted as saying that "there is no question that [Friendly's] disclosures will provide ammunition for those who oppose the fairness doctrine." We, meanwhile, cannot fault the goal of the doctrine, which requires broadcasters to "afford reasonable opportunities for opposing viewpoints . . . [and] devote a reasonable amount of broadcasting time to the discussion of controversial issues." We question, however, whether any administration can long resist the opportunity of interpreting "reasonable" in a self-serving way. Further, we question whether it is still valid to regulate broadcasting in a way very different from the print media.

The underlying premise for FCC regulation is that the air, like a pie in the sky, can be divided into only so many slices, whereas newspapers can proliferate with the sort of wild abandon denied radio and television stations. The limits of the public's air waves were thought to justify such regulation of broadcasters. This may have been a persuasive argument in 1949, when the FCC first required broadcasting licensees to adhere to the fairness doctrine. Now, however, in metropolitan areas certainly, and in much of the country outside of the cities, radio and TV stations greatly outnumber, and out-earn, newspapers.

## A dirty word in the news

The editor and publisher of the *Dayton Journal Herald* lost his job on March 25, ostensibly because he allowed the word "fucking" to appear twice on the

front page of his paper. It appeared in the transcript of a statement by a Treasury agent in which he described what happened in the moments before he shot and killed a fellow agent.

Editor Charles T. Alexander said he thought the passage was “an outcry of passion” that had a “certain dynamic” he could not disturb. He added that the agent’s words had “a lot to say about life and people and what they can fall into.”

At least some of Alexander’s superiors did not agree with his decision. The day after publication, Charles E. Glover, executive vice-president of the Cox Newspapers, called Alexander into his office and told him that publishing the “obscenities” was indefensible. Under the circumstances Alexander felt obligated to offer his resignation. It was accepted.

Why? There is a great deal of speculation, but no agreement: *The Journal Herald*’s circulation had dropped under Alexander; the papers with the offending words had been circulated to school children. Some staffers at the paper think management seized an opportunity to get rid of an editor they were uncomfortable with.

We don’t believe general use of the participle in question is required to aid thought or literature. However, it is beyond doubt that editor Alexander’s decision to print the word came from his desire to present an accurate record of what had happened, not from any desire to shock his readers. We agree with Alexander’s decision in this case, and we salute his integrity.

## The case of the sunken sub

It was the kind of story to stimulate even the most jaded reporter: the CIA teaming up with the reclusive Howard Hughes in a \$350-million operation to raise a sunken Russian nuclear submarine. Object: to recover Russian code books and nuclear missiles without their knowledge.

But when Jack Anderson broke the story in March, it seemed that half the reporters in Washington already knew

about it. It turns out that when the story first came to the attention of reporters more than a year ago, the CIA chose to suppress it by telling the full story to every newsman who came close — and then requesting that the news organization hold the story for reasons of “national security.” News organizations approached agreed to the embargo only so long as no one else broke the story. But the “national security” argument did not convince Anderson: “This was simply a cover-up of a \$350-million failure — \$350 million literally went down into the ocean,” he said.

The operation was not a success — only half the sub was recovered, minus missiles and code books. CIA director Colby told reporters he wanted to suppress the story because the agency was planning another attempt this summer to recover the rest of the submarine — this in spite of doubts within the intelligence community about the value of what might be recovered. (Most accounts agree that the code books were outdated and the missiles were not the latest in the Soviet arsenal.)

There are other questions to be asked about the decision of so many news organizations to hold the story. Here was the government secretly spending more money than had been requested for the saving of Cambodia — to gather information of dubious value. Here was the government engaging Howard

Hughes in a lucrative cost-plus contract. (This was the same Howard Hughes whose exact relationship to the Nixon administration has yet to be told.)

As Tom Wicker noted in *The New York Times*, cases in which the public’s right to know are weighed against claims of national security require decisions “not easily made, and no responsible person would wish to abandon them to abstract rules.” We agree for the most part, although we are willing to state one abstract rule: the danger to national security should be clear and present, and entail matters more substantive than national embarrassment, if news is to be withheld. By this test, the submarine story should have been reported.

There are those who speculate that Colby’s CIA sought disclosure, not suppression, by acquainting so many newsmen with so many details. Perhaps it was thought that the operation portrayed the CIA, for a change, in its properly official role. We don’t think the story is complimentary to anyone — including the journalists who withheld it.

## Money speaks: the Haldeman interviews

A favorite topic of in-house journalism talk of late has been the \$50,000 or so that CBS paid H. R. Haldeman to be interviewed on the air. To many it seemed as morally questionable to reward White House misdeeds as did the “checkbook journalism” rewards for the bedroom antics of Christine Keeler with a British cabinet officer. Guardians of journalism’s checkbooks already are having nightmares about football heroes and Martha Mitchell types auctioning off interview rights — and convicted criminals emerging from court to answer only the highest bidder’s questions.

The talk has been as inconclusive as it has been endless. Partly this is because the practice is well established: there have been payments for Churchill’s memoirs, for Svetlana’s recollections, for the astronauts’ tales (a dubious



# “Nobody can teach me how to write.”

We hear that all the time around here and all we can say is, “You’re right.”

So what have we been doing in business for the last 55 years?

Plenty.

In the last year alone, for instance, we told our readers a bit about the following:

- ★ How to query an editor
- ★ How to prepare a professional-looking ms
- ★ How much to depreciate on your working space
- ★ How to make out a bill
- ★ How to behave on a talk show
- ★ How much to expect for a half-hour teleplay
- ★ How to take photos for the skin magazines
- ★ How much to charge in 75 different job categories

Did you know all that already?

## And look what else we offer:

Technique tips writers send us (how to get an interview going, for instance). Those soul-searching interviews with writers (Jessica Mitford: “I’ve never told this on TV, but I guess it’s OK now . . .”). The incisive market information that made us famous (now with freelancers’ actual comments). Regular reports from New York and Hollywood and from the fields of poetry, cartooning and photo-journalism. Plus the only letters-to-the-editor page we know of written entirely by authors.

You’re not necessarily born knowing all of the skills you can learn in a copy of *Writer’s Digest*. For that matter, you’re not born knowing that you can save a buck off our regular price just by filling out this special coupon, either. But you probably learn fast.

### Special Introductory Offer

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Enclosed find \$6.95. (regularly \$7.95)

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The Monthly Service for Writers

Marie  
Rachelle  
nephew  
Page 20



deal), and for on-air interviews with Lyndon Johnson, Dwight Eisenhower and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Some argue that payment for *memoirs* is justifiable, as opposed to payments for *news*. But the Haldeman interview, like that with Solzhenitsyn, dealt with current topics; it was not a memoir.

The specific case of Haldeman was curious. His much-discussed arrogance and storm-trooper demeanor gave way to an air of bland modesty and injured innocence. New revelations were minimal. Mike Wallace, widely considered a skilled and relentless interviewer, appeared frustrated and sometimes indignant, but seemed to let pass various opportunities for tough follow-ups. The

impression left with some was that Wallace was unpleasant and rude to a rather civil fellow; with others it was that he was ineffective against a smooth performer. At any rate, it seemed Haldeman really should have paid CBS for giving him a platform.

Out of it all, the *Review* draws one strong recommendation. This is that respectable journalism, both print and broadcast, should make it standard practice that any paid-for interview should carry, in the introductory matter, a clear statement that the individual was compensated for the interview. Even with an Eisenhower, let alone a Haldeman, this would be relevant information, and the reader or listener should have it.

## Plugging leakers

Judging from two recent cases, the government is finding it alarmingly easy to root out the sources of confidential information supplied to the media. In Washington, Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur Burns asked the FBI to track down a Federal Reserve employee who had leaked a list of bank interest rates to *Consumer Reports* magazine. The list, published in the March issue of the magazine, compared sometimes wildly different rates for loans charged by banks in eleven cities.

Defending its action, Consumers Union, the magazine's parent organization, argued that, since the banks reveal their rates to anyone who asks in the first place, the Fed should give out the information itself. Chairman Burns replied that the banks had given information to the Fed with the understanding that it would be kept confidential and, citing the Eighth Commandment, called the leak a theft of government property.

In early April, the FBI found its man: an unnamed Federal Reserve employee who agreed to resign in return for not being prosecuted.

The second incident occurred in Berkeley, California, where radio station KPFA-FM, owned by the Pacifica Foundation, yielded a subpoenaed tape recording sent to the station by the New World Liberation Front. On the tape, the Front took credit for bombing local television facilities. Pacifica, always inclined to air material from even the most radical groups, has drawn many such subpoenas in years past, but has always fought them fiercely. Capitulation in this case was inspired by the Supreme Court's refusal to review the contempt conviction of the general manager of a Pacifica station in Los Angeles. He had refused to give a federal grand jury a tape from the Symbionese Liberation Army. Pacifica felt that the Los Angeles case established a precedent, and that it would be inadvisable to battle a similar subpoena in Berkeley. It all served to prove, as a Pacifica spokesman said, that the conflicts between law enforcement and journalism are far from resolution.

## The TV infant approaches adolescence

For nearly three years, viewers of KGSC-TV in San Jose, California have had a unique video treat. That station's on-camera editorialist is Carol Doda, otherwise famous as the first topless dancer. Cheerful as the Doda presence may be, it is bound to depress those who have been hoping that broadcast editorials would become an important journalistic form. Presenting a Carol Doda editorial as often as four times a day may be clever promotion, and it may be evidence of our faith in upward mobility. But it's not evidence that editorials are taken seriously.

The potential of TV editorials is enormous, if only because America's 702 commercial television stations reach sixty-six million homes. The failure to editorialize effectively derives, as Frank Stanton, former president of CBS, sees it, "from a basic conflict . . . between entertainment and information in a mass medium. The objective of the entertainer is to please most of the people most of the time — by and large to give people what they want." Stanton also notes that most station managers "do not come out of an editorial tradition, as most publishers do. Their backgrounds are usually in sales, which could account for what appears to be a failure to grasp some of the fundamental requirements of the broadcast editorial."

WCBS-TV in New York, KRON-TV in San Francisco, WTVJ in Miami, and a number of other stations in large metropolitan areas have shown that it is possible to produce editorials that make effective use of location filming, slides, videotape, and file film. Not many follow their example.

Editorial philosophies differ even more widely than styles of presentation. According to recent studies, between 65 and 69 percent of TV and radio editorials are devoted to local, state, and regional topics. Such topics are admittedly the special purview of local stations, but there is another point: the vast majority of TV stations are not equipped to deal intelligently with difficult national issues. Even at the few stations with full-time editorialists, there is little time for research and specialization.

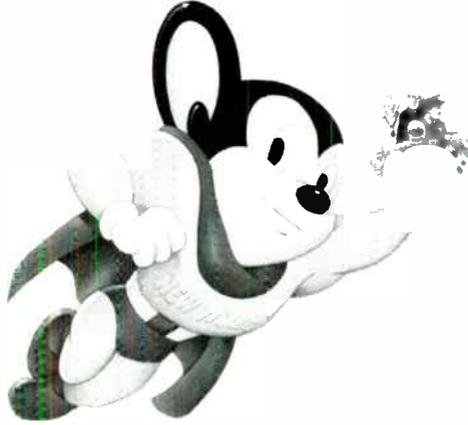
There is no doubt that television news has matured in the last quarter century. But editorials, which first appeared on TV screens a little over a decade ago, remain comparatively infantile. And they won't mature until station managements regard editorializing as an important part of their task, and provide the staff and resources to do the job.

PHILIP SCRIBNER BALBONI

*Philip Scribner Balboni is editorial director of WCVB-TV in Boston.*

# NewTimes.

## Think of us as the Mighty Mouse of magazines.



Superman we are not.

But that doesn't mean NEW TIMES isn't busting evil in the chops, fighting for the little guy, stripping the pants off phonies and generally shaking hell out of the establishment.

Like Mighty Mouse, we are small but powerful feisty. Out of all proportion to our size, we make waves. Strike fear in evil hearts. Give the tremble to fat cats. Shake the rafters. The Mouse that Roars, that's us.

### Some recent roars.

Every two weeks, NEW TIMES comes along with a stick or two of dynamite in its fist.

There was our story on "The Ten Dumbest Congressmen," with our nomination for King of Dumb. How they screamed! There was "Pre-



scription Payola," about doctors who will risk your life for a color TV. There was "Southie is My Home Town," a look at the people of South Boston you didn't find in other media. (After a century of the shaft, maybe they had reasons for coming off as bawling racists.)

In "The Little Camera that Couldn't," NEW TIMES dissected Polaroid's SX-70, as a symbol of a consumer economy gone wild. In "A Wallace Is a Wallace Is a Wallace," we looked underneath the new moderate George and found—guess what—the same old George. In "Happy Days Are Here Again," we saw the new depression as upbeat—a chance for the whole Whole Earth thing. "The Gourmet Freeze-Out" ripped the foil of a big restaurant ripoff. "The Consulting Con Game" laid bare a cushy professorial racket. "They Shoot Ten-Year Olds, Don't They?" was a heartwarming look at New York's shootin' cops with their 007 license to kill. "That Championship Season" stripped the cover-up from the sex scandal that decimated Notre Dame's football team.

### Is NEW TIMES mad all the time?

Golly, no. Don't get the idea we do nothing but dredge up embarrassing facts and tweak important noses. NEW TIMES is *the magazine of what's happening* and that's a spectrum that includes love and music and lifestyles and movies and all manner of rare new ideas. For instance, we reported on Erhard Seminars

Training (est), one of the most fascinating of the new life therapies. We got inside the world of bisexuality. We published our own medical research on pot—"Attention: Smoking Grass May Be Good for Your Health."

And of course we continue to report on the eternal battle of The Little Guys vs. The Big Guys. Like the story on Sam Lovejoy, who toppled the big bad nuclear tower. And the young hillbillies of Mendocino County who were



damned if they'd let their houses be torn down for lack of city plumbing.

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# Filling up the white space

A public-relations man found it all too easy to get press releases printed as news stories

by HAROLD Y. JONES

For fifteen months I was news director of the Expo '74 World's Fair in Spokane, Washington — and even after seventeen years as a journalist, the experience gave me an entirely new view of American newspapers. Bluntly put, I found that a surprising number of the smaller daily and weekly newspapers (most of the major metropolitan papers are a different story altogether) are quite willing to dispense with editors and reporters whenever they can, and turn instead to innocuous feature stories and "canned" copy — free, if possible — in order to fill up the empty spaces between the advertisements.

I headed the news division of Expo '74's public-relations department. We wrote and distributed several hundred stories, or press releases, about the fair both before and after it opened in May of 1974. Our purpose, of course, was to publicize Expo '74. The fair's attendance figures suggest that our efforts had some effect: at the end of the fair's six-month run, 5.2 million people had attended, some 400,000 more than had been expected.

I have no complaint on that score. I was paid to get the country's newspapers and broadcasters to help spread the word about Expo '74, and I was successful. What astonished me was how easy it was. Many of our news releases ran in newspapers all over the country, very often word-for-word, with nothing

*Harold Y. Jones has worked for United Press International and the Copley News Service, and is now free-lancing.*

added and nothing cut, and sometimes even under the by-line of the Expo staffer who had written the release.

The most striking example was a story by James Redfern of our staff that was mailed to more than 3,000 newspapers and radio and television stations in August of 1974. It was not a very subdued release: "Expo '74, the World's Fair which opened here May 4, was a success — some say a miracle — long ago," we said. The story summarized what the fair had done to rejuvenate Spokane and remove urban blight. It mentioned that Expo '74 was the first fair to have an environmental theme. "Celebrating Tomorrow's Fresh, New Environment," and pointed out that the Spokane River had been "cleansed by a new sewage treatment plant," and was now "running with trout." "Boys fish — successfully — right on the fair site," Redfern wrote. The thrust of the story was that the fair was "a showcase of cooperation between local businessmen and concerned environmentalists," and for that reason was "a bigger success than most people first imagined it could be."

The one-thousand-word release, exactly as Redfern wrote it, was deemed usable by editors in more than fifty American newspapers.

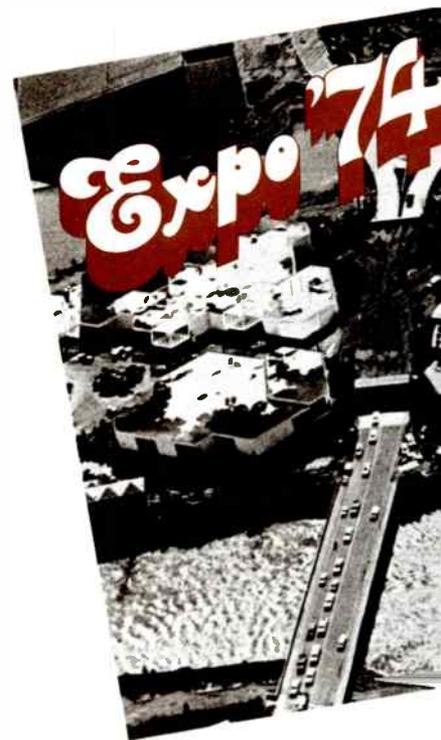
*The Hartford Courant* and the Hackensack (New Jersey) *Record* used the story with Redfern's by-line. Other papers ran it without a by-line; some ran it with the photos we included with the release. Papers that printed all, or almost all, the story included *The San Jose* (California) *Mercury-News*, the St. Petersburg (Florida) *Evening Independent*, *The New Haven* (Connecticut) *Journal-Courier*, the Wheeling (West Virginia) *News-Register*, the Pottsville (Pennsylvania) *Republican*, the Lamar (Missouri) *Daily Democrat*, the Scranton (Pennsylvania) *Sunday Times*, *The Natchez* (Mississippi) *Democrat*, and the New Bedford (Massachusetts) *Standard Times*.

Other papers worked other variations. *The New York Post* took several of our releases and patched together an ad-

vance piece late in April. The *Long Island Daily Press* ran, verbatim, a piece I had written on the fair's opening at the request of a public-relations man from one of the few commercial exhibitors.

We monitored our successes through clipping services, and we collected several thousand clips. I tried to scan them all as they crossed my desk. I did not make any systematic analysis of the clips, but I did leave the job with this feeling: much of the American press obligingly and uncritically told their readers exactly what we wanted them to know, that Expo '74 was a positive experience, a good place to visit.

Not everyone followed the straight public-relations line about the fair. Reporters from out-of-town, big-city dailies came to Spokane fairly often and wrote generally objective stories that pointed out the flaws: Expo had trouble



raising money; only a handful of foreign countries took part; the fair had to struggle to be ready for opening day; Spokane, with only 180,000 people, was presumptuous in staging a World's Fair; the energy crisis of 1974 was a threat to the fair; the former director of advance ticket sales predicted that the fair would lose money; the fair did not live up to its much-publicized environmental theme.

The environmental shortcomings always made good copy. The two wire services kept it active, and the Associated Press, in a series on the fair's exhibits, pointed out that many of them were more commercial than environmental. The correspondent who wrote the pieces told us later that he felt the critical pieces were necessary "to balance all the good stuff we've been sending out about Expo."

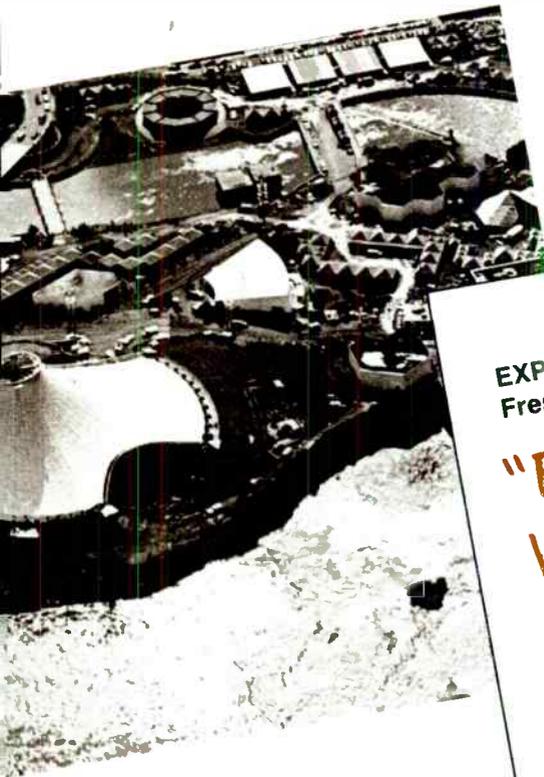
In the fall of 1973, Richard Threlkeld of CBS News visited the fair and was not impressed. The fairgrounds, still under construction, were ugly. The usually powerful Spokane River, which flowed through the fairgrounds, was not flowing, but trickling. Unlike the earlier New York and Seattle fairs, Expo '74 had no eye-catching symbol. And the liveliest nightlife Threlkeld could find was a thunk-a-thunk trio playing standards for oldsters in one of the downtown hotels. He reported most of this on the *CBS Morning News* and affected astonishment that a provincial city like Spokane dared to undertake such an ambitious project.

The reaction in Spokane was predictable: wounded civic pride, and empty mutterings about lawsuits. But those on the fair's public-relations staff, most of whom were not native to Spokane, were

happy about the coverage, on the theory that unfavorable national attention was much better than no attention at all. (Threlkeld returned twice, just before the fair opened and during it, and wrote two straightforward pieces.)

It should surprise no one that *The New York Times*, which sent six reporters to the fair at one time or another, did the best job of covering Expo '74. Other large papers — the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the *Baltimore Sun*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Denver Post*, and *The Kansas City Star*, also sent reporters to Spokane.

I'm not arguing that smaller papers can compete with the huge national papers; they simply don't have the resources. But I think it's fair to expect every American newspaper to have a reporter and telephone — and to use them liberally. ■



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"Expo '74, the  
World's Fair which  
opened here May 4,  
was a success —  
some say a miracle  
— long ago."

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# Nessen's briefings: missing

Ron Nessen is ready to answer more questions — but does he really have more answers?

by LOU CANNON

**O**n January 28, United Press International sent its clients a story relating the exploits of one Glendon Bozman, a Secret Service agent who had the day before loaded "several cases" of beer aboard a government plane that was transporting Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's limousine from Palm Springs, California, to Andrews Air Force Base.

The wire story, which had originated in the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, appeared on the front page of the *Washington Star-News* that afternoon and, on the following morning, on an inside page of *The Washington Post*. When White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen read it, he began to prepare for follow-up questions at the daily White House briefing. Nessen asked a staff member to obtain a response; he received a memorandum confirming the accuracy of the story, and more. The memorandum, sent by Maj. Gen. Richard L. Lawson, the military assistant to the president, to Secret Service Director H. Stuart Knight, also referred to "our recent trip to Japan when additional cargo was placed on aircraft at the request of Secret Service agents." In his memo, Lawson announced a step he had taken to prevent future such actions.

"I have issued instructions to the Department of Defense that only personal baggage can be placed aboard any aircraft without the specific approval of my office," Lawson wrote. "Personal bag-

gage will not include boxes, packages, or crates of any type."

Nessen did not release this information during his briefing. The subject never came up and Nessen, who believes that briefings should "basically reflect a question-and-answer format," did not volunteer the information. The copy of the memorandum remained in Nessen's voluminous briefing book until it was discarded in a cleanup some weeks later.

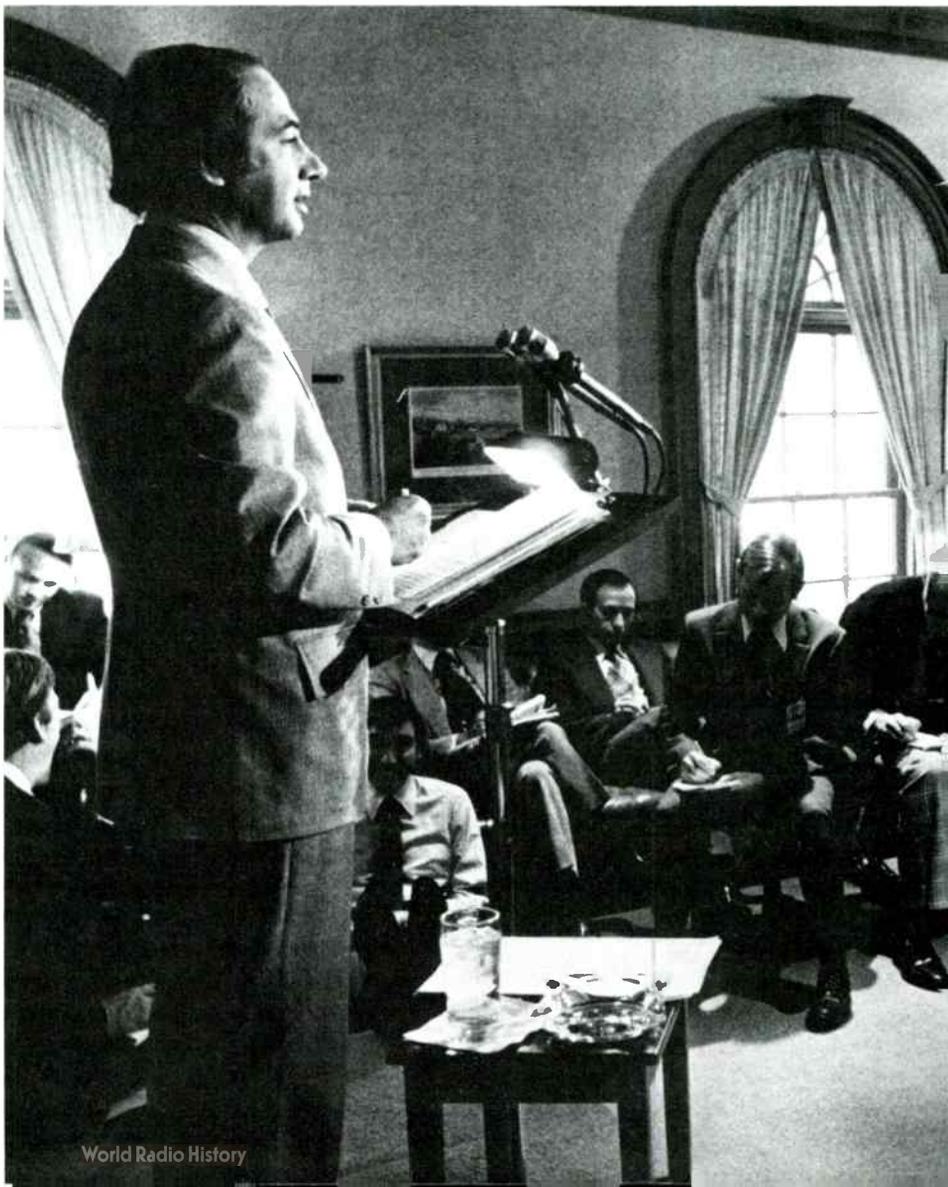
This incident, hardly world-shaking in its consequences, illustrates a complaint that Ron Nessen has made repeatedly since becoming press secretary. In interviews, background briefings, and private sessions with publishers and editors, Nessen has sug-

gested that reporters aren't asking enough detailed questions at the White House briefings.

□ Last October, Nessen says, he carried with him for several days a copy of a "presidential determination" that allowed U.S. military aid to Turkey to continue during the fighting on Cyprus. Reporters had expected this presidential action, and had previously questioned Nessen about it from time to time at White House briefings. But, to Nessen's surprise, by the time the action was taken, no one seemed interested in it anymore, and he says he was asked no questions about it.

□ On March 18, Nessen came to a briefing prepared to say that it was "highly probable" that the United

*Ron Nessen meets the press: a dai*



*Lou Cannon covers politics and the White House as a member of the national staff of The Washington Post.*

# questions (and answers)

States would participate in a summit meeting on a prospective European security treaty. No one asked him, although the treaty had been in the news. The subject did not come up until two days later.

□ On March 19, the White House press secretary came to his briefing prepared to knock down a *Washington Post* story of that day, quoting a spokesman for the Watergate special prosecutor who said that Nixon tapes were being made available to the prosecutor under a "voluntary arrangement." Nessen would have said that only subpoenaed tapes were available to the special prosecutor. The subject was never raised, and Nessen kept his comment to himself.

Nessen believes that reporters should

do as he does: prepare each day by reading the newspapers and considering questions that logically might be expected to produce a White House response. "I take five-and-one-half hours every day trying to get answers to questions," he says. "I wonder how much the reporters prepare."

Nessen's own preparation is demonstrated by his briefing book, which runs to 200 pages and contains everything from the number of days off the Senate will take this year (eighty-seven) to the president's position on such rarely raised issues as the death penalty. (This position, in case anyone ever asks, is that "the president supports the death penalty in certain limited circumstances. He believes that capital punishment can be a deterrent to certain crimes.") Beyond such position papers, the briefing book contains a long list of prepared answers to anticipated questions partially derived from a daily "rehearsal" of the briefing in which members of Nessen's staff play the role of reporters. On any given day, a substantial number of questions to which answers are prepared do not come up at the briefings. This is particularly true for foreign-policy issues, partly because Nessen prepares for a great many foreign-policy questions and partly because many of these questions are raised each day by the specialists who cover the State Department or the Pentagon briefings. But it is worth examining Nessen's contention that these questions also should be asked at the White House.

On February 7, a day chosen at random, Nessen appeared at his daily briefing with one foreign-policy announcement — the joint statement issued by President Ford and Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto at the conclusion of their talks in Washington — and comments on seven other issues. He was questioned on two of these issues, both relating to criticism of Secretary Kissinger. The five that were not raised, but which Nessen was prepared to discuss, were:

□ A report in *The New York Times* that the president's request for Cambodian aid exceeded the actual needs of the

Cambodian government.

□ A UPI report that U.S. military teams were being shuttled in and out of Saigon in possible violation of the Vietnam peace accords.

□ A question about the allocations of foodstuffs to various countries under Public Law 480.

□ A suggestion by Israel's Prime Minister Rabin on ABC's *A.M. America* that his country would be willing to return strategic bases and oil fields to Egypt in return for an unconditional guarantee of nonbelligerency.

□ A charge in Peruvian newspapers that the Central Intelligence Agency had fomented recent unrest in Lima.

The responses that Nessen was prepared to deliver were based upon a memorandum furnished him by Les Janka, the National Security Council aide who served as liaison with the White House press office. Janka, who has since been replaced in this job by Margaret Vanderhye, was not well known to the public, but he was a key link in the transmission of information originating with Kissinger, who in his dual role as national security chief and secretary of state is the ultimate source of almost every foreign-policy statement put out by the administration. Kissinger's penchant for dealing with selected reporters himself, usually on a background basis, is well known. He therefore preferred that Janka's memos be prepared for Nessen's information and used only in response to questions.

**T**hough Nessen is not eager to talk about it, this long-held Kissinger view that the press secretary should speak only when spoken to was strongly impressed on him soon after he took over the press secretary's job when Jerald F. terHorst resigned last September. "I understand the point," says Nessen, without confiding who gave him the understanding. "If you make a mistake on a domestic-policy issue, you might cause a flap. If you make a mistake on foreign-policy issues, you could start a war."

But it is not Kissinger and his National Security Council apparatus alone



ritual in the White House press briefing room

that makes Nessen reluctant to volunteer information. Even on domestic issues, an area in which the White House press secretary is more knowledgeable and far freer to respond, Nessen would rather give information only in answer to a question. This is partly because he doesn't want to appear as "a super salesman" for the administration and partly because the wire services tend to say that Nessen "volunteered" information when he makes an announcement about something. Nessen's argument that the wire services distinguish between volunteered information and an answer to a question "doesn't wash," in the opinion of Frank Cormier, dean of the wire-service correspondents who cover the White House. Cormier, who has a generally high opinion of Nessen as a press secretary, says that wire-service stories use the word "volunteer" only because Nessen rarely gives out information in this way. "If he did it all the time, it would be standard operating procedure and it wouldn't be newsworthy," Cormier adds. To his credit, Nessen takes criticisms like these seriously, and he is volunteering a bit more information.

Nessen had a high opinion of the White House press corps when he was a member of it as a network television correspondent. "I used to think, boy, we're in here every day asking these tough questions and really giving it to them. Now I'm not so sure we were doing all that well." Nessen's present view was shaped by his difficult first month in the White House, a period he now describes as "almost completely a blur." In his first briefing Nessen promised to be "a Ron, not a Ziegler," a typical wisecrack that many of his former colleagues considered gratuitous. But in the next few weeks Nessen got something of a taste of what it must have been like for Ziegler in those last months when the carefully constructed White House public-relations defense of Watergate was falling apart. An informal tabulation early in October of the first 1,074 questions put to Nessen showed that 477 of them dealt with Nixon-related questions, many of them about Nixon administration holdovers in the White House. At one point, *New Republic* correspondent John Osborne wrote in protest against this one-issue



*Nessen watches as the president talks to reporters aboard Air Force One.*

emphasis, noting that some reporters had developed "a taste for blood" in the Ziegler era and apparently liked it. Gradually, this Nixon hangover has faded, but not before making a deep and negative impression upon Nessen. Ironically, the unasked questions for which Nessen prepares sometimes include questions about the former president. On February 7, for instance, Nessen had assembled a detailed report on the Nixon transition act, which expired the following day. No one asked any questions about it.

**N**essen began his preparation for the briefing that day in a typical manner, reading *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and the White House news summary on his chauffeured ride from his home to the White House. He arrived at 7:30 A.M. and made some notes on issues in the news, then attended the senior staff meeting presided over by chief of staff Donald Rumsfeld at 8:00. Arriving back at his office shortly after 8:30, he convened the press-office staff and rehearsed some questions and answers. Then he met briefly with the president and Rumsfeld. Most of Nessen's morning was spent attending a meeting of Ford and his chief economic advisers, one of the several periodic important domestic-policy meetings that the press secretary attends. Only a couple of days

before, Nessen recalled. Ford had mildly chewed him out for failing to attend one such policy meeting and for having to report about it to the press secondhand. This morning Nessen remained in the economic meeting, delaying the scheduled 11:30 A.M. briefing first one hour and then two hours. Nessen finally arrived at 1:40 P.M. to face a hostile and complaining press corps.

"Since I have grown so pudgy, I decided that one way to lose weight was to have my briefing during the lunch hour since I couldn't eat," Nessen said in an attempt to ward off complaints about the briefing's delay. Before he could say anything further, Carroll Kilpatrick of *The Washington Post* made a statement. Kilpatrick is a quiet and gentlemanly reporter who rarely asks an antagonistic question, but he was furious with Nessen on this day.

"What you have done is, you have really immobilized us for several hours," Kilpatrick said. "Wouldn't it be possible if you could come out at 11:30, whether you were complete or not, and if you were not ready to brief then — maybe to come back at 2:30 or 3:00 because we have other appointments around town. We have other things to do. I realize this is bad, but there have been other days nearly as bad as this."

"Today I couldn't even do that," Nessen said apologetically.

With this bad start Nessen could hardly have been expected to do well in the briefing — and he didn't. In the ensuing forty-five minutes he answered more than one hundred questions from reporters, exclusive of the opening complaints and some quips along the way. Fifteen of the questions were house-keeping queries relating to presidential travel and Air Force One pools. These matters consumed one-third of the briefing. There were sixteen miscellaneous questions relating to announcements (Did the president leave the White House last night? What is the time of the president's next press conference?). There were another forty-two questions about the economy or closely related domestic issues, a majority of them focusing on the unemployment rate. And there were thirty-six foreign policy questions, all but six of them relating to Kissinger.

Nessen's most important announcement of the morning ostensibly was the resignation of Labor Secretary Peter Brennan. But this had been reported as a fact weeks ago by the Associated Press and the Washington newspapers, and it had frequently, if unofficially, been confirmed by the Department of Labor. The announcement of Brennan's successor would have been news, but Nessen declined to comment on a report, which subsequently turned out to be true, that John Dunlop would get the Labor Department post.

Nor did the economic questions, which occupied nearly half of the available time, produce any news of consequence. This was partly because President Ford's criticism of Congress for delaying his energy program had been well reported the day before, and Nessen had little new to add to the criticism. It was also because the economic advisers themselves proved accessible that afternoon, as they usually do, to those reporters, chiefly financial specialists, who wanted to add some details to what they already had reported. White House reporters are by the nature of their assignment generalists, and there was no new general policy or announcement of importance arising from the morning meeting that Nessen had attended. Nessen wound up sparring with reporters on left-over economic issues including an explanation of "why the cost-of-

living statistic used in the budget is higher than what the actual increase in the cost of living will be."

The question that produced the most news came on the issue where Nessen is required, because of Kissinger's sensitivity to criticism, to be most careful. It arose from an attack on Kissinger made that morning on the *Today* show by Charles Colson, the former White House aide and old foe of Kissinger in the Nixon administration. Fresh from prison, Colson had renewed his attack on Kissinger and produced a story that was bannered in that day's *Washington Star-News*. He charged that Kissinger was "unstable" and told a long, undocumented story of how only the prudence of President Nixon had restrained Kissinger from an even harsher and earlier retaliatory bombing of North Vietnam than had actually occurred. Kissinger reportedly was livid when he learned of Colson's charges. His anger showed up in Les Janka's memorandum for Nessen, which urged him to say: "I would not dignify Mr. Colson's charges with a response. Colson's charges are complete fabrications. We have searched the records and have found nothing to support his charges."

Nessen was wiser than to perpetuate such an exchange of accusations in this form. He said he would not comment on the Colson allegations. Instead, Nessen demonstrated presidential support for Kissinger by replying to another, milder, attack on the secretary of state by Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, an announced Democratic presidential candidate. In a speech on the preceding day, Bentsen had charged that Kissinger's one-man diplomacy was impeding the success of U.S. foreign policy. In reply, Nessen commented that the president had on many occasions expressed his support of Kissinger. "I might add that in view of the fact that Secretary Kissinger is just about to embark on negotiations of the greatest importance, the president would hope the secretary would have the support of the American people instead of having to face such criticism by political candidates," Nessen said.

This response triggered a series of follow-up questions, none of which advanced the answer. One reporter wanted to know whether Nessen was asking a

moratorium of criticism on Kissinger until the 1976 election, a question to which the press secretary replied, "I am just telling you how the president feels about Senator Bentsen's comments." To a question about whether Kissinger had any role in writing the statement, Nessen replied: "That is a statement that the president wants made clear." Most likely it was, although the essence of Nessen's reply was also contained in Janka's memo. And when Nessen was asked again whether Kissinger had anything to do with the statement, he said: "It is the president's views."

**B**ut what of the answers that Nessen had prepared that were not called forth at this briefing? It is difficult to believe that reporters would have been any more satisfied with Nessen's answers to such questions than they were with his replies about the Kissinger criticisms. If Nessen had followed Janka's memo — in effect, Kissinger's instructions — in answering the unasked questions, he would have denied CIA involvement in the Peruvian unrest and denounced *The New York Times* story on excessive Cambodian aid requests as a "totally inaccurate misrepresentation of the facts." He would have declined to answer the question about food allocations abroad under Public Law 480 or give a response to the Israeli prime minister's offer to Egypt on grounds that this would be inappropriate on the eve of Kissinger's trip. Only on the UPI report about U.S. military teams being sent to and from Saigon would Nessen materially have added to anyone's information, and this answer was substantially available from military sources. Nessen was prepared to deny that the Vietnam peace accords were being violated, but he would have conceded the sending of "teams of technical specialists to Saigon from time to time to insure good management of the U.S. military assistance supply program."

Beyond the value of these particular answers, there remains the question of whether the reporters present "should" have brought up these issues. The prevailing view in the White House press corps, which is not particularly noted for its self-criticism, is that Nessen's expectation that every possible question will be raised is an unreasonable one.

*continued*

“Reporters are not mind readers,” says James Deakin of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. “It’s blather to put the onus on the press if there is information that doesn’t get out. The briefings are held by the White House. Reporters will take information any way that they can get it.” Paul Healy of the *New York Daily News*, another veteran White House correspondent, believes that Nessen should simply announce information that isn’t sought in the course of a briefing. “I don’t think that’s news management,” adds Healy. “The White House should be willing to announce what it wants to get out without worrying about whether someone will say it’s propaganda. A briefing doesn’t have to be just questions.” Says NBC’s Tom Brokaw: “Nessen could say, ‘Let me draw your attention to changes in the wholesale price index,’ or whatever. I wouldn’t be offended. I would find that helpful.”

Nessen himself concedes that he could safely bring up some of the unraised issues now that the White House press corps seems to have emerged from the era when such volunteered information would be regarded as a diversion from the burning issue of Richard Nixon. Certainly, for instance, Nessen could have put out the announcement that Secret Service agents would no longer be permitted to carry back cases of beer from the West Coast, without causing any breakdown in the briefing system.

However, an analysis of this one day’s briefing and this reporter’s experience at the White House on many other days suggests that there is a far more significant problem than the unasked questions — and a more significant problem, too, than the unseemly delay of the briefings which, in any case, Nessen has in the interim largely corrected. The problem is that Nessen, by his own admission, is far more willing and able to talk about domestic-policy issues than foreign-policy ones. With refreshing candor, Nessen says: “The quality of my foreign-policy statements is far below the quality of my domestic statements.”

On domestic issues Nessen supplies long quotes from presidential policy meetings, a practice much appreciated by such wire-service reporters as Cor-

mier, who says he “suspects that in previous administrations such information was reserved for background briefings for the news magazines on Thursday afternoons.” Alas, candor is a deflated commodity in the Ford administration precisely because it is so plentiful. On domestic issues many White House senior staff members and cabinet officers reflect their president’s policy of openness, even as many with the same positions in the Nixon administration mirrored the chief executive’s hostility toward the press. This openness means that much of what Nessen says on domestic policy is available first hand from participants in the meetings and sometimes from participants before the meetings occur. Consequently, the value of Nessen’s extensive responses — and of the considerable preparation underlying his answers — is largely lost on the generalists of the White House press corps. Like reporters everywhere, they are interested not in an exercise in openness but in new information that will make a story.

Unfortunately, neither the information nor the candor usually is present when the subject is foreign policy, as Nessen’s answers to the two Kissinger questions demonstrate. This is largely a result of Kissinger’s own sensitivity to criticism and of his insistence on being the behind-the-scenes focal point of every foreign-policy pronouncement. This is a latitude, a discretion, and a power allowed to no other official in the Ford administration, and it profoundly affects the quality of every foreign-policy statement that comes from Nessen’s podium. The press secretary, on the president’s own orders, attends every major domestic-policy meeting. Though he has the required security clearances, he attends few meetings of the National Security Council and none of the daily meetings between Kissinger and the president. Nessen’s information on foreign policy comes from an NSC liaison, who is not on the press secretary’s staff, but on Kissinger’s. As his February 7 briefing demonstrates, Nessen does not always use the self-serving language of the Kissinger-dictated memoranda, but the press secretary is severely limited as to what he can say — and often as to what he knows.

This point was made dramatically clear on April Fool’s Day, when Ron Nessen learned the hard way just how little he could depend on the National Security Council. During a briefing at Palm Springs, California, where President Ford was in the midst of a nine-day working vacation, the White House press secretary told reporters that new diplomatic initiatives were under way in an effort to obtain a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war.

Six hours after this announcement, which produced a flurry of URGENT wire-service stories, a crestfallen Nessen appeared before the press corps to admit that he had been mistaken. “I was misinformed on this subject today by a member of the National Security Council staff,” Nessen said in apologizing for his earlier statement. “At the moment, there are no new diplomatic initiatives under way. . . .”

The limitations on what Nessen knows and says about foreign policy — and his own acceptance of the Kissinger dictum that an inept reply on this subject “could start a war” — overshadow too many of the White House briefings. It is probably true, to judge from some of the NSC attitudes toward Nessen, that the White House press secretary has tried harder than many of his predecessors to provide high-quality foreign-policy answers for the daily briefings. But this is an internal effort which is impossible for an outsider to evaluate with any certainty and for which Nessen consequently gets little credit.

Conversely, he gets even less credit for many of his well-prepared domestic-policy answers because the information often is available first or simultaneously from other sources and because Nessen himself sometimes fails to realize that oft-repeated and well-known policy statements do not constitute news, even when the statements are made by the president of the United States. Nessen has a point, possibly, when he says that reporters should prepare more carefully for the briefings and ever when he argues that there are questions which aren’t asked that should be asked. But these contentions will have more force when Nessen is better able to answer the foreign-policy questions that are asked and go unanswered nearly every day. ■

# Comparative journalism

What we don't know  
does hurt us

by MORTON MINTZ

At the Third A. J. Liebling Counter-Convention, held in May of 1974, I gave the first reading before my peers of Mintz's Mass Media Proposition. I was careful to say that it is not an axiom, not a law; that it is full of loopholes, and should not be carried to extremes. I would like to repeat it here because, despite the qualifiers, it has, I believe, an essential validity. Here it is: *If it's really important, it doesn't get the attention it deserves, or gets it late, or gets it only because some oddball pushes it.* One little-noted manifestation of this situation is the lack of what Dan Morgan, a *Washington Post* colleague and

friend, terms comparative journalism.

I am talking, first of all, about the kind of problems that cut close to the lives, health, and pocketbooks of our readers, such as the safety of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food and drugs we ingest, the vehicles in which we travel, the places where we work, and the power plants which supply us with electricity. I am also talking about the prices we pay and the taxes we pay, and what we get for our money. We — our city, our state, our country — deal unsatisfactorily with many of the problems that fall under my general descriptions, as we all know. Other cities, other states, and other countries have found better, or at least innovative, answers to some of these sample problems, as we too often *don't* know. Which is my point: news media, albeit with certain qualifications, do not give reliable, sustained, prominent, and priority attention to telling us who's ahead in dealing with these problems,

*Morton Mintz, a member of the national staff of The Washington Post, has taken a leave of absence to write a book on unaccountable institutions. This article was adapted by the author from a talk he delivered last June at the Newspaper in the Classroom Workshop dinner at the University of Louisville, in Kentucky.*



although they consistently give such attention to who's ahead in the National League. Responding to criticism of their foreign coverage, some news media commendably have spent substantial sums to report wars, revolutions, disasters, diplomatic developments, persecutions, and the like, but they have yet to be seriously criticized for neglecting foreign coverage of problem-solving.

To cite a homely example, I have yet to meet a person who, in buying a house, didn't feel he was taken in charges for title search and title insurance. But how many people know that in England the government keeps the records, certifies titles, and charges small fees which go into a public insurance fund that pays off for any mistakes that occur? I didn't know that until recently, when I came on the news in a book — David Hapgood's *The Screwing of the Average Man*. Again, we all know that men and women throughout the country find their jobs deadly dull and dehumanizing and their work environment authoritarian. How many of us know anything at all of the fascinating story of the experiments in industrial democracy — the possession of real decision-making power, over substantial matters, by an enterprise's employees — which have transformed workplaces in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Israel, Britain, West Germany, and, if you please, the United States? I found that story, once again, in a book — David Jenkins's *Job Power: Blue and White Collar Democracy*.

We don't always have to go abroad to find a case in point. In the 1950s, when I was an assistant city editor at the *Globe Democrat* in St. Louis, I had the pleasure — and it really was that — of persuading the management that we should investigate the cozy relationship between the State of Missouri and favored banks. Essentially, it was a classic relationship in which the state, whether the governor was a Democrat or a Republican, deposited tens of millions of dollars in favored banks for long periods at no interest. The banks then invested the funds, sometimes in small loans on which the interest rate ran as high as 28 percent. Appropriately grateful, the banks made the necessary but relatively trivial campaign contributions, always, of course, without evidencing narrow partisanship. As a result of a superb

three-month investigation by Carl E. Major and Ray J. Noonan, the bank lobby not only collapsed, but was so deeply embarrassed that it ended up actually supporting a constitutional amendment requiring investment of idle funds. The amendment was adopted and, in the first year in which it was in effect, yielded the taxpayers about \$1 million which, for all practical purposes, would otherwise have been stolen from them. But where was the comparative journalism to carry Missouri's example effectively to media in other states, some of which still collect little or no interest on public funds? With happy result, *The Washington Post*

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exposed Maryland's wasteful handling of its idle state funds — but that was not until 1973.

I suspect that the lack or insufficiency of comparative journalism internationally may have graver consequences. For starters, George Orwell, in his autobiographical *The Road to Wigan Pier*, warned in 1937 against sterile public housing; we here paid no heed. Again, although Scandinavia has been a pacesetter in dealing with numerous areas of common concern, this aspect has generally been as remote in our news media as the dark side of the moon; Scandinavia has tended, instead, to become synonymous with pornography, alcoholism, suicide, and deserters. We have heard little about a system devised in Sweden for rating automobiles for insurance purposes in terms of relative collision-repair costs, about a system which pipes apartment-house garbage underground, about the good housing, about delivery of health-care services, about the protection of miners. (A couple of recent, noteworthy

exceptions were in *The New York Times*: Lawrence K. Altman's pieces on hospitals in Sweden, and Agis Salpukas's articles on efforts in Scandinavia to humanize mass production.) Not long ago I learned that the Scandinavian countries had concluded a unique treaty under which a citizen of one of them who had suffered damages from pollution originating in another of the countries acquires, for purposes of litigation, citizenship in the country which was the pollution source. But how did I learn this? From a letter — not a story — in *The New York Times* sent in by a man who noted that U.S. media had given the treaty no attention.

There is not much attention, really, given the safety practices in the coal mines of Europe, East as well as West, which put ours to shame; to advanced systems of day care (East Germany is said to have one of the best); to the tough antitrust laws and tough enforcement in West Germany; to the fine new subway systems of Mexico City, Munich, Montreal, Toronto, and Budapest; to the advanced new trains of France and Japan; to the German buses which burn diesel fuel in uncongested areas but switch to electricity in the city.

In western Canada, along our own northern border, socialist parties govern the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, and they are, as Peter Barnes pointed out in *The New Republic* in October 1973, "the only democratic socialist governments in the Western Hemisphere." These governments promptly addressed themselves to some fundamental problems, including health insurance, public control of natural resources, a guaranteed minimum income, no-fault auto insurance, and preservation of open space. Barre's account is the best and most comprehensive I've seen, but *The New Republic* is not what I mean by a mass medium. Shouldn't newspaper readers have a chance to find out how these efforts near our borders are faring?

The message, I believe, is this: many countries facing problems similar to our own have pioneered new approaches and, sometimes, come up with solutions; yet our news media remain insufficiently concerned to give this kind of foreign news the coverage it obviously deserves. ■

# Taking AIM at Jack Anderson

The muckraker and his conservative critic have more in common than either thinks

by ROGER MORRIS

**A**t first glance, they seem to be natural antagonists: Jack Anderson, the irreverent muckraker, doggedly trying to sniff out malodorous secrets that vested interests don't want aired, and Accuracy In Media (known as AIM), a conservative media critic firing its corrections at the encircling hordes of liberal-leaning journalists.

True to form, they have recently clashed. In February, the National News Council upheld an AIM complaint that Anderson had "misrepresented" quoted documents in a column about the State Department's International Police Academy in Washington. The council's finding was widely publicized. Anderson retaliated with a shrill column, charging AIM's chairman with illegally using a federal government job to direct "a Watergate-style assault on the press." AIM, Anderson, and the News Council all appeared a bit bruised after the skirmish.

The AIM-Anderson diatribes have fattened the files of both parties for a number of years. In its attacks on Anderson, as in its other critiques (of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, the three TV networks, and many other journalists), AIM has shamelessly

ignored one of the union rules of American media criticism — the claim to ideological neutrality. That claim is the critic's key to acceptance, although it can also rob criticism of both passion and significance. The victims that AIM has sought to defend against inaccuracy have tended to be oil companies, the Pentagon, the junta in Chile, the distributors of chemical defoliants. Because AIM has been biased and predictable, professionals more readily ignored it. "Specialists in tunnel vision" is the description of one CBS executive.

**M**any of the complaints have been in that swampy territory of news selection and tone rather than clear-cut issues of fact. "As usual," said a typically annoyed editorial reply, this time in *The Washington Post* in 1972, "your complaint is concerned with disputing the judgment of our reporters and editors and a demand that we substitute that of your own patrons."

Not until early this year did AIM receive perhaps its most impressive recognition, the News Council's finding against Anderson. But AIM's chairman, a Federal Reserve economist named Reed J. Irvine, was to discover that the passage from right-wing gadfly to successful plaintiff before the News Council can have its perils.

Columnist Anderson has long known the rewards and risks of fame. Heir to

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*Roger Morris, a former National Security Council aide to Henry Kissinger, is the author of numerous foreign-policy studies, as well as articles on the media.*



**‘The council’s written finding for the record contains some errors and omissions that are curious for an organization in the business of judging accuracy’**

Drew Pearson’s famous and oft-disputed “Washington Merry-Go-Round,” Anderson became one of the country’s best-known muckrakers with scoops like his 1972 revelation of the U.S. “tilt” towards Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan war. But Anderson has also stumbled, most notably when he printed an incorrect story about drunk driving by vice-presidential nominee Thomas Eagleton.

As an independent columnist and muckraker, Anderson has been something of a journalistic outsider, much as his critic AIM has stood apart from conventional media critics. Both seem prey to the defensive feeling that may be the occupational neurosis of muckrakers and partisans. “You know these right-wingers,” said one Anderson staffer, Joe Spear. “They all work the same way. They have a technique. Pull little bits out and nitpick you to death, and then raise hell when you don’t pay attention. The Birchites are the same.”

“You know Anderson,” echoes an AIM adherent, “He has a technique for taking a little piece of something and drawing sinister implications that aren’t really there. It’s an old propaganda ploy.”

The controversy brought before the National News Council was set in motion last summer when Anderson received a tip from a staff member of Democratic Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota. Anderson was told there were some interesting “theses” on interrogation written by students at the International Police Academy, a school run by the State Department in a former Georgetown car barn to train foreign policemen. Aided by two translators (some of the student papers were written in French and Spanish), reporter Spear spent a day at the academy interviewing U.S. officials and gathering extensive notes on some fifty theses (out of 5,000 in the files) that dealt with police methods of interrogation.

Spear remembers most of the brief dissertations as banal, written in bureaucratic jargon: “A good interrogator takes lessons from Dale Carnegie,” said one. But he and his translators also found a few papers they did not think ridiculous. Based on these Spear wrote and Anderson edited an eye-grabbing column which United Fea-

ture Syndicate carried on August 3, 1974, headlined U.S.-TRAINED FOREIGN COPS PREFER TO STICK WITH TORTURE.

Students at the academy, said the lead of the column, “have developed some chilling views about torture tactics.” The article immediately added that a “lengthy investigation . . . found no evidence that the academy actually advocates third-degree methods.” Foreign police were taught to treat prisoners by “humanitarian principles.” But the bulk of the column was devoted to excerpts from six theses which demonstrated “an ambivalent attitude toward torture.” “Students graduate without showing much effect of their humanitarian training,” the column noted. It included this quotation: “‘As a last resort . . .,’ wrote a Nepalese [police] inspector, torture is ‘practical and necessary.’”

On September 7 AIM’s Reed Irvine wrote Anderson a three-and-one-half-page letter charging “serious inaccuracies.” The column “did not fully and accurately reflect the views of the writer of the paper” in five of the six theses. Comparing the Anderson quotes to other passages in which the students disavow torture, AIM accused Anderson of “taking statements out of context” and doing “an injustice both to the writers of these papers and to the International Police Academy.” A copy went to the National News Council.

**T**he matter languished for nearly two months. On October 29, News Council associate director Ned Schnurman wrote to Anderson, enclosing a copy of Irvine’s letter. He said the council “has been examining” the AIM complaint, and requested Anderson’s “cooperation in supplying whatever response you may care to make to the allegations made by AIM.”

Meanwhile, AIM and the Anderson staff had been sparring verbally over the latter’s refusal to answer questions on the column, apparently oblivious of the council’s action. A letter from Irvine to Anderson dismissed an Anderson inquiry about possible CIA funding or shady corporate backing for AIM (“slanderous gossip,” said Irvine). As a matter of standing policy, Irvine refused to divulge AIM’s contributor list on the grounds that its release might un-

fairly open contributors to *ad hominem* criticism.

There followed a November 29 letter from Spear to the council saying "each and every one" of the AIM charges could be "effectively disproved," but not citing specific evidence — on the assumption, as Spear later explained, that the council "would do their own thorough investigation." Spear did advise the council to "extend your investigation into the affairs of AIM itself," whose record would reveal, he observed, "an inordinate fondness for right-wing causes."

Unsatisfied, Schnurman asked again in early December for a detailed Anderson rebuttal to AIM, which Spear provided on December 27 in a five-and-one-half page epistle with supporting quotations from the theses, interpretative arguments, and the contention that, according to "my sources," the students' disavowal of torture cited by AIM was a "routine gesture" to "weak-kneed Americans." The column, Spear added, might even have been "too fair," and Anderson's "standards of proof [were] too high" to print other accusations about the academy. Even academy officials had told Spear the article was "fair." But Spear's letter seemed most indignant about the origin of the complaint. Irvine was a "right-wing fanatic" and AIM's "fanatical criticism" stemmed from a "severe bias." "I am dismayed," Spear wrote the council, "that your organization would seriously consider [its] complaints."

Within days, National News Council executive director William B. Arthur thanked Spear for his letter, but was at pains to admonish him that his "dismay" did not take into account that the council had to consider all "public complaints," including AIM's. With perhaps unintended irony, Arthur told Spear that the council could never rule out consideration of complaints on the grounds of "tilt."

A month later, on February 5, 1975, Spear learned during a phone call from an Associated Press reporter that the council had voted to uphold AIM's charge that Anderson had "misrepresented the views" of the thesis writers. "We think they were absolutely wrong," Spear was quoted by the AP.

AIM's Irvine was apparently not asked to comment, but he promptly sent off copies of the February 6 AP story (JACK ANDERSON COLUMN FOUND INACCURATE was *The Washington Post's* headline) to Anderson's subscribers, adding a reminder of their "obligation" to print the finding.

To AIM's basic point that the papers disavowed torture, Anderson now admits, "I should have included those disclaimers for the record." A first Spear draft of the article in Anderson's files carries just such a sentence ("Most of the students attempt to discuss torture tactics in a neutral fashion, listing both the pros and cons"); this might have taken the sting out of the AIM charge. Anderson deleted the sentence, however, and Spear didn't catch the significance of the omission at the time. "That was a mistake," Spear now also readily concedes. But even with the disclaimer, there would have remained questions of tone and inference.

The News Council's inquiry and decision of AIM vs. Anderson does not seem destined to go down as a model in monitoring the media. According to the partial translations prepared for Anderson, the theses were rambling discourses lending themselves, sometimes perhaps deliberately, to contradictory quotations and interpretations in the same paragraph — hardly the stuff of clear fact or clear error.

Quite apart from angry Anderson charges that the inquiry was incomplete, the council's written finding for the record contains some errors and omissions that are curious for an organization in the business of judging accuracy. In describing Anderson's response to the complaint, for example, the council alludes only to his reference to unnamed sources and Senator Abourezk. There is no mention of Spear's four-and-a-half pages of quotes and textual arguments, presented in his December 27 letter. Even if the council rejected it, the letter reflected the seriousness of the Anderson response.

Then there are small but not reassuring slips of fact. The finding says, for instance, that there were five students while Anderson quoted six. It notes that "Mr. Anderson's own syndicate titled the column THE TORTURE GRADUATES." But that title was the *New York Post's*;

the United Feature head was less sensational: U.S.-TRAINED FOREIGN COPS PREFER TO STICK WITH TORTURE. The AP dispatch on the finding repeated the council's error on the title.

What the decision seems to have boiled down to was that Schnurman, the only council official who read the papers at the academy, agreed with AIM that the quotes were in themselves misleading. Still unresolved is the larger issue: did some graduates of the U.S.-supported police academy advocate torture? Nothing in AIM's textual criticism, or in the council's agreement with it, would make you ready to risk going to jails run by academy alumni in Nepal or South Vietnam. On the other hand, the imprecisions of Anderson's column would hardly lead you to choose him to judge your case.

**A** week after the council ruling, United Feature Syndicate informed Anderson that he had been canceled by the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, which cited the News Council decision and a "general deterioration" in Anderson's subject matter. The columnist now shrugs off the cancellation, the only one at this writing. "There's always a jerk out there looking for an excuse to drop us," he said. His syndicate may not be so blasé. The same letter announcing the Walla Walla cut also asked Anderson to "tick off ten or twelve first-rate scoops you have made in the last several months . . . and we will have them handy as ammunition against any wavering clients."

AIM's heavy fire against Anderson may have its audience wavering as well, however. Anderson's files also carry notes from editors deploring the AIM attacks. On the same day as the United Feature letter above, for example, a Michigan editor wrote Anderson, "The only mail I ever get from AIM is critical of you . . . now I'm convinced Irvine has a vendetta going . . . and I just wonder why." "We're not anxious to have a finding to support AIM, which we realize has been at the throats of 'the liberal press,'" said the council's Schnurman, "and we're not anxious to have a finding against columnists, who should have as much latitude as possible, but this case was just too clear."

As the first correspondence on the tor-

**‘At a time when the old centrist consensus is falling on its face, none of us can afford the arrogance of the sort of stereotypes that enshroud AIM’**

ture issue was still smoldering, and the council inquiry hardly begun, another AIM attack on Anderson gave the columnist a chance to respond with what looks suspiciously like his own vendetta. On November 3, 1974 Anderson published a column on the “secret economic war” against the regime of President Salvador Allende Gossens in Chile, charging, in part on the strength of a leaked Library of Congress study, that the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), under U.S. pressure, had cut off new loans to the Allende government. “Since Chile had come to depend on these loans,” he wrote, “the policy amounted to financial strangulation.”

“In error,” pronounced AIM in a letter to *The Washington Post* eight days later. “Disbursements” of IDB loans to Chile, said Irvine, were higher under Allende than in the preceding three years; and besides, the loans financed only a “fraction” of Chile’s imports, hardly an important cause of Chile’s economic collapse, which was the result of Allende’s “mismanagement.”

Here Anderson was on more solid ground than he had been on the Nepalese story. His column on Chile had included IDB’s statement that disbursements on old loans had continued under Allende. The issue, which AIM’s criticism blurred, was the decision to grant *new* loans. Anderson had described a “policy” of financial strangulation, rather than charging that the embargo led to economic disintegration.

The substance of the Chile complaint became less notable, though, than what happened to the various documents involved. First, Irvine’s November 14 letter was never published by the *Post*. When AIM protested to publisher Kay Graham, she replied that her editors had received a “point-by-point” rebuttal from Anderson “that satisfies them,” and that “it would therefore be unfair to Mr. Anderson to print your letter.” Yet when AIM then asked for a copy of the Anderson rebuttal, the *Post* refused to send a copy on the grounds that Anderson reporter Les Whitten, principal researcher on the Chile piece, had denied permission to forward the letter.

On February 18, AIM took out a four-column advertisement in the *Post*

(titled THE POST-ANDERSON COVER-UP) repeating the original Irvine letter, giving an account of the *Post*’s refusal to supply the Anderson rebuttal or to publish AIM’s critique, and adding a recitation of the AIM views on Chile, all ending with an appeal for contributions to AIM. (“You want a paper that is accurate and that corrects its errors promptly and gracefully. We want to help you get what you want.”)

**B**ut being snubbed by Graham and her editors was perhaps the least of AIM’s difficulty with Chile: FED AIDE USES JOB TO ATTACK PRESS, announced a column signed by Anderson and Whitten on March 11. It charged Irvine (“a strident, right-wing propagandist”) with using his Federal Reserve Board job for a “Watergate-style assault on the press.” After listing AIM’s many respectable victims from *The New York Times* to TV documentaries, the column stated, “Ralph Nader and ourselves are under fire from AIM” — an observation more modest than grammatical. “His operation,” the column said, referring to Irvine, “has certain similarities to that of the notorious White House plumbers, whom President Nixon assigned to hound the press.” (Let the record show that Anderson and Whitten did *not* accuse Irvine of breaking and entering or obstructing justice.) The similarity to the plumbers, as Anderson saw it, was that Irvine had “used Federal Reserve Board facilities, telephones, and stationery to prepare broadsides against the press.”

“Normally, we don’t respond to irresponsible attacks,” said the column, “but Irvine’s charges reached such volume that we began to do some checking.” Irvine, “using his role as a Federal Reserve official,” had obtained and criticized the confidential Library of Congress report on IDB policy toward Chile that had been leaked to Anderson for the November 3 column. “Irvine was at least wearing two hats,” Anderson quoted a library official as saying.

As a result of Anderson’s charge, Representative Wright Patman, a Democrat from Texas, called for an investigation by the Federal Reserve Board of Irvine’s activities. Within a week, Irvine replied to the column in a

letter the *Post* did publish. The letter explained that commenting on papers about IDB loans to Chile “was within the ambit of my official responsibilities.” When that particular report is completed, in fact, it was going to carry an acknowledgement of “helpful comments,” like Irvine’s.

As for Anderson, Irvine said it was “reckless and irresponsible” to print such an attack; Irvine was “singled out for this honor because I have dared to expose several errors in the Anderson column in recent months.” It was “a calculated effort to intimidate me, with the expectation of silencing me . . . I am deeply worried when I see journalists drunk with power. . . .”

On March 20, the Federal Reserve Board announced that it had written Congressman Patman to advise that an investigation had found Irvine “did not abuse his official position through use of Federal Reserve facilities on behalf of AIM.” The investigation reportedly turned up two official letters from Irvine with “passing” reference to AIM, and those letters indicated, said the board, a “carelessness” Irvine had been ordered to avoid in the future. Otherwise, he was cleared. In a later column, *Post* ombudsman Charles Seib judged that his paper had “fumbled” its responsibility to give sufficient coverage to Irvine’s side of the story. And so stands the saga at this writing.

As a vignette on the human frailty and pettiness that can befog journalism, the AIM-Anderson encounters speak for themselves. Yet beyond their workaday moral — as Lyndon Johnson used to put it, “Don’t get into a pissing match with a skunk” — my view is that there may be some not-so-ordinary implications.

As for the muckraker, a needlessly thin-skinned Anderson seems to have overreacted to the AIM carping and the News Council finding. Apparently, the council was correct; Anderson readily admits a mistake in summarizing the studies’ views. His proven stature as an investigative reporter could surely accommodate a correction, however annoying AIM’s other criticisms. Nothing in the episode dignifies the swipe at Irvine. In a society overwhelmed with deadly human problems, there were vastly more important subjects for

Anderson’s column. There was no more eloquent illustration of this than the contrast between the Irvine column and Anderson’s subsequent revelation of the CIA’s Soviet submarine salvage operation, a little bureaucratic exercise of high cost and debatable significance that many reporters and editors had known about privately without displaying Anderson’s good sense and the guts to make it public.

Perhaps Jack Anderson should begin to view himself and his special role in American journalism in the same spirit in which he approaches some of his venerable bureaucratic and political targets in Washington — as an institution naturally tattered by time, that must be open to criticism to maintain its vitality, but which is essential to the country. In the same vein, it is probably good for all of us that AIM, or anybody else, may have made Anderson and his reporters feel a little like those many bureaucrats whose mornings are anxious until they scan a certain column next to the comic strips in the *Post* to make sure the next shoe hasn’t dropped on their nest. The trick, for Anderson no less than for the bureaucrats, is to keep doing the job with honesty and courage.

**A**s for the conservative critic, the lessons of AIM’s recent notoriety seem both simple and far-reaching. The sheer intensity of Irvine’s attention to Anderson has been plainly silly, not to mention the often sloppy substance. It overestimates the importance even of so formidable a journalist, and appears counterproductive as well as wasteful for a small organization that claims to be coping seriously with a pandemic problem of inaccuracy in the national media. Moreover, whatever the rigor of the Federal Reserve Board investigation, the proprieties of Irvine officially dealing with disputed policies by day, and then working after hours to pin the same subject on Anderson’s tail for AIM, strains the faith even of those who admit the legitimacy of AIM’s role.

But just that — admitting the legitimacy of AIM’s role — is a far larger problem. Anderson’s tendency to slough off AIM’s criticism because of its openly conservative perspective, Spear’s dismay that the News Council

would entertain such a plaintiff, the scornful sneers of many reporters that greet the mention of AIM — all bespeak a common unwillingness in journalism to take seriously on its merits criticism that is not certified by some formal claim of disinterestedness.

It is not only that such attitudes by the press merely confirm the twisted image of the media held by organizations like AIM or its counterparts on the left. Personally, I find AIM’s politics as repugnant as I find Jack Anderson’s work generally admirable. But in looking at this squabble for the *Review*, I’ve come to wonder if there isn’t something anti-democratic and even anti-intellectual in a widespread mentality that finds strong, doctrinaire views on public affairs *ipso facto* incompatible with criticism of the press. Whoever the critic, can’t his complaint be assessed on the facts, and shouldn’t news judgment be open to nonprofessional debate?

The argument works, of course, against left as well as right. I suspect the problem is rooted not so much in ideology inside the media as in the equally paralytic influences of bureaucracy, career, or organization. But whatever it is, this intolerance of criticism, glimpsed in the AIM-Anderson feud, is ultimately dangerous. At a time when the old centrist consensus on so many issues, from welfare to foreign policy, is falling on its face, none of us can afford the arrogance of the sort of stereotypes that enshroud AIM.

For that matter, maybe AIM and Anderson have something in common, despite their mutual rancor. Both have a stake in bringing to sunlight worn orthodoxies, both challenge the bland, accepted images that can dull and distort. In a larger sense, the mentality that automatically dismisses AIM is similar to the mentality that regards Anderson as an unwelcome troublemaker. Both AIM and Anderson run up against self-protection and self-interest, a reluctance to admit error, and a fear of publicity in the literal meaning of that word.

In a country where both the AIMS and Jack Andersons are judged and heeded on the merits, the public interest will have a better chance of squeezing through. And that goal, at least, may be one that AIM and Anderson agree on. ■

# Britain's great thalidomide

A tough press gag rule virtually choked off coverage of a national scandal

by ALFRED BALK

**T**o most Americans the drug thalidomide now seems a relic of the distant past. In part this is due to technological time warp, and in part, in this country, to the conscience of Food and Drug Administration scientist Frances Kelsey, who successfully prevented U.S. distribution of the compound that grotesquely deformed 8,000 babies. American casualties of thalidomide numbered only seventeen well-established cases.

England was much harder hit, with 452 known thalidomide births in a far smaller population, and there, fourteen years after thalidomide's withdrawal from the market, the drug remains the subject of periodic headlines. Litigation over compensation for its victims — armless, legless, or otherwise malformed teenagers — only recently entered the final stages. The press, whose coverage has been severely restricted by threats of contempt of court (one story about the origins of the tragedy, by the prestigious *Sunday Times* of London, has been embargoed for more than two years), complains of a *de facto* coverup; the distributors of thalidomide complain of "trial by newspaper"; and the thalidomide children's parents complain of having been victimized by the inertia of all institutions concerned. The British people, nearly two decades after thalidomide's introduction, are still denied the facts that would enable them to assess the tragedy, and are still without laws to prevent a recurrence.

This has happened in large part because of the British common law governing free press and the right to a fair

trial. (Britain has no Constitution or Bill of Rights.) Once an arrest or other notice of legal action occurs, a case is regarded as *sub judice* — subject entirely to court control with no public reporting or comment beyond the texts of complaints, responses, and proceedings in open court. The intent is to protect the right to a fair trial by creating a publicity-proof cocoon around anyone who might become involved in the case, including prospective jurors; the result, as the thalidomide story demonstrates, may have ramifications beyond that.

Like several other nations severely scarred by thalidomide, Britain seems to have blundered backward into its ordeal. Thalidomide, one of a myriad of compounds hurried from laboratory to market (in the Drug Rush of the 1950s) was synthesized by the German pharmaceutical house Chemie Grunenthal in 1954. Designated K17, it was tested by staff members, then marketed as a tranquilizer and sleeping pill which appeared harmless even in large doses.

Distillers Biochemical, a subsidiary of Distillers Company of Britain, became interested in the drug in 1956. Because Britain required no government approval to market a pharmaceutical, Distillers encountered no Frances Kelsey. The British government's Standard Joint Committee on the classification of Proprietary Medicines approved the drug — in Britain called Distaval, Tensival, and Asmaval. National Health Service doctors began prescribing it, and Distillers advertised in the *British Medical Journal* that "Distaval can be given with complete safety to pregnant women and nursing mothers without adverse effect on mother or child."

Problems surfaced slowly. In December 1960, a Scottish doctor wrote in the *British Medical Journal* of four K17 users who were suffering from peripheral neuritis, disease of the nerve ends in fingers and toes. The following October a new Distillers advertising brochure affirmed that the condition occurred in some cases but the brochure added, "It arises in only a small percentage and can be expected to resolve provided the drug

is withdrawn promptly on the onset of symptoms."

Meanwhile in Australia, where Distaval was marketed by a Distillers affiliate in 1960, an obstetrician became alarmed by the births of three malformed babies within five weeks in a small Sydney hospital. All died. After an investigation showed that all three mothers had taken thalidomide, he persuaded the hospital to ban use of the drug. When he confided his suspicions by phone to a Distillers' representative in Sydney and suggested the firm "might want to play their advertised claims for thalidomide a bit carefully until a thorough investigation," he was told that "thalidomide had been widely used in Britain and Germany for a number of years" with "no damage to unborn children." That autumn, after three children were born with fatal deformities, he again reported the occurrences to Distillers' Sydney office and warned he was alerting the noted journal *The Lancet* and others.

*The Lancet* returned his letter unpublished. When his report reached Distillers' London office, it was promptly forwarded to Chemie Grunenthal in Germany. Along with reports from German specialists, it helped persuade both companies to withdraw thalidomide from sale on November 27, 1961, pending crash research.

**F**ive months later the incriminating chemical link was found by a Distillers pharmacologist, who published his findings in *The Lancet*. Distillers sold its drug business, and the legal "writs" for damages flew. The first came in November 1962. Sixty-one others soon followed. With the help of a Dickensian-sounding charity named the Lady Hoare Trust, the plaintiffs formed a Society of Thalidomide Parents. One firm of solicitors was engaged to represent them, and England's ponderous legal machinery clanked into motion — *sub judice*.

As is customary, early efforts were directed toward a settlement without trial. Assembling of evidence, negotiations, and repeated consultations be-

Alfred Balk is editor and publisher of Atlas World Press Review.

# cover-up

tween counsel and clients consumed four years. Finally, in August 1968, Distillers made a firm offer: if allegations of negligence were withdrawn, the company would pay 40 percent of what the children might have won in a negligence verdict. Because English common law had never specifically been construed to apply to fetuses, the parents' counsel advised acceptance. The parents agreed. To establish a base of 100 percent, a High Court judge evaluated the cases of two children, one without arms and legs, the other without arms. As a result Distillers agreed to divide some £1 million (\$2.8 million) among the sixty-two litigants.

This was duly reported. Then 370 more claims flooded in — perpetuating *sub judice*. Except for occasional human interest stories on individual thalido-

mid victims, the press generally remained behind its wall of self-censorship, carefully avoiding stories about matters before the courts. The first chink appeared in December 1971 — ten years after thalidomide's removal from sale and nine years after filing of the first writ. In two consecutive stories, investigative reporter Harry Longmuir of the tabloid London *Daily Mail* told, among other travails of parents, of a father who contended he was being "legally blackmailed" into accepting inadequate compensation for his limbless daughter, then aged nine.

Distillers had just announced six-month profits of £35 million (\$87.5 million), and was offering to establish over a ten-year period a trust fund of £3.25 million (\$8.1 million), or an average award of \$200,000 per child. Ac-

ording to the father, art dealer David Mason, lawyers had presented the offer in strictest secrecy, warned that no money would be paid unless every parent agreed, allowed only ten days to decide, and provided only a half-hour for parents to ask questions. When the Masons and five other sets of parents held out, the lawyers threatened to request appointment of substitute legal guardians who would sign on their behalf.

"I call this legal blackmail," Mason told Longmuir. "I refuse to accept that British justice will allow a massive company like Distillers to push people around like this."

A day after that story the *Daily Mail* was threatened with contempt of court on grounds that publicity might lead Distillers to withdraw its offer. When the Attorney General followed with a threat of a formal complaint, the *Daily Mail* was silenced.

One of the most attentive readers of the *Daily Mail* stories was Harold Evans, the energetic young editor of the *Sunday Times* of London. A mid-career graduate student at the University of Chicago and Stanford and a consultant to the International Press Institute, Evans had moved from the editorship of a small provincial newspaper group to the *Sunday Times* in 1966 and soon won a reputation for courage and enterprise. Under his leadership, the independently edited Sunday arm of Lord Thomson's Times Newspapers had published numerous crusading news stories, special features combining reportage and analysis of current events, and book collaborations.

(Unlike many American editors, Evans has joined, not fought, staff members who wish to write books, not only granting leaves for that purpose but helping negotiate contracts and finding temporary free-lance replacements.)

"Journalism is an information-gathering business," he says. "The form in which that information is disseminated seems to me to be secondary to the fact that it must be disseminated and financed in the best way possible."

In 1967, at his direction, the *Sunday Times* had paid a pharmacological ad-

*Thalidomide victim Eddie Freeman with (from left) Lord Shinwell; Jack Ashley, M.P.; Harold Evans; and Alfred Morris, minister of state for the disabled*



viser to the thalidomide parents for technical counsel and documents on thalidomide. About the same time, Evans also paid £5,000 (\$12,500) to another source for documents obtained by a German prosecutor on Chemie Grunenthal's role in the marketing of thalidomide. Evans published a revelatory 7,000-word story and planned next to report on the drug's history in England. But legal counsel advised that the whole matter remained *sub judice*.

"The thing that really galvanized us," he says, "was reading in the *Daily Mail* about the low level of the settlement offered and the threat to David Mason — by the parents' own solicitors — to require him to forfeit his rights as a parent. I sent for David Mason, he came to my office, and I was impressed with him. I said past legal advice be damned, we must find a way to go ahead."

The way, devised by the Thomson organization's brilliant young counsel James Evans (no relation to Harold) was the ingenious approach of campaigning on moral — not legal — grounds: *legal negligence* (denied by Distillers and still to be resolved in court) aside, did not the corporation even if vindicated have a *moral responsibility* to children its products had harmed?

On September 24 the paper crossed the Rubicon: it published a story headlined, OUR THALIDOMIDE CHILDREN: A CAUSE FOR NATIONAL SHAME, along with an editorial, CHILDREN ON OUR CONSCIENCE.

The two-part package discussed Distillers' offer to England's thalidomide victims, noted it amounted to less than 10 percent of 1971 after-tax profits and about 1 percent of profits since the firm's marketing of thalidomide, and suggested the sum was "grotesquely out of proportion of the appalling injuries the thalidomide children suffered." The paper called thalidomide "a symbol of the havoc that a technically complex society can wreak," alluded to a Law Commission recommendation for revising methods of fixing damages for injuries, exposed the inadequacy of a judicial analysis of the settlement (it failed to allow for inflation, taxes, and actuarial estimates of life-span), and concluded that the case showed an urgent need for "major reforms in our legal sys-



Harold Evans, editor of the *Sunday Times of London*

## On Crusading

*The comments below were excerpted from an article in The Magazine for the Central Council for Disablement in Great Britain:*

The *Sunday Times* of London is credited with forcing Distillers to promise to pay an extra £20 million (\$50 million) to the thalidomide children. This is hailed as an example of the "power of the press"; a shameful example of the usurpation of the courts, if you are a lawyer or a Distillers director; a tolerable example if you are a thalidomide parent. It is really something very much more complicated than that. . . .

Newspapers [in Britain] have no more rights than the ordinary citizen. We are not detectives, with rights of search. We are not civil servants with rights, under regulations, to know about anybody's property or income or family. We are not parliamentarians with rights to summon witnesses and to protection for their privileges. We do not seek any of these rights. . . .

This is our real power: we can create an agenda for society. That is what the *Sunday Times* did with the thalidomide children. It was able to force them into the conscience of the country. But no newspaper or group of newspapers can do more than that. It cannot decide how society will vote on the item it has put on the agenda. . . .

A campaign requires alliances at all levels. Not sinister media conspiracies but encouragement and example between people who share the same objectives openly and frankly for a time. The thalidomide campaign would never have succeeded without an art dealer, a pharmacologist, a Member of Parliament, an insurance executive, and a housewife, to mention but a few non-media people. . . .

These people did not do things because "the press" told them to. They acted on their own judgments. The press could provide facts and a focus, but the rest depended on individuals. . . .

I am often asked why the *Sunday Times* gave such attention to the thalidomide children. There are after all under 500 thalidomide children, yet there are more than a million severely disabled people in this country. . . . But an effective campaign requires an attainable target. It is no use asking for the moon every week. My second answer to the question is that the story of success against one disablement, or against one powerful interest, has enormous real and symbolic value. If society has been persuaded to recognize its debt to the thalidomide children, there is more logic and hope in saying it should recognize a duty to all disabled people.

**Harold Evans**

tem. . . . It shames our society that a decade should have passed," the paper declared. "It shames the law that the compensation proposed should be so low . . . . The Government must act. The adversary system will not do. . . ."

A footnote to the story stated: "In a future article, the *Sunday Times* will trace how the tragedy occurred."

That story has yet to be printed. After the first article legal advisers to Distillers made a formal complaint to the Solicitor General. Editor Evans was officially warned that he might be in contempt should he publish anything more bearing on the litigation. Evans defended himself in a letter. The Attorney General then intervened and asked to see the "future article" referred to in the September 24 footnote. When Evans complied, the Attorney General sought — and received — an injunction against publication. He also won a High Court censure of a television station that had reported on Evans's campaign.

Since then, the *Sunday Times* has been almost continuously involved in litigation over injunctions, and Evans has been an indefatigable tactician. Working with Jack Ashley, a member of Parliament and a former broadcast producer who is especially concerned with the treatment of the handicapped, Evans helped move the House of Commons to a full-scale debate. The result was repeated castigation of Distillers and the government. This was followed by a resolution urging improved services for all disabled citizens and consideration of a government trust fund for the thalidomide children — after Distillers had met its obligations.

The *Sunday Times* also published a list of Distillers' major stockholders. About the same time individual shareholders began requesting a special meeting. Some of Distillers' largest shareholders — Britain's two biggest insurance companies, a major bank, and other institutions — publicly endorsed the idea; a supermarket chain banned Distillers products from its shelves; a Labor M.P. introduced a bill to impose an implicit safety warranty on all drug manufacturers, distributors, and sellers. In nine days Distillers' shares fell \$70 million on the London Stock Exchange.

Distillers already had increased its

offer once during the newspaper's campaign. Last year it revised the offer again, to £20 million (\$50 million) — eight times its original proposal — \$12,000 to be paid to each family immediately, the rest to be allocated to a trust to provide the children with lifetime incomes. Then the *Sunday Times* revealed that a Treasury official regarded income from the fund as taxable. Embarrassed, Prime Minister Wilson hastily arranged for a government contribution of £5 million (\$12.5 million) to offset future taxes.

**A**s Evans had hoped, ripples from his campaign have kept spreading, encompassing government inquiries into laws governing civil liability, the press and privacy, libel, and contempt. Some modifications are likely in all four areas. Last December, in fact, the Phillimore Committee, reporting to Parliament on contempt, endorsed several revisions supported by the press, including relaxing restrictions on pre-trial reporting and allowing claims of "general public interest" to be received in defense against charges of contempt of court. The *Sunday Times* campaign, too, has enhanced the prestige of both the paper and Evans, who, among other awards, was voted by his peers as Journalist of the Year in 1972-73.

"The *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* did some excellent reporting," says M.P. Ashley. "But without the *Sunday Times* there would have been no campaign. The paper initiated and sustained it. It was superb journalism, no question about it."

It also was superb tactics by Harold Evans and his counsel, James Evans. "We could have forged ahead and published," says Harold Evans. "But just publishing would have obscured the issues. We'd have been done. I'd have gone to prison."

"We're not a newspaper which is contemptuous of society. I believe laws should be upheld. You should fight to change them or find ways round them. I don't think you should throw a brick through a window. This is one of the tests of a democratic society: could argument, persuasion be made to work. or do you have to sit down in the middle of the street and get violent — which isn't the way."

The *Sunday Times* deserves credit on another point as well. While the Pentagon Papers and Watergate exposés received more publicity — and helped inspire investigative exploits in Britain, Japan, and elsewhere — both U.S. stories were handled largely as spot news, with only short-lived probing into their deeper ramifications. In contrast, the *Sunday Times* has continued to explore beyond the thalidomide settlement into issues of drug certification, treatment of all handicapped citizens, secrecy in corporate affairs, and the workings of the legal and judicial system. Last winter, for instance, the paper began an investigative series called "The Cost of Going to Law."

"The story now," says Evans, "is a far bigger, better story than we ever thought, in the sense that it's both about a drug company making a serious mistake and, secondly, the legal system failing to bring the remedy. As the years have gone by, not only the delay but the incompetence of the legal system in dealing with a scientific and technological disaster of this magnitude have proved appalling. The four or five people who worked on the case at the *Sunday Times* — admittedly a high order of journalists — have prepared a better case against Distillers in twelve months than was prepared by the Queen's Counselors, lawyers, and solicitors over a whole decade. In one sense it's a very cheap kind of investigation if you think what the law costs."

Evans' longest-term crusade, however, remains the campaign for greater press freedom in Britain. In the respected Granada Guildhall Lecture series last year he contrasted *The Washington Post's* freedom to report on Watergate with the "half-free press" of England and concluded the story might legally have been suppressed in the United Kingdom.

"Governments as well as citizens need a free and inquiring press," he said. "Truth is good for men. . . . The suffocation that results from habits of secrecy and suppression . . . underlies some of the divisions and some of the muddle we experience. . . . [But] we must resist the idea that only the perfect press is entitled to be free. The right to be free means the right to be free." ■

# KISSING 'THE GIRLS' GOOD-BYE

A discussion  
of guidelines  
for journalists

*How does one describe a woman? The question, in all its complexity, has been asked many times, but it is being asked again among journalists, in very specific ways: Ms. or Mrs. and Miss? Coed or student? Woman tennis player, or just tennis player? Mary Jones – or just Jones?*

*At Stanford University, a student group called the Women's News Service developed eleven "Guidelines for Newswriting About Women." They seemed a serious attempt to deal with journalistic problems that, as one reader recently said in a letter to CJR, are "tearing newsrooms apart." Because any set of guidelines is bound to be controversial (the Stanford group has already made a few revisions in their 1974 draft) CJR's editors felt the best way to handle the subject was in a discussion. This was arranged by Wendy B. Quiñones, president and founder of the Women's News Service and education reporter at the Antioch, California Daily Ledger. In addition to Quiñones, participants were:*

**Prof. William L. Rivers** of Stanford's Department of Communications, the moderator

**Reeve Hennion**, San Francisco bureau chief and California state editor for UPI

**Elaine Levine**, executive editor of Suburban Newspapers  
**Susan Miller**, a former reporter, and doctoral candidate at Stanford's Department of Communications

**Joe Russin**, news director at KQED, San Francisco's public television station

**DeWitt Scott**, copy editor at the San Francisco Examiner  
**Iris Yang**, then an intern, and now a general assignment reporter at The Sacramento Bee.

*The guidelines and an abbreviated transcript of the discussion follow.*

**1** Prefixes indicating marital status should be avoided. First reference should include a person's title (if any) and given name; later references should include LAST NAME

ONLY. For example: Secretary of State Henry Kissinger held a news conference . . . Kissinger stated. Rep. Edith Green (D-Ore.) said today . . . Green stated. Use of Mr. and Mrs. is limited to discussions which include a married couple, where the last-name-only rule might cause confusion. Miss and Ms. are not to be used at all. First names alone are also not appropriate for adults.

**Rivers:** Reeve, what's in the AP-UPI stylebook?

**Hennion:** I'm not certain there's anything in the stylebook dealing with this. It's the general feeling still that the traditional usage is still what our editors, our subscribers want.

**Rivers:** How are revisions made in AP-UPI style? This is very important, because I have the impression that many newspapers, especially smaller ones, no longer have their own styles. They simply go by the AP-UPI stylebook.

**Hennion:** It's not a decision on high by UPI-AP, but rather it's as a result of comments, input from the subscribers. UPI and AP are both service organizations, so particularly now when newspapers are just taking our tape and feeding it through their line casters, it becomes a very expensive proposition if they're not able to use copy as it comes in.

**Rivers:** Iris, what's the procedure in Sacramento? Are you instructed as to what kind of style to use?

**Yang:** It's sort of an accepted thing. Traditionally, the newspaper has used Miss, Mrs., — and Ms. if the person asks for it. Recently, I was interviewing a woman who had joined the Air Force reserves, and wanted to be called Airman.

**Rivers:** Scotty, what's the practice at the Examiner?

**Scott:** On a good day, there are seventeen practices. The women's department, "Scene," prefers to use just the woman's last name on second reference. They use Ms., too. But all other departments of our newspaper and of other newspapers I've been associated with have generally used Miss and Mrs.

**Miller:** You seem to be saying that the section editor is really the crucial person.

**Scott:** Yes, I am, and I regret that. I think it's wrong. The style on any newspaper should be set by the editor, for all departments.

**Hennion:** One thing that bothers me about this guideline — you seem to be assuming that this is a good thing to do, to delete marital references. And I'm not so sure that it's the overwhelming opinion of women that it is a good thing. I think there's an important element among women, maybe a majority, maybe even a vast majority, who feel they don't want to be one of the guys. They want separate treatment.

**Levine:** Our experience is that women who are in public life prefer the last name. So perhaps changes should occur department by department. In our papers, we use last name for second reference in most cases.

**Scott:** What are the exceptions?

**Levine:** Wedding stories are very difficult to write in that way.

**Russin:** The problem with this guideline and some of the others is the notion that the press should define and should lead language. I think the power of the press to shape language is so great, and generally so misused, that the press

should not be particular leaders in shaping the language and changing usage patterns. The press should essentially reflect what the current usage pattern is. And even though some people might say that a guideline like this is socially useful, I'm not particularly anxious to go ahead and use our tremendous power to change language because a number of people think it's socially useful. My instruction to our reporters is that they ask people how they wish to be referred to. We tend to follow what people want, and they tend to be wanting to drop marital references, but not always.

**Rivers:** Is it a practice at UPI for reporters to ask how to refer to their subjects?

**Hennion:** Some — I would say most of the young female reporters — will ask — and other reporters won't. If the word Ms. appears in a story, the editor will ask, "Did the

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**'I'm not particularly anxious to use the tremendous power of the press to change language just because a number of people think it's socially useful'**

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person request this or are you using it as a crutch because you don't know whether she's married or not?"

**Quiñones:** When I worked at the Fremont *Argus*, reporters were told to ask their subjects what they wanted to be called, and we resented it. We felt the question was absurd, and in some cases very difficult.

**Russin:** It's really not all that complicated. More often than not, you ask somebody how to spell his or her name. You'll ask if a man calls himself Joe or Joseph. There's a certain amount of detail that a reporter just has to ask, just for mechanics, and this is just another part of mechanics.

**Quiñones:** Reporters at the *Argus* often felt they were putting something over on the editor, because they would use Ms. and not ask. Just use it and see if they could slip it by. I think it's a rather unhealthy state of affairs to have this sneaking going on.

**Hennion:** AP and UPI policies just reflect this problem nationally. If there were a consensus on what is the right thing to do, there would be no problem. But — as we sit here — we've got a number of different ideas on the thing to do. So the question is whether you make a change for the sake of change, or whether you just hold with the traditional pattern until it becomes generally accepted that there's a reason for doing something different.

**Levine:** How do the traditional patterns get changed, then? It's usually been protests, demonstrations . . .

**Hennion:** Well, are we fighting the women's liberation bat-

tle? If women's liberation can't even convince women that this is what they want?

**Russin:** We're dealing here with something that goes deeper than whether people buy soda pop. We're dealing with language, and language reflects thinking. It's more basic and pervasive than discrete actions. And language has traditionally been defined by usage. Usage changes have been speeded up tremendously by the electronic press, but they still rest with the people.

**Scott:** But there's a big "but" here. Newspapers, and I'll speak only for newspapers, have to lead. They used to lead. They don't lead any more. And the language we use here, the Mr., the Mrs., what have you, and some of the other things in the guidelines we're going to be talking about — the underlying thing is the wrong. Half of the society has been treated badly — which is the main reason we're here, isn't it?

**2** Females over the age of 18 are "women." They are not "girls," "gals," "ladies," "chicks," "broad," "blondes," "lovelies," "honeys," or any other similar term. Words like "homemaker" and "housewife" are also not synonyms for "woman"; check carefully for accuracy before they are used. "Co-ed" does not mean "woman" any more than "ed" means "man"; persons who attend school are "students."

**Hennion:** I don't think there's much controversy in 2. Co-ed is my one exception, because co-ed has a very definite meaning in the English language. I don't think it's derogatory, I think it just states a fact. If you're going to use either "co-ed" or "woman student," co-ed is the much preferable word.

**Russin:** But don't you usually find that co-ed is generally used in sentences like, "the striking blonde twenty-one-year-old co-ed"? If the sentence is, "Patricia Hearst, a University of California student," you don't need to say, "University of California co-ed." It's clear that if the name is Patricia, she's probably a woman student. You would only say, "Patricia Hearst, a beautiful University of California co-ed."

**Miller:** So doesn't co-ed inherently have a kind of frivolous connotation?

**Hennion:** Yes.

**Quiñones:** There's no controversy about it, that women should be called women. But they're not. The UPI story on Wimbledon, for instance, was a masterpiece of equivocation. The men were "Connors" and "Rosewall," and the women were alternately "Billie Jean," "Chris," "the girls," "the ladies," "the women," "Ms. King," "King," "Miss Evert" — there was obviously no kind of consistency in the story. So why, when there seems to be such a consensus for not using these other words, why do they still appear?

**Scott:** Habit. Male bad habit.

**Quiñones:** How is that going to be changed?

**Scott:** By working with young city editors, young news editors, and the young whatever-their-counterparts-are on television. Because the old ones — you ain't got a prayer with the older ones!

*continued*



**Russin:** The story you mention is a sports story. Sports is a much more informal, earthy activity. If there's a male-female track meet going on, it's not uncommon to hear the male athletes refer to the female athletes as "broads," or "girls," or "chicks." That's the way they talk, and that's probably the way sportswriters will write. It's an accurate reflection of that milieu.

**Scott:** You have to walk into the newsroom of the sports department and see the men sitting there with their green eyeshades, and their cigars stuck out of the corners of their mouths, and they're "tough guys" in their forties and fifties, and they've always done it this way, and those damn broads — we're going to hold them down there where they're supposed to be. And this is the mentality.

**Quiñones:** Scotty, you're on the copy desk. Is it possible to direct the copy desk to pay particular attention to these things? To put out an addition to the stylebook, a memo, saying this is our style for dealing with women?

**Scott:** Yes, it is. And we do have such guidelines that we use, but we have one policy for sports copy editors, and one policy for "Scene" copy editors, and the Sunday copy editors, so this all has to be coordinated.

**3** Gratuitous physical description, uncommon almost to the point of absence in news stories about men, should also be eliminated from such stories about women. If you would not say, "Slim, attractive Sen. Howard Baker announced today . . ." do not say, "Slim, attractive Gloria Steinem announced today . . ." This rule does not apply with equal force to feature writing, especially profiles, in which physical description is often an essential aspect. However, care should be taken to avoid stereotypical descriptions in favor of describing an individual's unique characteristics or mannerisms.

**Rivers:** Let's consider whether it's even possible to follow this kind of guideline. The story of Wilbur Mills takes on an

extra dimension because the woman involved was very attractive. And I'm wondering really whether you could escape this.

**Russin:** That would fit into this guideline, because it's an element of the story. The alleged facts are that Wilbur Mills is an elderly congressman of presumed high righteousness, and he went out cavorting at some after-hours club with some leggy stripper, or whatever, and that presumably he wasn't just having a drink. And the fact that she was quite attractive was possibly one reason why he was interested in more than a drink. So that's part of the story. But the question is whether the guidelines are following usage or not, or are moving a step ahead of where people's heads are at. If you're covering a board of supervisors meeting, and someone comes before the board to make a special case for something, and if this someone is a very attractive woman, that is a fact, a political fact, in the meeting. And it's a political fact which particularly comes up with the male supervisors, though it may also be a fact for the women supervisors, because people do respond to sex. Howard Baker's appeal during the Watergate hearings was not entirely because he had a nice, folksy, Southern-country-lawyer way of talking. He was also quite arresting-looking to a lot of people, and that was a political fact of the proceedings.

**Quiñones:** But it was consistently mentioned in terms of his media appeal as a possible presidential candidate. It was not casually mentioned. But descriptions of women are very casually thrown into stories.

**Russin:** There is that, but I think it's also a fact of the way people react in situations, including reporters.

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**Who's described physically?  
Usually the women.  
And who are they described for?  
Usually the men'**

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**Miller:** Your argument about the board of supervisors assumes that they act in a way they wouldn't otherwise have acted.

**Russin:** They certainly do!

**Quiñones:** But it's usually not written that way. Casually throwing in physical description is a kind of "good ol' boys" approach to journalism, where all the boys get together and slap each other's back over the cute broads. It assumes a male audience, because who's described physically? It usually is the women. And who are they described for? Usually the men.

**4** Similar considerations apply to the mention of an individual's spouse and family. In a news story about a man, his wife and family are typically mentioned only in passing and only when relevant; the same practice should ap-

ply to news stories about women. If you would not say, "The gray-haired grandfather of 3 won the Nobel Prize," do not say, "The gray-haired grandmother of 3 won the Nobel Prize." Again, the practice is slightly different for feature stories and profiles, but the test of relevance should always be applied.

**Rivers:** It seems to me that this may be challengeable. It's common in American society — less common than before, but nevertheless common — for the woman to be the housewife, to be the one who takes care of the kids. Therefore, if she is in the news for something else, it would seem to me that this is a kind of tribute to her, to mention the spouse and family.

**Hennion:** That's exactly right. If a grandmother of three won the Nobel Prize, by golly, they ought to say she's a grandmother of three.

**Russin:** In the lead?

**Hennion:** No, I wouldn't say in the lead.

(At this point, Quiñones introduced a local newspaper story of a successful mayoral candidate whose extensive political experience, noted in the concluding paragraphs, was ignored in the lead in favor of mention of her three children.)

**Hennion:** I think that's a code. Maybe we don't know what age the children are, but if they're at the age where they're at home, and she can do all these things in addition, I say that's a tribute.

**Russin:** This is a fairly standard political story with a winner, saying why did you win? And it doesn't appear that she won because she had three kids. That's an incidental fact. The better journalistic approach would be, how did she do all these things and have kids? That's a legitimate question to ask.

**5** Most achievements do not need sexual identification; those which do should be so identified for both men and women. If you would not say, "Dan Rather is a male reporter," do not say "Helen Thomas is a female reporter." Instead of "Arthur Ashe is one of the best American tennis players and Billie Jean King is one of the best American women tennis players," say: "Arthur Ashe and Billie Jean King are two of the best American tennis players," OR "Arthur Ashe is one of the best American male tennis players and Billie Jean King is one of the best American female tennis players."

**Russin:** I don't think it's proper to say that Billie Jean King is one of the best American tennis players. I mean, it's fact, the Houston show aside, that in many sports women cannot beat men. That's just a fact of life. Arthur Ashe probably would beat Billie Jean King.

**Quiñones:** But then that makes the assumption that the norm in that sport is the men's game.

**Russin:** No, they're two different games.

**Quiñones:** I agree — but in that case, there is men's tennis and women's tennis. There isn't tennis and women's tennis.

**Hennion:** Getting back to the Rather-Thomas kind of thing, I think that's exactly right. You don't talk about a professor and a woman professor. You wouldn't say a business executive and a woman business executive.



Diana Bryan

**6** Avoid sins of omission as well as those of commission. If, for example, an expert is sought in a given field, or if an example is needed to make a point, women should be used in these cases as a matter of course — not simply as "oddities" or representatives of "a woman's viewpoint."

**Russin:** This gets into a much deeper problem: does a woman economist view economic questions differently because she is a woman?

**Quiñones:** I was about to bring up the same question, because it's occurred to me that in the coverage of Betty Ford's operation, it might have been very nice for somebody to talk to a woman surgeon. In some cases, there really are differences in the way men and women in the same field are likely to view certain issues.

**Russin:** All right, let's hold it right there. If that is even partially true, and I suspect it is, then this guideline has to be looked at differently, because then you are going to women for the woman's point of view. An expert woman's point of view perhaps, but you are seeking out a woman precisely because she is a woman.

**Quiñones:** I think on occasion that's appropriate — more so in the case of something like breast cancer than in, say, general economic issues. I don't remember, for example, much talk about whether Marina Whitman [a member of the Council of Economic Advisers] saw economic issues differently because she's a woman. She may see them differently, but I'm not sure that her being a woman is relevant to why she sees them differently. Breast cancer is an entirely different issue, and I think in that case it would be completely appropriate to go to a woman doctor.

**7** "Man," used alone and in words like "chairman," is a sexually exclusive term and should be avoided when at all possible. "Man-on-the-street," for instance, can easily be changed to "person-on-the-street," or "ordinary person";

"chairman" to "chairperson." The U.S. Bureau of the Census has begun officially changing its occupation titles to eliminate this problem: "salesmen" are now "sales workers" or "sales agents," "newsboys" are "newspaper carriers and vendors," and "airlines stewardesses" are now "flight attendants."

**Rivers:** When I get memos that the university has officially adopted the word, "chairperson," it's still a bit odd to me, but the question is whether it's going to still be odd a year from now. What's the practice on your papers, Elaine?

**Levine:** We use chairperson. It's awkward; we try to write around it if at all possible.

**Russin:** It's bad enough when it's written, it's worse when it's said. There are some words that are so much in usage that it's going to take more than the U.S. Bureau of the Census to change things. Women who serve drinks on airplanes are stewardesses. That's just what they are, that's what everybody knows them as, they call themselves stews, they're stews. That's it. They're not flight attendants and nobody's going to buy it.

**Rivers:** I'd assume that if chairman were no longer used on any television station or in any newspaper, in the course of time chairperson would come to seem much less awkward. Do you think the media should take a lead in using chairperson to a point that it no longer seems awkward?

**Levine:** I think every reporter deals with it in his or her own way, and most of them seem to try to write around it.

**Scott:** Our reporters are saying, "he chaired" or "she chaired." They're fudging it whenever possible. But if they have to, they're using chairperson.

**Hennion:** I think there is absolutely no sexual connotation in the word chairman. Until the feminist movement brought it up. Chairperson is a much more sexually oriented term than chairman. Every time you say "chairperson," you think "feminist movement." You don't necessarily think "woman," you think "feminist movement." It just jars me.

**Rivers:** But you might not think so if, historically, men had been the homemakers, and suddenly men began to take jobs in which they were elected to the chair. If it had been "chairwoman," then you might have a different attitude toward "chairperson."

**Hennion:** Certainly, but chairman is just the one that bugs me more than anything else. You can't call a woman a salesman. You can't call a woman a newsmen. But chairman is just so neuter, it's a position. It's like saying president, chairman of the board, anything. It has no sexual connotation. I think the right way to approach this is to call a newsmen or a newswoman a reporter. It's very easy to do, and you've got a good word. Chairman is a good word. Chairperson isn't. You're bringing in the idea of sex by using chairperson, not taking it out.

**Russin:** All this depersonizing of words — I don't know why women like to be called persons. It's a weird word. Yes, Bill, your point is right. If the media used it for ten years — as David Brinkley said, if you put a gorilla on the news every night for five years, everybody would think that's what somebody who delivers the news should look like. I don't like it, but if I grew up twenty years later, and newspapers used it all the time, I probably wouldn't think twice about it.

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## Person the lifeboats! The language is sinking!

- *Man and the universe. Man and God. Man and machines*
- *Man and woman*

You'll notice the difference. In the first instance, "man" means all mankind or, to quote the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "a human being — regardless of sex or age"; in the second, it means an adult male human being. The distinction is clear, and it makes nonsense of the efforts of those who would perpetrate barbarisms like "chairperson" and "newsperson." Sad to say, it is not merely the extremists with a cause who propose such language pollution. Today, even the setters of newspaper style, who ought to know better, are deleting "men" — and often "women" as well — from their stylebooks and inserting in their stead those dismal "persons."

"Man," as all dictionaries agree, can be as much a generic, sexless word as "horse" or "dog." We have not yet resorted to "racemare" or "seeing-eye bitch." Why, then, "chairwoman" or the even clumsier "chairperson"? It's obvious that such linguistic folly could lead to bizarre extremes. Will schoolgirls have to learn "penwomanship"? Will female workers put in "womanhours" and produce "personpower"? Will female astronauts go aloft in

"womaned spacecraft"? And will wives conclude that they are safe while swimming in waters their husbands shun because sharks are, after all, only man-eaters? Again, if we continue the pleasant custom of referring to a ship as "she," must we rewrite history to create a "woman-of-war"?

Finally, I suppose, we could systematically go about mangling the cadences of Shakespeare ("thou canst not then be false to any person"), of Donne ("no person is an island"), of Scott ("breathes there the person with soul so dead"), of Lowell ("once to every person and nation"). And we could rewrite the Bible to say, "Person does not live by bread alone," and "What is person that thou art mindful of such?"

The irony is that violating the language in this fashion undermines the cause of women's liberation, in whose name this battle is being waged. The result is not a more adequate recognition of women's equality, but a verbal ugliness that makes a valid cause seem, unnecessarily, dubious.

BOYD WRIGHT

*Boyd Wright is an associate editor at Women's Wear Daily.*

**Scott:** But it's not the language primarily that we're trying to change here. It's the mind-set that we're trying to change.

**Russin:** But through language, which is the most insidious way to do it.

**8** Women's professional qualifications or working experience should always be acknowledged, to forestall the common (and incorrect) expectation that most women are full-time housewives.

**Hennion:** So far we've been talking about equal rights for women, and now you want affirmative action.

**Quiñones:** What I'm after is accuracy. When Cathy O'Neill ran for secretary of state, one headline over the UPI story about this highly qualified professional was, "Housewife running for secretary of state." If a woman is a housewife, then fine, call her one. But if she's also something else, then it's perfectly accurate to say that.

**Russin:** I read Number 8 as being the same as Number 4. In dealing with somebody who's running for secretary of state, then the facts of the matter are that she's a logical candidate because she's been an accountant or done this or done that. Those are the qualifications you'd use to describe a man who was running for secretary of state if he'd been an accountant or was on city council or something. If she has nothing else going for her, and she's a housewife and wants to put in a woman's point of view, then those are the facts.

**Quiñones:** In some cases it may seem like affirmative action. For instance, if you're doing a feature on how a particular woman is raising her family, because she's doing something out of the ordinary, then that's your story. But she might also be a surgeon — and that should be mentioned, or the story will be misleading.

**Hennion:** It should, if it's germane to the story. In the example you raise, it probably is — as a code, if nothing else, for the fact that she's been well-educated.

**Quiñones:** But in many stories it wouldn't be mentioned; it's enough to say about this woman that she's a housewife — though in a story about a man who raises rare orchids, and was a lawyer, you wouldn't leave out that he's a lawyer.

**Hennion:** Then you're just asking for equal treatment, you're not asking for special treatment.

**Quiñones:** I think it's special compared to the way we're treated now!

**9** "Feminist" is the correct term to describe a woman committed to equal rights for women. "Women's libber" is an unacceptable pejorative.

**Rivers:** Lately, in social discussion, I'll start to say something light to a woman and ask if she's a women's libber. I'll end up saying, "are you a women's . . . movement . . . person . . .?" It's very hard — women's libber is kind of catchy, I think, still, and very much resented by women. But feminist always seems to be old-fashioned. I think of the Lucy Stone League, and the movements in the last century for voting and so on.

**Miller:** To me, feminist has the connotation of militancy. It's a charged word, and although I can offer no better alternative, I think it has connotations that don't accurately describe the full range of people that come under the umbrella that I would think applies to feminism.

**Russin:** The problem with women's libber, feminist, or any of those words, is that you tend to use them as shorthands and as codes, and when you use them, the message is that here is a person, essentially, whose whole existence is wrapped up in this particular quest. Which is often not the case. Someone may be perfectly happy to be described as someone committed to equal rights for women, but that may not be the thing that's on their mind twenty-four hours a

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**'S**o far we've been  
talking about equal rights for women  
and now  
you want affirmative action'

---

day. And that's the impression which tends to be conveyed when you throw a word like that on someone.

**Scott:** Well, you're talking equality, really. What we need is some word for equality-fighter.

**10** Headlines seem to be particularly susceptible to the use of stereotypical, simplistic language. As in other areas, play on these stereotypes is to be avoided.

**Rivers:** Scotty, you're the only one of us here to deal directly with this.

**Scott:** Oh, we blow it all the time. Because headlines are by nature short, tight, trying in very few words to get as much information as you can.

**Quiñones:** All of the good intentions that may go into a news story can be totally contradicted by a headline. One of our favorites from last year was, "Banker is a chic blonde." And the kicker was, "No women's libber." The pressures of trying to capture interest in a headline, and to make it short and punchy, really interfere with good intentions, and the things we all deplore show up much more in headlines, much more.

**11** When you have completed a story about a woman, go through it and ask yourself whether you would have written about a man in the same style. If not, something may be wrong with the tone or even the conception of your article. Think it through again.

**Scott:** As an editor, Number 11 does it for me. If I can do that, and do it honestly, we're really about two-thirds of the way there, aren't we? ■

## Understanding energy

On March 8, 1974, during the closing days of the Arab oil embargo, *The New York Times* complained that tight gasoline allocations would remain in effect for the rest of the month, even though gasoline reserves were near a two-year high. That same day, *The Wall Street Journal*, citing the same allocation and reserve figures, warned that allocations were so high that reserve stocks of gasoline would be drawn down to their lowest level in years by month's end if the embargo continued.

Who was right? The stocks stood at about 400 million barrels (a twenty-three-day supply), but as much as half of the supply was in transit, or already distributed, and thus no longer easily

*moved from region to region. Thus, opinions varied on how much of the reserves would be available in a real emergency. Such disagreement illustrates the biggest problem in writing energy stories: not a shortage of facts, but the wide gap between knowing the facts and knowing what they mean.*

*The glut of raw energy statistics is truly impressive. Some of the statistics are compiled by trade organizations and corporations; a surprisingly large portion is available to the public. Although much of the information is compiled from figures supplied voluntarily by individual companies, it is generally accurate enough to understand the broad energy picture.*

*Federal agencies are also a primary source, although the most useful "overview" reports are often twelve to eighteen months out of date by the time they are released. Reasons for the delay are*

*many: production and checking take time, as does the compilation of statistics from various sources (including companies which delay sending back the often complex government survey forms). Many critics complain that the delays help energy company interests, and that the process could be hastened at little additional cost by adding more staff. The Federal Energy Administration's record in this regard has improved, but such complaints have otherwise generally fallen on deaf ears.*

*Furthermore, energy regulation is highly decentralized. As the introduction to *The Energy Directory* points out, "nearly 300 federal bureaus, thirty-five congressional committees, and 450 state government agencies have some type of jurisdiction in energy affairs." Perhaps the best sources for beginning to understand energy are the first three listings below.*

### BOOKS

#### **The Energy Directory**

Environment Information Center, 124 East 39 Street, New York, New York 10016, 1974, \$50.

Although this directory was issued last September, just before the Energy Research and Development Administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission were created, it is well worth the price. Included are names, addresses, descriptions, and phone numbers of personnel of federal, state and local agencies, private groups, and of companies dealing with energy.

#### **The World Petroleum Market**

by M. A. Adelman, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland 21218, 1973, (paperbound) \$5.95.

It seems a bit quaint to read Morris Adelman discoursing on the "natural price" of Middle Eastern crude (that is, the cost of oil from new wells there) being only ten cents a barrel; at the time

the book was issued, such oil was selling for about \$3 a barrel. Nonetheless, this remains the most complete overview of the oil trade. Adelman, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is thought by many to be the most knowledgeable oil economist not working for an oil company.

#### **Energy for Survival**

by Wilson Clark, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974, \$12.50.

No earthshaking revelations here, just a solid, well-documented account of energy use. Clark also deals with alternative energy sources and conservation strategies.

#### **Chemicals from Petroleum**

by A. L. Waddams, Halsted Press/Wiley, 1973, (paperbound) \$6.95.

Only a small portion of each barrel of crude oil and every 1,000 cubic feet of natural gas are diverted into petrochemicals — plastics, fibers, and fertilizer. But, as food shortages have emphasized, that fraction is important.

#### **Geothermal Energy**

edited by Paul Kruger and Carel Otte, Stanford University Press, 1973, \$17.50.

Geothermal steam has been touted as a plentiful, cheap energy source. This book discusses some of the technical and environmental problems that must be solved first.

#### **Solar Energy Technology and Applications**

by J. Richard Williams, Ann Arbor Science Publishers, P.O. Box 1425, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, 1974, (paperbound) \$6.95.

A good, accurate, well-illustrated primer on the subject, with short sections on drawing power from the seas and from the wind.

#### **The Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor: An Environmental and Economic Critique**

by Thomas B. Cochran, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, (paperbound) \$6.95.

Approximately 40 percent of all mon-

ey obligated for federal energy research and development this fiscal year was spent on breeder-reactor research. Here Cochran attacks the breeder on environmental and economic grounds, arguing that even if events prove that the breeder is necessary, it'll be lost by delaying its introduction

### **The Energy Balloon**

by Stewart Udall, Charles Conconi, and David Osterhout, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974, \$7.95.

As secretary of the interior for eight years under Kennedy and Johnson, Udall had a major role in setting energy policy — such as it was. This book blames the oil companies and false economic assumptions for many of today's energy problems, and calls for redesigning American society to achieve energy conservation goals; the authors skim over the technology and dwell on the politics.

### **U.S. Energy R&D Policy: The Role of Economics**

by John E. Tilton, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, (paperbound) \$3.50.

Tilton argues for government support of energy research and development, discussing present efforts and future plans. A companion book, **Energy and the Social Sciences** (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974 [paperbound] \$7.50), raises a number of questions about what kind of research can be done, and how much money should be devoted to the task.

## **MAGAZINES**

**Nature and Resources**, UNESCO, UNIPUB P.O. Box 433, Murray Hill Station, New York, New York 10016, (quarterly), \$6 a year.

The international outlook is refreshing, and so is the interdisciplinary approach.

### **Natural Resources Journal**

University of New Mexico School of Law, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, (quarterly), \$12 a year.

Excellent survey articles, nicely documented. Can be read profitably by laymen.

### **Nuclear News**

American Nuclear Society, 244 East Ogden Avenue, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521, (monthly), \$30 a year.

This is the publication of the professionals working in nuclear energy fields; it covers legal and social as well as technical issues.

### **Nuclear Safety**

U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, (bimonthly), \$3.50 a year.

Covers analysis and control of hazards associated with radioactive materials, especially from the nuclear power industry.

### **Oil & Gas Journal**

Petroleum Publishing Company, 211 South Cheyenne Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74101, (weekly), \$32.50 a year to those outside the industry.

Respected, wide-ranging, and often quoted. Many libraries carry this journal.

### **Public Utilities Fortnightly**

Public Utilities Reports, Suite 502, 1828 L Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, (biweekly), \$30 a year.

Excellent articles on regulatory agencies and financing problems from an industry point of view.

### **Solar Energy**

Pergamon Press, Fairview Park, Elmsford, New York 10523, (quarterly), \$50 a year.

This journal has a fifteen-year history in a field receiving renewed interest. Editorial material is handled by the International Solar Energy Society, Parkville, Victoria, Australia.

## **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

### **Energy Resources Council**

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20500; (202) 343-6416.

The council, which in theory oversees all actions of federal agencies dealing with energy, is currently chaired by Rogers Moron.

### **Federal Energy Administration**

Federal Building, 12th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20461; (202) 393-6400.

FEA was created in 1974 out of the bones of the Federal Energy Office, which was carved mainly out of the Interior Department in the autumn of 1973. Frank Zarb has been FEA administrator since December 1974. FEA has been by far the most prolific and visible writer of energy regulations (about 150,000

words worth last year) because it is responsible for running allocation programs for petroleum products. FEA also runs the National Energy Information Center, ([202] 961-8685) which issues numerous weekly and monthly statistical bulletins. FEA has regional offices in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Lakewood, Colorado, San Francisco, and Seattle.

### **Federal Power Commission**

825 North Capitol Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20426; (202) 386-6102.

The FPC issued about 100,000 words of regulations in 1974, covering such matters as hydroelectric power, interstate transmission of electricity and natural gas (but not oil or coal; that's handled by the Interstate Commerce Commission), stocks and bonds issued by utilities, and reports of utility operations. Statistics it collects on such things as consumption of fossil fuels, utility return on investment, etc., are available to the public. FPC has regional offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Fort Worth, New York, and San Francisco.

### **Department of the Interior**

18th and C Streets NW, Washington, D.C. 20240; (202) 343-1100.

Although the Interior Department has lost much of its energy-regulating authority to FEA and ERDA (see below), it retains control over the granting of leases for exploitation of coal, oil, oil shale, natural gas, and geothermal steam on federal land and on the continental shelf (with the exception of areas within three miles of shore under state control). Interior also handles requests for pipelines and electric powerlines on federal land. The National Petroleum Council, bringing together numerous industry advisory groups, meets under the Interior Department's sponsorship (1625 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006; (202) 393-6100); it publishes numerous forecasts and reports.

### **Energy Research and Development Administration**

7th and D Streets SW, Washington, D.C. 20545; (301) 973-1000.

ERDA was created in October by the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974. It will bring most federal energy research under one roof for the first time "to increase the efficiency and reliability in the use of energy." Most of ERDA's initial staff

comes from the Atomic Energy Commission, which was dismantled. From the Interior Department, the agency gained the Bureau of Mines' energy research centers and the Office of Coal Research. From the National Science Foundation came geothermal power development programs and research on solar energy. (However, the Department of Housing and Urban Development retained a large program for demonstration of solar heating and cooling in residential housing.) Some energy research-and-development programs, most notably one on new automobile power systems, were transferred to ERDA from the federal Environmental Protection Agency. ERDA's chief is Robert C. Seamans, Jr.

#### **Nuclear Regulatory Commission**

Washington, D.C. 20555 (but physically located in Bethesda, Maryland).

All of the AEC's licensing and regulatory control of nuclear power (and just about anything else to do with nuclear energy was transferred to this new commission at the same time ERDA was created.

#### **State Agencies**

Almost all states have utility commissions to regulate rates for natural gas and electricity. Many also have agencies monitoring mining and drilling operations. In addition, last year's energy crunch spurred many states to set up extra energy bureaus. These are often attached to the governor's office, and mainly monitor the use of gasoline and heating oil.

In states short of water, agencies regulating that commodity may have an important energy say; water is used for cooling by electric power plants and in many industrial operations. State development offices, created to encourage industry, are usually excellent sources on energy supply and demand.

### **ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Club of Rome**

Via Giorgione 163, 00147 Rome, Italy. U.S. contact: Professor Carol Wilson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. Sponsored study which led to the book *The Limits to Growth*.

#### **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries**

Dr. Karl Lueger Ring 10, 1010 Vienna,

Austria. The now-famous OPEC; oil price cartel consisting of (in order of size of oil reserves) Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Venezuela, Indonesia, Algeria, Qatar, and Ecuador.

#### **International Atomic Energy Agency**

11 Karnter Ring, P.O. Box 590, 1011 Vienna, Austria (Can also be reached through the U.N. in New York). This United Nations agency issues technical reports, promotes atomic safety, and, perhaps most importantly, is charged with ensuring that nuclear materials are not diverted into making weapons from the facilities it is allowed to inspect.

#### **American Gas Association**

1515 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22209; (703) 524-2000. Trade and lobbying organization for the natural gas distributor and transmission companies; publishes *AGA Monthly* (\$5 a yr.). Library open to public.

#### **American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers**

345 East 47 Street, New York, New York 10017; (212) 752-6800 Extension 695. Largest professional group (50,000 members) involved with energy matters. Holds numerous conferences every year, and publishes conference proceedings and monthly journal. Engineering Societies Library (same address and phone number) is important source of energy information.

#### **American Petroleum Institute**

1801 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006; (202) 833-5744. API is the largest and most active trade organization concerned with energy matters; to many, it is *the* lobbyist for the petroleum industry. API's figures on oil production are probably the most quoted, and the most used (*Statistical Bulletin*, weekly, \$17.50 a year, *Petroleum Today*, quarterly, free, and periodic *Energy Backgrounders*, free, are perhaps the most useful API publications for journalists). API also supports remarkably neutral Central Abstracting and Indexing Service, 275 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016; it is run by E. H. Brenner and provides numerous expensive, specialized publications.

#### **American Public Power Association**

2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Washington,

D.C. 20037; (202) 333-9200. Main lobbying group and trade organization for municipal electric and other local, publicly owned utilities. Publishes annual report and bimonthly magazine *Public Power* (\$8.50 a year).

#### **Atomic Industrial Forum**

475 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016; (212) 725-8300; 1747 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20006; (202) 833-9234. Industrial association for manufacturers of nuclear equipment, uranium, fuel reprocessing, etc. Publishes monthly newsletter, *INFO*, free on request.

#### **Center for Science in the Public Interest**

1779 Church Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 332-6000. Public-interest group has criticized numerous federal energy policies; favors energy conservation to cut oil imports; publishes several energy-related publications and supplies energy statistics.

#### **Edison Electric Institute**

90 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016; (212) 573-8700. Chief trade association of investor-owned electric utilities; sponsors energy research and demonstration programs; good source of statistics on utility industry. Bimonthly *EEl Bulletin* (\$10 a year); library open to the public on request.

#### **National Coal Association**

1130 17th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 628-4322. Largest trade and lobbying organization of the bituminous coal industry; issues numerous reports usually free to journalists; publishes numerous periodicals.

#### **Resources for the Future**

1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 462-4400. Research institution with strong policy of resource conservation; publishes numerous reports; three-times-yearly *Resources Magazine* is free. Three of its reports (listed in the books section) are distributed by The Johns Hopkins University Press.

STEVEN S. ROSS

*Steven S. Ross is editor of New Engineer magazine and director of special studies at the Environment Information Center in New York.*

# READER'S FORUM

## The slogan that became a slur

Young people will probably never have heard of “the gold dust twins.” People over forty may recall them, but it’s doubtful that many know how and when they slipped into the language. They popped up in Chicago a few months back. On January 29, in the course of a local television news show, a white commentator referred to the city’s two black mayoral candidates — Illinois State Senator Richard H. Newhouse and lawyer E. Duke McNeil — as gold dust twins. Did he know what he was saying? Or had he tossed out the phrase without realizing that it was loaded?

The commentator was Andrew M. Greeley, a forty-seven-year-old Catholic priest who is program director of the National Opinion Research Center, a *Chicago Tribune* columnist, a prolific author, and also a political commentator for the new Public News Center on WTTW-TV, Chicago’s public broadcasting channel. His reference to Senator Newhouse and Mr. McNeil as gold dust twins occurred in a pro-Mayor Daley comment strewn with putdowns of the mayor’s opponents, black and white, in Daley’s sixth successful race for the mayoralty.

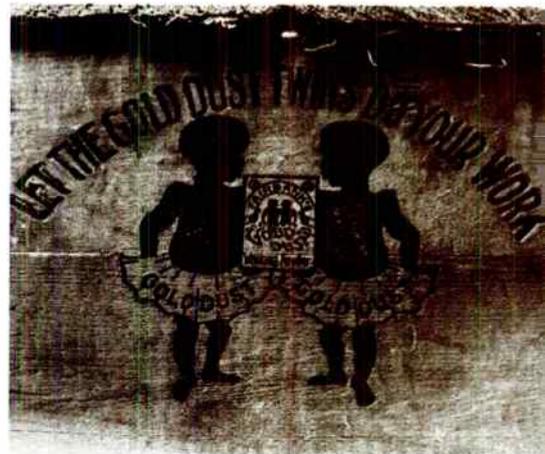
The original twins, for their part, were once widely known in the U.S., their fame rising and falling with the fortunes of a product called Gold Dust Washing Powder, brought on the market by the N.K. Fairbank Company. In 1891, the Fairbank firm placed its advertising account for several soap products with the N.W. Ayer & Son advertising agency, which duly conceived the grinning, big-headed, little-bodied black tots, dubbed them the gold dust twins, and came up with a slogan that type-

cast blacks as jolly domestics: “Let the gold dust twins do your work.” In 1939 Lever Brothers absorbed the company that had bought up the Fairbank firm. The product “is still produced in small quantities and sold in selected markets,” a Lever Brothers spokeswoman informed me recently, and the misshapen black twins still appear on the package. She could not tell me where those selected markets were. Company policy.

In the course of the product’s long shelf-life in the U.S., the term “gold dust twins” picked up connotations. “‘Gold dust twins’ was frequently used by whites in the South when I was growing up,” recalls Mrs. Grace Holt, a forty-nine-year-old professor of speech and director of black studies at the Chicago Circle campus of the University of Illinois. “It was always pejorative. It’s part of the language of racism. My generation, Greeley’s, was exposed to it,” Mrs. Holt adds. (The situation has been complicated a bit by a new movie called *Rafferty and the Gold Dust Twins*, which has nothing whatever to do with the caricatures on the washing-powder boxes.)

Curious to know whether and how Greeley’s television audience had reacted to his use of the phrase, I spoke with John Callaway, the news center’s executive producer and anchor man. Callaway told me that the center had received “several angry calls.” What had the callers said? “They said it was a racist remark.” Callaway went on to say, “It was our second week of operating and the editing and control was not all it should have been.” Actually, news center producer Sherry Goodman had read Greeley’s commentary in advance; the gold dust twins reference, she told me — and the copy backs her up — wasn’t in the text. He ad libbed it.

Had the ad libber known what he was adding? When asked about this, Greeley replied, “I didn’t realize [the gold dust twins reference] was offensive, and if I had known I would not have used it.” He added that he has heard of *Rafferty and the Gold Dust Twins* and assumes that the phrase is acceptable. (It seemed clear to me, however, that Greeley was trying to ridicule the Daley opponents in his speech. In the very next breath, he referred to another mayoral candidate as a “shanty Irishman.”) Had he ever seen a Gold Dust Washing Powder box? “No.” How, then, did the phrase slip into his speech? “What goes on in one’s



Du Sable Museum of African American History, Chicago

subconscious,” Greeley murmured, “would require much analysis.”

Yes. And perhaps Lever Brothers’ continued use of the twins as a marketing device “in selected markets” would bear scrutiny, too. The English language is booby-trapped with enough slurs as it is. There’s no need to market this one any longer.

LILLIAN CALHOUN

*Lillian Calhoun is coeditor of The Chicago Reporter, a newsletter on racial issues in the Chicago area.*

# The selective impact of libel law

The risk is greater for some subjects and for some journalists

by DAVID A. ANDERSON

**T**he great power of libel lawyers in the country's newsrooms these days is the unintended result of a series of Supreme Court cases, ending with the important *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.* decision last year. The legal system, as it now operates in matters of libel, favors the established media outlets over the newer ones, rich news subjects over poorer ones, and "professional" reporting over advocacy.

From *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) through *Rosenbloom v. Metromedia* (1971) the Supreme Court steadily expanded protection of stories about public officials, "public figures," and matters of public concern. Such stories, even when false, were privileged unless published with reckless or knowing disregard of their falsity.

But the *Gertz* decision retreated from this trend of expanding First Amendment protection. Elmer Gertz, a noted civil-liberties lawyer in Chicago, had been defamed by *American Opinion*, the monthly magazine of the John Birch Society. Gertz was described as a "Communist-fronter" and was accused

of being an architect of a national campaign to discredit police. A jury awarded Gertz \$50,000. The question on appeal was whether Gertz could recover, since the trial judge had found no evidence that *American Opinion* had published recklessly. The Supreme Court ruled five to four that Gertz, as a private citizen, should be able to recover damages more easily than a public official or public figure. (Justices Brennan, Burger, Douglas, and White dissented.) The Court repudiated one important aspect of *Rosenbloom v. Metromedia*; *Gertz* held that private plaintiffs subjected to news coverage can recover for libel without showing recklessness or knowledge of falsehood by those who defame them.

In two other ways the ruling was favorable to the press: the Court ruled that the Constitution requires that a defendant in a libel case must not only have said something false and defamatory, but he must also have been negligent. (Before *Gertz*, most private plaintiffs needed to show only that they had been falsely defamed.) This may turn out to be a small gain for the press, however, since juries will tend to infer negligence from the very fact that someone has been falsely defamed ("If

they weren't negligent, they wouldn't have been mistaken").

And, *Gertz* held that the Constitution precludes the victim of libel from recovering anything more than actual damages. This could be important, because the size of many libel awards was due to *punitive* damages (designed to punish the defendant) and *presumed* damages (permitted because it was thought too difficult to prove actual damages). The Court did leave open the possibility that punitive and presumed damages could be awarded when the plaintiff proves recklessness or knowledge of falsity.

The system of constitutional privileges modified by the *Gertz* decision has three major deficiencies. First, it best protects those who need it least. The system works fairly well for *Time*, *Inc.* or *The New York Times*; they have attorneys who know how to use the law, and they can afford to seek that protection. Yet these are the institutions least threatened by libel claims, because they can afford litigation. Those least able to bear costs, and therefore most in need of protection from libel claims, are the smaller, newer, and less conventional media voices. These outlets face a dilemma. If they are to survive, they must attract attention; to do that, they must tackle subjects not being covered by the established news organizations. In short, they must take risks. On the other hand, because of their financial insecurity, a libel suit, even though ultimately unsuccessful, would probably be fatal.

Second, the present system of privileges contains a built-in bias in favor of the conventional "objective" press. Because it focuses on officials and private persons whom the media already have made public figures, the conventional press is usually operating in protected territory. On the other hand, publications that focus on the less well-lighted corners of the social order (for example, on the sources and uses of private power in business, the professions, the arts, and the media) are often treading on unprotected turf. Magazines are particularly hard hit by this bias, because they attempt not only to tell us about public figures, but also about our private selves — our mores, foibles, peculiarities, heroics, vices. The *Rosenbloom* decision was important to

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David A. Anderson, a former reporter, is an assistant professor of law at the University of Texas School of Law.

## Cleveland: watering down the news

We try as often as possible at WKYC-TV, an NBC owned-and-operated station in Cleveland, to do investigative reports on how merchants treat their customers. The idea is to look like ordinary people, not reporters, and record, on tape or videotape, the treatment we receive from businessmen who don't know we're testing their product or service.

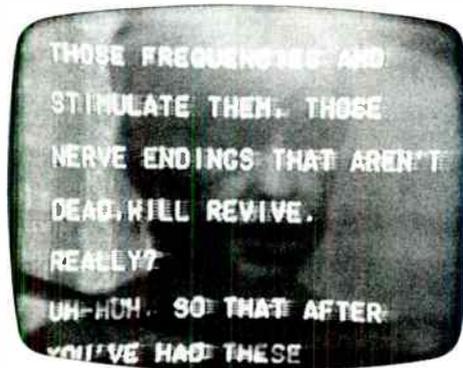
Last winter our investigation of hearing-aid dealers led one of them to seek a permanent injunction to keep us from airing a report on his selling practices. The injunction was denied by a federal district court judge last February 11. But in the meantime the station's lawyers had us practicing defensive journalism so that we could broadcast the report and still hope to win a jury trial. As we worked to defend ourselves before a lawsuit had even been filed, the impact of our report was considerably diluted.

The visits to the dealers had been made by people with real hearing problems; we couldn't rig their ears to suit our purposes. When they made the rounds of dealers, they acted as if they were seriously thinking of buying a hearing aid. Our test customers were in fact poor candidates for hearing aids, even though they had some hearing loss — this had been established beforehand by hearing experts.

The company that brought the injunction was by far the worst we encountered. Its saleswoman, who holds a state license, told our test customer that he could probably use a hearing aid; that if he used one of their custom-made models the sound stimulation would revive "sleeping nerves" in the high-

frequency range where he had a hearing loss; and that in two or three months he would probably get a five- to ten-decibel improvement in his hearing tests. (Our experts told us the man would probably find his normal hearing distorted if he wore a hearing aid.) An otologist told us later that the "sleeping nerve" theory had been dead for thirty years. All our experts agreed that the five- to ten-decibel variation is a common margin of error when hearing is being tested.

The entire "evaluation" was tape-recorded. We returned to the store later with a camera crew, identified ourselves, and asked to speak to the sales-



*The Cleveland hearing-aid salesperson, with sales talk superimposed. The soft-focus image was chosen to minimize chances of defamation.*

person. We asked her to explain her statements to our test customer. Her reaction to our questions is on film, but it will never be broadcast. She was simultaneously angry, flustered, and extremely nervous. She denied that she had ever said any of the things we had on tape. The film was never broadcast because our attorneys felt that using it

might give a jury reason to feel we had held her up to public ridicule.

We were able to use a single frame of the film with her picture on it, much like a snapshot, while the key portions of her taped remarks about the hearing test played on the air. At the same time, the words she spoke were written out on the television screen. Nonetheless, the public will never know anything more about the whole affair than that her company asked for an injunction, was refused, and declined offers to reply to us on film.

And of course much of the public will not know that we had asked for her reply simply to be fair, not because we were required to do so. In seeking a reply, we also gave them a chance to go to their lawyers, seek an injunction, and threaten the station with a civil suit.

What else could the station have done? The law allows anyone with a grievance to bring a lawsuit. For the price of stationery anyone can write a letter threatening to sue. And it is neither fair nor realistic to suggest that subjects of reporting should be prevented from seeking redress.

On the other hand, the news department could have tucked tail and run when it was threatened. We believed a lawsuit would follow the day after the broadcast. (None has been filed to date.) Instead, the news department made a journalistic decision to proceed with the story, and a business decision to make that story weaker, but legally defensible.

ALICE NEFF

*Alice Neff is a reporter for NBC News in Cleveland.*

such publications; it recognized the need to protect all media engaged in discussion of matters of public concern. *Gertz* rejected that in favor of a more limited and orthodox view of the kinds of discussion that are important.

The *Gertz* decision may be implemented in a way that further discriminates against the advocacy press. It is not clear under *Gertz* how negligence

is to be defined, but one possibility is a test suggested some years ago by the late Justice Harlan, some of whose ideas are reflected in the *Gertz* majority's opinion. He proposed that the defendant's conduct be measured against "the standards of investigation and reporting ordinarily adhered to by responsible publishers." For the advocacy press, adoption of this test would

be disastrous. How much protection will the negligence requirement of *Gertz* give a small underground newspaper if its practices are to be compared with those of *The New York Times*?

Third, the present system best protects the reputations of those who have money, power, and position. It least protects the reputation of the poor and weak. In part this merely reflects the

fact that the legal system generally serves the rich better than the poor, simply because the latter do not have access to it. But in the libel field, those with money and status have another advantage because of the high cost of successfully defending a libel suit. Whether a defamatory statement will be published or broadcast depends in part on the lawyer's judgment of the likelihood that the subject will sue. The lawyer knows that someone who has access to lawyers and is accustomed to using the legal system to achieve his goals is more likely to sue than someone who has no lawyer and is unfamiliar with the court system.

**S**ince it is inevitable that lawyers will often determine whether a story gets printed or aired, or killed, it is important to know whether lawyers are likely to make good censors.

Some lawyers feel an obligation to see that stories reach the light of day, and they are knowledgeable enough to help find ways to get stories printed. James Goodale, the general counsel of *The New York Times*, is probably the best-known lawyer of this kind. (His important role in a different but similar context — helping to get the Pentagon Papers into print — is described in Sanford Ungar's *The Papers and the Papers*.)

Lawyers like Goodale, however, are rare. The lawyers who handle publishers' and broadcasters' libel problems are usually the same lawyers who handle their tax work, collections, contracts, labor relations, and other corporate legal work. Rarely do they handle more than one or two libel suits a year. Since few of those ever get to trial, and even fewer are appealed, such lawyers are likely to have little or no experience in libel litigation. Nor are they accustomed to advising clients to push the law to its limits; their tendency is to give the press the same conservative advice they give their other corporate clients.

Even if the lawyer is sensitive to the broader interests at stake in his decisions, and even if he handles enough libel matters to develop some expertise in the field, another problem still inhibits his effectiveness. The libel lawyer lives with a serious conflict of his roles, and the better he is, the more serious the conflict. A good libel lawyer will de-

## San Jose: threatening a libel suit

In 1972 Don Gale, the parks director of Mountain View, California, was convicted of grand theft — the use of \$9,000 of the city's money to pay for his own company's film.

On November 28, 1973 the San Jose *Mercury* published a story alleging that a Mountain View city councilman, Charles Gordon, had been the attorney in 1970 for both Gale and his firm, Tennis Associates. The story also raised the possibility — unwisely, as it turned out — that Gordon might still be Gale's attorney. "Gordon claims he is not now the attorney for Tennis Associates," was the way the story raised the issue. But in "crucial" correspondence made available to *The Mercury*, the story went on, Gordon responded to a 1973 request to discuss information about Gale by claiming the attorney-client privilege. The subsequent controversy hinged on whether or not this claim indicated that Gordon was still Gale's lawyer.

"Gordon's personal letter, representing Gale's views, may raise questions about his ability to sit in judgment of city actions aimed at retrieving the bond money from [the insurance companies]," the report suggested; yet these questions aside, Gordon's claim was hardly evidence of work for Gale after 1970.

On December 17 *The Mercury* received a "demand for retraction of libelous publication" from Gordon, which referred not to specific libelous remarks, but to the news stories about Gordon generally.

The newspaper submitted the matter to its attorneys. Gordon was consulted, and the attorneys advised the paper that Gordon would probably file suit unless he received a retraction. The attorney

added, however, that he felt a retraction was unjustified. He suggested merely that *The Mercury* print a story giving Gordon's side of the matter.

On January 17, 1974 a story written by executive editor Paul Conroy and headed GORDON NOT GALE'S ATTORNEY; THEIR RELATIONSHIP CLARIFIED ran in *The Mercury*. "City Councilman and attorney Charles Gordon is not the counsel for Don Gale," the story began, citing as evidence Gordon's denial and an affidavit signed by Gale, his wife, and his business partner in Tennis Associates. The brief story did not repeat the suggestion that Gordon might be involved in a conflict of interest because of his previous stint as Gale's attorney.

Reporters at *The Mercury* considered the story to be a retraction. They were unhappy about it then and they still are. "The paper would rather back down than argue a point in court, even when its own legal counsel feels the paper is on firm ground," is the way one *Mercury* staffer puts it, adding that reporters were ordered off the Gordon-Gale story after Gordon had in effect threatened to sue.

Executive editor Conroy, on the other hand, regards the story as no more than a "clarification" made on the advice of attorneys. Did he order reporters off the story? Conroy says that if he did so, it was in large part because his reporters had handled it so badly. "I might have said something like 'this case has gone by the boards, forget it'" is the way he remembers it.

"Retraction" or no, it seems that Gordon's implied threat succeeded in rectifying a questionable interpretation of his letter by reporters — but also in ending the paper's investigation into his affairs.

velop rapport with the people in the newsroom. He must have their respect and confidence, because he can't be an effective libel lawyer unless the news people are willing to bring problems to his attention and to turn to him in the early stages of a potentially troublesome

story. But the lawyer's ultimate responsibility — and therefore his loyalty — must be to the owner who employs him. He knows that the purpose of his employment is to save the owner money.

What can be done to reduce the role of the lawyer in determining what news

*continued on page 42*

## Austin, Texas: living through a libel suit

In June 1974 *The Texas Observer* and I were sued for libel for \$5 million. Even putting the *Observer* and \$5 million in the same sentence constitutes a massive oxymoron.

The *Observer* is a sort of regional *New Republic*. It's a very small (circulation 10,500), liberal fortnightly that deals with Texas politics, Texas social problems, Texas "kulchur," and Texas characters. Its alumni include Ronnie Dugger, Willie Morris, Robert Sherrill, and Bill Brammer, among others. The paper is run as a sort of journalists' cooperative, and it has been close to broke for the entire twenty years of its existence. I take that back. We did make a profit in 1971; we all went down to Scholz's Beer Garten and bought a pitcher of beer to celebrate and that blew the profit for the year. (The *Observer's* business staff runs an ongoing miracle of the loaves and fishes: they recently came up with an extra desk, chair, and typewriter for a total cost of \$6.) Despite the paper's usually critical financial bind, it continues to win prizes, break stories, and, we think, turn out some pretty good journalism.

The plaintiffs, Brother Lester Roloff and Roloff Evangelistic Enterprises, Inc., are also suing four other publications and NBC. When all this started, we were incredibly naive about what the suit would mean. Obviously, we thought, we need a lawyer. Also obviously, we couldn't afford one. Ergo, we asked for volunteers. We got six and a lot of other offers of help from lawyer friends all over the state. We thought our problem was solved. It took us months to understand that the court costs alone could run between \$10,000 and \$15,000. It further became clear that the case might require hundreds of hours of a lawyer's time, and that, we agreed, was too much to ask of volunteers. We also learned that we would need counsel in Corpus Christi, where the suit was filed, and none of our volunteers were from Corpus.

We started raising money. With help from two of the *Observer's* oldest friends, Bernard Rapoport of Waco and J. R. Parten of Madisonville, we started a legal-defense fund. We now have an excellent lawyer in Corpus and are up to our eyeballs in benefits, getting out

fund-raising letters, having to put the bite on old friends, and trying to get help from foundations. The final cost is impossible to estimate. But it will certainly run to tens of thousands. The *Observer* no more has tens of thousands than it has \$5 million: before this suit ever gets to court, it could easily kill *The Texas Observer*.

The suit has invaded our lives in many ways. It is eating up our time and the money we do not have. It has forced us to consider taking out personal loans and leaving the *Observer* for more remunerative employment in order to pay them off. We recently rejected a solid story on some illegal business doings in Dallas — we can't afford to get sued again.

MOLLY IVINS

*The suit described above resulted from two articles about child-care facilities in Texas that Molly Ivins wrote in 1973. She agreed to discuss the suit with CJR, but said her article would have to be written with the advice and consent of counsel. It was. Therefore, the author is necessarily vague about the exact nature of the material that is allegedly libelous.*



Molly Ivins and Kaye Northcott, editors of *The Texas Observer*.

Alan Pogue

**'The question is whether the press is willing to pay for something that will improve journalism in the long run, even if it produces no immediate financial advantage'**

is printed and broadcast? There are several possibilities, including the increasing use of summary judgment procedures, in which a court rules on the defendant's claim of constitutional privilege before trial, if the plaintiff can produce no evidence of recklessness.

The most promising approach, however, is better libel insurance. Even though insurance is available in all states, a 1973 study showed that about half of all publications and broadcasters have no libel insurance at all — some because they can't afford it; others because they don't consider libel to be a serious risk; and still others because they're uninsurable. Many of those who are not covered are those who need insurance most: new magazines, "alternative" newspapers, and unconventional broadcasters. Their staffs may be untested, or they may even be committed to a kind of journalism that increases their risk of being sued.

Even when there is libel coverage, it's often inadequate: either the deductibles are too high, making suits expensive even for those insured; or the coverage pays damages awarded, but doesn't pay legal fees.

**T**here has been no comprehensive libel-insurance system simply because the press has been unwilling to pay for it. Many publishers and broadcasters have decided against a full-coverage libel-insurance system because they do not believe it to be worth the expense. It seems at least possible, however, that their analysis of costs and benefits is incomplete. The costs of libel insurance are easy enough to measure: they are simply the premiums charged. The benefits, however, are harder to calculate. They include any claims the insurance company may pay, plus assistance from the company in negotiating settlements. If the policy covers defense costs, the benefits include the value of these services.

Other benefits are intangible. For example, the chances of inducing the plaintiff to drop his suit or settle are increased if the plaintiff knows the defendant is represented by an insurance-company lawyer who is experienced in libel matters.

Most important, but equally difficult to measure, is the effect that a good in-

surance system can have on journalistic practices. If the risks of libel are fully insured, the decision to publish or not publish can be based more on journalistic grounds, and less on the cost of litigating. The question — as is so often the case — is whether the press is willing to pay for something that will improve journalism in the long run, even if it produces no immediate financial advantage. Enlightened self-interest at least requires that these intangible benefits be taken into account when considering libel insurance.

The second step requires even more enlightenment and is less clearly supported by self-interest. If libel insurance is to be effective, the press must realize that one of the goals is the sharing of risks. Risks are not shared when each publisher or broadcaster insists on a finely tuned premium that reflects only his own risks.

Premiums should be based on the loss experience of broad categories of publishers. New publications, for example, should not be placed in a separate category for rate-making purposes; they should be placed in existing classifications so that their risks are shared by more established newspapers or magazines. This means, of course, that low-risk organizations would subsidize libel insurance for riskier outfits. Surely it is not asking too much to require those with established reputations or monopoly positions to help keep alive the "marketplace of ideas" by sharing the risks with less secure newcomers.

The *Gertz* decision should make a good system of libel insurance more feasible. The demand for libel insurance should increase, because *Gertz* makes it easier for a private plaintiff to win (easier, at least, than under *Rosenbloom*). Also, *Gertz* should make libel more readily insurable by making awards more predictable. If juries cannot presume damages, and if punitive damages are restricted, insurance companies should be able to evaluate risks more accurately, and therefore be more willing to underwrite risks previously avoided. If *Gertz* has this effect, it may help to accomplish Justice Powell's goal of achieving "the proper accommodation between the law of defamation and the freedom of speech and press protected by the First Amendment." ■

# NATIONAL NOTES

## The persuader

LAKELAND, FLA.

Everyone knows the usual roster of newspaper brass: editor, publisher, and so on. Soon, it would seem, room will have to be made for a new title: marketing development director.

Lynn O. Matthews, director of marketing for the New York Times Media Company, which owns a dozen papers in Florida and North Carolina (among them Lakeland's *The Ledger*) is, at the same time, marketing development director for the papers in the Times Media chain. Matthews solicits new businesses and locates suitable properties for companies he has helped to persuade to settle down in chain-paper cities. Recently, his activities as a booster made him a controversial figure in this central Florida community. At a time when several local groups were heatedly opposing the construction of a luxury condominium in Lakeland, Matthews admitted that, as part of his booster role, he was representing a part-owner in the firm that proposed to build the condominium. Needless to say, this situation upset citizens who opposed the condominium — and raised questions in some readers' minds about whose interests the paper was serving: those of the community at large or the developers'. (Subsequently, in an editorial, *The Ledger* disclaimed having a vested interest in the building project, and, in the same editorial, came out in support of it.)

There is no hint of collusion between the editorial side and the market development office at *The Ledger*. (When a reporter discovered that Lakeland's mayor had been sent on a free trip to Minnesota by *The Ledger* to discuss plans for a proposed hotel, the paper, after some debate, printed the story. The free trip violated a city ordinance prohibiting such emoluments.) But some

*Ledger* staffers feel that having a market development director around at all presents needless complications. Among other things, editor Cleve Hamm notes, "It can hurt your credibility."

June Erlick

## A little Watergate

BROCKPORT, N.Y.

A series of articles about misuse of funds by several student government officers at the State University of New York at Brockport almost forced the campus's student newspaper, *The Stylus*, to cease publication this spring. The series, which began last fall, accused officers of misappropriating between \$85,000 and \$113,000 of student government funds. Among the charges: officers used school credit cards to buy new tires and gasoline for their own cars, and, in one case, to pay for a \$500 engine overhaul.

To prod SUNY-Brockport administrators into taking action, Clark Gebman, *The Stylus*'s chief investigative reporter, subsequently prepared a 152-page report detailing the abuses of the student officers. In January, SUNY-Brockport's president, Albert W. Brown, forwarded the report to the state police's bureau of criminal investigation, which is still investigating.

Three weeks later, *The Stylus*'s editors found themselves in a bind. They needed an additional \$3,000 in operating funds to offset increased printing costs; they would have to turn to the student government, which controls funds for all student activities.

In 1974, when the paper and the student government were on good terms, the government had given *The Stylus* \$10,000 in additional funds. This year it initially turned down the paper's request — on the ground that *The Stylus* had devoted too much space to the officers' wrongdoings while the student

government's "good projects" had been scanted.

The decision was reversed two weeks later, after a session that lasted into the early morning hours. One factor that helped swing the vote was concern for the student government's "image." The Rochester *Times-Union* had picked up the story and, in an editorial, had characterized the affair as "a little Watergate."

The first issue of *The Stylus* to come out after the funds were approved indicates that its editors have turned a deaf ear to the student government's call for more "good news." Another investigative story alleged new financial abuses by the student government's president and called for his resignation.

Michael Winerip

## The case of the silent mayor

PHILADELPHIA

Mayor Frank Rizzo is running for reelection — and the man who once claimed that "the working newspaperman made me what I am today" has not had a general press conference in more than a year. The silence stands in marked contrast to Rizzo's first years in office, when he became famous for his heated weekly press conferences and for his quotable quotes: "Philadelphia is a safe city — except for all the people who make it unsafe," or "I look around the room and I know . . . you're waiting to get your heels on my neck."

Rizzo's relations with the press cooled fast when, in August 1973, investigative reports from the *The Evening Bulletin* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* simultaneously broke a story that told of a secret squad of agents that Rizzo had sent out to spy on his political adversaries. Rizzo reacted violently, at one point calling the then-city editor of

the *Bulletin*, John Farmer, and threatening to cut the newspaper off from city news. The next week, Democratic party boss Peter J. Camiel charged that Rizzo had offered him a bribe in a bathroom of a local hotel and challenged the mayor to submit to a lie-detector test. The test was arranged by the *Philadelphia Daily News*. Rizzo flunked it — and blamed the press.

As the mayor's reelection campaign hit full stride, the candidate refused to break the press-conference boycott that began in November 1973. "There have been a lot of appearances by the mayor at neighborhood functions, a lot of personal contact," says Eugene Roberts, executive editor of the *Inquirer*, "but it has been a campaign notably bereft of issues." The administration recently received a \$274 million federal grant for a public works project which will mean



Mayor Rizzo taking lie-detector test

10,000 new jobs for a Philadelphia plagued with unemployment, but the mayor wouldn't answer any questions from the press about that, either.

Reporters are not happy about the situation. Andrea Mitchell, KYW-Radio's city hall reporter says, "I'm sorry he's closed himself off like this. I think he has an obligation to the public

to talk on issues." Another reporter complains that it is almost impossible to check stories out and get official comments on them. Mike Mallowe, a senior editor with *Philadelphia* magazine says: "I've worked for *Philadelphia* for about three years and have done about six or seven stories concerning the Rizzo regime. With all of that, I've had only a three-minute phone interview with Hizoner. Now something's wrong with that." *Tony Green*

## Happy birthday?

CHARLESTON, S.C.

In 1875, when the editors and publishers of South Carolina gathered in Charleston, they adopted a resolution pledging resistance against efforts in Reconstruction days to silence the public press and thereby, in their words, "deprive the people of their last and strongest barrier against tyranny and venality." This year, members of the South Carolina Press Association celebrated the association's 100th anniversary, during which they were wined and dined here by the so-called "sustaining members" of the SCPA — all of whom are employed by companies and organizations that apparently see themselves as "friends of the press." Among their ranks are representatives of South Carolina Electric and Gas Company, which has recently asked the state's Public Service Commission for a 25 percent rate hike, and members of the State Ports Authority, which had recently proposed the construction of a highly controversial terminal in Charleston. Both stories were covered, of course, by members of the SCPA.

Besides the food and drink supplied by the sustaining members, several door prizes were awarded, including an all-expense-paid "second honeymoon" in Charleston and assorted other vacations with free rooms and spending money.

As the *Charleston News and Courier* noted editorially while the association was celebrating its anniversary, "... at a time when its credibility is under scrutiny — if not suspect in the minds of some readers — the press ought to avoid what may appear to be compromising

situations such as are created by accepting even small favors from special interest groups. . . ." The SCPA, meanwhile, meekly referred the matter to committee for study. *Bobby Isaac*

## The four-month feud

LOUISVILLE

A feud flared up in this Kentucky city last November, and calmed down a bit this spring. The parties involved are, on the one side, the morning *Courier-Journal* and the afternoon *Louisville Times* (both owned by the same family); on the other, the Greater Louisville Auto Dealers Association. Charging that the consumer-oriented *Times* had been excessively rough on the auto industry in a time of slackening sales, the association voted, in late November, to withdraw advertising from the two papers. (The article that triggered the feud was a front-page *Times* story on the pitfalls involved in buying a used car.) The ad boycott reportedly reduced the papers' revenue by several hundred thousand dollars.

In March the auto dealers called an end to their boycott. "The rebates forced them back into print," says *Times* business editor Donald Houghton. "No other medium could explain the complexities."

While auto ad revenues have picked up at both papers, *Times* coverage of the auto sales story has not mellowed a whit. One article, for example, pointed out that while the rebates helped sales through January and February, projections for sales in rebateless March were grim.

While the Greater Louisville Auto Dealers Association has refused to comment formally on its feud with the papers, individual dealers do not conceal their irritation with the *Times*'s unrosy reporting. In a recent letter to the editor, for example, one salesman complained that the paper hadn't reported what he felt was a brightening sales picture. In a reply, business editor Houghton noted that the *Times* had reported and documented the only picture there was to report: sales were down.

*Peter Nichols*

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# Clay Felker raises his VOICE

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but will  
the nation listen as  
The Village did?

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'The *Voice* to me,' says Clay Felker, 'has always been a great publication with unrealized potential.' Our author reminds us of what the *Voice* accomplished in the days when its first editor edited people, not copy, and describes how this libertarian, existential paper became one of the nation's most profitable weeklies. 'I never said I wasn't going to make changes,' Felker told his newly acquired staff. We learn of changes made and of others still to come as the *Voice* goes national.

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It was, recalls one still-depressed staffer, “a very depressing day.” Senior editor Jack Newfield had heard about it from an outsider, investigative reporter Peter Maas, the day before. Word was spreading fast. The Family had a new head, and its members set about telling one another. Staff writer Howard Blum got a phone call at Jones Beach “telling me to come back to the office instantly.” Letitia Kent, who had not written for the paper in six years, received two transatlantic telephone calls in Britain breaking the news. Nat Hentoff read about in it the *New York Post*, and “my first thought was apprehension.”

What had happened was this. First thing that morning of June 5, 1974, the principal owners of *The Village Voice*, who were Carter Burden, councilman of the City of New York, and Bartle Bull, president, Taurus Communications, called in the paper’s two founders, publisher Edwin Fancher and editor Daniel Wolf. While, Fancher recalls, Bull looked down and away, Burden apprised them of the contents of a fresh press release.

“The companies that publish *New York* magazine and *The Village Voice* today announced that they have merged,” it began, proceeding to stipulate that Bull, Wolf, and Fancher would all remain in their posts. Words of praise from Clay S. Felker, editor and publisher, *New York* magazine, leaped off the printed page at Wolf and Fancher. “In its twenty-year history, *The Village Voice* under the direction of Dan Wolf and Ed Fancher has created a proud tradition of editorial innovation, independence, and integrity in reporting and discussing the major issues of the city and country. They have assembled a unique and talented staff, which are the heart and soul of any publication. . . . We fully expect *New York* magazine and *The Village Voice* to continue to compete with each other as they have in the past.”

Ed Fancher remembers being just “stunned. I wasn’t thinking about the legal basis of it. I knew nothing about Felker, really. I’d been introduced to him at a party once, and I’d heard stories, but you can’t go by stories you get secondhand. I thought, ‘Don’t panic.’ It’s not uncommon in business mergers for there to be no loss of control, for the parent corporation just to be interested in maximizing profits.” He might as well have panicked. It was not going to be a common merger. As a result, these days he and Wolf and the other minority stockholders — one Herbert B. Lutz and one Norman Mailer — are suing Felker and Bull and Burden for \$3 million, half compensatory, half punitive.

In *The Village Voice* Clay Felker had not bought up just any “alternative weekly” of run-on, first-person, advocacy journalism, kinky classifieds, and sociopoliticocultural coverage of foreign films, Consciousness III, rock, and radical politics. He had bought *the* alternative weekly, the one that had made all the others possible, that had startled, amused, disturbed, and ultimately given a new direction to journalism. He had also bought a publication three times as old and three times as profitable as his own; in fiscal 1974

*The Village Voice* cleared \$452,000, or 10 percent, on its \$4.6 million in sales. It was the first successful paper established in New York since the *Daily News* in 1919. It was the most successful weekly newspaper in America.

The decision to publish an avant-garde, iconoclastic, bohemian weekly out of the Village was made at the beginning of 1955. Ed Fancher, the business head, was thirty, a bachelor, and a practicing psychologist; Dan Wolf was nearer to forty, married (the week the paper started), then as now manically shy (he would not be interviewed for this article). They were both Villagers. They were both veterans — Fancher a ski trooper in the Italian campaign, Wolf securing captured enemy airfields with the Army Air Corps. They met each other when they both used the GI Bill to attend the New School for Social Research. Both had dabbled in journalism — Fancher had been a columnist for an Alaskan paper before the war, Wolf had dropped out of the New School to write *Columbia Encyclopedia* articles on Greek, Roman, and Arabic philosophy and press releases for the Turkish Consulate in New York.

The idea for the paper came from Wolf, whose first premise — an international bohemian’s newspaper with a global network of stringers — Fancher toned down. In his foreword to *The Village Voice Reader*, its early-years’ (and only) anthology, Wolf wrote that the paper was “conceived as a living, breathing attempt to demolish the notion that one needs to be a professional to accomplish something in a field as purportedly technical as journalism.”

Fancher was into the beat scene and a booster of where he lived, but he knew the decision was not to be made lightly. The 1920s had seen *The New Masses*, *Bruno’s Bohemia*, and *Quill’s Weekly* fold; *Caricature* and the metropolitan area afternoon daily *PM* were recently interred. What was

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thriving in the Village, for twenty-two years already and twenty more since, was the local-news, controlled-circulation *Villager*, “Reflecting the Treasured Traditions of this Cherished Community” and the tastes of its advertising base — the entrenched blueblood business interests which controlled the neighborhood’s commercial life and had starved out the earlier, offending papers. Fancher, though, anticipated the result of the postwar building boom in the Village — an infusion of young, degreed, independent, white-collar professionals with “above-average tastes — and incomes,” an intellectual allegiance to the editorial product he would offer, and no connection to the established neighborhood forces that would be shunning it.



Fred W. McDarragh

1959: *The Voice's* founders, Edwin Fancher and Dan Wolf, in front of the paper's first home, at 22 Greenwich Avenue

The name for the paper came from Norman Mailer, whose sister, Barbara, had been a childhood friend of Wolf's wife, Rhoda. At first, he fronted \$5,000, "contributed a few bits of amateur advice" while touching up *The Deer Park* (and dedicating it to Dan Wolf, among others), and read Vol. 1, No. 1 "with the detachment of someone who had paid a nickel at a newsstand." That was not to last long. In January 1956, after tossing in another \$10,000 of seed capital, Mailer began the first of seventeen ego-tripping columns, which he abruptly stopped after publicly complaining of typos. In his last column, he said Fancher and Wolf "wish this newspaper to be more conservative, more Square — I wish it to be more Hip." (Eventually, he would keep his stock, contribute occasionally, and label the paper "probably the best-written in the United States.")

Fancher said afterwards that "if we had known anything at all about publishing we never would have started the paper." *The Village Voice* first appeared October 26, 1955, and took more than seven years, plus losses of between \$50,000 and \$60,000, to break even.

What the new paper did have were gratis contributors of the likes of cartoonist Jules Feiffer, Michael Harrington, Gilbert Seldes, William Murray of *The New Yorker*, Vance Bourjaily, Katharine Anne Porter, Alexander King, e e cummings, Allen Ginsberg, Henry Miller, Eric Bentley, Paul Goodman, Lorraine Hansberry, Steve Allen, Seymour Krim, and Nat Hentoff, all seeking a place, as Hentoff put it, "to say what I want, in the space I want to say it in, with no one looking over my shoulder."

There were other factors. The 1956-59 "revolt of the urbs" against master-builder Robert Moses' plan to bulldoze and blacktop Washington Square Park, well-played in the *Voice*, joined the paper with the audience at which Fancher had been aiming. The ad boycott ordered against the paper by Tammany boss Carmine DeSapio, a charge

Fancher made while accepting the New York State Press Association's Best Weekly Award in 1960, worked out as a blessing by making the *Voice* zero in on what Fancher called "the vacuum of small, city-wide advertising" — outlets too small for *The New Yorker* or the *Times* and overlooked by *The Villager* and the old *West Side News*. Its audience saved it overhead — and truly impressed advertisers — by buying seven out of ten copies at newsstands, for ten, then fifteen cents. It never had to carry more than 35,000-odd subscriptions. As a result, even when the cost of paper raised subscriptions to five dollars a year, it never, except for a dollar discount to college students, needed to offer the cut-rate subscriptions that temporarily beef up circulation and lure advertisers, but often increase mailing costs and aggravate deficits for little or no return.

Then, on Pearl Harbor Day 1962, Bertram Powers, head of New York Typographical Union Local No. 6, called the longest newspaper strike in Big Apple history and — unwittingly — made the *Voice* a success. Over the next six years, as Powers' union demands helped kill off four dailies, the *Voice's* readership increased eightfold: from 17,000 to 135,000.

But above and behind it all was Dan Wolf, whose most-repeated, most repeatable statement about himself was, "I have fewer certainties than other people"; about his paper, "This is a writers' paper"; about his role in that paper, "to orchestrate the obsessions of the staff." He found it "a painful business" to write editorials. Such pain, in fact, that he rarely wrote them. He took note of that vacuum once. "*The Voice*," he proclaimed, "is not primarily interested in establishing a single journalistic or political program and hewing to it. . . . Our policy . . . is to give voice to all the many divergent factions, pressure groups, attitudes, and conflicting personalities of the Village. . . ." Thus relativist, skeptical, detached Dan Wolf, without that much to say himself, editing the libertarian, eclectic, existential newspaper. Thus, the Village voices, the editorial policy of not setting editorial policy.

**T**he central generation of writers during the *Voice's* peak period were Dan Wolf's children, and their recollections of him all sound the same.

*Dan Wolf liked to think of the paper as a place of development, an experimental laboratory, a breeding and testing area for the undiscovered and untried, and it functioned as a magnet for fifty "over-the-transom" pieces each week.*

*He often hired casually, on intuition, and brought into journalism people not involved in it.* In the case of Letitia Kent, it was by a kind of default; after she had modestly submitted a piece on urban traffic problems, she recalls, "He thought I was a nut. 'You're right, you really can't write,' he said." He hired her after *The New Republic* bought the piece. Vivian Gornick was a secretary, Clark Whelton a building superintendent, Alan Weitz a Hunter College dropout, Joe Flaherty a dockworker.

*As the editor on the "writers' paper," he "edited people, not copy."* Wolf himself flatly declared that penciling

and rewriting were “not my job,” and, according to Seymour Krim, he would wait until deadline and, as “an early exponent of chance,” just lay out, strip by strip, uncut, whatever was at hand. There was no copy desk, reference room, editorial conferences, or pressure to produce, and only rare assignments. And there was virtually absolute writer’s freedom. Dan Wolf’s editing was “*pre-factum*, not *post-facto*,” in the words of staffer Alexander Cockburn, done in explanatory *tête-à-têtes* with his writers. In the Joe Flaherty simile, “He used to be locked up in this place like a priest locked in his confessional on a Saturday.” According to the universal recollection, a Father-Family relationship developed.

In the 1960s *The Village Voice* became a home for the New Politics (Jack Newfield), the New Criticism (Andrew Sarris), and the parajournalistic New Journalism (Stephanie

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Harrington, Sally Kempton). Its participatory, immediate, first-person style filtered elsewhere; in New York certainly it became (as confirmed by writers who left) a “tip sheet” for the dailies’ unreported cityside news and a leavening influence on the features of the *Times* and the *Herald-Tribune*. (When the *Times* first assigned Letitia Kent to do a piece, “I asked, ‘How do you want me to write this?’ They said, ‘Just write it like you wrote for the *Voice*.’”) Writers like Hentoff, Newfield, Sarris, Paul Cowan, Flaherty, Whelton, Gornick, Ron Rosenbaum, Howard Blum, and Robin Reisig branched into books and the major media.

The East Village migrations of 1966 gave Dan Wolf, for one thing, his favorite protégé, twenty-one-year-old Don McNeill. The self-effacing McNeill reported the emerging hippie-Yippie scene as a self-criticizing participant. After covering the police-Yippie brawl at Grand Central Station in March 1968, he filed this understatement: “They [the policemen] looked at my credentials, cursed *The Voice*, grabbed my arms from behind my back, and, joined by two others, rushed me through back towards the street, deliberately ramming my head into the closed glass door, which cracked with the impact.” Characteristically, he resisted Hentoff’s advice to “move that up to the front. That’s not self-serving,” and damned the Yippies for a “failure in planning . . . that borders on gross incompetence and irresponsibility.” Five months later, just two weeks before he was to cover the Chicago convention, McNeill drowned in a lake in upstate New York. Wolf’s editorial eulogy: “In the exhibitionist apocalypses he wrote about and lived through, he kept his privacy, his individuality, his quiet” — the Dan Wolf formula, in fact. “One cannot easily bury the dead when the dead is twenty-three.”

Letitia Kent, who shared an office with McNeill and composed his obituary, soon left the paper. “Things just weren’t the same after that,” she says. “There was this emotional confusion as to whether you were an employee or family. It became too much. And we were sorry not only to lose him but, for a lot of us who were older, to lose what we thought was our connection to the youth movement.”

The other thing the East Village scene gave Wolf was competition from further left politically and farther out socially. When Art Kunkin founded the Los Angeles *Free Press* in 1964, he consciously proclaimed an imitation of the *Voice*. Other “alternative weeklies,” using the same format, surfaced — in Philadelphia (*Different Drummer*), Detroit (*Fifth Estate*), Berkeley (*Barb*), San Francisco (*Bay Guardian*), Boston (*Phoenix, Real Paper*), New Haven, Harrisburg, Washington, D.C. Later came the national rock magazines, the “fanzines,” *Rolling Stone*, followed by *Crawdaddy*, *Fusion*, and *Zoo World*.

Dan Wolf’s paper had stood on the fringe long enough to have established precedent for proliferating new modes of publication — and established enough to come under revisionist attack or economic competition from several of them. The old Feiffer-drawn house ad of a beatnik holding a *Voice*, sipping espresso, reciting that week’s features, and clinching it with, “Then I write my letter accusing them of going Establishment” was no longer just a gag. *EVO*, the acid head *East Village Other* begun in 1965, had a third of the *Voice*’s 138,000 circulation by the end of 1969, when *Evergreen Review* published a revisionist history-to-date of the *Voice* by J. Kirk Sale. Sale concluded, “You’ve come a long way, baby, but you got stuck there,” and quoted Jeff Shero, editor of the underground humor magazine *Rat*, saying “the *Voice* has grown old, along with its readers.”

In time, all this had to pass, and did. *EVO* lost 7,000 circulation in 1970; next year, Bill Graham closed Fillmore East as the East Village idyll collapsed into a sleazy combat zone, bringing *EVO*, *Rat*, and *Evergreen* down with it. “Their fatal mistake,” Fancher thinks now, “is that they were doctrinaire — they *wanted* to be Left.” But no doubt they were at the time, along with the death of McNeill, a contributing factor to the feeling that “we were all a little tired,” as Fancher remembers — tired, and evidently determined to settle their financial future once and for all.

In early 1970, Fancher and Wolf sold control of the paper to the up-and-coming Councilman Carter Burden, and his campaign manager, liberal Wall Street lawyer Bartle Bull, who between them formed Taurus Communications (Burden the 70 percent of stock) and agreed to pay Fancher and Wolf \$3 million for 80 percent of the stock over five years, plus annual salaries of \$42,000 and \$62,000 respectively, plus possible bonuses. The two founders put themselves under five-year contracts to continue as co-publisher and editor, renewable by January 23, 1975, with, they were sure, the proviso of first purchase rights if Burden and Bull wished to sell their shares at any time. Despite Burden’s involvement in politics, “he seemed in many ways the *ideal* guy to sell to,” said Fancher. “He was nice, liberal, we liked him. And we practically never saw him again.”

The same applied to Dan Wolf, who had wanted to be retained for only three years, and who progressively removed himself from day-to-day operations, conferring new responsibilities and the line of succession on editor Ross Wetzsteon. Wetzsteon and others now did the recruiting. When the radical English journalist Alexander Cockburn came on staff in the summer of 1972, ostensibly to take charge of the *Voice's* book publishing operation, his connection was as a Bartle Bull in-law. When Phil Tracy broke in on the Albany beat, it was Mary Nichols who backed him into it, while as far as Tracy could see "Wolf had already quit. He'd just be there to have lunch, sign the paychecks, and talk." Above all, the Dan Wolf formula for rewarding his writers — "You don't have to give liberals money if you give them love," Letitia Kent put him putting it — stopped working. After two late 1971 meetings held to discuss possible unionization or other staff action, the writers got more money, but resentment remained over the fact that poverty at the paper was no longer shared.

As for Carter Burden, he once stated that his interest was not control over copy but "mere ownership of stock." That was true throughout. Even before the purchase deal, says Fancher, Burden and Bull maneuvered the price down from \$3.2 to \$3 million, and for tax-shelter purposes upped their stock control from 51 to 80 percent while paying off Fancher and Wolf in installment loans borrowed at one percentage point above going rates. This meant that for the five-year period Fancher and Wolf remained at their posts, Burden and Bull would owe not just them but the remainder of the unpaid principal.

Burden moved the paper to where it is today — University Place and East 11th Street, midway between Washington and Union Squares — and began a drive for maximum profit. But the *Voice* peaked in the 1970s; circulation scaled 150,000 in spring 1971, slipped back, and has been stuck at between 140,000 and 150,000 ever since. And it did not diversify to stimulate growth — not into international circu-

lation as Fancher envisioned at the time of the sale, not into its planned books division, not into video cassettes as once suggested by assistant publisher George Dillehay. The profit came through pricing — up to 20 cents in March 1970 and 25 cents in May 1973 (35 cents outside the city), with subscriptions \$6, then \$7, then \$8.50 a year — plus increased advertising, as the paper switched plants and printed up to 136 pages. (The previous maximum was eighty.)

**B**y the spring of 1974, Ross Wetzsteon admits, his relationship with Fancher and Wolf "started cooling off. Now Dan and Ed were intimating they wanted to stay." Carter Burden was inaccessible to either Fancher, Wolf, or the increasingly concerned staff, and Bartle Bull was wondering if "perhaps it was time for a change. The old management had put off changes. . . . You don't want the reasons, do you? I have enormous respect for them, I miss them, we got along very well. But I could foresee difficulty and they had no assurance. We hadn't settled it. It wasn't really clear."

What was clear to Fancher was that Taurus had taken out over \$700,000 of the paper's money and that there were rumors Burden was seeking to sell. "Twice we confronted him with it, and he said, 'I'm just trying to get rid of part of my holdings.'" Burden let Bull in on what was up only ten days beforehand. To the bear stock market and the credit crunch of his bank loans had been added alimony for his divorced wife, Amanda.

For a man so glibly compared to Lord Beaverbrook and Henry Luce, it is ironic that no one has ever made the connection before between Clay Felker and his *true* karma. Not any real-life no-mind, fat-cat, tight-ass reactionary, but the central character in TV's syndicated smash series *The Name of the Game* — Glenn Howard, the cool, classy, dapper, polished, upbeat, good-life, driving, swinging, socially aware, politically progressive publishing emperor



**Spring, 1968:**  
*Voice* writers Don McNeill, Sally Kempton, and Letitia Kent on their way to cover student demonstrations at Columbia University

Fred W. McDaniels

who thrives, dives, and survives, on dry wit and aggressive trading, each episode of intrigue in a world of swindlers, secret agents, and horny secretaries. Clay Felker is Glenn Howard, Glenn Howard is Clay Felker. Felker, Howard. Howard, Felker. Howard Felker. Howard Glenn. Glenn Felker. Glenn Clay, Clay Glenn. Clay Howard, Howard Clay.

ZOWIE!

“Slick?” Clay Felker repeats the big question about *New York*. “We’re not slick at all. We’ve got a *great* deal of substance and hard reporting. The reason we’re called slick is that our graphics are very sophisticated. Only *Sports Illustrated* and *People* are glossy, designed weeklies besides us.” Which is what had Clay Felker seeking an outlet just when Carter Burden was seeking an out. As he explained to a securities analysts’ conference in November, between a tripling of paper costs in five years and the chilling effect of U.S. postal rates, he anticipated that *New York’s* glossy, weekly book and strictly localized base would go just so far. It was time to diversify, to go national. To become Glenn Howard.

**S**peculative stockholder Edwin Fancher, for one, believes that *New York’s* fast boom is collapsible and that its ten-cent stock dividend for 1974 was possible not through its own growth but rather by absorption of the *Voice*. But Felker, who insists the dividends would have paid off the same regardless, does not deny that, successful as it is, his magazine’s profits are still made in the spring and fall quarters, to be hedged against winter and summer operating losses. And he has tried to expand nationally before — the *Voice* deal was swung only after negotiations to buy *Los Angeles* magazine fell through. What Felker did was to apply basic corporate methods against the slowdown he saw naturally coming to *New York*: capture or create new markets with subsidiaries, stimulate new demand with diversification. The *Voice*, a small, Family business facing the same slowdown, expanded its product with a thicker tabloid and its profitability with higher rates, but not its market; and while Fancher and Wolf continued to discuss expansion, Felker expanded.

Edwin Fancher considered *New York* magazine “part of our competition,” not just for the 36 percent of his readers who read them both, but also because “he [Felker] tried to hire some of our writers” and mostly because of the “self-promotion” by Tom Wolfe and *New York* as founders of the New Journalism. (“The Boswell of the boutiques,” Newfield called Wolfe.) On one thing there was no dispute — *New York*, per Clay Felker’s credo “I edit by what interests me” and his hiring preferences of staff editors and free-lance writers, was just the opposite of a “writers’ newspaper.”

Clay Felker says he bought the *Voice* “both as a business investment and as an editorial opportunity. It had very exciting potential. I could have bought a lot of things, but they wouldn’t have been as interesting or exciting.” Negotiations began when he heard “Burden was looking to sell it,” and lasted six weeks, through the spring of 1974 while *New York’s* management urged the staff not to talk. Hands were

shaken on it at 10:00 P.M. Tuesday, June 4, lawyers spent all night drawing up a contract, and then “it hit us like a ton of bricks” the next morning, according to Fancher. Officially, it was an exchange of stock, not a sale. Taurus Communications retained its identity as a wholly owned subsidiary in a reorganized New York Magazine Company, which would absorb Taurus’s \$2.5 million in debts, fulfill its obligations to Wolf and Fancher, and seat Carter Burden as board vice-chairman. Burden and Bull received \$800,000 plus 600,000 shares of stock (34 percent outright control, compared to Felker’s 9 percent). Total price tag, including stock: \$5 million.

That was not all. Felker, Burden, and Bull agreed to vote their shares together for the election of directors — one designated by Felker, three by Burden — effectively eliminating the possibility that either party could engineer a coup against the other. Two weeks before the merger, *New York’s* incorporation charter was amended to permit the issue of new stock; it now made cash loans for \$2 shares to Felker (\$150,000 for 75,000 shares) and his design director Milton Glaser (\$50,000 and 25,000). The two men do not need to register the stock under the 1933 Securities Act now, and can require its repurchase for \$1.75 a share in January 1980. And then Clay Felker raised his salary: from \$80,000 a year to \$120,000.

From uptown, he issued soothing statements, but privately “I had a number of changes in mind. The *Voice*, to me, has always been a great publication with unrealized potential.” Though he knew that making his changes would mean conflict with Dan Wolf and Ed Fancher, “I hoped against hope, against reality, that we’d be able to continue to work with them.” It was instead against a possible walk-out by the staff, whose assembly he cited as Dan Wolf’s greatest achievement, that he made contingency planning. “I’m glad it didn’t happen, but I wasn’t helpless. We’d have just put the paper out from here and hired a whole new

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**‘The Dan Wolf formula  
for rewarding his writers —  
you don’t have to give liberals money  
if you give them love —  
stopped working’**

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staff.” But first Carter Burden talked to the staff, solving one important problem for him. Nobody blamed Clay Felker for anything that happened after that.

“For a sycophant such as myself,” wrote Alexander Cockburn in his “Press Clips” column about the announced merger, “there is something dizzying yet exhilarating at the thought of so many new asses to kiss” — and he thought up appropriate story ideas for the new *Voice*: “Recipes of the 10 Worst Bisexual Judges, How Jews Talk to Their Gay Plants, the 50 Lowest Salaries in New York, Best Dog Runs, Renovate Your Brownstone Into a Welfare Hotel.” He now says he was kidding, but others in the Family, concerned about things like the power people such as labor

mediator Ted Kheel had in the new regime (Kheel had threatened a libel suit over a *Voice* story about him some months before), began to gather in disorganized clusters.

Burden met with the staff in Mary Perot Nichols' LaGuardia Place apartment that weekend, where, Howard Blum says point-blank, "Carter Burden lied and lied repeatedly." Various, he is quoted as implying that he and Bull could blunt Felker's moves in the new regime and that Fancher and Wolf asked him to make the deal. He carefully recited both his own financial woes and the details of just how rich Fancher and Wolf had been getting. Above all, Burden, whose office spurned all requests for an interview, is remembered swearing, "I care as fucking much about the *Voice* as Dan or Ed," putting their retention on a "see-if-we-can-work-together" basis of "chemistry." (In a statement drawn up at press time, Burden contends that he "never asserted or implied at any time that Wolf and Fancher asked me to make the deal," and he amplified at length on the essence of the other quotes attributed to him. "If I am a liar," he said, "because Felker has not been blunted as a matter of principle, and I am therefore a liar to Mr. Blum, so be it. I will leave the *macho* to him and worry about financial clout when I feel it's necessary.")

Clay Felker came down June 20, and straightened everybody out: "I never said I wasn't going to make changes." He made it clear he was boss, and that no boss would "give away" his prerogatives regarding any new contract for Fancher and Wolf. He, too, would "wait and see." Meanwhile, no one on the staff was going to be fired. Howard Blum recalls that when Burden began to remind the staff what he had said about his and Bull's using stock against Felker if they had to, "Felker just leaned over and said, 'Don't mislead them, Carter.'"

"Felker had every right to do what he did," Blum goes on to say. "He never lied to us, didn't try to fool us. But we never saw Carter Burden after that, and it reminded me of Fitzgerald, how at the end of *Gatsby* he says Tom and Daisy break up things and retreat into their vast carelessness."

Fancher would insist later on, "There haven't been any fights between us," but Nat Hentoff saw Fancher-Wolf-Felker meetings in progress over the next two weeks, "and there was general griping, the sort that saps energy. How many captains can you have?" he says, and felt what happened next was inevitable.

On Saturday, July 6, Ross Wetzsteon, whose summer place in East Hampton was near Felker's, got a call inviting him to lunch. "Lunch lasted seven hours," as he reconstructs it. Milton Glaser was there, and *New York* writers Aaron Latham and Gail Sheehy. "Felker asked me what did I think about the *Voice*, and I told him. There was no conversation about replacing anybody." Late Tuesday night July 9, they got together again at Felker's request, and "he told me 'I'd like to read you a press release.' It began that Clay Felker just announced he has asked Dan Wolf and Ed Fancher to remain as consultants and that Ross Wetzsteon would assume the duties of editor. . . ." It was news Felker had given Wolf earlier that evening over drinks.

One thing Dan Wolf and Ed Fancher did not do was any consulting. Instead, Fancher's public statement on returning



Fred W. McDarrah

March 13, 1970: Fancher, Wolf and lawyer Bartle Bull in front of the building into which new owners Carter Burden and Bull moved the *Voice*

from out of town noted that he and his partner had planned on going "but not so soon and not this way" and that "we really haven't made any decision" on possible lawsuits. Another thing they did not do was ask the staff to walk out in solidarity, which saved face all around since even their harshest loyalists inside the Family admit that they could not have solved "the dilemma" of loyalty to "my friends Dan and Ed" by losing the job, the audience, and the perch the paper offered them. Plus, the Family was divided — newer writers not committed to Wolf, ones still smoldering about money, or older ones who saw the synthesis of it all, like Flaherty, who translated *Realpolitik* into streetese for everyone: "You sold the fucking candy store."

The announcement, but not the reasons for it, was in the next issue, with a "staff statement" and a little comment from Cockburn. Other than that, nothing. A committee to guarantee the paper's independence and integrity met twice. On July 22, Clay Felker raised base writers' pay from \$225 to \$300 a week and the going article rate from \$125 to \$200. There were no resignations.

On August 14 Felker wrote attorneys for Wolf and Fancher that it was not "an appropriate time . . . to make an offer to purchase" their stock. Eight days later their names were off the masthead. Four weeks later, Fancher and Wolf and Mailer and Lutz, 20 percent of the stock among them, filed suit in New York State Supreme Court. The defendants: *New York*, the *Voice*, Taurus, Felker, Burden, Bull. The charges: "Willfully and knowingly interfered with and violated plaintiffs' contractual rights," "actions not in the best interests of the *Voice*," "breach of

fiduciary duty” and written “shareholder’s agreement.” The particulars: Felker out of personal gain was seeking to enhance *New York’s* competitive position at the expense of the *Voice*; Burden and Bull got a “premium” price for their stock; Fancher and Wolf were not given the required first pass at it; “substantial” sums of *Voice* money had been advanced without proper authority, including the more than \$700,000 mentioned earlier. Nowhere do plaintiffs say they would have bought the paper if approached, nor do they ask that control be returned to them. All they ask for is what they already have — money, the flow of which the defendant directors shut off when they terminated their salaries on October 7. So on January 23, 1975, the day their contracts were to have expired or been renewed, two weeks after the 1,000th issue, Fancher and Wolf were in the midst of making depositions for discovery proceedings.

**C**lay Felker says he didn’t even consider anyone besides Ross Wetzsteon to replace Dan Wolf after he fired him. The night he did, Ross Wetzsteon says, “I said, ‘Thank you very much for your confidence.’ Obviously, at that point if I had decided I didn’t want it, he could have recalled it . . .” But Ross Wetzsteon did want it.

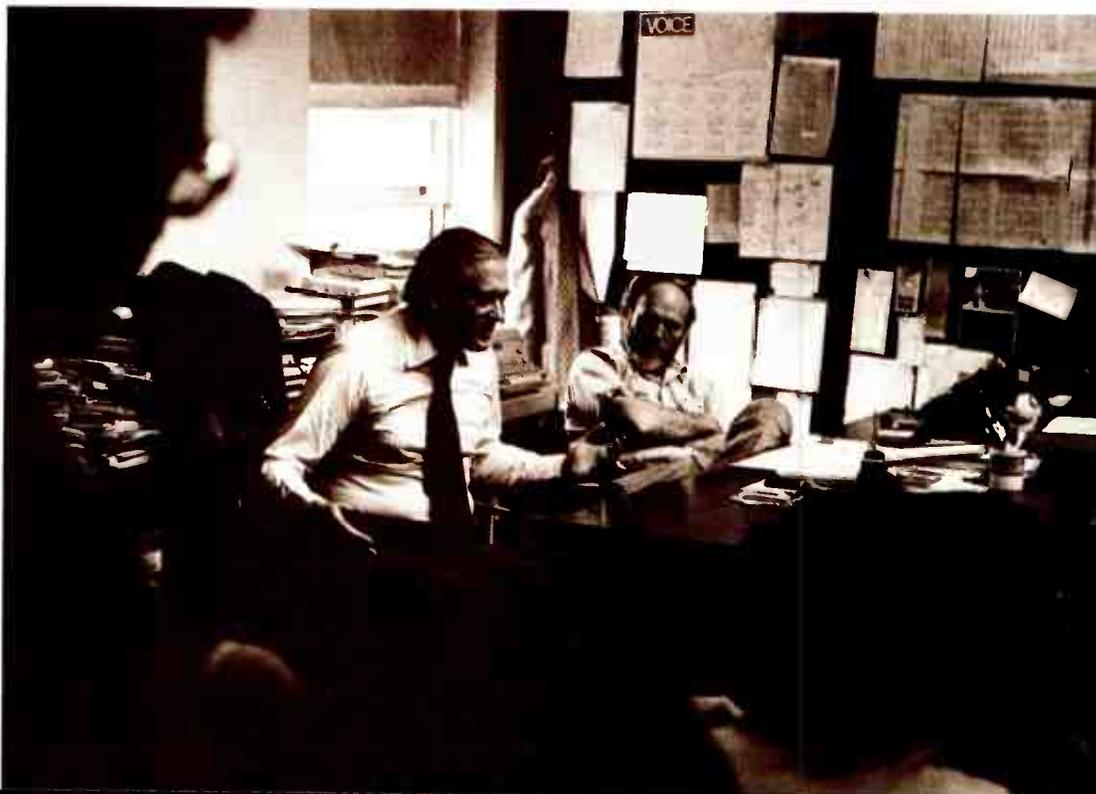
Ross Wetzsteon followed a six-year Army hitch with free-lancing for men’s magazines (*Cavalier*, *Playboy*), proofreading, writing, and editing for the *Voice* and now, at forty-two, “a major editorial position in a major national publication.” Recommending him for it are his skill at handling copy, his unflappability (informed by Mary Breasted that a writer would be unable to meet deadline due to his tripping on mescaline, she recalls he reacted, “Is that all?”), his First Amendment politics. But this low-key man also finds himself “in a high-pressure business.” Though one translation is available saying he ferried information on staff meetings to Felker and lobbied for Dan Wolf’s job, the consensus of staff who talk is affection and regard mixed with doubt that he can handle Felker by himself. “He never

questions why,” Howard Blum notices. “I’ve been with Felker, and if you go back at him and he can’t explain something he backs down. I think Ross just says ‘yes,’ not realizing that you don’t have to say ‘no,’ you can say ‘perhaps’ or ‘maybe this.’ Of course, Felker’s got a zero-to-sixty temper, and you can’t be worried about keeping your job or feeding your family. You’ve got to put it up to the Fates.”

Wetzsteon demurs. “Look, I think the *Voice* is worth fighting for. I’d love to stay, but I wouldn’t be shattered if I had to go. The point is that I could easily get into a shouting match and get brownie points on the fourth floor, but I have a very good working relationship with Clay Felker. He’s not monolithic, and he’s learning more and more about the *Voice* every day. I’m very optimistic.” But the further into our interviews, the more this accommodating Prufrock played defense, overestimating the animus toward him from the staff and his leverage with Clay Felker. By way of indicating his power around the office, he used as an example his hiring as art director Gil Eisner, who, interviewed next day, stated that not only was it Felker who hired him but that he first met Ross Wetzsteon on his first day of work. Ultimately, in March, Felker, who spends an estimated quarter of his executive time on *Voice* matters and makes two regular weekly visits — for Wednesday afternoon staff meetings and a look on Monday afternoons at page one — put an end to the pretense and put himself at the top of a redesigned logo as “editor-in-chief.”

The one thing Wetzsteon did get to do was fire editor Diane Fisher, something which for years he had wanted to do. For years she had been responsible — and been held responsible — for much of what passed for the paper’s graphics and layout. Every other move was Felker’s — Milton Glaser for a redesign; Judy Daniels of *New York* in as managing editor with her own team of assistants; Richard Goldstein, rejoining the paper he had left, back in as senior editor with Nichols and Newfield (later followed by *New*

**June 20, 1974:**  
Two weeks after his takeover, Clay Felker addresses *Voice* staffers, with Fancher at his side



Fred W. McDarragh

York's book critic Eliot Fremont-Smith); Robert Christgau brought back as rock critic; Alan Weitz made associate editor. On Newfield's advice, Felker hired Pete Hamill when he quit the *New York Post*. To inaugurate the national connection, Jon Carroll became the West Coast editor; Select Magazines, *New York's* distributor, took on the *Voice* account; and a national ad-sales staff was put together. At the executive level, Steve Blacker, associate publisher for marketing, and circulation director David Shanks were brought in; and publisher Bartle Bull, occupying a position of debatable power, had his offices brought down two stories.

**F**or the staff, Clay Felker has walked every extra mile so far. He has raised everyone, fired no one, and never hired, despite constant rumors. *Rolling Stone's* deposed managing editor John Walsh. He has apparently accommodated himself to getting backtalk and not always getting his way ("Sometimes I think my function at the meetings is to be cheeky with Clay," claims Robert Christgau. "What does he say? Oh, hell, I don't remember, and I wouldn't tell you if I did.") He has not killed or censored any writers' stories, defining as his own role "to back the staff to the hilt — legally, financially, and socially." Felker has always been that way, but the *Voice* quickly gave him a couple of litmus tests to pass. To the pending eleven lawsuits involving the paper he soon added his own, then one by Dorothy Schiff seeking \$500,000 against Newfield and Cockburn for their comments on the departure of *Post* reporter Al Aronowitz. While *Voice* lawyers began settling that one out of court, Mary Nichols opened up another front in her October 3 "Runnin' Scared" column against oil baron John Shaheen, would-be publisher of a P.M. daily, wondering "When is the *New York Press* ever going to get off the ground?" and charging him with "strong intimations of anti-Semitism." Felker got a full-page paid ad threatening libel action, but there was none, and the *Voice* went ahead with an in-depth

profile of Shaheen in December despite his attempt at an injunction in Chicago federal court. Thus, even someone as skeptical as Nat Hentoff has reached a *modus vivendi* with Felker, and it is agreed among the writers that he has improved the look of the paper they write in. Says Geoff Stokes, "It's clearer, easier-to-read, better-edited. Look at the *Voice* music section over the last year and it looks like a very good high-school paper."

But, Stokes also says, "I think Clay's personality will inevitably impress itself on the *Voice*. He was attracted to it because it was a free-wheeling newspaper, and it's precisely that attitude of free-wheelingness which he presently threatens." Stokes, covering Albany, is happily out of "the politics of it all," but from among what Joe Flaherty calls "the Politburo" run unhappy crosscurrents at the symptoms of Felkerization — flashy covers, "trendiness," gossip and a "chi-chi" tone, the paranoid theory that Felker bought the paper to ruin it and the plausible one that it "will cease to exist" as is when its demographics are expanded "and bent out of shape." It comes down to Clay Felker himself. He holds conferences. He suggests ideas. He gives assignments. He applies a pressure to produce. In a paper which never did that, articles have been cut to space, sometimes awkwardly, always traumatically.

In some sectors of a staff which never operated that way, the new behavior patterns have not gone down. "I never got the feeling the *Voice* was trying to sell itself before," says one staff member. "It was obvious from the first Clay had no idea what the *Voice* was. We're basically not his kind of people. There's a cultural difference. He's going to mold the *Voice* into *New York* magazine — superficial, less substance, very successful. The cost will be the quality of the paper."

Andrew Sarris became the first to go public with those fears in his Christmas week column, which referred to the firing of his fellow movie critic, Stuart Byron, by the *Real Paper* and then got to the point. "Byron insists on covering



**June 20, 1974:**

*Standing, from left to right: Bartle Bull, assistant publisher George Dillehay, Carter Burden, Dan Wolf; seated between Burden and Wolf, new editor Ross Wetzstein*

Fred W. McDarragh

the beat . . . Unfortunately, most publishers and editors prefer the scene to the beat. What they don't realize is that a beat well-covered eventually becomes the scene. . . . As the editor of the movie department at the *Voice*, I must report that the scene is beginning to squeeze the beat."

The new look is more and more a *New York* look, one embarrassing cover displaying a fey, divine-deco drag royalty couple under the all-caps head PARTYING OUR WAY TO HARD TIMES. The new cartooning by Edward Sorel has been brilliant; but in the centerfold new drawers Stan Mack, Clarence Brown, and Jan Faust are derivative of R. Crumb on his worst days. And, in a publication otherwise converting to magazine aesthetics, the *Voice* has moved its "What's On" culture calendar from the back cover to the centerfold, forcing the loyal, in-one-sitting reader to either start with the end of Sarris's and other critics' articles or use mirrors.

Felker's business record has been as brilliant as his journalistic; at his level of venture capitalism, however, it takes just one mistake. The chances of a Burden coup against him are highly overrated. But to get up the cash for the merger Felker sold off, for \$1.7 million, a Tarrytown, New York, conference center, euphemistically stating his company's intentions to divest all its non-journalism properties. The center generated five of the company's thirty-six-cent-per-share earnings in 1973, and the chance that he may have given up too much to get what he got is only one of the risks. The simple fact is that Clay Felker needed to expand and go national; *The Village Voice* did not. For the changes he has made and the plans he has, a new publication could have done as nicely — but would also have involved initial red ink. And for all his misgivings about slick, localized, weekly magazines, his eyes were on *Los Angeles* when the *Voice* was put on the block before him.

The goals are a 250,000 circulation and a September appearance for the "national" *Voice*, in the form of stripped-and-replated inside pages for the regions. Felker talks confidently about *Voice* competition — which to him is, at various levels, the New York dailies, the alternatives, or *Time-Newsweek-New Yorker-Cue*. Not he, nor anyone in his organization, will speak seriously about the possibility of competition between a "national" *Voice* and *Rolling Stone* — except to dismiss it. This could be a dangerous crock to carry around, since *Stone* only happens to be the most successful biweekly in the U.S. Founded as a foldout fanzine by Jann Wenner in December 1967, today the tabloid ranges far afield into general culture and national politics. Any "national" *Village Voice* will be contesting *Stone* for writers, readers, and advertisers. And, for a fact, the post-Felker arrivals of Hamill, Goldstein, and Christgau, by complementing the *Voice*'s content in precisely those pop/rock/politics areas where it was weak before in relation to *Stone*, could certainly be construed as reinforcements.

But if the *Voice* has the better pilots, *Stone* has the better plane, and expansion may just warp the *Voice*'s unique profit structure. As its Manhattan slant goes, so could up to 44 percent of its readership. Seventy-seven of every 100 readers have bought it off the streets; mounting out-of-town

circulation drives will incur costs for trucking, mailing, and distribution, ending the exemptions from such overhead it has always enjoyed. Pursuit of national advertising will tend to price out its original ad base of local shops and leave them open to solicitation by Lower Manhattan's increasingly active *Soho Weekly News*.

All around, Felker has upped the ante. In advertising. In subscriptions — \$8.50 to \$15 in one jump. On the street — from twenty-five cents to thirty-five to fifty in two jumps, August and December. And into his new property he has plowed, by his own count, between \$400,000 and \$500,000. "We've gotten it back already," he insists. "We're selling at exactly the same level." The statement, translated backwards, means that after eight months, circulation is doing just what it did at half the price — hovering around 140,000 — recovering Felker's investment, but generating zero extra growth. This hardly means Clay Felker will fail with *The Village Voice*, but it does mean that to achieve his kind of success the *Voice* may have to become a different paper with the same name. The only thing to prevent that now would be losing the lawsuit for the full award, leading to bankruptcy and a resale back to Fancher and Wolf. Probably no one appreciates the remoteness of all that more than Ed Fancher, as he sits in his apartment, deferring the question reluctantly and leaving the impression that someday, after the discovery proceedings and the year's docket countdown and the trial, it would be nice to start a paper again.

Joe Flaherty is philosophical about his loyalties to Fancher and Wolf at this point. "I'm happy they got that money. They grew the paper out of nothing, started it, ended up reaping financial rewards. Dan should be a very contented man. He had something, a plan, and saw it come true in his lifetime. A lot of people have a dream, but they die first or it fails. And look at what was started here — the launching pad for guys like Newfield, me, Rosenbaum, Truscott, Blum, Tracy, and before us guys like Hentoff. It was the best school for young writers there is."

This, the latest chapter in *The Village Voice* saga, is an old story. The same conditions in journalism ended epochs the same way: at *Saturday Review* when Norman Cousins fell before entrepreneurs John Veronis and Nicholas Charney; at *SR* again when Cousins moved right back in after their collapse; at *The New Republic* when Gilbert Harrison sold control to Martin Peretz (who insisted the transition meant no tampering with *TNR*'s traditions) and then, within a year, prematurely "retired" in the middle of aggressive design and marketing changes by the activist millionaire. It can be seen as a capitalist fable — Ed Fancher and Dan Wolf as Mustache Petes pushed out by sophisticated techniques and modern times, as small family businessmen and first-generation entrepreneurs absorbed into the investment portfolio of growth capitalists.

Once, Nat Hentoff says, as he walked in Sheridan Square at night, he saw publisher Fancher through the *Voice* window pasting up his ad section for that week.

But things did not stay that way.

And they are not that way now. ■

# These Faces Make The News... In The Pages Of The New Republic!



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WALTER PINCUS



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STANLEY KARNOW



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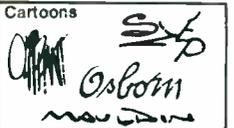
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# BOOKS

## Hidden targets

### Before the Fall: an inside view of the pre-Watergate White House

By William Safire. Doubleday. \$12.50

At the core of Watergate was a heavy layer of banality, in its own way fully as terrifying as the assault of the CREEP conspirators on traditional constitutional processes. If this episode in our history is ever dramatized, the appropriate orchestration would be drawn not from *Götterdämmerung* but from a TV jingle plugging toothpaste.

The goal of the participants was market saturation — an effort to drive competing political wares off the retail shelves. The language of the principals was drawn straight from the lower depths of advertising — “productive,” “counterproductive,” “staffed out,” “PR-wise,” and “inoperative.” Massive resources were committed to trivial ends. And the political commandos who burgled the Democratic National Committee headquarters resembled SMERSH far less than Keystone Kops without the saving grace of humor.

In this context, William Safire sheds invaluable light on the Watergate debacle. He has no new facts of any consequence. His psychological analysis of the leading characters is not particularly profound. But his detailed account of daily life in the White House presents one of the best pictures yet drawn of second-rate men treating the president as a commodity to be promoted through the modern methods of mass marketing.

It is doubtful whether Safire intended his book to turn out that way. More likely, it began just as he himself describes it — an effort to produce memoirs that would be “sympathetic but not sycophantic.” But his motives are irrelevant. Safire was a squirrel who collected into himself every scrap of paper that passed through his hands dur-

ing the White House years. He took copious notes of every meeting which he attended and not a single offbeat incident escaped his obviously quick eye. When he finally sat down to his typewriter, he had a mountainous mass of material which streamed on to the paper with a will and shape of its own.

What emerges is a conglomeration of trivialities, none of which, taken individually, can cause more than a flicker of amusement. In their totality, however, they become an absorbing presentation of the ambience of the White House — an atmosphere in which an obsession with trivialities affected even the most important decisions. For example, the invasion of Cambodia was followed almost immediately by a staff “game plan to sell the making of a decision” — which, translated into English, meant a concerted effort to portray Nixon in the press as a man who made all decisions in a “cool, calm, rational and very Nixon-like way.” (The latter quote was taken from a “poop sheet” passed out to staffers “who talked with people.”)

Perhaps the most revealing line in the book is one which is the easiest to miss. It occurs in the chapter on “The New Federalism,” where Safire discusses the tendency of the heavyweight thinkers — Pat Moynihan, Arthur Burns, and George Shultz — to pull in different directions. “Oddly, however,” the author comments, “the speechwriters could guess about 85 percent of the time which way the President would decide on any major domestic decision.” There is nothing “odd” about this at all. Mr. Nixon was not the first president who made his decisions on the basis of speech drafts sent to him, and I doubt that he will be the last. In the modern world, the ghostwriter is fully as influential an adviser as the philosopher.

Safire’s view of Washington is limited to the Nixon administration. There-

fore, he is unaware — or seems to be unaware — of the broader implications of his book. The White House that he describes is essentially a further development of trends which have characterized the modern presidency for the past few administrations. Any presidential assistant of those years could find his place at once within the pattern of Mr. Nixon’s establishment, even though he might well have problems with White House politics.

The parallels are striking. Safire’s “one-liners” produced for Mr. Nixon to drop casually in conversation or “ad-lib” in speeches recall the “tidbits” written by a perspiring assistant and rushed out to Lyndon B. Johnson as he led reporters around the South Lawn. The “PR group,” formed to “think about issues and projects that did not require a daily deadline,” had its counterparts in the Kennedy administration. The conscious management of important events so they would not compete with each other for headline space had its roots in the Eisenhower years.

**T**here is a tendency on the part of many commentators to dismiss such matters as inconsequential. It would be unfortunate if Safire’s book is disregarded on such grounds. The style of the White House determines its appearance to the American people, and if the style is dictated by PR, the appearance will be that of an ad agency. The latter is well designed to sell advertising, but when introduced to government produces little other than distrust.

It is doubtful whether Safire would agree with this point. He is a competent public-relations practitioner and his argument is not with the merchandising of the presidency but with the bad PR that was employed in the process. The men in charge were clumsy and primitive in their approach. They did not understand the press or even the elementary

methods of persuasion. Therefore, in his view, they kept from the public the warmth and humanity that he believes were part of Nixon's character and permitted nothing but the uglier sides to show.

Safire himself is obviously not clumsy or primitive. He gives an excellent demonstration of professional PR in his discussion of Mr. Nixon's character. Too astute to deny the obvious, he concedes almost at the outset the darker aspects of his ex-client's psyche — the unnecessary pugnacity, the meanness, the self-pity, the hatred of so many who disagree with him. He pins the responsibility for Watergate squarely upon the president. Having thus established credibility, Safire is then in a position to speak of the other side of the coin, of the qualities that *he* saw: progressivism, courage, realism, and intellectuality.

As an apologia for Mr. Nixon, it is superb — probably the best that can be done at this time. It is unlikely to change very many contemporary minds, but if there is a future shift in the public perception of the ex-president, it will almost certainly run along the lines laid out by Safire. He knows how to present a man as a giant with an Achilles heel — and he does it in a way that arouses sympathy no matter what the giant has done.

Throughout the book, Safire describes himself as a "centrist," and his philosophy is apparent in his discussion of his fellow staff members. He carefully balances virtues and demerits on page after page to the point of monotony. Only Jeb Magruder, whom he describes as "eager, harried, confident, optimistic and usually over his head," is pictured as totally without redeeming qualities.

Haldeman was a "patriot," a "faithful Horatio," and a loyal follower. He was also a "hater," a drill sergeant, and overly organized. Ehrlichman started



Edward Sorel

out as a "martinet" but became a "man of balance and compassion" and "the 'closet liberal' on many matters" — and then fell victim to the forces of enmity. Mitchell was something of an "elder statesman" and comes off in Safire's view as a hero who took the "rap" without flinching. Kissinger was an extraordinarily subtle man with an extraordinary ego who had some tendencies to overshadow the president. (He also was responsible for tapping some White House phones — an act that Safire, whose own phone was tapped, does not forgive.)

The picture has some of the flavor of a standard press release, although it is interlaced with entertaining anecdotes and quips from Moynihan and Kissinger that make good reading. But this may well be due to Safire's realization that the staff, however important collectively, consists of individuals who are interchangeable. The central focus of the White House remains the president, and those who serve him are in the mansion only because he wants them there.

Actually, the book suffers from Safire's efforts to analyze the staff members as individuals. He is much more readable when he merely describes what they did — and how they reacted to each other. When he plunges into character, he leaves an impression of an author groping for words because he is obliged to put something on paper. After all, this is an "insider's" book and he must acknowledge the existence of others who helped him shape history.

Safire's problem in this respect is that he has not made a clean break from the psychological milieu of the White House assistant. He recognizes the fact that things went wrong and he is not blind to the implications of Watergate. But he has not shaken free from the assumptions that held the Nixon staff together. This is particularly clear in his discussion of the press.

He has swallowed whole the claim that "no man has been so publicly despised over a span of an entire generation, with the attack led by the press. . . ." Nixon, of course, was not a press favorite. But I hope that some day Safire will be privileged to attend a meeting in

that section of Valhalla where the wraiths of departed presidents gather daily so each can argue his claim of having been the most maligned individual in the history of journalism. Where reporters are concerned, paranoia has been the thread that has bound all chief executives together.

As a preeminently sensible man, Safire does not regard press enmity as a justification for the poor press relations of the Nixon White House. He describes with lucidity the "us" and "them" psychology of the staff assistants; he chronicles on a point-by-point basis the illogical reactions to stories regarded as unfavorable; he scoffs at the mentality which assigned a dozen aides to be "color reporters" equipped with forms for recording the president's lighter moments — the forms to be passed on to "disseminators." At heart, however, Safire still believes that there was something unfair in the treatment of his principal by reporters. He is reacting not against the PR-oriented strategy of Nixon's White House but against the tactics used to pursue that strategy.

It is also obvious that Safire still feels some of the loyalties he developed as a Nixon aide. This is apparent not only in the tone of the book but in the feud that has erupted between him and Kissinger since publication. Many connoisseurs of Palace Guard infighting attribute the antagonism to resentment over the wiretapping episode. More likely, it is Safire's reaction to what Nixon courtiers regard as an unforgiveable sin: Kissinger's efforts to portray President Ford as more competent in the field of foreign relations than his predecessor.

Safire's ambivalence creates a curious tone throughout. At times, the book seems unreasonably disconnected and at other times excessively bland. But never does it appear to be hack work — not even in the bathetic recounting of the tearful scenes that preceded Mr. Nixon's departure from the White House. Somehow they are appropriate to the ex-president's career.

But whatever the tone, it does not detract from the book's value. *Before the Fall* remains a valuable case study of

the merchandised presidency and, on that basis, deserves to be read. If indeed Safire doesn't fulfill his original intentions, he has nevertheless hit a target far larger and more important. The nation has survived Watergate just as it survived the five-percenters, Teapot Dome, and the railroad land-grant scandals. Whether it can survive a choreographed White House is still an open question.

A democracy cannot function well when its people are disillusioned not just with a specific set of leaders but with all leaders. The signs of disillusionment in our nation today are visible to all but the blind and the deaf. It is not just that we lack men and women who inspire nationwide confidence; it is that we have only the faintest glimmering of hope that such men and women can be found. Generally, this situation is attributed directly to the scandals of the Nixon administration, but that explanation is much too simplistic. The cynicism that is bred by scandal usually evaporates when the rascals are thrown out. We have thrown out the rascals and the cynicism remains.

The specific misdeeds of the CREEP conspirators were peculiar to the Nixon White House and cannot fairly be attributed to other administrations. The concept of a president as a commodity to be distributed through mass markets, however, has been widespread for many years. It had its fascinations when the techniques were new because novelty is always fascinating. But the methods could not be repeated many times without the presidency becoming indistinguishable from a bottle of aspirin.

The politics of banality leads to government of banality, which, in turn, leads to constituencies of distrust. The merchandised presidency, which most of us have come to take for granted, is the foundation for the entire syndrome. Safire, perhaps unwittingly, has laid bare the anatomy of political merchandising for our inspection. I wish him well.

GEORGE E. REEDY

*George E. Reedy, former White House press secretary in the Johnson administration, is Dean of Journalism at Marquette University.*

## Tall tales and true

### Rumors, Race and Riots

By Terry Ann Knopf. Transaction Books.  
\$10.95

In July 1968 *The New York Times* reported a shoot-out between blacks and police in Cleveland. "It marks perhaps the first documented case in recent history," went the story, "of black, armed, and organized violence against the police." That account, as described in Terry Ann Knopf's nicely presented study of rumor's role in racial disturbance, also marked another instance of erroneous conclusion-leaping by a reporter who let invented information and perhaps his biases get the better of him in a heated situation. (Later the *Times* recanted its assessment and took part in an investigation that showed the battle was more likely spontaneous and precipitated by a series of provocative police actions.)

The media, writes Knopf, like the rest of society, continually fall prey to destructive rumor, and the best way to foil the beast is to understand what it is and how it works. Her book is a careful explanation of the nature and causes of rumor-mongering — the emotional fomenting of baseless or distorted stories and, often, the editorial conjecture that follows — and how rumor has contributed to — in some cases sparked — outbursts of race-related violence from the great East St. Louis and Detroit riots of 1917 and 1943 and those in many cities during the sixties to smaller but equally bloody incidents such as Attica. Her conclusions about the media are disturbing. When called upon to sift substantiated fact from tall tales and exert themselves as authoritative, calming sources of untainted information, most journalists are incapable of shaking themselves free of preconceived notions and usually wind up, mainly out of confusion and rote reaction, championing white attitudes over black.

Knopf's lessons are scholarly and well-documented. She describes three roots of rumor: the psychological, or rumor used as a self-defense mechanism to relieve guilt, anxiety, or hostility; the

functional, involving an unusual and unexpected event, such as an assassination, where rumor-prone ambiguity is created by an immediate, unsatisfied need for news that the media haven't had time to gather and evaluate (making it tempting for the media themselves to entertain whatever rumors arise); and the conspiratorial, referring to maliciously contrived rumor, such as the attribution of racial slurs to Senator Muskie during the 1972 New Hampshire primary. Knopf then details her own theory, called "the process model," which depicts rumor as a complicated societal phenomenon linked to rigid social structure, racist ideology, a hostile belief system ("blacks are naturally violent"; "the police frequently abuse their power"); and conditions of stress.

Finally, she applies her process model to the disorders of the sixties, an era of racial mayhem which, like its forerunners, was reported "impulsively, if not automatically" according to the "white version of events." Consistently journalists became victims of their own white makeup, presenting rumor as fact — "especially those emanating from the white community" — passing them along without corroboration, tinkering with them so that they bolstered preset editorial positions, surrendering to their own concept of the black stereotype and compulsion to titillate a receptive public with sensationalized reporting.

The book offers few solutions beyond increased self-vigilance against rumor and broader-based attitudes (Knopf does pin some hope on the sensitivities of the underground press, or what is left of it, an enlightened force on most occasions, to be sure, but hardly immune to its own rumor slinging), but that in no way dilutes its importance. The treatment is not a little text-bookish, but for journalists interested in learning how rumor derives and invades, and how easily they can be swept along willingly or not, sitting through Knopf's clinical reasoning is definitely worthwhile.

PETER NICHOLS

*Peter Nichols is associate editor of the Review.*

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# LETTERS

## The morality of leaks

TO THE REVIEW:

One of the great psychological tools of journalists, especially among competing investigative reporters, is a tendency to attribute your own success to persistent digging, and that of your colleagues to "leaks."

In his piece on "Exposing the CIA (Again)" in the March/April issue of *CJR*, Laurence Stern states that the minority staff of the Senate Watergate committee was industriously trying to leak documents detailing President Johnson's use of the FBI to spy on political enemies. In the next sentence he notes that "the *Chicago Tribune* and the Scripps-Howard newspapers did run stories on the 1964 episodes." The implication is clear. But the facts are these: during his testimony before the Watergate committee in June 1973, John Dean turned over to the committee an exhibit to his testimony which the committee refused to make public and promptly hid away in a committee safe. It was shown only to Committee Chairman Sam Ervin, Co-Chairman Howard Baker, Counsel Sam Dash and Minority Counsel Fred Thompson. If any of these men ever leaked the contents of this document, it was not to the *Tribune*. In fact, all four repeatedly refused to discuss it.

It was later learned from Dean's attorneys that the document in question had actually been written by William Sullivan, former assistant director of the FBI, who had since retired to New Hampshire. Sullivan agreed to discuss the document, but said he also had requests from two other reporters, Dan Thomasson of Scripps-Howard and Harry Kelly of Hearst Newspapers. He said he would talk about it only once and suggested a meeting in Boston and a single interview. That meeting prompted the three of us to undertake a series of interviews with former FBI officials all over the country that consumed most of three weeks. The result was a single story which detailed more political abuse of the FBI than was known by anyone, including Sullivan.

If Mr. Stern had checked with the Watergate committee, he would have learned that the committee's information on political use of the FBI was gathered by the committee

after the *Tribune* story ran. Only then did the committee get interested enough in the subject to begin interviewing ex-FBI officials. It was information from those subsequent committee interviews that *The Washington Post* discovered and blazoned across its front page as brand-new eighteen months later.

"For some reason," Stern notes, "President Johnson's questionable use of the FBI did not catch on as a page-1 issue. . . ." Perhaps the answer is an obvious one unsaid by Stern. Unless *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* thinks it's news in Washington, it isn't.

JAMES D. SQUIRES  
Bureau chief  
Chicago Tribune Press Service  
Washington, D.C.

Laurence Stern replies: *In a sense, Jim Squires is making my point that he and his colleagues were given unduly short shrift in subsequent accounts of FBI spying at the 1964 Democratic convention. Ron Kessler of The Washington Post did later provide a substantial elaboration of the earlier spying stories in that he documented specifically the use of wiretapping and bugging in the operation. If Mr. Squires pictures my use of the word "leak" as denigrative to his enterprise, I regret it. Leaks, as we all know, often come to us as a reward for industry rather than as a substitute for it.*

## Contra Stein

TO THE REVIEW:

In Herbert Stein's recent article on media distortion concerning economic reporting, he criticizes "the media's failure to make wider and better use of professional economists on the editorial, as distinguished from business management, side of their operations. . . ." As far as he's concerned, we're all guilty of not using specialists or experts.

Well, CBS News has three specialists and two professional economists on its staff and they bear the load of our coverage of the economy. The specialists are CBS News Correspondents George Herman in Washington, and in New York, Mitchell Krauss and Gary Shepard — each a veteran newsman who brings expertise to these assignments.

But more importantly, at least in response

to Mr. Stein and to compensate for what he perceives as a "lack of historical perspective" on the part of reporters, CBS News has two economic research editors — both professional economists. One is in Washington, D.C., the other in New York. Our Washington economist joined us from the Brookings Institution. . . . CBS News's New York economist first joined CBS as an economist for the broadcast division before we drafted her. . . . Their jobs are to provide dimension and perspective to our reporting.

Additionally, CBS News has contracted with an outstanding outside economics expert as a consultant on a continuing basis, to help us see what's coming in the future and make even clearer sense of what's happening now. More expert input: Ray Brady, editor of *Dun's Review*, does two weekend radio broadcasts giving consumers advice on handling their money.

Mr. Stein seems to be saying that if journalists knew and thought more about the economy we'd report it differently. Not likely. At CBS News, we brought in experts who knew what we didn't know and could help us with our thinking. That's even better, I submit, than the month's cram course he seems to think Walter Cronkite should take.

GEORGE HOOVER  
Director, Information Services  
CBS News  
New York, N.Y.

The March/April section on the economy I find a most admirable idea, which I hope might be followed by examples of some of the worst reporting in this area and some of the very best. . . .

That said, let me get to my reason for writing this letter: objection to the piece by Herbert Stein as being a waste of space. . . . I had hoped that *CJR* would wage incessant warfare against the on-the-one-hand, on-the-other equal-space cop-out. I think you've spotted this mote in the eyes of the men who produce our media; are you ignoring now the beam in your own eye?

Silk is specific — pointing out the incompetence or the downright lying in the official estimates of tax revenues: amounts, dates, all the rest. I see nothing in Stein's article other than the thoroughly discredited notion

that papers should give 97 percent of their space to the 97 percent of persons who on a given day haven't gotten around to committing a crime and getting caught at it. . . .

In short, this example illustrates flaws which CJR frequently exposes in other publications — and rightly so. Can't we have an ombudsman presenting in each issue (briefly, I hope) an analysis of the previous CJR issue? And a once-a-year summary of your contents, commenting on peripheral, evanescent, and trivial content, as well as areas in which you might have looked but didn't? This might well encourage and assist both your readers and contributors in the habit and skill of constant alertness in their use of all media.

EDGAR CRANE  
Houston, Tex.

### The 'new look' reviewed

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Should I say I like the risk, when a solid little magazine changes its format in order to aim for a national circulation? I do not like the risk, but I wish you the best of luck.

RICHARD ULRICH  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

In both design and content, your March/April effort was one of the best ever. The new graphic approach has resulted in a far more readable and attractive product, very much overdue.

BRIAN A. MERTZ  
*Daily Tribune-Examiner*  
Dillon, Mont.

### Misquoting "Time"

#### TO THE REVIEW:

I have just received a letter and enclosures soliciting subscriptions for the *Columbia Journalism Review*. One of the enclosures is a flier ("subscribe within 10 days") offering a reprint of an article about Henry Kissinger and the press. The text says: "It will give you a wholly different view of the man whom *Time* described as 'the greatest Secretary of State in U.S. history.'"

In *Time's* issue of December 24, 1973, a story discussing Kissinger's good and bad qualities concluded: "But so far he has yet to demonstrate that he can combine power politics with unexciting but necessary day-to-day diplomacy. If he succeeds in doing that, the 56th American Secretary of State may be remembered as the greatest in U.S. history." The article in the *Review* to which the flier alluded summarized the *Time* story thus: "*Time* thinks he has a chance of being re-

membered as 'the greatest in U.S. history.'" (Emphasis mine.)

I trust you will agree that this is quite different from simply describing Kissinger as the greatest, etc. I wonder, in passing, how the *Review* would judge another publication that used such a misquotation. I can understand how this sort of thing happens, given the enthusiasm of promotion people. But I do not enjoy your promoting the *Review* by making *Time* look foolish. The *Review* has too good a reputation and too many claims to distinction to make this tactic necessary.

I hope that you can give me your assurance that you will stop using this flier and that some appropriate correction in the "Letters" column or in some other manner, will appear in the *Review*.

HENRY ANATOLE GRUNWALD  
Managing editor, *Time*  
New York, N.Y.

*We agree with Mr. Grunwald that our flier overstates the case (but not that it makes Time, or was intended to make Time, look foolish).*

*We will change the flier, and we thank Mr. Grunwald for calling us on it.*

*The Editors*

### Santiago: I was there

#### TO THE REVIEW:

In his survey of U.S. press coverage of the Allende administration ("Through the Looking Glass in Chile," November/December) Roger Morris refers kindly to my reporting from Chile. But he states erroneously that my reporting "came only after Allende's overthrow." In fact, I arrived in Chile on August 4, 1973. Between August 7 and September 10 (the day before the coup), *The Washington Post* published no less than twenty-two of my dispatches with a Santiago dateline.

MARLISE SIMONS  
*The Washington Post*  
Mexico City

### Low grades for the professor

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Professor Watts ("The Mishmash Report," March/April) is a very confused historian. He is especially confused about the television news business as are most other academicians who have advice to offer the media without having first done their homework.

The evening news shows are not designed to be philosophical platforms on which all sides of an issue are presented or debated.

Nor are they meant to educate, though they may do this from time to time. They are, however, designed to inform one of the day's happenings.

Watts demands television news provide something in its evening programs it cannot provide. His students should be encouraged to read newspapers and magazines for the fuller meaning of news-happenings or watch network news specials that elaborate on a specific for an hour or more.

Furthermore, "the impractical professor" (his words) should know that his staggered-network-news idea is foolish. Utterly so. He would deny millions of people a report on the breaking news (he says his 6:30 P.M. program would be both breaking stories plus a main focus on Washington issues, etc., but he has obviously never faced a news deadline) and impose his idea of what they ought to know. Only a combination of newspapers, magazines, and some TV news specials can fill these gaps.

His second network — the 7:00 P.M. telecast — is already being achieved nicely by the three networks. And his third network — regional and local — is best left to those who live and report at the local level.

I am afraid the professor has no conception of the mechanics of television news nor has he tried to understand the role it plays and service it provides some forty million Americans nightly.

In essence, he does not know "hard" news from a James Reston column. He is talking apples and oranges. Different fruits, if you will pardon the expression.

JOSEPH J. DERBY  
Director, News Information  
National Broadcasting Company  
New York, N.Y.

Professor Watts is quick to criticize the networks for not giving his history students any coherence or meaning or any "concrete whole" to the news. He is, on the other hand, not so quick to criticize his students who he acknowledges "derive the bulk of their information about the world they live in from television news." Whose fault is that? How can anyone be a student of history or of current events or of anything if he fails to give due time and attention to newspapers and magazines to fill in the gaps?

Next question: if, indeed, there is a concrete whole and an overriding social structure to whatever happens or doesn't happen each day, how does Professor Watts justify an arbitrary division of the "news" into three conceptual packages (Washington; other national and international; regional and local)? This is the most questionable of the

# How strong a stand can a newspaper take on social and political issues without abusing its power?

## The Manchester Union Leader in New Hampshire Elections

by Eric Veblen

The Manchester Union Leader is a newspaper that has been a dominant force in New Hampshire politics for many years. It has a long history of taking strong stands on social and political issues, and its influence is felt throughout the state. In the 1970s, the paper's support of Edmund Muskie's bid for the presidential nomination was a major factor in his victory. More recently, the paper's support of Governor John Sununu has been a significant factor in his re-election. The paper's influence is also felt in the state and national arenas, where it has been a leading voice for conservative values.

## The Manchester Union Leader in New Hampshire Elections

by Eric P. Veblen

One New Hampshire newspaper never wavers in its determination to convince its readers that its view of politics and candidates is the correct perspective. The Manchester Union Leader achieved a measure of national fame for its tactics during Edmund Muskie's bid for the presidential nomination, but that was only one episode in the life of the hardest-hitting daily in the country. Eric Veblen explores its influence in the state and nation. \$9.00

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## LETTERS

article's many arguments, which include among them the proposal that I be subjected any given night to just one television network's consensus of where the news in Washington (or in the other geographical divisions) is, and what it is, and what it means.

The single constructive proposal of Professor Watts which is appealing is that the three networks no longer broadcast their evening newscasts simultaneously. Perhaps the realities of merchandising the news for the marketplace prevent this, which is assuredly an outrage because the viewer is deprived of diversity. And yes, Virginia, there is diversity in the network evening news programs, imperfect as they are.

GEORGE MASON  
University of Cincinnati  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Jim Watts replies: *Joseph J. Derby automatically rises to the defense of his network, a natural reaction for a corporate public-relations man. Skilled in the image biz, Mr. Derby hopefully fires his rhetorical buckshot, all sadly wide of the points I made. News obviously does not "break" to meet a deadline. Nor are the events of any given moment intelligently separated from their causes, which cannot be explained in twelve-second slices. Interestingly, he is unable to explain why my three-part plan is "foolish." He does acknowledge that NBC News does not seek to educate its viewers. Yet his parochialism in assuming that regional and local news bears no national interest suggests a more withered corporate perspective than even I imagined. His "hard" news is ice in a furnace, gone before it can be tasted. Mr. Mason's criticisms carry more substance. I, too, regret the citizenry's dependence on "mishmash reports." My "arbitrary division" suggests reform, not utopia. I would, however, strongly argue that there is no discernible difference, either in form or in substance, among the three networks. And I would suggest to Mr. Mason that the similar packaging is a result of what he delicately calls "the realities of merchandising the news for the marketplace. . . ." This is the reality which keeps defenders of corporate merchandising like Mr. Derby ever vigilant, constructive suggestions notwithstanding.*

### Cancer debate continues

TO THE REVIEW:

The facts stated in Greenberg's article ("A Critical Look at Cancer Coverage" January/February), while technically accu-

rate, are incomplete, and if they were complete, would lead to contrary conclusions. All the survival statistics reflect treatments given at least five years earlier. Thus, a five-year survival rate reported in 1974, the most up-to-date available, reflects treatments given in 1969, or earlier.

The Cancer Act of 1971 did not take effect until late 1972, so five-year survival rates reflecting its influence will not be available even for small groups of patients until late 1977 or 1978. Large-scale applications have not even begun yet because of inadequate funding, so that no significant change in five-year survival rates could be expected for large groups until after 1980. Even if a patient is completely cured by the initial treatment, he or she does not show up in the five-year survival statistics until at least five years later.

Greenberg apparently wrote his article shortly before the results of a crucial study by Fisher and his associates were reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. They reported on two-and-one-half-year survival times since only two-and-one-half years had elapsed. They were able, by post-operative chemotherapy, to reduce the treatment failure rate in breast cancer by more than 50 percent. Their five-year survival statistics may be less, but even if they are only half as good, they would show a major advance.

The survival figures for acute lymphatic leukemia of children are far better than one might gather from Greenberg's article. This is not a particularly rare cancer and has caused many tragic deaths. Twenty years ago, the five-year survival rate was 0 percent. The latest figures indicate a five-year survival rate of about 50 percent, and preliminary data suggest that children who develop the disease in 1975 and receive the best treatment will have a five-year survival rate of about 70 percent. Furthermore, almost all of these five-year survivals will have a normal life expectancy — a major advance.

It is quite true that results in the common, slow-growing tumors of adults have been quite disappointing. However, steps are being taken to improve research in this area too. If adequate funds are made available, and if bureaucratic obstacles are removed, there is a strong possibility of important advances in this field.

SOLOMON GARB, M.D.  
Citizens' Committee for the  
Conquest of Cancer  
New York, N.Y.

TO THE REVIEW:

The American Cancer Society's reply (March/April) to my article "A Critical

Look at Cancer Coverage" (January/February) merits comment because it is misleading.

My article, briefly, argued and documented the thesis that (1) with few exceptions — amounting to 20 percent of cancers — there has been relatively little improvement in cancer survival over the past two decades, and (2) in its concentration on a quest for cures, the cancer research "establishment" has been neglecting important research opportunities related to the prevention of cancers that appear to be of environmental origin.

In rebuttal, the ACS justifies its claims of significant progress in cancer cures by citing the 20 percent of cases to which I referred, and by expressing, as it has for decades, great hope for therapies that may be applied to the remainder. In doing so, it resorts to the venerable numbers game of major survival-rate improvements since 1940, while blurring or ignoring the fact that the great majority of these improvements occurred prior to 1955.

I am pleased to recognize that I did err, as the ACS points out, by not including uterine cancer among those types in which significant progress has occurred; regrettably, however, the survival figures for the other prevalent types of cancers do not show significant improvement, and the ACS concedes as much.

In regard to the ACS statement that "ACS and NCI (National Cancer Institute) research is leading to preventive techniques designed to protect against the dangers of asbestos, vinyl chloride, and other substances," I cite a March 17 report of a subcommittee of the National Cancer Advisory Board (the top-most advisory body of NCI), which examined the extent of research into environmental causes of cancer: "There was an obvious sense of general astonishment throughout the meetings that the National Cancer Program does not appear to have accorded an adequate priority nor sense of urgency to the field of environmental carcinogenesis particularly when this concerns chemical carcinogens."

Finally, the ACS expresses puzzlement over my use of quotes from a 1971 pamphlet, "The Hopeful Side of Cancer," stating that such use is "not up-to-date reporting." The pamphlet was given to me at ACS headquarters in response to a request for literature that the ACS currently provides to the public.

DANIEL S. GREENBERG  
Science & Government Report  
Washington, D.C.



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# REPORTS

"The Daily Double: Deadline in SLC," by Paul Swenson, **Utah Holiday**, December 5, 1974; "Mother Earth, Mon Amour," by Gregory Jaynes, **New Times**, February 7, 1975. "Forward! To the Rear at the *American Statesman*," by Molly Ivins, **The Texas Observer**, February 28, 1975; "So You Want to Publish a Paper?" by Jim Toland, **feed/back**, Winter, 1975

The gallery of press profiles continues to grow.

□ *Utah Holiday* editor Swenson reviews the newspaper situation in Salt Lake City where the morning and evening papers have pooled their printing, advertising, and distribution activities while (apparently) divvying up the major spheres of influence (national and international to *The Salt Lake Tribune*, local and investigative to the *Deseret News*). Attempting to define their blurred identities, Swenson sees in "the good, gray *Tribune*" the restraint and decorum of a Mary Worth, and in its competitor the zealous but uncertain intentions of a Little Orphan Annie. Wonders Swenson about both, "Is tedium the message?"

□ *New Times* correspondent Jaynes offers an enlightening glimpse into *Mother Earth News* and its owner-editor-publisher John Shuttleworth. The successful publication, inspired by *The Whole Earth Catalog*, says Jaynes, "smells of manure and cordwood. The editor smells like roses." Calling his magazine a "serialized survival manual for the future," Shuttleworth emerges as a man with a mission: "I'm trying to pry people free in the way they want to be free. Not the way that I want them to be free."

□ Ivins, coeditor of the *Observer*, reports in damning detail on *The Austin American Statesman*. Her tough-minded judgment: "Assessing the only daily newspaper in the capital of Texas is largely a matter of trying to figure out just how bad it is."

□ "A newspaperman's newspaper," is contributing editor Toland's estimate of the *Pacific Sun*, a unique community newspaper with an editorial policy that concentrates on events of long-ranging importance and a select, prosperous readership of cultural leaders and opinion makers in Marin County, California. The special personality of the *Sun* reflects the ideas of publisher Steve McNamara: "There is a lot of garbage

in most newspapers; objectivity is not the Holy Grail of journalism; there can be literary style in reporting the news."

"Whose First Amendment?" by Lewis W. Wolfson, **The Progressive**, January 1975

The debate continues over the right of the press to print whatever it wants and the right of the public to guaranteed access to the press. Arguments on both sides pivot on interpretations of the First Amendment. In this lucid, thoughtful essay, Wolfson, professor of communications at American University and a former Washington correspondent, explores the apparent dilemma with informed concern. Briefly tracing the evolution of the problem to the contrast between the historical Holmesian vision of the press as a marketplace for ideas and its present increasingly monopolistic tendencies, Wolfson observes that "a Tom Paine . . . with a ditto machine in Brooklyn . . . doesn't stand a chance against a majestic utterance of *The New York Times*." Further, he warns, well-deserved post-Watergate congratulations notwithstanding, the ghost of Spiro Agnew still haunts American journalism: "He unleashed . . . the resentment that many people . . . see as press licence." Despite recent court "press" victories, future decisions may well go the other way. The best protection, Wolfson urges, is a self-imposed increase in accessibility and accountability — through ombudsmen, community press councils, and a general openness about operations, finances — and shortcomings. By championing debate by all voices, he suggests, the press can show that "[its] First Amendment freedom is everybody's freedom."

"Editorial Cartoons, Capturing the Essence," by Stefan Kanfer, **Time**, February 3, 1975

With his usual clarity and grace, senior writer Kanfer offers an overview of the art of the editorial cartoon. His essay is a blend of the development of the genre from Thomas Nast to Herblock and an appraisal of its power, laced with anecdotes, bibliographic references, and provocative considerations for editors ("A cartoon," Kanfer quotes *New York Times* founder Adolph Ochs as saying, "cannot say, 'on the other hand'").

Observing that "of all features, the editorial cartoon is the least imitable by TV," Kanfer is convinced that in this age of skepticism, the editorial cartoon will flourish. It is, in his judgment, "one of America's liveliest and most permanent art forms."

"Newspaper Stocks Not Immune to Bad News," **Financial World**, January 22, 1975

Touted by brokers only months ago for their high price/earnings ratios and growth potential, newspaper stocks today have lost their dazzle. Circulation and advertising rates may be up, but the combination of rising costs and declining advertising lineage (particularly in classifieds) promises increasing vulnerability. This report, based on an examination of seven major publicly owned newspaper companies, concludes that on Wall Street, the prevailing view of newspaper stocks is negative. And the article does not fail to note the irony of "an industry hit by its own headlines."

"Annals of Television: Shaking the Tree," by Thomas Whiteside, **The New Yorker**, March 17, 1975

How quickly we seem to forget — the Agnew broadsides at network news; the Colson visits and calls to Frank Stanton, threatening to "bring CBS to its knees on Wall Street"; the heavy-handed challenges to licenses of two Florida TV stations owned by *The Washington Post*; the Nixon-Rather sparring matches; the FBI investigation of Daniel Schorr. Whiteside's account is the first comprehensive chronicle of the Nixon administration's "concerted attack on the over-all tone and content of network political news. . . ." While he spades what is essentially well-turned ground, Whiteside shows uncommon sensitivity about the complex and fragile world of network-affiliate relations. At the same time, he demonstrates an unusual grasp of the nature of television news itself. Whiteside leaves us with the haunting suggestion that, despite everything, the Nixon crew may yet succeed.

DANIEL J. LEAB

*Daniel J. Leab, a contributing editor of CJR, is director of American studies and associate professor of history at Seton Hall University.*

# The Lower case

## Saigon, Thieu look venerable to attack

Montana Standard Butte 3/31/75

The CBS decision came four hours before the premiere segment, "Code of Guilt," was to have been televised. The substitute segment was titled "A Mask of Deceit." It was shown at 8 P.M. z z z z z z z

The New York Times 2 8 75

## Middle Easy policy re-examined

The Albuquerque Tribune 3 24 75

## Planes must clear mountains first Crash prompts change in rules

Rocky Mountain News Denver 2 6 75

Q — I ax a widow with \$110,000, all invested in one municipal bond issue because of the tax exemption. But I am worried about it.

Tarrytown (N.Y.) Daily News 3 10 75

### MINI-FARMS

(HARRISBURG) -- OVER IN PENNSYLVANIA, THERE'S A NEW STATE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO TRANSFORM HUNDREDS OF PENNSYLVANIANS INTO MINIATURE, SUBSIDIZED FARMERS, BUT SOME FARM GROUPS ARE A LITTLE EDGY.

AP radio wire 1 22 75

## Teen-age prostitution problem is mounting

Tonawanda (N.Y.) News Frontier 1 18/75

## Shipping Magnet Onassis Dies

Los Angeles Herald Examiner 3 15 75

## Columnist gets urologist in trouble with his peers

Lewiston (Idaho) Morning Tribune 3 17 75

Eileen Simpson, a former wife of poet John Berryman, has done a study of creativity in poets and has been a clinical psychologist. Her authority in this novel is impeccable. Her sense of bewilderment and anguish is beautifully communicated, and it is impossible to read "The Maze" without being deeply and permanently moved.

The New York Times Book Review 3 6 75

Testimony at the trial showed that despite the alleged ordeal, Mr. Scott did not disclose his knowledge about the pun until after he was sentenced in Federal Court on Nov. 13, 1974, to 15 years in prison.

The New York Times 3 26/75

From Newsday (3 23 75)

Born in Carteret, N.J., on Nov. 4, 1911, Medwick made it to the majors when he was 20 years old and became a leader of the Cardinals' "Gashouse Gang." He compiled a career batting average of .324 with 2,471 hits including 205 homers. But he is remembered as well for his strange nickname, which came from the way he walked.

From The New York Times (3 23 75)

The nickname Ducky he received when he was in the minor leagues, playing for Houston in the St. Louis Cardinals chain. A young woman spotted him splashing around a swimming pool and remarked, "He swims just like a duck." His teammates quickly called him "ducky wucky" and the name stuck.

## People should evacuate when gas odor present

The (Ottawa) Citizen 3 26 75

## Police unit to help rape victims

The Newton (Mass.) Times 1 1 75

### Crime

Susan Goldwater, wife of Rep. Barry M. Goldwater Jr., gave birth to Barry 3d in a Washington hospital on Friday. The son of Sen. Barry Goldwater said his first child is "the youngest Republican in the Goldwater family."

The Philadelphia Inquirer 3 16 75

## Former man dies in California

Fremont County (Calif.) Chronicle-News 2 13 75



*What's in a name?"* Romeo and Juliet

Great names can also be great trademarks.

*"Good name in man or woman...is the immediate jewel of their souls..."* Othello

And great trademarks can be as valuable to you as they are to the companies that own them. Because they help ensure that when you ask for something you get what you asked for.

*"Speak the speech I pray you, as I pronounced it to you..."* Hamlet

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*"Zounds! I was never so bethump'd by words..."* King John

We don't want to bethump you with words; please just use our name correctly.

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