

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1978
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**PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS
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**SMOKE IN THEIR EYES:
DO CIGARETTE ADS
BLUR MAGAZINES' VISION?**

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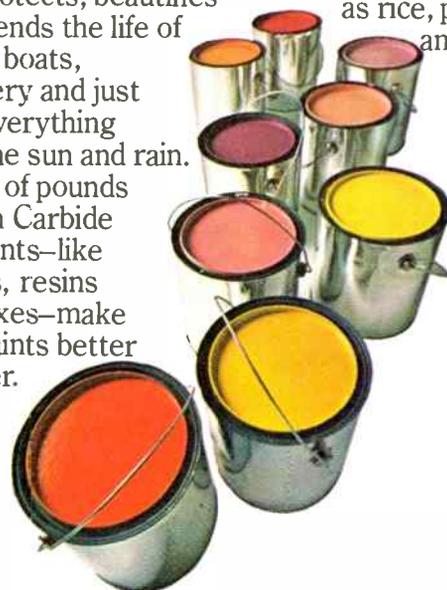


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These are some of the people to ask when you have questions about Gulf.

Finding, producing and transporting energy are complicated jobs. Sometimes the reasons we do things one way instead of another, or do one thing instead of another, aren't clear to anybody outside the business.

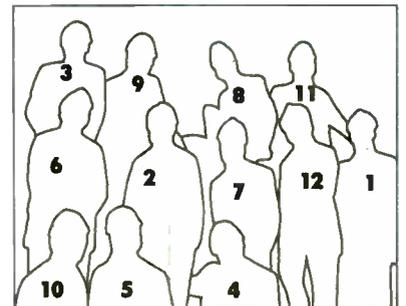
But the people and the press have a right to know what we're doing and how it will affect them.

So Gulf Oil Corporation has an elaborate system for supplying answers to questions about our company. The people in the picture are just a few of the people who are in charge of Gulf Public Affairs offices in various parts of the country.

Below there is a list of names and phone numbers of the Gulf people to call when you need information. We hope you'll use the system, because probably one of the most important challenges we have to meet is maintaining a free and open dialogue with the press.



**Gulf people:
meeting the challenge.**



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2. Boston, Massachusetts
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3. Denver, Colorado
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10. Santa Fe, New Mexico
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11. Tulsa, Oklahoma
Jeffrey P. Harris • 918-560-4305
12. Washington, D.C.
Nicholas G. Flocos • 202-659-8720

Gulf Oil Corporation

CONTENTS

● **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

Knight-Ridder wants to know the real you	<i>by Francis Pollock</i>	25
Psyche-baring is required at the nation's largest chain		
The magazines' smoking habit	<i>by R. C. Smith</i>	29
Cigarette-ad revenue gets in editors' eyes		
Can three billion peasants be 'covered'?	<i>by Richard Critchfield</i>	32
The story of the century may be in the world's villages		
Privacy and sensationalism: a British view		35
The latest Royal Commission chastises the press		
News that is both national and local	<i>by Amitai Etzioni</i>	42
How to cover news that happens in many places at once		
Tet coverage: a debate renewed	<i>by Peter Arnett</i>	44
A critical look at Braestrup's <i>Big Story</i>		
In defense of the marketing approach	<i>by Philip Meyer</i>	60
Research need not lead to trivial newspapers		
Chronicle	4	Books 50
At issue	12	Unfinished business 63
Publisher's notes	18	National News Council report 67
Comment	20	Reports 80
Working	49	Lower case 81

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CHRONICLE

INNOVATIONS

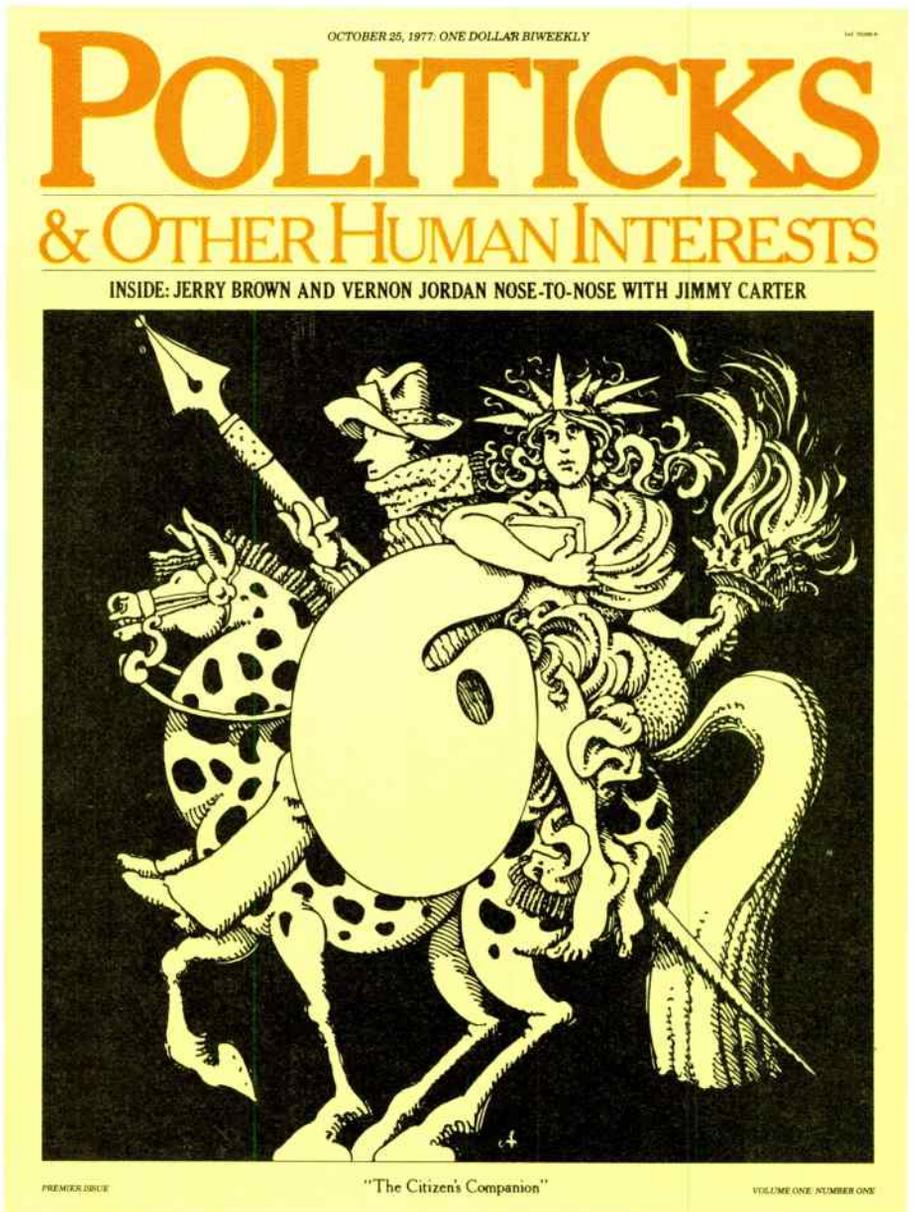
I-Team, WBZ-TV, Boston

This Westinghouse outlet, already high-ranked among the country's metropolitan stations in its commitment to news and public affairs, unveiled on September 27, 1977, its jazzily named investigative unit, an operation resembling *The Boston Globe's* established "Spotlight" team. Even as the I-Team went on the air with its first report, the station claimed that it was "local television's most comprehensive effort in investigative reporting." In any case, the initial effort — "The Legislature, A Question of Ethics" — was ambitious, comprising thirty-nine minutes without commercial breaks on a Tuesday 6 P.M. news broadcast. Stephen Kinzer, media critic for *The Boston Phoenix*, found the examination of legislators' conflicts of interest "an encouraging start" although the format was "hardly exciting." A second major report, on the award of state contracts to a mysterious computer concern, was aired November 1. Those involved with the I-Team include William Aber, station news director; Alan Lupo, on-air reporter; and Stephanie Meagher, producer/manager.

Politicks & Other Human Interests

There is an old-fashioned directness in the format of this new biweekly — an avoidance of high-pressure headlines, circus graphics, and prose devices of the new journalism. Using an ample 11½-by-14-inch page, striking full-page illustrations by such artists as Edward Sorel and Arnold Roth, and a blunt, rather ungraceful type style, *Politicks* offers earnestness with just enough satirical touches to keep the reader moving along.

The magazine had been in preparation almost from the time that its chief founder and editor-in-chief, Thomas B. Morgan, was unable to complete a deal to purchase *The Nation*. But the first issue, dated October 25, 1977, made it clear that *Politicks* would not be an imitation *Nation*, but something considerably more ambitious than that old, and still embattled, weekly. The curious name, *Politicks*, is said to derive from a verb meaning to engage in or discuss politics; it reflects the magazine's primary subject: citizen participation in the making of public policy. This objective is reflected particularly in a



section called "The Citizen's Companion," which announces caustic meetings, campaigns, organizations, and publications. In the opening editor's note, *Politicks* did not place itself definitively on the political spectrum but enunciated what sounded a little like a turn-of-the-century progressive position: "If we can envision a system that is economically just, socially humane and, above all, free, aroused citizens can achieve it."

Material in early issues included rather meandering interviews with George Ball, Vernon Jordan, and leaders in women's rights; articles by writers often seen in *The Village Voice* (which Morgan edited for a time) or other political publications: Ronald Steel, Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway, Edwin Diamond, Barry Commoner, and a scattering of some less familiar names. If the magazine had a prevailing defect, it was that it had not found an ingratiat-

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**EXTENT AND NATURE
OF CIRCULATION**

Average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months

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- 2. Mail subscriptions 33,174
- 3. Total paid circulation 34,858

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Total distribution 35,788

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- 2. Returns from news agents 1,648
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Total distribution 36,059

Copies not distributed

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- 2. Returns from news agents 1,788
- Total 39,464

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete

Douglas P. Newton
Business Manager

ing prose style; much of the reading was hard work.

Principals include, besides Morgan, Audrey Berman as managing editor and John Alcorn as designer; Morgan's wife, Mary Rockefeller Morgan, serves as graphics editor. *Politicks* sells for \$1 a copy, \$18 a year; its address is 271 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Inquiry

Another political biweekly, which started shortly after *Politicks*, *Inquiry* is based in San Francisco. Its editors style themselves "radicals" in the tradition of Jefferson, Paine, Garrison, and Bourne, but dissociate themselves from present-day liberals, conservatives, and leftists. The policy statement in the opening issue, dated November 21, 1977, averred that "most of the journalism appearing today asks the wrong questions," and implied that *Inquiry* would ask different ones. The material in the first issue is not unorthodox, however; writers represented include Tad Szulc (on the Richard Helms case), Ivan Illich (on the dominance of the professions), the revisionist historian Barton J. Bernstein (on Victor Lasky's recent best-seller), and Nat Hentoff (on First Amendment implications of libel cases). The restrained design, based on plentiful use of italic type-faces, is the work of Roger Black. Other principals include Edward H. Crane III, publisher, and Williamson H. Evers, editor. The editorial offices are at 1700 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, California 94111; a single copy costs \$1.25, a year's subscription \$17.50.

News Media & the Law

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, a Washington-based nonprofit coalition, issued ten editions of its estimable *Press Censorship Newsletter* between November 1973 and October 1976. Now the *Newsletter* has been replaced by an eight-a-year magazine, organized, like the *Newsletter*, by categories of cases, but presenting them more attractively and with illustration. Major sections are devoted, as could be expected, to gag orders, to confidentiality, and to privacy rulings; a roster of sources and

citations appears in the final two pages of the magazine. The first issue contains 48 pages plus covers. Editor: Jack C. Landau; managing editor: Linda R. Schwartz. 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Telephone: (202) 347-6888. A tax-deductible contribution of \$15 to The Reporters Committee puts the contributor on the list for eight issues.

Carleton Journalism Review

With an issue dated spring 1977, Carleton University of Ottawa, site of one of Canada's outstanding journalism schools, initiated a tabloid devoted to Canadian journalism. The issue contains an article summarizing interviews with sixteen journalists who had left journalism, a report on parliamentary-press relations, and other items, all relatively long by design. The *Review* is receiving assistance for the time being from the Atkinson Foundation and is being distributed free to the subscribers of *Content*, Canada's older journalism review. Editor: Anthony Westell; Editorial offices: School of Journalism, Carleton University, Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Canada.

Madison Press Connection

On October 9, 1977, newspaper workers of five unions striking or supporting a strike against the two Madison, Wisconsin, newspapers began publication of their own free Sunday paper. Rather more presentable and enterprising than many predecessors of the species, *Madison Press Connection* was still thin in news, evidently having no resources for gathering stories outside the immediate area. Its local coverage included regular stories on the strike, which began on October 1, against Madison Newspapers Incorporated, the joint publishing entity of the independent *Capital Times* and the *Wisconsin State Journal* of the Lee chain. By its fourth issue, *Connection* was claiming distribution of 63,000. (The pre-strike Sunday paid circulation of the *Journal* was more than 115,000.) With negotiations at a standstill, the paper could conceivably have a long life. Its publisher is the Newspaper Unity Committee, P.O. Box 9523, Madison, Wisconsin 53715.

SPECIALS

Canal Zone

a documentary by Frederick Wiseman

Like Wiseman's other documentaries, *Canal Zone* (PBS, October 7, 1977, 3 hours) does without narration, music, and interviews. It is unlike much of his earlier work (*Primate*, *High School*) in that there are no villains in human form. Zonians seem to be victims of their own bureaucracy, the grip of which is all the stronger because of their isolation. Wiseman shows them to be partial to the comforts of ritual and ceremony: a Boy Scout awards dinner, an amateur fashion show, a flag-disposal ceremony

Their intense patriotism is similar to that of white South Africans; both groups cling fearfully to a beleaguered way of life whose time has passed. A Canal Zone television station blares community-interest spots advising of precautions for street safety; a meeting of concerned parents reveals that child abuse in the Zone is three times the American average; and a guard dog, Keeno, is interviewed on a military television talk show, *Que Pasa?* A subtle doom is everywhere. *Bruce Berman*

The Battle over Panama, CBS Reports

This one-hour special, presented on November 1, represented an effort to inject speed and currency into the often sluggish production of documentaries. The group that last collaborated on the controversial special "The C.I.A.'s Secret Army" this time used the new portable camera-and-tape technology to create a special in three and a half weeks. There were complaints that it had technical rough edges, but John J. O'Connor, reviewing it in *The New York Times*, said that the program had done well its job of reporting a complex issue. Bill D. Moyers was chief correspondent, Howard Stringer, executive producer, and Judy Crichton and George Criel, producers.

AWARDS

Donald F. Bolles

The murdered investigative reporter for *The Arizona Republic* was named the twenty-fifth Elijah Parish Lovejoy Fellow by Colby

College on November 17, 1977, ten days after James Robison and Max Dunlap were convicted in Phoenix of planting the bomb that killed him. The award is named for a Colby alumnus, an abolitionist editor killed by a mob in Alton, Illinois, in 1837.

**The Boston Globe
Rock Hill Evening Herald**

These two papers won the public-service awards of the Associated Press Managing Editors association, it was announced in October. The *Globe's* "Spotlight" unit tracked and exposed "no-show" public employees. The South Carolina paper analyzed rape laws and court procedures in a six-part series that led to legislative and medical reforms.

TERMINATIONS

**All-news radio, WAVA, WAVA-FM,
Arlington, Virginia**

A small station that pioneered the all-news idea fifteen years ago, at least four years before major metropolitan stations took up the format, is being sold by its owner, Arthur W. Arundel, and will be converted to contemporary music and religious formats. (The only pioneer of comparable age is XTRA, a Mexican-based station that broadcast in English to southern California starting about the same time.) Arundel, owner of four community newspapers, said he would "move on to a change of scenery in journalism and public affairs."

Newsroom

Started in 1968 after a successful tryout during a newspaper strike, *Newsroom* became public television's most notable local news program, a prizewinner widely imitated throughout public TV. Under Mel Wax and Joe Russin, the hour-long program placed news above picture values and lively discussion over polish. In recent years, its support from the Ford Foundation was phased out and a new KQED management put a squeeze on its time, funds, and content. What remained was removed from the air in mid-October 1977. The story is told in detail in an article by James Benet, "Public TV Kills a News Winner," in *The Nation*, December 3, 1977.

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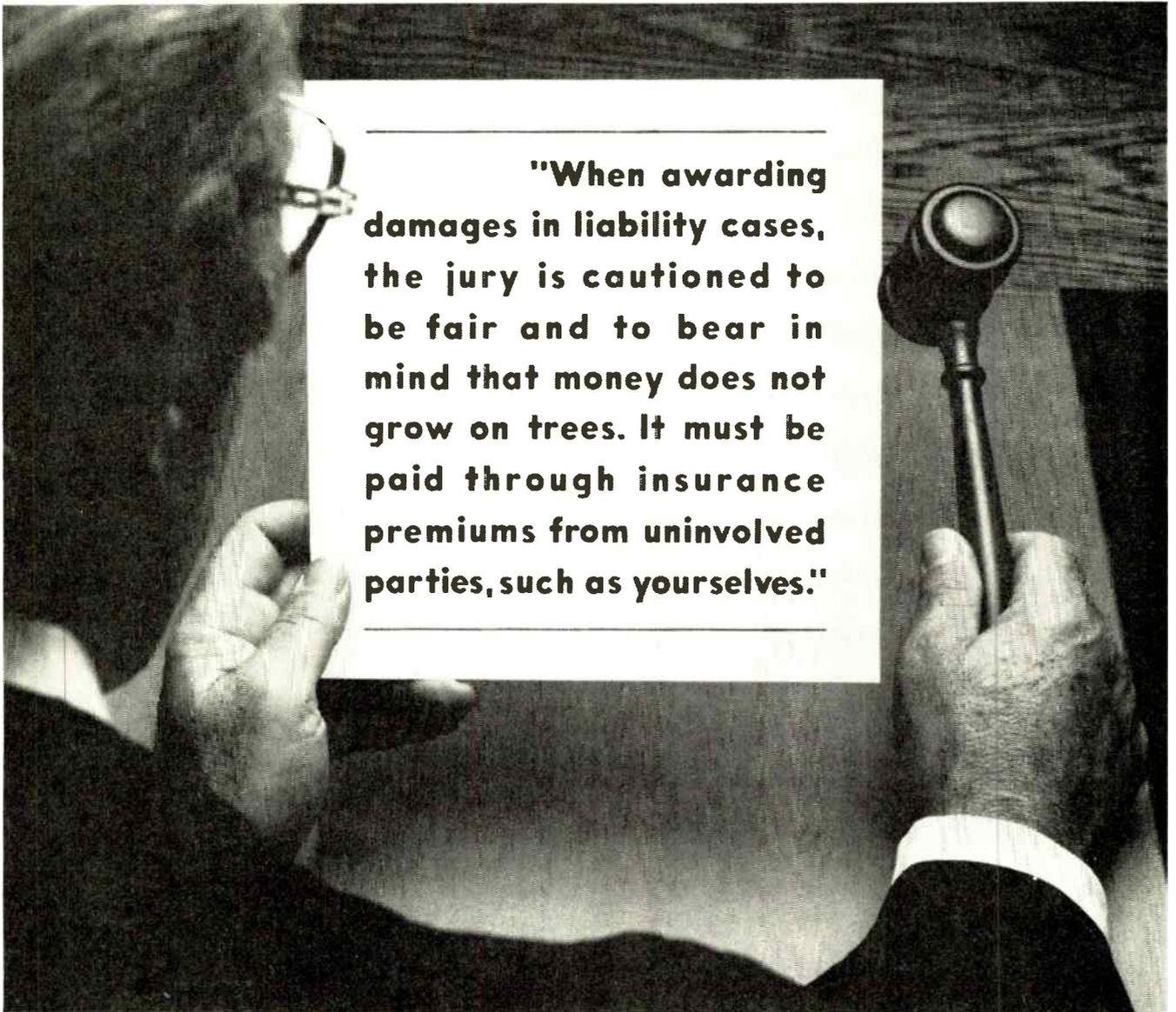
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Too bad judges can't read this to a jury.

A truck without brake lights is hit from behind. For "psychic damages" to the driver, because his pride was hurt when his wife had to work, *a jury awards \$480,000 above and beyond his medical bills and wage losses.*

A 67-year old factory worker loses an arm on the job. His lawyer argues that he should receive wages for all the

remaining years of his life expectancy. He had been earning about \$10,000 a year. The jury awards him a sum equal to almost \$89,000 a year.¹

Then there's the one...but *you* can probably provide the next example. Most of us know hair-raising stories of windfall awards won in court.² Justified claims should be compensated, of course. Aetna's point is that it is time to look hard at what windfall awards are costing.³

What can we do? Several things:

We can stop assessing "liability" where there really *was* no fault—and express our sympathy for victims through other means.

We can ask juries to take into account a victim's *own* responsibility for his losses. And we can urge that awards realistically reflect the actual loss suffered—that they be a fair *compensation*, but not a reward.⁴

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¹ The man was awarded \$1,250,000, or about \$89,000 a year, for the remaining 14 years of his life expectancy. The jury awarded an extra \$500,000 to his wife for loss of "consortium"—the company, affection and services of her husband.

² A by-product of such awards

has been a quantum leap in the number of personal injury and property damage suits filed. A 1977 study in California shows such suits increasing at *five times the rate of population growth*.

³ Most awards are paid by insurance, and insurance companies spend millions more defend-

ing policyholders against lawsuits. The direct result is rising premiums for automobile and other liability coverages. The *indirect* result is higher prices for goods and services—prices which are boosted to cover the skyrocketing insurance premiums of manufacturers, doctors, hospi-

tals, and others who are targets for windfall awards.

⁴ For example, it would help if juries were simply required to take into account payments the claimant has already received for medical bills and lost wages. Under the present system, these bills may be paid all over again.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Henry L. Savage, Jr., Public Relations, Aetna Life & Casualty, 151 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT. 06156. Telephone (203) 273-6545.



AT ISSUE

Do most people depend on TV for news?

The recent past has not been a happy time for those in the business of measuring media audiences. The accuracy of the Nielsen television ratings, and the inclination of nervous TV executives to exterminate shows on the basis of a few statistically insignificant percentage points, have come under growing attack. The turmoil over magazine audience ratings (*CJR*, September/October 1975) was recently fueled anew when W. R. Simmons and Axiom Market Research, producers of the most widely followed studies, released sharply divergent figures, with Axiom reporting hefty readership gains and Simmons showing major declines.

Now still another audience survey is being challenged: the venerable, eighteen-year-old report by the Roper Organization on public attitudes toward television and other mass media. The best known finding of the Roper study, which is underwritten by the National Association of Broadcasters' Television Information Office, is that television is the public's main source of news. TV's share vs. other media has been growing steadily. In the last Roper analysis in November 1976, some 64 percent of the respondents in a national sample of 2,000 said they obtained most of their news from television. Only 49 percent named newspapers. In 1959, when the survey was first conducted, the figures were 51 percent for television and 57 percent for newspapers.

The Roper finding has reinforced the widely held belief in television's predominant position in influencing public opinion on the news. That belief, in turn, is behind the continuing debate over the need for such controls as the fairness doctrine to make sure that the public is not unduly affected by television news's alleged biases.

In reality, the Roper conclusion is a "myth," according to a recent research paper by Robert L. Stevenson and Kathryn White of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Stevenson and White have many complaints about the Roper methodology. But the most serious is over the fact that the Roper study measures attitudes, not actual behavior. The question Roper asks about television is phrased this way:

First, I'd like to ask you where you usually get most of your news about what's going on in the world today — from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where?

"I don't think anybody in the business thinks you can measure behavior accurately by asking people what they 'usually' do," says Stevenson, an assistant professor of journalism. "Every textbook says you have to ask people very specific questions, such as what they actually did yesterday." The relationship of attitude to behavior, he contends, is often tenuous.

In their paper, Stevenson and White cite several "situational" studies that found that the number of people who actually watch television on an average day was less than the number who read a newspaper and considerably smaller than the Roper data would lead one to conclude. After conducting their own analysis using 1974-75 W. R. Simmons data from diaries and interviews with nearly 6,000 respondents, Stevenson and White came to a similar conclusion: on an average weekday, only an estimated 19 percent of the sample watched network television while 80 percent read a newspaper.

The Television Information Office was quick to counterattack. The Stevenson/White conclusions, it said, "are founded on inadequate data and faulty logic" and "fly in the face of obvious facts. Judgments which verge on the ludicrous are extrapolated into

decimal-point certainties." The T.I.O. was as vigorous in claiming loose methodology as Stevenson/White had been in dissecting Roper. In particular, the T.I.O. pointed out that Stevenson/White had measured only network news and ignored local news, had failed to consider the fact that many newspaper readers skip over hard news in favor of soft features, and had engaged in a certain amount of apples-and-oranges number juggling in comparing television and newspaper data.

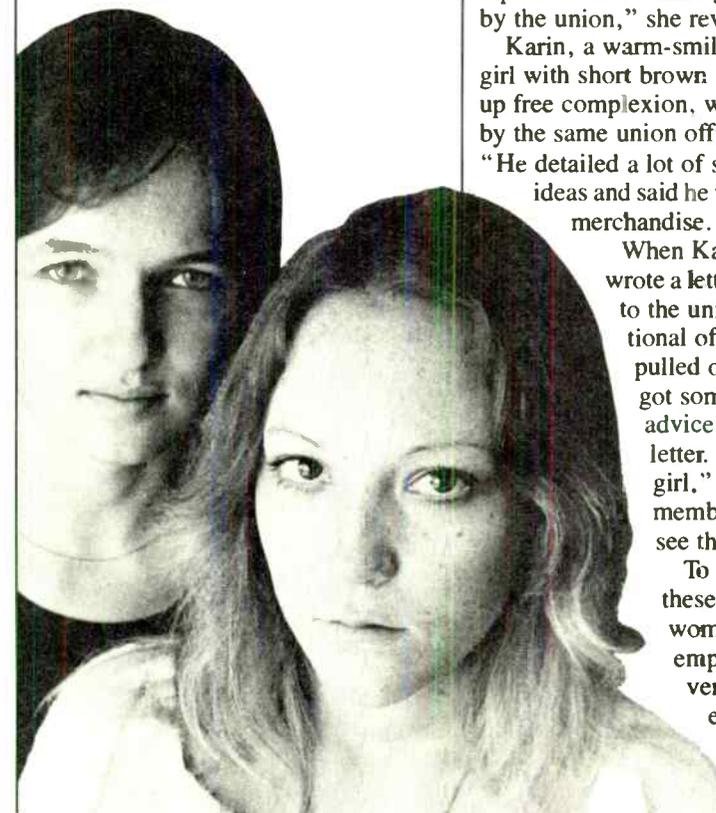
Robert Stevenson concedes that there are "a lot of missing pieces" in his analysis and that the TV and newspaper numbers are "not thoroughly comparable." Indeed, "in retrospect" he says he should not have included the newspaper figures, for they have tended to focus attention on TV vs. newspaper comparisons and away from his basic point, that there is a "dramatic disparity between the Roper assertions and the levels of actual viewing of television news." Even if viewing of local news and readership of soft newspaper features were considered, he claims, the disparity would remain significant.

Stevenson concedes he is at something of a loss to explain the disparity. The Roper survey's question, he claims, "is ambiguous, poorly worded, and asks people for information they can't come up with." But beyond this, he speculates that the higher numbers obtained in attitudinal surveys may reflect the admittedly massive public exposure to television in general while the lower numbers in behavioral and situational studies may derive from the fact that actual watching of and imparting of information by TV may be a good deal less than is commonly believed — or than viewers themselves think. A 1972 study by the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior compared questionnaires filled

They Wanted A Job But Not At That Price.

Teri DeLoache, 19, and Karin Seritis, 20, are two bright attractive college girls in Oakland, Calif., who wanted to work as waitresses to help pay their way through school.

They were willing to join a union to get their jobs—but they didn't bargain for the "after hours assignments" their union bosses had in mind for them.



Brown-eyed, blonde-haired Teri was interviewed by the secretary of the union. He came right to the point: "You have a great body. You could make a lot of money."

Teri turned down his offer to "work" conventions, keep an apartment for male visitors, take trips with businessmen and pose for a photographer. "Now I can't get a job referral by the union," she reveals.

Karin, a warm-smiling outgoing girl with short brown hair and a make-up free complexion, was approached by the same union official.

"He detailed a lot of sex-for-money ideas and said he wanted to test the merchandise."

When Karin refused and wrote a letter of complaint to the union's international office, she was pulled off her job. She got some "friendly" advice to withdraw her letter. "You're a pretty girl," said a union member, "I'd hate to see that ruined."

To put it bluntly, these two young women were denied employment and their very lives threatened because they refused to submit to prostitution.

They courageously decided to fight back, retaining a lawyer in November 1976, who filed a complaint charging mental duress and harassment. Incredibly, the lawyer's mother was savagely beaten by an attacker who warned, "You tell your son to drop this case."

He won't, thanks to the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which entered the case in March 1977.

An amended complaint has been filed, charging unfair representation, sex discrimination, illegal use of the union hiring hall and asking \$1 million in punitive damages.

Teri and Karin were fortunate. They found help. But how many other Teris and Karins haven't?

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is helping everyone it can. It is currently assisting individual workers in more than 75 cases involving academic and political freedom, freedom from union violence, and the right to work for government without paying a private organization for that privilege.

If you'd like information on how you can help workers like Teri DeLoache and Karin Seritis, write:

The National Right to Work Legal
Defense Foundation
Suite 600
8316 Arlington Boulevard
Fairfax, Virginia 22038

out by twenty families about their TV viewing with researchers' observations of actual viewing and found that the respondents overreported viewing by 40-50 percent. "If you ask people where they learned about a certain product," says Benjamin Lipstein, vice-president of research for SSC&B, a large advertising agency, "you invariably get exaggerated numbers on television. People will even mention television for a product that has never been advertised on TV. People watch so much television they tend to have the impression that most of their information comes from TV even when it hasn't."

Just what people get from television even when they are watching is open to question, says Stevenson. He cites a survey of 346 respondents in Seattle on television viewing of the Nixon impeachment hearings. The survey concluded that the public's response was one of "casual surveillance, glimpses of the hearings as time and circumstances permitted, when they permitted at all. It is a picture of history in the making observed by people on the run."

"Television news watching," Stevenson contends, "is a passive activity. It's very easy when you're watching to simply lose track of what's going on. Studies have been done where people were called after watching the news and they weren't able to remember a single thing they saw. You just let the information wash over you. To an extent, you can do that when you're reading too. But it's harder. You have to put more of yourself into reading, which is why there is likely to be more of a direct impact on people's knowledge."

While the notion that the omnipresent, always-on TV tube powerfully molds viewers' minds has much intuitive appeal, so also, one must admit, does the notion that the attentive newspaper reader is likely to assimilate more news than the passive television viewer. Given the mysteries and hazards of audience measurement, it would be difficult even for experts to resolve conclusively the methodological squabbles and determine in just what direction the most telling data point.

The conundrum is compounded by the fact that people probably obtain different kinds of news from different media. Television, it would seem, is unrivaled in giving viewers a strong, visceral feeling for events and people. TV news thus stresses stories with simple, visual angles. The profound impact on public opinion of TV coverage of the 1960s civil rights protests and student uprisings and of the Vietnam war is indisputable. But the print media are unrivaled in providing an intellectual perspective and understanding of the news. They probably have had a much larger influence than TV on public opinion on such complex, essentially non-visual issues as the energy crisis and economic policy.

The two kinds of news are not only disparate but complementary. From their study of Simmons data, in fact, Stevenson and White found that despite significant demographic differences "viewing of television news, on the whole, is modestly but positively related to readership of newspapers. People who watch network news also tend to read newspapers." People who are interested in news do both because they get different information from the two media. How meaningful, then, can any study be that regards television and print news as competitive and tries to pick a winner?

Stevenson and White's case against the Roper findings, in sum, may not be wholly persuasive. But at least it raises important doubts. The primacy of television news may not be a total "myth." But it should no longer be considered a sacrosanct truth.

CHRIS WELLES

Chris Welles is director of Columbia's Walter Bagehot Fellowship Program in Economics and Business Journalism.

The secret branch of government

The judicial branch of government may be co-equal with the legislative and executive branches but it has received privileged news coverage. For reasons

apparently steeped only in tradition and not law, news media have had a laissez-faire philosophy in coverage of the courts. They have not probed into judicial decisions. They have not tried to find out what goes on *in camera*. They have not pushed and prodded judges to explain ambiguous or self-contradictory decisions.

Why have the media kept hands off the judiciary? Why are reporters intimidated by the hallowed halls of the courtroom when they don't back down in the Oval Office? Why do they give the judicial black robes greater obeisance than the stars on the uniforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

The answer seems to be "tradition" and the judiciary has done everything possible to create an assumption that it would be demeaning for its members to appear before the press. Few reporters ever get a comment from an appellate judge explaining or elaborating on a decision, unless the judge is seeking publicity for a coming election.

Inside coverage of the judiciary is so unusual that *The New York Times* ran a front page picture recently of the New York State Court of Appeals with the following caption: "State's Highest Court — a Rare View: The seven judges who sit on the New York State Court of Appeals deliberate during a case conference in their Albany chambers. This is the first photograph made during an actual meeting."

Of course, what would be even more interesting would be stories about what happens at these meetings, the input of the various judges into the decisions reached as well as the politics of the members of this particular bench.

It is difficult to see the distinction — if indeed there is any — between judges meeting behind closed doors or *in camera* and the executive sessions of the executive and legislative branches of government. When the meetings of the latter are closed, there is not a good reporter alive who does not fight to cover the meeting or, when unsuccessful, doesn't try to find out what happened after attempts to cover the session failed. Why should the judiciary enjoy a privilege not granted other branches of government?

There is nothing in the rules of the American Bar Association, according to various authorities, that forbids a judge to comment on the court's action after a case is decided. As a matter of fact, various ethics canons based on A.B.A. codes indicate they may comment. A typical code reads:

A judge should abstain from public comment about a pending or impending proceeding in any court, and should require a similar abstention on the part of court personnel subject to his direction and control. This subsection does not prohibit a judge from making public statements in the course of his official duties or from explaining for public information the procedures of the court or his holding or actions.

Surprisingly, little has been said or written about this subject. There have been the long-standing arguments over coverage of trials and other complex issues of the justice system, but little has been said about the accessibility of judges — more accurately, the lack of accessibility.

It seems incongruous that a society

which continues to demand more openness in government should be prepared to accept one-word decisions (sustained, overruled, remanded) from the judiciary in far-reaching public-policy matters.

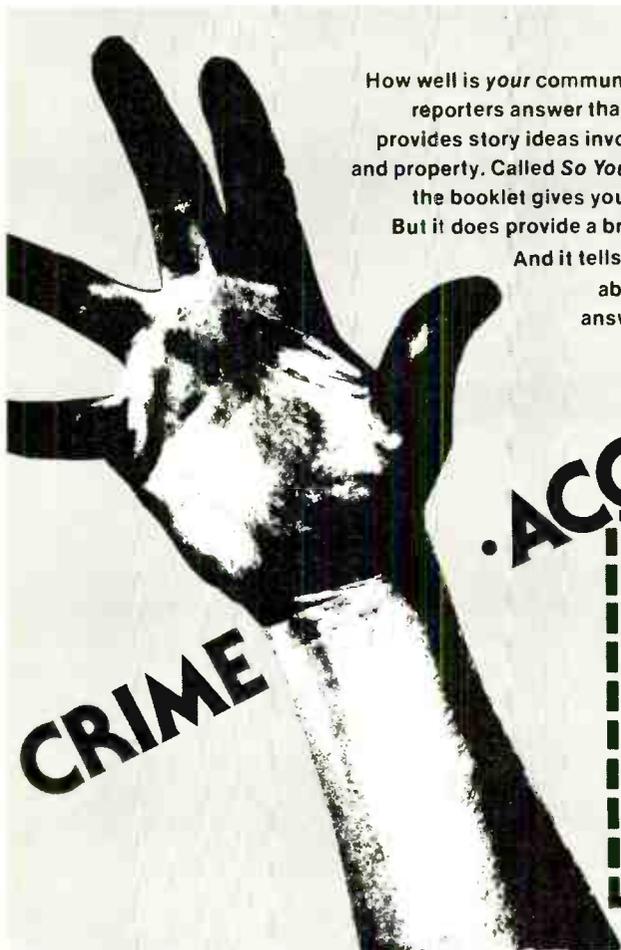
One of the defenses cited by court officials for not talking with the media is that decisions "speak for themselves." While the court may believe that these decisions "speak for themselves," they certainly don't always speak clearly. One has only to look at the decisions on pornography, busing, and other delicate issues to find evidence of the need for clarity and elaboration. The experts themselves cannot agree on what these decisions mean. Who would not welcome having the Chief Justice appear to explain for the laity what he believes the court has defined to be pornographic?

Others defending the present posture argue that judges would face the danger of inadvertently amending or changing a court order by impromptu statements. Yet the same danger — and perhaps a

greater danger — exists when the president is asked to explain delicate foreign policy negotiations or any other sensitive issue.

Others also hold that some legal opinions are so complex that they are too difficult to explain on a television news show in thirty seconds. Of course, the same can be and is said of presidential actions or legislative issues. Is a legal opinion so much more difficult to explain than a 1,500-page bill on tax reform? If complexity were to justify news blackouts, then the public would be left with little but stories on accidents, fires, crime, and violence, for the courtroom is scarcely alone in dealing with difficult and complex issues.

As to court "executive sessions" and other behind-the-scene stories, some past judges have been so sensitive to having their personal notes published after death that they have ordered them destroyed. The judiciary has argued that opening its doors or allowing coverage of closed sessions would make the participants sensitive to publicity and less



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prepared to give their most candid opinions. In effect, the members of the bench argue that they cannot operate in a fishbowl — the same argument used by many other public officials. Most reporters would agree that executive sessions may be necessary but that there is a danger when “secrecy” is applied to the whole legal process.

The argument that confidentiality must be maintained to assure a candid and open discussion was the same logic used by former President Nixon when he tried to protect his White House tapes. In *United States v. Nixon*, the Supreme Court addressed itself to the question of “presumptive privilege” in communications between the president and his advisors and recognized the need for maintaining such relationships. Indeed, it even likened this privilege to the “claim of confidentiality of judicial deliberation.”

The court ruled against Nixon “in light of our historic commitment to the rule of law.” Yet courts have defended their own confidentiality so ferociously that the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* was fined in 1977 for publishing the name of a judge being investigated for misconduct. Perhaps the public would welcome a review of “presumptive privilege” as enjoyed by the judiciary as a matter of routine.

In many cases involving issues of press freedom, the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of open discussion. Most notably in the landmark *New York Times v. Sullivan* case of 1964, the court all but flattened libel laws to protect “. . . the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited . . .” It would seem that the courts, sharing as they do an active role in the political and social life of our land, should allow themselves to become part of the uninhibited public debate.

BERL FALBAUM

Berl Falbaum is a free-lance writer based in Detroit.

Lesson from a conglomerate

Syracuse, New York, is a city permeated with subsidiaries of the Samuel I. Newhouse communications empire. The newspapers — the morning *Post-Standard*, the evening *Herald-Journal*, and the Sunday *Herald-American* — are members of the Newhouse chain. One of the three VHF stations, WSYR-TV, is owned by Newhouse Broadcasting, and so are its AM and FM radio adjuncts. In addition, NewChannels Corporation, a Newhouse company, supplies cable television service to 70 percent of cable users in Syracuse suburbs.

By the mid-1970s, the only local media field not locked up by Newhouse and other ownerships was cable service in Syracuse proper. Here the city itself took an initiative, proposing a municipally owned system in the belief that it would provide more revenue than the more customary private franchises.

Since New York State law does not permit the sale of municipal bonds for cable television construction, the city decided instead to sell bonds financing the construction of a “telecommunications system,” whose principal component (from a legal standpoint) would be a residential police- and fire-alarm network. The city would then use the alarm network as a base on which to “piggy-back” a city-owned cable television system. Although the creation of such a system would require considerable research and planning, the city administration believed, on the basis of a report in 1975 by an advisory committee, that it would be profitable.

Whatever the merits of the plan, the Newhouse newspapers immediately began to cast it in an unfavorable light. They recognized that the alarm portion

was the weak link in the municipal-ownership plan. No centralized alarm system for residences had been constructed before on such a scale; no one could say with certainty that it would work, technically or economically. Without it the legal basis for bonding would evaporate.

They did not reserve these criticisms for the editorial page, however, but made their position clear through the emphasis in repeatedly negative news stories. These were headlines on stories that appeared in the weeks before the critical council vote on the municipal system in November 1976: BUSINESSMAN QUESTIONS CITY-OWNED CABLE SYSTEM; CABLE TV PROPOSAL FLOUNDERS; CABLE TV FIGURES ‘BATTED ABOUT’/PROFITS IN QUESTION; SKEPTICS RAISE KEY QUESTIONS ON CABLE ISSUE; CITY CABLE-ALARM PLAN PANNED. Neutral or favorable headlines were all but nonexistent, and Newhouse involvement in the cable industry was mentioned only glancingly.

It was even reported that Stephen Rogers, publisher of the three Syracuse papers, exerted personal pressure on a swing vote in the city council, although Rogers calls the story “a lot of crap,” and the council member himself, although he reported the matter to the council, later called it “kidding.” Whatever the fact, the council member did change his position after being one of the original proponents of municipal ownership.

Even after the decision was made to pursue private development, the newspapers continued their attack on the “public safety” features which the C.A.T.V. system might provide. In an editorial titled “Drop the Frills,” the afternoon paper observed, “Members of the Council who reluctantly went along with private development of a cable TV system could throw a monkey wrench into the plan. It appears the frills — such as fire detectors and burglar

alarms — that were part and parcel of the municipal proposal have not been forgotten yet.”

What accounts for such determined opposition? The Newhouse interests deny that their own cable subsidiary was interested in moving in. But one city council member believes that the dailies' opposition to the alarm system resulted in part from Newhouse cross ownerships. “The same people who own the newspapers also own most of the existing cable TV systems in the suburbs surrounding Syracuse. They're afraid that if alarm services are offered to city residents, suburban subscribers may very well demand the same services. That would force NewChannels to rebuild its system, and that's not in the Newhouse corporate plan.”

But Rogers, the publisher, said in an interview that he did not really care if there was an alarm system or not. His only concern, he said, was that cable television be brought to Syracuse as quickly as possible.

The C.A.T.V. franchise in Syracuse was awarded recently to a subsidiary of a Toronto-based company with ties to local politicians. In the words of a council dissident, the council “brought insurance” against further newspaper interference. By awarding the Syracuse franchise to that company “most acceptable” to the local papers some members hoped to facilitate the implementation of a city-wide alarm system.

Whether such “insurance” has indeed been secured and whether the implementation of a city-wide alarm system can be realized in the face of newspaper opposition remain to be seen. In the meantime, Syracuse politicians have learned a lesson in the power of the conglomerate press.

JULIUS LITMAN

Julius Litman, a doctoral student in public communication at Syracuse University, served in the city's Office of Electronic Communications.

Walter Bagehot
British journalist and economist
1826 - 1877



THE BAGEHOT FELLOWSHIP

Have you ever found yourself over your head covering business stories? Would you like to obtain a deeper understanding of business, economics, and finance?

The Walter Bagehot Fellowship Program in Economics and Business Journalism, named after the distinguished 19th century British journalist and economist, is designed to help supply that understanding. Administered by the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, the Bagehot Program offers ten fellows a full academic year of study at Columbia University. It includes courses at the Columbia Business School and other university departments plus special seminars and informal meetings with prominent guests. *Editor & Publisher* has called the Bagehot Program the “granddaddy” of the various mid-career business journalism fellowships.

Eligibility. The Bagehot Program is open to full-time editorial employees of newspapers, wire services, magazines, and broadcast stations with at least four years of experience. Applicants need not be business specialists. But they should be able to demonstrate that greater knowledge of economics, business, and finance could add depth and understanding to their reporting.

Financial support. The Bagehot Program is funded by several major corporations and foundations, though the Columbia journalism school retains full control over the curriculum. The fellows receive free tuition and a stipend of \$13,500.

Application. The deadline for the academic year beginning in the fall of 1978 is April 8, 1978. For further information, send in the form below.

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Bagehot Fellowship Program
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Please send me further information and an application form for the Bagehot Fellowship Program for 1978-79.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTES

Editorial candor

Perhaps the most refreshing editorial seen in recent months appeared over Malcolm Forbes's signature in the December issue of *Forbes* magazine. It began: "One of the dumbest things *Forbes* has supported . . . was 'taking the Post Office out of Politics.' "

Frivolous journalism

Caution signals are going up for the benefit of those editors who have been rushing into lightweight journalism as a marketing device. We have seen the era of "happy talk" in television news, particularly at the local level. On its heels has come a veering away by many newspapers from serious news toward more emphasis on sex, violence, celebrities, household tips, and the like. Even *The New York Times* started promoting itself as offering "a lot more than the news."

All of this has stemmed from efforts at "better marketing," at withstanding a drift of readers to television, and supposed shifts in national tastes.

As chronicled in the *Review* ("Supermarketing the News," September/October), the trend has been pronounced in some papers, aided by the same breed of outside consultants who have jazzed up much of television news.

Heaven knows there's much to be said for modernized layouts, deft use of illustrations, bright writing, and coverage of offbeat human-interest news. But before rushing headlong into trivializing American newspapers, there's occasion for caution.

It should be noted, in the first place, that the top-rated national news broadcast is still the early evening Walter Cronkite broadcast, which deals in straight news and does so responsibly if unstodgily. And there are faint signs that the most frothy trends in local newscasts are slackening.

Now we have the findings of the elaborate Newspaper Readership Proj-

ect. They confirm that newscast viewers and newspaper readers are generally the same individuals, that hard news is what they most want, and that younger citizens are less trivia-minded than some had deduced.

Before going overboard with some of the frothier of the consultants, editors and publishers would do well to study the readership findings with care.

Cigarette ads

As many readers know, the *Columbia Journalism Review* has been going through internal policy discussions as to whether it should accept cigarette advertising.

It put the matter before its alumni Advisory Committee and its faculty Advisory Board. It also discussed the issue with its fellow magazines in the Leadership Network, an advertising cooperative. One committee split evenly; in the other a majority clearly opposed a ban; the other Network magazines also reject a ban.

In the end the issue reverted to the *Review's* management, which has considered the many arguments on each side, including thoughtful submissions by readers. The decision, at least for the present, is that the *Review* will not bar such ads, on those rare occasions when they are submitted, assuming that they continue to bear the Surgeon General's warning in prominent type.

Behind this is the belief that such advertisers, like others, should have reasonable access to the *Review*, even

George C. Wright

It is our sad duty to record the sudden death of a valued colleague, George C. Wright. As the *Review's* advertising director, he did as much as any person to put the *Review* on a firm financial footing, and he did so with wit, enthusiasm, and idealism that his colleagues will greatly miss.

when we disagree, and that the process of selecting ads could lead into the treacherous area of excluding advertisements for any product subject to abuse and, ultimately, for any idea that is distasteful.

Subsidiary considerations include a principle that was previously stated:

Editorially the *Columbia Journalism Review* seeks to champion standards of honest, fair, and decent journalism, dispensing praise or criticism where it seems appropriate. Beyond that the *Review* espouses no partisan positions, no movements, no causes. It does so for the simple reason that the *Review's* central mission is enough to keep it fully engaged, and the baggage of other causes would impair its primary function. . . . Much the same spirit of free speech has governed advertising in the *Review*.

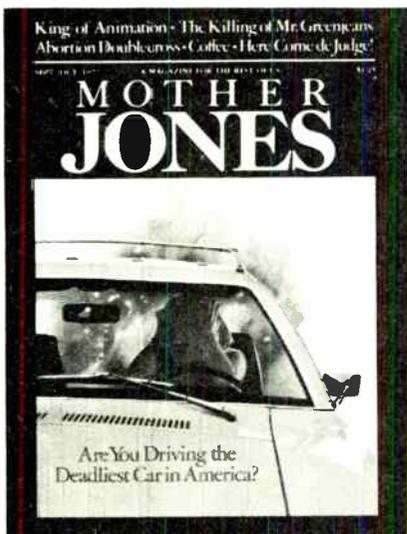
Many readers, we know, will dissent, but it is as close as this management could come to a fair decision. And we are confident that the decision will not impair the *Review's* independence, as may be apparent on page 29.

Readers' advice

Early in 1978, the *Review* will be systematically sampling the opinions of a small cross-section of subscribers. It will be asking questions about the state of journalism and about national and local issues particularly pertaining to journalism. More important, in some ways, it will ask readers for their opinions, their likes and dislikes about the *Review* — what features they enjoy or find valuable, which they find boring or useless, and what they would like to see increased or decreased.

Because of sampling techniques, the chances are overwhelming that you — or any other single reader — will not receive the questionnaire. This is to emphasize that the editors and I will value your views nonetheless. If you have opinions or suggestions about the job that we are doing, won't you be good enough to write us? You may address comments to the publisher. E.W.B.

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Mother Jones isn't just a magazine about politics, literature, music (from Keith Jarrett to Tex-Mex), feminism, cartoons, the environment, movies, psychology, poetry, backpacking, and joy (and anger) — it's all those things and more.

Mother Jones is a magazine for the rest of us. For people who aren't just surviving the age, but who want — and expect — more. For people who are getting ready for the Eighties. Who've broken with the old society, but are still looking for the new. It's a kind of road map, compendium, home companion and provocation to thought — a catalog of possibilities for yourself and the society you won't find anywhere else. Or at least all in one place.

Mother Jones has attracted writers like Studs Terkel, Raymond Mungo, Francis Moore Lappe, Peter Collier, Rita Mae Brown, Barbara Garson, Max Apple, Roger Rapoport, Eugene Genovese, Denise Levertov, and Kirkpatrick Sale. And dozens of new young writers with the promise of a radically different magazine that is complex in times that have grown more simple-minded.

- For its efforts, Mother Jones has sparked Ralph Nader to demand recall of 3 million cars that could immolate their occupants in an accident
- kicked off a Congressional investigation into a defective nuclear power plant
- sent one huge pharmaceutical company reeling with an expose on its birth control device that can kill women who use it
- been praised as "the best slick radical publication in the country" (*The Boston Globe*)

All in just a year and a half of publishing. But that's not all.

You'll find stories in Mother Jones you won't see anywhere else: the Doonesbury cartoons most newspapers wouldn't print... the reasons why, if you smoke in a big city, you'd better check with a doctor for lead poisoning... the full story of the FBI's meanest, most effective agent provocateur... why marriages seem to be falling apart, and what's replacing them, not to mention the random sampling of tidbits like the recipe for Oreo cookie filling... how much money the IRS could collect if dope were legalized... why *The National Enquirer* thinks Teddy Kennedy and Farrah Fawcett-Majors will fall in love... where to find the best roller coasters in America. And more... all in Mother Jones.

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COMMENT

Doublespeak

Shortly after the South African government closed down the country's most influential black newspaper, the *World*, and imprisoned its editor, Percy Qoboza, *New York Times* correspondent John F. Burns interviewed South Africa's minister of justice, James T. Kruger. "I'm very, very sincerely for press freedom, and so is my prime minister," Kruger said to Burns. "We are adherents of press freedom in its full sense."

In his thoughtful essay on the South African press, which appeared on the op-ed page of the October 23 *Times*, Burns went on to say:

From outside South Africa, such formulations read suspiciously like Orwellian doublespeak. Yet to those familiar with this confused and troubled land, there is little doubt that the Afrikaners of the Nationalist Party who hold a monopoly of political power believe what they say. The problem is that their concept of freedom, whether in press matters or anything else, is subordinate to their reverence for the state.

Two other Orwellian developments connected with the South African press caught our attention. First, the Press Council, established by the newspapers of South Africa to ward off government control, was apparently allowing itself to be used to intimidate the press. On October 7, acting on a complaint by Kruger against the *Rand Daily Mail's* coverage of the Stephen Biko case, the council ruled against the newspaper, calling its reporting "tendentious." (The paper had had the temerity to carry out its own investigation of the death of Biko, the country's foremost young black leader; it turned up no evidence of Biko's having died as a result of a hunger strike, as the government was then claiming he had, but instead reported "extensive brain damage and bruising.")

The second Orwellian element was

the doublespeak contained in Kruger's official statement of October 19 on bannings and detentions of opponents of the government. A committee, Kruger said, had been appointed "to make factual reports in relation to certain organizations and publications." Kruger went on to say:

The facts contained in these reports leave no doubt that . . . the publications mentioned in the Government Gazette serve, inter alia, as means for expressing views the publication of which is calculated to endanger the maintenance of public order.

It has consequently been decided . . . to prohibit the publications. In the nature of things I cannot in this statement fully enlarge on the activities of these organizations. . . .

In effect, if we understand doublespeak, Kruger would appear to be saying, I have abundant factual evidence of criminal activity but, in the nature of things, I will keep it to myself, thus justifying whatever it is I choose to do.

For the long-afflicted press of South Africa, such language can be compressed into a simple, menacing message: more trouble ahead.

Rumor as news

"Rumor has it" is the language of scandal sheets. During the climax of New York City's mayoral campaign, however, rumors that then-candidate, subsequently mayor-elect Edward Koch was a homosexual worked their way into the news system until they became the subject of news stories.

How did rumor become news? As *New York Times* reporter Lee Dembart noted in a November 11 story: "An article about Mr. Koch in The New York Times Magazine 10 days before the election first noted the rumors and declared that there was not a shred of evidence to support them." That is one way of looking at the treatment given the rumors in John Corry's October 30

Times Magazine article, "The Koch Story."

In his article, Corry, a *Times* reporter and columnist, justified the attention he gave to rumor by writing: "Politics being politics, rumors about Koch being a homosexual were almost certain to arise, and if they did not simply arise they would surely be provoked." What the second half of this sentence means is anybody's guess, but the first half is clear enough in context, for Koch is a bachelor who lives in Greenwich Village — local journalistic code words for a homosexual.

Corry's rationale is not persuasive. Politics is politics, all right. But journalism is journalism, and the *Times* plays a large role in the world of journalism, being both the self-proclaimed arbiter of what is fit to print and an acknowledged legitimizer of news. Before the publication of Corry's article, the rumor had not appeared in the news. Rumors about Koch being a homosexual had been circulating in the city for weeks, as subsequent articles would point out; there was probably not a journalist in town who had not heard them. Presumably, all were waiting for an event or public statement that would justify referring to them in a news story. In this competitive situation, Corry did not wait for a political figure to smear Koch; he broke the story of the rumor and then stated: "There is not the slightest evidence to suggest that Koch is now, or ever was, a homosexual. . . ." (Internal evidence indicates that Corry was subtly suggesting the contrary; in his lead paragraph, for example, Corry describes Koch as leaving a room "with a wave of the hand and a little glad cry" — an Edwardian patch that sticks out like a signal.) With defenders like Corry, Koch might have asked himself, who needed accusers?

Corry broached the subject of Koch's rumored homosexuality in the course of speculating on the nature of the candi-

date's relationship with Bess Myerson, a former Miss America who served as a co-manager in Koch's campaign. "Miss Myerson is a formidable political talent, and her affection for Koch is genuine," Corry wrote, "but one of her functions is to dispel rumors that he is a homosexual." Since Corry does not attribute this statement to any source, it would appear to be his personal conclusion.

The publication of Corry's article on October 30 opened the way for the rest of the media. That Sunday afternoon, during a televised debate among the four mayoral candidates, a reporter asked Koch if Corry's comment about Myerson's role in his campaign was true. Koch said it was not and called it "vicious." Nevertheless, as Geoffrey Stokes observed in a November 7 *Village Voice* article headlined **SMEAR NEWS IS NO NEWS**, the speculation "was news, and in the radio interviews that followed, Koch was again and again called on to describe his sexual orientation. Finally, in response to a question from WNEW news, he said, 'I don't happen to be homosexual, but if I were, I would hope that I wouldn't be ashamed of it. God makes you whatever you are.'" Corry's story had put Koch in a position analogous to that of a fifties liberal forced to deny that he was, or ever had been, a Communist.

In early November, the Associated Press became entangled in the rumor story. The A.P. learned that the president of the city's Patrolmen's Benevolent Association claimed to have information damaging to Koch. In an interview with representatives of the wire service, however, the P.B.A. president

refused to go beyond saying that his information involved an assault case, which had occurred a dozen years ago, in which Koch allegedly was attacked in his apartment but had refused to press charges. Given the context of recent reporting, readers could be expected to conclude that it was Koch's fear of being revealed as a homosexual that had kept him from pressing charges.

A.P. prepared a story, and stamped it "Hold." Koch was given a copy to review; by mistake, his principal opponent in the election, Mario M. Cuomo, also received a copy. Koch said he thought this sort of smear "went out with Nixon," adding, "If anybody has any information I challenge them to release it. Of course they don't have any information." Cuomo said he did not like the story and deplored "the circulation of what is innuendo and rumor." The A.P. belatedly decided that the story lacked documentation and that its release on the eve of the election would be "improper and unfair to all sides." But while the wire service was pondering what to do with the story, copies of it were mysteriously turning up at news desks around the city. As the A.P. reported in a November 9 story slugged "Dirty Campaign," which provided details of its own involvement: "Within hours, copies of the internal AP story began circulating in the city. . . . The AP's New York Bureau was deluged with telephone calls Saturday night, Sunday and Monday. Many callers falsely claimed to be reporters and said they thought the story needed to be released. One newspaper received a copy of the story anonymously with a note asking

why the story was being hushed up."

The A.P. account concluded: "All this about a story that was never more than a draft but which, once launched into the chase of rumors, soon became part of the whispering campaign."

On November 10, mayor-elect Koch requested the city's commissioner of investigation to ascertain whether the president of the P.B.A. did, in fact, have any damaging information. The results of the investigation were announced eleven days later. The *Times* report bore the headline **RUMORS ABOUT KOCH ARE FOUND BASELESS**.

The *Times* had come full circle. In the process, it had contributed little to responsible journalism, except insofar as it cleaned up the dirt it let drop at the start.

Darts and laurels

Dart: to United Press International, for a thick-skinned report on October 14 that told of a teenage girl who had been raped at knifepoint, forced to commit an act of sodomy, stabbed twice, and left bleeding and naked in the woods, then concluded that the victim had not been "seriously" injured.

Laurel: to *The Cincinnati Post* and the *Kentucky Post*, for publishing — within twelve hours of its release on September 18 and without advance planning or promotion — the complete, 47,000-word official blockbuster on the conditions that led to the tragic Beverly Hills Supper Club fire in Southgate, Kentucky, in which 164 lives were lost.

Dart: to the thirty-four editors, editorial writers, and other opinion-making journalists, representing such major papers as the *New York Daily News*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Florida Times-Union*, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, and the *Omaha World-Herald*, who together with their wives accepted an invitation to a "National Issues Seminar" at an all-expenses-paid October weekend at L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington. The freebie was sponsored by the United States Industrial Council Educational Foundation, a business group (advisory board president, Joseph Coors) whose



stated purpose is “to express the voice of free enterprise from the conservative viewpoint.”

Laurel: to the four Post-Newsweek television stations (WPLG Miami, WJXT Jacksonville, WFSB Hartford, and WTOP Washington), for “Nobody Ever Asked Me,” an imaginative and popular experiment in ascertaining the broadcasting needs of their respective communities. Preempting entire evenings of network prime time, the locally produced programs utilized live audiences, remote pick-ups, and telephone calls (collect) from viewers.

Dart: to *The Arizona Republic* for a lapse of judgment. Its November 10 story on the National Stuttering Project was headlined S-STUTTER CLUB FINDS H-H-HOPE.

Laurel: to WRFM New York and community affairs director Beverly Poppell, for an October series, “After the Fact,” a thoughtful exploration, in nineteen three-minute segments, of various aspects of media reporting of violence and crime.

Dart: to the *New York Post*, for its hysterical coverage of the American fall lecture tour, with State Department approval, of publisher Rupert Murdoch’s fellow Australian, journalist Wilfred Burchett, variously described in the paper’s November 18-19-20-21 blitz as a “communist newsman,” “Soviet

K.G.B. agent,” and “veteran operative of the international Communist propaganda machine” who was “involved in the interrogation and torture of American PWs in Korea and Vietnam.” Burchett, whose tour included open meetings at public and private universities from Harvard to Stanford, a talk at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, and a television appearance on ABC, once again denied the charges (rehearsed as well in *The Boston Herald American*). “The only agency that ever tried to recruit me,” wrote Burchett in the *Guardian*, for which he has been a staff correspondent for the past twenty years, “is the C.I.A.”

Laurel: to CBS’s *60 Minutes*, for disquieting investigations, on November 6 and 13, of breakfast cereals and hair dyes, not noticeably calculated to win the gratitude of General Foods and Clairol, two of the network’s heaviest advertisers.

Dart: to *Esquire*, *Vogue*, and *Motor Trend* magazines, for putting their editorial names on the dotted advertising line, by allowing photographers representing their publications to praise the glories of the Chrysler Cordoba both on television commercials and in print ads — an ad that also, incidentally, appeared in *Esquire* itself.

Laurel: to Larry LaRue, staff writer for the Long Beach, California *Inde-*

pendent Press-Telegram, for his courageous letter to the paper’s publisher, Dan Ridder, in which he chastised him for “precisely the form of journalism you said our paper did not practice when you responded to the *Los Angeles Times* articles a year ago” (“Why the L.A. Times Slammed a Neighbor,” *CJR*, March/April 1977). Specifically, LaRue objected to a November 13 editorial, “Nine Cents for Health” — a defense of the local hospital system and its costs, urging readers to rely on information published in the hospitals’ series of paid advertisements then running in the *I,P-T*, and ignoring altogether material to the contrary that had been gathered by the paper’s own reporters. The paper’s head editorial writer is a board member of one of the hospitals.

Gate happy

Ever since Watergate, the suffix “gate” has served headline writers as a handy means of suggesting to readers that they are in for another important Capitol Hill thriller. Is such advertising misleading? Columnist William Safire of *The New York Times* thought that the Lance affair deserved the suffix and wrote repeatedly about “Lancegate,” but few journalists followed his lead. And then there was — or perhaps is — “Koreagate.” Does

Other opinions

- Not to underestimate the intelligence of the audience and not to overestimate its information.
- To elucidate when one can, more than to advocate. . . .
- To retain the courage of one’s doubts as well as one’s convictions, in this world of dangerously passionate certainties.
- To comfort oneself, in times of error, with the knowledge that the saving grace of the press, print or broadcast, is its self-correcting nature.
- And to remember that ignorant and biased reporting has its counterpart in ignorant and biased reading and listening. — *Eric Sevareid’s rules for him-*

self, as recalled in his farewell broadcast on CBS, November 30, 1977.

One of the most important factors to consider in meeting the terrorist challenge is that of time and patience. And if the whole nation is watching on television, you’re under a lot of pressure to get it over with. . . . The police are almost under a compulsion to get it over with. The trouble isn’t just that the public watches too many cop shows; the cops watch too many cop shows, too. — *Dr. Frederick J. Hacker, expert on terrorism, in a Penthouse interview, November 1977.*

[ABC] has taken the Saturday-morning cartoon shows and moved them into prime time as live-action shows. This is

comic-book stuff, cartoon-style without the cartooning, and I say it is junk. — *Robert J. Wussler, in an interview with Les Brown in The New York Times, September 30, 1977, two weeks before his replacement as CBS-TV president.*

I don’t think a journalist should become involved in high-level diplomacy, but it is a journalist’s duty to pursue these diplomatic pronouncements. I wasn’t trying to get this meeting started. My official attitude is I couldn’t care less about it, though I can’t help believing it will be important and helpful. — *Walter Cronkite, commenting on the CBS Evening News double interview with Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin that preceded Sadat’s visit to Israel, as quoted in Time November 28, 1977.*

the South Korea scandal story merit the portentous suffix?

In an editorial-page article which appeared in the October 6, 1977, *Wall Street Journal*, Jerry Landauer, of the *Journal's* Washington bureau, suggested that the press may have been too quick to award the scandal gate-hood.

To begin with [Landauer writes], in the capital these days a scandal isn't a scandal until important segments of the media "discover" it. Once perceived, a scandalous situation is likely to dominate the news, for no newspaper editor or television executive wants to miss another Watergate. Then, as more news people pounce on the story, competitive pressures can overshadow fair play, resulting in overstated coverage that may not end until another "scandal" comes along to divert the media's attention.

Obviously, this doesn't mean that a foreign effort to subvert Congress isn't a legitimate subject for tough, incisive reporting. But so far the available facts about South Korean influence schemes seem to cast doubt on whether the lavish media attention has been warranted.

Landauer nails down his first point — that a scandal isn't a scandal until the media notice it — by pointing out that the outlines of the story had begun to emerge more than two years ago, in testimony given to a House subcommittee by Jai Hyon Lee, a defector from the South Korean diplomatic service. Lee alleged an overall scheme of clandestine operations in the U.S. by the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency, including payoffs to American politicians. "The media ignored him," writes Landauer; it took six months longer for South Korea to catch the fancy of the press.

To illustrate another major point — that as more news people pounce on a story, competitive pressures may result in overstated coverage — Landauer shows how swiftly the numbers of those supposedly implicated in the scandal escalated in press accounts. In February 1976, *The Washington Post* reported that two members of Congress were under investigation for taking South Korean bribes; by October, the *Post* had upped the number to twenty-two, while, not to be outdone, *The New York Times*

in the same month reported the "possible involvement of 90 members." By July 1977, the *Times* was saying that as many as 115 former or current Congressmen might be "involved" in unethical conduct.

Officials at the Justice Department and the special investigating staff of the House ethics committee, Landauer writes, are mystified by the escalating numbers. "Whatever the 115 number was meant to represent," Landauer quotes an aide to special counsel Leon Jaworski as saying, "it is exceedingly misleading." Landauer also quotes Attorney General Griffin Bell's response when asked to comment on press accounts suggesting a very broad scandal involving lots of Congressmen: "Well, if there is evidence, we haven't found it."

Landauer also points out how the media, having worked the House angle for all it was worth, then moved the story into the Senate. This was inevitable, he suggests, because "scandals must always seem to be 'growing,' 'spreading,' or 'widening,' lest they appear stale. . . ." The upshot was that after a week "of what is called investigative reporting, the media had cast an unsavory scent over the entire Senate, without identifying a single questionable act by even one named member. . . ."

The modest moral that Landauer extracts from his survey of coverage is: "In the rush to be first, reporters and editors should not forget that it's more important to be fair."

Gate-happy editors, take note.

Cross section

A respectful story in *Editor & Publisher* for October 1 described the funding of various projects in business journalism by the Foundation for Economic Freedom, an arm of the National Association of Manufacturers. The foundation announced the formation of a communication advisory council on the assumption that, according to the story, "inclusion of these working journalists . . . is believed to offset any fear that the program is designed to achieve a favorable press for business." The panel comprised two

syndicated columnists, the editor of *The Detroit News*, the managing editor of *Reader's Digest*, a journalism dean, a vice-president of the National Association of Broadcasters, Herbert F. Klein (formerly of the White House and *Metromedia*), the economics editor of the *Hearst Newspapers*, the public-affairs manager of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, and the editor of a small conservative magazine. If this is what American business thinks of as a convocation of "working journalists," one of the problems it has in getting its message across is apparent already.

Save the lunch

It is heartening to read that news media have rallied against a new federal threat — President Carter's proposal to limit deductions for business meals. The editorial writer at *The Wall Street Journal* argued (November 14) that lunches had to stay deductible to save jobs in the restaurant industry. Others tackled more basic issues. Robert D. Hershey, Jr., filing from London for *The New York Times* for October 21, surveyed the eating habits of Europe and found the business lunch a universal boon, meeting "basic human needs of food and companionship. It even offers the desk-bound worker the mild adventure of ordering dishes he might never try if he were paying the bill himself." And *Time* for October 10 propounded the superiority of restaurant over office: "The expense-account meal stretches an executive's time by enabling him to conduct business over a lunch table, and the atmosphere in many restaurants, where both host and guest are on neutral turf and no phones ring, affords a more congenial setting for discussion than an office." As to Carter's charges about "three-martini" lunches, *Time* dismissed them as all but nonexistent. Obviously, the balance of wisdom among those most accustomed to commenting on public policy lies on the side of the expense-account lunch. Nonpartakers may be grateful that they have an opportunity, through their taxes, to support this valuable adjunct of American life.

**A free press can of course
be good or bad, but, most certainly,
without freedom it will never
be anything but bad.**

Albert Camus

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Knight-Ridder wants to know the real you

Do the psychological tests given by
the nation's biggest chain invade journalists' privacy?

by FRANCIS POLLOCK

As strange as it may sound, many personnel managers are purporting to pass on the level of an individual's "neuroticism," "alienation," "drive," and "stability," by a process that often is not appreciably more scientific than measuring the size and shape of the subject's head. As Martin L. Gross has indicated, we are passively watching business and government conduct a nationwide quest for the Square Ameri-

can; their divining rod is a selection of tests that more often than not merely reflect the biases of their creators, thereby perversely giving a premium to those examination subjects who know how to psych the psycher.

The potential dangers to individual privacy from misuse of raw psychological test data are obvious. Disclosure of the individual's responses to sensitive questions or over-all scores might cause

him acute embarrassment as well as professional and economic injury. . . .

We must bring an end to the growing practice of relying on test results as a crutch — a practice that encourages users to abdicate their responsibility to formulate an independent judgment about people. . . .

from **The Assault on Privacy:
Computers, Data Banks, and Dossiers,**
by Arthur R. Miller

Nowadays, if you want to become a reporter for the respected Knight-Ridder chain, you must take a test that measures — among other things — your masculinity and femininity. And if you happen to be a woman, your prospects are better if you score high on the masculinity scale.

If you want to become an editor, you may have to take a psychological test that purports to measure your drives, needs, sentiments, conflicts, complexes, and fantasies. You will be asked to draw a picture of a man, of a woman, and of yourself, and your pictures will be instrumental in determining if you are suitable for the Knight-Ridder team.

Francis Pollock is a free-lance journalist who specializes in consumer affairs.

Knight-Ridder's psychological assessment program, a rarity in the newspaper industry but not in industry generally, has been under development for more than a decade. Recently, the influence of the chain's psychologists on the company's decision-making process has become so pervasive that few applicants are hired and few employees promoted without the guidance of the psychologists. Their judgments are said by their subjects to be uncannily accurate.

Some journalists who have taken the tests have raised questions as to their usefulness and propriety. Elizabeth Williams, who this summer left her job as the Philadelphia *Bulletin's* Delaware editor to become a news editor at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, a Knight-Ridder paper, says, "I thought the tests were

ridiculously detailed and not relevant to what was needed of me as a journalist." Williams's comment was typical of many. Others expressed mixed feelings. One was Jerry Bellone, formerly city editor of Knight-Ridder's *Philadelphia Daily News* and now managing editor of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, *Morning Call*, who said: "The greatest danger of such testing is that it tends to pigeonhole people, almost to quantify them. I'm not knocking the tests, as well-intentioned as they are and as scientific as they can be. It's just that they can be evaluated so subjectively."

Richard Ramsey, national contracts secretary for The Newspaper Guild, says the whole idea of such testing frightens him. The company's policy is never to show the evaluations to the sub-

'I want to know the aberrations everyone has'

Eugene Roberts, executive editor, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

ject, only to explain them, much as a credit bureau is exempted by law from having to give a person his or her credit report but is required by the same law to explain the report orally when requested to do so. And Knight-Ridder guards the completed tests so zealously that any employee's demand for a copy of his or her test responses for their personal files would probably be strongly resisted. The Guild's position, as explained by Ramsey, is that employees have the right to inspect and to respond to all the information in their personnel files. "If those tests are being used in a way that affects employment," says Ramsey, "the employee damned well has a right to see them."

Knight-Ridder editors and psychologists, for their part, stress the value of the psychological assessment program in maintaining the chain's reputation. They speak of the "diversity" it brings. "We have the widest possible variety of personality types you could imagine," says Lee Hills, chairman of Knight-Ridder's board of directors. As if to make the same point, a top editor of the chain's *Philadelphia Inquirer* invited me to tour the newsroom with him "to see what kind of diversity is out there."

The tests, these same people emphasize, are but one of several elements weighed in the process of deciding whether to hire or promote a person. (Some, as if to underscore this point, volunteered the information that people who had done "poorly" or "flunked" the tests had nevertheless been hired or promoted.) How much weight does management accord the results of the tests? According to Arnold Kerman, personnel director for both *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Daily News*, "Twenty-five percent or so of the decision is based on the psychological assessments. Another twenty-five each is placed on past history, personal feeling or 'gut reaction' of the editor making the decision, and the result of our reference

check." Eugene Roberts, the *Inquirer's* executive editor, says that he puts "the most reliance on past work record." The psychological tests, Roberts adds, "can raise negative or positive flags, suggesting in the case of negatives that we look more diligently into a person's background." Elaborating on how he uses the tests, Roberts told me, "I want to know the aberrations everyone has." After pausing, as if surprised by what he had just said, he went on: "They tell us about the ability to work with people, to accept criticism, that sort of thing."

One criticism of such testing is that it may reveal things about people's sex lives. Knight-Ridder executives insist that their program does not. "I don't look for anything in their sex lives," Kerman said. "We're not interested in this." Asked how he avoids dealing with sexual proclivities that might be revealed through tests and interviews, he replied: "I really can't, but I just don't report them." Kerman and other Knight-Ridder executives go on to say that the tests they use elicit little about one's sex life. "You're giving us too much credit," said Kerman. Roberts, asked whether he concerned himself with the sexual tendencies of his employees, said no. "It doesn't make any kind of difference to me. I've had homosexuals work with me — I'm not necessarily speaking about here at the *Inquirer*. But if I had a man who ran around pinching fannies, that would bother me. Or a man who goosed another man at the water fountain — that would bother me."

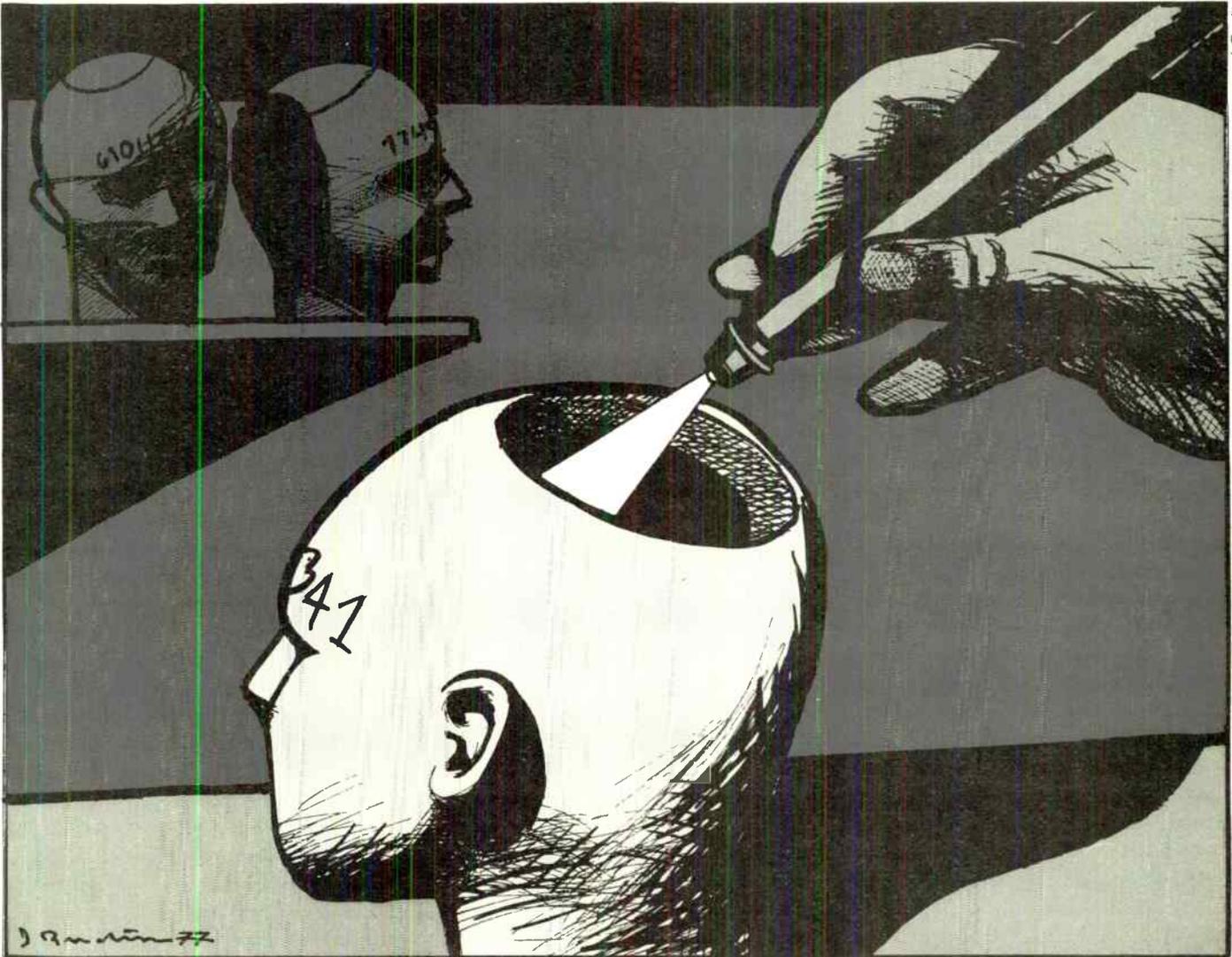
Knight-Ridder management people assert that the tests are not compulsory and that job applicants and employees seeking promotion will be considered even though they refuse to take the tests. These assertions seem somewhat hollow, however, in light of the fact that Knight-Ridder's personnel people do not volunteer the information that the tests are optional. ("They *never* do"

was the unanimous gist of what Knight-Ridder reporters and editors said.) Moreover, Kerman concedes, of the approximately 8,000 potential employees who have been tested over the past eight years, only two have refused to take the tests. Supposedly, their refusal to do so did not hurt their chances, yet Kerman's comments on another part of the application procedure make one wonder. No one, he says, *has* to sign the authorization for a background and credit check that appears at the end of every Knight-Ridder application for employment. But, he adds, if an applicant does not sign, "He may have something to hide."

A former Knight-Ridder executive, who declined to be named, says: "This psychological testing is a Byron Harless invention. Harless started pushing it in the mid-sixties, just before he came aboard full-time. He really believes in the goddamned stuff."

Harless, who "came aboard" Knight-Ridder in 1970 after having served as a consultant to the chain, says that he has been doing personnel consulting for newspapers since the 1950s. He is now a senior vice-president of Knight-Ridder and a member of the company's board of directors.

All the senior Knight-Ridder editors interviewed — people who typically study dozens of psychological evaluations of reporters and editors each year — said they had initially been wary of the program but were no longer apprehensive. The comment of James Batten, a long-time editor and now group vice president for news, was typical: "I feel very affirmative about the way it's been handled. I think a lot has to do with the sensitivity of Byron Harless." Knight-Ridder chairman Lee Hills said that he was so suspicious of the idea of making editors and reporters take psychological tests that he subjected himself to such testing by two teams of psy-



chologists. "Only then was I convinced of its merits," Hills said. "I was satisfied that, if it was done professionally, it was a useful tool."

When I first spoke with them, both Harless and Douglas Harris, the chain's vice-president for personnel, were reluctant to discuss their psychological assessment program in any but the most general terms. Harris declined even to name the tests used, saying by way of explanation: "We do not want to give anyone an opportunity to bone up on the tests. Some people, seeking to change jobs, might go out and buy the tests." Similarly, Harless said, "If you publish anything about the tests, we'll just have to change them."

Several days after these first guarded conversations, there was an abrupt change. Harless invited me to come to Knight-Ridder's headquarters in Miami "to go through the whole program." I

declined the invitation, but in subsequent interviews Harless was much more cooperative in discussing the procedures Knight-Ridder uses to size people up.

At the reportorial level, the key psychological test is the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey, which measures applicants in ten areas: general activity, restraint, ascendance, sociability, emotional stability, objectivity, friendliness, thoughtfulness, personal relations, and masculinity. (Harless calls the "masculinity-femininity" scale "typical psychological nomenclature and a bad description of what is really being tested.") This element of the test, he says, tells whether the person is more inclined to "tangible or esthetic activities.")

Assessment of editors up for promotion and would-be editors is more thorough. He or she will probably go to

Miami for a "management evaluation." One part of this is what Harless calls "a lengthy, two-way, in-depth interview," in which the person under consideration and a staff psychologist discuss the person's performance to date and such other matters as may come up. Then, says Harless, the person "may or may not" take the tests currently being used by Knight-Ridder. (Most do, he said.) The basic psychological test administered is the Bryon Harless, Schaeffer, Reid & Associates Test of Individual Thinking. It includes such open-ended sentences as "All men _____," "All women _____," which those tested are to complete.

The following list of desirable attributes, derived from interviews and other sources, would seem to represent an accurate, if partial, description of the sort of person wanted by the executives of

'Should corporations be encouraging us to be more aggressive than we already are?'

the nation's largest chain in terms of daily circulation (3,725,000).

□ *The ideal Knight-Ridder reporter or editor must be highly motivated and productive.* Even before Knight-Ridder started using the psychological testing program to the extent it does now, the chain had a reputation for attracting such people. Now, with the use of the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey and other tests, the company can gauge a person's "energy level" even before he or she is hired. If it's high, that's good.

□ *By and large, Knight-Ridder's female reporters and editors are expected to have "masculine" tendencies.* A list of those tendencies can be found in the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey, which was devised in the 1930s and has been modified over the years. Supposedly, the kind of female reporter Knight-Ridder is after will score high in such categories as "interest in masculine activities," "inhibits emotional expression," and "hard-boiled." All the female reporters and editors who had received an explanation of their test results that I interviewed told me they had scored high on the "masculinity" scale.

□ *The reporter or editor must be competitive – the more competitive the better.* There's a saying at Knight-Ridder that on the back of every reporter are a few footprints; the ones with the fewest footprints become the editors. How do the psychologists ascertain one's competitiveness even before hiring? Here again one turns to the Guilford-Zimmerman test, in particular the categories labeled "Belligerence/friendliness," "Sociability/shyness," and "Ascendance/submissiveness."

□ *The editors will be "team players," who will, however, never lose sight of their obligations to the news product in order to "keep people satisfied."* "Getting the job done" seems to be the key ingredient for success as a Knight-Ridder editor, although to lose sight of

the interdependence of the reporters and other editors who help to get the job done could lead to managerial disaster. This information is pieced together from a booklet entitled *Styles of Management*, prepared by the Knight-Ridder psychological team and sometimes used at seminars attended by the chain's editors and other management people. There are, of course, many ways of emphasizing the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses of the people working for you as you try to get the job done right. To simplify matters, Byron Harless speaks of the need for a "Patton" or "Marshall" type in a given situation, referring to the dissimilar American generals of World War II fame. The "Patton" type "kicks butts around" to get maximum efficiency; the "Marshall" type exercises a "diplomatic" approach to obtain the same goal. In any event, the ideal Knight-Ridder editor is the one who gets the best out of his or her foot soldiers.

None of these qualities, except perhaps "masculinity" in women, is out of line with what most newspaper executives hope to find in their employees. What is extraordinary within the world of journalism, then, is not the type wanted but the means used to provide the employer an additional gauge of a person's nature and potential. The question arises whether the resultant information is really worth the effort, and, further, whether the tests may not reveal more about one's ability to survive and rise within a bureaucracy than they do about one's abilities as a journalist.

The courts have recognized the right of an employer to use tests; at the same time, however, they have insisted that the tests must be "validated," that is, the test's relevance to the work for which the person is being considered must be clearly established. A case in point is being fought out in Jersey City.

A group of would-be firemen and former firemen seeking reinstatement is suing that city's government on the ground that certain sections of a controversial psychological test they were required to take, the results of which were cited as evidence of their unfitness, bear no demonstrable relationship to the job of fighting fires.

It was the complex matter of validating psychological tests for newspaper work that prompted the Hackensack, New Jersey, *Record* to drop such tests "about five or six years ago," according to Alvin Miller, the paper's vice-president for personnel. Miller says the paper feared that the tests might be raised as an issue in a civil rights suit "since we hadn't validated them." He adds that he has heard of no other papers outside the Knight-Ridder chain that use such tests today and that most who have considered using them have not done so "because they feel it's too controversial."

Knight-Ridder executives assert that their tests have been validated. Meanwhile, the chain's in-depth personality testing raises ethical questions. Among others: should applicants and employees be required or even asked to submit to a procedure originally designed to increase self-knowledge but that is being used instead to amass corporate knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses, desires and fantasies? Should corporations be encouraging us to be more assertive, more aggressive than we already are?

More specifically, should psychological assessment be a part of the news business? The generals in the Knight-Ridder hierarchy are convinced that they should be. As a result, their foot soldiers take the tests as they enter the ranks or rise in them. When such supposedly independent-minded and "diverse" people as those editors and reporters obediently bare their psyches on corporate orders, *that* is something to worry about. ■

The magazines' smoking habit

Magazines that have accepted growing amounts of cigarette advertising have failed to cover tobacco's threat to health

by R. C. SMITH

In the seven years that cigarette advertising has been banned from radio and television, American magazines have enjoyed huge increases in revenue from cigarette advertisements. According to *Advertising Age*, the five major tobacco companies spent more than \$62 million on magazine advertising in 1970, the year before the ban; by 1976 they were spending nearly \$152 million. During that same period, the proportion of all cigarette advertising expenditures that went to magazines doubled. From 1971 through 1976 the tobacco companies spent more than \$706 million on magazine advertising, and 1977 expenditures are sure to bring the total to well over \$800 million for the seven years that the broadcast advertising ban has been in effect.

During those same seven years, more than half a million Americans have died of lung cancer. The American Cancer Society's authoritative *Cancer Facts & Figures* estimates that more than 400,000 of those deaths were due to cigarette smoking. The 1978 edition of *Cancer Facts & Figures* adds that in addition to being responsible for an estimated 80 percent of all lung cancer deaths, cigarettes have been "impli-

cated in other diseases, ranging from colds and gastric ulcers to chronic bronchitis, emphysema, heart disease and hazards to unborn children." The A.C.S. concludes that "altogether cancer and other diseases due to smoking cause more than 250,000 premature deaths each year." During the seven years since cigarette ads were taken off the air, A.C.S. estimates suggest, well over a million and a half Americans have died of smoking-related disease.

The Tobacco Institute, which speaks for the tobacco industry, continues to insist that a cause-and-effect relationship between cigarettes and lung cancer, emphysema, or heart disease has yet to be established, and that more research is needed. Nevertheless, most experts in the field now seem to believe that enough is known to identify cigarettes as a major health hazard.

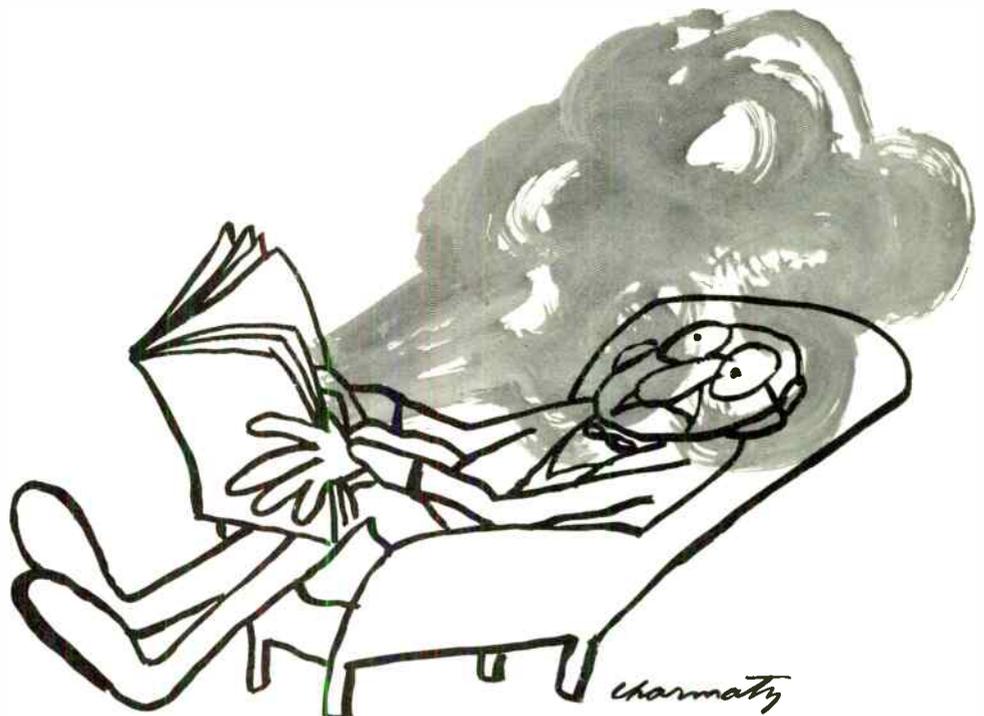
"Practically nothing in medicine is as clear," Daniel Horn, head of the federal National Clearinghouse on Smoking and Health, told *The Washington Star* recently. "It's ridiculous to continue to

argue about whether or not smoking is harmful."

In addition to the smoking-related deaths, there are the huge social costs that are consequences of smoking. A recent National Cancer Institute publication estimated that \$17 billion annually in medical care, accidents, lost work-time, and lowered productivity could be laid to smoking. (It has been estimated that 10 percent of all medical and health-care costs are smoking-related.)

By anyone's measure, these estimates of the toll in lives and resources claimed by the cigarette-smoking habit ought to recommend the subject to any American magazine that claims to serve its readers by keeping them informed of important social issues. Such simply has not been the case.

A survey of the leading national magazines that might have been expected to report on the subject reveals a striking and disturbing pattern. In magazines that accept cigarette advertising I was unable to find a single article, in seven years of publication, that would



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have given readers any clear notion of the nature and extent of the medical and social havoc being wreaked by the cigarette-smoking habit. The records of magazines that refuse cigarette ads, or that do not accept advertising at all, were considerably better.

Of all magazines, *Reader's Digest* over the years has provided the most thorough and aggressive coverage of the links between cigarettes and disease. At least since the 1950s the *Digest* has published a steady stream of articles on the subject, most of them medically authoritative, and all but one of them generated by the *Digest* itself (the lone exception came from the *Christian Herald*). The magazine's 1976 output of articles on cigarettes and health provides an impressive example of the *Digest's* coverage. In January there was "What Smoking Does to Women"; in May, "Cigarettes — and Sudden Death" (subtitled "Every cigarette smoker should witness an autopsy like this"); in July, "Time to Crack the Tobacco Lobby!"; in August, "Beware that Cigarette Cough"; and in October and December a two-part series, "Poison Gases in Your Cigarettes," which described the results of a *Digest*-sponsored analysis of the levels of carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, and nitrogen oxides found in cigarettes. The *Digest's* performance over the years has been unique. No doubt the prose at times was too strong for many journalists ("... black lungs sliced open on a cutting board, the brain in a jar of Formalin, are shocking post-mortem exhibits of an appalling indifference to the most serious health problem in this country today"), especially during the early years of the cigarette controversy, when the magazine's coverage was considerably ahead of its time. Nevertheless, the *Digest's* handling of the medical evidence against smoking has been exemplary.

The only other magazine that has devoted much space to the subject has been *The New Yorker*. It has published a number of long articles by reporter Thomas Whiteside on the subject of the political and advertising strategies employed by the tobacco industry to counter the growing concern of the public and the government over the dangers of cigarette smoking. Much that is

known about the shrewd and tireless efforts of the tobacco companies to keep their products before the public has been due to Whiteside's articles. (Last June, in an editorial, *The New Yorker* also criticized magazines, including the *Review*, for continuing to accept cigarette advertising.)

In May 1976, *Consumer Reports*, which accepts no advertising, examined "The Changing World of Cigarettes," noting in one article the tobacco industry's switch to low-tar, low-nicotine cigarettes and, in a second article, describing the great increase in cigarette advertising in magazines and newspapers. The magazine urged Congress to ban all cigarette advertising.

The *Washington Monthly*, a magazine that does not accept cigarette advertising, has run at least two strong articles on cigarettes. One, published in June 1977, was "How to Make the Tobacco Companies Pay for Cancer," by Seth Kupferberg. The other was "The Cigarette Scandal" (February 1976), written by contributing editor James Fallows, who is now President Carter's chief speechwriter. Fallows summarized the medical evidence against smoking, traced the anomalies of the government's tobacco policies, and concluded with a denunciation of publications that justify accepting cigarette advertisements on free-speech grounds.

The records of national magazines that accept cigarette advertising can only be called dismal. A few have published how-to-quit articles from time to time (itself an admirable thing to do, to be sure), although even those are comparatively rare. But anyone who depended on those magazines for reporting on the subject of cigarettes as a major public-health problem would have found nothing at all in many magazines, and only glancing references in others, primarily the newsmagazines.

The so-called women's service magazines, with the exception of *Good Housekeeping*, which does not accept cigarette ads, have not done their readers the service of telling them about what cigarettes contribute to the ill-health of our society. No full-length articles appeared in *Ladies' Home Journal*, nor in *Cosmopolitan*. Not even

Ms., during its six years of publication, has done anything substantial with the subject. Thus, readers of *Ms.* may not know of their progress toward one kind of equality they perhaps could do without: the lung cancer death rate for women is climbing steadily, and threatens to equal that of men — largely, health officials say, because American women began smoking decades later than men and usually smoked less. An editor at *Ms.* quite frankly linked *Ms.'s* failure to publish anything about cigarettes and health to the fact that the magazine is "heavily dependent on cigarette advertising." She added, with some irony, that *Ms.* had rejected an ad for Virginia Slims cigarettes ("You've come a long way, baby") — because it was sexist.

The affluent men's magazines, always generously endowed with cigarette ads, also have avoided the subject. *Penthouse* has published no articles on the consequences of smoking. Nor has *Playboy* — its editors thinking, perhaps, that such articles might not be welcome to readers whose "lust is for life."

The most curious performances of all are those of the two major news-magazines, *Time* and *Newsweek*. (*U.S. News & World Report* has been interested in only one aspect of the tobacco story: cigarette sales.) While both have reported the individual new pieces of evidence of the ill effects of cigarette smoking on health, neither magazine, in the seven-year period, has published anything resembling a comprehensive account of the subject. (Both magazines carry an average of six to eight pages of cigarette advertisements in each issue.)

It was not because the news they cover each week gave them no news "peg" on which to hang such an account. In fact, both magazines were given a perfect opportunity in January 1976, when a book with the unlovely title *Persons at High Risk of Cancer* was published under the auspices of the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society. The book prompted *Newsweek* to do a cover story, in its January 26, 1976 issue, entitled "What Causes Cancer?"

One would expect that cigarettes, as the leading single cause of cancer in the environment, would be identified as such somewhere in the six-page article.

They were not so identified. In fact, the oddest feature of the article, in which a scientist is quoted as saying that the U.S. faces "a major epidemic" of cancer, was the absence of any estimates at all of the nature and extent of the epidemic. To its credit, the story did mention, in several passing references, that cigarettes are carcinogenic. This, on the third page of the article, was the strongest reference:

The outcry that follows each successive new disclosure of a possible carcinogen on the dinner table or in the work shop tends to obscure the fact that 60 million Americans continue to expose themselves to tobacco — the least disputed carcinogen of all.

No one, in *Newsweek's* account, dies of cancer; people are merely "exposed" to a "hazard." Thus, the article overlooked estimates in *Persons at High Risk of Cancer* that of 99,500 preventable cancer deaths each year, 80,000 were linked to cigarette smoking. Moreover, *Newsweek's* chart of the "Top Ten Suspects" in causing cancer listed the ten suspected carcinogens in alphabetical order, with no estimates of their

relative importance, and with tobacco appearing ninth, after substances such as arsenic, benzene, and benzidine.

(The June 1976 *Harper's* magazine did a somewhat better job with numbers in a sixteen-page section entitled "The Anti-Social Cell: An Inquiry Into the Nature of Cancer." Its table of "The Most Common Cancers" cited the A.C.S.'s estimates of 84,000 U.S. deaths from lung cancer in 1976; the estimate that "possibly 80 percent of lung cancer would be prevented if cigarette smoking were stopped"; and the fact that smokers also run a higher risk of cancer of the larynx, oral cavity, bladder, and pancreas. The section contained a few other brief references to the link between cigarettes and cancer. The information was sketchy, but it was the best I found in a magazine with cigarette advertising.)

A week after *Newsweek* ran its cover story, *Time* gave two columns of its "Medicine" section to the subject. It disposed of cigarette smoking this way:

While such personal habits as smoking and drinking alcohol have long been linked with cancer, the researchers noted an intriguing

new finding: for people who both drink and smoke, the risk of cancer appears to rise proportionately higher than for those who do only one of these things.

Then it was on to the next article, "Fighting Frostbite."

If the newsmagazines avoided full coverage of the effects on health of cigarette smoking even when the "news" at hand would seem to demand it, then it should not be surprising that both magazines avoided similar coverage on the other occasions when they wrote about cigarette smoking. *Time's* most ambitious effort was just three weeks before its brief story chasing *Newsweek's* cover story. A "Time Essay" by Michael Demarest entitled "Smoking: Fighting Fire with Ire" chronicled the attempts by nonsmokers to curb public smoking and strongly implied that such efforts smacked of old-maidism and vigilantism. The essay concluded:

Indeed, the great mass of smokers might be well advised to organize in defense of their own "civil rights." They might call their league Smokers United to Avoid Vigilante Excesses, the acronym, of course, being SUAVE.

Why have no thorough accounts of the destructive role of cigarettes in our society appeared in American magazines that accept cigarette advertising?

Not all the possible explanations are especially ominous. Some editors no doubt think of the subject as worn out; they hesitate to lecture or frighten their readers.

Finally, though, it is impossible not to attribute much of the reticence of magazines to the economic realities of the magazine business. Advertisers are free, of course, to withdraw advertising from magazines whose contents they find uncongenial, and there is plenty of evidence that the tobacco companies have not been reluctant to exercise this freedom.

But when, over a period of seven years, the hazards of a virtually useless product that happens also to have killed hundreds of thousands of Americans fail to attract the attention of even a single magazine that publishes ads for that product — when this happens, one must conclude that advertising revenue can indeed silence the editors of American magazines. ■

It can be done

One recent newspaper reporting effort demonstrates that reasonably thorough coverage of the subject by a publication that accepts cigarette ads is possible. Last November *The Washington Star* ran a three-part series on smoking and health by reporter Cristine Russell.

The first part, headlined FINALLY, THE CANCER LEADERS START TO QUIT SMOKING, looked at a side of the smoking controversy that has rarely been covered: Russell reported on the smoking habits of high officials in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and especially in its National Cancer Institute. She found a sizable number who smoked cigarettes. The article was accompanied by an "H.E.W. Smoking Scorecard," which identified the present and past smoking habits of forty-five top officials in the department. (H.E.W. Secretary Joseph Califano quit a three-packs-a-day habit two years ago,

Russell reported.) At the end of the article Russell was identified as a nonsmoker, and her editor for the series as a smoker for twenty-two years who had "no intention to quit."

Russell's second article (EXPERTS PUT SMOKING'S COST TO NATION IN THE BILLIONS) listed the estimated health and social costs of smoking, writing, in her lead paragraph: "If historical smoking trends continue, one of every six Americans alive today — nearly 38 million people — might die earlier than expected because of smoking."

The third article dealt with recent changes in public and government attitudes toward smoking, changes in the industry itself, and a "laundry list" of "proposals weighed by anti-smoking groups and health organizations."

Russell's series was a model of what enterprise reporting on the subject could be, and it was all the more striking because it was published by a newspaper that has often been called "financially troubled." R.C.S.

Can three billion peasants

In neglecting the world's villages, journalists may be missing the story of the century

by RICHARD CRITCHFIELD

Three-fourths of the world's people receive very little attention from American reporters. They are the peasants, the three billion people who are still traditional subsistence cultivators of the land. There should be no doubt that these people are worth our attention: all the major contemporary revolutions — in Mexico, Russia, China, Indochina, Egypt, Algeria, Cuba, Angola — have involved peasant societies. In almost every case the revolution was preceded by cultural breakdown out in the villages, because the old peasant ways and views of life no longer worked.

The 450 or so American foreign correspondents only rarely report on these billions, because the peasants live in the world's two million villages, while the governments, wealth, and power — as well as telephones, cable offices, files, and typewriters — are in the cities. The working foreign correspondent rarely can afford to be away from the capital for more than a few days, and if he does spend a day or two in the countryside, he or she reports merely that Ahmed, the Pakistani landless laborer, or Mario, the Sao Paulo ragpicker, eats too little, earns too little, lives in a shack, and is altogether miserable. If conditions become intolerable, the correspondent has to report that the Ahmeds and the Marios have become rioters or revolutionaries, members of the scary mobs on our television screens.

If the world's poor are not rioting, revolting, or dying of famine, they are customarily kept out of sight and out of mind. We are left, then, with a vividly dramatic impression when they are in trouble, but we are likely to possess little real knowledge of why they starve or rebel, and we are usually diverted by some new sensational happening before we can find out the reasons for their predicaments. This cycle breeds not only indifference to the poor, but also ignorance, which stands in the way of

During the past ten years Richard Critchfield has reported from villages in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

finding solutions to their problems.

So this vacuum in reporting the world's poor does matter. Enough so that people from other fields have tried to fill it. For example, in 1959 the late Oscar Lewis wrote that American anthropologists had "a new function in the modern world": to serve as "reporters of the great mass of peasants and urban dwellers of the undeveloped countries." Implicit in his observation was the conclusion that nobody else was reporting what was happening to them.

Because of our deference to science and our distaste for the poor, anthropology has preempted a neglected majority of the human race whose lives and present predicaments should lie within the province of journalism, as they did a century ago. For it is journalism that reaches a mass audience, while anthropology reaches only the already interested few. If we are to know the world's poor people well enough to understand and alleviate their problems, then it has to be done through the written press, not through television and not through scholarly studies.

Eight years ago, after about a decade's experience as a political journalist and war correspondent, I undertook what began as, and still is, an experiment. I had gradually developed a sense that reporting surface politics was not necessarily telling what was really happening. For example, I spent three years and eight months covering Vietnam for *The Washington Star*. The first year was devoted to almost straight reporting of the military war, the second year to pacification, the third to internal Vietnamese politics and Hanoi's political strategy, and the last to the breakdown of the ordinary South Vietnamese's traditional Confucianist culture, which was (and possibly still is) the main obstacle to a successful communist state. What began as the reporting of events (journalism) ended in the study of the culture of ordinary people (anthropology).

It seemed to me that what was true for me in Vietnam might be true of other countries as well. Since 1969 I have lived with twelve individuals in as many

be 'covered'?

countries — six in Asia, four in Africa, and two in Latin America — and I have made more superficial studies in ten other countries.

When I go to a village I start with its ecological and economic system, which is agricultural: the ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, and threshing of the basic crops, usually wheat, rice, maize, sorghum, or (just recently in Brazil) cassava. Since hard physical labor is the central fact of village life, I work alongside the family I plan to write about. If the villagers relax by drinking in the evening (and “malt does more than Milton can” in most of the world’s two million villages), then I join in. I always use an interpreter, both for the

language and for the moral support.

In a departure from conventional newspaper technique, I try to write down as much dialogue as I can, rather than conducting interviews, either written or tape-recorded; I try to let life unfold naturally. In interviewing it is hard to avoid leading a subject, either consciously or unconsciously, along preconceived paths. Interviews work in most reporting, but not when you are exploring the way of life and views of a people you initially know next to nothing about.

Gradually, a look at agriculture leads naturally to systems of marketing and to the conversion of crops to food for the family. In time, one moves into social

life and religion, sex, and all the ways a people thinks and feels. Like the anthropologist, I also have to study the large civilization in which a village finds itself — its history, religion, philosophy, art, literature, politics, and economics. If possible, I also interview the nation’s political leader, who usually is in for a surprise: Egypt’s Anwar Sadat was startled last year to be asked about agriculture and life in villages along the Nile. Once started on the subject, he talked for hours.

A journalist may study a village as an ecological system or as a social structure, or may focus on the biography of an individual or a family, or concentrate on the character of a villager as one

Threshing sorghum in a jungle clearing in Sudan (photo by the author)



generalized type of human being. He or she may study a village or another form of small community to try to gain an understanding of the history of that *kind* of community in a specific part of the world or in order to understand more about the contemporary condition of a complex region.

Villagers also provide ways to study special problems. For instance, I have studied urbanization through the seasonal migration of a Javanese peasant to work as a pedicab driver in Jakarta; detribalization through an African witch doctor in the Nuba Mountains of southwestern Sudan; the struggle for ever-scarcer resources through a Filipino peasant caught in the Muslim-Christian land war in Mindanao; the breakdown of the traditional moral code among Brazilian peasants who migrate to the northeast city of Salvador; women's liberation in rural northeast Thailand and on the island of Bali; cultural breakdown among peasant immigrants in Jakarta, Calcutta, and Cairo; and economic collapse and a breakdown of law and order because of population pressure in the Comila region of rural Bangladesh.

A reporter in a village primarily engages in what might be called portraiture: he is trying to convey a picture of something. So do novelists, critics, historians, and biographers. What all have in common is that they present a picture of humanity without the benefits and limitations that science provides. They draw from reality such parts as, when they are rearranged and transformed, will convey a picture of a human whole to readers. They can be immensely convincing, and often are most convincing when their methods are most personal.

What I have done others could do, and it is extremely important that they do it. What I am proposing, specifically, is that the major newspapers, magazines, wire services, and television networks send twenty or thirty experienced reporters to live in villages in Asia, Africa, and Latin America for say, four to six months, possibly just before assignment to a new post. Each, accompanied by a full-time locally hired interpreter, could move in with a peasant family, spend days working with them in the

fields, and once he or she really got to know the peasants and their problems, report the findings in long feature stories, with photographs. In time the reporter would interview national leaders and write about national politics from a new perspective.

I realize that all this sounds totally unrealistic, and goes against almost every trend in foreign reporting today — which is precisely why it should be done. And it could be done — expenses, interpreter's wages, and all — for about \$600 to \$800 a month, or, with air travel and more support, for about \$1,000 a month. Possibly the foundations or the government would help. (Ford Foundation officials have already told me privately that if editors were willing to put up half the cost, the rest would be easy to fund on a matching basis.)

Both foundations and government are beginning to realize that the major obstacle to economic advance in the third world is our lack of knowledge about the village peasant and how to reach him directly with assistance. The Peace Corps has proved that large numbers of professionally skilled Americans are prepared to live in villages at low salaries if sufficiently motivated. In Vietnam the press spent long periods of time with troops in the jungles or with advisory teams in the district sub-sectors, which in effect were villages. (A very recent example of a reporter willing to rough it

is *The Washington Post's* Leon Dash, who spent months walking hundreds of miles through African jungles to write a series on Angolan guerillas.)

Reporting villages has its own internal contradictions, since it is an attempt to interest readers in something remote from their natural interests and daily lives. There are no big names in villages or urban slums, and there is always the danger that describing exotic foreign settings will leave many people cold. Yet in any foreign country there is a reality out there beyond the politicians and generals, the foreign-ministry briefings, cabinet-minister interviews, and the tight little world of the national press.

Reporting from the world's villages may be one way to watch the development of a worldwide crisis. When a culture breaks down for a small minority of the population, as it has, for example, for many black teenagers in the American inner cities, then the rest of the people have to live with some fear of crime and random violence. But when village cultures fail the millions of new urban dwellers who form a majority of a city's population, as I fear is happening in some of the cities of the third world, then the violence is no longer random, but general. While there is still time — five, ten, fifteen years? — more reporters should be covering what could be the most important story of the late twentieth century. ■

Husen, a Javanese villager, shown with the author in 1971



Privacy and sensationalism: a British view

The final report, recently published, of the third Royal Commission labels some press behavior 'intolerable'

Britain's third Royal Commission on the Press (the first two reported in 1949 and 1962) completed its work in July 1977, and its report has recently become available in the United States. The commission had been formed in 1974 at the urging of Prime Minister Wilson to "inquire into the factors affecting the maintenance of the independence, diversity and editorial standards of newspapers and periodicals, and the public's freedom of choice of newspapers and periodicals. . . ." The report necessarily devotes much attention to the economic and labor problems of the British press, while rejecting outright the most-discussed panacea — government subsidy. It also deals at length with the British Press Council and with flaws it discerns in the news-editorial standards of the press. These excerpts are drawn from chapter 10, "Performance of the Press."

In assessing the press, it is difficult to be other than subjective and that carries with it the risk of slipping into humbug. In our opinion, it is humbug for newspapers to defend the publication of stories obtained by invasions of privacy, written so as to contain sexual innuendo and to excite the prurient curiosity of readers, with the justification that such stuff strengthens the nation's moral fiber. Equally, we think it humbug to criticize items intended simply to divert and entertain for failing to provide material for instruction and serious political debate. The press and its critics indulge too often in sterile rhetoric of this nature. It is a danger we are anxious to avoid, and we are well aware that Royal Commissions are easily prone to superior humbug.

Nevertheless, the standards of truth, accuracy, and fairness can be applied from whatever standpoint the press is being judged. Although these may involve subjective judgments

and sometimes be difficult to apply in detail, they must be met in any piece of journalism. There are also certain forms of behavior in collecting information which should be regarded as intolerable.

Here we record our opinion that the way in which a few national newspapers treat some private lives is one of the worst aspects of the performance of the press. We refrain from giving examples. We have no wish to trespass on the jurisdiction of the Press Council or to re-open any of its cases. Like the Press Council itself, we are inhibited from commenting on some of the worst cases because we believe that to do so would only cause further distress to the victims.

Newspapers which invade the privacy of individuals generally justify their actions by saying that the people in question are "public figures" who have forfeited their right to privacy by "entering public life." The words "public interest" are often used in such cases. The Press Council's Declaration on Privacy makes a clear distinction between stories of interest to the public and stories which need to be published in the public interest, and states that publication of details about people's private lives is justified only where it can be shown to have served an identifiable public interest. We agree.

Citizens attach great importance to their privacy. Journalists are no exception. When we commissioned Social and Community Planning Research to carry out a survey of editors and journalists, using a written questionnaire and giving participants a most explicit guarantee that no individual respondent would be identifiable, the response rate from the sample of journalists was too low for the results to be written up fully. This resulted partly from the use of lists which proved to be out-of-date for drawing the sample, but it stemmed also from a feeling by some journalists that it was wrong for them to be questioned. The trade paper for journalists, the *UK Press Gazette*, which normally champions the public's right to know, ran a campaign against the survey. We found it ironical that some editors should have complained directly to the commission about the impropri-

ety of questions which invaded their privacy by asking about earnings or voting habits even when their anonymity was guaranteed. Mr. Bernard Shrimley, the editor of the *News of the World*, went so far as to make a speech attacking the Royal Commission for carrying out the survey.

It is sometimes argued that the only opposition to publication of details about people's private lives comes from those with something to hide. We do not agree. We believe that everyone has a right to privacy, and that newspapers should only breach it where there is a clear connection with a demonstrable and important public interest.

A specific form of invasion of privacy which we find deplorable is the use of deception to obtain stories. When News Group Newspapers gave oral evidence, we asked Mr. Lamb, the editorial director, about this in the light of a decision by the Press Council not to censure the *News of the World* for publishing a story obtained by deception. This concerned a man who had been led to believe that the reporters involved wished to present sex shows in foreign countries. He and his partner had been induced to demonstrate to the reporters what the audiences might expect, and was then "exposed" for his activities. Mr. Lamb told us that he believed that the Press Council had been wrong not to censure the *News of the World* for this use of subterfuge.



**'Journalistic activities
of this kind are as
unsavory as the behavior
they describe'**

We think Mr. Lamb was right. We are sorry that the *News of the World* does not always act according to the standards which Mr. Lamb adopted when he spoke to us. Its reporters still make use of deception to get stories in which the public interest, as distinct from public curiosity, is of the most tenuous kind. Articles in late 1976 were obtained by reporters who sent replies to advertisements in "contact magazines" expressing the wish to take part in the sexual activities advertised. Having learned of the advertisers' identities in this way, the reporters wrote articles in which they were named and denounced. It was not suggested that the individuals concerned were breaking the law, merely that they were doing things the newspaper affected to disapprove of. On the front page of the *News of the World* on March 27, 1977, was an article of denunciation under the headline DREADFUL DAVE ASKS GIRLS TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK. This described a man who had advertised for a partner to perform with him in sex shows in Copenhagen. One of the replies he received was from a reporter from the newspaper, who presented herself as a prospective partner before revealing her identity. It was not suggested that the man had done anything illegal.

We believe that journalistic activities of this kind are as unsavory as the behavior they describe, and that they bring journalists into disrepute. In our view, deceptions such as we have described are justifiable only in exceptional cases involving serious public issues, and in which there is reason

to believe that the conduct being exposed could not be discovered by other means. The difference between the sort of cases in which such tactics are justifiable and those in which they are not is difficult to define. In practice though, we think that instances such as we have described can easily be distinguished from those, like the exposure by *The Times* of corrupt police officers, in which subterfuge can be held to have been justified.

Mr. William Deedes has put to us persuasively in a paper that the existence of gossip columns and the excesses of the popular press are the price which has to be paid for a free press. We certainly believe that it would be wrong to control such activities by statute, and we know what a long tradition they follow. But we see no reason not to deplore them and to urge upon the Press Council the adoption of standards more stringent than those it has tried to uphold in the past.

Sensationalism is another charge frequently made against newspapers. The surveys which were carried out for us showed significant support for this accusation, although it did not stand out from other criticisms.

Sensationalism is closely related to bias and inaccuracy. Criticisms of news values which stress bad news and lead to hard stories which lack background information were made to us in respect of the reporting of industrial relations. We have received similar criticisms from other sources. In an important submission, the Community Relations Commission argues that racial minorities are often treated by the press, television, and radio in a manner which causes the public to associate them with trouble and strife. Instances are cited to show that stories have been deemed newsworthy only because those involved were immigrants or black. The submission also quotes cases in which an effort had been made to set the hard news in a proper context and to consider the issues behind it. The Community Relations Commission urges the Press Council to adopt a special code of practice for dealing with race relations.

We are satisfied that what the commission says of racial minorities does occur, and to other groups and organizations as well. We believe that the press should modify its policy and attempt to provide more background and supporting information. We believe that such a shift is in any case sensible now that people rely so much on broadcasting for the latest news.

The guidelines recommended by the commission for reporting on race relations stress the need for balance, objectivity, and moderation. These qualities are necessary in dealing with many subjects. We hope that the code which we recommend the Press Council to adopt will incorporate many of the commission's suggestions, such as those for insuring that journalists check sources, bring adequate knowledge to their reporting, and resist the temptation to use oversimplified stereotypes. We also believe that, in the sensitive and urgent area of race relations, the press can discharge its social responsibilities only if it takes special care and applies exceptional safeguards.

Checkbook journalism is one specific form of sensationalism. Following the conduct of the press in the Moors Murder trial, the Press Council issued a Declaration on checkbook journalism in 1960. The Committee on Con-

tempt of Court recommended that an investigation should be made of the extent to which the practice of making payments to witnesses continued, and had in mind the introduction of a new criminal offense if it was found to be widespread.

We inquired of the newspapers and the Press Council about checkbook journalism, going somewhat wider than the question which concerned the Committee on Contempt of Court, and dealing with all the matters covered in the Press Council's Declaration.

As was to be expected, we found no evidence of payments to witnesses or potential witnesses of the kind which were criticized so widely in 1960. Newspapers responded with varying degrees of helpfulness; the *News of the World*, for example, provided a useful list of the cases in which the paper had bought stories in recent years, and the reasons for publishing them, together with a statement of their policy. Other newspapers also helped us by setting out their views and policies.

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'It is not enough to defend the reporting of bad news on the ground that people want to read it'

his information revealed that some newspapers are prepared to buy stories from those associated with criminals, on the justification of "public interest" which, in this context, must mean no more than that they judge the public will be interested to read stories serving only to excite the prurient or morbid curiosity of their readers. We believe that those who write, or lend their names to, these stories are under considerable pressure to exaggerate their most sensational features. This tendency is likely to be increased when different papers compete for the same story. An example of what we have in mind are the articles which appeared in the *Sunday People* in July and August 1976 under the name of the daughter of the man who had become known as the Black Panther.

We do not recommend legislative measures to deal with checkbook journalism. We do, however, urge the Press Council to keep a special watch to insure that its Declaration is obeyed, and to volunteer an opinion when in the council's view, the behavior of individual papers breaches the Declaration.

A frequent criticism made by organizations submitting evidence was that the press is inaccurate. This is another criticism with a long history. In a celebrated piece of evidence to the first Royal Commission [1947-1949], Mr. John Gordon described the invariable experience of anyone with firsthand knowledge of a story as being that it was inaccurately reported. We found from the survey of influentials that half the people with firsthand knowledge of news stories in the provincial press made very favorable comments on accuracy while a quarter made very unfavorable comments. This contrasted with a considerable amount of support (over 40 percent) for the general proposition that the

NEWS OF THE WORLD

NOVEMBER 27, 1977 No. 6,989

PRICE 10p THE LARGEST SUNDAY SALE



Casanova's cast-offs condemned by Council

EXCLUSIVE BY STEVE BISHOP

LOVELY builder Frank Ley is looking for someone to love - but local council chiefs have raised the red over his sensational series of romances.

For three weeks in the past two years, here's "Frank" has been carried head and shoulders above the crowd in a hot air balloon. He has been seen in a hot air balloon. He has been seen in a hot air balloon. He has been seen in a hot air balloon.

At the end of the month, the council will be asked to consider whether it should take any action against the builder. The council is made up of 12 members, including the Mayor, Councillors and the Mayor's Officers. The council is made up of 12 members, including the Mayor, Councillors and the Mayor's Officers.

London
Frank Ley is a man of many talents. He is a builder, a balloonist, and a romantic. He has been seen in a hot air balloon. He has been seen in a hot air balloon. He has been seen in a hot air balloon.

But what if he is not a man of many talents? What if he is a man of many talents? What if he is a man of many talents? What if he is a man of many talents?

INSIDE TODAY

TV PROGRAMMES... Page 14
YOUR STARS... Page 10
CROSSWORD... Page 12
POOLS CHECK... Back Page

DISCOVER for YOURSELF
This new FREE Cassette & Bookcase from LinguaPhone tell you all about some fascinating new language courses

WEATHER
SUNNY with afternoon showers
TEMP: 45F OUT: 50F
WIND: 10-15 mph

60 A WEEK FOR DOING NOTHING Page 12



THE LIFE MACHINE SCANDAL

Kidney kids in peril because hospitals won't take free gifts

HUNDREDS of children will suffer - even die - because hospitals have rejected an offer of free kidney machines which could save their lives.

Forty-eight machines - enough to treat 100 sick children - are available at the Department of Health for use in hospitals and waiting houses. The machines are available at the Department of Health for use in hospitals and waiting houses.

Ring Selection Centre
FREE Gemstone Appraisal
Diamonds, Jewellery, Watches, Clocks, Silverware, Antiques, Carpets, Rugs, Curtains, Blinds, Paints, Paper, Stationery, Books, Records, Tapes, Videos, Computers, Peripherals, Software, Hardware, Telephones, Fax Machines, Modems, Routers, Switches, Hubs, Bridges, Firewalls, Servers, Storage Devices, Printers, Scanners, Copiers, MFPs, Projectors, Monitors, Keyboards, Mice, Joysticks, Gamepads, Controllers, Headsets, Webcams, Smart Cards, Biometric Devices, Smart Home Appliances, Smart Meters, Smart Grids, Smart Buildings, Smart Cities, Smart Transportation, Smart Agriculture, Smart Industry, Smart Energy, Smart Environment, Smart Security, Smart Health, Smart Education, Smart Entertainment, Smart Services, Smart Infrastructure, Smart Utilities, Smart Public Services, Smart Government, Smart Society, Smart Future.

News of the World: "Its reporters still make use of deception to get stories in which the public interest, as distinct from the public curiosity, is of the most tenuous kind"

provincial newspaper they read "often gets its facts wrong." The comparable figure for national newspapers as a group was 16 percent and for popular nationals 31 percent. Support for the press in the face of this challenge is provided by the fact that the content analysis shows that newspapers attach great importance to making up a story from attributed facts and statements, even, in some cases, at the expense of continuity and sense.

We suspect that one sense in which the papers are seen as inaccurate by their critics is that they convey inaccurate impressions by not giving stories an adequate background or context. This is a further example of the distorting effect of news values which we have mentioned in our discussion of bias. In our view, it is not enough to defend the reporting of bad news on the ground that people want to read it. For many, newspapers and broadcasting are the main sources of

information about events and institutions. We think they have a responsibility to insure that good and bad news are given in sufficient context to enable them to be understood. In a phrase which has received currency recently, neglect of context creates a "bias against understanding."

In the past the press has been heavily criticized on the ground that advertisers exercise too much influence on the contents of newspapers. Allegations of that kind were an important factor leading to the setting up of the first Royal Commission. They were also dealt with by the second Royal Commission. But they have featured very little in the evidence put before us.

Criticisms about advertising pressure are put forward at two levels, the general and the particular. In general, the press needs advertising revenue in order to survive. Apart from critics who hold that this dependence is unhealthy because it means that groups who are attractive to advertisers are better catered for than those who are not, some hold that the editorial content of newspapers and magazines is too closely associated with the goods which are advertised for sale in them, and that the relationship between advertisers and the journalists who are writing about their wares is too close for objectivity.

As far as the newspapers are concerned, we believe that there is evidence that the overall balance of contents of newspapers is not unduly influenced by the needs of advertisers. The analysis of newspaper content undertaken by Professor McQuail showed that there had been very little change in the contents of newspapers, measured by the proportion of space given to different subjects, between 1947 and 1975. If it were true that the influence of advertisers had increased *pari passu* with the growth in consumer spending in the intervening years, then much greater change in the contents of newspapers would have been expected. On the other hand, in magazines for women, and in certain specialist areas, editorial material concerns products which are advertised in the publications; photographic and motor-ing magazines are examples of this. It clearly has dangers.

There remains the particular question of more direct influence by advertisers, individual or collectively, over the contents of publications, either in insuring that they contain what advertisers like or that they do not contain what advertisers dislike. Charges of this kind were not made to us.

In a discussion of the influence of advertisers Mr. Charles Wintour distinguishes between material which is in the newspapers because it will please advertisers and attempts by advertisers to suppress material. On the former he says, "Is it wrong to give some degree of preference to stories which advertise? Not at all, provided that their products are good — and they are unlikely to waste money advertising unless they are. To many advertisers, the newspaper acts as an additional shop window. Those that help to keep our own shop open are entitled to a little extra limelight." While thus accepting that in a general way the presence of advertising affects what appears in the newspapers. Mr. Wintour goes on to make it clear that he believes that standards of criticism should never be lowered when describing the goods or activities of advertisers, and recounts some *causes célèbres* in which advertisers attempted, and failed, to coerce news-

papers into being less critical of their wares.

We came across one or two complaints of attempts to silence criticism. One involved a garage owner who was so upset by criticism in his local newspaper's consumers' advice column that he threatened to give up advertising. These threats were ineffective. Pressure of this kind is deplorable, although it is easy to see why advertisers should resent it when they are subsidizing with their payments a publication which attacks them or their products or service. We do not know how often such threats succeed or how often journalists avoid the danger by lowering their standards. No Royal Commission could expect to learn what happens from those directly concerned for it would not be in their interest to speak about the success of advertisers in exerting pressures of that kind. The previous Royal Commissions failed to find concrete evidence, and none has come our way either. In saying this we are not denying that it takes place; only that we are unable to document it.



'This story is a prime example of an abuse, the basing of contentious opinion on inaccurate information?'

An inquiry from the present prime minister [was made] as to whether we were satisfied that our report deals adequately with the issues of principle arising from the story and commentaries in the *Daily Mail* on May 19-21 about a "slush fund" alleged to be used by British Leyland [the automobile manufacturer]. In particular, the prime minister wished to be assured that we had considered political bias and partisanship on the part of some newspapers, and the effectiveness of the Press Council.

Here again, we should have had to postpone any necessary inquiries. As we write, both civil and criminal proceedings are pending in respect to these stories. It is, however, possible for us to respond to the request which the prime minister made to us without undertaking investigations of our own, because our report deals with the issues of principle involved and because sufficient basic facts are not in dispute. Among these are the facts that the letter which was at the center of the *Daily Mail's* allegation was a forgery which contained a number of discrepancies. The authenticity of the letter was not verified and Lord Ryder, who had ostensibly written it, was not confronted before publication with the allegations that were to be made.

These allegations were of the most direct and specific kind and couched in the strongest language. One extract from the investigative article on May 19 reads:

The practices to which Lord Ryder gave his direct blessing include:

- Straight bribery to agents and fixers who told British Leyland that without their intervention they would not get business.
- Deliberately breaking tax and currency regulations in countries all over the world, including countries of the British Commonwealth, or conspiring with others to do so.
- Padding prices. This permitted authorized dealers to open num-

bered bank accounts in Switzerland and Liechtenstein without the knowledge of their governments.

□ Handing over large bundles of cash, known as "suitcase money" to agents at secret London venues.

The comments printed in the newspaper's leader column on the same day were also strong and specific:

No ifs and buts, Lord Ryder must go. His behavior would be sleazy any time, any place. As the guardian of the millions we are pouring into British Leyland, it is intolerable.

Coming just after Mr. Callaghan has signed Jimmy Carter's purer-than-thou clause in the summit declaration and the pledge by Mr. Dell, the trade minister, to root out corruption, the stench of humbug in high places is beyond words.

In our view this story is a prime example of an abuse, the basing of contentious opinion on inaccurate information, which we refer to in Chapter 20 of this report as a long-standing example of serious misconduct on the part of some of the press.

In that chapter on the Press Council, we state our belief that it should adopt more stringent standards than hitherto when it is dealing with the combination of inaccuracy and bias. Further, we recommend that the council should draw up a code of behavior on which to base its adjudications. The existence of a code would enable the public to judge the performance of the press by known and accepted standards. The question raised by the prime minister's inquiry is whether the conduct of the *Daily Mail* provided evidence of abuses which would lead us to reconsider some of the chief recommendations and conclusions in our report. We do not believe this to be the case.

A main issue raised is whether partisanship in the press as a whole is so strong that, in the light of this case, exceptional measures to correct it would be justified. In this as in other questions throughout our report, we have been at pains to base our conclusions wherever possible on firm evidence. Many people and organizations complained to us of bias against the left on the part of the press as a whole. We have no doubt that over most of this century, the press has treated the beliefs and activities of the Labor Movement with hostility. Such evidence as we have indicates that today it may be less partisan than its left-wing critics believe. It is certainly the case that some newspapers of the right persistently seek for discreditable material which can be used to damage the reputation of Labor ministers or those connected with the party or with trade unions. The "slush money" story is a lamentable example. Nevertheless, it is not new evidence that the *Daily Mail* is a polemical and politically partisan newspaper, for it has been that for a long time. What is novel is the extreme lengths to which the paper was prepared to go in an attack on the government based on inadequately checked information. We do not on these grounds find justification for changing our general views and recommendations.

We say elsewhere in this report why we reject the ideas which have sometimes been put forward for correcting the balance of opinion in the press. We reject the idea of a launch fund to help new newspapers because we are opposed to the element of government involvement in the

press which would arise over the allocation of such a fund and because we have seen no scheme which we consider likely to have the editorial and economic results intended by those who put it forward. Furthermore, we cannot accept either that the creation of more newspapers, whether partisan or not, would be likely to lessen the irresponsible conduct which is indulged in by some existing partisan newspapers, or that it would quieten political dissatisfaction with the contents and behavior of the press. We have pointed several times to the gap in the national press which should be filled by a newspaper generally supporting left-wing parties and opinions, and providing fuller coverage than is available in the *Daily Mirror*. We have already noted that trade unions are considering the launch of such a paper, and we hope that the present episode may stimulate the Labor movement to back the project.

I 'A free society which expects responsible conduct must be prepared to tolerate some irresponsibility as part of the price of liberty'

If measures designed to alter patterns of ownership and political partisanship are not to be advanced, the question arises whether the law should be strengthened to deal with the contents of newspapers. Time will tell how the law will have been found to operate in respect of the *Daily Mail* in the present case. But we believe as a general principle that the press should not operate under a special regime of law but should so far as possible stand before the law in the same way as any other organization or citizen.

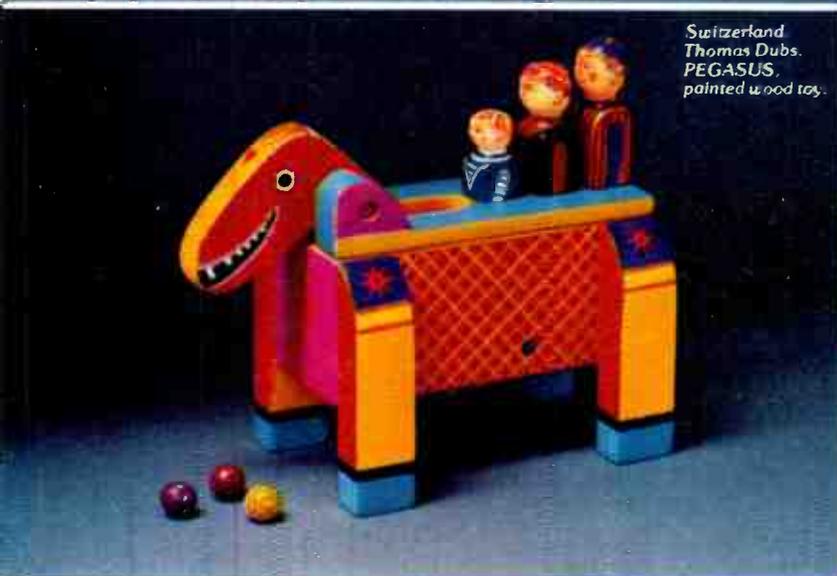
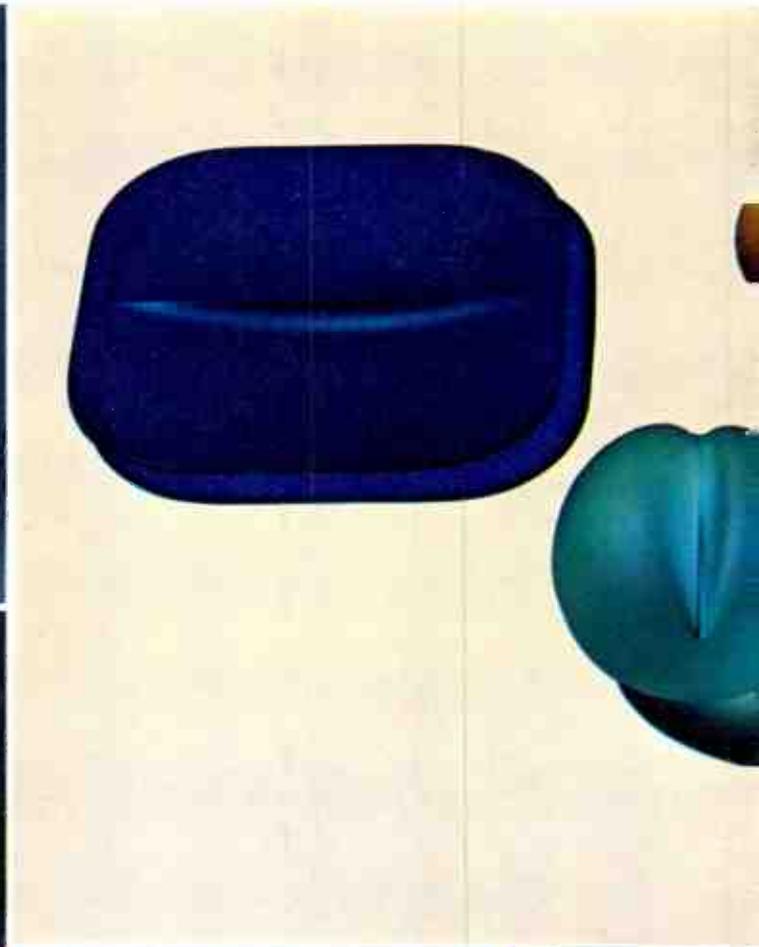
Whether it is done by law or by voluntary measures, the only ways in which newspapers can be restrained are either by a process of monitoring before publication or by the application of sanctions afterwards. We reject the idea of monitoring before publication as censorship and entirely inconsistent with the freedom of the press. And . . . we reject the idea of sanctions such as fines and suspension of journalists, as both difficult to devise and enforce, and potentially dangerous to the freedom of the press.

Our firm belief is that the press should be left free to be partisan and restrained as at present only by the law and by the voluntary system of a Press Council greatly strengthened in the ways which we recommend in Chapter 20. At the same time, the policy which results from such a belief is unlikely to be left in operation unless those who control the press insure that it behaves with proper restraint and provides its readers with the fair and accurate information and comment essential for responsible judgments. But there is no escape from the truth that a free society which expects responsible conduct must be prepared to tolerate some irresponsibility as part of the price of liberty. It is also true that cases of irresponsible conduct such as the *Daily Mail*'s behavior over British Leyland must imperil the freedom of the press by encouraging cynicism and political hostility towards newspapers which could give rise to pressures for restrictive legislation. ■

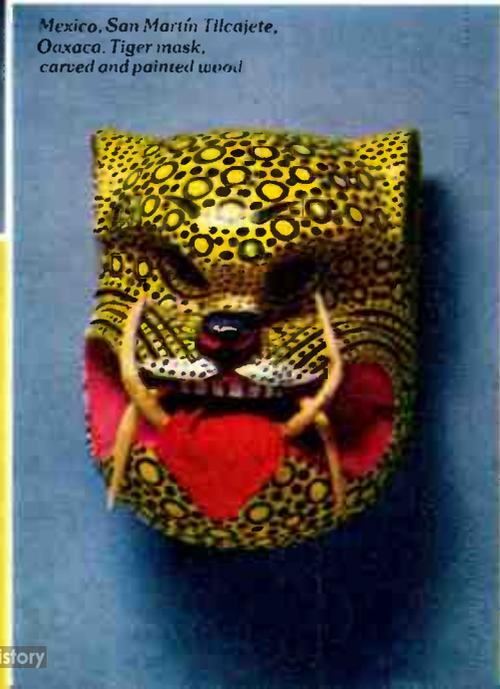
We talk better



India, Gujarat.
Water containers (beda).
hammered copper.



Switzerland
Thomas Dubs.
PEGASUS.
painted wood toy.



Mexico, San Martín Tilcajete,
Oaxaca. Tiger mask,
carved and painted wood

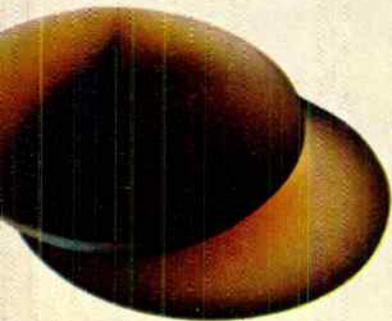


Korea. Kae Jung Kwak.
Gourd-shaped baskets,
handwoven rush.



with our hands.

Czechoslovakia. František Vizner.
BLUE FORM, TOPAZ FORM.
Jaroslav Svoboda.
GLASS SCULPTURE.



Photos: Little, Bobby Hanson, New York

These are some things that were made—lovingly and artfully—by hand. They were part of an exhibition of several hundred handcrafted pieces from around the world titled “In Praise of Hands.”

Some, as you can see, were made just for fun, others to be useful, and some for no better reason than that the maker felt like it. But whatever their purpose and wherever on earth they came from, they all speak the same language.

They speak to us of the things we have made, and the things we use with our hands—the humble, everyday things that fit so easily in the hand and please the fingers. And they remind us of the lasting pleasure of simple things that are well made and well used, and therefore much loved.

That’s one reason we sponsored this exhibition. In our business, as in many other American businesses, we deal with people from around the world, and it helps to be reminded that whatever our tongues may say, our hands and hearts speak the same language. It helps, too, to remind ourselves that individual initiative, individual imagination and individual innovativeness are still the basics of business in any language. Sponsorship of art that reminds us of these things is not patronage. It’s a business and human necessity.

If your company would like to know more about corporate sponsorship of art, write Joseph F. Cullman 3rd, Chairman of the Board, Philip Morris Incorporated, 100 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10017.

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“In Praise of Hands” appeared at the Ontario Science Centre, Toronto, sponsored by Benson & Hedges (Canada) Limited



Pena, Hector Guzmán Urbano.
RETABLO.
wood and paper altar piece.

News that is both national

A social scientist suggests ways to find and cover trends that may be developing in many scattered communities

by AMITAI ETZIONI

The media provide a mirror that enables society to examine its features and contortions. By means of the media, citizens and policymakers alike gain awareness of the social condition of the rich and the poor, the races and sexes. Both informal assessments and findings of scientific studies reach most citizens and policymakers not through full-length studies but through the summaries of them that appear in the media. Indeed, if a social development is not reported, for many practical purposes it is as if it did not exist. For example, a few months ago there was a major confrontation in Warsaw in which the police tried to arrest a religious group holed up in a church, but were prevented from doing so when a large crowd rushed to the group's aid. While the incident was extensively reported in *Le Monde* and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, it received little attention in the American media, and hence most Americans were unaware of this recent indication of strong religious sentiment in a Communist country.

The media's imperfections are many, ranging from a flat perspective (most subjects are soon termed boring and the restless focus shifts elsewhere) to a distorted view (the reflection tells us more about the mirror than about the events — for example, the tendency of the media to be more interested in bad than in good news). I wish to explore here a less often noted failing: the tendency to deal with national or local events to the gross neglect of *multi-locale developments*, that is, developments that occur simultaneously in scores of localities but do not constitute a national happening in the customary definition.

Perhaps the best example is the media's coverage of government — hardly a trivial subject. Great attention is paid to Washington, and to the local governments in the areas where individual newspapers and television and radio stations are situated, and reports

are published occasionally from other states or localities. Yet very little is reported about developments that involve most or all of the governments of the fifty states, the 160 or so major cities, or the 38,000-odd local governments. Reporters are assigned to Washington or the state capitals or city hall; almost none cover multi-locale developments. As a result, we are deprived of a whole category of news that is "national" in the sense that it affects most or a significant proportion of localities.

Thus, while every schoolchild has by now heard of Watergate, and many citizens may well have read something about misconduct in a particular local government, few of us have any idea whether local governments *in general* are full of little, or not so little, Watergates. Does illegal wiretapping occur *only* in Washington and, say, New Haven — or is it a rather common practice of local police forces? Is bribing known only to the Spiro Agnews and this or that governor (say of Maryland) — or is it, rather, rampant in our state or city governments? Is only this or that stage legislature a rubber stamp for the governor, or dominated by lobbyists — or is this the case with most state legislatures? Much has been reported recently about the F.B.I., and a local police force may be well covered, but are most of the nation's police forces effective, corrupt, politically partisan, or what?

Owing to several years of investigations into myriad federal programs and other aspects of Washington life, we have become increasingly aware of the deeper structural sources of the federal government's shortcomings. However, the habit of reporting local government scandals or problems in isolation, without relating them to the general condition of local governments, unwittingly creates the impression that such occurrences are unusual, unique, or even accidental, when such atypicality is far from established.

True, some multi-locale reporting is conducted by the wire services and national magazines. For example, by asking local newspapers, television and

Amitai Etzioni is professor of sociology at Columbia University and director of the Center for Policy Research.

and local

radio stations to report any Medicaid scandals in their areas, the wire services and newspapers were able to establish that *all* state Medicaid programs were riddled with scandal. Such reporting, however, is rare; in addition, the little there is of it is frequently flawed by a primitive mode of sampling, somewhat akin to public-opinion reporting before the introduction of public-opinion surveys. Thus a reporter occasionally will tell a story about conditions in prisons in, say, Alabama, California, and Illinois, but his selection of sites will be arbitrary, or designed to reflect the reporter's opinions or assumptions. (A common device is to provide one good, one bad, and one intermediate site.) A recent example of this was an August 8, 1977, *U.S. News & World Report* story entitled "Surprising Trend: You Can Beat City Hall." Its thesis: "More and more citizens are taking their governments to court — for everything from injuries on ball diamonds to slipping on tuna sandwiches." The implication was clear: there was a nationwide trend. The news story referred to "thousands of citizens a year . . ." and "changes in state laws and court rulings" which have "eroded the historic immunity of cities, counties and states from law suits filed by persons who believe that they were injured. . . ."

The story then went on to report such activity from several cities, including Wilmington, Dallas, Houston, St. Paul, San Jose, and Detroit. Even a statistic was cited: "A report for the National League of Cities says insurance premiums for *some* [italics supplied] municipalities tripled between 1974 and 1976. The average increase among California cities was 98 percent." Now if we only knew what the report said about the rest of the country, we could tell if the cities named were typical or — exceptions.

An October 6, 1977, *Wall Street Journal* story headlined CITIES SEEK TO COMBAT BIG INCREASE IN ARSON: HALF OF FIRES IN SOME AREAS ARE SET, BUT INVESTIGATORS OBTAIN FEW CONVICTIONS

informed readers that scenes of arson were "becoming increasingly familiar in urban areas across America. Arson is one of the fastest-growing crimes in cities. . . ." Unnamed experts were reported as having estimated "that probably 20% to 30% of fires nationwide are the work of arsonists." (Note the round figures, always suspect, and the fact that "nationwide" and "cities" are not one and the same thing.) Then a category of big cities was introduced and illustrated by one, Boston (from which the story was filed), to wit: "In *many* big cities [italics supplied], such as Boston, the estimate is 50%." Where is the trend? Nationwide? Urban? Cities? Big cities? Boston? None of these? The rest of the story deals with a few nationwide impressions and — with Boston.

A May 2, 1977, *U.S. News & World Report* story about the middle class got off to a promising start: "People are frank to admit it: They're making more money than ever before, but they keep falling further and further behind rising costs." The story went on: "Staff members of *U.S. News & World Report* talked with four randomly selected couples." They found them in De Quincy, Louisiana; Hanover Park, Illinois; Los Angeles; and Brooklyn. All fit the thesis just as a well-chosen glove fits the choosing hand. To be fair, whatever *U.S. News* meant by "randomly chosen" is not what a statistician means by it. As used by the magazine, the words are either a reassuring cliché or an indication that the reporter did not interview relatives. It almost certainly does not mean that *U.S. News & World Report* threw darts at a U.S. map, hit four spots, and then randomly opened the phone books of those areas to find the names of couples. It almost certainly does mean that couples were chosen to illustrate the trend, and hence were anything but random or representative of anything but the magazine's judgments.

What is necessary to gain a more inductive, empirical approach is to approximate a random or stratified sampling of the 38,000 local governments or even state and city governments. To ob-

tain "enough" cases to satisfy the criteria of scientific sampling need not involve large numbers. What is important, however, is that the sample be chosen in such a way that it does not merely reinforce the reporter's preconceptions or is so small as to be almost certainly atypical. Thus, a "trend" in three towns may well be no trend at all. Using sampling techniques will allow previously unknown trends to appear rather than simply illustrating trends the reporter has intuited or hypothesized.

There are several ways such sampling can be done without incurring inordinate cost. When the subject is major cities, of which there are, say, 160, any editor (or reporter) can randomly pick ten from a master list and get a much less biased picture than could be gotten by relying on hunches and "feel" for what is "typical." If one deals with 38,000 local governments, the services of a statistician might be employed. I do not mean continuously employed; but a day's consulting would yield a sample of all governmental units, as well as providing a gauge of how reliable trend information would be, assuming relatively small samples are drawn. The reporter might then wish to visit only a few (or the editor might ask stringers to report on only a few of the chosen units) and get information about the rest by telephoning local government information officers and appropriate departments, or by using local newspaper files. Such procedures may be more suitable for wire services, television networks, national magazines, and big newspapers, which can afford them. Smaller publications and stations might be able to draw on a sample drawn up by a joint service provided by a newspaper association, institute, or university.

Without more and more inductive, multi-locale reporting, there is little hope that Americans will get a proper perspective on the national government and Washington as they compare with the local ones, and the print and broadcast media will continue to give us exaggerated or fragmentary reflections of the nature of our society. ■

Tet coverage: a debate renewed



An ambitious study charges ‘gross misreporting’ of the Vietnam war’s turning point — but fails to clinch the judgment

by PETER ARNETT

In 1969 Joseph Alsop, described by historian Barbara Tuchman as a journalist “with a tendency to cataclysmic opinions,” wrote that the American press was between “the rock and the hard place” over its Vietnam coverage. Alsop argued that if U.S. policy prevailed and the war was won then the press would be criticized for its negative reporting, but that if the war was lost then the reporters would be blamed for contributing to that defeat. The columnist implied that an inquisition similar to that which followed the fall of China might be in store for the press.

I remembered Alsop’s warning long after his other predictions on the war had been proved false because I had met many of the principals involved. When I arrived in Southeast Asia in 1958 at age twenty-four, the China experience was still discussed by the hardy corps of old Asia hands traveling the new frontiers of American power in Indochina. I listened with glee and disbelief to Darrell Berrigan’s ribald

Peter Arnett, now a special correspondent for the Associated Press, reported from Vietnam for the A.P. from 1962 to 1970.

tales of the Shanghai warehouses in the closing days of that war, never dreaming that sixteen years later I would be in debauched Saigon watching a similar cataclysm. And while I marveled at the cool professionalism of men like Arch Steele, Tillman Durdin, and Edgar Snow, their sometimes guarded references to disputes over the "agrarian reformer" label pinned by some on the Chinese communists, and other matters, told me that the wounds ran deep.

These memories came back to me in early autumn when a "new" old Asia hand, Richard Pyle, a former Associated Press bureau chief in Saigon, called me from Washington to read the headline on *AIM Report*, a newsletter published by right-wing Accuracy in Media. AIM is predictably hysterical about the press, but Pyle was astounded, as was I, by the black headline, MISREPORTING THAT DOOMED MILLIONS, over a 4,000-word review of Peter Braestrup's two-volume work, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (Westview Press). It was a voice that was frenzied and not entirely alone. Edith Efron wrote in *TV Guide* that "*Big Story* in fact is a superlatively detailed case history of one of the most monumental foulups of contemporary journalism."

The reviewer for *The Washington Monthly* accepted the argument that the press had erred seriously, but found ironic solace. "Suppose the reporters hadn't got the story wrong? General Wheeler would have probably gotten away with sending 200,000 more draftees into that horrible mess. So thank God the press was wrong," he exulted. Columnist John Roche was less jubilant. Declaring that Braestrup had exposed "the power of the American media as a private government," he suggested that "the sensible action would be an investigation by a congressional committee."

But I am not writing a review of the reviews. I quote them to dramatize my own shock and surprise at such reactions to Braestrup's findings, and I asked myself whether I could have been so wrong in believing for the past nine years that our Tet coverage had been one of our finer hours. Was that dire Alsopian warning of retribution coming true?

Nemesis could find no surer hands. Peter Braestrup is a unique critic of the war coverage in that he is truly one of us. He pounded the streets of Saigon for the political story and negotiated the boonies in search of the war with the best of the Vietnam press crew, first for *The New York Times* and then as bureau chief for *The Washington Post*. He wore a scholarly air that belied his military background, and these two aspects of his personality no doubt propelled him toward his massive project in the first place, and shaped its ends. He is as qualified as any reporter to write about his Vietnam colleagues — a fact attested to by the willingness of the major news organizations to weigh him down with raw files and lengthy candid memos when he began his study six years ago. That they are disappointed with his ultimate findings would be putting it mildly. For myself, I do, and will, quarrel with his conclusions.

But from the dedication that lists the names of all the dead and missing newsmen in Indochina, to the picture credits, 1,445 pages later, Braestrup's *Big Story* contains an array of

journalistic trivia and trauma, of mug shots and street scenes, indexes, tables, and appendixes that could and possibly will occupy Vietnam war buffs all winter long. (For those aghast at the \$50 price for the two volumes, Braestrup advises that a much cheaper paperback version will be out next year.)

The book idea originally came from the New York-based Freedom House because, as Leonard R. Sussman, the executive director, writes in his introduction, "The Vietnam experience decisively changed the relationship between the press and the American government." Braestrup chose the Tet offensive as an ideal case history for studying press and TV performance under stress because the events were limited in time and occurred in a clearly delineated area, and because historically Tet was highly significant. The subjects of the study were the two wire services, the A.P. and U.P.I.; the newsmagazines, *Time* and *Newsweek*; the television networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS; and *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Braestrup selected eleven basic subjects that he said dominated coverage, from the fight for the American embassy, through Vietnamese, American, and Communist troop performance, to Khe Sanh and pacification. Braestrup seems to have painstakingly analyzed every phrase and adjective of every news report and television tape, and the sheer bulk of his information threatens to intimidate potential critics into silence. He devotes fifty-two pages to analyzing the guerrilla attack on the embassy, over 100 to the siege of Khe Sanh. Perhaps as a result of the book's length, the reviews I have read seemed to have been derived from perusals of the introduction and the conclusion.

That is a pity. From what I could ascertain, the main body of Braestrup's book fails to back up his widely quoted conclusion that "rarely has contemporary crisis journalism turned out in retrospect to have veered so widely from reality." For example, he concludes his chapter on "Psychological Victory or Defeat for Hanoi?" by stating that "once more the media's penchant for self-projection and instant analysis carried the day, and the resulting reporting turned out to be grossly misleading." And yet in the preceding sixteen pages he has praised the wire services, the *Times*, and TV and cited only *Time* and *Newsweek* as seriously erring. Newsmagazines do not necessarily all journalism make.

Discussing North Vietnamese military performance, Braestrup declares, "One of the characteristics of American journalists is their tendency, on occasion, to vastly overrate their country's enemies. This has been particularly true in the case of wars fought with Asians." He concludes this chapter by stating that "the overall impression in all media was that the initial round of Tet attacks left the allies with nothing but problems, and the foe looming larger than life — omniscient, shrewdly holding the 'initiative' and ready to outgeneral the allied commanders again." However, earlier in the chapter he had pointed out that General Westmoreland and his subordinates "publicly focussed not on enemy limitations but on possible enemy targets and 'second waves' — their speculations and warnings being

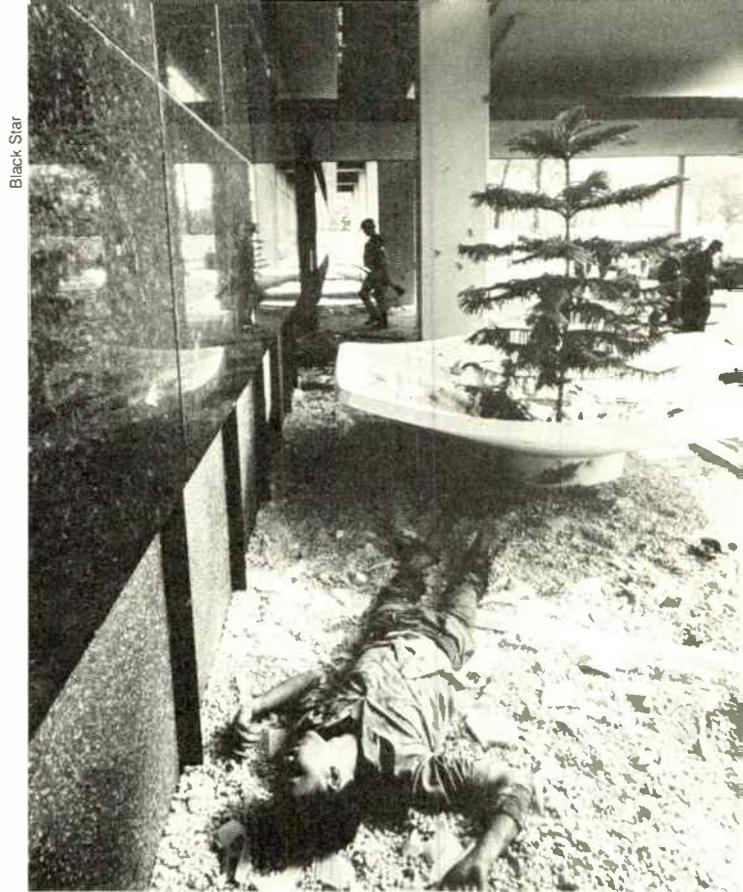
translated into predictions by the media — thus MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam] spokesmen in Saigon themselves contributed in February to a general journalistic perception that no logistics, organizational or manpower limitations inhibit the North Vietnamese capacity, even after the first wave, to strike at will.” Braestrup then asked why M.A.C.V. officials had done this, and answered, “because under newsmen’s questioning they were determined not to be caught [after failing to predict the initial Tet offensive] a second time.” Elsewhere in his book Braestrup insists that the press not lay its failings to poor information because it is a journalist’s role to ascertain the facts no matter what the obstacles. That seems to be asking a mighty lot of reporters in wartime.

Braestrup does make many telling points. News dispatches written at the height of a crisis tend to look flamboyant nine years after the event when passions have cooled, and certainly the A.P. and U.P.I. sometimes competed for adjectives. And, as Braestrup enthusiastically demonstrates in his chapter “First Reports Are Always Partly Wrong,” the wire services reported erroneously that Vietcong guerrillas had penetrated the U.S. Embassy when they had actually occupied the ground and part of an adjoining building. “There is a vast difference between seizing an objective and dying in a bold but abortive attempt to do so. But American newsmen were quick to award Hanoi a major ‘psychological’ triumph there, if only because they — the newsmen — and LBJ had been taken by surprise. It was a portent of journalistic reactions to come.”

Braestrup is critical of the heavy stress “on what AP called the human misery angle” at Tet and suggests that this “compassionate sensationalism” was the result of “genuine shock: many reporters were confronted with their first extensive view of war’s random destructiveness and waste.” He said that “especially on film, this treatment tended to blur or even obliterate the other realities, notably the military outcome and the resilience of the Vietnamese.” Earlier, however, Braestrup makes some revealing comments about his own biases. “For example as a former infantryman in Korea I was perhaps less shocked by war’s waste and destruction than were my colleagues experiencing these for the first time. I was probably more interested in such military matters as logistics, ‘foxhole strength,’ enemy tactics and allied deployments than they were.”

It is his preoccupation with the military level of the war that I believe is *Big Story*’s basic flaw. Maybe it is the methodology required to compute Braestrup’s tables of “negative” and “positive” trends in news stories that in retrospect neutralizes the real flavor of our reporting at Tet, and that was the sense that a historical change had taken place in the war. It seemed to me then, and seems to me even more so now that Saigon has fallen, that Westmoreland had little understanding of the need to build a nation in Vietnam, and had faith in his own forces but little use for the Vietnamese army. Only at Tet, when it was too late and the price too high, did the errors of his strategy become apparent, statistical military victory or not.

Which brings me to another of the much-quoted Brae-



Black Star

The scene after the Vietcong attacked the U.S. Embassy in Saigon on January 31, 1968.

strup findings — that while the Tet reporting added up to a portrait of defeat for the allies “historians have concluded that the Tet offensive resulted in a severe military-political setback for Hanoi in the south.” What historians? Henry Kissinger? In 1969 he wrote in *Foreign Affairs*, “The Tet offensive brought the compounded weaknesses — or, as the North Vietnamese say, the internal contradictions — of the American position to a head. To be sure, from a strictly military point of view, the offensive was an American victory. Vietcong casualties were very large; in many provinces the Vietcong infrastructure of guerrillas and shadow administrations surfaced and could be severely mauled by American forces. But in a guerrilla war purely military considerations are not decisive; psychological and political factors loom at least as large. On that level the Tet offensive was a political defeat in the countryside for Saigon and the United States.”

I would also question Braestrup’s technique of giving equal weight statistically to both an on-the-spot news analysis and a presidential news conference, or, for that matter, a Westmoreland news conference. In *The Legacy of Vietnam*, the most brilliant analysis of Vietnam reporting that I have read, Philip Geyelin, editor of *The Washington Post*’s editorial page, wrote:

The government is in a position to deliver its message directly in critical situations, without the filter of a newspaper account or a summary on the evening news. Thus, most of the crucial statements about the war in Vietnam came to us resoundingly and overwhelmingly from the president on nationwide television on all

three networks. It came to us in an address from General William C. Westmoreland to a joint session of Congress to the drumbeat of daily briefings by White House spokesmen. It came to us in a carefully orchestrated crescendo of public statements by the highest officials of government and by government surrogates in Congress. It came to us in white papers and in handsomely bound official progress reports. It came to us in the evening briefings in Saigon and at the noon briefings in the State Department in Washington, and in the chart-and-pointer, spit-and-polish presentations of the generals and the admirals at the Pentagon, on TV, in living color. And then, it was relentlessly reinforced by the interview graciously extended by an otherwise inaccessible and close-mouthed high official.

Against that kind of barrage, Braestrup offers, for example, a Tom Buckley story that portrayed a heroic picture of the enemy "as ready and willing to die" as an example of press "negativism" as against official "positivism," if I read his methodology right. Certainly the U.S. military and the White House had their say at Tet. The A.P. on February 25, 1968, ran 5,000 words of a General Westmoreland interview with our then general manager, Wes Gallagher. And L.B.J. was a talker, too.

I express my disagreements with the conclusions of *Big Story* more in sorrow than in anger. There is much about the study that is fascinating and illuminating, particularly about the press years up to Tet, and the techniques of news gathering used by different agencies. As one of the Vietnam war reporters consulted by Braestrup, I know personally how faithfully he and his myriad helpers labored over the details and sought out the views of colleagues. While there is no mistaking that the book's conclusions are responsible for the tenor of the majority of the reviews, Braestrup himself is more moderate than his reviewers, for he concludes that ideological bias was but a minor factor in the press's performance during Tet. This probably will help save us from the full fury of those who remember the China experience and possibly would welcome a repeat performance. Braestrup's own view of the war, that "while getting into Vietnam proved a costly American mistake, simply getting out did not assure us moral salvation," mirrors the attitude of many of those who covered Tet.

There is ample evidence in *Big Story* that Braestrup, now editor of *The Wilson Quarterly* at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, despite his negative findings remains attached to his old colleagues. In his concluding chapter he concedes that there were "many instances of superior journalistic performance, in terms of supplying information as opposed to simple drama. There was scarcely a reporter for the major media who did not produce some able journalism, whatever his sins on other occasions. And none, including this writer, was without sin." Then, rightly in my view, he singles out Charles Mohr of *The New York Times* as having produced the consistently best reporting from Vietnam during Tet, and mentions twenty-five others as commendable, "to recall a few."

My question is, if so many newsmen for the major media produced superior reporting, how, then, can they, as he charged, have "veered so widely from reality"? Later in the chapter he asserts:

We saw at Tet the first show of the more volatile journalistic style — spurred by managerial exhortation or complaisance — that has become so popular since the late 1960s. With this style came often mindless readiness to seek out conflict, to believe the worst of the government or of authority in general, and on that basis to divide up the actors on any issue into the good and the bad.

That's heavy stuff, I'd say. Maybe Braestrup singled out a lot of us for praise at the end because he didn't have the heart to lower the boom on all of us. For that, I'm grateful. But if conclusions in one of our Tet stories had been as inconsistent, he would have nailed us to the masthead. ■

Hearts and minds

Dispatches (Knopf, \$8.95) is Michael Herr's personal account of the Vietnam war, which Herr covered for *Esquire* in 1967 and 1968. Thus, he was in Vietnam during the Tet offensive and the months-long siege at Khe Sanh.

The book was originally scheduled to appear in 1969; it took years, however, for Herr to write the powerful opening and closing chapters, "Breathing In" and "Breathing Out." ("I found the material just impossible to deal with," Herr said.)

Herr reports on an aspect of the war that few journalists attempted to cover: the effects of combat on the men who fought it. The terrain explored here is courage, terror, madness, as well as patches of an eerie calm in a country where "you could be in the most protected space . . . and still know that your safety was provisional, that early death, blindness, loss of legs, arms or balls, major and lasting disfigurement — the whole rotten deal — could come in on the freakyfluky as easily as in the so-called expected ways. . . ." Herr also shows how the war he had come to cover covered and overwhelmed him and other correspondents. (See the excerpt below from the chapter "Colleagues.")

Herr's prose is not the flat language of the daily press; tense, rhythmic, inventive, it provides a natural setting for the jungle language of the "grunts," whose outbursts and conversations are a vital part of the book. *Dispatches* is keenly observed, intensely personal, and written with the economy of the "black paratrooper with the 101st who glided by and said, 'I been scaled man, I'm smooth now' . . ."

J.S.

At the height of the Tet Offensive alone, there were between 600 and 700 correspondents accredited to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Who all of them were and where all of them went was as much a mystery to me and to most of the correspondents I knew as it was to the gentle-

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tempered bull-faced Marine gunnery sergeant assigned to the department of JUSPAO which issued those little plastic-coated MACV accreditation cards. He'd hand them out and add their number to a small blackboard on the wall and then stare at the total in amused wonder, telling you that he thought it was all a fucking circus. (He's the same man who told a television star, "'Hold on to your ass awhile. You people from the electronic media don't scare me anymore.'") There was nothing exclusive about that card or its operational match, the Bao Chi credential of the Republic of South Vietnam; thousands of them must have been issued over the years. All they did was admit you to the Vietnam press corps and tell you that you could go out and cover the war if you really wanted to. All kinds of people have held them at one time or another: feature writers for religious organs and gun magazines, summer vacationers from college newspapers (one paper sent two, a Hawk and a Dove, and we put it down because it hadn't sent a Moderate over as well), second-string literary figures who wrote about how they hated the war more than you or I ever could, syndicated eminences who houseguested with Westmoreland or Bunker and covered operations in the presence of Staff, privileges which permitted them to chronicle fully our great victory at Tet, and to publish evidence year after year after year that the back of the Cong had been broken, Hanoi's will dissolved. There was no nation too impoverished, no hometown paper so humble that it didn't get its man in for a quick feel at least once. The latter tended to be the sort of old reporter that most young reporters I knew were afraid of becoming someday. You'd run into them once in a while at the bar of the Danang press center, men in their late forties who hadn't had the chance to slip into uniform since V-J Day, exhausted and bewildered after all of those briefings and lightning visits, punchy from the sheer volume of facts that had been thrown on them, their tape recorders broken, their pens stolen by street kids, their time almost up. They'd been to see Cam Ranh Bay and quite a bit of the countryside (Mission diction, which meant that they'd been taken out to look at model or "New Life" hamlets), a crack ARVN division (where?), even some of our boys right there at the front (where?), and a lot of Military Information Office people. They seemed too awed by the importance of the whole thing to be very clear, they were too shy to make friends, they were all alone and speechless, except to say, "Well, when I came over here I thought it was pretty hopeless, but I have to admit, it looks like we've gotten things pretty much under control. I must say, I've been awfully impressed . . ." There were a lot of hacks who wrote down every word that the generals and officials told them to write, and a lot for whom Vietnam was nothing more than an important career station. There were some who couldn't make it and left after a few days, some who couldn't make it the other way, staying year after year, trying to piece together their very real hatred of the war with their great love for it, that rough reconciliation that many of us had to look at. A few came through with the grisliest hang-ups, letting it all go every chance they got, like the one who told me that he couldn't see what all the fuss had been about, *his* M-16 never jammed. There were Frenchmen who'd parachuted

into Dien Bien Phu during what they loved to call "the First Indochina War," Englishmen sprung alive from *Scoop* (a press-corps standard because it said that if the papers didn't get it, it didn't happen), Italians whose only previous experience had been shooting fashion, Koreans who were running PX privileges into small fortunes, Japanese who trailed so many wires that transistor jokes were inevitable, Vietnamese who took up combat photography to avoid the draft, Americans who spent all their days in Saigon drinking at the bar of L'Amiral Restaurant with Air America pilots. Some filed nothing but hometowners, some took the social notes of the American community, some went in the field only because they couldn't afford hotels, some never left their hotels. Taken all together, they accounted for most of the total on Gunny's blackboard, which left a number of people, as many as fifty, who were gifted or honest or especially kind and who gave journalism a better name than it deserved, particularly in Vietnam. Finally, the press corps was as diffuse and faceless as any regiment in the war, the main difference being that many of us remained on our own orders.

It was a characteristic of a lot of Americans in Vietnam to have no idea of when they were being obscene, and some correspondents fell into that, writing their stories from the daily releases and battlegrams, tracking them through with the cheer-crazed language of the MACV Information Office, things like "discreet burst" (one of those tore an old grandfather and two children to bits as they ran along a paddy wall one day, at least according to the report made later by the gunship pilot), "friendly casualties" (not warm, not fun), "meeting engagement" (ambush), concluding usually with 17 or 117 or 317 enemy dead and American losses "described as light." There were correspondents who had the same sensibility concerning the dead as the Command had: Well, in a war you've got to expect a little mud to get tracked over the carpet, we took a real black eye but we sure gave Charlie a shitstorm, we consider this a real fine kill ratio, real fine. . . . There was a well-known correspondent of three wars who used to walk around the Danang press center with a green accountant's ledger. He'd sit down to talk and begin writing everything you'd say, entering it in, so to speak. The Marines arranged for a special helicopter (or "fragged a chopper," as we used to call it) to take him in and out of Khe Sanh one afternoon, weeks after it had become peaceful again. He came back very cheerful about our great victory there. I was sitting with [John] Lingle [of the Associated Press], and we recalled that, at the very least, 200 grunts had been blown away there and around 1,000 more wounded. He looked up from his ledger and said, "Oh, two hundred isn't anything. We lost more than that in an hour on Guadalcanal." We weren't going to deal with that, so we sort of left the table, but you heard that kind of talk all the time, as though it could invalidate the deaths at Khe Sanh, render them somehow less dead than the dead from Guadalcanal, as though light losses didn't lie as still as moderate losses or heavy losses. And these were American dead they were talking about; you should have heard them when the dead were Vietnamese. ■

WORKING

Virginia is for job-lovers

In the latest effort in professional pulse-taking, the Virginia Press Association and the journalism program of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University have conducted a study of the characteristics and attitudes of the news staffs of thirty-two V.P.A.-member dailies. And in a remarkable show of enthusiasm, 731 reporters, copy editors, sports people, department heads, and chief news executives have responded to the questionnaire — a return of 95.3 percent.

Less astonishing, perhaps, is the substance of their replies. According to the hard data, the journalist in the Virginia newsroom is young (median age, thirty-three), well educated (70 percent with college degrees), and experienced (median years, 6½). He — and the pronoun is correct — is male (78 percent), and chances are that he is on the same assignment that he started with on his present paper (a situation that moved the researchers to mild rebuke). If his salary is an average one, it lies in the \$235-a-week range.

As for his work, he loves it. Not just the challenge, the excitement, the freedom, the public service, though many cited these as the most appealing aspects of the job — just as the editors had predicted they would. For a significant number of others, however, the quality of journalism life seems directly related to the editors themselves — something the editors did not predict — and the “one best thing” about the job is the satisfaction of working with strong, supportive, professionally competent people. Similarly, those things liked least go well beyond bad hours and low pay to include not only frustration with the public’s lack of understanding of First Amendment considerations, but with unprofessionalism and incompe-

tence of editorial colleagues.

Understandably enough, and in the best tradition of pulse-takers everywhere, the researchers seem to have put the cheeriest face on their reading of the subject’s chart. Not that they lack grounds for optimism: the ten-year forecasts by news executives project an increase in the employed numbers of women, of college graduates, of journalism majors, and most crucially, of the whole news staff itself — a rise in jobs of 26 percent by 1986. And even at present, there appears to be a mobility rate of 10 percent.

There are, however, other, less reassuring signs that the report fails to mark. It ignores altogether the question of professional participation of racial minorities; perhaps it knows the answer already. It refrains from noting that even among the journalists who had been hired during the previous year, 74 percent were male; it resorts instead to fancy statistical acrobatics to prove that the salary and employment situations of women are not nearly as bad as they look. And on the matter of salaries, it makes no judgment at all, even though the pay checks of nearly a third fall substantially below the national median, which even as long ago as 1970 was estimated at \$11,420 for journalists working on daily newspapers.

No doubt it is much more pleasant to emphasize the “joyous pride, sometimes fierce, always emotional” that journalists take in doing their job, the motivation that is so “far more meaningful than merely so-many dollars for so-many hours,” and indeed, the “reservoir of power available to the owners and managers of Virginia dailies that, on some papers, has not yet been fully tapped.” To which the journalist — particularly if he happens to be among the 29 percent who make less than \$10,000 a year — may well reply that the reservoir is being tapped quite enough already, thank you. G.C.

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BOOKS

History by those who made it

My Soul Is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered

Interviews by Howell Raines. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 472 pp. \$12.95

This oral history traces the civil-rights movement from the Montgomery bus boycott to the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis. The interviews were recollections in the relative tranquility of 1974, when Howell Raines was a reporter for the *Atlanta Constitution*, but what the fifty leaders of the movement said was anything but tranquil. The result of Raines's work is journalism raised to the level of history — days' events fused by powerful feeling into the diary of a troubled decade.

Raines chooses to scoop up a few samples of the long struggle — the Montgomery boycott, Greensboro sit-ins, Freedom Rides, Birmingham demonstrations, Selma marches, and the Mississippi Summer Project — and let the principals of each tell their own stories. The book's introduction, describing the author's methods, is recommended reading for any journalist aspiring to write history.

Raines says it took nineteen months to compile *My Soul Is Rested*:

To trace the chain of acquaintances that led from one person to the next, I relied on the suggestions and address files of interviewees, my own alphabetized search lists, luck, and that most fundamental investigative tool of the American journalist — the telephone company's information service. All of these figured, for example, in my progress from Julian Bond to Lawrence Guyot to Hartman Turnbow. Bond, in telling me about the founding of SNCC, mentioned Guyot as one of the first SNCC workers to venture into the Mississippi Delta. Guyot, once I found him, included in his vivid recollections of S.N.C.C.'s forays a suggestion

that I seek out Hartman Turnbow, who was to give me so much more than the exceptional interview contained in this book.

Most of the interviews were done in one sitting and few lasted longer than forty-five minutes. Raines and his wife went over the typed transcriptions to insure their accuracy; then he edited out most of the repetitious phrases — “well, I mean, and uh, and the ubiquitous *you know*.” About a third of the people interviewed read over the transcripts before signing the release required for publishing verbatim remarks, but no one asked Raines “to change statements of fact or opinion that the interviewee knew might prove controversial or embarrassing.”

Oral history's greatest virtue is its faithful reproduction of all varieties of speech. The grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation come across as spoken; they are not rearranged, dressed up, or cleaned up into the “Standard English” by the person doing the interviewing or editing. Here is Turnbow:

How I first got interested in the Movement was a fella come in here talkin' 'bout redish and vote to become a first-class citizen, and he come down here in Holmes County outa Leflore County several times before we got interested in redishin' and votin'. Nobody in Holmes County or nowhere in Mississippi hadn't never redished and hadn't never voted, and I was quite a ageable man at that time, and I hadn't never did it and hadn't never heard anything 'bout it, so I just wasn't too interested in it. . . .

The contrasts between Turnbow's style of speaking and (for example) Julian Bond's educated middle-class speech do much to suggest the solidarity of the Movement among all classes and backgrounds. Raines doesn't have to make the point himself: his fifty voices do that.

The newness of the oral-history ap-

proach is reflected in the absence of an accepted style, particularly in the matter of handling dialect spellings. Raines's book uses apostrophes to show the sounds dropped from words like *votin'* and *'bout*, while other oral histories, such as Robert Hamburger's *Our Portion of Hell* (1973), drop the apostrophes as unnecessary. In what is perhaps the best style book yet available, William Moss's *Oral History Program Manual* (1974), developed for the John F. Kennedy Library, such spellings are left up to the discretion of the transcriber/editor, returning us to the days before the great dictionaries prescribed authoritative spellings for our words.

The oral history approach may clash with current journalistic practice. Here, for example, is what the *Stylebook of the Commercial Appeal* (1977) says: “Use dialect only when it is an important element in the story — and it rarely is. In direct quotations, judgment must be used in correcting minor lapses from good English, but our style and preferences should never be put in the mouth of a speaker, especially when how a man says it may be of as much importance as what he says.” It seems that the Memphis newspaper is interested in “how a man says it” only if it happens to be non-dialectal “good English.”

My Soul Is Rested gives occasional stage directions in brackets to help us see the speakers: (“[arms akimbo here, the accents of a Southern lady who is ‘put out’]”) and hear their tone of voice when it changes for some dramatic purpose; as Raines says in his introductory essay, “The South is a region of storytellers.” The vividness of oral history — John Lewis telling about the time he was sitting in at a Krystal hamburger stand in Nashville and getting fumigated with insect spray by the manager, who had locked him in, or Hank Thomas describing the mob at the

Trailways bus station in Birmingham beating up the Freedom Riders — makes it an irresistible medium for assembling the eyewitness fragments of history.

The difference between this medium and daily reporting media is primarily one of restraint: the oral-history interviewer stays in the background, permanently off-camera, and lets the people interviewed tell their story almost uninterrupted. For this very reason, at its less-than-ideal, oral history can be unbelievably boring. Imagine all the millions of pages of tape transcriptions filling up libraries all over the world, but nowhere faster than in the United States. How many of these pages are readable? As Stephen Shamberg said in *Guerrilla Television* (1972), Americans are information junkies: they will amass papers and tapes and their daily dose of milli-bits of information that cannot help but foul up their lives. The reporter's notebook and head have the virtue of holding what is usually the most memorable, whereas the tape recorder is absolutely indiscriminating as to what is

trash and what is treasure. Once transcribed, the two are often difficult to separate, and oral history promises much unreadable material to come. Given the choice between another oral history of the civil-rights movement and a straight but moving first-person narrative like Sally Belfrage's *Freedom Summer* (1965), where everything has been mentally edited and compacted before committing to paper, the common reader is likely to choose the *Freedom Summer* approach every time.

Another problem of oral history is that it relies heavily on highly subjective evidence. It suffers from what Tom Wolfe (in discussing the New Journalism) called "dropping the object" — being less interested in the shipwreck than the tears on the cheeks of those witnessing the shipwreck. The result is that history is reduced to something like psycho-history: it is so if you think it's so. Fortunately, in Raines's case, whatever self-congratulatory or grandstanding tendencies his interviewees may have exhibited in their interviews have

ended up on the cutting-room floor. The object is almost never dropped.

Pioneers in the oral history approach like Oscar Lewis and Studs Terkel concentrated on telling the Common Man's tale in his own voice, since it was obvious that the Puerto Rican laborer or the Chicago wino couldn't tell his story without help. But in this time of the telephone and the erasable tape, which may leave no archival records behind them, even the Great Man's tales and achievements may go unremembered. Few have the time or the abilities to write down what they have done. Oral history is a return to the amanuensis; it takes the slavery of secretarial duties from the person too busy or too unskilled to perform them himself. In fact, Columbia University's Oral History Research Office was established in 1948 by Allan Nevins, a man who devoted much of his life to writing the biographies of the greats; since that time, O.H.R.O. has spawned hundreds of oral history collections all over the world.

At the time of the founding of the

Civil-rights march, Selma to Montgomery, 1965



Oral History Association, in 1966, Columbia's office was getting inquiries from emerging nations as to the best ways to start oral-history programs coincident with their founding. For the journalist working in third-world countries, with their strong oral traditions, the oral-history approach may be the only way to get the story.

In our own third-world regions, particularly the Deep South, oral history may be the only way for the poor to communicate to the book-buying and newspaper-reading urban middle classes. Black-oriented radio stations like WDIA in Memphis have been reaching white audiences for years, especially the younger generation, so perhaps printed oral histories are not that surprising a development. As many of the principals in *My Soul Is Rested* stress, they got involved by the radio. John Lewis remembers hearing Martin Luther King's sermon "Paul's Letter to the American Churches" on a soul station in Montgomery. When the Montgomery Bus Boycott came along, Lewis remembered the sermon's message and got involved.

When I took a busload of college students to Birmingham in 1966, to help with a school-desegregation drive, it was the talks and sermons that were memorable: we heard the Miles College president outline his dreams for a struggling black college; we heard a sermon at an Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights meeting where a minister referred to George Wallace as the "Li'l Pharaoh" who would have to "Let my people go"; and we heard George Wallace speaking to a small crowd on a shopping center parking lot and introducing his wife, Lurleen, as the next governor of Alabama. What I saw and what little we accomplished have faded away, as have the names and faces of the people I met and worked with, but the sound of those Southern voices is still here, as memorable as the old lady in the boycott who said, "My feet is tired, but my soul is rested."

DAVID BOWMAN

David Bowman is a contributing editor of City of Memphis magazine and an occasional contributor to Southern Exposure magazine.



Weegee



New Year's, Sammy's-on-the-Bowery, 1943



Ambulance, 1943-44

Heatspell, 1938. Children Sleeping on the Fire Escape, the Lower East Side.



Beyond photojournalism

Working (I Do It for the Money)

by Bill Owens. Simon and Schuster. Unpaged. \$19.95 cloth; \$9.95 paper

Weegee

edited by Louis Stettner. Alfred A. Knopf. 183 pp. \$15

Public Relations

by Garry Winogrand. The Museum of Modern Art. 112 pp. \$14.95 cloth; \$9.95 paper

In widely differing ways these three books of photographs by experienced photojournalists react to, or comment upon, the stock images of daily journalism. Bill Owens works for a paper in Livermore, California, and in the beginning took "his own" photographs after he had fulfilled his assignment for the paper; Weegee, who died in 1968, did most of his best work during the years 1936 to 1945, when he was a free-lance news photographer; and Garry Winogrand's latest book of photographs is specifically about the people, both principals and hangers-on, at events where people gather mainly to be seen by the media and each other.

Among Bill Owens's hundred-and-forty-odd portraits of people at work are a crab fisherman, a pregnant instructor of baton twirling, a television cameraman, a birth-control pill inspector, a shoe salesman, a pickle packer, a chiropractor who is thinking of retiring to a worm farm, a private detective.

He doesn't seem to favor the rich or the poor, the alienated or the American dreamers. He relishes the details of jobs at either extreme, and of as many others as strike his fancy. Rich or powerful subjects naturally tend to surround themselves with signs of their success and their busyness. A philanthropist wearing only Bermuda shorts works in a cluttered office surrounded by plants (he's a liberal), but he is photographed talking on one of his three phones, the day's mail in his lap. A mayor is seen standing behind his desk. Behind him



Bill Owens

"At one time or another, 70 percent of people have a foot problem but only 3 percent seek professional care. I enjoy being a podiatrist. To see a patient who has suffered with corns for years and to correct that problem is a gratifying experience. When your feet hurt, you hurt all over."



"I'm one of the first freak fishermen on the West Coast. It's a life-style rather than a living. I want to conserve natural energy by doing more with less, so I sell the crabs I catch directly to people. Money is a paper signature for energy."

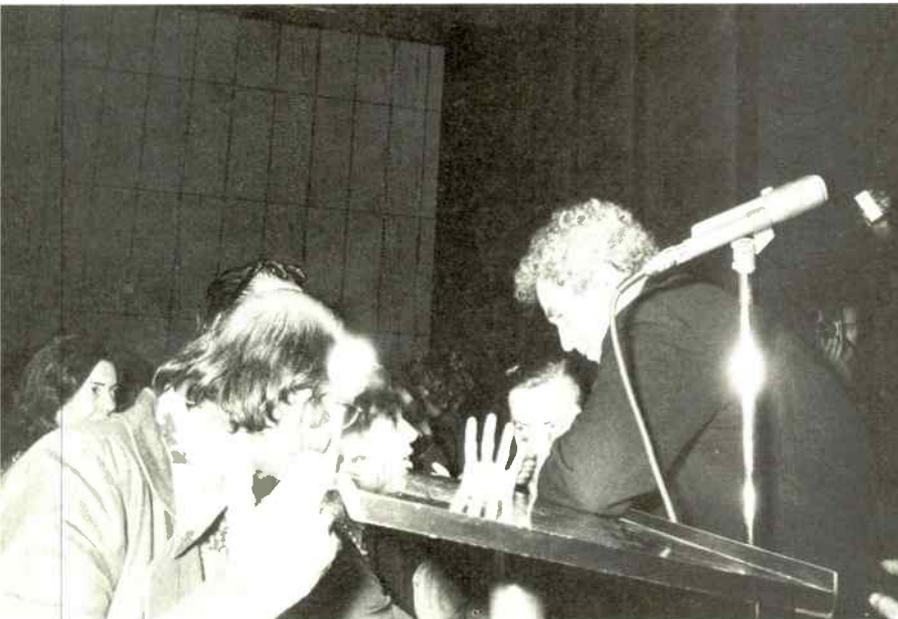


"I'm a philanthropist. Each year, depending on the stock market, I give away up to \$500,000. On my income tax forms I call myself a political maverick. I give money to political candidates, institutions and liberal politicians who support arms control and population control."





Garry Winogrand

*Centennial Ball, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1969**Peace Demonstration, Central Park, New York, 1969**Party, Norman Mailer's Fiftieth Birthday, New York, 1973*

are shelves of hats, from firemen, Mexican-Americans, Knights of Columbus, Future Farmers of America. Owens's poorer subjects, in contrast, are likely to be shown on assembly lines (including a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich assembly line), or in other crowded and unlovely settings.

It is not hard to see why Bill Owens's books (his first was *Suburbia*) have been popular. Not only are the photographs detailed, revealing, and sometimes witty, but they have captions in the voices of the subjects, which allows the book to be read as well as looked at. The tone of the captions is remarkably uniform from photograph to photograph: deadpan, funny, ironic, much like the mannered simplicity of Richard Brautigan or Kurt Vonnegut. A gravedigger, for example, who poses playfully with one foot in a grave in front of his backhoe, has this to say:

Before I got into the grave-digging business I was a body-and-fender man. My job is more than grave-digging. It's maintenance and planning. It fills a need.

Owens's photos provide plenty of material for social criticism, but they make none themselves; they do not lead us into either smugness or indignation. His subjects cooperate and pose, or self-consciously "act natural"; most often they are photographed looking directly at the camera, posing for a kind of on-the-job portrait. Of the three photographers, Owens seems to pay least attention to the conventional formulas and subjects of photojournalism; it is almost as if he has sought relief from crisis and drama and ceremony.

Weegee was a photographer from an older journalistic tradition, and, unlike Owens, he developed his art within it. He worked in New York City with a police radio and a darkroom in his car, and his book *Naked City* (1945) inspired the movie and the television series of the same name. Arthur Fellig became Weegee (from the Ouija board, because of his seemingly clairvoyant ability to be first at the scenes of murders and fires) as a kind of self-promotion. Weegee's photographs reflect the conventional values of the journalism of his time: the tough-minded exploitation of tragedy,

sympathy for the poor, a fascination with low life, and a contempt for the wealthy, who in his photographs are almost transylvanian in their pale bloodlessness. The subjects of many of his greatest photographs were chosen with newspapers in mind, but the results transcended the requirements of news. Murderers, corpses, survivors of tenement fires, summer crowds at Coney Island — all for Weegee could be either stock shots or works of art.

Weegee the artist was able to do more than merely deliver the goods for his customers. In one of his most disturbing photographs, the body of a woman is being loaded into an ambulance. Her mouth is agape, her eyes stare upward. Three men, one of them a policeman, look at her face, and their horrified expressions exactly mimic hers.

In *Public Relations* Garry Winogrand's subject is the media and how people act in their presence, or in the presence of the well-known. From 1969 to 1973 Winogrand made it his business to attend a few gallery openings, peace marches, press conferences, and other public events. His photographs suggest that on these occasions people tend to be either hyperactive or poleaxed, either overstimulated or petrified by nearness to the drama or the pseudodrama of public events and appearances by the famous and the powerful. (Winogrand's photograph of New York mayor John Lindsay sitting on a park bench in the sun, marinating in the attention of admirers, ought to be distributed to every politician in the country.)

Many of his photos, strobe shots taken during dimly lit receptions and institutional cocktail parties, are like X-rays that confirm the bad news we always suspected about such semi-public festivals-in-the-dark; now we know why we feel so bad at them and drink so much.

Often in Winogrand's demonstration groupies and cocktail-party extroverts one can glimpse introverts trying to get back inside themselves before it's too late. Those glimpses of sanity alone are worth the price of the book — at least in its paper edition.

R.C.S.

Everything from Ms. to zzz

The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual

edited by Howard Angione. Associated Press. 280 pp. \$2.50 (to A. P. clients), \$2.95 (to nonclients)

United Press International Stylebook

edited by Bobby Ray Miller. United Press International. 200 pp. \$2.25 (to U.P.I. clients), \$2.75 (to nonclients)

To someone outside journalism a style book by its very nature can seem offensive, a deliberate attempt to destroy individuality in writing. After all, words are thoughts, so the legislating of words constitutes an obligatory conformity in thought. To this position there are several sensible rejoinders: 1) better conformity than inadequacy; 2) style books deal only in trivia, not thought; 3) individuality is bad.

Since the conformity urged by the new U.P.I. and A.P. style books sometimes imposes a lowering of quality, and since at times these books do deal with substantial issues, the third rejoinder is probably the correct one. Certainly the books themselves display no strong desire for individuality; to a great extent they simply copy each other. In fact, these new books result from a joint A.P.-U.P.I. revision of their previous style books.

When they do differ, it is often the difference of two jeans-clad teenagers aiming lamely at individuality. U.P.I., illustrating cabinet titles, gives "Secretary of Commerce Juanita Kreps. Cyrus Vance, secretary of state." The A.P. gives "Secretary of State Cyrus Vance" and "Juanita M. Kreps, secretary of commerce." (U.P.I. is indifferent to middle initials; the A.P. says that they are "an integral part of a person's name.") Illustrating punctuation, the A.P. exclaims, "I hated reading Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'!"; U.P.I. hated *The Carpetbaggers*. Struggling to represent Hebrew authentically, the A.P. gives Rosh Hashana and Sukkot, U.P.I. Rosh ha-Shanah and Succoth.

The A.P. oddly requires *straight-laced* for metaphorical usages of *strait-laced*; U.P.I. bafflingly includes Oregon and Washington in the Sun Belt. The A.P. lists *trampoline* and *Gotterdammerung* and speaks of "the wind's murmur"; U.P.I. permits "they didn't know how bad off they were." That sentence is morbid in its content as well as its grammar, and sure enough the pessimistic U.P.I. gives "an average of 100 jobs are lost daily" where the optimistic A.P. asserts that "an average of 100 new jobs are created daily."

Style books such as these operate in several areas. They serve as irritatingly incomplete dictionaries, giving misspellable words and occasional useful definitions and distinctions, such as *because*, *since*; *character*, *reputation*; *compared to*, *compared with*; *either . . . or*, *neither . . . nor*. (These examples are in the A.P. book only.) They explain other points of grammatical usage, punctuation, etc. And, perhaps significantly, they determine verbal propriety in areas of social consciousness and change. Both of these books object to *Negress* and *Jewess*, for instance, and warn against using *squaw*, *tepee*, *warpath*, *tomahawk*, etc. demeaningly (though they are silent on less sensitive examples; the A.P. permits *paddy wagon*, for instance).

Newspapers are leveling texts, not improving texts, and so there is little point in whining about their lousy grammatical habits, such as their turning plurals into singulars (*agenda*, *insignia*) and other languages into English (*memorandums*, *referendums*, *stadiums*) while driving out likeable English verb forms such as *dove*. (The style books have not yet done their dirty work explicitly to *throve*, *hove*, *clove*, *rove*, *drove*, *stove*, and *wove* — but how many of these have you seen lately?) Given their tendencies, probably these books should be praised for holding the line on *that*, *which*; *uninterested*, *disinterested*; and *unique*. It's depressing, though, to find U.P.I. grudgingly muttering that "*whom* is required in certain idiomatic expressions: to *whom* it may concern, for *whom* the bell tolls," but that "elsewhere, *who* is acceptable in all references." The entry admits that *whom* is also acceptable, sometimes, "but it

may be awkward and often should be recast." One may take a grim pleasure from that last sentence — bad grammar being defended in bad grammar.

The hopeful person will argue that one can write well under any set of regulations. If this is so, then the proof of the pudding is in the eating; but the writing in these manuals is recurrently dismaying. "On a rotating basis" instead of "in sequence" decorates one discussion; the A.P. says that a brownout is "implemented to conserve electric power" and speaks of actors who "whet their talents in offbeat roles." Both style books, in apparently objecting to dangling modifiers, say mushily that one should "avoid modifiers that do not refer clearly and logically to some word in the sentence." Following this advice, U.P.I. produces such turbid sentences as, "Formerly Aeronaves de Mexico, headquarters of this airline is in Mexico City."

What happens when sloppy writing attempts to deal with the sensitive social issues also treated in these texts? Well, consider the matter of racial identity in stories in which that identity is not a central issue. "Use a racial identification only if it is clearly pertinent," U.P.I. says, and the A.P. agrees. As their first instance, both point to stories that concern "a feat . . . that has not been routinely associated with members of a particular race." Search your mind for instances. White wins watermelon-eating contest? Black lacks rhythm? Mr. Harold Feng, a Japanese, claims that as a tourist in Europe he took no photographs? Is there any way to follow the A.P./U.P.I. instruction without bigotry? Yet that was surely not the intention of the instructor, which is lost in his (or her) careless prose.

Let's watch now what happens when the two books discuss the word *admit*. They are anxious to warn their readers of the pejorative implications of the word. They both use an illustration with this structure: "A person who announces that he is a homosexual, for example, may be _____ it to the world, not admitting it." Leaning over backwards to avoid prejudice, the A.P. writes "acknowledging" it, U.P.I. "proclaiming" it. They are both look-

ing for neutral words. Unfortunately, *acknowledge* is a synonym for both *admit* and *confess*, so that the A.P. has made a bad matter worse, while *proclaim* implies a rather energetic declaration (there's a *clamor* in it) and can mean *extol*, so that U.P.I. goes in the opposite direction and makes something of an exhibitionist out of the poor gay. Incidentally, U.P.I. omits *that* in its form of the sentence, and its style book gives no rule for conjunctions of that sort. ("Use *that* to introduce a clause essential to a sentence," it says, probably referring only to pronouns.) The A.P. does give clear advice about this *that* while remarking that "there are no hard-and-fast rules." Unfortunately this use of hyphens mistakes a cliché for "a compound modifier — two or more words that express a single concept." *Hard and fast*, however, unlike *full-time* and *bluish-green*, are separable concepts, and one could speak of "fast and hard rules" if one wished to startle readers into a recognition of the obsolescent meanings involved.

See what tangled meanders one wallows in when reading style books?

Well, the A.P. and U.P.I. may not be clearly on the side of the angels with regard to race and homosexuality, but they're unclearly there, at least. The same can be said about feminism. They scorn the suffix *-person*, which is sensible, while suggesting that *weatherman* and *mailman* be replaced by (or with) *weather forecaster* and *letter carrier*, and that neutral terms be sought generally. ("Physicians and their spouses," urges the A.P., "not physicians and their wives.") They don't mention the popular *anchorman*, though, and they accept *divorcee*.

Both warn against using *lady* as a synonym for *woman*, and the A.P. adds a caveat against "patronizing overtones" when *lady* is used. With regard to hurricanes and typhoons, both warn against the using of their feminine names as an excuse for sexist images such as "fickle Hazel teased the Louisiana coast." Both define *forcible rape* as a redundancy except when contrasted to *statutory rape*, a rather remarkable

victory of reason over the Archie Simonsons of the profession.

The most exciting feature of the new style books, judged by the amount of critical commentary generated so far, is the new regulations that drop courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) in sports articles but retain them in other articles, for second reference, for women only. The choice of Mrs. or Ms. or Miss depends primarily upon the woman's preference, say the style books. If that cannot be determined — if she is in jail, for instance, or has fled the country, or is dead — then her marital status determines the use of Mrs. or Miss. She continues to be married even after being widowed; and, though she has her choice of Miss or Ms. or Mrs., apparently she cannot choose nothing at all. To rub this in, the final instruction is this: "If a woman prefers Ms., do not include her marital status in a story unless it is clearly pertinent." Obviously this acknowledges the impertinence of the information usually conveyed by Miss and Mrs.

The Washington Press Club's Subcommittee on Professional Equality has filed a long protest against this practice, and two women's press organizations, the National Federation of Press Women and Women in Communications, have joined in denouncing it. They take the titles to be demeaning, apparently not only because they often convey irrelevant information but because they imply that the information is in fact important and because for many women *Miss* implies *hasn't caught a man* and *Mrs.* implies *subservient to a man*.

Perhaps they do imply these things, but only to readers whose sexual attitudes have been formed elsewhere and who will not be persuaded to change by the absence of a courtesy title. One newspaper article reporting opposition to the practice said this: ". . . two women's press organizations have spit wrath in the direction of AP and UPI." The rest of the article contained no courtesy titles, but surely the unnamed author had succeeded in conveying in the quoted passage a slur that no courtesy title could have suggested. And the editors using A.P. and U.P.I. stories are free to cross the titles out. The silly U.P.I. attitude toward *whom* is a more

serious matter; words have no recourse to life when they are done dirt. Women will survive.

Both books discourage the mention of brand names (and often provide substitute generic names). They add: "When a company sponsors an event such as a golf tournament to obtain publicity, use a generic term for the event. . . . Provide the name of the sponsor in a separate paragraph that can be deleted if a newspaper wishes." (That is, if the sponsor doesn't advertise in that newspaper?) But think what would happen if newspapers *encouraged* the use of brand names: if a report on A's death from cancer included the information that he was a long-time Marlboro smoker; if B's malnutrition were linked to the brand of cereal he ate; if stories about C's and D's and E's deaths in auto accidents named the cars they were driving and the cars of the drivers who survived the collisions. Not much in any one case, perhaps. But just as feminists argue for the incremental value of the missing Miss, so one might argue for the incremental education provided by such information. True, the advertisers would go away . . . if they were advertising inferior products.

Imagine also what long-time effect might result if reporters were instructed not to use honorific and sporting terms ("arms race," "contest") in describing political, diplomatic, and military activities. Suppose they suppressed the jocular names of "war game" exercises as they do trade names. Suppose *kill* and *mutilate* were the only verbs permitted for those acts. Imagine instructions beginning, "When a government agency or military group sponsors an event to obtain publicity, say so in the opening paragraph." Now there's *real* stylistic reform!

Both style books are considerably longer than the texts they replace, but the A.P. style book is much longer and much better than the U.P.I. book. It contains far more background material — on foreign names, for instance, and the tenets and organization of many Western religions — and it explains many more points of meaning and grammar. Not that either is inclusive: both note that *river* is redundant with

Rio Grande, but ignore *Schuylkill*; neither lists *Ho-Ho-Kus*.

The last entry in the U.P.I. book is applicable to the whole subject: "zzz Lowercase, used to represent the sound of a person snoring."

J. D. O'HARA

J. D. O'Hara teaches English at the University of Connecticut at Storrs.

\$30 billion questions

Controversy Advertising: How Advertisers Present Points of View in Public Affairs

by International Advertising Association. Hastings House. 189 pp. \$12.50 paper

Advocacy Advertising and Large Corporations

by S. Prakash Sethi. Lexington Books. 355 pp. \$25

Politics in Public Service Advertising on Television

by David L. Paletz, Roberta E. Pearson, Donald L. Willis. Praeger. 123 pp. \$15

A recent issue of *CJR* contained an ad from a paper company stating that it has lately been "breeding better trees." Not only are they "taller and straighter than ordinary trees," the ad said, but "they also grow *faster*. And they have fewer, smaller branches." They contain, therefore, more usable fiber than the ordinary kind of tree designed by nature.

A few pages farther on, a Food Marketing Institute ad sought to explain "America's most misunderstood great invention," the supermarket. This invention, the ad suggested, keeps down the cost of food, raises its quality, and stimulates competition.

In the same issue, a Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association ad told of the efforts of its member companies to solve a wide variety of health problems — from hepatitis to cancer. A defense contractor explained why the country needs a new fighter bomber. And several oil and power companies advocated solutions to our energy problems.

I could not find any ads from environmental groups which might have

felt there was something nice about those ordinary unimproved trees. No consumer groups ran ads on drugs that *cause* diseases. There were no ads charging that the growth of supermarkets may drive out small businesses, decrease competition, raise prices, and lower the quality of food. And there were no ads that opposed expanding military hardware.

The ads in question are examples of what is variously called "advocacy advertising," "controversy advertising," or "issue advertising," among other characterizations. They do not sell products directly; rather, they seek to advance ideas and/or political positions which, ultimately, will result in the greater sale of products, although products are rarely mentioned. The reason books are written about this kind of advertising is that since the ads exist within a framework of *obvious* political and social persuasion, questions must be raised concerning their ultimate political impact, their legitimacy, and the means at hand to insure their truthfulness.

For my part, however, while some of these questions are important and books about them justified — they reveal details and provide a framework from which to view a corporate tendency — I have yet to find a book that is not flawed by the same limitation: they frame the questions too narrowly. *All* advertising is "advocacy advertising." *All* advertising has political and social effect.

More than \$30 billion is now spent annually on advertising in this country, and every dime's worth of it seeks to enter the mind of a reader/viewer and influence living styles, ways of viewing the world, and the economic systems which organically arise from these perceptions. Since virtually all of this \$30 billion is spent by corporations, the living styles presented naturally have their roots within only one kind of social-political consciousness.

The last time I informally measured how much ad money is spent annually by organizations interested in alternatives to the corporate view — by ecologists, or Indians, or poor people, Luddites, socialists, etc. — it came to something under \$2 million. So we have a ratio of roughly 15,000-1. To that ex-

tent the corporate mind dominates the information purveyed through advertising in this country. Of course, the reason the corporations spend more in advertising than the non-corporations is that the former have the money and the latter do not. A. J. Liebling once observed that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." What is true for the press in general is much more so with advertising.

Thirty billion dollars is an amount that is significantly greater than the total expenditure for all public secondary education in this country. It ought to be obvious that this amount of information (education!), confined as it is to the channelled perspective of business exigencies, is anathema to democratic processes. And yet this fact has remained invisible to most social and political critics. Only now that an increasing (though still small) percentage of advertising is more overtly political do the dangers become more visible. In

a way we should be grateful for this. But to think there is greater danger in "advocacy advertising," and that a real division exists among ads, is to be blind to the effects of advertising in general.

Two recently published books, *Controversy Advertising: How Advertisers Present Points of View in Public Affairs*, compiled by the International Advertising Association, and *Advocacy Advertising and Large Corporations*, by S. Prakash Sethi, a professor of business and social policy at the University of Texas, at Dallas, are examples of otherwise interesting books which circle their subject too narrowly. A third work, *Politics in Public Service Advertising on Television*, by three Duke University scholars, David L. Palatz, Roberta E. Pearson, and Donald L. Willis, takes a somewhat broader view of a different, though related, subject.

Both the I.A.A. and Sethi present detailed reports on the history of the growth of nonproduct-oriented ad cam-

paigns and the issues arising from them. Both reprint many examples of such ads. Sethi's work presents many more examples and provides more extensive analysis of them, but the I.A.A. study also includes many examples from abroad. Both works explore the corporate rationale for such advertising.

The I.A.A. and Sethi are in apparent agreement, for example, on the amazing fact that the chief corporate justification for the increased use of advocacy ads was to offset what corporations felt was an extreme bias of media to be opposed to the corporate perspective and to disbelieve corporate statements.

It is clear that large corporations take an almost Nixonian view of media criticism and suffer a nearly human degree of insecurity. Despite the fact that all life in America is primarily organized to serve commodity consumption, despite the \$30 billion spent to create a one-sided information environment, despite the access to government that corporations enjoy, every item of scandal, every report on pollution, every finding of an industrial process that produces cancer, every strike that opens corporations to criticism is received as if it might be a death blow. The corporate instinct is to retaliate on a massive scale.

And so a campaign by farm workers to gain a minimum wage and decent working conditions is met with tens of millions of dollars' worth of corporate advertising to overpower their efforts. An environmentalist ad campaign against the Alaska pipeline, waged at a cost of less than \$200,000, is met with an industrial campaign that cost upwards of \$25 million. (It has become a homily among "do-good" groups that there exists a "Truth Ratio." California environmentalist Alvin Duskin has said that if do-gooders can muster 10 percent of the ad budget of corporate opponents, the do-gooders will win. "The truth has an added ring to it," Duskin says, that can overcome information bludgeoning, at least to that extent.)

The International Advertising Association study acknowledges the existence of such problems as the effects of the domination of large corporations and the doubtful honesty of their ads, but finally, since the I.A.A. is after all a

From Teapot Dome to Watergate,
the "fascinating history of one of
the most influential newspapers
ever published..."

Read all about it!"

—EDWIN NEWMAN

The
Washington
Post THE FIRST
100 YEARS

CHALMERS M. ROBERTS

\$15.95, now at your bookstore

 Houghton Mifflin Company

trade organization, it cannot bring itself to do more than make light of these problems:

Controversy advertising by business is subject to very careful scrutiny by several groups. Questions of factual error and omission are analyzed by the press and regulated by a wide variety of business and government bodies. Fallacious arguments are subject to a different kind of regulation: the ridicule of one's peers.

Whatever problems may exist, then, will somehow work themselves out. And yet the press rarely scrutinizes ads. Government does little more than the press, and anyway is often deeply pro-industry. As for the "ridicule of one's peers," if that means that an auto manufacturer will run biting ads about the misleading statements of an oil company, I can hardly wait.

The Sethi study provides a far more serious and thorough presentation of the subtleties of the issues and the difficulties of their solution. Sethi even goes so far as to imply, obliquely, that corporations may need advertising that explains themselves because they have created so many conditions that require explanation. In reading Sethi, one gets the distinct feeling that he knows that something insoluble is at large, but he never quite says so. The following two quotes are as far as he allows himself to go.

There are indeed reasonable grounds for concern that advocacy advertising campaigns, when pursued by a significantly large number of corporations, over a period of time, can overwhelm the information mix available to the public and thereby squeeze out or sharply reduce the expression of alternative viewpoints on important issues affecting society. . . .

Devoid of a desire for change and a substantive effort in this direction on the part of business institutions, advocacy advertising will become just another in the continuing efforts of business to defend today's reality and status quo with yesterday's ideology and *raison d'être*. In the event large corporations are content to pursue a course primarily of partisan propaganda . . . [this] will not reduce the scope of conflict, but enlarge it. It will not contribute to the quality of diversity of public information, but worsen it. By escalating the level of noise, it will increase

public antagonism which will express itself through greater government restrictions. . . . Business will have no one to blame but itself and just as predictably will buy more ad space to bemoan the fact of public ignorance, media hostility, and political opportunism.

Despite Sethi's willingness to express such criticisms, in the end his recommendations are not distinctly different from the *laissez-faire* notions of the I.A.A. He says, for example, "paid advertising is not the only channel of communication and equal access to the public communication space does not mean equal access to the same communication medium." (I have heard corporate executives suggest that people without corporate-sized bank accounts can always use handbills.) Given his earlier statements, I was shocked at Sethi's suggesting that "market pressure," "public censure," and "self-regulation" can be effective means of limiting corporate indulgence. He does advocate broadening the scope of public-service messages on the air waves to include more controversial views than are presently aired, and he suggests that every news outlet establish its own Public Service Advertising Space Allocation Committee. But his big idea is that business and media should jointly fund a National Council for Public Information to expand access for nonbusiness points of view. Public-interest groups would apply to a funding board comprised of "eminent persons, including corporate executives, with a national record of public service." Each year, ten applicants would be funded. Thanks, but no thanks.

The third work, *Politics in Public Service Advertising on Television*, does not concern itself directly with corporate advertising on controversial issues, but rather with a form of advertising which, in theory, is open to noncorporate perspectives and issues. Broadcasters are required to provide a percentage of air time for public-service advertising (P.S.A.), and such ads, theoretically, can mitigate the domination of commercial advertisers. In practice, however, as the authors explain in great detail, P.S.A.s only serve to support the same socialization processes and the same philosophical and economic perspectives

one finds in other advertising.

This is a meticulous and powerful book, to me by far the most interesting and persuasive of the three. The authors describe how a kind of "buddyism" between broadcasters and advertisers, broadcasters, and the Advertising Council (which provides the great majority of the P.S.A.s which broadcasters find acceptable), effectively leaves this so-called access channel largely in the same hands as those that dominate the rest of broadcasting. Far from serving democratic processes by broadening perspectives available to the public, the authors report they found that all opinions dangerous to the status quo are excluded, as is information that might lead to anticorporate feelings. Both in style of presentation and subject area, the P.S.A.s that are broadcast serve to further a singularly acceptable (to commercial advertisers) perspective.

We categorized our PSAs as noncontroversial or controversial. The former express a viewpoint about which there is general consensus in our society. A controversial PSA concerns a subject over which there is considerable disagreement in our society and which might go beyond the cleavage tolerable within the general consensus. In view of our evidence that groups espousing controversial views are virtually excluded from television, we expected very few controversial PSAs. There were none. . . . PSAs constitute a part of the "continuing source of consensus". . . . Through the values they espouse, the blame they fail to attribute, the blame they do attribute, the solutions to problems they propose; and by excluding dissident groups, by refusing to consider certain subjects, and by depoliticizing issues, PSAs contribute to consensus by not "baring structural flaws". . . . We must question whether such advertising is indeed a public service, or whether it may more appropriately be characterized as propaganda contributing to the perpetuation and support of existing social and economic relations within an arid political stability in the United States.

JERRY MANDER

Jerry Mander was president of Freeman, Mander & Gossage Advertising, founder and director of Public Interest Communications, and is author of the forthcoming book, Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television, to be published in March by Morrow.

In defense of the marketing approach

Contrary to critics, research on newspaper audiences does not point the way to fluffy journalism

by PHILIP MEYER

It is time to say a kind word for the marketing approach to managing newspapers. Criticism is coming from a very wide spectrum of opinion in our profession: we had the curmudgeonly complaints of the late Lester Markel of *The New York Times*, who decried from his elder-statesman perspective what he called "Gallup editing," the use of survey research to learn reader tastes. There are the thoughtful reservations of a middle-generation practitioner, William H. Hornby, the executive editor of *The Denver Post*, who fears that preoccupation with the market will cause newspapers to lose sight of their constitutional function to tell the public what it needs to know. And the most recent complaint is that of a young idealist, Fergus M. Bordewich, who wrote in the *Review* (September/October 1977) that research was giving editors "a statistical excuse to work less hard at the challenge of making the world real to their audience."

Each of these critics assumes a conflict between marketing needs and a newspaper's responsibility to a free society. That conflict may be more imagined than real. If it could be demonstrated that the rational response to the demands of the marketplace is flashy graphics, chopped-up news summaries, and fluffy entertainment in place of solid information about public affairs, our society would indeed be in big trouble. Such a connection has yet to be made, however. Strange and alarming things are being done to some newspapers — but the connection between the innovations and serious marketing research is

either tenuous or nonexistent. The art of using scientific research in the marketing of newspapers is extremely underdeveloped and that is a pity, because the industry could use some solid cues at this moment in its history.

It is true that daily newspaper circulation has begun to climb again after a disconcerting period of decline in 1974 and 1975. Advertising linage is up. Some newspaper companies are enjoying record profits. But marketing innovation is not the cause. All of the industry's present bliss can be explained by economic conditions and population changes. The significant trend, as Jerry W. Friedheim, general manager of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, put it, is that "many of our markets are growing faster than our circulation." That is about as gentle a way as the language permits of saying that the newspaper business is proceeding downhill. It is not keeping up with population growth; thus, while the gross number of readers has edged up, the proportion of newspaper readers in the population continues to decline. Even worse, the long-awaited boost in readership from the postwar baby boom generation has not appeared. The oldest members of that generation are thirty-two now, a couple of years past the age at which the newspaper habit used to take hold. Instead, readership among that generation (defined as persons born between 1945 and 1954) actually declined from 1975 to 1977, according to survey data collected by the National Opinion Research Center for its annual General Social Survey. Among the adult population in general, the proportion who say they read a newspaper every day has declined each time the question has been asked in the N.O.R.C. surveys, starting in 1967 with 73 percent and dwindling to 62 percent by 1977.

Given this kind of trouble, we should be glad that some newspapers are making audacious experiments and trying to adopt principles of marketing that have worked in other industries. If you accept the readership trend charted by N.O.R.C., all you have to do is place a straightedge on the chart and extend the line to see that newspaper readership will fall below the 50-percent mark by 1990 if the present trend continues. If that happens, newspapers will no longer be a mass medium, and the primary rationale for their advertising support may be lost. Clearly, a risk of foolish and even counterproductive innovation is preferable to going gentle into that good night.

Not even the severest critics of the marketing approach contend that public wants should be ignored altogether. In practice, newspaper people are ambivalent about writing and editing for the marketplace. It is only when the market seems to be pushing them in a direction they would rather not go that they start to complain. When the market is with them, they seldom hesitate to reap its benefits and even point with pride to popular acceptance as evidence of their — and the public's — wisdom.

Moreover, the marketplace imposes a needed discipline. Given the freedom provided by the First Amendment, the only practical limit to newspapers' power is the need for public acceptance. The best evidence and reminder of that acceptance is the daily test of whether consumers are willing to pay money for what newspapers produce. Journalists need that check to keep from becoming insufferably elitist. The need to continually convince people that the product is worth fifteen or twenty cents provides a much-needed corrective.

One underlying assumption of much of the anti-marketing criticism is that the

Philip Meyer of the Knight-Ridder Newspapers appraised 1976 election polls in the January/February 1977 Review. He is a specialist in applications of social-science data in journalism.

new breed of consultants — dubbed “the news doctors” by *Time* — can tailor a newspaper to mirror public desires exactly, shutting out anything that is fresh, new, and needed. In fact, the consultants’ capabilities are severely limited, as they will admit when pressed. Joe Belden of Dallas can boil his advice to innovation-hungry editors down to nine basic concepts. One waits with bated breath, but Belden’s concepts turn out to be commonsense notions not very well supported by data: stress significance more and immediacy less in news content; rebalance the mix of hard and soft news; emphasize local news; put more emphasis on content and less on graphics; do something about the public’s perception that newspapers are biased; avoid too much that is negative; don’t be dull; adjust to new personal values and life-styles; and reassess the functioning and performance of the newspaper as a tool for communication. Only three of the items on the list are based on formal collection of quantitative data, and one of them (emphasizing local news) is in conflict with the most recent national study. The rest come from small-group interviews and Belden’s general observations and intuition. “The readership problem is an extremely complex thing,” Belden says. “Simplistic solutions are not going to work.”

Some newspapers are, as the critics charge, going for fluffy, light reading material, and tight summaries at the expense of detailed news. Some are doing startling things with graphics. In neither case are there hard data telling them that this is what readers want. On the contrary, where data have been collected, they tend to point in quite the other direction. A national survey by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, run under very tight methodological specifications by Leo Bogart, turned up support for the old-fashioned belief that people want news in their newspapers. Moreover, international and national news articles were rated by readers as both more interesting and more important than local news. (The advice of many consultants has been to trim the former in favor of the latter.)

The public is equally conservative when it comes to newspaper graphics. Splashy new designs are liked less than

more traditional design, although young people dislike the changes less than do older people. When *The Boston Globe* considered design changes, it offered respondents in a survey their choice of five different formats. The more radical choices were rated last. The *Globe*’s existing format came in second. And the first choice was an even more conservative format, which the *Globe* had abandoned two years before.

This case illustrates the kind of thing that hard research data are most likely to show. If you are really desperate to innovate, you will have to go beyond data. Helping editors to take that dangerous leap into the unknown may be the real function of the newspaper doctors.

“I for one do not believe that people know what they really want,” says Frank Magid, the Iowa-based consultant who is credited with the creation of television’s “happy-news” format. “And I don’t believe that you are going to be able to come up with answers that are really meaningful, significant, and that are things that can be put to use if you ask people what they want the newspaper to be.”

The research that accompanies the news doctors’ prescriptions may basically be useful for its placebo effect. Norman Cousins has told of his surprise at seeing Albert Schweitzer and a witch doctor dividing their work, with the latter effectively treating the great majority of patients, who were looking for no more than reassurance, encouragement, or a bit of magic for a psychogenic complaint. Much modern medicine, suggests Cousins, depends on that same placebo effect.

In journalism, a newspaper doctor may be providing a similar reassurance to an editor or publisher who needs to try some awful experiment. It is a service because the industry needs awful and dangerous experiments, and newspapers that volunteer to be laboratories for the experiments need all the hand-holding they can get.

Take away this large category of newspaper consulting and what remains at the core of hard research to guide editors? Precious little. In the first place there is no very good body of theory about the relationship of the reader to the newspaper. Without theories about

the way the market works, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to construct a useful model of the process for testing by research. And without a model, a researcher cannot know what questions to ask. “Most of [editors’] choices,” says Fred Currier of Market Opinion Research, “are not clear cut. That’s why they have a hard time verbalizing to you what the hell they want you to measure.”

The “Gallup editing” decried by Markel is a model of sorts. Call it the referendum model. Its unstated assumption is that the way to decide what to put in the newspaper is to take a vote on every category of content and then select those categories that get the most votes. The majoritarian fairness of this model is certainly appealing, but it is not good marketing strategy. Aside from Magid’s objection, which is essentially correct, the model does not fit what little is known about newspaper readership. Use of the newspaper is highly individualized, with every reader tailoring his or her reading pattern to fit individual tastes like a finicky customer (in the analogy of Harvard marketing professor Steve Star) proceeding through a cafeteria line. The cafeteria must stock items of both broad appeal and narrow appeal. As any editor knows who has ever tried to drop a crossword puzzle, a low-readership item can be very important to the few who read it, and the loyalty it engenders may be worth far more than the cost of the space it takes. Finding an editorial mix is therefore a very complicated problem, in which more information is needed than the referendum supplies. The intensity with which items are read and used is one such additional piece of information. The degree to which different kinds of content overlap each other is another; a well-read item may make little or no contribution to net readership if the people who read it are already drawn to the paper by other kinds of material.

Maxwell McCombs, a Syracuse University professor and director of the A.N.P.A. News Research Center, recently made a significant contribution to newspaper research with a decision model that takes this overlapping or clustering into account. McCombs recommends keeping features that have high and unduplicated readership and

dropping those whose readership is low and clustered with readership of other features. Readily available computer programs make the classification of features into those with isolated or clustered readership easy and cheap to do. His model is not yet widely used.

A model that is widely used, and is also a bit more sophisticated than the simple referendum, is the target-group model. The theory behind it holds that a specific category of non-readers can be isolated whose characteristics indicate that its members are not too different from readers. By tilting newspaper content toward the target group's tastes, a newspaper may convert some of its members to readership without losing any of its existing readers.

The most visible recent example of the use of this model is the *Chicago Tribune's* revamping in quest of a non-reader group defined by a psychological profile. The group, labeled the "Strivers," was found to be young, affluent, upwardly mobile, and in need of service information. The *Tribune's* new "briefing page" at the back of the first section, which ran pictures and news summaries, some of them keyed to inside stories, was one result. Redesign of "Tempo," the former women's section, was another. A section on participant sports was added. A brighter Monday business page was created, with hard news written by staffers who come in on Sunday and call businessmen off golf courses for interviews.

The *Tribune* as a result is a much more attractive and interesting newspaper, and this has come without any visible sacrifice of traditional journalistic values. However, one of the advantages peculiar to the target-group model has not been exploited. This advantage is that the model can be validated. If indeed there is such a category as the "Strivers" in Chicago, and if they can be counted and examined in detail, and if a newspaper can be tailored for their needs, then it should be a very simple matter to see if the model works. If it does work, the *Tribune* should have a greater proportion of "Strivers" among its readership than it had before. This simple validation of the basic concept has not been performed, although Ruth Clark, the Yankelovich, Skelly and White researcher who discovered the

"Strivers," hopes to return to Chicago a year from now to do that.

Most target-group studies never get such follow-up, the standard excuse being that so much money was spent on the initial project that none is left over to evaluate it. It may be that both the researchers and their clients, having made an enormous commitment to a project, would rather not know whether they acted on verifiable fact or a theory whose values are mainly literary and inspirational. If the latter is true, it is not necessarily bad, as the witch doctor's success attests, but it would be nice to know.

Another model, developed at Knight-Ridder newspapers, takes the data of the referendum and target group models into account and adds one other dimension: whether or not the subject matter in question has anything to do with newspaper readership. Odd as it may seem, some subjects are highly correlated with newspaper readership and others are not — even though they may be just as interesting to as many people. Traditional hard-news subjects, national, international, and local news, tend to have high interest and this interest is correlated with newspaper reading, a relationship which verifies that newspapers do tend to cover them with some reliability. Other topics, many of them service features, (consumer advice, child rearing, budget stretching) score high in the referendum, but interest in them does not correlate strongly with newspaper reading. These are therefore topics which offer an opportunity to capture new readers, whether by increasing the coverage of them or by promoting the coverage a newspaper already has.

The third category in this editorial priority-setting model includes topics of low interest but high correlation with newspaper reading. These are the "cafeteria items" that need to be retained and watched for the combinations that produce the best unduplicated readership groups. Topics in the remaining category, those having low reading correlation and low interest, can be given low priority.

Much more imaginative use of research is, of course, possible, but the simpler models may have to achieve

fuller development and acceptance first. A more complicated, computer-simulation model to test different kinds of editorial mix is a recurrent dream, although it understandably raises the hackles of editors. The fact that the most recent proposal of this kind came from the Newspaper Advertising Bureau did nothing to calm their fears. The adoption of the marketing approach has done much to quiet the traditional editorial-business side antagonism, but a residue of distrust remains. The marketing people have logic on their side here: advertising, circulation, and editorial efforts ought to be coordinated for marketing to be fully effective, for they all deal ultimately with the same customers. A strong editor can work with these other departments without being compromised. For a weak one, the traditional separation is probably not going to help anyway.

Leo Bogart's new study should be a help in bringing the intramural factions together. His documentation of the need to keep news in newspapers warmed even the heart of Hornby, who was recruited to express the anti-market viewpoint at the recent convention of the Associated Press Managing Editors. "The reader actually does want some of the things that we thought he didn't know were good for him," marveled Hornby, after hearing Bogart's presentation. He urged his fellow editors to "use the marketing and research tools well, not just as tablets of instruction, but as tools." He has that exactly right. Hornby is also correct in maintaining that editors have nothing to gain by viewing "the reader out there" as "some sort of a withdrawn, self-interested, alienated dummy that doesn't want to know anything about his world. . . . If we can keep our faith in what it is we're supposed to be doing, then I think the newspaper does have a good future."

We'll soon know. It may be that the newspaper industry is in the grip of social forces beyond its control and that the successful information distribution systems of the fairly near future will be vastly different. But bolstered by the free interplay of research, guts, and editorial instinct, the marketing approach gives us some hope of holding on to the newspaper as we know it. ■

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dissident note

TO THE REVIEW:

I am in the curious position of disagreeing with an article commissioned to illustrate the point being made in my piece about the U.S. press and dissidents in Moscow (CJR, November/December). My intention was to portray a dilemma for Western reporters who feel drawn emotionally to dissenters and also are attracted to the dramatic story they represent. I did not mean to suggest as [Fergus M.] Bordewich does ("The Press Harmonizes on a Presidential Theme," CJR, November/December) that in the early months of 1977 those of us in Moscow exaggerated the significance of the dissidents story. Within a few weeks of the Carter inauguration, a dozen leading dissidents were arrested — the most concerted crackdown in at least five years — and the president was speaking out in defense of these individuals by name. This was the first direct confrontation between the Kremlin and the new American administration, and it was a major development. For us not to have given comprehensive coverage would have been unthinkable. My point was not merely to criticize the amount that we write about dissidents but to raise questions about our approach to the issue and the danger that we may be exaggerating it. Bordewich reduces this rather complicated notion to a scorecard.

I did not see this piece before it appeared and would have made these observations to the editors of the *Review* had it been shown to me.

PETER OSNOS
Washington, D.C.

TO THE REVIEW:

Thanks to Peter Osnos for supplying perspective to reports on Soviet dissidents. Should we ask our domestic press to also provide perspective when they are reporting on American dissidents? More specifically, should we ask them the questions posed by Osnos? "Are these dissidents really as important as our attention to them would indicate? What actually is their constituency among [Americans]? Are we encouraging dissent merely by writing about it? Indeed, do we sometimes act more as spokespersons for dissidents than as reporters?"

D. F. CASS
Chalmette, La.

Losers all

TO THE REVIEW:

The Germond-Witcover story on the Bert Lance affair (CJR, November/December) provided few new insights into the press's handling of that difficult situation.

The article might have pointed out how every party in the affair was a loser — including the press. Senator Ribicoff was put in the spot of being an adversary to the Carter White House. The Governmental Affairs Committee, previously a harmonious panel, was split into angry factions. President Carter's credibility suffered. Bert Lance lost a top job.

But the fact remains that whether or not the press "hounded" or was out to "get" Bert Lance, those nationally televised charges alone were detrimental to the media's public image and confidence. In that respect, the press was also a loser.

On the other hand, the press's influence was considerable. Most observers, Germond-Witcover included, believe the turning point last summer was the president's request to the committee to relieve Mr. Lance of his agreement to sell his bank stock. They are wrong, in my view.

The real turning point came July 21 when the committee, willing to approve the request up to that point, was hit by William Safire's *New York Times* column that morning raising several still-to-be-answered serious questions about Mr. Lance's financial affairs. Faced with the new Safire charges, the committee decided to take no action on the president's request and asked the comptroller of the currency for a full report. From then on, publicity and press attention to the Lance affair began its rapid escalation.

ROBERT V. HEFFERNAN
Washington, D.C.

Dressing down

TO THE REVIEW:

You give the National News Council a "dart" [CJR, November/December] for using four columns of your space to explain charges of inaccuracy in the *National Enquirer*. You say "trying to establish standards of accuracy for the *Enquirer* is like setting up a dress code for a nudist colony."

I free-lance articles not only to the *Enquirer*, but also to other periodicals you would consider more respectable and accu-

rate. Based on my own experience. I would say *Enquirer* editors exercise more controls over accuracy than those at other publications.

The *Enquirer* relies heavily on freelancers, who might be tempted to manufacture quotes to make a sale to the well-paying weekly. Probably to protect the paper against this abuse and resulting lawsuits, the editors require an intelligible tape of every interview done in research for an article. I'm told that every quote used in final articles, prepared by staff writers, is compared against those tapes for accuracy by the paper's research staff.

Names must be spelled on tape. Birthdates must be obtained, so that the subject's age at the time of publication will be correct.

These seem to me to be serious standards. How well they are followed is certainly of concern to journalists in general, as well as to me. I have not found any instances of misuse of the files I have sent to the paper, and would not still be working occasionally for the *Enquirer* if I had.

For others, all they know may be what they read. If publication of the News Council's investigation is frivolous, as your "dart" suggests, then how are thousands of journalists to judge the *Enquirer*?

If your complaint is that the *Enquirer* offers no forum for corrections, I agree. But I believe every publication that uses my work is fair game for the most intense scrutiny, and that the results of those investigations are appropriate for CJR and its readers.

TERRY DUNHAM
St. Petersburg, Fla.

More asbestos fallout

TO THE REVIEW:

Betty Medsger's analysis of reporting on asbestos hazards in California (CJR, September/October) contained some careless second-guessing about an article of mine that might have been avoided had she troubled to talk with me about it.

The article in question reported an increase in mesothelioma, a rare malignancy of the abdominal lining, in European shipyard workers exposed to asbestos. Medsger takes me to task for failing to report in the September 1976 article that this and other asbestos-related diseases occur among California shipyard workers — a fact, she suggests, which I could have elicited from

Dr. Irving Selikoff, "the principal medical researcher cited in the article." The *Los Angeles Times*, Medsger asserts, is afflicted with "Afghanistanism" and its reporters, she implies, fail to ask the obvious questions.

I did in fact ask Selikoff whether a similar increase in mesothelioma had occurred among American shipyard workers. (I didn't specify Californians, but then the obverse of Afghanistanism is provincialism.)

Whatever Selikoff may have said on the subject before or since, his most direct response, as I reported, was that, "There is virtually not a shipyard in the world that was operating 30 years ago that has not by now seen a case of mesothelioma."

That seemed fairly inclusive to me. But to have singled out California shipyards for special mention might have suggested to a reader that I knew more about the prevalence of this disease than I did.

It may help to clarify the circumstances under which this article was written. It came from a basic research meeting that dealt broadly with the origins of human cancer. Occupational health was treated only peripherally and asbestos only incidentally. This did not, therefore, seem an appropriate occasion for a general discussion of the asbestos problem, which, as a matter of fact, had developed as a major national issue some years before.

Moreover, Selikoff's role in this meeting was relatively minor, mesothelioma was not the main focus of his remarks, and he was not the principal researcher cited in my article. Selikoff was merely relaying information that European researchers (named in the article) had published recently. Another reporter and I nevertheless asked him to elaborate to the extent that he could, for the discovery of mesothelioma in European shipyard workers who had not directly handled asbestos seemed at least a marginally new facet in this otherwise highly publicized problem.

In any case, Selikoff's main point in our conversation was that the National Cancer Institute had neglected to conduct a careful survey of some 4 million former shipyard workers that might have produced the data I was asking for. The article concluded with a response from an N.C.I. official who said, sensibly, I thought, that the dangers asbestos posed were by now so thoroughly documented that a costly screening program to pick up a relatively small number of mesothelioma cases would add little to the general fund of knowledge.

As to the larger question Medsger raises — whether journalists in California have

adequately covered the asbestos issue — I am in a poor position to judge, having moved from the East Coast to the *Times* only a month before writing the mesothelioma piece. My own impression, though, is that the relationship of asbestos to cancer — particularly in comparison with other occupational-health issues — has been intensively reported on a nationwide scale for at least a decade. Perhaps one reason Medsger found little material in California newspapers in 1975-76 is that the issue has long since bloomed and faded here in the wake of some important legislative and regulatory action to curb the problem.

I do, however, agree with what appears to be her basic point: that occupational safety and health deserve more aggressive reporting. But one might usefully distinguish between the roles of science and labor reporters. The latter certainly should be concerned with what employers are telling workers about well-established hazards.

As a science writer, I think I can make better use of my time examining hazards that are less widely known and which are not already the target of vigorous litigation and regulatory action.

The *Review's* recent interest in the coverage of such matters as occupational health, saccharin, and nuclear power certainly is commendable. But it would be nice if the *Review* could find critics who show some evidence of having followed these issues closely for some time.

ROBERT GILLETTE
Los Angeles Times

Betty Medsger replies: *Mr. Gillette can't have it both ways. If he, a science writer, didn't even know in 1976 that the disease was a grave problem in California, then how does he suddenly know now that "the issue has long since bloomed and faded here"?*

If this issue has bloomed and faded in the scientific literature and symposia that seem to be the basic sources of newspaper science writers, it has barely bloomed and certainly not faded among their readers, at least in California. That's because the major newspapers here have not written much about this problem despite the fact that many thousands of workers here have daily contact with asbestos on the job.

Gillette implies that my research was limited to the 1975-76 period. My clips go back to before World War II. My files from the Times are particularly thorough for the past decade. They include the paper's complete files on asbestos, industrial safety, and the Johns-Manville corporation, a major asbestos company with plants in southern

California. Those files and an interview with Gillette's senior colleague, medical writer Harry Nelson, confirmed that the Times has never done an investigation of health problems of local asbestos workers.

Gillette expressed concern that he could have been accused of provincialism if he had asked about California's shipyard workers at the time he wrote the article about European shipyard workers. Given his paper's record on the subject, I think he need not worry.

Gillette writes that "it would be nice if the Review could find critics who show some evidence of having followed these issues closely for some time." I find this attack strange coming from someone who went off to cover an address on a subject with deep local and statewide significance and then admitted that he did not even know of that significance. Though he apparently was a new resident of Los Angeles at that time, surely Gillette has followed American history closely for some time and could assume that California shipyards must have been crucial during World War II, and must have then and until now involved the exposure of many thousands of workers to asbestos.

The press room study (cont'd)

In "No News from the Press Room" (CJR, May/June), senior editor Jon Swan reported that for more than a year several major newspapers had barred from their press rooms a team of medical investigators contracted by the federal government to study the toxic effects of chemical agents used in press rooms. The article described the role played in this story by William D. Rinehart, vice-president/technical of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (he charged that the team's findings might reflect the alleged bias of Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, who would supervise the investigation), and the manner in which this story of an industry's defiance of the government was handled by the newspapers involved (they did not cover the story, leaving it to be told by *The Wall Street Journal*). The article also pointed out that, in the case of *The New York Times*, one of the papers barring the entry of the investigators, corporate attitudes and behavior were undermining *Times* editorials on occupational health.

There have been developments. In an article that appeared in the October 26, 1977, *Wall Street Journal* — again, the only paper to cover the story — staff reporter Gail Bronson wrote: "After a year of negotiations, The New York Times, the New York Daily News and the New York Post have agreed to allow a federal government contractor to investi-

gate possible health hazards in their pressrooms." What had broken the impasse? The newspapers had employed an outside consultant — Dr. John Peters of the Harvard School of Public Health — to review the study results as the investigation progresses. This is not an unusual practice, says Dr. Bobby Craft, who is the director of the division of surveillance, hazard evaluations, and field studies of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the federal contractor of the press room study. Craft describes Peters as a widely respected occupational health physician with training in epidemiology.

The stymied study can now proceed. For the record, it should be noted that a month before the newspapers decided to let the investigators into their press rooms, the *Times* published another editorial that had a distinctly hollow ring. It bore the headline "Let the Workers Know the Risk," and it dealt with "another chemical horror story," that involving the chemical DBCP. The editorial pointed out that the chemical, which is used in many pesticides, "has been blamed for causing sterility in workers and may cause cancer as well"; that Dow Chemical and Shell Oil, the two chief manufacturers of DBCP, knew as far back as 1961 that it damaged the sperm cells of laboratory animals; and that the hazard was revealed only last year when workers deduced that the chemical was "the probable reason for the failure of so many of them to have children. . . ."

Taking a strong stand, the editorial said: "Let the workers know the possible risks they run."

The editorial would have carried more conviction if, for more than a year, the *Times* had not barred an investigative team whose mission was to ascertain the risks workers in the *Times*'s press rooms run.

Body counts

TO THE REVIEW:

Your editorial quoting *The New York Times*'s David Burnham as saying that 100,000 deaths and 390,000 illnesses occur as a result of worker exposures ["The Plague," *CJR*, September/October] chides editors for not making more use of such information. Perhaps the nation's newspaper editors are more capable of handling statistics than Mr. Burnham. Those figures, supplied by O.S.H.A., include accidents as well as illnesses — even auto accidents in commuting to the job. The illness figure is similarly broad, including anything that can cause an absence from the workplace from a sprained ankle, a fall from a ladder, or open heart surgery.

The 1,500 suspected cancer agents is a conservative figure but correct enough. The problem, however, is that Mr. Burnham has put two and two together and come up with the creative statistic of 390,000!

JAMES E. MCKEE JR.
Director of corporate public relations
Monsanto Company
St. Louis

David Burnham replies: *Mr. McKee, who is paid to herald the great achievements of one of America's great chemical companies, seems very defensive. The estimate that 100,000 deaths and 390,000 illnesses that occur each year are caused by worker exposures to toxic substances was prepared by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, an agency in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare that is responsible for federal research in this area.*

NIOSH sticks by its estimates. In addition, it now is in the process of completing a national occupational health survey which found that one out of four American workers is exposed to some substance or substances thought to be capable of causing death or disease and that fewer than 5 percent of the places where people work have industrial hygiene services.

That feud in Philly

Back in March 1976, readers may recall, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* ran a Sunday feature about the city's mayor, Frank L. Rizzo, that was less than flattering, and when some of Rizzo's fans in the building and construction trades union expressed their displeasure by picketing the paper, blocking all entrances, delaying two editions, and beating up two photographers, the city's police (of which Rizzo is an alumnus) refused to intercede (*CJR*, May/June 1976). Subsequently the owner of the *Inquirer*, Philadelphia News, Inc., brought suit against the mayor, police commissioner Joseph F. O'Neill, building trades council head Thomas Magrann, and "unknown others," charging violation of civil and constitutional rights and seeking \$70,000 in damages. This fall, a partial settlement was reached: charges against Rizzo and O'Neill have been dropped (the suit against Magrann has not yet been resolved) and a new police directive issued giving specific guidelines for handling demonstrations. The guidelines call for police officers to try to "talk open" picket lines that may block a building and to arrest demonstrators who do not comply, unless there is danger that large-scale violence and bodily harm would result. P.N.I. president Sam

McKeel called the new directive "a significant revision . . . that will better assure everyone's First Amendment rights." The attorney for Rizzo and O'Neill said it only makes clear procedures already in use.

Ad-versions

TO THE REVIEW:

In an otherwise sensitive item in "Publisher's Notes" on whether the *Review* should accept cigarette advertising ("Review vs. New Yorker," September/October 1977), you make three statements which are either inaccurate or unfounded.

□ You refer to the "solid research indicating that cigarette advertising rarely influences decisions to smoke or not to smoke. . . ." In fact, this is a highly controversial area of study about which no firm conclusions have been reached. One could as well cite several "solid" econometric studies which came to the conclusion that cigarette advertising does have an effect on some nonsmokers (e.g., McGuinness, T., and Cowling, K., "Advertising and the Aggregate Demand for Cigarettes," *European Economic Review*, 1975). In addition, it is entirely possible that cigarette advertising reinforces or increases the habit among smokers, in particular, light smokers (see, for example, Herman, C. P., "External and Internal Cues as Determinants of the Smoking Behavior of Light and Heavy Smokers," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1974; Ritter, E. H., and Holmes, D. S., "Behavioral Contagion: Its Occurrence as a Function of Differential Restraint Reduction," *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality*, 1969).

□ You congratulate yourself on having to date accepted only those cigarette ads which are for low-tar, low-nicotine cigarettes. In fact, the evidence appears to indicate that far from being safer than regular cigarettes for the smoker, these products are *more* hazardous. Since most smokers are addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes, they tend to compensate for the reduced amount of this substance in low-nicotine cigarettes by smoking more cigarettes, smoking them to a shorter butt, increasing the size of each puff, drawing the smoke deeper into the lungs, or holding it there longer before exhaling. As a result, these smokers not only end up with the same amount of nicotine and tar, they also increase their exposure to other toxic substances, especially carbon monoxide, which "appears to be at least as much of a medical villain as tar or nicotine because it is implicated in the increased risk of arteriosclerosis, ischaemic heart disease, fetal damage, and so

on" (Schachter, S., "Nicotine Regulation in Heavy and Light Smokers," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 1977; see also: Frith, D.D., "The Effect of Varying the Nicotine Content of Cigarettes on Human Smoking Behavior," *Psychopharmacologia*, 1971).

Furthermore, the advertising which promotes these cigarettes as being safer than regular cigarettes may do more than, as you assume, "induce smokers to shift to low-tar, low-nicotine cigarettes." Such advertisements may also persuade non-smoking youngsters that smoking these particular cigarettes is safe and that they can therefore take up smoking them with impunity. Indeed, 43 percent of teenagers already report agreeing strongly or partially with the statement, "It's safe to smoke low tar cigarettes" (Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, Inc., *Teen-age Boys and Girls and Cigarette Smoking*, 1976, unpublished report of a study conducted for the American Cancer Society, cited in Fishbein, M., *Consumer Beliefs and Behavior with Respect to Cigarette Smoking: A Critical Analysis of the Public Literature*, a report prepared for the Federal Trade Commission, 1977). It is at least possible that this attitude was developed or reinforced by cigarette advertisements. It is also at least possible that this attitude may contribute to the willingness of some teenagers to take up smoking.

□ You make an analogy between cigarette advertisements and advertisements for alcohol, suggesting that journals and newspapers, to be consistent, should accept both or neither. While I believe alcohol advertising should be rejected on other grounds, the analogy is faulty in at least one critical respect: the moderate use of alcohol (i.e., 1-2 drinks a day — ½ ounce of actual alcohol per drink — consumed slowly, in diluted form, and with food) does not appear to cause any lasting damage in otherwise healthy individuals and those who are not susceptible to alcoholism. However, no one has claimed that there is a "safe" level of cigarette use. There is no known safe level of exposure to any carcinogen. (In any case, extremely few smokers limit themselves to one or two cigarettes a day.) Therefore, it is a very different proposition to advertise a product whose moderate use creates a great deal of pleasure without known damage as opposed to promoting a substance whose "moderate" use is exceedingly rare and, more importantly, the use of which in any amount is believed to cause cancer.

What concerns me is that your decision and that of other thoughtful journals and newspapers to accept or reject cigarette ad-

vertising may hinge on these and other unwarranted conclusions regarding the nature of cigarette advertisements and smoking. I can only hope that in your continuing debate on the issue you will have more accurate information at your disposal.

PETER FINN
Senior education and training analyst
Abt Associates Inc.
Cambridge, Mass.

The publisher replies: *My information on advertising's "rarely influencing decisions" to smoke came from W. Phillips Davison, Columbia sociologist and former editor of the Public Opinion Quarterly. His memorandum on the subject, which is being sent to Mr. Finn, cites research findings that conflict with Mr. Finn's citations. Professor Davison emphasizes the limitations of experimental research in such fields, concedes that advertising doubtless affects "some" non-smokers, and concludes: "My own preference would be to formulate a conclusion . . . that advertising rarely influences decisions to smoke."*

We did not "congratulate" ourselves on having accepted ads only for low-tar cigarettes; we simply noted that these were the only cigarette ads to come our way.

Certainly the analogy between cigarette advertising and liquor advertising is not perfect, as I thought I had indicated. The fact remains that countless "moderate" drinkers slip, tragically, into alcoholism each year.

In any event, the decision did not "hinge" on such subsidiary points, but on a more basic issue, as indicated on page 18.

TO THE REVIEW:

My subscription-renewal notice to CJR reached me the same day as the September/October issue, which by coincidence opened initially to the advertisement of the National Rifle Association. Nothing encountered recently in print has disgusted me more than that advertisement.

I don't know what the N.R.A. paid. I hope it was substantial. I do know I am disinclined to pay \$12 per year for the privilege of being periodically exposed to such contemptible commercial communiques, or to use the generic word, bilge.

The advertisement condemns Representative Martin Russo's bill in Congress because it would ban "over 70-percent of all handguns now owned by Americans." I too condemn the bill. It should ban 100 percent of handguns, and impose rigorous penalties on violators.

The effort in the advertisement to glorify a

murder weapon as "the gun that won the West" demeans American history and insults those of us who are descendants of the westerners who settled and tried to civilize this hard country. The west was won by hardworking farmers and ranchers such as my Oklahoma father and grandfathers. They won it with the plow, not guns. Never guns.

Today guns are weapons of criminals, true. But even more frighteningly they are the playthings of those dangerous adolescents who make up the National Rifle Association. Those playthings kill accidentally in the hands of children, carelessly in the hands of owners, insanely in troubled hands. A privately owned handgun held by a sick friend, a member of the N.R.A., killed my friend and his wife a little over a year ago.

The argument in this advertisement that criminals, not guns, are responsible for violence is a typically sad and witless rationalization. Deny them guns, and criminals no doubt would resort to stones and clubs, but those weapons are considerably less efficient in achieving swift lethal results. Reduce the number of guns, and eventually the butchery of guns will also be reduced. My friend wasn't a criminal, but a man in despair. I am convinced if that damnable gun hadn't been available, he and his wife would still live.

The National Rifle Association, of course, has a right and obligation, I suppose, to air their dreary views, such as they are. You have a right and obligation, I suppose, to peddle the space. Concomitantly, I have a right and feel an obligation to take the funds that might be used to renew my CJR subscription and send them to the National Coalition to Ban Handguns.

ROY MEADOR
Ann Arbor, Mich.

The editors reply: *We do not reject ads simply because we might disagree with them. Asked to reply, the National Rifle Association submitted a copy of an editorial from the Durham (N.C.) Herald of November 8, 1977, praising the N.R.A.'s advertisement.*

C-minus

James Myre of Madison, Wisconsin, who describes himself as a beginning journalism student, points out that the *Review* awarded the wrong middle initial ("M") to Benjamin Bradlee of *The Washington Post* in Melvin Mencher's "The Arizona Project" (November/December 1977). The editors blush, for who in journalism does not know that Bradlee's middle name is not a humble Max or Melvin but a resplendent CROWNIN-SHIELD?

NATIONAL NEWS COUNCIL REPORT

Nuclear industry reacts to NBC

Issue: Was a television documentary so biased that it misrepresented the hazards of nuclear waste? Was there adequate documentation to support the program's implications? Was the show so loaded with production gimmicks that it manipulated the audience?

Complaint: "Danger! Radioactive Waste," a one-hour documentary broadcast by NBC News on January 26, 1977, provoked immediate protest from the nuclear industry. The Council received six complaints, including letters from the Atomic Industrial Forum, the American Nuclear Society, and Bernard L. Cohen, a professor of physics at the University of Pittsburgh.

The complainants charged that the program lacked balance and perspective, that it was replete with major factual errors and misrepresentations, and that it "resorted to emotionalism, show-biz gimmicks and heavy handed editing to create a classic propaganda piece in the guise of news."

Charging *lack of balance*, the complainants asserted that:

- Significant pro-nuclear arguments were omitted or deemphasized.
- NBC used a relatively small portion of the information offered by the nuclear industry.
- The producer was antagonistic in conducting interviews with industry and government representatives.

Responding to this charge, NBC wrote, "We are aware that there are differing points of view on this subject, and that it is one of

The National News Council held its meetings in Evanston and Chicago, Illinois, last November 14 and 15, responding to an invitation by Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism to meet at its facilities. Meetings were attended by students and faculty. This "National News Council Report" includes the Council's actions taken at these meetings.

many interrelated energy and environmental issues and questions. This program was only one part of our ongoing coverage of all facets of the energy problem in various NBC News programs."

Charging *lack of perspective*, the complainants said:

- The benefit of nuclear power was not balanced against the impact.
- Comparative dangers in the use of fossil fuels were not examined.
- It was not noted that the population receives a great deal of radiation from natural sources.

NBC replied, "In the program, we were not discussing nuclear power as an energy alternative, we were examining one problem with nuclear energy. We in no way advocated the abandonment of nuclear power. . . . We do not think that the existence of dangers in other forms of energy . . . negates the dangers of radioactive waste."

Charging *factual errors and misrepresentations*, the complainants said:

- A number of purportedly factual statements made in the program had no scientific support. (For example, that uranium will run out by the year 2000; that wastes dumped in the ocean will remain deadly for hundreds of thousands of years.)
- Several mathematical calculations were incorrect.
- There was no evidence to support certain implications of hazards. Two scenes, in particular, were cited. One showed a farmer who was worried that his cattle were sick because of exposure to radiation from a nearby nuclear-waste-disposal facility. The other showed a former worker in a nuclear reprocessing plant who believed that his two sons may have been born with a genetic disease because of his exposure to radiation at the plant.

NBC replied, "The facts in the program were compiled over many months by several people, and all have been documented. It was produced in consultation with scientists highly respected in the scientific community."

Charging *production tricks*, the complainants said that the program used:

- Manipulative background sound effects, including dirge music, "Taps," and the score of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," as well as the repetitive use of the click of a geiger counter even where it had no relation-

ship to the content of the show.

□ Electronic visual tricks, to make nuclear plants seem to give off colored rays and to make radiation symbols waver as if emitting a gas.

□ A propagandistic script using phrases like "radioactive monster with no cage to keep it in."

NBC replied, "As for production techniques, these are a matter of opinion, and the fact is that there has been at least as much praise as criticism for the production."

In summary, the complainants contended that the program was designed "to exploit the viewer's fears and uncertainties" and "to scare them — not to inform them" at a time when information on this subject is of key importance as the nation prepares to make crucial choices.

The Council staff consulted outside experts and persons interviewed on the program. After these interviews, the staff discussed some aspects of the program with Joan Konner, the producer, writer, and director.

Conclusion of the Council: The debate concerning nuclear waste is undoubtedly of public importance and efforts by documentarians to illuminate that debate for the average viewer are to be supported. Before considering the specific charges of the complainants we would like the record to indicate that we applaud NBC for bringing this sub-

**'We applaud NBC
for bringing this controversy
to the attention
of its viewers'**

stantial controversy to the attention of its viewers. The blandness of television programming troubles us; provocative discussion must be sought after and encouraged.

We turn then to the allegations of *lack of balance*. Often we are confronted by complaints alleging bias in the presentation of a documentary. In this instance, complainants have charged that the "Danger! Radioactive Waste" documentary was "quite deliberately biased in an anti-nuclear manner." What is essential in a documentary is that its

conclusions be based on verifiable information — that is on documentation — and not that it be fully objective. A major function of journalism is responsible interpretation.

Whether this Council or the complainant agrees or disagrees with the conclusions of a particular new report is not relevant. Provided that the news organization has first presented enough basic material on which the public can reach its own conclusion, then the news organization is free to indicate its own thrust. The issue for us, therefore, is whether there was in the documentary a fair reflection of the major viewpoints, scientific as well as factual. We believe that there was.

This is not a case in which a report ignored the views of those who felt that there was no danger, or little danger, or even those who felt that the energy needs were so great that the risks were outweighed by the social needs. On the contrary, the views of the supporters of nuclear energy and of the notion that there are no real dangers, or that the

‘However, the program was seriously flawed’

risks are outweighed by the benefits, were presented. A particularly apt response was made by NBC to criticism of its choice of a scientist-interviewee whose theories have been substantially rebutted:

Debate in the scientific community is commonplace. . . . It is not unknown that a single scientist considered by a majority to be wrong in this time, later turns out to be correct. *In any case our purpose was to present the debate, not to make a judgment as to who is correct.* (Emphasis added.)

It then becomes a matter of emphasis and we do not think that the Council should substitute its judgment for that of NBC. The complainants’ charge of lack of balance is accordingly found unwarranted.

Similarly, we find the complainants’ charge of *lack of perspective* also unwarranted. Not only are we persuaded on this issue by the response of NBC and by our examination of the transcript, but we must note the thrust of the documentary. Indeed, an integral part of the documentary, what it was all about, was whether the energy shortage warranted the risks — and hence the “need” for nuclear power.

As to the complainants’ allegation of *factual errors and misrepresentation*, we note first many of the so-called errors cited by complainants are, in truth, matters of opin-

ion, interpretation, and emphasis. There are few absolutes and indisputable facts on this subject; scientists rarely agree. By and large, we believe that the documentary gave reasonable journalistic interpretations of scientific opinions, evidence, and studies. The responses of NBC and of independent experts interviewed by the Council’s staff would seem to us to indicate that sufficient support exists for most of the assertions in the program.

However, on examination of the charges, together with study of the transcript and viewing of the tape, we believe that the program was seriously flawed in several respects and with that in mind, we cannot say that the complaints are without merit.

Several allegations of factual errors and misrepresentations concern us: most notably the coverage of the “problems” at Maxey Flats, Kentucky, site of a nuclear waste storage facility; and the coverage at a nuclear facility of a transient worker’s possible genetic damage.

The program stated that the farmers around Maxey Flats had been having “unexplained problems” with their cattle. One farmer, Oscar Hurst, described the symptoms of his cattle’s illness in an interview. The program noted that veterinarians had tested the cattle and found no evidence linking the illness to radiation. Program segments featuring interviews with Mr. Hurst and some of his neighbors indicated that they were not fully satisfied that the test results were correct.

The staff’s investigation revealed that a veterinarian had diagnosed the “unexplained problems” as copper and phosphorus deficiencies; the cattle had been treated for the same and had responded. This information was not included in the program. The veterinarian had testified to these facts at a public hearing on Maxey Flats which an NBC crew had attended and, in part at least, taped. Asked why testimony that explained the animals’ problems was not included, the producer said that she was reporting fears and doubts of the community and did not intend that portion of the program to stand for the proposition that the problems were caused by radiation.

Another scene focused on a nuclear reprocessing facility at West Valley, New York. The narration included the following passage:

The company also made use of transient workers who were hired for short periods of time to work in the most highly radioactive areas of the plant. They received burnout doses of radiation, that is the maximum amount allowable in a year. The practice enabled regular workers to keep their exposures down. Jerry Brown was a transient

worker at the plant from July to September 1972. Subsequently he and his wife had two children, who have a rare genetic disease called Hurler’s syndrome.

Jerry Brown and his children were shown on camera during the following commentary:

JERRY BROWN: They’ll eventually go blind around the, at the age of five, blind and deaf. And later on in life, they’ll have problems with their internal organs — the heart, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys — and the end result is death at the age of ten.

NARRATION: Jerry Brown is not sure that the radiation caused his children’s illness.

JERRY BROWN: I can’t say definitely, then I think I’d probably be liable, and I do have a strong feeling that’s what it was caused from, but I can’t find a doctor that would definitely say so.

The complainants charged, “NBC did not present any evidence relating this disease to radiation. . . . This tactic, using deformed children to scare the public, is not unknown to the irresponsible fringe of the nuclear opposition.”

NBC responded, “The man who has two children with Hurler’s Syndrome was a transient worker. It cannot be proved that the disease was caused by his exposure, which he and the script stated. However, Dr. Irwin Bross of the Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, who is acquainted with the case, said that the exposure could have caused the genetic damage.”

Staff investigation revealed that, according to Ralph Deuster, president of the company that employed the transient workers, Jerry Brown had been subjected to about 25 percent of the allowable dosage of radiation. According to Dr. Bross, this would be roughly the equivalent of an ordinary X-ray dosage (1 rad). He told the staff that his studies showed that serious genetic defects occur in children of those exposed to this dosage. Other scientists with whom the staff spoke and who are studying the biological effects of radiation challenged the validity of Dr. Bross’s findings and considered it unlikely that Jerry Brown’s occupational exposure to radiation caused his children’s disease. The program itself presented no scien-

Full reports

Due to both space limitations and the desire for a more readable form, complaint reports by the Council in CJR have been shortened. Copies of full reports may be obtained by writing to The National News Council, 1 Lincoln Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10023. Enclose \$1 to defray mailing and handling costs.

tific testimony about the odds of low-level radiation causing birth defects. (It should be noted that the producer told staff investigators that she had obtained copies of Mr. Brown's records indicating he had received a higher dosage. Mr. Deuster explained this as an error on her part in having inappropriately added together unrelated figures.)

What we have is a series of "mights." A radiation dosage equivalent to an x-ray *might* be sufficient to cause human genetic defects.

'Use of this material would seem to betoken scare tactics'

Hurler's syndrome *might* be one of the genetic defects produced by radiation. Workers *might* be exposed to dosages which *might* be harmful to the extent that genetic damage *might* occur that *might* be manifested in their children. And so forth. We find the NBC response in this regard inadequate, what we consider to be the result of tortured logic.

In conclusion and on the record before us, we believe that the presentations on these two matters were not consistent with good journalism. Both stories must necessarily have had strong impacts on the audience, but with dubious relevance to the subject at hand. In both instances and as far as the transcript goes there was no evidence of cause and effect. Indeed the conclusion on both stories is nothing more than that there *might* be a connection. The use of this material would seem to betoken scare tactics, beyond the limits of sound journalism. The complaints in this regard are found to be warranted.

Finally, we consider the allegations of gimmickry, heavy handed editing, manipulative sound effects, and other so-called "production tricks." Without regard to whatever personal feelings we may have on these assertions, we believe that this Council should not substitute its producing judgment for that of a news organization. The complaints in this regard are found unwarranted.

Concurring: Brady, Ghiglione, Green, Lawson, McKay, Otwell, Renick, and Rusher.

Partial dissent by Sylvia Roberts: It is my opinion that the complaint with respect to the portion of the documentary showing the children afflicted with Hurler's syndrome is unwarranted. In all other respects, I concur with the majority.

Partial Dissent by Norman Isaacs: I agree with the central thrust of The Council's findings on the NBC program dealing with atomic wastes. However, I find myself compelled to voice disagreement over the Council's method of treating all parts of the determination in equal manner — warranted or unwarranted — regardless of the degrees of importance.

For me, the program was in the tradition of crusading journalism. It took on an issue of profound national importance. In the main, it did the job with skill and fairness. Unhappily, in two places the presentation became flawed — flawed enough to carry the impression of possible unfairness. To lift these two segments to the importance of the over-all focus and effect of the program strikes me as unbalanced on the Council's part.

My basic argument is that journalism does not lend itself to unvarying standard determinations. There are times when a journalistic effort can be defended for over-all purpose and still found wanting. The Council majority maintains that it has done this in this instance. I respectfully disagree. The two flaws do not seem to me to merit equal standing with a judgment on the totality of the program.

Panax decision reaffirmed

The National News Council, after holding a public hearing on October 19, 1977, reconsidered its opinion issued on July 8, 1977, regarding the Panax Corporation (CJR, September/October). Upon motion duly made and seconded, the following resolution was adopted by the Council:

RESOLVED, that the Council reaffirms the conclusions of its July 8, 1977, statement.

Separate opinions have been filed as follows.

Concurring opinion by Ralph Renick: Group ownership of newspapers in America has reached the point where it is a dominant force in newspaper publishing today. With that economic fact of journalistic life increasingly important, the Panax case establishes a significant precedent for future deliberations by the Council. The case revolved around one central question, in my view. Namely, does a newspaper owner have the right to

dictate news content to an editor on one of his newspapers? The answer is clearly, yes. However, the Council addressed itself not to that right but to the wisdom of its use and to the execution of that right as policy.

Editors, close to the complexities of each newspaper and to the communities they serve, are certainly better able to exercise news judgment relevant to each member of the group than is the absentee chain owner. It is with that view of the case that I joined the majority.

But I feel the decision states the majority opinion to an absolute degree that is unwarranted. The decision draws the line, in the abstract, without considering the articles in question, and it draws that line too harshly.

I fully agree that news judgment in the main should be delegated to resident editors. However, I think it is conceivable that a publisher could order news coverage which would be best determined by a person in an ownership position. Joint reportorial efforts by every newspaper in the chain, for example, might only be perceived as a justifiable effort by the publisher. Similarly, the journalistic efforts by one member of a group could be enhanced by another member paper with an order from the front office. Obviously, the placement, editing or eventual use

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of such coverage would be an editor's decision.

The majority's opinion in this case leaves one with the impression that a publisher should never be involved in specific news judgments. I think that we should open that door; at least leave it ajar. There are situations where such action could be beneficial. Obviously in the Panax case quite the opposite was true.

Dissenting opinion of Loren Ghiglione: Based on the October 19 hearing, my reading of the articles in question, and my understanding of John McGoff's conduct, I believe that his behavior was not in accordance with the highest ethical standards of the pro-

'The appearance of fairness required a more deliberate review of the question'

fession. I believe Mr. McGoff has the right to be wrong and that he was wrong.

But that said, I cannot reaffirm the Council's decision of July 8, a decision in which I participated. The Council asks journalists to publicly admit their errors, giving corrections as much prominence as their initial mistakes. In line with that principle, I must acknowledge that I feel the Council's original decision — again, my decision — was flawed in two respects, one procedural, the other substantive.

First, the telephone exchanges that resulted in agreement on the Council's original decision — though not, in my opinion, a violation of Council by-laws — should have been followed by a meeting of the Council prior to its decision.

The mistake was an innocent one. The Council faced an important question of journalistic ethics but, because of its limited budget, had no meeting scheduled for two and a half months. The Council attempted to respond promptly to that question. In retrospect, the appearance of fairness, if not fairness itself, required a more deliberate, more thorough review of the question, and a more carefully worded opinion.

As to the substance of the July 8 opinion, I must ask whether the wording raises more questions than it answers.

Is the Council saying that a large newspaper group should not have the right to make the final decision about the news content of the papers it owns? I believe ultimate authority rightfully rests with the owner,

whether he calls himself editor, publisher, or president and chief executive officer. That principle was affirmed by the Council itself in *Edwards vs. Mutual Broadcasting System* (1974): "Management has the prerogative to order the inclusion of specific items in regular news reports."

Is the Council making a totally valid distinction between editorial-opinion policy and news-content policy? Editors hired by groups — or by any newspaper owner, for that matter — should be given great latitude as to news judgment. But it is important for the owner — however he chooses to delegate responsibility — to remain accountable for both news and editorial content.

Is the Council taking on faith the contention of many newspaper groups that they delegate news judgments to resident editors? Ultimately, I suspect, a newspaper group or an individual owner hires — and continues to employ — only those editors who can live within whatever philosophical and procedural boundaries exist for that company. Those boundaries may be exceedingly loose and they may not be stated. But they exist.

I have been both newspaper employee and employer. Employees, I believe, are necessarily less free than employers to make their newspapers' editorial and news policies reflect their own beliefs. I am concerned about what this means — as independently owned papers give way to groups — for press freedom in the United States. If freedom of the press, as A. J. Liebling wrote, only belongs to those who own one, then what happens when the press of this country is in the hands of a dozen or so corporations? The delegation of news policy to editor/ employees does not help answer that question satisfactorily.

Finally, in keeping with the ethical standards the Council espouses about apparent conflicts of interest, I should note that I write about the rights and responsibilities of newspaper owners from my position as owner of *The Evening News*, Southbridge, Massachusetts, and five neighboring weeklies.

Dissenting opinion of Richard S. Salant: I concur with much of Mr. Ghiglione's opinion. Above all, I agree with his statement that the Council's conclusion of July 8 (and its subsequent reaffirmation of that conclusion) raises more questions than it answers. It need not have done so, if it had only taken one step at a time, as it could, and should, have done.

Of course, I agree that sound journalistic practice places sharp limits on what a publisher, owner, or chief executive officer should do in substituting his judgment for the judgment of his editors. And I think that this

is true whether or not the publisher, owner, or chief executive is a chain owner, publisher, or chief executive officer, or whether or not he lives in the same community that is served by his news organization.

But as I read the original decision (in which I concurred) the Council has, in the last analysis, reached the sweeping conclusion that *in no case* is it proper for a publisher, owner, or chief executive officer of a chain ever to intrude and impose his own news judgments. By explicitly excluding any questions of "the accuracy, fairness, or responsibility" of the two articles which Mr. McGoff ordered to be printed, I cannot escape the conclusion that the Council has reached this kind of "absolutely never" principle, without any exceptions. The fact is that by excluding consideration of the particular articles, the Council has not addressed itself to the question whether these articles are good journalism or journalism so bad that they — and hence Mr. McGoff — merit our condemnation. Since there are no facts relating to the merits of the articles, other than the articles themselves, which are before us, I can reach no final conclusion about the merit of the articles, nor did the Council. It is this which, it seems to me, compels the interpretation that the Council is indeed laying down, officially, the sweeping conclusion that irrespective of the merits of the news story which is ordered to be printed (or, for that matter, ordered *not* to be printed), an owner, publisher, or chief executive officer of a chain who issues such an order is wrong and merits the condemnation by the Council.

That bites off far more than I am ready to chew. It seems to me that there may well be circumstances where it is not inappropriate

'That bites off far more than I am ready to chew'

— or at least not so inappropriate as to merit Council condemnation — for a publisher, chief executive officer, or owner to order a news story to be printed or not to be printed. To take a simple example which comes readily to mind, a publisher, owner, or chief executive may decide that the National News Council is a good thing, worthy of support, and so makes a commitment that any findings which the Council makes adverse to any story or other action of his news organization will be reported by his news organization. In effect, therefore, he commits himself

to ordering that such adverse findings be printed by the news organization with which he is connected. Surely, the Council is not prepared to condemn that.

Thus, if I read the conclusion of the Council correctly, it has enunciated a broad and inflexible rule with which it cannot live, and inevitably must modify in the future, in the light of the particular circumstances. Indeed I believe the Council should be particularly restrained and careful in rulings which deal with internal relationships in a news organization lest it find itself as arbitrator of employer-employee relationships.

The issue of the proper allocation of functions and judgments as between the publisher, owner, or chief executive officer, on the one hand, and the editor, on the other hand, is a perplexing and delicate one which cannot be resolved by a simple rigid rule. Yet I read the Council's decision to be just that. I think the proper course would have been for the Council to have examined the accuracy, fairness, and responsibility of the particular articles and on the basis of that examination, to have reached a conclusion whether the articles were so inaccurate, so unfair, so irresponsible that Mr. McGoff, in ordering that they be printed, exercised so bizarre and unprofessional a judgment that his action warranted the Council's condemnation. This would have permitted the Council to deal with the difficult and complex issue on a case-by-case basis instead of rushing to judgment by enunciating the broadest possible principle.

That the majority of the Council did what it did is understandable. Of course, I fully share the responsibility for that action since I concurred in the original decision. But it is one of the unexceptional principles which the News Council has laid down that news organizations ought to admit error, fully, when error occurs. I can do no less than impose the same — and correct — injunction on myself. I should make it clear that I do so not because of, but despite, Mr. McGoff's personal attacks on me and my qualifications to participate in this case.

Dissenting opinion of William A. Rusher: Our hearing on October 19 simply confirmed my belief that this Council has not found, or even created, a basis upon which to condemn Mr. McGoff.

It should be noted at the outset that the Council has never taken up, and therefore never passed on, the question whether the two Bernard articles could possibly, in the exercise of editorial judgment by anyone, have been legitimately described and run as news stories. In these circumstances, Mr. McGoff is entitled to have his decision to in-

tervene and exercise editorial judgment in this case considered entirely without reference to any supposed defects in the articles themselves.

The Council majority accordingly finds its entire case against Mr. McGoff on his supposed transgression of the proper limits of an owner-publisher's journalistic authority over his editor-employee, at least in circum-

This Council has not found, or even created, a basis upon which to condemn Mr. McGoff'

stances like those obtaining on the McGoff newspapers in Escanaba and Marquette.

Nobody contests Mr. McGoff's legal right, as owner-publisher, to publish anything he pleases anywhere in his papers, and to discharge any employee, including an editor, who disobeys his plain orders. But the Council majority, evidently relying on procedures that are currently being followed by various other chain publishers, finds that the growth of large chains has resulted in the acquisition by individual editors — extralegally, and purely as a matter of journalistic practice — of a considerable degree of independence in the exercise of editorial judgment. It is this budding independence that Mr. McGoff, by intervening to impose his own editorial judgment in the matter of the Bernard articles, seems to have nipped in the bud in the cases before us; and for so doing the Council reaffirms its criticism of him.

I respectfully disagree. In the first place if such independence on the part of editors is indeed developing, and is desirable in the light of experience with chain newspapers, it is nonetheless certainly a break with past tradition concerning the relations of publishers and editors, as well as with both past and present law. At most, Mr. McGoff might be tut-tutted for refusing to follow the latest fashion in publisher-editor relations; but condemning him for failure to meet some newly established standard in the matter, where none yet exists, is simply not justified.

In the second place, the Council's own record and ruling are awash with uncertainty over the limits, if any, of this new editorial independence. At the hearing, some Council members seemed to think it applied only, or at least most forcefully, to editors at a substantial geographic remove from their publishers. At least one witness felt that whether the paper concerned had local competitors was a key factor. Several Council members

sought to draw a line between the publisher's authority over editorial policy and related features (e.g. political columns) and the editor's supposed sovereignty over the news pages. At a guess (and it is only a guess), a good many members of the Council, perhaps a majority, would be unwilling even now to say flatly that a local owner-publisher does not have the right, vis-a-vis his editor, to intervene and impose his own editorial judgment on a news matter, if he so desires.

The Council would be far better advised to nurse its new doctrine to full maturity, entire coherence, and general recognition before condemning anyone so sharply for failing to abide by it.

Comment on the Council majority opinion by Norman E. Isaacs: By this time thousands of words have been delivered at the various meetings of the Council and now in these columns by those few who disagree with the Council's one-sentence affirmation of its decision concerning Mr. McGoff and his

How to complain to The National News Council

The National News Council has two committees — the Grievance Committee, which takes complaints from any individual or organization concerning inaccuracy or unfairness in a news report, and the Freedom of the Press Committee, which takes complaints from news organizations concerning the restriction of access to information of public interest, the preservation of freedom of communication, and the advancement of accurate and fair reporting.

The procedure to follow in filing a grievance is simple:

Write to the news organization and send a copy of your letter of complaint to the Council.

If you are not sure to whom to address your complaint at a news organization, send it directly to the Council. A copy will be forwarded to the appropriate news executive.

If your complaint concerns a printed news report, include a copy of the report, the name of the publication, and the date.

If your complaint concerns a radio or television news report, include the name of the station, the name of the network, and the date and the time of airing.

Be sure to include as specific information as possible as to why you are complaining.

Complaints to either committee should be addressed to:

The National News Council
One Lincoln Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10023.

Panax operation. I am moved to point out that despite the persistent argument of Mr. Rusher, the majority of the Council has not been persuaded to his position. The decision remains what it was — that Mr. McGoff did journalism a disservice by his authoritarian behavior. Indeed, some of the dissents concede this. What it comes down to, I fear, is a sad clinging to the idea scornfully offered by A. J. Liebling: "Freedom of the press belongs to the man who owns one."

Since all this took place, the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, in national convention in Detroit, adopted a resolution commending those newspaper groups "that have delegated to local editors the responsibility for determining the content of their newspapers" and goes on to urge "groups and chains and executives to adopt local control policies forthwith to further press credibility and to avoid the clear and present danger of imposing on readers of local papers editorial content not subject to local editors' control and accountability."

The majority on the News Council welcomes this important national support of the finding on McGoff and his Panax Corp.

Cape Cod's water: poisoned or pure?

Issue: Was a magazine story (reprinted by a newspaper) accurate and responsible in describing Cape Cod's water supply? Was an attempt made between the writing (a year prior to publication) and the printing to check new studies? Was the story as printed unnecessarily alarmist in tone?

Complaint: The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce complained that an article originally appearing in the monthly publication, *Country Journal*, and later reprinted in *The Boston Herald American* presented a distorted picture of the quality of the Cape's water supply. The article was written by a free-lancer, William Walker.

Appearing in July 1977, under the title "The Poisoning of Cape Cod," in the *Country Journal*, and later under the headline WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, BUT NOT DROP TO DRINK, in the *Herald American*, the article left the strong impression that the Cape's drinking water was so polluted as to

pose an imminent health hazard to large segments of the area's population. The article said, for example, that sewage and pesticides "toxify water supplies from one end of the Cape to the other."

The Chamber of Commerce contended that the article was "highly inaccurate" — that recent scientific tests and surveys showed the drinking water relatively free of contaminants and no threat to health. The complaint suggested that the Chamber of Commerce, as an advertiser in the *Country Journal*, should have been consulted about the article's accuracy before publication.

Responding to the complaint, Richard Ketchum, editor of the *Country Journal*, said that the magazine's purpose in publishing the Walker article was to bring to the attention of the public "the deepseated, potentially disastrous problems that face a growing population whose source of potable water is fixed in precariously delicate balance with the environment."

In support of the article's accuracy, Mr. Ketchum supplied the Council with a summary of information used by Mr. Walker, including synopses of interviews with scientists familiar with the Cape's water supply.

One passage the Chamber objected to was a vignette which Mr. Walker chose to use as the lead for his article. It reads as follows:

In February 1976, the town of Harwich, Mass., ordered Herbert Andrews to abandon his home. Andrews was not the victim of unpaid taxes, nor urban renewal, nor was his home in the path of the latest interstate extension. But on February 6, 1976, Andrews and his wife quietly packed their bags and moved out. The Andrews were the first Cape Cod residents to lose their home because of contaminated groundwater. They will not be the last.

The article went on to quote Mr. Andrews to the effect that the Public Health Department had found some type of petroleum contaminating the water in his well and that the Fire Department had ordered the house evacuated.

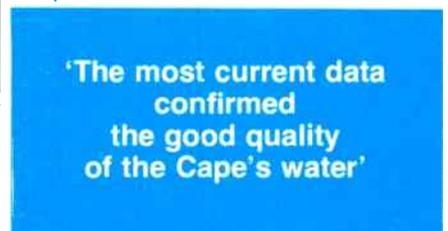
The Chamber said this account was misleading because it omitted the fact that the problem was found to be a leaking underground gasoline tank at a nearby service station and that by subsequently subscribing to the municipal water service, Mr. Andrews and his wife were able to move back into their home.

About the Andrews episode, Mr. Ketchum said the article never said that the man lost his home permanently, but that he hadn't gotten back in when the Walker manuscript was submitted. Mr. Ketchum also contended that the Andrews situation was not a localized one.

Stating that he believed there was ample

evidence to support Mr. Walker's conclusions, Mr. Ketchum said that he and the author felt an obligation to publicize the findings about Cape Cod's water supply and to "lay those findings before a large number of people."

Originally the Chamber complained about the article in a letter sent directly to the *Country Journal*. That letter was not published. Later, however, the magazine did publish a lengthy denunciation of the Walker article written by the director of public health



for the town of Barnstable which was followed by an editor's postscript defending the piece.

When *The Boston Herald American* advertised it would reprint the Walker article, protests from the Cape began. After publication of the story in July 1977, the newspaper then assigned a reporter to do a follow-up. That story appeared in September under the headline: EXPERTS AGREE CAPE DRINKING WATER CLEAN. The story quoted numerous officials and scientists who disputed the accuracy of the Walker article.

The Council staff interviewed the scientists listed by Mr. Walker as his sources. It was their opinion that the article made some good points about potential problems but was highly inaccurate in its description of the current situation. They denied giving Mr. Walker the impression that the Cape's water was "poisoned." In describing the article, the scientists used such terms as "false," "poorly researched," "alarmist," "inflammatory" and "unconscionable."

The staff reviewed the published studies of these scientists and found that the writer had misinterpreted and exaggerated their findings.

Investigation revealed also that the *Country Journal* did not seek out the most current scientific data, which confirmed the good quality of the Cape's water. The article was written more than a year before publication and was never updated.

Conclusion of the Council: The Council encourages wide latitude in the exercise of editorial judgment, particularly when the public's interest is concerned. The *Country Journal's* intention to alert Cape Cod to the need for pollution-prevention and water-

conservation strategies was commendable. The evidence is clear, however, that the article presented a seriously distorted picture of Cape Cod water quality.

The writing was so sensational and so sweeping in its conclusions that editorial caution was called for. The manuscript lay dormant at the *Country Journal* for almost a year, during which time the article's conclusions were not checked with scientific experts knowledgeable about the Cape's water.

Given the fact that the article was published, the editors then had an obligation to do everything possible to correct the record. The *Country Journal* did print a lengthy letter critical of the article. The magazine itself, however, did not acknowledge any flaws in the reporting. To the contrary, the editor followed the critical letter with comments defending the article. The Council notes the intention of the *Country Journal* to publish a follow-up story next summer but does not consider this a sufficiently prompt and adequate response to reader concern.

The complaint that the *Country Journal* article was inaccurate is found warranted because the magazine has failed to correct the record.

The Council, however, rejects the notion that the magazine should have cleared the contents of the article with its advertisers before publication. That segment of the complaint is therefore found unwarranted.

The *Boston Herald American* responded to reader concern by assigning its own reporter to investigate the Cape's water situation. The resulting story made very clear the flaws in the *Country Journal* article. This follow-up article was printed under a large headline and given the same prominence that the newspaper gave to the original article.

The complaint against the *Herald American* is found unwarranted.

Concurring: Brady, Ghiglione, Green, Height, Isaacs, Lawson, McKay, Otwell, Renick, Roberts, and Rusher.

Stamp of approval on postmen's complaint

Issue: Did a syndicated columnist err in reporting on union lobbying funds and in not revealing his membership in an anti-union

organization when writing on that subject?

Complaint: The American Postal Workers Union, through its national legislative director, Patrick J. Nilan, complained that the columns of Bryce Anderson incorrectly labeled the A.P.W.U. as the organization with the largest "war chest" for lobbying purposes.

Mr. Anderson, a retired associate editor of the San Rafael, California, *Independent-Journal*, is a self-syndicated columnist.

The union contended that he had misinterpreted its lobbying report to Congress by listing as funds set aside for lobbying what was actually the union's entire income from dues and other sources. The complaint pointed out that the error had been perpetuated in Anderson's columns even after the union had complained about it to the San Rafael newspaper and that the incorrect figure had subsequently appeared in a number of editorials and columns by others who had picked up the Anderson material.

The union's complaint further contended that in writing on the subject of union expenditure, Mr. Anderson should have identified himself as a member of the Advisory Council of Americans Against Union Control of Government. The organization, which is located in Vienna, Virginia, describes itself as a citizen's lobby.

At the heart of the dispute was the quarterly lobbying expenditure report that unions and other organizations are required to file with the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate and which is published in the *Congressional Record*. Two column listings in this filing procedure are particularly germane to the complaint.

Instructions for column "D" specify the inclusion under that listing "all receipts from which expenditures are made or will be made in accordance with legislative interests." Column "E" is for the listing of actual lobbying expenditures.

Mr. Anderson interpreted the language to mean that only that portion of the union's income which is set aside for lobbying was to be listed in column "D." The union contended that the language in the instructions for the listing was "vague and imprecise" and had decided to list its entire income under column "D" to be "open and forthcoming as far as the public record is concerned."

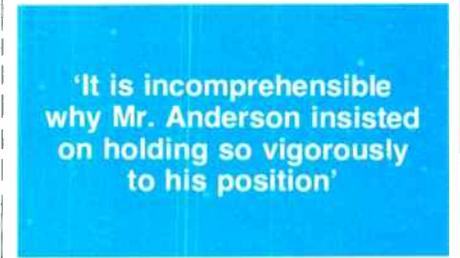
Concerning the union's contention that he should have revealed his membership in Americans Against Union Control of Government, Mr. Anderson said flatly that during more than forty years of newspaper work he had never allowed his news reporting to be influenced by membership in any organi-

zation. Said Mr. Anderson: "I regard accurate reporting as prime necessity in a free country, and any distortion to serve special interests is abominable."

Conclusion of the Council:

Accuracy. The listings in question occupy a single page in the *Congressional Record*. In one example furnished to the Council, the American Postal Workers Union elected to list in column "D" its total receipts from dues and assessments (\$6,946,622.63 for three-quarters of the present calendar year), and in column "E," its expenditures for legislative interests (\$347,958.50). Regardless of Mr. Nilan's contention that the language in the act is imprecise, it is difficult to understand how any journalist could confuse "receipts" with a "war chest" set aside solely for lobbying.

Even assuming that some might not properly construe the published tables, it appears



to the Council that the responsible journalist would (a) move to check for full understanding through the responsible officers of the House and Senate and (b) upon receiving a complaint about inaccuracy, promptly recheck to make certain of the basic facts.

Regardless of construction, the facts appear clear that the union's listing was acceptable to the key officers in the House and Senate and that it was not — as Mr. Anderson kept reiterating — earmarking all of its income on lobbying; nor was it, as he maintained, the largest of Congressional lobbyists. With the facts so clear, it is incomprehensible to the Council why Mr. Anderson insisted on holding so vigorously to a position demonstrated to have been erroneous.

The Council finds this portion of the complaint warranted.

Conflict of Interest and Disclosure. Americans against Union Control of Government describes itself as a citizens' lobby. As a member of its advisory council, Mr. Anderson receives no remuneration and, he says, never offers advice. He describes membership as "purely honorary." In reality, therefore, it may well be true that Mr. Anderson's membership in Americans Against Union Control of Government was

of no importance in shaping his references to the lobbying expenditures of the American Postal Workers Union and other unions.

The Council remains sensitive to the proposition that a whole range of factors — not only organizational affiliations but familial relationships, personal biases, religion, education, and friendships — may affect the writing of a syndicated columnist such as Mr. Anderson but fall short of requiring public disclosure. It would be unrealistic to require disclosure of all such factors in every contribution by every journalist.

Yet, faced with the specific facts of this case, the Council feels compelled to find — in line with its earlier urging that journalists make possible conflicts of interest “so clear that there can be no misunderstanding” — that this portion of the complaint is warranted. Mr. Anderson has repeatedly — on at least three occasions this year — written col-

'This would mean the control of news on essentially the whole continent of Africa'

umns discussing labor union lobbying expenditures. Mr. Anderson's viewpoint has been clear. In a February column, he wrote, “As always, the labor union lobby outspent all others.” In a March column, he wrote, “Labor unions put far more money into congressional lobbying during the year [1976] than any other category.” In a June column, he wrote, “As in past quarters, union labor far exceeded all other categories in money ear-marked for lobbying Congress, outspending the second-place petroleum industry by more than four-to-one.”

Given the evolving standard as to even the appearance of conflict of interest, and Mr. Anderson's persistence in repeating his error about the lobbying expenditures of the American Postal Workers Union, the Council believes he would have better served the public by disclosing in his columns on labor union lobbying expenditures the fact of his membership on the advisory council of Americans Against Union Control of Government.

Concurring: Brady, Ghiglione, Green*, Height, Isaacs, Lawson, McKay*, Otwell, Renick, Roberts, and Rusher**.

* Dissented on portion of decision which held that Mr. Anderson should have disclosed his advisory council membership.

** Abstained on the question of disclosure.

Statement on Pan-African News Agency

The proposal for the creation of a Pan-African News Agency (PANA), even in its developmental stage, is a matter of urgent concern to the press and news services of the free world. Both the Associated Press and United Press International reported during the second week of November that official representatives of forty-nine nations, mostly African but some Arab, met in Kampala, Uganda, to work out plans for the establishment of a monopolistic agency to control the flow of news into and out of the member nations. This would mean in effect the control of news on essentially the whole of the continent of Africa. Besides Uganda, two of the represented nations, Ethiopia and Kenya, were announced as offering to be the headquarters base of the proposed agency.

The Kampala Conference, which was made up largely of information ministers and officers of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), was described by its spokesman, Peter Onu, as designed “to correct the distortion of news” which he said is the product of “Western news organizations.” He asserted that “for too long the foreign news media have been presenting Africa as they see it and not as we see it. We don't want other people to interpret what we are doing. They speak for themselves and they speak for us as well. We want to correct the balance.”

Although the draft document, as reported by U.P.I. and A.P., said that the proposed agency would offer “full cooperation with foreign international news agencies,” it declared bluntly that when the PANA service is in operation all individual news agencies in Africa “shall cease making direct subscriptions to foreign news agencies” and that “foreign news agencies shall be required to subscribe only to PANA for African news.” An emphasized complaint of the Afro-Arab representatives was that Western news services employed “negative aspects of events in Africa,” and that these same press facilities minimized the “positive.”

This proposed closed-door African news agency to control information is not a new idea. It was debated by the O.A.U. in 1963 — fourteen years ago. While the proposal was held in abeyance so far as the continent of Africa was concerned, the press continued

to be controlled in Communist and Fascist countries and correspondents for the Western news services reported news developments often only with extreme difficulty. From time to time Western news reporters have been expelled. Regrettably the contagion of news control has spread to many other parts of the world. Latin America is affected, as the July, 1976, conference at San Jose, Costa Rica, following earlier efforts, demonstrated. The Inter-American Press Association met that prospect by going on record firmly against nationalistic press “guidelines” that would set up censorship for information flow both ways.

Western news services cannot yet know how far the PANA proposal may be carried. Some observers see it as a propaganda device. It has the appearance of being in the same restrictive pattern that characterized much of the anti-free world outlook at the UNESCO Conference at Nairobi in October, 1976. At that time the National News Council reacted with a forthright statement on behalf of worldwide press freedom (September 21, 1976), as did an impressive number of organizations devoted to the press in the Western world. Fortunately the UNESCO Conference did not adopt the press controls that had been proposed.

In the hope of achieving greater African cooperation with the Western news agencies, the Associated Press has volunteered to assist the developing nations of Africa with the training of personnel in the role of the press and in the operation of news transmission machines and other equipment. Thus far these tenders of assistance have not been accepted.

What is of current significance with respect to the PANA proposal is that it may be so much closer to reality than ever before. Action is called for at the Organization of African Unity Summit Conference next year in Sudan. A reported schedule is that PANA could get under way on a limited scale in 1978 and be in general operation by 1980.

Because of these possibilities, the National News Council now urges undiminished vigilance and renewed resolution on the part of American news services to uphold the free flow of news over this increasingly important continent. Grant that the coverage of African developments is less than it might be. Some of the reporting is of high order while at the same time the vast areas as a whole could have fuller, more understanding description and interpretation. Thus a constructive way to counter the danger-laden PANA proposal is for American and other Western news providers to do a better, more thorough, more informative job of covering the Afro-Arab part of the world.

The need clearly is not for less coverage of continental Africa but for reporting which even more closely lives up to the high responsibility of the free press on a globe so blighted by restraints, restrictions, and outright controls. For the lamentable fact is that in many places freedom is not even a word. History teaches that the peoples of the African nations will be the losers if the PANA controls go into effect. Let them take their stand on the side of free exchange of news and their long exploited continent will move into a new era of progress.

Dissenting: Height and Lawson.

The fluoride debate: cavities or cancer?

Issue: Did a newspaper act responsibly in reporting the view of a controversial scientist that fluoridation causes cancer? Did another newspaper and a television suppress this scientist's opinions? Should all scientific viewpoints receive equal space?

Background: The fluoridation debate lives on. In the 1950s fluoridation's detractors called it a Communist plot; in the 1970s new opponents say it causes cancer. Although the dental establishment is firmly convinced fluoridation prevents decay, some cities have never adopted the practice of adding fluoride to public water supplies.

Chief spokesman for the anti-fluoridationists is Dr. John Yiamouyiannis, science director of the National Health Federation, a group dedicated to freedom of choice in health matters. In the past two years, Dr. Yiamouyiannis has traveled from his headquarters in Delaware, Ohio, to campaign against fluoridation across the country — from Louisiana to Oregon.

The Council was asked to involve itself in the argument. First a dentist filed a complaint against the *National Enquirer* for publicizing Dr. Yiamouyiannis's theory that fluoridation causes cancer. Then Dr. Yiamouyiannis himself filed complaints concerning press coverage of his anti-fluoridation activities.

Early in 1975 Dr. Yiamouyiannis, along with Dr. Dean Burk, a retired cancer researcher, began distributing literature linking fluoridation with cancer. The two men had

examined government cancer mortality statistics for ten fluoridated and ten nonfluoridated cities. They asserted that the fluoridated cities had, on the average, higher cancer death rates.

Soon thereafter the National Cancer Institute issued a statement asserting that the Yiamouyiannis-Burk analysis did not "show any relationship between the fluoridation of water and cancer." The phenomenon outlined by the two scientists, the institute contended, was the result of factors other than fluoridation.

The dispute heated up when Yiamouyiannis and Burk gained the support of Congressman James Delaney of New York. In July 1975, Mr. Delaney read the Yiamouyiannis-Burk findings into the *Congressional Record* and called for the "immediate suspension of all artificial fluoridation pending further investigation." Later that year Yiamouyiannis and Burk produced a new study using different statistics to link fluoridation with cancer.

The scientific community did not ignore the Yiamouyiannis-Burk claims. In the past two years several studies — including a major one by the National Cancer Institute — have examined the possibility of a fluoridation-cancer relationship. The investigators have concluded that the Yiamouyiannis-Burk theory of a causal relationship is fallacious.

Yiamouyiannis and Burk contend that N.C.I. and the others have made significant errors in their analyses. In July 1977, the two scientists published another study designed to answer the objections raised to their earlier efforts. In September and again in October, Yiamouyiannis and N.C.I. spokesmen debated the fluoridation-cancer issue before a Congressional subcommittee. Despite the criticism from other scientists, Yiamouyiannis and Burk stand by their theory.

Boriskin vs. the *National Enquirer*

Complaint: Dr. Joel M. Boriskin, an Oakland dentist, complained about an article that appeared in the *National Enquirer* on April 12, 1977, under the headline: LEADING SCIENTISTS SAY . . . FLUORIDE ADDED TO DRINKING WATER CAUSES 35,000 CANCER DEATHS EVERY YEAR . . . HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF. The article presented the Yiamouyiannis-Burk theory and quoted the two scientists extensively. In his complaint, Dr. Boriskin criticized the newspaper for "irresponsibly printing a story that will very likely cause thousands of people to prematurely lose their teeth!" He asserted that the "contention that water fluoridation is linked in any way to cancer has been repeatedly refuted worldwide by reputable sci-

entific bodies conducting extensive research." In conclusion he wrote, "I think the *Enquirer* owes the 'other side' of fluoridation equal space. And in the future I would hope that the 'newspaper' would avoid such fearmongering."

The *Enquirer* did not respond to the Council's inquiries nor did it respond directly to Dr. Boriskin. The newspaper did, however, respond to a complaint about the same article from the American Dental Association and wrote, "We are satisfied that in quoting Dr. Dean Burk and Dr. John Yiamouyiannis, Science Director of NHF, we were reporting on the opinions and findings of responsible persons in this field."

Conclusion of the Council: The *Enquirer* article did not purport to be a comprehensive examination of the fluoridation issue. It merely presented the views of two scientists, and information in the article was appropriately attributed to them.

The Council has consistently rejected the notion that news organizations have an obligation to devote equal space or time to opposing viewpoints. We believe that such a requirement, besides being impractical, would undermine the editorial discretion so important to a strong and free press.

In this instance, the *Enquirer* article included the following sentence: "A spokes-

'I would hope that the newspaper would avoid such fearmongering'

man at NCI [the National Cancer Institute] told the *Enquirer* that the NCI feels that there is no satisfactory evidence linking fluoride with cancer." While the complainant is not satisfied with this brief presentation of the other side, the article at least indicated that the Yiamouyiannis-Burk theory has been disputed.

The complainant is correct in asserting that numerous "reputable scientific bodies" have concluded that the Yiamouyiannis-Burk studies are invalid. The recent debates in Congress indicate, however, that the issue remains unresolved in the minds of some people. Scientific truth can be elusive, particularly in a situation like this where there is no direct, empirical way to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

The public would not be well-served, in general, if only the opinions of the scientific majority were reported. The advancement of

knowledge is best guaranteed by the free flow of ideas.

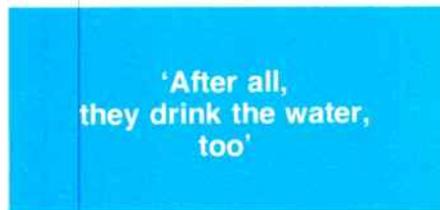
The complaint is found unwarranted.

Yiamouyiannis vs. The Shreveport Times

Complaint: In May, 1977, the Shreveport (La.) Chamber of Commerce issued a task force report advocating that the city's water be fluoridated. *The Shreveport Times* gave extensive coverage to the task force's conclusions.

Dr. Yiamouyiannis complained that the newspaper should have given anti-fluoridationists equal space. He said that the newspaper had printed numerous inaccurate statements contained in the task force report.

Responding to the complaint, *Times* editor Raymond L. McDaniel said, "all of his ob-



jections here are against a Chamber of Commerce task-force report, not against the *Times*." Mr. McDaniel said that he had no reason to doubt the good intentions of the task force members. "After all, they drink the water, too," he said.

On July 25 Dr. Yiamouyiannis took part in a public debate in Shreveport. The *Times* described the debate in an article headlined HOOTS, CATCALLS DISRUPT FLUORIDATION DEBATE. Dr. Yiamouyiannis complained that the newspaper printed an inaccurate report of his actions during the debate, including the false statements that he had "yelled" to the crowd and that at one point he had "rushed to the microphone" to interrupt another speaker.

Mr. McDaniel replied that the reporter "gave his view of what he witnessed."

Conclusion of the Council: Dr. Yiamouyiannis complains that the newspaper should have given equal space to the anti-fluoridation point of view. The Council leaves that decision to the editors. It is not unreasonable that the paper would choose to devote more space to the findings of the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce than the views of an individual from outside the state. Concerning Dr. Yiamouyiannis's specific objections to the articles dealing with the Chamber report, the newspaper responded quite appropriately that his complaints were against the task force, not the *Times* coverage of its report.

Dr. Yiamouyiannis's opinions were, in fact, given space in the article that described the public debate. Dr. Yiamouyiannis said, however, that the article gave an inaccurate account of the debate. Upon inspection, the article appears to be an unbiased account of what took place. In view of the circumstances, Dr. Yiamouyiannis's recollections of the events would seem to us no more credible than the reporter's. The paper reported arguments raised by both sides in the debate.

In summary, the *Times* fluoridation coverage flowed from specific news events. The paper obviously considered the work of the local task force the biggest news, but, when Dr. Yiamouyiannis made news at a public debate, the paper did not ignore, suppress, or unfairly present his opinions.

All portions of the complaint are found to be unwarranted.

Yiamouyiannis vs. KSLA-TV, Shreveport

Complaint: Dr. John Yiamouyiannis also complained about portions of KSLA-TV's July 25, 1977, newscasts. He objected to the way in which the stations conducted an interview with him and the way in which the interview was edited for broadcast.

Dr. Yiamouyiannis wrote:

When I went to the station, I was not asked about fluoridation but rather about the 'criminals at the National Health Federation.' I declined comment saying I was there to speak on fluoridation not on the National Health Federation.

The coverage that evening included a derogatory statement concerning the National Health Federation, mentioned that I was its Science Director and by innuendo that the derogatory statements made about the federation applied to me also. It virtually avoided my comments on fluoridation.

Transcripts of the newscasts revealed that Dr. Yiamouyiannis was given a great deal of airtime to respond to charges against the National Health Federation and also state his opinions about fluoridation. Among his comments that were broadcast were the assertions that fluoridation "has severe adverse effects," that it "has not been shown to be effective to any substantive degree in the prevention of tooth decay," and that it is "an infringement upon the person's right to decide what he puts in his own water."

Conclusion of the Council: After examining the transcripts, the Council cannot agree with Dr. Yiamouyiannis that KSLA "virtually avoided" his comments on fluoridation. To the contrary, the station provided him with an opportunity to denounce fluoridation.

The complaint is found to be unwarranted.

Concurring: Brady, Ghigliione, Green, Height, Isaacs, Lawson, McKay, Otwell, Renick, Roberts, and Rusher.

Cartoon on seals makes fur fly

Issue: What are the bounds of a cartoonist's expression of editorial opinion? In this matter, should the cartoonist have been free to heighten an emotional issue such as the Canadian seal hunt by the manner in which he depicted the hunters' providing skins for ladies' fur coats?

Complaint: Novotny Furs, Inc., of Lakewood, Ohio, complained that a cartoon by Gene Basset, distributed by United Feature Syndicate, which appeared in mid-March in *The Cincinnati Post*, among other newspapers, depicted "uniform stupidity" regarding the use of Canadian seal skins in fur coats. The cartoon showed hunters clubbing what appeared to be baby seals. It was labeled "Canadian seal hunt," and was captioned "Lovely, lovely . . . more coats for lucky ladies.'"

Ray Novotny of the Novotny firm declared that "The fact is that Canadian seal *is not, has never been, and is not at present used for fur garments*. In fact, THEY ARE NOT EVEN PERMITTED TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES [his emphasis]. The skin is used, mostly in Europe, for women's shoes, handbags and the like. . . ."

Mr. Novotny had complained previously to the Council regarding a cartoon by Bill Mauldin distributed by the Field Newspaper Syndicate. The Mauldin cartoon also concerned the use of seal skins in fur coats.

Mr. Basset did not respond to the Council's request for comment. In its research, the Council found that Canadian seals and any products made from them are not permitted to be imported into the United States, but Council investigators could not find anyone who would say that furs taken from Canadian pup seals are not used in making fur coats which are ultimately sold somewhere.

The cartoon by Mr. Basset basically attempted to convey the same message as that drawn by Mr. Mauldin, namely, that seals are killed and their skins are used in fur coats. Mr. Mauldin's cartoon did not identify the skins as coming from Canadian seals, but it, too, was published to time with the annual seal harvesting period in the northwest Atlantic. Neither cartoon specified that Cana-

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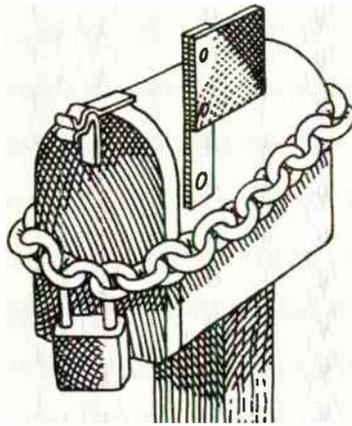
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dian seal coats were sold by American furriers.

In giving its opinion regarding the cartoon by Mr. Mauldin, the Council declared that it "recognizes the cartoon as one of the oldest forms of social criticism and probably the ultimate in journalistic satire and ridicule, highly personal in nature." However, the Council acknowledged that there could be instances where a cartoonist overstepped acceptable bounds and therefore reserved the right to take appropriate action should such occasion arise.

The Council found in the complaint against Mr. Mauldin that the specific cartoon was "within the range of the cartoonist's freedom" and held the complaint unwarranted.

Conclusion of the Council: Applying the same principle that it applied against Mr. Mauldin, the Council believes that Mr. Basset did not overstep the wide bounds traditionally available to cartoonists in their expressions of editorial opinion. Mr. Basset was within the range of such expression of the cartoonist's freedom, and the Council holds the complaint unwarranted.

Concurring: Brady, Green, Height, Isaacs, Lawson, McKay, Otwell, Renick, Roberts, and Rusher.

The case of the missing transcript

Issue: A complainant charges that a program shown by a television network was "extremely inaccurate." The network refuses to make the transcript available for examination, claiming the program was produced by an independent producer. The independent producer also won't allow the transcript to be examined. Approximately 19,500,000 saw the program. Why this intransigence?

Complaint: Marian Newman, Washington coordinator of The Fund for Animals, complained that "The Wonderful Kangaroo," aired on NBC on April 13, 1977, was "an extremely inaccurate presentation." According to Ms. Newman, the program, which was produced by an independent producer, Survival Anglia, Ltd., "repeatedly described how 'abundant' kangaroos are in Australia when in fact the animals are officially rec-

ognized as being threatened with extinction." She said that she feared "the effect of this program could jeopardize the future survival of these animals by misleading the public."

After network officials had discussed the charges with Survival Anglia, an NBC attorney responded to the complaint: "NBC has no reason to believe that 'The Wonderful Kangaroo' contained inaccuracies and misrepresentations."

John Ball, president of Survival Anglia's New York office, also defended the program's content: "Survival Anglia's staff of researchers and writers are renowned for their accuracy and quest for an objective view." Malcolm Penny of Survival Anglia's London office, who participated in the filming trip to Australia, contended that Ms. Newman's information was outdated and that the trip had revealed that the kangaroo populations were growing.

Efforts by the Council staff to evaluate this complaint were hampered from the beginning by the unwillingness of Survival Anglia or NBC to furnish a videotape or transcript of the program. The staff gathered information on the status of the kangaroo from the United States and Australian governments. But without a transcript, the staff could not determine if the program was a fair reflection of the available information.

Numerous requests were made for a transcript. Survival Anglia said that "The Wonderful Kangaroo" was not a news presentation and declined to provide a transcript unless directed to do so by NBC.

After several officials at NBC were approached about a transcript, the network's final refusal came from one of its attorneys:

We have declined to supply a script here because we do not have one to give. Since Survival Anglia Limited is a totally independent organization, we have not attempted to instruct Survival Anglia on how they should handle your inquiry. We have made it clear to them, as we have done with you, that they are free to make any choice they wish in this matter.

Conclusion of the Council: This is the first complaint against a television program which was not produced by a network news department which the Council accepted for examination. We believe that predominantly informational and purportedly factual programs, although sometimes independently produced, are properly within the Council's jurisdiction since journalistic standards should apply to all such programs, regardless of the identity of the producer. Although NBC has assured us of its willingness to provide transcripts for our study of programs produced by the network itself, it has taken a

far less than helpful approach towards our review of programs it purchases from outside. We see little justification for this distinction. The network should be as responsible for the content of the programs it buys from independent producers as newspapers and magazines are for the content of articles purchased from free-lance writers or literary agents. "The Wonderful Kangaroo" was broadcast over the network's facilities. It was viewed by 19,500,000 people, according to the Nielsen ratings. If it was inaccurate, the network must bear responsibility for having allowed its viewers to be misled. Viewers expect NBC's level of quality regardless of who actually produced the documentary.

As to Survival Anglia's refusal to provide either the transcript or to permit a viewing of

**'Viewers expect
NBC's quality regardless
of who actually
produced the documentary'**

the program by the Council's representatives, without a specific directive to do so from the network, we are equally disappointed. Having gone on the public record, and sold its product, the producer should be willing to stand by, or at least allow examination of, its statements.

The fact is then that neither the network nor the independent producer is willing to permit full examination of a challenge to the substance of its program on "The Wonderful Kangaroo."

The Council cannot assume that this intransigence by NBC and by the producer indicates in some manner that the complainant's charges are warranted. Nor can it adequately ascertain the validity of the charges without first knowing precisely what was said and revealed on the program. The Council therefore holds the complaint in abeyance, and for the time being at least, leaves it to the public itself to draw whatever conclusions it may from the unwillingness of the network and of an independent producer to submit for examination a program which has been described by a complainant as "extremely inaccurate."

Should a transcript be forthcoming, the Council stands ready to investigate the complainant's charges.

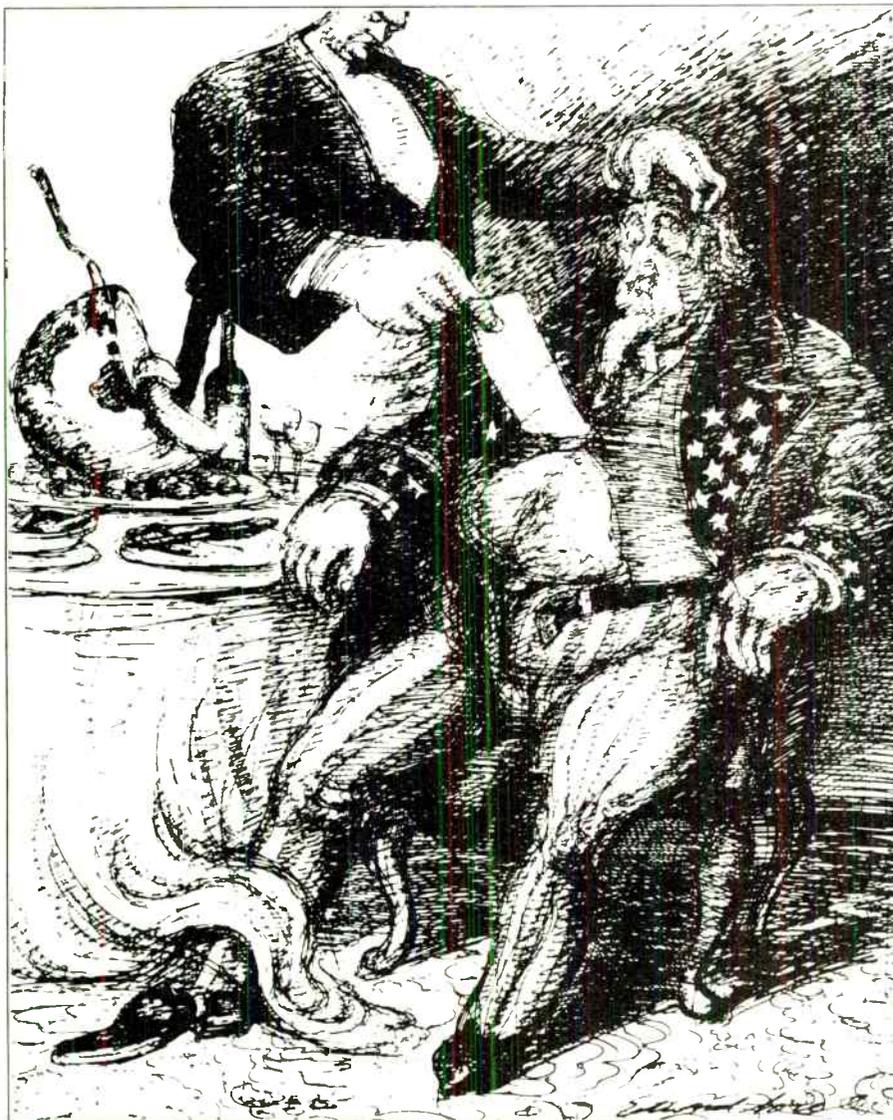
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REPORTS

"The Conservatives' War Against the Media: Kevin Phillips' Effete Snobbery," by Roy A. Childs, Jr., *Libertarian Review*, September 1977

The chickens, say the libertarians, have come home to roost: in the accelerating war against the media, old liberal ideas are new conservative ammunition. Of less concern to editor Childs than the ironies of the situation, however, are the fallacies of an argument that in his view amounts to "nothing less than an assault on the rights of freedom of speech and of the press" — Kevin Phillips's article, "Busting the Media Trusts," published in *Harper's* last July ("Reports," *CJR*, November/December). According to Phillips's "manifesto," media restraints may advance on several fronts, and Childs takes them on one by one, always grounding his rebuttal on the basic libertarian ideology of the free-market system. To Phillips's suggestion that the tremendous power of the media may subject them to the same accountability as the "other" three branches of government, Childs counters that Phillips has trickily identified the media's power as political when it is in fact economic — the power to produce and to trade what one has produced. To Phillips's suggestion of control of content through the application to newspapers of campaign contribution laws and lobbying regulations, Childs responds that such an effort would be misdirected: rather than a broader interpretation of commercial speech, the fight should be for a lifting of restrictions on commercial speech itself. And to Phillips's favorite threat of antitrust measures, Childs responds that historically, rather than diffusing economic power, government regulation has in fact promoted its centralization. In Childs's view, the best solution to the problem of media monopoly is true laissez-faire in both the market for goods and the market for ideas.

"How to Measure the Quality of Criminal Justice: Story Ideas," by Sally Jacobsen, *American Bar Association*, 1977

In a singular gesture toward a sometime antagonist, the American Bar Association offers challenging suggestions for journalists on how to cover the criminal-justice system in their respective communities. Taking the fundamental approach that journalism ought to hold criminal-justice professionals to their

own avowed guidelines, the twenty-six-page brochure, prepared by a Washington, D.C. free-lance reporter, is based on the seventeen-volume American Bar Association Standards for the Administration of Criminal Justice and the six-volume National Advisory Commission Reports on Standards and Goals for Criminal Justice. The advice is organized around some seventeen aspects of the system, ranging from the functions of the urban police, prosecutor, defense, and trial judge to sentencing, probation, and appeals, each accompanied by a description of the A.B.A.-N.A.C. standard, concrete ideas for stories comparing existing practices with that standard, and appropriate background questions to ask in pursuing the story.

"The Word from Mamma Buff," by Lally Weymouth, *Esquire*, November 1977

A hard-to-get glimpse of the legendary matriarch of the *Los Angeles Times*, as seen by Katherine Graham's daughter (a facet of the new journalism trend of assigning celebrities to cover each other). First as the wife of Norman Chandler, publisher of the *Times* from 1945 until 1960, then (and now) as the mother of publisher Otis, whose succession, to the acute dismay of the rest of the Chandler dynasty, she personally engineered, Dorothy Buffum Chandler has influenced the course of the *Times's* development in ways beyond estimate (though not, apparently, beyond dispute: according to Otis, his mother's power has been rather overrated). She's portrayed here as a woman of fierce conviction, domineering drive, and remarkable journalistic instinct, responsible for improving the working conditions of the *Times's* staff, for transforming the women's section with coverage of music, theater, and books (much as she later transformed the city's cultural landscape with her almost singlehanded crusade for the Los Angeles Music Center), and for managing a shift in editorial support away from Taft in favor of Eisenhower (even if it meant locking the publisher out of the bedroom to win her point). Now seventy-six and officially retired, Buff may yearn a bit for the smoother road not taken, but her passion for the *Times* is undiminished, and though her present involvement is less direct, she has plenty of ideas for making the paper better yet.

(Bonus: some new anecdotal treasures for collectors of Nixonia.)

Your Guide to the New Copyright Law, by Victor Levine, *Freelancer's Newsletter*, 1977

The new year brings a new copyright law, and with it new, if not intimidating, legal mysteries. This practical, twenty-seven-page booklet explains in non-legal English the background of the legislation, the significant (and welcome) changes in the 1978 version (the law it replaces had been around since 1909), and the way it actually works. Designed particularly for "creative workers" but useful to anyone involved with copyrighting procedures, the handbook covers such basics as length of term for new and existing works, redefinitions of literary property rights, fair-use and photocopying guidelines, and restrictions and penalties. The \$10 price includes two planned updates on copyrighting practices, test court cases, and additional clarifications as they develop.

"The Sorry State of the Labor Press," by Ralph Nader, *The Progressive*, October 1977

It will take a lot more than snappier writing and snazzier layouts — not that they wouldn't be welcome — to revitalize the nation's labor press, according to Nader, for its chronic problem is forgetfulness of its own mission. With an aggregate circulation of more than thirty million, the 800 publications of this specialized journalism carry a potentially enormous editorial impact; yet, rather than providing readers with information on such rank-and-file concerns as safety regulations, occupational disease, the rights of workers, and the perspective of labor on political issues, most publications prefer to focus on picnics, trophies, and handshakes — fluff that, in Nader's view, preserves the status quo of union officialdom and that sometimes turns workers against their own best interests. Rarely do such publications provide opportunities for two-way communication between members and officers with a letters-to-the-editor section, and few papers even cover their own union elections until after the fact. What should be done? More resources, says Nader, and more imagination ("During the 1920s and 1930s, many unions had shrunken treasuries and swollen imaginations. Now they have swollen treasuries and shrunken imaginations") — a national labor daily, perhaps; advantageous use of radio and television; more access for workers, more autonomy for editors; and, for a starter, a convocation of "forward-looking" union editors, reporters, workers, and officials to get it all going.

G.C.

The Lower case



Sen. Weicker With New Bribe. Camille DiLorenzo Butler

Ann Arbor News 11/7 77

2 Men Accused of Pecans Theft; Sex Charge Filed

(Montgomery) Alabama Journal 11 8/77

Albany Turns To Garbage

(New York) Daily News 10 3 77

Indian Ocean talks

The Plain Dealer 10 5 77

Electrocution Victim Making Comeback Against Long Odds

Kansas City Times 10 15 77

Lie Detector Tests Unreliable, Unconstitutional Hearing Told

The Hartford Courant 11 16 77

Opening ceremonies will be held at noon Tuesday and the dignitaries instead of cutting a ribbon, will cut in half a 10 inch loaf of bread supplied by the Kautman Banking Co. The bread will be given to a home for the needy.

Upstate (N.Y.) Business Journal 10 4 77

Missionary risked dysentery and bigamy in eight day trip to Nigerian villages

The (Gainesville) Times 10 14 77

Time for Football And Meatball Stew

Detroit Free Press 10 19 77

AN ITALIAN SINNER will be served at 5:30 p.m. at the Essex Center United Methodist Church.

Vermont 10/16/77

Do-it-yourself pregnancy kit to go on sale

The Detroit News 11/17 77

Marion freed after 81-day ordeal

Ottawa Journal 10/28/77

82-day ordeal over

The (Ottawa) Citizen 10/28/77

After 83 days, Marion safe

Ottawa Today 10/28/77

Wives Kill Most Spouses In Chicago

Florida Times-Union 9 8 77

Pancakes to sell for grave flags

University Herald (Seattle) 10/26/77



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