SEX CRAZED: WHY THE PRESS FELL FOR EYES WIDE SHUT

BRILL'S THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE

KIDS? GRIEVING FAMILIES? IS ANYONE EVER...

WHICH MEDIA HEAVYWEIGHTS **WOULD AGREE TO VOLUNTARY RESTRICTIONS PROTECTING** PRIVACY. WHICH ONES WOULDN'T.

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ANTHONY BARCELLOS PO BOX 2249 DAVIS, CA 95617-2249

WHAT DRIVES NPR'S CAR TALK GUYS? G THE MONEY MAGS' STOCK PICKS USE YOUR PHONE TO SURF THE WEB SIDE FOX'S "NEWS WITH AN ATTITUDE"

World Radio History

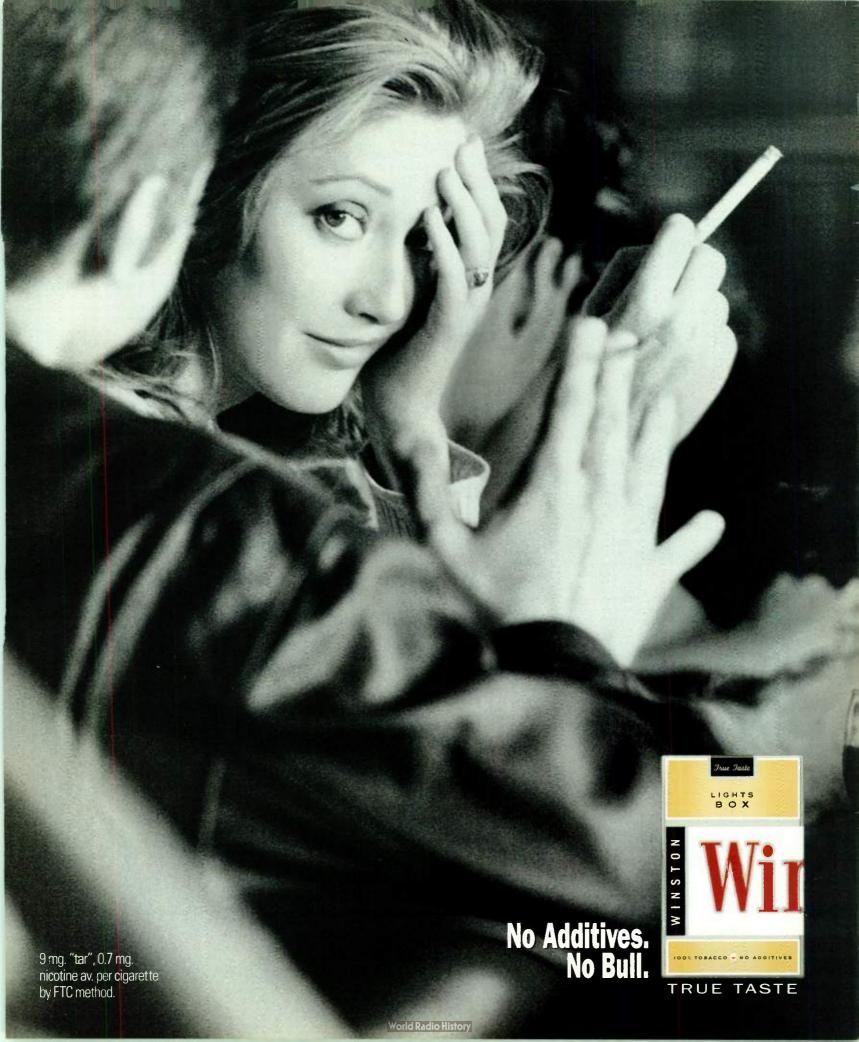
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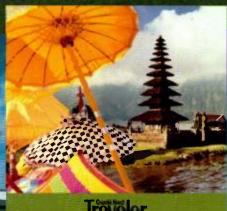
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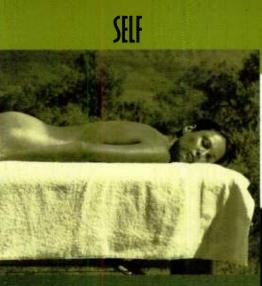
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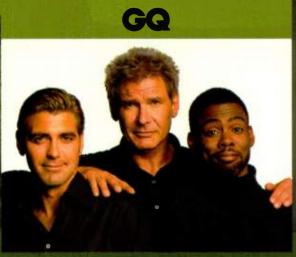


Traveler



allure









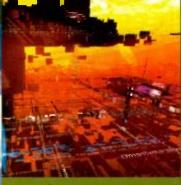
ENCE AS ALL THE PAGES AROUND IT. CONDÉNAST the accent is on content.



House Garden



Sports-Fitness



WIRED



CONDÉNET



NEW YORKER

MOST PEOPLE SEE A KID WHO'S BOUND TO MAKE TROUBLE.



Beneath the baggy clothes is usually just a kid who loves challenging gravity. And rather than causing problems, he may be creating solutions—by working with city officials to develop a municipal skate park.

Monitor readers know this thanks to a recent story in our Wednesday "Homefront" section.

In typical fashion, we looked beneath the surface views to present a bigger picture, without the cynicism so common in today's reporting.

As we do on everything from kids to Kosovo.

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MONITOR READERS KNOW BETTER.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITO

A GUIDE TO HOME, FAMILY,

AND COMMUNITY.



Going with the grain Award-winning furnituremaker John Hein turns exotic woods into masterpieces.

Page 13



An Irish 'fry-up'

A hearty stick-to-your-ribs breakfast in Dublin is a true test of what Irish cuisine is all about.

Page 16

Neighbor to Neighbor

- By David Clark Scott

Calculus of chores

all it the new math of chores.

Optimum household
harmony won't be achieved
by working couples if they divide
the chores in half.

Rather, each spouse should do 45.8 percent of the laundry, cleaning, shopping, and dishwashing, says Chioe Bird, a Brown University sociologist. The last 8.4 percent should be handed off to the kids, hired out, or let slide.

The key question: Am I under or over the 45.8 percent mark? (Don't feel compelled to answer. My Dearest.)

Professor Bird says that In dual income US homes, wives estimate they do about 67 of the chores. Husbands say 36 percent.

To put it another way, married with the log 40 hours of chores

A half-pipe leap into local politics

By Ross Atkin

wo years ago. Plymouth, Mass., town meeting member Russ Shirley didn't know a "half pipe" from a "rall-slide." And Adam Drexler, like most teenagers, had never set foot in a town meeting.

But the unlikely union of two worlds – the youthful freewheeling culture of skateboarders and the often-plodding Ways Radio

In pursuit of their own park, skateboarders cross a cultural divide for a lesson in civics

[LETTER FROM THE EDITOR]

HE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE DISAPPEARANCE and then the deaths of John F. Kennedy Jr. and his wife and sister-in-law followed the all-too predictable patterns of media overkill on the story du jour. Too much idle speculation; too much hype; too much exploitation—all followed by the familiar earnest self-criticism about all that speculation, hype, and exploitation.

But two aspects of the Kennedy coverage struck us, and apparently, many of you, as particularly excessive. First, there were the camera shots that peered through the hedges into Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's yard as her family awaited word about J.F.K. Jr.'s plane. And there were the young Schlossberg children, suddenly robbed of their anonymity as their pictures appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country.

By now, not only the saturation coverage of *the big story* but the press's self-examination and even the public revulsion that soon follow have all become sadly routine. It's tempting to conclude that nothing new can be said about all this, and worse, that nothing new can be done.

But we decided to try. We drafted two voluntary guidelines that, if accepted by news organizations, could have the effect of curbing the photographing of children (without parental permission) and of grieving families. We asked a broad cross-section of media figures if they would sign on to the guidelines and invited their comments. We also commissioned a poll to gauge the public's view on the matter.

The results—described and analyzed in our cover story by editor in chief Steven Brill—are eye opening. There's the media's almost instinctive resistance to even the mildest form of self-regulation. There's the public's overwhelming support for some simple common courtesies on the part of the media. And there's the gap between the media and public—a gap perhaps symbolized by the unwillingness of many, though by no means all, journalists even to discuss proposed self-limits in these areas, let alone give a simple yes or no answer to whether they agree with them. This will strike some as ironic, since the press would certainly resist such reticence on the part of a politician they were trying to pin down for a straight answer. The story package, including our accounting of dozens of media figures' positions and a report on our poll, begins on page 98.

The press's standing with the public is probably not helped by many news outlets' seeming inability—or unwillingness—to admit candidly when they make a mistake. Nancy Durham, a video journalist who has done some excellent reporting on the war in Yugoslavia (and whose "war diary" appeared in our June issue) made a mistake, which happened to be broadcast around the world. Durham does more than acknowledge the error here; she explores how and why it happened in a candid tale that also sheds light on how journalists, facing the dangers and pressures of a war, become vulnerable to the passions and propaganda of the combatants. Durham's story begins on page 82.

Far away from the turmoil and tragedy of war, two witty mechanics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have quietly (okay, not so quietly) created a small media empire around the simplest of premises: Have fun, be honest, and know what you're talking about. The "Car Talk guys," as they're affectionately known to millions of National Public Radio listeners and readers of their syndicated column, talk to staff writer Jennifer Greenstein about what motivates them (hint: not money) and how they manage to provide information and entertainment in a way that enhances both. You don't need to care about cars to be amused by Car Talk—or by Greenstein's piece, which begins on page 66.

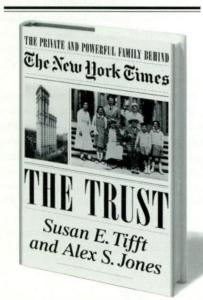
Veteran readers of this magazine (which I guess means anyone who has been reading it for a few months now) should be accustomed to the fact that we're always adding new features and columns, as we work both to broaden and deepen our coverage of the Information Age. This month is no exception, as we introduce "Face-Off," a kind of ideological showdown between two prominent press critics—Jeff Cohen of Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (on the left) and Jonah Goldberg of the *National Review* (on the right). Each month, we'll be asking them to weigh in on a media-related issue—the debut column, on page 54, focuses on the question of how the press covers race and racism. You can be the judge of which one has best marshaled his arguments and made his case.

ERIC EFFRON EDITOR

WHAT WE STAND FOR

- 1. ACCURACY: Brill's Content is about all that purports to be nonfiction. So it should be no surprise that our first principle is that anything that purports to be nonfiction should be true. Which means it should be accurate in fact and in context.
- 2. LABELING AND SOURCING: Similarly, if a publisher is not certain that something is accurate, the publisher should either not publish it, or should make that uncertainty plain by clearly stating the source of his information and its possible limits and pitfalls. To take another example of making the quality of information clear, we believe that if unnamed sources must be used, they should be labeled in a way that sheds light on the limits and biases of the information they offer.
- 3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: We believe that the content of anything that sells itself as journalism should be free of any motive other than informing its consumers. In other words, it should not be motivated, for example, by the desire to curry favor with an advertiser or to advance a particular political interest.
- 4. ACCOUNTABILITY: We believe that journalists should hold themselves as accountable as any of the subjects they write about. They should be eager to receive complaints about their work, to investigate complaints diligently, and to correct mistakes of fact, context, and fairness prominently and clearly.

THE BPIC SAGA OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FAMILY IN AMERICA



THE TRUST

The Private and Powerful Family Behind The New York Times

The excerpts in *The New Yorker* were intriguing, to say the least: anti-Semitism, nepotism, the price of being born into a wealthy, powerful family...Now here's the whole story. Although the authors were given full access to the people and the papers behind *The Times*, the book was written independent of family control.



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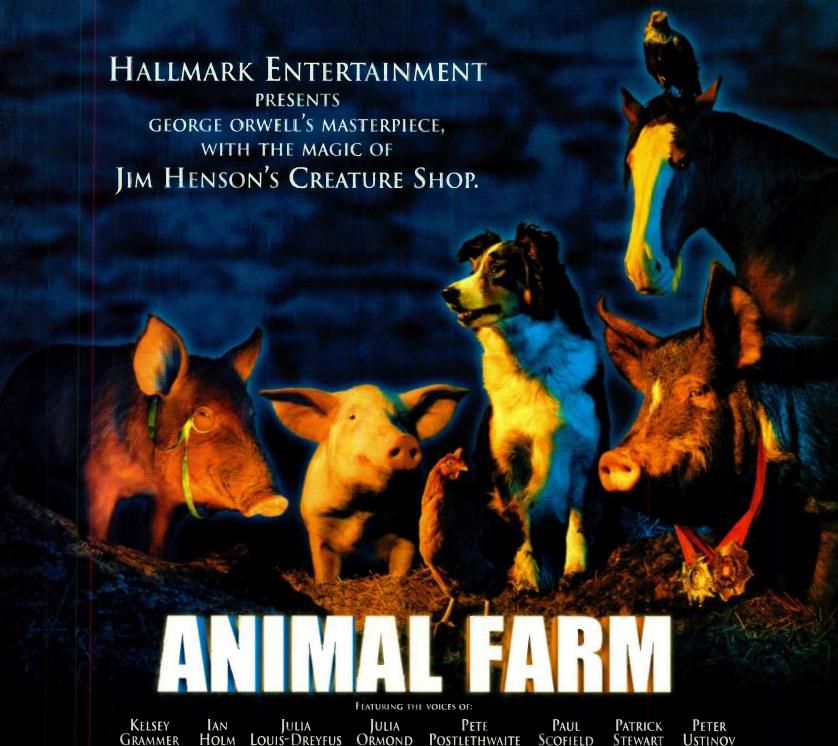
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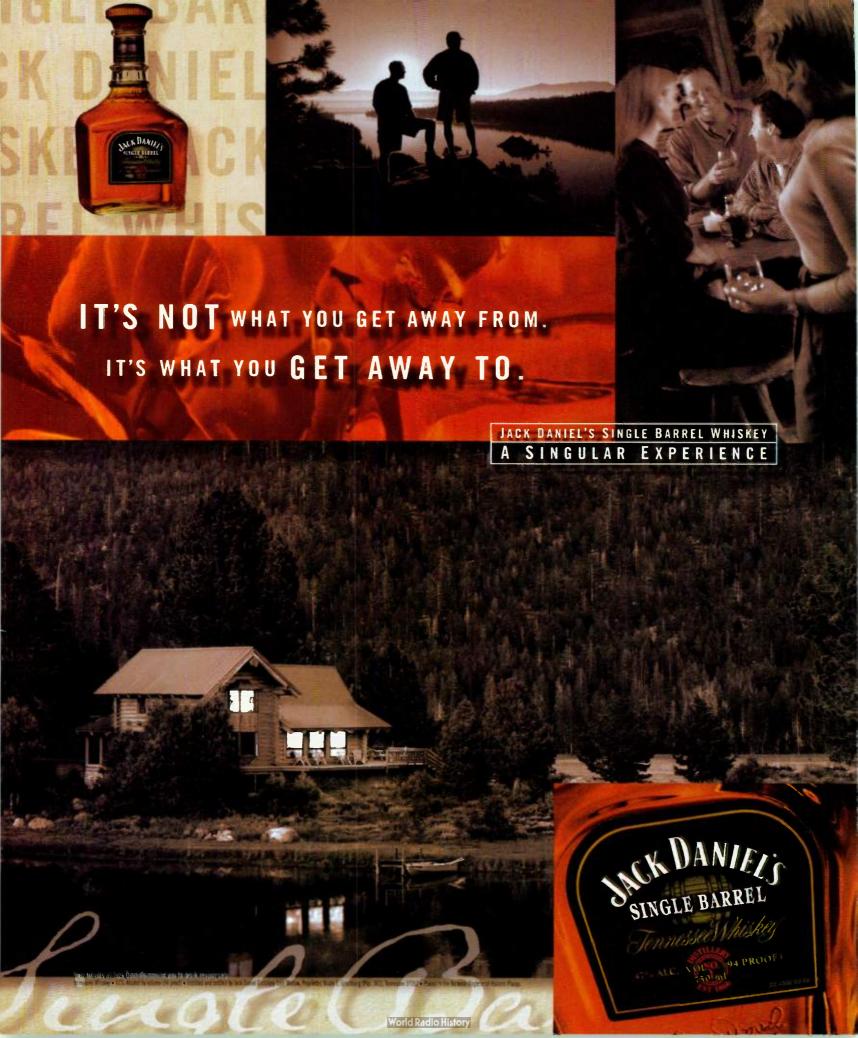
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THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE

OCTOBER 1999 • VOLUME 2 • NUMBER EIGHT

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BY STEVEN BRILL

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- 104 We asked a wide selection of journalists and news executives, from ABC's Cokie Roberts to CBS's Mel Karmazin, for their views on our proposals.

66 The Car Talk Guys Just Want To Have Fun

BY JENNIFER GREENSTEIN

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72 May It Please The Court

BY ROBERT SCHMIDT

Think reporters are pushy, enterprising, or scandal driven? Not at the U.S. Supreme Court, home to Washington, D.C.'s most deferential press corps.

76 The News That Dare Not Speak Its Name

BY RIFKA ROSENWEIN

Fox News Channel is conservative, though Fox would never admit such a thing. The real surprise, though, is that Fox's irreverent brand of news is winning a sizable audience.

(continued on page 15)

ON OUR COVER:

Photograph by James Worrell; Microphone courtesy of AST



Photographers train their cameras outside a New York church, site of the memorial service for John F. Kennedy Jr. and Carolyn Bessette Kennedy.

66 The Car Talk jesters, Ray (left) and Torn Magliozzi, have turned down many a lucrative commercial deal to stay with NPR.





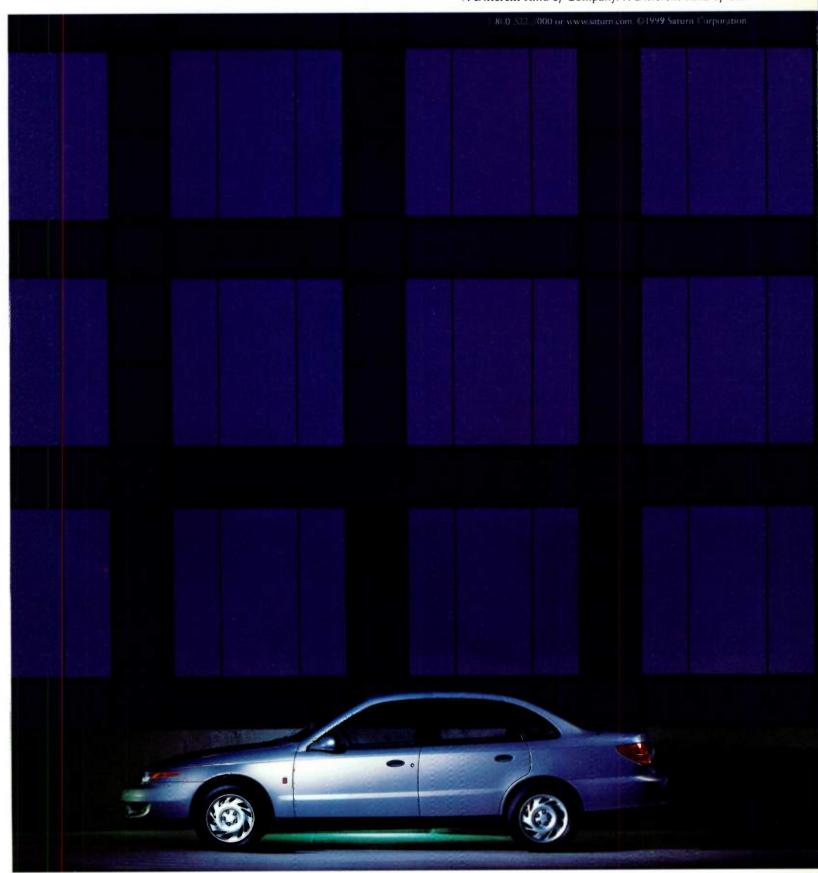
The docile U.S. Supreme Court press corps rarely ventures from the expected case stories.

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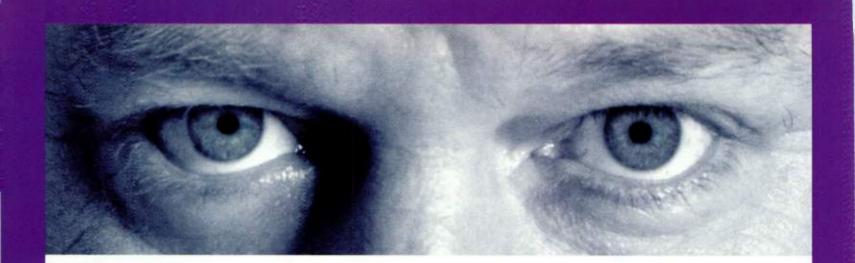


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(ILLUSTRATION) DE MICHIELL ROBERT (DURHAM); WARNER BROS. (EYES WIDE SHUT); VISAR KRYEZIU

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—BY MIKE PRIDE......

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-BY JARRET LIOTTA.....



There's no escaping the news anymore for our holiday-taking columnist.

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HOW THEY GOT THAT SHOT

Ensign John Gay, one of the U.S. Navy's 52 commissioned photographers, used his technical expertise to capture the awe-inspiring moment when a jet breaks the sound barrier.

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THE MONEY PRESS

When it comes to picking stocks and mutual funds, Money, SmartMoney, and Kiplinger's haven't been so smart.

-BY MATTHEW REED BAKER			П	C
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HONOR ROLL

Veteran ABC newsman Ted Koppel eliminates the hype, and tells us what we really need to know. Also: *The Boston Globe*'s Patricia Wen hits the jackpot with junk mail.

-BY MARVIN KITMAN A		CLIANIALIANI	1.1	1
—BY MARVIN KITMAN A	ND ED	SHANAHAN		-

UNHYPED BOOKS

The Celebration Chronicles shows how even Disney couldn't create a suburban utopia. Also: Teen girls speak for themselves; an esteemed Irish playwright recalls his childhood; and the golden age of African safaris is remembered.



The breaking of the sound barrier, captured on film by a Navy photographer.

SOURCES

Despite the confusing jumble of equipment and techniques out there, getting going in the art of photography is no longer intimidating, thanks to this guide for the aspiring Avedon.

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The Monkees deconstructed on one of our favorites, The E! True Hollywood Story.

NEXT

ASK THE EXPERTS

THINKING ON THE EDGE

The lesson of open systems should make us rethink the notions of property and authorship on the Internet.

BY DAVID JOHNSON.......

TOOLS

Wireless e-mail is a snap with the BlackBerry, though it can be costly.



CORRECTIONS POLICY

- I. We always publish corrections at least as prominently as the original mistake was published.
- 2. We are eager to make corrections quickly and candidly.
- 3. Although we welcome letters to the editor that are critical of our work, an aggrieved party need not have a letter to the editor published for us to correct a mistake. We will publish corrections on our own and in our own voice as soon as we are told about a mistake by anyone—our staff, an uninvolved reader, or an aggrieved reader—and can confirm the correct information.
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- 6. Separately or in addition, readers are invited to contact our outside ombudsman, Bill Kovach, who will investigate and report on specific complaints about the work of the magazine. He may be reached by voice mail at 212-824-1981; by fax at 212-824-1940; by e-mail at bkovach@brillscontent.com; or by mail at 1 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA, 02138.

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

how they got that SHOT

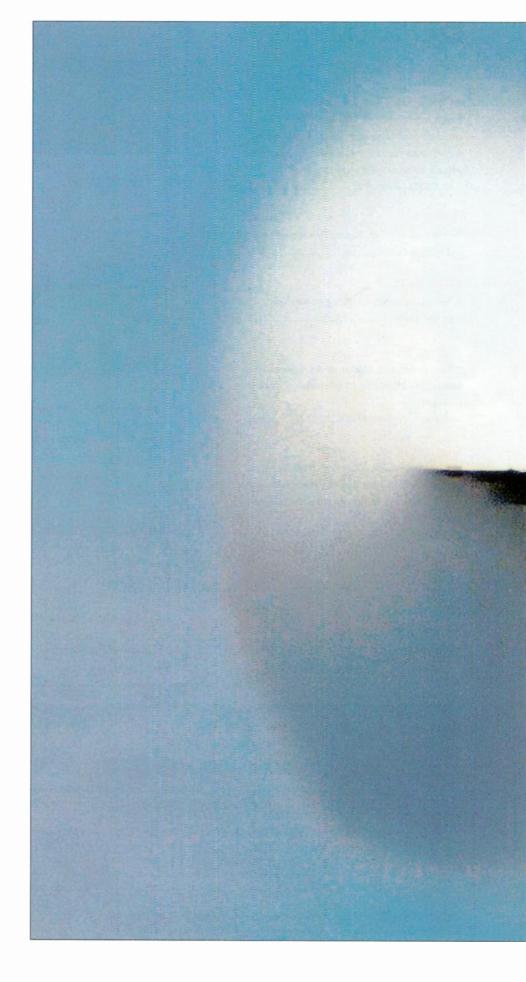
IT'S RARE TO HEAR THE SONIC BOOM MADE BY A JET as it breaks the sound barrier, but it's even less common to see the phenomenon occur. On July 7, Ensign John Gay, 37, caught this rarity on film. Gay, one of the U.S. Navy's 52 commissioned photographers, was on board the USS Constellation when a Navy F/A-18 Hornet, traveling at 650 knots, flew over the aircraft carrier's port side. The carrier was deployed in the Pacific Ocean near the coast of Hawaii, and the Hornet pilot was practicing for an air-power demonstration for foreign dignitaries. Gay, standing about 100 feet above sea level on an observation tower, first noticed the jet when it was about ten miles away. "When the plane nears the sound barrier, air travels over the curved surfaces of the aircraft and the air actually vaporizes," explains Gay. "[The air] starts to flicker and vaporize, so you see it coming." The vapor shown here only lasts about half a second, says Gay, who notes that the cloud disappeared as soon as he took the picture.

A Navy photographer since the age of 26, Gay began his career in the enlisted ranks and is now the photographic-systems manager for the service's Tactical Aircraft Reconnaissance Pod System, which is responsible for damage assessment and target identification. Gay says he can sense when a plane is about to break the sound barrier. "I don't want to say it was luck. It's more of a technical exercise," he explains, noting that his knowledge of the aircraft's features, speed, and altitude helped him figure out when to snap the shot. This vapor egg appeared a second or two before the more familiar sonic boom was heard, because sound travels more slowly than light.

This shot was captured using a zoom lens on a Nikon N90s; Gay took only this one picture of the Hornet as it flew by the observation tower.

After this photograph was released by the Navy on July 8, The Associated Press and Reuters picked it up. It also appeared on MSNBC.com and in Sports Illustrated.

-Bridget Samburg





PHOTOGRAPH BY REUTERS/US NAVY PHOTO BY ENS. JOHN GAY/ARCHIVE PHOTOS
World Radio History



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ON SCREAMERS, CONSUMERS, AND A PULITZER PRIZE

HRIS MATTHEWS AND HIS BRAND OF SCREAM TV, AS COVERED IN OUR September issue, attracted plenty of mail this month. Much of that mail arrived in the form of, uh, hardballs aimed squarely at the CNBC talker's mouth. Our look at the nation's number-one consumer magazine, *Consumer Reports*, also drew attention, including (not unexpectedly) a letter from the head of the organization that puts out the publication. Also checking in: the editor of the New York *Daily News*'s editorial page, whose Pulitzer Prize–winning series on New York's legendary Apollo Theatre got a close review in September. Letters published with an asterisk have been edited for space. The full text appears at our website (www.brillscontent.com).



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

*The September 1999 cover showed a remarkable likeness of Chris Matthews ["Chris Matthews Won't Shut Up"]. His mouth was a trifle undersized, so perhaps someone imagined him in one of his quieter moments.

Matthews is the sort of noise that those of us outside the media cannot recognize as worthy of employment. If a viewer looks upon Matthews as a form of entertainment, and chooses to pay for it, that's his privilege. As an instrument of education or information, he falls far short.

JACK EATON Amherst, NY

BLOND RAGE

Any idea why photos of Chris Matthews taken 20 years ago show him with dark hair? Does he bleach his hair and eyebrows or did he simply grow quite blond with rage?

RICHARD C. SPALDING Washington, DC

CORRECTION

The Notebook, September], we miscalculated the average number of corrections to run in each of the 12 *Brill's Content* issues published since the magazine's debut. That number is 3.42, not 3.45.

We regret the error.



Hardball's Chris Matthews, left, with his wife, Kathleen, and his onetime boss former House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill in 1992

THE LOUDMOUTH

*If Mr. Matthews is going to base the premise of his television show on the exchange of opinions between his guests and himself, he should be prepared to allow the opinions of others to be heard. Rudely and loudly interrupting guests who are trying in vain to explain their views, and even dismissing a guest from the show halfway through the program for daring to utter an opinion contrary to his, leaves Mr. Matthews looking more like Morton Downey Jr. than a serious journalist.

JOHN W. MILLER Washington, DC

NOT WATCHING

As a newspaper reporter for 35-plus years who knows what being pushy is about, I thought your September cover captured the braying Chris Matthews perfectly. His high-volume incivility is the reason I don't watch either his pro-

gram or CNBC, which he has tainted for me. As for his pious bromide about not allowing the debunking of anyone's race or religion in the September 1997 [Dick] Morris to-do, *puh-lease*.

> JOHN PAINTER JR. Portland, OR

INEXCUSABLE

*On page 120 of your article on Chris Matthews, he is quoted as making the following bizarre pronouncement:

"I'd like to suggest that in every household...there's been somebody who's spoken up for the president and said, 'I believe he didn't have this relationship.' All of those people are part of the recruited commission and put-in-the-field army of Clinton liars. He has made them all into liars...."

While this sort of "Nyaa, nyaa, told you so" bluster could simply be shrugged off as childish, when presented in a forum that purports to represent an intelligent discussion, it's somewhat less excusable.

JONATHAN RAYMOND
Arlington, MA

UNMOVED

Mr. Germond ["Confessions Of A McLaughlin Group Escapee," September]: Don't flatter yourself; no one has missed you. John McLaughlin is great!

> CHET MCLAUGHLIN Yakima, WA

Editor's Note: The letter writer says that he is not related to John McLaughlin.



Letters to the

editor should be addressed to: Letters to the Editor, Brill's Content, 521 Fifth Avenue. New York. NY, 10175 Fax: (212) 824-1950 E-mail: letters@ brillscontent .com. Only signed letters and messages that include a daytime telephone number will be considered for publication. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

WELCOME BACK

*A lot of years ago, Jack Germond, Jules Witcover, and I used to pal around while reporting on political campaigns. This was long before Germond became fatly famous with The McLaughlin Group.

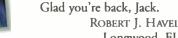
Years before Germond finally quit the group, I remember Witcover's rightly telling him he ought to quit the show, because he gave the program undeserved credibility.

It's good that Germond at last saw the light and renewed his membership in an old-time body that he aptly tagged SLIMSIN. This was back in

the media's more humble times, back when tiny tape recorders were barely in their infancy, back when there were few women on the campaign trail, with the exception of, as I recall, Mary McGrory, Marianne Means, and a very young Connie Chung.

SLIMSIN? "Shabby Little Inconsequential Men Scribbling In Notebooks."

> ROBERT I. HAVEL Longwood, FL





While some manufacturers may be unhappy with our test results of their products, most consumers trust us ["Testing Consumer Reports," September]. They're right to do so. The expert testing your writer witnessed, our concern for consumer safety, and our comparative ratings all make us the consumer's friend.

The four companies and three trade groups noted in the article, who have "fought back" against Consumers Union, are a tiny fraction of the thousands of companies whose tens of thousands of products CU has evaluated over the years. Typically, when we criticize product performance or report a problem with a product, the manufacturer contacts us so we can provide greater detail about our results. Many times, these companies find ways to improve their products. In the long run, the consumer benefits.

Your article notes that CU has not always agreed with government agencies about consumer-safety issues. That's true-but that fact does not diminish the value of our independent testing. And often, government agencies have come around to CU's viewpoints. The National

Highway Traffic Safety Administration-[partly] in response to our petition—is now doing rollover testing of [sport utility vehicles] in its own attempt to develop a safety standard.

We don't agree that accepting foundation grants affects our independence. Such grants amounted to [about] 1.5 percent of our annual revenues in fiscal year 1998. Our foundation grants for pesticide policy help support an effort to ensure that the EPA effectively implements the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act—an area in which the agency has unfortunately lagged. The report we published on pesticides highlighted the risk posed by methyl parathion on fruits and vegetables. On August 2, the EPA banned that pesticide [from most uses].

> RHODA H. KARPATKIN President Consumers Union Yonkers, NY

BUCKS PASSED

[Staff writer] Jennifer Greenstein was so intent on uncovering some sort of environmentalist cabal she played a little fast and loose with the facts ["Testing Consumer Reports"]. Let's get it straight: [the Natural Resourses Defense Council] did not, and does not, give money to Consumers Union. The money to which Greenstein referred was pass-through money, from The Pew Charitable Trusts, that was earmarked for CU. The money was part of a generous grant from Pew that helps us with our work on behalf of children's health. It wasn't our money. If she'd asked, we would have been happy to show her the relevant documents.

ALAN METRICK **Director of Communications** Natural Resources Defense Council New York, NY

Jennifer Greenstein responds: Consumers Union reported to us that the grant



came from the Natural Resources Defense Council and, in fact, NRDC did write the check. As Mr. Metrick notes, the funds for the grant were awarded to NRDC by Pew to be passed along to Consumers Union. But that doesn't refute our point: Consumers Union, which touts its impartiality, opens itself up to perceptions of conflict of interest when it has connections to groups with agendas on subjects about which its magazine writes.

DON'T LOSE SIGHT

*Congratulations on your article on Consumer Reports. While CR's intentions may be good, it's losing sight of its primary mission (to tell us what products are worth our money) in favor of political propagandizing and relentless marketing of CR's overpriced and/or overvalued services. It's also curious that it spends so much effort on silly, subjective appraisal (e.g., what kinds of ice cream taste best) while ignoring more worthwhile subjects (such as consumer fraud in the home security industry).

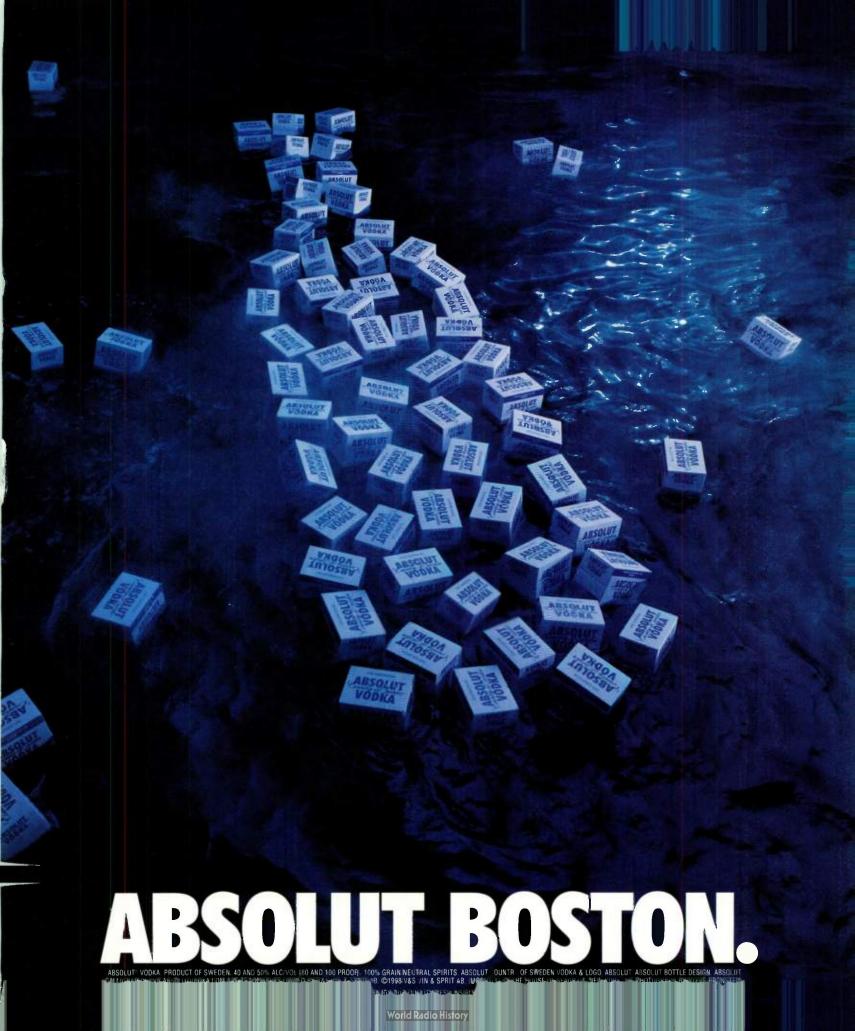
> **ERIC LANG** Manvel, TX

ON THE CONTRARY

*From a happy subscriber: Happy birthday, Brill's Content. The articles and commentary from your first year should now be found as reference standards in all U.S. schools of journalism. [They are] icons of quality that continue to be delivered with appropriate showcasing.

You've noticed the notion that our information on current events is selected, organized, and presented by a single ax grinder. Permit me to feel manipulated. With the arrival of Brill's Content, permit me to add: Au contraire. Diversity, balance, and context still live.

> WILLIAM A. PARKS Deltona, FL (continued on page 124)



24

REPORTEROM THE

HOW TO REACH HIM

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BY BILL KOVACH

OT SO SWEET. For those of you who do not follow the web version of Brill's Content, there are a couple of aspects of a complaint made in an extended correspondence about criticism of Time magazine that have not yet made it to the print version that I'd like to address.

The letter of complaint in question, accompanied by a 22-page bill of particulars, was sent by Norman Pearlstine, editor in chief of Time Inc. In his letter Pearlstine responded to what he called this magazine's "attack on Time's report on corporate welfare and the sugar industry."

It was, Pearlstine wrote, "at best a sad degree of gullibility and a lack of editorial research. At worst, it represents a cynical

attempt to gain attention by impugning the work of two respected journalists. In any case your article has no place in a publication founded expressly to track the facts." That is pretty explosive language and I don't believe it is justified by the reporting in the article that appeared in Brill's Content. Let me explain why.

Mr. Pearlstine was referring to the article "Time On

Big Sugar: A Not-So-Sweet Deal," by Abigail Pogrebin [The Notebook, July/August 1999], which raised questions about four specific points made in one two-page article that was part of a 42-page, four-part, award-winning series on corporate welfare. Time's article profiled one of the country's largest sugar producers, the Fanjul family of Florida, whom the article said, "might be considered the First Family of Corporate Welfare." While the bulk of the Time article (25 paragraphs) dealt with the generous federal subsidies for sugar production and the Fanjul family's political clout, the article in Brill's Content focused on four specific assertions.

Three of those dealt with the sugar industry's role in polluting the Everglades and Florida Bay and with the share of the clean-up costs the industry has agreed to pay. The fourth dealt with taxes on sugar.

Here are some excerpts from one exchange that will give you a sense of the nature of Mr. Pearlstine's complaint:

TIME wrote: "Chemical runoff from the corporate cultivation of sugar cane imperils vegetation and wildlife.

Bill Kovach, curator of Harvard's Nieman Foundation for Journalism, was formerly editor of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution and a New York Times editor.

Polluted water spills out of the glades into Florida Bay, forming a slimy, greenish brown stain where fishing once thrived....'

BRILL'S CONTENT wrote: "'This is factually so incorrect that anybody who deals with it is just amazed,' says Dexter Lehtinen, the former U.S. attorney who was actually considered Big Sugar's biggest enemy back in 1988....But, 'this idea that they are the entire problem is just wrong,' says Lehtinen of the sugar growers...."

TIME'S response: Time never said sugar growers were the "entire problem" in the degradation of the Everglades and Florida Bay. That is a misstatement by Lehtinen that Brill's Content let go unchallenged.

> Mr. Pearlstine's right that sugar was the "entire"

> > Here's how Time

about the word-Time did not use the word entire. Brill's Content should have let Time speak for itself; it would have made the same point. Time never said problem. What Time reported was more dramatic if not so forthright.

made the point. After writing of a self-described "hedonist's and sportsman's dream" in the Dominican Republic owned by the Fanjul family, Time then reported: "A thousand miles to the northwest, in the Florida Everglades, the vista is much different. Chemical runoff from the corporate cultivation of sugar cane imperils vegetation and wildlife. Polluted water spills out of the glades into Florida Bay, forming a slimy, greenish brown stain where fishing once thrived."

Because the only source cited for the pollution is "corporate cultivation of sugar cane" it's not hard to see how Mr. Lehtinen came away with the impression Time was blaming sugar for the "entire" problem.

This gets us to a basic point of conflict between Mr. Pearlstine and the critique published by Brill's Content: the question of the degree to which the sugar industry's needs for water and its introduction of pollutants into the Everglades are responsible for the degradation of Florida Bay. It is on those questions that Time based its case that sugar growers in general and the Fanjul family in particular have been assessed less than their fair share of the cost of cleaning up the pollution.

In the original article, Time cited no sources for its assertions about sugar's pollution or the cleanup costs. In his complaint about the assessment in Brill's Content of the Time story, Mr. Pearlstine cites many news reports relating to the sugar industry's pollution. *Brill's Content* relied on individual lawyers and individual scientists for much of its article.

Because reliance on a single source or a group of sources who support your position to the exclusion of sources who disagree is the most common error in reporting on matters of science—and one that the recipient of the information has no way of sorting out for themselves—it seems a review of the current scientific literature might be the best way to judge this issue. As it happens, my son Charles Kovach is a biologist for the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the agency most closely concerned with water pollution. When I asked him what the current literature says about this issue, here's what he wrote:

"Five recent popular-science (not peer-reviewed literature) articles confirm [an] ongoing 'disagreement,' placing at least partial blame for Florida Bay's woes on the sugar industry....Peer-reviewed scientific literature reflects the same 'disagreements', with the majority reflecting the opinion that sugar is not the culprit in Florida Bay...."

So, while there seems to be little doubt expressed in the popular press or in some scientific research that the sugar industry is a major source of pollutants in Florida, on the narrower question on which the *Time* complaint is based (the role of sugar makers in the degradation of Florida Bay), the case is not as clear-cut as pictured in either magazine.

My final point is that it is unfortunate that once *Time* felt justified in concluding the Fanjuls "might be considered" the "First Family of Corporate Welfare" it did not devote the space needed to document the assertion. Reams of news copy have been written, dozens of state and federal studies have been conducted, and lawsuits have been filed concerning the sugar industry in general and the Fanjul family in particular.

To try to distill that record in 2 pages of a 42-page report was an invitation to misunderstanding and doubt on any reader's part, as the example of the question about the sugar tax illustrates. Again, here are excerpts from Mr. Pearlstine's complaint:

TIME wrote: "Careful readers of Kenneth Starr's impeachment report to Congress will note that on Feb. 19, 1996, Alfie (Fanjul) called President Clinton while the President was closeted with Monica Lewinsky....The topic: a proposed tax on sugar farmers to pay for the Everglades cleanup. Fanjul reportedly told the President he and other growers opposed such a step....Such a tax has never been passed. That's access."

BRILL'S CONTENT wrote: "The only wrinkle: President Clinton continued campaigning for that proposed tax in Florida, despite Fanjul's 'access' and entreaties..."

TIME'S response: Brill's Content does not understand the difference between two very different tax systems—state and federal. The tax that Time wrote about was one proposed the very day of the Fanjul telephone conversa-

tion by Vice-President Al Gore. The vice-president unveiled the plan to impose a one-penny-a-pound federal tax on Florida sugar..."

In a rebuttal to Pearlstine's letter, Abigail Pogrebin, the author of the *Brill's Content* article, tried to agree: "Mr. Pearlstine is correct that there were two taxes proposed at roughly the same time for the same purpose—a penny-apound tax on sugar..."

But Mr. Pearlstine objected. "I never said anything of the sort," he stated in reference to Ms. Pogrebin's use of the phrase roughly the same time.

To confuse matters more, Ms. Pogrebin responded, "When I asked [Jim] Steele about this particular paragraph in his story, his answer was not to correct me as to which tax it was, but to say generally that the point of the anecdote was to dramatize the 'access' Fanjul had to the president. 'The whole point of that exchange...is that the average person can't call up [President] Clinton and get into the Oval office. That's what it's about.'"

On the deeper matter of the Fanjuls' political influence Mr. Steele was right about the importance of the account. If the anecdote was worth anything—other than to somehow get Monica into the story—it was that it reflected a level of access most people don't have to the Oval Office. How that access was used in this case would have been very useful information to have. But unfortunately neither *Time* nor *Brill's Content* dealt substantially with this important unanswered question.

What *Time* originally wrote about a sugar tax was: "Fanjul reportedly told the President he and other growers opposed such a step..." Reportedly? Reported by whom? *Time*? Ken Starr? Readers shouldn't have to take such allegations on blind faith. They deserve to have some way to weigh the implication on their own scales.

As you can see, the dispute between *Time* and *Brill's Content* had the effect of introducing a lot of new information into the record, making it clear to me that the story *Time* wanted to tell was too complex for the space allotted it. While the extent of the research by Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele became much clearer during the back and forth between Mr. Pearlstine and Ms. Pogrebin, I believe *Brill's Content* was justified in the questions it raised about the material as it was presented in *Time*.

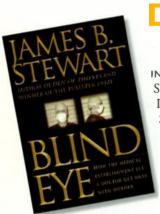
All of which I find unfortunate. The 42-page special report on corporate welfare that *Time* magazine published in November 1998 was an extraordinary investment of time and resources in a subject that few news organizations examine. And in the process *Time* did something almost never done by news organizations—it reported on cases in which *Time* itself benefited from favorable tax decisions. Barlett and Steele are justifiably celebrated for the depth and breadth of their reporting and documentation, which is the reason the series received so many awards. But the full extent of their reporting behind the sugar story was not on display in the article as originally published in *Time*.

Just So You Know...

those people who claim to know everything but have no explanation for anything. Found on the last page each month, the installments are written by contributing specialists who provide their expertise on everyday things. Often coupled with colorful diagrams or photos, the succinct explanations spell out in simple language the way things work.

Why, for example, doesn't Krazy Glue stick to its own tube? (The answer has to do with polar and nonpolar surfaces.) One recent column described the difference between aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs, like ibuprofen, in treating pain. (Aspirin chemically alters the walls of our enzyme channels, blocking the production of pain-inducing molecules; other drugs physically plug those channels.) There's been no scientific explanation yet for those self-styled know-it-alls. Maybe next month.

—Chipp Winston



Dia nosis Murder

Schuster, September 1999), Pulitzer Prize-winning writer James B. Stewart dissects the disturbing tale of Michael Swango, a doctor who the FBI has linked to the deaths of 60 people. The book, which grew out of an article Stewart wrote for *The New Yorker*, details Swango's rise in the

medical profession. Incredibly, Swango gained entrée into a number of prestigious medical residency programs even after patients died in his care, and after he was convicted of poisoning four coworkers.

Stewart—a former teacher of this writer's—relent-lessly pursues his subject. Piecing together more than 200 interviews, he reveals Swango's obsession with death and his powers in persuading others of his innocence. "Nearly all those who came into contact with Swango...defended themselves by pointing out that he was such a skilled psychopathic liar," writes Stewart. Blind Eye is a convincing assault on the medical establishment, whose stunted investigations allowed Swango to continue his silent rampage. —Kimberly Conniff

The Kaus That Roared

AT LAST! A DRUDGIAN WEBSITE WITHOUT THE GUILT-INDUCING aspects of the Drudge Report (sure, it might all be lies, but we can't help ourselves). The latest effort from veteran magazine writer Mickey Kaus—who's worked for *The New Republic, Slate*, and *Newsweek*—is the somewhat gossipy, frequently analytical, and always interesting political/media website **kausfiles.com** (www.kausfiles.com). Unlike Drudge, Kaus maintains a certain level of gravitas and responsibility. As he puts it, "I pretend to

uphold *some* journalistic standards. It's a much more conventional journalistic venture in that sense."

WORKING KNOWLEDGE

Kaus is at his best when he comments on other publications' articles and writers, as with an August dispatch that questioned whether *Talk* writer Lucinda Franks became simply a White House shill in the aftermath of her controversial article on Hillary Clinton. Kaus critiques the media with an insider's understanding and without pulling his punches.

—Jesse Oxfeld

Interesting the purpose of the purpo

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Little Ms.

IN THE WORLD OF TEEN MAGAZINES, where headlines are made of perfectly applied lip liner and expertly teased hair, true girl power is found in the form of New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their

Dreams. Without a makeup tip in sight, this ad-free bimonthly fills its pages with the opinions, ideas, and dreams of its adolescent readers. Each issue, written and edited largely by girls, covers a specific theme, such as "humor and happiness," "politics and feminism," or "fantasies and fairy tales." New Moon (available



online at www.newmoon.org) profiles such accomplished girls and women as Margaret Fishback, a poet and the highest-paid woman working in advertising in the 1920s. Other features include essays by girls from around the world, discussions of sexism, and the "Ask A Girl"

advice column. As is evident in their debates about vegetarianism and Title IX, New Moon girls are hip to the real world—or at least to the one outside the shopping mall.

—Stephanie Bleyer

Commercial Free

STAY FREE! IS THE COOL NONPROFIT 'ZINE THAT READS LIKE A TOUR OF America's consumer-driven culture. In its pages, editor and publisher Carrie McLaren and contributors examine the excesses of commercialism in American society. "Rationality wasn't behind the kick in the head I felt," she wrote in a feature about music in advertising, "when, upon entering a local bagel place, I heard [Sly & the Family Stone's] 'Everyday People,' on a radio and...[I] thought of a car commercial. Not Sly Stone. Or discovering those records in college."

McLaren's unbridled sense of humor is apparent throughout the 'zine. Stay Free! regularly features back-cover spoofs that mock ads for



everything from khakis to sports utility vehicles. In issue #16 (McLaren publishes "about every ten months"; ordering information is available online at metalab.unc.edu/stayfree) the media critic cum sociologist presents a jocular yet scholarly article on the social psychology of mindlessness, "the human tendency to operate on autopilot." Stay Free! is a true alternative to all things profit-driven. —Julie Scelfo

of s Maf ingr Sici 199 Hali tory aroi tion cian

TO MANY, THE NAME SICILY CONJURES IMAGES of savory cuisine, ancient cultures, and, yes, the Mafia. Writer Peter Robb throws all these

ingredients into Midnight in Sicily (Vintage Books, March 1999), creating a rich stew. Half travelogue, half crime history, the book is structured around the purported connections between Italian politicians and La Cosa Nostra, and how, since World War II, organized crime has created a multinational shadow state.



Robb weaves disparate elements and characters: A poignant chapter about Sicilian women includes vignettes of a prize-winning photographer turned politician, widows, and transgender prostitutes who testify in the defense of an alleged hit man.

Robb also details brutal killings, mountain towns, and Arab-influenced Sicilian feasts. In so doing, he dispels much of the *Godfather* romanticism that surrounds the Mafia, and enriches the island's stark, mysterious beauty.

---Matthew Reed Baker

The Dark Side Of Fame

WITH THEIR DARK, FORBIDDING THEMES, E! ENTERTAINMENT Television's Mysteries & Scandals and The E! True Hollywood Story strip the glamour from the world of celebrity to expose the ghosts in Hollywood's closets. From

the behind-the-scenes cast conflicts of the hit seventies sitcom *Three's Company* to the late Frank Sinatra's connections to reputed Mafia figures, *True Hollywood Story* (hour-long episodes premiere

weekly) uncovers the dirty little secrets that today's star publicists guard with their lives. An even seedier view of Hollywood emerges in *Mysteries & Scandals*, hosted by former New York *Daily News* gossip columnist A.J. Benza. The

half-hour show, which airs throughout the week, focuses on the lives of Tinseltown's most notorious leading men and women, including the hard-drinking, womanizing Spencer Tracy and the enraged, wire hanger-wielding Joan Crawford.



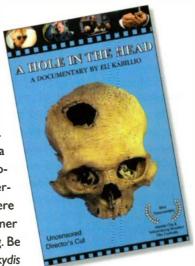




The Monkees on The E! True Hollywood Story

Stranger Than Fiction

MOVIE DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER ELI KABILLIO SERVES UP A FASCINATING—ALBEIT unsettling—documentary with **A Hole In The Head** (Mad Dog Films, Inc., on home video). The movie examines the controversial practice of trepanation, the cutting of a small hole in a person's skull to, some believe, increase his or her level of consciousness. In addition to providing a history of the procedure (including stomach-turning footage of trepanation being performed), Kabillio interviews modern-day advocates and practitioners. We also learn that there are some fairly erudite folk among the ranks of those willing to feel the pain (including a former professor of President Bill Clinton's). A Hole In The Head is at once horrifying and compelling. Be forewarned: If you cringe at the sight of blood, you need this film like you need...—Ari Voukydis



VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN



NOAM CHOMSKY FANS who can't get their fill of the political dissident's speeches and critiques from more mainstream media can check out **The Noam Chomsky Archive**, courtesy of *Z Magazine*'s website (www.zmag.org/chomsky). Chomsky's

radicalism makes him an unlikely regular on the Sunday morning talk show circuit. But the archive is full of Chomsky fare, like a transcript of a March 1998 debate on American foreign policy between Chomsky (a professor at MIT) and former CIA director James Woolsey. It's the perfect home for Chomsky's unfettered, revolutionary thought.

—Andrew Goldstein

Grill & Bear It



Here is New York

World Radio History

IF YOU YEARN FOR STIMULATING TALK with your mid-morning cup of coffee, tune in to MSNBC's Watch It! With Laura Ingraham (Mondays-Fridays, 11

A.M.-12 P.M. EST). The show's catchphrase, "Where spin doesn't win," sums up the host's hard-nosed approach to interviewing. Ingraham, a former defense lawyer and clerk to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, grills guests on the day's issues while entertaining audiences with her

scathing wit. "Al Gore is hardly the child of an impoverished background," Ingraham declared sarcastically in a discussion of campaign finance in the 2000 presidential race.

Watch It's main focus is on politics—the 'Know the Candidates' segment subjects guests like presidential contender Pat Buchanan to the host's questioning. And Ingraham includes the occasional pop culture topic, as with the recent discussion of ageism in Hollywood. —Danya Pincavage

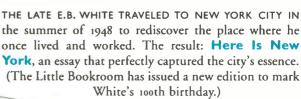




White All Over

WHEN THE MODERN LIBRARY RELEASED its list of the twentieth century's 100 best English-language nonfiction books, some may have been surprised that **The Elements of Style**, by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, showed up at number 21. It ought to be in the top five. The fourth edition—published by Allyn & Bacon in July to mark the 100th anniversary of White's birth—has been updated to reflect the modern world (the term word processor makes an appearance). But much of what makes Elements great for those

who spend time with the written word is timeless. Three of the authors' most useful commands: Use the active voice; omit needless words; write with nouns and verbs. In that spirit, here's another exhortation: Read this book. —Ed Shanahan



"The city is like poetry: it compresses all life, all races and breeds, into a small island and adds music and the accompaniment of internal engines," White wrote. Much has changed since then, but the city still boasts many of the rhythms, characters, vices, and pleasures that White documented with precision and grace.

—Dimitra Kessenides

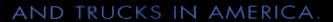














You know them all by name. But in automotive circles, some go by "North American Car of the Year." "Best Buy." "Top Car." "Truck of the Year." And "Best of What's New," to name just a few. In fact, 1998 GM cars and trucks were recognized with more awards than any other automobile company in America.* Recognition that included the 7 out of 10 GM owners who last year returned to buy another GM, creating the highest loyalty in the industry. ** Which is why it shouldn't be hard to recognize the quality cars and trucks of '99. Just check out the names on the left. *Based on an October, 1998 survey by S.H. Brown Automotive

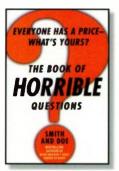


Marketing. **Based on Polk's statistics for household loyalty to a manufacturer for the 1998 model year.





Would You Ever.



FOR \$7.5 MILLION, WOULD YOU allow your mate to be kidnapped and held for one year without physical harm and then fake a rescue? How much would you pay to end world hunger forever? Would you become the movie star of your choice if it meant losing the memory of everything about your present life? Maybe you've never asked yourself these questions, but Smith and Doe have. They're the pseu-

donymous authors of The Book of Horrible Questions (St. Martin's Griffin, June 1999), and they asked 813 people these questions and others (many of them twisted ones about body parts and functions). Not for the easily offended, this book is a hilarious test of peoples' personal ethics. (For the record, 38 percent of respondents would allow their mates to be kidnapped, 14 percent wouldn't spend a dime on world hunger, and 25 percent would become a movie star.) —Michael Colton

FREELANCE PHOTOJOURnalist Fred I. Maroon was one of the few outsiders to get inside the secretive Richard Nixon White



House. Between 1970 and 1974, Maroon wandered through the hallowed halls and snapped more than 1,000 shots. He captured everything from Nixon at work in the Oval Office to the final moments of his presidency and his farewell address. Now, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Nixon's resignation, 121 of the photos are on display in Photographing History: Fred J. Maroon and the Nixon Years, 1970-1974, an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. (A portion of the exhibit can be seen online at www.si.edu/nmah/ve/maroon; Abbeville Press was to publish a book of Maroon's photos, The Nixon Years, 1969-1974: White House to Watergate, in September.) Considered unlikely to produce an unflattering portrait of the administration, Maroon was granted this unusual access. His series of penetrating, often sympathetic images offers no startling revelations, but does present a rare, intimate look at the infamous figures of the Nixon cabal. -lane Manners

Readers share their favorite sources for news and information.



Josef Blumenfeld, a PR executive and selfdescribed "heavy consumer of media" from Brookline, Massachusetts, writes:

GETTING TIMELY AND OBJECTIVE NEWS FROM Israel can be difficult sometimes. Ha'aretz, one of Israel's most-respected independent newspapers, offers its English-language version daily on the Web (www.haaretzdaily.com). Similar to other Israeli news sources, the site includes news of local and global interest, business stories, and arts and leisure coverage.

Distinct features, like the "Anglo File" section, keep readers informed about the activities of

Israel's English-speaking community. A recent installment profiled a Jerusalembased investment banker who specializes in Israel's high-tech industry. Access to Ha'aretz's acclaimed op-ed page, however, really sets this site apart. It is here that power brokers, decision makers, and everyday citizens lend their differing views to the Middle East's age-old dialogue about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thanks to the Internet, readers around the globe can follow the debate.



If so, write in and share your favorite media sources. Send ideas to: Stuff You Like, Brill's Content, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10175. Or e-mail us at: VOU LIKE, Drill's Content, 121 Figur Avenue, 11ew 2018, 1.... 1017, 1.... stuffyoulike@brillscontent.com. Please include your address and contact numbers.

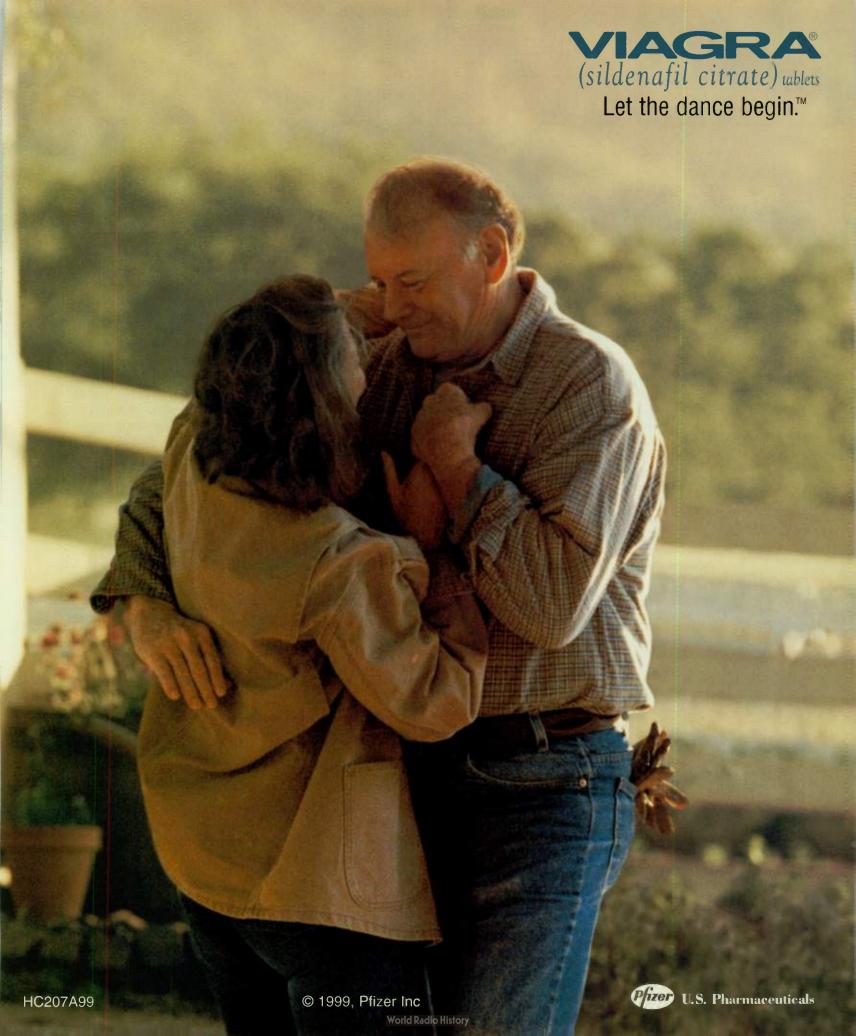
ARobot Wisdom

ROBOT WISDOM (www.robot wisdom.com) presents news the way web pioneers envisioned it-hypertextual, widereaching, and exhaustive. Creator Jorn Barger scours the Web every day for offbeat stories, alternative viewpoints on the mainstream media, and the latest in web innovations (new search engines, for example). Barger's daily listings of headlines and news excerpts span the globe, covering topics that range from

Russia's video-game culture to lifestyle guru Martha Stewart's decision to take her company public.

Robot Wisdom proves that the Internet can still be a source of untethered information. As Barger sees it, the Web has "truly level[ed] the media playing field....[It] instantaneously, irreversibly transfers the seat of power from well-financed publishers to essentially unfinanced editors." -Martin Johnson

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Déja Verdun All Over Again

it self-plagiarization, or, if you take a more charitable view, recycling. During routine fact checking for a quintessential New York Times op-ed treatise—a comparison of the Kosovo conflict to the epic

World War I battle at Verdun—an editor noticed that the writer, historian Alistair Horne (author of a book on Verdun), had penned a 1991 *Times* article that compared the Iran-Iraq War to...Verdun.

Among the many similarities, Horne quoted a Frenchman in both versions: "'War is less costly than servitude,'" he wrote in 1991. "Maybe it remains just as true today." Horne's 1999 version read: "'War is less costly than servitude.'...And so, indeed, it may be today—against a backdrop of Kosovo."



Just like...Verdun, circa 1918

And so, indeed, it was this May, when *Times* op-ed editor Katy Roberts learned that about a third of the new article had been appropriated from the old one. "Because it really was the heart of the piece," Roberts says, "we felt this duplication was excessive, to

put it mildly." She rejected the article.

Though one might have expected the author to retreat red-faced, the reaction was altogether different. Horne's literary representatives at The Wylie Agency faxed the Times demanding full payment, according to someone who saw the letter, on the grounds that only 7 of 21 paragraphs had been lifted. The Times declined to do so. (Horne and his agents would not comment.) The conflict then appeared to descend into a stalemate, just like, uh, Verdun. —Katherine Rosman

THIS CLOWN wasn't much fun

ON ITS JULY 30 "FAMILY FUN" PAGE, The Kansas City Star ran a blurb on National Clown Week. "It's a rule," the text read. "You MUST celebrate Clown Week, starting Sunday at the City Market." Accompanying the words, naturally enough, was a photo of a clown. But the editor selecting the file photo neglected to look at the flip side, which would have revealed that the clown in question was John Wayne Gacy, a Chicago serial killer (and onetime clown) executed five years ago for killing 33 boys and young men. The Star apologized the next day in an editor's note.

Thanks for the input

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE HAD TO STOP its presses mid-run just after midnight on July 11 when Judd Bagley, a spokesman for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, called to sound the alarm about a story that had been posted that night on the paper's website and was now spinning out of its presses. Not only was the story whose main points were attributed to Bagley-wrong, but he had a tape of his interview to prove he'd been misquoted. Conceding the point, the Tribune stopped the press run and corrected the story the next day. The paper's action seemed in keeping with a new commitment, made publicly by Tribune executive editor Gil Thelen, to make prompt corrections. But when Bagley visited the paper a few days later to complain of a pattern of errors, he charges, the paper responded by threatening to sue him for surreptitiously taping their reporter (which is illegal in Florida). Tribune senior editor Larry Fletcher denies threatening Bagley but doesn't sound like he's quite ready to bury the hatchet and thank Bagley for his constructive criticism. Says Fletcher: "We might have our lawyers look into the matter."—Chipp Winston

AMC AM

Oh, Cut It Out

QUICK—If you work for an industry publication being distributed at a trade show, and the owner of the convention center hosting the show objects to one of your articles, what do you do? Rip out the offending pages, of course.

That's what happened this summer when the powers that be at AMC, Inc., which controls the AmericasMart*Atlanta trade-show complex, didn't like what they saw in a home-furnishings monthly called Home Accents Today. The magazine, put out by the giant business-to-business publisher Cahners, ran a short article in its July issue that discussed AMC's multimillion-dollar debt restructuring.

AMC voiced its objections to magazine representatives, according to three industry sources who attended a trade show at the AmericasMart in early July. *Home Accents Today* staffers responded by ripping the article out of all the remaining copies of the magazine—over 3,000 issues, according to one source—at the show.

The people who control AMC, which advertises in *Home Accents Today*, "have a lot of power and they throw that power down quite a bit," says the editor of a competing trade publication. But it's rare, editors say, for magazines to be bullied into such blatant compliance.

Reached by phone, Home Accents Today publisher Marion Kelly insisted there was "no story" and hung up. The magazine's editor, Cindy Sheaffer, and seven other staff members also refused to comment, as did AMC. "There are quite a few levels of connection there," says Tony DeMasi, editor in chief of Giftware News. "They're afraid of the wrath of Thor."

—Kimberly Conniff

Frank Sutherland-Editor. In frances can

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANNY HELLMAN (BULL); KATHRYN ADAMS (GEORGE)

AS VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE SEEKS THE PRESIDENCY,

he's sure to call attention to the seven years he spent as a reporter for Nashville's **Tennessean**. After all, outside of his 23 years as a politician, newspapering is the only career Gore has ever known.

So it made sense for the reporting stint to be highlighted when Team Gore created his campaign video biography. What perhaps didn't make sense, at least journalistically, was for his former *Tennessean* colleague Frank Sutherland to give a testi-

monial. As the paper's editor, Sutherland, of course, is supposed to remain politically neutral. But in "The Al Gore Story," Sutherland reflects on how journalism led his friend into public service. Sutherland doesn't offer an explicit endorsement, but his participation lends credence to one of the biography's goals: to make Gore appear as a Washington outsider.

"I was wrong," says Sutherland, who apologized in an August 5 column, shortly after *Nashville In Review* broke the story. Sutherland says he didn't consider that his words would be used in a political promotion; he considered them comparable to the Gore-related press interviews he has done over the years.

Earlier this year Sutherland helped draft an ethics code for the *Tennessean*'s owner, Gannett Co., Inc. Though he gave the interview before that code was adopted, Sutherland agrees that his campaign-video appearance violates the code's provision requiring journalists to maintain independence from those they cover. Worse, he says, it's a violation of his own personal ethical principles. (Phil Currie, Gannett senior vice-president—news, says the editor has taken "the appropriate steps to try to rectify a call he'd like to have back.") In his column addressing the issue, Sutherland wrote that "I have asked the Gore people not to use my interview in fund-raising." That request appears to have come too late. In addition to posting it on their website, says Gore campaign spokesman Roger Salazar, "we've already sent more than 10,000 copies of it out."

—Ed Shanahan

Code Of Silence

John F. Kennedy Jr.'s death, the media incessantly interviewed anyone who could claim some link to the "Prince of Camelot." But despite more than 500 requests, the staff of Kennedy's magazine,

George, remained resolutely silent. "The last thing we were going to do," says one staffer, "was betray him when he died." The magazine dealt harshly with two non-staff writers who did break the silence. Contributing editor Douglas Brinkley, a ubiquitous TV presence, was dropped from the masthead. And longtime writer Lisa DePaulo, who praised Kennedy in a single New York magazine article, says she was ousted. Meanwhile, people like Nick Nyhan blabbed on-in his case on CNN's TalkBack Live. Nyhan's claimed credentials: He helped with research for a month and a half in early 1995, when the magazine had only a business plan. (Nyhan says he wanted "to tell the world I thought [Kennedy] was a really good guy.") As for George, executive editor Richard Blow says it will publish a Kennedy tribute in its October issue: "We felt that to speak about John, we should do it in the pages of his magazine."—Kimberly Conniff

edging Drudge

phrased in the form of a titillating question—that makes the Drudge Report popular with some readers. The headline: "Tripp Team: Did Hillary Get Heads Up On Indictments?" What followed was a series of questions and insinuations to the effect that Maryland

Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend had whispered to fellow Democrat Hillary Clinton—possibly at the memorial service for John F. Kennedy Jr.—the secret information that Linda Tripp would be indicted by Maryland authorities for taping and disclosing her conversations with Monica Lewinsky.

In fact, each of the first five sentences of the July 31 Drudge story contained questions. Which raises another question: Was any of it true?

Spokespeople for Townsend and the White House adamantly deny that the

lieutenant governor and Clinton discussed the issue. And the only two sources quoted in the Drudge article never even claimed that Townsend had said anything to Clinton. Moreover, according to Marna McLendon, a Maryland state prosecutor named by Drudge (but who is not prosecuting Tripp), Townsend—whose job has nothing to do with prosecuting crime—had no knowledge of the Tripp indictment before it was publicly announced.

At least one assertion in Drudge's article is demonstrably false. Drudge cited a "Tripp legal source" as claiming that Clinton and Townsend sat together at the Kennedy service. But a government official who was in contact with the memorial's planners says the Clintons sat near U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, while Townsend sat at least six rows away.

The only verifiably correct point was that Townsend flew to New York with the Clintons on Air Force One. But even that doesn't prove Townsend actually spoke to Hillary Clinton. Townsend was one of many on the plane and the Clintons took a separate limousine from the airport.

Drudge did not return calls seeking comment.

—Justin Zaremby

tnenotebook

PUNDIT SCORECARD: THE SHOWS SQUARE OFF

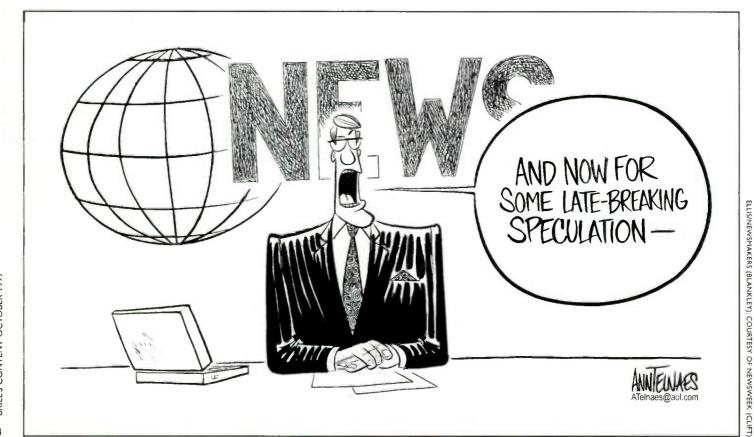
FOR SEVEN ISSUES NOW, we've been tracking and tabulating the predictive accuracy of TV's weekend soothsayers. And with our ratings now covering nearly a year—August 1, 1998, to July 1, 1999—the battle for the coveted first-place position rages on. This month Tony Blankley has taken the lead, displacing stalwarts Margaret Carlson and Eleanor Clift. Like last month, we noted, the two top slots were occupied by members of The McLaughlin Group. That raised a new question: How do the programs rate if their pundits' results are combined? Copital Gang takes the prize with a combined .597 accuracy rate; the McLaughlin Group earns second place at .590. This Week With Sam Donaldson & Cokie Roberts follows at .556, with The Beltway Boys limping into last place at .396. Two of the shows even managed to beat our chimp, Chippy, whose average slumped to .576.

Tony Blankley, MG (47 of 74)	.635
Eleanor Clift, MG (67 of 106)	.632
Margaret Carlson, CG (28 of 45)	.622
Mark Shields, CG (18 of 29)	.621
Al Hunt, CG (43 of 71)	.606
Robert Novak, CG (43 of 72)	.597
Pat Buchanan, MG (37 of 62)	.597
George Stephanopoulos, TW (54 of 91)	.593
Bill Kristol, TW (52 of 90)	.578

Chippy the chimp, unaffiliated (19 for 33) .576 Michael Barone, MG (31 of 54) .574 Sam Donaldson, TW (20 of 35) .571 Cokie Roberts, TW (16 of 29) .552 Kate O'Beirne, CG (19 of 36) .528 John McLaughlin, MG (44 of 87) .506 Morton Kondracke, BB (40 of 92) .435 George Will, TW (16 of 39) .410 Fred Barnes, BB (38 of 105)

"BB": The Beltway Boys; "CG": The Capital Gang; "MG": The McLaughlin Group; "TW": This Week With Sam Donaldson & Cokie Roberts







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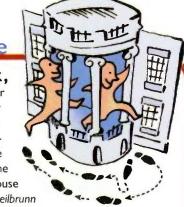
Yahoo! Finance



Quiz: The White House Shuffle

DEPENDING ON WHOM YOU ASK,

those who make the move from White House staffer into the ranks of the popular press have either gained invaluable insight into the government's inner workings or been caught in a web of incestuous relationships. Either way, lots of folks have done it (sometimes more that once). Can you match the media people in the left column* to the White House position they held in the right column? —Leslie Heilbrunn



- Walter Shapiro
 political columnist, USA Today
- Diane Sawyer
 coanchor, ABC News's 20/20
 and Good Morning America
- John Podhoretz
 associate editor, New York Post
- Ben Stein columnist, The American Spectator
- Bill Moyers
 executive producer, Public Affairs
 Television, Inc.
- James Fallows
 columnist, The Industry Standard;
 contributor, The New Yorker and
 The New York Review of Books
- James Pinkerton columnist and member of the editorial board, Newsday
- 8 Christopher Buckley editor, Forbes FYI; contributor, The New Yorker and Talk
- William Safire columnist, The New York Times
- David Gergen
 editor at large, U.S. News
 & World Report; contributor,
 The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer
- David Shipley
 editor, The New York Times Magazine
- Tom Johnson chairman, CEO, and president, CNN News Group
- (B) Hendrik Hertzberg senior editor, The New Yorker

- Speechwriter for Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford
- B Speechwriter for vice-president George Bush
- Speechwriter for Jimmy Carter
- Director of speechwriting and research team and special assistant, Richard Nixon administration; special counsel, Gerald Ford administration; assistant (director of communications), Ronald Reagan administration; counselor to Bill Clinton
- Press aide to Richard Nixon
- Deputy press secretary, and special assistant, Lyndon Johnson administration
- G Special assistant and speechwriter, Bill Clinton administration
- Press secretary, Lyndon Johnson administration
- Domestic policy analyst and director of research in office of political affairs, Ronald Reagan administration; deputy assistant for policy planning, George Bush administration
- Speechwriter for Ronald Reagan
- R Speechwriter for Richard Nixon

Answers: I(C); 2(E); 3(J); 4(A); 5(H); 6(C); 7(I); 8(B); 9(K); 10(D); 11(G); 12(F); 13(C)

In Short

OUR FIRST AWARD for identifying journalistic flip-flopping goes to Mickey Kaus, whose online column [see "Stuff We Like," page 26] punctured claims by Lucinda Franks that the media misinterpreted her interview with first lady Hillary Clinton in the debut issue of *Talk*. Franks complained that neither she nor Clinton had ever, as widely reported, made "a connection between [President Clinton's] chaotic childhood...and his sexual infidelities."

"Gee," Kaus wrote, "where could people have gotten the idea that a connection was there? Could it have been from Franks's article itself, in which the paragraphs on Bill Clinton's 'weakness' are immediately followed by a discussion of his childhood 'abuse,' so as to cleverly give the impression that Hillary was making exactly the link Franks now denies?"

AND FOR GREATEST DEVOTION TO ACCURACY...on behalf of a cosmetics advertiser, credit goes to *Elle*. The magazine's September issue confessed that "[t]wo new blushes from Almay...ended up oddly, wrongly colored on our July 'Beauty File' pages." In case readers missed the point, beauty/fitness director Jean Godfrey-June (who even attached her byline to the correction) concluded by referring to a photo of the blushes, which accompanied the correction: "Here they are in all their actual sheer, warm glory." Talk about laying it on thick....

FINALLY, AN HONORABLE MENTION for

The Boston Globe's Ramblin' Man: In June, the Globe's Steve Morse reviewed a concert by the Allman Brothers Band. Morse praised the "show-climaxing" song "Revival," which, he wrote, ended the performance. That drew a letter from a concert attendee who recalled the set ending differently. Turns out that Morse had skipped out early and the band had diverged from its planned song list. "I just screwed up," Morse later confessed in the pages of the Globe. His explanation: "I'd gone with a friend who did not have press credentials, and we were unable to park in the VIP lot." Morse had slipped out early to beat the traffic.

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^{*} There are more names in the left column than job entries in the right column because several people had a title in common in certain administrations.

Hillary's Phantom Leak

THE PRESS HAD A FIELD DAY in early August after the Forward, a Jewish weekly, broke the news that Hillary Clinton, the likely Democratic candidate for New York's U.S. Senate race, had Jewish kin. But despite heated protestations from Forward reporter Seth Gitell, who insists he worked off an independent tip, an array of reporters and commentators insinuated—seemingly without any evidence—that the Clinton team actually leaked the tidbit in order to curry favor with New York's influential Jewish voters.

Gitell and his managing editor, Ira Stoll, say the tipster is a longtime Forward reader (and no fan of Clinton's) who wrote claiming that Clinton's mother is lewish. Gitell delved into birth, marriage, and death records but didn't find a Jewish mother. He did, however, discover a Jewish half-aunt.

Even though Gitell and Stoll told reporters where the story had come from, some still implied that the Clinton camp was behind it. On CNN's

Crossfire, Robert Novak asked, "You really believe that, that this was an accident?" On Fox News's Hannity & Colmes, cohost Sean Hannity essentially accused Clinton of lying



about her Jewish heritage. And the New York Post wrote that some thought she was pandering,

though it included denials from Clinton's spokesman and the Forward.

The Post's associate metropolitan editor, Steven Marsh, argues that, these days, "everything is spin, everything is leaks, and I think you have to raise those questions." Marsh acknowledges that his reporters found no proof that Clinton's side was involved, but adds that there is also no proof that it wasn't. For his part, Novak says, "I suspect [a leak, but] I have no information. It's not anything I would ever write, but on a show like Crossfire...you can raise speculative possibilities." Adds Hannity, who claims he was joking about Clinton: "I'm not a reporter. I am a partisan commentator."

Even if you believe the leak theories, says Stoll, it's hard to believe the Clinton camp would "use the Forward, which is some small weekly newspa-

> per...that no one's ever heard of." And if they were going to leak a tip, Gitell adds, wouldn't they at least have gotten the information right? -Leslie Heilbrunn

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A War Offscreen

NAME A RECENT CIVIL WAR THAT HAS claimed a million lives.

If you said Kosovo or Bosnia, you're wrong. The answer is Sudan, where an estimated 1.2 to 2 million people have been killed in the civil war that has raged there since 1983. With Muslims in the North battling mainly Christians and animists in the South, the war has devastated the African nation's population.

But if you get your news from the main evening newscasts on ABC, CBS, and NBC, you'd be unlikely to know that the killing continues there unabated. From January 1 to August 1, those programs aired a total of three segments on the Sudan war. (Those same newscasts broadcast a total of more than 750 segments about Kosovo during that period).



The civil war will not be televised: Sudan, 1998.

Each of the three Sudan stories appeared on CBS Evening News. Says Al Ortiz, the newscast's executive producer: "I don't think we've covered it enough, but to go to the Sudan and do this story is expensive and tough in a year when our resources are severely strained by Kosovo and an impeachment trial." He says most people have "a basic understanding" of the long-running conflict.

Among the two networks that didn't air Sudan segments, NBC Nightly News executive producer David Doss did not return calls seeking comment. His ABC counterpart, executive producer Paul Friedman, would say only, "I don't have time to talk about this." —Jessica Gould

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Using

E PUSHES BIG GOVERNment, finds President Clinton too conservative, and sneers at corporate America. Despite Ralph Nader's more than 30 years as a liberal activist, however, it is impossible

to tell from most news stories that his agenda is the least bit political. Instead, the press almost always labels Nader a "consumer advocate." In the first three months of this year, not a single one of the 68 stories in major newspapers that mentioned his "consumer" organization, Public

But during the same period, 9 of 16 stories that mentioned the Washington Legal Foundation, a Nader adversary, called the "public interest" law firm conservative.

Citizen, called the group liberal.

It's hardly an aberration. Many publications that can't label conservatives fast enough rarely use the word liberal to describe organizations that by any conventional standard have earned that tag. The unequal treatment gives readers the impression that only conservatives are ideological; everyone else is just devoted to some greater good.

Consider how the media treat two groups that both claim to represent women: the liberal National Organization for Women, Inc., and the conservative Concerned Women for America. The organizations are polar opposites on just about every issue, but only the "conservative" one gets an ideological tag. In the first three months of 1999, CWA was called conservative in five out of ten stories.

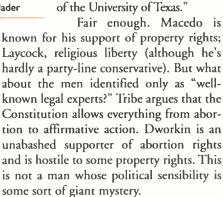
When journalists focused on NOW during the same period, however, their ideological blinders were firmly in place—even though NOW was especially partisan as it defended President Clinton throughout the impeachment saga. Nevertheless, NOW was

Evan Gahr, a contributing writer for The American Enterprise magazine, labels himself a neoreactionary, called liberal in just 3 out of 161 stories.

The disparate treatment isn't limited to women's groups. Last October, The New York Times reported that "hundreds of constitutional scholars and historians" had signed a petition criticizing the impeachment inquiry of President Clinton. The only folks identi-

fied ideologically were the "conserva-

tives." Reporter Eric Schmitt explained in the story that the signatories included "wellknown legal experts like Ronald Dworkin of New York University and Laurence H. Tribe of Harvard University, as well as conservative-leaning academics like Stephen Macedo of Syracuse University and Douglas Laycock



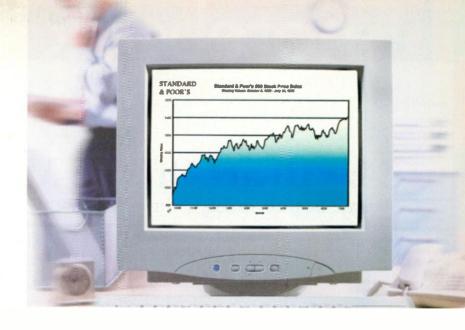
As for Nader, he says his politics can best be called progressive. "But I can't believe you're doing a story on this," he laughs. "I don't care what they call me."

Others may. Nader says that in the late 1960s, lawyer Lloyd Cutler asked The Washington Post to stop calling him a "consumer advocate" because the term constituted "editorial prejudgment." Cutler, who in those days represented Nader's archnemesis, automobile manufacturers, says "If \bar{z} I did, I don't remember."

Still, if there were a plea, it failed. Today, Nader continues to benefit from the Post's "editorial prejudgment." Perhaps it is time for "consumer advocates" to " bring one of their pet causes to the media: -Evan Gahr ₹ truth in labeling.



"Consumer advocate" Ralph Nader



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The Heart Of The Matter

A statistical term leads the media astray.

HE STORY LANDED ON the front pages of The Washington Post and USA Today, and merited brief mentions in The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and dozens of smaller papers. An innovative study that used videotape of actors posing as patients had revealed that blacks and women were 60 percent as likely as whites and men to be referred for a potentially lifesaving test on their hearts-a startling gap. But five months after the February 25 study appeared in The New England Journal of Medicine, the Journal conceded that the study's perplexing jargon had led the media astray. What the study actually found was a lot less eye-catching: Blacks and

women were 93 percent as likely to be referred for the test as whites and men. (In fact, it was only

black women who had a lower rate; they were 87 percent as likely as men of both races and white women to be referred.)

The Journal owned up to the problem in an unusual July 22 editor's note. "We take responsibility for the media's overinterpretation of the article," the editors wrote. "We should not have allowed the use of odds ratios" in the Journal's halfpage summary of the study.

Unless you're a professional statistician, you're not likely to have the slightest clue what an odds ratio means. "The truth is, it's confusing for a lot of people, including physicians," says Jesse Berlin, a professor of biostatistics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and one of the study's authors. An odds ratio expresses the ratio between two sets of odds; it is a complicated, nonintuitive, mathematical comparison. Most important, it is different than a "risk ratio," the technical term that describes a comparison made in the form "X is Y percent as likely to occur as Z." (See explanation at right.)

Most journalists mistakenly assumed

the odds ratio was a risk ratio, which drastically inflated the results. Thus, an ambiguous press release, written by a university affiliated with one of the authors, stated: "the odds that blacks and women...would be referred for cardiac catheterization were 60% of those of whites and men." The Associated Press, however, put it this way: "[D]octors were only 60 percent as likely to order cardiac catheterization for women and blacks as for men and whites."

It didn't help that the study's lead author, Kevin Schulman, discussed it on ABC's *Nightline* without explaining that he was using an odds ratio. "In retrospect," he says, "if we knew there would be this much of a problem, we would have used another methodology to present the results."

The New England Journal of Medicine Jeffrey Weiss, a *Dallas Morning News* reporter, says he found it impossible to decipher the num-

bers, despite experience in science reporting. A protracted conversation with Schulman didn't do much to resolve the mystery. "We went around and around about what it means to use an odds ratio, talked about it for half an hour," Weiss says. "I didn't understand it. I still don't understand it." Weiss left the figure out of his story.

After the Journal's mea culpa, a handful of media outlets—the Los Angeles Times, Reuters, and The Buffalo News among them—set the record straight. The AP, The Washington Post, and The New York Times corrected the error after inquiries from Brill's Content.

Many papers had simply run the original AP story. But even those that did their own reporting found themselves, as often happens when they write about something they don't have the schooling to fully understand, at the mercy of experts. "Some of these statistical comparisons are pretty hard to convey," observes Dennis Kelly, health and education editor at *USA Today*. "Unfortunately, we have to take our cues from the experts." —*Jennifer Greenstein*

TO BEST UNDERSTAND how reporters misunderstood the results of a New England Journal of Medicine study, look at the data reflecting the likelihood that certain people would be referred for heart catheterization, a procedure in which blockages are identified by injecting dye into the bloodstream.

WARNING: THIS GETS COMPLICATED

According to the NEJM, the results were as follows:

Black men	90.6%
White men	90.6%
White women	90.6%
Black women	78.8%

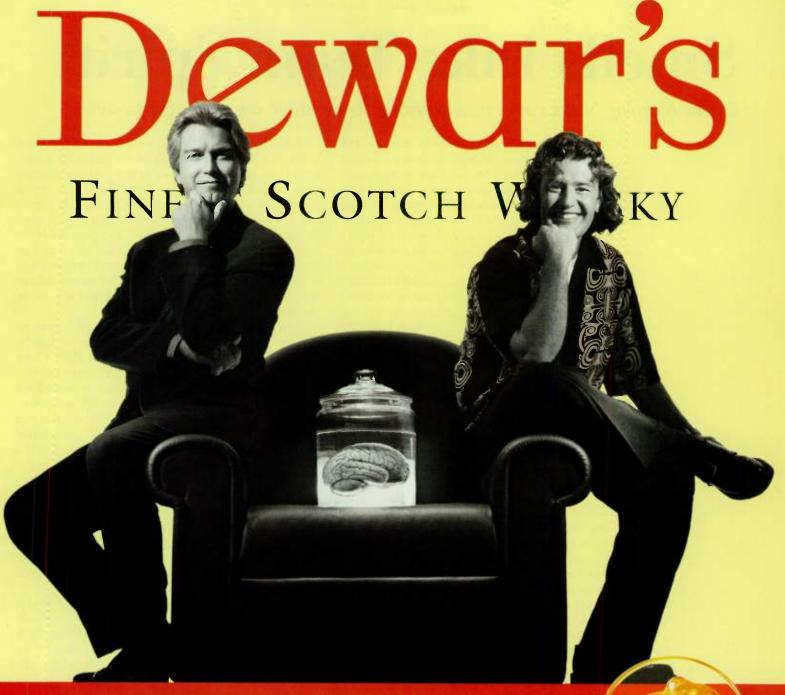
Combining some of the categories yields the following averages:

White	90.6%
Black	84.7%
Men	90.6%
Women	84.7%

Arriving at the "odds ratio" involves multiple calculations, according to the NEJM follow-up. To get "the ratio of the odds in favor of being referred for catheterization for blacks to the odds for whites," the authors divided .847 (the rate for blacks) by .153 (1 minus the rate for blacks). The result is 5.5. That figure is then divided by 9.6, which is arrived at by dividing .906 (the rate for whites) by .094 (1 minus the rate for whites). If you divide 5.5 by 9.6 the result is 0.6, or 60 percent.

The so-called risk ratio is much more intuitive and easier to calculate. Using the more meaningful comparison between black women and the other groups, you simply divide the percentage for black women (78.8 percent) into the corresponding figure for men of both races and for women (90.6 percent). That calculation reveals that black women were 87 percent as likely as white women and men of both races to be referred for heart catheterization.

40



They're out of their minds. When Whit and Richard walked out the gates of a major software developer to build a board game, friends thought they'd lost it. But they put their heads together with an art guru, a wordsmith and a talkative mime — and the result was Cranium? It's the first game designed to use both sides of the brain. It's selling like crazy, and they're looking pretty smart.

They're Dewars.

Smells Like Team Spirit

Dallas Morning News reporters wonder about their owner's sports deal.

AN A NEWSPAPER FAIRLY COVER ITS owner's business dealings? It's been an ongoing issue at The Dallas Morning News, one that culminated with a story on the front page of the business section in mid-August in which the paper acknowledged at least part of the turmoil roiling its newsroom.

The latest episode began on July 26, when the paper's three city hall reporters posted an impassioned memo on the internal message system. Three days earlier, the newspaper's owner, A. H. Belo Corporation, had announced its intention to pay \$24 million for a 12.4 percent stake in the NBA's Dallas Mavericks and a 6.2 percent share in a new arena being built for the Mavericks and the NHL's Dallas Stars. The memo writers feared that Belo's ownership interest would compromise the paper's coverage of the team and the arena.

The memo noted that a Morning News story had "failed to explore the obvious journalistic questions that Belo's purchase creates," and hadn't used quotes from skeptics like Dallas City Council Member Donna Blumer, who had told a Morning News reporter that "Belo can no longer be an independent voice..."

Strong words to describe a The Pallas Morning News

relationship that's scarcely unprecedented in the media world. As the original Morning News piece pointed out, the Tribune Company, The Walt Disney Company, and The News Corporation Ltd. all own sports franchises.

But Belo's investment is only one in a series of actions that have prompted disturbing allegations about Dallas's only daily paper. Last year Belo gave \$5,000 to the Yes! For Dallas committee to promote a tax that has since been implemented to pay for the sports arena. And Belo helped fund an organization that endorsed the Trinity River project, another controversial development plan, which requires \$246 million in public funds.

toed the Belo line. Last year, weekly

A new corporate teammate: Dallas Maverick Gary Trent

published numerous reports accusing the Morning News of deliberately slanting its coverage of the Trinity River project. In one instance, according to the Observer, Morning News publisher Burl Osborne demanded that a critical statement be moved off the front page, breaking the paper's rule that representatives of both sides of controversial issues be quoted before the article "jumps" to a page inside the newspaper. The reporter on the story had to threaten to remove his byline before Osborne relented and the quote was returned to the front page. (Osborne referred calls to Bob Mong, the paper's president, who did not return phone calls seeking comment.)

Another recent move that prompted grumbling among Morning News staffers was the replacement of Charles Camp, the paper's award-winning business editor. Camp

was moved to a newly created position, senior editorbusiness news. Although management assured the staff that the change was mutually satisfactory, some insiders say it was a de facto demotion caused by Camp's refusal, in the words of one editorial staffer, to "print obsequious stories about Dallas's

corporate community." (Camp de-

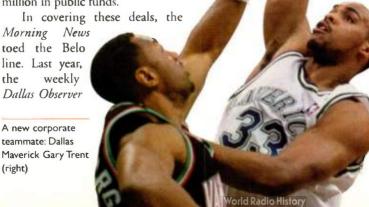
clined to comment.)

Five Morning News reporters say that the perception of management bias has contributed to a "chilled atmosphere" and self-censorship in the newsroom. And reporters worry that the public no longer trusts them. Says one: "There is a perception in the community as a whole that the paper isn't as hard-hitting as it should be."

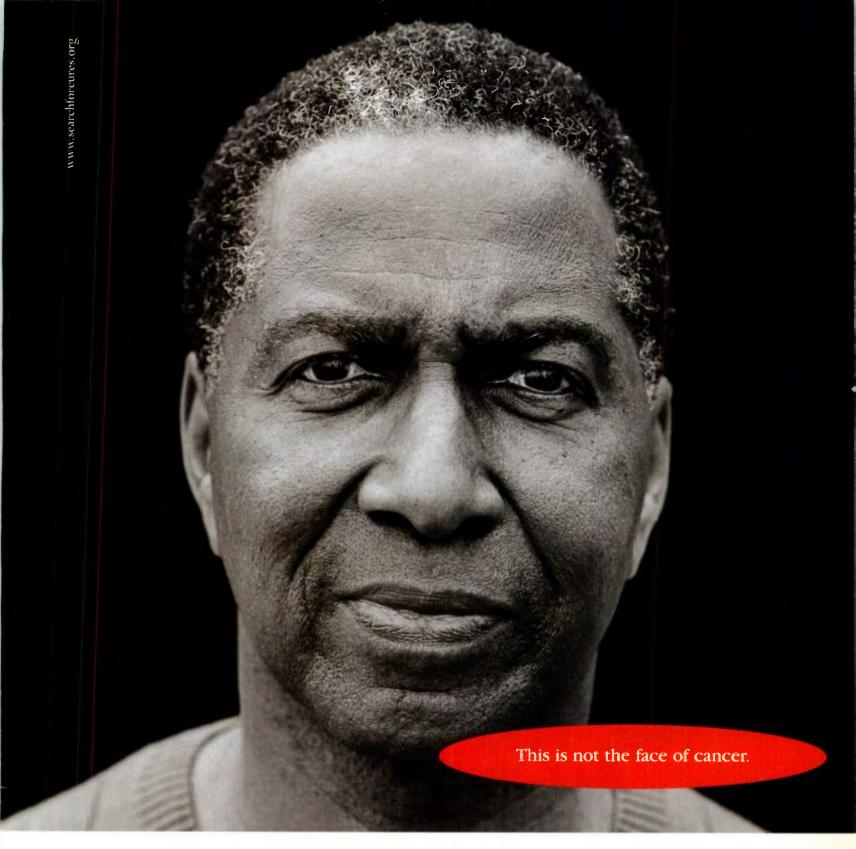
Executive editor Gilbert Bailon, meanwhile, defended the coverage of Belo's investment and held a staffwide meeting to discuss the issue. Managing editor Stuart Wilk points to two recent Morning News pieces critical of the arena plan—a tongue-in-cheek sports column and an archi-

tectural review of its design—as evidence that the paper still gives equal play to both sides.

Management also defended itself at length in the paper's August 12 article, though the 2,000-word story gave prominent play to questions about the paper's credibility. Still, argues one Morning News reporter, the article won't undo the damage done to the paper's reputation: "From now on, there will always \textsquare be people in the community who think the newspaper cannot be objective in covering the arena or the Mavericks." — Jane Manners



BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999



It's the face of Jim Williams. A father and a pilot, he has been in remission from prostate cancer for over eight years. As someone who did two combat tours in Vietnam, he knows war. Still, he considers prostate cancer his ultimate battle. Jim relies on new medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies. They're a major reason why he's in remission. Even though more people are surviving prostate cancer than ever before, pharmaceutical company researchers won't give up until there is a cure. Their relentless search allows people like Jim to face a future filled with hope.

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On Second Thought

When we printed a story about a boy who had been raped by a grown woman, we should have considered how it would affect the boy's life.

ANY YEARS AGO, AS PART OF HIS longtime campaign to improve newspaper writing, Roy Peter Clark warned a room full of journalists to beware of stories that fit familiar patterns. "Little old lady in tennis shoes beats city hall," for example, or "Sprinter overcomes polio to win hundred-yard dash." Clark, a senior scholar at The Poynter Institute, a school for journalists, wasn't arguing that such situations could not produce good newspaper stories. His point was that journalists sometimes go on automatic pilot when they report such events, relying on preconceptions and writing stories that omit or discount facts that don't fit the mold.

I was reminded of this warning recently when my city editor expressed second thoughts about a story we had covered in the *Concord Monitor*. We did not leave out or downplay salient facts, but the story came from such a classic newspaper genre—man bites dog—that we did not fully consider the problems it presented before we published it.

The story began with a phone call from an angry mother who lived in a small town near Concord. The woman said that

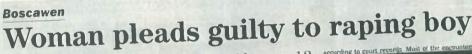
her son, when he was 13, had been lured into a sexual relationship with a woman who was 37. (After the stories were written, we discovered that the boy was 14 when the abuse began.) Now the perpetrator was charged with statutory rape, and the victim's mother wanted to know why the *Monitor* wasn't covering the story. The perpetrator's crime should be exposed to the community, she said, and if the crime was handled quietly, the woman might get off with a light sentence. She assumed we knew about the case and had chosen not to report on it because it involved a boy and a woman.

Felice Belman, our city editor, assured the woman that the reason we had not reported the story was that we knew nothing about it. It's a complex world out there, and newspapers are not as ubiquitous as some people think. One factor that keeps us from missing more is phone calls from readers asking why they didn't see something in the paper.

That's all it took in this case. Belman assigned a reporter to look into the woman's complaint. Sadly, stories about men raping girls are routine; the story of a woman charged with raping a boy is not. That is why I call it a "man bites dog" story—it upsets the way we think the world works. By definition, that makes it news.

Monitor staff writer Amy McConnell found out that a plea deal had already been struck in the case. The





Abuse began when she was 37 and he was 13

according to court records. Most of the encounters often un her living room or master bedroom, court documents claim.

Last summer, the boy told has parents what her

By AMY Boscawen

Woman sentenced for raping teen

Judge hands down state prison term

By AMY MCCONNELL

BY AMY MCCON

Merrimack County Superior Court
July o Livry Smilkler said be nonce

public that an older woman raping a technique by was as much a criminal art and as districting to the actimates an alore man raping a young art

Smulder sentenced Rich, who pt along guilty to four counts of telonious some assault, to serve at least 2 : to 5 or in the New Hampshire Sint Press or for the New Hampshire Sint Press or for 15 or 15 or 10 in the New Hampshire Sint Press or for 15 or 1

After details

accused, Marlys Rich, had agreed to plead guilty to statutory rape. She was soon to be sentenced on four counts of felonious sexual assault for a "progression of sexual conduct, fondling, and sexual penetration as part of an ongoing course of conduct" over a period of more than a year and a half. This conduct had come to light when the boy told his father about it. The evidence against Rich included her diary accounts of her relations with the boy.

McConnell's story contained only one sentence elaborating on the sexual contacts between the woman and the boy, but it included other details about the case. It named the street on which Rich lived, identified the victim as the son of her neighbor, and said Rich had been a friend of the boy's family.

About a month later, McConnell covered the sentencing. Before Rich faced the judge, the boy's mother described the trauma he had suffered. Once happy-go-

about the case appeared in the Concord Monitor, many of the boy's peers were able to figure out his identity. One of those details—the street on which the rapist lived—has been obscured in a tearsheet above.

Mike Pride is the editor of the Concord Monitor, in Concord, New Hampshire. His column on editing a daily local newspaper appears regularly.

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All In The Family

The authors of a new book about *The New York Times* turn up fascinating details about its longtime owners but don't fully explain the biggest question of all.

AMILY BUSINESSES, PARTICULARLY those that revolve around newspapers, tend to have a habit of not lasting past several generations. In August, after protracted squabbling over its continued ownership of the San Francisco Chronicle, a bitterly divided de Young family sold the paper to The Hearst Corporation. And in the eighties, the Binghams engaged in a messy and public fight before relinquishing the Louisville Courier-Journal. While such families as the Hearsts have not imploded like the de Youngs and Binghams, they have removed themselves from operational control of their media empires.

Those fates have not befallen the descendants of Adolph Ochs, the poorly educated son of German Jewish immigrants who purchased the flailing *New York Times* in 1896. The *Times*'s Sulzbergers have never let the publisher's post or control of the company slip from their grasp in four generations. And under their watch the paper has become the most influential in the country.

The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind The New York Times, the mammoth new book from Susan Tifft and Alex Jones, attempts to crack the conundrum of why the paper hasn't gone the way of so many other family businesses. The husband-and-wife writing team, whose previous book revealed the Binghams in all their dysfunctional glory, were given unconditional cooperation by the Times clan. The result is a prodigiously researched book filled with intimate detail sure to displease the whole family. Yet The Trust's thesis—that the family members have tamped down their personal desires in service to their covenant with a hallowed institution—ultimately fails to explain sufficiently the family's unity.

The New York Times that Ochs purchased 103 years ago bore little resemblance to today's powerful, resource-laden paper. Begun in 1851 by two Republicans, the paper was hemorrhaging financially. Moreover, Ochs, who had taken charge of the Chattanooga Times in 1878, was in no position to buy a paper losing \$1,000 a day. Land speculation and overreaching ambitions had left him juggling debts, always scurrying for more loans. Yet the lure of a paper with a distinguished reputation spoke to his deepest desires, according to Tifft and Jones. Ochs set up a Potemkin Village of a bank account in New York so he would appear flush, and then used his con-

siderable persuasiveness to win over the paper's shareholders.

On his first day as publisher, Ochs trumpeted the mission of the reborn paper: "to give the news impartially, without fear or favor, regardless of party, sect or interest involved." The mythology surrounding the paper had begun. The sanctity of the Times was inculcated into Ochs's only child, Iphigene, and then into her four children. Later generations took to calling these lessons the "rules of the road." "Conflict was to be avoided, and it was considered bad manners to discuss money," the authors write. "Times profits were to be plowed back into the paper to make it better, not to enrich their lives."



The first authorized books about Ochs and the family's stewardship of the paper (which appeared in mid-century, before the arrival of more objective books, such as Gay Talese's brilliant *The Kingdom and the Power*) were little more than hagiographies. The succession battles were excised, the financial shenanigans omitted, the editorial meddling forgotten.

The Trust doesn't fall into that trap. Peyton Place, or even Melrose Place, would have trouble competing with all the infidelities, divorces, nervous breakdowns, and alcoholic binges of the assorted Ochs descendants. When the writers unearth evidence that an ailing Arthur Hays Sulzberger, Ochs's successor and the grandfather of today's chairman and publisher, paid one of his nurses to have sex with him, the book threatens to descend into Jackie Collins territory.

But the candor teased out of family members, combined with unfettered access to the clan's papers, allow Tifft and Jones to demolish some of the most cherished *Times* myths. Adolph Ochs's will charged his heirs with the task of keeping the paper "free of ulterior influence, and unselfishly devoted to

Sulzberger (left) and Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr.

the public welfare." Yet the paper's vaunted objectivity has been tarnished by coziness to the government, string pulling, and, until recently, a surprisingly conservative social conscience. President Harding's wooing of Ochs resulted in the paper's shoddy coverage of the Teapot Dome scandal. Arthur Hays Sulzberger's

closeness to President Eisenhower precipitated his bowing to the government's desire to remove correspondent Sydney Gruson from Guatemala right before the CIA-inspired coup there in 1954. Not until the publisher's son, Arthur Ochs "Punch" Sulzberger, refused President Kennedy's demand to relieve David Halberstam of his Vietnam beat did the Times's history of complying with government wishes come to an end.

Arthur Hays Sulzberger used his connections to get his daughter Ruth into the Red Cross. He beseeched his managing editor to mention an aspiring actress who was then the object of his amorous desires; soon after, the actress's picture appeared in the Sunday theater section. Even Punch was not immune to using his paper for payback. Displeased with a 1972 New York magazine story, Punch blacklisted the author, Chris Welles, from writing for the Sunday paper.

The paper's image as a hotbed of liberalism is also misplaced. Under Adolph Ochs's reign, the Times opposed women's suffrage and favored concentration camps for "Reds." Arthur Hays Sulzberger had seven opportunities to endorse a president; four times he chose a Republican. And the family was so conflicted about its Jewish roots that the paper resisted singling out the horrors visited on Jews during World War II. It was only in 1961, when John Oakes took over the editorial page, that the consistently liberal leanings we expect of the Times materialized.

In place of the myths, however, Tifft and Jones too often resort to oversimplification and overstatement. The authors, who immersed themselves in the lives of the Binghams for their previous book, offer little to explain why that familywhose paper, the Louisville Courier-Journal, was a beacon of social enlightenment—imploded while the Sulzbergers have not. The Trust makes clear that backbiting and jealousy course through the branches of the family tree. Yet the family unites around the abstract. Tifft and Jones's pop-psychology explanations seem better suited to a magazine feature, not the thoughtfulness expected of a nearly 800-page book seven years in the making.

Even the authors' invocation of Iphigene Sulzberger, the family matriarch, as the common link through the four generations and of her insistence on the duty and unity the paper required, doesn't fully explain why in 1986 the Sulzberger heirs signed an unprecedented covenant that gave up their right to cash in their stake for billions of dollars while maintaining family control for about another century. When money and power are at stake, all the highfalutin principles in the world can get trampled—even in the best of families. Why they didn't in the case of the *Times* still remains a puzzle.

How the Times reached the pinnacle of influence in American journalism—and stayed there—is also given short shrift. Instead, The Trust devotes much of its attention to how the four publishers (a fifth, Orvil Dryfoos, died after just two years in the post in the early sixties) each successfully passed through a crucible that tested their worthiness to shepherd such an important institution. This 'Great Man of History' approach, though, possesses a key weakness: Nuance is lost as all sorts of power is ascribed to its subjects and the people who supposedly embody their causes. The narrative coincidences are just too perfect.

The authors make Adam Moss the straw man for liberalizing tendencies that the young Arthur Sulzberger Jr., who became publisher in 1992, then has to rein in. Moss, a thirtysomething magazine editor admired for his work at Esquire and 7 Days, had been brought in as a consultant to help liven up the paper. The authors first blame him for the embarrassingly poor reception of Styles of the Times, a Sunday section considered too gay oriented by many at the paper. And when the Sunday magazine, to which Moss had moved the following year (and which he now edits), ran a spate of controversial offerings, the authors portray it as further evidence that Moss was to blame. Arthur junior's "clarion call to shake things up at The New York Times had been heard-sometimes, too well," the authors write, later talking about "old-timers at the paper who felt the Times had been hijacked by the Adam Mosses of the world."

But there's one niggling detail the authors overlook: Moss didn't make the decisions they pin on him. Moss was a consultant on Styles of the Times, but the final say belonged to then executive editor Max Frankel. As for the magazine contretemps, "[t]o blame Adam...is completely unfair," says its then-editor, Jack Rosenthal, who takes ultimate responsibility for those calls. (Rosenthal, who has been overseeing the magazine's millennium project, is leaving at the end of the year to head the Times's charitable foundation.)

Arthur junior has not yet passed successfully through his true crucible. How he ensures that the paper's values and standards are maintained as the company ponders a spin-off of its web properties will be the true test of his birthright. "I think Arthur himself would tell you that it's a watershed moment," says managing editor Bill Keller. (The family, through Michael Golden, Arthur junior's cousin and the company's vice-chairman, declined to comment on the book for this article.) In July, Keller recalls, Arthur junior told a Seattle conference of minority journalists that he was head of a company with \$3 billion in revenue that has a new-media component with revenue of just \$25 million and no profits. Yet, Sulzberger said, "I'm dividing my time fifty-fifty between the two."

The Trust contains two pages in its epilogue outlining the Web's dilemmas and the resulting jockeying within the company. "It does feel as if the book stopped a little too soon," says Keller. The next few years will go a long way to determining whether the members of the fifth generation decide to keep the peace or battle for control of their legacy.

large store of nuts by squirrels in the autumn does not indicate a harsh winter but a good nut crop. It was CBC that informed me, at some length, about the people near Vancouver who practiced such strict recycling that they and their children produced only three bags of garbage a year.

Starting in 1986, I wrote a weekly newspaper column for ten years, and during the summer I provided yet another confirmation of the rule that a columnist takes on the coloration of whoever's available to crib from. I wrote about the hummingbird and the whales and the show-jumping rabbits and the squirrels; because of CBC, I wrote so much about animals that, in the interest of full disclosure, I had to quote my own wife at one point as saying "Are you under the impression that this column is syndicated principally to veterinarians' magazines?" I even wrote about the conscientious recyclers near Vancouver. (I couldn't remember the family name, so I called them Mr. and Mrs. Retentive.) It was in this period that I often alluded in columns to something I'd read in the Toronto Globe and Mail-the claim of a scholar named Ling Hong-ling, for instance, that the Chinese invented golf and the counterclaim by a Scottish tabloid that Ling was "a nutty oriental professor." I hardly need mention that it was also in this period that I set the record for consecutive columns by an American columnist on Canadian subject matter (two).

Six or eight years ago, around the time I was in danger of falling into the habit of beginning summer columns with phrases like "An item I recently came across in the Lunenburg Progress Enterprise...," we figured out a way to have the previous seven days of The New York Times, not to speak of the freshly minted Time and Newsweek, sent every Wednesday from Halifax to a garden store only 15 or 20 minutes away from us, where the bus stopped on its way down the coast. I insisted on reading the Times in chronological order—I considered any other method the equivalent of trifling with history—and my wife read the latest paper first. Our differing approaches had the convenience of that fortunate white meat/dark meat division that's often at the heart of successful marriages, unless we happened to reach the middle of the week simultaneously. Still, it wasn't a perfect arrangement. Facing seven days' worth of the Times can give you the feeling of having fallen behind in the assigned reading for a course in the nineteenth-century Russian novel. Also, on Wednesday, with seven issues of *The New York Times* plus the newsmagazines under my arm, I was pumped up with the knowledge that information is power, but I could feel the power draining away for the rest of the week. By Monday or Tuesday, I felt fearfully out of touch.

The speed and volume of news moving in our direction began to accelerate two or three years ago. Someone told us that the television monitor we'd finally gotten to watch videotapes could be hooked up to the local cable system two months a year; somehow cable had been on our coast for some time without my knowledge. We were now in the position to watch The NewsHour or NBC Nightly News instead of listening to As It Happens on CBC radio or trying to get NPR from behind the wheel. Meanwhile, it had become possible to get a sampling of The Washington Post and The New York Times on the Internet. This summer, we were able to arrange to have the previous day's New York Times delivered daily to a convenience store not far from the garden store. At this point, in other words, the congressman who thinks he can escape our gaze by airing his scandalous behavior in July or August is kidding himself.

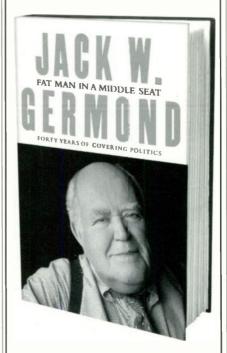
I'm grateful for all of these improvements, of course, although it has occurred to me that when we first visited Nova Scotia in 1969, part of what we found appealing about it was the absence of news from the U.S.A. Also, I miss the CBC, which I don't listen to nearly as much as I did before we caught up with the Information Age. Sometimes I think about the questions that all of those animal facts used to bring up for discussion in columns: Does a hummingbird also weigh as much as two dimes and a nickel? What do the whales say at those distances—something like "Can you still hear me?" I can't spend too much time on such idle thoughts, of course. I'm now aware, even in the summer, that I have to get through The New York Times every day. There will be another one tomorrow.

Contributing editor Calvin Trillin is the author of Family Man, just published in paperback by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. He is also a columnist for Time, a staff writer for The New Yorker, and a contributor to The Nation.

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BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

Racial Tension

Two press critics—one from the left, one from the right—duke it out in round one of a new, ongoing ideological duel. This month: How do the media cover race?



BY JEFF COHEN

WHEN NEWSPAPER EXECUTIVES MAKE A commitment to change, they often show great prowess in meeting their goals: Consider the breathtaking speed with which they added color graphics and lifestyle sections to their pages.

When it comes to fulfilling their 1978 pledge to integrate people of color into their staffs, however, most newspaper editors are moving slower than a Gutenberg press. The

American Society of Newspaper Editors' goal was to achieve minority employment at daily newspapers "equivalent to the percentage of minority persons within the national population" by the year 2000. Racial minorities now constitute 11.6 percent of news staffs but 27.3 percent of the country's population. At the rate newspapers are going (ASNE last year extended its deadline by 25 years), they won't reach their goal until late in the next century.

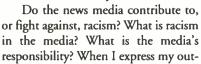
Slightly more diversity can be found in TV news staffs, and far less in magazines. But few top news executives in any medium—real decision makers—are people of color. This lack of diversity has consequences in terms of content. To take a relatively trivial example, when the decision was made at *Time* magazine to darken a cover picture of O.J. Simpson, only the lone nonwhite person in the room objected.

A more important consequence is the narrow, distorting lens through which racial minorities are frequently portrayed in mainstream news. Studies show that network TV's scant coverage of Latinos often focuses on crime, drugs, and "illegal" immigrants. And Kirk Johnson's classic study (*Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 1987) of 30 days worth of coverage of Boston's two largely black neighborhoods found that mainstream media focused overwhelmingly on lights-and-sirens stories involving some "pathology"—to borrow a term journalists love to apply to reports about black and Latino communities—such as violent crime or drugs, and "85 percent reinforced negative stereotypes of blacks."

By contrast, Johnson also found that coverage of the same two neighborhoods by four black-owned news outlets during the same period was more multifaceted, and thus ultimately more accurate. These outlets certainly covered crime, but they also covered local business, school (continued on next page)

BY JONAH GOLDBERG

THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH THUMBsucking over the issue of "race in the media" it'd be a shock if there were a viable thumbprint left among the entire alumni of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.





rage over racism, should I wear a tie or an open-collar shirt? All things considered, there is no story that your typical big-league journalist could get more jazzed over than a juicy horror story about racism. (How else to explain the endless clichéd stories about illiterate, white-trash Klansmen in the newsmagazines?) And yet, by constantly searching for horror stories and then trumpeting every anecdote and example as a national epidemic or trend, reporters make things worse while satisfying their own egos.

The best example is the fraudulent "church-burning epidemic" story of 1996. Admittedly, it was hyped by a cynical Clinton administration. And Deval Patrick, assistant attorney general for civil rights at the time, all but declared martial law on the national conspiracy behind this "epidemic of terror."

No surprise, it turned out there had been no significant increase in arsons, no national conspiracy, and some of the burnings were old-fashioned insurance scams. The press eventually sobered up, but could the story have had such legs if the press didn't at some level want it to be true? Would *The New York Times*, or, more important, the television networks, leap to their feet about a story that had racial overtones going in the other direction? No way. In such cases, they need to wait for all the facts to come in.

Or take the recent brouhaha over racial profiling and racist cops. The media devoted thousands of pages and TV hours to the horrific beating of Abner Louima by New York cops, and the revelation that the New Jersey police use race as a factor when they pull over suspected drug traffickers. The Louima episode was obviously awful. Racial profiling is a more complicated issue, in part because, well, profiling works.

But putting that aside, neither episode was at all typical in America. We are told that the worst (continued on page 56)

COHEN (continued)

achievement, and successful community cleanup campaigns.

Each individual "pathology" story in mainstream news may not be false, but if that's basically the only kind of story presented, the total picture becomes a lie.

The flip side of media's overrepresentation of minorities as criminals and druggies is their underrepresentation as experts and analysts. Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting's studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s documented not only the incredible whiteness of being an expert in national media (92 percent of Nightline's U.S. guests were white; 90 percent of The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour's were white; 26 of 27 repeat commentators on National Public Radio during a four-month study were white) but a tendency to ghettoize minority experts into discussions of "black" or "brown" issues.

For Americans still inhabiting largely segregated work-

When the decision

was made at Time to

darken a picture of

O.J. Simpson, only

the lone nonwhite

person in the room

objected.

places and neighborhoods (some as segregated as prime-time TV sitcoms), the media are the main sources of information about people of other racial groups and therefore deserve a share of the blame for the prevalence of racist attitudes.

In 1990, a National Opinion Research Center survey found that 53 percent of nonblack respondents said that African-Americans were less intelligent than whites, 56 percent said they were more violence prone, and 78 percent said they were more likely to "prefer to live off welfare." Majorities of respondents expressed similar views about Latinos, and significant numbers attributed these traits to Asian-Americans.

It would be easy to link such attitudes only to such media forums as talk radio, on which powerful hosts have trafficked for decades in ignorance and myth about people of color. But it was publications like *The New York Times* and *The New Republic* that helped resurrect the pseudoscience of eugenics and racial inferiority through prominent, often credulous coverage of texts like *The Bell Curve*. Take, for example, Malcolm Browne's October 1994 *Times* review, which praised *The Bell Curve* for making "a strong case" of a "smart, rich" elite polarizing with an "unintelligent, poor" population.

And it's the major newsweeklies that for years have promoted a white-pundit brethren—men like George Will, John Leo, and Joe Klein—who specialize in fiery sermons about the "pathologies" of the "underclass" that do much to absolve the *overclass* of responsibility.

Here's *Time*'s Lance Morrow: "If I were something like the Pope of black America and had the moral authority to make such suggestions, I would propose that no African-American use the terms racism or racist." Not surprisingly, Morrow is white; one wonders what the reaction would be

Jeff Cohen is the director of Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting. His latest book is Wizards of Media Oz: Behind the Curtain of Mainstream News.

if he'd advised Jews to abandon the term anti-Semitism.

Conventional media wisdom tends to see our country as a place in which racial discrimination happened in the past, where charges of racism are mostly an excuse, where societal depravity is largely the province of communities of color.

This worldview explains why mainstream journalists:

- so often frame affirmative action as an effort to correct "past discrimination," as if society were now colorblind. A six-month FAIR study in 1998 found that nearly a quarter of the news stories used the terms affirmative action and preferences interchangeably—a bias against affirmative action proponents who see themselves as opponents of dominant pro-white, pro-male preferences.
- waxed indignant over anti-white, anti-Jewish invective uttered by an associate of the Reverend Louis Farrakhan to
 - a college audience of a few hundred (which prompted a 97-0 U.S. Senate resolution of denunciation) while being virtually tone deaf to the antiblack, anti-immigrant invective emanating, via 50,000 watts of power, from Bob Grant, a top talk-radio host in New York City. (Senators, as well as other politicians, have appeared regularly as Grant guests.)
 - largely ignored, for years prior to the Oklahoma City bombing, the militia movement. If hundreds of heavily armed units of African-Americans (or other racial minorities) were training across the country and talking of the inevitability of violent clashes with the federal government, we'd have seen massive,

hysterical coverage—and not just from white talk radio.

• have made conservative black writers more prominent news sources than their progressive colleagues. Although blacks and Latinos tend to be left-leaning as voters, rightwing blacks and Latinos—like Armstrong Williams, Linda Chavez, Walter Williams, Larry Elder, and Thomas Sowell—are more prominent in syndicated columns and talk shows than left-wing ones. (After becoming editorial page editor at New York's *Daily News* in 1991, Ellis Cose found a memo from his predecessor decreeing that the paper run no more than one black op-ed columnist per day.)

Many news outlets, of course, have done some exceptional work on racism. In 1991, for example, ABC's *PrimeTime Live* presented dramatic evidence that racial discrimination is a present-day disease, not merely a legacy. Producers dispatched two evenly matched, well-dressed, well-spoken college graduates—one white, one black—to seek jobs through the same employment agency, apartments from the same landlords, a car from the same dealer. Again and again, hidden cameras recorded how the black man was lied to or turned away.

Even without hidden cameras, mainstream media should be able to focus a sharp lens on present-day racism in society. A good place to start might be in the newsroom.

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GOLDBERG (continued from page 54)

victims of racism are young black and Hispanic males. Yet, in surveys of tenth-graders conducted by CBS News, 61 percent of whites, 62 percent of Hispanics, and 63 percent of blacks said race relations were "generally good" in the U.S. and that the national epidemics they see on the nightly news apparently haven't reached their own neighborhoods. Seventy-two percent of all adults think race relations in their own communities are "generally good." The numbers were slightly higher for young blacks and Hispanics. The Gallup Organization found that a majority of blacks say they have never been treated unfairly by the police.

We know that scattered, disgusting racist episodes do occur, especially in a diverse country of 273 million people. But the news media seem determined to let the idea of persistent, incurable racism fester.

To its credit, *Newsweek* ran an article in June saying this was an especially good time for blacks in America—an indisputably obvious point considering the current boom and the history of slavery, Jim Crow, and other injustices. But for some reason, this was controversial both to *Newsweek* and its critics.

A typical response came from CNN's Roger Cossack, who opened a show dedicated to racial griping by saying, "Newsweek says it's a good time to be black in America, yet in Texas, there's an attempt to get tougher hatecrime legislation passed one year after a black man was dragged to his death. And in New York, the verdict is in, in

a case based on the brutal beating of a Haitian immigrant. The best time for blacks? How can that be?"

The answer, of course, is that two ugly episodes almost a year and 1,500 miles apart do not a seething national epidemic make. Another answer might be that the New York cops responsible for the beating were brought to justice, and that as horrific as the murder of James Byrd was, it's unlikely that hate-crime laws would have been more effective at preventing it than, oh, say, murder laws.

Arthur MacEwen, William Randolph Hearst's editor of the San Francisco Examiner, said that "news is anything that makes a reader say 'Gee whiz.'" Nobody disputes that. But do we have to make a "gee whiz"—or in this case a "Dear God"—story any more than what it is?

In recent months, racial activists and civil rights leaders have concentrated on pressuring the entertainment side of the media. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People announced in July that it was going to harass the major networks in the courts, Congress, and shareholder meetings until things changed. Of course, partly thanks to the sympathetic news coverage, the networks

were terrified, and within weeks they were rewriting and recasting their shows. Shortly thereafter, the National Council of La Raza followed suit, announcing it was going to boycott the networks for one week to protest the scarcity of Latino actors on television.

There may not have been as much fanfare, but the same thing has been going on in the news divisions for years. It's less noticeable because the doors of the newsrooms are already wide open. Few professions are more married to the platitudes of the diversity industry than journalism. Indeed, affirmative action may be an open topic for debate on the op-ed pages and the argument shows, but it's a closed topic in the corporate and editorial offices at most media outlets.

Still, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, con-

sidered the stodgiest of the "white" journalist associations, has an outright numerical minority goal. By 2025, ASNE wants 38.25 percent of U.S. newsrooms to be minority staffed. In an effort toward achieving this nirvana, ASNE has joined with groups like the Associated Press Managing Editors association. These groups recommend things like "The National Time-Out for Diversity and Accuracy" (can't you here Walter Winchell groaning?). This "time out," a weeklong gabfest about race and diversity, inevitably concluded "we aren't doing enough."

The real issue isn't the tired-buttrue complaint of media bias. It's whether or not bashing the media

piñata can yield any more goodies than it is already all too willing to give. When it comes to rank-and-file jobs, I don't see how. The inconvenient truth is that, quotas or no quotas, minorities aren't entering or staying in journalism fast enough for outlets to hire or keep them. Racism isn't the problem there.

Anybody with an open mind about affirmative action can see how this liberal herd mentality affects coverage. Being "good" on race puts a spine in the general conviction that reporters should mend society's deep wounds. In 1997, Paul Harris was the first black Republican to be elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in more than a hundred years. "You were raised, sir, in subsidized—a subsidized housing project by a single mother," pronounced NBC News's Ann Curry, "and yet you support welfare reform and oppose affirmative action. How do you square those two sides?"

"Media racism" is an ideal worry for fin de Clinton America. It's perfect because no matter how much "progress" is made, the "problem" will never fully go away. The press will always find the obscure case and make it the tip of a national trend. Alas, there will probably always be obscure cases. And the press, at least for the foreseeable future, will always fall for whatever guilt trip comes down the pike.

Newsweek ran an article saying this was an especially good time for blacks in America—an indisputably obvious point that for some reason was controversial.

Jonah Goldberg is the editor of National Review Online, for which he writes a daily column called "The Goldberg File."

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Memo To The Press: Work Sucks

As journalists chatter about the booming economy, the sitcom world of dead-end jobs and fed-up workers more aptly reflects the public mood.

> ONY SOPRANO, THE NEW JERSEY mob boss on HBO's funny and strangely moving hit series The Sopranos, could be the poster child for Americans' complex ambivalence about work. The beleaguered mafioso is struggling to reconcile the mounting pressures in his life: His best friend is missing, and his wife is secretly playing the stock market. But his big troubles are work-related: rebellious employees, a deadbeat whose legs he had to break, a restaurant he had to burn down. Work isn't fun anymore, Tony complains to his therapist.

gotta do what you gotta do."

Similarly, Fry, the pizza-delivery boy hero of Matt Groening's animated Fox series Futurama, found himself catapulted a thousand years into the future by mistake. Upon meeting his one-eyed "fate counselor," Leela the Cyclops, Fry was computer-evaluated and told he would be a delivery boy, just as he had been in the past. When he complained that he didn't like the job, Leela jeered. Nobody really liked their work any more, she said: "You

Pop culture, our national mirror on the wall, is, as usual, way ahead of journalism. These shows reflect the big news that for a growing number of Americans, work sucks—a story universally understood by the public but one that seems to float over the heads of most journalists. Not that we really need reporters to tell us this. How many people do you know who love their jobs, who feel appreciated or secure, who expect to be working for the same employer in ten years? How many have suffered divorce, anxiety, resentment, alcoholism, dislocation or other traumas associated with being pressured, harassed, downsized, or laid off?

The workplace has always contained degrees of difficulty, challenge, and pain, and there have always been brutal, even dehumanizing, jobs. But in recent years, work itself is changing, and not for the better. In his powerful 1996 book When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor, Harvard University's William Julius Wilson chronicles the catastrophe that befell the underclass urban poor when both high-tech and blue-collar jobs retreated to the suburbs, leaving behind either bad jobs or no jobs at all.

These days, the press is prone to chattering on about the

booming high-tech economy. But you don't have to go very deep-almost any neighbor, friend, or family member will do-to know that many of those jobs are lousy. They pay little, don't last long, are boring, or increasingly exclude the middle-aged and older. The very notion that a worker will find a good job with a good company and stay there for his or her working life has vanished. Because companies and government agencies tend not to make announcements about this pervasive new reality, journalism seems not to cover it much.

In the even more sweeping book The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism, published last year, sociologist Richard Sennett outlines the devastating effects of the constantly downsizing and continuously re-engineered

The news media have somehow missed the public's widespread frustration with jobs that are boring, low-paying, and short-lived.

> Contributing editor Jon Katz is at work on a book called Geeks, to be published by Random House in May 2000.

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high-tech economy on working- and middle-class jobs. He homes in on the tens of millions of Americans who become unemployable in early middle age, and on the older people who are brutally thrown out of work by corporations embracing the new ethos of the "flexible" (read: everyone is expendable) corporation.

To the media, work is about numbers: so many jobs, so many unemployment filings, so many start-ups. But work, as Tony Soprano knows well, is, at its core, about human beings. And journalism doesn't cover human beings very much these days, a result perhaps of the vast media encampments clustered on the coasts, in cities like New York, Washington, and Los Angeles.

For all the prattle about the booming economy, the 10,000-plus Dow, and the low national unemployment rate, work is becoming less secure, less enjoyable, and less meaningful for Americans of all classes and backgrounds. The media have largely ignored this story in favor of the latest revelations about President and Mrs. Clinton or the blandly useless digital shibboleths of Bill Gates. Perhaps it's because cogent analysis of the state of work seems too complicated. Work can't be covered in the Crossfire way that characterizes journalism these days-somebody on the left, somebody on the right. Real people and their work don't offer celebrity or obvious and snappy video.

Despite that, this is a monumental story. The so-called American work ethic, the enduring relationship between citizens and their jobs, may have always been mythicized or romanticized. But the opportunity to work, and the nature of work, remains fundamental to the way Americans view themselves and their country.

The declining quality of work, as opposed to the apparent surge in economic opportunity, is one of those stories whose relevance is that it describes something most of us know to be true, but haven't had the opportunity to read about or consider. It's the kind of story that requires time, analysis, and thought, a blend of journalism and sociology. As journalism becomes ever more competitive, even superheated—cable, radio, the Net—this kind of story is vanishing. It seems that the more journalists there are—and the more outlets they have—the less

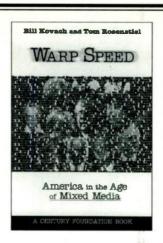
thoughtful and penetrating the media's coverage of crucial social issues like this one. These stories shouldn't get lost. They are vitally important to people.

For years now, mainstream media have had an enormous problem connecting with the lives of average Americans. This was clear during the year-long Lewinsky scandal, but in January 2000 the New Hampshire Syndrome will strike. In presidential election years, hordes of reporters decamp from Washington for New Hampshire to kick off the primary coverage. There, away from the poisonous fumes inside the Beltway, forced into contact with humans, they discover quadrennially, to their great excitement and dismay, that Americans are worried about such mundane matters as work. But the syndrome lasts only as long as the primaries, after which the press retreats to its enclaves, worrying about significant issues like semen stains on dresses and youthful indiscretions involving marijuana, sex, and booze.

The notion of journalism being disconnected from real people is so obvious and oft-mentioned that it's become a cliché, part of the background noise that goes into any discussion of the contemporary press. That doesn't mean it isn't important. Americans' concerns about work are a perfect example of an opportunity lost by the media. The truth is, there really are too many reporters working in Washington, New York, and Los Angeles and way too few prowling the vast spaces in the middle. Journalism has become reactive and herdlike. The idea of the Charles Kuralt-ian reporter popping into out-of-the-way towns or little-covered urban neighborhoods to take the pulse is in desperate need of revival. Journalists have become obsessed with celebrity, money, big institutions, technologies, and with one another.

Slowly it's dawning even on the people running media that in the post-Lewinsky era, it's both dangerous and self-destructive to lose touch so completely with most information consumers. In an age when hundreds of reporters cluster in the White House briefing room to scream the same questions at the president's press secretary, topics like work have never seemed a better subject for somebody's beat.

You can e-mail me at jonkatz@Slashdot.org.



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Ask The Experts

The Web's expert clearinghouses can lead reporters to good sources, but they can also lead to spin masquerading as objectivity. • BY JEFF POOLEY

N APRIL 22, TWO DAYS after the Colorado school shootings, Robin Franzen needed sources quickly. Franzen, a staff writer at The Oregonian, wanted to fatten up her story about teenagers and the Gothic subculture that the shooters had reportedly embraced, but she faced a deadline. So she fired off an e-mail query to ProfNet, an online "expert" clearinghouse that caters to journalists. "What is 'gothdom' and what isn't?" she wrote. "Looking for experts in cults, social sciences, and teens to discuss this timely subject. Need leads by 1 P.M. today."

ProfNet staffers bundled her request with 22 others in one of three daily e-mail dispatches it sends to paying subscribers—public relations representatives at more than 4,000 corporations, PR agencies, universities, nonprofits, and other organizations. "I sent out my query at 4 P.M., and I had responses waiting for me the next day when I went into work," recalls Franzen, who says she got leads on four "very useful" sources. (None made it into the final version of her story.)

ProfNet is the most prominent of over a dozen websites that connect experts and reporters. It embodies the symbiosis between journalism and public relations wherein newsrooms win access to sources, and, in exchange, PR agents gain "media placements" for their clients. This matchmaking is free for journalists, but PR reps pay for access to reporters' questions. When news breaks, journalists aren't the only ones chasing the story.

ProfNet-which touts itself as the "shortest distance between a journalist

and a source"-is the brainchild of Daniel Forbush, who started the service in 1992 when he was a publicist at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Within two years, says Forbush, the service grew from about 130 universities to more than 600.

In 1996, Forbush sold ProfNet for an undisclosed sum to PR Newswire, a press-release distributor, and stayed on as president. Since then, the service has signed on more than 3,000 new subscribers-mostly corporations and public relations firms, which now account for 70 percent of Profnet's members. The site handles nearly 500 inquiries a week from major news outlets, including the country's 100 topcirculation U.S. newspapers.

Directories of experts have been around for years. The

Yearbook of Experts, Authorities & Spokespersons (published by Broadcast Interview Source, Inc.), for example, is shipped free to many newsrooms, and plenty of university news offices have long produced booklets with contact information about their scholars.

But the Internet has made it much easier to tailor expert listings to requests from journalists, and in time for the afternoon deadline. That conveniencealong with the growing swarm of media outlets demanding fresh content-has helped sustain sites ranging from the web version of the Yearbook of Experts to university sites, the conservative Heritage Foundation, and the liberal Institute for Public Accuracy.

Here's how it works: Journalists submit an online query and wait for the sources to come to them. "You can catch us at 11:30 [A.M.]," boasts ProfNet's Forbush, "and have experts by noon."

One recent query from a reporter at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel read, "With the new Disney Tarzan flick coming up, I'm looking for some

> Tarzan experts to talk about the enduring quality of the myth, and its various aspects." Anotherthis one from an Associated Press reporter—was more specific: "I'm writing a story on whether the start of summer signifies any particular slump for the stock market. A professor or someone who tracks the history of the market would be ideal. Need leads by tomorrow..."

Responses from publicists start trickling in within hours, complete with bios and contact information for the experts they represent. According to an unpublished Carnegie Mellon study that ProfNet helped



The services provide "placement opportunities" and give "members, and their industry experts, broad industry exposure for a modest cost" as "part of the daily newsgathering process," according to promotional literature for ExpertSource, a ProfNet competitor coowned by Business Wire, another pressrelease distributor, and the Round Table Group, a consulting firm staffed mostly by academics. Companies that pay the \$100 Business Wire membership fee can register an unlimited number of authorities. ExpertSource responds to queries with a list of experts "to provide needed color and comment for even the most difficult to explain story."

ProfNet's rates are based on a sliding scale, with corporations and PR firms paying \$5,000 a year for access to journalists' queries. (For nonprofits and small colleges, the rate is \$420.) If PR reps want to list clients in the "Experts Database," they pay \$100 per expert (\$50 for nonprofits). If you believe ProfNet's ads in PR trade magazines, the payoff is huge. "Some of our members attribute more than 100 media placements annually to their participation in ProfNet Search," boasts one such ad.

But while they tout their claims to the PR community, most services that charge members fail to disclose that fact in the portion of their sites designed for reporters. Stephen Pisinski, chair-elect of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), says that the subscriber charges ought to be posted prominently. "To the extent that experts who don't pay to be listed aren't included," he says, "it's not a complete representation of experts in a certain way."

Services like ProfNet and Expert-Source can exploit newsroom deadline pressures and budget constraints. Reporters, furthermore, tend to rely too heavily on "expert sources." "I think the journalism community is A SELECTION OF EXPERT SITES

ProfNet www.profnet.com

PR Newswire's ProfNet sends reporters' queries three times a day to more than 4,000 corporations, public relations firms, universities, nonprofits, and other organizations. (The site's homepage is shown below.)

ExpertSource

www.businesswire.com/expertsource

ExpertSource, owned by Business Wire and the Round Table Group, sends reporters a list of sources from a database of academic consultants and industry experts registered by Business Wire-member companies.

Newswise www.newswise.com

Founded and run by a biochemist/science writer, Newswise distributes journalists' questions about

science, medicine, business, and lifestyle issues to more than 350 clients—mostly universities and research institutions.

dependent on PR professionals to do their jobs," says Business Wire vicepresident Neil Hershberg, who oversees ExpertSource, "as much as they might begrudge that publicly."

PR reps can use the sites to steer

reporters to academic experts sympathetic to industry views. "One of the fundamental PR techniques is what they call the 'third-party technique,'" says Sheldon Rampton, associate editor of *PR Watch*, a newsletter, "where the idea is to get your message in the mouth of someone that seems

like an independent third party." But expertise and objectivity are not the same thing and different experts on the same subject will have a range of views.

There's a related problem with these sites: A query can bring back responses from experts who are also interested parties. When *Brill's Content* sent out a query to ProfNet, ExpertSource, and two similar sites—we asked about the impact of the Telecommunications Act of 1996—8 of the 18 responses came from publicists representing academics. Most

BznetUSA top monad.net/~gehrung

BznetUSA, run by a public relations firm, takes queries on business and finance.

YearbookNews.com www.yearbooknews.com

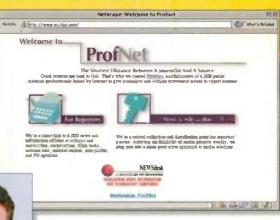
The online, searchable version of The Yearbook of Experts, Authorities & Spokespersons

PolicyExperts.org www.policyexperts.org/experts

The Heritage Foundation's "searchable database of the conservative movement" provides contact information for more than 2,000 experts.

Institute for Public Accuracy www.accuracy.org

This liberal organization lists experts by issue.



of the experts had first-rate credentials, but 12—fully two thirds—had financial ties (as legal counsel or consultants of one sort or another) to the telecommunications industry.

"I would say, with a ProfNet search, that we are going to such a large universe...there is no ideology present," insists ProfNet's Forbush. "You get back such a wide sampling, there's no opportunity for spin." But the truth is, queries don't always bring back such a wide sampling. PR Watch's Rampton recently submitted through a third party a ProfNet query about mad cow disease. The only expert suggested to him, he says, was a spokesman for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Daniel Forbush (left) launched ProfNet in 1992. Within two years it had 600 members, all of them universities. Since 1996. when Forbush sold ProfNet to PR Newswire, the service has signed on 3,000 new subscribers, most of them corporations and PR firms.

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Value Added

The lesson of open systems should make us rethink the notions of property, authorship, and privacy on the Internet.

> RECENT SPATE OF INTERNET CONTROversies repeatedly raises one central issuethe choice between an open architecture versus closed, or proprietary systems. May The Microsoft Network distribute software code that allows its users to communicate with the users of America Online, Inc.'s instant messaging without AOL's permission? Must cable companies that offer highbandwidth connections open those systems up to competing Internet service providers? Does a compa-

ny providing domain-name registrations have a duty to distribute its registration data to others who want to create new businesses based on access to those files?

At the content level, these questions recur whenever one author-compiler rides too obviously on top of the efforts of another. Should data extracted from an online database be entitled to special legal protection? May one website collect and frame links to lots of news stories

produced by other sites? May a columnist using such software as Third Voice [see "Notes On The Net," September 1999], which allows users to post public notes on any website, post his commentary without first

seeking permission? Should sellers be able to use quality ratings that they've developed on eBay when they sell through other auction sites?

What all these questions have in common is that they seem to ask whether baseline infrastructure created through substantial expenditures should be considered private property—or merely the next step forward in our collective climb out of ignorance. When should we treat new systems, new insights, or newly collected data as proprietary—and when should we treat them as parts of a shared commons, access to which must be guaranteed? More precisely, when should builders of business models to which others might add value

David Johnson heads the Internet practice at Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, a

Washington, D.C., law firm, and is a founder of the Cyberspace Law Institute.

open up to that potential? When should the creators of new and valuable "works" allow others to build new layers of value on top of their accomplishments?

The conflict is as old as the tension built deep into all forms of writing-including journalism-between the romantic myth of individual authorship and the reality that we create value only in groups. Every writer is torn between wanting to create a unique, self-expressive vision of the world on the one hand, and knowing deep down that all valuable works must in some sense be derivative

on the other. Every author wants to be

influential-and realizes that this requires producing expressions and ideas that can be built on by others, sometimes without attribution, often without even awareness of original source.

The conflict is heightened in cyberspace because greater speed and interconnectivity make it easier for others to build on any one author's work more quickly. When today's model for a specialized website becomes tomor-

row's opportunity for a meta-site that aggregates links to such specialized sites and steals a lot of eyeballs and advertising revenue, it seems like theft or trespassing. The speeded-up cycle times of the Internet economy have eliminated the optical illusion that we alone can fully exploit whatever we have created, leaving more elaborate forms of

"adding value" to future generations.

Confusingly, the short-term temptation to claim proprietary rights (and to lock out others who would add value to any given system) is mitigated by the growing realization that the Internet rewards those who both claim the least control over their own work and provide the most unlimited opportunities for strangers to add value by finding new ways to redistribute, cannibalize, or edit original work. We tend to think that establishing clear property rights (the right to exclude others from capitalizing on all the opportunities created by any work of authorship or invention) is the best way to encourage investment and build wealth. The Internet is trying to teach us something subtly different.

Traditional publishers think of their properties as, well, properties—exclusively available to them for exploitation, thanks to intellectual-property laws. They are instinctively horrified at the very thought that someone else might, without their permission, build a business based on those properties. In contrast, the average Internet software developer uses code from others all day long and knows that the very architecture of the Internet requires building one layer of value on top of another, without permission. If we had to negotiate perhaps thousands of linking licenses to build a portal site (like Yahoo!), it just wouldn't happen. And everyone involved, even those who maintain the linked sites, would be worse off.

When does it make sense—from a public policy stand-point or from the perspective of a profit-maximizing private actor—to build a system that provides unconstrained new capabilities for others to add value, as opposed to trying to capture, alone, all the potential created by a new work? The answer (perhaps surprisingly from a traditional viewpoint) is that it almost never makes sense to claim strong property rights that prevent third parties from building on top of whatever you have created. And the reason, simply enough, is that the creator of any given work, whether article or software code or communications pipe, cannot possibly imagine or implement all the many things that any good new work makes possible.

If the original creator tries to fence in his instant-messaging system or high-speed communications link, then it is likely only a matter of time before a second creator will devise an open system that, because it is open, attracts more users, creates more value, and ultimately takes the lead. If a large database owner works too hard to prohibit reuse of the materials it dispenses, those who want to manipulate and redistribute the data they download will find another source. Websites that fence out links, framing sites, and derivative commentators will

lose eyeballs. The Internet tells us: *Be open, or die*.

In a world in which value is maximized by allowing

your own work to become the basis for someone else's even more valuable creation, the key to success is minimizing the transaction costs associated with allowing others to link, quote, editorialize, redistribute. I'm not saying that authors and publishers need to allow others to copy without adding value—or even that they shouldn't get a cut of the value that others add. I'm not saying that those who build communications systems shouldn't get a share of the action their systems generate. But it is clear that success will come to those who make it easiest for third parties to ride on top of their own efforts. If I sell you a phone, it would be a bad idea for me to prevent people who bought phones from other people from calling you. Indeed, any effort to limit such calls would reduce the value of the phones I sell and make them less attractive to potential pur-

chasers. At the extreme, making your system or work freely available to others who can find a way to tailor it to fit their own customers' needs (as opposed to simply copying your work and giving it away) increases your distribution channel. Design your work product to be deployed by others—and choose your business model with an eye to retaining the benefit of your own creativity (or sweat), even if others transform your creation in many unpredictable ways. Creating value is good. Allowing others to add value is better.

For example, Amazon.com does well by paying a percentage of its sales to affiliated sites that make the Amazon directory available to their users. In a prior age, instilled with traditional notions of property, Amazon might have charged third-party websites for the privilege of adding value to their own sites by means of special links into Amazon's database. In effect, a third party site, say a quilting site, makes itself more attractive to users by making available a special selection of books, in this case books about quilting. But the payments now flow the other way, because Amazon understands that, in the newly networked age, it's better to be the most thoroughly connected node on the largest network.

Can this new logic of open systems be applied to better understand the seeming indifference of many consumers to the privacy issues so hotly debated in Washington? By providing our private personal data to an interactive

website, are we giving permission for third parties to use that data to "add value"

to our lives via personalized advertising? Every time you dispense a list of your preferences, you allow others who want to create value *for* you to ride on top of a resulting reduction in the cost of finding out what you want. We hate spam, because it

comes from those who haven't figured out what we want. But we like the personalized services that become possible only when we tear down the fences

surrounding our private data. A person who holds too much information about

himself too closely is doomed to get nothing but spam just as the author who too tightly controls redistribution and reuse of a work will impoverish its impact.

Movies need fan sites. Databases need customers who redistribute their data. Communications systems need higher-level users that tap into their systems in unpredictable ways. It's always been true that selfishness impoverishes the greedy, that it is more blessed to invest than to hoard, that empowering others brings great rewards. It's just that the Internet has made these timeless truths more obvious—as the speeded-up electronic world magnifies the effects of opening up (or closing down).

So next time you are trying to determine the value of a nifty new Internet service, or a promising work of authorship, don't ask, "Who owns it?" Ask whether it will be provided in a manner that allows anyone and everyone to make it even more valuable. The best things in life are, if not free, open.

E-Mail Without The PC

Internet appliances let you access the Internet (or at least get your e-mail) without a PC. Here's a look at three that promise to make your life easier.

BY JOHN R. QUAIN

MailStation: E-mail For Your Grandma

All we really want is e-mail. At least, that seems to be the ethos behind CIDCO's MailStation. Essentially, the MailStation is a black box with a small liquid crystal display (LCD) and a keyboard that lets you send and receive e-mail messages. That's it. No web surfing allowed. But for people who just want quick and relatively inexpensive e-mail access without having to buy a computer, the MailStation may be worth a try.

You can either buy it (see www.cidco.com) for \$99.95, plus another \$99.95 for one year of unlimited e-mail use, or purchase it for \$149.95 and pay \$9.95 month-to-month for e-mail service.

Like an answering machine, the MailStation connects to your phone line and comes all set up to start sending and receiving e-mail. There are no phone numbers to find for Internet access or esoteric e-mail routing configurations to set up. CIDCO does all that for you when you purchase the box, including entering a local Internet access number. So all you have to do is plug the MailStation into the phone line and start typing.

The MailStation's small screen presents you with the basics: an

in box, an out box, a section for creating messages, and an address book. A fifth option, called "extras," contains a calculator and a calendar into which you can enter appointments.

Usually, a new gadget means a new learning curve for the user, but with the MailStation most people should be able to start using it immediately without reading the manual. On each screen, there are prompts at the bottom that point directly to function keys. For example, when you're writing a missive, the "address book," "send now," and "save" functions are clearly indicated at the bottom of the screen. A spell-checking feature can be deployed with the push of a single button, and a "get e-mail" button retrieves messages from the Net. You can also set the box to check for e-mail at predetermined times, and a light comes on to tell you, to borrow a phrase, you've got mail.

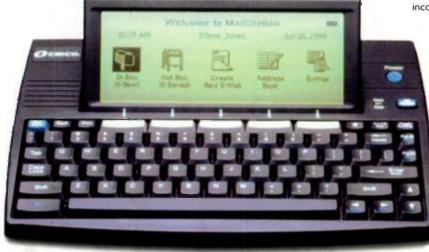
What the MailStation won't do is put you on the Web. You can't view websites; it's strictly for e-mail—and text-only e-mail at that. Attached files, such as pictures or Microsoft Word documents, can only be viewed by logging onto a special CIDCO website using

a PC. And the MailStation keeps messages brief-it cuts off incoming missives after about 1,000 words.

> Essentially, the MailStation is a basic computer with a built-in 33.6-Kbps (kilobits per second) modem. It's not the fastest Internet connection available (56 Kbps is typical today), but it's fast enough for handling email. And the machine can store between 300 and 400 messages. It takes three AA batteries for backup power in case the cat knocks the plug out of the wall or in case you want to unplug it yourself and sit on the couch to compose your messages.

Simple though it is, the MailStation is not perfect. The small LCD screen will make you squint, even though you can enlarge the text size, and you can only see six lines of message text at once. Also, the keyboard is maddeningly small.

It may sound like a dumb machine, and it is. But that also means it's simpler to set up and use than an answering machine.



E-Mail, nothing but e-mail, from the easy-to-use MailStation

64

(Or Even The Wires)

Use Your iPhone To Surf The Web

What I longed for in the MailStation—access to websites and a built-in answering machine—I found in the InfoGear Technology iPhone. Looking like a souped-up office deskphone, the \$399 iPhone is essentially a telephone with a large LCD screen and a pop-out keyboard. It combines the features of a phone with those of a basic web browser.

The iPhone includes two telephone jacks: one for your voice telephone line and one for the Internet connection line. This enables you to chat on the phone while you check news headlines on the Web, look up a phone number in the online white pages, or do some e-shopping. The iPhone offers a speaker phone, caller ID, speed dialing, an alphabetized personal phone book, and a digital answering machine that holds about 15 minutes worth of messages.

The web-surfing features of the iPhone let you cruise the Net via a built-in 56-Kbps modem and a 7.4-inch monochrome screen. The bright, back-lit screen is touch sensitive, so you can use your fingers or a supplied stylus to select items on screen, or you can use the keyboard to type e-mails and do online searches.

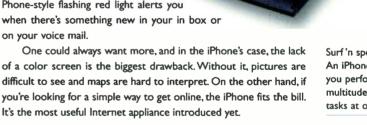
Getting online with the iPhone is almost as simple as it is with the MailStation. It doesn't come preconfigured for your phone line, but you can easily register with InfoGear (www.infogear.com) for \$9.95 per month for ten hours of cybersurfing, or pay \$19.95 per month for unlimited access. You can also use your existing e-mail account, but you'll still have to pay InfoGear \$4.95 per month to

connect to your existing Internet service provider. The iPhone presents most web pages well, though it cannot stream sound or video.

With the iPhone's keyboard fully extended, the machine looks like a small computer, but owners will appreciate the full-sized keys for composing e-mail messages. You can have the iPhone automatically check for incoming messages twice a day, and a Bat-Phone-style flashing red light alerts you

One could always want more, and in the iPhone's case, the lack of a color screen is the biggest drawback. Without it, pictures are difficult to see and maps are hard to interpret. On the other hand, if you're looking for a simple way to get online, the iPhone fits the bill. It's the most useful Internet appliance introduced yet.

Surf'n speak: An iPhone lets you perform a multitude of tasks at once.



E-Mail On The Go

One downside of e-mail is that no one has yet come up with an easy way to let you access it while you are away from your PC. So, to satisfy e-mail addicts, Research In Motion (RIM) created the BlackBerry.

The BlackBerry looks like a pager on steroids. With a small, sixor eight-line LCD screen and a tiny keypad, the BlackBerry's main claim to fame is that it allows you to use your existing e-mail address to receive e-mail messages wirelessly. Other handheld wireless e-mail solutions assign you a new e-mail address, leading to confusion for receivers and senders alike about which address you are using.

RIM lets you redirect e-mail from your existing account to the wireless BlackBerry when you're away from your desk. You can read simple text messages on the BlackBerry, but things like formatted memos and images can't be viewed on its tiny screen. You can also hook it up to your PC to synchronize read and unread messages. Caveat: It works only with computer networks equipped with Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft Outlook.

BlackBerry will work in 93 percent of the metropolitan areas in the country, RIM claims. Such convenience is expensive, though. BlackBerry (reachable at www.blackberry.net) costs \$399, or rents for \$19.99 a month. That's on top of a \$39.99 monthly service fee.

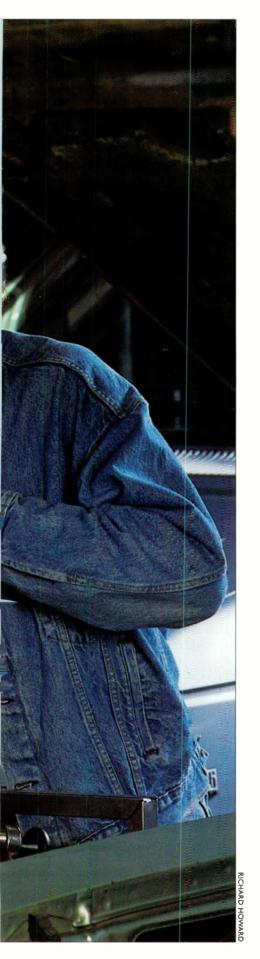


Wireless e-mail is a snap with the BlackBerry.









THE CARTALK GUYS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

Meet Tom and Ray Magliozzi, the motor-mouthed hosts of NPR's *Car Talk*. The two are kings of the road—with no interest in expanding their empire.

BY JENNIFER GREENSTEIN

OST COMEDIANS TRY NOT TO laugh at their own jokes. Then there's Tom and Ray Magliozzi.

The Car Talk guys, otherwise known as Click and Clack, host a public radio call-in show about cars. But despite its title, their program is only nominally about cars. Car Talk is more about opening your mouth, tilting your head back, and letting out long, loud, heartfelt gales of laughter.

The show is driven by the banter between Tom and Ray. The brothers laugh at their own jokes, poke fun at their callers, and insult one another. Somehow during all the merriment, they manage to answer questions about balky gear shifts and worn-out spark plugs, noisy mufflers and ragged suspensions. But when listeners tune in to *Car Talk* each week, it's not to gain a better understanding of the inner workings of

the Honda Accord. They're turning on the show to hear Tom and Ray dispense advice about such matters as taking a road trip with two teenagers in a subcompact car. (Hint: Don't do it.) Close to 3 million people return each week because it's pure enjoyment to listen to a couple of guys who have made it their business to have fun.

The brothers have not done too shabbily. From humble beginnings 22 years ago as a Boston call-in show hosted by a couple of grease monkeys from the neighborhood, *Car Talk* has become National Public Radio's third-most-listened-to show, after *NPR's Morning Edition with Bob Edwards* and *NPR's All Things Considered*. Close to 150,000 copies of *Car Talk*, the book, are in print. Tom and Ray's website (www.cartalk. cars.com) draws 35,000 visitors a day and sells thousands of T-shirts and tapes of the show a year. A CBS sitcom even tried to capitalize on the *Car Talk* guys. (It tanked.)



their success: The fun that Ray (left in both pictures) and Tom Magliozzi have in the studio has made Car Talk NPR's third-mostlistened-to show

could easily have come their way. They don't like giving interviews, hate TV, and aren't tempted by the six-figure offers to move to commercial broadcasting. Each year, they turn down dozens of invitations to give speeches for which they've been offered as much as \$50,000 a pop. They say "no" because those things sound a little too much like work. After all, fun is their primary interest. And that is the secret of their success.

T'S A THURSDAY MORNING JUST AFTER 10 A.M., AND Ray Magliozzi, 50, is standing in front of a work bench in a dimly lit garage in Cambridge, Massachusetts, hammer in hand, tapping on a cast-iron cylinder head. The street outside is dead quiet. Ray sent the cylinder head out to be resurfaced but the work was sloppy, so now he's trying to fix it by hand. Hammering at car parts doesn't look like that much fun, but Ray has loved working on cars since he was a kid, and aside from a few years teaching school, it's all he's ever done. "I love the days [in the garage] when the phone's ringing off the hook, and there are a million cars in there, and the day goes by like that," he says.

Today is not such a day. There are six cars in the shop, providing barely enough work to keep Ray and his four mechanics busy. After a little more banging, he decides it's time for a Sanka, and heads to the garage next door, which plays host to the local coffee truck at this hour. The smell of kielbasa on the grill drifts from the truck to the street, where banged-up cars awaiting salvation are parked. Back in his own garage, Ray leans against the wall and sips his Sanka.

"People come from all over the country to see this," he says, chuckling as he gestures to the completely ordinary garage behind him that fans have traveled from as far away as Montgomery, Alabama, and Washington state to see. "They're disappointed."

It's not easy to tell that this is the garage where the Car Talk guys practice auto repair (actually only one Car Talk

guy these days-Tom gave up working in the garage years ago). The brothers never mention the name on the air in order to discourage sightseers (who come anyway, mostly in the summer); they asked Brill's Content not to reveal the name. The only hints of the brothers' media celebrity are some Car Talk souvenirs pinned to the wall with thumbtacks, like a formerly white Car Talk T-shirt covered with grime. Underneath it, scrawled on the wall in marker, is "\$20" and an arrow pointing to the shirt. They don't sell too many of those.

The brothers, who grew up in East Cambridge, opened their first garage together in 1973-Tom, 62, says he went along with the scheme because Ray was "unemployable and

his wife was with child." Ray says he did it "to rescue Tommy from a life of vagrancy." (Both Tom and Ray are married; Tom has three kids, Ray has two.) Back then, the enterprise was a hippie-ish concept called Hacker's Haven. Half the garage was devoted to do-it-yourselfers who paid \$2 an hour to fix their own cars with the garage's tools. Not surprisingly, the Magliozzis ended up doing most of the repairs. Tom and Ray also taught auto repair at a local adult education center, which led to their shot at radio stardom.

One of their students worked at WBUR 90.9 FM. Boston's NPR news affiliate, and asked the guys, along with several other mechanics, to participate in a call-in show. Only Tom showed up ("I was always the sucker," he says). The next week he dragged Ray along, and Car Talk was born.

The show spent ten years on local radio, on which it was broadcast live, before NPR picked it up in 1987. Despite the brothers' heavy Boston accents, which are extremely un-NPR, they caught on. Car Talk now airs on 495 public radio stations. Though the show sounds live, it is actually taped every Wednesday and airs at different times around the country.

Ray thinks he and his brother started cracking jokes on the air the first time they were stumped by a caller's questhe air the first time they were stumped by a caller's question. They discovered *Car Talk* would be a lot more fun if they were a lot less serious. "And the more we did the laughing part of it, the more we liked it," says Ray. The 8

But the brothers aren't trying to make the audience laugh, they're trying to make each other laugh, "and it happens to be funny to the rest of us too," says Doug Berman, Tom and Ray's producer for the last 12 years. It's all off-thecuff, unscripted. "I have never-and I'm sure Tom would agree—I have never made any effort to think of something funny to say in advance of the show," says Ray. Maybe that's why the wisecracks consist mainly of adolescent jokes made at their own expense. (Tom: "If we weren't mechanics, you know what we'd be?" Ray: "Inmates?") But the hokey gags prove delightful because they're delivered solely for the purpose of making the brothers themselves crack up. "They're like the kids in the back of the class that used to joke and make you laugh," Berman says, "and you didn't want to laugh because you'd get in trouble."

N PERSON, TOM AND RAY ARE EXACTLY THE SAME as those kooks they play on the radio. Ray is the jovial, easygoing one. He actually tries to help solve callers' problems, and he keeps the show moving by asking callers to get to the point ("So what's up, Dave?") and signaling when it is time for them to hang up ("See ya, Jim."). Tom plays the Don Rickles role, willing to insult callers and carmakers alike for their stupidity. (Stupid is a favorite word for Tom; moronic is another.) When Sasha from Quincy, Massachusetts, began describing a problem with his girlfriend's 1983 Dodge Aries during one show, Tom interrupted to scold, "Notice it's always somebody else's car whenever it's a Dodge Aries. It's always 'my girlfriend,' 'my brother-in-law.'"

Callers chosen to be on *Car Talk*—they're pre-screened by the producers, who don't tell Tom and Ray what the calls will be about—pose questions about vehicular problems that range from the slightly ridiculous to the totally outrageous. That lets the brothers riff. When Ann from Georgia called to ask about a funny sound her car was making when she turned on the engine, she let slip that she started hearing the noise after she drove her husband home from Florida, where he'd had his vasectomy reversed. (Tom: "Tell him to take two aspirin and call us back in the morning.")

Matt from Minnesota tried to invoke supernatural causes to explain how the Sprite his son spilled on the car door had burned a hole in the leather. "It was like this X-Files thing," Matt said. Tom and Ray attempted a scientific explanation—after all, they both have bachelor's degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-and phoned a Harvard University chemist to see if Sprite could ignite a leather interior. (No way, the chemist said.)

In between the laughs, Tom and Ray give listeners valuable insights into one of life's biggest mysteries: what goes on under the hood of that machine they climb into every morning. The show makes learning the difference between a coil and a catalytic converter appealing, and that's no small accomplishment. The guys make plenty of jokes, but they also quiz callers about their car's grunts and klunks the way a doctor probes for symptoms. And they always offer specific advice about what needs to be checked, often outlining two or three steps a listener should follow.

Plus, they're fearlessly honest. They're willing to bad-

mouth car companies. They even rat out their fellow mechanics. Callers often use the show as a check on their mechanic—they take their car to a garage, then call Tom and Ray to tell them the diagnosis and the price. Tim Matthews, a Carrboro, North Carolina, mechanic who listens to the show, says he's heard callers relating advice from their mechanics that was "a lot of malarkey." Tom and Ray, says Matthews, usually steer callers in the right direction: "They're very knowledgeable."

In their own eclectic way, Tom and Ray have become leading consumer advocates within the car industry. They've established the Mechan-X-Files, a feature on their website through which listeners submit names of mechanics they've found to be reliable. The database now lists 15,000 names. Visitors to the site can also check the results of the Car Talk survey, which has compiled, among other consumer information, the ten car models with the highest repair costs and the ten with the lowest. "There is some seriousness of purpose there that the guys themselves will downplay because that's their schtick," says William Swislow, executive producer of cars.com, home to Car Talk's web presence.

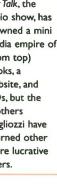
IN THE EARLY DAYS, TOM AND RAY did the show for free to drum up business for the garage. But after four years, they decided they needed to get paid, so they approached the producer with their salary demand: \$25 a week.

They're doing a little better than that now. Tom and Ray, who each make in the low six figures for the show, are close to signing a contract to stay with NPR for another five years. Seven publishers vied for their newest book, In Our Humble Opinion: Click and Clack Rant and Rave. The winner, Perigee (a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.) paid in excess of \$100,000 for the honor. Their syndicated column, which they started writing in 1989, appears in more than 300 newspapers.

But Tom and Ray have stubbornly rebuffed the riches dangled by commercial media, enticements that in the past have lured Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert and Bob Vila away from their public broadcasting homes. David Kantor, president of Chancellor Media, Inc.'s AMFM Radio Networks, says Tom and Ray could be making \$1 million a year in commercial radio. "If they were only in it for the money, they would have been gone from NPR's airwaves long ago," says Murray Horwitz, NPR's vice-president for cultural programming.

Most radio hosts would salivate at the chance to move to the small screen, but the Magliozzi brothers sneer at TV. "Television has become so produced that it's all complete bullshit," says Tom. Ray, as usual, is a bit more diplomatic: "TV ain't for us." They've resisted several offers to do television, succumbing only once, when they considered hosting a show about science. Being MIT geeks, they thought the show would be (you guessed it) fun. But the brothers eventually decided the project would be too much work. Here's where their life philosophy departs from the prevailing nineties work ethic. "I don't want to get involved in stuff that's going

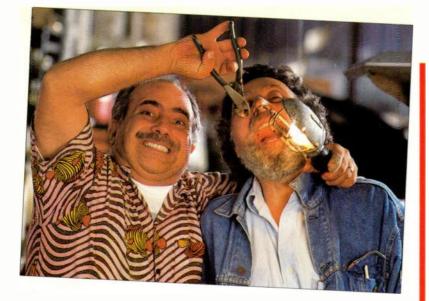
Car Talk, the radio show, has spawned a mini media empire of (from top) books, a website, and CDs, but the brothers Magliozzi have spurned other more lucrative offers



a Haircut in Horse

Town.





Despite Car Talk's popularity, Ray (left) still works in his garage, which allows him to keep his skills sharp. Above, he demonstrates the latest techniques on brother Tom.

to take away from my free time," says Ray. "I enjoy goofing off too much." Tom agrees, with one caveat: "If you know somebody with a million dollars, we'll do anything."

But that is no more than bluster on Tom's part. The brothers turned down repeated offers to do a weekly television series that could have netted them a figure "in the millions," says Eric Ellenbogen, former president and CEO of Marvel Enterprises, who courted them for years on behalf of Broadway Video Entertainment, Saturday Night Live creator Lorne Michaels's production company. "They could have been astonishingly successful as television personalities," Ellenbogen says. The proposed show, with a format similar to that of the radio program, would have guaranteed them a low six-figure fee plus a generous share of the profits, says Ellenbogen, who tried to accommodate their tepid interest by offering to film just one day a month, in Boston. The guys weren't willing to take the plunge and surrender their relative anonymity.

They did say "yes" once to a sitcom producer who paid them for the rights to do a show based on their life. Of course, that deal required no work from Tom and Ray—they just collected the money. The George Wendt Show, which debuted on CBS in 1995 and starred the actor who played Norm on Cheers, lasted just six episodes. "They sent us all the different scripts when they were putting the show together, and we thought, 'This isn't very funny,'" recalls Tom. "And for once in our lives we were right."

Tom and Ray are regularly asked to endorse products and give speeches. Berman, the show's producer, fields more than a dozen inquiries a month from major car companies, manufacturers, universities, and, once, even a drug company. The brothers have already been asked to speak at an engineering conference in Boston next June. The opening bid for their services? \$20,000. Berman turned it down.

One particularly persistent suitor called Berman to invite Tom and Ray to introduce a new product at a convention in New Orleans. The brothers were to be flown in first class, do some spiel at 3 P.M., and be home by evening. The tab for this one-day session? \$10,000 for each of the brothers.

Their answer: Nah, we don't really feel like lugging ourselves all the way down there.

"I think it was Tom, or maybe both of them said, 'You

know, I don't want to spend a day that way," Berman says. "So I called her back and said, 'Thanks very much, but they don't want to do it.' She said, 'All right, how about \$15,000 apiece?' I said, 'No, I'm not negotiating. I'm not trying to negotiate with you. They really don't want to do it.' She said, 'Okay, how about twenty?' I have learned a lot about negotiating from all these things. Every time I say no, people come back with more."

The final offer: \$25,000 apiece for one day's work. Tom's reply was vintage *Car Talk*. Says Berman: "Tommy says, 'Tell her it would take thirty grand each, but if she paid us thirty grand, then we couldn't work with her, because then she'd be too stupid, and we can't work with anybody that stupid."

NEEDLESS TO SAY, TOM AND RAY DIDN'T DO THAT appearance. The only public appearances they've consented to are for a handful of charities and the half dozen that are required in their NPR contract.

"Most people always want more," Berman observes. "And their conclusion is: We're happy. We have good lives. We like what we do, we like where we live, we like that we can go to Chinese restaurants and not be recognized.... They don't want to get sucked into being media stars. That's just not them."

Only guys who don't give a hoot about money could constantly portray themselves as money-grubbers—asking listeners to mail in their solutions to Ray's weekly puzzler "on the back of a \$20 bill" or selling tapes and coffee mugs through *Car Talk*'s "Shameless Commerce Division." And then there's the name of the company that the brothers founded to produce Car Talk: Dewey, Cheetham & Howe. (That's actually how callers are greeted when they phone the office.)

Like much else on the show, it's all a gag. "I guess money has never been important enough to us," says Ray. "We just didn't care about that, but I guess that's okay. I'm content to drive an old car. There are more important things."

Cambridge in the '87 Colt Vista that he got for a mere \$100 because the engine was fried (one of his mechanics rebuilt it). "It is extremely liberating having a shitbox," he says. He leaves it unlocked with the key in the glove compartment, and doesn't worry if it gets a dent. "Some gal crashed into me in Harvard Square a few months ago, and I kind of stuck my head out the window—she was driving some junkbox—and I said, 'You all right?' and she said, 'Yea.' I said, 'Good. See you later.'"

With the recent demise of Tom's beloved 1963 Dodge Dart—his teenage son had a nasty collision with a plow truck—Tom is now behind the wheel of a 1952 MG TD. He handed over the princely sum of \$9,000 for it—\$6,500 more than he's paid for any car in the last 30 years. When you take the MG for a drive, says Ray, you want "the tow truck following close behind so that you can get home safely. It's one step away from having the floorboards drop out and requiring that you propel it with your feet." The car leaves gas and oil in its wake, has no heater or defroster, and stalls about 20 times a day. Plus, there's no radio. Sounds like the perfect set of wheels for a guy like Tom Magliozzi.



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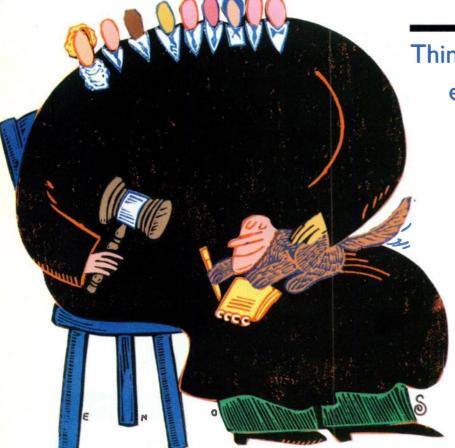
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May It Please The Court



Think reporters are pushy, enterprising, or scandal driven? Not at the U.S. Supreme Court, where Washington's most deferential press corps typically tells us only what the Court wants us to know.

By Robert Schmidt

S IS ITS CUSTOM, THE U.S. SUPREME COURT IS SET to begin its new term on the first Monday in October. The solemn occasion is usually marked by quiet ceremony—a Sunday Mass is celebrated at a church in downtown Washington, D.C., and the next day the justices head back to the Court to take the bench and officially start the new term. The Court's press corps is typically restrained as well, generally using the event to reflect on the significant cases on the docket.

Last year, however, the opening of the term was not so quiet. After the church service, Justice Antonin Scalia was confronted by a CBS News crew, whose producer wanted to know why Scalia had never hired a black law clerk. The next day, up on Capitol Hill, close to 1,000 protesters gathered outside the Court, chanting slogans and carrying signs decrying the justices' poor record for hiring minority clerks. As a symbolic end to the protest, NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, a former member of Congress, got himself arrested along with 18 others when he offered to deliver a stack of résumés to the Court from minority law students.

More unusual than the protest, however, was that it was spurred by a newspaper article. Working on a beat that is not known for pushy journalists or enterprise reporting, USA Today Supreme Court correspondent Tony Mauro dug up a story that not only was news but made news: Of the 394 clerks who had been hired by the current justices, only 29 were members of minority groups. Among Mauro's findings during his five-month investigation was that four of the nine justices, including Chief Justice William Rehnquist, had never hired a black law clerk. Overall, the March 13, 1998, page-one story showed the justices' minority hiring record in stark numbers: Of the 394 clerks hired by the justices, only 1.8 percent were black, 1 percent were Hispanic, and 4.5 percent were Asian.

Mauro's story touched a nerve both inside and outside the walls of the High Court. A group of leading minority-lawyers asked to meet with Rehnquist to discuss the Court's hiring practices, only to be rebuffed. Members of Congress grilled two justices about the controversy during an appropriations hearing. And Justice Clarence Thomas, the Court's only black member, told the head of a minority-lawyers group that he was frustrated by the lack of minority clerks at the Court.

Despite the protests, the congressional outrage, and Justice Thomas's comments, the story of minority clerks barely made it into the news pages of *The New York Times*. Linda Greenhouse, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1998 for her coverage of the Court, chose not to report on the issue. (The *Times* did run a short Associated Press story on the protest, and the paper published two editorials that criticized the Court for not hiring more minority clerks.)

"I had a lot of problems with that story," says

Greenhouse. "I really question its validity as a Supreme Court story." Greenhouse points out that the justices generally draw their clerks from an applicant pool of students from the top law schools-a pool that is mostly white. The fault may not be with the Court, Greenhouse contends, but with the applicant pool. Further, Greenhouse says that the USA Today story has caused people to jump to the conclusion that, at least implicitly, the Court discriminates in its hiring practices. The fact that four justices have never hired a black law clerk is not news, Greenhouse says: "It's a factoid, but it assumes that they've turned down minority clerks."

Greenhouse's thoughts on the clerks story are illuminating because she is widely recognized as the gold standard of the Supreme Court press corps—the reporter that most Court watchers, other journalists, and (if one believes anecdotal evidence) some of the justices, admire most. Moreover, Greenhouse was not alone in her feelings. Inside the Supreme Court pressroom, the reaction to Mauro's investigation was largely one of deafening silence. A few of his competitors offered congratulations on the scoop, but others privately derided the story as simplistic and hyped. While a few Supreme Court reporters did cover some

A critic says

Supreme
Court
reporters
are "tools"
of the Court,
but others
find their lack
of scandal
mongering
refreshing.

of the ensuing controversy, they seemed to do it halfheartedly.

The reaction to Mauro's story reflects more than a simple quibble between reporters about what makes a good story. It goes to the heart of how journalists cover the Supreme Court, and it prompts a question: Is this Washington's most deferential press corps? Fact is, Mauro's story was one of the few pieces of enterprise journalism done by a Supreme Court reporter last year. Why don't reporters who cover the Court look behind the scenes of the institution like reporters on other beats do? The Supreme Court is a coequal branch of government and the Court's decisions affect the lives of all Americans. Don't the justices deserve the same level of coverage as the president or members of Congress?

By not digging for stories or looking to see what goes on behind the scenes, some say the Supreme Court press corps is falling down in its role as a watchdog for an entire branch of government. "They are in essence tools of the Court," says Richard Davis, a professor at Brigham Young University who wrote the 1994 book *Decisions and Images: The Supreme Court and the Press.* "The reporters say, 'Our role is not to be a watchdog, our role is to be a linking mechanism between

the justices...and the public."

Others say the Supreme Court press corps is doing its job the way it should-sticking to facts rather than seeking out scandal or intrigue. In Washington, where reporters are often criticized for reporting on politics more than on policy, Supreme Court reporters stand out, for some, in a refreshing way. "I think the Supreme Court press corps still does something that the White House press corps has stopped doing and ought to go back doing," says Stephen Wermiel, who teaches at American University's law school and who for 12 years covered the





KHUE BUI/AP

Court for The Wall Street Journal, "and that is giving you an uneditorialized discussion of the day's news."

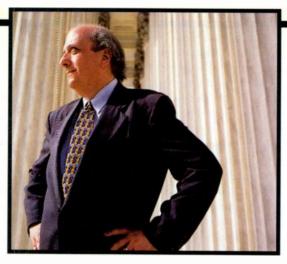
Whichever side one comes down on, it is clear that there is very little enterprise reporting being done by the Supreme Court press corps. This is underscored by the lack of interest among news organizations in covering the Court at all—a trend that can be seen most clearly on the broadcast networks. None of the major television networks have a full-

time Supreme Court reporter, nor do the all-news channels. NBC's Pete Williams and CBS's Jim Stewart split time between the Court and the Justice Department. ABC's Terry Moran is part of the network's law and justice unit; although he travels often to Washington, he is based in New York. Court TV, a network dedicated to covering the legal system, canceled its weekly show about the Court in May. Further, television journalists say it has gotten more difficult to land a story about the Supreme Court on the news. Moran, who expects to leave the beat soon, for example, says he did about a dozen pieces about the Court last term. His predecessor at ABC, Tim O'Brien, says when he was covering the Court in the 1970s and 1980s, he would do 50 pieces a year.

Television journalists may have the excuse that coverage of the Court is difficult because of the lack of images (cameras are not allowed inside). But print coverage, too, is dwindling. None of the three national weekly newsmagazines have full-time Court reporters, and, except for several highprofile cases each year, the magazines generally ignore the Court. Only 27 reporters have Supreme Court press credentials (compared with an estimated 1,700 with White House credentials). Some journalists note that the Court in recent years has scaled back the number of cases it hears, and blockbuster rulings are less common. Still, this doesn't explain the

lack of interest among news organizations in covering the Court.

An examination of how The New York Times's Greenhouse and USA Today's Mauro do their jobs demonstrates the journalistic choices the press has been making at the Court. Indeed, Supreme Court historian David Garrow, a professor at Emory University School of Law, actually discusses the Mauro method and Greenhouse method of covering the Court with his students. To under-



USA Today's Tony Mauro tries to humanize the Supreme Court.

stand the Court, Garrow says, people need to read both reporters' work.

Unlike their colleagues on the White House or congressional beats, for example, Supreme Court reporters do not try to distinguish themselves by getting scoops. Instead, they report on the Court's oral arguments and decisions. Most reporters make their living by calling sources and enticing bits of information out of them, but reporters who cover the Court do their job mostly by reading

briefs and opinions. While most pressrooms are a cacophony of phones ringing and people shouting, the Supreme Court pressroom, says one Court reporter, is like a monastery.

Supreme Court reporters tend to stay on their beat longer than most reporters. Greenhouse has been on the beat 18 years, Mauro for 20, and Nina Totenberg, who covers the Court for National Public Radio, for 31. The Baltimore Sun's Lyle Denniston, the self-styled dean of the press corps, has covered the Court since 1958. These reporters stay for a number of reasons, but mostly it's because their reporting style matches the ebb and flow of the institution. Supreme Court reporters excel at deciphering legal arguments, reading through piles of briefs. And experience on the beat really does count. Because the justices almost never talk to reporters about their decisions, reporters must largely rely on their own understanding of the Court to interpret a decision and put a story in context. As Denniston says, "I've been reading Supreme Court opinions for 41 years, I can put [a decision] into my own memory bank and put it into a better context." However, reporters who cover the Court say there is some self-selection going on. The Court beat also has had a healthy number of reporters who have come and gone quickly, some frustrated by the scholarly bent of the job.

For the most part, journalists who have been on the beat say Supreme Court reporters buy into the system that they cover. Some are law school graduates, while others who have covered the Court for years come to respect it as an institution. At the same time, it's difficult for reporters to dig up material because the press corps has almost no interaction with the justices, and the best potential sources, law clerks, are forbidden from talking to the press. "Sometimes we're not sensitive to the other responsibility we have to cover the justices as people with power," says O'Brien, the ABC News reporter who covered the Court for 22 years before being moved off the beat last year. "I think that part of the reason for this is, we've all seen how the Court works and we believe in it, we believe in the institution."

O'Brien exemplifies the conflict felt by some reporters who cover the Court. Over the course of his career, O'Brien

Tim O'Brien scored five scoops in 22 years. That may not seem like much, but on the **Supreme** Court beat it is legendary.

got five leaks on pending decisions—and broadcast stories

Disclosure: three of the journalists covered in this story-Tony Mauro, Terry Moran, and Fred Graham—formerly were colleagues of senior writer Robert Schmidt, as well as of the two top editors of this magazine.

editor at *Newsday* who covered the Court from 1991 to 1995, agrees that the Supreme Court press corps is too reverential. A former war correspondent, Phelps aggressively covered the Court and, along with NPR's Totenberg, broke one of the bigger stories to come out of the beat in recent years—the sexual harassment charges

made against Clarence Thomas by Anita Hill during Thomas's confirmation hearing. But Phelps did a lot of his work by staying away from the Court. He remembers coming to the pressroom when he began the job; he was greeted by the Court's spokeswoman. "[She] said to me when I came aboard, "Welcome to the Supreme Court family," Phelps recalls. "I was resolved not to become a member of the family."

The press corps' deferential attitude toward the Court is expressed in its coverage, in ways both small and large. Mauro has reported on justices nodding off during oral arguments, but few others do. Important issues like the justices' health are also often ignored. Fred Graham, chief

anchor for Court TV, who has covered the Supreme Court since 1965 for various news organizations, acknowledges that there is an excessive reverence among reporters. Graham remembers back to 1981, when Chief Justice Rehnquist was having serious problems with medication he was taking for back pain. It got to the point where Rehnquist was slurring his words when he spoke from the bench. But nobody reported on the problem until Rehnquist was hospitalized for drug withdrawal complications. "All of us heard it," says Graham, "but not I, nor anyone else, picked up on it."

To Greenhouse, however, the justices' personal problems often are not newsworthy. Greenhouse says that she was not thrilled with the reporting on Justice Thomas's

confirmation process, noting that if she had received the tip about Anita Hill's allegations, she may not have pursued the story. Although that may sound shocking coming from a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, Greenhouse defines her role narrowly. She writes stories that focus on the Court's work and eschews writing about the personalities of the justices. Individual justices are not worth reporting on, Greenhouse says, because unless at least five of them get together and make a majority, they can't make policy.

work product, ing on, Greenhouse says, because unless at least five of them get together and make a majority, they can't make policy.

What Greenhouse does best is take the Court's cases and decisions and put them in a historical and analytical context. Her stories give readers a feel for what the Court does and how it does it—even if the cases the Court is deciding seem boring or unimportant on the surface. At the end of the Court's term in June, for instance, Greenhouse wrote a story on three cases involving state liabilities that the Court decided by a 5–4 margin. Her story gave the news of the decisions and then deftly placed them in context of not only the current term but the past and future as well. "[I]t was also strikingly apparent that

the fault line that runs through the current Court as an all but

unbridgeable gulf has to do not with the higher-profile issues

of race, religion, abortion or due process, but with federal-

ism," Greenhouse wrote in her June 24 article. "It was clear

from the courtroom scene this morning and from the 185

Pulitzer Prize

winner Linda

The New York

Times says her

role is to

report on

the justices'

Greenhouse of

pages of often impassioned prose the Court produced in the three cases that, for these Justices, the question of the proper allocation of authority within the American system is not abstract or theoretical but urgent and fundamental, with the two sides holding irreconcilable visions of what the Constitution's framers had in mind."

Greenhouse does an inordinate amount of reading for her stories. In order to understand the Court as well as she does, Greenhouse reads more than 2,000 cases that come to the Court each year. "My very strong opinion is you cannot have a sense of what's going on here unless you see the raw material from which the Court is constructing its docket," she says.

Her understanding of the

(continued on page 117)



DAVID BURNETT/CONTACT PRESS

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

The News That NOT SPEA Its Name

Surprise! Fox News Channel

would never admit such a thing. The real surprise, though, is that Fox's uniquely raucous, irreverent brand of news is winning a sizable audience.

is conservative, though Fox



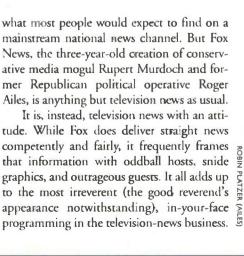
Fox News chairman Roger Ailes

By Rifka Rosenwein

Photographs by James Leynse/SABA

what most people would expect to find on a mainstream national news channel. But Fox News, the three-year-old creation of conservative media mogul Rupert Murdoch and former Republican political operative Roger

tude. While Fox does deliver straight news



BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

ONIGHT, THE HEALING MUST begin," says Sean Hannity, cohost of Fox News Channel's prime-time talk show, Hannity & Colmes. It is the night after the Columbine High School shootings, and with those words, Hannity introduces his guest, the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

"What do you say to students who've been through this kind of a tragedy?" cohost Alan Colmes asks Falwell as two Columbine students are shown via satellite. Falwell tells the teenagers that "the Lord for some reason spared them" because "the Lord had something for them special to do."

As Hannity wraps up the segment, he turns to his guest and says, "Rev. Falwell...[we] want to give you a parting shot here, maybe some thoughts and maybe even a prayer as we close this out."

The pastor complies. As the students bow their heads, Falwell closes his eyes and intones: "Our Heavenly Father, we pray for the children and the families in Littleton, Colorado, that your grace will be sufficient for this difficult hour. May your peace fill the city for Christ's sake, Amen."

Whatever else this episode is, it is not

World Radio History



The Fox News Channel newsroom in New York City

Fox News is also conservative. Such an observation, formed by watching dozens of hours of Fox News over several weeks, does not devalue the substance of the network's reportage or its sometimes strenuous efforts to present both sides of an issue. But Fox News executives positively bristle at the conservative characterization.

Fox News is "not a conservative network!" roars Fox News chairman Ailes. "I absolutely, totally deny it." Ailes is holding forth over a recent lunch of a Nestlé Sweet Success health shake and dry crackers (he's dieting) in his office above the Fox News studio on Manhattan's Sixth Avenue. "The fact is that Rupert and I and, by the way, the vast majority of the American people, believe that most of the news tilts to the left," he says. Fox's mission is "to provide a little more balance to the news" and "to go cover some stories that the mainstream media won't cover."

This, in a nutshell, is Ailes's take on his channel versus the rest of the media. It is only because the rest of the media is so liberal that his channel is labeled conservative, he says. "The fact that [Brill's Content has] to do this article because I didn't come from the left tells you everything you need to know about

why there needs to be a Fox News Channel. Because there are other opinions in the world. And they are not going to get aired on some of these other networks."

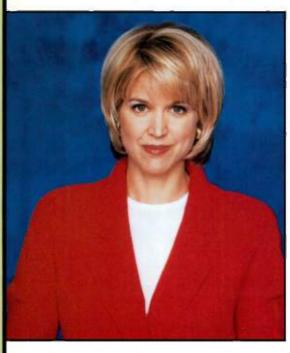
It's as if Ailes and other Fox News executives are ashamed of the conservative label. "You know, if you commit murder in this country, you can get off in seven years," Ailes bellows. "I've been out of politics for almost nine years. How long do I have to live through this shit to get them to stop saying that about me?" Ailes is referring to the press's frequent description of him as a "former Republican spinmeister" (he worked for for-

RILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

mer Presidents Nixon, Reagan, and Bush), which he interprets as a knock on his journalistic credentials.

Ailes and his vice-president for news editorial, John Moody (who, in an April 19 column for Fox's website, demanded that the Pentagon prove that Serbs had committed atrocities in Kosovo), insist that their off-air proclivities don't affect what viewers see. But with a roster of hosts that includes Brit Hume, Tony Snow, David Asman, Fred Barnes, Bill O'Reilly, and even Matt Drudge, Fox News executives can't duck the fact that the network puts forth a conservative on-air face. As one executive from another network puts it, "There is a place for [what Fox does]. But call it what it is. There's no need to work under the cloak of darkness."

Fox News is trying to have it both ways. Indeed, there are sound business reasons for Fox to camouflage the nature of its program-



Ex-CBS anchor Paula Zahn joined Fox in February

ming. By bashing the "liberal" media, Fox differentiates itself from all the clutter of news programming. It is the antimedia medium. From a pure marketing perspective, this kind of branding is gold, especially in a crowded field. "They're trying to carve out their own niche, which is an intelligent thing to do," says Bruce Leichtman, director of media and entertainment strategy for The Yankee Group, a consulting firm.

The disavowal of a conservative agenda makes it easier to attract such major, controversy-averse companies as General Motors and Sprint, which are now among the channel's

Fox is "MOt a conservative network. I absolutely, totally deny it."

—Fox News chairman Roger Ailes

largest advertisers. If Fox were to embrace overtly its conservative identity, it might marginalize itself, scare off advertisers, and perhaps lose any chance of winning what Ailes and Murdoch have so far invested more than \$300 million to acquire: mainstream credibility and CNN-caliber influence.

So Fox is pulled in two directions. Much of the time, it delivers its daily diet of hard news with balance and sobriety. But frequently, its boisterous, sharp-elbowed conservatism shines through as it delivers some of the most distinctive and oftentimes entertaining news programming on television.

And its appeal is real. Fox News has established itself as a credible presence in the news business. Fox News's prime-time ratings jumped 214 percent in 1999's second quarter from a year earlier, reaching an average of 207,000 households, up from 66,000 in 1998, according to Nielsen Media Research. For the same time period, which included the Kosovo war and the Columbine shootings, MSNBC was up 93 percent, to an average 234,000 households, while CNN was up 13 percent, reaching 664,000 homes. True, when the nation is riveted by a real news crisis, such as the Columbine shootings, it turns to the less edgy CNN and MSNBC, which see ratings spike with big news events and then fall off dramatically. However, Fox's distinctively conservative prime-time lineup has succeeded in achieving the elusive "appointment viewing" that holds its ratings steady week in and week out as viewers regularly tune in to their favorite programs. Fox has begun to overtake MSNBC in prime-time ratings this year.

Fox has made these gains as it increases its availability on cable systems around the country. About 41.5 million U.S. homes now receive Fox News, as compared to the 50 mil-

lion that receive MSNBC and the 76 million that get CNN. The key to Fox News's success in this area is simple: money. Fox News and its parent company, News Corporation, have decided that they are "going to buy [their] way onto systems," says The Yankee Group's Leichtman. Fox basically paid cable operators to carry its news channel-a practice that is not unique in the industry, but one never before executed on such a wide and expensive scale. The company paid cable systems between \$8 and \$12 per subscriber to carry Fox News. Those systems, in turn, agreed to pay back Fox an average of 20 cents per month for the duration of their contracts, which usually last ten years. By contrast, cable operators pay to carry CNN and many pay to carry MSNBC as well. (About 50 percent of MSNBC's distribution comes from cable systems that carry it to compensate NBC for getting network programming for free.)

Regardless of how it finagles distribution, Fox News is poised to gain influence as more viewers desert the broadcast networks' traditional nightly newscasts and flock to all-news cable channels. Fully 40 percent of Americans now get their television news from cable, as opposed to 57 percent from the broadcast networks, according to The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press. Fox News has already laid claim to a less sophisticated and less wealthy audience than its rivals. Given that, it is worth looking at this ugly duckling of a news network. Fox has tapped into a so-far underserved audience; its success may have come despite—or precisely because of—its raw new approach to news.

OW RAW? HOW ABOUT THE wild May 5 Hannity & Colmes performance of former U.S. Rep. "B-1 Bob" Dornan, a Republican who screamed to a wildly applauding live audience in Atlanta that President Clinton is "a rapist...who has no moral authority to be the commander-in-chief." Then, in a surge of Clinton-hating exuberance, Dornan and host Hannity stood up, bowed to the audience, and clasped their upheld hands in a victory salute.

On Fox News Sunday's October 19, 1997, show, images of the president posing with contributors at those now-infamous White House coffees rolled while Willie Nelson's "If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time" played. These tongue-in-cheek news/music videos are a regular feature on the show.

On May 19 of this year, Fox News was the only national news organization to offer live, breaking news coverage of presidential hopeful Dan Quayle's speech commemorating the seventh anniversary of his attack on the family values portrayed in Murphy Brown, the canceled sitcom.

Flashed as text at the bottom of the screen during some newscasts are "Fox Facts." On June 13, when independent counsel Kenneth Starr appeared on Fox News Sunday, viewers were informed that "169 publications called for [President] Clinton's resignation" and "The Starr report was 445 pages and contained the word 'sex' 548 times.'

But there is some serious, legitimate news that Fox News Channel covers closely while its competitors take a pass.

Fox News was the only network to air large portions of the recent congressional hearings on the Chinese nuclear espionage scandal. Fox was also the only channel to cover extensively the campaign-finance reform hearings in 1997. These hearings made the Democrats and their president look bad.

This is not to say that these weren't valid stories of national interest. Clearly, the public was well served by having Fox air these events. But they also illustrate a pattern of coverage that helps define the network and give it an identity. A viewer knows he can rely on Fox for certain kinds of information.

As Ailes himself points out, besides breaking news, the programming on any news channel appears only because of someone's subjective editorial judgment. "Look, about a third of what actually happens is news," says Ailes. "If Littleton, Colorado, happens, it's news. If a plane crash happens, it's news....The difference [between Fox News and its competitors] may be that if there are national security issues about paying off one of the national committees that gave the Chinese the technology to aim nuclear missiles at the United States, we consider that news. Regardless of which party got paid off." (It has not yet been established that certain campaign contributions to the Democratic Party during the 1996 campaign were directly connected to the Chinese obtaining U.S. nuclear secrets.)

"Because I have a more conservative background, would I have enjoyed covering" payoffs to the Republican Party? Ailes asks. "Probably not. Would I have done it? Ab-solutely. And therein lies the difference."

And for Fox, being different is everything. "There's a certain sameness to the news on the Big Three and CNN," says Moody, a former Time foreign correspondent who is in charge of Fox News's day-to-day editorial decisions. That's the message, Moody says, that "America is bad, corporations are bad, animal species should be protected, and every cop is a racist killer. That's where 'fair and balanced' [Fox's slogan] comes in. We don't think all corporations are bad, every forest should be



Rev. Jerry Falwell leads a prayer on the air.

saved, every government spending program is good. We're going to be more inquisitive."

Ailes and Moody, in separate interviews, cite recent examples of their "more inquisitive" approach:

A series in February called, "Sit Down, Shut Up, and Learn," on the failures of the "self-esteem" movement in education. In it, as Ailes describes it, a principal in the Southwest "cancels self-esteem classes, scores go up 48 percent in two semesters, and guess what? The kids have more self-esteem because they get little stars on their report cards!"

'There's something different in education you won't see on any other network" because, Ailes maintains, the rest of the media believe that more funding from the federal government is the best solution for improving education.

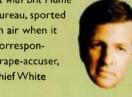
CAST OF CHARACTERS ON FOX

BILL O'REILLY, anchor of The O'Reilly Factor, Fox News

Channel's highest-rated show, says he is a political independent who represents "blue-collar, working-class Americans." Though the former Inside Edition host says he has no political ideology, he is virulently anti-President Clinton "because Clinton is doing a horrible job." During a show in the aftermath of the Columbine shootings that discussed lack of parental supervision of teenagers, O'Reilly said: "We'll blame that on the

Democrats...taxes are so high that both parents have to work..."

BRIT HUME, anchor of Special Report with Brit Hume and managing editor of the Washington bureau, sported a "Free Lisa Myers" button on his lapel on air when it appeared that NBC News had killed its correspondent's interview with President Clinton's rape-accuser, Juanita Broaddrick. Hume is the former chief White House correspondent for ABC News.



TONY SNOW, host of Fox News Sunday, is a former speechwriter for President George Bush. "It's fair to say that I'm known as a conservative," says Snow, who nonetheless insists that "the success of our show depends on being fair. Period."

MATT DRUDGE, host of Drudge, let Monicagate loose on the free world. Drudge has said he is a populist, rather than a conservative.

> FRED BARNES and MORTON KONDRACKE are the stars of Fox's The Beltway Boys. Barnes is also executive editor of the conservative, Rupert Murdoch owned political magazine The Weekly Standard.

The less-conservative Kondracke (right) is the executive editor of Roll Call.

DAVID ASMAN, host of Fox In Depth, is a former senior editor of The Wall Street Journal's editorial page.

SEAN HANNITY, the conservative half of Hannity & Colmes, also hosts a radio talk show on New York's WABC-AM.



ALAN COLMES is the only self-declared liberal host in Fox News's entire lineup. He also hosts a radio talk show on New York's WEVD-AM





On the set of The O'Reilly Factor

A story in the works this spring about the Catholic Church's vast array of shelters for battered women. "We don't automatically think that all priests are pedophiles and drunks," says Ailes. "We cover religion with more respect than anyone else."

Mayors in Africa, which Fox News was the only news channel to cover from the scene. Because Fox News didn't have a crew available, Ailes arranged for the Rev. Jesse Jackson (who hosts a show on rival CNN) to call in a report from the conference.

fill with news, all the news channels pack their programs with guests, panels, and talking heads. Their choices of who gets on the air color the information viewers receive. "You may see some conservative views [on Fox] that may not appear elsewhere, so there may be more conservative content," says Tony Snow, who hosts Fox News Sunday. "But the differences are overstated. A lot of us are still vying for the same guests."

Fox News producers and hosts stress repeatedly that they always strive to present both sides of an issue and have people representing both sides on their programs. And for the most part, they succeed. For example, retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. David Grossman, who blames video games for youth violence, squared off against *PC Gamer* magazine editor Gary Whitta on *The Fox Report* with Paula Zahn.

But Republicans and conservatives appear alone or paired with their fellow travelers on many more occasions than do Democrats. Some examples: Ralph Reed, Republican political consultant and former head of the Christian Coalition, is interviewed alone on *Special Report with Brit Hume*. Ann Coulter, conservative pundit;

Dick Morris, former Clinton adviser and current Clinton-basher; and David Asman, a Fox News anchor and former Wall Street Journal editorial writer, all guest cohosted The O'Reilly Factor one evening.

Not that balanced discussions do not ever occur. Shepard Smith, hosting a June 29



segment of *Fox News Now*, gamely stayed out of a spirited debate between Democratic consultant Robert Zimmerman and former Nixon aide Bob McMillan about whether President Clinton would run for the U.S. Senate in Arkansas—a rumor that had been floating around that week.

Of course, on a network as new as Fox, the guests viewers see may simply represent whom Fox can get. "What informs the guest choices is who's available. I know because they call on only two hours' notice," says James Ledbetter, former press critic for the *The Village Voice*, who has been a guest on a number of Fox News shows. "The attitude is they're really grateful to have you."

As an unabashed liberal, Ledbetter, who is now the New York bureau chief of *The Industry Standard*, says he has been impressed with Fox's efforts to get representatives from the left on its shows, sometimes even those "on the pretty hard left, in a way the networks don't." For example, Jeff Cohen, head of Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting, a "hard-left" media watchdog [and a *Brill's Content* contributor; see "Face-Off," page 54] is a regular panelist on *Fox News Watch*.

At the same time, Ledbetter is somewhat suspicious of Fox's motives. "It's a complicated game," he says. "The more extreme left they present, the easier it is to lampoon."

O WHO, EXACTLY, IS WATCHING Fox News? Fox News executives are quite open about targeting their programming to outside-the-Beltway folk who distrust other media as being too liberal. Fox News's slogan

of "fair and balanced" means different things to different people. "You think that's code for right-wing," Moody says to a visiting reporter. "I think that so-called average viewers—people not in this business, people who don't live in New York or Los Angeles, people who take mass transit to work—are suspi-

cious of television news."

Gad Romann, president of the Romann Group, an advertising agency that has bought time on the channel, describes Fox's audience this way: "Not particularly sophisticated, more conservative, less experimental." The median household income for Fox News viewers aged 25 to 54 is \$56,166, significantly below that of MSNBC viewers, at \$61,809; CNN viewers, at \$61,859; and CNBC viewers, at the high end with \$63,710, according to a 1998 survey by Mediamark Research Inc., a market research firm.

The demographics for news watchers as a whole are skewed somewhat older and better educated than the general population. Within this group, however, there are some differences. Fox viewers are 42 percent more likely than the average American to have graduated college, as compared to 64 percent for CNBC viewers, 67 percent for CNN viewers, and 77 percent for MSNBC viewers, according to MRI.

A big problem for Fox News is who is *not* watching: the urban, probably liberal twentysomethings who typically act as media buyers for big advertising agencies. "The awareness level of [Fox News] is so low," says Daniel Rank, director of television buying for DDB Worldwide, a major advertising agency. "My guess is that 95 percent of [ad] buyers have never seen it."

Fox News's top ad salesman acknowledges the problem. "Most media buyers are in their twenties, in New York or L.A., and are more liberal than their clients," says Paul Rittenberg, vice-president for advertising sales. "Sometimes we circumvent agencies and go straight to the client. [Especially at the beginning] we had to do a lot of that."

Rittenberg, in fact, is learning how to turn Fox News's image on its head, and to his advantage. As part of their pitch to potential advertisers, he and his sales force hold up two pictures: one of Oliver North, the right-wing Republican and focal point of the Iran-contra investigation, and one of Paula Zahn, the former CBS correspondent and morning-show host. The salespeople ask, "When we launched two and a half years ago, if somebody had shown you [these pictures and

asked], which new news network do you think will get Ollie North and which will get Paula Zahn, what would you have guessed?" North cohosts *Equal Time* on MSNBC, while Zahn, hired in February, is Fox's new big star. "Generally, there's knowing laughter" in the room after this presentation, says Rittenberg. "By and large, everybody gets it: *You guys are right. You're legitimate. You've got Paula Zahn, Brit Hume.*"

But with its advertising strategy, as with its approach to programming, Fox News tries to have it both ways. It disavows having an ideological bent, but encourages the perception of one when it suits its business interests. Rittenberg notes that "there might be a perception [among advertisers] that Republicans or right-wing [viewers] have more disposable income, a perception I don't try to dispute."

P AND DOWN THE NETWORK, people hold up as signs of their credibility Zahn and Hume, the former ABC News correspondent who was the first big name to join Fox and give it an aura of legitimacy.

But, in addition to his impeccable journalistic credentials, Hume also has always been known as a political conservative. Zahn is not associated with any political ideology and thus gives the network the imprimatur of objectivity that Fox executives so obviously covet.

Zahn, who was frequently trotted out by the company when she first joined, is well aware of the symbolism of her move. But, she

insists, "I had absolutely no reservations" about coming to Fox. So far, Zahn says, she's been more than satisfied with the quality and tone of the stories she's seen and worked on at Fox. "The mission here is to tell the news. That's pretty straightforward." She has also delivered for Fox. Her Fox Report has more than doubled its ratings, to an average of 167,000 households, since she arrived. She was named this summer to host a new 10 P.M. show beginning this fall to replace The Crier Report (whose host, Catherine Crier, left for Court TV).

But showcasing the hosts and anchors on the network is a doubleedged sword for Fox. Rittenberg

believes that one of Fox's greatest strengths is its roster of prime-time hosts, which has attracted what is known in the industry as "appointment viewers"—people who regularly tune it to watch particular personalities or programs. Unlike CNN, which made its

"We don't think all corporations are bad, every forest should be saved. We're

going to be more inquisitive."

—Fox News vice-president John Moody

name on breaking news, and MSNBC, whose close association with NBC gives it instant credibility and a huge promotional push, Fox has pinned its hopes on its prime-time lineup. "Aside from Larry King and Lou Dobbs [who left in June], I defy anyone to name who's on when at CNN," says Rittenberg. "We've created more appointment viewing in two and a half years than CNN has in twenty."

This may be true, but with whom are viewers making appointments? Largely with a conservative group of hosts [see "Cast Of

Ailes's response to this characterization is sublime. While not denying the political orientation of many of his hosts, he retorts: "But you're also looking at the guy who put Geraldo Rivera on the air, who put Chris Matthews on the air." Ailes ran both CNBC and NBC's now-defunct America's Talking channel in the mid-1990s, during which time he hired both Rivera and Matthews (who has since become a vocal critic of President Clinton). Ailes says he has since tried (unsuccessfully) to lure both to Fox News Channel as well.

"I tried to hire [former Democratic New York Governor] Mario Cuomo when I got here," adds Ailes. "And, by the way, I hired his son. I hired Doug Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy's youngest son." Christopher Cuomo is a correspondent for *Fox Files*, a prime-time newsmagazine that airs on Fox's broadcasting affiliates. Douglas Kennedy is a roving correspondent.

"You name me a liberal that will get [high ratings] at eight o'clock at night, on a consistent basis, and I'll have to have a talk with him," says Ailes. "You go with what's available that's going to get you ratings. I'm not going to put some person on who's going to bore everyone to death just so I could say I have a house liberal."

So maybe it's not about ideology at all. Maybe, like much of television news, the Fox News Channel is about attracting viewers with entertaining programming and getting good ratings.

In the best of all possible worlds, would

Ailes like to run an openly conservative news network? "No, not a chance," he replies forcefully. "It would be ineffective, it would play to the people who already believe, it would have no effect except a negative effect, it would create more division in society. [And] it would not be financially successful."

In the end, Ailes reminds us, "I'm also a capitalist."



Fox News's street-level studio in New York City

Characters," page 79]. "The dominant force is always the host. They get the final word," says Ledbetter. "There's a certain kind of ideological consistency among the [Fox] hosts that ultimately defines the network."



82

As a reporter who covers war, I have learned a powerful lesson: Getting to know the people whose lives have been forever changed by violence and death can sometimes lead to more lies than truth.

Gastalties of Wancy Durham

I am a video journalist, and my beat is war, but off the path worn by my fellow correspondents. I work alone, which seems to give me good access to people in utterly threatening surroundings. It helps enormously that I don't work on deadline; I can spend the time it takes to report a story well. Once I've gathered all the pictures and information I need, I return to my base at the London bureau of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Newsworld, the CBC's 24-hour cable news channel. I have been working this way for five years, mostly in the Balkans.

My experience in Kosovo over the last year and a half has introduced me to a type of propaganda that I have never encountered before, at least as far as I know. Because of that, I have learned a lesson: Taking time to get to know the people in your stories, and making a point of following up on stories, which I do, means you might actually find the truth—and discover that what came before it was a lie.

My stories are not about the front lines of war. Most of my subjects are ordinary people, although for them, the small challenges of everyday life have become a struggle for survival. I suppose my goal is to make TV viewers care about the ordinary people trapped in war because many times the particular war they're in has fallen out of the news, as Kosovo had pretty much done when I was there in September 1998.

While I certainly wasn't the only reporter in the place at the time,





Reporter Nancy Durham (top) first met 18-year-old Rajmonda Rreci (bottom) when the girl was a patient in a KLA hospital in Shalë in September 1998.

ANCY DURH

it was definitely not the story of the day. Monica was. I had read about desperate people hiding in the forests that summer but had not seen any pictures. When I finally saw the real thing for myself that September, I could hardly believe the scene. The people's desperation and dignity were in such stark contrast to one another. Camped in miserable weather under bits of plastic and tents supported by sticks, I saw sick and hungry people, yet they were carrying on almost as normal, the women baking bread in the rain in wood stoves that the men had carted from villages to the forest.

While I wasn't thinking about it at the time, my being there in those desperate days made me very attractive to the Albanian Kosovars, whose plight was far from the top of the news agenda. NATO seemed to be on holiday, and all the while, Kosovo was quite literally on fire.

On this journey, I traveled to Shalë, in Drenica (a Kosovo Liberation Army stronghold), with an Albanian Kosovar doctor, Shpetim Robaj. He took me there to show me a KLA field the United States, CBS Evening News used my pictures to tell Shpetim's story. Kosovo was sneaking back into the news. Viewers were moved by Shpetim's warmth and humor in the midst of adversity and distressed by his untimely death. Although Rajmonda made only a brief appearance, she too made an impact. People were struck by her conviction to avenge the murder of her sister. So three months later, in December, I returned to Shalë to look for her.

After a harrowing search, I found Rajmonda at the KLA's Drenica mountain headquarters. As twilight capped the summit, we stood together shivering in the forest while she gave a riveting interview. Here was a beautiful 18-year-old girl in a soldier's uniform, cradling a Kalashnikov rifle that she described as being "just like one member of my family. This is for me everything...because he have the power that I don't have."

It was nearly dark as we wrapped up our talk, and I knew I had little chance of seeing her again on this visit.



In December 1998, Durham filmed Rajmonda at twilight outside the KLA headquarters in Drenica during their first in-depth interview.

hospital. One week after our visit, Shpetim was killed when a landmine exploded under his Red Cross vehicle. Partly because of his death and partly because of other Kosovars I met on that first occasion in Shalë, I decided to make it "my village." I wanted to concentrate on a small place no other reporters had found reason to spend time in, rather than head, for example, to a village renowned for a mass grave. I wanted to follow ordinary people as they traveled through war, and hoped to benefit from getting to know them.

Shalë is where I first met Rajmonda Rreci, who was then 18. She was a patient in the KLA hospital at the time, pale and weak and attached to an intravenous drip. She told me she had just seen her eight-year-old sister Qendresa killed in a Serb attack on her village.

When we first met, Rajmonda and I only had a few minutes together. She told me in a voice filled with anger and conviction that she might join the KLA as a result of what had happened to her family. I wanted to speak with her more, but there was intermittent shelling nearby, it was late afternoon, and since no one stayed out in the country-side at night in those days, I had to move on.

The following week, I returned to London to assemble my story about Shpetim. My report was shown around the world in about a dozen countries that I know of, including Germany, Sweden, Italy, the Netherlands, and Australia; in

Before I left, I said I'd like to see her little sister's grave. "Even I don't know where it is," she said. I asked her what Qendresa's death meant to her. Rajmonda replied, "It's so really, really hard. But I am—sometimes, I am so lucky that my sister was only seven years old—six years old—and she had a chance to give her blood for this land."

This is when the first faint feeling of doubt flickered through my brain. In September, Rajmonda had told me her sister was eight. Was it just her command of English that tripped her up? I made a note to check her age in my notes. Although Rajmonda spoke stirringly in English, her speech was full of grammatical errors. I thought it an easy mistake for her to make and put it down to stress and war, but I wanted to get it right.

In television, you can live without a small detail like an exact age, but you cannot live without pictures, and I badly needed them if I was going to tell Rajmonda's story. Since there was no grave to visit, I pursued the idea of going to her hometown. "Why not?" she cheerfully asked. A picture of her house—whether it was still standing or in ruins—would do. It didn't even really matter if no one was home. I could talk to a neighbor, a teacher—anyone at all who could inform me about the life of a girl who had come to treat a Kalashnikov as a family member.

I asked Visar, my fixer-my translator, driver, and all-



day off at the logistics house. She was very warm and, I thought, happy to see me. She spoke about death and how she had thought it was coming to her in one particular battle; how the soldiers sang together to give themselves power; and how killing the enemy was hard at first, but then "you only want to kill, to kill him because you know what he done to your family." She told me how she was committed to the struggle for complete independence for Kosovo, vet yearned to behave like a teenager while she still was one. And once again I asked her about her feelings for her sister, Qendresa. She said that sometimes "you have to lose some-

admit I'd fallen victim to a had to stories, which aired in my around the world, repeated the lie.

Shpetim Robaj (top left), an Albanian Kosovar doctor introduced Durham to Rajmonda. One week later, he was killed when a landmine exploded under his Red Cross vehicle. A wooden gravemarker stands at the spot where he is buried in a Pristina cemetery.

around guide—to ask Rajmonda for directions to Skenderaj. They talked for a bit, in Albanian of course, when suddenly Rajmonda had a change of heart. She now said it could endanger her family for me to go to them. I offered to skip the family interviews if that made her feel better, and just take pictures of the neighborhood, but she wouldn't budge. Visar also insisted it was too dangerous. Once again, I felt slight pangs of suspicion. Why didn't Rajmonda want me to see her hometown? Her insistence was puzzling.

I wanted to learn more about this girl, but it wouldn't be easy. All serious reporting in a place like Kosovo is pure doorto-door diligence. There are no working land phones, cell phones are virtually useless outside of the capital, there is no reliable postal service. If you want to ask a question, you must drive, sometimes for hours, sometimes down roads that have been mined. No matter how seriously you take warnings and war training—and I take them very seriously—you do take risks. You drive and arrive to find the person has only just left for another part of the country. For me to find someone who knew Rajmonda and could tell me anything more about her and her family would have been close to impossible in the middle of a war.

For now, I would have to let it go. No grave, no village, no more Rajmonda for that visit.

I went back to London and told her story. It was a report about a gun-toting girl soldier who saw her small sister die. It was beamed around the world, just like the first installment. CBS news featured her. Stephanie Nolen of The Globe and Mail in Toronto saw Rajmonda on CBC and told me she found her "so real...she was such a child, and yet she had skills and ideas and plans and a sort of mission that's utterly foreign to what I know of [teenage] girls....Was it her sister who was killed? What more primal reason would there be for picking up a gun?" After my report aired on Channel 4 News in Britain, the editor, Jim Gray, declared that the story was the "tastiest morsel" on the show that night.

In June, when the war ended, I returned to Kosovo to look once again for Rajmonda. I learned that she had indeed survived and was still at KLA headquarters on the mountain in Drenica. I found her on her thing that you love, you really love, to have the freedom."

We spent the night in the KLA logistics house. Rajmonda made a bed for me on a cot in her room while she slept on the floor on a foam mattress cuddled up to another soldier, two girls in short nighties looking like children at a pajama party. In the morning, two soldiers arrived and told Rajmonda to put on her uniform, get her Kalashnikov, and join them for a mission. Off she went.

The following day I found her in a university dorm in Prizren, a city in the south, that had been taken over by the KLA. She was dressed in the allblack uniform of the new KLA special-police unit but she had added a touch of her own, a ribbon of black lace for a choker tied around her neck.

She told me that she had learned her family was alive and safe in Albania. She also offered me a surprise element to her story. She said she had in fact been an agent for the KLA in the summer of 1998—before she met me—and she told me that as an agent, she had been used to spy on Serb policemen. She dressed up and flirted with them, speaking excellent Serbian, she said, adding that she wore a wireless microphone for these operations and had a code line like "it's time to move" to let the KLA know when to pounce.

It was chilling listening to her describe her work. And it was unsettling, too, because her story was beginning to unravel. If she had lied to me about being a KLA agent, what else had she lied to me about? I blurted out, "Qendresa did really die, didn't she?" "Oh, yes," she said.

By now, I had a more than a gnawing feeling about the whole story. Something wasn't right, but I didn't know what. I did know, however, that the Yugoslav army had just withdrawn from her hometown, and it was now finally safe to go there. So when Rajmonda and I parted, I made my plans to go to Skenderaj, to see for myself what I could find.

The next day, Donat, my fixer during this trip, and I drove from rubble house to rubble house until we were directed to Llaushë, a village on the edge of Skenderaj, where the Rreci clan was supposed to live. We picked our way down a terrible dirt track of a road. The locals insisted it was safe from mines, but I hated it. Donat wasn't bothered—he drove the

Please, someone be home. We knocked. A child answered. A beautiful, dark-haired, sparkly eyed little girl. I asked Donat to ask her her name.

"Qendresa," she beamed.

Qendresa.

I found myself in the ludicrous position of having a sick, sinking feeling because a delightful nine-year-old child was alive. I was horrified, stupefied. Qendresa's mother, Bahrije, came to the door. She recognized me-from my videotapes, I suppose. She spoke my name before I could introduce myself and she seemed a little nervous. We wasted no time in getting

to the question: Uh, Qendresa, isn't she supposed to be, uh, not here?

Bahrije quickly offered the explanation that Rajmonda had got her sister's name wrong and that actually it was another sister, "Dafina," who died in the war. But her story was sloppy and not even close to Rajmonda's version. She said "Dafina" was killed in shelling in the woods, while Qendresa was supposed to have died in a fleeing convoy. The dates were wrong, the names were wrong. I could see there was no Dafina at all! It stunk. I had to admit I'd fallen victim to a lie. My story was no longer a true one, and the reports that had aired in cities around the world repeated the lie.

The next morning, Donat and I headed back to Raimonda's new head-

quarters at Prizren for a confrontation. I was a nervous wreck by the time she appeared. A teenage girl I thought I knew had my reputation in her hands. She'd lied to me—but why?

I found her and asked her that very question. She said that last summer, five days before we met, she was told that a girl who fit Qendresa's description had been killed. She claimed that the doctors—both Shpetim and another doctor at the field hospital—encouraged her to tell me her sister was dead as though it were fact. Rajmonda admitted that by December, she knew without doubt that Qendresa was alive. So why didn't she say so when I met her on the mountain? She blames everyone but herself—Visar, my fixer at the time, the doctors, the KLA. She says everyone told her the same thing, that lots of girls lost their little sisters and didn't have the chance to give an interview, so she should do it for them.

I returned to London with a bag of tapes but in a complete fog as to how to use them. Initially, I thought I could salvage my story. I would just have to find a way to let viewers know a fundamental part of it was nonwork with them, the more I wondered who else had lied. I had completely lost heart. I turned to my colleagues, who saw much faster than I that I must return to Kosovo and approach the story afresh. Kelly Crichton, executive producer of CBC's The National Magazine, listened quietly to my saga. When I was done, she told me I potentially had an even better story: If I could turn it into a story of war propaganda, I stood to be seen as an "older, wiser, more brave and honest reporter."

Older I certainly felt; for the rest, I will have to wait and see. Meanwhile, I have contacted the news outlets that ran my reports about Rajmonda to tell them about her lie and to notify them that a new installment is on its way.

It has taken me several weeks to

begin to feel once again engaged as a journalist and to regain my interest in this troublesome story. I was helped by a visit to Shpetim's sister Aferdita and her husband, Faton, Kosovar exiles in London. They were deeply sympathetic but honest enough, too, to admit that the lie probably did help their

cause. Faton explained that my story came when "no one from the West believed our suffering. After the propaganda the world said, 'Oh, the doctor died, and the sister died.'...Now everyone knows the suffering, a year ago they did not." But the weakness of propaganda is not lost on Faton, either. "This story you tell now will be very good for Serbs. This is how Albanians are. They lie. But thanks God we have plenty of real tragedies and Rajmonda's lie is going to be nothing."

I often think of the human misery and suffering I witnessed in Kosovo last summer. The people hiding in the forests, the villages on fire. Why would anyone feel the need to make up or exaggerate death? And then I remember the very last time I saw Shpetim.

He was crying. He wasn't acting. He had seen terrible things. That September, there were few reporters around. The place really was on fire. I saw the smoke.

I have agonized over whether I could have done a better job of reporting this story. I have searched my mind, my memories, my tapes, my notes, and my photographs for clues. I have listened over and over again to Rajmonda's lies on videotape. I have studied her face, her eyes. And I don't think I would do anything differently next time. In war, how else is there to work as a reporter but to go see for yourself as much as circumstances will allow? I looked and listened and thought I knew when to trust the word of a witness. I did go back again and again.

And as I write, I am on my way back to Kosovo once more to try to finish the story that was interrupted in June, when it took its new course. Now, recharged and with renewed fascination for why I was lied to, I am on my way to Kosovo—to look for more of the truth.

Rajmonda's mother, Bahrije, and sisters, llirida and Qendresa (standing in doorway), remained in Kosovo during the war.

sense! But the more I looked at the tapes and attempted to

Nancy Durham wrote a diary chronicling her experiences as a reporter covering the fleeing Kosovar refugees for the June issue.

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

WHY THE MEDIA KEPT THEIR



Thirsty for interviews with megastars Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, the media lapped up studio marketing spin that Stanley Kubrick's last film was a steamy, erotic masterpiece. But in exchange for access, the press ignored one big fact: The movie isn't sexy.

BY KATHERINE ROSMAN

"It's not erotic. It was strange and very long."

"It's sexual, I guess. In a base way."

"There's no chemistry between Tom and Nicole. It's not sexy at all."

The two ABC News staffers are overheard while noshing on free Warner Bros.—provided food in a press suite at the swank Beverly Hills Four Seasons Hotel on July 11. They are there "covering" one of the summer's major news events (if such things are measured by the number of magazine covers and network news stories to mark its arrival): Eyes Wide Shut, the late Stanley Kubrick's last film, starring the married-in-real-life Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. With the sole exception of Time magazine, no one in the American press had been allowed to see the movie until about a week before its premiere. In fact, the vast majority of journalists from national news outlets—like these two from ABC News—were able to see it just 72 hours before the premiere. Despite that,



Eyes Wide Shut had already been billed in magazines as "... the summer's sexiest movie..." (Rolling Stone) and "The Sexiest Movie Ever?" (Us). The stars even posed bare-skinned for the July 5 Time cover, which was among the newsweekly's top-ten sellers so far this year.

The ABC News staffers were there preparing five *Good Morning America* segments and a 20/20 piece. That was the level of coverage that ABC had promised as Diane Sawyer was given Tom Cruise's first television interview to promote the film, which had been shrouded in secrecy. Already, ABC ads touting "CRUISE. KIDMAN. SAWYER." (echoing Warner Bros.'s "CRUISE. KIDMAN. KUBRICK." advertising campaign) were running on the network and in *USA Today*.

But ABC had agreed to this huge promotional push for *Eyes Wide Shut* in early June without knowing anything about the actual movie. The two ABC News staffers quoted above had just discovered the truth that Warner Bros. and Pat Kingsley, Hollywood's powerful publicist, had so successfully hidden for so long: The movie isn't sexy.

When 20/20 aired Sawyer's Tom Cruise interview on July 14, however, the show still teased the movie as a terrific erotic thriller. "How much sex is there in this movie?" Sawyer asked Cruise, who laughed and didn't reply. "Were you making love to your wife in front of Stanley Kubrick?" Sawyer purred. Again, Cruise laughed, dodging the question with a coy "You gotta go see the movie." After flashing numerous sexy images

of the two stars, Sawyer did tell her viewers that the couple "have surprisingly few love scenes together." But she didn't mention that there are few love scenes period. (Sawyer did not respond to requests to speak about her role in the Eyes Wide Shut media blitz.) The Tom Cruise interview on 20/20 was the fourth-highest rated network TV show that week.

For the marketers behind Eyes Wide Shut, ABC's coverage was one of many home runs hit amid the media frenzy that led up to the film's July 16 release. The chief executrix of the PR campaign was the 67-year-old Kingsley, founder of PMK, a powerhouse publicity firm with offices in New York and Hollywood that wields great influence as it negotiates media access to star clients like Cruise, Kidman, Tom Hanks, and Iodie Foster. "We were extraordinarily fortunate," Kingsley says demurely. "It's never easy to get the press to do it for you. You have to have the right combination. They are not there to service us. But we are there to use one another. They use us for what they need and we use them for what we need."

"Pure entertainment and pure sex.... It's almost a risk to put anything else on the cover, a commercial risk."

Esquire editor David Granger



Apparently, the media needed a whole lot of Cruise and Kidman. For the promotion of Eyes Wide Shut, Kingsley brokered the pair to Time, Esquire, Good Housekeeping, Vogue, Rolling Stone, and Harper's Bazaar, all of which published glowing cover stories in May, June, or July. (Us ran a laudatory July cover story despite Kingsley's refusal to give the celebrity magazine interviews with her stars.) Other stories appeared in such magazines as Vanity Fair, Premiere, W, and Newsweek.

Throughout, the magazines titillated readers with promises of a perhaps unprecedentedly erotic mainstream thriller. No one at any of these magazines, with the exception of Time, had actually seen the movie or successfully interviewed anyone involved about what it contained. So what made the magazines think the movie would be so hot and tawdry? In March, Kubrick's staff, with Kingsley's knowledge, sent a 90-second



sex scene from the movie to media outlets. That was it.

That was enough for Vogue, for example, to run a ten-page story that acknowledged in the eleventh paragraph that the writer, John Powers, knew nothing about Eyes Wide Shut. Undaunted, Powers heralded the film's "erotic audacity." Rolling Stone's Kidman cover story, "Lust & Trust," promised that "Nicole Kidman shares secrets about life with Tom Cruise and working with Stanley Kubrick on the summer's sexiest movie, Eyes Wide Shut." What's more, Rolling Stone teased, the film "is said to contain scenes of unprecedented erotic intimacy...." Us's July cover ran a photo of the two stars with the rhetorical question "The Sexiest Movie Ever?" Liz Smith, who interviewed Kidman for the cover of Good Housekeeping amid the movie-marketing hullabaloo, concedes that the press were duped on this one. "The press [are] just trying to sell their magazines and their newspapers and they think sex sells," says Smith. "And they're told [by Warner Bros. and Kingsley that it is] going to be a real sexy movie and these are two of the biggest stars in the world, and they bought all of it."

Rarely has a studio so successfully kept all details about the actual product being sold out of the media coverage surrounding its release. Nancy Kirkpatrick, Warner Bros. senior vice-president for publicity, says that Kubrick devised the strategy to make no details of the film public before its release. Even after he died on March 7, the studio and Kingsley stuck to the hide-the-product publicity strategy. Hollywood marketers not involved with Eyes Wide Shut marvel at how successfully Kingsley and the studio fooled everyone. The media "just fell for it hook, line, and sinker," says Terry Press, chief of marketing for DreamWorks SKG, a Warner Bros. rival. "The smartest thing [Warner Bros. and Kingsley] did was not show it. The press just ate it up like it was whipped cream with a cherry on top."

The film needed a mother lode of buzz. Kubrick's \$61 million (according to Kingsley) project had to attract more than an art-house audience to make money. Given that,

purpose. Our coverline ["The Sexiest Movie Ever?"] had a question mark."

All the buzz gave the movie a respectable opening-weekend take of \$21.7 million. By the next weekend, many scathing reviews had pointed out that the movie wasn't very erotic. That, combined with poisonous word of mouth, caused the movie's second-week take to plummet by a disastrous 53 percent. By August 16, a month after the movie had opened, it had taken in \$53.5 million. (At the same time, the low-budget, no-big-studio, no-stars *The Blair Witch Project* had taken in \$107.2 million.) "The jig was up the minute the movie got shown," Press says of the *Eyes Wide Shut* marketing campaign. Though the media acts as Hollywood's de facto marketing arm quite often, the treatment of *Eyes Wide Shut* marks a low point in the morphing of journalism into marketing.

Sex sells: Glossy magazines clamored to feature Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman in various states of undress.



the studio wanted as much free publicity as possible—as long as the media stuck to the marketing plan of shrouding the film in secrecy up until the very end. The biggest PR coup, ironically, was landing the one publication that succeeded in becoming an exception to the secrecy rule. Eyes Wide Shut made the cover of Time, but staffers at Time were allowed to see the movie and write about what it contained. In fact, says Time deputy managing editor Jim Kelly, the secrecy surrounding the film was part of its allure as a cover story for Time, because the magazine could offer its readers a first look at the mystery movie.

As Kingsley, working for the stars and the studio, made her deals for Kidman and Cruise interviews, she told representatives of all the magazines (except *Time*) and TV shows beforehand that the stars would not discuss *Eyes Wide Shut*—the seeming impetus for the story—at all. Perversely enough, the monthly *Us*, which didn't even get an interview with Cruise or Kidman and therefore wasn't bound by any pact with Kingsley, seems to have gone along with the campaign to not report on details of the actual film anyway. *Us* editor Charles Leerhsen says that his staff did try to report on the actual movie. "We contributed to" the marketing of the movie, says Leerhsen, "but that wasn't our

But it is startling that the editors and TV producers are now so happily complicit that they speak freely about being used as Hollywood's tools. "Pure entertainment and pure sex. Those are the things that push magazines off the newsstands," says David Granger, editor in chief of *Esquire*. "It's almost a risk to put anything else on the cover, a commercial risk."

Indeed, Granger hasn't a touch of chagrin that his Nicole Kidman cover story titillated *Esquire*'s readers with the prospect of an erotic movie. Granger, who by mid-August had not seen the movie, acknowledges that, as he understands it now, *Eyes Wide Shut* is not erotic. "People expected it to be sexy because of the little bit leaked out" by Kingsley and the others hyping the "sexy" movie, says Granger. Not that it was not worthwhile for *Esquire*; Granger got to host a party for Nicole Kidman in Los Angeles that netted the magazine some publicity. We shouldn't be surprised that the hype was misleading, Granger reasons: "I think we just live in a hyperbolic culture. The media just pumped everything up."

So what if it wasn't true? What's the harm? Both the movie and the celebrity-obsessed media make out well by playing along. "It's all business," says Kingsley. The press

The power broker: Publicist Pat Kingsley in her Hollywood office



"We were extraordinarily fortunate. It's never easy to get the press to do it for youThey use us for what they need and we use them for what we need."—Pat Kingsley

> turned the promotion of Eyes Wide Shut into a news event "not because they were trying to help us but because they were trying to help sell magazines, newspapers, television ratings. That's what it's all about. You may have an extremely serious piece in a magazine, but you'll have some fluff on the cover."

> Everyone understands that entertainment coverage is manipulated—except, perhaps, readers. When teased with titillating hype by news outlets that hadn't even seen the movie, approximately 4 million people decided to line up for the flick on its opening weekend. Then critics like Stephen Hunter of The Washington Post noted that "Eyes Wide Shut turns out to be the dirtiest movie of 1958. Boasting far more eroticism in its ad campaign than it ever shows on screen, Stanley Kubrick's 13th and last film is actually sad, rather than bad."

> Kenneth Lerer, a top public relations executive, thinks that the Eyes Wide Shut media strategy may have actually backfired, if one considers the box-office results beyond the first weekend. "Ultimately, it was a complete nonmarketing strategy," he notes, as Kingsley and Warner Bros. worked so hard to keep information about the actual film under wraps. "They got their covers, they got Tom Cruise on TV," says Lerer, who was uninvolved in the Eyes Wide Shut strategy and has not seen the movie. "But they made a decision

that did not work out well for them, in hindsight."

Indeed, the disconnect between the hype preceding the movie's release about the film's extreme "eroticism" and the generally grim reviews and word of mouth that followed doomed the movie, argues David Poland, a Hollywood industry reporter who writes a daily column for roughcut.com, a website owned by cable network TNT. "It was one of the biggest backlashes against a movie ever," Poland says. The public felt cheated and misled and avoided the movie after the first few days.

Had the film been marketed as the art film it is, it may have found a natural audience and been perceived as an artistic success, rather than as a big, star-vehicle failure. "This is a complicated movie," Poland says. By allotting critics just a few days to see the film, digest it, and write about it thoughtfully, he says, Warner Bros. and Kingsley "kept the critics from having a judicious look." Many important critics may have eviscerated the film because they didn't get a chance to examine it beyond a single screening just days before their review deadlines.

The New Yorker's David Denby, among the most influential reviewers in the country, says he had to "maneuver and cajole" to be allowed to see the movie just four days before it opened.

He hated it. In his review published July 19, Denby opened with: "This is perhaps not quite the epitaph that he would have wished—nor is it the one that I would have wished to write—but I can state unequivocally that the late Stanley Kubrick, in his final film, Eyes Wide Shut has staged the most pompous orgy in the history of the movies. Perhaps the most pompous in the history of real-life orgies, toothough, not having been to one in two or three weeks, I'm a little less sure of my ground there."

The review didn't get any better from there. Denby says the entertainment journalists who jumped on the publicity bandwagon and helped to hype the movie before they could see it are little more than frauds plying "marketing masquerading as journalism."

"LET IT GO. LET IT GO. LET IT DIE.

Let the story die, "Kingsley implores in a phone conversation from her cramped, paper-swamped corner office at PMK's West Hollywood headquarters. "There are far more interesting things for [you] to write about...than the marketing campaign on Eyes Wide Shut."

A few months earlier, when Eyes Wide Shut was shaping up as the manufactured-hype coup of the year, the affable Kingsley had been only too happy to chatter on about her work promoting the film. Now that Eyes Wide Shut is perceived as a big fizzle with a marketing strategy that backfired, Kingsley has grown more circumspect.

Not that it is her fault, of course. Or Cruise and Kidman's. Or Warner Bros.' They were all just trying to "do Stanley proud" and carry out his (perhaps flawed) strategy for publicizing the movie by not revealing anything about it. The movie's failure to live up to its blockbuster billing is "not the actors' fault," Kingsley argues. "That's the movie's fault." Call it the blame-the-dead-guy excuse.

Dead men have no publicists.

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Reporting Af The Killing



A boy hawks The Cambodia Daily on one of Phnom Penh's main streets.

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

ter Fields

Americans introduce a free press to Cambodia.



AS JOB DESCRIPTIONS GO

it's a mixed bag: reporting for a foreign daily newspaper for a salary of about \$1,000 per month; food, lodging, and laundry are free. Malaria is not a problem, but dengue fever is. So are the occasional grenades.



Robin McDowell, a former staffer at The Cambodia Daily

"I jumped at it," says Robin McDowell. It was 1993, McDowell had recently graduated from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and was working as a reporter in the New York bureau of a Japanese newspaper. She moved across the globe to Phnom Penh and dedicated the next year and a half to *The Cambodia Daily*, a start-from-scratch journalistic challenge: bring to a country emerging from decades of war and bloodshed the kind of free and independent press that every American takes for granted.

On Friday, August 20, 1993, the first issue of *The Cambodia Daily* sold fewer than 400 copies. Today the English-language paper sells more than 3, 100 copies a day. And editor in chief Chris Decherd's mission statement is as clear as it was the day the first edition hit the streets. "I want a fair product, hard-hitting, savvy, and politically neutral," says Decherd, 32, who joined the paper four years ago, leaving behind his job as a local sportswriter and general-assignment reporter in Athens, Georgia.

A BLOOD-SOAKED LAND

At least 19 people were killed and more than 150 wounded Sunday morning when four grenades exploded at a Khmer nation party-led protest outside the national assembly, police, witnesses, and aid workers said. Arms and legs were blown off by the blasts... "Help me. Take me to the hospital...! can't walk anymore," begged one woman, sprawled on the ground...

THE CAMBODIA DAILY, MARCH 31, 1997

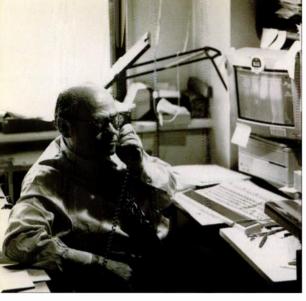
Phnom Penh is where you come to see what the so-called Asia Miracle looked like before the miracle. The city has no Rolls Royce traffic jams, no hot-shot stock-brokers talking on cell phones. Outbursts of violence are not uncommon, with guns and grenades the weapons of choice (after decades of war, there are still plenty of both around). Steady swarms of motorcycles and rickshawtaxis roar past in clouds of exhaust and dust. People congregate under trees or the shady eaves of buildings to escape the thick heat. The literacy rate stands at only 35 percent, the annual per capita income at a mere \$715.

The Cambodia Daily occupies the top two floors of a three-story building at 50B Street 240—a location that once housed a massage parlor. The newsroom can barely hold the paper's 30 to 35 editorial staffers (almost half of them American, the rest Khmer); reporters must share desks. The office, says Decherd, has its own special list of obstacles: "Power outages, running out of water, and waiting eighteen hours until the next delivery comes, a computer network that's a patchwork of systems and often crashes, a Cambodian staff with everyone from people with a college education to people who grew up orphans in refugee camps."

From the offices of the *Daily*, you can drive outside of Phnom Penh in no time—it's a city of only about a million. Down bumpy rural roads lined with shacks and rice paddies is one of the notorious killing fields. It's overgrown with weeds now, but the pits where hundreds of bodies were casually dumped by the Khmer Rouge are still

BY BARRY PETERSEN / PHOTOGRAPHS BY





Cambodia Daily founder Bernard Krisher in his Tokyo office

easy to see. A few pits have signs, put up by the government as a memorial. "This one for women and children," says one. Most pits haven't been disturbed since the Khmer Rouge carried out their killing in the 1970s. A visitor to the fields steps on human bones embedded in the hard dirt paths. The Khmer Rouge are believed to have killed 2 million people,

but no one knows for sure exactly how many died. "This soil," one Cambodian wrote, "is soaked with our blood and tears."

The Vietnamese invaded in 1979 and drove the Khmer Rouge into the jungle. Peace and free elections came in 1993. A year earlier, the government passed a law barring foreigners from operating newspapers in Cambodia. But the law was repealed amid demands for a free and open press. The stage was set for a newspaper like *The Cambodia Daily*.

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

"I give most (of my earnings) to my mom to help feed my family."... But she said she also keeps some for herself to buy new clothes, school supplies, and her favorite treat: fried bananas

NEWS DELIVERY GIRL CHOUN ROTHA
THE CAMBODIA DAILY, AUGUST 20, 1998

"Whenever I visit, I always get up early and see the kids who deliver the paper," says Bernard Krisher, the force behind the *Daily*. Krisher's accent still carries a hint of his Polish Jewish origins (his family fled the Nazis when he was 6). His whole face wrinkles when he smiles. As a boy of 12 in Queens, New York, he started his own magazine with a secondhand \$25 mimeograph machine, peddling his *Pocket Mirror* to his neighbors at three cents an issue.

After getting his degree at New York's Queens College in 1953 and serving a two-year stint in the U.S. Army, Krisher joined the now defunct *New York World-Telegram & Sun*. The newspaper sent him to Asia on a story and he fell in love with the region.

He joined *Newsweek*'s Tokyo bureau in 1962; by 1968 he had become bureau chief. Krisher left *Newsweek* for *Fortune*'s Tokyo bureau in 1980; he left *Fortune* three years later and became an editorial adviser for a Japanese-language newsweekly, a job he held until 1997.

"No one can learn as much as a journalist—who runs things, who the players are, how to get things done," he explains, sipping coffee one sunny afternoon in the modest Tokyo apartment where he works in a tiny back-room office. "And I observed all this, all my life, and I always felt I could do it better than anyone else. So I decided to test

Barry Petersen is a correspondent for CBS News who covers Asia from his base in Tokyo. He has also covered the Rwandan genocide, the Tiananmen Square uprising, and wars in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Iraq, and, most recently, Kosovo. that." The Cambodia Daily was his first test.

"Basically, I wanted to return something to society, to help people." He leans forward, willing the listener to understand. He's not a rich man giving back a few million. He's an ordinary guy. "I picked Cambodia because it was someplace that one person could manage."

A MUST-READ

One newspaper is...Moneaksekar Khmer (Cambodian Conscience) one of the leading opposition newspapers. On the front page of a recent edition is a photo of the nation's top elected official, NEC Chairman Chheng Phon, who is identified in the accompanying photo caption as a pedophile....Moneaksekar Editor-In-Chief Dam Sith defended the use of the term, arguing, among other reasons, that "Chheng Phon has not been independent or fair in his iob."

THE CAMBODIA DAILY, AUGUST 20, 1998

In a country where on any one day as many as 60 papers can be found on Phnom Penh newsstands, *The Cambodia Daily* found its niche quickly. Cambodia's press is more interested in selling opinions than facts. "[E]ach of the publications is supported by a political interest group," wrote *Los Angeles Times* reporter David Lamb in February, "a fact that is made abundantly clear by the reporting." Says 27-year-old Chris Fontaine, who came to the paper in August 1996 fresh from the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications: "A lot of Cambodian newspapers feel a 'free press' means, 'I'm free to take bribes from whoever I want, and free to report whatever I want.' I think the *Daily* has been good about making an example of what a free press truly is. It's really noticed."

No wonder that, inside government ministries and diplomatic drawing rooms, many consider the *Daily* a must-read. "On any given morning, there will be one or two stories I didn't know about," says Gordon Longmuir, Canada's ambassador to Cambodia. "These kids get out and around more than I do. Even the Cambodian elite won't miss the *Daily*, because they know that's what the foreigners are reading."

The paper's "just-the-facts" approach, Longmuir says, is its strength—and its weakness. "Sometimes stories are oversimplified," says the ambassador. "And there's not a lot of analysis, but that's not their job. Their job is reporting facts and what people say about it."

For analysis, there is another English-language paper, *The Phnom Penh Post.* A biweekly, the *Post* was launched in 1992, a year before the *Daily*, by Michael Hayes, who used his own money to get the paper going. He complains that the *Daily* is driving him out of business, thanks to Krisher's ability to get donations of computers from Apple Computer, Inc., and copiers from Fuji Xerox. Krisher's even got a state-of-the-art, four-color printing press worth a \$250,000 from Heidelberger Druckmaschinen, AG. "I've never accepted any cash because I want the paper to be totally independent," Krisher says. "I accept only products from companies that make that product."

Hayes's paper covers Cambodia exclusively, in part

"USE

because he has no access to foreign news. "We used to subscribe to Reuters," he says, "but I dropped it in 1997 because I couldn't afford it." Consider how Hayes feels every morning, opening The Cambodia Daily and seeing stories from The New York Times and The Washington Post that cost the paper nothing. Letters to friends like Donald Graham, publisher and CEO of The Washington Post, and Arthur Ochs "Punch" Sulzberger, retired publisher of The New York Times, brought Krisher their news services for free. Similar letters to honchos at the Dow Jones News Service, Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services, Japan's Kyodo News, and the German Deutsche Press-Agentur (DPA) got those wires for the paper gratis. The Daily does pay the Agence France-Presse and The Associated Press "minimal amounts," according to Krisher. Reuters allows the paper free use of two photos a month.

Krisher reaches into his own pocket to cover the paper's losses. It's a \$60,000 to \$120,000 annual donation from him to his pet project, right out of his savings. "What am I going to do with it?" he asks.

SOFT WORDS"

Cambodia will have amble rain, peace and prosperity during the upcoming farming season, sacred oxen indicated Sunday morning during the annual royal plowing season....In the traditional ceremony, offerings of wine, water, sesame, soy beans, rice, grass and maize are placed on the ground in separate bowls....The oxen ate half the rice, all the soybeans and maize, and one third of the water. The astrologers interpreted that to mean there would be enough water for farming this year, but no flooding.

THE CAMBODIA DAILY, MAY 26, 1997

Working at the Daily is not like covering your average city council. How many U.S. reporters gather their news by checking the appetite of a sacred ox? To break in new reporters from the states, editor in chief Decherd says, "I recommend that they go out and see three or four of the main tourist sites—like Tuol Sleng Prison." Tuol Sleng's walls are lined with pictures of prisoners, many of whom ended up in the killing fields, methodically photographed by the Khmer Rouge.

"You have to respect the culture and the morality of my country," says Ek Madra, who worked at the Daily from 1994 until 1998. (He left the paper for a job at Reuters in Phnom Penh.) "When you speak to a senior government official who is older than you, you have to use soft, more polite words, and convince them you're a nice guy, a nice reporter who can get the story right. Otherwise, he will never tell you what's going on."

Foreign reporters don't always work with Khmer translators. "Not having much more than a rudimentary knowledge of Khmer is not that much of a problem," insists former Daily reporter Chris Fontaine, now the AP's chief correspondent in Phnom Penh. "Ministers and state secretaries and a lot of my sources, aid agencies, and U.N. agencies are staffed by people who speak English."

The Daily has been a journalistic training ground for Cambodians. "They taught me how to collect information, go to press conferences, cover spot news, write a feature story," says Ek. Thanks to the Daily, he took journalism classes at the University of Southern California and worked for several weeks at the Long Beach, California, Press-Telegram. "The difference between journalism in America and here is like water and oil," he says now. "It's hard to convince my government about freedom of the press and what the reader wants to know."

HOW MUCH CRITICISM?

At a ceremony to welcome a group of 80 Khmer Rouge defectors, Second Prime Minister Hun Sen announced, unexpectedly, that his dog understands three languages. The dog, purchased in Thailand, understands Thai, Khmer, and English, according to the Second Prime Minister.

THE CAMBODIA DAILY, DECEMBER 11, 1996

Prime Minister Hun Sen went to Tokyo in February to solicit \$470 million in foreign aid; along the way he held a news conference. Krisher made his way to the microphone and asked the prime minister under what circumstances he would close papers or arrest reporters. Hun Sen's answer was unequivocal: There would not be "any time we'll betray or arrest" the Daily's reporters. "You have no need to worry of that. You can enjoy your freedom," he said, adding, "I don't think The Cambodia Daily could have such activities in most Southeast Asian countries."

He's right. As it happens, Cambodia's government is asking the world for millions in foreign aid, so it needs to appear aboveboard on the world stage. "They get irritated with the Daily frequently enough," says Canada's Longmuir, "though they've never succumbed to the temptation to close it down because that would seriously piss off the diplomatic community."

Still, Krisher doesn't want to tempt fate, so the Daily doesn't run editorials. "That's Bernie's directive," says Decherd. "But we irritate the government enough by reporting the truth about what's happening here." Says Krisher: "When we started, we felt we had a monopoly paper. We didn't want to force our single opinion down people's throats." The Phnom Penh Post follows the same no-editorial policy, but for a different reason. "I didn't

Moto-taxi drivers wait in front of The Cambodian Daily headquarters (top two floors of the building at right) for fares. The Daily is posted on a bulletin board and can be read



think it was wise," says editor Hayes, "to have a foreigner criticizing the situation here."

TRIAL BY GUNFIRE

Sporadic explosions and small arms fire could still be heard late into the night and local television and radio announced a curfew from 8 P.M. to 6 A.M. A western diplomat called the situation "chaotic" and confirmed that there had been casualties among clashing military units.

THE CAMBODIA DAILY, JULY 6, 1997, SPECIAL EDITION

The *Daily* made a name for itself in a trial by gunfire. The skirmish was between forces loyal to prime minister Hun Sen, and soldiers of his then-coprime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. It was early Saturday morning, July



The Cambodian Daily staff is composed of native Cambodians and Americans. Editor in chief Chris Decherd, in white shirt, sits in the middle of the newsroom.

5, 1997. Chris Fontaine woke up to a ringing telephone. "Things were going to heat up," he remembers being told by a fellow journalist. His reaction: Get out and cover the story, even though it was his day off, he was hung over, and the next edition of the paper was scheduled for Monday. Did he ever expect to be ducking bullets? "No. That is definitely not how I sold the trip to my parents."

As the fighting unfolded, sometimes in streets around their office, the *Daily* staff put out a special Sunday edition. When they were ready to publish, they realized their printer was across town, on the other side of the shifting front lines. So they published the paper on a laser printer. Not elegant, but effective.

A fellow American journalist, on assignment in the country, remembers it this way:

We fall asleep to sporadic shooting sounds and wake to a noisy pounding on our door. It's not the security police, it's [reporters] Joe Cochrane and Kevin Brown of The Cambodia Daily, high on adrenaline and low on sleep, delivering their quite fine eight-page paper by hand as they scoot around the city on a motorbike. They are proud of their work and deservedly so. It is the best kind of newspapering, operating against the odds, at risk and under intense pressure....And here they were at my hotel-room door with a paper full of on-scene coverage, enterprise reporting and good pictures.

The words come from former *New York Times* reporter Sydney Schanberg, in Phnom Penh that weekend on a free-lance assignment. "These young people, these *Daily* recruits," he says, "didn't say, "We have to stay home and hold the babies.' They were committed. They didn't cower under the bed. They came in to work. They were there." So this winner of the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for his dispatches from Cambodia, which became the subject of the movie *The Killing Fields*, did more than offer praise. He brought treats to their office. "Cookies and soda. They were operating as you would in semi-wartime situations," Schanberg says.

IT'S LIKE TAKING RELIGIOUS VOWS

Relatives of the victims of his reign of terror could take some solace in the fact that the man who masterminded one of the most horrific social experiments in history received little recognition at this funeral....No tears were shed. No speeches were made. His wife and daughter were absent, as were longtime Khmer Rouge comrades....Pol Pot's body was laid in a simple wooden coffin, draped with his blanket....A young guerrilla soldier doused the pile with gasoline, then set it on fire with a cigarette lighter at 9:52 A.M.

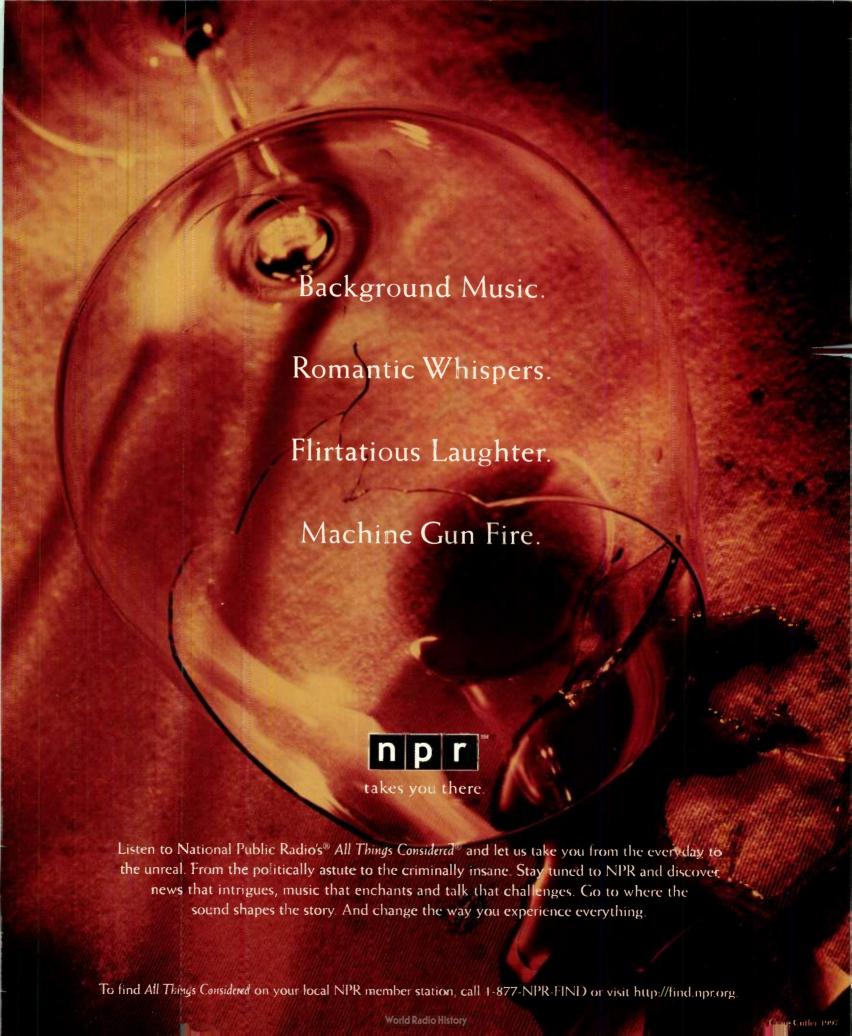
THE CAMBODIA DAILY, APRIL 20, 1998

"[The Cambodians] are still mired in their toxic condition," insists Schanberg. "Three decades of war and genocide and famine and forced labor—it's like all the plagues and Job's punishment. I don't think you recover from that in one generation. I think it's going to take time."

A free press won't bring the changes—but it's part of the process. The future? Former staffers will inherit the paper. "It will be theirs if anything happens to me," says Krisher. Working for *The Cambodian Daily* is like taking religious vows—you can leave, but you still keep the faith. "It's going to be hard for any of us to subsidize it to the extent that Bernie has," says former editor Barton Biggs, one of the chosen expected to keep the *Daily* flame lit. Biggs now lives in Colorado and is writing a book on mountain climbing. "We have to look at it from a business point of view, which Bernie has never done. But I think it's survivable, and it could be arranged that over a period of time it might be self-sufficient."

Daily alums are still drawn to the paper and the place. Robin McDowell, the paper's first managing editor, moved to the AP in Cambodia and now reports for the AP in Denver. "The place pulls you," the 33-year-old McDowell says wistfully of Cambodia. "There's such a huge hunger for unbiased information." She misses the kind of reporting the Daily is so proud of in a tradition she helped to create—stories that make a difference.

Bernie Krisher knows what continues to draw his brand of idealistic young journalists. "I'm spoiling them for the rest of their lives," he says, his face crinkling into the smile of a wiser, older man rejuvenated by the young journalists he guides. "I'm often telling them, when you get out into the real world, you'll never have this luxury again. I've given you a sandbox to play in—the luxury of running a newspaper by yourselves."



CURIOSITY INTERPORT OF THE PRIVACY PRIVACY

Cameras peering through the shrubs at Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg on that tragic weekend. Her children targeted by paparazzi. Is anyone *ever* off limits?

By Steven Brill

"I just got lucky," says paparazzi photographer Laura Cavanaugh. "I was only there for five minutes, and out came Caroline [Kennedy Schlossberg] and the kids. The other guys"—three other photographers—"had been waiting there for hours."

Cavanaugh is referring to a photograph she snapped from the sidewalk outside of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's Manhattan apartment. It was the day after the memorial service for John F. Kennedy Jr., and the picture caught Schlossberg, her husband, and two of their children, all grim-faced, leaving their apartment.

Cavanaugh says she sold her five minutes of work to *People* magazine for "about \$1,000," and to several other "foreign newspapers" for smaller amounts, a take that "was not as much as it could have been," because three competitors got the same shot.

Did she have qualms about taking the photo? "No," says Cavanaugh. "They didn't seem to mind. They didn't duck or yell at me to stop."

Amid all the over-the-top media coverage following the crash of John F. Kennedy Jr.'s plane, there were two aspects that seemed particularly wrong and easily correctable.





Doors Closed,

Kennedys Offer

Their Farewells

Man and Family Myth Reflected in Mourners

e Kennedy, the lest member of the First Facely of 19 the Cauch of St. Theorias Most with her daughter Tatis Woodstock '99 Kicks Off, But Without the Stardust way that showing these photos could survive the balancing test that news organizations claim they always engage in? That test is supposed to weigh the importance of covering something against the privacy that that coverage invades. If this claim for privacy didn't tip the scales against the public's "need" to see some invasive photos of people, including children, in their hours of maximum grief, what could?

Wasn't this, then, a situation where if everyone involved simply stepped back and reassessed what they'd done, they'd all concede that they would do some of it (at least the shots peering into the family's yard) or all of it differently if they could do it over again-and, indeed, that a kind of mutual stand down from these excesses would be a great thing?

Watchful eyes: The New York Times (top) ran a page-one photo on July 24 that showed one of the Schlossberg children (obscured here). Above: An aerial shot of the Schlossberg's home was shown on CBS's 48 Hours.

First, there were the camera shots-seen on every broadcast news network except CBS, all the cable news networks, and on countless local news reports that peered through the hedges into Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's yard at her home on Long Island as she and her family awaited word.

Second, there were those pictures of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's son and two daughters—the son, age 6; the daughters ages 9 and 11-all now robbed of

their anonymity as their grim faces appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country in the days following the air crash.

Neither of these intrusions qualify as great media atrocities of our time. They don't compare with the harm that comes from someone's reputation being unfairly maligned or with a completely private and defenseless person having his or her life turned inside out by a press swarm. But they are hauntingly emblematic in the now routine way they dragged us all down a notch, as hordes of journalists, working under the banner of the public's "right to know," helped us leer at another family in grief.

Sure, we were all curious to see the grieving family. But by any news standard other than curiosity was it necessary? Was there any

So we decided to ask. What we discovered was a huge gap between what most of the media think about how sensitive and responsible they are compared to what most of their audience thinks. You may disagree with some or even most of the responses we got; indeed, the public opinion poll we commissioned (see page 102) to gauge the public's take on these issues suggests that much of the country would disagree too. But this is not a story about bad people rejecting good values. Most journalists wake up in the morning wanting to do good, honorable work, and the airwaves and news pages across the country are filled with daily examples of them doing just that. It's just that any world in which members of a group are accountable only to themselves inevitably breeds a cacooned, warped sense of their own conduct that renders them unaware of the consequences, perceived and real, of what they do.

THE TWO QUESTIONS

The week after the Kennedy memorial service, we faxed a questionnaire to members of print and television news organizations across the country, asking if their organizations would be willing, in light of the coverage of the Kennedy tragedy, to observe two voluntary restrictions related to protecting privacy. In the case of newspeople who are not the policy makers in their shops (Christiane Amanpour at CNN and Tom

Brokaw at NBC, for example, as opposed to CNN CEO Tom Johnson and NBC News president Andrew Lack), we changed the "would" to "should," in effect asking them their opinion of these voluntary restrictions and whether the organization for which they work should sign on to them.

Here are the two restrictions:

1. To protect the privacy of children, our news organization will not [or should not, for the non-bosses] publish photographs or show video images of children under 14 years of age without the permission of the children and of one of their parents or a guardian, nor will we post reporters or photographers outside

their homes or in other places where we can accost them for interviews or photographs without their permission. Children who are in show business or the performing arts, or who accompany their politician-parents to campaign events or to other such functions where they are clearly meant to be on public display will be excepted.

2. To protect the privacy of grieving families, our news organization will not [should not, for the non-bosses] publish current photographs or show current video images of family members who have lost a loved one within one week following the death of that loved one, nor during that time will we post reporters or photographers outside their homes, at the funeral, or in other places where we can accost them for interviews or photographs without their permission.

THE NIGHT WE BEGAN DISTRIBUTING THE \$ guestionnaire. I had a chance to discuss it on हैं an MSNBC show with Jonathan Alter, the 8 Newsweek columnist (and NBC analyst) and Mortimer Zuckerman, who owns U.S. News &

Disclosure: Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's husband, Edwin Schlossberg, a writer and designer, has written for this magazine and is involved in helping to design an ancillary venture for this magazine's parent company. In addition, two of the author's children have attended the same school as the Schlossbergs' children.

Zuckerman spoke convincingly about his own dedication to striking a balance between news and privacy, but never explained how that balance worked when it came to his paper's having published a picture of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's son leaving his apartment the day of the memorial service and a shot of one of her daughters the day after. Alter argued that he was sure Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg "understood that, walking into the church there would be photographers," which, of course, only means that the media had

place great weight on that request in balancing their desire to obtain a newsworthy photo against the family's desire for privacy.

Second, in the case of both restrictions (the one involving children generally and the one involving grieving families), the voluntary restriction would be a general policy, and as with any general policy there could arise special circumstances that would cause the news organization to make exceptions, in which case the news organization would stand ready to articulate the reasons for having made an exception to its general rule.

IN OTHER WORDS, NO PERMISSION WOULD have to be sought from a grieving family to cover the comings and goings outside a funeral, but the grieving family could request that such an event not be covered and its request would be given great weight. And in all cases involving the voluntary restrictions, there could be exceptions for

responses; and 56 refused, after repeated requests, to take any position at all on the two questions. All of their responses are listed, beginning on page 104, with the longer replies excerpted and then published in full on our website (at www.brillscontent.com). The highlights illustrate how most of the press, like any professional group that has enjoyed freedom from accountability, bridles at the idea of being held to even soft standards.

For example, focused, lawyerlike, on the idea that a family has to traverse a public sidewalk to go to a memorial service, Griffin Smith Jr., the executive editor of Little Rock's *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, wrote: "I can think of no good reason for a 'general

People ran a picture of a Schlossberg child on its cover, and inside published a paparazzi shot (obscured here) of the family leaving its apartment.

The survey results show that the press bridles at the idea of being held even to soft standards with ample wiggle room.

forced her to choose between having her children go to her brother's memorial service or protecting their privacy.

Nonetheless, both Zuckerman and Alter, in their on-air picking through the proposed restrictions, made two good points. Zuckerman observed that the restrictions as written could keep his newspaper from covering the funerals of a police officer or a fireman killed in the line of duty, whereupon Alter pointed out the absurdity of a process that would see members of the press accosting a dead fireman's family to ask them to sign a permission slip.

Two days later, *Time* magazine managing editor Walter Isaacson weighed in with a fax that rightly pointed out that our proposal might have blocked the famous and clearly newsworthy camera shot of the three-year-old John Kennedy Jr. as he saluted his father's casket in 1963.

With all that in mind, we faxed everyone an addendum to the first fax, changing the proposals, as follows:

First, in the case of funerals or memorial services deemed to be newsworthy, the news organization could post photographers outside the place where the service is being held (or inside if given permission) unless they are explicitly asked not to do so by the family, in which case they should special circumstances (such as a president's funeral), but a news organization would be willing to articulate the reasoning behind making the exception. That second caveat—allowing for exceptions to the general rules—was a response not only to Isaacson's point about the camera shot of John Kennedy Jr. saluting at his father's funeral but also to the reaction we had already received from many people reflecting Alter's aversion to one hard and fast rule that substitutes for editors making individual news judgments. Now, in effect, what we were asking was whether these two voluntary restrictions should be a general policy a news organization would assume it would observe, but that would always be subject to individual, case-by-case assessments to see if an exception were warranted.

THE ANSWERS

These softenings may seem to you to go so far as to make the two restrictions meaningless. But most in the media didn't see it that way. In all, we sent the two-item questionnaire to 130 media people. Of these, 18 responded that they agreed with the two voluntary restrictions; Fifty-three responded that they did not agree; 3 offered mixed

**Appear born sets of the control of

rule' that purports to balance the newsworthiness of an activity occurring in a public place (entering or exiting a funeral) against the desire of the participants in that activity to render their public conduct 'private.'" On the other hand, Smith's Little Rock col-

BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

PUBLIC RESPONSE

JOURNALISTS OFTEN GET A CHANCE to express their views on issues of press standards and ethics—in internal newsroom discussions as well as in outside seminars and symposia. But rarely does the public get to weigh in on specific questions relating to press practices and tactics.

So we retained the polling firm of Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc., to seek public reaction to the same proposals we put to the press. The firm interviewed a sample of 475 randomly selected registered voters nationwide on August 3. The two proposals put to journalists were divided into four here to help assure a clear understanding of the queries. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.5 percent, and totals don't add up to 100 percent because some respondents had no opinion.

Respondents were read descriptions of the proposed policies and then asked whether they believe news organizations should or should not adopt them.

The news organization would agree not to show the image of any child under 14 years of age without the permission of the child and at least one of the child's parents. This policy would not apply to children who deliberately put themselves on public display because they are in show business or because they are the children of a politician and are at a campaign event.

67%

think news organizations
SHOULD adopt this policy.

23%

think they SHOULD NOT.

The news organization would agree not to post reporters or photographers outside the home or in any other place to wait to interview or photograph a child without the permission of the child and at least one of the child's parents. This policy would not apply to children who deliberately put themselves on public display because they are in show business or because they are the children of a politician and part of a campaign event.

80%

think news organizations SHOULD adopt this policy.

15%

think they SHOULD NOT.

The news organization would agree not to show a current photograph or image of family members who have lost a loved one within the prior week, and will not post reporters outside the family's home or any other place to wait to interview or photograph the family members without their consent.

86%

think news organizations SHOULD adopt this policy.

9%

think they SHOULD NOT.

The news organization would agree not to photograph grieving family members at funerals if asked by family members.

80%

think news organizations SHOULD adopt this policy. 15%

think they
SHOULD NOT.

league, Ginger Daril, the news director of KARK (an NBC affiliate), said she would agree to both restrictions, as did Larry Perret, the news director of KCBS-TV in Los Angeles.

"NO" FROM THE NETWORKS

The answers from these stations' affiliated national networks, based in New York, were quite different.

CBS News president Andrew Heyward replied, "We are not going to respond. I don't believe in industry guidelines at all. We handle these on a case-by-case basis."

cBS Evening News anchor and managing editor Dan Rather had much the same initial reaction but ultimately answered differently. "I'm in general agreement...about protecting people's privacy," he wrote. "However," he added, "it is my job...and that of every other editor at CBS News to deal with these sensitive issues on a case-by-case basis." But in a telephone call a week later, Rather amended his answer. "As long [as the voluntary restrictions] allow for us to deal with exceptions on a case-by-case basis, I could and will agree," Rather says. "It's a good idea. I just don't want any guideline to be seen as each of us abdicating our individual responsibility."

CBS News did not show any footage peering into Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's yard, though its 48 Hours show, also anchored by Rather, did use shots taken from a helicopter hovering over her yard; the shot showed the grounds but not any people. "There was lively discussion about it," says a top CBS news executive referring to the through-the-hedges shots. "And after the other networks began showing it, there was even more discussion, but we decided not to do it."

At NBC, faxes to news president Andrew Lack, anchor Tom Brokaw, Tim Russert of Meet The Press, MSNBC general manager Erik Sorenson, and the Today show's Katie Couric and Matt Lauer were all answered by spokeswoman Alex Constantinople, who said that David McCormick, NBC News's executive producer for broadcast standards, would be replying to us "in detail" and in writing "after he has a chance to consider it and discuss it with Andy and Tom." What we got from McCormick was a letter saying, "For many years, the men and women of NBC News have been sensitive to this issue....Many thanks for your ideas." (The entire letter, which is not much longer than the portion quoted, can be found at our website, www.brillscontent.com.)

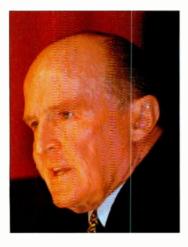
When we faxed McCormick back a note saying we hadn't sent any "ideas," but rather

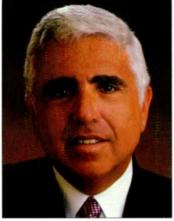
two questions about whether they would or should agree to two voluntary restrictions, we got no response. He subsequently refused to take our phone calls, but spokeswoman Constantinople said we could interpret his answer as a "no." Both NBC and

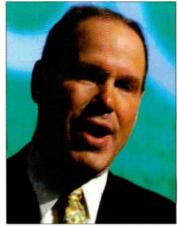
bump up against a family's sensitivities (see sidebar, page 128).

EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

In the case of all three networks and other major news organizations, we also







These top media executives (from left)—GE's Jack Welch (NBC), Mel Karmazin (CBS), and Disney's Michael Eisner (ABC) refused to take a stand on the proposed guidelines, kicking the issue to their news organizations.

faxed the questionnaire to the CEO of the organization's parent company-CBS's Mel Karmazin, Jack Welch of General Electric (parent of NBC), and Michael Eisner of Disney (parent of ABC). In all instances, the CEOs refused any comment, kicking the

issue back to their news organizations.

ABC News president David Westin replied through a letter from spokeswoman Eileen Murphy, saying, "As we are sure you are aware, ABC News has written general policies covering journalistic ethics....We consider it our responsibility to discuss issues like the ones you have raised, to develop appropriate policies and to apply those policies to individual situations....[W]e believe our approach to such matters has served us well....'

MSNBC showed footage from the cameras

peering through Caroline Kennedy

Schlossberg's hedges.

Murphy declined to let us see a copy of the policies to which she had referred, saying they were not meant to be public. According to Murphy, ABC showed the footage from Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's yard.

One ABC newsperson who replied on her own was Cokie Roberts, who e-mailed back, "Because, as neither an editor nor producer nor executive I am not in the position of making news decisions, it seems presumptuous of me to either sign or not sign your guidelines." However, Roberts then went on to discuss news coverage of the deaths of her father, then the House majority leader, and her sister, then the mayor of Princeton, New Jersey, in a way that adds important perspective to the issue, while demonstrating that many newspeople are not nearly as cavalier about these issues as their responses (or nonresponses) might suggest. Roberts vividly describes the legitimate news values that

As can be seen elsewhere in our listing of the responses (and non-responses) we received, most CEOs took the same handsoff stance. This is arguably a laudable sentiment. In an age in which major news organizations are now part of larger corporate conglomerates, the idea that business executives stay out of the newsroom seems reassuring. But the issues we were probing had to do with general policy, not individual news stories. And arguably the highestranking executive—the person who sets policy in any other corporate situation should be responsible rather than conveniently hands-off. As chief executives of major corporations that share a public trust, shouldn't Eisner, Welch, and Karmazin have a public view of whether it is okay for their employees to peek through Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's hedges? The only CEO who seemed to think so was Arthur Sulzberger Ir., the chairman of The New York Times Company. Although he referred his questionnaire to Times executive editor Joseph Lelyveld, he called and said that "on policy matters like this, Joe and I work together; if I didn't agree with Joe, we would have to work it out."

Fox News Channel CEO Roger Ailes said he agreed with the voluntary restrictions as long as he could make use of the caveat for exceptions. True, because Fox is part of media buccaneer and New York Post owner Rupert Murdoch's organization, this

> response could be dismissed as an indictment of how the exceptions caveat makes the entire exercise meaningless (a point that Toledo Blade executive editor Ron Royhab made in sending back his "no" answers). But in an interview, Ailes seemed to have thought through the restrictions seriously and was quite specificand narrow—in describing how he might apply any exceptions. Fox News did show footage of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's yard, but, according to Ailes, "[W]hen we were asked to, we pulled back."

"SOMETIMES WE SLIP"

At CNN, CEO Tom Johnson refused to agree with the restrictions as such, but seemed to describe policies that are consistent with them. He wrote, "We act with great caution in showing video images of minors. Generally, we do not show video images of minors in controversial circumstances without permission of their parents or guardian. There are exceptions; for example, a minor charged as an adult in a criminal case, or students being evacuated from a school. Experience tells us that there are other exceptions that are unpredictableand those decisions are made on a case-bycase basis with senior news management oversight. We are also sensitive when dealing with grieving families," with those decisions also made "on a case-by-case basis, with senior news management oversight."

If all that's true, I asked him, then isn't he in agreement with the voluntary restrictions and their caveats? "I just don't want to go there," he says. "I will only deal with these on a case-by-case basis, and I do that incessantly....I fired a producer for doing a tight shot of Ennis Cosby's dead body," Johnson adds, referring to the murdered son of Bill Cosby.

As for CNN's use of video from cameras peering into Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's yard, Johnson says, "I know we did that. Sometimes we slip....But I believe we stopped it after a while."

That, of course, (continued on page 109)

THE MEDIA RESPONSE

WE ASKED a wide selection of journalists and news executives whether they would agree or disagree with the two voluntary restrictions, and we invited them to comment. Here are excerpts of what some of them said (full transcripts of all the responses can be found at www.brillscontent.com).

TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY

of children, our news organization will not publish photographs or show video images of children under 14 years of age without the permission of the children and of one of their parents or a guardian, nor will we post reporters or photographers outside their homes or in other places where we can accost them for interviews or photographs without their permission. Children who are in show business or the performing arts, or who accompany their politician-parents to campaign events or to other such functions where they are clearly meant to be on public display will be excepted.

of grieving families, our news organization will not publish current photographs or show current video images of family members who have lost a loved one within one week following the death of that loved one, nor during that time will we post reporters or photographers outside their homes, at the funeral, or in other places where we can accost them for interviews or photographs without their permission.

However, in the case of funerals or memorial services deemed to be newsworthy, the news organization could post photographers outside the place where the service is being held (or inside if given permission) unless they are explicitly asked not to do so by the family, in which case they should place great weight on that request in balancing their desire to obtain a newsworthy photo against the family's desire for privacy.

These restrictions would form a general policy, and as with any general policy there could arise special circumstances that would cause the news organization to make exceptions, in which case the news organization would stand ready to articulate the reasons for having made an exception to its general rule.

1 DISAGREE 2 DISAGREE

The following people disagreed with both of our proposed voluntary restrictions.

CBS

Mel Karmazin
president and CEO, CBS Corporation

Allowed Andrew Heyward to respond on his behalf.

Andrew Heyward president, CBS News

ABC

Michael Eisner chairman and CEO, The Walt Disney Company

David Westin president, ABC News

Both allowed ABC spokeswoman Eileen Murphy to respond on their behalf. Murphy wrote:

As we are sure you are aware, ABC News has written general policies covering journalistic ethics that are dealt with by our news practices unit.... We consider it our responsibility to... develop appropriate policies and to apply those policies to individual situations....[W]e believe our approach to such matters has served us well and will continue to do so.

NBC

John Welch Jr. chairman and CEO, General Electric Company

Andrew Lack president, NBC News

Tom Brokaw
anchor and managing editor,
NBC Nightly News

Tim Russert
senior vice-president and Washington
bureau chief, NBC News; moderator,
Meet the Press

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Claire Shipman White House correspondent

Erik Sorenson vice-president and general manager, MSNBC

All allowed David McCormick, executive producer for broadcast standards and ombudsman for NBC News, to speak on their behalf. McCormick wrote:

For many years, the men and women of NBC News have been sensitive to this issue. However, in light of recent events we shall include your recommendations in our continuing review and discussion of newsgathering practices.

CNN

Tom Johnson chairman and CEO

We act with great caution when showing video images of minors. Generally, we do not show video images of minors in controversial circumstances without permission of their parents or guardian. There are exceptions; for example, a minor charged as an adult in a criminal case, or students being evacuated from a school. Experience tells us there are other exceptions that are unpredictable—and those decisions are made on a case-by-case basis with senior news management oversight.

We are also sensitive when dealing with grieving families. Our news assignments in these instances are made with great care, on a case-by-case basis, with senior news management oversight.

Bernard Shaw principal Washington anchor

Allowed Tom Johnson to respond on his behalf.

Wolf Blitzer lead anchor, The World Today; host, Late Edition

Allowed Tom Johnson to respond on his behalf.

TIME INC.

Gerald Levin chairman and CEO, Time Warner Inc.

Allowed Norman Pearlstine and Henry Muller to respond on his behalf.

Ted Turner

vice-chairman, Time Warner Inc.

Allowed Norman Pearlstine and Henry Muller to respond on his behalf.

Norman Pearlstine editor in chief, Time Inc.

Henry Muller editorial director, Time Inc. (joint response)

We believe that in the long run the privacy of those who are entitled to it is best protected by editors who understand the fine line between individual rights and the public's right to know, between fairness and decency on one hand and the commercial impulse on the other. That's why we will continue to place so much emphasis on judgment, character, and common sense when we appoint editors—and then trust them to make the hard calls that cannot easily be addressed in a few guidelines.

Walter Isaacson managing editor, Time

Although I agree with the sentiment about protecting people's privacy, I do not think it is possible to establish a single set of rules that will cover each situation....I think it is one of the primary duties of an editor to decide what is appropriate in each specific case—and the job of the public and press critics to let us know when they think we've overstepped the bounds of propriety.

Carol Wallace managing editor, People

My job is to set the taste standards for this magazine, including how far we go in the use of photos. Unfortunately, the news is not always pleasant, fun, or uplifting—especially in catastrophic tragedies. Oftentimes, children are involved in these tragedies, or are the offspring of parents who are. While we would make every possible attempt to be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the families involved, there are times when judgment calls need to be made on privacy versus newsworthiness. This is not a new issue, but I simply would have to stop short of blanket voluntary guidelines for all publications.

Christina Ferrari managing editor, Teen People

Allowed Norman Pearlstine to respond on her behalf.

U.S. News & World Report

Mortimer Zuckerman chairman and editor in chief, U.S. News

(continued on next page)

1 AGREE 2 AGREE

The following people agreed with both of our proposed voluntary restrictions.

CNN

Jeff Greenfield senior analyst; coanchor, CNN & Time

Christiane Amanpour chief international correspondent

FOX News Channel

Roger Ailes chairman and CEO

Paula Zahn

anchor, The Fox Report

Allowed Roger Ailes to respond on her behalf.

Jonathan Alter

columnist and senior editor,
Newsweek; analyst, NBC News

Tina Brown

chairman and editor in chief, Talk

Douglas Clifton editor, The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer

Ginger Daril news director, KARK (Little Rock)

Matt Ellis

news director, WNAC and WPRI (Providence)

Harold Evans

vice-chairman and editorial director of U.S. News & World Report, New York Daily News, among others.

Howard Kurtz

media reporter, The Washington Post

If I were in charge, I'd be more than happy to have *The Washington Post* decline to publish pictures of grieving family members after a death—unless they were doing their grieving in some public square or other out-inthe-open gathering. What the public despises about the media is the obnoxious intrusiveness with which we invade people's lives at times of tragedy, or buy telephoto-lens pictures from those who do.

Ann Landers

syndicated columnist

It is admirable to say that news organizations

(continued on next page)

Jim Loy news director, WOOD-TV (Grand Rapids)

Terry Moran correspondent, ABC News law and justice unit

Larry Perret
news director, KCBS-TV (Los Angeles)

Dan Rather anchor and managing editor, CBS Evening News

As long as [the voluntary restrictions] allow for us to deal with exceptions on a case-by-case basis, I could and will agree. It's a good idea. I just don't want any guideline to be seen as each of us abdicating our individual responsibility.

Miles Resnick news director, WDJT-TV (Milwaukee)

When it comes to exceptions there had better be a good reason.

Joe Worley executive editor, Tulsa World

We instruct our photographers to follow the golden rule: Treat them the way you'd like to be treated.

OTHER

The following people agreed with one guideline but not both.

Jim LaBranche news director, WAWS-TV (Jacksonville)

Disagree 2 Agree

George Stephanopoulos political analyst, ABC News

Agree

2 Undecided

Grant Uitti
news director, WICD-TV (Champaign, IL)

1 Agree

Disagree

& World Report; chairman and copublisher, New York Daily News

I do believe it would not work in every situation. I think in principle it's a good idea, but in practice it is very, very difficult to implement.

Stephen Smith editor, U.S. News & World Report

I can't argue with the goal of protecting the privacy of grieving families and children, but I don't feel comfortable subscribing to a policy, even a "general" one allowing for exceptions, that would compel U.S. News to explain its editorial decisions to another magazine....The editors of U.S. News are accountable to our readers and to our staff, and if we let them down they will penalize us in the way that hurts most—by withdrawing their trust.

Debby Krenek editor in chief, Daily News

We understand the concerns that prompted you to canvass editors on voluntary restrictions to protect privacy. We would have difficulty accepting them because the unpredictable business of news means circumstances must govern cases....I believe it would hinder our responsibility to cover news if in fact we sought to get permission to use photographs of every child under 14 years; there are some photos that justify publication because they happen publicly in the course of covering a news story, or have overwhelming relevance.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Donald Graham publisher; chairman and CEO, The Washington Post Company

Allowed Leonard Downie Jr. to respond on his behalf.

Bob Woodward assistant managing editor for investigative projects

Allowed Leonard Downie Jr. to respond on his behalf.

Leonard Downie Jr. executive editor

[T]he addendum in your most recent fax about funerals and memorial services is identical to the current working (but unwritten) policy for Washington Post photographers. In reference to the rest of the "pledges" you propose, The Washington Post has never made or entered into pledges or agreements about how to report the news, beyond the statements of our ethical rules

in The Washington Post Deskbook on Style. In the circumstances covered by your proposed pledges, we will continue to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, balancing coverage needs with sensitivity to the privacy of those being covered.

Mark Whitaker editor, Newsweek

Here at Newsweek, we have in the past—and undoubtedly will in the future—think long and hard about the appropriateness of publishing photographs of grieving family members, particularly children, in connection with news stories that involve death and other personal tragedy....Still, I feel strongly that such judgment calls should be made on a case-by-case basis and left up to individual editors, and not be the subject of blanket codes of journalistic conduct that may or may not be appropriate to specific news stories.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Arthur Sulzberger Jr. publisher; chairman, The New York Times Company

Allowed Joseph Lelyveld to respond on his behalf.

Joseph Lelyveld executive editor

[W]e don't believe in signing on to external codes. Our basic contract is with our loyal readers, who let us know fast when we stray, not with some editorial college of cardinals. We practice our own voluntary restrictions and follow our own rules, even when it means being held up to ridicule as we occasionally were for what was called our "restraint" during the recent media binge over John Kennedy's sad death. We think we got our coverage just about right on that one and don't see any need now to take an oath to mend our wicked ways.

Frank Rich

op-ed columnist; senior writer, The New York Times Magazine

Los Angeles Times

Mark Willes

chairman, president, and CEO, Times Mirror Company

Allowed Michael Parks to respond on his behalf.

Michael Parks

editor and executive vice-president

I agree with the intent, but a policy would have as many exceptions as not.

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CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Jack Fuller

president, Tribune Publishing Company

You raise important issues, ones that we are very sensitive to and that are the occasion of serious conversation in our newsrooms all the time. The wide variety of circumstances that we confront in covering the news makes having the ethical conversation rather than subscribing to a written rule offered by your magazine the best way to deal with the issues decently.

Howard Tyner

editor; vice-president, Tribune Publishing Company

Allowed Jack Fuller to respond on his behalf.

James Warren

associate managing editor/Washington bureau chief

Allowed Howard Tyner to respond on his behalf.

USA TODAY

Karen Jurgensen

editor

Allowed Robert Dubill to respond on her behalf.

Robert Dubill

executive editor

We urge our journalists to be sensitive in reporting and handling stories and photos relating to funerals and grieving families. We have no hard and fast rules or restrictions, i.e., prior restraints. Each situation is considered on news merit.

Steve Coz

editor, National Enquirer

Allowed David Pecker to respond on his behalf.

David Pecker

chairman, president, and CEO, American Media, Inc. (publisher of the National Enquirer and the Star)

Like all news organizations, our publications are devoted to obtaining information of public interest. In achieving this goal, news publications have a right and a responsibility to report the news as and when it occurs. We cannot simply subscribe to restrictions that would often stifle the collection and publication of legitimately newsworthy events. Having said that, we recognize and respect the privacy and property rights of individuals.

John Beck

executive editor,
The (Champaign, IL) News-Gazette

Grieving families involved in newsworthy stories often will talk to the local newspaper because we treat them with respect. This is in marked contrast to the media circus that often accompanies high-profile national stories, such as the Kennedy death.

Forrest Carr news director, KGUN9-TV (Tucson)

I don't like coverage restrictions and try to avoid them. One of my favorite sayings in the "nooz biz" is, "Never say never." I've only agreed to bind myself through use of that word a couple of times....

I believe newsgathering organizations should do the following: State what they stand for. Consider the public's input in drafting that statement. Provide a method for the public to hold them accountable.

Robert Henry news director, KPHO-TV (Phoenix)

Herbert Klein

editor in chief, Copley Newspapers

I think they are too restrictive. Most of the circumstances under which we run photos would fit under the exceptions.

Linda Lightfoot executive editor,

The (Baton Rouge, LA) Advocate

Such general policies with "wiggle room" for special circumstances are better described, I believe, as "guidelines." I think people—to the extent they are even aware of such internal policies—view them (1) as useless or lacking credibility precisely because of the latitude they afford. Or (2) as hard-and-fast rules regardless of the caveats...Once the newsroom decides an event is "newsworthy," that decision is going to trump general privacy considerations.

Ben Marrison

managing editor/news,
The Columbus Dispatch

Upon reviewing your "Voluntary Restrictions to Protect Privacy" proposal, we concluded that as a newspaper, The Columbus Dispatch already has unwritten rules dealing with an individual's privacy that are consistent with what you have proposed.

As a general rule, we don't publish photographs of children without parental consent, unless the circumstances demand the photographs be used. We respect the wishes of grieving families who do not want photographers or reporters at funer-

als, but maintain our right to write about and photograph the events from a distance or through interviews with those in attendance. If a grieving family does not grant an interview request we respect that.

John Pastorek director of news, WBRZ-TV (Baton Rouge, LA)

As a locally owned and operated station with a mission of community service, Channel 2 is very sensitive in our coverage concerning the privacy of children and grieving families.

I can't speak for other media outlets or news organizations, but I believe if we all followed the Society of Professional Journalists' "Code of Ethics" and the Poynter Institute for Media Studies' "Guiding Principles for the Journalist," there would be no need for restrictions, but rather a need for reflection and renewal in our role as journalists.

Joel Rawson

executive editor and senior vice-president, The Providence Journal

Ron Royhab

executive editor, The (Toledo) Blade

Both of these are set-up questions. Those of us who disagree with your proposed "voluntary restrictions" could be seen as journalists who want to "accost" grieving families and children under the age of 14. Accost is your word, not mine.

Dennis Ryerson vice-president and editor,

vice-president and editor, The Des Moines Register

Griffin Smith Jr. executive editor, (Little Rock) Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

These "voluntary restrictions to protect privacy" are, pardon my French, a crock.

Just because CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, the national newsmagazines, and some other news organizations go wildly overboard doesn't mean that level-headed, traditional news media should agree in advance to forfeit their own news judgments.

Patrick Yack editor, The (Jacksonville)

Florida Times-Union

We don't have a hard-and-fast rule, we handle things on a case-by-case basis....We seek permission to enter private property and we leave when we are asked....We try to adopt a sensitive tone because it is a sensitive time....I agree we sometimes overstep our boundaries and that hurts us as a profession.

WOULD NOT ANSWER

These people would not respond, following confirmed receipt of the questionnaire and a minimum of two follow-up phone calls.

Roger Altman founder, Evercore Partners

founder, Evercore Partners Inc. (owner of National Enquirer parent company)

Stephen Auslander editor, The Arizona Daily Star

Nancy Bauer news director, KNBC-TV (Los Angeles)

Mark Berryhill news director, WHDH-TV (Boston)

C.J. Beutien
news director, WTOL-TV (Toledo)

Karen Brown news director, WMUR-TV (Manchester, NH)

Peter Brown
news director, WBZ-TV (Boston)

Jennie Buckner editor, The Charlotte Observer

Carla Carpenter
news director, WPVI-TV (Philadelphia)

Ray Carter news director, WSB-TV (Atlanta)

Ken Chandler editor in chief and deputy publisher, New York Post

Jim Church
news director, WJXX-TV (Jacksonville)

Laura Clark news director, KSHB-TV (Kansas City, MO)

Keith Connors
news director, WCNC-TV (Charlotte)

Pat Costello news director, WBBM-TV (Chicago)

John Curley chairman and CEO, Gannett Co., Inc.

Sam Donaldson chief White House correspondent and ABC News anchor, 20/20 and This Week

David Duitch news director, WFAA-TV (Dallas) Tim Dye news director, WXMI-TV (Grand Rapids)

Rod Gramer executive news director, KGW-TV (Portland, OR)

David Green managing editor, The (Nashville)Tennessean

Don Hewitt
executive producer, 60 Minutes,
CBS News
I'm on record as saying that the cameras

I'm on record as saying that the camera outside Caroline Kennedy's house were disgusting.

Peter Jennings anchor and senior editor, ABC World News Tonight

Ingrid Johansen
news director, WLNE-TV (Providence)

Pam Johnson executive editor, The Arizona Republic

Bill Keller
managing editor, The New York Times

Ted Koppel, anchor, Nightline, ABC News

Michael Lloyd editor, The Grand Rapids Press

Coleen Marren
news director, WISN-TV (Milwaukee)

Ron Martin
editor, Atlanta Journal-Constitution
(also senior editor, Cox Newspapers Inc.)

Lane Michaelsen
news director, KTHV (Little Rock)

Ellen Miller
news manager, WBTV (Charlotte)

Rupert Murdoch chairman and chief executive, News Corporation

Don North
news director, KCT (Kansas City, KS)

Roger Ogden
president and general manager,
KUSA (Denver)

Charles Perkins
executive editor,
The (Manchester, NH) Union Leader

Cokie Roberts chief congressional analyst and anchor,

This Week, ABC News (Roberts did not express a view on the guidelines but offered related comments. See Sidebar on page 128.)

David Roberts
news director and vice-president,
WXIA-TV (Atlanta)

Rick Rodriguez
executive editor, The Sacramento Bee

Sandra Rowe editor, The (Portland) Oregonian

William Safire columnist, The New York Times

Jim Sanders vice-president of news, KNSD-TV (San Diego)

Dave Shaul news director, WCIA-TV (Champaign, IL)

Steve Shirk
managing editor-local and national
news, The Kansas City (MO) Star

Michelle Sloan news director, WNWO (Toledo)

Todd Spessard news director, KJRH-TV (Tulsa)

George Stanley managing editor, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Mike Stutz news director, KGTV (San Diego)

J.T. Thompson news director, WSMV (Nashville)

Gary Walker news director, KATU-TV (Portland, OR)

Scott Warren
assistant news director,
KOLD-TV (Tucson)

Ashley Webster news director, WZ-TV (Nashville)

Milt Weiss news director, WEWS (Cleveland)

Carolyn Williams news director, KOTV (Tulsa)

Kathy Williams
news director, WKYC-TV (Cleveland)

vice-president/executive editor,
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

(continued from page 103) would be one of the benefits of having a written policy in place (as CNN, in fact, does for many other situations). Then it would be more likely that those camera shots would not be used unless someone high up decided that they should be used.

Two of Johnson's employees, Christiane Amanpour and Jeff Greenfield, said that they thought CNN should agree to the restrictions.

"I AM OPPOSED TO INDUSTRY...GUIDELINES"

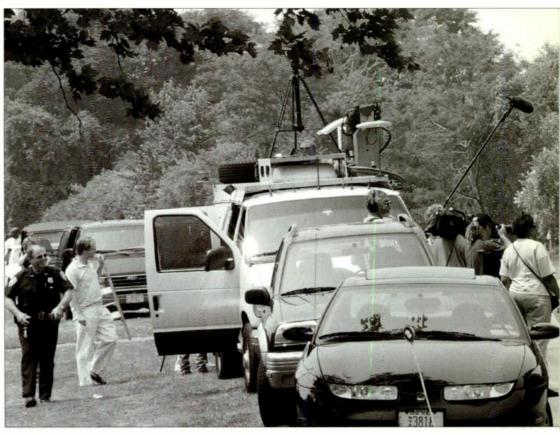
The country's leading newsmagazines took basically the same stance as the broadcasters. They claimed agreement with the general principles involved, but refused to agree to specific restrictions or guidelines of any kind.

Isaacson of *Time* put it this way: "I sympathize with the general sentiments that underlay your proposals and feel that *Time* always must be sensitive to concerns of personal privacy. However...I am opposed to the concept of industry-adopted rules and guidelines."

That sounds reasonable, but it also reads a lot like the following answer: "Like all news organizations, our publications are devoted to obtaining information of public interest....We cannot simply subscribe to restrictions that would often stifle the collection and publication of legitimately newsworthy events. Having said that, we recognize and respect the privacy and property rights of individuals." That's the response we got from David Pecker, the CEO of American Media, Inc., which publishes the *National Enquirer* and the *Star*.

Isaacson is as good a journalist and editor as there is, and he's highly sensitive to the issues raised here. But he bridles not only at committing himself to a guideline to which he could make exceptions as long as he were willing to articulate the reasons for those exceptions, but also at explaining his particular editorial decisions in this case. What, he was asked, was the balance he had struck between news value and privacy when he decided to run a prominent picture of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's nine-year-old daughter coming out of the funeral service? "I'm just not going to get into that," he replied.

Responding on behalf of all Time Inc. magazines (*Time, People, Fortune*, etc.), Time Inc. editor in chief Norman Pearlstine and editorial director Henry Muller wrote, "We believe that in the long run the privacy of those who are entitled to it is best protected by



Media vehicles and camera crews lined up outside Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's Long Island home following the disappearance of her brother John's plane.

editors who understand the fine line between individual rights and the public's right to know, between fairness and decency on one hand and the commercial impulse on the other. That's why we will continue to place so much emphasis on judgment, character, and common sense when we appoint editors—and then trust them to make the hard calls that cannot easily be addressed in a few guidelines. To sum up, voluntary restrictions are too simple a solution to a complex issue. There's no substitute for the intelligence and judgment of the best editors we can find."

A few days after we received this letter, I saw the latest issue of *People* magazine, whose cover story was titled "Two Shattered Families" (the Kennedys and the Bessettes). The cover included a picture of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's 6-year-old son. And inside was that large color photo bought from paparazzo Cavanaugh, who had staked out the sidewalk in front of Schlossberg's Manhattan apartment the day after the memorial service so she could get a shot of Schlossberg, her husband, her 6-year-old son, and her 11-year-old daughter.

Asked if that sidewalk ambush shot in *People* was consistent with the ideals reflected in his letter, Pearlstine referred me to *People*

managing editor Carol Wallace, who says, "I think it is definitely consistent with Norm and Henry's letter. The entire country was wondering how Caroline was doing. When they do come out in public, people want to see how they look. Staking people out when they come out of their apartments," Wallace adds, "is traditional. They knew there were photographers there." Did that mean that if they didn't want their children photographed, they should have stayed home? "Well, they could have ducked their heads. They knew what they were up against."

Faxed a separate question about whether they approved of this paparazzi photo of the Schlossberg children, Time Warner chairman and CEO Gerald Levin and vice-chairman Ted Turner—two media executives who have rarely shied from public statements about media ethics—declined to comment.

"I had no hesitation about running the photo," says *People* picture editor Maura Foley, who added that "the lines between what some call a paparazzi and we call a photojournalist often get blurred."

As for making those "hard calls" between "individual rights and the public's right to know" that Pearlstine and Muller described in their letter, Susan (continued on page 127)

MAGAZINE SHOWDOWN

When it comes to picking stocks and mutual funds, Money, Kiplinger's, and SmartMoney haven't been so smart.

BY MATTHEW REED BAKER

of the zeitgeist. In a decade during which investing has become a national pastime, personal finance magazines have thrived. Such headlines as "The 10 Stocks To Buy Now" have become nearly as ubiquitous on newsstands as celebrity profiles.

Those headlines have helped attract readers to the top three personal finance magazines—Money, with a paid circulation of 1.9 million; Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine, with 1 million; and SmartMoney, with 726,000. With their mix of helpful advice on a wide range of financial topics—everything from retirement planning to finding cheaper home insurance to getting a deal on a car to saving for a child's education—these magazines have become monthly bibles for a nation obsessed with money.

But it's with their splashy cover investment picks that these magazines announce themselves to the world. And that raises the question: How good are they at making the stock and mutual-fund recommendations on which their readers often rely?

We decided to find out. The result, after looking at a sampling of the magazines' cover picks for three recent years, wasn't pretty. Unsurprisingly, given that we're living through a historically unprecedented bull market, most of the portfolios delivered solid returns. That's the good news.

The bad news: You could have easily done better by just investing in a mutual fund that holds stocks in the Standard & Poor's 500 index.



THE PERSONAL FINANCE MAGAZINES cater to do-it-yourself investors in this era of skyrocketing Internet stocks and clever E-Trade ads. They don't shy from telling readers how to get in on the action *now*. And, the frequent refrain goes, investors should be able to equal, if not beat, the results of that widely accepted benchmark, the S&P 500 Index. Many a mutual-fund manager has been found wanting by the magazines when held to that standard.

"Our readers are looking to us for ideas to help beat the market," says Peter Finch, editor of *SmartMoney*. "Many, if not most, probably have some percentage of their holdings in an index type of fund or really broad hold-

ings, but I think part of the fun of investing is taking some of your money and trying to beat the market with it."

The magazines routinely include a list of caveats. They detail how they chose their picks, typically laying out strengths, weaknesses, and risks. The magazines recommend building diverse portfolios (of which their cover picks represent only a portion) and emphasize investing for the long term. (Indeed, given that the magazines appear monthly, weeks after being shipped to the printers, it would be impossible for them to offer anything other than longer-term advice.)

So how good is their advice? We took a snapshot, selecting the cover sto-

ries from a year ago, three years ago, and five years ago-1994, 1996, and the first seven months of 1998—a total of 512 stock and fund picks. Then, using research compiled by investment experts Morningstar, Inc., we examined how readers would have fared if they invested an equal amount in each stock or mutual fund in the "portfolios" recommended on the magazine's cover and held the investment through June 30, 1999. We confined ourselves to stocks and mutual funds-we excluded all bond-related investments—touted on the covers. which thus carried the magazines' imprimatur. (We excluded, for example, investments selected by experts not affiliated with the magazines. For details, see "Methodology," page 112.)

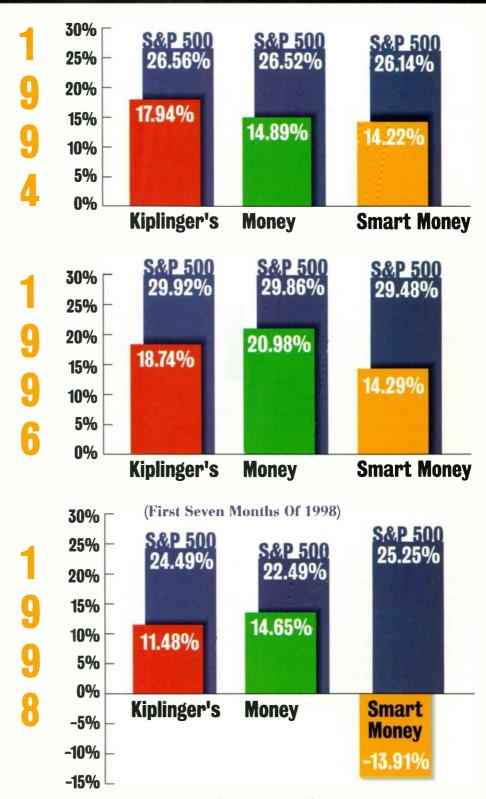
The top two ended in a statistical dead heat. *Money* delivered an average annualized return of 17.18 percent, with *Kiplinger's* at 16.99 percent. (Since we did not weight the returns by length of holding, we effectively created a margin of error of plus or minus .5 percentage points, according to a Morningstar research analyst.) *SmartMoney* brought up the rear with a 9.28 average. The charts at right break the returns down by year.

The results for the first two magazines are nothing to sneeze at—in fact, they far outpace the stock market's historical 10 percent average return. But if you compare the numbers to the S&P 500's whopping 27.14 average during the corresponding period, all three magazines' results look anemic.

The difference adds up over time. Consider, for example, Money's March 1994 cover portfolio, which has earned a solid 16.35 percent annualized return. The cover featured the confident headline "Eight Top Investments That Never Lose Money." Inside, the story recommended eight investments-including The Gillette Company and Unilever N.V.—that had "grown more than tenfold" since 1980. If you invested \$10,000 evenly across this portfolio on March 1, 1994, you'd now have a handsome \$22,425. But if you had plopped that money in an S&P 500 index fund, you would now have \$32,814.

In fact, only 4 of the 46 magazine portfolios beat the S&P (with 84 of the

GETTING BEAT BY THE S&P



Percentages reflect average annualized returns for stocks and mutual funds recommended in magazine cover portfolios, assuming equivalent investments in each stock or fund as well as in the S&P 500 Index. S&P figures vary because each corresponds to the months for which the relevant magazine published cover portfolios.

512 stock and fund recommendations besting the index). Two of the winning portfolios belonged to *SmartMoney*, which was more likely than its competitors to veer between wild success and dismal failure. *SmartMoney*'s September 1996 cover story, "Bargain Stocks to Buy Now," delivered a scalding 50.96 annualized return (compared to 32.23 for the S&P) with its well-timed selection of

Methodology

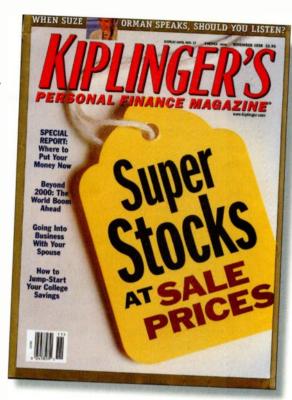
We included only stocks and funds recommended in the cover stories of the three magazines during the years 1994, 1996, and 1998 (the latter through July). We excluded selections after July 1998 because the securities did not have a full 12 months of performance at press time; we therefore did not want to compare those results with the annualized returns for the older investments. We eliminated stocks and funds specifically recommended as short-term investments of six months or less.

Morningstar, Inc., calculated the cumulative and annualized total returns for the securities, assuming an equal investment in each, as well as the equivalent figures for the Standard & Poor's 500 Index. We assumed that all dividends and capital gains were reinvested and adjusted for stock splits and fund management fees, but did not adjust for taxes. We used prices for investor or A-class mutual-fund shares if they were in existence at the time of the initial investment but did not adjust for loads. We priced each security as of the first day of the month in which a magazine recommended it. For example, we assumed a hypothetical reader of the March 1994 Money would purchase shares of Gillette on March 1, 1994. Thus, each return covers the time period between the reader's purchase date and June 30, 1999, the most recent date for which data was available at press time.

We did not include preferred shares, bonds, and bond funds. Finally, we omitted results for 32 obsolete holdings—merged or acquired companies and discontinued funds. Money had 9 such investments, SmartMoney 7, and Kiplinger's 16. The final tally includes 16 cover stories from Money, 18 from SmartMoney, and 12 from Kiplinger's, comprising 298 mutual fund and 214 stock recommendations.

powerhouses such as The Gap, Inc., and Microsoft Corporation. But *SmartMoney* also had the worst performing portfolio, May 1998's "10 Stocks Under \$25." The article warned that these smaller, riskier companies made sense only for the most aggressive part of an investor's portfolio. Sure enough, the stocks plummeted, losing 34.11 percent of their value.

"It looked to us as an opportune time to buy some really small stocks," says *SmartMoney*'s Finch. "As it happened, it'd have been better to wait a few months. But some of the stocks are coming back," he says, noting that he still expects them to do well over the long term. Finch argues that lumping all the picks together is "not a realistic way to judge the performance of our write-ups," considering that they often recommend a longer time horizon for the smaller stocks. "We're



Kiplinger's Miller was unfazed that his magazine didn't beat the S&P 500: "It puts us in the company of some very smart fund managers."

talking about a five-year investment at a minimum," he says. Still, he acknowledges, "it's been a very difficult time to beat the market."

To be fair, our yearly averages obscure the fact that the magazines recommend investments for varied purposes and for readers who differ in their risk tolerance. Some of the investments intentionally forgo higher potential returns for more secure holdings, such as *Kiplinger's* June 1994 "safe havens," which managed a respectable 15.41 percent annualized return. Other portfolios recommended international stocks, which are hard to compare to the S&P. Nevertheless, such stocks represent a small portion of the ones plugged by those magazines on their covers.

SmartMoney's financial editor, Jersey Gilbert, takes issue with almost every element of our methodology. Picking just cover stories is "arbitrary," he says, as is the selection of the years 1994, 1996, and 1998. He argues that SmartMoney's results would have been dramatically different if we included non-cover articles and articles from 1995 and 1997. (Indeed, he cited two S&P-beating portfolios, including a cover story in January 1997 that produced 48 percent annualized returns.) Moreover, he noted that SmartMoney's 1998

results suffered because of the magazine's emphasis on small-cap stocks, which have slumped in recent years. Like Finch, Gilbert expresses confidence that the stocks will eventually offer handsome returns.

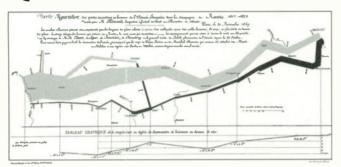
Editors at Money and Kiplinger's were comparatively unfazed by their magazines' results. "It's not surprising," says Kiplinger's editor Ted Miller. "It puts us in the company of some very smart fund managers." Money assistant managing editor Eric Gelman agrees: "If you look at how mutual funds have done over the past five years, I bet we're not far off." He explains that the hyperbullish performance of the S&P 500 is an unusually longlasting "one-dimensional market," dominated by a few large growth powerhouses like Microsoft, Dell Computer Corporation, and General Electric Company. Because Money stresses diversification, Gelman says, "you would not have done as well as with the big growth stocks that really outperformed."

Still, in the investing world, numbers talk—and none of the magazines came close to beating the yardstick they most commonly cite. "In any other time in history," Gelman sighs, "with a return of 17 percent, a person would have been elated."

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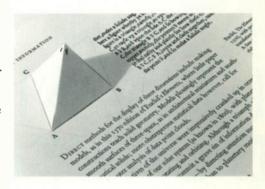


This map portrays the losses suffered by Napoleon's army in the Russian campaign of 1812. Beginning at the left on the Polish-Russian border near the Niemen, the thick band shows the size of the army (422,000 men) as it invaded Russia. The width of the band indicates the size of the army at each position. The army reached Moscow with 100,000 men. The path of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in the bitterly cold winter is depicted by the dark lower band, tied to a temperature/time scale. The Grande Armée struggled out of Russia with only 10,000 men. Six dimensions of data are displayed on the flat surface of the paper.

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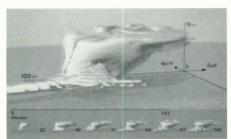
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Then there was the sense among cynical media critics like myself that the dolorous newsman, his network, ABC, and especially ABC News president Roone Arledge were exploiting the Iran hostage situation, milking it for ratings.

But after the distractions ended, there were only good things to say about Ted Koppel and his late-night news show on ABC. *Nightline* started out in 1980 as "the last word in television news," according to ABC's punning ads of that year, but it quickly became the first word in my book.

Veteran newsman Ted Koppel eliminates the hype, cuts to the chase, and tells us what we really need to know.

LATE NIGHT DONE RIGHT

BY MARVIN KITMAN

It was one of those programs that you took for granted after a while, that you knew was going to be there forever, the way an older generation thought of *The Arthur Godfrey Show*. It wasn't something you watched every night. But it made you feel comfortable just knowing it was there in case you needed it.

Nightline, at 11:35 P.M., was the media National Guard that could be called out in a crisis.

Ted Koppel is a national institution, one badly needed despite the onslaught of information available on TV. You could always sit around and watch C-SPAN all day and night, and you'd probably know everything you wanted to know—and a lot you didn't—about what was going on in the nation and in the world. But Ted Koppel cuts to the chase. If you kept up with the Koppel shows, you could keep up with what was really happening in the world. That's a lot to say about a TV news show.

His importance has been more appreciated the more things have changed in TV news since the Kopellian Age began. In the early days, *Nightline* was supposed to be a kind of distillation of what Dan, Tom, Peter, and their predecessors had decided was the news at 6:30. Ted was an interpreter of

the network evening news. Now, you watch *Nightline* to *get* the news. That's the big difference, the reason Koppel, for me, towers above all other newscasts.

More and more, network news seems to be the place where reporters tell you how to buy cheap watches or offer information that has to do with health and longevity—all the handy news you can use. Through most of the winters of 1997 and 1998, for example, when I tuned in to CBS, I thought I was watching The Weather Channel. Night after night, Dan was covering El Niño, how it was affecting warm air in the north, cold air in the south. Meanwhile, the world was going to pieces in ways many journalists wouldn't care about for another year: Kosovo was already cooking, China was allegedly stealing our A-bomb secrets, and the Japanese were committing suicide in unprecedented numbers.

Koppel, marching to his own glockenspiel, was telling me every night only what he thought was important.

Each night, *Nightline* sets the agenda for the next day. It frames and shapes public issues for the nation the way *Today* used to do every morning before it began trying to catch up to *Good Morning America* and became an entertainment show. As TV news has become more involved in the dreck and drivel of Hollywood, the realities of *Nightline* have grown in importance. Who cares if Dave will beat Jay in the ratings? Without bands or monologues, *Nightline* has survived as the alternative.

When Koppel did a subject, you knew it was an important one. Many times, he covered crises other outlets had ignored. *Nightline*, some of its detractors said, was a program in search of a crisis. "When there is no crisis," a rival news network executive once claimed, "[the story is] generally boring, and he lets Forrest Sawyer do it."

But what I like about Koppel is that he regularly goes out of our borders to cover stories, even when it isn't a big crisis. On July 16, he did a story about Aborigine children in Australia and how they had been snatched from homes and mistreated for generations.

I had trouble sleeping after seeing the injustice perpetrated on Aborigine children. That's how it is with Nightline. You don't always feel good after watching Ted. You have to decide where you stand—or sit or lay down—on the issues tackled by the show. Are you in favor of letting Kosovars take revenge against the Serbs? was the uncomfortable question raised by Ted's remarkable series after the bombing of Kosovo ended in mid-June. Should the U.S. troops let them massacre a few Serbs? And how many? The show doesn't have the usual high comfort level of TV. It makes you think.

Koppel always has a great guest list. There is always, it seems, a Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the Oregon guru who spoke out directly from a North Carolina jail after being indicted by a federal grand jury for immigration fraud, or a Studs Terkel, or a top administration official ready to pop into one of the boxes on *Nightline*.

Koppel is a good interviewer, a spontaneous framer of questions who doesn't let you know everything he knows

J N



In 1992, Ted Koppel took Nightline viewers on the Clinton campaign trail as he covered the final days of the presidential election.

about a subject, like Charlie Rose does. What I especially like about Koppel as an interviewer: He doesn't always allow his guests to get off the hook by not answering questions. He'd say to a dignitary: Okay, enough of this, you haven't answered the question. You've been sidestepping this all night. I want an answer. Frequently during the impeachment saga, when White House minions made media appearances, they'd try to give Koppel a snow job—but Koppel never bought their line.

He is not perfect, though. He often tries to oversimplify an issue by presenting "both sides" when there are really four or eight. In July 1998, for instance, Koppel hosted a congressman who proposed tighter gun control laws and a representative from a gun control research group calling for heavier enforcement of existing laws. Gun control, of course, is far more complex than that.

As an interviewer, Koppel has an interesting habit. He doesn't seem to like to meet anybody in person; guests are almost always interviewed via remote. "Is he afraid if they are in studio," asked one of his rivals, "he will be nice to them and not ask tough questions?" I find those boxes on the screen offputting, as if I'm watching an unfunny version of *Hollywood Squares*.

But in his 19 years as America's Q&A Man, Ted Koppel has taken over the mantle of Walter Cronkite as the country's most trustworthy journalist. I trust Uncle Ted. When he leaves an event ahead of time, like a presidential convention, I know it's all over but the balloons. Uncle Ted is a true opinion leader.

Everybody has his own favorite Nightline. And there are plenty that stand out. There was the story on the Brooklyn police mess of 1997 after the assault on Abner Louima, the show's visit to the killing fields of Cambodia in 1993, Koppel's interview with disgraced evangelist Jim Bakker and his wife Tammy Faye in 1987. Then, most recently, there was Koppel's series about Kosovo, during which he asked a girl to read passages from her diary, written during the Serbian massacres of ethnic Albanians; the effect was simple and fabulous. He also went to Kosovo in June and interviewed refugees whose families had been massacred. These were products of real journalism that provided clarification.

Ted Koppel may go down in history as the man who reinvented news. He is sincere, penetrating, and very good at playing the devil's advocate. "Nobody does what he does better," David Brinkley once said. I agree.

WEN HITS JACKPOT WITH JUNK MAIL

BY ED SHANAHAN

OSTON GLOBE REPORTER
Patricia Wen doesn't
cover politics, but some
enterprising sleuthing—
and some plain old luck—
led her to a story that
kicked off what easily could be labeled a
national political scandal.

On May 8, Wen, whose beat is consumer news, reported that the local public television station, WGBH-TV, had violated its own policies by trading "a few thousand" names off its 225,000-member mailing list with the Democratic National Committee in return for an equal number from the DNC's list. Wen's story led to the revelation that other PBS stations around the country had swapped donors' names and personal information with the Democratic Party and, in some cases, the Republican Party. Ignoring their own party's involvement, GOP House members bent on cutting PBS's federal funding seized on the appearance of a partisan relationship between public television and the DNC.

The story began after Wen decided to act on her curiosity about junk-mail solicitations. She wanted to know more about who has access to our personal information and how they sell it, and thought it would make a good story for her readers. So when she bought a new refrigerator, she used a modified version of her name as "a kind of tracer" in filling out the appliance's product registration card.

Wen soon got a credit-card pitch addressed to her alter ego. A call to the refrigerator maker revealed that the company that processed the registration card had peddled her name.

Wen recounted the incident in a May 2 column. A Boston-area woman saw the column and wrote to Wen about her own jarring junk-mail experience: She had recently received a DNC fund-raising letter addressed to her four-year-old son and connected it to a \$40 donation she had made to WGBH in both her and the boy's name. Wen contacted the station, and an executive there confirmed that the boy's name was among those that had been handed over to the DNC.

After Wen's story broke, other news organizations reported that PBS stations in a number of cities—including New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.—had engaged in the questionable practice.

By the time a July 20 congressional hearing was held to address the subject, 28 PBS stations had admitted trading donor lists with political parties. At the hearing, PBS president Ervin S. Duggan called the list swapping "inappropriate, embarrassing, and downright stupid." Within a week, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS's parent, officially banned the practice for all stations.

Wen says she is "delighted" to have brought attention to the issue of consumer privacy. Now she says she'd like to find out how the three-year-old son of one of her readers got pre-approved for a platinum credit card.

Patricia Wen's story led to policy changes at PBS.



DIANE BARE

COURT (continued from page 75)

Court allows Greenhouse in effect to scoop her competition, although the scoops are subtle. A good example of this is a story Greenhouse wrote shortly before the Court's last major abortion case, Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, came down in 1992. The story focused on the views of three justices—Anthony Kennedy, Sandra Day O'Connor, and David Souter-whom Greenhouse deemed a critical voting block based on their decisions in previous cases. Shortly thereafter the Court issued its ruling in Casey, and sure enough, those three justices were instrumental in crafting the opinion. Greenhouse says she learned later that one of the justices picking up the Times that morning thought somebody had leaked Greenhouse advance word of the decision. There was no leak; it was Greenhouse's knowledge of the Court that allowed her to give her readers this valuable insight.

Mauro sees the job differently. He writes about the Court's decisions and oral arguments, but he makes no attempt to read all the paper that comes into the Court. Instead, Mauro does reporting on stories that the Court doesn't hand him. He makes a lot of phone calls, checking in with law professors, former clerks, and other sources to find out tidbits about the justices. "It's not just the paper that they put out," Mauro says. "There are nine people with personalities, and the institution has 300 people working in it."

Mauro has a penchant for stories that give insight into the justices as people, or for stories that put a human face on the Court. Mauro gets some of these items into *USA Today* and he writes a column for the weekly legal newspaper Legal Times, which has a big appetite for such news because it is read mainly by lawyers. In addition, Mauro produces stories that are fun but that also serve to flesh out our understanding of the institution and the people who run it. Some examples: a piece about Justice Thomas's serving as the grand marshal at the Daytona 500 race; an article on the late Justice William Brennan Jr.'s FBI files, which were released after his death; and a whimsical story about how Justice Stephen Breyer used the word "I" in an opinion, as opposed to the more common judicial "we."

Mauro also takes his enterprise reporting seriously, partly because so few reporters on the beat do any. Recalling the financial scandal that forced the resignation of Justice Abe Fortas in 1969, Mauro says he is not sure if the current press corps would be able to uncover a scandal at the Court. "I sometimes wonder if we did have another Abe Fortas or something, would anybody find out?"

While Mauro's question is impossible to answer, the reality is that very few Supreme Court reporters are out digging for dirt or trying to break a story that will topple a justice. The prevailing view of the press corps seems to be that enterprise reporting is not worth the time, partly because it would be too difficult and partly because Supreme Court justices rarely cross ethical lines. Even veteran NPR reporter Totenberg, who also provides coverage for ABC's Nightline, says showing a little deference toward the nine justices is not the wrong tack to take. "I think we are deferential, and we have some reasons to be deferential," argues Totenberg, who is famous for her aggressive reporting on the Anita Hill story. "The truth is that there is precious little scandal at the Court."



Del

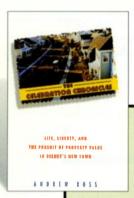
Behind The White Picket Fence

Celebration, Florida, may look like the happiest place on earth, but even Disney couldn't create a suburban utopia. Plus: Teen girls speak for themselves.

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE TOWN

of Celebration, Florida, is a strange little world. Built by The Walt Disney Company in the mid-nineties, it was

created as an experiment in "community" where residents could congregate in the town center or while away an afternoon on the



THE CELEBRATION CHRONICLES

By Andrew Ross

Ballantine Publishing Group • August 1999

front porch, greeting neighbors as they strolled by. But like most Disney creations, Celebration seems not quite real. As Andrew Ross describes in *The Celebration Chronicles*, Muzak is piped through tiny speakers planted underneath palm trees that line the streets. Fake snow is pumped into the Central Florida town at Christmastime. Town residents virtually deify Disney chairman and CEO Michael Eisner, believing he can rectify all problems.

But despite the name Disney, Celebration residents do have problems. They were lured, according to Ross, by the very tangible promise of "a state-of-the-art package of progressive education, high technology, unequaled health facilities, and quality homes." But they quickly learned that none of these promises would be fully realized, according to Ross's account. To begin with, the houses were poorly constructed, replete with

"tilted beams and uneven rafters," "cracks in the foundations," and "collapsing floors and driveways." "The way that some of the aggrieved talked," Ross writes, "it sounded like one big lawsuit waiting to happen."

Parents, meanwhile, were dismayed by Disney's perceived failure to deliver on its promise of providing a world-class education, Ross finds. Rather than learning arithmetic and spelling, parents lamented, students got a jargon-laden "progressive education" in which every teacher was a "learning leader," every classroom a "nurturing neighborhood."

It would have been easy for Ross to dismiss Celebration as some goofy Disney town, an über-suburb, all facade and faux-civility cast in the image of Walt Disney World. But by living there for a year while he con-

ducted his research and by spending countless hours attending town meetings and simply hanging out with residents, he was able to get beyond that facade to describe the existing tensions in Celebration and deliver a comprehensive and nuanced portrait of a town that, in the end, is less cotton candy than it appears.

No town, not even a Disney town, Ross concludes, is immune to difficulties. "People got divorced," he writes, "lost their jobs, fell sick, and died in Celebration, and, occasionally, all hell broke loose." Just like anywhere else in America.

—Michael Freedman

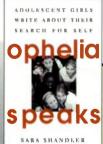
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REVIVING OPHELIA, PUBLISHED

in 1994, was psychologist Mary Pipher's stunning assessment of girls' coming of age: As teenagers, Pipher wrote, young women fall victim to a "girl-poisoning" society that offers only a slivered definition of what a woman should be. Sara Shandler, who read the book when she was 16, identified with both the pain and the desperate hope of the girls Pipher profiled. But something was lacking: "I felt Pipher was speaking for me, and I wanted to speak for myself," Shandler writes.

This thought gave birth to Ophelia Speaks, a collection of acutely personal essays about that fragile bridge between childhood and adulthood. Shandler summoned the voices of teenagers from all over the country, culling these pieces from hundreds of submissions. She then fashioned a

unique telescope to look into the fragmented world of young women who



OPHELIA SPEAKS

Edited by Sara Shandler

HarperPerennial May 1999

are often trying to find themselves while dealing with very real issues, from eating disorders and sexual abuse to discovering (or renouncing) religion and building relationships. The essays are startlingly honest, many of them budding from journal entries originally penned for only their writer's eyes. "And another milestone

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BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

passes without a hint of sorrow or a mark of passage," writes one girl after her first sexual experience. "No ceremony. No dwelling. Only a brief unsuccessful attempt at trying to forget it ever hap-

pened. Of course, I am no longer a virgin, ta-da? And how funny those words sound, look, written in blue ink on paper...as if I should feel their weight within these pages."

Some of the essays venture into unrestrained, emotive writing and create a fairly bleak portrait of the teen experience. But Shandler's spare and confident introductions to each chapter rein in the book's themes and highlight the girls' hidden strengths, creating a hopeful message for teens thrust into a sometimes bitter world. "Adolescence has robbed us of some of our youthful giggles, but happiness still remains," writes Shandler. "Despite our struggles, we have faith in our future." —Kimberly Conniff



"I LOVED DUBLIN," PETER

Sheridan declares early in 44: Dublin Made Me. "If Dublin was a woman, I'd marry her." But Sheridan's book is less about his relationship with Dublin, where he grew up, than it is about his relationship with "Da," his father, a relationship that was frequently nettlesome but always amusing. As told through images of a working-class family in 1960s Ireland, Sheridan's is a tale of an Irish childhood, like Frank McCourt's Angela's Ashes, spun with humor and poignance.

Sheridan—today a prominent Irish playwright and theater director—writes his memoir in successive episodes, beginning on New Year's Eve 1959. Young Peter, at times wallflowershy, is on the cusp of manhood, his will for independence growing by the year. His father, a railway booking clerk and incorrigible gambler archetypically set in his ways, is consumed by a struggle to stave off an accelerating decade he can hardly understand, much less accept. "The guitar is only a mongrel," he tells Peter when the boy



44: DUBLIN MADE ME By Peter Sheridan Viking Penguin May 1999

considers taking it up, "[a] bastard offspring of a Spanish gypsy." And make no equivocation about the Beatles, Da insists, "[they] don't play their own instruments....It's all done with tape machines."

The nerve center of the story is 44 Seville Place, the Sheridans' home and a place bustling with children and boarders of all stripes. "Ma had a terrible bark," Sheridan writes, "but she couldn't turn people away from her door." In one episode, Sheridan describes a younger brother who lay dying, struck down with a brain tumor, and remembers that "[f]orty-four turned into a house of tears." For a period of time soon after the boy's death, Sheridan's

father takes to his own bed, overcome with migraines, convinced that he too has a brain tumor.

Throughout the book, Sheridan's revelations and amusing ruminations paint lasting images of a boy on the journey to self-discovery, as well as of a father's hand in getting him there. It is Da, after all, who leads Peter to a local theater company, which becomes something of a rejuvenating force, helping to dissipate much of the frustration that

marks the boy's early life. His true calling heard, Peter knows his days at 44 Seville Place are numbered: "The path ahead suddenly seemed straightforward and clear."

-Chipp Winston



THE MAGICAL BUT PERILOUS

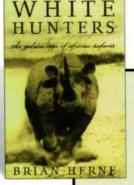
land that Brian Herne depicts in White Hunters is much like the American Wild West—but instead it's the east of Africa. Rogues, heroes, renegades, lovers, and literally tons of wild animals populate this crowded chronicle of hunting in a place where elephant hunter Bill Judd—not

Buffalo Bill Cody—is legendary.

Less a linear history than a progression of anecdotes and profiles, White Hunters features the stories of the men and women who made their fortunes and often met their ends in pursuit of lions, elephants, and buffalo. Herne is generous with the gory details of hunts and maulings, but he also paints a vivid picture of man's complex coexistence with these animals, from the man-eating lions that preyed on railway workers in Kenya to the semi-tame lions that lived with conservationist George Adamson, husband of Born Free author Joy Adamson.

These hunters led safaris for such illustrious clients as Ernest Hemingway, the Duke of York (later King George VI) and Theodore Roosevelt, whose expedition was covered by The Associated Press and hence brought international attention to the region. Some of the hunters are famous as

well, such as Karen Blixen and Denys Finch Hatton, portrayed by Meryl Streep and Robert



WHITE HUNTERS: The Golden Age of African Safaris By Brian Herne

Henry Holt and Company • June 1999

Redford in the 1985 film *Out of Africa*. Also intriguing are the lesser-known figures, like Mwalimu Manza, who could recognize a one-tusked elephant just from looking at its tracks.

Herne's book offers not only a generous collection of photos that date back a century, but also many tales that are based on conversations with the hunters and their unpublished diaries. "For many of these individuals safari life and the physical aspects of a hunt were infinitely more rewarding than actually securing a trophy," Herne writes. After a jaunt through White Hunters, one can understand why.

—Matthew Reed Baker

Picture This!

With such a confusing jumble of equipment and techniques, getting going in the art of photography can seem intimidating. No more, thanks to our guide for the aspiring Avedons out there.

BY BRIDGET SAMBURG





on the web:

CALUMETPHOTO.COM

This catalog has a wide selection of film, cameras, and field gear. "It has good prices but great service," says James Baker, executive director of Colorado's Anderson Ranch Arts Center, which offers photography workshops. An extensive index and detailed description of products make shopping for digital cameras, scanners, tripods, and film a snap.

BHPHOTOVIDEO.COM

"A major discount mailer, they have tons of information," says Maine Photographic Workshops director David Lyman. B&H Photo-Video's site is updated regularly with new deals, used equipment, and competitive prices. "That's a great place to buy," agrees Baker. "Their prices are the best."

DEJA.COM

You can get lots of information about photography products on this consumer-opinion website. Are you interested in Sony Mavicas? Look here for other consumers' feedback on these digital cameras. The rec.photo.digital area is especially popular, allowing you to participate in forums or post your own review.

APOGEEPHOTO.COM

Most photography experts suggest novices take a class or join a club to get started. This website is a good one for finding an index of workshops, says Baker. Complete with product reviews, a buying guide, and workshop listings, this site also has a "Photography for Young People" section.

KODAK.COM

This film company's site offers an excellent guide for understanding and mastering digital technology. The "Digital Learning Center" provides monthly imaging tips, as well as an explanation of the differences between digital and traditional pictures. Free online tutorials about digital-color theory and the fundamentals of digital

imaging are also available. "They have a great site for teaching photography," says *Popular Photography* technology editor Michael McNamara. Photography gurus also suggest checking out other major manufacturers' sites, including minolta.com, agfa.com, and nikon.com, for instructional material and equipment information.



ELKE HESSER/PHOTONICA



in the bookstores:

ANSEL ADAMS

The Came a

EXPLORING COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY

(WCB/McGraw-Hill, \$33) Respected photographer Robert Hirsch's book is used by college and high school instructors to teach the basics of color photography. This comprehensive, well-illustrated book is a necessity for those who want to skip over black-and-white picture taking and are ready to start shooting in color.

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR DUMMIES

(IDG Books Worldwide, \$19.99) This step-by-step guide "covers all the basics, including some aspects of digital," says *Popular Photography's* McNamara. Tips on everything from lighting and landscape photography to choosing the proper film and focusing the camera lens are covered in this reader-friendly manual.

THE ANSEL ADAMS PHOTOGRA-PHY SERIES: THE CAMERA; THE NEGATIVE; THE PRINT

(Little, Brown and Co., \$21.95 each) Photography buffs recommend this series by legendary photographer Ansel Adams as a fundamental introduction to the art of picture taking. "Ansel was the consummate technician," says Kyle Bajakian, program director for photography and digital imaging at Anderson Ranch. "He has a lot of details in there from the large camera format to how to expose film."

ESSENTIALS OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

(New Riders Publishing, \$60) This is a rather advanced book that focuses on using software programs such as Photoshop. "It has the most comprehensive information under one cover about digital photos," says Rixon Reed, owner of Photo-Eye Books & Prints in Santa Fe. Instructions on creating pho-

tomontages, restoring damaged photos, and how to layer images make this an excellent resource for the digitally inclined.

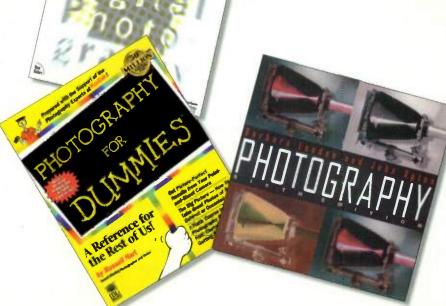
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY ANSWERS!

(McGraw-Hill, \$24.99) "It's a great question-and-answer sort of book that gives someone just starting out great information on digital photography," says Reed. An excellent guide for the beginning digital-camera user, this book explains the basics of all the techniques and equipment involved.

PHOTOGRAPHY

(Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., \$64) This how-to bible, written by photography gurus Barbara London and John Upton, will guide any beginner through the basics. "It's always been a great book for a basic introduction into how to use a camera and how to photo-

graph," says James Baker of Anderson Ranch. From darkroom and equipment-use instructions to a section on photography's place in history and its evolution over time, this book is a must-have for anyone interested in making photography a serious hobby.



ssentials of Digital Pho

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in the magazines:

AMERICAN PHOTO

(Hachette Filipacchi Magazines, \$21 annually) "This is a general-interest magazine that looks at all aspects of the field," says Phillip Block, deputy director for programs at New York's International Center of Photography. This glossy is full of brilliant photos, travel-shooting tips, and inspirational montages, as well as equipment prices and descriptions.



OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER

(Werner Publishing Corp., \$19.94 annually) For those interested in nature, wildlife, or landscape photography, experts recommend reading this magazine for tips on how to become a successful outdoor picture taker. Shadowing and dramatic lighting techniques and color-film options are among the topics discussed.



TNATIONAL GEO PHOTOS AND THE PROPERTY OF THE P

POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY

(Hachette Filipacchi Magazines, \$19.94 annually) This magazine is recommended as an excellent resource for buying and learning about equipment. Its extensive equipment-testing labs review new cameras and new films. "This is more geared toward the equipment and technology side of things," says Reid Callanan, director of Santa Fe Workshops, a photography school. "It also has the nuts and bolts of how to buy."



APERTURE

(Aperture Foundation, Inc. \$40 annually) This quarterly journal explores the fine art of photography by exhibiting various artists' work alongside their own interpretations and explanations of the photos. Although devoid of instructional information, *Aperture* will provide inspiration to photographers of all levels.



workshops:

Whether you take time off to attend a workshop or happen to be vacationing near one, these weekend- to two-week-long programs offer personal instruction with photographers from all over the country. Local colleges and universities may have courses as well, but these workshops are considered the best.

THE MAINE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS

One of the oldest workshops in the United States, Maine Photographic Workshops offers classes in the spring, summer and fall in Rockport, Maine. In the winter, sessions for shutterbugs who prefer warm weather are held in Mexico and Cuba. (877-577-7700 or www.meworkshops.com. Average price of a weeklong program is \$650; weekend programs are \$275.)

ANDERSON RANCH ARTS CENTER

Located in Colorado's Snowmass Village, Anderson Ranch offers workshops all year. Winter classes are taught at various locations around the world, including the Grand Canyon, Scotland, Ireland, and Jamaica. Weekend to three-week-long programs in digital imaging and traditional photography are available. (www.andersonranch.org or 970-923-3181. Courses range in price from \$395 to \$1295.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The ICP in New York City offers many courses throughout the year. Considered one of the finest photography institutes, the center plays host to masters of film and still photography, who come to teach students everything from black-and-white portraiture and color printing to digital imaging and lighting techniques. (www.icp.org or 212-860-1776. \$300 to \$555 for weekend to weeklong workshops.)

SANTA FE WORKSHOPS

Popular Photography's McNamara recommends these weeklong workshops for "anyone who wants to learn more about photography, from the advanced or amateur to a beginner." Classes range in focus from digital training to location shooting and are scheduled year round. (www.sfworkshop.com or 505-983-1400. Classes cost \$595 to \$975 for the week.)

THEY SPEAK FOR THEIR PAPERS

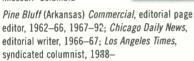
Editorial page editors: their backgrounds and points of view.

BY MATTHEW REED BAKER

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE Paul Greenberg

Editorial page editor, 1992-

B.A., journalism, 1958; M.A., history, 1959, University of Missouri-Columbia



His description of paper's editorial stance: "Conservative but erratic....We're strongly against abortion, but we're for rights for homosexuals."



LOS ANGELES TIMES Janet Clayton

Editorial page editor, 1995-Vice-president, 1997-Corporate vice-president. The Times Mirror Company, 1998-

B.A., journalism, University of Southern California, 1977

Southwest Wave, South Central Los Angeles, rewriter/reporter, summers 1975, 1976; Los Angeles Times, intern, 1977; staff writer, 1977-87; articles editor, 1987-89; editorial writer, 1989-90; assistant editorial page editor, 1990-95

"It's really not an ideological page, though it can be more liberal on social issues and more conservative on fiscal issues."

THE SEATTLE TIMES **Mindy Cameron**

Editorial page editor, 1990-

B.A., journalism, Pacific University (Forest Grove, Oregon), 1965

Lewiston (Idaho) Morning Tribune, reporter, 1969; managing editor,

1979-81; The Idaho Statesman, reporter, 1970-74; WXXI public television (Rochester, New York), news anchor/producer, 1978-79; The Seattle Times, associate city editor, 1981-83; city editor, 1983-89

"Moderate. We've endorsed people across party lines. We've been called liberal by our conservative critics. Ours is a different breed, we don't play party lines."

CHICAGO TRIBUNE N. Don Wycliff

Editorial page editor, 1991-

B.A., government and international studies. University of Notre Dame, 1969

Chicago Daily News, reporter,

1973-75 and 1977-78; night kity editor, 1975-77; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, reporter, 1978; Chicago Sun-Times, reporter, 1981-85; The New York Times, editorial board member, 1985-90; reporter, 1990; Chicago Tribune, deputy editorial page editor, 1990-91

"Moderate Republican in the best Lincolnian sense, with a dedication to the ideals with which the party was founded."



THE NEW YORK TIMES **Howell Raines**

Editorial page editor, 1993-

B.A., English, Birmingham-Southern College (Alabama), 1964; M.A., English, University of Alabama, 1973

Birmingham (Alabama) Post-Herald, reporter, 1964-65; The Birmingham News, reporter, 1970-71; The Atlanta Constitution, political editor, 1971-74; St. Petersburg Times, political editor, 1976-78; The New York Times, national correspondent, 1978-79; Atlanta bureau chief, 1979-81; White House correspondent, 1981-84; national political correspondent, 1984; deputy Washington editor, 1985-87; London bureau chief, 1987-88; Washington bureau chief, 1988-92 Declined to comment.

THE WALL STREET **JOURNAL**

Robert L. Bartley Editorial page editor, 1972-Editor, 1979-

Vice-president, 1983-

B.S., journalism, Iowa State University, 1959; M.S., political

science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1962

Grinnell (lowa) Herald-Register, reporter, 1959-1960; The Wall Street Journal, staff reporter, 1962-64; editorial writer, 1964-71; associate editor, 1972

"The philosophy of the Journal editorial page [is] 'free men and free markets.'...We are eighteenth-century liberals. We are not about to follow Pat Buchanan into protectionism, for example, and are pro-immigration."

THE DALLAS **MORNING NEWS** Rena Pederson

Editorial page editor, 1986-Vice-president, 1988-

B.S., journalism, University of Texas-Austin, 1969; M.S.J., Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 1970

The Associated Press, reporter, 1972; The Dallas Morning News, senior reporter, 1973-76; editor, 1976-80; senior editorial writer, 1980-85; associate editorial page editor, 1985

"Fairly traditional values. Pro-Dallas, pro-Texas, pro-trade. We're not isolationists, we're not knee-jerk conservatives, and we're not flat-earthers."



SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE John Diaz

Editorial page editor, 1996-

B.A., journalism, Humboldt State University (Arcata, California), 1977

Red Bluff (California) Daily News, reporter, 1978-80; Donrey Media Group, Washington bureau correspondent, 1980-1984: The Associated Press, reporter, 1984-85; The Denver Post, reporter, 1985-88; assistant city editor, 1988-90; San Francisco Chronicle, assistant city

centrist leaning left, but we're like...a reality check on a city that doesn't have too many."

THE WASHINGTON POST Stephen S. Rosenfeld

Editorial page editor, 1999-*

B.A., history and literature, Harvard University, 1953; M.A., Russian history, Columbia University, 1959



The Berkshire Eagle (Pittsfield,

MA), reporter, 1955-57; The Washington Post, city reporter, 1959-62; editorial writer, 1962-64; Moscow correspondent, 1964-65; editorial writer, 1965-82; deputy editorial page editor, 1982-99

*Rosenfeld has taken over the editorial page duties temporarily following the May 13 death of the section's longtime editor, Meg Greenfield.

"Independent."



BRILL'S CONTENT OCTOBER 1999

[LETTERS]

(continued from page 22)

TREAD LIGHTLY

*I cannot believe the animosity, snide remarks, and outright hatefulness that come through in some of your letters. I know that your magazine goes a little "against the norm," but this is almost comical. I can just picture the hair standing up on the back of [the letter writers'] necks, the blood pressure rising, the migraines pounding, as they take pen in hand or hack away at their keyboards to respond to your stories.

I think it is great that a magazine is finally here that, even if you don't agree with the reporting, has people talking and others treading with a little caution in their step.

Debbie Anderson Denham Springs, LA



ABC's Diane Sawyer

BAIT AND SWITCH

*Congratulations to Joan Konner for her perceptive review of the Diane Sawyer "interview" with Vice-President Al Gore ["Diane 'Got' Gore. But What Did We Get?" Talk Back, September]. We turned on the show in the hope of seeing mature and informative discussion. Instead, we got an unprofessional and unpleasant attempt to bait the victim.

RUTH AND HOWARD SAMUEL Chevy Chase, MD

MORE THAN THAT

*Jeff Pooley's unflattering brushoff of Adlai Stevenson as a "perennial" presidential candidate consigned to "a footnote in a history textbook" ["The Muddites," The Ivory Tower, September] is unfair and misleading, the more so when taken within the context of today's crop of true "perennial" candidates. Stevenson was nominated as his party's standard bearer at successive Democratic National Conventions and had enough political clout left in his arsenal to threaten an eleventh-hour derailment of the John F. Kennedy juggernaut at a third.

CHAUNCEY G. PARKER III Orlando, FL

QUESTIONS RAISED

*Steven Brill's response to [Meet the Press executive producer] Nancy Nathan ["Letters," September] acknowledges a factual reporting error but raises disturbing questions. How can Brill or any journalist review a program in a visual medium like television by reading a transcript, when so much information is conveyed by facial expression, a shrug, and on-screen visuals? It was flawed journalism to try. And is it reasonable for Brill to imply that [Meet the Press host] Tim Russert is partially responsible for the error because he failed to return a phone call or sent a transcript that only told part of the story?

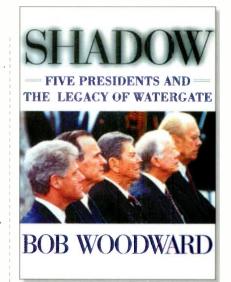
I think not. The "Corrections" section that begins on the preceding page raises similar questions. It regrets spelling names wrong, mixing up [a] job [title], and putting [an event] in the wrong location. Do these errors in the basics call into question the credibility of an entire article? They do for me.

You ask on the table of contents page: "Which major magazine runs the most corrections?" Your answer [page 42] suggests it is *Brill's Content*. With more attention to detail, you may have fewer errors than the others when you've published for as long as they have.

ALAN WACHTER Grasonville, MD

SHADOW CASTING

*Steven Brill's article about Bob Woodward's *Shadow: Five Presidents and the Legacy of Watergate* ["How Woodward Goes Wayward," Rewind, September] raises important issues about the author's ability to capture the purportedly exact details of conversations that the author was obviously



not privy to as a participant. That is something I have always wondered about in such books. The truth is always more complicated, and, as Mr. Brill points out, that ambiguity should be reflected in the narrative, and not just tucked away in a footnote that most people never read.

TOM OLAFSON El Centro, CA

A CHIMP'S SHAME

*Although Brill's Content declares that "no animals were harmed during the production" of the July/August issue, I must question the veracity of that statement: The magazine clearly relegated an otherwise intelligent-looking chimpanzee named Chippy to the rank of political pundit ["Pundit Challenge: Can They Beat Our Chimp?" The Notebook].

That the savvy chimp statistically bested George Will (as if any number of higher life forms can't make such a boast) hardly justifies such a demeaning characterization. And, according to your measurements, Chippy proved inferior to Robert Novak, Sam Donaldson, and George Stephanopoulos, an obvious source of shame for any self-respecting primate.

DAVID SEPPA Plymouth, MN

THE DAILY NEWS RESPONDS

The screed in your September issue on the *Daily News*'s Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial crusade to save Harlem's Apollo Theatre provided a detailed—

though hardly convincing—presentation of the point of view of Rep. Charles Rangel and his longtime friend businessman Percy Sutton. ["For *This* They Get a Pulitzer?"] Both are now in hot water over mismanagement of the legendary theater; they must be grateful for your support.

Fortunately, the facts—which seemed to have eluded your gullible writer, Robert Schmidt—speak for themselves. Clearly and without equivocation. The *Daily News* is proud to have uncovered them and to have helped put the Apollo on the right track.

Schmidt contends that the *News*'s campaign was "based on the allegation that Sutton owes the foundation \$4.4 million." Wrong. The figure is accurate—it comes from the Apollo's own controller—but it did not surface until we had published 4 of the 17 Apollo editorials.

What prompted the *News*'s campaign was this: During Rangel's tenure as chairman of the Apollo board, the theater was broke, decrepit, and dark most nights. Yet when the theater's somnolent board finally woke and began asking Sutton for back royalties, Sutton agreed to pay \$145,000. The board accepted. Without question. The sum was based, then board vice-chairman Eugene McCabe told the *News*, not on any formal accounting but on "how much the Apollo needed."

Schmidt asserts that his inquiries to the News editorial board were met with "equivocation." That is untrue. Fact is, editorial writer Jonathan Capehart was interviewed by phone at length and answered every question posed. Moreover, the News responded to written questions from Brill's Content with two point-by-point letters on July 13 and 14. We sent copies of correspondence with Sutton that shows he refused to meet with the editorial board or answer any of its detailed questions. Also included were a copy of the Apollo controller's memo on what Sutton's company owed, and information from the show's syndicator touting its success.

None of this information made it into the pages of your magazine. So it

bears repeating. The Apollo controller determined that Sutton's Inner City Theater Group owed \$4,388,409 over five years for its popular *It's Showtime at the Apollo* television program. The figure was based on a plain-English contract that required it to pay the theater's nonprofit foundation 25 percent of the annual net profit, with net profit defined as the usual gross invoice selling price with only limited deductions permitted.

Rangel now claims that the contract they signed was in error. This is preposterous. We are asked to believe that two alert and able people overlooked the single most important point in the contract. The congressman railed about racism, political bias, and personal vendetta, but six months went by without word of any contractual error passing his lips. Not until he hired a new set of lawyers did that excuse surface.

But these basic facts remain: Sutton's Showtime garnered \$26 million in revenues, with its Los Angeles-based syndicator pocketing \$6.4 million—a figure in line with the contract as written. Yet the Apollo Theatre Foundation Inc., owner of the magic Apollo name and its inimitable trademarks, received a mere \$300,000 over five years. After the News editorials appeared, then state Attorney General Dennis Vacco, a Republican, charged the Apollo's board of directors with violating its fiduciary responsibilities to the state-owned theater. His successor, Eliot Spitzer, a Democrat, like Rangel, continued the suit. Spitzer said that information provided by Sutton was so incomplete that the best he could determine was that "the foundation is owed well over one million dollars" by Sutton's company. Spitzer demanded restitution.

Schmidt disputes that It's Showtime at the Apollo is, as the News reported, "tied for third place among syndicated shows nationwide," and claims that editorial writer Michael Aronson "did not respond to two calls and one letter requesting comment." The truth is, the Daily News sent your magazine a copy of a page from Sutton's syndicator, Western International Syndication, indicating the show was "the #1 ranked"

music/comedy/variety show on television" and that it was neck-and-neck in third place with *Baywatch*.

Meanwhile, for more than a year, Time Warner Inc. has been involved in the Apollo-rescue effort and is trying to work out a settlement of the attorney



general's suit. Its involvement is contingent on Rangel's stepping down as chairman. Governor Pataki, through the Empire State Development Corporation, which holds title to the Apollo, also has urged Rangel to step down and believes the theater is owed millions. These are facts Schmidt neglected to report.

Thanks to the *Daily News* spotlight, new bidders for *Showtime* have come forward, offering the Apollo substantially more than Sutton, and setting a more accurate market value for the show. Rangel has done all in his power to disqualify them. This, too, was curiously absent from Schmidt's polemic.

As to the issue of fairness, the *Daily News* phoned Rangel so many times concerning the Apollo that he said he would not accept any more calls on the subject. He was given space to present his side in an op-ed article we published on May 7,1998, and in a letter to the "Voice of the People" column on January 14, 1999. Moreover, Sutton's lawyers, Parcher, Hayes & Snyder, concede that he was given ample opportunity to respond.

The Daily News editorial board is honored to have received the Pulitzer Prize for its efforts to lift the Apollo to its rightful place as a cultural mecca and an economic engine for 125th Street. We also are proud that we have been supported in this effort by many

Members of the Daily News editorial board celebrate their Pulitzer Prize for its series on New York's Apollo Theatre.

[LETTERS]

people in Harlem. We will never let them down. Nor will we shirk our duty to report the facts and draw the correct conclusions.

Your prominently displayed credo says *Brill's Content* stands for being "accurate in fact and context." Noble. You should try it sometime.

MICHAEL GOODWIN Editorial Page Editor The New York *Daily News*

Robert Schmidt responds: Mr. Goodwin's letter reads like one of the Daily News's editorials on the Apollo Theatre—high on rhetoric, but not backed up by facts.

First, Goodwin calls me "gullible" for presenting the point of view of Rep. Charles Rangel and Percy Sutton. Rangel, the chairman of the Apollo Theatre Foundation and Sutton, whose company puts out It's Showtime at the Apollo, were the two signatories to the disputed license agreement that was the focus of the Daily News campaign. Their viewpoint is vital to understanding the story. Yet the Daily News's editorial page gave short shrift to Rangel and Sutton's explanation—mocking it, in fact, in an editorial.

Second, Goodwin claims it is "wrong" that his paper's editorial campaign was based on the allegation that Sutton owes the theater \$4.4 million. As I noted in my story, the campaign was prompted by the editorial board's tour of the theater and its discovery that the Apollo was in sorry shape. But the crux of the editorials was that Sutton owed millions of dollars to the theater and that his friend Rangel was not making Sutton pay up. It is true that the News did not report the \$4.4 million figure until its fourth editorial. However, that is only because the editorial board had not fully reported the story before going to press with the allegations. Indeed, the first editorial about the Apollo, published on April 26, 1998, stated that Sutton likely owed the theater \$3 million, according to "knowledgeable sources."

Third, it is not, as Goodwin claims, "preposterous" that Sutton and Rangel signed a contract that was in error. Nor is the license agreement that gave Sutton the use of the Showtime name "the single most important point in the contract," as Goodwin states. At the time the agreement was signed, Sutton was transferring

his ownership of the Apollo Theatre to the state of New York. It was a complex deal handled by lawyers, and the license agreement was merely a 30-page addendum to more than 700 pages of documents. (It is worth noting, too, that the News's writers overlooked the fact that Sutton paid the theater "market rate" rent-a requirement noted in the 30-page license agreement but not reported by the News.) Furthermore, Goodwin's claim that Rangel never offered the explanation that the contract was in error for six months is a red herring. Two weeks after the News's first two editorials on the Apollo, Percy Sutton gave a widely attended public speech in which he put the blame on the "poorly worded and imprecise contract." The Daily News covered the May 12 event on its news pages. Sutton also offered the same explanation in an interview published in The New York Times on May 11.

Fourth, it is true, as Goodwin states. that the Daily News sent me "a copy of a page from Sutton's syndicator, Western International Syndication, indicating the show was 'the #1 ranked music/ comedy/variety show on television' and that it was neck-and-neck in third place with Baywatch." The document-not from an independent entity—is actually part of the syndicator's promotion materials and is designed to sell the show to television stations. Moreover, the ratings referred to in the document are for local markets, not "nationally," as the News reported. It should not have been difficult to find out that Showtime was actually ranked around 90th place among syndicated shows by Nielsen Media Research.

Fifth, contrary to Goodwin's assertion, I did report that the *Daily News*'s editorials drove up the price that Sutton now pays for the rights to use the *Showtime* name.

Sixth, the issue of "fairness" that Goodwin writes about should be directed at Sutton, not Rangel. It is true, as I reported, that Sutton refused to comment for the first editorial that the *Daily News* wrote, in April 1998. However, Sutton says that no member of the editorial board ever attempted to contact him again—despite the fact that the *Daily News* published 16 more editorials lambasting Sutton. Goodwin denied this in writing, but he refused—and continues to refuse—to say how many times Sutton was contacted or by whom.



ON FAULTY LOGIC

How's the following for a bogus headline to go with the bogus scoops reported in "War Gets The Monica Treatment" [July/August]?

"How a President, Distracted by Scandal, Entered Balkan War." This April 18 New York Times front-page headline suggests that American entry was unintended and a mistake resulting from Mr. Clinton's sex scandal. This is a very serious charge; it demands supporting evidence.

A careful reading of the *Times*'s detailed account of events leading to American involvement discloses no such evidence (unless you consider as evidence, which it is not, Bob Dole's casual remark that Kosovo "may have been one of the casualties" of the "all consuming" interest in impeachment). Indeed, the article states: "It is unclear whether the President's decisions on Kosovo would have been any different if he had not been distracted by his own political and legal problems."

Accordingly, the headline was misleading. It could, with equal logic, if you believe the war was just and a credit to Mr. Clinton, have been: "How a President, Despite Scandal's Distractions, Entered Balkan War." Mention of the scandal in the headline was inappropriate and, in the way it was done, false and unfair.

Sam Lerner Basking Ridge, NJ

CATCHING FOULS

*Your description of the new media machine and its approach to political-military reporting sounded vaguely familiar ["War Gets The Monica Treatment"], like a kind of

reporting we all knew about years ago. Finally, it hit me: What you described is the gossip-columnist style of journalism.

Like the Walter Winchells and Louella Parsonses of old, the media culture now tends to focus on celebrities, who in the political-military sphere consist largely of the administration and its leaders. These personages are dealt with in the timehonored gossip-column fashion: Stress the negative in both reporting and conjecture; publish any rumor that is scandalous; don't bother to verify rumors if they are negative; gild them with plenty of innuendo; and stick with the journalism of assertion without evidence.

One of the greatest disservices the media can render to any society is to knowingly publish half-truths and liesparticularly on national security issuesunder the pretense that they are fact. Your publication is to be commended for its exposés of such foul journalistic behavior.

> M.C. BRAGDON Arlington, VA

UNIUSTIFIED

*Steven Brill's argument that the news media treats war like a sex scandal in the wake of Monica is unconvincing. Perhaps if he had cited more than just two newspaper articles out of the hundreds (or thousands) written during the NATO bombing there would have been justification for placing this thin story on the cover of the magazine.

CHRISTOPHER O'NEILL New Orleans, LA

TO THE EXTREME

*So one letter to Brill's Content results in a story? Writer Ari Voukydis directly admitted that one letter prompted his story on Fox Files's piece on extreme fighting ["Them's Ultimate Words, The Notebook, Fightin' July/August]. Not one person contacted Fox Files "crying foul."

Voukydis's apparent inability to grasp Fox Files's reporting that 46 states ban this sport is mind boggling. He counters with his brilliant mathematical deduction that "at least four states permit the sport." Alrighty then.

Every single fact in [our] piece is correct. All footage contained in our story is given proper attribution. Footage from legitimate pay-per-view events is identified as such.

It has always been my understanding as a journalist that we all try to report on and about stories, not create them out of nothing. Furthermore, the extraordinary amount of time that I and others at Fox News spent on the telephone with Voukydis was excessive. As a result of all of this, we will certainly consider carefully whether we cooperate with Brill's Content in the future.

PAMELA K. BROWNE Senior Producer Fox Files

Ari Voukydis responds: The Fox Files segment "Caged Warriors" seemed to conclude that if a sport is not specifically permitted by law, it is therefore "banned." As my article explains, some states, California among them, neither explicitly permit nor ban mixed martial arts.

AMERICAN PIE

*The addition of music themes to news presentations ["Newsbreak Sonata," The Notebook, July/August] is simply one of the latest lame efforts of TV network news to appeal to a larger piece of the news-audience

pie. The problem, as has

been stated repeatedly in your magazine, is that the core news audience is interested in the honest, accurate, fair reporting of the news-not soap-opera pres-

entation of the day's big

story, the presentation of celebrity as news, or the agenda-correct manipulation of the news.

> LARRY HILDEBRAND Snowflake, AZ

(continued from page 109) Schindehette, the People senior writer whose name appears atop the story's 11 bylines, says that as far as she knows there was "no discussion about running that photo. Why would there be? Why would it be objectionable?"

At Newsweek, editor Mark Whitaker responded that he did not agree with the two voluntary restrictions, saying he, too, deals with these issues on a case-by-case basis. Columnist Alter, however, responded that he thought he could agree to the restrictions once the caveats for exceptions were there. In fact, according to two editors at Newsweek, Alter argued successfully that the magazine should not use any of those pictures taken at Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's Long Island home and that her daughter should be cropped from the photo that appeared on the magazine's cover.

At Newsweek's corporate sister publication, The Washington Post, executive editor Leonard Downie Jr. responded that the Post "has never made or entered into pledges or agreements about how to report the news...." But he noted that the proposed restriction, with the caveats concerning grieving families "is identical to the current (but unwritten) policy for Washington Post photographers." The Post did not run any pictures of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's children but did run a through-the-hedges shot of her and a cousin in her yard.

New York Daily News editor in chief Debby Krenek wrote a thoughtful letter describing policies at that paper that seem to match the ones we circulated. Then again, her paper ran pictures of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's son and one of her daughters. This suggests the porousness of our caveat allowing for exceptions; in theory, Krenek could agree with the proposed restrictions and still do exactly as she had done in covering the Kennedy story. However, Krenek too refused to sign on to any kind of industry standard that allowed for such exceptions, although her boss, Harold Evans (editorial director of both the Daily News and U.S. News & World Report), said that he agreed with both voluntary restrictions.

TALKING THE TALK

The reason for not agreeing to any common policy or restriction, even with room for exceptions, was probably expressed most candidly by Evans's editor at U.S. News & World Report, Stephen Smith, who wrote that he didn't "feel comfortable subscribing to a policy, even a 'general' one allowing for exceptions, that would compel U.S. News to explain its editorial decisions to another mag-

BRILL'S CONTENT (ISSN 1099-5234) (GST 866176886) is published monthly except combined issues in December/January and July/August by Brill Media Ventures, L.P., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. Subscriptions are \$15.95 for one year in the U.S., \$20.95 in Canada, and \$25.95 in all other countries. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BRILL'S CONTENT, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Vol. 2, No. 8, October 1999. Copyright @1999 Brill Media Ventures, L.P. The Copyright Act of 1976 prohibits the reproduction by photocopy machine or any other means of any portion of this issue except with the permission of the publisher. For subscription information, please call 1-800-829-9154.

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azine." To be sure, we were not suggesting a regimen whereby news organizations would have to explain a decision to us or anyone else in particular; rather, because they would have a specific policy in place, they'd have to be ready to articulate the reasons for exceptions to their own staffers, their readers, or anyone else who asked why the exceptions were made. In other words, because the organization had articulated standards that are more specific than the "We exercise good taste and sound judgment on a case-by-case basis" standard, it would be more tangibly accountable for its decisions and those decisions would be more readily comparable to those of other news organizations.

Smith's opposition to such externally measurable standards was echoed by Joseph Lelyveld, executive editor of The New York Times, which published a picture of one of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's daughters on page one (but which was also remarkably restrained generally in the amount and tone of the coverage it gave to the story). According to Isaacson of Time, after we referred to his initial response to the questionnaire in explaining the subsequent addendums and caveats we were faxing around, "I had [CBS News president] Andy Heyward and Joe Lelyveld...poking their fingers in my chest berating me for even having a dialogue with you about industry standards." Thus, it was no surprise that Lelyveld wrote, "While I respect what you're trying to accomplish, we don't believe in signing onto external codes. Our basic contract is with our loyal readers who let us know fast when we stray, not with some editorial college of cardinals."

IN REIECTING THE TWO RESTRICTIONS, John Pastorek, the news director at ABC affiliate WBRZ-TV in Baton Rouge, cited his agreement with the Society of Professional Journalists' "Code of Ethics" and The Poynter Institute For Media Studies' "Guiding Principles for the Journalist" as indicative of his sensitivity to the issues involved. Both of these are worthy statements of principle. They should be taught in every journalism school and posted in every newsroom. But they're not at all specific, and in places they read like the letter we got from Pecker of the National Enquirer.

These same guidelines are the stuff of

journalism-ethics seminars, which are convened by the dozens every year at places like the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. There, panelists and audiences of well-intentioned, somber journalists debate what's over the line and what's not, bemoan the sorry state of journalism in a world of competitive business pressures, and almost always emerge agreeing that they're all trying to do the right thing under tough circumstances that the public just doesn't appreciate. Words like integrity, balance, and fairness fill the room. They're serious words, mouthed by serious, sincere people. But any outsider hearing them would conclude that they're only words, and that these people are willing to talk the talk (endlessly) but not walk the walk with specific standards of conduct and accountability. For no lofty statements of principle proclaimed at these seminars-or in the letters we received responding to our questionnaire-have prevented hundreds of news organizations in the Kennedy story or in countless others, local and national, from intruding in a way that most non-media people so abhor that they'd laugh at the idea that any reporter really cares about any ethical guidelines. In that context, the two narrow standards we drafted are important because they are not general. They're about specific acts. They're about conduct for which actual people can be held accountable.



COKIE ROBERTS OF ABC NEWS, a member of a famous political family herself, offered a personal angle on the proposed guidelines:

Because, as neither an editor nor producer nor executive, I am not in the position of making news decisions, it seems presumptuous of me to either sign or not sign your guidelines.

Here's what I can tell you that may be of some use: My father [Thomas Hale Boggs Sr.], as majority leader of the House [of Representatives], was lost in a plane over Alaska

and never found. My sister, as the mayor of Princeton, New Jersey, fought valiantly against cancer and lost. Both were considered major stories, one nationally, one locally. Obviously, there were people who covered them tastefully and people who did not. The reportage on Daddy's search was sometimes sensational, and that of Barbara's illness often wrong. In both cases the memorial service/funeral were done very well.

As a family member, I can tell you that the stories about loved ones after they die, assuming they are at least respectful, are very welcome. It gives the family a sense that the life mattered. And pictures of the person you love are also welcome. You are probably sitting at home going through your own albums; having others see the pictures as well is comforting in its way. A Kennedy family friend who was on This Week the Sunday after John Kennedy Jr.'s funeral confirmed that that was the case there as well. It is difficult to have cameras around just catching family shots after a death or tragedy because it makes you feel self-conscious about ever greeting anyone with a smile. But it's a difficulty anyone in the public eye is accustomed to, and has, to some degree, asked for. After my sister died, I went out to sweep the front porch of her house and found a TV camera waiting. I chastised the reporter, only to be chastised in turn by my mother, then a sitting member of Congress. "Cokie," she said, "Barbara was a public servant, and the public has a right to participate." There it is, for what it's worth.

THE PUBLIC'S OPINION

That, in a word, is what the perception gap is all about. Most in the press don't think they have to answer to anyone outside their shops for their decisions, and everyone outside thinks that means they don't care.

Here's what we found out when we asked the national research firm of Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc., to poll people across the country, asking them what they think of these proposed restrictions. As the sidebar that appears on page 102 spells out, to make the questions comprehensible in a telephone poll, we divided the two restrictions into four questions. The results were overwhelming. By margins ranging from about three-to-one to nine-to-one, those polled favored the adoption of these restrictions.

Moreover, the poll questions did not even include the caveat tor exceptions, other words, they were far more stringent than the restrictions we asked members of the caveat to decide on. Yet by margins that rival a Saddam Hussein popularity poll in their lopsidedness, the public apparently wants the press to adopt these policies.

But CNN's Amanpour, who answered "ves"

to both restrictions, notes that with 24-hour

cable coverage now swarming any big news

event and the rest of the press rushing to

catch up, "you are bound to have all kinds of

pablum....No story can sustain itself with

legitimate news when you have this kind of

coverage twenty-four hours a day, seven

days a week." That's why, Amanpour says,

she's "in favor of our profession agreeing to

a voluntary code of conduct."

a promise that "[w]e will never stalk or

hound the victims of crime," as well as a

mates writing a book about privacy summed up the tension in this area between the press and the public this way: "[I]n recent years the 'information age' has burst into the information explosion. To the traditional daily newspapers, add record numbers of books, newsletters, magazines and other periodicals. Radio and television have become ubiquitous, often running twentyfour hours....All of these outlets need to be filled with information. As a consequence, people who in another time would have lived their lives in quiet obscurity now find themselves in the spotlight....When the media uses its strength to uncover government corruption or lay bare a public lie, it is the country's watchdog. But when the animal roams into our cherished private sphere, it seems to turn dangerous and predatory. Then we Americans turn on the

and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg.

It should also be noted that these majorities were basically the same for males and females, Democrats and Republicans.

Penn, Schoen president Mark Pennwho has counted among his clients major Democratic politicians including President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore, as well as such corporations as Microsoft, Disney, and Coca-Cola—says that he rarely sees a public policy issue produce such margins. "What's astounding about this," he adds, "is that you're getting these lopsided numbers when I can tell you that until a year or so ago when we asked questions about the media, [the response was] always, 'Leave it in the hands of the press; we trust the press to sort this out.' Now it's very different."

Told about the poll results, Cleveland Plain Dealer editor Douglas Clifton, who responded that he agreed with both restrictions, says that although he is "itchy" them. Kurtz seemed more connected to these sentiments than most of his colleagues. He replied to our two questions this way: "If I were in charge, I'd be more than happy to have The Washington Post decline to publish pictures of grieving family members after a death—unless they are doing their grieving in some public square or another out-in-the-open gathering. What the public despises about the media is the obnoxious intrusiveness with which we invade people's lives at times of tragedy.... If that means getting 'beat' by someone at the exploitation game, so be it. I'd gladly extend the prohibition to kids under 14 as long as they aren't being put on public display by their parents. The vulturelike pursuit of children who are of interest solely because of their prominent parents is, if anything, even worse than the media's behavior after a celebrity dies. There may

The real point is having some guidelines, to give the public a benchmark from which to hold media organizations accountable.

about boxing himself into any rules, even with caveats for exceptions, he did so because "I know that excesses have prevailed in the play of these kinds of stories and the public perception of our pursuit of them is that we are bloodthirsty, feelingless people who are only trying to sell newspapers. And I know that that contributes to...our diminished credibility."

Some reading these results will argue the hypocrisy inherent in these numbers. After all, the practices that the poll says the public doesn't like produce the media that the public seems to love watching. But that is not a real answer. Because there is a market for illegal drugs, cigarettes, get-rich-quick stock schemes, or other harmful products doesn't eliminate the ethical (and sometimes even the legal) issues involved in selling them. Indeed, we did not hear the producers and editors we polled defend what they do by saying it sells.

One newsperson who is also an observer of the news process is Howard Kurtz, who covers the media for The Washington Post and hosts the weekly CNN mediareview show Reliable Sources. Perhaps because his job in part is to interview nonmedia people about how the press covers be a need for rare exceptions to this approach, but not many."

GIVING THE PUBLIC A BENCHMARK, **ANY BENCHMARK**

Kurtz's agreement notwithstanding, the specific guidelines we drafted aren't really the point. They could no doubt be crafted better or perhaps focus more productively on other issues. The real point is having some guidelines, something that gives the public a benchmark from which to hold media organizations accountable—not legally, but in a way that compels them to put their decisions to the test of explaining them when asked.

One response we got from someone who declined to sign on to these restrictions was from Forrest Carr, the news director of KGUN9-TV in Tucson. He said that while he did not endorse these specifics, he thought that every news organization should "state what they stand for...consider the public's input in drafting that statement [and] provide a method for the public to hold them accountable." He attached KGUN9's mission statement, which included

The public may agree with her. But judging from their responses to the two weak-kneed provisions of such a code that we suggested, a majority of Amanpour's colleagues clearly don't.

In 1995, two former law school class-

press...." The authors were Ellen Alderman

Forget

Brave New Curriculum

Forget social studies. The best place to start teaching our children how to cope with information overload is in health class. • BY JARRET LIOTTA

DVERTISING, THE INTERNET, TALK shows, computer games, music, magazines—you name it. From the earliest age, children are touched by media and taught by media like never before. Their ideas, perceptions, and, in extreme cases, temperaments are being skewed and shaped by the most powerful forces of communication. To combat this influence, I believe it has become imperative for schools to take the lead in educating children about the media. I also believe that this education should be taught as an important part of children's health classes. That's right, health classes.

The endless stream of media influences can affect children's mental and physical health. For example, schools currently teach the health dangers associated with smoking, and it's good that they do, except the minute that kids leave the classroom, they're bombarded with very different messages. They see a glamorous print ad in a magazine, or perhaps an attractive poster of James Dean smoking a butt, and they learn that smoking is good, clean fun. The same is true with alcohol and drugs, where everything from advertising slogans to movie and television stereotypes send a faulty lesson that these substances can make your life better, not worse. A health class that trains children to understand media's subtle manipulations can help kids ignore—or at least apply skepticism to—the propaganda they see.

Eating disorders provide another example. Newsweek reported in its May 31, 1999, issue that with the arrival of American television in the Fiji Islands, incidents of eating disorders there have increased dramatically. Impressed by images that equate thinness with beauty, girls in Fiji are trying to become like the actresses they see, working toward recreating what is in effect a media illusion. Healthy eating habits in general are often challenged by the propaganda of advertising, not to mention by media stereotypes in movies and on television—whether it's too many too-thin actresses or an actor who might routinely consume a grotesque

diet—that inspire viewers to do the same.

Many educators also teach diversity and acceptance of others; at every turn, though, various messages of hate and intolerance challenge that teaching. Even worse, there is an increasing concern that young people's exposure to violent movies, music, and video games have left them desensitized to violence, and the result is tragic news stories, one after another, about children hurting and killing others and themselves. A course that helps children identify their own responses to media could help them control their own prejudices and aggressive actions.

Changing faulty perceptions instilled by media requires education. Simply abolishing violent or misleading material is not practical, nor does it look at the core problem. Unless students are taught the skills to discern the real meaning of information, to assign it an appropriate place in their reality, and to identify all the tactics of persuasion they face, this generation will mature without a psychological or spiritual rudder. Instead, these children will be forever at the mercy of intentional and unintentional propaganda, and, in the worst-case scenarios, capable of all kinds of harm.

This kind of education can work. When I taught fourth grade, I created a similar unit on advertising to teach students about marketing tactics used to influence consumer behavior. Together, we analyzed print ads and television commercials. Even at this young age, kids became astute at spotting ulterior motives. I applied the lesson to the 1996 presidential campaign, and these same students gained considerable understanding of the trickery of media politics. They learned why statements, impressions, and ideas can't simply be taken at face value. They became media-savvy and started to think independently. The students learned defenses to guard against the poisons of propaganda.

In early August, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a report recommending that pediatricians make inquiries into children's media habits during medical examinations to help detect TV influences that might be causing health problems. That's an excellent suggestion. But schools can help stop the sickness before it sets in by taking a logical, honest approach to student development. A curriculum that teaches and enlightens young minds about the power of the media would result in a graduating class of independent, analytic thinkers. For good or ill, the brave new world is upon us. Now it's time to deal with it in a new and brave way.

Freelance writer Jarret Liotta lives in Fairfield, Connecticut. If you have a media matter on your mind, submit your 700-word essay to "Reader Intelligence," c/o Brill's Content, 521 Fifth Avenue, 11th floor, New York, NY, 10175.

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[TICKER]

- \$3.50 Newsstand price of *Time* magazine's July 26,1999, John F. Kennedy Jr. commemorative issue (on sale July 19)
- \$20.50 Amount a copy of that issue sold for on eBay, an internet auction site, on July 22, 1999
- \$4.95 Newsstand price of *Playboy* magazine's February 1997 issue containing an interview with John F. Kennedy Jr.
- \$82 Amount a copy of that issue sold for on eBay on July 22, 1999
- 11 Percentage of journalists working for daily newspapers in 1995 who were minorities
- 12 Percentage of journalists working for daily newspapers in 1999 who were minorities²
- 96 Percentage of Americans who describe the invention of the radio as a change for the better
- 87 Percentage of Americans who describe the invention of the computer as a change for the better
- 73 Percentage of Americans who describe the invention of the TV as a change for the better³
- 17 Percentage of all characters on entertainment series (situation comedies and dramas) on the ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox networks during the 1992–93 TV season who were black
- 10) Percentage of all characters on entertainment series on the ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox networks during the 1998–99 TV season who were black⁴
- 23 Percentage of Internet users in 1995 who were women
- 38 Percentage of Internet users in 1996 who were women
- 47 Percentage of Internet users in 1999 who are women

- 64 Percentage of Salon readers who are men
- 69 Percentage of *Slate* readers who are men
- 90 Percentage of TheStreet.com readers who are men⁶
- 79 million Number of Internet users in the United States and Canada
- 303 million Combined population of the United States and Canada
- 900,000 Approximate number of Internet users in Africa
- 700,000 Number of those users who live in South Africa
- 761 million Combined population of African nations⁷
- 22 Percentage of the 10,379 commercial radio stations in the U.S. that are country music stations
- 11 Percentage that are news-talk stations
- 3 Percentage with religious-talk programming
- 0.4 Percentage with pre-teen programming⁸
- 91 Percentage of children between the ages of 10 and 17 able to identify Homer, Bart, and Maggie as characters on *The Simpsons*
- Percentage of children between the ages of 10 and 17 able to identify Al Gore as the vice-president of the United States
- 84 Percentage of parents able to identify Homer, Bart, and Maggie as characters on *The Simpsons*
- 80 Percentage of parents able to identify Al Gore as the vice-president of the United States 9

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- The coolest prom ever! "He gave me my corsage, and then we used our TerraServer satellite photos to scout wild hog country..."
- Kissing tips: How to make him put down his Darton Cyclone 3-D single-
- Fiction: "I Shot a 340-Grain Arrow 270 Feet Per Second" by Martin Amis.

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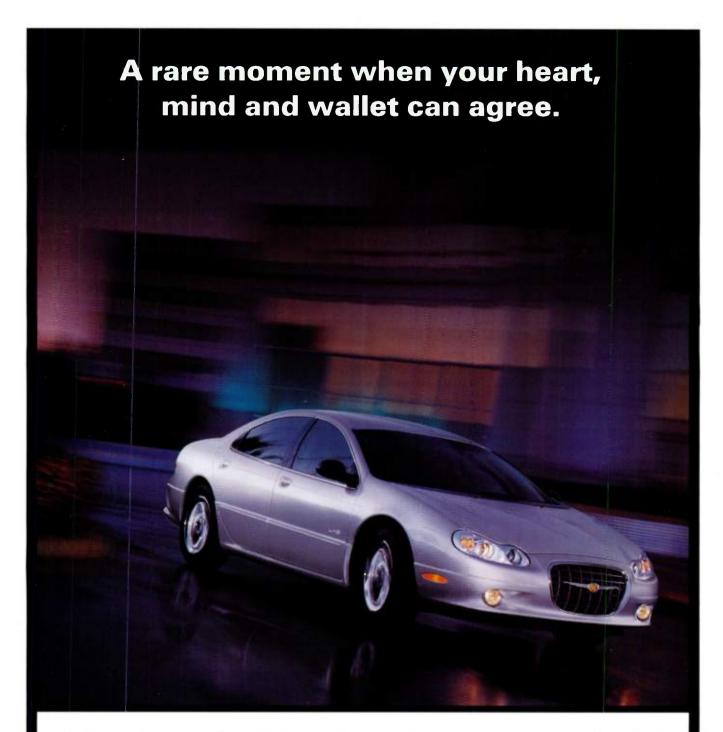
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Cordially,

Suzie Chambers

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