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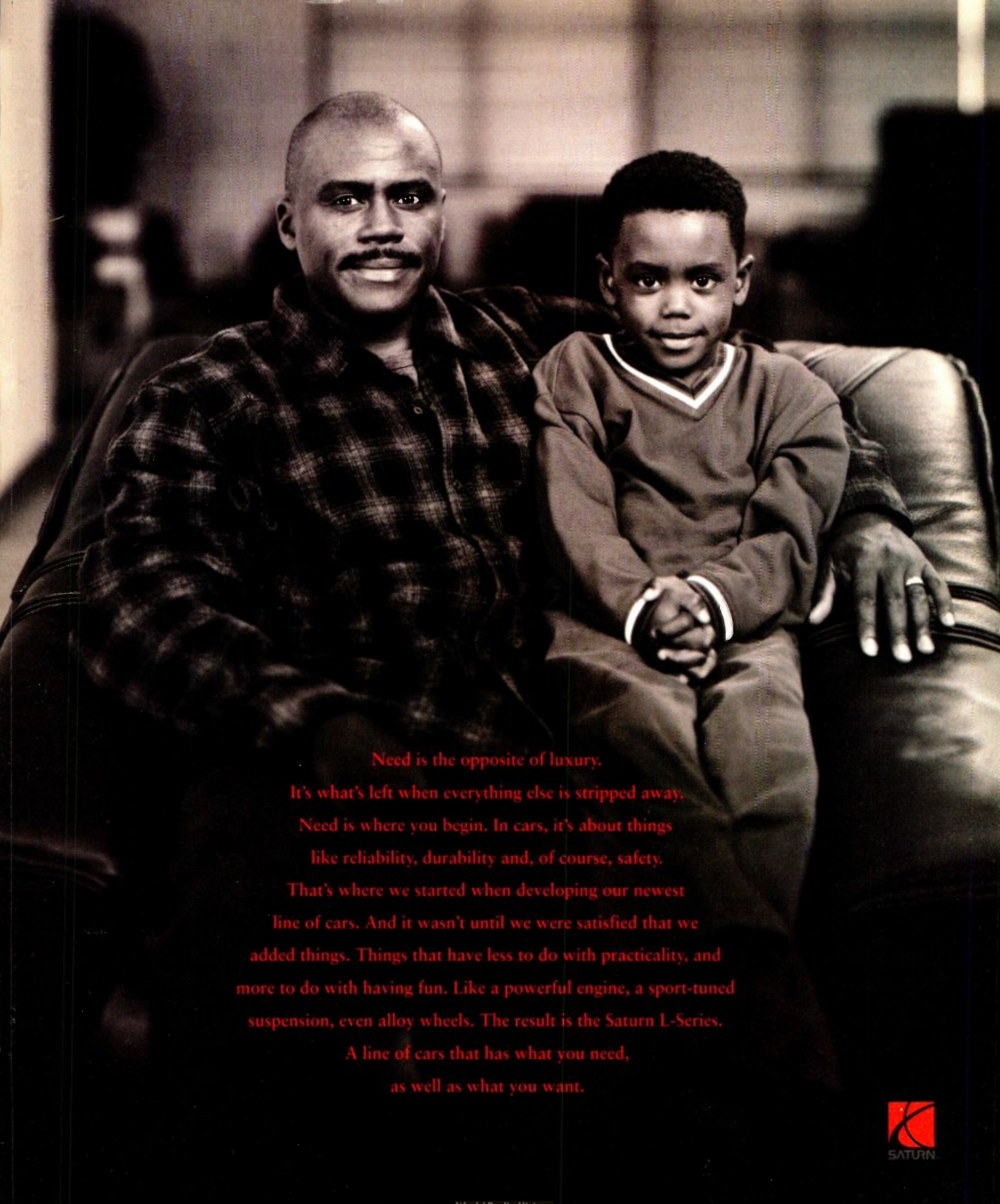

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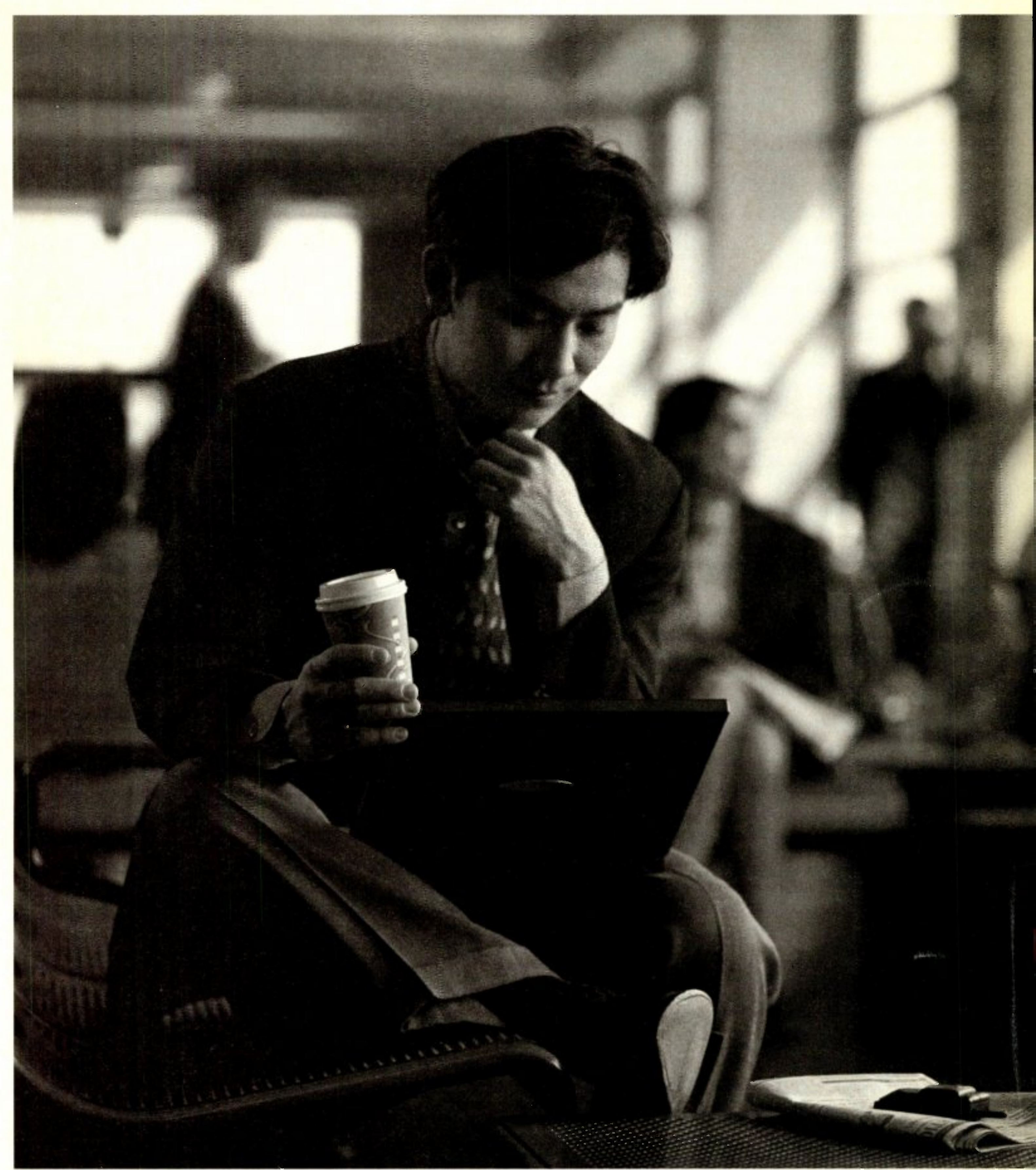

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SCOTT MENCHIN

FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

MOGUL MANIA

As I write this, President Clinton is about to visit Russia for the first time since the election of its new president (and former KGB officer), Vladimir Putin. Clinton and his delegation will undoubtedly have much praise for the liberal economic policies and pro-market reforms of Putin and his inner circle. What will likely not be discussed, however, is the fact that although the country moves closer and closer toward a democracy that we can recognize and support, suppression of the media has become more severe than it has been in years—in some instances recalling the worst of the Soviet era. Our two-part report on Russia and the media (beginning on page 86) documents, in often shocking detail, how government officials muzzle and harass journalists—and how, in the process, the newly rich media moguls are co-opted and corrupted. A few of these men are both press czars (owning television stations, printing presses, newspapers, and magazines) *and* politicians—mayors, governors, members of Parliament.

This issue also offers a kaleidoscopic look at American media-moguldom. Richard Schickel's revisionist take on William Randolph Hearst, beginning on page 80, reintroduces us to the first truly modern media baron, who knew the value of creating content *and* controlling its distribution. The only-in-America Hearst owned, edited, and distributed the news (and produced movies)—all while serving in Congress and running for mayor of New York City and president of the United States. Hearst used his publications as a platform for his often surprising political views but never let that get in the way of his bottom line.

Martin Peretz, the owner and editor in chief of *The New Republic*—the 85-year-old left-leaning journal of political and cultural commentary—has long used his magazine as a vehicle for expressing his political passions and influencing policy (though unlike Hearst he doesn't seem to need his magazine to make money). The 60-year-old Washington insider has spent more than 25 years at the rudder of one of the country's most august magazines, but he has focused perhaps even more intently on the ambitions of his close friend and former Harvard student Al Gore. Robert Schmidt, in his piece on page 70, explains that because of the men's three-decade-long friendship, Peretz has had to walk a very fine line, supporting Gore personally while trying to keep his magazine neutral.

Equally influential during her long career but in a very different sphere is Grace Mirabella, who edited *Vogue* for 18 years and went on, after she was fired, to take Rupert Murdoch up on his lunchtime suggestion that they start a magazine bearing her name. It folded in April after ten years, four of them under Mirabella's leadership. Her memoir, beginning on page 96, tells the story of a publishing insider trying to redefine the rules of the women's-magazine game but being unable, ultimately, to surmount the business forces that were beyond her control.

And, on page 64, meet the new generation of mini-moguls, who could redefine today's media culture as dramatically as Hearst did in his time. (Did you know that the founder of Napster, the Internet venture shaking up the music industry, is a 19-year-old college dropout?) Austin Bunn's group portrait of the teenage Internet vanguard charts their reinvention of not only modern media but the very structure of the American family. The "Teen Guru" phenomenon represents a seismic shift in the culture that has only begun to register. These are the true children of Hearst, some of whom will be able to afford to build circles around San Simeon—once they are old enough to drive.

DAVID KUHN

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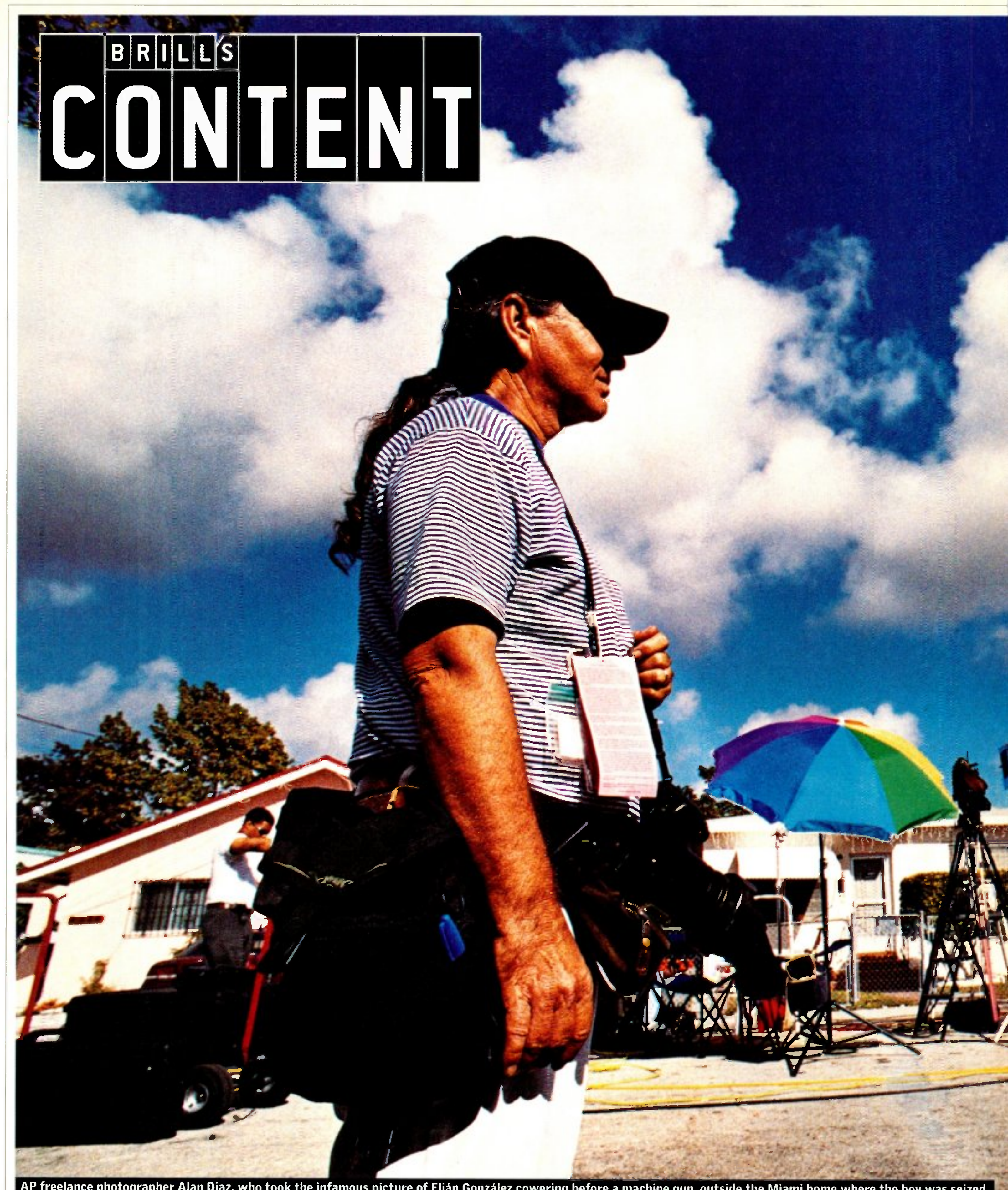

AP freelance photographer Alan Diaz, who took the infamous picture of Elián González cowering before a machine gun, outside the Miami home where the boy was seized

PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL COOK

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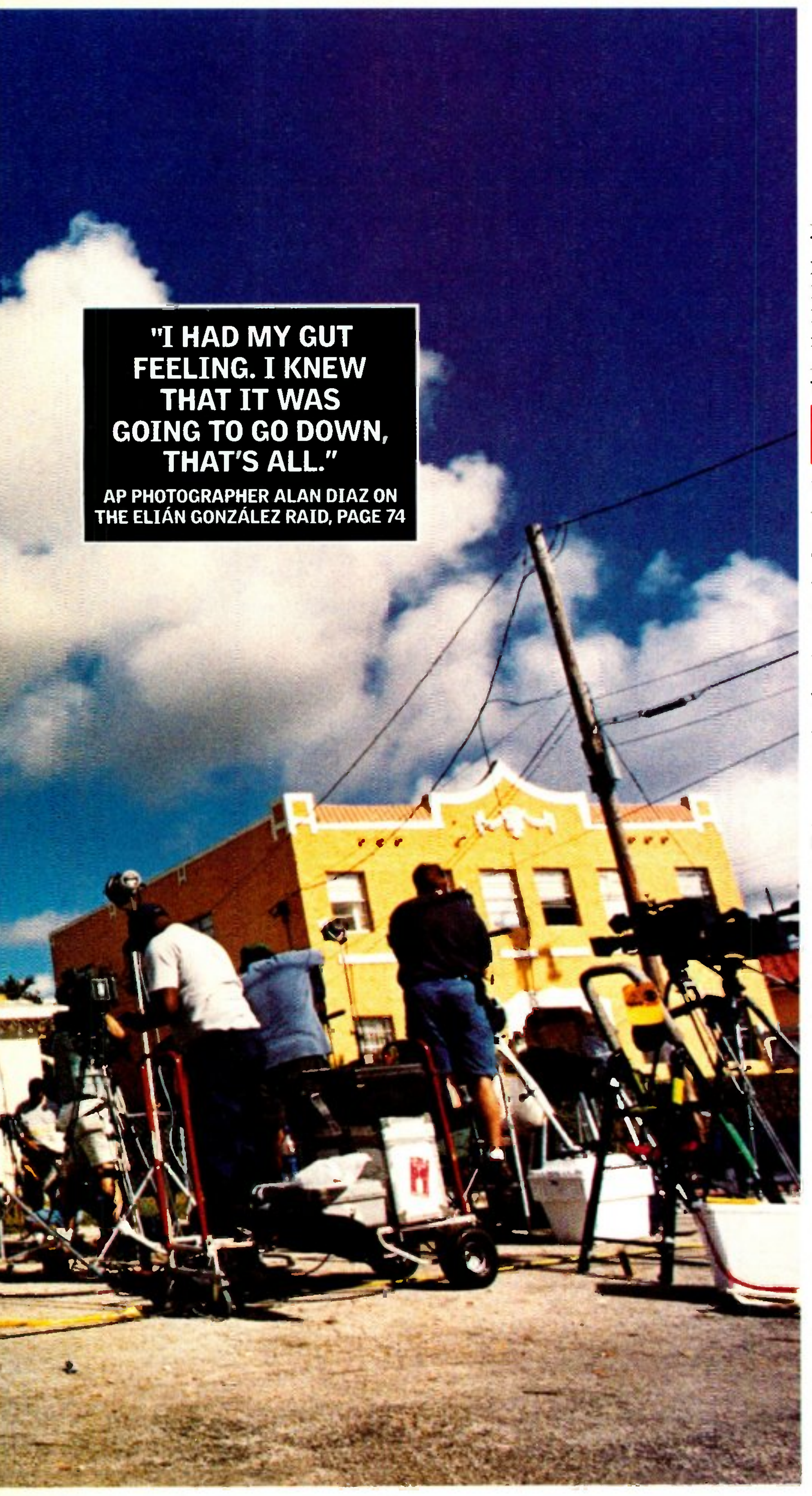

"I HAD MY GUT FEELING. I KNEW THAT IT WAS GOING TO GO DOWN, THAT'S ALL."

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COVER PHOTO: ANNA CURTIS

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"I HAVE A WEALTH OF TECHNOLOGY AT MY DISPOSAL THAT ALLOWS ME TO SEARCH THE WEB AND FIND THE NEWS AND INFORMATION FAR MORE QUICKLY THAN A HUMAN JOURNALIST COULD."

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TOP SCOTT MENCHIN

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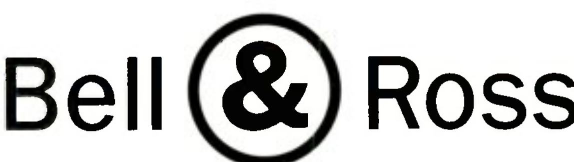

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THE GOODS ON GUMBEL; THE *FORWARD* FIGHTS BACK; AND PBS RESPONDS TO "FACE-OFF"

TOO MANY UNATTRIBUTED QUOTES

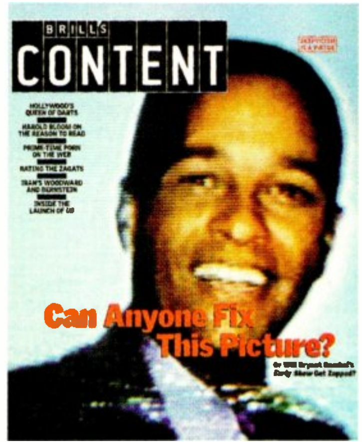
I thought I'd finally found a reliable and readable source of legitimate news gathering. Imagine my disappointment when I discovered the tabloidesque "For *The Early Show*, It's Getting Late" [May]. Not only is this article biased, editorialized, and unfair but I counted [several] unattributed quotes from "a good friend," "a former producer," etc. Is the use of unattributed quotes, made so famous by the *Globe*, the *Star*, and *The National Enquirer*, the standard practice at *Brill's Content*? I've always assumed that when you have no source, you have no story. You could have gotten those quotes from a disgruntled CBS page or security guard for all we know. Funny how you become the thing you hate the most.

MICHAEL BUCKLEY, JERSEY CITY, NJ

SLIP-SLIDING ON THE TRUTH

*Your featured story on Bryant Gumbel is both informative and amusing, in ways not intended by your [senior correspondent] Gay Jervey. It is a classic example of stumbling on the truth and then sliding over and beyond it. Consider this item: Gumbel is arrogant because he derides the silly and the pompous. To me, that sounds like a cool man with a critical intelligence who is unafraid to use it.

Is it significant that one woman in the focus group complained that Gumbel dominated dear little Katie Couric on NBC's *Today* show yet voiced not a complaint of Couric's obvious dominance of Matt Lauer after Gumbel left? It is indeed significant. Add this to that



revealing piece of demographic data quoted (which Jervey does nothing with) and all comes clear: Women outnumber male morning-show viewers 3-1. Where have all the men gone?

So, put together brave little Katie, bland pretty boy Matt, and soothing Diane Sawyer and what do you get in the morning? You get the P.C. Mommy Feminist version of the world: cooperative, not [confrontational]; calming, not stimulating; consensus, not competing viewpoints; attitudes, never ideas. In a word, you get the morning version of *Oprah*: Call it the *Ladies' Home Companion* for the brain-dead.

GERALD TRETT, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN OPTIMISM

I work for *The Early Show* website and was anxious for my own job security to read what your May cover suggests is an exposé of the faults of the CBS morning show. After sweating through the first two pages of the problems the show incurs, I was relieved once you dug into the vision of senior executive producer Steve Friedman. It will take more than optimism to keep this show alive, never mind gaining on the competition, but *Brill's Content* captured the attitude of the producers to make the most well-rounded show, a desire I see conveyed twice daily in our show meetings.

CHRISTINE RESLMAIER, NEW YORK, NY

LEAVE OUT THE INSIDE DOPE

Have you become a hybrid of *Talk* and *Vanity Fair* magazines?

Who cares about the inside dope on the Bryant Gumbel morning show? You also choose to praise the ultimate unscrupulous "media" celebrity, Diane Sawyer, a reporter who would sell her grandmother for yet another of her nauseating scoops, interviewing the sleazy and running over those who can't defend themselves. To think that *Brill's Content* started with a mission to decry what it now elevates.

CLARA LIVSEY, NAPA, CA

JUST NO EXCUSE

*I was apparently one of the few who "got" the editorial irony of

---

Letters to the editor should be addressed to: Letters to the Editor, *Brill's Content*, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10020 Fax: (212) 332-6350 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. Letters published with an asterisk have been edited for space. The full text appears at our website (www.brillscontent.com).

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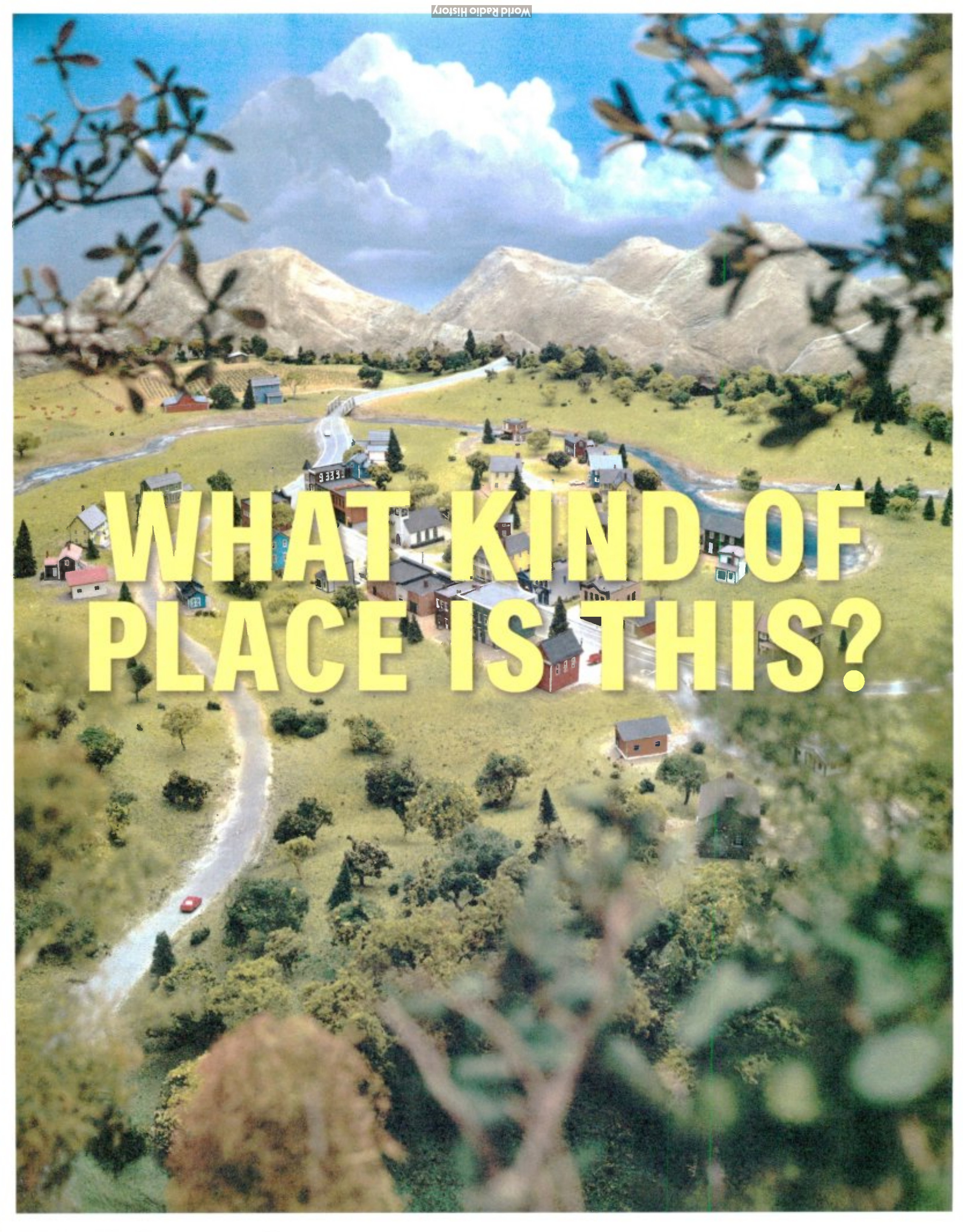

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Here is a list of our Contributing Editors:
Sherman Alexie, Jonathan Alter, Louis Begley, Harold Bloom, Sissela Bok, Bob Bookman, David Brown, Stephen L. Carter, Faith Childs, James Cramer, Frank Deford, Esther Dyson, Clay Felker, Genevieve Field, Larry Fink, Ira Glass, Peter Glenshaw, David Halberstam, Anita Hill, Laura Ingraham, David Isay, Wendy Kaminer, Polly LaBarre, Neil LaBute, Paul D. Miller, Cristina Mittermeier, Russell Mittermeier, George Plimpton, David Salle, John Scanlon, Mimi Sheraton, Anna Deavere Smith, Roger Guenveur Smith, Ilan Stavans, Christine Vachon, Rebecca Walker and Wendy Wasserstein.

Contentville is also home to fifteen magazine experts, who each month give their take on the magazines they're known for knowing. They range from the former editor of *Parents* to a world-renowned bioethicist to a former Clinton advisor to the anchor of *Fox Sports* news to a professor of Indo-Tibetan Studies at Columbia University.

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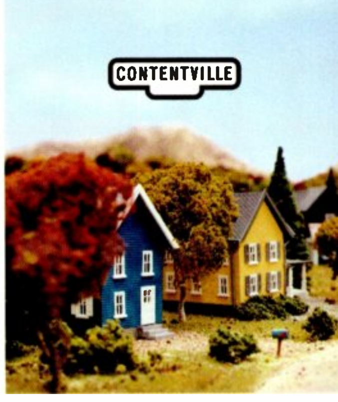

Along with our other experts and contributing editors, this esteemed group of booksellers will post their commentary so you can learn why *Jennifer James* of the famed **Curious George Goes to WordsWorth** bookstore in Cambridge thinks Lois Lowry's *The Giver* is "without doubt the most disturbing, powerful, memorable children's book I have ever read."

Find out why *Karen Pennington*, of **Kepler's Books & Magazines** in Menlo Park, is so enchanted by *The Advent Of The Algorithm: The Idea That Rules the World*. Why the "Partners" at the famed mystery bookstore **Partners & Crime** in New York, think the new Stuart Woods novel *Run* is such a "seriously frightening read." And why *Jim Harris*, of **Prairie Lights Books** in Iowa City, thinks Frances Mayes' *Bella Tuscany* is a disappointing sequel to *Under the Tuscan Sun*. Plus you get the "Essential Titles" for your library from experts like these in 38 categories ranging from Business, to Computers, to Mystery/Thriller, to Classic Fiction and Literature, to Religion.

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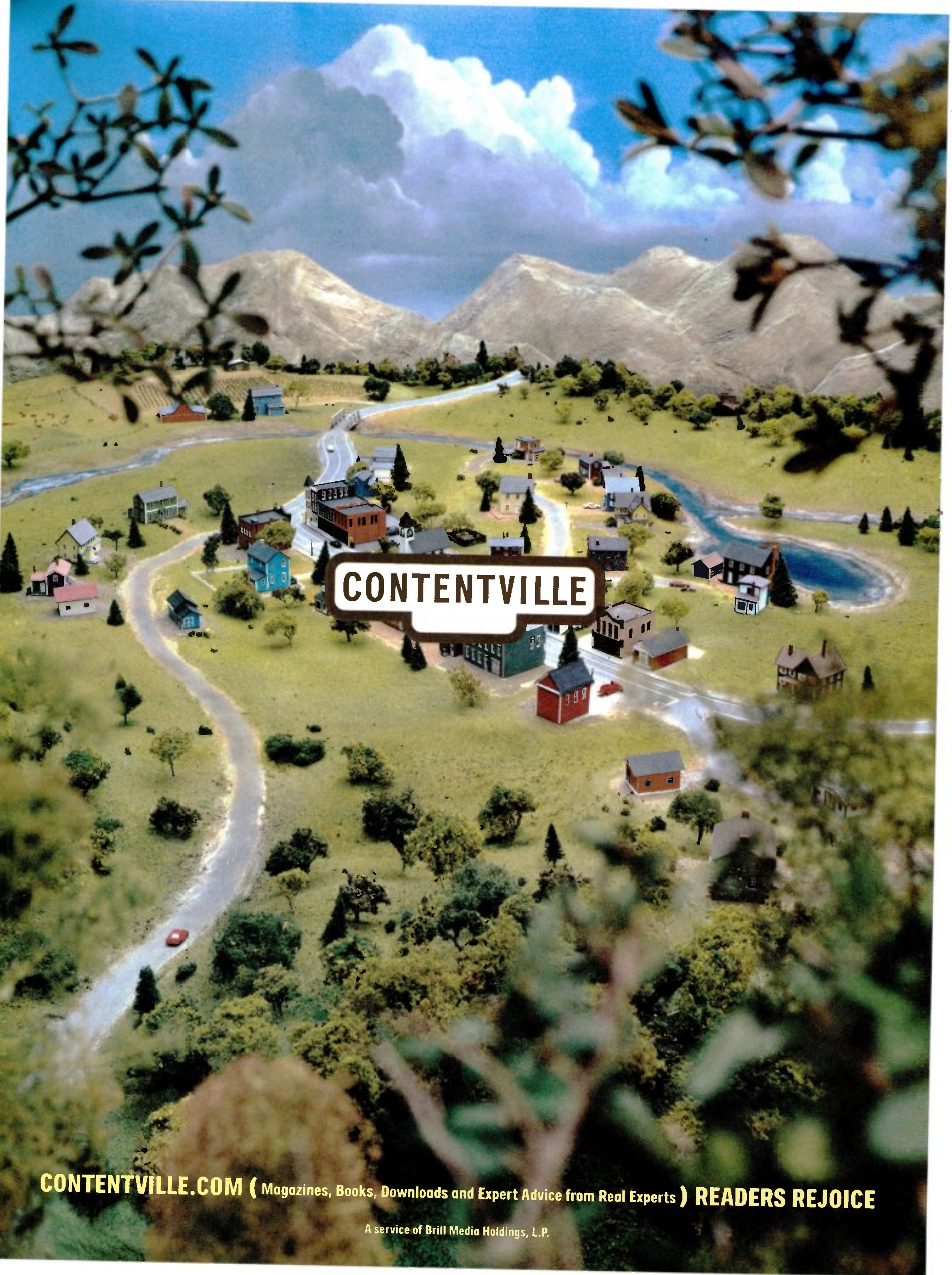

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the JonBenét Ramsey cover [February] without carping about its being some kind of pandering too. I had serious doubts about *The West Wing* cover concept [March]. But there is just no excuse for the cover story on *The Early Show*, which focused exclusively on the range of opinions about Bryant Gumbel's interpersonal style and on-air demeanor. Since even his detractors acknowledge he is an excellent interviewer and reporter, and I found no shred of evidence in the piece that the man has violated any journalistic principles or ethics, how did this story have any legitimate place in *Brill's Content*—much less on the cover?

LAURIE FALIK, SAN MATEO, CA

GET REAL

*Lynn Hirschberg is by far the best journalist to ever report on Hollywood ["The Player," May]. She's discerning, articulate, brave, and downright brilliant. Ninety-five percent of the rest who write in the trade confuse fawning devotion for journalism. But because many of Hirschberg's pieces, over her career, show immortal celebrities for the human beings they are, *Brill's Content* thinks to pry into Hirschberg's personal life and paint her as less than perfect, with insecurities and foibles. Get real. Lynn didn't reveal her true age in a few instances? What a hoot. Come on—I've lied about women's ages more times than Lynn could if she spent the rest of her life trying.

STEVE HANSCH, WASHINGTON, DC

A WASTE AND A WONDER

Carl Cannon's piece about David Willman was a wonder ["Bitter Pill," June]. The last few paragraphs were really devastating. Wasting an investigative reporter's skills on covering the hoo-ha around Bill and Monica while something that matters goes uncovered is especially depressing.

MARK ROSE, SEATTLE, WA

THE FAMILY BUSINESS

*I wanted to thank you for including "A Family Chronicle" in your magazine [May]. I confess a certain reluctance upon reaching Alex S. Jones's contribution in the May 2000 issue. I'm a big-city dweller—always have been. What could a story about a small-town, family-operated periodical possibly have to say to me?

Beautifully written, touchingly chronicled, Mr. Jones's article offered me a glimpse of a community bound by humanity as well as a family that remains true to its integrity.

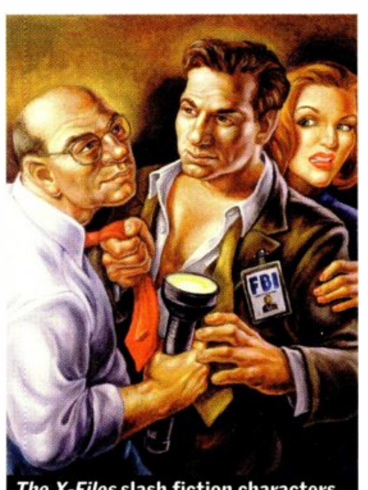
LESLIE ANN KENT, QUEENS, NY

FAN FICTION GOES MAINSTREAM

*As a longtime reader of fan fiction in assorted genres, I was interested to see fan fiction finally getting some mainstream attention ["The X-Rated Files," May]. When I first got involved in fan fiction more than a decade ago, I was stunned to discover all the erotic writing was gay, even more baffled when I found out it was written by heterosexual women like myself.

I did feel the article missed two salient points. Much of the time, two male characters are turned into a stereotypical male-female couple, with one being weak, submissive, and given to "sobbing," a characteristic that rather defeats the equal-power theory. Your article also skipped over the most disturbing part of slash fan fiction. A great deal of it, if not the majority, includes extremely graphic depictions of male rape and sexual torture.

AMORETTE ALLISON, MILES CITY, MT



The X-Files slash fiction characters.

OWEN SMITH

RACIER THAN YOU THINK

I enjoyed Austin Bunn's article "The X-Rated Files." However, I must disagree with the esteemed Samuel Delany on his assessment of early slash fiction. All veils and flowers? He wasn't reading the K/S zines I was reading 25 years ago—four-letter words, hard sex, kinks, and all.

I would clarify the distribution of slash zines also, which were available not only at conventions (which were not restricted to science fiction alone) but through mail order. I'd venture to say that more fans got their slash zines that way than at conventions, since the majority of fans couldn't get to cons (then and now) on a regular basis (or at all).

K.S. LANGLEY, CHICAGO, IL

TRASH FICTION

Someone needs to go back and read your mission statement. What a trashy issue. *X-Files* porn? That's fiction! Who cares? You look more like a *People* magazine for the media this month. Tell me what I need to know about whom I can and cannot trust in the media. Go back to doing your job.

JOEL FOX, LADY LAKE, FL

GROUND RULES, PLEASE

*I am not a journalist, but I've always been told: Make sure you establish ground rules up front about off the record, etc. So George W. Bush sets the rules; no quotes from the plane ["The No-Quote Zone," On The Trail, May]. However, apparently some reporters didn't quite get that, since they passed on certain information to your reporter, Seth Mnookin. So it would appear they broke the rules. Didn't Mnookin do the same thing by passing along their comments?

Isn't your reporter as guilty as the others for violating the trust? Or is this the same mentality that allows one publication to report on a story as reported by another so they don't have to get their hands dirty? I thought this was the kind of stuff *Brill's Content* was to expose—not do.

VINCE CRUNK, STRAFFORD, MO

CORRECTIONS

In June's Newsmakers, "Backward, March!," senior correspondent Rifka Rosenwein incorrectly reported that Masha Leon's gossip column appears on the op-ed page of the *Forward*. Also, former editor Seth Lipsky does not wear a "snap-brimmed fedora," as reported. Rather, he wears a homburg (see letter this page).

In a "Stuff We Like" item in the May issue, staff writer Jesse Oxfeld misspelled the name of CNBC reporter Joe Kernen.

In April's Honor Roll, "C-SPAN's Hail to the Chiefs," staff writer Julie Scelfo incorrectly referred to the series's 10-day finale. The finale comprised nearly 111 hours, not 350.

In "Can't Keep a Good Man Down," in April, staff writer Jane Manners incorrectly wrote that during Mike Barnicle's television coverage of John Kennedy Jr.'s plane crash last July, Barnicle mistakenly reported that U.S. senator Edward Kennedy had taken a calming midnight sail. Barnicle did not make this report.

In the April issue's "Best of the Web," under Allpolitics.com, staff writer Ted Rose misspelled the name of Carin Dessauer.

We regret these errors.

Editor Eric Effron responds: Some of the journalists who spoke with our reporter, Seth Mnookin, described events they learned in an off-the-record setting, but Mnookin did not violate any ground rules. Whether the subject is government abuses or the inner workings of the press, many important stories can be told only if somebody talks despite rules meant to ensure silence.

CORRECT THE RECORD

Several errors of fact and at least one snide remark marred Rifka Rosenwein's dispatch on the ouster of the editor of the *Forward* ["Backward, March!," Newsmakers, June].

[Gossip columnist] Masha Leon's column doesn't run on the op-ed page, as the article asserts it does. This could have been ascertained by looking at a copy of the *Forward*.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 134]

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Novel Idea.

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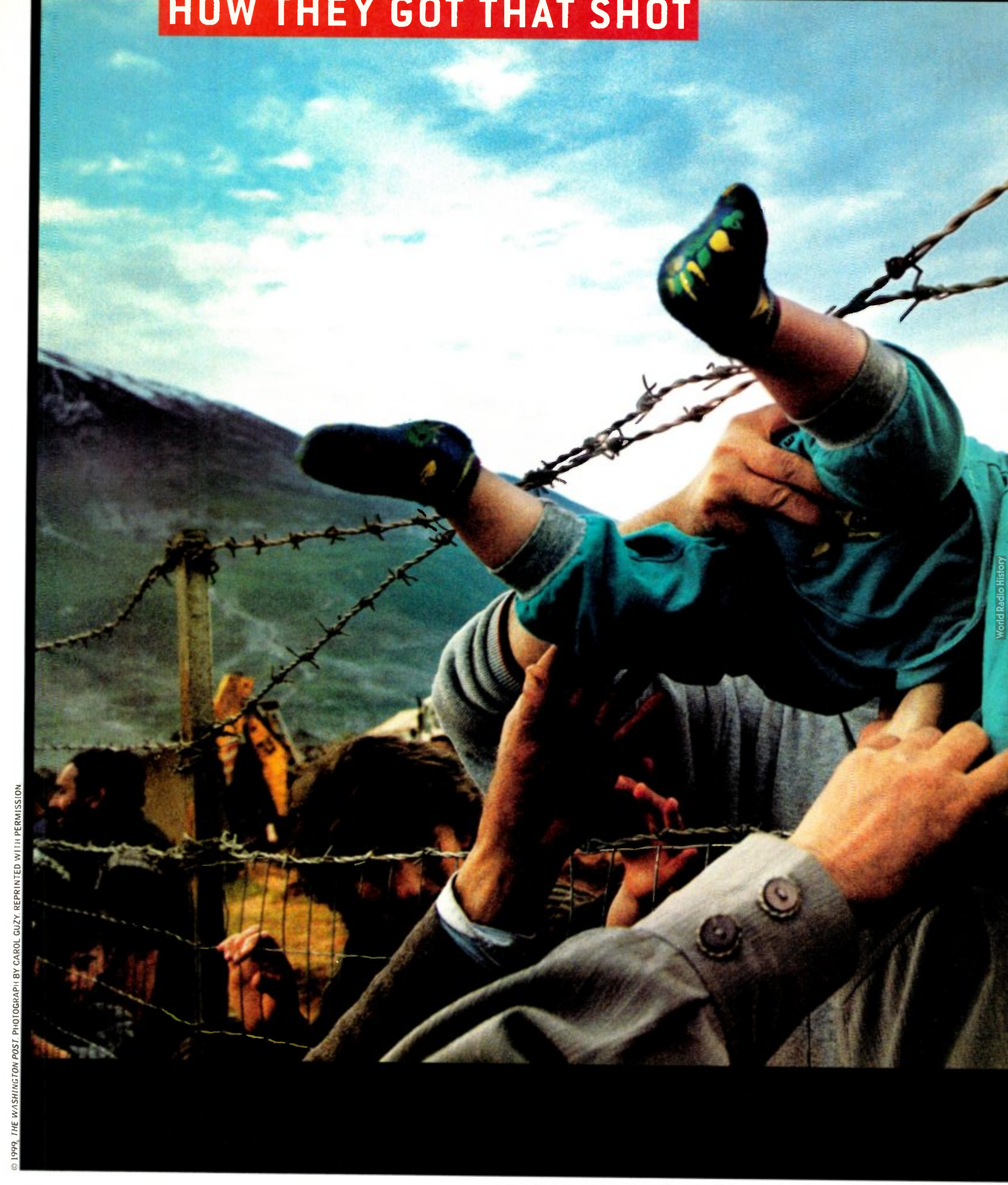

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LIVES TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

Carol Guzy's Pulitzer Prize-winning photo captures one family's heartrending reunion in the wake of the Kosovo conflict.

The Shala family would have been together again at last, except for the tall, barbed-wire fence that divided them. The Shalas and thousands of other Kosovars poured into a refugee camp in Kukës, Albania, last spring, having been forced from their homes during the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. Given what the family had gone through, the fence wasn't much of an obstacle.

Carol Guzy, a *Washington Post* staff photographer, was covering the border crossings in the former Yugoslavia at the time and watched as the Shalas were reunited despite the fence that walled off the already full camp. "They were passing all of the kids back and forth through the fence," recalls Guzy, 44. Many children, like this baby boy, Agim, were inside the camps and were passed through the barbed wire to be greeted with hugs and kisses from newly arrived family members. "It was a bittersweet reunion," says Guzy. "There were tears of joy and tears of sorrow." As refugees crossed the border from Kosovo, they looked frantically for familiar faces. "That particular day there were large groups of people coming over," recalls the photographer. Guzy says she stayed near the Shala family. "It was very, very emotional," she says. "I just had a gut feeling that something was going to happen." Guzy captured the moment as Agim was passed through the wire. The picture was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography as part of a 19-photo series on Kosovo refugees. This is Guzy's third Pulitzer.

Guzy, who has worked for the *Post* for 12 years and previously spent eight years at *The Miami Herald*, says her assignments vary from Washington, D.C., events to international news. "It's hard to witness this type of inhumanity," she says. "It's getting harder and harder to look."

BRIDGET SAMBURG

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taming the tv giants

The lesson of the Time Warner–Disney fight is simple: Those who monopolize systems for distributing content shouldn't own content as well. BY STEVEN BRILL

In May, about three and a half million customers of various Time Warner Cable systems across the country, including those in New York, Houston, and Raleigh, turned on their local ABC television channel and found that it had been zapped. Replacing it was a screen that said, "DISNEY HAS TAKEN ABC AWAY FROM YOU."

That wasn't true. Time Warner had yanked the ABC signal following a long-running contract dispute with ABC and its corporate parent, The Walt Disney Company. Having picked a week when the so-called sweeps ratings are tabulated in order to inflict maximum pain on Disney, Time Warner also inflicted maximum pain on its own customers, who would miss the extravagant sweeps programs ABC had slated.

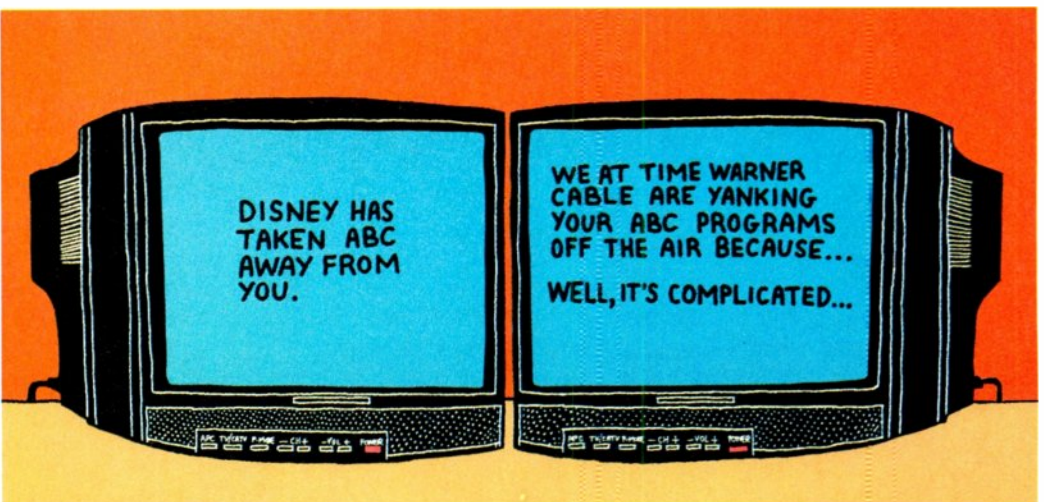
The dispute was so complicated that newspaper and TV reporters trying to explain it usually found themselves twisted into knots by the end of their reports, with cable customers left wondering which of the two giant media conglomerates to hate more. How complicated was it? Well, it involved: two cable networks you've probably never heard of (SoapNet and Toon Disney); the Disney Channel, which Disney wants Time Warner to pay high fees for and provide to all its customers; the rates charged to Time Warner Cable systems by two other cable networks also owned by Disney (ESPN and ESPN2); a slew of byzantine federal regulations; America Online's plans to offer interactive video services; and the various cable networks, such as CNN, HBO, TBS, CNN*fn*, CNN/Sports Illustrated, and the Cartoon Network, that Time Warner owns. Is that complicated enough?

Within about 39 hours, Time Warner—tone-deaf to the P.R. ramifications of its decision to take ABC away from its customers and then lie about it—caved and turned the ABC signal back on. But these disputes are likely to recur with increasing frequency as the media giants get bigger and their products more wide-ranging and interlocking. So how can you make sense of any of this? Whom should you root for or blame? And what, if anything, can be done about it?

Because I once ran a cable network (Court TV) and had to immerse myself in all of this, I'm going to be foolish enough here to try to give you the four essential dynamics that will help you understand what's going on the next time the media giants get into a fight like this.

But first some basics of the vocabulary and structure of the business that's behind what you get to watch every night:

A *cable operator* is the company that runs your *cable system* and bills you for your service. Cable systems are highly localized; they might cover a city or town or even just parts of a city or town. Nonetheless, in this era of media consolidation, almost all local cable systems are now divisions of large national *cable companies*. The two largest cable companies are AT&T (formerly Tele-Communications, Inc.) and Time Warner. Time Warner and AT&T together own thousands of cable systems serving about 35 percent of the homes in the country that have cable, which will be about 42 percent when AT&T completes a pending purchase of another large cable company.



PETER ARKLE

Cable systems and cable companies distribute programming from *cable networks*, like CNN, Sci Fi, or ESPN. These cable networks make deals with the cable operators whereby, in return for a fee, a cable operator gets to carry that network on its system. CNN charges the operator about 40 cents a month per home; smaller, less established networks may charge as little as a few pennies. Because getting a net-

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work launched on cable systems is a make-or-break situation, most new networks start off by providing their programming for free in hopes of building a following.

Depending on the number of channels it has, your cable system probably pays a total of about $7 a month per customer for all of the cable networks it carries. (This does not include premium channels like HBO, for which you pay an extra fee that is split by HBO and the cable system.) Your payment to the cable system of about $29 a month for this kind of basic service gives the cable system a handsome profit. Sure, it also has significant expenses for building and maintaining the system, and when these systems were first built there was a huge risk having to do with whether people would ever pay for cable. Nonetheless, this excess of fees you pay above what the cable operator pays the networks for programming, plus the revenue it gets from local advertising, makes owning a cable system a huge profit-margin business. Thus, Time Warner's cable systems produced four times the operating profit last year of the company's Warner Bros. division (which includes not only movies but hit TV shows like *ER*, *Friends*, and *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*) while receiving one third less revenue.

LARGE CABLE COMPANIES, SUCH AS AT&T AND TIME WARNER, HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO MAKE OR BREAK JUST ABOUT ANY CABLE CHANNEL BY DECIDING WHETHER TO DISTRIBUTE IT.

What makes that cable system's profit margin especially controversial is that the prices the cable system charges us aren't really subject to much competitive pressure. That's because cable has been thought of as what's called a *natural monopoly*. A natural monopoly is a situation in which certain physical or other immutable attributes of a business make it impossible or difficult for there to be competition. In the case of cable, the natural monopoly stems from the fact that cities and towns wanted to award only one company the right to dig up their streets or string wire across poles in order to connect homes to the system. This right is known as a *franchise*, and don't ask what kind of lobbying activities these cable companies engaged in back in the 1960s and 1970s when they went from town to town, city to city, seeking these franchises.

1. ANYONE WITH A MONOPOLY OR NEAR MONOPOLY ON DISTRIBUTING CONTENT HAS TREMENDOUS LEVERAGE OVER THE CONTENT PROVIDERS: Imagine a large city with only one movie theater. The theater owner would have all the leverage in bargaining with a movie studio over whether it's going to show the studio's movies, because it wouldn't have to worry about its customers going elsewhere to see a better movie. Despite the growth of satellite television in some areas as a competitor to cable, when it comes to distribution, in most places, especially big cities, cable systems have exactly that kind of monopoly distribution power. And large cable companies that own lots of cable systems throughout the country, such as AT&T and Time Warner, have enough power to make or break just about any cable channel by deciding whether to distribute it.

When I first got the idea for Court TV, I was told by every industry expert I consulted that if I didn't let one or more of the largest cable companies get a piece of the equity, they'd never put my channel on their systems no matter how good it was but that if I did give them a cut it would get on no matter how bad it was. I ended up making equity deals with three of the largest companies, including the top two: TCI (now AT&T) and Time Warner.

Such is the exuberant monopolistic culture of the cable industry that at that time, the four companies just below these top two were widely known in the industry as OPEC. They were named, with no trace of embarrassment I could ever detect, after the oil-producing cartel because they usually acted in concert to cut their own deals for access to their systems. (Why Time Warner would yank ABC should now be coming into focus; people who openly refer to themselves as a cartel are not the types who'd flinch at depriving their customers of a popular channel if it'll help them in a contract dispute.)

The result of this monopoly power is that of the 49 cable networks on my current Time Warner Cable system in northern Manhattan (this does not count over-the-air channels that are also on the cable system, public access channels, or pay per view), 40 are owned or partly owned, or *were* owned or partly owned at their inception, by one or more cable companies.

There's a certain logic here from the cable companies' point of view. They can make almost any wannabe cable network into a consumer brand with huge equity value; why shouldn't they get a piece of the action?

Caveat: Cable operators like Time Warner insist that just because their parent company owns a cable channel doesn't mean they will always launch it. And often that's true. Indeed, Joseph Collins, the man who runs Time Warner's cable systems across the country, is reviled by many Time Warner executives in other divisions because he so often won't cooperate with them. He launched Court TV on most of his systems but not on all of them, even though Time Warner owned a big piece of it. That's because, like executives in other conglomerates, he's more inclined to be focused on his own division's bottom line than he is on anything else. So, on those occasions when some other cable channel offered a local Time Warner system a better deal than we did, Collins and his people would take it. (And I'd, of course, go over Collins's head and complain, often successfully, that he was not doing exactly the thing I'm generally accusing cable companies of doing here: being loyal to the interests of the parent company and using his distribution monopoly to advance those interests.) But the fact remains that while cable companies claim they don't play favorites, as a general matter they do; networks owned by cable companies get strong preference both on the local systems owned by those companies and by other systems owned by other cable companies; and these companies' annual reports and statements to stock analysts are filled with odes to the virtues of the synergy between distribution and content.

It also happens that, except for Playboy [CONTINUED ON PAGE 130]

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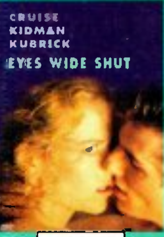

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World Radio History

REPORT FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

Does an e-commerce venture teaming the parent company of *Brill's Content* with NBC, CBS, and other media outlets taint the magazine's editorial integrity? BY BILL KOVACH

OF COMING AND GOING. Two reader complaints typify the comments I received after the announcement of the creation of Contentville.com, which, after its formal launch this summer, will team Brill Media Ventures, L.P., the parent organization of this magazine, with CBS and NBC and others in an Internet business venture selling all varieties of content, including magazines, e-books, traditional books, transcripts, academic dissertations, speeches, and archives of articles from thousands of magazines. Both readers wondered about conflict of interest now that this magazine has an economic interest in the operation of companies the magazine was created to monitor on the consumer's behalf. From what I have read and heard from colleagues and in conversations with readers of *Brill's Content*, these complaints represent a general disquiet about the impact of the new business arrangement on the magazine's journalistic independence.

An e-mail from Tom Mentzer, who describes himself as a graduate student in journalism, says, "How Steven Brill can add his name to such a project, a synergistic nightmare that he would have rabidly attacked given different circumstances, is beyond me."

The other message, also e-mailed, came from Ken Horowitz, who attached other critical online articles about the question of conflicts of interest, which, he said, "echo my extreme concerns about the ability of *Brill's Content* to remain 'untarnished.'" Horowitz added, "My confidence in *Brill's Content* is dropping as each issue appears on my doorstep...."

Since my two-year contract with *Brill's Content*, which stipulated that I could be neither fired nor rehired, ends with this column, it looks as if I'm ending where I began, writing about the potential for conflicts of interest in a publication that has set itself up to monitor the behavior of others in the media.

In September 1998, in the second issue of the magazine, Steven Brill and I debated the potential for a conflict of interest in his combined roles as owner, editor, and writer. That exchange concerned a joint business venture with NBC-TV he had been considering.

I wrote:

"The conflict Brill most insistently rejects—conflict between the roles and responsibilities of the publisher and editor—remains the most troublesome. As publisher, Brill has a fundamental commitment to the publication's economic success and to its investors. The publisher must therefore calculate all financial aspects of the business, aspects that could raise a conflict with the editor's direct responsibility to the consumer of the information. For example, when publisher Brill entered into negotiations with NBC-TV about a joint business arrangement, editor Brill had no choice but to attend a meeting.

"It was a meeting to which the editor should have objected. Only after the potential deal became public, and reporters called Brill to ask about its impact on the credibility of his new magazine, did publisher Brill hear what editor Brill should have told him."

Although *Brill's Content* has a new editor in chief, Brill, who is now CEO and chairman, retains a strong hand in editing copy and deciding what does and does not appear in the magazine. I do not believe that there is an impregnable wall, Chinese or otherwise, that can be erected between those who preside over the business interests of a journalistic organization and those who are responsible for the content it produces. But I do believe that the potential for a conflict is more likely to be realized—but unrecognized—when both interests are merged in a single person.

For nearly three years now, I have been working with a group called the Committee of Concerned Journalists. Our chief concern has been expressed in a statement that says in part:

"This is a critical moment for journalism in America. While the craft in many respects has never been better—consider the supply of information or the skill of reporters—there is a paradox to our communications age. Revolutionary changes in technology, in our economic structure, and in our relationship with the public are pulling journalism from its traditional moorings. As audiences fragment and our companies diversify, there is a growing debate within news organizations about our responsibilities as businesses and our responsibilities as journalists. Many journalists feel a sense of lost purpose. There is even doubt about the meaning of news, doubt evident when serious journalistic organizations drift toward opinion, infotainment and sensation out of balance with news.

"Journalists share responsibility for the uncertainty. Our values and professional standards are often vaguely expressed and inconsistently honored. We have been slow to change habits in the presentation of news that may have lost their relevance. Change is necessary.

"Yet as we change, we assert some core principles of journalism are enduring. They are those that make journalism a public service central to self government. They define our profession not as the act of communicating but as a set of [CONTINUED ON PAGE 132]

HOW TO REACH THE NEW OMBUDSMAN, MICHAEL GARTNER
Phone: 212-332-6381 Fax: 212-332-6350
e-mail: MGGartner@aol.com
Mail: 5315 Waterbury Road, Des Moines, IA 50312

SPECIAL NOTE Two years ago, when we began this magazine, we also began something never before tried by any publication: We appointed Bill Kovach our outside, independent ombudsman. His mandate was to write whatever he wanted at whatever length he wanted concerning any complaint he received about the content of our magazine. We stipulated that his term would last two years. I hope it isn't inappropriate to thank him for all of his work and for making this initiative succeed.

Beginning with the next issue, Michael Gartner will be our outside ombudsman. In terms of experience and reputation, Gartner is a worthy successor to Kovach. He has been Page One editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, editor and president of *The Des Moines Register*, and president of NBC News. In 1997 he won a Pulitzer Prize for editorials he wrote at the *Tribune* of Ames, Iowa, which he then edited and co-owned. He now is a majority owner of the Iowa Cubs minor-league baseball team. STEVEN BRILL

World Radio History

ANGELA CUMMINGS

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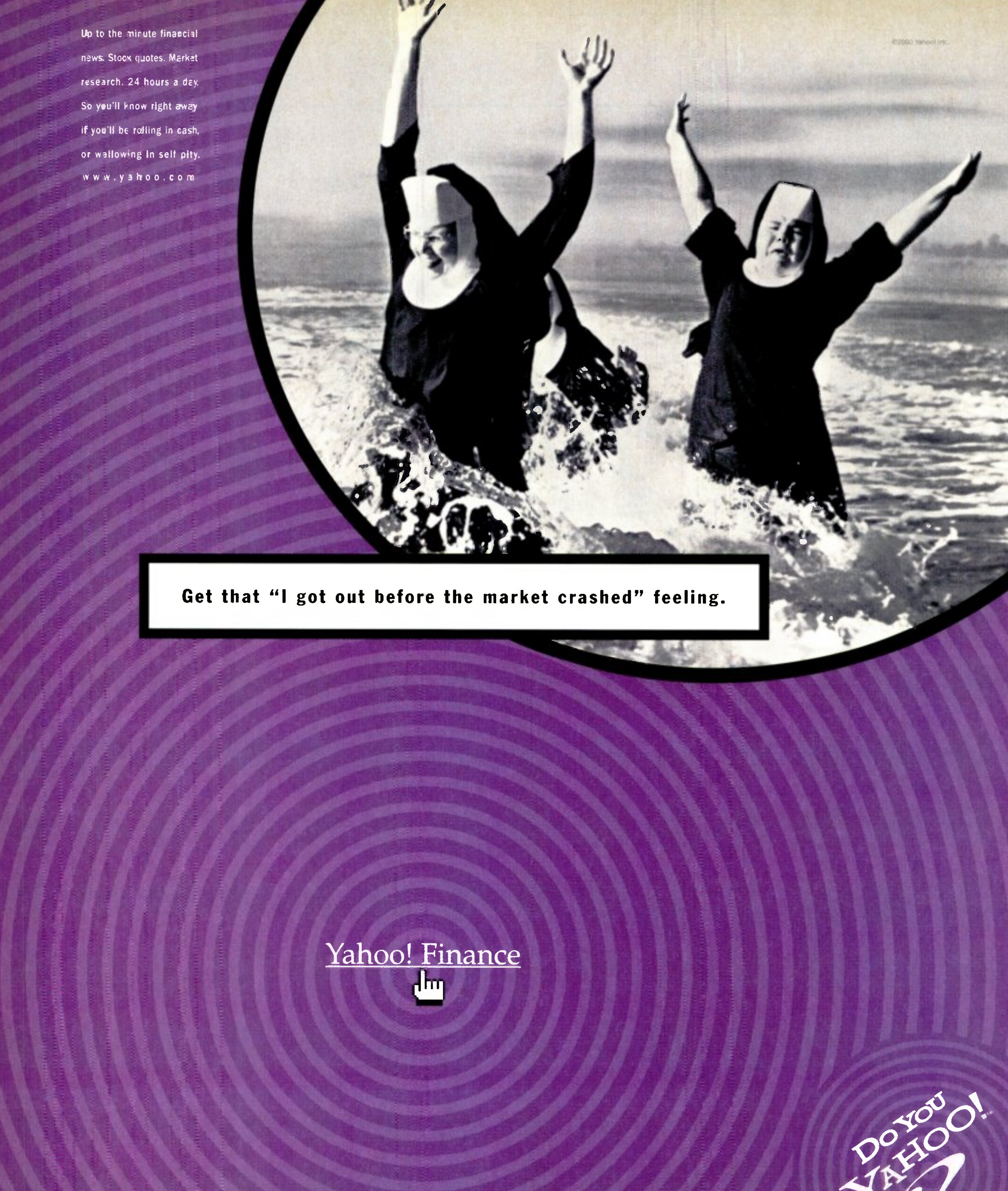


World Radio History

NOTEBOOK

Wallace's funeral, March 1997. Inset: Amir Muhammad's driver's license photo with police sketches in the L.A. *Times*.

THE WRONG MAN

THE NOTORIOUS L.A.T.

It's every newspaper editor's nightmare: Two of your star reporters identify a police suspect in a high-profile celebrity murder. You give the story big play: page one, above the fold. You print the suspect's name and publish his photograph. And it turns out to be dead wrong. What do you do next?

If you're the *Los Angeles Times*, you do absolutely nothing. That's what happened for more than a month after *Times* editors were presented with compelling evidence—produced by one of their own reporters—that their December 9, 1999, story identifying a man named Amir Muhammad as a suspect in the 1997 murder of rapper Christopher Wallace, a.k.a. The Notorious B.I.G., was wrong. By early March, according to two newsroom staffers, the lead detective on the case had told a *Times* reporter that not only was Muhammad not a current suspect, he hadn't been one when the December story ran. The *Times* waited until May 3 to report this fact.

Why the delay? The follow-up story was held nearly six weeks while editors fought over whether the paper should simply report the new facts of the case or revisit the mistakes made in the first story, according to an editor and reporter at the *Times*.

The December 9 story, written by metro reporters Matt Lait and Scott Glover, was a major scoop. Lait and Glover thought they had found a connection between the rapper's murder and the mushrooming Rampart Division police corruption scandal, which the pair had uncovered in September. The *Times* reporters wrote that police suspected an ex–Los Angeles cop named David Mack in a murder-for-hire scheme to kill Wallace. And because Mack was once partners with the officer at the center of the corruption scandal, a potential blockbuster link between the two stories existed.

Under this theory, Mack's triggerman was his college friend Amir Muhammad, who appeared to match details the police had about the shooter. Even though Lait and Glover were unable to find Muhammad, the paper ran the story, printing his name and photograph.

But even on cursory examination, the article didn't hold up. It quoted just two sources on the record—both of whom dismissed the theory—and didn't reveal until later in the article that detectives were also investigating a second theory for the murder that didn't involve Muhammad.

Chuck Philips says he was skeptical when he saw the piece. A veteran *Times* business reporter, Philips, 47, shared a 1999 Pulitzer for beat reporting for his coverage of the music industry. "Chuck is sort of the world's authority on rap violence," says his editor, Mark Saylor.

FUNERAL: AFP PHOTOS; ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT MENCHIN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITED BLISS

On the Sunday before St. Valentine's Day, *The New York Times* launched an altered version of its Weddings section. The pages—once full of stiff, formal rundowns of the genealogy and career milestones of brides and grooms—now feature a few announcements that include romantic details of courtship: "He asked [her] for a tour of Manhattan, and in a dark cacophonous jazz club he kissed her," read one recent profile.

Lois Smith Brady, author of the section's popular "Vows" column, which influenced the new format, likes the change. "I think the old wedding pages were dysfunctional," she says. "They gave you that horrible 'I'm not one of them' feeling. Now it's much healthier."

But what's to keep couples from embellishing their "love at first-sight"-style stories? After all, it's easier to check if a forebear arrived on the Mayflower than it is to verify a first kiss. According to Sunday Styles editor Trip Gabriel, wedding reporters "are responsible for getting the facts right." That means calls to friends and family members to double-check the stories. And were a couple's romantic exaggeration to come to light, says Gabriel, "I think it would be more of an embarrassment to them than it would be to us." ELIZABETH ANGELL

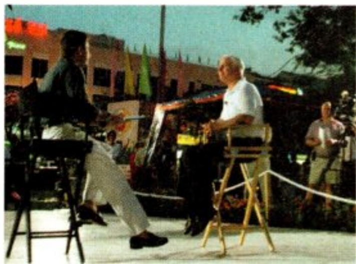
World Radio History

NOTEBOOK

EVOLUTION

MAKING NEWS

From morning-show gimmick to hard news: The story evolved quickly when NBC's *Today* invited U.S. Senator John McCain to return to Vietnam. NBC paid for the trip, and planned shots of the contemplative senator coming to terms with his prisoner-of-war past. But other news organizations quickly caught on to NBC's bright idea, and the wistful, paid-for voyage ended up in A-sections everywhere. Here's how. ADAR KAPLAN



1. THE PRESS RELEASE
"McCain...will take [*Today* cohost Matt] Lauer on a tour of the prison where he was held, the so-called Hanoi Hilton...Following Vietnam, Lauer will embark on his annual...trip, called 'Where in the World is Matt Lauer?' "
NBC press release, April 25

2. THE SOFT FEATURE
"Other emotions poured out as [McCain] stood in the land where he had been imprisoned, tortured, and starved...[McCain] often brushed off the 'hero' label by saying, 'I'm just a guy who intercepted a missile with my airplane...' "
New York Daily News, *April 26*

3. THE HARD-NEWS BULLETIN
"A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Phan Thuy Thanh, called remarks by Sen. John McCain regarding his wartime imprisonment in Hanoi a 'sheer distortion...' "
Reuters, April 28

4. THE A-SECTION REPORT
"McCain, who flew back to the United States today after a three-day private tour of the country, also criticized what he said is the reluctance of some Vietnamese government officials to improve ties with the United States."
The Washington Post, *April 29*

(Saylor resigned in late May for reasons he says are unrelated to this episode.) Philips had been following the Wallace investigation closely, but had never heard the Mack-Muhammad theory. So he set out to find Amir Muhammad. It took him three days, according to Philips and to Muhammad's lawyer, Bryant Calloway.

After a few weeks of cajoling, Philips says he convinced Muhammad to speak on the record. Meanwhile, by the first week of March, Philips had interviewed David Martin, the lead detective on the Wallace murder case. Martin told Philips that Muhammad had not been a suspect when Lait and Glover's original story ran. Martin's superior, Lieutenant Al Michelena, confirmed to *Brill's Content* that Muhammad is not a suspect and wasn't one when the *Times* story ran in December. *Times* executive editor Leo Wolinsky and city editor Bill Boyarsky both stand by the original story and maintain, despite the LAPD's statements to the contrary, that Muhammad was in fact a suspect in December 1999. Asked about Martin and Michelena's comments, Wolinsky says: "That's revisionist history. There's a bit of a disconnect within the police department."

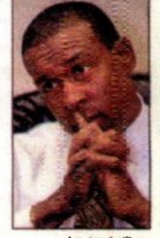
Man No Longer Under Scrutiny in Rapper's Death

■ Probe: Mortgage broker had been investigated in Notorious B.I.G.'s slaying. But police say theory is not being pursued.

By CHUCK PHILIPS
TIMES STAFF WRITER

A mortgage broker identified as the suspected assassin of rap star Notorious B.I.G. is no longer under scrutiny by police, according to the lead detective in the case.

Amir Muhammad, who learned he was under suspicion only after an article was published in The Times Dec. 9, said he was stunned and angered by the report.



Los Angeles Times

On May 3rd, the *Times* corrected the record on Amir Muhammad

Muhammad declined to comment for this article, but his lawyer, Calloway, says his client had nothing to do with Wallace's murder and had no idea his name had surfaced in connection with the case until he saw the *Times* article. Muhammad's first thought upon reading Lait and Glover's piece, says Calloway, was "concern for his safety and the safety of his family. His life stopped. The first three or four days he didn't leave the house."

"His life stopped," says Muhammad's lawyer, Bryant Calloway. "The first three or four days, he didn't leave the house."

After tracking Muhammad down and hearing the lead detective's contradiction of Lait and Glover's December article, Philips says he filed a follow-up article to Wolinsky no later than March 17. (Wolinsky disputes that, and says top editors first saw the story on March 28.) Philips described what happened next as "the ugliest experience I've ever had in any story I've worked on."

City editor Boyarsky was apprehensive about a *Times* reporter contradicting Lait and Glover, according to two newsroom staffers. Lait and Glover are considered rising stars, and many in the newsroom think their coverage of the Rampart corruption scandal might win the paper a Pulitzer Prize. Metro editors were opposed to any follow-up story on the Wallace case that raised questions about the reporting on the original story, according Mark Saylor and another newsroom insider. Saylor describes the city desk's view as, "their guys had not made a mistake and that the original story was correct." Says Boyarsky, "I felt it shouldn't run as an analysis and attack on the previous story."

But the business desk's Philips and Saylor thought the follow-up story should reflect the fact that the *Times* had made a mistake. "I think that Matt [Lait] and Scott [Glover] approached the original story honorably," says Saylor. "My concern and Chuck [Philips's] concern was only dealing fairly with the story as the facts came out later." (Glover declined to comment for this article. Lait would say only that he was "supportive of the second story.")

As the turf war between the metro and business desks dragged on—"It got to be like the Northern Ireland talks," says Boyarsky—Muhammad waited for the paper to report that he wasn't a suspect. All of this was unfolding in the shadow of the Staples Center scandal, the sale of the paper's parent company, and the ouster of editor in chief Michael Parks.

On April 21 (Parks's last day) Philips learned that a final version of his follow-up story had been approved and would appear in the Saturday, April 22, edition. Philips says he objected to that version, and his editor, Saylor—who, according to both camps, had been promised an opportunity to sign off on the final edit—wasn't in the office that day. After contacting Saylor for support and threatening to remove his byline, Philips succeeded in keeping the article out of the next day's paper. Almost two weeks later, on May 3, a compromised version of Philips's story that did not explicitly fault the *Times* for running the original article appeared in the Metro section.

Why the sudden rush to get the story out? Philips says he was told by executive editor Wolinsky that "they wanted to get it in before [the new editor in chief] John Carroll arrived." Wolinksy denies fast-tracking the story for April 22. "The story went into the paper the absolute moment it was ready to go," he says. Boyarsky also denies rushing the article, but admits that he wanted the problem "cleaned up" before Carroll's arrival.

In the second article, Philips quotes Muhammad as asking, "How can something so completely false end up on the front page of a major newspaper?" The story did not answer that question, though it did clear Muhammad's name. (Shortly after a version of the present article was posted on *brillscontent*.com on May 23, the weekly *New Times Los Angeles* reported that it had tracked down a former LAPD detective, Russell Poole, who claimed to be the source for Lait and Glover's December article. According to *New Times*, Poole said that although he thought Muhammad should be investigated further, Muhammad was not in fact considered a suspect by the department in December 1999. *Brill's Content* was unable to reach Poole for comment.)

In January Muhammad's lawyer, Calloway, wrote a letter to the *Times* calling the original story "clearly defamatory" and demanding that the *Times* run a retraction. As of June 5, no such retraction had appeared.

JOHN COOK

LEFT: PAULA BRONSTEIN/LIAISON

World Radio History

PHOTO FINISH

MAKING DEMANDS ON *LIFE*

When the group of *Life* magazine photographers pictured at right met in January, it wasn't to compare careers—it was to make an urgent demand to Time Warner Inc. CEO Gerald Levin.

The photographers had shot a lifetime of images for the magazine—historic pictures of Rocky Marciano, Georgia O'Keeffe, Joseph McCarthy, and many other subjects. They had recorded a visual history of postwar America, but as staff photographers for Time Inc., most of them didn't actually own their work: The company did. As such, they've depended for decades on the company's noblesse oblige (the photographers got half of whatever syndication income their pictures brought in), but this arrangement was due to end soon. It was due to end, in fact, when they passed away, despite Time Inc.'s historically generous tradition of taking care of photographers' families. (Time Warner Inc. shut down *Life* in May.)

Former *Life* photographers, family, and friends. Front row, left to right: Andrea Cairone, Yale Joel, Elin Elisofon, John Dominis, Co Rentmeester; middle: Georgiana Silk, Berenice Schutzer, Marlys Ray, Rosemarie Scherman; back: Russell Burrows, Myron Miller, Bill Ray, Steve Fenn, John Loengard

The group sent a letter to Levin, asking that their heirs receive the royalties the photographers were currently getting. Seventeen *Life* photographers signed it. Elin Elisofon, whose father shot for *Life*, explains the group's position: "I spent a lot of time in my childhood without my father," she says, "but he gave a lot to *Life*, and if Time Life benefits from that, shouldn't the descendants of these photographers?"

They were denied. Sheldon Czapnik, Time Inc.'s director of editorial services (whose division was already stirring photographers with the planned sale of 30,000 of the company's most famous prints), said the money the *Life* photographers already receive exceeds contractual requirements. "I thought we needed to draw the line somewhere," Czapnik said. STEPHEN TOTILO

DOING LUNCH

THE MEDIA BUSINESS DINES IN

In the wake of the Frank O. Gehry-designed Condé Nast "Cafeteria"—which debuted to well-deserved fanfare in April—we offer this comparative chart of a few media empires' in-house dining options. Not surprisingly, most rated high as theme-park surrogates but low as culinary experiences. KAJA PERINA

Condé Nast's tote

VENUE	YOU KNOW YOU'RE THERE BECAUSE...	BUT IT FEELS LIKE...	BEST BUY	TELLING DETAIL
NBC "The Commissary"	Conan O'Brien photos line the entryway	a hospital commissary	choice of pudding or Jell-O, $1.08	framed posters: "NBC: Eat Heart Healthy"
Dow Jones "Dining Center"	there's a news-wire ticker near the elevator	an airport lounge, executive class	Market Carvery Cajun Rubbed Sirloin Shell, $4.50	flyer: "Mice Love to Eat at Work Too—Don't Leave Food in or on Your Desk"
Viacom "The Lodge"	fourteen TVs are tuned simultaneously to either VH1 or MTV	a *Real World* casting call in a fake chalet	Showtime Noodle Station's Chinese stir fry with egg roll, $4.75	fake cars over the fake fireplace
Time Life "Choices"	every picture you've ever seen in *Life* is hanging on the wall	an Ivy League dining hall	mulligatawny soup, 30¢/oz.	marble tabletops, but banquettes are vinyl
The New York Times	it sells stress balls emblazoned with the *Times*'s "Expect the World" slogan	a live cooking show circa 1967	stray copies of Sunday's *Times Magazine*, starting Wednesday	bulletin-board notice: "No Personal Ads"
Condé Nast "Cafeteria"	everyone's wearing Gucci	the new VW bug: bright, sleek, and far too compact	coriander-roasted leg of lamb, $5.25	translucent pastel take-out bag: ideal for high-end cosmetics

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NOTICED

THE NEW NEW CLICHÉ

Our newborn century's first cliché has already hit saturation point. Everywhere we look, writers are twisting the title of Michael Lewis's best-selling e-business book—*The New New Thing*, published in October—into shorthand for "what's fresh" or "what's next."

Title creep is nothing new: Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* and Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* both became useful fixtures in the national lexicon. But Lewis's catchphrase has become hackneyed with startling speed, and readers in the English-speaking world are suffering from a spate of new new nausea.

It started in a wellspring of earnest journalism—*The Washington Monthly*. In the November issue, editor Nicholas Thompson characterized a calculator/clock as "the (new) new thing." Once hatched, the phrase metastasized. In an October *New York Times Magazine* essay, Andrew Sullivan identified George W. Bush as "the political new new thing." By spring, *Newsweek* was remembering when evangelicals were "the New New Thing on the right," and no less prestigious a journal than *Foreign Affairs* suggested that ethnic harmony is the "New New Thing" in intrastate relations.

Bastardized versions abound. In October the *Times*'s William Safire complained about the "new new isolationism." In December *Fortune* branded the Internet bubble era the "New New Age." In March, *Slate*'s David Plotz assessed "the new, new Al Sharpton"; a month later Plotz's boss, Michael Kinsley, considered "the new, new money" in a *Washington Post* op-ed. In May *The New Republic*'s cover story explored the "New, New Left."

Michael Lewis marvels at the currency of his coinage. Although he decamped to France, he receives regular new new news. His expression jumped the pond, appearing in *The Independent* and *Financial Times*. But Lewis assures us that "*la nouvelle, la nouvelle chose* is not showing up in the Paris press." Yet. EVE GERBER

World Radio History

NOTEBOOK

BACKTRACKING

THE FEMININE MISTAKE

Betty Friedan

When iconic feminist Betty Friedan claimed in her recent memoir that her ex-husband had "beat up on her" during the couple's 22-year marriage, the accusation made headlines in publications like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. But no sooner had the press zeroed in on the charges of abuse than Friedan began to back off, downplaying the very allegations that her publisher was hyping in a press release for the book.

The revelations occupied a total of only six pages in *Life So Far*, Friedan's 399-page memoir published in May, but publisher Simon & Schuster made sure to highlight "the physical abuse Friedan endured" in its press release. *George* magazine plugged an excerpt from the book with the cover headline "He Beat Me," and crammed the bulk of her accusations into the story: "And how could I reconcile being knocked around by my husband while calling on women to rise up against their oppressors?" Friedan wrote. Soon scores of publications were repeating the charges.

When abuse became the focus, however, Friedan started to demur. "Let's not overdo that," she told the *Chicago Tribune* in May. Friedan repeatedly insisted in other interviews that her husband was "no wife beater" and that she was "no passive victim." "I gave as good as I got," she told *The Christian Science Monitor*.

In Friedan's opinion, reporters completely inflated the story. "I wrote a very long book about American history...the women's movement, and the like," she says, "and I simply will not tolerate the media...trying to sensationalize my life." As for her publisher's press release, Friedan seemed genuinely surprised that it highlighted this aspect of the book. (Her publicist, Aileen Boyle, insists, "She did see it, and all I can say is that maybe she overlooked it.")

At the same time Betty Friedan was toning down her story, her alleged abuser, Carl Friedan, was trying to get his out. Few media outlets had asked him his side of the story. In an Associated Press article on May 24, for example, Beth Harpaz wrote that Friedan was "reluctant to divorce the husband who beat her." Harpaz did not contact Carl Friedan because, she says, "I felt comfortable taking her word for it." (Harpaz called Carl Friedan and updated the wire report after being contacted by *Brill's Content*.) And in a May 11 *New York Times* profile, Alex Witchel wrote of "physical abuse by [Friedan's] former husband," without contacting Mr. Friedan.

Carl Friedan denies the accusations, claiming he never "gratuitously" hit anyone. After the *George* piece ran without a comment from him (a spokeswoman says the excerpt was fact-checked, though Carl Friedan was not contacted), he launched a one-man PR campaign, setting up a website and sending letters to news outlets nationwide.

His efforts were rewarded when the *Times* ran an apologetic editor's note on May 26, two weeks after Witchel's article appeared: "The *Times* should have sought Mr. Friedan's response in person or by mail," it read in part.

Whatever the truth—and however she intended to promote the book—Betty Friedan says she's starting to regret writing about the stormiest parts of her marriage. "If I had known the media were going to make such a deal out of it," she says now, "I simply would not have put it in." KIMBERLY CONNIFF

ON THE RECORD

GRAMMATICALLY SPEAKING

Much has been made of John McCain's ill-fated attempt to interpose a dose of straight talk into presidential politics. But when it comes to the print media's coverage of the 2000 campaign, the talk has been a little too straight. From *Slate* to *The New York Times* to *The New Yorker*, reporters who cover the campaign have made a fetish of the verité quote, often refusing to clean up or paraphrase or otherwise render coherent a candidate's off-the-cuff remarks.

From a March story on Vice-President Al Gore by *The New York Times*'s Katharine Q. Seelye: "'Uh, I, I, my message is for the, the voters of the country. Uh, I ask for their support. I'm not taking a single vote for, for granted.'" It's certainly not a misquote, but an overquote, perhaps? (*Washington Post* reporters cleaned up the same remark in their stories.)

Gore had been responding to a question that had caught him off guard, Seelye says, which made an exacting transcription newsworthy. "I was trying to convey that he wasn't prepared to say anything that he hadn't scripted," she says.

Similar precision quoting has dogged the famously ungrammatical George W. Bush, from *Slate* correspondent Jacob Weisberg's "Bushisms"—an online compendium of painfully contorted verbal flubs uttered by the Texas governor—to Nicholas Lemann's January *New Yorker* profile, in which Lemann reproduced long stretches of Bush's garbled commentary in Q & A format.

It wasn't always this way, according to campaign-trail veterans. "I was told when I started," says *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, "not to use *ers* and *ums* or words that reflected a particular accent in a demeaning way." *The Washington Post*'s David Broder agrees that in most cases, verbatim quoting is a mistake. "Leaving the *ums* and *uhs* in isn't useful to the reader," he says, "because we all do that when we speak." And it's true: None of us actually talks in the measured cadences of your average sound bite. Strictly speaking, the uncleaned quote replete with transcribed perseveration—the *uhs* and *ums* we use to stall while we're thinking—is the more accurate one. "Most speech, especially that involving finding words for complex thoughts, is often not fluent," says Adrienne Lehrer, professor emeritus of linguistics at the University of Arizona.

Some reporters consider that lack of fluency a tool for psychological portraiture. "The *uhs* and *ums* say a lot more about who he is," Sarah Koenig, a reporter for the *Concord Monitor*, says of Bush. "If I want to show that someone sounds as if he's lying, or is pretending to know more than he does, or is being arrogant, or simply a dork, I might use all those *ums* and tangents to convey what I guess is the subtext of who the person actually is."

***Boston Herald* columnist Howie Carr, who regularly skewers members of the Kennedy family with candid quoting (former congressman Joseph Kennedy: "I think Pat McGovern, uh, has did a terrific job when she was the uh, uh, chairman of the, uh, [Massachusetts] Senate Ways and Means Committee"), puts it more bluntly: "You may be kind to clean up his quotes," Carr says, "but you're not being fair, [because] then the reader is not going to realize what a boob Kennedy is."**

MICHAEL ERARD

ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT MENCHIN; FRIEDAN: STACY WALSH ROSENSTOCK/NEWSMAKERS

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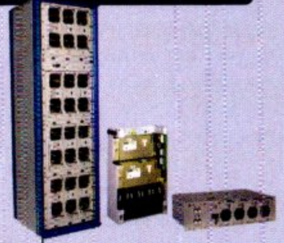

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World Radio History

NOTEBOOK

RETROSPECTIVE

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT

Until she resigned in May, Helen Thomas was the grande dame of the White House press corps. She spent 39 years grilling U.S. presidents—eight administrations' worth—for United Press International and was often called upon to ask the first question at press conferences. Thomas quit UPI when the company was sold to the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's News World Communications, Inc. Here, a few of her questions over the years.

TO PRESIDENT NIXON, AT THE HEIGHT OF THE WATERGATE SCANDAL: Your former top aide in the White House [H.R. Haldeman] has been charged with perjury, because he testified that you said it would be wrong to pay hush money to silence the Watergate defendants....Can you and will you provide proof that you did indeed say it would be wrong?

TO GERALD FORD, IN HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER NIXON RESIGNED: Throughout your vice-presidency, you said that you didn't believe that President Nixon had committed an impeachable offense. Is that still your belief, or do you believe that his acceptance of a pardon implies his guilt or is an admission of guilt?

TO RONALD REAGAN, ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE IRAN-CONTRA ARMS SCANDAL IN 1987: Mr. President, is it possible that two military officers who are trained to obey orders grabbed power [and] made major foreign-policy moves....Or did they think they were doing your bidding?

TO PRESIDENT CLINTON, IN 1997, AFTER HE ACQUIRED A PET: George Stephanopoulos says you're a lame duck. Dick Morris says you've gone to sleep. What is your rebuttal, and what's the dog's name?

STEPH WATTS

Helen Thomas in Washington, D.C., 1962

BLOCKBUSTING

THE BATTLE OF JULY 4

APRIL 24: The July 4 weekend is more than two months away. Dan Fellman, Warner Bros.' president of domestic distribution, is steering a Mack truck called *The Perfect Storm* toward June 30, the heart of the summer movie season, with another celluloid 18-wheeler, *The Patriot*, racing into his headlights. "Hey, I think they should move," Fellman growls with ironic swagger, "but that's their decision. We have the goods."

Mel Gibson in *The Patriot*, a Revolutionary War epic. At right, George Clooney battles *The Perfect Storm*.

"June 30 is our date. We have no interest in moving," counters Bob Levin, Sony Pictures Entertainment's president of worldwide marketing, about *The Patriot*. "If I were them I would move. But I don't make their decisions for them. They're just taking on something that is very, very strong."

Peter Bart, editor of *Variety*, has watched this extreme sport of executive posturing and Kasparov-like calculation for years. "It's a game of chicken," he says, "and it often happens that whichever person has the slightly weaker picture says, 'Oh, my God, we've made a mistake, let's pull it and try for a clearer run.'"

APRIL 28: With just 60 days left, as focus-group results and intelligence about the competition come in, both films still look like viable contenders for box-office glory, and both have Achilles' heels. Mel Gibson's star power is awesome, but *The Patriot* comes out of the risky historical-epic genre and promises a weightier tone than past Gibson orgies of righteous bloodletting. Warner's *Perfect Storm* features jaw-dropping special effects and is in the classic summer-movie thriller genre, but stars George Clooney, who has never carried a true blockbuster. And the movie, based on Sebastian Junger's nonfiction bestseller of tough Gloucester, Massachusetts, fishermen and apocalyptic waves, does not end with the sort of sun-streaked rescue that makes for cheerful word of mouth.

Dade Hayes, who reports on the film industry for *Variety*, says, "*Perfect Storm* might still move a week earlier. Warner is the underdog. But it's pretty late, and they're in a bit of a pickle. The weekend before is Jim Carrey. And the summer is so crammed with titles that where else would you put it? Dump it in August?"

MAY 2: *Patriot* producer Dean Devlin knows from summer box office. He made *Godzilla* (1998) and *Independence Day* (1996), with his partner, director Roland Emmerich. Each film had a $50-million opening weekend, and together they went on to a combined worldwide gross of more than a billion dollars. Is July 4 his lucky day? "It's a movie about the American Revolution," Devlin says of *The Patriot*, "and the country will be celebrating the American Revolution. It'd be irresponsible for us to open it any other time."

This year, with July 4 falling on a Tuesday, an estimated $250 million in ticket sales will be up for grabs during the four-day holiday weekend, and the potential to launch films toward stratospheric global earnings looms large. The summer gross is a projected $3.8 billion, with eight weekends tightly packed with major-studio releases, and despite intense competition, Warner and Sony's executive etiquette insists that there is more than enough money for them all. "I think if either of these films was going to move, they would have moved by now," says Bart.

MAY 5: Bart is wrong. Jeff Blake, president of Worldwide Distribution for Sony's Columbia Pictures, announces that he will change the *Patriot* release date to Wednesday, June 28. Is it a Machiavellian preemptive strike? Blake calls it a "slight technical adjustment" and jokes that "the idea of a seven-day weekend has always been a dream." But TV and newspaper coverage may favor the earlier event; if *Patriot* opens strongly, multiplex owners will be likely to keep it on the biggest screens through the weekend, and word of mouth could contribute to weekend ticket lines. "It wouldn't be out of the question for *Patriot* to do 70 or 80 million by the end of that seven-day period. It could be embarrassing for Warner if they get totally skunked," says *Variety*'s Hayes.

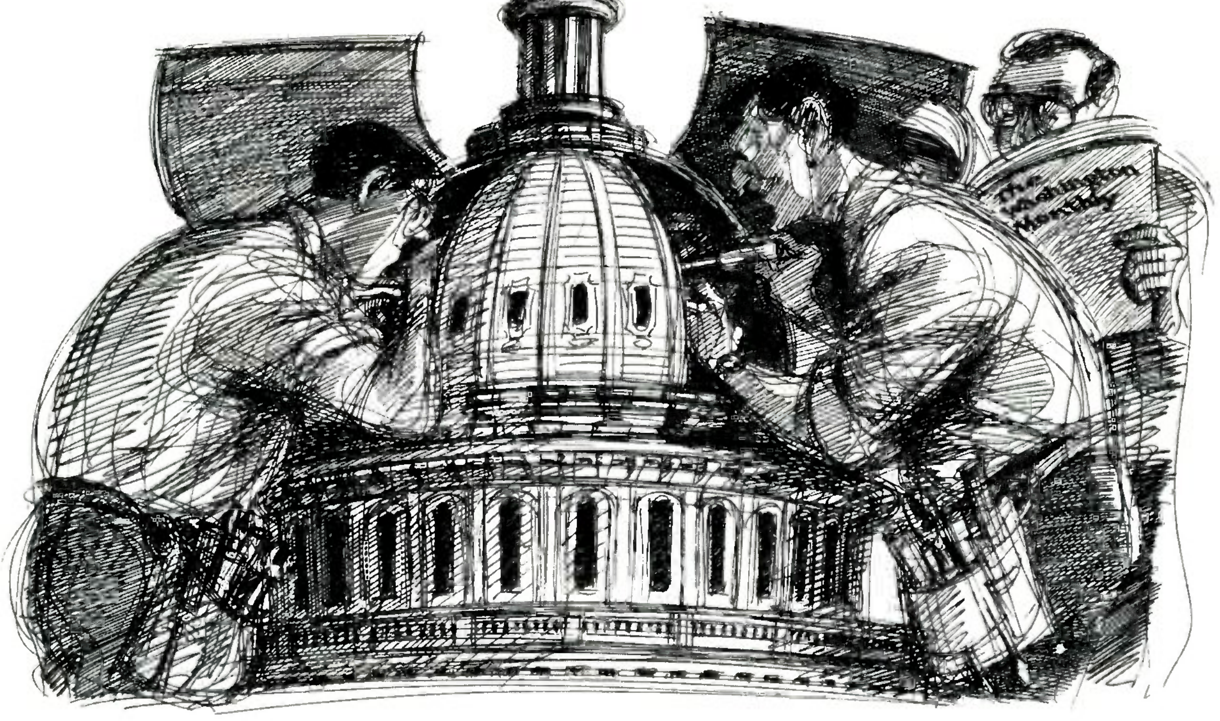
"I'm pleased that we're alone on the 30th," says Warner's Dan Fellman. "Obviously, they've had some second thoughts. We're going to do extremely well." As D-Day approaches, Sony's Blake is sanguine. "Inevitably, the first weekend, we'll be competing. But whatever *mano-a-mano* considerations there are, the great thing about this business is: A week later we'll all move on to something else."

SEAN GULLETTE

THOMAS BETTMANN/CORBIS

World Radio History

Capitol Repair Kit



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BLUR

A VISION THING

Last summer, WCBS-TV New York landed in hot water after its local newscast did a report on an eye-surgery operation being broadcast on the Internet: It turned out that the surgery webcast was a paid infomercial on the CBS station's companion website. Now another New York affiliate has blurred the line between advertising and news in its handling of a different eye surgeon. In March WNBC posted a laser-eye-surgery promotion on its website that looked an awful lot like editorial content.

The ad, paid for by Dr. Joseph Dello Russo of the New Jersey Eye Center in Bergenfield, sits adjacent to a column of local news headlines and looks like a health feature. "Flying Spot Live Laser Surgery Webcast: Click Here To Watch A Replay," it says. Click on the box and you wind up on a registration page filled with information about Dello Russo, his eye center, and different types of laser-eye-surgery procedures, all under the heading "4-NBC Special Presentation." Click further, and you get to watch the surgery.

Lew Leone, vice-president of sales at WNBC, says the Dello Russo link is a "banner ad, and it's pretty obvious that it's not news." Furthermore, says Leone, WNBC.com is not a news site but rather "a website built for commerce and information." The site is dominated by news updates, however, and the heading at the top of the screen reads "Newschannel4.com." (Calls to the site's editor were referred to the PR department.) Leone says that in creating the Dello Russo ad, "We didn't use any talent from our news division." But they certainly managed to put together an ad that looked like they had. LESLIE HEILBRUNN

WNBC.com's surgery webcast

OPERATIONS

BASIC TRAINING IN NEWS

U.S. Army Psychological Operations soldiers interning in the newsroom? That was the case earlier this year at CNN, which came under criticism in February for having hosted interns from the Army's 4th Psychological Operations Group (PSYOP) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. When word got out, first in the Paris-based *Intelligence Newsletter* and the Dutch daily newspaper *Trouw*, and then in *TV Guide* (the first major U.S. publication to report the story), CNN executives professed to be shocked at the revelations and blamed the situation on nonjournalists in the human-resources department.

"[T]hose interns had no business being here," Eason Jordan, CNN's president of news gathering and international networks, told *TV Guide* in April. "As soon as we discovered [the officers] were here, we put an end to it."

But CNN's contrite stance on the episode left the Army feeling a bit miffed. "It was no secret that they were with the Army," says Major Jonathan Withington, spokesman for the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command at Fort Bragg, referring to the interns. "Their supervisors were well aware of that fact. We were completely aboveboard."

All told, CNN hosted five PSYOP interns between June 1999 and last February. Though they didn't show up to work in uniform, all had sent résumés identifying themselves as members of the PSYOP unit.

The origins of the debacle date from February 1998, when officials at Fort Bragg approached human-resources departments at CNN and National Public Radio to inquire about the possibility of internships for Army personnel. The training, they reasoned, could help the soldiers carry out their military mission, which Withington describes as the "dissemination of information to foreign audiences in support of U.S. policy and national objectives" and "a non-lethal means to persuade rather than to compel physically," using tools such as handbills, radio, and "tactical loudspeakers."

Within months, three PSYOP soldiers had worked at National Public Radio; one on a variety of programs and two on the popular call-in show *Talk of the Nation*. The NPR internship program came to a halt in May 1999, when one of the interns mentioned his day job

during a casual conversation with a news editor. "They deal in part with disinformation and we're supposedly dealing with information," explains Jeffrey Dvorkin, NPR's ombudsman. "The implications are wrong."

Both CNN and NPR say the interns had no role in setting the news agenda or influencing stories. "It was totally inappropriate for them to be at CNN," says Susan Binford, a CNN executive vice-president for public relations. "But they were never in a position to determine what was covered or how it was covered." Jessamyn Sarmiento, an NPR spokeswoman, offers a similarly phrased statement of contrition, adding that the interns handled routine administrative tasks such as filing scripts and preparing schedules.

The Army will not allow the PSYOP interns to be interviewed, but Major Withington says that one of the soldiers who worked at CNN told him that he had gained enormous knowledge by simply observing how the network mobilized people and equipment to cover news stories. "The primary objective was for them to get hands-on experience that only CNN and other leaders in the broadcasting field can provide," says Withington. "We're learning from the master." KEN SILVERSTEIN

NONDISCLOSURE

ABC'S SILENT PARTNER

When Time Warner went head to head with ABC in May over transmission fees (see related article on page 23), *The New York Times* was quick to take sides. A May 3 editorial chastised Time Warner for its "inconsiderate and unnecessary interruption of the cable service." Readers of that editorial, as well as of 12 of the *Times*'s 13 related news stories during the week of the conflict, weren't told that since January, the *Times* and ABC News have been jointly producing a political webcast that features analysis by reporters and editors from both outlets.

"It's our usual practice to disclose relationships and indirect financial ties," says *Times* spokeswoman Lisa Carparelli, adding that the failure to reveal the connection in the editorial was an oversight. "The relationship is relatively new, and it's so remote from the editorial department that they just didn't think about it."

Of the 13 news stories, only one—written by Jim Rutenberg and Felicity Barringer—mentioned the *Times*–ABC News relationship. Barringer says she included the disclosure in her May 3 story because the article focused on the public-relations efforts of the two companies. "Do we feel an affirmative obligation for our reader to know this or for this to be relevant?" says Barringer. "Yes. Do we feel an obligation every single time? No."

But Carparelli says a reference in every piece "would have had a flavor of 'doth protest too much.'" KIMBERLY CONNIFF

ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT MENCHIN

World Radio History

PARTISANS

REINVENTING AL GORE

Vice-president Al Gore will do or say anything to get elected. Why do so many Americans share this perception? Sure, radio ranters and late-night comics shape watercooler wisdom, but they get some of their best material from the Republican National Committee. And when it comes to getting its message picked up and amplified by the media—from *The Washington Post* to David Letterman—the RNC is beating the pants off its rival on the other side of the aisle. "We're cleaning their clocks," crows GOP deputy press secretary Mark Pfeifle. Although Pfeifle isn't exactly an impartial observer, a glance at some of the tactics employed by the RNC and Democratic National Committee message manipulators bears out his boast.

Take this April 10 press release to political reporters: The headline was "Reporters Held Hostage"; the copy complained that it had been 51 days since Gore's last press conference; and an accompanying illustration featured NBC correspondent Claire Shipman and *Washington Post* reporter Dan Balz locked in a stockade. Follow-ups featured other journalists. The ingenious ploy—ply journalists with jokes about journalists—earned the kind of buzz you can't buy: Press gallery denizens chatted about whose mug had made the cut. Within two weeks of the release, *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* published items about Gore's media freeze-out.

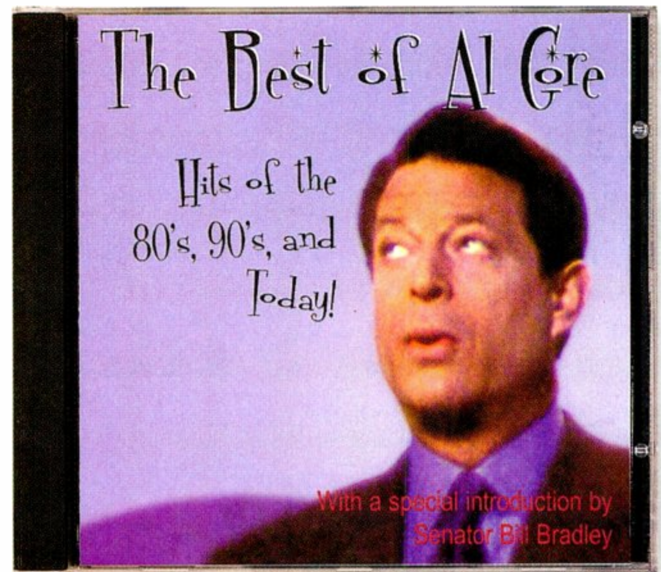
In May, the RNC had another successful gimmick: a CD of Al Gore's 17 greatest verbal gaffes, which the party distributed to 1,000 radio hosts. Within a week, ten major media outlets had mentioned the CD and countless radio programs had played snippets.

By contrast, the DNC's releases tend to be much more sober and, well, dull. Which means they're less likely to attract the jaundiced eye of your average political reporter. When, for example, the Democrats used independent studies to question Bush's budget in a January 6 release, "DNC Calls Bush Tax Plan 'The Real Y2K Disaster,'" it didn't provoke a single story.

What accounts for the difference? One reason: The RNC's press operation has a lot of former reporters on the payroll, and nobody spins reporters better than former reporters. The RNC's Pfeifle was a stringer for *USA Today* and The Associated Press. RNC director of communications Clifford May spent almost a decade writing for *The New York Times*. May says ex-journalists "know how to keep it witty and succinct." The RNC also uses businesslike methods to keep track of its operation, compiling a weekly chart of where its releases are picked up. For instance, in the last week of April, the GOP scored at least 75 "hits."

The DNC's press operation, on the other hand, is staffed by people from activist backgrounds, such as press secretary Jenny Backus, a former congressional press aide, and deputy press secretary Rick Hess, a DNC researcher who recently moved into media relations. The Democrats' releases are better at marshaling facts than they are at attracting attention. An April 25 DNC release—snappily titled "Democratic Party Leaders Demand Resignation of Bush's Texas Health Commissioner"—devoted 400 scrupulously annotated words to insinuating that George W. Bush ought to fire a state government appointee who had made some racist remarks.

The Dems have had some success in spreading the perception that Bush is a lightweight who cozies up to the far right, with such gimmicks as "Bob Jones Redemption Tour" T-shirts. But mostly theirs is pretty sober fare when compared to the RNC's operation. Mild-mannered DNC press secretary Backus insists that the inconsistencies in Bush's policy positions that the Democrats exhaustively document will sow seeds of doubt in the minds of voters. As for her adversaries in the RNC, she says, "They never seem to let the facts get in the way of a political hit."



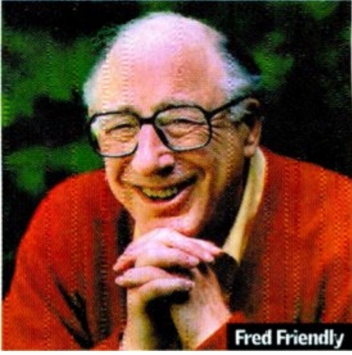
CD of Al Gore's embarrassing moments, released by the Republican National Committee. Top left: the RNC's anti-Gore mousepad.

Democratic pundit Paul Begala explains that "attacks that fit into a master narrative about the candidate" are more likely to generate coverage, a tactic the RNC excels in—like when RNC chairman Jim Nicholson mocked Gore's claims to rural roots by riding a mule-drawn cart in front of the Washington, D.C., home where Gore spent much of his youth. A dozen camera crews recorded the scene.

"At the end of the day," says Begala, "the voters see these guys as who they really are." So he hopes.

EVE GERBER

TOP AP PHOTO



RENTED

TOO FRIENDLY?

On June 20, the Fred Friendly Seminars Inc.—an organization started in 1974 by revered journalist Fred Friendly, who died in 1998, to facilitate debate about civic issues—will host a panel discussion on property rights and the environment. The seminar will run exactly as do those that regularly air on PBS: Notables from various fields will sit around a horseshoe-shaped table while a moderator leads a colloquium on a complicated, hypothetical situation. Unlike the PBS seminars, however, the June event will not be televised, and it will not be paid for with foundation grants. Rather, it will be put on for—and funded by—the National Association of Home Builders, an organization lobbying Congress to pass a property-rights bill.

Is this tweedy staple of PBS programming compromising its integrity with its rent-a-seminar service? John Echeverria, director of the Environmental Policy Project at the Georgetown University Law Center, thinks so. He declined an invitation to participate in the NAHB-sponsored seminar, writing in a letter to Fred Friendly Seminars president Richard Kilberg that "the Fred Friendly Seminars is being enlisted to help foster the view that the NAHB's legislative agenda represents a matter worthy of public and congressional attention."

Kilberg dismisses such criticisms, pointing out that private clients have always paid for seminars, with the understanding that Friendly staffers will have complete editorial control. "We believe the process works," he explains, "and we have all kinds of economic pressures....Basically, it keeps us going."

JANE MANNERS

World Radio History

NOTEBOOK

TICKER

81 Number of times Oprah Winfrey's name appears in the May/June premiere issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*

97 Number of times Martha Stewart's name appears in the June issue of *Martha Stewart Living*[1]

75 Number of days ABC was without union technicians during a 1998-99 labor dispute

1.6 Number of days ABC was unavailable to Time Warner Cable subscribers during May's license-fee dispute

6 Number of *New York Times* articles on the labor dispute during those 75 days

19 Number of *New York Times* articles on the license-fee dispute in May[2]

160 Combined number of minutes the three network weekday-evening newscasts devoted to stock-market stories in 1989

296 Combined number of minutes those newscasts devoted to stock-market stories last year

80 Number of minutes *CBS Evening News* devoted to stock-market stories last year

88 Number of minutes *ABC World News Tonight* devoted to stock-market stories last year

128 Number of minutes *NBC Nightly News* devoted to stock-market stories last year[3]

62 Percentage of journalists surveyed who said news stories are sometimes or often avoided because they are too complex for the audience

35 Percentage of journalists surveyed who said news stories are sometimes or often avoided because they will hurt the news organization or its parent company[4]

264 Total number of hours of GOP convention coverage CNN plans to broadcast on its various networks each day of the convention[5]

24 Number of hours in a day

1) *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Martha Stewart Living* 2) *The New York Times* 3) Andrew Tyndall, *The Tyndall Report* 4) The Pew Research Center for the People & The Press and the *Columbia Journalism Review* 5) *CNN*

COMPILED BY JESSE OXFELD

BRAD HINES

WORDSMITH

HE KEEPS THINGS ROLLING

MEDIA LIVES

BRON GALLERAN
Teleprompter Operator

Behind every great political speaker is a great speechwriter. And in front of him is a great teleprompter guy.

Bron Galleran will be that guy at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in August. Galleran, who began his career holding cue cards for the NBC soap opera *Days of Our Lives*, runs Computer Prompting Services Inc. with his business partner, John Cox. The two have "rolled copy" for the Academy Awards, the Grammy Awards, and the 1988 and 1996 Democratic conventions.

Political extravaganzas, says Galleran, present special problems from a teleprompter's perspective—such as rehearsing 160 speakers in three days while your computer system is virus-ridden, which happened to Galleran at the 1996 convention. "Rehearsals are always tough," he says. "When you have [U.S. senator Edward] Kennedy waiting to rehearse and we're...trying to debug a computer, it just makes you nervous."

"We can roll anybody's copy having never heard them before," says Galleran, "but it always helps to hear them in advance." If he's familiar with the speaker's style, Galleran says, he can keep up when they improvise. "If they decide to ad-lib," he says, "we know the way they ad-lib. [Los Angeles mayor] Richard Riordan, for instance, never sticks to the copy."

Even if the speaker does stick to the script (Al Gore, anyone?), scrolling the copy requires a special touch. "It's instinctive," Galleran says of the skill required to find the sweet spot for a given speaker: fast enough to read ahead a few lines but not so fast that the speaker gets nervous and speeds up.

It may sound like a blast, but Galleran says his last convention wore him out. "When it was done, I said, 'I'm never going to do this again,'" he recalls. "But [convention organizers] called me yesterday, and we'll do it."

LESLIE HEILBRUNN

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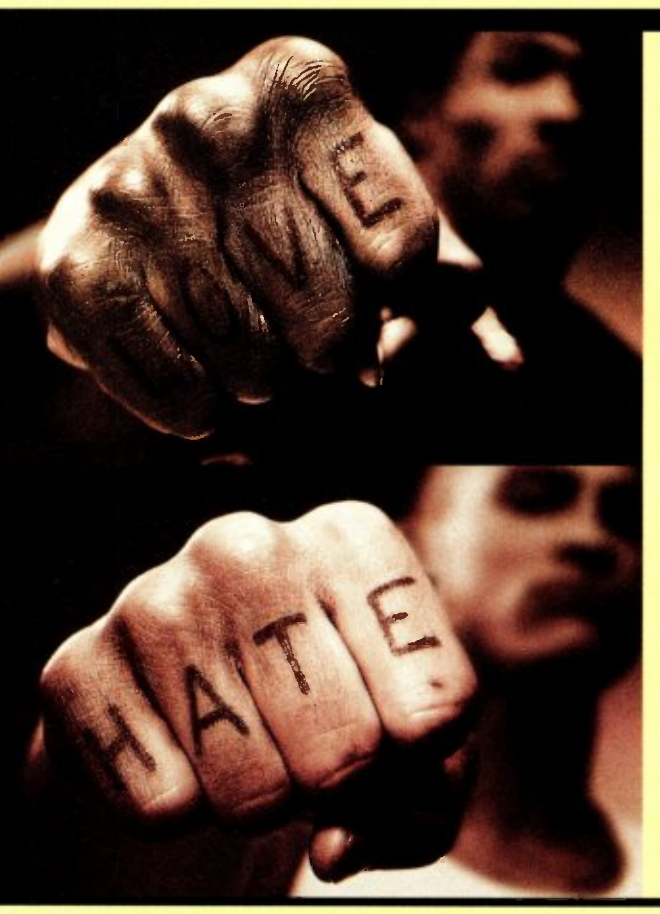
Why is it a hate crime when whites commit violence against blacks but not vice versa?



In our politically correct culture, it is simply improper to notice that black people, like whites, can be responsible for vicious crimes of hate. That's why the self-righteous left will be in for some surprises should the law they're proposing go into effect. Sorting Americans into specially protected racial and gender groups like a human "endangered species" act, and designating whites and heterosexuals as "oppressors," is itself an instigation to commit next page | www.salon.com/bc

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click click trick

The Internet's biggest ad agency follows you around the Web and collects your electronic fingerprints as you surf, including your stops in cyberspace's red-light district. BY MARK BOAL

We all know by now that when we log on to the Internet and surf the World Wide Web from the privacy of our homes, such privacy is largely an illusion. After all, websites keep track of their visitors, bulletin-board postings are archived, and even e-mail is not safe from prying eyes.

But the state of privacy on the Web may be worse than you imagine. A new generation of technology is making it easier for marketers and Web hosts to track us without our knowledge. Moreover, these tracking devices are showing up in places where many people may be most sensitive about guarding their privacy: pornography and medical sites.

I realized how hard it is to keep up with the rapidly changing online privacy terrain when I paid a visit recently to Richard Smith, an expert on computer privacy who prides himself on uncovering Internet practices he considers abusive. Turns out even Smith was surprised by what we would discover.

Smith was tutoring me on what you might call online countersurveillance, giving me a lesson in how to watch the watchers on the Web. We were in his office overlooking downtown Boston. Our laptops were on. On screen, we were looking at a popular porn site called iFriends. We looked at the coding that creates the page, when suddenly a line jumped out at Smith:

```
IMGSRC="http://ad.doubleclick.net/activity;
src=104085;type=views;cat=ifdpge;ord= 00509100200118?"
WIDTH=1 HEIGHT=1 BORDER=0
```

"It's a Web bug!" he exclaimed. Web bugs are the latest innovation in the art of monitoring people moving through websites. They are computer code, nearly identical in structure to the code for a picture or a banner ad. Except they are invisible, due to that last line: WIDTH=1 HEIGHT=1 BORDER=0. That describes an image one pixel wide and one pixel high, with no border. (The period at the end of this sentence would be represented on a typical screen as a four-pixel square.) A one-by-one pixel square can not be seen by the naked eye.

Smith had found a Web bug, but what really struck him was that first line of code: *IMGSRC="http://ad.doubleclick.net/activity*.

That clued him in to the fact that DoubleClick Inc., the most successful Internet advertising agency, was collecting information about our visit to a porn-related site.

DoubleClick is an online advertising agency that buys and places banner-ad space for its clients. But it adds another layer of service, too—it keeps track of who views and clicks on those banners, and now, with Web bugs, it can track people on pages without banner ads. DoubleClick's pioneering role on the Internet has earned it the adoration of Wall Street, but the enmity of privacy advocates, who are concerned that the company is building a mammoth database that profiles people's lives on the Web in elaborate detail.

ISTVAN BANYAI

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"In general, DoubleClick's whole strategy of tracking Internet users invades the expectation of privacy people have when they're browsing," says Andrew Shen, a policy analyst at the watchdog Electronic Privacy Information Center. "But when you're talking about particularly sensitive areas such as health or pornography sites, which are only accessed under the assumption that the person's visit remains unknown, tracking is especially objectionable. These are places where the preservation of privacy is vital."

Indeed, DoubleClick's reach is so broad that even casual browsing in the most sensitive corners of the Net leaves a data trail the company can follow, as Smith and I discovered.

Head over to the search engine at the Internet portal Lycos, the fifth-most-popular destination on the Web in May, and type the word *sex* into the query box. DoubleClick takes note. Or click on About.com, a site that gathers many pages under one umbrella and is one of the Web's most popular destinations, with about 4.4 million visitors in April. Thousands of sites are listed under About.com's adult section, and DoubleClick has the ability to monitor many of them.

DOUBLECLICK'S WEB BUGS ON PORN SITES SEEM TO VIOLATE ITS PLEDGE TO GIVE NOTICE ABOUT THE COLLECTION OF "PERSONAL INFORMATION."

Smith and I also discovered that DoubleClick operates Web bugs at procrit.com, a site for the HIV-related drug Procrit, and that it monitors mentalwellness.com, an online resource for schizophrenia. Both sites are owned by Johnson & Johnson.

The question for privacy advocates is what does DoubleClick do with the data it collects? Company officials say emphatically that it won't link information about an individual's website visits with his or her name. Yet the sort of Web bug coding Smith found DoubleClick using on various porn and health sites is ideally suited to linking a person's name to his or her computer.

This use of Web bugs, also sometimes called transparent GIFs (for graphics interchange format) seems to violate DoubleClick's own privacy pledge to be "fully committed to offering online consumers *notice* about the collection and use of personal information about them, and the *choice* not to participate." (The italics are DoubleClick's.)

Jules Polonetsky, DoubleClick's chief privacy officer and a former New York City consumer-affairs commissioner, says the company's privacy policy was "in no way" contradicted by DoubleClick's deployment of Web bugs, because names are not linked to sensitive online activities such as health and porn sites.

Polonetsky stresses that the company has "made a commitment that we won't ever use sensitive information to target ads or to build a profile," although he says that could change with the development of government standards. In the meantime, he adds, it's the clients' responsibility to disclose DoubleClick's Web bugs. "All the sites we do business with," he says, "we wish [them] to be as transparent as possible in explaining what happens on their site."

However, none of the sites where we found Web bugs revealed that fact in their privacy policies.

When asked about this, iFriends initially denied that DoubleClick had Web bugs on the sensitive parts of the site. But when presented with a log file showing that DoubleClick recorded a visit to a "girl-girl" fetish room, labeled in the computer code as room "5," Allan Rogers, a company spokesman, replied by e-mail, "While DoubleClick does indeed record, [it] does not know that room 5 is equivalent to girls home alone." This explanation comes down to saying that while DoubleClick collects the information, it does not have the technical skill to understand it—an assertion that Smith and others find hard to believe.

The other sites where Smith and I found Web bugs also downplayed their privacy implications. A Johnson & Johnson spokesman says the information gathered by Web bugs is used in-house to help the company refine and manage its sites. Consumers have nothing to worry about because DoubleClick is contractually prohibited from using the information for any other purpose, says the spokesman, Josh McKeegan. "The contract that Doubleclick signed with us specifically stipulates that they won't use it for any of the purposes which have gotten them into trouble—which is tying the aggregate data to specific cookies. That is specifically banned within our contract," says McKeegan.

Similarly, John Caplan, general manager of About.com, acknowledges that DoubleClick collects data on About.com users, but said "DoubleClick does not have the right to use any data it has on About.com users in any way. They serve our ads—that's it."

But critics note that DoubleClick's deal with its clients could change and it could acquire the right to disseminate data it currently collects. Moreover, a subpoena in a divorce proceeding, a warrant from a law enforcement agency, a malicious hacker, a mistake on DoubleClick's part—to name just a few scenarios—could drag DoubleClick's files into public view.

And regardless of who uses the data under which circumstances, the practice of covert data collection violates standards of online privacy endorsed by the Federal Trade Commission and by the industry-supported watchdog group TRUSTe. These guidelines specify that data-mining ought to occur only when the user is fully informed, and individuals are given some control over the information gathered about them.

One popular medical site, drkoop.com, took these concerns so seriously that in March it severed a long-standing relationship with DoubleClick. "We had a lot of concerns. There was also a perception problem," explains Laura Hicks, a spokeswoman for drkoop.com. "So we made a decision...that for the protection of our consumers, we would not use any third-party ad networks."

For many privacy advocates, the very existence of Web bugs and the data collection they facilitate constitute an invasion of privacy, leaving aside questions about how that information could be disseminated. Think of a Peeping Tom who installs a video camera in a clothing-store dressing room. Even if he never views the footage, the people captured on film will feel invaded.

"It's unacceptable for DoubleClick to be monitoring people's movements without their consent," says privacy advocate Jason Catlett, of

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the Junkbusters Corp., a group that opposes the proliferation of commercial messages. "If they tried this in the physical world it would be like having men in white coats standing outside X-rated movie theaters taking down your license plate number."

Catlett is particularly concerned about the lack of disclosure at porn sites, but a lawsuit filed against DoubleClick in California alleges that the firm's deployment of Web bugs at a great many sites is a violation of consumer-protection statutes. The class-action suit, filed in January by San Rafael, California, lawyer Ira Rothken, seeks an injunction to force DoubleClick to stop data mining via Web bugs and to give people a chance to see their dossiers.

"If DoubleClick doesn't change their strategy of attempting to tie name and address information with private click stream data...it will have a chilling effect on all Web users—no one will take risks in viewing sensitive sites, and Web users' First Amendment rights will be impaired," Rothken says.

While the suit has garnered little press attention, it is being closely watched by privacy groups. If the case gets to the discovery stage, DoubleClick could be forced to reveal the business deals and strategy behind its data warehousing, and the nature of the files it has gathered on millions of Californians. That, in turn, could open the firm to a host of new questions that the lawsuit raises. What is in the log files? How far back do they go? Do they contain every website you or I have ever visited on the DoubleClick network? When asked for a response to these questions, a company spokeswoman repeated DoubleClick's assurances that it is "absolutely committed to protecting the privacy of all Internet users."

A LAWSUIT AGAINST DOUBLECLICK IS BEING CLOSELY WATCHED BY PRIVACY ADVOCATES, WHO HOPE THE LITIGATION WILL FORCE THE COMPANY TO OPEN ITS FILES.

Why would a Wall Street darling like DoubleClick get involved in monitoring porn sites and health sites at the risk of alienating privacy advocates even more? To answer that we need to rewind to 1996. That was when Kevin O'Connor founded the firm, with the idea of cashing in on the rush to all things e. Back then, companies were curious about advertising online, but few knew how to navigate the Web. It was unpredictable and chaotic, and choosing the right advertising format was like throwing darts blindfolded.

DoubleClick simplified the task by gathering hundreds of the most popular sites in a network and then offering the ability to place banner ads across all, or some, of the network. The idea fit the times like a latex glove. The Fortune 500 turned their ad accounts over to DoubleClick, and soon it became the one-stop shop for online ads.

Today, DoubleClick's client roster reads like a who's who of corporate America. The company places ads on websites for AT&T, CBS, Ford Motor Company, Motorola, Inc., and hundreds of others. And its revenue is up sharply; in the first quarter of this year, it took in $110 million, a 179 percent increase over the same period last year, according to the company.

Every month, DoubleClick places 50 billion banner ads across its network, which the company says covers about half of the Internet's total traffic. As the company's annual report boasts, "Move your mouse over any ad on the Web, and there's a good chance you'll see 'ad.doubleclick.net' at the bottom of your browser window. DoubleClick didn't create the ad, but we did place it there."

And all of those ads are automatically monitored; DoubleClick gauges their effectiveness by tracking the number of people who click on them versus the number who view them. This so-called click-through rate is a metric only the Internet can offer, and it is *the* argument for why online advertising is more precise than TV, print, or radio advertising.

But click-through tracking yields another dividend, too. As DoubleClick quickly discovered after it began marketing the service, click-through technology opens the door to tracking individuals as they move from one site to another. If you can track whether someone clicks on one ad, why not track whether the same person clicks on any ad in a given network? Why not see exactly what an individual does online, where she goes, what she buys?

It's no wonder that from the start, privacy advocates objected to such tracking, but DoubleClick and other firms in the online marketing world pressed ahead. To make the tracking work, DoubleClick used cookie files. Cookies are random number strings—like fingerprints—that identify one computer to another. As you visit a page with a DoubleClick ad, the company places a cookie on your computer. After that, DoubleClick can track your movements through its network—*even if you do not click on its banner ads.*

And now, with Web bugs, DoubleClick can track you even when there are no banner ads on a page. And if you make a purchase or fill out a questionnaire on a site with a DoubleClick ad, the firm will more than likely collect that information from the Web bug and link it to your cookie.

Last year, DoubleClick tried to take the next step, and link its cookie files with actual names and identities. It merged with the consumer-database firm Abacus Direct, and announced a new division designed to create elaborate profiles of more than 90 percent of American households. The plan attracted an army of critics, including privacy advocates, who said DoubleClick would usher in a new age of surveillance. The Federal Trade Commission began investigating the company; investors, who got skittish, started to dump DoubleClick stock.

When the blows and bad PR had cost DoubleClick half its market value, CEO O'Connor backpedaled. "I made a mistake," he said. O'Connor pledged to delay the database until there was "agreement between government and industry on privacy standards."

Despite its public disavowals, DoubleClick nevertheless continues to lay the groundwork for the database by collecting vast amounts of information about where people go online. And the news that they are employing their invisible tracking devices on health and porn sites could cause them new political, public relations, and legal woes. The FTC has asked Congress for more authority to sue companies who are in violation of consumer privacy, although Congress is not expected to enact new laws anytime soon.

If DoubleClick ever chooses to merge the data from the Web bugs and cookie files with its existing consumer dossiers, it will create a database of unprecedented depth. The firm will not only have purchasing history and demographic information of some 100 million Americans at its fingertips, but also information about their sexual preferences and health conditions. For now, the records are not merged. But they lie there on servers, waiting. ■

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and this just in?

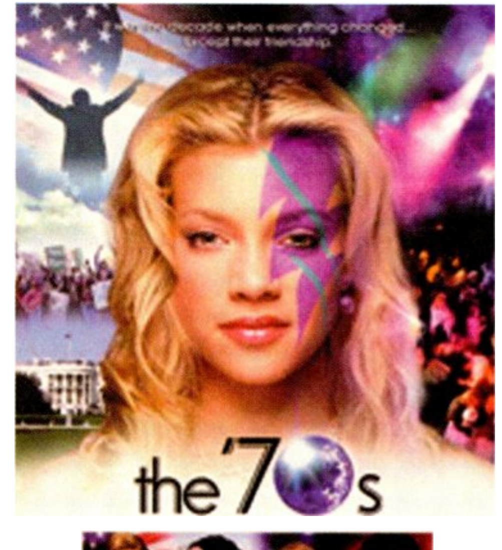
When journalism is used to promote lame entertainments like NBC's *The '70s*, no amount of smiley faces should make us feel good about it. BY ERIC EFFRON

Turns out the sixties and the seventies had a lot in common. I'm not talking about the political demonstrations, the recreational drugs, the promiscuous sex, or the way American families were torn apart by changing mores and social upheaval—although there was all of that. Nah. I'm talking about how both decades have now been churned through the cultural grinder known as the TV miniseries, in which everything that happened to *anyone* during the time in question happens to one of the miniseries' handful of lead actors.

Last year, NBC enjoyed so much success with *The '60s* (and its accompanying soundtrack, sold separately) that the network certainly couldn't wait a decade to celebrate the seventies. So for two nights, starting April 30, viewers were shown what *USA Today* critic Robert Bianco aptly described as "an incompetently guided tour of the decade's major signposts, done with all the cultural and historical depth of Disney's Small World ride."

I watched as much of *The '70s* as I could stand (I sort of lived through the decade the same way). In case you missed it (the movie, not the decade), here's NBC's official description of Night One (I'm sorry, but there is a point to all this, so please read on):

"In L.A., Dexter buys and restores an old movie theater in Watts where he meets Yolanda..., a community organizer. Byron leaves law school to work for CREEP (the 'Committee to Re-elect President Richard Nixon') and moves to Washington, D.C., where he begins an affair with a fellow campaign worker, Elizabeth....Eileen abandons her conservative politics in favor of the women's movement after meeting Wendy, her radical feminist Barnard roommate.... Christie's modeling career heats up, and she becomes involved with Nick..., a record producer who lives life in the fast lane. On the eve of Watergate, Byron is working for CREEP, 'cancelling out the opposition.' When Nixon defeats McGovern in the biggest landslide in political history, Byron is rewarded with a White House staff position. At Dexter and Yolanda's wedding, Byron and Eileen rekindle an old flame—and Byron and Dexter find themselves on opposite sides of the political spectrum.



NBC's *The '70s*: A bad trip

"As the Watergate investigation continues, White House counsel John Dean resigns. Eileen pursues a creative position at the ad agency where she works, but her boss responds by making her his secretary. Dexter, now actively involved in the Black Power movement, arranges a summit between the NAACP, the Muslims, and the Black Panthers. On the way to the meeting, he is gunned down by an unidentified assailant. Byron is subpoenaed to testify before the Senate Watergate committee, and Nick overdoses."

I'll spare you Night Two, except to assure you that Nixonite Byron becomes disillusioned and moves to Alaska to help save the environment. And I guess you might as well know, too, that Eileen, feeling the stirrings of feminism, bravely fights the shabby treatment she's endured at the hands of her sexist boss, and that Christie, the model, joins a cult but eventually is rescued and deprogrammed, and becomes a therapist.

You're probably not shocked at how lame shows like this can be (although this one was particularly lame). But you might be mildly surprised to learn that they are often considered newsworthy. The reason I've subjected you to the fictional life and times of Byron and Christie and the rest is because journalists around the country (the type who work for NBC affiliates, anyway) used the occasion of *The '70s* miniseries as a peg for news reports (yes, *news* reports) about the seventies. Footage of discos and gas lines and the rest were pulled out of archives, history professors were interviewed, all in service to...what? Informing viewers of the important developments of the day? Shedding light on economic or social issues? No. Promoting a truly shallow miniseries.

Of course some entertainment events do merit attention from journalists, and some have an impact on the culture that cannot—and should not—be ignored. But there was absolutely no explanation for this spate of seventies memory trips other than that the news divisions of NBC affiliates were used as carnival barkers to promote the NBC miniseries. It's not as if there were an actual anniversary—the usual justification for these sorts of nostalgia binges. I suppose you could say

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we've recently experienced the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the seventies, but that hardly seems like a news peg for anything.

In a series of stories that aired on NBC4 in New York, for instance, newsman Ralph Penza earnestly recalled the great New York City blackout of 1977, the mid-decade murderous rampage of Son of Sam, the anti-war marches, and on and on. Penza didn't tout the miniseries, but as he opened his final report, he was perched in front of the miniseries' logo (the "0" in *'70s* was constructed from a mirrored disco ball). In a noble effort to infuse the exercise with some relevance, Penza, who did not return a phone call seeking his comment, wondered: "What have we learned from the seventies?" There to answer was Kenneth Jackson, a Columbia University history professor. Pointing to the city's current prosperity and contrasting it with the fear and uncertainty said to have dominated the earlier time, Jackson remarked "that whatever was true in the 1970s is not true of 2000." Got it.

Dancing the decade away

At the conclusion of his report, Penza noted that the decade wasn't just about crises and confrontation. "You know, New Yorkers did laugh in the seventies at something new and different that premiered on NBC and it was called *Saturday Night Live*." Glad he got that cleared up. And then the anchors helpfully reminded viewers when to tune in to the upcoming NBC miniseries.

Okay, this is all about a pet peeve of mine, but I know from readers' letters and calls that I'm not alone: We want the newscasts we watch to be determined, first, by the news, and then by what the journalists who put the programs together think is important, or interesting, or even entertaining. But we don't want them used, subtly or otherwise, to promote dumb TV shows. This is not a new problem, although it seems to be getting worse as media companies get "smarter" about synergy and cross promotion and brand building. But it doesn't have to be this way. Viewers can change channels. Journalists can even resist.

Some are. In Chicago, WBBM-TV's Carol Marin accepted the anchor job at the local CBS affiliate after securing a promise that there would be no happy talk between segments and no features about the CBS movie of the week. Marin once famously quit another anchor job to protest management's decision to offer a commentator's slot to scream-show host Jerry Springer. So maybe resistance isn't futile.

And maybe there's a lesson to be learned from that decade known for smiley faces and bad hair and, I gather, *Saturday Night Live*. Though you wouldn't know it from either the NBC miniseries or the silly news reports it spawned, the seventies is also the decade that gave us *Nightline* (sorry, wrong network), a program that continues to prove that intelligence and independent thinking can draw and keep audiences, year after year, decade after decade.

During *The '70s* miniseries, the action is punctuated with contemporaneous news reports from, no surprise, NBC News. A network entertainment division can have fun with synergy, I suppose. But can't we expect more of the news? ◘

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kick that block

In our columnist's experience, it's not the encroaching deadline that fills a writer with dread—it's the one that doesn't exist. BY CALVIN TRILLIN

When I was a young reporter, I got transferred from the Atlanta bureau of *Time* to the New York bureau, and I set about trying to find a place to live in Greenwich Village—the neighborhood that I, like so many other outlanders hauling around portable typewriters, thought of as the one suitable habitat in the metropolitan area. After several miserable weeks of apartment hunting—and a pointed phone call or two from the *Time* business office, where it was feared, I think, that I was growing dangerously comfortable in the temporary lodgings the company was paying for at the Algonquin—I finally came upon what sounded like an appropriate floor-through in a Village brownstone. When I phoned the owner of the house, a woman who lived in Connecticut, I found myself being screened by someone who sounded not only preternaturally wary, a widespread affliction among New York landlords, but snobbish.

"Where did you go to college?" she asked.

"I went to Yale," I said.

"The boy who moved out was Yale," she said. "But the sort of Yale whose parents ate corn flakes so they could send him there."

I decided to leave that comment uncommented on, secure in the knowledge that even if my parents in Kansas City were at that moment in the breakfast room, the sound of cereal-chomping could not possibly carry all the way to Connecticut.

Then she asked what I did for a living.

"I'm a reporter," I said. I suppose I could have toned that up a notch or two by saying *journalist*, but in those days *journalist* was thought of as a candy-assed word except among the English, and I simply couldn't bring myself to utter it.

She responded to the information about my calling as if I'd said "I'm a small-time drug dealer by trade." She said that she tried to avoid renting to reporters, who were known to be both undependable and hard on the appliances.

"You must be thinking of newspaper reporters," I said. "It's the pressure of the daily deadlines that gets to them. I work for a weekly magazine; we're much more relaxed, because of the slower pace. Monthly magazine people are even nicer. Someone who works for a quarterly is almost certain to be a perfect gentleman."

I got the apartment—I got it, I've always thought, only because my competitors struck her as being even less respectable than I was—but I was wrong about deadlines. In the long run, deadlines of the sort imposed by newspapers or newsmagazines are soothing to the nerves. It's roughly true that a piece of writing gets written in the amount of time allotted to writing it, and the absence of a mandated allotment is what's scary. A friend of mine who was for some years the writer *Time* depended on when a late-breaking cover story was needed in 24 hours once stalled so long and so creatively on a book he was supposedly writing that I used to tell him his procrastination devices would someday be taught in a graduate seminar at Princeton.

In the Harold Ross and William Shawn eras, *The New Yorker* ordinarily didn't have deadlines for nonfiction pieces. Stories about *The New Yorker* as a cushy workplace often mentioned that writers could take

DANNY SHANAHAN

World Radio History

as long as they wanted with whatever they were working on—which was more or less true, although, since payment was by the piece rather than by salary, those of us without trust funds did have a strong incentive to finish up. *New Yorker* reporters, many of them former employees of publications with strict deadlines, had to compensate somehow for the absence of that impatient city editor looming over their desks to ask rude questions about when they expected to be finished. That made *The New Yorker* the world headquarters for discussions of the writing process—and of its wicked twin, the phenomenon of not writing, a subject writers tend to discuss in the gingerly way a relief pitcher might discuss the possibility of losing his control. One of the people working there at the time used to say that a particularly intense colleague came into his office so often to discuss what she always called "the lonely craft of writing" that he was no longer lonely but couldn't get any writing done.

I thought of those discussions recently after seeing Stanley Tucci's *Joe Gould's Secret*, a movie about, among a number of other things, not writing. Joe Gould was a Greenwich Village drink-cadger, also known as Professor Sea Gull, who often talked about his million-word manuscript that would someday be published as *The Oral History of the World*—a manuscript that Joseph Mitchell, the *New Yorker* writer Gould keeps introducing in the movie as his biographer, eventually discovered was nonexistent. Joe Mitchell—who is thought of by a lot of *New Yorker* nonfiction writers, myself included, as the greatest practitioner of the form—published his second piece on Gould in 1964, at a time when his production had already slowed down. (He hadn't published a piece in five years.) He continued to come to work regularly until he died, in 1996, but never handed in another piece.

NOT WRITING IS A SUBJECT THAT WRITERS DISCUSS IN THE WAY A RELIEF PITCHER MIGHT DISCUSS LOSING HIS CONTROL.

There was occasional discussion at *The New Yorker* about why Mitchell, who once earned his living as a highly productive feature writer for an afternoon newspaper, quit turning in articles. People liked to pass around obviously fanciful theories—for instance, that he had been writing along at a regular pace until some professor said that he was the greatest master of the English declarative sentence in America, and that had stopped him cold. I never found those conversations edifying. The mystery I wanted to see solved about Mitchell was not why he quit turning anything in but how he'd managed to create what he did write—how, for instance, he was able get the marks of writing off his pieces, so that, in the words of Joseph Epstein, "[h]e achieved in his prose what Orwell longed for in his: the transparent lucidity of a pane of glass." That mystery couldn't have been solved by a set of instructions, of course. A scholar of magic once told me that by spending enough time in enough libraries you could learn how a magician did just about any trick, but that didn't mean you could do it.

Seeing Tucci's movie reminded me that many of those conversations about the writing process were actually about how we managed to keep the wicked twin at bay. In the absence of deadlines, we all had to erect some artificial structure that would protect us from not writing. Some of the structures were pretty bizarre, but, since God had obviously not intended anyone to make a living as a writer, it seemed to me that there was no reason to question any system that worked. In my office once, a *New Yorker* writer who customarily worked at home told me about his writing day—an elaborate series of absolutely unalterable rituals and practices that ended when he had the day's production copied (at the same copy shop every day, of course) and then put the copy in a strongbox that he shoved into a crawl space above his kitchen. He had calculated that the crawl space would be the last place to go in the event he and his house and his family got wiped out in a horrible conflagration. When he finished his account, about 20 minutes after he'd begun, he said, "You think that's neurotic?"

I shook my head. "Nope," I said. "It sounds okay to me." ◘

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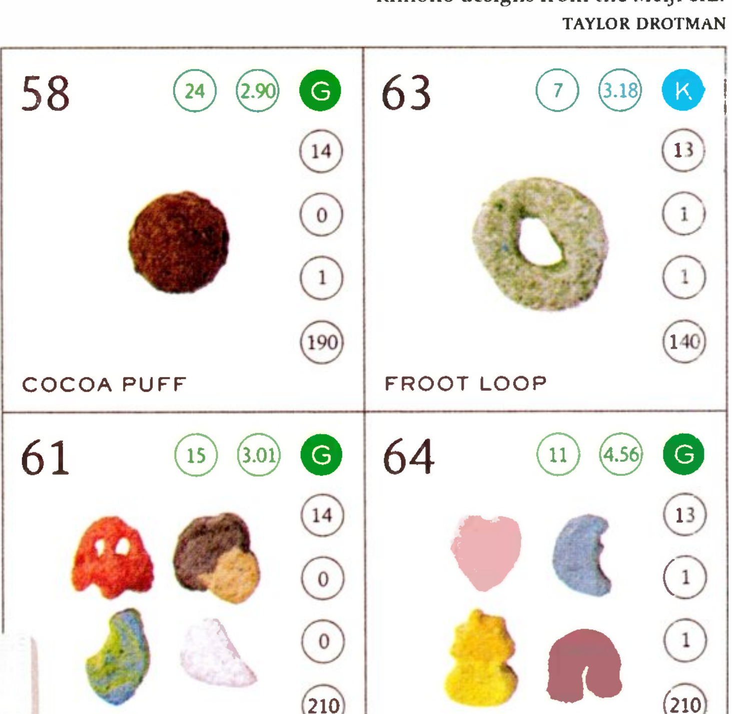
STUFF WE LIKE

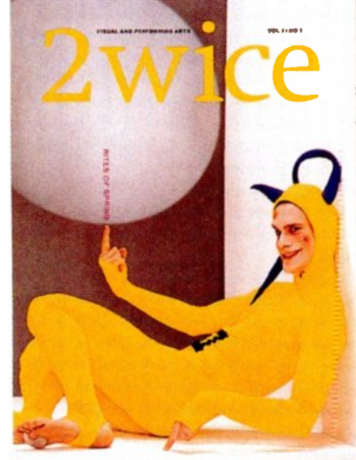
2WICE

ART, DANCE, AND DESIGN MAGAZINE

"Breakfast cereal is the most elaborately conceived food on today's grocery shelf," writes Catharine Weese in the latest issue of *2wice* magazine. It's an argument made all the more convincing by the accompanying "Periodic Breakfast Table." The ingenious chart categorizes 40 brands of cereal by shape; an accompanying key provides data on price, market share, nutrition, and more. It's just one example of the offbeat cultural and design attitude in this biannual publication. Other features include pictorials on some of modern dance's most provocative perfomers, including David Parker and Molissa Fenley, and a look at Kimono designs from the Meiji era.

TAYLOR DROTMAN





The latest *2wice* includes a chart comparing breakfast cereals.

2WICE: ANTHONY VERDE

HUBBLESITE

THE SPACE TELESCOPE ONLINE

In a season of starry nights and meteor showers, one of the best views of outer space can be found in cyberspace. Launched this year to celebrate the Hubble Space Telescope's tenth birthday, hubble.stsci.edu provides weekly news and updated images of swirling nebulae, dying stars, and other intergalactic goings-on. Site designers have sifted the scientific jargon out of the Space Telescope Science Institute's official Hubble site to create this offshoot for those without a Ph.D. in astrophysics.

Two spiral galaxies as seen by Hubble

Most of the pictures from Hubble—including the one shown above, which features two galaxies of stars aligned one in front of the other—were shot by the space telescope about a year before going up on the site. "Hubble doesn't take a picture for pretty pictures' sake," explains site director Stratis Kakadelis. "For a year after that image is taken it is proprietary for the observer doing research." After that, the image makes it to the Science Institute and the public. Not such a long wait, considering the light from the stars Hubble sees is billions of years old.

STEPHEN TOTILO

HATE.COM

AN HBO DOCUMENTARY

HATE.com: Extremists on the Internet takes you into the thriving online world of American hate movements. Given that the main visuals are website homepages and talking heads, filmmakers Vince DiPersio and William Guttentag present a surprisingly fluid and fast-paced portrait of high-tech racism and bigotry. The Internet's anonymity and easy access have helped hate movements accelerate their expansion beyond a core "redneck" constituency to include the college-educated middle class. The documentary shows the role online hate movements played in some of the worst cases of domestic terrorism of the 1990s, including the Oklahoma City and Atlanta Olympic Village bombings, as well as the mass shooting of children at a Jewish day care center in Los Angeles last year. The film, narrated by the Southern Poverty Law Center's Morris Dees, a leading tracker of hate groups, will air in August on HBO.

LESLIE HEILBRUNN

World Radio History

STUFF WE LIKE

"ON SOCIETY"

U.S. NEWS COLUMN

John Leo

You might not expect a "conservative" columnist to call a papal apology into question or decry cultural and class biases in the newsroom. But John Leo isn't afraid to buck stereotypes.

"Being an ideologue doesn't do anyone any good," says Leo, who has written the weekly "On Society" column in *U.S. News & World Report* for the past 11 years. "When you go against type, your normal constituency gets a little bit ticked off...but whether it helps you or not, I don't care."

Leo does care about chronicling cultural trends that he says seem "outlandish" to him. In his April 10 column, for example, a fake questionnaire parodied the U.S. Census Bureau's determination to increase the numbers of Hispanics and disabled people it counted. ("Is anyone in your household diabetic, a resident of New Jersey, or otherwise disabled?" one question asked.) In a more sober, March 20 piece, he criticized those on the cultural left for maligning Dr. Laura Schlessinger and treating her not "as an adversary to be debated but as a hater to be delegitimized and silenced."

If these views make him a moralist, so be it, says Leo. He was raised Catholic, and though he no longer practices, he does see his opinions as strongly connected to a moral compass. This is not to say his columns are in any way predictable, however. On March 27, Leo drew the ire of many Catholics when he wrote dryly that the Vatican's newest attempt at confronting past atrocities "tiptoes gingerly up to Christian complicity in the Holocaust by saying that the behavior of Christians 'was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers.' No, I guess not." Leo makes no apologies if readers are sometimes offended. "Every once in a while," he says, "you touch a nerve."

KIMBERLY CONNIFF

ALUMNI ONLINE

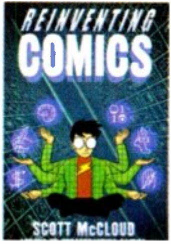
HIGH SCHOOL REVISITED

As a part of the standard Friday-afternoon-stare-at-the-computer-so-the-boss-thinks-you're-working Web search, click to highschoolalumni.com, a site that looks like it just might contain listings of every high school in every city and town in the United States. After registering free

COMICS AND THE INTERNET

REINVENTING COMICS

A NEW BOOK ON THE MEDIUM



McCloud's latest

Comic-book author Scott McCloud has long had faith in technology, which is why he believes computers can save the art form. In his new book, *Reinventing Comics*, McCloud explains how the Internet and graphics software will change both the production and distribution of comic books. *Reinventing Comics* is itself a comic book, and many of the things McCloud describes he also shows. "My drawing has always been a little stiff," says McCloud, who illustrated his book entirely on a computer. He describes himself as more of a tinkerer than an artist. "I like to take comics apart and put them back together."

McCloud's first book, 1993's *Understanding Comics*, was a breakthrough analytic treatment of a medium that had never been afforded much respect. Using the terminology of literary criticism, he refuted those who think comics are just for kids. But since then, McCloud argues, the comics world has fallen apart, plagued by fewer distributors and publishers, and a dwindling audience. Now, he says, the answer is the Web and all its digital tools—a way to eliminate brushes, paper, and middlemen from the comic-book business. So why is the industry-leading DC Comics publishing his book? "I don't know if the full implications necessarily have settled in," says McCloud. "I'm advocating the abolishment of all that we know."

STEPHEN TOTILO

OTHERVISION.COM

INTERNET ANIMATION MOVES UPTOWN

Urban Box Office Network, the brainchild of the late film and music producer George Jackson, is hoping to recast its image. The New York–based Internet company plans to relocate to Harlem and is launching *Heather Hunter: Bulletproof Diva*, an online animation series, this summer. "We'll be part of returning Harlem to its former glory as an urban and African-American cultural Mecca," says Josiah Perry, an executive producer at UBO, which produces sites on entertainment (SoulPurpose.com) and style (hairweb.com) among others. The network's new Othervision.com site is to be a hub for broadband Internet entertainment, a mix of live-action and animated series. Generating the most buzz so far is *Bulletproof Diva*, a feature pulled directly from the art-imitating-life file. The animated series features Heather Hunter of adult-film fame voicing a cartoon of...herself. Set in a postapocalyptic near-present, Hunter is caught up in a mythic battle between the forces of good and evil. "It's not a T-and-A cartoon," says co-creator Rob Wiser. "It approaches a more dramatic level." Indeed, it shouldn't be a stretch for Hunter to nail her character, a former pornographic starlet tapped to rid the earth of Satan and his demons. In the meantime, UBO awaits the broadband revolution, prepared to beam Heather Hunter directly into your home.

JOSEPH GOMES

The real Heather Hunter, inset, and Othervision.com's animated version

DUKE2000.COM

DOONESBURY'S DUKE RUNS FOR HIGHER OFFICE

Will people vote for a man who says the Keebler elves told him to run for president? Find out in the coming months, as former Ambassador Duke from Garry Trudeau's "Doonesbury" makes a satirical bid for the Reform Party candidacy. Fans of the 30-year-old strip can follow Duke's campaign at the website duke2000.com, where he touts his message: "I want to be the ferret in the pants of government."

Duke, said to be modeled after writer Hunter S. Thompson, accepts corporate sponsorships and seeks to implement what he calls "compassionate fascism." The site also includes Duke's mostly-blacked-out FBI file.

The campaign started in March, but Trudeau-as-Duke says the candidate has been "frozen out" of his party's convention. "Buchanan has already seized control," he says. "You can't even get in the hall if you're not dressed in brown and whistling Wagner."

ADAR KAPLAN

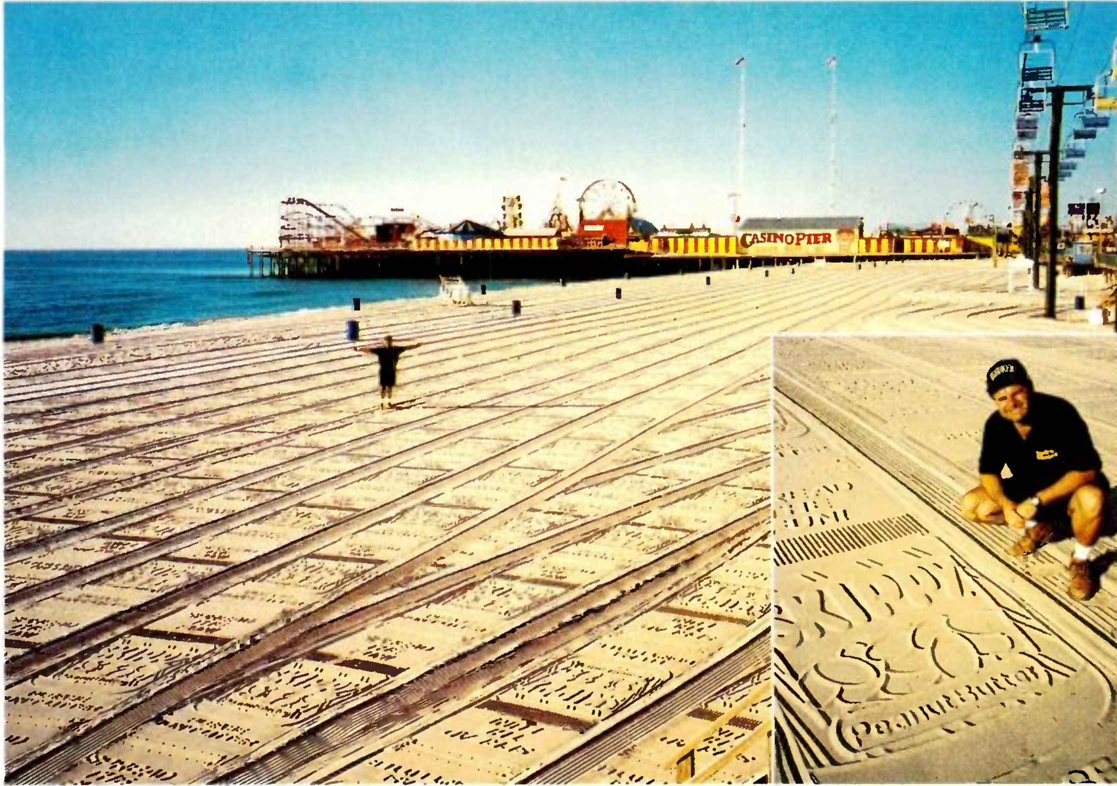
LEO: JEFF MACMILLAN FOR *USN & WR*

World Radio History

of charge and adding your name and occupation to your graduating-class roster, you can surf the names of your fellow classmates.

What's the purpose of this site, beyond assisting in class-reunion planning? Literature attached to the site explains that where there are lists, there are fantastic marketing and solicitation opportunities. But demographic targeting is not what makes the site fun to visit. For anyone who was unpopular, acne prone, chubby, or dateless, highschoolalumni.com offers sweet, sweet revenge. Just look to your classmates' e-mail addresses and brief bios and imagine the worst. Annie—head of the cheerleading squad—is already divorced? Oh, dear. And Richard—he of beer-bingeing glory and football-tackling fame who laughed when a kind but ugly duckling asked him to the Sadie Hawkins dance—is now suffering an average fate as a car-parts salesman? So sad.

KATHERINE ROSMAN



Patrick Dori shows off his work in Seaside Heights, New Jersey.

FLOPHOUSE

A BOOK ABOUT LIFE ON THE BOWERY

There are drunks, drug addicts, lonely widowers, and former Wall Street bankers all living together in the few remaining flophouses on the 16-block stretch of lower Manhattan known as the Bowery. The stories these people tell are sad, funny, provocative, and rife with self-destruction. In his book *Flophouse: Life on the Bowery*, David Isay, a producer of radio documentaries (how this project began), explores four of the eight remaining hotels, which offer nearly 1,000 men a bed each night. Many of these men have been living on the Bowery for decades, in small cubicles that cost as little as $4.50 a night. Isay interviews 50 Bowery denizens who reminisce about long-lost families, estranged wives, and abandoned jobs.

There's Ted Edwards from the White House Hotel, who calls the place "a respite for the weary on the run from life." Edwards says he's been living on the Bowery since he "went bananas" working as a banking executive (he hasn't stopped drinking since). There's Misha M., who immigrated to the United States in 1983 to do graduate work at City College in Manhattan, then quit school to take care of sick family members. His marriage deteriorated, and he's been living on the Bowery for five years. And there's James Jackson, a Korean War veteran, who grew up in Baltimore and swore he'd never take after his alcoholic father but then did. In 1970 Jackson quit drinking, and since then he's made his money shining shoes.

Isay relates how the Bowery has provided lodging since the Civil War, when homeless veterans made their way to the neighborhood in search of a place to sleep. Today's Bowery men talk about losing families, jobs, homes, and—perhaps most important—self-esteem.

BRIDGET SAMBURG

Flophouse: Tony Bell in his room at the Sunshine Hotel, 241 Bowery. "I put up the pictures to cover the dirt on the wall," he says.

FLOPHOUSE HARVEY WANG

BEACH BILLBOARDS

ADVERTISING IN THE SAND

Today it seems that little can stop the onward march of consumerism. Take the latest advertising frontier: the beach. Literally. Beach'n Billboard, an ad agency in New Jersey, will stamp your message into some of the nation's most popular shorelines. Company president Patrick Dori invented a machine—which, he says, came to him in a dream—that's dragged behind the trucks used to clean beaches each morning and then stamps a marketing message into the freshly swept sand. He's been doing this since 1998, when he put Skippy Peanut Butter ads on the seaside of Seaside Heights, New Jersey. "We're the only people in the world who do this," he says, and the company has since inked deals with other Jersey Shore towns and a handful of municipalities around the country—and has even licensed franchises in Puerto Rico and the Netherlands. This summer's advertisers will include Snapple and yapgear.com, an Internet-telephone company.

Dori's sand ads can provide two sorts of release—you can vent your aggression by stomping away the images, or you can sit back and enjoy the nature-over-man metaphor as waves wash away even the best-laid ads. Don't hate that

World Radio History

tag line in the sand. Revel in it. At first you might find beach advertising intrusive, but work past that reaction. It's about the only time you get to watch ads disappear.

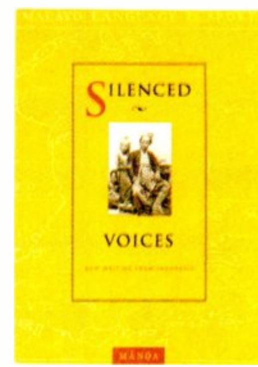
JESSE OXFELD

MANOA

JOURNAL OF ASIAN WRITING

They are the dangerous ones, writers whose very existence is jeopardized by their work and whose books are often banned in their homelands by despotic governments (think Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer). Most publishers consider these books—fraught with legal difficulties and doomed to poor sales by their very foreignness—projects to avoid.

As the cofounder and editor of *Manoa*, a biannual literary journal that features writers from the Pacific rim, Frank Stewart has made it his mission to publish such writing. Each volume of *Manoa* highlights a different country's literature. Recent issues have included work from Australian Maori, Malaysian, and Korean writers. "It's a very expensive endeavor and a tricky one," says Stewart, who notes that mere publication can endanger some of the journal's contributors, especially those who live under totalitarian regimes with sharp-eyed censors. "We have to be very careful about how we frame and introduce these stories so we don't get the writers in trouble." Stewart points to the most recent issue, which featured writing from Indonesia, whose government forbids any use of Chinese characters, fearing their use promotes communism. Stewart and his staff had to be delicate in deciding which buried messages to tease out in translation.



Indonesian writers are featured in the new issue of *Manoa*.

And *Manoa* is anomalous in another way, too. Stewart says that to most Americans, "Asia" means only Japan and China. *Manoa*'s next issue will feature writing from Tibet. "Tibetan secular literature didn't really begin until 1980. We're going to be the first to publish the writing that was done before the Chinese really started controlling the process.

Order *Manoa* at hawaii.edu/mjournal.

HANYA YANAGIHARA

A scene from TNT's dramatization of the Nuremberg war crimes trial

NUREMBERG

WAR CRIMES DOCUDRAMA

"The victor will always be the judge and the vanquished the accused." Such is Nazi leader Hermann Göring's response to his indictment for war crimes, as portrayed both in Joseph E. Persico's 1994 history, *Nuremberg: Infamy on Trial* (Penguin Books), and TNT's upcoming two-part miniseries, *Nuremberg*, based on Persico's book. The comment raises legitimate concerns about this pioneering trial: What will keep the law from degenerating into vengeance perpetrated by the winning side? The film follows the prosecution's efforts, led by U.S. Supreme Court justice Robert Jackson (played by Alec Baldwin), as well as the defendants' last weeks in jail. Persico had explored the cell-block warden's papers, and the film's most revealing scenes use his research to show how some prisoners remained defiant, while others became penitent.

"Going through this material, I managed to find—to the degree that it was humanly possible—the human beings underneath," says Persico. "You want your devils to have horns and tails. But when you read these accounts, most of [the defendants] are banal and so ordinary compared to the horrific crimes they committed. It makes their participation in those crimes all the worse." Most fascinating is Göring (played by Brian Cox), Hitler's second in command, whose cunning and charisma entranced even American GIs. "He was a seductive son of a bitch," says Persico. "He was an amiable bastard in a bastard cause."

Of course, when it comes to the trial itself, the movie has to dramatize some events in order to compress 21 defendants, dozens of lawyers, and thousands of documents into four hours. Even so, whole conversations quote directly from Persico's book. And for the first half's climax, the movie is faithful to the book in lingering on the prosecution's most dramatic moment, when film from the concentration camps is first aired as evidence. The audience in the darkened courtroom is shocked into silence, broken only by hushed, scattered weeping.

Nuremberg premieres on July 16.

MATTHEW REED BAKER

STUFF YOU LIKE

RANDY THACKER, A STAY-AT-HOME DAD FROM CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA, E-MAILED US THE FOLLOWING: Despite its name, the U.S. Geological Survey covers a lot more than rocks and minerals. Its website, usgs.gov, is easy to navigate, and you can look up information about the brown tree snakes in Guam, watch whooping cranes hatch, or get an update on the West Nile virus. The information is suitable for both the professional and the amateur, something seldom found on the World Wide Web.

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MANOA ANTHONY VERDE

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w w w . l y c o s . c o m

World Radio History

In its cringe-inducing coverage of the Elián saga, did the press reveal its true colors on the question of communism's morality?

news value, not values

JEFFREY KLEIN ARGUES

If you think the mainstream media are primarily in the information business, you were probably dismayed by the coverage of the Elián González "crisis." This exploitative circus was a variation on a weary theme: drama sells; melodrama sells even better. If you're on the right, you probably think that once again the "liberal" media conspired with the Clinton administration (and the communists) to sell out American values. The irony is that a core American value—the rights of the individual—triumphed precisely because the American people (albeit with the crucial help of a pandering media) signaled that it was time to bring the matter to resolution.

Obviously, the media milked this story for all it was worth. Perhaps ABC sank the lowest by airing a segment in which Diane Sawyer, with no visible shame, asked the 6-year-old to make up his mind and straighten things out once and for all. But there was a lot of competition for the Deplorable Taste prize. Tendentious "experts" attesting to the child's state of mind alternated with made-for-TV demonstrations during the round-the-clock stakeout.

In the end, though, the public decided as it did, not, as the right would have it, because it was swayed by a mindless media manipulated by Havana, but because the solution was consistent with a cherished American value: the responsibility of parents to raise children until they're old enough to make their own choices. In a twist of irony that Fidel Castro himself should appreciate, the right (and Elián's Cuban relatives) pushed for communal child rearing, while everyone else argued that the child should be reunited with what remained of his nuclear family. That's a view, of course, you'd expect to hear from the right.

Indeed, many conservatives were so blinded by anti-Clinton and anti-Castro passion that they found themselves on the wrong side of American—and Republican—faith. The coverage in the conservative media speaks volumes about this conflict. Let's concede that certainly Castro, and probably the Clinton administration, exploited a sad human story for political gain. But in place of compelling moral arguments for keeping Elián in the U.S., the right spewed rhetoric.

A sampler: Steve Forbes fulminated against the president's "human sacrifice to Castro." Jonah Goldberg in the *National Review* described the father's lawyer as "a private attorney taking orders from a murderous dictator," and concluded that what looked like a difficult moral question involving—for some—a good-faith conflict of values was actually a "no-brainer." Given that Elián's father "is the pawn of Castro and doesn't seem particularly concerned about his child," of course political rights should trump individual ones.

In *The Wall Street Journal*, Peggy Noonan endorsed the messianic narrative that some Cuban-Americans have spun around Elián. Referring to the ordeal the child endured off the Florida coast before he was found, Noonan wrote that "when he tired and began to slip, the dolphins who surrounded him like a contingent of angels pushed him upward." A *Journal* editorial that same day said Janet Reno and others appeared to be "surrogates of Cuba," and demanded that Congress establish "what drugs [Elián] may have been given *while in U.S. government custody* before his beaming photo with his father." Both pieces hinted darkly that Castro may have personally influenced the president into taking the stand he did. Both missed the obvious point: The president acted as he did because that's what the American public wanted.

Some of the conservative arguments have merit. The mainstream media have in general given the Miami Cubans a rough ride, casting them as anti-democratic extremists. And most would agree that Castro is a dictator, and that the Cuban social experiment has failed miserably. Somehow, though, the right leaps to conclude that those who favored reuniting father and son were communist sympathizers, and that the dominance of this view merely confirms the liberal bias of the American media. David Horowitz, for example, wrote in *Salon.com* that U.S. news organizations had "turned themselves into a transmission belt for the perpetrators' propaganda machines." Leaving aside the commonsense and legal arguments for Elián's return, this logic raises the ludicrous specter of a vast communist conspiracy involving such flagships of a multibillion-dollar media industry as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the major networks. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 56]

WESLEY BEDROSIAN

World Radio History

not pretty in pink

JONAH GOLDBERG ARGUES

When was the last time you heard Elie Wiesel accused of having an "irrational hatred" of Nazism or Hitler? Maybe you've seen a talking head ridicule Amadou Diallo's mother for not being able to "get over" racism? Perhaps your edition of *The New York Times* regularly decries the "independent" foreign policy of American Jews. I've never heard or seen any of these things. Yet ever since a 5-year-old boy was plucked from the ocean last Thanksgiving, I can't count how many times I've heard people who've had relatives murdered and homes stolen by an evil dictatorship called "irrational" for hating communism and Castro. I've even seen a front-page *New York Times* story in which a source compared the mayor of Miami to George Wallace. Hell, I've watched Dan Rather weep tears of joy over the prospect of sending a kid to a communist dictatorship. Meanwhile, *The Washington Post* applauded the fact that members of the Federal government—with a dubious warrant—kicked in the door, beat up a cameraman, and snatched a child to send to Cuba.

To be honest, I originally thought the Elián story was just an opportunity for nostalgic talking heads to pretend they were Cold War correspondents. The various networks would cut to "our man in Havana" as if this were a reprise of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Associated Press called it a "high-stakes ideological battle." *Time* referred to it as a "one-of-a-kind international showdown." Please. In realpolitik, the stakes were incredibly low. Cuba is a piss-ant dictatorship that measures its wealth in chickens per capita and its power in donkey-driven Gatling guns. Now that it's no longer a Soviet pawn, it poses little threat to the U.S., which is why we should tear down the embargo, flood Cuba with Pokémon cards, and make Castro the head doorman at the new Havana Bally's Casino and Resort. And—oh, yeah—I guess we should release the imprisoned political dissidents, journalists, and other "enemies of the revolution," about whom so many in the press choose not to report.

WESLEY BEDROSIAN

Still, my first choice was to reunite this kid and his dad, preferably here. But then two things happened. First, the Clinton administration handled this case terribly, all but reversing its policies on Castro's orders. Second, the media made this a national soap opera, casting the Cuban-Americans as villains for dragging Elián into a media circus. Did it ever occur to them that the *media* are the essential ingredient of a media circus?

Since this is not a policy debate or political argument, I will simply assert my belief that the administration acted shamelessly and in bad faith. The president and the attorney general continually invoked the "rule of law" when in fact they were enforcing the rule of their own policies. That policy—returning Elián to his father—is defensible, but spinning presidential edicts as incontrovertible law is evidence, to me, of this administration's arrogance and willingness to hide its motives behind deceitful rhetoric. Permit me a quick word in defense of conservatives. Yes, they had their inconsistencies, considering their usual preaching about family values. But I know as many conservatives who wanted Elián sent home as kept here.

Two things ruined the press's coverage of the Elián fiasco, and I'm not even counting the latitude the press gave the Clinton administration. The first is the press's very real, very strange, and very stupid blindness to the immorality of communism. If Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan's chief private lawyer was also Augusto Pinochet's lawyer, does anyone really believe *The New York Times* or Dan Rather would find it a harmless coincidence? If *Time* magazine called refugees from Nazism a "privileged, imperious elite," would your eyes just glide over it? Of course not. But among journalists, anti-communism disables the political correctness—and objectivity—gene like nothing else. What is it about communist dictatorships and American journalists? Ever since renowned *New York Times* reporter Walter Duranty denied Stalin-ordered famines in the Ukraine, American journalists have made apologies for a political system that has killed more people than any other in human history.

Indeed, it's as if the press corps suffers from a case of incurable mumpsimus, the act of willfully sticking with a mistake to save yourself embarrassment. While few journalists actually lied about conditions in Cuba, they [CONTINUED ON PAGE 56]

World Radio History

JEFFREY KLEIN

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54] To allege ideology-driven bias here is to misunderstand both the media's role and the true source of their power. Like it or not, the mass media's primary role is to mediate between the powerful and the American public. The Elián drama posed a moral conflict for the American people and forced a choice between family and political freedom. Initially, the social rules were in flux; the media served up theater as its audience came to grips with a new dilemma. Opinion polls in December showed the public to be split almost evenly on the issue, but from January on, two thirds wanted Elián reunited with his father in Cuba. Once the public made up its mind, the media had to follow. One regrettable upshot of this was that dissenting (Cuban-American) voices were increasingly marginalized, often by means of crude caricature.

The right also misunderstands the media's place in the full drama. Again, as long as the public was undecided, the U.S. Department of Justice's inaction looked judicious. But when popular opinion turned in favor of the father, the DOJ began to look impotent. The INS raid was ordered, in part, to restore order and reestablish the government's authority. But despite what the right would have us believe, there are limits to the media's permitted role. During the raid, INS officers roughed up a cameraman, probably to prevent potentially disruptive footage from airing in real time. The media were thus reduced to morning-after critics.

Was there a political conspiracy between the media and the Clinton administration? The right's reflexive reasoning in this instance is not beneath contempt—it's beneath common sense. The news organizations simply reflected (and contributed to) the American public's growing impatience with the whole story; by April, they were crying out for resolution. If there is any complicity here, it's between the administration and the American people.

What does the Elián drama tells us about the mass media's principles? Certainly not that they've been brainwashed into glorifying communism or Castro. Rather, it's that ratings still rule supreme, and that the media will wring every drop of melodrama out of a story, with little regard to conscience. In this case, the media may have hastened an outcome—one that seems to be the morally correct one. This is not always the case, for there is nothing in the media's composition and values that makes such an outcome inevitable. The role of drama queen may be a far cry from the dispassionate watchdog of journalistic fantasy, but to expect otherwise, after all the evidence of recent years, seems naive. ■

JONAH GOLDBERG

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55] seemed intent on spinning conditions there in the best possible light. Finalists in this game of communist spin-doctoring include Dan Rather, Bryant Gumbel, and Eleanor Clift.

CBS's Cuba coverage was so biased and shoddy from beginning to end that one might wonder what the "C" in CBS actually stands for. Randall Pinkston, its "man in Havana," was always eager to take at face value what his Cuban "sources" told him. The Cuban "[p]eople appear untroubled by the lack of modern conveniences," Pinkston declared, and believe "that President Castro is responsible for all good things." *Shocking* that people would tell him this in a nation where one can be shot for saying otherwise.

CBS'S COVERAGE WAS SO BIASED, ONE MIGHT WONDER WHAT THE "C" IN CBS STANDS FOR.

There were some newcomers too. The Rookie Award definitely goes to the *New York Post*'s Douglas Montero. Lenin used to call sympathetic Westerners who were willing to believe anything favorable about communism and anything terrible about the democratic nations "useful idiots." Montero should have "U.I." printed on his press credentials for all time. He reported straight from Cuban propaganda and missed no opportunity to express his devotion to Castro, whom he likes to call "the powerful man."

Montero, Gumbel, and others are giddy about moral-equivalence arguments regarding the Miami Cuban community and communist Cuba. "The Cuban exile community is guilty of committing the same type of kangaroo-court style justice and intimidation that they have always accused the Cuban government of mercilessly inflicting on them," Montero wrote, in a familiar formulation. This is either stupid or deceitful. Last time I checked, the Cuban community did not hold legally sanctioned show trials ending in murder and torture.

My favorite correspondent had to be Jim Avila of NBC News. He eagerly declared that things in Cuba ain't that bad. "[M]eat is back on the table" on most nights. And now that the good times are rolling ("meat"; they have "meat"!), Avila suggests that a mere 20 percent of Cubans would leave if the borders were "opened" (a euphemism for a situation in which people are not shot while fleeing).

Now, I have a vague recollection that the press considers the plight of blacks in America pretty significant. Well, imagine if all black people—13 percent of the U.S. population—wanted to leave America, and weren't allowed to. Would that strike you as a minor story?

Indeed, in one sense, the bias leveled against Cuban-Americans and toward Cuba was a great triumph for the right in the culture wars. It demonstrated that the press cares about ideological purity more than pandering to ethnic victimology.

The second thing that ruined the coverage has nothing to do with ideology. It has to do with—for want of a better word—the feminization of media values. The standard for news coverage has moved from (unattained) objectivity to whatever will pull at the heartstrings of moms. Whether this has to do with the judgment of journalists or the gravity of ad dollars, I don't know.

The result is the same. MSNBC has launched a daily chick-chat "news" show that drags on longer than the director's cut of *Beaches* and has as much news value. I like moms. But since when is "As a mother..." the only way to introduce an intelligent bit of analysis?

There's some nice convergence in all of this, too. When Janet Reno was named attorney general, she declared she wanted to use "the law of this land to do everything" she could to protect "America's children." The press, enthralled, thought this was wonderful, compassionate, feminine. Well, Janet Reno's been hanging in there ever since, and the press still cuts her a lot of slack. She's still packaging her decisions in soccer-mom language, which is probably why she chose to defend her shameful decision to Oprah Winfrey instead of Mike Wallace. ■

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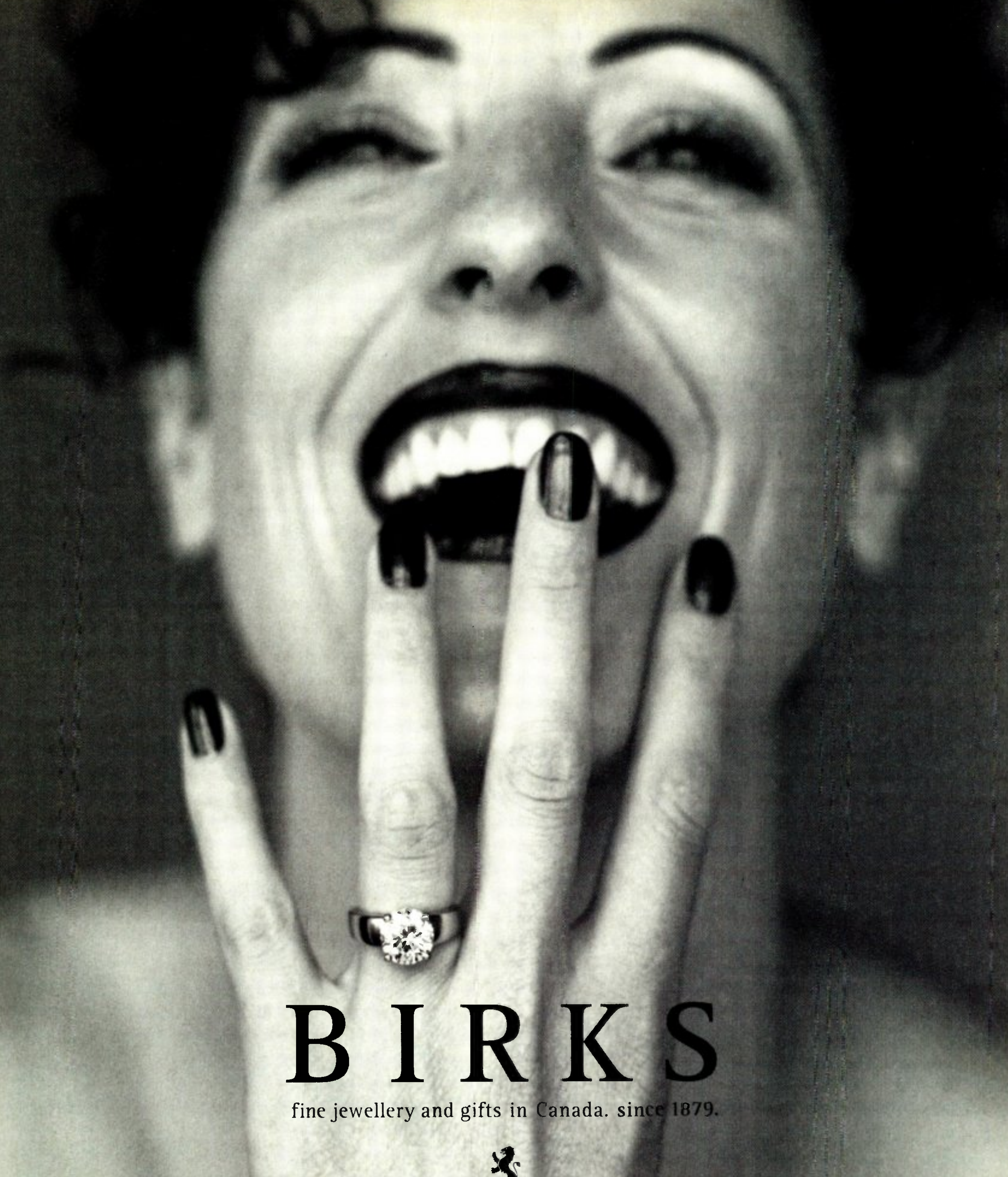

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courting disaster

When the chief justice of New Hampshire's Supreme Court was accused of breaking the law, my paper called for his resignation. It wasn't easy—we'd supported him for years. BY MIKE PRIDE

The storm door on the front of our house creaks. Meghan Ambra, the young neighbor who has faithfully delivered our paper for years, opens it early each morning and slips the *Concord Monitor* inside. I often hear the door's screech, but usually I drift back to sleep until the alarm goes off at six o'clock. I say *usually*.

For a string of days this spring, the arrival of the paper was the only alarm I needed. These were the first days of a crisis in New Hampshire's Supreme Court. The state attorney general had alleged that two justices had broken the law. One resigned, the other—the chief justice—accused the governor of trying to buy him out, and the House began a judicial-impeachment inquiry. Although I stayed at the office or phoned in to an editor late each night to talk through the stories, I could not wait to get up in the morning and read the paper.

As a citizen, not just as an editor, I was staggered by the events we were covering and commenting on. After all, it is not every day that you call for the resignation of a chief justice whose integrity and authority you have staunchly defended for more than two years.

In New Hampshire, as elsewhere, the power of the courts has always been an object of suspicion. This is a small state, and anti-court activists regularly raise the specter of an old-boys' network—a chummy legal community whose members take care of their own. Even some people involved in the system see the checks on the court's power as ineffectual.

The notion of this old-boys' network surfaced recently in a public and nasty divorce involving a sitting justice. Judith Thayer, the wife of Supreme Court justice Stephen Thayer, had a high profile of her own; she had been the state's board of education chairwoman. During the divorce, she had trouble getting and keeping a lawyer, and she charged that because of her husband's position, she could not get a fair hearing in New Hampshire's courts. It was not the first time the wife of a Supreme Court justice had made such complaints, and the Supreme Court should have been prepared to handle the ethical conflicts. But apparently it was not.

When Judith Thayer appealed an issue in the couple's divorce to the Supreme Court, her husband dutifully recused himself. But he was present when Chief Justice David Brock named a judge who would sit as a substitute on the case—Judge George Pappagianis. Thayer, unhappy with Brock's choice, let out a squawk. "You can't do that," he said, according to a subsequent investigation. "I don't want Pappagianis on the panel." Brock responded by trying to stop the appointment. Howard Zibel, the court's clerk, had been asked to call Pappagianis and tell him he'd been chosen to replace Thayer, and Brock tried to reach Zibel before the call was made. But he was too late—Pappagianis had already been notified.

Zibel was so upset about Thayer's request and Brock's actions on Thayer's behalf that he wrote a memo laying out what had happened and circulated it to several justices within the court. Eventually this memo reached Attorney General Philip McLaughlin, and McLaughlin's office investigated.

The attorney general's investigation shook the court. McLaughlin concluded that Thayer and Brock had both broken state laws—Thayer by trying to influence a case in which he had an interest, and Brock by

A good run

Concord native Matt Bonner and the Florida Gators may have come up short last night, but you can expect to see them in the Final Four again soon. ■ Page C-1.

Monopoly

A U.S. District Court judge supports Attorney General Janet Reno's (left) claim that Bill Gates and Microsoft have violated the nation's antitrust laws. ■ Page A-5.

CONCORD MONITOR

Tuesday, April 4, 2000 | Concord, New Hampshire

Justice Brock fights back

He won't resign; calls accusations 'unfounded attack'

By ALEC MacGILLIS
Monitor staff

At a glance

World Radio History

giving in to Thayer's demand. Thayer made a deal with McLaughlin—he resigned to avoid prosecution. Brock was silent.

The investigation portrayed the entire court as operating in an atmosphere that tolerated—and invited—unethical requests such as the one made by Thayer. It reported that even when justices had recused themselves from cases in which they were involved, they were allowed to read and comment on draft opinions on those cases. The justices said they made only editorial and factual changes in the opinion drafts, but this was a court whose chief justice had written in 1996: "Without judges who are perceived and trusted by members of the public as impartial, the authority of the rule of law is compromised."

This quotation from Brock was repeated in both court clerk Howard Zibel's memo, which started the investigation, and in the lead paragraph of the *Sunday Monitor* editorial on April 2. It was in this editorial, written the day after Attorney General McLaughlin announced his findings, that the *Monitor* called for Brock to step down as chief justice.

Events of this magnitude remind me of why I became a journalist. They demand coverage and comment of equal magnitude. You keep your sanity as an editor by realizing that you will never put out a perfect newspaper but that tomorrow you get another shot at it. But when it came to shaping the *Monitor*'s editorial position on this issue, suddenly that two-column temple of the newspaper's holy word, as an editor once damned it with mocking puffery, took on an even greater weight.

MONITOR EDITORIALS HAD LOUDLY DEFENDED THE STATE SUPREME COURT'S AUTHORITY AND INDEPENDENCE. NOW THAT THE COURT'S INDISCRETIONS HAD BEEN EXPOSED, WE FELT BETRAYED.

On the Friday afternoon that the attorney general released his report, I sat down with Mark Travis, the *Monitor*'s editorial-page editor, to discuss what to write. Our first inclination was to question whether the attorney general should have allowed Thayer to resign rather than prosecuting him. Why should Thayer walk away from this train wreck without anyone else judging whether the punishment fit the crime?

But by the next afternoon, Travis had other ideas for Sunday's editorial. He called me and read over the phone the editorial he had just written. It called for Brock to resign, too. I agreed that it was a logical leap. Could any institution withstand the public exposure of such an ethical and legal breach without a change at the top? The answer was no—and the Supreme Court was not just any institution.

Travis had made a strong case for resignation. "[T]alk of impeachment in the Legislature is both understandable and appropriate. Because of the energy such a proceeding would absorb and the agony it would generate, Brock should now resign and spare the state that much at least," he wrote.

Still, this was difficult ground for us to travel. More than two years earlier, in a landmark ruling, the court had struck down the local property tax as a means of paying for public schools. This decision threw the state into a fierce tax debate that remains unresolved. In the aftermath of the ruling, the court needed every ounce of its integrity to withstand attempts to remove Brock, amend the state constitution, and weaken the courts through what the *Monitor* considered destructive reforms. Throughout this strife, *Monitor* editorials loudly defended the court's authority and independence. Now that the court's indiscretions had been exposed, we felt betrayed.

There was also a bit of anger in Travis's thinking—and in the editorial. A key sentence read: "By giving substance to shadowy talk of an 'old boys network' among the judiciary, one that serves its own interests first, the justices may as well have doused their chambers in gasoline and handed their critics a match."

Almost before the ink was dry, however, Travis had second thoughts. On Monday morning, the day after the editorial was published, I could see the remorse on his face as he came to me and posed several questions: Would the call for Brock's head aid and abet activist legislators who had been trying for years to undermine the independence of the court? Had we blown Brock's actions out of proportion? And, perhaps the most important question, shouldn't we at least have withheld judgment until we heard from Brock?

That afternoon, we heard what Brock had to say. With four justices standing silently behind him at a press conference, he called McLaughlin's report contending that the two justices had broken the law "an unfounded attack on the integrity of the New Hampshire Supreme Court." The report was, Brock said, "factually incomplete, distorted by omission, and just plain wrong." He alleged that Governor Jeanne Shaheen had sent an envoy to seek his resignation in exchange for full retirement benefits. "Governor Shaheen, my integrity and the office of the chief justice are not for sale," Brock said. At a moment when an ounce of contrition might have produced a pound of goodwill, the chief justice offered nothing of the sort.

Clearly, this story wasn't moving toward closure. In the coming days the Executive Council would begin its impeachment inquiry, which is still in progress as I write this column. But after listening to Brock's words that afternoon, Travis and I knew just where to go with our next editorial on the court. Brock's performance had dispelled any thought of rescinding our call for his resignation. We made only one concession to those gnawing doubts of a few hours before. We decided to wait a day and think things through before commenting.

A day later, Travis wrote the *Monitor*'s April 5 editorial with a clear conscience and a clean line. His first paragraph told it all: "Chief Justice David Brock is certainly entitled to defend himself against the serious allegations raised by Attorney General Philip McLaughlin. But by attacking McLaughlin's motives while expressing no regret for his own actions or the impression they create, Brock has made his own predicament worse."

As usual, I edited the editorial before leaving the office, but when my front door creaked the next morning, I blinked awake and could not get back to sleep. I had to see the paper. ◘

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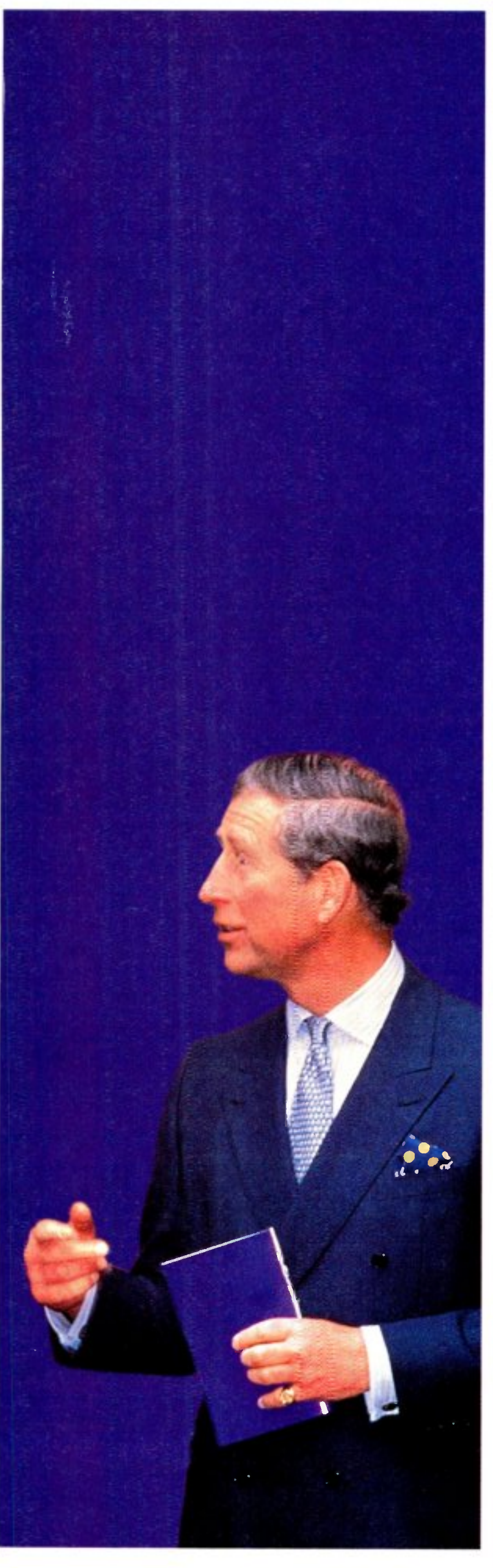

JOE LITTLE/ALPHA/GLOBE

World Radio History

Through leaks to the press and carefully placed news items, a monarch and the heir to the throne fight two battles—one between Queen and Prince, and one between mother and son.

By Sarah Lyall

The Royal Spin

If you had been strolling down Piccadilly in London on the otherwise unremarkable evening of January 28, 1999, you would have seen a motley crowd shimmering with anticipation across the street from The Ritz hotel. This was the British royal press corps engaged in one of its favorite news-gathering activities: standing around outside a building, waiting for someone to come out. There were several hundred people in all—reporters, photographers, and camera crews, plus a healthy complement of gawking passersby—and they were getting restless, having, in some cases, been there all day and even the night before.

The cause for all this excitement was a middle-aged couple, neither of them particularly glamorous: he with a thin, melancholy face and eyes set a bit close together; she with smoker's skin and somewhat unkempt hair. But this was not just any couple. This was Charles, The Prince of Wales and the heir to the British throne, and his mistress of many years, Camilla Parker Bowles, who had been attending a birthday party for her sister in the hotel that night. In the past, Charles and Camilla had always made elaborate, photographer-thwarting arrangements. This banal occasion, during which they were scheduled to walk together from the hotel to a waiting car, was their first public appearance as a couple.

ALASTAIR GRANT/AP PHOTO

Charles, the Prince of Wales, and his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, at the Commonwealth Day Celebration, March 13, 2000

The "coming out" photo: Camilla Parker Bowles and Prince Charles, London, January 28, 1999, in their first public appearance together

It happened at 11:58 P.M. and took less than a minute, this royal version of an N.Y.P.D. perp walk. Neither said anything, and the pictures weren't very good. But it didn't matter. The photographers got what they wanted: pictures that would travel around the world that night and dominate the news, at least in Britain, the next day. The reporters got what they wanted: an excuse to write overwrought stories about the exciting seismic shift in the royal landscape. And The Prince of Wales got what he wanted, too: the opportunity to appear openly in public—and, as it turned out, to general public approval—with the woman he had loved throughout his unhappy marriage to the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

The scripted outing of Charles and Camilla had been a long time coming, and the event itself was the result of intense, behind-the-scenes discussions and discreet, impeccably pedigreed leaks to the press. "Every Fleet Street newspaper was alerted to the fact that Charles would leave this party with Camilla, and it would be the first time they would be seen in public together," says Alan Hamilton, who covers the royal family for *The Times* and who appears to know where the bodies are buried. Who was making the phone calls? It wasn't Mark Bolland, the prince's deputy private secretary and the canny man who has been widely credited with retooling Charles's once-dismal public profile in the years following Diana's sudden death, in 1997. But he was behind them. "It was people working for Bolland making discreet phone calls and tipping off the press," Hamilton says. "And my God, was there a turnout." (Bolland, through a spokeswoman in Charles's press office, declined to be interviewed for this article.)

The British press, and particularly its royal-covering contingent, can be endlessly demanding: spiteful, petulant, willful, changeable—and ever influential. And with 26 national papers (13 of them published daily, and 13 on

World Radio History

Below: Mark Bolland, Prince Charles's deputy private secretary (left); Prince Charles in feathered headress while visiting Iwokrama Forest, Guyana, February 2000 (right)

Sundays), there are a dizzying variety of constituencies to please.

The papers range from the *News of the World*, a Sunday tabloid fond of sex scandals (and not-so-fondly known as the "News of the Screws"), and other mass-market tabloids such as *The Sun* and *The Mirror*, to more middlebrow tabloids such as *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*, and then to the respectable broadsheets, including *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*.

If keeping the royal press pack happy is a tough job, covering the royal family isn't a walk in the park, either. You rarely get to interview the people about whom you write. Many of your stories are based on slender wisps of information from people with transparently vested interests and names you can't use. And your editors always want exclusives, always want stories about private conversations between people who never talk to you, and, in the case of the tabloids, always want stories about sex.

That the reporters were such important players in the Charles-Camilla calculation at The Ritz speaks volumes about the prince's priorities these days. Being Prince of Wales involves at its heart holding out until the monarch dies so that you can inherit the throne. But in his determination to be more than a vulture looming in a tree, Charles is engaged in a thoroughly modern public-relations exercise that seeks both to infuse his role with more meaning and to dispel forever his old, unhappy image as out of touch and slightly ludicrous, the upper-class twit who relaxes by talking to plants, the unfeeling husband who betrayed his beautiful wife.

To this end, the job of Mark Bolland and his modest army of press officers is threefold. They have to spread the word about Charles's extracurricular agenda—his support for the environment and his dismay about modern architecture, for instance. They have to encourage the press to run stories that paint the prince as a caring father to his sons, William and Harry. And, just as crucially, they have to ensure that Camilla Parker Bowles—once the pesky X-factor in the unbalanced equation that was Charles's marriage to Diana, but now the prince's undisputed companion and the major stabilizing force in his life—gets good press, too. "Bolland is behind all the attempts to make Camilla respectable," says one well-placed observer. "And he has corralled power by charming up to her."

Bolland's long, patient, and hard-fought campaign to find some sort of semi-official status for Camilla within the royal family itself finally came to fruition on a Saturday afternoon in June. In an event considered so freighted with significance that it was covered on the front pages of every major British paper the next day, the queen attended a lunch in honor of former King Constantine of Greece at Highgrove, her son's country estate, at which Camilla Parker Bowles was also present. Not only that, but after Camilla greeted the queen with a low, formal curtsy, the two reportedly spent several minutes engaged in actual conversation (they were then seated at separate tables, the papers said, about as far apart as humanly possible).

"This certainly was a huge shift forward," says Richard Kay, the *Daily Mail*'s dashing royal correspondent. And indeed it was, at least by the speed-of-molasses standards of the royal family. Until that point, the queen had flatly refused to acknowledge Charles's relationship or to attend any function, public or private, at which Parker Bowles was scheduled to be present, including her own son's 50th birthday party. But even after the historic Highgrove confrontation, both the queen's courtiers and the prince's made it clear that marriage between Charles and Camilla is still not in the cards. This is for a host of sticky constitutional reasons having to do with the opposition of the Church of England—which the queen heads and which Charles will head in due course—to adultery and divorce, which Charles and Camilla have both committed.

It is hard to know now how significant the meeting was. "If Buckingham Palace wanted to see it as a huge symbol of the road to marriage, the story would have come from Buckingham Palace," says a longtime chronicler of the royal family (instead, the news was leaked to the *News of the World* first, apparently by the Prince's camp). But in any case, the queen's decision to greet her son's paramour is, at the very least, a potentially important thawing in the frosty relationship between Elizabeth and Charles. Their conflict has been fought over the last few years not through vulgar shouting matches but in the historic tradition of British monarchs and their heirs over the centuries, with competing circles of courtiers and—in the modern age—carefully placed leaks to the press. And pulling the strings from behind the scenes are, in the prince's corner, the exceedingly well-connected Bolland, 34, who was once the director of the Press Complaints Commission, and, in the queen's, Simon Lewis, 41, a simi-

In an event considered so freighted with significance that is was covered on the front pages of every British paper the next day, the queen attended a lunch at Highgrove, her son's country estate, at which Camilla Parker Bowles was also present.

I GLOBE PHOTOS; R. LYNNE SLADKY/AP PHOTO

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Above: Simon Lewis, the queen's communications secretary (left); the queen and Prince Philip in Perth, Australia, April 2000 (right)

larly well-connected public-relations man whose background includes top corporate-affairs jobs with both British Gas and NatWest, a major British bank.

"It's almost medieval, the court," says the *Daily Mail*'s Kay. "You only have to look back through the pages of history to see that Princes of Wales have always been at odds with their parents. Consequently, the people around them have also been at odds with each other."

In the early 19th century, the newspapers were critical of and even rude about the royal family, most notably in the case of the Prince Regent (later George IV), a bigamist and notorious libertine constantly at odds with his father. But by the time Edward VIII became king, in 1936, reporters were covering only what the royals wanted them to cover. The papers colluded with the palace in keeping the private lives of the family off-limits, deliberately staying quiet about the scandalous affair between the king and Wallis Simpson, the divorced American who went on to seduce him from the throne. For the juicy details, Britons had to turn to foreign newspapers.

A watershed of sorts was reached in 1969, with the broadcast of *Royal Family*, a documentary about the current royal family that took the cameras into Buckingham Palace for the first time, showing things like a family barbecue at which Prince Philip, the queen's husband, presented his human side by frying sausages on the grill. But as groundbreaking as it seemed at the time, the documentary was comically tame by today's standards. And at that time, the royal family spoke with one voice.

More recently, the competing agendas within the royal family have helped explain why *Daily Express*, a generally anti-Charles newspaper, ran a story in February in which anonymous government ministers who support the queen derided Charles as "a constitutional time bomb" who should never be king. They have explained why several Charles-admiring papers ran a story about how Charles, a supporter of the Dalai Lama, had snubbed his mother and the government by refusing to attend a state dinner for Chinese President Jiang Zemin. And they have explained why St. James's Palace, Charles's official residence, put out a statement in 1998 saying that Prince Harry would be accompanying his father to the World Cup soccer tournament—thus overshadowing the other family members who were also going, including Charles's father, Prince Philip, and doing a neat end run around Buckingham Palace, which had planned to issue a convivial joint statement from both palaces.

"There's a huge difference between Buckingham Palace and St. James's Palace," says *The Times*'s Hamilton. "There's a huge gulf, and considerable animosity, between them. Each runs their own show and there is some cooperation between the two—but no more than is absolutely necessary."

When Charles married Lady Diana Spencer, in 1981, there was only one royal press office, at Buckingham Palace, and it handled public relations for the queen, her children, and all manner of satellite royals, such as the Duke and Duchess of Kent. But suddenly, the sleepy operation had to crank into full gear to fill the press's, and the public's, bottomless appetite for Diana-related stories.

As the marriage began to unravel by the late 1980s, so did the ability of the press office to handle the fallout. In violation of every royal precedent, Diana's friends—and, increasingly, Diana herself—began to leak stories casting Charles as a remote husband and uncaring father, with Diana in the role of lonely, rejected wife. Buckingham Palace denied these reports with huffy indignation, continuing to promote the myth of marital bliss. Neither Charles nor his friends defended themselves publicly, thus aggravating the public's impression that the prince was at fault.

Then, in 1992, came the shocking publication of *Diana: Her True Story*, Andrew Morton's scathing dismemberment of Charles's abilities as a husband and father (after Diana died, Morton revealed that she had been a major source for the book). "It was awesome, a tremendous coup," says Kay, who made a name for himself in the nineties with a series of exclusives that grew out of his close relationship with Diana. Before, Kay says, "we were encouraged to believe the royal myth." Few people with anything of interest to reveal would talk to reporters then. But suddenly, he says, the telephones were ringing off the hook, as supporters of Charles and Diana lined up to leak some damning detail or present some partisan perspective on the latest disclosure.

Even after the book came out, Charles tried hard to avoid competing with Diana at her own game. But his staff, desperate to salvage his reputation, quickly negotiated for Charles to cooperate with respected journalist Jonathan Dimbleby for a sober, exhaustive biography aimed at presenting a new side to the prince and providing a dignified retort to the Diana offensive. But the result, *The Prince of Wales*, was seen as a terrible misstep. A long section describing the privations of Charles's childhood made him appear unattractively self-pitying. "He was seen as whining about his parents," says Robert Jobson, the *Daily Express* correspondent who serves as both the paper's royal editor and its diplomatic editor, and is no friend to Charles. Charles compounded the damage by submitting to a rare television interview with Dimbleby, as part of a 150-minute BBC documentary produced alongside the book.

"Both book and film covered the prince's public work to the [CONTINUED ON PAGE 120]

L: PA PHOTOS LIMITED; R: MEGAN LEWIS/AFP PHOTOS

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THE RISE OF THE TEEN GURU

They're brilliant, ambitious, and almost intuitively gifted at technology. A new generation of whiz kids are gaining unprecedented power and authority—and, as a new study shows, they're reshaping the American family. By Austin Bunn

You know the story of kids like Shawn Fanning, and you don't know the story. Fanning got his first computer as a gift from his uncle three and a half years ago, when he was 16. At the time, he lived in Harwich, a small town on Cape Cod. Now he lives in San Mateo, California, at the center of Silicon Valley, but we'll get to that later. Back when he first got the computer, Shawn was an avid baseball, basketball, and tennis player and was, by his account, surrounded by friends. "I was never the typical computer type from a social perspective," he says.

But then this technology dropped into his life, and it absorbed him. "I don't think it was a conscious decision," Fanning says. "It was more of an addiction." He abandoned sports so he could concentrate on programming. He'd get enthralled with projects that kept him up all night and not have time to go to school. His parents frowned on his fascination, but they didn't really understand it and were helpless to stop him. "My mom and I get along pretty well, but I didn't seem to fit in," Fanning explains. The computer became his secret craft, an exercise in selfhood.

Then Fanning discovered the benefits of control. He noticed a regular on IRC (Internet relay chat) with a strange sort of sovereignty. "When somebody got on and started arguing with the guy, he would kick them off," he recalls. "And I thought, *How the hell does he do that?*" He spent two months tracking him down to learn how. It wasn't video games or instant messaging that got Fanning hooked–it was authority. "A lot of my interest had to do with the power thing," he says, "and the ability to have real effects on people just from sitting in your room."

Most of us would be happy simply to get our software to run, much less have control over the ways others use it. But Fanning is the kind of person who wants to shape the experiences of lots of other people. In a world where 19-year-olds are, more than ever, adults in training, the computer gave Shawn Fanning an expertise and a chance to steer things. Which, I should mention, he's actually doing. Last year, Fanning dropped out during his freshman year at Northeastern University in Boston to found Napster, the phenomenally popular site for trading MP3 music files. An enormous music repository, Napster lets fans locate, share, and download free tracks from one another. It is one of the fastest-growing new media properties: In six months, Napster accrued 9 million users. It took America Online 12 years to rack up that many. In testament to Napster's rising profile, the Recording Industry Association of America, along with bands like Metallica, has taken notice and is suing Napster for copyright violations. But this legal détente may simply be the transposition of a generation gap. The powers that be are terrified of Napster, a company that has yet to present a business model. The powers that *will be* are transfixed by it. Fanning, the chief software designer in the company he started, is now surrounded by managers two decades older than he is. On this age issue, Fanning admits, "Yeah, it's pretty weird."

These days, we're all living with the weirdness. Teenagers—and, at 19, Fanning is a fogey—are at the helm of the largest sociologic shift in a generation. Raised on e-mail, instant messages, and Internet time, teenagers are developing into young turks of technology. Don Tapscott, who interviewed more than 300 teens for his

13-year-old Ilya Anopolsky, founder of Devotion, Inc., Corporation, a Web-design firm. Photograph by Anna Curtis

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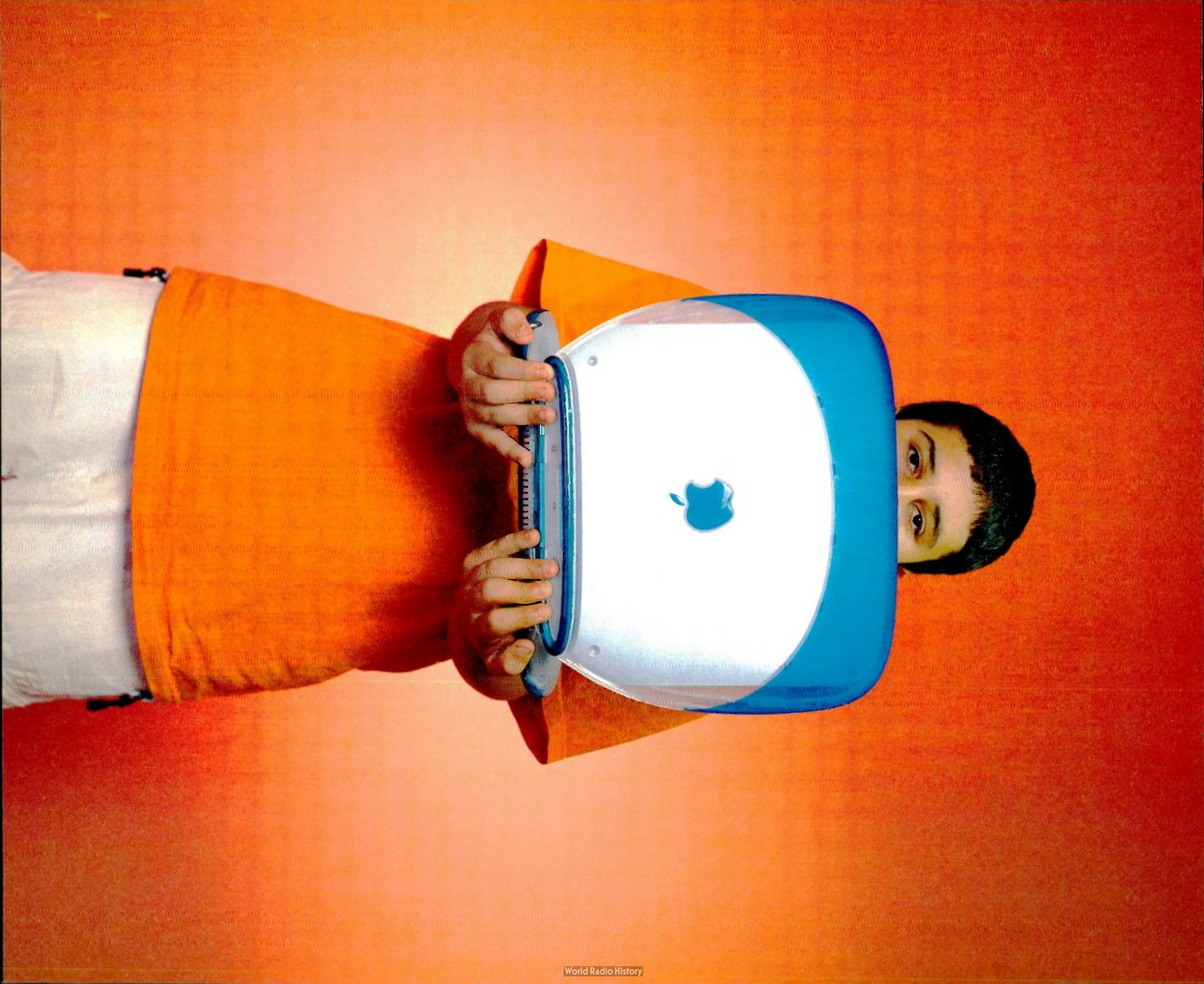

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1997 book, *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*, concluded that 85 percent of teenagers know more about the Internet than one or more of their parents. "This is the first time in history that children are an authority on something," he says. They lobby to get the computer in the home. They are some of the heaviest users of the Internet. And, as a soon-to-be-published study makes clear, their passion and facility is flipping the organization of the American family.

In a three-year, pioneering research project called HomeNet, social scientists from Carnegie Mellon University gave computers to about 100 families to examine their social effects. The results suggest a dramatic inversion of authority. The latest HomeNet study, slated for publication this winter in the peer-reviewed journal *Human-Computer Interaction*, tracks the emergence of the "family guru"—the resident technician, teacher, and occasional tyrant—most often a teenager. "It's not just that teens have a vast choice of...content and interactions" with the computer, writes Carnegie Mellon professor Sara Kiesler, the study's head researcher. "With the advent of the teenage guru, the child in the family plays a new role of child-as-technical advisor, a role...that confers on the teen authority and probably independence as well."

The scenario sounds familiar, but the consequences are not. We can see how the Internet is rattling the economy, the media, and the music industry (thanks to Fanning), but the societal repercussions may be much more immediate than we think. This adolescent technical expertise that Kiesler observed translates into a broader cultural savvy—it's expertise with a clearly defined destination. It sparks whip-smart teenagers to found their own companies and inadvertently turns their parents into bystanders, a sort of vestigial hardware.

The lanky, animated Michael Furdyk is the 18-year-old founder and business development manager of BuyBuddy.com, a *Consumer Reports* about computer devices. BuyBuddy is the second company Furdyk has started. He sold his first dotcom, MyDesktop, when he was 16 for a reported $1 million. "My parents are really supportive of what I'm doing," says Furdyk, who now works as a consultant for Microsoft on the side. Furdyk, like Fanning, is a poster boy for young entrepreneurs. I caught up with him in March in Seattle at a busy networking opportunity called the Bootcamp for Start-Ups, where he was working the room in the middle of a school day. Asked if his parents worry about him, he answers casually, "I think they kind of leave that to me to think about."

THIS ADOLESCENT TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TRANSLATES INTO A BROADER CULTURAL SAVVY—IT'S EXPERTISE WITH A CLEARLY DEFINED DESTINATION. IT SPARKS WHIP-SMART TEENAGERS TO FOUND THEIR OWN COMPANIES AND TURNS THEIR PARENTS INTO BYSTANDERS.

Fanning and Furdyk are only the most visible members of this vanguard. It won't be long before they have company—and competition—as the technology reaches saturation point. But the social impact will become increasingly subtle and profound. These are critical days, when the audiences for computers cross the threshold between, as they say in social science, "early adopters" and "early majority." One of those years was 1953. That's when more than 50 percent of American households with children under 5 years old had televisions, thus marking the point at which TV's social influence—its ability to blur public and private behavior, to educate and to alarm—would be felt forever after. Baby boomers raised on television began to have their "situational geography" remapped in 1953, says social theorist Joshua Meyrowitz in his book *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. Television mixed all conducts relentlessly—the public, the private, the proper and improper—into one teeming cauldron. Meyrowitz argues that you can almost count the days from 1953 until 1967, when that first TV generation hit 18, rejected all roles laid out for it, and ignited the "youth movement" of the late sixties. This year stands to become another threshold. According to a study released in May by the Pew Research Center, roughly half of American families have Internet access. The PC has become a standard appliance, but it is also a carrier of social change. It will soon be woven into the fundamental fabric of the culture.

This fact intersects with the other giant demographic reality: the rise of the so-called echo boom, the generation comprising the baby boom's children. There are more Americans turning 18 now than ever before, says William Strauss, author of *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. About 78 million Americans are between the ages of 0 and 22, accounting for 28 percent of the population. "In the last couple years, America has gone totally teenage," says Strauss. What television was to their parents, computers are to them.

But a computer, unlike a TV, requires skill, with authority following close behind. Sheri Parks, an academic at the University of Maryland who studies the impact of electronic media on families, believes the current social climate is prepared for a radical shift. Since World War II, teens have accumulated more and more financial power. "They already directly control millions of dollars and influence many more. They heavily influence what computer the family buys, what second car the family gets," Parks says. But now, as technology becomes woven deeper into families, where the parents are working and often absent, "kids are taking on new kinds of power" in the invisible, elusive electronic world, she says. "Parents can't control what is invisible."

Amber Jackson doesn't seem like the kind of 19-year-old who would know her IQ score. She's too unassuming to care. "It's somewhere between 140 and 150," she says with a laugh and a flick of her tightly braided hair. "I *know* it's not over 150." To Amber, a score that high isn't so much an intellectual distinction as a passport; IQ scores were used to identify the "advanced" students, of which she was one, in her Pittsburgh public high school. "We were the favorites; everybody liked us. That's why they came to us first," she says.

"They" were a team of social scientists at Carnegie Mellon's Human Computer Interaction Institute. In the late winter of 1995, the researchers approached journalism teachers in four Pittsburgh-area high schools and asked them to help identify students who would be willing to participate in a study. Jackson was 15 at the time. Her freshman English teacher, who ran the school newspaper, pulled her aside and told her about the researchers. The Carnegie Mellon researchers wanted to provide her with a computer, free Internet access, and e-mail, if Jackson would let them study how she and her mother (her parents are divorced) used the technology over time. "They were going to give me all this cool stuff, and all I had to do was let them know what I did," she says now, sitting in the bright racquetball courts that double as the cafeteria of Carnegie Mellon, where she will be a junior this fall. "I had just bought a *typewriter* to write my papers....I figured I had nothing to lose."

With that, Amber and her mom joined HomeNet. Ninety-three families in eight neighborhoods of Pittsburgh entered the study in two waves, the first in March 1995, the second in March 1996. (The second phase targeted those involved in community development.) A total of 237 people participated. About 25 percent of the households were minority, largely African-American; 60 percent of the participants were at least 19 years old. The average annual income of the

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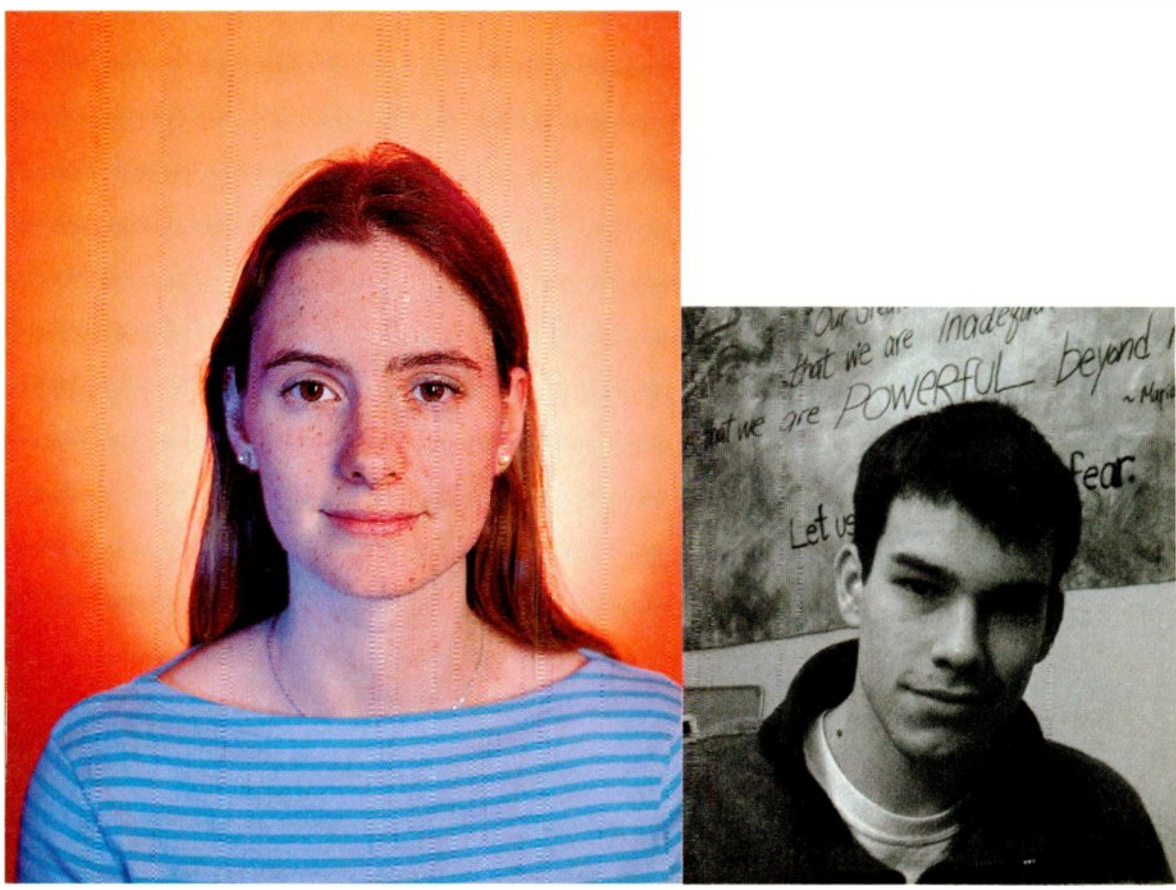

The CEOs of tomorrow, today: 19-year-old Jacqui Thorpy (left) and 18-year-old Michael Furdyk

L: ANNA CURTIS; R: STEVAN MORGAIN/AP PHOTO

families was $42,500, a little higher than the U.S. median but lower than that of Internet users. (Nearly 60 percent of Internet users earn more than $75,000 a year.) The project specifically excluded those who had active Net connections at work or home, making all the subjects Internet "newbies."

In the winter of 1995, Jackson and her mom went to Carnegie Mellon for an introductory session about the project and to get their free MacIntosh computer. The researchers explained that the computers had been set up so that data about their computer use could be mined remotely: how often each family logged on, how long it was online, which sites it visited, and how much e-mail was sent (but not the content). All the families then answered a pre-test questionnaire about their level of computer skill, social involvement, and psychological well-being, which included such agree/disagree questions as: "I felt everything I did was an effort" and "I can find companionship when I want it." Subjects also were asked to quantify how much time they spent with each family member and how many times they helped them in using the computer.

Jackson says she had no idea what, precisely, the CMU researchers were studying. In fact, once the computer was situated in her house, Amber ignored the fact that she and her mother were being examined. "You never thought you were a part of research because they would mail you a questionnaire around every six months, so you really forgot about it." The questionnaire itself was dense. "You would fill it out for days," she recalls.

The findings surprised the researchers. Their initial analyses showed that the more the test subjects went online, the more susceptible they were to slight increases in their depression levels and to the diminishment of their social circles. These conclusions flew against expectations. The estimated $1.5 million HomeNet study had, after all, received funding from such technology companies as Apple Computer, Inc., Intel Corporation, and Hewlett-Packard Company. The companies had obviously anticipated positive results.

As the Carnegie Mellon researchers prepared to publish the first study from the HomeNet sample group, titled "Internet Paradox: A Social Technology That Reduces Social Involvement and Psychological Well-Being?," they recognized that they would face resistance to their findings. For a year before the study came out in the journal *American Psychologist*, "we had a sense about how controversial this was going to be," says Robert Kraut, the bearded academic who served as the head researcher for the "Internet Paradox" paper.

He couldn't have overestimated the response to HomeNet's debut. When the study was released, in August 1998, *The New York Times* ran a front-page story about it headlined, "Sad, Lonely World Discovered in Cyberspace." To some, it confirmed the worst fears about the Net-addled generation. But the criticism it drew was resounding. "It [was] just phenomenally bad research," says Donna L. Hoffman, an Internet researcher at Vanderbilt University in Nashville and codirector of eLab, an electronic-commerce research outfit there. "When the academic community read it, they thought they [the Carnegie Mellon researchers] had made it up." Some found problems with the sampling, contending that such general conclusions about Internet use could not be drawn from a handpicked assembly of families in one city without a control group. (Notably, the study was composed largely of

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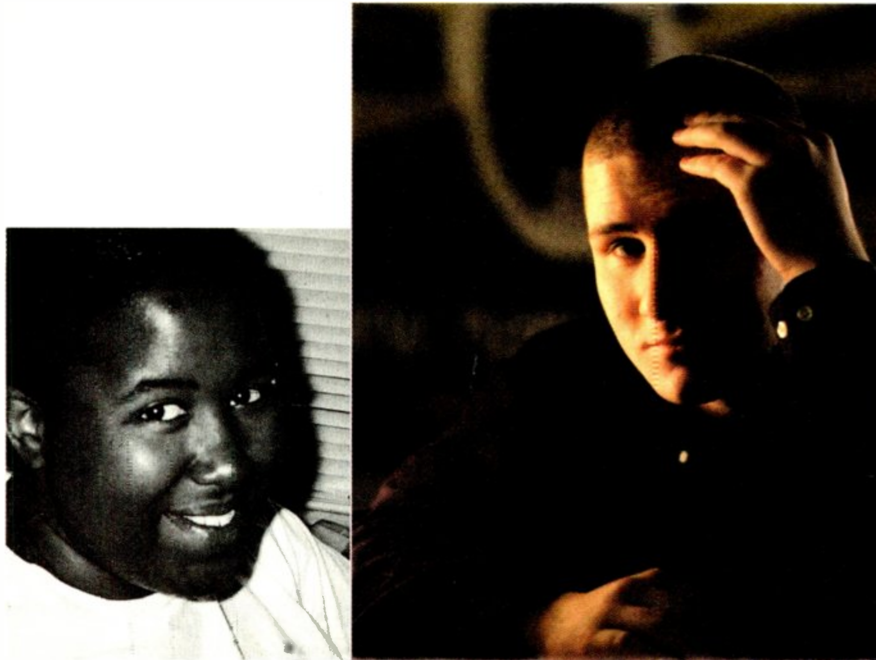

19-year-old Amber Jackson, a participant in Carnegie Mellon's HomeNet study (left), and 19-year-old Napster founder Shawn Fanning

kids and their parents and [illegible] of participants between the ages of 22 and 40, a key Inte[illegible] audience.) Many blamed [illegible] for overdramatizing and extending the conclusions of [illegible] study and playing into a cultural [illegible] technology.

Defending the study, Kr[illegible] argues that the Carnegie Mellon team openly admitted its limit[illegible]. [illegible] made off [illegible] he says. "We had an in-depth look at a local sample [illegible] superficial [illegible] broadly representative sample."

But the fervor over these [illegible] findings [illegible] one of [illegible] important and irrefutable [illegible] about computers: Teenagers are obsessed with them. Kraut found that on the average [illegible] teenage boy spent more than three hours a week [illegible] teenage girls [illegible]. Adult men logged on for just half [illegible] more than that. The kids received [illegible] and explored exponentially longer [illegible] the computer was their domain. And as [illegible] would reveal, this familiarity among teenagers [illegible] the computer [illegible] than an isolated phenomenon [illegible] bigger.

Sara Kiesler wants [illegible] videotape [illegible] Kiesler, a professor [illegible] Carnegie Mellon's Human Computer Interaction Institute [illegible] responsible fo[illegible] HomeNet, the upcoming paper entitled "Trouble With the Internet: The Dynamics of Help at Home." She has been studying the impact of electronic communication since the 1980s, using businesses as her test subjects and [illegible] how to use [illegible] practically.

The videotape was made during the researchers' visits to HomeNet homes. It's as if they were anthropologists [illegible] come to study members of a tribe puzzling over [illegible] that had almost literally fallen into their laps. The researchers [illegible] someone [illegible] notetaker, someone would do [illegible] somebody [illegible] ask questions," says Kiesler—and they [illegible] probe the family [illegible] range of issues: their day, lifestyle, what they did and didn't like about computers. Then they would accompany the subjects to the computer and ask them to demonstrate a typical, day-in-the-life scenario: how they used it, what they enjoyed most. But the typical scenario consistently looked like confusion and failure. "What we kept finding was that people had trouble," says Kiesler. "It happened almost everyplace we went."

The videotape runs through an all-too-familiar parade of bafflement. In one segment, a mom and child sit in front of the screen, staring down an hourglass icon. "Wait a minute, we're connected. No, we're not connected," the mother says, then tentatively: "We're idle now." Another woman, when asked what the computer is doing, responds: "I don't know—this is what happens sometimes. I don't think it's frozen....I can hear it humming." On principle, the researchers would not step in if there was a problem; observing the crises the HomeNet participants encountered—and their responses to those problems—without affecting them was precisely the point. The tape is often hilarious but also hard to watch, particularly when human naïveté collides with electronic indifference. One exasperated mom says flatly to the camera, "The [computer's] garbage can is full to bursting, and I don't know how to empty it." The tape also records one man entering the words *community development* into a search engine. He gets 58 *million* results. "At this point [illegible] explains.

[illegible] Kiesler [illegible] troubles represent an epidemic of helplessness, the shadow [illegible] by all the innovations the computer has wrought. "People [illegible] gave up [illegible] they felt 'I'm not good at computers'," she says. "The [illegible] of the people were quitting for reasons like 'I couldn't get a dial tone [illegible] get connected,' and all they needed to do was to call us and we would have helped them. But they didn't even know how to diagnose the problem." Eighty-nine percent of the households requested help in the first year of the study, a figure so high it suggests [illegible] about the oversights of hardware and software companies than it does about the handiness of the households.

The tape is fascinating not only for what it documents but for [illegible]: There are scarcely any teenagers complaining at all. In fact, judging by the footage, the desperation seems to be the province strictly of adults. Therein lie the origins of the "teen guru" phenomenon.

Over the course of the HomeNet trial, the researchers were initially blindsided by the amount of technical assistance the families needed. Although an enormous number of homes relied on the Carnegie Mellon HomeNet help desk the researchers established, Kiesler found that more than half of the individual family members never called. Some were afraid; some simply abandoned the machine; others muddled through with the help of friends and family members. But of the half that did call, Kiesler noticed an interesting pattern. You might expect that the people who called would be those who needed help the most—new computer users, for example. She found that the opposite was true. Those who called the help line were those who knew the most.

As unlikely as this might seem, it's a common trait in humans: If you already know something about a subject, you're more likely to want to know more about it. Social-science research in politics, consumer behavior, and the diffusion of innovations reveals that knowledge "accrues

L: COURTESY AMBER JACKSON; R: PETER DASILVA/CORBIS SYGMA

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most to those who already have a substantial amount of it," writes Kiesler. "People who are more interested and skilled in a domain are more likely to realize what they do not know, are more likely to have the confidence to challenge themselves and to stretch the limits of their expertise." Plot this expertise on a graph, and most of us linger near the bottom—some of us know nothing, others know a little bit but not enough to become smart about it. As technical knowledge grows, though, it doesn't just inch forward. It accelerates. It feeds on itself.

This finding aptly describes one of the stereotypes of the contemporary workplace: the lone tech wizard who visits the office cubicles, ministering to wounded printers and crashed hard drives with a kind of alchemical mastery. Our cluelessness is common enough, but so is his frustration. We wonder how he knows so much, and he wonders why we can't learn to fix it ourselves. In the workplace, these workers are deemed "information gatekeepers" by social scientists because they are the ones who manage and administer technical advice inside an organization. They are where knowledge concentrates. Typically, these gatekeepers have more seniority, more ties outside the organization, and more "authority and centrality than those to whom they pass advice," writes Kiesler. They are the interface between the workplace and the outside world.

Kiesler had expected to see the same role reflected in the HomeNet study: that computer know-how would aggregate in one person, probably the dad—the traditional household technician—who would have more seniority and ties outside the family. What she found instead was an almost precise inversion. In 31 of 58 households (54 percent) with teenagers, the person who called the help desk the most was a teen. In these homes, knowledge inside the family trickled upward. Those with the least seniority claimed the most authority. And gender-wise, girls helped their parents as much as boys did. Within intergenerational paradigms, boys tended to give advice to women (38 percent of all boy-woman pairs) and men (48 percent of all boy-man pairs) almost equally. Girls tended to give more help to women (49 percent of all girl-woman pairs) than to men (17 percent of all girl-man pairs); Kiesler sees this difference between boys and girls as a marginal statistical variation, though it does suggest something about the difficulty fathers might have in receiving technical advice from their daughters. (This research indicates that future generations of dads will just need to get used to it.)

KIESLER HAD EXPECTED THAT COMPUTER KNOW-HOW WOULD AGGREGATE IN ONE PERSON, PROBABLY THE DAD—THE HOUSEHOLD TECHNICIAN—WHO WOULD HAVE MORE SECURITY AND TIES OUTSIDE THE FAMILY. WHAT SHE FOUND INSTEAD WAS AN ALMOST PRECISE INVERSION.

Kiesler dubbed these crackerjack teen gurus not only because they're good at driving the computer but because they became the consultant to the rest of the family. "Teens' technical expertise shifted intellectual authority in the family," writes Kiesler. "Gurus were admired for their abilities...and sometimes they were held in awe." She quotes one interview with a teenage girl about her relationship with her dad:

"Sometimes if I'm not doing anything, I'm just like washing dishes or something...he can't access something, I can help him. Sometimes, [he says] 'I know what I'm doing' (she lifts her eyebrows, indicating skepticism). I don't know, maybe he gets upset that I know more about this than he does....[It] gives me the upper hand."

Another 41-year-old mother turned consistently to her son for guidance:

"I haven't done [that] yet because I need Bobby [teenage son] to help me do that....But okay, so now where were we, Bobby? Do I have to unconnect and reconnect? What do I do?"

Amber Jackson's experience with her mom, Deborah Jackson, reflects the same switch in expertise. Amber's mom had had exposure to a computer in her job as an international operator and trainer for AT&T. But the machine still eluded her. "I picked and I probed it and then I would call Amber over and say, 'Amber, can you turn this thing on for me?'" says Deborah Jackson. "If there's ever anything I don't understand, I go to Amber for support." Even though Amber is off at college now, she still comes back home on weekends to help her mother. But Deborah Jackson's confusion is no longer confined to the home. At work recently, Jackson was struggling to pull up some documents in Microsoft PowerPoint and failing. "My boss's 11-year-old daughter just went right up to the computer and—zip, zip, zip—she pulled them right up," she says. "When I see young people like that, I'm not jealous, I'm just out of my league. You can tell it's just a whole different generation."

In some ways, this authority-inversion shouldn't seem strange—it's as familiar to us as the expression "whiz kid." But what draws teens like Amber Jackson so intensely to the computer? What exactly are they gaining? Kiesler argues that the reason teens are online so much is partly because they have more time for recreational computing than adults. (On the other hand, one could argue that although the elderly have just as much free time, they aren't online in nearly the same numbers.) A bigger factor, suggests Carnegie Mellon's Robert Kraut, is that teens are at an age when social experimentation is key, and the impulse that keeps them glued to the phone receiver also keeps them plugged in. They also have less fear of damaging the machine. Teens are technologically impervious: "They've grown up with computers," Kiesler says, "so it doesn't seem new to them. If you look at risk-taking in teens, they are less fearful about the consequences of their actions and are more exploratory."

Surprisingly, the world these teens are finding online looks a lot like the one they're already living in. New surveys of newsgroups conducted by Katelyn McKenna, a New York University researcher whose work focuses on psychology, show that the majority of teens spend the bulk of their online chat time talking with friends from school. So while they might be risk-takers, what they're most often seeking on the Internet, aside from authority, is the comfort of the familiar. Even their new online relationships are surprisingly constant. In a two-year study she conducted at NYU from 1997 to 1999, McKenna found that 57 percent of the online relationships formed by teens were still intact two years after they began, and that 34 percent of those had become closer.

Beyond the social implications, there's another reason teens may be drawn to computers, one that Kiesler's own research suggests but doesn't articulate, the same reason Shawn Fanning found himself hooked on code. If it's true that gaining expertise in the computer translates into a position of authority inside a family, who better than the most disenfranchised of its members to master it? Kiesler points out that the emergence of the household guru both encouraged and *discouraged* computer use and skill development by others in the family; because of their advanced skill, the gurus started controlling the use of the computer. They set up protocols for how the computer would be organized, when it could be used, and even disassembled the machines. One kid changed the error sound so that the machine burped up an expletive whenever someone made a mistake. They made their knowledge as public as possible. They flaunted it.

Teenagers become obsessed with all kinds of things. And at a time when you're surrounded by a world of rules, curfews, and status symbols, being able to trump your parents' [CONTINUED ON PAGE 123]

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Marty's Moment

Al Gore has been preparing for the presidency his entire career, and no one wants to see him elected more than his mentor and close friend of 35 years, *New Republic* owner and editor in chief Martin Peretz. By Robert Schmidt

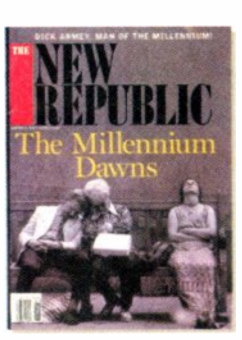
Martin Peretz's 60th birthday party was, by all accounts, an affair befitting a man who has lived his life traveling in the worlds of politics, journalism, and academia. Last fall some 250 friends packed into the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage in New York City to pay tribute to Peretz, the owner and editor in chief of *The New Republic* magazine, a weekly journal of political opinion that has been a bellwether of liberal thought in Washington for more than 85 years. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma, a close friend of Peretz's, performed a birthday concert. A full contingent of "Marty's boys"—such journalists as Michael Kinsley and Andrew Sullivan, whose careers have been shepherded by Peretz—attended the lavish black-tie dinner. But the biggest attraction, aside from the guest of honor, was from the world of politics—Vice-President Al Gore, joined by his wife, Tipper, his daughter Karenna Gore Schiff, and her baby boy, Wyatt.

Gore was no mere trophy guest, invited only to guarantee that the party would gain instant cachet or attention in the New York gossip columns, although his presence did both. Indeed, the vice-president, as Peretz proudly notes, is a close friend. When it came time for the toasts, Gore gave a teasing, affectionate speech, proclaiming his friendship for the man who helped Gore sort out his feelings about the draft in 1969, was at his side the day he became a United States senator in 1985, was one of his most influential and most vocal supporters during his unsuccessful 1988 presidential campaign, and traveled to Carthage, Tennessee, last year for the kickoff of his presidential race.

Peretz beamed as Gore recalled their days at Harvard University and noted that Peretz was instrumental in teaching a Southern boy about Jewish culture. The vice-president, who took his first trip to Israel with Peretz, a staunch Zionist, joked that one of their favorite songs was called "Mamas, Don't Let Your Ungrateful Sons Grow Up to Be Cowboys."

The joke highlights some obvious differences between the two men: Gore is a Southern Baptist politician and Peretz an East Coast Jewish academic. When they first met at Harvard, 35 years ago, Gore was a freshman and Peretz the young, dashing teacher whom everyone wanted to befriend. Today it is Gore who holds the power and the limelight.

The adage "If you truly want a best friend in Washington, buy a dog" is particularly apt when it comes to friendships between members of the media and politicians. Although such establishment journalists as ABC News correspondent Cokie Roberts and NBC News correspondent Andrea Mitchell mingle with politicians at cocktail parties and formal dinners as part of the inside-the-Beltway culture, there are few true friendships between politicians and journalists these days. The last great friendship between a president and a journalist was struck back in the early 1960s, when President John F. Kennedy palled around with *Newsweek* reporter (later *Washington Post* executive editor) Ben Bradlee. Like Kennedy, Gore is a D.C. insider—a member of Congress with a long history of interacting with the Washington press corps. More recent presidents such as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton were former governors who trumpeted their outsider status: They didn't have the time to build up relations with the media, nor, it could be argued, did they care enough to try. Of course, the media's fascination with presidents' private lives and with presidential scandals (most significantly Bradlee's paper's coverage of Watergate) has widened the chasm between journalists and presidents.



If Gore is successful in his bid for the White House, Washington will once again be home to a media insider with unparalleled access to the president. Not surprisingly, people are already buzzing about what might happen to Peretz and his magazine should Gore win. Writers at the 96,000-circulation *New Republic* joke that Peretz, a polarizing figure in Middle East politics, might land an ambassadorship to Israel. Others point out that Peretz—whose wife, Anne, comes from a

Gore and Peretz first met at Harvard, where Gore was a student of Peretz's. Portrait by Philip Burke

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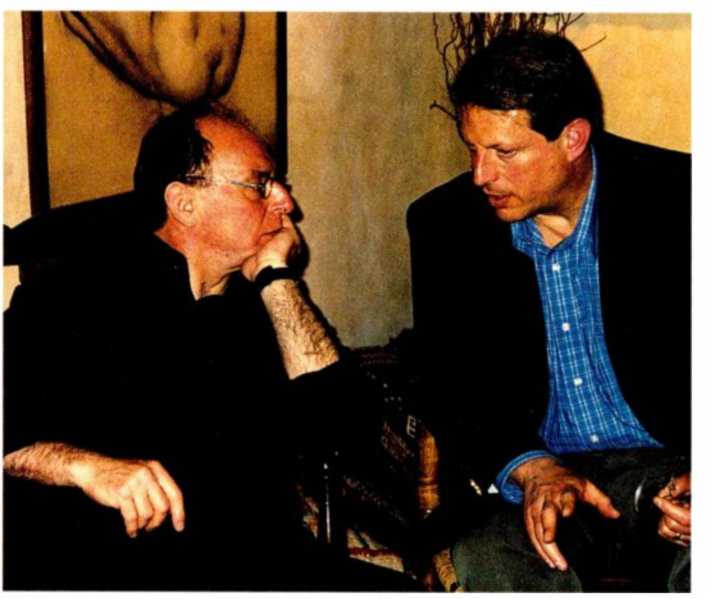
wealthy family—would likely hate having his finances made public during the confirmation proceedings. Furthermore, he has spent much of his life almost joyously making enemies of all sorts of influential people, which might come back to haunt him. Others speculate that Peretz, a man who loves rubbing elbows with powerful and famous people, would be content to be an unofficial Gore adviser, reveling in the attention likely to be given to Friends of Al—invitations to state dinners, sleepovers in the Lincoln bedroom, and maybe a secret mission to help the cause of peace in the Middle East. Such a position would, of course, boost Peretz's social standing in the capital.

Peretz says that it would be "crazy" to make him ambassador to Israel. In fact, any official job in a Gore administration, Peretz says, is out of the question. "Let me make it very clear that I'm not going to be in any job at all," he insists. Peretz is less clear about a role as an unofficial adviser but says that he generally doesn't "give Al foreign-policy advice. He knows what I think and we do discuss things when we see each other at leisure, but [we have] not been at leisure for 16 months or so." Even though Peretz downplays his influence with the vice-president, his friends say he would help Gore any way he could. "I'm sure when it comes time to staff a Gore administration, there will be all kinds of names that Marty will propose," says *The New Republic*'s literary editor, Leon Wieseltier, "but his own name will not be one of them."

And what might become of *The New Republic*, which Peretz bought in 1974 for $250,000, under a Gore presidency? Although the magazine is known for its iconoclasm and sometimes blistering attacks on politicians who don't toe the *New Republic* line, it has treated Gore respectfully. Still, say *New Republic* staffers, that doesn't mean the magazine is in the tank for Gore—even though much of Washington assumes it is. "In this case, the conventional wisdom is really tiresome," says Wieseltier. "Marty is interested in putting out a lively magazine; he's not interested in putting out an organ of a campaign." A look at the magazine's articles proves its Gore coverage has been tough and fair. During the primaries, *The New Republic* has run numerous articles critical of the vice-president's sometimes moribund campaign. In the past six months, the magazine has taken Gore to task for his various panderings: to Cubans (for his position that Elián González should stay in America); to women's groups (for opposing the Clinton administration's deal to get the United Nations dues paid because of anti-abortion language in the bill); to environmentalists (for promising them billions of dollars for conservation). Even *TNR*'s March endorsement of Gore conceded his flaws, though the editorial concluded on an undeniably positive note. "[Gore] knows how to attach America's prosperity to America's purpose," it read. "His nomination would be a credit to a party in which he—and this magazine—still believes."



New Republic editor in chief Martin Peretz (left) and Vice-President Al Gore at Peretz's house in Cambridge, Massachusetts, last year

ANNE PERETZ

But there's no denying that Gore has also been a friend of *The New Republic*. While in Congress, Gore wrote articles for the magazine, and, as vice-president, he once lunched with the editorial staff. With Gore in the White House, Peretz would find himself confronted with constant questions about the magazine's credibility. Some believe that Peretz will use his connection with Gore in an attempt to boost the magazine's prominence in Washington, a guess fueled in part by a direct-mail campaign launched in June 1999 and concocted by Peretz. The letter featured a portrait of the vice-president crowned with laurels. "You may know whom I support: Al Gore has been a friend for more than 30 years," Peretz wrote in a letter to potential subscribers. "Indeed, as a freshman at Harvard in 1965, he was one of my students, a memorable student as it happens, because he was all at once intellectually ambitious and deeply gifted. I knew already then how fine a mind he had and how morally scrupulous he was. I have never had cause to be disappointed or disenchanted." Peretz offered an 8-by-10-inch copy of the accompanying portrait of Gore (by Vint Lawrence, a *New Republic* artist) as a gift to new subscribers. "Marty believes that *The New Republic* is an indispensable magazine to people in Washington," explains one former staffer. "He believes it's even more indispensable if its owner were linked to Gore."

As one influential Democrat puts it, the magazine is not as relevant as it once was. *The New Republic* has been a voice for right-leaning Democrats, and its articles on arms control, foreign policy, and welfare have been an integral part of the policy debates that swirl around the White House and the halls of Congress; a plum political association with Gore may boost the magazine's profile. *The New Republic* has also graduated a host of well-respected journalists—many of them friends or students of Peretz's from Harvard. *TNR* alumni include *Slate* editor Michael Kinsley, cultural critic and *New York Times Magazine* contributor Andrew Sullivan, *New Yorker* senior editor Hendrik Hertzberg, kausfiles.com founder Mickey Kaus, author Michael Lewis, reporters Dana Milbank and Hanna Rosin and editorial writer Charles Lane of *The Washington Post*, and *Slate* chief political correspondent Jacob Weisberg.

But the magazine has also been hurt by the changing news cycle and the Internet. Web magazines such as *Slate* and *Salon* offer similar coverage, all of it updated daily. And then there was a sequence of editorial upheavals. Sullivan, the young British editor who seemed more interested in lifestyle politics than D.C. politics, was pushed out in 1996; his successor, Michael Kelly, was axed by Peretz in 1997, reportedly for refusing to run an unsigned editorial—written by Peretz—that downplayed Gore's fund-raising scandal. Kelly's replacement, Lane, was squeezed out in 1999.

The constant intrigue and *TNR*'s loss of oomph have led some to speculate that Peretz will put the perpetual money-losing publication on the block if Gore wins the election.

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After all, why would Peretz want to own a magazine that will inevitably be forced to criticize the policies of his close friend should he become president of the United States? The alternative—the magazine's loss of objectivity in deference to its owner's protégé in the West Wing—is no more attractive. "Al Gore came before the magazine in Marty's life and probably before the magazine in Marty's passion," says Charles Peters, editor in chief of *The Washington Monthly*, another political-opinion magazine. "He might go on, but my guess is he would get out."

When asked directly, Peretz says that he's likely to keep the magazine if Gore wins but "I might sell it if he's *not* elected," noting that he is "speaking very casually here." That's because, Peretz says, Gore will likely introduce new policies, including initiatives in science (a discipline in which the two men share an interest), such as increasing funding for research into antiviral agents and superconductors. "If he's elected president, life becomes much more interesting," says Peretz. Whatever happens, it's clear that Peretz is anxiously waiting and hoping for Gore's election.

THE NEW REPUBLIC FIRST ENDORSED GORE for president in the 1988 election. Peretz's glowing editorial (written in March of that year) noted Gore's "complexity of mind" and his "near-legendary ability to grasp the meaning of new and adventurous technologies." But the endorsement went one step further—it gave Gore *The New Republic*'s stamp of approval forever after: "We are for him for the long haul, through 1988 and beyond."

In the 2000 race, Peretz has continued his emotional—and financial—support of Gore. According to Federal Election Commission filings, Peretz; his wife, the chairman of a family-therapy clinic for the poor in Somerville, Massachusetts; their daughter Evgenia, a *Vanity Fair* contributing editor; and their son Jesse, a filmmaker, all gave the maximum $1,000 contribution to Gore last year. Each donated another $1,000 to Gore's legal and accounting compliance fund. Additionally, Peretz and Evgenia gave $5,000 to the political-action committee Leadership '98 in 1998. Peretz also has been a significant fund-raiser for Gore.

And he has, in fact, offered Gore political advice in the past. One move that sparked controversy was Gore's 1995 firing of speechwriter Richard Marius. Marius wrote a number of speeches for Gore in the early nineties while he was a senior lecturer at Harvard, and in 1995 Gore invited him to join his team. After Marius had secured a leave from Harvard and was preparing to move to Washington, Gore's office called and rescinded the offer. Peretz had faxed the vice-president a few of the articles Marius had written for the Harvard alumni magazine, including one that compared Shin Bet, the Israeli secret police force, to the Gestapo. In his recently published biography, *Gore: A Political Life*, former senior ABC News correspondent Bob Zelnick notes that Marius had no history of anti-Semitism and says that, "Most [of Gore's staff] felt Marius had been wronged and that the vice-president had acted to keep Peretz happy rather than to protect his office."

However, Peretz says that he was asked by two members of the vice-president's staff to bring Marius's writings to Gore's attention. Peretz makes no apologies for doing so, saying that the now-deceased Marius "seemed to me to have a tick about the Jews." Because Marius was to write for Gore, Peretz says, his articles were salient. "Since the vice-president is rather sympathetic to Israel, and he has made it very clear that he is, I thought he should [have been] made aware of the writings," says Peretz.

Overall, says Peretz, he doesn't view his friendship with Gore as "a political friendship." They do talk about politics, but other issues interest them more, says Peretz, especially the intersection of science and religion. They also talk a lot about family. "He's a fanatic father and I'm a fanatic father, and I would say those are the deepest bonds we have," says Peretz. The one time Gore got "pissed off" at him, Peretz says, was when he failed to call Gore after Peretz's son Jesse was involved in a car accident. The vice-president called Peretz at Jesse's hospital, and—after asking about Jesse—bawled Peretz out. "That gives you, I think, more of a sense of the relationship than any conversation we might have had about Russia policy or social security," says Peretz.

Some have speculated that Peretz will put *The New Republic* on the block if Gore wins the election. After all, why would Peretz want to own a magazine that will inevitably be forced to criticize his close friend?

Gore's daughter Karenna Gore Schiff, to whom the vice-president's office referred *Brill's Content*, says that the friendship is based more on a mutual intellectual curiosity than it is on politics. Peretz, says Schiff, will recommend books to her father, often about philosophy, which the two men discuss spiritedly. "They'll argue and debate and tease each other, and I think they almost have more fun disagreeing than agreeing sometimes," she says.

Schiff also notes that Peretz has been an important adviser to her father. "I know they do talk frequently and that my father values his friendship and counsel," says Schiff. "I think there is an element of [political] counsel, but their friendship is so deep that I wouldn't define the relationship that way."

GORE AND PERETZ MET IN 1965, when Gore, then a Harvard freshman, enrolled in first-year instructor Peretz's political seminar. Peretz was a popular campus figure, known for his liberal politics and his un-Harvard-like long hair and bushy beard. "There are teachers who develop coteries and everyone wants to be part of their clique, and Marty was definitely one of those during those years," says Michael Kinsley, who knew Peretz at Harvard and was editor of *The New Republic* from 1978 to 1981 and then again from 1985 to 1989. Peretz, who chose about 15 students out of the 100 who applied for his seminar, was taken with Gore, partly because Gore was so polite, and also for his "disciplined intelligence and ironic sense of humor." The course was a mixture of political theory, sociology, and psychology, with a reading list that ranged from C. Wright Mills to Alexis de Tocqueville.

The class consisted of freewheeling discussion, with Peretz encouraging his students to challenge the status quo. "It was a sixties seminar," says Peretz simply. But Gore, Peretz says, was one of the few students in the class who took centrist positions. "[W]hen he was a centrist, it took courage to be a centrist," says Peretz. "It really took a certain defiance, a certain personal bravery not to fall in with the clichés of the left." Schiff says her father credits [CONTINUED ON PAGE 127]

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Photographer Alan Diaz was the only journalist inside the home when armed agents took young Elián González. The resulting photo became instantly famous—and raised questions about whether Diaz's scoop was journalism or propaganda. By Amy Bach, Steven Brill, and Julie Scelfo

Capturing

"I WAS SO FAST THAT I THINK BACK AND I DON'T KNOW HOW I DID THAT," says Associated Press freelance photographer Alan Diaz of how he positioned himself to take the picture of the year—*the* picture of Elián González. The one in which Elián is in the closet, held by the "fisherman" as a Border Patrol agent in full riot gear, assault rifle at the ready, comes to take him. The one that made it into virtually every newspaper and onto virtually every TV station in the Western Hemisphere. The one that launched a thousand cries of "police state."

In Diaz's telling of his career-making moment, he was there at 5:15 that morning because "I knew. I had my gut feeling. I knew that it was going to go down, that's all." According to Diaz, he heard a "stampede" of agents coming from the back of the González house, and because he had a prime position out front, he jumped a 40-inch fence and ran through the front door and living room, found the closet where Elián was being hidden, and positioned himself to take the photo of a lifetime.

The now-famous photo Alan Diaz took during the INS raid on April 22. He could have—but didn't—take other photos that would have shown another side of the story.

ALAN DIAZ/AP PHOTOS

It all seems simple, perhaps even heroic. And in many respects it is. Diaz, 53, is a modest, shy man who worked the story longer and harder than the competition. And even the photographers he scooped offer praise for the long hours he invested to get the shot. But as with everything else about the Elián story—the story in which the "fisherman" who rescued Elián turns out to be a press-hungry house cleaner, and the second cousin who is supposed to be his stable, surrogate mother turns out to be an emotional basket case—there is more to the story of The Photograph than hard work or heroics.

This is the story of a photojournalist with the kind of deep passion for his subject that enabled him to be there and get the shot, but also of a man whose willingness to befriend one side allowed him to become the Miami family's designated photographer. That position got him unique access and, at the critical moment, an escorted entrance into the house, thereby making him a willing—if self-conscious—partisan in this bitter controversy.

It's a story of photojournalism fulfilling a classic function of monitoring government conduct, but also of a journalist who had the only outsider's eyewitness view of what happened inside the house during the raid—and could have, but didn't, use his voice and credibility as an outsider to counter accusations about police misconduct made by the Miami relatives.

Above all, it's an intensely human story of a man whose own haunting background as a Cuban-American, whose ups and downs as he scraped to build a life for himself and his family in the United States, and whose obsession with the story of the 6-year-old Cuban boy and the family that wanted to keep him all came together to produce a split-second moment of startling

Portrait of Alan Diaz by Brian Smith

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journalism, and at the same time sparked a debate that will last for years about how images are gathered and spun in today's media age.

Nothing about this story is baggage-free. From the time when Diaz began covering the story, on November 30, to the predawn raid on April 22, there is more than one version of how events transpired. On Thanksgiving Day, after Elián González was found dehydrated and sunburned atop an inner tube in the Atlantic Ocean near Fort Lauderdale, he was taken to Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, Florida. Already at his side were the boy's great-uncle and aunt, Lazáro and Angela González, and their daughter Marisleysis. The same day, Marisleysis received a call from Jose Basulto, the influential founder and leader of Hermanos al Rescate, or Brothers to the Rescue, a group of Cuban exiles who scout for Cuban rafters by airplane. Having been tipped off by a TV reporter that a group was stranded, Basulto began searching and returned distressed. He found nothing. Desperate for news, he telephoned the hospital where the survivors were reportedly taken, and a nurse put him in touch with the Gonzálezes.

Basulto visited the family and Elián the next day at the house, and did so almost every day after that. And there Basulto saw Alan Diaz, who came on the scene five days after Elián was rescued. Basulto has known Diaz for years. "He has flown with us many times," Basulto says. "He's not only a damn good photographer but he is also a friend." Most notably, in 1996, Basulto invited the press to join him in a flight to protest the Cuban government's shooting down of two planes the previous week. Four members of Basulto's organization were killed in the incident. In memory of those who died, the group planned to fly the same perilous route, which Cuban President Fidel Castro said violated its airspace. Most photographers didn't want to join, fearing Cuba would retaliate, according to Hans Deryk, a former AP staff photographer who is now photo director of *The Toronto Star*. In a foreshadowing of his intense involvement with Elián, Diaz wanted a front-row seat. "Alan wasn't a member [of Brothers], but Alan always wanted to sit on the plane with them," says Deryk. "It was his close ties to the Cuban community. If anyone was going to do it, it was Alan."

Born in New York City and raised by Cuban parents, Diaz remembers taking photos of his grandmother with an old Kodak Brownie at age 8 or 9. "It was on a snowy day and I'll tell you, ever since, I couldn't get away from cameras," he says. When he was 13, soon after Castro took power in Cuba in 1959, Diaz's parents moved back, harboring idealistic notions of what Castro and communism could bring to the troubled nation. But they returned without their young son, who did not want to go. Instead, Diaz stayed in the United States with relatives in the Bronx. At 17, he followed his parents "because I had to," he says. He lived in Cuba until he was 32.

"One time, the family walked out in the yard and dropped the puppy right in front of all the cameras," recalls a reporter for a local TV station. "Then they said, 'Here, Elián, go play with your puppy' in front of the whole world."

While there, the young Diaz married three times. He was always taking photographs, some of them risqué, but kept them underground because his work wasn't sanctioned by the government. He took a job in the one place reminiscent of the United States, the U.S. Interests Section, a U.S. government office designed to give the country a presence in Cuba without official recognition. Diaz worked there performing office duties until 1979 when, deeply disillusioned with Castro but attached to the Cuban people, he decided to make Miami his home. For Diaz and his wife, Martha, the move represented a compromise: Miami offered the people, the language, and excitement of Cuba, but not the government.

In Miami, Diaz taught English as a second language while trying to break into the world of photojournalism. He freelanced for various local weeklies to help support his wife and four children, the youngest of whom is now 18. In 1994 he walked into AP's downtown Miami office and got his first assignment. Diaz owned little equipment when he started, according to AP photographer Marta Lavandier. Freelancers must supply all their own gear, and the disks used for a high-powered digital camera can cost as much as $500 or $600 apiece. Diaz didn't even have a wide-angle lens, something necessary for the sports shots that are a Miami freelancer's meal ticket.

Diaz was known as a "go-to guy," meaning he did not get the high-profile assignments but could be counted on to cover local news and sports. He often worked twice as hard as more experienced photographers, his colleagues say, but was rarely the one who captured a great moment. In order to make money, which can be especially difficult for a freelancer at AP ("You can't spell 'cheap' without 'AP,'" the saying goes), Diaz would take on extra work by developing out-of-town photographers' film at football games. "He's a hard worker," says Phillippe Diederich, a freelance photographer who worked alongside Diaz during the pope's visit to Cuba in 1998. "[H]e is an honest, straight-up guy and sweet....He does his job the best that he can do it, but he wouldn't in any way step on anybody. He's not trying to be the most important photographer or a Pulitzer Prize winner." Friends are quick to describe Diaz as willing to lend a hand, even to competitors.

Like other minority journalists, Diaz often got pigeonholed into covering stories about the politics and people of his own community. "He speaks Spanish and knows the community," says Adam Yeomans, the AP assistant bureau chief in Miami. "I don't know if I'd call it an expertise in that area but he's someone we sort of rely on to help cover that stuff." And this was how Diaz found his niche. For years Diaz covered press conferences by The Cuban American National Foundation, an ardently anti-Castro group with major political influence in Miami, along with stories about other Cuban refugees. He always seemed to have a contact for Cuban-related stories, according to four of his colleagues. In 1998 Diaz returned to Cuba to photograph the pope. The experience was disheartening. "I know that he was pretty overwhelmed at his return," says Diederich. "When he was in Cuba he was nodding his head, 'My God, what had it become.'...He was very happy to leave after the pope."

So with the Elián story—the biggest news to hit Miami in years—the AP again called on Diaz. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Elián's extended family seemed to be shielding the 6-year-old who had lost his

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MULTIPLE EXPOSURES

"Hand over the kid before I go Waco on your ass!" stated the word bubble above the face of Attorney General Janet Reno, superimposed atop the torso of an armed SWAT-team agent. This poster image was but one reconfiguration of Alan Diaz's photos of the INS raid, which were quickly seized upon by Cuban activists and Elián sympathizers—not to mention pranksters—for their ripe improvisational value.

Within minutes of the raid, locals learned that the most well known picture was already on the Internet—it had been posted by The Associated Press and was available through Yahoo! and various newspaper websites. "I turned on the radio and heard the news," says Pavel Lujardo, who works at the Spanish-language Catholic magazine, *IDEAL*. "They said the picture was on AP....I copied [it] to a floppy and went to Kinko's and did a print out....Everybody was making copies." The Kinko's located in Coral Gables, about a ten-minute car ride from the González home, quickly became the hot spot for making posters, such as one of the Diaz photo bordered by the words "Ashamed to be American." Less than two hours after the raid, protesters brought the placard back to the house and held it up in front of news cameras.

But the image's afterlife didn't end there. At an April 29 demonstration in Little Havana, attended by more than 80,000 people, the photo ended up on banners, buttons, flyers, and T-shirts, altered and realtered to replace the photo's subjects with Janet Reno, Bill Clinton, and Fidel Castro.

Internet pranksters had their way with the photos, too. One e-mailed version shows the INS agent in Diaz's photo proclaiming, "Drop the Chalupa," a spoof of a Taco Bell commercial. In another, Elián has been placed in the arms of Michael Jackson; the subject line declares "Elián is finally safe." The most notorious caper was the Web video created by two Playboy.com employees, who promptly received cease-and-desist letters from the AP for "unauthorized defacing and display of AP pictures," thereby launching an Internet-wide grassroots protest about intellectual property in cyberspace (for more on this, see www.sixsite.com/true/). In the video, the raid photo came to life in the form of a well-known Budweiser commercial. "Whassup?" hollered Elián González, while the INS agent, Fidel, Janet, and Marisleysis responded in kind. "Whassup B?" the trooper asks Donato Dalrymple, who held Elián in the real photo. "Watchin' the game, havin' a Bud," came his response.

The photo's arrival into the national Zeitgeist was signaled by its appearance in a spoof commercial on *Saturday Night Live*. There it was, in the center of a dinner plate printed with the words "Elián Under Duress." The announcer described the virtues of "America's Worst Moments Commemorative Plates," and offered the big pitch: "Bring America's most humiliating failures into your living room."

JULIE SCELFO

A few of the ways innovators made use of Alan Diaz's photos of Elián. From left to right: T-shirts were emblazoned with a photo and the words "Federal Child Abuse"; an image of Michael Jackson was inserted into a Diaz picture and mass e-mailed; President Bill Clinton takes the place of an INS agent on a pin sold in Little Havana; Janet Reno's face is superimposed over that of an INS agent on a poster seen at a rally in support of keeping Elián in America.

L TO R: RON HAVIV/SABA; ANTHONY VERDE

mother at sea—no one was getting any photos of Elián. It was a far cry from the media power plays that later came to characterize the story.

But then something changed. Diaz began getting photos that no one else was getting. He shot two rolls of 24 exposures, one of them a close-up of the child's face that ironically became Fidel Castro's main propaganda shot for posters and T-shirts. For the first time, Diaz had made it big, and he didn't mind that it was thanks to Castro. "I thought, *Wow, I got a billboard where I never in my life would have thought I would get a billboard, especially in Havana*, you know?" he says. "[It] was, like, 'Wow.' I have one of those posters someone brought to me and I framed it. I have T-shirts that were brought from Cuba with Elián in front and I felt good about it."

Diaz says his entrée to the family didn't come from pilot activist Basulto's introduction, but by his own casual conversation with Lazáro, Elián's great-uncle. While Lazáro was putting up Christmas decorations in his yard, Diaz says he began chatting with him in Spanish and simply asked if he could take some photos. Diaz says Lazáro brought Elián out in the yard to see the decorations. "You can shoot him from outside the fence and don't talk to him," Lazáro said, according to Diaz. Afterward the conversation moved on to topics like sports and Cuba. "Nothing about the boy," Diaz says.

That version contradicts Basulto's claim that he was the matchmaker. "Al got in touch with the family through me," Basulto says. "And every time they needed a photo he was the one." When asked, Diaz confirms that Basulto urged Lazáro to let him shoot what would become the widely published pictures of Elián opening presents on Christmas Day.

"I'm looking here at a photograph that he gave me of Elián and myself," Basulto said wistfully in a phone interview, describing a photo of him sitting with Elián, who is wearing a baseball glove. "[Diaz] gave it to me as a present. 'Keep it as a present,' he said."

Within days of Elián's rescue, the boy's relatives decided that he belonged with them. They hoped to raise him in the U.S., against the apparent wishes of Elián's father, Juan Miguel González, who wanted the boy returned to Cuba, and who enjoyed the support of the Clinton administration. The Miami family's position brought trouble with Attorney General Janet Reno. Armando Gutierrez, a hucksterish political consultant, advised the family on media relations. Gutierrez orchestrated such familiar media moments as Elián's trip to Walt Disney World, his appearance at Little Havana's annual Three Kings Parade, interviews with the family, plus coverage of Elián's new puppy. "One time, the family walked out in the yard and dropped the dog right in front of all the cameras," recalls a reporter for a local TV station. "Then they said, 'Here Elián, go play with your puppy' in front of the whole world."

The way Diaz explains it, he continued to build his relationship by becoming a part of the scenery at these events, staking out his spot near the house and remaining there for days on end. "[I] came back every day, every day, every day, shooting the story, every day," he recalls,

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THE OTHER PHOTO

Alan Diaz's now-famous photo of the seizing of Elián González was months in the making. But there's a far simpler story behind the photo released later that day—in which Elián is shown happily reunited with his father.

The idea for putting out a rebuttal photo came from Ricki Seidman, a former Clinton administration staffer who now works at a Washington communications strategy firm. Seidman says she volunteered to help Gregory Craig, the lawyer for Elián's father, Juan Miguel González, "when I heard Al Gore criticize the administration's policy. Al Gore inspired me to want to help Greg and Juan Miguel."

According to Craig, "the picture from the raid was a truly frightening picture....But when we saw Elián with his father, that was a very different image....And Ricki suggested that we try to get a picture....So I asked the base commander [at Andrews Air Force Base, where Elián and his father were staying] if he could arrange for a photographer later in the day. Then I asked Juan Miguel if he minded if we had some pictures taken at about 4 o'clock." But, adds Craig, it turns out that Juan Miguel had a quicker solution. "He smiled, reached into his shirt pocket," Craig recalls, "and pulled out a disposable camera and said he'd already taken some pictures....He had taken some of Elián, and one of the INS or Border Patrol agents who had accompanied Elián had taken some of Elián and Juan Miguel together."

"I wanted to document that there was another side to [the Diaz picture]," Seidman says. "When we saw them together it was clearly a different picture."

Another enduring image: the father-son reunion

At the same time that the team helping Juan Miguel was thinking about a counter-picture, it got calls asking for just such a photo from both Myron Marlin, the Justice Department's director of public affairs, and, according to one of the people on that team, "someone in the White House communications office." (Marlin may have been on the case when it came to the photo war, but he and his staff fell down badly that day on another key P.R. front: No one bothered to inform the press, or even Craig, that the raid had been carried out only after an explicit warrant had been obtained from a magistrate—a gaffe that resulted in politicians who wanted to attack the raid going on the Sunday morning talk shows and inaccurately denouncing it as lawlessly done without a warrant.)

Seidman took Juan Miguel's disposable camera and, she says, "raced to the Ritz camera shop on Pennsylvania Avenue, had the pictures developed, and delivered them to AP at 1 o'clock."

Whereupon virtually every newspaper editor and TV news producer in the world was stuck with the decision of which photo—the terror of the raid or the joy of the reunion—to play bigger.

STEVEN BRILL

adding that he was there for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. "Everybody that was anybody...they knew Alan Diaz," says Donato Dalrymple, the "fisherman" who helped rescue Elián.

Diaz says he went inside the house only four times, once to shoot a visit from Gloria Estefan, although other journalists say this was more often than any other photographer. He also accompanied the family to a relative's home for Noche Buena, the traditional Cuban Christmas Eve dinner. But when the family offered him a seat at the table, Diaz says, he didn't feel it was appropriate. "So I just said thank you very much" and declined the offer, he says.

Every morning Diaz shared breakfast with P.R. flack Gutierrez and went with him to buy Cuban coffee and *pastelitos* (pastries) for the "Camp Elián" media gang.

But that response belies the complexity of this photographer-family relationship. Every morning Diaz shared breakfast with P.R. flack Gutierrez, accompanying him to buy Cuban coffee and *pastelitos* (pastries) for the "Camp Elián" media gang. "I knew Alan Diaz from having coffee with him every morning," says Gutierrez. Diaz often slept in a van right next to the house.

Diaz's camaraderie with Gutierrez grew. In fact, his relationship with the family's gatekeeper was unmatched. The family felt so comfortable with Diaz that one day Gutierrez approached him to ask for help. The family had a court battle coming up and it wanted photos to depict how well adjusted Elián had become. Diaz came through, though the photos were never used in the court case. Diaz says he did it as a favor and that he had no idea that it was for court use. "Actually I was killing rolls that weren't complete," he says. "That's all it was....I thought it was for [the family] because...there were a lot of portraits in there, too."

Diaz was also the only member of the press allowed to travel inside the family's car with the boy on his way to and from school. Gutierrez says that this was because Diaz was the pool photographer—an agreement reached between competing news organizations in which a single photographer will cover the story on behalf of all those in the pool. Gutierrez adds that Diaz was also chosen because the family felt comfortable with him—something that did not go unrecognized by fellow journalists. "I noticed from the very beginning him getting close to the spokesperson," recalls Arnaldo Irizarry, a cameraman for WSVN, Channel 7, Fox's local TV station. "Armando would say, 'Come over here and get in the car.' Alan would be gone for 45 minutes."

Diaz's presence in the car—and his status as a journalist—put him in a position to weigh in on one of the most contentious, and politically loaded, journalistic issues of the Elián saga.

WPLG, the local ABC affiliate on channel 10, ran a video of Elián yelling in Spanish at a passing jet. The station told viewers that Elián, "his arms arised to the sky, said '*Yo quiero que tu me regreses pa' Cuba*,' " or "I want you to take me back to Cuba." Many members of the Cuban-American community opposed to Elián's removal expressed outrage, claiming that the boy had actually said the opposite. An ensuing brouhaha included protesters picketing Channel 10's offices and shouting hostilities at its journalists.

The Miami Herald, widely criticized as being biased in favor of the Cuban exile community in its Elián coverage, analyzed the boy's grammar and hired an interpreter who concluded that the boy had said, "I want that they *not* take me back to Cuba." A follow-up article seemingly put the issue to rest: "Boy clarifies comment: 'I don't want to go,'" read the headline. According to the story, in the car ride home from school, Lázaro asked the boy, "So what is it that you said last night?" And Elián replied in Spanish, "I don't want to go to Cuba." The *Herald*'s clincher? Journalist Diaz was in the car. Mark Seibel, the *Herald*'s assistant managing editor in charge of metro coverage, says that at the time, the paper considered Diaz a credible source because he is a journalist, and that his reporter got Diaz's confirmation "just by asking him." "Also in the car at the time were González family spokesman Armando Gutierrez and Associated Press photographer Alan Diaz. All three confirmed that account," the story reads.

AFP

World Radio History

The story raised eyebrows among other photographers. Roman Lyskowski, the *Herald*'s deputy photo director, remembers being puzzled. He says he thought to himself, "Why was there a photographer in the car?"

As weeks turned to months, Diaz continued to camp out in his spot in front of the house, even when most of the media decided there was nothing going on. But by March, Camp Elián began to grow in numbers, with journalists from around the world pitching their tents.

For the family, the situation was becoming increasingly tense. Attorney General Reno was stepping up pressure for the family to give up the boy. On April 12 Reno came to Florida to negotiate the boy's return, but her deadline passed without any resolution. The major players covering the story recognized the family's anguish. "You could actually feel the tension," says Channel 7 cameraman Irizarry. Ninoska Perez, the spokeswoman for The Cuban American National Foundation, remembers Diaz having empathy for the family: "I know that I had tears in my eyes, and I know Al had tears in his eyes....You want to try to be professional but it was a very moving moment."

Diaz did not shoot any pictures of what federal agents claim—and a subsequent *Nightline* report seems to substantiate—was clear evidence of the family's effort to resist the federal agents.

April 22, the morning of the raid, Diaz had been awake for 72 hours in his "living room," a plum spot adjacent to the González's front yard, steps away from the front door and just outside a chain-link fence. Diaz says he had a "good feeling" that something was going to happen; he cleaned his camera lenses and put new batteries in his flash and camera. According to Diaz, "Lazáro just leaned on the fence and he said to me 'You know, Alan, if something goes down tonight, could you please come in?'" Gutierrez had also brought up the subject. "We...told [Diaz and NBC cameraman Tony Zumbado] we wanted them in the house if something happened," says Gutierrez. "If we had time, we were going to arrange [where they would stand]."

Diaz says he responded, "Man, if you want me in there now, I'm in!" But Diaz says Lazáro declined the offer, telling him to come in only if the raid happened. Nonetheless, Diaz had a clear advantage. News photographers generally can't—and don't—enter private homes uninvited even if they think something newsworthy is happening. Now Diaz had the invitation that no other photographer had.

Diaz wasn't the only one with an instinct that night. Rumors were flying that the federal agents would make their move that Easter weekend. On Friday, April 21, *The Washington Post* ran a front-page story reporting that the government was preparing to take action. Dozens of media personnel were watching the packed house, which was lit up throughout the night. But the rest of the media had been exiled behind an additional barricade across the street. They were twice as far as Diaz from where any handover would take place.

Diaz says that at 3 A.M., and continuing for just over two hours, he sat in his canvas camping chair, shooting the breeze with veteran *Miami Herald* photographer Jon Kral, a 1997 Pulitzer Prize finalist. At about 5:15 A.M., Diaz says, he heard rumbling, something like a stampede, "like horses on grass." "Jon, it's going down," Diaz said to Kral, as he grabbed his digital camera, which had been covered with a cloth to shade it from the morning dew. "Come on inside; come on inside," shouted Gutierrez, running out of the house, beckoning Diaz. Diaz jumped the fence. "I can't believe how well I jumped," he says. "But I jump and I land on my two feet." The pool videographer, Tony Zumbado from NBC, also had an invitation from Gutierrez. But Diaz says Zumbado was asleep when the raid began. (Zumbado omitted this fact from his later accounts, in which he charged that federal agents manhandled him, blocking him from getting his shot.) Zumbado belatedly went over the fence, too, but tripped and fell. Diaz took a few strides to the front door, which immediately opened for him.

Someone pushed Diaz toward the bedroom that Elián shared with his second cousin Marisleysis. "I go into the room," Diaz says. "It's pitch black, and I said 'Oh, God, I need light; I need light!'" He turned on the light and saw no Elián. "I said 'Oh, God, the kid!' You know, it went through my mind that he might be gone."

If any other photographer had run into the house, he would not have known where to go next. But Diaz had been inside the small house enough times that he went next to the door of Lazáro González's bedroom. Lazáro's wife, Angela, let him in. "She just looks at me like I don't know now. You know, a strange look...a very sad look." As he entered the room he saw Donato Dalrymple, the man who rescued Elián at sea, holding Elián inside the closet. "I say 'Oh, God!' You know, let me make a picture here because I don't know if I'm going to be able to make another one now when these guys come in," Diaz recalls. He shot a photo. One. Donato turned to him and said something like "What are they doing?" or "What are we going to do?" says Diaz.

"Donato," Diaz remembers saying, "there's nothing to do here." According to Diaz, the terrified Elián said to him in Spanish, "What is happening? What is happening?" Diaz says he replied, "Nothing's happening, baby. You'll be all right."

Diaz pulled up his camera and waited for the agents to come in. They entered and ordered him to stay back. His finger banged away on the shutter button. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight.

He watched as the agents took possession of Elián. Again, Diaz was ordered to stay back. As Diaz was leaving the house, he photographed the hysterical family. Nine. Ten. Eleven. Twelve. His final shots, taken outside, were of Ramon Saul Sanchez, the leader of the anti-Castro Democracy Movement, injured by an INS agent. Thirteen. Fourteen. He did not, however, shoot any pictures of what federal agents claim—and a subsequent *Nightline* report seems to substantiate—was clear evidence of the family's effort to resist the federal agents: a couch that had been pulled out of place in the living room to block the front door after Diaz had been allowed to enter. Diaz told this magazine that he was "so drained....I was sad, maybe confused, you know. I didn't want to work anymore." But his camera and his exclusive view of the inside of the house could have put an end to the family's subsequent claim that they had offered no resistance.

In front of the house, Diaz noticed Elián's 5-year-old cousin crying because of the tear gas in his eyes. "I told [CONTINUED ON PAGE 126]

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CULVER PICTURES

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William Randolph Hearst was America's original media mogul, a press baron whose guts and temperament would no doubt have thrived in the New Economy. By Richard Schickel

Hail To The Chief

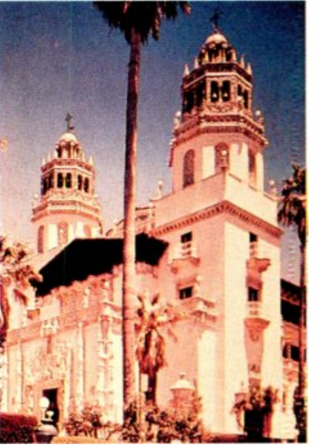
In 1950—William Randolph Hearst's eighty-seventh and last year on earth, and my last year in high school—I was 17 and the humblest Hearstling of them all, a copyboy at the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. For someone with journalistic ambitions, it was a great, and even romantic, summer job—odd hours, cynical newsmen, the presses in the basement shaking the building when they started their run.

The *Sentinel*, we can see from David Nasaw's new biography, *The Chief*, was an entirely typical Hearst paper of the early fifties—raffish and scrawny—and a distant second in a market dominated by the proud, slightly stuffy *Milwaukee Journal*, which then routinely made everyone's lists of America's ten best newspapers. The *Sentinel* suffered, as all the papers in the diminished Hearst chain did, from excessive centralization. Its pages were filled with syndicated features—Walter Winchell, Louella Parsons—and, of course, its lunatic right-wing political columnists: Westbrook Pegler, Victor Riesel, George Sokolsky. All this material was serviced by such Hearst subsidiaries as King Feature Service, International News Service, and the Hearst wire, which supplied editorials and special material advancing whatever the Chief's current agenda was (mostly virulent anti-communism at this particular time).

The papers had to pay for this stuff, which left their local newsrooms impoverished, unable to compete with the likes of the *Journal*, which to Milwaukee's complete contentment covered sewer bond issues and the bowling leagues with well-staffed and demonic thoroughness. The Sulzberger family, who owned *The New York Times*, sent their scion to it as an apprentice, but in some respects I preferred the *Sentinel*. Parsons and Winchell hinted at a more glamorous life than the *Journal* permitted us to imagine—nightclubs, celebrity high jinks—and I wanted to be with them in paradise. Sewer bonds have never much interested me.

Hearst's frequent journeys to Europe mixed business, pleasure, and often politics. At left, Hearst on the Lido, Venice, in the late 1920s.

HEARST STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT



The main house, San Simeon

Hearst himself had a certain dark glamour, too. The proprietor of what must be termed the world's first multinational, multimedia communications empire, he was famous for his spectacularly incompetent economic ways (he had lost almost everything in the Depression) and for the equally zany political course he had followed (from Bryan populism to McCarthyite reaction). By this time, most people paid scant heed to his rantings, but they gossiped endlessly about the legendary excesses of his art collection, which had played no small role in bringing him to the edge of bankruptcy, and his famous liaison with his "great and good friend," Marion Davies, the actress. And everyone knew he was the model for *Citizen Kane*, the celebrated movie that, largely through the publisher's efforts, most of us had never seen. The erroneous notion that Hearst had almost single-handedly instigated the Spanish-American War was planted in my mind, and I instructed myself to be appalled by this transgression against good journalistic practice.

It is the great virtue of Nasaw's superbly calm and nicely balanced book that he makes you think twice about all these matters—and many more. It is not that he is easy on Hearst's flaws, but he does show that

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Long before Disney, AOL–Time Warner, and Rupert Murdoch, Hearst had seen the strength that resided in owning as many ways of talking to the people—and selling them things—as possible.

they were heroically scaled, and often as not predicted things to come—both in journalism and in our political lives.

By 1950, Nasaw tells us, Hearst was operating out of a bedroom in Davies's Beverly Hills home, having left San Simeon, his fabulous "ranch" (only since it has become a tourist attraction do people refer to it as a "castle") in tears. He was frail, sickly, losing it. I sensed this one day that summer.

Mostly we copyboys hung out in the *Sentinel*'s wire room, which, far more than the city desk, was the paper's nerve center. The bell on the Hearst wire pinged, signaling that something from the Chief was heading our way. These missives always began "Chief Suggests" and this one was a lulu: The Korean War had begun that summer and the old boy was proposing that a circle containing a picture of General Douglas MacArthur and an American flag run in the upper-right-hand corner of all his papers' logos whenever an American victory was won. The legend "God Bless Gen. MacArthur" was to appear beneath it.

I remember being simultaneously appalled and amused as I ripped this instruction from the Teletype and hustled off with it to the managing editor's office. I knew of MacArthur's dangerous, yet faintly risible, egotism, knew he was Hearst's hopelessly out-of-it choice for the presidency, but mostly I was thinking what a laughable way of promoting the general that circle was. It was so redolent of turn-of-the-century newspapering, so Spanish-American War–ish.

Yet I also felt there was something innocent, even rather sweet, in the Chief's "suggestion," something that bespoke Hearst's ignorance of the art of public persuasion as it was developing at mid-century, and I felt a twinge of sadness for him.

Swimming at the "ranch," 1925. Hearst sits at right, behind Olympian Gertrude Ederle.

In this I would have been virtually alone among thoughtful, liberal-minded people of that time. By then that group's opinion of Hearst had coalesced into a hard knot of contempt. Thanks in part to his isolationism (which included a much-too-belated understanding of the danger of Nazism), in part to his slow-growing but ultimately implacable hatred of Roosevelt and the New Deal, in part to his unconsidered anti-unionism and anti-leftism, in part to the grandiosity of his own lifestyle—which blithely ignored the mewlings of middle-class morality—he had become something of a laughingstock. His publishing empire, battered and shrunken by the Depression, still commanded millions upon millions of readers. But, it was generally agreed, they were not at all the right sort; lumpen proletarian and petite bourgeoisie, they could safely be ignored while the better classes navigated the ship of state.

McCarthyism would at least briefly give the lie to this view. These folks could still be stirred up, still be a political factor. But that is somewhat beside my immediate point, which is that for all his eccentricities, all the huge effort he expended on marginal crusades—anti-vivisection, "smutty" books, plays, and movies—Hearst was one of the great visionaries of twentieth-century American life. He had invented what we now call the op-ed page (for which, in his case, everyone from Hitler to Huxley wrote), which was a small, mostly good thing, and he had invented the modern multimedia corporation, which is a large, ambiguous thing.

In his early days, as H. L. Mencken put it, Hearst "shook up old bones, and gave the blush of life to pale cheeks" with the bold design and typography of his journalism and with the snappy writing for which he paid far above the prevailing scale. In the course of this activity, Mencken went on, he "not only vastly augmented the enterprise of the whole American press; he also forced into it some understanding of the rights and aspirations of the common man...[and] broke down the old American respect for mere money."

In his book, nearby that telling quote, Nasaw totes up some of the many issues on which Hearst, who in those early days was a Bryan Democrat, stood to the right: antitrust, municipal regulation of utilities (if not outright ownership), direct election of senators, a federal income tax, school and prison reform, establishment of the Federal Reserve Board.

There is more. He opposed American intervention in World War I, and, well before Roosevelt embraced the idea, proposed a multibillion-dollar public works program to ameliorate the Depression. He even advocated diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union when few public figures did. And, all his life, he predicted that Japanese expansionism would eventually lead to war—though this position was tainted by the "yellow menace" prejudice endemic to his generation of Californians. It may even be that his ranting anti-communism derived from this racism, for he eventually conceived the notion that Russia was "basically Asiatic in thought and temperament."

These views did not, at the time, debar him from mainstream populism, which always bore a racist strain, and his political ambitions (he was briefly a congressman, ran for governor and mayor in New

TOP: CRAIG AURNESS/CORBIS; L: AMPAS

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W. R. Hearst's "ranch" at San Simeon, California. It remains unfinished.

York, dreamed of the presidency) were not entirely implausible. Indeed, it is possible that he was fraudulently denied his mayoralty, and it is difficult to understand why he did not do better, generally, in electoral politics.

One can't help thinking—although Nasaw doesn't quite risk this generalization—that Hearst's growing media power alienated his natural constituency. He was not shy about using his papers to advance his ambitions, and it may be that Mencken's "mob" feared the concentration of political and media power that Hearst clearly represented. Not to mention, alas, the flakiness he never bothered to hide.

Let's talk about power first. Long before Disney, AOL-Time Warner, and Rupert Murdoch, Hearst had seen the strength that resided in owning as many ways of talking to the people—and selling them things—as possible. In addition to his publications and the variety of wire and syndication services, he owned a newsreel company and a movie production company and spent much of the 1930s haranguing his executives about the persuasiveness of radio, which they were slow to understand but he forced them into. He missed out on television and, of course, the Internet, but you may be sure he would have been passionately committed to both. And today's Hearst Corporation, with $5 billion in revenue, one of the nation's largest privately held companies, is a major player in those fields.

The other thing about Hearst that ought to commend him to modern-day America, gaga as it is about entrepreneurial daring in the new media, is his total disregard of debt. His father may have given him his first newspaper, *The San Francisco Examiner* (whose purchase of its competitor since Hearst's youth, the *Chronicle*, is pending), but thereafter he bought almost everything on credit loosely secured by his family's mining fortune.

And like his modern counterparts, he never gave a hoot about profits, whether immediate or, seemingly, at any foreseeable moment. He never met a budget he couldn't exceed, and Nasaw recounts no grand Hearstian statements about the future he was building for his corporation or his somewhat feckless family. He simply loved to acquire things—the analogy in his private life is to his demented art collecting—and he loved to build things that were impossible to complete (San Simeon remains unfinished to this day). If he thought about ends at all, he

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BOOK EXCERPT

THE CHIEF: THE LIFE OF WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST

By David Nasaw

Although the coming of the tabloids in the middle 1920s made Hearstian yellow journalism look more respectable in hindsight, it had not done Hearst's bottom line much good. As *Time* magazine had reported on August 15, 1927, the [*New York*] *American* was "weakening. The terrible tabloids have out-Hearsted Hearst and the morning New York field in screams and scandals is dominated by the *Daily News*."

Fully aware that the tabloids were eating into his circulation in New York City and might, in the near future, do so in other cities, Hearst cautioned his editors to condense their news stories: "The average man in the street wants to read all the news of importance...presented to him briefly as well as brightly. There are so many things to occupy the time of every man, woman and child in America these days that no one ever has a great deal of time to give to any particular matter." Still, while he wanted shorter news stories, he was not willing to follow the example of the tabloids and substitute photographs for text. "Pictures that do not have news value," he warned his newspaper executives, "do more harm than good.... *The mass of pictures in a newspaper should have definite news value or else they should not be in the newspaper.*" He was also uncomfortable with the tabloids' penchant for attacking celebrities every bit as viciously, if not more so, than politicians. "Please, Phil," he telegrammed Phil Payne, his editor at the *New York Mirror*, after a particularly scurrilous attack on Gloria Swanson, "be more kindly to people and try [to] make friends of them. Nearly everybody I know is weeping on my shoulder because of [the] way *Mirror* roasts them. Can you not get some good natured reporters on staff?"

This is not to say that there wasn't a steady decline in the quality of the Hearst papers, especially the evening editions and the *New York Mirror*. The international and national coverage was no longer as well-written or as complete, the front pages were no longer laid out as cleanly as they had been, there were too many thick, bold headlines, and on the inside pages ads usurped space that should have been devoted to news items.

Hearst presides over a San Simeon dinner.

The Hearst papers had always specialized in crime stories, the more heinous and bloody the better, but while earlier these stories had also called attention to the role of political malfeasance and police incompetence in fostering criminality and derailing justice, that subtext had largely disappeared. If Hearst had earlier built a readership and political constituency among his working-class and ethnic voters by presenting himself as their ally in the battle for a safer, more livable city, he now attempted to hold on to that constituency by practicing a sort of identity politics. Gone were the crusades against the trusts and the bosses, against corrupt machine politicians and judges. In their place were rather blatant attempts to appeal to ethnic groups by hiring their "heroes" to write columns.

As part of his never-ending and never successful attempt to compete with the *Daily News*, Phil Payne at the *Mirror* asked for Hearst's permission to commission the world's most famous Italian, Benito Mussolini, to write a regular column. "Believe a Mussolini signed editorial exclusively in the *Mirror* would mean hundred thousand extra daily circulation for us in New York," Payne telegrammed the Chief in February of 1927. "Mussolini is constantly seeking to influence American public opinion. That is why I think he will do the job for nothing. What do you think about it?" Hearst replied that he thought the Mussolini idea was great. Unfortunately, Mussolini had already signed an agreement with the United Press syndicate, which was at the time Hearst's major competitor, to write "opinion pieces." To get Il Duce's articles, Hearst had to buy them from the United Press, which he reluctantly agreed to do.

Payne had more luck with his "Jewish" columnist. In February of 1927, he wrote Hearst at San Simeon that he had been able to sign on Rabbi Stephen S. Wise to do a column for the *Mirror*. Hearst was delighted. As he had earlier advised Lee Ettelson, the editor of the *American*, his other New York morning paper, it was "very important to have the support of the Jewish people in New York." The *New York Times*, he feared, was doing a much better job "looking out for the interests of the Jews—possibly because Mr. Ochs is a Jew; but although we are not, it is the policy of the *New York American* to deplore any race prejudice and to promote good feeling among all creeds and classes and protect the interests of every worthy cause."

Instead of attempting to represent the people in their fight against the bosses and the trusts by seeking injunctions or organizing demonstrations, the Hearst press in the 1920s had begun to rely on "stunts" and contests to attract new readers and hold on to old ones. The *Mirror* outdid itself, month after month, in this regard. In the fall of

L. MARC WANNAMAKER/BISON ARCHIVES; TOP: BETTMANN/CORBIS; BOTTOM: ARCHIVE PHOTOS

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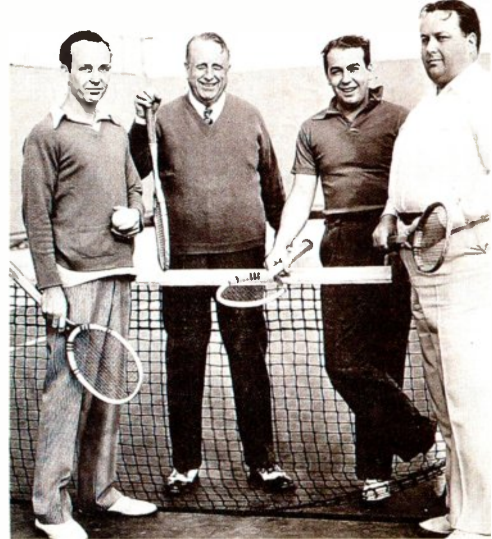
1927, Phil Payne engineered his most spectacular—and last—circulation stunt for Hearst. Caught up in Lindbergh fever with the rest of the nation, Hearst had offered to sponsor an entry of his own in a contest to fly the Atlantic, nonstop, to Rome. When Phil Payne announced that he was joining the crew of "Old Glory," the Hearst plane, in its trans-Atlantic flight, the Chief argued against it. To prove to Hearst that "Old Glory" was flightworthy, Payne took [Hearst's wife] Millicent up for a ride from the Old Westbury, Long Island field that Lindbergh had used. Millicent immediately telegrammed Hearst her enthusiastic endorsement: "I know the boys will make Rome in Old Glory. Think this is a most wonderful ship."

Hearst remained opposed to the plan and just days before departure telegrammed Payne that he would back the flight "only if the Government [assumed] authority and responsibility." Receiving no answer from Payne and fearing the worst, Hearst sent another telegram, this time to Mitchell Shiber, an editor at the *New York American.* "Rush Extra. Get this message by telephone to Phil Payne wherever he is immediately and confirm by telegram, quote, 'Do not let Old Glory hop off except under Government sanction per telephone message to Coblentz last night, unquote.'"

It was already too late. "Old Glory" had taken off as scheduled and crashed in the Atlantic with no survivors. Hearst, deeply embarrassed and ashamed that the life of his editor had been lost in so obvious a circulation stunt, published his correspondence with Payne in the *American.*



Hearst (second from left) with his sons, 1934

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Hearst campaigns for mayor of New York, 1909.

apparently imagined that somehow, sometime, things would come out all right, and damned if they haven't.

Put simply, Hearst was a media baron, but he was not a robber baron. He was a fierce competitor, but had no desire to crush or humiliate his rivals, the way so many Internet titans do today. He could be snappish with his underlings, but he could never bear to fire them. Some of the troubles he endured in the 1930s and 1940s, when he lost financial control of his empire, stemmed from his kindly inability to cut deadwood. There were also, of course, unkindnesses—notably his hatred of Roosevelt and his works—which went over badly with his readers. Hearst saw the code of the National Recovery Administration, as applied to newspapers, as an infringement on press freedom; he hated the New Deal's encouragement of unionization (particularly in his newsrooms), and, naturally, he hated the income tax, which became confiscatory in his bracket.

Hearst's isolationism, which was always selective (he advocated muscular Americanism in Asia and the Americas) but was distinctly Anglophobic and peculiarly blind to fascism (whose evils he discounted because he saw it as an anti-communist bulwark), also cost him readers, especially among Jews, who had supported his domestic populism.

It was during this period that the anti-Hearst campaign reached full, and slightly hysterical, cry. Introducing Ferdinand Lundberg's *Imperial Hearst* (published in 1936), Charles Beard wrote, "Even school boys and girls by the thousands now scorn his aged image and cankered heart." Five years later, that "image" was forever sealed by *Citizen Kane.*

Orson Welles's movie is a classic, but as biography it is bunk. Begin with Orson Welles's Hearst impersonation: His Charles Foster Kane is too ebullient in the early going, too embittered and isolated in the end. Hearst was, in fact, a large (more than 6 feet 2 inches), socially awkward, exceedingly shy galoot with a piping voice, hard to know and incapable of intimacy. His seeming frostiness often scared people on first meeting. It is only in his correspondence, which Nasaw quotes extensively and effectively, that a different sort of man emerges. Like a lot of people who are inarticulate face to face, Hearst was a terrific writer—forceful, direct, and often humorous, even at his own expense.

Hearst surely had his problems with his parents, but they were not Kane's problems. His father, for instance, was not a drunken failure. George Hearst was a drunken, barely literate success, whose good opinion, Nasaw makes clear, Will (later W.R.) spent his early decades vainly seeking. Nor did Hearst's mother, Phoebe, coldly reject him in Agnes Moorehead fashion. Rather the opposite. She made him into a mama's boy. After George's death Phoebe controlled his mining fortune and forced her son to wheedle the money he needed for expansion out of her. Occasionally grudgingly, often anxiously, but always, in the end, handsomely, she obliged him. He may have been a buccaneer, but he was long tied up in apron strings.

The *Kane* myth encompasses two other [CONTINUED ON PAGE 122]

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BACK TO THE U.S.S.R.

The journalists who aren't stooges for the ruling elite live in fear that the power of the state will come crashing down on them at any moment. Democracy may be taking hold in Russia, but when it comes to the notion of a free press, it feels like the bad old days. **By Matt Bivens**

The tax audit of our Russian media company began in typical fashion: Six beefy men wearing black ski masks and carrying AK-47s stormed into the publisher's office. They detained employees, rifled through filing cabinets, and demanded that safes be opened. They were after the payroll—$250,000, a sum collected in cash because the ruble, the government, and the national banking system had just collapsed. "These were officers with nothing to do with our tax district," recounts Derk Sauer, my boss, a Dutch journalist-turned-Russian media mogul. "They came from the other side of Moscow."

Our company's flagship is *The Moscow Times*, an English-language daily newspaper, which I edit. The newsroom is located at 24 Truth Street—Russia's answer to Fleet Street—in office space that once belonged to *Pravda*, which was the former Soviet Union's leading newspaper. Today, what had been the *Pravda* editor's office is occupied by me, a 31-year-old carpetbagger from North Carolina, and the newsroom is filled with grungy blue office carpet, brand-new iMacs, and about 30 journalists—Russians, Americans, and Europeans.

When news reached us on Truth Street that a band of masked men had seized our business office and publisher, some of us exchanged worried looks. At my secretary's quiet insistence, I emptied the wall safe, where we kept a negligible amount of petty cash. Then I called my boss, a man who runs one of the biggest publishing houses in Russia, Independent Media, which puts out, among other things, Russian-language editions of *Cosmopolitan*, *Playboy*, and *Good Housekeeping*. His frightened secretary could not put me through and said neither she nor anyone else had been allowed to leave for hours. I passed the news on to the reporters, who nodded in concern, then calmly went about their business. There was no panic. Tax raids happen, especially to media.

That was fall 1998. A year later, a second war in Chechnya was at its peak; the Kremlin was revving up a political-propaganda machine to ensure that Vladimir Putin, Boris Yeltsin's handpicked successor, would become Russia's next president. Our colleagues in the Russian media were howling about politically motivated tax audits. And suddenly the tax men returned with a vengeance. If they were content before to storm in and storm out with cash (in the end, they took $40,000), this time they demanded a sum with the potential to cripple our company: $9 million. They had reached that figure by insisting that anything that could be bought or sold—the book, say, in a book review or the dresses in a fashion-show photo shoot—was advertising, and was to be taxed as such.

In the late 1980s, when, after decades, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* made it possible for Soviet citizens to speak their minds, the populist Yeltsin caught the national mood of dissatisfaction with the shortcomings of Soviet life. And when some Communist Party members who were opposed to Gorbachev's liberal ideas tried to seize power—calling out tanks in August 1991 and arresting Gorbachev—it was Yeltsin who saw that they did not have the nerve to finish that fight and stood atop one of those tanks to say so. The coup crumbled and with it the Soviet Union. Gorbachev ceded the Kremlin to Yeltsin.

But Yeltsin did not live up to his original promises as a reformer and a democrat. Corruption flourished and civil liberties quietly eroded on his nine-year watch. Yeltsin himself sank so low in the public's estimation that to leave office voluntarily, he needed a formal immunity deal for himself and "the Family," as Russians derisively refer to Yeltsin's inner circle of cronies and actual relatives. He got that deal from Vladimir Putin, a 47-year-old former KGB officer who has little use for a free press.

Putin and his ministers, of course, say otherwise. The Kremlin offers a steady diet of

Right: Vladimir Putin, the former KGB officer who was elected president of Russia in March

AP PHOTO

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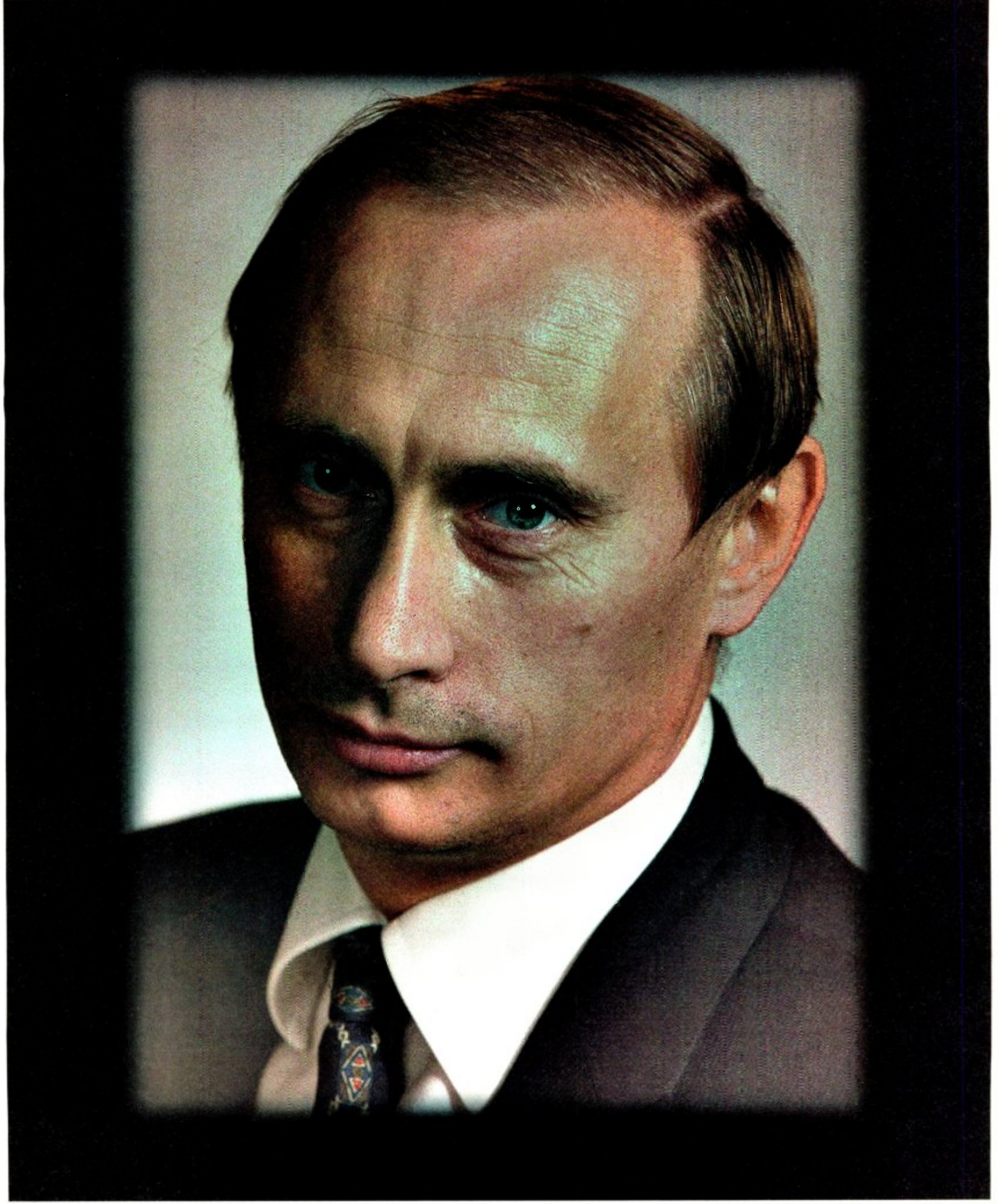

World Radio History

RUSSIA AND THE MEDIA

statements insisting that Putin has no intention of undermining the Russian constitution's free speech guarantees. "The president is firmly convinced that freedom of speech and freedom of the media are immutable values. A free press must exist as an important guarantee of democratic development," said the Kremlin press service in a statement when approached about this article.

But actions speak louder than words. Putin's machine-gun-toting tax police—in their trademark black ski masks and camouflage outfits—have descended in force upon the free media, in a country where full compliance with the tax laws often means surrendering more than 100 percent of profits.

That these raids are legally dubious and politically motivated was spectacularly displayed on May 11, just days after Putin's inauguration: Dozens of armed men in masks stormed the headquarters of NTV, the only television station in Russia with national pretensions that is not owned by the state. The first wave of commandos identified themselves as tax police; later in the day they removed the "tax police" signs from their backs, and suddenly the raid was characterized as part of a criminal investigation. Among those who did not buy either story was Gorbachev, who has agreed to head a public committee to defend NTV. "Non-state media, free from arbitrary bureaucratic interference, are among the necessary and essential guarantees of democracy," he said at the time. Meanwhile, the spin on Putin-allied television stations is that NTV is run by Israeli spies.

The NTV raid is not an isolated event. Thuggish state-sponsored attacks on journalists have become commonplace ever since Putin came to power. His federal agents parked one journalist, Andrei Babitsky, in a concentration camp before selling him to kidnappers. They sought to frame the son of another journalist as a purse snatcher. They dragged a third journalist, Alexander Khinshtein, out of his bed and tried to take him to a psychiatric ward in another city, claiming he had not properly filled out his 1997 driver's license application.

Putin has also said that "spies" have infiltrated the environmental movement. In one case that has been under Putin's direct control for more than a year, an environmental journalist named Alexander Nikitin was charged with treason, on the grounds that he had violated secret decrees by documenting government negligence with nuclear waste. The decrees were so secret that Nikitin's own defense team was initially not allowed to see them—so secret that prosecutors themselves conceded they had not read or seen the decrees their charges were based upon.

Putin's aggressive new press minister has unplugged a television station and forbidden news media from publishing interviews that directly quote Chechens—including the elected Chechen president, who accuses Yeltsin's inner circle of organizing the war to elect Putin in the resulting chaos. Putin's allies in Parliament have blocked an investigation into this accusation, and Putin has said he sees it as "immoral" even to entertain such ideas. At the same time, Putin sees nothing immoral in the Family's control over the Kremlin's Channel 1, the only television station that can be seen in every Russian home—a monopoly of the airwaves inherited from Soviet days. Channel 1, under Putin, has been using its airwaves to whip up war rage and to smear Putin's rivals as gays and Jews.

Some are openly talking of fascism and police states. "Under Putin, a new stage in the introduction of modernized Stalinism has begun," said Yelena Bonner, 77, the human-rights activist and widow of Nobel Prize–winning dissident Andrei Sakharov, in an open letter distributed to the media in March. "Almost all of the newspapers and television companies are under the control of [the Family and other corrupt power-brokers], which ensures a censor-like guidance of the mass media in the interest of those authorities." Others, however—including the U.S. government and many Western leaders—are praising the young, energetic, economically liberal new Putin government.

For a fresh view, I visited Oleg Panfilov, a well-known free press activist. The Panfilov family has lived one of those irony-rich existences so commonplace here: In the 1930s, the Panfilovs were declared "enemies of the people," and Panfilov's father, then just 14, was sent to a prison camp in Soviet Tajikistan, near the border with Afghanistan. After prison, he stayed in Tajikistan, married, and fathered Oleg. In 1992, Oleg, by then a journalist, was declared an enemy of the people by a new Kremlin-installed regime in what was by then an independent Tajikistan—and sought asylum in Moscow. "I did not bother getting Russian citizenship, although I'm Russian. I feel it's better to be a citizen of my banana republic than a citizen of the country that...forced me to flee my homeland," he said.

Panfilov, now 43, used to be the Moscow representative of the New York–based Committee to Protect Journalists, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the safety of journalists around the world. Now he's starting a project at the Russian Union of Journalists to teach first aid, ethics, and common sense to Russia's war correspondents. His new office needs a rug, a couch, maybe a table, and someplace to put the stacks of books and documents arranged on the floor. As he poured me a cup of tea, I asked him about the Union of Journalists' national study of media freedoms, published in October 1999, which concluded: "There is no freedom of speech in Russia."

Panfilov cited statistics that indicate "about 80 percent of all printing presses in Russia...and about 90 percent of all [TV and radio transmitters are]...state-owned"—and as such are weapons for silencing dissent in the hands of the nation's notorious regional governors.

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN'S MACHINE-GUN-TOTING TAX POLICE—IN THEIR TRADEMARK BLACK SKI MASKS AND CAMOUFLAGE OUTFITS—HAVE DESCENDED IN FORCE UPON THE FREE MEDIA.

Though Russia is not a dictatorship, a visit to the provinces reveals a federation of mini-dictatorships. The nation's 89 regions are ruled by men with sweeping, autocratic powers. Some are little better than organized-crime bosses, capable of putting out a contract on a journalist; others are more subtle in orchestrating favorable coverage and retaliating against the unfavorable.

"The usual mechanism—and there have been very many such cases—works like this," Panfilov said. "An independent newspaper in one of the provinces publishes an article critical of the work of the governor. The governor picks up the telephone and calls the director of the printing press—because the printing press is subordinate to the governor. And he says, 'This newspaper must be punished.' The

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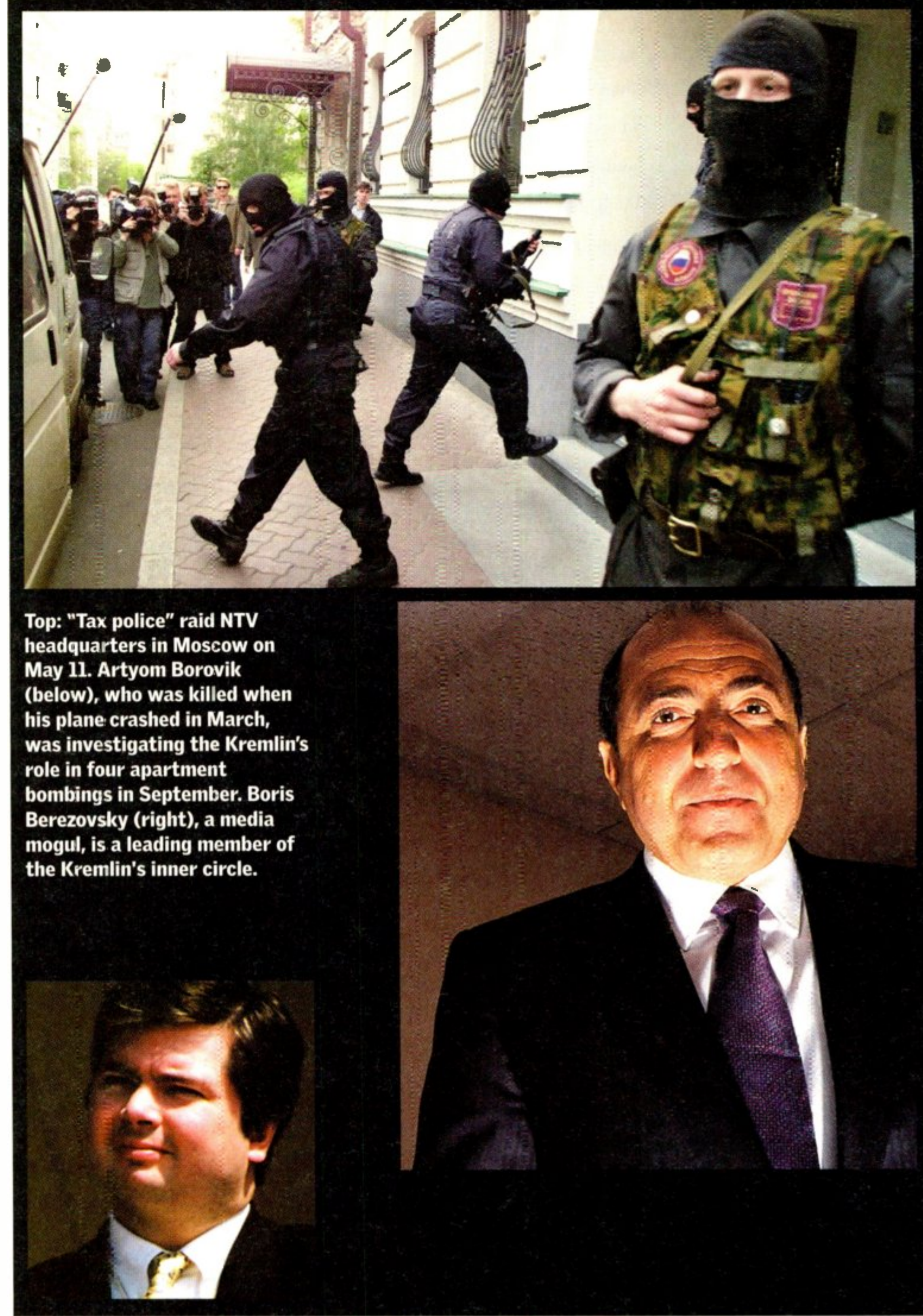
director of the printing press already knows what to do. He picks up the telephone and calls the editor of that independent newspaper and says: 'You know, tomorrow our electricity rates are going up, the price of newsprint is going up, the price of ink—so the cost of our printing services is going to rise three- or four-fold.' And that's it. That's the end of our independent newspaper."

When national media weigh in with hostile or uncomfortable reporting, they are often simply not distributed locally. And in one recent case, a national newspaper was even rewritten locally: On April 14, *Izvestia* published a withering article about the governor of Saratov, a region along the Volga River valley. This governor, *Izvestia* reported, never keeps his promises, and to get re-elected in March he struck opponents off the ballot and falsified the vote count. In Saratov, however, locally printed editions reported that the governor "sometimes" keeps his promises; as to rigging the vote, they simply noted that the elections, "in the opinion of [the governor's] main challengers, allegedly passed with legal violations."

Russia's provinces have long been the grim setting for horror stories. In the westernmost region, journalists critical of the governor, Leonid Gorbenko, have been beaten nearly to death, and their offices have been firebombed. Gorbenko is known for throwing microphones and temper tantrums during interviews with visiting television stations. And so it goes all across Russia to the Pacific Ocean port of Vladivostok, where one radio journalist has recounted how kidnappers tied his wrists behind his back, beat him, and burned him with cigarettes. His tormentors have been linked by federal investigators to the region's deputy governor.

Governors have other weapons, too. Lawsuits, for example. Article 151 of the Russian Civil Code allows an aggrieved party to sue for damages to a citizen's honor and dignity, and does not specify that truth is a defense for journalists. In 1997, as the editor of *The St. Petersburg Times*, a sister paper to *The Moscow Times*, I had the pleasure of learning firsthand the implications of this tool. An American-Russian joint venture to set up a Subway sandwich shop had fallen apart in acrimony; ultimately a Russian court ruled against the Russian partner, Vadim Bordyug, ordering him to pay $1.2 million to the Americans. When we reported this, Bordyug sued us for honor and dignity damages. He argued it was bad for his reputation to have testimony from his loss in court reported to the wider public—which, of course, it was. The case has stalled, and has not been ruled upon.

Honor and dignity cases have become a cottage industry. The Glasnost Defense Foundation, a Russian version of the Committee to Protect Journalists, reports that judges are willing to hear such cases 97 percent of the time and rule against the media 70 percent of the time.



Top: "Tax police" raid NTV headquarters in Moscow on May 11. Artyom Borovik (below), who was killed when his plane crashed in March, was investigating the Kremlin's role in four apartment bombings in September. Boris Berezovsky (right), a media mogul, is a leading member of the Kremlin's inner circle.

TOP MISHA JAPARIDZE/AP PHOTO LEFT ITAR-TASS/SIPA, RIGHT SABA

Then there are the federal subsidies for loyal media, handed out by governors and the Kremlin. There are also several thousand state-funded journalism prizes—such as the cash prize the governor of Nizhniy Novgorod offered in 1996 for the best coverage of his re-election campaign.

While Western governments and media have applauded and encouraged the privatization of such Soviet-era state assets as the oil companies, none has said a word about privatizing the printing presses or about the practice of government officials using taxpayer cash to set up their own pet media. Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov, for example, has his own national television station now: Center TV, funded by the city budget and loyal to the end to Luzhkov alone. Petersburg Television, its finances sucked dry by corruption, is now officially run by a deputy St. Petersburg mayor. The Russian Central Bank had also used state funds to

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found its own national newspaper, *Vremya MN*. The paper doesn't offer many Central Bank corruption stories—but nowhere will you read warmer coverage of former International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director Michel Camdessus, who kept sending those billion-dollar loans even though the Russian Central Bank admits it has for years been parking the nation's hard currency reserves in a British Channel Islands–based shell company called FIMACO that has no employees or premises.

Four years ago, I was on the Russian presidential campaign trail following Boris Yeltsin's Communist challenger, Gennady Zyuganov. It was a cheerless press corps: Zyuganov rarely made for good theater, and even when he did, reporters could expect their stories to be killed or rewritten as part of a national disinformation campaign organized by the Kremlin. One colleague at the Russian wire service told me her reports about Zyuganov's daily doings were not just spiked but were returned to her as printouts, with a rubber-stamped message across the top: "Contradicts the Informational Policy."

On one afternoon in May 1996, I watched Zyuganov work a crowd of appreciative students and faculty at a vocational school in the Ural Mountains, Russia's answer to the American Midwest. He told them he had obtained a four-point blueprint of a covert operation to destroy the Soviet Union that had been waged—successfully, it seems—by President John F. Kennedy. This scheme, Zyuganov said, hinged upon a silent CIA takeover of the Soviet Union's mass media. The nation's news organs were then used to foster, among other things, disrespect for the elderly. In his vague and meandering way, Zyuganov suggested that the CIA continued to control Russian television. At the back of the hall, my colleagues and I rolled our eyes or shared whispered wisecracks. But the students and faculty applauded warmly and often.

Back in my hotel that evening, I tuned in to a local radio station. A newscaster announced that Zyuganov was in town; he then went on to report that the candidate had not been able to speak at the vocational school because the students had booed him off the podium. None of this was true. No wonder Zyuganov believed the CIA had taken over the media. The free Russian press, it seemed, was obliged to undermine a Communist candidate in order to protect their own future.

That was presidential politics in 1996. By the March 2000 presidential race the situation was worse. Channel 1 was reporting luridly that "gays" were lining up to vote against Putin, in favor of the nation's leading liberal politician, Grigory Yavlinsky, and was offering a vicious attack on the existence of independent television station NTV on the grounds that it was run by a Jew. At the same time, Channel 1 and its ilk were dismissing reports of Russian-run concentration camps and civilian massacres by ground troops in federally controlled Chechen territory. Channel 1 did so either by ignoring the reports and twisting the facts or by giving prominent play to official arguments that the Western media were relying on Chechen "stringers" and, therefore, getting unobjective information. Soon Channel 1's most famous anchor, Sergei Dorenko, was suggesting it was time simply to declare that there were no civilians in Chechnya—that they were all fair game. "If there is no [civilian population], then the war will end in two weeks," Dorenko said. "The issue is not the actual presence or absence of a civilian population; the issue is what we think about it." In other words, why not just kill them all?

Dorenko, with his deep bass voice and deadpan, unsmiling humor, is the nation's most famous journalist. He is also the best example of the most troubling current in the profession: a willingness on the part of far too many journalists to perform hatchet jobs. Dorenko works for Boris Berezovsky, a fast-talking and balding oil and media mogul, a member of Parliament, and a leading member of the Kremlin's inner circle. Berezovsky is arguably the most powerful man in Russia, in part because he controls Channel 1. He and Dorenko together used the station to sell the people on Putin and his war—and to destroy his rivals.

For example, when word spread that Moscow mayor Luzhkov was thinking of running for president, Dorenko destroyed his reputation with particular glee. He reported that the mayor sympathized with Scientologists and lied about helping a children's hospital; was involved in a shady real-estate deal in Marbella, Spain; had murdered an American businessman; and so on. Luzhkov sued for libel and won (150,000 rubles, or about $5,000); Dorenko claimed a moral victory and continued savaging the mayor, using computer graphics to morph Luzhkov into Mussolini and Monica Lewinsky (in pearls). When we called Dorenko in December, he wasn't answering his phones, but he gave *The Moscow Times* an interview via e-mail. He denied working at the political order of Berezovsky.

THERE ARE SEVERAL THOUSAND STATE-FUNDED JOURNALISM PRIZES HANDED OUT TO LOYAL MEDIA, INCLUDING THE CASH AWARD THE GOVERNOR OF NIZHNIY NOVGOROD OFFERED IN 1996 FOR THE BEST COVERAGE OF HIS RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

But about this same time, the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*—a scrappy weekly associated with Yabloko, the nation's leading political party espousing liberal, pro-free market and pro-democracy values—published a transcript of a telephone conversation between Dorenko and Berezovsky. The transcript shows, among other things, the two discussing how best to pin a murder on Luzhkov. Amazingly, first Berezovsky and later Dorenko freely conceded the transcript was authentic. "I don't want to justify myself or justify others," Berezovsky said at a news conference, defending his puppeteer's role. "Obviously, this was a very powerful information war. It was logical and inevitable."

Berezovsky and other power-brokers—dubbed "oligarchs" to reflect their informal chokehold on national political life—have for years been buying up independent media organs and controlling their content. They have succeeded remarkably. "Today there is no free speech in Russia," says Alexander Zhilin, a retired colonel and former military affairs editor for the newspaper *Moskovskiye Novosti*. "Before it was controlled by the Communists; now it's controlled by the oligarchs."

In practice, this makes for some depressing ironies. Russian news consumers are treated to indignant reports about the national security threat represented by money laundering—in media controlled by men under [CONTINUED ON PAGE 124]

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BUNKER MENTALITY

There's a side to the Chechen war that the Russian government doesn't want us to see. And thanks to an accommodating press, both foreign and domestic, we're not seeing it. By Owen Matthews

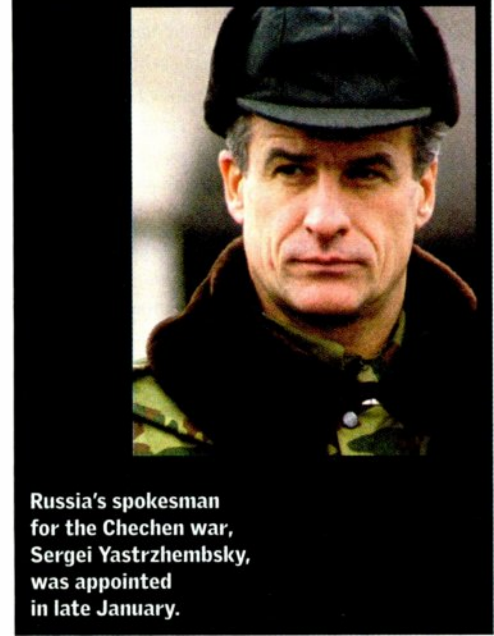
A moonless night deep in the Chechen mountains, and the soldiers inside the Russian garrison of Shatoi are scared. You can tell by the edginess in their whispered jokes, the exaggerated chain-smoking nonchalance of their officers, the strained stillness with which everyone stops to listen to the night's small noises. On assignment for *Newsweek*, I've joined the men outside their command bunker, where we have been drinking vodka; we stand, unsteadily, in silence, watching the hillsides. Ahead of us, ghostly white in the starlight, are the remains of a stone fort built 150 years ago by an earlier generation of Russian conquerors.

For the Russians, these hills are filled with fear. Rebels are still at large—and they have shown they can mete out death from the mountains with sudden and furious anger. Russian bombs have blown holes 20 feet into the loamy soil of Shatoi, leaving not a single house undamaged—but the locals' hatred of the Russians runs deeper than any bunker-busting bomb can penetrate. In the shadow of the Shatoi fort lurks the terrible inevitability, as certain and immovable as the hills, that eventually these conquering strangers will be scattered to the winds, just like their predecessors. And the Russians know it.

"You know what, son?" whispers the commander, leaning close so he can look me in the eye. "This. All this war. Useless. It's useless. We can kill as many of them as we like. It's still useless."

This is the Chechen war the Russian government doesn't want outsiders to see—the fear, the vulnerability, and the deep cynicism of its army, the sheer physical impossibility of conquering this republic by force, the fiction that the war is being fought against "bandits," with the support of the Chechen people.

Russia launched this, its second Chechen campaign, last September, after Islamic militants from Chechnya invaded the neighboring republic of Dagestan. Ever since, Russia has been eager to avoid the mistakes of its first, disastrous Chechen war of 1994–96, which ended in an ignominious defeat for the Russian forces and de facto independence for Chechnya. It's not the military mistakes the Russians want to avoid (many of which have been repeated) but the mistake of allowing journalists, particularly Western journalists, to witness the war firsthand and embarrass the Russian authorities with stories of rape, looting, and indiscriminate destruction perpetrated by its army.


Russia's spokesman for the Chechen war, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, was appointed in late January.

OLEG NIKISHIN/NEWSMAKERS

"In the last war journalists were given a card which allowed you to work in Chechnya, and they were able to do anything their enterprise and interpersonal skills allowed them," says David Filipov, who reported the first war for *The Moscow Times*, an English-language newspaper, and is now *The Boston Globe*'s Moscow bureau chief. "In this war, the first rule is that all journalists have to have Russian press officials around them at all times."

None of this is surprising. Governments dissemble in wartime—they play down the My Lais and the Tets, play up the happy villagers freed from their oppressors and the humanitarian airlifts. The rules of the game are straightforward—governments lie, and journalists try to call them on their lies. In this campaign, however, the Russian government, despite being nominally democratic and constitutionally committed to a free press, has not only lied but mounted a concerted, illegal effort to muzzle press coverage by intimidating journalists and keeping them from getting into the war zone. The tragedy—for the Chechens who have become the victims and for the Russians who have been so gravely misled by their media into supporting the war—is that for most of the campaign, there have been too few foreign journalists working independently in Chechnya to contradict the official line.

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Having salvaged her father's portrait from her home, a woman returns to Grozny in February, after Russian forces attacked the capital.

World Radio History

ANTOINE GYORI/CORBIS SYGMA

RUSSIA AND THE MEDIA

Instead, the vast majority of foreign journalists have been exiled to the war's fringe by two very real threats—being arrested by the Russian side if caught traveling independently and being kidnapped by Chechen bandits. "You're always working between two possibilities—running into the Russians and getting detained, or running into the wrong Chechens and getting detained," says *Washington Post* correspondent Daniel Williams. "I haven't been able to do what I've been able to do in other conflicts, which is get in a car and go and see for myself."

Most of the Western reporting about the war has been based on snippets of information from secondhand sources in the neighboring republic of Ingushetia, or via glimpses of the war's reality from carefully scripted official press tours. But though the majority of the Russian media have had better access, they have, for a variety of reasons that include kidnapping of their colleagues by Chechen bandits, become mouthpieces for official propaganda. The result is that a war of fantastic savagery has been conducted largely out of sight of the Western media. [For more on the Western media's coverage of Chechnya, see "A One-Sided War," Debunker, March.]

The irony is that Russian restrictions on the reporting of the Chechen war seem to suit Western governments just fine. It's pure realpolitik: Chechnya or no Chechnya, priority No. 1 for the West is a working dialogue with newly elected Russian president, and former KGB officer, Vladimir Putin. So it has been a boon for Western diplomacy that, due to the Western media's lack of firsthand reporting, the war in Chechnya has not captured the public imagination as Kosovo did. A French journalist, Anne Nivat, managed to travel unofficially with Chechen rebels, and her writing in *Libération* led to antiwar protests in Paris. But few foreign reporters have been able to match that accomplishment.

Unlike other small, victimized governments adopted as poster peoples of oppression by the West, Chechnya has an oppressor that is too big and too powerful to be brought to account for its abuses, militarily or even diplomatically. Were Chechnya part of Yugoslavia, Iraq, or Indonesia, international sanctions, United Nations' peacekeeping forces, and church collections would be offered up as tools for settling the conflict. But since Chechnya is part of Russia, it's seen by the United States as an internal problem. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright can describe Putin, the war's chief instigator, as "a man we can do business with" and not risk an outcry. Why? Because despite their ham-handed police tactics, their rehearsed press tours, and their unsubtle propaganda, the Russian authorities have largely succeeded in keeping the Western media out of the war zone and the West out of their affairs.

Yet the scale and intensity of this Chechen conflict dwarfs that of Kosovo and of the Yugoslav civil war that provoked media attention and outrage. Approximately 300,000 Chechens have been forced to flee their homes. Grozny, the capital, has been destroyed. Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands—no one has been able to make an accurate estimate—of Chechen civilians have been killed in a campaign of bombing and shelling that has targeted the towns and villages of the rebel republic since September. The tally of casualties from the first Chechen campaign stands at about 80,000 (compared with an estimated 2,000 to 10,000 killed in Kosovo).

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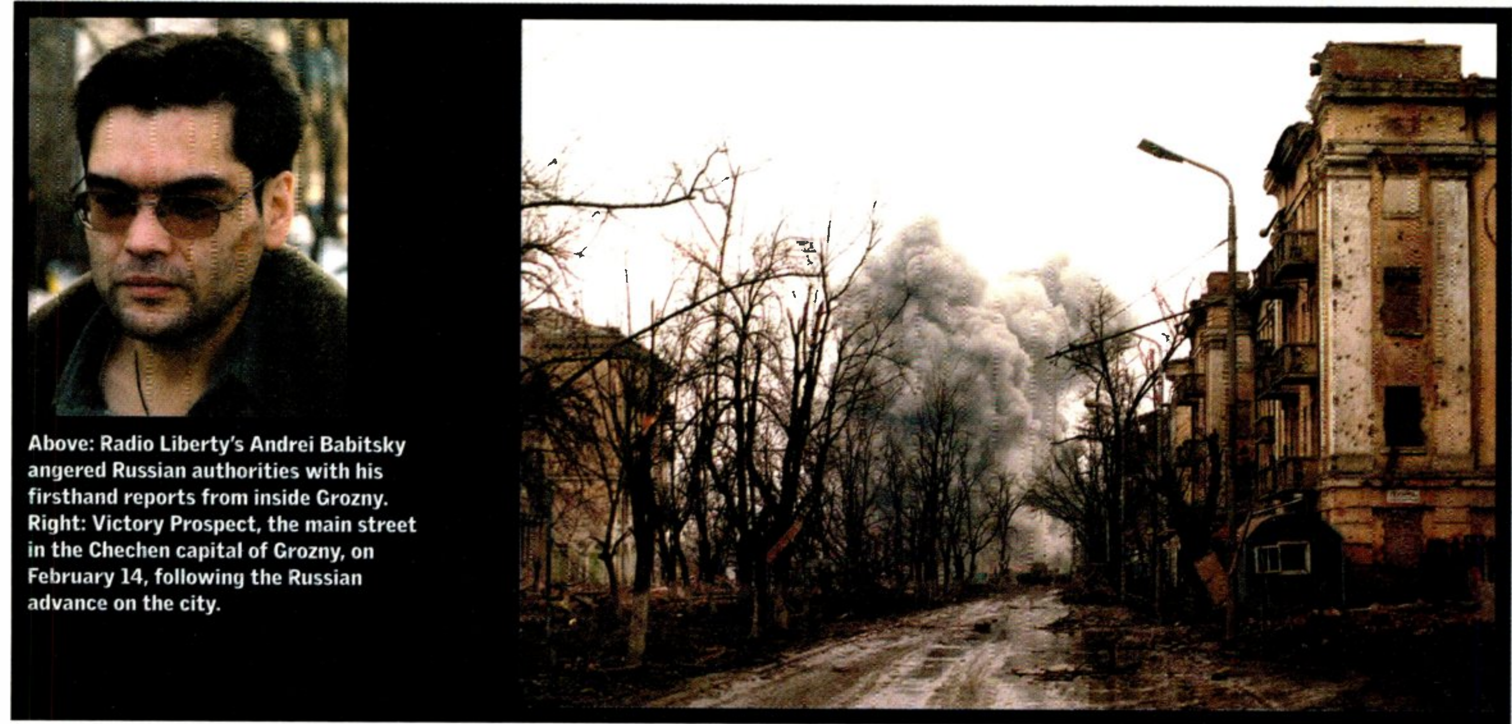

Above: Radio Liberty's Andrei Babitsky angered Russian authorities with his firsthand reports from inside Grozny. Right: Victory Prospect, the main street in the Chechen capital of Grozny, on February 14, following the Russian advance on the city.

LEFT TATIANA MAKEYEVA/AP PHOTOS; RIGHT: JAMES HILL/NEWSMAKERS

But despite the West's interest in the direction Russia is moving under Putin, in human-rights abuses in Chechnya, and in the nature of this politically dubious and violent war, what we read in the papers and see on television is highly distorted. By excluding witnesses, the Russian authorities have given themselves plausible deniability of reported atrocities. By confining journalists to the edges of the conflict the authorities have also confined them to the borderlines of credibility—note the vast numbers of stories datelined from neighboring Ingushetia that quote the harrowing stories of refugees. But refugees exaggerate, they distort, they lie. Such hearsay gives the Russian government room to wriggle out of uncomfortable questions and leaves correspondents groping in that gray morass of half-truths. "The trouble with telling the story through the eyes of refugees is that the people are so traumatized, you're not sure if what they're telling you is what they've seen or what they've heard," says National Public Radio Moscow bureau chief Michele Kelemen.

Russian authorities know how to control the press. The FSB, the barely reformed successor to the KGB, has an all-too-fresh institutional memory of rounding up dissidents, arresting journalists, and generally cracking down on dissent. Not surprisingly, the FSB has become the main tool in the Russian state's war on truth in Chechnya. FSB officers accompany all journalists, Russian and foreign, working officially in Russian-occupied Chechnya. Every army unit of battalion size or larger has a resident FSB officer whose job used to be monitoring the ideological state of the troops but is now counterespionage—or, in practice, catching freewheeling journalists and stopping the troops from speaking out of line.

There's a strong streak of old-fashioned KGB spy mania in the way foreign journalists are treated if caught working outside the strict aegis of officially sanctioned tours. I got a taste of this in January, at the height of the Russian siege, on the edge of Staraya Sunzha, a town just outside Grozny. I was there for *Newsweek* with a veteran Russian war correspondent, Alexander Yevtushenko, who had procured a car using official papers from the Russian health ministry, which gave us access around Chechnya.

Everything went well until we entered Staraya Sunzha. By chance we hooked up with Bislan Gantemirov, head of the pro-Moscow Chechen paramilitary police, and gave him a lift to his headquarters. When we arrived, there was a problem. Valery was a portly and choleric FSB officer assigned to keep an eye on the mercurial and politically less-than-reliable Gantemirov. As soon as Valery caught a trace of my foreign accent he turned on me, demanding my identification. What he saw made him beet-red with anger.

"You...you're not f---ing supposed to be here," the FSB officer yelled. "You foreigners—we all know whose side you're on."

Valery ordered me back into the car and went to fetch a pair of handcuffs to arrest me and take me to the Russian military headquarters. But after looking around at the uniformed Chechens under Gantemirov's command, he realized they wouldn't obey his orders even if he told them to arrest me. Gantemirov was on my side, and the Russian officer was a minority of one. But what struck me most was the Cold War logic—Russian journalists are allowed, but Western journalists aren't. Spy mania, hatred of foreigners, both recognizable concepts to the average Russian over 25 years old.

Anthony Loyd, special correspondent for *The Times of London*, described being interrogated for hours by FSB officers who tried to get him to admit he was a British spy. "Who do you work for and what is your rank?" Loyd says he was asked. Loyd was one of at least a dozen Westerners arrested after slipping into Chechnya.

Russians have a much harder time at the hands of the FSB if they find themselves contradicting the official line. Andrei Babitsky, a Russian reporter for the U.S.-funded Radio Liberty, angered Russian authorities with his firsthand reports from inside besieged Grozny. He was arrested by the FSB outside Grozny on January 16; for days, the Russian authorities refused to admit that they knew his whereabouts. Finally, after acknowledging that they were holding Babitsky on charges of "participation in an illegal armed group," the FSB announced that Babitsky had been handed over to Chechen rebels in return for three Russian prisoners of war. Two weeks later, however, it emerged that the FSB had handed Babitsky over not to rebels but to pro-Moscow Chechens in

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a botched attempt to discredit him as a rebel sympathizer.

The Russian government's spinmeister for the Chechen war is Sergei Yastrzhembsky, who was appointed the chief official spokesman on the war in late January. A former Russian ambassador to Slovakia, Yastrzhembsky speaks good English, wears sharp suits, and has the adamantine skin of a natural-born P.R. man. His regular briefings are surreal. They begin with screeds of statistics: the number of kilometers advanced by federal forces that day, the dead and wounded, the number of rebels believed killed. At the war's outset, the Russian death toll, according to the federal forces, ran at between five and ten a day; the number of dead rebels was allegedly ten times that amount. Reporters joked about the vast phantom armies at the rebels' disposal.

By March, the Russian claims had become more insistent that the rebels had lost as many as 1,500 men in their retreat from Grozny in February and that 800 had been killed in the village of Komsomolskoye in early March. And yet the "terrorists" continued to fight—on March 29, a convoy of Russian-backed Chechen paramilitary police was ambushed near the mountain town of Vedeno, leaving 43 Russians dead and nine captured. Eighty-four Russian paratroopers out of a unit of 90 men were wiped out on March 1.

Yastrzhembsky dismisses complaints from foreign journalists about restricted access by pointing out that foreigners have been visiting the war zone on official trips weekly since late fall. These press trips, however, tell you more about the Russian army's Soviet-era propaganda mind-set than they do about the war itself. Often there's an unconscious humor to them: A pair of worn-out Soviet-vintage minibuses would set out for their destination packed with Gore-Tex-clad Westerners laden with more satellite phones, laptops, and bulletproof vests than the Russian troops in Chechnya had to their name. The trips were a little like being on the visiting football team—with the same friendly banter and bravado on the way to the game and then, on the ride home, the forced jokes and silence from having witnessed devastation. If, that is, the FSB minders allowed us to see the destruction and talk to real refugees. One group of correspondents who visited Chechnya in early March was treated to a display of folk dancing by the residents of Znamenskoye, a town in the north of the republic that has become the Potemkin village showcase of happy Chechens living in harmony with their Russian liberators. All went smoothly, with speeches by local dignitaries and shows of mutual appreciation, until the correspondents began to file out of the hall. One woman ran up to the foreigners and began screaming, "Don't let them kill us!" The visitors were quickly herded onto a bus.

A group trip I went on was treated to a tour of a chicken factory as a shining example of the revival of the Chechen economy after liberation. After proudly reeling off statistics about his plant's capacity, the factory's chief vet concluded, "There is only one problem. We have no chickens."

"As soon as we began talking to people it would suddenly be lunchtime and our escorts began pulling us away," says NPR's Kelemen, referring to the official press trips. "The only time I tried to go alone, we made a deal with one Chechen driver to go in [to Chechnya], but he got pulled aside by the Ingush [police] for a while, and he came back and told us he had to buy some spare parts for his car instead."

THERE IS ONE OVERWHELMING PROBLEM FOR JOURNALISTS IN TRYING TO AVOID THE OFFICIAL RUSSIAN PRESS TRIPS AND TRAVEL IN CHECHNYA INDEPENDENTLY—THE RISK OF KIDNAPPING.

There have been other examples of intimidation and obstruction of journalists. One American photographer recalled getting back to his hotel room in Nazran, Ingushetia's capital, to find that the cables for his computer and photo scanner had been sliced. "The hotel is full of spooks and informers, and they try to make you take an official escort with you wherever you go in Ingushetia. They say it's for your own protection, but in fact it's to stop you getting into Chechnya," says the photographer.

A few Western media outlets, notably *The New York Times* and CNN, have optimized their relations with the Russian authorities to gain access almost equal to that enjoyed by Russian media, which, unlike Westerners, get to live on a Russian military base and get choppered or driven to the front every day. *The New York Times*, working out of Russian military headquarters in the neighboring republic of North Ossetia, managed for two months, through a mixture of good diplomacy and persistence, to get preferential treatment from the herders. The result was probably the most comprehensive Western reporting of the Russian side of the war. The *Times* Moscow bureau chief, Michael Gordon, said that "just because the Russians had their own agenda doesn't mean that we were compelled to follow it."

In terms of bypassing the official trips and actually getting into Chechnya independently, there are three methods: to enter Russian-occupied zones illegally with a local Chechen guide or driver, to go into Chechnya with the pro-Moscow provisional Chechen government (for me, the most successful method), or to go in with the rebels. But there is one overwhelming problem with all of these routes—the risk of kidnapping.

Since the end of the last campaign, in fall 1996, more than 2,000 Chechens and foreigners have been taken hostage by criminal groups operating in and around Chechnya and held until large ransoms were paid. Among the first journalists to fall victim were a television crew from NTV, an independent Russian television station, taken in West Chechnya on May 10, 1997. One hundred and one days after their capture, NTV paid a cash ransom of $2 million to a group of shady middlemen. Ever since, it's been open season on journalists and especially foreigners anywhere within striking distance of Chechnya.

In 1998, three Britons and a New Zealander installing a mobile-phone system for a British telecommunications company in Grozny were kidnapped and, after two months, beheaded when another group counter-kidnapped family members of the foreigners' captors. The men's heads were left on a roadside supposedly as a warning from their kidnapper, Arbi Barayev, to the Chechen rebel authorities not to attempt to move against his lucrative kidnapping business.

A video released by the FSB showed a series of home videos filmed by kidnappers—one sequence shows an American missionary having his index finger sawed off; another shows a captive being held down while a masked man cuts his throat with a hunting knife; a third shows a Russian hostage being decapitated with an ax. These films were aired on Russian television news at the start of the war and contributed to the mass anti-Chechen hysteria, which made the war hugely popular among the Russian public. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 125]

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In her eponymous publication, Grace Mirabella tried to prove that a fashion magazine could also challenge women's minds. Now that *Mirabella* has folded, she remembers how it all got started and comes to terms with what went wrong along the way.

By Grace Mirabella with Bob Ickes

Goodbye, *Mirabella*

IN 1989, A FEW MONTHS after I'd launched *Mirabella* magazine, I ran into my friend Malcolm Forbes in the lobby of the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills. We spoke for a few minutes about this and that, and then he said, out of nowhere, "Grace, do you know that you and I are the only two people who have their names on magazines?" I smiled and said, "What about Mrs. Lear, Malcolm?" He scowled, then roared: "Lear's her *husband's* name!"

Malcolm, of course, has since passed away, as have Frances Lear and her magazine. On April 15 of this year, a media reporter called me at home in Manhattan to get my reaction to the reports that *Mirabella* would be joining their ranks. It was news to me, but I was hardly surprised.

During those wonderful few months just before we launched *Mirabella*, I used to walk around the offices with my favorite photo in the world, a Horst portrait of Greta Garbo. She sits on a park bench in Paris, wearing a nifty sweater and smart jersey pants. She is utterly at ease, brilliantly simple, impossibly casual, yet utterly in control. Oh, how I used to annoy my staff, darting into their offices, showing them that photo, explaining that it represented the essence of the style—the languor and ease—that we should strive for in the magazine.

In its final years, *Mirabella* slid so far from that founding vision—indeed, from *any* vision—that I knew its days were numbered. What did astonish me, frankly, as the news of *Mirabella*'s demise spread through the newspapers and the publishing crowd, was how many people thought I still had even the slightest connection with the magazine. I would hope that those who know me—or, at least, knew the *Mirabella* I launched—had detected a shift in focus, a muddying of tone, a fall into the lumpen sameness that characterizes so many women's magazines. I would get letters from readers saying, "I've been with you since the beginning," and I'd want very much to write back and say, "No, you've been with someone else."

Perhaps my reaction is unrealistic, since the magazine, because of legal mistakes I made a decade ago, still bore my name. However, my stint as publication director ended in 1993, when, per my founding contract with Rupert Murdoch—who had convinced me to begin *Mirabella* in the first place—I retired. I was delighted with the magazine and my work during those four years. We never made money, but during my first two years, our ad pages increased significantly, and we were on track to turn a profit by the magazine's fifth year. (It never did.) We also won a National Magazine Award for general excellence.

But by 1993, I wanted to slow down, try something different—I was 64 years old. I became, as so many of us career editors do, a "consultant." When I realized that Hachette Filipacchi Magazines—which had bought the publication from Rupert Murdoch—wasn't terribly interested in my opinions, I trickled down to the bottom of the masthead as "founder."

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF GRACE MIRABELLA

Right: Grace Mirabella at her home in Bedford, New York, with her dog, Ace, in May 2000.
Left: a portrait by Al Hirschfeld
Photography by: Melanie Dunea/CPI

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I've been doing a lot of thinking since April 15, recalling those first years and what we achieved. My hope is that my *Mirabella* story can convince aspiring editors that women readers deserve a magazine that respects and challenges them—and that "fashion" needn't be synonymous with "fluff."

I STARTED *MIRABELLA* after spending almost 40 years at *Vogue*, first as a protegée of the iconic Diana Vreeland and then, for 18 years, as her successor as editor in chief. I suppose the story of my 1988 dismissal from *Vogue* has become somewhat mythic in publishing circles—how I first learned of it on television from the gossip columnist Liz Smith, to whom the news had been leaked, and then from my immediate visit to my boss, Condé Nast chairman Si Newhouse, who confirmed it.

It was inevitable. Women's magazines must, more than anything else, reflect the era in which they publish. Just as Vreeland's outré stylization began to seem preposterous in 1970, at the start of the women's movement—when you couldn't *give Vogue* or *Bazaar* away—my somewhat more sensible, sportier take didn't fly amid the eighties' conspicuous consumption. The classic American designers I had championed—Blass, Halston, Beene—had found serious competition from a new generation of Europeans.

Of course, I was devastated. (To this day, it pains me to flip through Anna Wintour's *Vogue*, although I think I understand what she's trying to accomplish—a chillier chic that emphasizes a rather severe, monied sensibility at the expense of real-world grace and beauty.) I was looking for something, anything, to help me move on. A week after my firing, I received a call from Edward Kosner, now the editor in chief of the New York *Daily News*, who at the time was editor of *New York* magazine, then owned by Rupert Murdoch.

Kosner said, "Rupert Murdoch would like to have lunch with you."

Now, I'd met Rupert Murdoch here and there, at social functions, in the way you greet someone amid a vast crowd. He seemed perfectly lovely and, of course, brilliant. But still I associated him a bit with scandal sheets, tabloids, and the like. So I said, "Ed, is that really something I want to do?"

He said, "Yes, you do."

So off I went to La Côte Basque.

He was late.

Worse, it was my first venture out since my firing, and I was put through the excruciating situation of having to sit there, alone, as many of my former *Vogue* and fashion crowd colleagues came over to pay their respects.

After 45 minutes, Rupert stormed into the restaurant, all bluster and apologies, and proceeded to say nothing exceptional for ten minutes. Suddenly, he paused, looked down at the table, and then into my face.

He said, "Do you think there are women out there without a magazine?"

I said, "Yes, I do."

And then, in a tone that suggested he'd been thinking about this for years, he said, "So do I."

As I recall, we talked about who these magazine-less women were. We decided that they were older than *Vogue*'s readers' median age: 32.7. Although I wanted quality, not age, to be the defining issue, we decided we'd aim for 36—for someone slightly more settled, more discerning. Someone who'd had her fun and was now getting down to the serious business of life. Someone who was as weary as I was with women's magazines' seemingly compulsive fascination with sex, especially on their cover lines, for which I think we can thank my friend Helen Gurley Brown.

"Of course," Rupert said, "we'll include fashion."

I made it clear immediately that the fashion element would either make or destroy us. I was positive—and remain so, despite a recent *New York Times* article about *Mirabella*'s folding, that said no one wants to read about runway fads and philosophy in the same magazine—that smart women, my crowd, could enjoy reading and words and also be interested in the way they looked. Nobody in our crowd wants some dumb something that's all about the runway.

I thought of Rupert Murdoch as being a bit like that fellow on *Get Smart*, calling, from some street corner in Bangkok, over a secret telephone hidden in the heel of his shoe.

At that initial lunch, I proposed a fifty-fifty balance between fashion and editorial, which was then unheard-of and is probably ill-advised today, since I'm certain there's no such thing as fashion anymore. (Yes, there are some good clothes, there are runways, there is hype, but today most women see fashion pages as entertainment and fantasy.)

Anyway, I told Rupert, "All of us fashion editors go to the shows. We have our notebooks. Most of us draw stars next to the things we'll want to see in the magazine. But most editors do one other thing, and that's put their initials next to the suit they want to own themselves. In other words, 'I don't want it in the magazine, but, gee, I sure would want it my closet.'"

I looked Rupert dead in the eye and said, "That's the dress I'll want to put in this new magazine. Not the one with the star—but the one I want to own myself."

Rupert seemed taken with me and my ideas. He left by saying, "I'll get back to you."

While I waited—and waited—to hear, I got a terrific offer from another publishing firm to oversee two magazines. So I called Rupert

Mirabella at *Vogue*, where she succeeded Diana Vreeland as editor in chief in 1970

COURTESY OF GRACE MIRABELLA

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again to try to move things along. He didn't call back. I'd keep pushing; no answer. After two weeks, he finally did phone and said, "Don't give up on me. I've just been busy, and I'll have an answer soon."

That's how Rupert was with me—always supportive, always straightforward, but somewhat mysterious. I thought of him as being a bit like that fellow on *Get Smart*, calling, from some street corner in Bangkok, over a secret telephone hidden in the heel of his shoe.

Anyway, I said, "I'm afraid I'm going to have to give up on you, because I owe these other people some kind of an answer."

He agreed to meet with me immediately, and that's when he committed to starting the magazine. When he told me his idea for the title, I wasn't sure I'd heard him correctly.

"It sounds so foreign," I said. "And most people won't even know who I am."

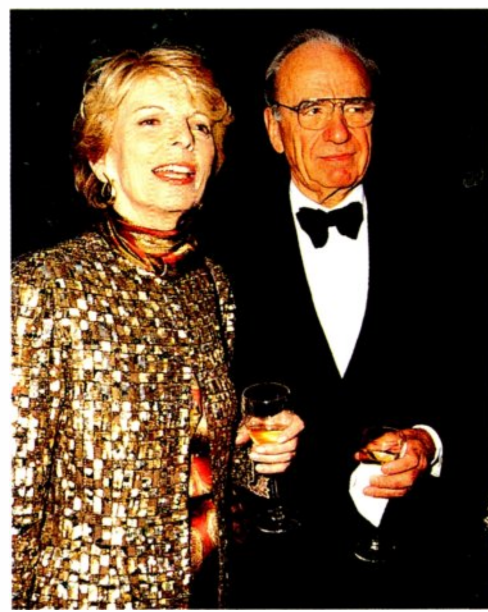
He didn't seem to think that mattered.

I agreed to sign on as publication director for three years, during which time I would have complete creative control. (I would end up staying for four.) I also agreed, out of shortsightedness and, perhaps, vanity, that my name would remain on the magazine for the entirety of its existence regardless of whether I continued to work there.

That, I would come to learn, was a huge mistake.

THE COVER OF OUR FIRST issue, dated June 1989, featured a close-cropped picture of Diandra Douglas, a documentary film producer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and, at the time, Michael Douglas's wife. Her right eye, nose, and lips engulfed the entire cover, making the face unidentifiable even to those who knew her. This wasn't about a face, it was about a feeling: strength.

Inside, we ran an excerpt from a biography of Josephine Baker, whom I adore, and inaugurated departments that were to become mainstays of the magazine, including "The Best," a simple, easy-to-apprehend collection of the best, say, handbags or watches. Features included an article about Hedda Nussbaum, whose surrogate daughter had been killed by her live-in companion; an essay, titled "Bland Ambition," by *New York Times* film critic Janet Maslin, on the rather dreary young male movie stars of the era (think Kevin Bacon, Kiefer Sutherland); and, of course, plenty of



ROBIN PLATZER

Grace Mirabella and Rupert Murdoch at a party in New York in the early nineties

fashion, with a special salute to the classic lines of Geoffrey Beene.

It was a heady time for fashion, marked by the extravagance of the Claude Montanas and Romeo Giglis. We did feature some of their work in the magazine, but amid all the late-eighties European rococo, I looked for clothes that were stylish and modern, yet wearable (but not run-of-the-mill). I was fed up with looks that no one in her right mind would wear, much less pay an arm and a leg for. I was fed up with glitz, with clutter, with terminal trendiness. What we were interested in was something less ephemeral; what we got excited about was style, style in the broadest sense of the word. And when fashion was *news*, we treated it as news—with tough reporting and provocative writing.

That first issue was a huge success, and all 500,000 newsstand copies sold out; our paid circulation began at a healthy 225,000. Despite our initial newsstand triumph, it became clear to me immediately that I would have to fight hard to (a) keep our creative sensibility from wavering and (b) hold firm against advertising pressure.

First, fashion. Our focus on my kind of clothes was causing us all sorts of problems. We had the hardest time hiring chic, up-and-coming young photographers to capture the look I wanted, which some considered dull. And without the top photographers, it was harder to generate word of mouth—or attract top advertisers.

For instance, I insisted that we have a section every month devoted to ten simple, stylish items that you simply must have—realistic clothes for the thinking woman. The section was called "Just Great." But no one, it seemed, wanted to photograph it for us. The clothes and the ideas seemed too boring to them—and they wanted the flashy, over-the-top layouts that *Vogue* and *Harper's* would assign. They wanted to reinvent the wheel, always be avant-garde and shocking, in the end making a joke of the clothes and the models.

I was specifically concerned that we not go the route of *Harper's Bazaar*, with its tricked-up typefaces and rather adversarial layouts. I had admired the late Liz Tilberis and Fabien Baron, its editor and art director then, and I do think they helped reinvent the look of women's magazines. But *Mirabella* was going to *re*-reinvent women's magazines (even though Rupert Murdoch had told me I "didn't have to reinvent the wheel"), and I wanted to convey a sense of power, directness. We'd have a hell of a lot of style, sure, but you had to be able to understand what was going on on the page.

We didn't have the budget to execute many photo retakes, and I was often exasperated to discover that my concepts had been ignored during a shoot. I'd be stuck with whatever was submitted. The photographers and their editors—many of whom were freelance and operated like mercenaries—would say, "Well, you weren't there on the scene, you didn't get the logistics. When we were there we decided...." And I'd yell, "Listen, gang, there's no more 'When we were there....'" I mean, every editor has been through that from time to time, but our approach was so novel that I felt I was going through it *every* time, and I didn't find it amusing.

I remember one fashion editor, who shall remain nameless, showing me film from a "Just Great" shoot and saying with a sigh, "Well, I'm sure you won't like these—they'll be a bit too Helmut Newton-ish for you."

I erupted, saying something along the lines of "Listen, I've been working with Helmut Newton since you were a youngster, I've been with him from the beginning and know *exactly* what he's about. So don't try to blame your lapse [CONTINUED ON PAGE 119]

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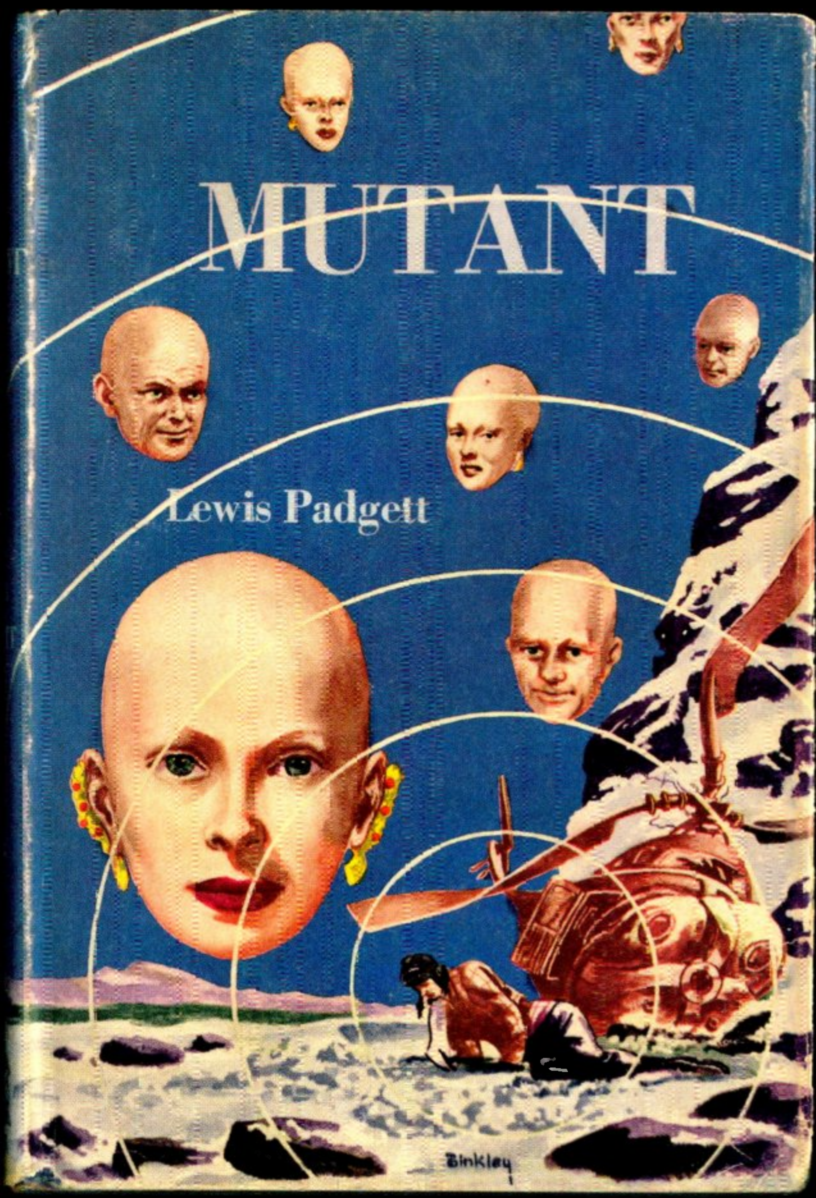
April 11, 1977. Freaked you out so bad you had to bury it.



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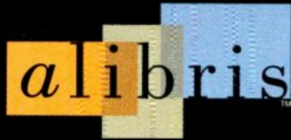

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BOOKS

American Jews today • How a literary agent coaxed out a first novel • Faith Popcorn's marketing to women • The profit in *The Prophet* • Time to turn off the TV for good? • What biographer Robert A. Caro reads while at work • 70 years of media images of gays and lesbians • The history of the consumer culture • Questions and answers about the process of writing

ARE JEWS LOST IN AMERICA?

BY JAMES ATLAS

Oy, have we got a problem.

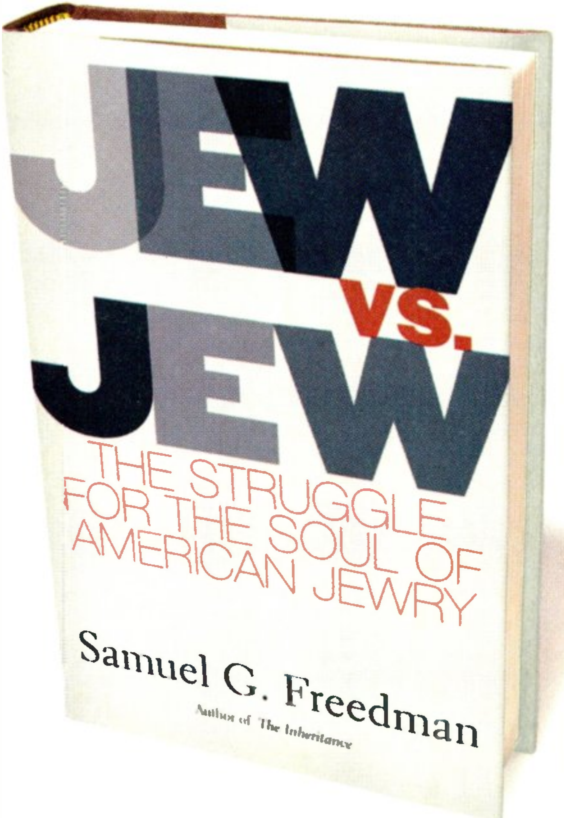
For 4,000 years, Jews were persecuted by enemies determined to expunge them from the earth. From bondage in Egypt to the Babylonian captivity, the Roman siege of Jerusalem to the Spanish Inquisition, they—we, I should say, in keeping with the current journalistic fashion of full disclosure—have fended off one murderous assault after another, culminating in Hitler's drive to make the world *judenrein* (Jew-free). Count on America, the wonderland of tolerance, to come to the rescue: Just half a century after this most recent, and nearly successful, effort at obliteration, the Jewish people appear to have found a safe haven on our shores. Now the greatest threat to their continuance is interfaith marriage—currently at a rate of 52 percent, according to Samuel G. Freedman's new book, *Jew vs. Jew* (Simon & Schuster), the latest work in the David Halberstam and late J. Anthony Lukas school of book-length journalism.

The diaspora, in short, has ended happily, and the homeless tribes of Israel have found a home at last.

So how does the "vs." of Freedman's title figure in the story? His subtitle is *The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry*—a struggle between the rapidly growing Orthodox branch and the assimilationists, who cling to what Freedman, in a vivid image, describes as a "husk of identity...*Seinfeld* and a schmear." In communities all over America, Orthodox Jews are digging in their heels, creating enclaves of believers whose black, Old World uniforms and side curls are the visible evidence of their militant separateness, their insularity. Meanwhile, the majority of American Jews are fading into the fabric of our polyglot nation, shrugging off the last shreds of ethnicity. "My whole life, I was surrounded by friends and relatives who are Jewish," a Cleveland clothing store owner says in the book. "Having Passover dinner together, going to synagogue on the High Holy Days—enjoyable things you did with people you loved. Being Jewish is the experiences and beliefs you share without even thinking about it." This is Judaism as most of us—the progressive, urban, secular Jews who dominate the landscape, if you happen to live in a major American city—know it.

Freedman, a professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and former staff reporter for *The New York Times*, provides a lively account of a conflict that's virtually invisible to those of us who assemble our image of contemporary American Jews from Woody Allen movies, Saul Bellow novels, and the pages of *Tikkun*—or, for that matter, the *Times* itself, a newspaper so thoroughly assimilated that it hardly remembers, let alone acknowledges, its Jewish origins. His method is the same one he employed in three previous books (*Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church*; *Small Victories: The Real World of a Teacher, Her Students, and Their High School*; and *The Inheritance: How Three Families and America Moved from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond*), focusing closely on a few groups that are, he deems, representative of some particular American dilemma. Tracking far-flung Jewish communities in New Haven, Los Angeles, Denver, Jacksonville, and Beachwood, Ohio, Freedman travels, listens, jots down—or, more likely, given the length of their soliloquies, tapes—the impassioned complaints of Jews on both sides of the issue: the assimilated and the separatists, Reform and Conservative Jews of varying beliefs and Orthodox Jews determined to assert that the core of Judaism is the Torah, its laws and prohibitions exempt from compromise. One of the most heated struggles Freedman chronicles involves five Orthodox Yale freshmen, who sued the university for violating their right to *tznius*—modesty—in a world of co-ed dormitories and free condom distribution.

Freedman's approach is informative, but it's also sentimental and naive. Perhaps the most curious feature of this earnest book is the author's failure to grasp what it's about: He has produced 700 pages on the lives of Jews in



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America without addressing the one subject that would explain why they can't get along among themselves: class. In his prologue, Freedman recounts the story of the Marcuses and the Guilors of Great Neck, Long Island, next-door neighbors who engaged in a stormy feud. Both families were from observant Jewish backgrounds, but America had transformed them into "nondoctrinaire, nondogma" Jews of intermittent and desultory faith. After Noam Guilor became ill with cancer, the Guilors discovered religion. Suddenly their street was filled with "a procession toward shul of husbands in suits, wives wearing broad-brimmed hats...." By the time the Guilors got around to constructing a ceremonial booth in their backyard for the Jewish harvest festival of Sukkoth, the Marcuses had fled to a home ten miles away "filled with early American antiques on a private road in a town whose modest number of Jews were still mostly Reform"—and, apparently, avid readers of *Town & Country*. "I am an American," David Marcus told Freedman. "I live the American Dream."

It's typical of Freedman's doggedly non-analytic method that he doesn't pause to dwell on what this dream might consist of, or how it came to be formulated. He's totally outside his characters, reproducing his interviews in wooden paraphrase. "She remembered sitting with her bubbe Sophie...." This pushcart-and-peddler prose makes me as uncomfortable as the Marcuses watching the Guilors' plastic-covered Sukkoth booth go up next door. But why? The reason the Marcuses and the Guilors can't get along, I suspect, is that the Marcuses perceive the "in your face" Judaism of the Guilors as an affront to their own social aspirations, an instance of what Freud called "the narcissism of minor differences."

The closest Freedman comes to an interpretation is to offer a brief account of the civil war that rent the Jews as the Romans advanced upon Judea in the first century A.D.; instead of defending themselves against their attackers, "the Jewish forces guarding the holy capital of Jerusalem turned their swords against each other." Thus divided, the Jews were conquered out of "*sinat hinam*—pure hatred, groundless hatred." What Freedman intimates but doesn't come out and say is that these forces were, in a loose sense, the intellectuals and the masses—a schism that has been played out through all of Jewish history. Before the Romans, there were the Greeks, overwhelming the Jewish colonies of Samaria and Judah with their advanced culture, splitting them into Hellenic assimilationists and isolationists (known as rigorists).

MANY OF US ASSEMBLE OUR IMAGE OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN JEWS FROM WOODY ALLEN MOVIES, SAUL BELLOW NOVELS, AND THE PAGES OF *TIKKUN*.

In the end, the Hellenization of the Jews brought them into the modern world. "It woke the Temple-state from its enchanted sleep," Paul Johnson writes in *A History of the Jews*. "It was a destabilizing force spiritually and, above all, it was a secularizing, materialistic force." But this revivified state, in turn, transformed Greek civilization, financing its buildings and institutions; Herod, the ruler of Judea from 37 B.C. to his death four years before the Christian era, restored Athens and Sparta and rebuilt the Temple of Apollo in Rhodes, "thus making his name revered in many small Greek islands and cities, which gave him the title of life-president," according to Johnson. He was, in other words, a *macher*—a big deal.

There is nothing new about this disproportionate cultural influence; the lesson of Johnson's magisterial book—and of Thomas Cahill's *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*—is that Jews have always exercised a disproportionate influence. What drew these distinguished *goyim*—if I may—to Jewish history was the discovery that what was then, as now, a numerically meager tribe had been responsible for the development of Christianity.

Taking a guess at what percentage of Americans are Jews, I had in my mind the ludicrous figure of 10 percent. The number, I learn from Freedman's book, is just over 2 percent. Why was I so far off? In part it's the cultural myopia induced by living in New York and being employed in the media. (Philip Roth's novels sell 30,000 copies; Woody Allen's films play to thin houses outside Manhattan.) But it's also in part because of the pervasiveness of what might be described as "Jewish sensibility." In his new memoir, *Experience*, Martin Amis recalls asking his notoriously bigoted father, the novelist Kingsley Amis, what it felt like to be mildly anti-Semitic in this politically correct day and age. "If I'm watching the end of some new arts program, I might notice the Jewish names in the credits and think, Ah, there's another one," Amis senior helpfully explained. I, too, have often found myself engaged in the same act of noticing.

The Jewish dominance in the media, in newspapers and magazines and Hollywood and the publishing industry, is an old story (not that its implications have been very arduously explored); I continue to find myself baffled—and not a little embarrassed—by the popularity of an insipid narcissist like Jerry Seinfeld, but he has certainly achieved market penetration as a representative Jew. So have Marshall Herskovitz and Edward Zwick, the creators of *thirtysomething*, and the Steven Spielberg of *Schindler's List*. To Freedman, this influence is invisible: One of the communities he writes about is a Cleveland suburb that had as its rabbi Arthur Lelyveld; Freedman coyly omits mention of the fact that Rabbi Lelyveld, a courageous figure in the civil rights movement and an eloquent spokesman for American Jews, was the father of Joseph Lelyveld, the current executive editor of *The New York Times*. Why this omission? Freedman might argue that his book is about Jews in the American heartland, not Jews in New York.

But Jews on the liberal side of Freedman's "vs." don't just aspire—they aspire to *something*. And what they aspire to, the "experiences and beliefs" invoked by the Cleveland clothing-store owner, is the world depicted in the media. Where do you think the Marcuses of Great Neck got the idea of filling their house with antiques? ◘

GASPER TRINGALE

BEHIND THE BOOK THE AGENT

Literary agent Suzanne Gluck had long "cheered from the sidelines" of television writer Adriana Trigiani's career, watching as her friend racked up credits for everything from *The Cosby Show* to an award-winning documentary. Little did Gluck know that she'd be responsible for Trigiani's most resounding success, her debut novel, *Big Stone Gap*.

Suzanne Gluck

In January 1998 Gluck, a vice-president in the literary department at International Creative Management, and Trigiani, who was a client of ICM's television department, lunched to discuss Trigiani's screenplay, "Bergamo." Gluck perused it and realized that the story would work better as a book than as a movie. Gluck quickly persuaded Trigiani to try her hand at a novel and helped her overcome significant reservations: "I thought I'd be 90 years old before I wrote a book," she recalls. After several false starts and a year of rising at 3 A.M. to write, "Bergamo" became *Big Stone Gap*, set in the Virginia town where Trigiani was raised. It was quickly purchased by Random House for a reported $750,000 and has sold more than 65,000 copies since it was published last April. (It has also been sold to five foreign publishers.)

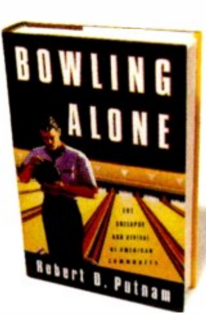
"Once Adriana got over the hurdle of seeing herself as a book writer, she was a complete natural," says Gluck. Trigiani now plans to devote herself to fiction and has almost completed a sequel. The screenplay will still be made—not as "Bergamo," but as *Big Stone Gap*. KAJA PERINA

World Radio History

AMERICA, GET OFF YOUR COUCH

BY JANE MANNERS

Harvard social scientist Robert D. Putnam is waging a war against television. In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster), Putnam's account of American civic decline, he writes that "dependence on television for entertainment... is the single most consistent predictor of civic disengagement" (the book's title refers to the two-decade dropoff in U.S. league bowling). The book—a 541-page version of an article Putnam wrote in 1995 for the academic publication *Journal of Democracy*—draws on an impressive collection of data to show that for the past 30-plus years, Americans have been dropping out of not just bowling leagues but all sorts of communal activities. We vote less, worship together less, and read fewer newspapers than at any other time since the fifties. A significant reason for this, Putnam believes, is TV. "More television watching," he says, "means less of virtually every form of civic participation and social involvement," which in turn hurts "our economy, our democracy, and even our health and happiness."



Putnam blames other factors as well—suburban sprawl and generational change among them—and he does point out that not all TV is bad for civic engagement; people who watch television news, for example, are more likely to be involved in their communities than are people who ignore news entirely. It's specifically entertainment television that Putnam is worried about. This kind of television, Putnam believes, is "lethal to social connectedness... because we're sitting in front of a TV, we're not spending time with our families, talking with our kids, or having the neighbors over to the house."

Putnam says he's aware there's no quick fix: "It's all well and good for me to sit in Cambridge and say we ought to all watch the *NewsHour*, but that's not what people find most appealing about TV." Because people aren't likely to switch over voluntarily to what Putnam calls "broccoli TV," and because the economics of television make a complete programming overhaul unlikely, Putnam thinks our best hope might be the Internet. "All the research that I'm aware of shows that most Internet time comes directly at the expense of TV. That is in principle a hopeful sign," Putnam says, "because in principle, at least, the Internet is a two-way communication that could get people engaged in their community in a way that television doesn't." ◼

TOP ANTHONY VERDE

BEHIND THE BOOK THE MONEY

THE PROFIT IS IN *THE PROPHET*

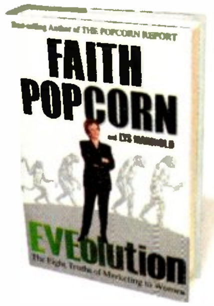
We asked ten leading publishing houses to name their top backlist title, that literary gold mine that stays in stock year after year and is a source of steady profits. All sales figures are publishers' estimates.

PUBLISHING HOUSE	TITLE, AUTHOR, FIRST PUBLISHED	COPIES SOLD
Alfred A. Knopf	*The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran, 1923	10 million
Anchor Books	*Into Thin Air*, Jon Krakauer, 1997	2.5 million
HarperCollins	*Charlotte's Web*, E.B. White, 1952	10.5 million
Little, Brown and Co.	*The Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger, 1951	tens of millions
Penguin Books	*The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck, 1939	4.8 million
Putnam	*The Little Engine That Could*, Watty Piper, 1978	2.6 million
Random House	Declined to comment	—
Simon & Schuster/ Pocket Books	*Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care*, B. Spock and S. Parker, 1945	more than 40 million
Vintage Books	*The Stranger*, Albert Camus, 1946	4.6 million
W.W. Norton & Co.	*The T- Factor Fat Gram Counter*, J. Pope and M. Katahn, 1989	more than 5 million

HAVING FAITH IN POPCORN

BY KAJA PERINA

Marketing guru Faith Popcorn, who established herself as last decade's consumer weather vane with *The Popcorn Report*, now turns her trend-spotting to women with *EVEolution: The Eight Truths of Marketing to Women* (Hyperion). Popcorn and coauthor Lys Marigold advocate a world in which every surface a woman encounters is branded and recommend that products be ubiquitous and services user-friendly in order to pacify the increasingly powerful female consumer. Dressing rooms, for example, should be equipped with "correct" situational lighting, as well as Estée Lauder "makeup samplers," so that women will achieve their desired look, and stores their profit. A woman's typical commute is a marketer's missed opportunity until we start seeing 40-foot banner ads on the sides of trucks. And a trip to the grocery store really begins in the parking lot, where the asphalt is painted, Disneyland-like, with "large product renderings, interpreted by well-known artists." Why? Because "this would be far more exciting than ugly blacktop. And what could be a better example of Peripheral marketing [one of Popcorn's eight truths[than a 6-year-old saying, 'Mom, we didn't park in Sugar Pops, we parked in Cap'n Crunch'"?



Popcorn's suggested initiatives are not all frivolous. Many tap in to what she deems the "Truths" of women's desire for brand interaction and accountability, and seem quite utopian given today's bottom-line-driven thinking. Popcorn suggests, for example, that HMO behemoth Oxford Health Plans, Inc., revamp its image by providing marriage counselors who make house calls, or that someone start a website to patrol the world's factories for sweatshop conditions. Not likely. But Popcorn's notions of executive car services using midafternoon deadtime to transport employees' children to school, or child-friendly hotel suites for mothers on business trips, may well be destined for a locale near you.

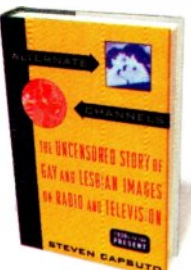
Not surprisingly, Popcorn is at her best when predicting concrete trends, and should refrain from speculating on the neurochemical reasons women respond intuitively, not impulsively, to products. One must also overlook her annoying romance with neologisms like "EVEolution" and "EGOnomics" and the tendency to wax as enthusiastic about innovations like Merrill Lynch's telecommuting and work-at-home options as she does about a new ergonomically correct garlic press. Popcorn does not pretend that *EVEolution*'s emphasis on product accessibility and loyalty is a novel approach, as she makes clear in a case study of cosmetics giant Revlon. Popcorn's suggestions for the floundering company include sponsoring support groups for women or math and science studies for girls, and turning Revlon's Ronald Perelman into an Oprah-like "spokesperson for art, aesthetics, and beauty."

Popcorn makes a final assertion that *EVEolution* is not for women only, but the appeal to stereotypically feminine qualities tells another story: "[W]ithout an emotional attachment to your brand, it's too easy for a woman to dump your brand. Walk out on you for good. Partner with your female consumer to nurture your brand, and you are tapping in to one of the most powerful forces in human nature," she inveighs. At such points the marketing imperatives of accessibility and consumer rights are themselves being spun—"branded" as female—in service of another Faith Popcorn best-seller. ◼

World Radio History

AS NOT SEEN ON TELEVISION

BY PETER TERZIAN



From the 1950s, when members of the early gay activist group the Mattachine Society were interviewed in shadowed profile on local talk shows, through the endless sissy ("thithy") jokes on Bob Hope's comedy specials and *Laugh-In*, and the earnest "issue" episodes of seventies sitcoms (often presented with parental discretion advisements), to Ellen Morgan's long-awaited outing over an airport intercom, gays and lesbians have searched for their faces and voices on the airwaves. In *Alternate Channels: The Uncensored Story of Gay and Lesbian Images on Radio and Television* (Ballantine Books), gay activist and media studies specialist Steven Capsuto traces the roller-coaster ride sexual minorities have taken to the small screen. (Despite the book's subtitle, only 1 of its 40 chapters is devoted to radio.) Capsuto points us to the so-called "liberated" years—the mid-seventies, the mid-nineties—and the alternating periods of repression and, at times, soft censorship. (When Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980, studio heads quietly rejected shows that reflected liberal values; regular gay characters didn't resurface for a few years.) The history of gays on television may seem like a steady evolution, but, as Capsuto illustrates, progress is unerringly—and unnervingly—tied to what happens at the ballot box.

Capsuto's obvious forerunner is *The Celluloid Closet*, the late Vito Russo's 1987 history of gays and lesbians on film. Russo's book benefited from copious movie stills and, later, a documentary that assembled film clips as damning evidence of Hollywood's neglect and stereotyping of gays. Russo was also a breezy stylist; by comparison, Capsuto is dry and a little humorless. The book's laughs stem largely from its recountings of good gags from *Soap* or *The Golden Girls*. And, alas, there are no pictures to complement the book's inevitable nostalgia buzz. (Remember Edith Bunker's "female impersonator" friend Beverly LaSalle?) As a history of the gay activist movement, *Alternate Channels* is nonetheless thorough and compelling. Capsuto patiently explains the day-to-day peregrinations of network indecision and activist campaigns, of story meetings and sit-ins. And he's a dead-on analyst of trends and political patterns, championing the many people who have fought to bring gay lives and stories into our living rooms: Fannie Hurst, Phil Donahue, Roseanne, and, of course, Ellen DeGeneres. (Even Bob Hope came around in the end, taping a public service announcement for Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.)

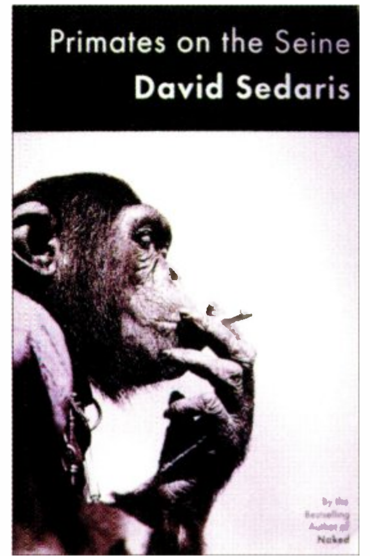
What will the future hold? Capsuto cautiously predicts a convergence of television and the Internet, imagining "several online gay TV stations." Capsuto speculates that the sheer number and diversity of channels available will inevitably encourage a new openness. If this utopian ideal ever comes to pass, *Will & Grace* may look as quaint in 20 years as Rob and Laura Petrie's single beds. ◘

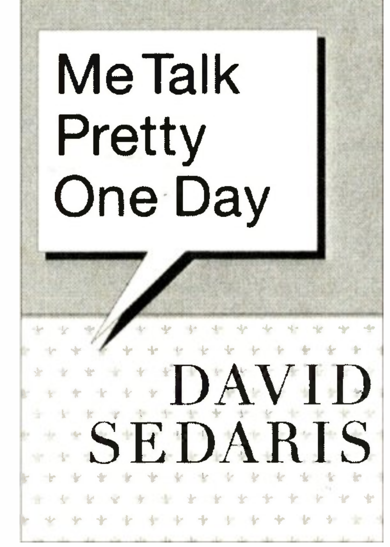
A BOOK JACKET...FROM START TO FINISH

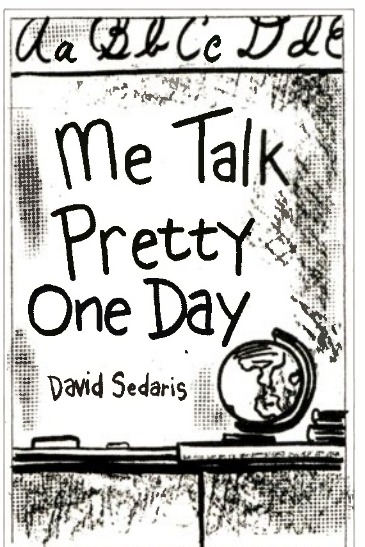
We're not supposed to, but we've all grown used to judging a book by its cover. It's no accident that we do: Book jackets are nowadays often as much a reflection of the designer's aesthetic tastes as the result of structured meetings with the publisher's sales and marketing departments, where a book's potential jackets are scrutinized for legibility and salability. As a result, a cover can go through a number of incarnations in a process that is usually highly collaborative; indeed, the finished product can look quite different from its creator's original vision.

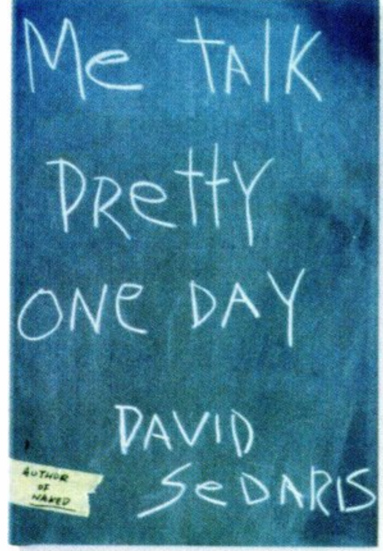
Now, as all art directors know, many editors—and authors—have a habit of considering themselves designers as well. It's the art director's job to strike that sometimes precarious balance between accommodation and aesthetic authority. And although writers are generally allowed varying amounts of artistic input, important authors can sometimes assert a great deal of influence in their book jacket's design. After best-selling author David Sedaris and his editor decided to change the title of Sedaris's witty collection of essays (many about his time in France) from *Primates on the Seine* to *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (Sedaris's original choice), Little, Brown and Company art director Michael Ian Kaye had to scrap his cigarette-smoking chimp ("very Parisian, like the cover of a French philosophy paperback") and start again. Sedaris had liked the fleur-de-lis pattern Kaye had been experimenting with on the spine of the original jacket, so Kaye let it "dictate the design" of his next sketch: a simple cover in "French blues and golds" whose mismatched fonts highlighted what he calls the "immediate and elegant" aspects of the book. Sedaris then suggested incorporating a chalkboard into the design, and Kaye thought of "a 1940s children's book illustration...like those old primers." Kaye liked the sketches the illustrator, Mark Weber, presented, but Sedaris wasn't as enthusiastic. In the end, Kaye stuck with Sedaris's original chalkboard concept but kept it simple.

HANYA YANAGIHARA









ANTHONY VERDE

Michael Ian Kaye's various designs for David Sedaris's book: The first version with the original title is at far left; the final jacket is at right.

World Radio History

BUYER BEWARE

BY SETH MNOOKIN

By now it's axiomatic that we live in a hypersaturated, media-fed consumer paradise. After all, the streets are cluttered with stores dedicated entirely to hair scrunchies, and sidewalk vendors hawk $100 pashmina shawls. But whither the intellectually curious consumer, who wants to expand his mind, hone his guilty conscience, and bone up on postmodern theory all at once?

That's where Juliet B. Schor and Douglas Holt, the editors of the 500-page *The Consumer Society Reader* (The New Press), come in. The book is a tendentious tome offering up everything you've forgotten from that graduate semiotics seminar you audited at Brown. At first glance, the *Reader* looks like just what the guilt-inducing leftist ordered. There are offerings from the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer and Adorno), the postmodern school (Jean Baudrillard), and the lower-case feminist school (bell hooks).

But after wading through an essay or ten, you're reminded why that college seminar was the last time you ventured over to the philosophy department. Even the essays that sound more enjoyable, like "Toy Theory: Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference" or "The Act of Reading the Romance," end up feeling scolding and overbearing.

Take Thomas C. O'Guinn's essay, "Touching Greatness: The Central Midwest Barry Manilow Fan Club." "Barry Manilow is a celebrity," O'Guinn writes. "I talked to some of his fans....The data collected here and at subsequent locales were used to expand upon what had already been learned and to test the evolving model with new data." And then there are whole sections that are comical in their pretensions: Since when did Karl Marx, Malcolm Gladwell, and hooks all fit under the same rhetorical umbrella ("The Tendency of Capitalism to Commodify")?

Still, there's just enough here to warrant a once-over. Gladwell's oft-reproduced essay on "coolhunters" is smart and funny. And James Twitchell's "Two Cheers For Materialism" pokes some delightful fun at the authors with whom he shares the table of contents. In his riffs on today's "middle-aged academic critic" and his inability to appreciate the machinations of capitalism, Twitchell could be critiquing his fellow contributors when he writes, "Driving about in his totemic Volvo (unattractive and built to stay that way), he can certainly criticize the bourgeois afflictions of others, but he is unable to provide much actual insight into their consumption practices, much less his own."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. ◘

CARO: JOYCE RAVID

BEHIND THE BOOK — OPEN ON MY DESK

Robert A. Caro

Robert A. Caro is currently at work on *Master of the Senate*—the third book in his four-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson—which covers the 36th president's years in the U.S. Senate, 1949 to 1960. On Caro's desk is a stack of narrow sheets of paper with the names of senators and their votes, penciled in by Johnson's own hand—almost like a political scorecard. One of these tally sheets tracks the votes on the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which Johnson—"a legislative genius," Caro says—successfully pushed through a Southern-dominated Congress. Along with the tally sheets, the author's desk is laden with transcripts of some of the 1,000 (his estimate) interviews he's done for this landmark work.

Caro became famous for his meticulous, tireless research and his ability to write exhaustive yet readable history with 1974's *The Power Broker*, his biography of New York's master builder Robert Moses, which won a Pulitzer Prize. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson* has been as highly praised and even more extensive: Volume one, 1982's *The Path to Power*, covered Johnson's life from boyhood to 1941, while volume two, *Means of Ascent*, published in 1990, focuses on Johnson's congressional career from 1941 through his 1948 election to the Senate. In the first stages of the project, Caro moved to Texas to be near the Johnson presidential library in Austin and to understand the Texas hill country, Johnson's homeland. These days the author works with Senate historians and often travels to Washington, seeking insight into the Capitol's inner world. "I always try to have a sense of place, so if something's going on [in my research] in the Democratic cloakroom, I keep running down to get into the Democratic cloakroom to see again what it's like....For years I used to spend all day in the Senate; I would sit in the Senate gallery for hours."

He says that he does not draw information only from books; immersion in documents and conversations with myriad Johnson associates provide him with the real stories behind the public record. "There aren't that many studies of legislative power," says Caro. "When we talk about power in America, we really mean executive power, presidential power. In all of my books, I hope to deal with the nature of political power, and I really wanted to go into what is legislative or parliamentary power. There are not a lot of books on the Senate, but in answer to the question 'How did things really get done?' you've got very little of that in books." Instead, Caro says, he seeks inside sources and pores over cartloads of documents. "I still find if you look long enough, you're likely to find what you want."

Readers have been looking a long time (a decade) for this third volume, but Caro has also been doing research for the fourth. Most of the people involved in Johnson's life are aging, and some of Caro's most important sources have passed away. Thus he has had to drop his writing when granted a rare interview, such as he did recently when he went to Georgia to visit ailing former senator Herman Talmadge. And, of course, before such an interview, Caro has to research all the relevant documents. "Sometimes you feel like you're in a race against death," Caro says. "Death is going to close off these sources, so you had better know the questions you need to ask, because you may not be able to go back. You always have that hanging over you." MATTHEW REED BAKER

Visit contentville.com for the full text of this article

BEHIND THE BOOK — AUTHOR Q&A

Kathryn Harrison is the author of the recent novel *The Binding Chair; or, A Visit from the Foot Emancipation Society* (Random House), set around late-nineteenth-century China. She has written the novels *Exposure*, *Poison*, and *Thicker Than Water*, and a memoir, *The Kiss*.

Where did you get the idea for your book?
My mother's mother, who raised me, grew up in Shanghai at the turn of the last century. She was a great raconteur, and my childhood was informed by exotic family lore to the extent that pre-revolutionary China became the persistent geography of my imagination. In 1997 I tried to exorcise this through research, planning to write a biography of my grandmother, but she'd covered her tracks too well....Still, the material I did have was so rich that I found myself writing a novel.

What is the best advice about writing anyone ever gave you ?
Writing is such an instinctive—at its heart almost unconscious—process, that most advice is moot. I live by Flaubert's example of a well-ordered and disciplined life: I believe that an externally conventional existence allows for artistic adventure and that a life that looks artsy (i.e., unruly, dissipated) doesn't support genuine creativity. [Writer] Bob Shacochis once told me that the function of an editor is to prevent a writer from making a fool of himself, and that seems like a useful caution.

When and where do you write?
I work at home, in a cramped study. I have young children, so I try to use the hours that they spend in school. When I was in my twenties I preferred the late night, strung-out paradigm; now that life is more complicated, my schedule is more disciplined, even conventional.

What's the strangest habit you have when you're working on a book?
Whatever strange habits I have are those that relate to a particular book. For example, while working on my novel *Poison*, which included a lot of bloodletting, I became a compulsive blood donor.

If you weren't a writer, what would you do?
Even a few years ago, I still dreamed of going to medical school and becoming a doctor.

Visit contentville.com for the full text of this interview

World Radio History

MINNESOTA GRABS THE MARKETPLACE

With its latest acquisition, Minnesota Public Radio is moving into Los Angeles and giving the sleepy world of not-for-profit broadcasting a jolt of capitalism. By Elizabeth Angell

David Brancaccio has a great radio voice. In person it sounds merely pleasant, but on the air, it's a richly modulated weapon of expression, engaging even when reading the day's NASDAQ numbers. You can't tell by listening if Brancaccio, the jocular host of *Marketplace*, a popular public-radio program about business, is transmitting from an abandoned building or a world-class recording studio. In reality, he's somewhere in between. For the past decade, the show's home has been a windowless bunker just off the Harbor Freeway, adjacent to the University of Southern California's campus in South Central Los Angeles. Inside, a warren of dingy offices surrounds a cramped newsroom. Although the staff shares a survivors' camaraderie—and takes a certain pride in the chickens that roam the parking lot thanks to a family next door—everyone is fed up.

That's about to change. In a deal unusual for the insular world of noncommercial radio, Marketplace Productions—which produces *Marketplace*, the *Marketplace Morning Report*, and *The Savvy Traveler*—was sold by USC to Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) for an undisclosed sum in April. (The staff of *Marketplace* writes a monthly column for Contentville.com, a corporate cousin of *Brill's Content*.) MPR plans to move its new show to a much larger studio in downtown L.A. The sale sparked local controversy and a legal battle over MPR's purchase of the production house.

Since its creation, in 1989, *Marketplace* has been a typical public-radio program: witty, intelligent, and underfunded. In place of a dry stock-market rundown, the show offers an offbeat take on business. In a story about Wall Street culture, *Marketplace* reporters are as likely to speak to a sidewalk hot-dog vendor as they are to a Goldman Sachs analyst. One recent broadcast featured a piece on Germany's luxury trains and a parody of what the potential Microsoft breakup might entail. "We need to not make this church for secular humanists," says Brancaccio, 40. "This shouldn't be stuff that's a real chore to engage."

The formula works. The show is the third-most-listened-to program on public radio, after NPR's *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*. It's carried by more than 290 stations and boasts about 4 million listeners a week. For local public radio stations that buy and broadcast *Marketplace*, it's a dependable source of revenue—local underwriters are eager to be associated with a well-respected business show. Until now, *Marketplace* has rarely capitalized on its name to sell books, for instance, or create programming; if the producers could sell shares, they would be considered a great buy.

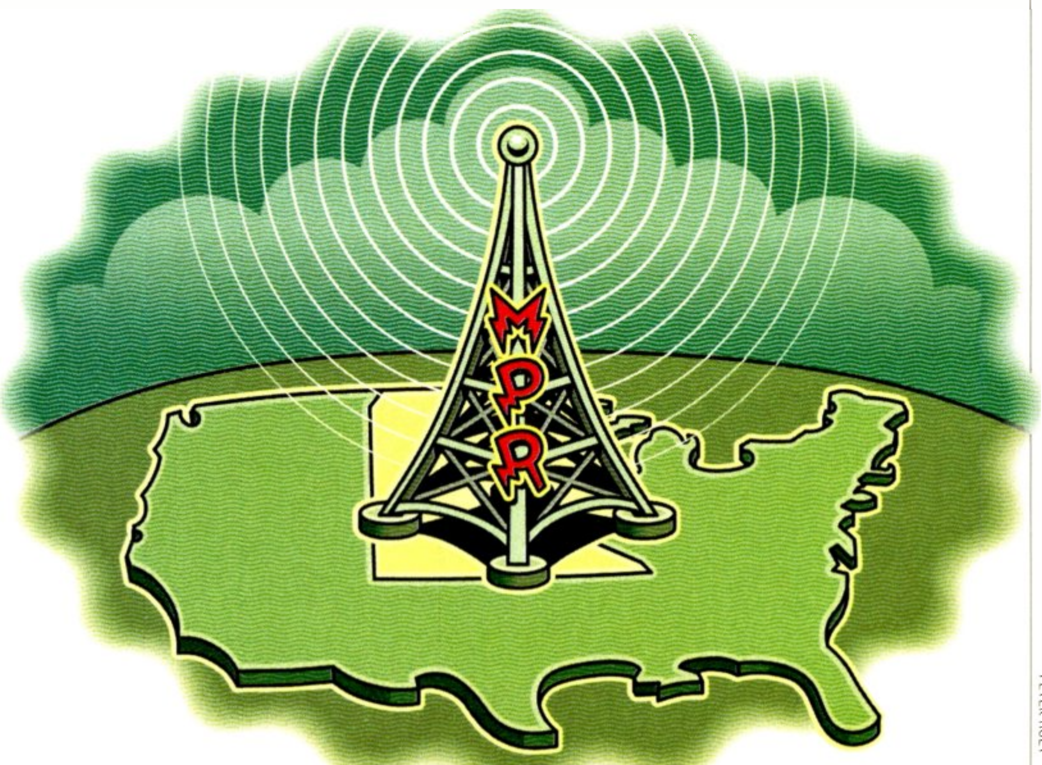
Minnesota Public Radio chairman Bill Kling would like to be known as the guy who recognized that buying opportunity. A tall, intense Minnesota native, Kling, 58, has built MPR, best known for its chief export, Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, from a single local station to a public-radio empire with a huge endowment and a staff of about 300. Kling, who has been with MPR since its inception in 1967, plans to enhance the production budget of *Marketplace*, as well as invest in new programs dreamed up by Marketplace Productions founder Jim Russell, 54.

But Kling wasn't the only one—nor the first—to recognize *Marketplace*'s possibilities. Before Kling, there was Public Radio International (PRI). Like its more powerful competitor, National Public Radio (NPR), PRI is a nonprofit distributor of radio programming. It was PRI that gave Marketplace Productions its seed money, and over the last 11 years, it has poured $20 million into the company without securing an ownership stake. PRI and MPR both bid for Marketplace Productions, but despite its long history with the company, PRI lost.

Although PRI's current agreement to distribute *Marketplace*, which expires in 2003, was unaffected by the sale, PRI sued USC—Marketplace Productions' former owner— for breach of contract. In a suit filed April 14 in the United States District Court in St. Paul, PRI claimed that its contract with Marketplace Productions granted it the right to refuse a buyer for the production house.

The two parties settled in late May—MPR will own Marketplace Productions, and PRI secured a long-term contract to distribute it—but what made the potential loss of *Marketplace* to MPR so galling to PRI is the history it shares with MPR. PRI was, in fact, founded by Bill Kling. In the early eighties, Kling approached NPR president Frank Mankiewicz about distributing one of MPR's key programs, *A Prairie Home Companion*, nationally. Mankiewicz turned him down. Kling went home and, with four other stations, created Public Radio International in order to distribute *Prairie* and other MPR programs.

In 1984, Kling stepped down from the board



PETER HOEY

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of PRI, which eventually relocated to offices down the road in Minneapolis and expanded its role as a radio distributor to include assisting local stations in producing shows suitable for nationwide consumption.

If it had lost its contract to distribute the shows produced by Marketplace Productions, PRI would have relinquished a tremendously important asset. That was why they bid on the program to begin with. A long-term contract, such as the one PRI negotiated with MPR to distribute *Marketplace*, ensures that PRI will be able to attract affiliates. Each affiliate station pays for the privilege of buying access to PRI's catalog of programs. That, of course, means revenue for the distributor, and explains why PRI worked so hard to cultivate Marketplace Productions over the years.

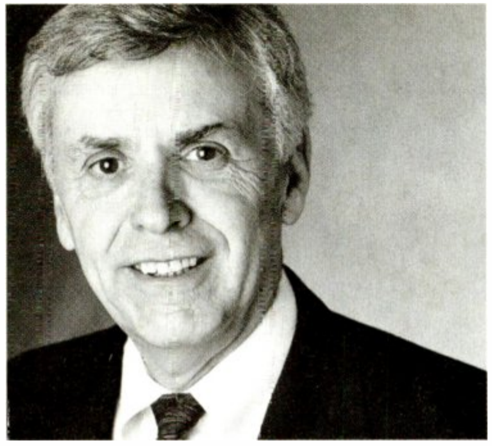
The show's new owner, MPR, stands to profit even more. *Marketplace* should attract lucrative corporate underwriting, and MPR can also take advantage of the show's name, brand, and audience to promote its other programs and attract listeners to its website. The world of public radio looks increasingly like a for-profit business—where competitiveness, ambition, and entrepreneurial instincts are rewarded—and MPR knows it. So, too late, does PRI.

If this all sounds unusually high-stakes for public radio, that's because there is some real money involved. MPR has a $110 million endowment, compared with NPR's $16 million, and Kling has set his sights on building a national reputation. The battle over who gets to own Marketplace Productions may have been resolved, but it has raised bigger questions, namely, who will capitalize on radio's content as it moves off the dial and onto the Internet. *Marketplace*'s millions of listeners are educated and affluent, and Kling has positioned MPR to leverage that resource for the future.

MPR'S HEADQUARTERS IN DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL IS THE ONLY BUILDING IN MINNESOTA'S CAPITAL WITH A WRAPAROUND NEWS TICKER.

The sale, however, did not originate with Minnesota Public Radio. For three years, general manager Russell, a career public-broadcasting producer and executive, had been concerned with USC's ability to finance and promote Marketplace Productions. It was apparent that he wouldn't be able to retain a talented staff without better facilities and more financial resources. He also wanted funds to invest in new programming and to develop *Marketplace* as a brand, not just a show.

When USC made it known that Marketplace Productions was for sale, five suitors stepped forward (including PRI). "[MPR] really turned on the charm," says Russell. "[Former vice-president and MPR board member] Walter Mondale did a presentation. We had a long, good history with PRI. It just turned out that, in the end, there were things that Minnesota Public Radio had that PRI didn't have."



MPR chairman Bill Kling has earned a reputation as a formidable businessman.

MPR is indeed impressive. Its four-story brick headquarters in drowsy downtown St. Paul is the only building in Minnesota's capital city with a wraparound news ticker. The businesslike interior sports 14 recording studios—one with the capacity for a full choir—and dozens of sunny offices. Over the course of three decades, Kling's network has grown into a Midwestern empire—it now operates 30 public stations in and around the state. The news division employs more than 70 reporters, producers, and editors, making it the largest broadcast team—public or private—in Minnesota. MPR's holding company also has a for-profit arm that includes a magazine-publishing business and three commercial radio stations; until 1998, it also had a catalog business. That company, the Rivertown Trading Company, grossed $200 million a year when it was sold two years ago, and $85.6 million from the proceeds of the sale was added to MPR's permanent endowment. As president of the for-profit company, Kling personally netted $2.6 million from the sale, a sum that raised eyebrows in the close-knit world of public radio.

Marketplace Productions is just the latest of Kling's California acquisitions. Last year, MPR's holding company, Minnesota Communications Group, took over the operation of KPCC, an L.A. public station. Kling says he has moved into Southern California because the area is underserved despite eight public-radio stations. "[L.A. is] the second-largest market in the country, and it may be the most important media market because of the entertainment industry," says Kling. It is also a city dependent on radio. Ninety-three percent of L.A.-area residents with a job drive to work; 95 percent of those listen to the radio while they're in the car.

Before Minnesota Communications Group revamped KPCC, there were no 24-hour public news stations in L.A. Kling's new station would be the only guaranteed noncommercial news outlet that L.A.'s more than 15 million residents could turn to during all that time on L.A.'s clogged freeways.

Kling hopes the expanded staff at KPCC—along with Marketplace Productions—will generate programming worthy of national distribution. "There's almost no national public programming coming out of Los Angeles," says Kling, "despite all that media talent."

Still, there is some concern that MPR's broad national ambition will be too much for Marketplace Productions to bear. "All of us were dubious. My staff has asked, 'Are they going to Minnesota-ize us?'" says Russell, who maintains that he isn't worried that *Marketplace* will lose its distinctive voice.

And just as some in the world of not-for-profit radio are having trouble adjusting to the new, more cutthroat side of their industry, some locals don't like the behemoth from the Midwest making a power play in Los Angeles public radio. Ruth Seymour, general manager of the locally beloved L.A. public station KCRW, is suspicious of the takeover. "The heart of public radio is its local commitment, its local concern, and its local control," she says. "That means the people who manage the station ride the same streets...and live with the same neighbors as their listeners do."

Local public radio stations like KCRW are not the only ones to see MPR as a Johnny-come-lately. Indeed, PRI's suit raised questions about public radio's very nature and forced its distributors and owners to confront their uneasy relationship with the business of their business.

There's a greater significance to the dispute, of course. After several years of indecision amid the new-media revolution, public radio is finally rushing to meet its future. As the lines between content producers, distributors, and individual stations blur, no one knows what will happen to the players as their roles—and their traditional sources of income—change in the Internet age. Who will benefit if Marketplace Productions expands from radio into Internet content, books, or even television shows? Producers may have a much more active role in reaching their listeners directly. "Our missions are converging on one another," says Kling. "It's much more difficult to say 'This is what we do' and 'This is what they do.'"

Russell sums up radio's uncertain future by quoting a favorite clause he remembers from one station's contract: It locks up all the rights to a program "including those not yet invented," he says. At its inception, Marketplace Productions might gladly have signed its rights to the mythical media of the future over to PRI. But today it's too late. With Marketplace Productions, MPR has bought more than just a few radio shows; it has bought a brand. PRI may now have its distribution contract, but Kling and Co. rule *Marketplace*'s prospects—even those not yet invented. ◘

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dept. SOURCES

UNTYING THE KNOT

Countless guides can help you plan that summer wedding. But with the divorce rate near 50 percent, here's where to turn in case things don't work out. By Jesse Oxfeld

Innumerable magazines, books, and websites have been designed to sell matrimony to the masses and guide them most of the way down the aisle. All too often, however, these sources skip over an inconvenient fact: An expected lifetime of wedded bliss is often neither blissful nor lifelong. Indeed, about 50 percent of American marriages now end in divorce. So while Martha Stewart may show you a happy, all-dressed-in-white wedding season, *Brill's Content* considers what happens when happily ever after goes bad.

DEALING WITH DIVORCE

On top of the basic angst—the love you thought would last forever has turned out to last for just a little while—emotionally charged practical issues must be resolved in any divorce. How will this affect your finances? Where will you live? What about the kids? A range of books and websites can help guide you through those concerns; we've looked at some of the most popular.

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO DIVORCE

By Sharon Naylor
(Macmillan General Reference, 1998, $15.95)

The *Unofficial Guide* series covers a range of home- and family-life topics, from *The Unofficial Guide to Planning Your Wedding* to *The Unofficial Guide to Eldercare.* This book takes a soup-to-nuts approach, providing explications on most every relevant issue. It starts with the most basic (should we divorce?) and works through the more complex (what are the different types of alimony?) Along the way, the guide provides information on the legal process, financial concerns, and emotional issues.

THE SMART DIVORCE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE 200 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW

By Susan T. Goldstein and Valerie H. Colb
(Golden Books, 1999, $10.95)

A more concise version of *The Unofficial Guide to Divorce*, this book also attempts to give brief summaries of the important information on a wide variety of divorce-related topics. The volume works more or less chronologically, setting up each entry in a simple format: A conventional-wisdom statement is made, and then the relevant facts are explained. At the beginning are such pre-divorce fears as "I won't have the money to do the things I used to do with friends" and "My children won't love me anymore." *The Smart Divorce* proceeds through picking an attorney, dealing with the legal proceedings, considering therapy, and looking out for the children.

CRAZY TIME: SURVIVING DIVORCE AND BUILDING A NEW LIFE, REVISED EDITION

By Abigail Trafford
(HarperPerennial, 1992, $14)

This book, originally published in 1982 and overhauled for the new edition, doesn't concern itself with legal issues or worries about the children. It focuses on helping you emotionally through a trying time. Trafford is a journalist, and the book is based not just on her personal experiences and research but also on hundreds of interviews with divorced men and women. *Crazy Time* is told mostly through anecdotal examples, although names are changed and stories blended. The first section deals with "Crisis," the point when the marriage finally falls apart. In the second part, "Crazy Time," Trafford discusses that period when the divorce is actually unfolding and helps you through the chaos. Finally, "Recovery" moves past the failed marriage, offering tips on how to deal with your public face, how to love again, and, eventually, how to remarry successfully.

DIVORCEINFO.COM

divorceinfo.com

Internet chat rooms and bulletin boards can provide a place for people dealing with the same issues to congregate and discuss their problems, whether legal, financial, or emotional. This site focuses more on surviving divorce emotionally than on legal concerns. That's not to say legal issues aren't examined, but divorceinfo.com is concerned most with helping you endure, as the site puts it, "one of the cruddiest experiences you'll ever face." It features lengthy sections on "Getting Through It," "Coping With Pain," and, most important, "Life After Divorce." Run by Lee Borden, a lawyer and divorce mediator in Alabama, the site has an endearingly no-frills appearance.

DIVORCE LAW

A bevy of books and websites promise to guide you through the legal aspects of your divorce. Should you bother with any of them? Attorneys argue, not surprisingly, that for something this important, it's worth spending the money to have a pro help you out. ("Listen," says big-shot New York divorce lawyer Raoul Felder, "it's a deal you're making for the rest of your life.") But even when you are using a lawyer, it's always wise to understand the legal process and know what's going on.

USING DIVORCE MEDIATION

By Katherine E. Stoner
(Nolo Press, 1999, $21.95)

Nolo Press, now called nolo.com, is the granddaddy of do-it-yourself-divorce guidebooks. Its first title, on doing your own California divorce, was published in 1971. The company has published dozens of books on topics from bankruptcy to workplace rights. This one, by a lawyer and mediator, explains how to avoid courtrooms by allowing "separating couples the chance to work with a neutral third party to resolve differences and find solutions." It explains how the mediation process works, how it's different from a courtroom divorce proceeding, and why couples should consider it.

PRACTICAL DIVORCE SOLUTIONS

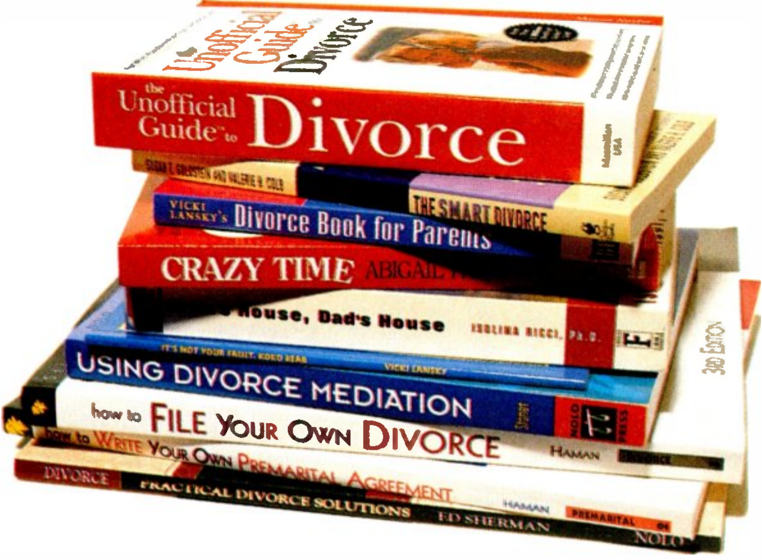
By Ed Sherman
(Nolo Press Occidental, 1994, $14.95)

An offshoot of Nolo Press, the separately owned Occidental branch publishes a few titles on handling your own divorce, covering a handful of states. Its lone national book, *Practical Divorce Solutions*, offers pointers on making it through the divorce process, including advice on how to avoid common pitfalls and tips on selecting lawyers. For those who choose not to use an attorney—and if the divorce is uncontested, this book favors the lawyer-free approach—it also provides sample forms and legal documents.

HOW TO FILE YOUR OWN DIVORCE

By Edward A. Haman
(Sphinx Publishing, 1998, $19.95)

Sphinx is a division of Sourcebooks, Inc., a leading publisher of do-it-yourself legal guides (*How to Form a Delaware*



ANTHONY VERDE

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Corporation, How to Make Your Own Will), and it produces a number of divorce-related titles. Divorce laws differ from state to state, so in addition to this nationwide guide, Sphinx offers 13 state-specific books. Each explains the ins and outs of standard divorce procedure, with sections on how to file, negotiating a settlement, and facing a court hearing. One section gives advice on how to pick a good lawyer and provides strategies for working well with him or her. There's even guidance on how to find a missing spouse so you can instigate proceedings. Each book includes an appendix on relevant local laws and another with appropriate forms.

DIVORCE SOURCE
divorcesource.com

This site offers a searchable database of case law, links to divorce professionals in your area, and provides an online calendar you can personalize to track your divorce proceeding, including e-mail reminders about important dates and events. Unlike most other sites, divorcesource.com has individual pages for each state, which is important because divorce laws differ between jurisdictions. For each one, the site features specifics on relevant laws, along with links to legal articles and selected books. The site is run by an independent company, Divorce Source, Inc., which sells advertising on its pages.

NOLO.COM
nolo.com

This website covers a vast range of self-help law references, offering free guidance, book sales, and downloadable forms. The divorce section of this wider-ranging site offers question-and-answer information on topics from annulment and separations to custody rights and alimony. It also includes links to dictionaries of legal terms and recommended books.

THE KIDS

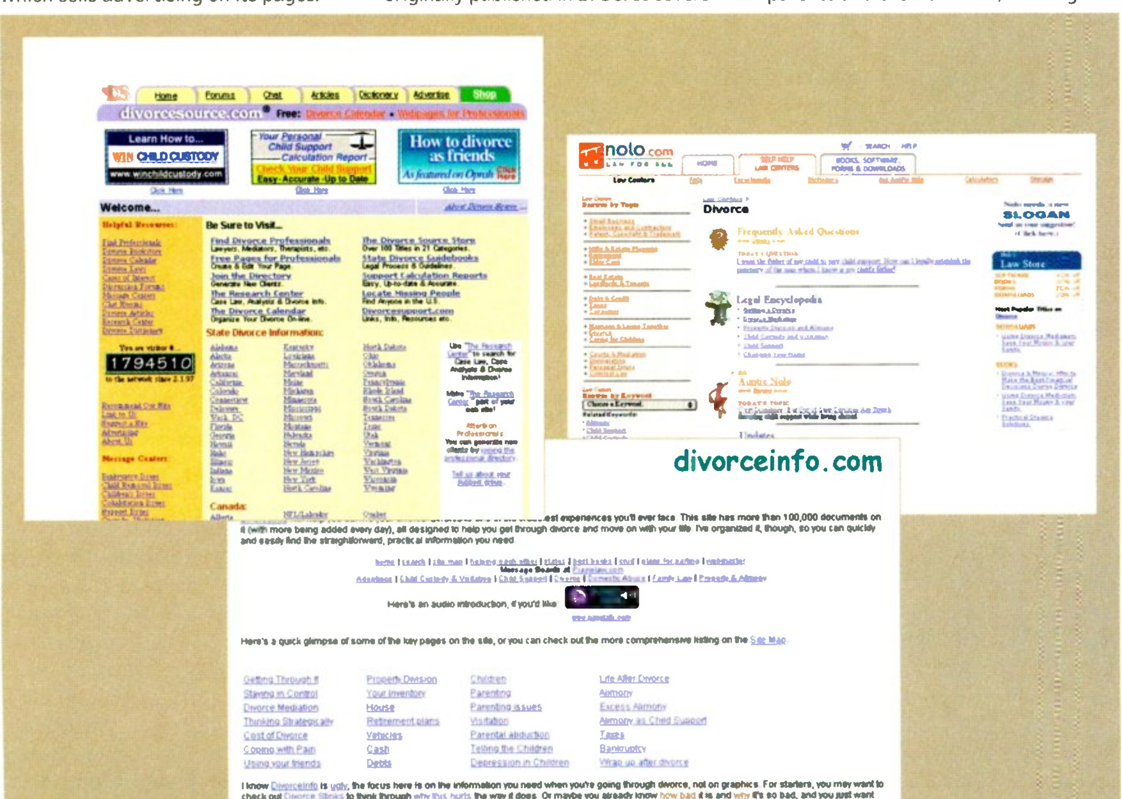
There's an old joke about a 90-ish man and woman who show up before a judge, suing for divorce after nearly 70 years of marriage. *Why now, after all this time?* the judge asks. Replies the couple: *We were waiting until the kids were dead.* The quip recognizes an important truth: One of the biggest concerns many couples face when contemplating divorce is how the children will react and how they'll be affected—and which spouse they'll end up with.

MOM'S HOUSE, DAD'S HOUSE: MAKING TWO HOMES FOR YOUR CHILD
By Isolina Ricci
(Fireside Books, 1997, $14)

This popular guide for separated and divorced parents, recently updated, was originally published in 1980. It covers both legal and emotional issues, as well as parents' day-to-day concerns about setting up two happy and healthy homes for their children. A chapter on the appropriate vocabulary for divorced parents goes beyond the obvious platitudes to caution about even seemingly innocuous comments that could be better phrased. The book recommends establishing a new, businesslike relationship with your ex and writing a "parenting plan," an elaboration on the custody agreement that spells out in detail each parent's responsibilities and addresses in advance many issues that will involve both parents, such as religious upbringing and paying for college.

DIVORCE BOOK FOR PARENTS
By Vicki Lansky
(Book Peddlers, 1996, $5.99)

Lansky is a single mother and the author of a series of parenting books (*101 Ways to Make Your Child Feel Special, Complete Pregnancy and Baby Book*). This guide, an updated release of a 1989 work, gives recommendations for dealing with the decision to separate and breaking the news to your kids. It discusses how they are likely to handle the announcement and anticipates some questions they might ask, recognizing that kids of different ages will have different reactions. Studded with quotes from divorced parents and their children, it also gives guidance on custody and joint-parenting issues.



IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, KOKO BEAR
By Vicki Lansky
(Book Peddlers, 1998, $5.99)

Beyond simply guiding parents through this tough time, Lansky also provides a read-along children's book to help explain to young children what's going on. The KoKo Bear character appears a few times in Lansky's oeuvre, being toilet trained, preparing for surgery, and welcoming a new baby. This picture book, which not only includes the child's story but also has hints for the parents on each page, begins with KoKo's parents announcing the news, watches PaPa Bear move out, and ends with KoKo settling in to the two separate homes.

PRENUPS

A lot of this headache, of course, could have been avoided if you had had a prenuptial agreement. A prenup lays out who should get what in the event of a divorce. Conventional wisdom says they're just for the rich, but that's not entirely true. They're often used in second marriages, for example, to clarify whether, after your death, assets should go to your new spouse or to kids from a previous marriage.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN PREMARITAL AGREEMENT
By Edward A. Haman
(Sphinx Publishing, 1998, $19.95)

Lending credence to the notion that prenups aren't just for the wealthy, this book was Amazon.com's 1999 bestseller in the "marriage" category—showing that a wider slice of America than you might think considers these arrangements. It starts off explaining what a prenup is, discusses whether you need one (unsurprisingly, it says you likely do), asks if a lawyer is needed and suggests how to find one. After going over applicable law and points to consider, the book provides a range of sample documents, from simple premarital agreements to financial statements and prenup release forms.

SMARTAGREEMENTS
smartagreements.com

SmartAgreements is a website selling do-it-yourself legal forms. If you decide to do a prenup without a lawyer, you can download a $10 form from the site that runs on the company's free software. The program walks you through 54 individual decision points and helps you finalize your deal. ■

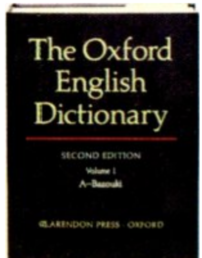
World Radio History

dept.

GATEKEEPERS

GETTING IN THE LAST WORD

For more than 100 years, The Oxford English Dictionary has been the authoritative reference for the Queen's English. Now it's being fully modernized—and Americanized—for the first time. By Chipp Winston



On the back page of a recent issue of *The New Yorker*, there was a small cartoon of a fed-up mom and her three kids, all holding luggage and preparing to leave home. "We are so-o-o out of here," the caption read. These days, the sentence wouldn't strike anyone as unintelligible. It's the sort of slangy, informal use of *so* you might hear a teen of the MTV set employ, as in: "Omigod, I would *so* marry Carson Daly if he asked me." Although the word's meaning in this context is fairly intuitive, if you looked for it in a dictionary—any dictionary—you'd come up empty.

It's Jesse Sheidlower's job, as the only American principal editor of the venerable Oxford English Dictionary, to put it there. Sheidlower scribbles the *New Yorker* reference on a 4-by-6-inch slip of white paper, as he has for other citations he's found—and as lexicographers at the O.E.D., as it's called, have for more than 140 years. Ultimately, he says, "it will go into the dictionary." Sheidlower, who is working on the first complete revision of the O.E.D. ever, doesn't invent new usages for words; like a reporter, he documents what's already in the language.

In October of last year, Sheidlower left Random House, where he'd edited dictionaries since 1991, to join the O.E.D. It was the type of opportunity no lexicographer could refuse. "They could have chosen a lot of people," says Wendalyn Nichols, editorial director of dictionaries at Random House Reference & Information Publishing. "It speaks volumes that they chose him....I would hazard that they felt that this time around they needed to cover American English if it was really going to be called the Oxford English Dictionary rather than the Oxford British Dictionary."

Today, Sheidlower looks prim in a gray suit as he sits alone in the small office that's the center for the dictionary's U.S. editorial work. (But don't be fooled: While editing the *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, he compiled *The F-Word*, the only dictionary devoted to a single—albeit profane—word.) The American office, a first for the O.E.D., is in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, a sleepy town of 10,000 at the mouth of the Connecticut River; it might just as well be Oxford. Sheidlower's desk is relatively bare—on it sit a G3 laptop and two books he needs for work: one an example of early homosexual literature and the other a collection of Dashiell Hammett short stories Sheidlower is studying for "good underworld slang."

The office opened just a few weeks ago; so far it has an in-house staff of exactly one. Sheidlower says that within two to three years, as many as ten people could be working here. Even then, it will be smaller than the U.K. office, he says, referring to the 50-person Oxford operation attached to a former printing works. Sheidlower envisions that some American staffers will draft and revise entries while others talk to contributors and consultants. There will be stacks of read and unread books on desks, he says, full of new words ready to be keyed into vast databases. For now, though, he works alone.

The United States is home to more people who speak English as their primary language than is any other nation, yet the O.E.D., with its high-flown, Victorian language, has never reflected that reality. Now, Sheidlower says, the O.E.D. "recognizes that American English is one of the most important, if not the most important, part of English." The fact is underscored by Sheidlower's appointment. At 32, he is something the O.E.D. isn't: a young, rather racy master of modern American slang.

THE SECOND EDITION of the O.E.D.—weighing 137 pounds, spanning 20 leather-bound volumes, and containing nearly 300,000 entries—is the kind of tome interior decorators design presidential libraries around, a work of scholarship regarded as much for its supreme authority on the English language as for its elegance. "It is an awe-inspiring work," Simon Winchester wrote in *The Professor and the Madman*, a literary history of the compiling of the O.E.D., "the most important reference book ever made, and given the unending importance of the English language, probably the most important that is ever likely to be."

What distinguishes the O.E.D. from most other dictionaries is its reliance on citations, published quotations that illustrate the usage and history of words. One hundred and twenty years ago, Sir James Murray, the O.E.D.'s famed first editor, issued an "Appeal to the English-Speaking and English-Reading Public of Great Britain, America and the British Colonies" for words to include in the nascent dictionary. Dr. William Minor, the murdering madman depicted in Winchester's book, responded with more than 10,000 citations.

Now John Simpson, the chief editor of the dictionary, has launched a similar appeal for new words. The O.E.D.'s publisher, Oxford University Press, announced last July that it would commit $55 million toward an exhaustive revision. Never before have definitions written by Sir James in the late nineteenth century been overhauled—reviewed, revised, and modernized—as they are now by some 300 editors and consultants. The first of these updates, approximately 1,000 new and revised words, was posted online in mid-March at www.oed.com. (An annual individual subscription costs $550.) A similar number of entries are to be posted quarterly until the complete third edition appears, in 2010.

AT 32, SHEIDLOWER IS SOMETHING THE O.E.D. ISN'T: A YOUNG, SORT OF RACY MASTER OF MODERN AMERICAN SLANG.

As part of the revision effort, scores of volunteers from every corner of the English-speaking world are participating in reading programs, combing through assigned material in search of millions of citations. The goal is to gather new quotations that will ultimately become part of the O.E.D.'s third edition, a juggernaut of a reference book that will likely consist of more than 40 volumes, twice the length of the current dictionary.

"THERE IS A DIRECT LINK between Sir James Murray and Jesse Sheidlower in their love of the history and nuances of words," says William Safire, *The New York Times*'s "On Language" columnist. Although Sheidlower is a slang expert, his reverence for history is everything the O.E.D. founder's ever was. "Jesse is one of a rare breed," says chief editor Simpson. "He's a very experienced lexicographer of modern American English, but he also has a historical side, which means that he is equally able to work with the emergent vocabulary of the American people since the earliest times." *The F-Word*, for instance, includes all known citations for every sense of the word—literally hundreds—the first of which dates from the fifteenth century.

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Word mavens past and present: Sir James Murray (above), the dictionary's first editor, was knighted for his work; Jesse Sheidlower, American editor for the O.E.D.

NORMAN MCBEATH

The O.E.D., it should be noted, has included precious little slang, but that will change. "[Slang] is going to be an emphasis now," Sheidlower says, "especially with America, because it is a big part of American English and something America is known for and even praised for." In the past, the O.E.D. has looked mainly at literary sources for language—serious nonfiction, as well as the work of major authors and poets. Now the emphasis is shifting to nontraditional sources: Marvel Comics, for example, and *Seinfeld* and *South Park* scripts. "We're looking for a kind of language that isn't normally studied the way literary language is," says Sheidlower.

BORN ON NEW YORK'S LONG ISLAND, Sheidlower has been interested in language for as long as he can remember. At 16, he enrolled at The University of Chicago, where he studied the history of the English language before doing graduate work in linguistics at Trinity College, Cambridge University. He first submitted a citation to the O.E.D. while studying there in 1990. He was reading a Lord Byron letter when he came across a use of the verb *tool*, meaning *to drive along*, that antedated the O.E.D.'s first citation by 13 years. "The earliest example had been 1832," he remembers. "This was in a letter from 1819. He was using it punningly in a sexual sense as well." In short order, the O.E.D. hired him to read material and submit citations, and he continued contributing to the dictionary for about a year until he returned to New York and began editing at Random House.

Six years later, in 1996, Sheidlower launched Jesse's Word of the Day, a popular Random House Web feature, where he answered users' arcane questions, such as what the "H" stands for in the phrase "Jesus H. Christ." (It's part of his Greek monogram.) The site was so popular it eventually spawned a book of the same name.

One of Sheidlower's primary responsibilities at the O.E.D. is to run the North American Reading Program, for which he assigns readings to dozens of volunteers around the country. He gets about 10,000 citations a month, which all become part of a gigantic citation file, now stored mostly electronically. One person is reading Dave Eggers's *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, for example; another is reading Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*. Still others are leafing through 1850s editions of *Harper's Magazine*. Sheidlower generally requires five citations from various sources over a three-year span before he will consider a word for inclusion in the O.E.D. "I want to have better coverage of Americanisms, better coverage of informal things, better reflection of American pronunciation and usage," he says.

One thing that isn't being covered is vocabulary that can be found only online. It's not that examples of language from *Salon* or *Slate* are considered less authoritative than, say, those from a Spider-Man comic. They're simply not considered. In the future, as more content migrates to the Web, the O.E.D. will have to confront the Internet. But at the moment, Sheidlower says, the editors are still considering how they want to deal with it. "We want to get things that can be saved in an archive," he says. "I mean, if they pull the plug on *Salon*, then that's it, you can't get it."

Still, the Web has emerged as an irresistible place to post a dictionary in progress. "I think the online version will be the O.E.D. of the future," says chief editor Simpson. Five-year-old Thomas Murray, the great-great-great-grandson of Sir James Murray, would no doubt agree. He was the first online user after its official launch in March. Of course, his mother had to help him spell some of the longer words he wanted to look up. ◘

World Radio History

dept. INFLUENCES

ART AND COMMERCE

Philip-Lorca diCorcia has influenced a generation of young fashion photographers. But when does homage turn into theft? By Luke Barr

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, they say—and then there's plagiarism. It's a fine line sometimes, nowhere more so than in the rarefied world of fashion photography. Consider the images shown here (all included in a longer portfolio in June's debut issue of *List* magazine): three photographs taken by venerable art photographer Philip-Lorca diCorcia, paired with three photographs taken subsequently by up-and-coming fashion photographers. Are the similarities the result of inspiration—diCorcia identifies a mood and style and technique, leading others to explore the same territory? Or does this sameness result from a *lack* of inspiration—young commercial photographers, hungry for ideas, stealing wholesale from the work of another? To the untrained eye—armed, say, with a few anecdotes about other photographers studying diCorcia's work on set during their own photo shoots—the answer appears to be the latter. "Art directors seek a certain kind of credibility by hiring artists," says diCorcia. "Then, once it's established through editorial channels that this is a cool way of working, art directors start hiring other people to do that same look in advertising."

DiCorcia, 47, has been taking pictures since the mid-seventies. His work has been shown in museums around the world, including in solo exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, in 1993. But diCorcia has long made forays into the world of commercial photography, taking pictures for such fashion magazines as *W* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Peter Galassi, chief photography curator at MOMA and a longtime admirer, says diCorcia "has drawn what you might call 'commercial slickness' into his work." His cinematic lighting creates an ominous, artificial reality; his pictures often look like stills from some larger, possibly awful story—a story we'll never be told.

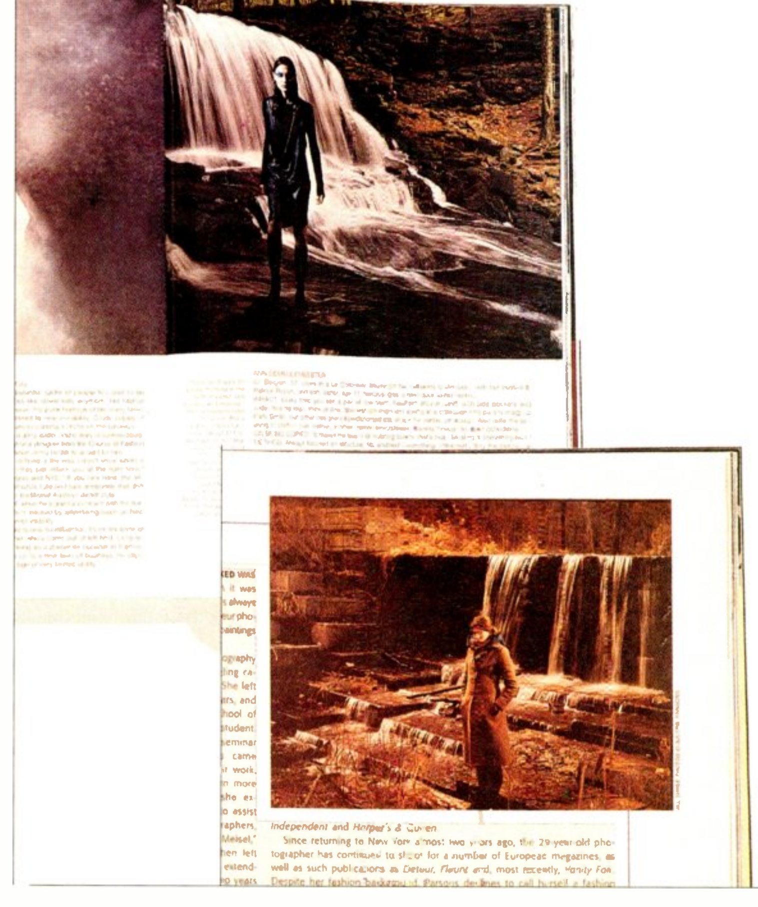
For his 1993–97 "Streetwork" series (top right), diCorcia developed a technique for street photography that involved bright, flash lighting that caught passersby on real city streets in surreal, glowing detail. Taryn Simon used precisely this technique in a fashion shoot for the September 1999 issue of *Flaunt* magazine (right, second from top). Simon would not comment for this article. In May 1999, *Photo District News* ran a picture of a woman standing in front of a waterfall (bottom right) taken by Justine Parsons. The picture was remarkably similar to a diCorcia photograph published in the September 1997 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* (right, second from bottom)—the same dull pallette, the same blurred-water effect. Parsons could not be reached for comment by press time.

"You go to a meeting and they pull out the artwork, and say, 'Here are the references,'" says Alexei Hay, explaining the visual instructions he received before shooting the fall/winter 1999 Kate Spade ad campaign (opposite page, bottom). The instructions consisted of a diCorcia photograph published in the September 1999 issue of *W* (opposite, top). "They're sitting there with a copy of the [diCorcia] shoot, and that's what they want."

Hay apprenticed as diCorcia's photo assistant before starting on his own, and most recently shot Gucci's fall 2000 ad campaign. He is perfectly aware of diCorcia's influence on his work: "I am eternally in his debt," he says. "It's something I think about every time I pick up a camera. It runs really deep." None of which stopped him from executing the Kate Spade ad. "I'm not going to beat myself up about it," says Hay. "It's a commercial world." ■

Philip-Lorca diCorcia's "New York, 1997" from his "Streetwork" series (top); a spread from Taryn Simon's fashion shoot in *Flaunt*, September 1999 (bottom)

Below: diCorcia's "The Individualist" in *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1997 (top); Justine Parsons's image in *Photo District News*, May 1999 (bottom)



Independent and *Harper's & Queen*

Since returning to New York almost two years ago, the 29-year-old photographer has continued to shoot for a number of European magazines, as well as such publications as *Detour*, *Flaunt* and, most recently, *Vanity Fair*.

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Above: diCorcia's "Perfect World" in *W*, September 1999. Below: Alexei Hay's photo for the Kate Spade fall/winter 1999 campaign.

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MEDIA DIET

DROWNING IN A SEA OF OXYGEN

Television heavyweights have lined up behind a new network for women. Problem is, it's almost impossible to see. One intrepid reporter finds—and watches—this hyped but hidden cable channel. By Jesse Oxfeld

You've probably heard the news: Women, demographically speaking, are the new teens. Just a few years ago teenagers were the great, new, untapped audience. Those in the marketing business explained that there was a huge population of kids, passionate about their entertainment and with money to spend. But the conventional wisdom has changed. Now, many of the same gurus say, the great, new, untapped audience, with large numbers and lots of cash, is women. And, it's argued by some, they're an underserved audience: Lifetime, although the fourth-highest-rated cable network during April, was until recently the only TV operation specifically targeted toward them.

For the last several months, legendary cable-programming executive Geraldine Laybourne, all-media personage Oprah Winfrey, and television producers Marcy Carsey, Tom Werner, and Caryn Mandabach—whose company created such hits as *The Cosby Show*, *Roseanne*, and *3rd Rock From the Sun*—have been touting Oxygen Media, their multiplatform information company geared toward women, which encompasses a cable network and 14 websites. That touting has been successful: All three newsweeklies have run features about Oxygen, as have countless other newspapers and magazines across the country.

Despite all the buzz, though, it's almost impossible to watch the channel. Oxygen airs 49 hours of original programming a week—whose existence, like God's, you'll have to accept on faith, because odds are you can't see even one of those 49 hours. The network is available in only 10 million of the country's 100.8 million television households. And considering that its founders promote it as a life-altering and life-affirming new kind of television channel, and do so with an almost messianic zeal, it isn't terribly surprising that Oxygen requires a religious-type devotion. "We're different from all TV," Laybourne proclaimed to *Time* magazine in January. (Laybourne herself is regularly hailed as a minor deity for having built Nickelodeon into a kids' entertainment powerhouse.) "I think some angels showed up today," Oprah wrote in her journal when Laybourne, Carsey, and Mandabach pitched their venture to her, according to *Newsweek*.

But mere faith seemed insufficient to support the hype, so I set out to watch a day's worth of Oxygen—to see whether it really is different from all other TV. Plus, I was curious to see how a guy would be struck by this explicitly women-focused network. As Laybourne has told the press, Oxygen is for "women who are leaning into their lives," whatever that means. No more helpfully, she's also explained that her goal is to "create a network that fully dimensionalizes women." Whatever she's saying, she's not talking about me. But just because the network isn't *for* men doesn't mean it's specifically *not* for us, either. Indeed, some argue I should be welcome in Oxygen's part of the cable dial. "The name of the network is Oxygen, not Estrogen," Mandabach told *The Detroit News*. "That's how we've always felt about it. Everybody needs it."

DOES THIS FEMINIST NETWORK EMPOWER WOMEN TO CELEBRATE THEIR WOMANHOOD IN A WOMANLY SORT OF WAY? NOT FROM WHAT THIS GUY SAW.

I live in New York City, ostensibly the media capital of the world. I work for a magazine that covers the media. I watch Time Warner Cable, the nation's largest cable company (although soon to be surpassed by AT&T Broadband), and DirecTV, the nation's largest direct-satellite provider. Nowhere could I watch Oxygen. So I decided I'd find a place where I could. I called Oxygen's public-relations people for a list of cities with Oxygenated cable systems. No such list, I was told, is available. I searched a news database for articles mentioning where Oxygen is available and learned that Atlanta seemed to be the closest big city with the channel. I called 15 hotels there; none carried it on their internal TV systems. Then I saw a story that pointed me to Chicago; in Oprah's home base, surely a hotel would carry Oxygen. Maybe so, but none of the 14 I called did. Same story with more than a dozen hotels I tried in Denver, Dallas, and Dearborn, Michigan (cities chosen, incidentally, not for their alliteration but because news clips said Oxygen was available there). I realized I'd have to find a private home. I made some calls and got on a plane.

A RECENT FRIDAY MORNING, 6:55 A.M., I roll out of bed, head downstairs, and turn on the television. I am in Mountain View, California, 2,567 miles from home. This is where I finally found the right combination of a friend's house where I could stay and a cable system that carries Oxygen.

First up, *Inhale*, wherein one Steve Ross, who, the channel's P.R. materials tell me, "teaches yoga privately to a number of celebrities," will take me through a series of stretches and breathing exercises that will leave me "feeling balanced and relaxed, yet fully worked out." This is not your mother's maharishi. Ross plays pop music—"Mercy Mercy Me" by Marvin Gaye starts soon after I've tuned in—and pushes his crowd quickly through their paces. Steve's on-set students—13 women and three men, of varying ethnicities, all in pretty good shape except for one token heavyset woman and a man who looks remarkably like the actor Forest Whitaker—are working hard: bending, twisting, and stretching. If you're one for exercise tapes, this could be a refreshing alternative. The on-air students seem to be getting a good workout, and a show that differs a little day to day is probably preferable to watching the same Tae-Bo video every morning.

But as I watch *Inhale*, I try to look at it both from the man's viewpoint and from what I think might be the woman's viewpoint. Which makes me wonder: *This* is for women? It's more like a creepy fantasy of male domination. Thirteen female students, attractive, carefully groomed, and wearing clingy, midriff-baring clothes, smile docilely while saying nothing. The only person who gets to move off his or her assigned spot is host Steve, who walks around telling the women what to do, dictating their contortions.

After an hour, *Inhale* exhales. Next, from 8 to 10, is a rebroadcast of the previous day's installment of *Pure Oxygen*, the network's marquee show. I decide to wait for the scheduled live version at noon. I use the break to check out the companion websites.

A key part of Oxygen's business plan is that it's not just a TV network. It's designed to have both an on-air and online presence, integrating its websites into its television programming and vice versa, poised for the day of true convergence—when you'll surf the Web as easily as you watch television, and do both at the same time through the same box. I start on the main page, Oxygen.com, and hyperlink my way through 14 sites on various women's-interest topics. As

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stand-alone entities, the websites do a decent job. Thriveonline, for example, covers a range of health and wellness topics from sexuality to nutrition. Another site, Girls On, covers TV, music, books, and movies. The rest of the cyber-lineup includes such sites as Breakup Girl, offering relationship advice; Moms Online, a guide to parenting; and ka-Ching, which features home-finance advice geared toward women. Other Oxygen destinations are *The Oprah Winfrey Show*'s Web presence, a style and fashion site, a women's-sports site, and an e-commerce site that sells crafts made by women. They all seem practical and useful, but none of them too exciting, and they're not particularly unique as Web destinations.

But the websites face a larger problem. They are dependent on a favorite dotcom buzzword, *community*. The idea is to build a connected, involved feeling among your users and between them and the site. Chat rooms, message boards, interactive elements like Web polls—all of these are supposed to make the user feel involved, part of the community, and thus more likely to return to the site and stick around longer. In Oxygen's case, that communal feeling will theoretically extend to the television shows as well, so that the two parts will together form a powerful whole.

But many of the websites suffer from far too great a communitarian urge. Girls On, the entertainment site, for example, is filled with content from average users saying, alas, average things. They're commenting on movies and TV shows, but not in any particularly insightful way. It sounds like small talk around the watercooler, which is not something I need to log on to get.

But enough with the Web. It's 10 o'clock and time to head back downstairs for the next show, *The Girl in the Picture*, a daily screening of a classic film from the thirties, forties, or fifties, starring a strong actress in a memorable role. Today's feature: 1938's *Holiday*, directed by George Cukor and starring Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant. It's a good film, of course, and Hepburn is good in it. It makes a nice, Oxygeny point: that Grant's character would be happier married to an opinionated, nontraditional Hepburn than to her socialite, daddy's-girl sister.

Intruding on the movie, however, is what Oxygen calls "the stripe." During all the network's programming—even the commercials—a black bar remains on the bottom few inches of the screen. During interview shows, that's where a guest's name and affiliation are displayed. Frequently the stripe points viewers to Oxygen's web address. Sometimes it teases what's coming up next. During the *Girl in the Picture* movies, though, the stripe provides trivia about the movie you're watching, à la VH1's *Pop-Up Video*. "Grant was left-handed," for example. And, "Q: Who was Hepburn's favorite actress?" Who cares? The point of *Pop-Up Video* is not to pay attention to the show but to see what funny factoids VH1 is going to tell you. Here, though, I *am* trying to pay attention. It's tough to follow a movie's plot if I'm also supposed keep alert for flying witticisms.

Clockwise from top left: *Pure Oxygen*'s Sandra Cuba, May Lee, and Farai Chideya; *Trackers*'s Khosi Kunene, Blaire Bercy, Su Chin Pak, and Ian Kesler; and *Exhale*'s Candice Bergen with Hillary Clinton

At noon comes *Pure Oxygen*, broadcast live for two hours from Oxygen's newsroom-cum-office-cum-set above the Chelsea Market on Manhattan's West Side. The show is rerun each night and again the next morning. The P.R. materials call *Pure Oxygen* the network's "signature series" and promise "the latest info, insights, and opinions on parenting, business, finance, health, style, home, and entertainment." Sounds like a pretty standard program, but remember that it will be run through the Oxygenating, feminized filter.

"*Pure Oxygen* talks with women," the publicity binder elaborates, "in a fluid production style that breaks down the walls between the viewers, Oxygen's staff, the crew, and the on-air personalities." The show features a cast of three youngish hosts, plus a staff of youngish contributors, who basically sit around and jawbone on a set that literally rests in the middle of a working office. There's a constant low background hum of murmuring voices and the occasional Oxygen employee walking by. Handheld cameras follow the hosts, nobody seems quite ready for prime time, and the combination of it all—the ambient noise and the unpolished performers talking to wobbly cameras—makes hosts Farai Chideya, Sandra Cuba, and May Lee look like Peter, Paul and Mary anchoring a PBS telethon and chatting up volunteer phone bankers.

This awkwardness is particularly obvious in segments like "Watercooler," where the hosts sit around with Hank, a producer on the show, who works the computer, making small talk theoretically based on topics from the chat boards. No mention is made, however, that today's broadcast is a rerun. The only way I realize this is when, at another point, the Oscars are previewed. (Later, back in New York, I learn that the show is live only Monday through Thursday.) When I took a look at the show's chat page, all I got was a "This page cannot be displayed" warning. Watching Hank type away at the computer is distracting and also sends an interesting message for this empowering-women network: The girls can talk, but they need a boy to work the computer.

The show is better when the segments are more traditional. One discussion had two political-pundit types wondering whether someone must be smart to be president. It's a legitimate question, and the conversation is less horse-racy and more contemplative than standard political-gabfest fare. The stripe device is actually useful here, popping up with facts about the educational backgrounds of the presidential candidates and former presidents, among other relevant tidbits. Then there's a competent, if interminable, video tribute to a female banjo player, Roni Stoneman, as part of women's-history-month festivities (the original broadcast was in March). The show ends with a good inter-

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view with Kimberly Peirce, the director and cowriter of *Boys Don't Cry*, and Christine Vachon, one of the film's producers.

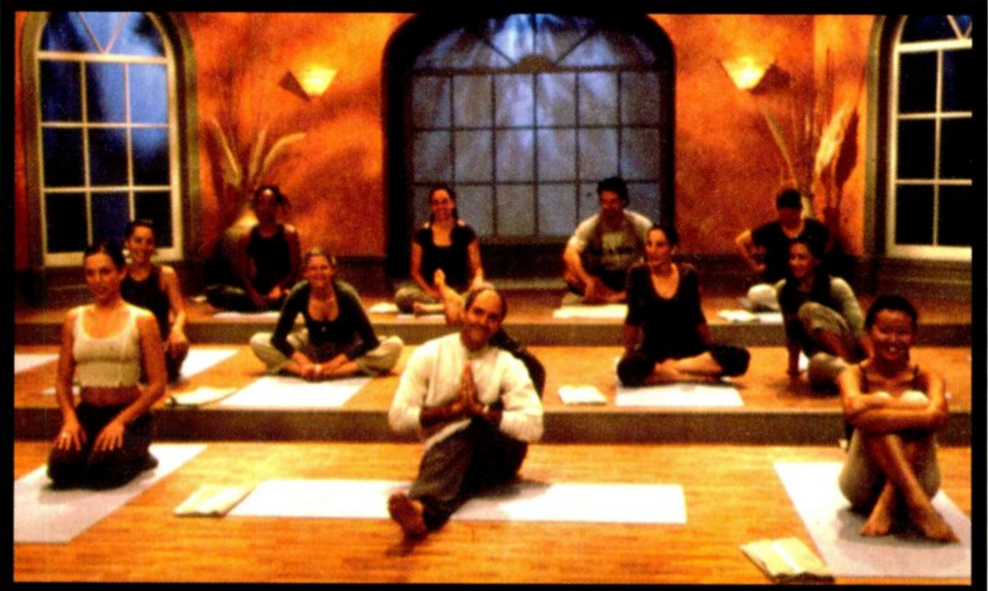
Although it was sometimes interesting and even enlightening, it's a relief when *Pure Oxygen* is over. All of that innovative and interactive "fluid production style" was a little exhausting. Part of what is appealing about television is that even when we think it's challenging us, it really isn't. Fundamentally, we like television to look like television. Sitcoms and dramas, even groundbreakers like *Seinfeld* and *The Sopranos*, look like sitcoms and dramas. We know what game shows, newscasts, talk shows, and late-night comedy should look like. *Pure Oxygen* simply doesn't look like recognizable TV. This may turn out to be a virtue, but for the moment, it's off-putting.

The next two hours, from 2 o'clock until 4, do look like TV. First up is *As She Sees It*, an hour-and-a-half-long daily show airing, the P.R. stuff says, "documentaries by, about, and for women." There's really no reason the film I caught, *No Man's Land*, about female war reporters covering the horrors in places like Sarajevo and Afghanistan, couldn't have been just as much for men. *No Man's Land* was good—the kind of thing you'd see picked up by, say, the Discovery Channel or A&E. After two hours of *Pure Oxygen*'s aggressively strange format, to watch something I could recognize as a TV show—even a serious documentary—was relaxing.

Likewise the 3:30 show, *I've Got a Secret*. It's a retread of the 1950s game show of the same name, and although it's not very good, it's enjoyable simply because it's in a recognizable form. On each episode, much like the old *What's My Line?*, a guest comes on with a secret (today's first contestant was baby-sat by George Clooney when she was a young child). Four celebrity panelists then have 45 seconds each to try to figure out the secret, using only yes-or-no questions. The guest wins some money if the secret can't be determined; in today's episode none of the three secrets are revealed. Perhaps that's because the panelists' sleuthing skills are as good as the state of their careers; to call them B-list celebs would probably be a compliment. Teri Garr is the allegedly big name, and it's downhill from there: Amy Yasbeck, who played a minor character on the forgettable sitcom *Wings*, is a regular panelist, and today she's joined by Jason Kravits from *The Practice* and Chris Hogan from *3rd Rock From the Sun*. I can't see a reason why this game show was revived at all, much less on a women's network. My guess is that the rights were cheap.

Still, *I've Got a Secret* is a pleasure compared to *Trackers*, which starts at 4 o'clock. For the next two hours, it's back to the TV shows that don't feel anything like TV shows—*Trackers* is essentially a teenybopper version of *Pure Oxygen*. There are chat segments, an advice segment, and a musical guest—a decidedly second-rate young country singer named Alecia Elliott.

There's also a game show, *Clued In*, that doesn't air in one block but is instead woven through it all. The quiz segments are fun, youthful, and kind of edgy—something MTV or Nickelodeon might do. The host, Ian Kesler, is one of the few people on *Trackers* who actually seems like a TV person. He's poised and articulate in front of the camera, and he ad libs without fumbling. Even when he messes up, he handles it well. But his faux pas is a gem. "Betty Friedman," he asks, "wrote what landmark feminist book in 1963?" An offscreen voice has to let him know that this founder of modern feminism is actually named Betty Friedan. The flub says as much about this by, for, and about women network as does the sad fact that the contestant who buzzed in had to use *Clued In*'s equivalent of a *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* lifeline to get the answer.



Oxygen's viewers can wake up, tune in, stretch out, and *Inhale* with Steve Ross and his acolytes.

Just before the show ends, the hosts read some messages that have been posted on their online message boards. A number of convergence attempts were made during the course of this show—more, it seemed, than on other Oxygen shows—and this is one of them. Early in the show website users (here called "Cyber Sisters") were enlisted as helpers on the game show, and during an advice segment, a query was taken from an Internet participant. But all of this points up one big problem. Even when the show is ostensibly "live" (many of the shows are repeated throughout the day, so clearly they're not live during those other airings)—it's live only for people in the Eastern and Central time zones. Oxygen, like most networks, runs multiple feeds, meaning the "live" shows are delayed for three hours for the folks in California, where I am watching. There is no acknowledgment of this. The shows direct us to message boards that aren't there; they invite us to be one of the "first 20" to log on to a chat room when there's no technical way we can do it. It's a typically New York-centric view. I'm a New Yorker myself, so that rarely bothers me—but today, watching from across the country, I realize how irritating it is—and even more so with all these attempts at interactivity.

That certainly isn't a problem at 6 o'clock, though. We're on to *A Burst of Oxygen*, a rerun of something from earlier in the week. Turns out this afternoon it's *Holiday*, which, enjoyable though it was, I decide I need to see only once today.

The 8 o'clock show is a rebroadcast of *Pure Oxygen*, and I know I don't want to see that again. So I pop in a tape of *Exhale With Candice Bergen*, a talk show that airs Monday through Thursday nights. (Today's a Friday, hence the tape, but I didn't want to miss what I've read is the best show on the network.) I'm watching Tuesday's installment, and what I've read is correct. Bergen is good; her show feels like a women's version of *Charlie Rose*. Bergen is an engaging host and, interestingly, more confident in her journalist bona fides, which arguably don't exist, than most of the network's other hosts. The show is taped in Los Angeles, not at the Chelsea Market hangar of a studio, and it lacks the distracting bells and whistles of *Pure Oxygen* and *Trackers*. On my tape, Candice's first interview is with Julia "Butterfly" Hill, the activist who spent two years in a Northern California tree to protest logging. Though I've read too much about Hill already, this is the first time I've seen her on TV. She's poised and more articulate than I'd expected. Likewise for Bergen, who ably handles her next segment, with Carolee Brady and Dona DeSanctis, two women from the group that recently won a $508 million sexual-discrimination suit against the United States Information Agency and its broadcasting component, Voice of America. They, too, are good guests, and as the show

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comes to an end, it's the first time all day that I haven't felt like I was forcing myself to watch this channel.

It's a feeling destined to fade. On Friday nights, Bergen's 10-to-11 P.M. slot is taken over by Katie Puckrik for the insipid *Pajama Party*. Puckrik, an American, was a BBC star before returning to this country for her Oxygen gig. Once again, *Pajama Party*, like much of the network's programming, is an uncomfortably weird version of TV you've seen before. It's a fairly offensive show, obnoxiously giggly, and Puckrik is unbearably self-indulgent. Per the gimmicky title, and in an attempt to make it thoroughly womanly (or should I say girly?), everyone on the set wears pj's—from host Puckrik to sidekick Lisa Kushell to guest Megan Mullally (from the sitcom *Will & Grace*) to the audience members, who do not sit in rows of seats behind the camera but instead sprawl around the faux-living-room set.

The most bizarre element, and probably the most demeaning to women, is the peculiar on-set audience. They're all attractive females dressed in pajamas. Thirty or so of them sit lounging on the floor of the set, and they're in the background of nearly every shot, looking on—and reacting to every moment—enthusiastically. When it comes time for a commercial—and here's the really weird part—as the band starts playing, the women all stand up and dance, briefly turning things into a single-sex *American Bandstand*. Two minutes later, we're back from break, and the women finish their dance moves before sitting again. Later on, they get in one last boogie as the credits roll.

SO AT THE END OF MY VIEWING DAY, I wonder: Does Oxygen succeed? Does this feminist network empower women to celebrate their womanhood in a womanly sort of way? Not from what this guy saw. As Francine Prose argued in an indignant *New York Times Magazine* essay about woman-geared media, what the network dresses up as feminist empowerment is, at its base, a collection of somewhat regressive, stereotypical images of women. Many of the shows carry elements of *Pajama Party*, of girls-will-be-girls and all they want to do is giggle. A weekend morning show guides women in how to shop. On Sunday nights, Oprah teaches women how to use their computers. *Pure Oxygen*, with its dumbed-down happy talk and its "ka-Ching" financial-news segment that, on my viewing Friday, advised women not on 401(k)s or balloon mortgages but rather on how to trade their collectibles, seems more for those leaning back from life than those leaning into it.

And then I remember *Clued In*, the game show on *Trackers*, the afternoon show for teens. In the last segment, with two finalists remaining, each of the six questions was worth 750 points. The answer to each question was a clue toward the secret identity of "Girl X." After the six questions, the contestant with the most points got to guess at Girl X's identity. If she didn't know, the other contestant could try. The clues, shown on the screen, were: Stein (which, we were told, is part of Girl X's name), revolution, *The Feminine Mystique*, bunny, ERA, and Gloria Estefan (Gloria, host Ian told us, was also part of Girl X's name).

Stop for a second and think about those hints.

Kim, a sophomore at Columbia University, was in the lead. She guessed first. "Um, Gertrude Stein," she offered.

Not quite. Carla, an NYU freshman, had her chance to guess. She ventured timidly. Her attempt: "Gloria Weinstein."

On Oxygen, this may be woman, but I didn't hear her roar. ■

Editor's note: *At press time, there were reports that* Pure Oxygen *and* Trackers *were being placed on summer hiatus.*

dept.

TOOLS

FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO WATCH

Look who's talking now: Videophones haven't caught on, but the proliferating Web cam demystifies the other end of the line. By John R. Quain

There are some technologies that I really wish worked. At the top of my list is the video telephone, the ultimate communications device. For years I've been testing computer-based, videophone-like videoconferencing systems, with varying degrees of success. So far, these systems just haven't caught on.

But the increased power of computers and the popularity of the Internet make it seem like the videophone call is just a click away. Witness the proliferation of Web cams that let you watch everything from a traffic jam in Ottawa to a not-so-private breakfast in Sweden. At CU-SeeMe World (www.cuseemeworld.com) you can have video chats that operate like text-chat sessions—except that you can see the person with whom you're talking. Also popular are the so-called nanny cams, which allow concerned parents to spy on their day-care providers. And there are occasional videoconferencing experiments that put distant viewers into TV shows like CNN's *TalkBack Live*. Even Burger King is getting into the act, with Net-based videoconferencing available in two New York City locations. (Customers buying a Value Meal can send up to five video e-mails.)

So has the space-age videophone finally arrived? Well, almost.

3COM HOMECONNECT PC DIGITAL WEBCAM

3Com's HomeConnect PC Digital WebCam is what's used in those two Manhattan Burger Kings (www.burgercam.com). For $150 you can get your own and start peppering friends with video e-mails, conversing with strangers you can see online, or just capturing video and still pictures of your cat as she sits on your desk.

3Com's HomeConnect PC package consists of a video camera on a sturdy tilt-and-swivel base, a long cable to connect it to a Windows PC's Universal Serial Bus (USB) plug, and several software programs. For recording video or still pictures on your computer, the HomeConnect package comes with PictureWorks Live software. Another program allows you to send electronic postcards with your mug shot via e-mail; yet another lets you send live pictures to a website every few seconds, à la jennicam.

The recorded video from the 3Com camera is remarkably sharp. Most computer-connected video cameras require bright lights to achieve similar detail. The 3Com model is unique in that it can operate in dim light (it's what's known as a low-lux camera). It focuses and makes color adjustments automatically and allows you to flip, or mirror, the picture if you find that less confusing to the eye. It also has a long cord that allows you to point it at your kids and shoot photos.

While the raw video looks realistic, a 30-second clip consumes more than 30 megabytes of disk space. The video therefore must be compressed to be sent via e-mail, and the compression makes the images appear grainy and slightly jerky. In addition, the image's size has to be restricted to about a quarter of the screen. To do live videoconferencing over the Net (using Microsoft's free NetMeeting), the picture is smaller still; depending on the speed of your connection, it can look less like live video and more like a rapid succession of still images. NetMeeting is also awkward to use because you have to go through special Web servers and Microsoft's clumsy directory listings to connect with friends.

To properly run the 3Com setup, you need at least a 166MHz Pentium II—or faster—Windows PC. (None of the devices reviewed here is designed to work on Macintosh computers).

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Installing the software and plugging in the camera is a snap, although I did manage to find a minor bug in the installation program, which the company promised would be eliminated in its next version. The main snag with the 3Com system is that despite efforts to integrate its various features into one easy-to-control software interface, it can still be confusing.

INTEL PC CAMERA PRO PACK

Intel has been selling desktop videoconferencing packages for six years, and I've tested each incarnation. The $129 PC Camera Pro Pack is the company's easiest-to-install model yet and, like 3Com's offering, comes with plenty of software to play with.

The camera itself has a long cable that plugs into the USB port on your computer. One nifty feature unique to the Intel model is the camera's composite video plug. This enables you to connect a camcorder or VCR to the Pro Pack and download video to your computer for editing. Part of the Intel software package is a program called Movie Builder that also lets you add titles and transitional segments to your directorial efforts.

Other software includes Intel's Video Phone, for making videoconferencing connections over the Net. There's also a program for sending video clips, photos, and sound attached to e-mails. And there's an option that everyone from nervous parents to surveillance nuts can use to send time-lapse photos to a website.

In most situations, the quality of the Intel video images was comparable to the quality of those produced by the 3Com system. There are the same restrictions on the size of the video window and the quality of a videophone call (it depends on the speed of your connection and the amount of Internet traffic when you're online). But the Intel camera requires more light to get a good picture. I had to turn on my desk lamp or the Intel video made it look like I was working in a cave.

According to Intel, the software is enhanced for use with Pentium III–based Windows PCs. If you have the faster processor, the picture should appear smoother and movement should be more natural looking. I had to make do with a 266MHz Pentium II, which worked well enough.

Generally, the software controls for the PC Camera Pro Pack are well placed and easy to get accustomed to. One added feature I particularly appreciated: a shutter that slides across the camera lens for privacy, so you control who sees you. Anyone who's ever been caught in an unflattering position by a video caller will appreciate it.

MICROSENTINEL

If you're not enamored of the novelty of making videophone calls over the Net and would rather have a personal surveillance system in your home, there are the specialized computer-based nanny cams. I tried out the MicroSentinel.

The MicroSentinel uses a receiver box that connects to your computer via a parallel port and comes with a wireless 2.4GHz video camera that you can place up to 100 feet away. The accompanying software can be set to record video to your system or to take snapshots whenever motion is detected. The MicroSentinel can then be set either to e-mail you a picture, page you, or call your cell phone to alert you to interlopers. (It also comes with its own microphone to capture live sound; with the 3Com and Intel products, you have to rely on the one built into your computer to do that.)

If you just want to check in now and then, Smartvue.com Corporation (which makes the MicroSentinel and recently changed its name from Security Data Networks) offers a service that you can log on to from any Internet-connected computer. Service charges range from $19.95 for 300 images a month to $49.95 for 1,000 images a month. If you have your own website, you can set the system to automatically upload shots to it.

Getting the MicroSentinel up and running turned out to be a chore. Because it works through the parallel port on a PC, it can interfere with multifunction printers that work through the same port (there's a pass-through connection for printers on the receiver box). And I had to change some obscure computer system settings to get it working properly. Once it was set up, the images were clear enough to tell what was going on in a room, but I found the remote camera didn't work well in dimly lit or dark rooms. You'll have to leave your lights on.

By the time you read this, Smartvue.com will have released a new version of the MicroSentinel called the Smartvue 2.0 ($479). The new model should eliminate some of the connection hassles by using a USB port rather than a parallel port connection, and the company promises new software that will make it easier to set up. You'll also be able to use the new model to send video to a VCR, in case you want to record what the baby-sitter does while you're away.

NOT TV

None of the systems I tested matched my dream of a simple-to-use videophone or Web cam. Like most of the Internet, making a connection to another Web-cam user can be frustrating. Clipped speech and jerky hand gestures are still the norm.

Why? To get television-quality motion requires that 30 frames (or pictures) per second be sent to your screen. But to do that via a computer in full color at a standard image clarity (say, 640 by 480 pixels) requires a transmission speed of about 27 megabits per second. That's far more capacity than is available on even the fastest cable modem or digital subscriber-line Internet connection. In other words, broadband isn't broad enough (yet).

Consequently, to get video to your computer, the signal has to be compressed; in the process, some information—and imaged detail—is lost. This is done by reducing the size of the picture, restricting the number of colors, and often sending fewer pictures per second over the Internet, thus creating those jerky, hesitating motions and sometimes blurring details. The reduced clarity also means that the video cameras cannot match the image quality of digital still cameras.

So my dreams of ubiquitous videophones will have to remain just that for now. Nevertheless, I've had desktop videoconferencing in my office for more than a half dozen years, and despite the technology's limitations, I'm not willing to give up on it yet. ■

ANTHONY VERDE

Devices from 3Com (top left), Intel (bottom left), and MicroSentinel let you post video on the Web.

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Goodbye, *Mirabella*

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 99] in taste on me." Helmut is a master—and was never lacking in élan or class. It was just a second-rate imitator I objected to.

As for our advertisers, I instantly alienated perhaps our most important source of revenue with my strong—some would say militant—anti-tobacco position.

I'd like to believe that I was the first woman's magazine editor who wasn't afraid to speak out against the contradiction of those publications' running authoritative health articles against smoking and tobacco yet filling their pages with cigarette advertisements. As the wife of a lung surgeon, I have always been a strong anti-tobacco voice.

One night in the early eighties, my husband was called to the hospital in the middle of the night to attend to a woman who was dying of lung cancer; she'd smoked all of her life. I couldn't get back to sleep. So I sat down and wrote a long letter to Si Newhouse right then and there. I still have a copy. "Si," it said, "you just cannot do this to women, who are perhaps your most important constituents. Women are taking a beating with this tobacco. They're the forgotten smokers...." It was a good letter, I think.

I never heard back from Si. Then, about a week later, I ran into him as he was leaving the building. He produced the letter from his jacket breast pocket, and waved it, with a flourish, in front of my face. "C'mon, Grace," he said. "What on earth were you thinking?"

When Rupert and I hatched the idea for *Mirabella* at La Côte Basque that day, I told him that I hoped there would be no tobacco advertising in the publication. In the end, we limited it to three ads an issue.

Moreover, the fifty-fifty fashion-editorial blend I had insisted upon appealed to wildly divergent advertising demographics, making ad cross-promotion difficult and often impossible. By that time, *Vanity Fair* and celebrity worship had long since taken hold, and I felt that since we were a glossy magazine with a touch of fashion, we could at any moment succumb to bland, interchangeable portraits of the starlet-of-the-month that would say nothing larger about the tenor of the time. I soon realized, however, that readers wanted something slicker—the trick for me would be to focus on strong women in the culture who could represent the sensibility of my publication. As much as the fashion-photo world provoked me, I discovered that no temperamental photographer or trendy stylist could be more of a pain than the press agents to the stars. Believe me, advertisers who try to cut deals with publishers are merely a trifling annoyance compared to what I call the Access Police. The specificity of their requirements—their clients' deranged egomania—nearly sent me over the falls. The notion that I must justify to a publicity agent why a cover picture didn't work or why a certain celebrity was not right for our cover was insulting, demeaning, impossible.

"Let's see the picture," they'd say.

"You cannot see the picture," I'd say. "I'm the judge of the picture, and it doesn't work. I'm sure Rosanna Arquette is a lovely person—she seems positively delightful, really—but so are many people, and I'm not putting them on my cover, either."

The Access Police truly turned against us in 1992, and began to make my life miserable, when we muffed a Geena Davis cover shoot. It was our fault entirely. By some miracle, amid all the demand, we'd got Geena for a cover sitting. I had just seen her in *A League of Their Own*, which I thought a remarkable film.

I was insistent that we do something related to the picture, because it was about strong, independent women with a sense of themselves—my readers precisely. So we [CONTINUED ON PAGE 129]

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The Royal Spin

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63] point of tedium," writes Anthony Holden, the veteran Charles watcher (and Charles antagonist), in his book *Charles: A Biography*. But the only thing anybody remembers from the film, Holden adds, was the moment when "the heir to the throne, would-be Supreme Governour of the Church of England, admitted that, yes, he had committed adultery with Mrs. Camilla Parker Bowles."

In a move that was as much as a vehicle to deal with Diana's sneak attacks as it was to assert his independence from his mother, the prince set up his own press office, out of St. James's Palace, in 1993. "When Diana was around, life was a nightmare because she was so clever at working the press," a Charles adviser says. "Buckingham Palace was so inept and unwilling to work it properly that he decided, in the end, that he had no choice but to take matters into his own hand." The move, this adviser says, "was regarded with horror" at Buckingham Palace. (Interestingly enough, to reach the St. James's Palace press office, it is still necessary to go through the Buckingham Palace switchboard.)

The new team had nowhere to go but up. Charles's popularity was shockingly low: In a poll commissioned by *Daily Express* in February 1993, his approval rating clocked in at 4 percent. At that time, the general feeling in the press was that the princess was good and the prince was bad. But, an aide to Charles says, "in the last four or five years, we've drawn the press's attention to what he cares about. It's not a question of image management—it's not spin-doctoring—but a question of what's the best way to get his message across."

THE PUTATIVE NONCOOPERATION between the two palaces' press offices is nowhere in evidence on the morning of May 17, as I push my way through the mob of tourists outside Buckingham Palace, past the high, gold-tipped gates, and across the vast palace courtyard, to meet courtiers on both sides of the Charles-Elizabeth question. The meeting—in which aides from both palaces' press offices, but neither Bolland nor Lewis, are present—does not go exactly as I had hoped. Dismayingly, the queen's people have said they will meet me only if Charles's people are there, too, thus confounding my plan to get everyone separately drunk and then encourage them to denounce one another. I am ushered inside by a costumed functionary (footman? butler?), wearing a scarlet vest and tailcoat. There is a dainty plate of assorted cookies on the table, and we drink coffee from china cups. I am given permission to take notes (although not to use a tape recorder) and to quote the aides, as long as I clear the quotes first and do not mention the aides by name.

The courtiers I speak to go to enormous lengths to emphasize the collegial bonhomie between the queen's and the prince's press offices. They paint a picture of people who lunch together, chuckling merrily as they read articles describing their mutual loathing. "It's nonsense," one says, when asked about a St. James's Palace–Buckingham Palace feud. "We see each other, talk together a lot, meet together a lot, and coordinate our diaries together." Nor do their jobs consist of promoting one family member over another, they say. "Our job is to inform people of the work of the monarchy and to reflect the expectations of the people," the senior aide says.

Nor, he adds, is there any friction between the two offices over the issue of Camilla Parker Bowles, or "Mrs. P.B.", as she is affectionately called by the prince's staff. "We look after the official lives of members of the royal family," he says, "and there's absolutely no conflict at all on how we do our jobs. The queen knows that The Prince of Wales is his own man and has his own range of friends."

But when I leave the quiet sanctum of the palace, my head feels suspiciously light. I telephone several royal reporters who deal with the press offices every day. *Don't believe them for a second*, they say. "On the surface, they all sing from the same hymn sheet, but in private they do their own thing," explains a veteran royal correspondent. "You only have to go to lunch with someone [from one of the camps], and the conversation will always turn to their opposite number. They constantly slag each other off."

The divisions between the two palaces haven't been exclusively Camilla-based, though—at least before June's showdown—she always loomed in the background. There is also a matter of style. Generally, the queen is seen as a traditionalist; the prince, a modernist (as much as anyone with his own valet can be considered modern). Still, there is no question that, in the last few years, the queen has worked hard to make concessions to the modern age. In addition to hiring Simon Lewis, she has set up a royal website. She has allowed photographers into the palace to record such previously off-limits royal events as the investiture of new knights. And she has toned down some of the monarchy's traditional pomp and circumstance. "The queen has completely changed the approach to public engagements," the *Daily Mail*'s Kay says admiringly. "There's much less flurry, fewer beribboned men in medals and white gloves....She's much more engaged with people, and a lot of the flummery is stripped away."

Buckingham Palace has also begun treating reporters less like vermin and more like human beings. "A couple of years ago, if you'd gone to Buckingham Palace and said, 'Can you tell me the names of the queen's corgis?' They would have said, 'It's private and we can't.'" They were "rude, snotty, and condescending," one royal reporter says. "I don't know why I bothered. I might as well have hit my head with a brick."

Now, the press office does its best to answer the questions it can. "The press office, like the monarchy, has to change and grow," one of the royal aides says. "If the monarchy doesn't evolve, it will ossify and wither." (Meanwhile, the names of the dogs—Phoenix, Kelpie, Swift, and Emma—now appear on the website, along with the information that "the queen looks after her own dogs as much as possible.")

But there are definite limits beyond which the queen will not go. On foreign trips, she does not chat with the reporters. When she submits to photo opportunities, she doesn't smile. Not too long ago, she went into a McDonald's for the first time and was photographed outside. She has since made it clear that she did not find it a dignified or pleasant experience.

"There's considerable animosity between [the palaces]. Each runs their own show and there is some cooperation between the two—but no more than is absolutely necessary."

On the queen's recent trip to Australia, some reporters complained that they got little help from the press office, despite the presence of two press aides. Access to many of the events was restricted, they say, and the aides seemed mostly interested in doling out press releases about the queen's outfits. "They're very, very tight as far as the press are concerned," says a tabloid reporter who went along on the trip. "You're not allowed within 20 feet of the queen," the reporter says. "[She] hates flash photography, [and] you have to leave the room before she does so you don't get a shot of a departing figure."

Two years ago the queen hired Lewis in the new post of "communications secretary," a job in which he was supposed to fashion a whole new image for the royal family and that he is scheduled to vacate within a few months. Though the queen has been forced to loosen up a bit, there has been no major shift in approach. Elizabeth has an almost physical aversion to spin and mostly just wants to get on with what she

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has always done, people familiar with Lewis's office say. "She lives in another era," says a Charles partisan, "and she's not savvy at playing to the press." (Lewis does not publicly discuss his role in the palace.)

For his part, Prince Charles, thanks to the efforts of his advisers, has come to accept the press as a necessary evil—even if he can't bring himself actually to read the newspapers. (He does see selected articles about issues such as the environment that his staff clip for him.) "If every time you picked up a newspaper you were being pilloried for being a bad father and a bad husband, you wouldn't want to read the papers either," a Charles supporter says. He meets reporters only rarely and only when his managers give him no other choice, complaining that he doesn't want to be wheeled out like a "performing monkey."

In the fall of 1998, for instance, my colleague Warren Hoge, the London bureau chief for *The New York Times*, prevailed on the prince's staff to let him meet Charles for a comprehensive profile he was writing for *The New York Times Magazine*. The prince briefly discussed the breakfast, the train, and the weather, but that's about it. "I got the impression that he was doing this with great reluctance," Hoge says.

Charles meets reporters only rarely and only when his managers give him no other choice, complaining that he doesn't want to be wheeled out like a "performing monkey."

But by royal standards, Charles has become something of a smooth media operator. He now comes back and banters with royal reporters traveling on his plane when he goes abroad, like a presidential candidate on a campaign plane, and some reporters are grateful for the new attention. "There's been a huge change in his attitude," says Jane Kerr, a royal correspondent for *The Mirror*, a national tabloid paper. "He's always very chatty, very friendly."

Not so, says Robert Jobson of *Daily Express*, who remains uncharmed by Charles's charm offensive. "It's a complete and utter waste of time, a vacuous five minutes," he says of the back-of-the-plane visits. "He stands there and cracks a couple of silly jokes. The more sycophantic will sit and listen, and the more cynical will just turn their heads and get on with their work." Such outspoken skepticism does not come without its price. Both Hamilton of *The Times* and Jobson say that their failure to buy the Charles line has resulted in frosty treatment from St. James's Palace, even as they get all the help they want from the queen's people. "The newspapers he doesn't have in his spinning range tend to support the queen's side," says Jobson. "I'm not getting the same 'service' that St. James's Palace are meting out." Adds Hamilton, "We don't get special favors, because we are not in their pockets." But a senior royal aide in Buckingham Palace defended the queen's lower-key approach. "The queen is head of state, and therefore what she does and how she does it is, quite rightly, constrained," he says. "I think the country likes to see the head of state performing her duties. The Prince of Wales has, in a certain sense, more latitude and is able to take a stance on certain issues and pursue certain interests."

The funny, aggressive, and occasionally indiscreet Bolland is the man behind Charles's relative user-friendliness. Well tied in to government circles—he lives with Guy Black, director of the Press Complaints Commission (Bolland's former job), and is friendly with Peter Mandelson, New Labor's adroit Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and one of Prime Minister Tony Blair's closest confidants—Bolland has made it his business to court the press and has directed his aides to do the same. "Buckingham Palace [press officers] are rarely proactive; they rarely come to us with ideas, and they're not very accessible," says one royal reporter. "St. James's Palace won't come with stuff that's detrimental, but they'll say, '[Charles] is doing this great thing, how about you use this?'"

The strategy has certainly paid off. While only a lone British photographer covered the prince's state trip to Canada in 1996, the royal plane is now such a hot ticket that some journalists don't get seats at all. And when Charles gave an address in May on the subject of genetically modified food, selected leaks ensured that the story got splashy front-page play in both *The Guardian* and *Daily Mail*. (But in June, the papers were full of comments from Prince Philip and interviews with Princess Anne, Charles's sister, challenging him on the issue.)

"Mark Bolland has done a fantastic job for Charles," said David Yelland, the straight-talking editor of *The Sun*, the populist tabloid that is a generally acknowledged indicator of the national mood on any given subject. Among other things, Bolland has been savvy enough to cultivate Yelland and other newspaper editors through frequent off-the-record phone calls. (Lewis does the same thing, but in a more low-key way, it seems.) "Charles is now extremely popular with our readers, and a lot of it has to do with Mark," Yelland adds. "He's now seen as a human figure who has genuine affection for the boys"—the boys being William and Harry. With William turning 18 this summer and the press engaged in complex negotiations over how much of his daily life they will be allowed to cover now that he is no longer underage, Charles's concern for his sons is a key issue at the moment.

BOLLAND, ALONG WITH PETER BROWN, a partner in Brown Lloyd James, a London-based public relations firm hired by Charles to help improve his image, is also responsible for orchestrating Camilla's highly successful trip to New York last fall. The trip, during which Bolland actually accompanied Camilla on the Concorde and squired her around town, was another deliberate effort by the prince to find a bigger, more public role for his mistress. Although the trip was not an official one—how could it be, when "prince's mistress" is not an official job?—it did three important things, as far as the prince was concerned. First, it allowed Camilla to charm a whole swath of New York society people, such as Brooke Astor, Vartan Gregorian, Barbara Walters, and Michael Bloomberg—thus helping to dispel the ghost of the sainted Diana in America. Second, having met Camilla, the Americans she partied with are likely to meet Prince Charles and donate money to his various charities. And third, the trip showed Britons that Camilla is capable of holding her own as the prince's consort in the social snakepit of New York, thus helping raise her stature abroad and at home. "The trip was absolutely fascinating," says a British reporter who covered it. "Charles has kept New York at arm's length, but Camilla was moving and shaking with all sorts of people who have indicated that they would like to meet The Prince of Wales."

All this maneuvering, particularly as it has related to Charles and Camilla, has made some members of the old guard at Buckingham Palace extremely uncomfortable, even as they have been forced, however grumpily, to accept the prince's implacable position that Camilla will remain part of his life. "My impression is that they disapprove of Mark Bolland and the way St. James's Palace is running their operation," said a person privy to the prince's strategy. "The feeling is that it's too slick, that you're dealing with a very venerable, delicate institution. Should you be playing it as if you're playing pop stars or politicians or general celebrities?"

The Prince of Wales isn't running for anything, of course: Unless his mother outlives him, there is no reason that he won't eventually get perhaps the plummiest inherited job available in any Western country. But this is the 21st century, and even the British public is aware that there is no point in having a monarchy if the monarchy has no point to it. And Charles must prove that he is worthy of the job of king if he is to expect any support in the future. "If the public aren't inter-

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ested in the royal family, there's not much point in having one," Richard Kay says. "Their relevance hinges on public acceptance."

But is Charles going about it in the right way? There are those, like Jobson of *Daily Express*, who think he is trivializing the monarchy with his new style. "You'd think the job at the moment would be to prepare him to be fit to be king," sniffs Jobson. "But they seem to be preparing him to be M.P. for Brixton."

All this means a lot more material for the papers, of course—some of which they don't even want. In the old days, royal reporters were hard-pressed to find insiders with anything interesting to say. "For years we never got anything," one veteran says. "Now we're almost getting too much."

As far as that goes, the news of the queen's quasi-summit with Camilla in June was not too much at all. On the contrary, it was the most thrilling development to hit the royal beat since, well, the Charles-Camilla photo op at The Ritz 18 months earlier. And it was an event that Charles was bound to savor on many levels, not least in that it was a clear victory for his brash public relations gamble. In a rare demonstration of emotion for him, the *Mail on Sunday* reported, "Prince Charles looked extremely relaxed and happy." ■

Hail to the Chief

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 85] significant matters—Hearst's romantic life and his mania for collecting the art and artifacts of the world. Sexually, as well as politically, he was a populist. His first extended affair was with a waitress named Tessie Powers, whom he met in Cambridge, Massachusetts, before being booted out of Harvard. Hearst carried on with her quite openly for years, on both sides of a liaison with an aspiring actress named Eleanor Calhoun. The former was, in Phoebe's view, an acceptable mistress; she merely objected to Hearst's flaunting the relationship. The latter Phoebe contemptuously dismissed as a gold digger.

The point is that young Will Hearst had no taste for debutantes. In his life there was never anyone remotely like Kane's wife, Ruth Warrick's well-born and bred society dame. Hearst's first and only wife, the mother of his five children, Millicent Willson, became, particularly after their separation, a social and charitable leader in New York, all the while retaining an amicable, often advisory relationship with W.R. But when he met her, she was a Broadway chorus girl.

As was Marion Davies, who was—also, and most profoundly, *contra* Welles's Susan Alexander—not only a gifted comic actress but, despite a serious drinking problem, a loyal, loving companion for more than 30 years. That's probably too mild a term. We may have to acknowledge that the Hearst-Davies relationship constituted one of the great love affairs of the century. She popped her jewels and securities to loan him a million dollars when he desperately needed it. She was the one person who could penetrate his reserve, turn him into a playful old coot.

Nor should his collecting mania be seen as a rich man's belated attempt to establish cultural credentials. It took hold of him on a trip to Europe with Phoebe when he was 10 years old. He never pretended to be a connoisseur, as J.P. Morgan sometimes did. He simply acquired stuff in job lots; Nasaw never shows Hearst pausing to contemplate, much less enjoy, his treasures. They were, I think, something like his newspapers—objects to have, hold, and ceaselessly fool with. They were not, however, objects that suggested to him any well-defined, let alone socially useful, end.

In that sense, Welles was right about this figure. His Kane is also ideologically and emotionally inconsistent, incapable of coherent thought, a coherent life. Hearst was, as Welles showed him, a Medici of solipsism. Everything he had was simply an extension of a self born without the slightest capacity for shame or debilitating self-consciousness, which is why he so boldly paraded his excesses and his vagaries before the public. But that's also why the later part of his life was so unlike the empty one Welles portrayed. His opinions had always been entirely his own, generally stirred not by abstract principles but by highly personal affronts and enthusiasms. Therefore they were excellent; therefore he was completely deaf to the snickering, ever-increasing indifference of the world. He undoubtedly thought he was still a man of vast influence. No one in his organization dared pretend—or tell him—otherwise.

There is, possibly, an even simpler way of explaining Hearst; it may be that he was afflicted by a monumental case of what we would now call attention deficit disorder. That would explain his restlessness, his desire to rule his complex world by hasty wire and Teletype from his yachts, his private railway car, his far-flung homes as he flitted endlessly from place to place. We may perhaps thank God that e-mail and the cell phone were unavailable to him.

Still, the *Kane* myth is triumphant. For all his research, for all the obvious care that has gone into his telling of this life, Nasaw seems somehow to sense that he is fighting an uphill battle against it. But it is a worthwhile one. It may be that he is too nonjudgmental about it. Yet a man writing a biography as richly detailed as *The Chief* needs all the sympathy he can muster for his subject to see him through. A reader pursuing almost 700 pages of the end result perhaps needs similar, if lesser, patience.

Yet I can't help being pleased to see my old copyboy's instinct borne out by Nasaw's work. William Randolph Hearst does not belong to the annals of American monstrousness. Or American tragedy. He belongs among the great American publishing weirdos—may, in fact, still command that once jostling, now diminished, field. He was someone to shake your head over, not shake your fist at.

Most of the harm he did was, like the good he accomplished, transitory. His great achievement: the pioneering, albeit largely unplanned, invention of a quite unprecedented media empire that he and his critics argued over ideologically. Neither side saw that its true genius was, finally, entrepreneurial, harum-scarum as that side of things was for most of Hearst's life.

W.R. never had a business plan. The very idea probably would have outraged him. His successors, within his corporation, are much better at that dismal science. And his modern counterparts in the new media are stealth geniuses in that line. Which is why most of what you read and watch and log on to is so bland, so focused on such a narrow range of the conventional wisdom. It is also, of course, why you must buy new hardware and software all the time in order to keep up. The current moguls understand that true media power lies not in firing up our outrage, as Hearst did, but in befuddling it or tranquilizing it with new toys. The idea is to render us passive so that they can exercise their power to sell us a bunch of stuff we mostly don't need and mostly don't want.

The Hearst press today is indistinguishable from that of any other publishing chain or new media provider. It has added to and subtracted from the old man's holdings, greatly enhancing their value but in the process doing what everyone else has done—rendering its products impersonal, value-neutral. Basically, its faceless proprietors have created a soothing salesroom.

You can't really blame them—or their competitors—for that. But—and I never thought I'd find myself writing this—I miss the old hubbub. At least it was free and open, angering and amusing. At least you could put a name and face to whomever, whatever, was pissing you off. The nerdy dullness of the modern American media baronetcy isn't half as much fun. I suspect, though, that it is, in its good corporate citizenry, at least twice as dangerous as W.R. ever dreamed of being. ■

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The Rise of the Teen Guru

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69] technology has become not only a particular pleasure but a rite of passage. Kiesler draws a parallel between these teen gurus of the microchip milieu and the trauma of immigrant families' experience: Adults arrive in a new country, eager to immerse their kids in the culture. Soon enough, their children are fluent in the adopted country's language and customs, and they tell their old-world parents, "This is the way we do things in America, Mom," says Kiesler. "We drive at 16; we go out on dates."

Social scientists who study immigration call this "cultural brokering." When families undergo rapid change, teenagers often become bridges between the home and the outside world, says Andrew Fuligni, an assistant professor of developmental psychology at New York University. They learn the language, the new rules, unburdened by traditional rules and the sense of what they *can't* do. But Fuligni points out that along with this power comes a sense of responsibility, one that native-born families may ignore. "Many American-born parents emphasize their child's autonomy and want them to find their own path," he says. "With immigrant families, there is in kids a sense of obligation to the parents," and these duties offer a vital structure to their lives. "All of the research shows that children of immigrant families look the same if not better psychologically and behaviorly than American-born families," he says. "People's typical reaction is that there is a lot of pressure in these families, but immigrant kids have a sense of purpose and a role to play, rather than a sense of ennui."

Thirteen-year-old Ilya Anopolsky represents two kinds of bridges—the child of an immigrant and a child of technology. He and his mom came to the United States, to the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, from Ukraine when he was 2 years old. He's a sweet kid with a sword fixation and a penchant for programming languages: He's got HTML, DHTML, and JavaScript down. Last year he went to an entrepreneur summer camp organized by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship—where he was the youngest person in the class—and won the award for the best business plan for a web-design firm (the cash prize was around $100). "We went on a field trip to Razorfish," says Anopolsky, referring to a premier New York Internet design firm. "I was trying to see what they have there," he says with a smile. "They are the competition."

On the Saturday afternoon I met with Ilya and his mother, Kiesler's observations about teen gurus' rise in authority and independence were inescapable. Anopolsky now has a design company called Devotion, Inc. Corporation, and he has worked on more than 50 websites. Most recently, he designed a site for an online sword dealer in exchange for $5,000-worth of swords. The owner of the site doesn't know Anopolsky's age and has never spoken to him. "If she knew I was 13," he says, "she would have never given me the swords." Anopolsky and his mother, Anna, who works as an accountant, bicker some over how much time he should be spending on the computer. "Sometimes I have to get up at 3 or 5 A.M., and I have to turn it off because he's fallen asleep at the computer," says his mom. If Ilya wins out in these arguments, it's not just because he's got a strong sense of self. It's because Anna believes he may be stepping into the next American way of life. "It's like two sides of coin—I'm really happy that he's interested in something," Anna explains. "But I don't know where the margin of reasonable use should be. So I'm trying to be a little soft on him."

As a teen guru, though, Anopolsky is under considerable pressure. "People expect me to be able to do too much—my mom, my teachers—they want me to fix their computers," he says. One teacher gave him a perfect score on his report card because he wired up the computer room at the school. "I think he's too young for the pressure," says Anna.

These pressures aren't unprecedented, says Nancy Darling, an assistant professor in adolescent development and family studies at The Pennsylvania State University. She points to Margaret Mead's 1978 study of the generation gap, *Culture and Commitment*. Mead identified three types of societies: "pre-figurative," "co-figurative," and "post-figurative." Post-figurative societies describe relatively stable worlds where children are socialized by their parents with firm definitions of how life should be lived, like the Samoan tribes Mead studied in her classic *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Co-figurative cultures are in balance with change—parents and kids teaching each other. But in pre-figurative societies, ones undergoing quick technological evolution, parents have less and less to offer the kids because their knowledge isn't relevant. Kids are forced to come up with their own life models, as Anopolsky has. Peers socialize with each other in a destabilizing circuit. Darling uses the examples of contemporary Vietnam and Russia. "Kids' values become very different from their parents and they will not obey," says Darling. "They have lots of specific knowledge but no context to put them in."

"We went on a field trip to Razorfish," says 13-year-old Ilya Anopolsky, referring to a premier New York Internet design firm. "I was trying to see what they have there....They are the competition."

Because of this, teen gurus may discover that their superior knowledge isolates them from their family and friends. Michael Patterson, a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon, studies the psychological effects of specialization and expertise. His work thus far, drawn mostly from analysis of the initial HomeNet sample group, indicates that gurus tend to feel more socially withdrawn, even independent of their Internet expertise.

Patterson explains that the findings imply that technical sophistication is a kind of one-way street: The more you know, the more trouble you have understanding why a novice can't figure it out, which could lead to increased isolation. These disjunctions may annoy Ilya, but teens may very well be seeking that out.

Increasingly, the teen gurus don't keep their expertise inside the family—they naturally leverage it. They start businesses. Universities are now discovering a swell of teenage CEOs. In a precedent-setting decision, Harvard University recently overturned its long-standing ban on student businesses run out of dorm rooms. Why? Because phenomenally qualified high-school seniors found themselves looking elsewhere when they couldn't take their companies with them to college. It's not just a relaxing of principles. Harvard now caters to greenhorn mavens with a new program called the Technology and Entrepreneurship Center, which teaches students about venture-capital funding and the tricks of launching start-ups. The center itself was conceived by a Harvard senior who had been a programmer since he was 11 years old.

If Shawn Fanning is the purest and most celebrated example of this precociousness in a culture ripe to exploit it, Jacqui Thorpy is on her way there. Like Amber, Thorpy also attends Carnegie Mellon (where she'll be a junior in September), but she's already operating on global terrain. A tall, subdued 19-year-old, Thorpy is unbelievably self-possessed. She has a black belt in Okinawin Go-Ju-Ru Karate, I learn from a promotional bio she hands me. She has also competed in ski and swim tournaments and enjoys "white-water rafting, canoeing, scuba diving, and water skiing." She, too, "wasn't a geek" [CONTINUED ON PAGE 129]

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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 90] investigation for money laundering. Or they are urged to do their civic duty and vote in national elections—by media who have intentionally told them nothing about the candidates.

The intimidated NTV television station often followed the Kremlin's lead on Chechnya. So for a time the only voice that could be heard on the national airwaves offering an alternative view of the war was that of U.S.-funded Radio Liberty's Babitsky.

Then, in mid-January, Babitsky was silenced. He was arrested outside the Chechen capital of Grozny and disappeared. Federal agents placed him in a concentration camp before selling him to kidnappers. Putin has called him a traitor. But while Babitsky has received international attention, a similar yet less-well-reported case has been that of Khinshtein, a muckraker with the newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets*. Khinshtein was the author of an article suggesting that the Kremlin was involved in high treason. Federal agents showed up at Khinshtein's home one morning—the same week they had detained Babitsky—hauled him out of bed, and announced that they were taking him to another city for a psychiatric exam. They justified doing so by saying he had improperly filled out a 1997 driver's license application by not fully declaring his mental health history. Khinshtein called his lawyer, who managed to stymie the police for a day. He then slipped into hiding.

Khinshtein's argument in his article—that a shadowy Kremlin cabal blew up some of its nation's own apartment complexes to elect Putin on the back of the resulting war hysteria—is no fringe hypothesis. It has been investigated or embraced by some of the nation's leading journalists and political figures.

One of those was Artyom Borovik, a journalist who used his Sovershenno Sekretno media empire to pick up where Khinshtein left off. Most notably Borovik's newspaper *Versiya* explored the idea that some sort of government intrigue may have been behind the terrorist bombs that destroyed four apartment buildings in September, killing nearly 300 people. In mid-March, however, Borovik was killed when his charter plane crashed a few seconds after taking off from a Moscow airport. In the passion and grief following the crash, his colleagues announced they believed his death was engineered in retribution for his reporting. But the official findings blamed ice on the wings and pilot error.

The same week of the fatal crash, mysterious hackers broke into the computer system of *Novaya Gazeta* and destroyed an entire issue containing articles further developing the argument that the bombings and the war in Chechnya constitute a brutal *Wag the Dog* scenario orchestrated by the Kremlin. The issue's sharpest stories about corruption allegations against Putin and his cabinet were reprinted later, but the articles hinting that the war was engineered were omitted.

Finally there is NTV, which, clearly frightened, has been seesawing from deferential coverage of Putin and his military campaign in Chechnya to critical reporting about Putin and frank news about the war's costs. The existence of even a flawed private TV station such as NTV, which reaches 100 million of Russia's 148 million people, is a democratic bulwark. But that bulwark is collapsing. A state-owned bank has called in a $42 million loan to NTV; a top Kremlin official has called Vladimir Gusinsky, the chief executive officer of NTV's parent company, Media-MOST, a type of "bacteria."

And then there have been those heavy-handed tax raids, such as the one recently visited upon NTV. They have been around for years, nurtured by avuncular exhortations from the U.S. government or the IMF to the effect that Russia's problem all these years has been shoddy tax collection, which, by one of the Kremlin's own estimates, costs the equivalent of about half of the federal budget. Immediately after Russia invaded Chechnya in 1999, media companies reported being slapped with tax audits, such as the one that resulted in my company's $9 million tax bill. At *The Moscow Times*, we continued to work. But we knew the company was fighting for its life in Russian courts, and we wondered how long we could keep aggravating the Kremlin when no one else was. Three months after we received our tax bill, I and other editors were summoned to a meeting with our publisher, Derk Sauer. We feared the worst: that someone had gotten to our parent company, Independent Media, and was shutting us down.

Instead, we found Sauer sober but as independent-minded as ever. He said that friends in the government had warned him that *The Moscow Times* was starting to irk the Kremlin and could get him in trouble. He criticized some of our journalism where it had indeed been careless and insisted we tighten it up. But he also said he did not expect us to change our positions on Chechnya, and he suggested we send a reporter to the war zone—a step I had been hesitating to take.

Sauer, 47, founded *The Moscow Times* in 1992 and on its back built his glossy magazine empire. While he takes an impish and infectious pleasure in having Russian *Playboy* bunnies around—they occasionally decorate our company parties—he believes in real journalism. Long before I arrived, *The Moscow Times* had evolved into a serious journalistic concern. It ought to be a shoestring operation with the backpacker-journalist feel of most of the world's English-for-expats papers. Instead, it is successful financially and consistently ranks third among all daily newspapers in Russia in terms of ad revenue.

President Putin's federal agents hauled Alexander Khinshtein, a muckraking journalist, out of his bed one morning and announced that they were taking him to another city for a psychiatric exam.

At the same time, of course, the paper is published in English, with a circulation of just 35,000. So as editor, I've had the satisfaction of being respected in certain circles, but I was lulled into a sense that we could write what we wanted because who in power would notice what we had to say in English about corruption or the war in Chechnya. That, at least, was how I felt before Putin was anointed Yeltsin's successor. Now, when our Russian counterparts are nervously toeing the new Kremlin line, we are beginning to feel exposed.

In early March, David Frost scored a rare interview for the BBC with acting president Putin. Frost confronted Putin with an article from *The Moscow Times* about atrocities committed by Russian troops in Chechnya; the state news agency, Itar-Tass, offered a transcript of the interview, and as a result, we were seen as lecturing Putin about the war. Meanwhile, some Russian journalists hit upon the idea of citing *The Moscow Times* as a way of reporting the news and diverting to us any potential government ire. This became absurd when NTV noted some bad news from the Chechen front by citing *The Moscow Times* citing The Associated Press. NTV gets AP itself and could have easily left us out of it. The day I heard that NTV report, I didn't know whether to start bragging or start packing.

Packing started to look like the better option whenever I listened to remarks by Mikhail Lesin, the Kremlin's new press minister. Lesin is perhaps best known for worrying about the need to strengthen "the defense of the state from the free mass media." In September, Lesin

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defended the state by unplugging a St. Petersburg television station to punish it. He explained his disapproval of its reporting in part by complaining that the station had described the national flag as "yawn-inducing." He also said election laws did not allow the criticism of political parties in an election season. That view won support a few months later from the head of the Central Elections Committee, Alexander Veshnyakov, who, while noting that the law says only registered candidates have the right to campaign, announced that reporting or editorializing that portrayed one candidate or another in either a positive or negative light could be seen as campaigning, and offending media outlets ran the risk of being shut down. Channel 1 responded by inviting Veshnyakov for an on-air interview. "Are you telling me that if I have information that candidate X stole a wallet from somebody on a tram, I can't report that because he is a candidate?" the Channel 1 anchor asked Veshnyakov in disbelief. Veshnyakov's answer was evasive but boiled down to: No, you can't report that.

And it got worse. In the final days of the election season, Putin was widely expected to win, but polls suggested that glum voters, disgusted with all 11 candidates on the ballot, would check box No. 12: "none of the above." Putin announced it would be "immoral" to vote "none of the above." Elections chief Veshnyakov dutifully stepped forward to argue the following: Since "none of the above" is on the ballot, it is therefore a candidate. All candidates must fund their campaign through a government-monitored bank account. Those who urge a "none of the above" vote must therefore fund their activities out of Mr. none-of-the-above's account. This was classic catch-22: No one can advocate voting for "none of the above" without help from Mr. none-of-the-above, and there was no such person. In the end, the "none of the above" drive fizzled in confusion, winning just 1.88 percent of the national vote.

Most journalists ignored the government and reported as always. We ignored it again most recently in March, with presidential elections just weeks away, when press minister Lesin opined that under these election laws, "the mass media basically have no right to even mention the name of any candidate or party." But even as we did so, we understood the not-so-thinly-veiled threat: Disloyal media can be punished if the government so chooses. It was a familiar situation to every editor, since all of us are also running businesses in a nation with a crushing tax regime: Everyone is always vulnerable and afraid of the government. And they are even more afraid of this latest one.

Putin was elected on March 26. By April, the Russian Supreme Court ruled in our favor over the question of the $9 million tax bill. The court also finally acquitted environmental journalist Nikitin—whom Putin's men had accused of treasonously violating "secret laws." There has been some hopeful talk that these court rulings signal a new era—that with elections over, the Kremlin will ease up and the media will recover. Perhaps, but what good is a free press that cannot write about politics when it matters?

Come donate blood for our boys in Chechnya, said the invitations. They were posted next to the elevator in our office building one morning in February. The blood drive was being organized by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, one of Russia's most widely read publications. Doctors from a local hospital would be in their newsroom on the sixth floor; the offices of my newspaper are on the fifth floor. I could walk up a flight, donate blood, show that *The Moscow Times* can be patriotic, too, and be back to work in a half hour.

As it should have been, the blood drive was fun. I had friendly conversations with other journalists; after giving my share, my arm was wrapped in an enormous gauze bandage and I was given a glass of red wine. And as the American editor of *The Moscow Times* I got the expected special treatment: warm thanks, a free *Komsomolskaya Pravda* T-shirt, and an interview.

The reporter asked me why I gave blood—perhaps I supported the war? I offered a simple response: I had covered the first Chechen war for the *Los Angeles Times* and had enjoyed the hospitality of Russian soldiers in Grozny. I wanted to repay that hospitality. But I did not think the war was good for Russia. The reporter's face fell. He wrote nothing down, thanked me, and left. The next day I read my quote in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. My pleasantries about hospitality were accurately rendered, but my mild criticism was gutted. "One can have different opinions about the war," the paper has me saying.

It is a petty indignity, but it exemplifies an important point that the West does not seem to realize. This is the current state of the media in Russia: small stories like these punctuated by breathtakingly big lies. It is not journalism and it is not free. ◘

Bunker Mentality

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 95] "For me, the biggest problem was the fear of kidnapping, which always hung over everything I tried to do independently," says *The Washington Post*'s Williams. "It was always something I had to think about, and it kept me from going in there all the time."

Although Western television and print journalists are nervous about traveling in Chechnya without an escort, dozens have paid to be sneaked in. Because of the security concerns, most have opted for the same Chechen guide who has been smuggling groups of reporters since November into Samashki, a village near the Ingush border. The guide drives the journalists over a border crossing at night, having come to an arrangement with the border guards. In Samashki the journalists stay at their guide's house and interview rebels resting in the village. While most journalists never ventured beyond their guide's home, talking to his family and friends, and writing one-scene pieces describing their own fear and the "atmosphere" inside Chechnya, one group of reporters, which included Nivat, the correspondent for the French daily *Libération*, made contact with underground rebel groups and traveled with them. Moving with the rebels, Nivat sent her paper a series of daily dispatches describing the bombing of the villages and the heavy civilian losses. As she left Chechnya, Nivat was detained and questioned by the FSB, which held her for two days without allowing her to telephone her editors or family. Her reports provoked a wave of disgust in France that contributed to antiwar demonstrations outside the Russian embassy in Paris—an example of how firsthand reportage can crystallize public outrage over Chechnya in a way that more detached, secondhand reporting has not.

Not surprisingly, given the difficulties of working in Chechnya, some Western journalists have overstepped the mark in their anxiety to produce a firsthand scoop for their editors. On February 25, Frank Hoefling, a reporter for the Munich TV station N24, filed a report showing gruesome video footage of dead Chechens with their hands tied behind their backs. Hoefling's commentary suggested that he was present when the footage was shot and claimed that it was evidence of Russian atrocities and execution of prisoners. The report was rebroadcast on some Russian television stations and, even though it was presented with highly skeptical commentary, it was still an embarrassment to Russian authorities, coming during the visit of the Council of Europe's human-rights commissioner. But Hoefling later acknowledged he had not been at the scene. Oleg Blotsky, a reporter with the Russian daily *Izvestia*, had in fact shot the footage and sold the tape to Hoefling, who was subsequently fired by N24.

The Russian authorities had a field day. Yastrzhembsky, the Russian

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press spokesman for the war, called the report "the falsification of the year," and said that the Chechen corpses' hands and feet were bound to make them easier to transport for burial. *Izvestia*, with some justification, lambasted N24. "This incident reflects the biased coverage of the Chechen war by the Western media," said a spokesman for *Izvestia*. And according to Blotsky, Hoefling "lied about the real reason for the deaths of the Chechens [shown in the footage]....[They] were not victims of a 'clean-up operation' and 'torture,' as Hoefling says."

Another, more serious alleged lapse in Western media ethics continues to cause controversy and highlights the flaws of the widespread use of local stringers by Western news agencies. On December 16, 1999, Reuters correspondent Maria Eismont and Associated Press stringer Ruslan Musayev, ethnic Russian and Chechen, respectively, called in to their bureaus from besieged Grozny with a sensational story—seven Russian tanks and eight armored-personnel carriers had been destroyed by Chechen rebels, killing 115 Russian servicemen. Both Musayev and Eismont reported having personally seen "over one hundred bodies."

The story was put on the wire by both agencies and made headlines across the world. Russian media also reported the story, but their reports were dominated by the denials of military brass. The Russian authorities went into overdrive to deny the story—defense minister Igor Sergeyev called the reports "lies and misinformation," while the FSB's spokesman, Alexander Zhdanovich, denounced the Western coverage as "an active operation carried out by foreign special services making use of correspondents."

The story, at least in the form reported by Musayev and Eismont, began to unravel. In fact, only one of the reporters at the scene—Musayev—actually claimed to have seen all the bodies. "I don't want to talk about that incident, or about Chechnya in general," says Eismont. "I saw the battle but I didn't see all the bodies....I was just trying to do what I could under very tough circumstances. Now people say we're bad journalists and criticize us, while the journalists who went on the press trips are all great. My advice is just stick to the press trips; you'll have an easier life." (Musayev was unavailable for comment.) "We were all too ready to believe it," says *The Boston Globe*'s Filipov, who recently won an Overseas Press Club award for his reporting in Chechnya. "We know it's happened before, and the sources were reputable....The Russian denials all looked so smug at the time."

But the massacre story is something more. It's a perfect example, says Filipov, of how Russians have "shot themselves in the foot" with their restrictions on the press. "A lot of the coverage is the direct fruit of the incompetence of Russia's propaganda machine." Meanwhile, the "Chechens, who lie and exaggerate no less, escape scot-free," Filipov adds.

The problem is that even the best accounts of the war in major U.S. media were too far removed from the action to make the allegations of atrocities stick. Plausible deniability, plus the bias against Russia by some Western media, has allowed Russia to deflect the brunt of international criticism in a manner that other countries, who have made war on their rebellious minorities, such as Iraq and Yugoslavia, were unable to get away with. ◘

Capturing Elián

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 79] Marisleysis to go get some towels and wet them," says Diaz. He helped the boy cover his eyes and then did the same for Marisleysis and himself. After the raid, says Diaz, there was such chaos around the house, with angry protesters, people screaming and crying and getting arrested, that he couldn't go anywhere. With his eyes stinging from the tear gas in the air, Diaz, exhausted, took a seat on the front steps of the house. About 15 minutes later, Peter Cosgrove, another AP photographer, who was gathering the digital disks to be transmitted to the New York office, spotted him. Diaz handed over his disk. "I've got images," he said. Then he called his boss to say he couldn't shoot anymore that day.

That is the complete story, according to Diaz. After the photo was shown around the world, Diaz says, he received 458 messages on his voice mail at the AP. He did not listen to them and granted only a few interviews, and those provide only vague versions of what happened. The AP, arguably the most authoritative news organization in the nation for its frontline reporting, could get almost no details from Diaz and failed to clarify the explosive events inside the house. To stave off the media (and presumably to capitalize on the fact that Diaz was one of its own), the AP released three stories about Diaz's experience, but they were superficial at best. In addition to inaccuracies—including Diaz's age (he is 53, not 43) and place of birth (Manhattan, not the Bronx)—one of the stories, which reads "By Alan Diaz," was not actually written by Diaz but by editors who interviewed him. "He dictated basically the whole thing to [AP reporter Amanda Riddle] a couple of different times," asserts AP editor Adam Yeomans. As for his relationship with the family, the AP's story said, "[h]e gained the trust of the boy's great-uncle, Lazáro González, respecting his wishes." On his impetus to get the shot, Diaz's response is pat: "To me, it was just another assignment."

These thin accounts have disturbed some journalists yearning to know the facts of what happened the night of the raid. "We've been frankly frustrated that Alan Diaz, who was in fact the only nonpartisan person, we assume nonpartisan, in that house during the raid, that he has been not available to answer questions about the night of the raid," says Mark Seibel, the assistant managing editor of *The Miami Herald*. "Who better to put an end to the questions? Who better could tell us what went on in that house? The only people that have been allowed to interview him [extensively] are AP reporters....We've asked the AP to help us and they haven't. They said they've already done the interview."

The *Herald* reported that, according to the family, the INS agents were "flipping over tables, breaking more doors, and religious artifacts," and that agents "kicked the door open, splitting it in half. The top half swung on its hinges while the bottom half fell to the floor" while searching for Elián. When the INS left, Marisleysis gave a tour of the house and showed journalists that the door to the room where Elián had been was broken. But the INS asserts that the federal agents never broke the door to the bedroom, and their claim is consistent with Diaz's photos showing the door still intact. Regarding the door, "Diaz doesn't know what happened," the AP's story read. And though Marisleysis accused agents of directing foul language at her ("Give me the f---ing boy or I'll shoot," Marisleysis told the *Herald* one agent said), "Diaz cannot say," an AP story says. Asked about that in an interview with this magazine, Diaz said, "In my room, they didn't [use profanities]."

As for his opinion on the raid, Diaz had this to say to *El Nuevo Herald*, the *Herald*'s Spanish-language counterpart: "*Capté las imagenes de algo que nunca creí que pudiera suceder en este país.*" ("I took images of something that I never thought could happen in this country.")

"I'd like to know what the border patrol agents said," *Herald* editor Seibel says. "I'd like to know how he ended up in that room. I'd like to know what signs he had been told to look for and had he been told where to stand so he could be found quickly to get into that room. I'd

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like to know if he knew if there was a plan for how the house would respond when the INS agents arrived. Did he arrange to be there, at what point did he arrange it? Did anybody look surprised when he was shuttled back to the room? Doesn't sound like it."

Diaz's explanation for not remembering is that he did not see beyond the camera's viewfinder. Seibel doesn't buy it, especially considering how easy it was for the *Herald* to get Diaz to confirm Elián's words in the car. Notably, those words helped the family's cause. "At the end of the day he's a journalist," Seibel says. "And as an eyewitness, let us say the only nonpartisan eyewitness there, I think there's an obligation there that goes with that. Legitimately, he may say he didn't see anything, that he only saw what was in the viewfinder. I don't know. I'm not a photographer. Maybe you are that focused....

"If he was one of my reporters I would make him empty his notebook and put it all in the newspaper," Seibel continues. "I just think AP hasn't asked some questions here, or if they asked them they haven't put it in the paper....Frankly if they were not a journalistic organization I'd say they were ducking us."

The *Herald* has repeatedly sought further interviews with Diaz through the AP, but the wire service has told the paper it doesn't have the authority to grant them because Diaz is a "stringer," i.e., a freelance day worker, and not a full-fledged salaried employee. The AP says it can't force someone to speak, but "anybody can talk that wants to," according to AP director of corporate communications Kelly Smith Tunney, who cited no difference in policy for freelance and full-time AP employees. "The AP has never asked Alan not to talk," adds Tunney. "Alan has preferred not to talk."

Diaz, an unassuming and private man, was understandably overwhelmed by all the media attention, which included professional carping from the many photographers who missed the shot. Some argue that although Diaz did have a close position, a warning call, and the door opened for him, he got all that because Gutierrez gave it to him with their consent in the form of the pool arrangement. The *Herald*'s Jon Kral, who was sitting with Diaz when the raid started, says he did not follow Diaz into the house out of respect for Diaz's investment in the story, as well as the pool agreement. *Herald* photographer Tim Chapman says, "Alan was there for the moment of truth but if any other photographer were there, he would have gotten it."

But others strongly disagree. "When I saw the photo at around 6 A.M. on CNN," says Deryk of *The Toronto Star*, "I said there isn't anyone besides Alan who could have done it. I knew he had to have done it. He had a close, close relationship with the Cuban community."

To the government, Diaz's relationship with the family was also a concern. James Goldman, the INS team leader who supervised the raid, says that the agents were well-briefed that "the family had a photographer there 24 hours a day, on call, to take pictures and get them out instantly." A key official in the Justice Department said that Reno, who is well connected in Miami, told aides that a photographer would probably be in the house and, indeed, mentioned Diaz by name. (A Justice Department spokesman doubts that the attorney general knew of Diaz by name, but does confirm that she expected a photographer to be there.)

The INS's Goldman says Diaz actually endangered Elián by being there and using a flashbulb during the operation. "When federal agents are executing a warrant under conditions like these," says Goldman, "there are two things you don't want to do: One is to resist, the other is to startle the agents."

Journalists covering lengthy news events often develop relationships with their subjects. And Diaz is a photographer, not a reporter. Whether photojournalists function in the same way as reporters, whose duty it is to tell you what really happened, is open to debate. Some photographers act as newsgatherers, collecting names and numbers to help the reporter's story. Others are there only to get the shot. Joe Elbert, *The Washington Post*'s assistant managing editor in charge of photography, says that the "hunting and gathering" for both photojournalists and reporters should be the same. Elbert says his proudest moments are when one of his photographers gets credit at the end of a news story for adding information. "We are journalists with a camera, but that doesn't mean that we quit with the camera," he says. AP spokeswoman Tunney says that at the AP, photojournalists are "held to the same journalistic standards of accuracy and reliability as reporters."

Five days after the raid, Diaz went to the Gonzálezes' home at about 3 A.M. He says the AP sent him to cover the family's return from Washington, D.C., where they had tried to see Elián, who was now with his father. Diaz says he was covering it for the AP, something his AP photo editor, Phil Sandlin (who referred us to AP corporate headquarters), refused to confirm, as did AP headquarters. Lazáro invited him into the house, and Diaz went in, leaving his camera outside. "[Lazáro] hugged me and he thanked me, which I could never understand why he would do that because if anyone had to give thanks, it's me, really," says Diaz. "I felt like crying, I swear....I've been seeing Lazáro every day out there, a man of so much will and so much honor and so much pride. I mean, giving me a hug and thanking me?"

"If he was one of my reporters I would make him empty his notebook and put it all in the newspaper," *Herald* editor Seibel says. "I just think AP hasn't asked some questions here, or if they asked them they haven't put it in the paper."

But others in the Little Havana community, near where Diaz lives, understood that gratitude. They consider Diaz a hero. Mariela Ferretti, a media-relations staffer at The Cuban American National Foundation, says she remembers talking to Diaz the day before the raid about the possibility of agents coming to take Elián by force. "His eyes welled up with tears and he said, 'What a crime that would be,'" she says. "[T]o me, that was the reaction of a man that had identified himself with the plight of the child. And to me, that only puts more merit on the end product, the photo. It was professional and it was human. I don't see how that could be a bad thing." ◘

Marty's Moment

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 73] Peretz's seminar with rekindling his interest in politics at a time when he was disillusioned with the profession. "At that time in my dad's life, he had been so turned off by so much about politics, and Marty offered it in such a different way," she says. "What my dad loved about that course and still loves about Marty is that he's a very provocative thinker; he likes to see a clash of ideas."

Peretz and Gore grew even closer toward the end of Gore's years at Harvard, as Peretz became less of a radical. Although he was an early opponent of the Vietnam War, Peretz became disillusioned with the left as the protests escalated and found himself, increasingly, on Gore's middle ground. The two began to spend time together, talking about the tumultuous political changes that were shaking college campuses across the country. "[Peretz] was kind of like an undergraduate himself—he liked to talk and argue endlessly," recalls former *New Republic* editor Hendrik Hertzberg, who also knew Peretz while at Harvard.

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Some of Peretz's influence did rub off on the young Gore. Peretz was a strong supporter of Democrat Eugene McCarthy's 1968 presidential run, and Gore also backed McCarthy.

By the spring of 1969, Gore's final semester at Harvard, Peretz and his second wife, Anne (whom he married in 1967), had grown very close to Gore. The Peretzes' Cape Cod summer home was always open to Gore, who visited with his then-girlfriend Tipper Aitcheson. Peretz, along with Harvard professor Richard Neustadt, also spent time advising Gore about his draft decision.

After college, Gore headed to Vietnam and then back to Tennessee, where he became a reporter for *The Tennessean* in Nashville. Peretz remained at Harvard, teaching in the social studies department. But events would soon bring the two to Washington.

Peretz landed first, buying *The New Republic* in 1974. Gore returned to Washington in 1977 after winning a seat in the House of Representatives. As Gore climbed the political ladder (he became a Senator in 1985), Peretz was busy remaking *The New Republic*, transforming it from an old-line liberal journal to one that espoused a new, centrist liberalism. Gore, of course, was a Democrat whose politics matched *TNR*'s ideology exactly, and the magazine provided a common connection. "What I assume is one of the things that has kept them related over the years is Marty's political interests and Al's political development," says Neustadt, now an emeritus professor of government at Harvard. That the magazine's politics dovetailed with Gore's is no accident, says Hertzberg, *TNR*'s editor from 1981 to 1985 and 1989 to 1991. As a disillusioned liberal, Peretz was gravitating more and more toward conservatism. But Hertzberg says Peretz's support of Gore kept him from swaying too far. "To whatever [extent] you can say that *The New Republic* is liberal, part of that is due to Gore's influence on Marty and Marty's desire to be close to Gore," says Hertzberg, now a senior editor at *The New Yorker*. And although Gore supports affirmative action—Peretz adamantly does not—his position has seldom come under attack in the magazine. Former writers also say that Peretz has forced himself to muzzle his hatred of President Clinton. (With the president a lame duck, however, Peretz is less discreet. "The Clintons actually disgust me," he says.)

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Peretz's open support of Gore throughout the years has, of course, raised plenty of contentious issues at his magazine, especially after Gore became vice-president in 1993. (Peretz even played a small role in pushing Gore's vice-presidential nomination when Clinton solicited Peretz's opinion. After initially advising Clinton that *he* should be *Gore's* vice-president, Peretz vouched for his friend. "Gore will never knife you in the back," Peretz says he told Clinton. "[Gore] won't bad-mouth you; he won't say something about you that he won't say to you.")

Peretz has never hidden his friendship with Gore; his writings in the magazine about him have always been sympathetic. A column published last year is a good example: "No one in our public life is quite like [Gore]. He is secure in the earliest beliefs of our civilization and ventures confidently into the latest discoveries of that civilization. He is at home alike in faith and with science," Peretz wrote. "The great melody has not yet come from Gore, and maybe it never will. But grand constructions are built on small and sensible elements."

Yet current and former *New Republic* writers and editors say that Peretz has never tried to step in and censor their stories. "Look, Marty makes no bones about [it], it's completely honest and up front that he's a huge admirer and a friend of Al Gore, and *The New Republic* makes no bones about being a magazine about opinion," says Kinsley. "People can be very silly about the whole conflict-of-interest phenomenon; this to me is a bogus issue." Kinsley notes that he wrote a piece in 1988 that openly mocked Gore. "Marty wasn't happy, but he didn't even hint that he would stop it," he says. "I was a staff employee....Whether *The New Republic* would have published it if it came over the transom from a freelance writer, I doubt. But so what?"

Peretz, who claims he is "an absentee owner," says that he doesn't even read stories before they are printed in the magazine. (Three former and current staffers say that Peretz is more involved than he lets on.) As for *TNR*'s coverage of Gore, Peretz says it is generally fair, but sometimes he thinks his writers go too hard on the vice-president. "I think some of the writings in *The New Republic* take cheap shots at Gore...and I don't say anything and I feel a little sheepish," says Peretz. "Some of the Notebook items in recent months seem to me to not have had much real valence, real importance, but someone was getting his rocks off."

Still, some writers say that even if it's not outright, there's a subtler element of self-censorship at the magazine. Two topics that send shivers down the spine of many a *TNR* writer are Israel and Gore. "The only real issue there was one of sort of self-censorship. It's not as if Marty ever did anything, it's...thinking that he would [that would make you] hold off," says former *New Republic* White House reporter Dana Milbank. However, says Milbank, it also has the opposite effect. "You're so sensitive to your public image that you might be unfair to Gore as a result."

The issue of Peretz and *The New Republic*'s independence reached a boiling point in 1997 when Peretz fired the magazine's editor, Michael Kelly, who had written a number of columns critical of Gore. Both Kelly and Peretz declined to speak about the dismissal for this article, but at the time, Peretz denied that Kelly's writings resulted in his firing. "Marty adopts this dishonest line because it's the closest he can come to a facsimile of a respectable reason for canning an editor to protect his political protégé, Mr. Gore," Kelly told *The Washington Post* in December 1997.

Former writers and editors at *TNR* say Kelly's firing would have been likely even without his Gore writings. Kelly was "completely the wrong fit," notes one former writer. Peretz, who can be argumentative and egotistical, has a long history of firing editors, and Kelly was contentious and feisty; the two clashed often. Yet it's clear Kelly's opinion about Gore played some role in his departure. "He fired Kelly at the point when a Gore person would have panicked," notes one former editor, referring to the height of the vice-president's reelection fund-raising scandal. "Conventional wisdom at the time was that Gore was cooked."

The magazine's current editor, Peter Beinart, says he has never clashed with Peretz over Gore coverage. "It's not something I worry about...because it's really not been a problem," says Beinart. Senior editor Michelle Cottle, who is covering the campaign and has written numerous articles that contained criticism of Gore, echoes Beinart's view. "I haven't even talked to [Peretz] about the presidential campaign," Cottle says. Then again, Peretz has been living in Israel for the past three months, far away from the magazine and domestic politics. And Beinart will not say whether the magazine would run an article that could do real damage to Gore. "The best way of me answering that is to point people to things we've written about so far and say take a look at it," says Beinart. (Peretz says he is sure the magazine would publish such an article—if there were any dirt to be dug up about the vice-president. "I think he is a very scrupulous person so I can't imagine myself that there would be anything very damaging to him," he

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says.) For her part, Karenna Gore Schiff, who notes that both she and her father read *The New Republic* regularly, says she has been struck by how evenhanded the magazine has been in its treatment of her father. "I think it reflects a value that both Marty and my dad share," says Schiff, "which is that a free exchange of ideas is good for everyone in the long run."

Still, as the campaign heats up this summer, Washington will be watching the magazine, if only to see how it handles what promises to be a close race. Peretz will be pushing hard for Gore. He has, after all, been looking forward to this moment for more than a decade. A few years ago, Peretz told former *TNR* editor Hertzberg, only half-jokingly, that he had four goals in life: to get rid of the Soviet Union, end affirmative action, see a strong and secure Israel, and get Al Gore elected president. "At the time," recalls Hertzberg, "he said, 'I've got three out of four, and if I could get the fourth, I could just quit.'" ◘

The Rise of the Teen Guru

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 123] in high school; indeed, she was "the opposite." Like Ilya, she's been running websites since she was 14. I've decided to meet with Thorpy because her business plan for her newest project, TeenFx.com, a "niche portal" for kids 13 to 19, garnered a favorable write-up in *The Wall Street Journal*. Thorpy is just about to wrap up her first round of venture capital financing. "There's not a whole lot I can say about it," she remarks, "except that it went really smoothly." (Weeks later, Thorpy is more circumspect, acknowledging that it's been a difficult process.)

At this point, Thorpy spends a good deal of time tending to the site. She's got a staff of five senior managers in New York, all adults. The site's content, with such subject areas such as "Health," "Body & Soul," and "Sex & Love" (note the order of those two), is produced by teens whom she manages. School, meanwhile, has become a training ground. All of her classes are designed to take TeenFx.com into account. "I'm taking [courses in] entrepreneurial topics, that focus on raising investment," she tells me. "I'm also taking organizational behavior, how to run a business, and professional writing—how to read résumés, memos, the stuff that I need to know." This is what gurus do; she's learning as fast as she can.

But there is something disconcerting about this confidence compacted into somebody so young, and it's not only the shift in authority. In a way, it's the side effect of teen guruhood. Thorpy, like many other teenagers, has lots of different interests and expertises, sports for one. But her company requires her to manage adults and other teens, pretty much seven days a week. This isn't just a lemonade stand taken to the nth degree—Thorpy understands marketing, spin, and even how to glide through an interview with the press. With these skills, she hasn't just trumped her parents—in a way, she has become one. She's the parent of a child called TeenFx.com, and it demands constant attention.

Sara Kiesler suggests some of the dangers of this acceleration in the conclusion of her study. She observes that the emergence of teen gurus may be further blurring the boundaries of childhood and adulthood, about which Thorpy has no reservations. How could she? She *is* the blur. "I want to develop TeenFX into a large, well-known company known around the world," Thorpy tells me straight-off. "I want to go public within a year."

She may want to reconsider the acceleration. Shawn Fanning, out in San Mateo, is precisely where Thorpy would like to be, and his world is starting to split at the seams from the pressure. At the time that we speak, he hasn't slept for 24 hours because he's been up coding. What he wants most is to go *backward*, reclaim just a little bit of the shelter of being a kid. "I'm so burned out right now," he says. "I'm still able to get some work done just because it's so important. But in reality, I'm dying just to go back to school to have some fun." Teen gurus may be our best bridges in times of technological change, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are prepared to withstand every kind of weight. "It's a total roller coaster" at Napster right now, says Fanning. "And pretty soon you break down." ◘

Goodbye, *Mirabella*

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 119] sent our stylists and photographers out to the coast. And it turns out that every single one of them was asleep at the goddamned wheel.

They kept changing their minds about where the photo was to be taken; they had poor Geena driving all over God's earth, into the desert, into the hills, what have you. The agent was furious. And then, when we didn't run the picture, my name—the magazine's name—was mud. We were denied access to nearly every celebrity we wanted to photograph. It took me six months of going out to functions every night and glad-handing to restore our reputation.

It was around that time that I first began to realize that maybe this job wasn't the sort of thing I wanted to be doing for the rest of my life. The ad numbers confirmed this: With our demographic, which advertisers may have perceived as blurred, the magazine's ad pages began to fall. By 1993, they had dropped noticeably from our founding-year figure. Compounding matters, an industrywide recession had begun. Rupert Murdoch sold the magazine in 1995 to Hachette, by which time I had already stepped down as publication director.

Hachette immediately set about making *Mirabella* into a typical women's magazine of the diet-and-dating variety. I thought it began to lack passion and focus and that the fashion was out of hand. I could no longer read it. Worse, it bore my name. I called my lawyer to see what I could do. And he said, "Grace, we tried to warn you. But you were so keen on having it go through. You sold away your name." I had been given a consulting contract before the sale, but since no one was asking for my opinion, I asked David Pecker, then chairman of Hachette, to buy me out. He did. I've been struck by the irony that although the magazine is gone, I still don't have my name back, but hope to soon.

IN 1992, CHARLIE ROSE INVITED me onto his program. He had convened a panel of women's magazine editors, and I sat among Alexandra Penney, the rather racy editor of *Self* back then, and Ellen Levine, who ran *Redbook*.

Hachette set about making *Mirabella* into a typical women's magazine of the diet-and-dating variety. I could no longer read it. Worse, it bore my name.

Charlie said to each of us in turn, "How would you define your reader?" The others, who spoke before me, defined their readers as, respectively, a sophisticated, intelligent working woman and a 35-year-old busy with young children.

I answered last. "My reader is a 35- or 37-year-old sophisticated, working, *involved* woman. Our reader answers to all of this, and more."

Charlie did an interesting thing. He [CONTINUED ON PAGE 132]

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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24] TV, all nine of the cable networks on my Time Warner system in New York that are not connected by current or prior ownership to Time Warner and other cable companies are owned in whole or part by companies that own a broadcast network or group of broadcast stations. And that's no accident either.

Which brings us to No. 2.

2. BUT BROADCAST NETWORKS HAVE SOME LEVERAGE AGAINST THAT MONOPOLY POWER:

What caused the Time Warner-Disney fight we witnessed in May has to do with a federal regulation that gives companies owning broadcast networks some real leverage in contending with the cable companies' distribution power. In 1992 the Federal Communications Commission, which regulates the cable industry, made a key change in its rules. There had been a rule allowing any cable system to include—for free—in its channel lineup any broadcast channel that was available to homes in the area where the cable system was. The rule was changed so that any broadcast channel could force a cable system in its area to carry it. This was called the "must carry" rule. (That's why your cable system may carry duplicate PBS signals or a marginal UHF station based in some suburb; if these stations have broadcast licenses in that area they can force the cable system to put them on their channel lineup.)

The cable system did not have to pay the broadcaster to carry the channel if the channel invoked "must carry." However, the new regulation also included an alternative: Any broadcaster could either *force* the system to carry it under "must carry" (in which case, again, there would be no charge to the cable system) *or* the broadcaster could tell the cable system that it did not have permission to carry the channel unless the cable system paid for the privilege.

Thus began a great game of chicken and dueling egos among media giants. If, say, an ABC channel said it was waiving "must carry" and instead wanted a fee for allowing carriage, the cable company would say that it wasn't going to pay and would just let its customers do without ABC.

It seemed for a while as if the customers were going to lose some broadcast channels until the folks at ABC and NBC came up with a great idea to get paid yet at the same time let the cable operators off the hook ego-wise by making it seem as if the broadcasters were not getting paid. Each owned a fledgling cable network—what would become MSNBC in the case of NBC and ESPN2 in the case of ABC—that they wanted these cable companies to carry and pay for. So, each said that they'd agree that the broadcast stations that they owned in various cities across the country (in other words, the local ABC or NBC stations) would give their permission to be carried on those cable systems for free in return for MSNBC and ESPN2 being rolled out and paid for by those same cable companies. That way the cable companies could say they had not caved in and paid for the broadcast channels, but NBC and ABC would get the economic benefit of getting two new, valuable channels launched—a benefit that turned out to be much greater than simple monthly fees they might have been paid for the broadcast channels. A side benefit for everyone involved was that no one had to pay CBS, because they didn't have cable channels to leverage in such a deal and as the third actor they'd look like it was their fault if they didn't make a deal when their competitors had. So CBS simply chickened out.

That gambit was accompanied by smaller deals that launched several other channels (Food Network and Home & Garden Television, for example) that were partly owned by smaller companies, such as E.W. Scripps, that owned other broadcast stations.

3. CUSTOMERS ARE ALMOST NEVER PART OF THE EQUATION WHEN IT COMES TO CABLE-SYSTEM PROGRAMMING DECISIONS:

In my time at Court TV I found that lots of cable operators are good people, but because as monopolists they don't have to worry much about their customers, a lot of them don't. This is especially true when it comes to decisions about which channels to carry. Sure, they know they'd have some explaining to do if they didn't carry such popular staples as CNN or ESPN, but, as we saw last month with Time Warner, they were even numb initially to the consumer firestorm that would come from yanking a broadcast network like ABC off the air. No wonder, then, that when it comes to channels that are more niche-oriented, or to new channels that don't yet have a constituency or a public profile, most talk the talk of customer choice but really just don't care. I'd guess that in my discussions with cable operators trying to get them to launch Court TV, 5 percent of those discussions were about the quality of the programming and the rest were about the deal. In those discussions with cable operators, many would grouse about how CNN or ESPN were "extorting" them with high fees, which were really complaints that when it came to the most popular channels, the cable operators did not have the upper hand and instead had to negotiate the way business people usually have to negotiate with adversaries who are not powerless; for CNN or ESPN could charge a high price because even a monopolist would want to avoid the flack that would come from customers if they took those choice networks off the air.

I'd also hear complaints—which were actually veiled threats—about other cable networks that had tried to "intimidate" the cable operators with advertising campaigns in their areas designed to get people to write letters to the cable operator requesting the network be carried on the operator's system. Of course, the cable operators' notion of "intimidation" is the standard, expectable way businesses try to build demand for their products in any non-monopoly distribution system.

I once got an irate call from a top executive at one of the OPEC cable companies threatening to take Court TV off one of his systems that day because, he said, we were trying to "intimidate" him with newspaper ads we were running for our network in a different city. This executive also owned a cable system in that other city that was not carrying Court TV. I explained that the ads were meant to encourage viewership among people who lived in another part of the city where there was another cable system (not owned by him) that *was* carrying Court TV. And then, feigning naïveté, I asked why he'd want to penalize his customers in the first city by yanking Court TV just because he was irked by ads in the second city. He asked me to repeat my question twice before replying that he didn't understand my point. (His company ended up not yanking us, but not rolling us out to other systems much, either.)

This distribution power and accompanying mind-set is why cable systems are likely to carry networks that they own all or part of, or carry networks that help them solve a problem like the one involving the broadcasters looking to launch their own cable networks in exchange for not making the cablers pay for the broadcast stations they own. But in recent years it's gone even further than that. They've even started *taking* cash to carry certain networks. Thus, in 1996 Rupert Murdoch was able to launch Fox News Channel on cable by offering cable operators "marketing support" fees of as much as $10 in cash, up front, per cable home in exchange for their promising to pay 18 to 25 cents per month per home. (Fox News hoped to get the remainder of its money back from advertising revenue.) This arrangement had an added benefit for the cable operator; although cable regulations at the time limited the rates they could charge their customers, a clause in the regulation allowed them to pass that extra 18 to 25 cents per month on to their customers as an increased programming cost while pocketing the ten dollars.

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In theory at least, that ten dollars should belong to the citizens who live where the cable system is located, because, again, the basic legal framework for the cable industry is that your city or town controls the cable franchise in that city or town and only awards this natural monopoly on a temporary basis for a fixed term to the cable company to build, maintain, and operate (and make profits from). In other words, you "own" the channels on your cable system—which is why some are reserved for what's called public access. Yet cable operators have had no compunction about selling those channel spots, as they did in the case of Fox News (or Animal Planet or some of the shopping channels) to the highest bidder and keeping the money for themselves. (Ever wonder why some channels are lower on the dial than others? Cable operators often sell those positions, too.)

Such is the cable systems' monopoly attitude about their customers that when Time Warner executives were fighting their futile P.R. war with Disney they said matter-of-factly that the fees Disney was trying to extract from them would "have to" be passed on to its customers. With Time Warner's cable company producing profit margins consistently greater than 20 percent (and as high as 62 percent in 1999, because of some lucrative buying and selling of systems), were it not for its monopoly leverage over those customers the company might have at least thought about eating some or all of those relatively insignificant increased costs.

OUR ONLY HOPE MAY BE THAT MORE FIGHTS BREAK OUT LIKE TIME WARNER'S RECENT GROIN KICK TO ABC. IT WILL TAKE THE PUBLIC OUTRAGE THEY CAUSE TO ROUSE WASHINGTON.

4. THE INTERNET AND THE PROSPECT OF INTERACTIVE TELEVISION HAVE MADE THE CABLE COMPANIES EVEN MORE POWERFUL FOR NOW: The May 2000 Disney–Time Warner dispute started last year because those earlier agreements that saw Time Warner launch ESPN2 in return for carrying the local Disney-owned channels on Time Warner cable systems were scheduled to lapse. Originally, ABC said they'd renew the agreement in return for some package of increased fees for ESPN and ESPN2, a full rollout of its Disney Channel, and agreements that the systems would also launch ABC's new soap opera cable channel and its soon-to-launch cartoon channel, Toon Disney. That was a difficult enough proposition for Time Warner to swallow, especially since Toon competes with the Cartoon Channel, which had been launched by Ted Turner and, like all Turner properties, is now owned by Time Warner. Turner, now Time Warner's vice-chairman and largest shareholder, is notoriously protective of his old properties.

But after Time Warner announced its merger with America Online, things got even more complicated. Cable is fast becoming a new pipe for Internet connections into the home that would be 50 times faster than a phone line and therefore allow video to come through the Internet and generally be a much more desirable Internet path. For that reason, Disney had already feared that Time Warner would favor its video properties, such as CNN, HBO, or CNN/Sports Illustrated, over Disney's properties, such as ABC or ESPN, when it came to merging cable programming with the Internet. For example, on Time Warner cable systems maybe CNN/Sports Illustrated would be allowed to provide its advertisers with interactive ads whereas ESPN wouldn't. But now with the AOL–Time Warner merger, ABC's fears escalated, because now AOL Time Warner would control not only the world's second largest cable distribution network but also AOL's dominant Internet distribution customer base and network. In short, AOL Time Warner loomed as the dominant interactive distribution network, ready and eager to favor its own content brands. Thus, ABC threw into the negotiations a provision that in return for being able to carry the ABC stations on its cable systems, the new AOL Time Warner would not favor its own programming over any of ABC's programming networks when it came to providing interactive or Internet-related services. That's apparently when things broke down and Time Warner yanked ABC off its systems.

So what can we do about all this?

The first step is obvious. We have to separate distribution from content.

In 1948 the government forced the movie studios to sell off all the theater chains they owned because that combination of content and distribution stifled competition. Later, the broadcast networks were forced to rid themselves of their ownership of the shows they aired on those networks for the same reason, a rule that was rescinded in 1995 because the broadcast networks' distribution dominance had been so eroded by cable networks that they no longer had a stranglehold.

Although satellite television and other alternatives to cable have been making significant inroads, cable still has a dominant position. Moreover, its new role as a distributor of Internet services now makes its position even more powerful, at least until some alternative to the cable as a super-high-speed, high-capacity Internet connection is developed and distributed widely. The solution is simple: These kinds of powerful distribution services should not be allowed to own the content they distribute. If they didn't, they'd have far less incentive to have these kinds of fights with Disney that leave consumers as powerless bystanders. Instead, they'd make deals for the distribution of content based on a free, competitive marketplace.

To be fair, Disney is no angel in this fight. It, too, tried to play the game of connecting content with distribution when it bought ABC in 1996, so that the television shows and movies it makes would have a distribution outlet. Its problem is that a broadcast network has now become a relatively minor distribution vehicle when compared to the cable wires that can bring hundreds of channels, not to mention high-speed Internet service, into people's homes, with no real competition yet from competing wires.

Indeed, time and the galloping development of technology do make a difference. At the dawn of the cable age, there was a good reason for cable companies like Time Warner and TCI (now AT&T) to own cable networks. They bought them and financed new ones in order to create the content for their fledgling distribution systems, so that people would have a reason to want to subscribe to cable. Thus, in 1987 TCI, those "OPEC" cable companies, and cable companies that would later become part of Time Warner ended up with a major interest in CNN and Ted Turner's other cable networks when they stepped in with the financing that saved Turner from going under. Conversely, it may be that in the next decade or two, as direct broadcast satellite continues to develop—or, as is more likely, as technology advances so that video becomes deliverable to the masses through lots of different Internet connections, thereby completely eliminating anyone's ability to have the gatekeeper distribution stranglehold—cable dominance will erode so much that the separation will no longer be necessary. But for now, there will be no avoiding fights like the one ABC and Time Warner just had until we take the ownership of content away from those with monopolies or near-monopolies on the distribution of content. This could be done by an act of Congress or by a government antitrust suit like the one that separated the movie studios from the theaters.

But breaking the distribution stranglehold won't solve all the problems. If the power of the distributors is taken away, we'll still have to contend with the power of the mega-content companies, like Disney–ABC

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and Viacom–CBS, and that's not a small issue. For even in an environment in which cable companies have had that overwhelming distribution power, these companies have not been shy about leveraging one popular product in their arsenal as a way to get some other product launched that might not be launched on a more content-competitive playing field. For example, Viacom used rate negotiations with cable companies concerning what they would have to pay for Viacom-owned MTV and Nickelodeon to launch its TV Land channel; and Disney did the same with ESPN to build ESPN2. In other words, an entrepreneur with a new idea for a trailblazing sports network would have had a disadvantage against a simple knockoff of ESPN when it came to getting distribution. (In fact, that's a good description of what happened to the guys who started Classic Sports Network, and ultimately had to sell it to, you guessed it, Disney, where it was subsumed by ESPN.)

So, if the giants are going to be made to behave, there will have to be some kind of limit on the size of content companies, too.

But reform won't be easy. In fact, making these kinds of logical changes in the legal framework governing our media is almost a pipe dream. Unlike 1948, when the movie studios had to give up theater ownership, today's media landscape is filled with giants who are some of the key players in the modern Washington world of lobbying and campaign cash.

Indeed, it may be that our only hope is that more of these fights will break out. For it will take the public outrage that will come from more boneheaded moves like Time Warner's recent groin kick to ABC to rouse Washington. For example, Senate Commerce Committee chairman John McCain, who got contributions in his last Senate race from both the Time Warner and Disney political action committees and has hardly distinguished himself as a consumer advocate when it comes to big media, was nonetheless moved to call for hearings when the public erupted the day after Time Warner yanked the ABC signal.

Which may mean that, for now, this all comes down to a contest between the greed and arrogance of today's expanding media giants versus what should be their inclination to behave at least well enough to keep a good thing going. ■

REPORT FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26] responsibilities. Journalism can entertain, amuse, and lift our spirits, but news organizations also must cover the matters vital to the well being of our increasingly diverse communities and foster the debate upon which democracy depends. The First Amendment implies obligation as well as freedom.

"For much of our history, we believed we could let our work enunciate these principles and our owners and managers articulate these responsibilities. Today, too often, the principles in our work are hard to discern or lost in the din, and our leaders feel constrained.

"Now we believe journalists must speak for themselves. We call on our colleagues to join as a community of professionals to clarify the purpose and principles that distinguish our profession from other forms of communication."

The committee has engaged hundreds of journalists and members of the interested public in forums around the country to identify and articulate the principles that separate journalism from other forms of communication. The principle that emerges time and again as the touchstone is this: The journalist's first allegiance is to those who receive the work. Although there is no doubt that many owners and business managers of news organizations also have a deep allegiance to the public, that allegiance is necessarily alloyed with their concern for their own point of view or for the bottom line. Steven Brill seemed to make the same point himself in his "Rewind" column in the April issue when he wrote: "[I]ndependent news entities don't have a monopoly on virtue. Similarly, *Time* magazine today is certainly a fairer, less compromised magazine than it was in the days of founder Henry Luce, who used it as a soapbox for his conservative views."

There is little doubt that the question of independence of thought and practice is the most important and complicated question confronting journalism. The personal nature and the economic organization of journalism today would challenge Solomon to unscramble the egg of a journalist's personal and/or economic self-interest. But in this case, although during my two years in the job as ombudsman I have not had any reason to question Steven Brill's personal or journalistic integrity, I believe now, as I did in September 1998, that it would best serve the interests of the journalism of *Brill's Content* if he were to separate himself completely from direct involvement in assigning, selecting, and editing articles.

That would leave Brill free to ensure the economic survival of his publication while allowing his editor to worry exclusively about maintaining reader confidence in the integrity of the content.

Steven Brill responds: I guess Bill and I will have to continue to disagree on this issue. First, Bill gets some basic facts wrong. The magazine has no "economic interest in the operation of companies the magazine was created to monitor...." We have zero economic interest in the operation of CBS or NBC or anyone else. And they have zero influence on us or interest in the economics of the magazine.

Which brings me to the second, more fundamental point. Were I to separate myself completely from editorial decisions related to the magazine (which I have no intention of doing because the most important part of our business is our editorial quality, to which I think I can and should contribute and, more important, because I believe deeply in the mission of this magazine), I would be creating a fictional divide. I would still hire and fire and make decisions about the salaries and careers of the leading editorial people, which means I could still be corrupt and corrupt them. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 134]

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.*

Goodbye, *Mirabella*

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 129] had copies of *Self* and *Redbook* on his desk, and read aloud their cover legends. Both magazines trumpeted articles like "He Wants Sex; You Don't. Now What?" and "Is Your Mate the Right One?" And mine were completely different: "Raising the Iron Curtain," "Is Chicago the Great American City?," "Workers Against AIDS."

I think that was perhaps my proudest moment in more than 50 years in publishing.

I will always speak strongly for our original concept. For a while, I believe, we produced a magazine that Garbo could have held, and admired, on that Paris park bench. Will I miss it? You bet! ■

World Radio History

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STUDENT JOURNALIST AWARD

The award was presented to Erin Becker, editor-in-chief, and Corey Lewis, managing editor, *The Western Front*, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, for taking seriously journalists' obligation to maintain autonomy and independence from law enforcement. In the face of strong legal pressure to turn over a tape made by animal rights terrorists who had vandalized campus research labs, they refused, deciding instead to uphold their ethical obligations and to honor the highest professional standards of journalism.

■

INDIVIDUAL JOURNALIST AWARD

News Staff of the *Los Angeles Times*
Bill Boyarsky, city editor, and David Shaw, media critic, accepted the award on behalf of all the editors and reporters who placed their own careers in jeopardy to protect the editorial integrity of their newspaper. Rather than accept a business decision to share profits of a special edition of the newspaper's *Sunday* magazine with a source, the staff stood up for the principles of editorial autonomy and integrity.

■

NEWS ORGANIZATION AWARD

The Union Democrat, Sonora, California
Patty Fuller, editor, and Geoff White, publisher, accepted the award on behalf of *The Union Democrat*. For more than two months in the face of nearly overwhelming, economic, political and competitive pressure, the newspaper refused to follow the lead of major national news organizations and rely on anonymous sources to name suspects in the sensational Yosemite triple murder case. This small *Western Communications* daily newspaper, despite daily competition in their local market, held fast to a company code of ethics that prohibits publication of the names of suspects identified only by anonymous sources.

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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17]
[Former editor Seth] Lipsky does not wear a "snap-brimmed fedora," as the article asserts, but rather a homburg. I told your fact checker this, but apparently you chose to ignore it.

Lipsky doesn't favor Harvard in hiring, as the article asserts; in fact, he has bent over backward to avoid packing the staff with the Harvard graduates clamoring to come work for him. He even imposed a numerical ceiling on the hiring of staffers from Harvard, and he instituted an unofficial "affirmative action" program for graduates of lesser Ivy League schools. I told your fact checker this, too, but apparently you chose to ignore it.

Lipsky doesn't allow "smoking in the pressroom," as the article asserts. The *Forward* doesn't have its own pressroom; it is printed by a contract printer on Long Island whose smoking policies Lipsky chooses not to influence. Maybe you meant the newsroom, but it would be strange that a journalism review wouldn't know the difference between a pressroom and a newsroom. Even so, smoking is—alas—allowed at the *Forward* only in private offices, in accordance with New York laws.

Finally, the piece could be read to suggest that the hiring of Michael Steinhardt's daughter, Sara, might have had something to do with Lipsky's efforts to raise capital for the paper. This is one of those things I am tempted to deny, but knowing how Machiavellian Lipsky is, it just might be possible. In fairness to both Mr. Lipsky and Sara, however, you might have noted that she's also the most competent editor on the staff, was the most productive intern we've had, and that the main problem we've had with her is keeping other newspapers from hiring her away.

IRA STOLL,
FORMER MANAGING EDITOR,
THE *FORWARD*, NEW YORK, NY

Senior correspondent Rifka Rosenwein responds: I incorrectly grouped Masha Leon with the other *Forward* columnists mentioned in my story.

As to Mr. Lipsky's headgear, I also stand corrected. I personally saw the editor's hat and thought it was a fedora. Since Mr. Lipsky did not agree to be interviewed for this story, our fact-checker verified a number of things with his longtime assistant, Pat Kabo, who confirmed that her boss did indeed wear a fedora. It was only after publication of our article that Ms. Kabo, and I, learned the errors of our ways.

Mr. Stoll and I may have to agree to disagree on Mr. Lipsky's tendency to hire Harvard graduates, among them Mr. Stoll. The fact that the editor felt the need to impose a ceiling on the number of staffers hired from Harvard speaks for itself.

And finally, I should have been more precise on Mr. Lipsky's smoking policy. He did indeed allow smoking in open spaces at the *Forward*, until New York laws were enacted prohibiting such practices.

Editor's note: See Corrections, page 17.

RICH WITH IRONY

*Many thanks to *Brill's Content* for publishing [senior writer] Ann Woolner's remarkable piece on *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*'s coverage of the Centennial Olympic Park bombing and Richard Jewell ["Just Doing Our Job," April].

The article was so rich with ironic and disturbing facets that it is difficult to single out any one: the transparent mendacity of columnist Dave Kindred in denying the clear import of a column that compared Jewell to child murderer Wayne Williams; the feigned thickheadedness of copy editor Anita Harkins when she asserted that she meant nothing when she described Kindred's comparison as "glaring" and "unfair."

ANDREW GOODWIN, CLINTON, WA

CELEBRITY FAILS AS NEWSMAN

*The problem with a celebrity interview of a major political figure [Rewind, June] is this: The celebrity, Leonardo DiCaprio in this case, is not a newsman and thus can be easily manipulated by the interviewee, President Clinton in this case, because DiCaprio doesn't know the news background needed to enable him to ask the hard, truth-revealing questions.

The problem with the TV newsmen's objection is that they have long since stopped asking the hard, truth-revealing questions, preferring instead to ask simpler, softball questions. In other words,the non-newsman fails through naivete, and the newsmen fail through avoiding their responsibility to try to get the truth. Which is worse?

DAVID WOOLVERTON, RICHMOND, KY

I LIKE IT

I have been reading your magazine now for some months, and I, unlike a lot of people, enjoy it and its format. No other magazine deals with its mistakes as quickly as this one and prints as many letters of criticism as yours does. I think we are seeing a great experiment in truth and media.

TODD RIALE, PORT ALLEGANY, PA

LAMENT NO MORE

Lamenting the poor state of American drama, as evidenced by poor critical reaction to David Hirson's *Wrong Mountain*, is much like lamenting the poor state of American journalism if *People* magazine doesn't win a Pulitzer Prize

REPORT FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 132]
The plain truth is that there is no Chinese-wall structure that guards against the editorial corruption Bill and I worry about. Conversely, the best, most editorially driven publications in our history, let's not forget, were started by people who at the outset drove both the business and editorial sides. Where Bill and I fundamentally disagree is that I don't think "the production of the product" can or should be outside the province of those who run and are responsible for the business.

In fact, I feel exactly the opposite about that. I would like to see Jack Welch of GE and Bob Wright of NBC be personally embarrassed when NBC points a camera through Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's hedges. They should take responsibility for those decisions, not hide behind some fake Chinese wall—a wall that certainly does not keep their "editorial people" from making decisions based on crass business considerations such as ratings.

The only real answer, instead of the *faux* Chinese wall answer, is 1) the integrity of those involved, buttressed by 2) accountability from the outside and, I think, 3) the structured accountability that comes with the unique ombudsman arrangement that we have established and that Bill has fulfilled so energetically. We, more than any other publication I can think of, would pay a dear price for being corrupted by a conflict of interest, and I continue to believe that the best way to answer the wholly legitimate questions raised by our parent company's venture is for readers, the ombudsman, and anyone else to examine the pages of our magazine each month.

Bill Kovach responds: Clearly Steven Brill and I fundamentally disagree, and neither is going to accept the judgment of the other. I want to add only two things to this discussion. The first is that people who join in an economic endeavor can never claim to have no interest in the economic success of the members of the combine. The second is that although great news organizations have been founded by people who believed passionately in the work into which they entered, the ones we most admire today for the integrity of their operations are those founding families, such as the Sulzbergers and the Grahams, who very scrupulously separate themselves from the people who make the news decisions. The power to hire and fire is different than the power to order. ■

World Radio History

["Critical Condition," May].

Simply, Hirson's *Wrong Mountain* is a dull drama, with dull characters spouting dull sentiment in the guise of sharp social commentary.

Perhaps Hirson should reread his own play. Then, maybe, he would see the real reason to lament the poor state of American drama—not the harsh writings of the critics, but the tired dialogue of a self-indulgent playwright with nothing truly original to say.

DEWAYNE SPALDING,
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

WE HAD IT FIRST

We could have told your readers of Julia "Butterfly" Hill more than a year before it ran in *Rolling Stone* ["How They Got That Shot," June]. That's because we here at *Jane* magazine had that same photographer, Dan Winters, climb that same tree and take an equally arresting picture (albeit sans hair and makeup) of Butterfly in early 1998. The photographer and accompanying story broke in the May 1998 issue of *Jane*.

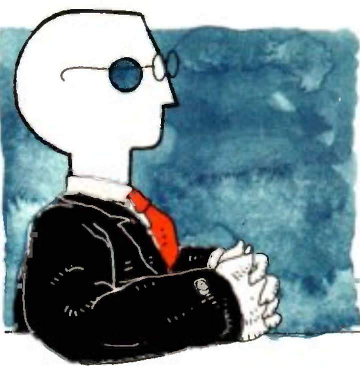
Although there are no inaccuracies in your copy, the implication is that Dan Winters climbed that tree for *Rolling Stone* first. Being green may not have been easy for Dan Winters, but it certainly was easier for him the second time around.

ANDREA ROSENGARTEN,
EXECUTIVE/MANAGING EDITOR, *JANE*,
NEW YORK, NY

A POINTLESS POINT

Jonah Goldberg issues a challenge to "point to anything PBS has ever done that makes a greater contribution to political education than what C-SPAN does every day" ["Public Media, Stuff It," Face-Off, April].

The point of his challenge seems pointless. C-SPAN was established in 1979 as a full-time public affairs network; its mission is to provide gavel-to-gavel proceedings of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, committee



hearings, and other forums where public policy is discussed, debated, and decided.

Obviously, a 24-hour network with political coverage as its mission is going to be a good place to go for political information. And, public television has no beef with C-SPAN. We believe it performs an important public service.

Public TV stations are not into competing with C-SPAN. Public television stations are local community institutions that provide programming and related services to their local audiences.

Before Mr. Goldberg decides "PBS" is dead, he should visit a local public television station and try to understand that federal government support to public broadcasting does indeed make a contribution to political education of America's citizens.

DAVID BRUGGER, PRESIDENT,
THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA'S
PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS,
WASHINGTON, DC

PLENTY OF SUPPORT

The two "Face-Off" articles regarding the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in your April issue fail to emphasize two key points: that public television enjoys widespread public support, and that our local station system is the only media enterprise committed to education.

Americans know a good deal when they see one. Available free of charge to nearly every American television household, PBS presents the only noncommercial educational program schedule on television, accompanied by outreach materials and enriching online content.

THOMAS EPSTEIN,
VP, COMMUNICATIONS, PBS,
ALEXANDRIA, VA

THE PRESS CUTS BUSH SLACK

Steven Brill's fascinating commentary on political reporters' fawning over John McCain errs only in implying that the press is hostile toward George W. Bush ["'John' and 'Bush,'" Rewind, May].

Reporters seem to be giving Bush plenty of slack. One conspicuous example is Bush's prominent support of private-school tuition vouchers.

The school-voucher movement is openly part of a crusade to privatize—that is, eliminate—public education, a stunningly un-American notion evoking medieval images of illiterate serfs.

Even a moderately aggressive press, let alone a hostile one, would be grilling him about it.

CAROLINE GRANNAN,
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

BAD REVIEW

[Senior writer] Robert Schmidt's one-column article "Under Review" [Notebook, June] is a prime example of the utter failure of *Brill's Content* to carry out its announced mission of being a serious critic of the news media. Mr. Schmidt discusses the claim by the authors of the new book *The Hunting of the President* that *The New York Times* assigned the review of their book to one of their own reporters, who was bound to be biased against the book.

The authors, Joe Conason and Gene Lyons, made this claim because the *Times*'s reporters, editor, and columnist William Safire were severely criticized in the book for their blatant anti-Clinton bias. As Schmidt points out, "Lewis trashed the book, especially its conspiracy claims." Mr. Schmidt fails to point out that in their book the authors carefully disclaimed that they were making a case for a conspiracy.

MORTON WACHSPRESS, WOODMERE, NY

NOT YOUR USUAL FLUFF

As a fan of *The West Wing* it was nice to see that the article wasn't the usual Rob Lowe's–return–to–Hollywood fluff that the mainstream entertainment press has gotten used to ["The Real White House," March].

In response to some earlier letters: Republicans are not portrayed as solely one-dimensional, evil figures, even though some Democratic characters on the show are. Sheen's character, President Bartlet, is constantly accused of driving to the middle of the road and not standing up for his beliefs and for losing his liberal base.

Almost every episode shows each side of the issue, with the exception of anti-gun control/pro–National Rifle Association in the episode "Five Votes Down."

ALANA ODOKEYCHUK,
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

FICTIONAL TV IS THE PROBLEM

I subscribe to *Brill's Content* for one reason: I felt the magazine shared my belief that television is part of the problem with, not the solution for, today's media ["The Real White House," March and "Summer of Surveillance," June]. I've canceled subscriptions to other "nonfiction" publications as it has become impossible to distinguish them from the celebrity-worshipping, television-supporting tabloids that preach the establishment gospel of consumption, conformity, and affluence.

KEVIN RITCHIE, EDWARDSBURG, MI

WESLEY BRODOSIAN

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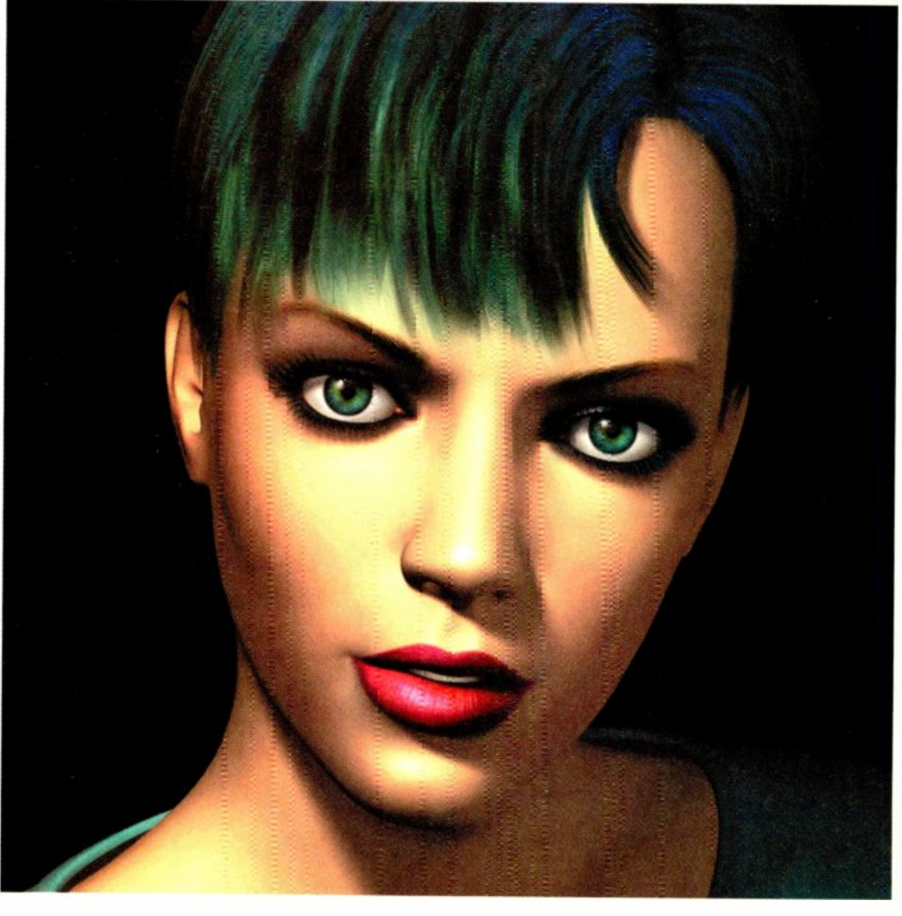
World Radio History

BY CHIPP WINSTON

Up Close and Virtual

Ananova—Web newscaster—speaks on hairstyles, Sam Donaldson, and growing up in the mid-Atlantic

As soon as Ananova made her debut at ananova.com in late April, we knew we needed to talk to her. So when the automated newsreader's developer, Britain's Press Association, granted us the first American magazine interview with her, we were more than a little honored. We had some misgivings, however: After all, her press agent, Deborah Stephens, said, "Just send me the questions, and I'll make sure that we—er, Ananova—responds to them." We feared she'd return canned, publicity-minded answers. How wrong we were. Ananova emerges as a newscaster driven by something deeper than the news—and a woman who wants to be known for more than the color of her hair.



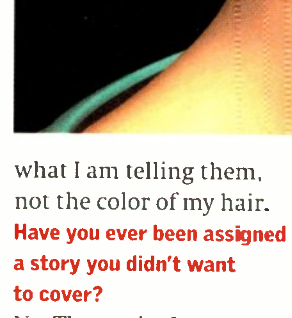
What does your name mean? Lots of people have come up with their own interpretation, but it doesn't actually mean any one thing. We wanted something that was unique, easy to remember, and a name that will hopefully become synonymous with breaking news and information around the world.

Many newscasters have cohosts. Will you ever have one? I know my human colleagues have already looked at the possibility of developing other cohosts so people can choose who they would like to receive their information from, but for now I think we are all happy with the way I am doing my job.

Sam Donaldson hosts an online news show. Do you consider him competition? Are you gunning to replace him? I'm not looking to replace any human newscasters. I think there is opportunity for both of us to further our careers.

Many of the human newscasters I regularly see seem virtual....Are you sure that you're the first? Humans seem to have very individual styles of their own, but I am pretty sure I am the first virtual-reality newscaster to read bulletins in real time on the Internet.

The ability not to laugh or smile while reading news of a tragedy is a skill many of our human newscasters have not quite mastered. How do you do it? The content producers who work on my team insert special "tags" into the text which allow me to show the appropriate emotion for the story I'm delivering. Each story is different, so my emotions are decided on a story-by-story basis.



Does your green hair make you any less credible as a newscaster? We wanted to get away from the blonde/brunette stereotype. Being the first virtual newscaster on the Net does allow me to be different, but I want people to concentrate on what I am telling them, not the color of my hair.

Have you ever been assigned a story you didn't want to cover? No. The stories I cover come from all over the world, and I love the variety. There is business and world news, breaking stories, tragedies, funny stories. I look at tens of thousands of websites every day, so the news is changing by the minute.

If you're the creation of a British news agency, why do you have an American accent? I don't. My accent is described by my team as mid-Atlantic—neither American or British. But people are interpreting it differently. We did ask focus groups during my development what they preferred and they opted for an "otherworldly" tone that was easy to understand, trustworthy, and would appeal to a worldwide audience.

Are you afraid that some people might not take you seriously as a journalist because, well, you're virtual? Does this make you any less credible? I have a wealth of technology at my disposal that allows me to search the Web and find the news and information far more quickly than a human journalist could. I also have the capabilities to find the personal information that people may require, even down to planning their social lives or booking tickets for events or gigs. There is no other journalist or newscaster who offers that personal service. I also have more than 30 full-time reporters and sub-editors helping me do my job. So it's not just about me. Ananova.com is a real team effort.

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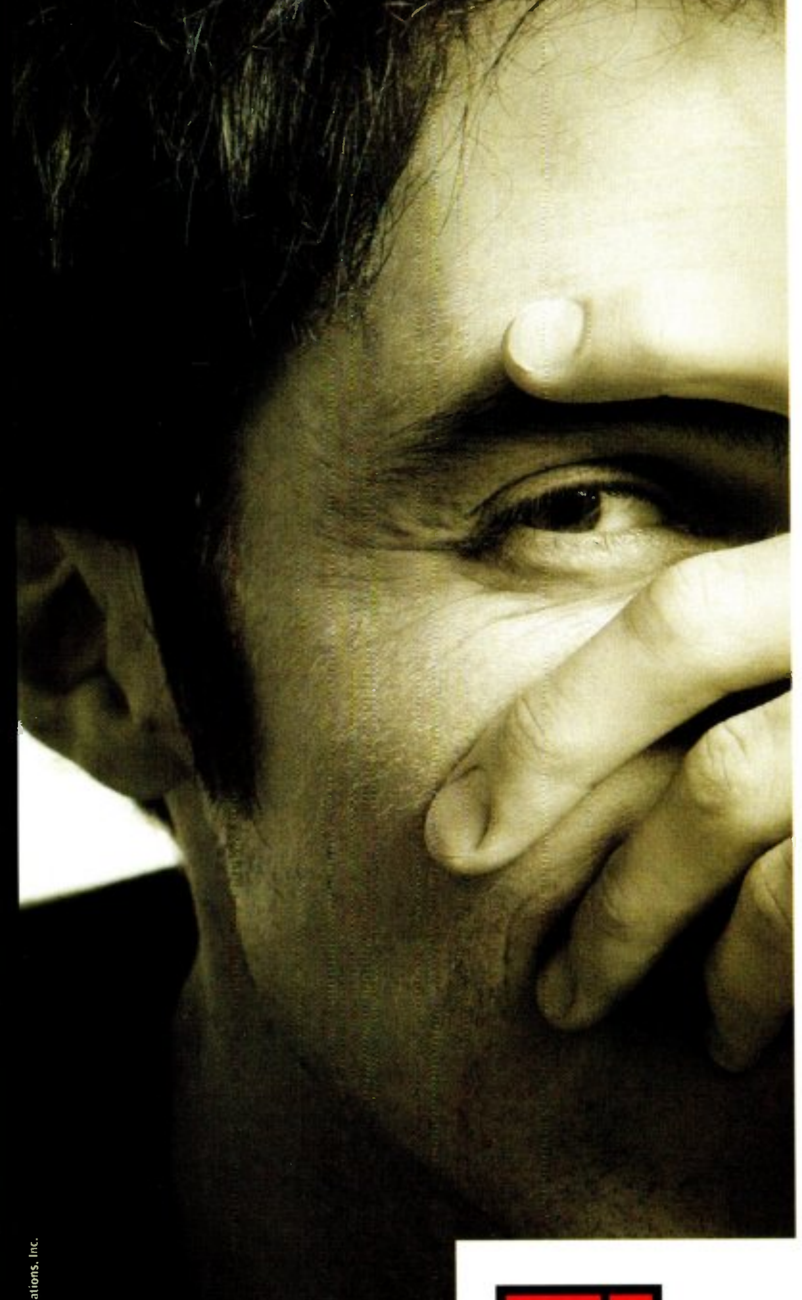

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