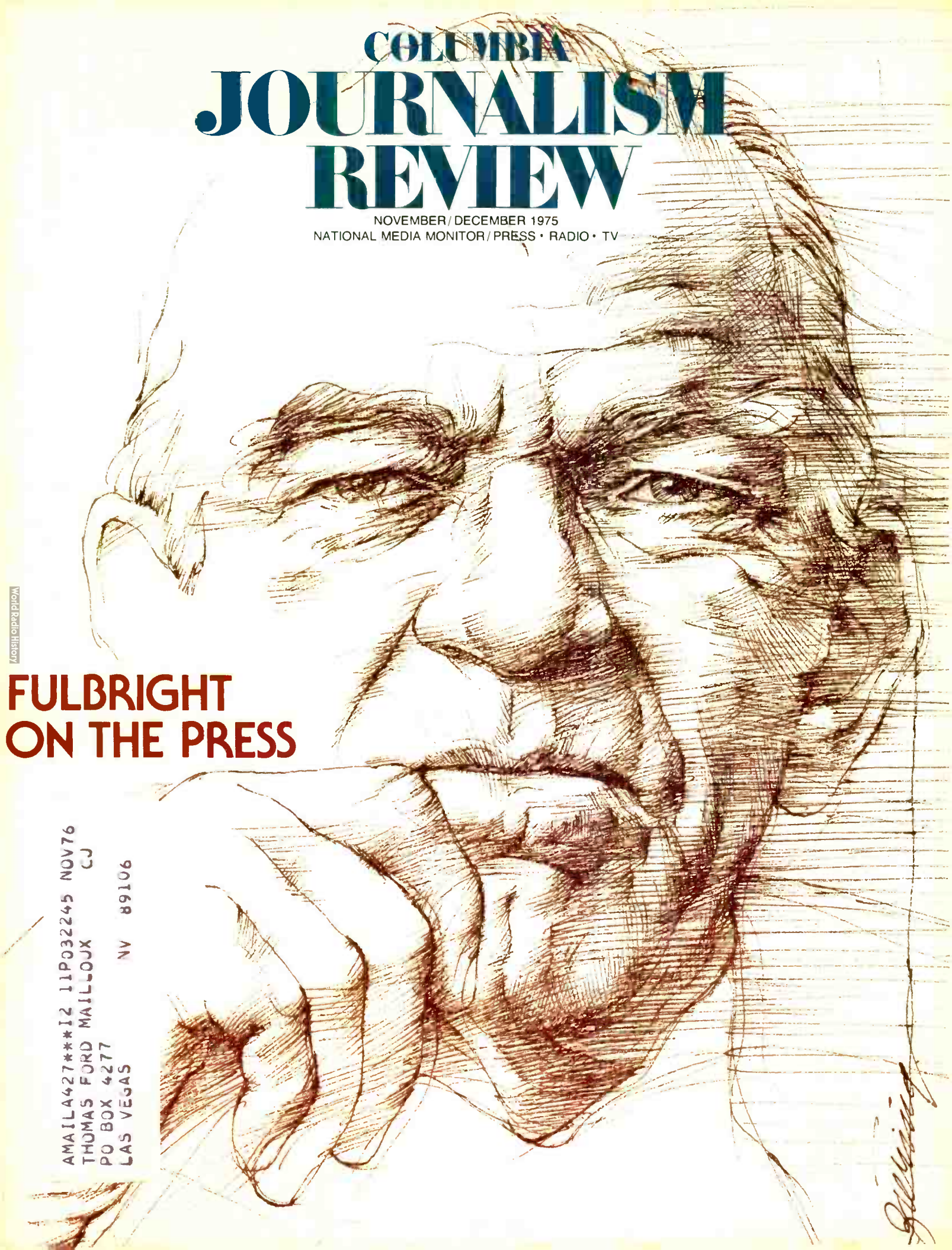
COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1975
NATIONAL MEDIA MONITOR/PRESS • RADIO • TV



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"To assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest responsible service . . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent."
—Excerpt from the Review's founding editorial, Autumn 1961

Cover: Robert Ziering

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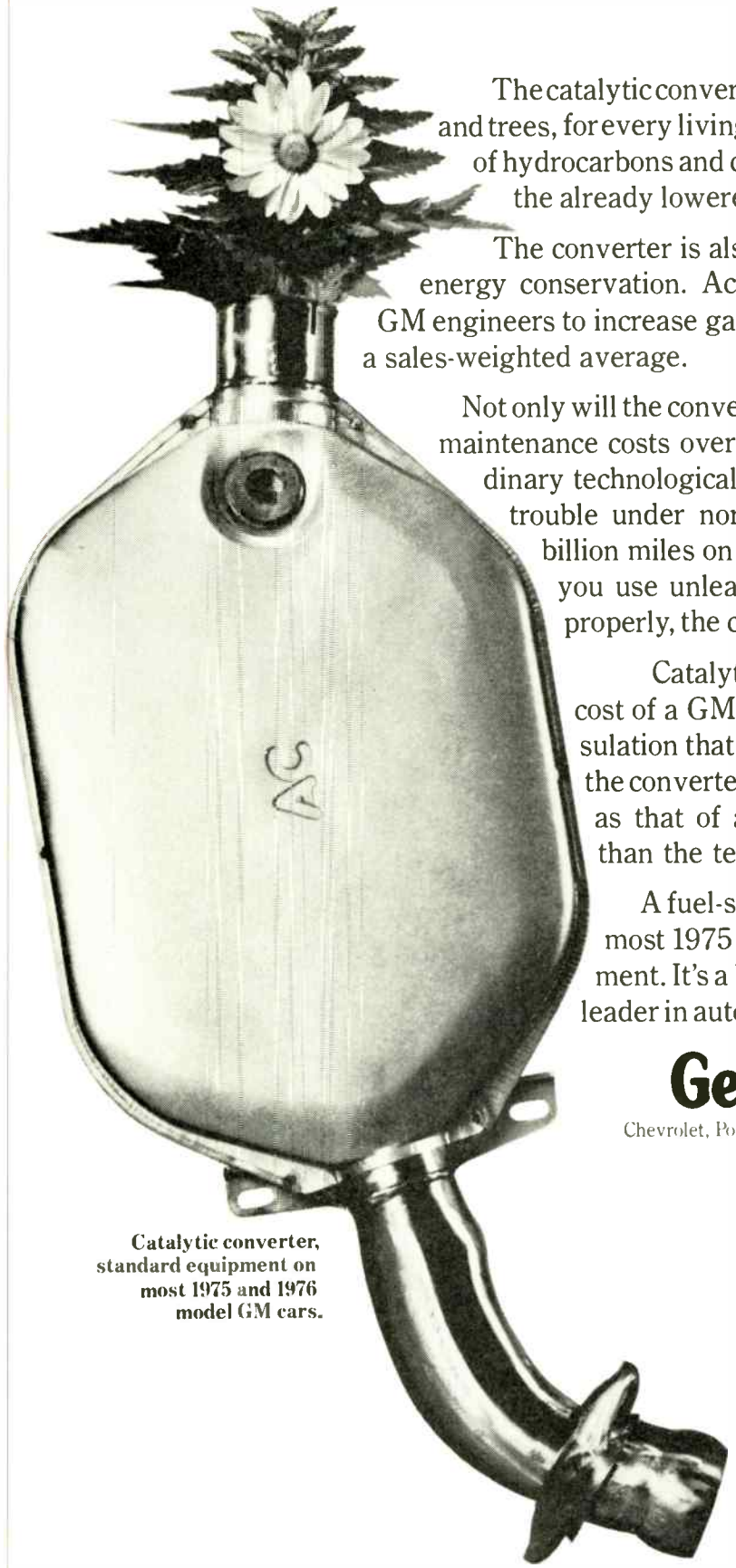
A breath of fresh air in automotive technology.



Catalytic converter, standard equipment on most 1975 and 1976 model GM cars.

The catalytic converter is a device for people and flowers and trees, for every living thing. It reduces exhaust emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide by about 50% from the already lowered levels of 1974.

The converter is also a device for pocketbooks and for energy conservation. According to EPA figures, it helped GM engineers to increase gas mileage in city driving by 28% on a sales-weighted average.

Not only will the converter save you money in fuel bills and maintenance costs over the years, it's one of those extraordinary technological advances that won't cause you any trouble under normal operating conditions. After a billion miles on the road, it's proved dependable. If you use unleaded gas and maintain your engine properly, the converter will last the life of your car.

Catalytic converters do add to the basic cost of a GM car. Part of that money goes for insulation that keeps the outer skin temperature of the converter in normal operation about the same as that of an ordinary muffler, and far lower than the temperature of the exhaust manifold.

A fuel-saving catalytic converter comes with most 1975 and 1976 GM cars as standard equipment. It's a breath of fresh air from GM, a world leader in automotive pollution control technology.

General Motors

Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick, Cadillac, GMC Truck

COMMENT

Patty, Squeaky, and Sara

In the course of one long and suspense-filled weekend early in autumn, Patty Hearst was captured, Sara Jane Moore shot at President Ford, and arguments began in the trial of Lynette Alice Fromme, charged with an earlier attempt to assassinate Mr. Ford. No doubt the occurrence of these events at the same time, and in nearly the same place, was a matter of chance, but other disturbing elements were common to these episodes.

A similar kind of fanaticism, or insanity, seems to have infected the perpetrators (the Symbionese Liberation Army, Ms. Fromme, and Ms. Moore). They all sought to appropriate newsworthy people, and thus news coverage, for their own purposes. The SLA saw the kidnapping of Patty Hearst as a step toward a class uprising and food for the poor. Ms. Fromme would have shot the president to save redwood trees, while Ms. Moore would have shot him to prove she was no longer aligned with the FBI. There is something like insanity here, because the chosen means are wildly unsuited to the ends.

There is insanity also in the belief that news coverage is all-important and all-powerful, able by itself to start a revolution or save a forest. All the protagonists literally set themselves in conflict with reality as rendered by the media: they were able to attract massive coverage, but they were not able to endow it with their private visions. They made news, as the saying goes, but they could not make its content or its impact.

To fear coverage of such fantastic acts is to fear that such fantasies are epidemic. If they are, it is not because journalists cover fanatics, but because readers and viewers have surrendered the perceptions and values that ought to constitute their private reality to the news and to news values.

You can make a good story either by becoming or by shooting a president, but in only one of these ways can you do good. Obviously there is a difference between news values and the values of life. News values favor novelty over tradition, the public over the private, the moment over its cause or its conclusion. The news is larger than life, but it is also more impoverished. Transpose news values to a living society, or a living soul, while neglecting other values, and they become recipes for individual psychosis and social breakdown. Has this begun to happen? And where might the fault lie? With the journalist? With his audience? With the boat that holds them both?

We thought and talked of "Patty" as if we lived next door. We rehearsed the facts: she did after all, hold a gun during a bank robbery. But her parents believed she was forced to do it. Was she a revolutionary, or a victim? We didn't know. We saw her on television, we heard her voice, and witnessed her parents' grief. But we didn't know her.

Subtly we are losing the distinction between media presentations and reality. (Do we readers and viewers know much about the Mayagüez? Do we think we do?) We sometimes forget that our "Patty" (as opposed, say, to the Patty her parents know) or our "Ford" is the merest phantasm, a figure embroidered by a series of confusing stories. Rationality and personality are threatened when we confuse the media presentation with the living reality, or with the picture we might construct ourselves after disciplined investigation. As the California sagas show, sanity requires that we avoid this confusion. *K.M.P.*

Giving the kid a break

It is reassuring indeed to know that however tight the job crunch, ours is a profession that will always find room for a bright comer. The *Ladies' Home Journal* hired Lynda Johnson Robb as a contributing editor; *The Saturday Evening Post* hired Julie Nixon Eisenhower as a consulting editor and gave her a seat on its board of directors; the Viking Press hired Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, also as a consulting editor. And recently, in a not-unrelated affirmative action, the Associated Press's Washington bureau manfully found a place on its staff for its first female photographer, Susan Ford. The emerging employment pattern seems to beg for analysis, but whatever the interpretation, one shining truth is clear: in this land of opportunity, where any little boy may dream of being President, any little girl can grow up to be Editor.

The National News Council lives

The National News Council completed its second year in August as a forum "to serve the public interest in preserving freedom of communication and advancing accurate and fair reporting of news." The council had acted on fifty-nine complaints, upholding five of them, finding thirty-three unwarranted, and dismissing twenty-one.

Some early fears that the formation of a national press council could lead to a form of censorship, or to the imposition of arbitrary standards on news organizations, have proved groundless. While we expressed reservations about one decision (May/June), on balance we have a high regard for the care and fairness

with which the council has weighed complaints.

The greatest contribution of the council, in our view, has been the opportunity it provides for public discussion of issues involved in gathering and reporting the news. Not only does such a forum lead to better public understanding of what newsmen do, it encourages better reporting. The council, still in its infancy, deserves the support of all who share these goals.

'The Guns of Autumn' aims low

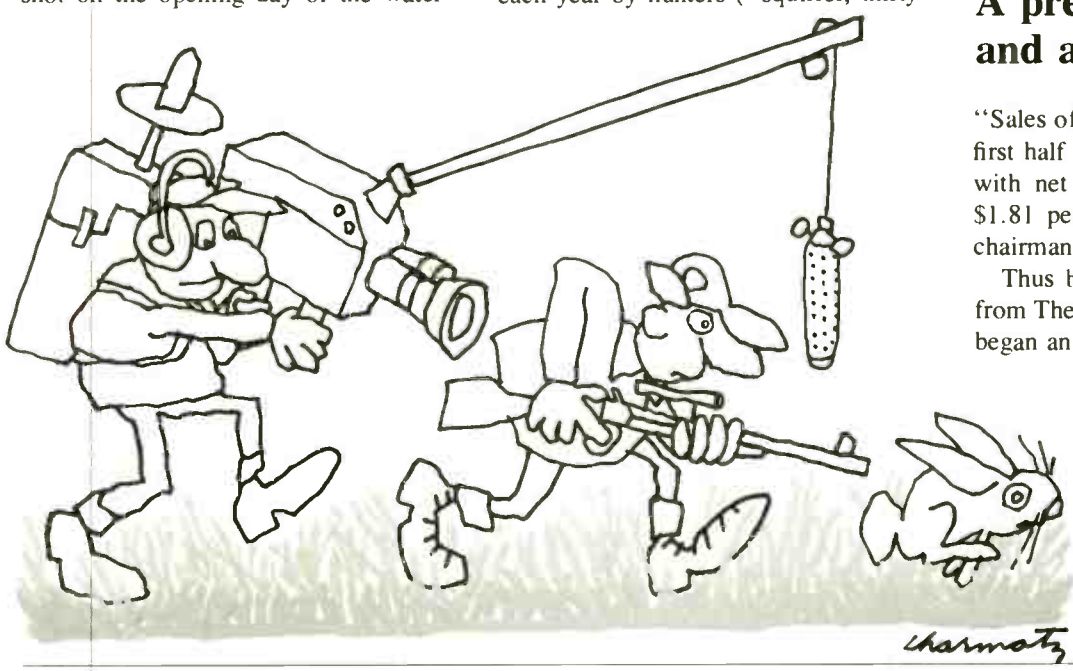
"We went to each location and we filmed what we found," said Irv Drasnin, the producer-director and writer of "The Guns of Autumn," a CBS News documentary about hunting. What CBS found was that modern hunting is unsporting, often cruel — and big business. What they didn't find was anything good to say about hunting. The cameras filmed dead and dying animals, killed by incompetent hunters whose goal seemed to be bagging an animal as efficiently as they could.

The program took viewers to five hunts around America. Black bears were shot as they fed at a garbage dump; a bear was shot after it was treed with the help of dogs, walkie-talkies, and cars; a great many ducks and geese were shot on the opening day of the waterfowl season in a "game management area" that sounded like a battlefield; buffaloes were shot on a fenced state preserve; and deer were shot on a private fenced preserve.

To select these parodies of hunts for extended treatment, without at least indicating that they do not make up the whole story of hunting, is to play into the hands of critics who say that the networks tend to be biased when they deal with subjects dear to the hearts of "middle Americans." (Acknowledging the critics, CBS also planned a follow-up show, "Echoes of 'The Guns of Autumn,' " which aired September 28, and which featured hunters and spokesmen for sportsmen's groups.)

We don't hold that Drasnin was required to present a "balanced" view of hunting. There was no need to show viewers a skillful, humane hunt to balance each grotesque killing. But the maker of a documentary should be clear about what his subject is: was "The Guns of Autumn" intended to show us the way hunters hunt in America, or the ways in which hunting is abused in America? Drasnin's script made no claims for universality, but neither did it contain any disclaimers. Throughout the program there was talk about the number of hunters in the country, how many dollars are spent on hunting, and, at the end of the show, there was a grim recital of the numbers of animals killed each year by hunters ("squirrel, thirty-one and a half million; rabbit, twenty-seven million . . .").

"The Guns of Autumn" was passionate, and passion is a quality much needed in television. But in their passion Drasnin and his colleagues resorted more often than not to crudely powerful images of dead and dying animals. It was as if vegetarians were to make a documentary about packing plants: we saw close-ups of bloody hands as they dressed out a bear; of a dead deer hung from a tree, its tongue distended; and of another deer, its antlers entangled with barbed wire, its eyes rolling in pain and terror as bumbling hunters tried to finish it off with shot after inept shot. Such images are powerful because death and bloody scenes arouse strong emotions. But to lean so heavily on shock value is to manipulate viewers, and to shock them repeatedly with blood and death is to manipulate them crudely. We suspect that the manipulation was the result of passion having overcome the desire to pay careful attention to its object — a serious flaw in an artist, filmmaker, or a journalist. While we do not identify ourselves with either side, we were struck by the fact that the documentary, which seemed to be about hunting in America generally, offered not one scene that a knowledgeable hunter could have watched with any pleasure.



A press release and a news story

"Sales of The Boeing Company for the first half of 1975 were $1,879,717,000 with net earnings of $38,443,000, or $1.81 per share, T. A. Wilson, board chairman, announced here today."

Thus began an August press release from The Boeing Company. And so too began an article in the August 4 *Seattle*

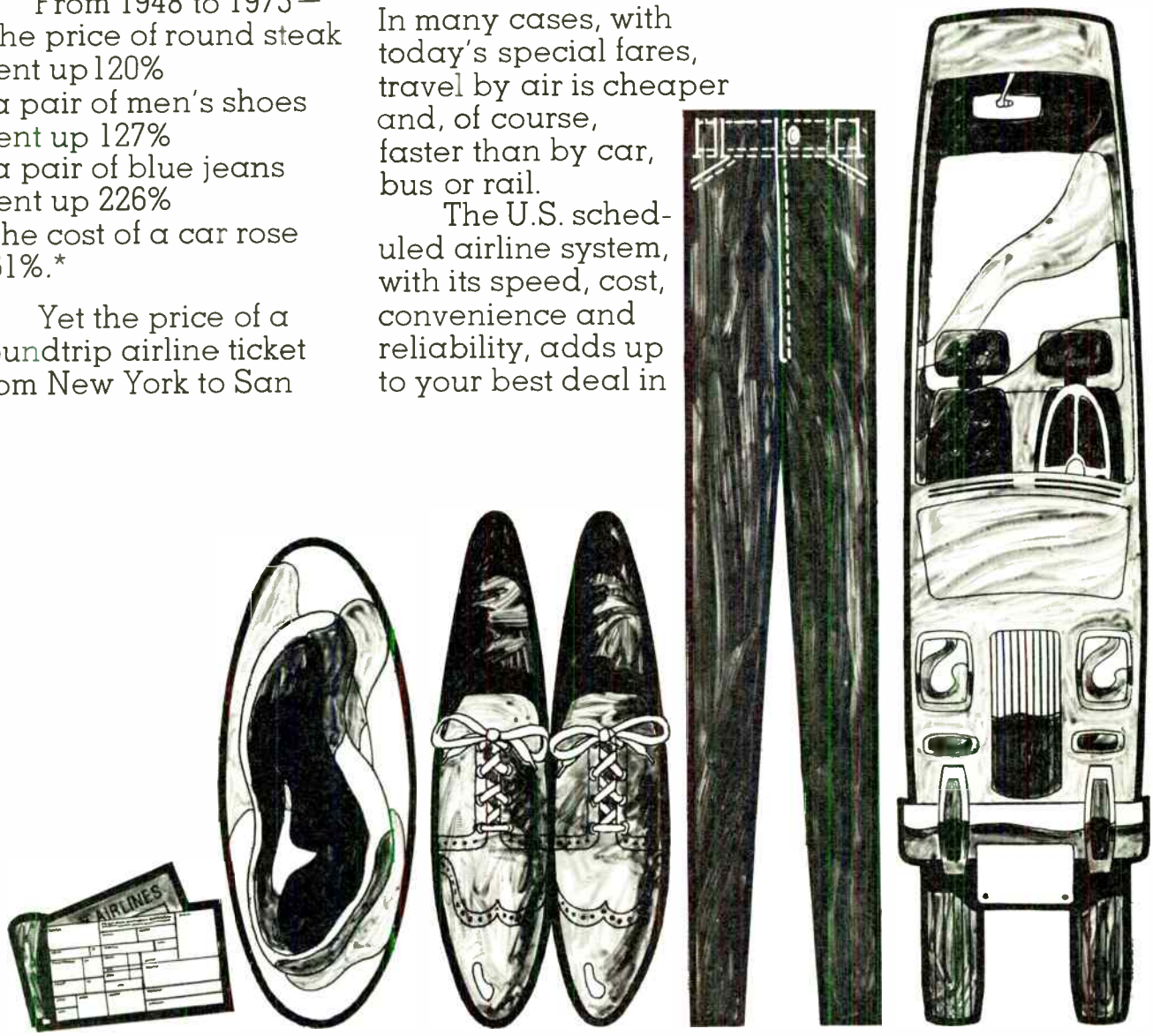
Jets and Jeans

Despite inflation and soaring fuel costs, an airline ticket remains a 1975 bargain.

From 1948 to 1975—
- the price of round steak went up 120%
- a pair of men's shoes went up 127%
- a pair of blue jeans went up 226%
- the cost of a car rose 261%.*

Yet the price of a roundtrip airline ticket from New York to San Francisco during those 27 years rose just **18%**—and you get there twice as fast. During that time the average airline fare went up **22%**, while the overall Consumer Price Index rose **123%**. In many cases, with today's special fares, travel by air is cheaper and, of course, faster than by car, bus or rail.

The U.S. scheduled airline system, with its speed, cost, convenience and reliability, adds up to your best deal in travel. That's why the airlines today are the dominant form of public passenger transportation between our cities, and between this country and the rest of the world.



Source: Consumer Price Index & manufacturers. Air fares as of August 15, 1975

THE AIRLINES OF AMERICA

Public Transportation at its best.

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

Times by the associate editor of the business section, Robert L. Twiss.

We note this press release that was run as a news story (in this case with minor copy-editing changes and the omission of one paragraph), not because it's unusual, but because it's an especially clear example of what is wrong with a practice that some editors defend.

It's no secret that Seattle is a company town, and that Boeing is the company. A news story on Boeing's financial performance is important to many readers of *The Seattle Times*. Surely if there were ever to be a time for a Seattle reporter to do more than pass on a press release, it would be when he reports on Boeing.

Why wasn't the release an adequate news story in its own right? The answer is buried in the second half of the release-turned-news item: "As noted last quarter, the reduced level of jet transport orders has been a major factor in the downward trend of company employment, which has continued, Wilson said. Since the first of the year, Seattle-area employment has declined by approximately 5,700 and now stands at 49,000. Nationwide, the reduction has been from 77,500 to 72,400."

In other words, the bad news came way after the good news. And Boeing's own version of what was news in the Seattle area, rather than a reporter's, was printed in *The Seattle Times* without its readers knowing it. We know the practice of using press releases is widespread, but we're still disturbed by it, not least because the public expects that a newspaper story is an impartial account.

Laissez-faire pitch — and catch

Several months ago, Frederick Dent, a former secretary of commerce, set in motion a program to inform the American public about how our free-enterprise economic system works — a booklet and a nationwide ad campaign. The campaign, carried out by the Advertising Council, is scheduled to start late this fall and to last for at least three years.

So far, perhaps, so good. But there's a catch. To get the project going, an initial $239,000 was taken from funds allocated to two Commerce Department agencies which, in these hard times, would seem to need every available dime: the Office of Minority Business Enterprise ($89,000) and the Economic Development Administration ($150,000). The first helps members of minorities to start and stay in business; the second runs programs designed to reduce unemployment.

More people will see the ad campaigns, but we judge that more free enterprise would have been fostered if the funds had been spent for their original purpose.

The Joseph Coors nomination

Should Joseph Coors, the conservative Colorado brewer, become a member of the board of the Corporation of Public Broadcasting? Hearings on that question before the Senate Commerce Committee took place this autumn, and the *Review*'s critical article (March/April) about Television News, Inc., a news service that Coors founded, was much discussed.

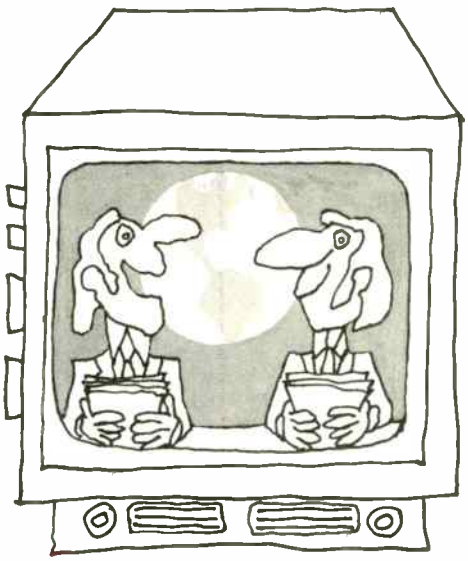
Public board members whose politics are not in the "main stream" strike us as desirable. If there were many such directors, more fur might fly at CPB meetings, and perhaps a good idea or two would result.

We oppose this nomination, however, because Coors has shown an insensitivity to the distinction between broadcasting and other forms of private business. Thus, in running a brewery it may be good business not to discuss details about new products and new markets, but it is not good broadcasting to launch a service founded for political goals as if it were a conventional news service. Nor does it serve the cause of tolerance to hold news personnel to an ideological standard, a practice that Coors clearly tolerated, if he did not instigate, at TVN. Again, in business, one develops or chooses the products that one sells, but in news broadcasting, it is not in the public's interest to seek to bar persons and statements with which one disagrees, as happened several times at TVN.

Mr. Coors has said he would pay more attention to such niceties in the future, but we see no reason why the risk must be taken. Individual achievement, not the political groups represented, seems to us the desirable credential for CPB board members. Still, if the search is on for a conservative, there are better candidates that Joseph Coors.

Good news for 'Eyewitness News'?

Local TV news shows, especially the *Eyewitness News* format pioneered by ABC affiliates and imitated by others, have been accused of skimping on news. Now comes a study, in last summer's *Journalism Quarterly*, telling us that, at least in New York, *Eyewitness News* contains more hard news than the city's other two network-owned

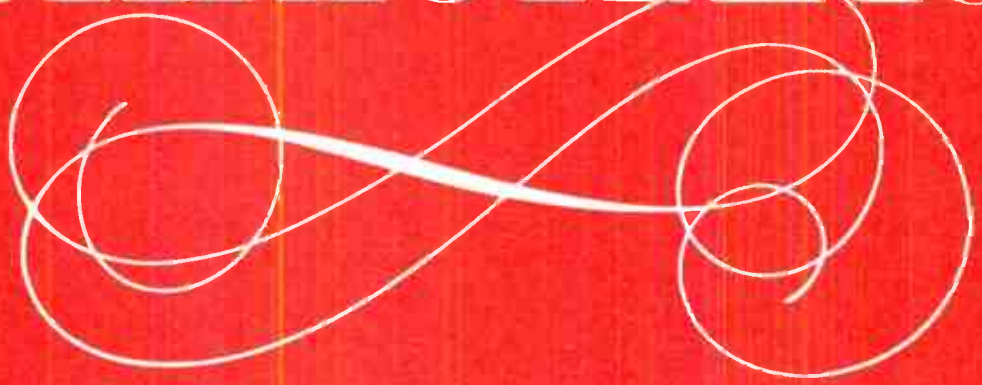


stations. The study also found that *Eyewitness News* ran more stories about crime and violence, and more humorous and human-interest stories.

The point seems to be that numbers don't measure the quality of news coverage. The article's authors note that their data indicate a "shift" in TV news toward "elements more likely to create viewer interest rather than viewer edification." Even when there is more "news."

continued

COMPLIMENT YOUR FRIENDS THIS CHRISTMAS



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This rolling research lab is helping America take advantage of an energy source that's been around for years.

The energy resource is coal. Right now, our country has nearly one-third of the world's coal reserves. This is twice the energy of Middle Eastern oil reserves.

However, burning coal presents some potential environmental problems. One of these is from pollutants known as oxides of nitrogen or "NOx" emissions.

Research against pollution.

To help industry and electric utilities reduce these pollutants, the U. S. Government awarded a research contract to Exxon Research and Engineering—a company with many years of experience in the science of burning fossil fuels.

This research is intended to help operators of electric power generating plants burn coal more cleanly. It will also help equipment manufacturers design new power plant boilers which will produce less pollution in the future.

The TIGER Van.

To help collect the data needed, Exxon designed and built the rolling research lab you see above.

It's called the "Traveling Industrial Gaseous Emission Research" vehicle—nicknamed "TIGER" van by the Exxon researchers who operate it.

Traveling from power plant to power plant, the TIGER van conducts on-site tests.

The five-man team of Exxon engineers and technicians aboard the van uses sophisticated probes to look inside power plant boilers and stacks. These probes collect emission samples and send them back to the TIGER van where they are analyzed and recorded.

The data is used to test new and and different methods of burning coal to reduce pollution.

Some results are in.

Over the past four years, field tests have been conducted on 25 coal-fired plant boilers in these studies, as well as on oil- and gas-fired boilers. Exxon engineers have been able to reduce NOx emissions from coal-fired boilers by as much as 60 percent in short-term tests. Longer term tests are needed to confirm these results.

The published findings of this research have been made available to utility operators, boiler designers and others working in environmental and energy research.

The TIGER van—it's one way Exxon, the government, the electric power companies and boiler manufacturers are working together to help bring you more energy with less pollution.

EXXON

In memoriam

We doubt that Chicago's Mayor Richard J. Daley had a hand in the careers of many journalists, but we know that his anger led to the firing of one aggressive radio reporter; for that knowledge we must thank the *Chicago Journalism Review*, a publication that for seven years explored the web connecting Daley and the Chicago media. The world would know less of this juicy subject, of stories killed and favors returned, of who runs Chicago, and how, had it not been for the *Chicago Journalism Review*. It passes, now, and will be missed.

The young reporters who founded the *Review* adapted their name from this publication (our present editor, no longer quite so young, was one of them); they in turn inspired other local reviews, most of which have faded from the scene. It is a sad tale, of lack of funds and business know-how, and, perhaps, of flagging will. Also, if the word from a few Chicago journalists is to be credited, it is a tale of declining editorial quality. Perhaps it's true, but recent issues have contained at least a few articles that we thought hit hard, factually and fairly.

The best of the *Chicago Journalism Review* will live on in an anthology, we are told, and we look forward to it as a rare collection of pieces about the discrepancy between theory and practice in journalism. No publication, however, can capture what we have always thought the best part of the *Chicago Journalism Review*: the after-work efforts of a corps of journalists, sometimes a few dozen, working with no boss, and no salaries, because they felt it important to write back at the Chicago press, an institution as fascinating and peculiar as that city itself. There was probably more editing and double-checking than was devoted to the average story in Chicago's commercial media, but it hummed without a clash of egos, without, even, a written policy. This spirit harks back to something very basic in journalism, and we need it still.

'A few war stories'

by ROGER MORRIS

In a mid-September hearing, the Senate Select Committee investigating the CIA was treated to a dazzling display of James Bond devices. Developed under an eighteen-year $3 million covert research program called "Project Naomi," the arsenal included dart guns that kill without trace, light bulbs and automobile engine parts that emit poison gas on use, and aerosol cans of epidemic bacteria to be sprayed on roads and then spread by the tires of passing vehicles.

Almost as fascinating as the bizarre weaponry — and in some ways as depressing — was the mere fact of the display, and the predictable reactions of both the senators and the media. Somber-faced legislators were duly photographed pointing dart guns or looking with suitable dread at a bottle of shellfish poison.

From *Newsweek* to *The Denver Post*, the press described in often lavish detail the stranger-than-fiction anatomy and genealogy of the devices. Lost in the thrill of it all, however, were some of the serious questions. Neither the committee nor the media covering the hearings seemed eager to dig beneath the gimmicks to the people and methods that made it possible for the government to invest so much time and money in planning for political murders.

Distracting the Congress and the press with the exotic toys and tales of

Senator Church and poison-dart gun

the trade is, of course, a time-honored tactic for the CIA. Even if the shocking stories raise eyebrows, it is still better than having time spent on investigations of actual men, motives, and operations.

"I'll tell them a few war stories," CIA director Allen Dulles used to say to his aides about handling troublesome public inquiries. He did. The CIA did it again this autumn. And, unfortunately, it still seems to work.

Roger Morris is a former National Security Council staff assistant to Henry Kissinger.

Darts and laurels

Laurel: to Louis Ruckeyser for his article in [MORE], the New York-based media review, recounting the foibles of New York newspapers, particularly *Times* editorial writers, in further confusing the city's financial crisis.

Laurel: to the *Chicago Daily News* for taking pains to correct almost any error at all. Last September this correction was published by the paper's Bureau of Fairness and Accuracy: "The Daily News incorrectly reported Tuesday that WLS disk jockey Bob Sirott uses a taped sign-off each day of Bugs Bunny gurgling, 'That's all, folks!' The voice is that of Porky Pig."

Dart: to the U.S. Public Health Service for Orwellian Doublespeak. The service issued departmental guidelines, which define a "Freedom of Information Officer" as "an officer of the Department who has been delegated authority under the provisions of the DHEW Freedom of Information regulation (45 CFR Part 5) to deny access to Department records."

Dart: to *Playboy*, for bad taste beyond the call of promotional duty in using, without permission, the Order of the Most Holy Trinity in a full-page newspaper advertisement (I READ PLAYBOY AND FOUND GOD was the headline). The magazine was boasting about the huge response the Trinitarians supposedly received from an ad for new members that ran in *Playboy*.

With thanks

The *Review* thanks the trustees of the Elmer Davis Memorial Fund for voting support of articles "in the Elmer Davis tradition." It also expresses continuing thanks to George P. Delacorte for the fund supporting *Review* reports on columnists and commentators. ■

One of a series on the first hundred years of the telephone.

The best phone system in the world didn't just happen. It was planned a long time ago.

This ad ran in 1908.

One Policy
One System
Universal Service

THAT the American public requires a telephone service that is universal is becoming plainer every day.

Now, while people are learning that the Bell service has a broad national scope and the flexibility to meet the ever varying needs of telephone users, they know little of how these results have been brought about. The keynote is found in the motto—"One policy, one system, universal service."

Behind this motto may be found the American Telephone and Telegraph Company—the so-called "parent" Bell Company.

• • • •

A unified policy is obtained because the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has for one of its functions that of a holding company, which federates the associated companies and makes available for all what is accomplished by each.

As an important stockholder in the associated Bell companies, it assists them in financing their extensions, and it helps insure a sound and uniform financial policy.

• • • •

A unified system is obtained because the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has for one of its functions the ownership and maintenance of the telephones used by the 4,000,000 subscribers of the associated companies.

In the development of the art, it originates, tests, improves and protects new appliances and secures economies in the purchase of supplies.

It provides a clearing-house of standardization and thus insures economy in the construction of equipment, lines and conduits, as well as in operating methods and legal work—in fact, in all the functions of the associated companies which are held in common.

• • • •

Universal, comprehensive service is obtained because the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has among its other functions the construction and operation of long distance lines, which connect the systems of the associated companies into a unified and harmonious whole.

It establishes a single, instead of a divided, responsibility in inter-state connections, and a uniform system of operating and accounting; and secures a degree of efficiency in both local and long distance service that no association of independent neighboring companies could obtain.

• • • •

Hence it can be seen that the American Telephone and Telegraph Company is the active agency for securing *one policy*, *one system*, and *universal service*—the three factors which have made the telephone service of the United States superior to that of any other country.

American Telephone & Telegraph Company

Bell System

COLUMBIA
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1975

Is it time to bury the holiday death watch?

Holiday driving may be no more dangerous than weekend driving, but you'd never know it from the news

by ROBERT J. SAMUELSON

Like weather stories, holiday traffic accident stories are a media staple. The wire services religiously churn them out, copy editors give them a quick once-over, and then they routinely find their place on news programs, and in newspapers.

Few things are as strong as the force of habit, but holiday accident stories may be one habit worth discarding — or, at least, overhauling. The premise of the stories — *that holiday periods represent the year's most hazardous driving periods* — may be wrong. At least, it's open to serious question. But for years, the press — abetted by the National Safety Council, which publishes projections of holiday fatalities — has played along with the assumption. If this assumption is off base, then millions of Americans have been given an exaggerated picture of the danger of holiday driving.

As it now exists, the holiday death story dates back to at least 1948, when the Safety Council — a nonprofit organization financed largely by dues from industry members — began making projections of holiday fatalities at the request of the media. "The wire services asked that the estimates be made because they considered the information newsworthy," according to Ron Kuykendall, an information officer for the Safety Council. "The council agreed to make the estimates because they provided an opportunity to place a safety message before the driving public during a dangerous driving period." It was a simple, apparently innocuous marriage of convenience: the media needed an outside "authority" for projections; the council performed a "good deed" and, in the process, collected some favorable publicity.

However, the continuation of the marriage depends on the extraordinary danger of holiday driving. If the holidays weren't unduly hazardous, they wouldn't be "news." And indeed, a survey of the scanty records that bear on this problem indicates that there is questionable evidence that holidays are more dangerous, and there is some evidence that they are not. The Safety Council clearly believes that holiday driving is more dangerous. In its *Accident Facts* (1974 edition), for example, it declares:

> Both deaths and death rates are higher during holidays than they are during comparable nonholiday periods. For traffic deaths, the number that occurred during five holidays (excluding Thanksgiving) over the three years 1971-73 was 24 percent higher than what would have been normal for nonholidays at the same time of the year. Over these same holidays, vehicle travel was 4 percent higher. Because deaths increased more percentagewise than travel, *death rates* averaged 21 percent higher during the holidays.

The problem with these figures is that they are derived from comparisons that may involve a perfect example of apples and oranges. That, at least, is the way they strike Brian O'Neill, vice-president for research of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a nonprofit organization which is sponsored by the major casualty insurance companies in the United States.

For its figures, the Safety Council compares deaths during a three-day holiday period — say a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday — with the *same* three days in the previous week and in the following week. (The comparison also includes the six hours of the evening preceding the first day of the holiday.) O'Neill argues that this approach creates an automatic distortion. Driving patterns during a holiday period resemble those of a weekend, not those of an ordinary Friday or Monday, he says. Normal weekday driving involves slow-moving commuter traffic, where the risk of fatality is lower; in contrast, both weekend and holiday periods mean more social driving — usually at higher speeds — and more drinking and driving. Thus, O'Neill argues, it makes more sense to compare holiday periods

Robert Samuelson is a Washington-based free-lancer who reports on economics for the Sunday Times *of London.*

THE DEATH-WATCH NUMBERS

1973 holiday automobile fatalities compared with those on non-holiday weekends

Holiday	Holiday deaths, per day	Deaths per day, Saturday of same month	% difference	Deaths per day, Sunday of same month	% difference	Average daily weekend deaths same month	% difference
Memorial Day May, 3.25 days	222	219	+1	175	+27	197	+13
Fourth of July July, 1.25 days	236	242	−2	193	+22	218	+8
Labor Day September, 3.25 days	231	233	−1	187	+24	210	+10
Thanksgiving November, 4.25 days	160	204	−22	163	−2	184	−13
Christmas December, 4.25 days	153	178	−14	143	+7	161	−5
New Year January, 4.25 days	132	183	−28	146	−10	165	−20

This table, which reflects the analysis of Brian O'Neill of the Institute of Highway Safety, compares average daily deaths during holiday periods with those over weekends during the same month. The table suggests that a holiday's duration plays an important part in determining the risk of driving. Each of the four-day holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's) recorded lower average daily deaths than weekends. During 1973, the average number of daily deaths during a holiday and during weekends were almost identical.

to other weekends in the same months.

O'Neill made such a comparison for 1973, and the results are interesting. With one exception, the average number of deaths per day during the holidays was *lower* than the average number of deaths on Saturdays of the same month. Comparison with Sunday death totals tends to show *higher* average fatalities on the holidays, although there were two exceptions (Thanksgiving and New Year's) when the average daily deaths were lower on the holidays. When both Saturdays and Sundays are combined, the average number of daily deaths on the weekends was higher than the holiday daily averages for three holidays, and lower for the other three. Lumped together, the pluses and the minuses tend to cancel each other; in other words, the number of deaths for each day of the holiday and each day of the average weekend are just about equal.

The point of all this, O'Neill says, is not that holidays are safe (they aren't, he insists), but that they are probably no more unsafe than most weekends. By focusing on the hazards of holiday driving, the media "may be guilty of misrepresenting the weekends — of convincing the public that there's only a problem on holidays."

Other safety experts are less charitable toward the media and the Safety Council's treatment of holidays. William Haddon, Jr., former director of the National Highway Safety Bureau and now president of the Insurance Institute, says the holiday fatality stories are "a successful piece of hucksterism" and that they divert attention from more serious highway-safety problems.

J. L. Recht, director of the Safety Council's Statistics Division, takes issue with O'Neill's conclusions. "I don't think he's made a proper comparison." His point: the figures for the weekends in the months O'Neill matches with the holidays include the holiday periods, so "you've got an inflated base." This is a valid criticism, but it is not clear that it makes much difference in this case. According to the Safety Council's own *Fact Book,* the Saturday and Sunday death totals during holiday months often tend to be very close to the averages for the preceding and following months.

If this all sounds inconclusive, that is probably as it should be. The truth is that research into the real danger posed by holiday driving is skimpy, and what exists is probably outdated. The study that the Safety Council uses to buttress its conclusions is nearly two decades old. Undertaken jointly by the Safety Council and the then-Bureau of Public Roads, that study attempted to compare fatalities (estimated by the Safety Council) with total vehicle miles driven on holiday and nonholiday periods (estimated by the bureau between 1955 and 1957). The study did, indeed, conclude that holiday driving was more dangerous, but a closer examination of the results leaves plenty of room for doubting whether the findings are, after twenty years, still valid.

Not only does the same problem of comparison raised by O'Neill apply as well to the older study, but there also has been a major change in holidays in those two decades: the holiday periods have consistently gotten longer. Back in the mid-fifties, many holidays were just one day. One-day holidays involve the highest death rates, presumably because people are squeezing their travel into a shorter time period and are rushing more. On the other hand, longer holidays tend to show lower daily death totals — probably for the same reason. With the legal reshuffling of holiday periods, almost all holidays are three days and many are four. How does this affect risk? How has the amount of travel on holidays against similar nonholiday periods changed over the past twenty years? How does this influence risk? (If there is much more holiday travel, is the real risk correspondingly decreased?)

No one, unfortunately, knows the answers to these questions, but, until someone finds out, it might be a good idea for the Safety Council and the press to stop pretending that their answers are the right ones, and for the press to take a closer look at the practice of holding holiday death-toll extravaganzas. ■

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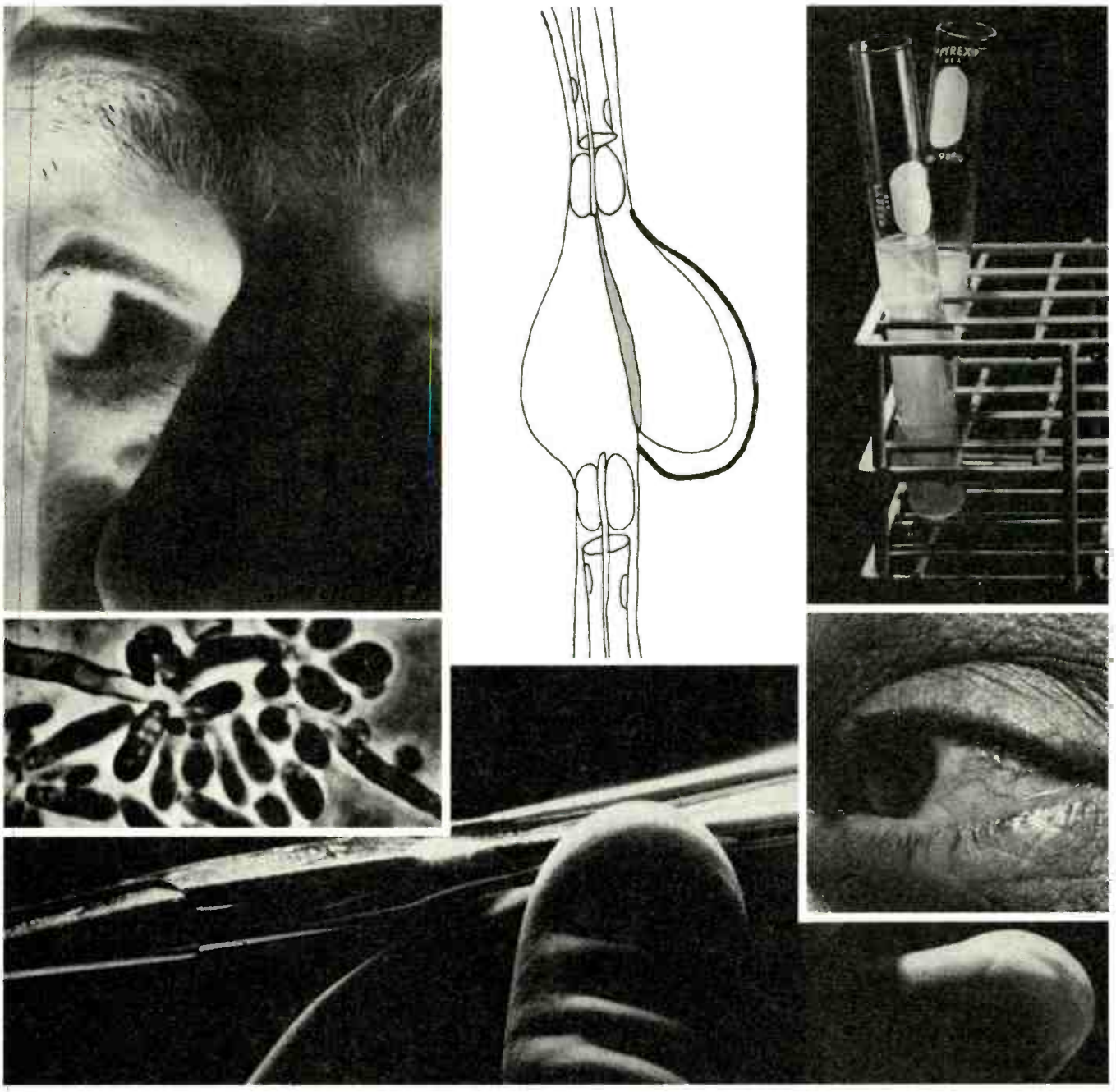

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Reporting (gasp!) what Betty Ford said

Unexpectedly, calm prevailed in the heartland

by ELIOT FREMONT-SMITH

It so happened, for reasons I don't quite recall, that at 9:30 P.M. on Sunday, August 10, my wife and I were sitting in front of the TV set, which was on and turned to CBS's Channel 2. *60 Minutes* was about to begin.

"Let's switch," I said, grabbling about in the scattered Sunday papers for the TV schedule. "No, don't switch," said my wife. "Betty Ford is being interviewed. I want to see it."

I grunted a mildly irritated assent, and reached for a book. The rest is history — or anyway hubbub, which is usually more fun.

As the world knows, the interview with Mrs. Ford, conducted by Morley Safer, was a series of little shocks surrounding one medium-sized one. The little shocks were, in order:

☐ The first lady was sexually aware about her husband, and mostly direct, only slightly coquettish, about their relationship. "I'm always glad to see him enjoy a pretty girl. And when he stops looking, then I'm going to begin to worry. . . . He really doesn't have time for outside entertainment. Because I keep him busy." (Nearly coincidentally, in the September issue of *McCall's*, Mrs. Ford was quoted saying that reporters had "asked me everything but how often I sleep with my husband, and if they'd asked me that, I would have told them. As often as possible!")

☐ She had sought and received some psychotherapy.

☐ She was strongly for the Equal Rights Amendment, "and we're going to get it." On the other hand, in response to Safer's very leading question about "the more strident voices of so-called 'liberated women,' " she was able to note that "I'm not the type that's going to burn my bra or do something like that."

☐ She could be critical of the president ("We've had our fights"), but believed marriage "should be a seventy-thirty proposition. You don't go into marriage as a fifty-fifty thing. You go into it, both of you, as a seventy-thirty proposition."

☐ She's had her political disagreements with the president, one of them having to do with "putting a woman in the Cabinet." Safer: "You won that one." Mrs. Ford: "Yes, I won that one."

☐ She would not be shy about abortion. She described the legalization of abortion as bringing it out of the backwoods and putting it in the hospital.

☐ In the context of not worrying about her children in connection with drugs (because she "would have detected it"), she nonetheless guessed that they had "probably tried marijuana," adding that she probably would have too at that age.

The medium-sized shock had to do with premarital sex and her daughter. It came between the abortion and marijuana zingers, and went like this:

Safer: You've also talked about young people living together before they're married.

Mrs. Ford. Well, they are, aren't they?

Safer: Indeed, they are. Well, what if Susan Ford came to you and said, 'Mother, I'm having an affair.'

Mrs. Ford: Well, I wouldn't be surprised. I think she's a perfectly normal human being like all young girls, if she wanted to continue and I would certainly counsel and advise her on the subject, and I'd want to know pretty much about the young man that she was planning to have the affair with; whether it was a worthwhile encounter or whether it was going to be one of those — She's pretty young to start affairs.

Safer: But, nevertheless, old enough,

Mrs. Ford: Oh, yes, she's a big girl.

Safer: I mean would it surprise you, though, given the way the — the way you brought these kids up, and the President brought them up, would it surprise you if that happened?

Mrs. Ford: No, I think there's a complete freedom among the young people now. And in some cases, I'm not so sure that, perhaps, there would be less divorce.

Dave Christensen

Hoo-ha. My wife and I looked at each other. Whatever else, Betty Ford wasn't exactly holding back. My wife was irritated at Safer's manner of questioning, which she termed "aggressive, coyly manipulative. He's a polite snake." I couldn't let it rest quite there, being a journalist, so I countered with the thought that if Betty had felt set up, she could have said so; she *was* the first lady; she didn't *have* to answer directly Safer's hypothetical questions about Susan's sex life. My wife agreed; she

Eliot Fremont-Smith is a senior editor of The Village Voice.

wouldn't let Safer off the hook, but allowed that Betty could have been more careful.

Betty's disingenuous candor would obviously cause some ruckus, but neither of us foresaw the extent to which the interview would be discussed later in the press. The next day, and for the next two weeks, all hell broke loose in the papers. Retrospectively, the reasons for this are of interest.

The New York Times of August 11 gave a simple UPI summary of the interview, leading off, of course, with the "affair" bit. It also reported that Ron Nessen, aboard Air Force One on the way to Vail, Colorado, had been asked for Mr. Ford's reaction, and had replied: "The President has long since ceased to be perturbed or surprised by his wife's remarks." (Nessen's tartness was to grow. Two weeks later, after the *McCall's* article, *Newsweek* reported that he "bristled that Ford was 'not going to react to every interview given by Mrs. Ford. [His] philosophy is that Mrs. Ford can speak her mind.' " That was after Ford had tried to joke away in Minneapolis his wife's TV remarks: "When I first heard of it, I thought I'd lost 10 million votes. When I read it in the paper . . . I raised it to 20 million.")

On August 12 came the standard "reaction" stories. According to the AP story, Susan Ford said she thought her mother had done "a good job." Michael Ford, a theology student, wasn't so sure. There was criticism from a Mormon elder, a Roman Catholic bishop, a British anti-pornography campaigner, and columnist Harriet Van Horne was quoted.

As is usual, criticism of Mrs. Ford's remarks was more interesting than the praise. The praise, predictably, focused on her "free spirit," courage, and candor in discussing issues of substance. "It's refreshing," said a typical editorial (this one in the Oneonta, New York *Daily Star*), "to have a First Lady who will stick her neck out for something other than highway beautification." Other praise corrected critics who misquoted what she actually said.

The criticism came in two tones — sadly disappointed and outraged/hysterical. ("The President of the United States . . . should REPUDIATE what Mrs. Ford said," declaimed the editorial of William Loeb's famous right-wing Manchester, New Hampshire *Union Leader*, which loves to balloon its ardor with caps and boldface.) In substance, the criticism fell into the following main — but not mutually exclusive — categories:

☐ Substantive, specific disagreement. Nancy Reagan let go a blast against the "new morality, including permissive attitudes toward premarital sexual relations" in a mid-September speech to a group of Michigan Republicans; apparently, from press reports, Mrs. Ford wasn't mentioned by name, but there must have been a lot of nodding and winking. More cosmically, William F. Buckley took Mrs. Ford to task for using her limelight position "to rewrite the operative sexual code of Western civilization."

'If the press takes notice, there must be consequences — to justify the notice'

☐ Disapproval of her candor, *per se*. This criticism was much more widespread than specific political disagreement. It's hard to come straight out against candor. So indirection and expressions of regret and exquisite distinctions (frankness considered as a matter of taste, abstractly laudable but not first-ladylike) — these were the accepted modes of quite serious, quite profound disapproval. For candor, outspokenness, was — far more than anything else — the issue that Betty Ford's interview raised.

The candor critique took several forms:

☐ Betrayal of a valued image of the first lady — any first lady. This is what Harriet Van Horne wrote about in her syndicated column. Van Horne is considered "liberal" and "humanist" (there's an air about her columns of a privileged but empathetic and well-meaning person slumming in journalism), so her attack was noted. It also was the first in print, appearing a day after the broadcast. Van Horne wrote that if — and the proviso is itself of interest in the analysis of commentator techniques — if she were a member of Mrs. Ford's family, "I'd have been saddened by the unseemliness of it all, a first lady forfeiting a certain privacy, some mystique that keeps the vital luster on the first lady image." Less subtle, yet connecting with the same concern, was Jeffrey St. John's television commentary: "Betty Ford is certainly entitled to her personal opinions. But as first lady of the land she should at least make some effort to act like one." Presumably, the conservative St. John would see evidence of such effort if the first lady had disguised her opinions — or pretended she didn't have any opinions at all, or any opinions that "mattered." Confusion over the role of the president's wife is obviously involved: should she behave like a commoner (which is what constitutionally she is) or like the Queen of England (a level we whimsically preserve for the convenience of our judgment)?

☐ Calling attention to troublesome matters. Direct expression of this complaint was very rare, yet it underlay a great deal of the resentment some people felt toward Betty for bringing up problems that they would rather not think about and/or could find no solutions to — i.e., the kids, the sleeping around, the drugs. This was not, I venture to say, simply resentment toward the bearer of bad, or at least unhappy consciousness-raising, tidings; it was that, but compounded by the presumably correct assumption that Betty's problems with her kids were indeed hypothetical — no Fords puffing marijuana really, no boyfriend sacked out between Susan's White House sheets and blandly expecting breakfast with the folks — circumstances that in fact do afflict more than a few American families. (And in many, husband-wife sex relations aren't so hot, either.) So, from this viewpoint, where did Betty Ford get off being so noble? Printed criticism in this vein took some funny turns. One columnist experimented with a civil-libertarian tack, getting exercised over the invasion of Susan Ford's privacy. Art Buchwald, parodying, picked up the same idea and ran with it to its absurd conclusion: "After all this publicity, Susan Ford is the only girl in America who doesn't have a chance of

having an affair with anybody. The whole world is watching her now and she can't make a false move. . . . Poor Susan. . . . If Ford gets elected in '76, . . . Susan won't be able to go to a drive-in movie with a guy until she's 21. And if Ford gets reelected in '80, Susan will be watched night and day until she's 24." Laugh, but Buchwald had a serious point. "Why do you think," he wrote, "people got so mad at Mrs. Ford for saying she wouldn't be upset if Susan told her she was having an affair? Most of the people who got angry know they have no control over what their kids do, and they were mad that the wife of the President said it out loud."

□ A perceived disloyalty to her politician-president-husband. This was a minor change on the indiscretion tune. The wife-in-her-place theme ran through much of the criticism, but rarely surfaced — probably because the wife in this instance had staked out a feminist position (regardless of what she would do with her bra) and had therefore rendered the theme a trifle unctuous and silly because so patently futile. Still, MCPism found its ways. Most of the disloyal-to-husband criticism centered on, and disguised itself with, political consequence. Here the harrumphs were loud and clear: Betty Ford had hurt her husband's political standing. Political commentators all over the place pointed this out; their sources, when there were any, seemed to be nervous and for the most part conservative Republican state leaders. An Evans and Novak column reported from Republican sources that in rural Florida "Mrs. Ford's comments ranked with Vice President Rockefeller and high gasoline prices as the major Republican grievances"; that Utah "was not Ford country in the wake of the first lady's remarks"; and that indeed "the whole nation [was] talking about Mrs. Ford's interview, with an overwhelmingly negative effect against her husband." All of this was delivered by Evans and Novak as supportive of an interpretation that "the political earthquake of Betty Ford's CBS interview" was at the heart of a spectacular drop of 16.5 percentage points in a presidential-approval poll conducted by Albert Sindlinger. The Sindlinger poll had registered a 55.3 percent approval rate on August 10, the day of the broadcast; on August 24 it was down to 38.8 percent.

But then, on September 24, a funny thing happened. The results of the most recent Harris survey were published. And — surprise — Betty Ford got a nationwide 50-36 percent positive job rating, far ahead of her husband's 41-56 negative rating, which itself had improved from the previous month's 38-60 negative. It was the first Harris poll taken of Betty's popularity, and the breakdown, by sex, age, and education, was interesting: she scored better among women than men (54 to 46 positive), better among younger than older people (55 positive for the 18-29 group, 44 positive for the over-50s), and best among the college-educated (60 percent positive); the only grouping she failed to win was the eighth-grade-education-or-less group, which rated her 34-40 negative. Overall, what the Harris survey showed was that she was well regarded by most of the public, and, in any comparative sense, had to be viewed as, if anything, an asset to the president. Beyond this, the survey suggested (and a poll can suggest nearly anything, as Evans and Novak illustrated) that the president's rating on job performance was not significantly dependent on what his wife might say to a Morley Safer. His poor marks in the Harris survey had to do, apparently first and last, with his performance as president in regard to the lousy economy. But *of course*! So obvious. And so dull.

60 Minutes isn't news, it's show biz, but in her contemplation of the possibility that her daughter might have an affair, Betty Ford seemed not to understand the conventions of the TV interview. She declined to take the usual well-orchestrated duck. There they were, Safer and Mrs. Ford, sitting on a sofa in the White House. But Safer was *on television*, while Mrs. Ford responded as if she were — formally, to be sure, but also simply — in her living room. She didn't seem hip to the media age — and it was, I think, the sense that she lacked hipness that produced much of both the praise and blame in the press. Mere coverage was not enough. If the press takes notice, there must be consequences — to justify the notice. (The same thing caught Ed Muskie on a snowy day in New Hampshire in 1972. He wept, or seemed to weep, or coughed, or something, in frustrated anger at the *Manchester Union-Leader*'s attack on his wife. Well, a terrific story. It is now part of our political mythology that Muskie's tears cost him the Democratic nomination. You will see it in the history books.)

To make the point plain, the following account would be unthinkable: "Today Betty Ford, the President's wife, said that her daughter Susan might have a premarital sexual affair. Reports from around the country indicate that Americans are taking it in stride and that her statement is unlikely to have any significant political consequence." No, no. No reporter is going to write that, and no editor is going to print it. The story must have meaning. So what happened with Betty Ford is that a lot of editors, journalists, and commentators took off not from the actual responses of the heartland (whatever they were) but from what they presumed the responses from the heartland would be (assuming — this never questioned — that there would be meaningful response).

In fact, the response from the heartland, even stirred up by the press, seems to have been — well, controlled. Betty got better known, and perhaps, on balance, slightly more admired than she was before the interview. Also, on balance, it would seem that the interview had by itself very little *political* consequence. People still vote on candidates, not so much on their spouses. And what Betty thinks about marijuana is not perceived as being nearly so important as what Jerry can or is willing to do about the economy. As for cultural consequences, people have been speaking out for quite a while now on all manner of controversial topics. That Betty can do it too is small, if apparently generally welcome, news. That she comes across as a nice person is very nice — but not really much more than that. So, in this instance, that unthinkable, unprintable report, might have been, in all its terseness, the most accurate of all.

"But I would want to read much more about it than just that," said my wife.

"Me, too," said I.

Exactly. ■

The National

How to get finger-lickin'-good coverage from the U.S. press

by FRANCIS POLLOCK

It is the moment of truth. The top chicken cookers from each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia are assembled in the mammoth Exhibit Hall of San Antonio's Convention Center, awaiting the Parade of States.

The Air Force Band of the West strikes up "Cook Your Chicken with a Tender Touch." Then, fifty-one finalists, accompanied by flag-bearing Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, march through the hall to their Westinghouse ranges and their chicken-preparation tables, where two quarts of Mazola and a large shaker of Ac'cent await them.

The Air Force Band plays the national anthem. Then the contest chairman, a Texas chicken man, announces:

"Now is the time you've all been waiting for. I call the contestants to their Westinghouse ranges to do their thing with their chickens!"

By ten o'clock on the morning of July 9, the contestants are doing their thing.

Francis Pollock edited Media & Consumer, *a publication that often dealt with commercial influences on the news media.*

As a manufactured event in search of news coverage, the National Chicken Cooking Contest does quite well for itself and its sponsors — the National Broiler Council, Mazola corn oil, and Ac'cent monosodium glutamate. The prize money provides news value: first prize at the national cook-off is $10,000, and four runners-up divide another $10,000. The contest also pays travel and lodging expenses for the finalists — and for most (forty out of sixty this year) of the food editors and writers who attend. The contest passes as a Cinderella story: anyone who has a recipe that calls for chicken, Mazola,

Chicken Cooking Contest

and Ac'cent can go for the money. As one sponsor says, it is "the Olympics of chicken cooking."

The Olympics costs about half a million dollars, including promotion and staff time donated to the National Broiler Council by chicken producers. Mazola and Ac'cent fork out $40,000 each in contest sponsorship fees. To measure the return on this investment, the sponsors look quite carefully at newspaper coverage.

According to detailed records kept by the broiler council, the 1974 contest inspired 2,057 newspaper articles. Among the headlines entered in the council's 140-page report: FOWL COOKS SIGN UP BY APRIL 1, *Wilmington* (Delaware) *Journal;* PLUCK UP YOUR COURAGE — YOU MAY FEATHER YOUR NEST, *Valdosta* (Georgia) *Times;* CHICKEN CONCOCTION MAY BE SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT, *Brockton* (Massachusetts) *Enterprise & Times;* CLUCK, CLUCK BECOMES A YUM, YUM, *Sacramento* (California) *Union*; CHICK CHAMP COMES HOME TO ROOST, *Portland Oregonian.*

This year's winners take a bow. The contest's sponsors win too. In the first three months of 1975, contest coverage reached over 21 million people.

The council's report also lists the circulations of newspapers and magazines that write about the contest, and it takes special notice of articles that mention brand names. The 1974 contest led to "ink" in papers with a combined circulation totaling 144,229,780; scorekeepers were able to count more than 92 million in the coveted "brand mention" column. The 1975 contest promises to yield an even higher score. In the first three months of 1974, contest-related "ink" reached 21,533,744 people. This year's score for the same period is twice as high: 43,572,015. And brand mentions rose by a significant margin during this period — from 278 mentions in papers with a total circulation of 14 million to 828 mentions in papers with a total circulation of 26 million.

Ms. Texas is apprehensive. As the home state contestant in the National Chicken Cooking Contest, she attracts a cluster of food editors, TV people, and other kibitzers. But it's not the crowd that worries Ms. Texas. She'll have to debone her chickens, she says, a job her butcher usually does. Considering that her recipe, Stuffed Calico Chicken Thighs (⅓ cup Mazola, 1 teaspoon Ac'cent), will require her to debone twenty-four chicken thighs, her jitters are understandable. Ms. Texas gingerly probes a thigh with a knife.

Meanwhile, Ms. Connecticut, whose recipe is called Orange-Banana Glazed Chicken Breasts (⅓ cup Mazola, 1 teaspoon Ac'cent), is struggling to debone a chicken breast. "This is the toughest chicken I've ever seen," she mutters.

Behind his electric barbeque, Mr. Alabama, dressed in his chicken-cooking finery (saddle shoes, checked gray slacks, and Harry Truman sport shirt worn over the belt), is hard at work on his Honey Barbequed Chicken (¼ cup Mazola, 1 teaspoon Ac'cent). As he employs a long-handled fork to fiddle with his chicken, a cameraman from KENS-TV, a San Antonio station, approaches. Cameraman: "Do something with your chicken. I'm gunna do a close-up."

Mr. Alabama (as he continues to fiddle with his chicken with his long-handled fork): "I am doing something with my chicken."

Cameraman: "Pick it up or something."

Mr. Alabama lifts the chicken from the grill and turns it over as lights flood the scene and the camera rolls.

The day before this year's grand event, contest director Anne Nesbitt told the finalists: "Best Foods [the makers of Mazola] asks that you be sure to make use of their related products, such as Karo or Skippy if your recipe calls for corn syrup or peanut butter. If you

Ethics, anyone?

Last February, the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association adopted an ethics code which included the following passage:

> Free travel or lodging . . . can compromise the integrity and diminish the credibility of food editors and writers as well as their employees. Such offers should be avoided.

This year, as in previous years, food editors received an invitation to attend the National Chicken Cooking Contest that offered them the following travel options (and only these options):

____ Please arrange my travel plans and send me the air ticket.

____ I prefer to arrange my own travel plans. Please send me the cash equivalent and I will let you know my arrival and departure times.

The covering letter from contest director Anne Nesbitt added: "You would be our guest for the entire time in San Antonio."

According to Nesbitt, about forty of the sixty food editors who converged on San Antonio flew there, ate, drank, and slept there for a day or two, and flew home again at the sponsors' expense.

brought another brand, give it away."

Food editors were "briefed," too, by the National Broiler Council and the Texas Department of Agriculture. At a seminar given by these two groups, the main event was a slide show on how broilers are raised. (Modern food technology, the editors learned, has halved the hatching to processing period of fourteen or sixteen weeks required in the 1950s.) Throughout the contest Kenneth May, a vice-president of Holly Farms, a major broiler producer, handed out company buttons shaped like a chicken. R. E. Hilgenfeld, vice-president of Church's Fried Chicken, told visitors he bought nearly two million pounds of chicken a week for that fast-chicken chain, and he offered "I'm a Chicken Lover" badges to all takers.

Also on display were samples of *The Chicken Cookbook*, a book copyrighted by the National Broiler Council. In the spirit of the contest, food editors were encouraged to alert readers to the book, available by mail for one dollar. *The Chicken Cookbook* had a guaranteed first press run of 200,000, Mazola being committed to buy 50,000 copies, Ac'cent another 50,000 with American Cyanamid, which makes additives and nutrients for chicken food, picking up the remaining 100,000.

The aroma of chicken being cooked or barbequed according to fifty-one recipes fills the Exhibit Hall. Among those present for the cook-off is last year's winner, Fayne Lutz, of Taos, New Mexico. Her winning recipe was Hot Chinese Chicken Salad (¼ cup Mazola, 1 teaspoon Ac'cent). Only a week ago her inaugural food column appeared in the weekly Taos News. *Not surprisingly, perhaps, her first recipe was for chicken, Teriyaki Chicken Wings.*

Did it call for either Mazola or Ac'cent?

"No."

Why not?

"I'm not on the payroll anymore," Mrs. Lutz chortles.

Announcement of this year's winners comes at an evening dinner in the convention center's banquet hall. First prize goes to Mrs. Caroline Graefe, of Idaho, for her Chicken 'n' Swiss Extraordinaire, sautéed chicken breasts on French bread with melted cheese (¼ cup Mazola, 1 teaspoon Ac'cent). Second prize goes to Mrs. Hiroko Ortega, of New Mexico, for her Sesame Chicken (¼ cup Mazola, 1 teaspoon Ac'cent).

Minutes later, the winner and runners-up meet the food editors in the press room for a news conference. It's immediately obvious that the editors' darling is Mrs. Ortega, who, her official biography says, was born in Tokyo and lived there until 1966.

First editor: "Most Americans don't like to spend much time in the kitchen. What about people from your country?"

Second editor (after learning that Mrs. Ortega met her husband through pen-pal correspondence): "How did your pen-pal relationship start? You don't have to tell us if you don't want to."

Third editor: "Where is your husband?"

Mrs. Ortega: "We couldn't find a baby sitter. Besides, we didn't know we were going to win."

Clucking among the food editors: "She's so cute . . . she's so adorable."

At brunch the following morning, the assembled food editors are served the winning recipes as cooked by the chefs of the Hilton Palacio del Rio.

Having been exposed to an affair such as the National Chicken Cooking Contest, what does a food editor tell her or his readers? An examination of articles from fourteen newspapers show that they:

☐ *Peddled several thousand cookbooks.* Enough of the editors, supplied

Each contestant must use Mazola and Ac'cent. Food Editors needn't name brands, but this year's mentions far exceed last year's.

photos courtesy National Broiler Council

with an appropriate press release, generated — within six weeks after the contest — 3,200 orders for *The Chicken Cookbook* mailed to an address in Connecticut. All orders at this address are directly attributable to news articles, according to a National Broiler Council spokesman. Roughly half of the plugs for the cookbook which appeared in the newspapers surveyed were lifted pretty much verbatim from the broiler council's press release.

☐ *Wrote a great deal about chicken.* That, of course, is what the sponsors intended. As might be expected, all of the editors treated their readers to recipes. *The Arizona Republic* treated its readers to all fifty-one recipes, taking two food sections to do the job. Most editors also reported on the "color" of the contest, including some tidbits about the charm of San Antonio.

Far more interesting is what the food editors did *not* write about chicken. None of the articles checked informed readers that the piece was appearing at precisely the time of year when chicken is most expensive. The cook-off is held in July, and virtually all of the articles inspired by it appear in July. And it is July when chicken prices are likely to be highest, according to the twenty-year price records maintained by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Prices begin moving up in spring, hitting the highest point in July and the lowest in December," says William Cathcart of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. This year, for example, the average wholesale price of chicken jumped from 40.1 cents per pound in April to 51.2 cents in July.

None of the articles checked dealt with this matter, with one possible exception — a story in *The Arizona Republic* that noted chicken prices "will be high for a few months." (Food editors point out that chicken, even when most expensive, is cheaper than beef or pork.)

Why is the contest held in July? Contest director Nesbitt says the month was chosen mainly in order to avoid scheduling conflicts with other trips the food editors are likely to take — the Pineapple Cooking Classic, sponsored by the Pineapple Growers Association of Hawaii, in August, and the newspaper Food Editors Conference in early fall.

An even more important chicken story that has received little coverage in the food sections and none at all in the contest coverage surveyed concerns two ongoing civil suits charging widespread price fixing and supply tampering within the broiler industry. One was brought in 1973 by the U.S. Justice Department against the National Broiler Marketing Association (while the association has no legal ties to the National Broiler Council, membership does overlap), the other by the state of New Jersey in 1974. This suit names the marketing association and member companies as well, several of which are represented on the board of directors of the National Broiler Council. (The council will not release the names of its members nor of its directors, who represent thirty-nine companies; other sources have provided the names of fifteen directors, five of whose companies are named in the New Jersey suit.)

At the food editors' "seminar" not a single food editor or reporter asked about the price-fixing suits. None of the articles checked reported on them.

☐ *Showed their journalistic independence, more often than not, by omitting brand names in the recipes they reprinted.* Of the fourteen papers checked, three consistently used brand names; nine used generic names — i.e., corn oil in place of Mazola, monosodium glutamate in place of Ac'cent, with some using "flavor enhancer" instead; the remaining two used brand names in the first recipe in a given article, then switched to generic names in subsequent recipes. The people at Mazola and Ac'cent are convinced they win whether the paper uses brand names or not. Mazola has the dominant share of the corn oil market — "in the neighborhood of seventy-five to eighty percent," says senior product manager Ray Cesca, and Ac'cent has "eighty percent of the monosodium glutamate market," according to product manager Gary Prime.

☐ *Did not tell their readers the trip was paid for by commercial sponsors when that was the case.* None of those who made the trip under these circumstances apparently felt the need to make this known to readers, at least among the papers checked.

Why management often chickens out

One reason that food sections are so bland is that management is afraid of annoying food advertisers. Recently, for example, a taste panel for the food section of *The Minneapolis Star* gave Pet Inc.'s Downy Flake frozen blueberry pancakes a low rating. Pet's marketing manager wrote his ominous warning to the *Star:* "I can only assume that advertising revenue from major companies is considered expendable" — and then canceled his company's advertising. The *Star* printed Pet's letter and continues to publish the findings of its taste panel. But such ad-rattling can have chilling effects.

Commenting on the conflict-of-interest risks associated with sponsored trips, Elaine Tait, former food editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and now its fashion editor, said last February at a food editors' seminar held in conjunction with Pillsbury's bake-off: "It occurs to me that papers that permit free trips might do it a lot more satisfactorily if they added a tag line to stories that resulted from those trips. It might say: 'All expenses incurred while Jane Doe was in Crossylvania were covered by *The Daily Bugle*. Air transportation was provided by Crossylvanian World Airlines for promotional considerations.' TV does it. Food editors troubled by the insinuation that a free trip is unethical should welcome it and add it voluntarily."

Tait's suggestion, by no means a new one — such a positive disclosure to readers has been discussed, and rejected, in the formulation of each of the recent spate of journalistic ethical codes — hasn't made much headway, judging from the articles inspired by the National Chicken Cooking Contest. Marie Ryckman, food editor at *The Cincinnati Enquirer,* who traveled to the contest at the sponsors' expense, says of Tait's suggestion: "I don't think readers are worried about that. It's no issue to me."

Her new executive editor (as of September 1), Luke Feck, thinks it *is* an

issue with readers, and says it is *Enquirer* policy to mention in a story that a trip was paid for if that were the case. Feck says trips paid for by commercial sponsors will probably be banned in the new code of ethics he is drawing up for the paper.

In sum, while there were some curious omissions in the coverage of an event that virtually all of the food editors insisted was "newsworthy," there is little evidence that any of the editors "sold out" to the chicken people in the way that term is commonly used.

But then it must be added that the sponsors have no illusions on this score. Their expectations are more realistic. As pointed out earlier, all they want is "ink" and they get it abundantly.

Ac'cent's Gary Prime, who says he doesn't read the food pages himself, speaks enthusiastically about the coverage: "It's like advertising. Any exposure we get helps the brand."

Mazola's Ray Cesca: "Mazola is doing so well, I'd be afraid to pull out of the contest."

How, in the face of such commercialism, do the food editors justify their coverage of the contest?

Simple. The contest is *newsworthy*.

"Any time you give away $20,000 in prize money, it's news," says Betsy Balsley, food editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, who covered the contest but whose paper picked up the tab. "Besides," she says, "chicken is a good food. And you know these things have news value when readers write in and ask you for the recipe that won two years ago."

Many food editors who take "sponsored" trips readily concede that at least some ethical problems are involved, but usually only minor ones. Says the *Enquirer*'s Ryckman: "The only important thing is the integrity of the reporter. If a reporter uses her position to promote something that should not be promoted, that reporter should be fired." Good reporters just wouldn't fall into that trap on a sponsored story, she says.

"Being from one of the larger papers, I get a lot of invitations," says Barbara Burtoff, food editor of the *Boston Herald American*, who allowed the sponsors to pay her way to the contest and served as one of the judges. "If the things's too commercial, I won't take it. If it's newsworthy, I might."

Many food editors candidly say that sponsored trips and gatherings are the *only* way their editors will let them cover far-away events — events that provide one of the few opportunities for professional development that are open to them. The reasoning goes: other food editors attend; many useful discussions take place; the editors "stay in touch" with developments in the field; and they return home with new ideas and energy. And it should be noted it was at a series of gatherings such as the National Chicken Cooking Contest that the editors developed the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association. The group seems seriously committed to better food writing under more professional conditions, and its code of ethics is virtually identical to those of other journalistic groups. But try as they may to make things more professional for themselves — and ultimately more useful to their readers — a policy that permits a food editor to travel *only* when someone else picks up the tab frustrates improvement.

Most food sections remain woefully unequipped to deal with some of most critical food stories of the day. Consider, for example, the formidable task of weighing the pros and cons of nitrates and nitrites in meats. They preserve meat and are a significant factor in minimizing the risk of botulism. At the same time, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that these substances increase the risk of cancer. Those with substantial capital investment in food additives contend that the public is adequately protected. But "consumer-oriented" groups such as the Center for Science in the Public In-

The food editors' tour

As the pro golfers have their "tour," so too do many food editors. Here, for the uninitiated, is a capsule summary of the five annual "majors," compiled by Ann Worley, food editor of *The Dallas Times-Herald:*

Pillsbury Bake-off (Either Pillsbury or newspapers pay food editor's way): the granddaddy of all cooking contests, Pillsbury annually draws thousands of entries. The drawing card? *Two* $25,000 first prizes. The drawing card for food editors: seminars that in recent years have covered new supermarket technology, food sections, etc. Usually held in February; this year in San Francisco, next year's location is yet to be picked.

Pineapple Cooking Classic (Either Pineapple Growers Association of Hawaii or newspapers pay food editor's way): held three years, 1972 through 1974, but not 1975. Until this year, the drawing card was a trip to Hawaii. This year, in lieu of the cooking classic, the pineapple growers held a seminar for food editors in San Francisco, for which they picked up the travel tab for editors who wanted to attend. Usually held in August; however, the growers don't know where or when next year's classic will be held, or if it will be held at all.

National Chicken Cooking Contest (Either National Broiler Council-Ac'cent-Mazola or newspapers pay food editor's way): covered in the accompanying article. Educational seminar for food editors generally regarded as the weakest of those offered at major cooking contests.

Newspaper Food Editors Conference (Newspaper pays for the editor's travel and hotel, often charging it to the advertising department; meals are provided courtesy of the food companies): brings together food editors with food companies and industry trade groups, the latter sponsoring meetings, speeches, new product demonstrations, etc. Very popular with food editors as it is still the only way, for the most part, of getting so many editors together at one time. Held in October; last year in Dallas, this year in Chicago.

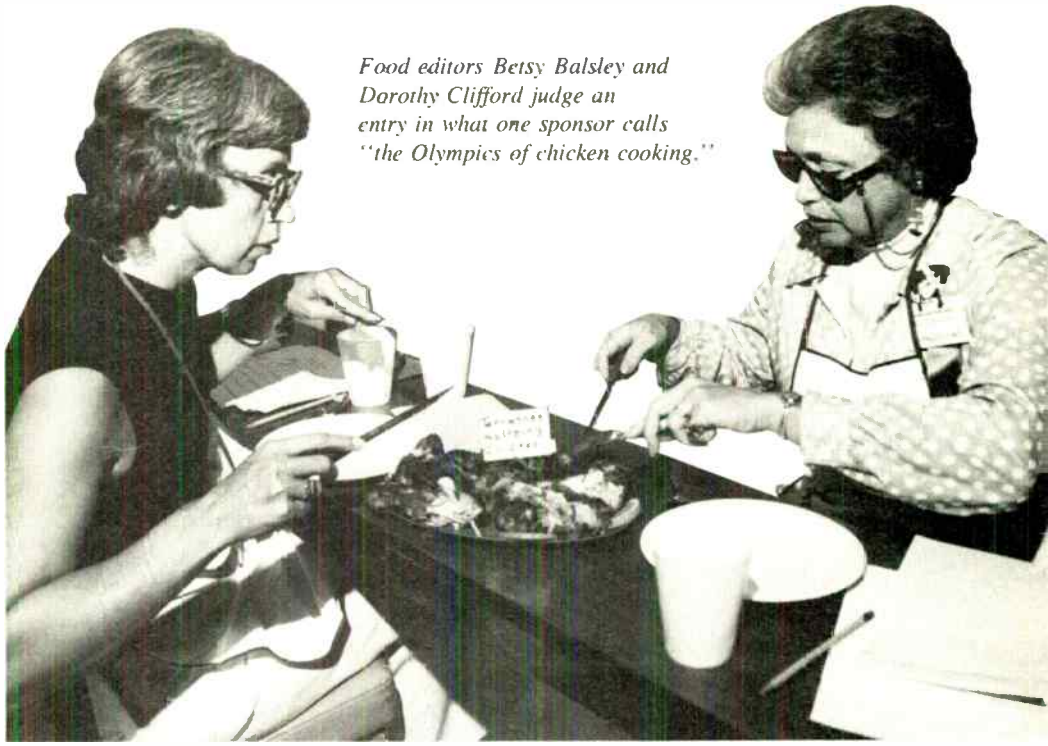
Super Market Institute Convention (SMI and Kraft Foods or newspapers pay food editor's way): the annual meeting of the biggies in the retail and wholesale sides of the food business. Good chance for editors to set up contacts and develop story material. Held in May; this year in Dallas, and next year in Dallas, too.

terest say that some foods — bacon, for one — are dangerous; if bacon is cooked crisply — the only way some people will eat it — the likelihood of its producing cancer-linked nitrosamines in the stomach is greatly increased.

How does a paper that permits its food editor to go only on sponsored trips expect her or him to develop even the minimal skills required to deal coherently with such a story? And this is only one of the health-related food stories that should be dealt with continually.

The blunt reality, according to many food editors, is that the top news executives — usually men — are themselves woefully out of touch with the critical issues of the food marketplace and are simply not interested in upgrading the professional skills of the food editors or in increasing the reporting budget for the food sections. Some go out of their way not to annoy food advertisers, who have considerable weight to throw around.

Food advertising revenues for newspapers totaled some $625-million in 1974, according to the Newspaper Advertising Bureau. That's about 11 percent of the *total* display advertising revenues of $5.7-billion. Considering that most of the food advertising appears in the food section, which usually appears only once a week, the financial value of the food section is obviously immense. And so is the pressure that food advertisers can generate. Many of the editors who scarcely give a second thought to sending their food editor on a sponsored trip bristle when asked if news reporters are permitted to take such trips. "Of course not," they answer.



Food editors Betsy Balsley and Dorothy Clifford judge an entry in what one sponsor calls "the Olympics of chicken cooking."

The double standard has certainly not escaped the notice of the food editors themselves, who are generally paid less than and worked as hard as their colleagues in the news section. A food editor who went to this year's chicken cooking contest at sponsor expense, and who asks for anonymity because naming her might lead to trouble in light of her paper's announced "no junket" policy, comments sardonically on the situation at her paper: "The editorial budgets for the food, women, living, and travel sections are peanuts, so there's no way we're going to be allowed to do any of the traveling we really need to do the job well. On the other hand, they wouldn't think twice about sending a reporter from the sports department and a photographer across the country to cover a road trip of the local college basketball team."

That in light of such discouragement and neglect food editors manage to come up with the outstanding food journalism they occasionally do is no small accomplishment. The food sections of *The Milwaukee Journal*, *The Minneapolis Star*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, for example, are generally acknowledged to do an exemplary job of responding to the needs of their readers. The *Journal*, for example, runs a food price chart each week that names products and supermarkets, and enough of each, to be very useful to consumers who care where their food-buying dollar goes. The food sections of these four papers, incidentally, pay their way on every trip taken. Top management recognizes the importance of food issues and the need to deliver high quality food journalism to their readers.

But elsewhere — at papers small and large — the food editor and her or his readers continue for the most part to be exploited by those who make the ultimate decisions. "It's disgraceful discrimination," says Faith Middleton, family section editor of *The Manchester Journal-Inquirer*, a respected small daily in Connecticut. "Editors and publishers don't fill the slots with the right people," says Middleton, "and they don't even bother to stop them from taking companies up on this freebie nonsense. But then, we all know that scores of papers sleep with big business."

Last year, as the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association was drafting its code of ethics, the group received a letter of support from Robert Clark, executive editor of the *Louisville Times* and *Courier-Journal* and the current president of the Associated Press Managing Editors group:

"Your organization is very much aware . . . of the pressures on you by food manufacturers to mention their products, to use their recipes, to visit their mills at their expense, and in general to serve their causes. And your newspapers, many of them small, may feel there is nothing wrong with such practices. But there is no way to serve two masters in these areas of news coverage. The consumer — the reader — must be convinced that we are impartial and honest and fair, and not beholden to merchants and advertisers."

Many food editors — among them several of those who were junketed to the National Chicken Cooking Contest — feel that Clark ought to be sending such letters to the publishers and managing editors instead. ■

The Dale tale

If you believe in a three-wheeled plastic car that gets seventy miles to the gallon — you could be a reporter

by ROBERT MEYERS

From August 1974 to February 1975 Geraldine Elizabeth Carmichael, who is six feet tall and usually described as "blunt-speaking," sold hundreds of people options to purchase a new make of car, as well as a lesser number of dealerships. She told potential buyers that her company, the Twentieth Century Motor Car Corporation, based in Encino, California, would produce 88,000 cars annually by 1976. On some days, as much as $20,000 found its way to the company's headquarters, an impressively furnished suite of offices that rented for $5,040 per month.

Perhaps it was inevitable that a supposedly "revolutionary" three-wheeled car, made of an indestructible plastic called "Rigidex" and delivering seventy miles to the gallon, would receive a great deal of attention from the press. As one reporter said, "It was the perfect media story: a tough-talking woman who had solved the energy crisis by fighting Detroit." Unfortunately, the story was not perfect: the promoters were indicted for grand theft last May.

The car, called the Dale, existed only in three incomplete prototypes, none of which had ever been driven more than a few feet. Investigators for the Los Angeles district attorney's office have yet to recover the bulk of the estimated $2 million raised by the promoters. And it developed that Liz Carmichael was not a crusading woman promoter, but a man with a wife and five children who had been sought since 1961 for jumping bail on a counterfeiting charge.

The first major story on the Dale appeared in *The National Observer* on November 2, 1974. The 2,500-word article by reporter John Peterson ran on the front page. Headlined AND OVER THE NEXT HILL — THE DALE, it began with Emerson's quotation about making better mousetraps and having the world make a beaten path to the inventor's door. "I had no idea I was taken in," Peterson says. He adds that he checked out the claims made for the Dale with "friends who were automotive types, and they all said the claims were feasible. The piece was hardly an endorsement for the car," he claims, "and from the letters I got afterwards, many people thought the whole thing was a put-on."

The article's length, two photographs (Peterson wrote that the Dale looked "like a cross between a Ferrari and a Corvette"), and prominent play tended to overshadow some of the cautions Peterson included in his story: "She boasts" that the car will get "70 miles per gallon of gas, and cost less than $2,000," he wrote. "She contends she has '$30 million in green, not credit' to get her challenge to Detroit rolling." But Peterson did pass on without disclaimer her statement that Rigidex was patented. Actually, Rigidex never existed; if it had been patented, that fact could have been confirmed.

On November 10 *Chicago Sun-Times* syndicated automotive columnist Dan Jedlicka wrote a long article on the Dale (headlined WILL THIS CAR UPSTAGE DETROIT?) which opened, "What America needs is a car that gets 70 miles per gallon, costs less than $2,000, and requires little maintenance. Twentieth Century Motor Car Corp., which doesn't believe that Detroit's auto makers have a Divine Franchise to build cars, has such an auto." He wrote that the car "sure looks like it is fun to drive," and tagged his widely reprinted piece, "Good luck, Mrs. Carmichael."

Jedlicka says that he wrote the article from his Chicago office, after what he remembers as a three-hour phone conversation with Carmichael. The article "was all tongue-in-cheek," he claims. "It was a good show-biz story. I thought I put in more than enough indications that the thing was a fib."

The most that can be said about Jedlicka's piece is that it tries to cover itself. If you're reading it to find irony and fun poked at Carmichael's project, you can find it. After describing the three different models of the Dale that Carmichael claimed to be planning to manu-

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Tom Zimberoff, Sygma

Geraldine Elizabeth Carmichael in her office. Behind her is a rendering of her "dream car," the Dale.

facture, and saying, in a deadpan one-sentence paragraph: "All will have three wheels," Jedlicka continues: "If this doesn't sound a little peculiar to you, you're probably the kind of person who thinks that buying the Brooklyn Bridge is a tenable proposition."

But Jedlicka doesn't leave it there. He commences to work on the reader's skepticism: "But wait," he writes, and tells the reader that "Carmichael sounds quite serious" as she speaks "from her firm's posh offices" about taking on Detroit. He goes on to describe in detail the car, and the plans of the company. The tongue does not seem to be in the cheek as Jedlicka writes that the Dale "is powered by a thoroughly-revamped BMW two-cylinder motorcycle engine, which turns out 40 horsepower. Mrs. Carmichael says it'll hit 85 m.p.h."

"The Dale," Jedlicka enthused, apparently looking at photographs as he wrote, "which will come out with an automatic or manual transmission, sure looks like it is fun to drive with its rack and pinion steering, special shock absorbers and strong little engine." Jedlicka's article, on the whole, makes the Dale sound both intriguing and plausible, if highly unusual.

Carmichael also had been making radio and TV appearances on Los Angeles stations during this time. She was interviewed by Bill Diez on KNXT (the local CBS outlet); Felicia Jeter, on KNBC; and by Tommy Hawkins and Jennie Blackton on KHJ-TV. Radio stations in Boston, New Orleans, and San Francisco also did live phone interviews.

On November 14 KABC-TV in Los Angeles ran an evening news report by Larry Carroll. The Dale "may be the car of the future," Carroll said, in an excited tone. "It gets seventy miles to the gallon. . . . The 1975 Dale is made of Rigidex and one-eighth of an inch of it is ten times stronger than steel."

Carroll aired a film supplied by Carmichael which showed a three-wheeled car being taken through its paces on a race track. What Carroll didn't tell his viewers, perhaps because he didn't know it, was that the car was not a Dale at all, but the home-built car that had stimulated Carmichael's promotional fantasies. It had been designed and built by Dale Clifft (hence the name of Carmichael's proposed car), who, in return for $1,001, had licensed Carmichael to produce a car based on his own. Clifft himself had no part in the subsequent promotion of the Dale.

At the conclusion of his filmed report, he said, "Some people think it's silly to have a three-wheeled car. At seventy miles to the gallon, I don't think it's

'Liz Carmichael was not a crusading woman promoter, but a man with a wife and five children who had been sought since 1961 for jumping bail on a counterfeiting charge'

funny, and neither will Detroit."

Back at the studio, on camera, Carroll engaged in the informal banter that is a feature of KABC's "Eyewitness News" format. One of his colleagues (Carroll says he does not remember which one) said casually, "At two thousand dollars, I'll take a couple of those."

The effect was startling. A former secretary at Twentieth Century Motors told me that "the phones were ringing off the hooks" the next morning. "People were sending in cash. The showroom was so crowded I couldn't get to my desk after lunch."

Carroll says he had repeatedly asked for permission to drive the car, but was always denied it (a working car in fact wouldn't be ready for several months). "We don't have time to check things out in television news," he says. "Just get the visuals, put in what cautionary words you can, and do it."

When Carmichael modestly allowed on film as how "we've done nothing more than any good engineer could have done," Carroll didn't get Carmichael to talk about exactly what the company had accomplished, or where her "engineers" had worked before. (Many of them had worked in aerospace, but in non-engineering capacities.) And when Carmichael said Rigidex could withstand the impact of a .45-caliber bullet fired from a distance of six feet, Carroll might have arranged a demonstration, which would have made a good visual.

To compound the subsequent embarrassment, KABC later gave a print of Carroll's report to the promoters, who kept it running in their showroom, and even refused to give it back once it was apparent that a scam was in the works.

Newsweek's Los Angeles bureau chief John L. Dotson, Jr. proposed the story, but says senior editor Clem Morgello shot down the idea when the magazine's Detroit bureau expressed doubts. *Time* correspondent Chris Ogden became suspicious when a piece of the "bullet-proof Rigidex" broke in his hands. *People* reporter Lois Armstrong was convinced that Liz was a man, and told her New York office so. However, she was not encouraged to follow it up. Don Horine, then an editor with *Associated Press* in Los Angeles (and now with the *National Enquirer*) thought the entire operation was a "pie-in-the-sky type of thing" and sent reporter Jerry Buck back to the plant to talk more with the "engineers." Later a piece was forwarded to New York, but never ran. The *Los Angeles Times*, which has a regional office close by the promoters' headquarters, did not do a story until after the murder on January 22 of one of Dale's salesmen (who had a prison record) by another (who also did).

Although a number of people thought the operation was flaky, no one seems to have considered the possibility of fraud. Certainly from September to January no one pursued that angle.

California Business (circulation 30,000), a regional weekly, was the first publication to question the operation. Acting on a tip and doing his own legwork, business editor Steve Ludwig wrote a tough piece which came out during the last week in December and which laid out the developing state and federal accusations (selling unregistered securities without a license, misrepresentations, etc.). According to investigators the article did little to slow the flow of money from would-be purchasers and investors.

KABC, the station which had broadcast Larry Carroll's report, received several phone calls from knowledgeable people who refused to be quoted indicating that all was not right at Twentieth Century Motor Car Corporation; too much money was coming in, and too little was being spent.

Eventually the investigation was assigned to reporter Dick Carlson and producer Pete Noyes. Together they made up KABC's "Special Unit." By talking with lawyers, investigators, police, and dissatisfied customers, Carlson was able, on January 1, to broadcast the first of several dozen reports portraying the operation as the flim-flam it was.

Learning that more than three months earlier the California Department of Corporations had issued a cease-and-refrain order against the car company prohibiting it from taking money on "options" for cars, Carlson sent cameraman Dennis Smith in with a $500 check, which was accepted — a violation of the law. When Smith came out, Carlson went charging back in, camera

rolling, demanding that Smith get his money back, which he finally did. (Actually, the press coverage up until this point had been so miserable that Liz Carmichael herself had broken the story of the cease-and-refrain order, on Hilly Rose's talk show broadcast over Los Angeles radio station KFI on December 11. A second cease-and-refrain order was issued on December 27.)

As the operation began collapsing, salesmen locked themselves in their offices while angry customers pounded on the doors. Unable to get in, Carlson had himself filmed at a pay phone in the lobby as he called into the offices, asking when the doors would open. He never found out.

In spite of the growing public record indicating that Carmichael's company was a marginal operation, the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner* on January 26 included the Dale in an article about the Los Angeles auto show. It described the car in straightforward terms, and included an artist's rendering of the car on another page.

But the scam fell apart completely on February 5, when warrants for grand theft were issued in Dallas against the promoters. (Carmichael, feeling the heat from California officials, had planned to move the entire operation to Dallas, but authorities there caught wind of her plans, and quickly moved against her.) With the issuance of the Dallas warrants, all sorts of media previously uncritical of the operation hopped on the paddy wagon. The Associated Press ran a story from Texas, with inserts from Los Angeles, and moved a photo of some of the promoters after they surrendered to Texas authorities.

(Carmichael, who was wanted by the FBI under the name of Jerry Dean Michael, is now in jail in Los Angeles, convicted of the 1961 bail-jumping charge, and awaits trial in California and Texas on fraud and grand-theft charges.)

The *Chicago Tribune* ran a front page story, with an above-the-fold picture of Mrs. Carmichael in happier moments. *Newsweek* ran a long inside story; *Time* gave a few inches to a pan of John Peterson and *The National Observer* for "running unconfirmed technical claims without any disclaimers"; *The National Observer* ran two pieces, one of which admitted it had been "beautifully bamboozled"; Dan Jedlicka updated and corrected his original "tongue-in-cheek" story. The local Los Angeles television stations did straightforward stories on the fraud allegations against the promotion; and when Mrs. Carmichael was extradited from Miami (where she had been arrested by the FBI on April 12) to L.A., a herd of newspeople was on hand to greet her.

Why was the press snookered? "It all sounded so plausible," says Roger Field, who did a brief spot on the car for radio station WINS in New York. "There really were no outrageous claims, such as that the engine would get 140 miles to the gallon. It might have been possible to get seventy miles to the gallon with a flyweight engine," he adds.

Roger Scott, the assignment editor at KABC who handled both the Carroll and Carlson reports, was asked over the phone if, with hindsight, he would have done anything differently. He said he hoped so, but that "on the surface, it [the promotion] appeared to be legitimate. They had large offices and lots of money."

What they didn't have were production facilities large enough to enable them to produce 88,000 cars. (A former aircraft hangar at Lockheed's Burbank facility had been rented, but Carmichael & Co. couldn't take possession until January 1, 1975 — and even by then they wouldn't have had any equipment.)

KABC reporter Larry Carroll says now that "it was kind of a ruse, but it [his enthusiastic report] happened as a result of the way TV news works. We just don't have time to check things out. It's one of the most damning things about the job."

Carroll says now that "I don't know how I could have done it more responsibly." However, he acknowledges that his film was shot three days before it was aired, and that the final edit was held up until the (misleading) promotional film from Carmichael arrived.

With the help of hindsight, some guidelines seem to emerge: common sense ought to have been of some help. A bullet-proof patented plastic? Where is the bullet, where the patent? Liz claimed to have degrees from the Universities of Ohio and Miami (Florida). Where were the certificates? A call to each school would have revealed that she never received degrees, and had only enrolled at Miami to audit one graduate class.

A look at the contract, which dozens of people signed each day, would have shown the peculiar wording which obligated the company only to make a "good faith effort" to produce the car, gave no written guarantee of a refund, and clearly stated that "no warranties are made, expressed, or implied, that said motor vehicles shall be produced and marketed for sale by any specific date."

Why do a story on a car which the designers won't let you drive? Or when they won't even let you sit in it? (Liz once sat in a prototype Dale — and broke the seat.)

Telephone calls made from late September on to the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Corporations, the federal Securities and Exchange Commission, the district attorney, and local congressmen would have revealed that each of these offices had received complaints about or were investigating the company. The Department of Corporations would have been a good source, since it issued the two cease-and-refrain orders.

Finally, common sense might have cautioned that the best motorcycle engines get only fifty miles per gallon or so, *without* an enclosed body. Short of a really major "revolution," how could the Dale possibly get seventy miles per gallon with a full automobile body?

Once obstacles to an uncritical story were identified, perhaps more energy might have been expended in investigating the possibility of fraud. The failure of journalists, especially those who were suspicious, to pursue this aspect of the story is unsettling. Uncritical press reports became the equivalent of free advertising — and helped the promoters (who didn't spend a dime on advertising themselves) to raise vast sums of money. Reporters who did not follow up on their own suspicions also helped insure that the public never heard anything unfavorable about the car. Carmichael herself made the point in a radio interview: "You know, regardless of how sophisticated most people become, they are still subject to being conned." ■

Distorting the voice of

A call for reform in the conduct (and coverage) of presidential primaries

by BURNS W. ROPER

A noble theory underlies our system of presidential primaries, but our experience in the past decade suggests we need a better way to pick presidential candidates, as well as political coverage that plays down, not up, the distortions that primaries bring to the political process.

In theory, presidential primaries allow the voice of the people to be heard. And, in theory, the tactics of politicians, the predictions of pollsters, and the reports of journalists all contribute to this worthy goal. Yet, for many reasons, the interaction of these four "Ps" (politicians, pollsters, press, and public) tends to result in candidates who are more extremist, more "maverick," and less electable than those selected by the old smoke-filled-room method.

The Democratic primary in New Hampshire in 1972 provides a good example. Several Democratic hopefuls did not enter that primary. The best-known candidates entered in the race were Senators George McGovern and Edmund Muskie and Los Angeles's mayor, Sam Yorty; not included were such well-known Democratic candidates as George Wallace, Henry Jackson, Hubert Humphrey, and Eugene McCarthy. Thus, the primary did not measure the strength of all the Democratic candidates. Yet by its outcome and by the way the press treated it and the public reacted to it, the New Hampshire primary started the McGovern trend and had a powerful influence on the ultimate selection of the Democratic candidate.

What happened in the primary? The pre-primary election polls, both published and private, suggested that Muskie would win the primary with about 60 percent of the vote and that McGovern would be a weak second at around 25 percent. McGovern's campaign strategists indicated publicly that they would be delighted with 25 percent of the votes, suggesting thereby that they weren't at all sure their candidate would do that well. Muskie indeed won (in the normal sense of that word). He did not do as well as the pre-primary polls had indicated, but he received 46 percent of the vote, which placed him well ahead of McGovern's 37 percent. Had this been an actual election rather than a presidential primary, the press would have called it a "comfortable victory" if not a "near landslide" for Muskie. But the press did not play up the Muskie victory. After all, that had been expected. Instead, it played up how "well" McGovern had done and how "poorly" Muskie had fared. Muskie's "poor" showing was laid almost exclusively to the so-called crying incident.

So much for *what* happened. Now let's look at some of the circumstances that underlay what happened — and at some of the reasons why it happened.

The New Hampshire primary took place in early March, eight months before the November presidential election, well before most people were interested in the election and well before most people had any real familiarity with the candidates. (The fact that pre-primary polls showed that Senator McGovern and Governor Wallace strongly appealed to the same voters dramatically illustrates this point.) It took place, moreover, at a time in the four-year political cycle when, as other polls have shown, the public is most disenchanted with the incumbent president — regardless of who he is and whether or not he is due to run for reelection — and when people tend to be fed up with politics in general. Invariably, from December through February of the fourth year of his term, the incumbent is at his lowest approval rating for the four years — and little higher by March.

Not only the New Hampshire primary, then, but those, too, that immediately follow it occur at a time when the electorate is apathetic on the one hand and receptive to someone new and different on the other. Thus, it is comparatively easy for an unusual or unorthodox or "different" candidate to make an impressive showing in a single state and, as a result of media coverage, to convey the impression of mass voter appeal, even if, in fact, he lacks such appeal.

New Hampshire has less than 4 percent of the nation's population. In 1972, the 130,000 registered Democrats represented only 25 percent of that state's voting-age population. The voters who turned out for the Democratic primary represented only 17 percent of all prospective New Hampshire voters. In short, the McGovern boom was started by the votes of less than one-half of 1 percent of the nation's voters. (While I have high regard for New Hampshire, it is hardly a microcosm of the nation.)

When a candidate's task is confined to winning as many votes as possible out of a total potential vote of only 130,000, and when the geographic territory is confined to a state the size of New Hampshire, it is not terribly difficult to pull out a respectable vote — if the candidate and his workers work hard enough. Senator McGovern conveyed the impression to a number of people, and particularly to college youth, that he was leading a crusade. A comparatively small group of New Hampshire supporters rallied around him; to supplement their numbers, volunteers were brought in from other states. They were a personable group, and they worked hard and caught the imagination of enough

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frustrated Democrats to produce 33,000 votes for McGovern — or 37 percent of the votes cast.

Because a primary campaign is highly concentrated in a single state and because the voters at that stage in the election process tend to be both uninformed and apathetic, voter preferences can change quickly. As a result, conventional polling methodology, which works well in a comparatively high-turnout general election where the candidates have come to be quite well known, often fails in a state primary election. If the polls do not actually pick the wrong candidate as the winner, they frequently fail to keep up with the rapidity of change that occurs in the very fluid, unstable atmosphere that exists during an early primary campaign. (More about the specific problems of pre-primary polls later.) As a result, a candidate will frequently do substantially better (or worse) in a primary election than the polls have indicated — as McGovern (and Muskie) did in New Hampshire in 1972.

The "pols" are acutely aware that the outcome of a primary election does not have to be anything like the outcome of a general election in order to be successful from a candidate's point of view. In a general election, a candidate must receive more votes than his opponent in order to win. In a primary, however, he does not have to have a mathematically superior margin of votes to "win," if he is the underdog. (Conversely, if he is the favorite he has to win big.) Because the goal in a primary is to do "better than expected," there is no incentive for the managers of an underdog candidate to predict victory. On the contrary, their best strategy is to say they will be pleased if their candidate gets 10 percent of the vote, when their own private polls are indicating that he will get 20 percent and when they are planning a final campaign drive to boost his total to 30 percent. The pols' strategy is to set the public expectation for their candidate at a very low level and then to do substantially better than that.

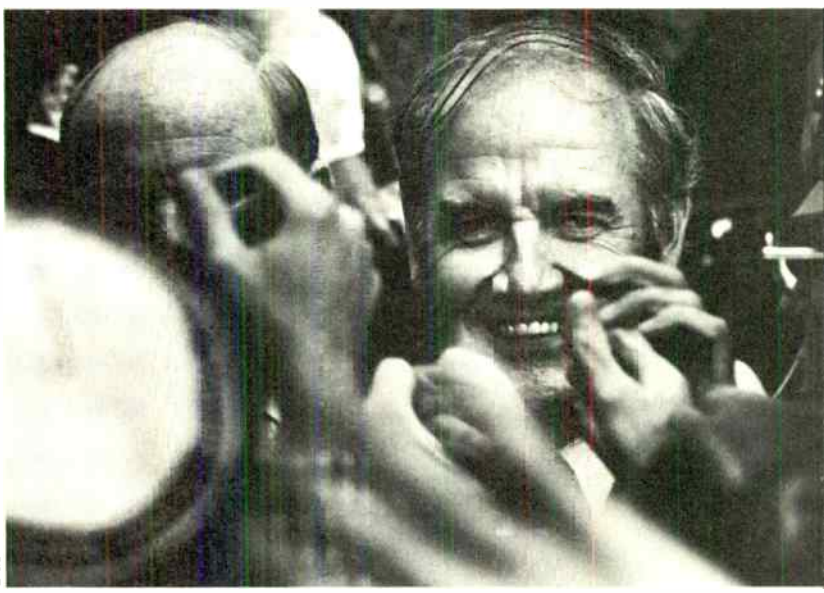
In their strategy, the campaign managers use early poll measurements as indications of what their candidate is likely to do and they rely on the press, after the primary, to make it known to all how much better their candidate did than was expected.

The press is, of course, interested in news. The expected can hardly rival the unexpected in news value. Hence, the news after the New Hampshire primary was not SENATOR MUSKIE WINS AS EXPECTED, but MCGOVERN SHOWS SURPRISING STRENGTH. The effect of the press's touting of McGovern's strong showing was to administer a near mortal blow to Muskie's candidacy. I do not count out the crying incident as one of the reasons Muskie did more poorly than expected, but I consider it a much less important factor than was popularly assumed.

Senator McGovern was perceived as a new and different

Black Star

'The news after the New Hampshire primary was not "Senator Muskie wins as expected," but "McGovern shows surprising strength" '



Black Star

kind of crusader by his followers. He attracted a dedicated band of campaign workers who were able to turn out a sufficient number of a relatively small group of voters to make a substantial showing. In addition to attracting zealous workers, McGovern appealed to an electorate that was fed up with politicians, disenchanted with the incumbent president, tired of the war, and receptive to casting a protest vote. These factors, in my judgment, had more to do with McGovern's strong showing than did the Muskie crying incident.

The effect of McGovern's showing in New Hampshire and of the way the press reported it created the impression that McGovern — about whom most of the public knew next to nothing — was a fresh, sparkling candidate who had swept the New Hampshire primary.

The factors, then, that conspired to produce the start of the McGovern march toward his party's presidential nomination were:

1. A primary in which not all of the major candidates were entered. . .
2. In a single state. . .
3. Which has less than 4 percent of the nation's population, and. . .
4. In which the Democratic party is the minority party (rather than the majority party, as it is nationally).
5. Opinion polls that showed McGovern getting about 25 percent of the vote and Muskie getting 60 percent.
6. The McGovern "pols" establishing 25 percent as a vote that they would be more than gratified with.
7. A corps of dedicated campaign workers concentrating their efforts on a small group of potential voters.
8. An electorate disenchanted with politics, eager for someone new and different, and ready to register a protest vote.
9. A primary outcome substantially more favorable to McGovern than "expected."
10. Wide publicity by the press about McGovern's "strong" showing, and. . .
11. The resultant impression among the nation's electorate that McGovern had won and was the man to watch.

Pre-primary polls, which played an important part in creating this impression, are substantially less accurate than national pre-election polls for two reasons: first, voter opinion is far more fluid in a pre-primary state than it is in the nation as Election Day nears; second, the survey budgets for pre-primary polls are much smaller than those for national election polls.

Opinion in a pre-primary situation is more fluid for several reasons, some of which have already been mentioned: prospective voters tend to be indifferent toward the forthcoming national election, which is still six or eight months off; the incumbent president's popularity is traditionally at its lowest ebb at this time of this particular year and hence voters are particularly receptive to someone who is "new and different." Furthermore, in a primary a voter can vote in protest — can even consciously vote irresponsibly — with plenty of time to correct his mistake come the general election if he decides he has, in fact, made a mistake. In addition, the heavy concentration of effort by a candidate and his workers in a small state can change opinion faster — particularly in light of the electorate's mood and its level of knowledge of the candidates — than it can nationally with what is necessarily a more diffused effort, and after the public has already formed certain judgments about the candidates. The mere fact that there are frequently six or eight or more candidates in a primary election as opposed to two major candidates in the subsequent presidential election makes for further instability and shifting. It is easier to make a clear choice between two people than among six. Thus, a primary is a "slipperier" kind of election for polls to stay on top of than is the subsequent national election.

There's another complicating factor: the pollster seldom has as substantial resources (money, time, and techniques) with which to measure voter sentiment during a primary campaign as are available to him during a general election. While standard Gallup polls employ samples of 1,500 respondents, the final pre-election Gallup poll may employ a sample as large as 2,500 if previous surveys indicate that the outcome will be close. Pre-primary polls, on the other hand, seldom involve more than 1,000 interviews, and often only 400 or 500. This is, of course, a proportionately greater concentration of interviews in a state than is devoted to the nation — a fact that causes laymen (and even some pollsters) to conclude there should be proportionately greater accuracy in a state primary result than in a national election poll. Such is not the case.

Where the population to be sampled is *much* larger than any reasonable sample that would be taken of it, the reliability of the sample depends on the *numbers* of interviews made, *not the percentage* of the people interviewed. Thus, for a given degree of accuracy, as large a sample of New Hampshirites must be interviewed to measure New Hampshire sentiment as would be needed of the nation's population to predict national sentiment. The commonly held view that something like 300 or 400 interviews are adequate for a city or a congressional district, that 600 or 800 interviews are needed for a state and that 1,500 to 2,000 are required for the nation is a fallacy. As many are needed in a congressional district as are needed nationally to achieve the same degree of sampling accuracy.

The budgets of pollsters in primary states, however, seldom permit samples of the same size. In addition, some of the pre-primary polls make use of telephone interviews, which inherently have more pitfalls when it comes to

election measurement than do face-to-face interviews. Moreover, determining who is and is not likely to vote in a primary is a *major* problem in pre-primary polls and is *far* more difficult than in a national election. Turnouts in primaries are almost invariably lower than in a general election.

So, under conditions that make measurement more difficult, the pre-primary pollster has less-adequate tools at his command with which to measure. It is not an accident that George Gallup, who has an enviable national-election-survey record, avoids pre-primary surveys.

I began by citing the 1972 New Hampshire primary and Senator McGovern's performance in it as an example. But McGovern's performance in that primary was by no means a unique case of distortion in the political process. The grass-roots selection process has resulted in the selection of other candidates who would never have made it through the smoke-filled-room process; and it has resulted in high prominence and influence of a number of others who did not become the candidates, but who would never have become either as prominent or influential as they did had it not been for the grass-roots selection process.

John F. Kennedy in 1960 is an example of a person who probably would not have become a presidential candidate had the choice been left up to the traditional convention procedure. While Kennedy was no extremist, he was definitely a party irregular. The fact that he did not qualify as an extremist is undoubtedly a major reason why he was ultimately elected.

Most of the other candidates who either have achieved the nomination through the primary or some other grass-roots selection process, or have risen to a position of considerable influence by this route do qualify as extremists. (When I say "extremist" I am not expressing my personal judgment but rather the view of the public.) Senator Barry Goldwater is a case in point. While he did not achieve the nomination through the route of the primaries, he did achieve it by working at the grass-roots level as opposed to the smoke-filled-room technique. Early, quietly, and competently, Goldwater got his dedicated supporters to run as delegates to the national convention. By the time the convention took place, it was packed with Goldwater zealots, many of whom were attending their first national convention. While his "extremism" inspired his supporters to work hard for his and their cause, and while this gained him the nomination, it was his extremism that cost him the election in one of the most lopsided votes of the century.

Senator McGovern achieved the nomination and lost the election in an equally lopsided vote — again because of extremism, this time of the left rather than the right.

Eugene McCarthy and Governor Wallace are also viewed as extremists. Their extremism has helped them to perform

Black Star

'It is my contention that even though Senator McCarthy and Governor Wallace have been capable of winning primaries, neither is electable in a November presidential election'

Black Star

extremely well in primaries and to attain a degree of influence and power which they never would have gained through the smoke-filled-room method of selection. It is my contention that even though each has been capable of winning primaries, neither is electable in a November presidential election. A year from now I may have to eat these words with respect to Governor Wallace, but I don't think it is likely.

'The press should be aware that pre-primary polls can be further off the mark than the final polls . . . and should beware the pols bearing polls'

Eugene McCarthy is a good example of one who achieved great influence through the primary route even though he did not achieve the nomination. In my judgment, McCarthy, because he persisted long after the convention had spoken in making the election a contest between himself and Hubert Humphrey (rather than between Nixon and Humphrey), had enough influence to insure the election of Richard Nixon. Considerable influence for a liberal Democrat.

The dilemma of the extremist candidate is that it is his extremism which helps him do well in an early primary. His extremism attracts zealous volunteers — and the votes of frustrated and disenchanted citizens. But once he is a candidate he becomes the victim of his extremism. He cannot renounce his extremist positions, even if he wants to, without losing his base of campaign workers, and yet the broad American public, come election time, will almost invariably reject an extremist.

Thus, it seems clear to me that the peculiar combination of the five "Ps" — primaries, polls, pols, press, and public — serves to distort our political process and to produce candidates who tend to be extremist in nature and who are mostly unelectable by the broad general public, which comes to life only as the election process moves into its final phases — September and October — of an election year.

I don't know, but I suspect that many of the people who will vote for a fresh face, the man who is "different from all the others," in March or April, end up voting for his opponent in November. They have had their protest vote, they have expressed their frustration, and now they must get down to a serious choice of the man who is to run the country for the next four years.

If the five Ps result in a distortion of the political process and serve to bring forward extremist candidates who are not likely to be elected, what is the solution? A national primary has been suggested as one solution, regional primaries as another. It is conceivable that either would cause the electorate to become sufficiently interested in the candidates early on so that they would make an effort to find out who they are and what they stand for. It is possible, too, that voters would treat the primary as a serious election rather than as an opportunity to vent their frustration. But I have my doubts. We might well end up with a super New Hampshire primary — the same thing except on a much larger scale.

The best solution, it seems to me, would be to return to the traditional smoke-filled-room method of selecting candidates. (In using this expression I do not mean candidate selection by only three or four party chieftains, but rather selection by a national convention composed of experienced year-in year-out party professionals. The distinction I am making is between delegates dedicated to the concept of nominating an electable candidate versus delegates dedicated to nominating their one man.) Today, with the current strong emphasis on mandated openness and protection of individual rights and equality, the chances are remote that we will return to the smoke-filled-room method, but it nevertheless seems to me the best way of insuring candidates that are most acceptable to the broad range of the American public. The professionals tend to know both the qualifications and abilities of the candidates and the kind of candidates that will appeal to the broad general public. If they are pragmatists, if they are not idealists, at least they are also not zealots who would rather go down to defeat in a holy crusade than elect someone who does not *perfectly* represent *all* of their views.

Since it is unlikely that there will be a return to the smoke-filled-room, or party-pro, method of selecting candidates, the next question seems to me to be what can the press do to avoid or minimize distorting the political process that the five Ps cause — and what can I and my polling colleagues do in this respect? Again, I see no magic answers. As far as the press is concerned, it should be aware that pre-primary polls can be further off the mark than the final, national pre-election polls. It should be aware — and particularly in the case of privately commissioned pre-primary polls — that they are frequently used by the "pols" to establish a low expectation level for their candidate, a level they feel sure their candidate will easily exceed. Beware the "pols" bearing polls. Finally, while journalists must take note of candidates who do better than expected, they should also call the public's attention to who actually got the most votes in the primary.

Pollsters who engage in pre-primary election polling should, of course, do their level best to see that the results of their polls are not distorted in order to set an artificially low expectation level and to insure that they have adequate budgets to do the best job possible — but these caveats are easier said than done. For our part, we plan to stick to national polls which we hope will help put in perspective what may occur in a fluid, fast-changing, single primary election.

There are, however, no easy answers as to how to be involved in the process and not contribute to the distortion it creates. Discerning newsmen have long known that sometimes in the process of trying to cover the news objectively their actions serve unintentionally to create the news. ■

A new wave of gag orders

Trial judges are abusing their injunction powers

by BENNO C. SCHMIDT, JR.

The country takes notice when a president lambastes the press or when a major test of press freedom comes before the Supreme Court. A current wave of judicial "gag orders" has been confined to trial courts, mainly in mundane criminal cases, and so far it has not aroused much interest outside the press.

Although the chaotic state of record-keeping by trial courts makes it impossible to keep track of all the prior restraints (to use the proper legal term), the Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press tries to tally contested cases. It reports two such orders issued in 1966, seventeen in 1973, twenty-eight last year, and twenty-four through August of 1975. The orders are usually set aside by federal appellate courts, but, oddly enough, this has not inhibited the trial judges. A few recent cases illustrate the problem:

☐ In June 1974 a New Orleans judge presiding over a controversial rape case prohibited the press from publishing testimony given in open court during a pre-trial hearing, as well as interviews with witnesses, accounts of "discreditable acts" committed by the accused, statements bearing on guilt or innocence made by prosecution or defense lawyers, and any editorial comment "which tends to influence the Court, jury or witnesses."

No notice was given to the press of the judge's intention to issue the order and no opportunity to be heard was provided. The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* appealed this sweeping order; after the Louisiana Supreme Court approved it, Justice Lewis Powell of the U.S. Supreme Court stayed the order pending full Supreme Court review. Although Justice Powell alluded to the power of courts to prohibit publication of information that posed "an imminent threat to a fair trial," he found no such threat in the case. Later, the Supreme Court refused to decide the legality of the New Orleans order, ruling that the question became moot when the criminal trial ended.

☐ In a Philadelphia case, a federal district judge prohibited publication of the fact that a defendant in a perjury trial had also been indicted for conspiring to murder a government informer. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit reversed this order in August 1974 on procedural grounds: the order had been issued without notice to the press and the press had been afforded no opportunity to appear. The district judge sought to appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, but in December 1974, the Court declined to review the case.

JOURNALISM AND THE LAW

☐ In May 1975 a Texas judge, without giving the press notice or an opportunity to be heard, ordered that "the News Media" refrain from publishing the names of jurors selected in open court, even though the names had been recorded in official transcripts and court records open to the public. The Texas Supreme Court refused to reverse this order, and last June a petition by *The Austin American-Statesman* seeking a stay from the U.S. Supreme Court was denied.

☐ In a fourth case that has generated great journalistic concern a federal district judge in Baton Rouge, Louisiana issued an order, again without notice or an opportunity for representatives of the press to offer arguments, barring all news accounts of a public hearing. The hearings had been called to consider the state prosecution of a local civil-rights leader for allegedly conspiring to assassinate the mayor of Baton Rouge; it was charged that the prosecution was trumped up to harass the defendant because of his political activities. In defiance of the gag order, two reporters published accounts of the hearing. They were held in contempt and fined $300 each. On appeal, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit held that the district judge's order "cannot withstand the mildest breeze emanating from the Constitution." However, notwithstanding the order's invalidity under the First Amendment, the Court of Appeals held that the reporters could be punished for disobeying it because *even an unconstitutional injunction* must be followed until set aside on appeal. The Supreme Court declined to review the reporters' appeal from this 1972 ruling. When the case went back to the district judge for reconsideration, he maintained both his finding of contempt and the punishment, and the Court of Appeals affirmed the contempt citation.

☐ The federal district judge in the "Gainesville 8" trial ordered CBS, its reporter, and its artist not to sketch courtroom proceedings or personalities, and not to broadcast any sketches drawn from memory. This order was later set aside by the Court of Appeals. Desiring to present a current, visual story on the trial, CBS disobeyed the invalid order before it was reversed, running a substantial risk of being punished for contempt as in the Baton Rouge case.

☐ Although most prior restraints are issued in criminal proceedings, they have been ordered in civil suits as well. In at least two recent instances, state judges have ordered newspapers not to

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comment on libel suits brought against them. In one of the cases, the suit arose from a Rockford, Illinois newspaper's criticisms of a local county court clerk. And in a case that is one of the most miserable examples of prior restraint in American history, an Indiana court in November 1973 enjoined ABC, on the day of a scheduled broadcast, from presenting a segment of a documentary on fire hazards, because the segment might libel a crib manufacturer located in the state. After 291 days had passed, this patently unconstitutional order was reversed, and ABC was permitted to air the disputed portion on its nightly news show.

The trial judges' desire to shield the processes of justice from the impact of publicity is understandable. The United States stands virtually alone among civilized nations in allowing unfettered public commentary on judicial proceedings. The British, for example, tend to look with dismay on our tradition of rough-and-tumble press coverage of judicial proceedings. Today many of our trial judges seem to agree. One recalls Judge Learned Hand's remark about the First Amendment, "To many this is, and always will be, folly." But, Judge Hand went on to say, "We have staked upon it our all." Direct restraints on press coverage of criminal proceedings may sometimes be rational, but they do not comport with our constitutional system.

The heart of our constitutional tradition of freedom of expression is aversion to laws that condition the right of expression on prior official approval or disapproval. As Alexander Bickel, no absolutist in First Amendment matters, put it, prior restraints "fall on speech with a brutality and finality all their own." Statutes or executive orders that prohibit expression can be disobeyed without punishment if the courts hold them inconsistent with the First Amendment. Prosecutors think twice before charging publishers or reporters with violating the law. And juries in criminal cases may exercise discretion to acquit. But where expression violates a prior *judicial* order, the danger of punishment exists whether the order is eventually judged constitutional or not. Whether an order should be enforced, whether it has been violated, and whether punishment should be imposed are questions for judges to decide, not juries. Thus, the immediacy of speech is stifled, and the chance of nullification of an unjust law by a jury is removed. The rule that judicial restraints, even when unconstitutional, must be obeyed until set aside on appeal, invests trial judges with a power that, temporarily unchecked, invites temporary abuse. And even temporary interference with so perishable a commodity as news can work a vast repression.

One can sense the weight of our constitutional tradition, a recognition of the procedural and policy shortcomings of prior restraints, and an appropriate institutional reluctance to issue injunctions which foreclose the exercise of First Amendment freedoms in the Supreme Court's handling of the Pentagon Papers case. The Court refused an injunction in that case, despite colorable claims of injury to military interests, and the virtual certainty that publication would embarrass the conduct of foreign relations. The determination of the Supreme Court to guard against the repressive potential of prior restraints in this serious setting is a devastating criticism of the casual readiness of trial judges to issue gag orders in relatively routine criminal or civil proceedings.

As unfounded as are these judicial prior restraints from a substantive point of view, an equally basic objection — at least for a lawyer — is the disdain for rudimentary notions of fair procedure that has characterized most of them. The power to issue orders that must be obeyed even if unconstitutional, until formally set aside on appeal, is not given to legislatures, presidents, governors, or any other governmental entity. That this power is given to a single judge means that judges must punctiliously observe fair procedures. And yet, the prior restraints pour out of lower courts without any notice to members of the press, without an opportunity to make First Amendment arguments or to try to narrow the scope of the restraining order. Often the order is not even reduced to writing; this confuses and delays appeal.

Once before in our history, a half century ago, the lower federal courts and some state courts routinely abused the judicial prerogative to issue orders that must be obeyed even if ultimately overturned. Lower courts often resorted to temporary restraining orders, usually issued without notice or argument, to stifle the power of unions. Because in labor disputes, as in the reporting of news, timing is often critical, an order not to strike or to cease some union activity, even if ultimately set aside, was often sufficient to break a strike or otherwise moot union aims. The propensity of lower federal courts to issue such damaging injunctions corroded public confidence in the courts and led, in the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932, to one of Congress's rare restrictions on the authority of federal courts to issue injunctions. I do not say that recent prior restraints against press coverage of criminal cases are comparable to the epidemic of temporary injunctions in labor disputes in the early decades of this century, but the abuse of the injunction power in that setting is a caution that should apply with special force to prior restraints of the press. ■

'Even temporary interference with so perishable a commodity as news can work a vast repression'

School busing: a story in two acts

Most of the reporters were in Boston, but the more important story was in Louisville

by EDWIN DIAMOND

"It is a sad sign of the times that covering the opening of school is considered a dangerous breaking news story," observed Sandra Burton, *Time*'s able Boston bureau chief, in the September 22, 1975 issue of the magazine. It is also a sad sign of the times that very few news organizations have yet mastered the intricate lessons involved in covering the school desegregation "story."

All during this past summer, the principal planning of the major news organizations was concentrated on the expected troubles in the Boston schools. Massachusetts state police had issued over 800 sets of press credentials by early September — 316 to national news media people and some 500 to local press people — according to an account in *The Boston Globe*. In part, the turnout was heavy because the press was looking for trouble. For almost a year, as the expanded second phase of Boston's cross-district busing to correct school segregation patterns was being planned, the media shoptalk had been about violence. The truck drivers and longshoremen of Charlestown (Phase II of the busing plan), it was said, were even more insular and angry than the people of South Boston (Phase I). Last year's catchphrase among reporters had been "Southie will be another Belfast." This year's was, "There'll be urban guerrilla warfare" by the Townies. Several news organizations decided to deploy Vietnam-style helicopters over the expected trouble spots during the first week of school.

The fantasies and fears no more materialized in Boston this year than they had last year. Charlestown is the home of Bunker Hill, and a local anti-busing group called itself The Powder Keg; but the longshoremen and mothers of Charlestown didn't blow up the place. Astutely, the Townies chose to make prayer, not war. Processions through the streets ended with the women kneeling and saying Hail Marys — asking God for relief from busing, one leader explained. It was a striking image which few picture editors could resist.

The street and airborne overkill aside, the press did perform "responsibly" in Boston. Everyone in the press agreed on that, although it would seem to be the minimum obligation of a skilled craft, just as we expect musicians to be able to read music. NBC News, for example, matched a "portrait" of white Charlestown with one of black Roxbury. At our News Study Group at MIT, Tom Piper arranged to videotape about two weeks of national and local television coverage of the opening of the Boston schools. When he and I looked at eight hours of tape, we agreed that almost everything that was admirably done by way of background and understanding of desegregation appeared not on the evening network news, but on the weekend network news or on the morning news programs (*Today*, *The CBS Morning News with Hughes Rudd and Bruce Morton*), where stories can be "soft" and run for four or five minutes.

But the case can be made that almost all the national press was caught looking the wrong way when schools opened in September. The real story was not in Boston, where most of the newspeople were, but in Jefferson County (Louisville), Kentucky. Almost the same number of students were involved in Louisville's busing as in Boston's (23,000 vs. 26,000); the preparations had been as extensive and the racial rhetoric of the opposition as supercharged. Most important, the Jefferson County plan was far more significant, since it involved city-suburb busing.

In recent years, the "white flight" to the suburbs has been seen as the final, frustrating obstacle to school integration:

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'Even the better news organizations still shrink from serious discussion of race and class in America'

if fewer and fewer white children remain within the central city boundaries, then it is hard to see how black children can get the putative advantages of attending "white" schools. The Jefferson County desegregation plan dealt directly with the situation. It treated the Louisville area, city and suburbs, as one integrated, metropolitan *political unit*.

Some of the national news organizations were in Louisville before the schools opened, but there was nothing at all like the numbers and attention clustered in Boston. The Louisville media, almost without exception, believed that the opening day "trouble" — a downtown scuffle between police and demonstrators, another "incident" at a high school — was minor. ABC and CBS network news, according to *Louisville Times* TV critic Howard Rosenberg, saw it differently, using film and narration about the downtown and high school "incidents." NBC portrayed a calm scene, and its Chicago crew went home the next morning. That Friday, however, a night of rioting began in Jefferson County. School buses were burned; police and the National Guard moved in — and the NBC crew and others scrambled back. One news organization, caught by surprise, even had to send people to Louisville from Boston.

Is the lesson, then, that it takes violence to get a story into the news? Not really. We all realize by now that the "news" tends to be where the news people are. We also know that the possibility of dramatic news — news about events that are highly visible or laden with emotion — tends to attract news people.

But covering violence is somewhat like violence itself: it is essentially mindless (although no one wants to detract from the courage of the street reporters). The violence inside decaying, urban school systems is less easy to portray. And the interior violence that rages in many people is hardest of all to approach and explain.

Many news organizations are doing better in these matters. Among the best reportage out of Boston were the pieces by Jimmy Breslin for *The Boston Globe* that talked about fundamentals — the poverty and ignorance that kept white and black working people at each other's throats. Breslin "covered" school desegregation by describing the educational idyll at an excellent private suburban academy — just a short drive from the Charlestown and Roxbury tenements — where the affluent send their children. Breslin, of course, is now a "writer" and novelist who stands apart; even the better news organizations still shrink from serious discussion of race and class in America. During the 1960s, the national news outlets, including the networks and the national papers, supported the civil-rights movement; there was a "liberal consensus" that the black struggle deserved help. But now that black rights seem to clash with the rights of others, the liberal consensus has broken down. The white ethnics have been discovered. The clarity of vision of the civil-rights 1960s is gone, replaced by an ambivalence about desegregation. ("The blacks really don't want it themselves.") This ambivalance is apparent in minor matters, such as treating it as the "busing story" rather than the "desegregation story." And it is apparent in the bigger issues. Earlier this year, Professor James Coleman, author of the little-read but much discussed "Coleman Report," appeared to say that "massive" court-ordered desegregation, particularly busing, hastened white flight from the cities. The "news" that busing caused resegregation — and, not so incidentally, was driving yet another nail in the central city (where so many news organizations do business) — was eagerly swept up and channeled into the national news flow. Busing is Bad, was the message; we can forget about it. Coleman, in fact, later backtracked from any hard conclusions in an interview with Robert Reinhold of *The New York Times*. The recantation hardly attracted the attention of the original sensation. Similarly, a meticulous study by one of Coleman's colleagues, Professor David Wiley, has shown just how important the school day can be to childhood achievement; the study was almost universally ignored. Its message was that schools do make a difference — even public schools. But with everyone's attention on the trouble in the streets around the schools an important message about the schools themselves was lost. ■

In Boston, the Globe *chose the crowd shot above for its page-one coverage of the opening day of school. The picture is not dramatic; it is impersonal, the faces are distant, and there is no compelling center of attention. But to the* Globe *editors it clearly was a "representative" photo of a large mass of whites peaceably protesting.* The Washington Post, *however, chose an action photo (left) of three scuffling men taking away a bullhorn from a fourth. (The scuffle was a sidelight to the school story — the man was a street-corner evangelist of some sort.)*

Boston protests: which newspaper did you read?

Judging by the picture coverage of the first week of school in Boston, it seems that the local papers picked photographs that reflected the "larger picture" the papers were trying to convey. Out-of-town papers, on the other hand, worried less about "balance" and their impact on the community.

According to an analysis by Alexandra Norkin of MIT's News Study Group, the two major Boston papers ran ten photos of violent action out of seventy-six. Comparable figures for out-of-town papers were four of seven in *The New York Times* and three of six in *The Washington Post*.

Two days later much the same contrast between home and out-of-town was evident. The Globe *and the* Boston Herald-American *ran the picture above, of Charlestown mothers kneeling and saying their Hail Marys. The photo may have its* visual *drawbacks — static, dull, vague — but the message conveyed is unmistakable.* The New York Times, *on the other hand, chose a different picture (left) of the same women, one taken before they prayed. The* Times *picture has "drama." The women stride toward the policeman, giving the photo immediacy and impact. It is a "better" picture, but one with quite another message.* E.D.

FOI foiled by a friend

The congressman who wrote the Freedom of Information Act also knows how to get around it

by STEVE WEINBERG

A new way to circumvent the Freedom of Information Act was displayed to a surprised Washington press corps last summer. The tactic was put to use by none other than John Moss, the California Democrat who was the act's chief sponsor in the House. While most of the material reporters wanted was released eventually, the episode left reporters wondering whom they could trust.

Moss's technique was disarmingly simple: he subpoenaed the documents he didn't want federal agencies to release, thus placing the material under the jurisdiction of Congress, and out of the hands of the agencies. As Moss himself said to one reporter during the controversy, "The act has no application to Congress. I ought to know because I wrote it."

Reporters wanted to see lengthy responses from nine regulatory agencies to a ninety-six-question survey sent out in June by Moss's powerful Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. One of the purposes of the questions was to determine if the agencies were too cozy with the industries they are supposed to regulate. The agencies were given thirty days to respond, and most met the late July deadline. The responses were massive. The Securities and Exchange Commission, for example, sent 3,000 pages of text and more than 10,000 pages of supporting exhibits, all prepared by several dozen staffers at an estimated cost of more than $100,000.

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Journalists, thinking there could be new and valuable information in the agencies' responses, asked Moss's subcommittee if they could see the documents. They were turned down, first by the staff, and then by Moss himself. (They were told that the materials might be available in several months.) Moss said that releasing them right away would interfere with, and maybe even destroy, a legitimate investigation.

That left the reporters who really wanted the material little choice: they filed freedom-of-information requests with the agencies. One of them, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, noted for its openness, released its response immediately. But before the other agencies could respond, agency heads received letters from Moss ordering them not to release anything because the responses belonged to Congress. The chairman of one agency, himself no friend of the Freedom of Information Act, said he was "flabbergasted" at getting such a letter from Moss.

When some of the agencies expressed doubt that a letter from a congressman — even from the one who wrote the act — was sufficient legal reason for denying an FOI request, Moss polled his subcommittee by phone and by a nine-to-two vote got permission to subpoena all materials from the agencies, including working drafts. Moss said the subpoenas were issued "to preserve the integrity of the inquiry I'm making."

Moss still thinks the subpoenas were perfectly legitimate. "The Constitution gives Congress the right to keep its business secret when necessary," he says. "It doesn't say that for the executive or judicial branches. I was faced with requests for investigatory materials before I'd even seen them. Some of the material was sensitive, and at least one agency told me so. I was aware of the possible repercussions, and I was aware of the criticism I'd receive."

In August two trade publications, *Television Digest* and *The Product Safety Letter*, asked for an order restraining the agencies from complying with the subpoenas. Soon after, the *Washington Star-News* filed suit challenging the subpoenas, arguing that they were issued to frustrate the intent of the Freedom of Information Act, not for any valid legislative purpose.

The beginning of a happy ending to the dispute came on August 6 when federal judge William Bryant granted a temporary restraining order against the subpoenas. Moss himself, although publicly critical of the judge, decided to informally rescind the subpoenas and let the agencies handle the requests routinely. Within two weeks, most of them had released the bulk of their responses. Reporters, perhaps feeling obligated after having made such a fuss, read through tens of thousands of pages, much of it technical and statistical material. Decidedly routine stories appeared in several publications, backing up those who said Moss had chosen poor ground on which to fight his battle.

So Moss's subpoena gambit failed because of the efforts of a few publications, a sympathetic judge, and a Congressman who, despite his stance in this case, generally favors freedom of information. Also, the regulatory agencies stayed largely neutral because they felt the information in question was not highly sensitive. But even so, reporting on the agencies' responses was delayed for several weeks.

Moss believes it unlikely that the subpoena tactic will be abused by Congress, but if it should happen, he says, "I would hope the press would raise hell."

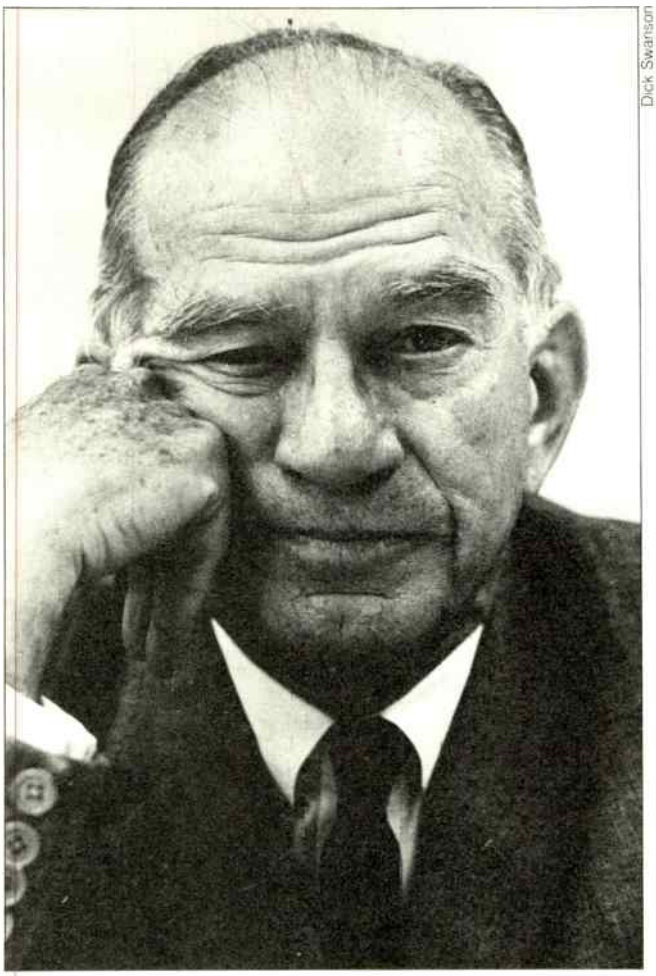
But what will happen if the tactic is used by a congressman who intends to frustrate the law, if the judge is not sympathetic, and if the agency has an intense interest in suppression? An aggressive press alone might not be enough. Perhaps it would be wise to expand the Freedom of Information Act to cover the legislative as well as the executive branch. That at least would neutralize the latest way to slow down the flow of information from government to the public. ■

FULBRIGHT ON THE PRESS

A famous dissenter calls for a halt to media 'inquisitions' and challenges some versions of his own legend

by J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

Heresy though it may be, I do not subscribe unquestioningly to the Biblical aphorism that "the truth shall make you free." A number of crucial distinctions are swept aside by an indiscriminate commitment to the truth — the distinction, for instance, between factual and philosophical truth, or between truth in the sense of disclosure and truth in the sense of insight. There are also certain useful fictions — or "myths" — which we invest with a kind of metaphorical truth. One of these is the fiction that "the king can do no wrong." He can, of course, and he does, and everybody knows it. But in the course of political history it became apparent that it was useful to the cohesion and morale of society to attribute certain civic virtues to the chief of state, even when he patently lacked them. A certain dexterity is required to sustain the fiction, but it rests on a kind of



Dick Swanson

social contract — an implicit agreement among Congress, the press, and the people that some matters are better left undiscussed, not out of a desire to suppress information, but in recognition, as the French writer Jean Giraudoux put it, that "there are truths which can kill a nation." What he meant, it seems, was that there are gradations of truth in a society, and that there are some truths which are more significant than others but which are also destructible. The self-confidence and cohesion of a society may be a fact, but it can be diluted or destroyed by other facts such as the corruption or criminality of the society's leaders. Something like that may have been what Voltaire had in mind when he wrote, "There are truths which are not for all men, nor for all times." Or as Mark Twain put it, even more cogently, "Truth is the most valuable thing we have. Let us economize it."

In the last decade — this Vietnam and Watergate decade — we have lost our ability to "economize" the truth. That Puritan self-righteousness which is never far below the surface of American life has broken through the frail barriers of civility and restraint, and the press has been in the vanguard of the new aggressiveness. This is not to suggest in any way that the press ought to pull its punches, much less be required to do so, on matters of political substance. I myself have not been particularly backward about criticizing presidents and their policies, and I am hardly likely at this late date to commend such inhibitions to others. I do nonetheless deplore the shifting of the criticism from policies to personalities, from matters of tangible consequence to the nation as a whole to matters of personal morality of uncertain relevance to the national interest.

By and large, we used to make these distinctions, while also perpetuating the useful myth that "the king can do no wrong." One method frequently employed when things went wrong was simply to blame someone else — in a ceremonial way. When I began publicly to criticize the Johnson Administration, first over the Dominican intervention in 1965, then over the escalating Vietnam war, I was at some pains to attribute the errors of judgment involved to the "president's advisers" and not to the president himself — although I admit today that I was not wholly free of doubts about the judgment of the top man.

Our focus was different in those days from that of more recent investigations, especially Watergate, but also the current inquiries concerning the CIA and the multinational corporations. It was sometimes evident in hearings before the Foreign Relations Committee on Vietnam and other matters that facts were being withheld or misrepresented, but our primary concern was with the events and policies involved rather than with the individual officials who chose — or more often were sent — to misrepresent the administration's position. Our concern was with correcting

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mistakes rather than exposing, embarrassing, or punishing those who made them.

In contrast, a new inquisitorial style has evolved, which is primarily the legacy of Watergate, although perhaps it began with the Vietnam war. That protracted conflict gave rise to well-justified opposition based on what seemed to me — and still does — a rational appreciation of the national interest. But it also set loose an emotional mistrust — even hostility — to government in general. Somehow the policy mistakes of certain leaders became distorted in the minds of many Americans, especially young ones, as if they had been acts of premeditated malevolence rather than failures of judgment. The leaders who took us into Vietnam and kept us there bear primary responsibility for the loss of confidence in government which their policies provoked. I am as certain today as I ever was that opposition to the Vietnam war — including my own and that of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee — was justified and necessary. Nonetheless, I feel bound to recognize that those of us who criticized the war as mistaken in terms of the national interest may unwittingly have contributed to that surge of vindictive emotionalism which now seems to have taken on a virulent life of its own.

The emotionalism has not survived without cause, to be sure. The Watergate scandals provoked a justified wave of public indignation, and a wholly necessary drive to prevent such abuses in the future. Moral indignation, however — even *justified* moral indignation — creates certain problems of its own, notably the tendency of indignation, unrestrained, to become self-righteous and vindictive. Whatever the cause and antecedents, whatever too the current provocation, the fact remains that the anti-Watergate movement generated a kind of inquisition psychology both on the part of the press and in the Congress.

If once the press was excessively orthodox and unquestioning of government policy, it has now become almost sweepingly iconoclastic. If once the press showed excessive deference to government and its leaders, it has now become excessively mistrustful and even hostile. The problem is not so much the specific justification of specific investigations and exposures — any or all may have merit — but whether it is desirable at this stage of our affairs — after Vietnam and Watergate — to sustain the barrage of scandalous revelations. Their ostensible purpose is to bring reforms, but thus far they have brought little but cynicism and disillusion. Everything revealed about the CIA or dubious campaign practices may be wholly or largely true, but I have come to feel of late that these are not the kind of truths we most need now; these are truths which must injure if not kill the nation.

Consider the example of the CIA. It has been obvious for years that Congress was neglecting its responsibility in failing to exercise meaningful legislative oversight of the nation's intelligence activities. A few of us tried on several occasions to persuade the Senate to establish effective oversight procedures, but we were never able to muster more than a handful of votes. Now, encouraged by an enthusiastic press, the Senate — or at least its special investigating committee — has swung from apathy to crusading zeal, offering up one instance after another of improper CIA activities with the apparent intent of eliciting all possible public shock and outrage. It seems to me unnecessary at this late date to dredge up every last gruesome detail of the CIA's designs against the late President Allende of Chile. Perhaps it would be worth doing — to shake people up — if Watergate were not so recently behind us. But the American people are all too shaken up by that epic scandal, and their need and desire now are for restored stability and confidence. The Senate knows very well what is needed with respect to the CIA — an effective oversight committee to monitor the agency's activities in a careful, responsible way on a continuing basis. No further revelations are required to bring this about; all that is needed is an act of Congress to create the new unit. Prodding by the press to this end would be constructive, but the new investigative journalism seems preoccupied instead with the tracking down and punishment of wrongdoers, with giving them their just deserts.

'My own view is that no one should get everything he deserves — the world would become a charnel house'

My own view is that no one should get everything he deserves — the world would become a charnel house. Looking back on the Vietnam war, it never occurred to me that President Johnson was guilty of anything worse than bad judgment. He misled the Congress on certain matters, and he misled me personally with respect to the Gulf of Tonkin episode in 1964. I resented that, and I am glad the deceit was exposed. But I never wished to carry the matter beyond exposure, and that only for purposes of hastening the end of the war. President Johnson and his advisers were tragically mistaken about the Vietnam war, but by no standard of equity or accuracy did they qualify as "war criminals." Indeed, had Mr. Johnson ended the war by 1968, I would readily have supported him as my party's candidate for reelection.

Watergate, one hopes, has been consigned to the history books, but the fame and success won by the reporters who uncovered the scandals of the Nixon administration seem to have inspired legions of envious colleagues to seek their own fame and fortune by dredging up new scandals for the delectation of an increasingly cynical and disillusioned public. The media have thus acquired an unwholesome fascination with the singer to the neglect of the song. The result is not only an excess of emphasis on personalities but

short shrift for significant policy questions. It is far from obvious, for example, that Watergate will prove to have been as significant for the national interest as President Nixon's extraordinary innovations in foreign policy. The Nixon détente policy was by no means neglected, but it certainly took second place in the news to Watergate.

Similarly — to take a more recent topic of interest to Congress and the press — it strikes me as a matter of less than cosmic consequence that certain companies have paid what in some cases may be commissions, and in others more accurately bribes, to foreign officials to advance their business interests. Such laws as may have been violated were not our own but those of foreign countries, and thus far the countries involved have exhibited far less indignation over these payments than over their exposure by a United States Senate subcommittee. I should not have to add, I trust, that I do not advocate corporate bribery either abroad or at home; nor would I object to legislation prohibiting the practice. At the same time the subject does not strike me as deserving of a harvest of publicity. It disrupts our relations with the countries concerned, and what is worse, it smacks of that same moral prissiness and meddlesome impulse which helped impel us into Vietnam. Furthermore, "commission" payments are not unknown in government business in the United States, and hypocrisy is not an attractive trait. Even in our business dealings with Italy or Saudi Arabia, there is relevance in the lesson of Vietnam: whatever the failings of others, we are simply not authorized — or qualified — to serve as the self-appointed keepers of the conscience of all mankind.

A recent instance of misplaced journalistic priority, which came within my own domain, was the media's neglect of the extensive hearings on East-West détente held by the Foreign Relations Committee during the summer and fall of 1974. The issues involved — the nuclear arms race and the SALT talks, economic and political relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and China — were central to our foreign policy and even to our national survival. At the same time that the media were ignoring the détente hearings, they gave generous coverage to the nomination of a former Nixon aide as ambassador to Spain, a matter of transient interest and limited consequence.

To cite another example: the press and television gave something like saturation coverage in 1974 to Congressman Wilbur Mills's personal misfortunes; by contrast I do not recall reading anything in the press about the highly informative hearings on the Middle East, and another set on international terrorism, held in the spring of that year by Congressman Lee Hamilton's House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia. The crucial ingredient, it seems, is scandal — corporate, political, or personal. Where it is present, there is news, although the event may otherwise be inconsequential. Where it is lacking, the event may or not be news, depending in part, to be sure, on its intrinsic importance, but hardly less on competing events, the degree of controversy involved, and whether it involves something "new" — new, that is, in the way of disclosure as distinguished from insight or perspective.

The national press would do well to reconsider its priorities. It has excelled in exposing wrongdoers, in alerting the public to the high crimes and peccadilloes of persons in high places. But it has fallen short — far short — in its higher responsibility of public education. With an exception or two, such as the National Public Radio, the media convey only fragments of those public proceedings which are designed to inform the general public. A superstar can always command the attention of the press, even with a banality. An obscure professor can scarcely hope to, even with a striking idea, a new insight, or a lucid simplification of a complex issue. A bombastic accusation, a groundless, irresponsible prediction, or, best of all, a "leak," will usually gain a congressman or senator his heart's content of publicity; a reasoned discourse, more often than not, is destined for entombment in the *Congressional Record*. A member of the Foreign Relations Committee staff suggested that the committee had made a mistake in holding the 1974 détente hearings in public; if they had been held in closed session and the transcripts then leaked, the press would have covered them generously.

'We really must try to stop conducting our affairs like a morality play'

We really must try to stop conducting our affairs like a morality play. In a democracy we ought to try to think of our public servants not as objects of adulation or of revilement, but as *servants* in the literal sense, to be lauded or censured, retained or dispensed with, according to the competence with which they do the job for which they were hired. Bitter disillusionment with our leaders is the other side of the coin of worshipping them. If we did not expect our leaders to be demigods, we would not be nearly as shocked by their failures and transgressions.

The press has always played up to our national tendency to view public figures as either saints or sinners, but the practice has been intensified since Watergate. President Ford was hailed as a prince of virtue and probity when he came to office. Then he pardoned President Nixon and was instantly cast into the void, while the media resounded with heartrending cries of betrayal and disillusion. Many theories, often conspiratorial, were put forth in explanation of the Nixon pardon — all except the most likely: that the president acted impulsively and somewhat prematurely out of simple human feeling.

Secretary Kissinger, for his part, has been alternately

hailed as a miracle worker and excoriated as a Machiavellian schemer, if not indeed a Watergate coconspirator. I myself was criticized by some of the Kissinger-hating commentators for "selling out" by cooperating with the secretary on East-West détente and the Middle East. Until that time it had never occurred to me that opposition itself constituted a principle, and one which required me to alter my own long-held views on Soviet-American relations and the need for a compromise peace in the Middle East.

My point is not that the character of our statesmen is irrelevant but that their personal qualities are relevant only as they pertain to policy, to their accomplishments or lack of them in their capacity as public servants. Lincoln, it is said, responded to charges of alcoholism against the victorious General Grant by offering to send him a case of his favorite whiskey. Something of that spirit would be refreshing and constructive in our attitude toward our own contemporary leaders. None of them, I strongly suspect — including Dr. Kissinger, President Ford, and former President Nixon — is either a saint or a devil, but a human like the rest of us, whose proper moral slot is to be found somewhere in that vast space between hellfire and the gates of heaven.

A free society can remain free only as long as its citizens exercise restraint in the practice of their freedom. This principle applies with special force to the press, because of its power and because of its necessary immunity from virtually every form of restraint except self-restraint. The media have become a fourth branch of government in every respect except for their immunity from checks and balances. This is as it should be — there are no conceivable restraints to be placed on the press which would not be worse than its excesses. But because the press cannot and should not be restrained from outside, it bears a special responsibility for restraining itself, and for helping to restore civility in our public affairs.

For a start, journalists might try to be less thin-skinned. Every criticism of the press is not a fascist assault upon the First Amendment. One recalls, for example, that when former Vice-President Agnew criticized members of Congress and others, the press quite properly reported his remarks, taking the matter more or less in their stride. But when he criticized the media, the columnists and editorialists went into transports of outraged excitement, bleeding like hemophiliacs from the vice-president's pinpricks.

More recently, since Watergate, the press has celebrated its prowess with a festival of self-congratulation, and politicians have joined with paeans of praise. The politicians' tributes should be taken with a grain of salt in any case — they have seen the media's power and few are disposed to trifle with it. The real need of the press is self-examination, and a degree of open-mindedness to the criticisms which are leveled against it. Journalists bear an exceedingly important responsibility for keeping office holders honest; they have an equally important responsibility for keeping themselves honest, and fair.

I make these general criticisms of the press with some embarrassment, because during my thirty-two years in public life I was treated for the most part with understanding and generosity by the press, most particularly by the major newspapers in my home state of Arkansas. Such complaints as I have — and I have a few — are essentially aspects of the more general problems cited above.

To my considerable personal discomfort I have found myself from time to time under journalistic examination to determine — it would seem — whether I was a saint or an

> 'The press has always played up to our national tendency to view public figures as either saints or sinners'

agent of the devil. Knowing full well that I was not the former, and daring to hope that I was not one of Satan's minions either, I have sometimes experienced a curious sense of detachment when reading about myself, as if the subject were really someone else. In truth, I have never thought of myself as anything but a politician — until my recent retirement — trying to advance the national interest, as best I understood it, while also doing my best to service my constituency, readily if not happily compromising between the two when that seemed necessary.

The Arkansas press — including the two statewide newspapers, the *Gazette* and the *Democrat* — came closer than others to accepting me on those terms, reporting my often heretical views on foreign policy with reasonable objectivity while also noting my efforts on behalf of agriculture, education, and industry in Arkansas — efforts in which I took and still take considerable personal pride. Even in my last, losing primary campaign in 1974 I was pleased and proud to have the support of the *Gazette* and the *Democrat*.

The sophisticated national press — though usually generous and sometimes flattering to me personally — has nonetheless had a tendency to pose certain rather tedious — and in my opinion largely meaningless — "paradoxes" about my personality and my role. Is Fulbright truly a humanitarian idealist, or a racist under the skin? An "international peace prophet," as one friendly writer recently put it, or "plain old Bill," regaling Arkansas rubes with talk about the price of cotton and chickens? How too, they have asked, anguishing on my behalf, can an "urbane" internationalist like Fulbright survive in a southern "hillbilly" state like Arkansas? But most of all my friends in the national press have pointed — more in sorrow than in anger — to the "paradox" of my "humanitarianism on a global scale" as against my early opposition to civil-rights

legislation and, more recently, my dissent from aspects of our Middle East policy and my differences with the Israeli lobby in Congress.

All these questions have been posed as a "moral" dilemma, in much the same way that our presidents have been viewed as either saints or sinners. What I perceive in this approach is not a genuine moral dilemma, or even an authentic paradox of personality, but another manifestation of that Puritan dogmatism which pervades our national life, including — to a far greater degree than is recognized — our liberal intellectual community. In the case of the eastern liberal press, the dogmatism is reinforced by arrogance — the arrogance of people who regard themselves as duly appointed arbiters not only of the nation's style and taste but also of its morality. The "paradox" posed about me by a number of writers has never greatly impressed or interested me because it is not really my paradox but *theirs*. "How," they are asking, "can a man who shares so many of my opinions and prejudices fail so woefully to share them all?"

In fact there are a few rather simple explanations to the so-called "paradoxes" in my career. While believing in the necessity of international cooperation and of the United Nations idea, I have also believed that education and economic opportunity were the best avenue to racial justice in the United States. I did not vote for civil-rights legislation prior to the late sixties for two very simple reasons: first, because I doubted its efficacy; second, because my constituents would not have tolerated it. I felt able to challenge some of their strong feelings on such matters as the Vietnam war; I did not feel free to go against them on the emotionally charged issue of race. And as far as the "paradox" of world peace as against the price of cotton is concerned, I see no conundrum at all — I have always been interested in both.

> 'There are no conceivable restraints to be placed on the press which would not be worse than its excesses'

Coming finally to the "paradox" of my "urbane" internationalism as against my "provincial" Arkansas constituency, I take this as no more than a conceit of the eastern "establishment." It has not been my observation that the representation in Congress of New York, Massachusetts, or California has been notably more responsible, intellectual, sophisticated, or humane than that of Arkansas. I have always felt attuned, responsive, and at one with my home state, and although the voters of Arkansas decided after thirty years that they wanted a change, I have little doubt that I survived a lot longer in politics in Arkansas than I ever would have in New York or Massachusetts.

Rather than for my moral qualities I should prefer to be evaluated for my specific positions on specific issues, for my contributions or lack of them as a public servant. That is what counts in a democracy, or in a mature society. It matters little to the nation or to posterity whether a president or senator met some individual's or group's or newspaper's particular standard of political "purity." For my own part I do not regard myself as a fitting or even interesting subject for priestly exorcism. If my career is judged worthy of review by journalists or historians, I very much hope that it will be for what I contributed or failed to contribute to my country and my state. The purity or lack of it in my motives is an issue strictly between me and my Maker.

I cannot stress too strongly that my criticism of the press in this regard is not especially personal. Looking back over my long career — to my many speeches on foreign policy, to the hearings, legislation, and other activities of the Foreign Relations Committee during my chairmanship — I am bound to conclude that I have been treated by the press with overall fairness and generosity. It is the general practice of moralizing to which I object, rather than the moralizing which has been directed toward me, most of which has been generous, some of which indeed has been flattering.

I have been more distressed personally by what has often seemed to me an arbitrary and prejudiced standard of "newsworthiness" in the national press, particularly as applied to the Middle East. I have noted repeatedly, for example, the quantitative disparity between the press coverage of Palestinian guerilla attacks within Israel and of Israeli attacks upon South Lebanon, although the loss of civilian life in the latter has almost certainly been greater. I even made a statement on the subject in the Senate in August 1974, but the statement itself was ignored, consigned to entombment in the *Congressional Record*.

Another instance of dubious "newsworthiness" arose following my final major speech as a senator, a discussion of the Middle East at Westminster College in Missouri. *The New York Times* reported the main theme — which was the danger of a world crisis arising out of the Arab-Israeli conflict — with reasonable accuracy, although the headline — FULBRIGHT, AT FULTON, GLOOMY ON WORLD — suggested that the gloom lay not so much upon the world as on the speaker. *The Washington Post* — not for the first time involving a statement critical of Israel — did not report the speech at all, although it was otherwise widely reported around the country. Some months later, by contrast, the *Post* found prominent place, including a picture, for an article recalling adverse comments I had made on black voting in the Arkansas Democratic primary back in 1944.

Still another instance of dubious "newsworthiness" in my experience occurred in April 1971 upon the occasion of a lecture I delivered at Yale University, again concerning the Middle East. On that occasion too I was critical of Israeli policy. *The New York Times* and other newspapers provided fair and accurate coverage. *The Washington Post* did not report the speech at all, but on the following day carried an article on the Israeli reaction to my speech, headlined ISRAELI PRESS LASHES OUT AT FULBRIGHT. Later

still one of the *Post*'s columnists devoted a whole column of vituperation to my unreported speech. Recently, the *Post* may have had a change of heart as they did publish on the op-ed page of July 7, 1975 a statement of my views concerning the appropriate settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

The ultimate test of the press's fairness is its coverage of opinions of which the writers and editorialists do not approve. In my own experience as a critic not of Israel itself, but of the Israeli lobby and of what has seemed to me the excessive responsiveness of the United States government to demands made upon it by the government of Israel, the press has frequently failed to meet the test of fairness and objectivity, tending both to an arbitrary standard of newsworthiness and to a shifting of attention from the event to its author, from statement to motive, from song to singer. I have in recent years been called "cranky," "crochety," and "obsessive" about Israel and the Middle East — by contrast, it is sometimes lamented, with my "courageous" or "inspiring" leadership on Vietnam. All this signals to me is that the writer does not sympathize with my views and has devised an excuse to avoid reporting them. To my knowledge the reporters who have made these personal charges have neither general psychiatric qualifications nor specific familiarity with my state of mind. If indeed I have been "crochety" about the Middle East, it is not Israel which has brought me to that state but journalists who have thwarted my efforts to communicate views which could, I readily concede, be judged mistaken under dispassionate examination, but which I myself have long believed and still believe to be rational, at least arguable, and pertinent to the national interest.

I have always had a good deal of admiration for Washington's overshadowed evening newspaper. The *Star* suffers from the ignominy of having achieved few if any

'In fact there are a few rather simple explanations to the so-called "paradoxes" in my career'

Watergate scoops, but over the years it has demonstrated certain less flamboyant virtues, such as confining its opinions to its editorial page. The *Star* has rarely been friendly to me or my positions on foreign policy in its editorials; at the same time it has usually given fair and objective treatment to my statements and to the proceedings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The *Star* even published a favorable review of my 1972 book, *The Crippled Giant*, although the paper's editorial writers could hardly have approved its main thrust, while the *Post* sought out as its reviewer an obscure controversialist from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, who had little to say about my book but a great deal to say about my signing of the "Southern Manifesto" in 1956 and my many personal shortcomings as he perceived them.

In addition to *The Washington Star* and the press in general in my home state of Arkansas, I have always felt a special regard for the smaller, regional newspapers around the country. The steady decline in their numbers and variety is a substantial loss to the country. Few of them have scored any great scoops of investigative journalism, but many of them combine a genuine regard for objectivity in the news with a good deal of common sense and sound judgment in their editorials. Their principal failing in my opinion has been an excess of deference to the large, national newspapers.

The special strength of the writers for the smaller newspapers is journalistic "distance" — a virtue much celebrated but rarely practiced by their more famous Washington-based colleagues. The latter tend to express "distance" through vituperation, but more commonly cultivate all possible intimacy with the high officials whose activities they report. The officials in turn usually find it advantageous to respond, with the result that some of the elite of the Washington press corps have effectively made the transition from observers to participants in the making of public policy. Free as their writers are from such temptations and aspirations, the smaller newspapers seem to me, by and large, to come closer to fulfilling their journalistic obligations to report the news accurately and interpret it with personal detachment. They often seem better able, as the historian Bernard A. Weisberger expressed it, "to see men and events in whole and human perspective — that is, always fallible, and not always the masters of their own destiny. Or, in short, historically."

I commend to the press, in conclusion, a renewed awareness of its great power and commensurate responsibility — a responsibility which is all the greater for the fact that there is no one to restrain the press except the press itself, nor should there be. After a long era of divisiveness and acrimony in our national life, we are in need of a reaffirmation of the social contract among people, government, and the media. The essence of that contract is a measure of voluntary restraint, an implicit agreement among the major groups and interests in our society that none will apply their powers to the fullest. For all the ingeniousness of our system of checks and balances, our ultimate protection against tyranny is the fact that we are a people who have not *wished* to tyrannize one another. "The republican form of government," wrote Herbert Spencer in 1891, "is the highest form of government: but because of this it requires the highest type of human nature — a type nowhere at present existing." We have shown in times of adversity in the past that we are capable of this "highest type of human nature." We would do well, if we can, to call it into existence once again. It has never been needed more. ■

NATIONAL NOTES

Watchdog barks up wrong tree

BOSTON, MASS.

It was an odd debut. In his inaugural column as *The Boston Globe*'s first ombudsman, Charles L. Whipple apologized for an "honest error" made by *Globe* reporter Walter V. Robinson. As it turned out, the ombudsman was in error, not the reporter.

Whipple's stumble started with a letter to the *Globe* from Boston Councilwoman Louise Day Hicks, a vociferous opponent of busing. Hicks claimed that Robinson had misquoted her in an article, making her say "our own will sell us out for color faster than anyone else," whereas, she wrote, she had not said "color," but "power."

Was an apology in order? Whipple tried to check out the facts. He and several other *Globe* reporters listened to a videotape of her comments; they couldn't decide which word the councilwoman had used and they couldn't read her lips: the camerman was panning. Another broadcaster with his own tape told Whipple that it sounded to him as though Hicks had said "power." Then a news director of another TV station "came up with the answer," Whipple wrote — "an 'outtake' showing Mrs. Hicks's face" and which showed "she made the sound of 'p' with her lips and said 'power.' "

Meanwhile, another examination was going on. Two days before Whipple's apology appeared in the *Globe*, WEEI-AM, an all-news Boston radio station, offered to run a technical analysis of the Hicks recording for reporter Robinson. Robinson says he immediately told the ombudsman about the offer; Whipple says he learned of it only after his article appeared in the *Globe*. At any event, WEEI's analysis established that Mrs. Hicks had said "color," as Robinson had said she had.

Four days after his apology to Councilwoman Hicks was published, Whipple went to WEEI, listened to the tape (from which all "highs" and "lows" had been removed), and agreed that the word used was, indeed, "color."

Six weeks passed. Quick to apologize to Mrs. Hicks, Whipple was slow to apologize to fellow reporter Robinson in print. Contacted in connection with this story, Whipple said, "I'm going to try to get something in about it. I owe it to Robinson to get the whole thing on the record." He added that he had done the best he could "on the evidence available when I wrote the column." Whipple admitted, however, that he himself had never seen the outtake showing Mrs. Hicks's face that had led him to conclude she had said "power." He had taken the news director's word for it.

Had he tried to see the outtake at any time? "After I heard the WEEI tape," Whipple said, "I called the television station because I wanted to see it personally, but was told it had been thrown away."

Three days after this interview, Whipple added a note to his ombudsman column stating that the WEEI tape had Mrs. Hicks saying "color." However, he failed to mention reporter Robinson by name. Says Robinson, "The *Globe* hasn't been as forthright in restoring my credibility as it was in its initial 'apology.' "

Bill Kirtz

Capital couple

TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

For eighteen months, no one in the capital press corps said much about the marriage of Paul Schnitt and Virginia Ellis. Schnitt is Governor Reubin Askew's press secretary; Ellis covers capital news for *The St. Petersburg Times*. But the combination of summer doldrums and a paucity of statehouse news set some reporters grumbling about the lack of accessibility to the governor's office. A few accused Askew of ducking interviews and refusing to answer controversial questions.

Tallahassee Democrat editor Malcolm B. Johnson took the controversy a step further by placing the marriage "near the core" of the accessibility dispute. In an editorial, Johnson argued: "Whether or not man and wife exchange notes for the benefit of the wife's reporting, each of her competitors is entitled to suspect it has happened whenever her paper publishes ahead of time some bit of news. . . ." He went on to "state as a fact . . . that some [reporters] are reluctant to go through Schnitt, as Askew requires, with inquiries to confirm, disprove, or develop confidential tips on public business. The reason . . . is the Schnitt-Ellis relationship."

St. Petersburg Times editor Eugene Patterson, in an editorial of his own, called Johnson's column "condemnation by smirk." *Times* Tallahassee bureau chief Martin Dyckman had even stronger words: "Malcolm Johnson is ignorant of the capital press corps. He is an old man who gets his information from hack writers." Capital Press Club members fired off a telegram to Johnson praising Ellis's integrity. But Johnson refused to back down or to apologize.

"Any reporter who feels there is a conflict should be able to see the governor without seeing Paul Schnitt first," Johnson explains. "The only reason nobody else brought this up is because they didn't have the guts."

Times editor Patterson says Ellis works with specific ground rules: she does not cover the governor's press conferences, and she does not write stories exclusively favorable to Askew.

Schnitt says his conscience is clear: "Virginia just has amazing sources and sometimes she reports things I don't

even know about."

Ellis emphasizes the difference between a reporter's and a press secretary's idea of news: "I've never found out anything from Paul. He never seemed to know anything."

Robert Shaw of *The Miami Herald* and David Lawrence of the Orlando *Sentinel Star*, both major competitors of the *Times* and considered to be more or less neutral observers, say they do not suspect Ellis of smuggling tips out of Schnitt's office. "If I didn't know either one of them, I'd be suspicious," Shaw says. "But I looked at what Virginia

Paul Schnitt and Virginia Ellis

was doing and decided that she has never abused her marriage. It's an utterly unfair rap."

Schnitt himself may have touched on the core of the dispute when he said, "I believe there were just a few male chauvinists out there who got their egos crushed when Virginia beat them on stories. If she were just another hack in the press corps, this wouldn't have happened." *Peggy Shaw*

Brooks brooks rebuttal, at last

WESTPORT, CONN.

Newspapers air both sides of issues of public interest, right? Well, many do. But in this posh town, B.V. Brooks, publisher of *The Westport News*, the town's only paper, has used the *News* to air, almost exclusively, his side of a quarrel with a local governing body. Why should Brooks brook so little rebuttal?

The publisher's hushed opponent was the local planning and zoning commission. In a series of unsigned articles that appeared in April, the paper accused the commission of being an "arrogant bureaucracy" whose nitpicking, foot dragging, and reversing of decisions delayed construction and, in some cases, scared developers off altogether.

The articles failed to mention a significant fact: publisher Brooks owns much of the property available for said construction, an estimated $2 million worth.

The beleaguered opposition — members of the commission and others who favor its preservative approach and regulations — wanted this and other points ignored or belabored in the *News* to be aired in some sort of juxtaposition to the charges. One point ignored by the *News* was a survey which showed that the majority of Westport citizens favor the present cautious pace of development.

On June 27, Brooks made a notable exception to his general policy of jamming the voice of the opposition. He reprinted a letter from the commission that rebutted allegations made by Brooks in earlier editorials.

Why was this one defense allowed when so many others had been thwarted? Commission chairman Julie Belaga suspects that the answer is related to her mailing of a four-page letter telling "the other side of the story" to 200 influential citizens and to the National News Council. While the council was reviewing the case, Brooks opened his pages to opposition views to some extent, so that finally the council determined that no action was called for on its part.

Brooks, meanwhile, has confined his attacks on the commission to his editorial page. *Peter Nichols*

Soft sell

WASHINGTON, D.C.

When *The Washington Post* turned to the suburbs for increased advertising, they did it by offering their suburban readers soft features instead of hard news. One competing suburban editor bluntly calls the new sections "an easy way to get at local advertising."

Last July the *Post* scrapped its old "Panorama" section in favor of three "zoned" sections, one each for suburban Maryland and Virginia, and a third for the District of Columbia. Zoning permits articles for and about each area to be inserted in the Thursday edition of the *Post*; and, more to the point, it enables the *Post* to offer reduced ad rates to local merchants — in some cases only ten cents a line more for four times the circulation.

William Curry, editor of the new sections, claims his editions do not compete with the suburban press. Suburban editors point out that the sections circulate the same day most competing weeklies hit the streets. And what about the new sections' names: "Maryland Weekly," "Virginia Weekly," "District Weekly"?

The weekly editors admit to being concerned about the *Post*'s cutting into their advertising, but not because of the editorial content of the new sections. Curry says that "readable trend, enterprise, and service" stories are his aim in the sections. Major efforts so far have included a guide to area parks and articles on condominium life and the trend toward larger families. Profiles and listings of local events have been standard fare.

"The stuff is all right," said Thomas Wuriu, editor of three weekly newspapers in Virginia, "but very mild. We're not worried about the editorial competition." A Maryland editor is more outspoken. Some of the *Post*'s suburban stories, he says, read as though reporters were asked for "twenty inches on anything. . . . It's not up to the rest of the paper and this could be an indication that they don't really care."

Some ad agency executives think the softness of the new sections will do nothing to attract local retailers. Others say that what really matters is the *Post*'s massive circulation; its name alone will draw local merchants.

The *Post* says that its weekly sections are already successful and are here to stay. But most of the suburban weekly editors hope that the jury is still out on the success of selling features in exchange for advertising dollars.

Peter Sleeper

READER'S FORUM

Did the Russian wheat deal really boost food prices?

by L. H. SIMERL

In its coverage of the sale of grain to Russia, the press has done a very effective job of misinforming the public. The most glaring example was its almost universal condemnation of the sale of wheat to Russia in 1972 as a major factor in the rise of food prices in the U.S. The facts do not support such a conclusion.

☐ When the Russians first came to buy wheat in the summer of 1972, our problem was surplus production capacity and burdensome stocks. During the previous crop marketing year, twelve months ending June 30, our government (taxpayers) had paid $877 million to farmers to hold 13.7 million acres of wheat land out of production. In addition, we had exported 632 million bushels with various subsidies ranging up to the full price of the wheat, which averaged around $1.50 a bushel. Even so, the carry-over of old wheat on July 1, 1972 was 863 million bushels.

For the crop of 1972 that was being harvested when the Russians arrived, at government request farmers had held 20,300,000 acres out of production The cost of that program depended on the market prices received by farmers for the wheat they produced and sold. The lower the market price went, the larger the payments to the producers for restricting production. It appeared almost certain that those payments would exceed $1 billion. Despite that costly restraint on production, farmers were harvesting a crop of 1,545,000,000 bushels when the Russians arrived. That, plus the carry-over of 863 million, made a total supply of 2,408,000,000 bushels. In contrast, our own needs for wheat totaled only 595 million bushels (528 million for food and 67 million bushels for seed). The remainder, 1,813,000,000 bushels, was available for export (with subsidies) for feeding to farm animals, and for carry-over into the next marketing year.

In that situation the sale of wheat directly to Russia, even though subsidized the same as other commercial sales, appeared to be, and was, a good deal for us and for the food-short people in Russia and the satellite countries, which suffered from bad weather.

☐ Canada, the second largest exporter, had 605 million bushels of old wheat left over in the summer of 1972, and was harvesting a new crop that was expected to total 580 million bushels. The total supply of 1,185,000,000 bushels was 500 million more than the Canadians had been able to dispose of during the previous twelve months. Other countries, too, had wheat in excess of needs. Some governments were subsidizing the use of wheat for feed for poultry and other farm animals in order to dispose of "surplus stocks."

☐ During the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1972, we shipped 344 million bushels of wheat to Russia, and also increased shipments to other countries by 213 million bushels. U.S. exports that year totaled 1,186,000,000 bushels, yet we still had more than 440 million bushels of old wheat left over at the end of the marketing year, July 1, 1973.

☐ If we had not sold wheat directly to the Russians, they would surely have obtained a large amount of U.S. wheat through world grain dealers based in Europe, Japan, Argentina, and elsewhere. Furthermore, the Russians would have drawn more heavily on imports from other countries, with little difference in the net effect of the poor crops in Russia and adjoining countries on the U.S. agricultural situation.

Economist L. H. Simerl

☐ Adding greatly to the upward pressure on world grain prices during 1972-73 were poor harvests of rice, wheat, peanuts, and corn in India and southeast Asia, a short crop of wheat in Australia, and of peanuts, corn and other crops in Africa, and a poor catch of fish (anchovy used as a high-protein feed for animals) off the coast of Peru.

☐ Another price-boosting force at about that time was the two devaluations of the U.S. dollar, which tended to raise prices of our grains and all other products exported or imported.

I realize that very few of the nation's reporters, writers, and commentators have any understanding of the economics of agriculture and food production. But that surely does not justify their appallingly poor reporting.

For a time in 1973 and 1974 it appeared that the media people were doing a better, or at least more cautious, job of reporting the food situation. Fewer gross errors appeared in the press or were broadcast over the radio and on television. Recently, however, there has been a growing tendency to resume blaming past and prospective increases in food prices on sales of grain to the Russians rather than on such factors as rising labor and transportation costs. ■

L. H. Simerl is professor emeritus of agricultural economics at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

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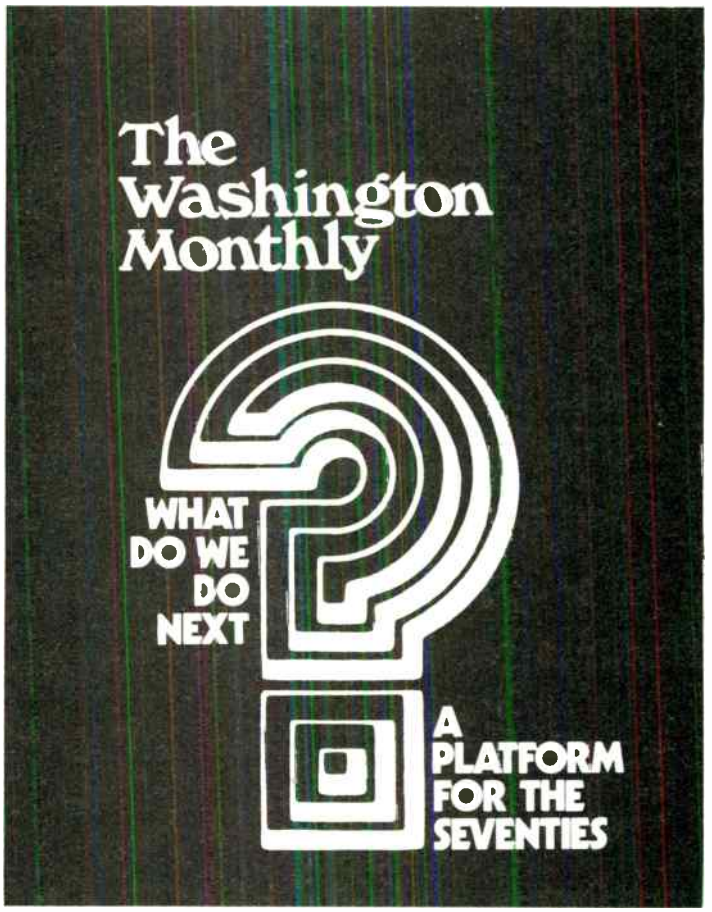

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BOOKS

Slender pickings

Heywood Broun: A Biography
by Richard O'Connor. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $8.95

"The most famous and controversial journalist of his time," is how Putnam's describes Heywood Broun on the face of the book's dust jacket, and although that description is both exaggerated and banal, it does point to Broun's special and almost monumental impact on many, especially during the 1920s and 1930s.

At a time when syndicated personal journalism was coming into its own as a distinctive influence on American society, Broun was read by millions and, as O'Connor records, "It was reckoned that Broun's by-line was worth about 50,000 in circulation. . . ." Broun's importance, moreover, lies not just in his being one of the highest-paid and most widely read columnists of his day or in being a respected member of the literary mafia of his time. Broun also played a significant if somewhat overpublicized role in the organization and development of the American Newspaper Guild — the first successful editorial workers' union in the United States.

Broun's importance transcends his era, and there long has been a need for a good biography of him, an intelligent "life and times" to supersede Dale Kramer's lackluster "biographical portrait," which was published in 1949. The late Richard O'Connor, an erstwhile newspaper reporter and magazine journalist turned popular historian, should have been able to supply such a biography. Unfortunately he has not. Indeed his vague and insubstantial book fails even to measure up to its less than distinguished predecessor.

Nowhere are O'Connor's failings more evident than in his treatment of Broun and the guild. The columnist was understandably proud of his part in the establishment of the guild in 1933, and O'Connor quite correctly asserts that Broun regarded the presidency of the ANG as the capstone of his career. However, Broun never involved himself in the day-to-day operations of the guild. And although he marched on ANG picket lines, pleaded its causes, and served as president until his death in 1939, Broun had much less to do with the guild than O'Connor indicates.

Indeed O'Connor's chapter on "the perils and pleasures of union leadership" is marred by a variety of errors — which are typical of the book's scholarly flaws. O'Connor, to paraphrase a well-known Charles Beard phrase, seems to have written without fear and without much research. There is no need to catalogue all the errors in this chapter (or any other); a few examples will suffice. The editorial workers' union which existed briefly in the 1920s was called the Presswriters Union, not "the Journalists Union," and Broun's efforts on its behalf were not "desultory," but, by his own admission, nonexistent. Also, Broun was not "the chief representative of the [editorial] . . . employees at the . . . hearings on the formation of the Newspaper Code" to regulate the industry under the National Recovery Administration; Broun probably was the most prominent among the editorial workers present but he was one of eleven people — eight of them working journalists.

Even if not wholly reliable, O'Connor's book is entertaining. He has collected an unusual number of anecdotes about Broun dealing with his romantic if somewhat naive involvement in various radical causes such as the Socialist party, his unorthodox marriage with Ruth Hale, his variegated group of friends and associates, his idiosyncratic and often messy personal habits (especially as concerns dress — Alexander Woollcott once likened him to "an unmade bed"). Some Broun anecdotes are well known, such as General Pershing's outburst on seeing him sloppily dressed at an inspection of war correspondents attached to the AEF; the incredulous Pershing asked, "What happened? Did you fall down?" Other facts about Broun are less well known, such as his strong aversion to hunters and hunting, and the offhand manner in which he was responsible for *Shoot the Works* — the "cooperative review" he participated in as "a kind of Greek Horace" and which provided work during the Depression summer and fall of 1931 for unemployed "actors, singers, musicians, and others."

Heywood Broun at work

And O'Connor does write well. For example, he neatly characterizes Broun's relationship with other members of the Algonquin Round Table by describing the columnist as "a moth in a wasps' nest."

Heywood Broun was a many-faceted individual; a hulk of a man, pugnacious and sentimental, lazy but given to occasional bursts of frenetic energy, amiable, hypochondriacal and extremely afraid of death, capable of great compassion and excessive generosity, overly fond of good food and drink, nonpolitical but involved in various radical movements. Richard O'Connor has barely outlined this journalistic giant. Granted that a new biography allows this generation to meet Broun. Still, one can only hope that in time he will receive full and thorough biographical treatment.

DANIEL J. LEAB

Daniel J. Leab, a contributing editor to the Review, *is an associate professor of history at Seton Hall University and author of* Union of Individuals: the Formation of the American Newspaper Guild.

Bettmann Archive

A weak toot

The Tin Kazoo: Television, Politics and the News
by Edwin Diamond. M.I.T. Press. $9.95

Edwin Diamond proposes taking a fresh and challenging look at the accepted wisdom of television and some of the axioms of media politics: that political incumbents and candidates can successfully manipulate public opinion and voters via television; that the television audience is essentially an unthinking "wad"; and the corollary assumption that "out there" (in Peoria) Americans generally have no interest in national and international news that they think does not affect their lives directly. Then, turning his attention from television to newspapers and news magazines (his title, *The Tin Kazoo,* is intended to characterize both print and electronic journalism as weak and uncertain instruments), he deflates the notion that the press adequately covered Watergate, the Vietnam war, the Pentagon Papers case, the story behind Nixon's and Eagleton's mental health, and the true character of the president and his staff during the Nixon years in the White House. The author accompanies his challenge of the axioms and accepted wisdom with explanations for the media's rigidities and inadequacies and recommends a few changes, but he abstains from advancing any plan of action that would turn the tin kazoo into at least a bugle call rag (a title he considered and rejected), stating simply that "most broadcast journalists know what must be done — or undone . . . to improve the coverage of politics, government, and the public news."

The problem with Diamond's approach is that many journalists may have difficulty swallowing his assumptions of exaggerated media power and poor performance as part of their own "accepted wisdom." The book seems to address two audiences, professional and lay — probably because the author is both a journalist and a teacher. (The *Kazoo* grew out of an undergraduate political science course he taught at M.I.T. and a number of study groups he

chaired at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.) To the journalist, therefore, some of his contentions will appear too generalized and not a little shopworn. Many of his allegations — that the press came late with little to the Watergate story; that reporters in the early years of the Indochina war generally saw eye to eye with the government and military; that network and local news operations are part of television's basic crowd-catching function to promote the sale of audiences to advertisers; and that "show-doctors," highly paid consultants, counsel news teams at local stations to "stay between the neck and the knees" — are hardly news to news professionals. For general readers, however, any demythologizing and demystifying of the institutions and processes which serve up America's news is useful; and *The Tin Kazoo* contributes detailed reviews of how poorly print and television handled some of the major news events (and nonevents) of the past two decades.

But even in this context the book has weaknesses. The author, in his handling of the influence of the press (chiefly television) throughout, is concerned with the power of the media to *change* public attitudes and opinions. He fails to stress what is perhaps the more important aspect of media influence — its ability to *reinforce* existing beliefs and values maintained by audiences. He does mention, very briefly, the "agenda-setting" function of the media, but the normative aspects of media influence, their power to shape images of reality and to keep those images stable, thus restricting possibilities for social change, is a dimension of media content that also calls for responsible exploration. He emphasizes that conventional news operations accent emotion, personalities, and idiosyncracies often at the expense of substantive examinations of American institutions. Some mass-communication theorists hold that this is no accident; they see it as a kind of unintentional sociological control. The minds of the viewer-readers, dazzled with human interest trivia, are diverted from an awareness that the media tend to persuade them that what is, is right.

The author refers to surveys and public-opinion polls to support his assertion that television news audiences are becoming more sophisticated, restless, and selective. The evidence, however, is not persuasive, and the argument is marked with a recurring ambiguity. We are told that the demographics of television — selective delivery of audiences to advertisers — suggest that viewers are sharper than before. Television decisions, the author admits, are nevertheless still made predominantly on the basis of raw, big numbers: the ratings. People in Peoria do care about national news, the author contends, but then he cites surveys to show that viewers exhibit considerable provincialism in their news tastes and do not retain most of the information conveyed to them over the tube. People are losing interest in TV, he says, but they are also watching it more.

A few flyspecks are significant enough to note. The author writes that NBC was established in 1926 partly to sell radio sets for RCA and "soon broadcasters found that they had something more valuable to market — the selling of audiences to advertisers." Radio's history shows that AT&T's New York radio station, WEAF, four years earlier, in 1922, had stumbled across the key that opened broadcasting's golden door to profits. He tersely characterizes the FCC's prime-time access rule as "maladroit," but neglects to explain why. He predicts that TV news will change for the better because of lighter cameras, prime-time exposure, longer stories, the fading of the anchorman star system, and newsmen's pride in their reporting. But then he undercuts his own optimism with his explanations of television's economic imperatives. Finally, he does not deal with many of the deeper problems of journalism, such as censorship, reporter power, press councils, and public access to the media. It will take more than five-finger exercises to get real music out of the tin kazoo.

ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON

Robert Lewis Shayon is a professor at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, and a noted television critic.

Check it with Bill

The Manchester Union Leader in New Hampshire Elections
by Eric Veblen. University Press of New England. $9

In the 1966 New Hampshire senatorial election, Democratic incumbent Thomas McIntyre hardly campaigned against his Republican opponent, an Air Force general named Harrison Thyng. Instead, McIntyre ran against Thyng's sponsor and chief supporter, William Loeb, the ultra-super-conservative publisher of the *Manchester Union Leader*. As campaign strategy the plan was a dilly. Loeb, in the florid, virulent style for which he has become known, charged McIntyre with Nazi-Commie tactics and otherwise sputteringly overreacted precisely the way McIntyre hoped he would. In the resulting campaign-long uproar, candidate Thyng was virtually forgotten by most everyone, including Loeb, who expended most *Leader* space attacking McIntyre instead of plugging the relatively unknown general. McIntyre won the election in a walk.

Manipulating Mr. Loeb is not often so slickly accomplished. Such is Loeb's power in New Hampshire, writes Eric Veblen in this academic but altogether fascinating study, that a politician must plan two campaigns: how he will contest rival candidates and, second and perhaps more important, how he is going to get around, by, or through Loeb and his paper. The *Union Leader*'s drumfire support or heavy hidings may be helpful or harmful to an office-seeker (whether he's supported by Loeb or not), but either way the paper's stamp on an election is indelible. The *Leader* has long been the loudest voice along New Hampshire's more populated southern edge, and in a state with few other print outlets and sparse television facilities, it also exerts a strong influence northward into rural areas. How Loeb cottons to a candidacy is crucial. "I don't think anybody runs for statewide office," comments one New Hampshire politician, "without one eye on what Bill Loeb is going to do or say." In some cases Loeb recruits candidates who never would have run in the first place. In others he has scared off qualified hopefuls merely by asking them not to run or telling them that the *Leader* is going to support someone else. In several instances candidates have withdrawn rather than subject themselves to Loeb's haranguings.

Once a poor devil's hat is formally in the ring, Loeb's presence becomes all the more overbearing. "People decide, 'How am I going to campaign?' " stated a leading Democrat, "and they say, 'I can't do *that*, I mean you *can't* ask me to do that because if I do I'm going to come up against Loeb.' They say, 'I'm going to go to Loeb and try at least to get him to be neutral.' When they decide what kind of issue they're going to take to the public, they decide on the basis of what kind of response they are going to get [from Loeb]. . . ."

Obviously all this obeisance is tied to what New Hampshire politicians have reflexively decided must be Loeb's substantial impact on the electorate, and for the most part Veblen's findings support their conviction. Though Loeb may have unwittingly helped an opposing candidate by supporting a weak one (as was the case in the McIntyre-Thyng contest), and though he occasionally may have undermined a favorite of his with a bit of overzealous expostulation, the frequency of *Union Leader* support — day after day of dogged promotion — and the paper's circulation strength make it a potent and effective tool. *Leader*-backed candidates, reports Veblen, ran more strongly where *Leader* circulation was highest. What's more, the statistics suggest that Loeb's support has meant victory for candidates who otherwise would have lost.

Veblen concedes that the influence Loeb and the *Union Leader* enjoy in New Hampshire is unique among American newspapers. Still, his study demonstrates the potential power available to a dominant communications medium, and for the most part it is an alarming prospect. *Peter Nichols*

LETTERS

Checkbook justice

TO THE REVIEW:

Lee Ward of Piggott, Arkansas, in his letter to the *Review* of July/August, says that my estimate of the costs of defending the libel suit brought against *The Texas Observer* shocks him. It does not, believe me it does not, shock him nearly as much as it shocks me. The limits of my credulity in regard to what a lawsuit can cost are pushed . . . to new frontiers almost daily.

We have forwarded to Mr. Ward a detailed account of our expenses in this lawsuit to date. For your readers' more general information, we offer this simplified breakdown of our expenditures (we estimate that we are less than one-third of the way through the suit):

Total for legal time, legal services and legal expenses (including modest payments to legal researchers, postage, copying, long-distance phone calls, one plane trip, several car trips and miscellaneous)	**$13,119.88**
Fund-raising expenses (including printing, addressing, postage, stuffing)	**$1,494.06**
To *Observer* for subscription portion of contributor checks	**$201.45**
	Total $14,815.39

Only a few of the major depositions and a small portion of the pre-trial discovery has been accomplished: we have not been through any pre-trial motions, much less the trial. I would further note that few publications could get away with spending so little (believe it, Mr. Ripley). The sum we have expended to date would have been far larger if: (1) the case had not been handled by volunteer attorneys for the first six months; (2) we did not have some volunteer legal researchers; (3) if the *Observer* staffers themselves had to be paid for the endless hours spent in fund-raising.

William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, tells us that publication spent $140,000 defending a libel suit brought by Linus Pauling. That case was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, but Rusher says the bulk of the expenses, over $100,000, came from simply getting the case through the trial stage.

An unfortunate spin-off of the publicity generated by our appeals for funds has been the assumption by some of our friends that we must have some hotshot lawyer who is charging us an arm and a leg. We do have a fine attorney, but he is charging moderate fees, and, in fact, his hourly fee is even less than that Mr. Ward suggested as being reasonable.

The experience of being sued has led me to some reflections on the cost of justice in this country. If one has no money at all, Mr. Ward, even the $18,500 you suggest as a top figure for defending a libel suit presents a staggering problem. Our publisher has had to take out a personal loan, our business manager gave everyone on the staff a $25 contribution to the Legal Defense Fund as a Christmas gift, and I keep buying flight insurance whenever I have to go to New York for a meeting of the National News Council. We are also considering asking for a change of venue to Piggott, Arkansas.

MOLLY IVINS
Coeditor, *The Texas Observer*
Austin, Tex.

Design for living

TO THE REVIEW:

. . . I was delighted to read Jane Holtz Kay's article "Architecture and Design — Who Cares?" [CJR, July/August] . . . I think part of the reluctance of editors [to use] built environmental articles is the lack of defined audience. A political story or editorial will be read by politicians and voters. An article on education will be of interest to teachers, administrators and parents. But who in the world has control over the design of our three-dimensional city? . . . There seems to be no one in the city who can be charged with physical planning continuity. . . .

KURT KARMIN
New York, N.Y.

Counting the bullets

TO THE REVIEW:

Joel D. Weisman's article, "About That 'Ambush' At Wounded Knee," (CJR, September/October) was an extraordinary example of rancid journalism. . . . Weisman is disturbed that the acts of the murderer or murderers were initially described by the press as "ambush" and "execution." He wants to be honest with the reader. So he very nicely points out that the two young dead FBI agents were not shot fifteen times. Instead, Weisman informs us, the agents were shot "six or seven" times. He concludes from the agents' wounds that instead of "executing" their victims, the murderer or murderers could have panicked and engaged in "unpremeditated murder" as a result of the "tense, combative" atmosphere on the reservation. In any event, Weisman argues that the killings were not the nasty, "cold-blooded" slayings the press originally painted.

If Weisman had been reporting from Vietnam, Americans might have been convinced that the hostilities there were downright enjoyable.

MARK L. GENRICH
The Palladium-Item
Richmond, Ind.

I agree with most of Joel Weisman's analysis of the coverage of the deaths of the two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation. . . .

As Weisman says, part of the fault lies with the FBI and its refusal to give out information. Tom Coll, the agent who was the FBI spokesman at Pine Ridge, described himself as the head of a new division of public relations within the FBI . . . trained in Washington in the care and feeding of reporters and . . . told to give [the press] more information on breaking crime stories than has been the habit. The reason, he said, was that the FBI had been hurt by Hoover's policy of releasing no information and that Clarence Kelley was earnest in his desire to "open up" the FBI.

Alas, if Coll's performance is any measure, a number of "good ol' boys" have been assigned to give us more flak and less information. As Coll was standing there in front of FBI headquarters dancing around questions and handing out "no comments," a number of other agents in the background were becoming just as angry and frustrated as the reporters, sensing that Coll was hurting the FBI more than helping.

Five days after the shooting, Coll was still refusing to release the results of the autopsies on the two agents. He said the U.S. attorney would not release them. The U.S. attorney said the FBI would not release them. Coll insisted, "I wish I could tell you." He vaguely hinted that the men had not been shot fifteen

or twenty times, but he would not own up to the fact. His only advice was that Kelley was having a press conference in California that evening, but he did not know what Kelley would say. The head of the FBI's information department did not know what his boss would say about the very project he was working on. Kelley released the results of the autopsies.

At about the same time, a man was arrested on the reservation for a minor crime and was shipped off to Rapid City as a material witness to the shooting. The next day, Coll insisted it could not have been true . . . but he agreed to check on it after some prodding. . . . The FBI's chief information officer finally found out that the man had indeed been arrested. . . . Coll . . . either had not been told . . . or was covering.

So much for openness.

DENNIS CASSANO
Minneapolis Tribune

Fair and chilly

TO THE REVIEW:

Charles S. Steinberg suggested in your September/October issue that the FCC's fairness doctrine be suspended for a period as an experiment to determine whether the doctrine chills broadcasters' ardor for aggressive documentaries. . . . In proposing his experiment, he ignores the "double standard" he points to. . . . He offers alternatives for determining the success or failure of the experiment. Whichever alternative, or any other method, might be selected would leave broadcasters in exactly the same psychological position they now find themselves. The sword would still dangle over their heads. They could not be truly free to do as their constitutional rights dictate. There would still be a chilling effect, for the experiment would end at some time. What would happen to them after it ended? . .

As long as the government is in a position to void licenses or fine licensees, there is a chilling effect. The Supreme Court recognizes the chilling effect of state libel laws but only gave lip service to the chilling effect of the fairness doctrine in the heralded Red Lion broadcasting case. . . .

Incidentally, it might be inferred by his readers that I introduced my bill to get the government out of broadcast programming at the behest of broadcasters. That is not true. The support some have given my bill came after the fact. My bill was introduced to right the wrong I committed when I pushed in 1959 to give statutory recognition to the fairness doctrine.

WILLIAM PROXMIRE
U.S. Senate

Charles S. Steinberg replies: *Senator Proxmire and I clearly have no basic disagreement over the substantive issue concerning the fairness doctrine. It should be rescinded because it is an impediment to freedom of communication. . . . It is highly unlikely that the Congress will ever act positively on Senator Proxmire's proposal that the doctrine be eliminated. Absent that possibility and the uneasy status quo will prevail indefinitely unless a first step is taken that could lead to ultimate abrogation. A moratorium in the form of suspension would be that step.*

Addendum

TO THE REVIEW:

The public opinion surveys upon which my article ["How Hard-hat is the Public on Crime?", CJR September/October] was based, were conducted for *Newsweek* by The Gallup Organization, and not the Gallup Poll. *Newsweek*'s sponsorship of these surveys, and their participation in developing them, should receive acknowledgment.

IRVING CRESPI
The Gallup Organization
Princeton, N.J.

The Sun: more heat than light?

TO THE REVIEW:

Reviewing the letters in your last issue, it's apparent that one cannot question the editorial judgment of *The Sun* without being subjected to groundless personal abuse from irate staffers.

Bob White [CJR, July/August] rightfully questioned the ethics of a newspaper that refused to give a man accused of wrongdoing a chance to offer an explanation. Such a policy, as anyone who examines American journalism in the early 1950s can see, is dangerous to the liberties of all. . . .

It was frightening to see that some reporters are so insensitive to the consequences of their actions. They, like the public officials they scrutinize, are in positions of public trust. Maybe they ought to examine their own ethics for a change.

MIKE ENGEL
Stamford, Conn.

Marx the crusader

TO THE REVIEW:

Raymond P. Ewing was certainly correct to point out [in his letter (CJR, September/October)] that Marx served as London correspondent for the *New York Daily Tribune* from 1852-1862, and also during that decade, wrote some articles for *Vienna Presse*. His American journalism is covered in another excellent volume edited by Padover: *Karl Marx on America and the Civil War*. . . .

I should perhaps have mentioned this in the review, but the work I was discussing covered only the early period of Marx's career, i.e., the period when he saw himself as a crusading journalist. As Padover points out, Marx's newspaper writing during the 1850s was primarily factual and expository reportage, and was distinctly secondary to his major concerns.

STANLEY ROTHMAN
Smith College
Northampton, Mass.

Too many warts?

TO THE REVIEW:

Television's illumination of the personal life of the president seems to provide a "human" touch to a figure all too often portrayed as mystic. In the past year network audiences have been privy to the president making his own breakfast, [as well as to] his golf stroke and backstroke. However, in recent weeks network news seems to have distorted this tradition.

I recall the widely used film of Mr. Ford landing on the seat of his pants as he stumbled descending from his aircraft. His quick recovery, greeting hand outstretched in accordance with protocol, was quite comical. Upon the initialing of the recent Middle East peace pact, Mr. Ford attempted to congratulate Egyptian President Sadat on the telephone. The thirty-second network film was not of the conversation, but a kaleidoscope of Mr. Ford saying, "Hello," and complaining of a bad connection.

I believe the public knows that the president does upon occasion stumble or have poor phone connections as does any "mortal man." While such asides are comical, can they be termed "news" in a medium where limited air time is valuable and expensive?

JOSEPH DeSTIO
WPGH Radio
University of Pittsburgh

Correction

A letter from Peter B. Thomas published in our July/August issue contained a typographical error. The final sentence should have read as follows: "If the industry will come to accept a market system of periodic auction of broadcast rights and so guarantee the opportunity for diverse interests to gain access to broadcast time, then we can question the necessity of the fairness doctrine."

REPORTS

by DANIEL J. LEAB

"Sports Coverage: All Sport, No Coverage," by Murray Olderman, **feed/back,** Summer 1975

There's muck aplenty to be raked in the sportswriting fields of northern California, says Olderman. But prostitution, plagiarism, semiliteracy are realities of the game; it's not all those $295 digital quartz watches given to reporters by the Oakland Raiders that bother him, or that regular dispatch of the raw sports copy of a veteran writer playfully sent by his colleagues to an English professor who reads the jumbled prose with disbelief and shock. Rather, Olderman's chief concern is with the "functional deficiencies" of the area's sports pages, deficiencies he regards as primarily sociological: the lack of black and women sportswriters, for example, and the indifference toward investigative journalism about sports. In his call for excellence, Olderman fails to confront directly the possible connection between professional ethics and performance; perhaps that omission accounts for an overview that, while interesting, is essentially unfocused.

"Environmental Reporting," **Montana Journalism Review,** No. 18, 1975

This is an illuminating collection of seven speeches representing a variety of viewpoints on reporting the environment. The different perspectives suggest some thoughtful considerations for journalists, and emphasize the difficulties of their task. John Talbot, publisher of *The Missoulian*, argues against reporting on an all-or-nothing basis, and pleads for an intellectual honesty which recognizes that "as creatures of the industrial revolution . . . we all contribute to the environmental degradation." In Talbot's view, the role of the journalist is to describe the alternatives as fairly as possible. Montana Power Company president George W. O'Connor takes another approach: is a reporter expected to read a 2,000-page environmental statement? Is a news blackout of an environmental meeting justified if both sides do not distribute news releases? Author A. B. Guthrie, Jr. offers this advice to reporters: "Pay no great heed to chambers of commerce. . . . Be chary of corporations and their spokesmen. . . ." And to publishers: "Beware of goodwill." Tom France, of the Northern Plains Resource Council, acknowledges that his grass-roots citizens' group views the media as a battleground, and notes that in matters involving news releases, the group is at a decided economic disadvantage. Moreover, he says, despite its expertise, it is too often ignored as a source. Valuable in general, the seminar is particularly interesting when it touches on the specifics of the Montana environment story.

"This Small News Sheet," by Malcolm Cowley, **Blair & Ketchum's Country Journal,** June 1974

That sense of community so many of us yearn for *is* possible, and in Sherman, Connecticut, a small mimeographed biweekly has helped to make it real. The twenty-eight-year-old *Sherman Sentinel*, written and edited by volunteers, has about 600 regular subscribers and one newsstand (a box on the wall in the general store), carries advertising, and is just about enough in the black to throw a big party for the staff at the end of the year. As poet and literary historian — and *Sentinel* board member — Cowley browses through the paper's bound volumes, recalling this particular property dispute, that particular school debate, the Yankee charm is keenly felt. But what impresses Cowley most is the role of the *Sentinel* in drawing the various parts of the community together. Despite current hints of trouble — acrimony among the citizenry, competition from nearby weeklies — Cowley has no doubts about the *Sentinel*'s survival; it is, after all, an institution. And if there's not another newspaper like it, he says, there ought to be.

"Wedding Presents, Cigars, and Deference," by Thomas Redburn, **The Washington Monthly,** June 1975

As chief counsel of the Senate Communications Subcommittee until soon after this article appeared, Nick Zapple, according to Redburn, "had a part of practically every important piece of broadcasting legislation or congressional study over the last twenty-five years." How did Zapple use his power? Generally, it appears, on behalf of the already rich and powerful broadcasting industry. (In the cable/conventional broadcasting dispute, for example, he helped the industry against competitive efforts; in the license-renewal issue, he helped industry lobbyists plan approaches to various senators.) Redburn portrays Zapple as a power-for-its own-sake type; the description of his demands for petty favors and the rush to please by fearful sycophants does not make pretty reading. But particularly disturbing is the author's charge of journalists who were aware but quiet — or worse, had fallen under Zapple's influence. Although Zapple has since departed from Washington, his example raises questions for public concern.

"Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media 1959-1974," a report by **The Roper Organization,** April 1975

This study for the Television Information Office measures attitudes of the public on various subjects over a sixteen-year period. Comparative statistics are presented here on questions dealing with amounts of television viewing time, the relative credibility and desirability of various media, government control of TV news, children's television, pay television, programming, and commercials. Although Roper's conclusion that "television is successfully meeting its challenges" is debatable, the evidence does indicate that the public approves of what it gets.

"Who Covers America?" by Hamid Mowlana, **Journal of Communication,** Summer 1975

Surprisingly little research attention has been directed to the foreign correspondents stationed in the U.S. Although this study, based on questionnaires, is subject to all the caveats that govern the use of such limited-sample surveys, it does provide some fascinating data. Items: there is no foreign correspondent from Black Africa stationed in Washington, D.C.; few foreign correspondents have any real contact with Americans outside of New York and Washington; of 103 respondents, thirty-four believed that stories they had filed had been suppressed because they disagreed with the editorial policies of their publishers. Mowlana's analysis suggests that in general, members of the foreign press corps are seriously committed, highly educated, politically and religiously liberal and — interestingly enough — sufficiently independent to make it difficult to consider them as a homogeneous group.

The Lower case

Lawmen from Mexico Barbecue Guests

San Benito (Tex.) News 9 17 75

At one point, Colby seemed to be suggesting that the CIA's production, in collaboration with the Army, of cultures other agencies are trying to obliterate, like brucellosis and TV, for instance, had been motivated by humanitarian concerns.

Chicago Tribune 9 22 75

Pastor aghast at First Lady sex position

Alamogordo (N M.) Daily News 8 13 75

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, (to $700) High powered engineering department needs assistant to top VIP. Dynamic, prestigious position offers exceptional reimbursement and retribution! Call Lisa Joseph, 852-5900, National Personnel, 1400 Rand Bldg. (Agency).

Buffalo Evening News 7 9 75

Rosemary Hall Gets New Head

The Hartford Courant 6 6 75

Slain Indian Adopted By Indiana Couple

Indianapolis Star 7 1 75

Milk Drinkers Turn to Powder

Detroit Free Press 11 12 74

Out-Of-Work Blacks High, Simon Says

Columbus Dispatch 7 2 75

The AFSC began by reconstruction work in World War I and fed the needy of all views after the Russian Revolution, headed by future President Herbert Hoover.

The Washington Post 8 19 75

Jane Butcher, on the walk of her home in White Plains, is president of the United Way of Westchester — only the second woman in the nation to hold a similar post.

Tarrytown Daily News 8/16 75

Robber Holds Up Albert's Hosiery

Buffalo Evening News 9/13.75

City, County Parks Resent Shakespeare

The News (Van Nuys, Calif.) 7 22 75

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS WANTED

good job for housewives, male or female, Warren Township area.

Bernardsville (N J.) News 7/31/75

ANTIBUSING RIDER KILLED BY SENATE

The New York Times 9/4 75

Deadline Passes For Striking Police

The Indianapolis News 8 20 75

Just to search for oil, Texaco spent over $500,000,000 last year for a hunting license.

In 1974, Texaco leased 120,000 acres of land from the Government for over one-half billion dollars. Hopefully, one day we'll find enough oil and gas to help make us less dependent on sources abroad.

Although America accounts for only 6% of the world's population, we consume about one-third of the total energy demand. Even with conservation programs, it's still estimated our country's energy needs could double by the year 2000.

There is a great potential for finding new supplies of oil and gas under our oceans.

So last year, we paid the U.S. Government over $500,000,000 for leases on over 120,000 offshore acres. That's over $4,100 an acre for property that's under water. And there's no guarantee we'll ever find a single barrel of oil.

But if we do find a potential oil or gas supply, we then have to spend additional millions for expensive offshore drilling and production platforms and pipelines.

Last year alone, we drilled over 100 offshore wells. This year, we hope we'll be able to finance the drilling of even more. The best way we can see to supply you with the petroleum energy you need is through a free enterprise system that will enable us to generate the necessary capital.

TEXACO

We're working to keep your trust.