Going For Broke On A Super Bowl Ad P. 72

Honest Sources For Diet Info P. 121

We Rate The TV Pundits P. 29

The *New York Times*'s Crossword Maven P. 78

Plus: Calvin Trillin & Ben Stein

BRILL'S CONTENT™

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE

FEBRUARY 1999

CBS

WHAT A DEAL!

WHY CBS NEWS AND CNN SHOULD MERGE

Page 84

reated the NBC News juggernaut
rce them to do it Page 92

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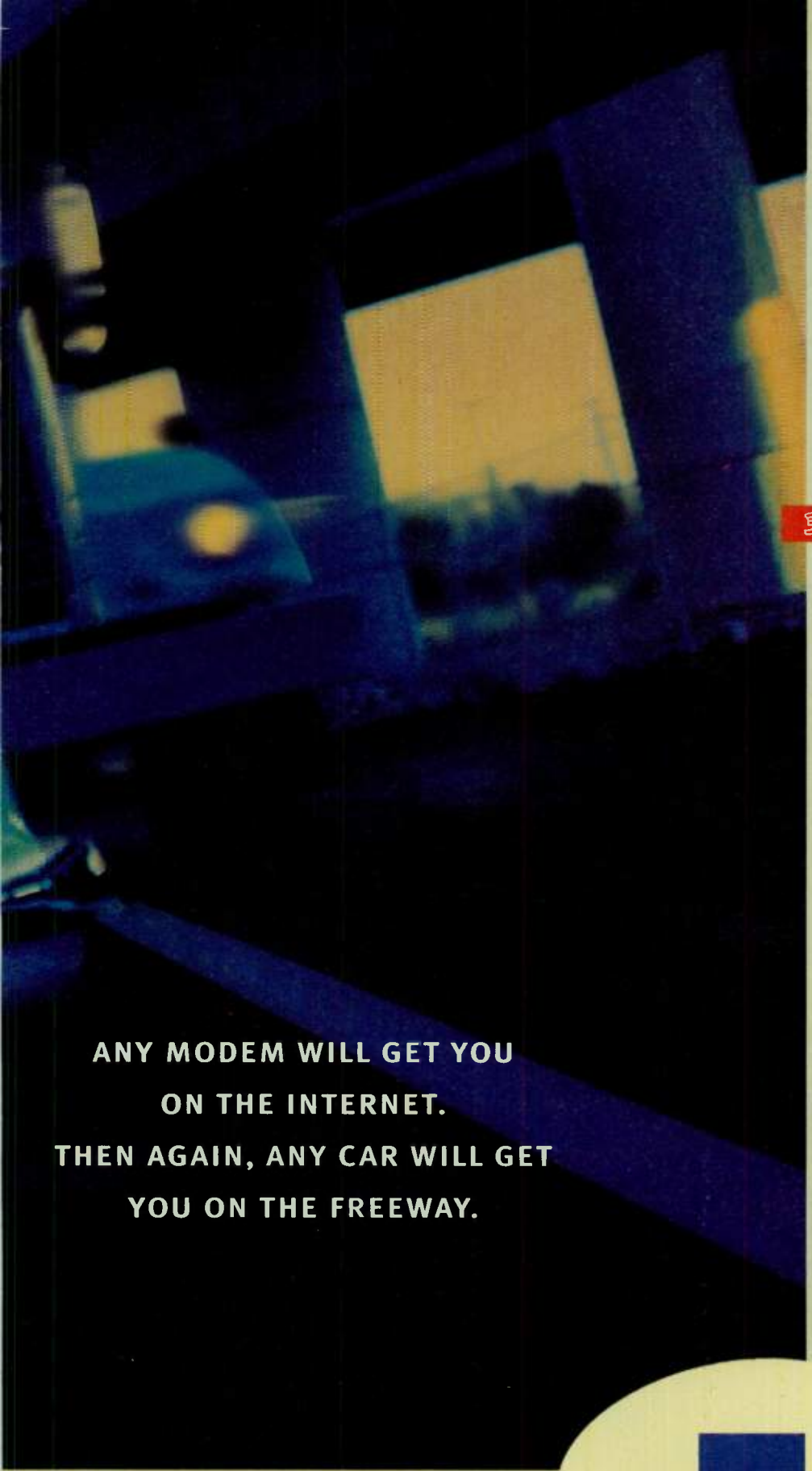

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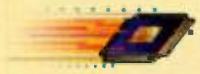

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ANY MAGAZINE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A WORK IN progress, but especially when that magazine is in its infancy and has carved out a mission no less daunting than creating a new category of magazine, one that monitors and chronicles the Information Age (or, at least, the information part of the Information Age). So, in this, our sixth issue, we are introducing a handful of new features—some in response to your ideas and suggestions (and, man, do you have ideas and suggestions)—intended to make the magazine more compelling, more useful, and more fun.

More on some of the new stuff shortly, but, first, a word about all those ideas and suggestions. We are regularly amazed by the volume and the quality of the letters we receive. True, a disturbing portion of them involve Sam Donaldson for some reason, and many readers are convinced that the press has a big Israel problem (though the letters are fairly evenly divided between those accusing the media of being hopelessly pro-Israel and those alleging the opposite). But, for the most part, your questions and observations have been enormously helpful, spawning some of the stories you've read or will read in this magazine and confirming our sense that there is a voracious public appetite for scrutiny of a media establishment that manages both to inform and infuriate us.

Lately, a lot of that infuriation has been directed at the pundits who seem to have multiplied exponentially along with the news outlets that host them. So here's a simple, powerful idea that came in from a reader: Keep score of how often those predictions and prognostications are on target. Check out our new "Pundits Scorecard" on page 29; in future issues we'll be adding names to the roster while keeping a running average. You'll be able to judge the pundits not simply on whether or not you agree with them (you can still do that, of course) but on how accurate their "insights" prove to be.

In that same spirit, we're launching a new section of the magazine this month called "Sources." We know all too well the feeling of being overwhelmed by too much information and not having enough time to assess its credibility, so each month we'll search the crowded media landscape for the best sources on a particular topic. In our debut effort, on page 121, we navigate the maze of conflicting (and often self-serving) information on diet and nutrition and produce a menu of publications, websites, and even telephone services you can trust.

Whom should we trust and believe? That's a big question in this Information Age, and it rests at the heart of this magazine's mission. In two other new columns, we don't presume to provide any pat answers, but we do give you some new ammo to help you think critically about what you read, watch, and log on to.

In "The Debunker," Ben Stein this month argues that the picture of the 1950s as dull and uninspired is a media myth that does not hold up against the facts (page 70); in future issues, other media myths will be exploded. And in "The Big Blur," on page 44, we take notice of all the subtle and not so subtle ways news and entertainment have blurred, as well as how advertising and other commercial forces are shaping our nonfiction media.

With all this focus on our new offerings, I'm afraid I may have buried the lead. In our cover story this month, editor in chief Steven Brill makes a compelling and authoritative case for a merger that would rock the news world. Brill approaches this surprising story not as an advocate but as a media entrepreneur and former cable-network chief who understands the business forces that make a CNN–CBS News merger if not inevitable, then certainly a lot more realistic than anyone previously may have thought. You'll likely be hearing a lot more about this one.

Brill's piece is nicely complemented by senior writer Abigail Pogrebin's probing profile of NBC News president Andrew Lack. Lack is not a household name outside of media circles, but he is widely credited with creating a multimedia powerhouse that has changed the face of network news, while raising some sticky questions about journalistic values in the modern marketplace. Taken together, Brill and Pogrebin's stories provide a vivid reminder that we live in a time of great possibilities, but also of great flux, when nothing, including the very structure and purposes of our great news organizations, can be taken for granted.

ERIC EFFRON
EDITOR

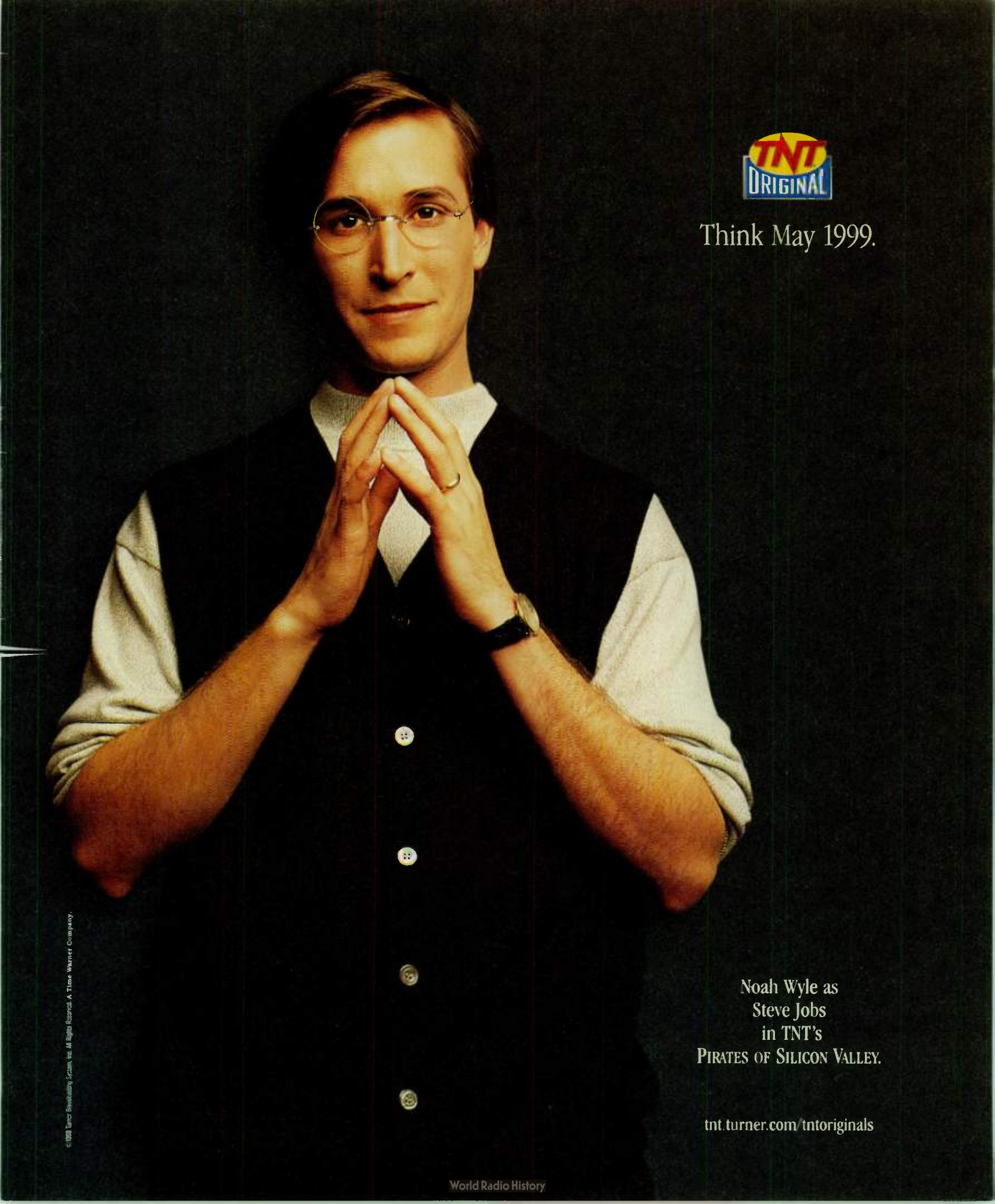
WHAT WE STAND FOR

1. ACCURACY: *Brill's Content* is about all that purports to be nonfiction. So it should be no surprise that our first principle is that anything that purports to be nonfiction should be true. Which means it should be accurate in fact and in context.

2. LABELING AND SOURCING: Similarly, if a publisher is not certain that something is accurate, the publisher should either not publish it, or should make that uncertainty plain by clearly stating the source of his information and its possible limits and pitfalls. To take another example of making the quality of information clear, we believe that if unnamed sources must be used, they should be labeled in a way that sheds light on the limits and biases of the information they offer.

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: We believe that the content of anything that sells itself as journalism should be free of any motive other than informing its consumers. In other words, it should not be motivated, for example, by the desire to curry favor with an advertiser or to advance a particular political interest.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY: We believe that journalists should hold themselves as accountable as any of the subjects they write about. They should be eager to receive complaints about their work, to investigate complaints diligently, and to correct mistakes of fact, context, and fairness prominently and clearly.



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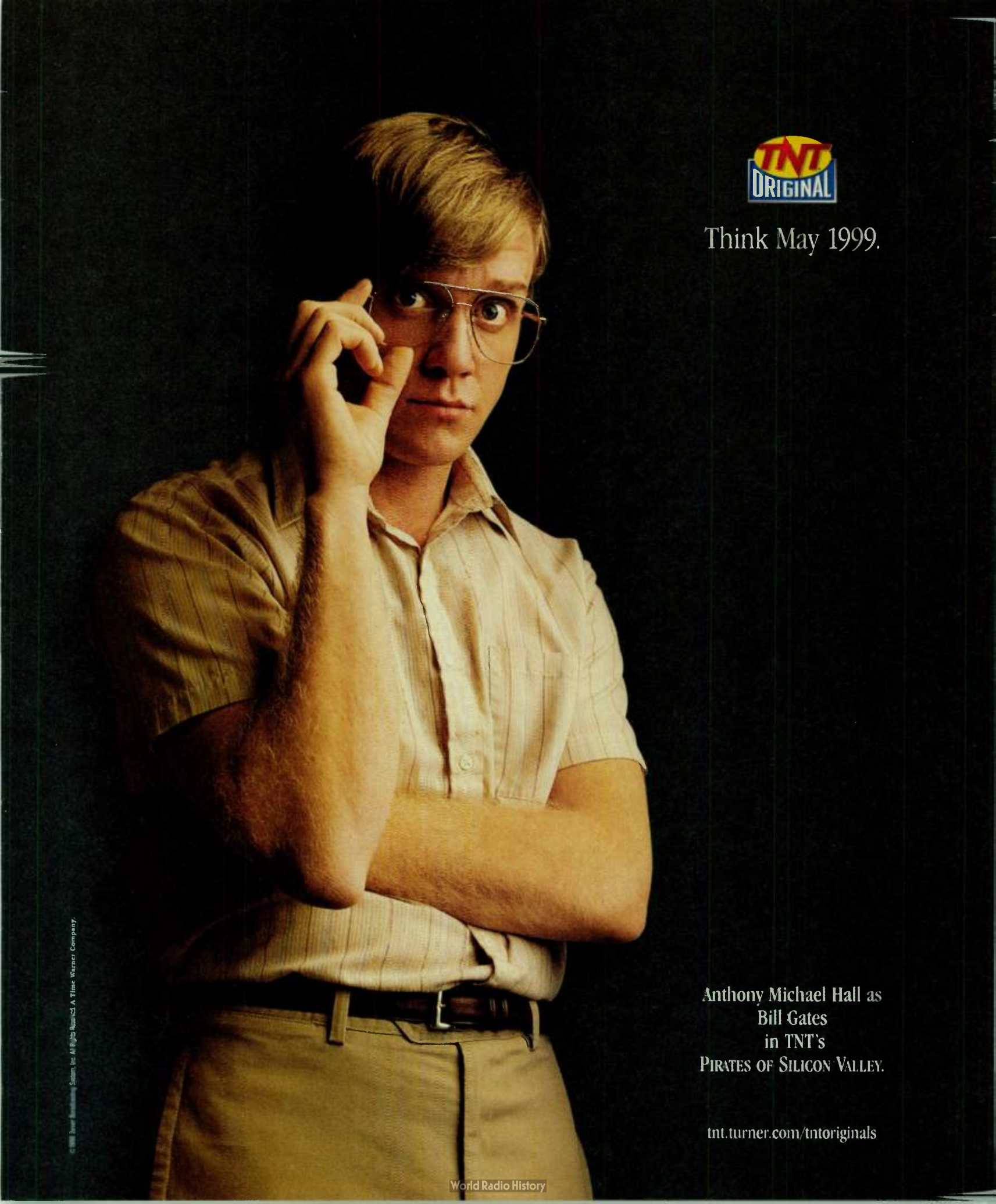

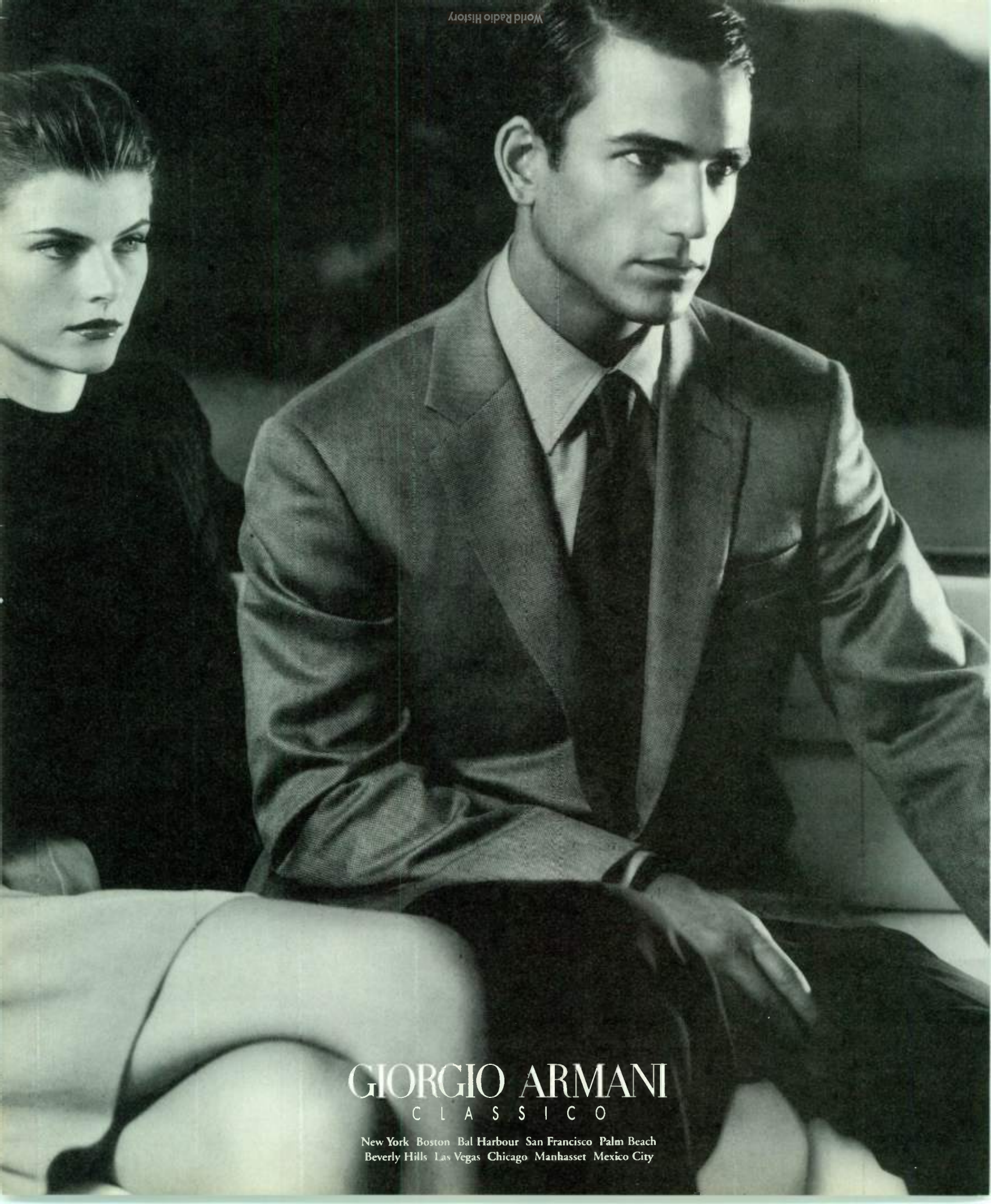

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THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE
FEBRUARY 1999 • VOLUME TWO • NUMBER ONE

FEATURES

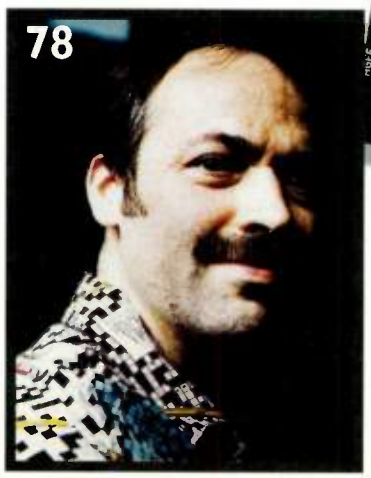
84

CNN and CBS News have tempting financial incentives to explore a merger.

92

NBC News president Andrew Lack has triumphed at NBC by heeding the same instincts that failed him at CBS News.

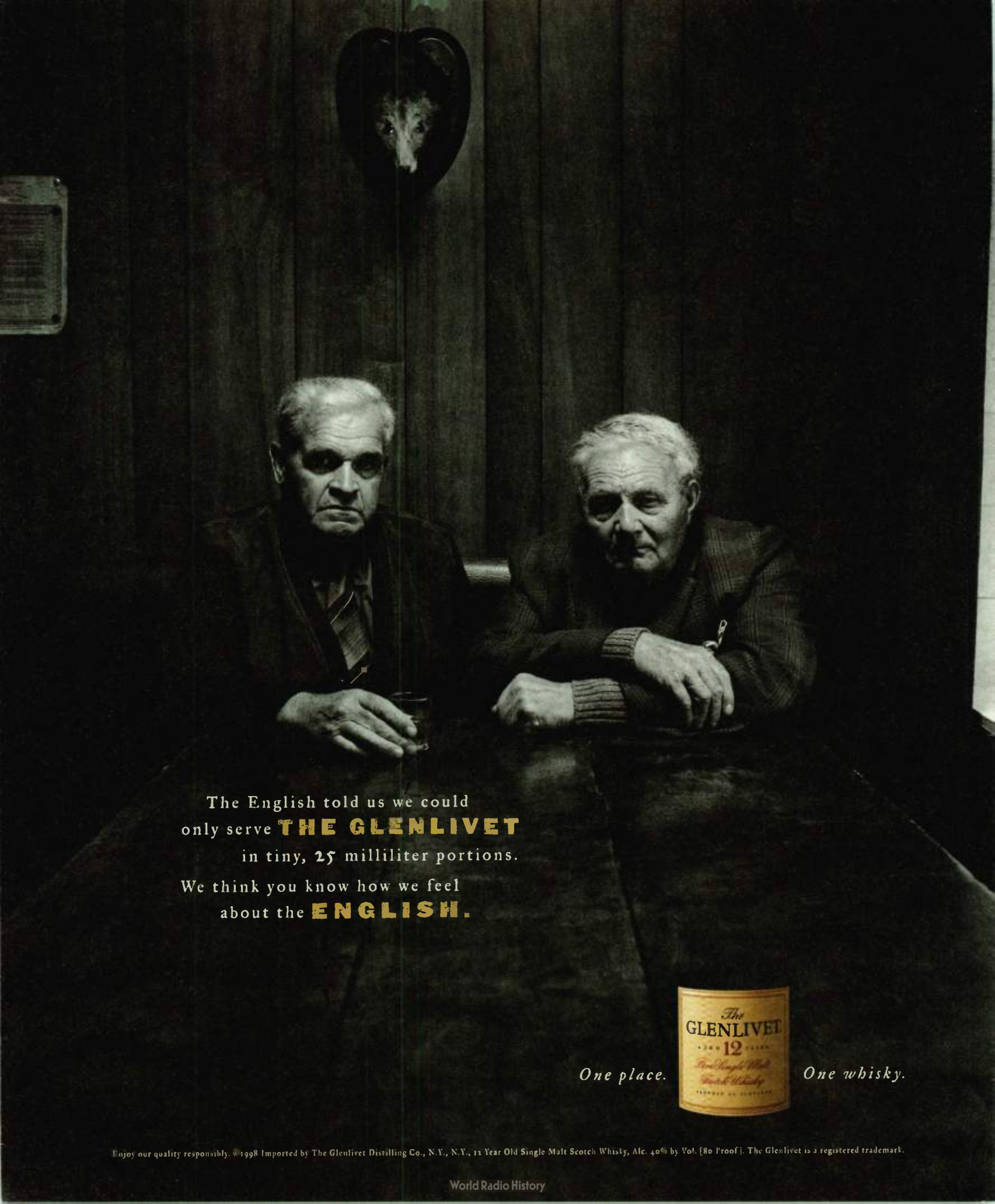
Without Will Shortz (below), the crossword editor at The New York Times, hundreds of thousands of readers would be left clueless.



72

Richard Johnson (above), chief executive officer of Internet upstart Hotjobs.com, is willing to spend $2 million on a Super Bowl ad to make a marketplace splash.

ED BAILEY/AP-WIDE WORLD (LACK); KEN SHUNG (JOHNSON); JIM ALLEN (SHORTZ)



42 *Sorry seems to be the hardest word for those Sunday-morning pundits, a.k.a. the Sabbath Gasbags.*

49 *The state Senate campaign of Democrat Rick Trombly raised challenging journalistic issues for the Concord Monitor.*

52 *A turf war broke out between theater and dance critics when a new version of Swan Lake came to Broadway.*

40 *The harrowing violence in Kosovo is captured in a photograph of a family grieving over a tragic death.*

ROBERT DE MICHIELI, CRAIG SCHWARTZ/AP-WIDE WORLD (SWAN LAKE); LARA SOLT; ALAN CHIN (KOSOVO)

THE NOTEBOOK 28

PUNDIT SCORECARD

The McLaughlin Group's political prognosticators offer their predictions each week. We calculate their batting averages. 29

WHEN HIT-MAKERS HIT BACK

The Madd Rapper didn't appreciate seeing a picture of himself in the hip-hop magazine *Blaze*, so he decided to strike back—literally. 36

HOW THEY GOT THAT SHOT

In a photo for *The New York Times*, Alan Chin captures the personal cost of the violence in Kosovo. 40

COLUMNS AND DEPARTMENTS

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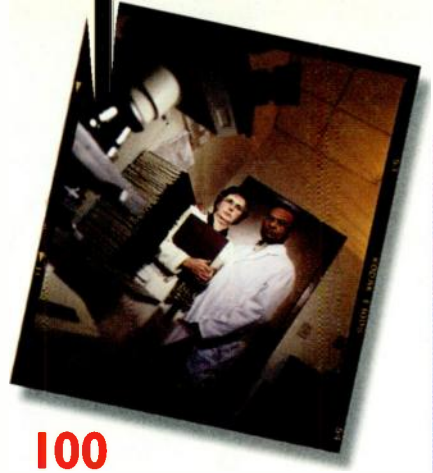
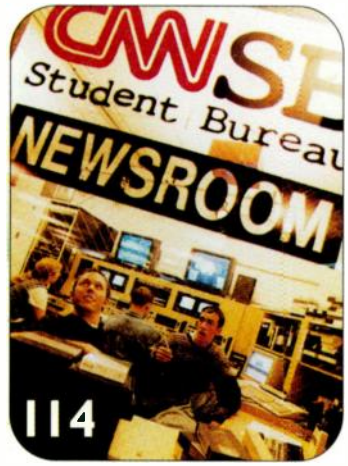


100

Carolyn and John Devaraj (shown inside the medical lab they used to own) are suing PrimeTime Live *for fraud.*

Will Smith finds himself under the watchful high-tech eye of the National Security Agency in Enemy of the State.



Students of Toms River High School work in the CNN Student Bureau newsroom.

CORRECTIONS POLICY

1. We always publish corrections at least as prominently as the original mistake was published.

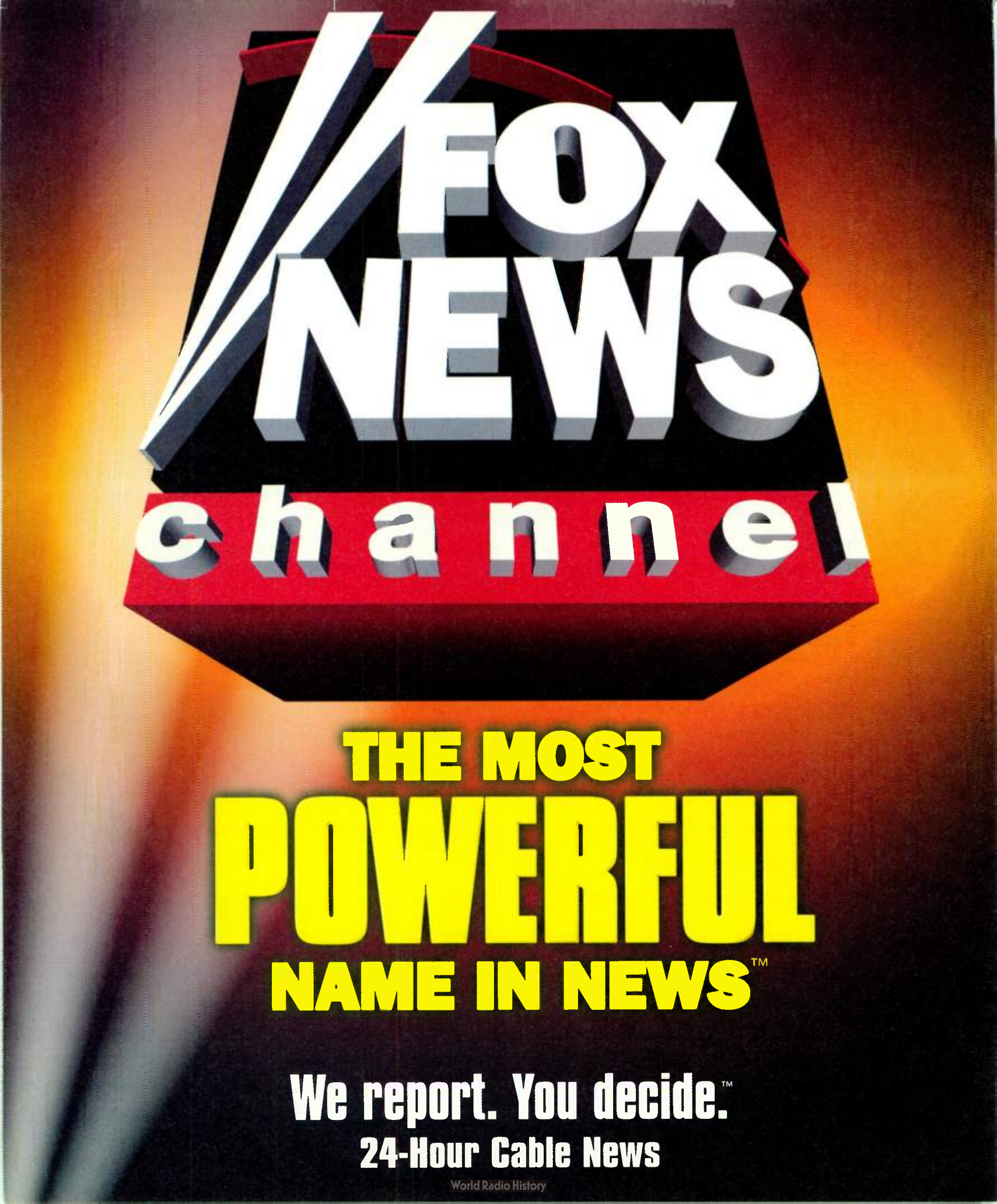
2. We are eager to make corrections quickly and candidly.

3. Although we welcome letters to the editor that are critical of our work, an aggrieved party need not have a letter to the editor published for us to correct a mistake. We will publish corrections on our own and in our own voice as soon as we are told about a mistake by anyone—our staff, an uninvolved reader, or an aggrieved reader—and can confirm the correct information.

4. Our corrections policy should not be mistaken for a policy of accommodating readers who are simply unhappy about a story that has been published.

5. Information about corrections or complaints should be directed to editor in chief Steven Brill. We may be reached by mail at 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 10175; by fax at 212-824-1950; or by e-mail at comments@brillscontent.com.

6. Separately or in addition, readers are invited to contact our outside ombudsman, Bill Kovach, who will investigate and report on specific complaints about the work of the magazine. He may be reached by voice mail at 212-824-1981; by fax at 212-824-1940; by e-mail at bkovach@brillscontent.com; or by mail at 1 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA, 02138.



OF MOUSE AND MAN

SOME STORIES ARE BY THEIR NATURE DESTINED TO ATTRACT MORE ATTENTION THAN OTHERS. So it was with our November cover story on one-man Internet news bureau Matt Drudge. "Your Drudge Report report was classic, well worth the cost of an entire subscription," wrote John Tomasin of New Jersey. Other readers weren't so sure. "I suspect his stupid smirk splashed across November's issue is directed toward the editors of *Brill's Content* for taking him seriously," scoffed Scott Anderson of Connecticut.

Letters published below with an asterisk have been edited for space. The full text of each can be found at our America Online site (keyword: brills) and at our website (www.brillscontent.com). In addition, other letters to the editor not published here can be found at the AOL site.

NO NEWS GIANTS

Forty years ago, Edward R. Murrow risked his career to warn against threats to the integrity of television news. He used his stature to stand up for what he believed was right, knowing his name and reputation would guarantee his remarks a hearing.

What a striking contrast to the highly paid talent of today's ABC News, who hide behind spokespeople to avoid comment on an issue that goes to the integrity of the organization they work for ["Mouse-ke-fear," December 1998/January 1999]. Your reporters have a future as gamekeepers—they certainly cornered a bunch of weasels on this one.

JOHN REINAN
Charlotte, NC

NOTHING THERE

*I'm impressed. I'm cruising past the newsstand and I see your mag: "Mouse-ke-fear, the dread that prompted ABC News to ruin its credibility by killing a tough story about Disney." Wow, I think, as I plunk down $3.95. This Brill guy's finally got the goods on Mickey, the biggest rat of all.

I plop down in the chaise longue, open 'er up, and what do I find? Nothing. Nothing at all. Your "indefatigable reporter" got "no evidence that Eisner or anyone else at Disney had a hand in killing the story." Your gal admitted "it's impossible to know for sure if the story was a gem or if it contained flaws so severe that senior news executives were justified in spiking it."

And, in ten big, Technicolor pages, you didn't show there was any story at all: "*Brill's Content* was able to identify only three cases in which Ross...found that sex crimes had been committed against Disney guests on Disney property." Three cases with 51,000 employees? You slipped by the very first rule of all news: it's got to be news.

DAVID BUFFINGTON
Hummelstown, PA
(via e-mail)

THE OUT-OF-TOWNER

*I thought Charles Kaiser's profile of *The Buffalo News* ["Making Page One," Decisions, December/January] was interesting enough until I got to the point in the story when it became apparent he had buried the lead. He builds up our sympathy for this unhip-and-proud-of-it bunch of journalists whose no-nonsense local strategies seem to have produced a terrific profit margin, *then* reveals that 1) they don't really deliver on their local-news promises because 2) the newsroom staffing is scandalously low, in keeping with the newspaper economy of absentee billionaire owner Warren Buffett.

S.R. MITCHELL
Pasadena, CA
(via e-mail)

THE BUBBLE BURSTS

*Ben Stein's piece ["Putting It All In Context," The Money Press, December/January] is a textbook example of sophistry. The equity "discount rate" is derived from equity prices, not vice versa. Expectations can change abruptly simply because they reflect what people think other people are thinking. [John Maynard] Keynes put that very well. And when a speculative bubble bursts, it splatters about faster than you can say "P/E." Little things mean a lot; people are smarter than Ben Stein thinks.

W.F. SMITH
Walnut Creek, CA
(via e-mail)

LET IT RIP

*Thank you for publishing the Broder-Talbot acrimonious exchange ["Ugly Tactics Indeed," Talk Back, December/January].

It, like the Lando-Hewitt disagreement published in [the October] issue, illustrates the moral bankruptcy of today's journalists.

RICHARD READE
Setauket, NY

HUNT, DON'T GATHER

*In attempting to justify his refusal to run the news item that [U.S. Representative] Henry Hyde had a

CORRECTIONS

IN "THE DEVIL MIGHT BE AN ANGEL" (November), an incorrect percentage was given for the *Los Angeles Times*'s circulation decline between 1991 and 1996. The newspaper's circulation dropped by 16.7 percent during that period.

In "Meet Your Weatherman" (December), an editing error resulted in our inaccurately stating the cost-per-forecast figure paid to Accuweather by an Indianapolis television station. The correct figure is $31. We regret the errors.

Letters to the editor should be addressed to: Letters to the Editor, *Brill's Content*, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 10175 Fax: (212) 824-1950 E-mail: letters@brillscontent.com. Only letters or messages signed by those who can be contacted during daytime hours, by e-mail or telephone, will be considered for publication. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

skeleton or two in his own marital closet, Jonathan Broder laments: "Already I was having trouble getting my calls returned from far-right groups and individuals like the Christian Coalition, Paul Weyrich, and Gary Bauer. If the Hyde story ran, I cautioned, *Salon* would have difficulty getting any Republican member of Congress to return its calls."

Three cheers for *Salon* editor and CEO David Talbot for not buying into this cop-out line of reasoning. If democracy is to flourish, it needs a vigorous Fourth Estate dedicated to actively seeking out the news, not one passively content to merely gather it.

CHAUNCEY G. PARKER III
Orlando, FL
(via e-mail)

BUT IS IT NEWS?

*Your warmed-over criticisms of video news releases ["Hamburger Helper For Newscasters," The Notebook, December/January] are no more valid today than they were when they first made headlines.

The issue is not the source of the information but whether in a news editor or producer's judgment the information is worth sharing with the public. Video news-release footage does not get on the air unless a journalist deems it newsworthy.

PAUL HOLMES
New York, NY
(via e-mail)

SMUG SHOT

*As a subscriber from the first issue, I'm becoming a bit concerned about the content of my favorite magazine. How is it that the cover of October's *Brill's Content* has a tremendous warning label with regard to TV magazine shows, while the cover of November's issue heralds Matt Drudge as "The Town Crier For The New Age"? The article about TV newsmagazines judges 60 percent of the investigated segments fair; the article about Drudge shows only about 20 percent of the stories that he claims to be true and exclusive are—after he kept a number of once-claimed (and probably libelous) exclusives [out of] the America Online archive! I suspect his stupid smirk splashed across November's issue is directed toward the editors of *Brill's Content* for taking him seriously.

SCOTT ANDERSON
Beacon Falls, CT
(via e-mail)

THE DRUDGE RETORT

*What a shame David McClintick didn't take the time to inform his readers of how many unflattering pieces Matt Drudge has done on conservative pundits or Republican politicians. I suspect the answer is that he's done very few, which would mean that not only is Matt Drudge not a journalist (by his own admission), but also that he's partisan and biased as well.

If a journalist (or Internet gossipmonger like Drudge) fancies himself as a "partisan for truth," a demonstrated willingness to go after all parties is a prerequisite.

MIKE CASEY,
Arlington, VA
(via e-mail)

PUFF PIECE

*What a disappointment. With all the important stories to write about tobacco and the media, this is the one ["Warning: Secondhand Smoke May Not Kill You," December/January] you picked. It's like a surgeon striding into the ER, glancing at the accident victim's spilling guts and oozing brain, and declaring: "This man has a hangnail!" Thanks for the manicure.

SARAH WERNICK
Brookline, MA
(via e-mail)

A SCAM SMOKED OUT

*It was a pleasure to see *Brill's Content* take the important step of publishing an article that begins to reveal the depth of misinformation and scientific sophistry regarding the perceived risks of secondhand tobacco smoke.

The distortion of scientific evidence, compounded by the scientific ignorance of journalists and policy makers, has resulted in health policies that are based on politics and emotion rather than science and reason. The great secondhand-smoke scam is a case in point.

[Writer] Nicholas Varchaver focuses on the July 17, 1998, decision of federal Judge William Osteen, who threw out the EPA's 1993 report finding that secondhand smoke was a carcinogen. It is sad that it took a federal judge to accomplish what hundreds of scientists and statisticians have tried to do in the five years following the EPA's report. Had reporters taken the time to find and speak with unbiased sources who took exception to the report, this country could have saved hundreds of millions of dollars spent in unnecessary and useless programs to limit secondhand smoke.

ANNE FENNELL
Austin, TX
(via e-mail)

BY THE NUMBERS

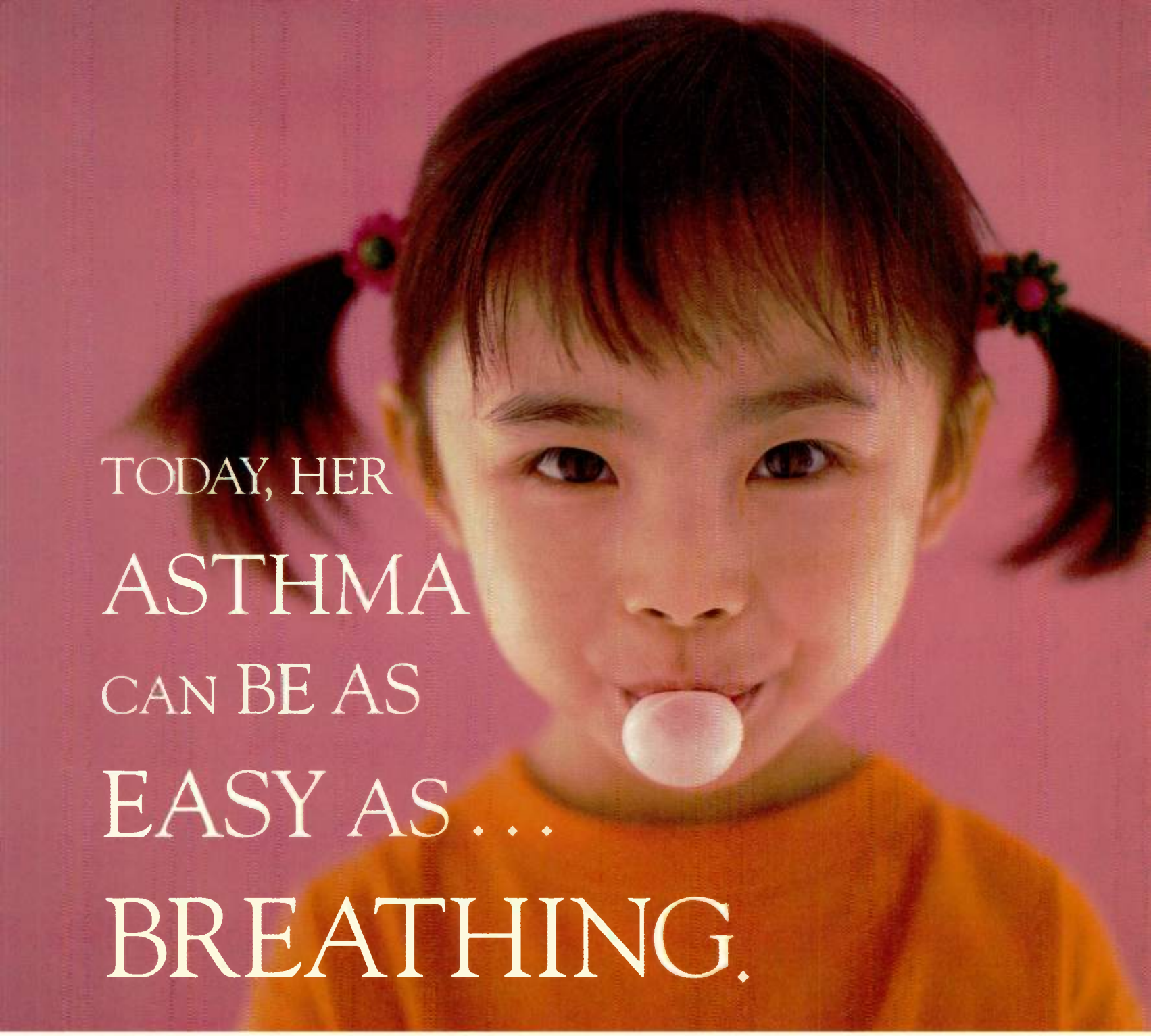
*In your article, "Warning: Secondhand Smoke May Not Kill You," there was an important technical error. On page 89, the author wrote, "the authors of the EPA study had lowered their so-called confidence interval, a statistical term that assigns a percentage value to represent how likely it is that a result occurred purely by chance."

This is not only incorrect, it is misleading, because it leaves out the most crucial part of the question. What the author is describing is the degree of confidence, also known as the level of confidence or the confidence coefficient. The actual 'confidence interval' is the range of values within which the results may fall. Specifically, if you have a confidence interval of +/-3 percent and a degree of confidence of 90 percent for a 19 percent result, you are saying that there is a 90 percent chance that the result is within 16–22 percent.

No discussion of a statistical result is complete without mentioning both figures. In statistical science, if you lower the degree of confidence, you generally increase the accuracy of the result, i.e., you decrease the confidence interval (which is a good thing, not a bad one). But this is at the expense of certainty. This makes your article state a partial falsehood, although probably by accident.

What your periodical missed is the

(continued on page 124)



For 15 million people with asthma, breathing doesn't always come easy. An asthma attack begins with a tightening of the chest and difficulty inhaling, and can leave sufferers gasping for breath with the overwhelming feeling of suffocation. Severe attacks can require an emergency trip to the hospital. But in recent years, pharmaceutical company researchers have discovered and developed new breakthrough medicines that allow patients more effective control over their asthma—and even help prevent an attack before it happens. So, for the millions of people with asthma, an attack isn't as frightening as it used to be. Today, asthma is more controllable, but we won't rest until it's cured. Then we'll *all* breathe easier.

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[REPORT FROM THE OMBUDSMAN]

BY BILL KOVACH

Heroic. Really?—"I JUST WANTED TO RAISE A QUESTION with you're...the designation of Stephanie Lambidakis of CBS as a 'hero' for waylaying Justice Scalia as he came out of church to ask him why he had no black law clerks. This is heroic journalism?" Although the reader didn't want to be identified, it's a fair question. The words we choose should mean what they say.

First let me say that the reader's use of the word *waylaying* to describe what Stephanie Lambidakis did casts her actions in a needlessly negative light. The question Ms. Lambidakis was trying to put to Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia was a legitimate one—the minority-hiring practices of members of the Supreme Court, an issue originally tackled by *USA Today*. Before taking to the streets, Ms. Lambidakis had repeatedly but unsuccessfully tried to question the justices by phone and otherwise. Failing that, she approached Justice Scalia in a public place and identified herself. She did not block his way or crowd him. She did not ask the question impolitely. He chose not to respond.

Supreme Court justices are, for many good reasons, more insulated from journalistic inquiry than most public officials. That does not mean that they should not be held to account for their behavior in areas of concern as important as the equal treatment of citizens.

Stephanie Lambidakis's attempt to raise the issue with a member of the court was a legitimate effort by a journalist reporting on an important subject. Whether the action was "heroic journalism" is another matter. My dictionary uses such words as *courageous, noble, gallant,* and *involving risk,* to define heroic.

Walking up to someone on a public sidewalk, even a powerful government official, to ask a legitimate question doesn't seem to me to rise to the kind of "courageous," "noble," or "gallant" activity that justifies the label *hero.*

Point Well Taken—The e-mail from Gary Karr is direct and to the point: "One word in the Disney/ABC piece sticks in my craw: *rumored.* The word appears in a sentence dealing with Brian Ross['s] salary." I agree; the word sticks in mine too, especially anytime I come across it in what holds itself out to be a reporting of facts. Even more so in *Brill's Content,* which announces each month in "What We Stand For" that "it should be no surprise that our first principle is that anything that purports to be nonfiction should be true. Which means it should be accurate in fact and in context." In anything other than a gossip column it would be hard to make that claim by publishing rumors.

When I asked Steven Brill, he agreed with Mr. Karr: "We made a mistake. That was bad editing. It's a bad word. We should say why we think that is the salary."

A Question of Standards—"What is the relationship between the magazine's web page and the magazine itself? Are the materials published on the website held to the same standards as the magazine?" Those questions were e-mailed by Toby Dorsey. It is a subject more and more frequently of concern to readers who see their traditional print publications begin to show up with a "paper" on the Web that changes minute by minute.

First, a disclaimer. My ombudsman's writ runs only to material that appears in the printed magazine. I've never seen the web version of the magazine. Because I have no firsthand knowledge, I asked Brill for his answer, and he says there are basically two standards.

"If the materials that appear on-line are identified as having been written by the magazine's staff or written for the magazine," he says, "the standards are absolutely the same for both print and electronic versions of the magazine."

But he adds that in order to take advantage of the flexibility that the immediacy of the Web provides for new opportunities for reporting and developing more interesting information, there are separate rules for some of the material that appears on-line.

"Some other information," he says, "is of necessity different." As an example he cites a competitive story that might grow stale waiting for the next issue of the magazine. Such a story would be posted on the web version, written to the magazine's standards. But because the story appears in an interactive medium it is likely to attract a discussion among readers who express information and opinions of their own on the subject. This "bulletin board" material is not held to the magazine's standards.

"Although," Brill adds, "I still think we are responsible in the sense that I reserve the right to edit stuff that is in bad taste or grossly unfair to people—within the parameters that the bulletin board is a place for people to discuss all kinds of opinion." ■

HOW TO REACH HIM

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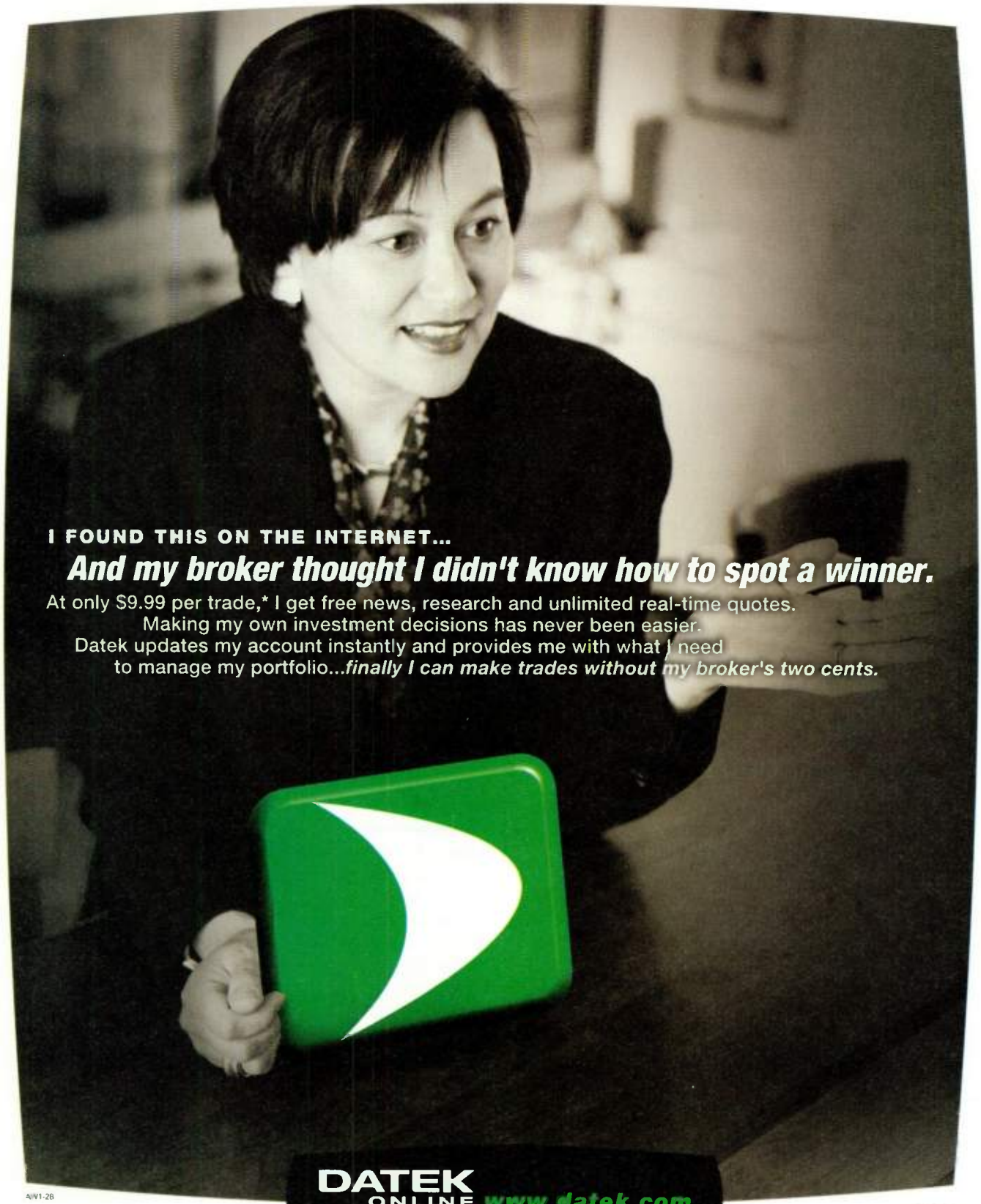
Bill Kovach, curator of Harvard's Nieman Foundation for Journalism, was formerly editor of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution *and a* New York Times *editor.*



A/W1-2B

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Grodin's miscast role...Ted Turner's hot war...*Vanity Fair*'s misplaced women...ABC stars menaced by a mouse...A killer *60 Minutes*...The *New York Post* takes the lead..Why Marcia?

ACTOR/ANCHORS

I try not to be a snob about politicians or even showbiz people becoming television journalists, but MSNBC went too far even for me on the night in November that we almost bombed Iraq. Just after the White House had announced on Saturday evening, November 14, that Saddam's letter of apparent capitulation was unacceptable, we were all treated to actor Charles Grodin anchoring MSNBC's coverage. Grodin, whom I remember fondly as the hapless father in *Beethoven* (the hilarious movie about a crazy family dog) and who had a gig as a weeknight talk-show host on sister cable channel CNBC that has now moved to MSNBC on Saturday nights, questioned NBC reporters live from Baghdad, Washington, and the United Nations. Meantime, CNN had its usual first team on air.

It wasn't that Grodin or his questions were stupid; he isn't and they weren't. Rather, it's a matter of what might have happened had some sudden news erupted, as was quite possible. It's also a matter of whether MSNBC and NBC News, which runs the cable channel, really believe—and want to tell the world—that when it comes to live coverage of a possible war there's no difference between an actor and, say, Tom Brokaw or Brian Williams.

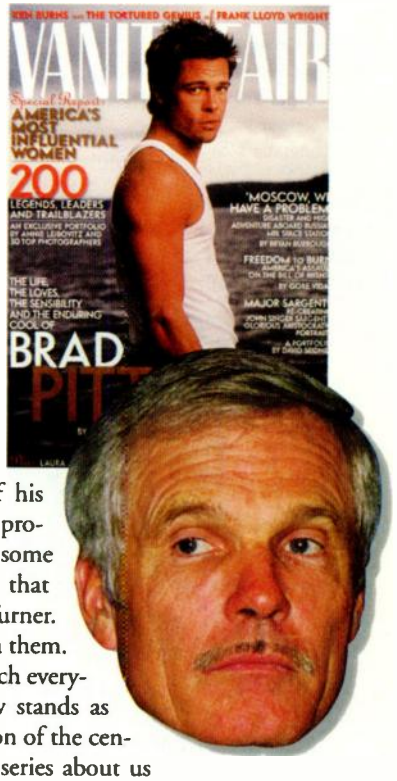
A HERO

Our "Heroes" column rewards journalists doing great journalism, but I want to reward a businessman and sometime blowhard for doing great journalism. I'm referring to Ted Turner. And as I watched another installment of CNN's *Cold War* the other night, I noticed that the closing credits said that he came up with the idea for the series. Was the staff just trying to butter up the mercurial (a true euphemism) boss? Not in Ted's case.

"It was in 1994 at the Goodwill Games in Saint Petersburg [Russia] that Ted took me to breakfast and said we should do a series on the Cold War now that the files were open...with live eyewitnesses and eyewitness footage," recalls Patricia Mitchell, who, with Jeremy Isaacs, is the series' coexecutive producer. In fact, says Mitchell, "when we finished scripting twenty hours, Ted read through it and asked us to make it twenty-four hours....I've never had someone in his position ask me to make something longer and spend more money....Ted told me on that very first day that we talked about this that his grandchildren were not going to know what the Cold War was all about unless we did this—that the impact was not simply now but all the runs this series will have in the future."

Although *Cold War* is not a ratings blockbuster, it's doing about 20 percent better than what had been in that CNN time slot. With advance ad sales, tape sales, and rights purchases by television networks around the world, the $12 million cost of the series is already covered, says Mitchell, meaning that future runs and tape sales will produce a profit.

Nonetheless, I'm told by four other people at CNN, including one who doesn't like Turner at all, that he pushed the idea hard against the eye-rolling skepticism of some of his company's financial people and professional programmers. These pros no doubt remembered some of the boss's other well-intentioned ideas that bombed. But for me that's what's great about Turner. He has all kinds of ideas and isn't afraid to push them. One result of that, of course, is CNN itself, which everyone said was a nutty venture and which now stands as probably the most important journalism creation of the century. The result in this case is a documentary series about us against the USSR that has kept me and my kids glued to the set. It's great stuff, with great footage, crystal-clear writing, painstaking reporting, terrific interviews with the important players, and a good follow-up discussion after each show anchored by CNN global-affairs correspondent Ralph Begleiter. If you've missed the weekly series of 24 one-hour shows, which began in September and airs at 8 P.M. (EST) on Sundays (with reruns three hours later that night and on Friday and Saturday nights at 10 P.M. and 1 A.M.), start watching or buy the tapes.



Vanity Fair's Brad Pitt cover sideswiped influential women; Ted Turner triumphs over the "Cold War."

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ/VANITY FAIR/AP-WIDE WORLD; AP-WIDE WORLD (TURNER)

WRONG ANSWER

When Walker Art Center director Kathy Halbreich was named in *Vanity Fair*'s special November issue as one of America's 200 most influential women, she wrote the magazine saying she was honored to have been chosen but that "the real story is framed by the photograph of Brad Pitt on the cover of the same issue. Wasn't there a single woman among your list...who could equal his accomplishments and sell the magazine?" To

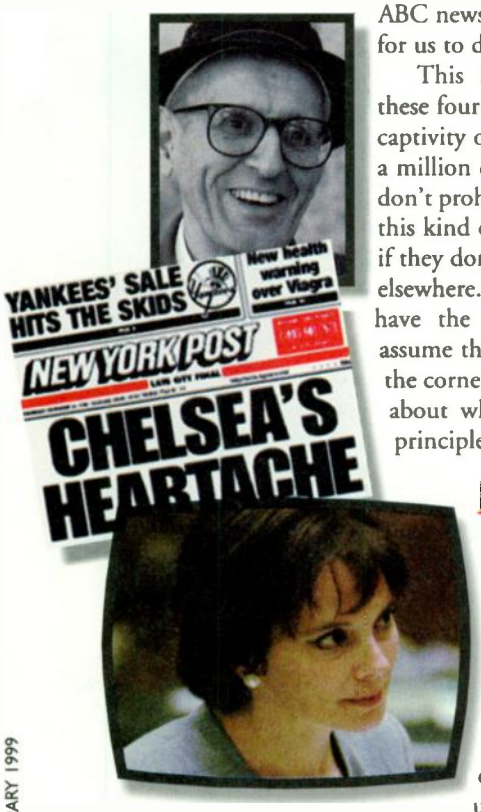
which editor Graydon Carter replied, "We would like to note that of the 24 artists featured in solo or small group exhibitions organized by Halbreich's Walker Art Center between this March and April 2000, 80 percent are men."

Huh? Why couldn't he just admit that his magazine's readers are about 80 percent female and that putting a young Hollywood male on the cover helps to sell it? "Because it's not true," Carter maintains. "We wanted to do a cover with eight of the women, but the logistics became impossible." So why not say that in his answer? "Because it was a snotty letter and it was none of her damn business."

VICTIMS

"You really need to write something about how they killed Brian's story...I wish I could speak out, but you can speak out for us....It's so important." That was what one of ABC's major on-camera news people said to me just before we published last issue's story about how ABC News killed Brian Ross's report about pedophile problems at Disney theme parks. In fact, before the story was published and in its aftermath, I've now had similar conversations with four different ABC news "stars" about how important it was for us to do something because they couldn't.

This is pathetic. The average salary of these four people claiming to be held in silent captivity over at ABC is, I'd guess, more than a million dollars. All have contracts that I bet don't prohibit them from publicly questioning this kind of core-issue editorial decision; even if they don't, they're all eminently employable elsewhere. It's just plain sad that none of them have the guts to do anything other than assume the role of victims forced to retreat to the corner of some cocktail party and whisper about what is supposed to be the bedrock principle of their work.



Dr. Jack Kevorkian (top) was hard to watch on *60 Minutes*, but the story was well done; the *New York Post* broke the "news" about Chelsea Clinton; Marcia Clark's credential is her fame (bottom).

FAME

Can anyone tell me why Marcia Clark has a job as an NBC News legal analyst and as Geraldo's regular Friday-night substitute on CNBC? This is, after all, the woman who lost the easiest-to-win celebrity murder trial of the century. And she didn't lose it only because of a misguided jury. As someone who used to write about trials for a living and who watched the O.J. Simpson case intensely, I can promise you that she did a truly horrible job, taking days to question witnesses who deserved an hour, putting the wrong witnesses on, and self-destructing whenever she tried cross-examination. So, why is she rewarded by becoming a television expert? Perhaps because she got hugely famous in the O.J. case. And fame seems to be its own validator, regardless of what you get famous for.

DEATH WATCH

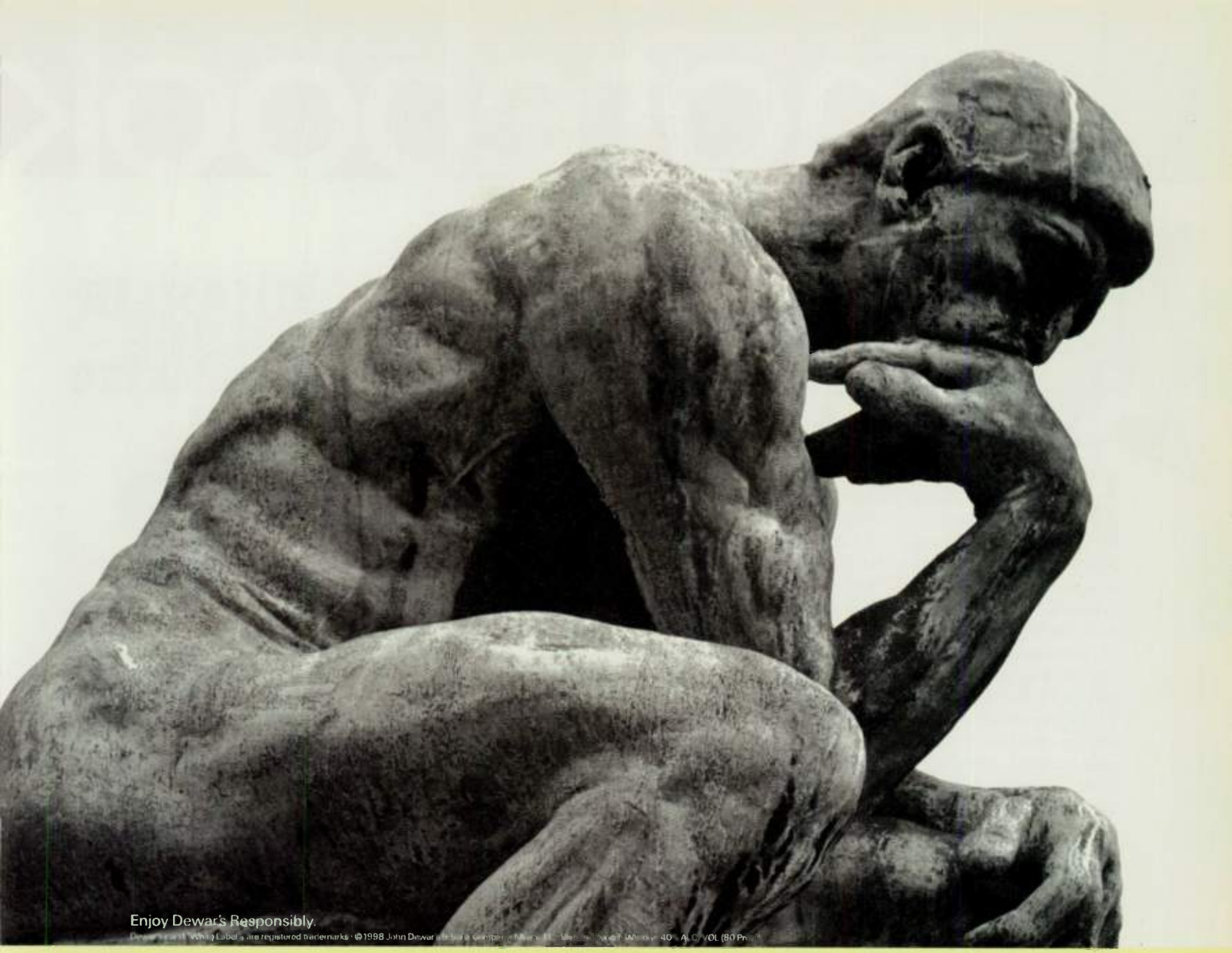
When *60 Minutes* showed Dr. Kevorkian killing one of his "patients," I was asked by lots of news organizations what I thought, and I guess my response disappointed them because I wasn't quoted in their resulting stories. I watched most of the show and thought it was done well. Mike Wallace pulled no punches about Dr. Death's hunger for publicity and Wallace did a good job of highlighting an important issue that needs to be debated. Television journalism's great strength, as compared to print, is in driving home the human dimension and often hard-to-take reality of an abstract idea. (Showing us the reality of the Vietnam War is another great example of that.) If, in fact, it is too hard to take, there's always the channel changer—which we found ourselves using when Kevorkian began to inject the poison.

STANDARD SETTER

On November 25, the *New York Post*, the trashy daily comic book that is a hoot to read but can usually be safely ignored, achieved a prominence that must make its editors (and proprietor Rupert Murdoch) proud. The paper became the standard setter for dozens of other news outlets on an issue of editorial discretion that until then had been one area where the press had done itself proud. That morning, the *Post* ran a screaming front-pager about Chelsea Clinton and a romance she was supposedly having or not having at Stanford. There were only anonymous sources, but these sources helpfully weaved together a story about her love life and supposed emotional distress and linked it to the presence of Ken Starr's daughter on the same campus, and, yes, the Monica scandal. As ridiculous as this all seems, it was enough to give dozens of other usually serious news organizations the excuse to break an admirable silence that the press had until now observed on anything having to do with Chelsea's personal life. By 6:30 A.M. my local cable news outlet, the heretofore serious Time Warner–owned New York 1, was reporting on the *Post*'s story. And our check of TV and print news outlets found dozens of these Chelsea reports on, among other stations, the New York and Los Angeles CBS-owned local news affiliates, and in *The Boston Globe* (owned by *The New York Times*), *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, *The Arizona Republic*, the *Houston Chronicle*, and other smaller newspapers from Sacramento to Dayton to New Orleans. All had similarly wormed their way into the story by reporting that the *Post* was reporting such and such about Chelsea. In short, they had all allowed Rupert Murdoch to become their editor.

That's, of course, the same thing that happened with the story of Henry Hyde's long-ago affair. One web magazine, *Salon*, broke a story that many other news organizations had deliberately decided not to run, whereupon they all ran the story about the *Salon* story. This downward competitive cycle, in which the editor with the lowest standards ultimately sets the acceptable standard, is poison that ultimately only the marketplace can stop. If your favorite TV news organization or newspaper didn't run the Chelsea story, write the editor a thank-you note. ■

SHEINWALD/AP-WIDE WORLD (KEVORKIAN); CHUN/POOL/AP-WIDE WORLD (CLARK)



One does not solve the world's problems over a glass of white wine.

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the notebook

MONSTERS *SUCKED OUT* MY BRAINS!

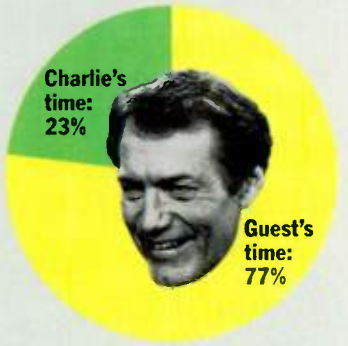
REMEMBER THE TELEVISED SPECTACLE of the 1991 Senate confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas? When the investigation into Anita Hill's sexual-harassment charge denigrated into a torrid soap opera, Thomas bitterly proclaimed that he was the victim of a high-tech lynching.

Seven years later, Thomas still harbors bad feelings about television—as evidenced by a speech he gave in October to a group of students from the Philips Preparatory School in Denver. "Suppose I told you there was a monster who latched on to your head and sucked out your brains?" Thomas asked the audience of third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders, according to local press accounts. "What is that monster?" The children, coached by the justice, replied in unison: "TV!"

Although he patiently answered questions from the students—one wanted to know if he was like the popular television jurist Judge Judy—Thomas declined to take questions from reporters attending the event.

Thomas's refusal to speak with the press springs from what he sees as unfair treatment by the media covering his confirmation, says the justice's close friend Armstrong Williams, a nationally syndicated conservative columnist. "The liberal media did its best to discredit him," says Williams. "He doesn't trust the media, nor will he ever grant an interview as long as he is on the Supreme Court." —*Robert Schmidt*

CHARLIE ROSE TALK METER



For years, the rap against public-television talk-show host Charlie Rose has been that he seems to talk almost as much as his guests. In December, we watched five random episodes of his late-night talk show to see how much talk actually came from Rose and how much came from his guests. The results: Charlie chatted just 23 percent of the time. Tune in next month to see if the meter's changed.

QUIZ

In this month's quiz, try to match the lofty pronouncements of these media leaders to the earthier fare that they distribute and broadcast. —*Matthew Heimer*

THE BOSSES	THE SHOWS
(1) "[W]e operated under the philosophy—which I have espoused and practiced from the time I took over the [Washington Post] company, and which I believe my father and [my husband] Phil did before me and [my son] Don is doing now—that journalistic excellence and profitability go hand in hand." —Katharine Graham, former chairman and CEO of The Washington Post Co. and former publisher of *The Washington Post*, from her 1997 autobiography *Personal History*	**(a) *Jenny Jones.* (Recent features: "Hey, Wake Up and Lose Some of That Make-Up," "Having a Blast With Those Sitcom Stars From the Past," women who are too proud of their breasts.)**
(2) "[W]e make a profit because we make a difference, because what we do is significant, because it enlivens the public dialogue at the center of all democratic progress, because it offers audiences new ways to see the world." —Gerald M. Levin, chairman and CEO, Time Warner Inc., at a speech to business leaders in Boston, October 21, 1998	**(b) *Jerry Springer Show.* (Recent features: "I Seduced Your Lover," "Jerry Rescues an Obese Man," "I Have Six Wives.")**
(3) "[T]here are boundaries of taste, civility, and appropriateness that we apply in turning down opportunities, no matter how much profit we might be sacrificing as a result." —Michael Eisner, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Co., from his 1998 autobiography, *Work in Progress*	**(c) *Inside Edition.* (Recent features: A vampire preys on Mexican goats, a model recounts her night of passion with Leonardo DiCaprio, Rodman ex on Carmen Electra: "She got what she deserved.")**

ANSWERS: 1b (*Jerry Springer* airs on Post Co.-owned stations in Detroit, Houston, and Miami-Ft. Lauderdale); 2a (*Jenny Jones* is distributed by Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution.); 3c (*Inside Edition* airs on Disney-owned stations in Chicago, Fresno, CA, and Flint, MI).

GREG GIBSON/AP-WIDE WORLD (THOMAS); KATE KUNZ/COURTESY OF ROSE COMMUNICATIONS

Pundit Scorecard

LAST YEAR WASN'T GREAT FOR TV PROGNOSTICATORS. There was Sam Donaldson's January 1998 vow that "we're not going to be here three months from now talking about [President Clinton's Lewinsky mess]." And their crystal balls looked pretty cloudy when they incorrectly predicted a Republican triumph in congressional elections.

Were those just a few black eyes or a pattern of errors? We decided to check. We tabulated the forecasts made between August and the November elections on *The McLaughlin Group*, whose regulars are known for the quantity, if not the quality, of their calls. We left time for predictions to unfold and counted only those whose outcomes were verifiable. In upcoming issues, we'll update the results and add other shows, allowing you to judge the self-appointed oracles by the accuracy of their pronouncements. *–Jeff Pooley*

Eleanor Clift

Bats left
Average: .600 (21 of 35)

Contributing editor, *Newsweek*

HOME RUN

Ahead of the curve in anticipating that Republicans "risk a backlash" if they decide to hold impeachment hearings (August 7).

STRIKEOUT

How quickly the mighty fall: Clift insists, only a week later, that "Republicans are not going to hold [impeachment] hearings this year. I don't even think they're going to hold them next year" (August 14).

Tony Blankley

Bats right
Average: .516 (16 of 31)

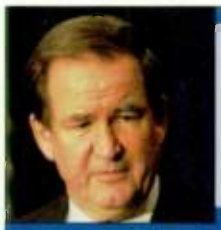
Editor at large, *George*; former spokesman for Newt Gingrich

HOME RUN

Predicts U.S. Senator Russell Feingold (D-Wisconsin) will beat Republican Mark Neumann to win reelection (October 23).

STRIKEOUT

Turns out that politicians aren't the only ones who flip-flop: the very next week (October 30), Blankley forecasts a Neumann victory. He was right the first time.



Patrick Buchanan

Bats right
Average: .462 (18 of 39)

Cohost, *Crossfire*; ex–presidential candidate

HOME RUN

Prophesizes that Newt Gingrich and/or Trent Lott will be challenged as party leader (October 23). Gingrich resigned days after the elections.

STRIKEOUT

Promises a seven-seat Republican Senate gain (October 30), a call that was, uh, seven seats too high. Earlier (October 2), he predicts that Ross Perot's condemnation of Clinton will have a big impact. Yeah—and there's no telling what'll happen when Admiral Stockdale weighs in.

Michael Barone

Bats right
Average: .448 (13 of 29)

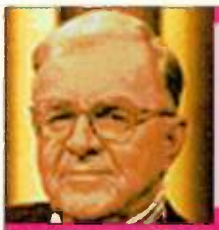
Senior writer, *U.S. News & World Report*

HOME RUN

Goes 11 for 15 (.733) in predicting Senate election results, though he misses calls in key states, such as New York and California.

STRIKEOUT

Predicts that Republicans will hold impeachment hearings in secret (August 14). Then asserts (October 2): "If and when impeachment hearings are voted, the public will approve of them." Barone must have been confusing himself with the public. Most Americans disapproved.



John McLaughlin

Bats right
Average: .387 (12 of 31)

Host, *The McLaughlin Group*

HOME RUN

Accurately divines that Congress will pass an $18 billion authorization for the International Monetary Fund before November (August 7).

STRIKEOUT

Vows that Republicans will pick up 13 House seats in the election. "I'm not a wimp-out like you, Buchanan," he barks (October 30). He may not have wimped out, but he did wipe out: McLaughlin's anticipated 13-seat gain turned out to be a five-seat loss.

COURTESY OF *NEWSWEEK* (CLIFT); ELLIS/NEWSMAKERS (BLANKLEY); MEDINA/REUTERS (BUCHANAN)

BOOKMARKS

HOROSCOPE COLUMNISTS

Joyce Jillson
syndicated astrologer

- **NASA** (science.msfc.nasa.gov/ssl/pad/solar/sunspots.htm)—"To advise my stock-market clients on the economy, I need this sun-spot information."
- **Consumers Digest** (www.consumersdigest.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/CD)—"Since I love to purchase via catalog at three in the morning, I like to read upon awakening just how grossly I've been ripped off."
- **Hotbot** (www.hotbot.com)—"The best [search engine]. Neiman Marcus, put it in your catalog."
- **Food TV** (www.foodtv.com)—"To lose weight. After viewing Emeril Lagasse's overseasoned, pig-fat-laden, gluttonous recipes, I'm more than satisfied with my diet lunch of cottage cheese and fruit."

Stuart Hazleton
horoscope writer for Cosmopolitan and Cosmopolitan on-line (www.cosmomag.com)

- **Halloween Movies** (www.halloweenmovies.com)—"I'm a horror-movie freak."
- **Dark Horizons** (www.darkhorizons.com/index2.html.)—"[For] the skinny on movies in preproduction."
- **Ken Crane** (www.kencranes.com.)—"I'm a DVD/laserdisc nut and buy all my stuff from Ken Crane's."
- **Movie Posters** (www.movieposters.net/posterlist.htm.)—"My mate and I like to frame posters from horror flicks that we check out [at this site]."

Athena Starwoman
Vogue's astrologer

- **Amazon.com** (www.amazon.com)
- **Starwoman** (www.starwoman.com)—"My own website."
- **Charles Schwab** (www.schwab.com)—"I buy my investments, shares, etcetera based on the horoscopes of the companies and their CEOs....Microsoft is a Pisces company, Bill Gates is Sagittarian."
- **Fidelity** (www.fidelity.com)—"To check out various mutual funds."

—compiled by Amy DiTullio

GLOSSARY
LAW & LAWYERS

Like everyone else, journalists love a good shortcut on the job. Why tell it like it is when it's easier to grab a glib catchphrase, a tricky euphemism, a dramatic generalization? Time for a reality check. We've compiled a glossary of the most overused phrases, complete with definitions for the real world. This month's edition: Legal journalism.

- A "tough but fair" judge is what reporters call every judge. It is meaningless because there can't be any such thing as a soft but unfair judge.
- A "flamboyant lawyer" is one who screams and preens in court.
- A "meticulous lawyer" is one who is completely dull and ineffective in court.
- A "lawyer's lawyer" is an utterly meaningless term that reporters use to say something nice about a lawyer when they can't think of anything specific.
- "He could serve up to twenty years in prison if convicted" means the reporter doesn't care about the real world and has only read a prosecutor's press release—which always lists the fantasy-world maximum sentence someone could get just to make the news of the indictment seem bigger.
- A "complicated legal argument" is one the reporter doesn't understand and is too lazy to have explained to him.
- A judge who is a "good delegator" is a judge who lets his clerks write all of his opinions.
- A judge who is "deliberate" is a judge who takes months to decide a simple motion.

Spoof Snafu

UNLIKE MOST NEWSPAPERS, *The New York Times* doesn't run comic strips, but on November 15, it came pretty close. In a brief story for the "Week in Review" section, James Sterngold wrote about how American movie studios alter film titles to appeal to foreign audiences. Sterngold offered some absurd examples of Chinese translations. *The Crying Game* changed to *Oh No! My Girlfriend Has a Penis!*, *Batman and Robin* became *Come to My Cave and Wear This Rubber Codpiece, Cute Boy*. *Leaving Las Vegas* was *I'm Drunk and You're a Prostitute*. And *Babe* became *The Happy Dumpling-To-Be Who Talks and Solves Agricultural Problems*.

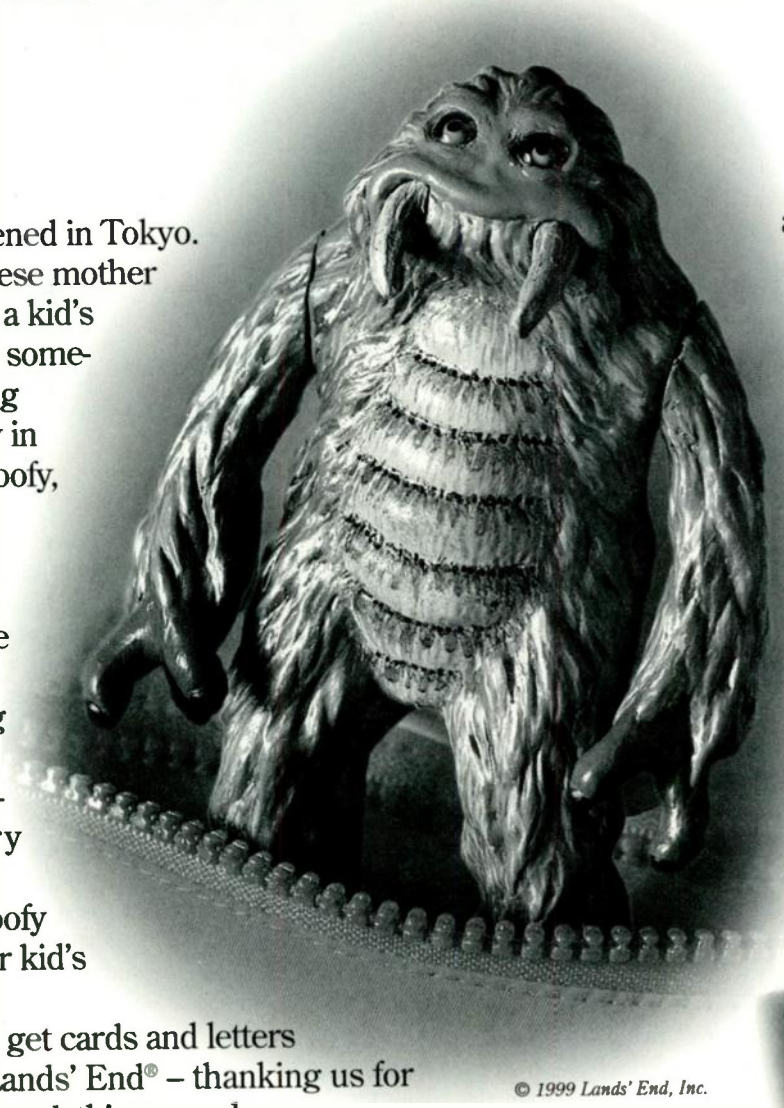
Funny stuff. Too bad the translated titles weren't real. Nine of the 13 examples offered in the article—including the ones above—came from an Internet comedy site called www.topfive.com, which is edited by Chris White.

How did the spoofs make it into the so-called newspaper of record? Sterngold says it was an honest error. The reporter received an electronic version of an old *Wall Street Journal* story on the same subject with White's fake list appended. Sterngold, and the movie executive who sent the list to him, mistakenly assumed it was part of the *Journal*'s story. Sterngold confirmed the authenticity of the article by checking the first few paragraphs against a copy in his own computer database, but he didn't read far enough to see that the Chinese titles were not taken from the *Journal*. "I assumed it was all all right," says Sterngold, who didn't bother to credit the *Journal* because, he says, the titles were "in the public domain."

Without a trace of humor, the *Times* issued a correction three weeks later.

—Ted Rose

The day we found a monster in our mailroom



This happened in Tokyo. A Japanese mother returned a kid's parka to us. And somebody in Shipping discovered a toy in the pocket – a goofy, 4-inch monster.

Well, figuring some little kid would miss it, he sent it back.

The next thing you know, we received a postcard from a very grateful mother.

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Double Vision

DESPITE APPEARANCES, DISPLAYED above are not four issues of *Time* magazine. There are only two. Twice in the month of November, *Time* opted to publish two different covers for the same issue: The November 2 issue sent to subscribers nationwide featured author Tom Wolfe, but New York City area newsstands offered as coverboys the New York Yankees, fresh from their World Series victory.

Then, on November 16, *Time*'s cover announced "The Fall of Newt" to readers around the country—except in Minnesota, where newsstands and local subscribers got a freshly minted Governor-elect Jesse "The Body" Ventura.

In both cases, the magazine's content was identical throughout the country. So what gives? Why were the covers different on these two occasions?

In the case of the Yankees, *Time*'s deputy managing editor James Kelly explains, "We thought it would be cool to let [New York] fans buy the magazine with the Yanks on the cover." Meanwhile, the Wolfe interview was an exclusive, and "it had to run that week."

As for the Ventura/Gingrich covers, Kelly says that until just before the magazine's deadline, Ventura was to be the cover subject nationwide. "But then Newt [stepped down as speaker of the House]. We had to go with that." Instead of scrapping the Ventura cover altogether, it was published for Minnesota readers.

The magazine had run separate covers only once before—on January 27, 1997. That week, readers in Wisconsin and Minnesota were treated to a cover shot of the Green Bay Packers, who were about to play in the Super Bowl. The rest of the country saw a cover about the murder of Bill Cosby's son, Ennis Cosby.

Kelly says he does not believe the recent split covers are the beginning of any trend and that it was only coincidence that two such issues appeared in the same month. "I can't imagine doing it all that often," he says. "The payoff is not so high as it may seem. Part of the reason to buy *Time* is to read the same thing as 4 million other subscribers [*Time*'s circulation is 4.1 million]. Someone in California, someone in Maine, someone in Florida, are all reading the same thing."

Still, *Time* did see a profit. The Yankee cover sold 50,000 copies in the New York metropolitan area, as opposed to the 10,000 to 15,000 sold on average in the region, according to *Time*. The Ventura cover also scored big in Minnesota, selling 60,000 copies, as compared to the average 5,000 to 10,000.

The country's other two newsweeklies avoid printing multiple covers. *Newsweek* has never run different covers, and *U.S. News & World Report* has done it once—on August 14, 1995, when it offered an Oklahoma City tribute in that state a few months after the bombing there. The rest of the country saw a cover featuring The Walt Disney Company buying out ABC. —*Rifka Rosenwein*

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"You know, it's interesting. I mean, you are the descendant of a slave woman. You don't look African-American at all."

—Kevin Newman, cohost of ABC's Good Morning America, *to Art Westerinen, whom scientists have determined is likely a descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Jefferson's mistress, Sally Hemings, a slave.*

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MEDIA DIET

CARL BERNSTEIN

This month, we asked former Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein to talk to us about his media diet. Here's what he consumes.

FAVORITE WEBSITES:
"I go to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* at midnight, because you can [read] them early," plus "various sites about high-end stereo."

MAGAZINES READ MOST OFTEN:
Vanity Fair ("I'm a contributing editor") and *The Absolute Sound*

TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAMS WATCHED MOST OFTEN:
CBS Evening News with Dan Rather ("I'm a consultant to CBS"), *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.*

BOOK CURRENTLY READING:
Single & Single by John Le Carré (to be published in March 1999)

FAVORITE RADIO STATION:
WHFS-FM in the Washington-Baltimore area. "[It's] a great rock station. New York, where I live, has the worst rock 'n' roll radio of any major American city....Also, [I listen to] NPR for classical music and news."

NEWSPAPERS READ MOST OFTEN:
"[I read] *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* fairly fully, and the *New York Post*, *New York Daily News* and *The Wall Street Journal*, which I skim."

A Pundit's Rise And Fall

WHEN THE NATION FIRST heard about Monica Lewinsky, there was more than a constitutional crisis to consider—there was a media event to produce. By early summer, the press had cast a little-known George Washington University law professor as a regular. Jonathan Turley, 37, thrived as a pundit, appearing dozens of times on television and in print during the next six months, providing legal analysis and often castigating the president.

Turley's elevation to the punditocracy took some by surprise. His primary pre-Lewinsky academic specialty had been environmental-criminal law, not constitutional law. While he had some teaching experience in the area, Turley was no luminary. In December, *The New Republic* scrutinized Turley's fitness to talk and sensibly concluded that he was no "more of a phony than anyone else in Washington." But what made him pundit material in the first place? Here's a hint: it wasn't his résumé.

Jonathan Turley makes his rounds on the talk-show circuit.

A 1992 incident shows how random circumstances can help create a commentator. Marjorie Just, a student in Turley's property class, had a story idea for her sister Sara, a booker for *Nightline*: Why not examine Turley's project advocating early releases for elderly prisoners? Sara Just found Turley articulate and concise. The project never made it on the air, but Turley did, as an expert on a *Nightline* show exploring the use of video in criminal cases.

The appearance put Turley in Just's Rolodex, and through similar "discoveries," Turley became a "dialer." That's a term used at *USA Today* to describe a dependably accessible and quotable expert, according to reporter Judy Keen. The crucial qualification is accessibility: Turley is known for returning calls promptly. (The first phone call for this article was returned in five minutes.)

Turley says he regularly faxes his newspaper op-ed pieces to approximately 12 reporters—standard procedure for wannabe commentators. Money does not appear to drive him; he says he is not paid for his commentary.

Turley was not a staple of early Lewinsky coverage—he only became ubiquitous after writing op-eds that consistently attacked the president's legal position. That set him apart from many legal commentators, who were equivocal or critical of Kenneth Starr. (Turley is no fair-weather thinker. Much of his litigation has been focused on fighting executive power.)

Once the press caught wind of an articulate, accesible Clinton critic, Turley was in demand. His Sunday talk-show debut was May 3 on *Meet the Press*; that appearance led to others. "I saw him [on *Meet the Press*]," recalls Phil Griffin, executive producer of MSNBC's defunct *The Big Show* and its successor, *Hockenberry*. "[I] said, 'Yup. We got to get this guy.'" Turley appeared on *The Big Show* five days later.

The TV appearances fueled calls from print reporters. Robert L. Jackson, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, quoted Turley after seeing him on television. "I knew he was a law professor at George Washington, and I think he might have been a former Justice Department lawyer," Jackson says. (Turley never worked at the Justice Department.) Another print reporter, who would not be named, quoted Turley more often as his TV profile increased. "I'll use [pundits] more because they [are] on television," the reporter explains. "Our readers will have a bit of familiarity with them."

Turley's profile appeared to drop in the fall. "Maybe he's overexposed," says *Nightline* correspondent Chris Bury, who is a fan of Turley. But the Lewinsky coverage had also shifted from exploring legal issues to political ones. MSNBC's Griffin says demand for legal talkers ebbed. "I want to find the Jonathan Turley of politics," he says. But Turley won't go away forever, Griffin predicts. "Whenever we get into environmental law, I will definitely give him a call."

—*Ted Rose*

RICHARD ELLIS/NEWSMAKERS (BERNSTEIN); ROBERT GIROUX/NEWSMAKERS (TURLEY); RICHARD ELLIS/NEWSMAKERS (3)

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When Hit-Makers HIT BACK

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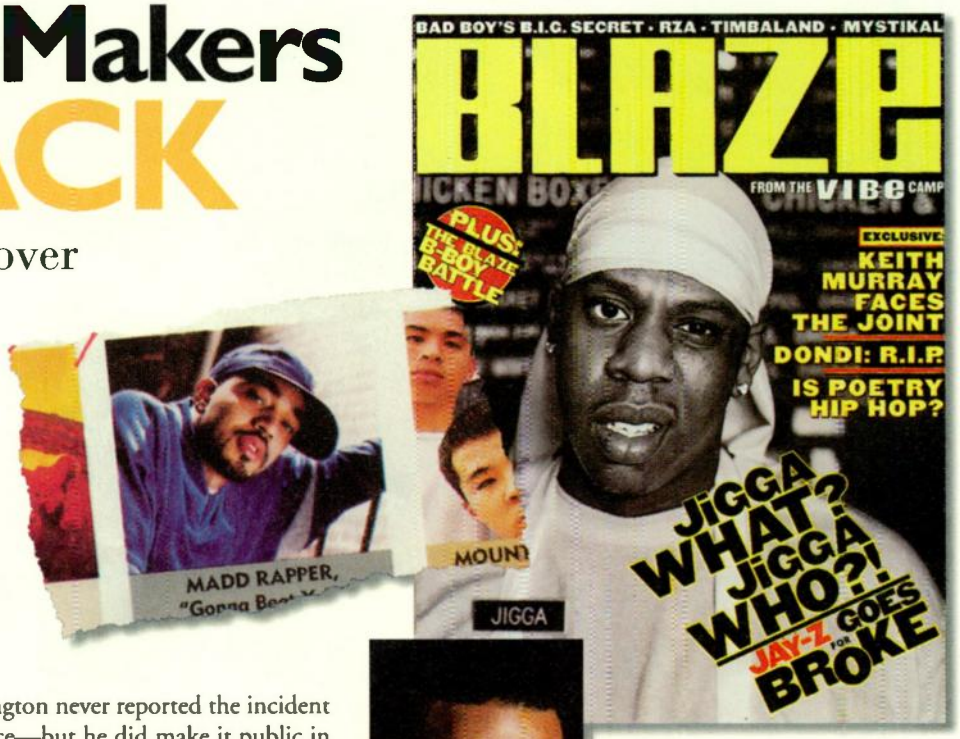

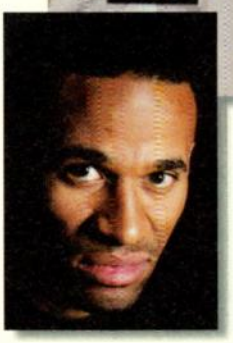

Deric "D-Dot" Angellettie (top left) allegedly took matters into his own hands after editor Jesse Washington (above) ran his picture in *Blaze* magazine.

IN ITS DECEMBER/JANUARY ISSUE, the hip-hop magazine *Blaze* reviewed a single by The Madd Rapper whose title—"Gonna Beat Ya'll"—may prove to have been prophetic. The disgruntled rapper's objections to a photo that accompanied the review landed *Blaze* editor in chief Jesse Washington in the hospital with fractured facial bones, according to the editor. The episode highlights a disturbing undercurrent in hip-hop journalism: if your reviews and art pull no punches, some artists punch back.

"The Madd Rapper" is a pseudonym used by Deric "D-Dot" Angellettie, the producer of megahits by hip-hop mogul Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs. Angellettie had been trying to keep his identity as the Madd Rapper secret—in part to build anticipation for the rapper's soon-to-be-released album. But *Blaze* exposed his alias by running a thumbnail-sized picture of Angellettie above its "Gonna Beat Ya'll" review. According to Washington, Angellettie didn't just get Madd, he got even: the editor claims that on November 16, D-Dot and three other men attacked him inside *Blaze*'s Manhattan headquarters, beating Washington with his own conference room chairs. Washington filed assault charges against Angellettie, who pleaded not guilty; the case is scheduled to go to court in February.

The beating gave Washington an unenviable track record at *Blaze*. Two issues in print, two brushes with death. Last summer, he claims, Fugees performer and producer Wyclef Jean threatened him with a pistol during a dispute over an album review. Washington never reported the incident to police—but he did make it public in an editorial in *Blaze*'s August debut. Jean denied Washington's accusation, calling the editor a publicity-seeker.

Washington's tales of terror mirror those coming out of *Vibe*, *XXL*, and *Rap Pages*, where writers and editors have also allegedly endured threats or beatings from disgruntled rappers. Why such short tempers among the artists? Washington and other writers who cover hip-hop believe it's partly because editorial staffs at many music magazines are extremely cozy with record-company advertisers. Performers grow accustomed to sales-friendly art and articles, and when coverage is less than fawning, anger follows.

In perhaps the most high-profile hip-hop assault, Dr. Dre, then of the group N.W.A., beat up TV host Denise ("Dee") Barnes after a rival rapper criticized the group on Barnes's show in 1991. And pictures can sting as much as words: writer Cheo Coker was attacked by a member of the Wu-Tang Clan over illustrations that ran with Coker's article on the group in *Rap Pages* in 1994. This phenomenon isn't limited to hip-hop, either; in November, an editor at *Spin* accused bodyguards for goth-rocker Marilyn Manson of assaulting the editor in a fit of photo-induced pique.

To try to defuse hip-hop's discomfort with criticism, *Blaze* lets artists see reviews in advance and prints their responses alongside the critiques. But that hasn't stopped the threats. In a rebuttal in the same issue that ran Angellettie's photo, a member of the Geto Boys threatened that the group would "mob on mothaf---as" who panned its latest album.

The 29-year-old Washington, a former reporter and assistant bureau chief at The Associated Press, hopes to set *Blaze* apart by doing "straight-up journalism in a hip-hop arena." Washington believes "threats get results" at many publications when editorial content ruffles feathers, but he vows that that won't happen at *Blaze*. As long as the magazine remains objective and honest, says the editor, "we think folks will realize that we'll always be fair." Washington says that *Blaze*'s recipe for making his plan a success includes an editorial staff that's fully independent from the advertising department, and—after D-Dot D-Day—tight security at the office. —*Matthew Heimer*

MARYANNE RUSSELL (WASHINGTON)

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The Dean Takes A Stand

SHOULD THE DEAN OF ONE OF THE nation's most respected journalism schools aid people who sue the media? That's not a purely academic question for Tom Goldstein, dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, who has recently served as a paid expert witness in suits against *YM* magazine, two Florida newspapers, and *Hard Copy*.

Goldstein earned $30,000 in witness fees for the two-year period 1996 and 1997, according to his own sworn testimony. Still, it is a job that Joan Konner, Goldstein's predecessor at Columbia, never accepted when she was dean. Orville Schell, who replaced Goldstein as dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, says he has never provided paid testimony. "It would strike me as a highly dubious business because, in effect, I think you have to be trading on your title at your institution rather than your reputation as an actual practicing journalist," says Schell. "I think universities are some of the few places in American society that still have a little remaining authority and moral credibility." Dean Ken Bode of Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism also says he never acted as expert witness, although he did agree to do so in one case that was dismissed before his testimony was called for.

Goldstein defends his role in the courtroom, pointing out that his past jobs as a reporter at such newspapers as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, as well as the more than 15 years he has spent working as an academic specializing in press standards and ethics, make him an expert. And Goldstein says he has no problem sharing that expertise in the courtroom, just as he has no problem being quoted in the newspaper as an expert on the press. "These are very important issues, and I feel I have something to contribute," he explains. Goldstein says he will not look the other way when he believes the media has behaved egregiously. As for the money, Goldstein charges $250 an hour and claims he gives "the bulk" of his earnings to charity.

In the *YM* case, Goldstein testified on behalf of Jamie Messenger, a model who sued the magazine because her photo was used to illustrate a column headlined "I got trashed and had sex with three guys." Messenger, who argued that people thought she was the person in the column, was awarded $100,000 in March 1998; the case is currently on appeal [see "Signed, Whoever," August 1998]. Goldstein also served as an expert on behalf of James Higginbotham, who sued two Florida newspapers after he was harshly criticized in a regular column in which readers are allowed to offer anonymous comments. That case was thrown out before trial.

Goldstein is now slated to testify for Marc Cowras, a Connecticut man suing *Hard Copy*. The show aired a story on Cowras's arrest for drunk driving that featured surveillance video of Cowras hitting himself and suggesting he might sue for police brutality. *Hard Copy* reported that Cowras "made good on his threats" and that he sued the police department. However, Cowras, according to his suit, never filed a case against the police department and was never called for comment by *Hard Copy*.

In the three cases, Goldstein says he felt the news organizations did not follow accepted journalistic standards. "We have an obligation at some points, I think, to bite the hands that feed us," he explains. —*Robert Schmidt*

Synergy Watch

Sure, *Entertainment Weekly* did tout Warner Bros.' flick *You've Got Mail* on its next-to-last cover of 1998. But while *EW* is part of the vast Time Warner Inc. empire, judging by its covers, any charges that its editors show preferential treatment for Time Warner movies don't stick.

Of a total of 49 covers in 1998, 21 featured a single movie. (The remaining 28 were devoted to either multiple films, television, or music.) How many Time Warner films graced the cover of the magazine? Only three. The big winners in the tally were Twentieth Century Fox and Sony Pictures with five covers apiece, while Paramount Pictures tied with Time Warner.

—*Dimitra Kessenides*

EVENING THE SCORE

SCORE ONE FOR THE *FINANCIAL TIMES* OF LONDON, which has been aggressively encroaching on *The Wall Street Journal*'s turf by covering American business. In the September 1998 issue, *Brill's Content* reported on the *Journal* scooping the *FT* on two major developments in the auto industry—including the merger of Daimler-Benz AG of Germany and Chrysler Corp.—that took place in the *FT*'s backyard.

But on Thanksgiving Day, *Journal* reporters enjoying their turkey were no doubt dismayed to read about the largest merger of all time, between two American companies—Exxon Corp. and Mobil Corp.—in the pages of the *FT*.

In the *Journal*'s defense, the paper does not publish on Thanksgiving. But in reporting on talks between the two oil giants in the next day's paper, the *Journal* chose not to credit its rival for breaking the story—despite its general practice of crediting competitors' scoops. (*The New York Times* ran its story on Thanksgiving Day, the same day as the *FT*, but still credited the *FT* and Bloomberg News for breaking the story.)

The *Journal* gives credit to a rival's scoop "that moves the markets," says Dow Jones & Co. spokesman Richard Tofel. Since this story broke on Thanksgiving, a day when the markets are closed, there was no reason to indicate in the *Journal* that the *FT* had broken the story, he says.

"That's ridiculous," responds Robert Thomson, U.S. managing editor of the *FT*. The U.S. markets were closed that day, but "the markets in Europe went bonkers" on the news of the impending merger.

Tofel adds that the *Journal* story was written with the assumption that readers already knew about the merger—and therefore it wasn't necessary to credit the *FT*.

"It is the biggest scoop we've had since we began publishing here" in 1985, says Thomson, adding that he knew of no fewer than 80 publications that credited the *FT* with breaking the story.

But, he adds, "it's all a friendly, professional competition." Right. —*Rifka Rosenwein*

"The da Vinci of data." *The New York Times*

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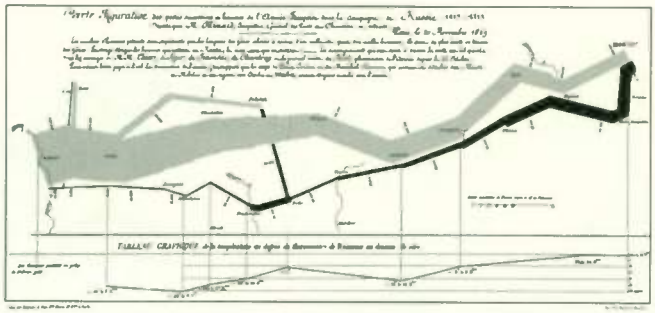

This map portrays the losses suffered by Napoleon's army in the Russian campaign of 1812. Beginning at the left on the Polish-Russian border near the Niemen, the thick band shows the size of the army (422,000 men) as it invaded Russia. The width of the band indicates the size of the army at each position. The army reached Moscow with 100,000 men. The path of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in the bitterly cold winter is depicted by the dark lower band, tied to a temperature/time scale. The Grande Armée struggled out of Russia with only 10,000 men. Six dimensions of data are displayed on the flat surface of the paper.

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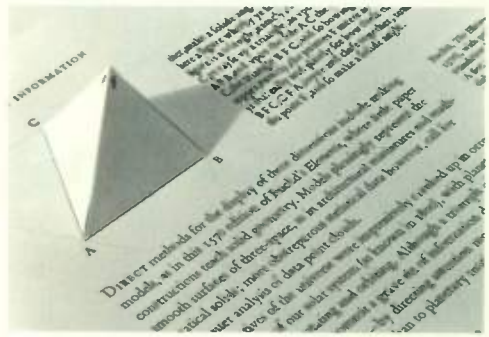
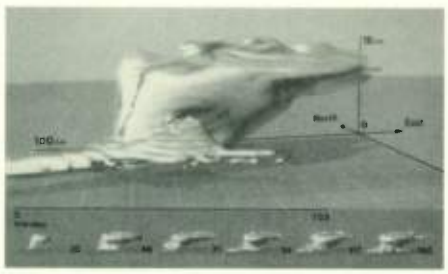


VISUAL EXPLANATIONS:

IMAGES AND QUANTITIES, EVIDENCE AND NARRATIVE



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HOW THEY GOT THAT SHOT

ALAN CHIN FOR *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

ONE GLANCE AND YOU'RE RIVETED. THE WAXEN FACE OF ALI Paqarizi, a 19-year-old ethnic Albanian killed by a booby trap, glows yellow—a sharp contrast to the pink flush in the cheeks of his mother and family. What elevates this photograph above most war images is its painterly quality and lighting reminiscent of a Rembrandt or a Vermeer. The scene's sadness is palpable.

This is the work of Alan Chin, a 27-year-old New York–based freelance photographer. Trained in fine-art photography at New York University, Chin has focused his lens on the ongoing strife in Bosnia and Croatia. In October, while in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, he was assigned by *The New York Times* to photograph the return of ethnic Albanian refugees to Kosovo after the Yugoslav forces pulled out. Ali Paqarizi was killed three blocks from his home by a booby trap left behind by the withdrawing forces.

In Kosovo, a province the size of New Jersey, each death is a public loss, and the entire village turned out for the procession marking Paqarizi's death. The photograph was taken in the family's home just before the event. Chin worked without lights. "No flash, no obnoxious things....I stayed for about a half hour and used available light. A sheet was hung across part of the window, which diffused the background but created the hard light on the women's faces which is what made the colors so vibrant."

After the cortege, Chin developed his film in one of the two photo labs in Pristina and transmitted it with a laptop. It appeared in the *Times* on October 29, less than 24 hours after he shot it. The *Times* may nominate the photograph for a Pulitzer Prize.

—*Miriam Hsia*

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"Sorry" Seems To Be The Hardest Word

Imagining a world in which the Sunday morning pundits don't mind using their hot air to admit when their predictions fall flat.

WHEN WILLIAM KRISTOL AND GEORGE Stephanopoulos acknowledged that their predictions on the outcome of the midterm elections had been, to put it charitably, inaccurate, I think I overreacted. I thought maybe we were going to start seeing all the regulars on Sunday morning television—the important media personages I think of as the Sabbath Gasbags—apologizing all the time for consistently misleading us simple folk.

In fact, I thought Kristol and Stephanopoulos were going to go further than they did. The first couple of Sunday mornings after the elections, I found myself expecting to hear Kristol say, "Anyone who put more money than he could afford on the election, based on our predictions, and now finds himself trying to avoid large men who speak sternly about what happens to people who don't pay their gambling debts, should know that George and I take complete responsibility." To which Stephanopoulos would add, "Just send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a receipt for your losses to Kristol and Stephanopoulos, care of..."

ROBERT DE MICHIELL

It wasn't as if the Washington press corps had never before gone into a paroxysm of apology. There was a collective breast-beating of serious proportions a couple of years ago when Stuart Taylor, Jr., wrote a piece in *The American Lawyer* concluding that Paula Corbin Jones, until then dismissed by the press as a late-blooming gold digger being used by crazies, had a case against President Clinton solid enough to be taken seriously. On television, Taylor discussed the strength of the plaintiff's case with growing assurance; I half expected Robert Bennett, the president's lawyer, to be spotted fleeing from the capital while shouting, "Feet, don't fail me now!" Taylor was accompanied by a chorus of lamentations from the Beltway press—confessions of having harbored subconscious class bias against Jones, apologies for having failed to analyze the case on its merits the way a true legal scholar like Taylor had.

Eventually, of course, the federal district court judge in Arkansas, finding that Paula Corbin Jones didn't have a cause of action even if you assumed her to be right in every particular, threw the case out of court, leaving Taylor in the position of a science reporter who had convinced us to take the cold fusion discoveries in Utah more seriously. I should have known that the instinct for apology isn't deeply ingrained in journalism when he did not appear on the *NewsHour With Jim Lehrer* at that point and commit hara-kiri.

Also, there were no apologies from the important media personages who, on the basis of one reporter's opinion, had spent months assuring us of the legal merits of the Jones case. On Sunday morning television, the Sabbath Gasbags continued to exude authority while hurling great gobs of pronunciamenti out of the Beltway—confidently analyzing events that, for a viewer who had taken their previous predictions seriously, could not actually have taken place. But after Kristol and Stephanopoulos acknowledged that they were capable of human error, I thought one of the Sunday shows might devote

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

a program to the sort of fond-look-backward session that *Meet The Press* held when it became clear in August that President Clinton was changing his story about Monica Lewinsky. *Meet The Press* confronted defenders of the president with their previous assurances of his truthfulness; the program I had in mind would revisit some of the Gasbag predictions that turned out to have been dead wrong.

The lead clip, of course, would be one of the Gasbags informing us last January that if the president were lying he'd be out in a matter of days. Then there might be 40 or 50 quick cuts of the Gasbag who kept repeating his contention that the American people would demand to know every detail about the relationship between the president and Monica Lewinsky. (When a Sabbath Gasbag tells you what the American people want, it's a sure bet that what he really means is what the Sabbath Gasbags want.) There would be a sort of montage of the Gasbag who assured us nearly every Sunday that the impending release of one explosive document or another—the Starr report, President Clinton's grand jury testimony, etc., etc.—was about to cause a crumbling of Clinton's popular support. I'd like to see the collection of clips end with a scene from *The McLaughlin Report*, a program that we've always referred to at our house as "Professional Wrestling": Pat Buchanan, asked by McLaughlin to gauge the impact of Ross Perot's denunciation of Clinton, calls it a "very important event."

When a Sabbath Gasbag tells you what the American people want, it's a sure bet that what he really means is what the Sabbath Gasbags want.

At that point in the looking-back program, Buchanan appears live. On *The McLaughlin Report*, he has demonstrated an acute ear for the tone of professional wrestling—the camera sometimes catches him in a jolly guffaw just after he's said something particularly truculent—and now, in a rather charmingly self-deprecating way, he reads what someone who made such an analysis of Perot's impact must have been imagining an historian 50 or 60 years from now would write about public opinion in the Lewinsky scandal: "Despite every attempt by the media to persuade the American people that they should have been more outraged by the president's actions than they appeared to be, surveys indicated that the public, even including a large number of the people who had voted against President Clinton, were consistently opposed to his removal from office—until President Clinton's behavior was denounced by Ross Perot. The stampede for impeachment caused by Perot's remarks came as a distinct surprise to most political observers, particularly considering the fact that a large segment of the American public considered Perot to be, as the phrase then went, 'off his rocker.' However, one particularly prescient political analyst named Pat Buchanan..."

Then all of the Gasbags who have been in the clips shown on the program walk onto the set and apologize for implying that people who declined to join the pack chasing Clinton—that is, two out of three people in the United States—had no moral values and were interested only in the material goods provided by the bull market. "I was particularly hypocritical on this issue," the most Olympian and sanctimonious of the Gasbags might say, apparently referring to the incident in his own past in which his wife was moved to deposit his belongings on the front yard. "I should take most of the blame."

"Oh, no, no," his fellow Sabbath Gasbags say. "Please. We were all equally at fault."

You'd think that at this point the anchor of the program would be feeling some sympathy for his guests. Instead, he starts some rather tough questioning. "When Bill Clinton got caught diddling an intern, it was obviously going to cost Newt Gingrich his job," he says. "But none of you predicted that. How do you think you people could have missed such an obvious call?"

The Sabbath Gasbags look contrite. "Yeah, you're right," one of them says. "We blew that one." It occurs to me that one of the Gasbags might be near tears.

"Hey, take it easy guys," I say to the television set. "It's okay. Really. Everybody makes mistakes." ■

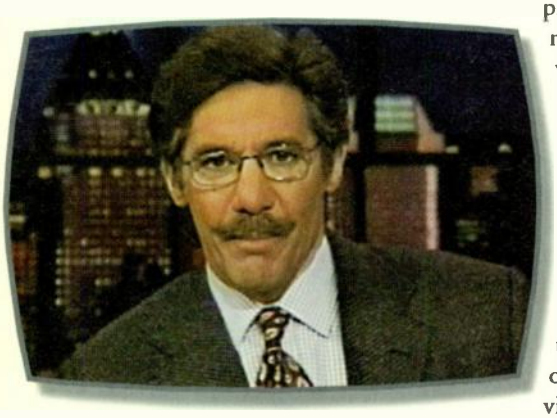
Seeing Double

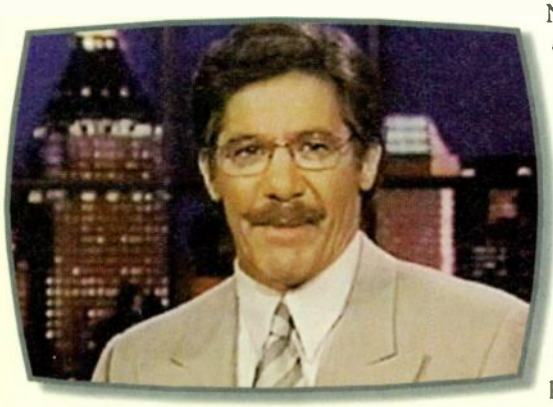
Why two Geraldos are worse than one. *Plus*: PBS thanks its sponsors. And *Wired* adjusts Bill Gates's image.

YOU COULD CALL IT THE *SEINFELD* FACTOR. YOU COULD even call it corruption. I call it the Big Blur, and it's what happens when the lines between fiction and nonfiction, between editorial and advertising, between news and entertainment, become indecipherable.

What does this have to do with Jerry Seinfeld? Ask Geraldo Rivera. Or ask Max, my 8-year-old, who remarked the other night, as he came upon me watching Rivera on CNBC: "Hey, it's the guy from *Seinfeld*." It took me a minute to figure out what Max was talking about, but then I remembered that in the *Seinfeld* finale last spring, the "bad Samaritan" trial of Jerry and his pals was "covered" by Geraldo himself, who appeared with his set and theme music. So I explained that the guy Max remembered from *Seinfeld* was, in fact, Geraldo, but he was just playing "Geraldo" doing the fake news, while the Geraldo I was watching this night was doing the real news. Or something like that.

Which is the real Geraldo? Geraldo Rivera delivers news on CNBC (top); Rivera "reports" in an episode of NBC's *Seinfeld* (bottom).





Sure, Max is just a kid, and most adults should be able to distinguish Geraldo the anchor from Geraldo the actor. Geraldo is hardly the first and—considering his colorful past—he's certainly not the most unlikely news person to put his authority (and his news organization's authority) in the service of entertainment. But when NBC decided to use the final episode of its hugely popular sitcom to give a boost to its rising news star, it blurred the line between its role as a provider of entertainment and its role as a provider of news and information. Not even Max should have to wonder which is which.

It's an unfortunate fact of life in this Information Age that while we have more information at our disposal than at any time in human history, much of it is suspect—or at least should be. We should be no less discerning as consumers of information than we are as consumers of cars or baby food. We should demand truth in labeling. We should be wary of hidden agendas. We should watch out for the Big Blur, which isn't a new problem, of course, but which is getting so much bigger and blurrier that it's getting harder to notice.

Sometimes it is obvious: Geraldo's blur was on full display and in living color on NBC (although it might take an 8-year-old to make you realize something is amiss). But often the commercial forces that shape our news are subtle and well hidden.

TAKE THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE, THE NETwork that's supposed to be a bulwark against the forces of commerce. PBS prides itself on bringing us programs supposedly too good to survive in the ferociously competitive marketplace that rules commercial TV. PBS viewers have no doubt noticed that those sponsorship announcements that come before and after the programs are starting to sound and look more and more like "real" commercials. But that's not the blur. The blur is when the programs themselves are shaped and twisted to accommodate the interests of the underwriters.

Critics say that's just what happened with a documentary that aired on PBS in late October called *John Glenn, American Hero*. Coproduced by KCET in Los Angeles and Newsweek Productions, most of the one-hour show was just what you'd expect of a documentary with such a title. But suddenly it veered into an upbeat discussion of the International Space Station that was barely related to the rest of the program and gave almost no hint of the financial and political problems that have dogged the massive undertaking.

Did KCET or Newsweek Productions have some interest in promoting the space station? Not likely. But The Boeing Company did. The aerospace giant in 1995 signed a $5.63 billion contract with NASA to help design and develop the space station. Boeing shelled out a lot less than that to underwrite the John Glenn documentary—in exchange for the usual on-air acknowledgements and for the public relations bonanza of being

Editor Eric Effron is the former editor and publisher of Washington, D.C.'s Legal Times. *His column will appear regularly in the magazine.*

Gutter mentality: Unless they scoured the fine print in *Wired*'s "gutter," readers wouldn't know that that wasn't Microsoft's Bill Gates in the photo.

associated with Glenn during his triumphant return to space.

But two experienced producers suspect that Boeing got more for its money, arguing that the bouquet delivered to the space station was connected to Boeing's sponsorship. "As soon as I saw that Boeing was the sole corporate underwriter, I knew what happened," says Dick Hubert, a veteran producer whose work has appeared on PBS on one occasion. "I knew why the space station was highlighted. We call this 'content for underwriting.'" Another experienced producer and PBS veteran, Julian Krainin, calls it "content corruption."

Peter Downey, PBS's senior vice-president of program business affairs, acknowledged to *Electronic Media* that PBS officials, upon viewing a finished version, felt the program focused too much on the space station. As a result, that section was shortened before it aired. Downey also acknowledged that the program might be vulnerable to the perception that Boeing's sponsorship influenced the content, though he denied any quid pro quo.

Boeing had "nothing to do with what was in or what was out," says coproducer Patrick Butler, president of Newsweek Productions. He says he saw John Glenn as "the bookends" of the U.S. space program—both its past and its present—which naturally led into a discussion of its future, the space station. As it happened, Butler says, it was a show Boeing was happy to get behind.

Producers Hubert and Krainin say such a dynamic creates its own brand of influence, affecting the subject matter being chosen and the way stories are told. Nobody has to say, "Give us the money and we'll be nice to you or your cause."

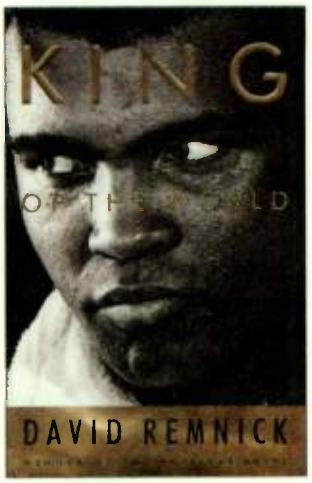
Ironically, the potential for this sort of "content corruption" may be greater with PBS programs—where the producers themselves are often scrambling for funding—than with the commercial networks. (Whatever else you might think about, say, Wolf Blitzer, it's unlikely he skews his reports because of the sensitivities of CNN's advertisers.)

Meanwhile, despite concerns within PBS about Boeing's role, viewers of the John Glenn documentary were not told that the underwriter had a huge stake in its subject matter.

ONE *BRILL'S CONTENT* READER, J. CARL Ganter of Traverse City, Michigan, e-mailed us recently to alert us to a different kind of blur, this one in the December issue of *Wired* magazine. There, accompanying an article about the problems besetting Microsoft's Bill Gates, is a photo of a forlorn Gates slumped in his chair. It looks like Gates, anyway. Tiny type running along the gutter of the page (a column away from the photo) indicates that the picture is actually a "celebrity look-alike, not actual celebrity." As Ganter aptly put it, "The truth lies in the gutter."

It could be worse, I suppose. *Wired* could have not deigned to tell us about the model at all. But, still, why risk misleading your readers? I guess now we'll just have to check out that agate type whenever we see a picture of a famous person in *Wired* doing something interesting or unexpected.

Maybe this is what being a smart consumer in the Information Age means. Watching for tricks, for shortcuts, for the blur. This column will try to be your ally in that effort. So let me know if you have any tips, suspicions, or theories about the Big Blur. (E-mail me at eeffron@brillscontent.com.) Together, we might just be able to achieve some clarity. ■



KING OF THE WORLD:

Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero

(RANDOM HOUSE)—Boxing has practically vanished from the public consciousness, but Muhammad Ali is still the greatest. In *King of the World*, *New Yorker* editor David Remnick skillfully tells the story of Ali's transformation during the early 1960s from Louisville loudmouth to heavyweight champion.

In his climb to the top, Ali embraced Islam and shattered stereotypes. Remnick's narrative ends before Ali's protest against the Vietnam draft, the act that expanded the boxer's legend beyond both sport and race. But in Remnick's story, the early Ali is already a complicated icon of individualism and celebrity. —*Ted Rose*

THE OBSCURE STORE AND READING ROOM—The trouble with the Web is that dozens of news outlets, from CNN to the Texas A&M *Battalion*, are publishing interesting articles that you would probably never see—if it weren't for James Romenesko. Every day, Romenesko, who covers the Internet for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, wakes up at 5:30 A.M. to scour the Web for offbeat features, investigative pieces, and quirky items, and then summarizes at least a dozen of his finds at The Obscure Store and Reading Room (www.obscure-store.com). He's a witty Matt Drudge. The December 16 headline offerings included "Cheesehead hat maker wants street name changed" and "Monica drops in on a party, and fights with an ATM." For major news events, such as the Matthew Shepard killing, Romenesko points readers to local press outlets such as the student newspaper at the University of Wyoming, Shepard's school. The Obscure Store also features a comprehensive list of other on-line sources, including seven Associated Press news wires, nine foreign papers, a dozen weeklies, 22 daily gossip columns, and the latest talk show transcripts. —*Noah Robischon*

THE WEEKLY STANDARD

Sure, it's too conservative for many tastes. But this Rupert Murdoch–owned Washington weekly is fun to read, well designed, provocative on a surprising range of subjects, has lots of original and important reporting, and usually crosses the line from clever to smart when it makes an argument. And, by example, it reminds us what liberals really lack—a sense of humor. It's what an ideologically based magazine should be. —*Steven Brill*

"Lexington"

With wit, grit, and a scrappy cartoon caricature, this *Economist* column's weekly one-page take on American politics—from presidential impeachment and American foreign-policy failures to Chicago mayor Richard Daley's grand plans and the obstacles facing the newest U.S. Census chief—makes sense of the sometimes nonsensical. When the less-than-animated Gray Davis won the California governorship, for example, "Lexington" noted that the victory of such a wooden candidate gave new hope to putative presidential candidate Al Gore. —*Leslie Heilbrunn*

"JIM MULLEN'S HOT SHEET"

This *Entertainment Weekly* column has a pretty audacious mandate: In just a half page, it relates "What the country is talking about this week...." Okay, maybe it should be subtitled "What Jim Mullen is thinking about this week." But Mullen manages, in short, pithy items that assume a fair amount of knowledge on the part of the reader, to capture some truths (and absurdities) that more ponderous treatments miss. On Monica Lewinsky's book deal: "She'll reportedly get $600,000 to tell her story. Which is what they'll have to pay me to read it." Or, on bottled water: "A report indicates that drinking it may promote tooth decay. No wonder Coca-Cola wants to get into the business." Mullen doesn't take anything in the news too seriously, which may be a very healthy—and often appropriate—stance. *—Eric Effron*

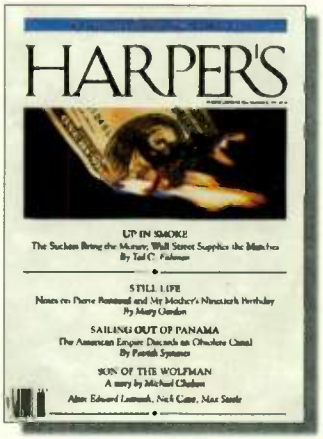
jim mullen's HOTSheet
What the country is talking about this week...

Geography Quiz on *The World*

(Public Radio International)—Even inveterate globe-trotters stumble for answers to *The World*'s daily geography quiz. The host of this weekday radio broadcast, Lisa Mullins, titillates listeners with little-known facts about sometimes exotic locales: The world's northernmost capital city? Reykjavík, Iceland. The "water tower of France"? The Limousin region, with six major rivers running through it. Home of a 100-mile desert horse race? It's Dubai, of course, the second-largest of the United Arab Emirates. For local stations and times, as well as a bank of past puzzlers, go to www.theworld.org.
—D.M. Osborne

TIME magazine writer JOEL STEIN

is the thinking man's Stuttering John (a Howard Stern sidekick)—the jerky boy who went to a good college. Over the past year and a half, Stein has transformed *Time*'s Arts Q&A feature into a forum for questions few others would dare ask. He queried Jennifer Lopez, "What's the big deal with your booty?" He told Gene Simmons of Kiss that a Kiss Visa card "doesn't scream rock 'n' roll to me." He inquired of Vanilla Ice, "How much of your life now is just getting made fun of?" That attitude carries over to his feature writing. While everyone else was nailing former *Boston Globe* columnist Mike Barnicle for his lack of journalistic ethics, Stein nailed him for not being hip. "He lifted jokes from George Carlin," wrote Stein. "What year is this? That's like stealing lyrics from Pete Seeger." Memo to *Time*'s editors: Please give the "People" page back to Joel. *—Michael Kadish*



"readings"

Harper's Magazine is a trove of reflective journalism and reasoned opinion. But its "Readings" selections—an eclectic medley of already published work—are often unreflective and poorly reasoned, and this is their particular genius. The *Harper's* editors troll the flotsam of American culture to find material for "Readings," like oddball court depositions or inane Web postings, with essays and short fiction thrown into the mix. *Harper's* September issue reprinted screenplay ads from a trade newsletter (the ad for a screenplay called *Power Kills* says, "Sex and hilarious situations prevail until people turn up dead, killed in unusual ways with power tools"); its December issue featured listings from *Who's Who In Professional Speaking* (one of the entries: "Jackie Pflug: Was shot in the head during a terrorist attack. Helps people gain a new perspective in overcoming life's obstacles"). "Readings" poses as effortless, stand-alone satire, and it works. *—Jeff Pooley*

GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS

The "Girls on" Network (www.girlson.com)

In a word—COOL. "The Girls" are four New Yorkers who serve up smart, witty takes on movies, TV, and books. Features and columns on culture add to the mix. The Girls never hold back—"I don't hate [Ally McBeal] because she's too skinny (she sure looks unhealthy though)," writes one. "I don't like Ally because she's not nice. At all." The site is visually exciting and easy to navigate. And while the chat is more of a draw for female cybercruisers, there's plenty there for the guys.
—Dimitra Kessenides

ABSOLUT UPGRADE.

Live Free Or Die

Despite competitive pressures, a newspaper fights to protect a public figure's right to privacy.

New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen, right, and candidate Rick Trombly, center, talk issues with elderly voters in Franklin (top). Trombly joins supporters outside Franklin's city hall (bottom).

KEN WILLIAMS/CONCORD MONITOR (SHAHEEN); LARA SOLT/CONCORD MONITOR (TROMBLY)

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S LICENSE PLATE MOTTO, "LIVE Free or Die," strikes some visitors as a little harsh. It's not tourist-friendly like "Sunshine State," chirpy like "Oklahoma is OK," or bland like "Vacationland." But you don't have to live in this state long to appreciate the power of Revolutionary War hero Gen. John Stark's words. Now that the Cold War is over, the populace fixates on the "live free" half of the slogan more than ever. The respect for personal freedom is reflected in our laws—no mandatory seat belts or motorcycle helmets for adults, for example—but finds its greatest expression in our allowing one another a wide zone of privacy.

One week before the November election, *The Union Leader* of Manchester, my newspaper's chief competitor, violated this tenet in the worst possible way. It used information taken from a website to suggest in a news story that state Senate candidate Rick Trombly was gay, then published an editorial asking whether Trombly lacked the "sound moral and family values that more than ever are needed in our elected officials." The editorial was loaded with references to rubber orgies, leather nights, and "other quaint homosexual fetishes and assorted amusements of the so-called 'gay lifestyle.'"

Shortly before this, my paper, the *Concord Monitor*, had received anonymously the same packet of information upon which the *Union Leader* story was based. The packet included a copy of the web page for the Minotaurs, B.C., Inc., a gay men's group that meets in Manchester, which is 17 miles south of Concord and the state's most populous city. Posted on the site, as a contact for more information about the club, was Trombly's phone number. Trombly, a lawyer, lives in Boscawen, a town in the heart of our circulation area. A state representative for 16 years and the House minority leader before stepping down two years ago, he was in an uphill fight last fall for the state Senate. He's a Democrat, the Senate district is heavily Republican, and his opponent, Amy Patenaude, was an incumbent.

We chose not to pursue the anonymous tip. Despite today's ever more complex and competitive media environment, we try to abide by the old standard for reporting public affairs: If a politician's private behavior affects performance in office or in a campaign, it is fair game for reporting. Interpretations within that standard vary widely, but its purpose—a worthy one—is to respect the private lives of public officials. We saw no evidence that Trombly's connection to the gay men's club, whatever it might be, had any bearing on either his long service in the House or his candidacy for the Senate.

The *Union Leader* story, which ran under the headline "Trombly: Just Lawyer For Gay Club Linked to Fetishes," caused us to reconsider our decision. There was no doubt that *The Union Leader* had introduced a new element into the campaign, and we had no choice but to cover it. The stakes were considerable: In late 1997, the state Supreme Court struck down New Hampshire's method of financing public schools as unconstitutional. With our gubernatorial race headed for a landslide, the makeup of the new Senate was the most consequential decision facing voters.

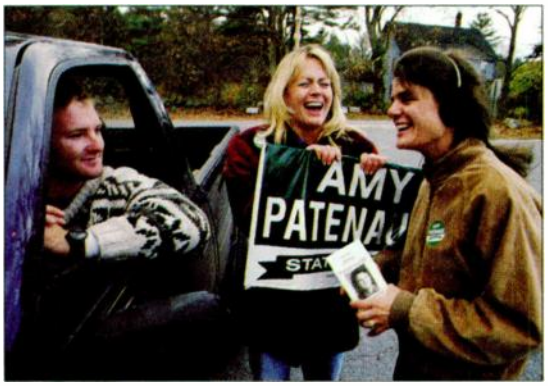
We briefly considered ignoring the *Union Leader* story. We reasoned that we had made the right decision in not reporting the story when we first learned of it. But this line of reasoning quickly dead-ended. Like it or not, the report was a critical development in an important local campaign that we had been following closely. The nature of the story made it likely that it would spread as gossip. We had an obligation to get the facts out.

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

We assigned reporter Ann E. Marimow, who had been covering the race, to write two articles for the next day's paper. The main one was about the *Union Leader*'s story, focusing on its substance, its origins, and what both candidates had to say about it. The sidebar examined the *Union Leader*'s decision to publish its story and our original decision not to. Also, Trombly agreed to come in for an on-the-record discussion with the editors and Marimow, and we published an edited transcript of the interview.

During that interview, Trombly expressed frustration that what had been an intense campaign over the biggest issue facing the state had taken an ugly personal turn. He called the attack on his character "gutter politics." Although we asked Trombly what voters should know about his personal life, we chose not to ask him directly, "Are you gay?" He had told us he would not discuss his private life, so we knew how he would have answered. But I am glad we did not ask. Trombly's sexual orientation had no relevance in the campaign, and, unless he himself decided to introduce the subject, another newspaper's effort to make it an issue did not alter that fact.

Life offers few opportunities to face and strike back at overt prejudice in your own backyard, and a newspaper needs to seize them when they come.



Republican incumbent Amy Patenaude (right) campaigns in her hometown of Henniker, New Hampshire, the day before the election.

One task for Marimow was to investigate whether the campaign of Trombly's opponent, Patenaude, had planted the story. Marimow interviewed Patenaude and one of her leading advisers, David Currier, who had held the Senate seat before her. They provided "evolving accounts," Marimow reported, about whether Patenaude knew of Trombly's connection to the gay men's club before the *Union Leader* story broke. Currier said the Patenaude campaign had learned of it two months earlier but had "left it alone." Patenaude denied knowing of the story beforehand but tried to use it at the same time she was disavowing it. "It's not a campaign issue for me," she said, "other than the issues it raises about children's access to adult websites."

Senior reporter Jim Graham wrote our only other news story on the matter. Graham is our newsroom's master of taking the public's pulse by knocking on doors and visiting corner stores, town dumps, and post offices. We sent him into Patenaude's Senate district to ask voters whether news of Trombly's association with the gay men's club would influence their decision at the polls. The only people who told him it would also said they had intended to vote for Patenaude in the first place.

After our first news stories appeared, Mark Travis, our editorial page editor, wrote an editorial shaming *The Union Leader*. In the 17 years since the death of its longtime owner and publisher, William Loeb, the paper has mellowed considerably. Loeb was well known for hatchet jobs, insults, and epithets. Among other niceties, in its headlines the paper sometimes referred to homosexuals as "Sodomites" or "Homos." The Trombly story, Travis wrote, was a sign that "the bilious spirit of William Loeb still haunts the newsroom of *The Union Leader*."

On the Sunday before the election, on our "Viewpoints" page, I wrote a column expressing hope that our downriver rival was not establishing a new standard for covering our state legislature—whose 424 members make it the country's largest—and the hundreds of other people in New Hampshire's public life.

Some people found our coverage excessive and thought the excess derived from our fight with *The Union Leader*. In a column that appeared on election day, Mark Jurkowitz of *The Boston Globe* suggested as much. But Jurkowitz's conclusion that we had "helped fan the flames of a story that has not drawn much public interest" rang hollow with me. The New Hampshire editors he quoted had run only a brief wire version of the story, but they had no reason to do more: Patenaude's Senate district was not in their circulation areas.

It is true that the *Monitor* and *The Union Leader* are locked in what another New Hampshire editor called "a long-running philosophical battle," but, to me, what mattered was the substance of the attack on Trombly, not its object or its source. Life offers few opportunities to face and strike back at overt prejudice in your own backyard, and a newspaper needs to seize them when they come. The way to do that is to expose prejudice on your news pages and condemn it on your editorial pages.

On the morning of election day, I went to get a haircut. My barbers for 20 years have been two brothers who run a three-chair shop across from the huge new federal courthouse, former U.S. Senator Warren Rudman's parting gift to New Hampshire. Though the barbers, Reggie and Jake Rousseau, will tell you that I do not visit them often enough, their shop is one of many places in Concord where I go to hear opinions other than my own.

When Reggie was finished with the fellow in his chair, the man rose, turned to me and said, "You're Mike Pride from the *Monitor*, aren't you?" In my experience, what follows this question can be quite unpleasant; with a sheet tied round my neck and a man with scissors snipping the hairs in my right ear, I felt especially vulnerable. When I admitted that I was indeed who the man thought I was, he introduced himself and thanked me for the paper's coverage of the Patenaude-Trombly race. He was a voter in that Senate district, he said, and Trombly's private life had no place in the campaign. Possibly this man would have voted for Trombly even if he hadn't perceived the unfairness of the personal attack, but I appreciated his words.

Late that night, the election results rolled in. For the first time since the election of 1912, Democrats took control of the New Hampshire Senate. This meant that the state's education funding crisis had a far better chance of a fair resolution. Among the upset winners in the new majority: Rick Trombly.

Live Free or Die. ■

DAN HABIB/CONCORD MONITOR

In Florida, Our Union Has the Most Demanding Construction Boss Ever.

"I've been a construction worker for over 40 years, and I've never tackled a job with a more demanding boss than I have today in Hollywood, Florida. The $500 million project is an exciting one: rebuilding the legendary Diplomat Hotel, bringing back world class glamour and accommodations along with an economic revival for South Florida.

Who's the boss who expects so much in the way of quality, who insists the job be done on time and on budget? We are—the Plumbers, Pipefitters and Sprinklerfitters union. *No contractor ever demanded as much of us as we do of ourselves.*

In 1997 our union paid $40 million for the Diplomat's 12.5 acre beachfront property and nearby golf course. Last April, we imploded the old landmark hotel to clear the way for the new Diplomat Resort & Country Club that will open in the year 2000.

Much of South Florida is as excited as we are. The property's redevelopment will create 2,100 permanent jobs and invigorate business and tourism.

Prior to its closing seven years ago, the Diplomat was one of south Florida's most popular hotels. It's demise was a devastating blow to the region's economy. Not only did it cost businesses millions of dollars, but workers lost good jobs and local governments were denied badly-needed tax revenues.

Our union is proud to be the engine that will generate an economic comeback of potentially historic proportions.

Let me tell you a little about the exciting new Diplomat: Imagine a 35-story hotel building with a huge portal in the center visually connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Intercoastal Waterway. What a spectacular view *that* is going to be! There will be a connecting conference center (with over 209,000 square feet of meeting space), plus retail shops, waterfront dining, marina, tennis center, world-class spa, and a newly designed and expanded 155-acre golf course.

You can bet we'll be using 100 percent skilled union craftspeople to do the job. Building a "hotel for the future" is a prime opportunity for us to demonstrate the superb quality of union workmanship.

If you would like to know more, give me a call. I can't quit talking about it!"

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General President

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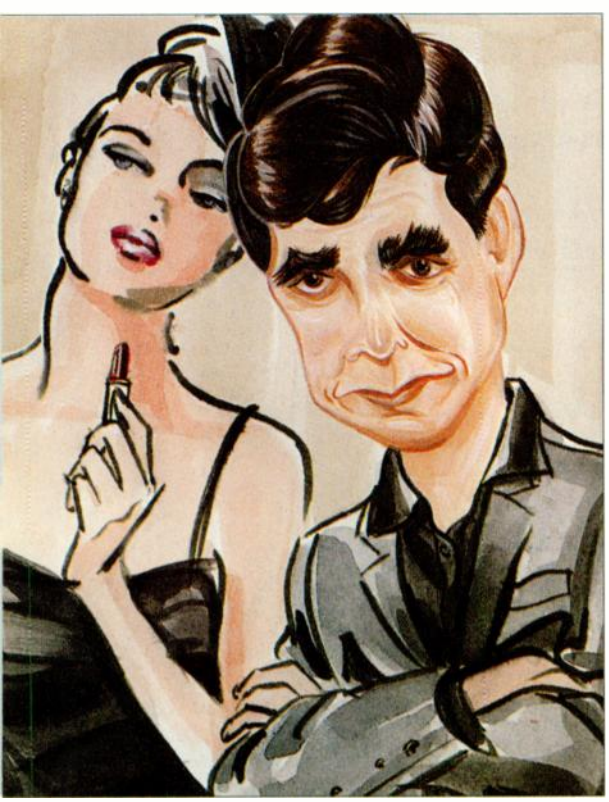
All's Fair In Literary War

Should a long-standing tiff preclude acid-tongued *Vanity Fair* columnist James Wolcott from writing about Brat Pack novelist Jay McInerney?

WHEN IT COMES TO STYLISH VITRIOL, THERE IS no better practitioner in today's magazine world than *Vanity Fair* culture columnist James Wolcott. Take a look at the opening line of his October offering, in which he demolishes *Model Behavior*, the latest novel by former 1980s literary Brat Packer Jay McInerney. "An obsession with models is something most men outgrow, unless they're knuckleheads," it reads. McInerney, in Wolcott's estimation, has not grown up. The rest of the column does not get any more generous.

Wolcott's invective, however, comes with a subtext he fails to mention: He and McInerney already have a long history of literary run-ins. And Wolcott and his magazine bear striking resemblances to a character and publication skewered in the book. "I think it would not behoove Wolcott to pretend to objectively review my book," says McInerney, "because there is a history of animosity there."



Dotted throughout McInerney's satire about a journalist's troubles in dating a supermodel are snide references to one Kevin Shipley, identified as a "book assassin" for *Beau Monde*, the novel's *Vanity Fair* stand-in. The book's protagonist describes the "crabbed and dyspeptic" Shipley as "someone of whom you feel compelled to ask: Have you ever used the word *joy*?"

The Shipley character isn't Wolcott "per se," McInerney says, but he certainly "might bring someone like him to mind—dyspeptic, misanthropic." (Notice the word *dyspeptic* keeps popping up.) And some of Shipley's personal traits, such as his affection for cats, mirror those of Wolcott.

The Wolcott-McInerney tiff stretches back more than a decade, to the era of *Bright Lights, Big City*, McInerney's tale of a cocaine-sniffing, glamour-seeking magazine fact-checker. Lumped together with Tama Janowitz and Bret Easton Ellis, McInerney regularly graced the New York gossip columns. From his perch at *Vanity Fair*, Wolcott slammed the troupe in 1987. The next year, in *The New Republic*, he reviewed McInerney's *The Story of My Life*. The verdict: "All talk, no texture, Jay McInerney's third novel speaks in Valley Girl lingo spread with a thick crudola of New York chutzpah."

McInerney retaliated in the July 1989 issue of *Esquire* with a long critique of critics such as Wolcott. In McInerney's view, the *Vanity Fair* scribe was filled with "seething, furious resentment," and exhibited "blatant sexism."

The grudges don't end there. *Vanity Fair*'s editor, Graydon Carter, used to coedit the now-defunct *Spy* in its glory days of puncturing the pomposity of the rich and famous. "Graydon and his cohorts were never stingy in their eagerness to horsewhip Jay," says Gary Fisketjon, McInerney's longtime editor.

Most notorious was *Spy*'s scalding 1990 cover story, "McInerney Dearest!" McInerney's second wife, from whom he was then separated, regaled readers with a first-person account of his drug taking and infidelity. McInerney is still livid.

Perhaps that explains his jabs at the *Vanity Fair*–like *Beau Monde* as a "glossy magazine devoted to naked pictures of Demi Moore" and other subjects of similar gravity. McInerney's book also pokes fun at Carter, who shows up as *Beau Monde* editor James Croydon, a Tom Wolfe impersonator "in full Savile Row armor." Carter says he hasn't read *Model Behavior* and was unaware that he and *Vanity Fair* are spoofed in it. Wolcott did not return phone calls seeking comment.

McInerney doesn't seem that angry that *Vanity Fair* would let Wolcott write about his book. "I'm a little too old and jaded at this point to be shocked by vindictiveness and perfidy," says McInerney. But he says he was surprised by the article's assertion that "there does seem to be a homoerotic component to [McInerney's] overidentification with fashion divas." McInerney, whose liaisons with models were constant fodder for the tabloids and who is now married for the third time, was dumbfounded: "After all these years of strenuous heterosexuality, it's very nice of him to let me come out of the closet."

In October, senior writer Lorne Manly examined the expanding book empire of German publisher Bertelsmann in the wake of its purchase of Random House.

GREEN & READ

IT'S HOLLYWOOD, HONESTLY

JUST AFTER LABOR DAY IN 1997, TOP EDITORS OF *THE NEW York Times* retired to Tarrytown, New York, for a management retreat, conflicts of interest much on their mind. One situation dominated their conversation: What's a newspaper to do when one of its reporters covers the industry of his or her high-powered spouse, particularly if it's Bernard Weinraub, the *Times*'s Hollywood correspondent, who is married to Amy Pascal, the president of Sony's Columbia Pictures?

In the wake of the off-site bonding experience, *Times* editors decided that Weinraub should avoid box-office and other money-driven stories, which can affect a movie's success or failure. (Weinraub had previously recused himself from covering Sony.) Yet today Weinraub is still writing those stories.

On November 2, he coauthored a story ostensibly about Time Warner's resurgence on Wall Street. Despite an upbeat opening, more than a third of the 2,085-word article dealt with the travails at the company's film studio and the size of the paychecks of its co–chief executives, Terry Semel and Robert Daly.

The background of Weinraub's wife complicates this story. Pascal used to run Turner Pictures, but when Ted Turner merged his company with Time Warner, there was no room for the fledgling movie studio. Daly and Semel offered her a production deal, say two Hollywood sources, but it wasn't the high-ranking job she sought. Instead, she headed to Sony.

The specter of a conflict of interest also hung over an earlier story. In August, Weinraub wrote a story about cost overruns on Universal Studios' *Meet Joe Black*, putting himself on the front edge of a wave of negative publicity about the film. The then–coming attraction just happened to open the same weekend as one of Sony's big hopes for the fall, *I Still Know What You Did Last Summer*. When *Meet Joe Black* was released in November, the poorly reviewed romance tanked. Indeed, the *Times* has not stinted on coverage of the turmoil at Universal, with Weinraub writing stories about *Babe: Pig in the City*'s flop and the firings of Univeral Studios chairman Frank Biondi and Universal Pictures' Casey Silver.

Weinraub dismisses as ludicrous any insinuation that he's helping Sony by trashing the competition. "I have no control over people saying these truly ridiculous things," Weinraub says, adding that Hollywood "is a very mean-spirited place, people always gossiping, always wishing you ill."

One studio executive says that although Weinraub is a good reporter and may be trying to be as dispassionate as possible, "I don't know how you keep a good marriage and stay completely objective. No way he's not going to be influenced by what his wife says....Why *The New York Times* thinks Bernie can stay above it [escapes me, but] it's a coup for Bernie."

Weinraub says he and his wife spend little time talking about movies, and that he refrains from joining her at movie openings and Hollywood parties. John Darnton, the *Times*'s cultural editor, adds that Weinraub has not followed up some box-office–type stories to avoid that perceived conflict of interest. And Bill Keller, managing editor of the *Times*, says he has no concerns about Weinraub's integrity. "Frankly, I feel he may be the most honest person in Hollywood."

But the perception of a conflict of interest can undermine a reporter's credibility and access to newsmakers as significantly as would a real conflict. Even former power agent Michael Ovitz, whose bid for a Hollywood comeback would not seem at all related to Sony, recently complained to the *Times* that Weinraub should not be covering the film industry. Says Keller, speaking before the Ovitz incident, "The fact [that] people are even saying, 'Gee, is he completely neutral in this?' that's troubling....It's something we've got to talk about."

ONE CRITIC IS NEVER ENOUGH

WHAT WITH BARE-CHESTED MEN PLAYING SWANS, A mod rocker clad in black leather, and a show-ending death-by-pecking, British choreographer Matthew Bourne's latest production is definitely not your parents' *Swan Lake*. Trying not to scare off a dance-phobic public, Cameron Mackintosh, the impresario behind such stage spectacles as *Phantom of the Opera* and *Miss Saigon*, decided to market *Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake* not as ballet but as a night of theater on Broadway. One of the show's press releases even called it "a musical that happens to be danced."

But if Mackintosh was hoping to sidestep a dance establishment less likely to accept this classic's radical reworking, he was mistaken. After a sold-out run in London, where theater critics gushed, Mackintosh's minions urged American media to dispatch their theater critics along with their dance critics. Not everyone played ball. "Because *Swan Lake* has music, because there's no language, I think it's appropriately in the province of the dance critic," says Elizabeth Zimmer, senior editor for dance at *The Village Voice*.

That argument triumphed at *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday*, and *The New Republic*. But the lure of Broadway and the pressure from the show's press agents were too strong for other publications. *The Dallas Morning News* sent only its theater critic. *The New York Times*, the New York *Daily News*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* dispatched both theater and dance critics and ran their reviews on the same day.

"Anytime something appears in a Broadway house, we feel bound to send our theater critic," says Alan Mirabella, deputy managing editor/features at the *Daily News*. "At the same time, we realized there was something so unique about this, we thought we'd add another voice."

Others, though, felt the reviewing duties should be left to the dance critics alone. "Just because the producer wanted it to be considered a Broadway show doesn't mean it is," says Linda Winer, chief theater critic and arts columnist at Long Island, New York's *Newsday*.

But the expected chasm between dance critics aghast at a classic's desecration and theater critics enraptured by the stagecraft never materialized. *New York Times* dance critic Anna Kisselgoff temperately applauded Bourne's work as "polished entertainment" and "clever in its choreography." *Los Angeles Times* dance critic Lewis Segal called it "uniquely audacious and unforgettable." Then there's *New York*'s curmudgeonly theater critic, John Simon. He referred to the ballet as "choreographically impoverished," and helpfully offered Bourne the following advice: "Go jump in a lake." ■

Go jump in *Swan Lake*: Is this radical new production ballet or theater?

CRAIG SCHWARTZ/AP-WIDE WORLD

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Forbes Bytes Back

New editor William Baldwin is beefing up tech coverage. But will it cost *Forbes* its famously acerbic tone? • BY ELIZABETH LESLY STEVENS

WHEN *FORBES* magazine announced last fall that William Baldwin would take over as editor in January, Baldwin was so little-known outside the corridors of the fusty old *Forbes* headquarters building on New York's Fifth Avenue that the magazine issued a press release explaining to the world that "William Baldwin, Editor-To-Be of *Forbes*, Is High-Tech Maven."

That came as news to some tech veterans. "That's ridiculous," says the editor of one computer-industry publication. "I've never heard of him."

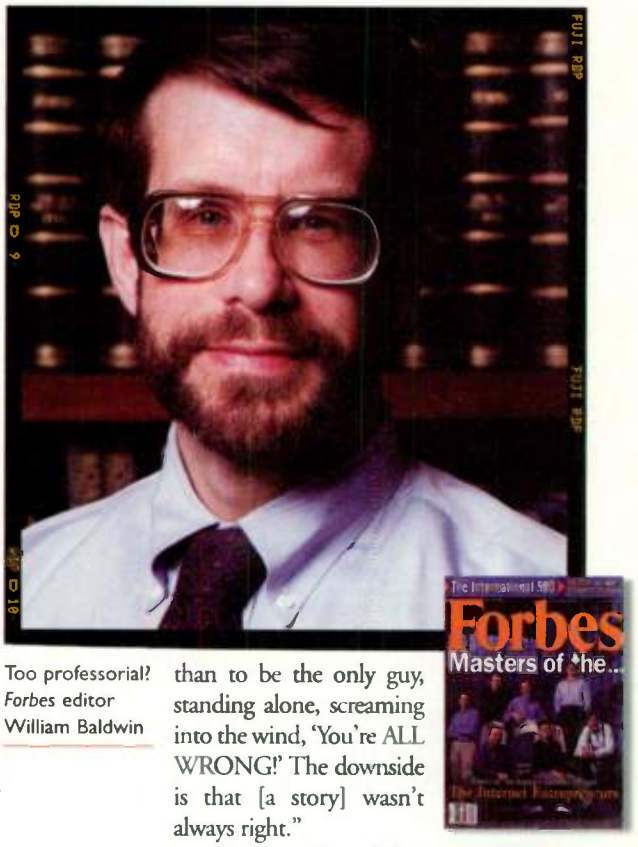
Even within his own magazine, Baldwin, an 18-year *Forbes* veteran, is a somewhat inscrutable character who avoids office politics and Manhattan's cocktail-party circuit. Colleagues credit his rise entirely to his work ethic and intellect. The slight, shaggy 47-year-old Harvard grad looks more like a mathematics professor than he does the top editor of a high-profile business magazine. His editorial passions—arcane, sophisticated investment strategies; intricacies of the tax code; and subtle technological developments—are distinctly unglitzy.

Indeed, he seems impervious to the trappings of status and power. Around the time Baldwin was promoted to executive editor in 1992, *Forbes* knocked out a wall of an adjoining office to double the size of his office. But Baldwin kept his furniture configured as before, oddly clustered in what was now one corner of a cavernous space.

This remote figure, though, faces a big challenge—one hinted at by the press release that announced his promotion. When Baldwin took over on January 1—as only the fourth editor the magazine has had since its founding in 1917—he inherited an institution that has lagged behind its competitors, *Fortune* and *Business Week*, in technology coverage and, more significantly, technology advertising. Wall Street was the big story of the 1980s, and Forbes was a real player. Technology is the big story of the 1990s—and *Forbes* badly needs to catch up. But is the reclusive Baldwin a vibrant enough personality to breathe new life into the 81-year-old business magazine?

FOR 37 YEARS, *FORBES* EMBODIED THE worldview of James Michaels, 77, Baldwin's predecessor. *Forbes* perfectly reflected Michaels's combativeness, prejudices, and boundless curiosity. Under him, a *Forbes* story became an easily recognizable commodity, marked by brevity, a clear, punchy conclusion, and a relish for challenging conventional wisdom. At Michaels's *Forbes*, fairness was for chumps, balance for the weak, and context for the wooly-headed. (To find out how a *Forbes* story gets its edge, see page 56).

"*Forbes* magazine *was* Jim Michaels," notes financial columnist Christopher Byron, who served as one of *Forbes*'s top editors until 1989. "It didn't have his name on it, but every other part of it was his personality. Michaels liked nothing better than to be the only guy, standing alone, screaming into the wind, 'You're ALL WRONG!' The downside is that [a story] wasn't always right."



Too professorial? *Forbes* editor William Baldwin

Despite that, Michaels's formula was extraordinarily successful, transforming *Forbes* from an also-ran among business magazines in 1961 into an advertising-thick powerhouse whose circulation is now surpassed only by that of *Business Week*. In the 1980s, with such stars as Allan Sloan (now at *Newsweek*), Howard Rudnitsky (now retired), and Richard Behar (now at *Fortune*) cranking out gems of investigation and analysis, *Forbes* was the country's savviest business magazine.

But in the past three years, many of the magazine's best-known writers and editors jumped ship, and it became obvi-

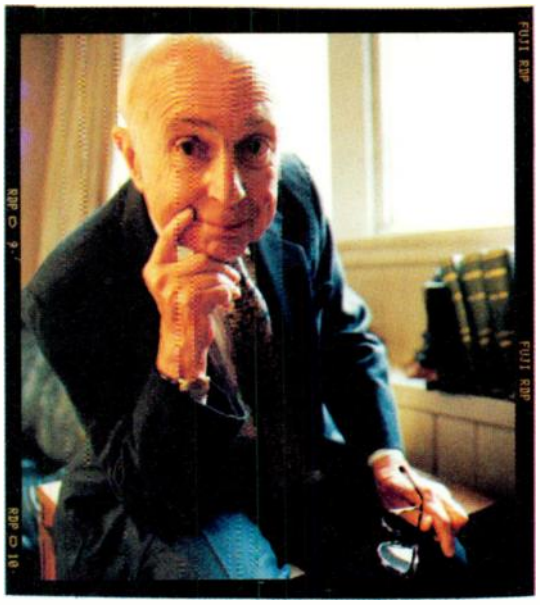
Senior writer Elizabeth Lesly Stevens, Business Week's *former media editor, wrote last issue about ABC's decision to kill a story about Disney.*

COURTESY OF FORBES

ous that it had fallen behind its rivals in both technology coverage and advertising. Nonetheless, circulation has remained strong, with *Forbes* boosting the circulation it guarantees to advertisers by 3 percent, to 785,000, as of January 1.

Forbes's archrivals have long paid attention to technology coverage, and have long attracted lots of tech ads, to boot. At *Business Week*, comprehensive technology coverage has been a key part of the magazine's mix for two decades. It created its "Information Processing" section in 1979, long before Baldwin, then an assistant managing editor, launched *Forbes*'s "Computers/Communications" section in 1988. (In 1992, *Forbes* did create *Forbes ASAP*, a bi-monthly technology supplement available only to *Forbes* subscribers. Unlike *Forbes*, which emphasizes investor-oriented articles, *ASAP* favors more conceptual stories about the culture of technology.)

When *Forbes* did run tech stories, its trademark biting style didn't always go over well with executives used to the more evenhanded coverage found in *Fortune* and *Business Week*. *Forbes* publisher Rich Karlgaard acknowledges that *Forbes* is treated with wariness by tech executives. "*Forbes* is perceived by the makers of technology products to be more hostile to the technology revolution than it actually was," says Karlgaard. "*Forbes* [has been] more skeptical of the stock market valuations of some of these tech companies. Its skepticism of high stock prices was confused with skepticism of the general importance of technology. In the last three years, [amid] a bull market, *Forbes* seemed out of step."



The contrarian: James Michaels stepped down after 37 years as Forbes editor.

Forbes's reporting system also put the magazine at a disadvantage. Its competitors have long had beat reporters who spent a decade or more building relationships with such figures as Microsoft chairman Bill Gates. By contrast, *Forbes* has no formal beats, and its writers can eviscerate a company and then never revisit it.

As a result, if a reader wanted to learn what the movers and shakers in technology were thinking, he likely wouldn't find that information in *Forbes*, which wasn't in the loop, and didn't regularly land interviews with the big tech moguls. When *Forbes* put Gates and Microsoft on its cover for the first time in October 1998, the story didn't have any comments from Gates.

Meanwhile, the buzz, especially among media buyers who decide where to place ads, has shifted in *Fortune*'s favor since managing editor John Huey was tapped to revive it in 1995. That helped fuel a 17 percent surge in *Fortune*'s ad pages in the first three quarters of 1998, while *Forbes*'s ad pages declined by .5 percent. *Forbes*'s ad revenue now trails that of both *Fortune* and *Business Week*, according to the Publishers Information Bureau.

Most troublesome, however, is *Forbes*'s lagging performance in attracting technology advertising, a booming category in which it ranks third among the Big Three business magazines, with less than half of *Business Week*'s 50 percent market share.

FORBES'S PUSH TO INCREASE ITS TECH position began even before the magazine promoted Baldwin to editor. Last summer, the magazine picked Karlgaard, then editor of *Forbes ASAP*, as *Forbes*'s new publisher. As the cofounder of *Upside*, a technology and business magazine, and as a contributing columnist to *The Wall Street Journal*, the glamorous Karlgaard has a high profile and moves

FORBES'S LOTUS POSITION

EVER WONDERED HOW ALL THOSE PUNCHY AND OPINIONATED *Forbes* articles are produced? A look at a controversial story about the messaging-software competition between Lotus Notes and Microsoft Exchange reveals much about the magazine's approach. The August 10, 1998, article was written by Daniel Lyons, a freelancer who has since been hired as a senior editor, and edited by both James Michaels and William Baldwin.

Titled "The Decline and Fall of Lotus," the 1,100-word story asserted that 60 percent of the largest U.S. companies had allied themselves with Microsoft Exchange, and that "former Lotus flagship accounts" were dumping Lotus Notes. The executive summary: Lotus is doomed.

Four of the story's sources say the article misrepresented their views or gave an otherwise distorted picture. For example, one company was identified as signing on with Microsoft; not reported in the article was that the firm still does 98 percent of its business with Lotus. The story "gave the impression we ditched Notes and went with Microsoft," complains Randall Eckel, president of software developer InfoImage, Inc. "Nothing could be further from the truth. I told [*Forbes*] exactly that."

The story also took a claim from Microsoft's marketing materials—that 30 of the 50 largest U.S. companies, none of which were named, had signed on with Microsoft Exchange—and reported it as fact. In an e-mail written to editor in chief Steve Forbes after the article appeared and Lotus complained, Michaels explained that no attribution for this persuasive statement was necessary because, when asked to comment, Lotus had "neither confirmed or denied the statement....[T]he fact that even Lotus did not deny its accuracy surely justifies [*Forbes*'s] acceptance of the statement." (Lyons, the story's author, declined to comment.)

Moreover, important context wasn't provided. Of the 12 companies identified as choosing Microsoft's product, six have

easily among the tech elites.

Baldwin, meanwhile, had become known—within *Forbes*, at least—as the technology guy. As a result, the Forbes family, which owns the magazine, didn't seriously consider other candidates. "Why punish someone just because he's been with you?" asks editor in chief Steve Forbes. "We didn't have to reinvent the wheel with him."

Baldwin appears unlikely to reinvent *Forbes*, either. He admits to no particular plans, or even the urge to leave any personal stamp on the magazine. "It will be hard for readers to see a pronounced change," he shrugs. The *Forbes* tone and format won't soften, Baldwin says. "*Forbes* is a blunt magazine," he notes. "A reader gets to the end of a *Forbes* article, and knows where we stand. That won't change. I get great pleasure out of defying conventional wisdom. Another word is contrarian. That's Jim Michaels's style. You bet I want to continue that tradition."

Baldwin does plan to increase tech coverage. In 1998 he hired three new tech writers, and he brought in Dennis Kneale, a *Wall Street Journal* senior editor responsible for technology, science, and health coverage, to oversee tech at *Forbes*. And the magazine finally established a big presence late last year—years after the competition—in Silicon Valley. Publisher Karlgaard and some 40 staffers are now based there.

But will more tech coverage mean better or more compelling tech coverage? Unlike Michaels, who was known for the breadth of his interests, Baldwin expresses enthusiasm about narrow subjects with seemingly limited appeal. Asked to name some of his favorite recent *Forbes* technology stories, Baldwin cites a June 1996 piece that he describes as "an unconventional view that monopolies on [computer] chips are good, [leading to improved] data transfer rates and chip integration. Our readers were startled by it." Another favorite: a January 1998 article about manufacturing logistics. "The algorithms were pretty sophisticated," Baldwin says. But, he notes, the story focused on how Volvo applied these theories, rather than on the technology itself. "That characterizes what I would like to do with technology" coverage, Baldwin explains.

Though it may just be a coincidence, many of *Forbes*'s recent tech covers seem to lack the magazine's characteristic edge. If it abandons the tone developed under Michaels—and its distinctive manner of bluntly telling its investment-oriented readers which companies to bet on and which to bail out on—*Forbes* runs the risk of having nothing to distinguish itself from the pack. A July 1998 cover on the "Masters of the New Universe," was a bizarre, almost fanzine treatment that depicted the moguls of Yahoo! and Amazon.com posing with surfboards, their young ages—hardly a revelation at this point—prominently displayed.

Silicon Valley symbolism: Forbes's West Coast office.

Another soft effort was the October Gates cover, which largely rehashed Microsoft's electronic-commerce efforts and the company's missteps on the Web—something that had been heavily covered by other publications for a year or more. "I don't think that's what our story is about," Baldwin counters. "This argument is key: Even if Microsoft is not successful in controlling portals [packaged Internet entry sites, such as Yahoo!], it can make an enormous fortune by controlling the end points. That is new."

Perhaps. But stories like that don't look particularly fresh to readers who don't have the stamina to make a methodical, textual comparison of *Forbes* and its competitors. If Baldwin is to live up to his "High-Tech Maven" billing, he'll have to give readers a bit more bite with their bytes. ■

RICHARD MORGENSTEIN

partnerships with Microsoft or compete directly with Lotus's parent company, IBM, and thus are unlikely to choose a competitor's product. And though the story accurately reported that Microsoft Exchange had outsold Lotus Notes for the first time in 1998's first quarter, it ignored nonpartisan sources who warned that the trend was not sustainable, caused by the fact that a new version of Exchange had just been released while a new version of Notes was months away. Instead, the one-quarter sales win was presented as incontrovertible proof that all the momentum belonged to Microsoft. (Indeed, by the third quarter, sales of Lotus Notes were again outstripping those of Exchange.)

These are not abstract points. Forbes shapes opinions and buying decisions. "This story has had a significant impact in the market," says Tom Austin, vice-president of the Gartner Group, an influential technology advisory firm. "The last thing an information-technology manager wants to do is make a long-term investment in a technology in its sunset years." Austin is particularly miffed that Forbes "misrepresented" Gartner Group's own data to substantiate the story's argument. In a November 1997 report, Gartner had forecast that it was "unlikely," Austin says, that Exchange would achieve "functional parity," or share the same features, as Lotus Notes by 1999. But Forbes reported that Gartner was predicting total parity would be achieved "in a year or two."

The article created "a huge concern in the market about Lotus's future," says Marcio Mattos, Lotus's vice-president for Latin America. "We probably lost deals because of it."

Michaels acknowledges that success or failure in the market can be influenced by the predictions in a *Forbes* piece but rejects suggestions that the magazine should feel a sense of responsibility in that process. "We undertake to make judgments on subjects we report on," he says. "Any story is—any facts are—capable of more than one interpretation. That's what makes for controversy. You see a fact in one light; I see it in another light. It will take some time. But at the end of that time, one of us will be proved right." He notes that *Forbes* has a short section called "Follow-Through," where it assesses earlier stories. "When the passage of a year, 18 months, two years, shows us to be right or wrong, we'll revisit [the Lotus/Exchange story]. For now, there's nothing more to say."—*ELS*

Implausible Deniability

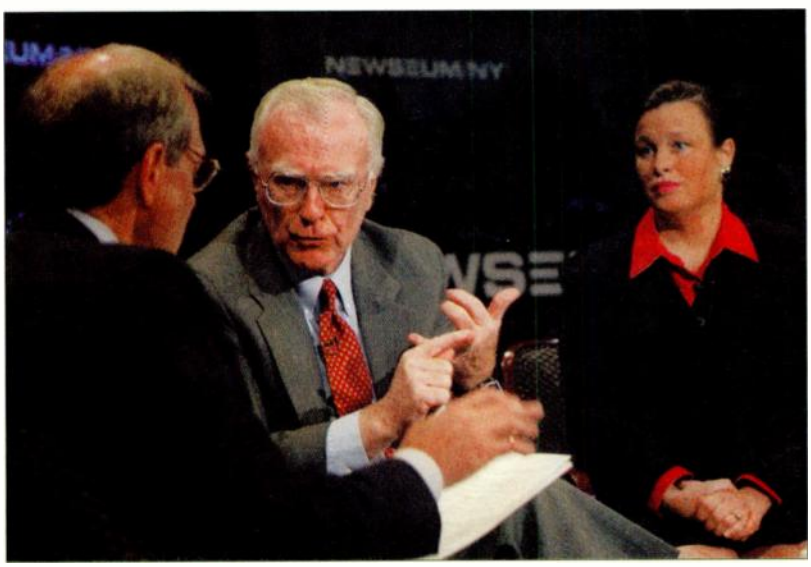
Two fired producers argue that CNN protected itself—rather than the truth—when it retracted its controversial Tailwind broadcast.

IN A YEAR OF JOURNALISTIC MELTDOWNS, CNN'S TAILWIND STORY last June may have been the most dramatic. The premier episode of *NewsStand: CNN & Time*, a television show that CNN produces with its corporate cousin *Time* magazine, included a segment with incendiary charges: In 1970, U.S. soldiers had used deadly sarin nerve gas during a secret mission in Laos that targeted U.S. defectors. The broadcast kindled outrage in the military and other quarters, leading CNN to hire lawyer Floyd Abrams to review it. Abrams's report, in turn, prompted CNN to retract the broadcast and to fire April Oliver and Jack Smith, who had reported and produced it.

Below, Oliver and Smith tell their side of the story. Tom Johnson, chairman of CNN News Group, declined an opportunity to respond, as did Steven Haworth, the company's spokesman. Abrams, however, did offer his views, which follow the account by Oliver and Smith.

APRIL OLIVER AND JACK SMITH

ON THE SUNDAY NIGHT IN JUNE AFTER THE TAILwind report aired, Jack Smith, coproducer of the story about the use of sarin nerve gas on a raid to kill American defectors during the Vietnam War, received a congratulatory phone call from his former desk assistant, Rick Kaplan. Kaplan had worked under Smith when Kaplan got his first job in television news at the Chicago CBS affiliate 29 years ago. Kaplan—the president of CNN USA—was now Smith's boss. Kaplan still considered Smith a mentor. They had covered a lot of news together back in Chicago. Kaplan spoke glowingly with Smith, extending high praise for the Tailwind report.



Ex-CNN staffers Jack Smith and April Oliver defend their story at a forum last year at New York's Newseum.

JEFF GEISSLER/AP-WIDE WORLD

The next day, Smith's coproducer on the story, April Oliver, heard from Kaplan. She received white orchids, along with accolades from him and her bosses at *NewsStand*, the CNN program on which the Tailwind story had aired. Oliver also knew Kaplan well. Just a week earlier, according to one CNN manager, Kaplan had told CNN chairman Tom Johnson that he had known Oliver for years and could vouch for the integrity of her work. Kaplan and Oliver had worked closely together on an award-winning series of broadcasts in the 1980s.

Despite that, we, the producing team of Smith and Oliver, were booted out of CNN's front door and castigated publicly by the same bosses who had showered us with accolades only three and a half weeks before. Kaplan and Johnson went on the offensive, bad-mouthing our work to the world, disputing their own involvement in the story, and begging forgiveness from the military, irate veterans, and even the Nixon estate, with a retraction and an apology.

On the day of the retraction, one CNN executive stated that the company's goal was to "kill this thing, drive a stake through its heart and bury it." That's an incredible statement for a news executive to make. Just why is CNN so eager to bury Tailwind? What are the implications for journalism?

We stand by the story. We are not novices who slapped this report together to garner headlines. In the 1980s, Smith was Washington bureau chief for CBS News, where he headed the investigative reporting of the congressional-page sex scandal. Oliver had reported on international affairs for 15 years, in-

cluding a five-year stint at the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, for which she produced reports from Nicaragua, South Africa, and China. The Tailwind story was carefully researched and reported over eight months, with our bosses approving each interview request and every line of the story's script. It was based on the accounts of multiple sources, from senior military officials to firsthand participants, some of whom paid high compliments to the Tailwind broadcast even after the controversy ignited.

CNN's executives and our *NewsStand* bosses knew it was a story based not on smoking-gun documents but on interviews. They knew the extent and the nature of our reporting. They had been briefed also that veterans of the elite, covert world of so-called black operations were pledged to secrecy. Given that "plausible deniability" was an overriding golden rule of the special operations commandos, a loud chorus of denials was inevitable after the story aired.

Top management received a 156-page briefing book three weeks before the broadcast, outlining the views of both supporters and detractors of the story's controversial central topic. Management also received a three-page memo, outlining exactly where attacks on the broadcast would come from. CNN's two top executives, Johnson and Kaplan, approved the report for broadcast.

The Tailwind story was carefully researched and reported over eight months, with our bosses approving every line of the story's script.

In addition to the sources who confirmed or supported the Tailwind story during our eight months of reporting, more than a dozen pilots told us of the availability or use of a special last-resort gas during the Vietnam War. It was known variously as nerve gas, killer gas, GB (the military name for sarin), CBU-15, or sleeping gas. Since the broadcast and our firing, we have received leads regarding similar missions. In addition, one of CNN's most experienced investigative reporters, John Camp, interviewed on camera a veteran who described killing four defectors by calling in a nerve gas strike on a 1970 raid into Cambodia. In a memo to CNN management, Camp detailed his extensive background check of the veteran and said the man seemed "extremely reliable." The videotapes detailing this entirely separate mission to kill defectors were in the hands of CNN's management at the time we were fired.

The vehicle for CNN's retraction and our firings was a highly publicized report by lawyer Floyd Abrams and CNN general counsel David Kohler. Kohler's involvement invalidates the purported independence of their investigation. Their verdict? The Tailwind story was prepared after "exhaustive research" and was rooted in "considerable supportive data." None of the information on which the story was based was fabricated or nonexistent. The lawyers could not—and did not—say that the story was wrong. They concluded, nonetheless, that the story was insupportable. (Our detailed rebuttal to the Abrams/Kohler report is available at www.wmin.ac.uk/media/tailwind.)

Our failure, the lawyers alleged, was that we became true believers in nerve gas use and a hunt to kill defectors, and that we ignored information to the contrary. This is simply not true. But this false thesis has been used by CNN not to tell the truth about the reporting and editorial decision making that went into the Tailwind story, but to kill the story and isolate us while protecting CNN's executives.

Under pressure from former Nixon operatives, the military establishment, and veterans who bombarded CNN's executive suite with e-mail, Johnson and Kaplan turned and ran from the story. They gagged us from responding to the various questions and criticisms relating to Tailwind that circulated in the press, many of which were simply untrue and could easily have been refuted. The untruths included reports that one drop of sarin on the skin kills—so that using sarin on a risky rescue attempt would make no tactical sense, as one drop would kill those being rescued. This is inaccurate. The nerve gas sarin kills those who *breathe* it, and the commando team was equipped with special chemical masks. Another untruth was that the commandos did not carry atropine, which is an antidote to nerve gas. Equally untrue was that the story was based on Tailwind officer Robert Van Buskirk's repressed memory, which he purportedly recovered during the course of our interview. In fact, Van Buskirk told of the use of a lethal war gas and the killing of a Caucasian in our first cold call. There was no repressed memory, as the transcripts of his interviews prove. Furthermore, we had multiple sources beyond Van Buskirk who confirmed this story.

IN THIS MAGAZINE IN SEPTEMBER, *BRILL'S CONTENT* EDITOR in chief Steven Brill interviewed CNN chairman Johnson, Time Inc. editor in chief Norman Pearlstine, and lawyer Abrams. In that interview, Johnson made a number of allegations that are flatly wrong.

The most erroneous is Johnson's claim in the on-line version of the interview that "I was not going to be pressured to either go with it [the Tailwind broadcast] or not go with it, depending on the ultimate question I put to the producers, [which] was, *are you sure you've got it right.* I think those are my exact words: *Are you certain you've got it right.* And—I almost wish I had the meeting notes or something, they don't exist, but they made such a compelling case, particularly Jack Smith and April."

There are no meeting notes because there was no meeting. Oliver never spoke or met with Johnson prior to broadcast. The only joint meeting Oliver and Smith ever had with Johnson was on June 18, two weeks after the Tailwind broadcast. An ashen-faced Johnson walked into the room saying he had just spoken to Henry Kissinger, who had told him that the Tailwind broadcast had made Kissinger ashamed to be an American. Kaplan chimed in that what CNN was faced with was not a journalism problem, but a public relations problem. He did not want this story to go to congressional hearings, with thousands of establishment figures lined up with General Colin Powell on one side of the room, and CNN and the special forces veterans on the other. In the *Brill's Content* interview, Johnson also made the claim that people who complained about the report had "no

agenda," that some of them merely wanted to help CNN. Can Johnson seriously believe that Henry Kissinger, the Special Forces Association, and the Pentagon have no agenda?

Johnson also made other statements that underscore CNN's strategy—heap blame on the producers and absolve management of responsibility. Johnson suggested that Oliver had taken the initiative in submitting the *Time* article—with her and Peter Arnett's byline—that was published in conjunction with the broadcast piece. This is dead wrong. Senior executives at CNN came to Oliver and Smith and told them to write the article and to include Arnett's name in the byline. Our *NewsStand* bosses, as well as *Time* senior editors, were aware of Arnett's minimal involvement, but approved the article and byline. CNN management, not Oliver, directed the inclusion of Arnett's name in the byline.

There was no need to retract the story. The responsible reaction would have been to invite naysayers to present contrary views on the air.

In the midst of the controversy that erupted after the Tailwind story aired, CNN founder Ted Turner, in a meeting with senior CNN executives, proclaimed a new standard for broadcasting an important story: that journalists ought to be able to prove it to a jury in a court of law. That is not now, and never has been, the standard for journalism.

The Tailwind story met the journalistic standard that we have abided by in our combined 47 years of covering news. This standard requires having enough credible sources and checking the accuracy of their information as carefully and as thoroughly as possible. The standard requires interviewing other available sources, particularly those who would likely contradict the report's information. We met that standard. And CNN's executives approved the Tailwind report using that standard.

If, as Turner has proclaimed, journalists ought to be able to prove an important story to a jury, journalists must be told the standard of proof that the jury would apply. Before a jury assesses evidence and renders a verdict, that jury is told what standard of proof it must apply. Abrams and Kohler concluded that the Tailwind story was "insupportable" but did not articulate the standard they had applied. Johnson has told Smith and Oliver that they were fired because CNN concluded that the story was not supported by "sufficient evidence" or "sufficient proof." But Johnson has never articulated the required level of proof. The preponderance of information we gathered in our reporting confirmed and supported that nerve gas was used and that defectors were targeted. Nevertheless, CNN retracted the story and fired us. The implication? In order to air an important story, CNN journalists must have proof beyond a reasonable doubt. This new standard is next to impossible to meet in reporting on a black operation, the very purpose of which is to forever conceal the facts.

There was no need to retract the Tailwind story. The journalistically responsible reaction to the emerging naysayers would have been to invite them to present their contrary views on the air. The one asset CNN has is airtime. If those like Kissinger, who turned us down for interviews on Tailwind, wanted to challenge the story, they should have been allowed to do that publicly, not through private back channels into CNN's executive suite. By caving in to pressure, running away from the story, and changing the rules, Johnson and Kaplan have placed a paralyzing chill at CNN on future reporting of military and government operations conducted in the dark and behind closed doors.

FLOYD ABRAMS RESPONDS

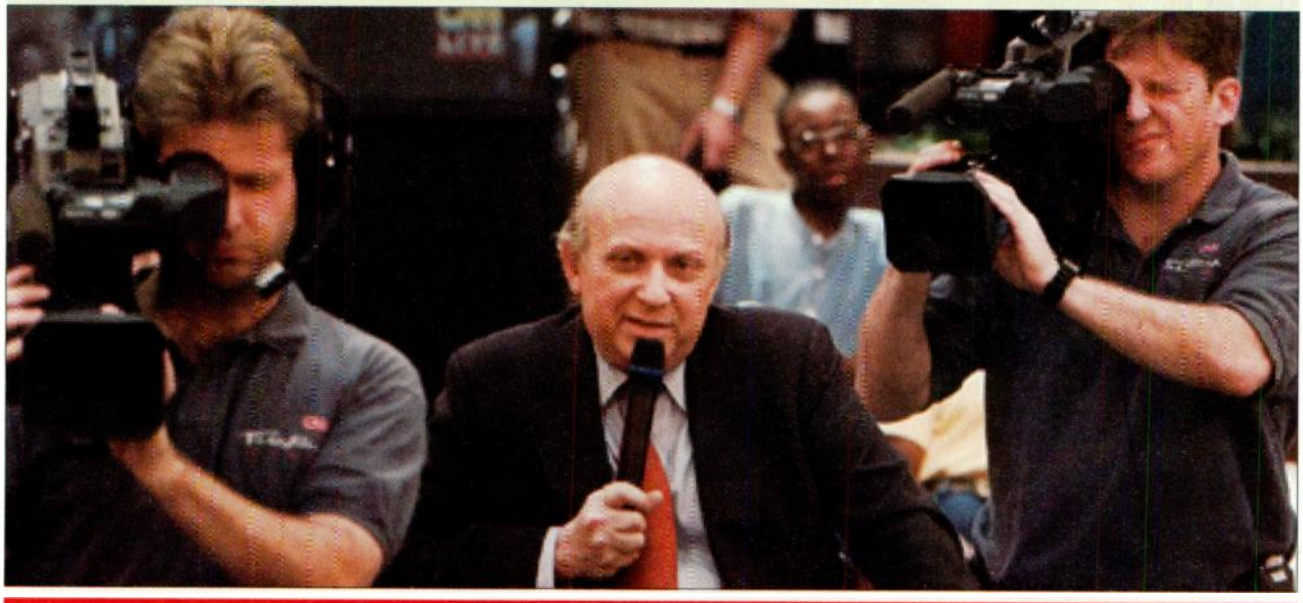
I DON'T KNOW WHO SENT WHITE ORCHIDS TO APRIL OLIVER. I do know why CNN retracted the piece on Operation Tailwind, since the decision to retract was based, to my personal knowledge, on the report I coauthored and submitted to CNN. When I concluded that the CNN broadcast was "insupportable," I did so because the information available to CNN that supported the thesis was simply inadequate to justify the extraordinary charges made by the broadcast; because a good deal of information that the CNN team that prepared the piece had concluded supported their thesis was inconclusive or did not provide the kind of information they believed it did; and because information that negated the thesis was understated or omitted altogether. My entire 54-page report, which concluded that CNN had "broadcast accusations of the gravest sort without sufficient justification and in the face of substantial persuasive information to the contrary," is available at www.cnn.com.

The conclusions in the report arose—and arose only—from the detailed review I and my colleague and staff conducted into *all* the relevant information CNN had at the time it aired the broadcast. We not only reviewed the entirety of the outtakes of key individuals interviewed for the broadcast, but the transcripts or notes of all interviews of all other relevant individuals interviewed for the broadcast. Where we thought it appropriate, we ourselves interviewed sources of information used in preparing the broadcast. We also interviewed other sources not interviewed by the CNN producers, and had the benefit of post-broadcast interviews conducted by *Time* magazine personnel and independent investigators retained by us.

We were, in short, given absolutely free rein to do all that we thought necessary to reach a genuinely independent judgment as to the bona fides of the broadcast. We did just that, concluding that "the central thesis of the

broadcast could not be sustained at the time of the broadcast itself and cannot be sustained now."

I deeply regret that Oliver and Smith seem unable to accept the notion that anyone, in good faith, could review their work product and find it wanting. That they continue to stand by their story is no surprise; our report concluded on page one that the program "reflected the deeply held beliefs of the CNN journalists who prepared it." The problem with the broadcast was never that its producers had doubts about it. It was that they did not.



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP-WIDE WORLD

First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams explains his critical report on the Tailwind story in an appearance on CNN's *Talkback Live*.

OLIVER AND SMITH'S LAST WORD

"SIMPLY INADEQUATE": NO, MR. ABRAMS. Once again, Abrams fails to articulate the standard used to reach his conclusion that the Tailwind broadcast was "insupportable." More than a half dozen sources confirmed the use of nerve gas and the policy of killing defectors. This is more than adequate under traditional journalistic standards.

"Genuinely independent": No, Mr. Abrams. The claim of independence is invalid because CNN general counsel David Kohler was his co-investigator. Kohler is a part of CNN management and reports to CNN's top executives. Abrams awkwardly masks Kohler's participation by referring to him as "my colleague." With Kohler at Abrams's elbow, these two lawyers served up what panicked CNN's executives wanted.

"Substantial persuasive information to the contrary": No, Mr. Abrams. The statement regarding contrary information is erroneous and highlights the bias of the lawyers' report. The Abrams-Kohler report apparently referred to statements made by several Tailwind veterans. As explained in our rebuttal, the information provided by these individuals was contradictory—sometimes even supporting the story—and was ultimately far outweighed by information from more credible and more knowledgeable sources.

"Detailed review": Not enough, Mr. Abrams. Abrams states that their report arose from a "detailed review" of "all the relevant information," including the "outtakes of key individuals." We do not know what information Abrams deemed "relevant" or what individuals he deemed "key." But Abrams makes clear that his report was not based on a review of all the information CNN had. Moreover, Abrams and Kohler failed to interview us, as promised, after they completed their review. How they could recommend a retraction without a complete review of all information, including interviews with the producers, is unfathomable.

Support from *"independent investigators"*: What, Mr. Abrams? Abrams claims he "had the benefit of post-broadcast interviews conducted by...independent investigators retained by us." Although the Abrams-Kohler report mentions these investigators, it does not specify what, if any, information was provided by them. According to a July 20 article in *Editor and Publisher*, these investigators included ex-CIA members. The article stated that Abrams said these ex-CIA members did not come up with any information he could use. Why then does Abrams cite them as bolstering his report?

"Deeply held beliefs": No, Mr. Abrams. In their report, Abrams and Kohler falsely portrayed us as true believers. By smearing us, Abrams and Kohler sought to absolve CNN management of responsibility. We approached every individual with a high degree of skepticism. We were not true believers wedded to a thesis or a set of deeply held beliefs. Our belief in the accuracy of our report is based on information provided by multiple credible sources.

"Review their work": Yes, Mr. Abrams. We welcome a full and fair review. We request that CNN release all Tailwind material—tapes, transcripts, work papers (Abrams's and ours), notes, and memos (redacting confidential sources). Let's make Tailwind a case study for our journalism schools. ■

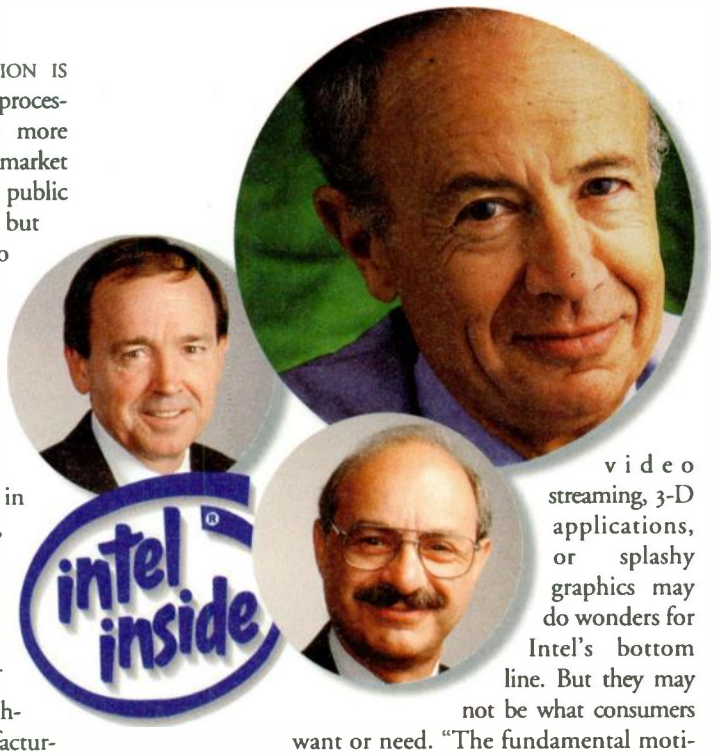
INTEL FACES ITS PARANOIA

The microprocessor giant tries to secure its future by investing in content that needs its chips. • BY LORNE MANLY

THE INTEL CORPORATION IS paranoid. The microprocessor colossus controls more than 80 percent of the market and is the third-most profitable public company in the United States, but chairman Andrew Grove likes to remind people that if the demand for ever-more powerful computers—and the microprocessors that are their brains—dries up, then so will Intel's fortunes. That sense of imminent catastrophe explains why Intel senior vice-presidents Ronald Whittier, in charge of Intel's content group, and Leslie Vadasz, who heads the company's business-development group, have been playing venture capitalist of late, investing hundreds of millions of dollars in companies that have nothing to do with designing or manufacturing computer chips.

"For [Intel's continued growth] to happen," Grove wrote in his 1996 business manual *Only the Paranoid Survive*, "content has to come to life, objects need to become three-dimensional, and sound and video need to become ubiquitous. Processing the large number of bits that make these up requires higher and higher power microprocessors. This has wonderful promise for our business."

Websites and CD-ROMs with video streaming, 3-D applications, or splashy graphics may do wonders for Intel's bottom line. But they may not be what consumers want or need. "The fundamental motivation of what Intel is doing is for people to say, 'My computer is awfully slow, I need a new one,'" says Stewart Alsop, a general partner at the venture capital firm New Enterprise Associates and a *Fortune* columnist. "And you have to ask yourself," he adds, "is that what makes media successful?"



Intel chairman Andrew Grove (top) and his media investment team, Ronald Whittier (middle) and Leslie Vadasz

Executives at the Santa Clara, California-based Intel decided to jump into the venture-capital business earlier this decade. Intel's dominance in the microprocessor market had already approached monopolistic proportions, and Andy Grove and his brain trust had a decision to make: Devote their energies to wrapping up the 15 to 20 percent or so of the business Intel didn't control, or attempt to expand the entire market. They chose the latter.

Intel certainly has the money to back its venture-capital dabbling. Its cash flow hit nearly $9.9 billion on revenue of $25 billion in 1997, so investing $300 million that year amounted to little more than a rounding error. (The company expected to match or surpass that for 1998.)

Most Wednesdays, Whittier, Vadasz, and between four and eight other people drawn from the content and business-development groups meet to ponder where to put the company's money. Intel has invested in makers of computer-networking gear, video phones, and even joysticks. But a growing proportion of the seed money has gone to new-media content companies, with a concentration in interactive entertainment, e-commerce, and health-information sites. And Intel has invested heavily in companies seeking to speed Internet access through cable lines or satellites.

While the company's ultimate financial gain is an important consideration, Intel executives also hope to sidestep a looming problem: computer users having no reason to upgrade. A growing number of consumers are buying computers for under $1,000. For Intel, that trend is worrisome. It's impossible to sell a $500 processor in a $1,000 computer. And though Intel is building new chips for the low-end market, the margins are not nearly as lucrative as they are for high-end models. In addition, Intel

Senior writer Lorne Manly wrote about radio conglomerate Jacor Communications, Inc., in the October issue.

DAVID STRICK/OUTLINE (GROVE); COURTESY OF INTEL (WHITTIER/VADASZ)

competitor Advanced Micro Devices, Inc., dominates the under-$1,000 niche with 68 percent of the market, compared to Intel's 16.2 percent, according to a report by ZD Market Intelligence that covered the first nine months of 1998.

THAT'S WHERE DEVELOPING relationships with media companies comes in. Intel executives realize that the best way to prod consumers toward more powerful computers is to give them applications they're aching to use, those that work best with powerful chips. Rich media content—be it live cybercasts of sporting events, real-time video of business conferences, instant chat, or transaction capabilities—serves that role. Instead of waiting for companies to develop that content on their own, Intel gives a helpful push to a selected few.

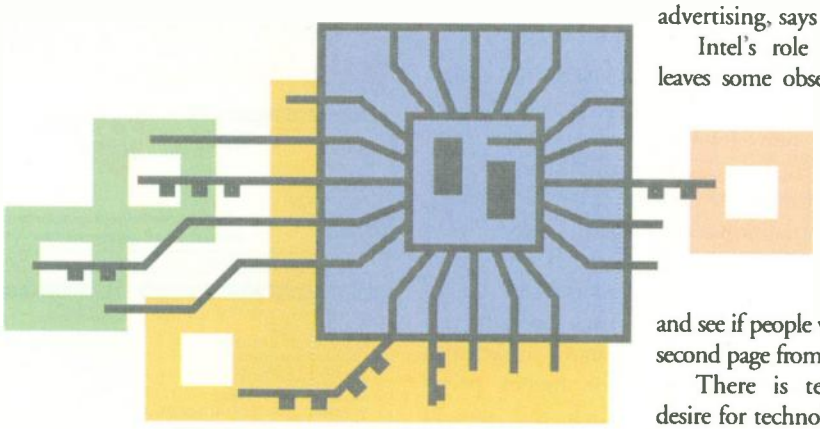
Health information is one segment Whittier particularly likes. People are using the Internet to check doctors' credentials, find information about their maladies, and join on-line support groups. "Consumers are indicating very strongly their desire to take control of their health," Whittier says.

This trend prompted Intel's multimillion-dollar investment last year in iVillage, Inc.'s Better Health site. And it explains Intel's strategic alliances with other health information companies, such as BabyCenter, Inc., and CommuniHealth Inc. Rather than limit its funding to one company, Whittier says, Intel bombards the business segment to spur the entire market. "We're interested in accelerating things," he says, adding that the on-line-education market is a future priority.

In its venture-capitalist guise, Intel usually spends between $1 million and $5 million for a minority stake. The company generally doesn't take a board seat. When Intel invests in public companies, however, it usually pours in more money. Intel shelled out $5 million for a 4.1 percent piece of SportsLine USA, Inc., during November and December 1997. Also in December 1997, the company invested $10.9 million for 4.9 percent of CMG Information Services, Inc., a venture-capital firm itself that holds a position in Lycos. And between July 1996 and July 1997, Intel spent $14.2 million for a 5.9 percent stake in CNET, Inc., which produces content for the Web and TV.

Intel's public-market choices have proved prescient. As of December 15, Intel's $30.1 million investment in these three media stocks was worth $86.6 million. "If you want to invest in...stocks, look at where Intel puts its money," suggests David Wu, a computer and semiconductor analyst with ABN AMRO, Inc.

Not all of Intel's bets have paid off. American Cybercast, which tried to bring soap operas to the Web with its Melrose Place wanna-be series *The Spot*, collapsed in 1997.



Besides the cash, Intel's involvement can provide a halo effect for the lucky companies. Venture capitalists like to invest alongside a powerful company such as Intel. The company's seal of approval opens up its marketing and advertising channels and a fledgling company can also tap into Intel's technical expertise.

Launch Media, which produces *Launch*, a 300,000-paid-circulation monthly music-and-entertainment CD-ROM magazine, was able to integrate its disk content with its web capabilities once Intel got involved, says David Goldberg, chief executive of the Santa Monica–based company. You can listen to a Barenaked Ladies music clip from the September issue of the CD-ROM while chatting on the Web to other fans of the pop group. "It's like going to a concert and talking with friends," says Goldberg, who adds, "I don't think we would have gone as far as quickly without Intel's investment."

Launch Media also got a boost when Intel featured the company on one of its "Intel Inside" ads that ran during shows like *ER* and *Seinfeld*—the equivalent of $9 million in brand advertising. *Launch*'s December 1996 newsstand sales nearly doubled for that issue to 45,000; the ads gave its name cachet at the record labels and movie studios it depends on for journalistic access and advertising, says Goldberg.

Intel's role in media development leaves some observers uneasy. Are Intel's wishes driving the content development, or are the consumers'? Intel executives say a richer media experience benefits the user. "Try to put flat stuff out there today and see if people will find you, or go to the second page from the first," says Whittier.

There is tension between Intel's desire for technological advances and the media companies' willingness to accommodate that desire. But media companies find they can fend off Intel's entreaties. Intel executives suggested that the Better Health site use a product that takes your pulse and temperature, tells you if you're nervous or calm, and offers exercises to relax. But Better Health turned down the request, and Intel backed off, Levitan says. "It was too complicated to use, and its accuracy left something to be desired," he explains, adding, "Technology should be enabling, not intimidating."

Whittier insists that Intel understands that you can't just put a lot of rich media content on the computer. "If you do that, people don't go," he says. And that won't help Intel's bottom line at all. ■

ANDERS WENNGREN

COMMERCIAL INTERRUPTION

Web ads now intrude on edit turf in the struggle to be noticed. • BY NOAH ROBISCHON

EVER SINCE THE FIRST WEB advertisement appeared in 1994, advertisers have been trying new gimmicks to grab the user's attention. They've tried "interstitial" ads that materialize on the screen and then disappear as users click from one page to the next, and "pop-outs" that appear next to the original web page in a smaller window—just to name two examples. Although the banner ad, the broad, flat rectangle that sits atop a web page, has remained the most popular and effective type of web ad, on-line advertisers and publishers are continually looking for something flashier and, they hope, more inviting to the consumer.

Advertisers and publishers are now moving ads out of the traditional on-line banner ad space and into editorial space. ZDNet, a hub site for Ziff-Davis Inc.'s computer magazines, offers banner ads that wrap around the top of a page and poke into editorial turf as they trail down the right-hand side. The site also features "extramercials," columns that slide over the right-hand side of a page and obscure the editorial content [see photos]. *HotWired*, known for its neon color scheme, turned its homepage black and white in early November as part of a promotion for Hewlett Packard Co.'s newest line of color printers. And *USA Today*'s website introduced an Intel Corporation ad that features an animated Homer Simpson running out of an advertisement and across the *USA Today* logo.

These new ads show how far some on-line publishers will go to earn the advertising dollars they need to survive. On-line news publishers, like ZDNet, HotWired, and *USA Today*, are offering advertisers more homepage space, or "real estate," in exchange for higher prices than they would charge for a normal banner ad (a banner wrap on ZDNet, for example, costs three times as much as a regular banner). There is evidence that the trade-off has been successful: the average price of advertising on news websites rose by 6 percent last year, from $38 per 1,000 page views (the standard measure in web advertising) to $40 per 1,000, according to WebConnect, a company that tracks on-line ad pricing.

ZDNet's "banner wraps" drew three times as many clicks as regular banner ads, according to Barry Briggs, ZDNet's vice-president of advertising sales and marketing. ZDNet deploys interstitial and pop-out ads, but rarely on its homepage, because users complained that the ads interrupt pages as they download. ZDNet hit on the banner wrap as a good solution. "We could not only expand the real estate for the advertiser to sell their message, but we would not disturb the user experience at the same time," says Briggs. With the user in mind, ZDNet's editorial department developed the "extramercial," a column that slides over the right side of a web page, but only after the user clicks on a tab.

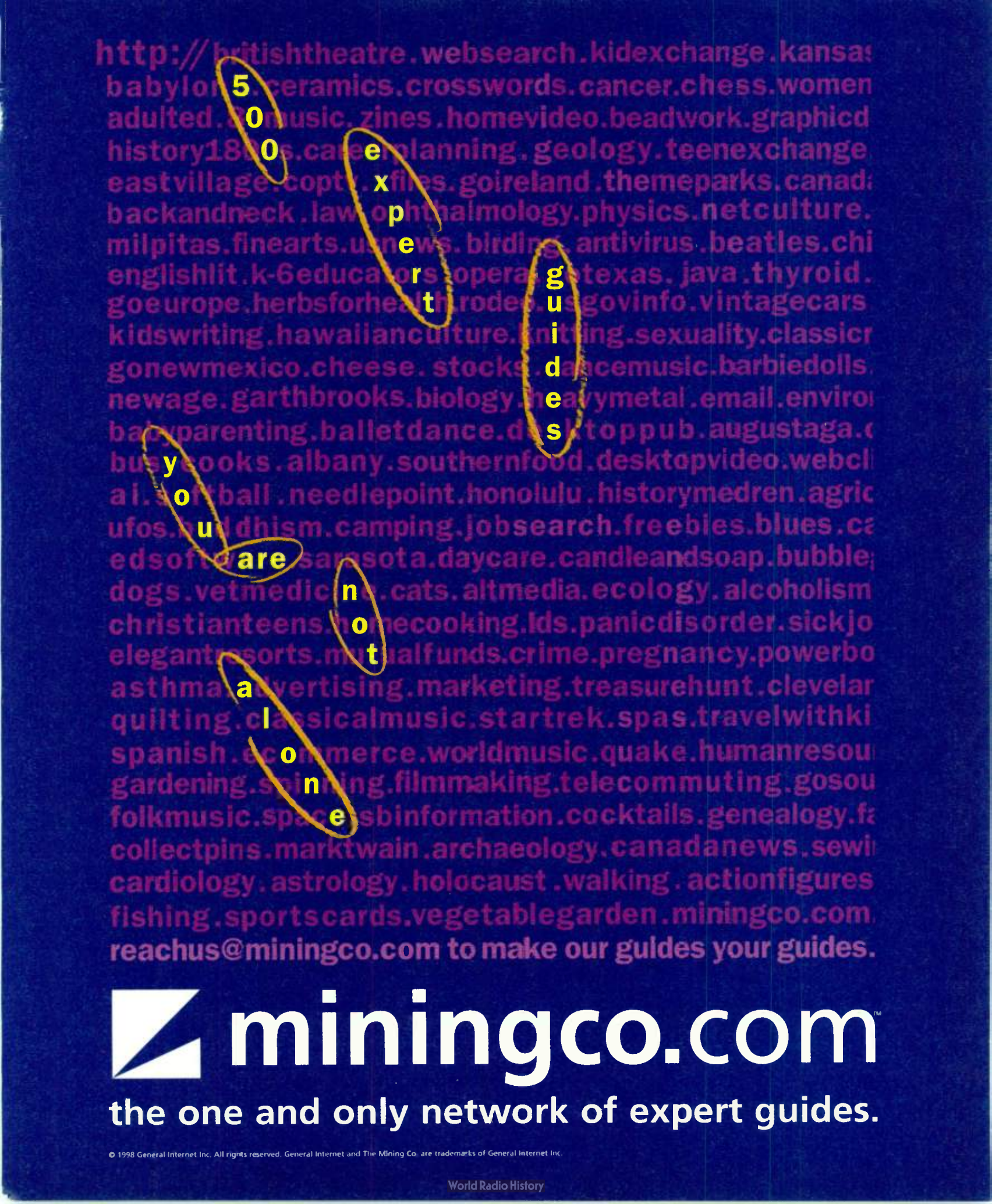
The cardinal rule at ZDNet, according to editorial projects director John Hargrave, is that "we can't interfere with the editorial experience, and I shoot down lots of ideas because they get in the way." For example, Hargrave says, he nixed a suggestion to incorporate sound into a banner advertisement because it wouldn't be clear whether the sound was tied to the ad or to the editorial. He notes that the reader decides whether to view the extramercial and, to do so, must click on a small blinking tab that says "extra." Because readers aren't forced to see the advertisement, Hargrave says, the extramercial doesn't blur the line between advertising and editorial. Neil Budde, editor of *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*, and Martin Nisenholtz, president of The New York Times Electronic Media Company, agree with Hargrave, saying that so long as the extramercial is a voluntary option for readers, it isn't objectionable.

Clicking on the grey tab in the upper right corner (top) brings up the "extramercial" column, which slides over the page, obscuring some of the editorial content.

But not every advertisement gives users a choice. When HotWired turned its homepage black and white for three weeks starting starting October 29, visitors were forced to click on the ad if they wanted to see the page's usual color scheme. Hewlett Packard outlined the broad concept of the promotion, and an editorial team at HotWired conceived the idea of turning the site's homepage black and white, according to HotWired's executive editor, Cate C. Corcoran. She refuses to divulge the exact amount paid by Hewlett Packard for the three-week promotion, but said it

(continued on page 66)

Senior writer Noah Robischon wrote about travel websites in the December/January issue.



(continued from page 64)

was one of the site's ten biggest sponsorships, fetching double the price of a normal advertisement.

The decision to give so much homepage real estate to Hewlett Packard's advertisement was difficult, says Corcoran. She also says that the promotion did not influence any HotWired coverage of Hewlett Packard that may have coincided with the advertisement. (There were three articles about Hewlett Packard during the promotion; two covered new technologies and one was about the company's sluggish revenue for the quarter. None touched on the subject of the color printer.) "We are totally aware that this is the closest we've approached the line, and going into this, we had our eyes wide open to see what the response would be from users," she says. According to Andrew de Vries, director of marketing communications for Wired Digital, Wired News received fewer than 15 messages about the black-and-white homepage. Corcoran says that of those messages, one third were complaints about the ad; an equal number expressed relief that HotWired had gotten rid of the usual ugly color scheme, and others complimented them on a great idea.

Homer Simpson runs across the *USA Today* logo in Intel's ad (top). HotWired turned its homepage black and white as part of a promotion for Hewlett Packard color printers.

Though the campaign was deemed a success by HotWired, other on-line news publishers wouldn't even consider allowing an advertisement to interfere to that extent with the signature look of their homepage. Hewlett Packard approached *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition* with a promotion similar to the one used on HotWired. The advertising department "turned it down without even coming to the edit department to see if it was okay," says the *Journal*'s Budde.

USA Today's Homer Simpson advertisement, which hawked Intel's Pentium II processor, is referred to as "beyond-the-banner" or "out-of-the-box" advertising, according to Lorraine Cichowski, vice-president and general manager of the USA Today Information Network. The first such ad appeared on the *USA Today* site in January 1997 and coincided with a Super Bowl television commercial that showed a Honda truck driving through the pages of a newspaper that looked like *USA Today*; the newspaper's logo did not appear in that ad. The standard was different for the website version of the commercial: it showed the truck driving through the *USA Today* logo. After running the on-line Honda ad, *USA Today* received "numerous requests for other out-of-the-box advertising," says Cichowski. As of November, "out-of-the-box" ads from American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Intel, Philips Electronics N.V., Hewlett Packard, and eight other companies have appeared on the paper's homepage.

Although *USA Today* has not and would not allow an advertiser to obscure the logo of its print edition, Cichowski says the animated web advertisements can't be held to the same standard because they don't actually interfere with the logo. "It may move, it may shift, something may roll over it, but the integrity of the logo remains," she says. "You can't do that in print." But some publishers wouldn't even consider allowing an ad to intrude on their logo, considered any publication's single most important piece of branding. Nisenholtz, president of The New York Times Electronic Media Company, has a different view: "There should be no double standard," he says. "It doesn't make sense to me that they would do it on-line but not in the paper."

Still, a double standard of sorts does exist at *The New York Times*. The paper's website usually features display advertising on its homepage while the front page of the paper never does. Nisenholtz admits that there are fundamental differences between a front page and a homepage, but says that on-line or off, a user should never be confused about what is an advertisement and what isn't.

In an attempt to avoid the double standard, *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition* initially offered an advertisement-free homepage in keeping with the front page of its print version, according to Budde. Today the banner advertisement position atop *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*'s homepage is one of the highest-priced ads on any news and information website. ■

Now the fastest retriever in cyberspace.

No matter what you're searching for on the Internet, from biographies to body piercing, you'll find it faster and easier when you unleash the new Lycos. All you have to do is log on to the Internet and say, "Lycos, go get it!"

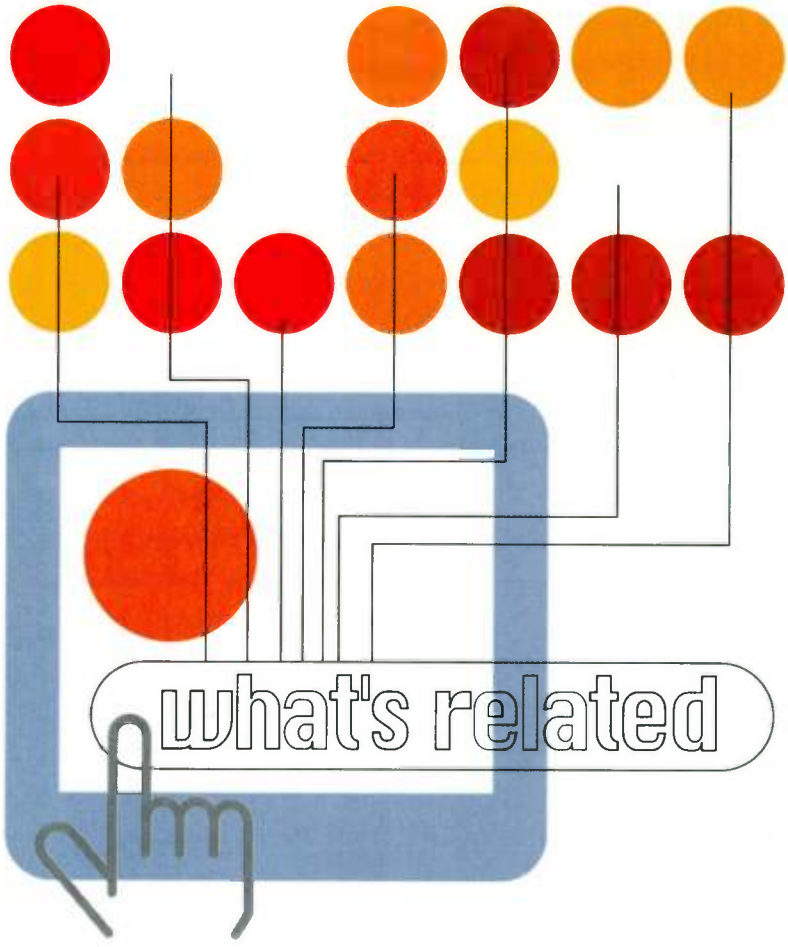
LYCOS

Go Get It! w w w . l y c o s . c o m

What's Really Related?

How a little-noticed button on Netscape could someday transform us from passive readers to active explorers of on-line news.

THE NEWEST VERSION OF Netscape Communication Corporation's Navigator (version 4.5) has an interesting button right beside the space where you're supposed to type a URL ("universal resource locator," or web address). The button is labeled "What's Related." When you are viewing a web page (say, a story on the CNET News.com site), clicking this button brings up a list of "related" sites—typically other news sites. The button generates its links via an algorithm that uses the actions of other users—where your fellow browsers went from the page you are on—to create something like the pheromone trail that ants lay down when they find a food source.



Some have criticized this new function as likely to lead to a herd mentality. They say that it could take us all to the point where we see only information *most* of us find "related"—producing a form of mob psychology, as more and more of us are led by the "strong attractor" of others' actions to pay attention to a smaller and smaller portion of cyberspace. I think the "What's Related" phenomenon is extremely promising and will lead in the other direction. It will tempt us away from the communal campfire toward individual exploration. But it will reach its true potential in that regard only when built with tags that point to external resources with a much finer focus.

Traditional theories of journalism view the reader as akin to a single-cell organism that clings to the wall of the journalistic blood vessel and feeds off a stream of (some might say increasingly less nutritious) stories that flow by. The classic question for most journalistic organizations is "What's New?" not "What's Related?" Newness is defined by the reporter or publisher—or the overall journalistic enterprise—not by the reader. By injecting the question "What's Related?" onto the screen of the web browser, Netscape has laid the foundation for a radical change.

Netscape's current "What's Related" function operates only at the level of entire websites and broad ideas. Unfortunately, it is not very helpful to learn that news.com and abc.com both have news. Imagine what might happen if these virtual links were more finely tuned to the level of individual stories. If I could come across a story on, say, trademark policy and then press my "What's Related" button to call up stories on domain-name registration, Internet governance, Ira Magaziner, International Telecommunication

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ANDERS WENNGREN

Union politics, etc., then the browser would automatically become a powerful mechanism for exploring "What's True."

The underlying algorithm that leads from any given news story to "related" stories would have to differ somewhat from the one now in use. It wouldn't matter to me (much) what stories were read in what order by others; I *would* want to know what stories various reporters (and users) thought were really relevant to the topic under discussion on the page I was visiting. This would require the creation of links between stories—not just between websites. It would weave together previous efforts by diverse journalists and users to create an explorable "meta-story," complete with opposing viewpoints. (To be fair, a few news sites—such as news.com—do offer links to other stories, although usually only to their own prior stories.)

At the risk of suggesting that journalists might have something to learn from lawyers, I must observe that the legal profession confronted, and solved, this problem a long time ago. The rich texture of the common law was born when someone invented the case citation—a unique identifier of a "reported" opinion that could be authoritatively "cited" in new opinions to show how previous discussions of "related" cases combine to support or undercut the decision at hand. When a court cites a case, it doesn't just say that another court might have discussed this subject. It sends you to the actual, fine-grained, "jump cite" in the relevant opinion. These precise citations make possible our ongoing legal discussion.

The need, then, is for a "universal story locator"—a system of citation that would allow any reporter (or user) to refer reliably (with a clickable hypertext link, of course) to any other story. (Standardized use of "meta-data," the information hidden within the coding of a stable web page containing the story might well do the trick. Each web page can contain hidden text that can be seen by search engines but not by the end user. That hidden text could contain a unique ID and the story's author, date, subject matter, parties involved, and publication.) This would create a new form of meta-journalism. An author could write a news story or analysis containing only what is really new and including previously reported details only by reference. Even more importantly, it would allow the browser to provide a "What's Relevant" button that links to pertinent stories and opinion pieces, not just to other news sites. Such a change would be revolutionary, in part, because it would transfer power to the reader, who would increasingly have to be viewed as a complex multicelled organism engaging in self-willed locomotion around story space. Users could even do their own meta-journalism, posting "opinion" pieces (with their own links to prior reporting) that point out inconsistencies, identify mob psychology at work, and highlight what they consider the most reliable (or unreliable) sources of information or analysis.

If we think of stories arrayed in a "story space," freely available to any author and brought up with a click by any reader, many new forms of "newstrition" become possible. A reader might be able to ask, "Who disagrees?" or "What's unrelated but involves the same people?" or "What's significant, according to whom?" or "Who reported the opposite, and how recently?" Instead of viewing readers as recipients of one-way broadcasts, sophisticated publishers would have to think of themselves more as tour guides for mobile and picky organisms. (Some on-line publications do take the form of "web rings"—signposts that lead from one related site to another. This concept clearly can be applied at the level of the "story" as well as at the level of the website.) The job of the journalist would not be to "tell the whole truth" but instead to offer a rewarding journey through various alternative, attributed versions of reality.

TO REALIZE THIS EXPLORABLE NEWS SPACE, MANY links would have to be built, sometimes by hand. There is no free hypertext lunch. But any reporter working on a story is likely to know much of what other publications have said—so the needed citations will be close at hand. The effort would be worth it. Lots of labor goes into putting all those citations into all those reported legal cases—and the resulting footnotes and cross-references found in most court opinions are still much more valuable than any automatically generated lists of cases one can get from computerized searches of full-text databases. The work of weaving a "seamless web" of "news" can only begin if we establish a fine-grained "tag" to place on every story—identifying the truth as told by a particular reporter at a particular time. Software architecture is politics—and the labeling schemes for news will determine how quickly meta-reporting can emerge, whether particular reporters and stories will flourish and replicate in a new news ecosystem and how completely we change from passive readers into empowered explorers of news space.

Netscape cannot make this decision on its own. It's up to every reporter and publisher to decide whether to make its stories available on-line, whether to agree upon a "universal" method of tagging stories, and whether to begin to engage in the meta-journalism of evaluating the development of a story, collecting all pertinent viewpoints, leading the reader to contrary or background information, and avoiding the impulse to pretend to offer a one-stop, completely authoritative source of information.

We've already come a long way from the Associated Press wire, with lots of "news" operations copying from the same "top down" source. Plenty of former readers who used to be at the bottom of the food chain can now claim to be authoritative and trusted sources on some subjects, on-line. But the more radical change promised by the new hypertextuality of the Web is that we'll ask entirely different questions. Instead of asking, "What's new?" we'll ask, "What's interesting and true?" And to get to that answer, we won't rely on any comprehensive publishing source. Instead, we'll start with a nearby morsel and then follow the path of "relatedness" until the very exploration of the web of possible facts, opinions, and analyses gives us the sense that we can reach a judgment all on our own. ■

Those Fabulous Fifties

Journalists have a lazy habit of dismissing the 1950s as a time when life was sterile, stuffy, and dull. They must have seen too many movies. ● BY BEN STEIN

The image of the typical 1950s family fosters the myth that the decade lacked creativity and inspiration.

CAMERIQUE/ARCHIVE PHOTOS

NOW, FOR A FEW WORDS about media reference points, and let's start in my dentist's office, where I was waiting to have a crown put in. I picked up a recent copy of *Time*. Because I know (and admire) Gary Ross, the very talented writer-director of the movie *Pleasantville*, I started to read Richard Corliss's review of the picture. As usual, Corliss's review was astute. But, to my dismay, as is usual with media folk, he dismissed the 1950s (the decade referenced in *Pleasantville*) as "sanitized" and compared it to the "long night of the living dead." He gave that time period its usual bad rap for being bereft of personal expression, sexual freedom, and the chance to let artistic genius flourish.

I cannot blame Corliss. His take on the time is commonplace in any media expression about that era. In fact, it's a standard media point of reference, a sort of totemic notion in commentary that cannot be challenged: Life in the fifties was starchy, monochromatic, and without creativity. Nothing interesting happened under President Dwight Eisenhower. After that, starting in the 1960s, the whole society and the culture really bloomed, taking us up to our present level of glory.

The only problem with this presumption is that it is wildly, comically wrong. The 1950s were an explosive decade, especially culturally, but in political and social ways, as well. In fact, it's hard to think of a time when there was no world war and more happened.

Take political life and international affairs: In 1950, the Korean War started. It was bloody, it came very close to being lost, and more American men died there than in any comparable period in any other war since World War II. In 1951, President Truman fired Gen. Douglas MacArthur in a moment of high civilian versus military drama never seen before or since.

In 1952, President Truman illegally seized the steel mills to prevent a strike, and Eisenhower became the first Republican president in 20 years. That same year, the United States tested the first doomsday weapon, the H-bomb, on Eniwetok Atoll.

In 1953, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed for spying for the Soviet Union amid extraordinary public furor on both sides, and the Korean War ended.

In 1954, the Army-McCarthy hearings gripped the nation as the famous red-hunter clashed with his enemies in a TV drama never matched before or since (I offer today's tepid impeachment hearings for contrast).

In the same year, the most far-reaching Supreme Court decision in history turned American life upside down. *Brown v. Board of Education*

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ruled segregation in public schools by race unconstitutional, plunging America into turmoil that led to bombings, riots, a gigantic and noble civil rights movement, and a court-ordered revolution in human rights never seen before in any large nation.

In 1955, Rosa Parks, a humble seamstress, triggered the Montgomery bus boycott that led to civil disobedience and mass protest as a means of securing social justice, one of the largest such movements since Gandhi's in India.

In 1956, the Hungarians rose against their Soviet occupiers, triggering a bloody war that ended only with the entry of the Red Army into Budapest and that sparked real fears of a Soviet push into Western Europe. My father-in-law was there with a nuke-armed missile battalion as U.S. forces in Europe prepared for World War III. In the same year, England, Israel, and France invaded Egypt, and Israel stunned the world by clearing Egyptian forces from the Sinai in 100 hours.

In 1957, panic gripped America as the Soviets launched Sputnik, the first satellite, signaling that U.S. scientific and military supremacy could not be taken for granted and that the future might belong to the collectivist states. There was also rioting in Arkansas and throughout the south over proposed school desegregation.

In 1958, the United States launched its first satellite. Civil-rights conflict continued.

In 1959, the United States twitched with fear as Fidel Castro took control of Cuba and launched a pro-Soviet regime "ninety miles from our shores," as the popular saying of the day went.

These are the highlights of an era of tempestuous conflict over racial issues and day-by-day concern about nuclear war, not to mention abiding fears about the economy (there were two recessions in the 1950s). It is hard to reconcile the notion that the 1950s were a sterile, boring, placid time with the twin notion that we were learning to "duck and cover" and building bomb shelters in the expectation of nuclear war. It is hard to say that nothing happened in the 1950s when the images of screaming, taunting mobs of whites blocking school doors against the entry of black children are still vivid in our memories.

True, the White House was a calm, relatively scandal-free place. But there was real ferment and change going on in the nation. Nothing since has even been close to as monumental a change in American life as was launched by *Brown v. Board of Education*, and no national climate has ever been as bitter as the crossfire hurricane that swirled around the red-hunters and their enemies.

As lively as the political scene was, the cultural scene was even more brilliant and glowing. The 1950s were a time when classics were turned out like clockwork in every artistic area. To compare the quality and artistic originality of what came out of the 1950s with what has come since is startling and even depressing.

It is hard to reconcile the notion that the 1950s were a placid time with the twin notion that we were learning to "duck and cover."

Take a look at some Pulitzer Prize fiction winners of the 1950s. Herman Wouk gave us *The Caine Mutiny*, Ernest Hemingway wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*, and William Faulkner offered us *A Fable*. Can anyone even remember who won a Pulitzer for fiction in the '90s?

Or, if you want total shock, consider some of the Pulitzer drama winners for the 1950s. There were Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific*, Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Can anyone imagine that a work of such power was created in our era?

And now, if you want to have your brains blown right out of your head, take a peek at some Tony Awards for Broadway plays for the 1950s. Giants walked the earth: Rodgers and Hammerstein brought us *The King and I* in 1952. In 1953, we saw Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, one of the classic dramas of all time. Also in that decade came *Kismet*, *The Pajama Game*, *Damn Yankees*, *My Fair Lady*, and *The Music Man*. Again, try to think of a single musical of the last 20 years that is not a revival and that will be hummed 50 years hence.

Now, hear the music. In the 1950s, we had Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Perry Como, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Charlie Byrd. Then, right in the middle of the decade, along came rock and roll: Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, The Platters, The Coasters, The Drifters, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and hundreds of others.

Top poets also marked the 1950s. Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, and Wallace Stevens were still churning out powerful poems. Theodore Roethke, Robert Penn Warren, and Marianne Moore were making poetry for the ages. Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac were rebelling, but decades of rebellion are hardly moments of sterility in art.

No decade is perfect, and the 1950s had plenty of problems with racism, sexism, and a lack of attention to the disabled and the nonwhite. But from the 1950s came the polio vaccine, the beginning of meaningful racial equality of opportunity, and a mass culture that assumed intelligence on the part of the mass audience: Anyone who recalls *Omnibus*, *Playhouse 90* or *Your Show of Shows* cannot be anything but humbled by the comparison with what is on any one of the hundreds of channels we have today. If you remember the eloquence of Ike (his supposed stammering was always a myth) and Adlai Stevenson, and then think of Bill Clinton's fraternity-boy colloquialisms or George Bush's contempt for language itself, you cannot but wonder how fast devolution has occurred.

The real story that begs for a movie is not how cool kids from the 1990s brought hip style to the 1950s. It's about how time travelers from the 1950s ventured to the late 1990s, gasped, and flew home again to a time of real excitement, genius-level creative output, and a last breath of elegance in human communication. ■

The Anatomy of a Super Bowl Ad

30 seconds in the end zo

THE GAME PLAN: TINY, UPSTART INTERNET COMPANY BETS $2 million on the 30-second shot at fame and fortune known as a Super Bowl ad. The company, Hotjobs.com Ltd., hires a hotshot ad agency, which comes up with a spot that it guarantees will grab people's attention. Does it ever. With the big game still two months away, Fox, which is airing the Super Bowl on January 31, rejects the ad as "inappropriate." Hotjobs founder and CEO Richard Johnson says he is "devastated."

It is now fourth-and-long and the company has no ad. Then comes the Hail Mary pass: Hotjobs feeds the story of Fox's rejection to *The Wall Street Journal*, which devotes its December 4 advertising column to the tale. The company, an on-line job board, starts receiving suggestions for a new ad from the public. The *Los Angeles Times* picks up the story. ABC sends over a camera crew for a special, "The Best Commercials You've Never Seen (and some you have)," which will air in February. The Hotjobs name is everywhere.

Touchdown.

The company still has no ad, but it has scored an even more elusive goal: It has gotten people to notice an otherwise obscure company. Suddenly, the $2 million price tag for the Super Bowl ad seems like a bargain. You can't buy publicity like this. "At the end of the day, I'm going to get back money on this," says Johnson.

Vince Wladika, a Fox Sports spokesman, has to agree. "They haven't even run their ad yet, and they've probably made back in publicity what they paid us," he says wryly. "The Super Bowl attracts the media. That's why people pay a premium, that's why they get value added."

A Super Bowl ad is unlike any other. It can catapult a company from obscurity to household-name status (think Master Lock, Dirt Devil). For established brands, the spot has helped create new images (think Pepsi's "Generation Next") or buzz (the Budweiser lizards).

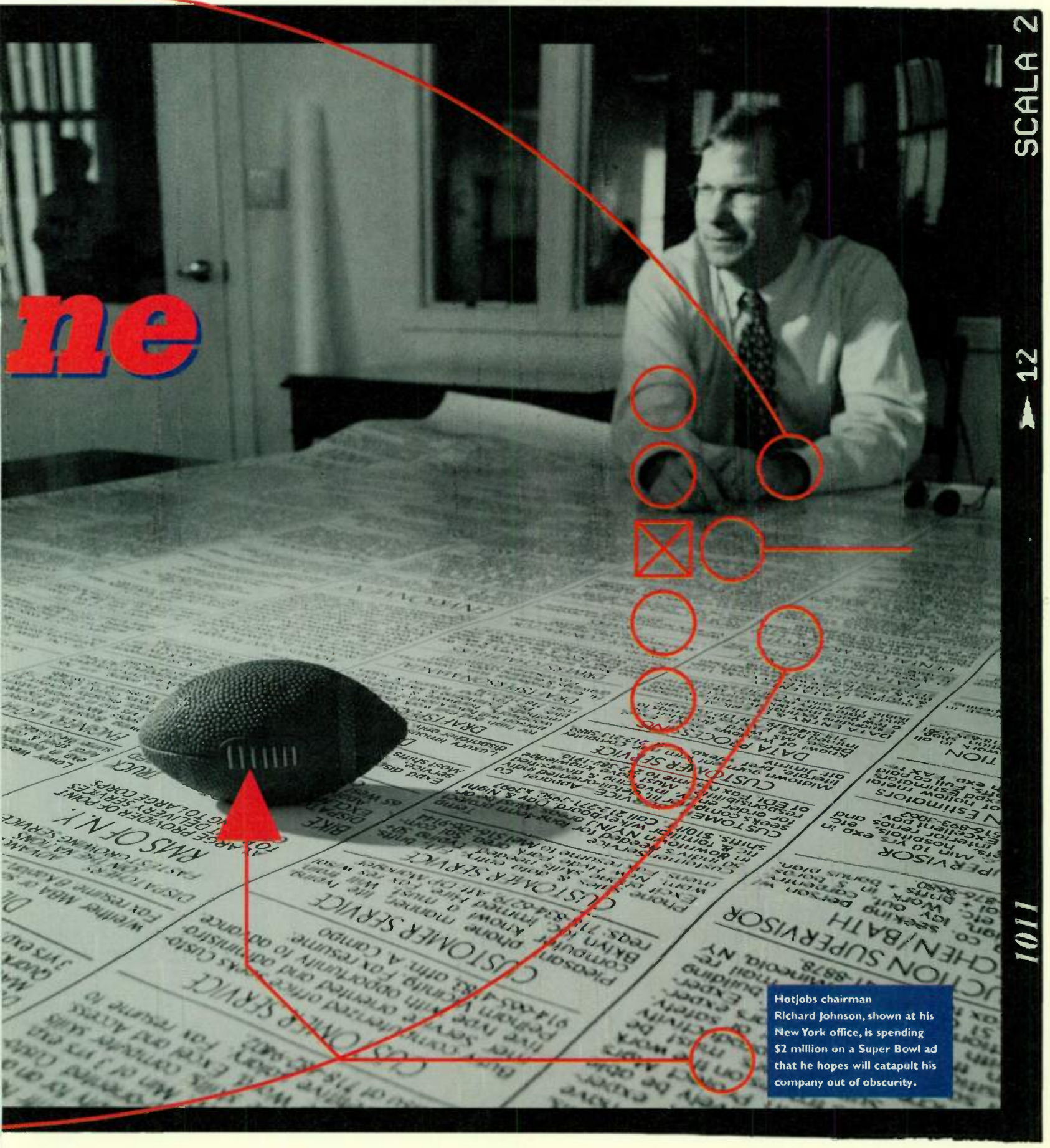
To ad industry insiders, at least, it has become a truism that as many people watch the Super Bowl for the ads as for the game, although that is not wholly accurate. No matter; agencies feel enormous pressure to strut their stuff with hip, cutting-edge commercials.

Fox is charging an average $1.6 million for a 30-second spot, up $300,000 from last year, when the game aired on NBC. (Prices vary based on an advertiser's relationship with the network and an ad's placement within the game.)

As of mid-December, according to Wladika, 54 of the game's 58 spots had been sold. Anheuser-Busch, Inc., paid a premium for ten 30-second spots at $2 million apiece to ensure that Budweiser and Bud Light are the only beer brands advertised during the game.

Advertisers are willing to pay stupendous prices for one reason: The game consistently

BY RIFKA ROSENWEIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEN SHUNG



HotJobs chairman Richard Johnson, shown at his New York office, is spending $2 million on a Super Bowl ad that he hopes will catapult his company out of obscurity.

ranks as the most highly watched television show each year, according to Nielsen Media Research. Super Bowl XXXII, which aired last January, scored a 44.5 rating, with a 67 share—numbers that are fairly typical for the game. One rating point represents 994,000 households; a share is the percentage of televisions in use that are tuned to a given show.

This means that 90 million people in the United States watched last year's Super Bowl. No other show in the 1997-98 season came close. The second most-watched program last season, with 55.3 million viewers, was the Academy Awards.

No other venue in today's fragmented media world can command consumers' attention quite so dramatically. "It's hard to make a really loud noise anywhere but in the Super Bowl," says Patrice Dermody, managing partner and media director for the advertising giant DDB Needham, which produces Bud Light's Super Bowl ads, among others.

A really loud noise is exactly what Hotjobs founder Johnson wants to make. A self-described risk taker, the 37-year-old entrepreneur cofounded a successful recruiting firm in 1988. He moved into on-line recruiting several years ago and formed Hotjobs in 1996. The company now employs about 70 people.

Hotjobs makes money by selling "accounts" of 20-ad blocks to employers, mostly Fortune 500 companies seeking technical staff. Job seekers can search the job listings and send their résumés to potential employers on-line. Hotjobs had revenue of $800,000 in 1997, projects its 1998 total at about $5 million and expects revenue to reach $25 million this year.

"I didn't get into the Internet for more incremental growth. I wanted the exponential growth that the Internet can offer," says Johnson. "In 1997, $11 billion was spent on [help-wanted] newspaper advertising. If only ten percent goes to the [on-line] boards...I want to be there.

"This is the year we take center stage," he adds. "To break into the ranks, you have to do something dramatic. You have to do something explosive." That's where the Super Bowl ad comes in. "This is how I'm going to launch my company to the next level.

"We're trying to score a trifecta," Johnson says. The ad, he hopes, will give the company cachet with potential clients, name recognition with job seekers, and finally—and, in some ways, most important—credibility in the investment community. The last is vital because Johnson is seeking some kind of "financial transaction," such as a public offering or sale, in 1999. Within an eight-week period last fall, Hotjobs retained an ad agency, a new public relations firm, and an investment bank, all set to be up and running by kickoff time.

But being new to advertising's big leagues has its risks. Hotjobs found its original ad agency, Boston-based Hill, Holliday, Connors, Cosmopulos, Inc., through its former marketing director, whose cousin is one of the agency's principals. The young company thought it was lucky to land an agency like Hill, Holliday, with $600 million in billings and experience producing Super Bowl ads for the accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand and the computer maker Wang. "We felt we'd landed at the top of the heap," says Johnson. "We didn't feel we needed to look around."

At a late-November meeting at Hotjobs's New York office, Hill, Holliday representatives tried to give their new client a feel for the competition. They showed a tape featuring some of the best Super Bowl ads of recent years: the Tabasco Sauce mosquito, the Budweiser lizards, the Snickers-bar groundskeeper. A stream of pop icons rolled by on the television monitor.

"The entertainment value is critical, primal," Ernie Schenck, Hill, Holliday's creative director, told his client. "You can't just go up to the edge, you have to go over the edge. Going over the edge can make you nervous, but I guarantee you: People will be talking about it."

But Hill, Holliday apparently went too far over the edge, at least according to Fox. The ad they pitched that day—which Hotjobs approved—featured a man sweeping an elephant's cage in a zoo. The man and the elephant both back up, each unaware of the other's presence. Finally, the elephant sits down; when it gets up, all that is left is the man's broom.

"The entertainment value is critical, primal. You can't just go up to the edge. You have to go over the edge. Going over the edge can make you nervous, but I guarantee you: People will be talking about it."

It didn't have a word of dialogue. "Half the people watching the Super Bowl are watching in a party or a bar," Fred Bertino, president and chief creative officer of Hill, Holliday, told his clients. "They can't hear dialogue or voice-over. Visual is best."

As the spot ends, a voice says, "Still stuck in the same old job? Hotjobs.com. All the hottest jobs at all the hottest companies."

Fox decided the ad did not meet its standards, and, on November 30, rejected it. "We do not think having a man inserted into an elephant's anus is funny," says Fox's Wladika. "A cable network may be different. But we're broadcast, and we're available to anyone and everyone who wants to see it."

JOHNSON, FOR THE FIRST TIME, WAS NERVOUS. The stakes, after all, were huge. His two-year-old company had taken out a $3 million line of credit in the fall to help pay for the ad. (Johnson says the company was able to pay for the ad; the credit line was just "insurance.")

The $2 million the company will spend on the spot, including production costs, will equal roughly half its advertising budget this year. The Super Bowl ad will be the company's first non-Internet media buy.

That's quite a burden to place on a 30-second ad. Yet Hotjobs is not alone in believing in the selling power of the Super Bowl. "It's more than a media event," says DDB Needham's Dermody. "It's an event in people's lives.

Contributing editor Rifka Rosenwein analyzed Business Week's *"Inside Wall Street" column in the November issue. She has never watched the Super Bowl.*

The commercials tend to be part of the event."

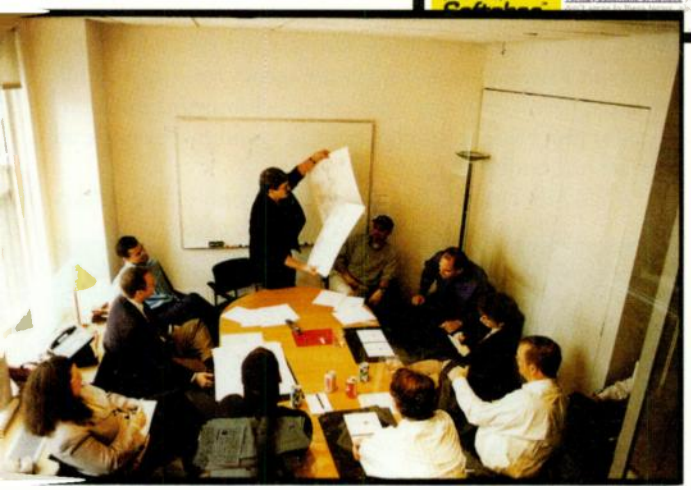
And unlike other TV "events," such as the Academy Awards and the World Series, people actually pay attention to the commercials during the Super Bowl—an obvious plus for advertisers.

David Blum, a market researcher at the ad agency Eisner & Associates, has been tracking Super Bowl advertising for 12 years. "Whenever you go to a focus group, people always say, 'Oh, I never watch the ads,' " he says. "But the Super Bowl is the only program where people are proud to say they watched the ads." His research shows that just 6 percent of all viewers watch the game solely for the ads, but, he says, that number is growing.

Not all Super Bowl ads are equal; advertisers covet placement in the first half because viewership tapers off as the game progresses. These prime spots are usually reserved for repeat advertisers or those with long-term relationships with the network. A close game, however, helps advertisers in the fourth quarter. Johnson reveals only that his spot will come soon after half-time.

When did ads become such a big part of the Super Bowl hoopla? The breakthrough occurred when Apple Computer, Inc., unveiled its Macintosh computer in 1984. A takeoff on George Orwell's "Big Brother" concept, the two-minute spot combined high production values, the drama of introducing a new product, and, perhaps most important, hype. It marked "the turning point to up the ante on a Super Bowl ad," says Blum.

Hotjobs's on-line plea for ad ideas after Fox rejected their submission (top); Hill, Holliday presents its ad pitches at the Hotjobs office.



Advertisers gleaned two lessons from the Macintosh commercial, says Blum: "One, if you're going to run a Super Bowl ad, it better be good. And two, leverage the publicity opportunity. Take advantage of the fact that advertising reporters follow [the game's ads] and they generate lots of publicity."

To many advertisers, the free publicity that accompanies the event alone makes the steep price tag worthwhile. "We did the Super Bowl ad primarily for the PR value," says John Heppner, executive vice-president, sales and marketing, for Milwaukee-based Master Lock Company. The company became famous within advertising circles for spending one third to one half of its advertising budget every year for 21 years on a single Super Bowl spot. The ad itself—a bullet being shot at the company's locks, which prove invincible—became famous.

"When you look at the cost of a Super Bowl ad, don't just look at the thirty-second spot. Look at the whole promotional value," says Heppner.

Indeed, by late November, even before the news that Fox had rejected its ad, the mere fact that Hotjobs was going to advertise in the Super Bowl was reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Advertising Age*, *Crain's New York Business*, *Adweek*, and *USA Today* (not to mention this story in *Brill's Content*).

Dottie Enrico, now an advertising columnist for *TV Guide*, is one of those journalists who help make these ads into promotional vehicles. For the last four years, she helped put together *USA Today*'s annual "Super Bowl Ad Meter," which is published the day after the big game. A professional polling firm gathers 50 to 100 people to watch the game and indicate, via dials, how much they like each ad.

"It's not overstating it to say that careers have been made or broken, accounts have been won or lost" based on *USA Today*'s ratings, says Enrico. "How well your ad did in the Super Bowl, how much buzz you can generate" can determine the fate of advertisers and their agencies.

Enrico defends the attention that journalists lavish on these ads. "It's the most expensive piece of real estate for advertising," she says. And because it's become traditional for advertisers to launch new commercials and promotional campaigns during the Super Bowl, "it's like covering the new cars in the fall or the new fall season [on television] or the movie industry at Christmas."

There's also the prestige factor. Some companies, especially smaller ones, see Super Bowl ads as a way of saying to consumers, franchises, suppliers, and investors, "I'm not a little guy; I'm a big guy. I'm playing in the same league as the Pepsis and Budweisers," says Bill Croasdale, executive vice-president, national broadcast, for Western International Media.

Peter Ellis, founder of Irvine, California-based Autobytel.com Inc., the first Internet company to advertise during the Super Bowl, seems to personify this approach. "It's the Super Bowl of marketing and we consider ourselves the Super Bowl of on-line," says Ellis. Appearing in the game sent a message to consumers and his car-dealer network that "we came to stay," says Ellis. "It helped us solidify our dealer base."

It also helped increase traffic to his site by 40 to 50 percent, he says. From 35,000 people a month going through his system to get a car, the number of visits increased to about 50,000 a month shortly after he ran his first Super Bowl ad in 1997, when the company was about two years old. The figure now stands at 125,000, Ellis says. That spot represented 25 percent of his advertising budget in 1997; he ran an ad again last year, and the $1.3 million price tag represented only 10 percent of his ad budget.

But despite Autobytel's almost instant gratification from its

Three notable Super Bowl ad images: Apple's 1984 spot introducing the Macintosh (top); the Budweiser lizard (middle); and Tabasco's exploding mosquito.

ad, many marketers believe that a Super Bowl spot is actually not the best vehicle to increase sales. Even some longtime advertisers believe the ad serves best as a means of "branding" their company and building name recognition, rather than actually moving people to the store to buy their product.

"It's brand building. It's not really directed at sales," says Master Lock's Heppner. And in fact, two years ago, when the company launched several new products, it opted not to advertise during the game. "It is extremely expensive to launch a new product in the Super Bowl," he says. For that, "you need repeated commercials" through regular channels. Master Lock has so far not returned to the Super Bowl lineup.

THERE ARE OTHER SITUATIONS IN WHICH A company might want to steer clear of the Super Bowl. For one thing, you need a really great ad, which can be difficult and expensive to produce. "People have come to expect highly entertaining ads. So you really need to step up to the competition," says Jim Crimmins, managing partner and director of strategic planning for DDB Needham.

Martin Manion, vice-president of corporate marketing for McIlhenny Company, maker of Tabasco brands, felt he had such an ad last year. The now-famous exploding mosquito spot had aired the previous year in local markets and had won four awards. "We asked ourselves, 'Is it good enough for [the Super Bowl] audience?'" says Manion. "We felt it was." He then notes that the ad ranked fourth in the *USA Today* ad meter, behind Pepsi and two Budweiser commercials. "We would not have taken the risk if we didn't feel [we had such a good ad]."

But Tabasco is not advertising on this year's game. Executives felt they had nothing equal to the challenge. "If we had a creative, dead-ringer ad again, I would consider it again," says Paul C. P. McIlhenny, president and chief executive of the company.

Because the game is all about entertainment, says DDB Needham's Crimmins, another reason to skip the Super Bowl is if you have what is called an "avoidance brand—a brand you use to avoid a problem," such as a headache reliever or a toilet-bowl cleaner. "If you're an approach brand"—a product you *want* to use—"then [the game is] a plus," he says.

Jay Schulberg, chief creative officer for Bozell Worldwide, urges even more caution when it comes to the Super Bowl. "The Super Bowl becomes an entertainment derby," he says. "An entertaining ad is terrific, as long as it leaves you with a selling message. [Otherwise, it] is a colossal waste of money.

"It's easier for a large company with a huge budget, like Pepsi," he says. They can run four or five spots and "there'll be one [that] people like. But for a small advertiser—you blow your wad, you better be sure it's damn good. It could get lost in the heap."

Hotjobs's Johnson might have had this in mind in early December after Fox's rejection. He had not been impressed with Hill, Holliday's other ideas when he first chose the elephant ad, so he felt he had few options.

He was so desperate that he sent out a plea for help on his website's homepage: "Got an idea for our Super Bowl commercial?" The company received about 100 suggestions in one day.

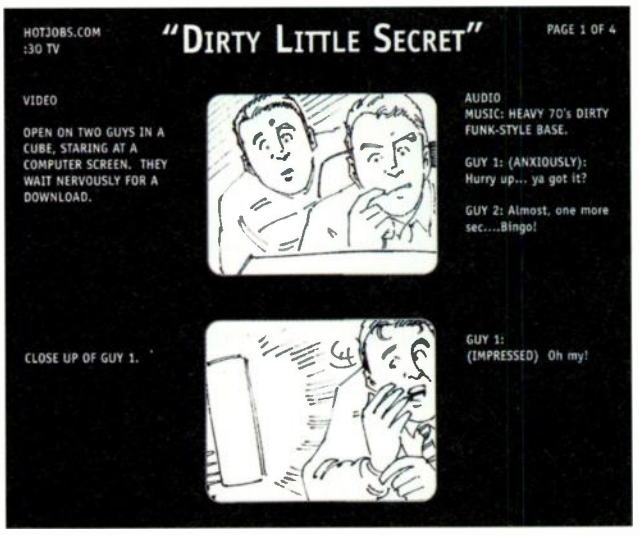
His relationship with Hill, Holliday was becoming strained. The agency's suggestions—with the notable exception of the elephant ad—were "baby boomer," says Johnson. "They were ideas old people would come up with. I'm a baby boomer too, but I live in a Gen X world. The ideas we were hearing from Hill, Holliday weren't connected to technology, weren't Gen X."

He decided to call a friend with whom he used to commute to New York from his home in Chatham, New Jersey. The friend, Kevin Moehlenkamp, had moved to Detroit to take a new position with advertising titan McCann-Erickson Worldwide.

Before he retained Hill, Holliday, Johnson recalls thinking: "What I was expecting from an agency was, we'd have to tell them [an ad] was too radical. If it were a young, cutting-edge agency, trying to make it..." that's what would have happened, he says.

In their conversation, Moehlenkamp told Johnson, "I have guys who'll have ideas that we'll have to say no to." Johnson was sold. He and Hill, Holliday parted ways, and once again, without shopping around, Johnson hired a new ad agency. (Hill, Holliday and McCann-Erickson are both owned by The Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc.) He lost about $100,000—roughly half the agency fee—on his Hill, Holliday fiasco, but says McCann-Erickson discounted its price for him so he would not have to spend more on the ad than he had budgeted.

While McCann-Erickson Worldwide, with billings of $13



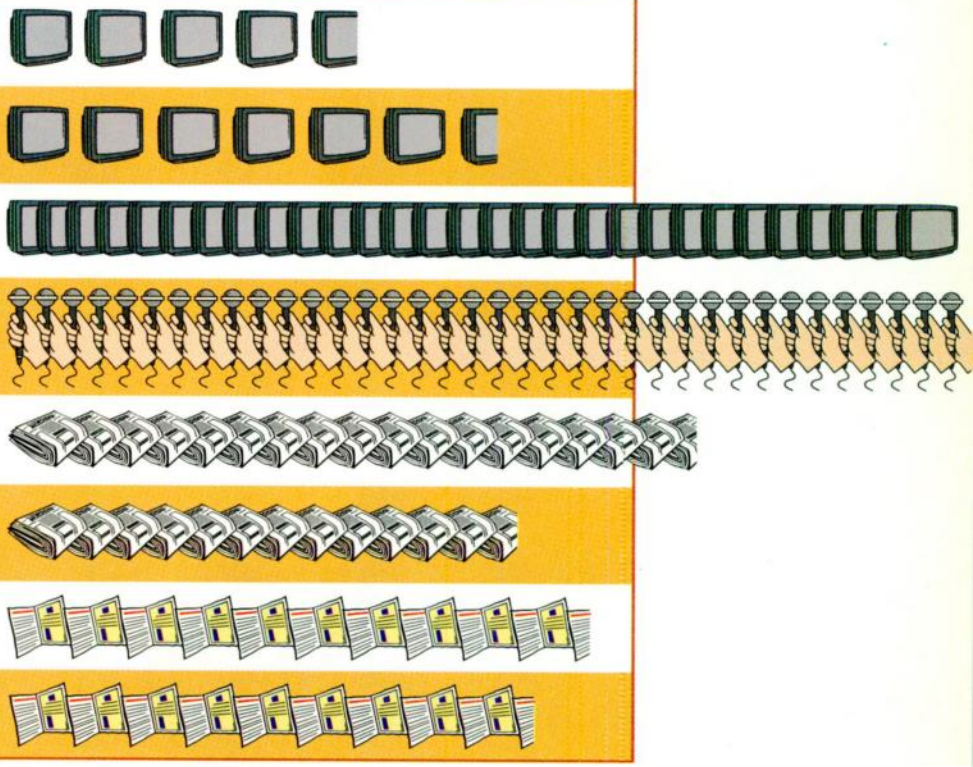
As Hotjobs narrowed down the choices for its Super Bowl ad, the leading contender as of mid-December was "Dirty Little Secret." Two panels from the storyboard show workers peering at a computer screen as if it held something forbidden and dangerous. The web page they're gazing at? Hotjobs.com, of course.

COURTESY OF APPLE CORP.; COURTESY OF BUDWEISER; COURTESY OF MCILHENNY TABASCO

How Much Advertising Can $1.6 Million Buy?

So you happen to have $1.6 million in your wallet and you might want to drop it all on a splashy 30-second spot during the Super Bowl. *Brill's Content* took a look at popular TV shows, radio shows, newspapers, and magazines that have a national audience in an attempt to answer the question: How much other advertising can $1.6 million buy? — *Matthew Reed Baker*

SHOW/PERIODICAL	UNIT	PRICE	NUMBER OF ADS THAT CAN BE PURCHASED FOR $1.6 MILLION
Frasier [1] (NBC)	30-sec. spot	$325,000	4.9
The Simpsons [1] (Fox)	30-sec. spot	$255,000	6.3
Larry King Live [2] (CNN)	30-sec. spot	$18,000	88.9
Imus In The Morning [3] (Westwood One)	30-sec. spot	$10,000	160.0
The New York Times [4]	4-color full page	$90,828.40	17.6
The Wall Street Journal [5]	4-color full page	$124,859.89	12.8
Newsweek	4-color full page	$154,750	10.3
Sports Illustrated	4-color full page	$170,000	9.4



NOTES: Advertising rates for television and radio shows are based on interviews with sales representatives at each network. Advertising rates for newspapers and magazines are based on 1998 rate cards. (1) Average price already paid, 1st quarter 1999. (2) Base price, 4th quarter 1998. (3) Average price already paid over 12 months, as of December 1998. (4) Derived from 1998 Sunday edition, business-contract rates. (5) 1998 noncontract rate, without 6% contract discount.

billion, has produced Super Bowl ads for such clients as Mastercard and Coca-Cola, the Detroit office, with $354 million in billings, had never done one before. Moehlenkamp, 34, now executive creative director for Detroit, arrived there recently after seven years at BBDO in New York—a major Super Bowl shop.

Clearly, Moehlenkamp's new office wanted the ad. "I had some creatives with me" when he was on the phone with Johnson, Moehlenkamp says. "After I got off the phone, they were drooling."

One ad idea on which the two men clicked began with Johnson, who thought of starting with an office worker surreptiously looking at a computer screen. His boss comes over and asks what he's looking at. The boss leaves, goes into his office, and the sequence is repeated with the boss's supervisor, and so on.

Moehlenkamp took this one step further. He suggested having the employee peer intensely at an unseen screen, with the implication that it was pornography on his monitor. The idea was to make Hotjobs seem as titillating as X-rated pictures.

After that initial conversation, the agency came up with several other ideas, and on December 16 Moehlenkamp and two creative directors flew to New York to present six story lines to their client. Hotjobs was under enormous pressure to make a quick decision; McCann-Erickson had already lined up several possible directors and wanted to begin casting the next day.

Cautious after his first go-round, Johnson asked more questions this time. After two hours, the group of seven men, including three of Johnson's colleagues, narrowed the choices to three: "Dirty Little Secret," which expanded on the porn theme; "Gladiators," which used a modern-day gladiator scene in an office setting to show how you can use Hotjobs to bypass the "brutality" of looking for a job; and "Security Guard," which featured an office security guard who fantasizes about glamorous jobs found through Hotjobs.

Despite the time constraints, the meeting ended without a decision. But by the next morning, Johnson had pretty much decided on the "Dirty Little Secret." It was edgy, it was technology-oriented, and it opened up a unique business opportunity: Johnson hoped to recoup one quarter to one third of the ad's cost by selling parcels of it to some of his better-known clients. When the ad's viewers finally get a look at the computer screen, they will see actual job postings from companies that list with Hotjobs. "Being I'm a small company," says Johnson, "money matters." ■

Without *New York Times* crossword editor Will Shortz, thousands of puzzlers would be clueless.

HE HAS A WAY WITH CROSSWORDS

With snappy puns and a zest for pop culture, Will Shortz has revitalized the *New York Times* crossword puzzle and reeled in a whole new generation of fans.

IN HIS METICULOUSLY ORGANIZED, BOOK-LINED OFFICE, Will Shortz was playing with dynamite. Problem was, he just couldn't get the explosion he was looking for.

Sure, he had ideas.

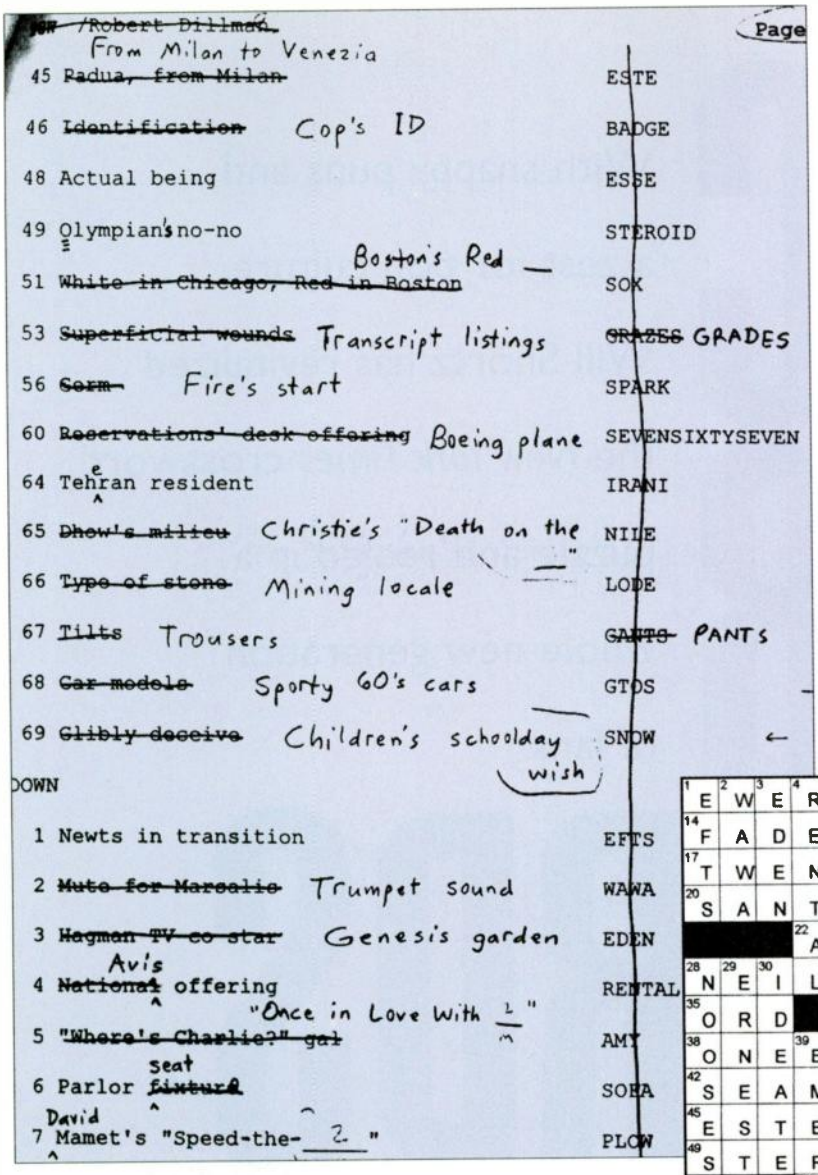
It makes a loud noise, he thought. *It bangs.*

If it were a Monday or a Tuesday, maybe something straightforward like that would fly, but the end of the week was approaching and Shortz needed some fireworks.

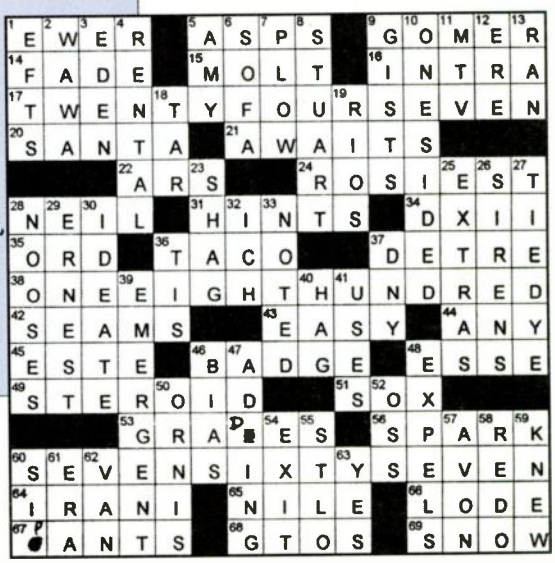
He sat at his desk staring at stacks of geography books, movie guides, unabridged dictionaries, and anthologies of opera, mythology, and rock and roll. He zoned out. Words began floating randomly through his head. Before long, he had it: *It makes a report*—a report, in this case, meaning a very loud noise. Shortz scribbled on a pad and finally settled upon this: "It makes a report, for a construction crew." The answer: "DYNAMITE STICK."

BY KATHERINE ROSMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM ALLEN



"Editing" a crossword, as evidenced above, often involves the complete creation of snappy clues.



Using such plays on words, Shortz, the *New York Times*'s crossword editor, has made himself the Grand Pooh-Bah of Frustration. With his facility for language and his gift for linear logic, Shortz has modernized a piece of the newspaper that's an object of passion for the hundreds of thousands of readers who hang on his every word.

Shortz's talents have made him a big celebrity in the puzzle world—and a moneymaker for the *Times*. Puzzles bearing Shortz's name and style run in the *Times*'s 1.1 million circulation daily editions and are syndicated in about 150 papers across the country. Each weekend, 1.6 million *Times* readers get Shortz's notoriously difficult Sunday puzzle—this one syndicated to about 300 newspapers. Also on Sundays, the 1.8 million listeners of National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition Sunday* hear "puzzlemaster Will Shortz" emcee his seven-minute, two-puzzle challenge. And the Times Books division of Random House, Inc., publishes at least four crossword books per year that reprint Shortz's *Times* puzzles. With his brain as his most potent tool, Will Shortz sits atop an industry carved only from his imagination.

In November, staff writer Katherine Rosman profiled Glamour *editor in chief Bonnie Fuller. Rosman takes a stab at the* New York Times *puzzle every day.*

"I LOVE THE LETTER Z," SHORTZ SAYS. HE IS IN HIS COMBINED home and office in Pleasantville, New York, a 50-minute train ride north of Manhattan. The austere, Tudor-style home is a shrine to his passion. In his living room, personal treasures like an original copy of the world's first crossword (from the 1913 *New York World*) and well-preserved handwritten notes from Sam Lloyd, a puzzle master from the late nineteenth century, peek out from a glass-doored armoire. Shortz owns what he believes to be the largest private collection of crossword and puzzle books and magazines, 18,000 in all, the oldest of which dates back to 1545. Many of these books serve as reference guides for his *Times* and NPR puzzles, so he works out of his home, where all of the information he could possibly need is within easy reach.

Standing 5 feet 9 inches tall, with dark brown hair peppered gray in his sideburns and moustache, Shortz is a kind-looking man with warm brown eyes and a quick smile. He is dressed immaculately in a white oxford shirt with fine, black pinstripes that is well pressed but not starchy, black slacks that drape but don't bag, and black wing-tipped shoes that look worn but not worn-out.

"I think of being a puzzler and a puzzle editor as being a long-distance entertainer," Shortz says. "It's very related to writing or telling a joke. A setup for the puzzle leads you along to thinking one way and suddenly when the punch line comes, you see that it was leading in a totally different direction."

SHORTZ IS HIMSELF NO stranger to different directions. While his long-haired fellow students at Indiana University protested the Vietnam War, rallied against the Nixon administration, and practiced free love in the early 1970s, Shortz, a student from the Indiana farm community of Crawfordsville, kept his nose in his books. That's not to say he wasn't an iconoclast: Shortz invented a curriculum that included a course on the psychology of puzzles, a philosophy course about the logic of puzzles, a journalism class that examined gaming magazines and another about American word puzzles of the late nineteenth century. He graduated in 1974 with a degree in enigmatology—the sole such degree in history, according to Shortz.

Fearful that understanding the difference between olio (a mixture) and oleo (margarine) wouldn't pay the rent, Shortz enrolled in law school at the University of Virginia. But writing clues, not writs, remained his passion. So, despite his law degree, and the option of joining a potentially lucrative profession, Shortz took a job with Penny Press, a crossword publisher. "I thought it would be a life of poverty," he says.

For once, Shortz was wrong. His career skyrocketed and

by 1989—when he was only 37—he was named editor in chief of *Games* magazine, a bimonthly publication with a circulation of nearly 200,000 that is filled with difficult crosswords, acrostics, and brain teasers. *The New York Times* was watching.

PUZZLES HAVE HELPED SHAPE THE HISTORY OF twentieth-century publishing in America. Eleven years after the first crossword puzzle appeared in 1913, Richard Simon and M. Lincoln Schuster printed 3,600 copies of their first publishing effort, *The Cross Word Puzzle Book*. The title was published under the Plaza Publishing Company label because Simon and Schuster were "embarrassed" to be known as publishers of puzzle books, says Trish Todd, the editor in chief of the company's paperback group. The book sold 400,000 copies by the end of 1924; that success helped establish Simon & Schuster as the publishing giant it is today.

The New York Times nevertheless resisted publishing a crossword because its editors lumped puzzles with comics; they considered both frivolous. The *Times* relented in 1942, according to *What's Gnu? A History of the Crossword Puzzle*, when then-publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger—a crossword afficionado—became addicted to the *New York Herald Tribune*'s crossword and grew tired of having to buy a competing paper to sate his craving.

Over the years, the *New York Times* puzzle has become the preeminent crossword in America. The *Times* built its reputation by turning to the best known puzzlers of their respective eras. Margaret Farrar, a coeditor of Simon & Schuster's record-setting *The Cross Word Puzzle Book*, became the first editor when the puzzle began appearing in 1942. She was succeeded by Will Weng in 1969 and Eugene T. Maleska in 1977.

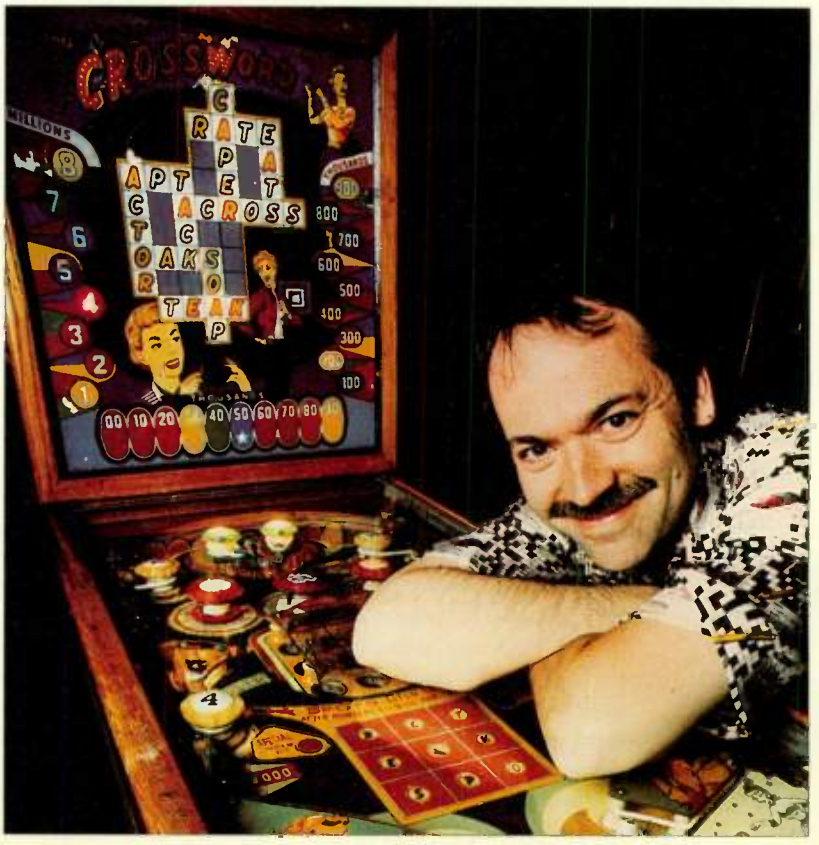
Revered as a near deity in the puzzle world, the late Maleska relied on old-fashioned cultural references and "crossword-ese," as Shortz calls it dismissively—words that appear only in puzzles. "ADIT" (a mine entrance), "ANOA" (a wild ox on the Indonesian island of Celebes), and "ESNE" (a feudal serf), are striking examples of classic Maleska; he vehemently opposed any modern or pop-cultural references.

These are precisely the words that caused a schism in the crossword ranks in 1988. A self-proclaimed "new wave" of crossword constructors, as they are known in the biz, a group of young turks led most vociferously by Stanley Newman, now the publisher of the Times Books puzzle division, bemoaned Maleska's old-school approach. These dissidents believed crossword puzzles would become extinct unless they began attracting a younger audience with, for example, references to rock and roll.

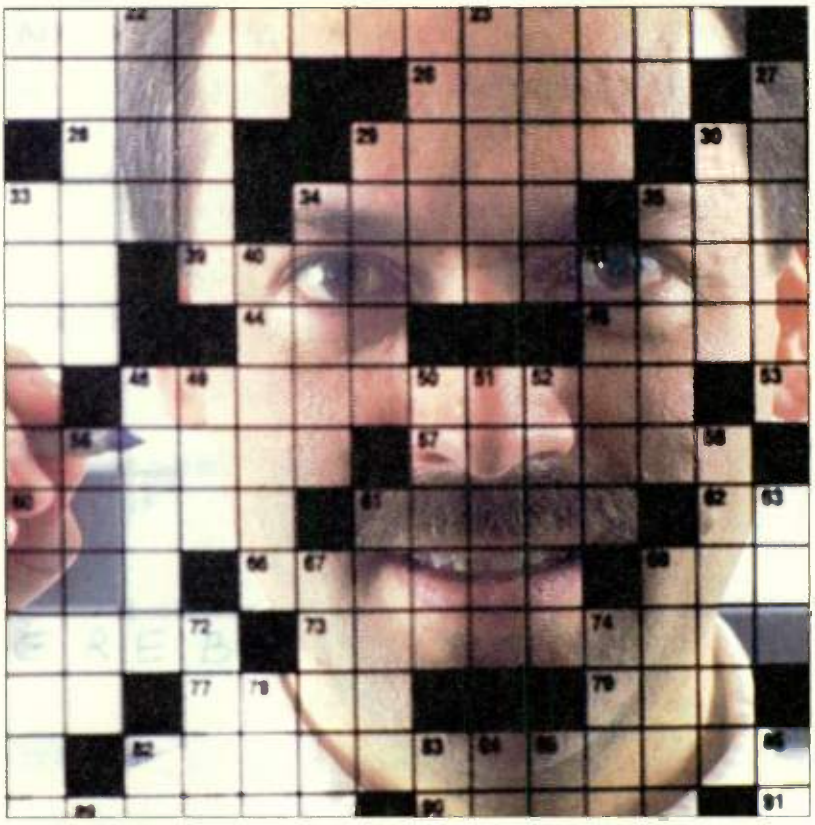
When Maleska died at age 77 in 1993, it fell to Jack Rosenthal, the editor in chief of *The New York Times Magazine*, to decide the fate of the crossword. Rosenthal says he wanted "somebody who could connect with a younger generation." He asked each applicant to submit a crossword and then narrowed the field to three. The real litmus test, though, was whether the candidates could quickly name three James Taylor songs. "If you couldn't do that," Rosenthal says, "you were not in touch enough with mainstream America." Shortz rattled off a host of songs *and* lyrics. Rosenthal cites Shortz's schooling and his eleven years at *Games* as additional strengths. "Will was *born* to be the editor of the *New York Times* puzzles," Rosenthal explains, emphasizing, "that's a very proud lineage at this paper."

SINCE HIS ARRIVAL, SHORTZ *HAS* SHAKEN THINGS UP AT THE *Times*. He has reduced "crossword-ese," updated cultural references to include modern movies, songs, and television shows, printed constructor bylines beneath the daily puzzles, and added brand names like "OREO" and "COCA-COLA" to the mix. There are boundaries, however, that he won't cross, such as death, disease, and sex. Still, Shortz tries to avoid seeming prudish. "There's one prominent editor who will not allow the word 'breast' in a puzzle and others won't allow 'bra.' B-R-A. Well, I think that's preposterous," he says, adding that he does "follow rules of good taste." For example, he recently published a crossword with "LEWINSKY" in the grid ("I simply clued it as '1998 name in the news'") and has accepted a puzzle with the word "VIAGRA." Both words resonate with the public and are therefore reasonable crossword fodder, Shortz explains. But solvers can rest assured that Shortz isn't taking the *Times* tabloid: "There certainly will not be any pun involved" in cluing for such words.

What there *will* be and what, in fact, there is, says Shortz, is "fresh, colorful vocabulary. I especially like phrases that aren't in the dictionary but are common in real life." Flipping through a Times Books compilation that bears his name, Shortz reels off answers that win his approval: "'OPEN SEASON,' that's good; 'EASY STREET,' that's lively; 'EURO DISNEY,' *there's* a great answer." He points to "THERE THERE." "You won't find that in any dictionary," he says,



Shortz's house is packed with puzzle memorabilia like this 1959 crossword-themed pinball machine.



Shortz, pictured above in 1993, believes people have a need to fill in empty boxes. "Nature abhors a vacuum," he says.

"but everyone knows what 'there, there' means."

The key to thrilling puzzles, Shortz says, is "deliciously misleading clues." These are the clues "that make you think one thing and turn out to be something completely different." Some recent examples of such tricky clues are "record holder" (for which the answer was "EX-CON"), "they may pick up a few pointers" ("DOG CATCHERS"), and "competitions between banks" ("REGATTAS"). How does Shortz come up with these puns? Well, for once, he's at a loss for words. "There's no way to explain it," he says. "You just let the word roll around in your head and if you're lucky something comes out."

BECAUSE SHORTZ'S PUZZLES REFLECT A WIDE-open sphere of contemporary life, fodder for the puzzles comes from all sorts of sources. He spends his free time immersing himself in culture so he can keep his puzzles fresh. He reads voraciously, travels abroad frequently, sees movies, and watches TV shows like *Star Trek: Voyager* and *The Simpsons*. "Everything in *The Simpsons* is good," Shortz says. "Lisa, Marge, Bart—all three of those names appear all the time. Edna Krabappel, the tavern owner named Moe. I think the people who created *The Simpsons* had crossword puzzles in mind."

"When we go to the movies, we are always the last people in the theater," explains Evie Eysenburg, Shortz's longtime girlfriend. "He'll watch the credits and see a name—like the third gaffer—and say, 'I hope that person becomes famous; that would be a wonderful crossword name.'"

Eysenburg can detect Shortz's creative moments. "The minute he sees a word, he tries to rearrange the letters," she says. "He tries to see the word backwards." Often, she and Shortz will be driving and, out of nowhere, inspiration will strike—and the multitasking Shortz will "write [the ideas] down while he's driving," she says.

They are ideas that Shortz calls upon later when editing—a process that begins at the mailbox. "I get an average of sixty to seventy-five puzzles submitted to me each week," he says. Since he can publish only seven per week, competition is tough. And the puzzles must be of varying degrees of difficulty because the *Times* puzzle starts out as relatively simple on Monday and builds to an often mind-boggling crescendo on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Once Shortz decides a particular construction makes the grade, the editing begins—a procedure that can radically alter a puzzle's substance. To aid his explanation visually, Shortz uses an example of a puzzle that will run on a Monday. Out of the 78 clues offered, Shortz has completely rewritten 54 and has significantly changed three. "This is someone who's trying to write difficult clues for what is basically an easy puzzle," he says.

"Kind of mural?" one unedited clue asks; the answer in the grid is "INTRA." Shortz shakes his head. "Maybe that would be alright for a puns-and-anagrams puzzle, but that's not right for an American-style crossword," he says. Instead, he has inserted the clue, "The 'I' of IM."

He has changed another clue for purposes of accuracy. "SNOW" is initially clued as "glibly deceive." Shortz finds that problematic: "'Snow' means to deceive someone by overwhelming with information," he explains. "I don't think 'glib' is particularly right." The clue, instead, will appear as "Children's winter school day wish."

"Rule Number One, of course, is accuracy," he emphasizes. "I'm very proud of the accuracy of the puzzle." Shortz estimates that out of the 32,000 clues he runs in *Times* puzzles over a year, there are only "about twenty mistakes." He doesn't run corrections for all 20, though. On September 26, for example, he ran a clue that said, "Annual P.G.A. Tour event" and the answer in the grid was "SKINS GAME." "It turned out not to be quite correct," he admits. "The Skins Game is an annual event of P.G.A. players that's organized by the media, but it's not actually a part of the tour." Shortz didn't run a correction, he says, because he got protests from only two people and doubts many more caught the distinction.

Another inaccuracy brought a deluge of mail and required a published correction. In an October 1997 puzzle, Shortz printed a clue that read, "Winningest NCAA basketball coach." The answer he ran: "RUPP." "All my reference books showed that Adolph Rupp of the University of Kentucky was the winningest basketball coach," he explains. "But what I didn't know was University of North Carolina's Dean Smith had passed his record the previous March, 879 to 876. It seemed like I was the only person in the world who didn't know, judging from the response I got."

Puzzlers have a low tolerance for inaccuracies, agrees Henry Rathvon, a well-known puzzle editor who moderates chats on the *Times*'s website. "If there's an actual typo in the headline on the front page of *The New York Times*, people assume it's a human error," he says. "Let there be an error in a crossword puzzle, the flamethrowers gather."

JIM COOPER/KRT

Responses are always plentiful. "I get a lot of mail," Shortz says, especially after a "doozy" of a puzzle. On November 5, 1996, for example, Shortz ran a puzzle in which the clue for the words running across the middle of the grid asked for "Lead story in tomorrow's newspaper!" The answer? "CLINTON ELECTED." Or, "BOB DOLE ELECTED." (The puzzle, submitted by Jeremiah Farrell, a puzzle constructor and professor emeritus of mathematics at Butler University, was revamped by both Farrell and Shortz.)

"Each of the [first] seven crossing letters were ambiguous," Shortz explains. The clue that crossed the first letter was "Black Halloween animal." Both the answers "CAT," (the "C" for "CLINTON") and "BAT," (the "B" for "BOB") fit. Another clue was "Provider of support, for short" for which the answers "IRA" or "BRA" fit. The other clues were similarly vague.

That morning—and for the next 24 hours—Shortz's phone at the *Times* (where he has an office he visits once a week) rang constantly. Most of the calls came from people who had filled out "CLINTON ELECTED." Shortz says they were "outraged" at the *Times*'s presumptuousness in declaring a Democratic winner before the polls closed. Other people, he says, filled out the alternative answer and "thought we had made a whopper of a mistake. I think it's the most amazing crossword that's ever been created."

"He'll watch [movie] credits," says Shortz's girlfriend, "and see a name—like the third gaffer—and say, 'I hope that person becomes famous; that would be a wonderful crossword name.'"

"PUZZLES ARE THE RODNEY Dangerfield of publishing," says Times Books' Newman—meaning the industry doesn't accord puzzles proper respect. The fact is, Newman explains, that "twenty-five percent of newspaper readers do the crossword." Sales of his title's puzzle books, he says, are "well into seven digits in terms of books sold every year." Because Times Books is owned by Random House, a private company that is in turn owned by Bertelsmann AG, Newman won't reveal his division's dollar value. Shortz's books are its best-sellers, says Peter Bernstein, the publisher of Times Books. "That's a powerful combination for crossword junkies—Will Shortz and *The New York Times.*"

Shortz's crosswords also help sell newspapers—especially the Sunday edition, in which Shortz's handiwork is found in the *Times Magazine*. "The puzzle is a crucial part of the *New York Times Magazine*," says Adam Moss, its editor. "It's a big destination, to use a market term, for a lot of readers." Moss believes that Shortz's puzzles attract more readers than did those of his predecessors, because he increased its accessibility with more modern cultural references. Moss offers anecdotal evidence of the puzzle's financial value to the *Times*, saying that sometimes one household has "two or even three subscriptions" to the Sunday paper because, he believes, "only one person can do a puzzle at a time."

The steadiness of the crossword business reflects the loyalty of puzzlers. Newman estimates that between 30 and 40 million Americans "do crosswords regularly," meaning at least once a week. To these people, Shortz is a celebrity.

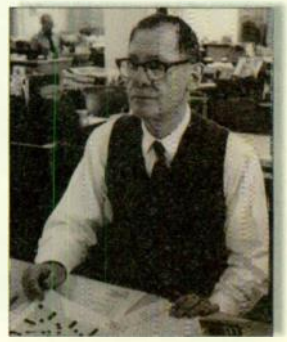
Shortz's popularity manifests itself in all sorts of media. One of his favorite stories comes from an NPR listener who told Shortz that while vacationing in Rhode Island, the listener and his family couldn't tune into *Weekend Edition Sunday* because the radio signals didn't make it to their coastal vacation resort. So, Shortz says, the man told him they "[drove] to the highest spot at the Providence [Rhode Island] airport, next to the trash dumpster, and from there—with the help of the dumpster—they're able to get the signal from Boston."

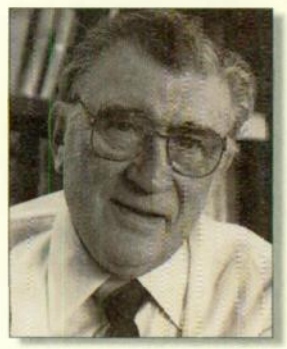
Shortz's fans include people like President Bill Clinton. During the 1992 election campaign, Shortz and Mike Shenk, now the editor of *The Wall Street Journal*'s weekend edition crossword, visited then-candidate Clinton's Manhattan hotel room, to which they brought a specialized puzzle constructed by Shenk.

"We sat down...and I interviewed [President Clinton] for a couple of minutes about crosswords," Shortz recalls. "He says he does sometimes three in a day and on average five to seven a week. And while I was interviewing him, he clicked on his watch timer and started solving the puzzle."

But when President Clinton was just halfway through the puzzle, Shortz says, an aide came into the room to tell him that he had an urgent phone call. The president, Shortz remembers, "clicks off his watch timer and goes over to the telephone and he's talking animatedly and a few minutes into the call, I hear his timer click on again and I look over and, in astonishment, I see, while he's talking on the phone, he's continuing to solve the puzzle." When President Clinton finished the call, Shenk and Shortz checked the puzzle for accuracy. "It was absolutely perfect and he had finished it in six minutes and fifty-four seconds," Shortz says. "Whatever else you can say about Bill Clinton, he's a very talented crossword solver." (A White House spokeswoman confirms that the president regularly does the *Times*'s crossword.)

In fact, the president has precisely the qualities that Shortz says make for a good puzzler: verbal agility and the inability to turn down a challenge. When people see "empty boxes," Shortz says, "there is a natural inclination to want to fill them in. Nature abhors a vacuum." Mostly, though, Shortz believes people gravitate toward crosswords for the sense of accomplishment they offer. "People are faced with problems every day of their lives," he says. And to those people, Shortz brings the ultimate satisfaction—problems that can be solved. ■





Shortz's predecessors: (from top) Margaret Farrar, Will Weng, and Eugene T. Maleska.

AP-WIDEWORLD(FARRAR); COURTESY OF *THE NY TIMES* (WENG/MALESKA)

Covering the same story: CBS and CNN on the morning of Sept. 21, 1998.

MustM

Unstoppable economic forces are driving CNN and CBS News into decline—or into each other's arms.

BY STEVEN BRILL

IT WAS ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 21 WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT A MERGER BETWEEN CNN AND EITHER CBS NEWS or ABC News—more probably CBS—is almost inevitable. The marriage could create a Tiffany international news network for the next century, one that would prosper mightily even as it provided a high-road alternative to the NBC broadcast/cable juggernaut. No, September 21 wasn't one of the days when executives from CBS or ABC met secretly with counterparts from CNN and its parent company, Time Warner Inc., to talk about a deal. In the last two years, there have been a slew of such meetings in New York and Atlanta, according to three senior executives at the companies involved. But, according to Time Warner chairman and CEO Gerald Levin, none of the sessions brought the sides close to an agreement. In fact, most of the meetings took place prior to last September, and the only deal that came close to being done contemplated a less comprehensive link-up (in which CNN would provide technical crews and other backup for CBS or ABC). Since then, as of this writing, the talks among the players about any deal have, if anything, cooled—for now.

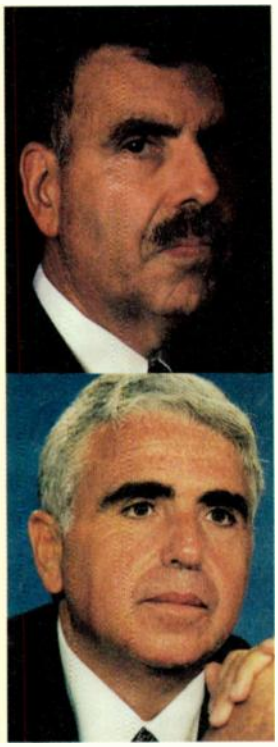
What happened that September morning wasn't secret at all. Rather, it was an excruciatingly public display of the unstoppable economic forces that are destined to drive CNN and CBS into decline—or into each other's arms.

It was on that morning that the videotape of President Clinton's testimony before the Lewinsky grand jury was publicly released. And beginning at 9:25 A.M., we saw ABC and CBS preempt all of their regular—and profitable—programming in favor of joining CNN, MSNBC, Fox News Channel, Court TV, and C-SPAN in carrying the whole thing all morning.

To be sure, NBC carried it too. But a producer at ABC and two senior executives at CBS explain that they decided they had to carry the testimony only after they heard that NBC's sister cable channel, MSNBC, was going to carry it, and they couldn't allow NBC to be a player via its cable channel in a major news story while they weren't. It was only when CBS and ABC decided to carry it that NBC (the network) decided that it had to match *them*.

"We decided we had to carry [the Clinton testimony] wall-to-wall because we have to tell our viewers and our affiliates that we

edge TV



Time Warner chief Gerald Levin (top) and CBS chief Mel Karmazin (bottom) each have financial incentives to explore a merger.

are a player in any big news story," explains CBS anchor Dan Rather. "Before NBC got into the 24- hour-news business [with MSNBC], we might have just let CNN have it, but now we can't let NBC give something to their viewers and affiliates without us answering. We lost a lot of money doing it."

According to a senior network executive, that decision to be "a player" cost CBS and ABC about $250,000 apiece in lost advertising revenue, because the testimony ran with few commercial breaks.

Meantime, over at the network that invented and once held a monopoly on 24-hour news coverage, CNN got another reminder that its days of enjoying all or most of the audience when there's breaking news are over. CNN attracted only 13 percent of the audience that tuned in to the Clinton testimony.

In short, CNN gained little from exactly the kind of event that was once its raison d'être; CBS lost a quarter of a million dollars televising something that added nothing to the world because it was available on a half-dozen other channels; and NBC, because of its broadcast/cable platforms, set the agenda.

Dropping money this way couldn't have made this a great morning for Mel Karmazin, the new shareholder-value-obsessed CEO of CBS. And it couldn't have been much better for Ted Turner, the CNN founder, who this year has seen his network continue to make lots of money but also continue to see its share of the news pie sliced thinner and thinner by competitors who once laughed at his idea for an all-news cable network.

These kinds of lose-lose situations usually don't last long at businesses run by rational leaders, let alone those run by hard-nosed winners like Ted Turner and Mel Karmazin. Indeed, the answer that comes most often when one asks executives at these companies, or stock analysts who track them, why a merger that could match the NBC broadcast/cable combination hasn't already happened is that the players, particularly Turner, have let ego get in the way of rationality.

If true, this resistance can't last for long, because the hard economic facts of television news are so plain, so inescapable.

Here are some of them:

• *Broadcast news loses money.*

Publicly, the network won't admit it, but the dirty little secret about television news is that no broadcast news-gathering operation—not NBC, not CBS, not ABC—makes money. The separately staffed magazine shows operated by the networks' news divisions (*60 Minutes, Dateline NBC, 20/20*) are profitable, as are some other news-division shows, such as NBC's *Today* (which, along with what has become the CNBC cash cow, is why the NBC News division as a whole is profitable). But the process of having reporters and crews arrayed around the world to gather and report news every night for a half-hour show costs a lot more than advertisers are willing to pay to reach the steadily declining audience attracted to these newscasts. (The network can officially deny these losses because the cost of, say, having a camera crew, producers, and an office in London is allocated among all the shows, even though *48 Hours* on CBS or *20/20* on ABC don't need full-time news staffers there, whereas the evening news half-hours absolutely do.)

In CBS's case, the half-hour news broadcast loses about $70 million a year, according to one senior executive, although he says it is difficult to tell exactly, because costs are allocated so haphazardly among the various shows.

• *24-hour cable news can make money.*

CNN, on the other hand, is the one news-gathering operation (that is, hard news as opposed to magazine shows and the like) that *does* make money, lots of it. And MSNBC and even the Fox News cable start-up are now doing well enough that their plans to be in the black look real.

According to CNN Chairman Thomas Johnson, CNN's channel in the United States and its sister channel, Headline News, made about $330 million in 1998, while its other, developing enterprises (a new channel in Spain, CNN International, and CNNfn, for example) lost about $30 million. (CNN's stellar financial success is another reminder that the marketplace isn't always cruel to quality; just as some of our best newspapers are the most profitable, what is arguably the best, most comprehensive television-journalism operation in the world is the only significantly profitable one.)

• *But CNN, or at least CNN's channel in the United States, is clearly going south economically.*

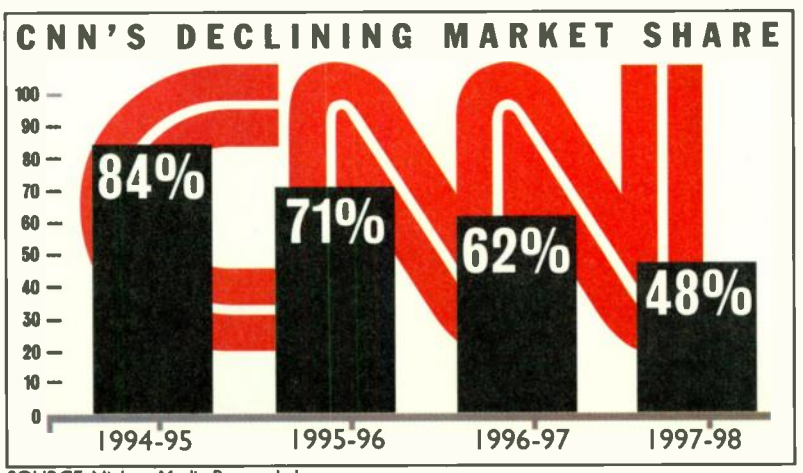
CNN's U.S. channel may still be able to show small increases in profit for the next year or two because of cable television's increasing ability to get higher rates per thousand viewers from advertisers, and because CNN is still able to increase by about 2 percent a year the monthly fee it charges your cable operator to carry the channel. But the long-term reality isn't pretty. CNN is steadily losing market share to competitors MSNBC, CNBC, Fox, and the Internet (though its own Internet offerings lessen some of that threat).

Thus, according to Nielsen Media Research, Inc., from October 1995 through September 1996, CNN captured 71 percent of the audience watching cable news; from October 1997 through September 1998 its share had sunk to 48 percent, with CNBC and MSNBC capturing a combined 46 percent and Fox about 6 percent.

No one at Time Warner, including Turner, is sanguine about that. "We are totally aware of the kind of threat CNBC and MSNBC present," says Johnson. "We are totally focused."

• *Appointment television hasn't been working for CNN.*

The problem is that Johnson's focus so far has been on magazine shows or, as he puts it, "the next level of cable news," which is "appointment viewing," the



SOURCE: Nielsen Media Research, Inc.

PATRICK HARBON/OUTLINE (LEVIN); PETER MORGAN/REUTERS/ARCHIV (KARMAZIN)

kind of brand-name programming that viewers try to remember to watch at a certain time. In theory this makes sense. Johnson's competitors are eating into the 24-hour, turn-it-on-and-it's-there utility value of CNN; indeed, as Abigail Pogrebin points out in her article *(see* "Lack Attack," *page 92)* on the NBC juggernaut, NBC's Andrew Lack has beaten CNN at its own game by using MSNBC to flog a single major news story every day. Turn on the set for news of that top story, and you're more likely to get it on MSNBC than you are on CNN, which covers a wider, more "newsworthy" menu of news. You might also get that same top story from Fox.

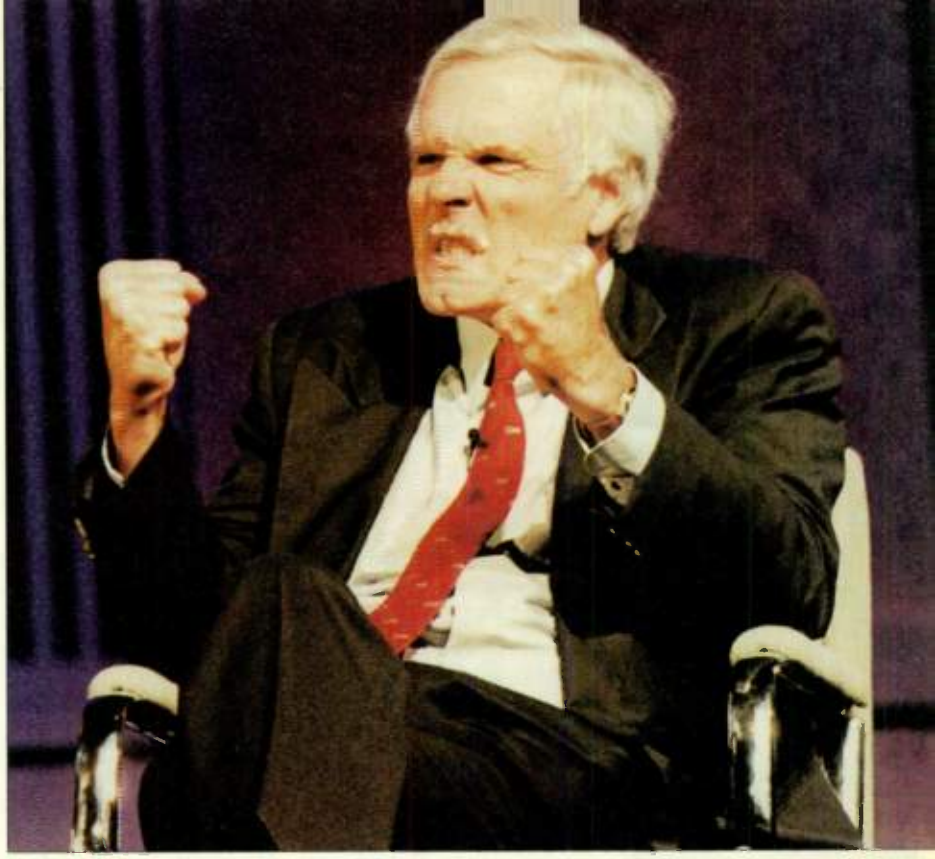
But appointment TV so far hasn't worked for Johnson. His recruitment of Richard Kaplan in 1997 from ABC to run CNN/U.S. and Kaplan's effort under the CNN *NewsStand* banner to create appointment television in prime time have failed to move the Nielsen needle. *NewsStand* has averaged only 417,000 viewing households, compared to 444,000 in the same time slots a year ago, according to Nielsen. And for CNN this is a high-cost program; the tab runs to about $500,000 per show. CNN's only appointment television remains the show featuring its one big name, *Larry King Live*, which averaged a viewership of about 1.3 million households in 1998.

• *NBC's broadcast/cable architecture is a winner.*

"I do wish we had NBC's architecture of broadcast with cable," concedes CBS News president Andrew Heyward. "It's really working for them....But," adds Heyward, "I think it's as much of a threat to CNN as it is to us, even if they don't realize it." Indeed, as Pogrebin's article on NBC explains, the MSNBC /CNBC combination is proving to be a special threat to CNN, because the two channels are promoted on the huge broadcast stage of NBC and because NBC's high-priced, star-appeal talent now moves seamlessly from the network to these cable channels. For example, if on the Friday afternoon that Kenneth Starr's report was released to the public, you turned on the tube for some instant news, what you got on CNN was its first team of White House and congressional correspondents. But on MSNBC they were matched by the equally solid and arguably higher-octane broadcast talent of Tim Russert, Tom Brokaw, Gwen Ifill, David Bloom, and Lisa Meyers.

On December 16—when bombs started falling on Iraq just as the impeachment vote loomed—the NBC/MSNBC team similarly cut into a story that was all CNN's the last time we bombed Iraq. Sure, viewers still tuned to CNN ahead of MSNBC, but this assemblage of star power and promotion and the seamless way the Iraq–Capitol Hill coverage moved back and forth from broadcast to cable is what is known as a world-class threat to market share.

The NBC broadcast/cable combination also threatens the other broadcast networks because, as we saw on the day that President Clinton's testimony aired, it forces them to make money-losing decisions. More important, for NBC it transforms news gathering from a grudgingly undertaken, money-losing effort to save face and preserve the network's brand into a real profit generator. With MSNBC and CNBC, NBC can use its broadcast platform to promote viewership on cable, while spreading the cost of its broadcast-news talent across the two cable channels (plus international cable and satellite outlets). CBS and ABC have no such strategy. For them, news gathering remains a black hole, with only their increasingly fungible magazine shows providing any offset to the losses from doing serious, breaking news.



Turner: A fierce competitor, so far he's insisted that his CNN does not need CBS.

• *Broadcast is the platform CNN needs.*

As CNN tries to move to the next level of cable news by creating that appointment television and by cashing in more generally on its stellar brand name, what it lacks is the big bang that is still broadcast television—or, as Johnson himself puts it, "the one hundred percent penetration into every household that broadcast brings."

With that comes the ability to pay the most for talent— and to lure talent in an era in which broadcast is for now still seen as the big leagues. The simple fact is that the lowest-rated CBS network program of 1998—*Buddy Faro*—was seen on average by 5.1 times as many people as was CNN's highest-rated hour, *Larry King Live*. Is there any doubt that a zero-cost rerun of *60 Minutes* on a Monday night on CNN wouldn't dwarf what Kaplan is getting on Monday night from *NewsStand* at $500,000 per show? Or that a one-hour Dan Rather news show at 8 P.M. wouldn't increase the popularity of CNN's current 8 P.M. news hour?

The lowest-rated CBS show—*Buddy Faro*—was seen on average by 5.1 times as many people as was CNN's highest-rated hour, *Larry King Live*.

• *Money-losing news isn't likely to be tolerated much longer.*

News divisions that lost money were once tolerated by the networks because of the prestige they gave the owner-founders and because of the way this "public interest" television kept Washington regulators happy. Not anymore. For better or worse, Washington is relatively sanguine about broadcasters' public-interest obligations in a world of infinite cable and Internet news alternatives. Moreover, ABC is now owned by a publicly held, bottom-line-conscious Disney, while CBS is controlled by Karmazin, the former radio broadcaster and impresario of the *Howard Stern Radio Show* who is famous for his intolerance of low profit margins, let alone negative profit margins.

The idea that Disney or Karmazin will allow these losses to continue forever, especially if there is an alternative, is inconceivable.

FRED PROUSER/SIPA PRESS

I have the alternative, and I think it's more likely to play out with CBS than with ABC. Karmazin could probably move faster than Disney, and any combination of Disney with a Time Warner entity (both own movie studios and major cable channels) would be more troublesome to regulators. Nonetheless, if you substitute ABC for CBS in everything you read below, you have a scenario that is almost as likely.

That scenario is that *CNN is going to buy CBS News — which will enable them both to survive and thrive.*

The Deal

Based on the strengths and weaknesses of each party, the modern dynamics of the television-news business, and a sense of what each side would want, here's my armchair investment banker's notion of the terms of the deal that could work:

1. CNN buys CBS News for $1.

This would not be a sale by CBS of its whole network, which programs entertainment as well as news shows, or of the whole television operation (the network plus the big-city local TV stations it owns). Only the news division—which includes *CBS Evening News with Dan Rather*, the magazine shows, such as *60 Minutes* and the new, second *60 Minutes* hour, as well as *48 Hours*, and perhaps the morning news show—would be included. All employees of the CBS news division would be included in the deal, but CBS would have to pay the severance costs of any CBS or CNN employees laid off by CNN in the first six months after the deal as a result of the merger.

2. The CBS network agrees to run these existing shows at their currently scheduled time slots for the next 20 years, and CNN agrees to provide that programming at the same or a better standard of quality.

The programming on CBS would always be branded with the combined names, CNNCBS. Any cancellations or changes in scheduling during those 20 years would have to be mutually agreed upon.

In other words, there would still be a *CBS Evening News with Dan Rather* at 6:30 P.M. on CBS, only now it would be called the CNNCBS Evening News. CBS would also be required to promote the CNNCBS shows on CBS with the same number of commercials on the network as it has in the two most recent years for the next 20 years, plus promote the CNN cable programs on CBS at the same level that NBC now promotes its cable programs.

3. The seven percent solution.

CBS would also get for the next 20 years 7 percent of the net profit from CNN's United States channel (including CNN's companion Headline News channel) and from the telecast of the news shows on the CBS network. (I've picked 7 percent because it makes the overall numbers work out in a way that looks fair to both sides; see chart on page 89.)

Dream Team? A combined CNN-CBS roster would include, from top, Dan Rather, Mike Wallace, Larry King, and Christiane Amanpour (who already has an arrangement allowing her to work for CBS's *60 Minutes* and CNN).

The Benefits

Here's why this deal works.

1. Instantly better cash flow and a higher stock price for CBS.

Yes, Karmazin only gets $1 up front. But look at what else he gets. Right now, his news division is probably losing $20 million a year, once the profits from *60 Minutes*, *Face The Nation with Bob Schieffer*, and other shows—about $50 million—are balanced against the $70 million in losses from news gathering. Because the value of all of CBS is derived by multiplying its cash flow, and because CBS News's losses reduce CBS's overall cash flow, the news division's very existence lowers the value of Karmazin's stock. In Karmazin's world there can be no greater sin.

Conversely, this deal probably would improve CBS's cash flow by at least $49 million and thereby raise the value of its stock (for the details, see the chart on page 89).

2. The same or better news programming for CBS.

This seems obvious; CNN consistently wins in polls asking people which national television-news operation they trust the most and are most likely to turn to for breaking news.

3. In news and public policy circles, it makes Karmazin a hero rather than an annual villain.

Consider Karmazin's alternatives. Every year at budget time he can, as he just did last year, order more cuts in the news division—which will be followed by news stories and op-ed articles about how he is chipping away at the Edward R. Murrow legacy in the name of profit. And he would, in fact, be chipping away at a valuable news organization and a valuable component of the CBS brand name. Or he could kill off news altogether and risk the wrath of affiliates, hurt his brand equity, and upset everyone else.

This deal would make him the man who strengthened CBS News and brought it to a new international level by preserving its place in the broadcast lineup at the same time that he married it with the widely respected CNN.

4. It gives CNN a killer answer to NBC.

"A CNN merger with CBS is the one thing I've been worried about for two years," says a senior General Electric Company executive. "It's the one way they could match us and beat us." (GE is NBC's parent company.)

Indeed, CNN would now have a broadcast platform from which to promote its own shows and the talent and programming ability from CBS that could move it to another level.

5. It's certain to ensure long-term profit growth for CNN.

What about the math that says CNN would be taking on a news division that loses $20 million a year, even with the profit generated by shows like *60 Minutes*? In fact, this is the real profit in the deal, the dynamic that makes it a big winner on Wall Street. It now costs CBS some $200 million just for news gathering—the camera crews, bureaus, producers, and on-air people deployed around the world to report the news. (This does not count the staffs of the magazine shows or other shows like *Face The Nation*.) Most people who have looked at that operation and the similar but larger one mounted by CNN believe they are almost 100 percent redundant—meaning that in theory the full $200 million could now be cut from the expense budget, which would mean $200 million more in profit for the new CNNCBS. But let's be conservative and

assume counterintuitively that only 50 percent is redundant. That would still be a $100 million saving, and a $100 million cash-flow increase from CBS's news operations that CNN would now enjoy.

AS THE CHART BELOW SHOWS, ALL OF THIS RESULTS IN AN improvement in annual cash flow for CNN of $51 million.

Again, this $51 million, or 15 percent, improvement in CNN's United States bottom line (in exchange, you'll remember, for a $1 purchase price) assumes that only 50 percent of the CBS news-gathering staff is redundant when combined with CNN's larger staff.

More important, it does not take into account any earnings improvements that CNN would likely get from increasing its audience on CNN by having the benefit of the CBS promotion platform and the CBS talent. Again, reruns of *60 Minutes* cost nothing but seem guaranteed to be a ratings winner by cable standards. Dan Rather or his successor on the broadcast evening news would be a great attraction for a CNN prime-time news hour, and other CBS talents, like Bob Schieffer, Scott Pelley, Bill Plante, and Paula Zahn could now be used much more productively, as could the on- and off-camera stars of that king of appointment television: *60 Minutes*. Even Bryant Gumbel, now languishing at $5 million a year on the CBS shelf, could be used when Larry King is off or for a second hour of interviews later at night.

If CNN can bump its prime-time audience just 10 percent that way (a low projection, I think) it would be adding another $35 plus million in advertising revenue—and profit. That would be a total profit improvement for CNN of $86 million per year—at the same time, again, that CBS is improving its annual bottom line by $49 million.

As an investment banker selling the deal would put it, "It's a win-win" replacing the "lose-lose" that we saw on the day the president's videotaped testimony aired.

6. *Other benefits.*

All kinds of other benefits could come from this combination. To take one example, CBS has launched an excellent, high-end stock and financial information website called CBS MarketWatch that, when combined with and promoted by the CNNfn cable channel and Internet site, could become a real on-line winner. More generally, we should not lose sight of the fact that CBS News and CNN have a number of enormously talented people; combining them (and, yes, eliminating the jobs of the least-talented half) would produce a stellar news organization that thrived on the three platforms that a modern television news organization must use: the more general broadcast stage, the fuller-bodied 24-hour cable medium, and the still-more substantive on-line medium.

It makes no sense to have so many reporters, producers, and camera people reporting on the same event—all in a money-losing effort.

The Objections

If this is such a no-brainer, why hasn't it happened, and what are the reasons it might not happen?

1. The carnage from layoffs.

The financial people won't see this as an objection, but lots of others will—and should, because the carnage would indeed be ugly. But the simple fact is that in a world where news gathering under current corporate structures loses money, it makes no sense to have so many camera people and so many producers and reporters on the scene reporting on the same event.

2. *Opposition from CBS's local affiliates.*

This is the biggest hurdle for CBS. CBS owns the local CBS stations in 14 major markets (including New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago), which account for about 32 percent of the nation's homes with televisions. The rest of the stations are non-network owned, and under current arrangements the relation-

HOW CBS GAINS $49 MILLION A YEAR

1. The merger eliminates the news division's current losses—$20 million—from the CBS books.

2. Then, there's that payment of 7% of annual profit from CNN's U.S. operations due each year for the next 20 years from CNN under the deal as outlined. As shown in the companion chart on CNN's gains, that is likely to amount to at least $29 million paid to CBS.

That adds up to $49 million.

AND HOW CNN GAINS $51 MILLION A YEAR

1. CNN/U.S.'s current cash flow:	$330m
2. Cost assumed by CNN of CBS News's current loss:	–$20m
3. Improved CNNCBS profit from cost savings by combining operations:	$100m
TOTAL CASH FLOW	$410m
Less 7% Payment to CBS	$29m
Remaining Cash Flow	$381m
IMPROVEMENT FOR CNN/U.S. ($381M versus current $330M)	$51m

ship is structured as if these stations were doing the network a favor by being its affiliates and airing its programming. The locals don't pay for the programming—in fact, they still get paid by the networks to air much of it—and they and the networks each sell different portions of the commercial time for their own accounts. (It's for that reason that the big money in broadcast television is in owning local stations, not in owning a network. Indeed, CBS makes all of its television money from its local stations.)

CBS's fear, then, would be that local affiliates would be so furious at the prospect of letting CBS use network airtime to promote a cable channel like CNN—which, after all, is the competition—that the affiliates would sever their ties.

The answer is that NBC has already finessed this problem and called its affiliates' bluff about the who-needs-whom dynamics of the relationship. Every time you watch *Today* or Brokaw's newscast and they promote CNBC or MSNBC you can see evidence of that. Aren't Karmazin and Turner smart enough and tough enough to do the same thing, especially now that NBC has done it first? Besides, these affiliates have no place to go if they object; CBS owns the most important affiliates anyway, and the government is likely to loosen regulations so that they can soon own more.

The other answer, of course, is that CBS would be giving its affiliates the long-term comfort of a strengthened news channel and brand identity with this merger, plus CNNCBS could offer these locals the prospect of becoming priority recipients of the news service that CNN now provides to local TV outlets across the country.

This deal can be sold to the affiliates if the parties involved have the guts to try.

CBS, the network of Edward R. Murrow, is now dependent on Howard Stern's impresario for the quality of its news.

3. CBS becomes a captive of CNN.

Suddenly the network of Edward R. Murrow would be depending on a cable channel for the quality of its news programming. Then again, the network of Edward R. Murrow is now dependent on Howard Stern's impresario for the quality of its news. Besides, CNN has every incentive to make CBS News as good or better than it has been. And the deal could include some mechanism for CBS to recapture its news division if CNN failed to perform up to standard. (Sure, that would be a murky, hard-to-enforce provision, but CBS News's future is murkier under any other alternative.)

4. The price CNN would pay is too high.

If you take that $29 million (7 percent of CNN's new $410 million cash flow) calculated earlier and multiply it by 20 years, the price becomes $580 million. (Of course it could be higher, because the cash-flow payment would presumably rise over the years, but we'd also have to attach a high discount to it because it's paid out over 20 years.) That's pretty high for something that we said is losing $20 million a year, right?

The answer is no, for two reasons: First, assume that CNN was buying just the profitable parts of CBS News, like *60 Minutes*, and that the money-losing hard-news shows were being scrapped. These profitable programs together probably make about $50 million. A set of brand-name media products plus a guaranteed distribution platform for them (the CBS network) would easily sell for 10 to 15 times cash flow, which would make that price reasonable.

Second, if this kind of price is really an objection, the deal could be structured to pay CBS only a multiple (obviously a higher one) of CNN's *improved* earnings following the deal, thereby lessening the risk.

5. Accounting problems.

Under this deal CBS would get a 7 percent share of the profits of CNN's United States channel. But CNN integrates its operations not only with spinoffs like CNNfn and CNN Sports Illustrated but also with its various international networks. How could the costs and revenue be separated out? Again, look at NBC and MSNBC. MSNBC is a joint venture of NBC and Microsoft, whereas the NBC broadcast network and the CNBC cable network are 100 percent owned by NBC. If they can figure out that accounting to their mutual satisfaction, so can CBS and CNN.

There is also the issue of whether CBS or CNN people would be selling the advertising on the CNNCBS news programs that appear on the CBS network. But they should be able to figure out an arrangement whereby both could, so that various packages of ads on CNN and CBS programs could be offered.

In short, these come under the category of problems that are difficult enough to provide credible excuses for not going forward. They are not deal killers, if those involved want to make the deal.

6. What about new news programs for CBS?

Twenty years is a long time to lock in one set of programs. What if it makes sense to cancel a current CBS news program or create a new one? Under the deal, canceling could be done by mutual agreement, which presumably would be no problem since both parties have an incentive to run programs only as long as they make economic sense. As for new programs, these could be negotiated on a case-by-case basis just as the network now does for entertainment programs produced by outside producers. For example, if CNN thinks that a third night of *60 Minutes* will work, it could offer CBS a better deal than the 7 percent profit split contemplated for current programs in this deal to run that third night on the CBS network.

7. Status and ego problems.

According to CNN's Johnson and a top CBS executive, discussions about some kind of CNN-CBS link-up began about two years ago, when Dan Rather was being courted by Johnson to move over to CNN. Rather wanted to stay at CBS, but as a fallback he became intrigued by the possibility of doing a one-hour show on CNN at 8 P.M. following his 6:30 P.M. gig on CBS. According to two sources on the CBS side, what began as a discussion of what CNN would give CBS for the opportunity to use Rather for that hour progressed into a discussion about CBS outsourcing a lot of its support operations—crews, producers, and offices in foreign and some domestic outposts—in return for a cash fee paid to CNN, which would allow CBS to trim millions from its operations budget.

Depending on which side you talk to, egos at CBS or CNN

got in the way of that deal. CNN and Time Warner people and even some CBS corporate people say that the CBS news executives were too protective of their turf (or their sense of their own professional standards) for a deal to happen. Says one Time Warner executive: "Andrew [Heyward, the CBS News president] really thinks that it matters that the reporter and even the cameraman on the tarmac in Iceland is from CBS, not CNN."

Adds a CBS corporate executive: "It got so that [former CBS CEO Michael] Jordan even started keeping Andrew out of some meetings." Heyward, however, says that he was and is completely open to "any deal with CNN that makes sense."

CBS people, both corporate and in the news division, maintain that it was the CNN people who killed a deal because, as one puts it, "[t]hese guys are so arrogant they don't think they are in any trouble at all....We had one meeting down in Atlanta, and they acted like they were doing us a favor just talking to us. They presented a plan where what they would charge us for this outsourcing was just crazy."

"It's ironic," adds another CBS negotiator. "These cable guys, who were so cutting edge ten and fifteen years ago, are now more tradition bound and arrogant than we are. We're the ones who are open to something new, but they're the ones who don't see that the world has changed."

ASKED ABOUT THE CBS DISCUSSIONS AND HIS COMPANY'S attitude, Time Warner CEO Levin says that what started as an outsourcing deal at one point became "a discussion of us taking over running [but not buying] the whole thing," except for the magazine shows. However, Levin adds, "we decided that CBS News is a declining business and that [a deal] was not in CNN's interest."

Levin also cites CNN's ability to serve cable companies with an "exclusive product"—with programs and talent not seen on over-the-air, free broadcast television—as another reason not to do a deal with CBS or ABC. And, he says, "I like CNN's culture the way it is."

That's quite a damning prognosis from the CEO who presumably would have to make the deal. Yet Levin is said by two of his own senior executives and by a principal figure on the CBS side to be more open to the right deal than he is willing to let on when asked to comment publicly. And one of Levin's top lieutenants, when asked about the possibility of the type of outright purchase outlined here, says that while it "might limit us from doing some other bigger things we have in mind, it's got a whole lot more appeal than anything we've been talking about....But...our view, especially Ted [Turner]'s view, is 'Why rush and foreclose other options?' "

Turner's view probably counts the most. The CNN founder is now Time Warner's vice-chairman and largest shareholder, and among executives at the company there is unanimous recognition that Levin would defer to Turner on any deal involving CNN.

Participants in the talks on both sides theorize that Turner, not Levin, was the one who put the kibosh on the first round of negotiations. They say that Turner argued (in a line of reasoning that echoes Levin's comments) that CNN doesn't need help from CBS or anyone else and would only be dragged down by CBS, while getting embroiled in fights over who controls what in the deal that was then on the table (in which CNN would operate and program CBS News, but CBS would still own it). However, another Time Warner senior executive says that "Ted well understands the threat of NBC, and he would not stand in the way of anything that makes sense. And when you talk about an outright purchase, that could make sense."

BOTH VIEWS OF TURNER'S PERSPECTIVE MAY BE RIGHT. When faxed an outline of this deal, Turner wrote back, "I can't comment about anything that *might* happen." (He supplied the italics.) However, I know from prior conversations with Turner

"Ted [Turner] well understands the threat of NBC, and he would not stand in the way of anything that makes sense."

when he was my partner at Court TV (which I founded and was involved in until 1997) that he continually worries about the power of General Electric and its subsidiary, NBC, as a competitor, but that his outlook often swings toward confidence that CNN is invincible. Similarly, Turner reserves only a bit less fear for Rupert Murdoch as a competitor, and Murdoch's Fox News has also done unexpectedly well for a late starter in cutting into the CNN pie. Fox, too, is a broadcast network, with a broadcast platform from which to promote its cable news channel.

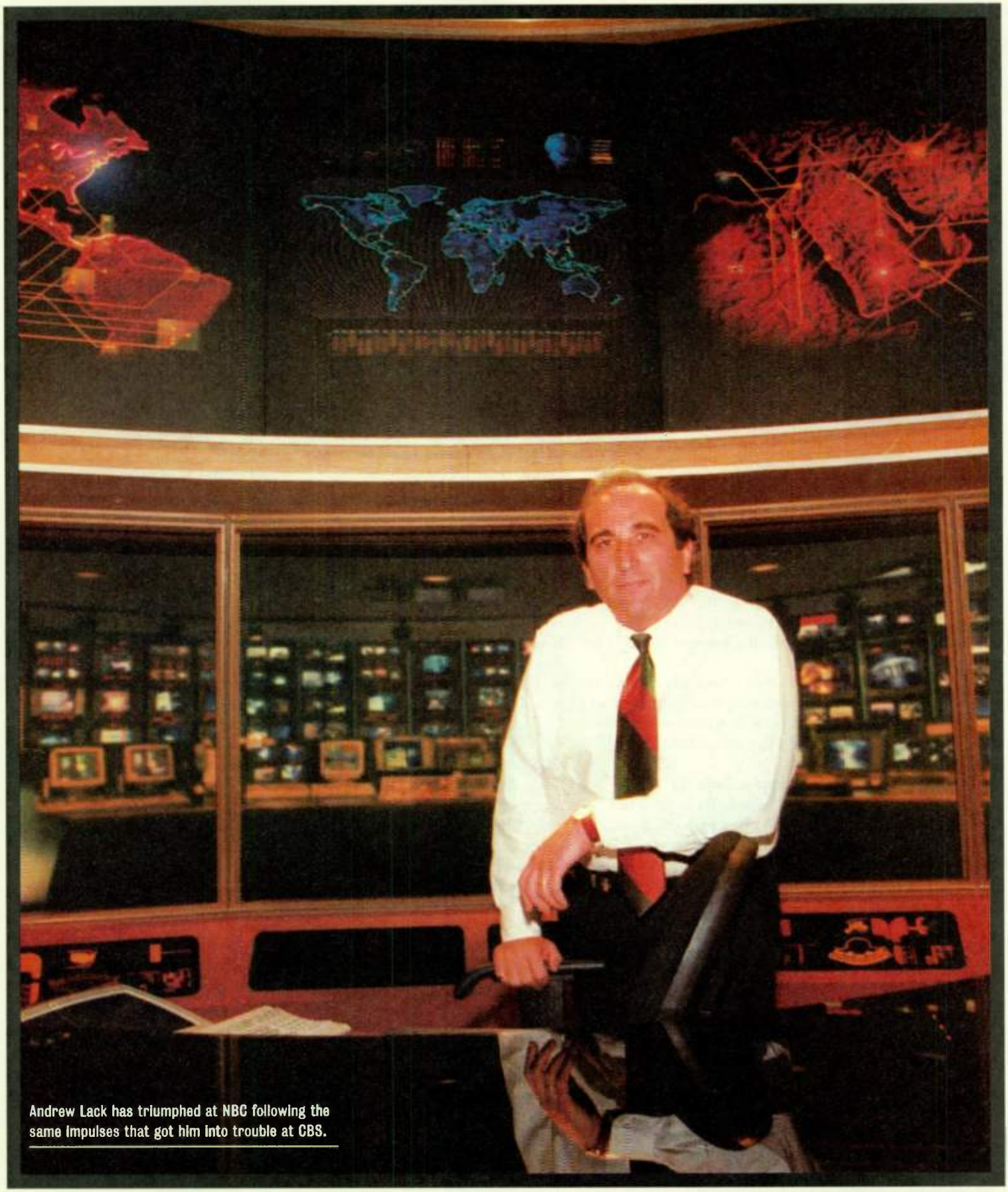
But all of that is beside the point when it comes to the kind of deal outlined here. In this deal, unlike the arrangements that have been discussed, Turner would be getting control of CBS News, and indeed, his once-scorned creation, CNN, would be seen as preserving the Murrow legacy. The barbarian at this gate would not only have taken over the temple; he'd have saved it.

If anything, the ego qualms should come from people on the CBS side; they would be the ones selling out. No one at CBS to whom I outlined this deal objected to the idea of such a sale. And news chief Heyward, while declining comment on any specific deal, said that in general a merger "could make sense. You would not find me worrying about defending my position if a deal like that presented itself."

As for Karmazin, it is unimaginable that he would feel any ego attachment to CBS News. Besides, in his mind the alternatives are killing it or pecking it to death with budget cuts year by year, which makes saving it this way an ego-booster.

Asked about all that and given this specific outline for a deal through a spokesman, Karmazin referred the question to CBS Television president Leslie Moonves. "Some of it would make sense and a lot of it probably wouldn't," Moonves says. "It all sounds very complicated and difficult, and without going through the details it's impossible to know if it could work."

This is a deal that the rest of us should root for. News that is done grudgingly by corporations that are losing money doing it carries with it no incentive for quality. The incentives all go in the other direction. Whatever you think of any individual story, program, or reporter, CNN and CBS have each distinguished themselves this year and in years past by taking the relative high road. Teamed up, they'd become a profitable business—in the business of preserving their valuable brand by staying on that road. ■



Andrew Lack has triumphed at NBC following the same impulses that got him into trouble at CBS.

ED BAILEY/AP-WIDE WORLD

ducers propose a story, the idea is evaluated on its merits, but also its "talkability," as one producer put it.

Ratings count everywhere, but at the *Nightly News,* producers at all levels get weekly results in their e-mail boxes every Tuesday. Demographics are tracked just as carefully. Producers say Doss and his senior staff talk openly about trying to pull in specific audiences. One producer says he has heard senior staff members lament that the newscast was losing childless couples on Thursdays and older women on Fridays. Recently, producers have been told that Lack has determined that older people are Brokaw's audience and should be catered to. That often translates into segments *about* old people—medical breakthroughs, nutrition, living longer. "Andy attributes our success to having targeted older viewers," says one producer, "to having understood that that's who's watching our show."

Bob Wright is hardly apologetic about producers tailoring the news demographically. "I hope they're doing that!" he says. "We're trying to provide programming that we think our audiences are going to be interested in."

A Lack admirer at NBC insists Lack is not just consumed with charting the audience; he genuinely strives to reinvent storytelling. Lack deputy David Corvo underscores this: "He's great about calling and telling you, 'That guest you picked didn't accomplish what you wanted to, the graphic was unclear, you're looking stale.'"

LACK'S FIRST PASSION MAY BE MSNBC, WHICH HE PILOTed to the air in 1996. Erik Sorenson, MSNBC's vice-president and general manager, says what you see is what Lack wants. "Andy's the king of MSNBC programming," Sorenson says. "He's the creator, the sun, the moonlight, the morning, the night. There is not a formatting or talent decision that gets made that Andy hasn't signed off on."

The 24-hour cable news channel, a joint venture with Microsoft that is headquartered in Seacaucus, New Jersey, is Lack's starship *Enterprise.* Its $60 million production facility has a 14,000-square-foot newsroom, a rotating anchor desk, and a robotic ceiling camera and lights that follow the anchor. With its state-of-the-art, jazzy-warm set, fresh-faced hosts, and constantly updated website, it has put itself on the map in a relatively short time.

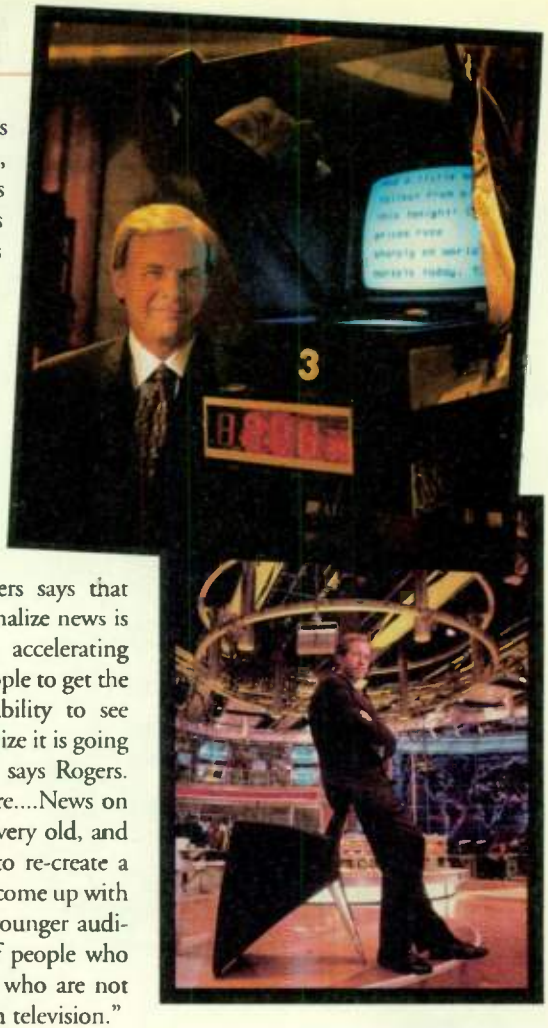
The $500 million Microsoft-NBC start-up was hatched by Lack and Thomas Rogers, president of NBC Cable and an NBC executive vice-president. "I went to Andy in 1994," Rogers says, "and I said, 'Look, I know you were brought in to turn around the prime-time fortunes of NBC, but I think there's an opportunity here for NBC to be in the news-channel game and to have a franchise that's even bigger than CNN over time.' And he warmed to the idea almost immediately."

They pitched their scheme to GE chairman Jack Welch, who told them to pitch it to Microsoft's Bill Gates. (CNN and Gates had already explored a similar alliance.) In Wright's New York conference room, Rogers and Lack gave Gates a convincing sell: Fuse the news and technological dominance of NBC News and Microsoft into a network for the future.

The ratings remain small: a .5 in the 1998 third-quarter Nielsens, an average of 201,000 households tuning in at any given minute. But MSNBC has a coveted subscriber base (46 million), which makes the channel/website worth an estimated $1.5 billion.

If the *Nightly News* is primarily for old folks, MSNBC is for their kids and grandkids. This is news with attitude and it seems to capture Lack's vision for the next millennium: relaxed set, young voices, irreverent patter—always on the hot topic of the day (even if there is none). And most important—*Your opinion counts. We're not just telling you; we're listening to you.*

Cable president Rogers says that MSNBC's effort to personalize news is strategic—a response to accelerating technology that allows people to get the news their way. "Your ability to see video and text and customize it is going to become a fact of life," says Rogers. "Andy had a real goal here....News on network television skews very old, and if you were really going to re-create a news division, you had to come up with a formula that attracted younger audiences....There are a lot of people who are going to the Internet who are not finding what they want on television."



Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw (top) was raised in the old school and sometimes squirms at Lack's concept of news. MSNBC's Brian Williams (bottom) says 24-hour news has become as basic as "oil, gas, and water."

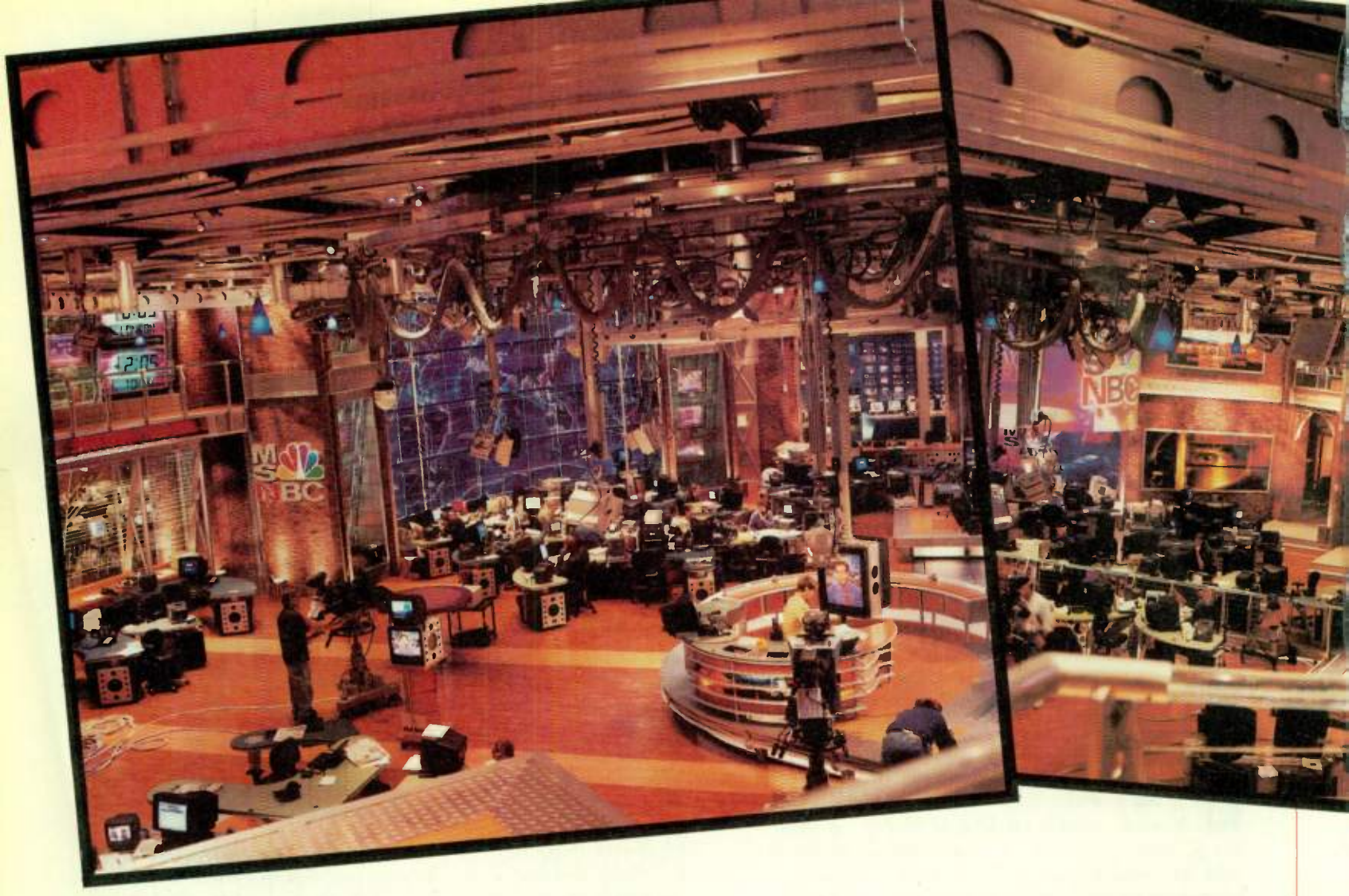
Advertisers like MSNBC's viewer profile. "MSNBC has found an affinity with people who are more confident in their own interpretation of the news," says Gad Romann, creative director of the New York-based ad firm The Romann Group. "The country is saying, 'We're not going to be duped by politicians, we're not going to be swayed by the media. We are going to make up our own minds.'"

Romann says there's a buzz about MSNBC in the ad world because independent viewers represent an elusive audience—young and upscale—whom advertisers covet. Low ratings don't deter advertisers who view MSNBC as a chance to zero in on a young viewer who can afford a Lexus. Romann also says MSNBC has the "feel" right. "There is a looseness in the style that gives it credibility," he says.

One of the looser programs right now is Laura Ingraham's daily talk show, subtly titled *Watch It!* The neoconservative pundit has yet to find an audience, but her style—hip and flip—perhaps epitomizes the new news on NBC. Broadcasting from Washington, Ingraham has an hour at 11 A.M. each day to update top stories, say what's on her mind, and ask her guests whatever she damn pleases. One minute she'll be talking about how the GOP botched the election, the next she's grilling former defense secretary Caspar Weinberger on his red socks. "He's wearing goofy socks," she says. "Why not mention it? It makes him more of a human being. I think people like that. It's more like real conversation."

Ingraham says she is guided by what *she* wants to see on television. "Why not talk about Jewel's new album on the same day we talk about military readiness in Iraq?" she asks.

MICHAEL O'NEILL/OUTLINE (BROKAW); MARK JENKINSON/OUTLINE (WILLIAMS)



The comfy, jazzy, state-of-the art set for cable's MSNBC, complete with rotating anchor desk and robotic cameras. The New Jersey facility cost $60 million.

Cheeky musical interludes punctuate the hour. She played R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World As We Know It" when the impeachment hearings started and Fleetwood Mac's "Little Lies" in honor of the president.

Brian Williams anchors MSNBC's more traditional news broadcast every evening at 9. If you miss it, his show is helpfully rerun at 10 P.M. on CNBC, NBC's sister cable channel that covers business during the day. Williams likes the fact that his audience is more news literate than average viewers. "I don't have to broad-base the writing," says Williams. "If you don't know who the speaker of the House is, there are plenty of other broadcasts for you."

When Lack asked Williams to leave his post as NBC's White House correspondent to go to MSNBC, cable chief Rogers and others say Lack sent a strong signal to the NBC staff about his commitment to cable. "I accepted Andy's offer to leave the White House without hesitation...blindly," says Williams, "because I knew what everyone else in the industry is finding out...that [24-hour news] is now as close to a utility as oil, gas, and water."

That doesn't mean all of his fellow correspondents rushed to put in more hours and file extra stories for a start-up nobody was watching. One former MSNBC producer who was there when the network debuted in July 1996 recalls resistance in the beginning. "There were the old-school correspondents who didn't want anything to do with it....The word had to come down from on top: 'Get with the program.' The amazing thing now is how cooperative they all are—it's really turned around."

Lack is credited with sending a clear message: *This train matters to me. Get on it.* "It was a combination of strong-arming them and a realization on their part that MSNBC was here to stay," says this producer. "And a lot of correspondents who didn't get a lot of play realized this was the place to get play."

"Play" is an understatement. White House correspondent David Bloom must by now have sprouted roots into the White House lawn. He appears to be standing there from dawn to dusk, reporting for whichever broadcast needs him. He acknowledges working 16-hour days when he's appeared on *Today*, MSNBC throughout the day, CNBC, the *Nightly News*, Keith Olbermann's (now-defunct) *The Big Show* on MSNBC, and finally, *The News with Brian Williams*.

"For me personally," says Bloom, "I always viewed it as: I work for NBC news; they're saying they want me to do MSNBC and CNBC. I say 'Yes sir,' and up the hill I go." He admits it's demanding, but also that it's an unusual opportunity "to be on the air more, to flesh out your own thoughts."

What's known as "All Monica, All the Time," might also be considered "All NBC News, All the Time." The talent seems to be everywhere at once. "It sort of makes them all like packhorses—like Communist workhorses," says *USA Today* TV columnist Peter Johnson. "Aren't there laws against this?" he jokes, conceding that the strategy has worked. "In terms of getting the brand name out, you've got to give them high marks for that."

DOUGLAS LEVERE

What's known as "All Monica, All the Time" might also be considered "All NBC News, All the Time." The talent seems to be everywhere at once.

One person soaking up the extra airtime is Geraldo Rivera, who is experiencing his third or fourth incarnation as Legitimate Newsman, despite his tabloid past and the reported discomfort of Brokaw and Lack. *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Welch and Wright rammed through Rivera's six-year contract, worth an estimated $36 million. Wright admits he did "feel strongly" that Rivera join the NBC family, but denies that Lack fought it. "He was never like, 'Gee I hate this idea, please don't make me do it,'" says Wright. "He said, 'This is going to be awkward. This is going to be difficult.' And it has been. But he took it on."

WITH THE CAST LIST SECURE, LACK MAKES SURE ALL OF its members are on display. The cross-promotion is relentless—NBC grabs every chance to urge you to watch more NBC. On October 4, for example, Tim Russert ended *Meet the Press* by introducing a Jane Pauley promotion for *Dateline*, then signed off with a typical NBC mouthful: "Thank you, Jane Pauley. Start your day tomorrow on *Today* with Katie and Matt; then the *NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw*. CNBC tonight...at 6 and 10 [Russert's other show]. We'll be back next week."

One week later, on *Sunday Today* with Jack Ford and Jodi Applegate, Brokaw popped up to preview his Monday broadcast and Applegate marveled, "I tell you, that Tom Brokaw, he is the hardest-working man in television." Coanchor Ford agreed: "He's all over the place."

The cross-promotion doesn't thrill NBC's affiliates, who aren't wild about Brokaw advising viewers to turn to a cable channel, MSNBC, when he signs off instead of telling people to stay tuned to their local broadcasts. But these seem to be chinks that don't threaten Lack's clear strategy to be a unified news machine.

"We have a vehicle," says Rogers, referring to MSNBC, "that if something big happens, we can immediately go on the air, even though it doesn't merit breaking into regular scheduled programming....It gives you leadership—you matter more because people have the ability to tune into what you're saying more than they do at other networks. A number of people in other news organizations have said to me, 'We wish we had that.'"

Victor Miller, a broadcast analyst with Bear Stearns & Co., says NBC News has been the first to figure out the new economics of the news industry. "Television is starting to look like Hollywood. Hollywood goes for the maximum number of windows—foreign distribution, airplanes, cable rights, pay-cable rights, broadcast rights....You take the same program and try to create as many revenue sources to cover a huge fixed cost. NBC has probably been the best at creating as many windows as possible to amortize their news costs."

MSNBC has taken a page from *Nightline*, which emerged in the 1980s from "America Held Hostage," and from CNN's breakthrough in 1991 with the Gulf War: Take the "Big Story" of the day and stay on it—whether it's Monica, JonBenét Ramsey, or Marv Albert. If you leave it for a moment, don't venture far. Saturation coverage.

Tyndall says NBC learned its lesson during the O.J. Simpson trial. "The breakthrough discovery that Lack made in journalistic style," says Tyndall, "was in '94, wherein he decided to ride the O.J. trial more than anyone else. It was covered fifty percent more on *Nightly* than the other two, every morning on *Today*, and on *Dateline*. They went heavy on the big water-cooler story. Now everyone is doing it."

Lack deputy Corvo defends the network against the charge that MSNBC overdoses on the scandal du jour. "People seem to come to it [MSNBC] for short periods of time, and they want to know what the top stories are. They're not terribly interested if you're into story six or seven....We always had the idea that we would stay on a few stories. It imprints people with the notion that if you're thinking about news, you're interested in a story, NBC News is probably there."

Bob Wright is even more direct about playing to the crowd: "We are trying to produce programming that has wide appeal. And the topical stories are the ones that have the most appeal to viewers, and we stay with them as long as we think they have real appeal."

Television critics have argued that the fixation on one big story at a time perverts news values. "The judgment process is kind of warped," says New York *Daily News* writer Eric Mink. "You're not making a judgment about the importance of a story, but the ability of a story to sustain itself and to withstand this kind of overkill."

WHEN LACK INHERITED THE NEWS DIVISION, THERE HAD been bloody cutbacks, Brokaw was mired in a distant third place, *Today* was in second place behind ABC's *Good Morning America*, and no fewer than 16 of the network's newsmagazine attempts had imploded—one literally when *Dateline* ran its infamous segment on the GM truck.

The irony is that when Lack was chosen, he was in about as low a moment in his 17-year career at CBS News as was the news division he'd been tapped to fix. During the same years that NBC News was losing its luster, Lack's engine at CBS News was sputtering to a standstill after a tenure marked both

When Lack created his first television newsmagazine at CBS News, *West 57th*, with his band of young correspondents (top), critics lamented the "MTV-ing" of broadcast journalism. Below: The scene closing the credits of *West 57th* showed producer Lack wondering out loud, "I don't see why we can't do that story."

by award-winning work and controversy.

A theater major at Boston University's School of Fine Arts, Lack began as an actor, migrated to advertising, and landed in 1976 at CBS News. After a stint at *60 Minutes*, he produced some acclaimed programs at *CBS Reports*, the legendary Edward R. Murrow documentary series, and even had a brief interlude as an on-air correspondent for a short-lived CBS newsmagazine. But Lack's star dimmed in 1985, when he created the newsmagazine *West 57th*. The show rattled the house Murrow built and was considered by some to be the harbinger not just of Lack's taste and philosophy but the erosion of news values on television.

West 57th introduced news vérité. Lack filmed his reporters sitting around the CBS cafeteria telling each other what stories they were working on.

With young correspondents like Meredith Viera and Jane Wallace, *West 57th* introduced news vérité. Lack filmed his reporters sitting around the CBS cafeteria telling each other about their stories. The camera pulled back to show how television is made—lights, backdrops, tape machines. Lack used David Sanborn theme music and eliminated stand-ups, those starched speeches reporters make in front of buildings. At the end of many shows, after the credits rolled, there was a shot of executive producer Lack leaning back in his chair saying, "I don't see why we can't do that story."

The show was almost joyously flogged by critics, except for lone enthusiast Tom Shales of *The Washington Post*. "Some programs merely debut and others launch their own eras," Shales wrote. "The program shakes, rattles, and rolls the cobwebs out of the magazine format and reinvigorates primetime journalism with irreverent and ambitious inventiveness.... *West 57th* is the bullet train of TV journalism."

But Lack was bulldozing TV journalism as far as the CBS standard-bearers were concerned. For them, Lack's "MTV-ing" of news signaled the end of an era.

"I think the CBS News milieu was at odds with that kind of broadcast," says *60 Minutes* chief Don Hewitt. "And it might have been ahead of its time—it was in the wrong time at the wrong place. Andy Lack has created a very successful career for himself at NBC using what *didn't* work here years ago, mostly because it was in our shadow."

When *West 57th* fizzled, Lack went on to produce three other newsmagazines that also languished and cemented his bad-boy status. On *Saturday Night With Connie Chung*, he introduced re-creations—the dramatization of real news events, complete with actors, lighting, and a soundtrack. At that point, even his loyalists began to defect. By the time NBC came calling, Lack was widely considered to be at the end of the line at CBS News.

"He was persona non grata," recalls one producer. "Everyone thought his career was over. He was finished."

When the NBC job opened up, Lack wasn't even on the shortlist, but Brokaw admired his work and had him in mind to skipper his evening-news broadcast. "We were just talking about some prospects," recalls Brokaw of his conversations with Wright. "He said, 'You know, you keep talking about this Andy Lack.'" After the dinner at the Dorset, Wright clearly came away with bigger ideas for Lack than just overseeing Brokaw's newscast. "I heard Bob say, 'I've met the greatest prospect I've ever seen,'" recalls Brokaw.

In a move that stunned the news business, Lack went overnight from CBS outcast to NBC commander in chief. "A lot of people were very surprised," recalls Donald Browne, former executive vice-president of news at NBC. "Andy is a great producer—the question was, 'Could he manage at that level?' And, of course, now everybody knows."

Hewitt, who was widely perceived to be holding Lack back at CBS, is the first to say Lack has done a hell of a job. "I think somebody at NBC saw something we didn't see and maybe to their credit," says Hewitt. "Wherever he was in life before he took that job, he has sure improved his lot in life very quickly and now presides over an empire bigger than any news president ever has."

"When I first took the job at NBC," Lack states in one of his written replies, "I was deathly afraid of meetings—bureaucratic, number-crunching, endless meetings—all that stuff that takes you away from the real pleasure and excitement of a reporter or producer's work. As it turned out, I found there was a certain amount of administration that you had to slog through, particularly with GE, but during the course of a day there was still plenty of time to stay close to the editorial process and the crafting of new ideas. Ironically, in many of the meetings I had so dreaded came the most thought-provoking questions about where broadcast news was headed."

It is difficult to nail down a list of concrete improvements Lack made to NBC News when he first took the helm. *Today* already had Jeff Zucker, and *Dateline* had Neal Shapiro—executive producers widely considered creative pillars of the news division. The headline talent—Brokaw, Couric, Russert, Pauley, Williams—was in place. But Lack got GE's money flowing, particularly the reported $15 million necessary to build the new *Today* set. With its window onto the street, the studio has become the broadcast's signature and a major tourist attraction. (ABC News has announced a similar design for *Good Morning America* in Times Square.)

Lack greased the retirement of *Today*'s then-anchor Bryant Gumbel in an elegant passing of the baton to Matt Lauer, making it appear—many say contrary to reality—as if it were

ARNOLD ADLER/ELECTRONIC MEDIA (TOP)

entirely Gumbel's decision to leave. Couric says Lack "deserves a lot of credit for making the transition from Bryant to Matt as seamless as it was. I think he was very important there."

Couric and Lauer are considered one of those rare pairings that rivals wish they could clone. The last two years have been the strongest in the program's history in terms of ratings and margin of victory over the competition.

The *Dateline* phenomenon has awed the industry: There appears to be an appetite for five nights of one newsmagazine every week, and NBC west coast president Don Ohlmeyer has said publicly he could imagine seven nights at some point. The perennial debate among critics is whether there exist five nights of worthy stories—whether the program scrapes the barrel to fill its airtime. Bill Carter, the *New York Times*'s television reporter, says the dispute over *Dateline*'s quality is drowned out by its profits. "It's a genuine hit television show and that gets noticed," Carter says.

Tom Wolzien, media analyst at the firm Sanford C. Bernstein & Co., calls Lack's *Dateline* gambit brilliant: "He sopped up the spare time for the entire division that they couldn't fill as well, they've built a brand they can plug in multiple times in the schedule, and they've been profitable."

Lack's climb to the top has not been without its stumbles. MSNBC recently lost one of his most promising stars, Keith Olbermann, to Fox, in part because the anchor's nausea meter maxed out, Olbermann has said, on covering Monica. And Lack has stepped in quicksand more than once when talking to the press.

The most hyped faux pas came in November 1997, during a phone interview with the *Times*'s Carter who quoted Lack as saying, "I have been focused during my entire time at NBC in building for the twenty-first century the largest, most impressive, and the preeminent news organization in the world. I now have NBC, MSNBC, CNBC, and the most-used on-line news site. I am America's news leader," he concluded, echoing his network's slogan.

His use of the first person was lampooned by the television industry. Many felt he hadn't misspoken but had betrayed his true hubris. Some of his colleagues past and present describe him as "imperial," "egomaniacal," "a screamer." "He could completely ignore you," says one former CBS producer. "You could walk down the hall and his eyes would be cold. You're either in with him or you're out, and he can turn on a dime."

Those who admire him talk in equally strong terms. Thomas Yellin, Lack's lieutenant at *West 57th*, now executive producer of ABC News's documentary unit, says, "Andy is this vivacious—if that's an appropriate word for a man—character, who has this ability to inspire people to be bold. He projects such massive self-confidence that you figure you can hide behind that, and it's a very good quality for someone trying to do something new."

His fans, not surprisingly, include his biggest stars. "I feel very close to him," says Couric. "Without singing 'Kumbaya,' what bad things can I say about him? He has some bad hair days," she chuckles. "I'm kidding."

In June 1996, NBC and GE executives tore up Lack's contract with two years remaining and offered him a new six-year deal that keeps him on the throne until 2002. That's a rare vote of confidence that will give him the longest tenure for a news president.

One senior network source says that a number of on-air talent and top executives have asked to link their contracts with Lack's—saying essentially, I don't want to be here if it isn't Andy. "I tried," says this source. "A very senior executive chuckled and said, 'Get in line.' Get in line! That's extraordinary, that that had occurred to anyone but me."

NBC's revival is widely—if begrudgingly—admired, despite a spate of layoffs this fall. But what will continue to be argued is whether the definition of news under Lack has been relaxed or blurred to the point where tomorrow's rookie reporters will have no grounding in the tenets of journalism that Lack cut his teeth on at *CBS Reports*.

"I feel very close to him," says Katie Couric. "Without singing 'Kumbaya,' what bad things can I say about him? He has some bad hair days."

"You have to give him credit for moving NBC News to a position of profitability," says *Los Angeles Times* TV critic Howard Rosenberg, "but you can also blame him for moving NBC News to the cutting edge of local news. Local news has been doing this a long time—let's give people news that affects you. Any good journalist does that, but if that drives your news, then your priorities are skewed. Closing bureaus in the same year you pay Geraldo Rivera a bundle is sort of a measure of your priorities even if they come out of different budgets. It's symbolic of where NBC News is headed under Andy Lack."

It is interesting to look back on Lack's interview with Charlie Rose on public television in 1993, just days before Lack started the NBC job. Lack discussed the news landscape: "I think, I hope, I pray that we may get a little bit more serious than we are now. Like hemlines that go up and down, I think our hemlines right now are about as high as you can get. We're showing a lot of leg, and I'd like them to come down a little bit. I'd like to see a little bit more room for thoughtful conversation, and it's not there as much in broadcast journalism as it should be."

Asked about that quote today, Lack responds with what is, indeed, the best defense of the news factory he has created: that it provides such a broad menu that the sterling material is there, even if it's sometimes obscured by the lower-brow fare. "The hemlines are still pretty high," he asserts. "It's hard to argue against that notion while the president, the Congress, and the nation have been dealing with Monica Lewinsky's hemlines. That said, there is a fair amount of thoughtful conversation from the *Today* show at seven in the morning to *The News with Brian Williams* at nine every night that I think is a step forward from where we were back in '93. I'm satisfied that we're having the conversations we need to be having in the newsroom and trying to put our best foot forward, even if the results are not always satisfying." ■

Announcing the launch of MSNBC, from left: NBC president Bob Wright, *Dateline's* Jane Pauley, Lack, Peter Neupert, then of Microsoft, MSNBC's Brian Williams, and on screen, Microsoft's Bill Gates.

PETER MORGAN/REUTERS

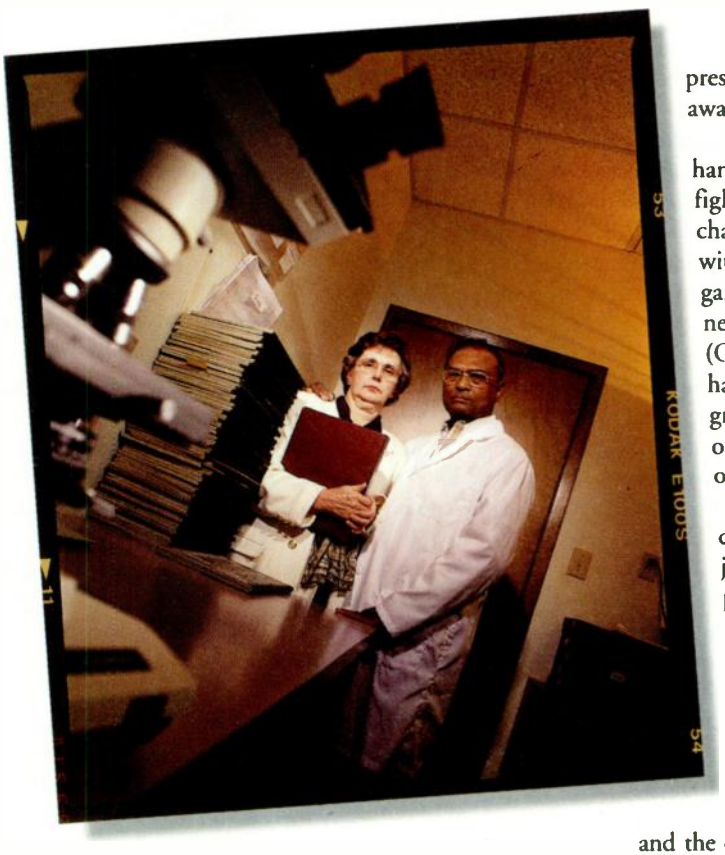
Lab Scam

ABC's *PrimeTime Live* won an Emmy Award for its hidden-camera exposé of medical labs. So why is it being sued for fraud and deception? • BY D.M. OSBORNE

JOHN DEVARAJ NEVER suspected that the visitors he received in March 1994 had hidden motives. Devaraj, who owned a Scottsdale, Arizona, medical laboratory, had agreed to meet with a woman seeking advice on how to set up her own lab. When she arrived with two colleagues, Devaraj showed them around, explaining that his was a low-volume operation that analyzed Pap smears and other medical specimens. "They were asking pertinent questions," recalls Devaraj, a soft-spoken native of India. "I didn't have any reason to believe they were not in this field."

Two months later, though, Devaraj learned that his guests were not who they said they were. They actually worked for ABC's *PrimeTime Live* (since folded into *20/20*) and had secretly recorded his every word and gesture. A week after that, on May 19, 1994, Devaraj and his wife Carolyn watched aghast as the newsmagazine accused their lab and three others of misreading women's Pap smears.

PrimeTime's "Rush to Read" portrayed Devaraj as a villainous lab owner who pressured his technicians to read too many Pap smears in too little time. That, warned ABC's Diane Sawyer, could lead to "fatal mistakes." Some 15 million viewers saw unflattering hidden-camera images of Devaraj sandwiched between the wrenching stories of women whose deaths and hysterectomies were attributed to mistakes made by labs with which Devaraj had no connection.



Too trusting? Carolyn and John Devaraj inside the lab they once owned.

For Devaraj, it hardly mattered that he was a small part of the story or that *PrimeTime* had not identified him or his lab by name. In the tight-knit medical community of Scottsdale, Devaraj was instantly recognizable. Indeed, within a week of the broadcast, Devaraj lost his core clientele. He later filed for bankruptcy and was forced to sell his lab, where he now works as an employee.

ABC, by contrast, basked in the glow of journalistic acclaim. The story's producer, Robbie Gordon, who had lied to get inside the lab, garnered prestigious Peabody and Emmy awards for the segment.

Even as the prizes were being handed out, though, Devaraj was fighting back. He filed a suit charging ABC and its producers with fraud and "intrusion" for gaining access to his private business affairs under false pretenses. (On December 17, the judge handed ABC a big legal victory, granting it summary judgment on the entire suit except for part of one fraud claim.)

Citing a policy of not discussing stories that are the subject of litigation, ABC and its producers declined to be interviewed or to answer written questions for this article. In legal papers, however, the network strenuously defends its deception and argues that Devaraj "should bear the consequences for speaking with Ms. Gordon and the others without taking any steps to confirm their identities."

That has only bolstered the Devarajs' convictions that ABC's lies were wrong. Indeed, while the legal odds may be against them (they plan to appeal), a review of the record and interviews with people involved show that *PrimeTime* not only engaged in a far-reaching pattern of deception—but also that the newsmagazine set up a sting operation and relied on a company that had a lot to gain by showing the weakness of lab analysis of Paps. In addition, ABC made the performance of Devaraj's lab appear worse by down-

MARK DURAN

Last issue, senior writer D.M. Osborne profiled David Isay, who creates radio portraits of people living on society's margins.

playing the difficulties inherent in accurately analyzing Pap smears—a murky process at best.

Even doctors who cooperated with the newsmagazine express disgust. "The trap that Diane Sawyer and her producers set up for the laboratories was extremely unfair," says Dr. Leopold Koss, a pathologist at New York's Montefiore Medical Center. "I found the whole process to be such a deception," concurs Dr. Dorothy Rosenthal, director of cytopathology at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore. "It was a disservice to the public."

ABC NEWS PRODUCER GORDON, WHO has worked in journalism for 27 years, submitted a proposal for her Pap probe in October 1993, following reports that a Rhode Island woman had died of cancer after four separate technicians failed to find precancerous and cancerous cells. The tragedy suggested that federal rules prohibiting technicians from reading more than 100 Pap smear slides in a 24-hour period had failed.

Gordon met with principals at Neuromedical Systems, Inc. (NSI), which was developing a computer-based screening system called PAPNET. Although PAPNET was still in development and not yet FDA-approved, Gordon proposed using it in an ambitious experiment. *PrimeTime* would gather Paps and have them analyzed by labs using traditional techniques. The newsmagazine would then show how a retest done by NSI's computer system might catch the labs' mistakes.

NSI was interested in working with *PrimeTime*, but raised a serious concern: the problem with misread slides was not lab specific but endemic within the industry. Laboratories routinely miss between 20 and 50 percent of slides containing abnormal cells. For that reason, NSI's then-chairman requested that *PrimeTime* not pin the problem on individual labs. Eventually, though, NSI agreed with ABC that labs could be mentioned by name on the air—but only if both NSI and ABC agreed that the labs' mistakes had been egregious. (NSI, which is not being sued by the Devarajs, declined to comment.)

Gordon ultimately collected 623 Pap slides from two doctors. But even as ABC sought, through NSI-affiliated doctors, to analyze these Paps, its technicians encountered the same problems for which *PrimeTime* would later fault the labs in its experiment: Owing to contradictory readings, *PrimeTime* and NSI had to alter the diagnosis of 10 of the 623 slides, ultimately deciding that 23 of the total should be labeled "abnormal" or cancerous. "The Pap smear is such a difficult thing to examine," explains Dr. Koss. "If you take a bunch of smears and show them to a lot of experts, they will always have different opinions."

ABC's plan included an audacious element: the creation of a fake clinic through which ABC would secretly hire labs to assess Pap slides.

Meanwhile, Gordon had abandoned her original plan, which was to find a women's organization to act as a front for *PrimeTime's* experiment. Instead, the producer obtained management approval to go undercover. Gordon's new plan included an audacious element: the creation of a fake clinic through which ABC would secretly hire labs to assess the 623 slides it had already analyzed. She named it the Huron Women's Health Collective. By early 1994, it had all the markings—on paper, that is—of a genuine clinic.

ABC BEGAN PREPARING A STING OPERATION to see if labs would read too many slides too quickly—and whether they would make mistakes in the process. Searching for labs, ABC learned of Consultants Medical Laboratory in Scottsdale, Arizona. Public records showed that Devaraj's lab had been cited for record keeping and procedural deficiencies. "All of those," ABC's Gordon would later testify in a deposition, "are indicators that there could be problems in reading [the Huron] slides."

So Gordon contacted Devaraj, ostensibly seeking his advice on how to open her own laboratory. She planned to be visiting relatives in Arizona in a few weeks, Gordon lied. Would Devaraj meet with her?

After Devaraj agreed, *PrimeTime* associate producer Rondi Charleston contacted his lab, pretending to be the office manager of the Huron Women's Health Collective. Charleston put on a convincing act, according to the Devarajs, telling them she had heard good things about their lab, and imploring them to take on a big assignment in a big hurry. If the Arizona lab could analyze some 600 slides over an upcoming weekend, Charleston promised, Huron would send them more work down the road.

Of course, Charleston was not really calling from Michigan, but from her desk at ABC News in New York. Huron's address, printed on the stationery that Charleston used when confirming her work order, was really a rented mailbox. Huron's phone number automatically forwarded callers to an answering machine plugged into an extra line at Charleston's desk.

The Devarajs took ABC's bait. And as the Huron slides arrived at their lab on March 18, 1994, so did Gordon. The producer had brought along two colleagues who purported to be a lab technician and a computer specialist. Devaraj escorted his guests to a small conference room.

There, according to ABC's transcript of the meeting, Devaraj explained that his lab was a small operation that employed three part-time technicians to read a total of 50 to 60 Paps a day, usually on weekends. To attract the best readers, Devaraj said he paid substantially more than his competitors. Devaraj emphasized—at six points in the conversation—that regulations strictly prohibited more than 100 slides per day per technician. "They can't even do one extra," Devaraj said. "It's not allowed."

Like a cop trying to coax out a con-

fession, Gordon repeatedly grilled Devaraj about the limits. But Devaraj held fast. "You can always waver on those limitations?" Gordon asked.

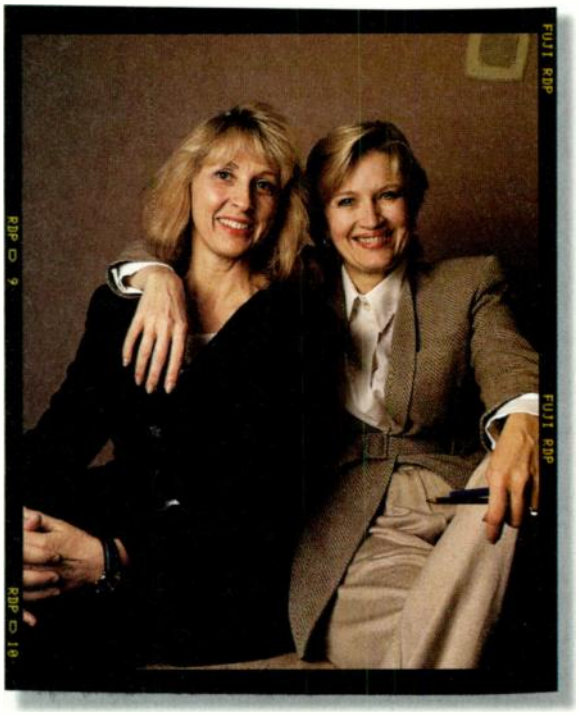
"No," Devaraj answered. "There's no way around them." None of these remarks would ever be aired.

Conveniently for Gordon, Devaraj had begun to prepare some of the Huron slides in the room where they were meeting, enabling the producer to ask him about that work. To handle this "large shipment," Devaraj told his visitors, he had hired four technicians. The lab would begin working on the slides that evening—a Friday—and would rotate fresh readers throughout the weekend. That would allow them to fulfill the unusual demand without violating the 100-slides a day limit. The lab was speeding its turnaround time at Huron's request, Devaraj explained, adding, "usually we won't do that."

Devaraj then obliged his guests with a tour through the lab. As he had during the meeting, Gordon's cameraman secretly taped it all via a tiny lens nestled in his wig. The crew gathered more hidden-camera footage the next day, when they returned, claiming to be looking for Gordon's lost sunglasses.

In her guise as Huron's office manager, meanwhile, ABC's Charleston twice called Devaraj's lab, hectoring the staff to finish up. Charleston maintained in a deposition that she spoke in a businesslike fashion, but her tone was such that the technician who took the first call immediately notified the lab owners at home. (Charleston, who has left ABC, declined to comment.) The technician "was very upset," asserts Carolyn Devaraj, who says she couldn't understand the rush.

As Carolyn Devaraj sank to the floor sobbing, her husband tried to comfort her. "It will be all right," he told her. That assessment proved optimistic.



Undercover or underhanded? ABC producer Robbie Gordon (left) with Diane Sawyer.

In the meantime, it had become apparent that a number of Huron's slides contained possibly cancerous cells. Following standard procedure, the Devarajs immediately requested the name of a Huron doctor or pathologist who could review the ominous slides and alert the patients in question. Charleston nervously fended off the question. "She huffily said she had to get off the phone," Carolyn Devaraj recalls.

Why? There was no doctor. Gordon had directed that Charleston "skirt" the issue, according to the producer's notes. "If pressed," Gordon instructed, "hang up before giv[ing] out [a] name."

Despite Huron's strange combination of pressure for quick results and seeming unconcern for its patients, Devaraj's lab completed the assignment and shipped the slides back to the clinic.

EIGHT WEEKS LATER CHARLESTON called and bluntly informed the Devarajs that Huron was an ABC hoax—and that they were going to be on national TV in one week. Charleston didn't attempt to interview them. Instead, the associate producer simply gave them the name of an ABC lawyer they could call if they had questions.

As Carolyn Devaraj sank to the floor sobbing, her husband tried to comfort her. "I told her, we have good [technicians]. We have good quality controls," he remembers. "I told her it will be all right."

That assessment proved optimistic. When the couple spoke with ABC and challenged its conclusions, they say, they were bullied by Gordon, a senior producer, and an ABC lawyer, who barked at them over a speakerphone and threatened to "destroy" them.

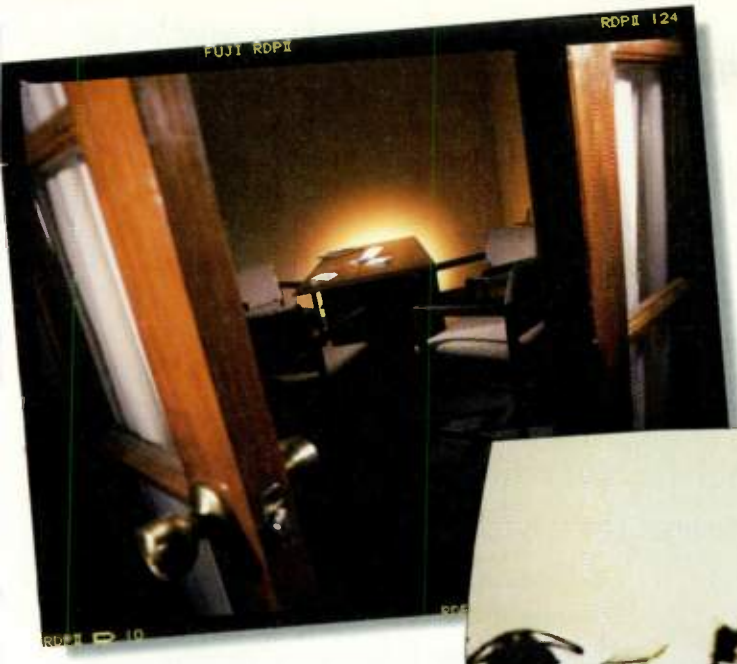
In legal papers, ABC describes the conversation as entirely civil. The network also contends that Gordon and a senior producer had a separate telephone discussion with the Devarajs in which they explained "the gist" of what ABC intended to say and gave them the opportunity to comment.

The May 1994 broadcast confirmed the Devarajs' worst fears. Hidden-camera images of their lab and John Devaraj followed the introduction. "It's the weekend in Arizona," Sawyer began, "where a lab has just received a large shipment of slides bearing the label of a clinic in Michigan. The manager of the Arizona lab doesn't know that these slides are from *PrimeTime* and over that weekend, we'll be observing the pace at which they're read."

A montage of chilling stories followed, spotlighting women who had died or had hysterectomies after various laboratories failed to find abnormalities in their Paps. Unidentified lab workers, in silhouette, complained about tired eyes and old equipment. "[Technicians] can make mistakes," Sawyer warned, "when they're pushed too hard to read too many slides."

But ABC's evidence against Devaraj was weak at best. By its own tally, three of Devaraj's four slide readers had obeyed the limits. The fourth, ABC claimed, had violated regulations by

MOLLY ROBERTS



ABC says Devaraj can't claim his conversation was private because it took place in a room (left) with "glass French doors." Below, Devaraj on ABC's hidden camera.

reading the maximum daily limit of 100 slides in just 6.5 hours. But the worker's time card shows she completed the work within an acceptable period of ten hours. And ABC's methods didn't exactly guarantee certainty: ABC had tallied workers' hours by secretly recording their comings and goings from a van parked outside the lab. But in legal papers, ABC admits that its cameraman didn't see two of the workers enter the lab, which suggests he just guessed at their arrival times.

PrimeTime never mentioned that Devaraj disputed its conclusions. Nor did it disclose that the two doctors it relied on to assess the labs' performance were on the payroll of NSI, and therefore had a financial incentive to make traditional laboratory techniques look bad. Instead, Sawyer reported *PrimeTime*'s findings unequivocally. She ticked off the performance of all four labs, beginning with Devaraj's, which was identified only as "the Arizona lab." The newsmagazine accused it of passing off as normal 5 out of its 23 abnormal or cancerous Paps.

According to ABC documents, Gordon had scripted a line stating that Devaraj "doesn't believe our results." But that was cut and replaced with a Sawyer voice-over that would constitute Devaraj's entire comment: "We told the manager of the lab what had happened. He said to us, if mistakes were made, it was an unusual circumstance, and he vowed not to take on such a large case load again." Devaraj maintains that that statement ignored his challenge of the study findings as well as his objections to the way ABC set him up.

Even assuming that ABC correctly reported that Devaraj's technicians had misread 5 of the network's 23 abnormal or cancerous slides (which cannot be verified, because NSI lost 15 of the slides), that would equal a false-negative rate of 21.7 percent—near the low end of the industry-wide range of 20 to 50 percent.

Gordon had cited that error range in her story proposal and in draft scripts. But in the end, *PrimeTime* relied on a much lower figure. "Experts say...labs should strive to miss no more than five percent," Sawyer told viewers. That's misleading, says NSI advisory board member Dr. R. Marshall Austin, who has aligned himself with Devaraj as an expert in the latter's litigation against ABC. "By citing only the lowest range of possibly acceptable error rates (5 percent), the broadcasters and their consultants appear to have confused idealistic goals for 'standard of practice,'" Austin states in court papers.

Indeed, "Rush to Read" was harshly criticized in the medical community. The American Society of Cytology complained that ABC's study was based on ersatz science and criticized ABC's reliance on NSI's unproven technology. And three doctors say that ABC should have given the labs a chance to review *PrimeTime*'s assessment of their work. Had ABC done so, it would have likely altered the story. Dr. Charles Santos-Buch, formerly the head of the laboratory founded by the inventor of the Pap, asserts that one of the slides that ABC accused Devaraj's lab of misreading was not improperly diagnosed but was marked in order to raise "a red flag" for the patient's physician. "The ABC study," Dr. Santos-Buch says, "was deficient and subject to erroneous interpretations and conclusions."

SO FAR ABC HAS BEEN winning the legal war. The Deverajs plan to fight on, but ABC's legal arguments—and their success—have only deepened their sense of being violated. ABC's lawyers maintain that the network should not be held liable for fraud since Devaraj's claimed damages were not caused by the producers' lies but by the broadcast, which it maintains was true. The network also argues, among other things, that Devaraj could have had no reasonable expectation of privacy because the secretly taped meeting took place in a conference room with "glass French doors."

In its defense ABC has displayed a remarkable commitment to privacy. At the urging of the network—which has joined in legal challenges seeking to open up other court proceedings—the court has barred public access to complete deposition transcripts. It has also gagged disclosure of such basic information as the state in which producer Gordon lives on the grounds that some of Gordon's story subjects have made threats on her life.

For the Devarajs, that ruling seems profoundly unfair. "She can come in here and lie...and ruin my life, ruin everything around me, but yet she won't even give her address," says Carolyn Devaraj. "It's horrible. I just couldn't believe that journalists could be so dishonest." ■

MARK DURAN (TOP)

Plotting A Revolution—Again

Procter & Gamble made advertising the financial power behind radio and television. The Internet may be next. • BY JENNIFER GREENSTEIN

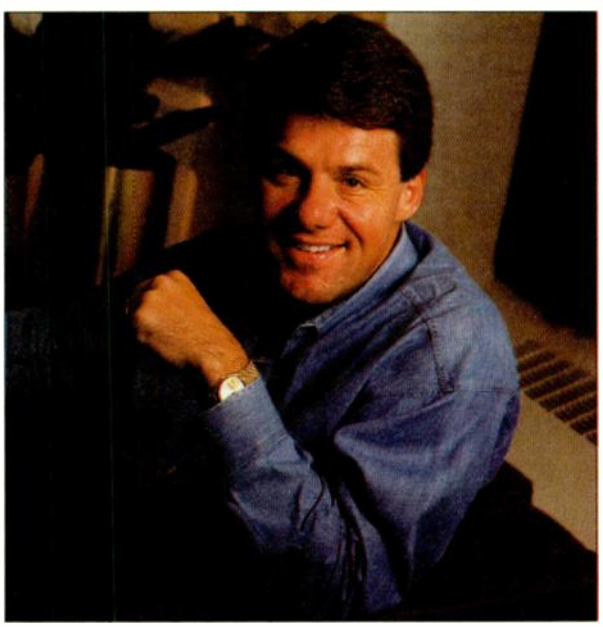
THREE YEARS AGO, PROCTER & Gamble's Denis Beausejour couldn't have told you much about the Internet. He surfed the Web every once in a while from his home in Hong Kong, but it wasn't terribly rewarding. His Internet connection was "very unreliable, and it was extremely slow," he says. But today, having moved to Cincinnati to become vice-president of advertising worldwide for one of the globe's biggest advertisers, Beausejour possesses the power to create a seismic shift in the Web's financial terrain by redistributing some of those advertising dollars.

If Beausejour makes his move, he'll be following a half-century tradition at Procter of seizing a new medium and revolutionizing it. More than 60 years ago, the company transformed radio by developing the serial drama as a vehicle for advertising its soaps and detergents. The 15-minute melodramas, dubbed soap operas, were wildly successful, drawing millions of women to their radios. Two decades later, Procter revolutionized the marketplace again by embracing the newest mass medium—television. The company moved those soap operas—and with them, millions of dollars in advertising—from radio to TV. So when Beausejour declared last year that interactive media had the potential to dwarf television as a way of bonding with consumers, it raised a question: Will Procter make its mark again—this time on the Internet?

In November, staff writer Jennifer Greenstein wrote about analysts who make projections about the Internet.

It looks like it might. Last August, Beausejour summoned 172 bigwigs from ad agencies, websites, and even some of P&G's competitors to Cincinnati in a public demonstration of the company's interest in cyberspace. Beausejour said he wanted to convene a "summit" to discuss on-line advertising. "We're here to try and achieve the promise of the digital future—faster," he said at the conference. "We have a vested interest in making the Web the most effective marketing medium in history." What he didn't say was how much money he was planning to spend to do that.

Procter & Gamble, a $37 billion company that sells such household staples as Tide and Pampers, spent $3.7 billion in 1998 plugging its products. With those dollars at his fingertips, Beausejour has the power to reshape the Internet: If he redirected 20 percent of his budget to the Web, that $740 million would top the amount all companies spent advertising on-line in 1997, according to one estimate (other estimates run as high as $1 billion).



Denis Beausejour could make Procter & Gamble the biggest player on the Internet.

JIM CALLAWAY

While P&G has the potential to become the Internet's biggest player, the man leading the charge is not relishing the attention—he's much happier working behind the scenes. He's no Bill Gates—a fact that he'll be the first to admit. "P&G is not a personality-cult type of place....We try to run the business on principles and values, not personalities," Beausejour explains. "I would describe [my role at P&G] as servant leadership." Still, Beausejour knows he could play a crucial part in the future of a historic company, and he plans to set his company on the right road. "It would be a shame to let down the people who are going to follow me thirty years from now," he says.

A mild-mannered man who cares deeply about his work, Beausejour turns to meditation and, he says, the "holy spirit" for inspiration. He also finds ideas in what he calls "the contradictions that present themselves in our daily life." Like what? "Like diet food that doesn't taste good....The place of a contradiction is often the place where a new idea can come up." Beausejour is a company man to the core. His efforts in on-line advertising—like every other project he takes on—have one mission: serving Procter's customers. "I do not set out to lead the industry as an objective unto it-

self. I'm focused on our consumers and our shareholders," he says.

The Internet advertising conference he convened had the on-line industry buzzing with expectation, but it was a little like a long-awaited date with a debutante: There was some heavy flirting, but no kiss good night. There were no announcements of major Internet advertising campaigns by P&G. Sure, Beausejour sent the signal that he's considering a plunge into the Internet, but he also indicated that P&G isn't entering the waters until the conditions are just right—and they aren't yet, he says.

Although he wasn't around in the early radio days, the 41-year-old Beausejour is acutely aware of his company's media legacy. In a speech last May at @d:tech, a marketing conference, he laid out in eye-popping detail how Procter's advertising dollars poured into radio and TV as those media gained acceptance. The company spent nothing on radio advertising in 1930; by 1935, radio accounted for half of its ad budget, he said. In TV, Procter's ad budget soared from 3 percent in 1950 to 80 percent in 1955. "In the next five years, will we see that same eighty percent shift from broadcast TV to new digital media?" Beausejour asked tantalizingly. "Well, if we can make this new medium all that it's capable of being, I see no reason why not."

Beausejour has been thinking about the Web a lot lately. While overseeing his 200-person staff and the company's $3.7 billion advertising budget, his passion for the Internet has driven him to spend about 30 percent of his time thinking about Internet issues, though, he says, "I'm not a techie or a surfhead." At night, he goes home to four kids, ages 5 to 13, who are savvy enough about the Web to have watched their dad speak at the P&G conference over the Internet on a live video feed.

A well-spoken, affable Canadian, Beausejour has worked at Procter nearly all of his adult life. He started as a brand assistant in Canada in 1978 and worked his way through P&G's ranks, filling positions in Australia, Japan, and China. In the two years he has run P&G's advertising divisions, the company's spending on the Web has been meager; it spent $3 million in the second quarter of 1998, which Beausejour describes as a dramatic increase from previous levels. Still, that's less than half of 1 percent of the company's quarterly ad budget. So why would a company that has thus far only dipped its toe into the oceanic World Wide Web make such a public display of its interest? Procter may consider it critical to signal investors that it's as savvy about the newest mass medium as it was about radio and television. "We can't afford to look back and see that we missed the boat," Beausejour says.

"We have a vested interest in making the Web the most effective marketing medium in history," Beausejour says.

Web advertising in its present incarnation—mostly small, rectangular banner ads—doesn't seem conducive to selling Crest toothpaste or Tide detergent. But P&G's core customers, women, "have flocked on-line in a major way," says Beausejour, and that's caught his attention. Many in the Internet industry see P&G as crucial to the Web's future. "The idea is if P&G can finally be convinced to spend on the Internet, the logjam will be broken," says Gil Fuchsberg, corporate director of new media at Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc., which owns several ad agencies. But that logjam is something of a chicken and egg problem, says Linda McCutcheon, president of Time Inc. New Media. As she put it during one of the Cincinnati conference's forums, "Denis [Beausejour], in his speech in May, said that P&G will spend to our potential, the on-line potential. One of the responses to that might be: Our potential will be realized by what you spend."

Before P&G invests serious money in the Internet, it wants to see some significant changes in on-line advertising standards. For instance, Beausejour favors bigger, more complicated ads that appear automatically in a separate window on the screen when you go to a website or that allow you to send e-mail from within the ad. Critics say these ads will make the Web slower to navigate, already a perennial complaint. "You are turning away your users by running an ad that takes a long time to download," asserts Jakob Nielsen, author of two books on the Internet. But Beausejour says that "as technology improves, it will basically eliminate" that complaint. He is already experimenting with technology that automatically downloads an ad in the background and is convinced that ads that offer more than a slogan are more likely to win a consumer's interest, like an ad for Always feminine products with a questionnaire to help women pick the right product for their needs.

Procter has already put its mark on one element of Internet advertising by pioneering a new payment method, much to the chagrin of many website operators. Two years ago, it paid for an ad campaign on Yahoo! based on the number of people who clicked on the ad instead of the number who saw the page, the industry standard. Since then, other advertisers have insisted on paying by the same formula, says David Dowling, president of media.com, P&G's agency for the Yahoo! deal.

Meanwhile, six months have passed since the Cincinnati conference, and there are still no visible signs of its impact on Procter. "It helped us focus on the great amount of work the industry must complete before we can truly invest in web advertising," Beausejour says. "But, it is still too early to tell whether or not the outcome of the summit will truly cause a shift in advertising dollars."

For Procter, practical and revolutionary have often come to be one in the same. "We know that the Web has the potential to transform virtually every part of our business," Beausejour said in a speech last May. The question is whether Procter will transform the Internet. ■

Dateline's All-American Porn Story

A couple's website features sadomasochism, threesomes, and graphic photos. Why did *Dateline NBC* call them "Ozzie and Harriet"?

BY MICHAEL KADISH

Editor's Note: *This story was posted on our America Online site on December 1. A few days later, we posted a response from* Dateline NBC *spokeswoman Hilary Smith. Her letter is reprinted in full below, with our reply.*

WHEN *DATELINE NBC* RECENTLY aired a feature story about a couple who trafficked in pornography on the Internet but was monogamous and family-values oriented, the show got half the story right.

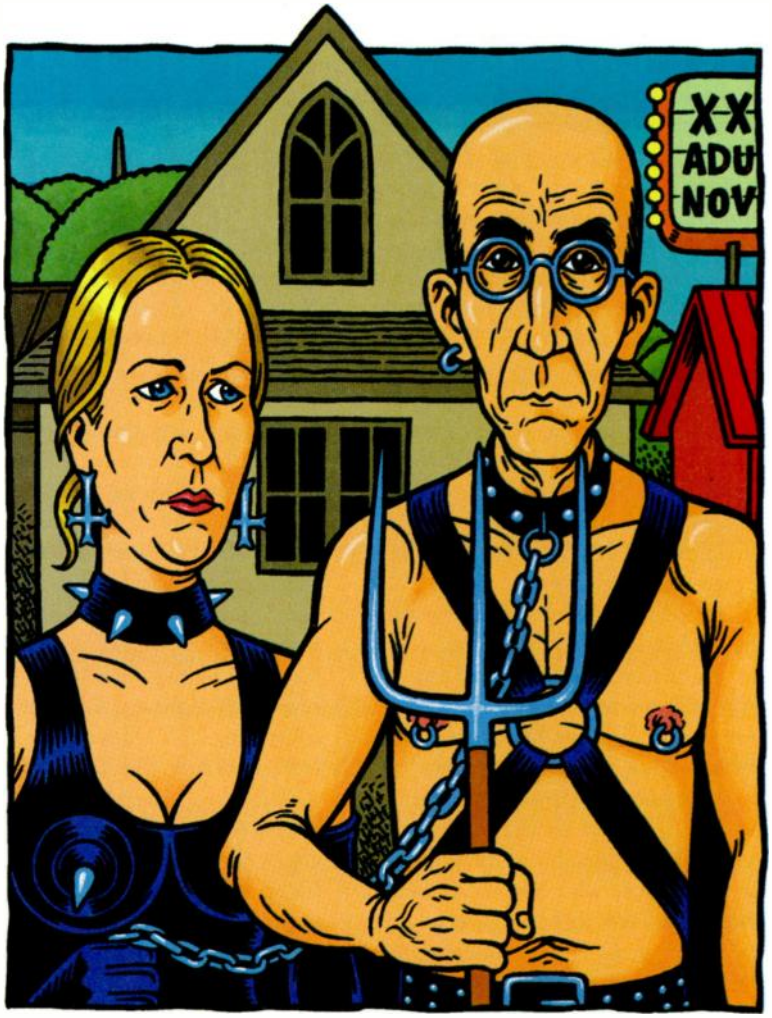
During last November's sweeps period, the newsmagazine introduced the nation to Jon-David and Cherie Messner, a couple the show described as "Ozzie and Harriet of the nineties."

What makes the Messners modern? *Dateline* explained that the couple makes ends meet—in fact, prospers—by producing an Internet site named the Wetlands, featuring themselves having sex. *Dateline* focused on the family's transformation into successful Internet entrepreneurs and pornographers while maintaining a normal household. But a review of the report and a perusal of the Messners' website suggest that at best NBC was snookered.

It's well known that the World Wide Web is home to thousands of pornographic services. But *Dateline* justified its focus on the Messners by presenting them as an all-American family, shown, for example, paddling in a boat and playing with their 8-year-old son, Cody. Jon-David Messner described the couple as "conservative compared to a lot of folks" and "monogamous." Cherie Messner noted that she is a soccer mom and a housewife.

"They're making a living doing what most couples do only behind closed doors," Jane Pauley cooed in her introduction to the segment.

Seems reasonable enough, except that a quick tour of the Wetlands turns up some activities "most couples" might not engage in at home. And the pictures of the Messners posted on the site certainly raise questions about their monogamy—questions *Dateline* never raised for viewers.



DANNY HELLMAN

Subscribers to the website—who pay $15 a month and apparently rushed there in droves following NBC's prime-time plug—can see images of the Messners and others participating in group sex, bisexuality, and sadomasochism, along with highly graphic amateur photos of common and unusual sex acts. The site also contains links to other porn sites, some of which advertise teen porn and bestiality.

In other words, the Wetlands is hardly distinguishable from countless other porn sites that thrive on the Web.

The rationale behind *Dateline*'s piece (beyond its producers, having to fill five hours of programming each week) is that the Wetlands is somehow

Assistant editor Michael Kadish wrote about e-mail privacy in the December/January issue.

different from other porn sites because the Messners ("JD" and "Cbaby," as they are known on-line) are just a typical couple that struck it rich by strutting their stuff on the Internet.

However, the site contains pictures of Cbaby in a menage-à-trois with accompanying text that reads, "I love the look on Gerry's face as..." What's more, there are pictures of both Cbaby and JD having sex with people billed as their in-laws. On one page, JD writes that Cbaby left him "Alone at Home with her Baby Sister Jill." You can guess what happens next.

When asked to square the photos with the couple's claims of monogamy, Jon-David Messner says he and his wife do not actually have sex with other people, instead employing what he calls "illusion through digital mastery," including hiring actors and purchasing images. If true, that's a fact that Dateline apparently agreed to keep from its viewers.

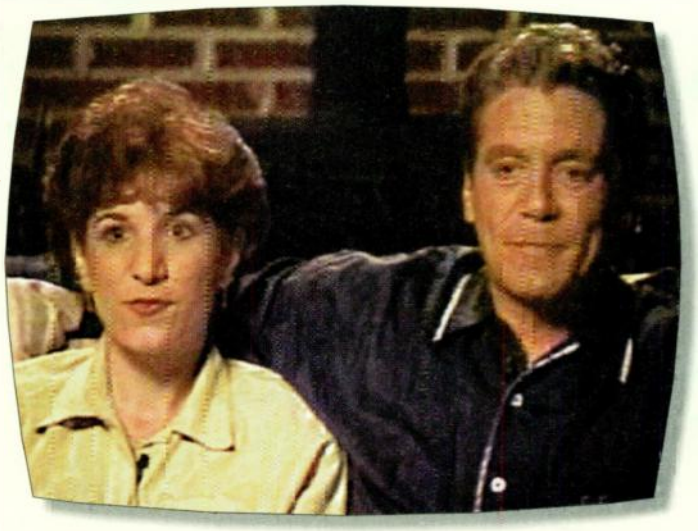
Jon-David Messner says he is satisfied with *Dateline*'s journalistic standards. Moreover, he's delighted with the attention; he estimates that he netted 6,000 to 7,000 new subscribers in the day or two following the broadcast.

"They just went through here like locusts," he recalls. "New customers were signing up...as fast as [our billing agencies] could process the sales....It was just incredible."

The *Dateline* segment was reported by Rob Stafford and produced by Betsy Osha and Dan Taberski. None of them would talk to *Brill's Content*. All questions were directed to *Dateline* spokeswoman Hilary Smith.

Smith, asked why *Dateline* chose to air a segment that was destined to do little more than drive traffic into a porn site, offered the following explanation: "We set out to find out who uses the Internet. We found out people use the Internet for porn. Once we found that out, we wanted to know how does that affect children. One of our producers stumbled on a story that incorporated all of these elements." (Smith noted that the piece discussed how the Messners' site may affect their son.)

Smith also was asked why *Dateline* didn't challenge the couple's monogamy claims when the pictures on the site point to them having multiple sex partners.



Jon-David Messner says he and his wife, Cherie, are "conservative compared to a lot of folks."

At first, Smith said a producer told her the pictures just "look like there are multiple people." But in a later interview, Smith said that "at the time that we reported the story, we checked the website and there were no pictures to indicate anything other than...they were monogamous."

But Jon-David Messner says he showed *Dateline* depictions of group sex involving him and his wife that were up on the website at the time.

Messner says he's not the only web pornographer thrilled with the *Dateline* report. "We traditionally trade traffic" with other porn sites, Messner explains. "The traffic was beginning to become stale. But *Dateline* brought in a tremendous influx of nontraditional porn-surfing traffic. It just freshened up that whole pool."

Dateline NBC Protests

Your article, which accuses *Dateline NBC* of getting only "half the story right," regarding its report on a couple who runs a pornography site on the Internet, is completely unfounded. We would therefore like to point out some key elements of the story, which illustrate that nothing in it was misrepresented or untrue.

The following responds chronologically to your article:

•You state that *Dateline* described the Messners as "Ozzie and Harriet of the 90s."

We did say the couple "looks" like "Ozzie and Harriet of the 90s," but we went on to say, "everything is not what it seems." Our point was the Messners might look like Mr. and Mrs. Middle America, but in one respect they weren't. Unlike Mr. and Mrs. Middle America, they had a pornographic website.

•Your article says "a quick tour of The Wetlands turns up some activities 'most couples' might not engage in at home," implying we misled viewers by saying the Messners were making a living "doing what most couples do only behind closed doors."

We didn't sugarcoat the website's contents. In fact, we told our viewers in the piece itself that along with nude pictures of women and men, the website includes more explicit material. "David and Cherie act out their customers' wildest fantasies and fetishes—from bondage...to domination to hard core pornography," the piece says.

•You write, "the pictures of the Messners on the site certainly raise questions about their monogamy—questions *Dateline* never raised for viewers."

Mr. Messner stated on our broadcast, "We're monogamous. We are totally monogamous." In addition, *Dateline* had—and continues to have—no proof that they are anything other than what they claim to be.

•You suggest that Mr. Messner's claim is contradicted by some of the pictures that appear on The Wetlands website.

Mr. Messner told *Content* those pictures are "illusion through digital mastery," that he and his wife do not actually have sex with others. And that's exactly

(continued)

what he told us when we produced the piece, after we asked him to explain the photos.

We still have no reason to dispute Mr. Messner. We talked with him last night, he repeated that every photo that seemed to show anything other than monogamy was a computer trick, or the two of them simply wearing wigs and costumes. We asked him about the "menage-à-trois" material you refer to in your article. More computer tricks, [Mr.] Messner said. In fact, in one of the photos, which shows three women, two of them appear to be the same person. Mr. Messner says they're both his wife, and a check of her face—and her tan lines—seems to confirm it. As for the other woman, Mr. Messner says she and his wife were never in the same room.

> "We didn't sugarcoat the website's contents. In fact, we told our viewers...that along with women and men, the website includes more explicit material."

Trickery again, he says—all part of the fantasy.

Of Mr. Messner's claim of cyberdeception, your article states, "If true, that's a fact *Dateline* apparently agreed to keep from its viewers."

We did raise the issue of digital manipulation and computer games in discussing the website's early days. "I started taking head shots of my wife and pasting her head on other women's bodies, and I got pretty good at it," [Mr.] Messner said in the broadcast. Moreover, [Mr.] Messner made clear his website was not about reality. "We play our fantasy out on the Web," [Mr.] Messner said.

You claim that the segment "was destined to do little but drive traffic onto a porn site."

There's always a risk that reporting on something will have the unintended consequence of raising consumer interest. As for naming the site, it's hard to report on it without naming it—as *Content*, which also named the site—made clear in your article.

In closing, I would like to refer you back to the first issue of *Brill's Content*. Mr. Brill told his readers "nonfiction should be accurate in fact and context." In light of the facts and the context of our story, which I have outlined, you may want to re-examine whether *Content* is living up to its own standards.

Hilary Smith
Dateline NBC

Michael Kadish responds:

Let's take the complaints one at a time:

1. By comparing the Messners to "Ozzie and Harriet" (and setting the piece to the theme song from *The Andy Griffith Show*), *Dateline* clearly was suggesting that but for their vocation, the Messners are a typical—idealized, even—American family. This is patently ridiculous. They are pornographers.

2. Actually, the *Dateline* piece did sugarcoat the website's content; it's raunchier than either the Messners or your reporter portrayed it. But the point is, the website does offer photos of the Messners engaged in ménage à trois and other activities that we doubt "most couples" engage in.

3. and 4. The website contains pictures of Mrs. Messner in a threesome. This is clearly not monogamy. Either the Messners are lying about their monogamy or the picture is a fake. In either case, *Dateline* never addressed this issue on air. Neither *Dateline* nor *Brill's Content* is in any position to determine—tan-line comparisons notwithstanding—how much is real and how much is illusion.

5. True, your report raised the issue of digital manipulation. But, as you indicate, that was done in the discussion of the website's early days. In fact, your report emphasized that the popularity of the site soared when Cherie Messner became less shy and allowed genuine naked pictures of her to be used. So viewers were left with the impression that computer gimmicks were no longer employed.

6. Of course you needed to name the site—if you had a compelling reason to do the story. ■

Double Standard

Media corporations have the power to endorse candidates, but other companies don't. It's time for change. ● BY RICHARD L. HASEN

We hear quite a lot from our readers—as is evident from our thriving letters-to-the-editor pages. Our new column, Reader Intelligence, *provides another forum for readers to speak out about media matters on their minds. All submissions should be directed to* Reader Intelligence, *c/o* Brill's Content, *521 Fifth Avenue, 11th floor, New York, NY, 10175.*

A.J. LIEBLING ONCE REMARKED that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." That certainly wouldn't be news to Philip Morris, which, as papers from the Minnesota tobacco litigation revealed recently, considered buying *USA Today* or United Press International to influence tobacco policy. Nor would it be news to Steve Forbes, whom the Federal Elections Commission recently sued for using his *Forbes* magazine column to bolster his 1996 presidential campaign.

These incidents, and growing media concentration, raise the question of whether the press should continue to be exempt from campaign-finance laws.

Consider The New York Times Company and Mobil. Mobil takes out opinion ads on the *Times*'s op-ed page, but it cannot endorse or oppose a federal candidate there or anywhere else because the Federal Election Campaign Act prohibits direct corporate expenditures to favor or oppose such candidates. To endorse candidates, Mobil would need to set up a political action committee with its numerous bureaucratic requirements.

The New York Times Corporation, however, can endorse federal candidates because of a statute exempting from expenditure limits "any news story, commentary or editorial distributed through the facilities" of a newspaper, magazine, or broadcast station. This "media exception" does not apply when the medium is owned or controlled by a candidate or party, which explains Steve Forbes's troubles.

The media exception fosters an inequality that gives Rupert Murdoch the right to publish an editorial endorsing a candidate while denying that right to Murdoch's corporate neighbor. Evidence suggests that newspaper owners use endorsement decisions to secure access to politicians. For example, in 1980, Murdoch had lunch with then-President Jimmy Carter and later met with officials of the Export-Import Bank. Two days later, Murdoch's *New York Post* endorsed Carter in the crucial New York primary. Soon afterward, the bank rejected a request Murdoch had made for a loan for his airline, but two days after the rejection, bank officials reversed that decision. Over board and staff objections, it gave Murdoch a $290 million loan at more than a point below the prevailing interest rate.

Those with wealth can buy newspapers to secure greater access to elected officials or, putting access aside, to influence the outcome of elections.

What, then, should be done? Congress could repeal the exception, making media corporations subject to the same rules as other corporations in spending their own resources to endorse candidates. News articles would not be affected by repeal because they are outside the scope of the FECA—they generally don't contain words of express advocacy, like "Vote for Smith," and their predominant purpose is to disseminate news, not influence the outcome of elections. Maybe a "news exception" is a big loophole because subtle news bias may influence electoral outcomes. Yet it is much more difficult to exchange subtle news bias for access, and obvious news bias doesn't fool voters.

But critics claim the media exception cannot be eliminated without violating the First Amendment. Instead, they argue, all campaign-finance limits should be repealed, providing unlimited spending by all to buy access and influence elections.

The First Amendment issue is not clear-cut. If, as the Supreme Court has said, it is constitutional to ban Mobil's election speech, why doesn't the same logic apply to Murdoch's News Corporation? On one hand, the Supreme Court has never held that media corporations are entitled to special protection. On the other hand, the Court has suggested in some cases that government can never interfere with a newspaper's editorial judgment.

If Congress enacted comprehensive campaign finance reform that eliminated the media exception, the Supreme Court could view it as an infringement on the special rights of the press. Or, instead, the Supreme Court could view it as the closing of a large loophole. The underlying question is whether Rupert Murdoch gets to talk louder and buy more access than everyone else. ■

Richard L. Hasen, an associate professor at Loyola Law School, has written extensively about campaign finance reform. A longer version of this article will appear in the Texas Law Review.

A Believer In Aftermath

To make sense of the Rwandan genocide, Philip Gourevitch listened to the people whose lives were horribly and irrevocably changed by it. • BY DIMITRA KESSENIDES

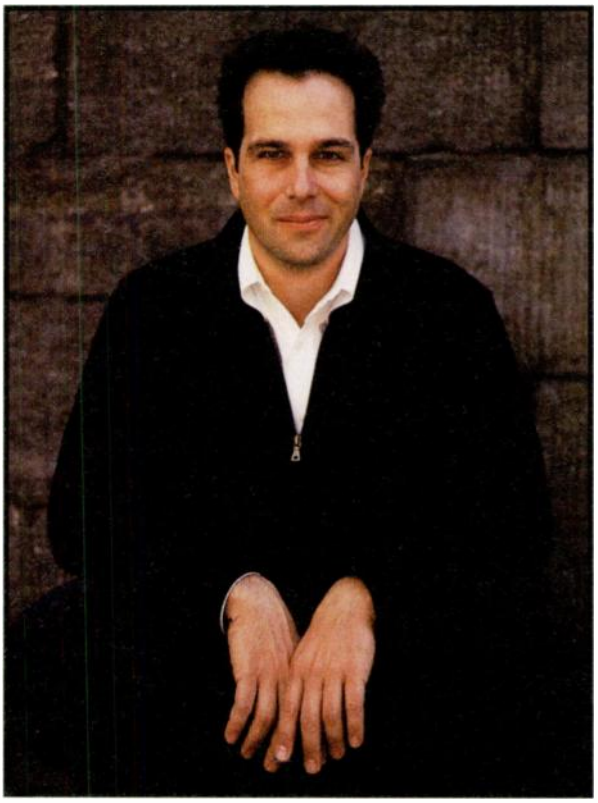
IN THE THREE MONTHS BE-tween April and July 1994, 800,000 Tutsis were slaughtered by their Hutu countrymen in the central African nation of Rwanda. The numbers—an average 8,000 killings a day—were unfathomable.

Philip Gourevitch, 37, then a freelance writer and contributing editor at the *Forward*, a weekly Jewish newspaper based in New York, set out to make sense of it all. "Although there'd been plenty of newspaper stories and plenty of coverage, it was fitful, it was fragmented, and we didn't get it," he says. So, a year after what is now accepted as the widest-scale mass killing since World War II, Gourevitch traveled to Rwanda, hoping to understand.

The result: a 14,000-word piece titled "After The Genocide" that appeared in the December 18, 1995, issue of *The New Yorker*, where Gourevitch is now a staff writer. It was the first of eight articles over the next two years in which he examined the slaughter's effect on Rwanda and its neighbors Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He calls himself "a real believer in aftermath," explaining, "About the time that everybody else packs up and goes home is often one of the best times to go in as a reporter, because it's a time when people are willing to talk, people have had a little time to reflect on the big event."

It is not so difficult for anyone to imagine or even understand these atrocities after reading the stories.

In the December/January issue, associate editor Dimitra Kessenides wrote about independent-film websites.



Philip Gourevitch brought uncommon depth and insight to his coverage of the Rwandan genocide.

Gourevitch traveled to Rwanda six times over two and a half years and spent a total of nine months talking to hundreds of Rwandans. Their harrowing accounts, which appeared in both *The New Yorker* and Gourevitch's recently published book, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), show just how carefully he listened. (*The New York Times* hailed the book as one of the best of 1998.)

In early 1994, when Gourevitch's thoughts began to turn more and more to Rwanda, he was already attracting attention for his essays in *Harper's* and *Commentary* that were critical of the popular response to the opening of Holocaust museums in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles, as well as to the release of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. Gourevitch questioned the notion that building such monuments to the Holocaust of 50 years ago somehow made up for the atrocity or rid the world of responsibility. "I felt there was something flawed in the way these things were presenting themselves...which was, 'We're building these monuments to our own right thinking, to our own opposition to the Holocaust.'"

The good intentions behind the museums and the movie, he argued, won't protect or preserve our humanity, and they won't reclaim it. Events in Rwanda reinforced his view. Every week, it seemed, *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* carried horrific photos showing Tutsi bodies floating in rivers, lying along their banks, or piled up near roads.

With these images in mind, Gourevitch set out for Rwanda in the spring of 1995. In October of that year, he delivered his first article to *The New Yorker*. "It was magnificent in terms of the level of moral intelligence and the level of detail," says Jeffrey Frank, who edited the story. Photographer Gilles Peress, who has worked with Gourevitch, agrees. "He has an amazing ability to transcribe voices," adds Peress. "There was other very good journalistic work, but nothing with the depth and the insight to hear and to transcribe the voice and the language the way Philip does."

Gourevitch's work took the story

KENNETH CHEN

well beyond the standard "who-what-where-when-and-why" coverage that emerged from Rwanda in 1994. It focused on deeper questions: How does it come to pass that neighbors turn on each other? How can one tenth of the population of a country be decimated in three months? What goes through the mind of a Tutsi as he witnesses his wife or child or brother hacked to death? How does any Rwandan live with the memory of the atrocities? And how should the rest of the world think about what happened in Rwanda?

"I was a Pulitzer juror for foreign reporting the year after Rwanda, and I would not accept the proposition that there was [no good reporting on it]," remarks Seth Lipsky, Gourevitch's former editor at the *Forward*. (The Associated Press, in fact, received a Pulitzer for its coverage by reporter Mark Fritz that year.) "But Philip carried it to a new level." This level was rooted in details that conveyed, as Peress notes, the voice of the people:

Odette [Nyiramilimo] looked over at her children.... When she turned back to me, she said, "This life after a genocide is really a terrible life.... The trauma comes back much more as time passes—this year more than last. So how can I look forward to next year?... I'm afraid it gets worse. I dream more of my sisters and cry through my dreams." Odette had one nephew who survived the genocide in Kinunu.... She had visited him only once, to help bury the dead.... "All the Hutus there watched us come, and some wanted to hug me.... I cried out, 'Don't touch me. Where did you put everyone?' One was married to a cousin of mine. I said, 'Where's Thérèse?' He said, 'I couldn't do anything... It wasn't me who did it.' I said, 'I don't want to see you. I don't want to know you.' Now whenever the Hutus there see a car coming to my nephew's, they all hide. People will say I'm an extremist because I can't accept or tolerate the people who killed my family. So if they're afraid once in their lives—I was afraid since I was three years old—let them know how it feels."... Odette nodded at my notebook.... "Do the people in America really want to read this? People tell me to write these things down, but it's written inside of me. I almost hope for the day when I can forget."

Had it not been for Gourevitch's coverage, says *New Yorker* editor David Remnick, the atrocities might have gone almost unremarked, save for some "very fine but limited" newspaper coverage. What Gourevitch did better than anyone else, Remnick says, was express the horror of the genocide, in terms of its scope and politics, with a great degree of specificity but without doing so simply for effect. "Philip, with his pieces in the *New Yorker*, has become both witness and moral witness, and journalistic witness of horror in a corner of the globe."

Gourevitch did more than serve as witness. Last spring, he sparked controversy after reporting that high-level United Nations officials knew beforehand of the possibility that the killings would occur. The story already had circulated in the foreign press (notably in England and Belgium). What Gourevitch revealed was information from a fax that had been sent to him anonymously, which said that current U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan (in charge of U.N. peacekeeping efforts in 1994) likely knew of the Hutus' extermination plans and did nothing. The story elicited little more than a qualified apology from Annan to the people of Rwanda. "The world failed Rwanda," Annan said last May, and it must now "deeply repent this failure."

Such apologies and admissions of lessons learned do little to advance peace or heal wounds, Gourevitch says. "This has never been a strictly past-tense story," he notes. "The fight to end this is not over, and [yet] we continue to fail." The strife in Rwanda has continued sporadically since 1994.

Reflecting on his Holocaust-memorial essays, Gourevitch says that the Rwandan bloodshed has only confirmed his ideas: "The simplistic response at that time was that I was mocking good intentions.... I wasn't being cynical about those museums. We are trying to reassure ourselves with these monuments that we're better protected, that we're better guarded against these sort of atrocities. I don't have much of a conviction that because something has happened that we will make it less likely to happen again." ■

Two victims of machete attacks.

GILLES PERESS/MAGNUM (2)

HONOR ROLL

ALEX PULASKI, *THE OREGONIAN*.

In a 21-story series that ran in the Portland *Oregonian* last summer and fall, reporter Alex Pulaski aimed a relentless page-one spotlight at the punishing conditions endured by the state's migrant farmworkers. In the process, he uncovered a host of legal violations and a pattern of government neglect.

Many workers, he found, are paid far less than the minimum wage. Many of the migrants' children pick the fields with their parents. "Who wants to believe, when Nike Inc. is being criticized for letting little boys and girls work in its contractors' overseas shoe factories, that a 7-year-old can pick berries an hour's drive from Nike's Beaverton headquarters in 95-degree heat for an Oregon farmer whose idea of a drinking-water cup for his workers is an empty beer can?" he asked in an August 30 story. State authorities, Pulaski reported, haven't issued a single child-labor citation since 1994.

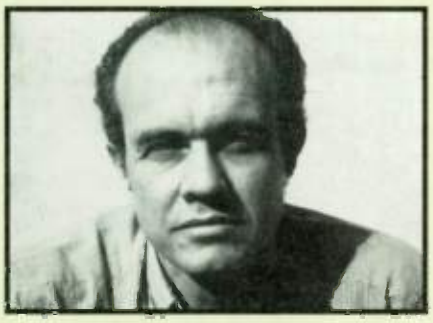
The Oregonian's Alex Pulaski examined the plight of farm laborers.

His work eventually caught legislators' attention; in September, five state Senate Democrats held a hearing to grill government officials about the reporter's findings and, according to Senator Cliff Trow, the hearing's chairman, migrant-labor legislation is in the works. *—Jeff Pooley*

HECTOR FELICIANO, AUTHOR.

In 1988, soon after Hector Feliciano, then a culture reporter for *The Washington Post*, began work on an article about a stolen painting purchased by the Louvre, one of his sources offhandedly commented that much of the art looted by the Nazis during World War II was still unclaimed.

Feliciano started to play detective. He examined Nazi looting inventories and other declassified documents and eventually interviewed nearly 300 people to track down thousands of pieces of unclaimed artwork that had been stolen. The owners—most of them Jewish—had never been able to lay claim to their sculptures, paintings, and other objets d'art. When



Hector Feliciano found that thousands of pieces of art looted by the Nazis are still unclaimed.

the works were returned to the French government after the war, many were either quietly integrated into museum collections or sold to art dealers.

Museums like the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, and Centre Pompidou first tried to dismiss Feliciano's charges. But after his book *The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest Works of Art* was published in France, they were forced to display over 900 of the works. In December, delegates from 44 nations agreed on guidelines for identifying stolen works and resolving claims at the Conference on Holocaust-era Assets in Washington, D.C.

Says Feliciano, who plans to write another book on the subject, "It's a pleasure as a journalist and writer to have seen that [my] work has tried to change things. I'm slowly realizing it has."

—Kimberly Conniff

BOB HERBERT, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*.

"Lots of calls come in cold," says Bob Herbert, a columnist for *The New York Times* who writes often on criminal-justice issues. "You can't investigate all of them." But when he received a call from Legal Aid Society lawyer Michelle Fox last July, he felt it was worth pursuing.

Fox asked him to look into the case of her client Jeffrey Blake, who had spent eight years behind bars for a 1990 double murder in Brooklyn that Fox said he did not commit. Blake was arrested after an acquaintance implicated him in the crime. Three other witnesses had placed Blake miles away from the crime scene. The first witness was later shown to have fabricated his testimony at trial.

Fox had already exhausted most of her legal appeals. Then, on July 12, she happened to read a column by Herbert headlined "Wrong Man at Rikers," which quoted Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes as saying, "I'm the last person in the world who wants the wrong person in jail."

"I thought, 'How ironic, given my situation,'" recalls Fox. "I must have left the D.A. about 30 messages," to little avail. She decided to call Herbert, who asked to see the entire trial transcript.

The 53-year-old columnist, who has been writing for the *Times* since 1993 and who spent most of his 17 years at the New York *Daily News* covering the city, says, "I know this area [where the shooting took place]. I know the difference between Bed-Stuy and Brownsville [neighborhoods in Brooklyn]." He says that he was convinced that Blake could not have made it to the crime scene and back in the time that was alleged.

Bob Herbert of *The New York Times* helped free a man imprisoned for a crime he says he didn't commit.

He also knew he was Blake's last resort. He published two columns, on July 30 and August 2, about the case. As to what effect he thought they would have, Herbert says, "You're just interested in putting together the strongest columns you can. Then you hope it'll make a difference."

It did. On October 28, the district attorney's spokesman announced that Blake would be freed from prison and also credited Fox and Herbert for motivating Hynes to review the case. *—Rifka Rosenwein*

Enemy of the State

Is Someone Watching YOU?

LAST NOVEMBER'S *ENEMY OF THE State* featured Will Smith as Robert Dean, an upstanding attorney ensnared in a rogue National Security Agency operation. Other than Smith, the movie's real stars were its myriad surveillance technologies, including satellites, tracking devices, bugs, long-range microphones, and secret databases employed by agents to track Smith down, frame him, and destroy his life. Does the movie accurately depict the technology available to our nation's intelligence agencies?

When asked about *Enemy of the State*, NSA public affairs officer Patrick Weadon says, "We have no comment." No big surprise there. The CIA did give non-classified tours of its Virginia headquarters to the movie's producers and stars. However, when *Brill's Content* asked about the movie's portrayal of intelligence technology, Chase Brandon, a spokesman for the CIA, would only say that under the law, "U.S. intelligence satellites are directed against foreign interests which represent threats," not against American citizens.

The movie's screenwriter, David Marconi, says he conducted research that led him to believe that satellites are positioned over virtually every major city and populated region on the planet, and that digital imagery recorded by satellites can be enhanced and enlarged.

In the movie, intelligence satellites are "retasked" (shifted into position) to follow Dean in real time on wild chases through Washington and Baltimore. When not following targets into buildings, the satellites accrue a massive log of events that may be replayed instantaneously. Tom Bowman, *The Baltimore Sun*'s Pentagon reporter and coauthor of a 1995 six-part series on the NSA titled "No Such Agency" finds it hard to believe that satellites are retasked "here and there at will without anyone knowing about it." The reason, he explains, is that retasking is a major affair that burns up the satellite's life span.

Will Smith can run, but he can't hide from the NSA in *Enemy of the State*.

Bowman thinks the high-quality resolution of satellite images in the film is accurate. "The pictures are just amazing," Bowman said. "We were told by one NSA guy that satellite pictures were so good that you could read a license plate."

One important distinction not made clear in the film is that the NSA does not collect images or conduct photo reconnaissance. It eavesdrops on communications. John Pike, security analyst at the Federation of American Scientists, notes that it's the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, under the Department of Defense, that decides which photos to take and that analyzes the images, not the NSA. Access to satellites by other agencies, like the NSA, is tightly controlled.

Larry Cox, who says he worked "in government for quite a while early in my career," served as a technical adviser on the film (he's described as a former NSA official in the movie's PR material). Cox says "the technical stuff was fun" and that it was "pushing the realm of the possible." He calls the ability to play back satellite imagery created at any time from anywhere on Earth "fanciful."

Pike goes even further in debunking what the satellites can do. Only a fraction of the total intelligence-satellite capacity, he says, is available for near real-time tasking—a process that takes hours, not seconds. Real satellites take still or, at best, stop-motion photography; they can't follow a subject like Dean down the street in full motion. Pike says current imagery resolution is about ten centimeters, which means you can barely see a license plate, let alone read it from space. In other words, "an object the size of a license plate is about the size of...a single pixel." Pike also estimates that only a small percentage of the Earth's surface is recorded at any one time, and almost none of that recording is done within the United States.

Screenwriter Marconi still believes the film accurately reflects the abilities of the NSA. Although "a lot of the stuff...happens a lot faster than it would in reality," Marconi insists "nothing in the film is really beyond the realm of possibilities." Technical consultant Cox disagrees and says the entire premise of the film is fantasy. "The kind of surveillance shown there would require almost an impossible level of coordination, if it were possible technically," he says, "and I don't think it is." —*Michael Kadish*

Assistant editor Michael Kadish wrote about the history behind Saving Private Ryan *in the November issue.*

COURTESY OF TOUCHSTONE PICTURES & JERRY BRUCKHEIMER, INC.

A For Effort, F For Editorial

ZapMe! offers free computers to schools, but there's a tradeoff: Kids are exposed to poor on-line content. ● BY NOAH ROBISCHON

LAST YEAR, FREMONT HIGH School in Oakland, California, had one computer connected to the Internet for its 1,491 students. With kids constantly waiting to use the computer, the school imposed a five-minute limit, "and that's not enough time to do research," says Barbara Warren, the school's librarian. This year, Fremont High School, which now serves approximately 2,400 students, has 11 new Compaq computers that will soon be connected to the Internet via a high-speed satellite network and loaded with Microsoft Office software.

The district paid nothing for the computer stations. The ZapMe! Corporation provided them for free in exchange for the right to sell advertising that students would see while surfing the ZapMe! "netspace" network. ZapMe's network consists of subject areas and channels such as art, government, health, and fun, with articles designed to be educational and entertaining for teens.

It's a textbook example of private enterprise partnering with public schools to benefit children. But is it in the kids' best interest? Librarians are troubled—not by the advertising but by the content that appears on the ZapMe! network.

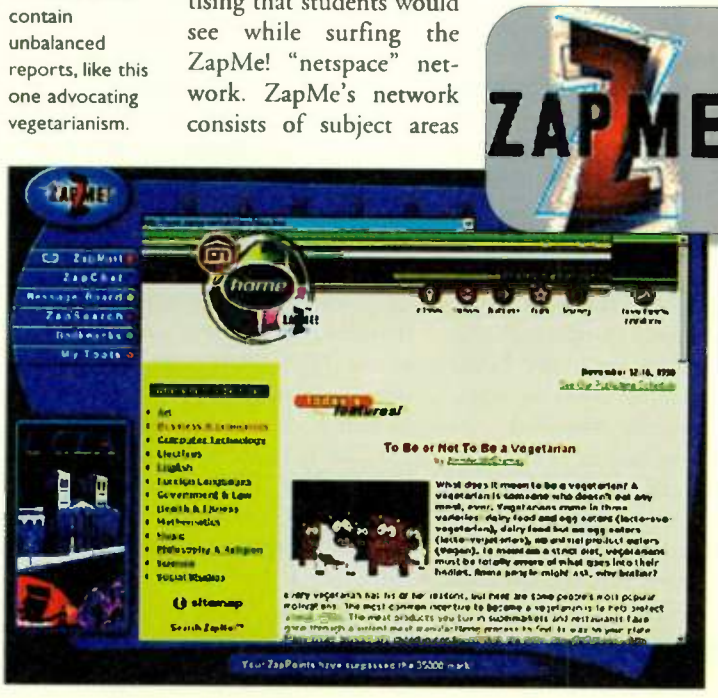
ZapMe! Corporation, a privately funded company founded by Lance Mortensen, a California construction and pasta-making magnate, began providing Internet access to 25 schools in October. By January, 200 schools around the country and 200,000 students will be using the ZapMe! network, claims company president Frank Vigil. The corporation supplies each school with between five and 15 computers, and installs them along with a satellite dish that links the computers to the high-speed ZapMe! network. The school need only supply electrical outlets and a dedicated phone line, which provides access to parts of the Internet that aren't included on the network. Schools are also required to have the computers in use for four hours each day. ZapMe! puts the value of the equipment and service at $9,500 per school per month.

ZapMe! hopes to profit by selling advertising and sponsorship on its network. The advertising on the ZapMe! browser, which is similar to Netscape or Internet Explorer, appears in a rectangular box on the lower left side of the window. These billboards can rotate every 10 to 15 seconds and, when clicked on, can open other windows that lead to advertiser websites or full-motion video presentations. ZapMe! begins accepting paid advertisements in January. Advertisers can also sponsor one of the content areas that students surf on the ZapMe! network.

ZapMe!'s plan to advertise to school children has been criticized—predictably—by the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education. And consumer advocate Ralph Nader issued a statement in October calling ZapMe! a "corporate predator" that "is the latest example of how companies coerce children to watch ads in school."

But the ads weren't an issue for the librarians we spoke with at six schools using ZapMe! or in the process of having it installed. Valle Blair, a librarian at Clayton Valley High School in Concord, California, a pilot school that has been testing ZapMe! since April, said the billboards are unobtrusive and that "most of the kids don't even notice the advertising." Instead, librarians said it was the quality of content on ZapMe! that was the problem.

Our review of the content on ZapMe! in November supported the librarians' complaints. All articles are written by ZapMe! content editors, and



News articles on the ZapMe! network often contain unbalanced reports, like this one advocating vegetarianism.

Senior writer Noah Robischon wrote about on-line travel agents in the December/January issue. Staff writer Rachel Taylor wrote about Bolt Reporter, *an electronic teen magazine, in November.*

new articles are published one to three times per week. But the articles in November were rarely devoted to current news events and were sometimes dated. There were no articles about the elections, but an article about the enduring popularity of Zorro (written in early October) was the lead feature in the "news" channel for more than two weeks. "Zorro is getting more press because of the recent film," says President Frank Vigil. "So our editors decided to provide some background more from a historical perspective rather than just, 'Go watch Antonio Banderas.'" (*The Mask of Zorro* was released in July.)

ZapMe!'s content is supposed to be targeted by age group. But the network is used by students who range from 11 to 18, and some articles, like one about the sexually transmitted disease chlamydia, may be inappropriate for a sixth-grader. Vigil says the company is still wrestling with how to present such information and claims ZapMe!'s 12 content editors use curriculum guidelines from California, New York, and Florida to tailor the articles for middle- and high-school readers.

Vigil says his content editors try not to put any "editorial slant" into the writing, and that their articles are meant to encourage readers to be independent thinkers. But an article about vegetarianism appearing in the "classroom" channel, the most popular area on ZapMe!, clearly supported the animal-rights cause. The article says that people who choose to eat meat "would prefer to live by these words: 'ignorance is bliss.'"

ZapMe! was originally meant to be content-free, claims president Vigil, providing nothing more than categorized pointers to educational websites. Teacher requests prompted the company to add editorial elements, he says. But having editorial content also means there are more areas for advertisers to sponsor, and it allows ZapMe! to market its service as an "educational" product.

Vigil admits that editorial content is an area "we need to grow in" and says the company is in the midst of recruiting a senior content editor. Meanwhile, librarians have been suggesting changes to ZapMe! content editors, and say they feel encouraged by ZapMe!'s plan to improve its product. ■

KRISTINE LARSEN

Classrooms Become Newsrooms

IT IS A COLD MONDAY AFTERNOON IN MID-November, and most of the 1,850 students at New Jersey's Toms River High School East are noisily filing out of the school building. But tucked away in a room behind the library, nine students remain. These teen journalists, pilot members of CNN's Student Bureau, have gathered to brainstorm story ideas. Roy Yack, the school's television-production and broadcast-journalism instructor, asks the young reporters: "What do you have to say? What's your message?"

Students say they have become smarter consumers of news since joining CNN's Student Bureau.

After some discussion, plausible story ideas emerge. One, on New Jersey's wetlands, fits the bill: the Toms River teens are in a unique geographic position to cover the story. If done well, it could have global relevance, and it is not time-sensitive. Another, on the strain food banks will face during the holiday season, sounds good too. Three teens will start making calls the next day.

Announced on September 17 and set to launch officially in January, the CNN Student Bureau was born of a partnership between CNN and Turner Learning, Inc., the educational division of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. The program is designed to introduce students to the rigors of journalism with the support of a world-class, news-gathering giant. Twenty-nine high schools and five universities have enrolled in the program, a number that is expected to increase to 200 by September, according to Terri Hickman, manager of public relations for Turner Learning.

The best Student Bureau videos will compete for a slot on CNN *Newsroom*, part of CNN's Cable in the Classroom. CNN's *Newsroom*, a lively, half-hour news show, is broadcast via satellite at 4:30 each weekday morning and taped by teachers for use during school hours. All broadcasts are commercial-free and have accompanying teacher-developed lesson plans on the Turner Learning website.

Funding for *Newsroom* and the Student Bureau is a "sacrosanct" part of the Turner Learning budget despite the fact that "it doesn't generate money, and it isn't supposed to," says Dr. John Richards, senior vice-president and general manager of Turner Learning. Still, says Larry Blase, *Newsroom*'s executive producer, his show is "teaching new generations of kids all about CNN. I'm sure there's some feeling of brand loyalty."

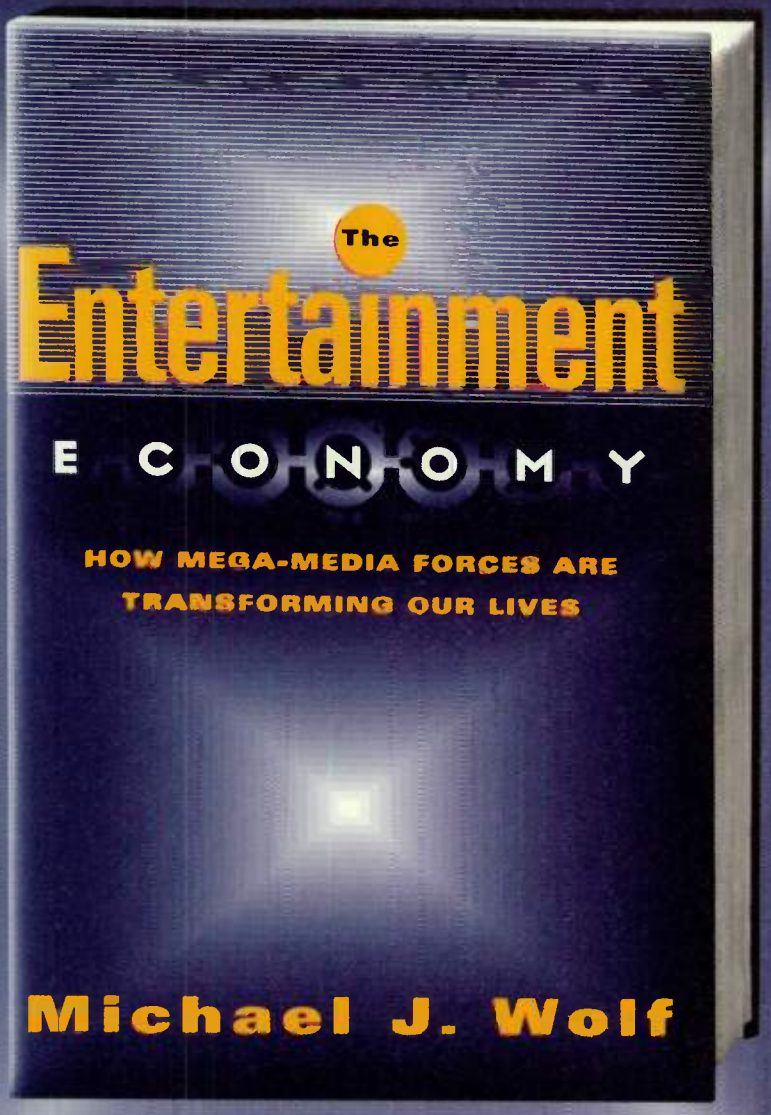
To ensure that Student Bureau submissions are of acceptable quality, CNN and Turner Learning are putting together a comprehensive package of guidelines and instructions. The materials will cover the fundamentals of journalism and include selecting story topics, interviewing techniques, how to attribute information, ethics in journalism, technical aspects of video field production, and writing scripts.

Student Bureau reporters are also asked to provide sources and contact information to Turner Learning for fact-checking purposes. Richards explains that "depend[ing] on the nature of the story and how controversial it is," Turner Learning staffers will go back either to the original source or to the teacher involved in supervising the video's production.

Teaching kids how to make the news will help them become more critical of the news they see on TV, teachers say—a notion that's central to the program's development. "We have to move from kids passively getting the news and information to producing it and actively getting involved in it," says Richards.

The Toms River teens say they do understand television news better since working with Student Bureau. Eighteen-year-old Bill Himpele says he never realized how difficult it is "to come up with a story...and to try to fit so much information into a two-minute package." Adds Brendan Castner, 17, "A camera is almost like a gun. Some people listen to what you have to say because you have the camera." Eighteen-year-old Tom McGovern sums it up: "If a piece is of good quality, if it tells a story, you appreciate it because you've been there." —*Rachel Taylor*

Every business is show business.



In the tradition of *Future Shock* and *Being Digital*, *The Entertainment Economy* shatters conventional views of our culture and economy, revealing that words like "image" and "celebrity" aren't just for actors and rock stars anymore.

Michael J. Wolf shows how everything in our world—from the airlines we fly to the malls we visit—is being transformed by ideas that come from the entertainment world. Exposing how the principles of MTV are used by companies like McDonald's and Citibank, Wolf shows how in our media-saturated society, corporations don't just sell products—they vie for our attention.

TIMES BUSINESS

www.atrandom.com

From History To Hubris

Photographers share their stories of behind-the-camera life at *Life*, while "experts" are exposed for their blunders and mistakes. Five new books tell all.

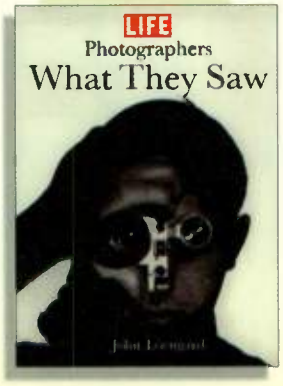
IF *LIFE* MAGAZINE WERE THE cultural map to post-World War II America, then the magazine's photographers were its able cartographers. In *What They Saw*, photographer, editor, and author John Loengard takes us behind the cameras, introducing us to the people who helped chronicle America through *Life*'s groundbreaking photographic essays.

Folks looking for a glossy coffee-table book should look elsewhere: this is a thoughtful collection of Loengard's conversations with 44 of the magazine's photographers in which they discuss their lives and their work. "This once," writes Loengard in his introduction, "their photographs are subservient to their words."

Carl Mydans reveals how he managed to snag the historic shot of General Douglas MacArthur strolling through the surf on his return to the Philippines. (Mydans ran away from the official landing area and positioned himself on the beach just as the general stepped ashore.) Alfred Eisenstaedt confesses that he doesn't particularly like his famous V-J Day shot of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square. David Scherman remembers playing in the ruins of Nazi Germany with fellow photographer Lee Miller (including Miller taking a bath in the Führer's own tub) until the Allies restored order and spoiled the private party. Allan Grant reflects on being the last person to photograph Marilyn Monroe. The recollections spill off of every page.

The book underscores the diversity of backgrounds represented in the magazine and how the experiences of each photographer shaped the end product. The stories form their own distinct snapshot of America. —*Ted Rose*

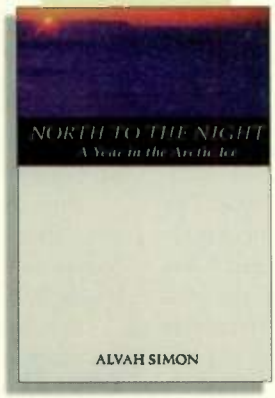
WHAT THEY SAW
John Loengard
Bulfinch Press
(November 1998)
PRINT RUN:
15,000 copies



ALVAH SIMON IS HUDDLED alone in the living quarters of a 36-foot sailboat that cannot move—it's penned in by solid ice that won't thaw for another seven months, if it thaws at all. It's 50 degrees below zero, the sun doesn't appear at this time of year, and the boat is dangerously low on fuel. Alvah Simon is living out his greatest fantasy: a winter in the Arctic.

Simon's chronicle of his year in the remotest of remote areas, which he shares in *North to the Night*, is riveting. Those who have never trimmed a sail won't have trouble appreciating the drama and danger of his journey. Simon, a lifelong adventurer who sails because, he says, "it makes life bigger," sees the Arctic as his greatest challenge. He sets sail in 1994 with his equally adventurous wife, Diana, but when she learns that her father has been diagnosed with cancer she departs, leaving Simon alone to face the perils of a life-threatening winter.

NORTH TO THE LIGHT
Alvah Simon
McGraw-Hill
(September 1998)
PRINT RUN:
20,000 copies



The darkness, cold, and solitude of life on a boat surrounded by 40,000 square miles of icy wilderness threaten Simon's health and sanity. He spends hours carving cubes of ice to melt for drinking water and building an igloo to store the cubes, only to discover later that he can't find the igloo in the snowdrifts. He goes days at a time without light to conserve energy and awakens one morning suffering from temporary blindness.

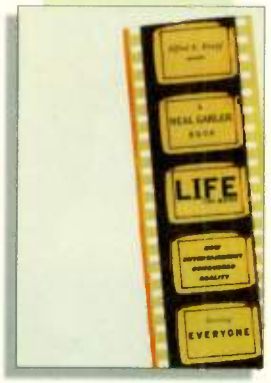
Simon's lucid, honest writing makes his adventure intellectually fascinating and emotionally gripping—and it will make you think twice the next time you switch on a lamp or turn on a faucet. —*Jennifer Greenstein*

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN Americans flocked to movie theaters, gazed up at the silver screen, and dreamed of movie stardom. Today,

though, it's real life that entertains us; now we dream of becoming celebrities—the stars of what cultural critic Neal Gabler calls "life the movie."

For Gabler, our singular obsession with celebrity has transformed our lives in profound ways: standards of entertainment have so thoroughly permeated American culture that theatricality and performance are now the default tools we use to shape our identities and values. As Gabler notes, the throngs cheering on O.J. Simpson's Ford Bronco chase were enacting movie scenes they had watched; in the same way, the immense outpouring of grief that met Princess Diana's death came from a culture that "knew" her only from magazine covers and salacious biographies.

LIFE THE MOVIE
Neal Gabler
Alfred A. Knopf
(November 1998)
PRINT RUN:
15,000 copies



Gabler's point is that we dwell in a culture collectively hell-bent on being profiled in *People*. The way we measure success and happiness—even, Gabler argues, reality—has come to depend on perceptions of a fame that is divorced from achievement or concrete action. Hence the worship of celebrity for celebrity's sake (Gabler's "Zsa Zsa Factor"), in which fame seems disconnected from accomplishment.

Gabler's ambition is broad, and the book occasionally suffers from a tonal schizophrenia: He both celebrates and bemoans this "world of postreality." Even so, *Life the Movie* offers a compelling portrait of modern life as "a show staged for the media."

—Jeff Pooley

FROM CHICAGO'S "BLACK BELT" to a private school in the city's affluent Lincoln Park district, from an existence scraped together on welfare to an education at Yale University, Rosemary L. Bray spent her young life learning to harmonize discordant worlds.

Bray's memoir, *Unafraid of the Dark,* shows how a little opportunity can translate into immeasurable ambition. Her father's abuse terrorized the family, but he taught his eldest daughter that an education was her only ticket out of destitution. Her mother insisted she learn to read at age three and sought a scholarship when Bray's teachers suggested she attend a more accelerated private school.

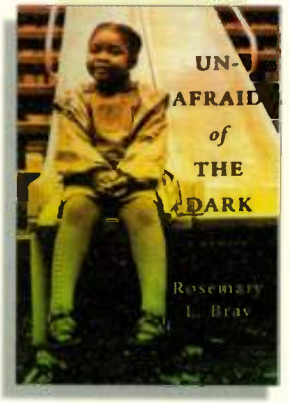
"They came to the North to leave their poverty and ignorance behind," Bray writes of her parents, "and though poverty had followed them—and their children—they were both determined to beat back ignorance."

Bray persevered, ultimately graduating from Yale and excelling at a succession of magazine jobs in a field still largely dominated by whites.

In *Unafraid of the Dark,* Bray traces her progression from a hoarder of public-library books to an editor of *The New York Times Book Review.* Along the way, she reveals a woman both haunted and liberated by her past.

—Kimberly Conniff

UNAFRAID OF THE DARK
Rosemary L. Bray
Random House
(March 1998)
PRINT RUN:
Not Available

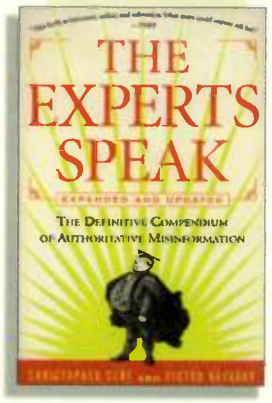


"IN THE MASS MEDIA, WHERE anchors and reporters are not permitted to have opinions of their own, expert opinion is all that's left," observe Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky in their introduction to *The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation.* The main problem with such "expert opinion," they hold, is that the experts are often, perhaps usually, wrong.

With an eye toward exposing this problem, Cerf and Navasky have assembled a funny, intricately indexed catalog of failed predictions, spurious logic, and bold miscalculations—all with the goal of knocking the so-called expert off his pedestal, preferably with a rock.

Some quotes work better than others to this end. Arguably, Elizabeth Taylor's saying "Nothing will ever separate us.... We'll probably be married another ten years" about husband Richard Burton only five days before announcing their divorce was more a matter of hubris than failed expertise, and Richard Nixon's "I am not a crook" was pretty much just a lie. On the other hand, the *Newsweek* headline "Fifty Political Experts Unanimously Predict A Dewey Victory" just three weeks before President Harry Truman's famous win showcases the point elegantly, as does, more unsettlingly, Mohandas Ghandi's praising of Hitler in 1940 for "gaining his victories without much bloodshed."

THE EXPERTS SPEAK
Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky
Villard Books
(August 1998)
PRINT RUN:
18,000 copies



Unlike similar stupidest-things-ever-said books, *The Experts Speak* aims to do more than get cheap laughs at the expense of a fool. When the chapter on gender roles leads off with a quote from Aristotle—"Woman may be said to be an inferior man"—the reader is reminded that even geniuses get it wrong sometimes.

Perhaps the single best example of the authors' cynicism and their disdain for "expert" authority leads off the "Power and Geopolitics" chapter: "The meek shall inherit the earth."—Psalms 37:11

—Ari Voukydis

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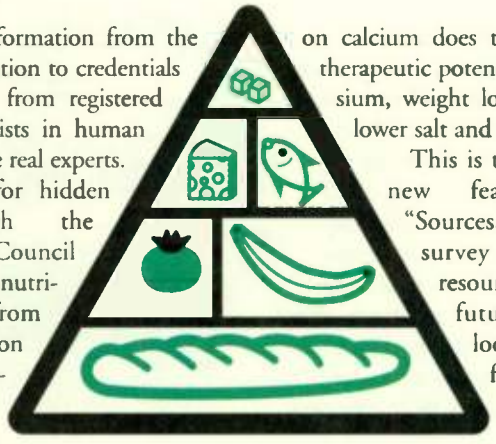
DIETANDNUTRITION

We've sifted through a mountain of information to compile our list of the best books, periodicals, and websites. • BY LESLIE HEILBRUNN

WITH ALL THE INFORMATION out there on diet and nutrition—much of it conflicting—how is anyone supposed to know what's reliable and what's not? *Brill's Content* asked 15 nutrition experts which diet and nutrition resources they would recommend as accurate, realistic, and easy to understand. After examining their suggestions, we compiled a list of the best sources available from print media, the Internet, and even the telephone.

What did we find? Because reliable diet and nutrition information is based on scientific research, the best sources are generally those produced by government agencies, universities, and health-related associations and foundations.

In addition to the list of sources we've provided below, here are a couple of tips to help you sift the good information from the bad. Always pay attention to credentials and look for advice from registered dietitians and specialists in human nutrition—they're the real experts.



Similarly, look for hidden agendas. Although the National Dairy Council offers good, reliable nutrition information from registered dietitians on milk and milk products, keep in mind that the Council is an industry group whose purpose is to promote milk products. In a section on its website devoted to reducing hypertension, for example, the council focuses its attention on the benefits of calcium. Only after a fat paragraph on calcium does the council mention the therapeutic potential of potassium, magnesium, weight loss, physical activity, and lower salt and alcohol intake.

This is the first installment of a new feature we're calling "Sources," which will present a survey of the most reliable resources on a single topic. In future installments we'll look at other subjects, like finance, wine, news, and travel. We'll choose from newspapers, magazines, newsletters, the Internet, television, and radio, and we'll organize our recommendations by medium. (This month we found nothing worth recommending on TV or radio—so we skipped them.)

in the bookstores:

THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION'S COMPLETE FOOD & NUTRITION GUIDE (Chronimed Publishing, $24.95) - A compendium of easy-to-use, easy-to-understand information. The book is peppered with sidebars that puncture myths (hyperactivity is not, in fact, caused by sugar, MSG, or other food additives; page 200) and address real-life dieting situations (how to order when dining out; page 391). Included are chapters on food allergies, grocery shopping, food safety, and the dietary needs of vegetarians and athletes.

BOWES AND CHURCH'S FOOD VALUES OF PORTIONS COMMONLY USED (Lippincott-Raven Publishers, $35) - According to Nancy Clark, a Boston sports nutritionist, this is the industry standard for counting calories, fat, and any other type of nutritional value in food, including name-brand products and fast-food items.

DIETING FOR DUMMIES (IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., $19.99) - By registered dietitian Jane Kirby and The American Dietetic Association, this user-friendly guide explains how to tailor sensible diet, cooking, and exercise plans for yourself. The book also includes information about diet fads, eating disorders, nutritional supplements, weight-loss drugs, and weight-loss programs.

NANCY CLARK'S SPORTS NUTRITION GUIDEBOOK (Human Kinetics, $16.95) - Nancy Clark brings everyone from the casual walker to the elite triathlete up to speed on nutrition basics, weight control, and eating disorders. "She has excellent examples and recipes that are very easy to put into practice, and it's a fun book to read," says Terry Karl, a dietitian at the Women's Sports Medicine Center at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York.

THE NUTRITION BIBLE (Quill, $17) - A dictionary of food and nutrition that runs from "A, Vitamin" to "Zwieback." "It's a great, quick, go-to book," explains Heidi Skolnik, a New York nutritionist, who uses it as a reference book in her practice.

THE SUPERMARKET GUIDE (Chronimed Publishing, $5.95) - Tips from The American Dietetic Association on understanding food labels, choosing vegetables and fruits, picking the healthiest yogurt, etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN HERSEY

[SOURCES]

in the newsletters:

TUFTS UNIVERSITY HEALTH & NUTRITION LETTER (800-274-7581; $24/year), *THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY WELLNESS LETTER* (800-829-9170; $28/year), and *ENVIRONMENTAL NUTRITION* (800-829-5384; $30/year) - These newsletters win universal praise from our experts, who say they are based on solid, scientific research. *Environmental Nutrition* deals solely with nutrition, while *Tufts* and *Berkeley* focus more on overall health and well-being. All are easy to understand and feature short articles on the latest research, nutritional recommendations, information on food safety, and evaluations of products ranging from herbs and supplements to breadmakers and diet books. Each newsletter also has health-and-nutrition facts and addresses reader queries on such topics as how yams and sweet potatoes differ, what's the best way to get calcium, and why, after eating a heavy meal, you feel hungrier than usual the next morning.

on the telephone:

THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION'S CONSUMER NUTRITION HOT LINE **(800-366-1655)** - Call for a referral to a registered dietitian near you or to hear recorded messages on a variety of nutrition topics. Note: if you want customized answers to your food and nutrition questions, you can call 900-225-5267 from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. (CST), Monday through Friday. A registered dietitian will be on hand to help you. The cost is $1.95 for the first minute and 95 cents for each additional minute.

in the newspapers:

THE NEW YORK TIMES, Jane Brody; *USA TODAY,* Nanci Hellmich - Brody, a *Times* columnist since 1976, and Hellmich, the nutrition and fitness reporter at *USA Today* for more than 14 years, have mastered the art of synthesizing vast amounts of diet information and making it understandable. "They are sound, very practical, and easy to understand—and they are very precise," says Christine Hart, a New York dietitian. She also says that Brody and Hellmich both "get at what are some real interesting themes for a reader that you don't get elsewhere...[and] know who to consult to get the right information."

in the magazines:

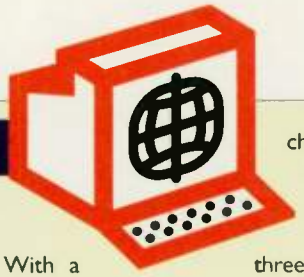
COOKING LIGHT
(Time Inc; $20/year)
Cooking Light provides recipes complete with data on calories, fat, protein, cholesterol, and fiber. There is also plenty to read on fitness—both physical and spiritual. It's "a wealth of information about how to make life healthier by lightening up food and making it more nutritious," says Kathleen Zelman, a nutrition consultant in Atlanta and an ADA spokeswoman.

EATING WELL
(Hachette Filipacchi Magazines; $19.94/year)
Eating Well's signature is the meal makeover that pares away calories and fat grams from all sorts of menus. The "Nutrition News" section serves up the latest research, diet-book reviews, and Q&As on general nutrition questions. Colleen Pierre, a Baltimore dietitian who serves as an ADA spokeswoman, is a big fan: "I love their photographs and I love their food and I love their information and they also have an excellent nutrition writer."

FITNESS **(Gruner+Jahr; $19.97/year)**
HEALTH **(Time Inc.; $19.97/year)**
PREVENTION **(Rodale Press, Inc.; $18.94/year)**
SHAPE **(Weider Publications, Inc.; $19.97/year)**
Each of these magazines was recommended by at least one expert—with a few caveats that hold true for all consumer magazines. Peggy Menzel, a dietitian at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, warns that their headlines and articles can sometimes oversell a concept (the wonders of oat bran, for example), give too much emphasis to one study's results, or rely on sources who are not nutrition experts. Menzel suggests that you do a little research to find out where the best information is coming from on a given topic, how thorough the research in this area is, and how valid the health claims are.

KAREN CAPUCILLI/GRAPHISTOCK (FRUIT)

on the web:



Tufts University Nutrition Navigator

(www.navigator.tufts.edu) - With a ratings system devised by the school's nutrition experts, Tufts University evaluated the information and usability of nutrition-related websites and offers links to each site reviewed.

Consumer Information Center

(www.pueblo.gsa.gov) - This site culls information on a variety of subjects from different government agencies. The layout is no-frills, but solid and updated information abounds. Go to the Food & Nutrition section for information about diet, nutrition, and food safety; look at the Diet & Exercise portion of the Health section to learn more about weight control and exercise.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases

(www.niddk.nih.gov) - The "Health Information & Education Programs" section of this website provides extensive information about obesity, its risks, and how to control it through diet and exercise. There is also a link to the Weight-Control Information Network, a national information service of NIDDK and the National Institutes of Health that provides consumers and nutrition professionals with information about obesity, weight control, eating disorders, and nutrition.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

(www.nal.usda.gov/fnic) - The U.S. Department of Agriculture created the nation's dietary guidelines and food-guide pyramid, so why not go directly to the source? The USDA's National Agricultural Library has information on food safety and reports on American eating habits, for example, such as how well kids are eating.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

(www.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html) - Go to the Nutrition and Dietary Guidelines link to learn about different types of fat or why you need more fiber in your diet. Or check out the food-label sections to learn that "low-fat" means a product contains three grams or less of fat per serving. Follow the Losing Weight and Maintaining a Healthy Weight link to find out which weight-loss products and programs are scams.

American Diabetes Association

(www.diabetes.org) - While the recipes and nutrition information on this site are geared to diabetics, "they have a lot of general guidelines that anyone can use," explains Susan Hopson, a dietitian at the University of Chicago Hospitals Gastroenterology Clinic.

The American Dietetic Association

(www.eatright.org) - With daily tips such as how to turn your kids on to fiber (December 10); monthly features like December's "Season's Eatings at the Mall"; and a regularly updated nutrition fact sheet, the association's website helps you navigate the ins and outs of a nutritious lifestyle. It also examines the latest diet and nutrition fads, like high-protein/low-carbohydrate diets, and offers information targeted to demographic groups like children, women, and the elderly.

The American Heart Association

(www.amhrt.org) - This is the place to go if you're looking for ways to reduce the risk of heart disease through diet. The site features "help-your-heart" recipes and dietary recommendations, and explains how the AHA has adapted the food-guide pyramid.

Center for Science in the Public Interest

(www.cspinet.org) - Remember the news about how bad movie-theater popcorn is for you or the actual number of calories in your favorite Chinese or Mexican dish? Those bulletins came from the consumer-watchdog organization Center for Science in the Public Interest, whose website is filled with information about the food and additives you're eating.

International Food Information Council

(ificinfo.health.org) - A wealth of information on food topics ranging from basic child and adult nutrition to food additives, biotechnology, and pesticides.

Mayo Clinic Health Oasis

(www.mayohealth.org) - The site's Nutrition Center links to a plethora of diet and nutrition information. Want to make over your fat-filled fettuccine alfredo? Go to the "Virtual Cookbook" and it will show you how to make it healthy. Curious if ostrich meat is low-fat? Put your question to "Ask the Mayo Dietitian" and you'll find out that it is. If you look at the Commonly Asked Questions link, you'll find out that all those quick-results "Mayo Clinic Diets" on the market are not in fact endorsed by the clinic. There is also extensive diet and nutrition information, as well as interactive quizzes to test how much you know about these subjects.

The Vegetarian Resource Group

(www.vrg.org) - Information about vegetarianism and veganism and how to maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet without consuming animal products.

CyberDiet

(www.cyberdiet.com) - All the tools and information you need to plan a healthful diet are here. If you want to know your body-mass index, your waist/hip ratio, your target heart rate, or how many calories you're burning while jogging a ten-minute mile, here's the place to calculate it. The site also provides customized nutrition profiles, a personal menu plan, nutrition information about fast-food restaurants, and exercise tips.

Meals For You

(www.MealsForYou.com) - You can use this site's recipes to build your own meal plan from scratch or opt for one of the site's menus designed for gourmands, vegetarians, dieters, diabetics, and the like. The recipe file is organized by ingredient, nutritional content, or course. ■

(continued from page 20)

real story about the media here, i.e., what is really wrong with those who report on scientific findings, a problem that even you have fallen victim to: scientific illiteracy.

RICHARD C. CARRIER
New York, NY
(via e-mail)

Nicholas Varchaver responds: I'm the first to admit that I am no statistician. I used the term *confidence interval* in the way that I did because that was how it was used by the ten scientists and statisticians I interviewed for this article. Indeed, the EPA's risk assessment on secondhand smoking, which was at issue, employs that term exclusively; it does not mention "level of confidence" or "confidence coefficient." That said, it is true that these same scientists and the EPA report used the phrase "confidence interval" loosely, referring both to the likelihood that a statistical result occurred purely by chance, and also to the range of results. But because we gave our definition, I believe it was clear to most readers. And whatever phrase you choose, the fact remains that the EPA jimmied its science—increasing the likelihood that its results occurred by chance—because it could not obtain a statistically significant result otherwise.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

*Hopefully your article on probing Kenneth Starr's leaks ["At Last, A Leakless Investigation," Rewind, December/January] will have impact. Press malfeasance is a serious threat to our political system and has endless opportunity in this era of monopoly newspapers.

Your article and the accompanying cover story about Disney are reminders that in many respects our political system was better served, in terms of the diversity of ideas, by the much-maligned party press of [President Abraham] Lincoln's days than by today's monopoly newspapers.

STANLEY COHEN
Chevy Chase, MD

LOOK IN THE MIRROR

*Why on earth isn't such a huge story ["At Last, A Leakless Investigation"] being covered? Clinton's accuser and prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, is clearly guilty of the very same conduct he is attempting to prosecute on the part of the president—lying in sworn affidavits. In understating the obvious, Brill points out that such a story "has no legs" because it shows the incestuous relationship shared by the media and Starr.

THOMAS N. OSRAN
Chicago, IL
(via e-mail)

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS FUTURE

*Matt Drudge is no more a modern-day Tom Paine than my neighbor is Marcel Proust for belonging to the HTML Writer's Guild. Your well-written article merely stated what most people already know about the Internet: it's leveled the playing [field] and allowed everyone the ability to get their infor-

DOWN TO BUSINESS

YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT *BUSINESS WEEK*'S "Inside Wall Street" [The Money Press, November] column is unfair and shows a lack of understanding about how financial markets work.

First off, you fail to give us the credit we deserve for doing our own analysis of the performance of stocks mentioned in the column. What other publication shows such accountability?

Second, by focusing on the takeover deals that didn't happen, you completely miss the point of the "Inside Wall Street" column. It is not forecasting takeovers. It is not a mergers-and-acquisitions column, as you wrongly bill on your cover. Rather, it is a column about stocks—stocks likely to move up or down. Even when a possible deal does not materialize, the mere existence of such talk generally drives up the stock price. [Writer] Gene [Marcial] reports on the talk of the street.

The proof of this particular pudding is in the stock prices: the stocks mentioned in our column, even the takeover stocks, did remarkably well after we wrote about them. Since you did not provide the date for your readers, I will: [*see chart, left*]

This is an outstanding record—far better than that of most managers on Wall Street. How could you all but ignore these numbers? Why didn't you print the rise in the stock price for all those takeover stocks you showed in your own table? If you had, most of them would show sustained price increases—a "takeover premium" even if the deal didn't happen.

You simply glossed over the truth: Gene's column has an outstanding record of highlighting stocks that move. His column is widely read and highly influential precisely because he has been so right for so long. It's all in the numbers, if you only bothered to look. Instead, you slammed a darn good journalist.

STEPHEN B. SHEPARD
Editor in chief, *Business Week*

Editor's Response: We noted that *Business Week* evaluated this column on the basis of how much a stock moves after it is written about in the column. But we also pointed out that this could be *because* a column had been written suggesting that a stock was a takeover possibility, not that the column was accurate. Thus, Mr. Shepard's chart showing that the stock jumps on the first day when the article is published but then falls back to gain no better or worse than the market overall *was* our point.

CHARTING A COLUMN'S SUCCESS

	1 day gain	1 mo.	3 mos.	6 mos.
172 Stocks mentioned in "Inside Wall Street" (1997)	4.7%	5.4%	7.8%	15.1%
Dow Jones average	.03%	1.3%	5.2%	11.6%
S&P 500	0.1%	1.9%	7.0%	15.4%
Russell 3000	.05%	1.7%3	6.7%	14.8%

mation from other than mainstream news outlets.

Drudge is just the right person at the right time. Good for him, but he's neither a revolutionary nor a pioneer.

YISRAEL ARI SPINOZA
Tucson, AZ
(via e-mail)

THEY GOT THERE FIRST

You credit Matt Drudge on page 123 of your November issue with exclusively reporting on May 20, "Encryption missing after China/US [satellite] accident." This was first reported on the Fox News Channel on May 18 during *Special Report with Brit Hume.*

CARL CAMERON
Correspondent
Fox News Channel
(via e-mail)

Editor's note: A transcript of that broadcast shows that Fox beat Drudge to the encryption story. Our apologies.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE

*If Matt Drudge is the "Town Crier For The New Age," then this country is really, really in deep trouble. To even mention Drudge's name in the same breath as Tom Paine is oxymoronic. To attempt to compare anything that Drudge could do or write or say with *Common Sense* or *The Age of Reason* is incomprehensible. A better title could have been "Town Liar For The New Age."

DON SEIDMAN
Baltimore, MD

PART OF THE PROBLEM

*Sixteen pages of Drudge, five of Broder. That's two thirds Drudge, one third "un-Drudge." Two thirds uninformed cynicism, one third solid competence; two thirds cavalier dismissal, one third intelligent professionalism. The question for sages to ponder is whether your November issue has captured the order of things or whether you're exacerbating one of the ills you set out to confront.

CHARLES ARTHUR WILLARD
Professor and chair
Department of Communication
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY

IT DOESN'T ADD UP

*I've just finished reading your profile of self-described Internet "citizen reporter" Matt Drudge, and, I must say, I'm disappointed.

I'm just not sure I understand the thinking at *Brill's Content.* Your first issue spent 30 pages castigating journalists for three weeks of sometimes shoddy reporting that filled the initial breaking of the Lewinsky/Clinton scandal. Now, just a few weeks after the release of evidence that proves many of those stories were correct, you're offering a cover story on a reporter whose biggest claim to fame is revealing the existence of a story developed by another news organization before it felt it was solid enough for publication.

Is the journalism of the future really a guy sitting in a room debriefing sources on-line to write stories that are definitely true less than half of the time?

As a journalist who still goes to bed with a knot in my stomach every night before a big story is published—mentally reviewing the piece time and again to try and catch the smallest error—I hope not.

ERIC DEGGANS
TV critic, *St. Petersburg Times*
Saint Petersburg, FL

WHAT'LL IT BE?

*I see what appears to be a glaring discrepancy in David Broder's comments in [Michael] Kramer's article ["The Un-Drudge," November]. Broder states that "[f]or both journalists and politicians, talent is no substitute for character." Yet in commenting on Jimmy Carter's presidency, he says that "[h]e's an estimable person, of course, but he was incompetent as president." So, Mr. Broder, which do you prefer in a president, talent or character?

ELIOT J. CHANDLER
Wiscasset, ME
(via e-mail)

DEAD MEN DON'T BREATHE

In reading Mike Pride's article ["Hardball With A Heart," Out Here, November], I couldn't help but be impressed by any law officer who could smell alcohol on the dead man's breath, as described on page 84. Now that's police work.

KERRY MACDONALD
Seattle, WA
(via e-mail)

DON'T DUMB IT DOWN

*Newspaper bosses reading your excellent "Too Hot For High School" [PG Watch, November] should see a potentially large group of readers who are typically shut out of the dailies.

As advisers to a teen-written news page printed regularly by *The Bristol Press* in Connecticut, we know that dozens of wonderful stories fall through the coverage cracks of most papers. Our student reporters produce stellar journalism that has won state and even national acclaim. Most of the papers that bother with a teen page of some sort dumb it down with the assumption that young people only want to read about the latest gory movie or one-hit band. Unfortunately, there are precious few places for real news about real teens and their lives.

STEVE COLLINS AND JACKIE MAJERUS
Bristol, CT
(via e-mail)

UNFAIR WORD CHOICE

*An actor/comedian says "f---ing" on national television and doesn't want to discuss it ["CNN Loses Control," The Notebook, November]. *Brill's Content*'s Rachel Lehmann-Haupt reports, "[Arsenio] Hall refused to comment for this article."

A reporter for *Nightline* screws up a significant fact and the anchor for the program doesn't want to discuss the next night's on-air correction ["*Nightline*'s Candid Correction," The Notebook, November]. *Brill's Content*'s Rachel Taylor reports, "[Ted] Koppel declined to comment for this article."

Refused makes a person look like a jerk; *declined* implies an intelligent person who has nothing to say about a touchy subject. Choosing *refused* over *declined* appears to be a subtle form of punishment used by reporters to get back at people that don't want to talk.

STEVE LUDWIG
Denver, CO
(via e-mail)

[LETTERS]

A CHEER FOR DECENCY

*While reading the notebook feature titled "Privacy: *CNN* v. *MSNBC*," I found myself cheering CNN and anchor Bernard Shaw for their compassion and decency on such a delicate and sensitive occasion in choosing not to identify the [slain Capitol] officers.

As a former host and producer of a television talk show for teens, I have found myself chafing at the bit from time to time when some in the media cowardly hide behind the very transparent shield afforded them by the phrase "the people's right to know."

PAUL ANDREW DAWKINS
Fayetteville, NC
(via e-mail)

POLICE THE AIRWAVES

*Referring to "Rewind" of November ["Back From The Abyss"], keep in mind that no broadcasters have an intrinsic or permanent right to the frequency or channel upon which they operate. Each station operates by sufferance. Granted, the FCC has not lately lifted any licenses, but that is more the political climate in which we are living. Given a more stringent policing of the airwaves and a more critical populace, that could well have an effect upon station operations.

WALTER BJORNEBY,
Greeley, CO
(via e-mail)

WHY NOT GIVE 'EM WHAT THEY WANT?

*Your insightful referenced essay on local TV news was too optimistic. Even given a new Internet age of more choices, local news will remain consultant/research/ratings/profit-driven. Content will be second to sizzle, because it is sizzle that sells. Viewers rated our 57 hours of continuous Hurricane Georges coverage the best (*Mobile Register*, October 2). Yes, it was also the most excessive. Our idea of the new era of community service is news. And it is also profitable. But your notion that viewers will tire of typical weather-crime-local-TV if they can get better faster elsewhere like the Internet/cable/newspaper forgets what TV is. Local TV is fleeting, changing, fast, and glossy. It is what viewers like.

Home construction has gotten cheaper because buyers want cheaper. Electronic media will always be entertaining first and informative second, because that is what sells. Viewers like what we give them. Advertisers like to get viewers. TV managers like to get advertisers. They are not trying to lead, inspire, or motivate their community, just be the most profitable. If more viewers wanted informative content, more would subscribe to newspapers.

ROBIN DE LANEY
Creative director, WKRG TV
Mobile, AL

TELL IT LIKE IT IS

*In your November issue, Katherine Rosman wrote about the truth and veracity content of magazines edited by Bonnie Fuller ["The Secret Of Her Success"]. While reading this, it occurred to me that one of the largest problems most journalistic ventures face is that they all evolved from one set of ethical bounds. Nowadays, what would be unheard of for *Newsweek* to support (e.g. the creation of fictional sources for its stories) may be a common, everyday event at *Cosmopolitan*. Still, *Cosmopolitan* is expected to be just as truthful as *Newsweek* (and, indeed, *Cosmopolitan* writers and editors seem to believe that at least in some respects they should be). What a magazine such as *Cosmopolitan* should do is set out what is common policy for it to do with regards to authorship, letters, opinions, etc., much as *Brill's Content* does. If they make up letters, state it. If a person's quotes may not be accurate, disclaim it. In this way, the reader can take the articles etc. for what he or she thinks they are worth.

MICHAEL HESS
Houston, TX
(via e-mail)

UP IN SMOKE

*In your article about *Glamour* editor Bonnie Fuller, you tell stories of quotation-doctoring and downright fabrication when Fuller was editor of *Cosmopolitan*. In particular, in one *Cosmo* piece about why men watch X-rated movies with their girlfriends, you allege that *Cosmo* editors "dreamed up" X-rated movie titles such as *Backdoor Draft*, *The Accidental Impurist*, and *E.T.—The Extra Testicle*. They may have dreamed up the first two, but the latter they certainly did not. They plagiarized it from one of the old Cheech and Chong movies [*Still Smokin'*], which explains why it's more imaginative than the other two.

MATT SIEGEL
New York, NY
(via e-mail)

THE VIEW FROM THE STACKS

*I am a children's librarian [and] am paid to keep abreast of the news and to select print formats that meet popular demand. That said, I have been dismayed by letters to the editor that seem to split hairs and miss the big picture. It's to your credit that you have published and answered them.

However, even in light of your coverage of Bonnie Fuller, I will continue to defect to whatever magazine she has revamped. Fuller and [creative director Donald] Robertson's brilliant, reader-friendly packaging has caused this unlikely reader to devour *YM* and *Cosmo* monthly, without fail. Prior to Ms. Fuller's appointment, I rejected the content of such women's magazines, but I can't resist her fresh, fun format [and] style. This is a high compliment coming from someone who has access to over fifty weekly and monthly periodicals. I would be more impressed by [Fuller's] critics if I thought they were the average consumer I see every day in the library.

ABIGAIL GOLDBERG
Brooklyn, NY

DIG DEEPER INDEED

*Jeff Stier's letter in the November 1998 issue highlights a crucial aspect of media criticism: uncovering the commercial interests that subsidize research and information. Your gracious attitude toward Stier's "digging," however, went a bit too far. Stier's group, the American Council on Science and Health, has produced dubious research that supported its corporate backers. *Columbia Journalism Review* pointed out in 1990 that

the council had fed its dubious findings on health and diet to the media on behalf of [various corporations].

Controversy followed [it] most recently when *The New York Times* summarized its latest industry-backed research in a piece on health scares that allegedly weren't scares at all, like Alar and apples (which, in fact, was a legitimate health concern). The *Times* was compelled to finally correct the record on September 5, after an environmental group took out its own ad in the *Times* drawing attention to the sloppy reporting.

PETER HART
Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting
New York, NY

WEIL DEFENDED

The claim by Jeff Stier ["Dig Deeper," Letters, November) that The Vitamin Shoppe's sponsorship of Time Inc. New Media's Ask Dr. Weil site somehow compromises the integrity of the on-line destination is not only disingenuous but, given Stier's affiliation with the American Council on Health and Science, obviously a self-serving attempt to undermine the legitimacy of our site.

The truth, of course, is that Andrew Weil's advice is based on one criteria: what he regards as being in the best interests of those who come on-line to seek his advice. Our mission will always remain ensuring that consumers are able to rely on the independence and the veracity of the information Dr. Weil provides, because nothing could be more detrimental to our editorial integrity or our business success than if we were to compromise that trust.

STEVEN PETROW
Assistant managing editor
Time Inc. New Media
New York, NY

DRUDGE MAY BE RIGHT

*Dee Dee Myers's on-target question "If hypocrisy is an issue with elected officials and candidates, why isn't it an issue with journalists?" must be honestly answered and pursued, since they are as powerful as politicians and candidates.

Ron Brownstein's attempt to answer this question was at best weak and disingenuous. The media are by no means innocent bystanders. They are the purveyors of muckraking that ruins people's lives. They profit through ratings, glorification, and ample paychecks. They are more than just "in the arena but near the battlefield." They are in the middle of the battlefield, instigating the war through their words. As contemptible as I find Matt Drudge, at least he is honest in his analysis of journalism—it's all "a fraud."

JANET HOO
New York, NY

NO HELP AT ALL

*In reading the article about covering tragedies ["Chasing Grief," November], the reporter, Cathy Hobbs, from WPIX in New York described her approach as, "Is there any way I can help you?"

If my father, mother, brother, and sister were killed instantly in a horrifying plane crash, how in the world can a reporter help me in this situation?

If any reporter covering a tragedy thinks they're actually helping the victims by telling their stories, they need a tall, ice-cold glass of reality.

SAM SCHACHTER
Dallas, TX

UNSUPPORTED CLAIM

*As one person constantly amazed at the lack of critical thought in media today, I was pleased to discover your publication. Imagine how dismayed I was, then, as I read the lead article by Steven Brill, "Accusation 35, Exoneration 2" [Rewind, October], which used the very techniques attacked throughout the magazine to casually slur a particular part of the legal system and lawyers. Although the principal focus of the story was how the media wrongly slanted its coverage, [Mr.] Brill somehow concludes that one solution is to "change the law" and force unsuccessful litigants to pay the victor's costs.

Compounding this attack, without foundation, attribution, nor a sense of fairness, he avers that this has not been done, in part, because "plaintiffs lawyers are so powerful financially and politically." Not only is this comment incorrect and spiteful, it is unnecessary to the article and unsupported by any facts.

DAVID N. DAMICK
St. Louis, MO

Steven Brill responds: As Mr. Damick probably knows, I've written a lot for a long time about the need for plaintiffs or defendants to pay the others' legal fees if they lose, and never, including in this article, have I been "spiteful" toward plaintiffs lawyers. However, I've simply pointed out that, as in this case, too often a completely innocent defendant has to pay tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees for the privilege of not caving in to a frivolous suit.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?

In your November issue you printed an informative letter from Michael Delizia that just happened to mention an obscure but interesting book advertised with a full-page ad on page 49. As you have probably pointed out yourself, such "coincidences" occur in women's magazines with alarming regularity. But is it a standard and acceptable practice at *Brill's Content* to solicit advertising for products mentioned in editorial content?

KIRSTEN NEILSEN
Berkeley, CA
(via e-mail)

SB responds: It's a coincidence. I didn't even notice the ad until I read this letter; the advertising people who sold the ad did not, of course, know about our selection of letters. It's embarrassing, and we're now working harder to make sure that if we run a letter that praises—or criticizes—a product like this, we won't run an ad of this kind.

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268 Number of election stories appearing on network evening news shows during the 1994 midterm general-election campaign (between Labor Day and Election Day)

72 Number of election stories appearing on network evening news shows for that time period during the 1998 midterm general election-campaign

426 Number of Monica Lewinsky scandal stories appearing on network evening news shows during the 1998 midterm general-election campaign (between Labor Day and Election Day)[1]

39 Percentage of U.S. consumers who rely on broadcast television for breaking news

37 Percentage of U.S. consumers who rely on cable television for breaking news

12 Percentage of U.S. consumers who rely on the Internet for breaking news

9 Percentage of U.S. consumers who rely on radio for breaking news[2]

5 Percentage of home Internet users who go on-line to read newspapers or magazines

11 Percentage of home Internet users who go on-line to be entertained[3]

0 Percentage of U.S. government agencies in full compliance with the Electronic Freedom of Information Act as of January 1998[4]

30 Hours of TV news available per week to the average viewer in the United Kingdom in 1986

243 Hours of TV news available per week to the average viewer in the United Kingdom in 1997[5]

3,263 Number of newspapers worldwide available on the Web, as of December 1998

1 Number of newspaper websites (usatoday.com) in the top 20 news, information, and entertainment sites[6]

400,000 Approximate number of extra copies of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sold on September 9, 1998, the day after St. Louis Cardinal Mark McGwire hit his 62nd home run of the season

43,300 Approximate number of extra copies of the *Chicago Tribune* sold on September 14, 1998, the day after Chicago Cub Sammy Sosa hit his 62nd home run of the season[7]

32.7 Percentage of newspapers in the U.S. recovered and recycled in 1987[8]

67.5 Percentage of newspapers in the U.S. recovered and recycled in 1997

42 Percentage of daily newspapers in the United States with no minority journalists on staff[9]

50 Approximate number of book publishers that controlled 73% of the adult-book market in 1977

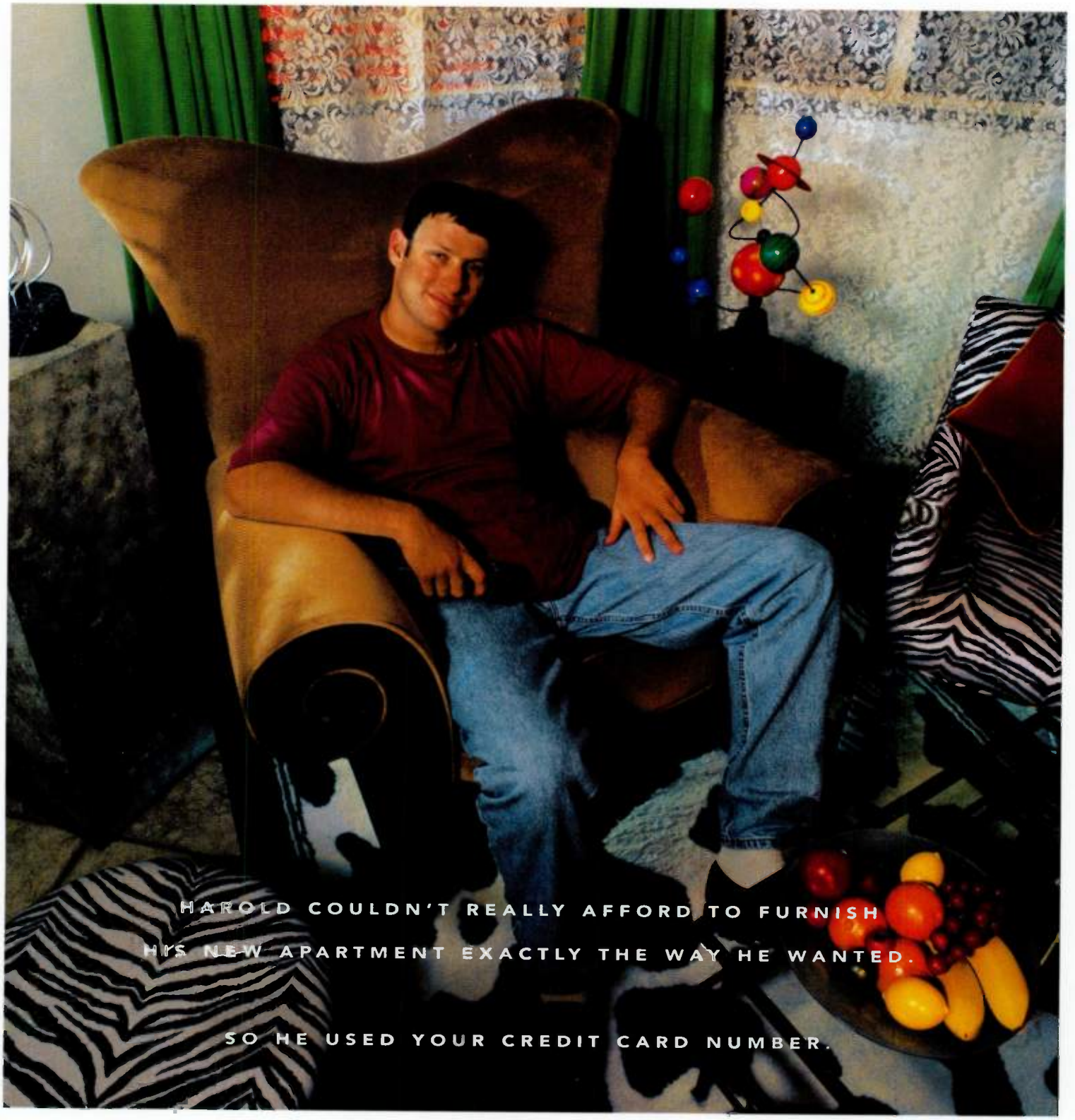
7 Number of book publishers that controlled 73% of the same market in 1996[10]

4 Number of books purchased per year by the average American

7 Number of books purchased per year by the average drinker of Diet Coke[11]

7:21 Average amount of time (in hours and minutes) that TV is viewed per household per day in the U.S.[12]

NOTES: 1. The Center for Media and Public Affairs / 2. Jupiter Communications Digital News Study / 3. Price Waterhouse Coopers Consumer Technology Survey, October, 1998 / 4. Internet Index; Office of Management and Budget Watch Report, April 1998 / 5. British Broadcasting Corporation News Study, October, 1998 / 6. Editor & Publisher Interactive; Media Metrix, Inc. / 7. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; *Chicago Tribune* / 8. American Forest & Paper Association / 9. American Society of Newspaper Editors 1998 Newsroom Census / 10. *Authors Guild Bulletin*, Summer 1998; Trade Book Publishing 1997 / 11. The Book Industry Study Group 1997 Consumer Research Study on Book Purchasing; Coca Cola Company / 12. Nielsen Media Research



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THE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE MARTINI FOR TWO. AS ENTWINED BY ELIAV NISSAN.

POUR SOMETHING PRICELESS.