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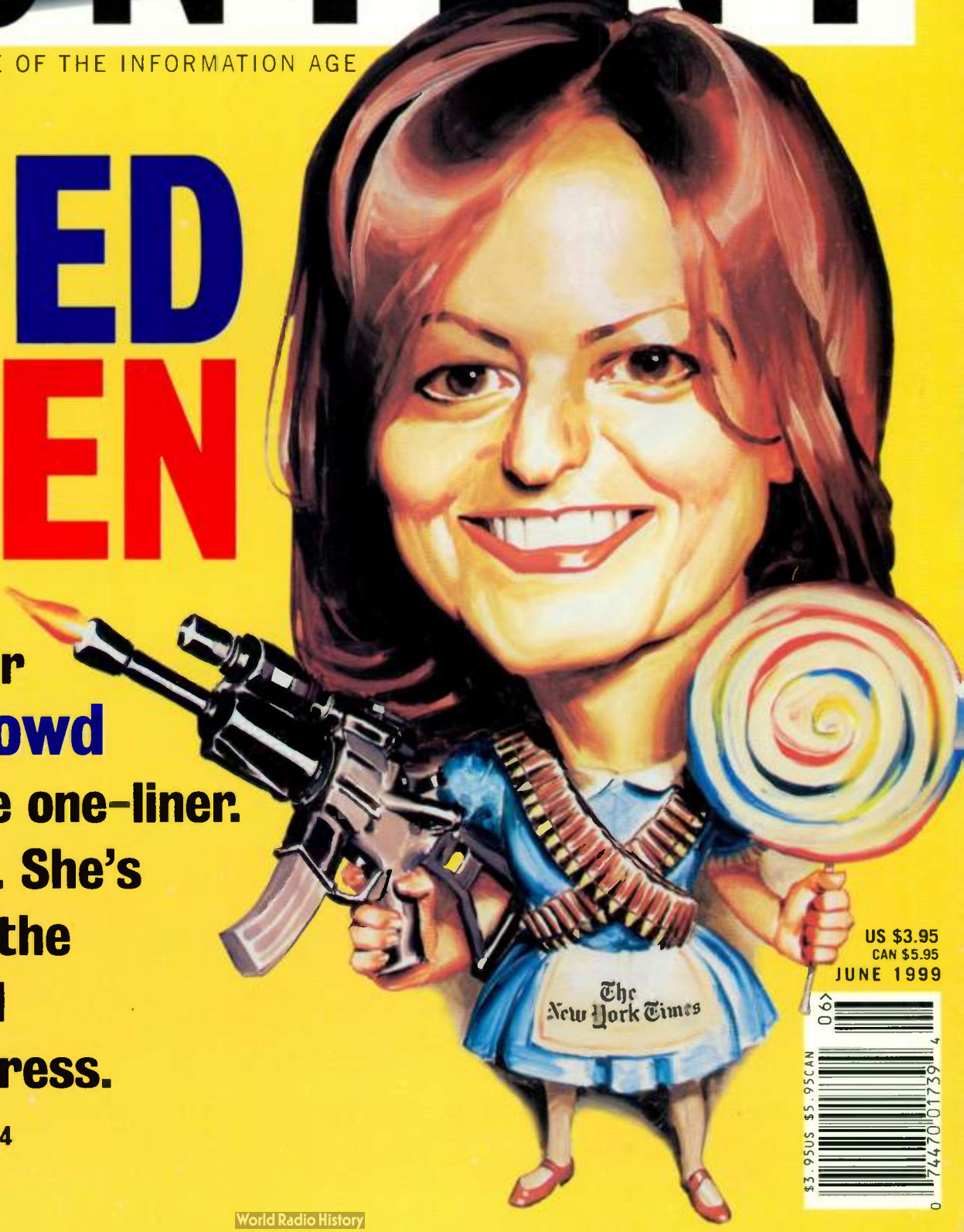
News Or Nepotism? NBC's Versace 'Scoop'

BRILL'S CONTENT™

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE

OP-ED VIXEN



Pulitzer winner Maureen Dowd is queen of the one-liner. She's brilliant. She's vicious. She's the poison-penned damsel in distress.

By Gay Jervey • Page 84

US $3.95
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JUNE 1999

VOGUE

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BRIDE'S

YOUR MESSAGE HAS ONLY AS MUCH INFLU

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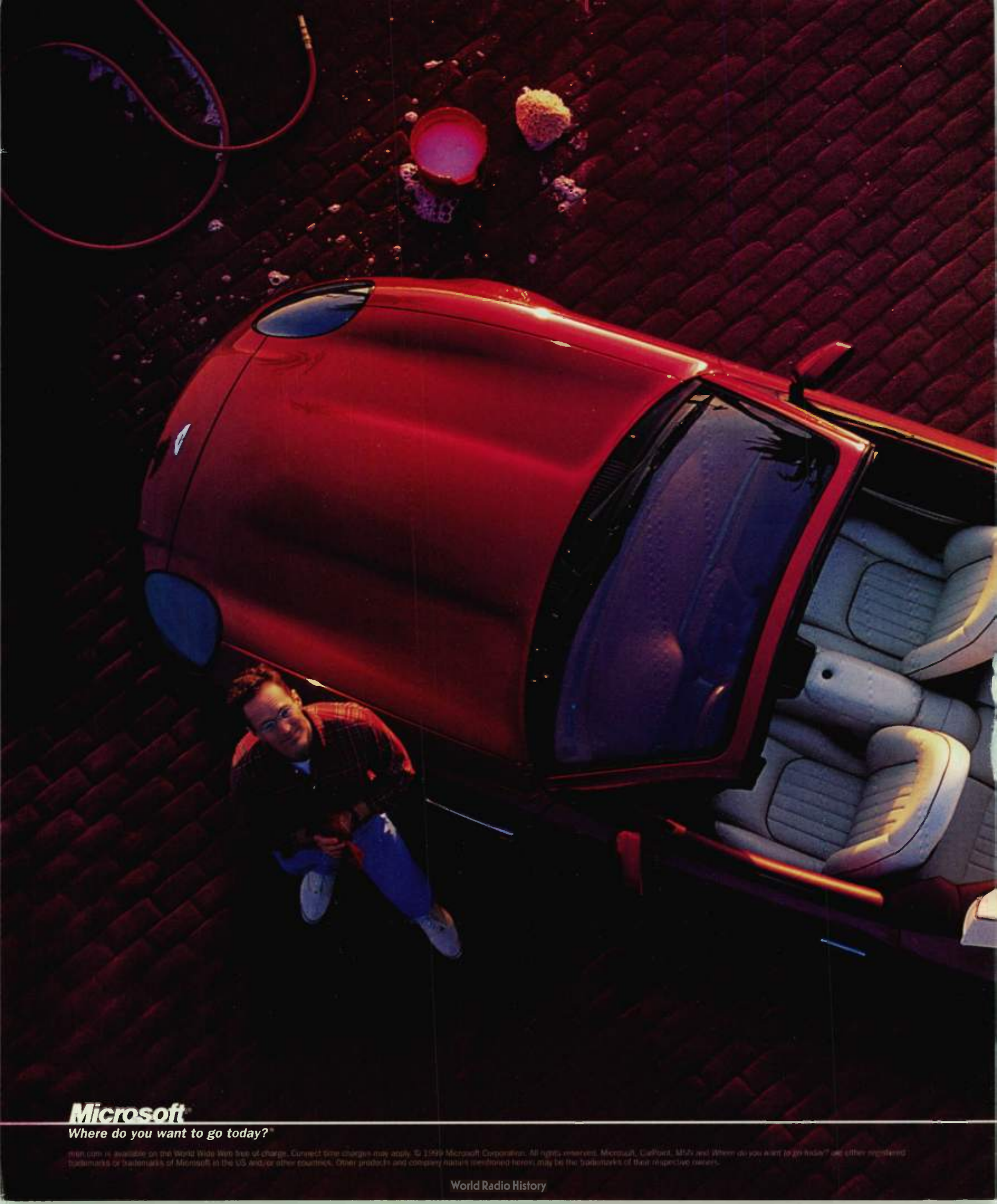

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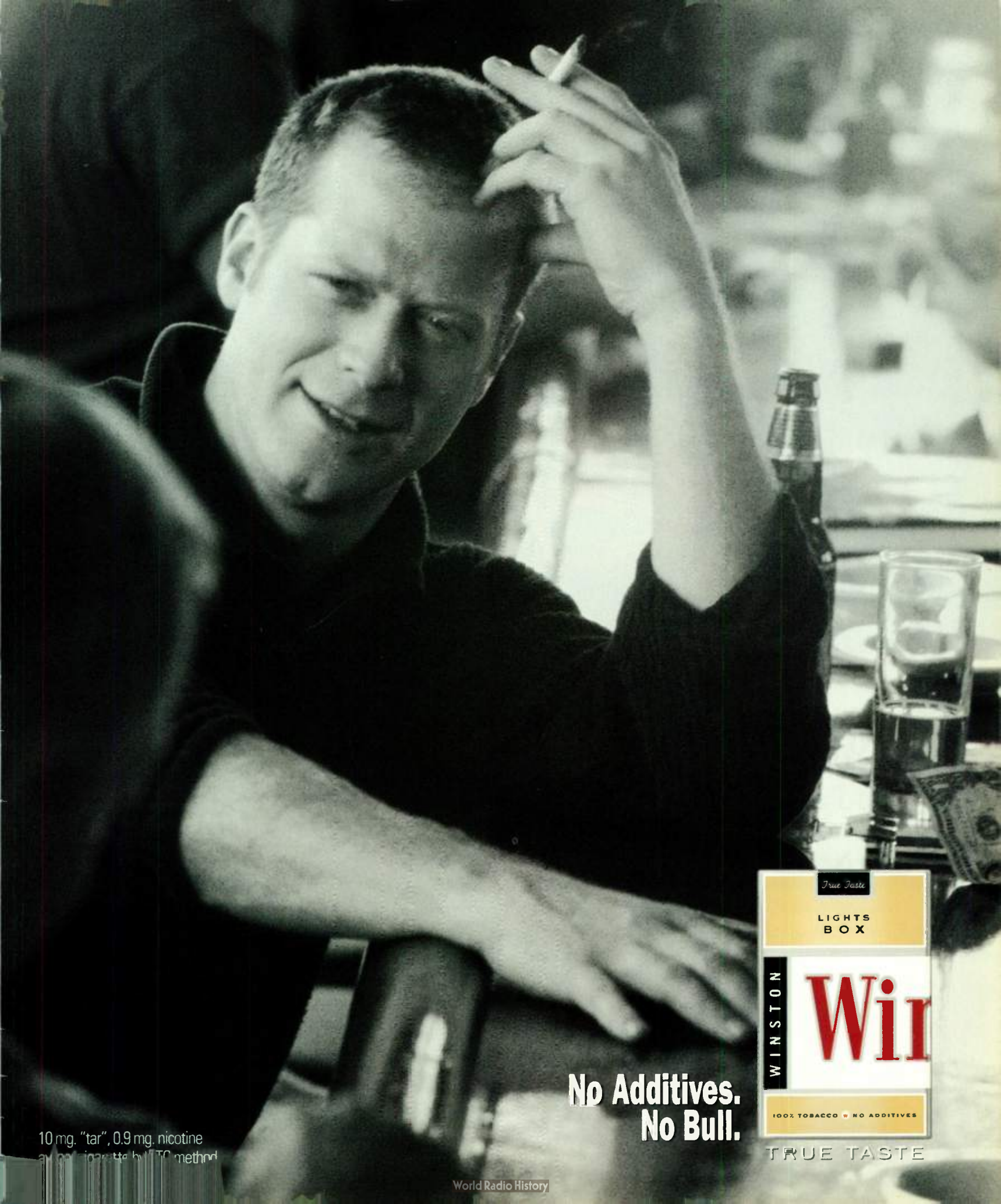

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[LETTER FROM THE EDITOR]

A WAR POSES EXTRAORDINARY CHALLENGES TO EVERYone it touches. The job of the press under such circumstances is to tell stories that illuminate the human toll, explain the military and political maneuvering, and even provide historical and social context. In a special package of stories this month, we offer a variety of vantage points on the media and the war in Yugoslavia.

When we profiled independent video journalist Nancy Durham in April, we were struck by both her modesty and her guts. Durham is one of those journalists who prefers to stay out of the way, to let her subjects shine through. So she was taken aback at first when we asked her to keep a personal diary for us as she made her way to the war region to create a short documentary about the Kosovar refugees for the British Broadcasting Corp. and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

Fortunately, Durham overcame her reticence, and we're the wiser for it. Durham's understanding of the region's tough history, as well as the relationships she had already forged there, give her story a rare depth and texture. Her account, which begins on page 110, introduces us to some sad but resilient people, while providing a rare inside look at a journalist at work under physically and emotionally difficult circumstances.

A very different kind of challenge has confronted CNN, and senior editor Nicholas Varchaver was provided unusual access to the network's nerve center in Atlanta to see how a network with ample resources and international reach covers a rapidly developing story with global implications. Varchaver's lively tale, which begins on page 102, is notable not just for the action he witnessed in Atlanta, however, but for the way it captures CNN's emergence as the real global force it has long had the potential to be.

Consider this statistic: Some 150 million homes worldwide receive CNN International, compared to the 80 million U.S. households that receive CNN. And did you assume CNN already proved its global reach during the Gulf War? Varchaver reports that while 10 million households outside the U.S. had access to CNN at that time, the number has increased fifteenfold since then. "The change can be summarized this way," Varchaver writes. "CNN, that most American of world symbols, is no longer an American network."

A SMALL YELP OF JOY COULD BE HEARD AROUND THE OFFICES OF this magazine when *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd in April was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for commentary. It's not that we're friends of hers or even that we were rooting for her. It's just that we had already decided to make senior writer Gay Jervey's probing profile of Dowd our cover story, and Dowd's Pulitzer win only serves to place in sharp relief many of the questions about Dowd's work that Jervey addresses.

Jervey writes that few doubt Dowd's talent or her power, but question whether the *Times* columnist informs. "There are those who often suggest that they would all but pay her airfare if Dowd would only venture out and investigate the world at large—and not just the Maureen-microworld...," Jervey writes. In trying to come to terms with what makes Dowd so confounding, Jervey finds a catch-22: "It is her very gift and potential that endow her with such an ability to disappoint." Jervey's article, her first for this magazine, begins on page 84.

Speaking of Pulitzers, after the prizes were announced, we conducted a review of how the winning newspapers chose to cover the prizes and themselves. Ever wonder how a newspaper's self-interest affects its news judgment? Our Notebook story on page 36 has the answer, and let's just say the cynics out there won't be disappointed.

ERIC EFFRON
EDITOR

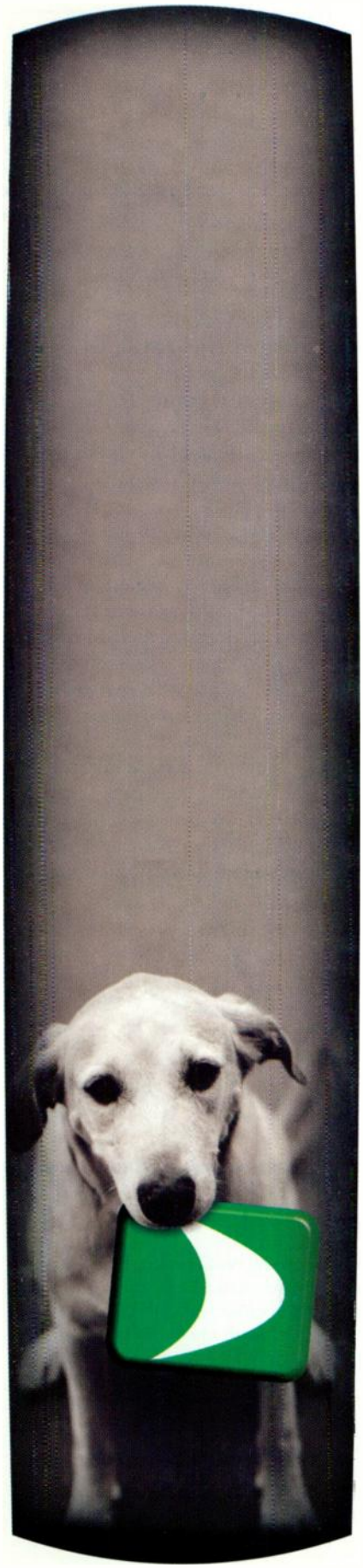
WHAT WE STAND FOR

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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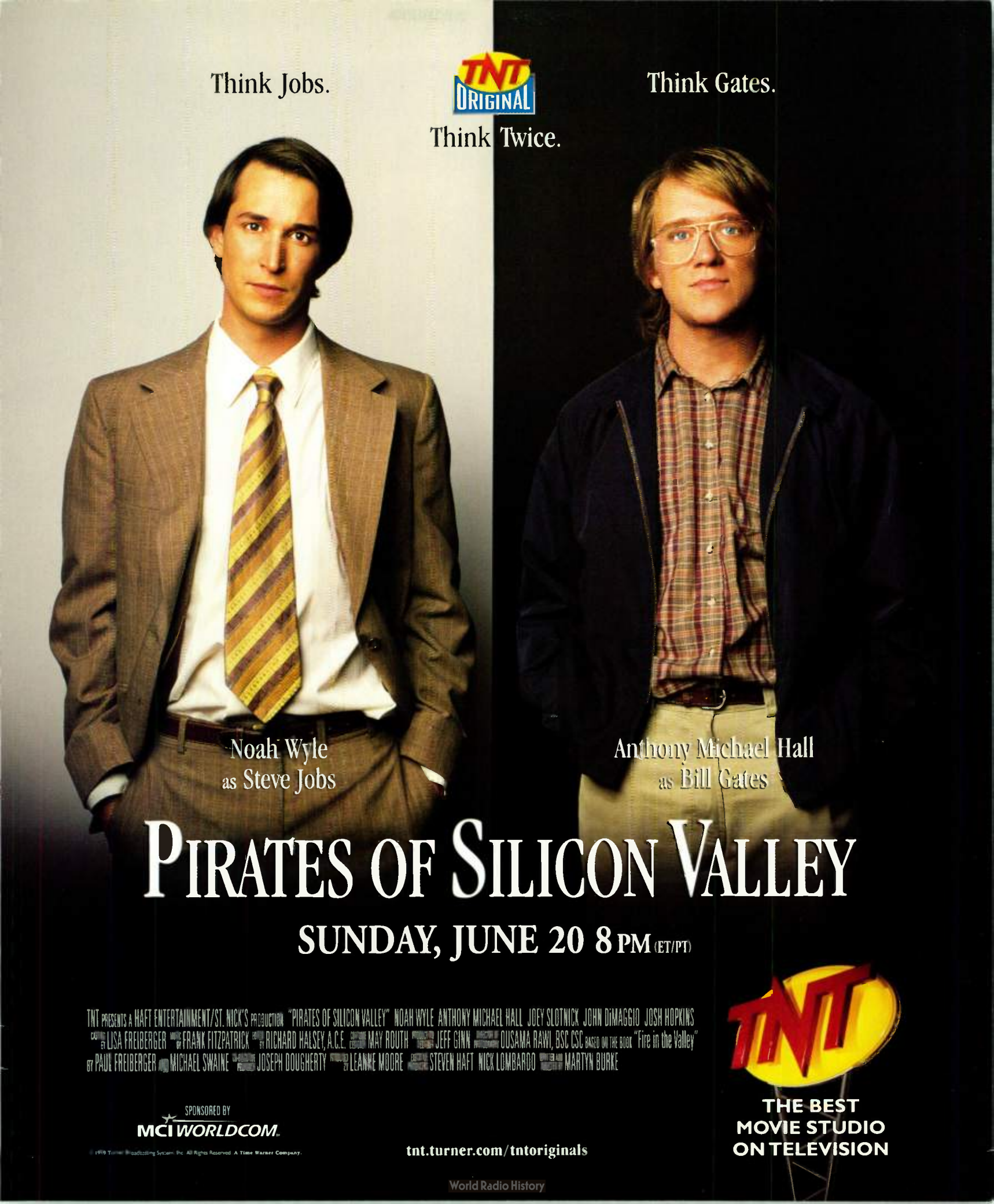

3Com

More connected.

Kate Hunter
Dancer

Address Book

Three choreographers I'd kill to work with; Paris # for Francois.

Date Book

Ballet class 10:00 am; physical therapy at 4:00 pm; dinner w/Mark, 7:30 pm.

Memo Pad

The Times review of my performance; notes on Balanchine bio.

To Do List

Buy another half-dozen leg warmers; roses to Katya for premiere (hey, who's jealous).

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BRILL'S CONTENT
THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE

JUNE 1999 • VOLUME TWO • NUMBER FIVE

FEATURES

ON OUR COVER:
Illustration by Dan Adel

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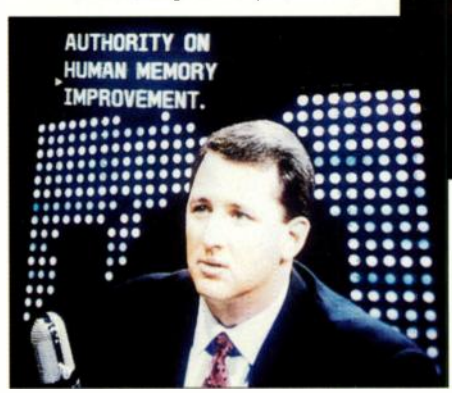
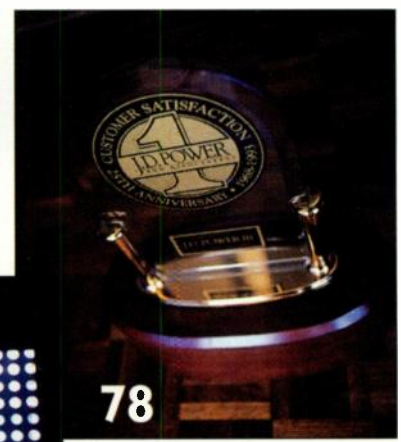
The New York Times's *Maureen Dowd draws fans who praise her keen observations and stiletto-sharp prose, while critics say she shortchanges substantive issues.*

74
Author Maureen Orth, pointing out the scene of Gianni Versace's murder, struck an advantageous deal with Dateline NBC *to hype her book.*

96 *You may know Kevin Trudeau (below) from his Mega Memory infomercial*





J.D. Power and Associates, best known for its car rankings, gauges customer satisfaction in 14 industries.

CHRISTY BOWE/IPOL (DOWD); PATRIK GIARDINO (J.D. POWER); KURT GERBER (TRUDEAU)

Zach watched 1,826 hours of music television last year hoping to discover new music

JONNY LANG

· album reviews · sound samples · music videos on demand · buzzing music community · live artist chats · local concert information · special offers and contests · radio

You just need to log on

LAUNCH.com

Discover New Music

102 CNN Takes Over The World

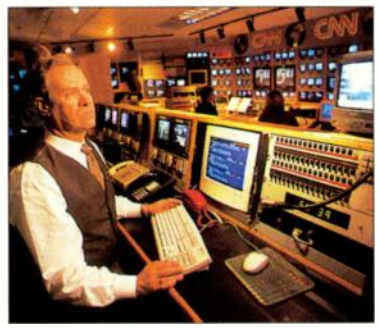
BY NICHOLAS VARCHAVER

Even as CNN faces stiffer competition at home, its Balkan news blitz highlights the network's increasing global dominance. Also: E-mail brings the conflict home.

110 War Diary

BY NANCY DURHAM

Video journalist Nancy Durham shares her experiences as she traverses the war-torn Balkans in search of a story about people for whom she grows to care.



102 *Chris Cramer, CNN International president and managing editor, runs the overseas operations from Atlanta.*

110 *The two refugee families from Kosovo that video journalist Nancy Durham accompanied while in Albania camped out in this unfinished building.*

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Those watching the Academy Awards on TV may have thought that mostly warm applause greeted honoree Elia Kazan. But there was a discrepancy between TV and reality. 33

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A Louisville *Courier-Journal* sports columnist lost his soapbox for eight months after tipping the NCAA to alleged wrongdoing at the University of Louisville. Did he do anything wrong? 40

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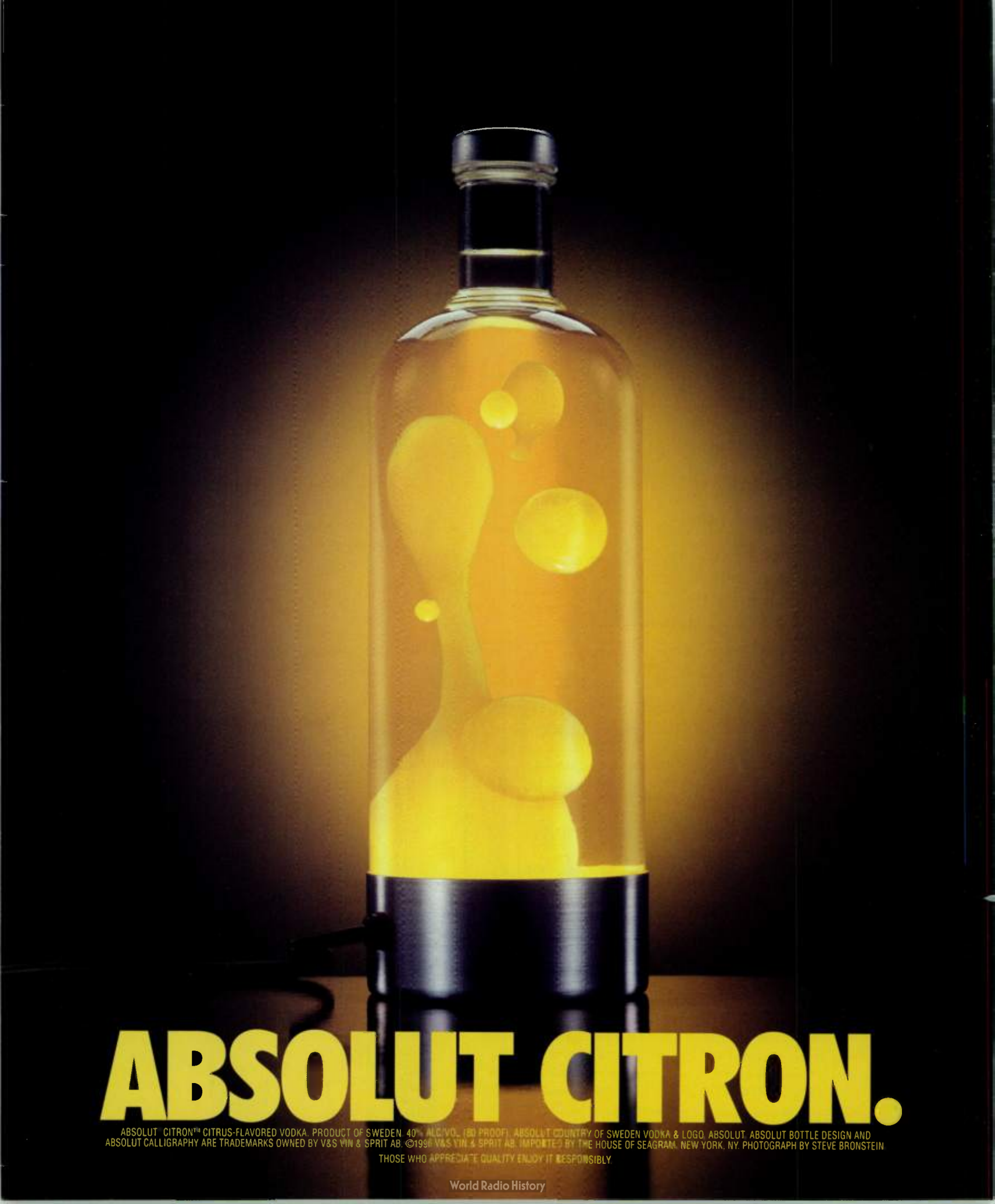
20/20 won a prestigious George Polk Award for its account of abuse suffered by foreign garment workers in Saipan. *Inside Edition*, however, aired the story six months earlier.....41

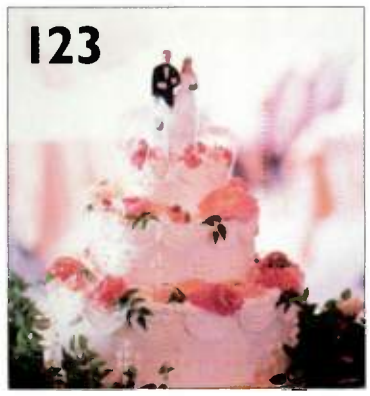
COLUMNS

45 *The temptations of the art world are greatest for freelance critics, whose pay is about as lucrative as what poets earn.*

MICHAEL SCHWARZ (CRAMER); NANCY DURHAM (BUILDING); ROBERT NEUBECKER (ILLUSTRATION)



DEPARTMENTS



June is high season for weddings, so Brill's Content scoured the plethora of bridal information to offer you the best.

On the Albanian border, refugees in a crude trailer grieve for lives and loved ones left behind.

Eva Chen, the chief technology officer of Trend Micro, sees herself as a virus doctor. Her patients are corporate America's computers.

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.

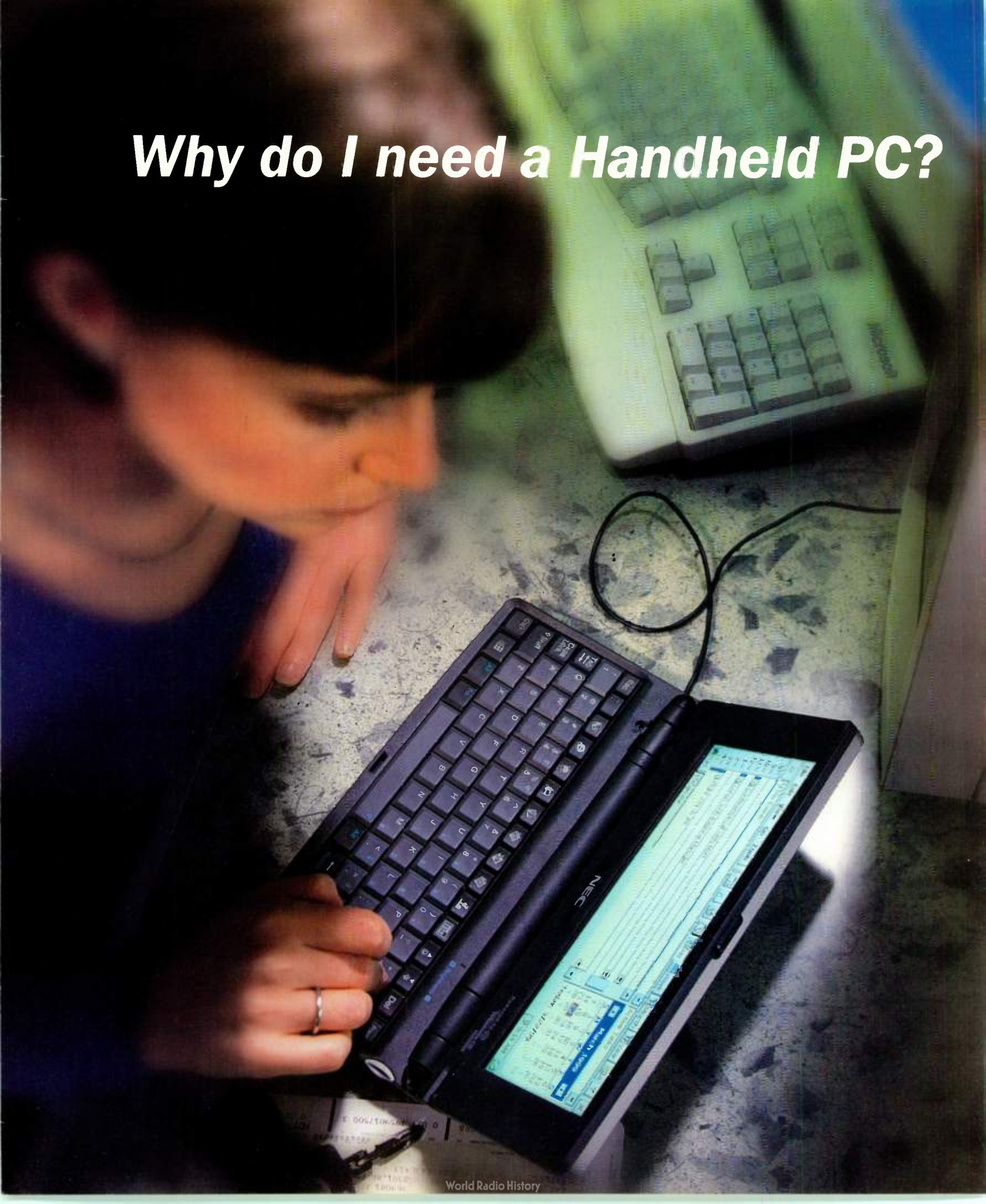
4. Our corrections policy should not be mistaken for a policy of accommodating readers who are simply unhappy about a story that has been published.

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.

TEISUKE SHINODA/PHOTONICA (CAKE); SANTIAGO LYON/AP (REFUGEES); TIMOTHY ARCHIBALD (CHEN)

Why do I need a Handheld PC?



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Civic Journalism is ...

About being part of the community.

As civic journalists, we think about the places we live and what journalism can do for the places we live.

An example is the Akron Beacon Journal's reporting on school funding. Now, when you say "school funding," people's eyes blur because nobody understands it. But our reporters and editors said, "We are going to own this issue." And they did an outstanding job of explaining how Ohio funds it schools.

The legislature needed to reverse its school funding formula after the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that relying on property taxes had created too much inequality. It was important to illuminate the problems and also seek solutions. The paper was very specific about what the solutions could be: How education funding could be changed and what the results of various plans would be.

The reporters showed that a proposal to reduce dependence on property taxes was a sham that would actually increase, not decrease, school funding disparities.

It was a difficult but important story for the community. In the end, that's what civic journalism is: It's all about the community.

Jan Leach
Vice President and Editor
Akron Beacon Journal

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism is pleased to present this message, another in a series on how journalists are trying to improve news coverage by involving citizens- and improve the community through their work. For more information, call 202-331-3200.

Pew Center for Civic Journalism

Jan Schaffer
director

Jack Nelson
chairman

1101 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 420
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www.pewcenter.org

ON TRUTH, TURLEY, THE "BEST," AND THE "WORST"

Among this month's batch of letters: several from people commenting on April's "The Best And Worst White House Reporters," several others on our choices for the "Best Of The Web," and even one challenging our definition of what constitutes the 1950s. Also attracting plenty of mail: our May story on whether the Rev. Jerry Falwell was the first to "out" an allegedly gay Teletubby. Letters published with an asterisk have been edited for space. The full text appears at our website (www.brillscontent.com).

TELL THE TRUTH

*In his recent piece "The Truth Really Is Out There," Jon Katz goes full stride into repeating the clichés of cyberpuffery without providing much substance. For example: "The news media struggle with the concept that pop culture has become one of our society's most telling and reliable mirrors. Perhaps because it threatens their monopoly on agenda setting..."

Mr. Katz is not the first to claim this presumptuous stance about how "society" is portrayed by the "news media." And as any devout *Brill's Content* reader would point out, "Pop goes the news media!" Wherein lies the distinction?

What about this struggle—do you have any examples? Is it only now that pop culture has become a "telling and reliable" mirror?

That young people claimed not to have cared about the Lewinsky scandal as much as the national media did—this can be attributed to pop culture, or to *The X-Files* in particular? They both can be attributed to a "conspiracy," Katz argues. Yet the fans of the conspiracy television show didn't tune in to the real conspiracy...so this thin logic falls apart.

By the way, *The X-Files* has nowhere near the widespread influence of *The Simpsons*, which itself portrays a mirror of pop culture among students at my alma mater, who read the newspaper and are nonetheless on track to be the agenda setters of tomorrow.

JON GARFUNKEL
Brookline, MA
(via e-mail)

LARRY WATSON/FOX (X-FILES)

CORRECTIONS

IN APRIL'S "OUT HERE," MIKE PRIDE DISCUSSED why the *Concord Monitor* did not publish a graphic photo of a local drowning victim along with its story about the man's death. In illustrating the column, we were provided with—and mistakenly published—the photo the *Monitor* chose not to use. Consequently, our caption stated incorrectly that the *Monitor* had published the photo.

Also, in April's "We Loved It" feature, we incorrectly reported that *Good Morning America*'s Joel Siegel used the word *great* nine times in a 30-second review of *You've Got Mail*. That review was actually two and a half minutes long.

We regret the errors.

GIVE IT UP

*Your "Charlie Rose Talk Meter" [The Notebook] was okay for a one-time joke. But then you dragged it out for three issues and now we have to be subjected to the Interrupt-O-Meter!

Listen, my loyalty lies far more strongly with Rose, who night after night produces a thought-provoking TV program, rather than with Steve Brill, who puts out an often interesting magazine.

Chuckie R. fans won't stand for it!

JORDAN HOFFMAN
Queens, NY
(via e-mail)

ENOUGH ALREADY

*Jonathan Turley's letter to the editor in the May issue is pathetic and offensive. First, referring to [Turley] as a "pundit" is really distorting the meaning of the word ("a learned man," according to Webster's Dictionary). Of all the legal shills for Kenneth Starr that flooded the TV talk shows last year, Turley was the most simplistic in his too freely voiced opinions.

Second, it is striking to see how thin-skinned this self-proclaimed expert is. This is the third letter I've seen from him in which he has argued about criticisms of his lack of expertise in his numerous TV appearances.

MORTON WACHSPRESS
Woodmere, NY
(via e-mail)

NOTHING NEW

Katherine Rosman's story on *Pop-Up Video* ["Pop Goes The Revolution,"

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May] did not suck (heh-heh), but she didn't mention that Beavis and Butt-head dissected music videos long before [*Pop-Up* creators Woody] Thompson and [Tad] Low. *Pop-Up* group screenings, also, seem nothing more than the process perfected by *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. To misquote Ecclesiastes: "There is no new thing under the camera lens."

RICHARD SASSAMAN
Bar Harbor, ME
(via e-mail)

SAY ANYTHING

Regarding "Whose Life Is It, Anyway?" [May]: As a writer in the new frugality/voluntary simplicity movement (last year's *The Simple Life*, published by Berkley, is my latest book), I have had the, uh, pleasure of dealing with most media. While there are exceptions, most of the people I have come across in the medium of television will say, do, or verbally agree to anything to get a story.

My approach with television people these days is, when possible, to simply ignore their requests for interviews. If they persist, [I] insist that they agree to broadcast [information important to me]. And, if they do, [I] insist that they put the agreement in writing. Usually they go away after this last request.

LARRY ROTH
Kansas City, MO
(via e-mail)

NOT HER MORNING

*Are there really people who like to start their day being assaulted by screeching, nerve-fraying commercials, squeaking psychobabblers, and medical and child-care claptrap ["Their Fight For Your Morning," April]?

Like the proverbial needle in a haystack, getting news from a morning or an evening so-called news show is a challenge not undertaken by most literate and educated people.

SHELLEY D. GRAHAM
Middletown, RI

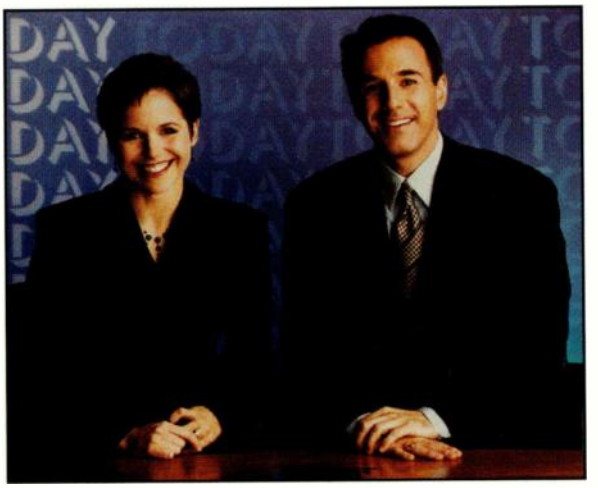
WHY A FIGHT?

I subscribed to your magazine with high hopes that I would find something different than the prevailing tendency in the rest of the media to portray events in terms of black/white or win/lose conflicts. Then I received the most recent issue, with its cover of Diane Sawyer and Katie Couric's picture [and the headline] "Their Fight For Your Morning." I'm disappointed. Why frame this as a fight? You need to read Deborah Tannen's book *The Argument Culture* and take her warnings to heart.

JANICE M. BEYER
Austin, TX
(via e-mail)

DRIVEN AWAY

*The *NBC Today* show is just fine. The second half tends to put out fluff, which I ignore. However, those screaming throngs waving hands, banners, babies, or whatever is at hand drive me out of the room. When the camera pans down on the street—with or without some staff—I switch.



Katie Couric and Matt Lauer of *NBC Today*.

BETTY JACKSON
Dallas, TX
(via e-mail)

AMERICAN TRAGEDY

*Your recent article ["Their Fight For Your Morning"] illustrates the problem with TV and the rest of the country: celebrity-itis. Who gives a snake's butt whether Katie is "chirpy" or Diane "purrs"?

The news is too personality driven, with too little substantive reporting. The networks ought to travel the country and hire locals who would not only have a resemblance to real people but who could also tell the audience what people really think. It would be an ongoing reality poll.

The tragedy is, if the American people are so enamored of the personalities created by hypemeisters, things won't change.

ROBERT A. RAUCCI
Saint Charles, IL
(via e-mail)

THE PROPHET

*In your April issue, a letter appeared from Newton Minow, the former chairman [from 1961 to 1963] of the Federal Communications Commission. When Mr. Minow was chairman, he predicted that television was becoming "a vast wasteland." How accurate [his] prediction has become.

JORDAN I. LANE
Bayside, NY

SUSPICIOUS

*I get a kick out of all the media types who have "no comment" or don't return phone calls when *Brill's Content* tries to contact them. These are the same media types who will pursue someone unmercifully for "comment," camp out on [their] front lawn, call them at their homes round the clock, and report with raised eyebrows and obvious suspicion anyone who gives a "No comment." Just another example of media hypocrisy and insensitivity.

ROBERT SALAS
Sarasota, FL

TINKY CRAZY

*Thanks to [assistant editor] Bridget Samburg for reminding us that rumors of Tinky Winky's alleged homosexuality are neither new nor necessarily unfounded ["Tinky Winky Trouble," The Notebook, May]. Gay-themed websites were Tinky-crazy long before the Rev. Jerry Falwell put his foot in his mouth.

But the tone of this whole discus-

(continued on page 128)

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REPORT FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

BY BILL KOVACH

ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL REVISITED—Let's pick up where we left off in April. The final item in that column was written in response to a reader who asked about the magazine's policy of clearly distinguishing editorial from advertising copy. In response, editor in chief Steven Brill wrote a statement that I'll repeat now for those who may have missed it:

"Here is our clear statement:

"Advertising, which must always be clearly displayed in design and typeface so as to distinguish it from editorial content, is a message paid for by outside parties trying to sell something to our readers. Its message is the responsibility of the advertiser, but *Brill's Content* will not knowingly publish any advertisement that is false.

"Editorial is the content of the magazine that readers pay for with their subscriptions or newsstand purchases. It is motivated only by the editors' attempt to offer news, information, and ideas that they think will interest and inform the readers. The editor in chief is solely responsible for its content, and it is never influenced in any way by advertisers."

At least two readers thought that policy was violated 42 pages later in the same issue. The offending ad was one for Microsoft that appeared on one side of a fold-out page (in effect, three pages) that on the other carried a chart of editorial material connected to a feature about the World Wide Web. (The bottom of that editorial page also carried a smaller Microsoft ad.)

One reader, Ken Horowitz, of Old Greenwich, Connecticut, wrote, "Before I'm able to read it, I rip out the annoying fold-out Microsoft ad which is getting in the way. As I'm about to throw it out, I realize that the flip side of it contains a 'Best of the Web' listing which seems to tie in with [the] story."

From across the country, Matt Alexander, of San Francisco, expressed a similar concern: "To my dismay, I discovered upon opening the fold-out summary that [it]...was actually part of a Microsoft advertisement."

Two aspects of the ad seem to me to justify the concern expressed by both readers. One is that the ad appeared adjacent to the full-page introducing the article and before any editorial material appeared that would tell a reader that page was advertising, pure and simple. As a matter of fact, I almost did just what Ken Horowitz did. I started to tear the ad out because it interfered with the flow of the article.

Then on the reverse side of this ad—across the bottom of a page of editorial content—is another Microsoft ad. Appearing as it does on the back of a full-page ad for the same company, it is not so hard to understand how a reader might overlook the efforts made to separate editorial from advertising and assume the whole thing was paid for by Microsoft.

I say "efforts made to separate" because care seems to have been taken to signal the reader to the difference between what appeared at the top and bottom of the page on which both ad and editorial content appeared. The editorial content, for example, was branded with a *Brill's Content* logo. The sharpest color contrast possible was used to separate ad (green) from editorial (red) content. Then, too, the headline material that first caught the reader's eye in the editorial content was set in uppercase type while comparable material in the ad was set in lowercase type. Finally, the editorial content was separated from the ad content at the bottom of the page by a bold black line.

All in all it seems clear there was an effort made to adhere to the rule the magazine has set for itself to separate editorial from advertising material. But I'm not sure that goal was achieved. Take the selection of type faces, for example. Though set in different cases (all uppercase or all lowercase), the type faces for both the ad and the editorial were similar enough to be seen as the same. And the standard device for separating ad from editorial with a bold black line was rendered almost meaningless by the design of the editorial content itself, which incorporated similar bold black lines to divide boxes of editorial material. In both cases, the design of the ad and editorial blurred the distinction between the two, which easily accounts for the confusion reported by these two readers.

As it happened, I discussed these complaints with Steven Brill on the same day the American Society of Magazine Editors announced that, for the first time in its 33-year history, it had withdrawn a nomination for one of its national awards. The reason: The magazine involved, *This Old House*, had failed to comply with ASME guidelines for separation of advertising and editorial content.

The culprit? A fold-out ad sponsored by Ace Hardware, on the back of which was a nuts-and-bolts chart prepared by the magazine's editorial staff. It was very similar in makeup to the *Brill's Content* combination at issue here. There was, though, a major difference. The *This Old House* chart carried this line

HOW TO REACH HIM

BILL KOVACH CAN BE REACHED BY:

VOICE MAIL: 212.824.1981

FAX: 212.824.1940

E-MAIL : bkovach@brillscontent.com

MAIL: 1 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138

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.*

along its bottom margin: "This poster is brought to you by Ace Hardware, the source for all your hardware needs."

When I talked to Steven Brill about the issue, he said he thought the efforts to separate the Microsoft ad from editorial content were successful and made the distinction "crystal clear" and that the ad at the bottom appeared "just as any fractional page ad on any page" would appear. The next day I received an e-mail from him saying, "I was still troubled by your inquiry regarding the [Microsoft] ad on the poster and took the initiative to call the American Society of Magazine Editors, of which Jackie Leo is president.

"Oddly, they did not spot the issue that you were troubled by the most, and that then troubled me—the full-page ad on the right-hand page—as any kind of issue at all. But Jackie did say they have been talking about the ad on the bottom, even though they agreed that it violates none of their guidelines and [they] would not have taken any 'action.'

"In any event, I decided I should meet with their board members who worry about the guidelines to get some group thinking on what we could do better, if anything, the next time."

The response was what I've come to expect from Steven Brill. As has been the case every time I have raised a question with him about the standards and ethics governing the magazine's work, he has done more than just listen to criticisms. Taking the initiative to talk with ASME and to hone and clarify guidelines that will let readers clearly see the limits of an advertiser's reach into the magazine is typical. By going to the organization, he also lends the support of *Brill's Content* to their work in a meaningful way. ASME is committed to elevating the standards and practices of magazine journalism. In recent years it has worked steadily to strengthen the separation between advertising and editorial content.

I hope either he or I will report to you on the ASME discussion in a later issue.

Steven Brill replies: We were indeed worried about setting our editorial content apart from the Microsoft ad on the bottom of the pullout double page. And I think we succeeded. Where we failed—and what we didn't even think about—was, as Bill says, having the right-hand page of the pullout be an ad, which seemed to make the whole section look like an ad, thereby hiding our chart. That's a bad mistake, especially because the chart is a summary of a special section on which we worked long and hard, and also because the chart's list of best sites excluded lots of that same advertiser's products in a way that it obviously would not have if we were paying any attention at all to advertising concerns—which we weren't. Looking at it a month later, I feel even more strongly that we screwed up; a reasonable reader could easily have assumed the whole pullout was an ad—before even looking at a chart that our writers and editors are quite proud of. In short, we didn't compromise our editorial standards to please an advertiser, but we did make a mess of how we designed the positioning of the ads. ■

Editor's note: For more on this subject, see The Big Blur *on page 48.*

how they got that SHOT

HERE WE SEE ETHNIC ALBANIANS FROM KOSOVO WHO HAVE just crossed the border at Morini, Albania. Before allowing the refugees to cross the border, the Serbs stripped their cars of their license plates and burned the refugees' identity documents, which means that they had lost not only their houses, their land, their jewelry, and their money but also their identities. "Even the grown man weeps," says Santiago Lyon, the Associated Press photographer who took the picture. "It is a macho culture where men don't cry in public, but the refugees have seen all their dreams dismantled in front of them."

This was one of the first images Americans saw on Monday, March 29, just after hearing that NATO had decided to launch air strikes against Yugoslavia. This photo appeared on the front pages of *USA Today* and *The New York Times*, and later, in *U.S. News & World Report*.

Lyon, 32, was already in Kosovo's capital, Pristina, when he heard about the air strikes. Experience told him to leave. He drove through Croatia and on to Vienna, where he caught a flight to Rome. From Rome, he picked up a ferry to Durres, a port city in Albania, and then drove to Kukes, near the Yugoslav border, arriving on Sunday night with just one hour of light remaining. He left everything except for his digital camera in Kukes and drove 25 kilometers to Morini, the nearest border crossing, where he saw these refugees. "I reached the border before the U.N. or any relief agencies had arrived, so the people don't know where to go or what to do. I worked without an interpreter. The people were obviously upset, so I communicated with my eyes, and they let me photograph them," says Lyon. "The light had slipped away, so I went back to Kukes, put the images into a laptop computer, and sent them to AP London." Only one and a half hours passed between the moment Lyon took the picture and the moment that it went out over the AP wire to Asia, Europe, and the U.S.

Lyon, who was born in Spain and grew up in Ireland, says he's never been so affected by a story. "I'm not going to pretend that it doesn't take a toll...but if I can continue to tell the stories in a coherent way to as many people as possible, [it] is worthwhile," he says. "These particular scenes in this day and age are astonishing. That the slow dismantling of a people and disintegration of a country is happening today, in Europe, is unbelievable. I grew up in Europe. I could be them. They could be me." —*Miriam Hsia*

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANTIAGO LYON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

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

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

Cracks In The Great Wall

The press in China is compliant. But talk to journalists there and you'll see signs that ideas and information are flowing—not freely, but inevitably.

Jiang calls for peace, security—President Jiang Zemin called here [in Switzerland] yesterday for a 'new security concept' and the exploration of new ways to safeguard peace and security in the world." —Headline and lead of article in *China Daily*, a government-owned, Beijing-based, English-language newspaper, March 27, 1999

"Jiang Irked With Swiss Over Protest by Tibetans—President Jiang Zemin of China continued his visit to Switzerland on Friday despite unhappiness with his hosts for failing to prevent a pro-Tibetan demonstration during the opening ceremony. The orderly but noisy protest...prompted Mr. Jiang to snub a welcoming reception...and to tell Swiss ministers that the neutral Alpine nation had 'lost a good friend.'" —Headline and lead of article in *International Herald Tribune* (owned by *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*), March 27, 1999

These two articles—each factually accurate, each conveying different realities—became a great journalism lesson for my kids over breakfast in Shanghai on the morning they were published. It was enough to make all of us proud of our First Amendment—and arrogant about any country that doesn't have one. These Chinese reporters are stooges, I told the kids.

Things became more complicated a few days later when my family and I met the stooge who wrote *China Daily*'s article and the editor who published it. People with names and faces and genuine ideals have a way of shattering stereotypes.

Qu Yingpu, 34, is the dead-serious, bespectacled reporter for *China Daily* who wrote the story about President Jiang's Swiss visit. Qu says he hopes some day to work as a journalist in an American exchange program. American journalists, he says, "seem too pushy, but I hope to learn from them more about freedom."

Still showing the excitement in his eyes five days after his trip, Qu says he was "honored" to have been able to travel with his president to Geneva, and that the "important positive news" in Switzerland was the speech Jiang ultimately gave. The demonstrators, he explains sadly, were an "insult" and a "threat to the security of our president." In fact, Qu adds, "your president would never have tolerated demonstrators so close."

Just after chatting with Qu, I sit in on *China Daily*'s evening editorial meeting, where the next morning's paper is planned. The session—in a spare, drafty conference room, with CNN blaring in the background—is run by Zhu Ling, deputy editor in chief. A 41-year-old veteran of the paper who spent ten months getting journalism training at the University of Hawaii, Zhu has day-to-day command over the paper and its more than 130 reporters and editors.

Pro-Tibet demonstrations like this one during the Chinese President's visit to Switzerland are all but ignored by *China Daily* and other Chinese media.

TEAM EPA/KEYSTONE-AFP

He is surrounded at the conference table by eight people. Except for a grizzled, heavy-set Canadian and a graying Englishman (whom Zhu refers to as his rewrite men), they are all English-speaking Chinese in their thirties. They, too, want to emphasize the positive.

An exclusive interview with a man billed by one of the junior editors as the country's leading science and technology official will, says this editor, "not include any references to the controversy with America over weapons"—meaning the recent spying charges. This is despite the fact that the official did have quite a bit to say about it. "We should probably leave it out," Zhu agrees.

A meeting between another top Chinese official and Greece's president will run across the top of the broadsheet's front page. There will be a big handshake picture and story trumpeting Greece's apparent agreement with China that the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia is wrong. Never mentioned in this editorial meeting, or in the article the next morning, is that Greece is a member of NATO and has facilitated the military action.

The paper's foreign affairs editor says that a poll has been taken indicating that the Chinese people overwhelmingly disapprove of the NATO bombing. When the discussion turns to which photo might run with this story, I suggest a graph or pie chart showing how the opinion divides up. But Zhu softly informs me, first, that there were no actual numbers provided by the government-controlled pollsters and, second, that, in fact, not a single person was found in the poll to support the bombing. In other words, there can be no graph or pie chart, because, amazingly, there was total unanimity. "We will just report that a large majority have this view about the American aggression," Zhu says matter-of-factly.

Zhu Ling, a top *China Daily* editor, says that nobody tells him what to write, because "We know the rules."

After the meeting, Zhu explains over dinner with his family and mine that "the Asian way" is to "respect authority" and "not be confrontational." There are "three kinds of press," he adds: "educational," which comprises most Chinese newspapers; "factual," which is how Zhu views *China Daily*; and "confrontational and disrespectful," which, Zhu explains, "is your country's journalism....Our society right now could not tolerate your kind of journalism. It is just not the Asian way."

The way Zhu and his reporters approach their work becomes understandable when seen in that context. China is a society built on thousands of years of tradition of respect for elders and for authority. The United States is a country of renegades who wrote a constitution that is basically a list of all the ways that government may not exert its authority. In both places, journalists—who are the intermediaries between rulers and the ruled—simply reflect those traditions. Which means that for Zhu and his reporters it is not so much a matter of pulling punches as it is of not thinking of throwing punches in the first place.

"He's a really nice guy," says one of my daughters—the one who delighted most in my calling him a stooge before we met him—after our dinner. "You shouldn't trash him."

With a circulation of about 300,000, *China Daily* is the country's only English-language newspaper. It's meant for two audiences: Westerners traveling in China, and Chinese natives who are learning English. The paper has no competition; the government preserves its English-language monopoly, even at the hotels, by not allowing foreign publications (such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, or *USA Today*'s international edition) to be printed on the mainland, thereby delaying their distribution until the end of the day or the next morning.

Zhu says that his paper "is more free than [mainstream Chinese-language papers] to report what we want....The other papers are more educational," he explains, by which he means that they are "used much more to get the government's message out; we just try to report facts, but with a positive emphasis."

Who tells you what you can or can't print? I ask. "No one, really," he answers, as if almost amused by the question. "We know the rules. No one has to tell me. I can tell what should be off the record....Even if someone from the government tells our reporters something that is on the record, I can tell if it should be off the record, and I will stop it."

According to an American executive in China who has business link-ups with Chinese publications, Zhu reports to a supervisor at the Communist Party's propaganda department. Asked about that, Zhu simply says that "it is rarely necessary for anyone to tell me what to do, but there is someone who can if I need direction."

That aspect of *China Daily*'s organization chart was not mentioned when I first saw Zhu at a New York luncheon held in his honor by The Freedom Forum, the lavishly funded foundation spun off by the Gannett Co., Inc., eight years ago.

Zhu spoke that day about how China is moving fast toward press freedom. His bland, platitudinous speech, and the way he seemed to duck questions about his actual freedom to publish, made him an appealing target. So did the subsequent Freedom Forum press release that headlined the talk this way: "Deputy editor says *China Daily* on road to press freedom; ad sales make it financially independent."

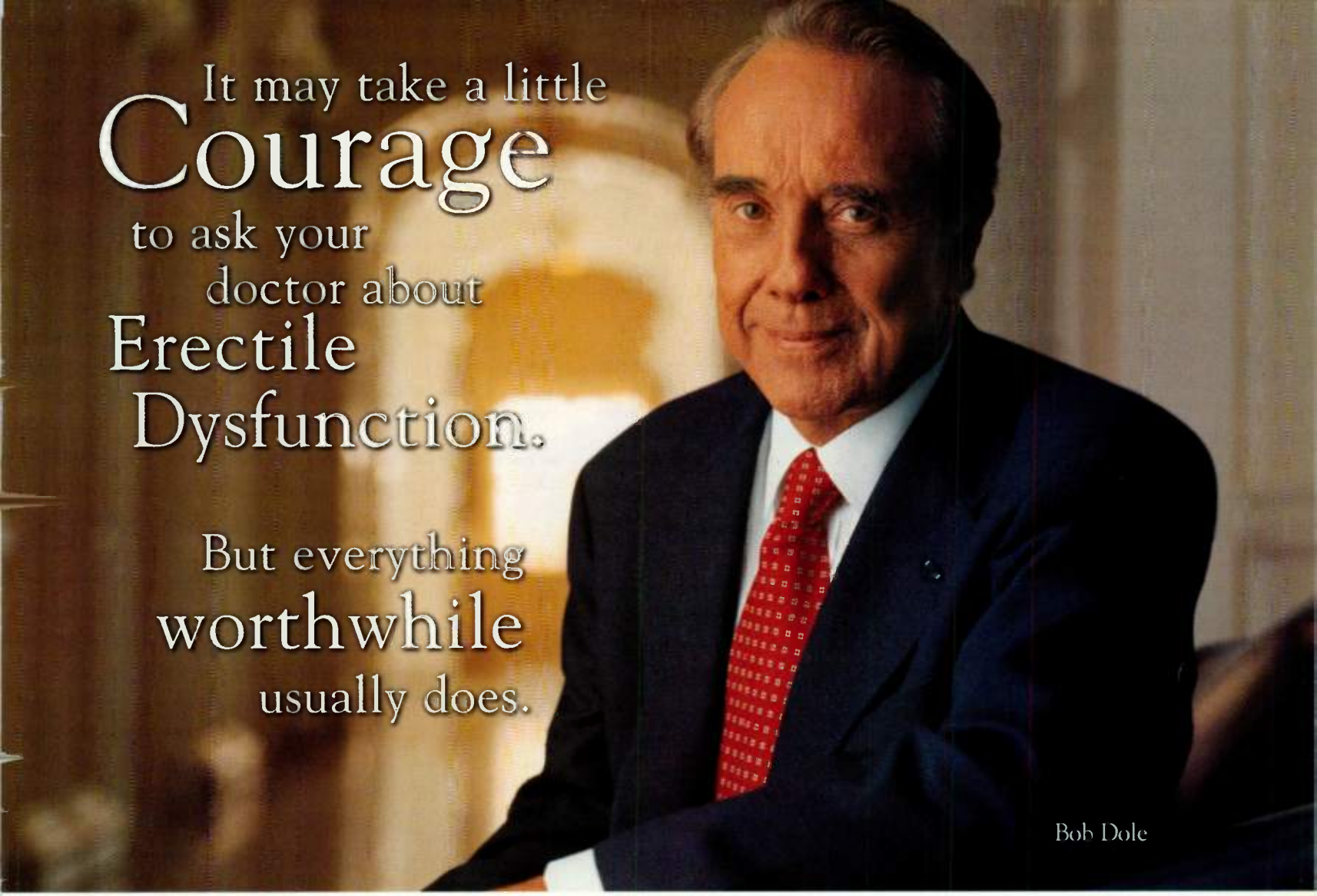
To be sure, China's suppression of freedom of the press can't be papered over or wished away. But those like Qu Yingpu or Zhu Ling, who are the victims of it—or even its complicit practitioners—shouldn't be seen as one-dimensional either. Their long-ingrained respect for authority, and, yes, their graciousness, should not be confused with ignorance or weakness. They are neither fools nor stooges. They know that things can, should, and ultimately will be different.

What will your paper be like five or ten years from now? I ask Zhu. "Oh, it will keep getting freer. We know that. This has increasingly been the case....And we want that."

Over dinner the next night I put the same question to a top reporter for the *People's Daily*, the country's leading Chinese-language daily and the official paper of the Communist Party. She laughs nervously, hesitates, then says, "You probably know the answer. I think we all know the answer. Things are getting better," she maintains, adding that newspapers have of late been allowed to go after local officials for incompetence and corruption, and that there is now a popular television program in China, called *Focus*, that so often and so effectively targets bureaucrats that many who've seen American television compare it to *60 Minutes*.

The ruling Communist Party, as *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman recently wrote, has made an unspoken deal with the Chinese people. The party will allow people to be increasingly able to participate in a free-market economy and live where they want, work where they want, wear what they want, even study abroad, as long as they don't challenge the party's authority.

Ultimately, though, that deal, as Friedman also pointed out, will take another turn. For with free enterprise increas-



When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, my first concern was ridding myself of the cancer. But I was also concerned about possible postoperative side effects, like erectile dysfunction (E.D.), often called impotence. So I asked my doctor about treatment options.

I'm speaking out now in the hope that men with E.D. will get proper treatment for a condition that affects millions of men and their partners.

Most E.D. cases are associated with physical conditions or events, like the prostate cancer surgery I underwent. The most common causes of E.D. include diabetes, high blood pressure, spinal cord injury, or surgery for the prostate or colon. E.D. can also be associated with smoking, alcohol abuse, or psychological conditions such as anxiety or stress.

The good news is that many effective treatments are available for E.D. But the important first step is to talk to your doctor. Together, you and your doctor can decide which treatment is best for you.

Now it's up to you to get the treatment you need for E.D. My advice is to get a medical checkup. It's the best way to get educated about E.D. and what can be done to treat it. It may take a little courage, but I've found that everything worthwhile usually does.

For more information about erectile dysfunction, please call 1-800-433-4215.

GET EDUCATED ABOUT E.D.

Pfizer

ingly comes free thought, especially in the age of the Internet and satellite television.

To understand that, one simply has to talk to the guide we had in one of the Chinese cities we visited. He's about the same age as Qu, the *China Daily* reporter. He says he's always eager to ask the Western businessmen and tourists he meets as much as he can about political issues. Most mornings, even if he isn't meeting someone for a tour, he goes to a Western hotel to watch CNN and read Western newspapers and magazines, all of which are legally available only at the hotels, office buildings, and housing compounds meant for Westerners.

Most important, just as they've routinely been able to tap into local black-market videodisc dealers so they can watch forbidden movies, such as *Red Corner* or *Seven Years in Tibet*, the guide and most of his friends have figured out ways to hack around the government's effort to impose a country-wide fire wall on Internet sites coming in from the West.

Coverage of wrongdoing is sanctioned by the authorities, but those doing it—and reading or watching it—are getting a taste of press power.

Indeed, this Internet-censoring operation is a comical, sponge-in-the-ocean exercise. The Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of State Security each employ legions of bureaucrats to scan the Web for sites that the country's people shouldn't see. The URL of any new offending site is added to a list of URLs (nytimes.com; cnn.com, etc.) that in theory cannot be accessed from any Internet service that is reached by dialing a mainland China phone number.

All of this simply means that those wanting to see uncensored news (or music or any other kind of forbidden website, for that matter) have to dial up an offshore Internet connection; get on to one of the black-market Internet connections set up on the mainland that allows for local dialing; get the information e-mailed to them; log on from a computer that does not go through the censors' firewall (inexplicably, they rent such log-ons for about 90 cents an hour at the giant government-owned bookstore in Shanghai); or, of course, get the same information from one of the thousands of sites the censors haven't discovered yet.

"I think if they find you using something like cnn.com a lot, you could get in trouble," the guide explains. "But if you are not on a list of people whose phones they watch, they won't know."

Put simply, this guide—who says that maybe 3 percent of all Chinese people of his parents' generation "even know about Tiananmen Square, but *we* all do"—knows he can't trust his government or its press. He's perpetually thirsty for alternatives, and he's having little trouble finding them. At the next Tiananmen Square confrontation, he may not throw the first rock or even unfurl the first banner, but he'll be there.

So, too, I'd bet, would be a contingent of the journalists who are now biding their time being "respectful." CNN is allowed in the *China Daily* newsroom, as are western Internet sites, and the reporters there clearly consider their oasis of access a major perk. (Indeed, the paper's entertainment reporter happily noted that she gets to read Western magazines as part of her job.) True, the new coverage of wrongdoing at the local level cited by the *People's Daily* reporter is sanctioned and often even encouraged by top national officials, and as such it can't be seen as truly independent reporting. But those who are doing it and those who are reading or watching it are likewise getting a taste of the power of a press that goes beyond "stressing the positive."

"Most people here know absolutely nothing about why we are bombing Yugoslavia, because their government feeds them bull----," says one prominent American diplomat. "And it drives me crazy. But I also know that the younger generation is increasingly exposed to Western democracy. Every job they take in a private business, or even driving a car for a businessman, or every time they go online, they get that much more exposure. And they know they can't trust the press....Even the reporters for these papers know they aren't printing the truth. They tell you that when you're alone with them....These journalists, all the young ones, are not fools or dupes....They see what others from the West report, and they study or go on exchange programs abroad. What do you think that does to them? They will change when the time is right....These are smart, eager people....It is just a matter of time."

The transition is not likely to come easily, and it's hard to imagine it ever being so transforming that the press in China become "confrontational" or "disrespectful" in the American tradition. Qu and his colleagues at *China Daily* really did seem (at least when we talked in front of their editor) to disdain "pushy" American reporters.

Indeed, as I was talking with them, I kept thinking of a scene played out on C-SPAN about two weeks before. It was the annual Radio & Television Correspondents' Association dinner in Washington, and, as is traditional, the president was a guest on the podium. As the plates were cleared, President Clinton had to sit there as an award was given to ABC's Jackie Judd for her coverage of the Monica Lewinsky affair. I wrote last summer, and still believe, that Judd's coverage had been reckless and biased; it's a mystery how the group could have ignored the fact that in addition to Judd's scoop about the stained blue dress, Judd had also reported a few days later that there was no stained blue dress and then had reported, also falsely, that a witness had interrupted the president and Lewinsky in the act. Nonetheless, I loved seeing Judd get her award—because watching President Clinton having to sit there and then seeing him stand to shake Judd's hand was a spine-chilling affirmation of what a truly free country is all about.

Editor Zhu may never live long enough to be exhilarated by the idea of a country where the press can challenge authority so fearlessly and so freely that even the top guy has to sit and take it. But it's a realistic hope that the coming generation of Qu Yingpus will begin to see it exactly that way. ■

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IBM scalable Web servers help Charles Schwab's customers trade over $1 billion a day online.

IBM

Friedman.bashed

A *New York Times* columnist touches a cyber-nerve with two seemingly innocuous columns.

ONE READER CALLED Thomas Friedman, the two-time Pulitzer Prize–winning *New York Times* columnist, a "gullible dimwit." Another lambasted his work as "superficial." A third branded him a "sloppy reporter."

It's not surprising that Friedman elicited such angry comments. What is surprising is that they appeared on the *Times*'s own website and that they were prompted *not* by Friedman's often-provocative writing on foreign affairs but by two seemingly benign columns touting a small online bookseller.

Times columnist Friedman (above) touted little guy Lyle Bowlin's website (below) as an example of how anyone can launch the next Amazon.com.

"I cannot think of a column that got more reaction than that one," says Friedman, referring to his February 26 piece, "Amazon.you," which argued that it is so simple and inexpensive to create a website to compete with giant bookseller Amazon.com that, as he put it, "[F]or about the cost of one share of Amazon.com, you can be Amazon.com." The reaction to the column was so intense that Friedman revisited the issue two weeks later with a column called "Killing Goliath.com."

Friedman's columns focused on Iowa resident Lyle Bowlin, who runs an online bookstore out of a spare bedroom, and who, according to Friedman, with low start-up costs and only $150 a month in expenses, can be considered an Amazon.com competitor. Friedman's point was that if Bowlin can do it, anyone can and, with the potential for thousands of Bowlins, it is highly doubtful that the Amazons of the world will ever generate close to the profits their high stock-market valuations assume.

Not long ago, readers miffed at a *Times* column could attempt to get a letter to the editor published. Today, countless online forums let readers sound off, and nytimes.com's Thomas Friedman forum was humming with some probing questions.

In his February 26 column, Friedman summarized Bowlin's monthly expenses: $30 for Internet service; $30 for credit-card service; $50 for a bank to manage credit-card transactions; and $40 for printing. Bowlin uses the same wholesalers (and gets virtually the same volume discounts) as Amazon. He is quoted as saying that everything he takes in over $150 a month is profit.

But the numbers don't add up, argued some of the online messages: What about costs of storage and packaging the books for delivery? What about administrative help, computers, pencils, printers, modems, copiers? Others said Friedman should have noted that the design and functionality of Bowlin's site is far inferior to Amazon's and that if Bowlin's does take off, so will the operating costs.

Friedman says, "The issue is really about price. When people shop online, they're not looking for bells and whistles." His critics, he says, are missing the point: "It's not how many people can be Amazon.com. It's how many people can be Lyle Bowlin. The barriers to entry are so low that anyone can be in it."

—*Julie Scelfo*

Disclosure: Brill Media Ventures, which owns this magazine, is currently considering a venture that would compete, in part, with Amazon.

Foreign Affairs
THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

KillingGoliath.com

I recently wrote a column about Lyle Bowlin, who, for about $150 a month, had managed to put together a Web site that could compete with

contact me the answer is coming from a real person, with a real name. I'm a real person, not a virtual per-

wrong. You ain't seen nothin' Lyle Bowlin can tell you, the

Cedar Falls
—the sequel.

Foreign Affairs
THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Amazon.you

Testifying before Congress Tuesday, Alan Greenspan wouldn't exactly come out and say that there was a little irrational exuberance behind some of the Internet stocks, but he said these share prices had reached levels that gave him "concern."

Well, if you really want to be "concerned" about the levels of some of these profitless Internet stocks, such as Amazon.com, you should pay less attention to Mr. Greenspan and more attention to what's going on in a small house in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

There, a single Iowa family, headed by Lyle Bowlin, is re-creating Amazon.com in a spare bedroom. I tell you this not because they're an immediate threat to Amazon.com, but to underscore just how easy it is to compete against Amazon.com, and why therefore I'm dubious that Amazon and many other Internet retailers will ever generate the huge profits that their stock prices suggest.

Lyle Bowlin is the director of the Small Business Development Center at the University of Northern Iowa. He is also a book lover. But having grown up in small Iowa towns, he has always regretted that he never had access to a good independent bookstore, with lots of titles. When the friends that not only could he offer them everything Amazon.com did, but he could do it cheaper and make a profit from day one. He now has customers from 23 states and Canada. It is funny to go to his Web site and see it offering "Millions Of Books At Great Prices," knowing that it is all being done out of his spare bedroom — as a hobby!

Here's the deal: Amazon.com offers "The Testament," by John Grisham, for 30 percent off retail ($19.57), plus $3.95 shipping and handling. Mr. Bowlin sells it for 35 percent off ($18.17) and $2.75 shipping and handling — $2.60 less. How? Like Amazon, Mr. Bowlin buys "The Testament" from the wholesaler for 44 percent off retail, but since he has no overhead or advertising budget he can sell it for 35 percent off. He can deliver the book through the U.S. Postal Service within three days for only $1.63, so he makes $1.12 more on

The secret of Cedar Falls.

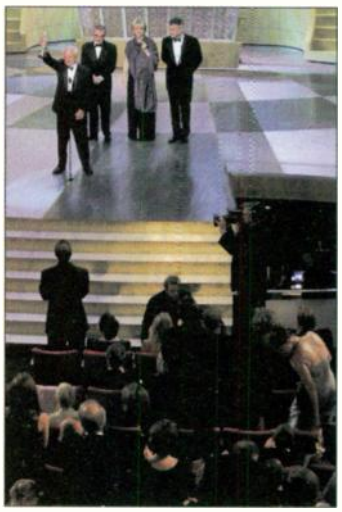
The offending columns that drew scorn on the *Times*'s own website.

COURTESY OF *THE NEW YORK TIMES* (FRIEDMAN)

KAZAN'S OSCAR SUPPORT: LESS THAN MET THE EYE

WHEN THE ACADEMY of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences announced that it would give director Elia Kazan an honorary Oscar at this year's Academy Awards ceremony, the move sparked controversy, because many in the film industry remain angry at the director for "naming names" to the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952. Those protesting Kazan's award asked attendees to register their disapproval by remaining in their seats when Kazan took the stage. The big question of the evening, then, was, how would the audience react?

When Kazan appeared onstage, the cameras panned across the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion's orchestra section. The applause was loud, and viewers watching the ABC broadcast at home saw 14 reaction shots: Nine were of stars such as Warren Beatty, Meryl Streep, Helen Hunt, and Kurt Russell giving Kazan a standing ovation; two were of stars Nick Nolte and Ed Harris sitting stone-faced and cross-armed; two others showed the orchestra section's mix of standees and sitters; and one showed Steven Spielberg and Kate Capshaw, who remained seated as they clapped. The impression for those watching at home was that while there was some dissension, there was more warmth and support for Kazan and his award.



Elia Kazan receives his honorary Oscar.

Those images taken together were misleading. Syndicated columnist Liz Smith and *Daily Variety*'s Army

(continued on page 34)

PUNDIT SCORECARD: SAM'S ON THE RISE

Even pundits can be (relatively) quiet. So it was in the latest installment of our accuracy gauge of TV talk-show predictors. Our updated list, below, takes us from August 1 to March 1. With the impeachment issue resolved—but the NATO attack on Yugoslavia unlaunched as of then—most of the pundits made only a handful of verifiable predictions. That left the majority of them in a holding pattern, with percentages that scarcely differ from the previous month's results. Margaret Carlson retained her hold on first place in the standings with George Will once again bringing up the rear. One other worthy of note: Sam Donaldson, whose improving average has brought him near the top five.

Margaret Carlson, CG (23 of 35)	.657	Cokie Roberts, TW (12 of 22)	.545
Tony Blankley, MG (32 of 52)	.615	Mark Shields, CG (12 of 22)	.545
Patrick Buchanan, MG (37 of 62)	.597	George Stephanopolous, TW (31 of 60)	.517
Al Hunt, CG (34 of 57)	.596	Morton Kondracke, BB (32 of 65)	.492
Michael Barone, MG (24 of 41)	.585	Kate O'Beirne, CG (13 of 27)	.481
Sam Donaldson, TW (14 of 24)	.583	Fred Barnes, BB (33 of 74)	.446
Robert Novak, CG (35 of 60)	.583	John McLaughlin, MG (25 of 56)	.446
Eleanor Clift, MG (40 of 69)	.580	George Will, TW (7 of 21)	.333
Bill Kristol, TW (37 of 64)	.578		

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

Donaldson moves up!

Carlson holds steady!

After rallying, Will sags!

GARY HERSHORN/REUTERS (KAZAN); COURTESY OF ABC (DONALDSON); COURTESY CNN (CARLSON); COURTESY ABC (WILL)

Kazan *(continued from page 33)*

Archerd, both of whom were in the auditorium during the show, told *Brill's Content* that less than a quarter of the audience actually rose for Kazan. Says Archerd: "[The standing ovation] was sparse in the front and it was scattered on the sides, and all around me, in the area where I was sitting [in the back of the orchestra section, in row T], there wasn't anyone standing." *Los Angeles Times* entertainment writer Patrick Goldstein, who also reported that three quarters of the audience remained seated, says the discrepancy between TV and reality was understandable, because "[t]hey tend to show the famous people who tend to sit in the front rows, and I think the perception is that more of them stood up than the people in the rest of the auditorium. I don't think that there was anything conspiratorial about it; I just think people in the front rows tend to react differently because they know the cameras are on them as opposed to everyone in the cheap seats."

Gil Cates, who produced the show for the academy, which oversees the camera work and all other aspects of the show except for the broadcast feed, says, "Basically what we tried to do was give an actual, accurate flavor of what happened in the theater....There are a lot of wide shots, and you can see in the wide shots exactly the relationship between those people who are seated and standing, so essentially what people saw at home was, to my way of thinking, an absolutely accurate representation of what happened in the theater." He adds that televising the Academy Awards ceremony live "is not really as scientific as the press makes it out to be. You're just there with 30 cameras and the event happens and you just cut...and the intent is to be as fair as possible." *—Leslie Heilbrunn*

The cameras showed more support than there really was.

Quiz:

The Family Business

If you think it's hard to keep track of all the mergers among media conglomerates, try staying current with the marital mergers of media players. Can you match the people in column A to their mates in column B? *—Katherine Rosman*

A

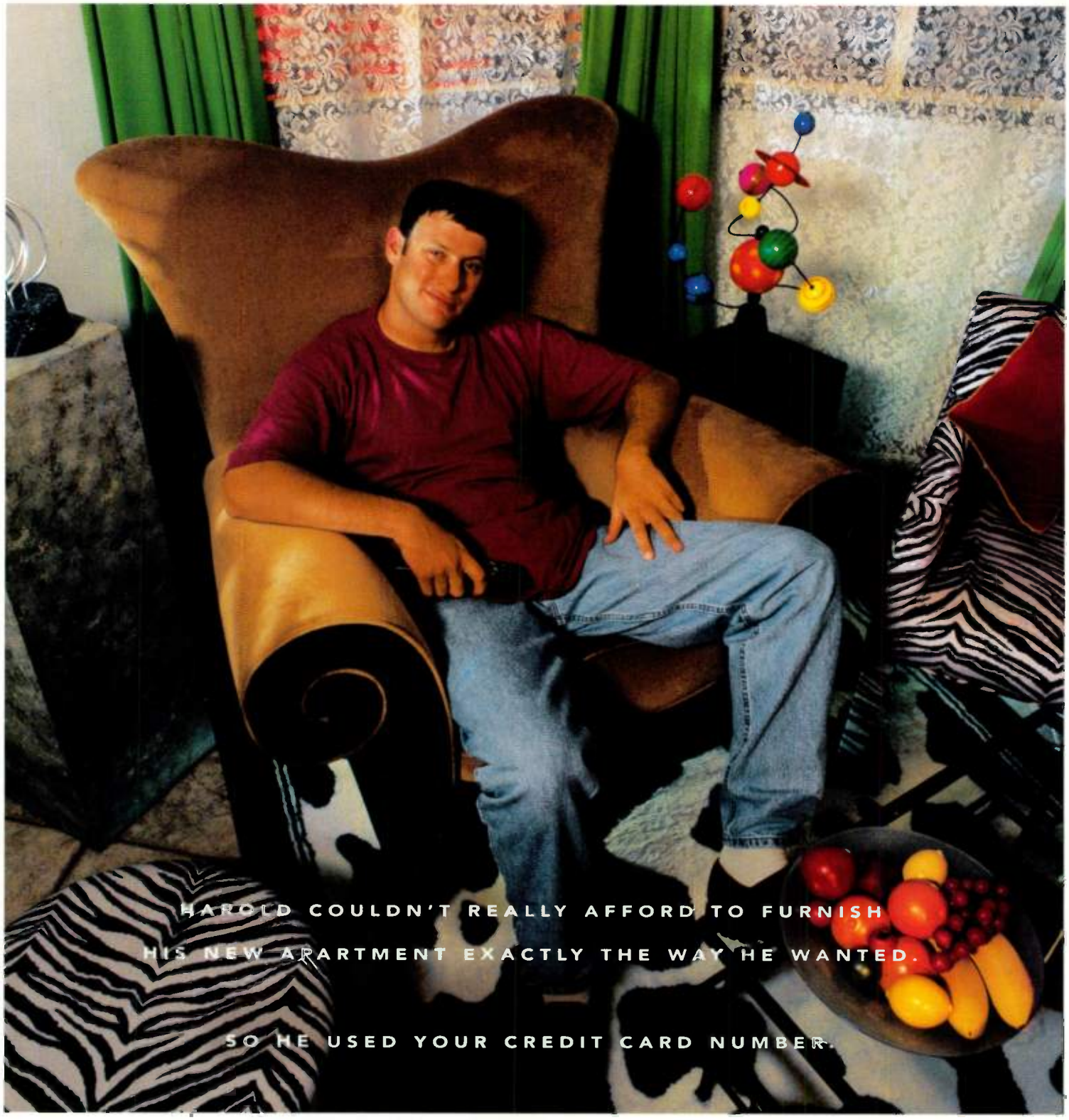
1. **Todd Purdum** (Los Angeles bureau chief, *The New York Times*)
2. **Al Hunt** (executive Washington editor, *Wall Street Journal*)
3. **David Remnick** (editor, *The New Yorker*)
4. **Al Roker** (weather and feature reporter, *NBC Today*)
5. **Neal Shapiro** (executive producer, *Dateline NBC*)
6. **James Rubin** (spokesman, U.S. State Department)
7. **Ken Auletta** (staff writer, *The New Yorker*)
8. **Peter Jennings** (anchor, *ABC World News Tonight*)
9. **Bill Hamilton** (national editor, *The Washington Post*)
10. **Dennis Kneale** (executive editor, *Forbes*)
11. **Frank Rich** (op-ed columnist, *The New York Times*)
12. **Peter Kann** (publisher, *The Wall Street Journal*; chairman, CEO, Dow Jones & Company)

B

a. **Karen Elliott House** (president, Dow Jones International)
b. **Kathleen Deveny** (assistant managing editor, *Newsweek*)
c. **Esther Fein** (metro reporter, *The New York Times*)
d. **Christiane Amanpour** (chief international correspondent, CNN; contributor, *60 Minutes*)
e. **Alex Witchel** (style reporter, *The New York Times*)
f. **JuJu Chang** (anchor, *ABC World News This Morning*)
g. **Jane Mayer** (staff writer, *The New Yorker*)
h. **Amanda Urban** (literary agent, ICM)
i. **Deborah Roberts** (correspondent, *20/20*)
j. **Dee Dee Myers** (contributing editor, *Vanity Fair*)
k. **Judy Woodruff** (anchor, CNN)
l. **Kayce Freed** (producer *20/20*)

1.(j), 2.(k), 3.(c), 4.(i), 5.(f), 6.(d), 7.(h), 8.(l), 9.(g), 10.(b), 11.(e), 12.(a)

ERIC DRAPER/AP-WIDE WORLD (KAZAN); SVENNEVIK/ABC (ROBERTS); LANGEVIN/SYGMA (RUBIN); COURTESY NBC (ROKER); COURTESY *NY TIMES* (FEIN); ECCLES/CNN (AMANPOUR); LACOMBE/*THE NEW YORKER* (REMNICK)



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Pulitzer Self-Promotion

Winning papers did not all tell the full story.

WHO NEEDS A PRESS release when you've got a newspaper at your disposal? For nine of the ten dailies that earned Pulitzer Prizes this year, the annual awards meant front-page self-promotion and giving the other prizewinners short shrift.

The New York Times, which was understated and evenhanded in treating the news of both its own and the other awards, was the lone exception.

Six of the newspapers—ranging in size and stature from *The Washington Post* to *The Hartford Courant*—bumped other stories off the front page to detail newsroom celebrations, quote editors, and dole out praise to the recognized reporters. And all three of the remaining papers prominently teased their inside stories on page one.

Among newspapers that didn't earn a prize, stories about the awards were short and buried deep inside. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, typical in this respect, placed a 645-word Associated Press article on page eight of its "Features" section.

By contrast, here's the front-page lead that ran in *The Miami Herald*, the winner for investigative journalism: "A hard-hitting series of reports that overcame numerous hurdles, unearthed hundreds of questionable votes, and ultimately overturned a tainted election earned *The Herald* a coveted Pulitzer Prize." The article continued, "As the Pulitzers were announced and bulletins flashed across news wires, staffers gathered around computer terminals in *The Herald*'s...newsrooms. Word of the paper's triumph generated gleeful shrieks, multiple high-fives, many wide smiles—and a shower of champagne." No other Pulitzer recipients are mentioned in the text of the 1,136-word story. Instead, the winners were listed in an accompanying box that ran inside next to the story's jump.

At *The Oregonian*, the coverage was much the same. "Amid popping champagne corks," the Portland daily's news staff "hooted, hollered, whistled, and cheered" at the announcement of its award for explanatory journalism, according to the paper's own article—headlined "*The Oregonian* captures a Pulitzer." The article quoted publisher Fred Stickel: "[W]inning the Pulitzer not only brings fame and distinction to *The Oregonian* but also significant recognition to our state." The story added, "Stickel said the quality of journalism displayed...its depth, clarity and creativity...[and] feeds Oregonians' intellectual appetite and reflects the intelligence of the state's residents."

Even the nation's most prestigious papers couldn't resist the temptation to promote themselves. *The Washington Post*'s page-one account, "Police Series Wins Pulitzer: *Post* Team Takes Public Service Medal," was given over mostly to its own award, though it did briefly mention the 13 others.

The *Los Angeles Times*, which won for reporting on corruption in the entertainment business, did describe other winners, but used the bulk of its coverage to counter the perception that it's soft on the hometown industry. And *The Wall Street Journal*, in an article headlined "*Wall Street Journal* Wins Pulitzer Prizes For Russia Crisis and Feature Writing," quoted the managing editor who boasted that one of the award-winning stories "took a look behind the headlines, statistics, and stereotypes to put a more human face on crime and all its consequences." Other Pulitzer recipients were cited, but only perfunctorily.

The sole prizewinner to avoid profuse self-praise was *The New York Times*. Despite winning two Pulitzers, the paper gave equal space and treatment to each winner.

—Jeff Pooley

Some newspapers trumpeted their own Pulitzers and gave the others short shrift. Only *The New York Times*, bottom, was more evenhanded.

Say Netanyahu, Gadhafi, Pataki.

NOW TRY SAYING IT LIVE

IN FRONT OF

10 MILLION PEOPLE.

Welcome to the Newseum.

Do you think being a newscaster is easy? Go in front of the camera and see for yourself. At the Newseum, learning how news is put together is hands-on fun for everyone. And admission is free.

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How would you cover some of the difficult stories journalists encounter every day? Our touch-screen computers in the Ethics Center let you decide, then explain the choices real journalists made.

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THE STORY BEHIND THE STAT

NUMBERS MAY NEVER LIE, BUT SOMETIMES they don't tell the whole story. Just ask John Carver, who heads the federal agency in Washington, D.C., that supervises accused felons released from jail and awaiting trial. Carver and his agency came under fire after **The Washington Post** published a January story reporting that residents of the District's halfway houses had escaped during a recent three-month period. Carver met with *Post* reporter Cheryl Thompson in February after the article appeared and gave her a 37-page spreadsheet that laid out how many detainees had escaped, how many of them were charged with new crimes, and what the new charges were.

On March 10, two weeks after the meeting, another story by Thompson appeared in the *Post*. Using the numbers Carver provided, it implied that the escapees had gone on a crime spree. The lead paragraph noted that "at least 83 of those 226 pretrial inmates who absconded—some more than once—were rearrested on new charges, including manslaughter and armed robbery, according to District and court records."

What Thompson wrote was literally true. However, her article did not give the complete picture. Carver's data *did* show that 226 pretrial inmates had escaped and that 83 were later charged with new crimes. But of those 83 new charges, 63 were for the crime of escaping from a halfway house. Thus, only 20 escapees were charged with a crime other than escape, and only one was charged with manslaughter and one was charged with armed robbery. The next day, before Carver had a chance to complain, the *Post* published the same numbers in an unsigned editorial. The editorial, written by Colbert King, said that "the city's halfway house program for inmates has remained a serious threat to public safety."

Carver eventually wrote a letter to Thompson's editor, complaining about her "highly misleading" use of the statistics, but never heard back. He also said that Thompson had never called him after their meeting, even though she wrote in her story that Carver "declined to comment." King, who wrote the editorial, says he is more worried about the victims of criminals who escape from halfway houses, than about "the spin" Carver is trying to put on the issue. Thompson referred calls to assistant city editor Jackie Jones, who says the numbers are fair. "I don't think this says at all that all 83 were arrested on new felony crimes," says Jones. "But they were arrested on new charges." As for Carver's contention that Thompson never called him for comment, Jones says, "That's absolutely not true." —*Robert Schmidt*

Ad Luck For Ford

On April 7, **Wall Street Journal** readers were treated to an upbeat front-page article by Fara Warner about Ford Motor Company's bright future under new chief executive Jacques Nasser. Inside the paper, Ford got some extra publicity: Adjacent to the story's jump page was Ford's own full-page announcement welcoming Volvo into the corporate family.

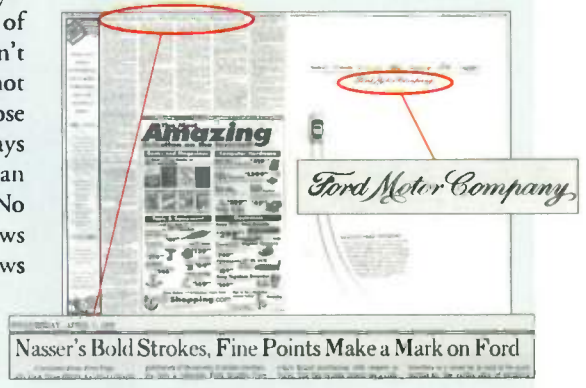
"What happened was absolutely a complete coincidence," says Paul Atkinson, the *Journal*'s vice-president of advertising. Ford's director of global news, John Spelich, says, "Unless somebody in the [*Journal*'s] composing room was having a little fun, it was pure serendipity."

Atkinson says the staff that lays out the paper doesn't even know which articles will run in the next day's paper when they set the ad pages. After the Ford piece and ad appeared, his staff "noticed it and discussed it internally," he says. "It's the kind of thing that shouldn't happen...but it's not something we lose sleep over." Says *Journal* spokesman Richard Tofel, "No one in the news department knows where specific ads will be placed....If we catch it, we'd be inclined to move it—whether it's a positive or a negative [story]. It's a perception thing." Both parties say that Ford was not told when the piece would run.

As Ford's Spelich notes, Warner's story analyzed Nasser's first 100 days as CEO, during which Ford acquired Volvo. The deal was finalized on April 1. Spelich says that early April was the obvious time to run an ad celebrating the move. "There was no purpose in trying to time the appearance of the ad with the article," he says, "They were parallel events, not coordinated." Says the *Journal*'s Tofel: "It's not inconceivable, but it's highly unlikely" that Ford would plan such a strategy. "If they said they were going to run this ad a day or two after the Volvo deal closed, they would have run it if the deal closed a week earlier or a week later."

The American Society of Magazine Editors, which expects its members to have more time to watch out for these conflicts than a daily newspaper editor would, prohibits placing ad pages "adjacent to related editorial material in a manner that implies editorial endorsement of the advertised product or services [see The Big Blur, page 48]."

—*Kimberly Conniff*



Nasser's Bold Strokes, Fine Points Make a Mark on Ford

The *Journal*'s story continued on a page next to a Ford ad.

DETROIT FREE PRESS/KRT(LOGO)

A true success story.

The Chicago Tribune celebrates its

20th Pulitzer Prize

with Architecture Critic,

Blair Kamin,

taking a 1999 Pulitzer for criticism—including articles
from his Reinventing the Lakefront series.
His journalistic integrity and in-depth investigation
are a true asset to the
Chicago Tribune and its readers.

Chicago Tribune

chicagotribune.com

Allow me to explain . . . and apologize

Hello again.

It is with relief, contrition and humility that I return today to the column space I've occupied for the previous 6½ years.

It comes to my attention that some of the readership has wondered where I've been the past eight months. Allow me to explain.

In May I was suspended for two weeks for what my superiors and I agree was a significant error in judgment. After the newspaper was unable to verify for publication some information about the University of Louisville, I chose to share that information with the NCAA enforcement staff. My hope was that it would investigate the information to see if it was true.

PAT FORDE

No further investigation resulted, however, and no news stories were published about the allegations. But the NCAA informed U of L of my action, and the university told the newspaper.

I **MAKE** no effort to minimize this mistake. Reporters often share information with investigative agencies, and appropriately so, to determine whether that information is true and of public consequence. But to have acted as a tipster was the wrong thing to do.

The paper's disciplinary action was swift and significant. In addition to the two-week suspension without pay, I had my column revoked for an indefinite period of time and my salary was frozen for a year.

I did not disagree with how my superiors treated me. I believe this action shows how seriously The Courier-Journal takes its role to produce a full, fair, accurate and trustworthy product for its readership.

I did agree with many of The C-J's readers who lobbied for a

A REPORTER TURNS INFORMER

FOR SIX YEARS, Pat Forde—The Louisville *Courier-Journal*'s smart-mouthed sports columnist—has been known for his acerbic appraisals of the University of Louisville basketball program, and for some tough reporting on the team. He has described the Cardinals as "held together with bailing wire and Dentyne chewing gum." He has also uncovered possible rules violations, prompting an NCAA investigation. In a city where Louisville basketball is the religion of choice, Pat Forde is a heretic.

Last May, without explanation, his four-times-a-week column disappeared. Forde continued to write news stories about sports, but no column. After an eight-month absence, a remorseful Forde returned to his column (shown at left) on January 17 and explained that it had been suspended because he had committed "a significant error in judgment. After the newspaper was unable to verify for publication some information"—he's referring to a possible NCAA violation—"about the University of Louisville, I chose to share that information with the NCAA enforcement staff. My hope was that it would investigate the information to see if it was true."

The tip Forde passed along didn't produce an investigation—but it put Forde's actions under scrutiny. (The NCAA told the school what Forde had done.) The paper never published the allegations, and Forde lost his column.

What, exactly, did Forde do wrong? Wasn't he just checking out a lead? Or did Forde stop being a reporter and become a snitch?

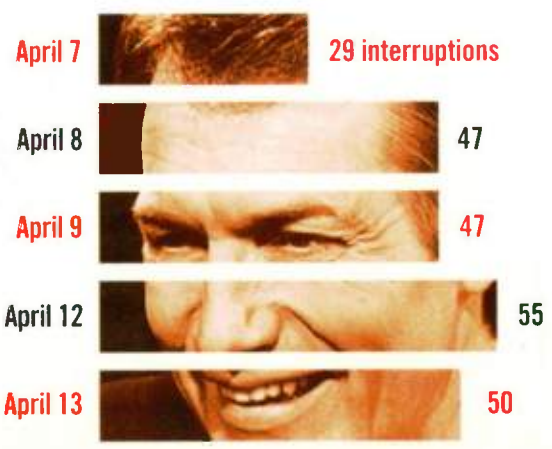
His misdeed, say journalists, is not so much what he did, but *why* he did it. Revealing information, after all, is a common journalistic practice. "If you've got information, sometimes you need to give a little to get a little," explains Danny Robbins, sportswriter for the *Houston Chronicle*. "But if you just literally pick up the phone and say, 'Here, check this out,' that seems to be crossing some line." Forde left the tip on voice mail, says Kenny Klein, the university's sports information director. That Forde did so suggests that he wasn't offering the tip as an informational quid pro quo. Forde says, "I shouldn't have handled it the way I did," although he declines to confirm that he left the tip on voice mail.

Forde's action raised serious questions about whether he was biased—questions the paper did nothing to resolve. The *C-J*, the first newspaper in the country to hire an ombudsman, had no reply for readers who called to ask, "Where's Forde?" Executive editor Bennie Ivory told the *Louisville Eccentric Observer* last July that, for legal reasons, the paper couldn't discuss what Forde had done.

The silence was deafening—and uncharacteristic. The *Courier-Journal* has an impressive tradition of coming clean when reporters break the rules or make questionable judgment calls. In 1988, a front-page story detailed how a reporter had misled his bosses about the accuracy of his notes. The paper told readers in 1995 that a writer would no longer cover the school due to a potential conflict of interest. And, in a story last fall called "An Ethical Lapse at The *C-J*," the paper revealed a plagiarism incident. Why didn't ombudsman Linda Raymond lay out the facts of the Forde imbroglio? "I couldn't be fully forthcoming about what had happened," she says. "I had never been told." —*Jennifer Greenstein*

Charlie Rose Interrupt-O-Meter

Last issue we began tracking how often late-night talk-show host Charlie Rose interrupts his guests during five installments of his show. We found that Rose cut people off an average of 55 times per show. This month, he was more restrained. In five consecutive mid-April installments, we found that he interrupted his guests an average of 46 times per show. Rose's interruption quotient peaked on April 12, when he spent a full hour bantering with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger about Kosovo and past administrations' foreign policy. He was least excitable on the April 7 show, which was divided into four separate discussions on baby boomers and their parents, Kosovo, jazz, and chess. —*Matthew Reed Baker*



KATE KUNZ/RÖSE COMMUNICATIONS

Getting There First

20/20's Schwartz and Ross accept their Polk Award.

IN APRIL, BRIAN ROSS AND RHONDA Schwartz of ABC's *20/20* received a George Polk Award for reporting for their feature, "Made In America?"—an account of the abuses allegedly suffered by foreign garment workers on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. Manufacturers there have exploited the island's U.S.–commonwealth status to affix "Made in the USA" labels to designer clothing while subjecting workers to unconscionable conditions.

But the ABC News story noticeably resembled one that had aired six months before on the syndicated *Inside Edition*. Like the *20/20* story, *Inside Edition*'s "Worker Abuse in the Mariana Islands," reported by Matt Meagher and produced by Brad White, examined the workers' fetid living conditions. Both stories told of "recruiters" who take foreign workers' money and lure them to Saipan with the promise of lucrative U.S. jobs. Both employed hidden cameras. Both even interviewed the same Catholic human-rights worker.

Robert Spector, chairman of the Polk Awards committee, which is based at New York's Long Island University, has seen both features (*Inside Edition* submitted its segment for a Polk last year, but didn't win) and says that despite similarities, "Made in America?" was "really a different story."

"Their story had elements that, frankly, I wish ours had," concedes *Inside Edition*'s White, citing *20/20*'s report that factory owners forced pregnant workers to have abortions. Still, "Worker Abuse" did win three major awards and prompted Congressman George Miller of California to introduce legislation addressing the abuses. "I always thought that these awards were for completely original reporting," says *Inside Edition* reporter Meagher.

ABC correspondent Ross, who says he saw the *Inside Edition* piece only after his own was finished, says awards like the Polk are "subjective, so ultimately it's up to the judges."

Ross and producer Schwartz won, says Spector, neither for breaking the story nor for doing the best investigative work but for presenting the most comprehensive story on the abuses on Saipan. —*Ari Voukydis*

Doesn't Count

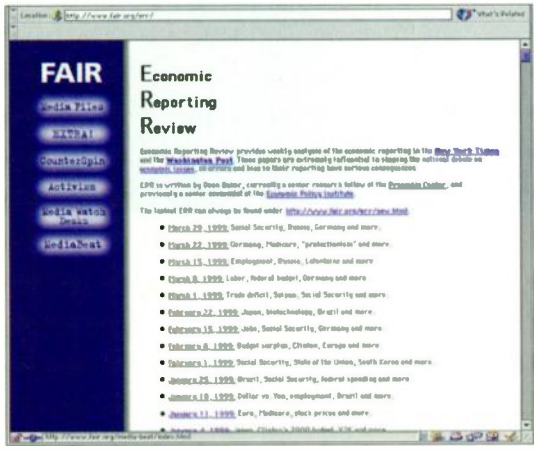
STUFF we LIKE

DAILY NEWS WITH WIT

Billed as "the most important television program ever," Comedy Central's ***The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*** mocks the self-importance of network news shows and cracks wise on the day's breaking stories. The Kosovo imbroglio is called "Kick in the Balkans '99." Imagine Dennis Miller's *Saturday Night Live* bit, only more fact-based and far funnier. Each show includes news headlines, interviews, and pieces featuring *Daily Show* correspondents on location across America, covering real stories that range from female midget wrestlers to the curator of the Barbara Streisand Museum. *The Daily Show* has been around since July 1996, but the program has improved since Stewart replaced the arrogant Craig Kilborn in January. Although the show's humor can be juvenile, Stewart's intelligence and self-deprecating wit shine through, especially in interviews and ad-libs. Tune in Sunday through Thursday at 11 P.M. *—Michael Kadish*

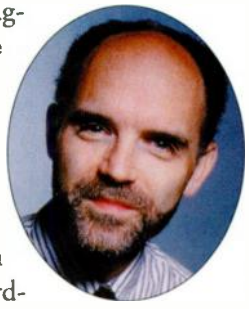
THE DAILY SHOW WITH JON STEWART

Dissecting The Business Pages



Those who suspect that newspaper business sections tend to politicize their coverage need look no further for confirmation than **Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting's Economic Reporting Review** (www.fair.org/err/index.html). Written weekly for the liberal watchdog group by economist Dean Baker, a senior research fellow at the Preamble Center, it dissects the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* business pages, highlighting flat-out errors and the politics of word choice and context. A March 12 *Post* story about the German finance minister's resignation, for instance, listed Germany's weaknesses as "some of the world's highest labor costs, shortest working hours, longest vacations, oldest students, and youngest retirees." Observed Baker: "These are all characteristics of a prosperous economy that has produced high living standards for its people." *—Jeff Pooley*

Advice For Any Investor



Jason Zweig's *Money* magazine column, "**The Fundamentalist**," offers invaluable advice and encouragement to investors—whether they're novices with a few bucks in a retirement plan or hard-core Wall Street watchers. He tracks trends and monitors the impact of market fluctuations before bottom-lining it all for his readers. Even with global markets unstable, Zweig advises keeping some assets in overseas funds—after all, he says, risk is what it's all about. And while Wall Street focuses on how money managers are benefiting from mutual-fund mergers, Zweig is more concerned with what those mergers mean for shareholders. *—Bridget Samburg*

money

MICELOTTA/COMEDY CENTRAL (STEWART); MICHAEL RAAB/MONEY (ZWEIG)

Tips For Better Computing

www.tomshardware.com offers some of the best analysis of personal computer hardware available anywhere. Geared toward the computer hobbyist, the site features technical explanations and performance scores for the important components that drive a personal computer, including motherboards, processors, graphics cards, and hard drives.

Unlike trade magazines, which generally offer advice on which components to buy, Tom Pabst, a German medical doctor, wants his site to focus on one goal: helping users squeeze the best performance out of their existing systems. Trade magazines seldom review hardware with the same consistency and rigor—or technical competence—as does this site. www.tomshardware.com will tell you, for example, if a Chaintech motherboard is faster than one made by Intel and how to make your new 300mhz PC run much faster.

—Michael Mathog

The Sound Of Nature

Every so often, amid its mix of morning news, National Public Radio takes listeners on an environmental journey with **National Geographic Society Radio Expeditions.** Whether it's a search for the nearly extinct Po'ouli bird in Hawaii, an introduction to a Tasmanian devil, or a description of the monarch butterfly's flight pattern, vivid sounds and storytelling offer listeners a glimpse of unique ecosystems near and far, and a richer understanding of our ever-evolving natural world.

—Leslie Heilbrunn

FCC: Phone Home

For anyone confused by the complexities of telephone service, the Federal Communications Commission provides a clear and easy-to-use guide on the Web. The **FCC Common Carrier Bureau Enforcement Division website** (http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/enforce/index-overview.html) can help consumers figure out many of telephony's mysteries and offers advice on how to pick a service provider. It also has tips for decoding the mystery charges on your phone bills and a section full of hints on how to avoid becoming a victim of "Slams, Crams and Other Scams." A section called "Stats and Facts" contains a scorecard of complaints filed against phone companies, as well as answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about billing. My favorite section: "Filing a Complaint," which lets you register gripes against phone companies online. Given the FCC's role in determining how much telephone companies can charge for Internet access, now is a good time to get acquainted with this site.

—Julie Scelfo

Newspaper Or Not?

AT FIRST GLANCE, ***THE ONION***'S FRONT PAGE IS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THOSE OF OTHER alternative newspapers, and that's a major part of the joke. This spoof, available in print and online (www.theonion.com), is best known for its gag headlines ("New Crispy Snack Cracker To Ease Crushing Pain Of Modern Life" and "Area Stoners Mistakenly Hold Massive Kemp Rally" are two memorable examples). What makes the shtick work is *The Onion*'s dead-on newspaper mimicry, complete with a *USA Today*-esque "STATshot" graphic in each issue (example: "How Are We Disposing Of The Bodies? 2,500 Americans polled"). The stories read and look like real journalism, until you realize that no, Congress didn't actually appropriate "an additional $540 million for evil." And while occasionally sophomoric, *The Onion*, published in Madison, Wisconsin, is at its most potent when skewering American attitudes, be it through fake news stories about the State Department's upcoming U.S. "enemy tryouts" or the removal of the "First-Amendment bug" from "Bill Of Rights 2.0." *—Matthew Reed Baker*

COMMENTARY THAT HITS

BELOW THE BELTWAY

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Gifted Critics

Artists sometimes provide gifts of their work to the scribes who review them. An obvious conflict of interest? The art community is divided.

CLEMENT GREENBERG, THE MOST ARTICULATE and powerful American art critic of the century, could make an artist's career or cripple it from his perches at *Commentary* and *The Nation* between the 1940s and 1960s. During that time, he also managed to cobble together a mighty impressive painting collection, full of Jackson Pollocks, Barnett Newmans, and David Smiths. All were gifts from the artists—and he got to choose the works himself. As he once told Peter Plagens, now *Newsweek*'s art critic: "If I'm going to get something, I might as well pick a good one."

No critic today approaches the influence Greenberg wielded in his prime, and the gift giving is not nearly as obvious. But the practice lives on. Robert Hughes, the tart-tongued and highly respected *Time* art critic, received a painting from the famed abstract expressionist painter Robert Motherwell as a wedding gift in 1981. Decades ago, Plagens received some artworks from Marcel Broodthaers, the Belgian poet-turned-conceptual artist. And both Eric Gibson, currently an assistant editor on *The Wall Street Journal*'s "Leisure & Arts" page, and *Art & Auction* editor at large Judd Tully found themselves on the receiving end of gifts from appreciative artists at the beginning of their careers.

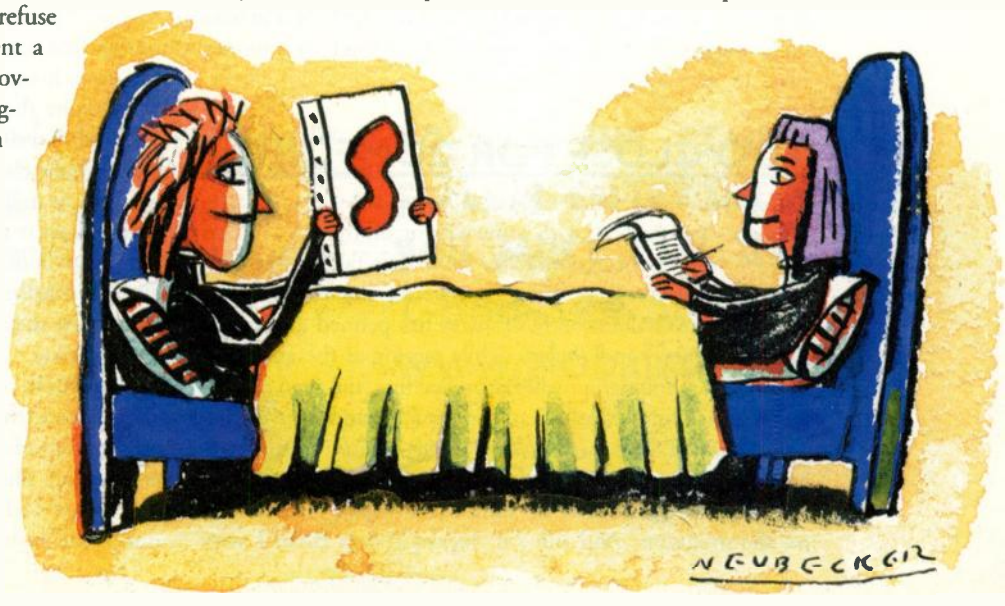
None of these critics believes the presents compromised their integrity, although they now refuse to accept them. But to some, gifts represent a too-cozy fraternization with the object of coverage, and could influence a critic's judgments in future reviews. "I think we'd frown upon it," says John Darnton, culture editor of *The New York Times*. "It's such a blatant, egregious violation of everything we hold dear [here], you'd almost have to be a psychopath to do it."

Not surprisingly, most art-world journalists take a slightly less dogmatic stand on the subject. "It goes on," says Bruce Wolmer, editor in chief of *Art & Auction*. "But the crucial line here is that no one reputable could have their opinion changed. [The gift giving] grows out of mutual recognition and gratitude."

Critics champion artists because they believe in them; the gift comes after the review. As Greenberg himself wrote in 1964: "I feel as free as before to say publicly whatever I choose about the works of these artists." Other denizens of the art world downplay the seriousness of accepting a token of appreciation. "The seductions today go way beyond someone giving you a work of art," says Jed Perl, the art critic for *The New Republic*. In the late 1970s, Perl relates, a Japanese gallery owner beseeched *Time*'s Hughes to visit Tokyo and review his show of Chagall prints. Hughes declined, but the owner would not be denied and somehow snuck into Hughes's New York office and tossed an envelope onto his desk. Inside, Hughes found something like $10,000 in cash. Hughes threw the man out.

The temptations, however, are most acute for those critics not employed full-time by publications. Freelance writing is not exactly lucrative; a critic is lucky to get more than $150 for a review in an art publication. "The only thing that pays worse than art criticism is writing poetry," says the *Journal*'s Gibson. These critics often turn to other revenue streams, such as writing catalog essays for art shows.

Art publications don't bother with written guidelines prohibiting perceptions of conflicts of interest, like those issued by bigger news organizations, such as *Time*, which prohibits gifts that "obligate or appear to obligate the recipient in any way." (In the case of potential conflicts, staff are expected to



ROBERT NEUBECKER

This Old House, This Glass House

After a home-renovation magazine had an industry honor taken away because of an ad-edit blur, we asked some questions about our own magazine.

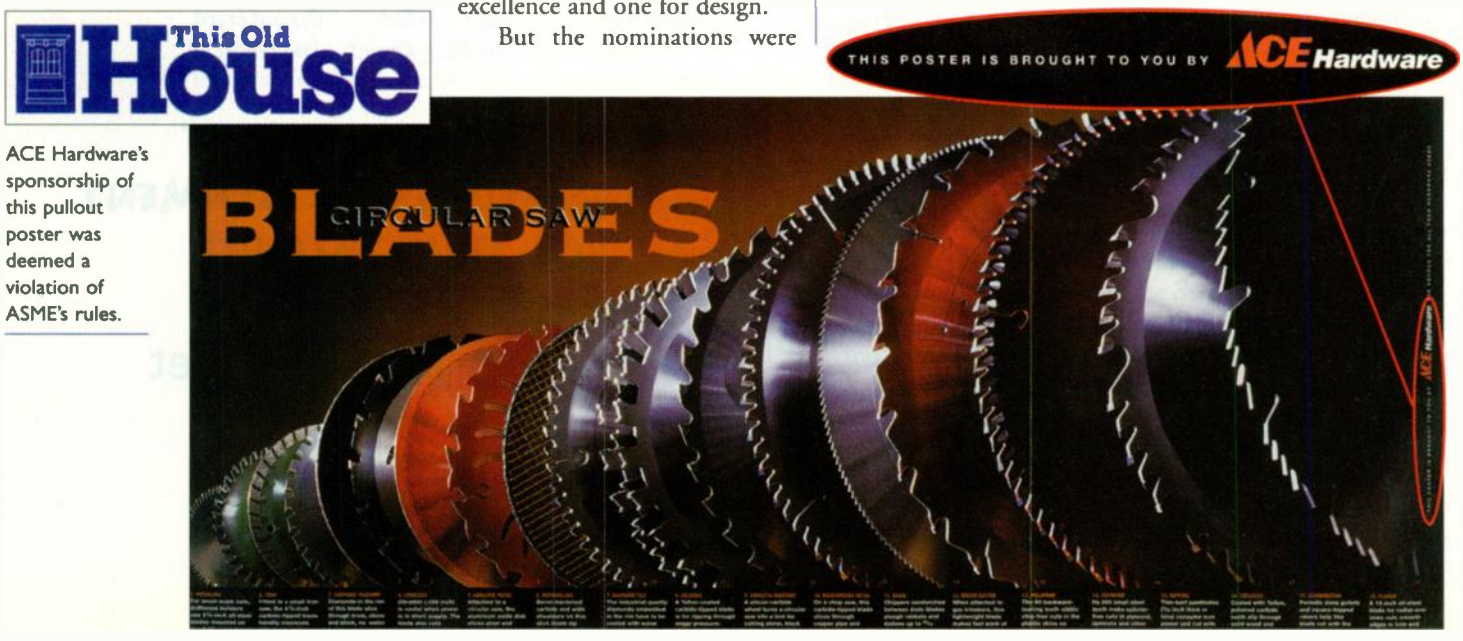
ONE OF THE ODD AND CHALLENGING things about putting out a magazine about media is that many of the issues, controversies, and pitfalls we write about are the same ones we face internally. This overlap gives us an interesting and, we hope, insightful perspective on the world we cover, but it also leaves us vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy or, less harshly, to admonitions that we should be wary of the glass walls in our own house before we throw any stones.

Which brings me to *This Old House*.

This Old House is a popular television series on PBS; it also is a companion magazine that, like the show, is full of helpful advice about house-renovation projects. The magazine, a product of Time Warner unit Time Publishing Ventures Inc., is well-enough regarded in magazine circles that it was on the verge earlier this year of capturing two prestigious National Magazine Award nominations from the American Society of Magazine Editors, one for general excellence and one for design.

But the nominations were withdrawn by ASME because the magazine, in ASME's judgment, had repeatedly violated one of the voluntary society's guidelines for the separation of editorial content and advertising. Most readers are probably unaware that a group like ASME even exists, and it doesn't have any real power over its 900-plus members' practices and policies. But it does administer the coveted National Magazine Awards, and its unprecedented action against *This Old House* was a big blow to the magazine and a sign that concerns about separating advertising and editorial content are becoming a higher-profile issue in the industry.

This Old House drew ASME's wrath because of an editorial feature—a pullout poster showing tools, hardware, and other categories—that carries at the side of the page a sponsorship message from Ace Hardware Corporation. The small type reads: "This poster is brought to you by Ace Hardware, the source for all your hardware needs." That's a direct violation of one of ASME's five guidelines on advertising: "[A]n advertiser's name or logo may not be used on any editorial pages to suggest advertising sponsorship of



ACE Hardware's sponsorship of this pullout poster was deemed a violation of ASME's rules.

those pages, nor shall any editorial page be labeled as 'sponsored' or 'brought to you' by an advertiser."

ASME WARNED *THIS OLD HOUSE* THAT IF IT didn't lose the sponsorship message, it would lose the nominations, explains Jacqueline Leo, the editorial director of *Consumer Reports* who serves as ASME president. "Sponsorship suggests control," Leo says. I asked Leo how a sponsorship message on a magazine page is different from the ones on television. After all, when we're told our local newscast is sponsored by Joe's Car Wash, we don't suspect that Joe is exerting some influence on the show. "The language of television is not the same as the language of print," Leo says, "and that's what we're trying to preserve. There are different traditions in different mediums."

But *This Old House* had another tradition to preserve, the tradition of protecting its financial well-being. The magazine's president, Eric Thorkilsen, said the magazine was obligated to run the messages as part of Ace Hardware's underwriting deal with the affiliated television show. He added that the poster is editorial content and that Ace has nothing to do with its creation. So the magazine defied ASME's warnings and the nominations were stripped.

ASME's guidelines address everything from how the layout and design of ads should be distinct from editorial offerings to how advertising should not be promoted on the cover. A new version of the guidelines, released in April, offers some guidance in the realm of new media, where advertising and editorial content have been blurred in creative and insidious ways inconceivable just a few years ago. For instance, the guidelines state that search engines presented under the magazine's brand should "perform their operations free of influence from advertising or other commercial considerations."

In my view, of all the blurs we see every day—from single-sponsorship deals to celebrities insisting on reviewing articles in exchange for a cover pose—*This Old House*'s infraction seems more a misdemeanor than a felony. Nevertheless, ASME's confrontation with *This Old House* may signal a new level of aggressiveness on the part of the 36-year-old editors' organization about upholding and even publicizing its standards. And that's a good thing, since the more the public is brought into these normally internal discussions about the proper relationship between the editorial and business sides of publications, the better informed we'll all be about potential and actual corruption of editorial products.

Which brings me to the glass walls I mentioned above. While the episode with *This Old House* was playing out, this magazine published a pullout poster of our own. Ours was a listing of websites we identified in a special report as offering the best content in their categories. The poster was on the back of a trifold Microsoft ad, and a smaller Microsoft ad appeared at the bottom of the poster. Several readers smelled a rat—or a Gates—and suspected that we had sold out our editorial independence to Microsoft. To them, it looked as if Microsoft had a say in picking our "Best Of The Web." A few complained to our ombudsman, Bill Kovach, who addresses the issue in his column on page 22.

We knew that the judgments we made about the best websites were not influenced by Microsoft's money (in fact, the ad package was sold *after* we had made our selections, and a number of Microsoft products, including its all-important portal, did not make the cut). But we also know that the appearance of ad-edit corruption must be taken seriously—especially for a magazine that holds itself out as a journalistic watchdog. So we asked ASME leaders what they thought. We were told that because the Microsoft ad was clearly identified as an ad (and because we never stated "this poster is sponsored by Microsoft," which it was, in a way) we did not violate ASME guidelines. But we had almost violated another ASME guideline, one that does not allow advertising to run "adjacent to related editorial in a manner that implies editorial endorsement of the advertised product or services."

"It was a close call," says Frank Lalli, the former managing editor of *Money* magazine and a member of the ASME board of directors. "And we expect better from you."

Fair enough. For a variety of reasons—some related to the design issues discussed by Kovach and by editor in chief Steven Brill in his response to Kovach, and some related to the goals ASME and this magazine are trying to achieve—we won't do another poster enveloped in multiple ads by a single advertiser. And we'll continue to tighten a practice we've always had of trying not to run ads adjacent to editorial material that deals with the advertiser's products. We'll also continue to follow how ASME tries to keep others in the industry honest. For us, the experience with our own poster is a reminder that our readers are, in fact, very tuned in to these sorts of issues—and are certainly prepared to keep *us* honest. ■

After *Brill's Content* published this "Best Of The Web" pullout poster with an ad from Microsoft, some readers questioned our ad-edit separation.

Eric Effron is the editor of Brill's Content. *You can write to him at eeffron@brillscontent.com.*

I Created A Monster

Too many journalists (even the author, on occasion) fall prey to the notion that something they wrote has changed the course of human events.

I CAN REMEMBER WHEN REPORTERS DIDN'T expect their stories to bring down a president. Those were the days. Modest expectations prevailed. I'd like to be able to say that in those days reporters who worked in Washington weren't as full of themselves as they are now, but, to be absolutely honest about it, my memory is a bit hazy on that point. In those days, when I was asked if I could think of anything I'd ever written that could be shown to have had any effect on anything at all, I usually replied that, according to a letter I'd once received, an election for clerk of the county court in Letcher County, Kentucky, might have been decided by a two- or three-year-old *New Yorker* piece of mine that I'd always thought was about something else. I'll admit that I avoided checking out the letter writer's analysis of the election results, just in case he was giving the piece more weight than it deserved.

I would guess that even in those days a number of my confreres had no trouble at all believing that the stuff they wrote was carefully read by actual people, including even some people they didn't know. The ability to believe that is, of course, the first step toward imagining that people are taking the stuff seriously, and that notion, in turn, is only one step away from getting the idea that your prose might have changed the course of human events. That idea, alas, can lead to the delusion that practically anything that happens in the world is the result of something you've written.

It's not surprising that, even in the era of modest expectations, supposedly tough-minded reporters could have drifted in the direction of that delusion. I don't doubt that you could find a technical writer in Osaka who remains confident that once American consumers gave the instruction booklet he wrote a thorough going-over, as suggested right there on the first page, they quickly became adept at setting their VCRs to record three separate programs over a two-week period. It's only human to cling to the belief that whatever prose you send out into the world is not only going to be read but also acted upon in a constructive manner.

Among reporters, Watergate gave that belief a great boost. Historians might point out that if anyone could be said to have brought down the president it was Judge John Sirica, but the judge was not the one played by Robert Redford in the movie. Since Watergate, expectations concerning what used to be called the power of the press have risen steadily. In other words, we've now had a quarter century of impact creep. So when Washington reporters are led to believe that they have the president in their sights, the heavy breathing starts, even if their sights are gooey with leaks from the office of the independent counsel.

The notion that what you've written has had some effect

ROBERT DE MICHIELL

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

on at least a presidential contender, if not a president, is, of course, tempting. I had a glimpse of its seductiveness not long ago when I started reading that Steve Forbes has been trying to transform himself for the 2000 campaign in ways that go beyond his newfound willingness to pay obeisance to Pat Robertson and to decry wanton baby-killing by those who have not truly welcomed Jesus Christ into their lives.

The Washington Post carried an extensive story on Forbes's makeover, offering as a source "political observers"—a phrase that always conjures up for me a line of 10 or 12 portly men sitting on bar stools in Washington, their backs to the bar, at some place that looks like the Palm, peering at the assembled crowd through those old-fashioned brass telescopes that I identify with Captain Horatio Hornblower. According to the *Post*'s political observers, Forbes has hired "top-notch strategists," and, presumably with their help, has "improved his appearance, sharpened his rhetoric, and honed his speech making." Just for a moment I allowed myself to dwell on how gratifying it would be to assume that the effort he was making in the area of style was a response to my description of him in a *Time* column last go-around as "doing that great comedy-club impression of what would happen if some mad scientist decided to construct a dork robot."

After reading the *Post* story, I even went so far as to imagine the scene as Forbes meets with his family and close advisers to talk about whether to take the plunge in 2000. The meeting is in a drawing room on that New Jersey estate that Forbes wouldn't have to bother to write off as a cattle ranch or banana plantation if the burden of complicated tax laws were lifted from the backs of the American people by a flat tax. The potential candidate himself opens the meeting by announcing that he's been having second thoughts about running. "Nobody is going to vote for a dork robot," he says. He emphasizes the phrase sarcastically, obviously hoping that those in the room will assure him that he is not a dork robot.

"But what if we made it hard to tell that you're a dork robot, dear?" Mrs. Forbes says. "I hear top-notch strategists can do wonders these days."

Forbes considers that for a while. Finally, he mutters, "It's so crazy it just might work."

Within hours, the top-notch strategists are there, accompanied by the best improvers and sharpeners and honers money can buy. Essentially, they're assembling a human-being costume for Steve Forbes—and all because of my column.

> Top-notch strategists are assembling a human-being costume for Steve Forbes—all because of my column.

What brought me out of that reverie was a front-page story I'd been sent from the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, in Northern California. It reported that the Edgewater Packing Co., an amusement arcade near Cannery Row, in Monterey, was being picketed by an animal-rights group because the arcade featured a chicken playing tic-tac-toe against all comers—an enterprise that, in the view of the animal-rights group, sent "the wrong message to people about the animal's integrity."

But chickens have been performing at the Edgewater Packing Co. for years. Why demonstrate now? I couldn't help but think that it had something to do with the *New Yorker*'s publication, a few days before the protest, of an article I'd written about, well, a different subject—the disappearance from Chinatown in Manhattan of a tic-tac-toe-playing chicken. In the article, I had mentioned the Monterey chicken in passing. In other words, I might reasonably claim, the next time I'm asked about the impact of my writing, that I not only affected the clerk of the county court race in Letcher County, Kentucky, but probably provoked a demonstration in Monterey, California, concerning a chicken's integrity. After a year of heavy breathing, the days of modest expectation may have returned. ■

Full-Court Press

A child has been brutally killed, and a man is behind bars. Is it the duty of the press to turn over information that can help convict him?

IN FEBRUARY, A JURY FOUND JIMMY DALE guilty of the rape and murder of 6-year-old Elizabeth Knapp in Contoocook, New Hampshire. The verdict brought relief, though not closure, for anyone who had been following this disturbing and puzzling case. For us at the *Concord Monitor*, the verdict also ended months of worry over whether prosecutors would subpoena one of our reporters and the tape she had made of her jailhouse interview with Jimmy Dale.

This was not the most challenging episode in the *Monitor*'s long fight to keep its reporters off the witness stand and their notebooks and tapes out of court cases, but it posed the issues in stark relief.

On one hand, here was a crime so savage that people who didn't even know the victim shuddered at the thought of her fate. When the crime was described at Dale's sentencing, students from the local high school, there to watch the proceedings for a class, broke into sobs. On the other hand, here was a newspaper that had interviewed the defendant months before the trial, then resisted prosecution efforts to present the substance of that interview to both a grand jury and a jury. Dale's statements to the reporter could have been relevant evidence, but the newspaper declined on principle to give them willingly in a court of law.

Which principle? Journalists need to be free of the governmental processes they cover. They are not professional witnesses, not for the government or for private parties; they put the information they gather before the public in the stories they produce, not in courts of law. If they take part in the processes they cover, they sacrifice their independence as journalists. If they are willing witnesses in court proceedings, the public has one more reason to doubt their objectivity and to deny them information.

Beginning last July, this principle clashed with the state's duty to gather all the evidence it could in bringing to justice the killer of Elizabeth Knapp. Particularly in a case of this magnitude, we had no illusions about a victory for journalistic principle before a judge. In a similar case years ago, a *Monitor* reporter refused to testify and wound up with a criminal-contempt conviction and a suspended sentence. But a principle is a principle. Besides, in the legal arena, sometimes you get lucky.

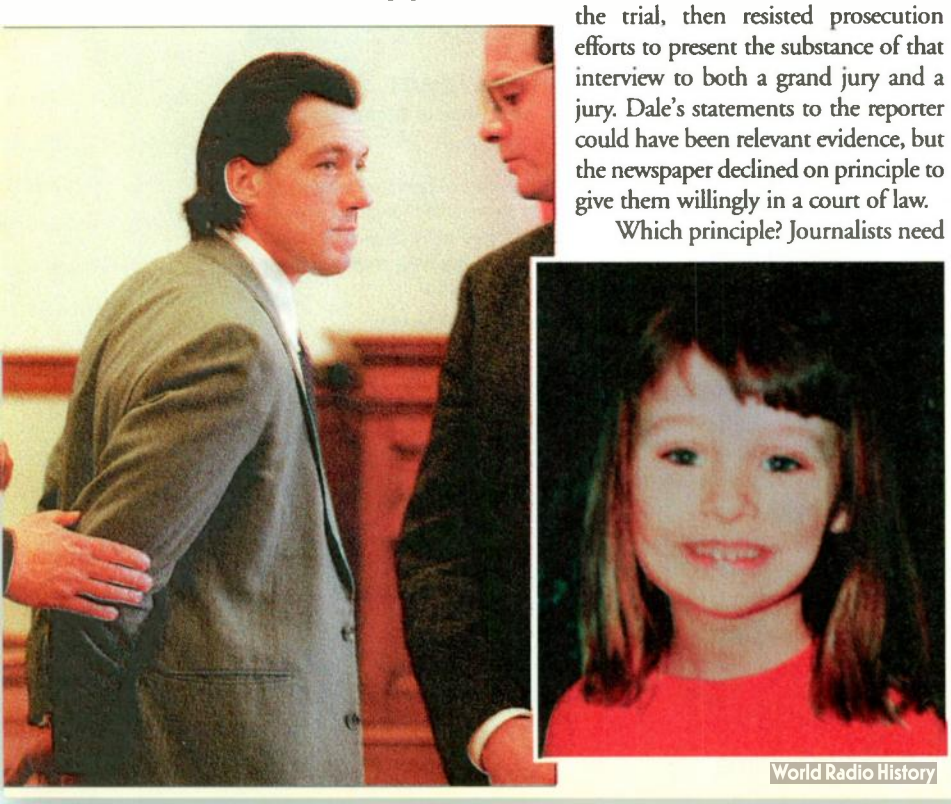
The case began nearly two years ago, when someone raped Knapp both vaginally and anally in her bed and smothered her with her pillow. The day of the crime, the girl's mother told the police she had seen her live-in boyfriend, Richard Buchanan, naked and moving on top of the girl and had tried to stop him. The police arrested Buchanan. A grand jury indicted him for murder, two counts of rape, and kidnapping.

As open and shut as the case seemed, there were troubling details from the beginning. Buchanan had arisen the morning after the crime and gone to work as though nothing had happened. Ruth Knapp, the mother, told the police conflicting stories of what she had seen.

Despite these inconsistencies, anyone who followed the case in the pages of the *Concord Monitor* had little reason to believe that the police had arrested the wrong man.

Then the DNA evidence became public. It eliminated Buchanan as Elizabeth Knapp's rapist. The state dropped the rape charges but attempted to hold him for second-degree murder. A judge refused to give prosecutors more time, and the murder charge was dropped as well.

Meanwhile, the state was pursuing a new suspect. He was Jimmy Dale. At the time of the child's murder, Dale was living in the same apartment building as the Knapps. He had left the state shortly after the crime.



On February 23, 1999, Jimmy Dale was convicted of the rape and murder of 6-year-old Elizabeth Knapp.

ANDREA BRUCE/CONCORD MONITOR (2) (DALE & KOENIG); AP-WIDE WORLD (KNAPP)

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

The police found Dale in Arizona, arrested him on a parole violation, and sent him back to New Hampshire. He refused to give a blood sample without a lawyer present, but investigators collected the butts of cigarettes he had smoked on the ride from Logan Airport in Boston to a county jail in New Hamphire. Saliva samples from the butts brought back a lab report that said: "Dale cannot be excluded as the source of the DNA detected in the sperm fractions obtained from the samples taken from Elizabeth Knapp's nightgown, groin area, vagina, and rectum." The state charged Dale with rape. At trial, an expert testified that the chances of finding a white male other than Dale whose DNA was consistent with the semen samples were 1 in 3 million.

The town in which the rape and killing occurred is in the heart of the *Monitor*'s circulation area, and we covered the crime extensively. A year later, the state's case against its chief suspect had unraveled, and although Dale was behind bars, no one was charged with the murder of Elizabeth Knapp. How the girl was murdered remained a mystery.

The *Monitor* assigned reporter Sarah Koenig to write a story on the anniversary of the crime. Her task was to recount the bizarre twists and turns of the investigation, to develop whatever new information she could, and to put the case in perspective. While reporting the story, Koenig requested an interview with Jimmy Dale. To her surprise, Dale said yes.

Koenig got another surprise when the prison allowed her to bring in a tape recorder and to speak with Dale alone. We were immediately suspicious. We believed—mistakenly, it turned out—that the corrections department and attorney general's office were working together to use our reporter to develop evidence against Dale. I discussed with Koenig the possibility that she would be subpoenaed.

During the interview with Koenig, Dale detailed his actions on the day Knapp was slain, gave an account of his movements after the killing, and pronounced himself "100 percent not guilty."

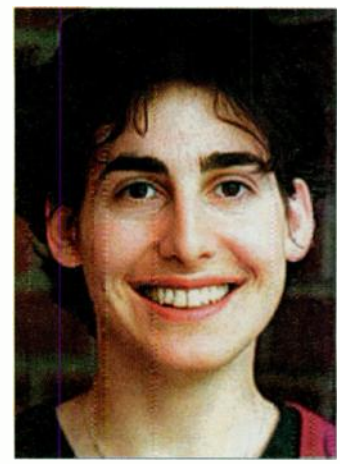
The day after Koenig's story ran, a state trooper came to the *Monitor* to talk with Koenig about her interview with Dale. As politely as I could, I told him that *Monitor* reporters did not discuss their work with the authorities. He left, but we knew this was just the beginning. Two days later, Joe Laplante, the lead prosecutor in the case, called to say he intended to subpoena Koenig to appear before a grand jury.

By now, we had brought the *Monitor*'s First Amendment attorney, William L. Chapman, into the case. Perhaps half a dozen times in recent years, Chapman has helped us keep reporters off the witness stand. During the next several days, we met with Laplante and the state's attorney general to discuss our differences, made a minor concession, and devised a strategy that we hoped would at least buy us some time.

The concession was that we would deliver the tape of Koenig's interview to Chapman and that Chapman would guarantee its safekeeping. The strategy, although we all had reservations about it, was to publish a full transcript of the Dale interview on the *Monitor*'s website. We reasoned that publishing the entire interview would satisfy the prosecutors' immediate curiosity about what else Dale had said to Koenig, and they might be less aggressive in seeking to compel Koenig to testify, particularly to the grand jury.

This was not a case in which we were seeking to withhold information given to us on the condition we not publish it. Since we had nothing to hide and we are in the business of publishing information, we saw no reason not to publish the entire interview. The website gave us a way to publish it without burning newsprint.

Publishing the entire interview also reduced the issue to its essence. As a matter of sound public and constitutional policy, a reporter should not be compelled to testify about information gathered on the job. Just as the executive branch respects the separate functions of the legislature and judiciary, it should also respect the separate function of the press. Doing so best serves society's vital interest in an informed citizenry. A free press means the ability to cover important matters without fear of reporters or their work product becoming entangled in judicial proceedings. It means avoiding even the perception that reporters serve as agents of the state.



When prison officials allowed reporter Sarah Koenig to interview Jimmy Dale alone, she knew it was likely that she would eventually be asked to testify.

AS IT TURNED OUT, KOENIG WAS NOT SUBPOENAED to testify before the grand jury. In November, Dale was indicted for murder in the Knapp case. Shortly before his trial early this year, the prosecutors again asked for the tape of Koenig's interview with Dale. We respectfully declined. The prosecutors again threatened a subpoena, but none came.

Dale was convicted of rape and murder. In a state that was a pioneer in the truth-in-sentencing movement, he was sentenced to serve a minimum of 60 years in prison.

I was curious about how our discussions and maneuvers had influenced Laplante, the lead prosecutor, in his decision making. So I called and asked him.

He said the state wanted our Dale interview mainly as a means to impeach Dale's testimony. Dale had told Koenig several things about his movements on the day of the crime that Laplante believed he could refute in court. To have those lies in Dale's own voice—on the tape—would have been valuable.

Laplante believed that publishing the entire interview on the *Monitor*'s website had actually hurt our cause, making it less likely that a judge would quash a subpoena of Koenig. In his view, the best thing we had going for us was our lawyer, Chapman—a calm, reasonable professional who did not pound the table and who sought to accommodate prosecutors wherever he could.

Perhaps if Dale had testified in his own defense, the state would have followed through with its subpoena threat. As it was, we dodged the moment of truth. Koenig never had to face the question of whether to testify in court to information she had gathered as a journalist.

If a newspaper has the opportunity to interview a defendant in a case that is preying on the minds of the community, it has a duty to do so. It also has a duty to fight to keep the reporter who conducts the interview off the witness stand and her work product out of the hands of lawyers for either side. Sometimes, even when prospects seem meager, this good fight produces good results. ■

Your financial future is starting to click.

To get the latest financial news 24 hours a day, you need the right connections.

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YOUR EYE ON THE MARKET

Henry Blodget, newly ensconced at Merrill Lynch, saw his own stock soar after his ultrabullish Amazon call.

SUZANNE OPTON

BULLISH ON BLODGET

How an Internet analyst's Amazon call sparked a media and stock-market frenzy—and boosted his own career in the process. • BY RIFKA ROSENWEIN

AT 7:40 A.M. ON Wednesday, December 16, 1998, Internet stock analyst Henry Blodget strode down the hall from his office at CIBC Oppenheimer Corporation to attend the firm's "morning call." During this daily ritual at the investment bank's offices in lower Manhattan's World Financial Center, analysts take turns making their recommendations to Oppenheimer's 630 brokers and salespeople, who are either present in the company's large auditorium or listening in via conference call. The analysts are called to the podium in the order that the firm attaches to the importance of their calls. That day, Blodget went sixth—and last.

He reserved his first call for America Online, Inc., which had announced it was expanding into Latin America with Spanish- and Portuguese-language Internet services. Only then did Blodget tell his audience he was raising his price target for Amazon.com—to $400. Shares of the company, which started as an online bookseller and is now trying to become the Internet's leading retailer, had closed the previous day at $242.75, far exceeding Blodget's previous price target of $150, which he had issued two months earlier. The analyst remembers getting just one reaction from the floor to his $400 prediction: "My God, that's aggressive," one broker said.

The meeting then broke up. Blodget picked up his usual cup of hot water and some milk from a small cafeteria on the floor, and headed back to his office to make his tea. He figures he reached his desk a few minutes after 8. Only then did he get an inkling of the tumult his Amazon call had unleashed. "My phone was lit up like a Christmas tree," he says. That day he received more than 100 calls; he estimates that a third came from Oppenheimer colleagues; the rest were from clients and the press. Everyone wanted to know how he had arrived at that seemingly outlandish figure and whether he had taken leave of his senses. Soon, the echo chamber that increasingly defines today's financial marketplace took over. Blodget's call landed on wire services and financial news websites, found its way onto cable television financial networks, and reverberated through online message boards—all within 90 minutes.

The besieged-by-the-media Blodget says he feels like a website during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

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The results were impressive for both Amazon and Blodget himself, who just a few months later landed a more prestigious and lucrative job. Amazon's stock price jumped nearly 50 points that day, reaching a high of $301.75, before dropping back to close at $289—an increase of 19.1 percent over the day before.

This was one of the largest single-day jumps for a stock that had reached stupefying levels. Amazon's share price rose 966 percent in 1998 alone. Since Amazon began trading on May 15, 1997, for $18, the share price had jumped more than 19 percent in a single day on just five prior occasions (adjusted for two subsequent stock splits, that $18 share would now be worth $1,070.25). Nearly 17 million shares of Amazon were traded on December 16, up from a daily average of 4.5 million, according to TheStreet.com, an online financial news site.

And all this activity came on a day not particularly conducive to stock run-ups. The United States had announced it would bomb Iraq and the House of Representatives was scheduled to begin its debate on President Clinton's impeachment the following day. (The market overall in fact did drop that Wednesday.)

A look at how the day unfolded provides a window into how the various financial and media forces at work in the market today can converge to take one lone analyst's call and create the kind of frenzy that attended Blodget's call. Amazon.com is a white-hot stock in a sizzling sector in the longest bull market in American history. Thanks to that very sector, the Internet, there has been a dramatic proliferation of small investors, often called day traders, who try to capitalize on market news and buy and sell stocks online throughout the day.

But it is the widespread dissemination of that news and the breathtaking speed at which it travels that fuels today's market. "The currency of the realm on Wall Street is information," says Dave Kansas, editor of TheStreet.com. "[Large financial institutions] used to control that," he says, through word of mouth among Wall Street professionals and the traditional wire services from such companies as Dow Jones & Company, Inc. and Reuters Group PLC which serve these firms.

"Now the information is available to a broader range of people," says Kansas, and many of these people are "one link away from doing a trade."

William Meehan, chief market analyst at Cantor Fitzgerald, who's been following the market for nearly 30 years, says that "five years ago, individual investors would've found out about [Blodget's call], if at all, the next day." Now, with the advent of round-the-clock television financial news channels, such as CNBC and CNNfn and dozens of market-oriented websites, "the dissemination of information is almost instantaneous," he says.

UNTIL THAT FATEFUL DECEMBER MORNING, Henry Blodget, then 32 years old, toiled in relative obscurity. A 1988 graduate of Yale University with a B.A. in history, he had spent a year in Japan teaching English and then another year and a half trying unsuccessfully to publish a book about his experiences. He worked briefly as a journalist, including a stint with CNN Business News, before joining the corporate-finance training program at Prudential Securities in 1994.

Since then, despite almost weekly appearances on the financial talk-show circuit and daily conversations with print and online financial reporters, Blodget had not yet broken out of the pack of Internet analysts. He worked for a second-tier firm and had not yet developed a real following on Wall Street.

In the few months since his December 16 Amazon call, all that has changed. He is now the senior Internet stock analyst for Merrill Lynch & Company, Inc., a far more influential firm, and his name has become almost a catchphrase among market pros and the press for the practice of stock analysis in the age of the Internet.

"I feel like a website during the Monica Lewinsky scandal," he says, referring to how busy he is, as he bounds across a reception area for an interview at his new office in mid-March. He seems harried and sometimes distracted as he describes his 14-hour workdays and hectic travel schedule. But when he talks stocks, especially Amazon's, he becomes focused, rattling off statistics and company history with passion and precision.

Despite Blodget's obvious aptitude on the subject of Amazon and the Internet, the reaction to his $400 price target left veteran market watchers "agog and aghast," as *The Wall Street Journal* put it the day after his report.

While staunchly defending his valuation to a visiting reporter, Blodget acknowledges that "Amazon is probably the most controversial stock I've ever seen." Company valuations are traditionally based on such sober factors as past performance and price-to-earnings ratios. But in the Wild West of the Internet industry, there is no history and, in the case of most companies, no earnings. Still, even in this environment, Blodget's price call created a sensation.

The language of his initial report was actually tempered. "We are maintaining our Buy rating for strong-stomached, long-term investors and raising our one-year price target to $400," he wrote. "We continue to believe that Amazon.com is in the early stages of building a global electronic-retailing franchise that could generate $10 bil-

lion in revenue and [earnings per share] of $10 within five years."

"Look at how fast it's growing," says Blodget. Ten percent of online users are Amazon customers, he says, and the Internet universe will rocket from 60 million to 350 million users over the next five years.

As for profit, Blodget believes that with its expanded offerings—everything from music to pharmaceuticals—and its ability to curtail real estate costs and other traditional retailing expenses, Amazon will break into the black within five years. Besides, says Blodget, Amazon's stock price had gone up by more than 1,000 percent in the one and a half years between its IPO and his December call. "To say that it will go up 70 percent [during the following] year is not outrageous."

Clearly, it was the number 400 that caught people's attention. "That's real money," says Matthew Winkler, editor in chief of Bloomberg News. Or, as Blodget himself puts it, his $400 price target was like "throwing a tub of gasoline at an already burning inferno."

At just about the time Blodget was heading off to his morning call, Andrew Bekoff, a reporter for the analyst-recommendations group at Bloomberg News, was making his usual round of calls to people on Wall Street. Bekoff recalls that one of his contacts at Oppenheimer told him about Blodget's call, and the reporter asked him to read part of the report to him over the phone.

At 9:14 A.M., Bloomberg News broke the story, dispatching a three-sentence squib over the wire with the headline, "Amazon.com Inc. Maintained 'Buy' at CIBC Oppenheimer." In the second sentence, Bekoff noted that the 12-month target price was $400 per share. Bloomberg filed 12 additional stories or updates throughout the day, including an opinion column criticizing Blodget's call.

Eight minutes after the Bloomberg story hit the wires, CNBC markets reporter Maria Bartiromo pumped up the volume. "I've got a *huge* call to tell you about coming out of Oppenheimer and Company today," said Bartiromo, reporting from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange for the cable network's *Squawk Box*. "Amazon.com, as we speak, [is] up $10 on Instinet [a service that allows after-hours trading by institutional investors]. Oppenheimer's talking about the stock. They're lifting their price target to an unbelievable level."

After a commercial break, Bartiromo told viewers that Oppenheimer had raised its target price on Amazon to $400 and then read excerpts from the report.

It took two minutes for Bartiromo's report to hit the Amazon message board on Yahoo! Finance, one of the largest stock-discussion sites. At 9:24, ssun1973 wrote: "Oppenheimer lifts AMZN price target. details to follow: CNBC." One minute later, the same person added: "Oppenheimer AMZN target: $400 (!???!)." Participants had already noted that Amazon's share price had begun to rise precipitously more than a half hour before the market opened. When the market opened at 9:30, Amazon was already trading at $259.13, up nearly 17 points from the close the day before.

This was not just idle chatter on a website. These small investors can and do move the market. After the market opened at 9:30, Bartiromo's colleague David Faber came on the air from the studio with an analysis of the call.

"Every day, literally hundreds of analysts" issue reports, says Faber. He regards many analyst reports as "silly" and ignores most of them. "This one definitely got my attention," however, he says. "I took it because I thought it was so incredible, and also because it was typical of the market."

When he went on air again at 1:05 for *The Faber Report*, he quoted the overwhelmingly positive messages posted on Yahoo!—and the virtually opposite sentiments expressed by portfolio managers—to illustrate his point. "It's happening again, and the discordant chorus that follows every breathtaking move upward by Amazon.com is in full force once again today."

> The $400 price target for Amazon.com Blodget announced last December was like "throwing a tub of gasoline at an already burning inferno."

SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES throughout the day—there were 768 on Yahoo!'s Amazon message board between 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., in contrast to the previous day's 284—ranged from exuberant to hyperventilating. "OK, I'm back in my chair again," read one subject heading at 9:29. "After falling out of it when I heard Maria Bartleromo [sic] say the Oppenheimer target was $400," the message read. "$400.....today," went another message at 9:44. "Come on guys, we can do it! Let's take it to $400 by Friday!!!!" At about the same time, Bartiromo was on air again announcing that Amazon was up by $32.25.

As the morning wore on, the stock price kept climbing, hitting $300 by midday. By that point, Blodget was feeling that "people had misunderstood what we were saying." He heard on CNBC that people were calling his report "the most outrageous thing" they'd ever seen and "completely irresponsible," he remembers.

Blodget decided to clarify his position, so shortly after noon he took the unusual step of issuing a second report, emphasizing that his price target was for one year, not one day. "We have received numerous inquiries about our recent increase of our price target for AMZN," he wrote in the second report. "We raised our price target for one reason only: the stock had surpassed our prior target and we wanted to convey our belief that there is still long-term upside for the shares."

In an article posted at 2:54 P.M., Larry Dignan, writing for the online

Inter@ctive Investor, noted that Blodget had tried to caution investors, but he considered the warning to be too late. "Although Blodget's comments make perfect sense, [Blodget] was trying to put out a forest fire with a garden hose," wrote Dignan. Amazon's soaring stock had helped spark a rally in the stock of Internet retailers, Dignan wrote. "It's likely that few investors will even heed Blodget's second report—they are too busy buying."

A participant in Yahoo!'s Amazon message board may have summed it up best at 2:18 that afternoon:"Bomb Iraq - Impeach Congress & Buy AMZN Today!!!" wrote HypeIsMightMan.

Despite the press reports throughout the day, Blodget was not quoted in any of the stories other than in excerpts from his report. He remembers getting three messages from CNBC, but says he was so busy returning calls from clients and colleagues that he did not end up speaking with most members of the press. That evening, he did make a brief appearance on CNNfn.

Amid the ensuing media attention, Amazon.com stock soared and Blodget landed a more prestigious and lucrative job at Merrill Lynch.

By the next day, Blodget had become an integral part of the Internet economy. Blodget's call had prompted another analyst to throw cold water on his $400 target, the media piled on the apparent conflict, and Amazon stock was off once again on another wild ride.

Before the market opened that next day, Merrill Lynch Internet stock analyst Jonathan Cohen—also well respected and at a much more influential firm than Blodget—had refuted Blodget's call and reiterated a "reduce" rating on the stock. Cohen said Amazon was actually worth "under $50 a share" and that the stock was "probably the single most expensive piece of equity ever."

Amazon's share price dropped that day, closing at $276.75, down 4.2 percent from the previous close. CNBC interviewed both Blodget and Cohen on *Business Center*, and other publications sought out Blodget to comment on Cohen's remarks.

The debate quickly became moot. On January 6, 1999, exactly three weeks after Blodget's original report, Amazon.com's stock price sailed passed the $400 mark, adjusting for a January 5 three-for-one stock split. (It closed that day at $138, which would be $414 before the split.) Bill Barnhart, writing in the *Chicago Tribune* on January 7, called the previous day's activity "The Henry Blodget memorial stock market rally."

The share price has gone through a number of ups and downs since then, but Blodget's reputation has only soared. In February, Blodget joined Merrill Lynch to replace Jonathan Cohen, the very man who had dismissed his call on Amazon. Cohen had left Merrill to join online investment bank Wit Capital.

Skeptics on Wall Street saw Merrill's about-face in Internet analysts as a ploy to get more underwriting opportunities from Internet companies that like the idea of having a bullish analyst on board to attract attention to a company's stock. As of mid-April, however, neither Oppenheimer nor Merrill had ever performed any underwriting work for Amazon.

Nevertheless, Blodget had arrived. Given Merrill's sales force of 13,600, rather than 630, Blodget's calls now resonate even more loudly than they did at Oppenheimer. And while he says he never expected his December 16 report to have the effect it did, he is candid enough to credit at least part of his newfound influence to a call that he knew to be "bold."

"I had not intended to bet my career on this," he says slowly, when asked to reflect on the course he's traveled since December. And, in fact, when he first saw the reaction to his call, he immediately swore he would never put a price valuation on a company again. Some of the most respected Internet analysts don't, precisely because of these kinds of repercussions.

"*That's it*," he remembers thinking. "*I don't want to be known as a stock promoter.*" (He has since had to revise that position because he says Merrill requires him to pick a price target for his stocks.)

BUT BLODGET WAS ALSO not oblivious to the upside of his daring move. "People suddenly seem to want to hear what I have to say," says Blodget.

Even prior to that call, Blodget was aware of and made use of the role of the press in helping his standing in the marketplace of analysts. "In the beginning [before his Amazon call], when I was talking to the press, I was building the brand. The brand happened to be me," he says. He had thus already developed good relationships with a number of financial journalists before December, he says.

The Amazon call, however, "really helped increase the visibility," he concedes. There are 30 sell-side analysts—those who conduct research for an investment bank's clients—who cover the Internet, he says. "There's so much noise, it's hard to create a following."

He now has that following. According to CNBC's Faber, Blodget is "now considered the 'ax' on the stock," using Wall Street slang for the guy to watch. "Where he goes, the stock goes."

Blodget doesn't dispute the characterization. "When your visibility becomes big enough, you can really move the market," he says. "I moved to that level with that call."

Yet with the way the Internet stock craze has been going, even Blodget may end up as just one more voice lost in the cacophony of the media echo chamber. As of April 13, Amazon was trading at $178.38. Adjusting for the January split, that comes to $535.13. Blodget's $400 target is already ancient history. ■

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The Myth Of The Internet War

How journalism hyped the Web's role in Kosovo.

A scene from CNN's war coverage (right). No single website draws an audience close to CNN's and that's one reason the network is a medium of influence.

COURTESY OF CNN

IN THE WEEK AFTER THE NATO AIR STRIKES began, CNN websites recorded more than 154 million pageviews. The poignant e-mail exchanges between a 16-year-old Albanian and a Berkeley, California, high school student made front pages all over the country. And in Yugoslavia, anonymous farmers, housewives, monks, and militia leaders modemed battlefield reports to the world, evading censors and soaring over the heads of the battling armies.

The Internet, *The New York Times* announced, had become an alternative news source. During the first weeks of the Kosovo crisis, newspapers and magazines were breathlessly describing the wonders of the Net, whereby cybercorrespondents defied danger to tell their stories online. This, we were repeatedly told, heralded a new age in media.

It's a surreal notion.

A newspaper story recently accused me of being a "Web enthusiast," and I plead guilty. I've been writing on and about the Net for years, and I rarely tire of pointing out the marvels of the Digital Age to a skeptical world, particularly a skeptical journalistic world. But journalism knows only two speeds when it comes to evaluating the Net: unnecessary alarm and unthinking hype. Hackers are portrayed as master criminals, and the arrest of a virus maker is heralded like the capture of John Dillinger. When the press isn't cawing in alarm, it's beating the drums for Bill Gates's latest technobabble. In the case of Kosovo, the theme is look-how-the-Web-is-changing-news. "Now," reported *Newsweek* in its April 12 issue, "the Web is a vivid mirror of the struggle for Kosovo, a first in war."

Certainly, the Web was a busy place in the first days of the air war. Mainstream news sites—CNN, *USA Today*, *Time Daily*, ABCNEWS.com—all recorded huge, sometimes record, increases in daily traffic. *Newsweek* ran a "cyberwar" sidebar to its war coverage, detailing Serbian hackers' assault on the NATO website. Pro-Serb sites denounced NATO "terrorism"; meanwhile, the Serbian militia leader Arkan, indicted by the Hague tribunal, chatted live on msnbc.com. Father Sava Janjic, a Serbian Orthodox monk, writing from a 664-year-old monastery near the Albanian border, warned the world that the NATO bombing campaign would take a heavy human toll.

For a Monica-weary American public, now abruptly at war and scrambling to catch up on the Balkans, Time.com's "Ask Time Daily: Kosovo" was one of the most useful sites. It made the magazine's correspondents available to reply to questions about the cost of the campaign, the history of the Balkans, and the nature of NATO and its internal politics.

Everywhere, media hyped the revolutionary nature of their interactive war reports. The online magazine *Slate* touted its anonymous web correspondent, a journalist filing dispatches from Belgrade. ABCNEWS.com had its own eyewitness, Serbian businessman Vladimir Aleksic, who answered e-mail questions about the conflict. "It shows the difference the Web can make," *Slate* editor Michael Kinsley told *The New York Times*.

But has the Web really made a difference in the planning, coverage, or consequences of this war? Or do the online world and the ever-manipulable mass media merely reflexively think so?

While there is undoubtedly much useful information online, the Web makes little difference in a story like this, except to underscore that more traditional media—TV in particular—remain far more significant. The Web journalism reflected the remarkable way that information now moves around the world. But none of it affected the direction, nature, or public perception of the conflict.

The most potent images of this war—the technobombs hurtling toward their targets, the three bruised and bloodied American soldiers, the harrowing streams of refugees pouring over the borders—were all first transmitted by mainstream media, in particular by CNN, which with this war has now clearly become the world's premier round-the-clock medium for news of global consequence [for related article, see page 102]. Its power derives from the fact that it reaches a vast international audience. Slobodan Milosevic and Bill Clinton and Tony Blair and NATO commander U.S. General Wesley Clark are all watching CNN at the same time, seeing the same images, along with tens of millions of repelled or transfixed citizens around the world. When Secretary of State

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Madeleine Albright appeared on CNN's *Larry King Live* in early April with special Kosovo envoy Bob Dole to outline American policy and demands, TV was accomplishing something no website or foreign e-mailer could: revealing U.S. government thinking, sending messages to other world leaders and directly to the Serbs. "One way to resolve this," Dole said, "is to have Mr. Milosevic make a graceful exit."

Kosovo is a politics, power, and policy story, not a rise-of-the-Internet story. The Net is, in fact, revolutionizing the movement of information and shaking up some powerful institutions—the stock market, for example. But this kind of storytelling is not its strength. The principal players are in Washington, London, Berlin, Belgrade. Anonymous posters and frightened teenagers on the Net give the story human dimension and gallantly defy censorship, but can't tell us how the decision makers are responding. CNN, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the broadcast networks do that. They all reported on Milosevic's state of mind, on his attitude towards the bombing. They interviewed hundreds of refugees and eyewitnesses. The mainstream press described President Clinton's growing determination to win even if the conflict dragged on.

None of these were stories, attitudes, or values particularly suited to the Net, where traditional notions of media often don't apply. Information technology, like almost all technology, doesn't always lead people. Sometimes it follows them, which is what makes it so unpredictable.

The Web is diverse; the tens of millions of people using it represent a large but unusually fragmented audience. These days, many are e-trading and auctioning. Ten million or so are doing business and talking to friends on ICQ chat. Millions are collecting free music with their MP3 players; millions more are playing computer games and buying books and CDs. Many of the rest are working, are checking out adult sex sites, e-mailing their kids and grandkids, or yakking about their erotic lives on AOL. There's never a critical mass of people all attending to the same thing at the same time; the very idea is antithetical to the Internet. Thus, few websites or online news sources, even if they do offer powerful reports, have the audience to influence public opinion. This isn't likely to change—if anything, the Web is breaking up into ever-more-distinctive communities.

Nor is the technological transmission of information across authoritarian borders a new development. For years, online writers, including me, have gotten sporadic e-mail from Teheran, Beijing, and Baghdad. Rupert Murdoch's STAR TV has been bombarding repressive regimes in Iran and China with images of American popular culture for several years now.

Some kinds of stories are better suited to the Web. The murder of Matthew Shepard, the gay University of Wyoming student beaten to death last year, was a landmark event for online journalism. Early in the story, the university's student newspaper threw up a website that proved influential in correcting inaccurate information, including reports that the accused murderers were university students. Those following the story could click to hospital websites for reports on Shepard's condition. Others could turn to websites to send messages of condolence, and to talk about homophobia and violence. The Web provided a personal connection to the story.

The release of Kenneth Starr's report was another pivotal moment in online journalism. Millions of Americans saw a critical public document as soon as—or sooner than—reporters did, and had the chance to digest it themselves.

But those are unusual circumstances. It's almost always foolhardy to generalize about technology, or the ways in which it will work. The Web proved useful in the Kosovo crisis—helping people learn about their relatives, understand the roots of the conflict, contribute to refugee relief. But from the first, this was a story overwhelmingly influenced by journalism in its more conventional forms: correspondents reporting on casualties and refugees from the war zones and borders, and on policy and strategy from behind the scenes.

Anonymous posters and frightened teenagers on the Web give the story human dimension, but can't tell us how decision makers are responding.

For decades now, technology has been reshaping the nature of political conflicts. Illegal satellite images, from CNN to MTV, were beamed into Eastern Europe for years before the fall of communism. Televised images of apartheid galvanized world opinion against the South African government. E-mail is credited with contributing to the failure of the 1991 coup attempt in Moscow. Faxes and CNN are believed to have limited the Chinese government's suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. And the U.S. government's awareness of the presence and impact of TV has shaped the tactics and duration of every foreign military operation since Vietnam—Grenada, Haiti, Panama, Beirut, Somalia, and now Kosovo.

At the same time, the Internet, although usually portrayed by the press as a source of addiction and perversion, has made the very idea of censorship absurd. The Net is a profoundly revolutionary and transformative medium, one that sober, thoughtful scholars have compared to the discovery of fire or the printing press.

But for the news business, the headlines from Kosovo haven't been that the Net makes a huge difference. The story is that conventional journalism still works in unique, time-honored ways to cover the biggest stories, to tell us what those stories mean in a coherent, factual, and trustworthy way. How curious that the practitioners of conventional journalism don't seem to know that. ■

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Greenfeld's Complaint

Thirty years ago, I reviewed *Portnoy's Complaint* for *The New York Times Book Review*. Now, I've got a complaint of my own—about how the *Times* is treating me.

BACK IN THE SIXTIES, I USED TO review books. Who did I review for? Oh, everybody. *The New York Times*, *The Herald Tribune*, *Time*, *Life*, *Playboy*, *New York* magazine, *The Village Voice*, *Commonweal*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*. You name it, I reviewed for it. How much was I paid per review? Let me put it this way: The pay wasn't exactly high by any standard, not even a literary one. A front-page review in *The New York Times Book Review* or the *Herald Tribune Book World*, for example, was $150 or $200. Top dollar in the field came from *Life*, which paid $300. When I mentioned that to a friend recently, he commented ironically, "No wonder they went out of business as a weekly mass magazine, throwing money about with such reckless abandon."

In 1969, I reviewed *Portnoy's Complaint* for *The New York Times*. Yes, the Philip Roth book. Front page. Gave it a rave. Said it was an important book and all that.

Two and a half years ago, in the summer of 1996, I get a letter from *The New York Times Book Review*. It seems they're putting out a special 100th anniversary edition of the *Book Review* and they'd like to reprint part or all of the *Portnoy's* review. The letter makes it sound like a great honor for both me and the book and asks me to sign the bottom of the letter granting permission. I figure Portnoy and his author, Philip Roth, might want to be included in that honor roll of the most "significant" books reviewed in the *Book Review* since its inception. Besides, I'm sure they'll send me a few bucks as an honorarium. Enough for a dinner. So I fax back my permission.

In October 1996, the special issue appears. A thick and pretentious one, page after page chock full of ads interspersed with reviews. But nary a word of thanks to the reviewers. Which annoys me. But what the hell? With the revenue coming in from all those ads, they'll surely be sending me a bigger honorarium than I'd anticipated. Maybe even enough for a dinner for two.

After a few months, when no check comes in the mail, I drop a note to Chip McGrath, the *Book Review* editor, asking, "What happened?" No answer. Now, I'm not an injustice collector, as we used to call them, so I forget all about it. But last summer, another note comes from Chip McGrath:

Dear Josh Greenfeld,

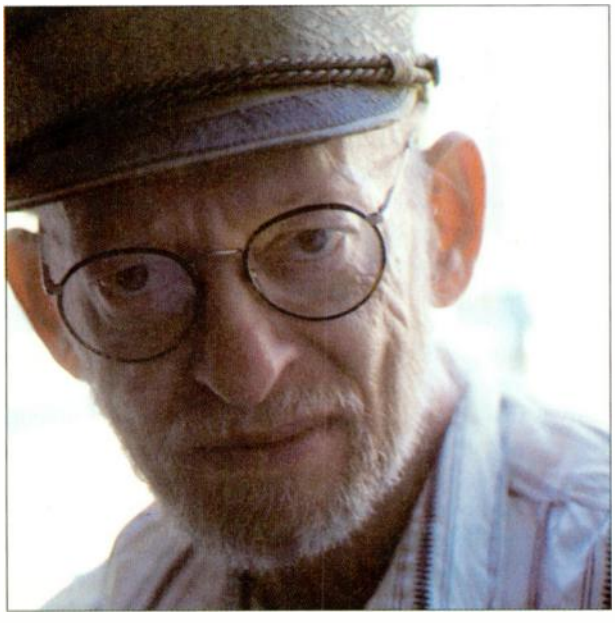
Two years ago you graciously gave us permission to reprint an excerpt from your review of *Portnoy's Complaint* (February 23, 1969) in the special centennial issue of the *Book Review*. This fall, Times Books is bringing out an expanded, book-length version of that issue, and once again we'd like to include your review. (We'd also like to send you a copy of the finished book.) To insure that proper acknowledgments are made please sign below and return this release in the enclosed envelope, or fax it to us at (212) 556-1320.

Yours sincerely,
Charles McGrath

I immediately reply:

Dear Charles McGrath:

Since your special issue of the *Book Review* contained page after page of advertising (although it seemed to lack the customary space to identify the reviewers), I assumed there would be an honorarium for the reprint excerpt; I even wrote you a note about it. But my note was never acknowledged. So this is to refuse to grant permission to use my review of



"What really offends me deeply is the chuztpah and the arrogance of *The New York Times*," says Josh Greenfeld.

PATRIK GIARDINO/SHOOTING STAR

Portnoy's Complaint or any portion of it in any projected book.

A few days later, on Tuesday, August 25, 1998, Mike Levitas, whom I've known since college, calls me from his vacation retreat on Martha's Vineyard; it seems he is in charge of developing projects for *The New York Times*'s book division, so my surly note has fallen into his bailiwick. The *Times* paid nobody for the reviews, he says, but he'd be willing to pay me $50 out of his own pocket. That's insulting, but I let it go and repeat my grievance. He says the people at the *Book Review* say they never got my note. Nonsense, I say, that's the other side of "The check's in the mail." He says it is a little late not to include the review since the book has been set up. And he argues that it would be a shame if the Roth review weren't in the book because that might make Philip feel slighted. I grant him he might have a point there and say I'll think it over.

I call Philip Roth, and we catch up with each other. In one breath he tells me he's been living a hermit's life, and in the next breath that he's going to Nantucket for the weekend to attend a Bill Clinton vacation picnic. As to the point of my call, he says he doesn't give a hoot if the *Times* book includes the *Portnoy's* review or not, that it's my review and my call, and that he couldn't care less what I decide to do.

So, on August 28, I send off this letter to Mike:

Dear Mike:

I've thought a great deal about the *Portnoy* review and decided that though I have great personal affection for you and we go back a long way together, I cannot in good conscience as a lifelong freelance writer give permission for the *Times* to reprint that review gratis again. The *Times* originally paid me $150 for it and three runs for that sum is just ridiculous even if two of them are recycles. After you told me that no other reviewer has asked for any payment I looked through that issue and discovered that at least half of the other reviewers were dead and a good deal of them were *Times* staffers and of those still among the living, many are in the danger zone of still publishing books. You said you thought Philip might have a concern if he were not included so I called him and he told me he would not care in the least if he were not.

Neither the *Times* nor its *Book Review* are charitable institutions. And neither am I. But let's all act as if we were as a matter of principle. I suggest that in order for me to grant permission for the reuse of that review the *Times* donate $500 in my name to a charity of my designation. If that's not possible let's just forget about it and let sleeping reviews lie.

All my best,
Josh Greenfeld

The next Monday, I get a call from Chip McGrath. Hello, Josh, he says. There seems to be some problem about using your *Portnoy's* review? He pleads that the *Book Review* is not a profit center for *The New York Times*, making it sound like it's something the *Times* runs for the public weal.

I am not crude enough to ask him what salary he gets for steering that weal. Instead, I point out to him that as a screenwriter I've walked picket lines for the rights to residuals, that for me getting paid for the reuse of my work is a matter of principle. He says the *Times* couldn't pay each reviewer $500. I say that is the *Times*'s problem but not mine, that if the *Times* gave $500 to some charity such as Human Rights Watch or some indigent writer's fund in my name the matter would be resolved. He says he will talk to Levitas and get back to me.

An hour later, the phone rings again. Not Levitas. Philip Roth. In our infrequent conversations down through the years, he usually comes on the phone slowly, warily, and deliberately, before going off into a riff of some sort. But this time he seems uneasy, anxious to get to the point. Listen, he says, I've thought it over and changed my mind: I would like to be included in that book. Why should every other shtunk be in it besides me? I tell him if that's what he wants I will have to seriously reconsider my denial of permission to reprint in deference to his wishes. But I still want to think it over.

Now, I am even more vexed than I was before. I am disappointed in Philip for changing his mind. I am angry with *The New York Times* for coercing Philip into pressuring me. I decide that when Chip McGrath calls, I will hold fast to my principled position. To hell with *The New York Times*. But Chip McGrath does not call me again. Neither does Mike Levitas.

Three months later, this past November, a copy of the book *Books of the Century* arrives with this cover letter:

Dear Contributor,

Here's a copy of our anthology of the *Book Review*'s greatest hits. Thanks very much for helping to make this project possible.
Yours sincerely,
Charles McGrath

I thumb through the book. I see my review of *Portnoy's Complaint*. I immediately reply:

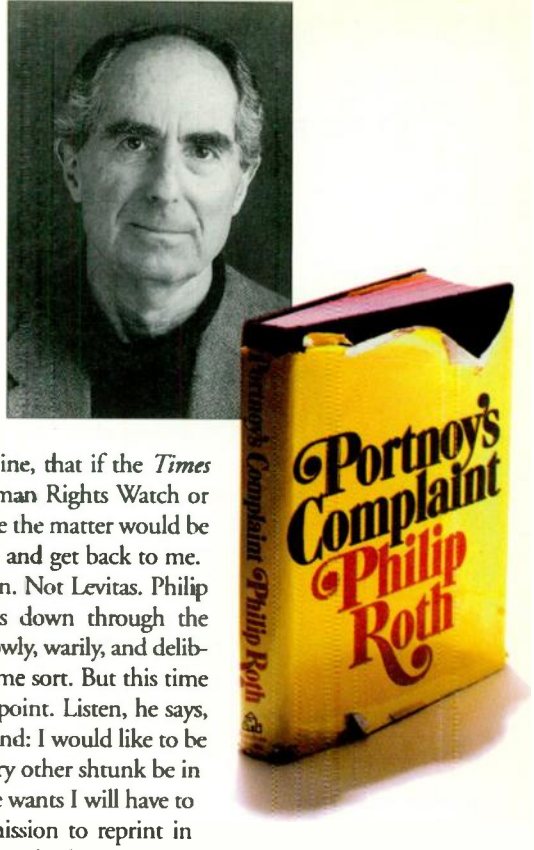
Dear *Book Review* Editor:

My enjoyment of the holiday season was not enhanced by the arrival of a copy of your "anthology of the *Book Review*'s greatest hits." Nor did the "thanks" in your accompanying "Dear Contributor" note make me feel any better. Because I distinctly and categorically withheld permission, both in writing and over the phone, for the inclusion of any portion of my review of *Portnoy's Complaint* in your hit parade. Now I don't know whether it's a policy of *The New York Times* descending from on high, or simply some loyal 43rd [S]treet apparachik's idea of following a party line, but the malign neglect of a writer does not sit well with me.

And now, the *Times* finally responds to me:

Dear Josh Greenfeld,

I think there has been a misunderstanding here, and I'm truly sorry. After our last phone conversation, I spoke with Mike Levitas, the person here at the *Times* who oversees all



Josh Greenfeld's original review of *Portnoy's Complaint*, by Philip Roth (above), ran in *The New York Times Book Review* on February 23, 1969.

Josh Greenfeld was nominated for an Oscar for the screenplay Harry and Tonto. *He is the author of seven books and is now writing a novel.*

JENS MORTENSEN (PORTNOY'S COMPLAINT); NANCY CRAMPTON/HOUGHTON MIFFLIN (ROTH)

the book projects. I showed him our correspondence and summarized our discussions. Mike then spoke with Roth, who by then had apparently changed his mind. He felt that he did want to see *Portnoy* included in the volume after all, and it was his understanding, as relayed to me through Levitas, that in that case you would not stand in the way. It was also my understanding that Roth was going to call you. At that point—out of relief frankly—I let the matter drop.

I should have double-checked, I guess, but I did think the issue was settled, and our decision to go ahead and include the review was in no way intended as a slight or as a dismissal of your concerns.

Yours sincerely,
Chip McGrath

There are two reasons I'm bringing this matter up. First, I never imagined a book review editor would ever argue that the subject of a review had given his approval, in any manner, shape or form, to the running of a review.

Second, I've learned that I should be more assertive. But how can I be in this case? I'm not litigious. And, even if I were, who wants to go legal against *The New York Times*? It's one thing to savor the notion of saying *To hell with you* to them; it's quite another to actually go after them. But what really offends me deeply is the chuztpah and the arrogance of *The New York Times*. Oh, such arrogance! Especially, in dealing with a humble producer of the mother lode of their existence, the written word.

CHARLES MCGRATH RESPONDS:

I won't quarrel with most of Josh Greenfeld's account—except to say that, for whatever reason, I never did receive his original letter asking for an honorarium. Believe me, I wish I had—we wouldn't still be fussing over this tiny bone. I'm also not unsympathetic to his position: I agree that, in principle, writers should be paid for reprints of their work. But in the case of *Books of the Century*, which includes pieces by scores of writers, the economics were such that even if we had paid everyone a token sum—the $50, say, that Greenfeld found so insulting—the book would not have been feasible. Well, you could argue, there are too many books in the world already. But those of us who assembled *Books of the Century* believe that this project had some genuine merit, and it should be noted that all the other contributors seemed to understand this and readily gave their permission. Only Greenfeld was unsatisfied—and seems determined to remain so.

After our first phone call—which, as the correspondence indicates, took place before, not after, Greenfeld's exchange with Mike Levitas—my instinct was to spare myself the headache and simply to drop Greenfeld's piece, which I didn't think was essential. But I was persuaded by Mike that the point wasn't so much this particular review as *Portnoy* itself, which certainly deserved to be on our roster. Mike, an old friend of Greenfeld's, then called him. Greenfeld said he wanted to think it over, but left Mike with the impression that if Roth wished *Portnoy* to be included he would not stand in the way. Mike later also called Roth, who said that, upon reflection, he would prefer *Portnoy* to be in the book, and he volunteered to call Greenfeld and tell him so. (Roth's understanding also was that Greenfeld would abide by his wishes.) Had we been "arrogant," as Greenfeld says, we would simply have ignored him. Instead, we made a good-faith effort, and though we didn't have it in writing, we did believe we had secured his permission.

Finally, we're talking about a reprint of a 30-year-old review here, not an editorial conspiracy. There was nothing in the least inappropriate in our consulting Roth; anyone who knows Philip Roth knows that the idea that the *Times*—or any institution, for that matter—could "coerce" him to do anything is ridiculous.

JOSH GREENFELD GETS THE LAST WORD:

I'm glad Charles McGrath agrees with me "in principle" that writers should be paid for their past work. Where we disagree is that I also believe they should be paid from *principal*. The argument that only a book that does not pay its authors out of the usual author's royalty allocation is economically feasible I refuse to buy. Nor do I accept the notion that no payment is better than a token payment. (What I found insulting in Mike Levitas's offer of $50 was that it would come out of his own pocket.) That "scores of writers" contribute to a project is also no excuse to shun each individual monetarily. Unless *The New York Times*, like so many publishers in this country, has great difficulty when it comes to long division. McGrath also still offers no explanation why writers were not reimbursed with even a token sum for the reuse of their work in the special *Book Review* issue.

I think McGrath is being a bit disingenuous when he says he wanted to simply "spare himself the headache" by dropping the *Portnoy* piece from the book. From everything I could surmise from Levitas it was a little late in the production process for them to do that easily. So my complaint might not have been such a "tiny bone" after all. McGrath also makes light of the fact that it is the reprint of a 30-year-old work that I'm "still fussing over." But that is exactly the point and one not to be disparaged. As a retiree receiving a pension from the Writers Guild of America, I am, in a sense, being sustained, in addition to my residuals, by the screen work I performed on a freelance basis decades ago. The same goes for my Social Security payments. And perhaps one day when McGrath achieves the age of serenity as I have, he will receive pension checks from *The New York Times* for the editorial chores he once performed in some distant past as what the Japanese aptly describe as a "salaryman." Meanwhile, why quibble with him or *The New York Times*? I feel like a gnat flying over an armadillo's nest.

Except that I'm right. ■

Editor's note: Philip Roth was given this article to read and chose not to respond.

JAMES J. CRAMER | HERB GREENBERG | DAVE KANSAS | GARY B. SMITH | BRENDA BUTTNER

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MELISSA MAKES A VIRUS KILLER'S DAY

How one antivirus software company scrambled to squelch the enemy—and boost itself

BY JESSICA SEIGEL

ANGELA WHITE FELT A little flu-y when she arrived for work at Trend Micro that Friday morning shortly before 8 A.M. Heading to her cubicle on the fourth floor of a nondescript brick office building in Cupertino, California, she hardly noticed the company's daily stock price—$108.15—handwritten on a board near the reception area. The number looked good, in keeping with the company's strong showing since it went public on the Tokyo-based Nikkei stock exchange last year.

At her desk, White ate a strawberry Pop-Tart and took her third call of the morning from a New York City system operator asking what to do about strange e-mail clogging his system. Send it along, she told him. When you work at a Silicon Valley antivirus software company, weird code-carrying messages are business as usual—good business, in fact.

Robin Murphy reads each new virus code as it comes in from infected customers.

The e-mail's subject line, "Important Message From...," is standard sucker's fare in the world of virus writers. Believing she was looking at a virus called "Ethan," a well-known Internet bad boy, White hit "OK" when the cryptic Microsoft security warning asked "Enable Macros?" Thousands of others made the same wrong click in the coming hours and days.

Instantly, White's computer began to spew out new e-mail. The now-infamous "Melissa" virus that feeds off Microsoft's Word and Outlook software was on the attack, auto-spamming the first 50 names in her e-mail address book, most of them belonging to her coworkers. Sure it's ironic when an antivirus company gets a virus. But it was hardly irony of the "ha ha" variety.

A temporary tech-support worker just a few months on the job, White tried to recall the e-mails, then hit delete, delete, delete. Unnerved, she walked over to her supervisor and said, "I have a big problem."

The race was on—not just to find a cure but to grab a piece of the intense media coverage to come.

What began as a bad Friday for Tokyo-based Trend Micro, Inc. ended up boosting the company's profile—and stock price—in the U.S., where the cutthroat antivirus software market is dominated by heavyweights Symantec (maker of Norton AntiVirus software) and Network Associates (McAfee VirusScan). Those giants fared well on Wall Street during previous virus scares. Not so this time. But Melissa's slap was a caress for Trend Micro, a 500-employee firm considered a fast-growing contender in the U.S. corporate antivirus software market. The company's specialty—protecting network Internet gateways and mail servers—put them at the heart of the action: in the workplace.

To the grumblings of conspiracy theorists who believe virus outbreaks are a software-company plot to drive profits, Trend Micro's chief technology officer, Eva Chen, offers no apologies. "Why should I feel guilty?" says Chen, a 40-year-old Taiwan native, who helped her brother-in-law, Steve Chang, found the company 11 years ago in Torrance,

California. "I am a virus doctor. Do you say a doctor in flu season tries to sell the flu? No. Do you say police sell crime?"

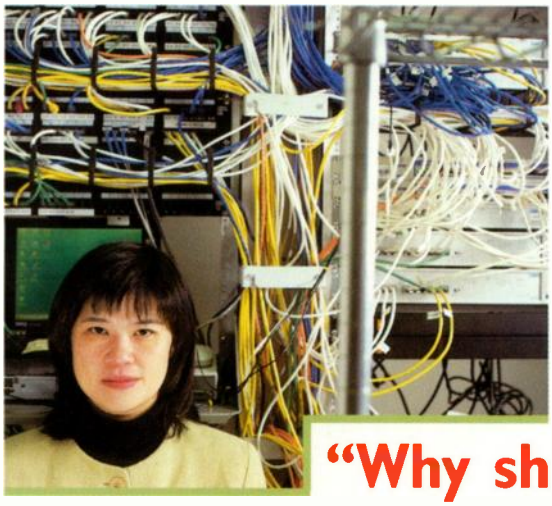
Some people *have* said things like that. Journalists have grown leery of marketers who announce virus scares—like the notorious Michelangelo hysteria of 1992—that often don't materialize, but nonetheless boost stock prices and software sales. Melissa was the real thing. Within hours of the outbreak, corporations like Microsoft and Lucent were forced to shut down external e-mail servers—the only way to stop the self-replicating auto-spam until a Melissa antidote could be found. In the end, the epidemic infected more than 300 organizations and 100,000 users, according to the government-sponsored Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Coordination Center at Carnegie Mellon University.

For those on the front lines fighting Melissa, opportunity through crisis was the furthest thing from their minds—at least at first. At Trend Micro, when Angela White's ponytailed supervisor, Bill Darm, saw the return-message receipts piling up on her computer screen, he had just taken the lid off his cup of 7-Eleven coffee. He knew it would go cold in the mayhem to follow.

Caffeine-deprived, Darm quickly flicked off White's computer, then stood up to sound the warning. Because bytes travel faster than feet, the "Important Message from..." e-mail was already hitting the antivirus research department across the corridor, beyond the pool table where staffers gather at lunch. Darren Chan, 25, the virus doctor on duty, began the search for a "patch," or cure, analyzing the new virus for a unique section of code, the "fingerprint" used to identify and eliminate "malicious" programs.

Chan transferred a copy of the Melissa e-mail onto a floppy disk that he then inserted into a "dummy" computer at his feet near his real hard drive. The dummy, quarantined from other computers, contained only a few "innocent," or empty, files, to lure the virus into one spot for easy analysis. Melissa took the bait.

When viewed as actual code, Melissa printed out as two pages of instructions in Visual Basic, a relatively easy language used for creating smaller programs. The code repeated commands like, "If ADI1.Name< >"Melissa," Then If ADCL>0, Then_ ADI1.CodeModule.Delete..."



Trend Micro cofounder Eva Chen defends profiting from virus outbreaks.

"Why should I feel guilty? I am a virus doctor. Do you say a doctor in flu season tries to sell the flu? Do you say police sell crime?"

For virus doctors like Chan, the appeal of the job is intellectual—not romantic or mythological. "I like the challenge," says Chan, a native of China who earned his electrical engineering degree at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. Still, a life-sized, stand-up poster of Dr. McCoy from the original *Star Trek* series stands near his desk. Science fiction battles between Good and Evil may feed the fantasies of virus creators and killers alike, but the antivirus researchers speak in dispassionate, technical terms. In online postings and coded messages, meanwhile, virus writers portray themselves as proud, Mountain Dew–drinking avengers battling corporate establishment drones.

One of the establishment drones at Trend Micro that Friday was antivirus coordinator Robin Murphy, a magenta-haired 25-year-old from Bethalto, Illinois, a small town where the high school boys never let her join in their Dungeons & Dragons games. On the job, she reads each new virus code as it comes in from infected customers, websites where virus writers post creations, and other software companies that share samples, though not cures.

A key link between research and other departments, Murphy writes a description of how a virus works for the technical support and marketing departments to use in helping customers and the public disinfect their systems. After viewing Melissa's program, she was not impressed with the riddle embedded in English within the code: "Worm? Macro Virus? Word 97 Virus? Word 2000 Virus? You decide!...It's a new age."

Murphy rolls her eyes at the virus writer's evident sense of self-importance. "They're obviously trying to challenge us, but when you see viruses

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIMOTHY ARCHIBALD

every day, you realize how pointless they are," she says. "It's chaos from stupidity. I hate to use the term *jacking off*, but it is. It's almost like I'm a janitor, not a white knight."

The cleanup had only just begun. By Chan's reckoning, it took him 55 minutes to isolate, analyze, and find a "patch." Once emergency measures were under way to contain and stop Melissa's attack on Trend Micro, a new antivirus patch was posted on the Web for customer and public use at 10:30 A.M. Pacific Standard Time, according to company accounts. For all the publicity to follow, Melissa was a routine (although well-designed) code that caused little actual damage beyond suddenly overloading servers with copious auto-spam. Still, Melissa—or a future attack—could have been programmed to mangle system software, erase data, or worse. (David L. Smith, the New Jersey man accused of creating Melissa, was arrested after an FBI manhunt, and charged with multiple criminal counts.)

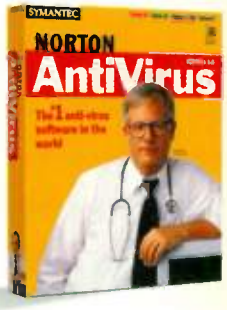
In the following hours, which stretched into days, Trend Micro raced to get the cure to its customers and—through the media—its message to the public . But what was the message? How big was the outbreak? By mid-afternoon on the first day, Susan Orbuch, the company's communications director, announced that Trend Micro had been the first to find a cure and protect customers against Melissa. Orbuch's announcement appeared in a press release that ran on the Business Wire at 5 P.M.—more than an hour and a half before competitors.

An announcement from Network Associates, Inc.—in which the company claimed *it* was the first to offer a cure—hit the PR Newswire at 6:41 P.M. Such claims are difficult to verify, but bragging rights count. "It matters to make sure we position ourselves as the lead research company," explains Sal Viveros, group marketing manager for Network Associates, Inc., who clocked his company's posted cure at 11 A.M.—a half hour behind Trend Micro's claim. Market leader Symantec Corporation, on company holiday, issued its press release three days later.

Rather than reporting on who was first, journalists were more interested in getting someone on the phone to explain the outbreak. Out front in offering epidemic information, Trend Micro scored mentions in the first wave of reporting, including that Sunday's *New York Times* story, "New Fast-Spreading Virus Takes the Internet by Storm." Marketing manager Daniel Schrader took calls through the weekend, giving one interview on virus vectors while changing his baby's diaper.

As panicked computer users clogged phone lines at Symantec and Network Associates, the media tidal wave overflowed to Trend Micro. "Frankly, reporters could reach us," says Schrader. Though the two industry leaders dominated national television coverage, Trend Micro was fea-

Rating The Antivirus Software



Norton AntiVirus and Network Associates' VirusScan are both good at identifying and eradicating viruses.

VIRUSES LIKE MELISSA MAY LEAVE YOU ANXIOUS about how your antivirus software measures up against the technological crisis du jour. Fortunately, the top players in the field have kept up not only with viral masterminds but with one another: They share information about new viruses, and rarely does one fall behind the others in devising a "cure."

We compared the most recent releases for desktop users by the leading antivirus software publishers. For PCs, those programs are McAfee VirusScan 4.0, by Network Associates, Inc.; Norton AntiVirus 5.0 by Symantec Corporation; and PC-cillin 6 by Trend Micro, Inc. For Macintosh, the programs are Norton 5.0 and NAI's Virex 5.0.

A top-notch antivirus package should identify and eradicate all known viruses in circulation. In a recent *PC World* survey, Norton and VirusScan met this standard, but a pre-release version of PC-cillin missed 8 viruses out of 250, which *PC World* considers statistically insignificant. The industry group ICSA, Inc. certifies products that meet the 100 percent kill standard. You can find a database of test results at ICSA's website (www.icsa.net/services/consortia/anti-virus/testing_reports.shtml).

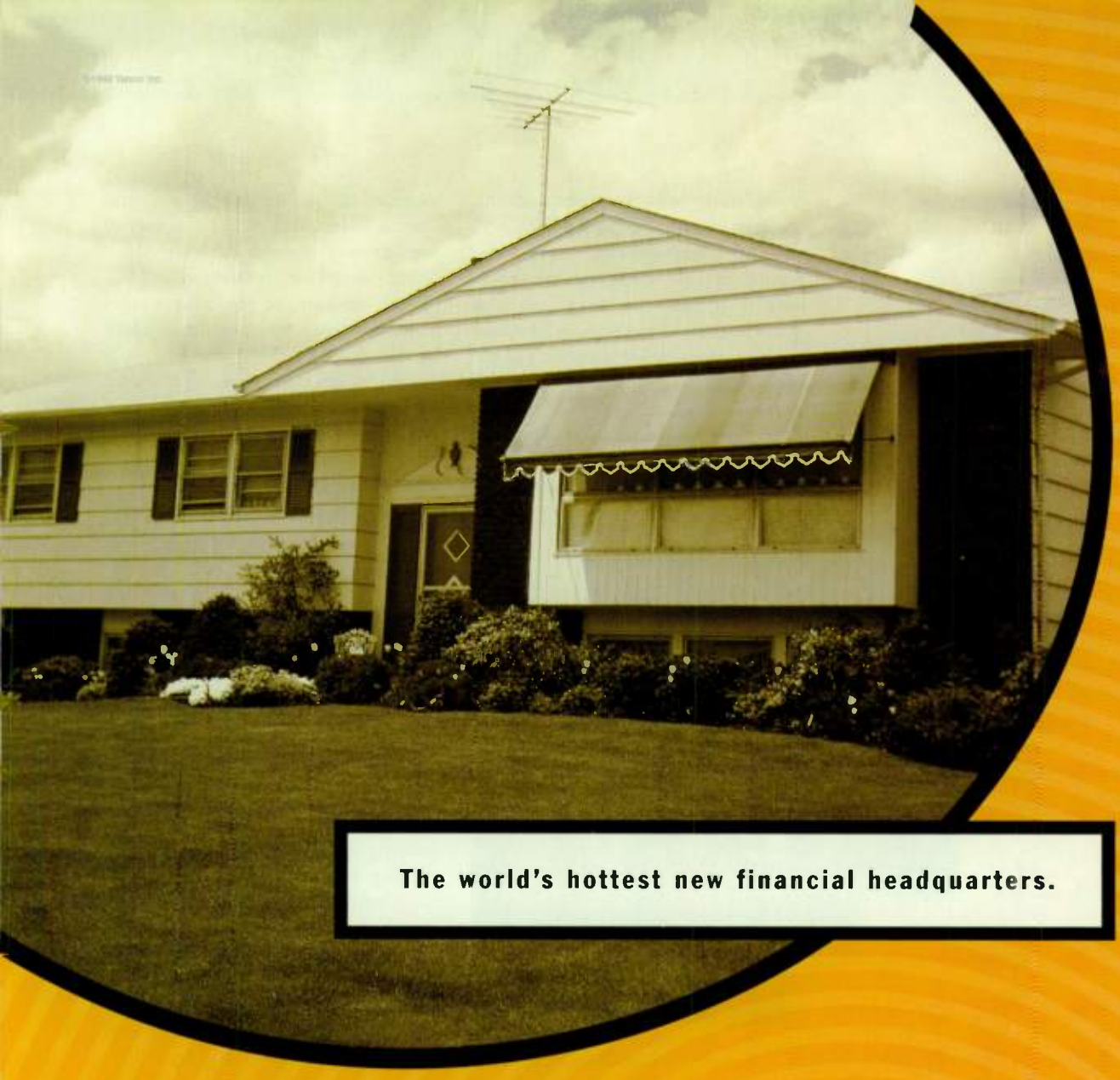
The ideal antivirus program runs quietly in the background and doesn't make its presence felt unless it catches an intruder. The leading PC programs rate equally high for unobtrusiveness. For Macs, Virex gets the edge: Norton is more likely to mistake benign files for viruses.

When your software finds a virus, you need easy-to-follow instructions on how to purge it. Reviewers gave Norton a slight edge in this category for both PCs and Macs.

The PC leaders' newest packages include "single-click" upgrade options that download new virus information and update your defenses in 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the speed of your Internet connection. VirusScan can also set your browser to automatically update your software.

Norton for Macintosh has a single-click download feature; Virex does not. But one reviewer found that Norton's auto-feature took twice as long as Virex's to execute a download. According to consultant Stephan Somogyi, this lag kept some Norton users from gaining quick access to upgrades during the Melissa crisis.

—Matthew Heimer



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tured in stories on local stations, in the *San Jose Mercury News*, and in numerous other regional outlets.

Alerting potential customers where they live—online—Schrader visited obscure sites and news groups where Melissa was topic number one. At alt.fairs.renaissance, he chimed in, advising Lady Druantia and her costume-loving pals to "surf over to" Trend Micro at www.antivirus.com for a free scan. By clicking the website's "Housecall" button, anyone could clean Melissa off their computer. (Trend Micro saw a fivefold jump in Web traffic, with 291,954 home users and system operators, paying and not, logging on to download or scan. Such free help and product trials—whether a quickie Melissa scan or a complete software package—are the lollipop to lure new, paying customers.)

At another site, Schrader advised professional system administrators, "Dodged a bullet this time, right? Not so fast," he warned. "However, we have already heard rumors of variants to this virus. What should you do? Panic." He then described Trend Micro's three free tools, posted online, for stopping attacks.

Schrader took calls through the weekend, giving one interview on virus vectors while changing his baby's diaper.

Even in a real outbreak with widespread impact, Schrader and his industry counterparts could not resist embellishing the facts. While the antivirus marketers were fueling Melissa mutation follow-up stories, researchers had yet to see many examples "in the wild." Symantec program manager Motoaki Yamamura even called his colleague at Trend Micro, engineer Richard Ku, to ask for a sample of a variant he had heard about from the media. Neither man had one. Though marketers hyped fast-spawning copycats to reporters, incidents "in the wild" were insignificant, according to Bill Pollak of CERT.

The "marketroids," as some researchers call marketing executives, were at it again. In recent years, as Symantec and Network Associates have gobbled up smaller companies, the often litigious competition has fueled the race to take credit for discovering—then protecting against—each newly detected virus with names like "Hare Krishna" and "Boza." The scares fueled sales and stock run-ups, then fizzled. As one 1992 Reuters wire story reported: "The much-feared Michelangelo computer virus proved to be more of a common cold than the Black Death for personal computers Friday, striking only thousands of an estimated 80 million victims." (That figure had ballooned from the 5 million originally floated by John McAfee, then-CEO of McAfee Associates, which is now Network Associates.)

Daniel Schrader put out the word about Melissa to customers and the media.

To track such hype, Rob Rosenberger in 1995 created his Computer Virus Myths homepage at www.kumite.com, and has been hammering away at Symantec and Network Associates shenanigans ever since. (Trend Micro, he says, has not been much of an offender.) In one widely reported incident in December, Network Associates executives announced a "serious new strain" and "new era" heralded by the discovery of the fearsome "Remote Explorer" virus. Word somehow leaked that MCI WorldCom was the previously anonymous large corporation under attack. It turned out that MCI was the only company affected. The virus never made it into "the wild," but press coverage did. In following days, Network Associates stock rose 22 percent, then headed down.

To counter escalating marketing claims, individuals from 46 organizations joined to create the "WildList" in 1993. The database tracks incident reports of viruses spreading outside the laboratory. "Nobody used to know what the threat was," says Joe Wells, the list's founder and CEO, who works as security research director at a small software company. Clearly, he says, Melissa was a serious incident. "It was the first real outbreak that merited the attention," he says, praising the initial media coverage for helping stop the spread.

Once Melissa began slowing down, Schrader explains, reporters were still clamoring for follow-ups; keeping the story going was just too tempting. "Mea culpa," he says. "We're under pressure to give another story and it's hard to hold back....It's true I was talking to the press and feeding them as fast as I could. It's very easy to cross the line between educating the public and hyping the latest virus."

On April 6, 11 days after the Melissa event, Network Associates stock hit a two-year low. But Symantec also dipped. Wall Street apparently regarded the home PC market—dominated by Network Associates and Symantec—as "mature," but saw plenty of room for growth in Trend Micro's corporate niche.

At Trend Micro that same day, a gleeful voice floated over a cubicle in the tech support section near a life-sized poster of Humphrey Bogart. "Did you see the stock price today?" the unseen man asked. "Sure did," came the cheerful reply. The sign at the front reception desk read "$148.88"—44 points higher than when Melissa struck. ■

Learned of a company that customizes CDs for consumers.
— April 27th issue, pg. 39.

Bought a customized CD.
— May 11th

Bought the company.
— June 6th

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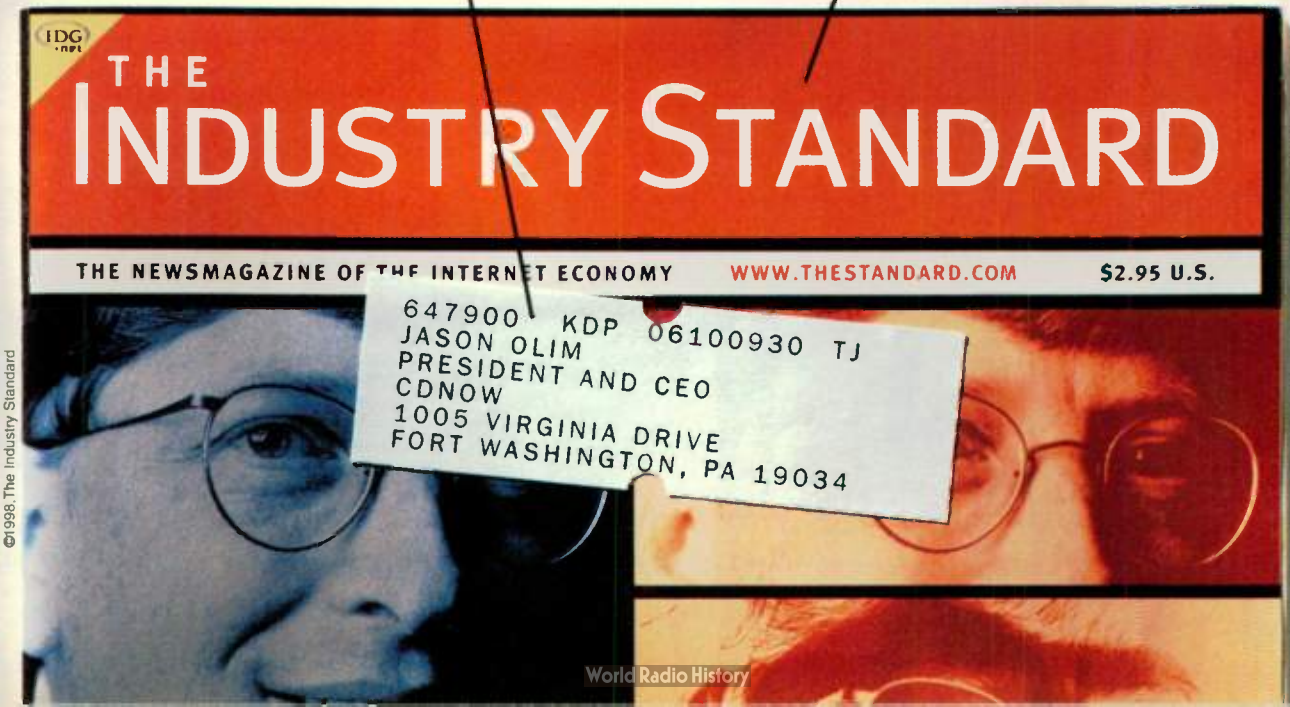

Reading Electronic Fine Print

How one solution to the Internet's privacy problem could also revolutionize e-commerce.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB CONSORTIUM, led by Web pioneer Tim Berners-Lee, may have just helped solve the online privacy problem by giving users more comprehensive control over how their personal information is used. The solution, although not yet available in end-user applications, has profound implications, not just for privacy but for e-commerce and beyond.

W3C (as the consortium is known) has proposed a new protocol known as P3P (Platform for Privacy Preferences Project) which is, in essence, a set of electronic words that allows a website to communicate its privacy policy electronically. (The Internet consists of "protocols"—structured languages—that allow communication between networks. Berners-Lee developed the HTML protocol, better known as the World Wide Web.) P3P also allows "client" software—your browser through which you do a search—to specify which privacy policy terms and conditions you find acceptable. Microsoft has announced that it will ship a product that allows online vendors to generate electronically readable privacy policies in this format.

P3P allows automatic entry into an online contract. With P3P, both parties, the website and the user, can specify in advance which terms they will accept, which they won't, and which might be negotiable. It provides a standardized vocabulary by which the website can tell your machine what it will do with the personal data you (or your computer) might submit in the course of interacting with that website. It also allows you to specify in advance which rules you want to apply to the personal information you disclose. If your specifications and the website's don't agree, you don't visit the site.

Some corporations are uncomfortable with P3P. Although it was developed by a group that includes privacy advocates and industry representatives, some suggest that the protocol is not sophisticated enough to reflect all of the nuances of the privacy policies needed by large institutions. Others think it is already too complex and gives the consumer too many choices. But the real discomfort stems from the technology's radical implications: If a consumer's computer can read the fine print of a privacy policy, or systematically filter out sites that encode unacceptable policies, then many consumers might "opt out" and never visit a site that doesn't offer satisfactory terms.

Everyone knows that consumers never actually read the fine print, online or off. How many sites have you visited that offer a chance to review elaborate "terms and conditions" and a scary button that says something like "Do *not* click this button to enter this site unless you have read and *agree* with the applicable terms and conditions." Did you read or click? I rest my case.

What will happen when an online agreement is not written in legalese, or even in text, but rather in the form of invisible (to you) electronic tags parsed into specific combinations of conditions? Instead, having considered various options as you adjusted your browser, you might have used your P3P client software to say the electronic equivalent of "Don't show me sites that provide information about my browsing habits to third parties." When your browser meets that website—well, you won't even get there.

TIM CARROLL

The industry may or may not agree on a standardized vocabulary for expressing the many possible permutations of privacy policies. And browsers and search engines may or may not develop slick client software that allows users to set their preferences. But think about the implications of the general design in question for all e-commerce transactions. If a privacy policy can be written and read electronically, then any other aspect of the terms and conditions applicable to an online transaction can also be encoded and negotiated automatically. Do you want to deal only with online merchants who have a no-questions-asked return policy? Do you want to deal only with merchants

(or, if you are a merchant, only with users) who agree that your transactions will be governed by U.S. law? Click here.

Once a contract offer can be encoded (by either party) as a standardized set of electronic tags, computers can remove the drudgery of figuring out whether or not you are dealing with someone on an acceptable set of terms. (Not that anyone actually goes through that drudgery—we all just click or sign the standard car-rental agreement without reading it.) With the benefit of a contracting protocol, the computer can focus our attention on the things we might not want to accept. That's why big companies that now implement opt-out privacy policies are so scared.

Those same companies, which spend millions trying to get to know their customers, should actually be embracing this new language of electronic interaction. A protocol that tells you what a customer might agree to can also communicate what kind of product she is likely to buy, or what her portfolio looks like, or whether she has a history of spending real dollars online. Communication is a two-way thing. The risk that some customer might actually read the fine print (automatically) is more than offset by the possibility that the revealed preferences—communicated from the customer to the online site, electronically—will lead to better service and also help close sales that might not otherwise have been made.

WE'VE ACTUALLY HAD ELECTRONIC FINE print for some time now, in the form of "meta-data" embedded in a site's HTML code as words used to identify the site; it is scanned automatically by search engines that index online links. But it is hidden from the consumer's view. This has led to abuses, such as companies putting their competitors' names in the hidden meta-data to draw traffic from unsuspecting consumers trying to find a more famous brand. Trademark lawyers are having a field day debating whether it is an infringement to mention *Playboy* in the hidden electronic text of a web page. But the point is that your computer already negotiates—directly or through intermediaries—to decide what you will see, based on the representations a website makes about itself in machine-readable code.

It's a short step from there to a world in which the very act of navigating to a website will become the equivalent of doing a deal. The resulting contracts won't even be non-negotiable "adhesion" contracts, which are traditionally vulnerable to challenge, because they will have been negotiated in a real sense. Decisions about which sites you visit will become—thanks to the settings of your preference file—the equivalent of an extended bargaining session.

We might even extend this automated-negotiation scenario to journalism. What would happen if you could say, electronically, "Don't show me any stories that the publisher doesn't warrant have been thoroughly fact checked"? What might happen if an online publication could say, "Don't show this story to anyone who hasn't promised, electronically, to send it along to a friend"? Will there be some publications (supported by advertising, no doubt) that say, in code, "Don't display this web page to anyone whose electronic wallet shows a net worth less than $300,000"? Will some investment advice (or offers of securities) be available only to those whose portfolio software shows they are suitably situated to take the risks involved in a particular online deal?

The most profound implication of electronic fine print may be that both vendor and user will be able to determine whether the other party is prepared to accept a particular source of law and choice of dispute resolution forum to resolve problems that may arise after the transaction. We need to build trust to build online commerce. Online sites do that with branding. Electronic fine print will let us brand the consumer, as well. And what a vendor cares most about, when evaluating an online prospect, is the willingness and ability to consummate the deal. No one reserving the right to wriggle out of a deal after the fact need apply. Vendors don't want to sell products to end users from a country that reserves the right to regulate the seller into the ground as soon as they can show that vendors shipped product, or even electrons, into their territory.

The very act of navigating to a site could become the equivalent of a doing a deal.

Of course, consumers may lie about their whereabouts—or even about their willingness to pay when the bill arrives. But the risk of default is manageable if both computers involved have an electronic record of the transaction tied to a particular online identity. The greater risk posed to e-commerce, up to now, has stemmed from uncertainty that "click-wrap" contracts can be enforced globally. Real, two-sided, electronic negotiations should reduce that risk—because most countries should recognize that these deals involve voluntary consumer acceptance of the terms of trade, and because those who issue online identities can rescind the online identities of consumers who don't live up to their online bargains.

Because electronic protocols can now tell both parties involved in an online deal what the terms and conditions are, and because those terms will be selected by both parties, this new form of machine-to-machine negotiation may increase the level of trust in online transactions. Companies used to dealing with legal boilerplate as the way of preserving all their options against hapless consumers, that rely on the fact that a consumer couldn't possibly spend the same effort as the company's highly paid attorney to actually read (or write) the fine print, will be uncomfortable. Those who understand the value of a well-formed, win-win deal will find ways to convert the new electronic contracting protocols into a whole new form of commerce. ■

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IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSES

When *Dateline NBC* considered revisiting the tale of Gianni Versace's killer, staff concerns about an oft-told story competed with a well-connected author and a sensational claim about a dead celebrity.

By Abigail Pogrebin

"What's new about this story?"

The question hung in the air for a split second. Neal Shapiro, the executive producer of *Dateline NBC*, who had asked it, had assembled ten people in his office in early March to screen the first cut of a story on Andrew Cunanan, killer of fashion designer Gianni Versace and four others. Cunanan had murdered Versace in July 1997 and then capped his spree by killing himself after a highly publicized manhunt. At the time, it was a blockbuster story that the press—including *Dateline*—had wrung dry.

On this particular morning, there weren't exactly huzzahs from the *Dateline* crowd. Some thought the segment lacked new information. And the juiciest material had questionable relevance to Cunanan's story. *Why air a new Cunanan segment now?*

On one level, the answer was obvious. A new book was coming out. Highly regarded *Vanity Fair* writer Maureen Orth had stayed with the story long after the rest of the press had forgotten it, and now had a 450-page book—*Vulgar Favors: Andrew Cunanan, Gianni Versace, and the Largest Failed Manhunt in U.S. History*—to show for her efforts.

On another level, though, the situation was unusual. Orth isn't just any writer. She's married to Shapiro's colleague, Tim Russert, NBC News's Washington bureau chief and the moderator of *Meet the Press*. NBC's president, Robert Wright, was scheduled to host a book party for Orth at his home in four days. Wright's wife, Suzanne, is singled out for personal thanks in the book's acknowledgments.

Orth's coziness with NBC royalty didn't raise eyebrows two years ago, when the Cunanan story was white-hot and Orth, who had covered Cunanan for *Vanity Fair*, was a natural interview subject. It's understandable that Shapiro was eager at that time to commit to a future segment based on a prospective Orth book.

By 1999, though, Cunanan had long since faded into oblivion and Orth's book was no longer an obvious "get." Indeed, now that the tome was complete, with little in the way of earthshaking information, it left some at *Dateline* wondering what they had committed to. Moreover, Orth's most explosive revelation was both inconclusively established as well as inflammatory and potentially unfair. Throw in a demanding author who had strong ideas about how *Dateline* should do its job and enough highly placed NBC friends to make her impossible to ignore. It all added up to a headache for the *Dateline* team.

***DATELINE* AND ORTH WORKED** together on the Cunanan story almost from the beginning. Orth had begun tracking Cunanan for *Vanity Fair* long before he targeted Versace, thus making herself an early expert. When *Dateline* began its exhaustive coverage in the summer of 1997, the show turned to Orth, featuring her in two segments. Afterward, Shapiro urged her to stay in touch. When Orth

MARINA GARNIER

Maureen Orth (above) on *Dateline*, in front of Gianni Versace's mansion (left), where the designer was murdered by Andrew Cunanan (near left). Facing page: Orth with her husband Tim Russert, moderator of NBC's *Meet the Press*.

SMITH/AP-WIDE WORLD (MANSION); MINNEAPOLIS *STAR TRIBUNE*/AP-WIDE WORLD (CUNANAN)

said that she planned to write a book about Cunanan, Shapiro says, he told her *Dateline* would definitely air a segment on it.

Two years later, when TV newsmagazines would normally be asking themselves if fickle American viewers still cared about the dead killer of a fashion designer, *Dateline*'s offer stood. Orth's publicist, Delacorte Press's Carisa Hays, claims NBC wasn't alone, that other major newsmagazines had vied for the book. "Everybody wanted it," she asserts, naming *60 Minutes* and *20/20*. But producers from those shows recall it differently. "I had no interest in it at all," says *60 Minutes* executive story editor Victoria Gordon. And *20/20*'s Jamie Zahn-Liebes says, "I said I had interest but I had to look at it first." It is unusual, both say, to cement a deal before any producer has had a chance to see whether the book actually delivers.

Not only did *Dateline* end up as the main bidder without reading a word but it also agreed to restrictive terms with the publisher, which effectively handcuffed the show's reporting. Its producers were not allowed to read the book until just two weeks before the broadcast date, nor were they permitted to begin fact checking the story until the Thursday before the Monday air date. That left only two working days to vet a report that Orth spent 18 months researching, forcing *Dateline* to rely almost entirely on the author's account.

At the time, those seemed like acceptable concessions for a buzz-making book. But when correspondent Dennis Murphy and his producer, Sophia Faskianos, were finally able to read *Vulgar Favors*, they were both struck by the fact that Orth had uncovered little that might advance the Cunanan story. "Neither of them liked the book," says one NBC source. "They both said there was nothing new." (Other than Shapiro and publicist Hillary Smith, no *Dateline* staffers would comment on the record.) Shapiro, who asserts that the time allowed for fact checking was adequate and that producers often get book galleys late, acknowledges that "it's not like an intricate story nobody knows. Much of the details have already been reported."

By *Dateline*, in fact. The show's 1997 coverage, which relied in part on Orth, sliced the story from every possible angle: Cunanan's "early years," his thirst for notoriety, his gay lifestyle, a chronology of the murders, and interviews with his victims' relatives. *Dateline* tracked the manhunt, the science of false sightings, the psychology of serial killers, Versace's final moments, and Cunanan's suicide.

ONCE *DATELINE* BEGAN WORK on the new Cunanan segment, the staff found that the stale material wasn't the only problem. Orth herself was difficult to deal with. She was a querulous interview subject. She seemed to consider herself almost another producer—entitled to dictate how her interviews should be shot and what should be included in the segment. (Orth did not respond to three phone messages left at her *Vanity Fair* office over three weeks; her publicist, Hays, says Orth was traveling on a book tour. "I don't even have a way of tracking her down," Hays says.)

Orth didn't limit her input to editorial matters, either. She called a network publicist directly to ask how NBC planned to promote the book segment, something almost always handled by an author's publicist. "Orth wanted to have control over how the publicity machine ran," says one NBC source.

Russert also added his two cents in a phone call with Shapiro, says an NBC source, during which he advised Shapiro about how *Dateline* should promote Orth's segment. Shapiro, the source says, was rankled by this interference. Shapiro disputes that and characterizes Russert's input as merely "an aside." He insists *he* was the one who called Russert, rather than vice versa, and that the topic came up in a conversation on another subject. "He said 'Maureen knows some reporters,'" Shapiro says. "'Would you like to get some stuff in print?' I said, 'Yeah, that would be great.'" (Russert declined to be interviewed, but gave this comment through his spokeswoman: "To suggest that an accomplished reporter and author like Maureen Orth needs her husband to help her career is the worst kind of sexism imaginable.")

Dateline "wanted to be scooped" by the *Daily News* on Orth's bombshell.

WHEN THE FIRST CUT was ready on Friday, March 5—just three days before the air date—a typical cast settled into Shapiro's office: correspondent Murphy, producer Faskianos, the segment's associate producer, two senior producers, two tape editors, the *Dateline* publicist, the NBC ombudsman, the head of NBC News's legal department, and NBC News vice-president David Corvo.

After viewing the piece, Shapiro went right to work, identifying page by page what he wanted changed. Shapiro says now that he meant the question "What's new?" rhetorically, to prod his producers to better home in on what he thought was most compelling. In Shapiro's view, Orth had uncovered disquieting details about police bungling—in particular, the fact that when Cunanan was on the run in a car stolen from one of his victims, an officer allegedly leaked to a reporter that authorities could track Cunanan through the car-phone signal. Orth thinks Cunanan heard a radio report about this and realized he had to ditch his vehicle and steal another one, a theft that led him to kill his fourth victim. And Orth had unearthed what Shapiro considered interesting facts about Cunanan's final days as a fugitive—the books he kept in his hotel room, the nightclubs he frequented, and his brazen visits to a diner where the Miami Beach police chief was a regular.

But others still felt the piece was basically a regurgitation. "I kept thinking this story should get killed," says one NBC source. "There's nothing there." (Subsequent reviews of Orth's book suggest the NBC staff were not alone in this perception. As *The New York Times Book Review* put it, "the shelf life of criminal celebrity has shortened to the point where Cunanan's tale already seems old." Even *People*, which might be expected to be more attracted to the salacious material, asked, "What's the difference between a must-read magazine article and a middling book? For Maureen Orth, about 440 pages and 21 months....Unfortunately in journalism, unlike bodybuilding, doing the legwork doesn't guarantee you'll have something to show for it.")

But the main debate at the screening centered on Orth's most controversial assertion: that Versace had the HIV virus, which causes AIDS, when he was killed. In her book, Orth posits it as fact. But neither the Miami Beach police department nor the Versace family have ever confirmed it, and the *Dateline* team wasn't comfortable reporting such a private piece of information so definitively. More important, they were not sure why Versace's HIV status belonged in a segment about his killer.

"The focus was intended to be on Cunanan and the search for why he did this and what the possible motives were and the issue of law enforcement," says *Dateline* publicist Hillary Smith, who attended the screening. "The element about Versace stuck out like a sore thumb. It did not blend in." This triggered discussion, recalls Smith. "We went back to Maureen; we questioned her about why she put it in the book."

Orth "hit the roof" when was still debating whether

Orth's argument, which ultimately swayed Shapiro, was that the HIV information was germane because the police had briefly considered it as a possible motive, floating a revenge theory that perhaps Cunanan was HIV-positive and wanted to kill the man who had infected him.

Others thought that was a weak justification, because it had proven to be a dead lead: The revenge hypothesis had fallen apart when Cunanan's autopsy revealed no HIV infection. Newsmagazines don't typically highlight a hypothesis ruled out two years earlier—especially given that Orth herself had dismissed HIV infection as a possible motive in one of her original *Dateline* appearances back in 1997.

Moreover, Shapiro and NBC's lawyers had questions about Orth's sourcing. Florida law prohibits disclosing a person's HIV status, and the Miami Beach police have steadfastly refused to do so in the case of Versace. Orth told NBC that she got the information from the now-retired chief investigator on the Cunanan case, who told her he saw the coroner's report. "I felt very good about the source since she had us talk to the source," says Shapiro. "I felt confident that

we did other reporting, which did not knock it down." The family's written statement to *Dateline* didn't deny the AIDS charge, though it did slam NBC for its "mercenary invasion of their privacy and the scurrilous assault on the reputation of someone who was a victim of a horrible crime."

During the screening, both the NBC ombudsman and the lead attorney opposed the inclusion of the HIV revelation. "The majority of people felt it did not belong in the story," says a *Dateline* source. (Once again, they were not alone in that view. The *Times Book Review* would later describe the book's details of Versace's sexual habits and HIV status as "ambiguously related to the fate that befell him but irresistible to the author.")

Shapiro bristles at the idea that the HIV issue would be resolved by committee. "Decisions about what goes on the air are not done by consensus," he says. "I make the decision....I would have killed this book if we read it and felt it didn't deliver." Shapiro explains: "If you take a respected author, who has become an expert on a subject, who's about to publish a book that will be read by millions of people....If you have information that is about to be made public, about to hit the bookstores, I don't think you should ignore it just because it may be controversial."

By the end of the screening, Shapiro says, the producers understood which points he thought "needed to be drawn out better." They had marching orders to find out more about Orth's sourcing for the HIV information. And, says an NBC insider, Shapiro asked a producer to tell Orth that the segment might be shortened for time reasons.

she learned that *Dateline* to include her biggest scoop.

Orth "hit the roof," an NBC staffer says, when she learned the *Dateline* team was still debating whether to include her biggest scoop and was considering cutting the segment. She scoffed at questions about whether the HIV issue was relevant. She put what some felt was inappropriate pressure on the producers, even signing onto husband Russert's NBC e-mail to send them messages—albeit ones in which she also signed her own name—another not-so-subtle reminder of who they were dealing with.

For Orth, a lot was at stake, explains publicist Smith: "It was what she considered to be the most newsworthy aspect of her book, and therefore expected it to be part of our report."

Meanwhile, Orth appeared to be using another publication to force *Dateline*'s hand. The New York *Daily News* had bought the right to run excerpts of her book once it was published. Now Orth was offering the paper the scoop on Versace's HIV status for an article that would run the day before *Dateline*'s broadcast.

By most accounts, Shapiro didn't mind getting trumped. "Everybody wanted to be scooped," says one NBC News source, who says it seemed as if Shapiro preferred that *Dateline* not be the one to break the Versace revelation "because then he'd have to make a moral decision" on the propriety of announcing it. Shapiro would have a lighter burden if a major newspaper had already made the news public. Shapiro denies this. "I would have made the same decision whether the *Daily News* ran it or not," he counters. And, Shapiro adds, the publicity "only helped the show.... A lot of times, as a structured thing, we try to get things in the paper which will get people to watch."

Orth, meanwhile, was also lobbying *Daily News* Sunday editor Edward Kosner as part of her cross-promotional blitz. Kosner says Orth "asked that we make a reference to *Dateline* and the fact that she was going to be on the show Monday," which he agreed to do.

Dateline wanted the publicity, naturally. But the show also took steps to distance itself from the book's findings. Kosner says a *Dateline* producer called him, asking "that we not attribute any specific information in the story to something that might be included in *Dateline*, because as of Saturday, they still weren't sure what was going to be in the piece."

IF *DATELINE* HAD QUALMS about the freshness of its Cunanan story, they weren't obvious when the piece was broadcast. "Tonight," it began, "in an exclusive interview with Dennis Murphy, investigative reporter Maureen Orth reveals new details never heard before." *Dateline* included the HIV revelation, even as it betrayed its ambivalence. Correspondent Murphy challenged Orth on the air to defend it. "If the Miami Beach detective is accurate that Gianni Versace was HIV positive at the time of his death," Murphy asked, "does it matter? Should—should it be talked about? Should it be in the book?" Orth responded, "I got my information from someone I consider a superb source, on the record. Therefore, I thought that it was valid enough to put in the book. Yes."

Dateline's Neal Shapiro

The next morning, NBC hosted Orth again, this time with an extended interview on *Today*. Katie Couric questioned the HIV disclosure: "Why was it relevant?" Orth's answer this time focused on Versace: When he died, she asserted, Versace was about to take his empire public and should "probably" have disclosed to potential shareholders that he had a "terminal disease." She described his HIV status as an "integral" part of the murder investigation.

That night, Orth's book party glittered, and the gossip columnists were there to chronicle the occasion. "Suzanne and Bob Wright threw a party for Maureen and her book," wrote the *New York Post*. The "magnificent" Trump Tower apartment "easily accommodated the 100-odd mostly media people who came. With Bob heading up NBC and Maureen being married to the network's D.C. star, Tim Russert, Peacock types were thick on the ground." ■

ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES

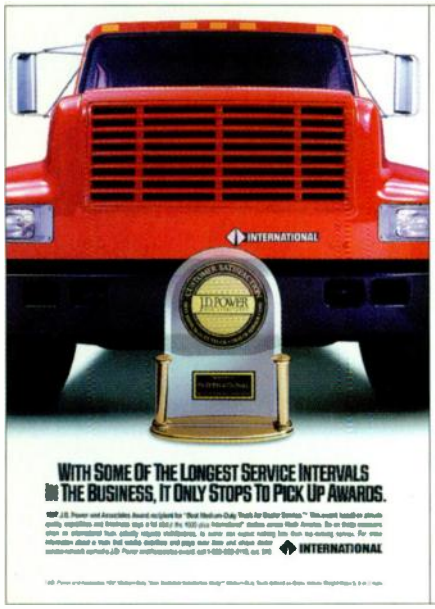
DECONSTRUCTING POWER

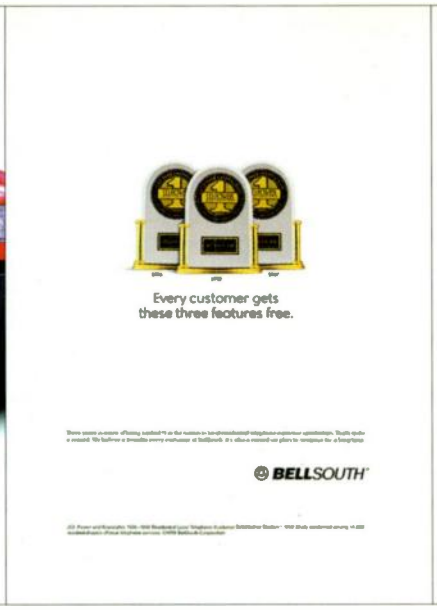
J.D. POWER AND ASSOCIATES WANTS TO BE THE GOLD STANDARD IN RATINGS SYSTEMS, RANKING EVERYTHING FROM CARS TO CREDIT CARDS. WHAT DO ITS AWARDS REALLY SIGNIFY? BY D.M. OSBORNE

IN JANUARY 1981, WHEN J.D. Power III spoke to 40-odd General Motors executives at the Hilton hotel in Northfield, Michigan, he was nearly hounded off the stage. Since quitting GM 14 years earlier, Power had developed a radical new technique of gauging customers' satisfaction with their cars and had used his research to help importers such as Toyota and Honda increase their U.S. sales. In Detroit, therefore, Power was widely regarded as a turncoat. His speech, in which he predicted that GM would lose 27.9 percent of its market share by 1990, only bolstered those suspicions. "The v.p. of

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRIK GIARDINO/SHOOTING STAR

J.D. Power III built his company from a kitchen-table enterprise into a $76 million-a-year business that gauges customer satisfaction in 14 industries.





Ads by J.D. Power winners, from left: "Best Medium Duty Truck, Dealer Service"; number one "Local Residential Telephone Service"; "Best Original Equipment Tire-Passenger Vehicles"; "Best Premium Midsize Car"; and "Best Entry Midsize Car"

sales and marketing jumped up and starting shouting obscenities at me," remembers Power, who resumed his talk only after the head of the company's Pontiac division intervened. "He told them, 'Sit down and listen. What this man is telling you is that unless we change, this is the way things are going to be.'"

INDEED, 18 YEARS LATER, JAMES DAVID POWER, KNOWN as Dave, is credited with giving U.S. carmakers a much needed wake-up call to improve car quality. His once-controversial customer satisfaction surveys are now purchased by the entire U.S. auto industry. A self-proclaimed "voice of the customer," the 67-year-old Power has transformed J.D. Power and Associates from a kitchen-table enterprise focused on the auto business into a $76 million-a-year business that today gauges customer satisfaction in 14 industries, rating everything from autos and airlines to cable systems and credit cards. "Power is the single standard by which everyone is measured," remarks Fred Hammond, a former corporate communications executive at Toyota and Volvo. Still, it is in the auto business that the Power name carries its greatest prestige. Says David Cole of the University of Michigan's Office for the Study of Automotive Transportation: "I can't think of a single individual or small company that has had greater impact in providing greater value to consumers."

But what does Power's imprimatur really signify: a product that is great overall, or just in a specific, narrow category? And who is Power's true master—the consumers whose views he solicits for his surveys, or the corporate clients who pay upwards of $100,000 to subscribe to a single report and as much as $250,000 to invoke his name in an ad? For Power, it's a constant balancing act. "His money depends on his credibility," notes David Champion, director of automobile testing for *Consumer Reports*. "If the data were not credible, the manufacturers wouldn't pay what amounts to an absolute fortune for his studies."

Yet as Power has expanded his business—he now conducts 100 surveys a year, up from 20 in 1990—the rise in the sheer number of the company's awards and the attendant ad claims threaten to render its mark of quality meaningless for consumers.

FROM THE OUTSET, THE MEDIA PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN promoting Power's work. He received his first national headline in 1973, when *The Wall Street Journal*'s Detroit bureau chief called for comment on a Power report that had found one in five Mazda owners complaining that their cars' new rotary engines failed within the first 30,000 miles. Fourteen manufacturers had subscribed to the study, and the reporter, Charles B. Camp, had somehow obtained a copy. "He started asking me specific questions, and I could hear him flipping the pages," says Power, who denies leaking the document. "That's when I wrote my first press release, trying to give balance to what we were doing."

Power's "balanced" remarks in the *Journal*—emphasizing that 75 percent of Mazda owners surveyed said they would buy the car again—set the tone for all of his future dealings with the press: informative but upbeat, a tone intended as much to assuage concerns among his current and prospective clients as it was to promote Power as a force in the automotive industry. "The goal is to to accentuate the positive," says Patricia Patano, the Power partner in charge of marketing.

Power's stance sets him apart from other independent raters such as *Consumer Reports*. Whereas *Consumer Reports* polls its subscribers for its annual rundown on vehicle reliability, which is designed primarily to guide consumer choices, Power conducts his surveys among car owners whose names are culled from vehicle registration and dealership sources, and tools his surveys for use by the industry itself.

Yet because Power designed and paid for his studies independently—borrowing what he needed to collect market data for which he hoped manufacturers would pay later—he found a following among the press. "[Power] was an entirely new thing and he was treated as news by the media," explains Ben Bidwell, retired chairman of Chrysler Motors. "Stories began to appear, and over time...there appeared to be some public acceptance that his word was gospel." Adds Power: "We couldn't have been successful unless we had the press out there believing in what we were doing. They got our message to top management."

Through the mid-eighties, however, skeptics within the U.S. auto industry outnumbered converts by a wide margin, and Power's company, headquartered in Agoura Hills,

California, remained unprofitable. "We had several bleak years," says Power, who assigned his four children the task of Scotch-taping a quarter, face-up, onto each of his surveys—an incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire. An affable chief executive who is as likely to be found sitting across from the desk of one of his junior associates as in his own modest office, Power handed out assignments in the hallway on a whim. "If something caught his fancy in terms of concept, then the potential profit-making ability of that study was not necessarily important in Dave's mind," remembers former Power executive vice-president John Uhles.

By late 1985, just as Power was poised to publish his "Initial Quality Study"—one of six syndicated automotive reports he now publishes annually—"the bank almost shut Power down," says George Peterson, Power's vice-president of automotive programs at the time. Power's IQS, a poll of 100,000 car buyers on problems with their new vehicles, had drained his reserves. And only a handful of carmakers—all foreign-owned—had agreed to buy the data. (Syndicated studies are the most expensive and riskiest surveys to produce—akin to a plaintiffs' lawyer taking a case on contingency.) "A lot of the manufacturers didn't like the idea that someone was going to be publishing quality information that they wouldn't control," notes Peterson.

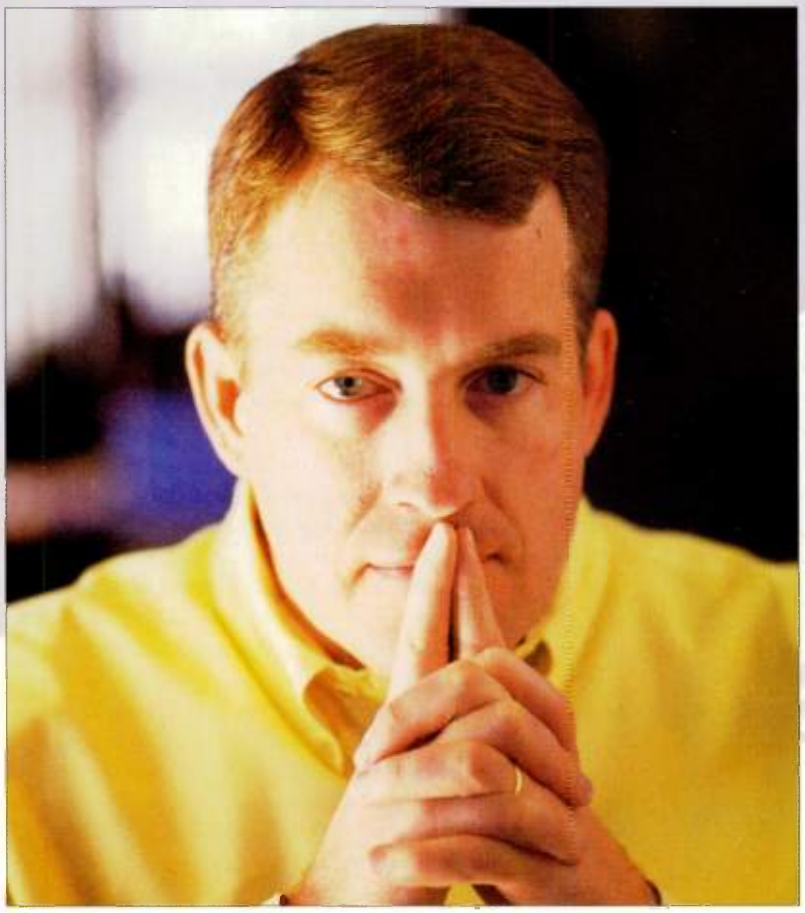
Though he was committed to remaining independent, Power desperately needed more carmakers to subscribe. So it was not surprising that *how* the company would present its survey findings became a subject of intense debate, according to two former executives. They fixed on a straightforward tally of customer-reported problems per every 100 vehicles in a specific model. Power would also calculate an "average score," disclosing publicly only those models that scored better than average. The complete survey—including a specific breakdown of complaints by make and model—would be made available only to carmakers at a price commensurate with the number of models a manufacturer had on the market. (Today, a manufacturer with only a few models on the market pays as little as $20,000 for an IQS, while the majors, with 60-odd models, pay more than ten times that amount, according to Chance Parker, Power's director of product research.)

The press complained that Power had suppressed important information. But Power stands by his decision to keep the losers' scores under wraps—even as companies now routinely leak the information to embarrass competitors, violating restrictions Power has tried to impose on his subscribers. "If we got a hundred percent of the manufacturers participating and using the data, then everyone would benefit," Power says. "That's what we were striving for. If a few manufacturers were being berated by the press, they wouldn't want to support us at all. It doesn't do any good to the industry to beat up on the companies that aren't performing."

Gradually, Power's strategy succeeded. As findings filtered through the industry, senior managers, first at GM and then at Ford and Chrysler, began to recognize a market demand for Power's research. Ford, for example, had long been the butt of jokes that its name was an acronym for "Found On Road Dead." Power's data documented customers' specific vehicle complaints, making clear that U.S. automakers could no longer blame their dealers for dismal sales. And while U.S. automakers still dominated the domestic market, with GM enjoying a 40 percent share, sales of Japanese imports were on the rise. "It was only when the domestic-market share started going down that Power sort of stepped into his own light and said, 'Look, the cars that are selling are high on my chart because they're reliable,'" recalls *Consumer Reports*'s Champion, who at the time worked as an engineer for Range Rover.

For manufacturers more than for consumers, Power's ratings filled a void. "Before Power, there was no single yardstick, other than sales data, you could use to measure who was doing a better job," explains former Toyota and Volvo adviser Hammond, now with Kermish-Geylin Public Relations, Inc. "They had in-house research, but that's always suspect and highly politicized. [Power] was an independent source who came up with an acceptable yardstick."

BY THE EARLY NINETIES, POWER HAD A LOYAL, ALBEIT somewhat unenthusiastic, following among the big three U.S. carmakers. By signing up for a package of five or six surveys a year, such subscribers began to ante up as much as a half-million dollars each. They paid even more for pointers on how to improve



Jamey Power worries about preserving his father's brand name.

More winners, from left: best "Domestic Airport Car Rental"; best "Internet Buying Service"; best "Internet Service Provider"; and "Best Home Builder, Phoenix"

their performance or for further explanation of their scores. Indeed, today the 20 researchers in Power's automotive division spend roughly half their time on proprietary studies purchased by specific manufacturers—in some cases reanalyzing previously collected data. Seeking to understand customer complaints about wind noise in the Sentra, for instance, "Nissan paid a huge amount," says a former senior engineer. "The carmakers would pay an extraordinary sum....They would do a phenomenal amount of work, to gain one or two points on IQS."

At the same time, Power's annual surveys on customer satisfaction and new-vehicle quality became must-carry stories among the major media. "I knew we had reached a benchmark when a reporter called...and said, 'If I don't get your press release right away, I'm going to be fired,'" remembers director of marketing Patano.

That's when Power says his company began making money. His profit margin, he says, is now 8 percent. Important in achieving those earnings, he acknowledges, have been the licensing fees he began to charge in 1987 to companies seeking to use his brand name in their advertising.

EARLY ON, ADS INVOKING POWER'S RATINGS APPEARED only occasionally, and boosted Power's credibility and brand-name recognition as much as they benefited the advertisers. Indeed, when Subaru ran the first high-profile commercial, at half time during the 1984 Super Bowl, Power was as flattered as he was stunned. "We looked at each other and couldn't believe it," he says. "Here we are on the Super Bowl!"

As ad claims proliferated, manufacturers increasingly complained about conflicting claims and comparisons among carmakers. (Mercedes-Benz was unhappy that Subaru trumpeted that second-place finish behind the upscale European import in its Super Bowl ad.) Within J.D. Power and Associates, there was also mounting concern about the advertising's effect on consumers. "When the creative department of the ad agency got ahold of the data, they'd make it seem like the car with the best door handles was the best overall," Power says. "You'd step back and say, 'Geez, this is kind of diluting our brand name,'" adds his son, J.D. "Jamey" Power IV, 36, who heads up a burgeoning international practice that spans the automotive and technology businesses.

Acting on the advice of lawyers, Power began attaching to his reports a strict notice that any promotional use was subject to a fee as well as to the company's written approval. At the same time, Power began publishing a list of annual "awards" that reflected leaders in specific survey categories, which he hoped would serve as guidelines for ad claims.

The ad policy, says corporate communications director Peter Marlow, is simple: "We review everything....We see all executions and all revisions." He notes that Power staffers are constantly on the lookout for ads that boast more than a survey supports. All ads must refer to the specific category and sample size from which the Power rating is derived. And Power no longer tolerates claims that trump up a specific award as an overall corporate achievement, "We don't care if they bring in their lawyers," Marlow says. "We're not intimidated, because we know we have the final say."

Ad people confirm that Power is strict. "You pay a lot for it and then there's handcuffs. They tell you what you can say and what you can't say," grumbles Tom Cordner, cochairman and creative director for Los Angeles–based Team One Advertising, which handles advertising for Lexus. "[J.D. Power is] trying to uphold the integrity of the brand, because there may be the opportunity to mislead, or misuse, or take advantage of the survey...but I wonder whether you get the value."

Power executives insist the licensing arrangement was never motivated by money, and emphasize that ad claims are handled separately from the company's research and reporting, "like an internal division of church and state," says Jamey Power. Yet the advertising guidelines may have aggravated the marketing mayhem the company wanted to avoid. In 1998, it announced 47 awards in the automotive industry alone. Power's 1998 Initial Quality Study, for instance, granted awards in 14 categories. It credited Chrysler with winning in the "premium midsize" category as well as in the "entry midsize" slot; named Lexus as best in three other categories; and put Honda on top in three more: "sporty car," "compact SUV," and "compact van."

Moreover, unknown to the average consumer, a car that's a winner in one Power survey may be a loser in another. The new Volkswagen Beetle, for example, which ranks high in terms of design features that appeal to customers in Power's four-year-old APEAL (Automotive Performance, Execution, and Layout) study of customer design preferences, has not been a stellar performer in the Initial Quality

Study. "It's not the most trouble-free vehicle," notes research director Parker. Chevrolet's Lumina, by contrast, gets outstanding marks for quality, but doesn't stack up well in terms of design. "There's so many different J.D. Power surveys now that it's confusing for consumers," complains Csaba Scere, editor in chief at *Car and Driver* magazine. "I'm in the business and I can't keep them straight."

Indeed, just last December the American Express Company challenged newspaper ads promoting Chase Manhattan's Visa and Mastercard as victors in J.D. Power's surveys of customer satisfaction in the platinum, gold, and basic credit-card categories. American Express demanded that future promotions make clear that the survey excluded its flagship card because it is a *charge* card, not a *credit* card, and that its Optima platinum credit card was not rated due to an insufficient sample size.

Power has also confronted complaints that his core IQS study has become antiquated—despite a 1997 overhaul. Everyone interviewed for this article credits Power with prompting an across-the-board improvement in car quality, but that, ironically, has chipped away at IQS's value. In 1987, the average number of problems per 100 vehicles in the IQS survey was 166. Ten years later, the average had dropped to 81. The number-one score of 110 in 1987 is well below average today, and a far cry from the 56 that put Lexus in first place in 1997. As a result, some claim the difference between being number one in Power's survey and, say, number seven, is meaningless—except that number one gets the bragging rights. "Nobody, including myself, ten years ago would have believed that we could have cars in the condition we have them today," responds Power. But he maintains that carmakers still have "to clean up their nitty-gritty defects" and argues that in order for his surveys to be relevant to the entire buying public, he must present his findings in segmented categories. "Giving an award for the whole industry is not meaningful," he says. "Not every customer is in the market for a Lexus."

NONETHELESS, SENSING THAT CUSTOMER CONCERNS are shifting away from quality and into service issues, Power has aggressively diversified his business. He's invested $10 million in his biggest initiative, the Power Information Network, a real-time database that tracks customer preferences using retail car-sales data. Power predicts the project, which debuted in California and will be in place nationally in 2000, will have 20 times the impact on the industry that his IQS study has, giving carmakers instant access to data on pricing and customer preferences in color, trim, and detail.

Meantime, Power's forays into nonautomotive businesses, which account for under 15 percent of revenue, have only increased the awards clutter. In the airline industry, for example, Power tags winners in long- and short-haul flights and identifies above-average performers in each of 15 other categories—from seat comfort to flight-attendant courtesy.

Power now gauges the customer satisfaction of everything from upscale hotel-room service to replacement tires. The company is even developing a joint project with Nielsen Media Research aimed at correlating television-viewing habits with new-car-buying patterns. "We think this could actually revolutionize the way television [advertising] is bought and sold," says Power media director Tom Healey.

Perhaps. But much of the data that Power disseminates to the public has little tangible value for consumers. The alphabetical listings of above-average airlines, for example, are just that: lists, presented in broadly defined categories—"menu alternatives," "space for carry-on luggage," and "inflight phone service." Granted, the companies that subscribe to such studies get a more complete picture than the public, but is such unqualified information really useful for consumers? "Our whole business structure is based on providing information for the service providers and the manufacturers," responds the senior Power. "Eventually, as the Internet grows and consumer information becomes a bigger deal, we will have to start providing more detailed information to consumers."

No one interviewed for this article suggests that Power's research techniques have been corrupted by the company's expansion. "They can't be bought," says *Consumer Reports*'s Champion.

But some do question whether Power has gone too far afield. "When they start fractionalizing J.D. Power," says advertising executive Cortner, "it begins to water down the J.D. Power mark."

"I know that some people will say that our brand might be worn down by working in so many different industries....Some of our staff even feel that we should spend more time in the automotive industry and forget all these other things," Power says. "My personal opinion is that we have a stronger brand today than we've ever had before." ■

In Search Of Maureen Dowd

The *New York Times*'s Pulitzer Prize–winning columnist is an enigma, described variously as thoughtful, generous, self-absorbed, and catty. One thing is certain: Her column invigorates, infuriates, and lacerates. And Queen of Buzz though she is, Dowd wants to remain a mystery.

BY GAY JERVEY

IT'S BEEN MORE THAN THREE YEARS AND PROFESSOR JOHN GLAVIN STILL feels as if he had been mugged. Just after Christmas in 1995, Glavin, the soft-spoken, courtly English teacher who chairs the Georgetown University English department curriculum committee, received an inquiry from a fellow lover of words eager to discuss accusations of sexual harassment that had surfaced against Senator Bob Packwood. Along the way, the caller also brought up recent changes in Georgetown's undergraduate program. Among other things, the university would no longer require English majors to study Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Milton. The voice at the other end of the phone line was engaged and curious. Her tones dipped and swayed, gentle and friendly—really quite sweet.

There was one thing, though, the implications of which John Glavin was not prepared for.

The caller's name was Maureen Dowd, and she had Glavin and Georgetown in her crosshairs.

"My reaction to the curriculum for Georgetown University's English department can be summed up with a few Elizabethan imprecations: 'Fie, fie, fie! Pah, pah! Howl, howl, howl! Tut!' " began Dowd's *New York Times* op-ed column of December 28, 1995. "Never mind that dissing these classics is a mistake anywhere. In this town, we need them. They provide the highest form of punditry."

"When we talked, she said that she wanted to write about Senator Packwood and the Packwood scan-

CHRISTY BOWE/IPOL

Illustration by Dan Adel

> "My reaction to the curriculum for Georgetown University's English department can be summed up with a few Elizabethan imprecations: 'Fie, fie, fie! Pah, pah! Howl, howl, howl! Tut!'...Never mind that dissing these classics is a mistake anywhere. In this town, we need them. They provide the highest form of punditry."
>
> — *"Liberties," December 28, 1995, in which Dowd attacked Georgetown professor John Glavin*

dal, arguing that there were these classic tales that had appeared in history and literature that were instructive to Washington today," Glavin recalls. "That's not exactly how it all turned out, however." Although Dowd did discuss the lessons that can be derived from the likes of Milton and Shakespeare, at its heart the column lambasted Georgetown's curriculum alterations as trendy and shortsighted. As for Packwood, "Liberties" that day made one minor mention of the senator, comparing him to Chaucer's character, the "bawdy Miller."

"What can I say?" Glavin sighs, still sounding a bit baffled by his sole encounter with Dowd, the acid-tongued *New York Times* columnist, who in April won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary—and who twice a week sends at least one person running for their Valium or, at the very least, their Tums. "Just thinking about it makes me a little nervous to talk to you now," Glavin adds, an ironic smile nudging into his voice. *Journalists and all of that,* his tone implies.

Dowd quoted Glavin—a renowned authority on Charles Dickens with an approachable, low-key manner that belies his academic stature—as saying, "We want to get away from the notion that literature is sacred. That is really a secular version of fundamentalism, the belief that there are magic books that have all the wisdom, all the authority, and if students passively attend to these books, they'll have all the answers."

"That is ridiculous," Dowd concluded. "It is impossible to go very far into Shakespeare and remain passive, or indifferent to social and sexual collisions. Whoever said that Shakespeare had 'all the wisdom'?...In a city in which much ado is often made about nothing, it wouldn't kill anybody to make much ado about something."

"What a reaction we had to that column. I got death threats!" continues Glavin, with the wry resignation of one who has long since chosen to rise above it all. "People contacted the university, saying that 'This is the only time in my life that I have *ever* agreed with Maureen Dowd!' and on and on. But, God knows, she is funny and talented. And as someone who does textual analysis for a living, I can tell that she has a very rich, complex imagination."

Several days later, a close friend of Glavin's chastised Dowd for attacking "one of the smartest people in Washington." Glavin's defender, William Curry, recalls that Dowd's initial response was a puzzled pause. Then the telephone line filled with a confused defensiveness that tiptoed into incredulity. "John Glavin?" Dowd drawled, as if trying to relocate the name, to find it in her mental Rolodex. "*You mean, that English teacher?*"

Curry was already well versed in Dowd. The previous February, he had been named counselor to President Bill Clinton, and thus was more than aware of the tempestuous half-life and gnawing repercussions of a "dis" from Dowd. Since his 1992 presidential campaign, Curry's new boss had been shadowboxing with Dowd's 10,000-watt words, which have essentially had nothing good to say about the president. Over the years, Dowd has ridiculed Clinton's "serial sincerity," branded him as both the "Highchair King" and the "Great Empath," and mythologized him as "President Proteus," careening through life in constant search of stimulation, reinforcement, and change.

"Maureen's writing style is magnificent," says the 47-year-old Curry, currently at work on a book about the Clinton presidency and living in Connecticut, where, as state comptroller in 1994, he ran for governor. "There is not a columnist in the country who can bring character alive and hold you to the end of a column like she can.

"But," he continues, "I love John Glavin. He was my sophomore English teacher at Georgetown and has been my mentor for years. He is a brilliant scholar. Nobody knows or cares about literature as much as he does. She was painting him as this leftist trendy with no concern for historical literature, which could not be farther from the truth. When you are talking about classical scholarship, he is the real McCoy, which apparently was lost on Maureen. Either she didn't get it, or she lacked the curiosity about him to care. When John opened up the *Times* that day, he had no idea what hit him. He still doesn't."

[S] ANDBAGGED THOUGH HE MAY feel, John Glavin should take heart. He is far from alone. Since she began writing her "Liberties" column in January 1995, Dowd's fiery use of the alphabet has triggered one long, italicized *OUCH*. She has zeroed in on a motley crew, from President Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore to former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, former senator and GOP presidential candidate Bob Dole, filmmakers Woody Allen and Oliver Stone, Los Angeles's Mondrian Hotel, New York's Barney's department store,

CHRISTY BOWE/POL

former *New Yorker* editor Tina Brown (now the chairman of Talk Media and editor in chief of *Talk* magazine), and Brown's husband, Harold Evans, vice-chairman and editorial director of the New York *Daily News, U.S. News & World Report,* and *The Atlantic Monthly.* She also took on Steven Brill, the chairman and editor in chief of *Brill's Content,* in an April 1998 column.

Ernest Hemingway's son, Patrick, whom Dowd lampooned in an April 1997 column, offers his sympathy. "You're writing about Maureen Dowd? God help you!" he gasps. "I hope you are taking measures to protect yourself. A bulletproof vest might help. What can I say? To a certain extent my brothers and I were savaged, but I don't hold any grudge," says Hemingway, a chipper man, who, over the telephone at least, sounds like a good sport. In her Hemingway column, Dowd wrote, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s children are wringing every last dime out of their father's 'I Have a Dream' speech with stiff licensing fees. And they sold Oliver Stone the rights to the King story, presumably including Dexter King's embarrassing rapprochement with James Earl Ray. Like the Kings, the Hemingways happen to have a sacred father, that is to say, a product....Patrick Hemingway, the middle son, had to back off from a plan to market Hemingway shotguns. It was considered tacky, given that Papa killed himself with one."

Not surprisingly, Dowd had a good time with literary agent Lucianne Goldberg, the choreographer of sorts of what we have come to know as "that Monica thing." In a column on April 18, 1998, Dowd wrote, "I want the Three Witches—Susan Carpenter-McMillan, Linda Tripp, and Lucianne Goldberg—to take their boiling cauldrons and go away."

"The people for whom life does not exist outside *The New York Times* are almost rhapsodic when I am in her column," shrugs Goldberg, who is clearly of the "Just-get-my-name-right" school. "Maureen Dowd could write 'Lucianne Goldberg had sex with a goat and is an ax murderer,' and they would be ecstatic that I even appeared under her byline. They don't remember why I was there, or necessarily what she said about me. Just that I was there. And they get all blissful about it. It's a cult. The Maureen Dowd cult."

FEW PEOPLE QUESTION DOWD'S TALENT, OR HER column's entertainment value. But does she inform? Dowd's critics suggest that she goes only skin deep, and that she would never sacrifice a punch line for evenhandedness. However keen her observations—and there are few better at crystallizing character, nuance, and scene—her obsession with personality leads her to shortchange discussion of substantive issues. And there are those who often suggest that they would all but pay her airfare if Dowd would only venture out and investigate the world at large—and not just the Maureen-microworld of Washington, Hollywood, and, occasionally, New York. And what about the fact that she so freely uses "Liberties" to lacerate? Does she see people as just that—people, with hearts and souls, not to mention blood pressures—or merely as raw material, grist for her mill?

For every naysayer who dismisses her as snarky and superficial, there is a fan who considers her among the most gifted columnists going, as her Pulitzer Prize for her columns on the impact of L'affaire Lewinsky more than confirms. Even those who wish that Dowd would thrust herself into fresh, perhaps more weighty material, concede that they find themselves flipping to her column every Wednesday and Sunday to see what tack she has taken that day. Reading Dowd, they say, is a guilty pleasure.

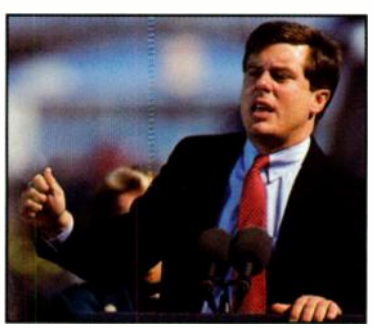
Ultimately, there is a catch-22 to the criticism of Dowd. It is her very gift and potential that endow her with such an ability to disappoint. Her readers, it seems, want her to soar, and some become irritated when she hides behind a routinely facile, glib, and mean-spirited facade. Dowd, they say, should be judged not just by her current work but by the beauty and power of her potential.

DOWD REFUSES TO TALK TO THE press. Thus she declined to speak to *Brill's Content.* In one of her few in-depth interviews, Dowd told *Mirabella* magazine in 1993, "If I say no to you, I feel like a hypocrite. But if I say yes, you'll destroy all of my mystery." That article is said to have embarrassed and chagrined her, despite its praise for Dowd's visibility and use of language. Far more telling was the remark about her "mystery." On one level, one can understand why a columnist might cultivate an Oz-like persona: The distance may give her more freedom to surprise. But in 1993, at the time of the *Mirabella* article, Dowd was still a reporter and had not yet begun to write "Liberties." She was fresh off the Bush White House beat, and had been front and center for years. So why the need for mystery?

Since then, her obsession with her mystique has only intensified. Many praise what they call her intriguing and smart decision to keep the world at bay. And, for what it's worth, Dowd does not self-promote.

"When you are talking about classical scholarship, [John Glavin] is the real McCoy, which apparently was lost on Maureen. Either she didn't get it, or she lacked the curiosity about him to care. When John opened up the *Times* that day, he had no idea what hit him. He still doesn't."

—William Curry



NAJLAH FEANNY/SABA

She has eschewed the Beltway talking-head circuit and even turned down Robert Redford when he wanted her to do a cameo in his movie *Quiz Show*. In explaining her calculated, peripatetic low profile, Dowd's friends, who wrap themselves around her like swaddling clothes, stress that, at heart, she is shy.

Really, really shy.

She speaks, they say, through her writing. With her propensity for wearing sunglasses in the fluorescent glare of an office—as she did this winter during a visit to the Senate press galleries—Dowd seems to aspire to a Garboesque aura of separation and skittishness. ("I said to her, 'Maureen, why are you wearing sunglasses? You're *inside the Capitol*,'" recalls one reporter.)

"Maureen cultivates this thing of mystery," agrees *Washington Post* columnist Mary McGrory, who has known Dowd since the two worked together during the late 1970s and early 1980s at the now-defunct *Washington Star*. "She does not want to tell you anything about what she is going to do. When we were in Rome on a press trip, I asked her when she was flying out and it was all this 'I don't know, I don't know.' Maureen turns even planes into a mystery." Like others, McGrory is somewhat measured in her remarks about Dowd, and seems equal parts amused and bemused by Dowd's heightened sense of hushed, fluttery drama about herself.

In the end, Dowd is "sensitive, vulnerable, and loyal," notes the writer Sally Quinn, who says she is fond of the columnist. "And she is very, very private. And there is almost no one that I can say that about."

Dowd is also famously thin-skinned, a trait that seems ironic in someone whose words so often wound. She hates it when people take the same liberties with her that she so freely does with others in "Liberties." One acquaintance recalls that after he took Dowd to task in one-on-one correspondence for a particular column, he learned through a mutual friend that his remarks had hurt Dowd. She also complained to *Newsweek* about a picture that it ran of her in a January story on the media.

And, according to McGrory, a 1996 James Wolcott article in *The New Yorker* titled "Hear Me Purr" particularly derailed Dowd. Wolcott, who declined to comment for this article, wrote, "[Dowd] snickers at easy targets most of us are sick of anyway, like Oliver Stone's overexposed ego (*Nixon*) or Woody Allen's weaselly ethics (*Mighty Aphrodite*). She rarely risks an unpopular stand against a major phenomenon, playing instead to an "in"-group snideness that retreats from any uncool show of enjoyment or passion." Since the Wolcott piece, several others, including a column this past winter in *The Boston Phoenix*, have dismissed Dowd as all bile with no vertebrae.

THE BELTWAY ECHO CHAMBER

It comes as no surprise that conversations with more than 100 people who either know Dowd personally or by dint of her column and reputation reveal a complicated person of enormous contradictions—a fey conundrum who at times exhibits both the whiny shyness of Mia Farrow and the wicked bite of Dorothy Parker. Dowd is repeatedly described as everything from thoughtful to thoughtless, from manipulative to straightforward. In the end, one of the most confounding things about Dowd is that the disparate opinions about her are so difficult to reconcile. She appears to define the word *paradox*. Here, for example, is a very visible journalist, who is known for her need for privacy—and yet who is one of the most talked-about names in the most talked-about town: Washington.

One thing is consistent, though. Dowd can be loyal and generous, and her friends—a select cadre that surrounds her like a "thin blue line"—care about her deeply and go to great lengths to ensure her privacy. They acknowledge that her desire for insularity does not inoculate her from the inquisitive. But for her sake they wish those of us who would pierce the veil of her privacy would go away.

Well, we can't.

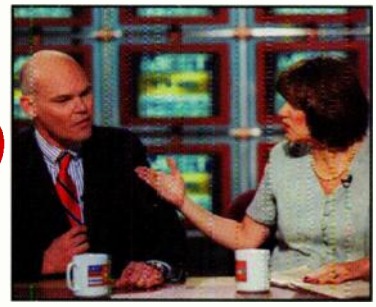
For one thing, there's her recent Pulitzer.

For another, even before she received that accolade, she was the Queen of Buzz, in no small part because of her journalistic real estate. The *New York Times* editorial page is the Harvard Yard of newspaper acreage, and it has a whole lot of history built on names like James Reston, Arthur Krock, and its most recent retiree, Russell Baker. Then there is what has come to be known as "the Dowd Factor," "Dowdism," or "Dowd Envy," which the Pulitzer will probably only perpetuate. Many fret that her success will spawn a slew of "Maureen wanna-bes," who would love nothing more than to show off their writing as much as Dowd can, but who have far less talent. Ultimately, though, Dowd's determined separateness and her distinct tone have kept the curiosity going. She is also utterly unpredictable. Dowd is often described as an equal-opportunity skewer.

MAUREEN'S COLUMN IS THE FIRST thing that people grab when they pick up *The New York Times* on Wednesdays and Sundays," says Sally Quinn. Political consultant Mary Matalin concedes that she and her husband James Carville, the inside-the-Beltway set's own Nick and Nora, have been known to duke it out over who gets to savor "Liberties" first. "We practically grab it out of each other's hands," laughs Matalin. "It's a guaranteed first-thing-in-the-morning brawl. It's one of the few things we agree on! We have to read Maureen Dowd before the phones start ringing with people talking about her column."

"I don't always like what Maureen writes, but I love Maureen," says the irrepressible Carville. "She has been harsh to the president and the first lady. But she is one of the few people who can make you laugh out loud," he observes, his bayou cadence lurching into a grin. "Maureen is kind of a professional wiseass. That is her niche. She doesn't pass legislation. Rather, her writing is a type of conversation....I get a kick out of her."

> Maureen is kind of a professional wiseass. That is her niche. She doesn't pass legislation. Rather, her writing is a type of conversation.... I get a kick out of her. —*Democratic consultant James Carville, who's married to Republican consultant Mary Matalin*



"I honestly believe her column has more impact and more people talking than anything in this town," says Bill Press, who cohosts CNN's *Crossfire*. "It is an absolute must-read. No question about it. When I moved to Washington three years ago from California, I was the new kid on the block. And the first thing my bosses at CNN told me that I had to do was to read every column of Maureen Dowd's. And I quickly learned that they were right. She is without a doubt the most wicked and well-read columnist today."

Time after time, her readers say Dowd encapsulates what they are thinking about, say, President Clinton or Kenneth Starr, but just can't put into words. Jeanne Brennan, who worked as Dowd's assistant from April 1996 through April 1998 and now works in the communications department of the Education Trust in Washington, observes, "I think what Maureen does best is to give a snapshot of what is going on. She just cuts right to it. She grew up in Washington and understands power and this town better than just about anybody else. So even if it is harsh, it is true....She is constantly taking pictures for us. She is showing us where we are. Maureen is the best mirror we have for ourselves as a country. That is why people respond so viscerally. She nails it every time."

Brennan insists that it is not Dowd's desire to hurt people, much less mangle them. She recalls a morning Dowd came into the office and said of that day's column, "'Jeanne, how could you let me be so mean? How could you let me be so mean?'" Brennan says she responded, "Maureen, it was a great column. Everything was legitimate." Brennan adds, "People might not believe this, but her intent is not to be mean....There is this wide discrepancy between how people react to Maureen and her work and who she really is."

PEG O' MY HEART AND STAR DAZE

The 47-year-old Dowd spent her childhood within the tight-knit, supportive web of her large, competitive Irish-Catholic family in Washington, D.C. She was the baby of the brood, born when her father was 61 and her mother 43. Shortly after birth, Dowd, who has three older brothers and an older sister, was injured when a nurse suctioning mucus from her mouth inadvertently cut her throat. At one point, doctors told her parents that they would lose her (a priest was called to perform an emergency baptism). That she pulled through made her family all the more protective of her.

Time after time, sources contacted for this article stressed how defining Dowd's Irish-Catholic upbringing has been, in terms of how she sees both herself and the world at large. She attended Immaculata High School and Catholic University, both in Washington. Over the years, Dowd's work has conveyed the indelibility of a childhood spent in and out of the confessional, surrounded by Holy Water, rosaries, priests, and nuns. Consider this column that appeared in *The New York Times* on Christmas Eve 1995: "Moral tales have replaced cat books as a publishing phenomenon," she wrote. "It used to be that sexy was good. Now good is sexy. Of course, if you came under the sway of nuns...[t]he good sisters' parables still burn on your brain."

Dowd remains close to her family and talks almost daily to her 90-year-old mother, whose advice she is said to cherish. "If I was looking for guidance on something, Maureen would often quote her mother, saying, 'Well, my mom always told me so-and-so,'" says Brennan. In a piece about GOP presidential candidate Pat Buchanan, who also grew up in Washington and whose family the Dowds know, the columnist wrote, "I'm not taking the fall. Sure, I know what you're thinking. He's an Irish Catholic and a journalist. I'm an Irish Catholic and a journalist. Two peas in a pod. Chips off the old sod. Even my own Ma, Peg o' my heart, slips into this way of looking at things. 'You're not going to be mean to Pat, are you?' she asks, her voice filled with dark history. 'He's one of us.'"

Dowd's father, Michael, came over from Ireland when he was a young boy and grew up to become a D.C. cop, who, among other things, was assigned to guard politicians. Dowd, who was close to her father, has recollected that her mental image of the Capitol glowing at night, casting a protective halo over Washington, came from her childhood rides with her mother to pick up her father from work. In 1950, Michael Dowd took a gun away from a would-be assassin trying to kill President Truman. Then in 1954, three Puerto Rican nationalists randomly fired shots from the spectators' gallery onto the House floor, wounding five congressmen. "My father ran over from the Senate [and onto the House floor] and wrestled one of the shooters to the ground," Dowd wrote in a column on July 29, 1998, about last summer's killing of two Capitol Hill officers. Dowd began and ended "Liberties" that day with the following lines, respectively: "When I was a teenager, in the 60's, I never told people that my father was a cop. It wasn't cool," adding that she had described him as being "in politics." And, "[n]owadays," she concluded, " I never say my father worked in politics. I simply say, with the greatest possible pride, that he was a cop." After Dowd's father died suddenly of a massive heart attack when Dowd was 19, she did not leave her room for three days, reportedly sitting ramrod straight on her bed, staring at the wall.

RICHARD ELLIS/NEWSMAKERS

After graduating from Catholic University, Dowd first worked at the Washington Hilton's pool and tennis club, where, as she told *Mirabella* in her 1993 interview, "I sold tennis balls to Morley Safer and Paul Anka, and got locker keys for Kay Graham and William Proxmire." Then she was hired as a dictationist at the *Washington Star*, typing stories that reporters called in from the field. David Burgin, the *Star*'s metro editor at the time, hired Dowd as a favor to her older brother, Kevin, who was a friend of his. "Kevin told me that he thought she could write, and I had a job opening, so I gave her a chance," recalls Burgin, who now runs Woodford Publishing in San Francisco. Dowd quickly gained a name as a dictationist who could not only type a mile a minute but also could dress up reporters' copy with everything from the well-placed comma to cadence, style, and verve. In no short order, Burgin recalls, "people would call in and request her." By all accounts the *Star*, the underdog paper to the *Post*, was a gritty, fun, and gently brawling place to work. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the newsroom brimmed with energy, and many of its journalists would go on to make their mark in the world. In addition to Dowd and Burgin, who later became the editor of the *Dallas Times Herald* and the *San Francisco Examiner*, they included Mary McGrory; Philip Gailey, opinion column editor at the *St. Petersburg Times*; Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek*; Gloria Borger of *U.S. News & World Report*; Fred Barnes of *The Weekly Standard*; Howard Kurtz of *The Washington Post*; Lisa Myers of NBC News; and Robert Pear and John Tierney of *The New York Times*.

It was not long before Dowd traded in her dictation tape for a reporter's notebook. "I worked as a reporter in Montgomery County, a wealthy Maryland county, for five long years," she once wrote in "Liberties." When she started out as a journalist, some members of her family have said they doubted whether she could muster the moxie to talk to strangers. She quickly proved them wrong, and gained a reputation as "this local kid with exotic talent," in the words of Howard Fineman, now the chief political correspondent for *Newsweek*.

In 1981, the *Star* folded, and Dowd fell upon hard times. "When the *Star* closed, editors from all over the country swooped down on the *Star*," recalls Gailey. "There was fierce competition to get *Star* talent. It was like relatives coming into the house after somebody dies to get the best furniture. I remember, as we approached the last day of the *Star*'s life, we had all been snapped up by the good news organizations. I had landed at the *Times*. Others had landed at the *Post*. At the end, one person whom I thought was tremendously talented had been overlooked, and that was Maureen. She had no offers. I remember pleading with a bureau chief of a major newspaper, not the *Times*, to look at Maureen Dowd. But he declined. I thought she was so talented. Poor Maureen. She was like the last orphan left in the orphanage." Eventually Dowd landed at *Time* magazine in New York.

ON TO THE GRAY LADY

While she was at *Time*, Dowd turned her eye to everything from midwestern cities to herpes to Jesse Jackson. Interestingly enough, it was an incident from her post-*Star* job search that provoked one of her more personally revealing columns. On March 18, 1998, three days after Kathleen Willey told *60 Minutes* that she had been sexually harassed by President Clinton, Dowd wrote that, when she was interviewing for her job at *Time*, the editor who eventually hired her propositioned her over dinner—an act that sent her running out of the restaurant, screaming into the night. Nearly 20 years later, the incident was clearly still grafted onto her consciousness, having slammed Dowd right up against her own vulnerability, not a trait that regularly resounds in "Liberties." The March column described Dowd's desperation to land a new job after the *Star* folded, and her fear, confusion, and rage at the man's actions—not to mention that she felt compelled to go to *Time* anyway. She needed the money. She wanted to write.

She was trapped.

Many of her readers were moved not only by the story, but also because, in a rare move, Dowd had let the world get to know her a little. Dowd's shield of sarcasm evaporated for a moment, briefly lifting the Maginot Line to which she so assiduously clings. For once, Maureen Dowd was not just a "tough chick." For once, she let you in. And, for once, the prevailing emotion in "Liberties" was a certain openness, as opposed to the anger and cynicism with which the column so often seethes.

[F]ROM *TIME*, DOWD WENT TO the metro section of *The New York Times*. She was recommended to editors there in 1983 by Anna Quindlen, then a reporter at the paper. Quindlen declined to comment for this article, but did confirm that she suggested both that Dowd be hired and—when she was leaving the *Times* in 1994—that Dowd replace her on the editorial page. William Geist, now a correspondent and commentator for CBS News and at that time a *Times* metro reporter, sat across from Dowd in the paper's New York newsroom. "I don't think Maureen set out to be a political columnist," Geist says. "I don't think that that was her life's dream. I love her column now. I go out into the rain to buy it. Back then she did not have that high a profile, though. She was just emerging." Geist, who is known for his own quirky, droll take on things, appreciated Dowd's sense of humor and desire to enliven the paper's sometimes gray copy and august sense of self-importance. "Maureen and I always believed that it was better to have funny stuff in the *Times* because it stood out, whereas in *The Washington Post* it would just be another witty story," Geist recalls.

While on the metro desk, Dowd wrote stories about, among other things, cocaine use in New England prep schools, the sweltering angst of a Manhattan August, and author Philip Roth. Then, in 1984, Dowd started to spend some time on the road with Geraldine Ferraro's vice-presidential campaign.

Even as a young reporter Dowd had an eye for the telling detail and nuance. Bill Kovach, curator for the journalism fellowship at Harvard University's Nieman Foundation and *Brill's Content*'s ombudsman, points to a pivotal Dowd moment at the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco. At the time, Kovach was the *Times*'s Washington bureau chief, and, as such, was shepherding Dowd's convention coverage. "We were on deadline," Kovach explains, "Mondale and Ferraro had just been nominated, and Maureen was watching the TV in our press suite. As the candidates stood on the podium, Maureen jumped up and grabbed me and said, 'Look! Look! There is the story. Mondale doesn't know whether to hug his wife or Ferraro. He doesn't know what to do.' She saw that this signaled a new era, with women playing a whole new role in politics and men not quite knowing what to do."

That keen observation—the sort that over the years Dowd's readers have come to expect—crystallized for Kovach just how clairvoyant a reporter she was. "We ran a front-page story on it," he notes. "She was the only reporter in San Francisco who spotted it, or at least who wrote about it. The gist of what Maureen could see, just through Mondale's body language, was that we were entering into a new era in politics." On July 18, 1984, Dowd's page-one story was headlined "Goodbye Male Ticket, Hello Etiquette Gap" and carried the following lead: "From the first, there had to be a policy on kissing."

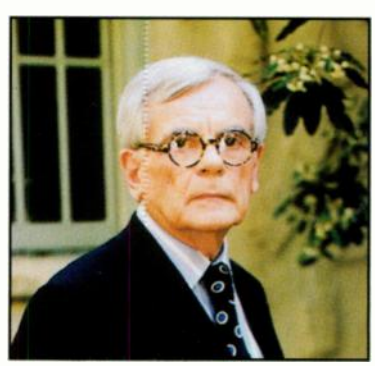
By the time that she filed that story, Dowd had also, apparently, long since perfected the Dowdian art of cajoling people into helping her via a unique alloy of neediness, likability, and—when she chooses to turn it on—kittenish seductiveness. In the story, Dowd quoted the opinions of several political consultants, including Robert Squier of Squier Knapp Dunn Communications. "I remember that story vividly, and talking to Maureen about it," Squier laughs today. "I recall thinking that *I have got to help out Maureen. I just can't let this woman down.*" To this day, Squier asserts, "Maureen has this amazing strategy. She will call you and say, 'I'm on deadline and I don't have a column,' and suddenly you feel as if you have to help her. Suddenly, her big problem is your big problem, which is that you have to get this column done."

"I call her Miss Scarlet," laughs Phil Gailey, her old friend from the *Star*. "She can do this poor-little-old-me thing. But the fact is, behind that helpless facade is one tough, bright, and talented journalist."

[I] N 1986, DOWD MOVED TO THE *Times*'s Washington bureau. When she did so, Miss Scarlet apparently had her eye on the prize: high-profile, sexy Washington reporting—and nothing less. In his book *Behind the Times*, Edwin Diamond notes that, at the time of the transfer, Dowd reportedly confided to her colleagues, "I know one thing—I'm not going to be covering any of those dreary regulatory agencies." For the next two years, she wrote about subjects that ranged from the 1986 Republican Governors Convention to spring in the capital to the Washington power lunch and the ins and outs of D.C. cocktail-circuit etiquette.

Then, in 1988, Dowd took to the campaign trail again, covering the presidential race between George Bush and Michael Dukakis. Known for its "If It's Tuesday, It Must Be Belgium" mind-set, life on the campaign trail can confuse and overwhelm even the most anal-retentive, Filofax-friendly of reporters. Dowd, however, is famous for being, shall we say, organizationally challenged. "The last time that I saw Maureen's office, there were puddles of paper on the floor and the books were upside down on the bookshelf," Mary McGrory shrugs. "Messy office. Neat mind."

"I love Maureen. I met her when we were on a long campaign swing, and it was very intense," says Alixe Mattingly, who worked as a press liaison for President Bush during his 1988 campaign and who is now vice-president for public affairs at the Washington, D.C.–based Pharmaceutical Research Manufacturers of America."These road trips are very hectic. You have bag calls at 4:00 A.M. and bus calls at 6:00 A.M. You don't get to your next hotel until midnight. You are totally sleep deprived. It's hard to keep track of what city you are in. And I will say that, literally, if I had not walked Maureen through it, she would not have made it. My first thought was, *Oh, my God. She is not going to last.* She just seemed to be this spacy thing, not at all the bare-knuckled political reporter. Yet look at her a decade later. This image she projects of



GREG LAVY/OUTLINE

"Suddenly she came up to me and did this simply wonderful thing. She said, 'I am sorry for what I said to you back then. I am sorry.' I was knocked out, stunned. I think it takes a lot of stuff to apologize like that. —*Writer Dominick Dunne, after Dowd apologized to him for being rude years earlier*"

this helpless little girl is very endearing, but she is just one of the most capable people whom I know."

Her dispatches from the road helped to define that campaign. Douglas Harbrecht, now the Washington news editor of *Business Week*, covered Dukakis along with Dowd that year. He recalls one of her pieces vividly. In a page-one story about the lackluster nature of the Democratic field, headlined "Prince Charming Candidate: So Far a Democratic Fable," Dowd wrote, "The candidates' problems are underscored by the belittling nickname that lingers on, even though they hate it: the Seven Dwarfs."

"She did some wonderful stories, and that particular one stood out," Harbrecht says. "From then on we all thought of the candidates as the Seven Dwarfs."

On a personal note, Harbrecht adds that Dowd is capable of flashes of graciousness that can seem so surprising in someone who, as he says, "is perceived by so many, including me, as being so cool and aloof and so totally shy."

Writer Dominick Dunne strikes a similar note. In 1993, just before the publication of his novel *A Season in Purgatory*, Dunne was introduced to Dowd at a party and told her how glad he was to meet her. His friendliness provoked something of a tongue-lashing from Dowd, who essentially told him to get lost, and not to try to sweet-talk or ingratiate himself with her, because she was reviewing his new book. "I was very, very hurt," admits Dunne, himself a sensitive Irish soul. "It really was upsetting. She was so hostile.

"Then years went by," Dunne adds. "This winter I was down in Washington covering the impeachment hearings for *Vanity Fair*. While I was down there, I went to a big book party and Maureen was there. Suddenly she came up to me and did this simply wonderful thing. She said, 'I am sorry for what I said to you back then. I am sorry.' I was knocked out, stunned. I think it takes a lot of stuff to apologize like that. So I said, 'Maureen, over, out, don't.' The person I was talking to said, 'Oh my God. I just witnessed the most incredible, fascinating thing.' And the very next day, as I was leaving the impeachment hearings, it was pouring down rain, and a cab pulled up with Maureen, Jill Abramson (of *The New York Times*), and Al Hunt (of *The Wall Street Journal*), and they rescued me from the rain. The very next day."

"STOP STARING AT ME!"

After George Bush won the election, the *Times* assigned Dowd to the White House beat. It was during the Bush years that Dowd seemed to break out of the pack, writing what would come to be known as "attitude" or "tude" journalism. "Maureen had a way of seeing and reporting things of a kind that journalists used to talk among themselves about but never write," observes *Newsweek*'s Fineman. "She had a way of turning around and writing that stuff. Everybody else in the press corps would say, 'I saw or I heard it, but I did not write it.'"

There was no doubt that Dowd really Got President Bush with a capital "G." Many of her pieces captured the Connecticut Gold Coast in him—the fact that you can take the boy out of Greenwich but you can't take the Greenwich out of the boy. Her portraits often went right to the heart of President Bush: his Waspiness; the way in which he could be so chipperly out of touch; his boyishness, competitiveness, and his "aw-shucks" eagerness to appear like one of the gang—the gang being the very bartenders, truck drivers, and insurance salesmen with whom he had so little in common. Terence Hunt, who has covered the White House for The Associated Press for 18 years, observes that the president was "very aware" of Dowd: "Bush was intimidated by Maureen. He would talk about being analyzed by Maureen and say, 'I don't want to be put on the couch.'" And in one well-known incident on Air Force One, the president commanded that Dowd "stop staring at me."

During the last days of his reelection campaign, though, Dowd wrote about Bush with surprising empathy, capturing the "Is that all there is?" aura of a presidency as it flickers out. Reading Dowd's pieces during the campaign's final, listless moments, one could feel Bush's sadness, his confused resignation, and, in the end, his isolation. "His aides see it around his eyes," one story read, "an expression of weariness that was not there before."

For his part, Bush was pleased that Dowd won the Pulitzer. On the day of the announcement in April, he commented, "There is no better writer today. She makes me laugh and cry. She makes me angry and happy. She's tough as nails, but she can be kinder and gentler, too."

DURING HER WHITE HOUSE DAYS, Dowd elevated her poor-little-me routine to an art form. But if Dowd can be kittenish in person, it's the tigress in print that leaves the lasting impression. Whatever her technique, everyone agrees: Dowd's words stick like Velcro. In her January 6, 1999, column about a possible Elizabeth Dole presidential candidacy, for example, Dowd wrote, "After President McMurphy, we will want Nurse Ratched. And now she wants us. We have been without adult supervision for too long." [McMurphy and Ratched are characters in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. To avoid a jail term for having sex with an underage girl, McMurphy pretends to be nuts. He's then sent to an asylum, where Nurse Ratched becomes his tormentor.] Mary Matalin concedes, "I like Maureen, but she makes me mad when she goes after my guys, because you know that she can label you, like comparing Elizabeth Dole to Nurse Ratched. You know that Liddy Dole will be fighting that image for a long time." "Florida can be a pretty conservative place," says Phil Gailey, of the *St. Petersburg Times*, which runs Dowd's column. "And let me tell you, we got a lot of angry calls about that Nurse Ratched reference."

Nurse Ratched's husband, Bob Dole, has been hazed by Dowd as well. But, interestingly enough, Dowd's views on Dole reflect an inconsistency that can lurk between what

> "I think she is brilliant. I like her. She is a good person, not a jerk.... I like the fact that she is vicious."—*Don Imus*

she writes about people and how she purports to feel about them. Dowd's depictions of Bob Dole during his 1996 run for president were, at times, quite rough. Among other things, she homed in on his rigidity, his defensive, sarcastic bite, and his apparent confusion over whether or not he really wanted the job. But when Dowd appeared on the Don Imus show—something she does from time to time—she struck a different note. "I remember once Imus asked her what she thought about Bob Dole," recalls Jeanne Brennan, "and she said, 'Oh, he is such a nice man.' And I thought to myself, *People are going to be so surprised to hear her say that. They are going to be shocked, because she has been tough on him in her column.* But she meant it."

Dowd's connection to Don Imus—who, on the air, muses almost obsessively about the columnist, from whatever volcanoes recently erupted in "Liberties" to her personal life—is well known and reverberates inside the Beltway. "I am a huge fan of hers," says Imus. "I think she is brilliant. I like her. She is a good person, not a jerk....I like the fact that she is vicious." (In its January 18 cover story on Imus, *Newsweek* reported that Dowd had written Imus a note asking him to stop talking about her private life. For one thing, she told him that it upset her mother that he was chatting on the air about Dowd's love life, including rumors that she has dated actor Michael Douglas.)

"You can't underestimate the Imus connection," Matalin says. "You have to understand how this inside-the-Beltway echo chamber works. The fact that Imus talks about her so much increases her influence, because everybody in Washington listens to Imus first thing in the morning. And everybody in the Beltway talks to everybody else. Imus is the top of the day. So if he's talking about Maureen or something she wrote, we'll be talking about Maureen.... And, as I said, when Maureen labels you, it sticks, especially if Imus picks it up and keeps repeating it on the air."

AND NOW FOR THE GREAT EMPATH: THE POLITICS OF PERSONAL DESTRUCTION

When *Times* publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr. approached Dowd for the op-ed page in 1994, "she agonized over doing the column," says her friend Michael Kinsley, the editor of *Slate*. "She was typically and unnecessarily insecure about whether or not she could pull it off. Everybody who knew her certainly urged her to do it. Her column is perfectly suited to our time because it is about levels of perception and peeling away these levels. Every period in time has its columnists, and now she is ours."

One thing is certain: Among Washington columnists, there is no keener observer of Bill Clinton than Maureen Dowd. If most opinion writers focus on his politics and policy, she seems obsessed with his personality, always looking for the key to his character—or, rather, his utter lack thereof. In the summer of 1997, for example, when President Clinton installed a hot tub at the White House, Dowd traveled to Santa Monica to visit the showroom of the manufacturer who had made the President's new toy, Hot Springs Spas. She wanted to test the waters. Dowd brought several friends along: *Vanity Fair* contributor Dee Dee Myers, President Clinton's former White House press secretary; Jerry Nachman, a former editor of the *New York Post*, who now works in television; Mickey Kaus, a magazine writer; Barbara Hower, author and TV personality; and Rebecca Liss, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*.

Patricia Wilhite, who at the time co-owned the Hot Spring Spas showroom, recalls, "I had all six of them in that tub. Maureen Dowd already had it in her mind how she was going to treat the story—all tongue in cheek—which is fine. She and her friends just kind of ignored me....They were talking all kinds of Washington gossip." Wilhite continues, "The conversation turned to Clinton and all of his fooling around with women. It was like he was the brunt of jokes, and it was upsetting, pathetic, like he was the village idiot. And that part distressed me. Because at the time I had no idea about Clinton. This was before Monica. And it was disheartening to hear the way that they talked about him." Among other things, as the resulting column reported, "Dee Dee demurred that the president would probably wear 'big, old baggy trunks,' even though his weight is down and he looks 'very hunky.'" And, "Jerry wondered about the potential for renting the hot tub to political donors. 'The hot tub and the Lincoln Bedroom package for a thousand dollars a night,' Barbara said dryly."

The White House's response to Dowd?

Leon Panetta, who served as President Clinton's chief of staff from 1994 until 1997, relates, "I used to have staff meetings at 7:30 A.M., and if there was a mean Maureen Dowd column, [former White House spokesman] Mike McCurry would say, 'Have you all seen Maureen today?' In fact, when someone said, 'Have you seen Maureen today?' you knew it was trouble."

"Everyone was required to grimace at the mention of Maureen's name," shrugs Bill Curry. "She was officially persona non grata at the White House."

TO THIS DAY, PEOPLE DESCRIBE ONE OF HER LEADS IN A PRE-"Liberties" story as not only capturing the instinctual prevarications of President Clinton but also personifying "attitude" journalism. In a 1994 report from Oxford, England, Dowd wrote, "President Clinton returned today for a sentimental journey to the university where he didn't inhale,

COURTESY OF WFAN

> "His aides see it around his eyes, an expression of weariness that wasn't there before. —*Dowd on President George Bush in the last days of his unsuccessful reelection campaign*"

didn't get drafted, and didn't get a degree." Since then, Dowd has not let up. Searing snapshots of Clinton have regularly been the centerpiece of her column's 700-plus words.

And she has routinely been right on. Consider the following excerpts from November 14, 1996: "We live in a society where loyalty to self yields to no other loyalty. In this respect, too, Bill Clinton is the perfect hologram for his age....Despite the hugging and misting and sharing, the Great Empath has always been willing to sacrifice friends and advisers at a brisk pace, with a chilling lack of sentimentality." Fast-forward to January 13, 1999: "We have a president with a congenital need to get his hand caught in the cookie jar, so he can be rescued again by the brainy wife he has turned into Mommy Dearest."

If Dowd seemed to view George Bush as somewhat hapless and out of synch—but at heart a gentleman and a standup guy—President Clinton, to Dowd, defines amorality. Dowd makes no bones about her view of Bill Clinton as the ultimate phony—a churning charmer who stays put for no one, and, ultimately, no one idea. President Clinton personifies for Dowd the kind of unbridled ambition that produces a programmed president who wrote his lines so long ago that he couldn't begin to tell you now what they really mean.

Dowd might be surprised, then, to hear that some people say that she and the president have more in common than either one of them might recognize, much less admit. At first blush, their styles could not appear more different. Dowd, for example, is known for an almost tribal respect for honesty and longstanding ties—she is said to be fiercely loyal—and one would never refer to *her* as the Great Empath. On the other hand, Bill Clinton seems to have no problem abandoning people in a heartbeat and never looking back.

Nonetheless, the two share an us-versus-them, black-and-white view of the world. And both exhibit an inability to see consequences—in President Clinton's case, of his actions; in Dowd's, of her words. They are both gifted, seductive, infatuated with personality, and, at times, self-absorbed. And can they ever work the room, if in very different ways. Bill Clinton may effuse garrulously and leave nary a hand unshaken, but Dowd, with her reputation and well-rehearsed mystique—and now her Pulitzer Prize—makes sure that she gets seen. In essence, the president and Dowd represent different sides of the same coin. Where they differ is that while the president is obsessed with joining and being accepted, Dowd relishes the role of the seething outsider.

Doug Marlette, the Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for *Newsday*, has known the president for years and has traveled with him. For months Marlette predicted that Dowd would walk away with a Pulitzer this year for her coverage of the Clinton-and-Lewinsky debacle and the mendacious maelstrom that it wrought. There is no doubt that the Lewinsky mess and the subsequent impeachment circus was made for Dowd, in part because it defined the political theater of the absurd. Just look at the cast of characters: the *90210* intern with her thong; the matter-of-fact maître d' of it all, Lucianne Goldberg; the treacherous taper, Tripp; Kenneth Starr, the out-of-control, puritanical prosecutor; and—at the center—the pubescent presidential bad boy. The chapter was made to be captured in cartoonesque imagery, not to mention the kind of blistering one-liners for which Dowd is famous. And the sheer tackiness of it all confirmed in high relief much of what Dowd has had to say about the president.

"Clinton and Dowd are a perfect match," says Marlette, who has never met Dowd. "They would have dated in high school. They would have gone to the prom together. It is this age, and the narcissism of this age." He continues: "The Clintons are all about spin and image, and Maureen is the high priestess of that. Maureen was on to Clinton's psychology and pathology from the get-go. And she could articulate it. And my point is that part of her genius is that she is like Bill Clinton. Right now, she has been the perfect foil for Clinton, and Clinton for her."

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SUGGEST that the anger that so often saturates "Liberties" stems from Dowd's calcified, inflexible sense of right and wrong—an almost Old World dogma and desire for this earth to be a better place. But wherever it comes from, its critical role in her column is symptomatic of a larger trend in journalism that some find disturbing. "Maureen is very talented," observes Joe Klein of *The New Yorker*. "But she is ground zero of what the press has come to be about in the nineties. There is a real lack of charity. Maureen is an alienated puritan. And puritans were obnoxious even when they actually believed in something. I remember having a discussion with her in which I said, 'Maureen, why don't you go out and report about something significant, go out and see poor people, do something real?' And she said, 'You mean I should write about *welfare reform?*'"

(It should be noted that in 1996, when Klein was revealed to be the "anonymous" author of the book *Primary Colors*, Dowd attacked him in her column: "And journalists

CHRISTY BOWE/POL

should be happy because, in this era when they are seen as scum, they have finally, thanks to Joe Klein, found someone to look down on.")

Klein, like others, argues that Dowd's cynicism—and, in a sense, her insistent isolation and apparent lack of deep reflection—impairs her as a columnist. "Maureen is a great writer, but I don't think she is a columnist," Klein says. "I can only think of one honest column, the one that she wrote about the cops being shot in the Capitol last summer. All the rest are just a pose. The kind of thing that we in the press do is that we come and go and leave wreckage in our wake. When we as journalists are negative about people, it has real consequences out there in society. I don't want to take it all out on Maureen. But a lot of people look to Maureen as a model.

"In the end"—Klein pauses—"we don't know what kind of heart Maureen Dowd has. The people at the *Times* are not letting us find out. And they are not letting Maureen find out, either. And, with a columnist, your heart is as important as your writing."

The following letter to the editor ran in *The New York Times* on February 2, 1997. It was written by Stuart Hanlon, a San Francisco attorney who represents Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, a former Black Panther whose 1972 murder conviction was overturned this year. "Maureen Dowd (column, Jan. 26) suggests that Johnnie Cochran, O.J. Simpson's lawyer, abandoned my client Elmer (Geronimo) Pratt during an important hearing to overturn his murder conviction so that Mr. Cochran could pursue his television career in New York, forcing me to remain in Orange County [California] to conduct the hearing even though my wife had been hospitalized," the letter began. "In fact, Mr. Cochran volunteered to cancel his plans so that he could be present at the Jan. 3 hearing while I stayed in San Francisco. Because I have worked on Mr. Pratt's case since 1974, my wife and I made the decision that I should be present at the hearing. If a new trial is granted, Mr. Cochran has committed to trying the case with me."

In the column in question, Dowd wrote, "The dark impulses have been good to Mr. Cochran. So what if that infamous verdict was a moral, social, and cultural stain on America? Johnnie Cochran now has his own show on Court TV." "It was terrible," Hanlon sighs. "Dowd just trashed Johnnie, making it sound like he had abandoned us. And she was dead wrong. Johnnie had offered to do the hearing, but my wife wanted me to do it. No, Maureen Dowd did not call me to check the facts before the column came out." Sounding sad on the other end of the line, Hanlon sighs, "My wife had just been diagnosed with cancer. We had two young sons. It was totally ugly, an awful time. My wife was a pretty well-known lawyer in San Francisco, and Maureen Dowd involved her illness in a very public forum. You can't get a whole lot more public than the op-ed pages of *The New York Times*." (Hanlon's wife died later that year, in July.)

"It was outrageous," comments Cochran, who says that Dowd did not contact him for the piece either. "Hanlon felt that it was a total invasion and rape of his privacy. And she got the whole thing wrong."

John Buckley, now senior vice-president for communications at Fannie Mae, praises Dowd as a wonderful writer, but says he has not spoken to her since November 14, 1996, when "Liberties" essentially accused Buckley, who had served as the communications director for Bob Dole's presidential campaign, of betraying the candidate by discussing his frustrations and the campaign's problems with Ken Auletta in a piece that appeared in *The New Yorker* immediately after the election. "She hit me hard, and if I saw her coming towards me, I would cross the street," Buckley says. "She was someone whom I considered a friend, and for years I had helped her with ideas for her stories."

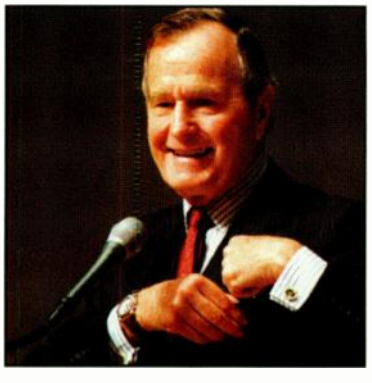
Contends Buckley: "I found it bizarre and unfathomable that she would, with no warning at all, within a week of our defeat, do something like that, when, in point of fact, the only thing that I had been doing for the past four months was work around the clock to help Dole deal with the likes of her. All I can say was that it was the bizarre end to a long-standing professional relationship."

Buckley points to a 1990 novel he wrote titled *Statute of Limitations*. In it, there is a character based on Maureen Dowd named Allison Hardy, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*. In one scene set aboard Air Force One, Allison is trying to cajole information out of a White House official named Max Pearlman. Buckley describes Allison's modus operandi: "Her reportorial schtick depended on excessive friendliness and flirtatiousness, which, coupled with expressions of difficulty in grasping even the basics of points, gave the feeling that you were helping a blind person across the street. Of course, the usual feeling in print was of being hit by her striped cane right between the eyes.

"But Max was a sucker," say the passage. "Max lived dangerously, and Max continued."

Careful, Max. Watch it, big guy. You're about to get Dowd-ed. ■

Editorial intern Rachel Gans contributed research assistance to this report.



MARIO TAMA/NEWSMAKERS

"There is no better writer today. She makes me laugh and cry. She makes me angry and happy. She's tough as nails, but she can be kinder and gentler, too."

—Former President George Bush, after Dowd won the Pulitzer Prize

Infomercial producer Kevin Trudeau says that since his time in prison he's devoted himself to products that "positively impact the whole person."

King Of The Pitch

INFOMERCIAL GURU KEVIN TRUDEAU HAS USED HIS BLINDING CHARISMA AND FAUX-JOURNALISTIC TECHNIQUES TO ROCKET TO THE TOP OF THE DIRECT-RESPONSE TELEVISION BUSINESS. BUT WITH HIS HISTORY OF RUN-INS WITH THE LAW, YOU MAY NOT WANT TO BUY WHAT HE'S SELLING JUST YET.

BY KATHERINE ROSMAN

"Pagers and cell phones off!" yells the stage manager, and a hush descends over the set in a Chicago television studio on a late January day. Lights! Camera! Action! "This is a special edition of *Vantage Point,*" says Karen Johnson, 29, a perky anchorwoman clad in a pink pantsuit. "My guest today is Kevin Trudeau, founder of the American Memory Institute, author of the best-seller *Mega Memory,* and regarded as the world's foremost authority on human-memory improvement."

Across an L-shaped desk from Johnson, in front of a black screen whose circular cutouts form the shapes of the continents, sits Trudeau, dapper with his blue pinstripe jacket, yellow print tie, and game-show-host good looks. A crew of about 15 stand around the set, but they are nothing more than technical support. Trudeau is producer, director, and star. "Well, as you know, the American Memory Institute today is the largest memory-training institute in the world," he says as his eyes, teeth, and diamond watch sparkle under the studio lights. To show the folks at home the power of *Mega Memory,* a set of audiotapes that teach memorization techniques, Johnson will read a list of 15 items to Trudeau, which he will then repeat in order. Before beginning, he earnestly says, "Never seen the list." "Never!" chimes in Johnson. Johnson calls off her list and Trudeau repeats aloud each item, eyes focused, hands folded neatly on the table in front of him.

Pen. Book. Towel. Bus. Jet. Shoe. Comb. Pencil. Window. Luggage. Ring. Paper. Cow. Dog. Cat.

And off he goes. "One, of course, was pen, two was book, three was towel," he says before nailing them all. He takes a breath and then recites the list backwards.

"Wow!" raves the saccharine host, eyes agog. "That was *something.*" Yes, it was, but exactly what is hard to say, because, in the world of Kevin Trudeau, nothing is quite as it seems.

Trudeau is a television entrepreneur in the high-stakes niche of infomercials. Direct-response television (DRTV), the industry term for infomercials and home-shopping networks, generated $56.7 billion in product sales from consumers in 1998, according to the Direct Marketing Association. Although Trudeau won't disclose how much he pulls in producing, manufacturing, and distributing about 25 products—primarily of the self-help variety—two of 1998's top-ten grossing infomercial products were his. *Dalton McCary's How to Hit the Golf Ball as Straight as You Can Point....Guaranteed* and *Dr. Morter's Dynamic Health* brought in an estimated $50 million and $35 million, respectively, according to *Infomercial Marketing Report,* an industry newsletter.

Trudeau "has done very well for himself," says Steven Dworman, editor and publisher of the *Infomercial Marketing Report.* "In profits, he's definitely up there in the top five or six" earners of infomercial producers, coming behind Everything4Less (E4L) and Guthy-Renker. And Trudeau is not averse to a little self-congratulation. In the August 1998 issue of *Response TV,* an industry magazine now just called *Response,* Trudeau ran a full-page ad offering up his sales services. "Let the 'Infomercial King' help you sell your product....Kevin Trudeau [has] more winning infomercials than anyone in history, the highest infomercial success rate of all time, [and was named] 1997 Infomercial Host of the Year," the ad proclaimed. (It's impossible to confirm the first two claims; infomercial com-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT GERBER

Trudeau claims his products can (from top) turn you into a human calculator, a golfing whiz, a quiet sleeper, and a mega speed reader.

tie, Wiseman sits in front of a mauve sheet as his image is superimposed onto a screen facing the one that shows Trudeau. "We also have in Chicago, in the studio, Bruce Wiseman, who is national president of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights." (CCHR, an offshoot of the Church of Scientology, is a "nonprofit, public benefit organization dedicated to exposing and eradicating criminal acts and human rights abuses by psychiatry," according to the group's website.) Above the split-screen picture of Wiseman are the words "Live Via Chicago." Wiseman is actually sitting only about six feet from Trudeau. Trudeau had told the crew to mock up a "live via-satellite" connection to give the production the appearance of a network news show. But with a reporter present, the crew decided to opt for the "Live Via Chicago" caption.

The trio discuss the mass marketing of "psychiatric" drugs, which both Block and Wiseman claim is a conspiracy between psychiatrists and pharmaceutical companies trying to cash in on frustrated parents with hyperactive children. Block and Wiseman are certainly not the only authors on the subject. In the last few months, two new books, *Ritalin Nation: Rapid-Fire Culture And The Transformation Of Human Consciousness* and *Scattered Minds: A New Look At The Origins And Healing Of Attention Deficit Disorder* have raised similar questions. But is an infomercial aimed at selling a product the place to deconstruct the issue? Trudeau, who says a teacher once told him he had a learning disability, says yes. "I don't believe in learning disabilities," he says. "I think it's just a scam." So this infomercial falls neatly into his inventory of items that benefit humanity.

But some pretty savvy machinations are at work here besides Wiseman's "Live Via Chicago" interview. As the cameras cut to graphics of charts whose data isn't legible, Trudeau says, "There's a publication here that says the number of ADD/ADHD diagnoses given to children between 1988 versus 1997. It went from 500,000 in 1988 to over 4,400,000 in 1997." The production also shows clips of what appear to be government hearings on the dangers of treating the condition with drugs. The source for both the graph and the hearings are never disclosed to the viewer. (When asked, Trudeau says the graphs and the videotape of the hearings were supplied by Wiseman's organization. Wiseman says the hearings were not the government's but CCHR's own.) Trudeau plays the skeptic throughout the program—"I've seen these children. I mean, it's like they are crazy," he says. "They come up to me with a baseball bat and whack me in the knee and start screaming....There is something wrong." That compels Block and Wiseman to respond with impassioned arguments as to why we should see it their way. Trudeau is finally swayed.

Throughout the twenty-eight-and-a-half-minute infomercial, viewers are told to call a number on the TV screen if they want copies of Block's or Wiseman's books. Trudeau receives all the proceeds.

It's brilliant soft-sell marketing. While thinking they're watching actual programming, viewers allow themselves to be persuaded, Trudeau says. "That's what we *want* to do," he emphasizes. "That's our idea. We don't want to look like an infomercial."

Just as Trudeau has reinvented infomercials, he has re-created himself. Born in 1963, Trudeau grew up in Lynn, Massachusetts, a blue-collar community just north of Boston. He nearly flunked out of high school, but took an early interest in sales. At 14, he attended his first Amway meeting. Two years later, he says he started a marketing business that sold financial advice. After high school, Trudeau became a salesman at a car dealership.

It was in that dealership showroom, soon after he began the job, that Trudeau experienced his eureka marketing moment. After spending a half hour trying to talk a reluctant customer into buying a car, Trudeau was called to the back room by his sales manager. "'Listen, this guy's not going to buy today,'" Trudeau says he told his manager. The boss, Trudeau says, grew silent and then said, "'Kevin, a sale has just been made.' And I said 'What do you mean?' And he goes, 'You got sold by this customer.'" It was an important lesson for Trudeau: In human interactions, Trudeau now believes, there is always a sale. After Trudeau was "sold" by that customer, he said to himself, "*That's never going to happen to me again. Never.*"

Growing weary of the car trade, Trudeau moved to Chicago in 1986 to get into the "memory business." He began selling seminars for Mark Dufner at a company called Memory Masters Institute. Trudeau quickly became the company's top seller behind Dufner, and before long, was earning a six-figure income and became a partner, according to Dufner. But in 1989, Dufner says, he caught Trudeau charging customers' credit cards for personal goods and threw him out of the company. Trudeau denies the allegation.

Trudeau then moved back east and founded the American Memory Institute, a company through which he sold memory seminars. But in 1990 he was convicted in the state of Massachusetts for larceny, and in 1991 was charged by the Justice Department with credit card fraud, to which he pleaded guilty.

"That was a time when I did something categorically wrong," he admits. "I was motivated by money at that point in time and I had an emotional challenge due to a breakup with a girlfriend. So that was a bad time. That was a time I was not acting as a good person or an honest, straight-up guy."

Trudeau spent two years in minimum-security prisons.

"It was the greatest learning experience of my life and I'm really happy that it happened," says Trudeau, who says he converted from Catholicism to Judaism upon his release. His time in prison helped him focus on developing products that "positively impact the whole person." He also taught memory seminars to fellow inmates.

After getting out of jail, Trudeau returned to Chicago to sell self-help products, such as Sable Hair Farming System, which purported to cure baldness, and Dr. Callahan's Addiction Breaking System, which "in sixty seconds can eliminate your addictive urge to overeat, to smoke cigarettes, to do any compulsion, any type of addicted behavior," as Trudeau claimed in an infomercial.

Such claims caught the attention of the FTC, which in 1998 filed a deceptive-advertising suit against Trudeau, his then partner, and their now-defunct company, Mega Systems, Inc. Trudeau settled the suit—admitting no wrongdoing—and agreed to pay $500,000 in consumer redress and to put another $500,000 in escrow in the event of further misrepresentations.

Trudeau characterizes the FTC incident as "extortion of an honest businessman." He says he settled only because of the high success rate the FTC has in winning such cases.

His defense may sound self-serving, but others in the infomercial industry cite witch-hunt tactics on the part of the FTC. "I wouldn't wish an FTC investigation on my worst enemy," says the *Infomercial Marketing Report*'s Dworman. "The reason why is that with an FTC investigation, it's very similar to the [independent counsel] Kenneth Starr investigation that we witnessed. You're basically guilty until proven innocent....[The FTC] can request every piece of paper, every piece of footage that was shot, even those not included in an infomercial, for example, and I don't care who you are or how pristine your image is, if you look hard enough, you're going to find something." (C. Steven Baker, director of the FTC's regional office in Chicago, says his staff tries to minimize the burden of an investigation, adding that "[w]e do not pursue technicalities.")

Trudeau says his industry is unfairly penalized for what are essentially mainstream selling practices. "You watch a Ford Motor Company commercial, or Chrysler, or Dodge, and they say 'It's $99 down and $99 a month!' and they put on nine lines of disclaimers," he booms. "Howard Berg [the host of Mega Speed Reading; see sidebar, page 98] can't read that! ...Why are they not given one bit of grief when they put on that disclaimer that nobody can read?" Adds Trudeau: "People think that there is a line in the sand" between what's legal and what isn't. "They think it's cut and dry, it's either black or white. And it is not."

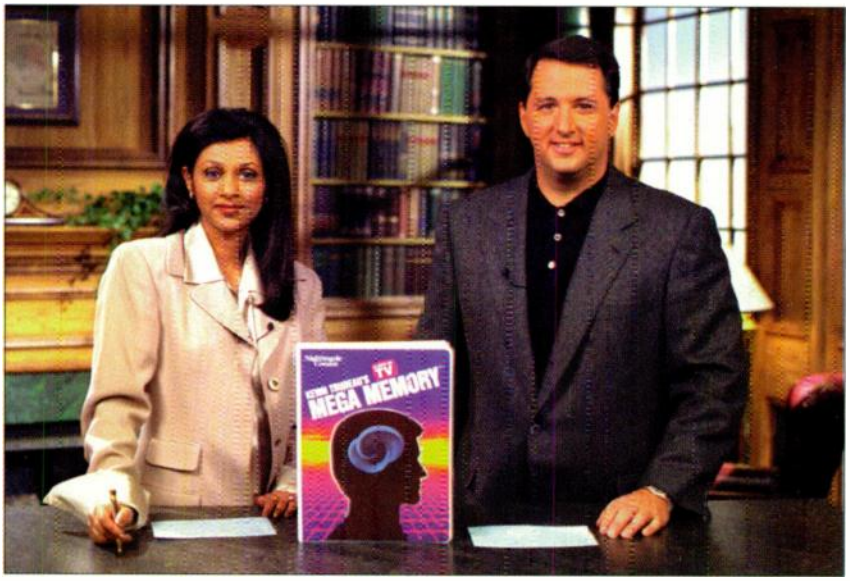
Elissa Myers, president and CEO of the Electronic Retailing Association, the infomercial industry's trade association, insists that there are clear-cut rights and wrongs in DRTV—and that a few rotten apples are spoiling the bunch. "Anything that has the net effect that makes it difficult for the consumer to understand what they're watching is against our guidelines," Myers says.

The ERA even worked with the FTC to bring charges against Trudeau and Mega Systems, Myers says. Trudeau maintains that the ERA has it in for him because he has long refused to join.

"PRICE POINTS, EVERYBODY," YELLS THE STAGE MANAGER near the end of the January shoot. Trudeau will now rattle off four different prices for one product. Sincerity etched in his voice, Trudeau exclaims in rapid succession: "Folks, it's just $49.99. You're saving over two hundred dollars!" "Folks, it's just $69.99. You're saving over two hundred dollars!" he continues on, while stroking the product as though he were a model from *The Price Is Right*. "Folks, it's just $89.99. You're saving over two hundred dollars!" "It's just $99.00 even, folks. You're saving two hundred dollars!"

Trudeau's team will insert the various prices into infomercials to test how customers react to different choices. Trudeau insists, "We're not really in the money business," adding later that "the statistic we actually measure, the reason we're in business...is the number of people using one of our products, benefiting from one of our products."

Trudeau finishes the last take, and stops to talk to a visiting reporter. Without being asked, he explains why he dines separately from the crew. "When you're the captain of the ship," he declares, "there has to be a little bit of a difference. Sean Connery never ate with the crew in *The Hunt for Red October*. The captain of the ship has to have a little authority." With that, the Infomercial King smiles, turns, and ascends a staircase. ■



TRUDEAU "AMAZES" KAREN JOHNSON WITH HIS MEMORY PROWESS—THANKS TO HIS MEGA MEMORY COURSE.

CNN TAKES OVER THE WORLD

World view: (from left) Steve Cassidy, deputy managing editor for international newsgathering; Will King, managing editor; and Tom Johnson, CEO, in CNN's Atlanta newsroom.

THE "WIRE ADVISORY" PIERCES A BRIEF LULL AT THE international assignment desk in CNN's Atlanta headquarters. It's day 14 of the NATO air assault on Yugoslavia and nine assignment editors are working shoulder-to-shoulder on either side of a narrow aisle located some 20 feet behind CNN's anchors, who are currently televising the network's morning show.

The nine have been working 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. during the air campaign; another team of nine replaces them for the 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. shift. But don't refer to these 12-hour stints as the day and night shifts. Because people watch CNN all around the world, the network pours resources into breaking stories at any time of the day or night. As international-newsgathering vice-president and managing editor Will King puts it, "It's always prime time *somewhere.*" These desk editors are the links between the producers and correspondents in the Kosovo region and the control room in Atlanta, handling everything from TV-satellite logistics to reporting, when needed.

And now, with news coursing across their computer screens, they'll need to do both—and fast. The next half hour will illustrate the tremendous resources, both technical and human, that CNN can bring to bear on a news story, as well as the competitive pressures that have only intensified with the advent of 24-hour-news competition (in the United States, at least) from Fox News Channel and MSNBC.

But this half hour, and the entire Balkan War, also demonstrate the increasing importance of CNN International (CNNI), which provides CNN programming mostly to the world outside the United States. For CNNI, a variety of factors have now come together. First, there's the vast expansion of CNNI's presence on cable and satellite systems across the globe. Second, there's the ongoing nature of the Kosovo conflict, which is significantly longer than the Persian Gulf War that made CNN famous worldwide. Third, there's the location of the war in the middle of Europe. Finally, there's CNN's burgeoning expertise and logistical prowess as a worldwide journalism organization (the network will deploy seven live feeds this morning—from Kukes, Albania, to Brussels; Aviano, Italy, to Moscow). The result: CNN International has emerged as a true global force.

10:50 *A Reuters bulletin.* Independent Serbian TV: Yugoslavia Declares Unilateral Ceasefire in Kosovo. *The ceasefire is being called in honor of Easter, the bulletin notes. It attributes the information to an "independent" Serb TV station called "Studio B." It's potentially huge news, but is it true?*

One of CNN's assignment editors—a lanky native of Belgrade—is skeptical. "There's no independent TV in Serbia," says Mina Ivanovic, as she quickly dials a phone to talk to a Yugoslav government source, an endeavor that is eased by the fact that Serbo-Croatian is her mother tongue.

The bulletin has come from a reputable source, Reuters, and CNN wants to get the information on the air as quickly as possible. But as much as the CNN team wants to beat their TV competition—and nobody would fault a news outlet for running with a Reuters story—they know that what they have is third-hand information. Nobody wants to air it until they've gotten their own confirmation.

A supervisor types out an internal advisory that instantly lights up on computer screens throughout CNN's worldwide operations: International Desk says stay away from Reuters bulletin on unilateral ceasefire in Kosovo. *Parisa Khosravi, who is running the desk, reaches for a microphone connecting her to CNN's "911" system, an internal squawk box, to repeat the warning. Her voice echoes through the newsroom, as well as through CNN control rooms and the offices of top executives: "We're staying away from this Reuters story on Independent Serb TV. We're trying to find out what independent Serb TV is."*

As editors debate whether such a thing exists, another staffer, Zoran Stevanovic, races up from the back of the newsroom, where he's been spending recent days monitoring Serbian TV in his native Serbo-Croatian. "I'll know in five minutes," he promises. Stevanovic has seen nothing about a ceasefire, nor has a friend in Belgrade who is now calling

EVEN AS CNN FACES STIFFER COMPETITION AT HOME, ITS BALKAN NEWS BLITZ HIGHLIGHTS THE NETWORK'S INCREASING GLOBAL DOMINANCE.

BY NICHOLAS VARCHAVER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL SCHWARZ

Ever wonder what's happening behind the anchors you see on TV? The international assignment desk (foreground) in CNN's newsroom.

If news breaks at 3 A.M., CNN will air it: "It's always prime time

Studio B. "Studio B is not independent," Stevanovic pants in a thick accent, "it's Milosevic's side. They were *independent, but now they're not. I'll check it out."*

SINCE CNN ROSE TO WORLD PROMINENCE WITH ITS COVERAGE of the Gulf War, it's no longer surprising that its newsgathering garners international notice during a crisis. The irony is that only recently has CNN's reality begun to catch up with perception. It's not just CNN's resources, though its coverage and technical capability in the current conflict surpass what it deployed in the Gulf. What has changed just as dramatically at CNN is news *dissemination.* Some 10 million households outside the U.S. had access to CNN at the time of the Gulf War. That number has since jumped to 150 million. The change can be summarized this way: CNN, that most American of world symbols, is no longer an American network. Certainly, the international desk provides evidence of that: Its 18 editors include German, Croatian, Irish, Tajik, Chinese, Scottish, and Danish nationals, not to mention American citizens born in Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

Until recently, CNN International did little more than borrow the feed from CNN's domestic service—60 percent of CNNI's programming was American—and beam that around the globe, typically to hotels. The prototypical CNNI viewer was a weary American businessman, unwinding after a long day in a distant foreign capital, searching for a lifeline to home—a dollop of news about the stock market, say, or the score of a hometown ballgame. But that has changed. If the early CNNI was the ugly American, loud and self-centered—the broadcast equivalent of a boisterous conventioneer wearing red plaid and clashing green, walking through the streets of Paris and looking for a 7-11—the newer incarnation increasingly represents the urbane American as world citizen.

10:55 *Director of coverage Khosravi ponders the Reuters story. She wonders how the CNN team will confirm whether*

Yugoslavia has announced a ceasefire. "Wake up Brent!" she shouts, referring to CNN correspondent Brent Sadler, who has worked through the night in Belgrade and is finally getting some much-needed rest. "When'd he go to bed?" Ivanovic asks. "Six hours ago?" Ivanovic rousts Sadler in his hotel room and tells him to find out what he can.

The story is proving elusive. "Reuters [in Belgrade] is telling [us] they got it from London," Ivanovic reports from her desk. "They're confused." Ivanovic unleashes a fusillade of consonants as she switches to her other phone, spitting out Serbo-Croatian at high speed.

Meanwhile, Sid Bedingfield, an executive vice-president and emissary from the top, has arrived at the desk. He's pleasant but edgy. He wants to know why CNN can't run the story now. *Khosravi explains that even Reuters is uncertain about the story. "They moved it," Bedingfield grouses, "and now* they're *confused?"*

11:00 *A TV monitor at the desk shows Fox News. Under video of President Clinton, Fox is running the words "Serb TV: Milosevic Declares Unilateral Ceasefire in Kosovo." They've beaten CNN, but the text is incomplete. It doesn't mention the Easter link, a piece of information that suggests the ceasefire may well be temporary. When a Fox anchor comes on a few minutes later, he notes that he has "an unconfirmed report" and cites "independent Serb television reports." He makes no reference to the Easter holiday.*

Ten minutes after the original bulletin, CNN seems no closer to nailing the story down. Stevanovic is gesturing wildly from 40 feet away, sawing his hand back and forth across his neck. "It's not true," he bellows, asserting that his friend in Belgrade has seen nothing about it on Serb TV. Just then, a monitor showing MSNBC flares with the headline "Serb TV: Yugoslavia Declares Unilateral Cease-Fire." The report, an

somewhere," says King.

announcer soon explains, is unconfirmed.

A CNN editor calls out that the news "isn't on the top of the Serb news hour." The journalists turn to the Serbian broadcast, also available at their desks. Khosravi turns up the volume on a separate channel, on which CNN has arranged for translators in London. Ivanovic interrupts. She's gotten a Yugoslav official on the line. "They are going to declare it in the next hour," she says. "We shouldn't go with this until they announce."

THE NEWEST, AND MOST DRAMATIC, ELEMENTS of CNN's internationalization are symbolized by Chris Cramer, the president of CNN International. An irreverent Brit, Cramer ruefully admits that his broadcast career began with a radio show called *Chris Cramer's Laugh-In* that was broadcast within a single hospital in Portsmouth, England. Cramer went on to spend 27 years at the British Broadcasting Corporation, both as a producer and as a manager. In 1980, Cramer was one of two dozen people held hostage when Iranian dissidents stormed the Iranian embassy in London. After several days there, he faked a heart attack, thereby managing to escape before a bloody rescue raid that killed five people. Cramer's newsgathering career ended that moment. "Lost my nerve," he says simply.

So Cramer took his voracious appetite for news into management. Since joining CNNI in 1996, he has spearheaded its international programming. In June 1997, CNNI implemented the key element in what it calls its "regionalization" strategy. Instead of one international network broadcasting to the four corners of the globe—which meant that a business show targeted to prime time in London would appear at four in the morning in, say, Hong Kong—CNNI has split its programming into four huge regions. Now there are essentially four international networks: One for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa; one for Asia; one for Central and South America; and one for the U.S. (available at night and on weekends to those who have CNNfn, the network's business channel). There are also ancillary networks, including a Spanish-language network for Latin America. CNN is now able to tailor, albeit only in broad strokes, shows for different parts of the world. Equally important, the network is comparatively unfettered by the vagaries of time zones.

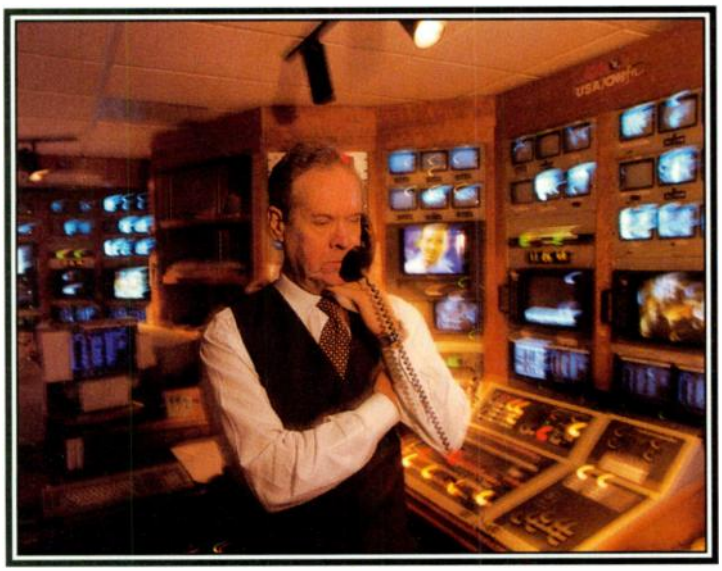
During crises such as the one in Kosovo, CNNI piggybacks on the domestic network, preempting most of its regional programming for the same breaking coverage one sees in the U.S. But that's not what happens the vast majority of the time. CNNI produces more and more of its own original programming, to the point that 90 percent of the shows on CNNI are not U.S. oriented. The regular programming ranges from foreign versions of American CNN shows to shows conceived specifically for the region in question. In Asia, for example, you can see the nightly *Biz Asia* or *Asian*

Serbo-Croatian spoken here: International assignment editor Mina Ivanovic juggles everything from Yugoslav sources to satellite logistics during her 12-hour shift.

Edition. CNNI also increasingly *looks* international. The majority of its anchors are non-Americans, with ethnicities that match those of the region to which they are broadcasting.

CNNI isn't just some little offshoot. More people now receive it than get the original U.S. version of CNN. Some 150 million homes worldwide have CNNI available, compared to some 80 million U.S. households with CNN. (Worldwide ratings figures are virtually impossible to come by, since there are no ratings agencies outside of the U.S. and a handful of European countries.) Today, Cramer says, 98 percent of CNNI's audience is non-American. He describes viewers as "affluent," "influential," and "avid consumers of magazines, newspapers, radio, and television." As he puts it, "They're people who want to know about the world, not just their world."

Chris Cramer, CNN International's president, inside the master control room, which allows CNNI to feed separate video streams to different parts of the world.



All this means that more people outside the U.S. may be seeing CNN struggle over what to report about the possible ceasefire than are seeing it in this country. It is, after all, near prime time in Europe and already prime time in the Middle East and parts of Asia.

11:05 *Even though one Yugoslav official has confirmed the news about the ceasefire, Khosravi still isn't satisfied. She explains to the executive vice-president, Bedingfield, who has stopped by for the third time in the last ten minutes, that this is a reliable source, but she still wants more. He seems frustrated that no one can find any hint of the broadcast that started things in motion. He unclenches his teeth long enough to ask, "Where did Reuters get it? It had to come from* somewhere."

Before anyone can answer, Ivanovic jumps in. She's got it. She's got confirmation. "There'll be a statement in an hour or so," she adds.

11:07 *Stevanovic runs to the desk. A ceasefire report has just appeared on Serbian TV. "Who's cutting it?" Khosravi barks, using newsroom slang for editing a piece of videotape. "Cut it." Stevanovic sprints off as Khosravi rings the control room and tells them, "We're pulling sound." She hangs up and calls Stevanovic: "Make sure the translation is right, Zoran."*

11:09 *On the air, there is no hint of the chaos occurring just over the shoulder of CNN anchor Natalie Allen. The show cuts from Allen to correspondent John King at the White House, who discusses the president's new comments on the issue of hate crimes, as well as on the general situation in Yugoslavia.*

11:11 CNN Morning News *cuts back to Allen. "We're just learning," she says smoothly, though it's clear she's no longer reading from a teleprompter, "that Serb television is announcing that the Yugoslav government desires a ceasefire for this weekend, which would be the Orthodox Easter. What would be the White House response to that, do you know?" Amazingly, King, who has been prepped, already has an answer: "U.S. officials have been anticipating such a move. Just seconds ago, White House press secretary Joe Lockhart told me, 'We're not interested in half measures or hollow gestures...'"*

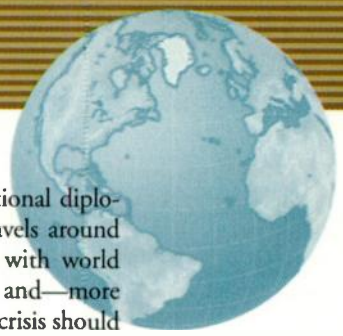
Twenty-one minutes after the initial wire report, CNN has verified the news and gotten it on the air. Some might be disappointed that Fox and MSNBC reported it first, but King—the person who typed the advisory recommending caution—seems elated. "We could've gone with the wire. We could've said, 'We've got a wire service story from Reuters quoting Serb independent TV,'" he remarks. But then—he snaps his fingers—the information would have been instantly transformed: "People will say CNN is reporting it. We wanted to verify it and get another source."

Fifteen times as many households receive CNNI now, Cramer

THE BUSINESS OF COVERING CIVIL WARS AND FINANCIAL turmoil is cutthroat. But CNNI appears to have only one worldwide competitor: the BBC. Its 24-hour BBC World service, the equivalent of CNNI, reaches about 60 million homes outside the United Kingdom, less than half as many as CNNI does.

The journalistic gap between the two is narrowing, argues Peter Knowles, the London-based managing editor of BBC World. The stereotype was always that the BBC had poor technical quality and technology, but had correspondents with superior analytical abilities. CNN, he says, was viewed as dominating any breaking-news situation with its technology and resources, but was perceived as skimming lightly when it came to analysis. Knowles says the BBC has been improving its technology, and he acknowledges that CNN's battle-hardened correspondents have gained seasoning.

Certainly, the BBC is watching CNNI every step of the



way. Knowles volunteers that BBC World beat CNNI *by six minutes* in announcing the Yugoslav ceasefire. "I was prepared to be second," he recalls, but is thrilled to have been first. (He's quick to note that the BBC didn't air its report until it too had obtained independent verification.)

11:12 *There's little time for journalistic musing. CNN has gotten the news on the air. But there are many more laps in the race: Which network will be first to air the Serbian TV footage announcing the ceasefire? Which will be the first with a statement from a Yugoslav government representative? The team works on.*

11:13 *CNN puts Sadler on the air via telephone from his hotel room in Belgrade. Because he stayed up through the night reporting on the bombing, he's been awake for only 18 minutes. For all anyone here knows, he's standing in his underwear, but he sure* sounds *authoritative. Sadler holds forth on the air for the next three minutes, repeating what CNN has already announced and adding a few details gathered in his few minutes of reporting. Meanwhile, technicians in Atlanta edit the Serbian TV footage.*

11:17 *CNN is first on the air with Serb video of the ceasefire announcement. CNN's round-the-clock translation service has paid off. Back at the international desk, Ivanovic is juggling multiple phone lines. In the confusion, she accidentally pushes the wrong button and wires are crossed. Her voice is briefly on the air worldwide: "Hello," she can be heard saying, "just one moment." Ivanovic realizes the error and switches to another line. She doesn't dwell on the snafu. Ivanovic has got bigger things on her mind—she has landed a big fish. "I've got the foreign ministry spokesperson," she announces. "He can go on the air now."*

11:22 *CNN interviews the government spokesman by telephone on the air. Ivanovic immediately notices a problem: "They got the name wrong! S--t!" She dials the control room. Within seconds, the on-screen chyron identifying the speaker as "Nebojsa Vojovic" vanishes. A few moments later, it reappears as "Nebojsa Vujovic."*

says, than did during the Gulf War.

CNN IS COMMITTED TO ITS INTERNATIONAL NETWORK. IT HAS spent some $13 million on its regionalization plan in the last two years and plans to pour another $7 million into it this year. CNN also continues to lavish resources on international newsgathering, recently opening a bureau in Havana and an "office" in Baghdad (the U.S. government, citing international sanctions, will not permit CNN to call it a bureau). That gives CNN 24 foreign bureaus, dramatically more than any other U.S. network, but still fewer than the BBC's 45.

The spending will continue, says CEO Tom Johnson. Despite the outlays, CNNI is making money. Last year, according to a source with access to the information, CNNI's $195 million in revenue (split evenly between advertising and subscription) generated about $50 million in profits.

Johnson seems energized not only by the international growth but by international reporting in general. Along with Eason Jordan, the president of CNN's international newsgathering, Johnson also devotes time to international diplomacy, broadcast style. He joins Jordan, who travels around the world constantly, trying to make contacts with world leaders so that CNN will have access to them and—more important—to their countries. If the next world crisis should emerge in North Korea, for example, CNN may have a leg up because Jordan has visited that country nine times already, meeting with government leaders each time.

Those diplomatic efforts also highlight a sensitive political fault line for CNN. The network's reporting must pass muster with both U.S. and non-U.S. audiences. CNN tries to achieve that in a variety of ways, some of them subtle. The word *foreign* has long been banned on the network, for example. But because of its prominence and the sensitivity of the conflicts on which the network reports, CNN's coverage inevitably rankles everybody at some point, leading to occasional charges from various sides in a given conflict that CNN is biased. Consider this example: In recent years, Jordan has been accused by the Iraqi government of being a CIA spy. But Johnson says a senior official U.S. administration official (whom he doesn't identify) told him that CNN provides "'a megaphone through which Saddam Hussein can spread his propaganda message to the world.'"

Such criticism is probably inevitable. But beyond its enthusiasm for news, what CNN understands is the symbiotic relationship between international newsgathering and international news dissemination. While executives at CBS, ABC, and NBC wring their hands about how much money they lose on international news and how little interest Americans have in watching it—closing foreign bureaus all the while—CNN's strategy is exactly the opposite. The network is spending ever larger sums on international news because that infrastructure feeds news not only to Americans but also to millions of non-Americans, many of whom are intensely interested in world news.

That's why CNN, which has developed a worldwide brand recognition comparable to Coca-Cola's—both in terms of people's awareness and of their tendency to see it as a quintessentially American product—really isn't a U.S. news organization anymore. "CNN International is an international news channel that happens to be in Atlanta," CNNI president Cramer says. "It's not an Atlanta channel that happens to be international. And there's a big difference."

At the international desk, there's a sense of release now that the ceasefire story has been completed. Despite a few hiccups along the way, Ivanovic is thrilled. "We got the statement first," she says, referring to the interview with the Yugoslav government official. "Perfect," says Khosravi. "Beautiful." Khosravi continues preparing the elements for the next half-hourly newscast. Some 15 minutes later the cycle completes itself. An Associated Press bulletin updates the ceasefire story. This time, though, the wire credits the key information to CNN, citing its interview with the Yugoslav spokesman. In just under an hour, the network has gone from follower to leader. ■

BRINGING THE CONFLICT HOME

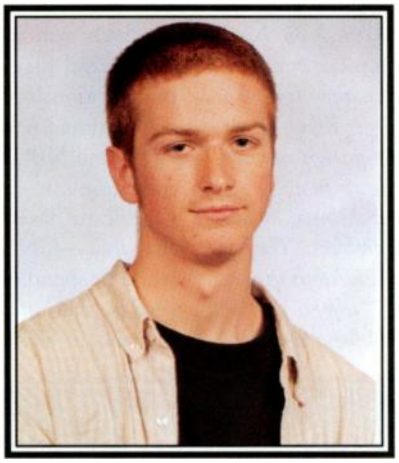
WHEN AN AMERICAN BOY BEFRIENDED A KOSOVAR GIRL VIA E-MAIL, HER LETTERS OFFERED RADIO LISTENERS A TRUE ACCOUNT OF A YOUNG LIFE INVADED BY WAR.

BY KIMBERLY CONNIFF

BEFORE JANUARY, 16-YEAR-OLD FINNEGAN Hamill didn't know much about the situation in Kosovo. He had read some news reports and had followed the general shifts and tremors in the Serbian province, but the massacre was a distant rumble from his daily life as a busy high school student in Berkeley, California.

Then he met Adona. On January 17, a peace worker who had recently visited Kosovo came to Hamill's church youth-group meeting and asked if anyone would be interested in corresponding with a 16-year-old Albanian girl. Hamill wrote to Adona (not her real name) that night. Their correspondence, which Hamill recounted in a series of pieces aired on NPR's *Morning Edition*, is a poignant introduction to Adona's world of tragedy and perseverance.

Adona reminds us that a Kosovar teenager's hopes might not be as unfamiliar as we expect. "I love listening to Rolling Stones, Sade, Jewel, and R.E.M., my favorite," she wrote. "You don't know how I'm longing to go to a party, on a trip, or anywhere. I must tell you, it's scary sometimes when...the whole family comes together, and we talk about how and where will we be going in case of emergency....We are all prepared for the worst and taught that life goes on, no matter what."



Finnegan Hamill, 17, thought his friendship with an ethnic Albanian girl would resonate with Americans trying to understand the conflict.

Her words brought the situation home for Hamill, now 17, an aspiring journalist. "I had the idea you'd become desensitized to it after years of violence," he says. "I underestimated what it's like, I think." After just a few letters, he knew he had a fascinating story on his hands. He alerted Youth Radio, a Bay Area organization that trains young journalists and produces segments for local and national radio outlets. Ellin O'Leary, a former NPR reporter and Youth Radio's founder, immediately agreed to produce the story. "I found [the teenagers'] perspectives so refreshing," says O'Leary.

Adona, who hopes to be a journalist too, according to O'Leary, was eager to get the word out about the atrocities in Kosovo. Following the advice of the peace group that introduced Hamill to Adona, Youth Radio (and eventually NPR) opted not to use Adona's real name or location for fear someone might hear it on an international broadcast. But O'Leary says she scrupulously checked the girl's existence by talking to the girl herself, verifying sources in Kosovo, and tracing the e-mail connection to Adona's region.

The first piece, which aired on NPR on February 5 (two days before the peace talks began in Rambouillet, France) gives glimpses of Adona's struggle to reconcile the dreams of a normal teenager with the uncertainty of her daily life. Hamill's narration was intercut with the voice of Belia Mayeno-Choy, another Youth Radio correspondent, who read Adona's part with restrained emotion. "I really don't want to end up raped, with no parts of body like the massacred ones," she read. "I wish nobody in the world...would have to go through what we are."

As the conflict intensified in March, Adona wrote about small losses, like scaling down a friend's birthday celebration to a tiny gathering: "Some think it is not right to continue this way while people are getting killed," she wrote. Although her friends had grown accustomed to feeling unsafe in the streets, now they no longer felt safe in their homes. "If you were the ones to taste this bitter and cruel part of the world...you would also understand the luckiness I feel for just being alive," she wrote.

On March 22, two days before the NATO bombing campaign began, Adona wrote that she could "see people running with suitcases" and hear gunshots from her balcony. She promised to continue writing until she had no electricity.

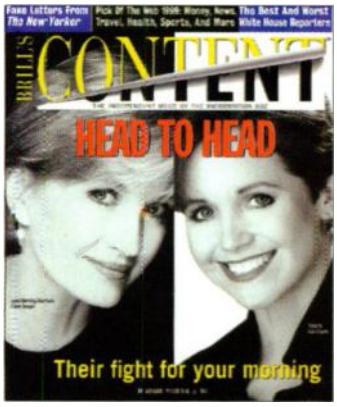
Two days later, the e-mails stopped coming. Hamill finally reached Adona on the phone, however, five days into the NATO campaign. He found that her family was still locked in their home, with a dwindling supply of food and water and a resolve to leave as soon as they were able—even if that meant they'd have to separate to do so. He talked to her again in mid-April, after her family had unsuccessfully tried to flee Kosovo.

Hamill aired an update on NPR on March 31, for the first time speaking without Adona's words to accompany him. "Watching the news at night and reading the newspaper in the morning—what before was a routine—has become an ordeal," he said. "It's unbearable knowing that my friend is living through the horror that I see on the news. Knowing that there is nothing I can do about it is even worse." ■

COURTESY OF YOUTH RADIO

BRILL'S CONTENT
THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INFORMATION AGE

THE ISSUE YOU WANTED OR THE EXTRA YOU NEED.



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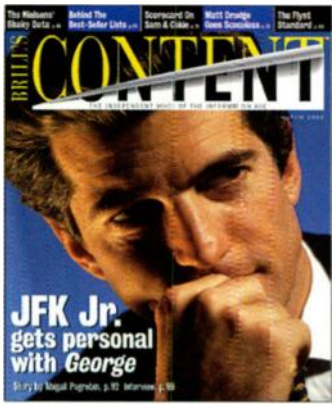

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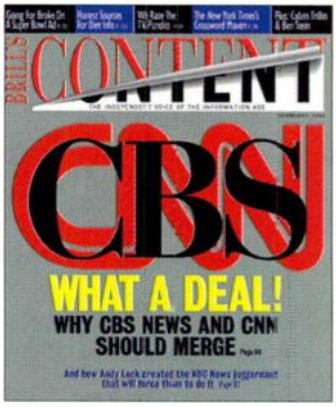

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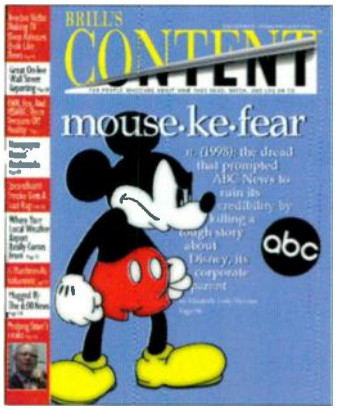

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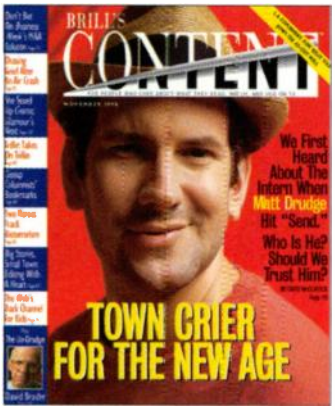

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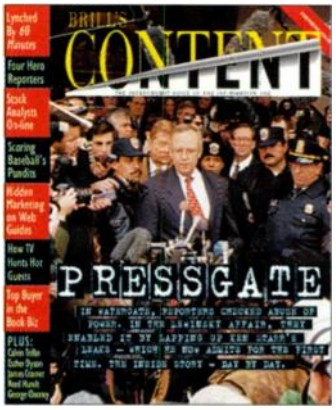

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AS A VIDEO JOURNALIST, NANCY DURHAM (left) tends to keep herself off camera; she prefers to focus on the people whose lives she chronicles. But we asked Durham, on assignment for the British Broadcasting Corp. and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.'s Newsworld, to share with us her own experiences—as she makes her way through a war-torn region in search of a story about people whom she inevitably grows to care about—and even depend upon.

War Diary

by Nancy Durham

31 March, 5:45

They keep the lights so low in the lounge at the London Heathrow Airport this time of the morning that I can hardly read the newspapers. But *The Independent* has made it easy to see by doing something I've never seen a broadsheet do before. The entire front page is a color photograph you have to turn sideways to view. It shows two mothers and a pile of sleeping babies and toddlers lying on the bare earth waiting it out God knows where. The headline says, "This is the reality of war...seven days of bombing, 250,000 refugees. And no hope." I am waiting for the 6:45 to Rome, on my way to that war—the war reporters must cover without visiting.

It was nearly midnight when Faton called me last night. He was Shpetim's brother-in-law; Shpetim was a Kosovo Albanian Red Cross doctor who was killed in a landmine explosion last October, five days after I completed my filming of his efforts to help the refugees of war. The summer had turned Kosovo into a refugee camp with shattered ghost villages as the backdrop. Shpetim was exhausted and I think a little broken by all he'd seen that summer, but after we'd make it through another Serb checkpoint, he still had it in him to laugh and to make fun of it all, just to cut the tension. The cops would hand back our papers and, and as we drove off, Shpetim would say, "F--- you, f--- you very much." It doesn't sound funny now but it was then, the way he said it. He saw so much death and suffering that summer, he had to laugh. On the day we said goodbye, September 25, he had been to see thousands of Albanians trapped in the Pagarusa Valley. He told me what he saw was like something from a concentration camp. It was very orderly, he said, and people were being herded around like animals. It was the last time I saw Shpetim; he died five days later, when a landmine exploded under his car on his way to treat a wounded six-year-old boy.

On the road to Kukes, Durim, Durham's fixer, reads a two-day-old English newspaper's headlines about the air strikes.

I made my film about Shpetim, and it has since bound me to his family and friends, and it is their telephone calls that inform me most about the situation inside Kosovo. Ilir calls every day. He's a doctor who survived the landmine explosion. He gets his information by phone from Zurich or Boston, from Albanians in exile wherever they are, and it's reliable and fast, out before it's in the press or on TV or radio. Desperate exiles, feeling terrible that they are not suffering through the war with their families and friends at home, are working the phones and e-mails like few reporters

know how to do. Late last night, tireless Faton called to say his informant told him that the street and shops across from where Shpetim used to live were filled with police. The terrified woman who whispered to him on the phone in darkness (the power's cut in Pristina) said, "We don't know what to do." Faton said he called me because maybe I would know someone senior in the military I could call, as if I could pick up the phone and say to NATO commander General Wesley Clark, "Could you check this street in Dardania district and please do something?" The night before that, Faton reported shootings and fires and killings. There are hundreds, thousands, of "uncorroborated" reports like this every day.

Same day, 13:30

The journey by train from Rome to the southeast Italian port of Bari takes four hours. I will sail from Bari all night to reach Durres on the Albanian coast. It could have been a three-hour flight to reach my destination, but 27 hours will have passed before I reach Tirana, the Albanian capital. I am on a sleek train tilting through vineyards, listening to voices on mobile phones seeming to make entire conversations out of just three words, *pronto*, *momento*, and *prego*. When I reach Tirana, I will be hours away by car to the place where all the people are coming to. And before I get there, I need to find a fixer.

Same day, 22: 18

My neat, bunk-bedded cabin aboard the *Palladio*, my Italian ferryboat, is home for the next eight hours. They have you join ship an hour before sailing. I feel exhausted, which is how the rest of the voyageurs look to me. I recognize them as mainly Albanian, mostly men, and mostly thirtysomething. They are slim, delicate, and rugged at the same time. All are exiles, and many of them come from Kosovo. They have what every Albanian wants—travel papers, so they can be free to come and go. One man told me he's going to Albania to show solidarity with the refugees. People have an impression that Albanians only want to leave their homeland, but it is not true. They are tied to home, like most people.

1 April, 16:45

The place is crawling with reporters. I've heard Germans, Brits, and Italians; fellow Canadians have come and gone and come again. CNN's "Strike Against Yugoslavia" (its name for its rolling bomb-campaign coverage, complete with drumbeat theme music) is on in my room, alternating between two big stories: Serb TV's pictures of the three American soldiers captured by the Serbs, and, of course, the continuing story of the exodus. The reporter, Chris Burns, is standing somewhere on the border, talking back to the anchor in Atlanta, but his body blocks the view of the arriving refugees.

Sunny, hot, and dusty Tirana has given way to a tropical rainstorm, and I have ten minutes before I interview candidate number one for the job of fixer, the person I will most rely on over the next several days. We will be together day and night; he or she will look after changing my money into Albanian leks and finding us accommodations (ha!). But the fixer's most important job is interpreting. A good one leaves nothing out and doesn't mind asking even your stupidest questions in an interview. A really good one leaves his own personality out altogether during an interview. Journalists are very demanding of fixers—they get blamed for everything that goes wrong and get no glory. But out here it's good money for them, and they work hard not to let you down.

This afternoon I learned the Kosovo Liberation Army is calling on male refugees aged 15 to 50 to return to Kosovo to fight. I met a man who organizes cars to send teams of men north to cross the border in darkness. He said he could arrange for me to go with them. I asked about security, and he smiled. He said there's an Italian journalist in there now, and three KLA men have died defending him. They will let nothing happen to him. This is supposed to make me feel okay? I asked the man's wife about the prospect. She said, "Those who go in have an ideal, and they are willing to die for it." I have ideals too, but here I think you have to know what it is to be a Kosovar to be willing to die for them.

I think my story will be about families divided by war, then united in exile, then divided again. Some of the men on the ship from Italy were coming to collect family members who are refugees; once reunited, some have plans to sneak back into Kosovo to fight. If only I'd learned that *on* the ship; I only found out today by accident.

Durim is my choice for fixer. His name means "patience"—most Albanians' names mean something, Shpetim's meant "savior"—and patience is one of the most important qualities I need in a fixer. Just as Shpetim lived up to his name, I think Durim will. He's 28, and has a serious side to him that will be important. I also loved that he wanted to talk about money upfront. He asked for $100 U.S. a day (nights included), meals, and accommodations to be paid by me. Excellent under the circumstances.

A grandmother is helped into the back of the Haliti family's vegetable truck, which will take her and her family to Tirana.

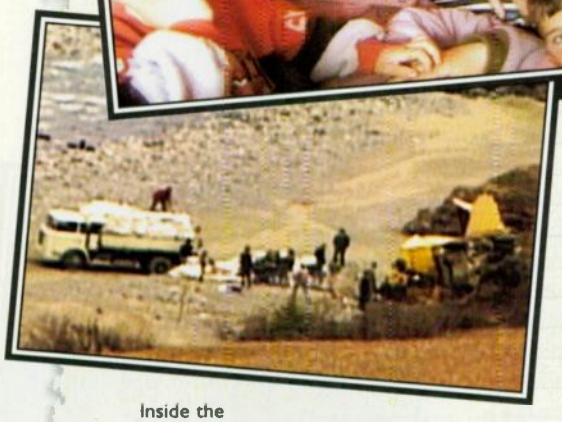
I have just met a friendly and noisy reporter from *The Toronto Sun* hanging around the front desk eagerly reporting the mayhem at the border. "Are ya goin' up the mountain or just comin' back down?" he asked me. He explained he meant up where the refugees are. Big story, he said. Vast numbers of people are crossing into Albania all the time, and many more are to come before they "turn off the tap." He told me the story has five or six days left in it. "There's 300 satellite dishes up there now. It was a great group f---! Traffic's gonna be bad tomorrow!"

Durim's found us a driver, Arianit. Durim won't drive because he hasn't done it for five years. I love to drive but I'm not chancing it here. They drive on both sides of the potholed, bumpy, broken road. Arianit (named after a fifteenth-century Albanian prince) is 27. He comes from the now world-famous border town of Kukes, where all the people are converging, which means he might know a floor we can sleep on. Durim's worrying ahead now about bottled water so, he said, we don't get, "God help us, a terri-

ble infection." Fixers can quickly become like your mother.

2 April, 20:40

Kukes, Northern Albania. Arianit doesn't speak English, although he understands some, and we've nicknamed him Commander because of his considerable military knowledge. He studied at the military academy in Tirana but never used his training professionally. Instead, since graduation, he's been an auto mechanic, a taxi driver, a weaver, and a waiter. He owns a 1981 Mercedes that is, unusually for Albania, not stolen.



Inside the vegetable truck, 28 men, women, and children make their way to Tirana (top). KLA uniforms are spilled from a truck that careened over a cliff's edge (bottom).

The road to Kukes is Albania's main north-south route, yet it is a crumbling, cracked, and sometimes single-track wreck of a "highway." There are no guardrails to offer protection from dead-straight drops. Halfway up our ascent, before it got sickeningly high, we came across a roadside commotion with a dozen or so men peering into a river valley at the cargo of a smashed truck—army uniforms destined for the KLA. There was a huge fuss over my taking pictures, even though the police officer present gave me permission. As I began filming, other men, both in and out of uniform, went crazy, yelling and threatening Durim, although not me. I assumed they were being protective of the KLA, wanting to keep this evidence of a botched war effort out of the news. It wasn't until we were chased away, literally, that I learned from Durim and Arianit the reason for secrecy was only to protect conniving local officials who are cashing in on the war. This was a modest example of Albania's lawless north. Northern Albania is in total anarchy and has been ever since the Albanian people lost their savings in March 1997 in the collapse of a fraudulent investment scheme. Durim calls it their "March Madness." He was smart enough not to invest, but many lacked his wisdom. When the scheme crashed, the masses revolted against their complicit government by raiding the country's weapons dumps. Now anyone who wants one gun or ten or more can have them, and most people do. I hear gunfire every day and especially at night.

Anyway, the northern bandits have taken a break while the refugee-packed buses, trucks, tractors, and tiny cars make their way south to Tirana. All their vehicles have been stripped of their license plates, just as the occupants have been of their identity papers, jewelry, homes, and livelihoods. I've never felt sorry at the sight of a car before, but here, without their plates, they are constant reminders of an unwanted people.

It took us eight hours on the road to reach Kukes, grinding our way up and down and around mountains, yet it was only a distance of 125 miles. Kukes is pronounced koo-kuss, but sometimes the locals say kook-see or kooks, as if this dirty gray place is deserving of a term of endearment. It is our fantastic good luck that Arianit has an aunt in Kukes. Leja is a schoolteacher. She told me it was hard enough helping her students before the crisis because of the poverty here, which is hammered home immediately to the new arrivals in Kukes with its garbage-strewn streets, stray dogs, and crumbling apartment blocks.

As I began filming, men both in

Same day, 23:00

Leja prepared a ridiculous amount of food for us, which is the Albanian way of making a guest feel welcome. We were fed chicken, a huge bowl of rice each, two hard-boiled eggs each, mounds of sliced cucumber and bread and mayonnaise, and little dishes of spicy dried seasonings. After dinner we sipped raki, a strong, clear local liqueur, which I found very warming on this cold, wet day. I wondered what our sleeping arrangements would be, since there are six of us here tonight (Leja's son and daughter are with us, but her husband, a police officer, is working overtime, helping at the border crossing) and two rooms.The BBC has rented a house somewhere in Kukes, and I have also heard reporters are sleeping five and more to a room at the "America Hotel" in Kukes (I asked if this was a new name in honor of the NATO assault and the exodus, but it's always been called this). Arianit's aunt insisted that I sleep in her bed in the other room. I protested at being given the comfortable big bed, but she wouldn't discuss it. So I did, under a framed picture of Leonardo diCaprio. Her 15-year-old daughter, Gasta, made her bed on the floor beside me. I slept well.

3 April

I spent this day—and well into the morning of the next—traveling back down south with 28 members of the Gashi and Haliti families from Krusha e Madhe, a village near Prizren in Kosovo.

I hadn't planned to do this; in fact, I didn't have a plan. I had a whimsical idea about getting something on the KLA effort, and I still harbored that romantic (well, completely nutty) idea of sneaking into Kosovo with the KLA. I really

The photos in this story were all taken by Nancy Durham. Some are screen images pulled from videotape she shot during her travels.

surprised myself that I even had this desire to go—though as I write I know I would not have. I often wonder how and why reporters get killed in wars, and I guess now from my own drive that what happens is, you get this irresistible urge to get the story and somehow assure yourself you will be safe, that you have a good chance of getting in and getting out. I bumped into Rick Bennett, a cameraman friend of mine, in the lobby of the Rogner Hotel Europapark in Tirana two nights ago. He sneaked into Afghanistan several months ago to shoot the Osama bin Laden interview for ABC—risking his life—but he is calm about it. He told me his approach: really knowing his contacts, trusting the information, and being able to carefully assess all risks. I knew as I listened to him I had done none of this nearly thoroughly enough to be able to even consider going into Kosovo.

Arianit has KLA contacts, so first, he took us to military barracks in Kukes. The place was completely without security. We could easily wander in, but despite my best attempt to chat up the commander to let me do some shooting just inside the barracks, I could see I was going nowhere. He looked so glum, so tired and defeated. He said simply, "We have too many things to do right now" and put up a hand. The men looked thin and tired, cold and scared. The healthiest looking Kosovar soldiers are the girls in their late teens. A column of new, scrawny male recruits marched into the compound past me. I cannot imagine going into Kosovo with this lot any more than they can imagine having me along.

We drove around soggy Kukes for a while. At noon, I spotted a group of men, women, children, and babies in ordinary clothes, but layers of them—skirts with leggings underneath, the older women in balloon trousers, a mish-mash of cut-off rubber boots, laceless shoes. They were loading boxes and each other into the back of a medium-sized truck, the trailer of which was covered with orange plastic. They were the Gashi and Haliti families. The Gashis and Halitis were renowned vegetable growers, winning prizes for their peppers, potatoes, and sugar beets. They once produced them for all of Yugoslavia. Now, as I met them, they were packing their vegetable trucks in preparation for the long trek south. I asked Durim to ask the families if he and I could ride inside with them, and we would exchange our places in Arianit's Mercedes. That's what we did.

Krusha survived the yearlong war until the first day of the NATO strikes. The families told me that on March 25, Serbian police rounded them up and took them to the neighboring village of Nagafs, where at 1:30 in the morning they came under attack by grenades. After the attack, the families hid for days in nearby woods, emerging three days ago to reclaim their two trucks and head for the border. They arrived in Albania at 3:00 in the morning, and we found them exhausted, cold, pale, and hungry. They'd been without proper food for two days.

We traveled for 14 hours, the time it took to undo the road coming south. People slumbered over and around and under one another quite naturally. The women and children were sick. They vomited out of the back of the truck or through the wooden slats on the sidings. It was surprisingly not very smelly, because it was so cold, I think, and also because they had had so little to eat there was little to bring up. I am sure it wasn't motion sickness—I get that feeling sometimes in a car. This had to be caused by exhaustion, and certainly fear and insecurity. And only the women threw up. Perhaps it was their bodies' way of preparing them for what lay ahead. It is the women who will hold the families together from now on, while the men prepare for the fight for Kosovo. The children were easily the most resilient of all the travelers in our wagon. Some were barefoot, yet they smiled and giggled much of the way. No baby cried seriously until nearly mid-night, after we'd been on the road for more than ten hours.

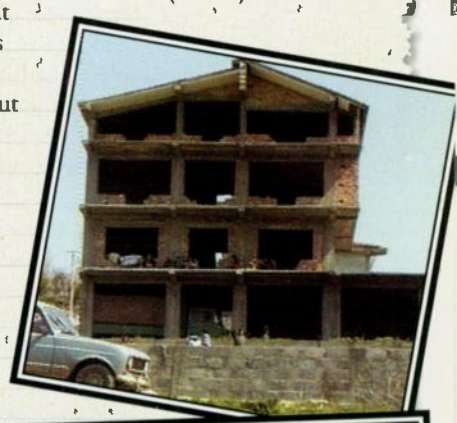
and out of uniform went crazy, yelling and threatening.

I tried at the outset to do the reporterly thing and count heads, ages, sexes, and so on, but I couldn't do this systematically. First of all, I couldn't see everyone inside our truck without trampling others, but also there were comings and goings on the journey. We collectively decided on the number 28 for a total, but at the last minute, a tiny newborn and mother joined us. Along the way, a couple of men left us, and a man wearing a pink toque jumped on. He wasn't a Gashi or a Haliti, and he was full of outrageous disinformation. (Durim was a good skeptic and believed him to be a Serbian agent.)

The KLA operates checkpoints on the north-south road, serving two purposes. Soldiers are on the lookout for Serb spies (the man in the pink hat joined us after the last check), who they believe have infiltrated the country to create unrest in Albania. But they are also desperately trying to recruit for the KLA. The men in my truck were screamed at in threatening tones by soldiers, who demanded to know why they weren't fighting for Kosovo. I thought we were going to lose our men on the spot, but all managed to resist with the promise that they would enlist as soon as they settled their families someplace safe.

The hairpin turns I'd fretted over on the way up in Arianit's Mercedes were nothing compared to what it was like coming down. The wagon top swayed out over the cliff edge—or so it seemed—and the truck's wheels were perhaps a foot from the drop. Yet there was laughter. I was so cold at one point that I unfolded my ridiculous-looking, wide-brimmed, brown rain hat and pulled it

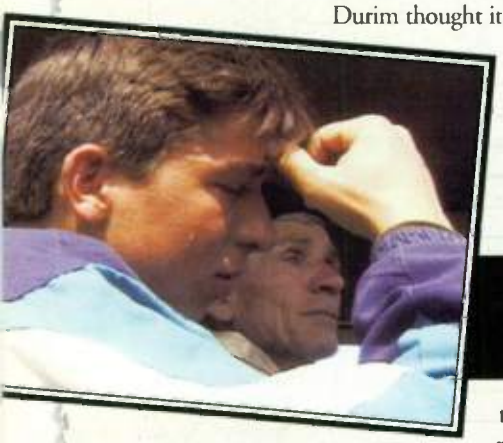
In Durres, the Gashis and Halitis stay in an unfinished house with no windows or doors (top). Women rest on the house's ledge in the sunshine the morning after their long journey to Durres (bottom).



over my head. One of the guys beamed at me and said "Madeleine Albright!" I got him back by saying "Robin Cook," Britain's foreign secretary. It is very strange to be in a place in the Balkans where they love you so much for being from a NATO country. Bill Clinton is their hero. I haven't heard a single person complain about the air strikes.

At the village of Milot, the Red Crescent, an aid organization, waited for us with the first—and only—food the Gashis and Halitis had been offered since they fled their homes: small packets of raisin bran and saltine crackers. They were dumped out of boxes into the back of our truck. When the aid man tossed food to me, I called out, "No, no, no" and "Une jam gazetare!" (I am a journalist!). He laughed and threw more. Durim thought it was wonderful and said, "Never mind, Sami (a young man who took the offer of a lift in Arianit's car because he had shrapnel wounds) will be selling it tomorrow. That's how food aid always works." I ate the crackers, and they tasted great.

After midnight we reached Tirana, but the Albanian capital was closed to the refugees, so we were ordered on to the port of Durres, about 25 miles away.



Fuad Gashi, 16, and his father tearfully leave the Haliti clan to find shelter for the Gashi family.

You get this irresistible urge to get the story.

4 April, 2:00

In Durres, the families silently climbed out of the trucks, sleeping babies wrapped in dusty blankets, a jumble of shoes piled on the ground. Kids rubbed their eyes and examined shoe bottoms for sizes to find matching pairs. My camera batteries were nearly dead, and I needed to recharge for the morning. We said goodnight, and Durim, Arianit, and I headed for Tirana. When we arrived at 3:00 A.M., my hotel had no room for me. We drove around until we found a place, the Pik Loti Hotel, clean but cold. There was a heating unit on the wall, which I couldn't figure out, and no water. At 4 A.M. I turned on BBC World TV. George Alagiah had a scoop, hand-delivered to him from, of all places, Krusha e Madhe. A local man had sneaked back into Krusha after hiding in the woods for several days and used his home video camera to take pictures of about 25 dead men. He was able to give most of them names. It was nervy enough to take the pictures, but this man also bravely smuggled them across the border to show the world what he saw.

I slept for three hours and woke at about 8:00 A.M. to find there was still no water. I pulled on my mud-caked clothes from the night before and headed down to check out. The reception man took one look at me and began a pantomime of washing hands and face, then he raced back up three flights to my room. I tried to stop him, pantomiming back that I was dressed and it was too late to use water, but he carried on to my room, entered the bathroom, and, on hands and knees, opened a tap behind the toilet. I could hear water start to gurgle and splutter through pipes. Too late. I paid $75 U.S. dollars for my short nap and fled.

Durim, Arianit, and I returned to Durres to see by light where the Gashis and Halitis spent the night. We found the men and women sitting in separate clumps on the grass. Everyone was quiet, no one had yet been able to connect with a shower or clean clothes. Mercifully, the sun was out.

The men gathered on the lawn told me that they were determined to join the KLA to fight for Kosovo and said they would leave in a few days. The women rose from their patch up the hilly lawn and tearfully headed down to a waiting van. More separations. They needed to find proper shelter, and the only way to get it was to break up into smaller groups. I find the sadness at these endless partings unbearable.

More news of the war from distant places and circuitous routes. Faton called tonight from London to tell me Firdes, Shpetim's widow, is safely out and now in Macedonia; lucky for her, she is not in a refugee camp. The Red Cross helped her into a city, where she waits with her two children. Faton is desperate to get her to England and wants to know what I can do to help advise him. I haven't a clue. I am worried about Firdes (Shpetim told me her name means "the best part of heaven"), who took her husband's death terribly. I saw her in Pristina last December and she was in deep, deep mourning, thin and crying. Widows rarely remarry in Kosovo, not that anyone would be thinking of this so soon after a death, but an onlooker cannot even be consoled with the thought that such a lovely woman will likely find another companion one day, because it simply doesn't happen. Shpetim's parents have been moved out of their home in Pristina, too, but they are still inside Kosovo! They've told their daughter (Faton's wife) they are prepared to die in their country. Faton has heard that Bianca Jagger is going on a mercy mission to Macedonia, and he is appealing to her to help get Firdes out.

5 April

The Gashis and Halitis who remain in Durres have now either been given proper homes with access to water or moved in with local families. I found the women in the hot sun, heating water on an open fire and washing by hand all the blankets, jeans, and clothing they used on the long journey. Everyone looks better.

On the way back to Tirana, we had a flat tire, but Arianit changed it without any trouble.

6 April, Tirana

I saw Mark Phillips from CBS after breakfast this morning. I'd been wondering if he would turn up here after being kicked out of Belgrade nearly two weeks ago. He was one of many reporters to be expelled from Serbia when the air strikes began on March 24. That night, Mark did his bit on the roof of the Belgrade Hyatt Regency (he

calls it the "Baghdad scenario") and then went to bed. He was drifting off to sleep at around 2:30 A.M. when "room service" arrived in the form of the security police—that's how they actually announced themselves at his door. He'd been awake since 5 A.M. the previous morning, when he drove in with his crew from Budapest (flights have been suspended), and it would be a long time yet before he would get some sleep. (Well, not that long—he is a pretty cool guy and took a short nap on a bench at police headquarters while he awaited his formal interrogation.)

Mark told me he was thankful that his "atrocious handwriting" and habit of not putting names next to numbers made it impossible for the police to connect him with Serb fixers and interpreters who had helped him. They are considered enemies of the state and are in danger inside Serbia right now. Police escorted him to the Croatian border that afternoon, which is how he comes to be yet another reporter perched on the edge of war; the way he sees it, that's okay. Mark, who does not shy away from danger, rates Kosovo as too dangerous a place to be right now. And he points out that much information is coming out, even pictures, like the Krusha videotape. Given the restrictions on reporting from Belgrade, he isn't sure there's a benefit to being there.

I am going home tomorrow. Tonight the hotel is crawling with reporters, the most I've seen so far. A woman journalist from Germany is still here discussing where and how she should make the journey north to the border. She was talking about this when I met her five days ago. I feel sort of sorry for her because it *is* hard to know what to do, but it is clear she needs to get out of the hotel. Others—new faces—are begging at the front desk for rooms, frustrated that there are no vacancies at the most happening hotel in Tirana.

7 April, Rome

Arianit and Durim drove me to the port of Durres this morning, and I hated saying goodbye. The opposite is often the case for me; when you've been together day and night for a week or two, I sometimes can't get away fast enough. I lost patience a few times with Durim because I just wanted to be alone and have him stop being so helpful, so I could just shoot quietly. But he was absolutely true to his name, showing only patience. Arianit constantly twinkles and is also patient. I normally hate background music, but I love the tapes he plays in the Mercedes. It has a kind of Middle Eastern/country feel to it. Both Arianit and Durim have asked me to send them some nicely produced country and western. The three of us have made a great team.

We said goodbye at 9:00—the boat was supposed to leave at 9:30 but didn't move till noon. That meant I missed the connecting train to Rome, but I made new friends on *Le Vikinga*, which made the crossing twice as fast as the overnight I arrived on. Peter Finn of *The Washington Post* was there. I'd heard all about his expulsion from Belgrade from Mark because they'd been kicked out together, but I'd never met Peter before. He's impressive—he's only been posted in Europe for nine months, yet he's reported from Kosovo five times. He's friendly, shares information, and doesn't have any of the snobbishness you sometimes find with the big-league reporters. Anyway, he and I, a Marine on leave from the U.S. embassy in Tirana, and James Ron, a sociologist at Brown University (in Albania for Human Rights Watch), shared a car rental for the drive to Rome. Peter was looking forward to a great Italian dinner and so was I, as my chances of my making my flight connection disappeared.

I called my husband to ask him to check out our best source on hotels, and he came up with a small one in central Rome, the Hotel Gregoriana. The hotel location couldn't be better; it's at the top of the Spanish Steps and cheaper than Tirana's Rogner Hotel. My suite alone could have provided comfortably for all the Gashis and Halitis.

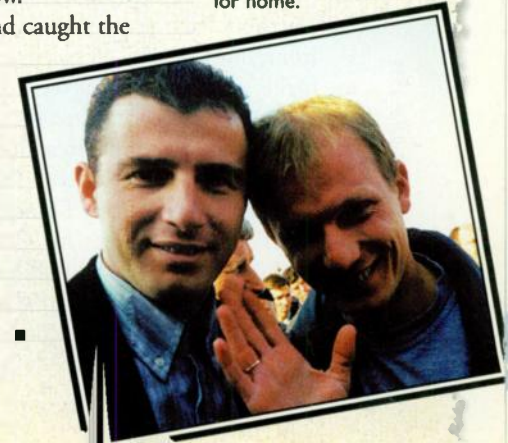
Over dinner, Peter said he'd noticed the same faces I had hanging around the Rogner when he came back down from Kukes. "I keep seeing these people in the hotel and I think, *What are they doing? What are they filing?*" he told me. "They seem to be moving from the cappuccino bar to the restaurant to the press conference. Tirana is Washington without paved streets. If I'm going to be in Albania, I have to be in Kukes."

and you somehow assure yourself you will be safe.

You miss stuff not being around other reporters, though, so I think I am probably about the last reporter to learn that there *is*, in fact, a Western journalist inside Kosovo—Paul Watson of the *Los Angeles Times*. He's staying at Pristina's "Five Star" Grand Hotel (certainly the least grand and perhaps the dirtiest hotel I've ever stayed at). I don't know Paul Watson, but he has my admiration for braving it out in Pristina. Still, there have been mutterings by jealous hacks that he isn't able to say much about anything, restricted pretty much as he is to "the view from the Grand." One jealous reporter was overheard to say of Watson over a Kukes dinner table, "It doesn't matter if the guy writes 'yabba dabba do,' he's gonna win the Pulitzer." If I were in Watson's shoes, I am utterly confident that's all I'd be able to write. Let's give him the prize now.

After dinner, I slept for a few hours, and caught the early flight to London.

So who's left inside Kosovo? And how is it for them? It is impossible to know. I think of young men like Durim. I think of their courage and enthusiasm for the work and the adventure, but also of their weariness at having to cover a story that is exciting for people like me to tell, but screwing up their own lives daily, because they actually have to live the story. ■



Durim (left) and Arianit wave goodbye to Durham at the port of Durres as she heads for home.

THEY'RE ALL EARS

Disney is hoping to work its magic to lure children to the radio dial—but it's their parents whom the Mouse really wants to trap. • BY KIMBERLY CONNIFF

IT'S 8:30 ON A WEDNESDAY morning, and the folks in a studio at ABC Radio in Dallas are in no need of a jolt of coffee. "Jump Jive an' Wail" is spinning in the background, and a host of bells, whistles, and digital equipment twinkles on the deejay display. During the next few hours, Kim Stewart and Dean Wendt (hosts of *Morning Mania with Kim and Dean*) will be visited by a vampire, offer a chance to win a trip to Walt Disney's private island in the Bahamas, and take a call from today's "morning maniac" listener. "Radio Disney rocks!" he yells into the phone.

Welcome to Radio Disney, the 24-hour radio network for children. Launched nationally in August 1997 and now airing in more than 40 markets, it's The Walt Disney Company's latest foray into the jungle of children's entertainment.

A 24-hour network for an audience that spends eight hours a day in school and is in bed by 9 o'clock? Seems like a risky venture, especially in an age when kids are seduced by cable channels, Sony PlayStations, and the Internet. Arbitron, a company that tracks radio listeners, doesn't even measure those under 12, and industry experts say no children's radio network has ever turned a profit.

Ironically, the last company to try to make a go of it asked ABC Radio to help it succeed. In 1995, the Minneapolis-based Children's Broadcasting Corporation asked ABC Radio (which was later bought by Disney) to take over advertising sales for CBC's Radio Aahs and help it add affiliates. Eight months into the deal, ABC told the fledgling network it planned to end the contract and launch its own national kids' radio network. A little more than a year after Disney launched its pilot run, Radio Aahs shut down for good. CBC execs now say the Mighty Mouse pushed them out of business and are fighting Disney in court.

Kim Stewart and Dean Wendt's antics entertain listeners during Radio Disney's morning show.

STEPHEN PUMPHREY

Regardless of how Disney managed to get the market all to itself, it'll take more than pixie dust to make kids' radio fly. What makes Disney think it can pull it off?

A fat bank account, for one. More than any organization that has traveled this road before, Disney has the financial resources (an operating income of over $1.4 billion) to back this project. "It costs a great deal of money and it takes a great deal of investment to get the business off the ground," says Scott McCarthy, the vice-president and general manager of Radio Disney. "[Disney] has the capability to make a significant investment in the early stages."

Before Disney even started broadcasting, the company shelled out millions of dollars for independent research to prove it could lure potential advertisers. Among its findings: Seventy-three percent of kids have their own radios and 65 percent listen to music on the radio at least an hour a day.

Of course, you can't turn a product into gold if people aren't interested in its content, and the powers that be at Radio Disney know that when kids are listening, parents are listening, too—one for every two kids, according to Disney's research—often in the tight quarters of the family car. So, the company has commissioned focus groups and phone surveys to determine what will appeal to Junior—and to Junior's mom. After the latest Brandy tune, parents may find themselves bopping along to "It's My Party." "We have to make

sure the product is something [parents] can tolerate, frankly," McCarthy says.

This is where the payoff takes place. The majority of commercials promote companies like K•B Toys and General Mills, which hawk their wares to kids. But parents may also be confronted by a Chevy minivan ad or wooed by a would-be accountant in a "Turbo Tax" commercial. "That's the type of advertising that's going to make the difference between whether or not they make a profit," says Ron Rodrigues, the editor in chief of *Radio & Records*, an industry trade newspaper. "[Parents] are the ones who make purchase decisions."

These days, the network is still gobbling up Disney dollars without making any of its own. But Radio Disney generates another precious commodity: exposure. In the early days of the venture, many parents and radio veterans suspected Radio Disney was just another instance of the Disneyfication of kids' entertainment. Prizes and promos often have a corporate link: Videos like *Mulan* and *A Bug's Life* are given away, for example, and daily shows are broadcast live from Disneyland and Walt Disney World. There's no question that being part of the Wonderful World of Disney Synergy has given the network valuable access, concedes Robin Jones, Radio Disney's operations director. The corporation owns ABC, Inc., Walt Disney Pictures, ESPN, and Buena Vista Television, plus its theme parks and toy division, so the network can offer contest winners such coveted prizes as a walk-on role in *Sabrina The Teenage Witch.*

But on the whole, Rodrigues says, the network does surprisingly little outright plugging for Disney brands beyond promoting Radio Disney itself. And that's true: Most of the characters the network uses on the air are in-house creations, and Radio Disney staffers insist that they have no mandate to inject a certain number of Disney product mentions into the programming (McCarthy estimates Disney products comprise 30 percent of promotions). "Wouldn't you think it would be natural to do Disney tie-ins anyway?" asks Rodrigues. Walter Sabo, a management and programming consultant to TV and radio companies, says, "Kids know if it's just a big commercial, and they don't respond to it." What's more, the kids who review new products on the air are free to pan as they please: Eleven-year-old Brandy Wade called a new documentary about Disney animators "the most boring movie I have ever seen in my entire life!"

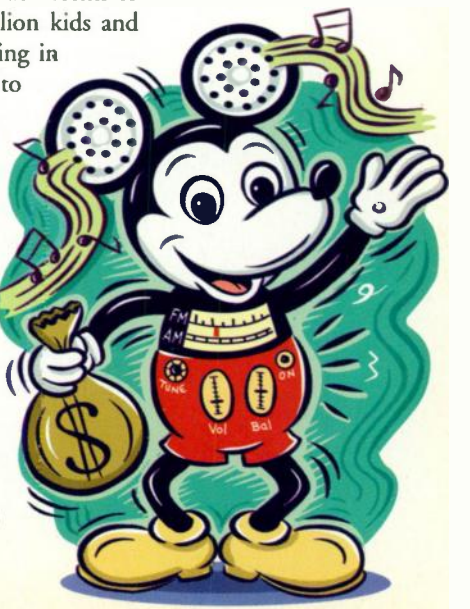
NINETY PERCENT OF the programming is music, and half of the selections are pop music. The other half are more parent-friendly: oldies, movie and TV tunes, and a few kids' songs, like L.L. Cool J's rendition of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" All of the songs are screened by an in-house committee. "You have to make sure it's lyrically clean," says Jones, "because even if kids don't know what some of this means, they're singing it." One tune that didn't make the cut: the mice serenade from the 1950 Disney classic *Cinderella*, with the decidely pre-P.C. line: "Leave the sewing to the women." "C'est La Vie," a song by the pop group B*witched, was nearly another casualty. It got to stay on the playlist, but only after the record company switched the line "I'll show you mine, you show me yours" (presumably a reference to a treehouse) to the phrase "You be the king and I'll be the queen." The rhyme got lost, but, hey, at least it was clean.

The network also devotes at least two minutes every hour to "edutainment," ranging from "Aptitude Dude," who explains science facts with a Bill-and-Ted's accent to a pint-sized version of the news called "ABC News for Kids." The network steered clear of the Jonesboro school shootings, says Jones, but it did offer extensive reports after the death of Princess Di. "That really affected kids—I mean, she was somebody's mom," Jones explains. Most features are produced in-house with help from 40 Dallas-area kids, ages 7 to 15, who work a few hours a week for the network, armed with a child actor card from the Texas Employment Commission. Everything produced by Radio Disney has to pass a checklist; programs must have "no sexual content/innuendo, no negative stereotyping, no violence, no anti-social behavior, and no negative moral messages." Still, not everything may be suitable for those little ears in the back seat: The feature "Gross Me Out" has aired somewhat scary segments on embalming and spontaneous combustion.

This approach to children's radio—involving kids without alienating parents—is not Disney's original invention, according to the Children's Broadcasting Corporation. In a suit filed in September 1996 in Minneapolis, CBC charged ABC with breaching its contract and using crucial information about kids' radio for its own venture. Former CBC vice-president of programming Gary Landis says ABC was "privy to a lot of information from a creative standpoint." This insider track, CBC contends, gave Disney a sneak peak at what works in children's radio, all at CBC's expense.

Last October, a jury awarded CBC $20 million—substantially less than the $170 million it had asked for, but a meaty award nonetheless. In January, however, a district court judge in St. Paul overturned the award, pointing out that the original contract specified that ABC could develop any format it wanted. Paul Klaas, a lawyer who represents ABC and Disney, insists ABC "didn't know they were going to launch Radio Disney" until they spoke with CBC about it in June 1996, seven months into the contract. CBC has appealed the ruling.

Whether Disney "borrowed" its model from Radio Aahs or just used common sense in developing kids' radio, the Mouse's approach seems to be working. Over 1 million kids and 500,000 parents are listening in every week, according to Statistical Research, Inc., an independent firm hired by Disney. The network is set to reach more than 60 markets by the end of the year. "Disney is not a company known for whimsy in implementing things," Sabo says. He feigns intense concentration, "Let's see: Kids, Disney, media...maybe they know something." ■



ELIZABETH PRAGER

Twenty years after launching C-SPAN, **Brian Lamb** is still fighting for a simple idea: Let the public watch their government.

LAMB'S REBEL PLAN

BRIAN LAMB ONLY LOOKS BORING. WITH his dull television persona and his genial off-air demeanor, it's easy to overlook the fact that this man has helped revolutionize the way the public sees its government—and that he has no intention of giving up the fight.

Lamb is the founder and CEO of C-SPAN, the public-affairs network that provides gavel-to-gavel coverage of the House of Representatives and the Senate (on C-SPAN 2), plus a vast array of original public-affairs programming. Talking to Lamb in his corner office overlooking Capitol Hill, it is hard to remember a time when his network didn't exist. As C-SPAN celebrates its twentieth anniversary, both Lamb and the network seem to be firmly ensconced inside the Washington establishment. Indeed, C-SPAN has been in Washington longer than many of the Congress members it covers; watching the network even inspired a few current lawmakers to run for office.

If C-SPAN and Lamb seem ingrained in the Washington culture, it is only because Lamb has been winning the war he started two decades ago against the journalism establishment and the broadcast networks' stranglehold on news. Lamb's philosophy is to broadcast political events in their entirety and let viewers decide for themselves what is important. Toward that end, Lamb is a tireless advocate for freedom of the press. An early supporter of cameras in courts, Lamb continually presses for TV coverage of the Supreme Court; C-SPAN has promised to televise all the cases argued before the High Court if it ever opens up to cameras. Recently, Lamb was an outspoken critic of the Senate's decision to hold deliberations on the articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton behind closed doors. To his many friends and admirers in the news business, the 57-year-old Indiana native is both a rebel and a populist. "If the establishment is a couple, or three, media mandarins, then he's anti-establishment," says Henry Goldberg, a lawyer who worked with Lamb in the Office of Telecommunications Policy under President Richard Nixon. "If the establishment is the American democratic ideal, then he's very establishment."

In March 1979, Lamb launched C-SPAN, driven by a simple idea: Show the United States government to the American people like it really is. C-SPAN just turned on the camera and let it roll, without editing, commentary, or analysis. At the time, Lamb's idea ushered in a new concept of journalism. "He's kind of a rebel against the traditional television mentality, which is to control and manipulate whatever the camera is pointed at," says Brian Lockman, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Cable Network and one of four employees when the network began.

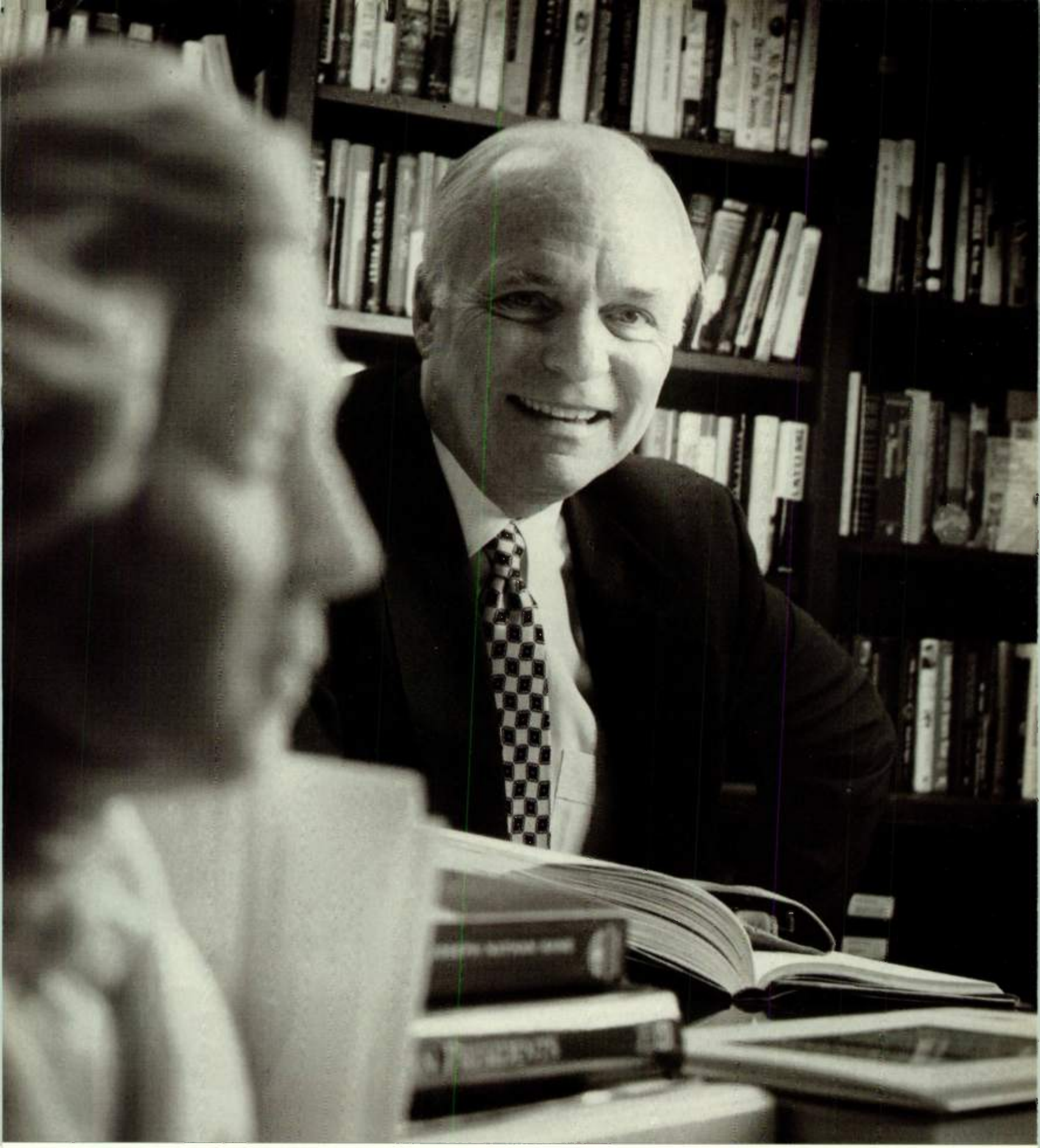
Lamb's vision for C-SPAN grew out of frustration. Coming to Washington in 1966 while still in the Navy, Lamb first worked as a public affairs officer in the Defense Department and later as a press secretary for the late Republican Senator Peter Dominick of Colorado. In those jobs, Lamb says, he saw firsthand the power that ABC, CBS, and NBC had to control what was on the news each night. "The only choices you had on television was what they decided to tell you was news," Lamb says. "[I saw] how little was getting through the funnel, how both sides were almost never being reported."

C-SPAN began modestly. When the House was not in session, the network went dark. Little by little, it grew, adding call-in shows, televising press conferences, and airing congressional hearings. C-SPAN 2 was launched in 1986 to provide coverage of the Senate. Today, C-SPAN encompasses three cable channels, an FM radio station, and a website. (The third channel, known as C-SPAN Extra, broadcasts public-affairs programming that couldn't fit into the schedules of the other two channels. C-SPAN Extra is only on the air nine hours a day and not on weekends.) While the network still televises all congressional floor debate, C-SPAN chooses its own programming for 85 percent of its airtime.

In deciding what to air, C-SPAN is not driven by economics. Lamb worked to persuade the burgeoning cable television industry to fund the network, as a "public service." Each cable system pays C-SPAN roughly five cents per subscriber; the arrangement provides C-SPAN's $34 million budget. C-SPAN does not worry about ratings, because it has no advertising. As a result, it is able to cover stories that the mainstream media might be ignoring. Lamb is particularly proud that C-SPAN was able to cover the Monica Lewinsky scandal, but still air every meeting of President Clinton's race commission and every congressional hearing on the budget and the Y2K problem. "While media organizations are making their money off of Monica Lewinsky, we're able to do that," says Lamb.

Lamb did not have to fight too hard to get cameras into the House. Lawmakers were already debating the merits of televising their proceedings when Lamb proposed covering House sessions. Stephen Frantzich, a professor of political science at the Naval Academy and coauthor of *The C-SPAN Revolution*, says that Lamb wisely took advantage of the cable

BY ROBERT SCHMIDT



Brian Lamb's vision for C-SPAN grew out of frustration that ABC, NBC, and CBS had the power to control which news stories were presented to the public each night. He wanted to let Americans see government as it really is, free of editing and commentary—an idea that constituted a new brand of journalism.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM WOLFF

operators' need for goodwill from Congress, which regulates the industry, and politicians' desire to get their message out. "He pulled what could be seen as these very selfish motives together and said, 'Boy, do I have a deal for you.'" But it took another seven years for C-SPAN to get cameras into the Senate, and Lamb helped lead the advocacy, testifying at hearings and meeting with key senators.

The network recently embarked on a major series, devoting 41 weeks to detail the lives of all 41 presidents. Lamb himself is busy doing a book tour to promote his second book, a compilation of biographies culled from his signature *Booknotes* interview program. Although he still hosts some programs, including *Booknotes*, Lamb has eased himself out of much of the day-to-day decision making at the network. "He's kind of a spiritual leader," says Lockman. "I think he's now above the fray of managing the business and can worry about maintaining the [C-SPAN] philosophy and making people understand it."

IT'S CLEAR THAT LAMB'S brand of journalism has found a small but receptive audience. C-SPAN's ratings are minuscule, even for cable TV, but many of its viewers are C-SPAN junkies—passionate about the network and politics. According to a network survey last year, 93 percent of its viewers said they voted in the 1996 election; 20 percent of its viewers had contacted a member of Congress. C-SPAN's influence can also be seen in its share of imitators. Twenty-one states now have some type of public-affairs network that broadcasts their legislative debates. And Canada, Japan, and Great Britain have their own versions of C-SPAN, modeled after the original.

For Lamb, however, C-SPAN'S twentieth anniversary highlights an important change in the TV industry: choice. "No longer does anyone control what we're going to watch and when we're going to watch it—and, from a television standpoint, what we're going to say," says Lamb. "Those days are gone." ■

WALSH PROFILES HINCKLEY'S FIANCÉE

BY MATTHEW REED BAKER

IT'S NOT EASY TO WRITE AN INTIMATE but balanced profile of a woman institutionalized for killing her ten-year-old daughter with a shotgun blast. It's even harder when that woman is the fiancée of John W. Hinckley Jr., the notorious Jodie Foster devotee and would-be presidential assassin. Yet in the April 5, 1999, issue of *The New Yorker*, staff writer Elsa Walsh pulled it off.

Hinckley's shooting of President Ronald Reagan in March 1981 shook the nation, but his fiancée Leslie deVeau's murder of her daughter, Erin, one year later is also well remembered in the Washington, D.C., area. Descended from local gentry, deVeau had had a history of mental illness and had been hospitalized before. In March 1982, she felt that something terrible would happen in the world and that she and her daughter should leave it together. Erin died, but deVeau's suicide attempt failed: The shotgun slipped, and instead she obliterated her left arm. While a patient at St. Elizabeth's Hospital for three years and an outpatient for five, fighting to regain her sanity, deVeau met and fell in love with Hinckley, a fellow patient who had been confined to the hospital after being found not guilty by reason of insanity for the president's shooting. Since her release from the hospital in 1985, deVeau has advocated that Hinckley be granted visiting time out of the hospital.

A year and a half ago, a *New Yorker* editor was trying to secure an interview with Hinckley, who repeatedly declined; Hinckley's legendary, pathological obsession with fame meant that media appearances were used against him in hearings held to determine his mental progress. Walsh pleaded to do the piece when she heard that deVeau might agree to an interview. "I always was haunted by her story," says Walsh, 41, who used to cover the local district court for *The Washington Post*.

Walsh is an expert in tackling thorny personal subject matter. In her 1995 book, *Divided Lives: The Public and Private Struggles of Three American Women*, Walsh probed the lives of three well-known women—including former *60 Minutes* correspondent Meredith Vieira—and how they coped with the pressures of work and family. She continued in this vein with *The New Yorker*, including a March 1997 piece on the recently wed politician and inveterate womanizer Senator Edward Kennedy.

Being a reporter, a mother to daughter Diana, 2, and stepdaughter, Tali, 22, and the wife of veteran journalist Bob Woodward, Walsh knows how such divided lives infringe on each other. But *New Yorker* senior editor Jeffrey Frank explains that Walsh's deep desire to understand people is what really makes them trust her: "She's an extraordinarily empathetic reporter," he says. "She doesn't go in with an attitude, and she really wants to have a rounded portrait."

But Walsh says she was not prepared for the empathy she felt for deVeau. Though deVeau had started a new life and had the placid appearance of what Walsh calls "a school librarian," the reporter discovered that she was about to embark on a long, emotional journey

Elsa Walsh's story provided a complex characterization of John Hinckley and his girlfriend.

LISA BERG/*THE NEW YORKER*

herself. "We started a conversation that went on for months and months," Walsh relates. "I was just drawn to trying to figure out what happened, and if she ever got over it—especially having a one-year-old child myself. I'd put my baby to bed, and I'd just cry. I couldn't imagine what it was like to have thought that you did the right thing."

Yet, over the course of 11,000 words, Walsh's piece, "Strange Love," clearly describes deVeau's state of mind as she finds "the road back" and how finding her sanity also robbed her of the delusion that her daughter's death had been justified. Through deVeau, lawyers, and psychologists, Walsh pieced together the present-day life of Hinckley, a man whose famous image has been frozen in history. Hinckley is revealed as a complex man, equally capable of writing tender love songs for deVeau as well as developing what some believed to be an obsession with a hospital pharmacist who resembles Jodie Foster.

Walsh says that when writing her story, she wanted to eliminate pathos. Doing so involved a tremendous amount of rewriting and restructuring; she credits Frank with helping her control the emotion. "In a piece that's overwrought already, you take away from the story," Walsh says. "I wanted people to come to their own conclusions about him and her....When you're mentally ill, getting well is really hard to do." ■

DOHRMANN SHOOTS FOR A SCOOP

BY ED SHANAHAN

IT WAS, SAYS THE EDITOR OF THE St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, the paper's biggest story of the decade: At least 20 players on the University of Minnesota's men's basketball team were accused of having research papers, take-home exams, and other course work done for them over a five-year period.

The main source of the allegations—Jan Gangelhoff, a former office manager in the university's academic counseling unit who claimed to have done most of the fraudulent work—told the *Pioneer Press* that she "struggled for a long time" before going public. Sportswriter George Dohrmann's persistence resolved Gangelhoff's conflict. *Pioneer Press* editor Walker Lundy estimates that Dohrmann spoke with Gangelhoff some 50 times before getting what he needed for a story. Says Lundy: "I think a lot of reporters would have given up after two or three times."

Dohrmann says he was "basically fishing" when he began the reporting last fall that led to Gangelhoff, who had left the university earlier in the year after earning her degree. At their first meeting, Dohrmann says, Gangelhoff showed him a "letter of disassociation" sent to her by the university (which had also sent a copy to the NCAA). The letter—an official severing of ties between the school and Gangelhoff—stung her, Dohrmann says, because, although her superiors and basketball coach Clem Haskins had not asked her to help the players, she believed they tacitly approved of what she was doing.

Dohrmann knew immediately that basketball-related violations had occurred but had to spend weeks persuading Gangelhoff to give him specifics. Even when she did, he held back on the story. "She hadn't proved anything to me," he says. Meanwhile, Dohrmann had obtained documents revealing that the university's athletic department had in 1994 essentially freed the basketball team from the usual institutional supervision that would prevent academic fraud.

In the first week of March, Dohrmann traveled to Gangelhoff's home in Danbury, Wisconsin. He downloaded some 200 computer files from her laptop, files that held the work she claimed to have done for the players. He and the paper's sports editor spent a frantic weekend printing out the files, sorting them by player, and examining them for evidence that multiple players had turned in the same work. On March 8, Dohrmann contacted university officials for comment. "They dodged," he says.

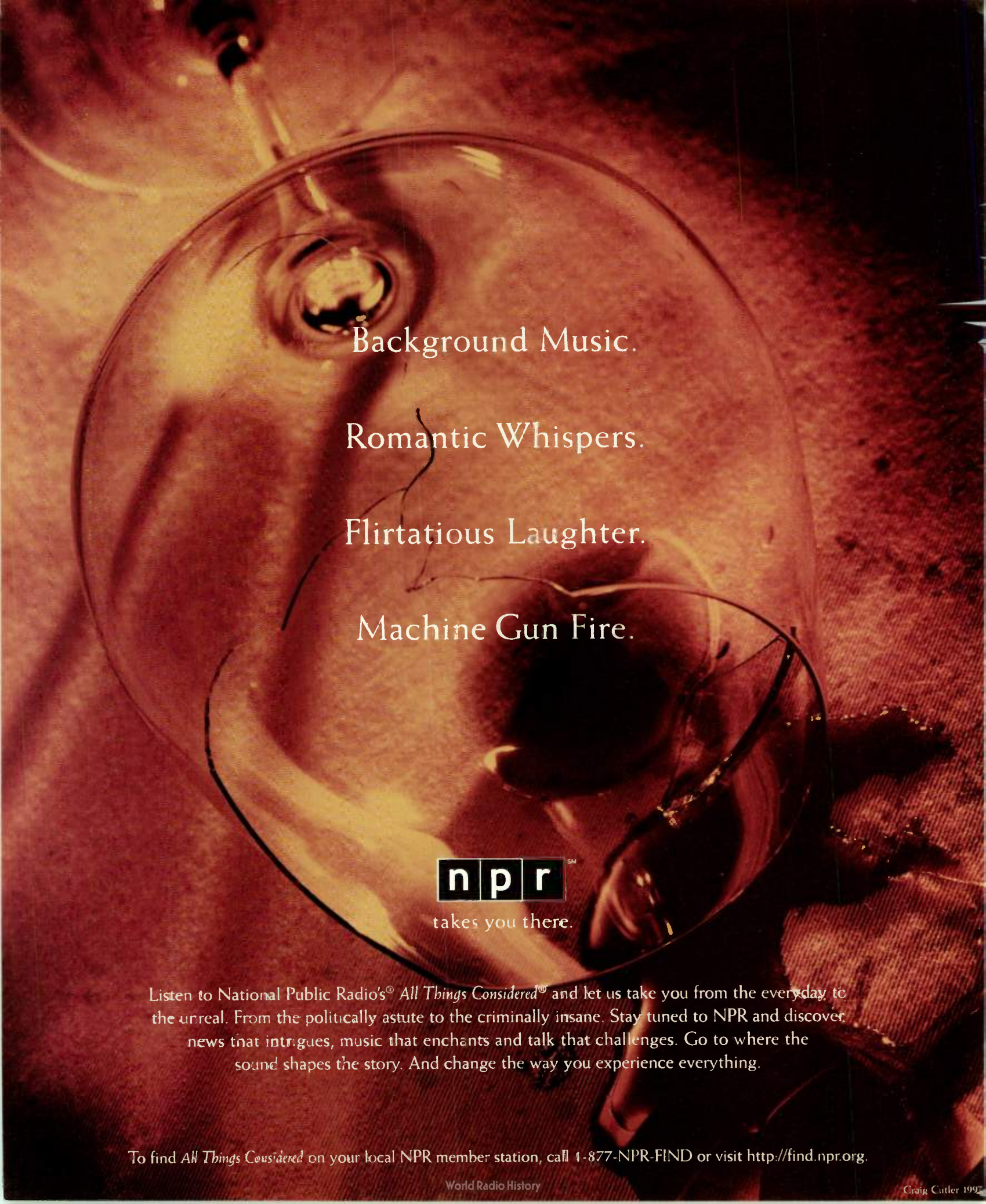
Timing may have had something to do with their reluctance to talk: The Gophers were preparing for their first-round NCAA tournament game. On March 9, the team left for Seattle. On March 10, finally having gotten comment from the university's president, who admitted Dohrmann had uncovered "serious allegations," the *Pioneer Press* published the story. The next day, the school suspended four players named in the scandal, and hours later, the Gophers, forced to play without key players, were upset by Gonzaga.

George Dohrmann's story blew the whistle on NCAA violations at the University of Minnesota.

The story's timing also made it a hot-button issue: Governor Jesse Ventura, speaking for more than a few Minnesotans, labeled the *Pioneer Press* "despicable" for publishing the story when it did. Weeks after the story appeared, Ventura was still upset about its timing, claiming the paper tried to "get the biggest bang for the buck." He acknowledged, though, that the allegations, if proved, "could spell the end of Clem Haskins's career here."

The university has hired two law firms to investigate the allegations. Meanwhile, if the story *was* timed for financial gain, the maneuver backfired: Some 500 angry customers canceled their subscriptions, according to Lundy. ■

DAWN VILLELLA



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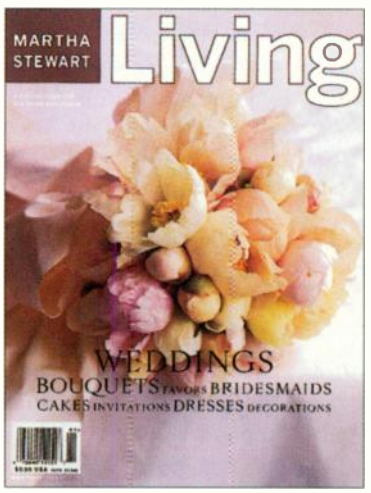
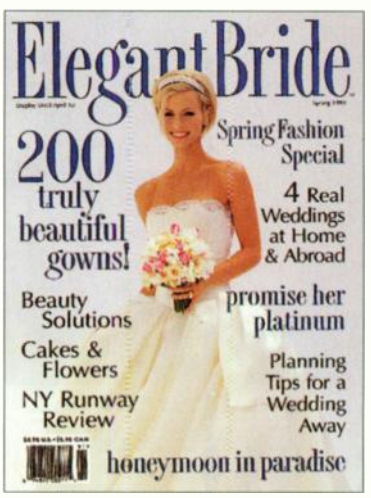
BRIDES' GUIDES

Books, magazines, websites, and mothers-in-law overflow with advice for the soon-to-be wed. Here are the sources the experts like best. • BY KENDRA AMMANN





in the magazines:

ELEGANT BRIDE
(Pace Communications, Inc., $4.95)
As its name suggests, this magazine takes an elegant approach to wedding planning by providing photographs of stunning bridal gowns and profiles of elaborate weddings. Concentrating on the upscale market, *Elegant Bride* focuses on traditions and sophisticated style (without running as many cumbersome advertisements as most other national bridal magazines).

WEDDINGBELLS
(WeddingBells, Inc., $4.95)
A Canadian standard for 15 years, this magazine for media-savvy brides and grooms recently launched a U.S. version. In six regional issues, *WeddingBells* cleverly combines the style, quality, and editorial content of a national magazine with articles and advertisements geared toward readers in Boston, Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, New York, the San Francisco Bay area, and southern California. A national edition is available in other regions.

BRIDAL GUIDE
(Globe Communications Corp., $4.99)
While "saving money is a hot-button issue for bridal magazines because they [promote] the bridal industry," says Alan Fields, coauthor of *Bridal Bargains*, "*Bridal Guide* is a little more realistic, a little more honest and frank." Covering all elements of wedding planning, this magazine has a more consumer-friendly tone than others, with money-saving advice, affordable honeymoon options, and photographs of reasonably priced wedding and bridesmaid dresses.

MARTHA STEWART LIVING WEDDINGS
(Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia LLC, $5.50)
Full of beautiful photographs and informative planning advice, this magazine is a complete resource. A recent issue showcased four elaborate weddings and included feature articles about planning a rehearsal dinner, selecting a tent for the reception, and preserving wedding pictures.

in the bookstores:

WEDDINGS
(Little, Brown and Company, $65.00)
With more than 300 stunning photographs, Colin Cowie has created an exquisite book favored by experts for its attention to details. Cowie showcases nine high-profile weddings and provides how-to advice on planning your own. Check out the "Flowers and Decor" section for its exceptional ideas.

WEDDINGS
(Clarkson N. Potter, Inc./Publishers, $75.00)
Originally published in 1987, Martha Stewart's book remains a classic. A compilation of practical advice and decorating details interspersed with profiles of more than 40 different weddings, the book "[stays] away from the standard, showing that you can do different things" says Houston wedding consultant Franca Gullett.

BRIDAL BARGAINS
(Windsor Peak Press, $13.95)
Written by wedding-industry watchdogs Denise and Alan Fields, this book gives the lowdown on what you really need to know when planning a wedding. Shopping strategies, lists of pitfalls to avoid, and money-saving tips about everything from bridesmaid dresses to wedding cakes will help you become a smarter wedding consumer.

WEDDINGS FOR DUMMIES
(IDG Books Worldwide Inc., $19.99)
This book breaks down all the details that go into planning your wedding, from setting the date to booking the honeymoon. "A terrific book," says New York wedding consultant Susan Bell, because it's "[co-] written by a wedding planner who really knows what she's doing."

THE NEW JEWISH WEDDING
(Fireside, $12.00)
A beautiful exploration of modern Jewish wedding customs and rituals, Anita Diamant's book explains how to incorporate Jewish faith and traditions into a wedding with interesting stories, prayers, and biblical references.

WILD GEESE AND TEA: AN ASIAN-AMERICAN WEDDING PLANNER
(Riverhead Books, $15.00)
Tastefully written, Shu Shu Costa's book is a wonderful resource for planning an authentic Asian-American wedding. Costa focuses on the origins and symbolism of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean wedding traditions.

JUMPING THE BROOM
(Henry Holt and Company, $27.50)
With this book, Harriette Cole "has elevated the concept of having an African-American wedding," says TheKnot.com's Carley Roney. The book covers traditions from Africa, the Caribbean, and the American South.

COLETTE'S WEDDING CAKES
(Little, Brown and Company, $39.95)
A delicious collection of wedding cakes designed by cake decorator Colette Peters, complete with recipes and instructions so you can bake them ourself.

SHOWERS
(Wilshire Publications, $9.95)
Written by Beverly Clark, this book is a comprehensive guide to planning a bridal shower. It offers information on the origins of showers, along with checklists, recipes, and ideas for games and themes. Includes information about baby showers, as well.

ENGAGEMENT & WEDDING RINGS: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE FOR PEOPLE IN LOVE
(Gemstone Press, $16.95)
This comprehensive guide to ring-buying includes practical advice about what to look for in a diamond, as well as information about colored stones, wedding bands, comparison shopping, and selecting a jeweler.

TEISUKE SHINODA/PHOTONICA (CAKE)

on the web:

THEKNOT.COM
(www.theknot.com)
First started on AOL, this well-designed website—best known for its bridal-gown search, online wedding gift registry, unique articles, and lively message boards—is "a little more street savvy, a little more plugged in to brides and grooms today" than other wedding resources, says *Bridal Bargains* coauthor Alan Fields.

WEDDINGCHANNEL.COM
(www.weddingchannel.com)
"One of the better-quality websites," says Houston wedding consultant Deborah Elias. Brides and grooms can search its comprehensive "Local Business Directory" for vendors in their area, calculate a budget with its "Budget Planner," create a personal web page to share information with guests, keep track of RSVPs, and register for gifts.

RON BEN-ISRAEL CAKES
(www.weddingcakes.com)
Professional cake decorator Ron Ben-Israel shares the secrets of making sugar roses and sugar daisies with step-by-step instructions complete with photos.

MATRIMONY MAMBO
(houston.webpoint.com/wedding)
This great site includes a series of articles, printable checklists, and interactive tools offering straightforward advice about planning your wedding and sticking to a budget. One feature, "Torture Your Sister: The Bridesmaid's Dress Game," lets you try on as many dresses and accessories as you can on an interactive bridesmaid until she blows her top.

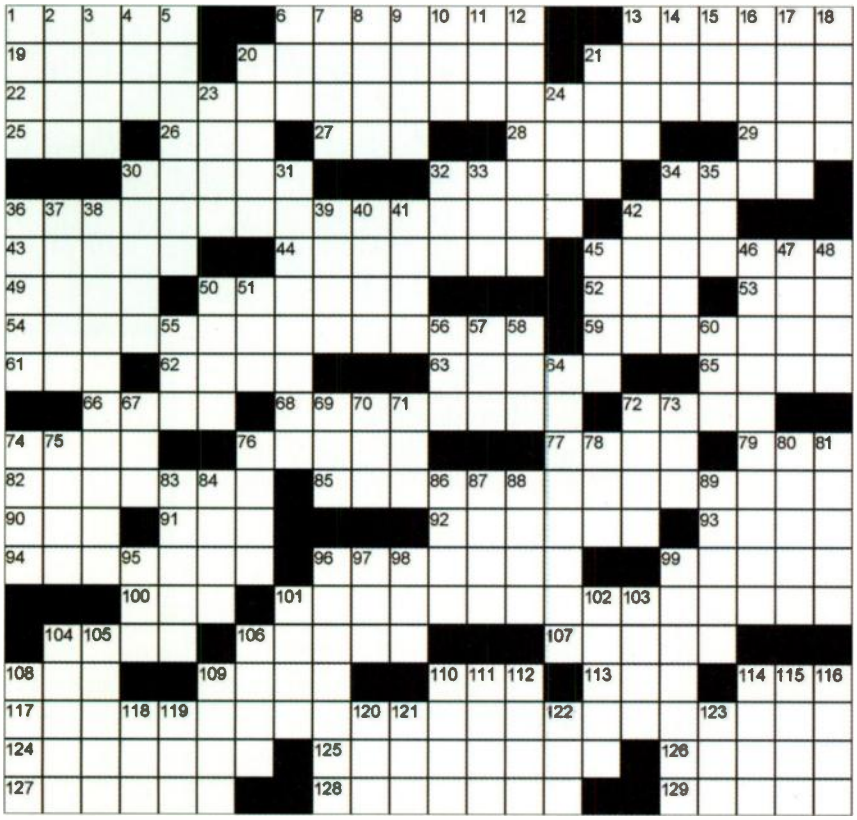
UNGROOM'D
(www.ungroomd.com)
While most wedding information is geared toward the bride, this site is dedicated to the groom's perspective, with articles on such subjects as relationships and newlywed finances. It even has a database of contact information about popping the question at professional sports stadiums.

TEISUKE SHINODA/PHOTONICA (CAKE)

[[CROSSWORD BY MATT GAFFNEY]]

THE FAB FOURTH ESTATE

Maybe you didn't know they were media critics.



ACROSS

1 With 6- & 13-across, infamous headline of 1948
6 See 1-across
13 See 1-across
19 It's remembered by Texans
20 Whither America's slouch, according to Bork
21 Item danced around
22 Beatles song about the Drudge Report?
25 The A in Q & A
26 It follows NBC or CNN
27 Help!
28 Walkers, in sign language
29 Start of MGM's motto
30 "___ Mia" (Abba hit)
32 Agreeable to the mind
34 Noted German paper, with *Die*
36 Beatles song about Joe Klein?
42 Schlesinger Jr. to Schlesinger Sr.
43 Make happy
44 Stuck
45 New York college
49 Read, with "over"
50 Put (together)
52 Bouncer's demand
53 *Today* preceder
54 Beatles song about *The View?*
59 West Coast paper, for short
61 Ex–*New Yorker* regular Frazier
62 Bering and Barents
63 100 clams
65 *The Well-Tempered Clavier* composer
66 What I'm holding
68 ___ hour (last minute)
72 1929 literature Nobelist
74 Section of London or New York
76 Stop on ___
77 Controversial Oscar name of 1999
79 Some bullets
82 Rose Garden swarming
85 Beatles song about NBC's *Dateline* plans?
90 Prefix meaning "equal"
91 Bill word
92 Takes the stump
93 Bring on board
94 Dozing crew
96 Put with the letter
99 ___ Carlo
100 Michaels and Gore
101 Beatles song about the Sunday *New York Times?*
104 Talk-show pioneer
106 Quick attack
107 Some fruits of the vine
108 Teeny
109 Ear stuff
110 Stock (abbr.)
113 Actress Gardner
114 Baltimore name
117 Beatles song about Diane Sawyer on ABC?
124 Mark Russell tickles them
125 Surprise hits
126 Set concern
127 Safire, some say
128 Mini-previews
129 Oboist's needs

DOWN

1 Bizarre art form
2 College whose paper is *The Pendulum*
3 Means partner, in Congress
4 Comic Philips
5 "Like ___!"
6 Pulitzer-winning cartoonist Wright
7 Ambulance workers, for short
8 Picture, in 34-across
9 Love god
10 Indy's quest
11 Enjoy Cancùn
12 Used the Internet, perhaps
13 Cold War propaganda venue
14 Deli specification
15 Code letters
16 Fable finish
17 On the qui vive
18 Takes home
20 Third in a sequence
21 Parental org.
23 Uterus
24 *The Truman Show* director Peter
30 Gives (out)
31 Used a password
32 Attenborough or Doyle
33 Had
34 Razzie Award-winning
35 Destroy
36 RC alternative
37 Goodbye on the islands
38 Steve Martin movie of 1989
39 *Mayor* author
40 "What a ride!"
41 Best Picture nominee of 1981
42 Pop
45 Organized bytes
46 You, say
47 "Just ___"
48 Larry Gelbart's show
50 Pecan and others
51 Muckraker Tarbell
55 "___ see it..."
56 Cable award
57 Days, say
58 Morse morsel
60 Ben- relative
64 Peppard's crew
67 Just off the presses
69 "I did not have sexual relations with that woman," notably
70 Big label
71 Relax, slangily
72 Fail to meet, as a deadline
73 Flat-fixing org.
74 Work of some doctors
75 Extremely, melodramatically
76 Mimics
78 Soap ingredient
80 Place in the playoffs
81 Shooting clay
83 1961 Newbery Medalist Scott
84 Communal
86 Word with cow or Toledo
87 Go easy
88 Morse morsel
89 Start of some *Jeopardy!* questions
95 Vietnam's Bao ___
96 Oscar Wilde title word
97 Grp. Heston represents
98 Go for the sympathy vote
99 1960 medicine Nobelist Peter
101 Like some coll. courses
102 Speeds
103 Like some hair
104 Bother
105 Judean king called "the Great"
106 Enemies
108 Congressional title
109 Newsman Huntley
110 Monthly time
111 Skunk name
112 CB word
114 Give up
115 Like the Mojave
116 Connie Chung and Mary Matalin, astrologically
118 NOW cause
119 Element No. 50
120 Pub order
121 Teachers' org.
122 Where some MDs work
123 Color

Matt Gaffney constructs crossword puzzles for The Washington Post, The New York Times, *and* GAMES *magazine. You can reach him at mgaf@erols.com.*

For solution, see page 128

HOW DO THEY KNOW?

Where restaurant critics learned their Pinot Noirs from their Cabernet Francs.

–By Julie Scelfo

WILLIAM GRIMES

The New York Times, restaurant critic, 1999–

EDUCATION: B.A., English, Indiana University, 1973; M.A., English, University of Chicago, 1974; Ph.D., comparative literature, University of Chicago, 1982

WORK EXPERIENCE: doughnut delivery boy, 1959–60; Macmillan Publishing, associate editor, translation project, 1980–84; *Esquire*, copy editor and contributor to "The Drinking Man" column, 1984–86; *Avenue* magazine, editor, 1986–89; *The New York Times*, magazine editor, general assignment reporter/culture desk, general assignment reporter/style department, 1989–99; author, *Straight Up or On the Rocks: A Cultural History of American Drink*, 1993

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Krispy Kreme doughnuts

ALAN RICHMAN

GQ, food and wine critic, 1989–

EDUCATION: B.A., journalism, University of Pennsylvania, 1965

WORK EXPERIENCE: *The* (Portland, Indiana) *Commercial Review*, news editor, 1967–68; *Philadelphia Bulletin*, sports writer, 1969–75; *The Montreal Star*, sports columnist and restaurant reviewer, 1975–77; *The Boston Globe*, sports and news feature writer, columnist, assistant managing editor, 1977–79, 1980–85; *The New York Times*, metro reporter, 1979–80; *People*, writer at large, 1985–89

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Ice cream

PHIL VETTEL

Chicago Tribune, restaurant critic, 1989–

EDUCATION: B.A., journalism, Eastern Illinois University, 1979

WORK EXPERIENCE: waiter and busboy, 1977–79; *Suburban Tribune* (Chicago), assistant features coordinator, general assignment features reporter, 1979–85; *Chicago Tribune*, general assignment features reporter, co-founder of the "Friday" section, 1984–89

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Deep–dish pizza

PHYLLIS RICHMAN

The Washington Post, food critic, 1976–

EDUCATION: B.A., American civilization, Brandeis University, 1961. Graduate studies: city planning, sociology, cooking classes

WORK EXPERIENCE: caterer, 1971–73; freelance food writer, 1972–76; *Washington Post*, food editor, syndicated columnist, 1980–88; novelist, *The Butter Did It*, 1997; *Murder on the Gravy Train* (coming in July)

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Cheetos

CRAIG LABAN

The Philadelphia Inquirer, restaurant critic, 1998–

EDUCATION: B.A., French, University of Michigan, 1990; Le Grand Diplome, La Varenne Ecole de Cuisine, 1992; M.S., journalism, Columbia University, 1994

WORK EXPERIENCE: World Economic Forum, staff reporter, 1991–93; *Boston Magazine*, freelance restaurant critic, 1993; *Eating Well*, *Food Arts*, and *Saveur*, contributor, 1992–94; *The Princeton Packet*, staff reporter, 1994–95; *New Jersey Monthly*, contributor, 1994–96; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, correspondent, 1995–96; *The* (New Orleans) *Times–Picayune*, government reporter, restaurant critic, 1996–98

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Little sesame crackers and dried sausage

BILL CITARA

San Francisco Examiner, food and wine critic, 1997–

EDUCATION: B.A., journalism, San Francisco State University, 1977

WORK EXPERIENCE: caterer, 1981–83; line cook, 1983; Sebastiani Vinyards, public relations and food wine pairings, 1985–86; *InfoWorld*, copy editor, 1987; *Marin Independent Journal*, freelance restaurant critic, 1987–97; *Diablo*, restaurant critic, 1992–97; *San Francisco Guardian*, restaurant columnist, 1995–97; KGO radio, host, *Restaurant Talk*, 1991–93; KPIX radio, host, *Let's Eat*, 1994–96

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Anything fried

HAL RUBENSTEIN

New York, restaurant critic, 1996–

EDUCATION: B.A., English and teaching, State University of New York at Stony Brook. Graduate studies: directing, film studies

WORK EXPERIENCE: freelance film reviewer, 1971–73; waiter, 1972–76, 1982–85; caterer, 1976–82; *Details*, restaurant reviewer and nightlife writer, 1982–89; *Elle*, contributing editor, 1985–89; *The New Yorker*, columnist, 1989–93; *Egg*, founder, 1989–91; *Interview*, contributing editor, 1991–96; *The New York Times Magazine*, men's style editor, 1991–95; *In Style*, fashion features director, 1995–

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Black cherry Jell–O with Breyers vanilla ice cream

JOHN KESSLER

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, dining critic, 1997–

EDUCATION: B.A., philosophy, Williams College, 1983; L'Academie de Cuisine, 1988

WORK EXPERIENCE: English teacher in Japan, 1983–85; The Research Counsel, research associate, 1985–86; Cities, Washington, D.C., sous chef, 1987–88; The Rattlesnake Club, Denver, line cook, 1988–89; Cafe Giovanni, Denver, sous chef, 1989–91; deVine Cafe, Denver, chef, 1991–93; *Westword*, freelance restaurant reviewer, 1990; *The Denver Post*, food writer, 1993–97

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Dried peas covered with wasabi

DOTTY GRIFFITH

The Dallas Morning News, dining editor and restaurant critic, 1997–

EDUCATION: B.A., journalism, University of Texas, Austin, 1972; M.A., liberal arts, Southern Methodist University, 1979

WORK EXPERIENCE: *The Dallas Morning News*, lifestyles editor, food editor, deputy lifestyles editor, metro reporter, 1972–96; KRLD radio, host, *In the Kitchen with Dotty*, 1992–94; author, nine cookbooks

FAVORITE SNACK FOOD: Chips and salsa

NAUM KAZHDAN/*THE NEW YORK TIMES* (WILLIAM GRIMES); COURTESY OF HARPERCOLLINS (PHYLLIS RICHMAN); COURTESY OF *NEW YORK* MAGAZINE (HAL RUBENSTEIN); COURTESY OF *GQ* (ALAN RICHMAN); COURTESY OF *THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION* (JOHN KESSLER); COURTESY OF *SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER* (BILL CITARA); COURTESY OF *THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS* (DOTTY GRIFFITH)

(continued from page 20)

sion still disturbs me. What is it that we're all laughing at? Falwell's (as always) buffoonish comments? Or the very notion of a gay children's character? The former is understandable, expected even. As a gay man, the latter troubles me as being horribly homophobic.

The history of animated and live-action characters enjoyed by both children and adults is filled with aggressively heterosexual personalities: Mickey and Minnie Mouse, the Flintstones, the Smurfs. Why is it so outrageous to consider that maybe, just maybe, one of the Teletubbies is gay?

ERIK PIEPENBURG
Chicago, IL
(via e-mail)

DERISION DESERVED

*I expected many good things from your magazine, and I've been very satisfied with it...until the other day, when, while flipping through the pages of the current issue, I found you spin-doctoring for the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

Falwell got the public derision he richly deserved for sending out that hysterical warning to parents to beware of the Teletubbies. He accused the show's producers of deliberately crafting the character with surreptitious gay signs and signals—even down to the

[character's] triangle antenna—in some kind of lunatic plot to send gay-positive messages to toddlers.

If the best you can say in his defense is that he might have gotten his information about the Teletubbies from gay camp culture and *People* magazine, then your standards of reporting accountability have taken a sudden nosedive, haven't they?

BRUCE GARRETT
Cockeysville, MD
(via e-mail)

ONE STEP BEYOND

*I was wondering how you would treat the Rev. Jerry Falwell's comments [about the allegedly gay Teletubby]—you get an A-plus for the little piece on Tinky Winky. There is no misinformation like religion-related misinformation. Falwell and his ilk are so open to lots of criticism. You went a step further.

ED GALLAGHER
Albany, OR
(via e-mail)

FROM A GRUMP

*I am so disappointed in the puff piece "The Best And Worst White House Reporters" [April]. *Brill's Content* has gone soft. I have been singing its praises and promoting it with enthusiasm, but the last two issues have failed. The whole country is grumpy and I place most of the blame on the media, with its constant barrage of negative and derisive thought, ridicule and slander of our country's leaders, and their total concentration on criminals, illness, and the proudly ignorant.

BABS LAWYER
Macomb, IL

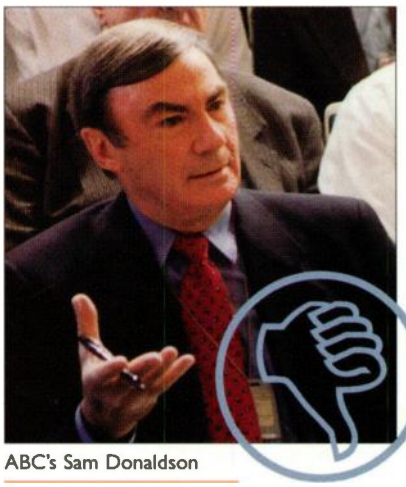
ROLE PLAYING

*I read your magazine for the first time yesterday and found it very enjoyable and informative reading. I would like to make a comment, however, on the article that attracted me to your pages: "The Best And Worst White House Reporters."

[Senior writer] Robert Schmidt did such a good job of documenting the reasons for classifying the reporters as he did that I found myself disagreeing with some of his conclusions based on the evidence he provided, especially in the case of [*U.S. News & World Report*'s] Kenneth Walsh.

On the "best" list, [CNN's] John King was commended for making tons of calls to get the details that others miss for his news stories, but, as Schmidt pointed out, King works number two behind Wolf Blitzer and has the time to do all of that detail work. Consequently, it strikes me that the news organizations [these reporters] work for and their particular role there determines what kind of reporting they do, and *Brill's Content* should have taken that into consideration a little more. That said, it's still a fascinating piece.

LIZ GRIFFITH
Burke, VA
(via e-mail)



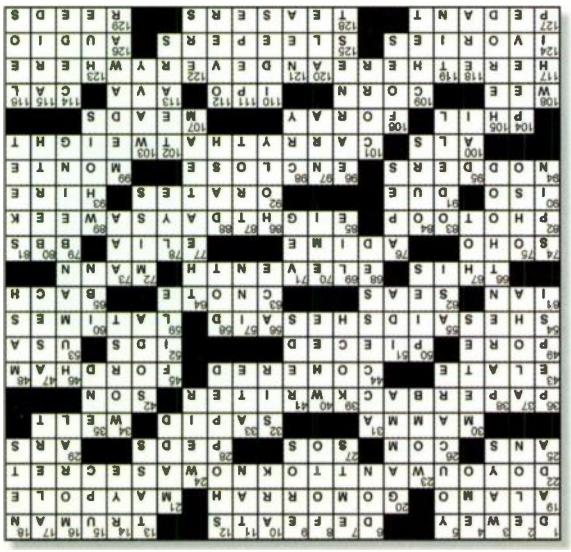
ABC's Sam Donaldson

NO EXCUSES

*Regarding Robert Schmidt's "The Best And Worst White House Reporters," I unfortunately could not agree more with the choice of listing ABC News's Sam Donaldson as one

Crossword Puzzle Solution

See puzzle, page 126



LIAISON (TINKY WINKY): DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR (DONALDSON)

of the worst.

To be fair, Schmidt makes the point that Donaldson is indeed busy with his various duties at ABC. Just the same, that's no excuse for his lack of development of stories, his "barking" out of questions at press briefings for the mere purpose of video and sound, and especially his relying on "common political wisdom."

As a journalist myself, I shake my head in wonder: None of what I see from the likes of Donaldson, at least in recent years, is what I was taught about the profession. If Donaldson ever wonders why the public is so disenchanted with the media, perhaps he might watch himself sometime.

T. GATES
News director
WJTO Radio
Bath, ME

SHOW NO MERCY

*Why show so much mercy for Sam Donaldson? If his reporting (or lack thereof) has been compromised because of too many other assignments, then ABC better take a look at its "star." Can we ask the press corps to report rather than play games? No wonder the president won't hold a lot of press conferences. Hats off to Mr. Schmidt for reporting on this bunch.

BUD LARSEN
Moyie Springs, ID
(via e-mail)

NOW DO THE BOSSES

*Thank you for a most cogent dissection of who is covering the White House beat. For a layman, your comments on the priority, timing of filing a story, and how that process influences other reporters was illuminating.

My only concern is, why should beating other reporters by often a matter of hours be considered such a crowning glory? Now that you have compared reporters, I'd like to see an insightful evaluation of the heads of these news organizations and their effectiveness.

FRANKLIN W. LIU
Boston, MA
(via e-mail)

SLOW IT DOWN

*I was very disappointed with "The Best And Worst White House Reporters." Your principal standard seemed to be that the reporters with the most scoops, and those quickest to air a story, are the best. Conversely, those who don't break news as often are dismissed as not doing much reporting or as "tired." For example, you give high praise to [CNN's] John King because he was able to report at 7 A.M. on January 11, before anyone else, that his sources told him that the White House might not move to dismiss the impeachment case at the outset during its initial response to the charges in [the president's Senate trial]. Is this news? Or simply informed speculation? Or, worse, reporting a rumor? More important, is the public better served by being told what might (or might not) happen five hours before the event actually happens? I'd rather hear a full, detailed, and insightful report about an event hours or even days after it happens than a hurried report from a reporter whose only concern is being the first to reveal some bit of information.

DAVID LEIT
New York, NY
(via e-mail)

OFFENDS THE SENSES

*Mike Pride ["Pursuing The Dark Side," Out Here, April] informs us that a newspaper's obligation (and therefore its editor's) is to "hold up a mirror to the community, and that means offering vivid reflection of its dirty laundry." He recommends "the more details, the more truth" and that omitting those details will render his newspaper "much less useful."

As someone who abhors censorship of any form and as a former newspaper editor, I suggest that unless the incidences of horrific events appreciably diminish, the graphic display of stomach-turning, heart-wrenching words and pictures is destined to do nothing more than, at best, sell newspapers to the morbidly curious and, at worst, offend the senses of intelligent, concerned readers.

ZACHARIAS ROSNER
Fort Lauderdale, FL

TO THOSE WHO SERVE

*Thank you for your coverage of Barbara Ehrenreich's *Harper's Magazine* article about the working poor ["Honor Roll," April]. Florida is flamboyant with its "entertainment" centers, but too little [attention] is given to the near-slaves who are serving the public.

RITA REUTTER
Daytona Beach, FL

Barbara Ehrenreich

WORTH THE PRICE

*The two short "Honorable Mention" pieces in the April issue were worth the price of admission. The work of Barbara Ehrenreich and [*Los Angeles Times* reporters] Mark Gladstone and Mark Arax touch the lives of real people and illuminate serious issues a thousand times more powerfully than the combined bloviations of all the television pretties and White House preeners with which you filled the issue. I am so glad I slogged through to the end.

TOM DIAZ
Washington, DC
(via e-mail)

AN AUTHOR'S PLUG

*I want to add some information to your April report on the Amazon.com practice of plugging books ["Booking Plugs On Amazon.com," The Notebook]. The story faithfully recounted the controversy and justifiable criticism of the online bookstore for promoting books without informing the consumer that publishers have paid for placement. [It did not] explain that Amazon.com is,

SIGRID ESTRADA/OUTLINE

through its separate, unpaid appraisal of books, contributing constructively to the democratization of the reviewing process. My own *Hallowed Ground* (Plenum/Insight Books, 1997) got scant attention from the powers that be in book review sections, but the editors at Amazon.com actually read and listed it as a "religion top 10" title. For authors and readers concerned that important books may be bypassed by reviewers, Amazon.com at times has performed a refreshing service to the reading public.

STEPHEN BURGARD
Irvine, CA
(via e-mail)

GOOD STUFF

*Jennifer Greenstein's recommendation of Jeff Greenfield ["Stuff We Like," April] was one I wanted to also endorse. I discovered Greenfield's insightful views in a sports essay he wrote some years ago noting the difference between real sports and TV-staged sports events. I'm very glad he's on CNN now instead of ABC. I get to see and hear him about ten times as often.

ILVA WALKER
Rio Rancho, NM
(via e-mail)

ALL GONE STALE

*Good for you with respect to your April Rewind's scant mention ["Monica Redux"] of "blond former prosecutors." May they forever remain nameless, since they are so consistently graceless and pointless. They must be fishwives gone stale, given the reek that rises from what they do.

CURT BALL
Winnetka, CA

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

*I am an attorney who can relate all too well to Steven Brill's Rewind item "A *Salon* 'Interview'" [April]. I represent three clients who recently were the subject of an adverse decision by a judge. Before I even knew about the decision, I received a voice-mail message from a reporter at a national business daily asking for comments and inquiring whether we would appeal. As best as I can tell, this message was left less than one hour after the 51-page decision was faxed to my office by the judge. Don't reporters recognize how difficult it is to discuss the complex issues that would warrant such a lengthy decision with someone who has done nothing more to become familiar with those issues than read the prevailing party's press release?

JERRY ABELES
Los Angeles, CA

KIDDING, RIGHT?

*What a treat the April issue was! Not only was I thrilled and titillated by two separate accounts revealing how difficult it is to be a rich man married to a well-known actress ["A Paper War Over Sharon Stone," The Notebook; "Both Sides Of The Media Lens," Talk Back], I was given a complete tutorial on how to use that brand-new technology, the Web ["Best Of The Web"]. I had no idea that Microsoft had so many useful websites. Why, there seemed to be a site of theirs mentioned in almost every category! Amazing! How kind of them to provide that handy poster at the start of the highly informative feature. At the publications I've worked for, we would have been forced to sully those carefully art-directed pages with the words "advertorial" atop each one.

MARIE MUNDACA
New York, NY
(via e-mail)

ACTUAL FAN MAIL

I'm a charter subscriber, and can tell you that although I already felt my subscription price was well spent, you added enormous value with your "Best Of The Web" feature—highly usable information and an outstanding service of your mission.

LAURIE FALIK
San Mateo, CA
(via e-mail)

DEAD LINK SCROLL

*Yahoo! has a "contests, surveys, and polls" category that [contains] dead links, including some to contests that ended in 1996. How can you say their entries don't get stale ["Best Of The Web"]?

KAREN HESTER
Madison, WI
(via e-mail)

THINK AGAIN

We're flattered that you singled out *Salon*'s "Mothers Who Think" department as among the "Best Of The Web," but would like to clarify two errors. "Mothers Who Think" is daily, not weekly. And it is a department, not a column, although it features columns by Sallie Tisdale and Anne Lamott, as well as reporting, essays, and interviews.

DAYNA MACY
Director of public relations
Salon
San Francisco, CA
(via e-mail)

ANNOYED

*The April issue of *Brill's Content* arrives. Before I'm able to read it, I rip out the annoying fold-out Microsoft ad that is getting in the way. As I'm about to throw it out, I realize that the flip side of it contains a "Best Of The Web" listing that seems to tie in with a story hyped on your cover. And I think to myself, *Has this magazine already sold out, letting an advertiser sponsor what was supposed to be editorial content?*

Imagine my further shock when I read Mr. Brill's comments about separation between advertising and editorial in ["Report From The Ombudsman"].

It is *very* clear to me that Microsoft sponsored the "Best Of The Web" feature fold-out, and I now must wonder whether it sponsored the article itself.

I already feel that you've begun to "dumb down" the magazine; muddying the waters separating editorial from advertising just makes things worse.

KEN HOROWITZ
Old Greenwich, CT
(via e-mail)

Editor's note: For a response to this and other questions about the Best Of The Web pullout poster, see "Report From The Ombudsman" (page 22) and "The Big Blur" (page 48). By the way, Microsoft-owned sites were named in four of the feature's ten categories.

HIS OWN PREDICTION

I didn't need "Pundit Scorecard" [The Notebook, April] to make the case: Margaret Carlson for president.

JACKSON RANNELLS
Santa Rosa, CA
(via e-mail)

IN FACT

*More than half a century ago, a great journalist, George Seldes, taught me that the main difference between editors and members of the world's oldest profession was that the latter were upfront about the connection between their work and their meal ticket.

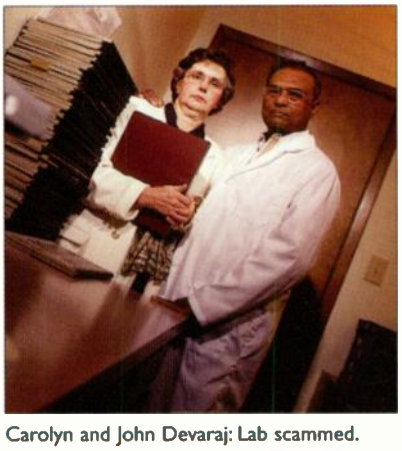
When I read your ombudsman's cant [April] that editorial content is motivated by the editor's attempt to offer news, I couldn't believe he was referring to a publication that featured a big whitewash of secondhand smoke in the same issue with full-page cigarette ads ["Warning: Secondhand Smoke May Not Kill You," December/January].

GILBERT BENDIX
Kensington, CA

GOOD QUESTIONS

*Bill Kovach's February column ["Report From The Ombudsman"] continued the discussion about an encounter between Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and CBS reporter Stephanie Lambidakis. There is one inaccuracy. Mr. Kovach said, "He (Scalia) chose not to respond." Unfortunately, [Scalia] did respond, first replying that he would not answer her, "because you're annoying me." After arguing back and forth about what she knows and whether that gives her enough knowledge to formulate a question, he stalks off, only to turn back again when she says, "What should people know about the hiring practices of the Court?" He says, "that it is rigorously fair." When she continues to engage him, asking "Regardless of race?" He scornfully says, twice, "Of course, regardless of race." Any TV reporter will tell you that this was a long interview. And, by TV standards, it was also a good interview.

MERRIE SPAETH
Dallas, TX



Carolyn and John Devaraj: Lab scammed.

GUTTER BALL

*This is in reference to the "Lab Scam" article in the February issue [The Investigators]. Thanks for the enlightening piece. It simply showed how dishonest the media is in its zealous pursuit to destroy the innocent. The third-rate reporting of ABC's *PrimeTime Live* is shameful, to say the least—actually I am being generous to call it only third-rate. The likes of [Diane] Sawyer and [producer Robbie] Gordon belong to the gutter world that journalism has become.

THOMAS MORE
Lawrence, KS
(via e-mail)

CAR TALK, PART TWO

*It's one thing to admit a mistake and apologize for having made it. Why apologize for a mistake you didn't make?

Regarding page 123 of your April issue ["Letters"]: You "regret the 'error'" you made in having a 1960 Chevrolet appear in a photo accompanying the [February] story, "Those Fabulous Fifties." Whether [or not] the innumerate media mass understands it, a 1960 vehicle would indeed be part of the fifties—the very last part!

Shouldn't a publication that stands for accuracy itself be accurate? Give yourself some credit, stop sniveling and keep up the otherwise excellent work.

ED TOWEY
Tallahassee, FL
(via e-mail)

LIGHTEN THE LOAD

*Okay, so *The New Yorker* receives hundreds and hundreds of letters and who gets to answer them all? The anagrammatic Owen Ketherry, that's who. If Owen's load is so heavy, why don't the editors give the scribe a break? I say loosen the purse strings and hire some help. I have it on good knowledge that Renee K. Worthy, T. Werner Hokey, and the redoubtable Henry Rotweek are all available and qualified to meet the periodical's demanding journalistic standards.

KEVIN GILLOGLY
Van Nuys, CA

MARK DURAN (LAB SCAM); ILLUSTRATION BY ROLLIN MCGRAIL

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3.3 million Average number of copies of *Sports Illustrated* sold each week

4.6 million Average number of copies of *Sports Illustrated*'s annual swimsuit issue sold[1]

6 Percentage of people who say they read every article in the magazine they read most often

31 Percentage of people who say they read less than one quarter of the articles in the magazine they read most often[2]

40.5 Percentage of U.S. households subscribing to basic cable in 1983

67.4 Percentage of U.S. households subscribing to basic cable in 1998

$8.61 Average monthly rate for basic cable subscription in 1983

$27.43 Average monthly rate for basic cable subscription in 1998[3]

70 Percentage of local television-news stories that are one minute or less in length

43 Percentage of local television-news stories that are 30 seconds or less in length[4]

59 Percentage of senior journalists (editors/news directors) who believe that journalism is hurt by reporters and editors serving as commentators and pundits

74 Percentage of senior journalists who believe that reporters and editors who serve as commentators and pundits risk their credibility by editorializing about the news rather than simply reporting it

61 Percentage of senior journalists who say there is some value to news organizations in having reporters and editors serve as commentators and pundits[5]

57 Percentage of Internet users who are men

71 Percentage of people who purchase goods online who are men[6]

45 Percentage of Iceland's population who use the Internet

35 Percentage of U.S. population who use the Internet

0.005 Percentage of China's population who use the Internet[7]

692 Number of ".com" domain names per 1,000 businesses in the San Jose metropolitan area

238 Number of ".com" domain names per 1,000 businesses in the Chicago metropolitan area

55 Number of ".com" domain names per 1,000 businesses in the Corpus Christi, Texas, metropolitan area

19 Number of ".com" domain names per 1,000 businesses in the Ocala, Florida, metropolitan area[8]

59 Percentage of fifth- to twelfth-grade girls dissatisfied with their bodies

66 Percentage of fifth- to twelfth-grade girls who want to lose weight

69 Percentage of fifth- to twelfth-grade girls who say pictures in fashion magazines influence what they consider to be their ideal body

47 Percentage of fifth- to twelfth-grade girls who say they want to lose weight because of pictures in fashion magazines

29 Percentage of fifth- to twelfth-grade girls who responded to this survey who were overweight[9]

1) *Sports Illustrated* (swimsuit edition figure reflects sales from 1995–1998) 2) Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide 3) Paul Kagan Associates, Inc.; National Cable Television Association 4) "Local TV News," Project for Excellence in Journalism, January 1999 5) *Columbia Journalism Review*; Public Agenda 6) and 7) CommerceNet; Nielsen Media Research; Yahoo!; Reuters; The Gallup Organization 8) Matthew Zook, University of California, Berkeley 9) "Exposure to the Mass Media and Weight Concerns Among Girls," *Pediatrics*, March 1999

If Utopia is defined as a place
where everything is perfect,
then we think we've already found it.

It's here among the rolling fields of Marion County that my father first had the idea to create Maker's Mark. Without the hustle and bustle of the city to distract him, he could mull over ideas until they were just right. That's how he came up with such a novel way of making bourbon.

One of the things Dad figured out was that if he used winter wheat instead of rye, he could improve the taste of the bourbon. It would take on soft and subtle characteristics while remaining full flavored. Doggone it if he wasn't right.

With an atmosphere that nurtures such wonderful ideas, I can't imagine living anywhere else. So while the township where our distillery sits may not be named "Utopia," "Loretto" is close enough.

Bill Samuels, Jr.
President

Maker's Mark®

Visit us at www.makersmark.com

Maker's Mark Distillery, Loretto, KY 40037, 45% Alc./Vol. (90 Proof), Fully Matured