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# Candor in a First Family has its limits

*Melvin File*

By HARRIET VAN HORNE

QUESTION: WHEN DOES the right to know become compulsion to pry?

Answer: When a television interviewer asks the incoming President of the United States whether he and the First Lady will be sleeping in twin beds or a double bed once they're in the White House.

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Van Horne

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How shall we be remembering Rosalynn Carter? For her soft, girlish-Southern voice, I imagine, and her firm sense of self.

The grandeur of the White House will not dim this First Lady's homyness (she's taking her sewing machine to the White House, she said last week) nor her own spirited candor, which differs considerably from Betty Ford's. How? Mrs. Carter seems open and truthful, but not one to strive for effect.

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Now, if the Carters will just not tell us any more of matters that are really none of our business.



*Media File*

ERALD R. FORD

# Carters, Tell Walters to Take a Jump...

Jimmy Carter  
Plains, Ga.

Dear Sir:

Saw you and your lovely wife, Rosalynn, on TV the other night, being interviewed by Barbara Walters. I gained a great deal of respect for the both of you at that time, because I certainly wouldn't have ~~seen~~ there being subjected to such questioning. And I'm not even going to be President.

I heard Miss Walters ask you if you were going to sleep together when you reach the White House. Although the question obviously embarrassed you, and made Rosalynn wriggle with humiliation, you answered "yes" with good grace and aplomb. I would have told Miss Walters to get lost.

I heard her ask you if you would bring your ~~hat~~ from Plains, and put it in the White House. I would have told her it was none of her damned business.

I heard Miss Walters ask you about your intimate decision to have another child late in life. You were very patient and cordial in your reply. I would have ended the interview at that point. That is nobody's business but your own.

I heard her ask you if you were going to wear your bluejeans during private moments around your new home. I don't see that your leisure attire makes any difference to anybody, and that includes the American public. You can wear your shorts around the house, for all I care.

You're soon going to be our President, Jimmy. You don't HAVE to subject yourself to foolish interviews anymore. You don't have to appear with Barbara Walters.

When she was at NBC, Miss Walters earned a reputation as a tough, incisive interviewer. She has turned soft on us. She appears as a simple woman with silly questions; one who fitters at the mention of love, sleeping together and bedrooms.

WELL, I saw on our sports page the other day that our three TV networks packed their bags and walked out on the Soviets upon learning that the Russians are demanding \$50 million to build facilities for telecasting the 1980 Summer Olympics. That's on top of the anticipated \$100-million bid that the Soviets are seeking for telecast rights.

Good for the networks, I say. There comes the time when capitalistic demands no longer can be endured. The \$100 million figure is fully four times the price ABC paid for rights to last summer's Olympiad in Montreal.

Still, I doubt seriously that we'll go without coverage of the 1980 games, despite the hold-up price tag. The networks now are contemplating court permission (antitrust laws are involved) to pool resources—and funds—to buy coverage rights as a team. The Olympics still is too big an event to pass up—even at highway robbery rates.

THE LOCAL November Nielsen ratings are in, and again show Channel 9 leading in the 10 p.m. news slot, with 42 per cent of the audience (on a four-week average



## On The Air

by CLARK SECRET

in the metropolitan area.) Trailing are Channel 7, with 30 per cent; Channel 4, with 22 per cent, and Channel 2, with 3 per cent. Channel 7 still leads the 5 p.m. news slot, however, followed by Channels 9 and 4.

And speaking of Channel 9's newsroom, news director Roger Ogden is moving to that same position at WLKY-TV in Louisville, Ky., which has the same ownership as Channel 9. The Louisville outlet also recently hired as its general manager Paul Bine, who headed educational Channel 6 here.

VIEWPOINTS: Memo to the Pollenex shower massage people: There are no degrees of uniqueness. Either something is unique, or it is not. Unique is a

superlative. Therefore, your shower massage gizmo cannot be the "most unique" on the market... If I see one more local TV reporter standing in front of City Hall, telling me what happened inside, or standing in front of the Statehouse, telling me what happened inside, I'm going to scream. Certainly, this tactic is necessary under infrequent and unusual circumstances. But its repeated use, which smacks of laziness, has reached cop-out proportions on all four stations here. Either go to the trouble of lugging your equipment inside and show us the action, or go inside and interview the people who were part of the action.

Of course, this takes a lot more work than setting up your camera on the City Hall sidewalk.



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Just to prove she can be as feeble with Republicans as with Democrats, she will do another of her "interviews" on Jan. 2—this time with President and Mrs. Ford. I'm sure she needs the time between now and then to think up more questions that are as tasteless as they are mindless.

Yours truly,

Clark Secrest  
The Denver Post

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"Media" file

A18

THURSDAY

# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER



## Why We Don't Intervene in Lebanon

WHY is the United States no more than an indifferent, "passive spectator" of the killing in Lebanon, as a reader of Lebanese descent alleged in a letter on this page the other day? Or worse, is the United States actually fomenting the bloodletting, as part of a secret Kissinger plot to dismember Lebanon and hand a piece of it to Syria, as Nicholas von Hoffman charged in a recklessly uninformed column of opinion in this newspaper recently? The second line of inquiry, fashionable as it may be in radical circles, hardly merits a serious answer. But the first question is both interesting and fair—if by being "passive" one means something short of active American military intervention of the sort undertaken with some success in a much different situation in Lebanon in 1958. By that standard, the American role today is undeniably restrained. But by ordinary standards it can hardly be said that Washington is a "passive spectator." Whether American policy has been wise or effective is certainly open to question. It is evident, however, that this country has been deeply involved in a long and complicated diplomatic effort to edge the Lebanese rivals toward compromise; to give Syria, the one outside force with the potential for limiting the violence, the diplomatic room to perform that mission; and to ensure that Israel would not have reason or pretext to make a countering move itself. Syria's large recent movements of troops into Lebanon are the boldest—if you will, the most desperate—steps so far in an American-supported policy aimed at restoring some measure of stability and retaining the integrity of that unhappy country. That Israel stands still for it probably has something to do with the fact that the Syrian intervention, whatever its purpose with respect to Lebanon itself, is putting a terrible squeeze on the forces of Israel's arch-enemy, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Some would say the relative caution of U.S. policy reflects inhibitions born of Vietnam. Yet this is too glib an explanation in itself, for it is entirely possible, if not probable, given the incredibly chaotic and incendiary state of affairs in Lebanon today, that the United States would be limited by the force of events to doing pretty much what it has been doing in Lebanon even if there had not been the chastening effect of the Vietnam agony. In any case, this is not 1958.

There is no Eisenhower Doctrine to sanction American intervention. And even if there were, there is no responsible government in Beirut capable of inviting us in. Indeed, there is no government at all in any recognizable sense. Unlike 1958, not even the embattled Christian minority now appeals for direct help from Washington—instead, it counts, incredibly enough, on Syria. The physical scene, moreover, is so random and disordered that it is almost impossible to imagine where troops would go if they landed. It would be pure folly to put American troops into a context where they had not been invited, where they could not bring useful leverage to bear on peace talks because there is almost nobody in a position to talk peace with authority, and where their arrival would surely ignite fierce storms elsewhere (not to speak of at home). It is not just the post-Vietnam limits of American power that are on view. It is good sense.

Soviet Premier Kosygin is now in Damascus, apparently trying to swing Syria out of its position in the American diplomatic orbit, perhaps also counseling the Syrians to take the firm steps needed to damp the Lebanese fires. Conceivably, the reported Soviet naval buildup in the eastern Mediterranean should be viewed in this light. For the Russians to move forward in such a way, however, is all the more reason for the Americans to tread warily. The Russians may just have the opening, and incentive, to be useful in regard to Lebanon. In that case, the United States ought to sit tight until it is clearer what the Soviets have in mind.

Perhaps no American not of Lebanese descent can measure the despair of Lebanese-Americans today. We suspect it is equally difficult for Lebanese-Americans, who are no different from many other Americans in the strength of their ties to their country of origin, to distinguish between apparent indifference, on the one hand, and the hard limits imposed by circumstances on this country's capacity to intervene decisively, on the other. It is precisely because American policy will rarely if ever fully satisfy the longings of all Lebanese-Americans for a greater direct U.S. commitment to the welfare of their countrymen that the rest of us owe them at least an honest effort to understand the dimensions of their sorrow.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

NOTE FOR: *Connie G.*  
FROM : RON NESSEN

For my "media"  
file.

*R N*





# Why Nothing Works in Washington

These are notes from a month spent in Washington. This story grew from a feeling that nothing in Washington functions any longer. That the means of government have gradually replaced the ends. That Washington no longer carries on in order to serve the rest of the country but now exists primarily to serve itself. Slowly, as the month wore on, that feeling hardened into a conviction. There is something dreadfully wrong in Washington. Nobody, particularly liberals, any longer believes that the policies they advocate or the programs they propose will accomplish much more than the hiring of more government bureaucrats. They don't believe their own solutions.

Washington is a city drowning in information. What did the secretary of the air force say in his luncheon speech in Los Angeles? Who's to be tapped to replace Moynihan? What's the meaning behind Nixon's trip to China? Almighty, ever-present, information. It simply pours into the town. The cabs always seem to have their radios turned to the all-news stations. The restaurants have wire service tickers tucked away behind the coatrooms. For a fee, someone

Mr. Tracy is a staff writer for the Village Voice. This article is excerpted from two articles in the Voice.

will send you a transcript of what was said on the morning TV talk shows. Before lunch. If you like, your name can be added to a list that insures you will receive a complete set of State Department press releases. People greet you with odd salutations like "I was up on the Hill this morning and I..." or "Just came from the White House. Did you know...?" In Washington, information is the edge people use to establish status. Journalists are kings and unpublished tidbits are the coin of the realm. You can walk into a luncheon club and the air itself crackles with whatever is most current. People rush up to you and say, "Ford vetoed the jobs bill" and look to you for an explanation of what will happen next.

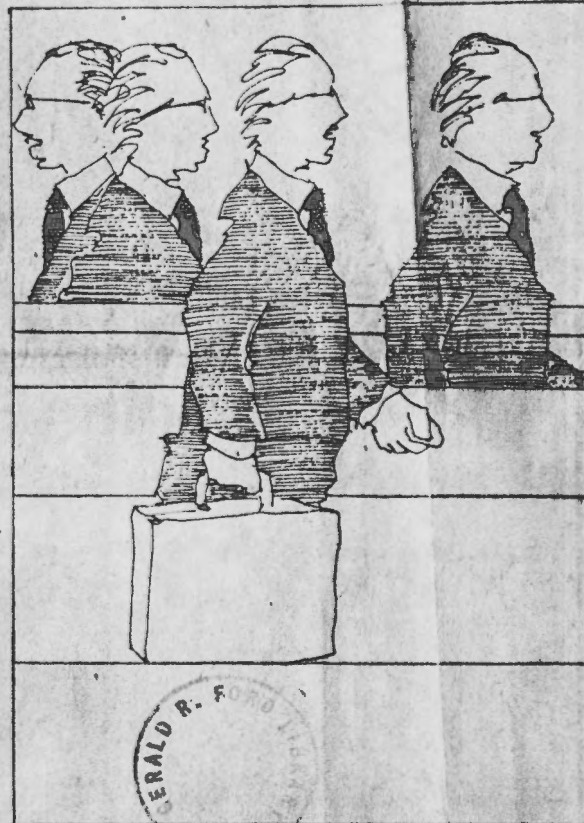
But there is very little knowledge. And no wisdom whatsoever. If information pours into Washington, it drains off just as easily. Are the farmers in the Midwest angry? A hearing will be held. A bill drawn. Hire some of their people to do a study for the Ag Department. That should shut them up for awhile. Our children can't read? HEW has been working on just that problem for a couple of years now. Their report is due next month. Have corporations been practicing wholesale bribery of public officials both at home and abroad? The President condemns it. Congress is

of Science and Industry was the best.) And the press office is an isolated snugger, cut off from both the outside world and the rest of the White House. I actually got to see more of the White House as a tourist than as a reporter.

Isolation accounts for much of the ugliness that takes place each day at the White House briefing. Several reporters vie with each other to see who can ask the rudest, most farfetched, least consequential questions. It is a brutal display of what the mannerless society we are rapidly becoming will look like. Nessen's recitations are constantly interrupted by snorts, snarls, and, occasionally, outright insults.

One morning in the course of briefing reporters on an upcoming Ford campaign swing through Florida, Nessen said, "It appears at this time that because the President is moving around rapidly from city to city down there, Mrs. Ford will not make the trip to Florida this weekend." The first reporter to speak asked, "What does that mean?" The second simply stated, "I don't understand that." The third chimed in sarcastically, "He's going to be moving around fast, so in other words she can't keep up, she is not able to keep up with him, is that it?"

Conventional wisdom holds that the current nastiness displayed by the White House Press Corps is a direct result of the snookering they took from Ziegler over Watergate. Actually, it seems most of the reporters have been swept up by the maddening notion that everyone with a press card must be an investigative journalist. (There is also the assumption that everyone in the White House is a liar.) Tightly confined to the press office compound, however, there is precious little for them to investigate beyond the state of the Coke machine. There are no secretaries or assistants one can accidentally bump into and chat up for awhile. You can't visit a person's office except by prior appointment. And they always want to know what you are going to ask them first. Unable to ingratiate themselves with people who might tell them something, the White House reporters are reduced to "investigating" Nessen's statements by questioning his every premise. With three or four exceptions, I don't think the reporters assigned to the White House mean to be rude. They are simply terribly insecure because their isolation makes them vulnerable. Jerry Ford could elope to Madagascar and the White House Press Corps might not discover it for a week. Whole days go by without any of them ever seeing Ford. One afternoon I was overcome by the notion that there really wasn't any White House, just the briefing room and a few offices for Nessen and his staff. Such profound insecurity will



explain why he took the money or what he did with it. After some pressure from Washington newspapers, the Senate Ethics Committee reluctantly agreed to look into the matter, but to date it has not found the time to ask Scott to come testify before the panel. The chances are they won't. To the best of my knowledge, not one single senator or congressman has risen to question Scott's behavior. The prevailing attitude on Capitol Hill seems to be he's an old man, about to retire, so why not leave him alone.

It is a closed system, the Pentagon, not unlike those ecosystems of which the conservationists are so fond. There is really no way to penetrate it. It has a language all its own, composed of technological terminology, awkward abbreviations, and outright evasion, designed not to communicate information indiscriminately, but to limit it to the military brotherhood. If you seek information from the military you must be prepared to ask questions such as the following, which was asked of Air Force Secretary Reed: "You slipped the D-Sark three or four different times, and there never was a full-scale production D-Sark 3 for the A-10. There was a DCP decision by Mr. Clemmons. Why no D-Sark now?"

If the Pentagon's closed system is frustrating to the casual observer, it is horrifying to someone responsible for

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Answers are Washington's ultimate illusion.

Of all the places a reporter can visit in Washington, the White House is the least interesting. The tour is duller than most tours you can take. (The Museum

there, Mrs. Ford will not make the trip to Florida this weekend." The first reporter to speak asked, "What does that mean?" The second simply stated, "I don't understand that." The third chimed in sarcastically, "He's going to be moving around fast, so in other words she can't keep up, she is not able to keep up with him, is that it?"

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It is now a well-enshrined platitude that the American people are disillusioned with their government in general and Washington in particular.

For some reason most people in Washington seem to feel this is basically just a public relations problem. Every jackass politician in town has stood up at one time or another and babbled, "We have to restore the people's faith in government." But as far as I can see, this disillusionment has very little to do with PR. It has to do with reality.

Take the example of Hugh Scott. Last year a lobbyist for the Gulf Oil Corporation testified that for more than a decade he made it a practice to give Hugh Scott a "gift" of \$5,000 each spring and fall. The money was corporate funds, part of a \$10-million slush fund Gulf Oil set up back in the late '50s. To date, Scott has refused to discuss the matter. Since he is retiring at the end of the year, it is unlikely he will ever have to

explain why he took the money or what he did with it. After some pressure from Washington newspapers, the Senate Ethics Committee reluctantly agreed to look into the matter, but to date it has not found the time to ask Scott to come testify before the panel. The chances are they won't. To the best of my knowledge, not one single senator or congressman has risen to question Scott's behavior. The prevailing attitude on Capitol Hill seems to be he's an old man, about to retire, so why not leave him alone...

It is a closed system, the Pentagon, not unlike those ecosystems of which the conservationists are so fond. There is really no way to penetrate it. It has a language all its own, composed of technological terminology, awkward abbreviations, and outright evasion, designed not to communicate information indiscriminately, but to limit it to the military brotherhood. If you seek information from the military you must be prepared to ask questions such as the following, which was asked of Air Force Secretary Reed: "You slipped the D-Sark three or four different times, and there never was a full-scale production D-Sark 3 for the A-10. There was a DCP decision by Mr. Clemmons. Why no D-Sark now?"

If the Pentagon's closed system is frustrating to the casual observer, it is horrifying to someone responsible for regulating Defense expenditures. One sunny morning I visited with Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, who is a member of the House Armed Services Committee. The sun was pouring in the window of her congressional office, and the comfortable, pleasant surroundings only deepened the depressing comments the congresswoman was making. "We never have more than five minutes to question any witness," she explained. "What can you ask in five minutes? Bells are going off. Staff aides are coming in and out with messages. There are other committee hearings to attend. And they (the Pentagon brass) know how to filibuster and use up all your time with just one answer." Two years ago Redbook profiled the congresswoman. Back then she was out to "humanize" the system and shift expenditures from defense to social needs. She had to fight to get on the Armed Services Committee, but she wanted it because she thought she could make a difference. On this sunlit day, she displays no such optimism. In-

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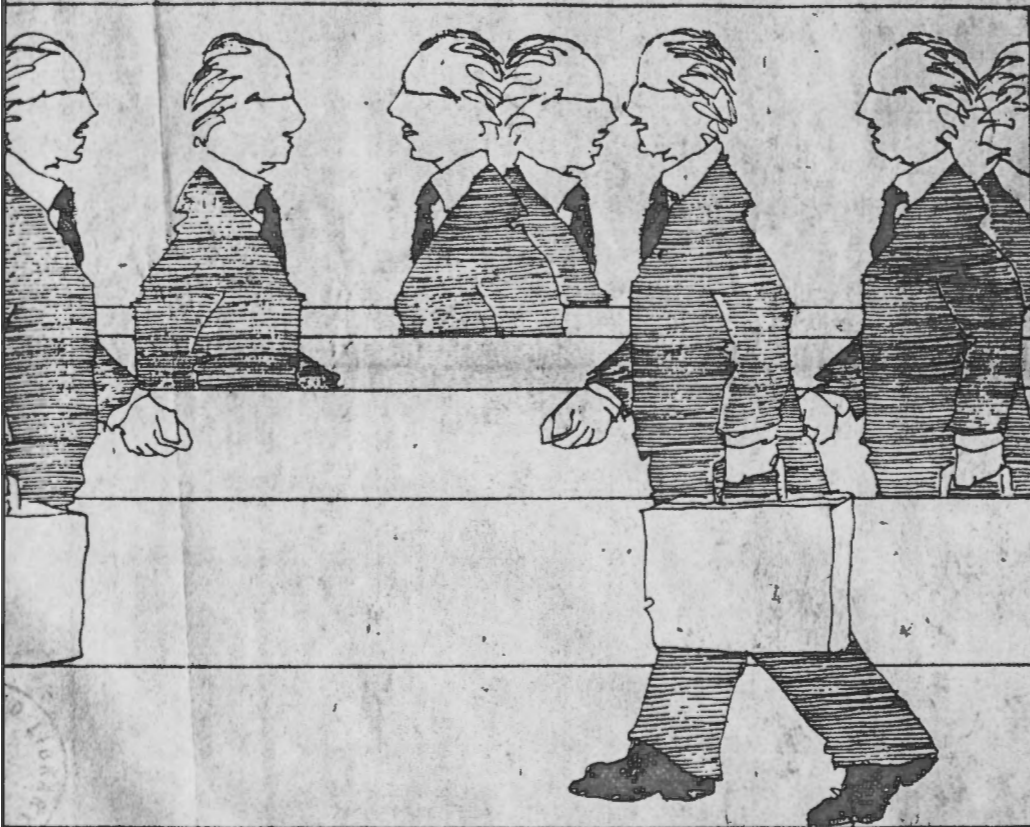
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# Washington



By David Toler for The Washington Post

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Of her work on the Armed Services Committee, Ms. Schroeder is tepidly enthusiastic at best. Asked what the vaunted "liberalization" of the committee has actually meant, she replies, "We've got many more people asking questions. We now get a few witnesses — people from the Brookings Institute — who oppose the current makeup of the defense budget." But her overall judgment is hardly positive.

The following week the Armed Services Committee continued its hearings on the Pentagon's budget. Thank God, I had other things to do. Then one afternoon, while riding in a cab, I heard on the radio a brief quote from some Pentagon official saying the Russians were catching up in the research and development of strategic weapons and

it was a lot nicer being on top. They seemed unwilling or unable to express any personal joy. I doubt the word joy is part of Washington's vocabulary. After awhile you almost shy away from the smart people in Washington. The smart ones just drip with despair.

Most reasonable people are not against the U.S. having an army—and a good one that will fight to defend us if ever that becomes necessary. But we are against a system that appropriates billions to build weapons we don't need. Granted, that system employs a lot of workers who might otherwise be out on the streets. But it also enriches the corporate establishment, corrupts the political process and ultimately fails to provide us with an adequate defense. The politicians give the money to Lockheed. Lockheed gives jobs to the workers. The workers re-elect the pols in order to keep their jobs. Meanwhile, we get stuck with CS-As that can't fly and an army so encumbered with useless military hardware that the only place it can win a war is on the drawing boards.

The same thing happens in the social programs. It's a different complex, composed of academics who flourish on government study grants, consultants who skim 5 per cent off the top of every appropriation, and labor unions with a vested interest in maintaining a bloated bureaucracy. But the net effect

proof to back it up) that we can cope with our problems. I believe we are a good and generous people as well as a cruel and greedy people.

We've advanced a good deal, materially, since the days when Franklin Roosevelt first announced the outlines of the New Deal. But we have paid a price. We've lost a lot of things that used to bind us together as a people. We've forgotten words like charity and compassion and, more important, the feelings those words once symbolized. In all but the most rural parts of the country, we've lost any notion of how men and women are supposed to live in community with each other. We've lost the instinct for self-reliance, the very instinct that built this country. And all these losses have wounded us far more deeply than we have previously imagined.

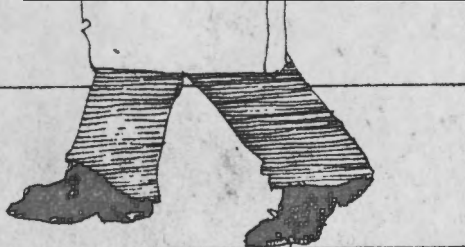
I think it is most important for us to recognize that we are a generous people without many outlets for our charitable instincts. The state (in the generic sense of the word) now has responsibility for caring for the old, the lame, the mentally ill, the sick and the poor. The state carries out none of these responsibilities with anything approaching adequacy, but it assumes—and we assume—that they are now strictly state functions.

That is not to say if we relegated all our social problems to private charity, they would go away. The problems are far too severe, and charity never adequately treated the suffering of everyone. That's why we turned to the state in the first place. But once people let the state take over that which they used to do for their fellow human beings, they quickly forget charity completely. They forget how good it feels to help someone in need. They forget that giving is a vital part of being human. And pretty soon there is only the government, a government program, supporters of that program, and a bureaucracy that feeds off it.

The people, cut off from those who they once wanted to help are, in effect, cut off from part of themselves. The question of social need is now a matter between the government and a recipient. The recipient has rights. The government has obligations. And lawyers argue the fine points. The people just pay the bills, and are relieved of responsibility, concern, feeling. And it gets worse, for now we have come to rely on the government to such an extent that we sometimes don't even attend to those obligations we have to our own flesh and blood...

It used to be that the government provided the facilities so that everyone could get a free education if they wished. Now we seem to be saying it's the government's responsibility to





By Sand Toler for The Washington Post

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It used to be that the government provided the facilities so that everyone could get a free education if they wished. Now we seem to be saying it's the government's responsibility to guarantee everyone a free education. That's substantially different. Is that what we want to do? Is everyone in our society educable? What about those who are indifferent to education? Do we nonetheless guarantee them one? That lack of self-trust may have been why so many of us looked to Washington in the first place. I prefer to believe (and this too is faith) people will help each other if given a chance. If they will, individual citizens are bound to be eight times more effective than a government bureaucrat.

Either care about each other or we don't. If we do care, then clearly the time has come to halt the sham of a \$398 billion federal budget that really fulfills few needs, solves no problems, and offers only despair for the future.

You see, the dirty little secret Washington is hiding from is that we can't pay people to be compassionate for us. We either do it ourselves, as individuals, or we don't do it at all.

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stead, she talks about "the total frustration of ever finding five minutes' worth of uninterrupted time just to think. We lead such a frenetic pace here. Politicians are the new superstars. Everyone wants you at their party but you can't be a debutante at night and have good ideas during the day. Nobody reads books down here. That's why the debate on the House floor is nothing but platitudes. Everyone is too tired. The brain shorts out after awhile. The whole town's brain has shorted out. We (representatives) don't even have a place to sit down and talk to each other in peace and quiet."

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There is one thing the congresswoman did not talk of, nor did any of the others I interviewed. She never mentioned any feelings of satisfaction for her own considerable personal accomplishments. Not once did I hear anybody in government say that they enjoyed their jobs, or that they'd been on the bottom and for all the problems,

it was a lot nicer being on top. They seemed unwilling or unable to express any personal joy. I doubt the word joy is part of Washington's vocabulary. After awhile you almost shy away from the smart people in Washington. The smart ones just drip with despair. . . .

Most reasonable people are not against the U.S. having an army—and a good one that will fight to defend us if ever that becomes necessary. But we are against a system that appropriates billions to build weapons we don't need. Granted, that system employs a lot of workers who might otherwise be out on the streets. But it also enriches the corporate establishment, corrupts the political process and ultimately fails to provide us with an adequate defense. The politicians give the money to Lockheed. Lockheed gives jobs to the workers. The workers re-elect the politicians in order to keep their jobs. Meanwhile, we get stuck with C5-As that can't fly and an army so encumbered with useless military hardware that the only place it can win a war is on the drawing boards.

The same thing happens in the social programs. It's a different complex, composed of academics who flourish on government study grants, consultants who skim 5 per cent off the top of every appropriation, and labor unions with a vested interest in maintaining a bloated bureaucracy. But the net effect is the same. We are asked to pay for one thing and get something entirely different in its place. We are asked to provide a free college education for everyone, but what we get is an academic bureaucracy looking to perpetuate itself. And college kids who can't read. We are asked to pay for welfare for the poor. What we get is a social service bureaucracy that treats people like mice in a maze. And poor people practically starving on welfare allotments. We are asked to provide for the care of our elderly. What we get is Rabbi Bergman and the Park Towers nursing home.

The people who support the military-industrial complex are called conservatives. Those who champion the social service complex are called liberals. But the distinctions are meaningless. Both categories function in the same exact way.

Clearly, it is time to start searching for another way. But what? . . .

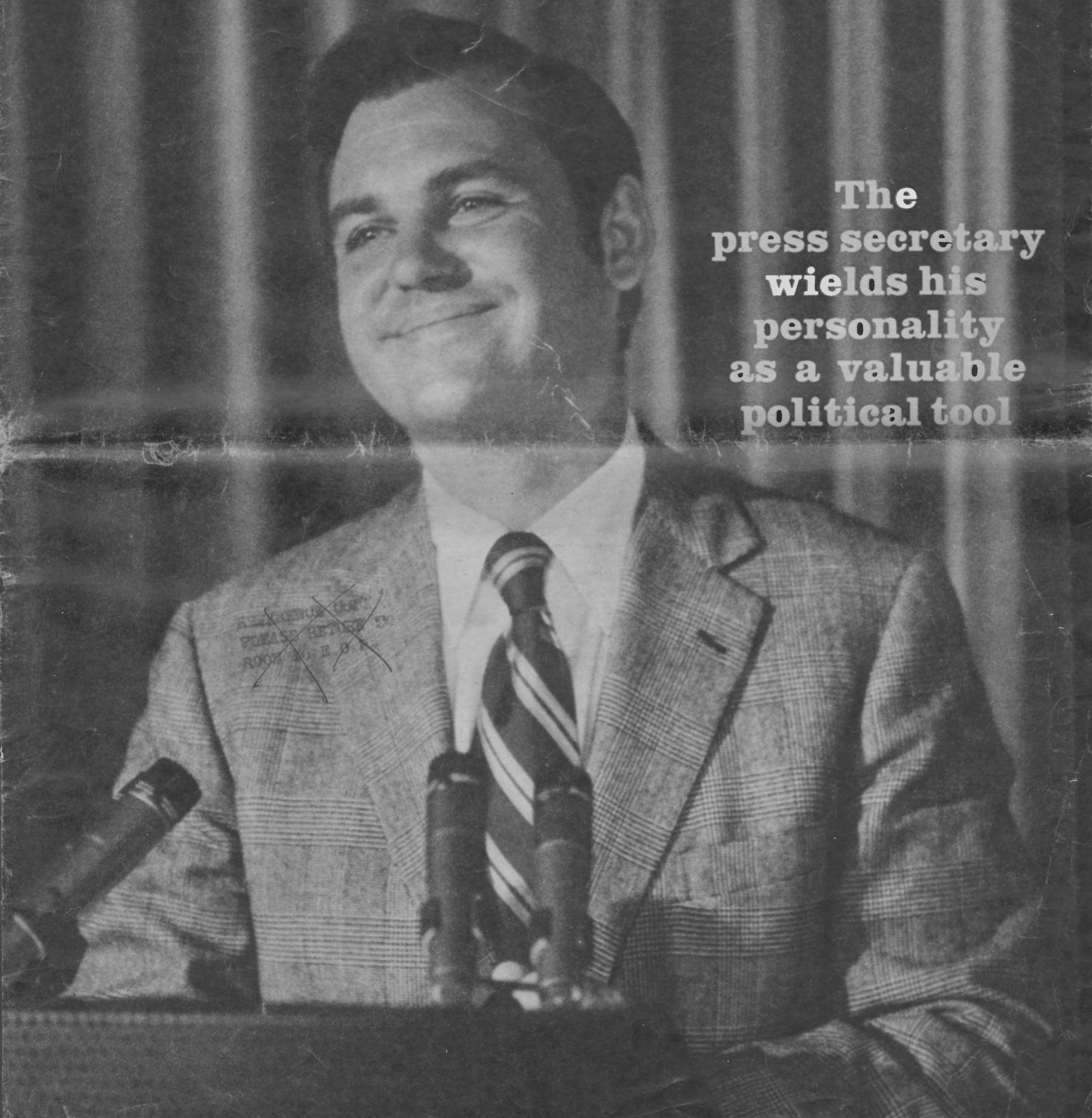
There is such a thing as a new direction. I believe (and it's faith—there's no

# Potomac

The Washington Post Sunday, July 4, 1971

**The  
press secretary  
wields his  
personality  
as a valuable  
political tool**

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TO: Ron Nessen

FROM: Margita E. White  
Assistant Press Secretary  
to the President

I believe you will find the attached speech by James Russell Wiggins, reprinted in this week's Editor and Publisher, of interest as well as of possible use in future speeches you might make.



## Perspective in the news

James Russell Wiggins, former editor of the *Washington Post*, now running the *Ellsworth (Me.) American* in his so-called retirement, has been a student of the press as well as a laborer in its vineyard for many years. It is and has been his favorite subject on which he can wax eloquent at length at any time orally or in print.

At a speech in Worcester, Mass., recently following Sigma Delta Chi ceremonies designating the American Antiquarian Society, of which he is president, as an historic site in journalism, Wiggins discussed a subject that has been bothering many newspaper editors lately: With its almost consistent disclosures of possible wrong-doing in the U.S. government and the U.S. system, a role that the press must perform, is it in danger of destroying public confidence to the point where the citizenry may turn to an alternative system which has not had the same press scrutiny?

His questions, which follow in brief, must be pondered by every writer and editor:

"The first American Revolution and the more recent one both demonstrated abundantly the power of the press to destroy confidence in existing institutions and to arouse a desire for an alternative. This negative role is one most congenial to the press. The news, by its nature, is largely negative. Its negative aspects derive from human nature and not from the nature of the press. It is our natural instinct and impulse to dwell on what is wrong more than on what is right. This is often a good thing, and not unhealthy or damaging most of the time, but there are some circumstances in which it may be misleading. Some of those circumstances may now exist.

"The press of the past few years (like the colonial press from 1765 to 1776) emphasized the defects of governments in the United States.

"The defects needed emphasis.

"As we emerge into a new era, it seems to me, we need to examine the intensity of the scrutiny which we focus upon our institutions. A press more skillful in inquiry and in the presentation of news than ever in the past has the power to place government conduct and all aspects of American life under more intense examination than any press that ever has existed anywhere in the world. Its very skill and capacity, along with the good it accomplishes, may distort perspective, warp judgment, and inspire mistaken estimates of the relative worth of our institutions.

"This is more likely to be true, in my opinion, because of the uneven scrutiny that the press exercises. The intensity of the light it turns on contemporary society in the United States is much greater than that it directed to the past and far brighter than that it turns upon events and governments abroad and immeasurably more penetrating than the light it can turn on the possible evils of any alternative system of the future.

"The very brilliance of the contemporary press as a critic today sometimes leaves the impression that there have been few deviations from rectitude in American governments of the past, few military reverses, few economic mistakes. The abuses of power, the departures from the letter of the law, the disregard of the constitution that occurred long ago are obscured both by the weaknesses of the national memory and by the less efficient press examination of governmental conduct in earlier decades.

"Our short memories, our superficial press attention to history, our romantic notions of the past, our journalistic infatuation with the "unprecedented", create an illusion of relative political purity and social serenity in the past that makes contemporary derelictions more odious. Those who criticize government today, like those who criticized 200 years ago, have, as a part of their armament, the popular illusion of a golden past from which there was a fall and a departure.

"There is an even more emphatic disparity between the ability of the press to scrutinize our own country and its governments, and its ability to scrutinize other countries and their governments. While in the United States, the right to know has steadily expanded, over much of the earth's surface it has steadily diminished. Only now and then in our media do we get a glimpse of what is going on in the Soviet Union. . . .

"If the proverbial man from Mars descended into our midst, and informed himself solely by the contents of the American media, he would be likely to conclude that in the United States, crime is rampant, traffic accidents are commonplace, highway deaths a daily phenomena, crimes a violence a part of our life style, political corruption endemic, air accidents an almost daily occurrence, general social malaise the prevailing climate, while at the same time, he would be impressed by the fact that there is little or no crime in the Soviet Union, no traffic accidents, no

highway deaths, no political corruption, no airplane accidents, and a general social climate marked by the eager cooperation of everyone from the Young Pioneers to the aged to hasten a Communist millenium.

"Fortunately, Americans are not so naive as to arrive at this conclusion, but the daily drip of disclosure that parades a succession of weaknesses and errors about the American system is not matched by the same perpetual train of revelation of wrong-doing, error and disaster in the Soviet Union.

"Nor is there column after column of news about what goes wrong in the Peoples Republic of China.

"The great information network that, but lately, brought into American living rooms the war in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia has been severed. It is not conceivable that millions of people could have been summarily exiled from Phnom Penh without dreadful cruelty, terrible hardship, incredible deprivation, but the march into the countryside has gone relatively unreported. There has been nothing to match the TV screen image of the nude child fleeing napalm bombs. There has been no photograph to parallel the pistol execution wrought by Saigon's chief of security. A vast curtain of silence has descended upon a stricken Indo China. The vanquished peoples of three countries have had the good grace to sink silently into the grave, mercifully sparing American sensibilities the sight of their anguish on TV screens and in newspapers.

"It may be unavoidable. But there is a distortion in the perspective of popular judgment on the relative hardships of a war to resist conquest and a peace achieved by submission to conquest. We watched the anguish of defense on our TV screens every night. We are not burdened by the cries of the sick, wounded and dying who have fallen to Communist tyranny. The camera does not lie about what it sees; but until it is omnipresent, it tells a constructive lie about the relative horrors or the terrors it can see and those it cannot observe. . . .

"The news presents an inadequate picture of the shortcomings of the past and of the follies in foreign lands and to that extent exaggerates the virtues of

(Continued on page 25)

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# Shop Talk at 30

(Continued from page 32)

past or present alternatives to American institutions, establishments and officials. The press is similarly handicapped in any effort to disclose the injustices of that other foreign country—the future. There are no reporters in the land of Tomorrow. So the very evidently defective Today must suffer by comparison with an ideal Tomorrow that exists only in the imagination of naive people who are deluded by the notion that man is perfectible, not just improvable.

"This kind of partiality in the disclosures of the news ultimately may present any existing system at such a disadvantage that it seems relatively less acceptable to society than a poorly remembered past, an only partially reported present, or a fanciful future. And if it does, we may live to see a time when public confidence is so shaken in the government about which we knew a great many bad things that an outraged citizenry turns to alternative systems recommended only by public ignorance of their defects and injustices.

"Without abandoning the alert detection and energetic exploitation of news about the defects in the government of our own country, how can we give the news that perspective which it would have if we could report with equal facility the news about the defects of governments in other countries? Without concealing the undeniable cruelties and violence of war in defense of our interests or our own freedoms, how can we keep them in perspective when we are unable to report the violence and cruelty of those who wage war against us or against our friends?

"These are troublesome questions for me. I can look back on a half-century of American newspapering in which, so far as I know, I have not hesitated to uncover and report wrong-doing, wherever, and whenever I have found it. Surely this is a function of the press. It is a function with which we cannot dispense without imperiling our system. But how do we restore the impartiality that would exist if we were as free to uncover and report the wrong-doing of every other system of government? How do we

escape the role of agents provocateur, arousing the citizens of this country against their own institutions?

"How do we give perspective to disclosures about the shortcomings of our own government? How do we fill the void in our reporting caused by our inability to turn upon others the same bright light of inquiry that we so sharply focus on our own country? How do we keep a balance between our negative reporting and our constructive reporting? How to give readers a healthy, balanced view of contemporary revelations of wrong doing—a view that will not let them either relax over iniquity or inspire them to turn to an alternative about the shortcomings of which we have not adequately informed them?

"To conceal or suppress accounts of our own failures certainly would be misguided policy, divesting Americans of the very information the democratic system requires. To conceal or suppress (however unwillingly) the accounts of the failures of other nations, at the same time, distorts perspective, misleads judgment, and warps opinion on the relative merits of rival regimes.

"The 'artillery of the press', from 1765 to 1775, shattered public confidence in the British government of North America so completely that the actual resort to arms was merely the physical climax of total alienation. If this drumfire of criticism and disclosure, maintained by 37 small and scattered weekly newspapers, was able to destroy the public confidence in British institutions, can we assume that the immensely more effective 'artillery' of our modern system of communications will not impair public faith and confidence in the government of the United States?

"Recently we have been much excited about the transgressions of the Central Intelligence Agency, as we should be if we value the preservation of our civil rights and constitutional safeguards. But how do we put even this in perspective. It would be too transparent if we were to insert an italic paragraph in every CIA story saying: 'Of course, these offenses aren't a patch on what is being done by every other secret police in the world'. We may believe that. A note of explanation of this kind would sound defensive and apologetic, and it wouldn't be convincing.

"We are left with the uncomfortable sensation that sometimes we are unfair to our own country and its government.

"This sensation first disturbed me in a major way in 1951. A committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, paid a visit on President Harry Truman, at the White House. We went there to urge the President to amend Executive Order 10-290 which set up the categories of classified documents and distributed the authority for putting on public papers the stamps of RESTRICTED, CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET, and TOP SECRET. We wished to limit the number of categories; to restrict the total number of documents subject to classification, and to greatly curtail authority to use the designations.

"When we had completed our presentation, President Truman turned upon me. His face was flushed. His dander was up. His patriotism was aroused. He was no longer just the President of the United States. He was very much Captain Harry S. Truman, the commander of Battery D. And he was very much the Missouri boy who read everything he could find about the history of his United States of America. 'Damn it', he said warmly. 'It's your country, too, you know'.

"And so, I commit to a rising generation of newspapermen the task of finding a solution to the problem of giving perspective to a news report that is curiously variable in the fierce light it focuses upon the weaknesses of our time and country, and the light that it turns upon the flaws of other times and countries. I hope to spur them on to the task with Harry Truman's brisk reminder: 'It's your country, too, you know'.

## Okla. weekly sold

The *Lindsay* (Okla.) *News*, a weekly, has been sold by Grace and Hershel Smith to Lindsay Publishing Co., a new corporation. Its officers include Bob Gilmore, publisher of the *Altus* (Okla.) *Times-Democrat*, who is president; Jesse Turner, advertising director of the *Times-Democrat*, vicepresident, and Tom Ricketson, publisher of the *Beaumont* (Tex.) *Enterprise and Journal*, secretary-treasurer.

### Linage—Cont'd. from Pg. 24

	1975	1974
<b>SPOKANE, WASH.</b>		
Spokesman—		
Review-m	1,318,223	1,270,623
Chronicle-e	1,466,080	1,389,920
Spokesman—		
Review-S	620,505	770,823
Grand Total	3,404,808	3,431,366
NOTE: Sunday and Grand Total includes Parade linage.		
<b>STOCKTON, CALIF.</b>		
Record-e-S	2,038,452	2,137,086
NOTE: Includes inserts—356,384 lines in 1975; 488,824 lines in 1974.		
<b>TACOMA, WASH.</b>		
New Tribune and		
Tribune &		
Ledger-S	2,106,370	2,219,644
<b>TOLEDO, OHIO</b>		
Times-m	486,564	547,313
Blade-e	2,084,955	2,306,959
Blade-S	1,150,436	1,318,133
Grand Total	3,721,955	4,172,405

	1975	1974
<b>TOPEKA, KANS.</b>		
Daily Capital-m	1,479,114	1,464,267
State Journal-e	1,304,072	1,209,754
Capital-Journal-S	561,806	548,870
Grand Total	3,344,992	3,222,891
<b>TORONTO, ONT.</b>		
Sun-m,S	1,095,247	1,075,361
Star-e	4,247,608	4,761,634
<b>TUCSON, ARIZ.</b>		
Star-m	2,549,750	2,891,756
Citizen-e	2,554,916	2,803,878
Star-S	904,246	1,047,382
Grand Total	6,008,912	6,743,016
NOTE: Sunday includes "Parade" linage.		
<b>TULSA, OKLA.</b>		
World-m	1,586,174	1,754,243
Tribune-e	1,617,589	1,724,521
World-S	741,722	770,191
Grand Total	3,945,485	4,248,955
<b>VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>		
Sun-e	4,274,356	4,390,872
NOTE: Includes Weekend Magazine.		

	1975	1974
<b>VISALIA, CALIF.</b>		
Times-Delta-e	1,560,230	1,210,202
NOTE: Includes inserts—404,664 lines in 1975; 279,328 lines in 1974.		
<b>WAUKEGAN, ILL.</b>		
News-Sun-e	1,753,500	1,901,186
<b>WICHITA, KANS.</b>		
Eagle-m-S	2,697,000	2,924,000
Beacon-e	779,000	955,000
Grand Total	3,476,000	3,879,000
Part-run advertising: Beacon-e includes 10,000 lines in 1975; none in 1974.		
<b>WILKES-BARRE, PA.</b>		
Times-Leader-News-Record-All Day	1,450,893	1,414,446
Times-Leader-News-Record-S	—	150,166
Independent-S	694,371	701,139
Grand Total	2,145,264	2,265,751
NOTE: Independent-S includes Parade: 68,922 lines in 1974; 56,423 lines in 1975. Times-Leader-S includes 66,697 lines Family Weekly in 1974; none in 1975. No Sunday Times-Leader fig-		

	1975	1974
<b>WILMINGTON, N.C.</b>		
Star-News-m&e	1,244,464	1,453,718
Star-News-S	332,982	410,942
Grand Total	1,577,380	1,864,660
<b>WINDSOR, ONT.</b>		
Star-e	1,454,127	1,352,624
<b>WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.</b>		
Journal-m	1,459,206	1,743,994
Twin City		
Sentinel-e	1,310,218	1,447,194
Journal-Sentinel-S	667,912	773,290
Grand Total	3,437,336	3,964,478
NOTE: Part-run and comics not included.		
<b>WORCESTER, MASS.</b>		
Telegram-m	960,186	1,047,277
Gazette-e	1,055,915	1,150,191
Telegram-S	1,130,896	1,177,610
Grand Total	3,146,997	3,375,078



*Jan Morris*

## The Arrogance of the Press

The American press has always been a rather different institution from the British. In so huge a country the local newspaper has acquired much greater power, and there is something forcefully romantic about the status of grand old organs like the St. Louis Post-Dispatch or the Milwaukee Journal, with their humming offices in the heart of town, their squadron of

*Jan Morris has written several books about history and politics. This article is excerpted from Encounter, a British monthly.*

reporters, their locally celebrated editors and regionally lionized columnists, their ancillary TV stations, and their dashing fleets of delivery vans. It was a Briton who called the press the fourth estate of the realm, but the Americans were the first, I think, to recognize the concept constitutionally, and ever since the newspapers of America have occupied a station in public life different in kind from their European contemporaries.

In America as a whole the press seems to me to have developed an unhealthy new arrogance. One senses it partly in the dogmatism, often slavishly accepted, of critics and editorial writers but chiefly in the disturbing vogue for investigative reporting. This springs largely, of course, from the success of *The Washington Post* in exhibiting the immoralities of the

### The News Business

Nixon regime, but it has gone much further now. The press enjoyed that letting of blood, and now too often seems to think that good journalism knows no secrets, respects no privacies, pardons no faults, and brooks no reticence.

A nation, they say, gets the press it warrants, and I think perhaps this predatory journalism does genuinely reflect a meanness or cruelty in the American spirit today. It is bad journalism, to my mind, for it is out of balance. It is unrealistic in its demands. It is immature in its excesses. It is distasteful in its relentlessness. It is often disgracefully inaccurate. It is harmful to the commonalty in its inescapable innuendo that nobody in high office is beyond suspicion. The right to say anything about anybody is not one of the inalienable rights envisaged by the founding fathers.

I find it easy to imagine a tyranny there: those handsome offices, of *Journal* or *Herald-Times*, transformed into bureaus of authority, those columnists and talk-show kings revealed as fawning spokesmen of the regime, those investigative tigers translated without much difficulty into agents of police or secret intelligence. It is not hard to see. They are halfway there already, if not in method at least in instinct.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



**From Jon Hoornastra**

**EYI**

*file*

# FURTHER MORE

## Is The Press Misusing Its Growing Power?

BY IRVING KRISTOL

The notion that the media ordinarily and rightly should assume an adversary position vis à vis government is both very old and very new. It was a commonplace of 18th- and earlier 19th-century journalism, was shouldered aside for some 100 years, and was reasserted in full vigor about a decade ago. Today, most of our younger journalists accept it as a platitude. But what they seem disinclined to realize is that it is a platitude with interesting implications.

The adversary idea has a distinguished pedigree. Its godfather is the very first American journalist of distinction, Thomas Paine, who is well thought of these days but little read. Tom Paine, like most radical republicans of his time, believed that government was essentially a conspiracy against the liberties of the people, and therefore the less of it, the better. His advocacy of the republican form of government was based on the assumption that this form of government was the closest one could, in practice, come to the ideal of no government. He wanted a government that would be both feeble and, above all, inexpensive—a constant theme throughout his writings was the lower level of taxation that a republican regime would be willing or able to impose on its citizens.

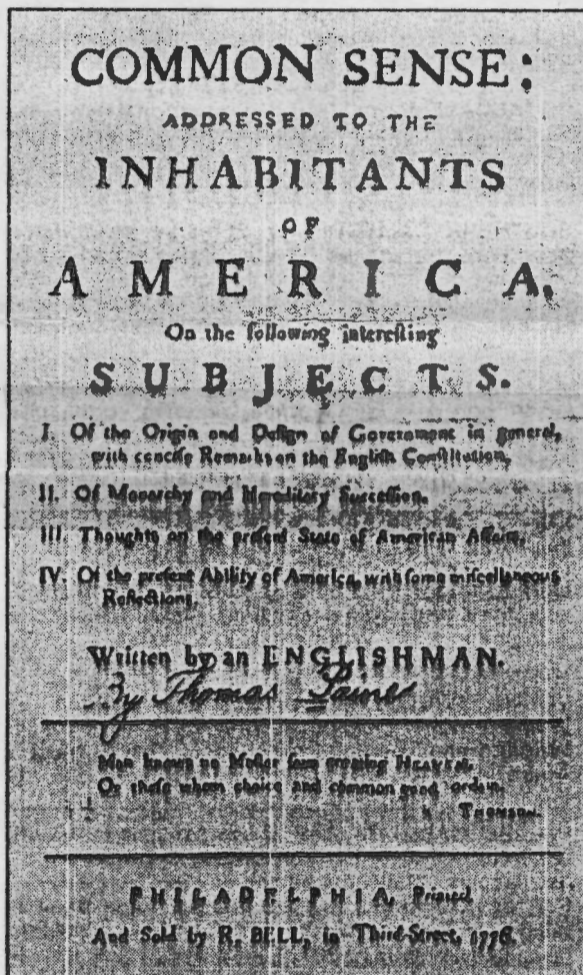
This hostile and suspicious view of government has been an enduring aspect of the American mind, from Thomas Jefferson to Barry Goldwater, from Thoreau to Paul Goodman. But in the course of the 19th century, it gradually ceased to be the predominant aspect. It was simply incompatible with too many emerging American realities—with the reality of being a great power having a "positive" role to play in the world, with the reality of corporate capitalism which needed a strong government as a countervailing power, with the reality of the welfare state and its enhanced responsibilities, etc. These changes in political reality were inevitably and naturally accompanied by changes in journalistic perspective. The press still proclaimed itself the "watchdog" of the people's liberties. It remained quick to expose and criticize government—but, instances of corruption aside, it was as likely to criticize government for doing too little as for doing too much. It ceased for the most part to think of itself as essentially an adversary of government per se, but rather as the chosen vehicle whereby public opinion influenced governmental action.

Indeed, one whole part of the press, the most "respectable" and influential part, came to regard itself as "the fourth branch of government"—i.e., as participating in the exercise of political power. Such participation might be done in a spirit of vigorous independence, and could lead to conflict with any of the three traditional branches; but in the end such a self-definition

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made journalism a part of the political establishment and endowed it with commensurate responsibilities. The major responsibility was to help government govern effectively and fairly, presenting the news *first of all* from the point of view of those who governed, and then supplementing it with the views of others. *The New York Times* of yesteryear was exactly such a newspaper, as indeed were most major newspapers throughout the country. That they were "co-opted" into the political establishment, as the accusation now has it, is the simple truth of the matter. That they were a servile branch of this establishment is, however, an absurd exaggeration. What we today take for servility was then interpreted as—and may still properly be seen as—an appropriate deference to democratic institutions.

It is worth lingering over this point, because it is the single most significant change that has occurred in journalism in our lifetime. The change is this: Not only do journalists no longer concede to government any prior claim to defining the news, they do not see government as having any right at all to have its point of view fully and fairly presented to the public. Any concession along these lines is taken to be equivalent to permitting the press to be "manipulated" by government. Instead,



"Most journalists today are not radicals à la Tom Paine. They are 'liberals' who believe in large and powerful government."

journalists today insist that *their* point of view is what defines "the news"—what is to be reported or not reported, or in how much detail or in what context. There is no more perfect illustration of this state of mind than the fact that no major newspaper today feels obliged to publish a communication from a government official in which he takes issue with a news story, and in which he tries to explain what he "really" said or what he is "really" up to. They may or may not publish such a communication, as they see fit. Fifty years ago, they would have taken it for granted that they had no choice in the matter.

This new posture is often presented as a long overdue exercise in "professional responsibility." It is also, of course, an exercise of professional power—and while the power is evident, the specific nature of the responsibility is

**"Adversary journalism today is rooted, not in principle, but in a kind of joyful schizophrenia... The adversary posture may be exceedingly pleasurable for journalists, but everyone else is beginning to suffer from cramps."**

not. The most that is offered by way of a rationale is that, in conducting itself in this way, the press is playing its proper and "natural" adversary role vis à vis government.

Now, it is true that there is always a degree of hostility and tension in the relations between any government and all journalism. Government will always believe that the truth as it sees it *is* the truth. There is nothing sinister about this attitude. The men and women in government are not more corrupt or more dishonest than men and women in any other area of life, including journalism. They are, most of them, trying to do a difficult job—the job of governing Americans—as best they can, as conscientiously as they can. They would like the public to appreciate their problems, and to understand why they are doing whatever it is they are doing. Inevitably they tend to see themselves in the best of possible lights and to put the nicest gloss upon their behavior—we all do that. Inevitably, too, they are resentful when the press suggests that there are other lights and other possible glosses.

All this, it must be said, is normal enough. What is *not* normal is the tremendous gap of credibility and distrust which, in recent years, has opened between public officials and the press. And I am talking about *all* public officials, the local parks commissioner as well as the President, the local housing commissioner as well as the governor or mayor. From the very bottom to the very top of public life today one hears public officials lament, in private conversation, that they find it impossible to get the activities of their agencies or offices fairly and adequately reported in the press. And this is not normal at all. In fact, it is pathological. How on earth is a democracy to govern itself if officialdom finds itself perpetually frustrated in communicating with the public.

To this question journalists are likely to reply that *they* will do the communicating, from an adversary posture, and that it is no part of their job to serve as "flacks" for officialdom. The trouble with this reassertion of the adversary tradition is that it has cast off the principles which supported and legitimated it. Most journalists today are not radical republicans à la Tom Paine. They are "liberals" who believe in large and powerful government. They believe the United States Government must help feed the world, defend and promote civil liberties throughout the world, mediate conflicts among the peoples of the world, redistribute income in favor of the poor and the unlucky, regulate the activities of the large corporations, "plan" cities and neighborhoods, etc.—all of which requires an energetic government with a vast, self-confident bureaucracy.

In brief, journalists today are overwhelmingly in favor of ever greater concentration of power in government—Federal, state and local—while, in their daily adversary proceedings, they create an ever greater distrust and suspicion of government. Adversary journalism today is rooted,

(continued on page 26)

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## Furthermore

*[continued from back page]*

not in political principle, but in a kind of joyful schizophrenia. And what is the average citizen to make of it all? If government is unworthy of his confidence, why should he want more powerful and more extensive government? How long will he respect a free press which constantly nags him in so contradictory a way?

The adversary posture may be exceedingly pleasurable for journalists, but the sad truth of the matter is that everyone else is beginning to suffer from cramps. That is not infrequently the case when one of the partners takes his pleasure irresponsibly, without due regard to the needs of others. Not only government but all the other institutions and political forces in our society—trade union leaders and university presidents as well as corporate executives, the political left as well as the political right—are becoming increasingly frustrated at what they take to be an irresponsible journalism. An adversary posture toward the press is becoming more prevalent than most journalists realize or care to admit. And, despite the First Amendment, no free press can long survive in such an atmosphere of distrust and hostility. ■

# The Press After Watergate: Getting Down to New Business

By Katharine Graham

“...The Nixon-Agnew administration, which set out to hurt the press, *did* damage us, though not in ways it had intended...”

It's obvious that in the wake of Watergate, the nation is going through a painful and confusing period of assessment and of adjustment to new standards of conduct for public officials. There is a new sensitivity to wrongdoing abroad in the land, and that is obviously all to the good. But there is also a new and rather indiscriminate emphasis on disclosure as *the* index of fitness for public office, and that, I think, is doing harm—harm to the nation in general and to the nation's press in particular.

Nelson Rockefeller and Wilbur Mills have found out about the new mood the hard way over the past couple of weeks. In Congressman Mills's case, what has made him an object of so much curiosity and ridicule is less the incident at the Tidal Basin in Washington than the fact that he tried to cover it up, first refusing to comment and then issuing an explanation which struck people as incredibly lame.

In Governor Rockefeller's case the problem is more complicated and more serious. On the one hand, it seems that the governor does not fully appreciate the pressures and demands which the new, superheated atmosphere imposes on everyone who is seeking a public vote of confidence. The best example is the governor's reaction to the revelations that his brother had financed a campaign tract attacking Arthur Goldberg in 1970. Governor Rockefeller's response—a belated acknowledgment that he had known about this dirty trick, and a belated apology—might have seemed adequate before Watergate. But to many people it apparently seems much less so now, after the Nixon White House team has been so roundly and justifiably assailed for recommend-

ing similar, though far more extreme, so-called dirty tricks, among other things, to discredit its opposition.

There are some tougher aspects to the situation, too. Governor Rockefeller, for instance, is not only being judged in a new climate; he is also being assessed under a new procedure, the Twenty-fifth Amendment, which has been used only once before. Judging from his experience and that of Mr. Ford when nominated for vice-president a year ago, it seems that vice-presidential nominees, when facing confirmation by Congress, are going to be subjected to far more scrutiny than they have ever received when nominated in the normal course of things. This is not bad; the shortcomings of the usual way we choose vice-presidents—in haste, almost as an afterthought, by exhausted political brains—are obvious. But it is not yet clear what standards ought to be applied or what defects in character or performance Congress should consider as disqualifying.

This is a general problem today. Of course the nation needs to know that any person entrusted with public office is not a crook. But public service also involves other qualifications and abilities. An emphasis on candor and an absence of wrongdoing, although primary and vital, can distort the process of assessment if it is carried to extremes and distracts the public and the press from other, equally significant questions.

This is where I see the less healthy influence of the Watergate experience. It's not too much to say, I think, that the Nixon-Agnew administration, which, as we know, set out to hurt the press, *did* damage us, though not in ways it had intended.

Among other things, the manner in which the stories of corruption and misuse of power unfolded made the press too much a party to events, too much an actor in the drama which was being played out. Some individuals became

celebrities, and the whole profession became regarded in some quarters as heroic. That is an unnatural role, and to some extent a dangerous one, which was thrust on us by default—the default of the other institutions, such as the opposition party and the agencies of justice, which especially in the early months following the Watergate breakdown failed to do their jobs. The press bore much the same burden with regard to Vietnam. It adds up to an overload, I think, which is not good for us or for society. Right now, for instance, there are signs that Congress still relies on us too much to do the probing which committees should be doing for themselves.

Watergate distorted our role even more because the press became not just a party, but an aggrieved, self-conscious party to the case. This happened not so much because our credibility and motives were so frequently and so loudly attacked, but rather because our professional poise and competence were questioned in another, much more painful, way. Many members of the press corps began to report the Watergate story in a basically trusting mood, relying on sources and on assumptions about official conduct which had proved to be reliable in the past. The most established in our ranks, in some cases, trusted most. It took time for the press to discover that we were being deceived and used, that the very assumptions under which we operated were—forgive the phrase—no longer operative.

This process of deception has always been at least a theoretical possibility to working journalists throughout history. But in our time it became a major hazard. The learning experience began with Vietnam and reached its logical climax with Watergate.

In Vietnam, it took a new group of journalists to cut through the fog of official assurances and reveal what was happening. To lay bare the facts of

*Katharine Graham is chairman of the board of The Washington Post Company. This article is adapted from a talk Ms. Graham recently gave before the Magazine Publishers Association.*

“...We now have on our hands problems of balance and perspective which we have not yet resolved, or even fully understood...”

Watergate, it took two young local reporters, unburdened by habits of trust and acquaintanceship. The point is that like the rest of the country, the press discovered how badly we'd been taken in. The result has been to validate that cynicism which the press is always supposed to have—and to make it not a general, professional attitude but a sharp, personal, and self-defensive trait. No one wants to be burned again.

So, there's now a tendency to jump on a Rockefeller or a Wilbur Mills, whether to compensate for failures in the past or to avoid the possible sin of underplaying what might be tomorrow's major scandal. This tendency goes beyond the traditional limits of intelligent skepticism, and even healthy cynicism, that are as important to our business as paper and cameras. What we now have on our hands, I think,

are problems of balance and perspective which we have not yet resolved, or even fully understood.

These problems are signaled to the press whenever someone says to us (as someone always does):

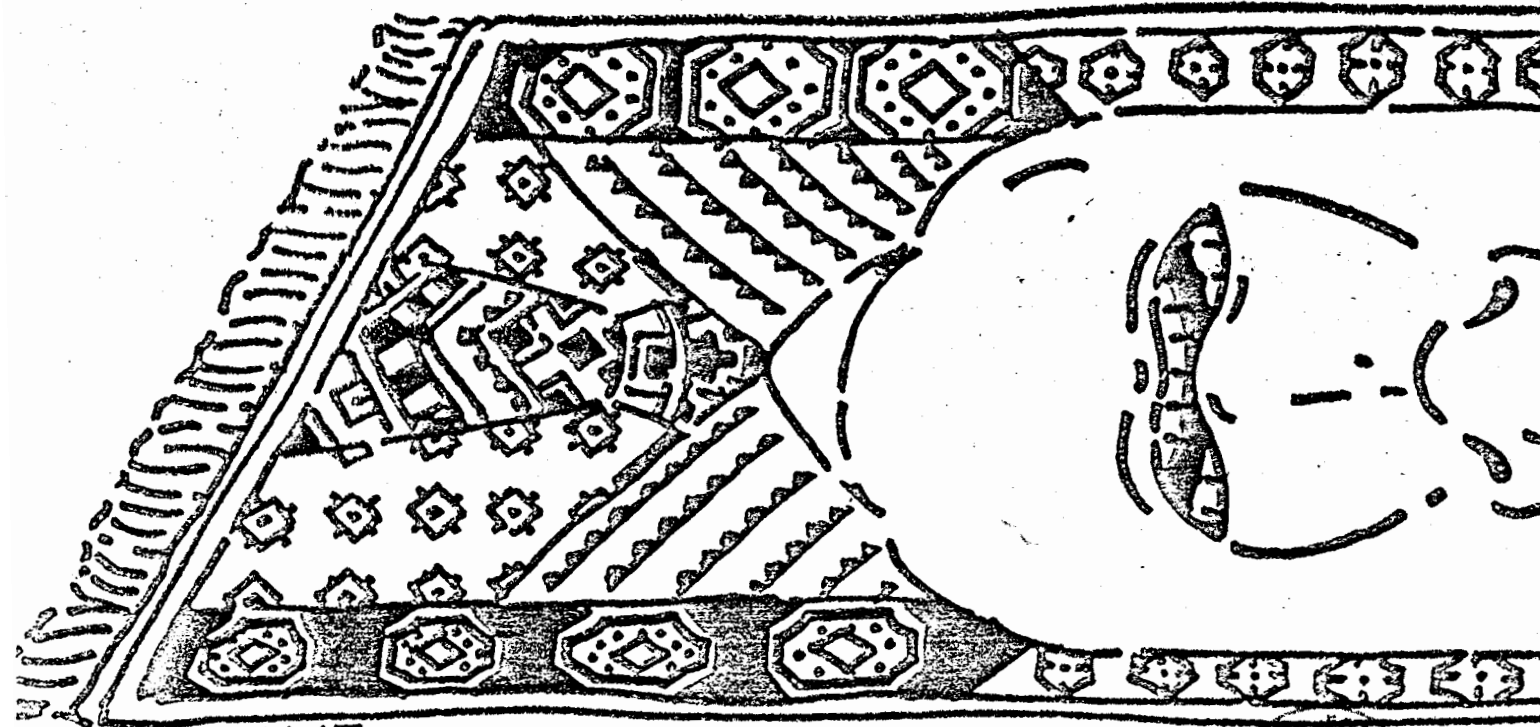
Stop . . . you are tearing down all our leaders . . . you are making mountains out of molehills . . . you are asking Rockefeller to live up to tests which no one in political life over a period of years can measure up to—least of all the congressmen questioning him . . . the press is being selectively leaked to . . . the press is unfair. . . .

There is also a tendency on the part of certain public officials to figuratively or literally stamp their feet and question even the right of the questioners to question.

But valid questions have been raised—and have to be answered. For in-

stance, in order to weigh Governor Rockefeller's qualifications for the nation's second-highest job, it seems vital to know a great deal about his fifteen-year stewardship of New York State. That is a harder, drearier, less entrancing subject than his huge gifts of money to his friends or his family's financing of a grubby campaign book.

The same applies to Mr. Mills. The most important questions about the congressman from Arkansas do not involve his private life per se, but rather his use of the public power he holds as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. His authority and expertise give him command over taxation, social security, welfare, health insurance, unemployment compensation, and other policies which can determine the financial security or even the survival of millions of Americans—and the suc-



S. CHWAST.

GERALD R. FORD



cess and profit of many more.

These enormously complex and important issues are much more difficult to write about, and less fun to read about, than the Tidal Basin swim.

Or take the somewhat different case of Henry Kissinger, another extremely intelligent public servant who does not entirely understand the new demands for disclosure. Kissinger reacts to interrogation with a wariness and displeasure which are bound to arouse our interest. But again, the pendulum has sometimes swung too far, so that seemingly tough questions of his candor and disclosure have gotten more attention than really tougher questions of his policies and performance.

Other examples abound. One editor of *The Washington Post* has told me about an on-the-record briefing on the SALT negotiations by the secretary of defense and the head of the arms control agency. At such a rare event, you might expect questions to focus on the substance of SALT. Instead, the two officials were barraged with such questions as, "Why are you having this

briefing?" and "Did the White House tell you to tell us this?" The whole session was permeated with the notion that anything offered on the record was a lie, a selling job, or both.

To see conspiracy and cover-up in everything is as myopic as to believe that no conspiracies and cover-ups exist. Such cynicism may be an understandable reaction to deception and disillusionment, but that kind of hangover from Watergate will surely handicap us in coping with other subjects that are, or should be, dominating the news.

Just as Watergate became the shorthand for an enormous tangle of events and attitudes, those other topics have their labels, too—energy, food, the economy, the environment. Behind each label is a mass of facts and factors of such intricacy and import that most Americans are just starting to comprehend them.

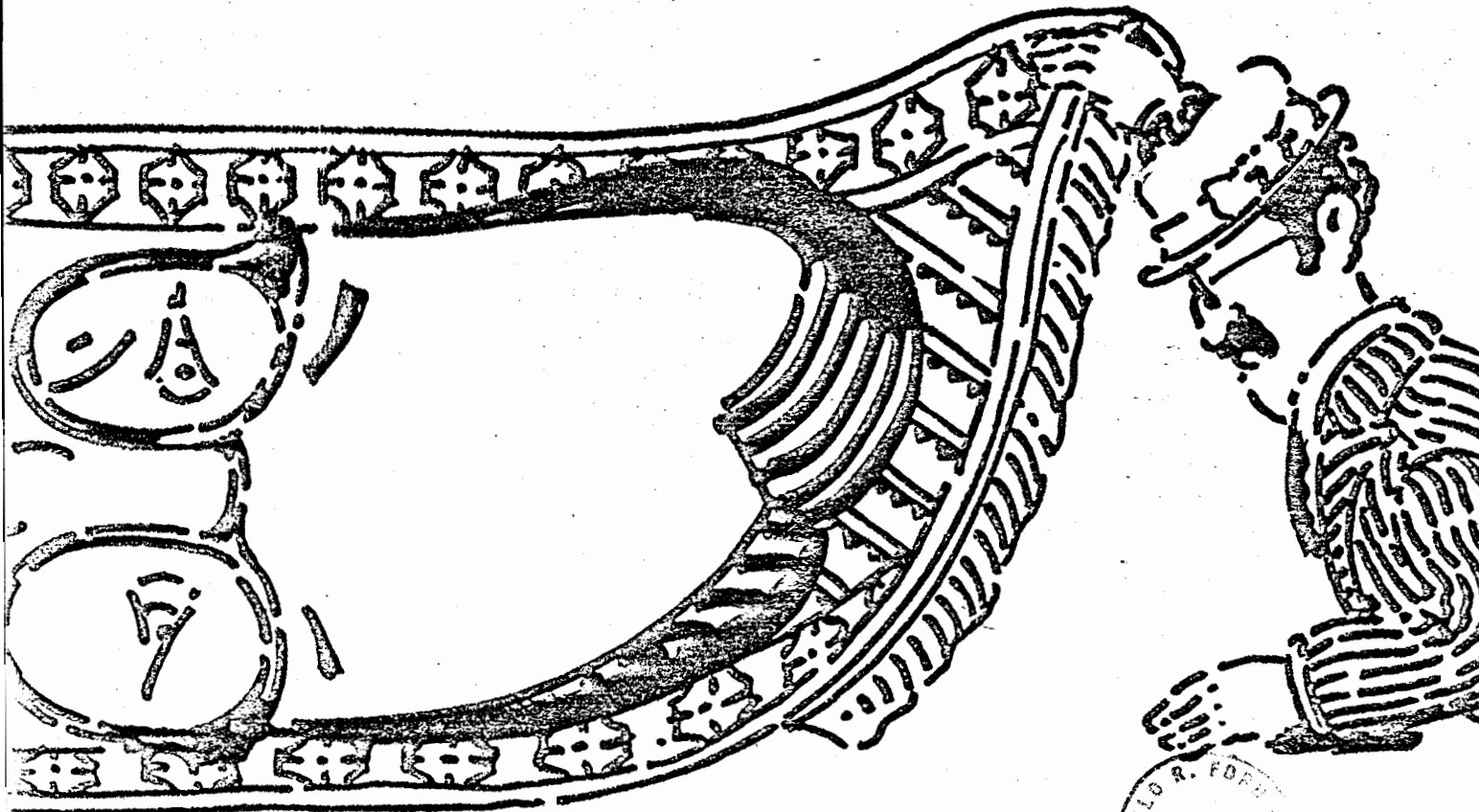
As the press bites into these other issues, we may find that Watergate was easy by comparison. Watergate, after all, did have one central figure, Richard Nixon, and one central theme linking

various crimes, a cover-up. These other issues—not new, by any means, but suddenly paramount—can't be so neatly organized. The Arab sheiks are not the whole story of oil. Conspiracy theories don't take you very far toward explaining fertilizer shortages.

Watergate, moreover, for all its scope and gravity, was a traditional kind of story. It required traditional techniques of investigative reporting and, at several points, the flat-out crisis coverage which the American media have learned to provide so well.

But investigative talent, even if backed by all the balance and dispassion and stamina we can muster, won't be enough for coverage of the crises in food and oil and finance which appear to be ahead. Those stories demand other abilities as well.

The first is the ability to comprehend a number of extremely arcane fields, ranging from macroeconomics to geology to antitrust. It is no mean trick to become conversant in a specialty which experts spend their whole lives mastering—especially if the expert prac-



“... To see conspiracy and cover-up in everything is as myopic as to believe that no conspiracies and cover-ups exist . . .”

tioners devote much energy to keeping their field obscure. The oil industry, for one, has only lately begun to talk about its pricing policies. Business taxation, directly affecting everything from retail prices to land use, is still unnecessarily mysterious. The change of a single comma in a law can make millions of dollars' worth of difference, and the insiders aren't about to give a cram course for reporters. As I've noted, this is the real challenge in covering Wilbur Mills.

Once the press has mastered the relevant mysteries, the next challenge is to report them in terms which our audience can grasp. This is both easier and harder than it used to be. We have outgrown the era of what might be called split-level coverage of specialties, the era when there were essentially two different audiences: the small group of experts who talked in their own terms among themselves, and the great mass who were generally uninformed.

That was the period of “gee-whiz” coverage of strange and wondrous things: wide-eyed accounts of man's exploits in space, breathless reports about new medical wonders, excited bulletins on discoveries of rare minerals at the bottom of the sea. It was a time when many laymen still accepted the notion that some subjects were too hard for ordinary mortals to understand—and when writing jargon-laden prose was thought to be a sign of intellect.

That time is gone. Literary and educational levels have risen so much, and the mass media have done their share of educational work so well over the years, that the public is generally much better informed. Like most things, this has the defects of its merits. We can ask much more of our audience—but they, in turn, ask much more of us.

Take, as an example, the Alaska pipeline. Twenty years ago, perhaps even ten, that tremendous multibillion-dollar construction project in the northern wilds would have been covered primarily as a tremendous multibillion-dollar construction project in the northern wilds. Stories would have emphasized the hundreds of miles of mammoth pipe, the treacheries of weather, the challenge and adventure of it all.

Five years ago, such coverage was more balanced . . . up to a point. Pipeline stories also reported the opposition to the plan and the project's potential impact on the caribou and the Arctic permafrost. In time, we had to report discussions of possible alternatives and their impact on oil prices in the Mid-

west and on relations with Canada. And by now, of course, the pipeline story has been seen to have even larger dimensions. It also involves, among other things, balance-of-payments issues, the continuing controversy over native claims, future policies on natural gas development, and the pressures of sudden growth in Alaska, the nation's last real frontier.

If that sounds like a magazine piece, it probably is. Magazines are in many ways the ideal medium for serious treatment of the major issues of our day. However much the industry feels squeezed by soaring costs, magazines still have certain luxuries—more lead-time and perspective than the daily press, more permanence than broadcasting, more immediacy and wider readership than most books. It is no accident that long take-outs on big subjects in the daily press are called “magazine pieces.” It's no accident that broadcasters describe some public-affairs programs as “magazines of the air.” Nor is it happenstance that people are more and more depending on news-magazines to give shape and coherence to the jumble of a week's worth of headlines.

Journalism of this kind is especially important now because the country is in a painful, challenging period, facing stubborn problems which can't be resolved overnight, with the possibility of really grave economic difficulties ahead. Those of us in the news business might as well reconcile ourselves to the fact that we probably face some more years of delivering exceedingly bad news. That isn't going to do much for our popularity. Some of the messages we bear are going to be unwelcome to both the public and the policymakers, in public and private offices, who want to preserve the illusion that everything is all right—or at least not completely out of control.

So, we had better steel ourselves for many repetitions of the old complaints: Why are we always reporting what's wrong? Why is the press constantly tearing down people and institutions and undermining public confidence and trust?

The answer is, of course, that the press doesn't tear down, just as it doesn't build up. It's not the business of the press to uphold institutions, to reform them, or to make policy. Our job is to relate what's happening, as fairly and completely as we can—whether or not that is what people want to hear and what officials want the people to believe.

That is a simple answer which can be hard to explain, especially to those who have a vested interest in the public mood. Acquaintances in the financial community, for instance, have told me often in recent weeks that the main problem with the stock market is confidence, that things would be much better if the press would just stop scaring people.

Whenever fear or pessimism—or, for that matter, confidence—is a real factor in events, our reporting on the existence of that fear or confidence *does* have an impact. And it is easy and understandable to blame or credit the press, even if all we do is serve as messengers.

To me, this is a powerful argument for perspective in our treatment of events. It is not, however, an argument for some kind of artificial balance between good news and bad, much less for silence, about the problems and the moods which do exist. The democratic system, after all, is grounded on the premise that the people should be informed, that, indeed, they can make intelligent decisions only when they are fully informed. It is no service to democracy to ration bad news.

The press these days should therefore be rather careful about its role. Watergate did create some problems in terms of our image and self-image. In the past two years, I fear, we may have acquired some tendencies toward over-involvement that we had better overcome. But we had better not yield to the temptation to go on re-fighting the last war and see conspiracy and cover-up where they do not exist, or focus on an individual's candor to the exclusion of every other aspect of his character and experience. Nor should too much be asked of us. We are not prosecutors, judges, or legislators—or cheerleaders—and we should never be.

It is challenge enough to do our proper job in times as turbulent as these. How we perform, how much wisdom and energy and professionalism we display, will have a bearing on the nation's capacity to cope with some very serious matters. How we perform will also, and not incidentally, determine the extent to which the press remains healthy and strong and, if not always well regarded, at least well read. In that respect, there is a lot to one of Thomas Jefferson's lesser-known observations about the press. He wrote: “The printers can never leave us in a state of perfect rest and union of opinion. They would be no longer useful and would have to go to the plow.”



HUGHES RUDD: What we have right now is one man's attitude toward President Ford - a Guest Opinion from Eric F. Goldman, Professor of History at Princeton University.

[Guest Opinion]

PROFESSOR ERIC F. GOLDMAN: The other day someone asked me to evaluate the Ford Presidency. I blurted out, "It all seemed vaguely irrelevant." On further thought, I'll stick to that. I'm afraid it's about the judgment history will make of Gerald Ford - vaguely irrelevant. We all know - and we keep reassuring each other - that he is a decent, likeable human being. He is certainly not dumb, despite Lyndon Johnson's celebrated remarks. He is anything but a do-nothing President. He has policies, significant if highly debatable ones, which he pushes hard. And yet. . . The American Chief Executives generally recognized in history as successful leaders have all shared two characteristics: an instinct for recognizing and for facing the essential problems of their eras; and a way of thinking which tied their programs in with inevitable trends of the present and the future. On his part, President Ford is a persistent practitioner of avoidance, of substituting rhetoric for reality or a sunny, well-meaning irrelevance. Are the great cities, the heart of American life, in dangerous disarray? He tells them about the virtues of municipal thrift. In foreign policy, when he's not leaving it to Henry Kissinger, he sloganizes about something or another called "detente". As for those on-rushing inevitable trends, the President seems to have declared them abolished, or at least suspended for his years in the White House. He will, he says again and again, take us back to the good old days. Perhaps as Gerald Ford goes on with his Presidency, he will catch up with the 1970's. Perhaps. Meanwhile, he appears the amiable captain of the ship, going through all the motions of command with diligence and sincerity while the craft takes more and more water through great, gaping holes.

RUDD: That Guest Opinion from Eric F. Goldman, Professor of History at Princeton University.

ANNOUNCER: The time now - exactly 16 minutes before the hour. In one minute, the CBS MORNING NEWS talks with Bernadette Devlin.



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PROGRAM The Today Show STATION WRC TV  
NBC Network

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SUBJECT An Interview with Richard Reeves

JIM HARTZ: Richard Reeves has been reporting on the political scene for the last ten years in this country. His work has appeared in many publications, primarily in The New York Times -- he was chief political correspondent for The Times -- and in New York magazine. He won several awards for his investigative reporting, and now he's written a new book, a controversial one, titled, "A Ford, Not a Lincoln." It's a critique of the first hundred days of President Ford's Administration.

Dick, welcome to Today.

I found fascinating, right toward the beginning of the book, your description of the changeover in Administrations, your point being that you did not think that Ford was prepared for it, that very few plans had been made for it, and that Alexander Haig had already become and continued to become the dominant force as chief of staff.

Would you describe what was happening during that time, and the subsequent...

RICHARD REEVES: Well, basically, we were all looking at the pictures of Ford smiling and swimming. Haig and Kissinger ran the country. There was an enormous power struggle within the White House between, basically, Ford's transition group, which had done planning for him, and the old Nixon people, led by Haig, to the point where Kissinger refused orders from Ford. There were investigations to find out who was taking out cartons of records from the White House in those days, and there were screaming matches and almost physical fighting during that 30-day period when everyone was focused only on Ford and he was only in front of the cameras.

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HARTZ: Why couldn't he get control?

REEVES: Because he simply did not have the ability to handle a leadership situation. He had spent 25 years of his life learning how to practice a kind of leadership of followership, of not offending anyone. And when his time came, he was almost physically incapable of doing anything about it.

BARBARA WALTERS: Dick, the prevailing view of President Ford was, and perhaps to a degree is now, that "Look, he may not be the brightest guy in the whole world, but he's awfully nice and honest, and it's time to have someone like that."

Now, would you tell us what your chief objections are to him, not only as a man, but -- you go beyond that -- as to what he represents?

REEVES: Yeah. I have no objections to him. I think he's a nice man, and I don't think that he's a dumb man. I think he's a pretty shrewd guy with a good basic intelligence.

My objection is that he got in a position to get to be President of the United States -- it may have been an accident, but it was no accident that someone like him became, and that the kind of politics that he's practiced for 25 years may well be the future of this country. Politicians who never make a decision, never stand for anything, stay on the periphery of power, and kind of the least objectionable alternative, the lowest common denominator; and they ride this escalator up without ever taking a step.

WALTERS: And that's what you see happening.

REEVES: I do see that happening, yeah.

WALTERS: Do you think, therefore, that President Ford will be reelected?

REEVES: No, I do not think that he'll be reelected, but...

WALTERS: And I know you thought that. That's why -- how do you explain this...

REEVES: On the other hand, I don't think there's an enormous difference, stripped of some basic ideology, between a Hubert Humphrey and a Gerald Ford.

WALTERS: You think he will run; you don't think it'll be Reagan. You think it'll be Ford who'll run, but...

REEVES: I think he may have real problems getting the



Republican nomination. I think a President, as Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson found out, challenged in the primaries has real problems because the cloak of office is stripped away as soon as anyone challenges them. If Reagan challenges him, he may well beat him.

WALTERS: And if not, you think the Democrats will win.

REEVES: It is -- I would bet my savings that the Democrats will win, although in the things I was talking about, I don't think that makes an enormous amount of difference.

HARTZ: What do you see happening in the next year or so? Well, actually, what ever's going to happen is going to happen before next July. Here we had yesterday Birch Bayh announcing and becoming the ninth serious Democratic presidential candidate. With the new rules in the Democratic convention, isn't there a possibility of a deadlock next July? Who do you see emerging from that?

REEVES: I think there's a possibility of a deadlock, but I think that it probably will be the man who wins most in the primaries. I mean there really is a legitimacy issue involved at this point. Nixon didn't run in '72; Ford has never run for President. And it's going to be pretty hard to take the nomination away from a man who runs through the primaries and wins some of them.

HARTZ: And what if he wins like 25 or 30 percent of the delegates?

REEVES: I think then he'll be able to put the rest of it together. I suspect that man will be Humphrey.

WALTERS: To get back to the book and your criticisms of Ford: One of the things you say, and I may not have it exactly right, is that Ford is always honest except when he has to lie. And you felt that he lied when he said that he thought President Nixon was innocent.

REEVES: Well, I know he lied when he said that. He had all -- he already knew the final evidence against Richard Nixon when he took his final swing through the country. And at every stop he, not only when he was asked, but he continually volunteered that he thought he was innocent and that there was no evidence. He knew that there was no [sic] evidence, and he was willing to talk about that, that he thought then that it was his job not to let the American people know that.

WALTERS: Why do you think he pardoned Nixon, and what do you think that did? -- in addition to pardoning Nixon.





REEVES: I think he pardoned Nixon basically for the reasons he said. I think he was personally unable not to, that he -- that Gerald Ford's whole life has been geared to having people like him, to going to bed each night with no one mad at him, which is not an uncommon phenomenon among adopted children, and that he simply could not leave Nixon out there hanging.

I mean my own feeling is that Nixon was kind of a part of his quest for a surrogate father.

WALTERS: And you've seen him taking no decisive steps in these days in which he's been President. You think he's just Mr. Nice Guy kind of going along...

REEVES: No, no. I think he's -- I think he's a decisive man.

WALTERS: But you said earlier that he takes -- that we have the politics of the lowest common denominator and the least objectionable alternative, and that he's just making no decisions and just kind of...

REEVES: No. By that, I don't mean that the man doesn't make -- you have to make -- for instance, I think it's a decision to decide not to do anything. The WIN Program was a decision; it was a decision basically designed to do nothing for as long as possible a period of time and delude the American people into thinking you were doing something. Because in fact, Simon, Ash, Greenspan were still running the economic program; they didn't want it changed, but they wanted the American people to think it was changing. And it was a decision to do that.

WALTERS: ...continues to do that? These are the way[s] he makes his decisions now?

REEVES: Yeah. I think that the decisions are carefully calculated to do very little. I mean I think there's a real art to it, which is what much of the book is about: how I think these people operate to give the impression of action when in fact they are not acting.

HARTZ: Part of that is the use of the press, and you write rather scathingly about the White House press corps. Would you summarize briefly what you say about then? And then I'd like to know what reaction you've had from some of the members of the White House press corps.

REEVES: Well, I mean, I talk about the White House press room in operation. One out of five people working in the White House works on public relations. It's an adult day-care center that you can -- the reporters are after stories, and if you feed them one story a day, whether it's 900 words or a minute

and thirty seconds, that keeps them happy. I mean it keeps them dumb; it keeps them occupied; they have important jobs. And the situation is totally controlled by the White House, to the point where they have lights on the wall in the press room which tell you when you can get up and leave. I mean it's kind of -- it's literally Pavlovian.

My friends, and most of them are my friends -- and I've been one of them at various times -- all say -- have all said to me privately, [Snaps fingers], "You're right. That's the way it is. That's the way they are." In some cases, some of the people who said it to me [were the ones] I was literally talking about. I mean everybody sees it in somebody else.

HARTZ: Did you fall into that trap yourself?

REEVES: I wasn't -- I've never been covering the White House long enough to be taken.

WALTERS: Nixon said that the White House was so tough, and a great many American people feel that the White House -- not the White House, but the White House press corps, and the press corps in general, is too tough on the President. And many people blame the whole Watergate thing -- you know, the press bearing down too hard. This is very contradictory to what you're saying.

REEVES: I hope in the book that I can convince them that they're wrong. I mean we're talking about -- we're talking about a man, Gerald Ford, who controls a \$400 million public relations budget. And if someone thinks that 50 or 60 reporters can match that -- I mean the fact is that anything good about Gerald Ford, or Edward Kennedy or Nelson Rockefeller or any other politician, is known by the American people. They take care of that.

So, in many ways, the role of the press is to point up what they're not saying.

HARTZ: What do you think the press should be doing, Dick? How should that be handled...

REEVES: In this Administration?

HARTZ: Any Administration -- the White House press corps.

REEVES: I think that it should be roaming around the city of Washington, talking to the people who are involved in day-to-day governing. I mean I literally believe the position of press secretary should be abolished. If the President wants to say something, let him say it or let him issue a statement; a copy boy can pick it up. And let those people, many of whom are very, very talented, roam around and talk.

I mean there should have been a hundred reporters in the Pentagon during Vietnam, not at the White House. There were a half-dozen at the Pentagon.

No one covers government; we only cover politics.

WALTERS: Is there anything now specifically about Ford that you think should be covered? Is there any one great mistake that you'd like to bring to our attention, or anything you think now should be covered that isn't being, or looked into? X

REEVES: Yeah. I would like to -- I would like to find out, for instance, why they have made no moves, except to buy time, on energy and what they really think they're doing. I would like to know the thinking that went into the decision to align this country with Franco, when chronologically you knew what happened yesterday had to happen. I mean we're going to have a disaster in Europe because of Ford's decision to go to Spain and ride in the back of a car with Franco.

Ford seems to confuse hard work and traveling with accomplishment. I mean he thinks riding in a car with Franco accomplishes something. What it probably accomplished is that we're going to be on the wrong side of another Portugal when Franco dies.

HARTZ: You were talking about the system thrusting the lowest common denominator to the top. Is there anything in the system that you think should be changed that would alter that?

REEVES: I don't know the answers. I wish I knew the answers. Because I think the end result of this is that the reason the American people are turning off on politics is that they have -- that they see through this much better than we in the press do, and that they have been turned off. And the famous apathy is a result of people like Ford controlling the political process.

HARTZ: I guess I was looking for: "Which came first? The chicken or the egg?" I don't know whether we can solve that problem this morning.

WALTERS: Why don't we just say the book is called "A Ford, Not a Lincoln," by Richard Reeves.