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content

for Canadian Journalists

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FABRICATION FACTORIES

by ROBERT LANTOS

Although the word "tabloid" refers to the size and shape of a publication, the "tabloid press" has a more specific meaning.

Tabloids are weekly newspapers which deal in a sensationalized way with a limited repertoire of subjects, the principal ones being sex, violence, and scandal and gossip about the famous. Moreover, although they use the news-story format, the tabloids have only accidental brushes with real events.

The size of the tabloid press in North America is impressive. The leader in the field is the *National Enquirer*, produced from its plush offices in Florida by one of the highest paid staffs of any newspaper in America. Its news-stands sales, which now exceed two million a week, are the third highest on the continent, immediately after *TV Guide* and *Playboy*. *Midnight*, with headquarters in Montreal, is the runner-up, with weekly sales of more than 600,000.

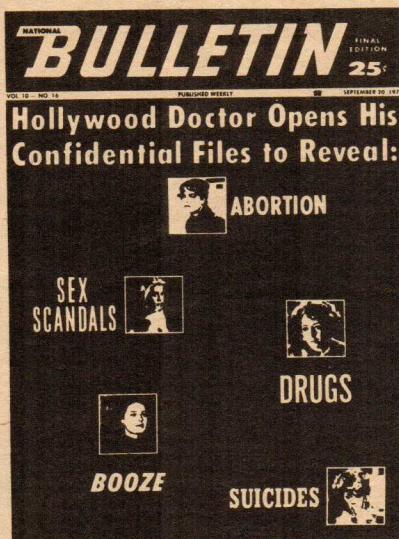
The *Enquirer* and *Midnight* are the only tabloids with such mammoth circulation figures. There are, however, about 40 nationally-distributed tabloids, with circulations ranging from 30,000 to 300,000. The two largest tabloids are a sub-species of their own — the "family tabloids", so called because of their status of greater respectability and less emphasis on sex and violence.

To reach their present circulation, the two "family tabloids" have had to look for distribution outlets beyond the news-stand and the kiosk. They found them in supermarkets, where they could reach the shopping housewife. In order to penetrate the supermarket chains, *Midnight* and the *Enquirer* had to offer a product suitable for the supermarkets to display. Thus, the palliative of sex and violence was replaced by such "human interest" themes as gossip about celebrities, rags-to-riches tales, miracle cures, and consumer protection.

The tabloids in their present format date back to the mid-1950's, when Generoso Pope, Jr. converted the *Enquirer* into the first mass-circulation weekly tabloid. There are, however, numerous predecessors which paved the way for the tabloid methodology. As early as 1890, the first yellow journals introduced the elements of extreme sensationalism, disregard for authenticity, and the emphasis on sex and gore which are characteristic of today's tabloids. Arthur McEwen of the San Francisco *Examiner*, one of the first Hearst Corporation yellow journals, summarized his paper's objectives just before the turn of the century: "What we're after is the 'gee-whiz' emotion. We run our paper so that when the reader opens it he says 'Gee-whiz' ". The same objectives could be attributed to any tabloid today. Except "gee-whiz" might not be the term used.

After a period of decline, yellow journalism experienced a revival in the 1920's. New York's *Daily Graphic* introduced new peaks of sensationalism, becoming the first full-fledged forerunner of present-day tabloids. The *Graphic's* coverage of the execution of Ruth Snyder, a convicted murderess, is nearly as grotesque as the tabloids' handling of the Charles Manson murders. In both cases, the events were the occasions for an orgiastic celebration of brutality. This is how the *Graphic* announced the execution:

Don't fail to read tomorrow's *Graphic*. An installment that thrills and stuns! A story that fairly pierces the heart and reveals Ruth Snyder's last thoughts on earth; that pulses the



blood as it discloses her final letters. Think of it! A woman's final thoughts just before she is clutched in the deadly snare that sears and burns and FRIES AND KILLS! Her very last words! Exclusive in tomorrow's *Graphic*.

By the 1930's most yellow journals either became "respectable", like the New York *Daily News*, or folded due to a failure to raise advertising support, such as the *Graphic*.

Today's tabloids are the heirs to the tradition of yellow journalism. Although advertising revenue still is minimal, they have succeeded in circumventing that problem by relying exclusively on sales revenue for profits. Tabloids are singularly uninterested in advertising. In most cases, less than five per cent of their space is devoted to display ads.

One of the most successful tabloid publishers is based in Montreal. *Midnight Publishing Co.*, owns, in addition to *Midnight*, four tabloids: *National Examiner*, *National Bulletin*, *National Spotlight* and *National Close-Up*. It also publishes four French-language tabloids and four detective magazines. Most of the company's sales, however, are in the U.S. More than a million papers are shipped south of the border each week, in what must be the largest export item in Canadian publishing.

Tabloids are relatively easy and inexpensive to produce. Because there is no research or verification, stories are written at supersonic speeds. The

average tabloid staff writer churns out three to four feature stories a day. There are those known to write as many as 10 or 15. Two writers and an occasional stringer can compile all the material for one weekly tabloid. *Midnight Publishing Co.*, for example, employs about ten staff writers and a few stringers to write all the stories for its five English-language tabloids. Such writing volume may seem dazzling to one accustomed to the rhythm of regular newspapers. But it is not all that spectacular if one looks at how the stories are pieced together.

First, as the writer need not concern himself with accuracy, he can write anything he pleases — off the top of his head. The only restriction is that it fit the story title and photographs, which he receives from the editor. Quotes, names, places and events are fictitious.

Second, tabloids follow a strictly-prescribed style of writing. Once the basic formula has been mastered, it is merely a matter of applying it and changing characters and plot.

General features of tabloid writing-formula are: Extensive use of slang, short, hard-hitting words, abbreviations, simple conjugations, short paragraphs, extensive use of interviews, a maximum of three paragraphs of text without a quote and a maximum of three paragraphs of quotes without a break, and the use of recognizable archetypal characters and situations.

In the case of sex-stories, for instance, there are at least three sex acts per story, mostly first-person accounts. Descriptions of sexuality are standardized through a taboo on four-letter "obscene" words. Instead, often repetitive euphemistic metaphors are used to describe the intimate details of sexual activity. These are the clichés of "soft-core pornography", in which such expressions as "love-nest", "honey-bush", "palpitating tunnel", "love-lips", "juicy grotto" stand for vagina, and "ramrod", "love-stick", "jackhammer", "plunger", "weapon", "prong", "loaded-rifle", "piston", etc., are used in lieu of penis.

With a few exceptions, most tabloid sex-stories are incredibly formulaized. Any page of any issue of *Spotlite*, *Close-Up*, *Bulletin* and others will be replete with passages such as, taken from a *Spotlite* story called "How Nurses Get Sex Kicks With Patients."

It might be a little rough on the heart attack patient, but these ladies don't care, so long as the quivering quims are filled with long, sturdy rods most of the day . . .

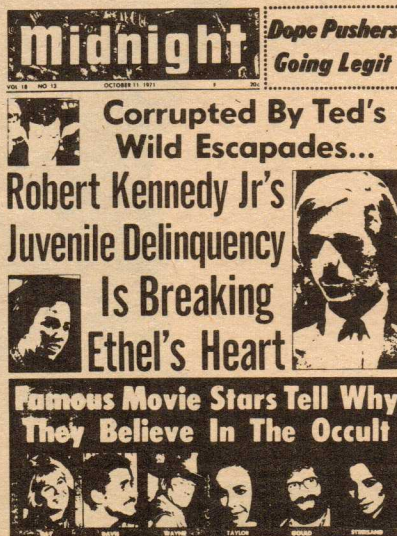
"Do you think I'm going to let a class A stud disappear just when he's slipping me the grandest tool I've ever had in my life?" asks nurse Rita Dunn of Atlanta.

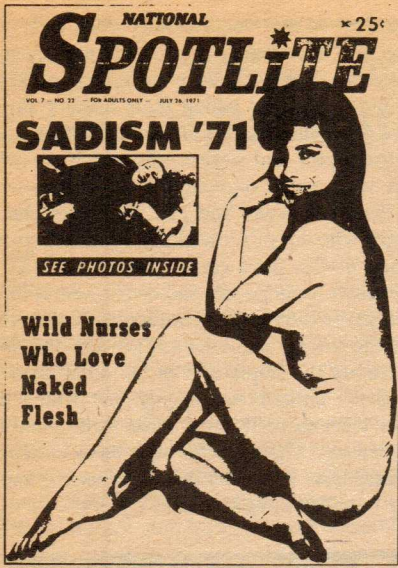
"Every morning when I make my rounds at 6 a.m. he's waiting for me with his tool lifting the covers about a foot and a half.

"I close the curtain by his bed, lift my skirts, stuff my panties in my pocket and masturbate a little to get the tunnel nice and creamy for him . . .

"She had one down in front of her where she could get her hot lips on his organ, another behind her giving it to her in an unmentionable place and the third underneath where she could get her silky quim on his little tool."

The tabloid sex-story is further regimented by its pro-puritan morality. When dealing with sex, tabloids take a condemnatory position toward





every form of sexual activity outside marriage. An *Examiner* story entitled, "Hollywood Sex Hangups — Lesbianism ... Mate Swapping ... Transvestism", which after giving copious descriptions of the various "perversions", begins to sermonize, and illustrates this attitude:

The warped sexual desires of many movie directors, producers and studio executives also is a deciding factor in turning Hollywood into the sex hangup capital of the U.S., if not the world . . .

"The whole perverted direction today's movies are taking can be traced back to the perversions of certain directors and producers, if you want to know the truth," insists Dr. Webber. (He is introduced earlier in the story as 'a psychiatrist whose case files contain the names of numerous West Coast personalities'.)

"They have called America a sick nation, and that may or may not be true — but I know that Hollywood, for sure, is a sick town!"

Third, there is no rewriting in the tabloids unless a story is rejected by the editor. Normally, the story is typed directly in its final version, then passed to the editor. The hastiness of the writing shows in the carelessness and sloppiness of the copy. Frequently, the same word is used half a dozen times in the same paragraph, and, in extreme cases, characters have been known to mysteriously change names through a story. Reginald Potterton, a former *Enquirer* writer describes in a *Playboy* article how a typical story in the most reputable of all tabloids was handled:

I was waiting in the office of one of the desk men one morning while he checked a column over the office telephone with its author. The conversation went something like this: "Listen, how come you've got John Wayne punching some loudmouth drunk in Tokyo two paragraphs after you've got him punching another loudmouth drunk in Copenhagen?" There was a pause while the voice at the other end made its explanations. The desk man nodded and then put his pencil to the copy. "I got it", he said finally, "Make the second one Brod Crawford."

The only difference between the *Enquirer* and the less-prestigious tabloids is that whereas the desk editor in this case caught the error, in smaller tabloids it would have gone undetected.

Tabloid photography requires even less effort than writing. Photos are either purchased in bulk from European agencies or lifted from other publications. Cheesecake shots, used arbitrarily to illustrate stories such as "I Need A Different Man Every Night — Sighs Volumptuous", (any name will do), and pictures of deformities and mutilations are obtained from the agencies at not more than \$5 each. Photographs of celebrities sometimes are bought but more frequently borrowed from other papers. Finally, pictures of sexual activity and "soft-core porno" are invariably

ably pirated from any of the hundreds of glossy, \$5 or \$6 sex magazines on the market.

As most of these magazines are becoming too explicit for even the most permissive tabloids, such as *Spotlite*, the airbrush plays an active role. Another favorite source for pictures is the movie-magazine, especially the European ones, which feature many sexy, semi-nude shots that fit conveniently into tabloid stories.

A company owning several tabloids can minimize expenses by re-using the same photographs — after a decent interval — in each paper, illustrating completely different stories. Thus, one Shelly Hardy, whose nude picture appears in the November 29, 1971, issue of *Spotlite*, as the heroine of a story entitled "Big-Breasted Cows Look Good, but Small Girls Are Dynamite in Bed — Boasts Bite-Sized Shelly Hardy", reappears in the March 13, 1972, issue of *Close-Up* as Mona Hall, who complains that "she doesn't like being treated as a sex object all the time".

Ironically, in the *Spotlite* story, she has problems seducing because her breasts are too small: "He was reluctant at first. I knew he was thinking about my boobs.", whereas in the *Close-Up* version she says: "My boobs were made for squeezing . . . And I've had more men slobbering down my blouse trying to get a suck and a feel than I care to name."

PSYCHIATRIST USES OWN WIFE FOR MADNESS EXPERIMENTS

In another instance, a picture of a very young girl slipping off her blouse appears in the November 15, 1971, issue of *Close-Up* under the headline "Hypnotist Ravages Young Virgins". The same photo is in the January 3, 1972, issue of *Spotlite*, under the banner "Daughters of High-Class Families Become Whores for Kicks."

Unlike other media, tabloids need not wait for events to happen in order to report on them. They are in the uniquely advantageous position of being able to create anything they wish to write about.

It is remarkably simple to fabricate any story by matching up completely unrelated photographs and text. The tabloid methodology is one of reconstruction. It begins with an angle, and then works its way backwards to assemble the story. The matching of the materials is often arbitrary.

For example, in a story about orgies, any picture of a group of half-naked people will do. In other cases, especially in the bigger tabloids, the reconstruction of events is more elaborate.

Midnight's cover story in its October 18, 1971, issue entitled "Proof That Pres. Kennedy Survived Assassination: PHOTOS SHOW JFK ALIVE ON SKORPIOS" sold a record number of copies. Its sales of 727,983 copies (ABC statistics) were more than 100,000 higher than the three previous issues, which sold 602,717, 609,173, and 620,085 copies, respectively. Two blurred photographs, depicting three men and a woman amid some trees were printed on the front-page. The same pictures, along with several snapshots of eye-witnesses, Kennedy, Jackie and Onassis

are shown in the story, which occupies a two-page spread.

According to *Midnight*, the pictures were taken by chance by a "British tourist on a cruise of the Greek Islands." They allegedly show JFK in a wheelchair with a bandage on his head, a doctor and an attendant at his side, along with a woman who "bears a startling resemblance to Jackie Kennedy Onassis." All the credit for the discovery is given to the British tourist, one George Duncastle, and other sightseers.

The story follows in the wake of another one on the same theme called "JFK Did Not Die in Dallas", in a previous issue of *Midnight*. The second story is set up to reinforce the first one, by suggesting that Mr. Duncastle realized the true identity of the people in his two pictures only after he read the first story in *Midnight*: "The shot was snapped from a holiday cruise ship by a vacationing Britisher who had no idea of the importance of the photo he had taken."

Duncastle supposedly walked into *Midnight's* London office and "pulled two black and white 35mm prints out of a manila envelope" (Midnight, it may go without saying, has no London office.) According to the article, the pictures were "fuzzy because of the distance involved (they were taken offshore from Skorpios, hundreds of feet from the subject)." In the rest of the story, other witnesses are quoted as saying that they, too, had sighted the mysterious man in the wheelchair.

Although *Midnight* takes no responsibility for the information in the story, its position is clear. The story concludes: "Six unshakable eye-witnesses — plus two profoundly disturbing photographs. Can they all be mistaken? Are they all part of a vicious hoax? Or did John F. Kennedy live on for seven years after Dallas — just as many hard-nosed European journalists have been saying all along?"

The construction of this story was relatively simple. The two "profoundly disturbing" photographs were taken on Montreal's Mount Royal, a five minutes drive from *Midnight's* headquarters. The four subjects were all *Midnight* writers, cheerful to get away from the office for an hour of fresh-air posing.

One writer, of about the same height as JFK, was decorated with a turban-like head bandage. Another one wore a white lab coat, which identified him as the doctor. The third one was in street clothes, which was appropriate for an attendant. The fourth one, the only female of the group, wore slacks, a sweater, large sun-glasses and a kerchief on her head, thus becoming the former First Lady.

To round out the picture, a wheelchair was rented for the occasion, and, for a final touch of reality, the shot was taken with a telephoto lens from a distance of about 200 feet and slightly out of focus, thus ensuring the "fuzzy" quality.

This fuzziness served a dual purpose. First, it was the kind of picture one would expect from a tourist taking snapshots at a distance, and second, it showed only the blurred features of the subjects, thereby making exact identification impossible.

Still working backward, *Midnight* added three genuine photos of Jackie wearing sweaters, big dark glasses and a kerchief, and drew attention to them with the caption: "Compare these three photos of Jackie with photo of woman taken by Mr. Duncastle. Note similarities in glasses, kerchief." After this, the writing of the story was simply a matter of inventing the eyewitnesses' names and quotes, and filling in the details — and the process of reconstruction was complete.

This method is standard procedure for most tabloid stories, with the difference that often, instead of posed pictures, stolen or purchased ones are used. In this way, celebrities find themselves portrayed in the pages of a tabloid. The all-time favorites for tabloid gossip, scandal and "shocking revelations" are Onassis and the Kennedys, followed by such film stars as Frank Sinatra, Elizabeth Taylor, and Raquel Welch.

WOMAN REFUSES TO LEAVE CAR HER HUSBAND DIED IN

By JAY WARREN

The police found bones across the way when all they had called them and reported that he was missing.

The 37-year-old woman was found on the edge of a field about 100 yards from the road. She was found in a car which had been abandoned on the edge of the field. The police found the bones in the car. The police found the bones in the car. The police found the bones in the car.

Mr. Kasper broke down completely when he heard the news. The tragedy was reported by a local newspaper. The police found the bones in the car. The police found the bones in the car. The police found the bones in the car.

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She Turns It Into a Home For Herself and Two Kids



Widow Kasper now lives in the car with her two adorable children. She had turned the car into a home for herself and her two children.

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Typical front-page stories of this genre: "The Ruin of His Reputation Too Much for Him to Bear — Teddy Tries to Commit Suicide" (*Close-Up*); "Jackie Onassis Believes in Reincarnation — and Fears the Day She Will Meet JFK Again" (*Examiner*); "Onassis Secretly Owns Mexican Marijuana Fields . . . 25 % of World's Supply Is Growing on His Land" (*Midnight*); "European Investigator Uncovers: Names, Photos of 5 Men That Jackie Secretly Dated After She Married Onassis" (*Midnight*); "Liz Disgusted! Burton Reveals Strange Sex Urges While On Drug Trip" (*Bulletin*); "How Paul Newman Lives With Impotence" (*Bulletin*); "Frank's Secret Revealed . . . The Real Reason Sinatra Retired From Show Biz. Gov. Reagan Wants Him As Presidential Running Mate for Next Election!" (*Examiner*); and "Sex Queen Forced to Work in Porno Movies . . . Raquel Welch Hit by the Hollywood Depression" (*Examiner*). One may wonder how the tabloids get away with it. Why don't the maligned celebrities sue, and why is it that about five million people in America faithfully buy tabloids and believe them?

The first question is easier to answer. The tabloids' near immunity to legal action stems from what Carl Grothman, a former editor of the *Enquirer*, calls the "Historic Precedent" principle. The idea is that if the celebrity in question has at any time committed an act similar to the one the tabloid accuses him of, he is in no position to sue.

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For example, if John Wayne once punches a drunk and has a reputation of toughness, the tabloids have carte blanche to print endless stories about his fistfights, even if they are imaginary. Legally, if a paper can show that, in the public eye, John Wayne is known for fistfights, it stands a good chance of winning a suit, even if the specific story it printed was totally fictitious. Moreover, lawsuits generate so much adverse publicity for the suing party that they seldom are pursued to the end. According to Grothman: "All the public cares about is the charge made against the guy, not whether he is guilty or innocent. That's what sticks in their memory".

Why millions of Americans regularly buy and believe the tabloids is a more complex problem. As most of the content is totally inauthentic, and the rest highly inaccurate, their popularity in a part of the world which is saturated with information, facts and data by a sophisticated network of mass media, is indeed peculiar.

To understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to know something about who are tabloid readers. All the direct evidence, such as letters from readers and marketing statistics, corroborate the view that the tabloid readership is overwhelmingly lower-economic class with minimal education. The tabloids consciously cater to the lowest common denominator, aiming at an audience often a shade above illiteracy.

Tabloids are conscious of their working-class following and angle their stories to please the "little man." In consumer protection stories about all types of rackets, the tabloids never hesitate to accuse Big Business and government of corruption and collusion against the average citizen. Celebrities and the wealthy often are treated ruthlessly, but rags-to-riches stories or stories of deprived individuals are gentle.

Tabloids think their readers are conservative, and therefore remain reverent toward authoritative figures and public heroes. In sex, they combine intimate descriptions of sexual activity with a morally condemnatory tone. Thus, promiscuous women are referred to as "sluts" and "nymphos", people with out of the ordinary sexual preferences are "perverts" and "degenerates", and generally, the sex articles' attitude is rather puritan.

It is not unusual for a tabloid to disclose some "monstrous perversity", such as "Sisters Marry — And Judge Rules It Legal" (*Close-Up*), and then run an editorial in the same issue protesting against the avalanche of moral decadence in contemporary society.

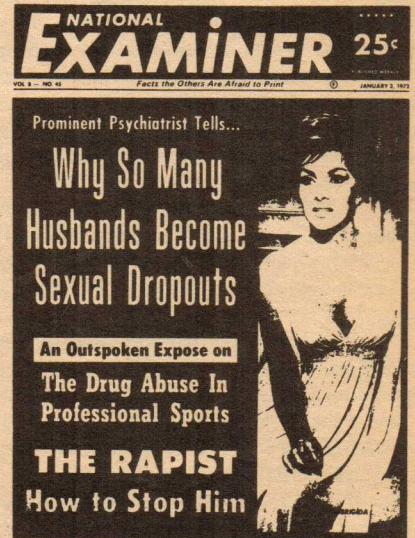
The tabloids provide a "safe" kind of pornography for the conservative-minded who, while interested in reading about sex, have puritan values and do not want them challenged. The slant of the tabloid articles on sex is inherent in the vocabulary used. A typical "soft-core" story in *Close-Up*, entitled "Sex Life of the Campus Coed — College Has Become A Four-Year Orgy," begins: "Ever wonder what happens to the sweet, innocent young girl who goes away to college a virgin and comes back a pot-smoking, braless slut? What is it that makes her change this way? What is it that turns a well-bred young lady into a promiscuous, sex-hungry woman?"

Although they know they cater to a particular social sector, the tabloids proffer no point of view of their own. They try to echo the views of their readers — and shape their editorial policy accordingly. The present flourishing of the tabloid industry suggests that the publishers' interpretation of their readership's world-view is accurate. Unlike other publications, tabloids have no commitments to any ideology or to any advertiser. While advertisers, through their financial influence, may dictate much of the style and content of today's media, they are insignificant among the tabloids.

Once we identify the tabloid reader, we can try to answer the question why he believes in the tabloids.

The key is that the tabloids deal only with themes which are firmly engraved in popular myth and folklore. They reinforce those ideas and positions and prejudices which their readers already believe or at least suspect. They tailor their stories to fit the myths and stereotypes which are widespread in the social segment for which they write.

Myths such as the bad girl who does and the good girl who doesn't, the Hollywood starlets who sell their bodies for a career, the whore with the golden heart, college sex and drugs, secret hippie rituals, jet-set perversions, miraculous cures, reading of the future, supernatural powers and so on — these are the staple diet of tabloid stories. As long as the tabloids write only that which their readers wish to read, they have little chance of going wrong. Their stories will have credibility no matter how ludicrous they may seem, and no matter how fictitious they are.



Another reason for the tabloids' credibility is the assumption that newspapers which tell outright lies will be prosecuted and dealt with by the authorities. As the truth seldom is objective, and as there often are more truths than one, it would be impossible to enforce any decrees against inauthenticity without at the same time sacrificing plurality.

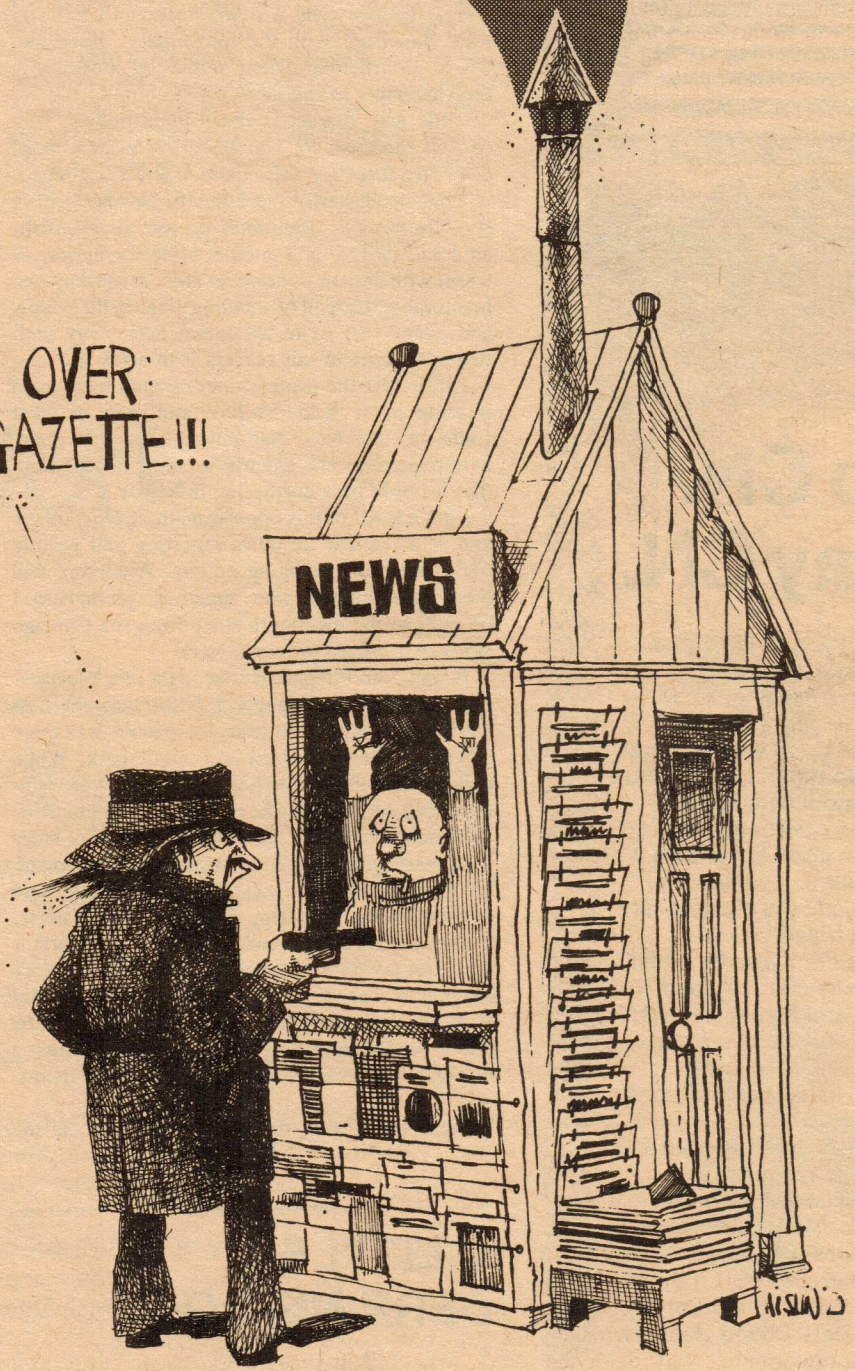
Thus, freedom of expression must also include the freedom to lie. The public's intrinsic respect for the reliability of the printed word and the news-story format, works for the tabloids in the sense that it gives even the skeptics the impression that, despite exaggeration and sensationalism, there must be a grain of truth in tabloid stories. It seems inconceivable that completely fabricated stories can be printed and sold openly on the news-stands in hundreds of thousands of copies, without anyone raising a cry against them.

To the reader who may ask why, if what the tabloids write is true, do such sensational stories not appear elsewhere, the tabloids have an answer on their front page. "Facts the Others Are Afraid To Print," reads the *Examiner's* logo, while the *National Informer* carries the subtitle "Truthful News of All Facts of Life." The tabloids frequently refer to the collusion of the slick mass-media to keep the truth hidden from the populace, and to the fear of the liberal press to "tell it the way it is."

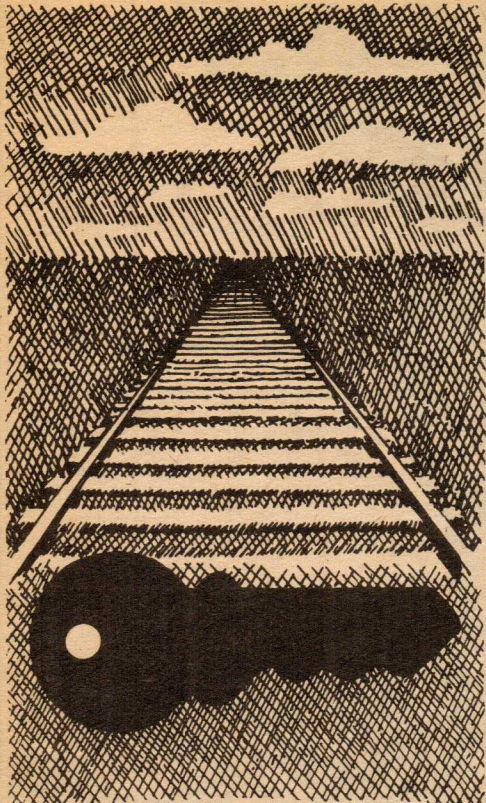
The truth of the matter is that the tabloids are not alone in manufacturing information. They have extended the practice of manipulation, distortion and censorship by omission, to its culmination. Rather than slanting news to fit their ideology, the tabloids create them as the need arises, much like a vending machine operating punctually at the drop of a coin.

Robert Lantos recently completed his master's degree thesis for McGill University, Montreal, the subject of which was the tabloid press, for which he once wrote.

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NEW, ER, NEWER JOURNALISM

by EARL J. JOHNSON

When you cease to be a news editor and become a fulltime reader for your own pleasure you start questioning some of the rigidities of your former craft.

You wonder why a news story can't tell you what happened with the informality, grace and wit of an articulate friend talking at lunch; why the characters in the news don't come to life for you the way characters do in good novels; why so few reporters let you know by even a word or phrase that they were there when it happened.

You wonder why there has to be one writing style for news — often third-person, stand-offish, cold and dull — and another style for fiction — warm with human juices, readable, rewarding and memorable. Instead of standing close to the people and events we write about we lean away and, perhaps, some of our readers lean away too.

I hear that the professional circuits have been buzzing lately with the pros and cons of what some call the New Journalism; also that many newspapermen are against it, or at least afraid that it might be a corrupting influence.

I got a whiff of this opposition three Novembers ago at a seminar on news reporting and writing for a group of managing editors. Assuming that they represented a new breed in journalism I brought to the meeting a story from the Chicago *Sun-Times* of the previous week.

It was Tom Fitzpatrick's account of a Weatherman rampage in Chicago. I said it was the best news story I'd seen all year. Fitzpatrick was there when the mob organized in a public park. When it raced through the north side smashing store windows and automobiles he ran ahead, was engulfed and escaped briefly, into side streets. His story took readers into the heart of this mad escapade. He let them see the faces of demonstrators, hear the shouts, the shattering glass, feel the hysteria.

Well, klunk! Or at least, klink! The seminarians were not favorably impressed. One said the story seemed to change tense at one point. Another said it didn't estimate the property damage or how many skulls were cracked. Then there was a discussion of whether this wasn't advocacy reporting.

Next spring this story won a Pulitzer as the

best of the previous year; so not everybody in the craft is against innovative reporting and writing. And now that I am on the receiving end of journalism I favor innovation more than ever.

News writers should be encouraged to break out of their shells and adopt whatever style will serve best to communicate the news.

But style is secondary to substance, and the chief merit of New Journalism is its emphasis on better reporting. This is not basically new. What is new is intensifying reportorial research and extending it into areas which traditional reporting has neglected. Tom Wolfe gave this description of the reportorial side of New Journalism in a recent issue of the *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*:

"We developed the habit of staying with the people we were writing about for days at a time, weeks in some cases. We had to gather all the material the conventional journalist was after — and then keep going. It seemed all-important to be there when dramatic scenes took place, to get the dialogue, the gestures, the facial expressions, the details of the environment. The idea was to give the full objective description, plus something that readers had always had to go to novels and short stories for: namely the subjective or emotional life of the characters."

Wolfe's techniques could hardly be applied this morning to yesterday's Supreme Court decision or this afternoon to this morning's gang murder, although our treatment of many spot news developments would benefit if the reporter dug farther below the surface and tried harder to put his facts in perspective.

Wolfe thinks of New Journalism as available in the main for newspaper supplements and section pages and for magazines.

It is not a replacement for Old Journalism. The issue is not either-or. New Journalism can be the supplement that enriches the craft, varies the reader's diet and rewards him with a new interest and better understanding of the news.

Earl J. Johnson retired in 1965 after 30 years as editor of United Press International. This article is reprinted from the New York Times.

A LITTLE DERRING-DO

In the years following its birth in 1947, the Canadian Managing Editors' Conference developed into a timid and wary adolescent. As the managing editors gathered for their annual meetings, they were acutely aware of the fact that back at the office sat the men who really called the shots for the newspapers — the publishers.

The managing editors, therefore, were leery of going out on any public limbs which might very well be chopped off by the publishers when they got home. (The CMEC had, in fact, been in existence for at least 15 years before it passed its

first tentative resolution on a public issue.)

During the years, however, the organization has been gaining confidence. This was especially apparent this year when the CMEC gathered in Saint John in May for its 26th annual meeting.

Pointing to a new maturity on the part of the CMEC at that meeting were two significant developments. The first was a move towards a productive and continuing working relationship with the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers' Association. The second was a tough resolution on the subject of the proposed federal Election

Expenses Bill.

Well in advance of the day it was led to the Davey Senate Committee and flayed as an organization interested solely in promoting newspaper advertising, the CDNPA had begun a reorganization program. At the CMEC conference in Kitchener a year ago, William Galt of the Vancouver *Sun* was named to head a committee to study how the CMEC might fit into the new CDNPA picture.

At Saint John, Galt reported on the efforts of his committee over the last year. The CDNPA had set up within its organization five divisions, one of which was editorial. Galt had been named chairman of the editorial division of the CDNPA and had been asked to appoint the president of the CMEC (in this case, Albert Boothe, managing editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*) as vice-chairman. (A most unusual character, this Galt. Not only is he the *Sun's* managing editor, but he was also his paper's official delegate to the CDNPA.)

The Saint John conference responded with a resolution welcoming the CDNPA's support and proposing the two bodies jointly sponsor, under the direction of the CMEC: regional seminars on editorial topics to be decided by the regions concerned; a regular informational bulletin to be distributed to news executives; and any other projects the two bodies might decide upon.

This made clear the CMEC's concept of continuing as an entity in its own right.

The new CMEC executive acted quickly on the regional seminar proposal. It named Ivor Williams of the London *Free Press* to co-ordinate the program, with these regional chairmen: Jim Morrison, of the Fredericton *Gleaner*; Florian Sauvageau, of *Le Soleil*, and Malcolm Daigneault of the Montreal *Gazette*; Mort Fellman, of the North Bay *Nuggett*; Ed Hayes, of the Kitchener-Waterloo *Record*; Dick Goodwin, of the *Winnipeg Tribune*; and Fred Barnes, of the *Victoria Colonist*.

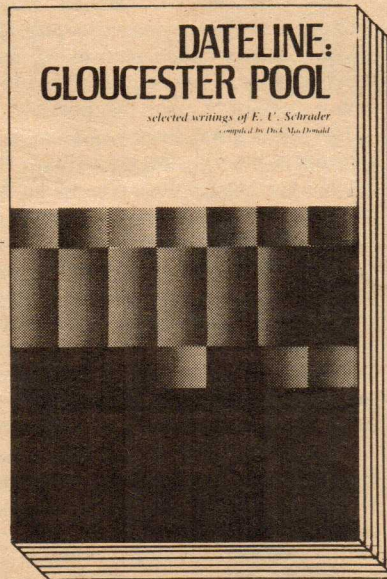
Delegates had before them a good sampling of what the proposed information bulletins could contain. Due chiefly to the efforts of Ivor Williams, and Clark Davey of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, in the weeks prior to the convention delegates had received a stream of special reports from CMEC members. Among the subjects were newsroom developments in the French-language press, trends in newsroom technology, the experiences of newspapers moving to new plants or new processes, libel experiences, editorial training developments, and reports from journalism schools.

Provisions of the Election Expenses Bill, recently introduced to Parliament, were brought to the attention of the conference by Bill MacPherson of the Ottawa *Citizen*, who pointed out they appeared to restrict newspaper coverage of federal election campaigns for the first time. He identified the offending section as the one which would prohibit the publishing, on election day or the day preceding it, of any "article, editorial, advertisement or announcement of a partisan, political character."

Interpretation of that aside, delegates agreed unanimously it was "completely unacceptable" because it would be "an infringement on the freedom of the press and the public's right to full information." They sent a telegram to Prime Minister Trudeau telling him so.

Probably the most lively official and unofficial topic of conversation throughout the conference was the recent court decision finding the Vancouver *Sun* guilty of libel in a case involving reporting from a committee of the B.C. Legislature. Fears of what effect this might have on the journalist's concept of privilege were not allayed by Mr. Justice J. Paul Barry of the New Brunswick Supreme Court, a conference speaker, who made it clear that the legal waters of libel are murky indeed.

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A PRECEDENT IS A PRECEDENT BY ANY NAME

by KNOWLTON NASH

The whole question of "outs" in television news and information programming, and who has the right to see these, puts two opposing views of the public's right-to-know on a collision course. For the most part, the courts are saying there is no such thing as protection of news sources in a legal sense if a court or judicial agent or body decides it is in the public interest to have access to those "outs." This, it is said, represents the public's right-to-know and the ability to pursue justice for the protection of the public. Countering this point of view is the view of most journalists that the public's right-to-know is best protected by preserving the confidentiality of news sources.

Where does the public interest really lie? In my judgment, the public interest clearly lies in a very large degree of protection for the confidentiality of news sources.

Sir William Hailey, former editor of the London *Times* and director-general of the BBC, said recently that "journalism is the lifeblood of democracy. Without free, full and uncontaminated information on all things that matter, the people have no sound means of making choices and deciding."

H. G. Wells said "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." The media, and television and radio in particular, have a very special responsibility to provide much of that "education." They must

have the tools to do that job — and one of the key tools is the preservation of the confidentiality of news sources.

Destroying protection for confidential sources of information would wreck the basis for effective news reporting. It would critically, and perhaps fatally, damage the public's right-to-know. We cannot allow the sterilization of journalism in this country or elsewhere, for to do so would indeed be to sterilize democracy itself. It is a sad fact that most people today seem to prefer illusion to reality, but we simply can't allow television to become merely chewing gum for the eyes.

With deference to Marshall McLuhan, the medium is not the message: its message must be realism, and to obtain realism we must have a big expansion of investigative reportage and the tools necessary to make this possible.

Journalists always have had a long and hard and sometimes bloody struggle to have the right to report what's happening. When John Wilks began to report Parliament for the general public, the House of Commons in 1762 declared this was a breach of privilege and sought to prevent the public from knowing what was going on. That kind of neanderthal idea of public interest being best served by the public not knowing what is happening, has of course been largely overcome for the print media, but there remain today many areas where the electronic medium is denied access while the print medium is accepted. But, in time, inevitably even the electronic medium and what might be called the Gutenberg medium will be on the same footing.

One area where we are very much on the same footing is, of course, on this question of access to "outs" — whether these "outs" be film, audio tape or a reporter's notes: they all are essentially the same thing.

We are familiar with the issue in which the CBC found itself this past winter in connection with the filming of disturbances surrounding the visit of Soviet Premier Kosygin. It seems to me this was one of the very few times in Canada where the issue was defined rather sharply and did indeed get some public attention. There have been a number of hearings on this subject in the United States where the issue has been spotlighted and to some degree in the United Kingdom, but there has been not much of this issue on the public record in Canada.

Perhaps I should review some of the circumstances in our case in dealing with the royal commission set up to inquire into the Kosygin disturbances, as a background to this issue. On the evening in question, outside the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, we had a number of camera crews and one in particular happened to be in place when there was a good deal of activity with police horses and people charging back and forth. That film was being shot for a documentary, but was used in our news programs, as well as other programs. Because of the nature of the events occurring — the jostling and hassling and pushing that inevitably happen in such circumstances — a great deal of the film shot simply was unusable because it was out of focus or the camera was jumping about. Nevertheless, we were able to get a good minute or two for airing.

Subsequently, at a hearing by the royal commission, lawyers representing some of those who were facing charges, and also lawyers representing the police, demanded the hearing be shown the

"outs" because they felt the film might show circumstances which would be favorable to their clients, either in denying accusations that had been made or in showing justification for actions taken.

We were asked if we had kept the "outs" from the Science Centre Kosygin disturbances and we said "yes." We then were asked to voluntarily provide the "outs" and we refused. Then Gene Hallman, vice-president in charge of the English-services division, and myself were served with subpoenas ordering us to bring the "outs" to the royal commission hearing.

We appeared the morning after the subpoenas had been served, when I brought the "outs" with me to the courtroom. We both were called to the witness stand and Hallman and I stated that the public interest was better served by the CBC not handing over the "outs" as directed in the subpoena.

I think it is of sufficient importance to repeat the brief statement made in this case. This is what I said to the hearing:

"I am deeply concerned about what we consider to be a highly-dangerous abridgement of a free press inherent in the request for delivery of all the film shot by the CBC during the demonstration under investigation here.

"The commission already has screened all the film which was used in CBC broadcasts. To ask now for what is called the "outs" — that film which was not used in what was broadcast — represents what we would feel to be an invasion of privacy of the news media. It endangers the basic freedom of the press. Our concern is not so much with the substance or character of this film, but rather with the fundamental principle involved.

"We believe what is being requested is dangerous to freedom of the press and the public's right to know for several reasons:

"1. It makes the journalist, in effect, an investigative agent of the police department, government, or the court. It puts the journalist in the role of a policeman and that is fundamentally wrong.

"2. It has an inhibiting effect — indeed a chilling effect — on a reporter's ability to gather and report the news because it lays open to revelation and reprisal confidential sources of information.

"3. It opens the door to intimidation of reporters and producers who should be concerned solely with providing the public with the pertinent facts of a given situation and not have to worry about the police or the government or the courts forever looking over their shoulders at their notes or film "outs," often in a totally different context from the time of the event.

"The film "outs" that have been requested are much the same as the notes a newspaper reporter uses on which to base his story. As such, it seems to us an unwarranted invasion of the journalistic function to seek public presentation of those notes or "outs." Essentially such a request could well lead to indirect censorship. We should take every possible step to protect the public's interest by keeping journalism from this kind of surveillance.

"I recognize these points are more in the nature of a philosophical argument than a legal argument. And we fully recognize this commission's right to make any request that it deems appropriate. But I think we in the journalistic business, however, have a right and indeed an obligation to point out what we consider to be an action which



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could well limit in the future the public's right-to-know.

"There has been recent experience in the United States relating to actions which threatened to stifle the public's right to know, and I feel that the Canadian public, too, must have this basic right protected.

"In no way do I think we should inhibit the pursuit of justice, but in instances such as this, justice, I believe, is better served by the preservation of the right of privacy to our film "outs" or notes. We cannot voluntarily provide all the requested material, and therefore I would join Mr. Hallman in asking respectfully that the CBC be excused from having to deliver to this hearing the film "outs" as well as that film already seen by the public and by the Commission."

In testimony, Hallman noted that the Corporation fully recognized the royal commission's right to order the presentation of the "outs" but he delineated his objections to doing so in this case. He suggested that the presentation to a court of "outs", whether they be film, audio recordings, or notes, might impair the confidentiality of news sources or the integrity of editorial processes. He said the royal commission request raised a basic question of principle.

Frankly, after we made our statements, we were not sure how the commissioner would respond, and I must say I was very pleased with his attitude in this matter in the sense that he took our position very seriously and in no way dismissed our statement out of hand. He listened to the arguments of the lawyers who objected to our position, and then retired to his chambers for about 20 minutes or so to prepare his own statement on the matter.

In essence, the commissioner rejected our position, but very pointedly he noted that it was in this particular case and for this particular inquiry, and my assumption here was that he wanted to make sure that it was not assumed to be a precedent. He said we had advanced "admirable and commendable philosophical reasons" in support of our position to not hand over the "outs." But he said the relevance and materiality of the "outs" had been firmly established in evidence by witnesses. He said that while television editors may be justified in the sense of claiming a journalistic privilege, he felt the privilege fundamentally lies with the people of Canada, not with the editors: he said to recognize such a privilege and to recognize the confidentiality of the news media on that particular inquiry, involving that particular film, would be to deprive the people of Canada of their right to view and to know what is recorded, and, he said, what was originally intended to be shown to the people of Canada.

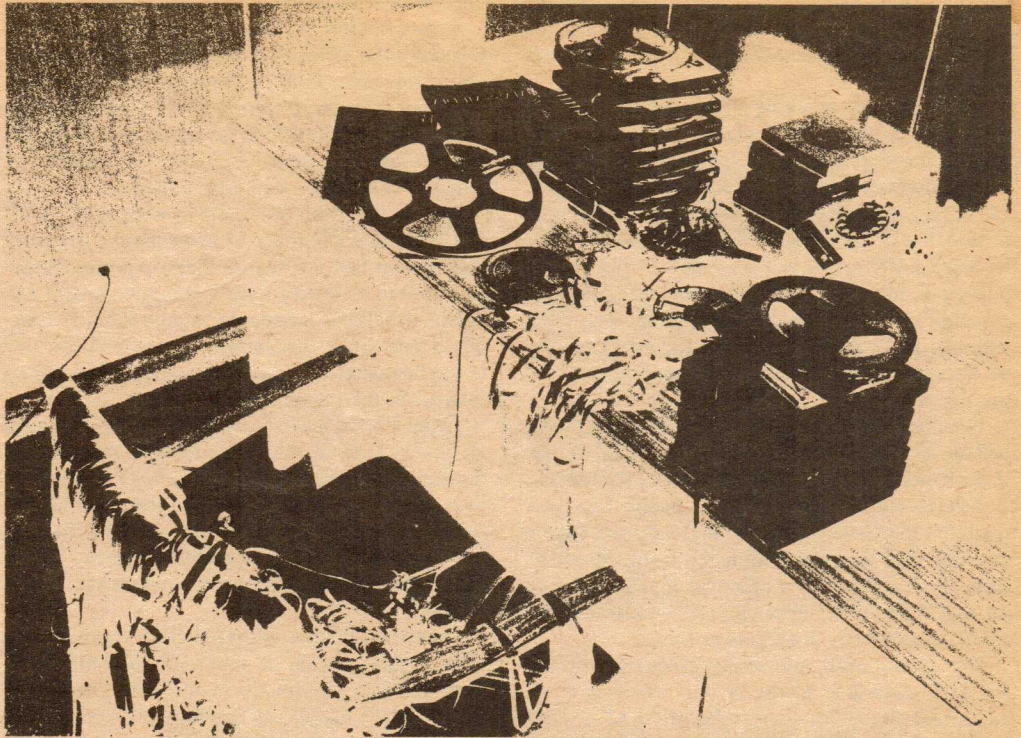


Photo: Andy Perry

(I should note that, of course, it is wrong to suggest that everything we shoot is "intended to be shown to the people of Canada" because in television, we do not intend to show everything we film just as a reporter does not intend to write everything he puts in his notebook, but he distills the essence of his film or his notes, and that is what is intended to be shown or heard or read.)

In this particular case, I must confess to a good deal of unhappiness at earlier actions taken by many of our colleagues in the news business. The CBC was the only organization which objected to the handing over of "outs" and the only organization which stated its point of view publicly to the commission and from the witness stand.

The commissioner noted particularly, and obviously it significantly undercut the CBC position, that NBC, United Press International, and Channel 11 in Hamilton, claimed no journalistic privilege in relation to their film coverage of the Kosygin disturbances, nor was any journalistic privilege claimed by photographers who were on hand at the event. Had there been a united front on this issue, while I don't think the commissioner would have taken a different position, he nevertheless would have, I am sure, been more impressed with the unanimity on the issue.

In any event, the commissioner ordered me to

hand over the film, and I did so, saying it was being done with a good deal of reluctance and with recognition of the CBC's position on this issue.

I referred to two points of view on a collision course: the courts and the law which say the public right-to-know is best served by forcing a journalist to reveal his sources of information whenever requested, and the media which says the public's right-to-know is best served by protecting confidential sources of information.

The two points of view are not necessarily irrevocably irreconcilable. Few journalists would demand a total protection of all confidential information when it comes, for instance, to national security or knowledge of an impending murder and the like. It seems to me the media could bend a bit on this, and there certainly could be some bending in the application of the law entitling them to extract information from reporters' confidential sources. There could be much more careful examination of the implications involved by the courts or other judicial bodies demanding such information, and, for that matter, when a judgment is made that information is required, it could be given in private rather than at a public hearing.

Although we are in the business of communications, I think we have failed to communicate to the public-at-large and to the politicians, in particular, the need for protection of the confidentiality of news sources. I believe we must dramatize the need for this journalistic protection because without some protection the public is in danger of being short-changed. In these days of increasing effort by governments everywhere in the world to manage or control news, it becomes ever more important for newsmen to have confidential sources of information so that the public is not seduced by propaganda. What we need is much more investigative journalism in Canada particularly, and what we certainly do not need are further restraints on investigative journalism.

It's tough enough now for reporters who have to handle what Winston Churchill once called "terminological inexactitudes" or handling politicians and government officials who seem to come out thunderously in favor of motherhood and virginity at the same time.

There has been some effort in Canada to develop an approach on getting more protection for confidentiality of news sources. The Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec appealed to the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media for legal safeguards for journalists who obtain information from confidential sources. The Fédération



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said journalists should be allowed by law to refuse to testify when their testimony is requested for placing in evidence notes, film "outs" or unused tape.

But, generally speaking, this issue has not had too much exposure in Canada, and I think it's about time it did have. It has had a good deal of attention lately in the United States. There was, of course, the Pentagon Papers case where a committee of the Congress of the United States tried to force CBS to present its "outs," not in the pursuit of any court case but simply as a "fishing expedition" for political gain. Fortunately, CBS resisted, and Congress rejected the effort of one of its committees to force the handing over of the "outs."

For instance, there was a case in Baltimore at *WBAL-TV* where a state's attorney obtained a court order to get possession of film "outs" taken during a disturbance in April. A large public fuss was made on the issue, however, and later the state's attorney said that while he had a right to see the film, he felt that "as a practical matter insisting on that right could endanger . . . newsmen on the scenes of later disturbances . . ."

One of the most interesting cases now before the U.S. Supreme Court is one where a court supported the journalistic contention of a right to protect news sources. In this case, Earl Caldwell of the *New York Times* successfully persuaded the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco to overturn a lower court decision requiring Caldwell's testimony and asserting that the government cannot require a reporter to testify unless it can justify a compelling need for his testimony. In the Caldwell case, the Court of Appeals said the government did not make evident a compelling

need for the testimony.

It also should be noted that former Attorney-General John Mitchell issued guidelines two years ago in this area, limiting the discretion of government agencies in subpoenaing newsmen and the files and film. Nevertheless, those guidelines still left the attorney-general as the final arbiter of whether subpoenas would be issued.

The *New York Times*, along with ABC, CBS and NBC and a number of news media, prepared a statement last fall saying that a reporter should be required to testify only if the government has reason to believe he had information about a crime, could not obtain that information elsewhere, and could demonstrate "a compelling and over-riding interest in the information."

In the United States, one government argument against providing this protection to newsmen is that once granted to reporters would this extend beyond the so-called "establishment" media and beyond reporters generally and would it include underground newsmen or authors of books or college lecturers and, government lawyers ask, where would it end?

In correspondence with Dick Salant who is president of CBS News, he said that while they have been fighting vigorously in the United States on this issue, he had a case recently in Britain where CBS was presented with precisely the same problem, but of course under British laws, not American.

Two CBS correspondents were summoned to a commission hearing examining the causes of the Londonderry tragedy, and particularly the issue of who fired first. The CBS reporters were asked to testify and all the advice Salant received from British lawyers was that they could not resist

this successfully since there is of course no First Amendment argument in the United Kingdom, as there is none in this country. Salant said he therefore had to tell his people that while CBS would stand behind whatever they chose to do, the risks of jail were very great and hence the CBS advice was for them to comply and to testify. In that same case, he understood BBC did voluntarily comply with the request of the commission.

In the United Kingdom, there is, of course, the Official Secrets Act and there has been a considerable amount of pressure there lately so that the act is in use as an excuse to muzzle press freedom. There has been consideration in the U.K. on legislation to reduce the threat of prosecution for newspapers publishing matters of public interest, although nothing has gone so far as New York State in its journalistic protection legislation.

With some exceptions in New York State and several other American states or Sweden, or Austria, basically governments and courts and their agents and agencies are not conceding that a newsman has any more right to withhold information given to him from whatever source than does the general public have a right to withhold information. Journalists are not given the same kind of protection as provided for doctors or priests. Nevertheless, in the United States there is a growing awareness on the part of governments, courts, their agents and agencies, that this is a somewhat delicate area and indeed there is an argument about which philosophy best protects the public's right-to-know—that of the government or that of the journalist.

To reiterate, I think that only through a concerted effort on the part of the news media in Canada can there be any serious effort made to modify attitudes, let alone the law in our country in regard to the protection of the confidentiality of news sources.

The Romans used to ask, "Who watches the watchman?" Today, so many of our critics are asking, "Who edits the editors?"

The answer, of course, is that the viewers and the listeners and the readers do, and in the electronic business our editorial franchise is up every second of every day because it only takes a second to switch over to some other channel.

A recent issue of the *Canadian Broadcaster* noted the constraints that many are seeking to impose upon editorial freedom and discussing this issue it noted the dangers of intimidation and exploitation on the part of governments or their agents or agencies. The *Broadcaster* said: "It is up to the media to institute their own attack on the subtle and blatant threats to freedom of the press — to use the media to initiate the shouting and make the public aware its right-to-know is being violated."

Sir Kenneth Clark, who hosted the BBC Program which the CBC carried called *Civilization*, commented on a very obvious truth but one which tends occasionally to be overwhelmed with coverup or distortion efforts by critics of the media: "On the whole, I think that knowledge is preferable to ignorance."

Those who are so critical of the media for providing knowledge to the public of what is going on and how we go about doing that job are often grossly misinformed on what it takes to preserve the public's right-to-know.

Clearly, the public has the right-to-know—and the right-to-know must be preserved. The increasing pressure on reporters to reveal confidential sources of information, however, are jeopardizing that right. Unless we do something about it, George Orwell's 1984 will be here a decade earlier.

Knowlton Nash is director of television information programs for the CBC. This article is drawn from remarks he delivered to the Radio-Television News Directors Association, central Canada regional seminar, in Sault Ste. Marie.

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THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY

by ALAN HARVEY

Let me grab the reader with a brash beginning: Canada is the most under-reported nation in the world.

Sounds sweeping? Not really. Throw in a qualification by calling it the most inadequately covered among advanced nations, and the statement probably stands up. We're talking, of course, about the embarrassing dearth of Canadian-angled news in media outside Canada, especially in the United States and Europe.

The complaint is not new. Almost the first day I set foot in Fleet Street, aghast at the comparison with New York's Rockefeller Plaza where I had just spent two exciting years, I began hearing that heart-cry of visiting Canadians: Why don't British newspapers carry any news about Canada? We can't even get the hockey scores!

Stuff and nonsense, I used to say. I was concerned with getting pieces about Britain or France into Canadian newspapers, and the absence of

hometown copy didn't bother me. Now, it HURTS. Canada is growing up, it's interesting and it deserves attention. As much, say, as Israel, which is smaller than most of our provinces, or Rhodesia, which is certainly not nicer but eats up a lot more newsprint. Mostly *our* newsprint, at that.

Britain's disregard for Canadian news is a topic that often comes up in Fleet Street. At the Hoop and Grapes pub on Farringdon street, strategically situated so that filing editors can nip down and back for a fast one between bulletins, an Englishman who has worked for both Associated Press and Reuter invariably buttonholes me with his lat-

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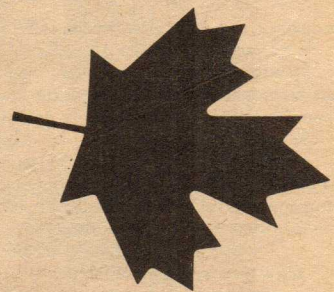
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est instalment in the serial story of how hard it is to rustle up any news from Canada. When something does happen in Canada, he argues, the reports coming in are so sketchy, so lacking in perspective and background, that they just get lost in the flow of sharply-written stories from other countries.

"The stories we get from Canada are written for Canadians, who don't need the background," said my English wire-service colleague. He gets around a lot; his byline has appeared in Canadian papers under Cairo and Calcutta placelines. He is campaigning for Canadian copy that is "buttoned up" — an agency vogue-phrase which means providing all the information the reader needs, tightly but fully. Encapsulated.

Intrigued by his vehemence, I started asking

around. My own field is British politics, so I don't handle incoming copy. I sought an opinion of Jack Hartzman, who happens to have attended the same public school (Dewson) and the same high school (Harbord) that I went to in our native Toronto. He's a veteran Reuter man, one of four top "copytasters," as they call the breed, casting a critical eye over world cables pouring into the Reuter head office at 85 Fleet Street. He has a high-sounding title but prefers to be known merely as a senior editor. No capital letters, he adds demurely.

"I'll go along with the contention that Canada is probably the most under-reported advanced nation in the world," he told me, furnishing a few words in writing at my request so I wouldn't mar a long friendship by misquoting.

"There are probably many reasons for this. For one thing, there's an impression abroad that Canada remains an unsophisticated pioneering

society, still building up its institutions. The country, like it or not, is overshadowed by the United States. And the costs of new-venture reporting in a country 4,000 miles across with such a small population are formidable, perhaps prohibitive."

Canada, he added, is reasonably well-ordered and stable with Quebec as an exception proving the rule — that notoriety and natural disasters make news, and steady progression does not. Perhaps, he added with good Canadian caution, Canadians aren't very newsworthy because they shy away from flamboyance, are worthy but dull (despite post-1967 assertiveness) — that Canadians are, in fact, the Swiss of North America.

I consulted other editors from Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, United Press, Radio Free Europe, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. I talked to correspondents of Italian, Dutch and German news agencies, and came up with an unanimous view — Canada is badly under-

played abroad. An editor from a Turin paper said that Canada, despite its high proportion of Italian immigrants, has a low profile in Italy.

In Poland, they remember the hockey-playing Warwick brothers; they even have a phrase in Polish which I once memorized, have now forgotten. In the Soviet Union, I recall, Canada meant little more than books by Jack London (whom I never thought of as Canadian) and Mazo de la Roche. I've never been to China, but at international conferences in Geneva the highly-educated Chinese I did meet knew of only one Canadian — Dr. Norman Bethune, still a legend in China many years after his death.

I'm straying from the subject. I'm not talking so much about the Canadian *image* abroad as about news coverage. I haven't gone into the subject with a slide rule or a survey of column inches, but I can cite one recent example of the lack of Canadian news appeal.

The day before British Prime Minister Edward Heath went to Brussels to sign the Treaty of Accession to the European Common Market, the Canadian high commissioner in London, Jake Warren, delivered to Mr. Heath a message from Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau expressing Canada's best wishes in the European venture. It was a good message; unlike many diplomatic exchanges, it said something. In effect it was giving Canada's blessing to Britain's new cross-channel enterprise.

It was timely, and it was worth reporting. Above all, it was made available immediately to British newspapers. The press office at Canada House was on the ball. But, as far as I am aware, not a single British newspaper included the message from Ottawa in their comprehensive coverage of events associated with the Accession Ceremony. Yet the same sheets had carried many thousands of words, earlier, about the importunate viens of Australia and New Zealand on British entry into Europe.

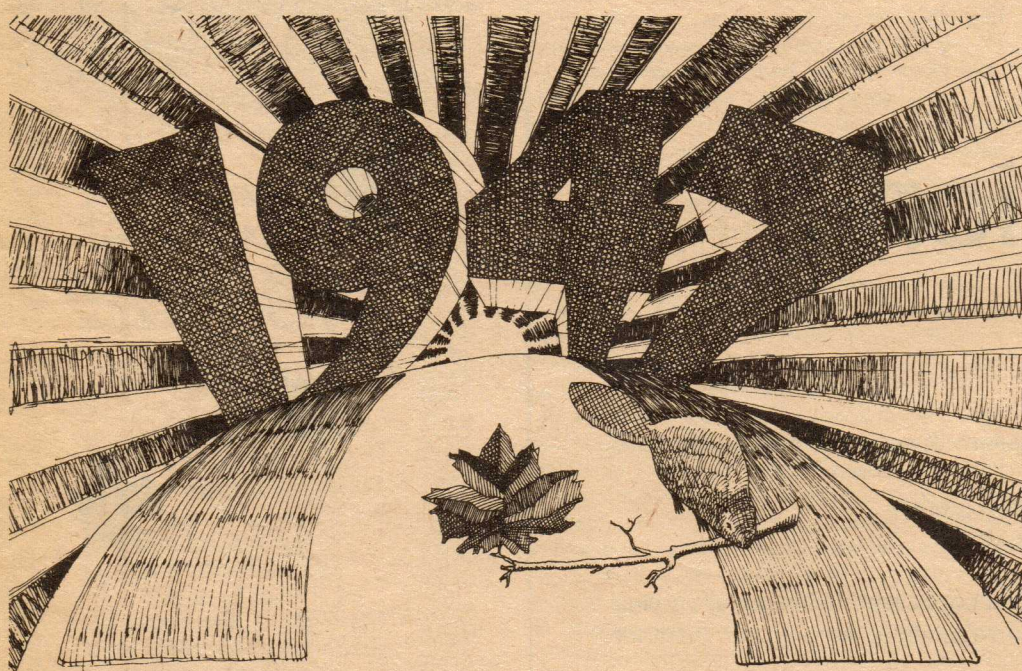
Of all the explanations for Canada's non-newsworthiness, I think Jack Hartzman's point about our contiguity to the United States probably is the most potent. Sharing pillows with a porcupine may be prickly, but it doesn't get us headlines. Power compels: lack of power repels. We're strung out over too wide an expanse, the western world's largest land mass, and even our own provinces don't know much about one another.

Hesitantly, I'd offer one more theory. International news agencies such as Reuter and AP cover Canada through The Canadian Press, which has a near-monopoly position. There are few if any British correspondents in Canada. And CP's main thrust is to provide domestic and international news to Canadian papers, and the stories sent abroad by CP may not always be rewritten and backgrounded for the foreign reader. At least, they weren't in my day. I say this without intending criticism, because I cut my editorial eye-teeth in CP; to put it fulsomely, it is my first, last and only love.

Does it matter if we're undervalued? In media circles, I suspect Canada and Canadians have lost some prestige abroad since the days when Lester Pearson was forever saving the Commonwealth with subtle diplomacy and the late Lord Beaverbrook was loosing his imperial thunderbolts from the *Daily Express* office, but we're not exactly persona non grata. The only thing that really upsets me is the way British turf writers keep calling Nijinsky an *American* horse, instead of acknowledging his Canadian origins!

After all, a country that can produce a Trudeau, and a Nijinsky, shouldn't have to worry about its press clippings. And Moredecy Richler constantly reminds us, we're Tomorrow Country.

Alan Harvey is a political correspondent with Reuter in London, England, and previously was with The Canadian Press and the Toronto Globe and Mail.



IN CANADA, 25 YEARS AGO...

The country, two years after the end of World War II, had a population under 13 million—excluding Newfoundland which was not yet a province. Leafs dethroned Canadiens to win the Stanley Cup. It was MacKenzie King's last year in political life. At the UN, Lester Pearson was mediating the Palestine dispute.

And in the emerging field of electronics, a fledgling company was taking shape at St. Hubert, Quebec —Canadian Aviation Electronics Ltd.—soon to become a pioneer builder of aircraft flight simulators and a manufacturer of supervisory control systems, communications equipment

and systems, and magnetic products. Along the way, our name was abbreviated and a number of diversified subsidiaries entered the fold—serving major industries here and abroad. In electronics, aerospace, ferrous and non-ferrous metal products, plastics, railway equipment, forest industry products—you name it. Today, 70% of CAE's total sales of \$58 million are for export. And of course we have more shareholders —now close to 4,500. One thing hasn't changed, though. We're still Canadian owned and operated. Just the way we started out, 25 years ago.



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EXACTLY, WHAT DO THE READERS WANT?

by C. E. WILSON
and F. K. BAMBRICK

Journalists are constantly assuring one another that the future of newspapers lies in more and better depth-reporting, in interpretation. After all, television and radio can bring the news faster, and sometimes more dramatically. This means newspapers ought to quit competing with the electronic media on spot news, traditional news, and concentrate on the ponderous forces of social change.

The Davey Senate committee faulted Canadian journalists for not preparing the public for social change, a task obviously requiring lengthy analyses, even some crystal-gazing.

No one, it appears, has yet asked the public directly about the matter. Readership studies tend to tell us what readers like from the current menu, not what they might like to see added. By linking diverse research results, however, it is possible to formulate an inferential case against depth reporting, at least in any great quantity.

There is demonstration, for instance, that the news competition between print and electronic media may be more apparent than real. First of all, the most highly interested audience for television is not the audience most highly interested in news, however the news is presented. The heavy television watcher may pay little or no attention to television news — he may still rely on the paper. Then, of course, there is the news addict, who will read and watch news with equal avidity,

seeing the two presentations as complementary, not competitive. Any attempt to dilute what communication researchers call the "surveillance function" of the newspaper — bringing the tidings — may be a disservice to these people.

Then there is theoretical expectation and some evidence that people who rely on television news are not much better informed than if they were not exposed to news at all; they are aware of being exposed to newscasts, not to what the newscasts contain in the way of information. If newspapers concentrate on depth, and ignore the surface events, there may be no place people can learn what is going on.

If any event, indications are that most newspaper stories of more than a couple of hundred words are read to the end by few readers. For instance, Davey committee figures put average newspaper reading time at 44 minutes, and U.S. figures show even less time. The Davey Report shows only about 27 minutes spent on what we might call depth-potential news: front page, financial, international news, and editorials. Obviously, the reader is not exhausting what he is offered now; he tastes a little of just about everything. If we cut down on his choice, and offer only long, interpretative stories, can we assume he'll read more?

Educational television people have found that

making high quality programs available doesn't really draw people from the standard entertainment fare, it just taps a different group of people, and it doesn't stretch things too far to see parallels between ETV and depth reporting.

It's a little like the school of newswriting which says the inverted pyramid lead is no good, because it doesn't encourage readers to read more than a few paragraphs. What evidence do we have people will read anything at all if we make it impossible to get by with the first couple of paragraphs?

Then, in reply to a question in the Davey questionnaire, about 72 per cent of the respondents reported themselves happy with the present mix of news in the local, national and international categories. They seem to like the "something for everyone" approach. U.S. corroboration comes in the form of a conclusion reached from research results by the American Newspaper Publishers Association: "The newspaper's strength, therefore, lies precisely in its capacity to serve diverse and segmented interests." Canadians cited variety as one of the strong points of the newspaper. Television was vastly preferred by Canadians for special reports (62 per cent for TV to 13 per cent for newspapers) while newspapers and television were nearly equally preferred for interpretation (41 per cent for newspaper, 37 per cent for television).

There is, of course, the constant finding from research: of the material now included in newspapers, people prefer what might be called the old-time hard news — disaster, crime, human interest. They'll read dull but important news only under the prod of conscience — and won't remember it well.

A possible conclusion from all of this is that if the newspaper changes, puts emphasis on interpretation and depth-reporting to the point where the traditional town crier function is abandoned, the general mass appeal of the newspaper may be lost. The newspaper may well become a specialist type of publication, appealing — in depth — only to certain special interest groups, in the way many weekly and monthly publications now do. Instead of locally-oriented newspapers, confining circulation to one geographic area, we may find national newspapers confining coverage to a very small subject area.

Then some bright entrepreneur will come up with the revolutionary idea that what people want is more news of all kinds about the locality in which they live. He'll find support for his position in both U.S. and Canadian research on what readers like from a newspaper. Then he'll start an old-fashioned daily with a little bit of something for everybody, and . . .

Research is one of the many areas in journalism requiring examination and contemplation. Too often, the working journalist or other media person simply lacks the time to study material which has been compiled about the job. C. E. Wilson and F. K. Bambrick of the journalism department at London's University of Western Ontario have undertaken research projects which warrant attention. This is another in a series of articles by them. They're interested in research work done at other universities, community colleges and by individuals. Correspondence should be addressed to them at: Department of Journalism, University of Western Ontario, London 72, Ont.

The English media in Quebec:

A distorting mirror of reality?

Is there an English-language ghetto in Quebec? Do the English-language media cater to that community . . . or do they try to reflect the interests of the entire province?

The Association of English-Media Journalists of Quebec, curious about such questions, last fall organized a seminar in which news folks and the public took part. A 32-page account of that gathering has just been published by the Association, in conjunction with Reporter Publications Limited.

Main speakers included Prof. Donald Theall of McGill University, CBC broadcaster Michael Enright, Charles King of the Ottawa *Citizen*, lawyer Brian Mulroney, union information officer Neville Hamilton, and writers-broadcasters Jean-V. Dufresne and Gretta Chambers.

A lot of questions were asked . . . and a few answers given in the course of the seminar. They should be of interest not only to journalists and media people across Canada for a better understanding of the unique nature of the media in the predominately-French province.

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THE WATERING HOLE

by BRIAN BRENNAN

The official press club in Prince George, B.C. never really got off the ground.

However, the unofficial version thrives around four tables in the corner of a huge sprawling tavern downtown, which is known to the regulars as "The Barn." A small but dedicated bunch of drinking newsmen sits in this corner most week nights, each one of whom will attest to the fact that the best stories always happen in the "Barn."

It would have been nice to have an official press club. Being 500 miles due north of Vancouver we could have called it "The nearest press club to the North Pole." But like the three drunks who told the judge they were all sitting in the back seat of the car going the wrong way on a one-way street, nobody wanted to take on the responsibility of steering this club in the right direction, so the idea died.

But the Barn is alive and well, and let no editor dispute the fact that the best stories *do* happen in the Barn.

Witness, for example, the tale of the "sozzled swinger," in which one of the patrons — for reasons best known to himself — decided to leap Tarzan-like from a pool table and swing from one of the chandeliers. He showered a dozen customers with a cloud of shattered glass, including (natch) five reporters, who were starting into an evening of quiet drinking. Enter four waiters, bent on asking the chap why he has to disturb the peace in

such unorthodox fashion. Before they can get to him, he bolts through the nearest exit, while his brother distracts the waiters by throwing empty beer glasses at them. The ensuing free-for-all is dutifully documented by the five scribes, without a minute's loss of valuable drinking time.

Then there was the slow night when a waiter slipped out a side door with a full tray of beer, and peddled his wares in one of the neighbouring hosteleries. When the competition got wise to the move they endeavored to effect a similar stunt. But, alas, when the unsuspecting waiter stepped inside the Barn door he was beset upon by three of the Barn's stalwarts, who confiscated his beer and told him never to darken the Barn doors again, unless, of course, he was a paying customer.

That one didn't exactly rate byline status on the front page, but isn't that why there's a gossip column in the left-hand corner?

Or the "Eye In the Sky" story, where two plain-clothes members of the city detachment set up an observation point in the rafters of the Barn. From there they watched the activities of a suspected (and unsuspecting) dope peddler, who made the sale right under the eyes of the hidden policemen.

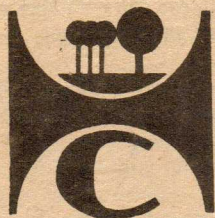
Of course, the newsmen at a nearby table were equally unaware of the presence of the pair in the false ceiling. But (right!) the story did happen in the Barn.

One of our numbers even made so bold as to work as a waiter in the Barn one evening. The net result, after four dropped trays, and an evening wrangling with his former colleagues in the unofficial press club, was a respectable first-hand account of the problems facing a beer parlor waiter, and a promotion of the merits of the non-stick dime. Apparently, good-intentioned customers can play havoc with a waiter's evening through placing tips on his wet tray, and many a tray of good beer has been spilt by a harried waiter feverishly attempting to extricate coins adhering to the tray. Hence, the case for the non-stick dime.

The most notable radio interview conducted in the Barn had to be extensively edited before broadcast, to eliminate the sounds of clinking glasses and chomping potato chips.

The subject of the interview — a Prince George-based RCMP officer — had spent his two-week vacation retracing the course of Simon Fraser along a 400-mile stretch of the Fraser River, along with 14 Boy Scouts, in a home-made riverboat. After a voyage fraught with problems from rapids, whirlpools, and rain-storms, the policeman's first thought, after being airlifted to town from the group's flooded camp-site 40 miles upstream, was to get down to the Barn post-haste for a couple of quick drafts. There he held court with the unofficial press club while recounting his exploits.

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re-election in the Barn, labor leaders have unveiled their wage demands, and many a fire alarm has been transmitted to the unofficial press club before reaching the ears of the newsrooms. Even government ministers have dallied awhile in the Barn, during quick trips away from the provincial capital, and been interviewed while downing two beers.

And let no editor doubt the veracity of any exclusive emanating from the Barn. The unofficial press club knows better than most that "in vino veritas."

Brian Brennan is a freelance journalist and musician, until recently employed as a newsman by CJCI-AM in Prince George.

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Please send your application and curriculum vitae before June 30, 1972, to Mrs. Theresa Watters, Supervisor of Personnel Benefits, The Company of Young Canadians, 323 Chapel Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Z2.

LETTERS

COLORED GLASSES?

Editor:

Ben Swankey, the author of *Crossing Ideological Barriers* in your May issue, is certainly right when he says most Canadian journalists have been so immersed in the search for their own identity and role that they haven't looked much beyond the borders of Canada. Mr. Swankey is, himself, a prime example.

I would suggest that he would be well advised to read some books on Communist history before venturing out of Canada again. He might find it a real eye-opener.

Mr. Swankey has been completely snowed by Oldrich Bures in Prague and has written a story that lacks any perspective and pays no attention to contemporary history. I find it very hard to buy a sweeping and unsupported statement that Mr. Bures "is a well-known and highly-respected journalist in eastern and western Europe." While I do not know Mr. Bures, I would suggest that in order to hold down his job in Prague today his loyalty to the present Czechoslovak regime would have to be without question.

Perhaps Mr. Swankey was immersed in the search for his identity in August, 1968, when Soviet tanks rolled into Prague against Czechoslovak party chief Alexander Dubcek, whose "Socialism with a Human Face" experiment featured a brief period of unprecedented press freedom in a Warsaw Pact country.

Most of the Dubcek-era journalists, who were brave men and women, today are either in jail or without work and are not eligible for the wonderful rest homes that the International Union of Journalists runs.

I would also suggest that the Cold War was not kicked off "by Winston Churchill's Fulton, Missouri, speech in 1946" as Mr. Swankey seems to think. If he has never heard of Joseph Stalin, I would have expected the editors of *Content* to have heard of him.

Mr. Swankey also seems to find the IOJ statutes wonderful and he quotes from them at length. In this vein, I would suggest he take a look at the constitution of almost any Communist country. They read even better. They guarantee free speech and freedom to travel. Unfortunately, the guarantees are confined to paper and are not applied in practice.

There certainly is nothing wrong with examining journalism in Communist countries but please let's do it with a little more sophistication than this rather naive effort which does no credit to a publication that purports to speak to Canadian journalists in A.D. 1972.

The May issue was the first of your publication I have seen since returning to Canada and, except for Mr. Swankey, I found some valuable contributions in it — especially the piece on I. F. Stone by Bruce Garvey.

Peter Rehak
Ottawa Bureau
Montreal *Star*

OH, MR. MATHEWS

Editor:

Robin Mathews of Ottawa, in your April *Letters* column, referred to the *événements* of France in May-June, 1968, and says: "Not one newsman in Europe could point to back copy and say, 'I saw it coming and said so.'"

Mr. Mathews is correct, of course, in implying

that the events of May-June, 1968, took most observers by surprise. And it may be true that not one newsman in Europe predicted what was brewing in precisely the terms he mentions.

But, if I may tootle a tiny tune on my own trumpet, I recall drawing attention to the underlying tensions in France as long ago as 1950 when I quoted a Breton as saying France was "pourrie" — rotten.

In a story published by *The Globe and Mail* on December 17, 1965, I wrote:

"With marked social inequality only partly masked by generous family allowances, something akin to a suppressed state of civil war exists in France between the haves and the have-nots."

One other example. In a story in the same paper on January 6, 1965, I said that "grumbles and grandeur go hand in hand in France . . . a visitor's impression is that France . . . may revert to the old quarrels for lack of a personality acceptable to all."

With the dazzling clarity of hindsight, I'd probably go a little harder now. But I'd like to ask Mr. Mathews: is anybody in Canada really interested in political developments in our second mother country? France, I submit, is one of Canada's major blind spots. We think we know it, but we don't. It is our loss.

Alan Harvey
Reuter
London

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MISCELLANY

Things we joke about and think never could happen *do* happen. For years, Canadian Press staff handling pictures have been reminded of the importance of identifying subjects by their position in a photo. It can be overdone. At a meeting of the Ontario News Study Committee, Marty Hope of the Sault Ste. Marie *Star* offered a couple of examples. One was a shot of Federal Fisheries Minister Jack Davis and a B.C. salmon. The caption writer was careful to note that Mr. Davis was on the left. Another was a Toronto shot of singers Anne Murray and Gordon Lightfoot. Guess what? ... the 14th annual MacMillan Bloedel daily newspaper awards have been given. First prize in the 25,000-or-more circulation category went to business writer Peter Myers of the *Vancouver Province* for a series of stories about unusual tradings in mining stock options, leading to some important developments involving the Vancouver Stock Exchange. Russell Oughtred of the *Nelson Daily News* won in the under-25,000 category for a study of the hazards faced by home and business owners whose property is outside the area normally served by the city's fire department, including a discussion of possible fire protection alternatives. First prizes are worth \$500. Second MB awards of \$250 were won by Robert McMurray, business editor of the *Province*, and Ben Pires of the *Alberni Valley Times*. Honorable mentions worth \$100 were made to Jes Odam of the *Vancouver Sun*, Steven Krueger of the *Kamloops Daily Sentinel*, and Gorde Hunter of the *Victoria Daily Colonist* ... Garth Allan, formerly of *CKY* in Winnipeg, has left his position as news and sports director at *CJRL* Kenora to be associate editor of the *Kenora Calendar*. The publication's circulation has climbed to 9,400 from 4,300 since last January ... Paul McKenna (Dodo) Davis, one of Montreal's most colorful journalists, died at the age of 67. Most recently he wrote the *Montreal Star's* Sideshow column, reminiscing about show business in Montreal and North America generally, with which he was closely associated in his younger years. He was a founder of the Montreal Men's Press Club welfare fund, which helped journalists who had fallen on hard times ... a new publication has appeared in Alberta rural areas, striving to reach the smaller communities and isolated farms with news and advertising of interest to them. *Ad-Viser* of Red Deer will circulate by mail and carrier with an anticipated circulation of 100,000 every two weeks until September. At that time, the four regional rural editions likely will go weekly. Editor is Noel Buchanan, formerly a general reporter at the *Red Deer Advocate*, and publisher-owner is Leslie Rideout ... Toronto publishers James Lewis and Samuel have moved to new and larger quarters, where they will be joined this summer by publishers Peter Martin Associates and House

of Anansi. The three will pool resources, consolidating orders and having joint invoicing and sales representation, an expedient gesture and probably an indicator of things to come where small Canadian publishers are concerned ... open-line broadcaster Jack Webster, the man with the burr who occasionally pops up on national television interview programs, is moving to *CJOR* in Vancouver from New Westminster's *CKNW*. He'll start at *CJOR* in early July. Also at the station is the volcanic Pat Burns, whose schedule will be reduced with Webster on deck ... at the Saint John Canadian Managing Editors' Conference, two presentations were made to retiring members — an engraved stein for Tommy Morrison of the *Welland-Port Colborne Tribune*, past president of the CMEC, and luggage for Bill Metcalfe of the *Ottawa Journal*, for many years the conference's secretary-treasurer ... three of the four new directors to the enlarged board of Maclean-Hunter Limited are professional journalists — Peter Newman, editor of *Maclean's* magazine; Doris Anderson, editor of *Chatelaine*, and Paul Deacon, editor and publisher of the *Financial Post*. The idea is to inject a greater journalistic influence into the company's decisions. Fourth person nominated to the board is Lorne Clark, vice-president / finance, controller and treasurer of Maclean-Hunter ... Roger

NEW ADDRESS? CHANGING JOBS? TELL CONTENT

Lemelin is new president and editor of Montreal's *La Presse*, succeeding Pierre Dansereau, who was named managing director of Gesca, the communications arm of the Power Corporation consortium of interests. Lemelin, 53, carved out a brilliant career with *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune* magazines and was the creator of the Plouffe Family television series. He said *La Presse* would assume an increasingly provincial thrust and would open its pages to a wider variety of political opinions. He also said newsroom staffs should have a greater say in running their papers ... Sandra MacMillan, editor of *Book Beat*, the company publication of Coles Book Stores Ltd., is new chairman of the Toronto branch of the Media Club of Canada, succeeding Kathleen Rex of the *Globe and Mail* ... another move to government: Joseph Hanafin of the *Montreal Star* has joined the information service of Canada Post ... media columnist Ron Base of the *Windsor Star* has been travelling across the country, preparing a series of stories on the alternative press in Canada. Shaping up well ... Montreal freelancer Don Bell, whose work appears frequently in *Weekend* magazine, has a book coming out this fall. McClelland and Stewart is publishing *Saturday Night at the Bagel Factory*

and other *Montreal Stories*, 18 non-fiction pieces in all ... Robert (Bob) Hainstock has been appointed editor of the *Manitoba Business Journal* and the *Saskatchewan Business Journal*, succeeding Joseph Martin who has assumed editorship of the *British Columbia Business Journal* in Vancouver. The monthly magazines are owned by Cambridge Publishers. Hainstock previously was a communications consultant and had written for the *Winnipeg Tribune* and was editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press'* monthly report on business ... coming up in the July 8 and 15 editions of *The Canadian Magazine* is a two-parter by staff writer Barry Conn Hughes on his trip with the world's first tourist flight to the true geographic North Pole. The *Age of Leisure* has, indeed, arrived ... *Ottawa's Octopus*, among the oldest of Canada's so-called underground publications, has died ... the cost of operating the two major wire services in the U.S. during 1971 rose by 4.8 per cent over 1970 to \$121.2 million. UPI, which is in the process of converting its services to automation, says the automated facilities have long-range benefits but that the price must be borne now ... after 20 years with Canadian National, 13 of them as director of public relations director, Charles Harris is moving to Bell Canada. At 52, he'll be a vice-president and PR director for Bell. His career in journalism started at the age of 16 when he landed a job as a copy boy at the *Globe and Mail* for \$9 a week ... Malcolm Daigneault of the *Montreal Gazette* was elected to fill a vacant one-year term as a director of the Canadian Managing Editors' Conference, held in Saint John (see story elsewhere in this issue). Others named to two-year posts were Pete Mossey, *Medicine Hat News*; Cam MacKenzie, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*; Merv Moore, *Vancouver Province*; W. T. Galt, *Vancouver Sun*; Gordon Murray, *Niagara Falls Review*, and James D. Morrison, *Fredericton Gleaner*. Continuing in office for another year are: Albert Boothe, *Winnipeg Free Press*, president; W. Ivor Williams, *London Free Press*, past president; C. W. Davey, *Toronto Globe and Mail*, first vice-president; William MacPherson, *Ottawa Citizen*, second vice-president and secretary-treasurer; and the following directors: Edward Hayes, *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*; Richard Goodwin, *Winnipeg Tribune*; Donald Smith, *Edmonton Journal*; Robert Pearson, *Windsor Star*; Roland Cote, *Montreal Le Petit Journal*.

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