Plus: Good-bye Southam News. Hello CanWest News Service.

MEDIA

LIFE AND DEATH DURING THE AMERICAN INVASION OF IRAQ

How much of the real story did journalists covering the conflict really obtain?

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DEPARTMENTS

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Publisher
Nick Russell

Editor
David McKie

Books Editor
Gillian Steward

Legal Advisor
Peter Jacobsen
(Paterson McDougall)

Designer
Bonanza Printing & Copying Centre

Printer
Bonanza Printing & Copying Centre

Advertising Sales
John Dickins

Administrative Director
John Dickins
(613)526-8061 Fax: (613)521-3904
E-mail: caj@igs.net

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By David McKie

Taking Stock

The recent conflict in Iraq raised some age-old questions about the truth and how accurately it gets reported

As soon as it became clear that the U.S.-British military intervention in Iraq had led to the easier-than-expected downfall of Baghdad, discussions seemed to intensify about the way the conflict was covered. Journalism listservs in Canada and the United States crackled with criticisms and opinions about the nature of the conflict. Was it a war? What was the real purpose? Were the Americans ever serious about finding chemical weapons, or were concerns about weapons of mass destruction just decoys, designed to distract citizens from George W. Bush's real aim: ridding the world of Saddam Hussein, a task his father failed to accomplish the previous decade.

This conflict was so inevitable that critics felt safe enough to speculate about the effect the American-led invasion would have on journalists and their pursuit of truth, or, at least, reliable information. In her analysis entitled *Will the Truth Again Be First Casualty?*, Jacqueline E. Sharkey, whose stories on U.S. policy in the Central American region sparked questions and an investigation of Lt. Col. Oliver North's private Contra network, used historical precedent to cast doubt on the motives of George W. Bush and his fellow warmongers.

Citing the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when George Bush Sr. tried to take out Saddam Hussein, Sharkey notes that journalists poised to cover the second Gulf War were doomed to endure similar restrictions. She notes that there was congressional testimony by a former Pentagon official that the U.S. Defense Department "doctored" statistics about the success rates of weapons systems during the first Gulf War to increase public support for controversial weapons systems. Evidence emerged from Operation Desert Storm — as it was called back then — that most of the bombs that fell on the enemy were actually "dumb" bombs that had no precision guidance systems. And George Sr. gave international public relations firm, Hill and Knowlton, $10 million to "sell" the American people on the need for U.S. military intervention. Do any of these observations sound like they could apply to this most recent conflict?

Sharkey also argues that journalists back then were, in part, authors of their own misfortune. "Instead of rebelling against a system in which they were obliged to be confined in 'pools,' they fought among themselves for pool slots and turned in colleagues who tried to work outside the pool system."

Sharkey's analysis is instructive because it echoes some of the same concerns that are sure to emerge in discussions about the ways in which the recent Iraqi conflict was stage-managed. For instance, in his piece for *Media*, Stephen J. A. Ward focuses on the contentious issue of embedding: that is, allowing a select group of journalists to travel with the soldiers for a birds-eye view of the carnage. As he explains, embedding was the American military's attempt to deal with criticism; it used pools during the first Iraqi conflict to unduly restrict the movement of journalists. While the idea of embedding is as old as war itself, the idea nonetheless sparked a lot of discussion among journalists. In his piece, Ward notes: "Embedding adds information that might otherwise not be obtained…But embedding can undermine journalistic independence and erode media credibility. It can lead to unbalanced, de-contextualized journalism."

Ward's argument is advanced by another critic who sounded off about the coverage of the Second World War. As his target, this critic, writing for a different publication years ago, chose the dispatches of American novelist, John Steinbeck. The American novelist's dispatches were published in 1958 as a collection called *Once There Was A War.*

> ***It's important for media outlets to balance reports from embedded reporters with stories that contain dispassionate analysis and context.***

"They are period pieces," the critic observes, "the attitudes archaic, the impulses romantic, and, in light of everything that has happened since, perhaps the whole body of work untrue and warped and one-sided." The acid-tongued critic was none other than John Steinbeck himself who, along with other correspondents, covered the second war to end all wars from the privileged position of an "embed." Steinbeck's criticisms of his own writings sound fresh, although they were aimed at a different war.

He felt that his dispatches idealized the American soldiers as people incapable of cowardice and violence. And no commander was "cruel or ambitious or ignorant." Steinbeck wrote that the small view each reporter had of the war offered too narrow a window for any nuanced understanding of some of the larger questions about the nature of the conflict that eventually became fodder for the history books and history buffs.

Against the backdrop of this criticism, it's interesting to note that in his piece for *Media* magazine, Ward suggests that during conflicts, it's important for media outlets to balance reports from embedded reporters with stories that contain dispassionate analysis and context for which Steinbeck so hungered.

The criticisms of Steinbeck and Ward are not meant to imply that all stories from embedded reporters were tainted. Indeed, some of those dispatches have given us useful glimpses into the true and nasty nature of war. In his articles, it was observed that Steinbeck offered useful observations and touching stories about military life and the exploits of incredible men such as the U.S. Navy officer in Italy who tricked a garrison of German soldiers into surrendering.

Fortunately, there is more to our coverage of the Iraq conflict than the pros and cons of embedding. There have been real concerns that media outlets don't do enough to help their correspondents deal with the emotional stress that war can induce. The sight of dead bodies, such as the Reuters photo featured on *Media*'s cover page, the loss of colleagues and friends, and the fear of death are enough to play tricks on anyone's psyche. In his piece about the psychological aspects of war, Saleem Khan quotes Anthony Feinstein, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto, who notes that: "There's the whole myth of the war correspondent as someone who is immune to the psychological consequences of trauma. No one is immune."

A part of the conflict that also received some attention was the antiwar protest. As the conflict drew nearer, protests seemed to increase in intensity. That was evident from demonstrations across the country. Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and other large cities seemed to be focal points for much of the media coverage, which makes Mark Lisac's observations rather poignant. From his vantage point in Edmonton, he witnessed a peace protest that became one of the largest anti-establishment demonstrations held in Alberta's capital. And yet, the event went largely unnoticed in the rest of Canada.

"Truth may be the first casualty of war," writes Lisac, "but the truth of regional identity in Canada has been among the walking wounded for many years. That's why the reporting of Alberta's opinions on the war should spark a much wider reassessment."

We hope you enjoy our assessment of a conflict that held the world's attention for a brief moment in time.

As usual, if you have any thoughts about what you read or what you think we should be writing about, please feel free to contact me at: *david_mckie@cbc.ca*

Bye for now. ☑

BY JULIAN SHER

The Credibility Test

There are ways to identify the individuals running certain Web sites

Journalists want to find useful Web sites, but even when you find one you also want to be sure it is credible. Or at the very least, you want to know who is really behind a Web page.

In many cases it is obvious — Monsanto runs the Monsanto Web site, Greenpeace runs its Web site. Most Web sites have a "Contact us" or "About us" link – but sometimes the information can be sparse. And even then, can you always be sure it is accurate? You might stumble across an obscure or controversial Web site and you want to know who is really paying the bill.

Fortunately, there are tools to help you out. Every Web site has to be registered and the companies that do this want to be sure they get paid. So the owner or "registrant" has to give certain details and those details are stored in databases. Of course, someone could simply be acting as a front for a group — but at least you have a real name and usually a phone number or address.

FOR MAJOR WORLD SITES

A small, but efficient tool is BetterWhoIs at *www.betterwhois.com*. The site gives you results only from the major domains — .com, .org and .edu – that is, the main commercial and American sites; U.S. educational sites and all the world's non-profit sites.

Type in the name of any Web site under these three domains. You will get a page that says, "RESERVED," meaning someone has bought the Web domain. Scroll down and usually there is an administrative contact (the person who runs the Web site) and a technical contact (the Webmaster).

(A technical note: Sometimes with Betterwhois, you get a page that says access has been restricted to a two-step process. These are pages registered through a firm called Network Solutions. But there is a note that says, "click here" — do that, and you'll get through.) For example, if you visit the site of *Earthliberationfront.org*, you will find news and bulletins from one of the more radical ecological groups in North America. U.S. authorities call them "eco-terrorists;" their defenders call them heroes. The Web site gives out no names, just a generic email address. But a search with Betterwhois or AllWhois shows the site is registered to a Canadian, Darren Thurston on Commercial Drive in Vancouver.

If you visit the controversial site of Holocaust-denier Ernst Zundel at *www.zundelsite.org*, you will find a contact page that lists his wife's name. But a BetterWhoIs search also gives you a phone number.

FOR SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

If you want to check the ownership of a site from a specific country — for example, .fr for France or .za for South Africa — the best place to start is the AllWhois database at *www.allwhois.com*. This Web site monitors all the domains, although the results can sometimes be hard to decipher.

For Canadian sites – that is, sites registered with a .ca domain – you are best to use the Canadian Internet Registration Authority at *www.cira.ca*. The search box is at the top left. Simply put in any address — but be sure NOT to put in the "www" at the front. Out pops an easy-to-read results page.

For example, if you want to check on the Coalition for Gun Control at *www.guncontrol.ca*, the group's Web site is owned and managed by the same people identified on the site. The phone number of their registrant matches the contact number on their Web page.

You might stumble across an obscure or controversial Web site and you want to know who is really paying the bill. Fortunately, there are tools to help you out.

ALEXA.COM

There is one site that combines several useful features for investigating a Web site: *www.alexa.com*. Alexa tells you how popular a page is and how it ranks on the Web. It uses a complicated formula that analyzes reach (how many people see the page) and page views (how many pages they visit on the site). For example, of the six billion-odd Web pages, JournalismNet ranks about 93,000; the CAJ Web page ranks about 250,000 and the Vancouver province ranks 156,000. It also tells who else links to the site and other sites people visit on the same topic. There is also a contact information box, which tends to be the registrant. And the beauty is this site does any of the Web domains for you -- .com, .org, .ca, or any other country.

These tips work only for paid sites. Personal Web sites, hosted by universities or "freebie" sites at *geocities.com* or *aol.com* cannot be searched, since the domain belongs to the company, which simply gives out Web pages on its server. You can identify a personal, free site by the tilda — the Spanish sign that looks like "~" — in the address. For example, *www.geocities.com/~myvacation.htm*

For these and other resources on finding who is behind a Web page, see Jnet's Web page devoted to this topic at *www.journalismnet.com/people/whois.htm*.

GOOGLE STILL TOPS

None of this means you should abandon Google as your primary search tool. Though don't get lazy — learn how to master Google's basic search function and its advanced search tricks. (For more on this, take a look at the article on this at *www.journalismnet.com/tips* or in *Media,* Summer 2000, vol.7,No2)

There are also some new tools at Google you might not be aware of. Google News (at www.news.google.com) is one of the best ways these days to do a news search. It searches only news, not general Web pages from major international (English-only) news sources, though only a few Canadian media outlets. You can read the previous week's news by topic, or use the search box with the usual powerful Google tricks for accuracy (minuses, quotations, etc).

Google's Web Directory *(at http://directory.google.com)* allows you to search by category.

Google Labs — the department that keeps coming up with improvements for Google — offers you a peek at a new site they are developing called Google Glossary *(at http://labs.google.com/glossary)*.

Need a quick definition, not just of a word, but of a concept or an issue — for example, "ozone layer" or PCBs? You get several links to the best web pages that give you a snapshot of the phrase, its meaning and context. An excellent quick reference guide.

And finally, you can attach some instant Google features such as Google search buttons *(at http://www.google.com/options/buttons.html)* and a mutlitask toolbar directly to your browser *(at http://toolbar.google.com)*. More on these and other gadgets in an upcoming column.

Julian Sher, the creator and Web master of JournalismNet (www.journalismnet.com)*, does Internet training in newsrooms around the world. He can be reached by email at* jsher@journalismnet.com. *This article and many other columns from* Media *magazine are available online with hot links on the JournalismNet Tips page at* www.journalismnet.com/tips

Cover Story

By Stephen J. A. Ward

In Bed With the Military

Embedding is a new term for an ancient practice

I was an "embedded reporter" long before U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld first uttered the barbarous phrase. As a CP correspondent during the Bosnian conflict, I attached myself to Canadian peacekeepers based on the outskirts of Sarajevo. I rode in their armoured vehicles. I ate in their mess. I had a beer in their bar. I interviewed commanding officers. I accompanied soldiers as they patrolled tense villages or cleared mine-infested fields. Sometimes, I filed a story over the base's fax machine.

Was I really embedded in the style of Gulf War II? I don't think so. I was informally 'attached' to (or assigned to cover) a military unit. But I was not formally part of the unit, and I didn't train with the military prior to deployment. I wore no uniform. I signed no agreement restricting what I could report. On the contrary, I wrote critical stories that made me persona non grata among some commanding officers. I paid my own way, and came and went as I pleased. I considered myself to be independent.

Independent war reporting is a relatively modern notion. Embedding — the formal attachment of reporters to military units — is a new term for an ancient practice, as old as the "messengers" who traveled with Alexander the Great as he marched on Persia. Embedding, with censorship, was standard reporting practice in the two world wars. Journalists have been so closely identified with armies that it was not until 1977 that the Geneva Conventions recognized journalists as civilians. With the Vietnam War, journalists began to see themselves as independent observers — even critics — of their country's war effort. After the Vietnam debacle, generals vowed that never again would journalists be free to roam across the battlefield, undermining their propaganda.

In the first Gulf War, Dick Cheney confined most of the news media to slow-moving pools and hotel-room briefings, enlivened by videos of smart bombs. In response to post-war criticism, major news organizations promised they'd never get into bed with the military again. In the next war, they would operate independently. Then came Gulf II. Rumsfeld tempted many news organizations back under the tent of military supervision. The strategy offered potential benefits for the military. Embedded reporters could cover the campaign, but they wouldn't endanger operations. It seemed likely that embedded reporters whose lives depended on military units would identify with their fighting comrades, and send home positive stories. Embedded reporters would counter any Iraqi propaganda or false atrocity stories. Also, embedded reporters would be so busy dodging bullets and filing reports that they'd barely have time to think, or criticize. The Pentagon bet that news organizations, in a competitive media environment, would not turn down access to the front lines — access that was safer than going it alone. The price? The old rules of reporting restrictions and censorship. Embedding was back, in spades.

IMAGES OF WAR: ***An Iraqi family flees for safer territory.***

But technology made embedding in 2003 different from embedding in 1943.

Thanks to handheld cameras and satellite connections, we could watch war "live," or almost live. Embedded reporting brought us both fascinating and infuriating forms of journalism. We virtually rode along with the high-tech coalition warriors as they encircled Baghdad. This is nothing to sniff at. Part of good war reporting is to be at the scene, up to your neck in the action. Nor can it be denied that seeing the battle unfold is valuable information. But too much coverage was "gee whiz" descriptions of military weapons or clips of exploding missiles. The networks' enhanced graphics and "interactive" maps made war appear to be a video game. There were so many white, male, war experts on my TV that it seemed the networks had embedded military generals.

Too much of the embedded coverage was overly patriotic or uncritical. As a viewer, I bristled when U.S. anchors snidely dismissed Iraqi officials. I objected when journalists talked of the Iraqi army as "the enemy" and adopted the first-person plural to dramatize their reports. Sarah Oliver in the Mail on Sunday wrote: "We rode at dawn, the men of the 1st Royal Irish." I was baffled by embedded reporters who adopted the military jargon of AAVs (amphibious assault vehicles) and MOPPs (mission-orientated

Journalists have been so closely identified with armies that it was not until 1977 that the Geneva Conventions recognized journalists as civilians.

PHOTO CREDIT: *REUTERS/Chris Helgren*

protective posture). Laudatory interviews with field commanders made me want to throw rocks at my screen. I found myself cheering on the "unilateral" reporters, such as the CBC's Patrick Brown in northern Iraq. On the other hand, I read with interest Matthew Fisher's embedded report for the *National Post* on the fall of Tikrit. I was fascinated by embedded video and print reports on towns seized, the reactions of Iraqis and the fate of POWs.

The danger of embedded reporting is that it elbows out other forms of journalism. In the excitement of war, we forget that journalism is more than breathless spot news. It is about explaining what one is seeing; it is about questioning and investigating; it is making sure that one's overall reportage has a diversity of voices and perspectives. Good reportage delves into causes and consequences. It reveals, as propaganda, the dubious claims and simplifications by both sides. Overwhelmed by the disconnected facts, I was driven from the frenetic American network coverage to the calmer unembedded networks, such as the CBC, which tried to put things in perspective.

The Iraq war didn't just revive embedding. It firmly established a model for war reporting, a model that has been emerging for a decade or two. On this model, the war reporter is not primarily a careful interpreter of information. He is a human conduit for the relentless flow of fragments of text, images, audio and hurried commentary. He is a journalistic vacuum cleaner that sucks up and transmits whatever information is available. Back home, TV anchors resemble desperate men and women struggling to say something meaningful about the war reporter's latest factoid, while standing in the middle of a swift-moving current of news.

For now, and the foreseeable future, embedding is part of the future of war reporting. I expect more wars like Gulf II, more American interventions in the name of fighting terrorism. So, news organizations need to debate urgent ethical questions such as: Was embedding worth it? Does the public really benefit from it? Would they embed the next time? Like all ethical questions, the issue of embedding is complex and involves a conflict of values. Embedding adds information that might otherwise not be obtained, and it is safer than sending unilaterals into the front lines. But embedding can undermine journalistic independence and erode media credibility. It can lead to unbalanced, de-contextualized journalism. Journalists should remember the words of CBC's Paul Workman as he expressed his frustration at coalition forces for preventing unilaterals from entering southern Iraq: "It is in fact a brilliant, persuasive conspiracy to control the images and the messages coming out of the battlefield and they've succeeded colossally."

I have grave reservations about embedding. I think news organizations should avoid it, if at all possible. No journalist who believes in free and independent journalism should feel comfortable about accepting restrictions on coverage. However, if a news organization decides to embed, it should put in place editorial policies that reduce the potential negative effects of embedding. Embedding is irresponsible unless every precaution is taken to ensure accurate, comprehensive and diverse coverage.

IMAGES OF WAR: ***Iraqis topple a statue of deposed dictator Saddam Hussein.***

Some basic editorial provisions for embedded news organizations are:

Invest in non-embedded journalism: News organizations that embed must also assign unilaterals to the conflict.

Provide context: Explain the disconnected facts of embedded reports by using a diversity of sources and experts, including non-aligned analysts and experts who don't support the war. Emphasize the broader issues.

Edit skeptically: Question official reports and numbers from all sides. Seek out reports that contradict or balance the views contained in embedded reports.

Show the human face of war: Balance the technology of war with coverage of civilians who are killed, maimed or displaced by the fighting.

Avoid cheerleading: Hold embedded reports up to the same standards as other news reports: Avoid patriotic prattle, excessive jargon, fluff interviews with "heroes," and the biased language of "we" and "they." Seek hard-edged, independent reports.

Monitor embedded reporters: Consider rotating or removing embedded reporters who appear to be identifying too strongly with their military unit.

Transparency: Provide the public with transparent (and repeated) explanations about editorial restrictions and how these rules limit reports.

Publish everything: Publish all information that had been censored or restricted immediately after the conflict ends, if not sooner.

Support harassed unilaterals: Journalism organizations should join forces in opposing undue restrictions on independent reporting as they occur.

Aside from embedding, the most fundamental ethical question to emerge from coverage of the Iraq war is this: What is the future of patriotism in an age of global news media? It was disturbing to see how news organizations and journalists so quickly shucked off their peacetime commitments to independent, impartial reporting as soon as the drums of war started beating. In an age of global news media, where reports have an impact that transcends borders, a journalism of narrow patriotism not only does a disservice to one's own citizens, but to citizens around the world. In times of war, the public sphere needs the same independent, critical journalism it should receive in times of peace, no matter how unpopular that stance might be among segments of the population.

The patriotic drivel of some of the war journalism from Gulf II makes one pine for the days when reporters believed in old-fashioned objectivity, that much maligned concept. I propose that war correspondents, when asked what side they are on, should follow the ancient philosopher, Diogenes the Cynic. When asked by Athenians why he ignored local customs, Diogenes dismissed such questions.

"I am," Diogenes would retort, "a citizen of the world."

Stephen J. A. Ward is an associate professor at the UBC School of Journalism who teaches journalism ethics.

PHOTO CREDIT: *REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic*

BY LESLEY HUGHES

Good News or no News

The conflict in Iraq hovers like a poisonous cloud

April 11, 2003, Baghdad fell. Mainstream media outlets declared the war in Iraq to be over! But wait — in some reports the war is over; in other reports it isn't. Thousands of Canadians turned to their favourite, credible Web sites, only to read the war may not be over at all.

Whatever final dates are recorded in history, the question remains, did journalists ever have a hope of learning and reporting the truth about the war in Iraq?

Like the military, journalists had better, smarter, faster technology on their side than in any previous war in history. But superb equipment couldn't solve other serious professional challenges the conflict presented.

This story for *Media* magazine, for example, is already compromised by my use of American military language as directed by the White House. According to the Geneva Convention — there's no higher authority — the conflict wasn't a war; it was an illegal invasion. This is an important distinction supported by the United Nations Charter.

When Canadian media outlets almost universally ignored the difference and referred to "the war," they carelessly aligned themselves with supporters of the Anglo-American invasion. Nevertheless, ethical journalists persisted in efforts to get at the facts and the meaning of the story.

Was Saddam a survivor, or was that his body double? Were there a few hundred casualties, as reported on CNN? Or was it up to 10,000 killed and wounded, as expert opinion suggested on CBC Radio One's Sunday Edition? Were any of the frequent and speculative reports on chemical and biological weapon sites (alleged motivation for the invasion) ever backed up with solid evidence? These are fundamental questions still waiting for answers.

Saturation coverage and an abundance of information, whether words or pictures, could not ensure the public knew what was really happening. And no wonder, given the limits within which journalists were trying to do their work. The possibility of death on the job, for example, has a discouraging effect (Please see Saleem Khan's story on page 10).

In February, 2003, the Pentagon announced there would be zero tolerance for independent satellite uplink positions in the forthcoming battles in Iraq. In other words, no unauthorized live telephone or TV reports would get to air. When veteran BBC war correspondent Kate Adie challenged Pentagon officials on the consequences of their directive, they confirmed that the military would have orders to fire on such sites. "Who cares?" they asked her. "They (the journalists) have been warned."

The "who cares" policy, as well as the concept of covering the war with "embedded" (integrated) media (Please see Stephen J.A. Ward's article on page 13) was internationally disputed by senior journalists like the *New York Time's* Sydney Schanberg, veteran of the Vietnam conflict celebrated in the film The Killing Fields. The policies received repeated coverage in mainstream media outlets; journalistic resistance to embedding received less coverage.

Whether the military had orders to fire on other media sites is still to be determined. At least13 journalists died covering the three-week war. Two of them were killed in their Baghdad hotel by American forces who declared, unconvincingly, that the deaths were accidental. Their deaths occurred just one day after American soldiers killed an Al-Jazeera journalist and wounded another working in their headquarters in Baghdad, a site well known to the Pentagon.

David Miller, U.K.-based media analyst at Stirling University, called the media management of the invasion nothing short of "public relations genius." The coalition press information centres in Kuwait and Qatar agreed on an acceptable spin, which went to the

According to the Geneva Convention — there's no higher authority — the conflict wasn't a war; it was an illegal invasion.

FOG OF WAR: ***Saturation coverage and an abundance of information, whether words or pictures, could not ensure the public knew what was really happening.***

PHOTO CREDIT: *REUTERS*

Office of Global Communication in Washington, where it was polished for the White House and the public. The result, says longtime war correspondent John Pilger of the Daily Mirror, was "You got good news or no news." So, for an endless number of days, the news seemed the same: U.S. forces were within a few kilometers of Baghdad. It was apparently during this time that the elite Republican Guard divisions were wiped out from the air — a massacre not meant for public consumption. No pictures, no story.

The terms for embedded reporters were severe: every story was checked by a media liaison officer, run by a colonel, and then went through brigade headquarters. CBC Radio and Television opted out, but Radio Canada "embedded" Luc Chartrand for a marine perspective of the war with mixed results. "We put him in context with other things, with facts on the ground. Certainly we got more visuals. But always, control determines coverage," recalled CBC foreign correspondent Céline Galipeau during a radio interview about the conflict.

Journalists trying to interpret the war in Iraq from their desks in Canada faced particular challenges. Skeptical of both information from official sources and from a censored battlefield, many faithfully researched a constant flow of contradictory information from the Internet where a starkly different, unsanitized war emerged.

Al-Jazeera's English-language Web site and raw video clips from Reuters, available at *www.robert-fisk.com*, exposed the suffering of the dead and dying on both sides in the American-led conflict.

Journalists' efforts to file neutral reports of events in Iraq encountered serious editorial bias. In the long run-up to war, Canadian citizens turned out in record numbers to challenge the right of a superpower to a pre-emptive attack on another country whose crime was strictly a perceived threat. But, in varying degrees, Canadian media owners (and by extension, their publishers and editors) sided with the hawks in the Bush administration. Some of them, the *Globe and Mail*, for instance, permitted vigorous debate from rebel columnists (Geoffrey Simpson, Paul Knox, Rick Salutin, et al.) but these columnists were peaceful tourists in hostile territory.

"If they could see what we see, people would know there is no just war. We (journalists) couldn't cope with it, except for the job and the deadlines every day. The shock comes later."
– Céline Galipeau, CBC foreign correspondent

PHOTO CREDIT: *CBC*

PHOTO CREDIT: *Adrian Wyld*

Others, like the War Desk at CanWest Global Television network, were unabashedly enthusiastic at the prospect of real live war. "War whores," as Nicholas von Hoffman indelicately named such enthusiasts in the *New York Observer*, "tingling with happy excitement as they strain to infect their viewers/readers with their enthusiasm for the looming death and disfigurement of others."

Ironically, in this war, it was possible to die getting a story few people trusted: could readers be expected to accept as absolute fact a story appearing under a daily banner like that of the *National Post*, (tanks rumbling forward under the Stars and Stripes) or the *Winnipeg Free Press* (Saddam Hussein shown squarely in the sight of a gun)?

Judging by the number of unanswered questions, the conflict in Iraq meets the classic definition of what media literacy experts call "the dysfunctional story" that actually damages the community it was intended to serve. It remains a somebody-done-somebody wrong story, told in a manner impossible to resolve; it hovers over the community like a poisonous cloud, dividing and demoralizing those who would know the truth, but remain frustrated because they can't decide what it is.

In the public's view, the writers, photographers or broadcasters of such stories are the irresponsible parties. Despite governments, military spindoctors and biased employers placing obstacles to the truth, journalists are the ones who lose credibility and take most of the blame for the messy contradictions of war coverage.

The biggest contradiction is that, although wars get more high-tech and generals claim less and smarter damage on enemy and civilian populations, the public has yet to see the true reality of that damage and judge its acceptability.

Canadian citizens turned out in record numbers to challenge the right of a superpower to a pre-emptive attack on another country whose crime was strictly a perceived threat.

"If they could see what we see," says Gemini Award winner Céline Galipeau, "people would know there is no just war. We (journalists) couldn't cope with it, except for the job and the deadlines every day. The shock comes later."

Nothing in the coverage of the war in Iraq suggests that ordinary people will see, hear, or read about the reality of war any time soon. In the meantime, more urgent questions arise. How long will it be before journalists begin to fight for their collective integrity? And how, exactly, can such a war be won?

Lesley Hughes is a Winnipeg-based writer, broadcaster and columnist.

BY SALEEM KHAN

Dangerous Minds

Journalists who covered the conflict against Iraq could become hidden casualties

"It's a bad time for reporters," muses Philip Castle, a journalism professor at Australia's Queensland University of Technology.

Three days after America's attempt to assassinate Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with a barrage of dozens of cruise missiles, Castle was in Toronto researching psychological trauma in journalists. He previously studied the experiences of journalists who covered the Bali bombing, the war in East Timor and a tsunami in northern Papua, New Guinea, which killed more than 2,500 people. Now he's contemplating what journalists likely witnessed in the war against Iraq — scenes "most of us try to avoid even describing or thinking about.

"Limbs blown off, stomachs, innards and pieces of brain scattered — it's the very worst of a multiple car pile-up multiplied by a thousand times. There's wreckage, there's groaning, there's people who have died in agony, there's burnt flesh — that's what war is about," Castle says. He also predicts more of the "brutality at a level we saw a little bit of in Afghanistan, where prisoners were locked in (shipping) containers and suffocated to death."

Those kinds of images and experiences will have a profound psychological impact on journalists who covered the death and destruction inflicted by the combination of U.S. and British massive firepower and Iraq's response to it, Castle predicts. And he would know. Castle served two years with the Australian military in Vietnam before he became a reporter who covered the death-and-dismemberment beat — violent crimes including murders and assaults, suicides, bloody road and air accidents, natural disasters — and politics. From 1986 to 1995, he was director of communications for the Australian National Police, a job that exposed him to horrific crime scenes more disturbing than those he saw as a reporter.

Castle's experiences caused him to grow concerned about journalists' mental health. As a result, he became a founding member of Newscoverage Unlimited, a support organization for journalists where he helped shape trauma intervention methodology and its application.

Part of the reason journalists covering the war are at risk of developing psychological problems — possibly more than soldiers — is the fault of journalists themselves, Castle says. He's not alone in that view.

TRAUMA STUDY

"There's the whole myth of the war correspondent as someone who is immune to the psychological consequences of trauma," explains Anthony Feinstein, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto. It's a myth they encourage at their own risk, he says. "No one is immune."

Feinstein published the first psychiatric study of war correspondents in the September, 2002, issue of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. He found that both male and female war journalists had significantly higher rates of alcohol consumption than colleagues who do not cover war, were more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depression, and were more likely to abuse drugs. As many as 28.6 per cent suffered from PTSD, 21.4 per cent developed major depression, and 14.3 per cent abused drugs, including alcohol.

The study also found that the prevalence of PTSD during the course of war reporters' lifetimes was similar

DEADLY IMAGES: ***"Those kinds of images... will have a profound psychological impact on journalists who covered the death and destruction inflicted by the combination of U.S. and British massive firepower."***

– Philip Castle, journalism professor

PHOTO CREDIT: *Aaron Ansarov, PH1(SW), USN, FLTCOMBATCAMGRUPAC*

to rates for military combat veterans, and as much as four times that for police officers, whose rate of PTSD is between 7 and 13 per cent. The rate of major depression among war journalists (a predominantly male profession) exceeded that of the general population in the U.S. — around 17.1 per cent — and was nearly double the 12 per cent rate for men in the U.S. Yet, journalists were not more likely to receive treatment for their problems and often went untreated, the study found.

"There's this macho image attached to the profession," Feinstein says. Along with that image comes what he describes as the outmoded way war journalists and their bosses have tended to think about psychological difficulties: "You don't talk about these things and you have to have the right stuff. And if you don't have the right stuff, you should get out because you can't be a good journalist, which I think is a load of rubbish."

NEWS CULTURE

Feinstein speculates that this culture of silence within the industry may be a key reason why virtually no research on trauma in journalists exists. While most news organizations have accepted the idea that they must provide their staff with hostile environment safety training before going into conflict zones, they have been slower at providing similar training to prepare for psychological trauma, he says.

"It's much easier to close your eyes, send someone into harm's way and assume they're going to be fine," Feinstein says. "If you start doubting that assumption, it becomes a very difficult thing to do."

In spite of that difficulty, he says news organizations are starting to break the old taboo and the "culture is definitely changing," a point Gerry Smith agrees with.

Smith is vice-president of organizational health at Toronto-based Warren Shepell and Associates, which runs confidential employee assistance programs (EAP) for over 2,000 companies, including media organizations.

"It's only in the past couple of years that we began to be invited in to do training with media companies," Smith says. "The fact that I'm actually invited in now, to train media companies in the effects of post-traumatic stress is a huge step forward. It means that the media companies themselves are actually recognizing the need."

He says while there isn't a great need for psychiatric or counseling services among journalists at the moment, he expects the demand to increase, especially as some continue returning home from assignments in Iraq.

"When they're back and begin to consider what they've actually been through, they recognize the dangers their life has been placed in, and that's when they begin to experience some of that stress more," Smith says.

SIGNS AND TREATMENT

Some of the symptoms journalists suffering from PTSD can expect to experience include flashbacks, nightmares or intrusive thoughts that plunge them back into scenes or experiences from the war; sleeplessness, a tendency to starve themselves or binge on food or drink, and changes in bowel function such as a rapid case of severe diarrhea they can't explain. Other symptoms include feelings of anger, distrust, and disillusionment with the state of their lives.

THE UNFORGETABLE IMAGES OF WAR: ***It was not hard to find disturbing images that brought home the brutal reality of war that threatened to throw the Bush administration off its message track. News organizations such as the BBC made images like this one of an Iraqi man on his way to hospital readily available on their Web sites. This picture was one of many on the BBC's gallery which it entitled: "Human cost of war." For more information, please go to:*** **http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/photo_gallery/2935669.stm**

Smith notes that a phenomenon known as "vicarious trauma," accounts for the fact that journalists who are not on the front lines covering the war can become just as traumatized as those who were. Journalists in a newsroom, edit suite or on the desk can develop PTSD simply by seeing the pictures that are sent back, or by hearing about their colleagues' experiences in the war zone.

Journalists in a newsroom, edit suite or on the desk can develop PTSD simply by seeing the pictures that are sent back, or by hearing about their colleagues' experiences in the war zone.

The treatment for both groups is the same: a resumption of normal activities and routines, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, social activities with friends and family, and contact with society at large, Feinstein says. Or, as Smith summarizes it, "Food, water, air, rest, exercise and sex -- not necessarily in that order."

Talking about feelings and experiences with a counselor, friend, family member or religious leader is an important aspect of recovery, but journalists tend to have difficulty talking about their emotions, Smith says.

"They tend to be a bit more closed in on themselves, so we encourage them to write about their experiences," Smith says, emphasizing that those writings are meant for private use, not publication. "That's something journalists tend to be good at, and that gives them an idea of how they're doing."

While journalists can recover without professional involvement, Smith advises anyone who has symptoms of PTSD for longer than three or four weeks to see a doctor for professional help.

DANGEROUS PROFESSION

"It's something that news organizations must take seriously," says Sandy McKean, director of CBC News staff development. "The rules of the game are much different out there than they have traditionally been."

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists conservatively counted 20 journalists killed in the line of duty last year. But there are 13 other

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Dangerous Minds

deaths whose motive a CPJ investigation was unable to determine, and another three journalists who disappeared under suspicious circumstances.

Meanwhile, in its annual report for 2002, the Paris-based Reporters sans frontières counts 25 journalists killed, 692 arrested, at least 1,420 physically attacked or threatened and at least 389 media outlets censored. The Austria-based International Press Institute placed the number of journalists killed in 2002 at 54. And in its annual report, the International Federation of Journalists counted 70 journalists and media staff killed in 2002.

"People may not support your particular story and may even prevent you from trying to get information; and worse still, may even capture you, torture you, imprison you, and the worst thing: kill you," Castle says about the possibilities that faced journalists who have covered the war against Iraq, or any conflict.

At press time, at least 13 journalists had been killed in Iraq and two were missing. Two of the dead were killed April 8 when a U.S. tank fired a shell at the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, where journalists were based. U.S. officials subsequently offered conflicting stories to explain why their forces fired on the hotel. Organizations representing journalists are demanding an investigation. The same day, another journalist was killed in a U.S. missile attack on the Baghdad bureau of Qatar-based, 24-hour Arabic-language news network Al-Jazeera, and Abu Dhabi-TV was fired upon by U.S. troops. In 2001, a U.S. missile attack destroyed Al-Jazeera's bureau in Kabul, Afghanistan.

ITN correspondent Terry Lloyd was killed March 22 after U.S. or British forces fired on his two-vehicle caravan clearly marked as press, says cameraman Daniel Demoustier, who was injured. Two colleagues who were travelling with them are still missing. The British Ministry of Defense is investigating the incident.

Three more journalists were killed in clashes between U.S. and Iraqi forces, one was killed in an apparent suicide bombing and another died after stepping on a land mine.

It all factors into traumatic stress for journalists, Feinstein says. "There's a very strong *esprit de corps* amongst this group, and if you're out in the field and suddenly there's news that one of your colleagues has been killed, the effect can be very troubling."

MINIMIZING JEOPARDY

To deal with both the physical and mental dangers, CBC field staff entering a conflict zone undergo extensive training, McKean explains. For Iraq, they also received biological and chemical weapons training. While the safety training itself imparts confidence and a degree of mental comfort when confronting dangerous situations, the courses specifically include training to prepare for psychological stress before it occurs, manage it while it's happening, and afterward.

The CBC debriefs its foreign correspondents after dangerous assignments and gathers them in Toronto annually for a week of meetings. Last year, the group spent a day discussing psychological stress, and they have participated extensively in Feinstein's studies.

COMFORT FOR THE WOUNDED: ***Corpsman Christopher Pavicek provides aid to a wounded Iraqi soldier after a firefight with 1st LAR outside the town of An Nu' maniyah, Iraq, April 2, 2003.***

McKean emphasizes that support isn't just given in intervals, but throughout employees' assignments.

"We are in constant communication with our correspondents and producers, and shooters and editors in the field on a day-to-day, and in many cases, hour-to-hour basis, so they're not out there on their own," McKean insists.

While that kind of contact may not seem important, given war journalists' independent nature, it makes a difference, Castle says. "A lot of journalists get pretty upset because their equipment's not very good or they can't connect, or they can't get their satellite dishes going, or their phones working. Those small things can make a big difference to journalists' well-being."

Although news organizations are coming around ... there is a disparity in the attention of different branches of the mental health of their employees.

Confidential care and counseling for PTSD and other problems is available through the CBC's EAP which the organization contracts Warren Shepell to provide. Last year, the CBC extended its EAP to cover all foreign bureau staff and their families, including contract and freelance workers.

"We keep reminding them of the fact that this service is available and we're having discussions right now about doing something else once this conflict is over," McKean says. "We're very sensitive to this matter."

Although news organizations are coming around, Feinstein says there is a disparity in the attention different branches of the media give to the mental health of their employees.

"It's the newspapers that are way behind television when it comes to this," he claims. Although he's not certain of the reason, he suggests that change in news organizations is driven by a handful of senior managers. Until some of those key individuals realize the importance of work-related trauma, organizations continue to follow the same patterns.

Another area where mental health care for journalists falls short is among freelancers. Despite the progress many organizations have made, they tend to leave their contract and other non-staff employees to their own devices.

It's an unfortunate and difficult reality that freelance journalists have to face, but not one they have to face alone.

"Journalists who aren't freelancers could look out for their colleagues a bit," Castle says. "Who better to look after journalists than other journalists?" ☑

Saleem Khan is a Toronto-based journalist and CAJ board member.

PHOTO CREDIT: *Gysgt Hansen, Erik S., 1st Marine Division Com Cam*

BY MARK LISAC

Ignoring Alberta's Antiwar Protesters

The treatment of the antiwar rallies in Edmonton looked like a spectacular case of a much larger phenomenon — a tendency to force the facts into a preconceived mould of regional stereotypes

The antiwar demonstration in Edmonton on March 22 was an awfully big event to write off but the country's news media managed to do so. How and why that happened reveals a lot about the need for changing perceptions of regionalism in this country.

The numbers were slippery, of course. Several thousand people gathered downtown and marched to the legislature. There, the crowd swelled. Estimates range from about 12,000 to 18,000. The now-usual compromise of about 15,000 may have been possible.

Even a number in the lower range translates into two important facts.

The March 22 antiwar rally in Edmonton saw by far the second-largest turnout in a day of demonstrations across the country. It was triple or quadruple the size of the rallies in Toronto and Ottawa.

And in raw numbers, it was likely the largest public rally ever held in Alberta, perhaps double the size of the next largest demonstration ever held. As a percentage of population, some Social Credit rallies in the 1930s may have been larger. There was likely more popular feeling against programs like the National Energy Program of 1980 or the national gun registry. But no public issue has drawn more people to one spot to express their opinion.

How then to explain why the Edmonton rally became an afterthought in national news coverage?

The usual treatment was to begin the story in Montreal and Toronto, add some mention of Ottawa, Halifax and Winnipeg, and then go on to say that, by the way, there were also some protests out West.

Neglect was in fact the better of the options. A Canadian Press story that night managed to interpret the Edmonton rally as evidence of a national split between general antiwar feelings in the East and somewhat pro-war feelings in the West!

"Interestingly," the CP story said, "the Calgary, Edmonton and Montreal demonstrations mirrored somewhat the findings of an EKOS Research Associates poll conducted this past week for the *Toronto Star* and Montreal's *La Presse*.

It found that Chrétien's decision was backed by a majority of respondents everywhere in the country, except Alberta."

How did the second-largest antiwar demonstration in the country, likely the largest public rally ever held in Alberta, back up an impression of a province unhappy with the federal government's decision not to commit Canadian soldiers to the war in Iraq? Not that the demonstrations indicated a province against the war. All the evidence pointed to a nearly even split of views in Alberta, with opinions very strongly held on both sides. At the same time, this was surely not a province where antiwar opinion was negligible. Yet the media played it that way.

VOICES OF DISSENT: ***A crowd of several thousand gathers in front of the Alberta Legislature Building on March 22 to protest against the war in Iraq.***

What seems to have happened and why? The time-zone effect probably loomed large. The story of the March 22 demonstrations began to take shape in newsrooms after the events in Ontario and Quebec. There may have been a tendency to keep the initial events at the centre and merely tack on what happened elsewhere rather than take a broad, countrywide view.

But the treatment of the antiwar rallies looked like a spectacular case of a much larger phenomenon — a tendency to force the facts into a preconceived mould of regional stereotypes. The print writing and the broadcast summaries suggest it was all too easy to fit Alberta into its standard role as the province sourly opposed to federal government decisions. Alternatively, it was all too difficult to imagine Alberta as a place where something unexpected might happen.

Media outlets and politicians know the script so well that they end up trying to tell the old story when a new one is unfolding before everyone's eyes. And that is demonstrably what happened inside as well as outside Alberta. One sign: a story in the Calgary Herald on the March 22 weekend said a poll conducted for Global Television had found 22.7 per cent of western Canadians supporting a U.S.-led war in Iraq. Astonishingly, the story went on to claim this result showed public resonance with Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's support for the war.

Truth may be the first casualty of war, but the truth of regional identity in Canada has been among the walking wounded for many years. That's why the reporting of Alberta's opinions on the war should spark a much wider reassessment.

Klein himself ran into serious problems. He intended to bring a resolution supporting war into the legislature. He had to scale that back significantly and settle for a softly worded ministerial statement when he ran into opposition inside his own Progressive Conservative caucus.

A poll published in the *Edmonton Journal* indicated complex currents running inside the province. The wording of the questions contaminated the war issue with other

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PHOTO CREDIT: *Maren Lisac*

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Ignoring Alberta's Antiwar Protesters

political considerations. Still, the poll found clear geographic differences inside the province. The Edmonton region was much more doubtful than other areas. Edmonton resembled much of the rest of Western Canada, which in turn was fairly close to the rest of the country. Steve Patten, a political scientist at the University of Alberta, pointed out that Calgary and rural Alberta were the real outliers in public opinion, not Alberta as a whole and not the West. Those differences in Calgary would later be mirrored by minor differences in news coverage. It was marginally easier in the final days before and during the collapse of Baghdad, for example, to find mention of civilian casualties in the *Edmonton Journal* than in the *Calgary Herald*.

These contrary indications — poll findings and Klein's setback with his own party — never achieved national prominence. They tended to pass quickly inside the province as well. It wasn't the first time. Truth may be the first casualty of war, but the truth of regional identity in Canada has been among the walking wounded for many years. That's why the reporting of Alberta's opinions on the war should spark a much wider reassessment. Inside Alberta, the myth of a monolithic public opinion serves many interests well. Outside, the same myth makes for simple news writing. One gets the impression it sometimes serves as the template for stories simply because it's easier to recycle the old story everyone knows.

Canada's media, and Alberta's, too, have to come to grips with realities that affect not only the Iraq war, but many domestic issues:

* Alberta is often not an outlier in the spectrum of Canadian public opinion despite a frequent expression of regional alienation. It fits quite easily into that broad spectrum with only minor variations. Polls tend to find the convergence is strongest among younger westerners.

*Calgary tends to think differently from the rest of Canada, including Western Canada and much of Alberta. This should be recognized but not stretched beyond the facts.

*Alberta is no longer part of the rural west of imagination. It is three-quarters urban or suburban. The Calgary-Edmonton corridor is home to one of the most concentrated urban populations in the country, with a municipal conglomeration approaching one million people at each end, and with all the complexity of opinion and capacity for innovation that conglomeration suggests.

*Many of the political attitudes associated with the West or Alberta are actually attitudes of rural areas. They reflect a population under financial and cultural stress and are often more pronounced in Saskatchewan despite their association with political trends in Alberta. Sometimes those attitudes match attitudes in urban areas, particularly in Calgary, but often they represent a reaction against all urban encroachment. One clear example is the much higher historic support for gun control in Alberta cities than in rural Alberta.

*Polls should be treated with care in Alberta (as elsewhere). They often feed off existing popular conceptions.

*Alberta political leaders often speak for the province, but sometimes do not.

Mark Lisac is author of The Klein Revolution, *a study of the early years of Ralph Klein's government. He is also a copy editor at* The Edmonton Journal *and used to be the paper's provincial affairs columnist.*

BY PHILL SNEL

Images of War

When does a picture tell the truth? Always. And never, argues photographer Phill Snel in his article about the images that dominated the front pages of newspapers around the globe

CASUALTY OF WAR: ***Memorable images, such as the Reuters photo of the mud-covered hands of an Iraqi man protruding from a rolled-up carpet, offered a glimpse at the grim horror of death without showing a whole corpse.***

The entire truth of a situation cannot usually reveal itself in a single image, since there is almost always more to the story than might be shown. But at the same time, what one sees in a photo actually did happen, otherwise it couldn't have been recorded as an image.

What, then, can one say about the deluge of photographs that ensued from the embedded still photographers with the U.S. and British forces during the war on Iraq? Does the totality of all that work show the entire story?

The issue of censorship always comes up whenever there's mention of an "escort." And why not? As visual journalists, we're accustomed to the ever-hovering PR person trying to make sure that we don't make their company look bad — obviously, we "soldier on" trying to objectively do our job as best as possible. But what about when that company is a world power, waging a questionable war on the world stage? Obviously, when we talk about a war in Iraq, we're not in Kansas anymore, and the really big dice are being rolled by the powers that be, because they're allowing all of those "embedded" journalists along for their little ride into Baghdad. Can they allow the whole truth out? Can they afford not to? What if the real truth gets out later?

Well, as far as I've been able to tell, there's been no real mention of censorship with photos. In fact, it has been suggested that the best images from the war in Iraq were the still photos. At first there was much ballyhoo about the technology of the great satellite phones with video capabilities. But did anyone really get much more than fuzzy images that accompanied the oft-repeated words "... reporting live from..."? Or what about the television journalists' inability to specify details? It was the still photographers who managed to make the stronger, and in my opinion, more memorable images of Gulf War II.

Criticism from America's photographic stance in Afghanistan helped to set the stage for the war in

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PHOTO CREDIT: *REUTERS/Stephen Hird*

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Images of War

Iraq. In Afghanistan, there were too many handout photos provided by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and not enough genuine journalist-made images. A sentiment echoed by Canadian Press's Chief of Pictures Ron Poling about the war in Iraq: "If I had a complaint about everybody's pictures, it's that they accepted too many DOD pictures. There was a lot from the navy on aircraft carriers, and from the ground, too. The practice [at CP] is to look at photos and determine if it's hopelessly slanted — if it is, then it's ditched. I'd like to see fewer pickups from government agencies."

So now we move forward to Gulf War II, with digital camera and satellite phone-equipped photographers — a far cry from the days of Vietnam where photographers might have to wait days until they returned to file photos. Gary Hershorn, Reuters' news editor/pictures for the Americas, says, "The embedding process was good. It served the media well, insofar as putting photographers at the front every day. Some agencies had the luck of the draw, depending upon where the Pentagon put you. From a photographer's point of view, it was outstanding to see the great pictures that were taken every day — there always seemed to be a standout photo on a front page."

Pictures are only made because someone had actual access. If something happened, but no photographer was there, then there would be no picture — no historical reference to mark the horror of the moment.

"In terms of the [daily] file of photos, there was a broad range of pictures, says Poling. "Because of the embedded journalists, perhaps, there was a more obviously American side of the story [rather] than Iraqi — that was probably as much because of access. Iraqis controlled access in their country, (for) example AP's Jerome Delay couldn't leave the Palestine Hotel without an escort. Consequently, you were seeing what the Iraqis wanted you to see; with Americans, you would see everything that a unit was up to. Everyone was filing whatever they

MEMORABLE SHOT: ***"It was uncanny how the best pictures (of the day) got published by all of the papers. I was amazed at how much play the war got — sometimes whole sections with 18-20 pictures each day."***

PHOTO CREDIT: REUTERS/*Damir Sagolj*

JOY IN THE STREETS: ***As far as I've been able to tell, there's been no real mention of censorship with photos. In fact, it has been suggested that the best images from the war in Iraq were the still photos.***

PHOTO CREDIT: REUTERS/*Goran Tomasevic*

had. (I) haven't heard of anyone complaining about [censorship]."

What about those who actually served as embedded journalists? The New York Times shipped off more than two dozen journalists to cover the story. Among one of them was staff photographer Vincent Laforet who was assigned to a relatively civilized embedded post. He wrote in a diary that recounted his 27 days aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, "One of the challenges I faced as an 'embed' was to ensure that I was not 'in bed' with these people I came to admire and/or the military." Laforet also asked himself questions: "Was I focusing too much on the incredible sacrifices these sailors and aviators make in the personal lives — and losing sight of the horrid effects of their efforts on the distant ground? Was I missing the bigger picture?"

Another embedded journalist was Getty Images staff photographer Paula Bronstein who recently left Kuwait after a "non-voluntary disembedment." Apparently, according to Bronstein, after weeks of watching bombs leave the base with messages written upon them, a flight mechanic offered her a pen to write a message on one of the bombs. Bronstein used a Sharpie to write "This war sucks. It will only breed hatred." She expressed an opinion different from the military's, and for that, she says, she was punished. "If I'm invited to express my opinion, should my opinion only be what the military finds acceptable?"

In the end, only time will tell us if we were all hoodwinked by Pentagon PR. For now, we have thousands of images from the conflict. Memorable images, such as the Reuters photo of the mud-covered hands of an Iraqi man protruding from a rolled-up carpet, offered a glimpse at the grim horror of death without showing a whole corpse. Other images that gave us golden moments of this fast-paced conflict are the Reuters picture showing the toppling of a Saddam Hussein statue, U.S. soldiers smoking cigars while seated in one of the dictator's palaces, marines sitting in a mud hole during an early part of the war, one (of several) of an Iraqi kissing a smiling U.S. soldier, and a U.S. soldier kissing a baby.

"It was uncanny how the best pictures [of the day] got published by all of the papers. I was amazed at how much play the war got — sometimes whole sections with 18-20 pictures each day," remarked Hershorn when asked whether newspapers were picking photos that told the whole story.

Pictures are only made because someone had actual access. If something happened, but no photographer was there, then there will be no picture — no historical reference to mark the horror of the moment. If, in the opinion of some, photographs from the war on Iraq seemed to gloss over those horrors, then I cannot agree. There were literally thousands of images from many, many agencies to choose from each day. Remember: a single image can show something that actually happened, but it cannot tell all there is to know about the entire situation.

Were all the war photos just photo-ops? It's highly unlikely that so many moments could be scripted to unfold under the eyes of so many experienced journalists. If all newspapers in Canada used just a portion of all the images available each day during the conflict, does that mean justice was done in terms of proper coverage? In the end it comes down to the editors' judgment to shape the coverage for their papers in order to try to tell the story for that day, or that week. I dearly hope that, in the end, the totality of the coverage does serve the readers and the public. ■

Seeing is Not Believing

BY *PHILL SNEL*

One of the most talked-about single images from the war in Iraq, at least within the still photography industry, had to be one that was never actually taken, and certainly was not indicative of war coverage as a whole. It exists as an image, but it was never a single moment captured as a legitimate photograph. *Los Angeles Times* photographer Brian Walski used elements from two photographs, taken moments apart, in order to create a different image. In the world of journalism, that sort of action is tantamount to lying under oath at the Supreme Court. Justice was swift in the form of a phone call to Walski informing him of his termination, instructions to leave his sat phone with the writer and to find his own way home out of the Iraqi desert.

In an e-mail to the entire photography staff of the *Times*, Walski admitted his lapse in judgment and accepted responsibility for it. When asked how he could do it, Walksi said: "I f---ed up, and now no one will touch me. I went from the front line for the greatest newspaper in the world, and now I have nothing. No cameras, no car, nothing."

"That was a bad thing," responded Ron Poling, chief of picture service for The Canadian Press. "It pointed out the importance of keeping our credibility, and how serious of an incident it was."

"It should never have happened. It's just sad that it happened at all — it leaves a black mark on photojournalism," added Gary Hershorn, Reuters' news editor/pictures for the Americas, from his office in Washington, D.C.

LINKS:
http://www.latimes.com/news/custom/showcase/la-ednote_blurb.blurb

http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=28082&sid=29

Phill Snel is a Toronto-based freelance photographer working for well-known national and international newspapers and magazines. As former associate photo editor/photographer at Maclean's, as well as a former stringer for CP and Reuters, Snel has extensive experience working directly with various image agencies, editors and photo editors. He is currently the president of the Eastern Canadian News Photographers Association (ECNPA). For more information on the ECNPA go to www.ecnpa.com, *and for Phill Snel go to* www.phillsnel.com.

FEATURE

BY ROBERT SCALIA

In Fear of Article 23

Government officials in Hong Kong don't think much about press freedom, which is why they're using a law to put the clamps on journalists

"So they send me up there with a hidden camera," recounts Jiang Xueqin, his voice shaking slightly, the emotion of it all still noticeably fresh. "It was basically a trap. The square where the protest was supposed to take place was crawling with secret police."

Before he knew it, Xueqin was sitting in an interrogation room, facing 12 detectives from the provincial task force accusing him of being a foreign spy.

The Canadian freelancer had been arrested that day in Daqing, a small town in Northern China straddling the Russian border. He was working on a PBS documentary on China's entry into the World Trade Organization. The crew had received a tip that a massive worker demonstration was under way.

Only 100 or so workers had turned up that Monday afternoon in early June. However, three months of intense protests in the area meant authorities were "expecting journalists to come." It was also a sensitive time — one day to the anniversary of the Tienamen Square Massacre. Far away from the square, another scenario involving another journalist is unfolding.

Somewhere in the offices of the *Sunday Examiner* in Hong Kong, sedition is lurking, perhaps among the scattered boxes and cluttered shelves, unknowingly whispered over telephone lines or transmitted as an attachment into cyberspace — words and their authors guilty alike. Father Louis Ha is the *Examiner's* editor. The threat of arrest is every editor's doomsday scenario. Louis Ha has been mulling over this particular possibility more frequently as of late.

Father Ha gently puts down his glass of water, brushing aside some unedited articles and sample spreads of the week's paper from his desk. His eyes seem to dart back and forth behind his big, thick lenses.

"Sooner or later," he explains, foreboding in his soft-spoken voice," some of my intentions, some of my articles might be considered threats to national security."

Such fears of arrest would have been easily dismissed when Hong Kong was still under British rule. China reclaimed the colony in 1997. Against that backdrop, the Executive Council's recent decision to push forward new national security legislation has left many journalists in Hong Kong feeling rather uneasy.

The council (a 14-member cabinet appointed directly by Hong Kong's Chief Executive) has endured heavy fire from journalists, lawyers and human rights groups condemning Article 23. They fear these so-called anti-subversion laws endanger press freedom and threaten the one country- two systems' framework that presently regulates relations with Mainland China.

HIS WORST FEAR: ***"The way I work will be the same... but the atmosphere and attitude around here will be different," says Father Louis Ha, editor of the*** **Sunday Examiner.**

In other words, one man's nightmare just got a lot more plausible.

These days, it seems everyone wants a piece of Article 23.

U.S. President George W. Bush discussed it with Chinese President Jiang Zemin last October at their Texas summit. The U.S. State Department has also chimed in, as have several British members of Parliament.

Twenty-six journalists' groups worldwide have formed a united front. The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) claims to have backing from some half a million media professionals in 155 countries.

Despite having received over 100,000 submissions and 30,000 signatures opposing Article 23 during a three-month consultation period, the Executive Council has decided to put the bill before the legislative council.

The proposed laws are meant to replace three existing ordinances in Hong Kong — namely the Crimes, Official Secrets and Societies Ordinance. As such, Article 23 covers everything from treason to secession to the theft of state secrets.

As the voice of Hong Kong's 250,000 Catholics, the* Sunday Examiner *continues to criticize China, where many Catholic leaders have been forced underground for refusing to renounce their allegiance to the Vatican.

It states that a publication will be considered seditious if it incites people to commit treason, secession or subversion or causes violence and public disorder that ultimately endangers the stability of the People's Republic of China. Inciting violence carries a seven-year jail term, while inciting treason, secession and subversion – publishing an editorial calling for

PHOTO CREDIT: *Robert Scalia*

overthrow of the government, for example — carries a life sentence.

These rather vague definitions have become the main point of contention. Politicians and journalists alike have repeatedly demanded the government publish a workable draft of Article 23 (a white bill) so the law's exact wording could be up for public consultation.

The Hong Kong Journalists Association, for example, insists only expressions that are intended to incite imminent violence should be punished. The group also believes journalists should be able to use public interest to justify the disclosure of state secrets.

Secretary for Security Regina Ip recently announced that certain amendments have been made to the legislation, including more precise definitions of treason, secession and subversion. She believes Article 23 "will now be more relaxed than similar laws in the U.S., Britain and Australia."

She has repeatedly insisted that the government is definitely "not extending mainland China's laws or concepts to Hong Kong."

Many journalists and human rights group maintain that the consultation period — which ended Dec. 24 — was a sham. They have accused Hong Kong's government of bowing to Mainland pressure.

Chinese vice-premier Qian Qichen has continually downplayed opposition in Hong Kong over the enactment of Article 23. He maintains Beijing has not intervened in its drafting, but has only "outlined general principles."

From from Hong Kong and China, in the safety of his Toronto home, Xueqin puts things into perspective. Even though he was deported (after authorities discovered he lacked the required journalists visa) he was let off rather easily by Chinese standards.

Many journalists aren't so lucky.

A 2001 report released by the Committee to Protect Journalists says China accounts for 22 of the 87 journalists imprisoned worldwide. Last year, the World Association of Newspapers released a similar report, which states China's leadership has not softened attitudes towards the press.

"Newspapers are still kept on a very short rope," it says, while 'estate secrets,' social reporting (AIDS, for example) and cyber-dissidents continue to be considered serious attacks against the regime. All are severely punished.

Xueqin believes his two-year stint in China has provided some insight into how the Chinese government seeks to curb press freedoms.

There are many laws in China that aren't regularly enforced, he explains.

For example, citizens holding a meeting involving more than five people are required to inform police. "That's a ridiculous law," he blurts out emotionally, his voice rising." But it's a catch-all law.

"If the police wanted to get you somehow, they now have an excuse. Article 23 could work the same way," he reasons. "While it probably won't be popularly enforced, it will be used to go after specific opponents."

So just who are those opponents?

"Whatever organization — whether it's religious, political or social — that poses a threat to the authority of the Communists party."

Thirteen years ago, the Communist Party leadership decided to insert a last-minute provision in China's Basic Law to ban subversive activities.

Those officials had been stunned by Hong Kong's outpouring of support for the student protests that finally culminated at Tinanmen. They labelled the British colony a potential base for subversion and became obsessed with the idea that Hong Kong's openness would leave it vulnerable to infiltration by so-called hostile international forces.

Father Ha was helping those very students in the years leading up to June 4, 1989. In 1991, he was barred from China. In the years that followed, he helped write a book on those events. Although it was never published, he insists it "isn't very pleasing for the Chinese government."

He continues to be a member of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movement in China, a group that the mainland has deemed subversive.

Even today, from the relative safety of Hong Kong, Father Ha finds himself in a uniquely precarious position. As the voice of Hong Kong's 250,000 Catholics, the *Sunday Examiner* continues to criticize China, where many Catholic leaders have been forced underground for refusing to renounce their allegiance to the Vatican.

With Article 23 looming over their heads, many Roman Catholic leaders in Hong Kong fear China might one day decide to label the underground church as a national security threat, much like they have done with Falun Gong.

If this ever happened, Father Ha could potentially be accused of sharing state secrets — given the stories of intimidation and persecution he receives from church and news sources in China.

"(The newspaper) would have to cut all communications with the church in China," he explains, as well as the Union of Catholic Asian News.

Article 23 also seeks to ban all local political groups affiliated with organizations outlawed on the mainland, on the grounds it would endanger national security. The Catholic Church could qualify.

"According to what has been approved," explains Father Ha, "it will be very easy to fall in the trap — some of the danger spots (the Executive Council) has included."

Father Ha pauses in his characteristic way. It's a long pause, enough to hear the *Examiner's* employees typing away in the background, others talking excitedly while putting the finishing touches on the weekly.

"The way I work will be the same," he adds carefully, "but the atmosphere and attitude around here will be different." Ha believes the pressure such laws will place on his staff will ultimately lead them to evaluate risk and question the need for critical material.

"'You better drop it,'" he imagines them saying. "'We are only a church paper.'" ■

Robert Scalia is a freelance journalist working out of Montreal. He was recently in Hong Kong on a fellowship sponsored in part by the Canadian Association of Journalists.

FEATURE

BY JOEL RUIMY

Suspicious Article

Journalists in Hong Kong could be forced to censor themselves — or worse still, stop doing investigative journalism

Free-expression activists around the world are casting an anxious gaze at Hong Kong's Legislative Council and its plans to enact legislation known as Article 23.

The proposal would give authorities in the former British colony, handed over to mainland China in 1997, unprecedented new powers to crack down on journalists who publish material regarded by Beijing as sensitive or secret.

Beijing had been pushing the territory to draft new security laws to cover treason, sedition, secession and subversion. The resulting proposal leaves definitions for those crimes wide open, and it calls for penalties up to life in prison. For that, it has come under attack by groups as diverse as journalists, the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Catholic Church.

But in addition to concerns about the explicit penalties, there is another fear: that the draconian nature of Article 23 will lead many journalists to avoid trouble by self-censoring, by avoiding controversy or the investigative journalism that serves society so well.

AMONG THE CONCERNS:

Search Warrants: The legislation makes it unnecessary for police to obtain search warrants from judges before proceeding; instead, "senior" police officials would have the power to issue such warrants without benefit of review by an independent judiciary.

"Unauthorized Access": Journalists who publish government information that turns out to have been stolen, hacked, or obtained through bribery, would face stiff punishment — even if they only obtained the information without being aware where their source got it.

As the Hong Kong Journalists Association has pointed out, the legislation makes no provision for cases where "the public interest in publishing information obtained indirectly through such means overrides the potential damage caused by publication."

Others warn that draconian penalties could be imposed on journalists who reveal information as relatively innocuous as the financial performance of Chinese state-owned companies. Such penalties would lead eventually to journalists publishing only official information.

Banned Organizations: Hong Kong would have the power to ban any organization affiliated with groups proscribed by the Mainland on national security grounds – without any independent determination that the group actually does pose a security risk. Some fear that could empower Hong Kong to outlaw such groups as the Falun Gong, banned on the mainland as an "evil cult" but free currently to practice in Hong Kong, and the Catholic Church; some members of the latter have been banned by Beijing for refusing to renounce loyalty to the Pope.

Sedition and Treason: Under the vaguely-worded Article 23, advocating for use of force in support of Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province, could bring charges of treason.

Article 23's defenders say that its provisions would be triggered only in the event of war, outbreaks of violence, or serious crimes. But by the very virtue of having the law on the books, critics say, the authorities could also crack down on whoever they felt was being too outspoken.

An earlier, even more draconian version of the Article 23 met with such vociferous opposition last fall that Hong Kong redrafted key provisions; authorities now say the new version quells the concerns of the free-expression community.

But critics say the changes are cosmetic; in the earlier version, for example, even low-ranking police officers could write out a search warrant. Now, only "senior" officers would have the power.

There is another concern in Hong Kong — only 24 of the 60 members of the Legislative Council are elected by the public in direct elections; the remainder are picked by business groups and pro-Beijing factions. Beijing also has the right to directly select Hong Kong's chief executive. ■

Joel Ruimy is the executive director of the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression.

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY: ***Father, Louis Ha, editor of Hong Kong's* Sunday Examiner, *is nervous about Article 23. Beijing had been pushing the territory to draft new security laws to cover treason, sedition, secession and subversion. The resulting proposal leaves definitions for those crimes wide open, and it calls for penalties up to life in prison.***

Draconian penalties could be imposed on journalists who reveal information as relatively innocuous as the financial performance of Chinese state-owned companies.

PHOTO CREDIT: *Robert Scalia*

BY KARIM H. KARIM

The Great Israel-Palestinian Debate

It was revised with criticism over the CBC's coverage of the Middle East

The Middle Eastern Studies Association of North America (MESA) held a celebrated debate titled "The Scholars, the Media, and the Middle East" on Nov. 22, 1986. It featured Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens on one side, and Bernard Lewis and Leon Wieseitler on the other. Lewis dubbed it "the shootout at the MESA corral."

Controversy had raged since the 1978 publication of Edward Said's Orientalism, which suggested that Western academic research had ideologically supported the West's domination over the Middle East since the colonial period.

Said had also accused Orientalists including Lewis (described as "the doyen of Middle Eastern Studies" by a *New York Times* reviewer) of being anti-Arab and pro-Israeli behind the veil of scholarly objectivity. These accusations shook the foundations of the study of the Middle East carried out in some of the most prestigious North American and European universities and were to have a wide-ranging effect on Western scholarship concerning non-European peoples.

Said published another book called *Covering Islam* in 1981, making a similar case linking Western journalism to Western political designs on Muslim-majority countries. He sought to demonstrate how the assumptions of journalists who covered Muslims were based on the work of Orientalists and were also influenced by the foreign policies of their countries' governments.

The memory of that old debate was awakened with the exchange of op-eds, letters and emails earlier this year between Norman Spector, currently a columnist for the *Globe and Mail*, and CBC officials. (Readers of *Media* may have seen this public and private correspondence which Spector posted on the listserv that serves as a discussion forum for the CAJ.) A television debate was suggested. But a week-long flurry of emails in January hammering out the details about the proposed event — going back and forth on when, where, what show, how long, which host, how many participants, and who — ended in recrimination.

Spector's position is: "I lived in the region for many years. I know the languages. Having had close personal relationships on both sides, I understand what makes both Israelis and Palestinians tick. And I've concluded that we've been receiving propaganda from the CBC." He also took issue with the CBC's failure to use the term "terrorists" to describe Palestinian bombers and with its reference to the West Bank and Gaza as "occupied Palestinian land" and not "disputed territory." (On the other side of the spectrum, the Canadian Islamic Congress's current report on Anti-Islam in the Media criticizes the CBC for what it considers "anti-Muslim terminology" such as "Islamic terrorist," "Muslim extremist," and "jihad militant.")

He is particularly annoyed with former CBC's Jerusalem correspondent, Neil MacDonald, who, he charges, displays an anti-Israeli, pro-Arab bias — that he soft-pedals reports of Arab violence against Israelis and rarely travels to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria to report on their governments' misdeeds. What's more, he had not learnt Hebrew.

Spector makes some good points. It is important for a foreign correspondent to live in his primary reporting location for a sufficiently long time to begin understanding the undercurrents of local thought and feeling. Knowledge of vernaculars is crucial in covering a fast-breaking story.

His argument about MacDonald not travelling to neighbouring countries sounds contradictory, but it actually raises an important issue. Almost every Western media organization bases its Middle East correspondents in Jerusalem. Spector fears that they only tend to see Israel's follies. But others have broached the concern that they become habituated to viewing the region through Israel-centred perspectives.

> ***Israel is no ordinary country – it is invested with tremendous emotion on the part of Jews and Christians, journalists included.***

Israel is no ordinary country — it is invested with tremendous emotion on the part of Jews and Christians, journalists included. Robert Lichter's study of American journalists' support for Israel found that over 90 per cent of those with Jewish religious affiliation "asserted a moral obligation to defend Israel, compared to 75 per cent among Catholics and 71 per cent among Protestants." Those with no religious affiliation were at 68 per cent.

Teddy Kolleck, a former mayor of Jerusalem, noted the following about a particular site in the city: "In ancient times, it was believed that Jerusalem was the centre of the world and this hole was the centre of the centre – the very navel of the universe. Sometimes I have the impression that the foreign correspondents who reside here still believe that."

What seems to be most admirable about Spector, a former publisher of the *Jerusalem Post* and chief of staff for former prime minister Brian Mulroney, is that he makes little attempt at concealing his own allegiances with respect to the Middle East and Canadian federal politics. Perhaps the public would be better served if more North American journalists, like many of their European counterparts and Norman Spector, made clear what side of contentious issues they had planted their respective flags.

Spector appears to be on shakier ground on some of the other issues that he has raised. The use of the words "terrorist" and "terrorism" has been contentious in broadcast media organizations in many Western countries. The issue is not the much-used truism that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," but the highly ideological manner in which governments have used this term. Reporters do their job best in describing events, processes and situations, not in labelling. In responding to Spector's charges, Neil MacDonald searched the *Jerusalem Post's* archives of the year when the former was its publisher. He found that "the *Post* used the words 'terror,' 'terrorist,' and 'terrorism' hundreds of times, almost without exception to describe Arabs. Meanwhile, Baruch Goldstein, who gunned down 29 worshippers at a mosque in Hebron, Yigal Amir, who slew an Israeli prime minister, and sundry other violent radicals were described by the *Post* as 'suspected Jewish extremists.'"

The insistence that the CBC refer to sections of the West Bank and Gaza as "settlements" is even more problematic. Spector would be happier if Canadian media used "disputed territories," a term which would bring greater legitimacy to the Jewish settlers' occupation of those lands. It is not surprising then that he also has qualms about the use of the terms "settlers" and "occupation." The next step may be to adopt the Israeli government's description of the settlements as "Jewish neighbourhoods," which some American media have already begun doing.

Perhaps Spector's weakest argument is that CBC's coverage of Israel "foments the views of former national native leader and Order of Canada recipient, David Ahenakew and his ilk." Even first-year mass communication students know that the hypodermic model of media effects has been discredited since the 1960s. Public opinion and individual prejudices are the result of a complex combination of influences

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The Great Isreal-Palestinian Debate

that, apart from media messages, include sources such as the family, schools, religious institutions, and peers. Furthermore, like Brian Mulroney, Spector seems here to be equating criticism of the Israeli government with anti-Semitism. One would expect that as a journalist, he should know how paralysing such accusations can be for his craft.

The television pictures of the first Intifada in the 1980s came as a huge shock to North American viewers. They showed Israeli soldiers armed with automatic rifles shooting at and killing Palestinian children throwing rocks with slings. How could the offspring of Holocaust survivors be capable of such brutality? we asked ourselves. We had been taught to think of Israel as David fighting the Arab Goliath. But it was Palestinian boys who seemed to be assuming the role of David in the face of Israel's overwhelming might.

We began to wonder if we were being too harsh in our coverage of the Jewish state. A spate of media articles inquired into the reporting of correspondents. A similar self-examination is being carried out with the coverage of the second Intifada.

Why do we feel compelled to do this in the case of Israel and not other countries, like Yugoslavia, for example? In order to understand this we need to understand better how the image of the country was shaped. Israeli governments have consistently sought to capitalize on the romanticism that North Americans and Europe feel about Israel. Abba Eban, a former cabinet minister, admits, "we based our claim on the exceptionality of Israel, in terms of the affliction suffered by its people, and in terms of our historical and spiritual lineage. We knew that we were basically appealing to a Christian world for whom the biblical story was familiar and attractive, and we played it to the hilt." Identities of contemporary Jewish Israelis were merged with those of biblical figures in Israeli propaganda.

When an American public relations firm was hired in the 1950s to promote the State of Israel in the U.S., it sent a young writer named Leon Uris to the country to soak in the atmosphere and write a novel about it. He wrote Exodus. Art Stevens writes in *The Persuasion Explosion* that the book and later the movie "did more to popularize Israel with the American public than any other single presentation through the media." Norman Spector obviously fails to see the big picture when he complains about CBC's

TROUBLE IN ISRAEL: ***Israel is no ordinary country — it is invested with tremendous emotion on the part of Jews and Christians, journalists included.***

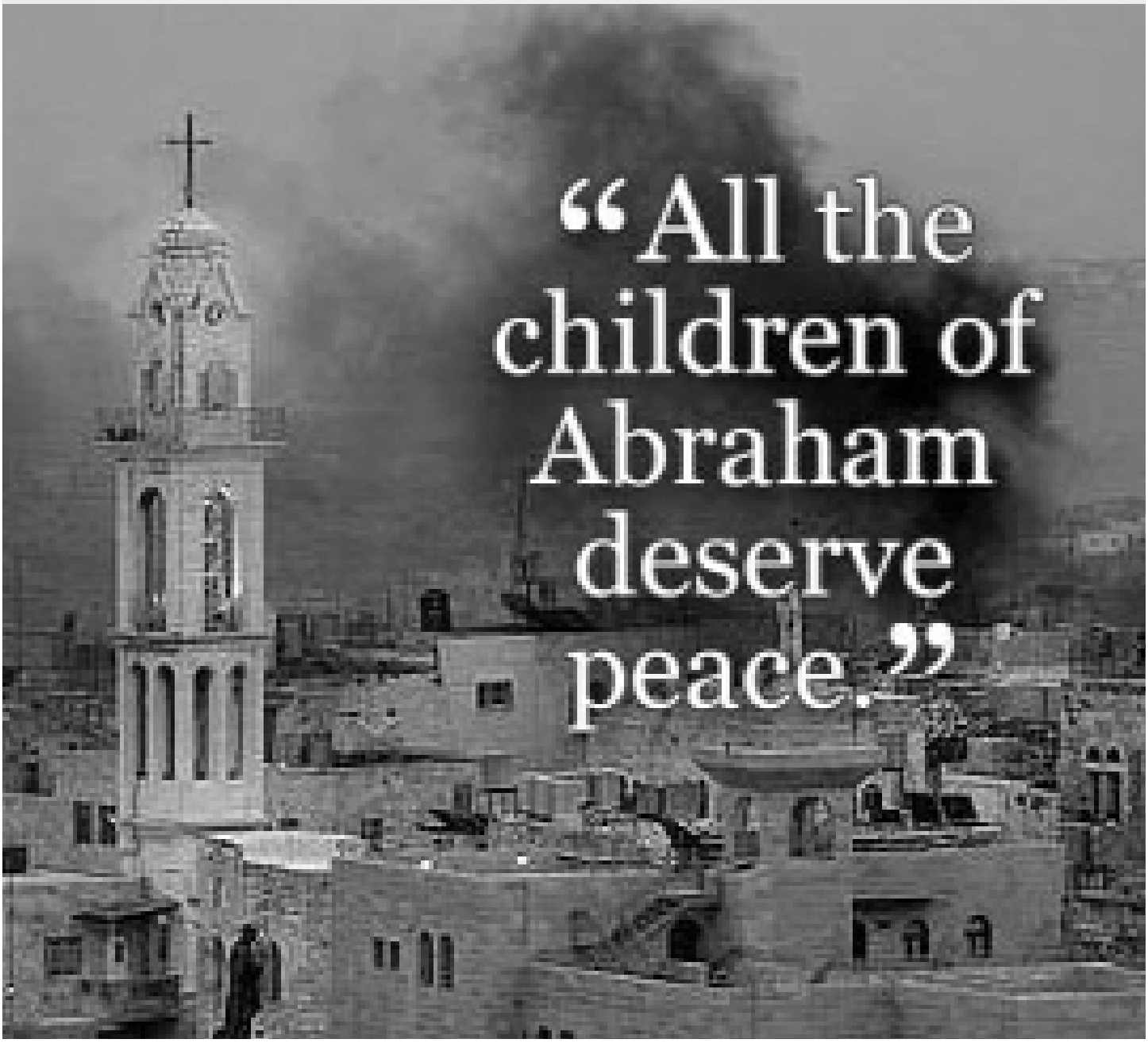

PHOTO CREDIT: *CP Archives*

propaganda against Israel.

Senior journalists like Neil MacDonald and Robert Fisk of *The Independent* (London), who have reported incidences of Israeli ruthlessness, have come under severe attack. MacDonald would probably deny it, but this pressure has compelled him to provide balance in a ritual manner that does not serve his audiences well.

The strong rejection of Ahenakew's comments by Canadians of a broad variety of backgrounds demonstrates that we have a good sense of right and wrong. What the readers and audiences of the media need is an honest depiction of the injustices perpetrated by all sides in the Middle East conflict. The world seems to be in denial of the growing racial hatred in both Israel and the Palestinian territories. If journalists do not speak of the brutal truth of the daily violence that continues, even when there are no bombings or house demolitions, there will be little movement towards establishing a just peace for all occupants of that land.

By the way, the result of the shootout at MESA was widely judged to be a tie.

We have been talking about these issues ad nauseum with no resolution in sight. Let's skip the debate — we need to focus instead on understanding why the bloody stalemate between the two peoples is dragging into its second half century. Many important questions remain unanswered. Who benefits most from the prolongation of the conflict? How is it maintained despite the continual attention on it from the rest of the world? Is our microscopic attention to the daily body count obscuring our comprehension of what is really at stake?

Dr. Karim H. Karim is an associate professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism. He is author of the critically acclaimed Islamic Peril *(Montreal: Black Rose), for which he received the Robinson Prize. It has recently been re-issued in an updated edition.*

Talk Back

A Snapshot in Time

Former CBC Television Middle East correspondent, Neil MacDonald, was the subject of an intense debate about biased coverage of Israel. Much of that debate played out on the Canadian Association of Journalists' listserv.* Globe and Mail *columnist and former* Jerusalem Post *publisher, Norman Spector, argued that the corporation's coverage — including MacDonald's — should be more even-handed. The following is the response MacDonald wrote for* Media *magazine earlier this year.

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9: A few heavy news weeks here. First, a crushing victory for the political right in general elections, then Israel's first astronaut was lost aboard the shuttle Columbia. As always, my colleagues in the foreign press corps and I wrote our stories with great care. Reporters here are used to working under a microscope. Some of them would say, a proctoscope.

Supporters of Israel have complained for years that the international media, CBC included, are systemically biased. Lately, the heat has grown particularly intense. That said, here's a quick recap of other, largely unreported, events in just the past week or so:

The Israeli army, once again, fired a flechette round, an indiscriminate explosive device packed with lethal metal darts, toward a group of civilians in Gaza. It caused two young boys severe internal damage. The army has killed civilians with such rounds in the past.

The army blew up a house of a wanted man in Gaza, missing him, but killing a 65-year-old woman inside.

The army demolished about 20 Palestinian buildings and homes near Hebron in one day, saying they were built without permits. Buildings erected by settlers a short distance away, also built without permits, were left untouched.

The army shot and killed two male nurses at a hospital for the handicapped in Gaza. The army said the men had not been suspected of anything, but had been killed by "deterrent fire," laid down, it would appear, to protect Israeli soldiers operating nearby.

These events were largely ignored by the North American media. Certainly none of us reported them as war crimes, as many Palestinians would argue. Only the Israeli media pointed out that flechette rounds are packed with shrapnel to ensure maximum damage, just like the odious devices carried by Palestinian suicide bombers.

The point here is this: Journalists, despite their self-styled outsider status, tend to gravitate towards, and respect, institutions and governments. It's no different here. Israel, a fully fledged nation-state, often receives the benefit of the doubt, and its officials know it. Read from here, the bias accusations are puzzling.

One other thing: the bias debate at home has begun to centre ferociously on the non-use of the word "terrorist," which is common style both at the CBC and other large media organizations. Columnist Norman Spector has led the charge both in public columns and the CAJ's Web ring, accusing CBC of what he calls "shameful coverage."

The "terrorist" question deserves more space than I can give it here, but, just out of curiosity, I did recently search the archives of the *Jerusalem Post*, the newspaper Spector ably published for a year or so in the nineties. Under his generalship, the *Post* used the words "terror," "terrorist," and "terrorism" hundreds of times, almost without exception, to describe Arabs. Meanwhile, Baruch Goldstein, who gunned down 29 worshippers at a mosque in Hebron, Yigal Amir, who slew an Israeli prime minister, and sundry other violent radicals were described by the *Post* as "suspected Jewish extremists."

Understandable, I suppose. But read from here, Spector's criticisms seem a bit rich.

Neil MacDonald is now the Washington correspondent for CBC Television.

My Odyssey to Cape Canaveral

CTV's Ellin Bessner was vacationing with her mother in Florida in early February of this year when news of a disaster flashed across her television screen. She called the CTV newsroom; her bosses quickly sent her to Cape Canaveral to cover the local reaction to the explosion of the space shuttle. Here is a diary of her reporting journey — which was a team effort, together with her mother, who acted as producer and driver.

9:15 a.m.

I was just waking up to make a cup of coffee in my aunt's condominium in Boca West, a luxury resort in Boca Raton, Florida. My mother was in the living room, watching TV. As I walked in to see what was on the news, I saw to my horror, a live video on *CNN* of what appeared to be the space shuttle breaking up as it re-entered the earth's atmosphere. It was just after 9:15 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 1, 2003. My mother and I had already made some plans to spend the morning at the beach, and then catch an early dinner and a movie. After all, it was the third day of my first vacation away from husband and kids in more than six years. I had come to Florida with my mom for a little rest and relaxation. Yet, my first instinct was to call the *CTV* Newsroom in Toronto, to let them know I was close by, and ready to go to Cape Canaveral and file a report.

When *CTV* said "GO!!!," I didn't even take a shower. I threw all my stuff into a suitcase, and grabbed my passport and extra traveller's cheques from the wall safe. My mother did the same. We jumped into her red Sunfire, and headed north to Cape Canaveral at top speed. It was a three-hour trip. My mother had to come with me, and she did so willingly, which was great, since she was the only one permitted to drive the rental car. And so that's how it began: an odyssey that would become one of the highlights of my 22-year career in journalism.

As we drove up the Florida panhandle, taking the turnpike, and I-95, our ears were glued to the radio for the latest news about Columbia. All this time, I was on the cell phone with both CTV and NASA, trying to arrange accreditation. It was supposed to be a simple process. Get to Cape Canaveral, check in with the officials at NASA, and get accredited at the media office. CTV had already faxed my particulars, in a letter of accreditation around noon that day, so we thought it would be quick once we arrived. We were wrong. NASA's media office was scrambling to get organized. A woman at the other end of the phone told me they were not allowing any foreign crews to be accredited, and worse, there was no official spokesperson on site at that time.

11:20 a.m.

By this time, NASA's chief administrator, Sean O'Keefe, had scheduled a briefing at Cape Canaveral for 1 p.m. We weren't that far away, and I eagerly hoped to arrive in time for the briefing.

But first, we had to stop at the visitors centre in Cape Canaveral. The sign for tourists outside read "Kennedy Space Centre: Your Odyssey Awaits." We were the first Canadian news team on site. Local U.S. news affiliates were stationed in the parking lot with their microwave trucks. The guard stopped us, ordered us to park, and get out so they could check our names and identification. Our second inkling there was something wrong came then and there, when a local reporter from *ABC* News said he was trying to get in here from the visitors centre, because there was at least an hour-long wait at the badging centre.

We had never heard of the badging centre. We would soon find out.

After a few minutes, we were advised to go to the center for our media passes. Just then, a white rental car drove up. It was the crew from *CanWest Global*. I thought, "Oh no, here comes the competition already!"

The centre's parking lot filled with satellite and microwave trucks from *CNN, ABC, FOX, NBC*, and *WESH*, the Hearst station in Florida. We parked and went inside the small office.

The centre had a waiting room with 12 chairs, two vending machines, two bathrooms, and a television set. On the other side, was the counter area, where two female security guards were taking down the names of television reporters and their crews. At the same time, they were trying to find out whether NASA's media office, about a 20-minute drive away, had received their faxed letters of accreditation from head office, processed them, and entered them into the central computer. Only then, were the two guards permitted to issue badges and photo ID's. Every so often, the guards would get frustrated with all of us, and order everyone pressed against the counter to move back, or move to the waiting area, so they could do their work.

Back home, CTV was already on the air with a live special broadcast, and I needed my badge to get over to the NASA media centre in order to get on the air. But it was not to be. Not for another seven hours.

3 p.m.

It was time for the first full briefing from the NASA people at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston. Many reporters in the waiting room still had no accreditation, so they watched it on the TV at the badging centre, and took notes. "It is a tragic day for the families of the astronauts and for the nation," said NASA's briefing officer. Over by the badging counter, guard Susan Barton listened with half an ear, and tears started rolling down her cheeks. She has worked at NASA for the better part of 25 years, and knew most of the astronauts personally. I went over to her and said I'd like to give her a hug, but the counter separated us.

As more and more reporting crews began to arrive, from all over the country and the world, the office simply became overcrowded. At this point, the two guards ordered us outside the building. Then they locked the doors. It was now nearing 5 p.m. CTV's National News special was already off the air, but I still needed to file something for CTV Newsnet.

For some American news crews, such as CNN and NBC, the badging process moved much more smoothly. For instance, the main anchorman of NBC, Tom Brokaw, happened to be in Florida on vacation. He pulled up at the media centre,

wearing a brushed-brown leather jacket, and remained somewhat aloof. It didn't take long for some of his tough-talking network producers armed with their cell phones to get him an access card to the main NASA media centre, where all the networks had set up anchor desks near the runway where the space shuttle was supposed to land earlier that morning. It was a similar story for CNN's Lou Dobbs, host of the Moneyline show. Dobbs turned up in a pinstriped suit with a gold shirt underneath, apparently also on vacation. He smoked, and waited outside while his badge was readied.

The badging centre normally closes at 6 p.m. Eventually, a woman from the main NASA media centre turned up, and told us they had decided to extend the hours to 8 p.m. But for the foreign reporters, including me, my mother, and about fifty other correspondents who were not U.S. citizens (journalists from Japan, Australia, Sweden and the UK), it didn't mean much. All our paperwork had to be approved first in Washington and then faxed down to NASA in Florida. But since NASA didn't send anyone to the Washington office on Saturday to do the processing, and wouldn't do so until early Sunday, our accreditations were not going anywhere.

Eventually, they decided to let us go to the main NASA media centre, without badges, but under escort on a NASA bus. We had to sign waiver forms, with our names and news affiliations, and climb aboard the bus.

And after all this time, I nearly didn't go.

The long delay in my getting a badge had cost me my very first item on the CTV National News. Earlier in the day, I was supposed to file an item that would run third in the newscast, with a live top and tail. As the day dragged on, CTV had another disaster to cover: the second avalanche to hit Revelstoke, B.C., killing seven high school students from Okotoks, Alberta. My spot on the lineup was then downgraded to a one-minute talk back. Then, to nothing. CTV National News officially released me. It was a huge disappointment, since I had been there early and first. I resolved not to give up and hoped that maybe CTV Newsnet would want something for the 24-hour cable all-news network. I didn't tell my mother anything until we were on the bus. She got on, too.

EVENING IS APPROACHING. WILL I EVER MAKE IT TO AIR?

When the bus arrived at the main NASA media centre, no one was expecting us. I found that hard to believe, considering we were the first group of unbadged, unaccredited journalists, about thirty in all. The press officers were sitting behind the counter spreading news releases with statements on the disaster from Boeing, and others. My mother and I picked up souvenir news releases and pamphlets for my two sons in Toronto, and she took some stuff for my three nephews in Montreal.

Then we headed outside to find a camera crew I could borrow for a live chat with Toronto. It was cold, dark and the spotlights lighting up the giant NASA vehicle assembly building in the background created a sombre atmosphere. All the main news networks had satellite trucks and anchor desks up on a hill overlooking the runway where the space shuttle had been scheduled to land. Eventually, I knocked on the door of an ABC truck out of Tampa, WFTV. After much to-ing and fro-ing, I was hooked up with an ABC microphone and an earpiece. They could hear me in the CTV control room in Toronto, but I couldn't hear them. We tried to establish a better connection. Then there was a terrible buzz on the line, making the hit unusable. After 25 minutes of me standing outside in the cold, shivering because I had taken off my leather jacket to appear on camera, we had to call it off. ABC needed to edit its reporter's piece for that night. Again, I was disappointed. Meanwhile, the folks at CTV were trying to find another camera spot for me to do a hit.

REPORTING LIVE: ***After hours of trying to get on air, Ellin Bessner finally managed to borrow the resources of an American crew to tell the people back in Canada the latest news about the shuttle explosion.***

My resources people in Toronto, Tom Hildebrand and Emil Grahovic, had lined up a hit using the crew from FOX-TV. I found them, and moments later, I was standing up on a black plastic box, the lights were on, and this time, I could hear the producer in Toronto and also the director, and the anchorman, Scott Laurie. We did our chat, and it went well. Eight hours after my arrival at Cape Canaveral, I finally got on the air.

In hindsight, it was probably a good thing I didn't have any way of watching myself on TV that night: I wasn't wearing any makeup, since I was supposed to be on vacation and had left my makeup at home; my hair was curly from standing outside all day and night at the Kennedy Space Centre, and I looked very tired.

My mother took lots of photographs on her digital camera of the first night of our reporting adventure. Then we boarded the media bus to get back to the badging centre, so we could pick up our car and head for dinner and our hotel. The new NASA escort on the bus handed out press releases saying the badging centre would remain open until 10 p.m. that night and reopen six hours later. So when the bus dropped us off, I hotfooted it over to see if those same two women had eventually got my accreditation approved and had a badge for me. Again, no luck. So we gave up and drove to a hotel, which we had reserved, in Cocoa Beach.

Cocoa Beach by night is not exciting. We passed the

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PHOTO CREDIT: *Lois Lieff*

Continued from Pg. 25
My Odyssey to Cape Canaveral

Ron Jon surf shop, a famous landmark, and passed the other hotels along the main A1A strip. Some stores and businesses we passed had posted signs saying "God Bless the Crew of Columbia." This is the Space Coast, after all, where at least 15,000 people work for NASA in some way, either as direct employees or as contractors on the Space program at the Kennedy Space Centre. The businesses have names like Pilot Travel, Space Coast Welders, and Flying J gas stations.

On the TV monitor, CNN was broadcasting ongoing coverage of the shuttle disaster. The clerk at the front desk registered us and then handed me an armful of faxes. She had been waiting for Canadian journalists. On closer inspection, I noticed the faxes were for a CBC producer out of Toronto, but I decided to be nice and not take them! I handed them back and told her they were for my competition.

DAY TWO

At five the next morning, I was up to check in with the morning crew at CTV News. The overnight assignment editor Phil Hahn booked me for two live chats with CTV Newsnet. I had told him there were memorial services in bedroom communities. My first hit was at the First Baptist Church in Merritt Island. This time, I borrowed my mother's beige blazer, which she had nicely ironed for me in the hotel room. I also had blow-dried my hair. I decided at least I would have the clothes and the hair, if not the makeup, for TV.

After breakfast, my mother and I decided to head over to the site of my first hit to make sure the ABC crew was there, ready to help us link up with Toronto. They were set up near the church, so we parked beside them and went to say hello.

The reporter was Jorge Estevez, a young man originally from Cuba, now working in Orlando. He had makeup on, nice teeth and hair, a great voice, and he was doing live inserts into his station's morning show. We chatted, he introduced me to the cameraman, and we arranged everything for 8:45 a.m.

People started to arrive for church, and many carried their own bibles. Everyone was dressed in their Sunday best, and many of the men wore patriotic ties or Space mission pins. Everyone was still shocked by the loss of Columbia.

NASA engineer Roger Hall says he was at his nearby home the morning before, listening with half an ear for the sonic boom that accompanies every shuttle landing at nearby Kennedy Space Centre. "As soon as I didn't hear the sonic boom, I knew something was wrong," said Hall. He said it brought back horrible memories of 1986, when he was on the launch pad at the Kennedy Space Centre to watch the liftoff of the Space Shuttle Challenger.

Hall is a deacon at the large Baptist church and had come this Sunday morning to find comfort and to pray.

At the service, the senior pastor, Curt Dodd asked the congregation not only to pray for the seven astronauts and their families, but also for the employees of NASA and contractors of the Space Program. "Many have touched Columbia with their own hands, they have caressed the tiles and run the programs for over two decades," he preached. "Help them not feel alone."

BACK AT THE NASA MEDIA CENTRE

My next hit was at 12:35 p.m. at the main NASA media centre, so we said a quick goodbye to ABC and motored back to the badging centre where my badge was still not ready.

More stress. The NASA media bus didn't leave right away. It had to lead a convoy of about a dozen other media trucks and cars. I bounded up the aisle of the bus and begged the driver to leave, so I could make the window of 12:35 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. when my hit was scheduled. Finally, at 12:45 p.m., we arrived at the main NASA media centre. I sprinted off the bus, ran across the lawn to the stairs where the media positions were set up on the hill and met the FOX producers who were waiting for me. We did our chat with Wendy Petrie, the anchor back in Toronto, and this time, I had the backdrop of the Vehicle Assembly Building behind me in the daylight.

Then it was back to the media bus and another long drive to the badging centre to pick up our car and find some lunch. At this point, I was still supposed to stay over in Cocoa Beach another night in order to do two live hits with Canada AM on Monday morning. So since I had to fly back to Toronto the next afternoon and still hadn't set foot on a beach, my mother and I decided to have lunch and take the afternoon off somewhere at the beach. We had been working for nearly two days straight, without much sleep. Before we could even find a beach, CTV called and cancelled the Canada AM hits, so we were free.

Once again, we made our way dutifully to the badging centre, now in search of a media pass that would serve only as a souvenir, and nothing more. And this time, it had been approved. I didn't bother to tell the guards I was heading back home and that I wouldn't be needing the badge again. As we exchanged goodbyes, guard Susan Barton walked over to her desk and pulled something out of her purse. "This is a mission pin," Barton explained. It was small, blue and the shape of the space shuttle. It had the mission number STS-107 on it and all the names of the astronauts, even Ilan Ramon's, with as a tiny Israeli flag beside the name. "One of the astronauts gave it to me before they launched, and I want you to have it," she said. I gingerly accepted her gift, and when I got home, I gave it to my oldest son, Alex, so that when he grows up, he will have something touched by a hero.

I got lots of congratulations from my colleagues and superiors at CTV News when I returned to my job at CTV Newsnet the next day. And it was a thrill to watch the actual hits I had done from Cape Canaveral thanks to two friends who had dubbed them as they went to air. They will look good on a demo reel! And my mother and I share an unforgettable memory of a road trip to cover one of the century's biggest news stories. ☑

BY FRED VALLANCE-JONES

CAR is gaining momentum

More and more media outlets are using numbers to uncover important stories

CAR is coming of age in Canada, and is shedding its image as a reclusive, numbers-driven obsession of a few lonely die-hards.

This corner of *Media* magazine isn't feeling quite as lonely as it once did. In fact, it's getting downright crowded.

The last year has been something of a blur in the world of computer-assisted reporting in Canada.

Natalie Clancy of CBC-TV in Vancouver built a database to probe a string of gangland murders (Please see the Winter 2002 edition of *Media*). A team at the *Toronto Star* analyzed police data to reveal a persistent pattern of racial profiling and sweep up the 2002 Michener award and a National Newspaper Award. David McKie of CBC Radio used Health Canada data to investigate faulty medical devices. My own newspaper, *The Hamilton Spectator*, makes CAR a regular part of the daily file.

CAR is coming of age in Canada, and is shedding its image as a reclusive, numbers-driven obsession of a few lonely die-hards.

There was proof of that once again at the recent CAJ annual convention in Toronto as the lineup for the fifth annual CAR award was like an awards show in its own right.

For those of us who have been around since nearly the beginning, since the days when the CAR room at the annual convention was a good place for a bowling tournament, it's more than a little satisfying. These days, it's hard to find a chair in the CAR room, and the training sessions fill up quickly with people eager to learn the mysteries of rows, columns and queries. I marvel at it all.

I remember well the Vancouver convention in 1999, when McKie spent long hours in the CAR demo room, learning how to use Excel. This year, he was one of the teachers, and shows other journalists, and journalism students at Carleton University, how to avoid being overwhelmed by data when writing and broadcasting CAR stories.

The *Toronto Star* team behind the newspaper's Race and Crime series. Front, left to right, are reporters Michelle Shephard, Jim Rankin and Jennifer Quinn. Back, left to right, are mapping specialist Matthew Cole, chief librarian Andrea Hall, and reporters John Duncanson and Scott Simmie.

These days, CAR skills are showing up as a requirement on job postings. Canada's journalism schools are making CAR part of the mainstream curriculum, and reporters are having more and more success prying newsworthy databases from the clutches of reluctant governments.

It's a good time to have CAR skills, and a good time to learn.

Which brings me to some good news.

The CAJ's CAR caucus has begun preliminary discussions about hosting the country's first national CAR conference. We still have to work out the finer details, but we think Canada is ready for a three-day conference bringing together the best minds in CAR in North America. Intensive training, lots of tips and maybe a few beers to wash down the numbers (alright, definitely). The caucus will start planning in earnest for Canada's biggest CAR event ever. You'll be hearing more about it here, the busiest little corner of *Media* magazine.

Fred Vallance-Jones is a CAR specialist at The Hamilton Spectator and teaches CAR at Ryerson University in Toronto.

PHOTO CREDIT: *Keith Beaty/TORONTO STAR/Digital image*

BOOKS BRIEFLY

BY GILLIAN STEWARD

The Truth in Fiction

A novel about life in a 1970s newsroom packs a lot of reality and poses some uncomfortable questions

Drowning Man
By Dave Margoshes
NeWest Press, 246 pages, $22.95

To those of us who got into journalism before the 1980s, Wilf Sweeny is as familiar as copy paper. The grey-haired lush at the back of the newsroom seemed to have it all behind him. He could bash out a story on his Underwood in five to 10 minutes, using only two fingers. But he never said much. Was never part of the newsroom clique. To the young people in the newsroom, especially the young women, he seemed out of place, nothing more than irrelevant clutter.

Given all the recent layoffs and downsizing in newsrooms across Canada, there may not be too many Wilf Sweenys left. But in his latest novel, *Drowning Man*, veteran journalist Dave Margoshes brings Sweeny to life with vengeance and with a host of questions about the pleasures and perils of journalism.

First, some background about Margoshes. In the 1970s he left a Monterey (California) newspaper to come to the *Calgary Herald*. He wasn't a draft dodger but had serious misgivings about Richard Nixon's USA. He spent about 10 years in Calgary working for both the *Herald* and the *Albertan* (later to become the *Calgary Sun*) city editor. From there he moved to the *Vancouver Sun* and then to Regina when his wife, Ilya, landed a position with the public library.

In Regina, he has focused on fiction and poetry, produced several short story collections and one other novel. But the journalist in Margoshes has never been completely extinguished. Particularly the romantic journalist — that male icon of the pre-computerized newsroom.

Often working-class, self-educated, individuals who rose from copy boy to reporter to editor through sweat, tears, cunning and braggadocio, the Wilf Sweenys of the newsroom were also loners and often heavy drinkers. They moved from newspaper to newspaper, recounting their legendary feats to anyone who would listen — the stories about the stories, usually better than whatever had been published. So strong was the pull of the "story" or the next newspaper that wives and children were sometimes left to fend for themselves. Getting fired only added to their legendary status.

Sweeny, like Margoshes, moved from newspaper to newspaper, from a weekly in a small town in British Columbia to the *Toronto Telegraph*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Miami Herald*, the *Washington Star*. Over to Europe during the Second World War and then back to North America, working his way down the scale

until he found himself back at the newspaper where he started, writing obits.

Drowning Man is a mystery, somewhat of a metaphysical mystery, so I don't want to give away the plot. But there's a body, a reporter, detectives, and of course, a sexy babe. As the reporter, Sweeny finds the investigation of the odd death of a man in a hotel room to be irresistible. The man had just arrived in town. All his credit cards were phony, and he had no other identification. Was he a spy? A con man? Mafioso? Had he come to town to see Wilf about something? Only hours before he died, he made a string of phone calls to newspapers around the world. But why had he no address except for post office boxes? No family and no real friends?

The story unfolds in 1970 when newspapers and the radio were still the main sources of news. Typewriters still prevailed, while women were few and far between in newsrooms, usually relegated to secretarial positions or fluff news. Police departments didn't have media information officers blocking a reporter's every move. And Richard Nixon was still in power.

Looking back now, it's easy to see that it was the end of an era. Television was in its ascendancy, and within a decade, that's where most people in North America would turn for the news of the day. Women would demand entry into the newsroom as more than just accessories. A university degree would become a prerequisite for anyone wanting to work as a reporter or editor. Journalism schools began sprouting up all over the place.

Newsroom culture would never be the same. Some say that's a good thing, that the remembered past is always rosier than it actually was. We smooth over the rough spots, impart good intentions where there were none. But what I found interesting about Margoshes' novel is the way newsroom culture comes alive again. You can smell the dusty, old newspaper clippings in the morgue. Hear the typewriters and wire service machines tapping. Smell fresh ink on fresh newsprint. You can also smell the desperation of the old reporter, his craving for one more big story, one more drink, one more chance.

Margoshes really sings when he writes about the pure joy of writing, of getting lost in a story as you bash it out on the typewriter, then seeing the story in the newspaper, in someone's hand or clutched next to a woman's breast as she boards a bus.

But for journalists there's much more to *Drowning Man* than mere nostalgia. For underneath the mystery and the metaphysics, Margoshes is asking some pretty basic questions: Is the price of success in this business too high? How much of your soul do you owe to the company store? And what happens to journalists when they are no longer associated with the big newspaper or TV network? Who are they really? Is so much of our identity tied up with our employers that without them we shrivel into nothingness? And what about all those hopes and dreams we had at the beginning of our careers? Where did they go?

Difficult questions to answer, but as Margoshes has shown in his latest novel, they are questions certainly worth reading and thinking about.

Gillian Steward is Media *magazine's books editor.*

Review

Probing Beyond War's Half-Truths

The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from Crimea to Kosovo, by Phillip Knightley and John Pilger, 2002, 574 pages, $13.97 for bulk paperback orders over $25

Even though this book is less than a year old, it already needs to be updated to include the U.S.-led war in Iraq. The next edition will also have to deal with the question of embedded reporters and the influence they had on the perception and reality of that war. As the book stands now, it's a fascinating compendium of wars and war reporters dating back to the mid 1800s and ending with the NATO campaign in Kosovo. First published in 1975, it originally ended with the Vietnam War. And although there have been many wars since, it's interesting to note that many of the observations and questions posed in the first edition are just as relevant today, perhaps even more so.

Knightley wrote that more than one Vietnam War correspondent felt that journalism was not the best medium for capturing the real war. Each day's news was swiftly consumed by the next day's. Too few correspondents looked back and tried to see what it added up to, too few probed beyond the official version of events to expose the lies and half-truths, too few tried to analyse what it meant." Sound familiar? And if 30 years ago each day's news was consumed by the next day's, today each hour's news is consumed by the next hour's. As electronic communication has sped up, so has war.

We seem to be between wars again: the ideal time to slowly read this book and absorb the lessons and questions of previous conflicts. And I have a question of my own. Why did the publisher change the original title — *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist* (my italics) *and Myth Maker?* Given the antics of certain TV networks south of the border, propagandist should be immediately reinstated in the title.

G.S.

Sources_AD

THE LAST WORD

BY TIM CREERY

Tracks in the Sand

Good bye Southam News. Hello CanWest

THE END OF AN ERA: ***Reporter Rick Mofina admires a memory board of Southam News memorabilia. It was displayed at a farewell party for the news agency, now known as CanWest News Service.***

For old hands and not so old, Southam News went out with neither a bang nor a whimper — but a convivial evening by the bar. This was a good way to go. After 75 years, during which time Southam News grew from a 1928 bureau in London, the news service became centralized and standardized out of all recognition by the Aspers' CanWest and rightly took on that name earlier this year.

So Brad Evenson of the *National Post* and a few colleagues convened a Southam RIP at the National Press Club in the winter to "drink to the tracks we left in the sand." Here are a few self-centred reminiscences, partly based on interviews I did in 1992 for an article on the growth of the news service in the 60s and 70s. It was the Southam correspondents' editorial responsibility to each of the papers, rather than to the news service itself, that gave life with Southam News Services (SNS) its bracing touch of creative tension. No one in Ottawa laid a pencil on your copy, or spiked it; your prose went on to meet its fate in each newspaper. From time to time correspondents would make tours of the papers to meet the pencil-wielders and spikers. Christopher Young, thoughtful and forceful writer, as well as deft editor, ended up with the most successful record of navigating both sides of this process. His papers were the *Winnipeg Tribune*, the *Hamilton Spectator* (news editor), and the *Ottawa Citizen* (14 years as editor). He served briefly with SNS between the *Spec* and the *Citizen*, returning to become general manager (with the service becoming known as Southam News), London correspondent, Moscow correspondent, and columnist.

Life for others could be more dangerous. Both Charles King and Bruce Phillips had to get used to the idea that Fred Auger, the rancorous publisher of the *Vancouver Province*, could block or end your appointment to Washington.

Charlie Lynch, who became the country's best-known national columnist and retired as Chief of Southam News Services in 1984, told me in 1992 that Auger had objected to King's fair-minded coverage of the loggers' strike in Newfoundland. It had offended Auger's forest-industry friends in Vancouver. King told me Auger had opined that the papers should leave Washington coverage to the *New York Times* service.

King later became London correspondent. In Phillips's case, Auger heeded the whining of a minion of the U.S. Embassy who lobbied the papers about Phillips's critical articles (reflecting much U.S. comment and dissent at the time) about the Vietnam War. Auger wanted Phillips transferred back to Ottawa. "The other publishers went along with him and I regret to this day I didn't dig in my heels and refuse to make the transfer," Lynch told me.

Bruce Phillips, who eventually left SNS for CTV, and CTV for the Mulroney government, and then to a stint as federal privacy commissioner, said, "I loved the Southam experience. It was the best job I ever had. We had a great deal of latitude in the kind of stuff we were allowed to write and I think it was a good product for its time."

As a hitherto anonymous writer for the Kent commission wrote in its 1981 report: "Southam is the Cadillac of the news service business. It is well funded, does more foreign corresponding than any other Canadian service, and is widely admired by its competitors." Being Charlie King, the writer added for balance: "Yet, it may be the very paucity of other matching services that makes it look so good." Let's admit it. We liked our work. ☑

Tim Creery left SNS to be editor of the editorial page of the Montreal Gazette *in 1973. He was research director of the Kent commission.*

PHOTO CREDIT: *Jim Bronskill*