



Opening Shot



THE PUBLISHER OF PHILADELPHIA NEWSPAPERS INC. ANNOUNCES A PLAN TO CUT 100 JOBS FROM THE *DAILY NEWS* AND THE *INQUIRER*. What impact do newsroom cutbacks have on the surrounding community? What does the wave of downsizing portend for the future of print journalism? How do you think a community will get its news fifty years from now?

Talking Points

AT THE PEAK of his power, William Randolph Hearst owned more than a score of daily newspapers in major cities across the country, some of the nation's highest circulating magazines, and several radio stations and movie studios. Today, publicly owned companies, such as Knight Ridder, News Corp. and the Tribune Company dominate the media market. Although these media companies make money, they face pressure to constantly increase their profits. One way they're doing so is illustrated by the photo on this page.

What does it mean for you as a young journalist and/or citizen when profits are more important than scoops in a newsroom? Were we better off as a nation when the Hearsts and Pulitzers, rather than Wall Street bankers, were the lords of the press? What do you think?

To get CJR into your students' hands through low-cost subscriptions, contact Dennis Giza at dfg2@columbia.edu.

A WAY OUT?, PP. 18-21:

Have students list the benefits and drawbacks of a newspaper going public. If your students owned a major American newspaper would they take it public? Why or why not? Can newspapers meet standards of journalistic excellence and also the expectations of Wall Street? Can a major media company survive in the long run without public ownership? Have students reread what James Rutherford has to say on page 20 about media properties. Compare his opinions with those of Bruce Sherman (p. 19). As an investor, whose views would your class favor? Why? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Reread the author's concluding statement about the old time press barons. Select and research the lives and careers of three of them. What was better about journalism then? What was worse? Find the annual report of any one of the larger publicly owned media companies. Analyze the figures in the report. Write an article about what the numbers reveal, how it views its news operations, or any other important issue that you feel is raised by the report. For your article, conduct at least two interviews with people who can shed some light on what the figures mean.

MY PLAME PROBLEM — AND YOURS, PP. 22-27:

Why did Bush Administration officials “out” Valerie Plame? Do students think President Bush was aware of the effort? If they were covering the White House, how would they try to find out? Why do officials leak information? Why is it important for reporters to be able to protect their sources’ anonymity? Why have some federal officials sought to remove those protections? Phelps says that there was little outrage over Miller’s jailing. Why do your students think that was the case? Discuss the implications of the last sentence in the story. What impact do students think the Plame case will have on journalists? As journalists, would they be more reluctant to rely on anonymous sources? How would that affect their reporting? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** What are shield laws? Find out if your state has shield law protections or if your state legislature has considered any shield law bills. Draft what you consider to be a strong and proper shield law. What are the latest developments in the Plame case since the indictment of “Scooter” Libby? Write an article predicting the outcome of the affair.

MIAMI NOIR, PP. 28-37:

What is the Crosswinds project? Who is behind it? How would *The Miami Herald* and its owners benefit from it? How has that influenced its editorial policy regarding the project? Who has objected to Crosswinds? Why? Do students think the concerns are legitimate? What do students think were the real reasons for *The Herald’s* decision to fire DeFede? Did *The Herald* make a mistake in firing him? Why or why not? Was DeFede’s relationship with Teele journalistically proper? Discuss the legal and ethical issues involved in the taping of telephone calls and interviews. Do students think DeFede was wrong to tape his conversation with Teele? Some readers objected to the photo of Teele laying dead in the lobby of *The Herald*. Should the photo should have been printed? Should *New Times* have run the story about Teele without corroboration or comments from the accused? Why or why not?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Have students research the developers and supporters of Crosswinds.

What is their relationship with *The Herald*? Visit the Web site www.fec.gov to help track their political donations. Who has benefited from their largesse?

THE COST OF FREEDOM, PP. 42-47:

What are the various hurdles facing journalists in Lebanon? Under the circumstances, what are the motivations for reporters in Lebanon to continue their work? What would students do if they were offered a job as reporters in Lebanon? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** As a class, create a booklet listing press restrictions in nations around the world. Coordinating with your classmates, select several countries to research, listing any laws that restrict journalism and the general conditions faced by reporters in those countries. Find out the number, if any, of journalists killed or jailed in those countries over in past three years.

CULTIVATING LONELINESS, PP. 48-51:

What are the main points raised by the author in his opening sentence and paragraph? Why is the Internet a danger to journalism, according to Kaplan? What does he believe to be the strengths of old-fashioned travel writing? How can journalists adapt some of those practices to their daily writing and reporting? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Find and read a book that you believe is an excellent example of travel writing. In a review, discuss why you think the reporting reflects the ideals espoused by Kaplan in his article.

Quick Takes

1) Read the questions posed in the second paragraph of “Drilling Down” (p. 6). Write an article addressing any one of the questions.

2) Write an article analyzing an aspect of the history of relations between the U.S. military and the press.

3) List what you think were the five most important stories of 2005. Explain the reasons for your selections. Discuss the reporting that went into each of your choices.

4) Spend a few days at a high school newsroom. Write an essay about some aspect of what you saw and learned as it related to the issues raised in “The Next Generation” (pp. 38-41).

Between the Lines

- 1) What is the risk of always relying on mainstream sources for information? Why do reporters often do that?
- 2) After reading “Of Hate and Genocide,” (p. 9) do you think there is a way to balance free speech protections while also preventing hate mongering? If so, how? If not, why not?
- 3) When is it proper for journalists to move beyond writing and reporting and become advocates for a cause (p. 11)?
- 4) Should the faculty of a journalism school be politically balanced? Why or why not (p. 16)?