



The Price



THE BODY OF ALLAN ENWIYAH, WHO HAD BEEN WORKING AS A TRANSLATOR FOR JILL CARROLL, THE KIDNAPPED AMERICAN FREELANCER, IS RECOVERED IN IRAQ.

Why are so many journalists in Iraq being targeted for death? Why are so many willing to accept that risk to do their jobs? Would you? Is there a way to reduce the risk to journalists without lowering the quality of their work?

Talking Points

BY NOW, it's an old story. A newspaper's corporate parent, looking to maximize profits, hands down the order to cut staff. Next comes a wave of firings and buyouts, and at the same time a test marketer armed with focus-group data starts dictating the kinds of stories that should be covered.

For a while, it appeared that *The Philadelphia Inquirer* was going to be the next victim. It still may be, but the editorial staff has decided not to go down without a fight. The layoffs prompted them to reinvent and reinvigorate the paper in a way that just may represent the future of print journalism.

Can a major newspaper think differently and not only survive but thrive? Does the model of what a daily newspaper should be need to be changed? What do you think?

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THE STRINGERS, PP. 20-22:

Why must Western journalists in Iraq often rely on stringers? How does the need for stringers affect news coverage? What are some of the reasons why Iraqis work as stringers? Comment on their courage and drive. Will their work make a difference in Iraq? Do the attacks on journalists help or hurt the cause of extremists? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Find coverage from Iraq in major American newspapers. How much of the reporting is done by stringers? Can you tell from the reporting itself when a story has been put together with the aid of a stringer? Visit the Web site of the Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org). How does the organization go about fulfilling its mandate? Find the latest figures and accounts of journalists killed in Iraq and compare them to the number of journalists killed in previous American wars. Research and discuss the reasons behind your findings. Arrange an interview, either by phone, the Internet, or in person with a journalist who was in Iraq. Prepare questions in advance to discuss the challenges of reporting from Iraq and the need for stringers to aid in the coverage. If possible, obtain the name and email address of a stringer who might be able to answer questions directly.

LOOKING FOR LIGHT, PP. 24-37:

Why has the editorial staff of the *Inquirer* been downsized? How and why are the problems at the *Inquirer* being repeated at many newspapers across the country? What does it say to you that so many of the *Inquirer*'s reporters volunteered to take early retirement? What happens when market research, more than editorial judgment, determines how news is covered and stories are written? If you were an editor, would you rely on market research to make these decisions? Why or why not? How has the *Inquirer* reinvented itself? Was it a mistake to cease being a newspaper of record? Why or why not? What kind of impact will that decision have on the readership? What does it mean when a paper tries to establish its "voice"? How can a newspaper do that? What is the voice of your local newspaper? Come up with an example of how a paper might "zig" when the others "zag"?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Try to find a copy of the *Inquirer* from its heyday in the 1990s. Compare its front page and news pages then and now. What do they tell you about how the newspaper has changed? Is it for the better? Why or why not? Look at the *Inquirer*'s news coverage on the Web. Are any of the changes discussed in the article reflected on the site? If so, how? Compare the site to that of other major newspapers. What differences do you see? Research the companies that may bid on the *Inquirer* (p. 34)? Who do you think would make the best owner? The worst? Why? Imagine you are on a committee charged with envisioning a newspaper of the future. Write a memo explaining your vision of what an excellent newspaper can and should be in 2015. Discuss the kind of voice you think the newspaper should have.

THE OPTIMIST, PP. 38-44:

What are the lessons that a young reporter can learn from Walter Pincus's reporting techniques? Compare and contrast Pincus and Seymour Hersh as reporters. Who do you think is more effective? Why? How does Pincus's inside status help or hinder his reporting? Does his previous stint working with the CIA diminish his credibility? Pincus's reporting, according to the article, implies that "in official Washington, there are wise old heads who can set things straight." Do you have the same amount of faith in public officials? Why or why not? Reread the second to last paragraph of the story regarding Pincus's plans for a national newspaper. What do you think of Pincus's idea for how the stories were to be written? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Research how the CIA secretly funded the work of journalists during the Cold War. How effective was the program? How was it uncovered? Research the work of several reporters mentioned in the story, including I.F. Stone, Hanson Baldwin, and Seymour Hersh. Find examples of their reporting and compare them. Why do you think their work was so highly regarded?

Between the Lines

- 1) How would you have handled the stalking story if you were in Jared Flesher's shoes (p. 10)?
- 2) After reading "Blind in Red Lake, (p. 12)" what suggestions could you make to a young reporter about to cover a different culture?
- 3) Should reporters be compelled to cover the war in Iraq (p. 17)? Why or why not?
- 4) How do publishers and journalists define nonfiction differently? Read the different opinions about when a memoir isn't a memoir (p. 51). Who do you think is right? Why?

THE TRIPSTER IN WOLFE'S CLOTHING, PP. 54-57:

How would you define the "new journalism" of the 1960s? How did it differ from mainstream reporting? How and why was it able to flourish? Who were the leading practitioners of the art? Is new journalism still being practiced today? If so, by whom? In *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Wolfe created an illusion of being on the bus with the Merry Pranksters. How was that different from James Frey fictionalizing his life? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Find an example of new journalism from the 1960s. What aspects of the work are characteristic of new journalism? Does this type of reporting work for you? Why or why not? Try your hand at it. Report and write your own story in new journalism style.

Quick Takes

- 1) Find a city with only one daily newspaper and another city with two. Read their papers over several days. Note the differences between them that might indicate how the lack of competition can breed complacency in journalism.
- 2) Read the first Laurel on page 14. Then get a list of your state's critical sites list. Research some of the choices and discuss your findings. Include at least one comment from a state official.
- 3) What were the major provisions of the Communications Act of 1934? What did the act have to say about the ownership of the airwaves? Write a story discussing whether you think the intentions behind the act continue to be honored. If not, when and how has that thinking changed?