



AP Photo: Anja Niedringhaus

A DESERTED STREET IN THE WESTERN PART OF FALLUJAH, IRAQ, NOVEMBER 2004. Why is there a need for reporters and photographers to be eyewitnesses to battles like the one fought in Fallujah? Imagine yourself as a reporter in Iraq, covering the insurgency in Fallujah. How would you prepare yourself emotionally for the work? How would you cope with the danger? Does reading war reporting make you want to be on the scene? Why or why not?

THE DEATH OF SUPPLY COLUMN 21, PP.

10-12: How was reporting from Vietnam during the war different from reporting on the Iraq war? Why did the reporting from Vietnam prompt the first and second Bush administrations to change the rules about reporting from a war zone? Who has benefited from the new rules? Who has been hurt by them? Explain. What was it about Peter Arnett that made him such an excellent reporter? Read some of his other pieces from Vietnam and comment on them. How was he able to learn about Supply Column 21? What was the importance of photographs to his story? Compare the reaction of the military to Arnett's story to the military's response when stories broke about Abu Ghraib. What role did photography play in the latter story? Reread the last paragraph of this story. What other qualities are necessary for someone to be a great reporter? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Research the history of the Associated Press. How, when and why was it formed? How is the work of an AP reporter different from that of a reporter working for a daily newspaper? Learn more about David Halberstam as a reporter. Find some of his pieces from Vietnam. Why were they so highly regarded? Read one of his books and write an in-depth review of it.

INTO THE ABYSS, PP. 13-78:

WAR IN IRAQ, SOME KEY EVENTS, PP. 14-15: Select any one of the events on the timeline. Research how that story was covered on line and in the mainstream press (if possible view the TV coverage). Write an essay evaluating the coverage and suggesting how it might have been improved upon. What, if anything, was overlooked in the stories? Which were well done? Why do you think so? Follow up on the story. What has changed since it was reported? Evaluate the impact of the event and its coverage.

Talking Points

TO CELEBRATE CJR's 45th anniversary, the editors have put together a special issue featuring the recollections of 45 journalists who have covered the war in Iraq. This unique oral history takes you behind the scenes of what is certainly the biggest story in the world today.

The journalists not only paint a vivid picture of a battle-scarred country and people, but they also honestly reveal — sometimes brutally so — what was in their own hearts and minds as they diligently pursued their stories, often under the worst of circumstances.

According to CJR's editors, the oral histories make it clear that “the coverage of the war and the course of the war are somehow intertwined.” Read the oral histories. Then come back to that phrase and think about it. Can you tie the two together? How?

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

IN THE BEGINNING, LIBERTIES AND AMBIGUITIES, PP. 19-27: What were some of the earliest indications that the war might go sour for the Americans? Find examples in the reporters' comments of poor planning or lack of foreknowledge that would come back to haunt the military effort.

THE REIGN OF THE CPA, PP. 27-33: How did the creation of the Green Zone change the way the war was covered for many reporters? What do the reporters reveal about the workings, the attitudes, and the effectiveness of the CPA? How did the CPA attempt to control the way the war was reported? Do you think their efforts to do so were wise? Why or why not? Compare and contrast the different points of view on the usefulness of the daily briefings. If you were a reporter in Iraq, would you want to attend them?

OMENS AND INCIDENTS, ENEMIES AND CIVILIANS, PP. 33-41: Discuss the significance of Nir Rosen's comments (beginning on p. 33) about American attitudes toward Muslims and what they imply about their own religious beliefs. What obligations do journalists have when they are informed of American atrocities? If you were in that situation, how would you report the story? What would you do if you were asked to hold a story about atrocities committed by Americans? Find out how the shootings by the Eighty-second Airborne in Fallujah (Larry Kaplow, bottom of page 35) were reported. In light of Kaplow's comments, discuss the quality of the stories you find. What is Nancy Youssef referring to when she talks about "hearts and minds" (p. 39)? How was the term used during the Vietnam War? How and why are the U.S. and Iraqi governments trying to control information about civilian body counts? How would you get to the truth?

THE EMBEDS, PP. 46-53: From the military's point of view, what are the benefits of embedding reporters? Compare and contrast the different points of view on embedding expressed by the reporters. Would you prefer to be embedded or to be out on your own if you were covering the war? Explain.

REPORTING IN IRAQ, PP. 53-63: List the different ways that the reporters in this section used enterprise to find important stories. How can you apply those examples to typical daily stories? Why have so many journalists been targeted by the insurgents? Does the practice help or hurt the insurgents' cause? Explain.

THE GOOD NEWS, PP. 64-68: Follow a week's worth of reporting on Iraq in your local newspaper. Does the reporting reflect the concerns and observations raised by the reporters in this issue of CJR? Why or why not? Andrew Lee Butters says that Americans shut their eyes to the truth (p. 65). Do you agree? If not, why not? If it is true, why do you think Americans behave that way? Who or what bears responsibility for it?

THE CONTINUING STORY, PP. 68-78: Follow a week's worth of reporting on Iraq in your local newspaper. Does the reporting reflect the concerns and observations raised by the reporters in this issue of CJR? Why or why not? Reread Dan Murphy's account that begins on page 69. At the end, he writes, "I think you get the point of the story." What is his point? Comment on it. Several of the reporters talk about the fear that is a part of them while reporting from Iraq. How would you cope with that fear? **ADDITIONAL**

ACTIVITIES: Select any one of the reporters who is interviewed for this oral history. Reread only his or her comments. What do you see differently from reading that person's account straight through in that manner? What do you learn about that reporter, as a person and as a journalist? Was there a major turning point or revelation for the reporter you chose? If so, what was it? How did it affect his or her perception and/or work? What did you learn about journalists and journalism from reading the entire oral history? How did it change your perception about the war and about war reporting? What did it tell you about the value of oral history?

THE DESEGREGATION DRAMA, PP. 91-95: Find examples of reporting on the civil rights movement. Compare and contrast the examples you find to reporting on the Iraq war. The story cites the landmark case of *New York Times Company v. Sullivan*. Research the case. Who brought it? Why? On what grounds did the Supreme Court make its ruling. What impact has the case had on the way journalists report their stories?

Between the Lines

1) In "Assignment Iraq" (p. 1), the editors write about how "reportorial curiosity can surrender to patriotic stagecraft." Find other examples of that happening in American history. Compare and contrast the incidents you find with what happened in the early days of the Iraq war. Why do you think it happens? What can be done to avoid it?

2) What are the concerns about e-voting machines? Do you think it's an important story? Why? If you were an editor, how would you cover the controversy? Read the letters in response to the editorial "Guarding the Vote." Investigate the arguments over the coverage of the 2004 Ohio vote. Based on your reporting, which side is correct? Why?