

The Public

Ben Bradlee

We've got to find a way to get the children [reading newspapers] and guarantee to get them when they're 18, which is hard if they have no history. If you get the passion back in papers — I'm not talking about crime and lurid stories, although there's nothing wrong with a lurid story if it can be made remotely significant — if you can get that back, and a sense of excitement in the paper, which is not hard, (readers will follow). I mean, you can do it so many different ways. You can do it with pictures. You can do it with exclusives. ...

We should pause here to thank Richard Nixon for Watergate. I never miss an occasion to thank him.

William Hearst III

The resources of the great television networks, in terms of where they have bureaus, are declining even as the interest in television news is going up. That means that a lot of what we're seeing on the important shows is really more free-lance, less edited, [with] less ability to be certain of the quality, the integrity, of the reporter.

We have to do what Jefferson wanted us to do, which is inform ourselves. People sometimes talk about the media like this: "Here I am. I'm the viewer. There's something coming at me and it's wrong. And I'm the hopeless victim of its wrongness." I have never met anyone who watched a television that way. Or reads a newspaper that way. Everybody I've met watches it and says, "What a bunch of bull," or "I like that guy." So there is this continuous filter of "I accept it, I don't accept it," which supersedes the authority.

Alberto Ibarra

One of the changes we made ... that I really like is that we took away all titles, and any time you get a byline, your e-mail address goes along with it. So a reader can either tell you, "Hey, that's not even the half of it, let me tell you what else I know and you ought to follow this"; or the reader can object so the reporter can know what kind of impact, what kind of power he/she has. Readers feel much more interactive with the newspaper. I think all of that is important.

Steve Isenberg

We depend on the best of our readers, on their own curiosity.

Mark Whitaker

The greatest threat to the newsmagazine these days is people who do not follow the news. You ... develop that habit and therefore think that you really do have to look at a newspaper every day.

What helps you develop that habit is a big, huge, ongoing news story.

This is, arguably, since September 11th, the first story that had that element of just, my God, there is something major and huge happening every single day that you have to follow. Obviously, as tragic as it has been, one thing that is kind of hopeful for us in the news business is this may be a story that reconnects some people, who had perhaps gotten disengaged from the news, into that habit. Perhaps even more importantly, [the story] developed that habit in younger readers.

Dick Wald

People don't see what you think they see. They see what they think they saw. There is an emotive content to vision, to hearing, to all of the aspects of our lives that you must take into account, and it's very hard to. You need, in our business, to have an empathetic imagination so that you can understand the way in which the message will be received, in addition to the way it is sent. And it is particularly so in those media, like television, that appeal directly to the senses.

William Hearst III

It bothers me that a lot of people look at the press as a problem to be solved. It's all public relations. It's spin. So the press expert on the campaign or at the company says, "If we just get a big wall of sound at the beginning, that's our kind of spin. And

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by the time the other spin emerges, it will be drowned in the noise." It is not all about spin. Sure the press has its fads. But in the end the events flow from the truth. Get the events right.



I feel a little bit like an expatriate in the sense that I came from the newspaper country, the news country, and I'm wandering around unbeknownst to the citizens of the larger economy. When you hear what people really do think about the press, it's discouraging. Maybe their expectations are so high, even unrealistic. The person who hasn't been inside the tent vastly misjudges the amount of moral debate that goes on in every newsroom that I've ever been near.

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Matt Storin

The ombudsman gets thousands of calls a month. And those calls are not going to be answered by the editor under normal circumstances.

I'm a big fan of the ombudsman concept.

Lou Boccardi

Gary Condit and O.J. and the (Monica Lewinsky) dress and (similar stories) ... news organizations don't write about those things because nobody wants to read about them.

Every time there's an election, people say, "Too much horse race coverage." ... Well, I'm sorry, I live in New York state. During the last campaign, as that Senate campaign with Mrs. Clinton and Rick Lazio reached its climax, I went to a lot of places outside New York. People asked me about that Senate race. What they said to me was, Lou, who's going to win? They didn't ask me about the rival positions on welfare.