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# Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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# INSIDE JOURNALISM

FEBRUARY, 1991

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

## DOWALIBY BASHES MEDIA

"The public hears what is said at the beginning of the case, and from that, they convict you."

According to Cynthia Dowaliby, this is the reason her husband, David, was convicted of murdering their daughter, Jaelyn, last May.

Dowaliby was one of three who recently spoke to j-students in Jim Ylisela's Interpretive Reporting class about how the media can influence a jury's decision. She spoke with great emotion about the trial of her husband. The other speakers, David Protes, a journalism professor at Northwestern University and an investigative reporter, and Peggy O'Connor, president of the Freedom for David Dowaliby Committee, both concurred with Dowaliby's statements.

"Inaccurate evidence [was leaked] to the press by the prosecuting side," Protes said. For instance, the rope that was used as the murder weapon was similar to one of the Dowaliby children's toys and the blood found on Jaelyn's pillow was from Dowaliby's oral surgery, Protes claimed. But the media's interpretation made them seem like irrefutable evidence against David.

Protes gave j-students his advice for preventing inaccurate reporting. "First, [journalists must] not rely on sources that aren't there. For instance, the three sources [the media] had at the beginning of the case dwindled into one who testified in court.

"Second, get sources on the record. Attribution provides security.

"And last, don't get too close to the prosecution's ideas. The Dowalibys were advised by their attorney not to talk to the press; therefore, the media only heard the prosecution's side, and they talked extensively."

O'Connor added that not enough care was taken by the press concerning the facts about David. He is only an ordinary person, she said, but he was treated with the indifference to accuracy generally reserved for celebrities [who are less protected by libel laws].

"I am permanently scarred," said Dowaliby. "I'm a trusting person, maybe too trusting, but I don't trust the media anymore."

—Stacy Manglaras

## MEET THE PRINTER

### *Magazine Editor Describes Process*

A five-member group representing the j-department's forthcoming



magazine, CHICAGO: Arts and Communication, visited Ringier America Printing Co., in Pontiac, Ill. a few weeks ago, to see how their words and graphics would eventually become a professional-level publication.

The team consisted of Nat Lehrman, chairman of the j-department and the magazine's publishing advisor; Don Gold, director of the department's magazine program and the magazine's editorial advisor; Burton Winick, art department faculty member and art advisor; Dina Giobbia, student production manager; and myself, student editor-in-chief. We went to Pontiac to coordinate the magazine's spring 1991 printing plans.

Ringier representatives met with us at a luncheon conference, and hammered out details and logistics. The meeting was productive and, for Dina and myself, an invaluable educational opportunity.

After a working lunch, we were taken on a plant tour that included every stage of magazine production.

The plant is a gigantic, high-technology complex that is extremely efficient and almost totally computer-operated.

At present, Ringier's webfed offset printing process is the system most often used in the United States to print magazines, illustrated books and colorized brochures. The plant produces millions of magazine copies annually.



Cynthia Dowaliby pauses during the discussion in an Interpretive Reporting class.



Our tour took us through the preparatory stage, on to printing and binding, and, finally, distribution.

"It was very encouraging to know that a plant with that quality control and capacity is going to print our magazine," says Gold. "It means the magazine will have the appearance of a professional publication and that's exactly what we're after, in all its aspects."

—Muriel Whetstone

## JOHNSON SHINES AT SUN-TIMES

"Going to work is like getting up, going on an adventure and being on a high," says senior j-student Mary Johnson, who is a part-time reporter for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Johnson, 41, has written about 50 stories for the *Sun-Times*, 12 of which made the front page.

Johnson was offered a position as a reporter three weeks after completing an internship last summer at the *Sun-Times*. She says she was so elated that she could not stop screaming.

"This was a real job, it was not an internship," she says. "I received a press pass, business cards and a mailbox."

Johnson got her start with the *Sun-Times* when she was named the first recipient of that paper's Minority Internship Scholarship Program award after being recommended by j-instructor and *Sun-Times* reporter P.J. Bednarski.

At the time of her internship, which provided a paid salary for 13 weeks, the *Sun-Times* was short-staffed and let her do what the very best reporters do: hit the streets and start covering news.

"The staff was eager to give me a chance, put me at ease and share their skills with me," Johnson says.

One of her most memorable front-page stories was a news feature about the eviction of the homeless at O'Hare Airport. She was excited about going out and doing a story that had social relevance.

The story had an emotional impact on her that she struggled with while on the assignment.

The heart of her story consisted of the aftermath of the eviction and Johnson had to "separate myself from

the story," which she says is the hardest part about being a reporter.

Along with a photographer, she followed an elderly lady carrying two huge cardboard boxes and two tattered bags.

Instinctively, Johnson wanted to assist the lady but was instructed by the photographer not to do so, because she was there only as an observer.

Although it may seem like Johnson was born a journalist, she worked full-time for many years as a secretary before coming to CC.

Johnson decided to attend CC and pursue a writing career because she enjoyed writing and realized that there were "no promotion opportunities without a degree."

She became involved in the *Chronicle* as the managing editor last semester, and has a near-perfect GPA.

Supported by her husband, Melvin, and four children, Johnson is now able to attend classes full-time.

Johnson believes older people should not regard going back to school as a handicap, because they have the same opportunities that young people have.

She is comfortable at CC because, "Students are very tolerant of each other. I do not feel strange because I am 41 and the person sitting next to me is 22."

Although her life may seem complicated, Johnson says her goal for the future is very simple: "I want to be a great African-American journalist!"

—Denise Nelson



Mary Johnson

## THE STORY BEHIND THE SCANDALS

### *New Class Uncovers Investigations*

Imagine that after months of exhaustive investigative reporting, you've obtained irrefutable proof that the governor, who everybody thought was a man, is really a woman. It's your big break—the story that will make you a star. The hard part is over, right? Wrong. It's just beginning.

Now come the assaults on your character, the attacks on your integrity and the charges against your questionable methods.

"There is a tremendous amount of heat on the reporters once a story breaks... a veritable firestorm is going to hit," says Mike Lyons, deputy director and chief investigator for the Better Government Association, a civic watchdog group.

Lyons says that this is a major aspect of journalism that j-schools tend to overlook.

"We train these kids to be relentless, and then we send them out there—these bloodhounds who are after the Pulitzer in their second year—and they're just not prepared for the after-effects following a story's appearance. Once the story hits, that's really only the beginning."

But Lyons, along with Terry Brunner, executive director of the BGA, has found a way to change that and show students that investigative reporting is not always praise and Pulitzers.

They will co-teach a new course this spring entitled, "Chicago Politics: Behind the Investigations," available for junior and senior Columbia j-students Monday evenings.

This course will look intensively at every phase of an investigative operation, from the hatching of the idea to weathering the storm after the story hits.

"A key component in this class is going to be how to respond to attacks on your credibility," Lyons says. "And what you can do to protect your integrity when they come after you."

"The class will also look at case studies of actual investigations," Lyons says, "dissecting the investigation from beginning to end, looking at all the decisions that go into it."

Such controversial cases as the



Mirage Tavern case, in which undercover operators from the BGA and the WBBM-TV investigative team, set up an actual tavern to monitor corrupt dealings in the government, and the Medicaid scam, an investigation that the F.B.I. still uses as a training film for new agents, will be among the cases that students will be analyzing.

After a combined 34 years working as investigators for the BGA, both Lyons and Brunner are painfully aware that there is a myriad of circumstances which directly affect the route an investigation takes.

What both Lyons and Brunner hope students will ultimately gain from the course is an understanding of all the variables involved in an investigation, and see up close the dynamic nature of investigative reporting.

—Steve Crescenzo

## CC GRADS AT CITY NEWS

"The City News Bureau is like graduate school — only it pays you a salary," says 1988 Columbia graduate and weekend editor of City News, Anna Marie Obiala. "It's a training ground for journalists who want to prepare themselves for big-time newspapers."

The CNB, often called "boot camp for journalists," is a wire service for major newspapers such as the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, and for area radio and television stations.

Obiala's quick trip to being an editor at City News is not uncommon.

"Once a reporter leaves, you gradually work your way to the top," says Obiala, who became weekend editor after only a year and a half.

Although the CNB is notorious for its long hours and low pay, most graduates still find that the experience is rewarding.

Sally Huffer, a 1987 CC broadcast journalism graduate, is currently a broadcast editor for City News.

"I like the stability," Huffer says. "City News is much more rewarding and friendly to newcomers than some of the other television and radio stations in Chicago."

Huffer has been with City News for one year, and says she plans to stay for quite some time, although at the CNB,

that means only about three years. New grads are given a chance to make mistakes, learn some new things and then get out into the real world.

Yvette Shields, a city hall reporter who has been with City News since 1988, says she had no other alternatives after graduating from Columbia except the CNB.

"There was really nowhere I could go straight out of college," Shields says. "But the experience is great at City News. What it does is prepare you for the real world."

— Timothy Bentevis

## GOUDIE'S GULF TALES

When Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August and took control of its government and oil reserves, WLS-TV reporter Chuck Goudie was the first local reporter to bring the news, live from Saudi Arabia, into our living rooms.

On December 3rd, in the Hokin Auditorium, Goudie, who specializes in national security and organized crime reporting, shared his experience with Columbia College students.

He showed clips from his 23-story series that he put together on his own, virtually independent of his co-workers in Chicago and in the U.S. military reserve unit in Saudi Arabia.

Assigned to Operation Desert Shield immediately after the invasion, Goudie, along with a cameraman, expected to go to Saudi Arabia and film one week of material and then return home to put a series together.



Chuck Goudie

In actuality, however, Goudie stayed for two weeks and reported one story per day live from Saudi Arabia.

While staying with the U.S. troops in the Gulf, Goudie learned many of them "want to invade. If they have to come home having nothing happen, there will be a lot of disappointment; they'll feel as if they've been there for no reason," he says.

Goudie says his piece on the tremendous amount of mail being sent to the soldiers garnered the most public attention, and a story he did on board the USS Wisconsin stirred up the most controversy.

The public was not prepared to see a demonstration of exactly how these young American soldiers were trained to defend themselves when the time came to do so, Goudie says, and it brought home the idea of war for many people.

But despite his extensive interviewing and first-hand observation of the situation, Goudie says he still has found no certain reason for the U.S. deployment of nearly a half million troops.

"If none of this had happened," he says, "the economy would probably still be the same as far as oil and national security are concerned; in fact, it would probably be better if we weren't spending so much money over there."

—Rachel Morrow

## "600 SOUTH:" THE HIDDEN QUARTET

If you don't know that Columbia College's tv department has a cable newsmagazine that airs monthly, sit back and relax, because "600 South" is bound to knock your socks off. You can see it on Channel 21 at 8 p.m. on Fridays.

The newsmagazine is a complex interaction of four classes: TV News Practicum, Producing the News, TV News Field Production and News Production.

TV News Practicum familiarizes broadcast journalism majors with the professional functions of a TV news department, and is taught by Jim Disch.

Producing the News illustrates the overall feel of putting together a news program. It is intended for the students who have completed the News Practicum, and is instructed by John Gibbs.



TV News Field Production is designed to give students the experience of performing as on-camera talent. They also learn field production and editing. It is instructed by Lamarr Scott.

TV News Production develops and presents the news program under appropriate studio operating conditions, and is also instructed by Jim Disch.

Chairperson of the tv department, Edward Morris, says that what is most rewarding is "being confident that graduates from Columbia College have a leg up on other students who do not have similar real world teaching. Many don't have the foggiest notion of what news is like."

Most students find that being a part of the cable newsmagazine is challenging. Senior Mal Maltadros says, "It's a good feeling seeing the final package of a story that you helped to develop."

Graduate j-student and executive producer for "600 South" Trent Han-neman says, "I learned a lot about meeting deadlines and working as a team."

The cable newsmagazine was created to provide hands-on experience for the broadcast journalism curriculum and was initially circulated through the Hokin Center. Now "600 South" is in its 6th season.

As for the future of the cable newsmagazine, Morris does not envision it being available to a national audience, because U-NET, an arm of the National Association of College Broadcasting, is not ready for a local college newsmagazine show. Morris says that "600 South" gives impetus and meaning to the presentation of news for students who aspire to be broadcast journalists. "If we never presented it any place but inside the institution, it would serve a valuable function," he concludes.

—Denise Nelson

## CUMMINGS HEADS CHRONICLE AGAIN

When j-student Lance Cummings was 18-years-old he was a "wild party animal who struggled to avoid flunking out." He was "unfocused in career goals and drifting rudderless through the great society of the late 1960s."

Now 40 years old, Cummings has a

4.0 GPA and is the 1990-91 editor-in-chief of the **Columbia Chronicle**.

Originally from Rockford, Ill., Cummings spent his freshman and sophomore years at Carroll College in Wisconsin.

Unhappy with his studies, he went to California to pursue a lucrative career in the securities business.

But in spite of a high income, he decided a few years ago that he still wanted to pursue a career in writing, so he left the sunny West Coast and decided to give Chicago and Columbia College a try.

"Writing was a terrible chore for me because I'm a perfectionist, and, unfortunately, I'm not perfect," Cummings says. "But it has gone from being a chore to a joy."

Cummings was the **Chronicle's** executive editor during the 1989-90 school year and while he liked the paper then, he still elected to make some major changes when he took over at the top this fall.

Cummings' position as editor is challenging and sometimes prevents him from contributing as many articles as he would like; however he is confident that his influence on the **Chronicle's** staff is reflected in their work.

"If I can help someone to better his or her writing ability then that makes me feel at my best," he says.

This past summer Cummings interned at the Blackwell Corp., a current affairs television program in Washington, D.C., while attending the Institute on Political Journalism at Georgetown University.

After graduation he plans to return to Georgetown to pursue a master's degree in national security.

—Rachel Morrow

## IJ BITS

Congratulations to **Sally Daly** ('86) who was hired as Cook County sheriff Michael Sheehan's press secretary. Daly will be handling all the media involvement and internal publications for the sheriff's office. Daly spent three years as a writer for the **Southtown Economist** and was recently the paper's city hall reporter.

**Paul Freitag** ('90) is busy serving as program coordinator for the **National Foundation for Sleep and Related Disorders in Children**, based here in

Chicago. In addition to handling public relations for the year-old organization, Freitag also serves as editor of "The Sleeping Child," the foundation's newsletter.

**Shelley Acoca**, a member of Columbia's 1988 journalism graduate program, has recently been named managing editor of the **Schaumburg Review** and **Hoffman Estates Review**, which are part of the Pioneer Press chain. As managing editor of the two weeklies, Acoca edits and lays out copy, writes editorials and serves on the papers' editorial boards.

Another member of the 1988 graduate class, **Elizabeth Owens**, is now covering the education and business beats for **Pioneer's Park Ridge Advocate**, after working for its **Niles Spectator** and **Morton Grove Champion** newspapers.

**Karen Klemens**, a 1989 graduate of the j-department's master's program, was recently named director of communications for the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. She was formerly the public information officer for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

—Julie Sacharski

## INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the journalism department

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