

THE IRE JOURNAL

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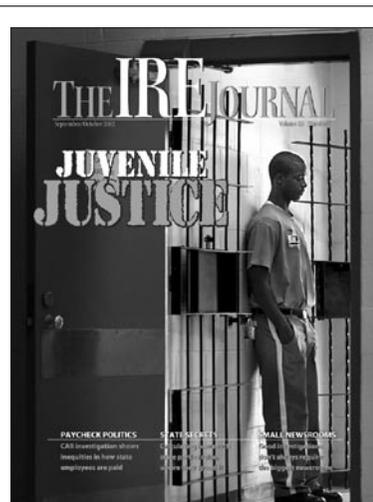
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ABOUT THE COVER

Derrick Iverson is serving 10 years for armed robbery in a prison that also houses adult killers. He was 16 when the robbery was committed, 17 when sent to prison.

Cover story, pages 20-30

Cover photo by
Al Diaz, *The Miami Herald*

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FROM THE IRE OFFICES

Remember the 'E' in IRE



BRANT HOUSTON

Despite our limited budget and resources, IRE continues to improve its services to members; our latest efforts are aimed at assisting investigative editors and producers in their work.

As part of this initiative, we have set up a directory of investigative and projects editors from print publications. If you have been to our Web site, www.ire.org, you have seen the directory listings at www.ire.org/editors. The second step was to establish a listserv, editors-l, for those editors working on investigative projects.

At the same time, we are setting up similar services for investigative producers working in broadcast. The directory is listed at www.ire.org/producers and the listserv is producers-l@ire.org

We hope these services will help editors and producers get in touch with each other and share ideas and techniques just as they do at our conferences and workshops. IRE will archive the listserv messages on its Web site so editors and producers can peruse them even if they don't join the listservs.

Editors from both large and small newsrooms already have joined the editor's directory, including those at *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Seattle Times*, *Newsday*, *The Kansas City Star*, *The Columbus Dispatch*, *The Indianapolis Star* and the *Fairfield County (Conn.) Weekly*.

Many thanks to projects reporter Bill Theobald of *The Indianapolis Star* and investigative editors who encouraged us to complete this project.

We intend for the listservs to be focused on work and to the point. If you are an editor and interested in being in the directory or on the listserv, please send a message to editors@ire.org.

If you are interested in being in the producer directory or on the listserv, please send a message to producers@ire.org.

Workshops under way

The response to the one-day workshops on doing investigative journalism, particularly at small- to medium-sized news organizations, has been nearly overwhelming. The workshops, presented in collaboration with SPJ and regional hosts, offer a rapid-fire series of sessions on finding documents and sources and on how to use open-records laws to pry information loose. (See page 5 for more details.)

As *The IRE Journal* goes to press, we have a dozen workshops scheduled around the United States and planning is under way for another dozen. You can find information about them at www.ire.org/training/betterwatchdog.

If your news organization would like to have a one- or two-day workshop in investigative reporting or computer-assisted reporting right before or after the workshop, please contact our training director, Ron Nixon, at ron@ire.org

Endowment drive keeps going

In the coming months, you will be hearing more about our \$5 million endowment drive. In addition to the push for annual small gifts, we are pursuing larger gifts from corporations, foundations and individuals.

As you may recall, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation created a partial-matching program of up to \$1 million for us. For every \$2 donated to the endowment by others, the foundation will donate \$1.

Since we have \$2 million raised in donations and pledges, this means that if we raise \$2 million more in the next three years we will achieve our goal with the help of the foundation.

While \$5 million will not generate enough income to run all of IRE's services, it will ensure

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Brant Houston is executive director of IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. He can be reached through e-mail at brant@ire.org or by calling 573-882-2042.

First dates planned for Watchdog Workshops

A crucial duty of journalists is to serve the public interest by acting as watchdogs of government and business. That function has become all the more important at a time when governments are restricting the flow of information and the public seems willing to sacrifice freedom for security. At such times, broadcast and print journalists must redouble their efforts to use freedom-of-information laws and help the public appreciate the value of such laws.

A "Better Watchdog Workshop" is intended to help journalists, especially those from small- to medium-sized news organizations – and those in bureaus of larger organizations – learn the investigative skills that keep government and business accountable while offering readers enterprise reporting that is interesting and informative. Critical among the skills needed to do such stories is the ability to use federal and state FOI laws.

IRE and SPJ have joined forces to offer these fast-paced workshops throughout the United States and show how improved reporting skills, often aided by the employment of open-records laws, can result in top-notch journalism. A small team of expert instructors will run the workshops, which will bring together IRE's expertise at journalism training and SPJ's leadership on FOI issues. Program materials will include a copy of SPJ's "Open Doors," a recently published guide for using FOI laws and some of the best IRE tipsheets on beat coverage.

In some cases, the workshops may be extended to Sunday for special sessions or for hands-on training in computer-assisted reporting. The cities already scheduled include:

Sept. 14 – Charleston, W.Va.
 Sept. 28 – Detroit
 Nov. 16 – Fort Lauderdale
 Nov. 23 – Wichita
 Feb. 22, 2003 – Phoenix
 Mar. 29, 2003 – Minneapolis
 April 5, 2003 – Cleveland
 April 12, 2003 – Spokane
 April 12, 2003 – Long Island

Check www.ire.org/training/betterwatchdog for the latest additions and updates.



Better Watchdog Workshops

Regional conference set for Savannah, Ga.

Develop more enterprise on the beat! Learn from award-winning journalists! Explore the South's hottest issues! Sign up for the IRE Regional Conference scheduled for Oct. 19-20 in Savannah, Ga.

Three tracks of panels are planned for Saturday – from basic skills to the more advanced. You may attend any panel from any track. Sunday is an optional hands-on workshop: "Introduction to computer-assisted reporting."

Track A: Starting Out: Doing Better on the Beat

- Backgrounding individuals
- Digging through property records for hidden stories
- Documents and sources for investigations in city hall
- Going in-depth on the cops and courts beats
- Doing more on the school beat: Issues and programs to probe

Track B: Building More Skills

- Doing the tough interview
- Effective use of FOIA and state open records laws
- Election coverage, before and after
- Localizing federal and state documents and databases
- Tracking professional and business licenses and enforcement

Track C: Hot issues in the South

- Water rights and conflicts
- Investigating business, deregulation and other issues
- Covering the military and its bases during the war on terrorism
- Using Census data for investigations
- The transportation stories we are missing

To sign up for either or both days – or to check out the latest on the conference – visit www.ire.org/training/savannah02.

Several federal databases updated in IRE collection

The IRE and NICAR Database Library recently updated several major components of its database collection. They include:

Federal spending

The Consolidated Federal Funds Reports database, current as of fiscal year 2001, is a valuable tool to explore federal expenditures

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MEMBER NEWS

Chuck Baker's book "Flowers for Princess Diana" was published in August. Baker is managing editor of the *Nevada Military Veterans Reporter* in Las Vegas.

■ University of Florida student **Kim Balestrieri** was awarded third place in the 2002 Hearst Journalism Broadcast News championships.

■ **Matt Birkbeck**, *Pocono* (Pa.) *Record*, has written "A Deadly Secret: The Strange Disappearance of Kathie Durst" (Berkley). The book is the story of the events surrounding the arrest last year of Robert Durst, heir to a New York real estate fortune.

■ **Debbie Cenziper**, formerly an investigative reporter with *The Charlotte Observer*, has moved to *The Miami Herald* to investigate Miami's public schools.

■ **Madeleine Doubek** of the (Chicago) *Daily Herald* has won her second consecutive Peter Lisagor/Chicago Headline Club Public Service Award. She led a team that won for its four-part series, "The Hidden Scourge," which examined the growing deadly heroin and club drug problem in Chicago's suburbs.

■ **Mark Greenblatt** has moved from reporter/investigative reporter at KOAA-Colorado Springs to full-time investigative reporter at WBBH-Fort Myers, Fla. Greenblatt will lead WBBH's investigative unit.

■ **Tom Kertscher**, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, has a book due in October: "Cracked Sidewalks and French Pastry: The Wit and Wisdom of Al McGuire." The book is a collection of quotations by the late Marquette University basketball coach and broadcaster.

■ **Peggy Kuhr**, managing editor for content at *The* (Spokane, Wash.) *Spokesman-Review*, has been named Knight Chair in Journalism at the William Allen White School of Journalism at the University of Kansas.

■ **Dave Lieber**, senior columnist for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, won the 2002 Will Rogers Humanitarian Award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists and the Will Rogers Memorial Commission of Oklahoma.

■ Longtime member **Bob McGruder**, executive editor of

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Send Member News items to Len Bruzzese at len@ire.org and include a phone number for verification.

STATE PAYROLL

Maintaining in-house state salary database pays off with stories of political favoritism

BY BILL KRUEGER
AND JOSEPH NEFF
THE (RALEIGH, N.C.) NEWS & OBSERVER

It was a story that, under state law, we should not have been able to tell.

For three days last year, we wrote about all sorts of inequities in how state government employees were paid and how they got pay raises. We wrote about how employees in the Administrative Office of the Courts received an extra pay raise while the state was struggling with a budget deficit. We wrote about how state troopers used their political muscle to get an automatic pay raise just for them written into state law. We wrote about how employees close to those in power, such as the governor and state legislators, got special treatment when it came to pay raises.

The reaction was overwhelming. State

employees called and wrote to thank us for finally exposing a system they knew was corrupt. Outraged taxpayers called to tell us of their plans to storm the legislature. The administration of Gov. Mike Easley announced a proposal to overhaul the system for paying state employees.

What didn't change was the law that could have prevented us from ever telling the story.

Linking databases

Under North Carolina law, the current salary of a state employee, as well as the date and amount of the most recent promotion or demotion, is a matter of public record. The salary history is not. Once new information about the employee becomes public, the previous records are closed.

Hugh Stevens, a lawyer for the North Carolina Press Association, told us that he knew of no other public record that is automatically removed from public scrutiny in this way. "It's a loophole that state people have driven a truck through," Stevens said.

Fortunately, we had a way around that loophole. When *The News & Observer* got into computer-assisted reporting years ago, one of the first databases we acquired was the listing of all state employees and their salaries. Since 1993, *The N&O* has routinely acquired that database two or three times a year. Each database is a snapshot of the state payroll at a given time.

By linking the databases together, we were able to get what the state wouldn't give us. We were able to put together our own salary history for agencies and individuals.

It was a small tip that gave us the idea of tying them together. We had been reporting on campaign finance hanky-panky by the new state agriculture commissioner. A tip came in about a series of questionable raises that departmental big shots had given themselves

five years ago.

We went to our news research department with the intent of pulling the salary records only for these four or five employees. David Raynor, our database editor, made an offhand comment: "If you're going to look at a few employees, you might as well look at all of them."

That rang the bell. If we could do it for a handful of employees, we could do it for all. At about the same time, we were working another tip that Easley had given out several big raises at the Justice Department shortly before he stepped down as attorney general to be sworn in as governor.

Naturally, there were several complications when we tried to put our own salary history together.

We joined the databases together by "position number," a unique identifier for each state job. As jobs are added over the years, the number of positions increases. When departments split up or are created, more position numbers are created.

So we created a master table of unique posi-

Policing precocious college students

The most critical records for our stories were electronic – the salary data from the state personnel office and from the state university system and the data from the state retirement system.

But we got some of our best stuff from paper records, particularly salary studies that had been done for various types of jobs and for various agencies. Our favorite came from university police departments, which were seeking a raise for campus cops. They described campus policing as "one of the more difficult arenas" of law enforcement:

"These officers must work with, communicate to and manage the best and brightest young adults this state has to offer. These students can be precocious, self-assured and sometimes aggressive. Many are highly intelligent and many are away from home for the first time. They are ready and able to try new activities and behaviors and to think different thoughts, and providing a safe and secure environment in a city-type setting is never easy; it is particularly difficult with this population."

Nuts and bolts information for computer-assisted reporters.



Uplink is a bimonthly newsletter covering every facet of computer-assisted reporting. It's written by the nation's top reporters for the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting.

Articles include valuable information for journalists, educators and students on uses of databases, spreadsheets, Internet resources, mapping and statistical software. Investigative reporters explain how they developed significant stories through these techniques. Technical tips and Q&As serve beginners and advanced journalists.

To subscribe, go to www.ire.org/store or call 573-882-2042.

\$40 for IRE members • \$60 for nonmembers

NICAR is a program of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. and the Missouri School of Journalism.

Mel Nathanson | The News & Observer



Correctional officers check the readiness of weapons in one of the guard towers at the Cleveland Correctional Center in Shelby, N.C.

tion numbers, and then tied the tables together into a single file. This file allowed us to ask all sorts of questions. Who received big raises in a given year? Were there patterns of high raises in certain departments or offices? Which jobs tended to get the biggest raises over the past eight years?

When state personnel officials need to look at an employee's complete record, they query on Social Security number. That option wasn't available to us. To obtain a person's complete salary history, we wrote a standard query that pulled all the employee's records by name.

One pattern that we noticed was in the court system: Year after year, central office employees were receiving bigger pay raises than other state employees. We found out that the court system used an arcane system of salary reserves (generated by courthouse workers in the state's 100 counties) to fund raises for the central office staff in Raleigh.

We asked the court system to give us a list of everyone who had received raises from this pool. The court's personnel manager had his office compile the list from computer printouts, using paper and pencil. They sent us a bill for \$1,600 to cover the time it cost to produce the report. We called the state personnel office and asked if they could do the same report. They said they could, with an off-the-shelf query, at a maximum cost of \$45. It turns out the courts didn't want to go the electronic route – it would have enabled us to detect their pattern of raise-giving.

Paycheck winners

While our new master file contained a wealth of information, it was still incomplete. We had to turn to another set of data, which we also had collected through the years, for the salaries for faculty and administrators in the state university system. We used data from the state's retirement system to look at legislative employees. We had not collected that data through the years, but fortunately for us state law did not protect the historic data kept by the retirement system.

Once our reporting was done, we thought hard about how to tell our story. While we had a story that no one else could do, we realized that parts of our story wouldn't shock most readers. What we had found, in some respects, merely confirmed what a lot of people already suspected – that state government was rife with political favoritism and that the basis for raises wasn't just job performance.

What we provided in our series, "Paycheck Politics," were details: Who got the big raises and how they did it. In addition to examples cited in the stories, we broke out small stories on each of the three days about some of the employees who had been "winners" in this corrupt system.

We wrote about Basil McVey, the deputy director of court services, who got 14 raises over a six-year period. The key to his success? He complained a lot. "I was underpaid for what I was doing and had been complaining about it for a long time," he told us.

We wrote about Darren Clark, a personal assistant to then-Gov. Jim Hunt. His salary rose from \$27,500 to \$50,000 over four years – a much greater increase than rank-and-file state employees received over the same period – even though his job title didn't change. In one year, his salary increased almost 27 percent.

We wrote about John Connell, clerk of the Court of Appeals, who doubled his salary one day in 1997: from \$45,000 to \$94,000, with

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Mel Nathanson | The News & Observer



Court clerks Barbara Graves (right) and Carol Smith help defendants through the paper trail on their way to court at the Wake County Courthouse.

SMALL NEWSROOM IDEAS

Good investigations don't always require the biggest newsrooms

BY GEORGE KENNEDY
FOR THE IRE JOURNAL

When Steve Pizzo first learned that the local savings and loan was being mismanaged, he tried to find somebody else to do the story. After all, Pizzo was publisher of the *Russian River News*, a weekly in tiny Guerneville, Calif., and his reporter, Mary Fricker, was newly returned to journalism after raising a family. The *Russian River News* was the only paper willing to hire her.

None of the bigger news organizations to which they pitched the story was interested. So a persistent publisher and a nervous neophyte dug into what was to become one of the most important stories of the decade, the looting of America's S&Ls. Before they were finished, Pizzo, Fricker and *National Mortgage News* reporter Paul Muolo even wrote a book on their investigation. The book won an IRE Award in 1989.

Ideas for others

Fricker, now a senior reporter at the *Santa Rosa (Calif.) Press Democrat*, told the story of her unorthodox introduction to investigative reporting while a panelist at the recent IRE Annual Conference in San Francisco. Her story showed that good investigative reporting can be done in small newsrooms. She offered more than a dozen ideas for others.

Fricker's top 3 tips:

1. Every time you have a disaster in your area, there is a workers' compensation component to that story. The key questions are: What benefits are the workers entitled to? Often your readers will be surprised at how low they are. And do the workers ever actually get those benefits? Many will not, or their benefits will be delayed, sometimes for

years.

To get started on this story: Talk to attorneys who represent injured workers and read the workers' files. Disputed cases will go to a special workers' comp court, and those files are public records.

2. Yes, injured workers sometimes commit fraud. But probably at the rate of less than 1 percent, not the 30 percent some insurers

Tips and tapes

Good reporters, no matter the location, and good newsrooms, no matter the size, can produce terrific investigative stories. For the complete tipsheet from this panel, visit www.ire.org/resourcecenter and search for Tipsheet No. 1640. You can also buy the audio tape of this session, or any of many other conference panels, at www.ire.org/training/audio.html under San Francisco.

claim. Don't fall for the easy story of a supposedly injured worker videotaped playing golf. Instead, studies show that the fraud that really costs money is fraud by employers, who lie about the size of their workforce or about the danger of the jobs their workers do, so they can get lower premiums. And what about the mil-

lions of dollars taxpayers have to pay to take care of workers who get injured working for uninsured employers, even though the laws in most states require employers to carry workers' compensation insurance?

To get started on this story: Check with your district attorney, state district attorney associations and your state workers' compensation agency to find employers who have been charged with fraud. Your state workers' comp agency can give you data on uninsured employers.

3. Unnecessary amputations: Up to 85 percent of the 82,000 lower-leg amputations in the United States each year could be prevented, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if the patients – usually diabetics – could get proper care for the sores that become gangrenous and lead to amputations.

To get started on this story: Check the National Hospital Discharge Survey (www.cdc.gov/nchs) to see if wounds and

diabetes are increasing reasons for hospital admissions in your area. If they are, does your hospital have a wound care clinic? If not, you'll find doctors in your area who know it's needed.

Tom Roeder of the *Yakima (Wash.) Herald-Republic*, on the same San Francisco reporting panel, helped his paper win an IRE Award this year for investigating the deaths of four young firefighters in a national forest blaze. In this case, too, a small newsroom focused its resources (one-third of the city staff) to uncover the "how" and "why" behind a tragic local story. Unlike Fricker's first S&L story, metro reporters descended on the fire story. The Yakima staff just out-hustled and out-worked larger outsiders.

Roeder's top 3 tips:

1. Poverty pimps: Nonprofit organizations seem happy and good from the outside, but from the inside, they can prove devious.

Case in point: The Washington State Migrant Council double- and triple-billed state and federal accounts for Head Start programs. This was discovered in an investigation prompted by a tip, then a quick check of the nonprofit's annual filings with the state, which showed that the Migrant Council was sitting on \$1.5 million in cash after all its bills were paid.

2. Teacher sex: Most of the sex scandals at schools actually don't wind up in the paper. But if your state has a solid public records law, they could. In Washington, you can request all disciplinary actions taken against teachers in a calendar year.

One of those newsroom reviews led us to a football coach whose senior-year honey was bought off with a used car and a plane ticket. The coach is now stocking shelves at Yakima's Target.

3. Investigate something positive: I'm sure that you are perceived as the doomsayer of your community. "Why can't you ever write something positive?" the PTA asks.

Here's a positive idea that upset a local myth. The Anglos here believed the local jail was mostly populated by Hispanics. A public records request for three months of daily head counts by race revealed that Hispanics, who make up 37 percent of the county, made up 30 percent of the jail population. Good fast story.

The *Wisconsin State Journal's* Andy Hall

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The Pulliam Journalism Fellowship



Jump-start your journalism career with a solid program that boasts four Pulitzer Prize winners among its alumni — the Pulliam Journalism Fellowship. The Fellowship offers myriad career opportunities; in fact, a Pulliam Fellow from our first class of 1974, Barbara Henry, now serves as president and publisher of *The Indianapolis Star*.

Now entering its 30th year, the 2003 Pulliam Journalism Fellowship helps build a bridge from the classroom to the newsroom. Fellows are assigned to *The Indianapolis Star* or *The Arizona Republic* in Phoenix for 10 weeks each summer as staff reporters. We award 20 Fellowships annually.

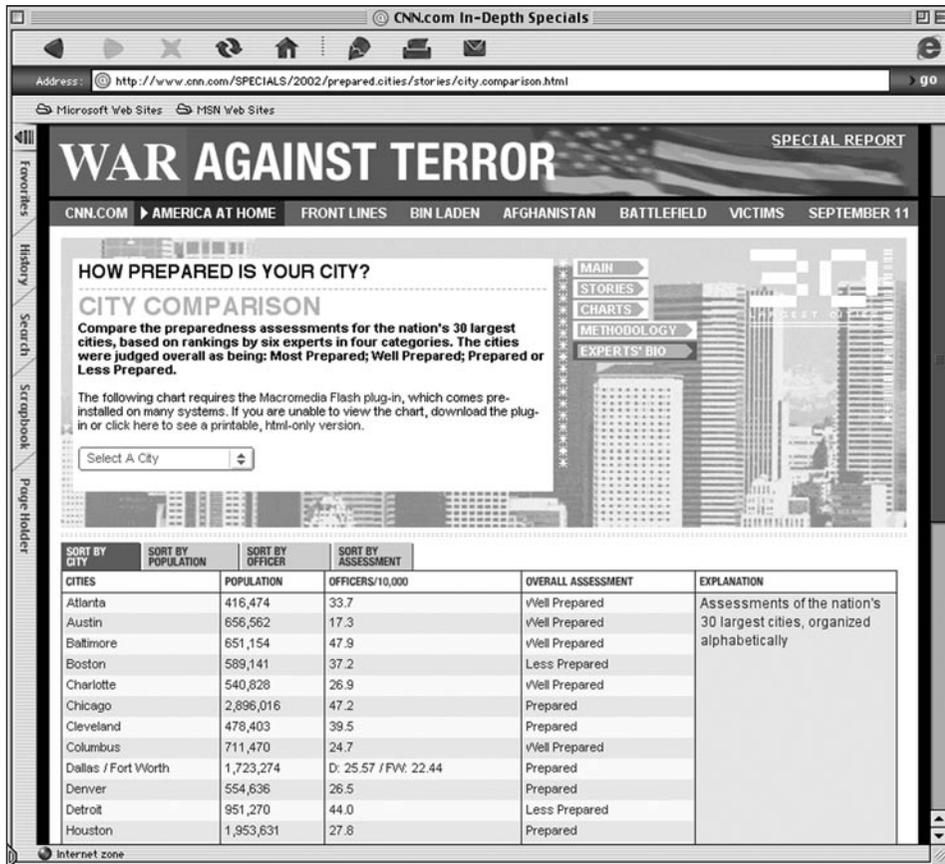
We'd like to encourage applications from students with a wide variety of backgrounds. Previous internships and part-time experience at a newspaper are desired or other demonstration of writing and reporting ability. Those who go through the Fellowship often find new professional opportunities opening up at other newspapers during and after the program. Past Fellows now serve as newspaper publishers, editors and reporters all over the world.

Traditionally, our Fellowships have been open only to graduating college seniors. In 2001, we expanded eligibility to include college sophomores and juniors, as well as seniors pursuing a career in newspaper journalism.

Contact us anytime after Sept. 1, 2002, for an application packet for our Summer 2003 program. Our early admissions deadline is Nov. 15, 2002, with up to five winners notified by Dec. 15, 2002. Non-winning early admissions applicants will be reconsidered with all later entries, which must be postmarked by March 1, 2003. Winners from this group will be notified by April 1, 2003. The stipend for the 10 weeks will be \$6,300.

Visit our Web site at <http://www.indystar.com/pjf> or e-mail Fellowship Director Russell B. Pulliam at russell.pulliam@indystar.com for an application packet. You also may request a packet by writing:

Russell B. Pulliam, Director
The Pulliam Journalism Fellowship
P.O. Box 145
Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145



This ongoing dialogue with a team of experts proved invaluable, as they often had firsthand knowledge of the preparedness efforts and vulnerabilities within a number of major cities. We also were able to seek their input on the statistical data, federal grant monies and such criteria that would best help in evaluating the work done by city officials leading up to Sept. 11.

True preparedness

OK, but how many cities could we review in depth? We initially thought 50, until deciding it would be too overwhelming and time-consuming a task. And when we considered 25, we struggled to justify eliminating important cities like Miami and Atlanta that barely missed making the cut.

Ultimately, we reviewed national crime statistics reports and developed our top 30 cities by the criteria that cities had to have a population of at least 350,000 and employ at least 1,100 full-time police officers. Even then, to include as many cities as possible, Dallas/Fort Worth and San Francisco/San Jose were combined rather than evaluated individually. We made sure to present separate data on each city in our final report and, as it turned out, our final rankings for these cities would have been the same no matter which way we did it.

That bit of information would prove helpful in addressing challenges from Fort Worth and San Jose officials, who argued that their respective cities had their own individual issues and didn't care to be evaluated with their neighbors.

Once we were comfortable with our list of cities, we dug for every shred of relevant data and public record that was available. The analysis would focus on four crucial categories: transportation (access to and from emergency sites); hospital/medical; federal preparedness (an evaluation of funding and training programs); and emergency management.

True preparedness is often deemed best achieved where the local, state and federal governments – as well as members of the private sector – work as partners. But we recognized a challenge in preparing for emergencies was also getting access to available resources.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we found, awarded \$120 million to states during the past two years to upgrade public health's capacity to respond to bioterrorism. But only four cities received separate grants, including New York (\$1.14 million), Chicago (\$902,089), Los Angeles (\$850,275) and Washington, D.C. (\$570,317).

Finding, analyzing and weighting the value of

READY OR NOT

CAR investigation looks at cities' terrorism preparedness

By MIKE FISH
CNNSI.COM

Just how prepared are major U.S. cities to face a terrorist attack? Can we assume places like New York and Washington are more up to speed than, say, Milwaukee or Columbus?

The questions were being posed by editors at CNN.com as another possible follow up to events of Sept. 11. Like several news organizations, we had completed a computer-assisted reporting project that focused on the airline industry and security at the country's busiest airports, and there was a desire to similarly rank, or at least gauge, the performance of major cities.

Terrorism experts, who by all appearances had multiplied in number after Sept. 11, were insisting on two things: no city is immune from risk and no one is fully prepared to handle the fallout of an attack. So folks couldn't help but worry about

their own safety as well as suddenly wondering if their city was schooled to deal with everything from biological to chemical threat.

To assess the preparedness of the largest cities, CNN.com undertook a computer-assisted reporting project last fall that produced "How Prepared Is Your City?" on the Web site, a 30-minute special report on "Wolf Blitzer Reports" and also a TV package by CNN homeland security correspondent Jeanne Meserve.

The early challenges were plenty. First, we were determined to produce a thoughtful package that would both enlighten and address people's concerns, yet at the same time wouldn't serve as a blueprint for would-be terrorists and criminals. We found this also to be the top concern of the experts who were interviewed or assisted us in evaluating the cities.

consistent, statistical data that could be applied, in our four categories, across the 30 selected cities, would be a key to making this study work.

The survey says...

Early in the project, however, it became apparent that statistics alone were not going to tell us the full story of a city's preparedness. Some of the information that would be valuable in evaluating cities, such as details about pharmaceutical stockpiles, is appropriately guarded.

The experts stressed the need to weigh intangibles, like how the uniformed services work together as well as the level of commitment from the private sector to participate in training. So, while accumulating the data in each of our four categories, CNN.com also provided local emergency management directors with a 10-question survey to evaluate staffing, training and such key questions as:

- **Who does your city's emergency management director report to?**
 - A. Mayor's office/City or County manager
 - B. Police Department
 - C. Fire Department
 - D. Other
- **The number of your full-time staff dedicated solely to emergency management?**
 - A. More than 10
 - B. 5-to-10
 - C. 1-to-5
 - D. 0
- **In the current fiscal year, the amount received by your department for terrorism planning, training and equipment?**
 - A. More than \$1 million
 - B. \$500,000-to-\$1 million
 - C. \$100,000-to-\$500,000
 - D. Less than \$100,000

All of the data accumulated by CNN.com was later shared with the local emergency management directors, who were offered the opportunity to comment and report any corrections. In most cases, it required multiple follow-up calls and faxes – but it was crucial that officials confirm the accuracy of data that would be used in the city evaluations.

Eventually, we would provide our empirical data to six law enforcement, security/terrorism and emergency management experts asking them to rate the cities in each of the four categories, using a one-to-five scale (one being best prepared). The Disaster and Terrorism Assessment Survey given the experts was a 22-page document that included key potential vulnerabilities of each city, general city information such as the

number of police officers per 10,000 residents and then specific data compiled within our four categories.

The most comprehensive was hospital/medical, which included 18 items ranging from physicians and emergency outpatients per 10,000 residents to whether the state employed a public health veterinarian and the number of CDC-sponsored "disease detectives."

While reviewing the data, we stressed the importance for the experts to rely on their own experience with the cities. So, factored into the evaluation was their awareness that some cities face a greater risk because of such things as location, commerce, landmarks and hosting major events.

The final overall assessment of the 30 cities was based on the simple average of the experts' ranking, with CNN.com weighting the hospital/medical category 1.5 times because of its importance and the volume of relevant data. Cities were judged as being most prepared, well prepared, prepared or less prepared.

In the end, only New York, having earlier experienced attacks on the World Trade Center, was judged most prepared. We did a separate story looking at New York's performance and the lessons learned.

The major knock against New York came in the transportation category, where experts cited the potential for gridlock – a factor in getting responders to the scene as well as transporting the injured and ill to medical facilities.

Several other large cities also fared poorly under transportation – notably Boston, Philadelphia and Detroit. The panel judged them overall less prepared, joined by Las Vegas, Milwaukee and New Orleans. CNN.com shared the rankings with city officials before publishing and produced

a separate story detailing heightened preparedness as well as steps taken by the individual cities since Sept. 11.

Our analysis also found:

- While cities are better prepared than prior to Sept. 11, significant improvement is still needed in public health, emergency response, evacuation planning and inter-agency communication.
- Las Vegas and New Orleans, two major tourist/convention cities, are located in states that do not employ a public health veterinarian, which could be helpful in the early detection of a biological crisis. Nor did the cities have a CDC-sponsored disease detective.
- Cities faring best are those like New York that routinely host major events or traditionally face natural disasters, such as Florida and California cities.

The two-month project produced eight stories for the Web site, which were edited by Kevin Drew. It also utilized state-of-the-art technologies for the presentation, including the latest version of Flash to display the charts (in addition to the printable HTML version). With a simple click of the mouse, viewers saw how their city's overall grade compared with others, along with individual comparisons within the four categories. Jennifer Pangyanszki and Ann Hoevel coordinated the presentation of the information, charts and stories. Andrea Facini and Nirut Kru-suansombat designed the special report; Robert Felker created the city graphics, and the coding was done by Charles Rawls, Aurelie Gaudry and Julia Wester.

Mike Fish is a senior writer at CNN.com. Since 1998, he has won 12 regional and national writing awards.

HOW PREPARED IS YOUR CITY?
Washington, DC

SELECT A CITY

The overall city assessment is based on the ratings of six law enforcement, security/terrorism and emergency management experts in four categories using a one-to-five scale (one being best prepared). The overall assessment -- an average of the scores -- is derived from a scale that assigned four levels of preparedness: Most Prepared, Well Prepared, Prepared and Less Prepared.

ASSESSMENTS	
OVERALL	Well prepared
TRANSPORTATION	3.94
HOSPITAL/MEDICAL	1.267
FEDERAL PREPAREDNESS	1.667
CNN CITY SURVEY	1.667

WASHINGTON, D.C.

METHODOLOGY • EXPERTS' BIOS • SOURCES

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE: AN INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

BY MIKE MCGRAW
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

U.S. reporters aren't alone in fretting over corporate journalism. Fifty journalists and public policymakers from 30 countries endorsed a statement of concern that "market pressures are undermining the quality of journalism" during a recent international seminar in Salzburg, Austria.

Led by former *San Jose Mercury News* publisher Jay Harris, a working group of journalists from China, Germany, India, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States drafted a forceful statement on the issue during the spring seminar and presented it to other seminar participants.

"As news organizations preserve high profits by reducing newsgathering resources and neglecting journalism in the public trust, the fundamental role of the press to inform and empower citizens is endangered," the statement said.

Media conglomerates and intense market competition are spawning new priorities where "profit is replacing public service as the principal mission," the statement said. Strategies for reaching that goal include the blending of news and entertainment, a reduction in serious news coverage and a shrinking commitment to domestic and international news.

Such strategies have a heavy impact on investigative journalism, several seminar participants agreed, because it is especially expensive and takes more time and space.

The statement calls on leaders of news organizations worldwide to "recognize the need for a wiser balance between business goals and public-service responsibilities, and to reaffirm their commitment to journalism and the role of a free press in sustaining human liberty."

The statement was drafted during a session of the Salzburg Seminar. Based in a 260-year-old

palace called Schloss Leopoldskron, the seminar was founded after World War II by several Harvard University students who believed that America should help not only in the physical rebuilding of Europe, but also in its cultural and intellectual healing.

The March session, the 396th since the seminar was founded, was called "Influence, Values and Professional Responsibility in the News Media." The seminar explored several issues, including pressures on journalistic freedom after Sept. 11, and the Internet and professional responsibility.

Harris, who resigned his last position citing differences with corporate management over financial priorities, was one of 10 faculty members.

In a speech earlier in the seminar, he outlined historical changes in ownership of U.S. media companies. "It is clear that when then-current owners took their companies public," he said, "they had neither the intention nor the expectation that their companies would one day be controlled by people concerned primarily neither with journalism nor public service, but rather with short-term profit and uninterrupted profit growth."

IN DEFENSE OF JOURNALISM
AS A PUBLIC TRUST
Salzburg, Austria
March 26, 2002

I. PREAMBLE

This statement expresses the concerns of international journalists and supporters of journalism attending the Salzburg Seminar Session 396, March 20-27, 2002, in Salzburg, Austria. The topic: The decline of the news media's role as a public trust and the effects

of that phenomenon on its obligations to civil society. Our discussions revealed that journalists and their supporters from many countries share a strong conviction that market pressures are undermining the quality of journalism; specifically, as news organizations preserve high profit levels by reducing newsgathering resources and neglecting journalism in the public interest, the fundamental role of the press to inform and empower citizens is endangered. These concerns are the motivation for this statement.

A free and independent press is essential to human liberty. No people can remain sovereign without a vigorous press that reports the news, examines critical issues and encourages a robust exchange of ideas. In recognition of the press's vital role in society, many countries extend it special legal protections under constitutions or legislatively enacted statutes. These protections are unique, for they safeguard print, broadcast and online organizations against government interference and censorship.

Where this special status has been accorded the press, news organizations have been held to a high standard of public service and public trust. Over time, this ideal has become a bedrock of journalism, an enduring tradition by which a free press has been a powerful force for progress and informed citizen participation in society.

Historically, threats to press freedoms have been political in nature. At the start of the 21st century, however, a new kind of threat emerges that, if continued, will endanger the freedoms guaranteed to the press and put at risk the sovereignty of the citizens.

The nature of the press as a commercial enterprise has changed significantly. The emergence of media conglomerates and intense market competition are creating new organizational priorities in which profit growth is replacing public service as the principal mission. Sustaining profit growth often requires reducing the resources for news gathering, thereby diminishing the role of the news media as a public trust.

Business priorities are encouraging the blending of news and entertainment as a strategy to build audiences and ratings. This trend, most noticeable in television, has led to a reduction in serious news coverage and may be responsible for a decline of public confidence in this medium as an essential source of information.

Finally, a shrinking commitment to both domestic and international news means that news organizations are missing opportunities to connect people and ideas globally at the

LEGAL CORNER

very time technology has made such connections increasingly possible.

This international group of journalists and supporters of press freedom calls on the leaders of news organizations worldwide to recognize the need for a wiser balance between business goals and public-service responsibilities, and to reaffirm their commitment to journalism and the role of a free press in sustaining human liberty.

II. CONCERNS ABOUT JOURNALISM

We recognize that news organizations function in a competitive, multimedia environment and that financial strength is key to journalistic independence. However, an unbalanced priority on profits and financial growth runs counter to the concept of journalism as a public trust. We are convinced that the growing imbalance in the priority given to quality journalism and profit growth ultimately impairs citizens' ability to participate fully in their communities. And we recognize that neglecting the public interest erodes public support for legal guarantees of the freedom of the press to report the news. We conclude that market forces and other pressures are causing the following problems:

- 1) On citizens and society.
 - Inadequate access to diverse sources of information.
 - Decline in public understanding of current affairs.
 - Decline in citizen participation in community life.
 - Diminishment of citizens' political authority.
 - Improper confluence of media ownership and political interests.
- 2) On journalism content and influence
 - Decline of diverse and comprehensive news produced in the public interest.
 - Neglect of audiences that are not valued by advertisers.
 - Compromising editorial integrity for commercial purposes.
 - Encroachment of entertainment into news coverage.
 - The shrinking impact of news organizations as audiences dwindle.
- 3) On news media organizations
 - Concentration of ownership and creation of monopolies.

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A roadmap for avoiding 'false-light' claims in business reporting



DAVID SMALLMAN

In the mid-1990s, an experienced business reporter for *The New York Times* learned of a rumor circulating on Wall Street about two publicly traded companies. The substance of the rumor (later shown to be false) was that the chairman of the companies, Robert Howard, was an alias for a convicted felon named Howard Finkelstein.

Not untypically, the confidential sources for this tidbit were "short sellers" of one of the company's stock. Short sellers borrow shares of stock, sell them, and then buy an equivalent amount of shares to return the borrowed shares. They profit if the stock price declines between the time the short seller sells the borrowed stock and the time replacement shares must be purchased to repay the borrowed stock. Bad news, of course, often results in at least a temporary drop in a stock's price.

The reporter, Susan Antilla, believed that there could be a newsworthy correlation between the spread of the short sellers' 'dual identity' rumor in the marketplace and recent price fluctuations in shares of the companies overseen by Robert Howard. Antilla investigated for more than a month, and interviewed approximately 30 people, including the subject of the rumor, his son, and government officials from the SEC. When the story was published, a significant portion detailed Antilla's efforts to confirm or disprove the rumor through the SEC, and as the story went to press, the SEC officials with whom Antilla had spoken had been unable to resolve the short sellers' rumor. That same day, however, documents and other information were provided by lawyers representing Robert Howard and Howard Finkelstein.

The Times published a correction stating that after inspection of the materials provided by the lawyers, it found "no credible evidence to support the rumor" and regretted having printed it. But the matter was far from over,

and litigation concerning the Antilla article did not conclude until more than seven years later. When it finally ended, on June 28, 2002, a Federal Appeals Court in Boston issued a decision that can be viewed as a helpful roadmap to reporters and editors for avoiding – or at least taking early measures to later defeat – false-light invasion of privacy claims.

Howard v. Antilla

About three years after publication of the original article, Robert Howard sued Antilla, but not *The Times*. The case went to trial on Howard's claims of negligent defamation and false-light invasion of privacy. The jury returned a verdict in favor of Antilla on the defamation claim, but awarded Howard \$480,000 after finding in his favor on the false-light claim. Antilla appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

The law of privacy evolved from a general recognition that individuals have a legal right to control dissemination of information about themselves when that information relates to nonpublic aspects of their lives. A distinct cause of action exists for "publicly casting a person in a false light" if: (1) the false light in which that person was placed would be highly offensive to a reasonable person, and (2) the person who does so had knowledge or acted with reckless disregard as to the falsity of the publicized matter and the false light in which the subject of the publicity would be placed. A false-light invasion of privacy action differs from defamation in that the injury in a privacy action is mental distress from being exposed to public view, while the injury in defamation actions is damage to reputation. But as with defamation and libel claims, a false-light claim can only survive a First Amendment challenge

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David B. Smallman, The IRE Journal's contributing legal editor, is a partner in the law firm of Steinhart & Falconer LLP. He is First Amendment counsel to IRE and NICAR and a member of IRE's First Amendment task force.

TERRORISM RECORDS

Federal data check shows public misinformed about convictions

BY MARK FAZLOLLAH
AND PETER NICHOLAS
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

There was quick action when *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that the Department of Justice had dramatically overstated its record of convicting terrorists, with conservative and liberal congressmen calling for an investigation.

The December story, which documented a five-year pattern of inflated terrorism statistics, went unchallenged by the Justice Department. The U.S. attorney's office in San Francisco, which had one of the worst records of pumping up the stats, acknowledged almost immediately that its numbers were wrong.

Among San Francisco cases of supposed terrorism were the Mexican immigrant who concocted a phony passport application; the babbling man who walked into an FBI office and threatened to kill former President Bill Clinton (he didn't realize Clinton was no longer president); the woman who totally lost it on a flight from Australia and demanded that the stewardess

bring her the Virgin Mary (not to be confused with a Bloody Mary).

There were many other run-of-the-mill criminal cases that federal prosecutors were listing as terrorism. And the misinformation was going to Congress and the public.

"Where they were misrepresenting those figures of the terrorists convicted, it shows they may be lying to the Congress of the United States, and those responsible for that should be removed from office," Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., chairman of the Committee on Government Reform said in a news conference called in response to the *Inquirer* story.

Burton's committee pulled the General Accounting Office into the battle to get an accurate count of terrorism cases. The GAO says its investigation probably will be ready this year.

Common denominators

We began by looking at the basic data from

Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. Each month, TRAC gets raw Justice Department data and markets it in a highly useable form. The Justice Department organizes all federal cases into different criminal categories ranging from bribery to brutality to white-collar crime to terrorism.

But while the justice data was complete up to Sept. 30, 2001, it did not include the names of defendants or their federal court case numbers. To get that, we paired the justice information with federal court data offered through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER). While this is a commercial service, the charges are reasonable – often only 25 cents to electronically access a full court docket for an individual case.

Keep in mind that the pairing is painfully time consuming, so it is best suited to small samplings of cases.

We found that the justice data listed only 463 cases of terrorism, but we further whittled that number down by focusing only on federal convictions that were *labeled* as terrorism cases.

The common denominators in the two data systems were the dates of filing criminal charges, the federal court districts in which the cases are filed, and the lead criminal charges. Because PACER allowed us to select all cases filed on a specific date in any federal court district, we entered the date of each Justice Department's terrorism case.

The northern district of California, for example, had 14 convictions over a five-year period, requiring us to review the electronic docket information for every case on each of the 14 days.

It was terribly tedious, but it produced

Soros Justice Media Fellowship

The Soros Justice Media Fellowship offers journalists working in print, photography, radio, and documentary film and video the opportunity to pursue in-depth stories that improve the quality of media coverage on incarceration and criminal justice issues.

Fellows devote up to one year to research, write, produce, and widely disseminate stories that reduce the over-reliance on policies of punishment and incarceration in the United States, and restore discretion and fairness to the U.S. criminal justice system.

Grants of up to \$45,000 are awarded for one-year projects.

Fellows chosen in 2002 can begin work in either March or August of 2003.

The Soros Justice Fellowship Program is a project of the Open Society Institute's Criminal Justice Initiative.

For more information, contact Kate Black, at Kblack@sorosny.org; (212) 548-0170 or go to www.soros.org/crime

Application Deadline: October 11, 2002

Open Society Institute 
Criminal Justice Initiative

results.

Usually, there were no more than a dozen criminal cases filed on a single day. Of those, there usually would be only one with the specific criminal charge matching the Justice Department data.

There were additional checks we used to ensure we identified the right cases. PACER gave us the names of the judge and federal prosecutor in each case. The justice data provided the initials of the judge and prosecutor.

Once we had the name of the defendants, we could look for news articles that had been written by local papers. We contacted defense lawyers, who were shocked that the Justice Department was classifying their clients' cases as terrorism. They faxed us copies of indictments and other court records.

Reporters from our sister Knight Ridder papers pulled court files for us in several federal districts.

Real terrorism

Confronted with the results of our research, some federal prosecutors were willing to discuss cases. We also reached out to FBI agents who investigated them.

In one supposed case of terrorism in Seattle, two commercial pilots were feuding.

Pilot Eugene Allen tried to hurt the other's career by sending authorities a phony report that the pilot was planning a hijacking. Officials quickly called in the FBI's anti-terrorism unit in Seattle.

The lead FBI agent, who worked three years with the anti-terrorism task force, cracked the case in two weeks. He got a confession from Allen, who eventually pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges and was sentenced to a brief period of probation.

For those interested in using this data, remember that there are other ways this information can be used. For example, consider how something like environmental hazards could be examined: Are federal environmental enforcement prosecutions hitting big polluters or only getting small fish? Was it a mechanic who accidentally dumped a barrel of oil or was it a petroleum company that polluted Houston Bay?

The list may be endless.

Mark Fazlollah is a projects reporter for The Philadelphia Inquirer and has won the Selden Ring and Roy Howard Awards, as well as working on Inquirer teams that have been Pulitzer finalists three times. Peter Nicholas works in the Washington, D.C., office of The Inquirer.

Withholding information by wrapping it in a flag



CHARLES DAVIS

The devil is in the details, they say, and the trick is getting Congress to pay attention to them. Buried in the Bush administration's 35-page homeland security department proposal is this little gem: "Information provided voluntarily by non-Federal entities or individuals that relates to infrastructure vulnerabilities or other vulnerabilities to terrorism and is or has been in the possession of the Department shall not be subject to section 552 of title 5, United States Code."

For those of you unfamiliar with legalese, section 552 is the federal Freedom of Information Act, and no, there is no hidden meaning here: the president wishes to carve the largest single exemption in the history of FOIA. Imagine any information "relating" to homeland security being whisked into this super-exemption, no questions asked, simply because it is being voluntarily provided by industry – and the corporate world will become incredibly patriotic about sharing with the Department of Homeland Security.

The sweeping language of this proposed exemption raises a number of important questions. Precisely what types of information would be withheld? How closely must the information "relate" to infrastructure vulnerabilities to merit protection? What qualifies as infrastructure or vulnerabilities? What counts as "voluntarily" provided? Is voluntarily submitted information that "is or has been in the possession of the Department" exempt from disclosure even if it was obtained by another agency as part of the everyday regulatory process?

Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge has told the press in recent weeks that the proposal is a work in progress, and that everything is on the table.

Perhaps, given the administration's deep and abiding love for secrecy, journalists should be very, very afraid.

Protecting information

The best reason to fear the prospects of the super-exemption is that such protection for corporate America has been on the wish list of several members of Congress for years now.

In fact, the language in the homeland security

exemption mirrors a failed legislative effort last year by Sens. Robert Bennett (R-Utah) and Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.). Reps. Tom Davis (R-Va.) and James Moran (D-Va.) introduced a similar bill in the House. Both bills proposed to protect voluntarily disclosed "critical infrastructure" information from FOIA. It failed after a spirited campaign by public interest groups, journalists and others concerned about maintaining scrutiny of the regulatory process. Having failed the test of the democratic process, proponents of critical infrastructure secrecy stuck in the homeland security wording, hoping that wrapping it in motherhood and apple pie will silence its critics.

The arguments for the exemption haven't changed. Proponents of the FOIA exemption argue that it will encourage private businesses to share information about potential vulnerabilities in the nation's physical and cyber infrastructure. This is far from true: Exemption 4 of the FOIA, the "trade secrets" exemption, already provides near-blanket protection for such information.

In fact, last year when industry representatives argued that an exemption was needed before private companies would voluntarily share infrastructure information with the government, a senior FBI official testified at a congressional hearing that the FOIA already prohibits the release of sensitive commercial or financial information received from the private sector.

Ronald L. Dick, director of the FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center, said "[W]e believe that there are sufficient provisions in the FOIA now to protect information that is provided to us."

The reality, of course, is that corporations could use the exemption to indefinitely hide embarrassing data from the public and other government agencies. In a post-Enron, post-WorldCom world, that's a tough sale, so the corporate world must be thrilled that the rhetoric has shifted from corporate secrecy to the amorphous-yet-patriotic homeland security.

The fact remains, however, that a miniscule

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Charles Davis is executive director of the Freedom of Information Center, an associate professor at the Missouri School of Journalism and a member of IRE's First Amendment task force.

STATE SECRETS

Using local resources to track millions of dollars through the great 'back door' of American politics

BY ROBERT MOORE,
MARYJO SYLWESTER
AND JOHN DUNBAR

CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

State political party organizations, like their counterparts in Washington, D.C., collectively raise millions of dollars from special interests each year, but they have done so without the scrutiny that the national parties have drawn in past election years.

That much we were certain of.

What we did not know – what no one knew, or had ever attempted to find out – was precisely how much money state party committees raise, and how they spend their riches.

To answer those questions, the Center for Public Integrity decided to launch State Secrets, an unprecedented, nationwide investigation of money in state politics, using the

2000 elections as the case study.

In the end, our investigation substantially changed what we know about the federal elections that year, and shed new light on who really are the biggest donors in American politics.

The center – a nonprofit, non-partisan investigative research organization in Washington – is known for taking on sweeping investigations and exhaustively researched publications. But it was apparent from the start that “State Secrets” might be the most complex project to date.

To pull it off, we recruited the help of two prominent nonprofit organizations that compile campaign contribution data – the Center for Responsive Politics, also in Washington, D.C., and the National Institute on Money in State Politics, in Helena, Mont.

The organizations spent a year collecting and analyzing contribution and expenditure data reported by the major state political parties in all 50 states. This past June, we published our findings.

Among other things, we learned that the Democratic and Republican state party committees raised a staggering \$570 million in the 2000 election cycle – more than even seasoned political scientists we spoke to had ever expected.

Perhaps most significant was the fact that nearly half of the \$570 million taken in by state party committees came in the form of “soft money” transfers from national party organizations. Soft money has been defined as unregulated, unlimited contributions from unions, corporations and wealthy individuals to the national political parties. The money, by law, was to be used to support state- and local-level party-building, cover administrative costs and promote non-federal candidates through generic advertising.

But, for the first time ever, we were able to track the daily movement of millions of dollars in unregulated soft money from federal party committees to their state counterparts *and* on to consultants and others closely tied to federal candidates.

By completing the circle of soft money contributions to expenditures, “State Secrets” confirmed a commonly held perception that state parties were used to launder soft money and influence presidential and congressional elections in a way never intended by federal law.

We had, in effect, illustrated the flow

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website www.statesecrets.org. The page title is "Soft Money Transfers to States: 2000 Election Cycle". The main content area features a table with the following data:

State	\$ From Natl Parties	Other Contributions	Total	%Soft Money
Florida	\$26,979,324	\$36,497,951	\$63,477,275	42.5%
New York	\$12,131,097	\$32,212,839	\$44,343,936	27.4%
Michigan	\$24,134,806	\$15,389,152	\$39,523,958	61.1%
Pennsylvania	\$21,650,400	\$10,902,224	\$32,552,624	66.5%
California	\$11,218,493	\$21,180,859	\$32,399,352	34.6%
Missouri	\$21,537,866	\$8,752,752	\$30,290,618	71.1%
Ohio	\$13,158,154	\$16,605,383	\$29,763,537	44.2%
Illinois	\$11,573,549	\$15,254,590	\$26,828,139	43.1%
Washington	\$12,464,063	\$11,891,005	\$24,355,068	51.2%
New Jersey	\$290,771	\$19,595,831	\$19,886,602	1.5%
Minnesota	\$4,928,906	\$14,617,441	\$19,546,347	25.2%
Virginia	\$9,603,452	\$8,210,816	\$17,814,268	53.9%
Georgia	\$3,144,748	\$11,195,567	\$14,340,315	21.9%
Texas	\$5,881,275	\$7,187,132	\$13,068,407	45.0%
Indiana	\$2,644,243	\$9,933,763	\$12,578,006	21.0%
Oregon	\$8,337,140	\$4,206,940	\$12,544,080	66.5%
Iowa	\$5,688,732	\$5,502,377	\$11,191,109	50.8%
Wisconsin	\$7,913,144	\$2,701,229	\$10,614,373	74.6%
North Carolina	\$6,060,462	\$4,011,435	\$10,071,897	60.2%
Kentucky	\$7,786,933	\$1,872,842	\$9,659,775	80.6%

The website interface includes a navigation menu with options like "Welcome", "The Public", "Books & Projects", "IC/IJ", and "About the Center". There is also a search bar and a sidebar with various links and information.

of money through the great 'back door' of American politics.

McCain-Feingold timing

By sheer coincidence, the day the "State Secrets" report was released, the Federal Election Commission published final rules related to the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill, known formally as the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. As important as the language of McCain-Feingold, the final rules are the guidelines the FEC will use when it comes to enforcement of the new law.

Among other things, the law is intended to eliminate the loophole through which national political parties funnel soft money to state committees, which use the money in the service of federal campaigns, contrary to federal law. Indeed, the soft money ban prescribed by the McCain-Feingold law bans the national parties from raising soft money, thus preventing them from channeling the cash to their state counterparts.

“For all the changes that campaign finance reforms portend, some political scientists say the new law simply shifts the flow of big-money donations from the national parties to the state party committees.”

But, through rulemaking decisions, the FEC rules leave some elements of the state-party/soft money loophole intact. Local party committees can raise "soft money" in limited amounts – bundles of \$10,000 per donor. Also, presidents and members of Congress continue to raise soft money for state party organizations. The state parties can continue to use those unlimited soft dollars to buy voter lists, and foot the bill for "get-out-the-vote" activities that help elect candidates to a federal office.

For all the changes that campaign finance reforms portend, some political scientists say the new law simply shifts the flow of big-money donations from the national parties to the state party committees. If that is the case, state political party committees will become

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OBTAINING THE INFORMATION

We encountered significant difficulties or delays in obtaining the data from 30 states. To get complete datasets required multiple requests and repeated telephone calls to the state agency in charge of maintaining the records that we needed. The problems, generally, were missing pages of reports, and, in some instances, entire reports were never sent.

For example, in Virginia it took 12 weeks, at least a dozen phone calls and e-mails, to get all of the 1999-2000 paper reports filed by 10 political committees. Other states presented equally frustrating hurdles.

If you are taking on this task in one or more states, we can offer some suggestions:

- Make your request in writing, identifying by its official name each of the reports that you want. Make the list easy to read – list each separate item on a separate line so that it can be checked off as they go along.
- Ask for the full campaign finance report – even if you need contributions only. This costs you more money, but it reduces the chances of missing pages.
- When an agency fills your request, check the records immediately. It will save valuable time, and reduce the frustration level if you find missing reports early on.
- Make a follow-up telephone call to the agency within a week or two of sending your request. A friendly reminder helps speed things along.

Contact information for each state agency we contacted, and the format (either paper or electronic) of contribution and expenditure data can be found at www.statesecrets.org (Choose "In Your State" from the left-hand navigation bar). Some states may have improved availability of electronic information for more current reports.

WHAT YOU SHOULD BE DOING NOW

Campaign finance reform supporters are concerned the soft money flow will simply shift from Washington to the states, where it will be much harder to track. It makes sense. In 14 states, there is no limit on corporate contributions. Nineteen states have no limit on labor union contributions. Beyond that, even states that restrict those donations may have loopholes. Corporate and union donations may, in fact, have no limits under some state laws if the money is used for "administrative" or other "party-building" purposes.

Check out the "State Secrets" Web site to find out who the top donors were, and how the parties spent money in your state. Then begin talking to those people (remember, they may not necessarily live in your state) to find out why they give, who advised them to do so, and how the campaign finance reforms will affect their political activities.

If you haven't already begun to familiarize yourself with the myriad accounts and Byzantine rules that apply to the political party committees in your state, get started now. The learning curve is steep. Also, get to know the clerks who run the day-to-day operations at the local elections office. Talk to the state party treasurer or accountant. They know as much as anyone about how the system operates.

Finally, remember that there are flaws in virtually every state system for collecting and archiving campaign finance records. So, after all the grief you've endured to actually get your hands on the data you requested, you just might find something is missing.

Chris Granger | The Times-Picayune



Standing on the deck of his ship NOBRA, pilot Gerald LaChute waves to a coworker who was passing on a ship near Destrehan, La.

MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

River pilot system rife with abuse

BY JEFFREY MEITRODT

THE (NEW ORLEANS) TIMES-PICAYUNE

Teal Grue was the poster boy for our lead story about what’s wrong with Louisiana’s archaic system of selecting and overseeing Mississippi River pilots.

Grue dropped out of high school after 10th grade. He pleaded guilty to drunken driving in 1990. He tested positive for marijuana use in 1998 and was forced into drug rehab. And he didn’t get his first maritime license until 1999, less than two years before his father helped him join the elite ranks of Louisiana’s river pilots.

We didn’t write about Teal Grue because someone tipped us off. His stunning resume was

simply one of many we reviewed and typed into an Excel spreadsheet after *The Times-Picayune* decided to investigate what some believe is the ultimate good-old-boys club in Louisiana.

River pilots have one of the most dangerous jobs in the state. They operate on the most treacherous waterway in North America. And under state law, they are free to elect and regulate themselves – a privilege shared by none of their peers in the United States.

The idea of Teal Grue steering a 100,000-ton oil tanker down the lower Mississippi upset a lot of people. So did the rest of “River Barons,” a four-day series by maritime reporter Keith

Darce and myself. State legislators called on the governor to hold a special session to deal with the issue. The governor, who stayed out of previous reform efforts, has finally agreed that the system needs fixing.

We didn’t think the issue was that provocative when we first decided to take a look at the people who guide foreign-flag vessels along the Mississippi River. At the time, we wanted to find out if two rumors were true: that Louisiana pilots are some of the highest paid mariners in the country and that widespread nepotism makes it virtually impossible for nonrelatives to join the ranks.

Low-key approach

The first task was relatively easy. Since their pay is typically decided by a public agency, pilot compensation is a matter of public record in many states. To fill in the blanks, we called around to various pilot groups and interviewed experts who had conducted compensation studies. We found out that Louisiana pilots, who earned about \$321,000 each last year, were near the top of the heap.

The second task was much harder. Unlike most states, which regulate pilots through inde-

pendent state agencies, Louisiana leaves that job to the pilots themselves. That means most of the records we needed to document the prevalence of nepotism, and investigate other pilot practices, were in the hands of the pilots, who are legally considered state officials.

We knew that the quickest way to kill our project was to file a voluminous public-records request at the beginning of our reporting. In the past, the pilots have vigorously resisted outside scrutiny. One group even refused to give a copy of its bylaws to the National Transportation Safety Board when the federal agency was investigating an accident involving one of the group's pilots.

To avoid litigation, we took a low-key approach. We contacted the leaders of the three pilot groups that operate on the Lower Mississippi and asked them to help us understand what they do and why they're paid so much money.

The groups were happy to cooperate. They had just taken a bruising in the press over the huge raises they had won from the Louisiana Public Service Commission, and they also were smarting from a failed legislative effort last spring to shift pilot oversight to the state.

The pilots let us ride with them on ships, bunk at their stationhouses and interview anybody we wanted in their organizations. Two months later, when we filed our first records request, the pilots were unhappy but still cooperative. By then they understood that we were as interested in what they do and how they do it as we were in nailing them for their mistakes.

The main records we wanted from the pilots were their job applications and the accident reports they filled out if one of their ships clipped a bridge or smashed into a fleet of barges.

None of the pilot records was available electronically. We wound up with six boxes of documents, and it took us about three weeks to type everything we needed into Excel spreadsheets.

The applications were rich with revealing personal information. All applicants were required to furnish a birth certificate, and many also were asked to supply the names of their siblings and spouses. That proved invaluable in documenting nepotism, as well as tracking campaign contributions (many of which were made by pilots' wives). To help us summarize the data, we added yes/no fields indicating whether an applicant's father was a pilot, or whether any other family member was a pilot.

The results were irrefutable: Of the 100 people elected to become river pilots in recent years, 85 are related to other pilots, with some able to trace their family connections back five or six generations.

The applications also yielded surprising information about the criminal and educational backgrounds of many of those selected to become pilots. We created separate, standardized fields for each type of data. On education, for instance, we used four descriptive phrases: "didn't grad HS," "HS grad," "some college," "college grad." Anything interesting, like the fact that someone dropped out of school after 10th grade, we threw into an all-purpose "notes" field.

Filling in the blanks

One of the most unexpected findings of our series involved pilot discipline. Originally, we didn't think public safety would be a major factor in the series. But to make sure we didn't miss anything important, we asked the groups to provide accident and pilot misconduct records, which are investigated and judged by the pilots themselves.

The files were a mess. Names were frequently abbreviated, and rarely spelled the same way twice. To solve dirty data problems, and make it possible for us to combine data from various spreadsheets, we assigned each pilot a unique identification number. That made it easy analyze the data – to calculate, for instance, which pilot had the most collisions on the river.

The records contained several bombshells. First, we discovered that two pilots were allowed to keep their jobs after testing positive for cocaine use in 2000. Second, we found that one group racked up nearly 100 accidents yet failed to discipline a single pilot in a decade – a fact that dismayed even the group's staunchest supporters in Louisiana.

Considering that there is an average of 30 accidents involving large ships on the Lower Mississippi each year, the data we created for this project will continue to pay dividends. With just a few clicks, we can look up the safety record of any of state's 230 river pilots, allowing us to add context to stories that previously depended on a friendly and talkative pilot.

Ironically, the only records we're still waiting for involve the U.S. Coast Guard, which has been extraordinarily unhelpful in this project.

Though we submitted a Freedom of Information Act request for investigative records from the Coast Guard last September, the agency has yet to produce most of the documents we're seeking.

We were forced to write our series without the records and file an additional FOIA request to get the kind of basic information (such as the number of accidents investigated by the Coast Guard on the lower Mississippi River in recent years) that we expected to obtain in interviews. We hope to write an additional story when those records are ultimately released to us this year.

Jeffrey Meitrodt is the special projects editor of The Times-Picayune in New Orleans. He is the co-author of "River Barons," which won a 2002 National Headliner award for investigative reporting. Meitrodt joined The Times-Picayune in 1993 as a business reporter. More details on the computer-assisted reporting techniques for this story appear in the March/April issue of Uplink.

Chris Granger | The Times-Picayune



Bar pilot Charles Steinmuller heads out on a crewboat to make a nighttime run down the Mississippi River on the grain ship Nordstjernen.

Derrick Iverson is serving 10 years for armed robbery in a prison that also houses adult killers. He was 16 when the robbery was committed, 17 when sent to prison.

Photo by
Al Diaz, *The Miami Herald*

JUVENILE JUSTICE

With teenagers using guns on classmates and teachers and young kids killing their playmates, the public cries out for solutions. To prosecutors, that has meant seeking hard time — even life terms — in adult prisons for young offenders. The repercussions of those punishments are now being felt throughout the system.

And a lack of children's programs, particularly for girls, has left some judges no choice but to place exploited children, such as those forced into prostitution, in detention for their own safety.

Billions of tax dollars go into programs for abused, neglected and delinquent children and their parents. Do those programs work? Are the records open enough for the public to even judge?



JUSTICE SERVED

Covering juvenile courts critical to protecting vulnerable

BY STEVE TWEDT AND BARBARA WHITE STACK
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

The main reason journalists ignore juvenile justice is its confounding secrecy. Many hearings are closed. Dockets and records are sealed. Officials are forbidden to talk.

It's too damn hard to get the information. Really, why bother when there's so much else to cover and so much of it is easily accessible?

The most basic reason to bother is that journalists abhor secrets.

There should be no secret court hearings in a free, self-governing democratic society – especially hearings during which youngsters may lose their freedom and parents may lose custody of their children. Some delinquency hearings, usually those for the most serious crimes, have been opened to the press and public over the past decade. But many remain closed. And most of the hearings on the other side of juvenile court, those for abused and neglected children, remain secret. Only 12 states routinely permit press or public access to those hearings.

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CHILD PROSTITUTES

Spotlight shows adults freely exploit, endanger youngsters

BY JANE O. HANSEN
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Two of Atlanta's most notorious pimps, convicted of prostituting children as young as 10, recently learned they would spend nearly the rest of their lives in federal prison.

With names like comic book characters, "Batman" was sentenced to 40 years in a U.S. penitentiary; "Sir Charles" got 30 years. There is no parole in the federal system, and national experts said the harsh sentences could be a first. It was an extraordinary ending to a very ordinary story that had started more than two years ago.

As with most tips, this one had come from someone familiar with the types of stories – often children's issues – that I've written. She told me there was a growing problem of child prostitution in Atlanta, and she thought I'd be interested.

What she said intrigued me, so I agreed to meet with her to hear more. When I arrived, I was surprised to find a number of juvenile court workers waiting to talk to me, including probation officers, the head

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KIDS IN PRISON

Young inmates more likely to re-offend after adult prison

BY RONNIE GREENE
THE MIAMI HERALD

It was May 2000, and youthful tragedy struck South Florida once again: On the last day of school, a 13-year-old boy pulled out a .25-caliber pistol, pointed it at his teacher and shot him to death in a school breezeway in Palm Beach County. Less than a year earlier in neighboring Broward County, a 12-year-old boy literally body-slammed his 6-year-old playmate to death, police say.

Suddenly, two school-age children were charged with murder in Florida's adult court system. And just as suddenly, Florida's reputation for cracking down hard on juvenile crime was in the national news. Soon, columnists, experts and advocates were debating the merits of trying Nathaniel Brazill and Lionel Tate in courts once reserved solely for adults.

The Miami Herald decided to turn these two very high-profile cases into a much deeper look at Florida's crackdown against juvenile defendants. While the newspaper continued to closely cover the prosecutions after the killings of teacher Barry Grunow and 6-

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JUSTICE SERVED

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Another fundamental reason juvenile court should be covered is its cost. Every year, at the order of juvenile court judges, billions of tax dollars are sunk into programs for abused, neglected and delinquent children and their parents. Do those programs work? Do the newly popular programs run by private, for-profit companies contracted by governmental agencies get better results? Are more and better programs needed? Are reform schools utter failures that should be replaced by a system that sends more delinquent youths directly to criminal court for trial and adult prisons for punishment? Is it essential to remove children from drug-abusing parents, or do the kids end up abused in foster care anyway? Do mentally ill children who commit crimes receive the services they need to recover stability or do modern “reform schools” send them deeper into the depths?

Of course, the most important reason to scrutinize juvenile justice issues is the children. These are among the most vulnerable citizens. They don’t really understand what is happening to them and are not capable of aiding their attorneys in the same way adults do. A disproportionate number of delinquent children are graduates of the abuse and neglect side of juvenile court.

Did juvenile court fail them then, when they first entered the system as beaten or emaciated children? Many other delinquents are mentally ill, learning disabled or otherwise handicapped. The system whose duty it is to deal with these complex and layered problems of citizens too young to sign their own contracts, purchase cigarettes or vote must be closely examined so that its successes can be replicated and failures avoided.

A decade ago, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* decided it wasn’t going to allow closed courtroom doors and confidential documents to prevent it from covering juvenile justice. It has assigned at least one reporter to cover these issues full time ever since. Last year, it published three major projects on juvenile justice matters, including one that culminated in a court challenge the paper hopes will permanently prop open Pennsylvania’s juvenile courtroom doors.

Mental torment

The most difficult of the three investigative reports described Pennsylvania’s treatment of mentally ill children who commit crimes. In addition to all of the secret hearings and sealed documents of juvenile court, reporter Steve Twedt also faced the secrecy surrounding mental illness.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Research for “It’s A Crime” began after

Twedt learned from contacts at the local juvenile detention center that children with serious mental illness were languishing there for months because court officials could not find an appropriate placement for them. Without access to treatment, these children “decompensated,” which means their illness worsened. On some days, officials at the detention center, which is supposed to be simply a holding facility – not a place where rehabilitation occurs – were dealing with up to four serious suicide attempts.

Certainly the issue of juvenile lockups becoming de facto mental hospitals had been written about before. Almost invariably those stories used pseudonyms or first names only and were accompanied by headless photographs. We faced the same three-fold confidentiality barrier because we were writing about juveniles, because they were under court jurisdiction and because they had been diagnosed with serious mental illnesses.

But we also believed we needed to give our readers a look into the eyes and hearts of these troubled teens and detail the unique and often arbitrary events that had converted them from mental health patients who needed treatment to delinquents who had to be locked up. To get names and faces took enormous patience and



Robin Rombach | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Becky Woolheater passes time by watching TV at the Gulf Coast Youth Treatment Center in Florida. Allegheny County sent Becky to the treatment center when no secure center could be found in Pennsylvania.



Mario Fiore gives a salute as he graduates from Pressley Ridge Schools. The 22-year-old, who has spent the past three years at the school, will be moving to an adult program when one is found suitable to his needs.

many acts of faith by editors who believed it would work out, eventually.

In the spring of 2000, Twedt met and interviewed three Pittsburgh-area teens in detention, with the understanding that no names would be used. They told heart-breaking stories of mental torment that had led to self-mutilation, suicide attempts, explosive outbursts and arrests.

There was no guarantee the teens would ever agree to be named, though two had either reached or were about to turn 18, when they could give legal consent. The father of the third teen had spoken at public conferences about his son, so we believed there would be a reasonable chance he would let us use photos of his 16-year-old son and full identification.

Photographer Robin Rombach and Twedt made three trips across Pennsylvania to visit detention centers and “kid prisons” where they interviewed teens, detention and corrections staff, judges, psychiatrists, researchers and policy makers. When one of our teens was ordered to a psychiatric hospital in Florida, the paper sent Rombach and Twedt to visit her there, again with no guarantee we would be able to use the photographs.

In the end, all three teens allowed us to use their names and images for the story, for three reasons. First and foremost, each believed strongly that they didn’t want other teens to go through what they had, and they saw that their stories might help accomplish that. Second, after

a period of several months, they felt they knew and could trust us. And, third, we were profiling three teens, so the spotlight would not be quite so bright on any single one.

As a follow up to the original series five months later, Twedt investigated more than 25 reports of juveniles who had committed suicide while in custody, adding yet another confidentiality barrier to overcome. To obtain primary documentation about the suicides, Twedt tracked down police incident reports, state investigative reports, court records, coroner reports and other verification. In one instance, he appealed to the North Dakota state attorney general’s office to intervene in the case of a young woman who had hanged herself after 210 days in custody.

The documents clearly showed that shoddy record keeping, room confinement for minor rules violations and lengthy incarcerations all place at-risk teens in greater danger of seriously hurting or killing themselves.

Doing adult time

While Twedt used the names of delinquent teens with mental illness, fellow reporter Barbara White Stack did not identify the teens who were at the center of her stories about the failure of the “adult time for adult crime” policy in Pennsylvania. In order to gain access to confidential child welfare and delinquency files, Stack agreed not to clearly identify the youths. Real first names and last initials were used instead. Both of us

believe real names and faces make stories much more compelling. But in this case, it didn’t seem fair to use the names.

That is because these were kids whose stories would not normally have made it into a daily newspaper. Their crimes were too minor. And the stories were to be published five years after the crimes occurred. Some of the youngsters reformed completely in that time. It didn’t seem right to name them and drag them down five years later. If those names were withheld, would it be right to publish those of the youngsters who did not reform? The *Post-Gazette* was using their stories, their lives, to illustrate the findings of an investigation. The paper was using them for its purposes. None of them volunteered for this, and the paper didn’t seek their consent. Stack simply tracked every youngster who was charged as an adult in Allegheny County in the first 12 months after Pennsylvania’s “adult time for adult crime” law took effect.

In the first year of the law, Stack attended every preliminary hearing, and virtually every juvenile court hearing involving these 130 teens. Some were sent to juvenile court for trial anyway. Some were tried in adult criminal court. Stack got the stories and the statistics.

Four years later, she checked court files to determine how much time each youth actually served and which ones committed new crimes. She also convinced court officials and judges to give her access to each youngster’s juvenile court files so she could see which had been abused or neglected and which had committed earlier crimes.

The statistics showed that “adult time” was both ineffective and unfair. Black youths were charged as adults far out of proportion to their percentages as juvenile offenders and they served longer sentences. Youths sent to adult jails and prisons served far less time than backers of the law claimed they would. Adult time, it turned out, wasn’t much time at all. When these youths were released, they committed more new crimes and more serious crimes and did it quicker than youths who were charged as adults but transferred to juvenile court for trial and sent to reform schools. More than half of the teens had been abused or neglected as children.

The politicians promised that “adult time for adult crime” would lock away young thugs for long periods, preventing them from re-offending and thus protecting the public. This series of stories, called, “Is This Justice,” showed that promise was broken. Those stories were published in March of 2001. The first ran on the five-year

JUVENILE JUSTICE

anniversary of the day the law took effect.

Court challenges

Six months later, Stack wrote another series of stories about juvenile court, this one dispelling the myth that juvenile court is universally closed and has always been closed. Called "Open Justice," the series was supported by a grant from the University of Maryland's Journalism Fellowships in Child and Family Policy. During months of research and trips to four states with open juvenile court hearings, Stack discovered that closed hearings defy juvenile court's history of openness and violate constitutional protections in 22 states guaranteeing open court hearings.

Pennsylvania is among those 22 states, and immediately after the series ran, the *Post-Gazette* mounted a legal challenge to closed hearings. Waving a copy of the state constitutional guarantee, "All courts shall be open," the *Post-Gazette* has asked judges in three counties to open hearings regarding abused and neglected children. Two of the three have ruled against the *Post-Gazette*, and the paper has appealed. The third judge hasn't decided yet.

None of these cases is in Allegheny County, where Pittsburgh is located. That is because all six judges who routinely hear abuse and neglect cases in Allegheny County agreed to permit the *Post-Gazette* to cover cases a few months after "Open Justice" was published.

The *Post-Gazette* has reason to hope for success in its appeal. As the series pointed out, *The (Portland) Oregonian* used a similar constitutional challenge to open juvenile courts in Oregon in 1980. If the *Post-Gazette* wins its challenge, the two decisions may start to knock down those closed juvenile courtroom doors in other states with constitutional protections, dropping them one by one like dominos as the weight of the preceding cases falls on them.

The series, "Open Justice," also set the record straight on the history of juvenile court. The first juvenile court in the nation, the one created in Chicago in 1899, was open to the press and public, and those in many other states were as well because they modeled their laws on the one in Illinois. The courts in many states did not close until after the National Conference of

Commissioners on Uniform State Laws

recommended it in 1968. Though most states opened some delinquency trials during the "adult time for adult crime" wave of the 1990s, only 12 states permit the press or public into hearings regarding abused and neglected children.

For the media to cover juvenile justice issues properly, for the public to be adequately informed about the fate of its most vulnerable citizens, these courts must return to the days of their infancy when the press and public were invited to watch the process and determine for themselves whether justice was really being served.

Steve Twedt is a special projects writer and editor for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette who has previously contributed to The IRE Journal on stories about dangerously unfit truck drivers and teachers who are sexual predators. The series, "It's A Crime: How Mentally Ill Teens Are Trapped in Lockups," won the 2002 National Mental Health Association media award. Barbara White Stack has concentrated on issues involving abused, neglected and delinquent children for the last nine of her 23 years at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

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COVERING JUVENILE JUSTICE

Covering juvenile justice issues can be daunting when given the lack of cooperation from the courts, the prosecutors, parents and the juveniles involved. Todd Richissin of *The Baltimore Sun* offered these ideas at the 2000 IRE National Conference to get you past those barriers:

Don't limit your education. To get an understanding of the system itself, I simply approached a defense attorney who represents juveniles, told him I didn't know beans about juvenile justice and would like to sit with him and be educated. I did the same with a judge and a prosecutor. All obliged. (This has the added benefit of introducing you to potential sources.) But don't stop there.

To report with any degree of depth, I think it's necessary to learn about the population being served (or not served) by juvenile justice agencies. What are the demographics of the delinquents – beyond a racial breakdown? Who are the parents of these kids? (Check their criminal records. Also, consider approaching them when they arrive at the juvenile facilities for visiting hours. In some states, the parents can sign a waiver that will give you access to the records of the kids.) What is the average length of stay in a detention facility? What's the recidivism rate? These answers probably exist in data culled by your juvenile justice agency.

To get a fuller picture, spend a day or two sitting in juvenile court. Many states allow this. For those that don't, talk to a judge, explain that you have no intention of reporting names or any identifying information on the juveniles who will be before him or her, and it's not unlikely the judge will let you sit in the courtroom for a day just to observe.

Finally, find out what kind of records are kept by your agency. One good way to do this is to ask for computer "record layouts" that, basically, provide headings of all different categories of data recorded by the agency. For example, it's almost certain your state's agency keeps a record of occasions when guards use force against kids.

Avoid the jargon. This, of course, is true when covering any beat but it can be particularly tricky when covering juvenile justice. Many people involved with juvenile justice issues – both those who want the kids more harshly punished and those who are advocates for them – object to the terms "guilty" (rather than adjudicated), "jail" (rather than youth centers), "crimes" (rather than offenses), and "probation" (rather than post-release supervision of aftercare). You can tell the story just as effectively, while gaining more readers, by keeping the language accessible. Your critics will argue these terms constitute factual errors. Ignore them; the terms are legit. A juvenile who is "adjudicated as having committed the offense" is a kid guilty of a crime.

Watch that bleeding heart. It's a horrible thing that kids are beaten and raped by guards, and nothing can make the assaults acceptable. But don't hedge on the children's crimes when you report their stories. By being blunt about their crimes, the reporting is more honest. By not flinching when you report about what they have done, your reporting on abuses of the kids and the shortcomings of the agencies charged with helping them gains credibility.

Tell a story, don't report a situation. You can come up with the most disturbing factual reports ever published on juvenile justice – and it won't matter if nobody's reading. Even in hard-news stories, avoid the temptation to automatically revert to "newspaper reporting." Instead, be aware of the drama inherent to juvenile justice issues and mine it for all it's worth.

Finally, as when covering any beat, sources are important. Because of confidentiality laws, though, sources on the juvenile justice beat are priceless. Find them. Make them your friends. Use them. Defense attorneys are especially willing to help because they're as disgusted with the system as anyone.

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CHILD PROSTITUTES

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of the local Court Appointed Special Advocates program and others.

They said they were seeing an “epidemic” of young girls who were being prostituted by adult men, but police and prosecutors refused to do anything about it.

These court workers – almost all women – had tried to enlist the help of Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard in cracking down on pimps, a task outside the jurisdiction of juvenile court. They also wanted Howard to go after strip clubs where young girls allegedly were dancing under false identification cards provided by their pimps. But Howard told them that any attempt to go after the strip clubs would be viewed as “harassment,” and he was reluctant to do anything.

In Georgia, as in some other states, pimping always has been a misdemeanor, even when the prostitute is a child. I left that meeting interested in learning more, and began reporting in earnest on child prostitution.

Not bad kids

There were a number of challenges in writing these stories. From the beginning, I told the advocates I would need to meet the girls. They balked because of confidentiality, an obstacle I have run into countless times. As a journalist, I know from experience that I can write about a problem from the viewpoint of experts, and it will make no difference. I can report each year, for instance, that in Georgia 38,000 children are abused or neglected, and it will move no one. But if I write about one child behind the numbers, people and politicians respond, often in overwhelming ways.

To win access to the girls, I needed the approval of judges, probation officers, parents (where they existed), and the girls themselves. It took a lot of time, and a lot of convincing.

In addition, I needed the right children to tell the story. Once children reach adolescence, the public is less likely to see them as victims. My goal in doing the story was to show what the judges were saying: These were not bad, “slutty” kids. They were victims who were being exploited.

One day my editor said, “Go find me an 11-year-old.” Eventually, with the help of a judge, I found not only an 11-year-old but also her 10-year-old sister, both of whom were being prostituted on the streets of Atlanta.

I learned the most from the girls themselves. During a period of months, I interviewed seven

girls who told me that prostituting was like taking drugs. One girl, 14, described holding \$1,000 in her hand as the most amazing experience of her life. It was “addictive,” she and several others said.

They talked about the freedom of not having to go to school, get up at a certain time, live by any rules. And they spoke of exploitation – of having to dress up in certain clothes, work when they were exhausted, be with men who frightened them.

I asked the girls many stupid, naive questions. And they answered them. Often they appeared older than their years, although there were reminders of their age, like the McDonald’s Happy Meal the 11-year-old ate as we talked. I learned they were intensely afraid of the men who controlled their lives: One 10-year-old talked of being hit on the head and threatened with death by the man who was prostituting her.

When I asked her what she’d like if she could have anything in the world, she said she wanted to go back to elementary school where there

was a mentor program. She wanted a mentor, because, “it would help me be better off in life,” she said. “Much better than I am.”

This child had no one, and the best she could wish for was a stranger who would act as her mentor.

An American phenomenon

After those initial interviews, the story began to crystallize. I already knew from experts and court records that one key element was going to be that pimps get away with their crime. But it was not until I interviewed the girls that I began to understand the other part of the equation.

One particular week, I interviewed three girls who were behind bars. They all wore the standard prison garb of adult prisoners. One 14-year-old had her hands and feet bound in metal shackles during a court appearance. I suddenly asked myself, “What’s wrong with this picture?”

It was not just that pimps were going free, it was that children as young as 10, whose only crime was being sexually exploited by adults,

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Kimberly Smith | Atlanta Journal-Constitution



Juvenile court probation officer Tammy Archibald counsels a 15-year-old former prostitute. The girl is back in school and hopes to go to college.



Shackles bind the legs of a 10-year-old girl during a juvenile court hearing. She is being held on a number of charges including running away and prostitution.

were behind bars. Rather than being treated as victims, these children were being treated as offenders.

I started to see that certain attitudes about prostitution permeate the justice system, affecting police officers, prosecutors, citizens, and judges.

The problem of perception affects the media as well. When I first approached some editors at my paper about doing this story, a couple of them would say something like, "what's new about child prostitution? I've read this story before." My response: "I don't think you have."

I said that because one of the challenges in doing this series was the dearth of information on child prostitution in America. Plenty has been written about child prostitution in other countries, and in immigrant communities here. And there have been occasional stories about a child prostitution ring being busted here or there. But next to nothing has been done on the overall problem of child prostitution as an American phenomenon.

Only scant research had been done on trafficking as a domestic issue. There were a few studies, but the numbers were fuzzy and unreliable. For instance, various studies estimate there are 300,000 child prostitutes in the United States. But that same estimate has been used to describe the number of child prostitutes in all of North America, including Canada.

Because of the lack of sound data, we decided to conduct our own study by surveying the nation's juvenile judges.

The survey was important because we remained skeptical of how big of a problem child prostitution really was. Once we com-

pleted our survey, we were confident it was big enough.

Among our findings:

- Nearly one in three of the judges claimed to have seen an increase in the number of child prostitutes in their courtrooms in the last five years.
- About the same percentage, one third, estimated the children were getting younger.
- About half of the urban judges said that local and state laws were not harsh enough in punishing pimps and johns.

One of the most interesting findings was that even judges tended to view the problem through the prism of gender. Among female judges, for instance, 85 percent said that they saw one or more child prostitutes in their courtroom every month. Among male judges, it was 68 percent.

The survey exposed me to the nature of the problem in other cities, as well as alternatives for dealing with it. In Las Vegas, the police have an entire unit devoted to child prostitutes, where detectives are trained to "deprogram" the girls (and the occasional boy).

Maintaining credibility

Most people know about Internet chat rooms and the danger they pose to children. In Atlanta, however, an older form of technology, the telephone, is often used to lure kids into leaving their homes and getting engaged in prostitution. I eventually wrote a separate story about a 12-year-old girl who had disappeared through one of these chat lines. Fortunately, after the story was published, the girl was found.

We named that girl, because she was missing, and the judge and her mother wanted her name published. Other than one other girl who was missing, the others remained anonymous. But another major obstacle in doing this series was deciding whether or not to name the girls. These children live unusually dangerous lives, and nobody associated with them, including the girls themselves, wanted their names in the paper. But this paper has a policy – one I've always supported – that we do not use false identities. The basis, obviously, is to maintain credibility.

In the end, we decided to write about those girls known by judges and other professionals whose names we could put in the paper. After a lot of begging, we also won the judge's permission to shoot photos of the girls, as long as they couldn't be identified.

The series ran a year and a half ago. Since then, a number of changes have taken place. Last year, the Georgia legislature passed a new law, for the first time making the pimping of juveniles a felony, punishable by up to 20 years in prison. District Attorney Howard has become an aggressive prosecutor who has won stiff sentences in state court against a number of adults who have sexually exploited children.

In a dramatic overnight sweep, the FBI and local police arrested 11 of the city's pimps known to prostitute children. Led by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, eventually 15 pimps were indicted in what may be the nation's first child prostitution case brought under federal racketeering laws.

All but two of the defendants pleaded guilty, and are now serving prison sentences averaging five years. This year, a federal jury found the other two guilty of running a criminal enterprise to further child prostitution.

A federal judge told Andrew "Batman" Moore and Charles "Sir Charles" Pipkins they'd spend probably the rest of their days in prison. "You may be the first two pimps in American history to face this kind of sentence," the judge said.

My newspaper didn't cause any of that to happen. But sometimes we get to play a little bit of the role of catalyst. When it happens, it is perhaps the greatest privilege of this profession.

Jane Hansen is a member of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's special projects team. In the 20 years she has worked at the paper, she has won numerous local, state and national awards. Her "Selling Atlanta's Children" series won several awards and was named Story of the Year by the Georgia AP.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

KIDS IN PRISON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

year-old Tiffany Eunick, editors Marty Baron and Judy Miller freed colleague Geoff Dougherty and me to examine the broader implications, and broader questions, triggered by the state's juvenile crime campaign.

The effort had actually begun nearly a decade earlier, when infamous tourist crimes by young suspects prompted state legislators to pass sweeping laws giving prosecutors enhanced powers to try children as adults. Since then, the get-tough approach had

prompted heavy debate – but little independent analysis.

Our mission was to look beyond the two cases and provide a factual accounting of the larger state crackdown.

Our questions, at least on the surface, were simple: Just how effective has Florida's juvenile crime campaign been? Who has the state targeted under the toughened laws? Once juveniles are prosecuted as adults – and sent off to prison – what happens to them? Do they face a high likelihood of assault behind bars? Are they likely to leave prison as worse

criminals, or reformed young adults?

Answering those straightforward questions took well over half a year. Dougherty conducted computer-assisted analysis of millions of court records to systematically address key issues, as I pulled thousands of courthouse records on individual juvenile cases and conducted in-person interviews across Florida with everyone from young criminals serving time in adult prisons to judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, advocates and victims.

Ultimately, we found some surprising answers. The hot-button Brazill and Tate prosecutions, for instance, proved to be not at all typical of the types of juvenile cases being tried in Florida's adult courts. But first, a little more detail about the reporting methodology.

Following young inmates

To get a full accounting of the types of crimes that landed young offenders in adult courts, we examined records of juvenile prosecutions in Florida adult courts since 1995. To get a sense of their rap sheets before their forays into the adult court world, we pulled those defendants' prior records. We analyzed both to understand the typical crime, and typical rap sheet, for juveniles being prosecuted in adult courts.

To get a sense of what happened to juvenile defendants once they landed in adult prison, we obtained a computer database from state prison officials listing assault allegations in every state prison over a five-year period.

Al Diaz | The Miami Herald



Teenager Rebekah Homerston, who was sent to prison after a series of property crimes. "I think they should try to help me, instead of sending me to prison," Homerston says.

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With this information, we created a searchable database that allowed us to examine assault allegations by prison, by the victim's age, or by the type of complaint, such as aggravated assault, aggravated battery or attempted murder. Dougherty used this database to explore how often juveniles complained of abuse in Florida's prison system, and to compare that to the rate at which adult inmates complained of abuse. To fully tell the stories of individual assaults, I obtained state Department of Corrections internal investigative files, such as when a South Florida teenager was murdered behind bars, or when a North Florida teen was scalded in the face with boiling water during another prison flare-up. I interviewed some victims of these assaults, and asked prison officials to explain what happened.

We also wanted to know what happened to juvenile inmates after they left state prison. Are they more likely to continue their criminal ways than juveniles charged with similar crimes routed to rehab programs instead? To answer that question, Dougherty used a statistical technique that allowed for an apples-to-apples comparison of two sets of teens charged with similar crimes but sent to different systems – one to state prison, the other to juvenile detention programs. He followed the teens after release from their respective systems, to see which relapsed into crime more often.

Beyond the computer analysis and paper research, we built our report with the stories of those affected by the state's crackdown. I crisscrossed the state interviewing juveniles tried in adult courts and sent to prison. These were young criminals whose cases had not drawn headlines, but who made up the bulk of the state's prosecution effort.

They included a Broward County teenager, born to a father now serving life in prison for assaulting minors, who ran to the streets – and into trouble – in her youth. She was sent to state prison for property crimes, without getting a full chance at rehabilitation in reform programs. And they included a Tampa teenager, serving a state prison sentence for a series of drug crimes, who was blinded in one eye when another con attacked him behind bars with a lock stuffed inside a sock.

We also interviewed victims, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, legislators, advocates and critics, a broad range of voices. Some felt Florida's crackdown deterred youth from

Al Diaz | The Miami Herald



Juvenile Joseph Tejera, who was tried as an adult after a Miami burglary, says violence is part of prison life.

lives of crime. Others thought the state was giving up on reforming its most troubled teenagers.

Clearing hurdles

In the end, this is what we found:

- Although teen murders capture the most publicity, such cases comprise a small portion of juvenile adult court prosecutions. Florida teens are far more likely to be bumped to adult court for less-serious burglaries, drug charges or robberies.
- Many teens are sent to adult court without being given a full chance at reform in the state's juvenile justice system. This system is so strapped for cash, it doesn't have the resources to deal with all the children coming through its doors. State prosecutors sometimes give up on the juvenile system's ability to turn kids straight, and send them straight to adult courts.
- Once in state prison, juveniles are more likely than adults to report being assaulted. Some were attacked with brooms and prison locks. One was scalded with boiling water. Another was murdered in a prison built for adults.
- Juveniles sent to prison are more likely to re-offend than teens charged with similar crimes routed to reform programs.

To reach these conclusions, we had to clear reporting hurdles and overcome delays. It took months of legal negotiations to obtain the state prison system's database of assault allegations, but we ultimately prevailed. Inter-

viewing each inmate was about one month in the making: We first had to write to each to get their written permission for an interview, since the state doesn't allow requests by phone. Once the inmate signed off, the state prison system would set a time to meet at the prison. While this process was workable, it required



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a lengthy investment of time.

Reaction to the series was largely positive – but not entirely. The chief of Florida’s prison system felt our recidivism study was flawed. He questioned the findings of our assault analysis. He criticized prior researcher studies we quoted in the stories. He issued these criticisms after declining in-person interviews prior to the series (he would only answer questions in writing), and without offering his own studies to counter ours.

Our findings stood up. Four months after our series, a Department of Corrections report found that juvenile inmates leaving Florida’s prison system were far more likely than adult inmates to continue committing crimes after release. This echoed one of our key findings: That juveniles sent to Florida’s prison system

often failed to shake their criminal habits after release.

“The truth is, I think *The Herald* series made the case for this legislation. I sent it to every committee that heard it and brandished it virtually everywhere I went.”

Our work also prompted reform. Florida legislators – the architects of the state’s toughened laws – passed a bill ensuring that most juveniles will be kept away from adult felons in prison, but housed instead with other juveniles. As he

pushed the measure forward, one of the bill’s sponsors cited our findings and said: “The truth is, I think *The Herald* series made the case for this legislation. I sent it to every committee that heard it and brandished it virtually everywhere I went.” After the bill passed, the state prison chief was among those applauding the new law.

Ultimately, the lesson I take from our exploration is this: When a major story breaks, make the time to look past the debate and emotions of the single event to see how well, overall, a particular system operates. Look past the smoke, and find the fire.

Ronnie Greene is a member of The Miami Herald’s investigative staff who has written about corruption at Miami’s airport and cronyism at its public school system. He is a past winner of the IRE medal.

WEB RESOURCES

- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)** – Offers resource lists and fact sheets on juvenile crime and juvenile court statistics, including “Offenders in Juvenile Court,” which is updated annually.
- **The National Council for Juvenile Justice (www.ncjfcj.unr.edu)** – Publishes annual updates to the Juvenile Court Statistics report and the National Report on Juvenile Offending and Victimization. Periodic publications include States Response to Serious and Violent Juvenile Crime Report and bulletins and fact sheets on current areas of interest in juvenile crime. Trend information is also available in the National Juvenile Court Data Archives.
- **Trends in the Well-being of America’s Children and Youth (www.aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/01trends)** – Produced annually for the Department of Health and Human Services by Child Trends, a research and policy analysis firm. Includes chapters on child mortality and youth carrying weapons.
- **The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (www.nccd-crc.org)** – Publishes policy papers and research reports on juvenile justice issues.
- **The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, The Research Program on Problem Behavior, Institute of Behavioral Science (www.colorado.edu/cspv)** – University of Colorado at Boulder works to understand and prevent violence, particularly adolescent violence. Its Information House does free customized bibliographic database searches on all aspects of violence (including gangs, child victims and violence, race and juvenile justice).
- **The Casey Journalism Center on Children and Families (www.casey.umd.edu/home.nsf)** – A resource center for journalists who cover the social issues, policies and institutions affecting children and families in America.
- **The KIDS COUNT Data Book (www.aecf.org/kidscount/index.htm)** – Published each year by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, includes state profiles of indicators of child well-being, including child death rates, teen violent death rates, and juvenile violent crime arrest rates.
- **The Center for the Study of Youth Policy at the University of Pennsylvania (www.ssw.upenn.edu/CSYP)** – Researches juvenile justice systems policy. Publications include Youth Violence: An Overview and Juveniles in Adult Prisons.
- **The National Center for Health Statistics (www.cdc.gov/nchs)** – Publishes annual mortality and vitality statistics, which include information on youth homicides.
- **The Federal Bureau of Investigation (www.fbi.gov)** – Collects and analyzes arrest reports from around the nation. Two preliminary crime statistics reports are released in the winter and spring, which include findings for major cities only, and the final crime statistics are available in the fall each year and are available on its Web site. IRE maintains this information formatted and cleaned through its National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (www.nicar.org/data/fbi/).
- **The Bureau of Justice Statistics (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs)** – Regularly publishes analyses of crime trends, including the National Crime Victimization Survey.
- **The National Youth Gang Center under the auspices of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (www.iir.com/nygc)** – Collects and analyzes statistical data on gangs, analyzes gang legislation, and identifies promising gang program strategies. Publications include the 1995 National Youth Gang Survey.

SOURCE OF COMPELLING SEA TRAGEDY LIES IN NEWSROOM GOING THE DISTANCE

BY STEVE WEINBERG
THE IRE JOURNAL

When journalists write books for general audiences about how they conducted their investigations, the results are often fascinating. The most renowned of those books is “All the President’s Men” by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward. Enough similar books exist that they can legitimately be said to constitute a genre. *The IRE Journal* has reviewed dozens of such books.

“Until the Sea Shall Free Them,” by former *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Robert Frump, has joined the genre recently. It is an especially valuable addition to the literature because of what it tells its intended general audience – not to mention its smaller audience of journalists – about how an editor with a vision can push talented reporters beyond what they thought were their limits of achievement.

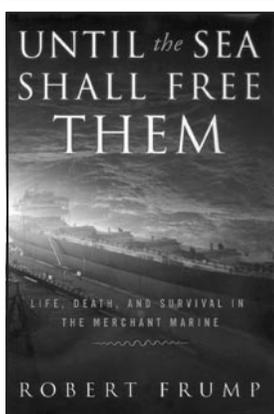
First, the backdrop: In February 1983, a ship hauling thousands of tons of coal from Norfolk, Va., to Somerset, Mass., sank during an ocean storm. Of the 34 merchant mariners on board, 31 died in the freezing water. All these years later, Frump, now a Wall Street executive, tells the story about what should have been a routine voyage, the avoidable sinking, the mostly bungled rescue attempt, the mass deaths, the dual government inquiries, the litigation, the survivors’ fates, and how the incident changed the U.S. Merchant Marine for the better.

It is an important, compelling book. But it almost did not find a publisher. While his *Philadelphia Inquirer* stories about the sinking of the *Marine Electric* were still current, Frump submitted a book proposal to multiple publish-

ers. Nobody said yes. Meanwhile, Frump left the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for a trade publication called the *Journal of Commerce*, which covers shipping and other transportation businesses for insiders. He stayed in touch with the surviving protagonists in the saga of the *Marine Electric*.

Even after leaving journalism for Wall Street, Frump could not let the book idea go.

With the success of sea adventure books, led by Sebastian Junger’s “The Perfect Storm,” Frump decided to test the publishing climate again. A few years ago, Doubleday, a division of Random House, said yes.



Until the Sea Shall Free Them: Life, Death and Survival in the Merchant Marine, By Robert Frump Published by Doubleday, \$24.95, 341 pages

Check the hatches

The ship haunting Frump belonged to Marine Transport Lines, a huge corporation traded on the stock exchange. Everybody in the industry seemed to recognize that cargo ships like the *Marine Electric* built during World War II needed extensive

repairs at minimum, or needed to be totally scrapped. After all, they consisted in part of “tired iron,” a term for weakened steel with an excess of sulfur content. But the profit motive caused owners to move more slowly than desired, while close ties to the owners caused ship inspectors to look the other way. On top of that, ineffective bureaucracy caused government agencies to let penalties slide and fear of lost jobs caused captains and crew to stay silent about the questionable seaworthiness (except among themselves).

A few months before disaster struck the *Marine Electric*, Clayton Babineau, its first mate, decided to blow the whistle about the ship’s questionable seaworthiness. He liked his

job, but he feared for his life and the lives of his colleagues. He understood that if the ship went down, its owners would probably avoid penalty. That had been an industry-government pattern for decades. Instead, the ship’s officers, if they survived, would bear the punishment.

So Babineau called U.S. Coast Guard inspectors while the *Marine Electric* was docked in a Rhode Island repair yard. “Listen,” Babineau said, “Here’s what’s wrong with the ship. Go on board and just take a look. You’ll see the cracks in the deck. You can’t miss them. Check the hatches.” The inspector on the other end of the telephone line said he would. But, according to Frump’s reporting, “the complaint made in Rhode Island was not forwarded to other ports where she put in. Babineau never got any response, never saw any results of his call.”

Instead, Babineau watched as Coast Guard inspectors and those from the American Bureau of Shipping, a private-sector safety contractor, ignored the deficiencies.

When the ship sank in February 1983, Babineau died. Of the three survivors, Frump centers on one, a veteran seaman named Bob Cusick. Like Babineau, Cusick worried constantly about the *Marine Electric*’s safety. But Cusick had confidence in his ability to work around the ship’s problems, so kept accepting the short runs up the Atlantic coast, confident if something went wrong the Coast Guard would save the crew. Cusick and Babineau did, however, turn down opportunities to work the transatlantic voyages, such as when the ship carried grain to Israel.

Telling the truth

Part of the book’s drama centers on the rescue of Cusick from the ocean, followed by Cusick’s recovery and his decision to resume his sailing career despite nearing retirement age. The more universal drama grows from Cusick’s decision to tell the truth to the Marine Board of Investigation during its inquiry, and the National Transportation Safety Board during its inquiry. Traditionally, seamen of Cusick’s high rank honored a code of silence.

Frump’s other, late-entering, hero is Captain Dominic Calicchio, one of the three Coast Guard officers hearing the evidence for the Marine Board of Investigation. In Frump’s account, Calicchio refuses to bend to government or industry pressures. He insists that the report of the accident place specific blame for the sinking and the mostly botched rescue, insists that the recommendations section mince no words about future

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 >

Small newsroom

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

— recently elected to the IRE Board of Directors — also served on the conference panel. His favorite investigation began, he recalls, as he struggled to come up with a lead for an education package. He pulled out his calculator and began figuring the grade-point averages for black and white students in Madison. The readily available figures gave him his lead: “Year by year, African Americans are falling further behind whites in the Madison School District despite nearly a decade of efforts to boost their achievement levels.”

Hall’s top 3 tips:

1. Racial achievement gap: In virtually every school district, average grades and test scores of minority students lag behind those of whites. Has the achievement gap in your community’s schools widened? Who’s succeeding, and who’s not?

To get started: Compare current high

school cumulative grade-point averages, listed by race, to figures five and 10 years ago. Use the same procedure for standardized test scores. Don’t let school administrators simply release the “average” score for the entire student population. Also, you’ll find interesting differences if you examine the scores by race for each school. Can achievement scores be explained by other factors such as poverty and mobility?

2. Violent crime: Residents ought to be shown which areas of your community are safe — and which aren’t. Where is violent crime concentrated in your community? Why?

To get started: Obtain the police department’s database of calls for service, or of reported crime. Or persuade the department to provide you with such information as the address having the greatest number of violence-related calls, the block with the greatest number of calls, and the officer responding to the greatest number of violence calls.

3. Public pays for political campaigns: In Wisconsin, taxpayers were paying about \$4 million a year for partisan legislative caucuses — agencies that were thinly disguised campaign machines controlled by legislative leaders. Are taxpayers unwittingly financing political campaigns in your state? Are their activities legal?

To get started: Find out everything you can about who’s running legislators’ campaigns. Check lists of legislative and state agency workers. Are those campaign activists public employees? Obtain calendars, phone records and payroll records. Can campaign workers prove that none of their time or phone calls was billed to taxpayers? Public records requests of caucuses may unearth partisan campaign materials, too.

George Kennedy is a professor at the Missouri School of Journalism, former managing editor of the Columbia Missourian and former editor of The IRE Journal.

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Payroll

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

no increase in staff or responsibility. Connell was embarrassed by the raise, which had been engineered by the clerk of the Supreme Court. His response when we asked him about it four years later: "Oh shit."

And we wrote about Charles Fullwood, the executive director of the Wildlife Resources Commission, who got a 25 percent raise one year in an effort to keep pace with his counterpart at the Division of Marine Fisheries. "That was a nice jump, wasn't it?" Fullwood said when we asked him about it.

We also made sure that none of the main stories was more than 40 inches long, with a few short sidebars each day. We had some fun with the graphics, including a "Governor's Index" that showed 190 state employees (including four in the governor's office) were paid more than the governor.

After each story ran, the phone calls and e-mails from taxpayers and state employees poured in. "Finally! Someone with the balls to expose this unfair practice!" one reader wrote after seeing our story about the preferential pay system for state troopers.

Several readers wanted more. They wanted to be able to look at the data themselves, and asked if there was somewhere on the Web where they could go to take a look.

The answer was "no." There was nowhere

they could go to get the data we had used as the basis for our stories. Aside from the state personnel office, we were the only ones who had it. And we decided, after much internal discussion among reporters and editors, not to put what we had on the newspaper's Web site.

Why? We gave it serious consideration, believing that one obligation of newspapers is to make information about how public dollars are spent available to their readers. But, as journalists, we seek to put such information in context, and we struggled with how to do that with the raw data.

We didn't have time to do anything more than allow readers to look up the salary histories of individual employees. We didn't have time to develop front-ends to enable readers to examine trends or easily look at what was happening in a particular office or agency. We also knew there were glitches in the data. We could and did take those glitches into account as we did our work, but it would be hard to explain to individuals peeking at our database.

Ultimately, we decided that putting the data up on our Web site would only enable our readers to become voyeurs – of their neighbors, or of the guy in the next cubicle. We didn't see much merit in that.

Bill Krueger and Joseph Neff are investigative reporters at The News & Observer in Raleigh, N.C.



State trooper Kelly Councilman keeps a sharp eye out for speeders and other traffic violations in the vicinity of Graham, N.C.

Mel Nathanson | The News & Observer

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CLINICAL TRIALS DATABASE CAN LEAD TO LOCAL ANGLE

By CAROLYN EDDS
THE IRE JOURNAL

Finding local experts or developing story ideas on medical topics can be a little easier with a search of the clinical trials database at ClinicalTrials.gov, a Web site maintained by the National Institutes of Health and developed by the National Library of Medicine.

The purpose of this Web site, which began in early 2000, is to provide information about clinical trials for drugs used to treat serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions. The trials in this database may receive money from private or federal funds. The Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act of 1997 required the creation of such a database, which has more than 6,300 clinical studies. While most of these are located in the United States or Canada, studies from about 70 countries are included.

The database is searchable in many ways. A “focused search” allows more than one field to be combined in a search. Searchable fields include disease or condition, experimental treatment, trial location, choice of three age

groups, or supporting organization type. After the search results are displayed, if desired, click on the box in the upper left corner to include all trials in the search results, both that are, and are not, recruiting patients.

Use this “focused search” to locate local experts on a particular disease. For example, type “lung cancer” in the box labeled “Disease or Condition” and “Portland, Maine” in the box labeled “Trial Location” to find a contact for a clinical trial on that subject in that area. The “focused search” also can find current local clinical trials. In the box labeled “Trial Location,” type the name of a local medical facility or the name of a city and state to find trials at that facility or in the area.

While searches by location are allowed, as the trials from those search results are displayed, all of the locations of that trial are listed, not solely the location searched. Some trials may be in progress in many states. This can increase the length of the display, so using the “Find on this page” option from the Web browser menu allows

for quicker movement to the desired location. Also, if the name of the city searched might be a city in another state or country, include the entire name of the desired state in the search.

Synonyms for medical terms are included in a search. A search for the phrase “chickenpox” will also include a search for the phrase “varicella.” This is helpful since many terms might be used for a similar subject. To view the synonyms added to a search, click on the “Query Details” button in the upper right corner of the search results page.

After a trial is selected, some of the information displayed includes the purpose of the trial, condition, treatment and phase, trial sponsor, MEDLINEplus links to related topics, study type, objectives, eligibility requirements, trial location and contact information, the date the trial started and the last date the trial information was updated.

Boolean operators AND, OR and NOT can be used with the search. Exact phrases can be enclosed in quotation marks. See the “Help” section for more searching tips.

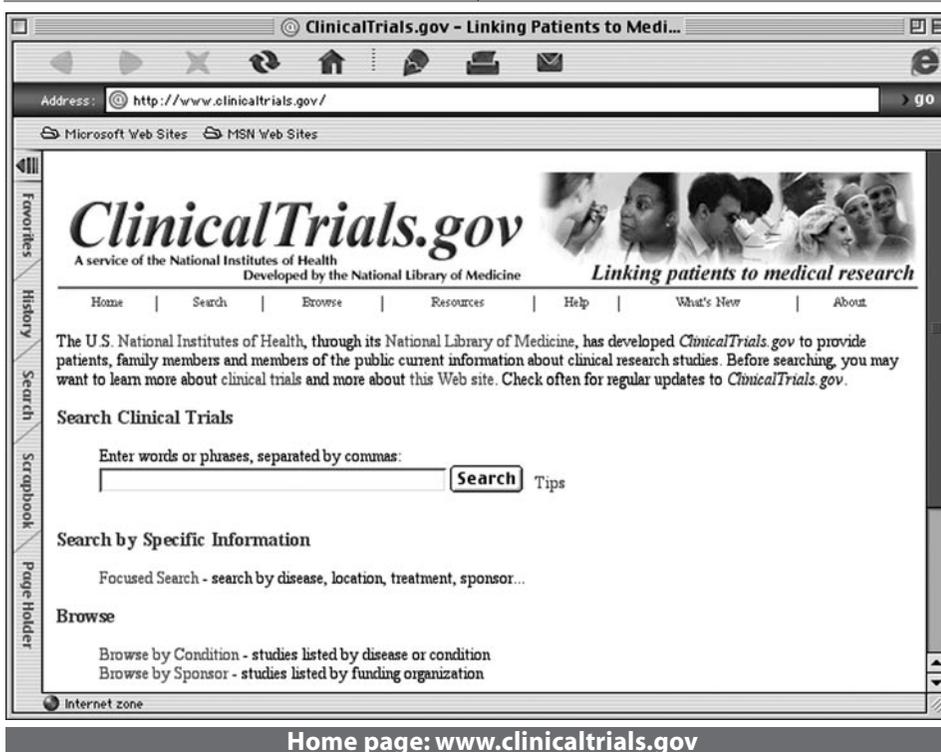
Trials also can be browsed by disease either alphabetically or by disease heading. For example, chickenpox also can be found under the “viral diseases” heading. As with the “focused search,” click on the box in the upper left corner to add trials no longer recruiting patients to the search results.

In addition, trials can be browsed by sponsor. The four sponsor types: National Institutes of Health, other federal agency, industry, university/organization. Once a sponsor type is selected, a list of sponsors in that category is displayed alphabetically. Again, to include trials not currently recruiting patients, click on the box in the upper left corner. Unfortunately, it seems that search results cannot be limited to those trials that have been completed.

The Web site includes a section on clinical trials with information such as what a clinical trial is, who can participate in one, the different phases of a clinical trial and a glossary of clinical trial terms.

On a final note, you may also want to consider Center for Drug Evaluation and Research –Guidance for Industry Information Program on Clinical Trials for Serious or Life-Threatening Diseases and Conditions at www.fda.gov/cder/guidance/4856fnl.htm.

Carolyn Edds is the Eugene S. Pulliam research director for IRE. She directs the IRE Resource Center and helps maintain Web resources.



Home page: www.clinicaltrials.gov

State secrets

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even bigger players in national politics.

Pulling it all together

The logistics of pulling off such an ambitious project were daunting. Researchers collected and computerized campaign finance disclosure reports from 50 state government agencies, covering the activities of some 225 political party committees during the 2000 election cycle. All told, the amount of paper documents amassed could have towered 15 feet high.

We created a database made up of 300,000 discrete records. Where possible, we compared our data to reports the same organizations filed with the Federal Election Commission. We collected contribution information and coded it to allow us to identify virtually every contributor to state political committees that year. We tracked the interstate exchange of money, from one state party to another state party. We followed shifts of contributions from one internal account to another, allowing us to see how money that, by law, should have helped local candidates for office was used to influence federal elections.

From state to state, there were widely different disclosure forms, and varying deadlines for filing reports.

Only eight states provided data entirely in electronic format. Sixteen states provided either contribution or expenditure data in an electronic format, but not both.

So, more than half of the data we needed was available only on paper. Some of these paper reports were found on state Web sites as downloadable files; the remainder had to be requested directly from the agency. In the end, we collected some 30,000 pages of records.

When the data entry was complete, researchers spent several months standardizing entries for contributions – making company names (Enron, Enron Corp., Enron Corporation ...) consistent, checking spelling, and generally cleaning the data.

Expenditure and contribution records were coded and categorized, based on a number of factors, including the donors' business interests, and purpose for expenditures.

With the help of campaign finance experts from around the country, the center devised a unique system to categorize each political

party expenditure by its purpose.

Contributions were coded according to a system devised by the Center for Responsive Politics, which assigns an industry classification to each contribution. The system allows one to determine which industries are donating the most money to political parties.

Coding both the contribution and expenditure data was difficult at times because the campaign finance reports were often handwritten or missing key pieces of information. For example, most states don't require listing the occupation or employer of every contributor.

A copy of the expenditure coding schedule is available on the project's Web site, www.statecrets.org. Look under the "methodology" section.

Disclosure gaps

We knew that the disclosure of financial activity would be marred by widely divergent reporting standards and, in some cases, inaccurate information filed by the political parties. We were stunned at just how dramatic the errors were.

In the vast majority of states, GOP and Democratic committees gave conflicting

information to state election officials and federal officials when it came to reporting soft money donations from Washington. Overall, the differences totaled \$16 million. In one case, the Washington State Democratic Central Committee reported to state officials that it received only \$705,000 in soft money transfers from the national Democratic Party committees. But the FEC records show the same committee had received dramatically more: \$6.6 million.

Such errors underscore the challenge of creating a reliable database from the sources of information we had – the only sources available to anyone seeking to do what we did.

Robert Moore joined the center in 1999. Prior to that, he spent 12 years as an investigative reporter and legislative correspondent for newspapers in Delaware and Pennsylvania. MaryJo Sylvester was the State Secrets project manager and database editor at the center. Prior to that, she worked as IRE's database library administrator. In August, she joined the USA Today sports department as database editor. John Dunbar is a veteran investigative reporter and has been a senior associate with the center for the past three years.

Better Watchdog Workshops

Investigative Reporting on the Beat

Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. and the Society of Professional Journalists have joined forces to offer a series of workshops focused on doing investigative reporting while covering a beat.

The workshops will teach journalists how to do investigative and enterprise reporting while on a beat and will emphasize the use of freedom-of-information laws in the pursuit of these stories.

The workshops will specifically serve journalists at small- to medium-sized news organizations — from print and broadcast.

For more information, including a schedule of workshops, visit www.ire.org/training/betterwatchdog.html

To request a workshop for your area, contact Executive Director Brant Houston at brant@ire.org.



Books

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safety measures.

For the most part, Calicchio prevails through his intelligence, honor and stubbornness, sacrificing his chance for advancement as he does so.

The other, unlikely, good guys in Frump's book are the investigative team at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, commanded by then Editor-in-Chief Gene Roberts. Rather than providing superficial coverage of one fatal accident at sea, the reporters, driven by Roberts, dig for months, for years, to uncover industry-wide safety scandals resulting in death after death.

Frump introduces Roberts by showing him calling reporters and editors at home on a Sunday morning to tell them of the *Marine Electric* tragedy. "There seemed no plausible explanation for why he was doing this," Frump says. "Roberts was not a morning man, for one thing. He preferred working late into the evening as the newspaper drove toward its final edition deadline. Moreover, few *Marine Electric* crew

members were from his circulation area, and Philadelphia was 102 nautical miles up the Delaware River from the sea. So there was no strong local angle to mobilize his news staff."

Part of Roberts' motivation, Frump says, came from covering the waterfront decades earlier at a Norfolk, Va., newspaper: "Alone among senior editors in America, he knew both the heartbreaking nature of the business and its potential for good stories. He was convinced Philadelphia needed a maritime writer, even though the city's days as a great port were fast ebbing.

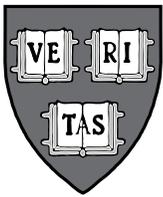
For years now, he had been attempting to get a reporter to fill that beat, and only recently had he succeeded."

Frump used the Sunday after Roberts called to gather information about the *Marine Electric*. On Monday, Frump stood in Roberts' office, he says, "giving all the wrong answers. It was clear even from the initial wire reports that the old ship had had her share of repair problems. The reporter wanted to chase them down, hit the hiring halls, talk to seamen. The reporter had covered

an earlier sinking of an old ship, the *SS Poet*, but never really nailed the story. This time, the story would pop open. But Roberts suggested a change in tactics and pace. Most reporters were sprinters. On projects, Roberts wanted marathoners. Don't go chasing after the seamen in the hiring halls, he told the maritime writer. They aren't likely to go away. They will talk with time. This time, don't go broad. Go deep. If the system is rotten, it had a beginning. Lay out a statistical case that is bulletproof. Go back through the files and find where this started. Go all the way back to World War II if you need to. You've got the time and the resources."

It was no dream. Roberts kept his word. The remaining sections of the book showing the interactions of Roberts, Frump and additional *Inquirer* newsroom staff are educational and inspirational. This book belongs on the same shelf that is the home to "All the President's Men."

Steve Weinberg is senior contributing editor to The IRE Journal and former executive director of IRE.



Nieman Fellowships for Journalists at Harvard University

The Nieman Foundation is now inviting applications for its 2003-2004 fellowship program.

In this critical time for journalism, the mission of the Nieman Fellowships has never been more important. The fulfillment of its mandate to "promote and elevate the standards of journalism and educate persons deemed specially qualified" begins each year with the selection of 12 working journalists from the United States and 12 from other countries.

The application deadline for U.S. journalists is **January 31, 2003.**

Information and application forms may be obtained from:

Program Officer
Nieman Foundation
One Francis Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Tel: 617-495-2238
Fax: 617-495-8976
E-mail: nieman@harvard.edu
Web site: www.nieman.harvard.edu

Salzburg

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- Vulnerability to the imperatives of stock markets and other financial interests.
- Increasing tendency of multimedia conglomerates to use news resources to promote commercial interests.

III. PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

To address these concerns, we encourage the press and public to consider the following suggestions:

- 1) Encourage diverse news media ownership and urge media companies to commit to providing quality journalism to all communities they serve.
- 2) Ensure that television networks and radio stations provide quality news programs as part of their societal obligation to the public airwaves.
- 3) Help citizens evaluate the quality of the news they receive and express their views so that their voices may be heard.
- 4) Use journalism to enhance citizens' ability to participate in community life.
- 5) Call on companies that own news organizations to:
 - a) Adopt mission statements reflecting their journalistic values and the priority they attach to their role as a public trust.
 - b) Adopt a long-term business strategy based on producing quality journalism.
 - c) Include journalists on the boards of companies that own news organizations.
 - d) Adopt professional standards that promote high-quality journalism.
 - e) Compensate news executives based on the quality of their company's journalism rather than its financial performance.
- 6) Ensure that entertainment content does not compromise news coverage.
- 7) Keep a clear separation between advertising and news content. All advertising should be clearly labeled.
- 8) Reaffirm journalism values of accuracy, fairness and balance; and maintain the press' roles as watchdog and voice for citizens.
- 9) Promote professional standards of excellence in journalism education.
- 10) Foster media education of young people in schools and through media.

Endorsed by participants from the following countries: China, Germany, India, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America.

News briefs

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in detail. Using the data, collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, journalists can look at federal assistance and then overlay that with demographic and housing information about counties and cities.

The database shows how much money the federal government has spent. It covers federal expenditures or obligations for grants, salaries and wages, procurement contracts, direct payments for individuals, other direct payments, direct loans, guaranteed or insured loans, and insurance. The data can be analyzed by the state, county, congressional district, city or the federal program involved. CFFR also includes the District of Columbia and U.S. outlying areas.

Federal contracts

The federal contracts database provides details about more than 560,000 contracts, including the dollar amount, contracting agency and the type of product or service involved.

The database contains information about each federal contract worth more than \$25,000. Some of this information includes the agency granting the contract, whether the business receiving the contract is woman- or veteran-owned. Also included is information about small and disadvantaged business programs.

The 2001 data includes 560,467 records of federal contracts. This update includes several new fields pertaining to veteran-owned businesses, fair opportunity and performance-based service contracting.

Uniform Crime Reports

The FBI Uniform Crime Reports databases are now current through 2000.

The six data tables include crime information reported to the FBI by law enforcement agencies around the country. Most of the data consists of the "index" crimes: murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor-vehicle theft and arson.

In addition, the databases provide detail on property crimes and includes the dollar values of the crimes. Additional data show age, sex and race information of people arrested for major crimes, plus drug offenses, gambling, DUIs, runaways and others.

The Supplemental Homicide Report table provides more detailed information on homicides, including demographic information

about the victim, the offender and the weapon used. Information in the database includes age, sex and race information for the offenders and victims, broken down by each homicide. It also provides the relationship between offenders and victims, and the circumstances of the crime.

National Bridge Inventory

The National Bridge Inventory database, obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, lists structural evaluations and codes for all bridges in the U.S. This includes bridges on highways, railroads, pedestrian-bicycle, overpasses and those designated as historically significant. The most recent database includes inspections through the end of 2001. The records represent the most recent inspection for each bridge.

Current as of December 2001, the dataset includes 694,941 records of bridges.

Boat registration

The database of boat registration, kept by the U.S. Coast Guard, contains information with every boat registered with the agency, including type of boat, size, use and, in one dataset, ownership. Current as of 2001, the data includes 509,805 boats.

Journalists can connect boat accidents with the boats' owners and look at boats registered in their communities. The Data Library also offers recreational boating accident data.

To order data, call the database library at 573-884-7711 or peruse its government data collection, including documentation and sample data, online at www.ire.org/datalibrary/databases.

2002 conference tipsheets available via Web site

The tipsheets from the 2002 Annual IRE Conference are now available on the IRE Web site. You can search the San Francisco tipsheets at www.ire.org/resourcecenter/initial-search-tipsheets.html. You can either review the tipsheets from just this conference – by typing San Francisco IRE Annual 2002 in the search field – or type in a specific topic to review a list of relevant tipsheets from all conferences.

Tipsheets are available on topics ranging from medical sources to backgrounding businesses to 10 tips for writing tightly. If you have any questions about tipsheets, please e-mail the Resource Center at rescntr@ire.org or call 573-882-3364.

Legal corner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

if the plaintiff carries the burden of showing with “convincing clarity” that the statements at issue are “provable as false” and made with “actual malice” (i.e., that the false statement was made intentionally or with reckless disregard as to whether it was false.)

The false-light claim

The Court of Appeals observed that the entire trial was predicated on the theory that Antilla was liable for false-light invasion of privacy because her article falsely implied that Howard, the chairman of two publicly traded companies, was instead Finkelstein, a convicted felon. To prevail on that claim, Howard needed to show with clear and convincing evidence that Antilla intended or knew that her article implied that “Howard is Finkelstein.” And because Howard was a public figure, established law presented another hurdle: “implications perceived in a statement but not intended by the speaker cannot be actionable.”

Closely examining the Antilla article for actual malice, the court found that “it is questionable, even doubtful, that the article

[was] actually capable of bearing the harmful implication charged by Howard.” The court noted that while the article repeated the short sellers’ rumor and cast doubt on some of Howard’s attempts to dispel the rumor, “read as a whole, the article points out flaws in both sides of the story and never places the author in a position of evaluating the truth or falsity of any party’s account.”

The court agreed with Antilla’s testimony that the article remained “agnostic” with respect to the truth of the short sellers’ rumor. Apart from the reporter’s intent in writing the article “to be clear that she didn’t know the answer” to the question of Howard’s true identity, the court also noted that Antilla’s editors had emphasized that the article “must be clear that it takes no stand on the truth or falsity of the rumor and that the article should focus on the SEC’s inability to resolve the rumor despite its role in the policing of the market.” While Antilla’s story did include certain facts tending to support the short sellers’ story, countervailing facts also were included. Accordingly, the First Circuit held that Howard failed to meet his burden of proving that Antilla intended or knew that the article falsely accused him of being a known felon.

A “balanced account”

The appellate court noted that “the article might also be nonactionable” because it offered a “balanced account of the Howard/Finkelstein controversy – reporting evidence that is consistent with the hypothesis that Howard is Finkelstein but also evidence tending to negate that hypothesis – and does not imply that [Antilla was] in the possession of undisclosed facts indicating that Howard is Finkelstein.”

The court observed that a statement is nonactionable if “it is plain the speaker is expressing a subjective view, an interpretation, a theory, conjecture, or surmise, rather than claiming to be in possession of objectively verifiable facts” or if “[t]he sum effect of the format, tone and entire content of the article is to make it unmistakably clear that [the author] was expressing a point of view only.”

For those involved in reporting and editing investigative stories about the current bumper crop of business scandals, the legal standard applied in the *Antilla* case may be well worth remembering.

FOI report

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

amount of corporate data ever emerges from FOIA requests, and between Exemption 4 and Exemption 1, the national security exemption, this is much ado about nothing. It’s bad policy, and it would help Ridge and Bush create a federal bureaucracy free from media scrutiny.

Equally disturbing is the proposal’s take on whistle-blowing, recent history be damned. As proposed, the administration bill allows the secretary of homeland security – acting unilaterally – to choose how (or whether) employees would be covered by current legal protections against reprisal when they call attention to instances of agency failure.

This despite the dramatic whistle-blowing of Minneapolis FBI Special Agent Coleen Rowley, who was praised by Bush and Ridge in press conferences for her courage in coming forward to blast her bosses. Rowley’s case would argue for extending whistle-blower protection to the FBI, and making it a permanent protection for all employees of Homeland Security.

Allowing the Department of Homeland Security to exempt itself from the Whistleblower Protection Act would seal off investigative reporters from the most important sources in government – the lower-to-middle-level employees who must follow orders that sometimes run afoul of morality. Like the FOIA, that law is a powerful ally of the public interest and those citizens who are interested in maintaining the accountability of our government and its officials. Government employees should remain free to report abuse, misfeasance, official misconduct and outright criminality.

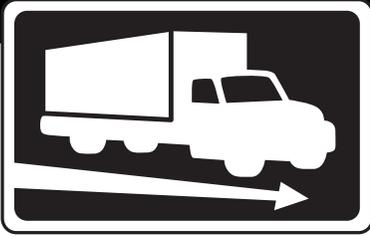
Hope remains for reason to prevail. In congressional hearings, members of both parties have made it plain that the administration is overreaching. Ridge is not backing down, though: he has defended the FOIA exemption, and has even asked for the power to suspend normal procurement rules and the anti-secrecy provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

All this secrecy must be examined against the backdrop of the biggest government reshuffling since 1947. The proposal moves about 100 federal entities into a single cabinet agency with an annual budget of more than \$37 billion and about 170,000 employees, and charges this new department with keeping us all safe.

All of which makes some form of scrutiny all the more important for the Department of Homeland Security, for all our sakes.

MOVING?

House filler 1



Please send us your new address so you don't miss one issue of *The IRE Journal* or any important member announcements.

Drop us a note at
memberdesk@ire.org

Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc.

Member News

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the *Detroit Free Press*, died April 12 at age 60.

■ **Shawn McIntosh**, IRE Board president, has moved from executive editor of *The Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson, Miss., to deputy managing editor at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. The position includes coaching reporters and editors.

■ **Mark Rochester**, IRE Board member, is moving from enterprise editor at *Newsday* to assistant managing editor/Sunday at *The Denver Post*. The position includes direction of investigative projects and the Washington bureau. ■ **Kathleen Rutledge** has been named editor of the *Lincoln (Neb.) Journal Star*. Rutledge was formerly managing editor.

■ *Orlando Sentinel* reporters **Mary Shanklin** and Tim Barker won first place for nondeadline reporting in the national Society of Professional Journalists competition. Their piece, "One Ticket Town," explores Orlando's dependence on the tourism industry. ■ **Mc Nelly Torres**, formerly with the *Morning News* in Florence, S.C., is now with the *San Antonio Express-News*. She is a member of the paper's education team.

Houston column

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

that we will always have core staff and be here to provide resources and training.

If you want to make a donation, please send your check to IRE (marked "Endowment") at 138 Neff Annex, Columbia, MO 65211. And if you have ideas or suggestions for the drive, please write to me at brant@ire.org.

New look to Uplink

The IRE staff has given *Uplink*, our newsletter on computer-assisted reporting, a new look and content gets better with every issue. If you are interested in seeing a free issue or in subscribing (*Uplink* has to support itself), please e-mail John Green, membership coordinator, at jgreen@ire.org

And finally, we are asking members to renew their membership as early as possible this year. This could save us thousands of dollars in printing and mailing multiple renewal notices and allow us to use that money for services.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS AND EDITORS, INC. is a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of investigative reporting within the field of journalism. IRE was formed in 1975 with the intent of creating a networking tool and a forum in which journalists from across the country could raise questions and exchange ideas. IRE provides educational services to reporters, editors and others interested in investigative reporting and works to maintain high professional standards.

Programs and Services:

IRE RESOURCE CENTER – A rich reserve of print and broadcast stories, tipsheets and guides to help you start and complete the best work of your career. This unique library is the starting point of any piece you're working on. You can search through abstracts of more than 19,000 investigative reporting stories through our Web site.

Contact: Carolyn Edds, carolyn@ire.org, 573-882-3364

DATABASE LIBRARY – Administered by IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. The library has copies of many government databases, and makes them available to news organizations at or below actual cost. Analysis services are available on these databases, as is help in deciphering records you obtain yourself.

Contact: Jeff Porter, jeff@ire.org, 573-882-1982

CAMPAIGN FINANCE INFORMATION CENTER – Administered by IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. It's dedicated to helping journalists uncover the campaign money trail. State campaign finance data is collected from across the nation, cleaned and made available to journalists. A search engine allows reporters to track political cash flow across several states in federal and state races.

Contact: Aron Pilhofer, aron@ire.org, 573-882-2042

ON-THE-ROAD TRAINING – As a top promoter of journalism education, IRE offers loads of training opportunities throughout the year. Possibilities range from national conferences and regional workshops to weeklong boot camps and on-site newsroom training. Costs are on a sliding scale and fellowships are available to many of the events.

Contact: Ron Nixon, ron@nicar.org, 573-882-2042

Publications

THE IRE JOURNAL – Published six times a year. Contains journalist profiles, how-to stories, reviews, investigative ideas and backgrounding tips. *The Journal* also provides members with the latest news on upcoming events and training opportunities from IRE and NICAR.

Contact: Len Bruzzese, len@ire.org, 573-882-2042

UPLINK – Monthly newsletter by IRE and NICAR on computer-assisted reporting. Often, *Uplink* stories are written after reporters have had particular success using data to investigate stories. The columns include valuable information on advanced database techniques as well as success stories written by newly trained CAR reporters.

Contact: Jeff Porter, jeff@ire.org, 573-884-7711

REPORTER.ORG – A collection of Web-based resources for journalists, journalism educators and others. Discounted Web hosting and services such as mailing list management and site development are provided to other nonprofit journalism organizations.

Contact: Ted Peterson, ted@nicar.org, 573-884-7321

For information on:

ADVERTISING – Pia Christensen, pia@ire.org, 573-884-2175

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS – John Green, jgreen@ire.org, 573-882-2772

CONFERENCES AND BOOT CAMPS – Ev Ruch-Graham, ev@ire.org, 573-882-8969

LISTSERVS – Ted Peterson, ted@nicar.org, 573-884-7321

Mailing Address:

IRE, 138 Neff Annex, Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO 65211

IRE AWARDS 2002

call
for
entries

The annual contest of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc.

DEADLINE: Postmark by Jan. 13, 2003

Categories

Newspaper:

For outstanding investigative reporting at a daily or weekly newspaper. (Use highest one-day circulation of the week.) Categories are: Circulation less than 100,000; Circulation between 100,000 and 250,000; Circulation more than 250,000; and Local-Circulation Weekly.

Television:

For outstanding investigative reporting by a television outlet. Categories are: Network or syndicated program; Top 20 market; and Below Top 20 market.

Other Media:

For outstanding investigative reporting in other media such as Magazine, Newsletter, Specialty Publication, Book and Radio.

Online:

For outstanding investigative reporting that 1) appears exclusively on the Web or 2) appears first and exclusively on the Web, even though it may later be published in a newspaper or magazine or broadcast on television.

NOTE: If work is published first on the Web and later published or broadcast in traditional media, there cannot be two entries. An entrant must choose which category to enter.

Special Categories:

Tom Renner Award: Outstanding reporting in any medium covering and exposing organized crime. (Limited to 10 stories) You must submit TWO sets of copies if submitting an entry in the Tom Renner category and in another category. If only one set is received, the judges will decide in which category the entry will be placed.

IRE FOI Award: Honors individual or organization in any medium whose significant actions further open records or open government. You must submit TWO sets of copies if submitting an entry in the FOI category and in another category. If only one set is received, the judges will decide in which category the entry will be placed.

Student Award: Outstanding investigative reporting by a student in a college-affiliated newspaper, magazine or specialty publication, or broadcast work that has been publicly reviewed, screened or aired.

NOTE: Judges reserve the right to give more than one award in a category or to declare no winner in a category

The contest recognizes the best investigative reporting in print, broadcast and online media, and helps identify techniques and resources used by entrants.

For entry forms and additional information, visit our Web site at www.ire.org/contest