

# THE IRE JOURNAL

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*Deseret Morning News*

## THE IRE JOURNAL

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## FROM THE IRE OFFICES

# Efforts intensified to make training, resources more valuable



BRANT HOUSTON

Last year was a brutal one for the journalism profession and our members – and no one is predicting 2006 will be any easier.

At IRE, we have been saddened by the buyouts, layoffs and unceasing cutbacks in media company budgets, especially for the training that would help the companies and their news staffs deal with the dramatic transformations in the industry.

Still, we have no intention of lessening our efforts to provide resources and services to members and to the profession. In fact, we are expanding our work with the help of our volunteer members; key grants from foundations; an endowment fund that is beginning to produce investment income to help with our operations; and redirection and further modernization of our programs.

Among these efforts:

- A further upgrade of our publications to make more of them available electronically.
- Another upgrade of our Web site to make it easier to use and to offer more online instruction.
- Increased training for editors and news directors with continuing training for reporters.
- Boosting the scope of our mentoring program.
- More online training and services for our international members.
- A program to provide training and resources for ethnic news organizations.
- More services from our Database Library and Resource Center for newsrooms that do not have the staff or the time to do in-depth data analysis.
- Increased collaborations with other journalism training groups.

We believe that these efforts will significantly help journalists and companies get through the ongoing industry transformation by offering them the skills and resources needed in whatever new forms the industry takes.

Some of this work is already under way. In the past year, our Database Library and Resource Center have supported journalists from more than 300 news organizations. The Database Library, for example, provided analysis for many news stations across the country, resulting in high-profile stories during the critical sweeps period.

Further, the IRE Español Web site is up and running for Spanish-speaking journalists everywhere. This site does not simply translate the IRE Web site from English to Spanish, but collects unique resources for journalists in the United States and Latin America.

We have launched our “Unleashing the Watchdogs” program for midlevel editors in partnership with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and are initiating a similar program with the Radio and Television News Directors Association.

At the same time, we have steadily improved our online resource packages for journalists covering breaking news events and made it much simpler to get databases from our Database Library.

At IRE, we have foreseen many of the coming changes and have tried to stay ahead of them as much as possible. That’s why IRE began its collaboration in 1993 with the Missouri School of Journalism to teach computer-assisted reporting at the school and around the world. Also, it’s why we have increased the number of regional seminars and workshops from 40 to 80 in the past 10 years – so we can bring the training to you as newsrooms cut training and travel budgets. And that’s why we were among the first groups to make much of our materials available electronically and on the Web.

We think the past decade of work done by the IRE staff, board and volunteers has served our members well. With the skills we teach, journalists can do better investigative and in-depth stories faster, with more depth and sophistication in a growing electronic media world. We remain committed to doing everything we can to make our members indispensable in newsrooms now and in the future.

*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.*

## IRE members nab military reporting, editing awards

Several IRE members received awards from Military Reporters and Editors this year.

A team of *Dayton Daily News* reporters that included members Russell Carollo, Ken McCall, Mehul Srivastava and Mike Wagner won the Joseph L. Galloway Award for Distinguished Journalism for their series "The Toll of War."

Steve Liewer of *Stars and Stripes* won in overseas print coverage (circulation less than 100,000) and Miles Mofeit and Arthur Kane were among the *Denver Post* reporters to win in domestic print coverage (circulation more than 100,000).

## IRE Web site offers hurricane resources

If you are looking to track investigative stories on Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, visit the IRE Web site's special page at [www.ire.org/inthenews\\_archive/katrina.html](http://www.ire.org/inthenews_archive/katrina.html).

There you will find links to Katrina investigations from around the country, as well as plenty of resources for enhancing your own hurricane and disaster coverage. The site has a detailed list of databases on subjects such as storms, dams, bridges, and federal assistance

programs and tipsheets for journalists covering the aftermath of hurricanes and other disasters. Also, there is an overview of recent hurricane-related stories from *The IRE Journal* and *Uplink* and links to external Web sites that are useful in disaster reporting.

## Watchdog workshop on tap, aimed at midlevel editors

Get ready to put some bite in your journalism with "Unleashing the Watchdogs," a new series of workshops designed especially for midlevel editors. Presented by IRE and the American Society of Newspaper Editors, these regional seminars will explore how to conceive of, manage and produce watchdog journalism, whether it's on a daily, beat or long-term basis.

Under the guidance of editors and trainers with years of experience producing investigative and enterprise work, you will also learn tips and techniques for guiding reporters in effectively using the Internet, open records laws, computer-assisted reporting and anonymous sources.

An Unleashing the Watchdogs Workshop will be Feb. 9-10 in Orlando, Fla. For more details, please visit the IRE Web site at [www.ire.org/training/unleashing](http://www.ire.org/training/unleashing).

## Investigative journalist Jack White remembered



Jack White, a Pulitzer Prize- and Emmy Award-winning journalist and one of investigative reporting's pioneers, was remembered as an honest and responsible reporter by colleagues and the public.

White died in October at his home on Cape Cod. He was 63.

"Jack White was a great reporter, a meticulous investigator and one helluva good guy," says Robert Greene, former president and chair of IRE and leader of IRE's famous Arizona Project. "He loaned his advice and name to IRE when we really needed it. We are forever in his debt."

White launched his career at *The Newport* (R.I.) *Daily News* in 1969, and moved to *The Providence Journal and Evening Bulletin* the following year. He was propelled into the national spotlight in 1973 when – using a tip and tax documents – he revealed President Nixon had underpaid his income taxes in 1970 and 1971.

He won the 1974 Pulitzer in National Reporting for the story, which led Nixon to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in back taxes and prompted Nixon's famous line, "People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I am not a crook."

White also served as one of IRE's early members and directors, which provided a boost to the fledgling organization.

Following stints at the *Cape Cod Times* and WBZ-Boston, White moved in 1985 to WPRI-Providence,

R.I. He spent the past two decades working as a chief investigative reporter at the station, and ultimately earned two Emmy Awards for his television reporting.

Karen Rezendes, WPRI's manager of news and special projects, says White was the "go to" person at the station for background information, history and context, and was a mentor to countless reporters and producers.

While widely regarded for his early contributions to investigative reporting, she stresses he was a lifetime practitioner of the ever-evolving craft. "Jack stayed with the times. He understood the paper trail, then and now," she says. He not only kept current with FOI laws and regulations, but he knew the latest techniques in computer-assisted reporting, she says.

He was particularly interested in building complex stories, for which he prepared meticulously. "He knew what should be in documents before he even got them," Rezendes says. "Before he sat down to do an interview he knew what the answer should be."

After his unexpected death, WPRI did a half-hour special about White. In putting that package together, Rezendes says they heard the words "honesty," "integrity" and "responsibility" repeated over and over – not just from White's friends and colleagues, but from his former sources as well.

"Even if sources didn't like a Jack White story, they knew it would be fair and right," she says.

To see WPRI's tribute to White, go to [www.wpri.com/Global/SearchResults.asp?qu=jack+white](http://www.wpri.com/Global/SearchResults.asp?qu=jack+white).

## MEMBER NEWS

**A**ndrew Bailey has left *The Buffalo News*, where he worked as a news researcher, and is *The Toronto Star's* computer-assisted reporting specialist. ■ Jenni Bergal has joined The Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C. as a senior writer. She was previously a producer for the Casey Journalism Center at the University of Maryland and a longtime investigative and award-winning reporter for the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*. ■ Matthew Brady, city editor of *The* (Twin Falls, Idaho) *Times-News*, recently contributed to the primer "Covering the Campaign to Expand and Improve Pre-Kindergarten." The primer, published by the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media at Teachers College, Columbia University, is available through the Institute. ■ Jon Craig covers state government for *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. He was a statehouse reporter for *The Columbus Dispatch*. ■ John Heys, formerly a health reporter at the *Charleston Gazette*, now covers business for the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* in the paper's Charlotte County bureau. ■ Jolanta Kruszelnicka has left RMIT (Melbourne, Australia) for RSA 99.1 (Malaga, Spain) where she hosts *Infinity*, a two-hour science program and investigates private science projects. ■ Ray Locker is the national security editor at *USA Today*. He was formerly The Associated Press' supervisory correspondent in Sacramento. ■ Todd Milbourn, formerly a city hall reporter at *The Modesto Bee*, is covering nonprofits and philanthropy at *The Sacramento Bee*. ■ Lucy Morgan, a Pulitzer-Prize winning investigative journalist at the *St. Petersburg Times* for nearly four decades, will retire this year. She is the paper's Tallahassee bureau chief, a position she has held for the past 20 years. ■ Eugene Mulero has moved from the (Morris County, N.J.) *Daily Record*, where he was a beat reporter, to *The Arizona Republic*, where he is a general assignment reporter. ■ David Paulsen has joined the *Poughkeepsie* (N.Y.) *Journal* as a municipal reporter covering southern Dutchess County. He was features editor at the *Wausau* (Wis.) *Daily Herald*. ■ Clint Riley is a staff writer

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Send Member News items to Pia Christensen at [pia@ire.org](mailto:pia@ire.org) and include a phone number for verification.

# BOOKS OF 2005

Book-length probes run from war in Iraq to environmental issues

BY STEVE WEINBERG  
THE IRE JOURNAL

One of the more popular themes of investigative books in the past year has been the war in Iraq, ranging from the performance of journalists to military operations.

Kristina Borjesson, for example, conducts in-depth interviews with 22 print, broadcast and online journalists for "Feet to the Fire: The Media After 9/11, Top Journalists Speak Out," which looks at the media performance at home and abroad in

covering the war.

One of her interviews is with Jonathan S. Landay, national security and intelligence correspondent for Knight Ridder in Washington, D.C. In the book, Landay explains how he systematically examined claims by President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard Cheney that the Iraqis possessed weapons of mass destruction.

"The way I got into it was to familiarize myself

with what it takes to have a WMD [weapons of mass destruction] program," Landay tells Borjesson. "I decided to familiarize myself with what Iraq had, and I did that through open sources, particularly the United Nations [weapons inspectors] reporting on what they found and what they destroyed [in the Iraq military arsenal]. In particular, I focused on the question: What kind of physical infrastructure do you need to build a nuclear weapon?... You need thousands of high-speed spinning machines called centrifuges if you are going to go the uranium enrichment route, which was the way the Iraqis were going because it is very, very difficult to get the spent fuel you need from which to extract plutonium, which is the other way to go... So the question was, did they have the infrastructure? They had it at one time, and it had been destroyed. The UN inspectors destroyed it. My next question was, with the spy planes and spy satellites overhead and the UN inspectors on the ground in the country... with all

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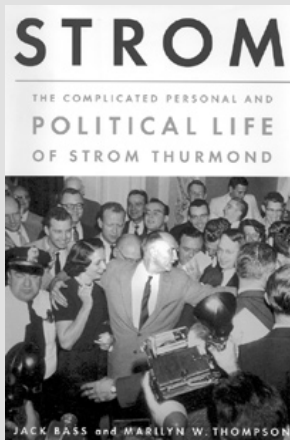
## INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

Each year, Steve Weinberg does his best to compile this exclusive list for *The IRE Journal*. It consists of books of investigative or explanatory journalism, broadly defined, published for the first time during 2005, in the United States, in English. The list is limited to authors who work as journalists for American media outlets, and who are trying to reach general audiences through retail bookstore sales. If you know of a book unintentionally omitted from this list, please send an e-mail to [weinbergs@missouri.edu](mailto:weinbergs@missouri.edu).

- A**
- Allen, John L. Jr. **Opus Dei: An Objective Look Behind the Myths and Realities of the Most Controversial Force in the Catholic Church** (Doubleday)
  - Araton, Harvey **Crashing the Borders: How Basketball Won the World and Lost Its Soul at Home** (Free Press)
  - Arkin, William M. **Code Names: Deciphering U.S. Military Plans, Programs and Operations in the 9/11 World** (Steerforth)
  - Arroyo, Raymond **Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles** (Doubleday)

- B**
- Baer, Martha, Katrina Heron, Oliver Morton and Evan Ratliff **Safe: The Race to Protect Ourselves in a Newly Dangerous World** (HarperCollins)

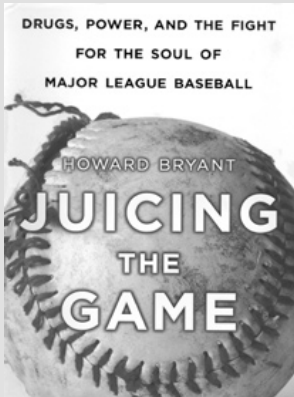
- Baker, Peter and Susan Glasser **Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution** (Scribner)
- Balfour, Sandy **Nursing America: One Year Behind the Nursing Stations of an Inner-City Hospital** (Tarcher/Penguin)
- Bass, Jack and Marilyn W. Thompson **Strom: The Complicated Personal and Political Life of Strom Thurmond** (PublicAffairs)



- Battelle, John **The Search: How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture** (Portfolio)
- Becker, Jasper **Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea** (Oxford University Press)
- Bernstein, Nell **All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated** (New Press)
- Berreby, David **Us and Them: Understanding Your Tribal Mind** (Little, Brown and Company)
- Birchard, Bill **Nature's Keepers: The Remarkable Story of How the Nature Conservancy Became the Largest Environmental Organization in the World** (Jossey-Bass)
- Biskupic, Joan **Sandra Day O'Connor: How the First Woman on the Supreme Court Became Its Most Influential Justice** (Ecco)
- Bixler, Mark **The Lost Boys of Sudan: An American Story of the Refugee Experience** (University of Georgia Press)
- Blakeslee, Nate **Tulia: Race, Cocaine, and Corruption in a Small Texas Town** (PublicAffairs)
- Bleifuss, Joel **Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen?: Exit Polls, Election Fraud and the Official Count** (Seven Stories Press)
- Blustein, Paul **And the Money Kept Rolling In (and Out): Wall Street, the IMF and the Bankrupting of Argentina** (PublicAffairs)
- Bogira, Steve **Courtroom 302: A Year Behind the Scenes in an American Criminal Courthouse** (Knopf)
- Bonavoglia, Angela **Good Catholic Girls: How Women Are Leading the Fight to Change the Church** (Regan Books)
- Bordowitz, Hank **Billy Joel: The Life and Times of an Angry Young Man** (Billboard Books)
- Borjesson, Kristina, editor **Feet to the Fire: The Media After 9/11, Top Journalists Speak Out** (Prometheus)
- Bowden, Charles **A Shadow in the City: Confessions of an Undercover Drug Warrior** (Harcourt)
- Bowen, Mark **Thin Ice** (Holt)

## INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

- Boyer, Peter J. **Catastrophic Success: How the Bush Administration Remade Our Military to Win New Wars But Not the Peace** (Random House)
- Bradley, Richard **Harvard Rules: The Struggle for the Soul of the World's Most Powerful University** (HarperCollins)
- Briggs, Jimmie **Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War** (Basic Books)
- Brown, Ethan **Queens Reigns Supreme: Fat Cat, 50 Cent and the Rise of the Hip-Hop Hustler** (Anchor)



- Bryant, Howard **Juicing the Game: Drugs, Power, and the Fight for the Soul of Major League Baseball** (Viking)
  - Buck, Rinker **Shane Comes Home** (Morrow)
  - Bull, Chris **Bad Republicans: The Unholy Alliance Between the Republican Party and the Extreme Right** (Thunder's Mouth Press)
  - Burdick, Alan **Out of Eden: An Odyssey of Ecological Invasion** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
  - Burke, Monte **Sowbelly: The Obsessive Quest for the World-Record Largemouth Bass** (Dutton)
- C**
- Casey, Kathryn **She Wanted It All: A True Story of Sex, Murder, and a Texas Millionaire** (Avon)

- Cashill, Jack **Hoodwinked: How Intellectual Hucksters Have Hijacked American Culture** (Nelson Current)
- Cauley, Leslie **End of the Line: The Rise and Fall of AT&T** (Free Press)
- Chaplin, Heather and Aaron Ruby **Smartbomb: The Quest for Art, Entertainment, and Big Bucks in the Videogame Revolution** (Algonquin)
- Cheney, Annie **Body Brokers: Inside the Underground Trade in Human Remains** (Broadway)
- Chesnoff, Richard Z. **The Arrogance of the French: Why They Can't Stand Us – and Why the Feeling Is Mutual** (Sentinel)
- Cockburn, Alexander **The Democrats in End Time: The True and Terrible Story of How the Dems Blew It and What Comes After** (Thunder's Mouth Press)
- Cohen, Jon **Coming to Term: Uncovering the Truth about Miscarriage** (Houghton Mifflin)
- Cohen, Leah Hager **Without Apology: Girls, Women and the Desire to Fight** (Random House)
- Colin, Chris **What Really Happened to the Class of '93: Start-ups, Dropouts and Other Navigations Through an Untidy Decade** (Broadway Books)
- Collins, Marion **While She Slept** (St. Martin's)
- Cone, Marla **Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic** (Grove)
- Coyle, Daniel **Lance Armstrong's War: One Man's Battle Against Fate, Fame, Love, Death, Scandal and a Few Other Rivals on the Road to the Tour de France** (HarperCollins)
- Crawford, Craig **Attack the Messenger: How Politicians Turn You Against the Media** (Rowman & Littlefield)

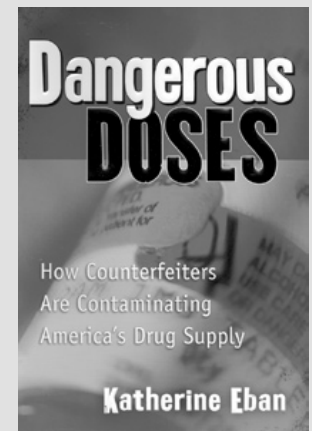
- Crier, Catherine with Cole Thompson **A Deadly Game: The Untold Story of the Scott Peterson Investigation** (Regan Books)
  - Critser, Greg **Generation Rx: How Prescription Drugs Are Altering American Lives, Minds, and Bodies** (Houghton Mifflin)
  - Crowley, Kieran **Almost Paradise: The East Hampton Murder of Ted Ammon** (St. Martin's)
- D**
- Dahlby, Tracy **Allah's Torch: A Report From Behind the Scenes in Asia's War on Terror** (Morrow)
  - Deibert, Michael **Notes From the Last Testament: The Struggle for Haiti** (Seven Stories Press)

- Diaz, Tom and Barbara Newman **Lightning Out of Lebanon: Hezbollah Terrorists on American Soil** (Presidio)
- Dicker, John **The United States of Wal-Mart** (Penguin/Tarcher)
- Dirmann, Tina **Such Good Boys: The Story of a Mother, Two Sons and a Horrifying Murder** (St. Martin's)
- DiStefano, Joseph N. **Comcasted: How Ralph and Brian Roberts Took Over America's TV, One Deal at a Time** (Camino)
- Doherty, Brian **This Is Burning Man: The Rise of a New American Underground** (Little, Brown and Company)
- Dolnick, Edward **The Rescue Artist: A True Story of Art, Thieves, and the Hunt for a Missing Masterpiece** (HarperCollins)
- Donovan, Karen **v. Goliath: The Trials of David Boies** (Pantheon)
- Dreyfuss, Robert **Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam** (Holt/Metropolitan)

- Duncan, David Ewing **The Geneticist Who Played Hoops With My DNA, and Other Masterminds From the Frontiers of Biotech** (Morrow)
- Dwyer, Jim and Kevin Flynn **102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive Inside the Twin Towers** (Times/Holt)

**E**

- Eban, Katherine **Dangerous Doses: How Counterfeiters Are Contaminating America's Drug Supply** (Harcourt)



- Edelstein, Robert **Full Throttle: The Life and Fast Times of NASCAR Legend Curtis Turner** (Overlook)
- Eden, Scott **Touchdown Jesus: Faith and Fandom at Notre Dame** (Simon & Schuster)
- Ehrenreich, Barbara **Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream** (Metropolitan/Holt)
- Eichenwald, Kurt **Conspiracy of Fools** (Broadway)
- Ellis, Richard **Tiger Bone and Rhino Horn: The Destruction of Wildlife for Traditional Chinese Medicine** (Island/Shearwater)
- Ellison, Katherine **The Mommy Brain: How Motherhood Makes Us Smarter** (Basic)
- Epstein, Edward Jay **The Big Picture: The New Logic of Money and Power in Hollywood** (Random House)

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

F

- Fanning, Diane  
**Written in Blood**  
(St. Martin's)
- Feinstein, John  
**Next Man Up: A Year Behind the Lines in Today's NFL**  
(Little, Brown and Company)
- Fenton, Tom  
**Bad News: The Decline of Reporting, the Business of News, and the Danger to Us All**  
(ReganBooks)
- Feuer, Alan  
**Over There: From the Bronx to Baghdad**  
(Counterpoint)
- Finkel, Michael  
**True Story: Murder, Memoir, Mea Culpa**  
(HarperCollins)
- Fishman, Ted C.  
**China, Inc.: How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World**  
(Scribner)

- Fitzpatrick, Frank  
**The Lion in Autumn: A Season With Joe Paterno and Penn State Football**  
(Gotham Books)
- Fleming, Karl  
**Son of the Rough South: An Uncivil Memoir**  
(PublicAffairs)
- Francis, Eric  
**A Wife's Revenge: The True Story of Susan Wright and a Marriage That Ended in Murder**  
(St. Martin's)
- Friedman, Thomas L.  
**The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century**  
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- Fussman, Cal  
**Kingdom Come: Inside the Money, Race and Politics of LeBron James' Rookie of the Year Season**  
(ESPN Books)

G

- Gaines, Steven  
**The Sky's the Limit: Passion and Property in Manhattan**  
(Little, Brown and Company)
- Gannon, Kathy  
**I Is for Infidel: From Holy War to Holy Terror: Eighteen Years Inside Afghanistan**  
(PublicAffairs)
- Garen, Micah and Marie-Helen Carleton  
**American Hostage: A Memoir of a Journalist Kidnapped in Iraq and The Remarkable Battle to Win His Release**  
(Simon & Schuster)
- Garin, Kristoffer A.  
**Devils on the Deep Blue Sea: The Dreams, Schemes and Showdowns That Built America's Cruise-Ship Empires**  
(Viking)

- Garreau, Joel  
**Radical Evolution: The Promise and Peril of Enhancing Our Minds, Our Bodies – and What It Means to Be Human**  
(Doubleday)
- Garrett, Major  
**The Enduring Revolution: How the Contract With America Continues to Shape the Nation**  
(Crown Forum)
- Gasparino, Charles  
**Blood on the Street: The Sensational Inside Story of How Wall Street Analysts Duped a Generation of Investors**  
(Free Press)
- Gertz, Bill  
**Treachery: How America's Friends and Foes Are Secretly Arming Our Enemies**  
(Three Rivers)
- Gibson, John  
**The War on Christmas: How the Liberal Plot to Ban the Sacred Christian Holiday is Worse Than You Thought**  
(Sentinel)



★ SAVE THE DATE ★

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## INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

• Gilder, George  
**The Silicon Eye: How a Silicon Valley Company Aims to Make All Current Computers, Cameras and Cell Phones Obsolete**  
(Atlas/Norton)

• Glantz, Aaron  
**How America Lost Iraq**  
(Penguin/Tarcher)

• Glatt, John  
**One Deadly Night: A State Trooper, Triple Homicide and a Search for Justice**  
(St. Martin's)

• Goldberg, Bernard  
**One Hundred People Who Are Screwing Up America**  
(HarperCollins)

• Goldfarb, Michael  
**Ahmad's War, Ahmad's Peace: Surviving Under Saddam, Dying in the New Iraq**  
(Carroll & Graf)

• Goldstein, Brandt  
**Storming the Court: How a Band of Law Students Sued the President—and Won**  
(Scribner)

• Gross, Michael  
**740 Park: The Story of the World's Richest Apartment Building**  
(Broadway Books)

• Gross, Michael Joseph  
**Starstruck: When a Fan Gets Close to Fame**  
(Bloomsbury)

• Grunwald, Michael  
**The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise**  
(Simon & Schuster)

• Gumbel, Andrew  
**Steal This Vote: Dirty Elections and the Rotten History of Democracy in America**  
(Nation Books)

### H

• Hambling, David  
**Weapons Grade: How Modern Warfare Gave Birth to Our High-Tech World**  
(Carroll & Graf)

• Harr, Jonathan  
**The Lost Painting: The Quest for a Caravaggio Masterpiece**  
(Random House)

• Harris, John F.  
**The Survivor: Bill Clinton in the White House**  
(Random House)

• Hawthorne, Fran  
**Inside the FDA: The Business and Politics Behind the Drugs We Take and the Food We Eat**  
(Wiley)

• Herbert, Bob  
**Promises Betrayed: Waking Up From the American Dream**  
(Times Books)

• Hilts, Philip J.  
**Rx for Survival: Why We Must Rise to the Global Health Challenge**  
(Penguin Press)

• Hiltzik, Michael A.  
**The Plot Against Social Security: How the Bush Plan Is Endangering Our Financial Future**  
(HarperCollins)

• Horn, Stacy  
**The Restless Sleep: Inside New York City's Cold Case Squad**  
(Viking)



• Horne, Jed  
**Desire Street: A True Story of Death and Deliverance in New Orleans**  
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

• Houppert, Karen  
**Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—for Better or Worse**  
(Ballantine)

• Howard, Johnette  
**The Rivals: Chris Evert vs. Martina Navratilova, Their Epic Duels and Extraordinary Friendship**  
(Broadway)

• Hubner, John  
**Last Chance in Texas: The Redemption of Criminal Youth**  
(Random House)

### J

• Jacobs, Joanne  
**Our School: The Inspiring Story of Two Teachers, One Big Idea and the School That Beat the Odds**  
(Palgrave)

• Jacobsen, Annie  
**Terror in the Skies: Why 9/11 Could Happen Again**  
(Spence)

• Jans, Nick  
**The Grizzly Maze: Timothy Treadwell's Fatal Obsession With Alaskan Bears**  
(Dutton)

• Johnson, Steven  
**Everything Bad Is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter**  
(Riverhead)

• Jordan, Mary and Kevin Sullivan  
**The Prison Angel: Mother Antonia's Journey From Beverly Hills to a Life of Service in a Mexican Jail**  
(Penguin Press)

### K

• Kaplan, Michael and Brad Reagan  
**Aces and Kings: Inside Stories and Million-Dollar Strategies From Poker's Greatest Players**  
(Warner)

• Kaplan, Robert D.  
**Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground**  
(Random House)

• Katz, Samuel M.  
**Jihad in Brooklyn: The NYPD Raid That Stopped America's First Suicide Bombers**  
(New American Library)

• Kirby, David  
**Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic**  
(St. Martin's)

• Kitfield, James  
**War and Destiny: How the Bush Revolution in Foreign and Military Affairs Redefined American Power**  
(Potomac Books)

• Klein, Edward  
**The Truth About Hillary: What She Knew, When She Knew It, and How Far She'll Go to Become President**  
(Sentinel)

• Kleinfield, Sonny  
**His Oldest Friend: The Story of an Unlikely Bond**  
(Times Books)

• Klepacki, Laura  
**Avon: Building the World's Premier Company for Women**  
(Wiley)

• Koopman, John  
**McCoy's Marines: Darkside to Baghdad**  
(Zenith)

• Kozol, Jonathan  
**The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America**  
(Crown)

• Krauss, Erich  
**Wave of Destruction: The Stories of Four Families and History's Deadliest Tsunami**  
(Rodale)

• Kuczynski, Alex  
**Beauty Junkies: Inside Our \$15 Billion Obsession With Cosmetic Surgery**  
(Doubleday)

• Kugiya, Hugo  
**Fifty-Eight Degrees North: The Mysterious Sinking of the Arctic Rose**  
(Bloomsbury)

• Kunstler, James Howard  
**The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of the Oil Age, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-first Century**  
(Atlantic Monthly Press)

• Kushner, David  
**Jonny Magic and the Card Shark Kids: How a Gang of Geeks Beat the Odds and Stormed Las Vegas**  
(Random House)

### L

• Lambrecht, Bill  
**Big Muddy Blues: True Tales and Twisted Politics Along Lewis and Clark's Missouri River**  
(St. Martin's)

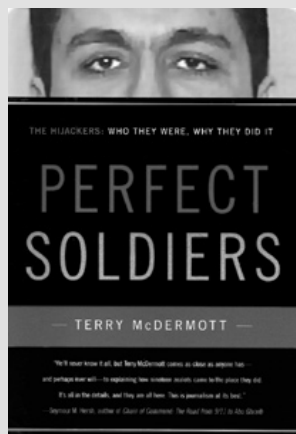
• Larmer, Brook  
**Operation Yao Ming: The Chinese Sports Empire, American Big Business and the Making of an NBA Superstar**  
(Gotham)

• Lasica, J.D.  
**Darknet: Hollywood's War Against the Digital Generation**  
(Wiley)

## INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

- Laszewski, Chuck  
**Rock 'n Roll Radical: The Life and Mysterious Death of Dean Reed** (Beaver's Pond Press)
  - Leslie, Jacques  
**Deep Water: The Epic Struggle Over Dams, Displaced People and the Environment** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
  - Levine, Suzanne Braun  
**Inventing the Rest of Our Lives: Women in Second Adulthood** (Viking)
  - Levy, Ariel  
**Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture** (Free Press)
  - Lewine, Edward  
**Death and the Sun: A Matador's Season in the Heart of Spain** (Houghton Mifflin)
  - Lynn, Barry C.  
**End of the Line: The Rise and Coming Fall of the Global Corporation** (Doubleday)
- M**
- MacGregor, Jeff  
**Sunday Money: Speed! Lust! Madness! Death! A Hot Lap Around America With NASCAR** (HarperCollins)
  - MacPherson, Malcolm  
**Roberts Ridge: A Story of Courage and Sacrifice on Takur Ghar Mountain, Afghanistan** (Bantam)
  - Magee, David  
**The John Deere Way: Performance that Endures** (Wiley)
  - Mapes, Mary  
**Truth and Duty: The Press, the President and the Privilege of Power** (St. Martin's)
  - Markoff, John  
**What the Dormouse Said: How the 60s Counterculture Shaped the Personal Computer Industry** (Viking)
  - McCauley, Michael P.  
**NPR: The Trials and Triumphs of National Public Radio** (Columbia University Press)
  - McCoy, Elin  
**The Emperor of Wine: The Rise of Robert M. Parker, Jr. and the Reign of American Taste** (Ecco)

- McDermott, Terry  
**Perfect Soldiers: The Hijackers: Who They Were, Why They Did It** (HarperCollins)



- Menzer, Joe  
**Buckeye Madness: The Glorious, Tumultuous, Behind-the-Scenes Story of Ohio State Football** (Simon & Schuster)
- Merritt, Davis  
**Knightfall: Knight Ridder and How the Erosion of Newspaper Journalism Is Putting Democracy at Risk** (Amacom)
- Merry, Robert W.  
**Sands of Empire: Missionary Zeal, American Foreign Policy, and the Hazards of Global Ambition** (Simon & Schuster)
- Miller, G. Wayne  
**The Xeno Chronicles: Two Years on the Frontier of Medicine Inside Harvard's Transplant Research Lab** (PublicAffairs)
- Mitchell, Andrea  
**Talking Back...to Presidents, Dictators, and Assorted Scoundrels** (Viking)
- Moaveni, Azadeh  
**Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America and American in Iran** (PublicAffairs)
- Mooney, Chris  
**The Republican War on Science** (Basic Books)
- Moynihan, Ray  
**Selling Sickness: How the World's Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients** (Nation Books)

- Murphy, Brian  
**The Root of Wild Madder: Chasing the History, Mystery, and Lore of the Persian Carpet** (Simon & Schuster)
- N**
- Naim, Moises  
**Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers, and Copycats Are Hijacking the Global Economy** (Doubleday)
  - Navasky, Victor S.  
**A Matter of Opinion** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
  - Naylor, Sean  
**Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda** (Berkley)
  - Nichols, John and Robert W. McChesney  
**Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections and Destroy Democracy** (New Press)
  - Niehoff, Debra  
**The Language of Life: How Cells Communicate in Health and Disease** (National Academies/Joseph Henry Press)
- O**
- O'Connor, Ian  
**The Jump: Sebastian Telfair and the High-Stakes Business of High School Ball** (Rodale)
  - O'Harrow, Robert J.  
**No Place to Hide: Behind the Scenes of Our Emerging Surveillance Society** (Free Press)
  - Ojito, Mirta  
**Finding Mañana: A Memoir of a Cuban Exodus** (Penguin Press)
  - Okie, Susan  
**Fed Up!: Winning the War Against Childhood Obesity** (Joseph Henry Press)
  - Olsen, Gregg  
**The Deep Dark: Disaster and Redemption in America's Richest Silver Mine** (Crown)
  - Oppenheimer, Jerry  
**Front Row: Anna Wintour: The Cool Life and Hot Times of Vogue's Editor in Chief** (St. Martin's)

- Oppenheimer, Mark  
**Thirteen and a Day: The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Across America** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- Osborne, Duncan  
**Suicide Tuesday: Gay Men and the Crystal Meth Scare** (Carroll and Graf)

**P**

- Packer, George  
**The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- Parson, Ann B.  
**The Proteus Effect: Stem Cells and Their Promise for Medicine** (Joseph Henry Press)
- Paul, Pamela  
**Pornified: How Pornography Is Transforming Our Lives, Our Relationships and Our Families** (Times Books)



- Pelosi, Alexandra  
**Sneaking Into the Flying Circus: How the Media Turn Our Presidential Campaigns into Freak Shows** (Free Press)
- Pelton, Robert Young  
**Licensed to Kill: Privatizing the War on Terror** (Crown)
- Peter, Josh  
**Fried Twinkies, Buckle Bunnies and Bull Riders: A Year Inside the Professional Bullriders Tour** (Rodale)
- Phelps, M. William  
**Every Move You Make** (Pinnacle)
- Phillips III, John  
**God Wants You to Roll: The \$21 Million "Miracle Cars" Scam — How Two Boys Fleeced America's Churchgoers** (Carroll & Graf)



## INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

• Phillips, Michael M.  
**The Gift of Valor: A War Story**  
(Broadway)

• Plotz, David  
**The Genius Factory: The Curious History of the Nobel Prize Sperm Bank**  
(Random House)

• Pond, Steve  
**The Big Show: High Times and Dirty Dealings Backstage at the Academy Awards**  
(Faber & Faber)

• Posner, Gerald  
**Secrets of the Kingdom: The Inside Story of the Secret Saudi-U.S. Connection**  
(Random House)

• Poulson-Bryant, Scott  
**Hung**  
(Doubleday)

• Poundstone, William  
**Fortune's Formula: The Untold Story of the Scientific Betting System That Beat the Casinos and Wall Street**  
(Hill and Wang/FSG)

• Praso, Sheridan  
**The Asian Mystique: Dragon Ladies, Geisha Girls and Our Fantasies of the Exotic Orient**  
(PublicAffairs)

• Press, Bill  
**How the Republicans Stole Christmas: The Republican Party's Declared Monopoly on Religion and What Democrats Can Do to Take It Back**  
(Doubleday)

• Pyle, George  
**Raising Less Corn, More Hell: The Case for the Independent Farm and Against Industrial Food**  
(PublicAffairs)

### R

• Raab, Selwyn  
**Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires**  
(St. Martin's)

• Rathbone, Cristina  
**A World Apart: Women, Prison, and Life Behind Bars**  
(Random House)

• Ridgeway, James  
**The Five Unanswered Questions About 9/11**  
(Seven Stories Press)

• Ridgway, Nicole  
**The Running of the Bulls: Inside the Cutthroat Race From Whar-ton to Wall Street**  
(Gotham)

• Rieff, David  
**At the Point of a Gun: Democratic Dreams and Armed Intervention**  
(Simon & Schuster)

• Riley, Naomi Schafer  
**God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America**  
(St. Martin's)

• Rivard, Robert  
**Trail of Feathers: Searching for Philip True**  
(PublicAffairs)

• Roach, Mary  
**Spook: Science Tackles the After-life**  
(Norton)

• Robins, Natalie  
**Copeland's Cure: Homeopathy and the War Between Conventional and Alternative Medicine**  
(Knopf)

• Rodgers, Walter C.  
**Sleeping With Custer and the 7th Cavalry: An Embedded Reporter in Iraq**  
(Southern Illinois University Press)

• Rohm, Wendy Goldman  
**The Eighth Day: The Promise and Peril of Stem Cell Research and the Regeneration of Man**  
(Harmony)

• Royte, Elizabeth  
**Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash**  
(Little, Brown and Company)

• Ruhlman, Michael  
**House**  
(Viking)

**S**  
• Salerno, Steve  
**Sham: How the Self-Help Movement Made America Helpless**  
(Crown)

• Schultheis, Rob  
**Waging Peace: A Special Operations Team's Battle to Rebuild Iraq**  
(Gotham)

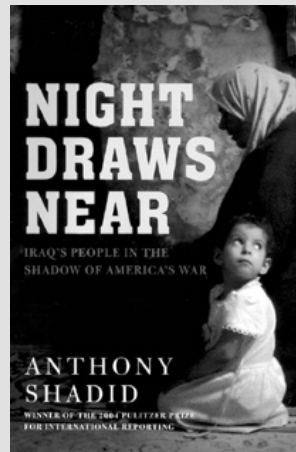
• Schumacher, Geoff  
**Sun, Sin and Suburbia: An Essential History of Modern Las Vegas**  
(Stephens Press)

• Scott, Robert  
**Monster Slayer**  
(Pinnacle)

• Seaman, Barrett  
**Binge: What Your Student Won't Tell You**  
(Wiley)

• Seife, Charles  
**Decoding the Universe: How the New Science of Information Is Explaining Everything in the Cosmos, From Our Brains to Black Holes**  
(Viking)

• Shadid, Anthony  
**Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War**  
(Holt)



• Shellenbarger, Sue  
**The Breaking Point: How Female Midlife Crisis Is Transforming Today's Women**  
(Holt)

• Sherrill, Robert  
**First Amendment Felon: The Story of Frank Wilkinson, His 132,000-Page FBI File, and His Epic Fight for Civil Rights and Liberties**  
(Nation Books)

• Shiflett, Dave  
**Exodus: Why Americans Are Fleeing Liberal Churches for Conservative Christianity**  
(Sentinel)

• Singer, Mark  
**Character Studies: Encounters With the Curiously Obsessed**  
(Houghton Mifflin)

• Skiba, Katherine M.  
**Sister in the Band of Brothers: Embedded With the 101st Airborne in Iraq**  
(University Press of Kansas)

• Sledge, Michael  
**Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Fallen**  
(Columbia University Press)

• Smith, Andrew  
**Moondust: In Search of the Men Who Fell to Earth**  
(Fourth Estate)

• Smith, John L.  
**Sharks in the Desert: The Founding Fathers and Current Kings of Las Vegas**  
(Barricade)

• Solomon, Norman  
**War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death**  
(Wiley)

• Spencer, Suzy  
**Fortune Hunter: Marriage, Murder, and Madness in the Heartland of Texas**  
(St. Martin's)

• Sperry, Paul  
**Infiltration: How Muslim Spies and Subversives Have Penetrated Washington**  
(Nelson Current)

• Stafford, Thomas  
**Afflicting the Comfortable: Journalism and Politics in West Virginia**  
(West Virginia University Press)

• Stark, Peter  
**At the Mercy of the River: An Exploration of the Last African Wilderness**  
(Ballantine)

• Stewart, James B.  
**Disneywar**  
(Simon & Schuster)

• Stille, Alexander  
**The Sack of Rome: How a Beautiful European Country with a Fabled History and a Storied Culture Was Taken Over by a Man Named Silvio Berlusconi**  
(Penguin Press)

• Stowers, Carleton  
**Where Dreams Die Hard**  
(DaCapo/Perseus)

• Stratton, W.K.  
**Chasing the Rodeo: On Wild Rides and Big Dreams, Broken Hearts and Broken Bones, and One Man's Search for the West**  
(Harcourt)

Books

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

this containment going on, how could [Iraq] have been able to re-create this infrastructure without anybody knowing?"

Landay's reporting, Borjesson points out, showed the Iraqis almost certainly had not re-created the infrastructure.

Other books written specifically about the war in Iraq range from first-person accounts by journalists who risked their lives to cover the military, to more traditional investigations written in omniscient third person after vast amounts of research away from the war zones.

Choosing the best of the bunch is difficult, because the criteria are different for various genres represented on this list. Still, I believe any list of the best books from 2005 about the Iraq war is quite likely to include "Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War" by *Washington Post* correspondent Anthony Shadid.

Others include: "Ahmad's War, Ahmad's Peace: Surviving Under Saddam, Dying in the New Iraq" by Michael Goldfarb; "The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq" by George Packer; and "Sister in the Band of Brothers: Embedded With the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne in Iraq" by Katherine M. Skiba.

At the same time, journalists delved into other dire situations around the world, highlighting issues in North Korea, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, China, Russia, the Sudan and Haiti. One of those issues that had worldwide impact was terrorism – and one of the best books in that area is "Perfect Soldiers: The Hijackers: Who They Were, Why They Did It" by Terry McDermott of the *Los Angeles Times*.

Some books investigated international issues, such as illegal narcotics or pharmaceuticals, dirty air and dirty water. An excellent example of work on global warming is "Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic" by Marla Cone.

National politics within the United States led to

exposés about the George W. Bush White House, as well as books about the perennial inefficiencies and deadly negligence of nursing homes, hospitals, physicians, the criminal justice system, prisons, public schools and so many other parts of the societal fabric.

Most books of serious nonfiction lose money or break even for their publishers. The publishers then proclaim earnings are down, the business of retailing books in brick-and-mortar stores yields little or no profit margin, and books as we know them might be impossible to sustain.

Maybe so. But the 2005 list, like the lists compiled in years past, suggests book-length investigative journalism still is thriving under the First Amendment – if not at the cash register.

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

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2005

• Suggs, Welch  
**A Place on the Team: The Triumph and Tragedy of Title IX**  
(Princeton University Press)

**T**  
• Taibbi, Matt  
**Spanking the Donkey: Dispatches From the Dumb Season**  
(New Press)



• Tayler, Jeffrey  
**Angry Wind: Through Muslim Black Africa by Truck, Bus, Boat, and Camel**  
Houghton Mifflin

• Temple-Raston, Dina  
**Justice on the Grass: Three Rwandan Journalists, Their Trial for War Crimes, and a Nation's Quest for Redemption**  
(Free Press)

• Thomas, Andrew Peyton  
**The People v. Harvard Law: How America's Oldest Law School Turned Its Back on Free Speech**  
(Encounter)

• Timmerman, Kenneth R.  
**Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown With Iran**  
(Crown Forum)

• Tobar, Hector  
**Translation Nation: Defining a New American Identity in the Spanish-Speaking United States**  
(Riverhead)

• Trento, Joseph J.  
**Prelude to Terror: The Rogue CIA and the Legacy of America's Private Intelligence Network**  
(Carroll & Graf)

• Tucker, Mike  
**Hell Is Over: Voices of the Kurds After Saddam**  
(Lyons)

**V**  
• Vise, David A. and Mark Malseed  
**The Google Story: Inside the Hottest Business, Media and Technology Success of Our Time**  
(Delacorte)

**W**  
• Wallace, Mike, with Gary Paul Gates  
**Between You and Me: A Memoir**  
(Hyperion)

• Warner, Judith  
**Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety**  
(Riverhead)

• Washburn, Jennifer  
**University Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education**  
(Basic Books)

• Waxman, Sharon  
**Rebels on the Backlot: Six Maverick Directors and How They Conquered the Hollywood Studio System**  
(HarperEntertainment)

• Weiner, Eric J.  
**What Goes Up: The Uncensored History of Modern Wall Street as Told by the Bankers, Brokers, CEOs, and Scoundrels Who Made It Happen**  
(Little, Brown and Company)

• Weingarten, Marc  
**The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight: Wolfe, Thompson, Didion and the New Journalism Revolution**  
(Crown)

• Wellman, Joy  
**Rattlesnake Romeo**  
(Pinnacle)

• Wertheim, L. Jon  
**Transition Game: How Hoosiers Went Hip-Hop**  
(Putnam)

• Wicker, Christine  
**Not in Kansas Anymore: A Curious Tale of How Magic Is Transforming America**  
(Harper San Francisco)

• Willman, Chris  
**Rednecks and Bluenecks: The Politics of Country Music**  
(New Press)

• Witcover, Jules  
**The Making of an Ink-Stained Wretch: Half a Century Pounding the Political Beat**  
(Johns Hopkins University Press)

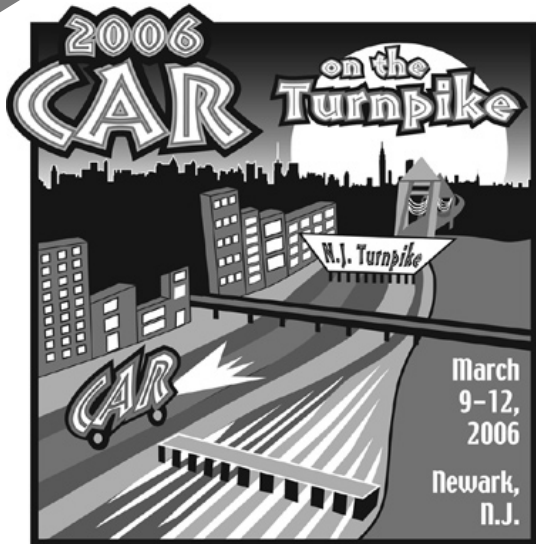
• Wojnarowski, Adrian  
**The Miracle of St. Anthony: A Season With Coach Bob Hurley and Basketball's Most Improbable Dynasty**  
(Gotham Books)

**Y**  
• York, Byron  
**The Vast Left Wing Conspiracy: The Untold Story of How Democratic Operatives, Eccentric Billionaires, Liberal Activists, and Assorted Celebrities Tried to Bring Down a President – and Why They'll Try Even Harder Next Time**  
(Crown Forum)

• Young, Christine Ellen  
**A Bitter Brew: Faith, Power, and Poison in a Small New England Town**  
(Berkley)

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Cancellations need to be sent via e-mail to [jgreen@ire.org](mailto:jgreen@ire.org). There is a \$50 processing fee for all cancellations until March 8. Refunds will not be given for cancellations after March 8.

To attend this conference, you must be an IRE member through April 1, 2006. Memberships are nonrefundable. Registration will close on Feb. 27. The last day to register without the late fee will be Feb. 17.

### MEMBERSHIP

\_\_\_\_ I am a member of IRE through April 1.  
\_\_\_\_ \$50 I need to join/renew my U.S. or international  Professional  Academic  Associate or  Retiree membership.  
\_\_\_\_ \$25 I need to join/renew my student membership.

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\_\_\_\_ \$100 I would like to register for the conference as a student.

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# STRIKE OUT

## Legal battle for state records proves jurors still excluded on basis of race

BY STEVE MCGONIGLE  
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

As a courthouse reporter in 1985, I was fascinated by Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade, a legendary prosecutor who once persuaded a Dallas jury to hand a pair of kidnappers 5,005-year prison sentences.

His team of lawyers also was the take-no-prisoner sort. They even wrote training papers on jury selection warning against taking fat people (no impulse control), anyone who had ever been to California (too liberal) and minorities (too empathetic).

During this time, I thought it seemed there were few blacks serving on juries, so I asked fellow reporter Ed Timms (now metro's city editor) to help me check it out. Our data analysis resulted in a series of stories concluding that prosecutors were systematically excluding, or "striking," almost all eligible blacks from jury service – an issue I would revisit 20 years later.

Shortly after our first stories ran, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in *Batson v. Kentucky* that racial exclusions remained prevalent enough around the country that it would impose a process by which racism could be exposed and eliminated before a jury was seated. The three-step process for challenging suspected race-based strikes became known as a *Batson* hearing.

### Juror selection

Fast forward to February 2002. Attorneys for convicted Dallas County murderer Thomas Joe Miller-El persuaded the Supreme Court to review whether his 1986 trial was invalid because of jury discrimination. We decided to take another look, too, even though this time around we suspected it would be more difficult.

For one thing, the Texas Legislature had changed the law governing access to juror information records – the cards prospective jurors fill out giving such personal information as age, birth date, occupation, address, religion and race.

There was an exception for reporters who could show "good cause," but no one had tried it. So we asked – first of the presiding judge who controlled access to juror records, and then of the 14 other Dallas County felony court judges. They all said no.

The only remaining option was to file formal motions with each judge. Despite opposition by District Attorney Bill Hill, who felt juror privacy should trump the public's right to know, each judge

ultimately agreed with us and released the records. The legal battle took almost a year.

By fall 2003, the *News* had hired Jennifer LaFleur as its computer-assisted reporting editor. With a wealth of experience in "precision journalism," she was a natural for the project. Tim Wyatt and Holly Becka, two reporters with extensive courthouse experience, rounded out our four-member team.

We had more than 6,500 juror slips digitized, built an Access database and spent months reading court transcripts and case files to accumulate additional information for our analysis. One of the key things we were looking for was evidence that attorneys had formally complained about jury discrimination by requesting a *Batson* hearing.

We also needed to know how prospective jurors answered certain questions commonly asked, which lawyers on both sides insisted was the real key (instead of race) to determining juror selection.

With the help of two other colleagues, we entered into our database how each prospective juror in 59 appealed cases answered questions during voir dire. Appealed cases were the only ones for which juror transcripts were available. But to be sure we would not have problems with the smaller sample, we tested for any significant demographic differences between jurors in the 59 cases compared with the 108 total cases in our sample. There weren't any.

Next, we went looking for an expert on jury selection who could advise us on our methodology and found David Baldus. The University of Iowa law professor had done landmark statistical research on race and the death penalty in Georgia in the mid-1980s and had published an exhaustive study of race discrimination in jury selection in the Philadelphia district attorney's office in the late 1990s.

We also enlisted advice from others who had done serious research on jury selection. Tapping LexisNexis and researchers at the Center for Jury Studies, we found Mary Rose at the University of Texas, Shari Diamond at Northwestern University, Phoebe Ellsworth at the University of Michigan and Valerie Hans at the University of Delaware (now at Cornell University).

Our data analysis was a two-step process. The first was a rudimentary analysis using the query functions of Access to obtain "strike rates" – the percentage of eligible jurors, by race, who were excluded by the prosecution or defense by means of a legal

mechanism known as a peremptory challenge.

The second phase employed a far more sophisticated analytical tool known as "logistic regression." At its most basic, this allows for each variable (age, address, religion, etc.) to be measured while controlling for every other variable. The idea is to identify the most significant factors involved in the decision-making process. In our study, what went into the decision by prosecutors to exclude blacks?

LaFleur's regression analysis allowed us to move beyond strike rates to examine what factors they may have been based upon. Not only could we say blacks were being struck at more than twice the rate of whites by prosecutors, we could say that being black was one of the top factors in deciding whether a prosecutor struck a prospective juror.

Even the two university criminologists enlisted by the district attorney to refute our findings said they were impressed by the scope and sophistication of our analysis. They simply disagreed with our conclusions.

### Thinking creatively

As critical as the data were, we knew we had to put human faces on the story. The district attorney had allowed us to interview many of his prosecutors, and we talked to dozens more defense attorneys, several of them former Hill assistants.

We also spoke with the chief judge of the Dallas Court of Appeals and more than half of the felony court judges, including the normally media shy Judge Henry Wade Jr., son of the former district attorney. To our great surprise, he said publicly that he thought racial bias was still a factor in jury selection.

We also talked to a handful of black community activists about the attitudes of minorities toward jury service. For a broader perspective, we sought out other judges, lawyers and academics from around the state and nation who had experience with the issue of jury discrimination.

We included as many "real people" in the story as we could, but were somewhat constrained by judicial orders that gave us records but restricted our ability to contact jurors without advance permission from the court. Sometimes, we had to think creatively to understand what the records were telling us. For example, one of the uniquely Texas practices we wrote about is known as a "shuffle."

Lawyers on both sides can request one shuffle of the prospective juror pool when they don't like the original, computer-generated seating order. Many lawyers think shuffles help get more minorities to the front of the pool, thereby increasing their odds of being seated as jurors.

But nothing in the records proved that a jury pool had been shuffled. We figured that out by examining whether the individualized identification numbers assigned to each prospective juror were arranged in ascending order.

When they were not, we knew the jury had been rearranged from its original order.

Further, in trying to find instances in which

minority jurors had been struck by prosecutors and then put back on a jury because a judge ruled the strike illegal, we looked for marks on the juror lists where a prosecution strike had been replaced with "J" for juror. The latter technique helped us nail down the case of the "liberal" medallion. (See [www.dallasnews.com/jury](http://www.dallasnews.com/jury) for that story, and the entire series.)

Because journalists often are criticized for overly simplistic or flat-out misuse of statistics, we also decided to allow the main subject of our investigation plenty of time to consider our findings and dispute them before publication.

We faxed the district attorney highlights of our analysis before our interview and then spent two hours discussing our findings in detail with him, a dozen of his assistants and one of the criminologists.

Hill said that no matter what the statistics showed, he knew his staff did not discriminate. He also said he felt no need to systematically track jury-selection bias among his attorneys because the courthouse rumor mill, among other things, would let him know if any of his deputies were discriminating.

We considered all of Hill's rebuttals seriously. For instance, we re-ran our analysis to see whether he was correct when he said that socio-economic status was more important than race in determining who was accepted for jury service. Since socio-economic

status is not listed on the juror information cards, we turned to Census block group data for the analysis.

His contention turned out to be incorrect. Indeed, no factor we studied could diminish the significance of race. Only factors not captured in the public record, such as jurors' body language or lawyers' intent, were not included in our analysis. Hill said that it was precisely those subtleties of body language or facial expression that led prosecutors to strike blacks more frequently than whites.

But our stable of experts told us our regression analysis was sound and that the statistical link we found between race and jury selection was so strong that something like "demeanor" could explain the gap only if it were closely tied to behaviors particular to blacks or whites.

In other words, you would have to believe that blacks were more likely to have bad attitudes if bad attitude, and not race, was a reason that black jurors were struck at higher rates.

In the end, the criminologists recruited by Hill did not dispute that prosecutors disproportionately struck blacks. They insisted, however, it would be wrong to use those statistics to infer racial bias by prosecutors.

Several times, the district attorney tried to derail our series. He demanded a meeting with our top editors; he sent a letter vaguely threatening legal

consequences if we printed the stories.

It was an interesting threat because at the time Hill was investigating the newspaper's admitted overstatement of circulation. He subpoenaed records in March and again in July— weeks after unsuccessfully appealing to the newspaper about our work. From our first interview with him, he linked our conversation with his investigation of the newspaper's circulation.

Weeks before we published, Hill held a news conference, where, surrounded by minority members of his staff, he insisted his office did not tolerate race discrimination in jury selection.

We published the three-part series Aug. 21-23. Our stories were picked up by news organizations across the country. In September, attorneys for a man charged with aggravated robbery subpoenaed our data in hopes of bolstering their argument that prosecutors using peremptory challenges would prevent their client from receiving a fair trial. That case is pending.

*Steve McGonigle has been a reporter at The Dallas Morning News since 1981, and is assigned to the projects desk. His awards include the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, the American Bar Association Silver Gavel and the National Association of Black Journalists Award.*

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# RISING COSTS

## Police overtime pay out of control as officers, prosecutors pass blame

BY JASON KANDEL  
(LOS ANGELES) DAILY NEWS

The Los Angeles Police Department's overtime budget is larger than many of the city department's regular budgets, and has been for so many years that the sheer size of it hardly makes news anymore. Still, my editor wanted me to do an overtime pay story on the LAPD.

I found that the LAPD had spent nearly \$63 million – just for overtime – through April, even though the department only budgeted \$55 million annually for 1.2 million hours of overtime.

By digging through the budget, I found court overtime was exceedingly high, there was an enormous amount of wasted time and money, and police and prosecutors were pointing fingers about who was to blame.

My first call on the story was to LAPD media relations. I told them I wanted to write about overtime costs, and they referred me to the department's Fiscal Operations Division. Once there, I chatted up the supervisor, asked her what big issues were on her plate, and she keyed me into the hot topic of discussion – rising court-related OT costs.

After she researched some numbers for me, I asked her to provide me with more data. She obliged, and provided me with 200 pages worth of overtime data – an overwhelming task to calculate. Instead, I got her to e-mail me the data in Excel spreadsheet format.

Every overtime item imaginable was in that spreadsheet: overtime for administrators, the city's 18 patrol divisions, special security details, vice units, narcotics, gangs, homicide investigations, extra patrols, internal affairs, SWAT call outs, court-related overtime and airport security. The list went on and on. This, I thought, was a good lesson in being careful what you ask for.

### The blame game

While it was the biggest batch of numbers I had crunched in Excel, it also was an invaluable lesson. I sorted the numbers by item and what had cost the department the most money. I looked for the patterns. Court-related overtime was up there – a fresh angle I wanted to pursue.

The supervisor at the Fiscal Operations Division confirmed what I had found, and gave me some principal contacts she had been dealing with about the issue. My LAPD sources provided me with names of police working in courthouses. These officers made sure other police officers not only got orders to appear in court, but showed up. I interviewed cops on the front lines who were racking up a lot of overtime because of in-court appearances.

I discovered the police were wasting more than \$1 million a month sitting at the courthouse or waiting on call on their days off for court hearings that were regularly delayed or called off because of plea bargains.

The police, who have been trying to maximize the number of officers on the streets to keep gang violence down, recognized they had a big problem. Court-related overtime was fat they could cut. Managers assigned a task force to work with prosecutors and court officials.

There seemed to be plenty of blame to go around.

Police blamed an overwhelmed court system for frequent delays, and prosecutors who required long lists of officers to be in court even if the officer was only peripherally involved in the investigation. Much of the court-related overtime was for officers being “on-call,” meaning they got paid just waiting to be summoned to testify in felony or misdemeanor cases. In many cases, police did not even get called

to court – the defendants pleaded guilty, ending the court proceedings.

Prosecutors blamed police, in rare instances, for “engineering” overtime by making an arrest, for example, at the end of their shift and having to book a suspect and do paperwork on overtime.

“There’s room for improvement on both sides,” said Janet Moore of the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office. “Officers know that they can make a lot of money off of overtime.”

One officer said some police spend their on-call time exercising at local gyms, visiting relatives or even working part-time jobs close to the courthouse – all the while getting paid a minimum of two-and-a-half hours at time and a half. One officer said he regularly racks up 20 hours of court overtime a month, supplementing his \$78,000 salary. The average amount of overtime at the LAPD is \$58 an hour.

### Local story potential

Officials admitted that cutting court overtime is a tough balancing act because of frequent delays of court hearings and the chaotic schedules of officers. But police said they were already working on the problem. They put teams into courthouses to make sure other cops not only showed up for court but also to coordinate schedules, file misdemeanor and felony cases and work an on-call unit to make sure cops are served with subpoenas. The officers also were assigned to track cases and make sure officers responded to court within an hour of being summoned.

The story helped put a spotlight on an issue that had been brewing behind the scenes for months. Frustrated city officials were scrutinizing every dollar spent by each city department on a monthly basis as they scrambled to reign in the city's \$200 million structural deficit.

Undoubtedly, cities across the country face similar problems. Look at your police department's overtime situation. Talk to cops in the field. Traffic cops who handle DUI cases get called to court a lot. Cops who make a lot of arrests are good candidates. How many times have they been called to court, but have not had to testify? Go to courthouses in the morning where a lot of cops mill about waiting to be called. Talk to prosecutors about who they call to testify in their cases. Do they call in everyone listed at a crime scene, even if the officer was only peripherally involved in the case? Does your court and department have designated subpoena control units? Talk to those cops and ask them about the process. Talk to those in the department's fiscal operations.

There's a lot of potential for follow-ups. My story prompted one police supervisor to call for an audit of Los Angeles International Airport overtime security details. That supervisor told me he believed there were some officers hoarding those coveted overtime spots, while others had to be put on a waiting list.

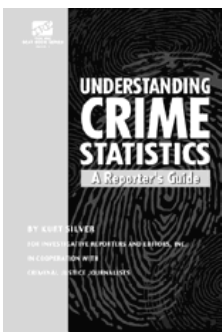
*Jason Kandel has been a reporter at the (Los Angeles) Daily News covering the LAPD and crime for six years.*

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# SOBER DATA

## Motorists escaping DUI convictions; prosecution success rates challenged

BY BRAD BRANAN  
TUCSON CITIZEN

**A**ds about the risks of drunken driving fill the airwaves each holiday season, becoming as familiar as college bowl games and bad office parties. “You Drink & Drive. You Lose,” a national campaign says. “Expect the Max,” Arizona motorists are told.

With the help of federal and state funding, police officers back the rhetoric with high-visibility “saturation patrols” and “sobriety checkpoints.”

What happens to many motorists after being arrested is a different story. In metro Tucson, nearly half of those accused of drunken driving escape conviction in the courts that handle most of the cases, we reported in a three-day series. Motorists charged three or more times are even more successful, avoiding conviction in 38 percent of all cases.

One of the reasons is that inexperienced and overloaded prosecutors often are matched against highly paid and knowledgeable defense attorneys. Further, the accused learn how to beat the system by not taking the tests for drunkenness or not showing up for court.

The cost of the justice system’s failures? Motorists with pending or dismissed charges continue to drink and drive and then kill or maim people in crashes.

Researchers have found similar problems with DUI prosecutions nationwide.

### Convention busting

The idea for the series originated with a single motor-vehicle crash in April. After allegedly driving drunk, Gregory D. Artz was charged with killing 21-year-old Aaron Anaya Jr., a former high-school football player. Artz had two prior DUI charges dismissed and pleaded guilty to lesser charges in a third case.

The failure of the courts to stop Artz made Anaya’s death even more painful for his mother.

“People try to tell me that it was God’s will or that it was his time, but I can’t think that way,” she said. “It makes me angry because I feel this could have been prevented. The system didn’t work. They didn’t do their job.”

The case raised questions: How many motorists repeatedly beat DUI charges? How many of them go on to kill or injure motorists in a drunken driving crash? To get the answers I obtained databases of drunken driving cases from Tucson City Court and Pima County Justice Court. Using Microsoft Access, I examined the results of about 33,000 DUI cases

filed in the courts between 1999 and 2004.

How the records were analyzed was the most important and controversial decision I made. I calculated the conviction rate by dividing the number of convictions by the number of filed cases instead of completed cases, the formula favored by prosecutors.

The logic of that decision is outlined in a 1999 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report, “Examination of DWI Conviction Rate Procedures,” which is available on the agency’s Web site ([www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)). Agencies tend to “calculate and report that form of conviction rate which places them in the most favorable light,” the report says.

Calculating a rate based on all cases provides the best measure of the justice system’s overall performance. Focusing only on completed cases would have meant ignoring thousands of defendants with pending cases. Almost all of the pending cases were more than six months old, while the Arizona Supreme Court wants such cases tried within six months.

### Resistant sources

During initial interviews, prosecutors and judges spent hours trying to pick apart my analysis, particularly the inclusion of pending cases. I ran a number of calculations to respond to their complaints. The results did not change much, although I agreed to include a second conviction rate in the series that excluded pending cases — 63 percent, compared with 52 percent.

The additional work was necessary to make the stories bulletproof, but also brought the added benefit of continuing the dialogue with resistant sources. Each time I returned with new numbers, they allowed me to ask more questions. They eventually answered all of my questions, probably because I seriously considered their initial complaints.

Prosecutors said they were handling more DUI cases because of population growth and increased enforcement. While local law enforcement received outside funding for additional DUI patrols, about the same number of prosecutors was handling the cases.

DUIs are considered “boot camp” training for new prosecutors eager to handle homicides and other high-profile violent crimes. At the same time, these prosecutors often face the growing number of

criminal defense attorneys specializing in DUI.

Arizona judges highlighted the advantages held by the defense in a 2002 survey by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation. They pointed to prosecutor and police problems with evidence and defense attorneys’ excessive motions as the biggest obstacles to adjudicating hard-core drinking drivers. Judges nationally reached similar conclusions.

The foundation also surveyed prosecutors, police and others in the justice system for a series of widely cited reports about the failure to stop motorists who repeatedly drink and drive. The foundation will provide survey results by individual states if asked.

### Areas of concern

Some motorists charged with DUI take advantage of other loopholes in the justice system.

Under Arizona law, motorists only are required to take a breath or a blood test, one of three tests generally used to determine drunkenness. Defense attorneys tell motorists to consent only to a blood-alcohol test. If defendants can get the test results excluded, or if the results are close to the legal limit, they can beat the case.

Motorists repeatedly cited for drunken driving often skip out on court, knowing that warrants are not actively served. About 20 percent of such motorists at one point in 2005 were facing warrants for failing to appear or comply with some other court order.

With the help of advocates at Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and a lot of records research, I was able to locate a number of victims who illustrated the human costs of the system’s failures.

I obtained databases of drunken driving accident reports from local law enforcement, and matched motorists’ names to those in the court databases. Since 1999, at least 10 Pima County motorists with pending or dismissed DUI charges were killed or killed others in drunken driving crashes.

In Tucson last year, at least 18 motorists were charged with injuring someone in a DUI crash when they had charges that were pending or dismissed. At least 32 people were injured in the crashes.

A DUI task force appointed by Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Ruth V. McGregor discussed the newspaper’s series as it prepared to make recommendations by the end of the year. McGregor told me the slow pace of DUI cases was one of the biggest problems in the state’s courts.

Pima County Attorney Barbara LaWall, while renewing her office’s objections to my analysis, said: “Your series highlighted important issues and areas of concern in the process of DUI arrest and prosecution. There is no denying there are problems that need to be fixed.”

*Brad Branan is a projects reporter at the Tucson Citizen. He previously was a regional affairs reporter at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. The series “DUI: A Failure to Convict,” can be seen at [www.tucsoncitizen.com/projects/dui05](http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/projects/dui05).*

# EXAMINING HOMELAND SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security was established after 9/11 to reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism but, more than four years later, millions of taxpayer dollars are being spent to protect a windmill in Iowa, save a pet llama in Maryland and purchase unnecessary

equipment that even public officials admit they do not need. While access to public records has been restricted, journalists are still finding ways to examine stories on everything from how many weapons are being seized in our airports to why security spending is so chaotic.

Laura Seitz | Deseret Morning News



A sampling of potential weapons that were seized at Salt Lake City's International Airport. Since 2002, more than 180,000 potential weapons have been seized.





Carly Christensen checks the photo identification and boarding pass of Chris Curphey at the Salt Lake City International Airport.

## DANGEROUS SKIES

### Agency roadblocks overcome to show millions of potential weapons seized

BY LEE DAVIDSON  
THE (SALT LAKE CITY) DESERET MORNING NEWS

Each day, people at U.S. airports surrender enough potential weapons to arm every passenger on 33 filled-to-capacity Boeing 747 jumbo jets.

Between February 2002 and March 2005, passengers surrendered nearly 16 million potential weapons – 14,000 a day on average – according to an analysis of federal data. Still, despite all the concern since 9/11, the confiscation rates among the nation's 445 airports with passenger service vary dramatically – and the Transportation Security Administration is not sure why.

Our project began as a follow up to a quick story we did in 2004. At that time, we filed a Freedom of Information request with the TSA for the number and types of potential weapons that had been confiscated at Salt Lake City International Airport (one of the nation's 33 "large hub" airports).

The TSA provided a paper copy of a spreadsheet

showing that 180,000 items had been surrendered there in a period of just more than two years, which had included the 2002 Olympics.

We began wondering how Salt Lake City's airport compared with others, so I filed another FOI request with the TSA for data from the agency's Interim Federal Security Representative and Performance Management Information System.

The request stated that I wanted "The amounts and types of potential weapons and other prohibited items surrendered or confiscated at security gates (or other passenger searches) at each airport in the United States between February 2002 and February 2005. I seek data for each separate airport. It should be available through your IFSR and PMIS databases. Please provide it in electronic format."

A couple of weeks later, an FOI official from the TSA called and said that while the requested data had

been found, it would be more than a year before I could receive it in electronic format. Why the delay? A TSA official said FOI officers are required to view every cell of every spreadsheet to ensure that it does not have hidden, sensitive information.

However, the official said that if I wanted a paper printout of those spreadsheets, I could have it immediately. I was flabbergasted and tried to negotiate for quicker release of electronic data. I was not successful.

I took the printouts, paying \$27.70 for 377 pages. But now I had a whole new set of problems.

I had to input a lot of data manually to analyze it. Some larger newspapers would have the budget to pay outside companies to do that, and to double enter it to ensure accuracy. But we are a smaller newspaper, and have no such budget. So, I did it myself amid other work.

Before starting, I took some time to decide how I wanted to put my final Excel spreadsheet together. I realized it would need to look quite different from what the TSA had provided to give me the information I desired.

While I tried to double check data as I went, I did not physically double enter it. It took more than a month to enter it.

Once completed, I did simple spreadsheet calculations to come up with information on the number of specific weapons confiscated at specific airports, and the national total. By comparing years, I tried

## Items surrendered at U.S. airports

February 2002-March 2005	FEB-DEC 2002	2003	2004	JAN-MAR 2005	TOTAL
Knives (blades longer than 3")*	44	143,622	64,714	12,208	220,588
Knives (blades shorter than 3")	318,737	1,816,913	1,985,258	434,360	4,555,258
Fireworks**	-	3,843	9,317	1,665	14,825
Ammunition/gunpowder**	-	10,764	25,619	4,682	41,065
Prohibited tools	67,103	560,137	809,044	207,036	1,643,320
Sharp objects	536,834	3,057,947	3,461,978	752,197	7,808,956
Replica weapons	20,019	28,014	17,253	3,499	68,785
Flammables/irritants	62,584	523,341	694,124	151,328	1,431,377
Explosives	388	1,086	374	148	1,996
Dangerous objects	6,927	29,493	28,239	3,820	68,479
Clubs, bats, bludgeons	3,493	25,521	29,100	5,421	63,535
Box cutters	3,961	23,545	22,410	5,007	54,923
Firearms***	148	637	254	-	1,039
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,020,194</b>	<b>6,224,863</b>	<b>7,147,674</b>	<b>1,581,371</b>	<b>15,974,146</b>

\*Category added for most in March 2003. Knives found before that included in knives less than 3 inch category.  
 \*\*Categories added in September 2003. All found before that are in flammables/irritants category  
 \*\*\*TSA quit reporting firearms seized on records provided as of August 2004

SOURCE: Deseret Morning News analysis of Transportation Security Administration data

## Weapons surrendered at smaller airports

PER 1,000 passengers  
 Medium, small and non-hub U.S. airports - February 2002-March 2005

TOP 5 MEDIUM HUBS				
RANK	AIRPORT	LOCATION	WEAPONS SURRENDERED	WEAPONS PER 1,000 PASSENGERS
1.	Eppley Airfield	Omaha, NE	60,601	15.8
2.	Louisville Intl	Louisville, KY	70,710	14.0
3.	Green State	Providence, RI	112,418	13.9
4.	Steven Anchorage	Anchorage, AK	71,318	13.7
5.	Bradley Intl	Hartford, CT	131,781	13.5
<b>TOTAL/AVERAGE FOR ALL MEDIUM HUBS</b>			<b>3.6 million</b>	<b>10.4</b>

TOP 5 SMALL HUBS				
RANK	AIRPORT	LOCATION	WEAPONS SURRENDERED	WEAPONS PER 1,000 PASSENGERS
1.	Saipan Intl	Saipan, MP	27,826	288.5
2.	Guam Intl	Agana, GU	49,597	166.2
3.	Orlando Sanford	Sanford, FL	19,683	97.3
4.	Tulsa Intl	Tulsa, OK	93,453	22.8
5.	Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara, CA	21,223	21.8
<b>TOTAL/AVERAGE FOR ALL SMALL HUBS</b>			<b>2 million</b>	<b>13.9</b>

TOP 5 NON-HUBS*				
RANK	AIRPORT	LOCATION	WEAPONS SURRENDERED	WEAPONS PER 1,000 PASSENGERS
1.	Greater Rockford	Rockford, IL	1,753	676.0
2.	Gary/Chicago Intl	Gary, IN	945	535.7
3.	Canyonlands Field	Moab, UT	480	257.5
4.	Clinton County	Plattsburgh, NY	276	138.8
5.	Vernal	Vernal, UT	238	112.6
<b>TOTAL/AVERAGE FOR ALL NON-HUBS</b>			<b>943,680</b>	<b>17.1</b>

\*at least 1,000 passengers in period

Based on origination passengers, according to Bureau of Transportation statistics.  
 SOURCE: Deseret Morning News analysis of Transportation Security Administration records



TSA employee Connie Clements (left) uses a hand-held metal detector to conduct a secondary search of Amanda Fossum at the Salt Lake City International Airport.

Keith Johnson | Deseret Morning News

to determine whether the number of weapons seized was growing.

Still, to do true comparisons I realized I needed to compute weapons seized per passenger, meaning I needed to find data about how many passengers used each airport. I initially relied on the number of "passenger enplanements" for airports found through the Federal Aviation Administration.

I then asked the TSA to review my data since I was concerned about the accuracy of the data I had entered by hand.

While the TSA said my numbers were close enough to be considered accurate, they protested my use of "enplanement" data to come up with confiscation rates per passenger because many passengers counted in "enplanements" never pass through security at larger airports as they transfer

planes.

TSA said that since that would make confiscation rates at hubs falsely appear smaller, I should use data for "originating passengers." However, neither the TSA nor the FAA has such data.

After searching, I found the Bureau of Transportation Statistics does have monthly surveys estimating originating passengers at most airports. Still, because a few smaller airports lack originating passenger data, I had to use "enplanement" information for them.

After that, it was easy to figure weapons seized per passenger for each airport and how rates differed among large, medium and small airports.

In my story, I did note some holes in the data. For example, the TSA quit tracking (at least in data provided to us) how many firearms were surrendered

after August 2004. Also, during 2002, TSA reported no weapons confiscated over long periods for several airports. So, we used data for 2003 and 2004 to compare trends.

We ended up with a story showing numbers of weapons confiscated at all U.S. airports, with charts revealing which airports found the most. We put some extensive charts online that showed totals for each airport.

*Lee Davidson is a special projects reporter for the Deseret Morning News of Salt Lake City. He was its Washington, D.C., correspondent for 17 years, and has won numerous national and regional reporting awards. If you are interested in doing a similar story, his spreadsheets are available. Contact him at lee@desnews.com.*

# GRANT MONEY

## Access to state operations reveals spending run amok

BY GREG BARRETT  
THE (BALTIMORE) SUN

When the federal government allots \$13 billion in homeland security grants over the course of three years, it doesn't take Woodward and Bernstein to figure out a story might be found in the receipts. "Follow the money" is the mantra of watchdogs everywhere.

So, after Maryland completed its first fiscal year of homeland security purchases, editors at *The Sun* wanted the books examined. How exactly was the state spending its \$322 million cut of federal taxpayer money? How was all this new spending authority being used?

But, as is the case with all government dealings in homeland security, most of the operation's finer details were held like a state secret.

The receipts and homeland security contracts for the state's city and county jurisdictions are filed in 27 purchase binders the size of unabridged dictionaries, and stored behind the gates of the Camp Fretterd Army National Guard compound in rural Reisterstown, Md. This is where the offices are for the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, which oversees most of the homeland security purchases.

*The Sun* was told by state officials that for reasons of security, it was unlikely reporters would be granted access to the books. And if reporters ever were allowed to see them, the books would be heavily redacted and *The Sun* would be charged per hour for the manpower needed to vet each page. The cost estimate for the volume of material being discussed was staggering.

Nevertheless, we filed a public records request, called a Public Information Act (PIA) request in Maryland. While we waited for the state's response, we started the legwork by going door to door to some of the state's high-risk jurisdictions, such as Montgomery County, which abuts Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, and to some low-risk counties like rural Kent. All were relatively open and cooperative.

### Exhaustive spending

We wrote the first package of stories before the state responded to our PIA request. The report totaled 4,000 words and began on the Sunday front page in March. *The Sun* provided snapshots of spending, but gave readers specifics about a hi-tech buying spree that was well under way with federal tax dollars.

For example, Baltimore City was in the final stages

of building a \$1.3 million "Watch Center" which would be fed by surveillance cameras hung from public and private buildings. From a well-guarded location the police wanted to keep secret, the city would be able to monitor Baltimore's bridges, ports, stadiums, streets, highways and harbors on a bank of plasma TV screens.

Montgomery County's \$965,886 police command bus — a Lynch Diversified Vehicle, the new Cadillac of law enforcement — was as large as a Greyhound and had seven flat-screen plasma computer monitors, high-speed Internet, DirecTV Satellite news and more cafeteria-size Bunn coffee makers than law enforcement officers said they would ever use.

The county's old bus — used on stakeouts during the notorious 2002 sniper killings that haunted the Washington, D.C., region — was 12 feet shorter, had one computer and no Internet or satellite TV. Coffee was ordered in.

Kent County (population 19,582), an outpost on Maryland's Eastern Shore, used its cut of homeland security money to buy an \$8,800 hand-held chemical warfare detector. County officials admitted that al-Qaida was an unlikely threat, but they were enamored with the device after watching the military train with it. They expected to use it only on overturned chemical trucks.

Our reports described a pattern of exhaustive spending spurred by the spend-it-or-lose-it rules of homeland security grants. If a state did not consume its federal grant awards by each fiscal year's deadline, the money stayed indefinitely in Washington.

Montgomery County's new homeland security director called it a challenge just to spend all of the money within the deadlines. So vast were the grants that the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) contacted the state's 26 jurisdictions as the one-year deadlines approached. It asked a question previously unthinkable for a government bureaucracy: "Can you spend more?"

MEMA, the primary custodian of these first-responder grants, was rushing to allocate the last \$4.3 million of its fiscal year 2003 awards before Washington closed the books.

James Carafano, a homeland security research analyst for Washington's conservative Heritage Foundation, said he considered the planning and spending reckless. "After 9/11, action preceded thought. We were throwing money at the problem because we didn't know what else to do," he said. "It is excusable in 2003. It will not be excusable in 2006."

### Senseless expenses

Three days after this first package of stories ran in *The Sun*, the state granted our PIA request to review its homeland security purchase binders — receipts, invoices and memoranda of agreements. A spokesman for the state's Office of Homeland Security phoned to

Doug Kapustin | The Sun



Richard Boughner, a sales manager with iPix, adjusts a set of security cameras on display. Together the cameras can provide wide, panoramic views and the ability to zoom in to read numbers from license plates. Homeland Security has brought a windfall of federal grant money to Maryland and the nation to beef up our defenses.

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say access was granted because the previous stories appeared to be fair and balanced.

Also, I thought, the state had seen we were determined to report the story with or without its help, so why not allow us into Camp Fretterd where the research could be more closely monitored and controlled?

When we arrived at MEMA's offices, we were surprised that no receipts, invoices, memos or memoranda of agreements had been redacted. The state allowed us to bring a laptop computer and scanner, which we used to download all documents we considered significant. After two or three weeks — it's all a blur from staring at the small type — *The Sun* had scanned several hundred receipts and reviewed nearly 10,000 pages of documents, including hastily written inner-office e-mails and Post-it notes.

We found receipts for homeland security exercises that seemed senseless — i.e. \$17,234 for large-animal rescue training that involved saving a pet llama named Dexter — and supplementary purchases that made Baltimore's mayor sound hypocritical.

In our first round of stories, Mayor Martin O'Malley had criticized Congress for not spending enough on homeland security. He called the grants "woefully under funded."

Now we had receipts showing that Baltimore had

spent \$23,572 in federal homeland security grant money on embroidered polo shirts, fleece pullovers, Nantucket caps and duffel bags. It spent another \$12,864 on personal travel kits filled with shampoo, toothpaste and the like. The clothes and hats were used to identify different players in a mock bioterrorism exercise, and then given to first responders, along with the travel kits.

O'Malley sounded chagrined and vowed not to repeat the purchases. "I think we probably could have accomplished the same thing with T-shirts," he said.

### Intimate dialogue

Just as important as our access to the receipts was our access to the office staff — the state accountants and auditors at Camp Fretterd who managed the grant program. Over time they grew increasingly comfortable with our presence and they talked freely. In these conversations, they discussed the flaws of a grant program that was burdensome and, at times, chaotic.

What had been described by the state's brass as a smooth operation appeared in the trenches to be dysfunctional.

In our report in May, we described a grant program that directed most of its spending appropriately, but an office that struggled to manage the new spend-

ing authority.

The pool of grants handled by MEMA's small staff had grown 20-fold — from \$2.8 million to \$60 million since Sept. 11, 2001 — with no additional personnel added. A state accountant confessed, "If you wanted to know how many trucks have been bought in the state [with homeland security money], right now I couldn't tell you. ... I'd have to pull each voucher."

In an e-mail buried in the receipts, a state auditor was juggling purchase revisions and confusing acronyms with the state Domestic Preparedness Division when, exasperated, she appeared to sum up the underlying mood of the program:

"OK, OK, you are driving me crazy. ... Who is OCME — is that Ocean City or some other obscure groupie??? ... I believe I'm beginning to need something that begins with D, either Death or Drunkeness. Maybe Double D — Death by Drunkeness???"

After the stories ran, a state spokesman called to say they were fair, but he joked (or maybe not) that things would be different the next time *The Sun* is given access to state records: Reporters would not be privy to the intimate dialogue voiced by e-mails and Post-its.

*Greg Barrett is a general assignment reporter for The (Baltimore) Sun.*

Monica Lopossay | The Sun



Maryland purchased five heavily armored police vehicles using homeland security funds.

# 9/11 FUNDS

## Scrutiny of SBA database uncovers loans given to businesses that never wanted them

BY DIRK LAMMERS  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

As farmers in western South Dakota faced another year of drought, I decided to use some precious enterprise reporting time and look at the Small Business Administration's disaster loan database I had obtained from NICAR.

As I looked at the businesses approved for disaster loans, imagine my surprise when I discovered a South Dakota country radio station had received a loan tied to the World Trade Center terrorist attacks more than 1,700 miles away in New York City.

I called Frank Bass, the AP's director of computer investigation whom I had met at the 2004 CAR Conference in Cincinnati. He downloaded the same database and found even more puzzling borrowers of the disaster loans tied to the 9/11 attack: a pet boutique in Utah, a perfume bar in the Virgin Islands and a gun dealer in Guam.

The program's guidelines stated that each of the 10,000 borrowers had to submit a brief statement conveying how they were affected by the attacks. While we wanted to file FOIA requests for all of them, we soon discovered that we would have to submit separate requests for the SBA's four regional offices, which could take quite a bit of time. So, we picked the most interesting recipients out of the database and about a month later information began trickling in.

Some of the requests were barely touched by the dreaded redacting marker. Others were nearly covered by the black ink. (We appealed the most unusable batch.)

### Internet Resources

Facts on International Relations and Security Trends (FIRST) is a joint project of the International Relations and Security Network (ISN) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). FIRST provides an integrated database system containing clearly documented information from the field of international relations and security, taken from research institutes around the world. (<http://first.sipri.se>)

NewsLab is a nonprofit resource center for television and radio newsrooms focused on training and research. NewsLab's homeland security Web page ([www.newslab.org/links/homelandsecuritylinks.htm](http://www.newslab.org/links/homelandsecuritylinks.htm)) provides an extensive list of Web resources for investigating homeland security.

Project on Government Oversight (POGO) was founded in 1981, and is an independent nonprofit organization that investigates and exposes corruption in the federal government. Among other things, its Web site lists the latest stories on homeland security at [www.pogo.org/p/x/archivesecurity.html](http://www.pogo.org/p/x/archivesecurity.html).

### Curveballs ahead

Our story caught the interest of John Solomon, an investigative AP editor in Washington, D.C. He was putting together a multimedia investigative team and had hired Bass as one of his reporters. The SBA loan story would be the team's first major effort complete with video, audio, graphics and multimedia elements.

We began talking to the businesses that had received the loans, including a Maine broccoli farm and a Maryland skydiving school. We found that companies far removed from the disaster areas received about \$1 billion in loans from the SBA.

But just when we thought a run date might be in our future, we were hit by curveball No. 1: We discovered another \$3.7 billion in SBA Sept. 11 loans – more than triple our original amount.

The loans came from the SBA's Supplemental Terrorism Activity Relief (STAR) program, an offshoot of the agency's standard business loan program. The SBA let banks lend the money to businesses while it guaranteed the loans from default. The agency said a business only had to show an indirect tie to the attacks, and it left it up to banks to decide whether a company was eligible.

Bass requested the SBA database, which arrived in about two weeks. But we were now looking at nearly 19,000 loans, totaling \$4.9 billion. We put together an abbreviated spreadsheet – business name, business type, address, city, state, ZIP code, date of loan and amount for each borrower – and sent a copy of the spreadsheet to AP bureaus in every state. In addition, we created an online database so members could localize their own stories.

The bureau reporters had just started working on their state sidebars when we were hit by curveball No. 2: Borrowers from all over the country were denying they received any Sept. 11 loans.

Was the database wrong? Would we have to scrap the entire project or at least scale it back to the original focus? Was I going to have to cancel my vacation to Florida that was already paid for?

No, no ... and definitely no.

Persistent reporters such as Carrie Spencer in Ohio and Stephanie Stoughton in Virginia helped uncover the fact that

scores of businesses that went to the SBA seeking general business loans were unknowingly put into the STAR loan program.

The SBA said it may have happened when some banks were less strict with the guidelines, hinting that ulterior motives were at work. But banks we contacted insisted they followed the rules and did nothing wrong.

Banking officials said the agency encouraged the industry to use the STAR program liberally, especially when its normal guaranteed lending program was hit by steep budget cuts in 2002. The president of the National Association of Guaranteed Lenders said an SBA official told lenders at an association conference that if they could not find a reason to move a loan into STAR, she would help them find a reason.

### Wealth of information

Great interviews started pouring in from the bureaus. Many business owners were appalled their loan was pulled from a pool set aside for those affected by 9/11. Many said they would not have taken the money if they had known.

By this time, we had a wealth of great information and that is where Solomon's skill as an editor really paid off, helping us cut to the chase:

WASHINGTON (AP) – The government's \$5 billion effort to help small businesses recover from the Sept. 11 attacks was so loosely managed that it gave low-interest loans to companies that didn't need terrorism relief – or even know they were getting it, The Associated Press has found.

And while some at New York's Ground Zero couldn't get assistance they desperately sought, companies far removed from the devastation – a South Dakota country radio station, a Virgin Islands perfume shop, a Utah dog boutique, and more than 100 Dunkin' Donuts and Subway sandwich shops – had no problem winning the government-guaranteed loans.

Even before it landed on front pages across the country on Sept. 11, the package held the top spot on Yahoo! News for hours. The mainbar was accompanied by more than three dozen state AP sidebars packed with closer-to-home examples.

Within 24 hours of its publication, Sens. Olympia Snowe, chairwoman of the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee; John Kerry, the ranking committee Democrat; and Hillary Rodham Clinton were calling for an investigation.

The SBA's head of public affairs called me saying the piece was a hack job, while the agency head contended our story was "rife with errors." But when asked to specify those errors, the agency head backed off, calling the reports "sensational and distorted."

We spent considerable time during the two weeks after the piece ran firing letters back and forth specifying

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our accuracy.

A banking industry official said if our purpose was to ensure that businesses wiped out by Hurricane Katrina would be afraid to apply for help, then we were successful.

We continue to do follow ups. The latest piece revealed that \$245 million from the main Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) effort – the \$1.2 billion program – have been charged off, liquidated or are at least 60 days delinquent. It is the largest disaster recovery failure amount in history, nearly double the \$122 million defaulted upon for businesses awarded disaster loans in the wake of the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

*Dirk Lammers has worked for The Associated Press since 2003 and is working at the Sioux Falls, S.D., bureau. Frank Bass is an AP investigative reporter based in Washington, D.C., and previously served as the news organization's director of computer-assisted reporting. John Solomon has been with the AP since 1987 and is the AP's director of multimedia investigative reporting in Washington, D.C.*

## Stories from the IRE RESOURCE CENTER

- **Story No. 20865.** "Anti-Terror Funds Buy Wide Array of Pet Projects," by Jo Becker, Sarah Cohen and Spencer Hsu, *The Washington Post*. This story traced the path of the region's first wave of homeland security aid from its distribution through its final use, a trail that has been largely unexamined by federal regulators. The reporters found that much of the \$324 million directed to the Washington region after the 9/11 terrorist attacks remained unspent or funded projects with questionable connections to homeland security. The analysis included a review of contracts, grant proposals and purchasing databases. (2003)
- **Story No. 22060.** "Aloha Al Qaeda," by Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Maddy Sauer and Simon Surowicz, ABC News Primetime Live. ABC delves into wasteful spending by the Department of Homeland Security. Among other scenes is outgoing secretary Tom Ridge lounging by the pool at a resort in Hawaii while staffers swim and snorkel nearby, all on a working day and at taxpayers' expense. (2004)
- **Story No. 21593.** "Ethical Breaches by Homeland Security Nominee Bernard Kerik," by Russ Buettner, *New York Daily News*. Buettner reveals that the New York correction commissioner Bernard Kerik accepted a number of gifts and cash, and failed to file proper public disclosures. The Secretary of Homeland Security nominee was accused of several additional indiscretions. Just before the stories were to be published, Kerik withdrew his nomination and eventually resigned from Rudolph Guiliani's consulting firm. (2004)
- **Story No. 21708.** "Homeland security spending leaps to \$110 million a year in Pennsylvania," by Tim Darragh, *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pa.). Homeland security spending in Pennsylvania increased 100-fold over four years, transferring disaster preparedness from an afterthought of county government to big-budget, high-tech operations. (2004)
- **Story No. 21353.** "Missing plan to protect the homeland," by Sean Holstege, Michele Marcucci, Mike Oliver and Ian Hoffman, *The Oakland (Calif.) Tribune*. Throughout California, officials deal with the misappropriation of homeland security funding. Some of the smaller counties used the anti-terrorism funding for such minor repairs as fixing courthouse doors. (2004)
- **Story No. 20855.** "Tossed Out of America," by Flynn McRoberts, Cam Simpson and Liz Sly, *Chicago Tribune*. The *Tribune* followed a planeload of Pakistani men deported from the United States to examine the effectiveness and impact of counter-terrorism programs implemented by the Bush administration. The investigation found that the programs cause rifts and tension between governments and within cultures and families. (2003)
- **Story No. 20953.** "Nuclear Smuggling Project," by Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, David Scott, Yoruba Richen and Gerilyn Curtin, ABC News Primetime Live. Major lapses and gaps in homeland security at ports are revealed by smuggling harmless depleted uranium from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Los Angeles. The shipping container was never opened for inspection at any point during its three-week transit. (2003)
- **Story No. 19750.** "Homeland Security," by Steve Kroft, Leslie Cockburn and Sianne Garlick, CBS News 60 Minutes. This investigation reveals the Immigration and Naturalization Service is "afflicted by a culture of mismanagement and corruption." A whistleblower says the agency's executives encouraged inspectors to allow foreigners into the United States without looking up their names in terrorist watch lists. (2002)
- **Story No. 20631.** "Operation Enduring Liberty," "The Cops Are Watching You," "The Big Chill," "Vigilante Justice," "Homeland Security X 50," "Foreign? Suspicious!" and "D.C.'s Virtual Panopticon," by David Cole, Robert Dreyfuss, Marc Cooper, Amy Bach, Eve Pell, Will Evans and Christian Parenti, *The Nation*. This series of articles in *The Nation* follows various aspects of the "war on terror." Several articles touch on the classification of protest groups in America as "terrorists." (2002)
- **Story No. 19050.** "What Terrorists Want," by Nicholas Lemann, *The New Yorker*. After 9/11, terrorism experts came out of the woodwork to say how they think terrorism can be stopped. Lemann looks specifically into the idea of what terrorists want in the first place and how that plays into stopping global terrorism. (2001)

### Some things we learned (and relearned) from the project:

- Do not be tied to the "computer" portion of a computer-assisted reporting project. The heart and soul of the package came from great interviews by reporters. The database gives you the questions, not the answers. It led us to talk with the right people.
- Do not assume all internal memos have to come via a leak from a disgruntled employee. Many useful documents are out there sitting in some Internet directory, and it just takes rewording Google searches until you find the document you are looking for.
- Search LexisNexis and the Internet for industry publications on your subject. The day our story hit the Internet, a banking newsletter publisher sent me an edition with a transcript of the SBA official saying the agency wouldn't "play gotcha" with the STAR loans.
- Do not get too frustrated with having to change course. We came upon detours twice with this project, and both times they led to a better story.
- Do not think there is just one government program that handles all needs. It's a mistake to credit a bureaucracy with that much efficiency. Ask around, then ask around some more. We are quite sure there are more 9/11-related programs around, and all of them bear examination.
- Do not think you have to be a dedicated CAR specialist to work on a project. Most of my time at AP is spent acting as desk supervisor at a control bureau. If you stumble upon a solid story, use whatever time you can each day to move forward on it.

# FEDERAL MONEY

## Security officials equally confounded by list documenting state's critical assets

BY BERT DALMER  
THE DES MOINES REGISTER

**“W**ildlife ... dams ... quarry ... radio ... warehouse ... heliport ... wildlife ... dams ... quarry ... radio ... warehouse ... heliport.”

I repeatedly ran the words through my head in a futile attempt to note everything important from a list of landmarks designated as “critical assets” by state homeland security officials.

Under Iowa law, the list of critical assets – places where mass destruction could arise if attacked by terrorists – was public information. But in a quirk of law, which is becoming more common among our post-9/11 governments, I was not allowed to take any notes on what I saw.

As I leafed through these hundreds of pages of nearly 12,000 assets, two things became clear: 1) my memory was no substitute for a notebook; and 2) there were some pretty questionable items on this list.

I was tempted on a few occasions to run to the bathroom to scribble down notes on scraps of paper, a la Dustin Hoffman in “All the President’s Men.”

Instead, after an hour and a half of reading and re-reading the list, I said a hasty good-bye to the two kindly officials who had monitored my every move, ran to my car and wrote until I could remember no more.

I managed to recall about 60 specific spots around Iowa whose presence on the list theoretically made them more worthy of extra security measures. Some were obvious choices. Others were bona fide headaches.

But it was interesting to note what *wasn’t* on the list.

### A good chuckle

While the Danish Windmill Museum in Elk Horn (daily average attendance: 200) had made the cut, the state’s two tallest skyscrapers in Des Moines (78 combined floors of office space) had not.

The state’s alcohol warehouse also was a priority item worth protecting, but public court-houses were forgotten. An Indian reservation and a 7,800-acre wildlife refuge were also included on the watch list.

Some quick tabulating at the office revealed that Iowa had twice as many critical assets as it had sworn police to protect them.

Needless to say, national security experts living in more target-rich locales had

a good chuckle about our findings.

“Unless it’s providing all of the wind energy for the state of Iowa,” said one, “I wouldn’t find the windmill museum critical.”

Some local police said they were unaware of the contents of the list and were unclear about what the designation meant. Even the windmill museum’s manager was taken aback by the news. “I don’t know whether I should feel honored or not,” she said.

State homeland security officials explained that the list was a sort of rough draft, compiled hurriedly in the months following the 9/11 attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. But this was almost four years later, and the state was using the list to help determine which police and firefighters should get the biggest proportion of the federal homeland security money coming to Iowa.

The *Register’s* previous analysis of those grants had shown that Iowa’s capital and most populous city, Des Moines, had received only \$250,000 of the state’s first \$28 million from the feds’ State Homeland Security Grant Program.

No question, I had my story. But doubts soon arose as to whether it would ever run.

During interviews, the state’s new homeland security chief was refreshingly candid about the list – he even acknowledged that some things on the list “made no sense” and would be scrutinized when the list was updated later in the year. But he declined to discuss the rationale for any specific asset’s inclusion on the list, or even confirm its presence there, citing secrecy provisions in state law.

I silently worried whether I might in some way be bound by the same restraint.

### Breaking a pledge

Historically, of course, the government cannot impose a prior restraint on the press, except in extremely limited circumstances. In this case – constitutional concerns notwithstanding – the state law said that the critical-assets list “shall not be copied in any manner.”

Before I had applied to see the list (as was required under state law), *Register* Managing Editor Rick Tapscott and I had guessed that, if we were granted access, we must be in the clear on publication. On the advice of our attorney, Mike Giudicessi, we had attached an addendum to our application emphasizing that I was a reporter and would be viewing the list as part of my newsgathering duties.

The application, which was required of both public and private information-seekers, was quickly approved.

However, a second look at the application included a disclaimer that the reader of the list should not “disseminate the information without the prior approval of the administrator.”

We were now troubled by whether my initial access to the list simultaneously constituted prior approval to write about it.

To set things straight, I called the administrator to let him know we had plans to write about a handful of specific assets. Predictably, he objected.

We were now in the position of possibly breaking a pledge we had unwittingly made not to reveal the contents of the list.

Gary Fandel | The Des Moines Register



The Danish Windmill at Elk Horn, which has a daily average attendance of 200, is on the state’s critical asset list.

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# EXAMINING HOMELAND SECURITY

Thus began the internal debate:

Is this law unconstitutional?

Should we write the story anyway?

Could we write about things *not* on the list?

Should we write only about assets in the general sense, like “dams” and “bridges”?

In the end, we called upon the common sense of the state’s homeland security chief to recognize that revealing a few of the items would pose little if any threat to public safety. And, to his credit, despite knowing which direction our story likely would take, he ultimately gave his written, unconditional approval for me to write about a select number of assets from the list.

“We’re still discussing what the law means,” he acknowledged. “We’re still trying to figure out what constitutes a copying of the list. This isn’t a copying

of the list.”

Response to the story was widespread. Public-action groups and blogs distributed the story nationwide. More questions on

the nation’s homeland security strategy were posed, in Congress and among experts, and debate over the definition of critical assets – and the public’s interest in knowing about them – continues.

Iowa’s critical-asset list has since been revised to about 1,400 entries. The list reportedly focuses more on interrelated systems of infrastructure than specific structures. My application to see the new list has been approved.

Wish me luck.

*Bert Dalmer is a special-projects reporter with The Des Moines Register.*

## What is a critical asset?

Federal and state laws define the term similarly, but the definitions have been wide open to interpretation:

- The federal Patriot Act: “Systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.”
- State of Iowa: “Any system or asset in Iowa that if attacked would result in catastrophic loss of life and/or catastrophic economic loss.”

In Iowa, the critical-asset lists are intended as a road map for regular patrols and as a sortable index when sector-specific threats are relayed by intelligence agencies. They also are used by the state to dole out federal homeland security grants among the counties.

In late 2004, the state of Iowa was maintaining a list of critical assets that numbered 11,600. The federal government, according to state officials, then put the number in Iowa at 145.

Access to the lists varies by state; federal officials say their list is not open to public inspection.

### TIPSHEET:

State laws on access to homeland security plans and figures are all over the board. It is a sure bet that you’ll have better luck obtaining good information from the states rather than the feds.

- Peruse the state law to get a sense for its homeland security responsibilities and obligations. It’s likely that the department is bound by law to create reports that may be accessible to the public.
- Find out what the state’s plan is to spend federal homeland security grants. How does the state prioritize which cities and counties get what? Is there a formula that takes risk factors into account, or does everyone get an equal share? Does the state provide any direction to the locals on how that money should be spent?
- Check local expenditures if the state shuts you out. If you spot any exotic equipment on the local police department’s budget, chances are, they were bought with homeland security money. Ask about the source of the funding and write the story backwards, calling the state’s oversight and secrecy into question.
- Use national reports for context. The Government Accountability Office ([www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)) has some great primers on homeland security issues. Congressional committee Web sites ([www.hsc.house.gov](http://www.hsc.house.gov)) also feature studies and testimony from public and private experts. Also see reports from the U.S. Conference of Mayors ([www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org)).

## Tipsheets

If you are interested in more tips about investigating homeland security, try these sources available through the IRE Resource Center ([www.ire.org/resourcecenter](http://www.ire.org/resourcecenter)).

- **Tipsheet No. 2199**, “Homeland security: The stories we are missing.” Deborah Sherman of KUSA-Denver summarizes several investigations involving homeland security. They include tracking federal grants, assessing hospital preparedness and examining transportation and cargo concerns. She notes 13 Web resources and provides a sample public information request for fund records. (2004)
- **Tipsheet No. 1744**, “Transportation stories: Security and other stories.” Doug Pardue of *USA Today* offers a list of contacts and Internet resources for aviation safety and homeland security. The contacts include telephone numbers and explanations of what the experts do. (2005)
- **Tipsheet No. 1746**, “Covering the military during the war on terrorism.” Noelle Phillips of the *Savannah Morning News* offers a summary of resources on the military from books, news publications and Web pages. (2002)
- **Tipsheet No. 1767**, “On the home front: The battle over information access.” Sean Moulton of the Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press offers a side-by-side analysis of the Restoration of Freedom of Information Act of 2003 and the Homeland Security Act of 2002. (2003)
- **Tipsheet No. 2507**, “CAR Investigations into Homeland Security: Grants, contracts and safety.” Nancy Amons of WSMV-Nashville takes reporters through the process of finding a story on local government spending of federally allocated grant money for homeland security. (2005)
- **Tipsheet No. 2218**, “Homeland Security: The stories we’re missing.” Blake Morrison of *USA Today* focuses on finding the stories in airport security. The tipsheet gives insight into getting to know airport employees and developing good sources among the air marshals. There are also hints about what types of documents and Web sites can be useful. (2004)
- **Tipsheet No. 2508**, “Hitting the Mark on Homeland Security Stories.” Sean Holstege of *The Oakland (Calif.) Tribune* reviews his paper’s in-depth statewide look at homeland security spending. He offers 16 lessons he learned from the experience. He also attached his FOI requests and some of the information he received. (2005)



# SECRECY CULTURE

## Journalists developing strategies to access restricted information

BY MICHELLE DAMMON LOYALKA  
THE IRE JOURNAL

If you are looking for evidence of just how difficult getting information from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can be, consider this: To this day, the department's National Strategy for Transportation Security plan remains classified, keeping even state and local officials, whose emergency-response strategies hinge on the plan, in the dark.

In such a tightly controlled environment, it is no surprise journalists are having trouble accessing records on homeland security budgets, grants, purchases and nearly everything else.

"The information coming out of Washington, D.C., on homeland security is really pretty poor," says Bert Dalmer, a special projects reporter who covers homeland security for *The Des Moines Register*. "Everything is just a mystery when you talk to the feds."

Chief among the current obstacles, says Rebecca Daugherty, FOI service center director at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, is the DHS's overuse of the privacy exemption to exclude any information that identifies individuals – be they government employees, contractors, or aid recipients.

Not only has this hampered reporters in locating sources, she says, but it has restricted journalists from accessing information unrelated to the individuals involved.

"The notion that any time you name an individual you are infringing on their privacy has gotten totally amok," she says.

One strategy for finding information being withheld under a privacy exemption is to think one step removed, says Mike McGraw, a veteran *Kansas City Star* projects reporter. When the Centers for Disease Control used the privacy exemption to deny his FOI request for information about victims of food poisoning, for example, he requested copies of FOI requests from attorneys looking for information on food poisoning cases from the CDC. He then worked through those attorneys to locate victims.

### The golden nuggets

Given the agency's culture of secrecy and expansive budget, following the homeland security money trail is both vitally important, and incredibly difficult, says Charles Davis, executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition. While it is possible to track dollar amounts passed on from the federal to state level, and then from the state to the local level, records regarding how the money is

spent once it reaches its destination are typically closed, he says.

"That makes it extremely difficult to see whether or not they're using the money wisely once it gets down to the local level," Davis says. "From an access advocacy perspective I think that's a disaster waiting to happen."

Since he started covering the DHS last year, Dalmer has found several ways to deal with the problem. First, he suggests attending meetings of the local Emergency Management Commission (or the equivalent), where a panel of area representatives prioritizes local homeland security allocations. This helps you understand what the perceived needs are in each locale and allows you to observe competition for funds among cities, suburbs and rural areas, which can make for good stories, he says.

Next, in lieu of access to the homeland security budget, he suggests looking at the budgets of county agencies, emergency management groups and sheriffs' departments and working your way up. Since many of these entities are perennially underfunded, a sudden spending spree may be an indication they have received homeland security grant money, Dalmer says.

When Dalmer used this approach to analyze homeland security spending in Iowa, he turned up some surprising results. He found, for example, local agencies using homeland security grants for mundane items like rubber gloves and paper shredders and a small county requesting \$6,700 for traffic cones, signs and barricades. At the other extreme, he found counties looking to buy items such as an underwater camera or a wall clock with a built-in hidden camera, and a conservation district looking to purchase 99 sets of high-tech night goggles.

"When you're doing these homeland security stories you get bogged down in jargon and it's boring as hell," he says. "But when get down to something everyone can understand, like traffic cones, that's the golden nugget."

Finally, he recommends meeting with homeland security officials at the state level. Even if they will not give out specific figures, they may be willing to discuss how they decided to allocate funds around the state. In Iowa, for example, where risk was taken into consideration, capital city Des Moines only received \$250,000 of the state's first \$28 million in homeland-security grants last year.

"There never has been a good and well thought out distribution of money," Dalmer says. "It's essen-

tially been a pork fest where everyone gets a piece, so it's so important to be a watchdog on this stuff."

### In the trenches

Journalists and others are confronting accessibility problems every day. Several Florida-area papers already have filed lawsuits in response to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) use of the privacy exemption to withhold information on last year's hurricane relief efforts.

It remains so difficult to get safety reports and risk assessment information about bridges, nuclear facilities and other places that are considered potential terrorist targets that in Missoula, Mont., county commissioners were denied access to information about a deteriorating dam a few miles upstream from the city for homeland security reasons.

Though their request for information was denied by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and not Homeland Security, Davis says it underscores the issues that arise when there is too much secrecy.

"Debate is going on now about how much risk is too much, and which risks do we face directly, and which indirectly," Davis says. While the case can be made that risk-assessment information on such structures should be withheld in the name of security, communities often face a much more direct and immediate threat from lack of access to essential safety information, he says.

To make matters worse, since homeland security is still relatively new there is a dearth of real experts who can analyze the way things should be versus the way they are, Dalmer says.

"You almost need to go to people in D.C. testifying in Congress and right in the trenches," he says. "Many scholars only know what's in the papers."

Of course, Homeland Security is not the only agency keeping a tight lid on information these days, Daugherty says. It's simply the one with the highest profile.

"We've seen the steady erosion across the federal government of finding out anything," she says. "Homeland Security is a problem now because its programs are of such profound interest to the public."

If there is a silver lining to be found anywhere in the clouds of secrecy enveloping the nation's government, it may just be that this has gotten the journalistic community and concerned citizens much more involved in FOI issues, Davis says. The National Freedom of Information Coalition is involved in startup state-level FOI coalitions in Vermont, Pennsylvania and New England and talks are under way in several other states, he says.

"We have to have a loud voice in the debate over whether or not secrecy makes us safer," he says. "We need to make the argument for access, pointing out as often as we can the folly of secrecy for secrecy's sake."

*Michelle Dammon Loyalka is editorial intern for The IRE Journal and a graduate student at the Missouri School of Journalism.*

# ANALYSIS TOOL

## Routine story rescued from mundane as Census numbers add subject depth

BY ROBERT GEBELOFF  
THE (NEWARK, N.J.) STAR-LEDGER

**M**other's Day will roll around again in a few months, just as it does every year. But did you ever consider doing some investigative work regarding this national holiday?

It can be done. It is a perfect example of how even the most superficial stories can be given meaning and depth with a little investigative work.

Specifically, we turned a Mother's Day cover piece into a look at how a woman's race impacted whether she would stay at home and take care of her children, or be employed elsewhere.

It began when Lifestyles reporters Carrie Stetler and Peggy O'Crowley approached me about helping them with their assignment last year about Mother's Day. But here's where it got interesting: They wanted to explore the state of the union for working mothers, with as much factual and demographic underpinning as possible.

Since I had experience in this area – specifically with PUMS data – they recruited me to work with them.

### Ask questions

So, just what is PUMS? It stands for Public Use Microdata Sample, and it is in many ways the best method for using Census data.

Most of the information collected by the Census is published in a series of tables, organized by topic. So there is a series of tables about income, about family relationships, and everything else collected on Census questionnaires.

There's no shortage of tables – in most cases, any question you might have about the demographics of a state, county or place can be found in one of these tables.

But PUMS gives you even more flexibility. Instead of being a series of tables tabulated by the Census, the PUMS database is sample of individual Census forms collected by the government, with names and addresses deleted to protect the privacy of Census participants.

Getting down to the individual level gives you the power to build your own tables, using any variables you want.

In my case, there were a few published Census tables that told me how many mothers there were, and how many were employed, but that was it. I used PUMS to fill in the blanks.

PUMS is a database, and you need to know how to use database software to analyze it. But the

database and the software are merely tools – to get a good analysis out of PUMS, you need to approach the project like a reporter, asking a series of questions, examining the results, and then asking your follow-ups.

My technique was this: I pulled out every Census form in which somebody was identified as a mother. And then I compiled statistics on every other variable – age, sex, place of birth, income, etc. If given time to do a project like this, I always start with a broad look at the data, because it provides you with some baseline numbers and gives you ideas for what variables you might want to “cross.”

“We weeded and pruned and pulled out the most interesting material.”

Crosstab queries involve analyzing one variable based on another. In my case, I was most interested in the demographics of working mothers, so I honed in on the employment status field, and then crossed it with everything else.

In plain English, this was the equivalent of asking: “How does race impact the likelihood that a mother will work? At what ages do a mother's workforce participation rate rise and decline? What role does economic class play in the equation?”

Because we are a statewide paper, and infinitely fascinated with how New Jersey compares to the rest of the nation, I repeated everything I had done with New Jersey PUMS data using national data.

### Ratio of working moms

After a couple of weeks, I had generated enough factual information to write a dissertation. But of course, we wanted to avoid writing a dissertation. So working with my colleagues, we weeded and pruned and pulled out the most interesting material.

And then we started reporting. As in any other computer-assisted reporting project, a statistical analysis is only a starting point. We needed to interview lots of mothers, sociologists and other experts, in part to make sure our findings jibed with reality but also to bring the findings back into the realm of storytelling.

In terms of factual information, what we found

is that the ratio of working mothers to stay-at-home moms is about 2 to 1, where it had been about half and half in 1980.

We found that New Jersey women were more likely to stay at home than women in other states, a finding driven by two underlying trends – immigration and income.

By looking at the workforce status of mothers by place of birth, we were able to document that workforce participation varies greatly among mothers from different immigrant groups. Overall, more than 40 percent of New Jersey's foreign-born mothers were staying home, and women from India, Japan and the Arab world were far more likely than others to stay home with their children. Yet women from Haiti, Jamaica and the Philippines were far more likely to raise their children and hold a job.

Aside from cultural factors, we found that economics played a major role. Many immigrant groups were starting at the bottom of the economic ladder, and the cost of child care cancels out any economic benefits of taking a job, particularly since many of the jobs available to recent immigrants were not necessarily high-wage.

For instance, the average salary for Mexican mothers who work is \$13,000 – about one-third the overall average wage of a working mother.

Money works into the equation another way, we found: The further up the economic ladder, the more likely a family will have two working parents – except at the very top, where the percentage of stay-at-home moms spikes.

At the 90th percentile – families earning more than \$150,000 – four of five mothers worked. But at the 95th percentile – incomes above \$220,000 – the trend suddenly reversed, with nearly half of all mothers choosing to stay home – upper-class households where a second income is not necessary.

We found that women with larger families were more likely to stay home, but that it's not until you get to women with four or more children that the majority were stay-at-home moms.

As education increases, women were more likely to work: 39 percent with just a high school degree stay home, but only 34 percent with a bachelor's, 26 percent with a master's, and 14 percent with a doctorate were stay-at-home mothers.

Also, younger women were more likely to stay at home than older mothers, who may be better established in their careers before having children. About 45 percent of married mothers under 30 stay at home, compared to 39 percent in their 30s and 29 percent in their 40s or 50s.

In sum, you can't make a great story with PUMS alone. But PUMS can undoubtedly make a lot of stories a lot better. If you would like to learn more about it, I highly recommend the PUMS repository at the University of Minnesota's Population Center, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)

*Robert Gebeloff is a projects reporter at The Star-Ledger in Newark, N.J.*

# BIG HURDLES

## Investigative lessons for small staffs: 'Tell them you're not going to back down'

BY E.J. SCHULTZ

THE (HILTON HEAD, S.C.) ISLAND PACKET

Can a small newspaper undertake a time-consuming investigative series? The answer is yes, if you have the commitment of not only reporters, but a top editor.

The *Island Packet* spent two months investigating a local physician, and published an exhaustive account of how the state and local court system and Board of Medical Examiners failed to sideline this doctor despite a lengthy record of alcohol-related citations.

Called "System Failure," the May 2004 series, along with a story about another doctor in another newspaper, spurred the state General Assembly to pass a law requiring more public disclosure by the medical board. Our series was a finalist for an IRE Award in the small newspaper division.

It began when *Packet* executive editor Fitz McAden opened an anonymous letter that made accusations against a well-respected cardiologist. The writer claimed this doctor was called for duty to an emergency room, but arrived drunk. The letter further stated that a nurse intervened and another

doctor was called in.

McAden did not believe it was a hoax. In fact, the leader of the 21,500-circulation newspaper "focused on it very big time," he said.

### Bend the rules

McAden easily could have passed on the story. After all, the community surely would not have noticed. The young doctor, described by patients as "gifted" and "brilliant," had reached near-celebrity status on Hilton Head, a retiree haven known for its sunny beaches and professional golf tournament.

At the same time, *Packet* reporters were busy cranking out daily stories for the small newspaper and didn't have a lot of spare time to chase down an investigative piece. Still, McAden said he thought the story was not only important for the community, but "there's just some stories you don't sacrifice."

"You just have to figure out ways," he said.

McAden assigned two reporters to the story. I was one of them. At the time, I was covering business for

the paper. (I have since moved on to cover business for *The Fresno Bee* in California.) The other reporter was Noah Haglund, then the *Packet's* police reporter. (He is now the night crime reporter for *The* (Charleston, S.C.) *Post and Courier*.)

Time was the biggest issue. Each of the *Packet's* nine staff reporters is expected to write about one story a day. Realizing that, McAden did much of the early legwork. It's an unusual role for an executive editor, but at a small paper, sometimes there's no choice.

"You maybe have to bend the rules a little bit in terms of the roles people play in the newsroom," McAden said.

McAden filed a freedom of information request for Department of Motor Vehicles records that detailed the doctor's past legal problems. The record included three driving-under-the-influence charges. McAden further discovered a conviction for leaving the scene of an accident that never made it on the doctor's driving record – the judge handling the case was a friend of the doctor.

McAden also learned that the medical board had suspended the doctor's license in 2001 while the board investigated his alcohol-related arrests. But a state administrative law judge quickly overturned the suspension. The judge, meanwhile, sealed all records of the case, keeping them from public view.

### Be a pit bull

We were not brought in on the story until McAden had a strong hunch that something was amiss in how the case was being handled.

"I didn't want to waste their time until I knew we've got a story here," McAden said. "A lot of times at a small newspaper it gets to be a question of who's got the time right now."

Further aiding the investigation was the fact that it was a rare period of calm at the *Packet*. The paper has a high turnover rate as young reporters leave for larger newspapers after two or three years. Because McAden wasn't spending time recruiting reporters, he was able to do the early investigative work.

McAden is no stranger to high-intensity reporting. He spent 15 years as an editor and reporter for *The Miami Herald*, covering airline crashes, hijackings and corruption in Florida's pari-mutuel industry.

Still, there was plenty to do when Haglund and I got involved. Our task at the beginning was to gather court documentation on the alcohol-related charges against the doctor. This was harder than it sounds. The court I was assigned to is in a small town outside Hilton Head overseen by a judge nicknamed "Bubba."

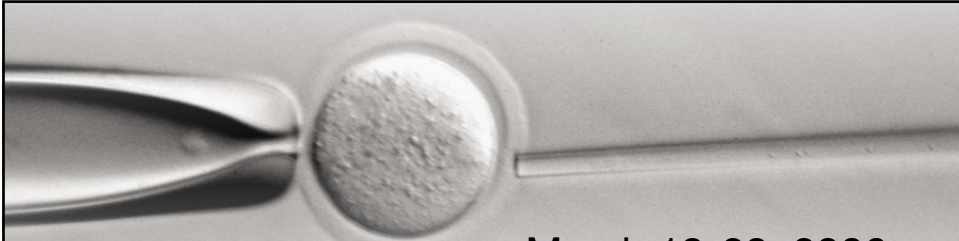
The court was not used to the media attention. The first time I asked for files on the doctor, the clerk said she had to clear it with the judge. I finally got what I wanted after five or six trips to the courthouse.

Haglund had the same problems.

"It was kind of a lesson in persistence and not giving up and asking people the same thing over and over," he said.

He remembers McAden saying: "You go and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 >




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photo by Justin Ide-Harvard University

# HEALTH BEAT

## Critical resources for investigating cold and flu season in your town

BY RHITUPARNA CHATTERJEE AND AMANDA BUCK  
THE IRE JOURNAL

As the weather turns colder, flu season warms up. With it often come reports of impending pandemics, vaccine shortages and all the risks they entail. IRE has compiled the following resources to help investigative reporters cut through the hype and offer readers a more accurate diagnosis. Also included are recent stories about this year's avian flu threat.

### Epidemics and bird flu

Recent stories about epidemics and bird flu:

- National Public Radio's flu Web page provides in-depth coverage on the topic of past and future potential flu pandemics: [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4949542](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4949542)
- *The New York Times* provides a free collection of articles published in the *Times* about avian influenza since 1996: <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/health/diseasesconditionsandhealthtopics/avianinfluenza>

### Resource Center

Stories from the Resource Center include:

- No. 20996. Radio Free Asia's Peter Zhong and Bai Fan reported on the SARS epidemic in its early stage despite an attempted cover up by the Chinese government. It was found that SARS spread rapidly and had a great impact on the social life of the Guangdong province of southern China. Reporters concluded that a blackout of the Chinese official media and government cover-ups were chief reasons for the spread of the epidemic. (2003)
- No. 17401. A CBS News investigation into the Food and Drug Administration revealed the agency has approved a number of drugs despite objections from its scientists. Among the questionably approved drugs was Relenza, a flu drug. Allyson Ross Taylor, Jim Murphy, Jim McGlinchy, Mark Katkov, Andy Triay, Sharyl Attkisson (2000).
- No. 18960. A three-month investigation found that massive efforts to provide flu shots for the public in 2000 resulted in healthy young Americans receiving shots while the elderly and those with chronic illness had to wait. It was also found that when the vaccine was available to those most vulnerable to the flu, the price was inflated. Sabin Russell, Reynolds Holding and Elizabeth Fernan-

dez, *San Francisco Chronicle* (2001).

- No. 16567. An investigation found that the FDA should have known about contamination of flu vaccinations based on a previous investigation of the same British company. Also, FDA inspectors should have been suspicious of the company when they found instances of contamination in 1999. Mike McGraw, *The Kansas City Star* (2004).
- No. 17468. Del Walters and Cindy Wright of WJLA-Washington delved into hygiene problems on airplanes. The two-part series revealed the results from an analysis of samples collected from tray tables, armrests, doorknobs, bathrooms, pillowcases and blankets on airplanes. (2000)

### Tipsheets

Tipsheets are also available from the IRE Resource Center, including:

- No. 1705. "Examining Your Local Health System" By Tracy Correa, *The Fresno Bee*. This tipsheet explains how to research medical information and what public records are available. A copy of two death certificates and a medical examiner's report are included.
- No. 2188. "Five Ways You Can Look Good on the Health Beat" by Patricia Simms, *Wisconsin State Journal*. This tipsheet lists five ways to be an above-average reporter on the health beat. Included are listservs the author recommends, as well as Web sites with information for potential story ideas.
- No. 1710. "Hospital and Medical Data Sources" by Joan Mazzolini, *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*. A tipsheet on hospital and medical data sources, what and how to search for them. Included are sample letters to health institutions requesting data.
- No. 2074. "The Perils of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)" by Peter Canfield, Dow, Lohnes & Albertson. This tipsheet offers guidelines on the privacy rules of the HIPAA statute and the release of information on protected health records.

### Web resources

If you are looking for Web resources on covering health issues, including infectious diseases such as the common flu and avian flu, consider:

- The National Institute for Computer Assisted

Reporting (NICAR) offers several databases that relate to investigating health. ([www.ire.org/datalibrary/databases](http://www.ire.org/datalibrary/databases))

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a list of resources and basic facts about influenza, including the latest information on flu vaccines, on its Web site. ([www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm))
- The scientific journal *Nature's* In Focus Web site offers resources and articles on bird flu, including an up-to-date timeline going back to 1890, when the first recorded influenza pandemic occurred. ([www.nature.com/news/infocus/birdflu.html](http://www.nature.com/news/infocus/birdflu.html))
- FacsNet Reporting Tools: Reporting on Risk Assessment – Find out how to assess risk and how to evaluate scientific studies in this primer from the Foundation for American Communications. ([www.facsnet.org/tools/ref\\_tutor/risk/index.php3](http://www.facsnet.org/tools/ref_tutor/risk/index.php3))
- Nieman Reports: Reporting on Health – A 114-page magazine published by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University in 2003 presenting scholarly articles on health journalism, including pieces on how to cover health issues and why and where health coverage goes wrong. ([www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-1NRspring/V57N1.pdf](http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-1NRspring/V57N1.pdf))
- Nieman Reports: Medical Reporting – A 127-page magazine published by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University in 2003 presenting an entire section of scholarly articles about medical reporting. ([www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-2NRsummer/V57N2.pdf](http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/03-2NRsummer/V57N2.pdf))
- MedLine Plus, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, offers an archive of the latest scientific articles on bird flu. ([www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/birdflu.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/birdflu.html))
- Science and Development Network posts a list of bird flu resources. ([www.scidev.net/ms/bird\\_flu](http://www.scidev.net/ms/bird_flu))
- The National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) lists the latest in influenza research by NIAID-funded scientists, flu publications, timeline, news releases and congressional testimony on influenza. ([www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/focuson/flu](http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/focuson/flu))
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Web page on pandemic flu offers the latest information about important facts, travel advisories as well as individual health and safety. (<http://pandemicflu.gov>)

*Rhituparna Chatterjee and Amanda Buck are graduate research assistants for IRE and the Center for Science, Health and Environmental Journalism, a program of IRE and the Missouri School of Journalism.*

# REPORTING TOOL

## Broadcast stories gain impact through variety of data analysis

BY JEFF PORTER  
THE IRE JOURNAL

Computer-assisted reporting, meet television. Actually, astute broadcasters have known about this connection for years. Now – as mapping software becomes more sophisticated, as a rising number of broadcasters are attending IRE training events, as their competitors use these investigative tools to add punch for their own stories – that connection is growing.

To help with the demand, the IRE and NICAR Database Library has become increasingly involved in broadcast stories through data analysis. We have worked with television stations across the United States on a variety of stories and in a variety of capacities.

While we have done work for broadcasters for several years, the recent spike began in February 2004, when we completed mapping analysis for KIRO-Seattle. The template – repeated in Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Tennessee and the District of Colum-

bia for starters – was to map, or “geocode,” registered sex offenders, by address. We then mapped day-care centers. The software, ArcView, generates a series of dots on a map for each set. Then, we told the software to identify instances where sex offenders are within 600 feet of a day-care center. The resulting maps and lists became a critical reporting tool.

In KIRO’s case, we found more than 600 Washington state sex offenders in proximity to day-care centers, despite state law. We found similar results in several other markets. Of course, the mapping software did not write the stories. It did not shoot one second of video. It did, though, help provide graphics to display on the air and on the Web, along with a list of places to go and people to see. Unlike anecdote-driven stories, the data work gave the story additional authority. The government agency responsible for monitoring registered sex offenders could not easily shrug off the story by saying cases were

mere isolated incidents. The data gave KIRO hard numbers to back up shoe-leather reporting.

You can order a copy of KIRO’s stories from the IRE Resource Center (573-882-3364) by asking for story No. 21849.

Since that time, we have helped broadcasters find the restaurants with the worst health inspection record, identify public employees who seem to get sick a lot on Fridays or Mondays, pinpoint hot spots of auto thefts, and find the most violent college campuses. In addition to data analysis work, NICAR staffers work with journalists to understand and use the analysis to its best potential.

In some instances, NICAR does only part of the work. As more broadcasters add their own computer-assisted reporting skills, we have done only part of the work, passing it over to the journalist. With an arsenal of hardware and software, NICAR can turn mainframe tapes into CDs of data, clean up mounds of data into a usable form, and produce easily used spreadsheets from huge databases that would engulf most commonly used database managers.

And as always, NICAR, a joint program of IRE and the Missouri School of Journalism, can provide government databases – a growing collection – with a quick turnaround when breaking news occurs.

*Jeff Porter is director of the IRE and NICAR Database Library.*

## Big hurdles

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

be a pit bull and tell them you’re not going to back down.”

It’s not as if the clerks were hiding anything. It was just that the county court system was unorganized. The filing system in the court I visited consisted of a room full of cardboard boxes stuffed with files.

“The clerks will always tell you that documents aren’t public record,” Haglund said. “Well, it turns out that most of them are.”

His suggestion: Go up the chain of command.

“You feel like a tattletale, but you have to go tell their supervisors,” he said.

One of the lessons I learned was to document everything. McAden was a stickler about it. Each time we talked to a court clerk or interviewed a source, McAden made us send him an e-mail detailing the conversation.

“It makes it stick in your brain and as you do that, you think of other questions you need to ask,” McAden said.

This also helped Haglund and me keep things straight as we juggled stories on our regular beats.

Haglund still had to write the daily crime blotter and I had to write the Friday business feature. I quit doing daily business coverage for a while.

Haglund said he “combined trips.” When he

checked for new criminal cases at the courthouse, he reminded clerks that he was still after records on the doctor.

We all learned how to be persistent.

I went door-to-door in a neighborhood looking for the whistle-blowing nurse. I never found him. But thanks to an anonymous tip, McAden and I found the 82-year-old patient who was at the emergency room the night the doctor showed up drunk. He was unaware of the doctor’s condition – until we told him.

### No unnecessary drama

Perhaps the biggest annoyance of doing such a story in a small town is that you are likely to run into sources when you don’t want to – at the grocery store, a movie, or just about anywhere.

McAden even went to the same church as the director of the hospital where the doctor worked.

“Everybody knows everybody,” McAden said. “And you have all these interconnecting relationships.”

The good thing is that it keeps you honest.

“You think a lot harder about how you’re going to say things,” McAden said.

For example, when we wrote the final story, McAden advised us to avoid unnecessary drama and let the facts tell the story.

After we broke the story, letters to the editor

poured in accusing us of “tabloid journalism” and worse. Patients of the doctor were outraged that we were “attacking” such a brilliant man. But there also were letters of encouragement and thanks.

About two weeks after our story was published, the board suspended the doctor’s medical license and ordered him to undergo treatment.

But again, an administrative law judge intervened and reinstated the doctor’s license. A deal was later worked out allowing the doctor to keep his license, but requiring him to get treatment if he wanted to practice again.

Throughout the case, we were unable to get disciplinary records on the doctor from the medical board because the case was sealed. And an administrative law judge ignored requests by the newspaper to attend hearings.

The *Packet* filed suit asking for access. In August, the state Supreme Court ruled in the *Packet*’s favor, ordering the release of the doctor’s disciplinary records. The court also ruled that administrative law judges must give the public a reason before sealing records.

Last we heard, the doctor was still living in the area but apparently is not practicing.

*E.J. Schultz is a business reporter for The Fresno Bee.*

# PAY-TO-PLAY

## Initial stories trigger more connections between business profits and politicians

BY JAMES DREW  
THE (TOLEDO) BLADE

Last April, *The Blade* published a special report on the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation investing \$50 million in a rare-coin fund controlled by Tom Noe, a Toledo area coin dealer and prominent Republican fundraiser who attained "Pioneer" status for raising at least \$100,000 for President Bush's re-election campaign.

The article examined how since 1998 the state had invested in the coin fund despite strong concerns from a bureau auditor about possible conflicts of interest and whether the state's millions were adequately protected.

That story led to: the state halting the investment; a successful *Blade* lawsuit to force the bureau to disclose its rare-coin inventory; the admission from Noe's attorney that as much as \$13 million may be missing from the funds; the resignation of the bureau's administrator; the conviction of Gov. Bob Taft and two aides for violating state ethics law by accepting gifts from Noe; formation of a federal and state force to investigate the failed investment; and the impaneling of a grand jury.

The story also triggered dozens of tips that Mike Wilkinson, Steve Eder and I have followed for the past seven months, along with two other colleagues.

Because of what happened at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, several of the tips we received have focused on whether the state's failed investment in rare coins is part of a much bigger picture involving "pay-to-play politics" in state government.

Several tipsters encouraged us to ask tough questions at the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Some of those tips turned out to be dry wells, but others had a common theme: Look at the billions of dollars that the department spends on engineering contracts.

### Political contributions

The starting point was a series of memos that a source wrote about ODOT officials who had left their jobs to work for engineering and consulting firms, and high-ranking officials in the governor's office who had resigned to become lobbyists and were representing

firms that do work with ODOT.

This source walked me through the inner workings of the department, and corroborated information that came from other tipsters.

Joe Mahr, a member of *The Blade's* investigative reporting team, submitted a public records request for ODOT paper or electronic records regarding recommendations for engineering and consulting contracts since January 1999 (when Taft took office), and contracts and correspondence about those recommendations and contracts.

We followed up with requests for personnel records for 20 former and current ODOT officials; appointment calendars; phone records; e-mails, quarterly vendor reports; vendor lists for consultants by category; correspondence and ODOT plane records.

We studied ODOT's process for selecting consultants, focusing on the high-ranking officials who three times a year pore over the rankings of engineering firms that want to design roads and bridges.

Based on two interviews with ODOT Director Gordon Proctor, we learned that officials talk about the firms' strengths and weaknesses and their track record on previous jobs, consider the recommendations of the 12 districts throughout Ohio and reach a consensus. But Proctor acknowledged he made the final call.

Spurred by a question from a source – "Why do you think engineering firms need lobbyists when they are selected for contracts based on qualifications?" – Wilkinson and I used the appointment calendars and phone records to document which firms hired high-profile lobbyists who made frequent contact with state transportation officials.

One barrier was high-ranking ODOT officials, including Proctor, who said they did not use state-issued cell phones. They said they used their private cell phones and, as a result, those records were not open to the public.

We obtained a quarterly ODOT report that ranks how much firms have received in professional service contracts over the past five years.

Wilkinson, a veteran reporter who has worked on several computer-based reporting stories, compiled the political contribution data. It showed that over the past decade, engineering and design firms have contributed more than \$1 million to politicians, political parties and political action committees. In the past five years, those same firms had received more than \$400 million in ODOT contracts.

The database showed that, although many of the firms donated, they did not contribute the same amount or get the same big-dollar ODOT contracts.

We reported the 20 firms that received the most work in the past five years from ODOT have contributed more than \$700,000 to politicians, political parties and political action committees. Those same 20 firms received nearly 60 percent of all the money spent by ODOT on consultants in the past five years.

We also found an important element of the story was the Republican Governors' Association (RGA).

Of those 20 firms that received nearly 60 percent of the money spent by ODOT, a dozen of them gave

## THE ROSALYNN CARTER FELLOWSHIPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH JOURNALISM

The Mental Health Program of The Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga., announces six one-year journalism fellowships. Designed to enhance public understanding of mental health issues and combat stigma and discrimination against people with mental illnesses, the fellowships begin in September 2006.

- The program is open to print and electronic journalists with a minimum of two years of professional experience.
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*"This program is an exciting component of our efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination against those with mental illnesses. I look forward to working with each of our fellows to promote awareness of these important issues."*

—Rosalynn Carter

The application deadline is April 17, 2006. To apply, write or e-mail:

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## CONTRACTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

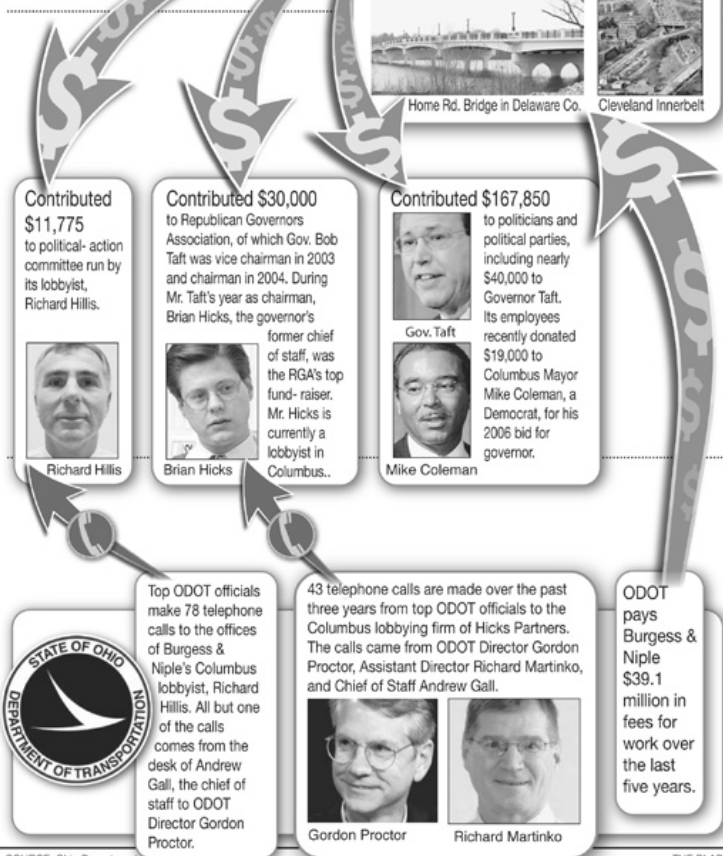
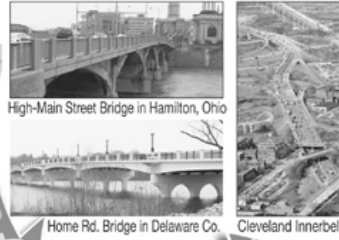
Burgess & Niple is among the most generous firms when it comes to political donations. In the last five years, the firm is second in receiving contracts from the Ohio Department of Transportation. The company chairman, however, said the firm does not expect to get work because of the contributions by its employees.



### BURGESS & NIPLÉ

Burgess & Niple is an engineering and architecture firm headquartered in Columbus.

#### ODOT PROJECTS BY BURGESS & NIPLÉ



SOURCE: Ohio Department of Transportation and Ohio Secretary of State

THE BLADE

another \$336,000 to the RGA. Brian Hicks, who was Taft's chief of staff and is now a powerful Statehouse lobbyist, controlled fundraising for that group for a time. The names of other lobbyists were familiar to us.

Several calls from ODOT went to H. Douglas Talbott, a former high-ranking aide to Gov. George Voinovich and to Taft. We had reported in June that Talbott had accepted \$39,000 from Noe and had not disclosed what he said was a loan to buy a home in Lakeside, Ohio, on his annual ethics statement.

Talbott shares office space with fellow lobbyist Dick Boylan. A source gave us copies of documents that Boylan dropped off indicating which projects his clients would prefer to get. Richard Martinko, assistant ODOT director, recalled seeing one of those spreadsheets from Boylan.

A source connected me with a former midlevel manager of a Columbus engineering and consulting firm that has designed several bridges and roads in Ohio.

In a rare use of an unnamed source by *The Blade*, the former manager – who said he couldn't speak on the record because he had joined another firm that did ODOT work – told us that when he received bonuses in the 1990s, company officials expected him to use part of the money for political contributions.

We interviewed a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party, Paul Tipps, who acknowledged that ODOT's process to pick consultants had been political in the 1980s when Democrat Richard Celeste was governor and it is political now with Republicans ruling all three branches of state government. Tipps had seen the system from vantages as party chairman under a Democratic governor and as a lobbyist in the 1990s, when the GOP had taken control of the Statehouse.

Proctor, ODOT's director, said he did not know why firms hired lobbyists and said politics had no role in the department's selection of engineering and design firms.

In fact, Proctor told us he recently had checked the Secretary of State's Web site and scrolled through the

fields to see which firms gave to political candidates and discovered that "every firm was on there."

## Cracking down

In the months following our story about the state's rare-coin investment, Democrats harped on what they called a "culture of corruption" and railed against pay-to-play politics.

The ODOT story showed that some companies had begun to shift their political contributions from Republicans to Democrats, who have lost all statewide executives' races in Ohio's last three elections.

We reported that 16 of the engineering and design firms that work for ODOT recently contributed \$134,000 to Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, a Democrat running for governor – more than half what those firms gave to Democrats over the past decade.

We then documented how much those firms gave to the three GOP candidates for governor and Coleman's primary opponent, U.S. Rep. Ted Strickland.

The issue of whether Democrats preferred to inherit the system after the 2006 election as opposed to enacting laws aimed at cracking down on "pay-to-play" such as New Jersey has done led us to expand the project into a three-part series.

Eder showed that contributions from ODOT contractors had begun to flow into Coleman's campaign.

Colleagues Christopher D. Kirkpatrick and Joshua Boak did profiles on an engineer and a well-connected Columbus lobbyist with ODOT clients who have made extensive political contributions in Ohio.

*James Drew is Columbus bureau chief with The Blade.*

## Member news

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

at *The Wall Street Journal* in New York City, where he covers Citigroup. He was an investigative reporter at *The (Bergen) Record* in Hackensack, N.J. ■ **Adam Symson** is director of news strategy and operations for the E.W. Scripps Company's broadcast television station group. Previously he was the group's director of investigations and special projects. ■ **Abby Vazquez**, formerly consumer producer at KRON-San Francisco, is an investigative producer at KPIX-San Francisco. ■ **André Verlöy** has left The Center for Public Integrity and is working for The Norwegian Investigative Journalism Foundation as well as acting as a researcher for Brennpunkt, the investigative program of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. ■ **David Zeman**, an investigative reporter with the *Detroit Free Press*, is now the paper's enterprise and investigations editor.

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Contact: Pia Christensen, [pia@ire.org](mailto:pia@ire.org), 405-707-7300

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A water taxi departs from a tanker recently anchored in Port Angeles, one of the busiest tanker stop-overs on the West coast. It is also a place where crew members can get intoxicated without worrying about going through official checkpoints.

## Breaking the corporate blockade to get the real story on oil tankers.



Eric Nalder, Reporter

After a mystery oil spill in Puget Sound, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer investigated how the oil-safety reforms instituted after the Exxon Valdez spill were working—and found that the safety net is fraying dangerously.

Investigative reporter Eric Nalder followed the trail of evidence to ConocoPhillips, the third-largest oil company in the United States. The company tried to thwart his efforts by issuing a gag order to its employees, but thanks to a whistleblower's courage and Nalder's perseverance, the P-I found a pattern of misconduct and dangerous behavior aboard oil tankers owned by Polar Tankers, a ConocoPhillips subsidiary.

Those tankers regularly carry millions of gallons of oil from Alaska to Pacific ports, and so the story was of vital interest to Seattle and the entire Puget Sound area. Through interviews and the discovery of internal company documents,

Nalder reported the coverup of an oil spill at sea, an unreported explosion, reports of alcohol use on tankers and harassment of crew members who reported problems. He found evidence that ConocoPhillips influenced a Washington study that proposed a reduction in tanker tug escorts. Nalder also detailed the checkered career of the Polar Tankers ship suspected by the Coast Guard of causing the mystery spill.

To read the series, "The Human Factor: Why Another Exxon Valdez Could Happen," visit the Web site at [seattlepi.nwsource.com/specials/oiltankers/](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/specials/oiltankers/)

The series generated a strong response, including supportive letters from mariners and the Washington Legislature's creation of a new oil spill advisory council. By overcoming obstacles to find the truth, our journalists help protect their local communities and ensure that Hearst Newspapers deliver excellence every day.



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