



Join the best in the business as IRE honors Don Bolles and the 30th anniversary of the Arizona Project at its annual conference.

The Arizona Project was the historic effort by journalists to continue the investigation that led to the killing of Arizona Republic reporter Don Bolles. Bolles and many of those 38 journalists, known as the Desert Rats, were founding members of IRE and were instrumental in shaping its future.

For IRE, the murder of Bolles – a 47-year-old husband and father – and the resulting Arizona Project brought national attention and stature. A project that had a 50 percent chance of success was published. A tiny organization with little money flourished to become what it is today. Thanks to those who have gone before, IRE now has an organization strong enough to take on today's threats to investigative reporting.

PRELIMINARY SPEAKERS LIST

Crystal Adams, University of North Texas
 Robert Anglen, *The Arizona Republic*
 Zita Arocha, University of Texas at El Paso
 Gilbert Bailon, *Al Dia*, Dallas
 Richard Behar, The Klebnikov Project
 Helena Bengtsson, The Center for Public Integrity
 Frank Blethen, *The Seattle Times*
 David Boardman, *The Seattle Times*
 Walt Bogdanich, *The New York Times*
 Susan Carroll, *Houston Chronicle*
 Janet Clayton, *Los Angeles Times*
 Paul Clolery, NPT Publishing
 Wendell Cochran, American University
 Gary Cohn, *Los Angeles Times*
 Sheila Coronel, Columbia University
 Amanda Crawford, *The Arizona Republic*
 Sandra Crucianelli, Channel 7, Bahía Blanca, Argentina
 Scott Decker, Arizona State University
 David Dietz, Bloomberg Markets
 Steve Doig, Arizona State University
 David Donald, IRE and NICAR
 Jonathan Donnellan, Esq., The Hearst Corporation
 Leonard Downie, *The Washington Post*
 John Emshwiller, *The Wall Street Journal*
 Margaret "Peggy" Engel, The Newseum
 Mark Feldstein, George Washington University
 Renee Ferguson, WMAQ-Chicago
 Gary Fields, *The Wall Street Journal*
 Richard Galant, *Newsday*
 Manny Garcia, *The Miami Herald*
 Ted Gest, Criminal Justice Journalists
 Matt Goldberg, KNBC-Los Angeles
 James Grimaldi, *The Washington Post*
 Lorie Hearn, *San Diego Union Tribune*
 Brant Houston, IRE and NICAR

Carlos Eduardo Huertas, *Consejo de Redación*
 Dianna Hunt, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*
 Alan Judd, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
 David Kaplan, *U.S. News and World Report*
 Mark Katches, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*
 Meg Kissinger, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*
 Christopher Knap, *The Orange County Register*
 Michelle Leder, Footnoted.org
 Tammy Leitner, KPHO-Phoenix
 Charles Lewis, The Fund for Independence in Journalism
 Eric Longabardi, TeleMedia News Productions/ERSNews.com
 Tony Lopez, Phoenix Police Department
 Paula Madison, KNBC-Los Angeles
 Ron Manderscheid, Constella Health Sciences
 Mike McGraw, *The Kansas City Star*
 Shawn McIntosh, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
 David McKie, CBC News
 Andy Miller, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
 David Milliron, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
 Nils Mulvad, Kaas & Mulvad
 Blake Morrison, *USA Today*
 Eric Nalder, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*
 James Neff, *The Seattle Times*
 Deborah Nelson, University of Maryland
 Ron Nixon, *The New York Times*
 Asra Nomani, freelance journalist, Georgetown University
 Tim Nostrand, *The (Hackensack, N.J.) Record*
 Lise Olsen, *Houston Chronicle*
 George Papajohn, *Chicago Tribune*
 Douglas Pardue, *The (Charleston, S.C.) Post and Courier*
 Jacquee Petchel, *The Houston Chronicle*

HOST: *The Arizona Republic*

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Conference registration and hotel reservations available at www.ire.org/training/phoenix07.

Join us in Phoenix for:

- Panels with tips and techniques from top reporters, producers, editors, news directors and writers
- Hands-on training in computer-assisted reporting from the best practitioners
- Networking and mentoring opportunities

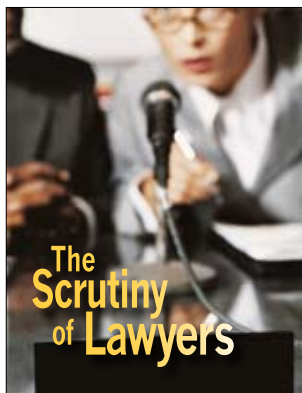


June 7-10
Phoenix, Arizona

THE IRE JOURNAL

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THE IRE JOURNAL

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FROM THE IRE OFFICES

IRE keeps budget in black with experience, grassroots support



BRANT HOUSTON

No one will dispute it has been a tumultuous year in journalism in every sector. Chains of newspapers were sold. Buy-outs, lay-offs, and budget cuts were everywhere. Although many corporations are reaping profits other industries would long to have, the projections remain bleak.

Long-time journalists wonder where the profession is going and question whether serious, credible journalism will survive. Everyone is puzzling over the best way to move to, or include, the Web.

At IRE, we don't doubt serious journalism will survive. We think that the kind of journalism we support will indeed be "the franchise" once this brutal transformation and shake-out is complete.

At the same time, we have to be financially vigilant and agile during these professional storms. We have not seen the wholesale slashes by the industry in money for training and resources since the months after 9/11.

Many companies don't seem to be investing in training for the future or, if they are, it seems to have little to do with content. We can only imagine the credibility disasters ahead if they don't invest in developing journalistic skills, techniques and knowledge.

But IRE remains focused on its goals, re-adjusting – but not dramatically changing – our operating budget and programs as we go along. And at the same time, we haven't let up on our endowment drive, despite the financial shockwaves sent through the industry.

We expect to finish this year in the black, and we have prepared a budget (see page 7) that we expect to finish in the black next year, too. We have done this, and will continue to do it, through maintenance of our most effective current programs and developing the new programs needed in the future.

If you look through the proposed budget, you will see we still receive support from the major news corporations for our conferences, regional workshops and in newsroom training, although we are conservative and don't predict that the financial support will be as much as in the past. We do expect to continue to receive support from those companies and from foundations because of the proven track record of training and services. We also have an endowment that is already providing more than \$100,000 in investment income annually.

If you examine the budget more closely, you will see that:

- Work at the database library is at an all-time high as broadcast stations and newspapers request more data and more assistance for data analysis.
- Plans are under way for more Watchdog Workshops for ethnic media newsrooms.
- Moves have been made to reduce some of the costs of our publications.
- Readjustment of staff assignments will permit more effort to go into fundraising for operations and the endowment.

We have the ability to finance new programs and new services because of our long history – 32 years – in journalism training. Because of our previous success, our financial backers know we deliver. Because of this, we expect support for our expanded training for the ethnic media newsrooms in the U.S. and for our work in campaign finance.

Like everyone else, we run a tight-ship in these stormy times. Our full-time staff of 12 is professional, experienced, and incredibly efficient. Our graduate and undergraduate student employees and volunteers are among the best in the nation. (Find another organization of this size that puts together 60 seminars and conferences a year, maintains a database library and resource center, and publishes a magazine and a newsletter, among many other tasks.)

Most important, this organization's future rests securely with its members. The amount of money, time and commitment by the membership is simply unrivalled. Whether it's helping to do volunteer training and speaking at our workshops, giving to the endowment, or writing for *The IRE Journal*, our members are always there for us.

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.

Join IRE in Phoenix

The 2007 IRE Conference takes the organization back to Phoenix for the 30th anniversary of the Arizona Project. Don't wait another day to make your plans.

The conference will be held June 7-10 at the historic Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa. The program includes tracks for editors and broadcasters, and bilingual panels discussing coverage of the U.S.-Mexico border, plus extensive options for beats such as justice, business, education, politics, health and more.

Don't miss Friday's Showcase Panel, "Keeping investigative journalism thriving: Strategies for the future."

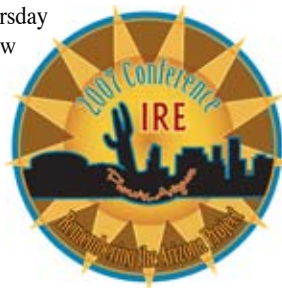
Additional panels cover the fundamentals of reporting from interviewing to Internet research, plus hands-on classes in computer-assisted reporting and an optional day of CAR-focused panels on Thursday.

The 2006 IRE Awards will be presented at a luncheon featuring keynote speaker Dana Priest of *The Washington Post*.

A Friday night reception at the Biltmore will honor the Arizona Project. Thursday night the ninth annual Blues Bash will feature Canned Heat in a private show that will raise funds for the IRE Resource Center.

The room block at the Biltmore is full, but there are plenty of rooms available at the nearby Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort. For information about making a reservation, go to www.ire.org/training/phoenix/hotelinfo.

Registration information is online at www.ire.org/training/phoenix07. The deadline for early-bird registration (\$165) is May 14. After that date, you can register at the conference for \$190.



IRE members receive top industry honors

Several organizations recognized the work of IRE members with journalism awards throughout the year. Some winners are spotlighted below. Members' names are in bold:

The George Polk Awards

- **Debbie Cenziper** of *The Miami Herald* won in metropolitan reporting for "House of Lies," a series documenting mismanagement and misspending by one of the country's largest housing agencies.
- **Charles Forelle, James Bandler** and **Mark Maremont** of *The Wall Street Journal* won in business reporting for "Perfect Payday," a series detailing the practice of backdating stock-option awards. They also won the **Goldsmith Award** for Investigative Reporting from Harvard University for the same series.
- **Matthew Kauffman** and Lisa Chedekel of *The Hartford Courant* won the military reporting award for "Mentally Unfit, Forced to Fight."
- **Robert Little**, a national correspondent for *The (Baltimore) Sun*, won in medical reporting for his three-part series, "Dangerous Remedy." Little examined the use of Recombinant Activated Factor VII, an experimental, blood-coagulating drug, in more than 1,000 soldiers.
- **Ray Ring**, the northern Rockies editor at the (Belgrade, Mont.) *High Country Independent Press*, won in political reporting for following the money trail financing referendum campaigns against land-use regulations in six Western states.

Heywood Broun Award

- **Debbie Cenziper**, an investigative reporter for *The Miami Herald*, was recognized by The Newspaper Guild-Communication Workers of America for "House of Lies."

- **Matthew Kauffman** and Lisa Chedekel of *The Hartford Courant* won the military reporting award for "Mentally Unfit, Forced to Fight."
- **Lorrie Taylor** of WJW-TV in Cleveland won the award for "Disappearing Homes," a story on a predatory real estate company.

Scripps Howard Foundation

- **Steve Everly** of *The Kansas City (Mo.) Star* won in business/economics reporting for "Hot Fuel," an investigation detailing how the expansion of liquids in higher temperatures – a basic law of physics – costs warm-weather consumers millions of dollars each year.
- **Charles Forelle, James Bandler, Mark Maremont** and Steve Stecklow of *The Wall Street Journal* won the \$25,000 Ursula and Gilbert Farfel Prize for investigative reporting for "Perfect Payday," a series which exposed the practice of manipulating backdated stock options.
- **Michael Smith** and David Voreacos of Bloomberg News won in public service reporting for "Slaves in the Amazon," which revealed the human chain connecting South American slavery to the homes of American consumers.
- **Mark Fainaru-Wada** and **Lance Williams** of the *San Francisco Chronicle* were honored for distinguished service to the First Amendment for their refusal to reveal confidential sources related to the investigation of the BALCO scandal.

MEMBER NEWS

The *Seattle Times* team of **Ken Armstrong, Justin Mayo** and **Steve Miletich** won the Distinguished Writing Award for Local Accountability Reporting from the American Society of Newspaper Editors. ■ **Ron Chepesiuk** has a new book, "Gangsters of Harlem: The Gritty Underworld of New York's Most Famous Neighborhood," (Barricade; www.gangstersofharlem.com). ■ **Nicholas Coates** has left the *New Hampshire Union Leader* in Manchester to pursue graduate studies at Northeastern University in Boston and freelance. ■ **Alexis Fisher** has moved from WBRE-Wilkes-Barre, Pa., to WCAU-Philadelphia. ■ **Chris Francescani** is the editorial producer for the ABC News Law & Justice Unit in New York. ■ **Brian Hamman**, former online managing editor at the *Columbia Missourian*, is working in the news technology department at *The New York Times*. ■ **Coulter Jones** is now with *The (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.) Citizens' Voice*. ■ **Matt O'Brien**, news editor at *Las Vegas CityLife*, has written "Beneath the Neon: Life and Death in the Tunnels of Las Vegas," a book about his adventures in the storm drains of Las Vegas, to be published in June 2007 (Huntington). ■ **Ben Simmoneau** and Dan Maddox of WGAL-Lancaster, Pa., won a Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism for individual achievement at a local station from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California. ■ **Cary Spivak** and **Meg Kissinger** have joined the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's* investigative team. ■ A CBS-San Francisco team including **Anna Werner** won the Bill Stout Award for Enterprise News. ■ **Alan Zibel** is now with The Associated Press, covering business out of Washington, D.C. He worked at the *Baltimore Business Journal*. ■ **Peter Zuckerman** is now at *The (Portland) Oregonian*. He previously worked at the *Daily Journal* in Los Angeles and the *Post Register* in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Send Member News items to Megan Means at meganm@ire.org and include a phone number for verification.

IRE members win Pulitzers

The 2007 Pulitzer prizes honored five IRE members for a variety of work, including local, national and investigative reporting, non-fiction books and public service.

- **Brett Blackledge** of *The Birmingham (Ala.) News* won the investigative reporting award for uncovering widespread corruption in Alabama's community college system.
- **Debbie Cenziper** of *The Miami Herald* was honored for the "House of Lies" series, detailing how a public agency squandered millions of dollars intended to fund public housing.
- **Charles Savage** of *The Boston Globe* won the national reporting award for stories on President Bush's extensive use of signing statements that allow him to bypass portions of new laws.
- **James Bandler, Charles Forelle and Mark Maremont** shared the public service prize awarded to *The Wall Street Journal* for exposing illegal backdating of stocks given to corporate leaders.
- **Lawrence Wright** won the non-fiction book prize for "The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11."
- **Hank Klibanoff** and Gene Roberts won the prize for distinguished book on U.S. history for "The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation."

Several IRE members were also finalists.

- **Matthew Kauffman** and Lisa Chedekel of *The Hartford (Conn.) Courant* were finalists for the investigative reporting prize for their in-depth work on suicide among American military personnel in Iraq.
- **Ken Armstrong, Justin Mayo and Steve Miletich** of *The Seattle Times* were finalists for the investigative reporting prize for a series of stories exposing improperly sealed lawsuits.
- **Michael J. Berens, Julia Sommerfeld and Carol Ostrom** of *The Seattle Times* were finalists for the investigative reporting award for their investigation of sexual misconduct by health care professionals.
- *The Washington Post's* series on farm subsidies by **Sarah Cohen, Gilbert Gaul** and Dan Morgan, was a finalist in the public service category.
- **Joanna Kimberlin** and Bill Sizemore of *The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot* were finalists in the explanatory reporting category for their work examining the increasing reliance on private military personnel in the U.S.
- **Fred Schulte** and June Arney of *The (Baltimore) Sun* were finalists for the local reporting prize for stories about the misuse of an arcane Maryland property law.
- **Maurice Possley and Steve Mills** of the *Chicago Tribune* were finalists for the national reporting award for investigating the case of a potentially innocent man who was executed by lethal injection in Texas in 1989.
- **Pete Earley** was a finalist in the general non-fiction category for his book "Crazy: A Father's Search through America's Mental Health Madness."

Elections upcoming; absentee ballots available

Six seats on the 13-member IRE Board of Directors are up for election this year at the 2007 IRE Conference in Phoenix.

The board serves as the governing body of IRE and generally meets three times a year to discuss and vote on IRE business. One of the meetings is at the annual IRE Conference in June. The board periodically has conference calls.

Directors serve on committees and task forces made up of board members and appointed non-board IRE members.

The seats are for two-year terms, and incumbents may seek re-election to the board. A board position is unpaid; board members and their news organizations are expected to pay all, or a substantial amount, of travel expenses to board meetings. IRE will provide limited help in cases of need. Candidates must be IRE members in the professional or academic category. However, only one academic member may be on the board at a time, according to IRE's Articles of Incorporation.

Board members are expected to help raise funds and contribute financial or other resources to the organization. In addition, they lose eligibility to enter the IRE Awards contest if they have a significant role in the contest entry.

Members have until noon on Friday, June 8, to get on the "election-day ballot" at the IRE Conference.

In addition, candidates can be included on an absentee ballot that will be made available to members who are not able to attend the conference.

To get on both ballots, candidates must have declared by April 17. Declaring consists of sending a candidacy statement with brief biographical information to elections@ire.org. Candidates' statements are posted online at www.ire.org/boardelections.

Candidates who do not declare in time to be included on the absentee ballot still can submit statements as late as 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 23, for posting on the IRE Web site.

Candidates who wait until the conference to announce must deliver a one-page statement and personal biography to the IRE executive director by noon (MST) on Friday, June 8, in Phoenix. These, along with the previous candidacy announcements, will be posted on a bulletin board in the main conference area.

At the membership meeting on Saturday afternoon, June 9, candidates must be nominated and seconded from the floor by two other IRE members. There will be no nominating speeches, but candidates will have two minutes to address the members. The ballot at the membership meeting will include all

candidates declared through the Friday deadline. Absentee ballots will be opened and counted along with the ballots cast at the meeting.

Immediately following the board elections, there will be a separate election for two IRE Awards contest judges. Those candidates will be nominated and seconded from the floor.

Board candidates wanting to appear on the absentee ballot and/or the IRE Web site, should submit a candidacy statement/bio limited to 500 words. An accompanying photo is encouraged. Send announcements via e-mail to elections@ire.org. Please include contact information.

Absentee ballots

Members unable to attend the conference will be allowed to participate via absentee balloting.

Absentee balloting is meant to supplement – not replace – IRE's traditional election process, which encourages membership meeting attendance as a sign of commitment to the group and to involve as many members as possible in important discussions.

Only those not planning to attend the meeting and requesting a ballot in advance will be able to vote before the conference.

Requests for absentee ballots will be accepted from April 17 to May 16; these include only the names of candidates who declare by the absentee ballot deadline. IRE members whose membership status will be current through June 30, 2007, may request absentee ballots by phone, e-mail or in person. Each ballot will be sent to the address of record for that member along with information on how to fill out the ballot properly. Please send requests to elections@ire.org. Completed absentee ballots must be received at the IRE offices by May 25.

Only international members requesting absentee ballots will be allowed to vote via e-mail.

Absentee ballots will not be available at the annual conference, nor will they be accepted there.

IMPORTANT DATES

- April 17: Candidate declaration deadline to make it onto absentee ballots
- April 17: Members can start requesting absentee ballots
- May 16: Deadline for requesting absentee ballots
- May 25: Deadline for absentee ballots to reach IRE offices
- May 23: Deadline (5 p.m.) be listed on the Web site
- June 8: Deadline (noon) to get on election-day ballot
- June 9: Board elections at annual membership meeting



BUDGET 2008

BY BRANT HOUSTON
THE IRE JOURNAL

Here is the proposed budget for IRE in the 2008 fiscal year, which begins July 1, 2007. It is a cautious budget given the many changes in the profession, but it continues to provide financing for all our current programs and adds workshops for ethnic media newsrooms.

Over the past year, we have seen membership fall by about seven percent, but we expect a rise in membership in coming months as the industry completes its series of buyouts and layoffs and as we provide more services for freelancers, online journalists, ethnic media newsrooms and international journalists.

We also foresee more demand for our Data Library services and our online resources in the next fiscal year.

Money in Politics: Following the money trail in 2008

SPECIAL THANKS to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for helping underwrite this event.



Jump-start your coverage of 2008 campaign giving and spending with an in-depth look at money in politics. At these one-day workshops, learn how to follow the money and its influence before and after the election. The workshops will emphasize money in local and state elections, as well as the Federal Election Commission and the impact of nonprofit 527 ideologic organizations at all levels.

Computer-assisted Reporting hands-on training will be offered to a limited number of preregistered people. Space is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. These hands-on classes will build data analysis skills for reporters covering money in politics. The classes will use federal and state-level data, including "527" data from the IRS. Instructors will emphasize story ideas generated by the analysis. You must attend the workshop prior to attending the CAR training.

To request a Money in Politics Workshop in your area, send a message to training@ire.org.

For more training events, go to www.ire.org/training

Proposed IRE Budget for Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008)

Combined All Programs

Year	Proposed 2007	Projected 2007	Proposed 2008
Membership			
Revenue			
New membership	\$60,000	\$59,000	\$60,000
Membership-student	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$8,000
Membership-international	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$5,000
Membership renewals	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$120,000
Renewals-student	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Renewals - international	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Subtotal Membership	\$211,000	\$210,000	\$203,000
Journal subscriptions	\$15,000	\$9,000	\$10,000
Journal ads	\$70,000	\$62,000	\$70,000
Total Membership Revenue	\$296,000	\$281,000	\$283,000
Membership Service Expenses			
IRE Journal	\$90,000	\$117,000	\$100,000
Staff costs (membership)	\$80,000	\$89,000	\$80,000
Postage and shipping	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Total Membership Service Expense	\$173,000	\$208,000	\$183,000
Net Membership Activity	\$123,000	\$73,000	\$100,000
Resource Center			
Books			
Book sales	\$53,000	\$46,000	\$50,000
Royalty revenue	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Book costs	\$30,000	\$26,000	\$25,000
Net Book Activity	\$31,000	\$28,000	\$33,000
Stories and Tipsheets			
Resource Center story and tipsheet sales	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Resource Center salaries and expenses	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$90,000
Net Stories and Tipsheets	\$(45,000)	\$(47,000)	\$(52,000)
Contest			
Award contest fees	\$35,000	\$26,000	\$25,000
Award contest expenses	\$10,000	\$7,000	\$6,000
Net Award Contest Activity	\$25,000	\$19,000	\$19,000
Net Resource Center Activities	\$11,000	\$0	\$0
Web			
Web services revenue	\$12,000	\$24,000	\$20,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$20,000	\$13,000	\$15,000
Web services expenses	\$45,000	\$52,000	\$45,000
Net Web Services Activity	\$(13,000)	\$(15,000)	\$(10,000)
National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting			
Database Library revenue	\$70,000	\$110,000	\$125,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Database Library salaries and expenses	\$95,000	\$97,000	\$95,000
Net Database Library Activity	\$(10,000)	\$18,000	\$40,000
Uplink Subscription Revenue	\$20,000	\$19,000	\$20,000
Uplink ads	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Uplink expenses	\$4,000	\$15,000	\$8,000
Net Uplink Activity	\$18,000	\$5,000	\$14,000
Net NICAR Activities	\$8,000	\$23,000	\$54,000
Other sales and services revenue	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,000
Other sales and services expenses	\$11,000	\$8,000	\$10,000
Net Other Sales and Services Activity	\$(10,000)	\$(6,000)	\$(9,000)
Net Sales and Services Activity	\$(4,000)	\$2,000	\$35,000

Proposed IRE Budget for Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008)			
Combined All Programs			
Year	Proposed 2007	Projected 2007	Proposed 2008
Conferences and Seminars			
Annual Conferences			
Registrations and fees (IRE and NICAR)	\$150,000	\$126,000	\$125,000
Optional CAR day	\$15,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Other revenues	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$150,000	\$137,000	\$150,000
Total annual conference revenues	\$335,000	\$305,000	\$317,000
Conference expenses	\$140,000	\$191,000	\$195,000
Net Annual Conferences Activity	\$195,000	\$114,000	\$122,000
On the Road Seminars			
Registrations and fees	\$95,000	\$79,000	\$80,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Seminar expenses	\$90,000	\$75,000	\$80,000
Net On the Road Seminar Activity	\$7,000	\$6,000	\$2,000
Boot Camps			
Registrations and fees	\$95,000	\$82,000	\$90,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$5,000
Seminar expenses	\$35,000	\$29,000	\$30,000
Net Boot Camp Activity	\$65,000	\$55,000	\$65,000
Regional Conference			
Registrations and fees	\$0	\$0	\$0
Prior/Current year contributions releases	\$0	\$0	\$0
Workshop expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Regional Conference Activity	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ethnic Media Workshops			
Registrations and fees	\$0	\$2,000	\$5,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$0	\$10,000	\$45,000
Workshop expenses	\$0	\$7,000	\$30,000
Net Ethnic Media Workshop Activity	\$0	\$5,000	\$20,000
Watchdog Workshops			
Registrations and fees	\$20,000	\$17,000	\$15,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
Workshop expenses	\$60,000	\$79,000	\$60,000
Net Watchdog Workshop Activity	\$20,000	\$8,000	\$25,000
Money in Politics			
Registrations and fees	\$10,000	\$0	\$2,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Workshop expenses	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
Net Money in Politics Activity	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$7,000
Conference Fellowships			
Fellowship expenses	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Net Fellowships	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Conferences and Seminar Activity	\$312,000	\$193,000	\$241,000

Proposed IRE Budget for Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008)			
Combined All Programs			
Year	Proposed 2007	Projected 2007	Proposed 2008
Grants and Contributions			
Temporarily restricted	\$100,000	\$196,000	\$150,000
Unrestricted	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Permanently restricted	\$1,000,000	\$200,000	\$700,000
Total Grant and Contributions	\$1,101,000	\$401,000	\$855,000
Investment Return			
Endowment investment return & dividends	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Net Program Activity	\$1,537,000	\$671,000	\$1,234,000
General and Administrative Expenses			
Salary and personnel costs	\$317,000	\$270,000	\$294,000
Professional Services			
Consulting/fundraising	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$7,000
Accounting	\$14,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
Legal	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$5,000
Total Professional Services	\$27,000	\$22,000	\$25,000
General Office Expenses			
Telephone and fax	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$9,000
Postage	\$7,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
Office supplies	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Photocopying	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Insurance	\$16,000	\$14,000	\$15,000
Computer supplies	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$2,000
Equipment expense	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Other office expense	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Total General Office Expense	\$54,500	\$47,000	\$52,000
Other Expenses			
Publications/dues	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$3,000
Board of Directors	\$8,000	\$7,000	\$8,000
Travel costs	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
FOI conferences	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
Computer purchases	\$15,000	\$17,000	\$15,000
Staff training	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Total Other Expenses	\$35,500	\$29,000	\$31,000
Total in General and Administration Expenses	\$434,000	\$368,000	\$402,000
Fund-raising Expenses			
Salary and expenses	\$40,000	\$61,000	\$60,000
Promotions	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
Total Fund-raising Expenses	\$43,000	\$62,000	\$63,000
Depreciation	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Reserves	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$25,000
Total Administrative Expenses	\$517,000	\$460,000	\$505,000
Less Endowment Contributions	\$1,000,000	\$200,000	\$700,000
Excess Net Program Activity Over Expenses	\$20,000	\$11,000	\$29,000

WATCHDOG JOURNALISM TRAINING

These training programs for small to mid-sized newsrooms or bureaus of larger papers are made possible, in part, by generous grants from the Chicago Tribune Foundation, the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, and the Las Vegas Sun, Barbara J. Greenspun, publisher.

To learn more and register for upcoming events, visit www.ire.org/training/watchdogjournalism.

Unleashing the Watchdogs
(Primarily for editors)

These workshops, held in partnership with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, feature top editors and trainers sharing techniques, tips and years of experience on how to get watchdog journalism done.

- October 15-16 – Minneapolis, Minn. Hosted by University of Minnesota

Better Watchdog Workshops
(Primarily for reporters)

These workshops help journalists learn the investigative skills that keep government and business accountable and to produce enterprising and informative stories.

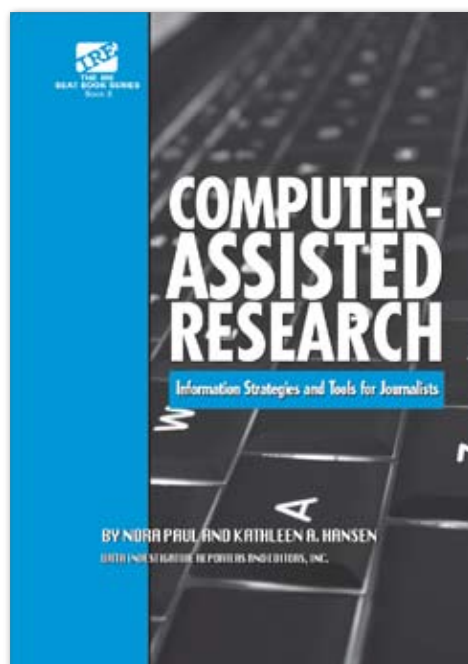
- October 15-16 – Minneapolis, Minn. Hosted by University of Minnesota



Salaries and Benefit**As of July 1, 2007**

	Salary	Benefits	Total	Contributions or Allocations	
Executive Director	\$96,000	\$29,000	\$125,000	\$80,000	Journalism school/Seminars
Training Director	\$58,000	\$17,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	Seminars
Database Library Director	\$59,000	\$18,000	\$77,000	\$77,000	Database Library
Membership Coordinator	\$43,000	\$13,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	Membership
Admin Asst. Membership	\$27,000	\$8,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	Membership
System Administrator	\$40,000	\$12,000	\$52,000	\$0	
Publications Coordinator/Advertising	\$32,000	\$10,000	\$42,000	\$42,000	Journal/Web
Resource Center Director	\$39,000	\$12,000	\$51,000	\$51,000	Endowed Post
Conference Coordinator	\$46,000	\$14,000	\$60,000	\$16,000	Seminars
Finance Officer	\$38,000	\$11,000	\$49,000	\$0	Administrative
Program Designer	\$43,000	\$13,000	\$56,000	\$0	Administrative
Computing Support Spec.	\$17,000	\$1,000	\$18,000	\$0	Administrative
Development Officer	\$39,000	\$12,000	\$51,000	\$51,000	Endowment income
Subtotal	\$577,000	\$170,000	\$747,000	\$483,000	Subtotal
Graduate Assistants	\$30,000		\$30,000	\$20,000	Journalism School
Part-Time Help	\$45,000		\$45,000	\$30,000	Journal
Student Web	\$10,000		\$10,000	\$10,000	Web
Student Assistants	\$35,000		\$35,000	\$30,000	Data Lib/Res Ctr
Subtotal	\$120,000		\$120,000	\$90,000	Subtotal
Total General/Administrative				\$867,000	Total General/Admin.
Subtotal of allocations				\$573,000	Subtotal of allocations
Net salaries & benefits				\$294,000	Net salaries & benefits

A MUST-HAVE IRE BEAT BOOK, AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER



COMPUTER-ASSISTED RESEARCH: INFORMATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR JOURNALISTS

By Nora Paul And Kathleen Hansen

The IRE beat book series brings you an all-new edition of the essential guide for journalists navigating Internet resources. It's updated to reflect the increasingly dynamic and sophisticated options in wikis, blogs, smarter search engines, commercial data providers, and more. Learn the best strategies for online "reconnaissance," plus best practices for efficient, accurate and ethical use of these tools.

Order this and other IRE Beat Books from the Resource Center.

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2006 IRE Awards honor top investigative work

BY KATE RAINEY
THE IRE JOURNAL

Investigations into dangers Americans face at home and abroad, coverage of the coal mining industry and a book documenting the rise of anti-American sentiment in the Middle East garnered top honors in the 2006 IRE Awards.

These stories were among the 16 prizes awarded by IRE this year from 501 entries. The IRE Awards, established in 1979, honor outstanding investigative journalism with medals and certificates.

IRE also recognized a groundbreaking documentary that offered unparalleled insight into the Latino gangs in California's agricultural towns, an investigation that tracked a single tank of gas around the globe and a series detailing the lack of support many U.S. soldiers receive for the psychological wounds they sustained in Iraq.

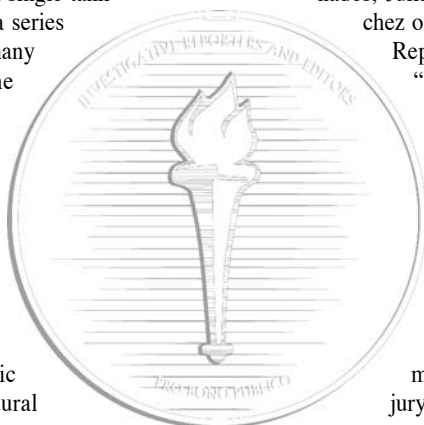
Transparency of information was a popular subject among this year's winners. IRE recognized a massive effort by college students in Texas to examine police use of Tasers, as well as a European project aiming to make public all available data on agricultural subsidies in the European Union.

IRE Medals, the top honor bestowed by the organization for investigative reporting, were awarded to:

- Reporter Ken Ward, Jr. of the *Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette* for providing a detailed portrait of the hazards inside America's coal mines. Following the disaster at the Sago Mine in West Virginia, Ward's investigation used documents and data analysis to demonstrate breakdowns in federal and state regulations that made 2006 the deadliest year in mining in more than a decade. "Ward's work illustrated the importance of mastering a subject through dogged beat reporting and ultimately sharing that deep knowledge with readers," the IRE judges said.
- Author Lawrence Wright for "The Looming Tower," a book explaining the genesis of anti-American sentiment in the Middle East and the transformation of Osama bin Laden from an eccentric millionaire to the fanatical leader of an

international terrorist organization. Wright provides intimate details of the lives of bin Laden and his top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and exposes communication failures between the FBI and the CIA that left the U.S. vulnerable to the attacks on 9/11. Judges described Wright's work as a "tour de force of investigative reporting, so skillfully crafted that it reads more like a page-turning crime novel than the exquisitely documented journalistic study it is."

- The Tom Renner Medal for Outstanding Crime Reporting was awarded to Oriana Zill de Granados, Julia Reynolds and George Sanchez of the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco for "Nuestra Familia, Our Family."



This documentary offers a look inside the world of Latino gangs told through the experience of a Salinas, Calif., man who raised his son to become a gang member. Reporters worked for more than three years to build relationships with gang members and obtained grand-jury transcripts and FBI internal reports. Their work follows the

Nuestra Familia gang in action, accounting for its development from a political movement to a violent organization in both California's agricultural cities and its prisons. "Nuestra Familia" shows the effects of gang life on families in Salinas, where parents hope to break the cycle of violence before it captures their children. (The Renner Medal is awarded for either a single story or a lifetime body of work.)

- Judges chose two Freedom of Information Award winners

The (Albany, N.Y.) *Times Union* team of James Odato, Michele Morgan Bolton, Fred LeBrun, Brendan Lyons, Elizabeth Benjamin, Carol DeMare, J. Robert Port, Rex Smith, Jim McGrath, Howard Healy and John de Rosier. After hitting a wall in their attempts to expose New York legislators' use of secret slush funds to bankroll pet projects, the journalists sued the Assembly to force the full disclosure of financial records. Their

story, "Secret Political Piggy Bank," subsequently revealed suspect and sleazy deals supported by state legislators.

Nils Mulvad, Brigitte Alfter and Jack Thurston also won an FOI Award for their work on Farmsubsidy.org. The Web site is the culmination of a two-year effort to obtain public data on agricultural subsidies within the European Union. Records are currently available from 17 of 25 EU member states, and the data have led to investigations that revealed millionaires were among the top subsidy recipients and explained how dairy subsidies in Europe were undermining farmers in developing nations. The judges called Farmsubsidy.org "a truly important and groundbreaking effort that will pave the way for the opening of other European Union records to the benefit of journalists worldwide."

The IRE awards are divided into 15 categories based on market or circulation size, for print, broadcast and online media. The 2006 IRE Certificate winners were:

- Paul Salopek, Kuni Takahashi and Brenda Kilianski of the *Chicago Tribune* for "A Tank of Gas, A World of Trouble." By obtaining secret oil-industry documents called "crude slates," the reporter followed a single tank of gasoline from a Chicago pump back to its origins in Nigeria, Venezuela and Iraq. The investigation looks not just at the financial and environmental tolls of America's addiction to oil, but at the human costs as well.
- Fred Schulte and June Arney of *The (Baltimore) Sun* for "On Shaky Ground." An investigation of nearly 4,000 cases filed between 2000 and 2006 revealed that many people in Baltimore were losing their homes because of an obscure, colonial-era law related to "ground rent" rights. The story led to significant reform and likely saved the homes of many local residents.
- Jean Rimbach and Kathleen Carroll of *The (Hackensack, N.J.) Record* for "Lessons in Waste." The state of New Jersey funneled \$2.5 billion into preschool programs in an effort to better prepare low-income, inner-city children for school. But, millions of dollars did not reach the classrooms or the children, as some preschool owners spent the money on luxury goods for themselves. *The Record's* findings led to the indictment of three preschool operators and a statewide attempt to clean up the program.
- Todd Spivak of the *Houston Press* for "Run Over by Metro." Spivak spent four months investigating fatalities and serious injuries on Houston's public buses. He found that the Metropolitan Transit Authority misrepresented its accident statistics, ignored safety recommendations and pushed victims to agree to accident settlements.
- Chris Hansen, Steve Eckert, Joshua Kuvin, Allan Maraynes, Katherine Chan, Elizabeth Cole and David Corvo of Dateline NBC for "Bitter Pills." Counterfeit prescription drugs slip into the mainstream medicine supply in the U.S.,

and an undercover investigation exposed how a Chinese crime ring attempted to sell millions of dollars worth of counterfeit medications. After this revelation, the Food and Drug Administration established new rules to track pills from factories to pharmacies.

- Jeff Burnside, Scott Zamost, Felix Castro, Ed Garcia, Pedro Cancio and Maria Carpio of WTVJ-Miami for "Citizenship for Sale." Reporters uncovered a scheme exploiting unsuspecting immigrants. A South Florida man claimed to sell citizenship in an American Indian tribe in North Dakota for \$1,500, which would also guarantee the right to work legally in the U.S. The investigation shut down the operation and led to federal and state investigations.
- Bob Segall, Bill Ditton, Gerry Lanosga and Holly Stephen of WTHR-Indianapolis for "Cause for Alarm." A stunning investigation revealed that hundreds of square miles of land in Central Indiana lacked adequate tornado warning systems due to antiquated sirens and a lack of official knowledge about siren locations. Reporters doggedly tracked and mapped more than 300 sirens using a hand-held Global Positioning System tracker.
- William Selway, Martin Z. Braun and David Dietz of *Bloomberg Markets* for "Broken Promises." An investigation by Bloomberg reporters detailed Wall Street's creation of a \$7 million municipal bond program allowing banks to profit from money intended for public entities. Judges called this piece "a well-sourced project that makes a technically complex industry understandable."
- Daniel Zwerdling, Anne Hawke and Ellen Weiss of National Public Radio for "Mental Anguish and the Military." Although nearly one-fourth of soldiers returning from Iraq display symptoms of serious mental health problems, most do not receive the help they need. NPR's investigation demonstrated that military treatment programs are not working, as even suicidal soldiers struggle to get the necessary help. Senate leaders demanded a Pentagon investigation into the soldiers' claims following the broadcast of this series.
- Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Maddy Sauer, Simon Surowicz, Krista Kjellman, Steve Alperin, Michael Clemente and Christopher Isham for "The Mark Foley Investigation." ABCNews.com broke the first stories of former U.S. Rep. Mark Foley's inappropriate and sometimes explicit correspondence with Senate pages and relentlessly pursued the coverage as the scandal grew. Judges said, "These journalists demonstrated the power and speed of the Internet as a tool for reporting and disseminating national news."
- A team of more than 40 University of North Texas students, one student from Baylor University and one from Texas Christian University for "A Stunning Toll." Anecdotal evidence suggested that Texas police were misusing Tasers, and state agencies often either ignored reporters' requests for data or actively resisted releasing

it. The students eventually obtained and made public thousands of pages of records and inspired legislation meant to limit the use of Tasers.

IRE Contest entries are screened and judged by IRE members who are currently working journalists. The IRE program is committed to avoiding conflicts of interest, so investigative work that includes any significant role by a member of the IRE Board of Directors or a contest judge may not be considered for awards.

This represents a significant sacrifice on the part of individual judges and board members, and often entire newsrooms, who might have done exemplary

investigative work. For instance, board members or judges who work for the *Houston Chronicle*, *The Seattle Times*, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and WMAQ-Chicago, among others, were unable to enter.

The IRE Awards will be presented at a luncheon on Saturday, June 9, during the 2007 IRE Conference in Phoenix. The conference, which will be held June 7-10 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, will feature many of the winners discussing the techniques, methods and resources they used to develop and execute their stories. To register, please go to www.ire.org/training/phoenix07.

2006 IRE AWARDS WINNERS AND FINALISTS

NEWSPAPERS

LARGEST NEWSPAPERS (MORE THAN 500,000) OR WIRE SERVICE

CERTIFICATE

"**A Tank of Gas, A World of Trouble,**" *Chicago Tribune*; Paul Salopek, Kuni Takahashi, Brenda Kilianski

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

In order to understand the full impact of America's addiction to oil, reporter Paul Salopek set out to do what had never been done before: tracking a single tank of gasoline from a Chicago pump back to its origins in Nigeria, Venezuela and Iraq. He was able to do so by obtaining secret oil-industry documents called "crude slates," documents that took him around the world and provided a foundation for this novel investigation. Compelling and, at times, chilling, this investigation forces each driver to look not only at the financial and environmental tolls of filling the tank, but at the human costs as well.

FINALISTS

- "**Harvesting Cash,**" *The Washington Post*; Dan Morgan, Gilbert M. Gaul, Sarah Cohen
- "**Guantanamo Detainees,**" The Associated Press; Andrew O. Selsky
- "**Broken Bench,**" *The New York Times*; William Glaberson



LARGE NEWSPAPERS (250,000-500,000)

CERTIFICATE

"**On Shaky Ground,**" *The (Baltimore) Sun*; Fred Schulte, June Arney

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

When a family of Vietnamese immigrants lost their home over a small unpaid debt related to an obscure, colonial-era law, reporters at *The Sun* began to investigate. Soon, they uncovered lawyers and ruthless landlords who were systematically acquiring so-called "ground rent" rights and using small debts to force hundreds of people out of their homes all over their city. In all, reporters analyzed nearly 4,000 cases filed during 2000-2006. They found outraged judges whose hands were tied as they watched how ground-rent owners – who own only the land under the homes and typically are owed only nominal annual fees from the homeowners – targeted elderly and deceased homeowners to acquire real estate for a song. This investigation led to significant reform, undoubtedly saving the homes of many Baltimore residents.

FINALISTS

- "**Mentally Unfit, Forced to Fight,**" *The Hartford (Conn.) Courant*; Matthew Kauffman, Lisa Chedekel
- "**Hidden Dockets/Secret Cases,**" *The Miami Herald*; Patrick Danner, Dan Christensen
- "**Abandoning Our Mentally Ill,**" *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*; Meg Kissinger
- "**Dangerous Remedy,**" *The (Baltimore) Sun*; Robert Little



MEDIUM NEWSPAPERS (100,000 - 250,000)

CERTIFICATE

“**Lessons in Waste,**” *The* (Hackensack, N.J.) *Record*; Jean Rimbach, Kathleen Carroll

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

In the effort to better prepare low-income, inner-city children for school, the state of New Jersey undertook the most ambitious and expensive preschool program in America, funneling \$2.5 billion into preschool programs. But, *The Record* discovered that millions of dollars never reached the classrooms and kids and went instead to greedy middlemen – preschool owners who spent the money on luxury cars, cruises, hotels, gambling and shopping sprees. Building a database from thousands of documents, the newspaper found a system rife with problems and lacking any significant oversight. Since publication, the state has scrambled to clean up the program, and three preschool operators have been indicted.

FINALISTS

- “**NY Power Authority,**” *The* (Syracuse, N.Y.) *Post-Standard*; Michelle Breidenbach
- “**North Carolina Water: Safe to Drink?**” *The* (Raleigh, N.C.) *News and Observer*; Pat Stith, Catherine Clabby, David Raynor, Michael Biesecker
- “**Corruption in Community College System,**” *The Birmingham* (Ala.) *News*; Brett J. Blackledge



SMALL NEWSPAPERS (UNDER 100,000)

IRE MEDAL

“**Beyond Sago: Coal Mining Safety in America,**” *Charleston* (W. Va.) *Gazette*; Ken Ward, Jr.

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

After years of covering the coal industry, reporter Ken Ward, Jr., offers readers an unparalleled portrait of the dangers inside the mines and the breakdowns of federal and state regulation that made 2006 the industry’s deadliest year in more than a decade. Using documents and data analysis, he detailed lax safety procedures, inferior training, poor equipment maintenance and other problems that contributed to deaths at Sago and other mines. Ward’s work illustrated the importance of mastering a subject through dogged beat reporting and ultimately sharing that deep knowledge with readers. His work also shows that small newspapers can change the shape and course of national debate on an issue of paramount importance.

FINALISTS

- “**Lethal Lapses,**” *Belleville* (Ill.) *News-Democrat*; George Pawlaczyk, Beth Hundsdoerfer
- “**UM Space Programs,**” (Missoula, Mont.) *Missoulian*; Betsy Cohen, Jennifer McKee
- “**Investigating Five Rivers,**” *The* (Myrtle Beach, S.C.) *Sun News*; David Wren

LOCAL CIRCULATION WEEKLIES

CERTIFICATE

“**Run Over by Metro,**” *Houston Press*; Todd Spivak

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

Todd Spivak’s four-month investigation into the Metropolitan Transit Authority in Houston looked at fatalities and serious injuries caused by the public bus system. It found that the agency rejected the safety recommendations of its own investigators, hounded victims to settle accidents and misrepresented its accident statistics. The compelling and vivid narrative writing gives extraordinary power to the victims’ stories and fuels the outrage over the agency’s misconduct.

FINALISTS

- “**Cracked Houses,**” (Phoenix) *New Times*; Sarah Fenske
- “**Navahoax,**” *LA Weekly*; Matthew Fleischer
- “**The Wexford Files,**” *Santa Fe Reporter*; Dan Frosch

TELEVISION

NETWORK/SYNDICATED

CERTIFICATE

“**Bitter Pills,**” *Dateline NBC*; Chris Hansen, Steve Eckert, Joshua Kuvin, Allan Maraynes, Katherine Chan, Elizabeth Cole, David Corvo

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

In an investigation that took its journalists and cameras across the globe, *Dateline NBC* documented how counterfeit prescription drugs are invading America’s mainstream medicine supply. Going undercover, correspondent Chris Hansen exposed a Chinese crime ring negotiating to sell millions of dollars’ worth of fake pills. The bogus pills were such good counterfeits that even experts had a hard time telling the difference. Within days of the broadcast, the federal Food and Drug Administration announced new rules – on which the agency had dragged its feet for 18 years – to track pills from the factory to the pharmacy.

FINALISTS

- “**Trophy,**” *NBC News*; Lisa Myers, Adam Ciralsky, Rich Gardella, Doug Adams, Jim Popkin, Albert Oetgen, John Reiss
- “**Searching for Jacob,**” *CBS 60 Minutes*; Scott Pelley, Shawn Efran, Rebecca Peterson, Andy Soto
- “**The Mother of All Heists,**” *CBS 60 Minutes*; Steve Kroft, Andy Court, Keith Sharman, Daniel J. Clucksman, Amjad Tadros, Tadd Lascari, Jonathan Schienberg, Patti Hassler, Jeff Fager
- “**No Fly List,**” *CBS 60 Minutes*; Steve Kroft, Ira Rosen, Jennifer MacDonald, Matthew Lev, Tadd Lascari

TOP 20 MARKETS

CERTIFICATE

“**Citizenship for Sale,**” *WTVJ*-Miami; Jeff Burnside, Scott Zamost, Felix Castro, Ed Garcia, Pedro Cancio, Maria Carpio

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

This riveting investigation revealed an illegal scheme that exploited the hopes and fears of unsuspecting immigrants. The operation, run by a South Florida man, purported to sell citizenship in the Pembina Little Shell Band Indian Tribe of North Dakota. Victims were told they would have the right to work legally in the United States if they paid \$1,500. It was a sham, of course. The *WTVJ* investigation shut down the bogus operation and led to federal and state investigations.

FINALISTS

- “**Taxicab Deception,**” *KNBC*-Los Angeles; Joel Grover, Matt Goldberg
- “**Hiding Homicides,**” *WBBM*-Chicago; Pam Zekman, Simone Thiessen
- “**Patients in Danger: The Caremark Investigation,**” *KHOU*-Houston; Jeremy Rogalski, David Raziq, Chris Henao, Keith Tomshe

BELOW TOP 20 MARKETS

CERTIFICATE

“**Cause for Alarm,**” *WTHR*-Indianapolis; Bob Segall, Bill Ditton, Gerry Lanosga and Holly Stephen

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

Tornadoes are a fact of life in central Indiana, and tornado sirens provide warnings that can save lives. So, it was shocking to learn what *WTHR* journalists discovered: County officials in the Indianapolis area didn’t know how many sirens they had, where the sirens were located or whether the sirens worked. Using a hand-held Global Positioning System device and shoe leather, the station tracked down and mapped more than 300 sirens. They documented that hundreds of square miles of land left unprotected and that many of the antiquated sirens had not worked for years.

FINALISTS

- “**The Ticket Fix,**” *WTVF*-Nashville; Phil Williams, Bryan Staples
- “**911 State of Emergency,**” *WISH*-Indianapolis; Rick Dawson, Loni Smith McKown, Bill Fisher
- “**Captive Victims,**” *KMOV*-St. Louis; Steve Chamraz, Steve Perron, Steve Harris
- “**Sham Dunk,**” *WKRC*-Cincinnati; Jeff Hirsh, Eric Gerhardt, Dan Hurley

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 >

Copies of Entries

Copies of all contest entries are available from the IRE Resource Center (www.ire.org/resourcecenter). The center can be reached at rescntr@ire.org or 573-882-3364.

Congratulations

Bloomberg journalists:

William Selway, Martin Z. Braun and David Dietz

2007 Magazine Publication/Winner:

“Broken Promises,” Bloomberg Markets, December 2006

Judges' comments:

“In an ambitious, difficult and ultimately fruitful investigation, Bloomberg’s reporters discovered that Wall Street had created a \$7 billion municipal bond program that allowed banks and advisors to profit while the public entities they were supposed to be funding got nothing. Municipal bonds are considered dull and complicated by most writers, but this investigation of ‘black box’ deals brings to life abuses that robbed cities and towns of their dreams for better schools and housing. It is a well-sourced project that makes a technically complex industry understandable.”

**And all others recognized by the
Investigative Reporters and Editors Awards**

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WORD**

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WORD**

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WORD**

COUNTING DOWN TO DEADLINES!

IRE is currently in the middle of two separate challenge grants, and deadlines are quickly approaching. How can you help make sure IRE receives the full grant amounts? By acting now to support IRE's mission of fostering excellence in investigative journalism.

These grants will give IRE \$1 for every \$2 IRE raises. Currently, IRE has the opportunity to receive \$1.2 million in matching funds.

IRE MEMBERS CAN ASSIST IN MANY WAYS:

- donating or pledging to IRE's endowment fund
- donating or pledging toward IRE programming and general operations
- sharing ideas with IRE staff for potential prospects in your region
- recruiting new IRE members within your own newsrooms (more information below)
- asking co-workers to renew their lapsed IRE memberships
- establishing funds within IRE's endowment

For more information, please contact IRE Development Officer Jennifer Erickson at (573) 884-2222 or jennifer@ire.org.

JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION CHALLENGE GRANT

IRE must raise \$2 million in endowment funds to release \$1 million from the Knight Foundation. Knight sends IRE \$1 for every \$2 pledged or donated to IRE's endowment fund.

If you've been putting off your support of IRE until it is needed most, now is the time to act. **This challenge will end in December 2007**, so we need your help today.

So far, nearly 1,000 IRE members have risen to the challenge. Please join them and, in the process, help IRE ensure its uninterrupted support of investigative journalists and editors and allow IRE to focus additional resources on emerging programs.

For more information on donating to IRE's endowment fund, please see the form on the right or contact IRE development officer Jennifer Erickson at (573) 884-2222 or jennifer@ire.org.

CHALLENGE FUND FOR JOURNALISM III

The Challenge Fund for Journalism III (CFJ) is a program funded by the Ford Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Ethics & Excellence in Journalism Foundation.

The CFJ program's goal is to help journalism organizations strengthen their leadership, organizational infrastructure and financial resources so they can continue their programs well into the future.

All new IRE memberships will help us meet our \$200,000 challenge goal, which will release \$100,000 in matching funds. How can you help? Please see below for more information about the membership drive.

The deadline for raising the \$200,000 is May 31, 2007. Please act today.

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Current members who sign up new members will be eligible for prizes in a special drawing, including fee waivers and travel stipends to IRE's 2008 conferences. Grand prize is a fee waiver to attend a Computer-Assisted Reporting Boot Camp at the Missouri School of Journalism (a \$500 to \$1,000 value) with a \$500 travel stipend.

For each new member recruited, one slip of paper will go into the prize drawing, meaning the more new members you recruit, the more chances you have to win.

To find out how the drive works, and to start collecting entries, go to: www.ire.org/membership

The drawing will be held at the 2007 IRE Conference, June 7-10 in Phoenix, Ariz. You do not have to be present to win. Offer applies only to applications completed as instructed and received by May 31, 2007. To ensure every application counts, use our online membership form at www.ire.org/membership/join.html (secure server) or fax your completed form to 573-882-5431.

Questions? Contact John Green, IRE Membership Coordinator, 573-882-2772 or jgreen@ire.org

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– Diane Sawyer
ABC News

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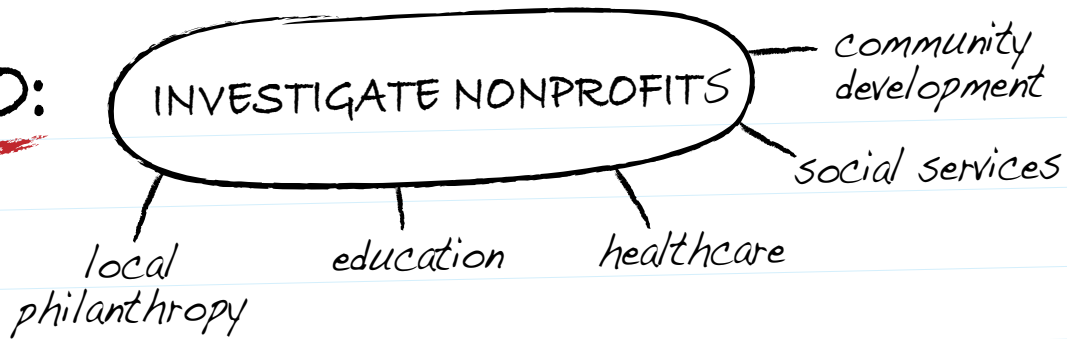
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Border patrol agents attempted to convince the crossers to get out of the water and walk on dry land the roughly 50 yards back to Mexico, but their warnings were not heeded.

ON THE BORDER

Team covered 2,000 miles in three weeks for a multimedia immigration series

BY BRADY MCCOMBS
ARIZONA DAILY STAR, (TUCSON)

The call to secure the U.S.-Mexico border had been the rallying cry of anti-illegal immigration activist groups for years. Then, last May, the president announced his plan to send 6,000 National Guard troops to the border by the summer and hire 6,000 new border patrol agents by 2008.

That's when *Arizona Daily Star* executive editor Bobbie Jo Buel knew what the newspaper's next border project must be: to examine the feasibility of sealing the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border and the potential economic, political, environmental and cultural effects of such an attempt.

With our operations based in Tucson, just 70 miles north of the border, and with a long history of breaking border stories and covering them in depth, we knew we could handle the task. We decided to travel the entire border from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico for the story, but because of budget constraints, it would have to be done in about three weeks.

We decided that the main character in the story would be the border itself with the people who cross it, defend it, live on it and study it as the secondary

characters. We set out to see as much as humanly possible of the international line in order to gain an understanding of this 2,000-mile border.

Editors put together a five-person reporting team. It included me – the border and immigration reporter – and reporter Stephanie Innes, who covers faith and values but had done previous border work. The photographers were James Gregg, a bilingual photographer with experience working with immigrant communities; Lindsay Miller, who had done a documentary on migrant workers in California; and veteran photographer Kelly Presnell. The final member of the team would be Andrew Satter, our award-winning online producer. Our editors were Ignacio Ibarra, a border reporter for 14 years before moving to the desk, and team leader L. Anne Newell. Assistant managing editor Jill Jordan Spitz would oversee the entire process. (See team member insights on page 19.)

From the start, the newspaper decided it wanted the project to be multimedia. As an active team member, Satter wouldn't be limited to putting content online back in Tucson. He would also learn

about the border and report alongside the rest of us. He coordinated our daily blogs from the road and later produced the multimedia package of videos, photos, slideshows and forums. He had a video camera, and Innes and I were given digital audio recorders and video cameras to assist in the online element. Our photographers carried digital audio recorders, too.

Before analyzing whether it could be sealed, we would need to educate our readers about the border itself, and we wanted to do that in the form of photos, videos, sound and words. We established a rough outline of the stories we hoped to get, and it helped us to focus.

Many challenges

Of course, we wanted to see what the border was like geographically and how that plays into security. In addition, we wanted to focus on the possible impacts of an attempted border seal on the economy, the culture, the environment, violence and politics. We stayed mainly on the U.S. side because we wanted to focus on the effects a border security effort would have on the United States.

Before leaving, we spent about a month doing pre-reporting and educating ourselves on the issues. We also tried to plan some interviews with officials and analysts, ride-alongs with border patrol agents and tours at ports of entry with U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers. However, we knew most of our reporting would come from hugging the border, talking with community members and keeping our eyes and ears open.

We set out in mid-July in two rental cars. Our very first day was typical of our trip. While driving west on Interstate 10 in California, we spotted a Border Patrol helicopter circling above. We found a dozen Border Patrol agents in the rocky hills of the area looking for a group of illegal entrants that had been spotted from above. Our photographers followed the agents to get pictures, Satter shot video and Innes and I started talking with locals who lived in the nearby ranches. The agents never did find the illegal entrants, and the event was little more than a tiny mention in our final stories, but it gave us a jumpstart.

We spent time in Arizona, Texas, Mexico and California, sometimes working together and sometimes splitting up the team to cover more ground.

The challenges were many. For example, we would arrive at a location along the border and have only a short amount of time to get the story and understand the issues before moving on. We worked with 100-degree heat, long drives and cramped hotel rooms. We didn't always have the time we would have liked, and sometimes we weren't able to meet with the people we wanted to interview or see what we wanted to see, but we did our best to cover each place.

We interviewed at least 350 people, including

Lindsay A. Miller | Arizona Daily Star



Researching and reporting stories about the border ultimately convinced reporters that federal plans to invest millions in a border wall would not solve the problem of illegal crossings.

James Gregg | Arizona Daily Star



A 13-year-old Mexican boy rests his hand on the mesh fencing that separates Tijuana, Mexico, from Border State Park in San Ysidro, Calif.

The online package received a total of 78,606 hits within five days of publication and was a finalist for a Newspaper Association of America's Digital Edge Award for most innovative multimedia storytelling.

those who live and work on the border, illegal entrants, border patrol agents, customs and border protection officers, business owners in the borderlands, national park officials and experts or analysts in migration, economics, environment, culture and politics.

Along the way, we took turns sending daily blog entries, usually about interesting things that were unlikely to make the final stories. We tried to generate interest in our trip without going into the deeper issues we would address in the series. Satter organized this effort and spent many late nights in hotel rooms editing and putting them on the Web site. The blog made the trip more taxing but served as a key tool to engage our readers early and create buzz for our upcoming series.

Tired and weary, we returned home after 21 days on the road. The greatest challenge for all of us was weeding through all our interviews, photos, tapes and videos to decide what best fit our series. Many of the things that were cut from main stories were published as vignettes before the series ran. This helped generate more reader interest in the project.

Multimedia storytelling

Based on our findings, the newspaper felt comfortable taking a bold stand with the series and settled on the title, "Sealing Our Border: Why It Won't Work." The title initially made us nervous but, reading through our stories, we realized we had the evidence to back it with our travels, interviews and research. The bold assertion also helped us focus our stories.

Our synopsis: The rugged terrain, history of failure, multimillion-dollar price tag, loss of business and detrimental effects on culture and politics make sealing the border all but impossible.

Although three-quarters of Americans think the country should do more to stop illegal immigration, and politicians from California to Capitol Hill are promising a secured border, the engine that drives illegal immigration will churn on as long as businesses here offer better jobs than those available back home. The illegal entrants and smugglers will continue to find ways in, around and through the nation's gauntlet of security at the border.

We published the four-day series Sept. 24-27, 2006, with two main stories per day, plus sidebars and a host of wonderful photos and graphics. A multimedia package (www.azstarnet.com/secureborder/) with documentaries, videos, slideshows, panoramas and a live chat accompanied the print content.

The series received national attention. The online package received a total of 78,606 hits within five days of publication and was a finalist for a Newspaper Association of America's Digital Edge Award for most innovative multimedia storytelling. We conducted a live chat with readers the week after it published.

Brady McCombs is the Arizona Daily Star's border and immigration reporter.

Back from the border

Reporter, online editor and project editors share what they learned

Lessons learned

By Stephanie Innes

We had six people traveling the border and the potential to go in six different directions. In addition to holding several meetings before we left, we had daily meetings to make sure we were on the same page.

The meetings were not always easy. There was a temptation to follow the sad and sometimes unusual stories of the migrants we met, but we had to constantly remind ourselves about why we were out there. Had we caved in and spent a lot of time following those side stories, the project would have been a disaster.

I found that setting up interview appointments ahead of time worked to some extent, but we came upon much of our best material simply by

following the geographical border, taking notes on the types of fences and the topography, reporting on the various people we saw and met along the way and then doing follow-up calls where needed. For example, in the remote border town of Lochiel, we noticed most of the names in the cemetery said "De La Ossa." There was no one in the town when we stopped by, but after we returned to Tucson, we searched the phone book and eventually found the youngest son of the ranch family that settled Lochiel, which is now a major drug-smuggling route. He provided us with historical perspective on the smuggling and violence along the border.

The multimedia reporting was one area where I could have used a little more practice. Only by the end of the project was I getting the hang of how to interview people on camera and how to ensure their words were not drowned out by wind and other background noise.

Online aspirations

By Andrew Satter

Part of what made this project so ambitious for us was our online aspirations.

As the project's online producer, being involved from the very beginning was vital. We determined early on that I would act not just as the passive producer shoveling content from the paper onto the Web site but as an active reporter who would accompany the team on the border trek.

This helped in many ways. It gave us another set of eyes on the border. It allowed for the gathering of online-exclusive content and provided an on-location editor for a daily written and video blog during our trip. It gave me the understanding of the project needed to execute a comprehensive

Web component in conjunction with the print side's package. It reduced the turnaround time, too.

On top of the manpower investment, other resources an organization would need for a mobile multimedia studio include mini-DV video cameras for the online producer and reporters, a mobile video production studio consisting of a G4 laptop, Final Cut Pro HD, Sorenson Squeeze Compression Suite and an external hard drive for storage.

Organization was very important. With 33 hours of video tape, hundreds of photos, dozens of panoramas and 2,000 miles of details to remember, on top of all the equipment I was responsible for, I felt a little overwhelmed at times. If I hadn't developed a strong system for organizing and tracking everything using spreadsheets and Word documents, it very easily could have spiraled into chaos.

Careful planning

By L. Anne Newell and Ignacio Ibarra

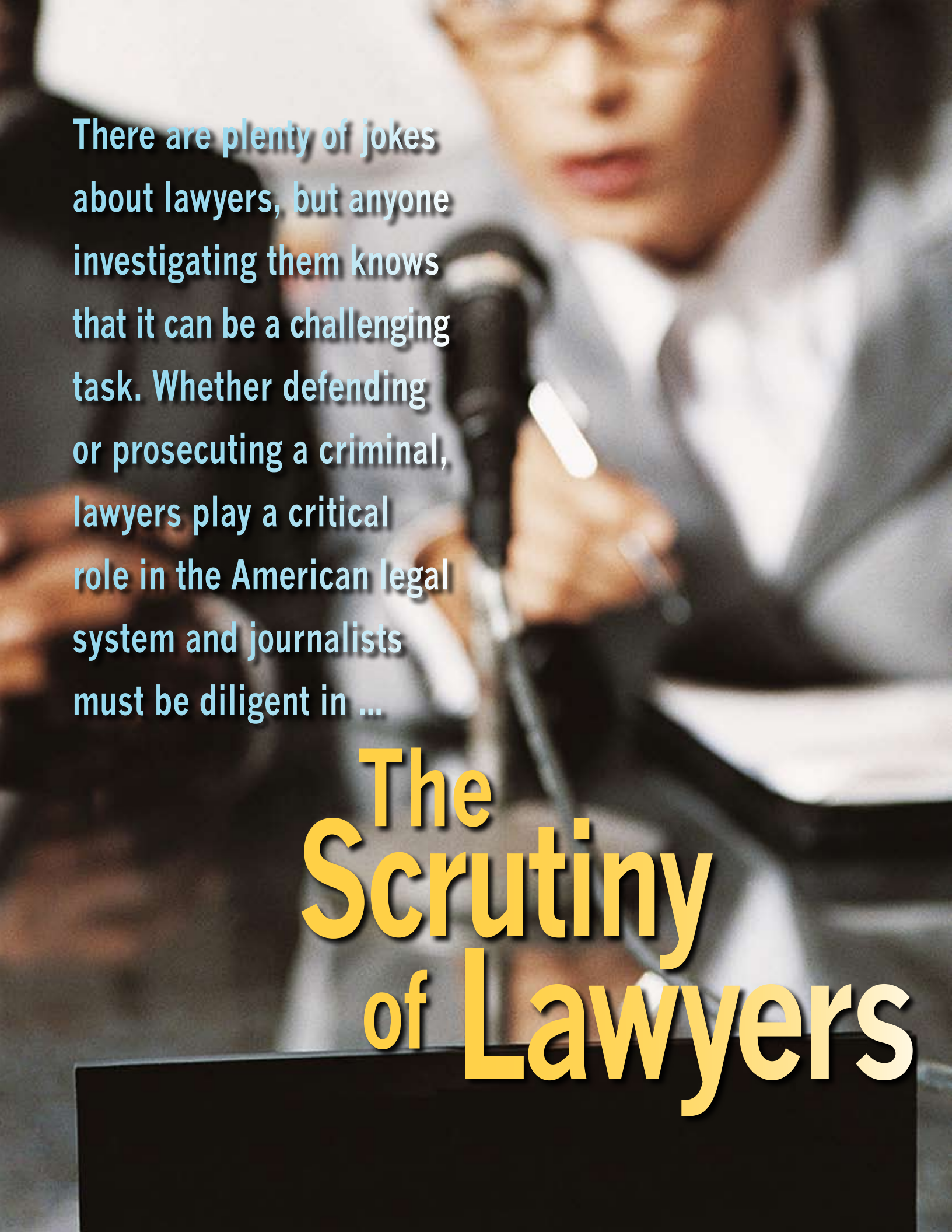
When we were asked to oversee one of the biggest projects the *Arizona Daily Star* has pursued in recent years, we immediately realized it would take careful planning.

Like any good editors, we started scheduling meetings.

Joking aside, we knew the project could easily overwhelm any of us, and we needed to stay focused. At our first meeting, we talked about what we wanted to do and what we'd need to do it. We sent the reporters out to research topics while editors and managers looked into rental vehicles, the legal aspects of a cross-border investigation and, of course, how much it would cost. A week later, we drew up story budget lines and agendas for all meetings.

We believed we were capable of this great task and coached one another to help get there. And we all pushed for perfection. Here is some of what we learned:

- Provide structure and clear deadlines, but let reporters know the stories are theirs to report. For example, we all chose topics (economics, politics, environment, culture, violence, etc.) before the team left, but we let our crew build the stories on its own. Throughout the project, we talked often and in detail. We then outlined the package and wrote detailed story budgets so everyone had clear assignments and directions.
- Multimedia is for everyone. We provided equipment and told everyone they were expected to report in a new way. It paid big rewards. Reporters saw things differently, and the new layer of depth this added to our reporting was amazing. Big caveat: Invest in a day or two of training before anyone begins reporting. Otherwise, you lose time and money in the field as everyone learns to use the new tools. We also made a big point of including our online colleagues from the beginning. In fact, bring in all collaborators early. The more thoughts, the better. Just stay focused!
- Push yourself – not just your reporters – to think big. We ran stories as previews and used blogs and ads as promos for the main package.



There are plenty of jokes about lawyers, but anyone investigating them knows that it can be a challenging task. Whether defending or prosecuting a criminal, lawyers play a critical role in the American legal system and journalists must be diligent in ...

The Scrutiny of Lawyers



An attorney passes through security as he enters the Mecklenburg County jail to see a client. To check the accuracy of billing records submitted by court-appointed attorneys, reporters compared billed hours to the jailhouse logs showing when prisoners met with lawyers.

SYSTEM ABUSE

Defending indigents proves profitable for some court-appointed attorneys

By Ames Alexander and Gary L. Wright
The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer

Defending the poor in Charlotte can be a lucrative profession.

After discovering that some appointed lawyers had collected more than \$200,000 a year, we set out to determine how they did it.

What we uncovered has alarmed readers, sparked a federal investigation and changed the way Charlotte's appointed lawyers bill for their work.

One lawyer, Lucky Osho, had repeatedly double-billed for jail visits, we found. On more than 50 occasions, he submitted multiple bills for expenses such as travel time, mileage and parking for what records indicated were single jail visits. We also found that several other lawyers had collected taxpayer money for jail visits that sheriff's records suggest they never made.

North Carolina pays private lawyers more than \$60 million a year to defend indigent criminal suspects. But, as we showed, it's a system vulnerable to financial errors and abuse.

Exhaustive review

The story began with a tip from a courthouse source who said a lawyer had billed for jail visits that couldn't be confirmed by jail records. The tipster mentioned that one judge had a document disclosing how much money each appointed lawyer in the city was making. The figures, the source said, were startling.

When we got the document, it showed that Osho had collected more than \$200,000 from the state in a single year.

We knew we needed more. So, we obtained databases from the state office of Indigent Defense Services and printouts from the federal courts containing information about all payments to appointed lawyers in Charlotte over the previous three years.

We used that information to determine the largest billers and then pulled scores of timesheets and fee applications submitted by those lawyers.

Getting our hands on timesheets wasn't always easy. Although the feds require appointed lawyers to submit timesheets detailing their work, the state courts generally require such documentation only in murder cases and appeals.

Public records provide few ways to check whether appointed lawyers do all the work for which they bill. But, jail records offer one clue. So, we also got a database from the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office that included information on all visits to the county jails. Then, we began conducting an exhaustive review of the jail visits claimed by the top billers.

In our first round of analysis, we checked whether the database contained more than 1,000 of the jail visits lawyers had reported. (The timesheets are mostly handwritten and not computerized, so

QUICK LOOK

Name of the series or story and publication date:

"Lawyers' bills to state don't add up," March 12, 2006

How the story got started:

Gary Wright, the newspaper's courts reporter, began hearing from judges who were concerned about the large sums some appointed lawyers were collecting to defend the poor. He and investigative reporter Ames Alexander set out to answer the fundamental question: How can appointed lawyers making \$65 an hour earn more than \$200,000 a year? To make that much, a lawyer would have to bill for more than 60 hours a week, 50 weeks a year – something many experts said was nearly impossible.

Length of time taken to report, write and edit:

Six months

Major types of documents used and if FOIA requests were needed:

The reporters analyzed more than 200 fee applications filed by appointed lawyers who defended indigent clients. They also examined thousands of pages of court files and handwritten logs kept by detention officers at the Mecklenburg County jails. The *Observer* used the state's public records law to obtain the jail logs and a separate database with information on visits to the Mecklenburg County jails. Jail officials initially balked at providing quick access to the jail logs, but they agreed to make them available following requests from the newspaper's reporters and top editor.

Major type of human sources:

Private defense lawyers and public defenders, judges, sheriff's officials, court clerks, legal experts and officials with the state's office of Indigent Defense Services.

we manually checked each claimed jail visit against the database and built spreadsheets to tally our findings.) Several lawyers had billed for jail visits that didn't appear on the database.

Some defense lawyers questioned the accuracy of the sheriff's database and argued that their own records were more accurate.

We dug deeper and discovered another independent set of jail records that captured information about visits to inmates. In these handwritten documents – called pod logs – detention officers record when inmates leave their cell areas to talk with their attorneys and other visitors.

After some back and forth between *Observer* staffers and the sheriff, we obtained the pod logs for the dates in question. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the pod logs confirmed what the database indicated: There were no official records for more than 130 jail visits that lawyers had claimed.

It got even more interesting when we began to mine the data for other patterns. When Osho made a

The Scrutiny of Lawyers

John D. Simmons | The Charlotte Observer



Lucky Osho, a lawyer who does lots of indigent defense work, may be double billing the government.

trip to the jail, we saw that he often visited numerous clients. And when we looked at the bills Osho submitted for those clients we saw a striking pattern: He often billed twice or more for travel time, mileage and parking for what the jail records indicated were single visits. The practice allowed him to collect thousands of extra dollars. He and his lawyer said any billing errors were unintentional.

Osho had collected more than \$700,000 for defending the poor during a three-year period – far more than any other Mecklenburg County lawyer. We estimated that he billed more than 65 hours a week, on average, just on his appointed cases. Those figures don't include the work he did on behalf of paying clients.

Legal experts say lawyers shouldn't bill for every hour they work – only for the time that directly benefits a particular client.

When we asked Mecklenburg judges about the money Osho had collected, their responses were blunt. One judge called it “staggering,” “preposterous,” and “inexcusable.”

Lessons learned

For those who want to pursue a similar story, we offer this advice:

- Prepare to spend a lot of time with documents and databases. Also, look for records that corroborate what you think you're finding.
- Understand that the documents tell only part of the story. You'll need to consult multiple other sources to make sense of the official records.

• Give the lawyers the benefit of the doubt. For instance, we considered a jail visit confirmed if the date for which an attorney billed was within two days of a visit logged in jail records.

The work was painstaking, but the stories made a difference.

After a federal judge alerted authorities about the newspaper's findings, the FBI began investigating. That probe is still under way. Mecklenburg judges prohibited two of the lawyers we examined from getting any more court-appointed cases, at least until the FBI concludes its investigation.

The stories also captured the interest of state and federal auditors, who later conducted studies that echoed many of our findings.

Our investigation triggered changes in how appointed lawyers bill. In Mecklenburg County, appointed lawyers now must file detailed accounts of their work, and a new court employee is checking their bills. A recently completed study shows those lawyers are now billing for fewer hours. North Carolina officials, meanwhile, say they'll push to require timesheets statewide.

To read the stories online, visit www.charlotte.com/113 and click on “Attorneys for indigent.”

Ames Alexander is an investigative reporter for *The Charlotte Observer*. He has won more than 40 journalism awards.

Gary L. Wright has been with the *Observer* for 28 years. He's spent much of his career covering criminal justice.

What makes lawyers tick – and how to engage them

By Ronda Muir, Esq.

While lawyers score well above the national average in IQ, they score below the national average in emotional intelligence. They are least able to accurately perceive their own and others' emotions, making them more likely to be caught off guard by someone else's emotional response, or even by their own powerful reactions.

Lawyers also tend to either engage in an all-out war to “win” or they walk away.

What does all of this mean to reporters trying to get statements and information from attorneys? While every person is different, here are a few tips that may help dealing with lawyers:

Don't ramble or engage in chit-chat. Get to the bottom line. These people are busy and most interested in the conclusion and not inclined toward personal relationships.

Establish your credentials. Expertise carries a lot of weight with lawyers.

Explain the compelling logic of your inquiry. They want to know why you need this information.

Explain why you are talking to them specifically. They will enjoy feeling important, and it will close the logical loop of why they are critical to the story.

State clearly your timeframe. Give them your deadline and when you need a statement from them.

Consider reverse psychology. “You probably won't...” might well be a challenge the lawyer takes.

Avoid accusations or other provocations. They are highly sensitive to criticism and likely to be defensive. Similarly, don't play the devil's advocate unless you can do so tactfully. If they feel attacked, they will go for the jugular in their commitment to win. Don't take them on.

Avoid emotional plays. They probably won't read it or will read it incorrectly and are most likely to respond by avoiding you.

Don't take their argumentative style personally. It has nothing to do with you. Just respond as rationally as possible.

Give them time to provide their response. Don't force a statement now. If you do, you'll most likely get nothing. You are more likely to be successful if you give them a time when you can call back or offer to receive their emailed response.



Ronda Muir, Esq., is a senior consultant with Robin Rolfe Resources. She couples years of practicing law in the U.S. and Europe with advanced study in psychology and conflict resolution.

NO DEFENSE

Series uncovers how lawyers fail mentally disabled clients at trial

By Stephen Henderson
McClatchy Newspapers

This is a series that, like many others, began with the story of one man.

Ronnie Lee Conner is one of the most disturbed inmates on death row in Mississippi. Psychotic and delusional, he sits in his cell howling throughout the night and keeping other prisoners awake. He fouls his cell regularly with feces and urine.

I learned about Conner in a report about conditions on Mississippi's death row and wondered: How does a guy like this end up with a death sentence? The Supreme Court has long said that people with profound mental illnesses shouldn't be executed – and that the lawyers who defend these people have an obligation to present extensive mitigating evidence from their backgrounds so that juries can then rely on that evidence to render a sentence less than death.

When I learned from his appellate lawyers that Conner's trial counsel hadn't presented any evidence of his bizarre life and well-documented mental illness (in one of his more disturbing periods, he jumped from a moving train because he believed demons were chasing him), I knew I had a good story.

If it could happen to Conner, if lawyers in such an important case could fall so flat in their efforts to defend a guy with his history, I figured it was probably happening a lot more. From there, the story grew to a massive four-state survey of more than 80 death penalty cases to examine how much (or little) lawyers routinely did to defend their clients.

My goal was to quantify, perhaps for the first time, how frequently lawyers' failures help send people like Conner to death row in four key death-penalty states: Virginia, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. The cases were chosen from among all the death sentences given in those states from 1997 through 2004. In each state, the survey started with the most recent conviction and went backward until 20 cases had been researched.

It wasn't until I got into the reporting that I discovered just how far-reaching this ambitious idea was or how difficult that quantification would be. I needed to examine trial records in each of the cases; many had never been looked at before. I needed to review appellate records that often weren't well-developed or publicly available.

Most important, I needed to talk with the lawyers involved in each of the cases to get a sense for why all this happened. Was it money? Did they not know how to defend their clients? Or, did they just not care?

Inadequate performances

The first surprise in the story was how frequently we found lawyers failing to tell critical details of their clients' pasts. Of the 80 cases I reviewed, lawyers in 73 put forth only the most cursory mitigating evidence while overlooking much richer, more pertinent material.

Getting the lawyers to talk about their experiences was trickier but also yielded some surprises. Although I thought they would mostly be reluctant to talk about their cases, I found the vast majority eager to share their own frustrations. Nearly all talked about a lack of money in the states I was researching. Some confessed that they didn't know how to conduct a background investigation of their clients and felt bad that their performance was so inadequate.

I worried initially that the lawyers would recoil from suggesting any failures on their part for fear of liability or, perhaps, some sort of bar sanction. But it didn't seem to be an issue. They all spoke freely.

I found appellate lawyers more distrustful of me and less inclined to share information about what their clients' trial lawyers did. Some of this trepidation was about not spoiling a pending argument by having it appear in the press. Some of it was distrust of media coverage of legal issues and concern that mistakes I might make would compromise a pending appeal.

I was able to overcome this with some of the lawyers through old-fashioned persistence. Others were persuaded by the fact that I was a beat reporter in the U.S. Supreme Court press corps and regularly handled legal issues with the required attention to detail and sensitivity.

With some, though, I simply couldn't break through. One Mississippi case fell out of the stories because the death row inmate's appellate lawyer could not be convinced to let me into the case.

Dedication to defend

The last challenge I faced in reporting these stories was the biggest – but it also paid off in the biggest way.

Late in the reporting, I decided that the last story in the project ought to be a hopeful one about trial lawyers hired to defend a client properly and given all the resources and training they needed to do so. It would show that the problems we were pointing out were correctable and avoidable.

I knew I'd encounter the same reluctance I'd experienced with some of the appellate lawyers: These lawyers would be under the gun with a client

QUICK LOOK

Name of story and when it was published: "No Defense: Shortcut to Death Row," published Jan. 21-23

How the story got started (tip, assignment, etc.): One case of bad lawyering led to an investigation into 80 cases in four big death-penalty states.

Length of time to report, write and edit the story: The reporting – done in between three terms of the Supreme Court, two vacancies, the death of the Chief Justice and three confirmation battles – amounted to about six months of actual work, but spread out over three calendar years.

Major type of documents used and if FOI requests were needed: Trial transcripts, appellate briefs and opinions. No FOI needed.

Major type of human sources used: Lawyers, lawyers and more lawyers. I also got pretty friendly with the clerks at the Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia and Georgia supreme courts.

facing a possible death sentence if anything they did went wrong.

For months, I called around to different lawyers to see if they'd let me get a first-hand glimpse at their work. "No way," was what I heard over and over.

Then, I met a group of young lawyers in Georgia who seemed to believe they had nothing to lose by exposing their work to a journalist. Indeed, they thought their client, a profoundly retarded woman accused of setting a house fire that killed four people, might benefit from press coverage of her case.

We spent weeks together, trolling through the wreckage of defendant Cynthia Allen's life in Valdosta, Ga., and in a dank New Orleans housing project where she grew up.

The result was a story that, in my opinion, made the series. Allen's tale was heart-wrenching, and made all the more vivid by her lawyers' dedication to defending her. I got a front-row seat for all of it, including access to Allen in jail and visits with her family in New Orleans. It made for a compelling narrative to cap off an otherwise deeply investigative series.

Our story has generated a lot of buzz in the states we reviewed about the quality of defense lawyers, and I got strong responses from readers, many of whom were moved by the stories' details even if they disagreed that the defendants deserved better representation.

My favorite bit of feedback, though, said something like this: The story was a wonderful example of how patience and persistence pay off in journalism.

I can't think of a better axiom for investigative – or any other – work in this business.

Stephen Henderson, now deputy editorial page editor for the Detroit Free Press, is the former Supreme Court correspondent for McClatchy newspapers, a post he held for four years.



Texas law gives prosecutors the power to decide whether to share information with defendants' lawyers. In the most extreme cases, defense attorneys can't see key documents, such as police reports, unless the document or its author is introduced in court.

QUICK LOOK

Name of the series or story and when it was aired:
"Rules of the Game," Nov. 27, 2006

How the story got started:

Researching our series on incorrect DNA evidence sending the innocent to prison, we began to become familiar with how pre-trial discovery was being done in Texas.

Length of time taken to report, write and edit:

The research occurred on and off and then became intensive for the three months leading to broadcast. Writing and editing took one week.

Major types of documents used and if FOIA requests were needed:

West Law, LexisNexis, county clerks' offices, Appellate Court Clerk's office. Human resources used: 35 interviews with attorneys, judges and legal experts. An inquiry also was posted for applicable cases on The Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Web site at www.tcdla.com

ON TRIAL

Defense attorneys hampered by Texas law allowing prosecutors to withhold evidence

By David Raziq and Jeremy Rogalski
KHOU-Houston

Imagine that despite your attempt to lead a clean life, you have been accused of committing a felony. You might be innocent or guilty, but either way, you expect a fair trial.

But, what if you discovered that your defense attorney wasn't allowed to do some of the most basic preparation we commonly think we're entitled to?

What if you found that, before your trial, your counsel can't see the police report regarding your crime, can't see a witness list and isn't allowed to look at any lab test results for anything from fingerprinting to ballistics to complex DNA analyses?

In fact, the only time your lawyer is allowed to view any of these documents vital to your case is *after* the author of said report (the police officer, lab technician, etc.) has been called to the stand and finished testifying for the prosecution.

Then, during a short recess, the judge finally will allow your attorney to read the relevant report before cross-examining the state's witness.

And guess what? If the state never calls the author of any of these reports to the stand, your lawyer may never see those documents.

Sound incredible? Even scary? Well, that is how the law is being practiced in many Texas counties, and amazingly most of the public doesn't seem to know it.

Legal implications

We first discovered the story while researching criminal cases for another investigation into the problems with DNA and serology work done by the Houston Police Department's crime lab.

While interviewing defense lawyers, we found

that not only was the lab doing spurious science, but many of the lawyers couldn't get a close look at the lab's reports until right in the middle of trial. These were cases in which people sometimes faced long prison sentences and even the death sentence.

In addition, many of the reports were long, complex and beyond the average defense attorney's ability to critique on the fly.

Legal experts we consulted about this practice were flabbergasted and called it "unconstitutional" and "immoral."

So, how could this happen?

It turns out that in Texas it is all perfectly legal. A state law gives district attorneys the right to withhold from the defense all police reports and witness lists because they are supposedly "work product." Again, the only time the defense is allowed to see

The Scrutiny of Lawyers

such reports is if the author of that work is placed on the stand.

This allows the prosecution to hide unfavorable information or documents by simply not calling certain witnesses.

In addition, our legal research discovered that a Texas superior court ruling had also applied the “work product” definition and rules to police crime lab work and reports.

All of this had another implication, too.

The landmark 1963 U.S. Supreme Court case *Brady v. Maryland* requires the prosecution to immediately share any exculpatory evidence with the defense. That is, they must disclose any evidence that could indicate the defendant is not guilty. What many don’t realize is that the only arbiter of what is “exculpatory” is the prosecutor.

The pre-trial discovery process can act as a check against unscrupulous prosecutors, but if the exculpatory information is in a police or lab report, the defense might never see it. As the head of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association told us, “The state has all the cards.”

Andrea Keillen of the Texas Defenders Service said that, in general, the whole set of rules “cripples your ability to put on a defense. It’s off-the-charts unfair.”

A power game

We talked to 35 attorneys, judges and legal experts, but it wasn’t long before we knew we were onto something.

His name was Sergio Castillo. We first met him as he walked his two daughters to the school bus stop. He had spent 13 years – nearly a third of his life – in prison for attempted murder.

The case was based on the testimony of a person described as

a “sole eyewitness” who pegged Castillo as the triggerman at a party that turned into a scuffle and ended in gunfire.

The only problem is that the police interviewed three other witnesses who identified another man as the shooter. The police report containing the other statements was never brought up at trial, nor was the document’s author called to the stand, so Castillo’s defense team never got to see it.

Years later, an appeals discovery process produced the police reports and contradicting witness statements. Castillo was freed.

We found other similar cases as well. After surveying more than 50 sources, we found that some county prosecuting offices adhered to the state law in different ways. We began to make a map of Texas and found there were three categories for counties.

- Closed file policies. As described above, some district attorney offices completely close down their file until the jury is seated and the state calls its first witness. This includes vital information such as police reports, witness statements, lab reports, DNA test results and expert reports. Defense attorneys only are entitled to see those after direct examination, and then are left scrambling to develop a cogent cross examination.
- Semi-open file policies. Other district attorney offices will allow defense attorneys to look through the file before trial, but they cannot photocopy it, copy it verbatim or dictate it for later transcription. What’s more, a proctor is often assigned to “baby sit” the defense attorney to ensure they’re playing by the rules. The result is defense attorneys (often court-appointed and paid by taxpayers) must spend



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Sergio Castillo, shown with his children, was wrongfully convicted of attempted murder. At his first trial, prosecutors only introduced the testimony of one witness against Castillo, despite the fact that three other witnesses identified another man as the shooter.



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KHOU's investigative team compared Texas county prosecutors' policies for disclosing evidence. Jeremy Rogalski reported that only a handful offer defense attorneys copies of documents that are vital to preparing for trial.

dozens of hours taking long hand notes of complex reports – sometimes two or three inches thick – instead of putting them through a photocopier in a couple of minutes. When it comes to DNA or other lab results that include intricate diagrams, attempting to replicate with handwritten drawings proves useless for a defense expert to adequately analyze.

“It’s absurd,” said one defense attorney. “It can’t possibly be done accurately, and so there’s no sense in trying to do it at all.” Another added: “It’s all a power game by the prosecutors.”

• Open file policies. A handful of district attorney

offices choose to disclose nearly everything to defense attorneys shortly after a defendant is charged. Some DAs will even e-mail PDF copies of police reports and other pertinent documents as a courtesy, but these are by far the exception rather than the norm.

Jeremy Rogalski is a nine-time regional Emmy award-winning reporter who joined the KHOU-TV investigative team in August 2004. David Raziq has been an investigative producer for the last eight years and is now the executive producer for investigations at KHOU-TV.

Pre-discovery evidence

In our investigation, we found that some other states have similar pre-discovery evidence rules. Here are a few things we learned along the way that you might find helpful:

1. Along with talking to the major defense law organizations, former prosecutors and others, we also used listservs and electronic bulletin boards to put the message out that we were looking for legal cases that had been affected by the state's discovery laws.
2. Research the law first and get it down cold. At first, we were misinformed by a well-known defense lawyer who said the evidence rules recently had changed because of a new law. In fact, it turned out that the legislation had never been passed. If we hadn't been skeptical about a usually dependable source, we might not have done our investigation.
3. Many defense attorneys were once prosecutors in the county where they currently work, or they have spent a great deal of time building a negotiating a relationship with the DA. Some of them even get referrals from prosecutors. As a result, defense attorneys often told us of some amazing injustices that resulted in seemingly innocent clients going to prison because of the state discovery laws. But, upon further thought, they refused to help us more. The reason? They didn't want to get on the "bad side" of their district attorney and possibly ruin their current business. Frequently, defense attorneys can be far more chummy with the prosecutors they see again and again than with the client they may see only once.

COURT RESOURCES

By *The IRE Journal*

For more information on judges, courts and lawyers, check out these stories and tipsheets available from the IRE Resource Center at www.ire.org/resourcecenter:

Stories

- Story No. 22378: New Mexico's governor appointed Thomas Rodella as a county judge despite reports that Rodella, a former state police officer, had fixed tickets in exchange for votes. Rodella resigned following the investigation, which also revealed he had also personally secured the release of a DWI offender. Michael Gisick, John Foster, Kevin Bersett, Laura Onstot, (Española, N.M.) *Rio Grande Sun* (2005)
- Story No. 22092: The arrest of a local politician revealed that some criminal charges in the Mobile Municipal Court system are dropped and then erased from public records. The files are moved to a cabinet not accessible to the public, computer records are hidden, and the police department also is ordered to destroy its records. Steve Myers, *Mobile* (Ala.) *Register* (2005)
- Story No. 21279: A convicted con man, who was also a federal prisoner serving a sentence for bank fraud, set up a bogus law firm and swindled the families of other prisoners who were desperate for resentencings. Tony Pipitone, Darran Caudle, Tim Arnheim, Brent Singleton, WKMG-Orlando (2003)
- Story No. 21139: Rumors circulating around the Portsmouth Circuit Court kicked off an investigation that revealed a judge reduced drunken driving convictions to reckless driving in almost two out of three appeals. Reporters identified the trend by analyzing a state database of criminal cases. Amy Jeter, David Gulliver, *The* (Norfolk, Va.) *Virginian-Pilot* (2003)
- Story No. 21031: A two-month investigation revealed that the Queens County Democratic Organization and its chairman control who makes it to the bench in the borough's city and state courts. Democrats have an unbroken record of winning judicial elections that dates back to at least 1990. Dustin Brown, Courtney Dentch, *Bayside* (N.Y.) *Times* (2003)
- Story No. 19995: A lawyer in Tacoma, Wash., blew the whistle on a Superior Court judge after a client implicated the judge in a dishonest business deal. However, the state of Washington is one of nearly 40 states in which it is an ethical violation for a lawyer to disclose communication from a client. Bob Van Voris, *National Law Journal* (2000)

Tipsheets

- No. 2234: "How You, Too, Can Dig Up the Past," Jerry Mitchell, *The* (Jackson, Miss.) *Clarion-Ledger*. The author explains how to investigate crime stories by digging through records, examining past coverage and following the paper trail to testimonies.
- No. 2108: David Burnham, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. This tipsheet provides an overview of how to cover federal courts, including information on investigative agencies, U.S. attorneys and judges.
- No. 2058: "Investigating Diversity in the Courts," Rick Brundrett, *The* (Columbia, S.C.) *State*. This tipsheet explains how to find information in the court system and offers several resources for journalists looking for information on diversity in the courts.
- No. 1979: "Court Records: Mining for Gold," Kim Christensen, *The* (Portland) *Oregonian*. This tipsheet aims to help reporters who feel out of place at the courthouse by providing lists of common documents and where to find them.
- No. 1677: "Writing about Misconduct by Prosecutors," Ken Armstrong, *Chicago Tribune*. This compact tipsheet is a greatest hits list on covering prosecutorial misconduct, including common sense hints and gritty details.
- No. 1644: "How to Cover Problem Solving-Courts: Handling Drugs, Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Other Special Subjects," Superior Court Judge Darrell Stevens, Butte County, Calif. This tipsheet explains why journalists need to report on these courts, where to find stories and what strategies to use. It also offers a fact sheet about collaborative justice courts.

Past issues of *The IRE Journal* featured articles by journalists discussing their investigations of the courts. They include:

- "No Access: Judges balk at unsealing records, readers support media court battle," Ken Armstrong, *The Seattle Times*. Armstrong details his experience with open records laws in King County, Wash., explaining how the county seals records that are meant to be open and how his own research effected change in the system. (July/Aug. 2006)

- "Strike Out: Legal battle for state records proves jurors still excluded on basis of race," Steve McGonigle, *The Dallas Morning News*. McGonigle discusses his investigation into jury selection in Texas, which began with a year-long legal battle to obtain demographic information on jurors. He then worked with a computer-assisted reporting specialist to analyze the data for racial bias and also found a human element to enrich the story. (Jan./Feb. 2006)
- "District attorney's office often slips between cracks," Steve Weinberg, *The IRE Journal*. Weinberg reproves journalists for ignoring a wealth of possible stories in and around prosecutors' offices. He also provides advice for following paper trails related to lawyers, arrests and court cases. (Nov./Dec. 2003)
- "Gagging the news: Courts limit media reporting by silencing trial participants," Rachel Mattee-Boehm, Roger Myers, Steinhart & Falconer LLP. The authors, both lawyers at a San Francisco firm, criticize the trend in California courts of imposing a gag order on trial participants, law enforcement officers and court personnel to keep them from talking to the media. Mattee-Boehm and Myers argue that courts are increasing their restrictions on the public's access to information. (Nov./Dec. 2002)
- "Justice served: Covering juvenile courts critical to protecting vulnerable," Steve Twedt and Barbara White Stack, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Twedt and Stack explain their investigation of the imprisonment of delinquent teenagers with mental illnesses, including how they gained access to the teens and what reporters can learn from juvenile court hearings and legal documents. (Sept/Oct. 2002)

There are also Web sites and databases available from NICAR that offer data or assistance on covering the courts.

- Public Access to Court Electronic Records (<http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>): PACER offers public access to case and docket information from federal district, bankruptcy and appellate courts. Registered individuals or agencies pay a user fee, as well as eight cents per page for access to Web-based systems.
- FindLaw (www.findlaw.com): FindLaw provides a variety of legal resources to both legal professionals and the general public. Users can search a database of local lawyers or browse different types of legal information on topics such as criminal law, employee rights and immigration, among others.
- FBI Uniform Crime Reports: This government resource, combining law enforcement statistics compiled by local agencies nationwide, is available through NICAR. Composed of six databases, the data include information on different types of crimes organized by agency. The FBI posts statistical reports and other guides related to the UCR at www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm. Information on raw data available from NICAR is at www.ire.org/datalibrary.

COINGATE

How a big story became a beat and launched an I-team

BY JAMES DREW AND STEVE EDER
THE (TOLEDO) BLADE

Over the past several years, IRE has helped reporters tackle investigations on their beats.

But, what happens when an investigative story has so many legs that it becomes a beat?

The easy answer is it's a good problem to have, but the real answer is much more complex.

In April 2005, *The (Toledo) Blade* published the first story in what would become a two-year investigation into government corruption and influence-peddling in Ohio. The story focused on GOP fundraiser Tom Noe, a rare coin dealer from the Toledo area. Noe was managing a rare-coin venture funded with \$50 million from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the state-run insurance program for injured workers.

The spine of the initial four-month investigation was a collection of documents *The Blade* obtained under Ohio's public records law. They revealed the state had continued to pour millions into the investment despite warnings from an internal auditor.

The first story ran on April 3, 2005. We knew early on that the reaction would determine the story's traction and, ultimately, its significance. What we

couldn't have anticipated is that for nearly two years, our investigation would emerge as the dominant story in Ohio and alter the course of state politics.

Our earliest reports were met with harsh criticism and resistance from local politicians all the way up to Ohio Gov. Bob Taft, the great-grandson of President William Howard Taft. Just four days after the newspaper's first story, Taft sat down with *Blade* reporters and editors in Toledo.

Referring to Noe – his friend and one of his biggest campaign contributors – the governor said: "He's probably been the most effective advocate for this part of the state in Columbus that you've got, and you're going after this guy. You're trying to kill him for some reason.

"He was making money for the state; what's the problem?" Taft added.

Runaway freight train

The project began with Mike Wilkinson, a projects reporter in Toledo, and statehouse bureau chief James Drew. From the earliest stages of the investigation, Drew and Wilkinson worked their sources in Columbus and Toledo respectively. They also persisted in gaining access to public records showing that Noe personally had sold coins to the state, a conflict of interest, and had lent state money to other businessmen without getting sufficient collateral.

The investigation soon required a "coin team" as the story began to resemble a runaway freight train.

Steve Eder, a Toledo-based reporter, joined the team as we began to investigate the rare-coin subsidiaries that Noe formed with the state's money. As the project wore on, he lived out of a hotel in Columbus for eight months, helping to advance the story and break new investigations within the series.

"I thought we should put a reporter on each one of these coin dealers around the country," said Dave Murray, the special assignments editor and the editor of the newspaper's newly formed investigative team.

Christopher Kirkpatrick, a reporter specializing in economic development in the Toledo area, was called in to focus on rare-coin issues.

We uncovered more problems with the coin funds, including a pair of missing 1850s-era gold coins, debt write-offs and the hiring of a convicted felon as an associate. At the same time, Noe and his

political allies repeated their long-standing claims that the rare-coin fund turned a significant profit for the state – until May 26, 2005. That's when Noe's attorneys informed authorities that there was a shortfall of up to \$13 million in the rare-coin fund.

Immediately, state and federal authorities said they were pursuing criminal and civil charges against Noe. Within days, they formed a task force to initiate a large-scale investigation of the operations of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation. The task force also picked up a separate investigation into allegations that Noe, who had attained "pioneer" fund raising status for collecting at least \$100,000 for President Bush's re-election campaign, had violated campaign finance law by using friends and associates to violate contribution limits.

A story that initially played out in a small coin shop in a Toledo suburb and a state office building in Columbus rapidly spread to Colorado, Kentucky and California and eventually would take "coin team" members to Texas, Florida and Washington, D.C. Over time, the story would touch Ohio politics and the governor's mansion, the Beltway, into the world of money managers and investment marketers and a controversial Toledo real estate firm.

Growing team

Tackling the story and its many legs required substantial resources and support from John Robinson Block, the co-publisher and editor-in-chief. Block and senior editors understood the potential of the story and devoted the staffing required to pursue it.

A key step was our lawsuit filed in May 2005 against the state after it refused to release the detailed inventory and transaction records of the rare-coin fund. In July, the Ohio Supreme Court sided with the paper – making public hundreds of thousands of pages of records that allowed us to piece together the intricacies of the doomed investment.

Competing against larger newspapers in Ohio, we had to make sure we didn't miss the daily developments in what had become a wide-ranging government scandal. We also had to stay ahead of daily stories, continue our enterprise into the rare-coin investment and also expand our investigation.

Murray, the project editor, had to decide how to maximize the paper's resources, focus its investigative energies on major developments in the story and help the team remain ahead of the competition. He gauged the strategies of rival newspapers in Ohio, which bolstered their staffing to try to cut into our lead on the quickly growing story. Murray even left the Toledo office with two reporters to come to the focal point of the story in Columbus and deployed reporters to the various fronts of the project.

By the end of summer 2005, the scandal had ensnared high-ranking aides to Taft who had accepted vacations, money and gifts from Noe without disclosing them. Taft also fell, becoming the first sitting governor in Ohio convicted of a crime when

Jeremy Wadsworth | The Blade



Defense attorney Bill Wilkinson, left, talks with Tom Noe after his sentencing on a pattern of corrupt activity, money laundering and forgery.

he pleaded no contest to ethics violations for failing to disclose gifts from Noe and others.

At its peak, in the summer of 2005, the team grew to 11 – six reporters, an editor, a librarian and a clerk who filed hundreds of thousands of pages of coin records, a forensic accountant and a copy editor who became a full-time layout person for the coverage.

“It almost became a little newsroom within the newsroom,” Murray said.

Politics writer Jim Tankersley joined the project in the fall of 2005 with a focus on the political ramifications of the scandal. He helped examine President Bush’s elite fundraisers and led our coverage of the 2006 elections, when voters ended one-party rule in Ohio. Exit polls showed that corruption was a major reason for the sea change.

As the story dominated Ohio news, its roots in Toledo continued to deepen.

Last year, Wilkinson reported on Noe’s guilty plea in federal court in Toledo to violating campaign finance law and the convictions of four public officials who helped Noe curb federal campaign finance limits. Wilkinson also covered Noe’s state trial in Toledo, which coincided with last year’s elections.

A jury convicted Noe on 29 charges, and a judge sentenced him to 18 years in prison and ordered him

to pay millions of dollars to the state in restitution. Noe, who is currently serving a 27-month federal sentence for funneling money to the Bush campaign, is appealing his state conviction.

Earlier in 2006, Terry Gasper, the workers’ compensation bureau’s former financial chief, pleaded guilty to accepting bribes from Noe and other money managers and investment marketers in exchange for lucrative investment business. Gasper’s admission opened yet another vein for us to investigate.

Investigative responsibilities

Over the past two years, we never have lost sight of the need to continue our investigations and to expose problems in state government.

As part of the hotly contested Republican primary for governor in 2006, we investigated the ties between vendors and contributors to two veteran statewide officeholders. Also last year, we reported that in the decade since the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation turned over management of claims of injured workers to private companies, politically-connected firms had collected millions of dollars from the state agency while their owners and executives poured more than \$600,000 into the campaign coffers of the state’s political leaders.

When we formed a permanent I-Team last

October, we named Drew and Eder, who continue to work on the “Coingate” project and other investigations, as the base of the team. In addition, the team’s stated goal is to rotate reporters “to introduce as many staff members as we can to investigative reporting projects.”

“*The Blade* has a national reputation for outstanding investigative reporting and we intend to continue that tradition,” wrote executive editor Ron Royhab in a memo to the staff announcing the formation of the I-Team. “While the newspaper industry is going through some difficult times now, newspapers cannot allow their investigative responsibilities to suffer.”

As our work continues, a state and federal task force continues to interview witnesses and subpoena records. Authorities have charged 18 public officials and money managers in response to our investigation, with 16 criminal convictions. We continue to pursue the story and prosecutors say more charges are expected.

James Drew and Steve Eder are investigative reporters for The (Toledo) Blade. They helped uncover Ohio’s “Coingate” scandal and were honored as finalists for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, and winners of a National Headliner Award, a Gerald Loeb Award and the George Bliss Award.

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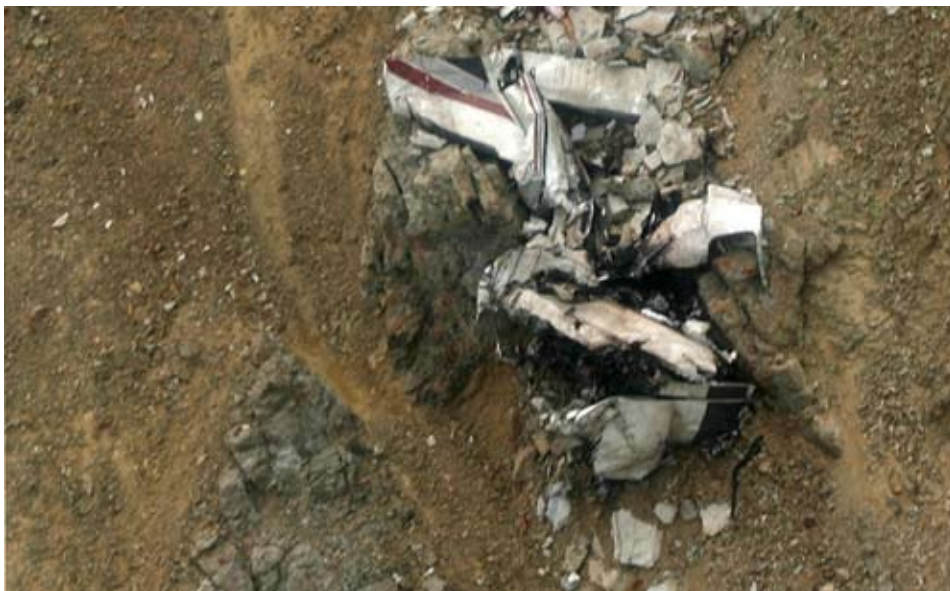
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J.D. Kirkendoll



A *Miami Herald* data analysis found that air cargo crashes were 50 percent more likely to result in death than similarly regulated planes carrying passengers.

DEADLY FLIGHTS

Cargo flight crashes more common than government, public realize

BY RONNIE GREENE
THE MIAMI HERALD

First, the left engine of the 23-ton cargo plane began vibrating in the sky over South Florida, forcing the young pilot to bring the aircraft down in a lake near a shopping mall. Six months later, another relic cargo plane lost life in the air and then pummeled the pavement on a Fort Lauderdale street and scattered debris in driveways.

Each near miss was touted as a miracle – landings that could have taken lives but averted disaster. Then, they were largely forgotten, just as most air cargo crashes are.

In truth, *The Miami Herald* revealed, these near misses were snapshots of larger breakdowns in a perilous industry where crashes are more prevalent than the public or government realize. In more than a year of research, the newspaper documented that air cargo planes crash with deadly consequences nearly once a month in the United States, but the Federal Aviation Administration has done little to curtail the industry’s safety failings.

The South Florida crashes were only part of the reason we launched this project. My editor, Michael Sallah, joined the newspaper from Ohio, another state with its share of cargo tragedies. After Sallah became our investigations editor in 2005, we decided our first project would be a detailed look into this under-the-radar industry.

We agreed to make this a national project and set

a straightforward goal: to document every fatal U.S. cargo crash this decade and pull back the layers to understand why the crashes were occurring and what was being done about it.

Deadly aviation

Finding answers began with a case-by-case review of accident reports maintained in a National Transportation Safety Board database. The database is helpful in many ways, but it does not allow for a simple search for all air cargo crashes because companies in this industry fly under a myriad of regulations. Thus, you cannot simply plug in a few keystrokes and come up with all crashes. Instead, I pored over several hundred individual reports to pinpoint those involving air cargo planes.

After months of legwork, I came to preliminary findings: From 2000 to mid-2006, there had been 69 fatal U.S. air cargo crashes that took 85 lives. Most involved pilots who were flying solo for small, little-known companies, and their deaths sometimes generated a scant few paragraphs in the local paper.

Before digging deeper, I asked the NTSB for its list of fatal cargo crashes in the same period. Quite simply, I wanted to make sure I had not overlooked any cases. Instead, I found that our research had identified more cases than the government logs reflected. The reason goes back to the multiple regulations that

govern this industry. When a cargo plane crashes as it is traveling to pick up cargo, or after it has finished ferrying freight, it is considered a “positioning” flight under FAA rules. None of those cases were included on the NTSB roster, but we identified 12 among the 69.

Other NTSB statistics showed that cargo is part of a family of small on-demand carriers – including air taxis, charters and EMS helicopters – with the highest crash rates in commercial aviation. We took this finding one step further. My colleague Jason Grotto found that air cargo crashes were 50 percent more likely to result in death than similarly regulated planes carrying passengers – revealing air cargo as the deadliest form of commercial aviation.

Other statistical findings were telling. I created a master file of every fatal U.S. cargo crash this decade, then logged key information for each: when and where the plane crashed, what time the accident occurred, the age and model of the plane, the operator involved and the age of pilot. We learned, for instance, that the downed planes averaged 26 years old – nearly four times the age of typical airline passenger aircraft – and two planes with questionable safety records were involved in the most crashes. Taken together, these findings exposed the largely hidden consequences of a booming business that transports everything from car parts to business letters to hazardous materials, sometimes flying over bustling neighborhoods.

Next, I explored the regulations governing the small cargo planes involved in nine of every 10 fatal crashes. Pilots for small carriers can fly up to 40 percent more hours per year than pilots for large airlines. Their planes are not required to have black boxes. And, experts said, small air cargo operations receive less rigorous oversight from the FAA, which devotes most of its resources to planes carrying passengers.

Crash rulings

Beyond the numbers and regulations, this was a story about the largely unknown pilots who fly, and sometimes die, in this industry. While conducting interviews across the country, a profile emerged of a cadre of young pilots eager to move up the aviation ladder and who took the low-paying jobs to reach these goals. Their nickname: freight dogs.

Nicholas Hibberd, a University of Texas honors graduate born into a family of pilots, died in 2002 when a faulty part brought his cargo plane down near homes in Texas. Thomas Lennon, who achieved his goal of flying passenger planes only to lose his job after 9/11, went back to work squeezing his 6-foot-7 frame into small planes ferrying canceled checks. He died in a crash near Baltimore-Washington International Airport in 2004. Alaska pilot Shima Funakoshi died in 2003 while giving her mother a tour of her cargo work. I traveled to Texas to meet with Hibberd’s family, to Maryland to meet with Lennon’s family, and to Florida, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and South Carolina to interview others touched by this industry.

Our findings raised questions about the gov-

ernment's tendency in eight of every 10 cases to blame pilots for deadly crashes. We obtained records showing that the NTSB and FAA had issued safety warnings about the two planes involved in the most crashes: the Cessna 208B, which has major handling problems related to icing, and the Mitsubishi MU-2, which has a high crash rate. Not once did the NTSB cite these issues in its crash rulings.

Families pushed the FAA to require black boxes, or flight data recorders, on small cargo planes to help provide answers. "The worst thing that can happen to somebody is to lose a family member and not know why," said a pilot whose brother died in a 2002 crash. "It would cost money, and a lot of people would be opposed to it. Improvements in aviation are measured by deaths. How many deaths, and how much is it worth, to correct the problem?"

Indeed, the air cargo industry itself had fought far-reaching safety reforms that would put it under the same type of scrutiny as large airlines.

A focus of our research was FAA oversight. Why were cargo planes crashing while commercial aviation, overall, boasted a strong safety record? To help answer this question, I filed Freedom of Information Act requests for FAA enforcement and citation records involving troubled carriers. These helped demonstrate the lax oversight with tragic examples. We wrote of a young pilot so worn out he begged for a co-pilot one day in 2005, and, after he couldn't get one, died when his plane crashed into a Colorado mountain 30 minutes later. FAA files showed that his Salt Lake City employer had been fined seven times in five years for blatant safety violations but was shut down only *after* the fatal flight. An Albany, N.Y., cargo operator had a fleet of planes not certified to fly into icing conditions, yet the FAA brought enforcement only *after* a deadly 2000 crash – involving ice.

Attention needed

We presented our findings to experts, including a former FAA inspector, for technical feedback. In July 2006, "Deadly Express" was published. Reaction was swift.

Members of Congress pressed for hearings, while pilots and families said the series unearthed dangerous practices needing reform. "I'm 53 now and have been working hard as an advocate for change in the cargo industry since I was 28," one pilot said. "You and your paper are the first ones I have seen make a difference."

Wrote the parents of a pilot killed in 2004: "It heartens us to think that, because of the information you're revealing, there might be someone who might use this information in a way that could save a life. Had we been aware of this information before our own son accepted his position as a pilot with a cargo carrier, we know we would have been able to prevent his death."

The FAA, which had never conducted its own study of air cargo's death toll, maintained that it had helped sharply reduce the industry's crash rate. Yet the agency's claims were misleading, pointing at just two years of data while we had examined a decade. We found that the industry's crash rate had spiked up and down in that time, but it remained far higher than large commercial operators. In 2004, the on-demand carriers' fatal



The investigation put a human face on pilots killed in air cargo accidents. Fine Air First Officer Steven Petrosky died in a fatal crash on Aug. 7, 1997, during takeoff from Miami International Airport.

accident rate was 65 times greater than that of larger carriers and was the highest since 1996.

We continued our reporting with a second investigation that examined nonfatal crashes. The December report found that one of every 10 such accidents involved planes that were low on fuel. This fundamental breakdown endangered pilots and people on the ground, and it showed, again, that this long-neglected industry is in need of attention.

Ronnie Greene is an investigative reporter with The Miami Herald and past winner of an IRE Award. He is finishing his first book, a nonfiction environmental justice narrative to be published in early 2008 by HarperCollins/Amistad.

Photos: Candace Barbot | The Miami Herald



Reporters traveled across the country to interview family members of the dead pilots. In Philadelphia, Widow Lara Lennon holds the quilt she made from her husband's U.S. Airways flight uniform and favorite pieces of clothing.



A Texas couple visits a memorial marker for commercial pilot Nicholas Hibberd, who died in 2002. His twin-engine Cessna 402C crashed into the house where the couple lived.



Former House Speaker Jim Black resigned from the state House of Representatives and pleaded guilty in federal court to a public corruption charge.

N.C. POLITICS

Stories on illegal activities prompt criminal convictions, ethics reform

BY DAN KANE AND J. ANDREW CURLISS
THE (RALEIGH, N.C.) NEWS & OBSERVER

It looked as if the 2005 legislative session would end without the passage of a state lottery. A bill had passed the House, only to come up one vote short in the state Senate. Leaders there said they were giving up.

But, House Speaker Jim Black exhorted Senate leaders to continue the fight. The Senate returned a week later to take up the bill. Two lottery opponents were no-shows. The lottery became law.

That twist was one of many that caused us to look more closely into the lottery's passage. We ended up finding a whole lot of shady dealings behind the lottery's passage and other legislative activities involving Black. The reports led to the criminal convictions of two people for illegal lobbying and a third for mail fraud. In February, Black pleaded guilty in an unrelated case that state and federal investigators later uncovered: accepting payments from chiropractors while he pushed favorable legislation.

At the start of the session, Black, a Charlotte-area Democrat, had emerged as a strong convert for the lottery. He began arguing, as advocates had done for years, that North Carolina was losing hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue as its residents crossed into neighboring states to buy lottery tickets.

But here's what Black left unsaid: Before he

began his push, his unpaid political director, Meredith Norris, had won a \$40,000 contract to consult for Scientific Games, one of the two companies that run the majority of lotteries across the United States.

Despite rumors that she was lobbying for the company, Norris and the company's top lobbyist, Alan Middleton, made no mention of it either.

When *The News & Observer's* Dan Kane called Middleton and asked him to confirm that rumor, Middleton denied it. The reporter rephrased the question: Had Middleton hired Norris in any capacity?

Kane asked several times before Middleton finally said that Norris had been hired to "monitor legislation." Norris said the same thing in an e-mail response. Their lobbying denials were significant because lobbyists and their clients are supposed to register with the state and report spending on lawmakers when it involves the pursuit of legislation.

That was enough for an initial story; the consulting suggested the company was trying to buy influence with Black.

The next challenge was to find out if Norris was indeed lobbying Black and other lawmakers. Kane filed a request with Black's office for all records and correspondence involving Norris and/or lottery interests.

Lobbying violations

As Kane waited for the records, Black made two appointments to the new state lottery commission, which would select a vendor to run the games. We began hearing that one of those appointees, public relations executive Kevin Geddings, had a past business relationship with the Middletons. Geddings and Middleton denied such a relationship, though they did say they were friends. Reporter J. Andrew Curliss tracked down court records that showed Geddings had hired Middleton several years earlier for public relations work.

After reporting those two red flags, *The News & Observer* dropped its first bombshell, which would lead to more than 100 stories.

Kane's records request produced e-mails showing that Norris had lobbied for Scientific Games. She had set up a dinner meeting between Black and Middleton, and she had sought to invite lawmakers on a yacht cruise with Middleton at a state legislative conference in Seattle. The records also showed Middleton provided Black's office with legislative language that landed word for word in the lottery bill and was intended to give Scientific Games a leg up on bidding for the lottery contract.

The correspondence opened new ground, too. Norris's other lobbying clients, which she had disclosed, were enjoying extraordinary access to the speaker's staff. In one case, she told Black's staff to insert language that favored one of her clients into a bill so that it didn't appear to come from her.

State and federal authorities jumped in. The North Carolina Secretary of State's office, which oversees lobbying, announced an investigation. Federal authorities dropped subpoenas on Black's office. At the end of October, Scientific Games disclosed that it had paid Geddings, Black's appointee to the lottery commission, \$24,500 largely to push for the lottery's passage. That work included coaching a state senator before a lottery debate and producing pro-lottery radio ads within the districts of the two senators who later did not show up for the final lottery vote. The company also disclosed that it had reimbursed Norris roughly \$4,000 for wining and dining lawmakers.

Within a year, a federal jury convicted Geddings of mail fraud. Middleton and Norris were convicted in state court of lobbying law violations.

Tighter regulations

Meanwhile, we uncovered other examples of questionable conduct:

- Black created a state job for the wife of one of Norris's lobbying clients. The president of a regional economic development agency also had given contributions to Black's campaign and let Black use agency offices for political meetings.
- The head of another regional economic development agency had given Norris a separate \$24,000 contract that many on the agency's board had no clue about. The contract, believe it or not, was for public relations. The agency had little to show for her work.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

POST-ELECTION

PACs adapt to new reality by giving money to Democrats

BY JONATHAN D. SALANT
BLOOMBERG NEWS

After the November elections put Democratic lawmakers in the majorities of both houses of Congress for the first time in 12 years, we set out to see whether corporate campaign donations would reflect the new reality.

It happened once before: Back in 1995, business political action committees, which had supported the Democratic majorities for years, quickly switched sides and gave a majority of their campaign contributions to the newly employed Republicans. The corporate PACs had given to Democrats because they were in charge. Suddenly they were giving to Republicans not only because they had the majorities but also because their agenda mirrored that of business.

Even as polls showed that the Democrats had a good chance of winning one or both houses of Congress in 2006, the largest corporate PACs didn't hedge their bets. In fact, they increased their giving to Republicans to keep them and their pro-business ideology in power.

That all changed after Nov. 7.

Switching sides

It didn't take very long for business PACs to adapt.

Congressional candidates and PACs were required to file campaign finance statements in early December. The House and PAC reports were available electronically at the Federal Election

Commission Web site (www.fec.gov). Because the Senate does not yet file electronically – legislation to change that procedure passed the Senate Rules Committee in March – I went over to the FEC offices to read those filings. Copies of Senate filings eventually are scanned and posted on the FEC Web site, but that can take weeks.

I looked at all of the Democrats who defeated incumbent Republicans and found several corporate PACs that had supported the losers wasting no time writing checks to the winners.

During the campaign, Boeing's PAC backed Republican Sen. Jim Talent of Missouri with a maximum \$10,000 campaign contribution. Just 17 days after his defeat, the PAC wrote a \$5,000 check to Claire McCaskill, the Democrat who beat him.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad was even quicker. After contributing \$5,000 to Republican Sen. Mike DeWine of Ohio during the campaign, its PAC gave \$2,500 to Democrat Sherrod Brown 13 days after he won the race.

Trade groups also switched sides. The American Bankers Association PAC gave \$5,000 to Democrat Heath Shuler of North Carolina three days after he won a House race against Republican Rep. Charles Taylor. The bankers' group supported Taylor during the campaign. The association's PAC, which also had given to DeWine's campaign, contributed \$2,500 to Brown nine days after he was elected.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 >

Electronic Disclosure

The Democrat-controlled U.S. Senate this year is considering legislation to require senators to file their campaign finance disclosure reports electronically, the way House members, presidential candidates and political action committees do.

It can't come too soon for reporters who now must wade through hundreds or thousands of pages of filings to find out who is giving to a senator's campaign.

When Senate Banking Committee Chairman Chris Dodd of Connecticut, a Democratic candidate for president, announced that his Senate campaign had raised \$3 million in the last three months of 2006 and would use that money to help fund his quest for the White House, I set out to find out where those donations came from.

While other presidential candidates who had been fundraising, such as Senator John McCain and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, filed electronically, Dodd's donations were on hundreds of sheets of paper because the money was raised by his Senate campaign.

It took more than four hours to go through every page with the names of the donors who gave Dodd his \$3 million. There were some celebrities, such as actors Paul Newman and Chevy Chase.

What interested me, however, was that more than one-third of Dodd's total was contributed by the employees and PACs of banks, investment houses and insurance companies – the industries overseen by the Senate Banking Committee that he chairs.

After all, Dodd raised more money over those last three months than any other presidential candidate, even his neighbor to the west,

New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was in the midst of a re-election campaign. And the industries he oversees were major contributors to his fundraising prowess.

To be sure, some of the money was donated before the Nov. 7 election that gave control of the Senate to the Democrats and made Dodd the banking committee chairman. Still, polls gave the Democrats a realistic chance of winning a Senate majority. And almost half of the \$375,971 in PAC contributions that Dodd raised after Nov. 7 came from industries under the banking panel's jurisdiction.

The Senate banking panel "is a juice committee," said Craig Holman, a lobbyist for Public Citizen, a Washington watchdog group. "The industry feels the pressure to give because this is the chairman with oversight over their business affairs."

Dodd told us that the money came from people with whom he had long-standing ties.

"This is not a newfound relationship," he said. "These people know me best. They've worked with me. I've worked with them. We've been in agreement on various issues; we've been in disagreement on various issues over the years."

Now that Dodd is officially raising money for his presidential campaign, he will file electronically. And the Senate Rules Committee in March passed legislation that would require electronic filing for Senate candidates.

– Jonathon D. Salant

DEATH INDEX

Hunt continues for elusive corpses rising to cast a vote

BY JOHN FERRO
POUGHKEEPSIE (N.Y.) JOURNAL

Stories about dead people on the voter rolls are not new.

For example, Paul D'Ambrosio of the *Asbury Park* (N.J.) *Press* described how he reported on this same topic in *Uplink*, the computer-assisted reporting newsletter published by IRE and NICAR. That was in 1994. Back then, Paul received his data on nine-track tapes and did his computer matching with an old Intel 486/66 chip. (Yikes.)

But, until our story ran last October, nobody had applied this tried-and-true formula to New York's statewide voter registration list. That's probably because New York didn't have a list until June.

Our report showed that New York had as many as 77,000 people on its brand new voter registration list who were deceased, and as many as 2,600 of them had a record of having cast a vote after they had died.

A heady experience

New York's difficulties in meeting the requirements of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 have been well documented. On March 1, 2006, the U.S. Justice Department sued the state because, among other things, it had failed to produce a computerized voter registration database.

That summer, the state finally produced its voter list, and then an e-mail arrived in my inbox. It read: "The IRE and NICAR Database Library has just added a significant database to its collection, just in time for the general election season: the Social Security Administration's Death Master File."

The next thing I knew, I was calling IRE for the master death index and bopping up the New York State Thruway to Albany to get a CD with the voter list. Total cost: \$205 for the master death index, \$10 for the voter list and \$3.57 for the Big Mac I ate on the drive up.

There in my special sauce-stained hands were the makings of what I thought would be a nifty story: corpses, as Jack Cafferty would later refer to them on CNN's "The Situation Room," rising from the grave and casting votes. Or better yet, evidence of organized voter fraud.

I found neither.

What I did find was the product of some fairly rudimentary computer-assisted analysis. Just six months out of my boot camp at the IRE headquarters in Columbia, Mo., I was – and still am – quite a few queries away from a black belt in CAR.

All I had to do was compare a few pieces of identifying information in the two databases: names, dates of births and ZIP codes. It sounded simple enough. The only problem was the size of the databases. The nationwide master death index had more than 77 million records in it. The state voter list had more than 11 million records.

Some database managers can handle files this large and larger, but I had to stick with Microsoft Access. Some of the queries took 15-20 minutes to execute and caused the fan on my CPU to start spinning so hard, you could hear it two cubicles over.

Eventually I had my list of 77,000 matches showing people who had the same first name, last name, date of birth and ZIP code in both databases.

Real people, but not all of them dead, as it turned out.

I knew going in there would be some false matches. The Social Security Administration goes out of its way to warn that its master death index is not 100 percent accurate and that some of the people listed in the database are not deceased. I found two people in Dutchess County like that. One fellow declined an interview, but 85-year-old Hilde Stafford informed me, "I'm still alive. I still vote."

But what of all the others? What of the people who had appeared in our obituaries but had a record of having voted after they had died?

So began the real reporting. It wasn't enough just to report the list. I began looking at all of our local matches. In each case I examined records of deceased voters were the product of bookkeeping errors or mistaken identities rather than fraud.

One Friday evening, I drove to the last known address of Betty L. Johnson, who had come to Dutchess County from a small town in Virginia when she was 17 and had raised eight children while working at a duct tape factory and in the kitchen at a veterans hospital. She had died in 2003. Apparently, she had voted the following year.

I knocked on her apartment door and found two of her daughters inside. One was named Betty J. Johnson. It didn't take long to figure out that the daughter's vote had been assigned to her mother's record. It was confirmed by an examination of the poll books.

There were other cases. In the end, I had a story that quantified the potential for fraud and errors in New York's new statewide voter registration list and showed how some of those errors could occur. (See related stories on pg. 35)

Darryl Bautista | Poughkeepsie Journal



Data from the Social Security Administration and local election officials allow journalists to search for examples of people casting votes after their death. However, detailed investigation often reveals errors in record-keeping, rather than voting fraud.

Profound impact

We shared the story in advance with the other Gannett papers in New York and provided localized data for them.

The response was immediate. The blogs began weighing in. Broadcast news followed. A couple of weeks later, we posted the data online so people could do their own searches for dead voters. The state Board of Elections, which does not use the master death index to cross-check its registrants, said it would consider doing so. Some county boards said they would review their processes as well.

On Halloween, I found myself in the newsroom at CNN headquarters in Manhattan preparing to be interviewed by Mary Snow for a spot on "The Situation Room."

CNN commentator Jack Cafferty soon would be expounding on corpses rising from the dead to vote. Conspiracy theorists on both sides of the political spectrum were having at it on the blogs, raging about what this would mean in the upcoming midterm elections.

Just before CNN began taping my interview, it hit me how a simple, old idea applied at just the right time could have such a profound impact, even if the results were not as salacious as I first imagined they could be.

John Ferro is senior local editor at the Poughkeepsie Journal.

“Dead voter” stories

Extra! Extra!, IRE’s investigative reporting blog, notes more examples of “dead voter” stories dating back to August 2003 from a variety of media outlets, including:

- WEWS-Cleveland
- *Poughkeepsie Journal*
- *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*
- *The Indianapolis Star*
- *The (Munster, Ind.) Times*
- *San Francisco Chronicle*

See the *Extra! Extra!* archives (www.ire.org/extra/extra) for more information and copies of the stories.

The IRE Resource Center also has stories on the subject. To order copies, call the Resource Center at 573-882-3364 or e-mail rescntr@ire.org.

- **Story No. 23151:** After a primary election in an inner city Memphis precinct finished with a margin of 13 votes, reporters found that the names of dead voters were used to cast ballots and that hundreds of deceased voters were still on polling lists. Marc Perusquia, Halimah Abdullah, Rick Locker, *The (Memphis, Tenn.) Commercial Appeal* (2006)
- **Story No. 22556:** Election fraud in Detroit included voting rolls with 300,000 registrants who had moved or died, among other infractions. FBI and state officials seized city voting records following this story’s publication. Brad Heath, David Josar, Lisa M. Collins, *The Detroit News* (2005)
- **Story No. 21422:** An analysis showed that 11,700 dead people across Missouri were listed as eligible voters for the 2004 election. In some cases, ballots were cast under the names of citizens who had died a decade earlier. Aaron Kessler, *The Joplin (Mo.) Globe* (2004)
- **Story No. 21033:** Following the Democratic primaries in Lake County, Ind., reporters found voters who registered from vacant lots and many who were dead. The investigation also revealed how Lake County took advantage of the poor, uneducated and non-English speaking populations. Steve Patterson, (Merrillville, Ind.) *Post-Tribune* (2003)

Lottery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

- Black had helped his fellow optometrists (who were also major contributors to his campaigns) gain the right to perform some injections around patients’ eyes. He held up fee-increase legislation the state medical board had sought to catch bad doctors.
- Black had stacked a state regulatory board that oversees his son’s pest control business.

Our stories reverberated in the state legislature, prompting the first-ever ethics law for executive branch officials, a ban on most gifts, meals and other perks from lobbyists and a ban on lawmakers’ personal use of campaign funds. Lawmakers also adopted tighter fiscal regulations for the regional economic development partnerships.

Black narrowly survived the 2006 election and continued to press for another speaker term until we uncovered another arranged state job. This time, Black had created the unprecedented position of House historian for a woman whom he had quietly removed from supervising House pages.

She had sent the pages to stay with her son, a convicted felon with a history of drug and alcohol abuse. But, Black rewarded her with another \$50,000 job to produce a book on the history of the North Carolina House. She was unable to complete the project before her job ran out.

After 20 months of work, she turned out a 23-page report that Black wouldn’t release. The state’s new speaker did. Among the many factual and grammatical errors, it reported that a past speaker had continued serving in the House for two years after he died.

Dan Kane and J. Andrew Curliss are state government reporters at The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer.



Former House Speaker Jim Black is escorted into federal court in Raleigh.

PACs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Payback time

Two months later, my colleague Kristin Jensen and I decided to take a bigger look at corporate PAC giving after the Democratic takeover. By this time, PACs had filed their lists of campaign donations through Dec. 31, giving us almost two months of data.

We took the top 25 corporate PACs that had given the most money to federal candidates, as compiled by Congressional Quarterly’s Political-MoneyLine (www.politicalmoneyline.com), an independent site that tracks campaign giving.

All 25 had given a majority of their donations to Republicans during the 2006 campaign. No surprise here; Republicans controlled the White House and both houses of Congress, and they had passed tax cuts and other legislation that business groups strongly supported.

We then went through each PAC’s list of post-election giving and sorted it by political party. Seventeen of those 25 PACs had given a majority of their post-election contributions to the newly empowered Democrats.

As we wrote, “For some of the biggest companies in the U.S., it’s payback time. Paying to Democrats, that is.”

The top 25 PACs poured more than \$420,000 into Democratic candidate coffers between Nov. 8 and Dec. 31, about double the amount that went to Republicans.

To be sure, some company PACs continued to favor Republicans, but even their percentage of Democratic giving went up in several cases.

More typical was the PAC of the cable television company Comcast Corp., which had given 55 percent of its donations to Republicans. After the election, the PAC gave \$37,500 to Democrats and \$8,500 to Republicans. Aflac Inc., best known for its quacking duck commercials, gave 57 percent of its PAC donations to Republicans for 2006. After Nov. 7, the PAC contributed \$52,500 to Democrats and \$1,000 to Republicans.

By the way, we found that the phenomenon wasn’t limited to business PACs. Although labor generally supports Democrats, some union PACs give to friendly Republicans. Before the election, the air traffic controllers union gave the maximum \$10,000 to Republican John Sweeney of New York, a member of the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee. The union has since given \$5,000 to the Democrat who beat him, Kirsten Gillibrand.

Jonathan D. Salant reports on campaign finance and lobbying from the Washington bureau of Bloomberg News.

CAR pioneer uses data, news archives to trace racial cleansing in U.S. counties

BY STEVE WEINBERG
THE IRE JOURNAL

It is no surprise that veteran investigative reporter Elliot Jaspin has written a breathtaking exposé. After all, way back in 1979, Jaspin, not yet 30 years old, won a Pulitzer Prize for uncovering a scandal in small-town Pennsylvania. Then he used his considerable intelligence to pretty much invent what today is known as computer-assisted reporting.

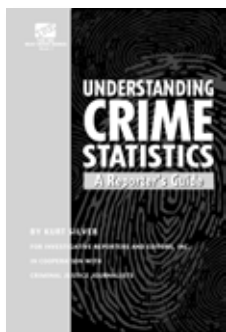
Jaspin's relentless curiosity cannot undo the grievous harm of the past, but the book might spawn a national dialogue about the poison of racism.

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But, the subject matter of Jaspin's first book is a surprise because it is grounded in the distant past, not the present. Furthermore, the engine that drives the book is not high-technology computer-assisted reporting, but rather the most basic of all journalistic tools – relentless curiosity.

The relentless curiosity kicked in nine years ago when Jaspin was visiting Berryville, Ark., on assignment. After winning his Pulitzer Prize for local investigative reporting at the *Pottsville* (Pa.) *Republican* (shared with Gilbert Gaul for exposing organized crime infiltration of a coal company), after developing computer-assisted reporting at *The Providence Journal-Bulletin*, after advancing that new paradigm at the Missouri School of Journalism in conjunction with IRE, Jaspin ended up at the Washington, D.C., bureau of Cox Newspapers.

With extra time in Berryville before returning to Washington, Jaspin toured a small history museum that, unsurprisingly, mentioned the town's slaveholding era. It dawned on Jaspin that, while visiting a Deep South locale that obviously had been home to many blacks, he had not seen a black person anywhere. He asked a source about that. "The Klan keeps them out," she said.

Jaspin started looking at U.S. Census data for Arkansas. Berryville was not unique. In fact, about one-third of Arkansas counties showed no blacks. An anomaly? No, Jaspin determined. Numerous counties in Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and Kentucky also showed no black residents in the 1990 Census. For each location, Jaspin traveled back further in time. Each of those all-white counties had served as home to numerous blacks at one point, but then the blacks disappeared, almost overnight, never to return.

Jaspin was documenting the phenomenon of "sundown towns." In those towns, whites had ordered blacks to leave by sundown and to stay away. Occasionally, those racial cleansings

occurred without physical violence. More often, deaths ensued.

Although not the first author to discover and write about sundown towns, it appears Jaspin is the most thorough of all those authors, in part because his computer skills provide an analytical power unknown to previous researchers.

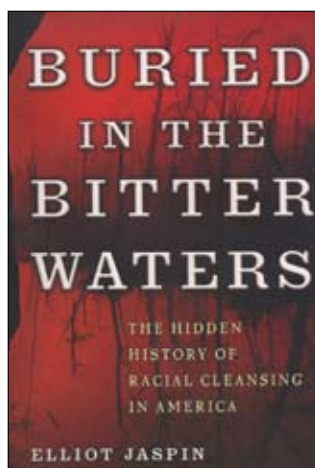
Locating a Web site at the University of Virginia containing historical census data, Jaspin downloaded the figures, then read them into a database. Next, he searched for counties where blacks had resided then disappeared before the next census. More than 200 counties appeared. To understand what the computer documented, Jaspin read old newspapers on microfilm and interviewed local historians. The revelations poured forth, after lifetimes of silence.

For example, in Mitchell County, N.C., racial cleansing took place relatively late – in 1923. It began with the alleged rape of a white woman by a black man. Today, doubt exists

whether the woman told the truth. In 1923, however, the whites of Spruce Pine believed what they heard and decided to punish all blacks, not just the purported rapist. Jaspin dug up local reports that suggest the atrocities: "Spruce Pine Negroes Forcibly Deported by Armed Mob in Cars," it stated.

Jaspin's relentless curiosity cannot undo the grievous harm of the past, but the book might spawn a national dialogue about the poison of racism. The dialogue might yield a greater sensitivity about how the hurts of the past play out sometimes in the violence of the present. The book might even spawn amity between the races in the future, as the dialogue takes hold. No investigative reporter could hope for results much better than that.

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



BURIED IN THE BITTER WATERS:
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By Elliot Jaspin
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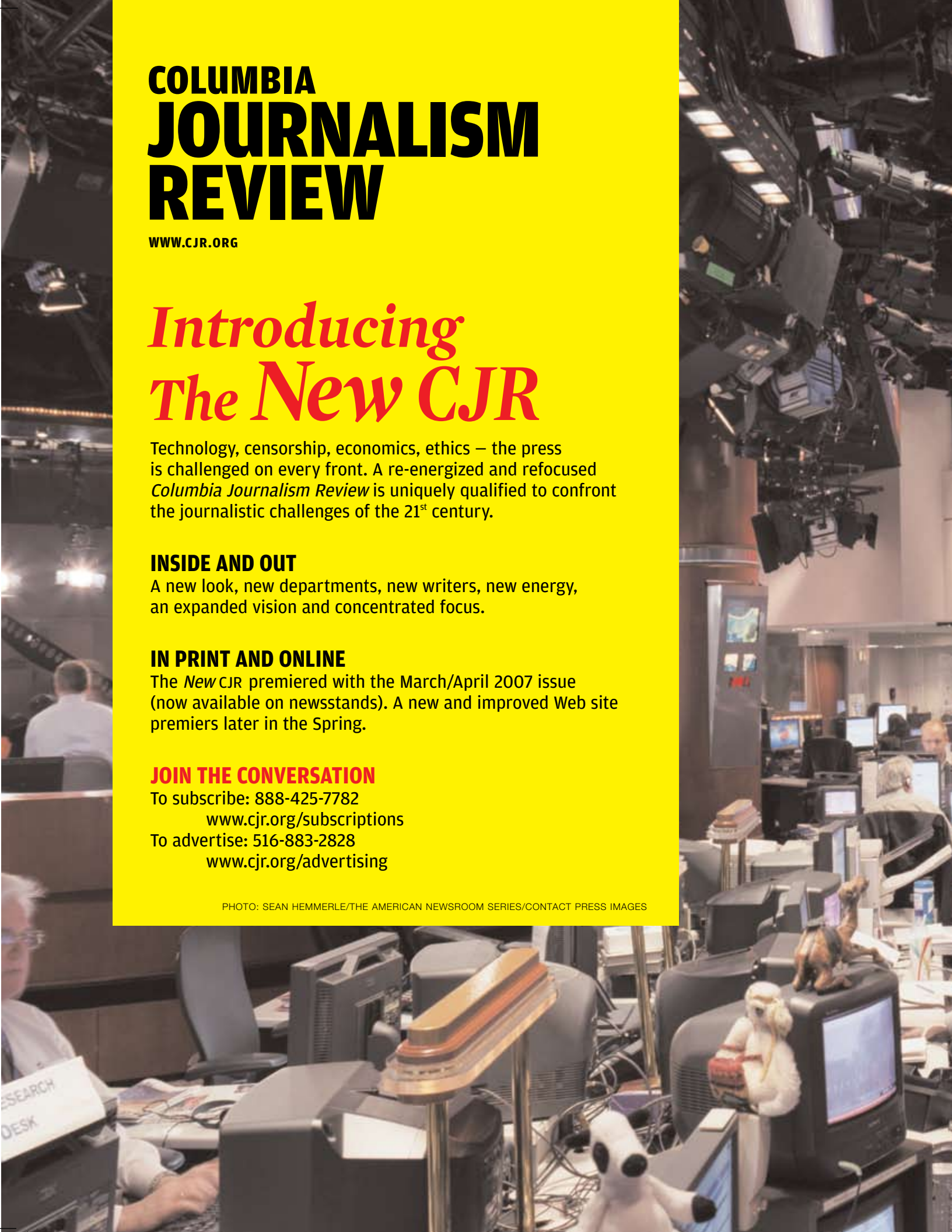
The *New CJR* premiered with the March/April 2007 issue (now available on newsstands). A new and improved Web site premieres later in the Spring.

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IRE Award winners

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

OTHER MEDIA

MAGAZINE/SPECIALTY PUBLICATION

CERTIFICATE

“Broken Promises,” *Bloomberg Markets* magazine; William Selway, Martin Z. Braun, David Dietz

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

In an ambitious, difficult and ultimately fruitful investigation, Bloomberg’s reporters discovered that Wall Street had created a \$7 billion municipal bond program that allowed banks and advisors to profit while the public entities they were supposed to be funding got nothing. Municipal bonds are considered dull and complicated by most writers, but this investigation of “black box” deals brings to life abuses that robbed cities and towns of their dreams for better schools and housing. It is a well-sourced project that makes a technically complex industry understandable.



FINALISTS

- **“The Secret World of Modern Slavery,”** *Bloomberg Markets* Magazine; Michael Smith, David Voreacos
- **“Nobody’s Hero,”** *5280 Denver Magazine*; Maximillian Potter
- **“Dumping Grounds/Just Moving On,”** *The Chicago Reporter*; Casey Sanchez

RADIO

CERTIFICATE

“Mental Anguish and the Military,” National Public Radio; Daniel Zwerdling, Anne Hawke and Ellen Weiss

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

The NPR team delivered a powerful assessment of the mental health toll of the war in Iraq, documenting in heartbreaking fashion the internal battle some soldiers fight after they return home from war and the frustration they face in dealing with the military health system. The journalists compared written policies to actual practices at the Fort Carson Army Base in Colorado, discovering neglect and even punishment of some soldiers who dared speak up about depression. After the stories aired, Senate leaders demanded a Pentagon investigation of the soldiers’ allegations.

FINALISTS

- **“Dying for a Job,”** Canadian Broadcasting Corp.; Susanne Reber, David McKie, Bob Murphy, Alison Myers, Jack Julian, Frank Koller, Phil Harbord, Tyana Grundig, Bilbo Poynter, Dick Miller
- **“Power Trips,”** American Radio Works/American Public Media; Stephen Henn, William Kistner, Chris Farrell, Margaret Koval, Karen Lowe, Stephen Smith, Bill Buzenberg, J.J. Yore

ONLINE

CERTIFICATE

“The Mark Foley Investigation,” ABCNews.com; Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Maddy Sauer, Simon Surowicz, Krista Kjellman, Steve Alperin, Michael Clemente, Christopher Isham

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

Acting on information that other mainstream news organizations downplayed or ignored, ABCNews.com broke the first stories of former Rep. Mark Foley’s inappropriate behavior with congressional pages and relentlessly drove the coverage as it widened into a full-blown congressional scandal. In doing so, these journalists demonstrated the power and speed of the Internet as a tool for reporting and disseminating national news. As new angles developed, ABC’s Web site offered expanded exclusives with nightly broadcast reports, a synergistic alliance that set a model for other media outlets.

FINALISTS

- **“Power Trips,”** The Center for Public Integrity; Jim Morris, Helena Bengtsson, Daniel Lathrop, Robert Brodsky, Marina Walker Guevara, Alex Knott, Anupama Narayanswamy, Kevin Bogardus
- **“Conflicts on the Bench,”** Center for Investigative Reporting; Will Evans

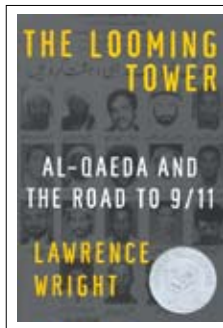
BOOKS

IRE MEDAL

“The Looming Tower,” Lawrence Wright

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

This book is a tour de force of investigative reporting, so skillfully crafted that it reads more like a page-turning crime novel than the exquisitely documented journalistic study it is. Wright explains the genesis and development of anti-U.S. sentiment in the Middle East, and takes us through the transformation of an eccentric, sickly millionaire – Osama bin Laden – into the fanatical, cave-dwelling leader of a highly organized international terrorist organization. Drawn from five years of research, including hundreds of interviews (many conducted in Arabic) and thousands of documents, Wright brings new light and understanding to the events leading up to the 9/11 attacks. The spellbinding narrative provides intimate details of the lives of bin Laden and his top deputy, Egyptian physician Ayman al-Zawahiri, and tells how Al-Qaeda developed from a disorganized group of rebels in the Afghan desert into a multinational group capable of taking down the World Trade Center. He also exposes shocking communication failures between the FBI and the CIA that left America exposed to the attacks.



FINALISTS

- **“Blood Money,”** T. Christian Miller
- **“Enrique’s Journey,”** Sonia Nazario

TOM RENNER MEDAL

IRE MEDAL

“Nuestra Familia, Our Family,” Center for Investigative Reporting; Oriana Zill de Granados, Julia Reynolds and George Sanchez

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

This stunning documentary provides an unprecedented look inside the world of Latino gangs, largely through the experiences of a man in Salinas, Calif., who raised his son to become a gang member. Journalists put in more than three years of hard work building relationships and trust with gang members, obtaining grand-jury transcripts and poring over leaked FBI internal reports. They provide shockingly raw scenes of the Nuestra Familia gang in action, intricately detailing how it grew from a political movement among Mexican-American farm workers into a violent force that rules both the streets of California agricultural cities and the halls of the California prison system. Most significantly, “Nuestra Familia” brings home the sorrow of the agricultural community of Salinas, whose mothers desperately hope to break the cycle of gang violence before their sons’ sons are imprisoned or murdered.



FINALISTS

- **“Chicago’s First Family of Clout,”** *Chicago Sun-Times*; Tim Novak, Robert Herguth, Steve Warmbir
- **“Vietnam – The War Crime Files,”** *Los Angeles Times*; Nick Turse, Deborah Nelson
- **Julie Bykovicz package**–*The* (Baltimore) *Sun*; Julie Bykovicz
- **“Mugus and Masters on the Nigerian Web Scam,”** ABC News; Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Joseph Rhee, Len Tepper, Asa Eslocker, Dana Hughes, Christopher Isham, David Sloan, Jon Banner, Jim Murphy

FOI AWARD

IRE MEDAL

“Secret Political Piggy Bank,” (Albany, N.Y.) *Times-Union*; James M. Odat, Michele Morgan Bolton, Fred LeBrun, Brendan Lyons, Elizabeth Benjamin, Carol DeMare, J. Robert Port, Rex Smith, Jim McGrath, Howard Healy, John de Rosier

JUDGES’ COMMENTS:

When the *Times-Union* set out to expose how New York legislators used secret slush funds called “member items” to fund pet projects, they hit a stone wall. The government initially gave up a heavily redacted database with funding amounts but no sponsoring legislators’ names. So the newspaper ended up suing the Assembly itself to force full disclosure of the financial records. In a lawsuit eventually joined by important media outlets across the state, the Albany paper was able to obtain records that showed how many lawmakers were funding suspect and sleazy deals through their secret funds. Among the findings: legislators underwrote pricey non-profits and no-show jobs for relatives, and supported the political organization of a state senator with a bribery conviction. There’s nothing like holding the writers of the FOI laws accountable – and this series did just that.



FOI AWARD

IRE MEDAL

Farmsubsidy.org—Nils Mulvad, Brigitte Alfter, Jack Thurston

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Nils Mulvad, a Danish investigative journalist, led a two-year effort to open archives all over Europe to expose the closely guarded secrets of farm subsidies. With help from journalist Brigitte Alfter and researcher Jack Thurston, records on subsidies were acquired from 17 of 25 of the European Union countries. The resulting information was put on a Web site and made available to reporters and others worldwide. It resulted in a number of important stories in European media, including showing how millionaires were among the top recipients and how dairy subsidies were undermining farmers in the Third World. This truly important and groundbreaking effort will pave the way for the opening of other European Union records to the benefit of journalists worldwide.

FINALISTS

- **"Lead's Dangerous Legacy,"** *The Cincinnati Enquirer*; Sharon Coolidge
- **"CDC,"** *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Alison Young

STUDENT WORK (ALL MEDIA)

CERTIFICATE

"A Stunning Toll," University of North Texas students, one Texas Christian University student, one Baylor University student

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Students at the University of North Texas took on a formidable task when they set out to investigate anecdotal reports about the misuse of Tasers by police in Texas. They set out to obtain records from 254 sheriff's departments and a couple hundred police agencies statewide to analyze use of the stun guns. Though many agencies fought or ignored them, the students eventually obtained thousands of pages of records, which they scanned and made available on a public Web site. Though the idea came from a faculty advisor, persistent efforts from more than 40 UNT graduate and undergraduate students (as well as one from Baylor and one from Texas Christian University) made the project possible. The students got legal support from the non-profit Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas and editorial support from instructors who work at *Fort Worth Weekly*. Their reporting also was the basis of a student-driven story published in the *Fort Worth Weekly* that raised important questions about Taser use in Texas and inspired legislation meant to limit their use.



FINALISTS

- **"Power Trips,"** Medill News Service, Northwestern University
- **"If These Walls Could Talk,"** *The Minnesota Daily*, University of Minnesota; Brady Averill

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

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Contact: Beth Kopine, beth@ire.org, 573-882-3364

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

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

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

Contact: Brant Houston, brant@ire.org, 573-882-2042

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

Contact: David Donald, ddonald@ire.org, 573-882-2042

Publications

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

Contact: Megan Means, meganm@ire.org, 573-884-2360

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

Contact: David Herzog, dherzog@ire.org, 573-884-7711

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

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Call for entries

Barlett & Steele Awards for Investigative Business Journalism

Presented by the Donald W. Reynolds
National Center for Business Journalism

Submission deadline August 1, 2007

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Runner-up \$2,000



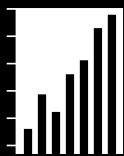
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Entries must have appeared between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

Each print publication or online organization can submit only two entries.

All rules and details posted online at www.businessjournalism.org/barlettsteeleawards/.



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