

# THE IRE JOURNAL

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Evan Richman, *The Boston Globe*

## THE IRE JOURNAL

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## FROM THE IRE OFFICES

# IRE gaining momentum in drive for "Breakthroughs"



BRANT HOUSTON

"Breakthroughs" is the name we've given to the second phase of the IRE Endowment Drive and we believe the name is right on target.

We want to break through to our initial goal of \$5 million and keep going. We want to break through to more individual donors and foundations so they know about IRE and its value to the industry and to society.

We want to break through to all tiers of our profession so that publishers, editors, station managers and news directors know how much practical training and resources we provide – and how those services set the newsgathering standard for the profession.

And we want to break through to complete financial security and stability for IRE so that our core programs are always there. By doing this, we would keep our membership fees low. We would keep our staff stable. We would be able to concentrate more on improving and expanding our training and educational services in the United States and internationally.

Over the past three years, the board and staff have worked diligently to put IRE in a good position for the second phase of the drive. We have formed a strong and professional staff, which has allowed the board to focus on the bigger policy issues.

We have refined our mission statement and strategic plan. We have continuously improved the operations of the IRE offices despite cutbacks and bare-bones staffing. We have increased the endowment fund to nearly \$2 million, having obtained two major and generous gifts – one from founder Myrta Pulliam for the IRE Resource Center and one from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

(The Knight Foundation's gift was two-fold. In addition to donating \$500,000 to the endowment, it also established a \$1 million partial-matching grant. Knight will give 50 cents for every \$1 given to the endowment.)

At the same time, through wise investment policies, we had only mild losses during the past year in the endowment fund – during one of the worst markets in U.S. history. This meant we still have well over \$200,000 in investment income earned in the past five years.

### Professional assistance

Nonetheless, because of the difficult economic times, we realized that we would need professional assistance to reach our goal. Again, the Knight Foundation stepped in to help. In the spring, the Knight Foundation allocated a portion of its matching money to endowment drive expenditures.

As this is a major step for IRE, the board and staff, we realized that we required professional assistance and sufficient funds to run the drive. We have used the money to prepare new endowment materials and to contact donors.

We will update the membership at our June conference. We know this is an ambitious effort and we don't expect the work to be easy. But we think the world turmoil of the past two years has made it clear how valuable the passion and expertise of IRE's members are.

We not only want to preserve this organization and its quality, we want to break through to complete financial security so IRE will always be a vigilant leader and inspiring guide in our profession.

*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.*

## Charlotte tipsheets available via Web site

The tipsheets from the 2003 Annual Computer-Assisted Reporting Conference are now available on the IRE Web site.

You can access the Charlotte tipsheets at [www.ire.org/training/charlotte](http://www.ire.org/training/charlotte). To search all of IRE's tipsheets, go to [www.ire.org/resourcecenter/initial-search-tipsheets.html](http://www.ire.org/resourcecenter/initial-search-tipsheets.html).

Charlotte tipsheets are available on topics ranging from the latest Internet resources to social network analysis to basic overviews of mapping software. If you have any questions about tipsheets, please e-mail the Resource Center at [rescntr@ire.org](mailto:rescntr@ire.org) or call 573-882-3364.



## Nonprofit audit data available from IRE

How are government agencies and nonprofit groups spending money they receive from Uncle Sam? A database now available from the IRE and NICAR Database Library can help journalists find out. The Federal Audit Clearinghouse database lists all audits of state and local governments, and nonprofits that spent \$300,000 or more a year in federal money. The database begins with audits from 1997, when the federal government started requiring them. There are 170,900 records in all.

The database looks at the spending of federal assistance. It also includes audits of sub-recipients of federal aid, like when a state gives some of its federal award money to local agencies.

The data contains information about whether the audits have revealed any problems, plus valuable contact information. To order the database, call at 573-884-7711 or go online to [www.ire.org/datalibrary/databases/fedaudit](http://www.ire.org/datalibrary/databases/fedaudit).

## MEMBER NEWS

**H**oward Altman has moved from executive editor of the *Philadelphia City Paper* to editor-in-chief. ■ **Roberta Baskin** has moved from ABC's *20/20*, where she was a senior producer, to a position as senior Washington correspondent for NOW with Bill Moyers, where she covers stories ignored by mainstream media. Her coverage includes money in politics, environmental regulation, taxation, corporate power, health and economic policies, and the influence of special interests on policy. ■ **David Boardman** has been selected to replace Alex MacLeod as managing editor at *The Seattle Times* when MacLeod retires at the end of June. Boardman, most recently assistant managing editor for investigations, business and sports, has worked at *The Times* since 1983. ■ **Roger-Luc Chayer**, editor of *Le Point*, a Quebec-based magazine focused on gay health issues, has purchased the magazine and extended circulation into the United States. ■ **David Dietz, David Voreacos** and Alex Armitage of *Bloomberg News* won the New York State Society of Certified Accountants Excellence in Financial Journalism Award in Wire Service for their work on "Auditors Failed to Warn in More Than Half of Big Bankruptcies." ■ **John Aloysius Farrell** is leaving *The Boston Globe* to rejoin *The Denver Post* as bureau chief in Washington. Farrell had worked at *The Post* before joining *The Globe* in 1987. ■ **Jeremy Finley**, formerly managing editor/reporter at KARK-Little Rock, is now a reporter at WSMV-Nashville. ■ **Sandra Fish** has moved to assistant features editor at the *Daily Camera* in Boulder, Colo., from covering the state legislature. ■ **J. Todd Foster**, a Washington-based freelancer and former investigative reporter in Tennessee, Florida, Idaho, Washington state and Oregon, is now managing editor of *The News Virginian* in Waynesboro, Va. ■ **Mark Hyman** has moved from executive

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 ➤

Send Member News items to Len Bruzzese at [len@ire.org](mailto:len@ire.org) and include a phone number for verification.

## Industry awards spotlight IRE members

Among the journalism awards handed out this year by various organizations, many have singled out the work of IRE members. We spotlight several here. Members' names are in bold:

### Pulitzer Prizes

#### Winners

- **Clifford J. Levy** of *The New York Times* won the Pulitzer in Investigative Reporting for the series "Broken Homes." The series exposed the plight of 15,000 mentally ill adults housed in squalid New York state-licensed facilities.
- **Alan Miller** and Kevin Sack of the *Los Angeles Times* won the Pulitzer in National Reporting for their investigation of a military aircraft linked to the deaths of 45 pilots. This work was also a finalist in the Investigative Reporting category.
- **Diana Sugg** of *The (Baltimore) Sun* won the Pulitzer in Beat Reporting for her stories that illuminated complex medical issues through the lives of people.

#### Finalists

- **Jim Haner**, John B. O'Donnell and Kimberly A.C. Wilson of *The (Baltimore) Sun* were finalists in Explanatory Reporting for their work in "Justice Undone," an investigation of the city's low conviction rate in murder cases.
- **Ronald Hansen**, Norman Sinclair and Melvin Claxton of *The Detroit News* were finalists in Public Service for their work that revealed the problems in a criminal justice system that

allowed lawbreakers to get away with everything from petty theft to murder.

- **David Cay Johnston** of *The New York Times* was a finalist in Beat Reporting for his stories about U.S. tax laws and of how they are abused by corporations and individuals.
- **Amie K. Streater** and the staff of the *Pensacola (Fla.) News Journal* were finalists in Public Service for stories that exposed a culture of corruption in Escambia County, Fla., and that resulted in the indictment of four of five county commissioners.
- **Mike Carter, David Heath, James Neff** and Hal Bernton were finalists in Investigative Reporting for "The Terrorist Within," about an Algerian boy who became a terrorist.
- **Christine Willmsen, Cheryl Phillips, Steve Miletich, Duff Wilson, David Heath, Mike Carter, Ian Ith, Christine Clarridge**, Susan Kelleher, Janet Burkitt, Hal Bernton, and editors **James Neff** and **David Boardman** were finalists in Breaking News for coverage of the many local connections to the ex-soldier and his teenage companion arrested in the sniper attacks in the Washington, D.C., region.

### SABEW Best in Business

- **Christopher Castelli** of *Inside the Navy* won in Breaking News in a weekly publication for the articles "Shipbuilding giants may swap

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ➤

LPD-17 and DDG-51 work worth billions” and “Responding to Lott, DOD starts funding LHD-9 and one more DDG-51.”

- **David Evans** of *Bloomberg News* won in Spot Enterprise in real-time for his work on “Edison Schools boosts revenues with funds not received.”
- **Alorie Gilbert**, Mike Ricciuti and Joe Wilcox of CNET News.com won for Projects in real-time for their work on “A mortal Microsoft.”
- **Dan Herbeck, Fred O. Williams, Jerry Zremski**, Tim Graham and Holly Auer of *The Buffalo News* won in Breaking News in a mid-size publication for their work on “Adelphia scandal.” Herbeck’s major role was investigating why the U.S. Justice Department decided to throw the book at Adelphia and the history of previous federal cases involving major financial scandals in the US.
- **Meredith Jordan** of the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* won in Projects in a weekly for her work on “Georgia’s corporate tax giveaway.” The project detailed a handful of Georgia companies that have secretly been receiving tax breaks from the state for the past three years.
- **Sandeep Junnarkar** of CNET News.com won for projects in real-time for work on “Cracking the nest egg.”
- **Lou Kilzer, Jeff Smith** and David Milstead of the *Rocky Mountain News* won in Spot Enterprise in a large publication for the article “Qwest’s rise and fall.”
- **Miles Moffeit** and Kris Hudson of *The Denver Post* won in Projects in a giant publication for their work on “Unmasking Qwest.” The project took readers inside board meetings where the CEO ordered executives to cook the books. The series’ findings were investigated by the SEC and resulted in the firings of employees.
- **Chris O’Brien** and Jack Davis of the *San Jose Mercury News* won in Projects in a large publication for their work on “Rich man, poor company.” Their analysis revealed that insiders at 40 companies took home \$3.4 billion from selling their stock even though their company’s value fell at least 99.5 percent from what it was at the height of the boom.
- **Anthony Palazzo**, Michael Stremfel, John Brinsley, Deborah Belgum and Mark Lacter of the *Los Angeles Business Journal* won in Projects in a weekly for their work on “Rise and fall of global pipe dream.”
- **Rick Rothacker**, Tony Mecia, Charles Lunan, Amber Veverka, Sharon E. White and Peter St. Onge of *The Charlotte Observer* won for Projects in a mid-size publication for their work on “Despair in mill town.” This yearlong series

chronicled the troubled textile industry in the Carolinas.

- **Michelle Starr** of the *York Daily Record* won in Spot Enterprise in a small publication for the article “Fields of danger: Farm life can be deadly.”

#### Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Awards

- **Jim Haner**, Kimberly A.C. Wilson and John B. O’Donnell of *The (Baltimore) Sun* won in Public Service Reporting. The article, “Justice Undone,” exposed serious shortcomings in the local criminal justice system.
- **Sam Roe** of the *Chicago Tribune* won in Environmental Reporting (over 100,000 circulation) for his report “Supercar: The Tanking of an American Dream.” This report revealed the behind-the-scenes forces that led to the demise of the U.S. government project to produce a highly fuel-efficient automobile.
- **Seth Rosenfeld** of the *San Francisco Chronicle* won the Distinguished Service to the First Amendment award for his series “The Campus Files: Reagan, Hoover and the UC Red Scare.” He exposed unlawful FBI cold-war intelligence activities at the University of California at Berkeley.

#### George Polk Awards

- **Walt Bogdanich**, Barry Meier and Mary Williams Walsh of *The New York Times* won in Health Care Reporting for “Medicine’s Middlemen.” This series exposed the market control of private companies in the sale of drugs and supplies to many hospitals, which leads to inflated costs and inferior products.
- **R.G. Dunlop** and Jason Riley of *The Courier-Journal*, in Louisville, Ky., won in Local Reporting for exposing an extremely mismanaged county judicial system.
- **Clifford J. Levy** of *The New York Times* won in Regional Reporting for the series “Broken Homes.” The series exposed the plight of 15,000 mentally ill adults housed in squalid New York state-licensed facilities.
- **Debbie Salamone** of the *Orlando Sentinel* won in Environmental Reporting for her series “Florida’s Water Crisis.” This series documented the danger that unfettered growth poses to state drinking water supplies.
- **Ellen E. Schultz** and Theo Francis of *The Wall Street Journal* won in Financial Reporting for an investigation into employers who secretly use employee benefit plans to generate dollars for themselves.
- **Phil Williams** and **Bryan Staples** at WTVF-

Nashville won in Television Reporting for “Friends in High Places.” This series exposed potential ethics violations by then-Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist.

#### Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards

- **Dario Klein**, as news editor with CNN en Español, and correspondent Jorge Gestoso won a Silver Baton for outstanding investigative reporting in “Jorge Gestoso Investiga: La Doble Desaparecida” (Jorge Gestoso Investigates: The Twice Disappeared), the first non-English language program to receive the award. They explored the 1970s “Dirty War” in Argentina.
- Reporter **Brett Shipp** and producer **Mark Smith** with WFAA-Dallas were awarded a Silver Baton for the series “Fake Drugs, Real Lives.” WFAA’s investigative unit revealed how Dallas police department informants planted evidence to convict poor and immigrant defendants on drug charges.

#### APSE Awards

- **Scott M. Reid, Natalya Shulyakovskaya** and Marla Jo Fisher of *The Orange County Register* won Best Investigative Writing for their series “Phantom Classes.” The investigation revealed that community colleges across California were reaping tens of millions of dollars in taxpayer money by recording high-school athletes as college students. It was featured in the March-April issue of *The IRE Journal*.
- **MaryJo Sylwester**, sports database editor of *USA Today*, won in News-Story Writing. The award was given for a project that analyzed a list of Augusta National members. She received the award with Erik Brady, Michael McCarthy, Julie Ward, Fred Meier, Gary Mihoches, Michael Hiestand, Sal Ruibal, Ellen Horrow, Rachel Shuster, Leslie Spalding, Theresa Howard, Tom Anker, Ruth Fogle, Tristan Coffelt, Pam Fiawoo, Joe Hagarty, Ray Hicks, Susan O’Brien, Bruce Rosenstein and Zubin Jelveh.

#### National Headliner Awards

Print

- **John Barry**, Babak Dehghanpisheh and Roy Gutman of *Newsweek* won in Magazine Coverage of a Major News Event or Topic for their work on “War Crimes of Afghanistan.”
- **Eric Eyre** and **Scott Finn** of the *Charleston (W.V.) Gazette* won in News Beat Coverage. The winning series, “License to Steal,” was about illegal deal-making between a state school’s assistant superintendent and Charleston businessmen

- **Willoughby Mariano** of the *Orlando Sentinel* and **Walter F. Roche, Jr.** of *The (Baltimore) Sun* won in Investigative Reporting for an article written for *The Sun* entitled "Indentured in America."
- **Amie K. Streater** and the staff of the *Pensacola (Fla.) News Journal* won in Public Service Reporting for her report "Escambia County Commission." The story revealed that the chairman of the Escambia County Commission gave a fellow commissioner a collar-green pot stuffed with \$80,000 in small bills.

## Broadcast

- **Yoruba Richen**, **Brian Ross** and **Brenda Breslauer** with ABC News won in Investigative Reporting in television and cable networks and syndicators for the report "Unsolved Rapes." The investigation revealed hundreds of thousands of rape evidence kits sitting unprocessed in police storage rooms across the country.
- **Bryan Staples** and **Phil Williams** at WTVF-Nashville won in TV Investigative for "Friends in High Places." This series exposed potential ethics violations by then-Tennessee Gov. Don Sundquist.

Maryland-Delaware-D.C.  
Press Association Awards

- **Michael Dresser** and **Bill Patalon** of *The (Baltimore) Sun* won in State Government Reporting. The two investigated fraud and mismanagement at the Maryland state employees' pension system.
- **Jim Haner**, **Kimberly A.C. Wilson** and **John B. O'Donnell** of *The (Baltimore) Sun* won in Public Service for the article "Justice Undone."
- **Heather Harlan** and **Roger Hughlett** of the *Baltimore Business Journal* won in Local Government Reporting. The article, "Job Growth Efforts Under Fire," showed that the city and its leading economic-development agency were overstating its job-growth numbers. They also found that companies that never delivered on their promises were getting taxpayer money to subsidize their businesses.
- **Tom Jackman**, **Patricia Davis**, **Brooke A. Masters**, **Maria Glod** and **Josh White** of *The Washington Post* won Best General News Story. The story, "Death Penalty Taking its Toll," was a one-day package of articles that

featured a death penalty case from every side – victim and his family, defendant, prosecutor, defense attorney, key witness. The article appeared on the day of the execution.

- **Kathleen Johnston Jarboe** of *The Daily Record* won in Business/Economics Reporting. Her article, "Shell Game: State Alleges Scheme to Avoid Taxes; Game of Wait and See" was about Maryland companies trimming their state tax bills by transferring profits to shell corporations in Delaware that hold their trademarks.
- **Willoughby Mariano** of the *Orlando Sentinel* and **Walter F. Roche, Jr.** of *The (Baltimore) Sun* won in Investigative Reporting for an article written for *The Sun* entitled "Indentured in America."
- **Larry Rulison**, **Roger Hughlett** and **Keith T. Reed** of the *Baltimore Business Journal* won in Series for the project "CEOs on the Frontline." The three spent an entire day with chief executives in Baltimore. They had them get out of their office and do jobs that the regular employees do "on the front line." The series revealed how the CEOs view their organizations.

## The Village Voice salutes TOM ROBBINS winner of the 2002 IRE Award.

His series "The Lush Life of a Rudy Giuliani Appointee" took top honors in the Local Circulation Weekly category.

Congratulations to  
all 2002 IRE winners

the village  
**VOICE**

# WINNERS NAMED IN 2002 IRE AWARDS



BY *THE IRE JOURNAL*

Reporters and editors from *The Boston Globe* took top honors in the 2002 IRE Awards for their investigation into the Catholic Church.

The team won a prestigious IRE medal for an extensive examination into decades of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and the cover-up of their crimes by church leadership. (The story is highlighted on page 21.) *The Boston Globe* team included reporters Matt Carroll, Sacha Pfeiffer, Michael Rezendes, Stephen Kurkjian, Michael Paulson, Kevin Cullen, Tom Farragher and editor Walter V. Robinson.

The annual awards of IRE recognize outstanding investigative work in print, broadcast, online media and for work furthering freedom of information.

IRE judges recognized a wide range of work that included probes into faulty military aircraft, pollution, government corruption, significant defects in crime lab testing, gunrunning and intelligence failures preceding the 9-11 terrorist attacks. This year, the judges also gave special citations for international work.

The IRE Awards program strives to avoid conflicts of interest. Work that includes any significant role by a member of the IRE Board of Directors or an IRE contest judge may not be entered in the contest. This often represents a significant sacrifice on the part of the individual – and sometimes an entire newsroom. Among the organizations affected this year are *The Seattle Times*, the *Wisconsin State Journal* and WEWS-

Cleveland.

The *Globe* stories exposed a national scandal that continues to reverberate, the award judges said. “These stories brilliantly documented a powerful institution’s inability to police itself, with tragic consequences for its many young victims and ultimately for the church itself,” the judges said.

The Tom Renner Award – for outstanding crime reporting – went to Frank Main, Carlos Sadovi and Steve Warmbir of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, for following the money from a \$1

billion-a-year drug trade into beauty shops, apartments, record companies and even Hollywood movies.

“The investigation showed how savvy street gangs were beginning to wield political influence, reaching into neighborhoods to get out the vote,” the judges said. “This series stood out because of its investigative depth and sharp writing.”

The Renner Award comes with an IRE medal and a \$500 prize.

Other winners include those receiving IRE certificates: the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Fresno Bee*, *The Winston-Salem Journal*, *The Village Voice*, ABC News 20/20, KHOU-Houston, WTVF-Nashville, *Newsweek*, Center for Investigative Reporting, The Center for Public Integrity, and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. A student award went to *The Harvard Crimson*.

The Freedom of Information Award went to Seth Rosenfeld of the *San Francisco Chronicle* for his 17-year fight to obtain FBI records docu-

menting the bureau’s illegal and covert activities at the University of California. The contest judges said his work illustrated the importance of the Freedom of Information Act.

“His persistence through numerous court cases resulted in a story that revealed the federal government’s unconstitutional assault on ‘liberal’ students, faculty and a university president,” the judges said.

“It forged new legal ground, expanding the nature of the information that must be released under the FOIA and the government’s responsibility for paying legal fees. Perhaps most significantly, Rosenfeld’s work is contributing to the nation’s post-Sept. 11 debate over balancing civil liberties and national security.”

An IRE Certificate was awarded to David Sloan, Carla DeLandri, Brian Ross, Brenda Breslauer, Yoruba Richen and Tom Marcyes of ABC News 20/20 for showing how evidence that could catch violent criminals – police rape kits – sits unprocessed across the country due to lack of money. In an unusual and somewhat bold collaboration, 20/20 offered to pay half the expenses to process 50 rape kits at the Baltimore Police Department. “20/20’s investigative project led directly to catching and convicting two rapists and freeing another man who was imprisoned for a rape he did not commit,” the judges said.

Other certificate winners:

- Alan C. Miller and Kevin Sack of the *Los Angeles Times*, for “The Vertical Vision,” a grim tale of how the Marine Corps remains committed to a fighter plane that is killing its own in record numbers. (See page 36.)
- Mark Grossi, Barbara Anderson, Russell Clemings of *The Fresno Bee* for “Last Gasp,” a compelling and comprehensive look at an agriculture hub that has become home to some of the nation’s dirtiest air.
- Kevin Begos, Danielle Deaver, John Railey and Scott Sexton of *The Winston-Salem Journal*, for “Against their Will,” which meticulously documented the forced sterilization of more than 7,000 residents – many of them poor and black – over a 50-year period.
- Tom Robbins of *The Village Voice* for “The Lush Life of Rudy Appointee,” which proved the virtually, nonstop spending spree of tax dollars by an aide of former New York Mayor Giuliani on items for himself and his friends.
- David Raziq, Anna Werner and Chris Henao of KHOU-Houston, for “Evidence of Errors,” an investigation detailing Houston Police Department Crime Lab problems one expert characterized as “repeated gross incompetence” that may

Videostreamed excerpts of television category winners and finalists can be found at the IRE Web site ([www.ire.org/contest/past/02video.html](http://www.ire.org/contest/past/02video.html)).

Copies of all contest entries are available from the IRE Resource Center ([www.ire.org/resourcecenter](http://www.ire.org/resourcecenter)). The center can be reached via e-mail at [rescenter@ire.org](mailto:rescenter@ire.org) or by calling 573-882-3364.



LOCAL CIRCULATION WEEKLIES

CERTIFICATE

**“Lush Life of Rudy Appointee,”** *The Village Voice*, Tom Robbins

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Tom Robbins of *The Village Voice* kept after a long-denied FOIA request for the expense records of a top aide to former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, even after being told the records were lost. The impressive results, released three months after Giuliani left office, showed a virtually nonstop spending spree, with Russell Harding billing taxpayers for everything from an open airline ticket bought just before he left office to thousand-dollar hotel bills in Hong Kong and Las Vegas. Harding – a college dropout and the son of Giuliani’s political mentor – was appointed by Giuliani to head a city agency responsible for multimillion-dollar bond deals. In this well-written and engaging series, Robbins reveals not just Harding’s junkets but also a disturbing aspect of the Giuliani administration that had been kept out of the public eye because of the former mayor’s zealous guarding of internal records. After publication, Harding promised to repay \$52,000, his former top aide was fired, ongoing city and federal probes were launched and Harding was indicted for spending hundreds of thousands of agency dollars on personal travel, gifts and parties for friends.

FINALISTS

- “Northern Arc: Road to Riches,” *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, Sarah Rubenstein, Walter Woods
- “Sweetheart Deal,” *Dallas Observer*, Thomas Korosec, Rose Farley
- “The Chief and the New West,” *Northwest Explorer*, Patrick Cavanaugh

TELEVISION

NETWORK/SYNDICATED

CERTIFICATE

**“Unsolved Rapes,”** ABC News 20/20, David Sloan, Carla DeLandri, Brian Ross, Brenda Breslauer, Yoruba Richen, Tom Marcyes

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

A stunning investigation where ABC revealed a “dirty secret” in police departments: Thousands of rape evidence kits – evidence that could catch violent criminals – sit unprocessed in police storage rooms across the country. Brian Ross and his investigative team at 20/20 discovered police don’t have the money to process the kits. In an unusual and somewhat bold collaboration, 20/20 offered to pay half the expenses to process 50 rape kits at the Baltimore Police Department. 20/20’s investigative project led directly to catching and convicting two rapists and freeing another man who was imprisoned for a rape he did not commit. This report awakened the nation to a hidden problem and has led to new funding commitments from private and public sources.

FINALISTS

- “Central Park Jogger,” ABC News PrimeTime, David Doss, Cynthia McFadden, Robert Lange, Eric Avram
- “Good Intentions, Bad Results,” CBS News 60 Minutes, Steve Kroft, Leslie Cockburn, Stephanie Palewski, Sianne Garlick
- “Eligibility for Sale,” ESPN, Tom Farrey, Jon Genstiel, Tim Hays, Craig Lazarus, Bob Ley
- “In A Child’s Best Interest,” MSNBC, Karen Grau, Bill Hussung, Scott Hooker

TOP 20 MARKETS

CERTIFICATE

**“Evidence of Errors,”** KHOU-Houston, David Raziq, Anna Werner, Chris Henao

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

A remarkable investigative project that is shifting a long-held belief that DNA evidence is irrefutable. Turning a tip into an exhaustive investigative project, KHOU found errors at the Houston Police Department Crime Lab. One expert characterized those errors as “repeated gross incompetence” that may be sending innocent people to prison. This investigation is now resonating nationally and may shift a paradigm as old as DNA testing itself. This investigation was extraordinary and demonstrates a television station’s commitment to doing serious work.



FINALISTS

- “Fake Drugs, Real Lives,” WFAA-Dallas, Brett Shipp, Mark Smith, Kraig Kirchem, David Dutch
- “Trafficked for the Military,” WJW-Cleveland, Greg Easterly, Tom Merriman, Ron Mounts, Mark DeMarino, Dave Hollis, Tim Roskey
- “The Prisoner and The Politician,” WNBC-New York, Jonathan Dienst

BELOW TOP 20 MARKETS

CERTIFICATE

**“Friends in High Places,”** WTVF-Nashville, Phil Williams, Bryan Staples

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

This swarming investigation exposed how millions of dollars worth of state contracts were handed to friends of Tennessee’s governor. In a series of well-documented reports over many months, WTVF tied big money contracts to two long-time friends of the governor. This happened at a time when the state was in the midst of a budget crisis and raising taxes. Facing retaliation, WTVF’s Phil Williams didn’t flinch and produced some of the most compelling television investigations of the year. This important investigation does more than put an outgoing governor on notice; it sends a clear message to all elected officials.

FINALISTS

- “The Pain Doctor,” WITI-Milwaukee, Bob Segall, Diane Carbonara
- “Charter School Investigation,” WKRC-Cincinnati, Jeff Hirsh, Jeff Barnhill
- “A Cozy Connection,” WOAI-San Antonio (formerly KMOL), Joe Ellis, Brian Collister, Stephen Kline

OTHER MEDIA

MAGAZINE/SPECIALTY PUBLICATION

CERTIFICATE

**“Series on 9-11 intelligence failures,”** *Newsweek*, Michael Isikoff, Daniel Klaidman, Evan Thomas, Mark Hosenball

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Dogged reporting by *Newsweek* forced the nation

and a reluctant Congress to face the fact that intelligence failures, the long-troubling rift among investigative agencies and bureaucratic foul-ups seriously hurt any chance that law enforcement agencies could have prevented the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

FINALISTS

- “War Crimes in Afghanistan,” *Newsweek*, Babak Dehghanpisheh, John Barry, Roy Gutman
- “Look Who’s Cashing In at Indian Casinos,” *Time*, Donald L. Barlett, James B. Steele
- “Made in the USA: Hundreds of Americans Have Followed the Path to Jihad,” *U.S. News & World Report*, David E. Kaplan
- “The New Math of Old Age,” *U.S. News & World Report*, Christopher H. Schmitt

RADIO

NO WINNER

FINALIST

- “Investigation into World Business Review,” WNYC-Radio, Bob Garfield, Sean Landis

ONLINE

CERTIFICATE

**“Gunrunners,”** Center for Investigative Reporting (San Francisco), Julie Reynolds, Matthew Brunwasser, William Kistner, Dave Gilson, Rick Young, Lowell Bergman, Omar Lavieri, Allyce Bess, Marlana Telvick, Monica Sagullo, James Sandler, Will Evans, Mabel Tampinco, Robin Stein, Kelly Davis, Jared Saylor

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

“Gunrunners,” the Web site companion series to a PBS Frontline/World episode, is an incredibly well-reported and deeply-sourced expose of the secret activities of international gun smugglers that went beyond what was broadcast to the public. A team led by the Center for Investigative Reporting launched a detailed, nine-month project that was extremely effective in flushing out Jean Bernard Lasnaud, an arms dealer wanted by Interpol but found to be living openly in Florida because he was a CIA informant. Lasnaud, who the team found selling arms from his own Web site, was arrested in Europe two days after the series was published. The center’s Web site, muckraker.org, also featured a transcript of an FBI tape made of Lasnaud’s son, which reporters obtained during a narrow window before it was removed from the public record.

FINALISTS

- “Enron’s Big Political Donors,” The Center for Public Integrity, John Dunbar, Robert Moore, MaryJo Sylwester
- “Cracking the Nest Egg,” CNET News.com, Sandeep Junnarkar
- “Sex Slaves: Europe’s Trade in Drugs, Guns and Women,” MSNBC.com, Preston Mendenhall, Andrew Locke, Mike Moran, Bob Arnot

BOOK

CERTIFICATE

**“Capitol Offenders: How Private Interests Govern Our States,”** The Center for Public Integrity, Diane Renzulli, John Dunbar, Alex Knott, Robert Moore, Leah Rush

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

The scope of this investigation is breathtaking. The



Center for Public Integrity gathered information on all 7,400 state legislators in America to focus on a crucial, overlooked issue: Many legislators seek committee assignments allowing them to enhance their private financial interests, often at the expense of their constituents. The book demonstrates that vested interests are influencing legislators' decisions on education, health care, insurance, public safety and the environment.

**FINALISTS**

- "High and Mighty SUVs: The World's Most Dangerous Vehicles and How They Got That Way," Public Affairs, Keith Bradsher
- "Betrayal: Crisis in the Catholic Church," Little Brown and Company, The Boston Globe

**SPECIAL CATEGORIES**

**TOM RENNER AWARD**

"Crime, Inc.," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Frank Main, Carlos Sadovi, Steve Warmbir

**JUDGES' COMMENTS**

Reporters from the *Chicago Sun-Times* took the old adage "follow the money" to new heights in their examination of the Mob and Windy City street gangs. Frank Main, Carlos Sadovi and Steve Warmbir followed the money from a \$1 billion-a-year drug trade into beauty shops, apartments, record companies and even Hollywood movies. Full of intimate portraits of young gangbangers and an aging Mob, the investigation showed how savvy street gangs were beginning to wield political influence, reaching into neighborhoods to get out the vote. This series stood out because of its investigative depth and sharp writing. The writers spent a lot of time doing surveillance in dangerous conditions, but it yielded investigative gold.



**FINALISTS**

- "Immigrant Express," *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, Patrick Wright
- "Trafficked for the Military," WJW-Cleveland, Greg Easterly, Tom Merriman, Ron Mounts, Mark DeMarino, Dave Hollis, Tim Roskey

**FOI AWARD**

"The Campus Files: Reagan, Hoover and the UC Red Scare," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Seth Rosenfeld

**JUDGES' COMMENTS**

Reporter Seth Rosenfeld's 17-year fight to obtain FBI records documenting the bureau's illegal and covert activities at the University of California perfectly illustrates the importance of the Freedom of Information Act. His persistence through numerous court cases resulted in a story that revealed the federal government's unconstitutional assault on "liberal" students, faculty and a university president. It forged new legal ground, expanding the nature of the information that must be released under the FOIA and the government's responsibility for paying legal fees. Perhaps most significantly, Rosenfeld's work is contributing to the nation's post-Sept. 11 debate over balancing civil liberties and national security. A *New York Times* editorial put it this way: "These accounts of the FBI's malfeasance are a powerful reminder of how easily intelligence organizations deployed to protect freedom can become its worst enemy."



**FINALISTS**

- "A Failure of Public Health," *The Detroit News*, Kimberly Hayes Taylor
- "Blood Errors," *Newsday*, Kathleen Kerr
- "Stories From FOIA Requests," *York Daily Record*, Sharon Smith, Jim Lynch, Teresa Ann Boeckel, Sean Adkins, Rick Lee, Joe Hainthaler, Michele Canty, Maryann James

**STUDENT WORK (ALL MEDIA)**

**CERTIFICATE**

"The Secret Court of 1920," *The Harvard Crimson*, Amit R. Paley

**JUDGES' COMMENTS**

The author showed great perseverance and determination in assembling 80-year-old facts from an institution, Harvard University, which was ultimately forced to acknowledge a sorry episode in its otherwise stellar history. The newspaper showed that a 1920 university investigation into a student's suicide ended with the university convening a secret court that labeled 14 men "guilty" of being or knowing homosexuals. Some were forced to leave the university and the city of Cambridge, Mass. As a result of the story, the current university president issued an apology for the actions of the university.

**FINALISTS**

- "Foster Shuffle," Capital News Service (University of Maryland), Michelle Krupa
- "State Salaries," Capital News Service (University of Maryland), Hanah Cho
- "Killer Coasters," Capital News Service (University of Maryland), Kathleen Johnston Jarboe

**SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**SPECIAL CITATION**

**Special Citation** to Nancy Phillips for the Rabbi Fred Neulander investigation, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

**JUDGES' COMMENTS**

Sometimes results don't come until long after the work appears. Nancy Phillips began writing about the Neulander murder case in 1994 after the wife of a popular rabbi was found bludgeoned to death in their suburban Philadelphia home. For the next several years, she kept following the case. Eventually, one of Neulander's associates made a confession to her that finally led authorities back to Neulander – more than five years after the crime. In November 2002, a jury convicted Neulander of arranging his wife's death and sentenced him to life in prison. This is an outstanding example of a reporter of great courage who persevered long after most would have given up.

**SPECIAL CITATION**

**Special Citation** for an International Entry "How Elected Officials Divided Up 45 Million Euros Since 1992," *Le Figaro* (Paris, France), Mark Hunter, Nour Richard-Guerroudj, Salim Jaouani, Fabien Laborde, Lucie Monier-Reyes, Aureo Gorius

**JUDGES' COMMENTS**

Mark Hunter led Universite' de Paris students as they broke the story of how a law designed to make officials more honest served only to enrich them at public expense, in virtual secrecy. French politicians are allowed to hold two offices at the same time. The "Transfer" system gave them a mechanism to redistribute half of their second salary to others within their party. This turned into a patronage system funded to the tune of at least 45 million Euros (the same sum in U.S. dollars) of public money over the last decade. Constructing databases and making the most of public information, the students built a strong indictment of France's "Transfer" system. Overcoming officeholder indifference and a lack of cooperation, the students built a strong investigation shining light into a dark system that shrouded how elected officials are paid.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**Special Recognition** for an International Entry "Georgian Railway," Rustavi2 (Tbilisi, Georgia), Nino Zuriashvili, Alexandre Kvatashidze

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**Special Recognition** for an International Entry "Tracking the E-Waste Trail," Radio Television Hong Kong, Canace Lam Kit-yin, Benny Sea Chi-wai



# 2003 CONFERENCE LINEUP FEATURES HOTTEST TOPICS

BY MARYJO SYLWESTER

USA TODAY

**T**he 2003 IRE Annual Conference, set for Washington, D.C., will highlight resources in the nation's capital for all levels of investigative reporting in the United States and around the world.

The June 5-8 conference at the National Press Club and JW Marriott Hotel will offer plenty more, ranging from panels on medical and education investigations to one-on-one writing sessions and computer-assisted reporting classes.

Some of the biggest names in investigative

journalism are scheduled to appear.

Ben Bradlee, *Washington Post* executive editor from 1968 to 1991, is scheduled to give the keynote address about investigative reporting in Washington. Bradlee was a key figure in many of the *Post's* biggest stories, including Watergate. The keynote speech will take place at the IRE Awards luncheon on Saturday, June 7.

*The Washington Post's* Bob Woodward, who has provided unique insights into the Bush administration in the wake of Sept. 11, and Seymour Hersh, whose cutting-edge work on national security regularly appears in *The New Yorker*, are among the speakers who will share their knowledge.

A showcase panel, scheduled for Thursday, June 5, will examine the tension between national security and privacy, as exemplified by the Pentagon's "Total Information Awareness" project, the Patriot Act, new facial recognition and other tools being

employed in the war on terror and other data mining being conducted by the federal government.

Expected panelists include: U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala), who focuses on intelligence and privacy issues; Viet Dinh, the Justice Department's chief policy official and an architect of the Patriot Act; Morton Halperin of the Council on Foreign Relations; Dan Gillmor, a *San Jose Mercury News* technology columnist; Kate Corrigan of the ACLU; and Benjamin Bell, head of the Transportation Security Administration. The panel is co-sponsored by the Missouri School of Journalism's Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting, which is currently held by Geneva Overholser.

Top foreign journalists will discuss lessons from the wars on terror during an international roundtable on Friday, June 6. Those expected to speak include Iqbal Athas, Sri Lanka's top national security journalist; Ignacio Gomez, an award-winning reporter who has twice had to flee death threats in Colombia; Anna Politkovskaia, the Russian reporter who interviewed the Chechen rebels before they were gassed; and Mariane Pearl, a journalist who is writing a book about terrorism and who is the wife of slain *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl.

## Special panels

To take advantage of the location of the conference, organizers have planned some unique panels that provide in-depth understanding of the institutions located in Washington that are beneficial for all reporters – no matter where they are based.

A series of panels called "The Insider's Guide to Washington" will show how to find the best records, chatty sources and investigative stories in the federal government. The series of fast-paced panels will spotlight Congress, the White House and an array of federal agencies. The experienced tour guides – a.k.a. the panelists – will offer tips on infiltrating the bureaucracy from inside and outside the Beltway.

Those itching for a more hands-on perspective can sign up for mobile panels on Saturday. Two panels, one to the Capitol and another to the National Archives research facility, will take participants by bus to tour each site, while experts and experienced journalists share insights. Participants will need to sign up for

### REGISTER

To register for the conference, visit [www.ire.org/training/dc03/](http://www.ire.org/training/dc03/) or copy the form on the back of this issue of *The IRE Journal*, fill it out and fax it to 573-882-5431.



these panels through the IRE Web site before arriving for the conference.

## Don't miss Sunday

Make sure you plan to stay at the conference through midday Sunday. A special program has been planned for the last day, with the top writers and reporters in the investigative business on hand.

One track will be devoted to writing. IRE will offer four panels, three geared toward print and one toward broadcast writing. All will walk through the process of organizing and writing up the findings of an investigation, so they are transformed into a well-told tale for readers and viewers.

The conference also will offer an opportunity for in-depth, one-on-one coaching on investigative reporting. IRE will offer the chance for attendees to sign up for one-on-one sessions with accomplished investigative reporters and editors who have significant experience. These private 30-minute sit-downs will allow you to seek advice on stories that have you stumped, or probe ideas for following up on reporting you've already done. The one-on-one setting allows you to get specific advice, without worrying that your competitors might hear about the stories you are working on.

## On the Web

For the first time, the highlights of the conference will be chronicled through a Web publication created by faculty and students from four universities. Students will report on several panels or issues each day to give those at the convention, and those who couldn't attend, coverage of the major events. The student reporters are planning online video features as well.

The four schools are the Medill School of Journalism's Washington program, the University of Maryland, the University of Missouri's Washington program and American University. The Web publication will be accessible at [www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org).

## Optional Day offerings

The Optional Day offerings on Thursday, June 5, will include panels on computer-assisted reporting techniques and a track of criminal justice panels, co-sponsored by Criminal Justice Journalists. In addition to panels about

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 >

## EXPECTED SPEAKERS

- Iqbal Athas**, *The Sunday Times*, Sri Lanka  
**Donald Barlett**, Time Inc.  
**David Barstow**, *The New York Times*  
**Roberta Baskin**, Now with Bill Moyers  
**Maud Beelman**, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists  
**Benjamin Bell**, Transportation Security Administration  
**Peter Bergen**, author  
**David Boardman**, *The Seattle Times*  
**Walt Bogdanich**, *The New York Times*  
**Ben Bradlee**, *The Washington Post*  
**Tom Brune**, *Newsday*  
**Christopher Callahan**, University of Maryland  
**Rose Ciotta**, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
**Sarah Cohen**, *The Washington Post*  
**Steve Coll**, *The Washington Post*  
**Katie Corrigan**, American Civil Liberties Union  
**Alice Crites**, *The Washington Post*  
**Sylvester Daughtry Jr.**, Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.  
**Viet Dinh**, U.S. Department of Justice  
**Liz Donovan**, *The Miami Herald*  
**Gilbert Gaul**, *The Washington Post*  
**Ted Gest**, Criminal Justice Journalists  
**Dan Gillmor**, *San Jose Mercury News*  
**Ignacio Gomez**, Canal Uno TV, Colombia  
**Ronnie Greene**, *The Miami Herald*  
**James Grimaldi**, *The Washington Post*  
**Michael Grunwald**, *The Washington Post*  
**Dee Hall**, *Wisconsin State Journal*  
**Morton Halperin**, Council of Foreign Relations  
**Tom Hamburger**, *The Wall Street Journal*  
**Seymour Hersh**, author  
**Mark Hosenball**, *Newsweek*  
**Brant Houston**, IRE and NICAR  
**David Cay Johnston**, *The New York Times*  
**David Kaplan**, *U.S. News & World Report*  
**Tony Kovaleski**, KMGH-Denver  
**Jennifer LaFleur**, The Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press  
**Lee Levine**, Levine Sullivan & Koch, L.L.P.  
**Toby Lyles**, *The News & Observer*  
**James Lynch**, American University  
**Tom Maier**, *Newsday*  
**Willoughby Mariano**, *Orlando Sentinel*  
**Stephen Mastrofski**, George Mason University  
**Mike McGraw**, *The Kansas City Star*  
**Shawn McIntosh**, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*  
**John McQuaid**, *The Times-Picayune*  
**Josh Meyer**, *Los Angeles Times*  
**Alan Miller**, *Los Angeles Times*  
**Anne Mintz**, *Forbes Magazine*  
**Blake Morrison**, *USA Today*  
**James Neff**, *The Seattle Times*  
**Ron Nixon**, IRE and NICAR  
**Robert O'Harrow**, *The Washington Post*  
**Geri Palast**, Justice at Stake  
**Marion Paynter**, *The Charlotte Observer*  
**Mariane Pearl**, author, France/United States  
**Cheryl Phillips**, *The Seattle Times*  
**Tony Pipitone**, WKMG-Orlando  
**Anna Politkovskaia**, *Novaya Gazeta*, Russia  
**Stephen Power**, *The Wall Street Journal*  
**Gary Price**, author  
**David Raziq**, KHOU-Houston  
**Wally Roche**, *The (Baltimore) Sun*  
**James Rosica**, *Tallahassee Democrat*  
**Jonathan Salant**, The Associated Press  
**Fred Schulte**, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*  
**Sen. Richard Shelby**, R-Ala.  
**David Smallman**, Steinhart & Falconer LLC  
**John Solomon**, The Associated Press  
**James Steele**, Time Inc.  
**Joe Stephens**, *The Washington Post*  
**Lynn Sweet**, *Chicago Sun-Times*  
**Marilyn Thompson**, *The Washington Post*  
**Al Tompkins**, Poynter Institute of Media Studies  
**Steve Weinberg**, Missouri School of Journalism  
**Alice Wertheim**, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*  
**Margot Williams**, *The Washington Post*  
**Phil Williams**, WTVF-Nashville  
**Derek Willis**, The Center for Public Integrity  
**David Willman**, *Los Angeles Times*  
**Nanci Wilson**, KEYE-Austin  
**Bob Woodward**, *The Washington Post*  
**Marianne Zawitz**, U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

using CAR for various topics, the schedule will include a panel track on how to take an investigative CAR project from start to finish. This series of panels will walk through the stages of a project – choosing the story, battling for data, pulling it together and working with editors. The criminal justice track will feature tips on interpreting crime statistics, evaluating local law enforcement agencies and covering judges.

Hands-on computer-assisted reporting classes will be offered throughout the conference at the National Press Club and at the nearby Medill Washington bureau. Those classes will cover using spreadsheets, database managers and effective searching and background using the Internet.

**Best of the year**

The regular schedule of panels will be packed with the best investigative reporting work in the U.S. and foreign media, including this year's

IRE Award winners. Terrorism and war reporting will be prominently featured, with panels planned on investigating the military in war-time and covering terrorism as a beat.

There's a wealth of other topics. Expect to learn about investigating religious and health care institutions, uncovering failures in the justice system, finding corruption in local or state government, digging into businesses in your community and making sense of new campaign finance laws.

IRE classics on interviewing techniques, unsung investigative documents, tips on sourcing and navigating the maze of Freedom of Information requests are on the program, as well. Panels geared toward broadcast journalists will discuss the unique elements of investigative journalism in front of the camera or microphone. The annual membership meeting is sched-

**LATEST LINEUP**  
For the latest day-by-day schedule of panels and other events, visit [www.ire.org/training/dc03/](http://www.ire.org/training/dc03/)

**HOTEL**  
This year's conference hotel is the JW Marriott at 1331 Pennsylvania Ave. Call 800-228-9290 or 202-393-2000 and ask for the Investigative Reporters and Editors room block.



uled for Saturday afternoon and will include balloting for six seats on the IRE Board of Directors.

The National Press Club will host a reception on Friday night, and *U.S. News & World Report* will sponsor a reception on Saturday night.

A program and breakfast for area high school students interested in journalism will be sponsored by *The Washington Post's* Young Journalists Development Project.

The fifth annual Blues Bash will feature exceptional live music and camaraderie in an eclectic setting on Thursday, the opening night of the conference. Details on tickets and directions are posted at [www.ire.org/training/dc03/](http://www.ire.org/training/dc03/). To date, the yearly event – begun as a broadcaster get-together – has raised more than \$8,500 for the IRE Resource Center.

Local hosts are the National Press Club, *The Washington Post* and *U.S. News & World Report*. Sponsors include the Gannett Foundation, *USA Today*, the Poynter Institute, International Center for Journalists, the Philip L. Graham Fund, American University, Medill School of Journalism and Missouri School of Journalism.

*MaryJo Sylvester is database editor for USA Today's sports section. She serves on the Washington, D.C., local committee.*

The Center for Investigative Reporting, FRONTLINE/World, WGBH and KQED congratulate the producers and reporters who contributed to the

**“Gunrunners” Web site**  
winner of the 2002 IRE Online Certificate

Rick Young	Omar Larieri	Will Evans
William Kistner	Allyce Boss	Mabel Tampino
Julia Reynolds	Marlena Telick	Robin Stein
Matthew Brunwasser	Monica Sagullo	Kelly Davis
Kim Woodard	James Sandler	Jared Saylor
Dave Gilson	Angela Morgenstern	
and Lowell Bergman	and the FRONTLINE/World Web design team	
	U.C. Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism	

 Center for Investigative Reporting

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# BUDGET PROPOSAL

Despite economy, IRE stays stable,  
increases training and membership

BY BRANT HOUSTON

THE IRE JOURNAL

## Proposed IRE Budget for Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004) Combined All Programs

Year	Proposed FY 2003	Estimated FY 2003	Proposed FY 2004
<b>Membership</b>			
<b>Revenue</b>			
New Membership	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Membership-student	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Membership-international	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Membership Renewals	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$110,000
Renewals-student	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Renewals-international	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
<b>Subtotal membership</b>	<b>\$158,000</b>	<b>\$179,000</b>	<b>\$179,000</b>
Journal subscriptions	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
Journal ads	\$45,000	\$55,000	\$55,000
<b>Total membership revenue</b>	<b>\$208,000</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>	<b>\$241,000</b>
<b>Membership Service Expenses</b>			
IRE Journal	\$85,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
Staff costs (membership)	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$75,000
Postage and shipping	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
<b>Total membership service expense</b>	<b>\$163,000</b>	<b>\$168,000</b>	<b>\$172,000</b>
<b>Net membership activity</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$69,000</b>
<b>Sales and Services</b>			
Book sales	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Book costs	\$18,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
<b>Net book activity</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Resource Center sales	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
Prior/current year contributions	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$40,000
Resource Center expenses	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
<b>Net Resource Center activity</b>	<b>\$(10,000)</b>	<b>\$(10,000)</b>	<b>\$(15,000)</b>
Web services revenue	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$12,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Web services expenses	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
<b>Net Web services activity</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>
Database Library revenue	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$15,000	-	-
Database Library expenses	\$70,000	\$75,000	\$78,000
<b>Net Database Library activity</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>
Uplink subscription revenue	\$17,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Uplink ads	\$5,000	\$-	\$3,000
Uplink expenses	\$11,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
<b>Net Uplink activity</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
<b>Royalty revenue</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
Other sales and services revenue	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Other sales and services expenses	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
<b>Net other sales and services activity</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>Net sales and services activity</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$51,000</b>
<b>Conferences and Seminars</b>			
<b>Annual Conference</b>			
Registrations and fees (IRE and NICAR)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Optional CAR day	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Other revenues	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$120,000	\$130,000	\$140,000
<b>Total annual conference revenues</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$310,000</b>	<b>\$320,000</b>
Conference expenses	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$140,000
<b>Net annual conference activity</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>

Despite another year of bad economic conditions, IRE has maintained financial stability. This proposed budget has about \$1.5 million in operating expenses – about the same as the previous year.

During the past year, we kept our expenses down by delaying equipment purchases, not filling several positions, not giving raises and continuing to make our operations more efficient.

At the same time, we have met many of our revenue goals, although the bleak economy and the war in Iraq put pressures on the training funds of news organizations that use our resources.

Beginning last fall, we embarked on an ambitious series of seminars – the Better Watchdog Workshops – aimed at journalists at small- to medium-sized news organizations and young journalists. (We did this in addition to our regular conferences and seminars.)

The workshops, supported by a grant from the SDX Foundation and done in collaboration with the Society of Professional Journalists and other news organizations, brought in both revenue and membership. In fact, our membership reached 5,000 for the first time in IRE's history this year and it has stayed at or above that level.

The IRE Database Library and Resource Center also increased their services significantly, with the data library helping more news organizations learn to do data analysis as a part of their reporting. *The IRE Journal* not only won another national award this year, but increased advertising revenue within its tight acceptance guidelines.

In the administrative area, we handled our membership and bookkeeping more efficiently and more accurately. In the fiscal area, we improved accounting methods and the tabulation of ongoing expenses, overcoming the difficulties of the imposition of a new accounting system at the University of Missouri that we use for some of our programs.

Our major financial effort this year was the launch of the second phase of our endowment drive. With the support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we've been able to allocate significant funding toward the endowment drive, including revision of our strategic plan and the preparation of new materials. We have raised

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## FEATURES

### Proposed IRE Budget for Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004) Combined All Programs

Year	Proposed FY 2003	Estimated FY 2003	Proposed FY 2004
<b>Newsroom Seminars</b>		*Census	*Census
Registrations and fees	\$25,000	\$6,000	\$-
Seminar expenses	\$15,000	\$6,000	\$-
<b>Net newsroom seminar activity</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>
<b>On the road seminars</b>			
Registrations and fees	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$90,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$-	\$-	\$-
Seminar expenses	\$75,000	\$70,000	\$73,000
<b>Net on-the-road seminar activity</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>
<b>Boot Camps</b>			
Registrations and fees	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$-	\$-	\$-
Seminar expenses	\$10,000	\$9,000	\$9,000
<b>Net Boot Camp activity</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$41,000</b>	<b>\$41,000</b>
<b>Regional Conferences/Workshops</b>			
Registrations and fees	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Prior/current year contributions released	\$-	\$70,000	\$65,000
Conference expenses	\$8,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
<b>Net regional conference activity</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
Conference Fellowships	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Fellowship expenses	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
<b>Net fellowships</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>
<b>Net conferences and seminar activity</b>	<b>\$212,000</b>	<b>\$271,000</b>	<b>\$288,000</b>
<b>Grants and contributions</b>			
Temporarily restricted/unrestricted	\$250,000	\$170,000	\$225,000
Permanently restricted	\$125,000	\$515,000	\$100,000
<b>Total grant and contributions</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>	<b>\$685,000</b>	<b>\$325,000</b>
<b>Other support and revenues</b>			
Award contest fees	\$23,000	\$28,000	\$28,000
Award contest expenses	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Net award contest activity</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
Investment return	\$10,000	\$3,000	\$5,000
Endowment Return	\$-	\$30,000	\$40,000
<b>Net other support and revenue</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$51,000</b>	<b>\$63,000</b>
<b>Net program activity</b>	<b>\$712,000</b>	<b>\$1,134,000</b>	<b>\$796,000</b>

### Proposed IRE Budget for Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004) Combined All Programs

Year	Proposed FY 2003	Estimated FY 2003	Proposed FY 2004
<b>General and Administrative Expenses</b>			
Salary and personnel costs	\$370,000	\$313,000	\$363,000
<b>Professional services</b>			
Consulting/Fundraising	\$15,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Accounting	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Legal	\$5,000	\$12,000	\$10,000
<b>Total professional services</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$127,000</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
<b>General office expenses</b>			
Telephone and fax	\$10,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Postage	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Office supplies	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Photocopying	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Insurance	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Computer supplies	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Equipment expense	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Other office expense	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Total general office expense</b>	<b>\$49,000</b>	<b>\$39,000</b>	<b>\$39,000</b>
<b>Other expenses</b>			
Publications/Dues	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Travel costs-board	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Travel costs-staff	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
FOI conferences	\$1,000	\$-	\$1,000
Board consultant	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$-
Equipment purchases	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Staff Training	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Total other expenses</b>	<b>\$32,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Total General and Administration Expenses</b>	<b>\$486,000</b>	<b>\$507,000</b>	<b>\$547,000</b>
<b>Fund-raising expenses</b>			
Commissions and other expenses	\$15,000	\$33,000	\$28,000
Promotions	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
<b>Total fund-raising expenses</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Contribution to Endowment</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>	<b>\$515,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Reserves</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$692,000</b>	<b>\$1,112,000</b>	<b>\$732,000</b>
<b>Excess net program activity over expenses</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>	<b>\$64,000</b>

nearly \$2 million so far and part of the endowment investment income already is helping to support the Resource Center.

In the coming year, we will request the support of major donors, whose gifts will be partially matched by the Knight Foundation.

Despite the difficult market, we have preserved much of our endowment investment income earned over the past five years – more than \$200,000.

In this year's budget, we've increased funding to continue the endowment drive, to cover mandated employee health benefit increases and will propose salary raises for the staff, but have not put those in the budget, while awaiting board approval. The cost of the proposed raises for the staff would total about \$30,000 for 13 staff members.

On the revenue side, we are planning another series of the Watchdog Workshops and will expand our training offerings. We also will offer more services in the Database Library and the Resource Center, especially through our Web site, and will seek additional funding for our international efforts.

### Salaries and Benefits As of July 1, 2003

	Salary	Benefits	Total	Contributions or Allocations	
Executive Director	\$76,000	\$21,280	\$97,280	\$30,720	Journalism school
Deputy Director	\$70,000	\$19,600	\$89,600	\$15,360	Journalism school
Training Director	\$48,000	\$13,440	\$61,440	\$61,440	Seminars
Database Administrator	\$49,000	\$13,720	\$62,720	\$62,720	Database Library
Membership Coordinator	\$37,000	\$10,360	\$47,360	\$47,360	Membership
Admin Asst. Membership	\$22,000	\$6,160	\$28,160	\$28,160	Membership
System Administrator	\$34,000	\$9,520	\$43,520	\$20,000	Knight Grant
Web Coordinator/Advertising	\$32,000	\$8,960	\$40,960		Administrative
Web Administrator	\$35,000	\$9,800	\$44,800	\$40,000	Knight Grant
Resource Center Director	\$40,000	\$11,200	\$51,200	\$40,000	Endowed Post
Conference Coordinator	\$33,000	\$9,240	\$42,240	\$-	Administrative
Campaign Finance Director	\$-	\$-	\$-		
Finance Officer	\$30,000	\$8,400	\$38,400	\$-	Administrative
Program Designer	\$20,000	\$5,600	\$25,600		Administrative
International Admin Asst	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	Administrative
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$526,000</b>	<b>\$147,280</b>	<b>\$673,280</b>	<b>\$345,760</b>	
Graduate Assistants	\$33,000		\$33,000	<b>\$33,000</b>	
Part-Time Help	\$10,000		\$10,000		
Student Web	\$15,000		\$15,000		
Student Assistants	\$10,000		\$10,000		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$68,000</b>		<b>\$68,000</b>		
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$378,760</b>	Subtotal of allocations
<b>Total General/ Administrative</b>			<b>\$741,280</b>	<b>\$362,520</b>	Net salaries & benefits



# THE BLACK BELT

Alabama's Third World  
brought to public attention

BY JOHN ARCHIBALD,  
CARLA CROWDER  
AND JEFF HANSEN  
*THE BIRMINGHAM NEWS*

There are few places in America where children and families face greater hardship than in the 12 counties of Alabama's rural "Black Belt." A quarter of all families are led by single moms, 80 percent of students are poor enough for free lunch at school and life expectancy is lower than in many Third World countries.

Poverty and unemployment remain high; luring jobs to a systemically racist region with little infrastructure and a largely uneducated population is almost impossible. Health care in the Black Belt is abysmal, infant death rates are alarming and schools are bad, even by Alabama standards.

We knew much of this as we proposed a 2002 project that would examine Alabama's most troubled region. We also knew that many Alabamians didn't know it, or they chose to ignore the injustice that has burdened the region for 180 years.

Our goal was a project that not only informed Alabama's oblivious about the problems and indignities of the area, but one that would give them a reason to care, that would awaken them and point them in the direction of atonement.

By the end, the results surprised even those among us who had pushed so hard to make the project happen. Among the findings:

- A computer analysis of 149,000 tax records – compiled into a single database for the first time – showed that more than two-thirds of all land in the Black Belt is owned by people living outside the counties. To make matters worse, most of these absentee owners qualify for agricultural "current use" tax exemptions, which, the *News* found, lowers the taxable value of the land by more than \$1.1 billion. Examinations of comparable timberland in neighboring states showed tax rates on similar land are

two to three times higher in Mississippi and Georgia than in Alabama. Those facts spurred legislators to demand changes in Alabama's regressive tax system.

- Shoe-leather reporting in the vast region revealed an illegal dual school system in Greensboro, Ala., where student populations are manipulated so that whites never attend a high school that is largely black. The "white school," as Greensboro West is called, receives better equipment, better-educated teachers and all the revenue from city football games, among other perks. That revelation prompted the State Board of Education to investigate the system and demand changes.
- We found towns with doctors but no medical equipment and others with medical equipment

but no doctors. We found astonishing rates of pregnancy, disease and squalor. At the bottom of it all, we found hopelessness.

The Black Belt is a once-fertile crescent that sweeps through Alabama and other Southern states. School books say it is named for its rich black soil. Others say that is a euphemism for a place where black descendants of slaves outnumber whites.

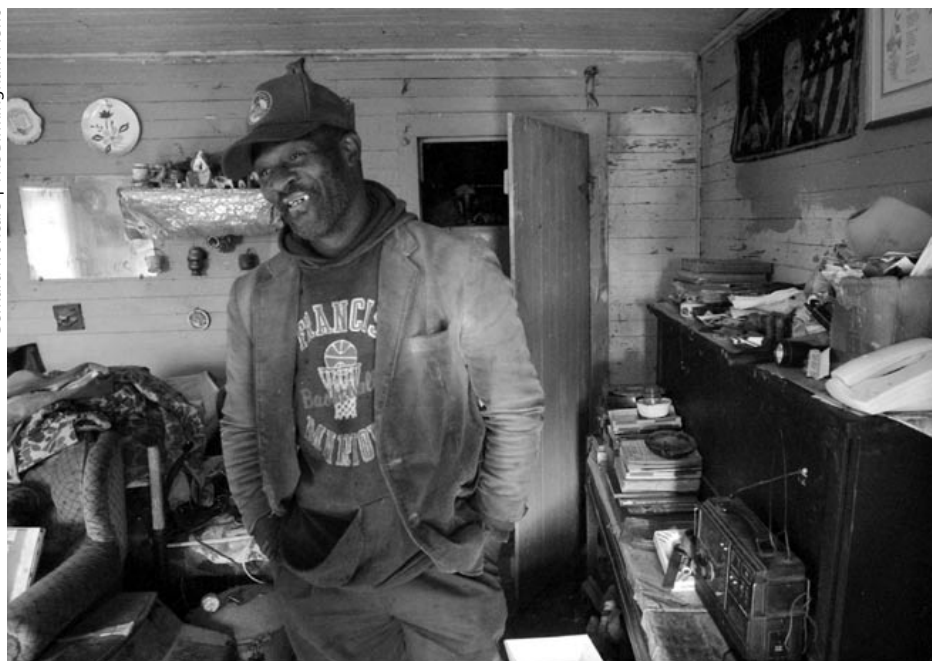
“The Black Belt is a once-fertile crescent that sweeps through Alabama and other Southern states. School books say it is named for its rich black soil. Others say that is a euphemism for a place where black descendants of slaves outnumber whites.”

We proposed a focus on 12 counties, and suggested the name "The Black Belt: Alabama's Third World." Editors bit, and committed unprecedented space and resources.

The series was unlike anything we had ever tried. We were examining an isolated area about the size of Vermont, trying to tell history in news stories, trying to tell readers where the region

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 ➤

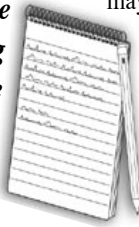
Bernard Troncale | The Birmingham News



Once 1,500 laborers worked on Perry County's largest plantation. Tommie "Rooster" Moore, 48, is one of five who are left. He clings to the decaying five-room shack where he was raised.

# Interviews with the Interviewers

*Some journalists have a natural gift for interviewing. Others spend entire careers mastering the skills. During 2003, The IRE Journal is presenting the series "Interviews with the Interviewers." We have talked with some of the most renowned interviewers in the field of investigative reporting. Focusing on a different style of interview each issue, we share their experiences, techniques and advice with you. This is the third installment.*



PART 3

## Confrontational interviews

BY LORI LUECHTEFELD  
*THE IRE JOURNAL*

**G**o ahead. Pick a fight with Pat Stith. He welcomes it.

"That's a mistake on their part," says Stith, an investigative reporter with *The News & Observer* in Raleigh, N.C. "I'm not going to react to it. I'm not going to pour gasoline on it, but I won't retreat from it one iota."

When people get angry, says Stith, seasoned reporters know it's a golden opportunity to not only get good quotes, but a way to maintain the upper hand in an interview.

"I have a lot more experience interviewing people like this than they have being interviewed," he says.

Top reporters say that often the nature of an investigation leads to unavoidable confrontations in interviews where tempers can flair and lies can be told again and again. There might be more than one "no comment" from a disgruntled subject. But how a reporter chooses to deal with these confrontations can make all the difference in a story.

"Don't build up the idea of confrontation in your head," says Eric Nalder of the *San Jose Mercury News*. "Just be ready to deal with it."

Nalder agrees with Stith when it comes to dealing with angry subjects.

"The key thing is to not become angry and hostile back," he says. Nalder says this is often a mistake made by young reporters.

"When you become angry, you're giving up something," Nalder says. "If they get angry at you, you own something of them."

Nalder says that although journalists shouldn't react with anger, they shouldn't try to calm the subject either.

"It's patronizing," he says. "Interview the anger."

Anger often comes to the surface in final interviews with central subjects in investigations. Stith refers to such final interviews as "showdown interviews." During these interviews, says Stith, a reporter has three objectives:

- Confirm information and gather new information.
- Get a confession.
- Eliminate the counterattack after the story is published.

He stresses that maintaining control is

important while trying to achieve these objectives.

And, believe it or not, being polite is still possible in a confrontational interview, and may even help you appease the subject enough to get more information.

"You can say 'please' and 'thank you' and still ask: 'Why did you steal the money?'" Stith tells audiences at IRE conferences.

While trying to achieve the objectives of a showdown interview, broadcast journalists in particular might have the impulse to provoke emotions in their interviewees to get more compelling images on the screen.

"I have to check myself against the tendency to just get a moment," says Duane Pohlman of WEWS-Cleveland. "My interest is in getting the truth, not the embarrassing moment."

Al Tompkins of the Poynter Institute agrees, saying that while a lot of journalists "intentionally make interviews confrontational" to make themselves look aggressive, it should really be a last resort.

Roberta Baskin, senior Washington correspondent for "NOW with Bill Moyers," says experience helps journalists in this area.

"In the old days, I would cross a line between being too confrontational," she says. "I would turn the villain into the victim." Baskin says after an interview she sometimes felt like she had beaten up her interview

Jim Bounds | The News & Observer



*News & Observer* reporter Pat Stith prepares to interview an officer for the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles' Enforcement Division.



subject.

Baskin says one of the most important things to do in an interview is to let the subject talk. She realized this while working on a story about drug testing in the National Football League. Her subject, when allowed to speak freely, commonly made racist comments.

“Just stand back and let it rip,” Baskin says.

Interrupting a subject whenever a conflict arises often will keep an interviewer from getting to the heart of the story. Interviewers often have

the greatest urge to pounce on interview subjects when they realize the subject is lying.

Nalder suggests handling lies the same way you handle anger.

“Interview the lie,” he says. “See lying as a gift to you.”

Liars often use a lot of details, says Nalder. This gives a journalist plenty of opportunities to pick a lie apart. Wait until the liar is exhausted, then go back to ask about details that will indicate what they are saying is a lie.

However, Stith recommends not using “gasoline words such as ‘lie.’” He let that word slip from his mouth once and the subject’s lawyer terminated the interview immediately.

Valeri Williams, most recently with WFAA-Dallas, likes to test the reliability of a subject.

“Sometimes I intentionally misstate a question to test if they will be honest,” she says. If a subject doesn’t correct her, she knows she should be cautious elsewhere in the interview.

Pohlman says he will restate his question when a subject lies.

“I give them a chance to retract because the dynamic of an interview isn’t normal,” he says. “They’re nervous.”

If the person sticks to the lie, Pohlman will then break it apart systematically, pointing out how he knows they aren’t being truthful.

Often, rather than lying, a subject will resort to the infamous “no comment.”

“I almost never have to settle with a ‘no comment,’” Nalder says.

Nalder recommends dealing with a “no comment” by giving the subject a smaller task. Ask an easier question. It often helps to

ask about other people involved, he says.

Mike McGraw, of *The Kansas City Star*, follows a “no comment” with a simple question: “Why?” He also points out to his subject what a “no comment” looks like to a reader.

In addition to “no-comments,” journalists often will have trouble getting a confrontational person to speak to them in the first place. Some journalists will then have to resort to ambushing a person for an interview.

“I have ambushed, yes, only after repeatedly trying to make contact,”

Williams says.

While Williams was working on a story about mercury in child vaccines, a government official repeatedly refused to be interviewed. After asking him one more time at a congressional hearing, Williams chased him with the camera, and then broadcast his “no comment.”

“It was a serious enough topic,” Williams says.

Baskin also remembers a time in her career, many years ago, when she ended up chasing

a subject down the streets of Chicago in high heels, which she admits “I can’t picture myself doing now.”

When a confrontational source does grant an interview, often the subject will not be alone. Powerful people often will have handlers, such as lawyers or assistants, who will try to control the interview. Others might have had considerable coaching before the interview, such as the senior vice president of a credit card company who spent thousands of dollars on interview coaching before talking to Williams.

In other cases, the handlers might be the ones who try to answer the questions for the main subject. When that happens, Stith advises turning the question back to the real subject when the handler is done speaking.

In some cases, the handler might try to terminate an interview prematurely, such as with a mayor’s handler present during a Pohlman interview. “We’ll stop this interview with your admission that we’re not getting to crucial points,” Pohlman told the handler.

Advises Pohlman: “Don’t shut the camera down for anything.”

*Lori Luechtefeld is a graduate student at the Missouri School of Journalism and magazine studies intern with The IRE Journal.*

**More tips**

IRE has tip sheets, audio tapes from conference panels and other resources on tough interviews available at [www.ire.org/resourcecenter](http://www.ire.org/resourcecenter), including:

**Tip sheet No. 1262** – The Showdown Interview, Pat Stith

**Tip sheet No. 1090** – The Art of the Broadcast Interview, Tony Kovalski

**REMEMBER WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE? YOU CAN FEEL THAT WAY AGAIN. BEEN TO POYNTER?**

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# A MUCKRAKING LIFE

Early investigative journalist provides relevant lessons

BY STEVE WEINBERG  
THE IRE JOURNAL

Charles Edward Russell has been dead 62 years. But his investigative reporting reads as if it could have been published yesterday. The relevance of history for today's journalists has rarely, if ever, been more obvious than in Russell's magazine articles and books.

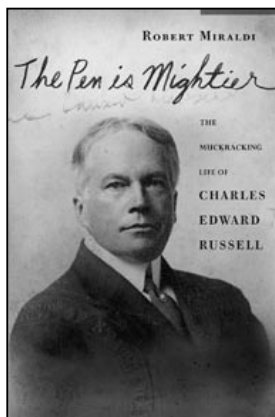
Robert Miraldi, a journalism professor at the State University of New York, New Paltz, has resurrected the mostly forgotten Russell for a contemporary audience with a fascinating biography of this Iowa native who spent most of his career in Chicago and New York City.

Like many journalists of his time, Russell (1860-1941) was an activist as well as a reporter, running for political office four times as a Socialist (hoping to become a U.S. senator or New York State governor); helping launch the NAACP; and serving the U.S. government as a diplomat during World War I because of President Wilson's confidence in his abilities.

When Russell entered the world, Davenport, Iowa, seemed an unlikely platform for his later fame. Despite its small size, however, Davenport had formed connections to the wider world as a river city, a railroad hub and a farming exporter. Russell's father, Edward, was a newspaperman, starting as editor of the *Le Claire Republic* in 1858, then becoming part owner and editor of the *Davenport Gazette* in 1862. A fierce opponent of slavery and a strong supporter of Republican

Abraham Lincoln, Russell's father used his newspaper to advance causes as well as inform the community of births and deaths.

Edward Russell told his son that a newspaper must be "the guardian and nourisher of civic virtue," with a related goal of "terrifying evil doers and arousing the communal conscience." Charles Russell loved those ideas. So, after finishing his formal education in Vermont in 1881, Charles Russell made the long trek back to Iowa to help run the family newspaper. He did so with distinction for several years, until his ambition led him to St. Paul and Minneapolis to write about urban issues in a venue larger than Davenport. In 1886, Russell left the Midwest, heading to New York City, where the national newspapers promised fame.



**THE PEN IS MIGHTIER: The Muckraking Life of Charles Edward Russell**  
By Robert Miraldi  
Published by Palgrave,  
328 pages, \$35

## Working with sources

Fame did not come right away. Despite Russell's solid Iowa and Minnesota newspaper experience, New York City editors failed to hire him.

Russell turned to freelance writing, hustling for stories he could sell to the newspapers and magazines where he wanted to be a salaried staff member. The strategy worked. Russell ended up employed inside several New York newsrooms, where his sharp intelligence and memorable prose helped him stand out.

Eventually, he moved from telling slice-of-life stories to investigative reporting. Spending time in Chicago, Russell exposed the terrible working conditions and dangerous products

of what had become known as the Beef Trust, dominated by the Armour family. Later, Russell took on creeping corporate monopoly in a variety of industries. His exposés from 100 years ago sound a lot like today's exposés of amoral, multinational corporations. He would have understood modern-day scandals at companies like Enron and Tyco just fine.

The Beef Trust expose started simply enough, with Russell reading the testimony of J.W. Midgley, an expert on railroad shipping, to the Interstate Commerce Commission. Midgley explained how meat packers used their clout with railroads to control markets and the prices paid to livestock farms that shipped to those markets.

Unlike other investigative journalists of his era, Russell decided against going undercover. Instead, he worked sources from the stockyards to the corporate suites, relied on information developed by congressional committees, and wove in profiles of key players to draw readers.

After what would become an eight-part series began running in *Everybody's* magazine, valuable new sources contacted Russell. One of those sources worked inside the industry and could feed Russell first-hand information. Another source knew a middleman who carried messages among the Beef Trust leaders. The messenger apparently shared information with Russell's source, information that upon further investigation by the journalist checked out. For example, Russell first learned important details about rebates from his informant. A packer with lots of beef to transport would tell a freight line operator that the beef would travel on a different train route unless the railroad would kick back some of the shipping cost regulated by the federal government. The rebates violated the law, but, Russell learned, were being disguised through false classifications and by undercounting the weight of the shipment. "Wherever we turn in this story," Russell wrote, "there is but one prospect, and that is graft."

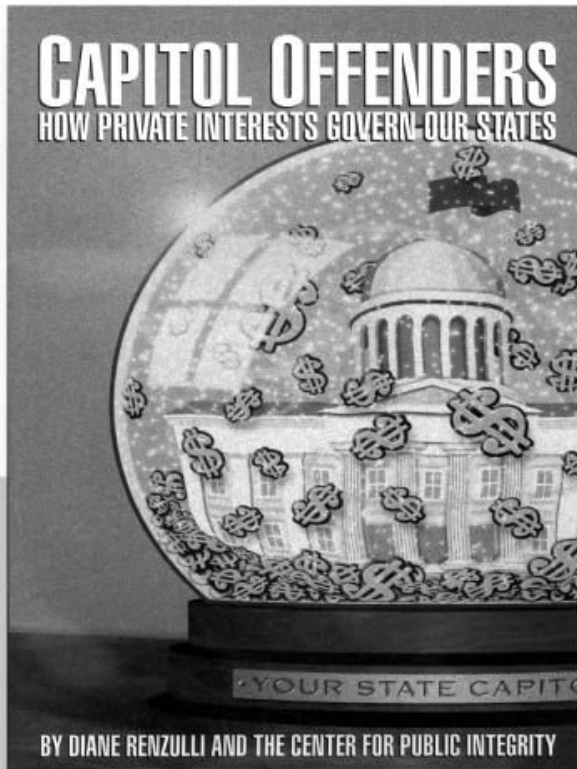
The Beef Trust exposé ran during 1905. It would be three years later that he published an exposé causing an even greater sensation.

Among modern chroniclers of journalism history, there is agreement that Russell's *piece de resistance* was his investigation of New York City's Trinity Church. In addition to serving as a prominent place of religious worship, the architecturally imposing church and its

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 ➤

Congratulations to the editors, writers and researchers who contributed to

# “Capitol Offenders: How Private Interests Govern Our States”



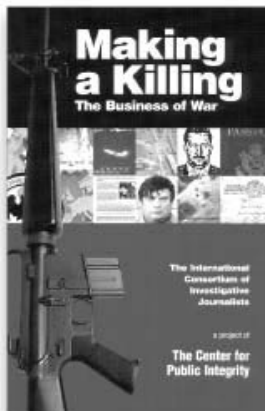
## Winner of the 2002 IRE Award for Books

**Special thanks** to: Diane Renzulli, John Dunbar, Alex Knott, Robert Moore and Leah Rush, director of State Projects.

The project would not have been possible without the generous support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Deer Creek Foundation, Ford Foundation, Joyce Foundation, John L. and James S. Knight Foundation, Alida R. Messinger and the Open Society Institute.

**Congratulations** also to online category finalist “Enron’s Big Political Donors,” written by John Dunbar, Robert Moore and Maryjo Sylwester.

The Center for Public Integrity is proud to be associated with IRE. We thank you for your recognition of our projects.

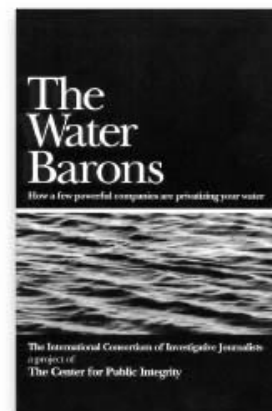


Other recent books available through the Center for Public Integrity Store include:

“Making a Killing: The Business of War”

“Water Barons: How A Few Powerful Companies Are Privatizing Your Water”

Visit our store at [publicintegrity.org](http://publicintegrity.org)



THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

## PRIEST SCANDAL Globe court battle unseals church records, reveals longtime abuse

BY SACHA PFEIFFER  
*THE BOSTON GLOBE*

**O**ur project began with an astonishing admission, followed by a simple question.

The admission came in June 2001, from the then-leader of the Archdiocese of Boston, Cardinal Bernard F. Law. He acknowledged in a public court filing that in 1984, he had transferred the Rev. John J. Geoghan to a new parish – despite knowing that Geoghan had been accused of molesting seven children.

The question came in July 2001, from the then-brand-new editor of *The Boston Globe*, Martin Baron, who asked why church documents in Geoghan's case were shielded from public view by a court-imposed confidentiality seal. The answer – that church lawyers had requested the protective order – spurred Baron to send the newspaper's lawyers to court to file a motion to lift the seal.

*Continued on page 24*

## FAITH HEALER Hidden cameras help, hidden records frustrate probe into televangelist

BY MEADE JORGENSEN  
DATELINE NBC

**T**he live orchestra always plays “How Great Thou Art” when televangelist/faith-healer Benny Hinn makes his entrance in his custom-made white suit with the “Holy Spirit” logo embroidered in gold on the pocket.


“Pastor Benny,” as he is known to his followers, will tell you they are singing about Jesus. But after following him on and off for two years, it's hard not to think “Thou” might refer to the good pastor himself.

He has been known for his outrageous theological statements (one of my favorites is that God originally intended for women to give birth from their sides), his outrageous “comb-over” hairstyle, and the way he “slays people in the spirit,” at his crusades. You might get a chuckle out of watching Hinn fill the stage with prostrate followers, and hearing him call down healings for everything from HIV to cancer to demons – but you had better take this man seriously.

He has millions of followers. His

*Continued on page 26*

# FOLLOW THE FAITH



**Religious leaders h  
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# DWING HE HFUL

The Rev. D. George Spagnolia pumps his fist at a press conference declaring his innocence and right to due process after being removed from his post because of allegations of sexual misconduct.

Photo: Bill Greene, The Boston Globe

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## CITY PORTRAITS

Role of religion  
starkly different  
in town profiles

BY JILL LAWRENCE  
*USA TODAY*

**O**n my first trip to Montclair, N.J., at a routine meeting about economic development, Alison Barnett rose to discuss downtown decorations. “We’re calling it seasonal lighting instead of holiday lighting because I don’t want to get into trouble with anybody,” she said. “We are looking at the snowflake theme because it seems very non-denominational.”

When I stopped by Franklin Book-sellers in downtown Franklin, Tenn., manager Carol Ann Shull volunteered that all her employees are Christian. “We try to avoid having things that aren’t wholesome,” she said.

I could not have asked for a better introduction to the contrasting religious attitudes in these two towns. Moments like these over the course of an eight-month project crystallized one of the principal conclusions of my three-day series stemming from the 2000 election: that religion is the wellspring of the culture gap in America. It’s at the root of opposition to abortion and homosexuality.

*Continued on page 27*

## IMAM UPROAR

Imam’s history  
hurts credibility  
on local scene

BY TOM MERRIMAN  
WJW-CLEVELAND

**T**he instructions were simple: Catch a flight to a city on the east coast. Rent a car. Drive to a specific parking garage. Await instructions.

The rules were uncompromising: No cameras. No taxis. No disclosure of my ultimate destination.

The payoff was unbelievable: Complete access to volumes of hidden camera tapes, transcripts, and translations documenting the Islamic terror network in America.

Shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, the WJW I-Team began unraveling the controversial past of Cleveland’s most prominent Islamic leader. A personal history far different from the public persona Imam Fawaz Damra had crafted during the prior decade. To most people in northeast Ohio, Damra was not only the local face of Islam, he was a man of peace.

*Continued on page 29*

## PRIEST SCANDAL

from page 22

Ultimately, *Globe* attorneys were successful in persuading the court that the public's right to know outweighed the archdiocese's privacy claim, resulting in the release of more than 10,000 pages of previously secret church records. The documents proved devastating to the Boston archdiocese. But while the legal motion wended its way through court, the *Globe* Spotlight Team, a four-person investigative unit, set out to learn as much as it could about what the church knew about Geoghan, when it knew it, and what it did about it.

How, we wondered, had one priest – who by January 2001 had become the subject of at least 84 civil lawsuits alleging that he had molested children – accumulated so many victims in six different parishes in three decades before being removed from active ministry in 1993?

### Unconventional target

Our research began in August 2001, and our findings stunned us. In the Boston archdiocese alone, we now know, more than 150 priests have been credibly accused of sexually abusing children in recent decades. Often, family members and even fellow priests alerted top church officials of wrongdoing. But the crimes were concealed, ignored and forgiven by a lengthy succession of bishops and cardinals who were widely viewed as icons of morality in the Catholic Church.

By March 2003, the *Globe* had published more than 900 news stories about the clergy sex abuse scandal, and more than 500 people had come forward with legal claims that they were molested by priests in the Boston archdiocese. Nationally, similar accusations forced the removal of an estimated 450 priests in 2002. As public disgust grew over ugly disclosures about abusive priests and indifferent bishops, and about millions of dollars paid in so-called hush money, church attendance and donations plummeted. Lay reform groups like Voice of the Faithful were born, attracting thousands of outraged Catholics. In December 2002, Cardinal Law, once America's most influential church leader, resigned in disgrace.

Meanwhile, reeling from the abuse scandal and a down economy, the Boston archdiocese now teeters on the brink of financial ruin, and has considered bankruptcy as a solution to its troubles.

How did we get here?  
The Catholic Church was an

unconventional target for the Spotlight Team. For much of its three-decade history, Spotlight had carried out its mission of exposing corruption by taking on municipal and government institutions, like bad cops, crooked politicians and corrupt public agencies. At the same time, newspapers across the country had been writing stories for years about clergy sex abuse, and the *Globe* had been writing for several years about Geoghan. But most of those stories focused on isolated cases of abuse, and on the actions of individual priests rather than church officials.

With Cardinal Law's June 2001 admission, however, the story of clergy sex abuse shifted from one about priests who abused children to one about church leaders who had covered up for priests who abused children. That was territory few newspapers had explored, largely because church files were inaccessible to the public. Still, before the breadth of the crisis was exposed, many church leaders, including Cardinal Law, denounced the media for its coverage of the issue, insisting that the problem of clergy sex abuse had been blown out of proportion.

But had it? The task of testing the church's claim was a daunting one. We were faced with somehow cracking open an institution that had neither the obligation nor desire to make its records public or discuss how it operates. One example of the church's rigid resistance to public inquiry: Just before the *Globe* published its first

Geoghan story on Jan. 6, 2002, the spokeswoman for

the Boston archdiocese not only refused to answer our questions, but said the church had no interest in knowing what those questions were.

We launched our investigation by interviewing everyone we could think of who knew anything about the Geoghan case: lawyers, known victims, prosecutors, the small circle of people who had studied the issue of clergy sexual abuse. Within a week, it was clear that the dimension of the clergy sex abuse problem extended far beyond Geoghan, and far beyond the Boston archdiocese. Again and again, we were told that Geoghan was only "the tip of the iceberg."

### Not an aberration

In an effort to quantify the extent of the abuse, we combed through nearly 20 years of the archdiocese's annual directories, which list every priest in the archdiocese and his parish or administrative assignment. From those directories, we developed a spreadsheet to track what seemed to be an unusually large number of priests who had been placed in categories like "sick leave," "awaiting assignment," "clergy personnel office," or "unasigned." From interviewing numerous victims, we knew that priests frequently received those dubious labels after church officials received abuse complaints about them.

Scrutinizing the directories was tedious and time-consuming, but fruitful. From them, we found that in the mid-1980s, there were usually

Bill Greene | The Boston Globe



Cardinal Law issues a statement to the press in December.



## The Book

In "Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church" (Little Brown & Co., \$23.95), the investigative staff of *The Boston Globe* gives the complete story of the Catholic Church's cover-up of abusive priests that lasted for decades and involved hundreds of victims

The book adds "new, never-before disclosed details," on how abusive priests were shuffled to different locations, as well as those who knew about the problem and did nothing to stop it.

The book was a finalist in the book category of this year's IRE Awards.

about two dozen priests in all those categories combined in any one year, out of more than 1,000 priests. By the mid-1990s, after the church had begun to pay secret settlements and quietly remove offending priests from parishes, the number shot up to more than 100 priests.

We also scoured a state trial court database, looking for cases in which victims had filed lawsuits. That led to the identities of other accused priests. Then we assembled a list of every attorney we knew who had handled a sexual abuse complaint, including the cardinal's lawyers, and we obtained docket numbers of all civil cases those lawyers had handled since the late 1980s. Among the hundreds of docket numbers, we found other lawsuits that had never been reported. In some instances, judges in those cases had ordered all the records impounded, keeping them out of the public eye.

In November 2001, Superior Court Judge Constance M. Sweeney ruled in the *Globe's* favor on its motion to unseal the Geoghan file. The archdiocese appealed, but a state appeals court judge upheld Sweeney's ruling. The documents were eventually released in late January 2002. Our original series on Geoghan was published Jan. 6-7, 2002, before the Geoghan court file was formally unsealed, and was based entirely on our reporting and public court records. Then, on Jan. 31, 2002, we reported that the archdiocese had secretly settled sexual abuse claims against at least 70 other priests in the previous 10 years. The story obliterated the church's long-time claim that Geoghan had been an aberration.

Alongside the stories, which triggered a massive public outcry and a series of apologies by Cardinal Law, we published what we called

our "tip box," which became an invaluable tool for gathering information. The tip box listed two phone numbers (one to reach a live reporter, one to leave a recorded confidential message) and an e-mail address so readers could contact us with news and comments. That box brought such a torrent of phone calls and e-mails from readers across the country and even around the world – several thousand, at last count – that we had to hire a student intern to help us answer them. Most of the people who contacted us were victims, and from them we learned the identities of many more alleged abusers.

As the story exploded, the Spotlight Team – reporters Matt Carroll, Sacha Pfeiffer and Michael Rezendes and editor Walter V. Robinson – was joined by religion reporter Michael Paulson and special projects reporters Stephen Kurkjian, Thomas Farragher and Kevin Cullen. More than a year and a half later, the tragedy of clergy sexual abuse remains a high-profile national issue. The crisis has led to new church policies, changes in state law, the resignations of numerous top Catholic prelates, and massive shakeups in dioceses throughout the U.S.

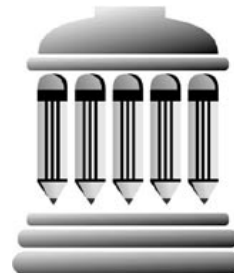
For the *Globe*, the story has been a refreshing reminder that newspapers should not shy away from questioning even society's most revered institutions. It also has renewed our belief that there are always ways to extract information from seemingly impenetrable institutions. Throughout this project, our extensive contact with victims has demonstrated the immense value of reaching out to readers, who are often rich repositories of information. And our investigation has taught us that there is no substitute for documents to prove a case of this magnitude. In the end, the church's own files were its downfall, and the *Globe's* decision to go to court to unseal them was worth the resources it took to do so. Other newspapers would be well-served to do the same.

Perhaps the key lesson we have taken from this project, which has consumed more than a year and a half of our professional lives, is how deeply important it is to question authority. Before we published our original Geoghan stories, we braced ourselves for picket lines outside the *Globe* by Catholics enraged over our reporting. But those protests never came. Instead, readers focused their anger where it belonged: on the church.

*Sacha Pfeiffer is a reporter for the Boston Globe Spotlight Team, the newspaper's investigative unit. The Globe reports won an IRE Medal in this year's IRE Awards and the Pulitzer Prize.*

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Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors



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## FAITH HEALER

*from page 22*

daily TV show, “This is Your Day,” is seen in more than 100 countries. And, from an investigative standpoint, he takes in an estimated \$100 million a year, though the ministry denies that figure.

He lives lavishly by almost any standard. The ministry is building him an eight-bedroom, nine-bathroom house in an exclusive gated community in Southern California. He flies around in a top-of-the-line private jet. He stays in the presidential suites of whatever hotel (preferably Hyatts, Four Seasons, or Ritz Carltons) he happens to be in.

I was assigned the story in May of 2000, after four people died waiting for Hinn to appear at a crusade in Kenya. I was asked to see if there was a story there. At first, it was not conceived as an investigative piece. It was more biographical.

As my colleagues and I looked into it, and met with resistance from the ministry itself, it gradually turned into an investigation. It became the only way to do a story on Hinn.

Just about every month, Hinn has a two-day crusade somewhere in the United States. My colleague and I attended one without cameras on a Friday night in Philadelphia. It was a pretty amazing experience: It’s a professional sound and light extravaganza with thousands of firmly believing faithful from all walks of life. And at the center of it all is Pastor Hinn.

At every crusade we attended, the formula was always the same: an immediate appeal for money, music, preaching, passing the collection bucket, and finally, the “healing” portion of the crusade.

At just about 10 p.m., at every crusade we attended, Hinn would say that God was speaking to him – telling him about miracles of healing going on throughout the arena.

“There is a man named George,” Hinn called out one night. “George has HIV. Well, my brother George, God is telling me, the Holy Spirit is burning it out of your body!”

“A back problem has just been healed,” Hinn would say. “You may feel a burning sensation in your body,” Hinn would suggest.

“If you think the Lord has healed you, line up on the left and right of the platform,” Hinn said at almost every service.

Hundreds of people would line up. Screeners, some of them doctors, would then go up and down the lines to pick out the most believable and telegenic candidates. The lucky few would get to go up on stage with Pastor Benny and testify before the throng and the TV cameras. Later,

those would be edited down for Hinn’s show.

We quickly saw that the only way we were going to be able to document this process, and to try to verify the incredible claims of healing, would be with hidden cameras. We ended up attending crusades in about five different cities. At one crusade, we were able to volunteer to help the “healed” people backstage for their interview.

We were able to show our viewers how the process works, and also to show that in at least two cases, the healings didn’t happen. Two women we followed later died of their cancers after being “healed” at a Benny Hinn crusade.

But debunking healing claims was easy compared to our attempts to get inside Hinn’s finances. The most interesting part of this story, and the most troubling from a journalist’s perspective, is that Hinn does not have to reveal much about any of his ministry’s finances.

As one expert told us at an IRE conference a few years ago, “The story about religious organizations is not what is illegal, but what is legal.”

Because his ministry is registered as a church, Hinn does not have to provide audited financial statements, and it’s extremely difficult to find out where the money goes.

My colleague, Andy Lehren, our producer for computer-assisted reporting, did his best. He actually found a small religious nonprofit corporation in California that held Hinn’s mansion. The house is considered a “parsonage” or church residence. But it was like pulling teeth to get the ministry to give us even the minimal required paperwork on the corporation.

Lehren also found building records in Orange County that gave us the size of the house, and location. So we were able to do a flyover to document its existence on tape.

Using building records, we calculated that it cost about \$3.5 million. It’s probably worth considerably more. The ministry said it was a “good investment.”

Apart from the house, almost anything else – from ministry financial statements, to salaries of Hinn and his highest paid staff, to records about multimillion-dollar fund-raising projects – was almost impossible to obtain.

The ministry had floated a bond issue in the 1980s, and Lehren was at least able to give us a small snapshot of what the ministry looked like back then. But there was little else.

The ministry refused to provide us with any financial data, and just simply denied any estimates of income or salary that we came up with from former insiders.

Hinn repeatedly refused to speak to us. He placed questions about a U.S. Attorney’s investigation into the ministry off limits. The catch of course was that the U.S. Attorney’s Office wouldn’t tell us what was investigated.

Then Hinn said he would only speak to us if he could go on live and unedited. He had appeared on “Larry King Live” twice. We explained to him that was almost unprecedented, not our format, and even if we did it, would require cramming the interview into about five minutes at the end of the piece.

We finally approached Hinn outside his hotel in Buffalo, N.Y., (yes, it was the Hyatt), after he had finished his crusades. He promised to get back to us with an answer about an interview. Eventually it was “no.”

Despite our frustration, we were able to at least raise some questions about Hinn. We called attention to the fact that the ministry had promised on its Web site that it would be building an orphanage in a small town in Mexico “soon.”

Months after the Web site announcement, we sent a crew from our Mexico City bureau to check it out. There was no Hinn orphanage, and not even a building permit registered with the town authorities.

The ministry did get wind of our efforts to check out the orphanage. On a rebuttal show that aired two days after our show, Hinn claimed he now had all the building permits and had begun construction. He showed video of what he said were orphans in a “temporary” facility, and one of his assistants was shown at what appeared to be a construction site.

Finally, I recently received a form letter from the ministry (I am still on their mailing list). In it, Hinn told his flock that, because “... of a story that aired on a secular network,” the ministry’s finances were affected “... during January and early February, resulting in a loss of over 10 percent of our income.” He goes on to say that he needs \$2.5 million to cover the shortfall.

Assuming that’s true, and if you calculate from the assumption that \$2.5 million is 10 percent of the ministry income for six weeks (January and early February), that’s about \$216 million dollars a year. Maybe our estimate was just too low.

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*Meade Jorgensen has been a producer at Dateline NBC since 1994. He has worked on a wide variety of stories, from an investigation of the New York City Police Department to a story about polar bears invading a small town in Canada.*



## CITY PORTRAIT

from page 23

It influences how people view government and judge the personal behavior of public figures. It is an engine of diversity in some places and nourishes like-minded people in others. And it is something candidates need to understand in order to bridge the values gap.

The election map and exit polls after the presidential election produced hard evidence that America was a nation divided: blue Democratic territory dominating both coasts, the urban Midwest and Indian reservations, and red Republican turf across vast swaths of the South and the interior heartland. The blue zone contained half the country's population, the red zone the other half.

### Town profiles

Who are these people in these two separate, evenly matched Americas? Are they as different from each other as this map and these polls suggest? What are their towns like? What are their lives like? What matters to them? How do they feel about the other half of the country? Why do they vote the way they do? What can national leaders do to bridge the gap? As most Americans gratefully put the botched election behind them, I couldn't get these questions out of my mind.

Eventually I persuaded my newspaper, *USA Today*, to let me profile two towns, one on each side of the divide. The result was "One Nation, Divided."

There were many challenges along the way, from finding the right towns, to maintaining objectivity, to getting strangers to talk to me about things you don't even bring up with friends and relatives: politics, religion, homosexuality, abortion, their taxes, their kids and their dreams. And during my final half-hour of field research, in Montclair, N.J., the World Trade Center came under attack. The project immediately stopped, but we resumed it in November to see if the gap between our towns had narrowed. We found through follow-up polls and interviews that it had not.

Identifying our towns was a labor-intensive task that took several weeks and would have been infinitely harder without the Internet. I was looking for towns that had voted mostly for Al Gore or mostly for George W. Bush, and that accurately reflected each man's distinctive support groups: African-Americans and well-educated professionals for Gore, religious conservatives and

Tim Dillon | USA Today



Pastor Scotty Smith of Christ Community church preaches about the merits of a faithful marriage during his third Sunday service.

anti-tax business types for Bush.

My first stop was the National Association of Secretaries of State ([www.nass.org](http://www.nass.org)), which has links to each state's secretary of state office. These state sites had election returns, sometimes by county and sometimes down to the city level. I compiled lists of potential towns based on lopsided vote totals for Bush or Gore. Then I looked at Census data and a portal site that compares cities.

Finding the right mix was complicated. For Gore, I looked at the West Coast, but found that the minority population of most towns was either minuscule or predominantly Hispanic. On the East Coast, a friend suggested Montclair, N.J. Twelve miles from Manhattan, it is often described as an urban suburb. It turned out to be perfect: one-third black, highly educated and three-quarters had voted for Gore.

Seeking a Bush suburb roughly parallel to Montclair, I settled on Franklin, Tenn., an affluent county seat 15 miles south of Nashville. Specific vote totals for Franklin were not available, but Williamson County had voted two-thirds for Bush. The fast-growing town itself was a microcosm of the evangelicals and tax-cut enthusiasts enamored of Bush.

With input and guidance from Jim Norman, the *USA Today* polling editor, we later confirmed

our choices with Gallup polls of each town. They were gulfs apart on questions of morality, abortion, religion, homosexuality, evolution, illegitimacy and worship. The same was true when it came to taxes, guns, regulation and the role of government in general. It was hard to avoid the conclusion that the more important the role of religion, the less important the role of government – and vice versa.

The keys to this series were extensive use of the Internet and letting one thing lead to another. I worked closely with an editor, Doug Pardue, whose patience and confidence never wavered during a long period of gathering information. I also worked with a photographer, Tim Dillon, with a bit of red-zone background – he's a churchgoer who owns a gun and has been hunting. Suffice it to say my background is different and the tag team effect helped put people at ease in both towns.

I didn't know anyone in either town and had only two indirect personal connections – a Montclair book agent who handles a close friend's work and the brother of an office colleague who knew Franklin inside out. Beyond that, the Internet was a helpful launch pad.

### Raising questions

Before the first of my six trips to each place,

# FOLLOWING THE FAITHFUL

I scouted online for meetings of civic groups, PTAs and town councils, and names of academics, school officials and economic development boosters. The idea was to start with people and institutions accustomed to dealing with media, and work my way inward from there. I also quickly discovered that pastors and real estate agents are networkers with dozens of contacts.

Almost everybody in Montclair wanted to talk. The school PR person gave me names of friends in interracial marriages. The meeting that yielded the “seasonal decorations” anecdote also yielded an invitation to a PTA meeting in a private home. That led to discussions with various individuals about politics, religion, racial tensions and whether kids should stay in the Boy Scouts if gays could not participate. You get the picture.

Franklin was more reserved, but not impenetrable. The school district spokeswoman clued me in to the many musicians and recording studios in town, which led to learning that Franklin was the new base for the Christian music industry and thus to interviews with Michael W. Smith and other pillars of that industry. A pastor at a megachurch invited me to a weekly gathering of evangelical pastors committed to racial reconciliation. A school superintendent discussed local views on morality and Bill Clinton. A fundamentalist with a home-based business pointed me toward one of the only Jewish families in town (his daughter had babysat the kids) and one of the only gay people in town (it took three contacts before I felt comfortable enough to bring up the unacknowledged fact that he was gay).

I steeped myself in the cultures of both towns by studying yellow pages and Internet listings, taking driving tours, attending church services and festivals, reading sermons on the Web, and following local doings on newspaper Web sites. Once, desperate to find gay people in Franklin, I had a Nashville gay bar post my name and e-mail address. The pillars of the project, however, were old-fashioned interviewing, observation and analysis.

Listening carefully, I realized that Montclair clergy almost invariably described their roles as raising questions rather than supplying answers. Those conversations immediately came to mind when Scott Brickell, manager of several Christian rock bands in Franklin, said one group resumed a tour right after Sept. 11 because “the world’s looking for answers. As Christians, we’ve got the answers, so why should we sit home?”

That was only one of many stark contrasts on religion. Start with the diversity of religion in Montclair versus the dominance of evangelical Christianity in Franklin, and the major role religion plays in Franklin versus its relatively incidental role in Montclair. The 9/11 attacks exposed further contrasts. Some Montclair residents visited mosques and Muslim clerics in the aftermath; the largest Franklin congregations heard from Islamic experts but not from Muslims. One pastor said that would have been awkward because the guests would have known their hosts considered their own religion the only true one.

Several 9/11 victims lived in Montclair and many more made narrow escapes. In the aftermath, the

town government leaped into action with emergency plans and brought in a boatload of psychologists to counsel people. But government in Franklin

Tim Dillon | USA Today



Reverend Stephanie Weiner of the Union Congregational Church delivers her Sunday sermon.

was rebuked when it tried to get involved. Some area leaders wanted to contribute \$1 for each county resident to a fund for children of firefighters and other responders who were killed. The proposal died; a county commissioner told me people had already contributed through their churches and didn’t want to mix charity and government.

Then there was the meeting white evangelical clergy told me they had requested after the 2000 election. They wanted their black counterparts to explain how black Christians could vote for Democrats who supported abortion and homosexuality. According to several participants, black pastors said black voters consider practical concerns such as jobs more important. A fundamentalist pastor, Scotty Smith, said the discussion jolted white evangelicals out of their assumption that “any thinking Christian is going to vote Republican.”

The series and its conclusions rested on a mass of details like these, obtained painstakingly over time, using tools as new as the Internet, as scientific as polling and as traditional as shoe leather. The upshot was a double portrait praised and circulated by strategists in both political parties.

*Jill Lawrence is a political writer at USA Today. She was a columnist for The Associated Press and a freelance magazine and newspaper writer before joining the paper in July 1996. She won a National Headliner Award in 1995 and is now covering her fifth presidential campaign.*

Tim Dillon | USA Today



Pastor DuWayne Battle leads his congregation at St. Paul's Baptist Church in Montclair in some old-fashioned Gospel singing.

# IMAM UPROAR

from page 23

He reached out to the Jewish community, lectured at local universities, and showed restraint after a drunken hater plowed his car through the front door of the Islamic Center.

By the end of our investigation, that public persona was changed forever. It was shattered by hidden camera videotapes, court filings, and a single-page, 13-year-old, public record maintained by the New York Secretary of State's Office. The real Imam Fawaz Damra advocated the murder of Jews, raised money for Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and established what the U.S. Justice Department described as "Osama bin Laden's first beachhead in the United States."

The Cleveland media often turned to Imam Fawaz Damra as a local expert on all things Islamic. We were no different. Developing a story on the Holy Land Foundation, we asked the imam to talk about the group's fund-raising activities in northeast Ohio.

When I mentioned Damra's name to our source, however, it quickly became clear we had stumbled upon a much bigger story. It was rooted in a Florida deportation case involving a

was probably the first time we ever started an investigation by interviewing the subject.

Damra was so enraged by the questions, he showed up at the station the next day demanding we discard the interview. We refused, but agreed to give the imam a second chance before our cameras. By this time, we had obtained a videotape of a 1991 speech in which Damra called Jews "the sons of monkeys and pigs."

Realizing this would probably be his last opportunity to interview Fawaz Damra, Sheil made the unorthodox decision to ask a wide range of questions for which we had little or no foundation (Have you ever met any of the original World Trade Center bombers? Have you ever met Osama bin Laden? Have you ever met any of bin Laden's associates?) Damra's answers (particularly his denials and evasions) gave us important clues for conducting the investigation.

## Tight-lipped law enforcement

We quickly learned the Justice Department's interest in Fawaz Damra grew out of his role in the late 1980s as imam of the Al Farooq Mosque in Brooklyn, N.Y. The Al Farooq had long been known as a hotbed of Islamic radicalism and the place of worship attended by several of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers. Damra's resume, however, revealed he had left the Brooklyn mosque in the summer of 1990. Damra insisted during the second on-camera interview that he had never met any associates of Osama bin Laden and didn't know any of the original Trade Center defendants.

The most difficult challenge facing journalists attempting to investigate terrorism-related stories is the virtual lockdown of government sources since 9/11. It is extremely difficult to cultivate law enforcement officials willing to talk off the record about closed terrorism investigations. We overcame this obstacle by identifying individuals who had retired from various joint terrorism task forces, specifically, retired New York police detectives who were more than willing to give us personal history lessons about the Al Farooq. One retired officer even turned over undercover videotapes, transcripts, and mug shots arranged on a poster board outlining the relationships between individual suspects and

various acts of terrorism. None of the information was confidential. It had all been entered into evidence in some court at some point in time. And yet, it was completely inaccessible through typical official channels.

## Looking for help

To this day, I have never met Steve Emerson. He is a very difficult man to track down. A pioneering terrorism expert with some serious enemies, Emerson directs The Investigative Project from an undisclosed location. He first exposed the presence of an Islamic terror support network in the United States in his documentary "Jihad in America," a former IRE Tom Renner Award winner. Critics may dismiss The Investigative Project as a pro-Israeli think tank, but the intelligence-gathering skills of Emerson's research staff can be an invaluable asset to journalists.

After weeks of conversations with his staff, I finally spoke to Emerson by phone. He agreed to grant me complete access to the extensive library of tapes and documents his organization had amassed since 1995. I was to come alone without cameras. For security reasons, I would not learn of the office's location until I reached a pre-determined destination.

Although Emerson's researchers had



Palestinian named Mazen Al-Najjar. Included in the evidence was the affidavit of a federal agent describing Al-Najjar's frequent phone calls to "known alien terrorist suspect Fawaz Damra." There was also reference to a videotape in which Damra was allegedly shown raising donations for the Islamic Committee for Palestine. ICP was allegedly a front for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

With little time to digest the information, I caught I-Team reporter Bill Sheil as he was leaving for the Damra interview, "Read this and ask the imam about the videotape!" It

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– Anonymous (from seminar evaluation)

*"Well worth the money!"*

– Anonymous (from seminar evaluation)

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# FOLLOWING THE FAITHFUL

not previously focused on Fawaz Damra, they were able to identify several key court transcripts describing Damra's activities. Most importantly, we were able to confirm that Damra had lied during his interview with the I-Team. Damra not only knew several of the original World Trade Center bombing defendants, they had discussed their falling out with "Brother Fawaz" on an FBI wiretap. Without the help of The Investigative Project, our exploration into Fawaz Damra's controversial past would have barely scratched the surface of the truth.

### Final puzzle piece

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, a focal point of American Islamic militancy was an organization called the Alkifah Refugee Center. It was housed in Brooklyn in the basement of the Al Farooq Mosque. In court records, the Justice Department described the Alkifah Refugee Center as bin Laden's first base of operations in the United States.

According to the filings, Bin Laden and his partner Abdullah Azzam had set up Alkifah to funnel guns, money and volunteers to their training camps in Pakistan. We knew Damra had served as the imam of the mosque, but was he actually involved with the Alkifah operations? A microfilmed copy of the organization's original incorporation papers from the New York Secretary of State's Office held the answer. Fawaz Damra was actually a founding corporate officer of the Alkifah Refugee Center.

Any investigation of a respected religious leader is certain to trigger extraordinary scru-

tiny, public debate, and even outrage. When that leader is Islamic, the context is post-September 11th, and the topic is terrorism, however, the story has the potential to be a community powder keg. Broadcasting an investigation linking an unindicted, non-arrested, non-convicted



individual to terrorist organizations raises the stakes even higher.

Station management remained committed, news management asked tough questions, and our lawyers pressed hard for privileged documentation of our claims. In the end, the records and tapes we obtained through retired law enforcement agents, The Investigative Project and a simple FOIA request enabled us to air the investigation without compromise or equivocation.

*Tom Merriman is an investigative reporter with the WJW-FOX 8 I-Team in Cleveland. When he researched "The Imam Investigation," he was prohibited by a non-compete clause from appearing on air. His I-Team colleague Bill Sheil reported the story.*

## INTERNET RESOURCES

- National Association of Secretaries of State – election information and links to each state ([www.nass.org/electioninfo/electioninfo.html](http://www.nass.org/electioninfo/electioninfo.html))
- American Factfinder at the U.S. Census – population, housing, economic data (<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>)
- Microsoft Network's House & Home – city comparisons on costs, education, etc. (<http://houseandhome.msn.com/pickaplace/comparecities.aspx>)
- Also: Web sites for city governments, school systems, civic groups, newspapers, businesses, religious institutions and historical associations.

## Counting the faithful with church roll data

BY RON NIXON  
THE IRE JOURNAL

**H**ow many Baptists live in your community? What about Catholics or Lutherans? How many Jews or Muslims are there?

From 1850 to 1936, you could find answers to questions like these in U.S. Census results. But the U.S. government dropped a question about religious affiliation in 1946, partly because the Christian Scientists denomination had concerns about invasions of privacy.

That left little demographic information about religious organizations. When the Census Bureau tried to revive the question for the 1960 Census, opposition from religious groups caused the agency to scuttle the plan.

Fortunately, journalists can find answers by analyzing the "Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States: 2000" survey (formerly Churches and Church Membership in the United States) conducted every 10 years by a group of religious organizations.

Led by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, the group started to conduct its own census of religious group membership in the early 1950s. The survey provides the best available information on the membership of religious bodies in the United States.

More than three-dozen news organizations recently used the 2000 data to examine religious beliefs and attendance in their communities.

### Tracking membership

The *Palm Beach Post* examined church membership in South Florida and found that Palm Beach County was the second-most religious county, based on the percentage of people who claim some type of religious affiliation. The paper included color maps and graphics to enhance its stories.

The *Charleston Daily Mail* did a story showing West Virginia ranked second among the states in the number of congregations per capita.

In contrast, the *Tacoma (Wash.) News-Tribune* found that Washington ranks next to last among the 50 states in church attendance and membership, dropping from 47th in 1990. One-third of Washington residents attend or belong to a church, synagogue or mosque, compared with one-half nationally. The (Portland) *Oregonian* found simi-

lar results in its review of the religious census.

The *Herald News* of West Paterson, N.J., used the data to look at religious groups that claimed the survey underestimated their membership. Mike Corn of the *Hays (Kan.) Daily News* found that several of the reported figures in the survey conflicted with numbers provided by local religious groups. For example, the census showed that church membership for several congregations in one county had declined. Corn traced the decline, not to membership losses, but to counting problems in the study. The churches had been included in the population counts of another county.

### Limits in data

The current census is a survey of about 150 religious organizations. The study is the only census to provide a county-by-county breakdown of religious participation. The study provides the total population for a county, number of religious bodies and number of members and adherents.

The study is limited in many ways because the numbers are reported by the religious organizations and not all groups participate. In the 2000 census, 14 religious groups declined to participate, including some predominantly black congregations. Several groups, however, participated for the first time, making comparisons between census years difficult.

Also, many Muslim groups have taken issue with the religious study, saying that it underestimates the total number of their members. An additional problem with the data is the way membership is defined by the religious groups that report. While many include only those who attend services on a regular basis, other groups include anyone with an affiliation to the religious body, including children.

To standardize the data, the ASARB uses adherents rather than members to examine growth of religious organizations. Adherents are adult members and their children. Membership totals include only those who are full regular members of a religious group.

Another problem with the data is that in a few counties, the number of adherents actually exceeds the total population. The ASARD says this could be because many people live in one county, but attend church in another.

Despite these limits, the data is the best available information for journalists reporting on religious group numbers.

*Ron Nixon is the training director for IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting.*

### Getting the data

The religious membership data can be obtained from the Glenmary Research Institute in Nashville ([www.glenmary.org/grc/default.htm](http://www.glenmary.org/grc/default.htm)). The data comes on a single CD in Microsoft Access and costs \$100. Older datasets can be obtained from the American Religion Data Archive at Penn State University at [www.thearda.com/](http://www.thearda.com/)

### Other sources

While the Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States: 2000 is considered the best collection of religious data available, it is by no means the only one. There are dozens of places to find data about religion, including:

- [www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com) – Located at Penn State University, the American Religious Data Archive holds dozens of datasets related to religions, some down to the local level.
- [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com) – This is a collection of more than 41,000 adherent statistics and religious geography citations. Journalists can find adherent numbers by group and place.
- [http://hrr.hartsem.edu/sociology/sociology\\_research\\_datasets.html](http://hrr.hartsem.edu/sociology/sociology_research_datasets.html) – The Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut specializes in studying religion in public life and includes several datasets on its Web site.
- [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com) – Opinion research firm The Gallup Organization has several polls with religion-based information.
- [www.nazareneresearch.org](http://www.nazareneresearch.org) – Church of the Nazarene Research Office. Good site with religion data plus interactive maps that can be queried on the Web site.

### Religion reporters

The Religion Newswriters Association ([www.religionwriters.com](http://www.religionwriters.com)) is a nonprofit membership association founded in 1949 to advance the professional standards of religion reporting in the secular press and create a support network for religion reporters. This site is hosted on IRE's reporter.org Web servers.

## Black Belt

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

stands, why it seems stuck, and why it matters. It would be both satisfying and painful.

Our team started a series of brainstorming meetings and an e-mail list to discuss approaches. We wrote and revised outline after outline. Disagreement and discussion helped us plan, and we ultimately decided to write six packages that would introduce the region and deal with social disintegration, politics and power, education, health, and solutions.

We settled on a consistent three-pronged approach to each package:

- A fact-filled, statistically based main story that provided startling information.
- Accompanying stories of people, narratives about the Black Belt's crushing problems.
- Strong graphics and photos, including maps and a historical timeline.

### Every kind of data

Our sources for the story were a mix of left-brain and right-brain reporting.

On one hand, we created databases to paint the region in numbers. We built a database of all land records for 10 Alabama counties. We used every kind of data we could find: school test scores; a century of Census records; years of birth and death records; property tax data from three states; state, national and international health data and all kinds of court and archival records. We even used obscure data like "deer density" records and a Southern lynching database.

On the other side of the brain, reporters and a photographer traveled more than 20,000 miles through the region, meeting the residents who provided the best, most compelling stories. We talked to hundreds of people, from ordinary folk in places like Snoddy, Trickem and Gee's Bend to educators, lawmakers, business owners, politicians and others.

The reporting was hard, emotional and time consuming. Sometimes, the people in the shabbiest little shacks, the people whose lives best illustrated the miseries we knew existed, were nearly impossible to interview. They were so disabled, or mentally ill, or sickly, you couldn't get a clear story out of them. Once a few details began to spill out, they became entangled with issues related to Social Security, Veterans Affairs, the landlord and the boss man.

The best sources were the church leaders and the matriarchs in the tiny, tight-knit communities. The talkative woman who runs the only store in Gee's Bend knew everybody, their children, their histories. She wrote down names and gave directions on how to navigate the unmarked country roads.

Once contacted, the families often proved unreliable. They didn't make or keep appointments. Sometimes reporters had to wait hours for a family member to return. And they were

Bernard Troncale | The Birmingham News



In Perry county, cotton and vegetable farmer Alfred Lewis, 71, tends to his farm equipment, which is in constant need of repair. After making a few passes planting okra seed, a wheel comes off his planter and causes a three-hour delay. Despite this, he has managed to send eight children to college.



so despondent, it was often excruciating to interview them.

Our major obstacles in the story came within our own team. There was disagreement on how to tell the story. There were arguments on how to split space between the narrative and analysis, the graphics, the photos. There was irritation at trimming, and conflicts over tone. Were we being too harsh? Were we showing enough hope?

We largely overcame these obstacles by delegating responsibility for trimming and tone to one ruthless writer. This, despite some bruising, worked. In the end, most everyone was satisfied.

The stories shamed the longtime families in the Black Belt, especially whites who saw their existence as quaint. So many people were blind to the problems closest to them. They saw nothing wrong with black women in their 70s never having had any job opportunity but as a maid. Perhaps we underestimated people's complacency.

By the end of the series, many of these people had come to understand what we were trying to do.

### Shifting gears

We knew the series was effective when readers began to call and curse us, or call and say they cried as they read it. We knew it was successful when the newly elected Republican governor – who only visited one of the Democratic Black Belt counties as he campaigned – appointed a Black Belt commission to find solutions for the area's problems as one of his first acts in office. "It has been described as a Third World country," he said. "We can no longer allow that to exist."

Bernard Troncale | The Birmingham News



In Wilcox County, Leola Pettway worships at Ye Shall Know the Truth Baptist Church which holds services in an old school building.

New U.S. Rep. Artur Davis also called the series a blueprint for change. He said last month he will seek unprecedented federal resources for Black Belt counties in 14 states. Groups used the series in successful grant applications and church groups shifted gears, sending mission groups to south-central Alabama instead of to North Carolina. Two colleges said they wish to build a curriculum out of the work.

The series was an interesting combination of investigative reporting, narrative storytelling and computer-assisted reporting. It was massive in scope and, like all projects, similar in nature

to childbirth. It was painful, and involved a long labor.

Remarkably, the baby was born. Now we're watching it grow.

*John Archibald is database editor for The Birmingham News; general assignment reporter Carla Crowder has previously worked for The Rocky Mountain News, The Albuquerque Journal, The Montgomery Advertiser and The Alabama Journal; and senior reporter Jeff Hansen is a former microbiologist. "The Black Belt" was a medium newspaper finalist in this year's IRE Awards.*

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David Kawashima | ESPN.com



Issam Thamer al-Diwan holds the medals he has won.

# TORTURE

## Iraqi athletes report regime's cruelties

BY TOM FARREY  
ESPN.COM

Most of the letters responding to ESPN.com's package on the torture of Iraqi athletes thanked us for bringing to light a horrific – and ongoing – chapter in sports history that largely had gone overlooked by the world, and particularly U.S., media. But the most interesting note was the one with “Nice Propaganda” in the subject line, generated by someone looking to discount our reporting.

“Honestly,” the reader wrote in the message, “Uday Hussein just sounds like a Middle East version of Bobby Knight.”

Perhaps many sports fans care more about Bob Knight's abuses than Uday Hussein's, but such a comparison trivializes the profound, sustained torture that Saddam Hussein's son visited on Iraq's athletes. As president of the Iraqi National Olympic Committee (INOC) since 1984, he had imprisoned and brutalized them for nothing more than losing games.

We knew our “Blood on the Rings” package would be viewed within a political context – that some readers would dismiss the stories based on nothing more than their antiwar sentiment, while

others would embrace them because they would seem to help justify an attack.

So the question before us was: How do we cut through that noise to compile a report on human rights abuses that will be viewed as a credible and important piece of journalism? It's not as though Uday Hussein honors Freedom of Information requests. Iraqis wouldn't even grant our request to take a street photo of the Olympic headquarters, which allegedly included a prison on the first floor.

In January – a month after our report and the filing of a complaint by a London-based human rights group – the International Olympic Committee launched a formal investigation into the INOC. Since then, other former national team athletes, as well as a former soccer referee and Iraqi Olympic executive, have come forward with additional accounts of torture at the INOC. Amnesty International found ESPN.com's report “consistent with the accounts” of nonathletes.

We published the accounts of five former athletes because we found them plausible. But our gut was fortified by our background work and the terms under which we profiled these athletes.

Some of the methods that we found helpful, and may be of use to other journalists preparing reports on human rights abuses in foreign countries:

- **No anonymous sources or silhouettes.** The potential consequences to the athletes of detailing the crimes of Uday Hussein were obvious. Most feared retaliation against family members still

in Iraq. Their concerns were real: As punishment for their son defecting during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, the parents of weightlifter Raed Ahmed spent two weeks in prison.

Quoting these athletes anonymously might have offered some protection. But it could have impaired the reader's ability to trust the accounts. So, all the athletes we used were identified without restrictions, with the lone exception of Ahmed, who, to minimize any risk to his immediate family, asked that we not disclose the U.S. city where he is now living.

Their willingness to be identified provided accountability: Why make up these stories when your family back home could be harmed? It also allowed readers, and viewers, to get to know these people. In the companion “Outside the Lines” television report, they also saw the sincerity in the faces of athletes like former national team volleyball player Issam Thamer al-Diwan, whose pleading eyes filled with tears when recalling how Uday would urinate on the bowed, shaven heads of imprisoned athletes.

- **Use the libraries of human rights organizations.** After we started our investigation, we learned that a human rights group that pursues war crimes against the Hussein regime was preparing a formal complaint to the IOC. The group, Indict, had acquired, among other documents, an affidavit from a Kurdish table tennis player who said he had been tortured last summer. Combined with our independently acquired accounts from Thamer and soccer player Sharar Haydar, who were not part of the Indict complaint, the affidavit gave us three athletes who claimed they had personally endured torture on orders of Olympic officials. Other athletes said they were not harmed but knew of teammates who were. Indict also had taken photos of the player's backs and knees, which showed scars from the ordeal.

Indict, though based in London, gets some funding from the United States. The group did not start with American money and says its filing of an IOC complaint was not sparked by any request from the U.S. government. Still, given the potential bias of Indict, we wanted to be careful to evaluate its evidence. Our comfort level grew when much of its information was consistent with what we had acquired in our reporting.

We also used the libraries of Amnesty International ([www.amnesty.org/ailib/index.html](http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/index.html)) and the Human Rights Internet ([www.hri.ca/forthecord2002/index.htm](http://www.hri.ca/forthecord2002/index.htm)), which catalogues U.N. reports on Iraq and other countries. They

David Kawashima | ESPN.com



Former national team volleyball player Issam Thamer al-Diwan with his family.



## FOI REPORT

describe locations and techniques of torture used on other Iraqi citizens that were in line with those described by athletes with whom we had spoken. One report even details Uday's amputation of the hand of one Olympic Committee employee.

When pursuing Iraqi abuses, another Web site worth checking is the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait ([www.crsk.org/iraqi.htm](http://www.crsk.org/iraqi.htm)), which has archived documents collected from the Iraqi invasion in 1990. One of the items in its possession is a letter from Uday to an Iraqi general requesting permission to loot a printing press from a Kuwaiti science club "as a service to the sports movement."

Another group, the Harvard-based Iraqi Research and Documentation Project ([www.fas.harvard.edu/~irdp/](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~irdp/)), collects documents smuggled out of Iraq detailing crimes against dissidents. None of its materials speak to the torture of athletes, but the group was helpful in putting us in touch with former Iraqi athletes now living outside the country.

• **Translate well and often.** There's no underestimating the potential for inaccurate accounts when crossing cultures and languages. So for our on-site interviews with athletes who preferred to speak in Arabic, we hired an independent translator who was fluent in the experiences and dialects of Iraqis. Then we hired a separate, professional house in New York to translate the tapes.

Three of the accounts were then edited and worked into a series of first-person, as-told-to stories on ESPN.com. The approach gave us another opportunity to make sure we understood every aspect of their accounts. Before publication, their stories were read back to the athletes in Arabic, providing them a chance to correct any errors and add any necessary details.

Some readers might not have liked the timing of our report. But it was hard to deny the power of the athletes' accounts.

"After reading your article on Uday, I feel there is nothing else for me to do but join the military," one person wrote. "I believe this man should go down. I'm enlisting ASAP."

Can't say that's the response we sought. But we're glad he was moved.

*Tom Farrey is a senior writer for ESPN.com and a regular contributor to ESPN's "Outside the Lines." The story on tortured Iraqi athletes was honored as a finalist for the 2003 Scripps Howard Foundation National Journalism Awards, for cable/large-market television.*

## Paper intervenes in case to argue for public database



ZIVA BRANSTETTER

An announcement that the city of Tulsa and a group of black officers had agreed to settle a federal discrimination lawsuit following eight years of litigation was welcome news in Tulsa.

But the devil, as it turns out, was in the details of a protective order proposed as part of the settlement. While the settlement would cost the city an estimated \$6 million to implement, a massive database to track police contacts with the public and most other information generated by the settlement would not be available to the public under the protective order.

Seeking to protect the public's right to know, the *Tulsa World* requested to intervene in the federal case and its efforts are apparently paying off. The federal judge overseeing the case ordered the city to take part in a settlement conference with the newspaper. As projects editor for the newspaper, I took part in settlement talks last month with attorneys for the city and most of the disputes regarding public access were resolved. One remaining issue is before the judge.

Joe Worley, executive editor of the *Tulsa World*, said the case is an example of how newspapers can make a difference before it's too late. In some federal cases, such protective orders are signed and approved before the press has a chance to object.

"We believe the city has a duty to make these records open so that the public can have some way to gauge whether its elected officials are carrying out their promises. This is an important public interest case involving the expenditure of millions of tax dollars," Worley said.

### Tracking compliance

A group of black police officers filed the suit in 1994 claiming discrimination in hiring and promotions by the Tulsa Police Department. The officers, known as the Black Officers

Coalition, were granted class-action status.

In December, the city and the plaintiffs announced a proposed settlement, with both sides hailing it as a new beginning for the divided police force. The agreement, which still must be approved by U.S. District Judge Sven Erik Holmes, calls for the city to undertake a number of training and hiring initiatives.

It also requires the city to establish a database that will track arrests and other police stops, internal affairs investigations, complaints, civil suits, use of force and other issues by race of officer and citizen involved. An auditor would be hired at city expense to oversee compliance while a dispute resolution committee would encourage settlement of disagreements between the city and the plaintiffs.

Under the city's proposed protective order, the database would not be public and neither the auditor nor the dispute resolution committee would be subject to the state's open records and open meetings acts. That order seemed to contradict itself by stating that it was not intended to restrict records already open under the state's Open Records Act. Many of the records in the database were already open under the state's act, which includes computerized records in its definition of a public record.

Because much of my job involves obtaining and analyzing databases of public records, I realized how the protective order would hamstring our ability to follow progress of the settlement. My editors asked me to study the order and help our attorney write an alternative proposal, which was filed with the court in a request for a hearing.

During a hearing before Holmes in February, Attorney J. Schaad Titus, representing the *Tulsa World*, argued that the city's proposal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43 >

*Ziva Branstetter is the projects editor of the Tulsa World, where she writes and edits investigative and computer-assisted projects and stories. She has been an editor and reporter at The Philadelphia Daily News and The Tulsa Tribune.*

Don Bartletti | Los Angeles Times



Harrier jets in various states of disassembly sit in a maintenance hanger at the Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Ariz.

# MILITARY AVIATION

## Harrier jet bedeviled with mechanical ills

BY ALAN C. MILLER  
AND KEVIN SACK  
*LOS ANGELES TIMES*

In February 2001, Marines Corps Commandant James L. Jones proclaimed that the Harrier attack jet, which can take off and land vertically like a helicopter, was “flying unbelievably well.”

By then, the *Los Angeles Times* already was uncovering a different reality: the aircraft had crashed at alarming rates for three decades, making it the most dangerous plane flown by the U.S. military.

By July, when three more Harriers had gone down, we were digging deep to detail a staggering array of problems that had caused 143 major accidents and the loss of one-third of the fleet. Forty-five Marines, including some of the nation’s finest pilots, had died in noncombat crashes.

Documents and interviews revealed that the

Marines had known for years that they were flying a plane bedeviled by mechanical failures, maintenance mistakes and inadequate funding. Its frequent groundings deprived pilots of the hours needed to master a highly demanding cockpit. We showed how the Marines moved haltingly to fix known deficiencies that took aviators’ lives.

Marine generals justified the losses to us as the price of developing a pioneering aircraft that could give their troops rapid close air support. They said the plane had proven itself in combat. But we took an independent look at the Harrier’s war record and documented that it had rarely performed missions that safer, conventional jets couldn’t undertake.

Indeed, we found that in 31 years of service the Harrier’s vaunted ability to take off verti-

cally had been used in training, air shows and an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie —but never on the battlefield.

We showed how the Marine Corps, despite the Harrier’s track record, used its considerable political clout to advance plans to build its own fleet of distinctive aircraft combining the traits of helicopters and planes. The Harrier was its first.

This provided a connection to the Marines’ second such aircraft, the V-22 Osprey troop transporter, which has killed 30 in four crashes during testing. It afforded us a forward-looking slant as well: the Pentagon is developing the Marines’ own vertical version of the Joint Strike Fighter, the next-generation combat jet. Editor John Carroll drew on this theme for the series’ alliterative title: “The Vertical Vision.”

### The human toll

The project originated in 2001 with a tip about the Harrier’s abysmal safety record. We began by collecting Marine Corps documents, congressional testimony, inspector general and General Accounting Office reports and news accounts of individual crashes. We started tracking down pilots who had survived crashes and family members of those who had not.

Next, we submitted scores of Freedom of Information Act requests for the Judge Advocate General investigative reports. Doing so early was critical. Some reports were heavily redacted. Others, the Navy informed us, could not be located. But during an 18-month period, we obtained 87 accident investigation reports, and their detailed findings about individual accidents formed the spine of our reporting.

Each envelope we opened seemed to contain ever more disturbing revelations. Pilots had died because the Marines took nearly a decade to fix a known problem with the Harrier’s wing flaps. A colonel lost his life after bailing out because a wrongly installed washer had caused an engine fire. Another pilot ejected over an Ohio interstate highway after a loose ball bearing shredded his plane’s engine; it got there after being fired with a slingshot by Marine maintenance workers trying to shoo pigeons from their hangar.

The investigative file on the 1992 accident that killed Capt. Jeffrey J. Smith included a police report that mentioned Smith’s parents had been at the scene of the crash. A phone call to his mother in Iowa revealed that she had been videotaping her son’s fatal takeoff, and the story of his life and death became a primary narrative device for illustrating the Harrier’s

human toll.

We also requested transcripts of pilots' cockpit radio transmissions and, in the case of the Marine we used to lead the series, we received a chilling audio recording of his last words as well.

Through a growing array of well-informed sources, we discovered that the accidents were only part of the Harrier story. It is also the most vulnerable plane to enemy fire – imperiling its pilots in war as well as in peacetime. It is severely hamstrung by the demands of its unique vertical capability. We began to collect data – reports from the Persian Gulf War, comparative war-fighting abilities of the Harrier and other tactical planes, a history of the Harrier's combat record – to fill out this piece of the portrait.

The publicity conscious Marines were often more accommodating than we expected. We went to them early and often to seek data on everything from the Harrier's cost per flight hour to how many times the fleet had been grounded. They granted us access to Harrier bases in Yuma, Ariz., and Cherry Point, N.C. They provided us with videos and photos. We, in turn, assured them that, no matter what we ultimately wrote, their perspective would be included and we would be fair and accurate.

We also tapped the massive Naval Safety Center aviation database, which helped identify accident causes. Another reporter had initially obtained it for a different set of stories (not involving the Harrier). We supplemented that database with a subsequent FOI request to add updated data. Richard O'Reilly, the *Times'* editorial director of computer analysis, did extensive analysis of the data.

The information was contained in 96 separate tables with limited sets of key data fields. No single key was common across all tables. O'Reilly found it was usually necessary to carry out a half-dozen or so separate joins to get all of the desired fields into a single table. Once done, the result nearly always included repetitions of a particular incident because one or more individual factors differed. Therefore it was not possible to do a simple count to find out how often a particular problem appeared. Instead, we identified specific problems and O'Reilly then re-coded and combined data to reach an accurate tally.

O'Reilly, himself a civilian pilot, also provided technical assistance for a series of graphics, including visual depictions of the complex process of changing a Harrier engine and of how

the Harrier, Osprey and Marine strike fighter fly. He mined numerous Harrier-related Web sites for technical, historical and personal details through targeted Google searches. A personal Web site of a British turbojet hobbyist helped elucidate how a loose circlip, or fastener, led to the fatal crash of the series' lead case.

Washington investigative editor Deborah Nelson, who saw the story's potential trajectory early on, marshaled resources on both coasts to launch the project and assure its flight path. She engaged the paper's most senior editors and assembled top graphics, photo and research colleagues into a dynamic team. Her weekly conference calls kept everyone on track.

Nelson and Miller traveled to Los Angeles

in early 2002 for a brainstorming session with managing editor Dean Baquet and photo, graphics, design, Web site and research representatives. Out of that meeting came the idea for a "memorial wall" recounting the stories of the 45 Marines lost in non-combat accidents and the two pilots killed in war.

This proved particularly challenging. The Marines did not provide the names of deceased pilots. With the help of a team led by investigative researcher Janet Lundblad, we compiled the identities through months of painstaking searches of historical records, electronic databases, news stories and interviews with Harrier pilots.

Among the sources Lundblad tapped to complete this elaborate mosaic were a partial list of accidents from the appendix of a history of the Harrier; a reunion list of surviving Harrier pilots; the Naval Safety Center aviation database, which included pilots' initials and birth and accident dates from 1980 to 1998; the ejection seat manufacturer's Web site; a photo of a plaque from a Marine squadron providing full pilot names; searches of military occupational codes through the M-Find in Nexis; military casualty reports; a search of [www.militarybrats.com](http://www.militarybrats.com), a Web site frequented by children of military personnel, and [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com), a Web

site that includes more than four million grave records; various online databases, including the Social Security Death Master File, and people-finder records on Accurant, AutoTrak and Nexis.

Once the pilots were identified, we sought out survivors for interviews and photographs. We used geographic locations of military bases and flight training centers to find past addresses; analyzed Social Security numbers to determine hometowns; asked widows for names of survivors of other pilots; contacted small-town public libraries for pilot obituaries and next-of-kin, and submitted FOI requests to the National Archives/Military Personnel Records Center to verify hometowns. The Google search engine

Tyrone Turner | Los Angeles Times



John O'Brien walks with daughter, Lauren, 4, at their Westchester, Pa., home. O'Brien lost parts of his left arm and leg because of a Harrier accident at Camp LeJeune, N.C., in 1993.

pointed to national cemeteries and a memorial page on a high school alumni Web site.

With the assistance of Houston-based researcher Lianne Hart, we ultimately spoke to at least one relative of each of the 47 deceased pilots and obtained photographs as well. The memorial wall ran for three open pages on Day Three and was a powerful feature of our Web site presentation.

By the time we completed our reporting, we had interviewed scores of Harrier pilots, mechanics and commanders as well as dozens of current and former Marine Corps generals, Pentagon officials and military analysts. We traveled to a dozen different states as well as England, where the Harrier was invented and is still flown by the British. We developed a trusted and invaluable cadre of sources, some of whom remained on background, to school two non-Pentagon reporters in the often-arcane technology, tactics and terminology of military

aviation and warfare.

The stories benefited enormously from the intensely focused and highly skilled editing of Nelson in Washington and Carroll, Baquet and senior projects editor Roger Smith in Los Angeles.

In the end, given the complexity of the subject matter, the nature of the findings and the stakes, we decided to vet the entire series with the Marines prior to publication. After reading key sections to Marine officials, we gave them the opportunity to object to anything they felt was inaccurate or unfair, and we incorporated a handful of changes as a result. We also provided them with the graphics to fact-check. This process helped us avoid potential post-publication headaches.

### Exposed flaws

The impact of the four-part series was almost immediate. Two weeks later, on the day the 108th Congress was sworn in, the House Armed Services Committee summoned Marine officials to Capitol Hill to respond to the stories. The head of Marine aviation told the committee he would substantially increase flying time for pilots.

The committee’s new Republican chairman, Duncan Hunter, said he would seek funding for fixes and additional flight hours and announced “a robust set of hearings” on military aviation safety, focusing on the Harrier.

Two weeks later, Rep. Jerry Lewis, who heads the House appropriations subcommittee on defense, said he had begun an inquiry into whether the Harrier, which is scheduled to remain in service another 13 to 17 years, should be flying at all. He called the plane’s record “nothing short of a disaster.”

Rep. John Murtha, the ranking Democrat on the House defense appropriations subcommittee and a former Marine, said he was investigating whether the fleet should be retired early or whether additional funds were needed.

We were especially gratified by the tremendous response from Harrier pilots and family members of those who died in the aircraft.

“Your report was excellent. A flawed aircraft, maintained with a lot of heart by Marines, flown against great odds by the best men I’ve ever known,” wrote one Harrier pilot.

“You guys got it 100 percent right,” wrote another. “Don’t let anyone tell you differently.

Your series exposes everything. Lives could be saved as a result of your work.”

And Bettye Yount, the mother of pilot Peter E. Yount, whose death was described in the lead of the series, wrote, “You have researched and reported factually. My son would have appreciated your article on behalf of all his fellow pilots.

“He would have wanted to know his death meant at the very least that life-saving improvements would be made to the Harrier. He knew they could be.”

*Alan C. Miller has been a reporter with the Los Angeles Times for 16 years, and a member of its Washington investigative team since 1994. He received the IRE Medal and other national awards for his work on the 1996 campaign finance scandal. Kevin Sack, who lives in Atlanta, joined the Times’ Washington-based investigative team in April. He previously worked for The New York Times, where he wrote the lead story for that paper’s series “How Race Is Lived in America,” which won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. “The Vertical Vision” won a certificate in this year’s IRE Awards.*

## Military accidents

Military crashes and mechanical problems with public service aircraft have been the subject of other investigations by journalists, including these stories available from the IRE Resource Center [www.ire.org/resourcecenter](http://www.ire.org/resourcecenter):

- A six-part series investigated the causes of crashes among military aircraft. Thousands of pages of accident reports were reviewed and even more computer records were examined. The investigation cited numerous concerns involving the safety of military personnel and the release of aviation safety data. Story No. 15844 by Russell Carollo, *Dayton Daily News* (Dayton, Ohio). *The IRE Journal* carried Carollo’s account of how he got the story in the November-December 2000 issue.
- A four-month investigation found the engines in many of the Minnesota National Guard helicopters crippled by faulty or defective parts. The investigation revealed the U.S. Army knew about the problems for years but chose to cut corners on maintenance and compromise the safety of the engines, putting pilots at risk nationwide. This policy resulted in hundreds of in-flight

emergencies and nationwide crashes. Story No. 16121 by Jay Kolls, Tim Jones, Jon Menell and Gary Hill, KSTP-Minneapolis/St. Paul.

- An investigation into the nation’s aerial firefighting program found that many of the program’s aging planes should never have been flying in the first place. The investigation revealed the questionable safety record of a contractor who had the wings snap off two airtankers in mid-flight. The story revealed that no single registry or agency keeps track of accidents involving so-called public-service aircraft. Story No. 19873 by Scott Sonner, Don Thompson, Robert Gehrlee and Ray Locker, *The Associated Press*.
- An investigation into Boeing, the world’s biggest plane maker, found that the corporation was accused of hiding flawed parts on U.S. military choppers, which the government says led to at least one fatal crash. Story No. 18493 by Rick Anderson, *Seattle Weekly*.
- A investigation of the U.S. Marine Corps’ MV-22 “Osprey” aircraft revealed serious

mechanical problems that contributed to crashes and the deliberate falsifying of maintenance records by senior officers. Story No. 18732 by Mike Wallace, Paul Gallagher, Charles Fitzgerald and Robert Zimet, *CBS News 60 Minutes*.



Camp Pendleton Marines stand quietly in a pouring rain while families and friends mourn the loss of the 19 Marines killed when their MV-22 Osprey crashed while attempting to land at Marana Airport in Arizona.

Mark Boster | Los Angeles Times

# ASBESTOS

Series tells story behind product liability problems

BY PATTI BOND

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

**G**eorgia-Pacific chief Pete Correll was hopping mad, and that was my first clue that I was onto something.

I was gearing up for another quarterly conference call in which Georgia-Pacific officials speak with analysts about the company's financial results. Georgia-Pacific, for the record, is the world's biggest tissue maker and a large producer of plywood and lumber.

The earnings calls are usually filled with hard-core commodity talk and the usual ups and downs of the building supply business.

But on this particular Thursday in late January 2002, there was a drastically different tone. As it turned out, what I heard that morning laid the foundation for my first investigative project.

Correll, chairman and chief executive of the Atlanta-based lumber giant, frequently complains about his bad luck, but this time Correll was more frazzled than I'd ever heard him in my three years

of covering Georgia-Pacific.

In the weeks leading up to Georgia-Pacific's fourth-quarter earnings release, Wall Street had developed a sudden fixation on asbestos liability – something of which the company had no shortage. Georgia-Pacific used asbestos from 1965 to 1977 to make a compound for hanging wallboard and finish ceilings, and as a result, it was pulled into the biggest product liability disaster ever.

For years, executives had been telling investors not to worry about asbestos liability because the company had plenty of insurance. But investors started to get restless near the end of 2001, after a string of asbestos-related bankruptcies and eye-popping trial verdicts emerged against other defendants. Suddenly Georgia-Pacific, with its 63,000 pending asbestos injury claims, was in the spotlight.

Investors slashed a third off the company's stock price – and there were rumors that Georgia-Pacific might have to join other asbestos defendants fleeing to bankruptcy protection.

Correll had to do something quickly, so he tried a tirade. Raising his voice and sprinkling a bit of profanity throughout the hour-long conference call, Correll lashed out at analysts for "irrational" speculation. The asbestos panic was "absolutely absurd," and furthermore, "grossly overblown."

Correll, I remember thinking, doth protest too much.

## Convoluting mess

With the sheer volume of lawsuits, we realized that I couldn't tackle the project alone, so veteran project reporter Ann Hardie was brought in to help wade through the litigation and piece together what had happened during the 1960s and 1970s at Georgia-Pacific.

From the start, Hardie and I were intrigued with the age-old notion that the decisions from long ago can sometimes come back to haunt you, so we focused on Georgia-Pacific's past, present and future as the overall theme for the project. The timeline theme emerged as a natural element for organizing and writing the project.

We spent the first month or so just trying to understand the basics. Before we could really dig into the legal end, we had to answer two questions that were at the root of the entire issue: 1. What is asbestos? 2. Why is it dangerous?

Hardie tackled those issues through interviews with local doctors and federal safety officials. We also purchased a reference book on the history of asbestos use.

In retrospect, most of the information was available via the Internet, but I think it helped in the early stages to hear it from our own sources. The only danger was that we already had begun to stockpile details outside the focus of Georgia-Pacific.

For example, we had assumed that asbestos was banned completely. Many of the news articles we found initially, including recent stories, had erroneously said so. We learned, however, that the EPA tried to phase out asbestos in 1989, but a federal judge overturned the ban on technicalities. Asbestos is still being used in pipeline wraps, brake linings and small appliances, for example.

We were surprised, and our editors were surprised, which naturally led to – "Hey, why don't we do a story on that?" We reminded ourselves that everything had to relate to Georgia-Pacific. (We handled the it's-not-banned facts in an "asbestos backgrounder" that ran as a sidebar.)

Once we learned about asbestos-related diseases, we answered a key legal question: Why are lawsuits still flooding the courts?

Asbestos illnesses typically don't begin to surface until 10 to 50 years after exposure to the toxic substance, so there has been a continuous wave of lawsuits since the use of asbestos hit its heyday in the construction industry during the 1970s.

Once we understood the health aspects of asbestos, we began to grasp the legal end, which by most accounts is a convoluted mess. In all, more than a half-million injury claims have been filed over asbestos since the 1970s, and experts say that claims could keep rolling in for the next 40 years.

Asbestos plaintiffs generally fall into one of three camps, depending on the alleged injuries: those who are dying from mesothelioma, a gruesome cancer that is considered the signature asbestos disease; those who have asbestosis, a progressive scarring of the lungs; and those who have a pleural thickening, which is when the membrane covering the lungs thickens due to asbestos exposure.

Our original plan was to find people from each group to illustrate the range of injuries. But finding people who were still alive and willing to talk



A residential asbestos containment company worker seals a room for asbestos removal in an Atlanta apartment complex. The plastic keeps asbestos particles from settling on the carpet.

was much harder than I had imagined. I assumed that with the thousands of lawsuits out there, I'd have a hard time whittling down the prospects. I was wrong.

First, there's no national database of asbestos claimants. Most lawsuits are filed in state courts, and there's no routine, centralized procedure for asbestos filings in state courts. Some courts have special asbestos dockets and some have installed electronic filing systems to cut down on the paperwork. But even when we began researching the cases electronically through CourtLink, it was nearly as cumbersome as thumbing through the paperwork.

Lawyers typically group more than 100 plaintiffs against dozens of defendants in a single lawsuit. By the time all the motions, discovery and other legal documents are piled on, one lawsuit could easily fill two shopping carts.

It didn't take long to realize why the U.S. Supreme Court has referred to the backlog of cases as an "elephantine mass."

Hardly any of the suits go to trial because defendants don't want to take chances with juries. Asbestos litigation has turned into a business transaction for the most part, with each side negotiating for the best deal. Almost all of the cases settle for confidential amounts.

For example, in the nearly 30 years that Georgia-Pacific has been dealing with asbestos lawsuits, the company has taken only a dozen cases to trial.

Rather than spin our wheels on finding people with each type of injury, we decided to find a few of the most damaging cases against Georgia-Pacific, and those were the people with mesothelioma. They're virtually guaranteed multimillion-dollar awards, and lawyers like to

publicize the settlements when they can.

Within that group, we looked for people who would illustrate the variety of ways you could be exposed to asbestos. Most claims against Georgia-Pacific, its attorneys say, come from construction workers who breathed dust from asbestos-containing compounds. Some are the wives of workers who brought asbestos home on dusty work clothes. And some are consumers who claim they were sickened by breathing asbestos in products they used in home remodeling projects.

The three people we highlighted included a contractor, the wife of a plasterer and a young woman who was exposed to asbestos as a child during a renovation in her home.

### Childhood exposure

Lisa Pransky, who was exposed to asbestos as a little girl, turned out to be the glue that held the

## Plan of action

### By Patti Bond

After that first conference call with Georgia-Pacific's boss, asbestos began nagging at me. Suddenly the standard disclosure about the tens of thousands of pending injury claims in the company's annual reports stood out like a red flag:

Why was Georgia-Pacific still mired in the problems of a product it abandoned 25 years ago?

And why were people are still filing asbestos lawsuits today if the stuff was taken off the market in the late 1970s?

I imagined the questions gnawing at me would be the same questions that readers would have, too.

Around the same time, the AJC's business editor, Mark Braykovich, had asked reporters to turn in enterprise ideas for 2002. I proposed the asbestos story as a big Sunday package for the business section, but Braykovich, a former investigative reporter, immediately spotted the idea as a good candidate for a full-blown project.

Once I realized that I'd need the approval from higher-ups to forgo my normal daily beat to work on a "project," I made sure the proposal was as focused as possible. This actually worked to my benefit in a couple of ways. For my editors, I clearly had a plan for attacking an enormous topic like asbestos, and for myself, I had something I could keep going back to, months later, to remind me why I was burying myself in stacks of lawsuits and documents.

This proposal would be the skeleton that we would put the meat on – and as it turned out, the initial game plan was pretty close to the finished project we turned in nine months later. Here are a few key items from that proposal:

- Find out what Georgia-Pacific's asbestos problems are. GP bought a company in 1965 that made asbestos products. What exactly did they make, and what happened to the plants and workers involved in

making asbestos-laden products?

- What is GP's liability in relation to other defendants?

- Get a breakdown on the 300,000 claims filed to date against GP. Is there any way to tell how many are worker-related vs. consumers who were exposed? Can I talk to any of them or their families?

- Find out how asbestos litigation works. How do lawyers round up plaintiffs? Why is Georgia-Pacific still getting sued today?

Once we had all the information we needed, we began putting the story together. From the start, our editors envisioned a three-day series with the past-present-future theme. We had all the pieces to tell a detailed narrative of Georgia-Pacific's asbestos years. It was fairly clear that the past – both for Lisa Pransky and for Georgia-Pacific – could stand on its own as a separate, strong story.

Georgia-Pacific's past was a story that had not been told, except in court, and we knew that it was really the anchor of the project – and the most logical story to kick off the series. (Pransky's appeal win came just a couple of months before publication, so that gave us a news peg and a reason to tell readers why the events of 25 years ago were still haunting the company today.)

With the past nailed down, we moved to the present, which was clearly rooted in the courthouse. This was the hardest area to rein in – so much had been written about asbestos litigation that we had a hard time finding our own angle. Project editor Donna Lorenz kept telling us to stick to the business of suing and to tell the story of how trial lawyers have turned asbestos litigation into an industry of its own. Ann Hardie kept reminding me that every lawyer, every judge, every court clerk, every lawsuit had to relate back to Georgia-Pacific.

The third-day story took a hard look at the uncertain outlook for investors. We focused on how Georgia-Pacific's asbestos problems have handcuffed its leadership and their strategy for growth, how the company's liability has killed business deals to sell its building products unit, and how it has significantly scarred the company on Wall Street.

first day of the series together.

I had first found Pransky back in 1999 when I saw a story in a legal newspaper out of Maryland. A jury had awarded her \$9 million after she convinced them that her cancer was caused by Georgia-Pacific's asbestos-containing compound. She believed she had breathed asbestos as an 8-year-old when her father remodeled the basement.

At the time, I wrote a routine daily story and filed the clip away with some other lawsuits against the company, but she stuck in my mind. I remember imagining a little girl watching her dad work. I thought about how her father must have felt when he found out his remodeling project – a recreation room for his daughters – could be responsible for Lisa's cancer.

Pransky was one of the first people I checked on at the start of the project. I called her attorney in the middle of March to find out what the status of her case was. She had died in 2000, but the case was still on appeal on behalf of her husband. The appeals hearing, as luck would have it, was just three weeks away.

Her award was the largest ever against Georgia-Pacific, and it was the only case the company has lost on trial. The more I learned about Lisa, the more she shaped up to be a perfect thread for the project.

Her exposure occurred in 1973, the year that Georgia-Pacific was grappling with warning labels about asbestos and three years after the company had first recognized that asbestos was becoming a health problem.

Luck stepped in again while I was developing her story. The appeals court upheld her award during the summer. At that point, we knew we would build the first-day story of Georgia-Pacific's past around Pransky's childhood – it would be the story behind the largest asbestos award against the company. Through the trial transcript and interviews with Pransky's husband (an unwilling source that I had to work on for two months), I pieced together what happened in the basement of her childhood home, and how her life would later turn on a five-pound pail of joint compound.

Meanwhile, Hardie had the incredibly tedious job of putting together a 12-year timeline of Georgia-Pacific's asbestos use. With the help of discovery documents such as internal memoranda, interrogatories and OSHA citations, the story of Georgia-Pacific's struggle with asbestos began to unfold quite dramatically.

We found that the company:

- told consumers its asbestos products were safe even as the federal government was moving to

ban the products;

- experimented with, but abandoned, asbestos replacements because they didn't work;
- frequently violated federal safety regulations inside manufacturing plants.

### Pressure mounts

By the end of it, Hardie and I had sifted through more than 2,500 documents, some dating back to the 1950s. At times, I worried that daily newspaper readers would wonder why we'd run front-page stories based on the events of the 1960s and '70s, but I just kept remembering Correll's angry conference call.

At the time the series ran in September, more than 314,000 claims had been filed against Georgia-Pacific. Company attorneys had resolved about 250,000 claims, although, as we found out, they could settle claims around the clock and still not keep up with the lawsuits filed each week.

Asbestos liability has bankrupted 60 defendants that once made or used the toxic substance, including at least a dozen since 2000. Every time a company dies off as a viable defendant, the pressure mounts on Georgia-Pacific to pick up a bigger share of the burden.

Clearly, the current generation of leaders – and investors – was now paying for decisions made long ago. And with another several decades of litigation in the works, the problems would outlast

them, too.

Most of the feedback I received on the series came from people who wanted to know more about asbestos. Most either had an asbestos-related illness, or knew someone who did.

Georgia-Pacific's chairman ran an op-ed piece the Sunday after the series ran, saying that we had unfairly singled out his company when there were so many others involved in asbestos litigation. The company also ran a two-page ad that touted its place as a large Atlanta-based job provider.

About a month after the series ran, Georgia-Pacific made an announcement that confirmed some of our original suspicions: asbestos litigation was costing the company more than expected.

The company said that settlements and related costs were running 63 percent more than the company had planned to pay in 2002. Insurance would cover more than half of the costs, but the disclosure affirmed investor fears that asbestos was taking a higher profile at Georgia-Pacific than in years past.

Company executives blamed the higher costs partly on the judgment in the Pransky case.

*Patti Bond has been covering Georgia-Pacific and Home Depot for five years as a business reporter for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She recently became the paper's national business reporter, a new beat for the AJC.*

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## Books

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

huge congregation owned tenement houses in deplorable condition.

Russell heard about Trinity Church long before he started researching the expose. Russell's father had told him that when the family first arrived in the United States, they lived briefly in a ramshackle Trinity tenement. All those years later, Russell decided to see if anything had changed. Making his way through Manhattan, Russell knocked on doors of properties owned by the church. He found "horrible" living conditions, especially for the elderly and for children. He used documents, including a New York Senate investigation of the church's finances, but relied most heavily on first-person observation for the three magazine pieces that appeared during 1908. He guided readers up the broken stairs of a unit on Hudson Street, writing "The halls are narrow, dark, dirty and smell abominably ... a prolific breeding place for the germs of tuberculosis."

### Prevalent issues

Russell did not stop with using his words to expose rapacious corporations and unsaintly churches. He focused on prison conditions that led to hardened criminals instead of rehabilitated sinners. His passion for reform never ceased. But in his declining years, Russell turned away from the daily pressures of newspapering and magazine writing to become a book author, a form allowing a bit of breathing room. A polymath, Russell wrote about numerous topics. One of the books, a decidedly non-investigative biography of Theodore Thomas and his role in developing the American symphony orchestra, won Russell the Pulitzer Prize in 1927.

Miraldi feels enriched having tackled Russell's life through biography. "To trace Russell's life is to brush up against all the great reform causes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries – Populism, Progressivism, racial integration and Socialism. In the process, it becomes clear that many of the issues that engaged Russell are prevalent today ... inflated stock prices, corporate profiteering and political influence-peddling" among them.

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

## Member News

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

producer at KXTV-Sacramento and managing editor of *The Times* in Miami, an experimental news magazine, to KTVK-Phoenix, where he is the Three-on-Your-Side reporter.

■ **Jim Lewers** has moved from business editor of *The Wichita Eagle* to managing editor of the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*. ■ **Doug Most**, senior editor at *Boston Magazine*, will have his story "Dirty Little Secret" published in the second anthology of "Best American Crime Writing," which is due out in August. ■ **Lise Olsen**, a veteran investigative reporter with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and founding director of IRE-Mexico, will be joining the investigative team of *The Houston Chronicle*. Olsen, who taught investigative and computer-assisted reporting extensively throughout Latin America and South America while with IRE, continues to help IRE with its international efforts on a volunteer basis. ■ **Steve Patterson**, a reporter at the *Post-Tribune* in Gary, Ind., won three news writing awards in the annual Hoosier State Press Association Awards. In the largest newspaper-circulation category, Patterson won first place in Non-deadline and Ongoing news and also picked up a second place in Ongoing news. The first-place awards were for a year-plus investigation into the Gary City Clerk's office. ■ **Jan Pottker's** book, "Janet and Jackie: The Story of A Mother and Her Daughter, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis," is now available in trade paper. Pottker is a freelance writer. This is her seventh book. ■ Northwestern University's Medill Innocence Project, founded and directed by journalism professor **David Protes**, has received the second Herbert Block Freedom Award. The prize is awarded to those who exemplify devotion to free speech, compassion for the weak and disadvantaged and distrust of unbridled power. Protes and his students use basic reporting skills to uncover evidence exonerating death-row inmates in Illinois. ■ **Laure Quinlivan** with WCPO-Cincinnati

won the Walter Cronkite Award for Political Journalism for investigating the activities of the Ohio Speaker of the House and his intimidation of a candidate running for office. She also won a regional Murrow Award for continuing coverage for reporting on Cincinnati's Vine Street. In 2001, she produced the hour long documentary "Visions of Vine Street." In 2002, she did more than 40 additional stories on the issues raised and followed up on the 10 solutions the original documentary proposed.

■ **Deborah Sherman**, investigative reporter with WTVJ-Miami, and **Scott Zamost**, investigative producer with the station, won the regional Edward R. Murrow award for feature reporting for their report "Judge Julian's Story." The two also shared the national Clarion award for investigative reporting with Dave Savini and Michele Youngerman of WMAQ-Chicago for "Selling Innocence," a joint investigation of the child erotica industry. ■ **Mike Sherman** is leaving *The (Nashville) Tennessean* for a sports editor position at *The Daily Oklahoman* in Oklahoma City. ■ **Paula Lavigne Sullivan** has left *The News Tribune* in Tacoma, Wash., to take a regional and computer-assisted reporting job at *The Dallas Morning News*. Sullivan will report on growth and development issues. Sullivan had been at the Tacoma paper for four years where she was the CAR coordinator and covered Census and various beats including local government, crime and general assignment. ■ **Cathy Tatom**, reporter for *The Oklahoma News Report* and reporter-anchor for the *Tulsa Times News Magazine*, picked up five SPJ Oklahoma Pro Chapter Awards for Television Reporting. Her awards included two first-place awards in enterprise and general reporting and three second-place awards in investigative reporting, government/political coverage and team coverage. ■ **Matt Wickenheiser**, formerly the news editor of *Solid State Technology*, a New Hampshire-based trade magazine, is now a business writer with the *Portland Press Herald*.



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## FOI report

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

would violate the First Amendment. As a witness for the newspaper, I told the judge that the protective order, as written, would leave the public with no way to track compliance with the terms of the proposed settlement. I cited other public interest cases in Oklahoma where court monitors provided public reports.

### Valuable tools

A proposed protective order submitted by the newspaper makes most of the database public and requires the city to design it to facilitate access to open records. The state's Open Records Act does not require agencies to create new records, a loophole some agencies have used to deny requests for redacted versions of computer databases. Reports of the auditor and agendas of the dispute resolution committee also would be public under the newspaper's proposal.

Clearly private information, such as officers' Social Security numbers and most personnel records, would remain private under the newspaper's proposal.

Titus said the *World's* proposed protective order "will allow us an ample opportunity to inform the public about what is happening during the course of this consent decree."

"A blanket protective order was in place during the entire term of discovery of the case. Because nearly every document in the case was designated as confidential, we were never able to track the case."

An attorney for the city protested to the judge that designing the database to facilitate public access may not be the most cost-efficient approach for the city. Holmes replied that he could save the city a lot of money if it didn't have to comply with the First Amendment or the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

Holmes is expected to rule on the proposed protective order and the settlement in coming weeks. The city's police union has objected to the settlement and is almost certain to appeal.

If the settlement is approved, the press and the public will have valuable tools to track the city's compliance with it. In the end, greater openness by the city, now matter how grudgingly it was granted, will give the public more confidence in its government.

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

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

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

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

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

### Publications

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

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

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

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

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

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

### For information on:

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

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

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

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

### Mailing Address:

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

# 2003 IRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE • JUNE 5-8

## Washington, D.C.

National Press Club, 529 14th St., 13th Floor  
JW Marriott Hotel, 1331 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Medill School of Journalism, 1325 G St. NW, Suite 730

## Host Hotel: JW Marriott

800-228-9290 or 202-393-2000

## Local Hosts:

National Press Club  
*The Washington Post*  
*U.S. News & World Report*

## Sponsors:

The Gannett Foundation  
The Poynter Institute  
International Center for Journalists  
Medill School of Journalism  
Missouri School of Journalism  
*USA Today*  
American University  
Philip L. Graham Fund



WASHINGTON, D.C.

## Don't miss:

Panels, Roundtables,  
Hands-On CAR Classes,  
Demo Room, Mentoring,  
Networking, TV Show & Tell,  
Membership Meeting,  
Awards Luncheon

## REGISTRATION FORM.

To register, please complete this form. Visit our Web site regularly at [www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org) or call 573-882-2042 for the latest details. *Please write carefully! This information will be used to make your nametag.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/Affiliation/School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone (required): \_\_\_\_\_

To register, mail this form and a check to IRE, 138 Neff Annex, Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO, 65211. To register by credit card, you must have a VISA or MasterCard. We cannot accept American Express. You may fax your credit card registration to 573-882-5431 or register online at [www.ire.org/training/dc03](http://www.ire.org/training/dc03).

Cancellations need to be sent via e-mail to [jgreen@ire.org](mailto:jgreen@ire.org). There is a \$50 processing fee for all cancellations until June 4, 2003. Refunds will not be given for cancellations after June 4.

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

To attend this conference, you must be an IRE or National Press Club member through July 1, 2003. IRE memberships are nonrefundable.

### MEMBERSHIP

\_\_\_ I am a member of IRE or NPC through July 1.

\_\_\_ \$50 I need to join/renew my U.S. or international  
 Professional  Academic  Associate or  
 Retiree membership (IRE only).

\_\_\_ \$25 I need to join/renew my student membership  
(IRE only).

### REGISTRATION

\_\_\_ \$150 I would like to register for the main  
conference days as a  Professional  Academic  
 Associate or  Retiree member.

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

\_\_\_ \$75 I would like to register for the main  
conference days as a National Press Club member.  
NPC member ID \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ \$25 Late fee for registrations postmarked or  
faxed after May 3.

### CAR DAY (optional) Thursday, June 5 – requires additional fee

\_\_\_ \$50 Professional/Academic/Associate members

\_\_\_ \$35 Student members

### BLUES BASH Thursday, June 5 at 8 p.m.

\_\_\_ \$15 Advance tickets (*specify how many tickets*)  
Tickets at the conference will be \$20.

### RECEPTION National Press Club – Friday evening (June 6)

\_\_\_ \$10

**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_