



Fall | Winter 2020

OKLAHOMA
HUMANITIES

Culture | Issues | Ideas



CITIZEN
2020

INFORMED & ENGAGED



CAROLINE LOWERY
Executive Director
caroline@okhumanities.org

PERSPECTIVE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This considerable, expanded issue of our award-winning magazine is one programming component of a larger national initiative entitled *Democracy and the Informed Citizen*. Humanities Councils in 46 states, Guam, and the Northern Marianas Islands are participating in this collaborative project administered by the Federation of State Humanities Councils with funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Across the nation, communities are coming together to examine the historical and constitutional foundations of a free press, the connection between journalism and the humanities, the critical role that humanities and journalism play in shaping the judgments and opinions of citizens in a democratic society, and the contraction of traditional media and local news, particularly in small-town and rural America.

Federation of State Humanities Councils President Phoebe Stein notes: "In response to the dynamic landscape of American journalism and the mounting social and political polarization of the American public, the *Democracy and the Informed Citizen* initiative supports programs and resources that examine the essential role that journalism and the humanities play to inform and engage citizens at all levels of our democracy."

Oklahoma Humanities is participating in this national work with new programming on multiple platforms—a project we're calling

CITIZEN 2020, which will be accessible to Oklahomans in all 77 counties. In addition to this expanded CITIZEN 2020 magazine issue (the most substantive in our history), we're partnering with a large statewide coalition of public media entities, journalists, humanities scholars, and cultural organizations to examine compelling questions about the shifting media landscape and how it affects our ability to access information, assess its credibility, and analyze its significance. We look forward to your participation in this vital and exciting project. There are multiple ways for you to engage in our conversations:

- Tune in to free nonpartisan election coverage, on-air or online, via a statewide partnership with the collaborative journalism project "Oklahoma Engaged."
- Listen to the CITIZEN 2020 *BrainBox* podcast series, featuring initiative-specific episodes and complementary online resources.
- Participate in virtual public forums with local journalists and media experts to discuss aspects of gathering the news and analyzing it as consumers.
- Request additional copies of our CITIZEN 2020 magazine to start a discussion in your family, your school, or your community.

Please join us! Dates, times, and details are posted at our website. okhumanities.org/citizen2020



Johnson on trunk reading newspaper, ca. 1920-1925, Bain News Service, Library of Congress

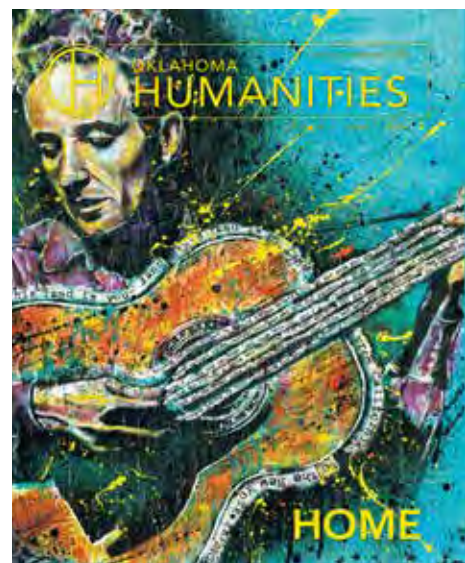
CONTENTS

CITIZEN 2020 FALL | WINTER 2020 | VOL. 13, NO. 2

- 7 ELECTION DAY**
A vote for hope.
By Loren Gatch
- 12 WHAT COMES BEFORE "WOKE"?**
On the history of sleep as a form of protest.
By Franny Nudelman
- 20 A SHORT HISTORY OF CAMPAIGN DIRTY TRICKS**
Election meddling before Twitter and Facebook.
By Elaine Kamarck
- 26 IN PURSUIT OF PRESIDENTS AND PRINCIPAL CHIEFS**
The arc of dual citizenship.
By Jay Hannah
- 38 LEARNING FROM THE PAST—ACTING FOR THE FUTURE**
Listen, learn, think, act.
By Ben Alpers
- 44 LEADING THE WAY**
The extraordinary accomplishments of Ida B. Wells and Madam C. J. Walker.
By Michelle Duster and A'Lelia Bundles
- 50 ON CIVILITY**
Looking for a sense of belonging.
By Pamela Chew
- 54 EDUCATING THE TROOPS**
Shaping consensus with "democratic propaganda."
By Stacy Takacs
- 62 FIXING OUR REALITY PROBLEM**
The case for common sense.
By Thomas E. Patterson
- 68 THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE**
Exercising media literacy.
By Kimberly Roblin
- 72 THE ASSAULT ON JOURNALISTIC ETHICS**
What happened to trust in the media?
By Andy Rieger
- 76 ASK A JOURNALIST**
Q&A about reporting the news.
By Our Readers and "The Press."
- 88 POPCORN, POLITICS, AND THE PRESS**
Real to reel—Hollywood's take.
By Kimberly Roblin

- IN EVERY ISSUE**
- 2 Perspective From the Executive Director
 - 4 Post: Mail | Social Media | Messages
 - 6 The Editor's Desk
 - 97 Noteworthy: OH News
 - 98 2019 OH Annual Report

Reader Feedback



I really have enjoyed your latest *Oklahoma Humanities* Spring/Summer 2020 issue on HOME. The articles' perspectives on the meaning of home are very interesting and thought-provoking. I was amazed by the cover! I have never seen such a unique portrait of Woody Guthrie, done in Sara Bowersock's contemporary style. I loved the way she included Woody's lyrics as part of his guitar. This was the most eye-catching, appealing cover your magazine has ever used. It was a great decision to feature Ms. Bowersock's beautiful image ("This Land is Your Land") of an Oklahoma icon on the cover about HOME. Her Oklahoma connections shine through her paintings. Thank you for sharing her name and website with readers.

—Sam Marvin, Del City

I am a big fan of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. I wanted to thank you for your recent HOME edition, and for the beautifully written Editor's Desk piece. It brought tears of joy to one ol' English professor.

—Pam Bracken, Oklahoma City

What a fabulous issue [HOME, Spring/Summer 2020]. It's right up there with the JUSTICE issue in my hall of fame. I immediately was drawn to the Guthrie and Dust Bowl essays, but what most delighted me were the pieces by Ayelet Tsabari and SeungHo Lee. Congratulations on putting together such a timely and emotionally/intellectually resonant issue!

—Daniel Simon, Assistant Director and Editor in Chief, *World Literature Today*

I'm very proud to have contributed to the HOME issue. The magazine is a treasure.

—Will Kaufman, University of Central Lancashire, UK

2020 Magazine Awards

Great Plains Journalism Awards

Finalist
Magazine Page Design

Society of Professional Journalists Awards
Oklahoma Pro Chapter

First Place | General Writing
"Losing Time—And Finding It"
By Kimberly Roblin

Third Place | General Writing
"Poetic Justice"
By Julie Ann Ward

Second Place | Best PR Publication Cover
Justice | Spring/Summer 2019

Third Place | Best PR Publication Cover
Time | Fall/Winter 2019

Second Place | Best PR Publication
Time | Fall/Winter 2019

Third Place | Best PR Publication
Justice | Spring/Summer 2019

SEND YOUR IDEAS, opinions, and suggestions. Comment via Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram or email the editor, carla@okhumanities.org

CITIZEN 2020
MEDIA LITERACY
PANEL

DICK PRYOR
General Manager, KGOU Radio

and

YVETTE WALKER
Gaylord College of Journalism
& Mass Communication,
University of Oklahoma

Join us for an engaging discussion on how to find nonbiased news sources, techniques for assessing the accuracy of reporting, and how to contend with the nonstop bombardment of disinformation.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020
LIVE, VIA ZOOM 6:30 P.M.

REGISTER:
okhumanities.org/citizen2020

This Oklahoma-specific programming is part of *Democracy and the Informed Citizen* (DATIC), a national initiative administered by the Federation of State Humanities Councils with funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Humanities councils in 46 states, Guam, and the Northern Marianas Islands are engaging in this collaborative project. Oklahoma Humanities is participating, and you can too, with new programming on multiple platforms created for our CITIZEN 2020 project. Find info on this event and other CITIZEN 2020 conversations on our website (above).



OKLAHOMA
HUMANITIES



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Caroline Lowery
caroline@okhumanities.org

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
& EDITOR
Carla Walker
carla@okhumanities.org

PROGRAM OFFICER
Kelly Burns
kelly@okhumanities.org

PROGRAM OFFICER
Christopher Carroll
chris@okhumanities.org

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
& COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Chelsi Dennis
chelsi@okhumanities.org

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
MANAGER
Khylee Forgety
khylee@okhumanities.org

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Oklahoma Humanities magazine is an award-winning collection of culture, issues, and ideas—a rich mix of humanities scholarship, insightful narratives, informed opinions, and beautiful images, for a read that is smart, balanced, educational, and entertaining. Subscribe online: okhumanities.org or call (405) 235-0280.

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Oklahoma Humanities awards include 44 Oklahoma Society of Professional Journalists awards, including multiple first place honors for Best Writing, Best Cover, and Best PR Publication; 9 Great Plains Journalism awards, including firsts for Best Magazine Feature Writing and Best Magazine Page Design, and as a finalist for the Great Plains Magazine of the Year; 3 Central Oklahoma IABC Bronze Quill Awards; the State Historic Preservation Officer's Citation of Merit; and an Oklahoma Heritage Distinguished Editorial Award.

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THANKS
OKLAHOMA CITY
UNIVERSITY!

CELEBRATING A TEN-YEAR PARTNERSHIP

Oklahoma City University (OCU) is a valued partner of Oklahoma Humanities' reading and discussion program, Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma (LTAIO).

For ten years, OCU's Dulaney-Browne Library has generously provided a repository for the program's 14,000 books that are loaned to Oklahoma libraries, prisons, and other nonprofits.

LTAIO book discussions are transformational, fostering a safe space to express diverse opinions and offering opportunities for personal reflection and growth.

OCU's gift of on-site office space and use of the mailroom guarantee the smooth circulation of books and helps Oklahoma Humanities continue to offer the program—for free—to Oklahomans across the state.

We are extremely grateful for OCU's continued support!



OKLAHOMA
HUMANITIES

THE EDITOR'S DESK

CARLA WALKER
carla@okhumanities.org



Map of Oklahoma and Indian Territories, published pre-statehood by The American Investment Company of Atoka, Indian Territory, one of many speculators dealing in tribal Allotment lands.

Let me tell you about my friend Jay Hannah, whose writing you'll find on page 26.

Jay is one of those people who never meets a stranger. In the first five minutes of meeting, he will ascertain that you have some *thing* or some *one* in common. Probably a cousin. If he had a nickel for every cousin he claims . . . well, you know how it goes, he seems to know *everyone*—or is related to them by marriage or adoption or direct descent, since he can trace his family back eight generations.

In the next five minutes of conversation, Jay will have quoted no less than three philosophers, as a man of letters, and regaled you with stories that will double you over with laughter. Stories of politics (sans partisanship), gunfights (I don't think he carries a gun, but you never know), and folklore from every corner of this state. Google him and you'll find more than one source that declares him a "celebrated orator." (Now soon to be celebrated writer.)

Likely as not, before the conversation ends Jay will find reason to call upon a language that, to your ear, will be unfamiliar; yet, you sense, *he* is at one with that language. The combination of his north-eastern Oklahoma drawl and this

melodious new-to-you language will make you wish you knew it too, because surely it conjures something sorely lacking right now: civility and goodwill.

If you haven't guessed, Jay is both native Oklahoman and Native Oklahoman; a citizen of the United States and a Citizen of the Cherokee Nation. He takes great pride in this, being a member of two nations in which his residencies converge in the same state.

At the outset of our plans for a CITIZEN 2020 issue of the magazine, I asked Jay to write about this perspective of dual citizenship, a different kind of duality than what we assume is "of two geographically different countries." Before he delivered his text, he sent me a huge box of documents and ephemera that you'll see in photos on the pages of his article. I was so busy working on other aspects of this issue that I let "The Box" sit in a corner, waiting until I had time to sort out the rhyme or reason for all the paper and pins and old election ballots and metal stamps.

Once I sat down to study the documents, I began to weep. Sappy to say, but true. I was holding history in my hands. Agitated, I called Jay to ask, "Why did you send this? These documents belong in a museum or tribal archives, not in this box and certainly not in your attic!" Seemingly unaffected, he acted as though the collection was so much memorabilia. "Just family *stuff*."

It's not just stuff. Among the documents and artifacts are the story of Jay's family—and by extension the Cherokee Nation—and by further extension the State of Oklahoma. It is the heartbreaking story of "Allotment," whereby vast swathes of prairie and forest were piecemealed to the highest bidder for pennies on the dollar. It is the story of a Cherokee family who

deeded precious acres from one generation to the next. And it is a story of dual citizens who held fast to Native traditions (like the claiming and naming of tribe—at least eight generations), using storytelling and Indigenous language to keep the traditions alive, while also embracing citizenship in a shared America by exercising and safeguarding "The Vote." (More on that in Jay's essay.)

There is more to the story. Removed to this red earth with a treaty of promise from the U.S. government that tribes could maintain sovereignty and self-determination, the Cherokee embraced Oklahoma, improving it with homesteads, and schools, and thriving enterprise. Inevitably, others encroached, assumed, wrested, and cheated to co-opt Indian Territory lands. From the inception of statehood in 1907, the state of Oklahoma has imposed jurisdiction over tribes within its borders. But this summer the highest court in the land, the U.S. Supreme Court, determined in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* (July 2020) that Congress has never disestablished reservations (or lands reserved by treaty with tribal nations) and therefore those lands remain "Indian Country."

My poor attempt at recounting this Oklahoma history is akin to my inability (before now) to comprehend that my state is, as we once announced on our license plates, "Native America." The collaboration with Jay "schooled" me on the ideals of citizenship and my state's dual identity as "Native" and "America." In one of our conversations, Jay summed up the lesson: "Oklahoma was Indian Territory before it was a state—and it's still that way."

Spend time with Jay's essay. If you chance to meet him, you will no doubt call him friend, as I do. And feel lucky to know such a native/Native Oklahoma son.



ELECTION DAY

A VOTE FOR HOPE

LOREN GATCH



It's the first Tuesday of November—Election Day.

For nearly twenty years now I've voted in a church. It's not a house of worship that I otherwise frequent, but the University Lutheran Church is the polling site for Precinct 42 in the city of Norman, Cleveland County. Almost all of the polling places in my county are churches, which is neither here nor there, though it does say something about the lack of public spaces. Just south of the University of Oklahoma campus, the area throngs with students rushing to classes. I know I'm getting near when I can see the temporary VOTE HERE easel sign that springs up like a mushroom after a soaking civic rain.

After traversing a small parking lot, I skip up some steps and enter the church through stout glass doors that take me down a short corridor. To the right is the entrance to the chapel-sized worship sanctuary built in the A-frame style that Lutherans are known for. To the left, the space opens up into the church's Fellowship Hall, where I encounter a set of folding tables staffed by election personnel. But I know they are not for me; they serve voters from the adjacent Precinct 13, which shares the same polling site. (Lutherans are ecumenical, in that way.) I stride on by and the voting tables for the 42nd Precinct come into view. I'm about to perform my very ordinary civic duty.

Illustration, N. Mendal Shafer, July 15, 1862. Library of Congress



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If Election Day represents political renewal, it is counter-balanced by an ethic of responsibility for the consequences of our choices.

Election Day is the closest I get to politics as a going concern, and voting is my limited participation. Each time, the choices are different in personalities and details; in sum, however, they comprise a ritual that is central to the meaning of democracy.

Ritual, as a form of action, brings the past into the present, merging them into something real and new. The ancient Greeks, when settling new communities, brought a sacred fire kindled from their home hearths which they used to light the fires of their new home, symbolizing the continuity across space and time. Likewise, upon arriving on a new continent, the New England Puritans engaged in acts of covenant that not only established their communities but also recreated the very relationship between man and God that defined their Christian faith.

Election Day, I believe, represents to the citizens of a democracy a secular version of this ritual. It offers them the opportunity to reconstitute political community through a collective act that generates power and transmits it to those chosen to wield it. Any stable political arrangement needs to provide for that moment when power is passed from one hand to another. Monarchies remain vital through dynastic succession (“The king is dead. Long live the king!”). In a democracy, the process is periodic elections that do more than just tell us who’s going to be boss; they recreate the time-honored communication of popular will that endows those election outcomes with legitimacy.

Timing and frequency of those contests is critical. In our current political cycles (taking local, state, and national politics together), I may be at my polling place more than once a year; intervals of time that brief give citizens the opportunity to judge whether we think things have gone well or badly and to collectively do something in response to our assessments. One advantage to democracy as a form of political order lies in the homey idea of making a schedule and sticking to it.

As a creature of political habit, being there on Election Day matters to me. Once, on account of a scheduling problem, I had no choice but to vote early at the county election board office. The experience left me feeling shabby, like drinking at a bar well before happy hour.

Given the time of day (early morning is my routine), there’s only a few people ahead of me in line and the precinct workers look ready to play their parts. The first person I encounter is the “judge,” a woman with long wavy gray hair who maintains the precinct registry book and checks voter identification. “Mr. Gatch!” she cries, as if it were about time that I showed up. My conceit is flattered that she remembers my name. (It does her brain good to do that, she once explained.) I sign on the line next to my name and show the necessary identification. Much as I disapprove of the voter-suppression effects of tighter voter I.D. laws, at this moment I’m glad for the opportunity. It makes me feel important

that it matters who I am. I step along the row of tables to the next worker, the “clerk,” whose responsibility is to hand me a paper ballot (*just one*, from a stack amongst the cluttered tabletop display of miniature American flags) and a pen with which to mark my selections.

The first time I voted, the first year that I was eligible, was in 1976—the nation’s bicentennial—at a fire station on the south side of Chicago. It was my first encounter with a lever voting machine, an intimidating mechanical contraption requiring me to set a number of small levers representing my choices for various candidates. Once my selections were set, I was to pull a larger lever that would register them on counters. For the machine to function, the privacy curtain had to be drawn around the booth. There, alone, as a neophyte voter, my first civic experience was one of clueless panic as I stared at the face of this mute contraption that promised to inaugurate me into the mysteries of citizenship. Too embarrassed to ask for help (even if I had been allowed), I fiddled with my choices, gave a great grinding pull on the lever, and launched my vote with all the hope that a gambler might give to the slot machine upon which he bestowed his fate. With that, my privacy curtain sprung open, spitting me out into the blinking sunlight. I no longer remember who I voted for, but, lucky for me, that voting machine acted as an oracle, for it left me with one certain message: Democracy is always about taking risks.

Forty years later, democracy is still an exercise in risk and I am a bit more sobered by the probabilities. My paper ballot in my hand, I cross over to a set of cardboard voting cubicles set haphazardly against the serving windows of a kitchen alcove. There’s a pretense of privacy in the exercise of voting, but the format feels more like an academic examination. I have to complete my ballot by filling in with ink pen the boxes corresponding to the names of the candidates of my choice, and whether I agree with various proposed laws. It reminds me of the multiple choice tests I sometimes give to my students. The format implies the spurious conclusion that there are only right or wrong answers in politics and, if we’re careful enough, we *can ace this thing*.

At the top left of the ballot, a tiny drawing of a hand illustrates how I should vote: FILL IN THE BOX NEXT TO YOUR CHOICE(S) LIKE THIS—NO CHECK MARKS OR X’S. (I’m bothered: The illustrated hand is right-handed, but I’m left-handed.) Next, a box titled STRAIGHT PARTY VOTING pops up. I swat the thought away like a gnat or a floater in my mental vision. I feel the need to work my way through the individual names of each competitive pair—the people who will make laws on behalf of all of us. If elections are rituals that reset political time, recreate our constitutional beginnings, the results also renew the tasks of public policymaking, opening wide vistas into uncertain futures.



Some of those policy outcomes are implemented quickly and look okay to me: I like the fact that I can now get my favorite Merlot at the local convenience store, thank you very much. Other outcomes seem much more distant, unclear, and all the more ominous. For example, climate change is a looming reality that we may or may not have the political will to address. Even if we knew the fix and how to pay for it, the time involved may be beyond current election cycles. How can democratic politics commit to solutions for problems decades in the future? Thomas Paine, a fervent democrat, wrote:

Every age and generation must be as free to act for itself in all cases as the age and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow.

I'm thrilled by this declaration of freedom, but a little leery of its consequences if we get it wrong—whether climate change or any other national or global issue. “Society,” countered Edmund Burke, “is a contract . . . between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.” It's not a contract that we can make or unmake, but represents the very conditions of our existence. If Election Day represents political renewal, it is counterbalanced by an ethic of responsibility for the consequences of our choices. I won't be alive when the full force of climate change hits the planet, yet my generation would renege on its portion of the contract if it did not bring the concerns of the future into those of the present. Though the future cannot vote, its premonitions do tug at our consciences and weigh upon the scale of our deliberations.

As I toil down the ballot, the old kindergarten skills come back to me. *Color between the lines.* I glance furtively at the voters in adjacent cubicles, not so much to cheat on my little civics test as to get an idea of how far along they are. The standard executive and legislative posts, both national and state, are straightforward as choices, but as I get to the outer echelons of Oklahoma government (Insurance Commissioner, Corporation Commissioner, etc.) my confidence is shaky. Once I enter the region of judicial retentions, my composure collapses entirely. I understand the logic of these choices: *If you haven't heard anything bad about them, then vote for the incumbents forthwith.* But it's a choice strategy predicated on ignorance, and one that I find repellent. I scan the names, looking for any conceivable reason for casting my affirmative votes.

By page two, the ballot gives way to state questions and here I return to firmer ground. Each of the questions involves a story about policy and I enjoy preparing for those. I mark my votes and with that I'm at the end of the ballot. I look around, relieved to find that I'm not the last one there. The final step is to consummate my role as citizen by stepping back to the precinct table where a third election worker, the “inspector,” gestures towards the optical scanning machine that will transform my inked-in squares into an electronic tally.

I'm proud that Oklahoma does voting well compared to other states—a clear paper trail with an electronic record to match, which can be compared if there's any doubt about the results. I insert my ballot into the scanner slot and the mechanism draws the paper out of my hands, transforming my oblong colorings into digital code. The machine clicks and registers the input: I'm immortalized as a number. The inspector gives me an “I Voted” sticker and a lollipop for my efforts. All three precinct workers will be there for another twelve hours. My own responsibilities as a citizen are complete in ten minutes.

Now I'm poised to step back into the wider world, but I hesitate, conflicted by competing thoughts. First, I've dispatched my civic duty with cheerful and complacent efficiency. My ballot choices, added to everyone else's, elect leaders that will legislate the broad horizon of the future, lit by a bright, ascendant democratic sun. I crunch my lollipop in anticipation, impatient for that new and better world that in some small way I'm helping to make.

My next thought is decidedly more negative as that sugary lollipop dissolves into a bitter aftertaste: *Is civic engagement a fraud that only chumps fall for?* I'm a Baby Boomer—those three precinct

workers are too—and all we Boomers have managed to do is befoul our common civic nest, which now reeks of squandered chances and unpayable debts. My generation's failure to ensure racial justice (added to the failure of generations before us) has inflamed the body politic, evidenced in widespread Black Lives Matter protests. There's a horizon out there all right, but the sun's darkening and a storm front is quickly moving in. Both Thomas Paine (who championed progress) and Edmund Burke (who nurtured tradition) would be mortified by the mess we've made—past, present, and future.

Perplexed by today's partisan divides, I can't bring myself to be either an optimist or a pessimist. The theologian Reinhold Niebuhr warned about the pitfalls of both. To be an optimist (to believe in progress, in the broadest sense) breeds complacency and even arrogance, because optimism encourages you to believe that good things happen by themselves, and that time is on your side. To be a pessimist breeds fatalism, because pessimism discourages you from believing that anything good can ever happen. As a result, your inaction becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

To have hope, though, is something different. Hope empowers you to try to change the world, even if you don't see the results you wish for, and perhaps never will in your lifetime. As Niebuhr put it, “Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore, we must be saved by hope.” On Election Day, it isn't just political will that's being renewed, but hope as well—which we need now more than ever.

I really don't know if anybody's vote matters. If I couldn't figure out democracy's odds in 1976, I don't know them any better now. All I have is the certainty that I have an obligation to try, have hope that my vote, our votes, matter.

★★★ VOTER RESOURCES

Register to vote, find your polling place, see a sample ballot: ok.gov/elections

Explore the election process on national and local levels: vote411.org

Key terms and topics relating to Oklahoma politics: okpolicy.org/category/whats-that

Citizenship and voter info, Metropolitan Library System: metrolibrary.org/explore/topic

LOREN GATCH holds a Ph.D. from Cornell University and is Professor of Political Science at the University of Central Oklahoma, where he has taught since 1998.



Camping out for Tuesday's abortion/speech argument, Nov. 19, 2018, Art Lien

WHAT COMES BEFORE “WOKE”?

ON THE HISTORY OF SLEEP AS A FORM OF PROTEST

From Vietnam die-ins to Occupied parks, stillness as dissent

FRANNY NUDELMAN

Long before “woke” came to signify a new generation of awareness and activism, the language of sleep, dreams, and awakening infused social movements, from the religious revivals of the eighteenth century to the “dream” of racial equality preached by Martin Luther King. In popular movements for peace and justice, sleep has signified both a death-dealing ignorance and

the utopian promise of a regenerated society. To be asleep is to be apathetic—insensible to the cruelties we inflict or ignore—while in dreams we enjoy a faint awareness of new realities. The language of sleep, charged and motivating, draws its power from the fundamental truth that we need sleep in order not only to flourish but also to survive.

Popularized by Black Lives Matter, “woke” is now widely used to convey

the importance of paying attention to matters of power and privilege; in a culture of rampant distraction and reactive speech, it offers a kind of mantra for reflection and vigilance. Such vigilance, however, is never far removed from the vulnerability of the sleeping body: search online for images of “sleep” and “protest” and you will discover countless examples of demonstrators fast asleep—side by side or in large groups—as well as the “die-ins” that weirdly resemble these sleeping congregations. Such images remind us that we cannot wake until we have slept.

For activists, who agitate for altered modes of thinking and living, sleep is a practical necessity. In order to congregate and resist, demonstrators must often sleep outside for days and sometimes weeks at a stretch, and high-profile demonstrations past and present have been shadowed by legal contest over public sleep. A case in point: in the spring of 1971, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) fought the courts for the right to sleep on the National Mall as part of their weeklong demonstration, Operation Dewey Canyon III. (The demonstration took its name from the secret raids into Laos conducted by the U.S. military—Operation Dewey Canyon I and II.)

When the courts denied their petition, veterans decided to break the law by sleeping anyway. Turning good rest into a form of dissent, hundreds of veterans fell asleep,

wondering whether or not they would be arrested by daybreak. Their case demonstrates the importance of public sleep to movement history: from the occupation of Alcatraz to Occupy Wall Street, protest camps have brought people together to resist oppression and reimagine communal life; as such, they are sites of disruption and struggle—targeted by state authorities and protected, in often ingenious ways, by activists who defend the right to sleep.

☾ The VVAW conceived Dewey Canyon III as a total demonstration that left no stone unturned in an effort to draw public attention to the war’s atrocities. Over the course of the week, veterans lobbied their senators and testified before committees; they held candlelight vigils and planted trees; they turned themselves in to the Pentagon as war criminals and discarded their medals on the steps of the Capitol. At the end of each day, they returned to their camp on the Mall, where they reviewed the day’s activities, watched films, sang, ate, and planned for the following day. It was this campsite that, somewhat surprisingly, became the source of a heated legal confrontation between veterans and the government.

By the time the VVAW began negotiations for a permit to camp on the National Mall, the question of whether and where demonstrators would be allowed to sleep had already been politicized by



Protesters and Chicago Police officers in Grant Park during protests coinciding with the Democratic National Convention, Aug. 28, 1968. National Archives

other high-profile demonstrations. For example, the city of Chicago's draconian approach to granting permits was one major source of the conflict between demonstrators and police at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. When city officials refused to allow demonstrators permission to stay overnight in eleven city parks, organizer Tom Hayden was not sure the planned protests could succeed. He wondered, "How many people were going to spend four or five days in Chicago with no assurance that they could participate in a rally, attend a concert, march to the convention, or unroll a sleeping bag in Lincoln Park?"

As it turned out, the nighttime struggle with Chicago police over the 11 p.m. curfew provided the spark for days of police actions during which demonstrators and journalists were gassed and bloodied in the streets. If violence in Chicago changed the course of U.S. political history, Mayor Daley's decision not to grant demonstrators overnight access to Chicago parks played a significant part in provoking these confrontations.

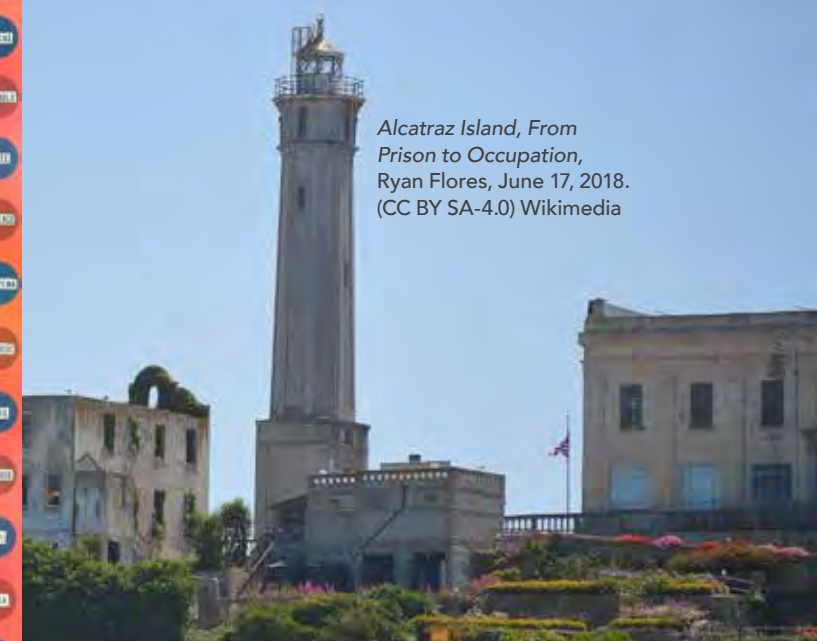
We tend to recall the huge marches and street battles of the era, but not the tedious negotiations with state authorities; preparing for events that would last more than one day, protesters required permission to sleep in public. The VVAW valued their campsite

for practical reasons and were also alert to its symbolic value, as it allowed them to reenact—or as they put it "simulate"—the daily routines of an invading army. Their approach was in step with other activist groups that by the late 1960s had begun to experiment with occupation as a form of political expression. At Resurrection City, in People's Park, and on Alcatraz Island, demonstrators did not march, but rather stayed in place, inhabiting symbolically charged public spaces over a span of time.

When Native American activists seized Alcatraz Island in the fall of 1969, for example, they reclaimed one small, inhospitable piece of land, making themselves at home for 19 months in the empty cells and abandoned guards' quarters of the island's defunct penitentiary. In a similar spirit, Berkeley activists had a few months earlier claimed an abandoned lot that belonged to the University of California and turned it into a city park where people could gather and grow food. If militarism, racism, and colonialism infiltrated the most routine aspects of daily life—a perspective increasingly embraced by movement activists—it was these habits, they maintained, that must be liberated. Protest camps allowed demonstrators to practice such reinvention and put their efforts on public view.

Two days before Dewey Canyon III was scheduled to begin, the government issued an injunction barring veterans from overnight camping on the Mall. The VVAW appealed, and their case traveled through the courts at a breakneck pace. The injunction was based on National Park Service (NPS) regulations that defined "overnight camping" as "sleeping activities, or making

George Hart. Lawyers and witnesses for the VVAW focused on two issues. First, they argued that public sleep was a material necessity, appealing to the government's responsibility to take care of returning soldiers. John Kerry, who testified as a witness for the VVAW, informed Judge Hart that many of the veterans, already on their way to the D.C. protest, had no place else



Alcatraz Island, From *Prison to Occupation*, Ryan Flores, June 17, 2018. (CC BY SA-4.0) Wikimedia

Alcatraz Proved a Point, Joseph Morris. Joseph Morris Alcatraz Occupation Collection, GOGA 35283, Golden Gate National Recreation Area. nps.gov

preparations to sleep (including the laying down of bedrolls or other bedding), or making any fire, erecting any shelter, tent, or other sleeping accommodation structure, or doing any digging or earth breaking, or carrying on any cooking activities." The injunction would allow protesting veterans to engage in all of their planned protest activities from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day, but would not allow them to cook or build shelters at any time and forbade "sleeping activities" at night.

The VVAW appealed the injunction and the case was heard by U.S. District Judge

to stay because they were without jobs and could not afford to book a motel room. He explained, "We are bringing with us people who by necessity for a five-day lobbying effort must find their abode outside."

The need to sleep outside was proof of the difficult material circumstances that many veterans confronted on their return to the U.S. and their very presence on the National Mall dramatized the inadequate services that they had come to Washington to protest. Veterans argued that the government should let them bed down on the Mall



because they had no other place to go; Judge Hart feared that veterans, or some other group that followed their example, might make themselves at home there and never leave.

Putting poverty and unemployment on display, the VVAW's court battle unfolded in the shadow of the occupation of the Mall three years earlier by Civil Rights activists: associating legal camping with permanent (or semi-permanent) residence, Hart had Resurrection City in mind. Resurrection City was part of the Poor People's Campaign, conceived by Martin Luther King and others in response to the perceived exhaustion of Civil Rights movement tactics. King felt that the movement's focus on legal (in)equality and constitutional protections had run its course and was, in any case, ill-suited to the forms of discrimination taking place in northern cities. The Poor People's Campaign hoped to build a multi-ethnic coalition around the issue of poverty and expand calls for justice to include the right to food and shelter.

The campaign requested permission to construct a functioning city on government land and was granted a generous permit that allowed up to 3,000 people to live for 37 days on 15 acres of West Potomac Park. Although camping was not ordinarily allowed in the park, an exception was made for Resurrection City. In West Potomac Park, demonstrators built homes made of plywood and plastic sheeting and equipped them with sanitation, electricity, and running water. The Department of the Interior, which had granted the permit, came to regret its decision. When the permit expired, police violently expelled protesters from the park, and one year later Congress voted overwhelmingly to ban "sit-ins, camp-ins, and sleep-ins in the capital."

The second major argument presented by the VVAW to Judge Hart was that public sleep was a form of expression that fell under the protection of the First Amendment. The main question before the court, during this hearing and in the briefs and hearings that followed, was

whether or not public sleep should be considered a form of free speech. As Kerry put it, "We feel the campsite is part of our freedom of speech. . . . This is the only way in which we feel we can adequately tell our story to the people in this country."

It is worth recalling that the First Amendment protects not only freedom of speech but also "the right of the people peaceably to assemble." The contested Washington campsite brought demonstrators together in the evening to play music and watch films, discuss the day's activities, and plan for the following day. It gave them a chance to break bread together and to sleep side by side. In these ways, it was vital to the First Amendment promise of the right to assemble, which is allied in the Constitution and throughout the history of creative dissent with the practice of free

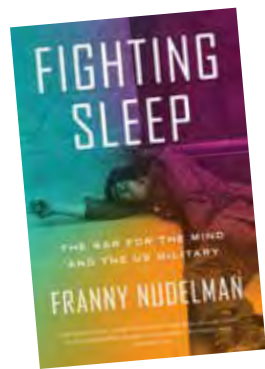
speech. Petitioning to camp overnight, the VVAW asked the court to defend both their sleep and the late-night discussions that were integral to the work of organizing.

After listening to arguments from both sides, Judge Hart enjoined against the use of the Mall for "overnight camping," and limited the VVAW to demonstrating from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. At this point, the VVAW took their case to the Court of Appeals, which reversed Hart's ruling. The government then applied to the Supreme Court to stay the decision taken by the Court of Appeals, arguing, "To say that the First Amendment provides a right to occupy park property for a substantial period of time, with all the resulting hazards, including health, sanitation, and litter . . . is to extend the First Amendment too far."

ABOVE: Resurrection City in the mud, May 24, 1968, by Marion S. Triksoko. CENTER: Construction of Resurrection City, May 14, 1968, by Warren K. Leffler and Thomas J. O'Halloran. RIGHT: Resurrection City (Abernathy), Washington, D.C., by Marion S. Triksoko, May 22, 1968. Images: U.S. News & World Report Collection, Library of Congress



Protesters in front of White House, by Warren K. Leffler, Feb. 10, 1971. U.S. News & World Report Collection, Library of Congress.



FRANNY NUDELMAN is Professor of American Literature and Culture at Carleton University in Ottawa. She is the author of *John Brown's Body: Slavery, Violence, and the Culture of War* and coeditor, with Sara Blair and Joseph Entin, of *Remaking Reality: U.S. Documentary Culture after 1945*. This essay is adapted from her most recent book, *Fighting Sleep: The War for the Mind and the U.S. Military*, published by Verso Books (versobooks.com). Copyright © 2019 by Franny Nuelman. A version of this essay originally appeared on Literary Hub (lithub.com).

On Tuesday, April 20, Chief Justice Warren Burger, in his role as Circuit Justice for the District of Columbia, agreed with the government's position and reinstated the injunction. The VVAW then petitioned for emergency consideration of the case by the full Supreme Court. On Wednesday, after the protesters had already spent two nights on the Mall, the Supreme Court agreed to reinstate the original injunction "with full force and effect." At this point, the case was decided.

As the Supreme Court deliberated behind closed doors, VVAW lawyer Ramsay Clark met with Justice Department lawyers in an effort to craft a compromise suitable to both the veterans and the Nixon administration. Clark returned to the Mall late Wednesday afternoon to deliver the Justice Department's bizarre decision. Clark informed the crowd that they could remain on the Mall throughout the night. They could hold meetings, watch films, and play music. They could even sing and dance. But they would not be permitted to fall asleep. If they

slept, they would be subject to arrest. Clark counseled veterans to obey the ruling and refrain from sleeping.

In response, veterans caucused by state to discuss their plans. Debate raged over whether to obey the court order and stay awake, or defy it by falling asleep. As VVAW founding member Jan Barry recalled, "It was real democracy in action. It was astounding." After various speakers had voiced their opinions, VVAW chapters caucused to vote, and veterans decided, by a small margin, to sleep. In this context, sleeping became an act of civil disobedience. In the words of one *Washington Post* reporter, "Several hundred protesting Vietnam Veterans Against the War defied the full U.S. Supreme Court last night and bedded down on the Mall."

In the end, the Nixon administration's Justice Department, which had pushed hard to obtain and defend the original injunction, declined to arrest sleeping veterans. The Washington police did not want to arrest men who had fought in the war, and the Nixon White House did not relish media coverage of

sleeping veterans being cuffed and carted off to prison. Late Wednesday night, the cast of *Hair* arrived at their encampment for a spontaneous performance. Together, veterans and Broadway performers sang "Give Peace a Chance," the song recorded two years earlier by John Lennon and Yoko Ono at their Montreal bed-in. Instead of going to jail, as they had anticipated, demonstrators had a chance to sing and dance and then to fall asleep on the National Mall.

In the decades to follow, the VVAW's legal arguments over the right of veterans to sleep on the National Mall continued to reverberate. In 1982, the NPS granted a permit to the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), allowing for the erection of two tent cities as part of a protest on the Mall that would "demonstrate the plight of the homeless." They refused, however, to grant protesters permission to sleep in these "symbolic tents." The CCNV fought the courts over the right to sleep and eventually the Supreme Court ruled, once again, in favor of NPS regulations, finding that camping regulations did not violate the First Amendment.

In his dissent, however, Justice Thurgood Marshall defended the expressive power of sleep—which he referred to as "sleep-speech." Comparing the public sleep of anti-homelessness demonstrators to the sit-ins of the Civil Rights movement, he argued that in both cases a physical routine that is typically "devoid of expressive purpose" is effectively transformed by protesters into a "novel mode of communication" that merits legal protection.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, activists explored the roots of injustice in the routines of daily life and attempted to reform their society by remaking such routines. From King's "I Have a Dream" speech to John Lennon and Yoko Ono's bed-in, to the VVAW sleep-in on the National Mall, the effort to politicize sleep—a daily practice, necessary to survival—was one expression of a far broader effort to resist violence and oppression.

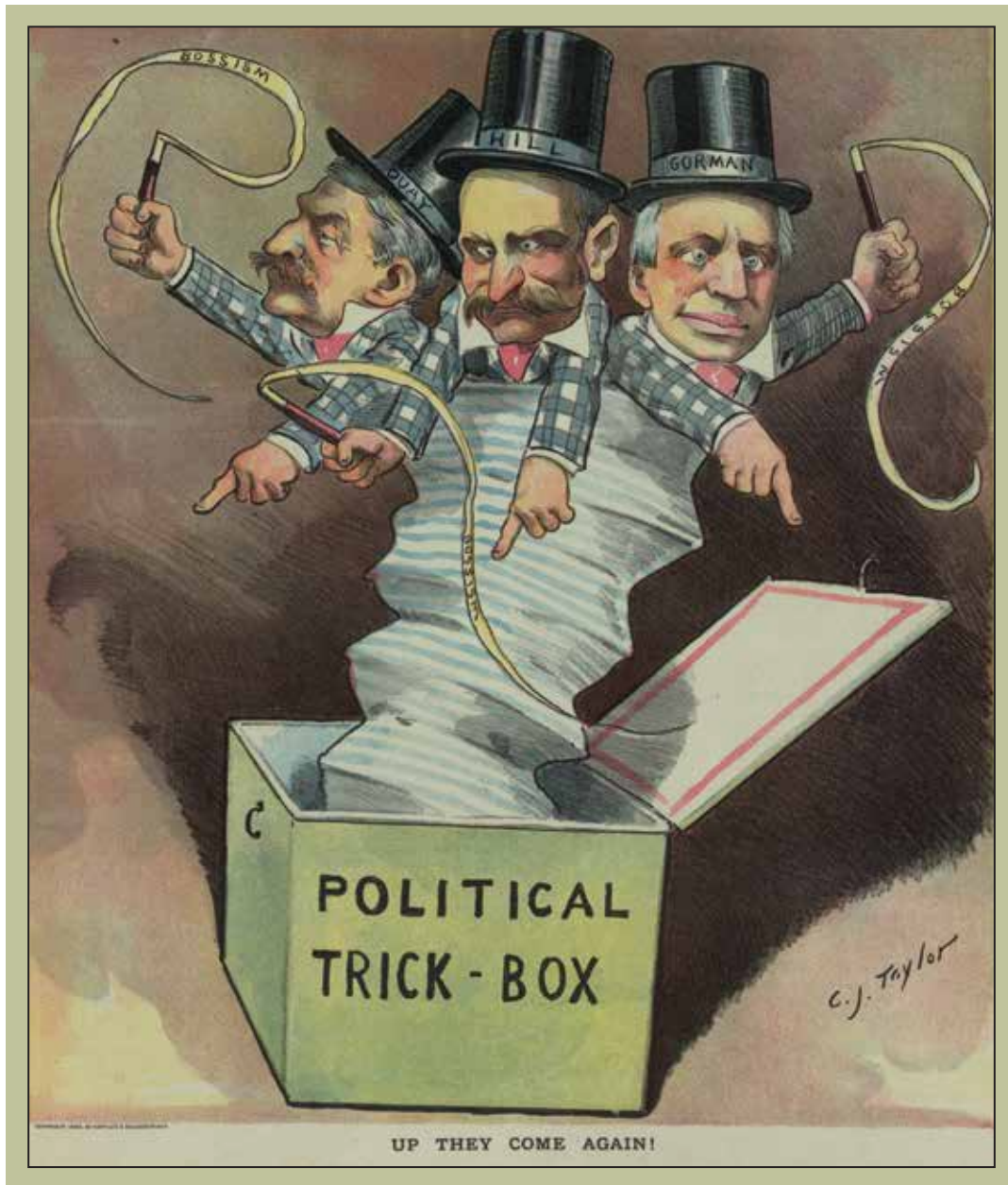
For activists today, sleep remains indispensable. In the context of political protest, sleeping in common out of doors continues to pose a threat to social order as demonstrators clash with the law over the right to public sleep. ■



John Kerry, spokesman for Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), by Warren K. Leffler, April 21, 1971. U.S. News & World Report Collection, Library of Congress. INSET: Ribbon detail, "Return to Sender," 1971, Library of Congress. Purple Heart Medal, photo by Major Will Cox, Georgia National Guard, March 2, 2014, U.S. Dept. of Defense

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "Soldiers for Peace," audio documentary by Kate Ellis and Stephen Smith, 2019, *APM Reports*. Interviews and chronologies trace the evolution of the Vietnam War and veterans' political views. apmreports.org
- "Life at Resurrection City," National Museum of African American History & Culture. Curated blog posts reveal daily life at Resurrection City. nmaahc.si.edu
- "We Hold the Rock," Dr. Troy Johnson for National Park Service. Essay and photos recount the occupation of Alcatraz Island and the lasting impact of the "Indians of All Tribes" movement.
- "When Sleeping in Public is an Act of Protest," Karen Frances Eng, Dec 13, 2018, TED. Profiles Jasmeen Patheja, who shows women how naps in public spaces can help change a culture of harassment. ideas.ted.com



A Short History of
**CAMPAIGN
 DIRTY TRICKS**

Election meddling before Twitter and Facebook



ELAINE KAMARCK

IN AMERICA TODAY, OUTRAGEOUS LIES, doctored videos, and impostors try to influence elections alongside legitimate news and direct campaign communications from would-be leaders. But dirty tricks are nothing new. While the medium may be different, the goals are as old as elections themselves. Thus, it is fitting to begin working on the problem of defending democracy in the internet age by trying to understand the world of dirty tricks in the pre-internet age.

To do that, we should distinguish between dirty tricks and negative campaigning, including attack ads and contrast ads. The latter may be offensive, but they are based on something that is true as opposed to something that is a wholesale fabrication. For instance, let's take one of the most infamous ads from the 1988 presidential campaign pitting Vice President George H.W. Bush (R) against Governor Michael Dukakis (D): the Willie Horton ad. It has gone down in history as one of the more offensive and racially incendiary ads ever. Willie Horton, a Black prisoner convicted of murder, was released on a prison furlough program in Massachusetts. While out on furlough he kidnapped a young couple, stabbed the man, and assaulted the woman. The ad features a scary photo of Willie Horton and under a photo of Michael Dukakis it says, "Allowed Murderers to have Weekend Passes." The weekend furlough program was created in 1972 under a Republican governor as the result of a court decision. Dukakis himself defended it.

Both the program and Willie Horton were real. The circumstances surrounding the crime were accurately described, the visual image was true to life even if sensationalized, and there were numerous news stories attesting to the facts of the case.

Now compare this ad to an incident in the 2016 campaign where nothing was real: Pizzagate. In the 2016 presidential campaign, social media outlets spread the story (referring to his hacked email accounts) that campaign manager John Podesta's emails contained coded messages referring to human trafficking and a child sex ring run by high-ranking members of the Democratic Party, including Hillary Clinton. This activity was allegedly based in a Washington, D.C., pizzeria called Comet Ping Pong. The conspiracy theory spread quickly, promoted by various right-wing websites and by the Russians. As the rumors grew, so did harassment of the owners and employees of the pizzeria, culminating in a shooting incident by a North Carolina man who took it upon himself to come to Washington and rescue the poor children.

Nothing about Pizzagate was real. There was no sex ring, no coded messages, and no children being held against their will at the pizza place. All the supposed "facts" spread in this story were completely fabricated. The incident illustrates how the difference between dirty tricks and negative campaigning is that dirty tricks are complete lies. The political journalist David Mark makes a similar distinction: "First, I want to distinguish negative campaigning—charges and accusations that, while often distorted,

CARTOON: "Political Trick-Box. Up they come again!" by Charles Jay Taylor, Sept. 25, 1895, *Puck*, c. Keppler & Schwarzmann. Library of Congress



PHOTOS:

1. George H. W. Bush and Barbara Bush at Republican National Convention, Houston, TX, by Laura Patterson, Aug. 1992 (loc.gov). 2. Bush-Quayle, Dukakis, and McGovern-Eagleton ephemera (Saffy Collection, Univ. of North Florida Digital Commons). 3. "The old man and the sea," by Edmund S. Valtman, Oct. 31, 1972, *Hartford Times*. George McGovern as a fisherman battling high seas, alludes to Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the story of an old Cuban fisherman who catches a giant marlin largely eaten by sharks before he returns to port. McGovern's campaign was undermined by a series of tribulations (loc.gov). 4. Edmund Muskie campaign poster, 1968 (loc.gov). 5. Nixon campaign bumper sticker, 1968 (Richard Nixon Library/NARA). 6. "I want to make it perfectly clear that national defense requires 18-cent oil," by Edmund S. Valtman, March 1, 1970, *Hartford Times*. President Nixon giving a speech. Liquid, shown as dollars, drips into a can labeled "Political Contributions." Nixon bowed to pressures of domestic oil companies about quotas for the importation of oil (loc.gov). 7. U.S. Senator John McCain in Phoenix, AZ, by Gage Skidmore, Oct. 21, 2016 (CC BY-SA 2.0/Flickr). BELOW: "The happy effects of that grand system of shutting ports against the English!" Illustration by Cruikshank; Walker publishers, Oct. 15, 1808. President Jefferson defends his Embargo policy (loc.gov).



contain at least a kernel of truth—from dirty tricks or cheating.”

To understand the world of dirty tricks, it helps to understand their function in the context of an election. Elections are fought over a finite period of time—Election Day is the endpoint—and public interest increases as Election Day approaches. Unlike a dirty trick against a corporation, which might be remedied in time for a product to rebound, a dirty trick timed to occur before the election can have a definitive impact, even if it is proven to be false. The ramifications can be enormous because U.S. elections cannot be re-run.

A brief summary of some of the dirty tricks in American elections shows that they tend to have the following objectives: to create doubt around a candidate's character; to confuse the voters about the election; to break into the opponent's sphere and get information on them; and

to affect the actual outcome by interfering with the counting process.

CANDIDATE CHARACTER

Sex has long been a favorite topic of the dirty trick. In the early 1800's, politics was no less suffused with innuendo than today. Among the most salacious stories were those penned by the partisan journalist James Callender, who alleged in a series of articles that Thomas Jefferson had fathered several children with his young slave, Sally Hemings. For nearly two centuries this was held up as an early example of dirty campaigning. In 1998, thanks to DNA testing, it turned out that Thomas Jefferson had indeed fathered illegitimate children with his slave.

Two centuries later, the combination of illicit sex and race was still the ideal fodder for the creation of a dirty trick. In the 2000 Republican presidential primary, then-Governor George Bush of Texas was running against Senator John McCain of Arizona. McCain won the New Hampshire primary and the race went on to South Carolina where

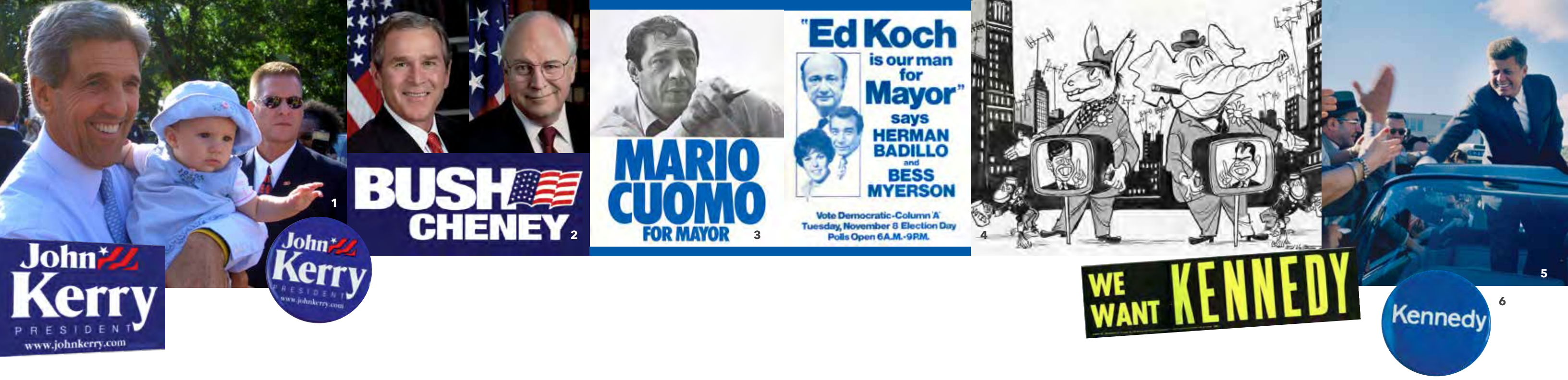
the Bush campaign knew they had to stop McCain. Using a tried and true strategy, the phony poll, opponents of McCain spread a complete falsehood. Phone calls to South Carolina Republican voters asked "Would you be more or less likely to vote for John McCain . . . if you knew he had fathered an illegitimate black child?" McCain and his wife Cindy had adopted a dark-skinned girl from Bangladesh in 1991 and that child, Bridget, was campaigning with them in South Carolina.

Confronted with attacks on their wives and children, candidates have a hard time defending themselves. McCain was distraught at this attack and his efforts to fight back only made his situation worse. He lost the South Carolina primary and the nomination.

McCain's emotional reaction to an attack on his family was not unusual. In 1972, Senator Edmund Muskie was the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination to run against President Richard Nixon. While campaigning in New Hamp-

shire, the editor of the all-important *Manchester Union Leader* received a letter from a New Hampshire citizen accusing Muskie of using the word "Canuck," a derogatory term for French Canadians—a significant part of the New Hampshire electorate. Muskie never did any such thing. (The letter was later discovered to have been written by a White House aide to President Nixon, Kenneth Clawson.) At the same time, the editor of the *Manchester Union Leader* insulted Muskie's wife, calling her unladylike for drinking too much and telling jokes. Muskie gave a press conference where he was furious and appeared to cry. Whether there were tears or a melted snowflake on his face, the damage was done. Muskie won New Hampshire, but by a much smaller percentage than was anticipated (especially given that he was from a neighboring state). The narrow victory devastated his candidacy and he lost the Democratic nomination to George McGovern, who turned out to be the weak nominee Nixon preferred.

For much of American history, being gay was a nonstarter for a politician. As early as 1836, the hero Davy Crockett wrote that presidential candidate Martin Van Buren was "laced up in corsets, such as women in town wear, and, if possible, tighter than the rest of them." The famous FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover spread rumors that the 1950s Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson was gay; ironically, Hoover has been the subject of much rumor and speculation about his sexuality. New York City was the first city which stood up to this tactic. In the 1977 mayoral primary, placards appeared out of nowhere that read "vote for Cuomo, not the homo," in reference to Mario Cuomo. Cuomo's opponent Ed Koch won the primary and never directly addressed the rumors about his sexual orientation. These days this line of attack seems almost quaint given the large number of openly gay elected officials, but being a closeted gay seemed a sure way to catch the ire of both the gay and straight community.



One of the many problems with complete lies attacking the candidate's character is that they are sometimes so outrageous that the campaign refuses to take them seriously. Or, the campaign knows they are a threat but doesn't want to increase the reach of the dirty trick by giving the lie even more publicity. However, even if a lie is too outrageous for most people to believe, in a tight race only a very small fraction of the electorate needs to believe it. And big lies remind people of the old saying, "Where there's smoke there's fire." A story that is not plausible on its face may still prompt some to believe that something is wrong with the candidate.

Nearly all of these problems surfaced with the "swift boat" campaign against Senator John Kerry. Kerry had served in Vietnam and was awarded a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, and a Silver Star. In 2004, his service and his heroism in war stood in contrast to President Bush, who had not gone to Vietnam and who got into the Air National Guard through his political connections.

Sowing doubt about Kerry's war record was important to the Bush campaign. In the spring of 2004, a group called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, composed of Vietnam veterans who claimed to have been with Kerry during the incidents he was awarded medals for, began to hold press conferences and buy television ads questioning each of his medals. A long-time critic of John Kerry (for his later public opposition to the Vietnam War) wrote a book about Kerry called *Unfit for Command*.

The Kerry campaign's reaction was slow and ineffectual. His top consultants kept restraining him from hitting back out of fear that he would look angry and that it would add even more fuel to the fire. And yet they sorely misjudged the impact the ongoing story was having on cable news during the critical month of August 2004. A review of Kerry's war record was conducted by the Navy in September of 2004 and found that the medals were all properly awarded. And Bush himself eventually disavowed the group, but the damage had been done. The big lie

only has to sow doubt, and the closer the race the more impact it can have.

CONFUSING THE VOTERS

Attempting to confuse the voters is another tried and true characteristic of the dirty trick. Sometimes this is inadvertent but nonetheless critical, the best example being the confusing "butterfly" ballot design that caused voters in the 2000 presidential election in Florida to vote for "Al Gore and Republican Pat Buchanan" or "Al Gore and Socialist David McReynold"—thus invalidating their ballots.

But at other times it is intentional. An early example of intentionally confusing the voters comes from John F. Kennedy's first run for Congress in Boston in 1946. In Boston then (and now), the two dominant ethnic groups were Irish and Italian, and the state was heavily Democratic—meaning that winning the Democratic primary was tantamount to winning the general election. Kennedy (Irish) was running in the Democratic primary against a Boston City Councilor named Joe

Russo (Italian). Kennedy's father, Joe, allegedly paid another Joseph Russo (a custodian with no political experience) to also run in the primary in hopes of splitting the non-Kennedy vote.

Another way to confuse the voters is to populate the ballot with third-party candidates who are recruited for the express purpose of siphoning votes from the major party. In 2010, a Republican dirty trickster in Arizona got friendly with a group of homeless people and recruited them to run on the Green Party ticket for a variety of offices. Among them were: a tarot card reader, with less than a dollar to his name, who was signed up to run for State Treasurer; a homeless man, who went by "Grandpa" on the streets, who was recruited to run for the State Senate; and a young street musician, who was recruited to run for a seat on the Arizona Corporation Commission. Democrats and Green party officials were furious and filed a lawsuit but failed to get the fake candidates' names off the ballot.

Another tried-and-true dirty trick is to attempt to confuse the voters about important election dates. In the 2018 election, [Rep.] Lee Zeldin (R-NY)

sent out flyers telling his constituents that they had to return their absentee ballots by November 6. The actual deadline was November 5 and ballots received after that were not counted. Democrats were suspicious that the "mistake" was meant to keep students from voting, but Zeldin's campaign denied any wrongdoing and provided a statement from the printer also saying it was a mistake. The problem was that the Zeldin campaign made the same "mistake" in 2016 as well, fueling suspicion that this was a dirty trick.

In 2012 Wisconsin Democrats, furious over Republican Governor Scott Walker's attacks on public-sector unions, mounted a successful recall petition creating a new election. The 2012 recall election was contested between Walker and Democrat Tom Barrett. As the June 5, 2012, primary date approached, voters reported receiving robocalls (a favorite tool of dirty tricksters) that told voters that if they had signed recall petitions they were not required to vote in the recall election. Walker won the race with 53% of the vote.

PHOTOS:
1. John Kerry holding a supporter's baby in Rochester, MN, by Alec Jacobson, Sept. 8, 2008 ([PD] Wikimedia). Kerry campaign sticker (Wikimedia) and button (Saffy Collection, Univ. of North Florida Digital Commons). **2.** Official White House portraits: President George W. Bush, by Eric Draper, 2001; Vice President Dick Cheney, by Karen Ballard, 2001 (Wikimedia). Bush-Cheney 2000 campaign sticker (George W. Bush Library/NARA). **3.** "Mario Cuomo for Mayor" poster, 1977; "Ed Koch is our man for Mayor" poster, ca. 1977 (loc.gov). **4.** "Here we go again," by Edmund S. Valtman, Sept. 12, 1960, *Hartford Times*. The Democratic donkey and GOP elephant as organ grinders with monkeys soliciting "Votes." Organ-TV sets show presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon (loc.gov). **5.** Senator John F. Kennedy greets a roadside crowd in Indiana, Oct. 5, 1960 (JFK Library). **6.** Kennedy campaign sticker (docsteach.org) and button (Saffy Collection, Univ. of North Florida Digital Commons).



IN PURSUIT OF PRESIDENTS AND PRINCIPAL CHIEFS

The Arc of Dual Citizenship

JAY HANNAH



It is 2020, a presidential election year. And, as if out of the mist of *Brigadoon*, comes an event that awakens the voice of the people to choose who will become one of the most powerful individuals on the planet. It is a time of consistency and a translation of change. Participating in the vote is arguably one of the greatest

of all expressions of freedom. It carries the weighty burden of civic responsibility. I would call it the *greatest* of all responsibilities. Presidential election years have, across our nation's history, vacillated between a contest of ideologies and a reckoning of societal conscience. It is a manifestation of the people's will.

For me, the 2020 presidential election year is more than a contest fueled by rhetoric and hyperbole between political parties seeking the leadership reins of this country; it is about a citizen's duty to circumscribe the bounds of trust and leadership. As an Oklahoman, I am a citizen of two nations: the United States and the Cherokee Nation. One has plenary power while the other, even though much older and more experienced in the selection of leaders as defined by the Supreme Court, is a *domestic sovereign*. An election year is a touchstone of my past and a reminder that being a dual citizen has an added set of challenges in reconciling the parallels and proclivities in electing leaders. Election years remind me that I must choose wisely, whether voting for Principal Chief of my Native Nation or President of the United States.

While uniquely different, the two voting responsibilities have remarkable similarities in the search for complementing traits of leadership and policy. Unfortunately, there are no tutorials or orientations to tease out an understanding of how to be a responsible voter in either arena. Immersion is required. In the tableau of tribal, city, county, state, and national elections, one must literally vote "early and often."

I grew up within the historic boundaries of the Cherokee Nation, where my people arrived on the Trail of Tears in 1839. My father's parents were born as Cherokee Citizens before there was a placed called Oklahoma. In some ways, I am a second-generation U.S. citizen. My paternal grandparents and their parents, aunts, and uncles did not become U.S.

citizens until Congress ratified the Cherokee Allotment Agreement in the spring of 1901. Allotment, the act of fragmenting tribal-held lands into individually owned parcels, was the primary focus of creating the Dawes Commission to oversee land distribution to tribal citizens. This was the final diminishment of the Cherokee Nation, breaking up tribal authority into what is today fourteen counties in Northeastern Oklahoma.

The year 1901 would appear as a unique date for the Cherokee, as Section 63 of the Allotment Act plainly stated:

Each Cherokee citizen shall, on the date of the ratification of this agreement, become a citizen of the United States and be entitled to all the rights and privileges thereof, but the same shall in no wise affect his rights as a member of said tribe.

By the stroke of a congressional pen, my Cherokee family transformed into citizen duality. In those days, the extension of U.S. citizenship to the Cherokee was more about terminating Native government than about expanding benefits to Native peoples. Allotment and citizenship were simple ingredients in a formula of assimilation rooted in the earliest years of American interaction with Native peoples. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the Cherokee Nation had been diminished by the extinguishment of its courts, allotment of its tribal lands in severalty, and suspension of its citizens' right to elect their own Principal Chief.—But on the bright side, they were now eligible to vote in U.S. elections.

PHOTO: Jay Hannah, 2001, then-Treasurer of the Cherokee Nation, holds a portrait of his great-great-grandfather Ezekiel Eugene Starr, who also was Treasurer of the Cherokee Nation in the 1890s. Jay is seated in the Officers' Barracks at Fort Gibson where Treasurer Starr officiated the Cherokee Outlet Payment in 1893. Photo by David Fitzgerald. More info: search "Ezekiel Eugene Starr" at visitcherokeeanation.com



I was born mid-century and raised in Adair County just forty years after the Cherokee Nation barely escaped termination. The county was named for one of my ancestors—a Scot trader—who intermarried among the Cherokee. Adair County was carved from the old Goingsnake and Flint Districts of the Cherokee Nation prior to statehood. It was the place my family called home since their arrival on the Trail of Tears from their ancestral homelands in southeastern *Ta na si* (Tennessee), northern Georgia, and northeastern Alabama.

My interest in the electoral process was ignited at an age when most kids are learning to read and taking up the challenge of penmanship. Both my father, Dennis Charles Hannah, and grandfather, William Thomas Hannah, were Precinct Inspectors, responsible for officiating elections in the precincts of Ballard I and Ballard II, the two northernmost precincts in Adair County. As precinct leader, the Inspector picks up election supplies from the County Election Board

office to take to the polling place, coordinates other precinct officials and completes necessary documentation, then returns ballots to the Election Board office at the end of Election Day.

The primary function of precinct officials today is relatively unchanged from those of a hundred years ago. While technology has entered the scene, elections are still the domain of the human experience. The Precinct Inspector is sworn to serve voters and to make sure all properly marked ballots are cast and counted. Anyone who has voted in our state has interacted with these local citizens-turned-election-officials, stepping through the tried-and-true process of voting. We do so in deciding a full array of city, county, state, and national offices, not to mention school boards and revenue initiatives, with little thought as to the process of diligence and preparation required. It is at this grassroots level that the wheels of democracy's bus go round and round.

While it is still a family mystery as to why or how both my father and grandfather became involved in managing the elections in our communities, it was their honor and privilege to do their part to facilitate the vote of the people. My father dedicated almost thirty years to serving as Precinct Inspector of Ballard II. I am fortunate to have learned the mechanics of how our country votes from men I revered, trusted, and loved. I was taught that voting and serving the community are honorable endeavors—not only a privilege but also a *responsibility* of citizenship.

My fifth birthday was in July 1960. The world is a dizzying, fascinating place at age five. Trips with my dad to Stinchcomb's Corner, the general store located on Moseley's Prairie, was a mercantile where you could purchase whatever was required—from a fifty-pound sack of flour to a gallon of kerosene. Moseley's Prairie, complete with three one-room schools within a six-mile radius, was a cross between

the 1960s sitcoms *Green Acres* and *Petticoat Junction* (without the train). I have often said that Moseley is a place with two Baptist Churches, one Missionary and the other Southern, separated by Rod's Shakin' City beer joint, where the congregations of all three might drift from one to another.

Stinchcomb's was not just a place of commerce; it was the community rally point for conversation, an open forum for dialogue where issues local and national could be vetted, aired just short of debate, and perhaps consensus reached for the good of all concerned. As the fall season appeared, store proprietor Osie Stinchcomb kept a fire in a large potbellied cast-iron stove in the center of the old rock building, where local men gathered to take up topics of the day. As a perennial tagalong with my dad, I was a silent observer to a host of conversations that meant little in the mind of a five-year-old who was more interested in the store's inventory inside the ancient oak and glass candy case than hearing about the price of corn or if The Allen Canning Company

in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, just four miles east, was going to contract for green beans next spring.

Nor was I concerned with which of two men, simply referred to as Nixon and Kennedy, would win the upcoming presidential election. I did notice that just the mention of their names sparked the most impassioned exchanges. Cherokee neighbors from the traditional tribal community of Chewey, just across the Illinois River, with names like Crittenden, Vann, Pathkiller, and Hogshooter, often admitted that they knew little of "that Kennedy fellow," but he was a Democrat and that was all they really needed to know. Neighbors who were non-tribal seemed more interested in Nixon, the vice president under "General Eisenhower," as Ike was known in my home community. Men now in their 30s and 40s had followed Ike across Europe just fifteen years earlier to free the world from Fascism; therefore, if Ike trusted Nixon to be his vice president, that was the only endorsement required. I was curious, but unaffected.



1. Allotment Deed for 125.35 acres granted to Jay's great-uncle Hooly Hannah (*Hoo-ley*, meaning "Bell" in Cherokee) by the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Nov. 1, 1907. 2. Quit Claim Deed transferring allotment land from Hooly Hannah to Jay's grandfather William T. Hannah, March 14, 1925. 3. Red and green deed stamps indicating payment of property transfer tax. 4. General Warranty Deed transferring land from Hooly Hannah to William T. Hannah, Sept. 4, 1924. 5. Dennis Hannah's Application for Registration to Vote as a Citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, indicating his family tree chart is complete to enrolled ancestors William T. Hannah, his paternal grandfather, and Cherry Starr, his maternal grandmother, and designating that he will vote at Precinct 1, Adair County. 6. "Vet for Ike" bumper sticker, ca. 1950s, an example of campaign materials meant to sway military veteran voters, without regard to party lines, for Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential run. 7. Jay's maternal grandfather Si Jones (left) and Osie Stinchcomb, proprietor, in front of Stinchcomb's Corner General Store on Moseley's Prairie, ca. 1940s. 8. Dennis Hannah with his uncle Ezekiel Starr (left) and grandfather Charles Lucien Starr (right), ca. 1950s.



That fall, my dad and his close friend, J.B. Morris of Chewey, shared the cultivation of a large crop of sugarcane, now ready for harvest. In the 1960s, sugarcane was grown for livestock silage, a necessary supplement to the prairie hay required to overwinter herds through the cold months in the Ozark Plateau of northeastern Oklahoma. The harvest was epic. My dad drove my grandfather's Ford 8N tractor, pulling an ancient McCormick-Deering grain binder used to cut and tie bundles of sugarcane into shocks for storage. The old grain binder, a Rube Goldberg machine, had been adapted by my grandfather from horse-drawn to tractor-pulled. Dating from the turn of the century, a single bull-wheel brought the mechanical behemoth to life.

J.B. sat on the operator's seat of the binder, regulated its Wizard of Oz-esque analog controls, and fed twine into the spooling mechanism that tied the bundled tops of cane cut down by the machine's sickle. It was both frightening and effective. I rode on the tractor with my dad and watched J.B. attempting to tame more moving parts than a railroad-grade pocket watch. He would often refer to the machine as "that damned old Democrat binder." When I asked him why he called it that, he smiled and said, "Well, Jadee, it is just like the Democrat Party that Mr. Kennedy is part of. It is a very old piece of machinery with lots of moving parts that breaks down regularly and actually produces very little." J.B. was a Republican at heart. That evening, I asked my dad, "What is a damned old Democrat?" He said, "Why, we are,

son." My mind whirled like the cogs of that grain binder. "I thought we were Cherokee," I replied. His tone trailed off as he said, "Well, we're that too."

In that moment, I connected two dots that continue to be part of a lifelong search for identity in culture and in politics.

My mom, Bobbye, was White and had deep family roots in the northwest Arkansas counties of Benton and Washington. When my maternal grandfather passed away in February of the 1960 presidential election year, Granny came to live with us. She, too, was a Democrat and talked of how President Roosevelt (FDR) had saved the nation during the Great Depression. She was puzzled with how the country had "swapped horses," as she described the political pendulum swing to the Republicans in the 1950s. "After all that FDR and Harry Truman did," she'd ask, "how could the country just head for the other ditch?" Her only rationale was that everybody liked Ike and, after all, he had been the General that led the combined Allied Army to victory over Hitler. As Irving Berlin asked in his song, "What can you do with a General, when he stops being a General?" my Granny allowed that you could send him to the White House—no matter his politics.

Granny grew up in northwestern Arkansas in the post-Reconstruction Era after the Civil War in a county that had been occupied by Union forces in 1862. After the 22nd Indiana Infantry Regiment burned

the Benton County Courthouse, folk would not fly the American flag over the county seat until Democrat Grover Cleveland was elected President in 1885.

Dad had been a paratrooper during WWII with the 82nd Airborne and claimed to have seen General Eisenhower inspecting his unit on the eve of the D-Day invasion. Now that the General was in the White House, I was more interested in how he was promoted to president. My dad explained the office to me in tribal terms that I could understand. "The president is like an Indian chief," he said. "Presidents are elected by the people to lead the country, just as chiefs are chosen by the people to lead the tribe." In the Cherokee language, the word *u-gv-wi-yu-hi* is used for both chief and president. It was all beginning to make sense.

The Cherokee have been "choosing" chiefs since time immemorial. Across millennia, the process moved from chiefs being selected by councils, to being chosen by tribal clan headmen, to ultimately being elected by of-age male voters. Tracing the selection process for Chief of the Cherokee is a historical timeline of a Native Nation in evolution. By the 1820s, it became obvious that the Cherokee Nation required a singular voice of leadership rather than the fragmented voices of chiefs, headmen, and councils of easily divided, locally autonomous tribal towns. Creating a centralized Cherokee government came with the adoption of our first written Constitution in 1827.



A pocket-size map of Oklahoma, dated 1909, advertising land for sale in Cushing, "situated in the most eastern part of Oklahoma." Land speculators like Ira Stout trafficked in Indian Allotment land after Oklahoma statehood. Selling points of the land, according to Stout's little red book, included its many crops (from wheat to gooseberries, which "grow to perfection in this climate"), good public schools, five churches, two banks, and three railroads. "To the man that wants to change his location there is no section of this country that holds out so many advantages as this. It is good for the farmer, merchant and manufacturer." Stout further claims he has 30,000 acres, which he handles "on commission." The Office of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes, U.S. Department of the Interior, issued regulations for the first sale of unallotted lands on October 12, 1910. Hundreds of thousands of acres of former tribal lands were auctioned to the highest bidder. When the Dawes Commission ceased to exist on June 30, 1914, only 306 acres of the Cherokee Nation remained.

out of their ancient homelands to new lands in what is now Oklahoma. In the West, he navigated intra-tribal rivalries, built seminaries of higher education, provided for common schools, and attempted (ineffectively) to steer a course of neutrality during the American Civil War. Though beloved by traditional Cherokees, Ross was often seen as an indecisive impediment to progress by those who shared his mixed blood ancestry. His shifting stance on Removal to the West, apparent lack of control over post-Removal reprisals spawning intra-tribal civil war, and his shifting allegiance between the Confederacy and Union, paint Ross's leadership in a mixed palette. Still, he continued to be reelected as Principal Chief across conflicting eras of the Cherokee Nation. He was as anointed as he was flawed. Serving until his death in 1866, his place in Cherokee history as the first constitutionally elected Chief is well enshrined.

The diminishment of tribal sovereignty and citizenship rights after the Allotment Act in 1901 paved the way for seventeen Principal Chiefs to be presidentially appointed between 1906 and 1970—mostly for signing over unallotted tribal lands to the United States after Oklahoma statehood. These Chiefs were appointed in a curious mix of legal and ceremonial obligation that often provided a reign of only one day, as when President Franklin Roosevelt appointed my great-great-uncle W.W. Hastings for one day in the 1930s for the express purpose of signing over the title to Cherokee lands that would become the site of the Indian Hospital. It was not until passage of the Principal Chief's Act of 1970 that Cherokees were finally allowed to reinstitute elections of their own.

My first presidential Election Day came on Nov. 3, 1960. The night before, my dad made the



forty-mile roundtrip from our home on Moseley's Prairie to Stilwell to take receipt of the ballot box for Ballard II. As the Precinct Inspector, he was responsible for readying ballots and preparing the Precinct Judge and Clerks needed to officiate the decision of the people. At dinner that night, as my mom and dad talked about a nation on the cusp of a presidential decision, my mom said something to the effect of, "Take Jadee with you tomorrow and show him how elections work." Dad agreed over a plate of fried potatoes and while I was excited about the opportunity, I had no concept of what the day would hold. I just knew I was going with my dad to watch him do something important.

We were up early. Polls opened at 7:00 a.m. and that meant that the Green Valley School House, just north of the Illinois River, had to be

unlocked and a fire built to stave off the crisp November morning air. Pads of ballots were arranged, counting tablets dispersed, pencils sharpened, and the precinct roll book was placed on a big table just inside the front door. The Precinct Judge who was to check voter registration cards and signatures in the large registry book, and the Clerk tasked with dispersing paper ballots arrived chattering as though cicadas awakening from a thirteen-year hibernation.

Then and now, state election law requires the Inspector, Judge, and Clerk to be registered to vote and two of the three officials to be from the two largest political parties in the state. My dad and Lola Anglin, who went by "Babe" and served as the Clerk, were Democrats, leaving Precinct Judge Mrs. Harless as the lone Republican in the officiating squad. I remember that my dad met Mrs.

Harless at the front door and proclaimed that she needed to get her Nixon electioneering out of the way, because once she stepped through the doors of Green Valley School House, "No one is to know if we are Roosters or Eagles." That seemed odd until I saw the sample ballot he tacked to the front door. At the top of the ballot were the images of a rooster to designate the Democratic Party ticket, and an eagle to designate the Republican Party ticket. All of the political talk stopped as soon as they entered the door of the old one-room schoolhouse-turned-church (and now polling place). With quiet hands they moved with orchestral precision to organize the ballot materials.

The day was long and tedious for a kid not yet a first-grader. Folks trickled in, some dressed as though on their way to a church social and others in overalls with the stained badge

of field labor. Mom had fixed a lunch of sandwiches and Mrs. Harless brought a cake—it was chocolate. I took a nap after lunch on one of the church pews that lined the walls, played among the old oak and cast-iron school desks, and cautiously approached ancient playground equipment that would cause an OSHA inspector to cringe in horror. Green Valley closed its doors in 1958 in favor of school consolidation and a bus ride across the river to Watts, where all twelve grades were relegated to one school building. Watts was a railroad town nestled alongside the Kansas City Southern Railroad, on the west side of Ballard Creek, where both voting precincts took their names. At the community building in downtown Watts, my grandfather was replicating the same polling place rituals for Ballard I Precinct that my dad was executing at Green Valley for Ballard II.

The highlight of the day was when my dad handed me a sample ballot and said, "Son, it's time for you to cast your vote." He explained the various offices that were in contest. Incumbents like County Sheriff Fats Swebston and County Commissioner Hungry Buffington were in the candidate lineup, along with a list of Clerks for offices that tested my attention. Then he pointed to the presidential candidates, Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy. When I asked whom I should vote for, he said, "Well, son, as Precinct Inspector I'm not allowed to tell you who to vote for; but if you want to vote a straight party ticket, just stamp the rooster until the feathers fly." I don't think Mrs. Harless, my uncle's mother-in-law and one of only a handful of Republicans in Green Valley, was impressed with my dad's political tutorial.



OPPOSITE: A collage of election ephemera, including Adair County sample ballots printed with icons of the rooster (representing the Democratic Party) and eagle (representing the Republican Party) and square metal stamps bearing the rooster and "X" for marking ballots. PHOTO: Election Day, 1976, at the polling place on the Hannah Farm in Adair County. Pictured are Ballard II Precinct Officers (left to right) Lois McGlothlin, Cecil Harless, Dennis Hannah, Sharon Boswood, and Carr Harless. ABOVE: Envelopes used to secure the key to a ballot box lock. A metal stamp bearing a star and the number 46 (representing Oklahoma as the 46th state), was used to imprint the wax seal on the envelope, indicating the ballot box was under "dual control," meaning that two people had been present during the process to secure ballots in the box. Envelope for the Ballard II Precinct bears Dennis Hannah's signature above the seal.

I marked my ballot and, even though it didn't go in the big metal ballot box with all the other voters' ballots, I felt as though I was part of something very "grownup" and much bigger than I could comprehend. It was curious to me how a small piece of paper in Adair County could make a difference in deciding who would be President of the United States.

My mom fetched me in the afternoon and I was home with my granny when Dad came through the door after the polls had closed and the counting was completed. He told my mom that he was taking the ballot box to Stilwell and would not be home until late. She said, "Don't you think that Jadee should see the courthouse lit up on election night?" My dad looked at me and winked. We bundled into his 1952 Ford pickup with the padlocked Ballard II ballot box, containing all the decisions of our community, in the bed of the truck and were off for the county seat.

The trip to Stilwell was an odyssey. The rural road in front of our modest farmhouse was the county line separating Adair and Delaware Counties. Stilwell, where my dad had been raised, may as well have been on the dark side of the moon from our end of the county. I had been to Stilwell with my Cherokee grandmother to see her father, my great-grandfather Charlie Starr, the patriarch of our mixed-blood family. The Starrs had played significant roles in the political and governmental workings of the Cherokee Nation since the intermarriage of a young Quaker who came among the Cher-

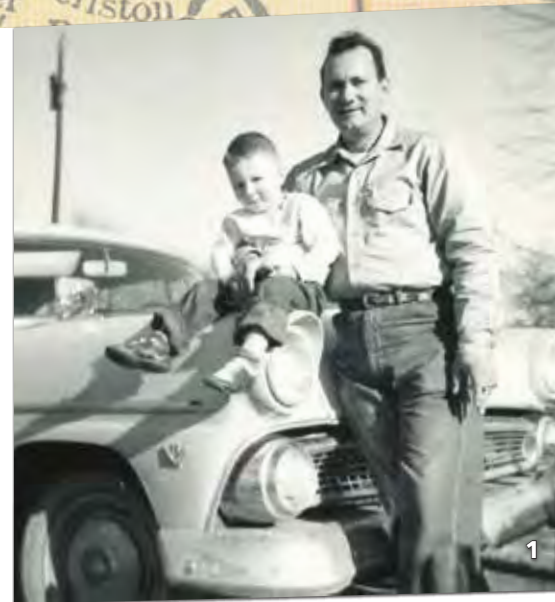
okee in the mid-1700s to engage in deerskin trade. Granddad Charlie's great-uncle James Starr had signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 that would prove to be the point of ignition for Cherokee Removal. By 1844, James Starr had paid the blood law price of death for having signed away tribal homelands in exchange for what he believed was a future in the West, where the Cherokee could continue without harassment by the incursions of avarice by states which overlaid the old Cherokee Nation. The loss of ancestral homelands and the loss of four thousand Cherokees on the Trail of Tears signed and sealed the death warrants of Treaty Signers, as they were referred to during "the troubled years" following Removal.

Being "lighter-skinned" than my dad and grandparents, my dad was keen on explaining that I had the same amount of Cherokee blood as Chief John Ross who had led the Cherokees to Oklahoma. Indeed, Ross was one-eighth by blood and served the Nation as Principal Chief when tribal citizenship was not about skin color, but about which *culture* would define your life's course. Ross lived as a Cherokee, just as my family decided to do, in an era when it would have been much easier to "just be White." Self-determination is powerful. Granddad Charlie was a leathery, somewhat scary connection to my Starr family that I would later learn was filled to overflowing with characters famous and infamous, from senators and cabinet secretaries to assassins and outlaws. He was my living connection to pre-statehood Cherokee history.

Dad's old truck departed gravel and met the pavement of State Highway 33 at Stinchcomb's Corner. An eastwardly route toward Siloam Springs, Arkansas, stopped short of crossing the state line and we turned south. State Highway 59 snaked down the east side of Adair County, crossing the Illinois River just north of Watts, crossing Ballard Creek, past Chewey Road, and then on to Baptist Mission. It was here that our Cherokee Family arrived at "Breadtown" in 1839 as one of the terminus points and supply depots established by the U.S. Army as the final punctuation to the Trail of Tears.

We drove past the old Baptist Mission Church on the northeast slope of Bushyhead Mountain, where Sunday services were announced with a bell brought west on the Trail of Tears. From Baptist Mission, the road leads to Westville, where my Cherokee great-great-great-grandparents rest in Foreman Cemetery, just north of the Dairy Maid. It's not often you can get an ice cream cone and see the headstones of your ancestors from one vantage point. We drove on to where Shell Branch and the Baron Fork intersect, past Peavine, and then south toward Stilwell. Dad kept me awake by pointing out where cousins lived and by watching for deer crossing the road.

Lights were ablaze on both floors of the Adair County Courthouse, a 1930s Art Deco jewel of blond brick with limestone casements. In an architectural cliché, the heads of Indian chiefs, carved in the limestone over the front doors, were bedecked in feather headdresses



that no Cherokee ever saw outside of a Western movie. The original courthouse burned unexpectedly in 1928. My dad was eight years old at the time and would tell stories about the night the courthouse burned and that his parents let him stay up late to see the spectacle. Terrazzo floors echoed with our every footstep, blending with a cacophony of conversations and a wall cloud of cigar smoke. Men shouted out welcomes in both Cherokee and English and in teasing tones proclaimed, "Well, I guess the final box is here so now we can call in the dogs."

My father handed over the large square galvanized metal box and the padlock's key in a small envelope with a wax seal bearing the 46th Star to prove that the contents had been safeguarded. As county election officials opened the box and began their inventory of the ballots, my dad took me by the hand and we made our way up the stairs to the jail on the second floor. The kitchen, ordinarily relegated for the preparation of prisoner meals,

was the source for strong coffee to fuel the ballot counting. We stopped at a large dark wood door with an opaque crinkle glass window lettered with "Sheriff." My dad took his finger and ran it up the door facing until his index finger found a small round hole. Sticking his finger in, he turned and said, "Boy, this is what happens when you mix whiskey and pistols."

It would be years later before I learned the full meaning of his remark. In a story that appeared in major newspapers across the country, on election night just four years before, Adair County Sheriff Chester Crittenden was in a heated run-off race with former Under Sheriff Robert "Bob" Alberty. Near midnight on July 3, 1956, Sheriff Crittenden and Bob Alberty were hanging around the courthouse during the vote counting and the two opponents met in the jail kitchen. Some said an argument erupted over how the ballots were being counted; some say that Sheriff Crittenden was going to arrest Alberty



1. Jay Hannah seated on car hood with his dad, Dennis Hannah, April 1958. 2. Pictured left to right are Grandmother Gi-ta-ya (Cherry) Starr Hannah holding Jay Hannah; Jay's sister, L.D. Hannah; great-grandfather Charles Lucien Starr; and great-aunt Mary Still Starr. 3. Jay's mom, Bobbye Hannah. 4. Jay in front of one of the Moseley Baptist Churches (yes, it is spelled wrong on the building sign). | Document photography for this article by W. Michael McShan. Ephemera scans coordinated by Adele Smith.



Welcome!
L.B.J.

NES 1976
NAME DENNIS FARMER
POSITION INSPECTOR

NAME	FD
RESIDENCE	FD
DATE	FD
TIME	FD



1. Kennedy-Johnson and flag pins. "Welcome LBJ" poster distributed to attendees during President Johnson's visit to Pryor, Oklahoma, in August 1966. 2. News Election Service form with instructions to collect and report election results to the media. The form notes that votes cast in the presidential election in Adair County, Number 1, Congressional District 2, on Nov. 2, 1976, totaled 14 for Gerald Ford, 28 for Jimmy Carter, and 0 for Eugene McCarthy. 3. Small shop building on the Hannah farm that served as the Ballard II polling place for the 1976 elections.

for carrying a concealed pistol and being drunk. Those in the courthouse that night agreed upon one thing: there was a flurry of gunshots. Crittenden staggered out of the kitchen with wounds in the chest, stomach, and one shoulder from Alberty's Colt .32 automatic, making it only a few steps before he collapsed dead. Alberty was found on the kitchen floor, dead from a single wound over his left eye from the Sheriff's Smith & Wesson .38. The case was ruled a double murder. It was an election night to be remembered and its lesson on the hazards of mixing pistols, alcohol, and politics was duly noted.

I awoke the next morning and ambled into the kitchen where my mom and dad were having breakfast. My mom pulled me to her lap and said, "Well, I guess your vote counted. John Kennedy is going to be President Kennedy thanks to you." I asked how she knew how I had marked my ballot. She smiled and said; "I saw the rooster's feathers in your hair."

Adair County cast only 1,903 votes for Kennedy as compared to 3,655

for Nixon. A largely Democrat-populated county had overwhelmingly voted for a Republican presidential candidate. The numbers were reflective of the entire state. Oklahoma, with its majority of voters registered as Democrats at that time, carried Republican Richard Milhous Nixon by 59.02% of the vote. My dad blamed Mrs. Harless. Still, the tide of the national vote put JFK in the White House by .02% of the vote.

Other presidential elections caught my eye across the years. I was in the sixth grade in August 1966 when my mom took me out of school to travel to her birthplace, Pryor, Oklahoma, to see President Lyndon Johnson speak at the opening of the Mid-America Industrial Park. A who's-who of Oklahoma politicians were the warmup act for the president: U.S. Senator Fred Harris, Governor Henry Bellmon, Lt. Governor George Nigh, and U.S. Speaker of the House Carl Albert. The Kilgore Rangerettes provided entertainment and Anita Bryant, accompanied by the Pryor High School Band, sang "Happy Birthday" to the president,

who had just celebrated his 58th birthday. I was more impressed with the high kicks of the Rangerettes than the high talk of what seemed to be a battalion of politicians in gray suits. President Johnson pointed political barbs at Republican Governor Bellmon, but quickly moved to answering his own question: "Why are we in Viet Nam?" *All the Way with LBJ* buttons, *Welcome LBJ* posters, and the chance to shake his hand made my first "in the flesh" presidential sighting a memorable experience.

Senator Robert Kennedy, brother of slain president John F. Kennedy, made a cameo appearance at Oaks Indian Mission on February 18, 1968. It was my first glimpse of (at the time) a not-yet-presidential-hopeful. His plane landed at a nearby Arkansas airport so that a car could easily drive Highway 33 past Stinchcomb's Corner on its way to the gathering at the Oaks High School Gymnasium. I was out in front of the old rock store, which my parents now operated, when the black Lincoln slowed and pulled into the gravel driveway. The backseat window rolled down and a man with a Bostonian accent I had

never heard before asked me if I knew how to get to Oaks Indian Mission. I pointed west and they drove away.

Senator Kennedy, Chairman of the U.S. Senate subcommittee studying Indian Education, remarked, "There ought to be more emphasis on Indian culture." He was right. Four months later, on June 5th, Bobby Kennedy was fatally wounded only moments after claiming victory in the California presidential primary. During the evening news, I saw film footage of his final moments lying on the hotel's kitchen floor. When I heard the news, I couldn't help but think of his big smile, asking me for directions. Once again the world changed. Earlier in April of '68, Martin Luther King, Jr., another voice seeking to reason with America's internal turmoil over an unpopular war and the strife of racial inequity, had been struck down at a hotel in Memphis. Seeing the country's angst as a capstone in lethality before my thirteenth birthday gave me pause.

Democrat Jimmy Carter of Georgia and incumbent Republican President Gerald Ford were at the

top of the ticket when I went to cast my first "real ballot" in a presidential election. In November 1976, my dad was still officiating elections for Ballard II. This time the votes were cast in a workshop building on our family's farm. Green Valley School House had mysteriously burned after an itinerate preacher leased the building from the school board to hold church services. His brand of evangelism apparently crossed the bounds of acceptance for the community's traditional congregations. Some joked that the old schoolhouse had succumbed to a fire and brimstone sermon; some speculated it was lightning. My mom just said, "God works in mysterious ways."

Without the traditional polling venue, the County Election Board granted permission to conduct voting on our family farm. My first official presidential ballot was cast literally in my own backyard. Cows near the barn bawled loudly at the sight of strangers coming and going throughout the day. Jimmy Carter carried the vote in Ballard II and across the country. I would later meet President Carter in Sept. 1989

when he came to Tahlequah to inaugurate the community's Habitat for Humanity Chapter. A soft-spoken man with a genuine heart for rural America, Carter would face the trials of gasoline shortages and the hostage crisis in Iran that defined his administration. While his successes in the White House were few, in 2020 at age 96 he still teaches Sunday School class and swings a hammer for Habitat.

I was not old enough to vote in the tribal election that transitioned leadership from W.W. Keeler to Ross Swimmer. I was in the polling place line to vote for a young and vibrant Wilma Mankiller as the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Although Wilma had grown up in Adair County, our paths would not cross until she had returned to the Nation from California, where her family had been relocated in a federal plan to provide employment opportunities to Native Americans. She was not just an elected Principal Chief; Wilma was a beloved woman, great leader, and a good friend. Her outlier approach to leadership was that of a listener. Wilma's approach



Graffiti on the west side of the Berlin Wall offers a glimpse into East Germany, by SSGT. F. Lee Cockran, Nov. 14, 1989, National Archives. RIGHT: Berlin Wall near the Brandenburg Gate, by Sue Ream, Nov. 9, 1989 (CC BY 3.0) Wikimedia



LEARNING FROM THE PAST ACTING FOR THE FUTURE

BEN ALPERS

On November 9, 1989, I was in a restaurant eating pizza with a friend when I looked up at the TV behind the bar and saw something I never expected to see: Hundreds of people were standing triumphantly on the Berlin Wall. Although the chain of events that led to that moment started months earlier, it still came as an extraordinary surprise to those of us living through that moment.

I was in my third semester of graduate school at the time. And though I was doing a PhD in American history, that fall semester I was taking a graduate seminar on modern European history. I remember my professor telling us, even after the Wall fell, that he thought German unification was unlikely. That very year, another professor in the department, a specialist in modern

German history from whom I'd also taken a course, had published a book on German national identity, concluding that the two Germanies had become quite separate societies and would remain so for the foreseeable future. These senior scholars were proven wrong within a year of the Wall falling.

I don't mention their errors to denigrate them—both were brilliant. I learned an enormous amount from the seminar on modern Europe. And that book on German national identity is terrific (though a quite different conclusion was added to a second edition). But the misinterpretations of these two teachers taught me a number of valuable lessons, one of the most important of which was that it can be extraordinarily difficult to navigate one's way through times of unexpected change.



PHOTOS: **1.** President Lyndon B. Johnson meeting with advisors on Detroit riot crisis, by Yoichi Okamoto, White House photographer, July 24, 1967, LBJ Library. **2.** Copy of *Los Angeles Times*, "Looting and Fires Ravage L.A., 23 Dead, 572 Injured." Posted by Dark Sevier (CC BY NC 2.0) Flickr. **3.** Gulf of Tonkin Incident: John J. Herrick, USN, Commander Destroyer Division 192 (left) and Comm. Herbert L. Ogier, USN, Commanding Officer of the destroyer USS *Maddox*, 13 August 1964. They were in charge of the ship during her engagement with three North Vietnamese motor torpedo boats on 2 August 1964, photographed by PH3 White. Official U.S. Navy Photograph. **4.** Richard Nixon gives his trademark "victory" sign, Paoli, PA, Ollie Atkins, White House photographer, July 1968, National Archives. **5.** President George H. W. Bush rides in a HUMVEE with Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Saudi Arabia, David Valdez, White House photographer, Nov. 22, 1990, National Archives. **6.** Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler shake hands during meetings for Munich Agreement, 1938. Brazilian National Archives via Wikimedia.

As I write this in early June 2020, our nation is going through two enormous crises. The first is the COVID-19 epidemic. At least 1.9 million Americans have contracted the disease; at least 110,000 have died of it. The nation is also being rocked by protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. Though these protests have been mostly peaceful, our president has responded by threatening to quell them with the U.S. military.

By the time you read this, you will know much more about how these two crises have evolved; it is possible that neither will be over. And even in the unlikely event that they *have* entirely

resolved, we will doubtless face other crises in the years ahead. So, how can we better understand a moment like this? How can we be more informed (and more involved) citizens in times of turmoil?

Great crises have deep roots and the two that the nation is facing as I write are no exception. George Floyd's murder is rooted in four hundred years of white supremacy and the related shorter history of modern American policing. Understanding these and other historical contexts for Floyd's death, and the public and state responses to it, is essential for acting intelligently and effectively.

But often, public discussion of history and current events turns into a game of "Find the Right Analogy": Is the U.S. in 2020 becoming the America of 1968, when white backlash against urban unrest helped elect Richard Nixon? Are we in 1992, when civil disturbances following the acquittal of four L.A. police officers charged with using excessive force in the arrest of Rodney King led to a different series of political outcomes?

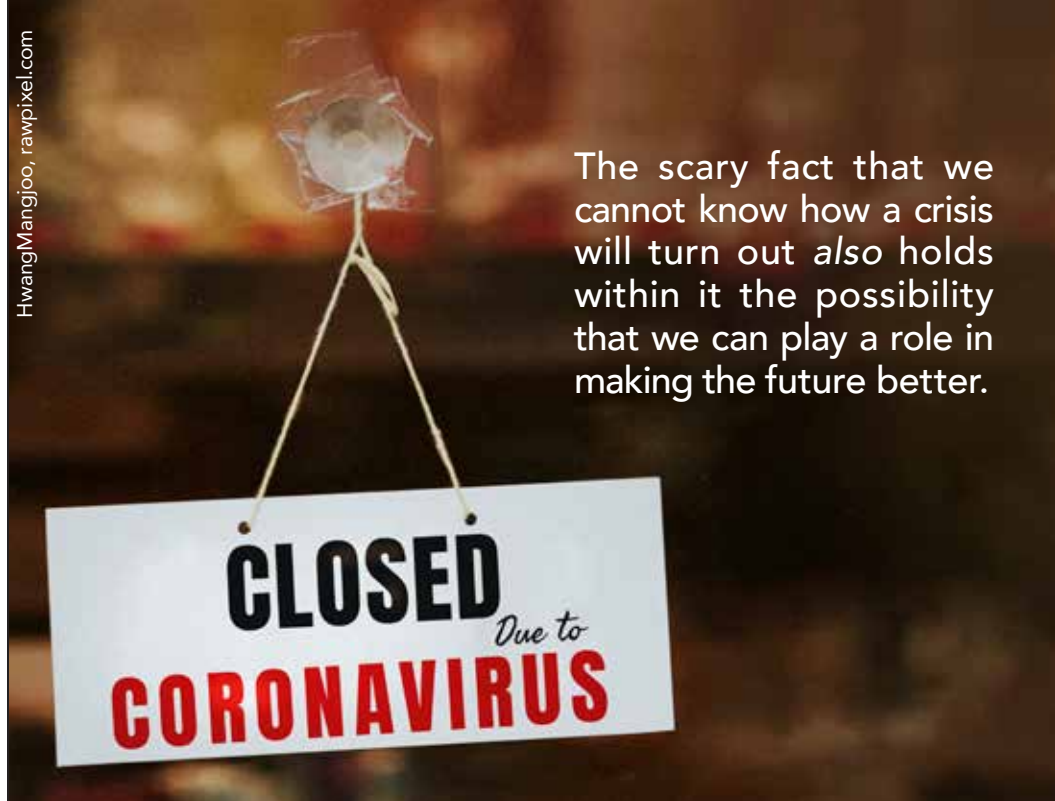
It is common for American citizens and policymakers to think about the present by relating it to the past. In early 1991, Congress debated whether to give President

George H.W. Bush the authority to go to war against Iraq in Kuwait. Historical analogies seemed to dominate the discussion: Would refusing to pass authorization for the use of military force against Iraq be tantamount to Neville Chamberlain's attempted appeasement of Hitler in 1938? Would passing such an authorization prove to be like the Vietnam War-era's Gulf of Tonkin resolution?

There's something comforting about the notion that history repeats itself in such simple ways. We like to think of history as a series of stories. And it would be nice to think that all one had to do to understand any

present moment is to figure out which historical story we find ourselves in and where we are in its unfolding. Even if the analogy one reaches for is an unhappy one, at least one feels sure of where one is going.

Narrative is a powerful tool historians use to understand the past and convey that understanding to each other and to broader audiences. But the stories of history are, by their very nature, retroactive. Over time, what we see as important in the past changes. And, as it does, the stories we tell about the past change too. For example, from the 1940s through the 1970s, U.S. historians viewed



The scary fact that we cannot know how a crisis will turn out *also* holds within it the possibility that we can play a role in making the future better.

the 1930s as a period in which “modern America” emerged. During those decades economic inequality shrank. Union membership soared. The New Deal and Great Society created a fairly robust social safety net. And those developments enjoyed broad (though hardly universal) public support.

But as the aspects of mid-twentieth-century America have changed over the last four decades, historians’ views of the 1930s have changed as well. Rather than building a foundation for modern America, the New Deal now looks like, in the words of historian Jefferson Cowie, “the Great Exception.” Those decades of decreased economic inequality stand in stark contrast not only to what came before but also to what came after. Now historians ask different questions of the middle decades of the twentieth century: What unusual circumstances made possible these unusual results? What changed to bring this exceptional period to an end? In answering these new questions, the stories we tell about that period have changed.

The situation is even more fraught, when trying to understand the present. The events of 2020 will almost certainly look different

from the vantage points of, say, the years 2030, 2050, and 2100. And current events have not yet played themselves out. Will the wave of protests gripping the country end with the fundamental criminal justice reform protestors want, or with an intensified show of force from the police, or will they end some other way entirely? Will the COVID-19 pandemic peter out or reassert itself? Will the economy experience a “V-shaped” recovery or will the downturn drag on? The answers to these questions are all in our future . . . or at least they are as I write this.

From the vantage point of spring 2020, it would be comforting to know the answers to these questions. Indulging in historical analogy—as comparing 2020 to 1968—appears to define the issues and where we are going. Not only is that a comfort history cannot provide, it also comes at a substantial cost. The scary fact that we cannot know how a crisis will turn out *also* holds within it the possibility that we can play a role in making the future better.

In 2004, the writer Rebecca Solnit published a book about living through crisis entitled *Hope in the Dark*. For Solnit, hope is not a faith that everything will turn out fine.



Black Lives Matter Rally, by David Geitgey Sierralupe, May 31, 2020. Eugene Police Department estimates between 7,000-10,000 marched during a pandemic to denounce racist police violence (CC BY 2.0/Flickr).

Rather, it is the belief that, in the midst of crisis, possibilities exist for a better country and a better world to emerge. As Solnit writes, “Hope locates itself in the premises that we don’t know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act.” Part of that action, Solnit suggests, consists of the narratives we fashion: “Every conflict is in part a battle over the story we tell, or who tells and who is heard.”

An understanding of history—in the sense of what happened and the stories we tell about what happened—can play a critical role in informing our hopeful action in response to crisis. Crises, in turn, lead us to ask different questions of the past, to listen to voices that have been silenced or ignored. It is no accident that *The New York Times*’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *1619 Project*, which attempts to center American history around the legacy of slavery, began in 2019, at the end of a decade in which white nationalism had grown in power, even as Black Lives Matter and other attempts to address systemic racism emerged.

Solnit’s vision of hope cannot entirely tell us what to do any more than it suggests

that everything will turn out fine in the end. That “spaciousness of uncertainty” brings with it responsibility: to listen (especially to those most affected by crises), to learn, to think, and to act. How we act is ultimately a matter of choice. Nothing and nobody can make that choice for us.

When I saw those people on TV standing on the Berlin Wall, I was a distant observer to the events rocking Europe in 1989. I don’t have that luxury in relationship to the crises facing our nation today. But I learned a second lesson from my professors’ misreading of those past winds of change—a lesson of humility. However knowledgeable we are about the kinds of crises we face, we are likely to make mistakes in analyzing them. Along with the responsibility to act comes a responsibility to admit to the mistakes that we will inevitably make, to ourselves and to those around us.

BEN ALPERS is the Reach for Excellence Associate Professor in the Honors College at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture* and is currently at work on a book about Americans in the 1970s thinking about the American past. He also serves on the board of Oklahoma Humanities.



MICHELLE DUSTER AND A'LELIA BUNDLES

Madam C. J. Walker in front of her Indianapolis home, 1912, at the wheel of her Model T with (left to right): Anjetta Breedlove, Madam Walker's niece (in front passenger's seat); Lucy Flint (Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company bookkeeper) and Alice Kelly (Walker Company factory manager).

➤ As we mark the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the story of American women's battle to secure the right to vote is being rewritten. Hidden drama and missing details are being revealed as suffragists like Mary Church Terrell, Zitkala-Sa, Lola Armijo, Mabel Lee, and other women of color now take their rightful places beside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in new books, musicals, podcasts, and museum exhibitions.

This more accurate historical account allows us to reflect on the roles our ancestors, Ida B. Wells and Madam C. J. Walker, played in the fight for women's suffrage. Ida B. Wells—Michelle Duster's great-grandmother—is best known as a journalist, suffragist, anti-lynching activist, and a co-founder of the NAACP. In May, she was posthumously awarded a Pulitzer Prize Special Citation for her courageous investigative reporting. Madam C. J. Walker—A'Leilia Bundles's great-great-grandmother—was a beauty industry entrepreneur who provided jobs for thousands of Black women and became a philanthropist and political activist.

The extraordinary accomplishments of Ida B. Wells & Madam C. J. Walker

➤ Ida was born into slavery in Holly Springs, Mississippi, on July 16, 1862. The eldest of eight children, she graduated from Shaw University (now Rust College) and moved to Memphis where she started as a teacher, then turned to journalism and activism. In 1895, she married attorney Ferdinand L. Barnett and settled in Chicago where they had four children together.

Madam was born Sarah Breedlove on December 23, 1867, on the same Delta, Louisiana, plantation where her parents and older siblings had been enslaved before Emancipation. Orphaned at seven and widowed at twenty with a young daughter, she moved in 1888 to St. Louis where her brothers were barbers. She was a washerwoman until 1906 when she developed a line of hair care products for Black women soon after marrying her third husband, Charles Joseph Walker.

While still a poor laundress, Sarah was embraced and mentored by the women of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church. When the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) met at St. Paul's during its 1904 convention, she observed the power of Black women organized around civic, political, and social activism. Ida, who already was an internationally traveled civil rights advocate, had been a founder of the NACW.

Although Black women had advocated for suffrage even before the 1848 Seneca Falls convention for women's rights, members of the NACW were excluded from a meeting of the all-White General

Federation of Women's Clubs in 1896. The common cause that had united Black and White abolitionists like Anthony, Stanton, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth during the 1840s and 1850s fractured after the Civil War when the 15th Amendment enfranchised Black men but not White women in 1870. Acutely aware of the rift, abolitionist and NACW co-founder Frances Ellen Watkins Harper told delegates at the 1873 American Woman Suffrage Association convention that as "much as white women need the ballot, colored women need it more."

➤ The decades-long tension came to a head on March 3, 1913—the day before President-elect Woodrow Wilson's inauguration—during a parade for women's suffrage in Washington, D.C. Parade organizer Alice Paul consigned Black women to the rear of the procession because Southern White women objected to their presence. Ida, who had faced even more formidable opponents, defied the order and joined the otherwise all-White Illinois delegation. Welcome or not, Ida, Madam, and thousands of Black women created their own local groups. In January 1913, Ida founded the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago, just a few months before Illinois passed legislation granting women limited voting rights.

At the time of the March 1913 suffrage parade, Madam was in the midst of a long-scheduled trip through South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama



This portrait of Madam Walker was taken circa 1913 by well-known photographer Addison Scurlock, Washington, D.C., and appeared in Walker Company advertisements for decades. The image was used on the 1998 U.S. Black Heritage Series postage stamp of Madam C. J. Walker. Photo here and page 44 courtesy Madam Walker Family Archives, A'Lelia Bundles. BUTTON: Manufactured by the Whitehead & Hoag Company in Newark, NJ, this dime-sized button announced support for women's voting rights. The gold background was emblematic of the suffrage movement's primary color, and the phrase "Votes for Women" was one of its main rallying cries. U.S. House of Representatives Collections

to recruit new sales agents for her haircare company. But even as she focused on building her business, she realized the importance of the vote and women's collective action. In June 1912, she had hosted the Colored Branch of Indiana's Equal Suffrage Association in her Indianapolis home. Local teacher Caroline "Carrie" Barnes, a graduate of Columbia and Tuskegee, had organized forty members, including Madam's bookkeeper, Lucy Flint, and her attorney, Freeman B. Ransom.

Ida and Madam considered enfranchisement a means to combat the racial violence they both had witnessed. In Memphis, three of Ida's friends, whose grocery was in direct competition with a nearby White-owned store, were lynched in 1892 on the pretext of a crime they did not commit. In her articles, Ida exposed the truth about lynching as an act of terrorism and political intimidation. She called for boycotts of White-owned businesses and streetcars. After a visit to the Oklahoma Territory, she suggested mass migration from Memphis and even considered relocating there. As a child in Madison Parish, Louisiana, during the 1870s, Madam had seen the Ku Klux Klan and former Confederates reclaim control of local government and the state legislature. Curtis Pollard, her family minister who had been elected a state senator during Reconstruction, was chased at gunpoint from the state by White supremacists

who resented his political and economic influence. Madam's eldest brother, who was a Pollard ally, fled at the same time.

➤ We don't know exactly when Madam and Ida met, though Ida's recollection in her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, suggests it was as early as 1906, soon after Madam founded the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company. Their paths continued to cross at conventions during the next decade as each worked to advance the cause. In Chicago, Ida and the Alpha Suffrage Club's push for Black women to vote led to the 1914 election of Oscar De Priest as the first Black alderman and made it possible for them to wield continued influence on local politics. In New York, during the 1916 presidential election, the *Richmond Planet* reported that Madam urged women to fight for the vote as a way to "bring about a better economic and industrial condition for the race" and to allow them to confront "the infamous Jim Crow cars and other unjust discrimination."

In September 1917, Madam hosted a dinner in her Harlem townhouse for Ida and the board of the National Equal Rights League (NERL), an organization led by *Boston Guardian* editor William Monroe Trotter. The NERL convention happened at a particularly fraught time in America. Two months earlier, a White mob—resentful of Black men who had replaced them during factory strikes in East St. Louis, Illinois—killed more than three dozen Black men, women, and children during a three-day spree of violence. Madam, who had lived just across the Mississippi River in St. Louis for almost two decades, knew the

town well. Three days after the riot, Ida arrived to interview residents for firsthand accounts of the attacks. Her *East St. Louis Massacre* pamphlet documented the state militia's complicity in the destruction of an African American community. (The national reaction to the devastation in 1917 was akin to the outrage that followed the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020.)

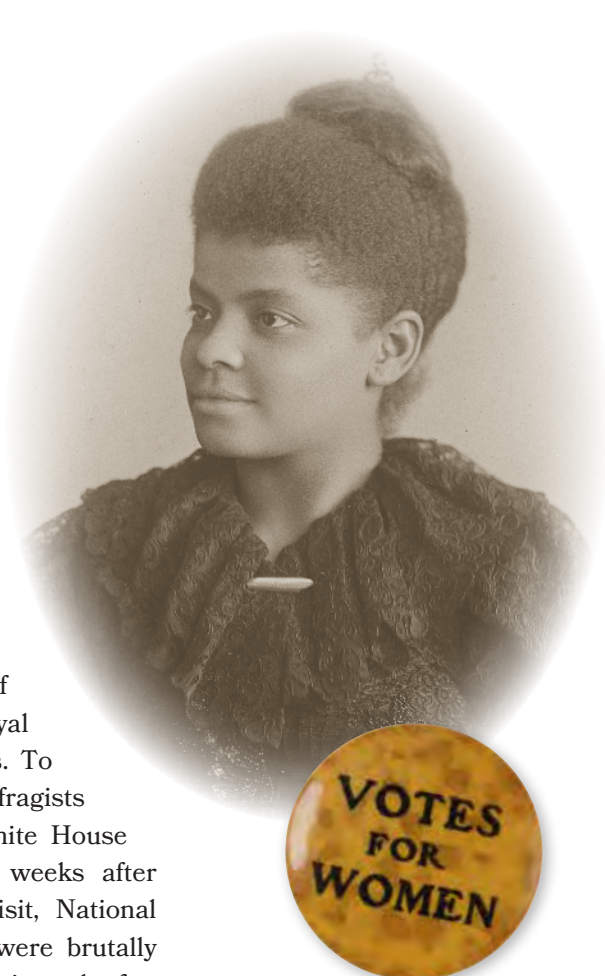
Among the strongest displays of force was a Silent Protest Parade organized by the NAACP's New York branch executive committee on which Madam served. The demonstration drew a multi-generational crowd of 10,000 marchers who processed up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue holding banners that denounced lynching. A few days later, Madam joined a group of Harlem leaders who traveled to the White House with a petition urging President Woodrow Wilson to support legislation to make lynching a federal crime. At the Madam Walker Beauty Culturists League's first national convention that August, the delegates sent a telegram to Wilson reinforcing the demand for an anti-lynching bill, something Ida had spoken to President William S. McKinley about almost two decades earlier in 1898.

Wilson was particularly peeved about matters of race and the rights of African Americans. The first Southern-born president elected since the Civil War, he had imposed racial segregation on previously integrated federal offices at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing shortly after his inauguration—sparking a highly publicized clash when, at a 1914 White House meeting, NERL leader William Trotter

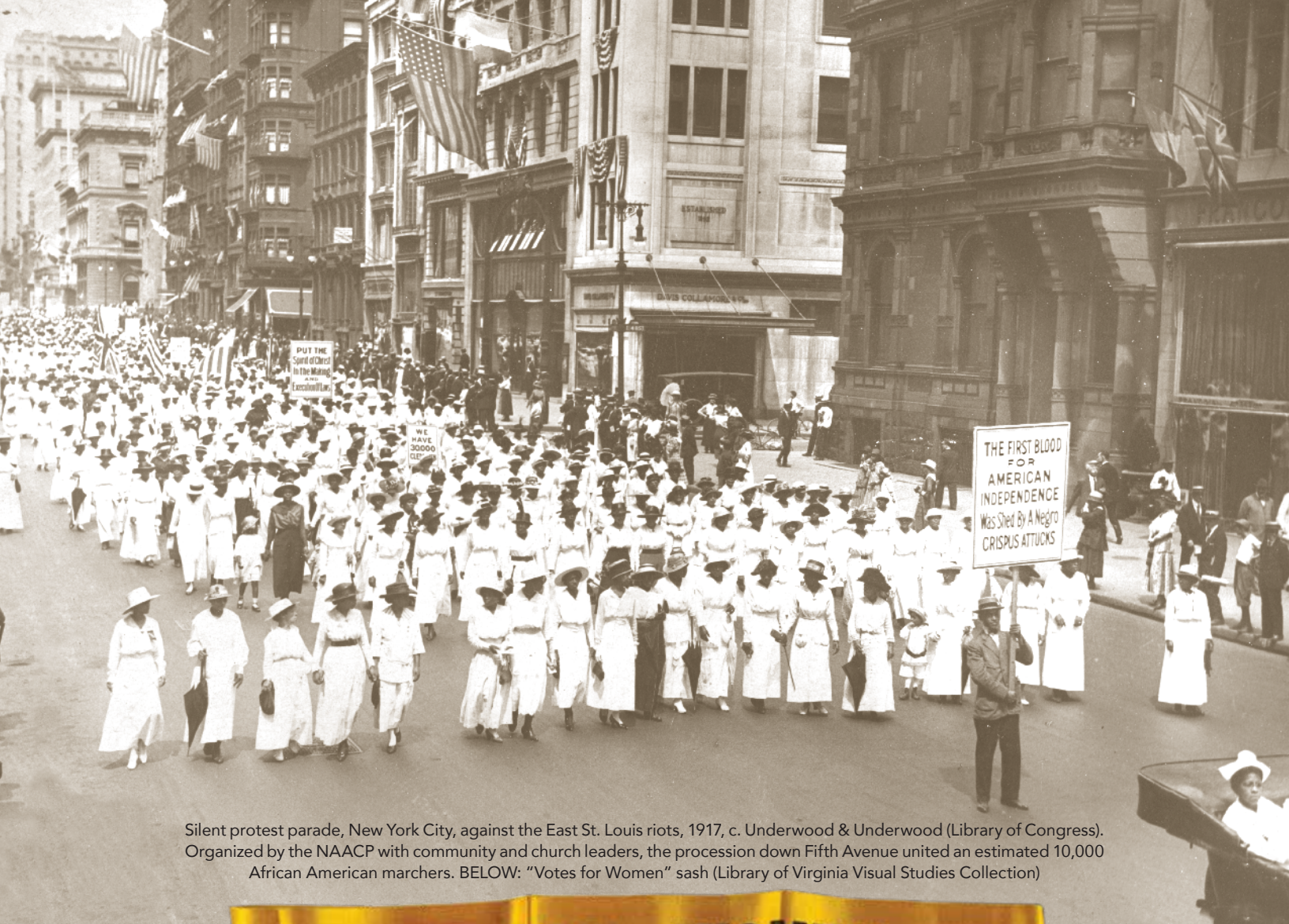
took Wilson to task over the segregation. With American troops—including thousands of Black soldiers—fighting in France during World War I, he dismissed the legitimate domestic concerns of African Americans as disloyal and unpatriotic distractions. To complicate the situation, suffragists had been picketing the White House since January 1917. Two weeks after the Harlem delegation's visit, National Woman's Party members were brutally beaten, arrested, and imprisoned after unfurling a banner comparing Wilson to the dictatorial German emperor.

Madam and Ida's affiliation with Trotter, as well as their own outspokenness, had drawn negative attention from the Wilson administration. During the 1917 NERL meeting and at subsequent gatherings, both women were spied upon by Walter Loving, a Black agent for the War Department's Military Intelligence Division, which had also been monitoring Hull House founder and suffragist Jane Addams and other Whites it deemed radical. In a classified report, Madam and Ida were labeled "Negro subversives" for the transgression of protesting racism, lynching, and discrimination.

Black suffragists were fighting on many fronts. Unlike their White counterparts, Black women faced legally sanctioned institutional racism that denied them and their families housing, education, jobs, health care, and adequate wages.



Ida B. Wells-Barnette, portrait by Sallie E. Garrity, ca. 1893. Ida B. Wells sued the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railway in 1883 after being dragged from her seat for refusing to move to a segregated railcar. Her anger spurred her to begin contributing articles to Black-owned newspapers. She became part owner and editor of the *Memphis Free Speech and Headlight* in 1889. After three Black businessmen were lynched in Memphis in 1892, Wells launched a four-decades-long anti-lynching crusade and published her groundbreaking treatise on the topic, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, in 1892. Portrait and text, National Portrait Gallery. BUTTON: Yellow "Votes for Women" button, Missouri History Museum.



Silent protest parade, New York City, against the East St. Louis riots, 1917, c. Underwood & Underwood (Library of Congress). Organized by the NAACP with community and church leaders, the procession down Fifth Avenue united an estimated 10,000 African American marchers. BELOW: "Votes for Women" sash (Library of Virginia Visual Studies Collection)



➤ When the 19th Amendment was enacted in 1920, it was intended to guarantee that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” For Black women, that franchise remained elusive. Legal barriers were quickly erected in states with significant Black populations. The fight for suffrage for many Black women and men would continue for another 45 years until the Voting Rights Act of 1965—and indeed continues to this day.

Madam died in May 1919 more than a year before the 19th Amendment was ratified, but Ida was able to take advantage

of her voting rights. In 1930, just one year before her death, she even dared to run for state senate. As Ida and Madam’s biographers and carriers of their legacies, we feel fortunate that our ancestors knew each other and worked together. We cherish the chance to join forces and make our own history together.

Michelle has led efforts to name streets and to commission historical markers, statues, and monuments to honor her great-grandmother and other history-making women. A’Lelia’s biography *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker* was a *New York Times* Notable Book and the inspiration

for *Self Made*, the recent Netflix series starring Octavia Spencer.

In the spirit of our ancestors, we, too, focus on work that brings equity to Black women. We engage in truth-telling to document and give credit to the generations of women who paved the way for us, and to support the activists who address the unfinished business of voting rights, women’s rights, income inequality, and social justice. Because of Ida and Madam, we know voter suppression when we see it. We know that the literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and poll taxes that blocked our ancestors from voting have been replaced today with purges of voter rolls, shuttering of polling places, and restrictive voter ID laws.

Despite past and current efforts to stymie communities of color, we are energized by the political impact of women—and especially Black women—who have staked a claim as a powerful voting bloc and consistently voted in higher percentages than other cohorts in recent elections. Ida and Madam would have been pleased that 102 women were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018 and that a quarter of U.S. senators are women, including California Senator Kamala Harris, the first woman of color to be nominated to a major party presidential ticket after being selected as Joe Biden’s VP candidate in August 2020.

Like Ida and Madam, we know that the opportunity to have a voice in politics, both as voters and public servants, should be available to all. Like Ida and Madam, we know that women of color must continue to fight on many fronts

and that American democracy remains a work in progress. During this centennial commemoration of women’s right to vote, we are reminded that Ida B. Wells and Madam C. J. Walker—along with hundreds of other women of color—never shied away from challenging America to live up to its ideals. Just as they inspired generations of activists, we strive to do our part today. Along with our family ties to these visionary pioneers comes the privilege and responsibility to make their stories relevant in ways that inspire young girls and motivate today’s social justice activists.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- “Marching for the Vote: Remembering the Woman Suffrage Parade of 1913,” Sheridan Harvey, Library of Congress. How Alice Paul worked to organize and execute the parade, the mistreatment of marchers by onlookers and police, efforts to sideline Black women, and the subsequent impact on the suffrage movement. loc.gov
- “Madam C. J. Walker,” Amber Paranick, May 29, 2020, Library of Congress. How Madam used her entrepreneurial success to employ Black women, improve her community, and provide a gathering place for Black civic leaders. loc.gov
- “100 Years Ago African-Americans Marched Down 5th Avenue to Declare that Black Lives Matter,” Chad Williams, July 25, 2017, *The Conversation*. Events that brought a multi-generational crowd of 10,000 to New York City to march in silent protest against lynching riots in East St. Louis, IL. theconversation.com
- “Suffrage in 60 seconds: African American Women and the Vote,” video series. National Park Service. Black women’s marginalization and the efforts by activists like Ida B. Wells to advance the cause of suffrage for all women. nps.gov



A’LELIA BUNDLES is an author and journalist. A former ABC News producer and executive, she serves on several nonprofit boards including the National Archives Foundation, where she is Chair Emerita. Her biography *The Joy Goddess of Harlem: A’Lelia Walker and the Harlem Renaissance* will be published by Scribner in 2021. Twitter and Instagram: @aleliabundles | aleliabundles.com



MICHELLE DUSTER is an author, professor, and public historian. She has written or edited six books including *Ida In Her Own Words* and *Ida From Abroad* which feature Ida’s original writings. Her book *Ida B. the Queen: The Extraordinary Life and Legacy of Ida B. Wells* will be published by Simon & Schuster in January 2021. Twitter and Instagram: @michelleduster | mldwrites.com

ON CIVILITY

PAMELA CHEW



nly now do I understand why my Chinese father wanted me to answer our phone or open the front door when the doorbell rang at our house in small-town Missouri. Even a professor who held an endowed chair still worried and dreaded a knock at the door. He constantly needed reassurance that his life in the Midwest in 1950—unlike the life he knew growing up in Chinatown in San Francisco during the '20s and '30s—would not be questioned, taken away, or jeopardized because of race, status, or documents.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited Chinese people from entering the United States, testifying in court, owning property, voting, marrying non-Chinese, or working in institutional agencies. The Act was still in place when my father and his six siblings were born. They were separated and placed in orphanages in the Bay area when their mother died during childbirth. All six were given English names by the nurses in the hospital. My father was now Harry Chew. Their limited-English-speaking father, a domestic cook, had no alternative other than remain employed in the home of an affluent female physician—without his children.

This upbringing impacted my father's way of thinking, conduct, and philosophy of life. He was reluctant to talk about his childhood or adolescence. I understood that his silence meant the pain he experienced never disappeared. He once revealed that he received a dime a week as an allowance from his birth father, which he carefully divided: one nickel for a fresh loaf of French bread that he ate sitting on the pier at the wharf; the other bought entrance to the Saturday matinee, where he could escape prejudice, hatred, and degradation, where he could be inspired and dream of what could be achieved in America.

When the U.S. entered World War II with China as an ally, my father enlisted, becoming a cartographer in the United States Air Force. In December 1943, President Roosevelt signed the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, ending a period described as sixty years of legalized racism and discrimination. After his service, the GI Bill funded my father's MFA at the Kansas City Art Institute. On graduation day, a fellow grad drove my father and mother to be married in Kansas, because Missouri miscegenation laws banned interracial marriage. My artist mother was of Pennsylvania Dutch heritage.

After the civil ceremony, the same friend drove my newlywed parents to Cottey College, a two-year women's liberal arts institution in Nevada, where my professor father would be respected and admired for the rest of his life by a community that embraced him until his death in 1978.

Eventually, the civility of his neighbors helped my father find the security, peacefulness, and sense of belonging he longed for.

PAMELA CHEW recently retired from Tulsa Community College where she has taught since 1985. She was the founding faculty member of both the Italian and ESL Programs. She has also taught at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, as well as in Honduras and Colombia. IMAGE, RIGHT: Wedding portrait of Harry Chew's parents, Shee Kwok and Ngan Chew



The Fisherman, Harry Chew



Harry Chew





BRINGING AMERICA'S
STORY TO HOMES ACROSS
THE NATION AND INSPIRING
THE NEXT GENERATION OF
ENGAGED CITIZENS



NATIONAL ARCHIVES
FOUNDATION

ONE HUNDRED
YEARS AGO,
WOMEN WON
THE VOTE



Discover the untold stories of the suffragists behind the movement for women's voting rights through National Archives records, educational materials and downloadable posters, a virtual exhibit, and an online curator-led exhibit.

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archivesfoundation.org/civics

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Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin

Native American suffragist Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin was a prominent advocate for Native women, walking alongside White women in the 1913 suffrage march in Washington, D.C.

Mary Church Terrell

Mary Church Terrell was an advocate for women's suffrage who argued that the vote would be key for African American women to achieve civil rights.



Mabel Ping-Hua Lee

Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee was an outspoken Chinese immigrant who joined the fight for women's voting rights, despite the fact that the Chinese Exclusion Act prevented Lee from becoming a citizen and voting.

archivesfoundation.org/women



PHOTOS: 1. General William Westmoreland and President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House, April 7, 1968, by Frank Wolfe (LBJ Library, NARA). 2. Young "hippie" and National Guard soldiers across the street from Democratic National Convention, Chicago, Aug. 26, 1968, by Warren K. Leffler (U.S. News & World Report Collection, loc.gov). 3. Draft resistance rally at Yale Univ., by Robert Child, *New Haven Journal Courier*, March 4, 1968 (NARA). 4. Fleeing 1968 Tet Offensive, Vietnam, (DOD, Wikimedia). 5. Richard Nixon campaigning, Sept. 1968 (NARA). 6. Cpl. James E. Mull, 21, listens to election returns over Armed Forces Radio, Vietnam, Nov. 1968, by Cpl. P. Kratofil (Official USMC Photograph). 7. Aftermath of rioting following assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Washington, D.C., by Warren K. Leffler, April 8, 1968 (U.S. News & World Report Collection, loc.gov). 8. PVT James E. Stadig and company exiting Viet Cong cave, Vietnam, Oct. 26, 1967, by Robert C. Lafoon (NARA).



EDUCATING THE TROOPS

SHAPING CONSENSUS WITH "DEMOCRATIC PROPAGANDA"

STACY TAKACS



IN 1968, A BATTLE WAS RAGING

in American political and cultural life. The Tet Offensive, a series of coordinated attacks by North Vietnamese troops on South Vietnamese targets, exposed the gap between representations of the Vietnam War and conditions on the ground. Anti-war protests sprang up on campuses across the country. Draft resistance surged, and public support for the Johnson administration's policies dipped to fifty percent. A surprisingly strong showing for anti-war candidate Eugene McCarthy in the New Hampshire primary led President Johnson to bow out of the 1968 campaign, and anti-war protests at the Democratic National Convention turned violent as Chicago Police waded into the crowds, beating protesters and bystanders alike. To make matters worse, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in April incited a wave of urban riots, and National Guard members, many of whom had joined to avoid serving in the war, were called to keep the peace on the streets of America. Republican candidate Richard Nixon won the Republican nomination on a promise to end the war and "curb disorder and crime in American cities." The election, which pitted Nixon against Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) and segregationist George Wallace (I-AL), was shaping up to be a moratorium on the conduct of the war and the direction of American society.

Amid this roiling domestic drama, U.S. soldiers in Vietnam were encouraged to register for absentee ballots and were kept informed about political events at home via daily newscasts and hourly radio bulletins. Most impressively, they were treated to about eighteen hours of live television election coverage presented by military broadcasters associated with the American

Forces Vietnam Network (AFVN), a local subsection of the worldwide American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS).

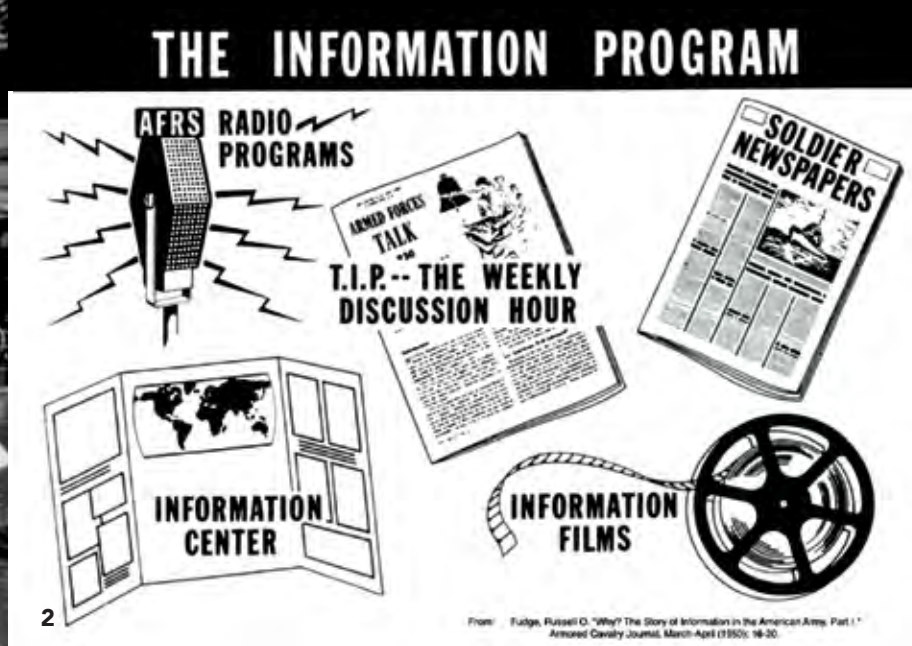
At the time, AFVN consisted of six radio and eight television stations, providing 'round-the-clock information and entertainment to troops "from the Delta to the DMZ," as AFVN DJs were fond of saying. Programs transcribed onto vinyl records, cassette tapes, and 16 mm film were shipped every few days from the AFRTS office in Los Angeles, CA, while timely news and sports were delivered via shortwave radio and the occasional satellite feed. Up to ninety-six percent of the 500,000 troops stationed in Vietnam could purportedly access AFVN radio, and eighty-five percent could receive the television signals.

For the 1968 election special, AFVN newscasters painted special red-white-and-blue election sets, worked up profiles on the major races and candidates, primed their audience using special spot announcements, then reported on the big race as well as all 435 House races, key Senate and gubernatorial campaigns, and several special ballot initiatives. When the coverage dragged into the evening hours, Saigon News Chief Randy Moody (1968-1969) recalled that broadcasters used "a videotape of a weeks-old Notre Dame-Michigan State football game and a Doris Day movie" as filler and broke in to provide updates. At 2 a.m. local time, AFVN was finally able to announce Nixon's victory.

The live election show was quite a departure from AFVN's usual programming, which consisted of "rip-and-read" newscasts and a steady diet of diverting amusements like *Batman*, *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, and *Mission Impossible*. In *Armed with*



1



2



3. Theodore R. Poston, [NARA record identifies as] head of the Negro Press Section, Office of War Information, ca. 1941-1945. 2. Components of the Information and Education Division, from "Why? The Story of Information in the American Army, Part I," by Russell O Fudge, *Armored Cavalry Journal*, March-April (1950). 3. Soldiers listening to "Mosquito Network" Pacific Radio (radioworld.com). 4. Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, and Bing Crosby at war bonds benefit, Hollywood, CA, 1944 (doctormacro.com)



We bring them in with Bing Crosby . . .

4

Abundance, historian Meredith Lair has described such creature comforts—radio, TV, movies, hot food, cold beer, air conditioning, and consumer abundance—as emotional “insulation” deployed by military authorities to elicit compliant service from the temporary citizen-soldiers who made up most of U.S. Forces in Vietnam. On the one hand, such comforts connected service members to home and reminded them they were still civilians at heart, not lifers or military professionals. On the other, these luxuries “worked to absorb soldiers’ discontent over the indiscriminate and sometimes pointless violence they were charged, directly or indirectly, with creating.”

“For soldiers desperately in need of a pick-me-up,” Lair writes, “American pop culture became an instrument of war that shielded them from its demoralizing effects.”

To suggest that AFVN served as emotional insulation captures only half of the story, however. True, the initial rationale for the radio service, established during World War II and spear-headed by commercial broadcasters and admen, was to provide distraction and a “touch of home” for troops serving overseas. Yet, the leadership of the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS), as it was then-called, used entertainment strategically, to build a bigger audience for the

information and education (I&E) materials which were the main rationale for the service. As one AFRS alum put it, “We gather them in with Bing Crosby and then sell them their [anti-malarial drug] atabrine.”

When commissioned in May 1942, AFRS was situated within the Information Branch of the Army’s Morale Services Division and tasked with delivering both entertainment and information. As such, the radio service straddled the philosophical divide between Army commanders who thought recreation and creature comforts (Post Exchanges, movies, sports, and theatrical shows) were sufficient to sustain morale, and those who believed some “mental training” in the principles of democracy, the evils of fascism, and the rationale for the war would better prepare soldiers for the rigors of a long campaign. AFRS founder Col. Thomas Lewis came from the world of entertainment radio, but he firmly believed in the information mission. “The soldier needs to know what it is he is fighting for,” why he is fighting, and “what he may expect from the future,” Lewis explained to Army and Navy commanders during a planning meeting in 1944. “He must know what he must fear from defeat; [and] what he must hope for from victory.”

AFRS provided this information sandwiched between a steady diet of jazz, jive, country, and variety programs drawn from commercial radio and featuring the top entertainers of the day. As part of the information mission, the radio service ran news reports on the hour, emphasizing the unbiased delivery of information. They transcribed series like *America’s Town Meeting of the Air* and *University of Chicago Roundtable* for overseas distribution and created their own educational programs, most notably an eleven-episode series by Erik Barnouw entitled *They Call Me Joe* which used the name in its many iterations (Joseph, José, Giuseppe) to celebrate the diversity of American life. Perhaps the most effective information vehicle during WWII, however, was the “spot” announcement. AFRS recordings and shortwave feeds did not carry typical commercials, in part because commanders worried that ads for the comforts of home would undermine morale in the field. Instead, they carried command information spots designed to sell morale. These “commercials” explained military life to its citizen-soldiers, outlined the values of “Americanism,” and generally reassured the troops that they were well-trained, well-supported, and well on their way to winning.

As WWII wound down, AFRS staffers began planning for the postwar context by recalibrating the balance between information and entertainment. Staff Sgt. Jerome Lawrence (later co-writer of *Inherit the Wind* and *Auntie Mame*), tasked with reviewing AFRS’s existing programs in late 1944, recommended a “gradual expansion of the use of orientation and educational materials in the content of AFRS programs.” Specifically, he suggested AFRS better utilize the star power of performers to push information about post-war programs and plans. For example, he believed the program *GI Jive with Jill*, featuring female DJ Martha Wilkerson as “Jill,” could be cultivated as a delivery vehicle for indoctrination materials, stating: “Many elements of orientation would sit well in a program M.C.’d by a charming girl.”

When the war finally ended, the mission of the I&E section shifted from explaining “why we fight” to clarifying “what happens now,” especially for those charged with overseeing the occupations of Germany, Japan, and Korea. AFRS assumed its new duties with gusto, producing spot announcements to combat the twin problems of fraternization and venereal disease (“For a moment of play you may have to pay!”) and using



1. Soldiers listening to American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) radio network, Tuy Hoa, Vietnam (DOD, NARA). 2. AFVN Danang news cast in process, Vietnam (DOD, NARA). 3. and 4. AFVN sets for 1968 election coverage, by Randall Moody (loc.gov, R.J. Moody Collection).

short, informative programs to explain the responsibilities of peacekeeping to troops hardened by war. The “GI Ambassadors” series, for example: reminded soldiers that “It Only Takes One” bad apple to undermine the peacekeeping effort; taught democracy to the troops (and the eavesdropping locals) via programs like “Hideiki and Democracy” and “What is an American”; and encouraged soldiers to provide for locals in need through episodes like “Operation Little Vittles.”

As the Cold War heated up in the 1950s, many in the public, as well as the Department of Defense (DOD), sought to counter the influence of Soviet propaganda with education. Among other things, President Eisenhower called for the implementation of a more robust indoctrination program within the military. AFRS was, by then, part of the Armed Forces Information Service (AFIS), a division of Manpower and Personnel, run by Assistant Secretary of Defense John A. Hannah. Hannah described the new Information Doctrine thus: “Briefly stated, the Information and Education Program is in the business of combating Soviet Communism.”

The education section of AFRS was tasked with providing “training in citizenship” and the four “fundamental differences”

between Americanism and Communism. According to Hannah these were: a belief in individual liberty, the rule of law, the value of the truth, and the existence of God or a higher power. Series like “A Primer on Communism” and “Behind the Bamboo Curtain,” designed to explain what we were fighting *against*, supplied basic, though heavily slanted, information about Communist philosophy and modes of governance. “If Freedom Failed,” on the other hand, used counter-factual scenarios (what would happen to schools, churches, factories, and newspapers under communism) to explain what we were fighting *for* (freedom of speech, religion, and trade).

This two-pronged approach—emphasizing what we were fighting *for* and *against*—was in keeping with the prevailing philosophy of “democratic propaganda” that shaped America’s initial forays into public persuasion. As lawyer and morale booster Ernest Angell described it in 1942, democratic propaganda was a “propaganda of truth” derived from the notion that “free people cannot be told what to think. They must be given the facts and permitted to do their own thinking.” At AFRS, however, the facts were often delivered in the emotionally manipulative language of entertainment; for example, “Behind the Bamboo Curtain #1”

opens by describing “the militant and threatening thunder of Chinese communism,” complete with sound effects.

Throughout the 1960s, politicians and AFIS administrators reshaped the policies and procedures of the American Forces Radio and Television Service (television having been added in 1954) to assist in the broader psychological warfare campaign against the Soviet Union. Often this involved sacrificing the truth, as well as combat efficiency, in the name of morale. At AFN-Europe, for example, officers curtailed political reporting in an attempt to “make it difficult for the Kremlin” to capitalize on bad news. A program called *Army Information Digest* was given a primetime slot on radio and TV to maximize viewership for indoctrination subjects. On TV, the *Digest* often showed the Army Pictorial Services’ series *The Big Picture*, a public relations vehicle touting the importance of a robust Army to national security. Most notably, the episode “Why Vietnam?” (1965) contained blatant propaganda depicting South Vietnamese troops as willing and able partners in the struggle (they were not), the South Vietnamese government as democratic and devoted to the people (it was not), and the National Liberation Front as puppets

of Soviets and Chinese communists (they were not). As an orientation to the conflict, it was nearly useless, yet it was shown on AFVN into the 1970s.

Finally, under Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, AFRTS was “encouraged” to collaborate more directly with the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) and other overseas broadcasters to ensure a more consistent voice for American public diplomacy. Edward R. Murrow, head of the USIA under Kennedy, quickly cajoled AFRTS into carrying the Voice of America’s nightly news roundup, without attribution, meaning military listeners would be unaware of the program’s status as propaganda. The practice violated the Smith-Mundt Act’s prohibition against directing USIA propaganda toward American audiences and was eventually disallowed, but only after military personnel complained to their congressmen.

In Vietnam, mounting concerns about free speech, propaganda, and censorship in military media operations came to a head. Despite an official Defense Department proclamation prohibiting “the calculated withholding of unfavorable news stories from troop information publications” and broadcasts, AFVN reporters had to pre-clear all news related to Vietnam through the

Military Assistance Command Vietnam Office of Information (MACOI). Not only was the arrangement inefficient, it left AFVN news vulnerable to the whims of public affairs officers whose job, according to News Chief Moody, “[was] to build a favorable image of the military.” The mission of the news department, on the other hand, “[was] to present a fair, accurate and unbiased account of the day’s events for the American serviceman.” Whenever a news story “unfavorable or embarrassing to the military” appeared, the two missions came into conflict, and AFVN news usually lost the battle.

Among other things, MACOI maintained a “Proper Terminology Determination List,” nicknamed the “Let’s Say It Right” list, which forbade mention of napalm or tear gas and offered a string of euphemisms for some of the war’s worst excesses (e.g., “search and clear” instead of “search and destroy” or “pre-cleared firing area” instead of “free-fire zone”). MACOI also embargoed stories that might offend South Vietnamese President Thieu’s sensibilities and denied permission to broadcast stories that might undermine discipline or morale, even when such stories were of vital interest to soldiers and widely available in stateside media (examples include news of troop withdrawals, faulty armored vests, and Ho Chi Minh’s death).

These censorship practices violated not only DOD guidance but also the core belief of AFRTS personnel that servicemen and women deserve the same news and entertainment as their fellow Americans. Thus, AFVN news personnel actively revolted beginning in 1969. The staff first petitioned MACOI for a written list of the censorship policies. When that failed, two AFVN news editors sent a letter to their congressmen, and later gave public interviews in which they accused MACOI of censorship. Both men were reassigned. Then, on January 3, 1970, AFVN newscaster Spc. 5 Robert Lawrence ended the nightly newscast with the following statement (abbreviated here):

I have found that a newscaster at AFVN is not free to tell the truth and, in essence, to tell it like it is. MACV and the

MACV Office of Information have seen to it that all those newscasters who are dedicated to their work are sent away to other areas. In some cases, off the air completely. . . . We’ve been suppressed and I’m probably in trouble tonight for telling you the truth. I hope you’ll help stop censorship at AFVN and any American station under military rule. Thank you and good-bye.

Good-bye, indeed. Within minutes Military Police descended on the studio and placed Lawrence under house arrest. The station was barricaded to prevent civilian reporters from accessing AFVN staff members, all of whom were ordered to rebuff interview requests on the matter. Lawrence was subjected to aggressive interrogation, threatened with a court martial, and reassigned as a Chaplain’s assistant for the remainder of his tour. The sportscaster who thanked Lawrence at the end of the broadcast was also reassigned. In the aftermath of each incident, the military investigated but found no wrongdoing. According to investigators, the correct term for “censorship” was “news management,” and the “free speech advocates” at AFVN were really just “malcontents.” In reality, the AFVN revolt may have been the clearest lesson in democratic values AFRTS personnel ever produced.

These incidents ultimately changed the nature of news provision on AFRTS stations worldwide. The DOD quickly moved to centralized control over news delivery, using satellite distribution of commercial network newscasts to cut soldier-broadcasters out of the editorial process. The DOD framed the move in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, but it was also clearly designed to evade future accusations of bias and censorship. The only biases contained in AFRTS news programming today are those built into our commercial media system.

==== AFRTS was rebranded the American Forces Network (AFN) in 1996, and all programming functions are now centralized in the Riverside, CA, headquarters. AFN has gone



U.S. Army Sgt. Jennifer Casanova, broadcast journalist for the American Forces Network-Afghanistan and a native of Colorado Springs, CO, hosts the “Midday Madness with Cass.” Bagram Air Field, Dec. 8, 2011, photo by Spc. William Begley

Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Arthur Rosen, afternoon DJ at American Forces Network onboard U.S. Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia, reads off the latest command updates concerning COVID-19 during his show, April 16, 2020. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Carlos W. Hopper

from one channel in both radio and TV, to ten radio channels, a streaming radio app which carries a variety of regional AFN stations, and eight TV channels including a dedicated news channel featuring a balanced diet of programs from all of the major commercial news networks. AFN station personnel concentrate on producing radio shows, spot announcements, and short video stories for delivery to the Defense Visual Information Distribution System (DVIDS), a clearinghouse for pro-military news and information items. Distinctions between public affairs, journalism, and broadcast production have eroded, both in training and in assignments, and AFN station personnel view themselves primarily as a command information tool. They concentrate on serving base commanders and leave concerns about the morale and well-being of the troops to programmers in Riverside.

Some things remain the same, however. With an important election coming up this year, AFN stations are busy plugging voter registration as a democratic duty and outlining procedures for successfully casting that absentee ballot. On election night, the AFN News Channel will bring live results to service personnel, military contractors, and their civilian dependents around the globe. True, military newsmen will not be the faces of these newscasts, but the network continues to hold to the morale maxim that “Only an informed America(n) can be a strong America(n).”

STACY TAKACS is Professor of American Studies at Oklahoma State University. She is the author of two books, *Terrorism TV: Popular Entertainment in Post-9/11 America* (University Press of Kansas, 2012) and *Interrogating Popular Culture* (Routledge, 2014); co-editor of *American Militarism on the Small Screen* (Routledge, 2016); and co-editor of a new series from University Press of Kansas called “War on Screen.” She is working on a book about the American Forces Network.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- “Jubilee,” American Forces Radio Service via Internet Archive. Listen to WWII-era recordings of “Jubilee,” AFRS radio programming that showcased African-American singers, jazz groups, and performers. archive.org
- “G.I.’s Outburst Widens Censorship Issue,” James P. Sterba, Jan. 5, 1970, *The New York Times*. Recounts accusations of censorship by Robert Lawrence and other military broadcasters, from WWII through the Vietnam War. nytimes.com
- Biographies of Vietnam War military broadcasters who served in the MACOI, including Randall Moody and Robert Lawrence. In “War Stories,” Moody recounts covering the 1968 elections for some 500,000 troops. macoi.net
- “AFVN: The GI’s Companion,” Ken Deutsch, April 18, 2016, *RadioWorld*. Article on and link to 10-hour audio documentary, including contemporary interviews of former AFVN radio jockeys and vintage clips of AFVN broadcasts that were “the soundtrack of the war.” radioworld.com
- “AFVN (American Forces Network),” video clips of Vietnam War military personnel watching and listening to AFVN radio music and TV programming. “AFVN ‘Commercials’—That Is—Public Service Announcements,” audio of AFVN PSAs with photos of troops. youtube.com

FIXING OUR REALITY PROBLEM



Contemplation of Justice, June 2, 2020, Art Lien

Today's information system exaggerates and inflames our differences while filling our minds with nonsense and disinformation. Unless that system changes, and we change along with it, common sense will continue to be in short supply.

THOMAS E. PATTERSON

IF we're going to fix our information disorder, the traditional news media will have to shoulder much of the burden. In an earlier time, Americans were closely attentive to what journalists had to say. Their words created an "information commons"—a shared set of facts and ideas about the country and the challenges it faced. Not everyone derived the same meaning from the news they were receiving, and the reporting had its blind spots. But it was a politically balanced rendition of public affairs that helped build a sense of national community. It didn't prevent division, but it had a depolarizing effect. Our news outlets did their job well enough that we took for granted why a shared understanding of politics is important.

The information commons cannot be resurrected in its old form, built as it was on media monopolies. The three broadcast television networks and the local newspaper dominated Americans' attention, so much so that the sum of what they reported

was nearly the whole of the news that people consumed. And consume they did. News was the only television programming available at the dinner hour in nearly every media market.

Today's media system is fragmented and includes partisan outlets that offer one-sided versions of reality that appeal to many Americans. These outlets are gathering places for the like-minded. Rather than provide a shared understanding, they offer a picture of the world that's rosy on one side of the partisan divide, dark on the other. The effect is polarizing.

Today's media system also includes nearly every imaginable form of entertainment, everything from electronic gaming to streaming video. If the old media system made it hard for the citizen to avoid news, the new system is an invitation to indulge in fantasy. Although Americans are spending more time on media than ever before, they're spending less time on news.

Nevertheless, the traditional news media are still the backbone of America's

news system. Their cumulative audience easily exceeds that of partisan outlets, and most of those who follow partisan outlets also get much of their news through traditional outlets, which also supply most of the news links found on the internet. The audience for traditional news has declined but is still huge, which is an extraordinary asset in today's "attention economy." What other institution has a daily following in the tens of millions? No church or political party gets anywhere near that kind of ongoing attention.

The traditional media also have another strength—a commitment to accuracy. *BuzzFeed News* analyzed the factual accuracy of the internet political news pages of three mainstream outlets (*ABC News Politics*, *CNN Politics*, and *Politico*), as well as the Facebook pages of three major right-wing outlets (*Eagle Rising*, *Freedom Daily*, and *Right Wing News*) and the corresponding pages of three left-wing outlets (*Addicting Info*, *Occupy Democrats*, and *The Other 98%*). Only the mainstream outlets demonstrated fidelity to accuracy. A mere one percent of their original claims were shown to be factually wrong, compared with 20 percent for the left-wing outlets and 38 percent for the right-wing outlets.

The problem is that the traditional media have allowed themselves to become a megaphone for the falsehoods of others. A recent

Columbia journalism school study concluded that "news organizations play a major role in propagating hoaxes, false claims, questionable rumors, and dubious viral content." News outlets honor their commitment to accuracy by quoting their sources accurately, but that is a flimsy standard when sources are lying or peddling half-truths and rumors. If traditional media are to deserve their claim to be "custodians of the facts," they need to recognize that the larger media system is filled with propaganda and that transmitting it in the name of "objective reporting" makes them part of the problem.

■ The traditional media need to do better. They need to supply what a democracy most needs from the press—a steady supply of trustworthy and relevant information. "The point of having journalists around," says NYU's Jay Rosen, "is not to produce attention, but to make our attention more productive."

We also can't restore sanity to the public sphere if our mainstream news outlets continue to be infected by what a Carnegie Corporation study called "the entertainment virus." Some news outlets, including *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*, have avoided the temptation to soften their news, but many have not. An informed public cannot be built on infotainment and sensationalism.

The media are fostering a public that is losing its sense of what it means to be informed and, with that, its ability to fend off false, baseless, and useless ideas. The best protection against being duped by ideologues and liars is having the facts. Information actually does trump deception and disinformation, but only if you have it.

When news outlets are criticized for lacing the news with entertainment, they tend to blame the audience, saying that they're merely responding to public taste. But the public doesn't necessarily know what it wants until it sees it, a point emphasized by Rueven Frank, who headed *NBC News* during the heyday of broadcast

reduces them "to their worst stereotypes, people possessing no motive but political advantage." What conclusion can one draw from game-centered reporting other than the impression that politicians spend all their time one-upping each other? It would be one thing if the stories explained in detail what's at stake in the competition, but that part is often left out. A University of Pennsylvania study found that competing policy proposals are often reported by their sponsors' names without reference to what the proposals contain or how they differ.

Game-centered stories displace coverage that could help voters better understand the nation's policy problems. Such

Small wonder those with extreme views have disproportionate power. They're the ones who take the time to vote.

television. "This business of giving people what they want is a dope pusher's argument," Frank said. "News is something people don't know they're interested in until they hear about it. The job of a journalist is to take what's important and make it interesting." Unless journalists find ways to take issues of national policy and make them appealing, they'll continue to underserve the public. Citizens, as Princeton's Martin Gilens has shown, make better choices when they understand policy problems than when they don't. Common sense doesn't exist in a void. It requires that we know what's at stake.

Journalists' obsession with the political game—who's up and who's down—is also a disservice. It's the dominant theme of political coverage and fosters political distrust. By portraying politicians as single-minded in their pursuit of power, the press, as [Michael Schudson] noted,

stories make it into the news, but not regularly. Former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson put his finger on the problem when he wrote: "You come out of a legislative conference and there's ten reporters standing around with their ears twitching. They don't want to know whether anything was resolved for the betterment of the United States. They want to know who got hammered, who tricked whom." Theodore H. White, who pioneered inside-politics reporting, said that so many journalists do it now that there's "no room left on the inside."

Equally destructive is attack journalism. It's not the same as watchdog journalism, which is rooted in careful factual investigation and is aimed at holding officials accountable. In contrast, attack journalism starts with the assumption that politicians can't be trusted and seizes upon any hint or suggestion that a politician acted improperly. Attack journalism fosters cynicism

and political distrust. It also makes the press an easy target for politicians. When journalists attack them at every turn, they open themselves to charges of bias.

And when journalism's "bad news is good news" formula is applied to demographic groups, it's destructive. Over the past decade, when immigrants have been the main subject of a national news story, roughly four of every five stories have been negative in tone. That's true also of news coverage of Muslims. And for decades Black Americans have been underrepresented in the news except when it comes to crime, where they're not only overrepresented but portrayed in ways that Whites accused of crime less often are—handcuffed and in police custody. Journalists can shrug their shoulders and say they're not responsible for how people respond to their stories. That's another dope pusher's argument. Negative coverage of immigrants, Muslims, Blacks, and other marginalized groups fosters negative stereotypes that activate prejudice and allow ideologues to justify everything from lengthy prison sentences to border walls.

Positive stories don't come naturally to journalists. They lack the tension that journalists seek and can lead to accusations that the reporter is a shill. But without such stories the news media are failing to show us an entire side of the American story—the positive side. Success is one of the most underreported aspects of politics. After the sharp economic downturn in 2008, the media stayed on the story while the news was bad and then dropped it as soon as the economy began to improve. No wonder most Americans believed that government policies—TARP, the job stimulus, and the like—did little to fix the problem and were a waste of taxpayers' money. Nancy Gibbs, former editor of *Time* magazine, notes, "If we don't show

how democracy can work, does work, if we don't model what civil discourse looks and sounds like and the progress it can yield, then we can hardly be surprised if people don't think [such things] matter."

Without news that is balanced, relevant, and trustworthy there's not much hope that the public will anchor its opinions in reality. Such news is not beyond reach. NPR produces it regularly. The type of reporting I'm proposing would require journalists to have a fuller understanding of their subjects, spend more time away from the centers of power, say more about the substance of our politics and less about the horserace aspects, be as attentive to what's going right as to what's going wrong, and recognize that their stories affect the judgments citizens make.

■ Citizens also have to do better. We're part of the reason that our politics have been going downhill. One could say, as did the philosopher Javier Goma Lanzon, "that we are looking for the ideal of a virtuous republic composed of citizens relieved of the burden of citizenship." We're not committed enough to show up regularly at the polls, if we show up at all. The presidential election is still a draw for many. About three in five of us get up and out for that contest. But turnout in many primary and local elections has fallen below 15 percent. The 2018 midterm elections drew the largest midterm turnout in more than half a century. Yet the number of eligible voters who stayed home exceeded the number who showed up at the polls. Small wonder those with extreme views have disproportionate power. They're the ones who take the time to vote.

Nor are we committed enough to inform ourselves. We're intent on amusing ourselves, and we do it well. Compared with the pre-cable era, news consumption



has declined in every age group, especially among young adults. Americans are not walled off from news because of its high cost or inaccessibility. They suffer from insufficient interest.

Perhaps, as some have argued, we're victims of an education system that doesn't place much value on the teaching of history, the humanities, civics, or media literacy. It's difficult to know how much weight to attribute to this tendency, but the kind of education that people receive does affect their response to politics.

The past decade or two have exposed faces of America that appeared to have been receding. Perhaps the racism and other forms of bigotry that have been so apparent recently were always there but were merely less visible. If that's correct, the downward turn in our politics and media have simply served to surface them. I'm inclined to think otherwise, believing that recent political and media developments have intensified and enlarged our worst instincts. It's a dangerous development. In the long run, the health of our democracy rests more on

the character of our citizens than it does on the strength of our institutions. We need to restore, and deepen, Americans' commitment to democratic values. That effort must go beyond fostering the duty to vote. It also includes fostering tolerance, forbearance, and a recognition that what's good for the individual is inseparable from what's good for society.

Citizens are more dependent on the tone of our politics than might be thought. We have, as a result of scientific polling, nearly a century of reliable public opinion data. What jumps out when looking at the history of the polls is the variation in public opinion. The political distrust expressed by today's public is not how the public has always felt. There was a lengthy period where confidence in government was high. The hostility that many of today's Americans feel toward members of the opposing party is not how Americans have always felt. There was a lengthy period when Democrats and Republicans, though they had their differences, viewed each other with respect. The wacky ideas

and conspiracy theories that we now so readily embrace did not always fill our heads. Polls stretching back to the 1930s show that Americans have never been highly informed, but it's only recently that our thinking has gone haywire.

The difference in these periods can be traced to the behavior of our leaders. They can speak honestly and appeal to facts and reason, or they can dissemble, deceive, and appeal to our worst impulses. When they've acted responsibly, the public has responded sensibly. When they've behaved badly, so has the public. "The voice of the people is but an echo," wrote Harvard political scientist V. O. Key, Jr. "The people's verdict can be no more than a selective reflection from the alternatives and outlooks presented to them."

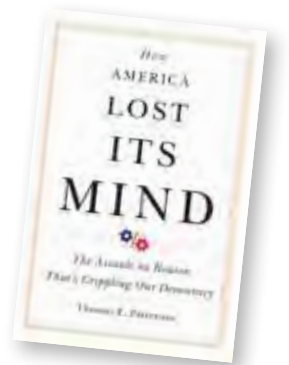
Key wrote those words in the 1960s, but they capture what has happened since. Party polarization started at the top, among political elites, rather than at the bottom. Disinformation and demagoguery are not naturally occurring phenomena. They are the result of deliberate choices made by political and media operatives. When they engage in name-calling, exploit our divisions, and put expediency ahead of principle, it's a green light for us to do the same. How did Democratic and Republican voters learn to see each other as enemies rather than rivals? We didn't learn that from our neighbors. We learned it from our warring party leaders and the messengers allied to their cause.

From the nation's earliest days, most of America's leaders understood that

their privileged position carried with it a public trust. They differed in their beliefs, but they stopped short of destructive words and actions. When Thomas Jefferson won the election of 1800 and declared it a "revolution" of the common people, he refrained from demonizing his opponents, knowing that to do so would unleash the populist resentments that had been building against the wealthy.

Sensible leadership has been in short supply in recent decades, and it's turned us against each other. Citizens can be faulted for their lack of interest and embrace of cockeyed ideas. But citizens' response is invariably affected by the quality of public leadership. We can't move from tribal conflict to reasoned discussion unless political leaders exhibit it. When politicians fill the public sphere with partisan bombast, recrimination, and claims of moral superiority, our politics has nowhere to go but down.

The quality of leadership also affects the news media's response. We can, and should, expect more of the press, but it will disappoint us time and again if we expect it to make up for defects in our leadership. As journalist Walter Lippmann noted, the news media are not equipped to give order and direction to our politics. For an institution to do that job, it must have the incentive to identify problems, propose solutions to those problems, and submit them to the voters for approval or rejection. Political parties are designed for that purpose. The press is not. The press has its role, but it is not that role. When operating at its best, the press's role is to bring to light the developments that can help citizens understand their choices. ■



THOMAS E. PATTERSON is Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He is author of several books, including: *Informing the News*; *The Vanishing Voter*; and *Out of Order*, which received the American Political Science Association's Graber Award as the best book of the decade in political communication. Patterson received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. His research has been funded by the Ford, Markle, Smith-Richardson, Pew, Knight, Carnegie, and National Science foundations. This article is adapted from *How America Lost Its Mind: The Assault on Reason That's Crippling Our Democracy* by Thomas E. Patterson, published by The University of Oklahoma Press. Used here with permission. ©2019 Thomas E. Patterson

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Becoming an informed citizen requires an essential skill—media literacy—to distinguish fact from fiction.

KIMBERLY ROBLIN

Public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. Sounds very Jefferson, or Hamilton, maybe even Lin-Manuel Miranda—but the source of this statement is not from a broadside or Broadway. It's from the preamble to the Society of Professional Journalists' (SPJ) Code of Ethics. A preamble to a code of ethics. They clearly take their work and the role it plays, seriously. As Information Age consumers, we should take ours equally so.

Technology has revolutionized how we generate, encounter, access, share, and process information. It is everywhere. It crawls along our television screens. It populates our social media feeds. We google it. We scroll it. It is never more than a click away. But the Information Age can be difficult to navigate. Not Bronze Age or Dark Ages difficult, but tricky nonetheless.

The same mechanisms that make information so accessible have also made it easier to manipulate and fabricate. Although fake news is not a 21st-century invention, technology has amplified its presence and potential. Instead of enlightening, it infiltrates and exploits, most often through social media. Media literacy—the ability to discern fact from fiction, bias and opinion from outright untruths—has never been more critical. Information is good, but knowledge is better. The truth is out there. As responsible citizens, we must be willing to search for it.

The moment we no longer have a free press, anything can happen. What makes it possible for a totalitarian or any other dictatorship to rule is that people are not informed. – Hannah Arendt



WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?

The Cambridge Dictionary defines fake news as “false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other social media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.” Whether articles, photographs, or videos, fake news traffics in misinformation and disinformation, similar concepts separated by intent. Misinformation is false information, while disinformation, also false, is deliberately disseminated to damage and deceive. Misinformation can be accidental, but disinformation is premeditated.

Unfortunately, some politicians, pundits, and members of the public apply “fake news” to any report they find problematic. They have leveraged it into an effective label for any narrative they want to quickly dismiss or discount. But as U.S. Senator and Oklahoma native, Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously noted: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.” Facts are facts. The truth is the truth. Disagreement with, or dislike of a story does not make it fake. Resultantly, media literacy means investigating not only journalists, authors, and other content creators, but also those who comment on and share the stories.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The untruths of fake news can undermine trust in journalism, influence opinion, and reaffirm biases. Even if the stories or images are fake, the consequences are not. A 2019 Pew Research study confirmed that many Americans believe it is a significant problem. Half of survey respondents ranked fake news a bigger problem than violent crime, climate

change, racism, illegal immigration, terrorism, and sexism. Nearly 70% believed it negatively impacted Americans' confidence in government.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

There are many individuals and groups responsible for fake news, but the same Pew poll showed 57% of American adults believed politicians and their staff generate a significant amount, while 36% believed journalists were largely at fault. Interestingly, respondents felt the news media had the “most responsibility” in decreasing fake news.

As the production and circulation of fake news has increased, journalists and other groups have actively tried to mitigate its effects. In 2019, the Duke University Reporters' Lab recorded 195 fact-checking organizations, a four-fold increase since 2014. As information consumers, however, the public bears a responsibility as well. We can accept every story that hits our inbox or Instagram, or we can actively analyze it and assess it. We can be passive—or we can be a participant.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Learn to read. Literacy isn't just about reading the words, but also understanding them. The same is true of media literacy. Studies show that consumers of all ages (grandparents, tweens, teens, and, yes, even millennials) can be fooled by fake news. The problem is so endemic that several colleges now offer courses on recognizing and rooting out fake news. For those of us not enrolling, we can turn once again to the SPJ's Code of Ethics. It's not just eloquent. It's instructional, and its four guiding principles can help us navigate the Information Age and improve our media literacy. Here's how:



If you want a society that is free and vibrant and successful, part of that formula is the free flow of information, of ideas, and that requires a free press.
—Barack Obama

SPJ ETHIC #1: SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT

Get curious. Ask questions. We learned to read by sounding out the words. Media literacy is the same. Check that the story, video, or photo is sound. Learn how to distinguish news articles from opinion pieces; ads from other types of info; false evidence from concrete evidence; fact-based statements from opinion-based statements. Use these tips:

EMBRACE SKEPTICISM—truth is not mandatory, on social media or elsewhere.

APPROACH STORIES that stir strong emotions, either good or bad, with extreme caution.

ESTABLISH CONTEXT for sound bites and headlines. Misinformation can be the addition of false information or the omission of relevant information.

ASK: WHAT'S IN A DOMAIN NAME? Websites that end in dot-com (.com) and dot-org (.org) are standard, but variations such as dot-com-dot-co (.com.co) are a red flag.

CONSIDER THE CONTENT and who created it. Is the author identified? Does the site include an "About Us" section?

SLEUTH FOR INFORMATION about the author, website, broadcaster, etc. Ditto for any individuals quoted in the piece.

ASSESS THE OVERALL PIECE. Does it sound like news or opinion? Is it an advertisement or a vehicle for promotion?



REVERSE SEARCH PHOTOGRAPHS to determine if they've been used in other instances and if the context is correct.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF VIDEOS. Grainy? Slightly out of sync? Both are signs of possible alteration.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. "Boost your news literacy know-how. Test your ability to sort fact from fiction, and score points for accuracy and speed across three levels of difficulty and four modes of information" with Informable, an app launched by the News Literacy Project. Info: newslit.org/updates/informable

MAKE USE OF THE INFORMATION AGE and fact-checking resources—see the list at right where we've listed a few.

SPJ ETHIC #2: MINIMIZE HARM

If you think a report, photograph, or video might not be accurate, don't share it. Talk to friends and family too about fake news and offer tips on how they can spot it.

SPJ ETHIC #3: ACT INDEPENDENTLY

Don't rely on someone else to verify the truth for you. Take the initiative and start following the clues. "The game is afoot!"

SPJ ETHIC #4: BE ACCOUNTABLE

The existence of fake news is beyond our ability to control. It is here to stay and becoming more difficult to differentiate. Ultimately, however, we determine what we read, consume, and share.



HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

CONSIDER THE SOURCE. Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission, and its contact info.

READ BEYOND. Headlines can be outrageous. What's the whole story?

CHECK THE AUTHOR. Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?

SUPPORTING SOURCES? Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.

CHECK THE DATE. Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current news.

IS IT A JOKE? If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.

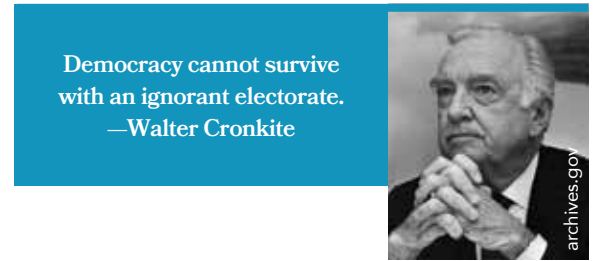
CHECK YOUR BIASES. Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

ASK THE EXPERTS. Ask a librarian or consult a fact-checking site.

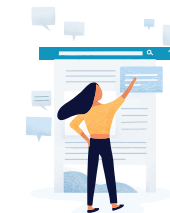


FACT-CHECKING RESOURCES

Snopes | snopes.com
 Politifact | politifact.com
 FactCheck | factcheck.org
 FlackCheck | flackcheck.org
 OpenSecrets | opensecrets.org
 Fact Checker | washingtonpost.com
 Duke Reporters' Lab | reporterslab.org



Democracy cannot survive with an ignorant electorate.
—Walter Cronkite

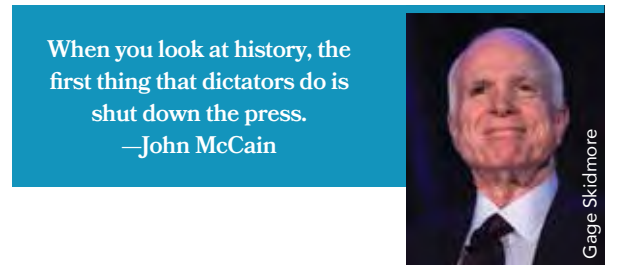


NEWS QUIZ

Test your knowledge of the week's headlines

AARP Weekly News Quiz | aarp.org
 CNN Total Recall Weekly News Quiz | cnn.com
 Pew Research, The News IQ Quiz | pewresearch.com
 Slate, The Slate Quiz | slate.com
 The New York Times News Quiz | nytimes.com
 USA Today News Quiz | usatoday.com
 Wall Street Journal News Quiz | wsj.com
 Washington Weekly News Quiz | pbs.org

KIMBERLY ROBLIN, bio on page 93. SOURCES: Cambridge Dictionary (dictionary.cambridge.org). Enoch Pratt Free Library (prattlibrary.org). "Fake News: How To Spot Misinformation," NPR (npr.org). "Fake News, Propaganda, and Bad Information: Learning to Critically Evaluate Media Sources," Cornell University Library (guides.library.cornell.edu). "Fake or Real: How to Self-Check the News and Get the Facts," NPR (npr.org). "Fake Trump Video? How to Spot Deepfakes on Facebook and YouTube Ahead of the Presidential Election," USA Today (usatoday.com). "How to Spot Fake News," International Federation of Library Associations (ifla.org). "Informable App Helps You Build News Literacy Skills," News Literacy Project (newslit.org). "Making Media Literacy Great Again," Michael Rosenwald, Columbia Journalism Review (cjr.org). "Many Americans Say Made-Up News Is a Critical Problem That Needs to Be Fixed," Pew Research Center (journalism.org). SPJ Code of Ethics, Society of Professional Journalists (spj.org). "The Fact-Check Industry," Columbia Journalism Review (cjr.org).



When you look at history, the first thing that dictators do is shut down the press.
—John McCain

THE ASSAULT ON JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

ANDY RIEGER
SKETCHES BY ART LIEN

What happened to trust in the media?

John Montgomery was excited to be publishing his own weekly newspaper just a few years out of the University of Oklahoma School of Journalism. In Tishomingo, he and his wife, Gracie, did it all. They wrote local news, took pictures, gathered ads from Main Street merchants, billed and collected from them.

It was all going smoothly until the local grocer—John’s largest advertiser—got in trouble with the law. The grocer suggested to John that the newspaper not print news of his significant ticket and, if it did, not to bother coming by for the next week’s ad. John needed the regular paid advertising, but he had an ethical streak learned from his OU professors.

The story ran. The ads stopped. “It was certainly a gut check,” said Montgomery, now the editor and publisher of *The Purcell Register*. “I walked back to the office with my insides all gnarled up.” After a few weeks, the grocer learned that he needed the newspaper just as much as the paper needed ad revenue. Without the

prompts from ads, the grocer’s customers shopped less and sales slumped.

The ads were reinstated.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES

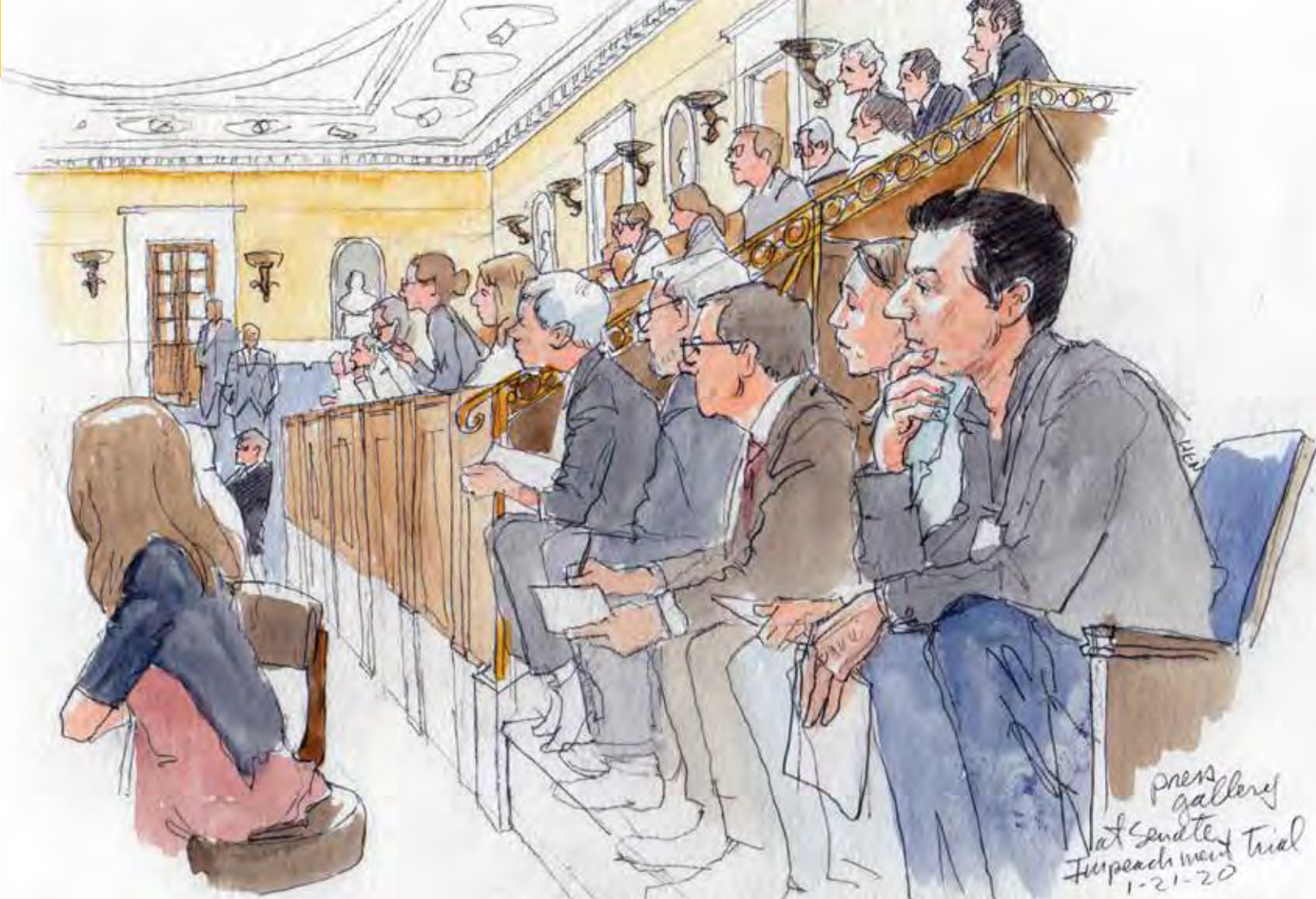
Ethical challenges such as Montgomery’s are nothing new to journalism. Technology and the changing nature of our fast-moving society only increase the challenges. Respect and trust in the news media have dwindled in the past twenty years. Many in the profession worry that the public has lost sight of the role journalism has in a democratic society. Even more troubling is the loss of high school and college civics classes where journalism’s virtues are celebrated. To many Americans, Watergate is but an old hotel and office building instead of where reporting began that toppled a president.

There was a reason our nation’s Founding Fathers made the First Amendment first. Freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press, and the right to peaceably assemble and petition the government are hallmarks of our

society. They play out daily on the streets of America.

Generations of American journalists have bucked up against elected leaders, appointed bureaucrats, and corporate titans. Exposing wrongdoing and corruption doesn’t make for friends at City Hall or at the Country Club, but American citizens once trusted the news and respected the profession. My three children came of age during my twenty years as editor of *The Norman Transcript*. They endured late-night telephone calls, threats in the grocery store aisle, and one simple assault. “If you want everyone to like you,” I told them, “be a firefighter. Everyone loves them.”

Often, the watchdog role of the press is undermined by those who are rightfully targeted. “Fake news” has been a common cry in nations with authoritarian leaders. The term made its way to America and is now used by leaders in all levels of government—from mayors to the president. Some politicians seem to relish a good fight with the press, thinking they have good reason to cry foul at unflattering reports. Denigrating the



press galvanizes a partisan’s base of support and sows doubt in a story’s truth. The accusations against journalists tend to increase the closer we get to election day.

In a divided country, readers and viewers often side with the media that most align with their own political views. They judge a news story by the originating source rather than the facts presented. The number of those original big-media platforms continues to decline, further shrinking the press’s ability to hold government accountable. Fewer reporters means public meetings are skipped. City, county, and school budgets go unreviewed. No one is watching the taxpayer’s checkbook. Court hearings and police blotters

are not monitored. Political candidates are not scrutinized.

Readers have fewer voices and fewer choices.

NEWS—AT WHAT PRICE?

Newspapers, where the majority of all news begins, have taken a direct hit. Daily papers—mere shadows of their former selves with fewer journalists, dropped editions, and declining circulation—may never recover. Declining circulation numbers mean those subscribers who remain are asked to pay more for less. Advertising costs are up. Published obituaries, one of the last expected services of a newspaper, now cost in the hundreds of dollars. Radio and television have been hit,

too, downsized by staff reductions, consolidations, and corporate takeovers. With fewer trained journalists doing original reporting (as opposed to aggregating or stealing what others have done) and pressures from management to scoop the competition, fact-checking and source development fall victim to shortcuts. Third-party fact-checkers are growing in popularity, but their work comes too late in the news cycle. The days of gumshoe reporters working for days to verify and then break a story are long gone.

Publishers battle a growing mindset among younger readers that news should be free. That was possible when advertising carried the bulk of publication expenses. Print



June 25, 2015



End of Term Opinion Watch During Pandemic, June 30, 2020

The very definition of a journalist is in question. The rapid change of news platforms makes the term malleable.

advertising doesn't easily migrate to a newspaper's website. Classified advertisements, once the cash cow of newspapers, have migrated to Craigslist, AutoTrader, and real estate websites. As fewer advertising decisions are made locally, ad sales (adjusted for inflation) have fallen below that of the 1950s. National retailers have abandoned in-print ads in favor of cheaper inserts, leaving fewer dollars and pages for news content. The industry stresses the value of content at a time when newspapers have less of it. As a result, except for a few cities, local ownership of daily newspapers is no longer viable. Revenue is routinely swept out of local banks into corporate accounts.

As that revenue stream shrinks, so do jobs. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that, from 2008 to 2018, newsroom employment was cut by twenty-five percent. The number of employees in newspaper, radio, broadcast television, and other information entities dropped from about 114,000 in 2008 to 86,000 in 2018.

LOCAL NEWS MATTERS

Nevertheless, readers still value hometown journalism: A 2019 Gallup survey found that nearly half of Americans believe "local newspapers are

vital and should be preserved, even if they can't sustain themselves financially." But that same study found only one in five Americans (twenty percent) support local news by subscribing to a news source, or by donating to or purchasing a membership in a local news organization. In central Oklahoma, the number is just thirteen percent.

A separate University of North Carolina study found that one in five newspapers have closed over the past fifteen years. Almost 200 counties have no newspaper at all. In Oklahoma, Harmon County has no local newspaper, instead served by a newspaper in nearby Vernon, Texas. *The Edmond Sun*, once a daily newspaper, ceased operations in early 2020. Since 2004, more than forty Oklahoma newspapers have ceased operations or merged with another paper.

Financial challenges impact more than just newspapers. They affect television and radio, too, which routinely take their lead from print news. With less original content, Oklahoma broadcasters turn to weather forecasts, car chases, and traffic reports—easy pickings for a limited staff. One Oklahoma City television station has two morning meteorologists, but only one news reporter.

Nonprofit news sites, often founded by unemployed journalists, have gained some traction. In Oklahoma, *Non-Doc*, *Oklahoma Watch*, and *The Frontier* have emerged as trusted news sources. All are funded by foundations, donations, and individual philanthropists.

In some cities, startup news websites freely share their content with legacy media, giving those platforms stronger content and helping to restore the lost watchdog role. Some have partnered with local PBS and NPR stations to gather and distribute news. Without significant advertising revenue or deep-pocket donors, startup sites remain undercapitalized. If a thriving free press is to survive, readers who grew up consuming news information for free must now be trained to contribute towards the content.

TECHNOLOGY AND TRUST

The same technology that allows news platforms to build worldwide audiences also encourages thievery of original content. The push to be first with stories and photographs online makes it tempting for others to steal. At *The Norman Transcript*, our news stories were uploaded each evening. Often television stations and news sites would copy our

stories for use even before the newspaper was printed and delivered the next morning.

When paywalls (where customers pay to receive content) were introduced, readers balked. They sought out the stories on free websites, even though those sites often pirated the stories. Mark Thomas, executive director of the Oklahoma Press Association, shares an analogy of the paywall debate: "It's like going to Wal-Mart," he told an OU journalism class. "The stuff on this side of the store has a price tag on it, but the same stuff on the other side of the store is free. Which way do you think people are going to go?"

Trust in online news sites, like confidence in all media, is a shrinking commodity. But, unlike legacy media, online news sites often have no accountability. At the four newspapers where I was employed over a forty-year career, readers reached out by way of the front door or the telephone. Once, when I arrived at my office on a Monday morning, there were four unhappy subscribers waiting for me on the newsroom couch. That kind of direct, personal interaction can't happen on the internet.

THE MAKING OF A JOURNALIST

University journalism courses stress professional ethics. Early on, students learn the Code of Ethics put forth by the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), whose four guiding principles are: seek truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable and transparent. Journalists should (and most do) recognize their special obligation to watch over our republic. They are often the only ones actively pushing for open meetings and ensuring that public records are open to all.

The very definition of a journalist is in question, too. The rapid change of news delivery platforms makes the term malleable. Can anyone with a laptop and a Facebook account be considered a journalist? With fewer working reporters and editors, untrained citizens often attempt to fill the role. But as one of the "Ask a Journalist" panelists responded to that question [see "Ask A Journalist," page 76], you wouldn't accept a citizen surgeon or citizen lawyer, so why would you trust a citizen journalist? Many citizen journalists are, at best, advocates for causes. Conflicts are inevitable and, left undisclosed, leave readers with a skewed view of the facts. Independence and transparency are often lost.

The SPJ Code addresses changing journalistic practices, including technological changes: It teaches journalists that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy. The rush to be first with a story does not surpass the need to be correct.

Journalism will survive this latest round of economic and ethical challenges. Technology will change delivery platforms. What will *not* change is the need to gather, assemble, and provide fair, unbiased news to the public at large—who deserve no less than the truth.

ANDY RIEGER is a retired editor and reporter, who spent more than forty years working for Oklahoma newspapers and teaching college-level journalism courses. He is an adjunct instructor at the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism.

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "Why Are Some Journalists Afraid of 'Moral Clarity'?" Masha Gessen, June 24, 2020, *The New Yorker*. Fallout from a NYT column reveals divergent journalistic approaches. newyorker.com
- "Journalists Should be Watchdogs . . . Views Vary by Party, Media Diet," Mark Jurkowitz and Amy Mitchell, Feb. 26, 2020, Pew Research Center. Public views of media performance. journalism.org
- "The Loss of Local News," *After the Fact*, The Pew Charitable Trusts. Podcast series on the decline of local news. pewtrusts.org



MISSION—POSSIBLE

ANDY RIEGER

Your mission, should you choose to accept it . . . The challenge from *Oklahoma Humanities* was an easy one. My job was to round up a panel of Oklahoma journalists and pitch them several questions submitted by readers. I searched my contact file for five ethical journalists who understand the nuts and bolts of today's media, are proud of their profession, and agreed to give their valuable time to answer a few thoughtful inquiries. As you'll read in their bios on page 87, these professionals are at the top of their field, represent a variety of news media platforms, and have staked some or all of their career right here in Oklahoma.

Dick Pryor lives and breathes freedom and responsibility of the press. He routinely gives talks on why it's important to be engaged in a community and state's civic life.

Susan Ellerbach knows the stress that comes with publishing a metro newspaper seven days a week. And she does it with fewer staff members each year than the year before.

David Craig, before joining academia, was a respected journalist working on a copy desk—one of my first jobs in journalism. Craig now trains other budding journalists.

Cindy Allen is a rare breed of journalist who has worked both as an editor and publisher. She brings a balanced perspective that reminds us that the press is a business, too.

Rich Lenz has a background in sports and news and is a tremendous storyteller.—Deep down, that's what we all do.

Mission accomplished.

CITIZEN INTERVIEWERS: Mary Lou Bates (Oklahoma City), James Buratti (Oklahoma City), Linda Burrows (Edmond), Roxana Cazan (Yukon), William Hagen (Shawnee), David W. Levy (Norman), John McBryde (Oklahoma City), Michael McShan (Oklahoma City), John Odgers (Oklahoma City), Dory Thomas (Lawton), Desiree Webber (Mustang), Bill Woodard (Bartlesville)

Ask a Journalist

CITIZEN 2020 Issue

Sketches by Art Lien

EDITOR'S NOTE: A generous grant by the Mellon Foundation and its *Democracy and the Informed Citizen* initiative inspired us to invite Oklahomans to engage directly with journalists. A dozen readers of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine answered the call to turn the tables and take on the role of reporter to pose questions to five journalists representing news entities across our state. These engaged citizens deserve the byline and their names and towns are noted at right. Their questions and the journalists' answers are frank and thought-provoking—and well worth the extended read. Give us your feedback. Email the editor: carla@okhumanities.org

Q: What separates professional journalists from so-called citizen journalists? Like the Hippocratic Oath for physicians, is there a similar code of ethics for professional journalists?

DICK PRYOR, KGOU: Professional journalists typically receive advanced education and training in journalism or a related field and follow ethical standards established by organizations such as the Radio Television Digital News Association and Society of Professional Journalists. These codes establish standards for accuracy, fairness, conduct, transparency, conflict of interest,

independence, and accountability in reporting. Professional journalists normally have experience reporting for news organizations that require specialized expertise, continuing education, and adherence to professionalism.

In my opinion, the term "citizen journalist" is a misnomer, an oxymoron. One does not become a "citizen journalist" by virtue of having access to a computer and the internet any more than they could become a "citizen surgeon" because they have a knife or a "citizen lawyer" because they have watched legal programs on television. Why should the standard be lower for journalism?

Professional journalism is complicated and its role in a democracy is essential. Journalism ("The Press") is the only profession protected by the Constitution of the United States—in the First Amendment. The work of journalists is just that important.

DAVID CRAIG, Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Oklahoma: In an age when anyone can take pictures and share information, ethical standards are one of the key distinctives of professional journalists. Many citizen journalists are ethical, too, but professional journalists have a special obligation to provide truthful information to the public. The Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics is widely recognized as an expression of the best standards of American journalism. It is built around four principles: seek truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable and transparent. Some other professional journalism organizations, such as the National Press Photographers Association, and individual news outlets, such as NPR and *The New York Times* also have codes. So do other news organizations around the world.

CINDY ALLEN, retired editor/publisher: Quite a bit separates professional journalists from citizen journalists, and the main things are education and experience. Professional journalists typically have at least an undergraduate degree from a college or university. That education includes not only journalism, statistics, journalism law, ethics, and a host of other great coursework that provides them a well-rounded, liberal arts education; they have also typically worked as an intern or have had experience through their university media.

Professional journalists learn from each other, members of a newsroom lead and guide each other. Professional journalists have managing editors, copy editors, and assignment editors that provide guidance on coverage, and proof and check journalists' work for accuracy, objectivity, context, etc. When a professional journalist writes a story, there are at least two other gatekeepers who help make sure the work is accurate. And, professional journalists abide by the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics. Bloggers and citizen journalists likely don't have degrees or education in journalism, and they don't have that kind of backup from editors.

Q: Politicians often avoid answering questions directly or essentially change the subject in their response. How do you get answers to your questions without antagonizing interviewees? Please comment on journalists' increasing insertion of facts in news stories when a spokesman or politician says something that needs correction. At what point does such correction move the story to "opinion"?

RICH LENZ, OETA: Getting information out of a reticent subject is a journalistic art form and it can be accomplished in different ways. I prefer to avoid interrupting someone who is pivoting away from answering a question—but I will if I have to. One simple trick is easing into the things you really want to know about. Let the interviewee have their say, get them comfortable, and then move toward the questions you are really interested in getting answered. I have also found it effective to tell

the person up front: "You've been reluctant to discuss this, but what I want to know is . . ." This puts them in the position of knowing that you know they don't want to go there, but we're going there! I've gotten some thoughtful, honest answers to tough questions that way many times.

DAVID CRAIG: Good journalists are polite but persistent in asking follow-up questions. In their writing, they are doing the public a service if they insert facts in a story to correct false statements. The ethical principle of seeking truth and reporting it means journalists have to do more than repeating what a spokesman or politician says. They have to provide factual context, whether that agrees with the statement or not. Stating those facts without adding words of judgment helps to keep the story from becoming opinion.

DICK PRYOR: Faced with an increasing onslaught of dubious claims and self-serving statements by elected officials, there is a growing trend in journalism to utilize the "fact sandwich" technique. This method of reporting begins with a statement of relevant, known facts, followed by the statement of the speaker, and closing with a reiteration of the facts.

Adroit politicians are generally very good at "pivoting" to reflect the message the speaker wants to deliver, rather than answering the question asked. As a journalist, I care less about "antagonizing interviewees" than holding them accountable, getting to the truth, and delivering a story on deadline. Occasionally, re-asking the question in a slightly different way elicits a meaningful response. Asking open-ended *who, what, when, where,*

why, and *how* questions is a method to force an answer with elaboration and reasoning, rather than talking points.

It is not unfair or inappropriate to ask an interviewee, "How do you know that?" to urge them to explain their rationale and the information they relied on in making their statement. In fact, that question *should* be asked to seek the truth. The role of independent journalists is to seek the best obtainable version of truth, provide reliable news and information to facilitate informed citizenship, and hold elected officials and powerful institutions accountable to the public.

Journalists have an obligation to point out provable facts in their stories, especially when those facts challenge an interviewee misrepresenting the truth. Reliance on established, provable facts and questions informed by experience, observation, and knowledge is not necessarily opinion, and placing the speaker in an uncomfortable position does not mean the questioning is inappropriate. The journalist's job is to serve the public interest by providing reliable and true information, not to be complicit in spreading misinformation or disinformation.

Q: Why do some news outlets appear to be partisan or biased? And why do their reporters (who hold varying viewpoints) seem to follow a prescribed agenda? FOX News reporters wouldn't work for CNN, nor would writers at *The Washington Post* align with those of *The National Enquirer*—or would they? When editors give an assignment, do they tell you what slant the story should take?



DAVID CRAIG: At responsible news outlets, an editor might suggest a focus or emphasis for a story, but dictating a political slant would be rare. But bias is a more complicated issue than it might appear. Language that the reporter considers interpretation might appear to some readers or viewers to be bias, even if that is not the intent. All reporters have worldviews that shape what they think is important or troubling and leave them with blind spots that may bias their coverage—again regardless of intent. News outlets with more liberal or conservative audiences may attract reporters with similar worldviews. The perspective of audience members also plays a role. Scholars have identified a "hostile media effect": Partisan members of an audience tend to see news coverage as biased against their own point of view.

DICK PRYOR: In my experience, people who want to see bias, see bias. When disappointed by the outcome

of a story, news consumers generally prefer to blame the messenger ("The Media"). Real journalists work hard to ensure their reporting is objective and fair. They don't always get stories right (journalists are human, after all, and sometimes sources lie and facts change), but bias claims often result when the story does not align with the news consumer's own perception or preferred view of reality. That doesn't mean the reporting is biased. Interestingly, journalists are among the few professionals trained and required to be unbiased; yet we are targeted for bias by people who want a different result.

Some "news" outlets are biased; it's part of their business and marketing plan. Some outlets direct their reporters to slant a story a certain way or reach a desired conclusion. There are many ways stories can be subtly biased. Sometimes, the bias resides in the story selection; it can also be caused by story placement, word choice, prominence, and repetition. Reporters

who work for such organizations know the rules and why they were hired. Employees in any business must deliver on their employer's expectations to keep their job. At some point journalists must decide whether they want to deliver what their employer demands or move on to another job.

News assignment editors and managers often have a general idea of what a story may be (that's why they choose those stories) and discuss that premise with reporters. In a professional news organization, whether the finished story fulfills the promise of the premise is not a certainty. The reporter may see a different story approach than the one originally contemplated or unfolding facts and other information may push the story in a different direction, as it should.

Another factor that complicates viewer and listener perceptions is the difference between news and talk. Commentary, opinion, and analysis (talk) is not the same as news, yet



Sketch artist Bill Hennessy capturing what the cameras don't. 1-25-20

many consumers can't tell the difference. News consumers get especially frustrated and confused when news and talk blend together. It takes work to discern the difference, and a lot of people just don't make the effort.

Q: How do you effectively deal with forces that want "both sides" of a story presented equally? My observation is people usually believe one particular side, despite evidence.

DICK PRYOR: Revered journalist Edward R. Murrow said, "I simply cannot accept that there are, on every story, two equal and logical sides to an argument." Indeed, there are likely multiple sides to every discussion or issue with varying weight, credibility, evidence, and relevance. "Fair and balanced" is a slogan. In my experience, fairness is more important than balance. The world is not all black and white or right and left with no middle ground. Both sides of a story presented

equally is not reality. Responsible reporting provides context. Independent, professional journalists have an obligation to be fair.

DAVID CRAIG: It is vital to the truth-telling mission of journalism to present all sides, whether there are two or seven. Lazy journalism seeks out polar opposites and presents those as balance. If there are two major sides, telling both of them is part of giving the public what it needs to judge their views. But presenting both sides doesn't require giving them equal time. If ninety percent of the evidence supports one side, that side probably merits more attention—but even that judgment needs to be made with a close look at the facts.

Q: As we approach national elections, how reliable are polls conducted by newspapers versus those by the major TV networks? What distinguishes a scientific poll from a survey pushed by candidates?

DAVID CRAIG: Major polls sponsored by newspapers and TV networks typically come from work with professional research firms or universities that understand scientific methodology. For example, CNN and NBC News-*Wall Street Journal* national election polls are conducted by research firms. The NPR-PBS-Marist poll is conducted by a university. Candidates may also use professional research firms, but journalists should always watch for biases in the wording of poll questions. Scientific polling methods include seeking representative samples, wording questions neutrally, and reporting margins of error.

DICK PRYOR: The proof of polls is in the pollster, financial investment, and purpose. Reputable public opinion research firms operate using strict industry standards for fairness, methodology, and reliability. Regardless of which media organizations pay them, reputable polling firms should

deliver accurate information (within the margin of error). Consumers of polling information should always remember the margin of error and show greater trust in polls with larger sample sizes, [which] are more accurate, but also cost more.

Q: Has the thinning of ad and subscription revenue (and the consequent thinning of reporting staffs) changed what news is published or how it is treated? Is "submitted content" from outside sources published to fill space because newspapers lack the resources to produce local content?

CINDY ALLEN: The decrease in newsroom personnel is very definitely a detriment to newspapers and, more importantly, to communities. There are either no reporters or very few reporters to attend and report regularly on school, city, and county government meetings or activities. That leaves very little objective voice in telling the community what is going on with important entities that account for a great deal of tax money. Just publishing press releases provided by these government entities doesn't give the full context of what is going on. There's no one to ask follow-up questions and hold those entities accountable. It also leads to less activity at "city hall" if community members don't know what's going on and can't ask questions themselves.

I think newspapers are more likely to publish submitted content regarding events or the typical press releases from businesses, no matter how newsworthy they are, in order to provide local content. However, there still have to be editors to edit these submissions, and the

newspapers I've been associated with do a pretty good job of making sure even submitted content is readable and conforms to style.

DICK PRYOR: Remember media organizations are businesses. They operate as best they can with the resources they have and will not survive if they are not financially viable. If people want journalism that informs, empowers, and connects us, and helps each American be an engaged, educated citizen, they must support it through their actions and their dollars.

DAVID CRAIG: It is a reality that having fewer reporters and editors means something has to change, whether that means stories going undone, being covered in a more superficial way, or checked less closely for errors. Submitted content is one easy and cheap option that becomes more attractive with cuts in staff.

Q: The free press as a core democratic institution is constantly under attack and the role of a journalist is routinely delegitimized. How do you maintain focus, unbiased perspective, and a positive attitude—personally and professionally—when the media is characterized as "dishonest" and "the enemy of the people"?

SUSAN ELLERBACH, *Tulsa World*: As journalists, we are trained and educated to approach coverage with an unbiased eye. It is the basis of our credibility as journalists. The confusion comes from the cacophony of opinion out there that is labeled "journalism." Politicians have always railed against journalists who expose their faults or their misdeeds. But it's important to keep a professional

demeanor in the face of criticism. The positive attitude comes from the knowledge that the work you're doing is important, accurate, and credible.

CINDY ALLEN: I try to look honestly at the complaints regarding the press. I think journalists and those leading what we call "mainstream" news organizations today need to recognize that some complaints about the press are, unfortunately, deserved. We have to acknowledge that the media has made some tremendous mistakes in the efforts to be "first" with a story or to be immediately online or to chase social media posts.

We also have to acknowledge that the line between objective reporting and "point of view" reporting has been blurred in news consumers' eyes. Journalists working for today's mainstream organizations need to understand that news consumers have thousands of news outlets at their fingertips, and we only have control over how we provide coverage. I think we owe our readers the most objective, balanced, and accurate information we can provide. We have to think like a reader. That means we do everything we can to vet our sources and to confirm the information we are providing. We hold a story if we can't confirm the information properly.

RICH LENZ: I never think of the media as a monolithic entity, nor myself identical to every other person who lists their occupation as "journalist." My approach is to ask for specifics: How was I dishonest? What did I get wrong? If the answers are thoughtful and legitimate, I try to listen and learn. I've never considered myself an "enemy of the people."

DICK PRYOR: Attacks on journalists and the “news media” are nothing new. Throughout history, reporters and media organizations have been a target of ridicule to varying degrees. Harsh criticism and mockery come with the territory. We are trained to rise above attacks, remain ethical, stay focused, and do our jobs regardless of how we are perceived, degraded, or assaulted. As difficult as it may be at times, we know we must maintain our professionalism and credibility.

Q: With the charges of “fake news” being leveled at news media, has fact-checking helped build a sense of reliability? Do you make a habit of fact-checking your work before broadcast or publication, or call someone you’ve interviewed to verify quotes? How do you respond to criticism of a story you reported and what do you risk in doing that?

CINDY ALLEN: Yes, we must constantly fact-check our stories. I have never been a fan of verifying quotes, particularly if the quote is a controversial one. It’s too easy for the source to say, “No, I didn’t say that.” I think with quotes, we have to be extremely careful in making sure they are placed in the proper context. We have many tools now to verify quotes, such as cell phone audio and video recording. If the source wants to record the interview as well, I have no problem with that.

As far as responding to criticism, there may be times when replying or explaining is relevant. With controversial and complex issues, I think providing additional articles about “how we covered this story” is important in helping readers understand the context of the issue and how the reporting on the story occurred.

RICH LENZ: Criticism of a story happens all the time. It’s an old but very true cliché in this business: If people protest your story—from both the left and right—you’ve probably produced a solid and fair piece of work.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: As an organization, we trust our journalists to be factual. Editors question reporters about information gained from sources and the credibility of those sources. We do check facts and quotes in stories when there is a question. We encourage reporters to check back with sources to verify information before publication if there is any question in their mind. We respond to criticism by listening in full to make sure the criticism is directed at a fact, and not simply a matter of disagreement with the story. If there is a mistake, we correct immediately and are transparent about the correction.

DICK PRYOR: Journalists need to adhere to professional standards, including fact-checking, and be prepared to confidently defend their work. The more journalists can cite sources, explain work processes, and exhibit responsibility and ethics, the more the public will appreciate their role and performance.

Q: The country is divided when it comes to political views and the news. People are selective in choosing which media outlets they will watch or read, so many do not learn all sides of the story. How can journalists convince the people who only believe news reporting that agrees with their party affiliation to watch or read differing sides of a story?

CINDY ALLEN: This question is definitely a hard one. I think we have to

distinguish the difference between news sites and point-of-view sites. Point-of-view sites vastly outnumber what I call legitimate and mainstream news organizations whose goal is to objectively and accurately report. Point-of-view organizations are very good at marketing their material to their own followers. I’m not sure journalists should try to convince people to “believe” anything. I think the only thing a news organization can do, whether it is a newspaper, online site, or broadcast media, is to objectively provide as much diversity in coverage as possible and provide space (opinion pages) for discussion and conversation.

RICH LENZ: If we are honest, we’ll admit more and more news reporting is “agenda-driven.” It comes with a built-in slant, particularly at the network and cable level. Perhaps that’s the impact of social media, I’m not sure. I strive to play it straight down the middle every time. People who want their information delivered that way will gravitate towards my/our work. If they don’t like that, they’ll go somewhere else, but I’ll be at peace either way.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: I wish I had a viable answer to this one. I speak with people on a daily basis who question our reporting just because it isn’t what they’re hearing on their favorite cable news station. Many people want to read information that agrees with their specific political view. Outside of our editorial pages, that’s not our job as a news publication. We strive to be objective in our reporting by presenting facts and giving context to those facts.



DICK PRYOR: We can suggest that people follow news outlets that don’t necessarily support their view of the world because doing so helps them become better-informed citizens. We can recommend that personal fact-checking, discussing thoughtfully, seeking objective truth, and keeping an open mind are essential to a functioning society. We can urge that laying off social media and dubious “news” websites encourages educated citizenship that is critical to democracy. However, the lure of confirmation bias and the need to have one’s own personal perspectives, biases, values, and identity affirmed is powerful.

And, there are plenty of places where people can easily turn to get the news they want to hear without the inconvenience of being challenged or learning they are wrong. As journalists, we realize some minds just cannot be opened or changed, nor do they necessarily need to be. Much of our job is to equip people to make better-informed decisions

for themselves. Convincing people they benefit by being engaged, discerning, and informed by truth and logic more than emotion, falsity, and ease is not just the journalist’s responsibility—it is the responsibility of each of us in a civilized society.

Q: Why don’t journalists do more to disprove wild rumors, disinformation, and conspiracy theories?

CINDY ALLEN: I don’t think journalists accomplish much when they try to disprove rumors and conspiracy theories. What journalists can do, however, is find a way to objectively report on these matters without the agenda of “disproving.” If a public official provides disinformation about something and it is widely reported, a news organization should look at that issue and objectively report on it with credible sources. Unfortunately, more than persuade viewers of the truth, these efforts

to disprove claims often are seen as partisan themselves. I have seen news organizations successfully take the topic of the day—which could be a conspiracy theory or disinformation—and report on those matters objectively without escalating the issue. That’s the best way to approach it.

RICH LENZ: I think it’s a waste of time reporting on rumors and conspiracy theories. Our time is much better spent producing impactful, truthful, accurate reports that benefit our audience and help them navigate through their day.

DAVID CRAIG: Journalists’ primary job is to seek out truthful information. Chasing rumors, disinformation, and conspiracy theories can create its own set of problems by amplifying false information. Debunking those things is also beyond the ability of individual journalists because disinformation is often driven by organized efforts that take advantage of social media platforms on a large



scale. But there is a place for news organizations to join in bigger efforts to uncover disinformation.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: We have smaller staffs and it's sometimes a struggle to report all of the legitimate news that's happening in our community. We do, sometimes, disprove information that may be dangerous or unfair. But if we spent our time disproving every wild rumor or "conspiracy theory" that comes our way, we wouldn't have time for anything else.

DICK PRYOR: There are not enough reputable and adequately equipped news organizations, time, or journalists to chase down and refute the plague of unreliable, dishonest, or misguided misinformation and disinformation that, like a virus, quickly replicates, mutates, spreads, and grows in our modern high-tech world. Much of this difficult work must be done by the people (the governed) and requires commitment, vigilance, discipline, and courage.

Q: Do you believe that, for most stories, there is only one version of the truth? Does the journalistic pressure for objectivity (presenting more than one side of a story) have a negative effect in fueling disinformation and disregard for facts?

CINDY ALLEN: Journalists have to be careful about who they select to provide differing "sides" to a story or issue. In order to report on a controversial topic like vaccinations, reporters need to work hard to inform themselves first. And you have to resist quoting the most sensational narratives. You can find physicians who work with their patients regarding the safety of vaccinations and when vaccinations are appropriate. And you ask for their sources or experiences to back up what they say. Vaccinations is one of those issues that is complex and fraught with partisan perspective. People truly want to be informed so they can make their own decisions.

RICH LENZ: Edward R. Murrow has a famous quote that in some cases there is one truth to be told and telling both sides of the story is detrimental to sharing the story's fundamental truth. I don't agree. I always opt to tell both sides of a story and let the viewer decide for themselves. I'm not wise enough to make that decision for them.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: There are always different perspectives to stories. [For example], if you're a business owner who is paying minimum wage employees, you have a much different economic perspective than those employees. But the fact remains you're paying minimum wage. In general, the facts represent the truth.

DAVID CRAIG: For most stories, there is only one core set of facts, but sometimes those facts are impossible to fully learn and verify. Presenting more than one point of view—or presenting conflicts where factual understandings differ—is part of telling the broader truth of the story.

Using objectivity as an approach to reporting does more to lead to presentation of accurate information than to highlight disinformation.

Q: As you look back over the history of American journalism, which journalist, in your opinion, is most worthy of our admiration and remembrance, and why? Do you think that journalist would thrive in today's climate, be warmly received by the public or the media business?

CINDY ALLEN: Walter Cronkite is an example of an exemplary broadcast journalist. He was seen as a trusted source of information, and I think he worked very hard at reporting the news calmly and objectively. He was also humble. Though considered a celebrity journalist in his prime years, he cared more about being a good reporter than a popular reporter. I can't really answer if he would thrive in today's 24-hour news environment, but I know I certainly miss journalists like him.

RICH LENZ: I love the previous generation(s) of news anchors: Walter Cronkite, Chet Huntley, David Brinkley, Peter Jennings, Diane Sawyer, Jane Pauley, Connie Chung. They all had their private political beliefs, but you'd rarely see them revealed on-air. (Cronkite criticizing the Vietnam War is an exception and one of the reasons Lyndon Johnson decided not to run for re-election.) That's old-school journalism and the way I was taught to conduct myself. I dare say, none of them would probably succeed in today's television climate, for a variety of reasons. Different times.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) would have to be one of the standards for all journalists, particularly women. As a Black woman who made inroads as an investigative journalist fighting for others while she was discriminated against at every turn, her story is remarkable and her fight against injustice was groundbreaking. In a more accepting society, I think she would have set the standard for journalists of all genders and colors. And, yes, I think she would be widely accepted by her peers. The public would probably be as skeptical of her as they are about most journalists these days.

Q: Internationally, journalists have always taken chances when reporting from places of foreign conflict. But the protests following the murder of George Floyd put journalists under fire in our own country, among our own citizens. Tell us about the drive within journalists that makes them willing to risk physical harm to report the news.

CINDY ALLEN: It's unbelievable to me that in 2018, for the first time, the United States was named one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists. And that danger has only been exacerbated by the rhetoric of unscrupulous politicians and social media. However, I can tell you that, yes, there is an internal drive and a need to be a part of the action to document what is really going on—and the aftermath—to tell the stories of perseverance and survival.

My primary experiences in dealing with danger were with chasing tornadoes and storms. It is definitely an adrenaline rush. But more importantly it's a feeling of "being

there," and of experiencing what is happening in real time. Being there to document the chaos makes a journalist a much better storyteller. It also provides the best opportunity to put those stories into context for readers and viewers. Thank goodness we still have good journalists willing to put themselves out there to bring us the news as it is happening.

DICK PRYOR: Journalists are among our world's foremost first responders. We are driven to question, learn, report, and serve. Just as firefighters are inspired and trained to rush toward a burning building and risk their own lives to save lives and property, most journalists are willing to sacrifice and put themselves in danger to get the story. When big stories happen, journalists rush headlong to the scene, fueled by adrenaline and commitment to the public's need to know, to report the story, and worry about themselves later. Most of us are just wired that way and are determined to face down the odds and do our job. We believe in our work and the role we play in civilized society.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 880 journalists worldwide [were] murdered between 1992 and the end of 2019. Reporters Without Borders found that 941 journalists were killed from 2010-2019, many of them in war zones. A historically low number of journalists were killed in 2019—only 49. By the end of the year there were 57 journalists held hostage and 389 in prison. That was a good year.

Journalists also carry physical and emotional scars from their work, and it takes a toll. But we are trained to gather ourselves, focus, and meet the next deadline,



regardless of the challenges and hostility we face. And that hostility is growing. That the climate for reporters is deteriorating in the United States should come as no surprise given the frequent characterization of journalists as “fake news” and “enemy of the people.” According to the Reporters Without Borders 2020 Press Freedom Index, the United States has slipped to 45th out of 180 countries in the degree of freedom available to journalists, ranking one place ahead of Papua New Guinea.

RICH LENZ: I personally know a few reporters here in Oklahoma who were reporting in the thick of the protests and wound up being tear gassed. It is a tough business for sure. I’m proud to know many reporters who wouldn’t think of not being on the scene to report a significant story. It’s just something that gets in your blood and never goes away. At its best, journalism is a fine calling, but if you hope to be great at it, you need to be willing to pay the price to get the story.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: The very real risks that journalists in the U.S. face started long before the [2020] protests surrounding the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. I had a veteran photographer tell me that he felt more targeted at a 2016 political rally than at the recent protests we covered in Tulsa. Regardless,

journalists go towards the news not away from it. Even when we coach journalists to put their safety first, their instinct is to cover the news. It’s a sense of purpose that really can’t be taught. Our job as managers is to take every precaution to keep them safe, provide them with the best gear possible, and to trust their judgment.

DAVID CRAIG: Reporting the news is a job that takes a passion for truth and public service. That is what keeps conscientious journalists going despite the difficulties and dangers they face.

Q: Many journalists are among the unemployed because of COVID-19. Indeed, the move to digital media and loss of ad revenue in the past decade (or longer) has led to the decimation of newsrooms. What have we lost and what is at stake when there aren’t enough journalists to report the news?

CINDY ALLEN: The traditional business model of newspapers and media companies no longer works. The newspaper industry, in particular, was slow to adapt to the changes in advertising. Traditional advertisers that produced a lot of revenue for newspapers, such as classifieds, real estate, car dealerships, grocery stores, etc., no longer advertise in print form or barely advertise. That is why so many newsrooms have been cut, even before COVID.

Newspapers, in my opinion, still provide the best, most credible, and most relevant coverage for their local communities. But, as newsrooms shrink, the bread and butter coverage of government meetings and community news is being lost, transparency about what is

happening in local government is lost. People know less and less about what is happening in their communities, and if they depend on social media for the information, it may not be accurate. The loss of newsroom positions makes it harder for the public to find accurate and relevant information.

DAVID CRAIG: Losing local journalists means important problems in some communities either do not get covered in depth or are not covered at all. Partisan sources with one point of view have a greater ability to shape public opinion where these gaps exist. “News deserts” leave blind spots in public understanding of important topics, especially at the local level.

RICH LENZ: I think a trend you’ll see is wealthy investors stepping in to save the best newspapers. Jeff Bezos buying *The Washington Post* is the first of what I believe will be many examples of this. I also think this will lead to more activist reporting in those newsrooms.

SUSAN ELLERBACH: What we have lost in the decline of newsrooms across the country is virtually unfathomable. In many communities, they’ve lost the luxury of having information at their fingertips—of knowing what decisions their local government and local schools are making. Why is their water bill going up? Why are schools going to four-day weeks? Many people don’t know where to find answers to questions like that—or have the time to search out the answers—and depend on their local news sources. But what about those questions that aren’t as simple and the answers that

aren’t as apparent? What about how tax money is being spent or misspent? It’s the whole watchdog role of the press. That is what’s at risk of disappearing.

DICK PRYOR: Journalism organizations have been shedding jobs for many years as a variety of forces (including changing consumer habits, rising costs, and diversity of news options) have forced many legacy news organizations to reevaluate their practices, reduce their output, or shut down. Smaller start-up and nonprofit reporting organizations have filled some of the void, but they, too, operate on a thin margin. The coronavirus outbreak and resulting economic collapse in the U.S. accelerated the decline, at a time when news and information was especially critical. By April 10, 2020, *The New York Times* estimated that 36,000 journalists had either lost their jobs or had their pay reduced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. When, or if, those jobs will come back is anyone’s guess.

In an April 29, 2020 story, the trade journal *Variety* asked Emily Bell, founding director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia Journalism School, what happens if journalism goes away. Bell replied, “From studies, we know that corruption increases and local, regional, and national politicians get away with more. It’s not a fantasy to say that journalism holds power to account.”

Journalism connects and enlightens the people, protects them from dangerous forces, and makes informed citizenship in a free and democratic society possible. Without reliable, trustworthy, and independent journalism, the grand American experiment would be severely threatened. We lose journalism at our own peril.



RICH LENZ is news director of OETA and anchor of Oklahoma’s only statewide newscast, *The Oklahoma News Report*. Lenz is an Emmy-winning journalist with thirty-eight years of experience as a newscaster and sportscaster. Prior to joining OETA, Lenz worked at KWTU in Oklahoma City and KOTV in Tulsa. He also spent thirteen years as sports director at WDSU-TV in New Orleans.



DICK PRYOR is general manager of KGOU Radio. Pryor has more than forty years of experience in television, radio, public relations, law, and government service. He earned a B.A. in Journalism and a J.D. from the University of Oklahoma. In 2015, he was chosen a Distinguished Alumnus of the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at OU and is a member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.



SUSAN ELLERBACH is the executive editor of the *Tulsa World*. She began her career at the *World* in 1985 as a business reporter and has served as state editor, Sunday editor, and managing editor before being named to her current position in 2014. Ellerbach is a proud graduate of the William Allen White School of Journalism at the University of Kansas. In 2010, she was inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.



CINDY ALLEN is a veteran communications professional having served as editor and publisher of community newspapers in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas. Her most recent newspaper position was managing editor at the *Enid News & Eagle* from 2002 to 2012. She has won several writing and editorial commentary awards. She is currently the External Relations Director for Parent Promise/Prevent Child Abuse Oklahoma. She serves on the board of directors of Freedom of Information Oklahoma.



DAVID CRAIG is professor and associate dean at the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma. His teaching and research focus on media ethics. He is the author of *Excellence in Online Journalism: Exploring Current Practices in an Evolving Environment* and *The Ethics of the Story: Using Narrative Techniques Responsibly in Journalism*. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Media Ethics*. He earned a Ph.D. in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia.



ART LIEN has been sketching in courtroom proceedings since 1976 and his regular beat is the U.S. Supreme Court. You can see his work on NBCNews.com, SCOTUSblog, and courtartist.com, his website where he archives drawings and links to news stories about cases and opinions.



Citizen Kane, RKO

POPCORN, POLITICS, *and* THE PRESS

KIMBERLY ROBLIN



The Washington Post's slogan warns "Democracy Dies In Darkness." Without a free press and an informed electorate for illumination, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people cannot survive. There is a darkness, however, where democracy *can* exist. Where we can explore, criticize, dramatize, and analyze it—the darkness of movie theaters and living rooms.

A quick survey of film and television reveals the particular popularity of the press and politics, but cinema's connection to democracy is more than screen deep. Its very history is a civics lesson in the interpretation and application of rights. In 1915, the Supreme Court ruled that movies were a "business . . . and not to be regarded as part of the press of the country or as organs of public opinion." Translation? They weren't protected by freedom

of speech and resultantly came under widespread censorship from state and city officials who found them offensive. It wasn't until 1952 that the Supreme Court reversed its decision and acknowledged that "motion pictures are a significant medium for the communication of ideas. Their importance as an organ of public opinion is not lessened by the fact that they are designed to entertain as well as to inform." The Supreme Court understood that movies, as expressions of broader social interests and trends, reflected not only their writers, directors, and producers, but their audiences as well.

So get comfortable, grab some popcorn, and get ready. Silver or small screen, satire or serious, inspired by fact or fiction, these selections demonstrate our fascination with politics and the protections of the First Amendment.

MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON (1939) A young senator defends himself against false accusations in an exhausting filibuster that demonstrates his courage while exposing the corruption of elder statesmen. *Starring: James Stewart, Jean Arthur*

HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940) Set to lose his ex-wife (and best reporter) to her upcoming marriage, a newspaper editor suggests a final collaboration on a high-profile murder case and investigation. *Starring: Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell*

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (1940) Unexpected guests spark unexpected feelings in a young socialite, just days before her wedding. With the threat of "bad press" in the air, will she choose her ex-husband, her fiancé, or a tabloid reporter who is more than he seems? *Starring: Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart*

CITIZEN KANE (1941) A young reporter pursues the meaning of "rosebud," the dying word of a mercurial newspaper tycoon in this Orson Welles masterpiece, ranked the best movie of all time by the American Film Institute. *Starring: Orson Welles, Ruth Warrick*

STATE OF THE UNION (1948) A reluctant candidate runs for president to assuage his girlfriend's ambitions and reconnects with his former wife to fabricate a more wholesome image. *Starring: Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn*

CALL NORTHSIDE 777 (1948) The mother of a convicted killer places a want ad in hopes of gathering information that exonerates her son. A Chicago newspaper answers, investigates, and ultimately proves his innocence. *Starring: James Stewart, Helen Walker*

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS (1957) An influential columnist wields the power of the press as his personal weapon when he promises a press agent publicity in exchange for ruining his younger sister's relationship with a man he deems unsuitable. *Starring: Tony Curtis, Burt Lancaster*

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1962) American soldiers return from the Korean War changed men in this classic story of suspicion, manipulation, and the unsettling realization that the enemy is not only without, but within. *Starring: Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, Angela Lansbury*

SEVEN DAYS IN MAY (1964) When the leader of the free world signs a peace treaty with the Russians, his Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff leads the plot to overthrow him in this Cold War thriller. *Starring: Burt Lancaster, Ava Gardner, Fredric March*

THE CANDIDATE (1972) The Democratic Party taps the former governor's handsome son to run for the California state senate. No one is more surprised than him when he wins. *Starring: Robert Redford, Peter Boyle*

1776 (1972) John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson sing their way through the humid summer of 1776 in this light-hearted movie musical about the inception and adoption of the Declaration of Independence. *Starring: William Daniels, Ken Howard, Howard Da Silva*

THE PARALLAX VIEW (1974) A reporter sees a presidential candidate's assassination from a new and dangerous perspective after his investigation leads to the corporation behind a larger conspiracy and incurs fatal consequences. *Starring: Warren Beatty, Paula Prentiss*

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE (1975-Present) Comedy and current events collide in this 90-minute sketch show where politicians are favorite fodder and frequent guests. Skits are short, inspired by scores of talented comedians, and their impressions live forever.

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN (1976) Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward become household names when their Watergate investigation, aided by the anonymous source Deep Throat, uncovers President Richard Nixon's hubris and forces his resignation. *Starring: Robert Redford, Dustin Hoffman*

NETWORK (1976) An aging anchor rages against forced retirement in a series of unhinged reports. The public can't look away and as the ratings rise, so does his blood pressure. He's mad as . . . well, you know the rest. *Starring: Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway, William Holden*

FLETCH (1985) An oddball investigator goes undercover to gather intel on local drug deals and stumbles into a far bigger story with international implications. *Starring: Chevy Chase, Dana Wheeler-Nicholson*

Seven Days in May, Paramount

State of the Union, MGM

The Philadelphia Story, MGM





His Girl Friday, Columbia

MURPHY BROWN (1988-1998; 2018-2019) A seasoned, investigative journalist returns to work after rehab and must navigate her professional life, personal life, and everything in between. *Starring: Candice Bergen, Faith Ford*

JFK (1991) An investigation into President Kennedy's assassination consumes a New Orleans district attorney as he becomes increasingly convinced that the official explanation and subsequent Warren Report are flawed. *Starring: Kevin Costner, Gary Oldman, Jack Lemmon*

MALCOLM X (1992) Based largely on Alex Haley's 1965 biography, this Spike Lee film provides an overview of the activist's life, looking at events not in isolation, but as part of a larger context and narrative. *Starring: Denzel Washington, Spike Lee*

DAVE (1993) When the president suffers a medical emergency, his staff launch a desperate charade to keep the vice president from power and promote an amateur impersonator from temp office manager to Oval Office stand-in. *Starring: Kevin Kline, Sigourney Weaver, Frank Langella*

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT (1995) In this romantic comedy, a widower president seeking reelection and a prominent environmental lobbyist fall for each other. But can their Oval Office romance survive the public and political scrutiny? *Starring: Michael Douglas, Annette Bening, Martin Sheen*

WAG THE DOG (1997) When a scandal threatens the president's reelection, political insiders and a movie producer stage a false war and leverage the press into a weapon of mass distraction. *Starring: Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Anne Heche*

PRIMARY COLORS (1998) A charismatic governor with a southern drawl, a whip-smart wife, and a wandering eye runs for president in the early '90s. Sound familiar? It's based on the roman à clef about Bill Clinton and his first presidential campaign in 1992. *Starring: John Travolta, Emma Thompson*

THE DAILY SHOW WITH JON STEWART (1999-2015) Specializing in satire and sarcasm, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* received a 2015 Institutional Peabody Award for "its bracing media criticism, gleeful outing of mendacity and unflagging mockery of the dumb and asinine in American life." Stewart made viewers laugh and think as the show became a news source for many.

THE INSIDER (1999) The tobacco industry targets a whistleblower after he appears on a nightly news program and tells a damaging story to millions of viewers who are, more importantly, consumers. *Starring: Russell Crowe, Al Pacino*

THE WEST WING (1999-2006) Even President Bartlet and his staff aren't immune from the politics, personal conflicts, and daily dramas that plague every office—Oval or otherwise. It might be the White House, but it's still just a workplace. *Starring: Martin Sheen, Allison Janney, Bradley Whitford*

THE CONTENDER (2000) When the vice president suddenly dies in office, the president nominates a female senator, but the hearing devolves into a smear campaign amid blatant and latent sexism. *Starring: Joan Allen, Jeff Bridges, Gary Oldman*

THIRTEEN DAYS (2000) Thirteen days and ninety miles were all that separated the world from nuclear war in the fall of 1962, when an American pilot photographed Russian missiles under assembly in Cuba. *Starring: Kevin Costner, Bruce Greenwood*

SHATTERED GLASS (2003) When something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. A young journalist's sensational stories raise red flags and collapse under scrutiny when his sources are found to be largely fake. *Starring: Hayden Christensen, Peter Sarsgaard*



The West Wing, NBC

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Columbia

GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK (2005) CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow takes on Senator McCarthy, the Red Scare, and corporate pressure in this George Clooney drama filmed entirely in black and white. *Starring: David Strathairn, George Clooney*

THE COLBERT REPORT (2005-2014) A fictitious ultra-conservative pundit rails against the liberal establishment and champions "truthiness" in this satirical series starring Stephen Colbert, current host of *The Late Show* on CBS.

CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR (2007) Afghans receive unlikely support in their fight against the Soviets when a Texas congressman, a Houston socialite, and an American spy coordinate stateside efforts to raise funds. *Starring: Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, Philip Seymour Hoffman*

W. (2008) Oliver Stone's unforgiving take on the somewhat surprising rise of George W. Bush from failed congressional campaign to professional baseball, the governorship, and finally the presidency. *Starring: Josh Brolin, Elizabeth Banks, Thandie Newton*

FROST/NIXON (2008) Three years after his resignation, Richard Nixon sits down for an exclusive interview with David Frost. Expecting to control the narrative, he finds himself instead in a surprising and compelling exchange. *Starring: Frank Langella, Michael Sheen*

JOHN ADAMS (2008) An early and ardent supporter of independence, a Massachusetts lawyer plays a pivotal role in the creation of a new nation, its governance, and the great American experiment. *Starring: Paul Giamatti, Laura Linney*

MILK (2008) Harvey Milk, a local San Francisco businessman, becomes a community activist, runs for city office, and ultimately becomes the state's first openly gay elected official in 1977, before being shot and killed the following year. *Starring: Sean Penn, James Franco, Josh Brolin*

PARKS AND RECREATION (2009-2015) Leslie Knope, Deputy Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, battles red tape and endemic apathy in her mission to beautify Pawnee, Indiana, and enrich the lives of its citizens. *Starring: Amy Poehler, Rashida Jones, Nick Offerman, Chris Pratt*

THE IDES OF MARCH (2011) A young campaign manager discovers firsthand how quickly politics can compromise character and must decide if his ideals are true principles or talking points. *Starring: Ryan Gosling, George Clooney, Rachel Evan Wood*





The Post, 20th Century Fox



Network, MGM



All the President's Men, Warner Bros.



Malcolm X, Warner Bros.

MADAM SECRETARY (2014-2019) A secretary of state uses her former experience as a CIA analyst to execute statecraft and negotiate the complexities of geopolitics while raising a young family. *Starring: Téa Leoni, Tim Daly*

LAST WEEK TONIGHT (2014-Present) With a team of researchers at his back, John Oliver is a funny fact-finder who delivers substantive pieces on timely topics each Sunday evening. He's not a journalist—but he's not just a comedian either.

HAMILTON (2015) An immigrant orphan rises up to become the "ten dollar founding father" in this Broadway biopic of Alexander Hamilton. Written by Lin-Manuel Miranda and filmed in 2016, the original Broadway production is streaming on Disney+.

SPOTLIGHT (2015) *The Boston Globe's* investigation into sexual abuse allegations against the Catholic Church revealed a systemic coverup, earned a Pulitzer Prize for journalism, and inspired this 2016 Academy Award Winner for Best Picture. *Starring: Mark Ruffalo, Michael Keaton, Rachel McAdams*

THE POST (2017) To publish or not to publish the Pentagon Papers? That's the question in this Steven Spielberg film about freedom of the press and a White House administration's attempts to restrain it. *Starring: Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks*

VICE (2018) Under George W. Bush, Dick Cheney became the most powerful and influential vice president in American history. Sometimes the office shapes the man. Sometimes the man shapes the office. *Starring: Christian Bale, Sam Rockwell*

SUPERMAN (multiple adaptations) Journalists are superheroes in this comic book series, with characters Clark Kent and Lois Lane as newspaper reporters. Aided by intrepid photojournalist Jimmy Olsen, they break stories and save the world. Adaptations are legion—from early radio broadcasts, the 1952's black-and-white TV series, and an appearance on *I Love Lucy* to Christopher Reeve's iconic movie performances and an epic showdown in 2016's *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*.

KIMBERLY ROBLIN is a writer, curator, and fourth-generation Oklahoman. She received her BA and MA from the University of Oklahoma and has worked in major museums since 2005. Her work has been featured in *The Journal of Gilcrease Museum*, *True West*, *STATE*, *Oklahoma Humanities*, *History Scotland*, and several books, including the 2009 Oklahoma Book of the Year for non-fiction, *Thomas Gilcrease*. Sharing history, particularly Western, through publications, exhibitions, and research is more than business—it's personal. IMAGES: All black-and-white movie photographs courtesy doctormacro.com

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "The End of American Film Censorship," Kristin Hunt, Feb 28, 2018, JSTOR. A brief history of film censorship in the U.S. daily.jstor.org
- Browse the American Film Institute's top 100 movies. afi.com



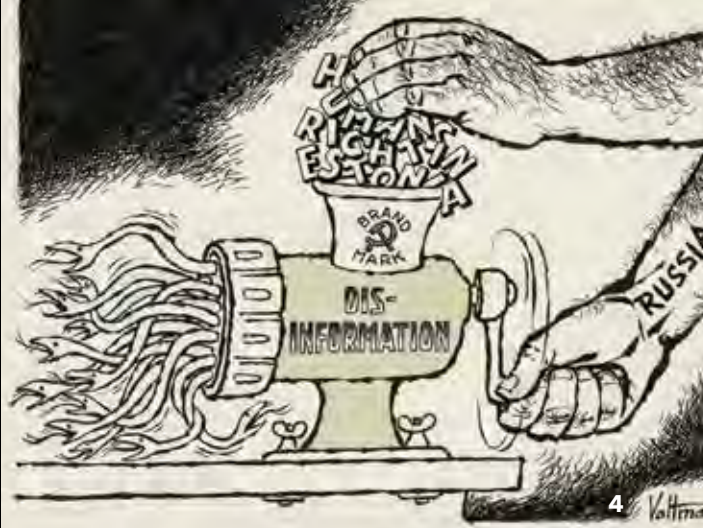
Milk, Focus Features



Parks and Recreation, NBC



Veep, HBO



KAMARCK | from p. 25

BREAKING AND ENTERING

As we now know, breaking and entering can be physical or digital. The most famous physical breaking and entering was at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters on June 17, 1972, at the Watergate Building in Washington D.C. This began a two-year-long investigation that revealed how President Richard Nixon's CREEP (the appropriate acronym for the Committee to Re-elect the President) used a wide range of dirty tricks to assure Nixon's re-election in 1972. Because the burglary was bungled and immediately publicized in *The Washington Post*, we'll never know what sorts of information the burglars were after or how they intended to use it in the fall campaign. But the unraveling of that break-in revealed other break-ins—including the break-in at Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office—and a plethora of dirty tricks carried out by the "plumbers," a group dedicated to finding dirt on Nixon's opponents.

In 2016, a group of Russians known as the Internet Research Agency broke into the Democratic National Committee's email system

and into the Clinton campaign's email system. They released this information to Wikileaks, who released it to the world in time for the start of the Democratic Convention. The information was damaging enough to cause the resignation of the DNC Chair, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, and to spread discontent among supporters of Senator Bernie Sanders, just when the party should have been uniting for the general election.

INTERFERING WITH THE ELECTION AND THE COUNT

Fraudulent election activity is certainly not new to American politics. In the era of big-city political machines it was not unusual to "vote the dead"—have someone go to the polls and vote using the identity of someone who had died. And over the years, candidates and parties have engaged in all sorts of voter fraud—from paying people to vote who had already voted or who were pretending to be someone else to reporting precinct totals with intentional "errors."

In his first run for the United States Senate, Lyndon Johnson, who was later to become president,

lost the Democratic primary (that was all you had to win to win Texas in those days) amidst reports of widespread voter fraud. And so, as the story goes, when Johnson got the chance to run again in 1948 against former Governor Coke Stevenson, he was determined to play the game as it was currently played in Texas. The race became humorously known as the "87 vote landslide." That was Johnson's margin, totally the result of a late-reporting precinct from the town of Alice, Texas. Apparently, 202 voters, some deceased or absent from the county on election day, lined up at the last minute to cast their votes for Johnson. The ballot box from Precinct 13 has mysteriously disappeared and is still sought after.

FAST-FORWARD TO THE INTERNET AGE

Every dirty trick that was possible before the internet is possible today. The biggest difference is that they are cheaper, faster, and easier to hide. As we saw in 2016, the Russians threw a lot of false information about Hillary Clinton to the voters. In addition to the aforementioned Pizzagate, they told targeted voters (especially Bernie Sanders' supporters) that

Hillary had Parkinson's disease, that she was involved in al-Qaida, that she had murdered political opponents, that she used a body double, that she had made a small fortune arming ISIS, and that she gave the order to leave four men in Benghazi.

Character assassination, no matter how far-fetched, has always found its way into political campaigns. In this century "deep-fakes," the use of audio and video to make it seem as if a candidate is saying or doing something that they didn't do, will make character assassination even more potent. Although the video making Speaker Nancy Pelosi look as if she were drunk was quickly revealed to be doctored, it had been viewed more than two million times by the time major news outlets were reporting it to be a fake. Facebook refused to take it down in spite of admitting it was a fake. And as of this writing we still don't know and probably won't know who doctored the video.

Spreading information designed to confuse the voters, breaking and entering, and interfering with the transmission of election results were all invented long before computers were invented. But now the low cost of a dirty trick, the difficulty of holding someone

accountable, and the sheer speed with which a character assassination or a misleading bit of information can travel makes these threats to democracy more urgent than ever.

ELAINE C. KAMARCK is a Senior Fellow, Governance Studies program, and Director, Center for Effective Public Management, at the Brookings Institution. She conducts research on 21st-century government, the role of the internet in political campaigns, homeland defense, intelligence reorganization, and governmental reform and innovation. She is the author of *Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know about How America Nominates Its Presidential Candidates* and *Why Presidents Fail And How They Can Succeed Again*. This article was adapted from her FIXGOV article, Brookings Institution, July 2019. brookings.edu

EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "The State of Trust, Facts, and Democracy," *After the Fact*, The Pew Charitable Trusts. Podcast on public confidence in democratic institutions and civic life. pewtrusts.org
- "John Kerry Reflects On Smear Campaigns And Not Taking Anything For Granted," Terry Gross (host), *Fresh Air*, September 5, 2018. A candid discussion about the difficulties of effectively responding to well-orchestrated and financed falsehoods. npr.org

1. Lyndon Johnson portrait, Oval Office, by Arnold Newman, December 1963 (LBJ Library); LBJ campaign button (docsteach.org). 2. Richard M. Nixon greeted by school children during campaign stop, by Jack E. Kightlinger, Aug. 24, 1972 (Nixon Library/NARA). 3. "Don't put up any resistance! Just keep in step," by Edmund Valtman, April 13, 1973, *Hartford Times*. A small man labeled "Congress" is hustled from the Capitol by men with President Nixon's features. Nixon used all weapons at his disposal in 1972 to force Congress to accept his ambitious domestic program, extending executive privilege and refusing to allow staff to testify before Congressional committees, most notably the Watergate Committee. Many feared these actions would erode Congress's powers and increase powers of the president (loc.gov). 4. "Dis-Information," by Edmund Valtman, 1992. Hands labeled "Russia" stuff "Human Rights in Estonia" into a "Dis-Information" meat grinder as snakes with forked-tongues emerge (loc.gov). 5. Donald Trump at campaign rally, Phoenix, AZ, by Gage Skidmore, June 18, 2016 (CC BY-SA 2.0, Flickr). Trump 2016 campaign logo (Wikimedia). 6. Hillary Clinton at campaign rally, Tempe, AZ, by Gage Skidmore, Nov. 2, 2016 (CC BY-SA 2.0, Flickr). Clinton 2016 campaign sign, photo by Gage Skidmore (CC BY-SA 2.0, Flickr). "Hillary for President" campaign button (Saffy Collection, Univ. of North Florida Digital Commons). 7. U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi at 2019 Democratic Party State Convention, San Francisco, by Gage Skidmore, June 1, 2019 (CC BY-SA 2.0/Flickr)

was refreshingly *out of place* compared to those who seek the Oval Office or the robes of a tribal chief. More often, those seeking the highest of offices embrace a leadership approach of “Talk first, and listen maybe.”

Since participating in my first tribal election, the rancor of politics and election mishaps have been present in my tribe as well as my country. Hanging chads in the 2000 presidential election, added with vote recounts and election-eve candidate ejections in tribal elections, have made for an uneasy view of the susceptibility of the rule of law to election chaos. Claims of election tampering and foreign influences in the last presidential contest are at parity with adopted strategies of dark money, robocalls, direct mail campaigns, and the harvesting of absentee votes in some tribal elections. All have caused me to long for a more earnest time when the precinct’s votes could be transported in the back of a pickup truck without a single ballot being lost or spoiled, a time when the people’s decision was clear and transparent.

The responsibility of participating in the vote as a dual citizen has its challenges. Reconciling the entanglement between policy of and toward Indian Tribes and the incursion of national party politics into Indian Country is daunting. One has only to look at the tension that erupted between the State of Oklahoma and tribal leaders over the questions of water rights and gaming compacts. Negotiation impasse and legal malaise between one’s state and tribe does not ease the conflict in choosing sides.

Often, the remedies to long-standing, unresolved questions pave the way for new challenges. What we witnessed this year in the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark *McGirt v. Oklahoma* ruling is conspicuous. While the Court’s ruling resolved the question of whether Eastern Oklahoma is still Indian Country, new legal mutations are manifested concerning jurisdiction over major crimes. The technical attributes of *McGirt* are linked with jurisdictional elements of the Major Crimes Act; but the Court’s decision relied upon the fact that Congress did not disestablish the reservations of the Five Civilized Tribes at Oklahoma Statehood and, thus, those lands should be treated as Indian Country.

No doubt there will be much ado with regard to past and future criminal cases within the historical boundaries of the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Nations. But across the expanse of time, Indian Country in Oklahoma is still as it was before Oklahoma—a real place.

The duality of the sovereigns of state and tribe give reality to the duality of citizenship. The duality of responsibility in choosing leaders for both sides of the political ledger—tribal and non-tribal—is weighty. My tribal heart says that the Cherokee have been on this planet since the Great Creator sent fire across the waters carried on the back of a spider. My Cherokee history reminds me of the potential perishability of amity between tribe(s) and state(s), singular and united. The term *federally recognized tribe* suggests one’s tribe could just as easily be federally *un-recognized*—or its lands established by treaty could be *dis-established* by congressional

act. *McGirt* underscored as fact that treaties hold both sides responsible.

Ballot boxes—both tribal and state—are still the domain of the people. For those of us who seek more citizen-centric policies and leadership at both the tribal and non-tribal level, it is essential that we each make our way to our own Green Valley School House. Be it in person or by mail, we must cast our vote (and perhaps our lot) for leadership who will protect our freedoms as countrymen and as Natives, guarantee all citizens the right to embrace self-determination, and act for the greater good of these United States and Indian Nations.

It is a balancing act at best and a privilege at most. As my daddy would say: “Vote early and vote often.”



JAY HANNAH, a native of Adair County and Cherokee Citizen, is a banker and former Chairman of the Cherokee Nation’s 1999 Constitution Convention, Secretary-Treasurer of the Nation, and Chairman of all Tribal Enterprises. He serves as the Convener of the Cherokee Tribal Community for Central Oklahoma and President of the Descendants of the Cherokee Seminaries.

MARTHA BERRY (Cherokee Nation) began creating traditional Cherokee beadwork in the 1980s. She taught herself the art form by studying historic artifacts and photographs. To the extent possible, she uses materials, techniques, styles, and designs authentic to early 19th-century Cherokee beadwork. In August 2013, the Cherokee Nation designated Berry a Cherokee National Treasure for preserving and perpetuating the art of traditional Cherokee beadwork. The beaded circles appearing in this article are details from her bandolier bag titled “The Fourth Estate,” photographed by her husband, retired journalist Dave Berry. berrybeadwork.com

NOTEWORTHY



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Oklahoma Humanities (OH) strengthens communities by helping Oklahomans learn about the human experience, understand new perspectives, and participate knowledgeably in civic life. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, OH provides and supports programming for the general public that uses humanities disciplines (such as history, literature, ethics, and philosophy) to deeply explore what it means to be human.

OH accepts grant applications from non-profits across the state for programs that may take the form of museum exhibits, film festivals, teacher institutes, oral history projects, or other

formats that best serve local communities. OH also administers programs that provide free access to cultural humanities content, including: *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine; *Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma*, a reading and discussion series; the *BrainBox* podcast; and *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution to provide traveling exhibits in small rural communities.

Upcoming episodes explore three exciting new Oklahoma museums: the First Americans Museum (Oklahoma City), OKPOP (Tulsa), and the Bob Dylan Archives housed at Gilcrease Museum (Tulsa). We’ll also examine the history of conspiracy theories, the legacies and uncertain futures of Oklahoma’s small rural communities, and innovative ways of teaching and learning Oklahoma history. *BrainBox* episodes are free and accessible through your favorite podcast library and on the Oklahoma Humanities website. okhumanities.org/brainbox | While you’re tuned in, give our podcast a rating, and email your comments or suggestions for future episodes of the “Podcast for your Noggin.” brainbox@okhumanities.org



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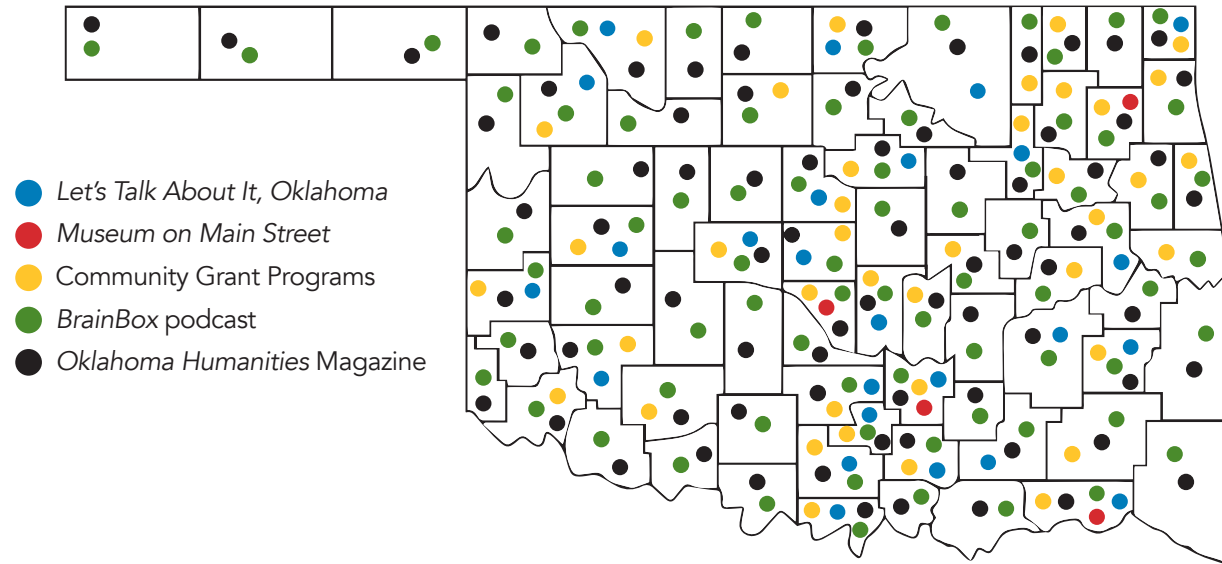
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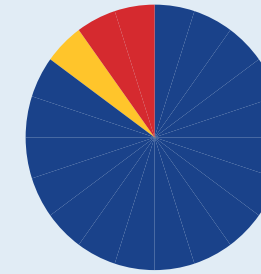


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- 2,400** Downloads of *BrainBox* podcast streamed
- 23,000** Copies of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine distributed
- 3,200** *Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma* attendees
- 3,000+** *Museum on Main Street* attendees
- \$189,000** Grants awarded to 43 organizations, reaching a statewide audience of 167,138

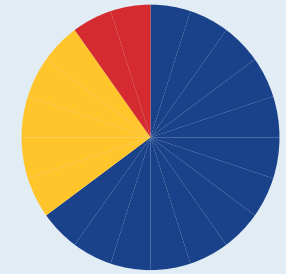
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- Major and Challenge Grant applications are considered twice per year
- SPRING: Mandatory Draft, Mar. 1 | Final, April 1
- FALL: Mandatory Draft, Aug. 1 | Final, Sept. 1
- Opportunity Grant applications accepted year-round
- Guidelines posted on our website

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NEXT UP: HOPE | SPRING/SUMMER 2021

From the beginning of human existence there has been devastation and innovation. Epic failures and victorious recoveries. But what moves us from tragedy to triumph? In a word, *hope*. Our Spring/Summer 2021 issue will publish as Oklahoma marks the centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre—a terrible scar in state history which is still unknown to many. How do we find hope when despair is unacknowledged for generations? We’ll explore this and other perspectives on hope in our next edition.