GADFLY TO THE WATCHDOGS: HOW THE JOURNALISM REVIEW (MORE)
GOADED THE MAINSTREAM PRESS TOWARD SELF-CRITICISM IN THE 1970S

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION


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This dissertation tells the history of (MORE), a journalism review founded and run by a group of journalists who found themselves constrained by the professional norms of their employers and their profession. In telling (MORE)’s story, the dissertation tells a part of the story of the organized press in America in the bulk of the 1970s, and some of its interactions with that decade’s cultural convulsions. The dissertation takes a historical approach, telling (MORE)’s story through the use of the magazine itself as primary text; oral history interviews with surviving editors, contributors and participants in the journalism review’s six “Counter-Conventions”; primary documents, including archival material from the records of news organizations and individuals involved with (MORE); and audio recordings of parts of the Counter-Conventions. These sources are
supplemented by a body of secondary literature including contemporary news reports, other works of press criticism from the era and academic studies of press criticism and the history of the 1970s.

The study of (MORE) provides insight into changes in journalistic professionalism in the 1970s, a key period after the rise of what Michael Schudson calls “the critical culture”; it investigates the role of press criticism in the functioning of the press and the effects, both direct and implied, that press criticism has on mainstream publications; it will trace some of the roots of the professional press’s increasing self-awareness in response to rampant anti-intellectualism among its members; and, using the ideas of these self-aware journalists as a guide, it begins to trace the outline of an intellectual history of the 1970s.

This dissertation advances four main arguments regarding (MORE) and the national and journalistic cultures in which it operated:

1. (MORE) changed the nature of press criticism, and began its diffusion into the culture.

2. (MORE) changed the way journalists thought about themselves and their profession.

3. (MORE) influenced the way the organized press practiced its trade at a time when the industry was reshaping itself.

4. (MORE) reflects broader changes in society in the 1970s.
Dedication and acknowledgements

When I talked to Victor Navasky of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism about my ideas for a dissertation about press criticism, he suggested that I focus on (MORE), and put me in contact with his friend Dick Pollak. More than anyone, Pollak was instrumental in my ability to research this work. While he knew that I would not be telling the story of (MORE), the journalism review that he cofounded, from his point of view, he was kind enough to loan me his personal bound volumes of the magazine for several months, even going so far as to have his building’s superintendent fetch them for me out of his apartment while he and his wife were in Vietnam, partway through an around-the-world trip. Pollak also gave me several hours of his time for interviews and opened up his address book to share contact information for several of the other (MORE) contributors I interviewed for this project. Of course, I would also like to thank those who gave me their time and tried their best to remember how and why certain events happened 40 years ago. The oral history sections of this dissertation would have been impossible without them.

I would also like to thank the staff of the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library. They were invaluable in helping me to find material about (MORE) in their collections, which was particularly important since the staff of (MORE) did not save most of their own correspondence or other records. The Dorot Jewish Division of the Library also helped in providing access to a 1971 oral history interview with J. Anthony Lukas.

Karen Michel connected me with the archivists at Pacifica Radio. Thank you to
her and to her friend Adi Gevins who facilitated my relationship with the Pacifica Archives. Thanks especially to Shawn Dellis, who pulled up the actual tapes and performed the work of digitally transferring them for me.

Sandra Hanson, who was the chair of the English department at LaGuardia Community College when I began my teaching career, recognized that I was a good candidate for a doctoral program and goaded me to apply. I might have figured that out for myself eventually, but I owe her my gratitude for pushing me when she did.

And thank you to the faculty and administration at Marist College, for giving me a wonderful and supportive place to work even while I was completing this dissertation. I am excited honored now to move on to the next stage of my academic career there.

Thanks of course also to the committee that guided this research. I was fortunate to find myself in the program at Rutgers, where an interdisciplinary approach allowed me to use historical methods in a community where much of the research uses the tools of social science instead. My chairperson, David Greenberg, brought a combination of journalism knowledge and rigorous historical methods to bear on my work, and he was a terrific mentor, coach and role model. His historical training (and dual appointment in Rutgers’s excellent history department) also helped bring on the excellent T.J. Jackson Lears, who was invaluable in helping me to broaden the scope of this dissertation to address some of the social and intellectual history that are in this work. Susan Keith has worked almost as closely with me on this project as David has, and has been generous in sharing her preliminary work on the journalism review movement, which has obviously influenced this dissertation. And Linda Steiner was my first adviser at Rutgers before she moved to The University of Maryland. I take it as a huge compliment that she would
offer to stay on my committee even after she moved on. And she may be my best editor. I appreciate her patience in sticking with my most convoluted sentences.

My partner, Simon, lived through this. I thank him for putting up with me while I worked, and for telling me to work when I didn’t.

My dad is in many ways my ideal reader—a smart, well-educated person with an endless stream of questions.

My mom is my academic idol. I watched her finish her own dissertation when I was in high school, so I knew what to expect—and also knew that it was possible.

This dissertation is dedicated to Simon and to my parents.
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I am that gadfly which God has given the state and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you.

—Socrates, in Plato’s Apology

Introduction

In the early summer of 1971, three partners—a Pulitzer Prize–winning former New York Times staffer, a former Newsweek media columnist and an independently wealthy self-made reporter for The New York Post—published the first issue of a journalism review. It was an unassuming publication, physically. It was printed on cheap paper, nearly newsprint quality, and similar in size to a tabloid newspaper or the New York Review of Books, with whom it shared a designer, (as well as some aspirations toward intellectualism). (MORE), as this review was called, was not the first journalism review in the U.S., but it was different from the ones that existed already to such an extent and in ways that make it an important piece of journalism history and for the intellectual history of the press in the 1970s. At one time, it even had the same sort of intellectual credibility that the New York Review and The Village Voice had, being mentioned in the same breath as a venue for writers who “want a discriminating audience

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3 Sam Antupit, who designed (MORE) in its first few years, also created the look of the New York Review of Books, and brought some of that design sensibility to the lesser-known journalism review.
4 I have adopted the stylization of the title that the magazine itself used under its first group of owners—all caps with parentheses. When I refer to the magazine after its sale by these owners, I use the standard More. Not only does this follow the practice of the editors, but it also reflects that these two incarnations were almost different publications. When I am quoting from secondary sources, I maintain the formatting of that original source.
with a populist tinge.”

Among journalism reviews, *The Columbia Journalism Review*, subsidized by Columbia University, had been around for a decade, long enough for an anthology to have been published already; a strong contingent of regional journalism reviews had existed for almost as long (and in some cases longer); and in the three years since the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, several new regional journalism reviews had sprung up in various places around the United States.

Like the *Columbia Journalism Review*, (MORE) had national aspirations. And like the regional reviews, (MORE) was going to be written by working journalists and would take a much more anti-institutional stance than *The Columbia Journalism Review*, which was staid by comparison, and written by academics as much as by journalists. (MORE) combined ideas from the other reviews, and by adding its irreverent, intellectual, anti-institutional bent, created something new. For a certain breed of disaffected professional journalist, one who hadn’t seen or read the regional reviews, it was something that was also bordering on revolutionary. Even for those journalists who were familiar with the regional reviews, (MORE) was something new: a journalism review that negotiated the path between the generally more anti-establishment regional reviews and the pro-

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institutional Columbia Journalism Review. (MORE) was an alternative publication without being an underground publication.

The masthead of (MORE)’s pilot issue included only three people: editor Richard Pollak, a former press columnist for Newsweek, as well as a former editor and journalist for various publications; publisher William Woodward III; and famed designer Sam Antupit, who had served as Esquire’s art director in the 1960s, and who developed the template for The New York Review of Books, the format of which (MORE) strongly resembled. The issue ran to 24 pages, printed in two colors (black with a scarlet-red logo, the name of the magazine framed by square brackets. Stuart H. Loory, who had been the Moscow bureau chief for the New York Herald Tribune and the Washington bureau Chief for the Los Angeles Times, wrote the cover article, about how the press played along with Richard Nixon’s exploitation of Vietnam prisoners of war. And the other contributors to the issue were no less impressive: J. Anthony Lukas, who had won the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting while at the New York Times; George E. Reedy, who had been a press secretary for Lyndon Johnson; Village Voice reporter Paul Cowan; Charlotte Curtis, who was then women’s editor for the New York Times, and who would go on to run its Op-Ed page; and David Halberstam. An advisory committee for the first issue included New Yorker writer Calvin Trillin and CBS news correspondent Mike Wallace.

In an unsigned letter from the editor, the magazine claimed that it would have no “Ringing Declaration of Purpose,” since such declarations were nearly impossible to live up to:

Despite your best intentions, little old ladies from Dubuque do pick up your magazine. Or some newspaper editor (or even publisher) momentarily forgets the marble admonition in the lobby and gives the news partially with both fear and favor…. [W]e have reluctantly put aside our own Ringing Declaration of Purpose
(and a clarion call it was, too) in favor of a sentence or two on what we hope to accomplish. Our goal is to cover the New York area press—by which we mean newspapers, magazines, radio and television—with the kind of tough-mindedness we think the press should but seldom does apply to its coverage of the world. We hope to do this seriously but not without wit, fairly but not “objectively.”

Despite their shrugging off of the idea of the Ringing Declaration of Purpose, clearly these critics of journalism intended to have some effect on the way that journalism was being practiced in their home town. And while they purported to be a local review of journalism (and acknowledged that they were late to starting a city review for New York), the very nature of the New York press was such that it also constituted the de facto national press, since so many of the country’s news organizations made their home there. Also, as the Ringing Declaration makes clear, (MORE) was aware of the idea of objectivity that was pervasive in the profession of journalism from the very start of its publication. Whether or not journalism can be said to fit the exact sociological definition of what makes up a profession, certainly the practitioners of journalism at mainstream news outlets held a collection of normative beliefs about the best way to practice the craft, and (MORE) was acutely aware of the frustrations that journalists at these institutions were beginning to feel with their institutions. Some journalists, including (MORE) co-founder Tony Lukas, felt that the professional norm of objectivity was being used by mainstream institutions of the press as a facade of impartiality that concealed an actual complicity with power. This frustration was of a piece with the anti-institutionalism that had come to characterize political movements (mostly on the left, but also across the board) in the previous decade. In 1971, the mainstream of the American institutional press was just beginning to come to terms with the cultural changes that

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would come to be known as “the sixties,” and American journalism was roiling with some of the same counter-cultural passions that had thrown public life into upheaval in the previous decade. Seymour Hersh published his dispatches on the My Lai massacre in 1969. Leftist student organizations had given rise to a vigorous underground press that was on the verge of softening into alternative newsweeklies. But the mainstream press was also awakening to new possibilities: (MORE) began publication in June, 1971, the very same month that the *New York Times* began publishing the classified military history that would be known as the Pentagon Papers; and the Watergate break-in was a year away. Journalism was changing, and many of those who thought about its role in society also began to think about new ways to practice this old art. The “New Journalists” had begun to explore new kinds of subjectivity and personal voice in the writing of journalistic work. By the summer of 1978, when (MORE)’s last owner finally sold its subscription list to its comparatively tepid, but institutionally supported rival *CJR*, (MORE) had been a witness to and participant in some epochal changes in American journalism. (MORE) itself was a direct reaction to frustration that one of its founders, the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter J. Anthony Lukas felt a couple years earlier with how his employer—also the *Times*—would let him characterize the “Chicago 7” conspiracy trial. It was a time in which major news organizations were grappling with the tensions between the tradition of objectivity and a new generation of young, college-educated

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9 Historians differ on when “the sixties” began and ended, but the social and cultural changes that term signifies clearly did not fit into the chronological 1960s.  
journalists who wanted to engage with social change and write in their own voices.\(^{12}\)

It was the decade in which the mainstream press began to distrust institutions and mainstream America began to distrust the mainstream press. But at the same time, it was also the decade in which “investigative reporting would suddenly gain celebrity and sex appeal and would redefine the image of the profession.”\(^{13}\)

It was the decade in which a reporter could be played, in an Oscar-winning (and popular) film, by Robert Redford. It was the decade in which “the press” was subsumed into “the media.” Yet at the same time, the 1970s were the decade in which the monolithic voice of authority, which had been challenged throughout the 1960s, was finally dissolved.

This dissertation tells the history of (MORE), and in so doing tells a part of the story of the organized press in America in the bulk of the 1970s, and some of its interactions with that decade’s cultural convulsions. The dissertation takes a historical approach, telling (MORE)’s story through the use of the magazine itself as primary text; oral history interviews with surviving editors, contributors and participants in the journalism review’s six “Counter-Conventions”; primary documents, including archival material from the records of news organizations and individuals involved with (MORE); and audio recordings of parts of the Counter-Conventions. These sources are supplemented by a body of secondary literature including contemporary news reports, other works of press criticism from the era and academic studies of press criticism and the history of the 1970s.

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\(^{13}\) Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007), 140.
The study of (MORE) provides insight into changes in journalistic professionalism in the 1970s, a key period after the rise of what Michael Schudson calls “the critical culture”; it investigates the role of press criticism in the functioning of the press and the effects, both direct and implied, that press criticism has on mainstream publications; it will trace some of the roots of the professional press’s increasing self-awareness in response to rampant anti-intellectualism among its members; and, using the ideas of these self-aware journalists as a guide, it begins to trace the outline of an intellectual history of the 1970s.

Themes and theses of the dissertation

This dissertation advances four main arguments regarding (MORE) and the national and journalistic cultures in which it operated:

1. **(MORE) changed the nature of press criticism, and began its diffusion into the culture.**

The critical culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s and the journalistic ethics movement blossomed in such a way that the American press was ready for a journalism review such as (MORE). The increasing education level of reporters and the events of the 1960s fueled the questioning of authority in newsrooms and the open expression of dissent. (MORE) grew out of a small but energetic tradition of press criticism, but it achieved a greater influence within the culture of journalism than its predecessors did, shaping the press in subtle but significant ways. The progress that (MORE) made spurred changes in the culture of criticism.
that would develop in the decades after (MORE), influencing criticism of the press and other media by professionals and the public into the present.

2. (MORE) changed the way journalists thought about themselves and their profession.

(MORE) reflects a change in attitude prevalent in the American press during the 1970s, which was not previously expressed in the self-aware and self-mocking way that (MORE) expressed it. In this period, a sizable cohort of reporters began calling for a tradition of intellectual inquiry and self-examination that could replace the anti-intellectualism they saw as inherent in a blind pursuit of objectivity and a bland institutional voice in news writing. While the press, like all social institutions, is in a state of constant change, the 1970s do represent a time of particularly notable change within the ethics and practices of the profession, and (MORE) influenced that change, while also forming a community for likeminded journalists to meet and discuss their ideas for the development of the profession.

3. (MORE) influenced the way the organized press practiced its trade at a time when the industry was reshaping itself.

(MORE) was instrumental in facilitating the American press’s conversation about itself and its relationship to the culture at large in the 1970s. For the most part, that conversation centered on questions of the press and its relationship to institutions—both those that it covered and those that produced and published the journalism itself. The movements that had sprung up in the 1960s exposed problems with racism, sexism and elitism that the press itself was not immune to.
And while (MORE) never pitched itself as a counter-cultural publication—mostly owing to the institutional associations that most of its writers held or had held—it did forge a place for itself as both counter to and part of the institutions of the American press, critiquing those institutions and attempting to spur them toward better news coverage, and countering their more excessive focus on professional conformity as an expression of power over their reporters. In the 1970s, powerful institutions of journalism began a transition from being influential but independent to being corporate conglomerates. The press became the media. But as that move occurred, (MORE) helped to carve out a place for a more independent vision of journalism within those consolidated media corporations.

4. (MORE) reflects broader changes in society in the 1970s.

Finally, this dissertation posits that studying (MORE) allows a historian to begin to sketch an intellectual history of the 1970s, which has mostly been absent from the scholarly literature. While it is admittedly a narrow lens with which to view a decade, (MORE) serves as a record of the ideas of some of the most important journalists who chronicled the decade, and the intellectual history of the press can establish an outline of the broader intellectual history of the culture. The chronological 1970s have often been subsumed into the two more easily categorizable decades that surround them, with a “long 1960s” running from the assassination of John F. Kennedy to the resignation of Richard Nixon, and a “long 1980s” that often picks up with the rise in cultural conservatism that led to Ronald Reagan’s election. However, the 1970s, roughly congruent with the publication of
(MORE), brought on a period when the broader culture co-opted social liberalism while turning, simultaneously, toward economic conservatism.

This dissertation tells the story of (MORE) in six chapters, arranged more or less chronologically, each addressing some of the major, intertwining themes that run through (MORE)’s history, and placing them against the backdrop of the transition from the 1960s into the 1980s, putting (MORE) in the context of the history and functions of press criticism, and examining how the journal reflects the changing professional standards of journalists and their rebellion against the anti-intellectualism endemic in the press.

Peter Richardson, in introducing the story of (MORE)’s contemporary, the muckraking Ramparts magazine, said that writing about a magazine is like telling the story of a rock band. There is an institutional identity, but as individual personalities leave and enter the magazine, that identity changes in subtle or significant ways. As much as possible I try to follow that model in this dissertation, also drawing from the ideas of Fred Turner, who shows how the individuals who were involved with The Whole Earth Catalog operated as a network, more than as a monolithic institution.

The rest of this introduction summarizes the six chapters that follow.

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14 Peter Richardson, A Bomb in Every Issue: How the Short, Unruly Life of Ramparts Magazine Changed America (New York: New Press, 2010).
Chapter 1: From *The Kingdom and the Power to The Powers That Be*: The Culture of Professionalism in American Journalism through the 1970s and Journalistic Press Criticism in the United States

The first chapter of this dissertation lays out the primary themes and begins to build the main arguments of the dissertation. The historiography builds on works covering the history and theory of press criticism, beginning with works covering the nascent press criticism of the 19th century, followed by some of the canonical works of press criticism of the early 20th century, such as books by Will Irwin, Upton Sinclair, George Seldes and H.L. Mencken. The chapter also surveys mid-century work by perhaps the most famous American press critic, A.J. Liebling, who was a direct inspiration to the founders of (MORE). A few scholarly works also deal with the history and theory of press criticism, including a few books, a dissertation and several academic articles. I place (MORE) in the context of these predecessors and contemporaries and, having established a taxonomy of press criticism based on this survey, I distinguish (MORE) from them and explain its importance in that lineage as a journalism review written primarily by working journalists.

The first chapter also sets up the culture of professionalism that had developed in the American press up to the beginning of the 1970s, since (MORE) is a direct reflection of that culture and a reaction to it as well. Michael Schudson identified a “critical culture” in journalism at about the time of (MORE)’s founding, and this historiography builds on that idea to explain some of the tensions that caused a new breed of educated young journalists to feel constrained by old newsroom norms. This chapter connects the rise of alternative media, the changing demographics of mainstream newsrooms and broader
changes in the culture of the 1960s to explain these changes and set the stage for the founding of (MORE) in 1971 by the frustrated working journalists who picked up on the traditions of journalistic press criticism in creating their magazine.

Chapter 2: Newsroom Cabals, Barnyard Epithets and a Ringing Declaration of Purpose: (MORE) magazine from its founding in 1971 to the end of 1973

Chapter two takes up the story of the founding of (MORE) itself, beginning by bringing together the three co-founders who invented, edited and financed the magazine in its first incarnation. J. Anthony Lukas, a Pulitzer Prize–winning reporter for The New York Times, had begun to chafe under the constraints of the newsroom’s bland institutional style and its insistence on objectivity. This came to a head when Lukas was in Chicago, covering the federal trial of several radical activists who were accused of conspiracy to incite riots in connection with the 1968 Democratic Convention. As far as (MORE) is concerned, Lukas had two seminal experiences in Chicago. First, he began to argue with his editors when he realized that the trial was a political show trial, and the Times editors wouldn’t let him state that conclusion in the paper.16 Secondly, he met the editors of the Chicago Journalism Review, to that date the most influential of a group of regional journalism reviews that had been started in various places around the country. Unlike the staid and quasi-academic Columbia Journalism Review, the Chicago review was written by working reporters around Chicago, and took a political stand against the editorial staffs that employed them. Lukas was inspired by The Chicago Journalism Review, and when he returned to New York, he told his friend and former Baltimore Sun

16 Lukas, Barnyard Epithet.
colleague Dick Pollak that Pollak should become the editor of a new journalism review.\textsuperscript{17} Pollak, who had also edited the media column for \textit{Newsweek}, agreed, and the two friends held a series of meetings to gauge interest in a new publication and to try to obtain some financing for it. At one meeting, held at the Harvard Club, a young man named Bill (or “Woody”) Woodward approached them and offered to fund the magazine out of his own pocket. Woodward was a reporter at \textit{The New York Post}, and had been mentioned in a \textit{New York Magazine} article about a “cabal” at the \textit{Times} (and some similar organizing at the \textit{Post}), which had also noted Tony Lukas’s participation (and hinted at his leadership of) the cabal.\textsuperscript{18} Woodward had some anti-institutional feelings, but he also had money. His grandfather had started the Manufacturers Hanover Bank, and Woodward got his job at the \textit{Post} in part because his grandmother was friendly with its owner-publisher, Dorothy Schiff.\textsuperscript{19} The three founders formed a corporation, Rosebud Associates, and published a pilot issue. Four months later, in October 1971, the magazine began monthly publication. The balance of this chapter examines, through close reading and historical context, the first year or so of stories that (MORE) published.

Chapter two draws on a variety of sources including bound volumes of (MORE) provided by its first editor, Richard Pollak; oral history interviews with surviving editors, writers and observers of the magazine; archival documents from the records of \textit{The New York Times} and \textit{The New York Post}, which are available at the New York Public Library; an oral history interview with J. Anthony Lukas that was recorded the same month that

\textsuperscript{17} Richard Pollak, interview with the author, September 8, 2011.
the pilot issue of (MORE) was released; and a variety of contemporary press sources that illuminate the tensions that gave rise to (MORE) and the press culture that (MORE) critiqued.

Chapter 3: Taking Our Cue From Joe: The A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions

Make (MORE) a Newsroom Name

Chapter three tells the story of the A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions, a series of six national conventions where readers of (MORE) and other like-minded journalists, students, professors and various assorted hangers-on gathered to discuss the issues that were percolating in newsrooms across the United States. Much of what these reporters wanted to talk about consisted of the issues that were raised in chapters one and two of this dissertation, but many of them had been a topic of discussion in newsrooms for decades, and many of them still are. But three decades before the advent of social media or even Jim Romenesko’s media news and gossip blog, reporters had no outlet for connecting with reporters at other publications beyond gathering at the local reporters’ bar. This was especially difficult for journalists who wanted to find out what their peers in other cities were talking about. The new class of journalists who were college educated and saw an ethical calling in their careers were scattered, but the launch of (MORE) in 1971 began to give them the idea that there were others out there like themselves. And the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention, held over two days in June, 1971, brought them together under one roof for the first time. The magazine was barely a year (and only ten issues) old when thousands of journalists, students, professors and hangers-on gathered at the Martin Luther King Labor Center in New York, but still the convention
drew notice in several local and national papers and *New York* magazine, and was covered live by WBAI, the Pacifica radio station, and by Manhattan’s newly installed cable television network.

(MORE) had named the conference for A.J. Liebling, the late *New Yorker* press critic, who embodied the spirit of literary and intellectual prodding of the press that (MORE) admired, and who also espoused a thoroughly anti-publisher take on press criticism. That stance explained the “Counter” in the name of the convention. It was held directly counter to the American Newspaper Publishers Association convention, held at the distinctly tonier Waldorf-Astoria across town. The first convention featured panels on “The New Journalism,” on why reporters leave daily papers, on the role of racism, sexism and elitism in journalism, and a keynote address by *Times* writer Tom Wicker, who called for the introduction of “an intellectual tradition in journalism,” one that would encourage journalists to be more self-critical and less accepting of the institutional wisdom of their employers. The climax of the event itself was the awarding of the first “A.J. Liebling Prize” to the independent investigative journalist I.F. Stone, who exemplified one of the many strands of journalism—the hard-nosed watchdog, in this case—that (MORE) advocated a return to. Liebling’s widow, Jean Stafford Liebling, was on hand to award the prize and lend legitimacy to the use of Liebling’s name. Even this atmosphere of being “counter” to the institutional press wasn’t enough for many attendees, and the activist Abbie Hoffman and several others pushed their way onto convention panels in order to get their voices heard. This illustrates the difficult balance that conference organizers and even (MORE)’s editors had to keep in order to negotiate a path between being critical and being radical.
Perhaps more importantly though, the conference brought together those disaffected reporters who were not nationally known—not the Halberstams or the Lukases or the Wolfes—and who wanted to connect to each other and, in some cases, even begin to take organized action to change the way their newsrooms operated. The participants organized two late-night meetings and organized a committee to address issues of concern before the second Liebling convention. Izzy Stone even dropped in to one of the late-night sessions.\(^{20}\) The woman who reported that tidbit about Stone in the *Philadelphia Journalism Review* wrote her piece because she found the atmosphere at the Liebling Convention liberating. But the reaction of her full-time employer, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, also demonstrated that news organizations feared the power of organized reporters. Shortly after publishing her piece on the convention, she was fired. And she was not the only conference-goer to meet that fate.\(^{21}\)

(MORE) held a second Liebling Convention in Washington, D.C. in 1973, just as Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward’s reporting on Watergate was becoming a sensation among reporters. They returned to New York the following year and for two more years, with the final convention coming a little later in the year than the others, in November, 1976. In 1975, to include more West Coast media, they also convened a conference in San Francisco, where the convention met with even more resistance to its “straight” approach to media criticism. Eventually, the (MORE) conventions, like the magazine itself, did become more mainstream. Even by the third convention, having a newspaper writer for a keynote speaker seemed passé, and someone like Tom Wicker was


superseded by the comedian and film director Woody Allen. The conventions became a place where young reporters could come to gawk at celebrities, a phenomenon that the socialist former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Kent MacDougall called “starfucks.”

Chapter three also builds on a combination of primary and secondary sources, including panel transcripts housed in the New York Public Library; archival recordings of parts of two conventions that were made by Pacifica radio stations; contemporary coverage in mainstream and alternative newspapers, and interviews with participants and panelists. The journalist Nora Sayre also took extensive notes at the first two conventions, and those notes are archived with her papers, also at the New York Public Library.

**Chapter 4: The Press Becomes the Media, and a Journalism Review Becomes a Media Magazine**

The A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention solidified the national reputation of (MORE), and over the next few years, the journalism review had its greatest period of stability. Several staff changes marked the period. Tony Lukas was still a guiding force for the magazine, but he increasingly spent his time working on book and magazine writing projects. Woody Woodward also began to spend less time at the magazine—not that he spent much even at the beginning. But he sent in some business managers to try to get the publication on solid financial footing, a series of repeated attempts that never really succeeded. Woodward kept supporting publication with checks from his own fortune. The original designer of the magazine, Sam Antupit, also left, and was replaced

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22 Interview with the author, August 8, 2012.
by a young designer named Malcolm Frouman, who tightened up the journal’s look, making it slightly more machine-made, a little bit less handmade, though it retained its newsprint aesthetic and still relied heavily on commissioned cartoons, particularly on work by Marty Norman, who also designed an iconic poster for one of the Liebling conventions, depicting a 1930s reporter in suspenders and fedora saying “Hello sweetheart, get me rewrite.”

More significantly, the magazine hired two editors in this period who shaped the editorial content of (MORE). One was a new assistant editor named Claudia Cohen, who had recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and had been the first woman to edit the Daily Pennsylvanian student newspaper there. Cohen became very close to Dick Pollak, who mentored his new assistant editor. Cohen, who would later become a well-known gossip columnist and television personality, brought her interest in high society and in the personalities of the people working in media companies. She would also become an important bridge to a later era of the magazine, when it was sold to new owners. (MORE) also brought on its first Washington editor, a young reporter named Brit Hume, who had most recently been one of the reporting assistants to Jack Anderson, the syndicated columnist and investigative reporter. Hume too would go on to a long career in television.

The three founders of Rosebud Associates were never able to find a way to make (MORE) stable financially. They and their business managers blamed a combination of reasons: journalists were not a cohesive group to sell advertising to; the circulation never got high enough; they should have been pursuing foundation support more actively. Woody Woodward no longer wanted to support the magazine out of his own pocket.
Dick Pollak said that the amount of time that he was devoting to the magazine had aided in tearing apart his marriage, and his wife said that she would not contest giving Pollak full joint custody of their daughter if he were able to promise that he would have a more “normal” life. So Rosebud Associates reluctantly sold the magazine (Lukas was in favor of letting it die rather than see it go into the wrong hands) in the summer of 1976.

The magazine took a one-month hiatus and returned with a late summer double issue in a totally new format under the guidance of its new editor/publisher Michael Kramer, a young writer who had left Clay Felker’s New York Magazine to take over (MORE). The new issues were no longer printed on cheap newsprint, but rather on glossy paper. They were glued at the spine instead of being stapled. They ran to 50 or 60 pages each month instead of the old magazine’s 20 or 24 pages. In short, it looked more like a glossy newsstand magazine. Kramer borrowed New York’s graphic designer (and the designer of the iconic “I ‘heart’ NY” poster) Milton Glaser to lead the redesign. The logo also got reworked. The squared parentheses of the old logo, which harked back to vague nostalgic days of print journalism, were gone, as was the tagline “A Journalism Review.” Instead, More had become “The Media Magazine.” It was an important change in direction, as the new young editor tried to broaden the appeal of the magazine and increase its circulation.

More was a different magazine after the original triumvirate sold it. In addition to its press criticism, the magazine had regular features on advertising, movies and television, even outside of the realm of news. There was more photography. And while some staff members (Claudia Cohen, notably) remained, the tone of the magazine tilted

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23 Interview with the author, September 8, 2011.
more toward awe at the media and the personalities who ran the media companies. On the whole, the magazine shifted from an early 1970s anti-establishment publication with one foot in the late 1960s and a real interest in sticking it to the “powers that be” (to use the phrase frequent (MORE) contributor David Halberstam used for his book on the news media) to one that felt more slick and corporate—and almost conservative—in a way that seemed to presage the coming 1980s. This is not to say that *More* ever became politically conservative—it did run a piece by the young Christopher Hitchens—but it became more a part of the establishment in the Michael Kramer era than it ever did under Pollak and Lukas.

*More* did occasionally continue to piss off the media establishment. In the winter of 1976–1977, the Australian-English press baron Rupert Murdoch made a splash by purchasing Woody Woodward’s former employer, the liberal evening newspaper *The New York Post* from Woodward’s mother’s friend Dorothy Schiff. *More* was certainly not the first press outlet to break this story, but it did play a small but significant role. When Murdoch bought the *Post*, Clay Felker, editor of *New York*, and Michael Kramer’s mentor, commissioned a deeply critical profile of Murdoch to run in the magazine. But before it could run, Murdoch bought *New York* too, and killed the story. Through his connection to Felker, Kramer got hold of the profile and ran it, splashing across the cover of *More* the accompanying David Levine illustration of Murdoch as a killer bee invading New York.

The Murdoch incident shows that *More* had the potential to become something just as worthy as its previous incarnation, but with a little bit more popular sizzle, and less satire and long-winded critical commentary. But just as Rosebud associates
discovered, *More* would not be beloved by a mass audience, and could barely even make inroads in impressing the media companies that the magazine covered. (Kramer wrote to *Times* managing editor Abe Rosenthal in 1976, asking for his increased participation, and Rosenthal replied that *More* still reflected “the psychic problems and nastiness of some of the people who used to put out More and are now still involved with it.”24 Like Pollak, Lukas and Woodward before him, Kramer eventually decided that he had to sell, this time to a publisher named James B. Adler, who had made his money as the founder of the Congressional Information Service in Washington, D.C. A young writer named Robert Friedman took over as editor, and under the guidance of Pollak and Lukas attempted to honor the magazine’s roots while continuing the new format. But the Adler/Friedman era was even shorter than the Kramer era. Adler tried to run *More* from Washington, and a few months after purchasing it by assuming the liability for its debts, Adler became ill and sold the magazine one last time. Adler looked for a suitable publisher, and Pollak and Lukas advocated on the magazine’s behalf, even years after they had first sold it. But in the end, Adler sold *More*’s subscription list to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the staid competitor with institutional and foundation support. In the end, *More* was a victim of the decline in interest in the radical politics that inspired it even if (MORE) never quite reached the level of radicalism. Michael Schudson made that diagnosis about the other journalism reviews of the movement when he published *Discovering the News*, but he

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said that “More is read widely.” That situation would not last through the end of the year.

Chapter five builds on a close reading of the second half of the Rosebud era as well as the Kramer/Adler-era issues of More combined with oral history interviews and a few archival documents found in the archives, mostly of The New York Times.

Chapter 5: The Loyal Opposition: (MORE) and The Times

From the very beginning, (MORE) saw itself in large part as a nemesis to a single publication. I use this chapter as way of examining the negotiated role the journalism review carved for itself as a gadfly to the watchdogs. Primarily, I will examine the review’s relationship with its chief nemesis, The New York Times. The very first issue of (MORE) dealt at length with an essay by the Washington insider and future U.S. senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. (MORE)’s response essay, written by Stuart Loory, mostly picked apart Moynihan’s argument that the press should be more deferential to executive power. But an editorial tucked in at the end of the short pieces (MORE) gathered under the heading “Hellbox,” noted that Moynihan had made one suggestion for the press that the editors of (MORE) agreed with: publications should run corrections in a regular, fixed spot. Before 1973, very few if any publications ran corrections regularly; instead, they were haphazard and often handled differently by different parts of the publication. (MORE) took up Moynihan’s challenge, saying that it would publish corrections, when needed, in the same Hellbox spot in every issue thereafter. And Pollak challenged other publications, including the Times, to do the same. While the Times did not immediately

25 Schudson, 189.
jump on (MORE)’s suggestion, within a year or so, the paper did regularize its corrections policy and begin publishing them daily on the second front page of the paper. Pollak claims this as a victory for (MORE) but the full story is more nuanced and speaks to relationship that (MORE) had with an establishment paper such as the Times. The idea for publishing corrections in one consistent place had been around for at least a couple of years, and was a part of a general trend toward press ethics and accountability. But the Times, and especially its managing editor, Abe Rosenthal, regarded (MORE) as a frivolous and juvenile, and while he was certainly aware of both the Moynihan essay and (MORE), he didn’t act until the more mature and responsible (in his view) Columbia Journalism Review made a similar suggestion.

(MORE) constantly had to negotiate between being a magazine staffed by former journalists for mainstream publications and one that appealed to a more radical element that wanted to tear down the established system. (MORE) was consistently somewhere in between. Its editorial stance was that it wanted to improve the existing media system, rather than tear it down and start over—though it was certainly always more radical than The Columbia Journalism Review. And never afraid to piss off a powerful institution.

In 1968, the Times hired a Yale University professor of organizational behavior to consult on the Times’s editorial management structure. Chris Argyris studied the paper for several years, getting access to the publisher and all of the top editors and also running a management retreat for them. As part of his agreement with the paper, he would be allowed to write a book about it, with the name of the paper and all of its staff
Chapter 6: Gawker, Content, Bloggers, Spy: The Legacy of (MORE)

Chapter six turns toward an examination of and assessment of the legacy of (MORE). Chapter five closely examines the influence that (MORE) had on its primary targets, but this chapter will address the ways that the journalism review has extended and facilitated the “critical culture” within the press that had just begun to flower when (MORE) was founded, in addition to using some of the models of press criticism outlined in chapter one as a way of assessing the magazine’s impact.

This chapter addresses several publications that followed in the wake of (MORE), including the press criticism of the pseudonymous “J.J. Hunsecker,” writing in the 1980s satirical magazine Spy; Steven Brill’s Content, the short-lived media magazine of the early 2000s (which read very much like late-era More); and the snarky media website Gawker. I also examine the influence (MORE) had on non-journalistic press criticism such as media watchdog organizations and even on the satirical commentary of Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. The chapter will also look at efforts by some of the writers involved in (MORE) to resurrect a journal of press criticism of their own, and at work that those writers and others have done as independent press critics or regular columnists writing about the press.

Most importantly though, the chapter looks at the influence of (MORE) on the online ecosystem of press criticism that has developed since the advent of social media platforms, allowing people who think critically about the operations of the press in the United States—journalists, students, academics, politicians, and even just interested observers—to share their ideas in real time, in a way that (MORE) could only begin to do with its monthly publication schedule and its yearly conference. In a way, the community of press criticism on social media including Twitter and Facebook can be seen as a constant Liebling Convention. (MORE) admittedly did not have more than a glancing effect on the culture at large, but this final chapter also examines how the cultural changes that (MORE) mirrored manifested in a broader context.
Chapter 1: From The Kingdom and the Power to The Powers That Be: The Culture of Professionalism in American Journalism through the 1970s and Journalistic Press Criticism in the United States

The journalism review (MORE) was published in an era bookended by two large and influential works of journalism about journalism: Gay Talese’s *The Kingdom and the Power* and David Halberstam’s *The Powers That Be*. Talese’s book portrayed his former employer, *The New York Times*, as a place that was a much less monolithic institution on the inside than it probably seemed to outsiders.\(^{27}\) The book, published in 1969, was a new animal, in that it was an eye opener to a reading public that hadn’t necessarily given much thought to how the news was produced, or to the idea that there could be any dissenters from the selections that editors and writers made for the newspaper. Perhaps they hadn’t even thought about the fact that editors *made* choices. The news was the news. But *The Kingdom and the Power* became Talese’s first best-seller, and an era of increased public discussion and scrutiny of the press had begun.

(MORE) contributor David Halberstam published his own book about the news media, *The Powers That Be*, in 1979, the year after the journalism review ceased publication. It’s a colossus of a book, more than 700 pages long, and according to the jacket copy, seven years in the making (almost exactly the period of (MORE)’s existence).\(^{28}\) *The Powers That Be* examines four media giants: CBS, *Time*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*—four of the most powerful news organizations in the country in the late 1970s—and tells the story of the powerful people behind those institutions and their interactions with the government and corporate interests. The end of


the 1970s was a time when late 1960s distrust of institutions began to segue into the 1980s, a time when they were more widely celebrated and less widely questioned. These two books fit neatly in chronology just before the launch of (MORE) and just after its demise, and both were written by men who had ties to the review (Halberstam was a close friend and colleague of founder Tony Lukas and Talese was a headliner at the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention). But their timing was not just coincidental. The books serve as a convenient shorthand for the changes that roiled the organized press and the broader public in the 1970s, a complex, dynamic and unstable decade often characterized as a mere transition from the 1960s to the 1980s, both of which have better established identities as decades.

*The Kingdom and the Power* appeared at a time when distrust of public institutions was beginning to hit an apogee. Distrust of media and government grew throughout the sixties as the public began to realize the scope of the deception that had brought the country into the Vietnam war and the complicity of the press in furthering that deception. The demonstrations and the violent police response surrounding the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago made many people realize that the mainstream news media were slow to recognize new political developments, and often minimized, delegitimized or moderated them once it did pick up on those movements, as Todd Gitlin a sociologist and media scholar who participated in some of those political movements as a young man, argues. So by 1969 or so, when Talese’s book about *The New York Times* appeared, a public was ready to hear about the dissension within the ranks of media institutions. But by the end of the seventies, the public again seemed eager for strong

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institutions that had answers and promoted a strong, unified and more conservative country. A decade of malaise and anti-institutional attitudes had worn off, especially as society began to rediscover the idea of the market, both economically, and really for the first time, even in the realm of ideas and in the academy.30

The transition from the 1960s to the 1980s in journalism marked a change in the way that journalists thought about themselves. Talese had left the Times in 1965, and made a name for himself as a magazine and book author. He was often associated with the “New Journalists,” including the movement’s evangelist, Tom Wolfe,31 and others who attempted to elevate the style of journalism in the late sixties and early seventies. But also tied into the New Journalism was both an implicit (and sometimes explicit) critique of objectivity, which some of them saw as limiting the potential for a new kind of journalistic truth. During this period, journalists became more self-aware and self-critical generally, and made the strongest argument yet that the editorial functions of news making were the essential element in the publication of a newspaper or the production of a television news show—and that objectivity as a professional ideal was actually being used as a form of control by editors and publishers who were their employers. The news gatherers, writers and editors asserted themselves as more important than the publishers—a view that they had likely always held, but one for which they were able to articulate a coherent and compelling argument. Reporters thrust themselves into the intellectual life of the United States in the seventies, making inroads against perceptions that the norms of the professional press made journalism, counter-intuitively, an anti-intellectual profession.

This renewed sense of intellectualism in American journalism manifested itself in the critical culture of 1970s newsrooms and in journalism reviews such as (MORE). For this reason, a study of (MORE) illuminates not only the mores of journalists in the period, but also serves as a great starting point for an intellectual history of the seventies. While the ideas of academics, essayists and public intellectuals are important, many more people engage with the popular press in forming their ideas. And (MORE) was the forum in which the best journalists of the 1970s engaged with each other’s ideas.

At the same time, the 1970s were the beginning of the period that press critic Jack Shafer suggests are the closest thing to a “golden age” of American newspapers, by which he means not the quality of the product so much as the stability of their income: “from about 1970 to 2005… consolidation of titles gave the surviving papers near monopoly power over mass market advertising in their markets.”

David Halberstam’s *The Powers That Be* serves as a sort of capstone to this period, having been published in 1979, and researched over the course of the tumultuous period that resulted in their rise. Halberstam had come to prominence as a questioner of institutional authority, attempting to discover whether or not the narrative about the Vietnam War that government officials had been feeding him and other reporters was true. Of course he did this for one of the biggest institutions of the press in the mid-1960s, *The New York Times*. Halberstam eventually felt constrained by that institution as well, and turned to books and magazines, just as his friend Tony Lukas had and as Gay Talese had before him. Both Halberstam and Talese were accused of painting unfair portraits of their subjects and even of just

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getting their facts plain wrong, but the portraits have endured, and their combined thesis—these institutions of the press held immense power in shaping public thought—have endured, even if they are not rock solid works of academic history. That *The Kingdom and the Power* and *The Powers That Be* both include the word “power” in their titles is no coincidence. Nor are their Biblical resonances. By the end of the 1970s, Americans had learned that the “voice of God” tone of their journalism was manufactured by human beings, but they had also learned that the earthly kingdoms that controlled the media were no less powerful.

As (MORE) began publication in 1971, the profession of journalism was changing; the culture at large was changing; and the business of newspapers, magazines and broadcast news was also about to be remade. Journalists questioned the professional norm of objectivity with new vehemence and fought with publishers for control of the work they did. (MORE) chronicled these changes and played a role in them as well, but in order to understand (MORE)’s place in this ecosystem, an understanding of the ecosystem is necessary. This chapter addresses that ecosystem: the unquestioning professional objectivity of the rank and file reporter; the history of press criticism; the change from a professional press to a corporate media system; and overarching changes in society that accompanied all of this.

**Objectivity, professionalism, anti-intellectualism and corporate journalism’s complicity with power**

(MORE) represents an important development in the self-regard of journalists as a professional group—or at least as a group pursuing similar goals and sharing norms. Prior
to the rise of the large city newspaper beginning in the 1830s, there was no real concept of the job of a reporter. Newspapers were usually small operations published as side projects by printers or financed by political parties. Those who were wealthy enough to publish newspapers did enjoy autonomy, but ever since those publishers began hiring writers to work for them, those employees functioned without any real way of expressing their own opinions, for the most part. This was especially true as newspapers began to standardize their “voice” and adopt the posture of objectivity, largely in an effort to avoid losing advertisers or subscribers. Objectivity has roots in the positivist tradition, and may originally have been meant to function somewhat as a scientific method for journalists. But by the 1970s, that meaning had been lost, and it had come to mean something more like “balance” or even a bland disinterestedness that many reporters felt stifled them and denied them their independent voices.

The advent of underground and alternative newspapers, as well as independent newsletters such as I.F. Stone’s Weekly, allowed journalists to be truly independent for the first time since the rise of mass circulation newspapers in the 19th Century. Also, the reporters’ power movement (also known as the democracy in the newsroom movement) gave journalists hope that they could have a voice in running larger newsrooms when they weren’t able to start their own publications—though the movement, inspired by reporters’ strikes in Europe was mostly ineffective, and petered out by the end of the seventies.33 (MORE) gave these independent (and independent-minded) journalists a way

to see themselves as a united force across publications, and solidified quasi-professional standards that transcended the industry of journalism.

But in addition to aiding the social status of journalists, professionalization was a boon to publishers, who could see the development of professional standards and a single “voice” for journalists as a way of getting their staffs to fall in line. Also, the key professional ideal that journalists coalesced around—the ideal of objectivity—could also be seen as a way of masking a complicity with power.

By the 1890s, the basic structure of a news story had been standardized, though historians differ on the reasons for the development of the “hard news” form, often referred to as the “inverted pyramid.” In inverted pyramid news writing, a lead sentence conveys the main news item quickly and clearly, and details about the event proceed from that lead in order of importance. The form possibly grew out of the stilted, concise language of telegraph communications beginning in the 1860s, or its adoption allowed various news organizations to use the same material from the Associated Press news wires. Publishers and editors controlled journalists’ writing in order to ease the work of their superiors or to appeal to the widest possible audience. William S. Solomon argued

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that “In size, visibility, and influence, the newspapers that became dominant were those that catered to advertisers and treated news as a commodity.”

Sometime in the first half of the 20th Century however, the inverted pyramid and objectivity gained a rationale that elevated them to the status of professional practice rather than production convenience or editorial imposition. Reporters began a march toward professionalism, which would secure them middle class stability, and as a consequence of this professionalization, the journalists internalized the idea of objectivity, and what had been an external requirement became internalized. It became the best practice. In other words, as employee reporters began to assert themselves as professionals, the objectivity ideal was co-opted as their own, and many reporters would fail to see why it was an ideal that was in the best interest of their publications, not necessarily in their own.

But objectivity also allowed editors and writers the comforting illusion of independence, and in many ways journalists convinced themselves that the noble ideals of objectivity served their own purposes, when in reality, this ideal allowed publishers to exert a kind of unquestioned control over editorial content. Objectivity ensured that newspapers would never be too inflammatory for readers or advertisers. These same concerns would resurface in the 1970s, when (MORE) was published. However, the concern in the later period was more with corporatized editors than it was with the publishers—or at least it extended the concern to the editorial hierarchy.

George Seldes observed: “The reporter throughout our history has been the lowliest of animals. Believing himself to be too good to join in any organization or movement, he has found himself exploited by everyone.” According to Marianne Salcetti, newspaper reporters in the 20th century were more educated than those who had come before them, but they were entering a more mechanized workplace, and in the division of labor, their work was devalued and considered replaceable. Their stories were subsumed into the larger “voice” of the newspaper, which was seen by the management classes as being more important than the voice of the individual journalist. Meanwhile, according to William Solomon, a new class of editors separated the publishers from the reporters and functioned as a sort of middle management, further distancing individual reporters from any hope of true autonomy. This was certainly true of reporters such as J. Anthony Lukas, who chafed under the leadership of New York Times managing editor A.M. Rosenthal, leading in part to Lukas’s idea to found (MORE). Rosenthal had been venerated as a reporter—by other reporters—before he became an editor and alienated many of his former newsroom colleagues.

For Richard Hofstadter and for Robert H. Wiebe the social function of journalists was a key part of the Progressive movement, the political idea that an active, participatory democracy with a strong basis in scientific rationality could overcome the evils of an industrialized, urban society. The professions could create and secure a middle class and insulate against the corrupting influence of capital through their ethical codes. Through the research component of the professional schools, the professions also

37 Marianne Salcetti, “The Emergence of the Reporter: Mechanization and the Devaluation of Editorial Workers.”
38 William S. Solomon, “The Site of Newsroom Labor.”
connected themselves to the new social sciences, which were become established in the universities at about the same time. Superscript 39 The scientific rationality of medicine or engineering could thus be applied to pedagogy, social work, psychology, or even to journalism.

For Hofstadter, journalists were central to the Progressive project. He goes so far as to say, in fact, that “[i]t is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Progressive mind was characteristically a journalistic mind, and that its characteristic contribution was that of the socially responsible reporter-reformer.” Superscript 40 But the journalists Hofstadter is referring to—the group known as the muckrakers—were primarily magazine writers. And in magazines, reporters were given more freedom to develop their unique voices or to express their occasionally radical political views. The reformers mostly went to the magazines, and those reporters who sought steady jobs went into newspapers, where they could hope to achieve a comfortable middle class existence at the expense of some level of autonomy.

Though the valorization of rationality was a boon to those who view journalism as a kind of populist social science and contributed to the solidifying of the objectivity norm in journalism, the concomitant standardization has always been an ill fit for journalism, which, in the U.S. system cannot be a limited-entry profession in the way that medicine or law or even teaching could require a standardized education or licensing. Not all people who practice journalism see themselves as professionals, and so those who worked for newspapers were the main proponents of professionalism. Those who worked to effect social change were often outside the newspaper industry, as the muckrakers

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40 Haskell, 186.
were. Also, many of these newspaper journalists were still working-class, not college educated, and viewed themselves more as craftspeople than as professionals.

Criticisms such as Upton Sinclair’s and those of the journalist Will Irwin in a seminal 1911 *Collier’s* magazine series on American newspapers reignited public outrage in the commercialism of newspapers. Mostly though, technological advances and wide circulation were seen as a good thing. Birkhead quotes the muckraker Lincoln Steffens, who had spent the early part of his career at newspapers before moving to the more independent world of magazine journalism:

The idealists, even more than the money-makers, should insist that the good newspaper be so made that it will pay; since it is not the paper but the readers they are after and the profits are the proof of the reading.\(^41\)

Douglas Birkhead holds that Irwin’s series was a watershed moment in the understanding of the commercial press—and it was just that: commercial. Summarizing Irwin, Birkhead writes that the new institution of journalism “could not be separated from its free enterprise orientation, corporate organization, or the capital investment of its technological base. But its power and intrinsic importance to modern life gave it prerogatives that extended beyond the boundary of property rights.”\(^42\) For Irwin, the reform of professional journalism would have to happen within the successful institution of commercial newspapers. Birkhead is one of several scholars of journalism’s professionalism who finds that

\[t\]he fit of an occupational ideal of individual autonomy to an industrial bureaucracy would not be perfect: journalism would be destined to a perennial

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\(^{42}\)Birkhead, 10.
state of semi-professionalism, to a faith in a “spirit of professionalism” rather than in the exact example of the established professions.\textsuperscript{43}

Irwin, as a seminal critic of the press, foreshadows A.J. Liebling, who was a direct inspiration for (MORE). And Irwin also foreshadows (MORE) itself in his questioning of the commercial motivations of publishers.

The peak of journalism’s professionalization movement coincided in the 1920s with the articulation of the norm of objectivity.\textsuperscript{44} Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel argue that the original meaning of the term was not freedom from bias, but rather one that “called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information—a transparent approach to evidence—precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work.”\textsuperscript{45} Walter Lippmann, similarly, wrote of journalists: “There is but one kind of unity possible in a world as diverse as ours. It is a unity of method, rather than aim; the unity of disciplined experiment.”\textsuperscript{46} Journalists would gather information and analyze it, but accept any conclusion that the evidence pointed toward, rather than the conclusion that the journalists preferred. Then these conclusions would be presented in bland, neutral language, so as not to color these semi-scientific conclusions.

Of course, these are broad historical generalizations, and several newspapers did use a lively writing style to attract readers, instead of striving for disinterested blandness

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{45} Kovach and Rosentstiel, p. 72
\textsuperscript{46} Walter Lippmann, \textit{Liberty and the News} (New York,: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920).
but as Michael Schudson argued, this “story” model was gradually superseded by an “information model”:

While reporters subscribed concurrently to the ideals of factuality and entertainment in writing the news, some of the papers they worked for chose identities that strongly emphasized one ideal or the other. The World and the Journal chose to be entertaining; the old penny press, especially the Times after Adolph Ochs rejuvenated it in 1896, took the path of factuality.\footnote{Schudson.}

It is these information model newspapers that survived, with newspapers known as “writers’ papers” gradually dying out. The World ceased publication as its own paper in 1931, and its successor as the reigning writers’ paper in New York, the Herald Tribune, could not survive the 1965 newspaper strike, and went out of business only a few years before (MORE) was founded. This left The New York Times as the dominant newspaper in New York, and indeed the dominant newspaper in the United States. This was a clear victory for the objective “information model.” As Andrew Porwancher convincingly argues, since Adolph Ochs, who had bought and remade the Times in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, was the “Prophet of Objectivity,” and the key figure in establishing objectivity as a professional ideal. Porwancher argues that the choice of objectivity was not an altruistic one or one that guided institutional norms. Rather, objectivity was used to legitimize institutional goals of increased advertising and circulation.\footnote{Andrew Porwancher, “Objectivity’s Prophet: Adolph S. Ochs and the New York Times, 1896–1935.” Journalism History 36:4 (2011): 186–195.}

The professional model had become well ingrained by the time sociologist Herbert Gans wrote his 1979 book on the culture of newsrooms (published just after the end of the (MORE) era), in which he studied two national network television evening news programs and two news magazines. Throughout the book, Gans refers to journalists
as professionals with almost no explanation. He does, however, touch on the theme of professional autonomy several times during his work. Interestingly, he adds first-person observation to the theorizing of earlier academics. Journalists have some autonomy, he writes, particularly the senior writers who have gained the trust of their editors. He notes that this autonomy may frequently be “illusory,” since editors find ways of controlling the newsroom by means other than threats, and by allowing the individual journalists to feel as if they have freedom. “Writers are entitled to select their own facts, draw their own conclusions and come up with their own evaluations, although they may be edited later.”

Gans, despite his training as a sociologist, wasn’t working from the history of professionalism either, and yet he hit on the same point. Objectivity gave publishers and editors a framework for keeping their writers’ ideas within what Daniel Hallin calls the “sphere of legitimate controversy.”

Over the course of the 20th Century, the professional ideal of objectivity became increasingly ingrained in the culture of journalism, and by the time (MORE) was first published, journalism had become, I will argue, an anti-intellectual practice.

**Anti-intellectualism in professional American journalism**

Historians of the U.S. press have expended little effort examining its intellectual history. And at the same time, intellectual historians often ignore the role of journalists in propagating the ideas of a culture. Journalism is a profession that traditionally has long had writing as one of its core skills; it often concerns itself with public policy and the free

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flow of information in a democracy; as a subject of academic study, journalism has built up a substantial amount of scholarship; and journalism is taught as a major or minor in hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States (though college-level instruction is not, in and of itself, a guarantee of an intellectual approach to the subject). In fact the core processes of journalism—reporting, critical evaluation of public events, and investigation—are inherently intellectual. Because of these factors and others, one could easily make the commonsense assumption that journalists, as a group, have adopted the probing, questing, questioning and self-critical habits of mind that characterize intellectuals. Yet despite the near-continual presence of at least some intellectual journalism (as much of the so-called “elite” media would likely be called), the organized members of the U.S. mass media have on the whole been not merely a non-intellectual group, but rather an anti-intellectual group, actively fomenting a press that is populist, anti-elitist, anti-rational, instrumentalist, and blindly professional, and the doctrine of objectivity fed this.

Very few academic studies have looked at the history of anti-intellectualism in the American press, and not many more have looked at anti-intellectualism in America in general. Since the institutional press began to form in its present state in the period between the rise of the Penny Press and the Yellow Journalism era of thriving urban newspapers, several reformers and critics inside and outside of the working press have attempted to add an intellectual dimension its standards of practice, and nearly all of these attempts have failed, in the long term, to effect much change in the general tenor of the press’s intellectual operation. Therefore anti-intellectualism is an integral idea when it comes to understanding the collective mindset of the institutional press, and also a major
part of what the founders of (MORE) were rebelling against. While tangible change may seem to be the most logical way to measure the effect of a critic of the press, as asserted above, a good critic instead influences the ideas of journalism—the intellectual atmosphere surrounding and guiding the practice, rather than the practice itself.

Two works, one building upon the other, serve as the historical and theoretical bases for dealing with the idea of anti-intellectualism. The first, from which its definition of anti-intellectualism is taken, is the classic and seminal work on anti-intellectualism, Richard Hofstadter’s historically-informed 1963 examination of the phenomenon, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. This book defines intellect, which Hofstadter contrasts with simple intelligence. For Hofstadter, intelligence is simple “excellence of mind,” which “works within the framework of limited but clearly stated goals…”

In Hofstadter’s definition, a great many intelligent people are not intellectuals, and being an intellectual, conversely, does not guarantee intelligence. A great surgeon or attorney might be very intelligent, and indeed that might be all a client would want. An intelligent surgeon would be well versed in the best practices of the day, and be able to understand and execute them. But an intellectual would be questioning those practices, looking for a better way. A patient might not want an intellectual surgeon, since that surgeon might be

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52 Hofstadter, 25.
prone to experimentation. On the other hand, the intellectuals in a profession are the ones who push it forward. In medicine, that would be the researchers who do experiment and who find the next great procedure or even a cure. Journalists might be asking questions of their sources all the time, but that is just a part of their job. I argue that they do not have as strong a tradition of questioning their own practices, accepting ideas such as objectivity as unquestionable truths.

The bulk of Hofstadter’s book examines the several strains of intellectualism, from its roots, as Hofstadter identifies them, in early American evangelicalism, to his direct incitement to write the book, the McCarthyite anti-Communism of the 1940s and 1950s (an anti-intellectual atmosphere that A.J. Liebling directly deals with in his Wayward Press writings).

The sociologist Daniel Rigney reread Hofstadter and codified his historical overview into a theoretical framework that makes Hofstadter’s ideas more practical to build upon for working scholars. Rigney identifies three distinct strains of anti-intellectualism in the more general arguments put forth by Hofstadter: religious anti-rationalism, populist anti-elitism, and unreflective instrumentalism.

Within the first strand of Hofstadterian anti-intellectualism, religious anti-rationalism, Rigney identifies two distinct strands of conflict: “warm” emotion vs. “cold” reason, on one hand, and absolutism vs. relativism on the other. The first dialectic Hofstadter identifies with the decline of Puritan preachers as rational religious leaders and the ascent of emotional, charismatic evangelical leaders. The second tilts believers toward the absolutism of unquestioning faith. In defining the second strain of anti-

intellectualism, populist anti-elitism, Rigney notes that “In any society with democratic aspirations, we may expect a mistrust of claims to superior knowledge or wisdom on the part of an educated elite, especially when such claims are suspected to be instruments in the service of class privilege.”\textsuperscript{54} Hofstadter suggests that this strain of anti-intellectualism arose with the decline of the patrician, educated leaders of the American Revolution, where “The leaders were the intellectuals,”\textsuperscript{55} and the rise of Jacksonian populist democracy. Interestingly (though neither Rigney nor Hofstadter mentions this coincidence), Jackson’s 1828 election victory coincides almost exactly with the advent of the Penny Press and the first large single-purpose newspaper companies (The New York \textit{Sun} debuted in 1833). The final strain of anti-intellectualism in Rigney’s Hofstadter-derived framework is unreflective instrumentalism, “the devaluation of forms of thought that do not promise relatively immediate practical payoffs.”\textsuperscript{56} This is an emphasis on the practical, rather than the theoretical, and can be seen both in industry and in the expectation that universities would focus not on theoretical education, but on training students for specific jobs in those industries. Rigney sees this as the dominant form of anti-intellectualism in American life at the time of his 1991 writing.

To Rigney’s three categories, I would add a fourth, a category of anti-intellectualism that may be particular to the press, and which I call “unquestioning professionalism.” This category builds on Hofstadter’s distinction between intelligence and intellectualism. While elsewhere, a lack of intellect does not automatically equal anti-intellectualism, I would argue that reporters who unquestioningly accept the norms of

\textsuperscript{54} Rigney, 441.  
\textsuperscript{55} Hofstadter, 145.  
\textsuperscript{56} Rigney, 444.
their profession are actively opposing an intellectual approach to news, and therefore contribute to the atmosphere of anti-intellectualism that pervades American journalism. This separates my category of unquestioning professionalism from the benign exercise of intelligence without intellect, a combination that may be fine for a doctor or an engineer, but that is potentially dangerous in a profession that deals in the public dissemination of knowledge and ideas.

Daniel Rigney’s implicit call for research into anti-intellectualism among the American media and its subset, the American press, has mostly gone unanswered. Only one published work addresses the topic as its primary undertaking, Dane Claussen’s *Anti-Intellectualism in American Media: Magazines & Higher Education*. This is a valuable volume, particularly for its summary of the scholarly work on anti-intellectualism and for its contextualization of the press within that history. However, it is not as comprehensive as its title might suggest. The key to its original research lies in the subtitle: the book is an examination of the coverage of higher education in American magazines in the 20th century, and while its findings certainly contribute to the understanding of the press and its anti-intellectual predilections, it is not a particularly broad study. Whereas he attempted to demonstrate how the press perpetuates anti-intellectualism in the public at large, there are no histories that examine anti-intellectual attitudes within the institutional press itself, and how those attitudes are perpetuated within the profession itself, and not necessarily in the public at large.

Several plausible explanations for the anti-intellectualism of the press present themselves. First, the commercial nature of the U.S. press in general—and the more

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recent corporate consolidation of the media have driven journalism’s appeal to a populist, middlebrow audience. The effort to maintain a “mass media” requires a mass audience, and like media in general, the press has aimed its reporting at the broadest possible swath of the American public, rather than trying to reach an educated minority or trying to educate the majority. The idea of “infotainment” is very closely related to this: in order to maintain this mass audience, news organizations treat news as just one more element of the media, rather than as an important entity unto itself. News, the idea behind infotainment holds, must be entertaining. Importance and relevance are secondary. This leads not only to a focus on entertainment news, sports, and car crashes that have spectacular video available, but also to the sensationalizing of more “serious” news. This sort of sensationalizing clearly fits into Rigney’s category of populist anti-elitism.

But the anti-intellectualism of the press is likely not driven entirely by corporate concerns. The professional norms of journalists themselves sustain anti-intellectual attitudes. Reporters have a long history of vocationalism, preferring to think of themselves as constituting a trade or a craft rather than a profession, with all of the esoteric knowledge and specialized training that professional status would require. Reporting has a strong working-class background, with a tradition of young people working their way from being copy boys, ferrying typescripts between reporters and editors, to being editors themselves. These traditions were beginning to die away by the time (MORE) came on the scene, but they lasted at least into the late 1970s. This is not to say that there are not intellectuals within the working classes, because there certainly are, but the tradition (now largely fading) is to be a hard-drinking, tough-as-nails metro reporter who is unfazed by anything he (and with the His Girl Friday exception, the
tradition is for it to be a “he” might see down at the precinct or in the back rooms of the ward boss.

Two other explanations for anti-intellectualism in the press also seem likely. The first is public criticism of effete and elitist intellectual snobbery. This is an attack that is leveled against intellectuals of all stripes, in and out of the press, but it can have a particular power when wielded against the press. The paradigmatic example of this would be Senator Joseph McCarthy’s attacks on university professors, writers and journalists during the Red Scare of the 1950s, but this is only one of many possible examples. These attacks have their particular power over journalists because of the final and perhaps most important reason for the persistence of anti-intellectualism in the American press: the veneration of truth and the organized press’s devotion to the idea of objectivity. For at least a century (though some historians debate the origins) American journalists have held to an idea of “truth” as, if not an attainable ideal, at least a goal to strive for at all times. Attacks on the elitism of the press often paint it as biased toward liberal thinking, and any conclusion on one side or another of any debate is sure to attract attacks from those who believe that the reporters are not holding to the standards of their trade. The veneration of objectivity also leads reporters to value fact over analysis and commentary. The fact is the ultimate goal of the American news reporter, and while the collection of facts can be one of the instrumental ends of intelligence, it is not an intellectual activity, or at least is not seen as such by reporters who attempt to dissociate fact from

interpretation, and thereby ignore the intellectual implications of the process. J. Anthony Lukas, the (MORE) cofounder, struggled with The New York Times’ insistence on objectivity, a key impetus for his creation of (MORE). There had been plenty of careful thinking about the press, but little of it had come from within the organized press. Lukas sought to change that.

The forms and functions of press criticism prior to the founding of (MORE)

In a 1968 book that was part of an “Open Letter” series, John Tebbel opened his “letter” to newspaper readers in this way: “You are, I assume, a critic of newspapers.”59 His assumption, of course, was based on the idea that every reader is a critic. He goes on to write that the press has many sorts of critics, including disdainful intellectuals and reactionary ideologues. But he admits that he, too, had been a critic of the press.

But in 1968, Tebbel had likely not seen much press criticism in the sense of, say, “film criticism.” For him, and for most observers of the press in 1968, “press criticism” would likely have been synonymous with “criticism of the press,” rather than an organized activity, or even a profession. There had been some—The Columbia Journalism Review had published for five years by then, and A.J. Liebling had only recently concluded off his influential Wayward Press column.

In 1968, John Tebbel was on the vanguard of a new wave of this newer sort of press criticism, the kind that sought not just to criticize as in “to pick on,” but to criticize in the sense of analyzing and suggesting paths toward improvement. And yet by the end of the decade, dozens of books would be published for a general audience examining the

workings of the press. In addition to *The Kingdom and the Power* and *The Power and the Glory*, there was Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein’s memoir of their Watergate reporting, *All the President’s Men*; Timothy Crouse’s *The Boys on the Bus*, about presidential campaign reporting; memoirs by investigative columnist Jack Anderson; works of press criticism for a general audience; and several seminal academic works of criticism, including Gaye Tuchman’s *Making News*, Herbert Gans’s *Deciding What’s News*, and Michael Schudson’s *Discovering the News*. The Woodward and Bernstein book became an Oscar-winning film. Enrollment in journalism schools spiked during the 1970s. And while this may have had nothing to do, directly, with Woodward and Bernstein, as has often been said, certainly it speaks to a rising interest in the practice of watchdog journalism and the role of journalism in society. People were talking about the press in the 1970s, not just the stories that the press covered.

Those intellectuals who have found themselves constrained by the norms of the professionalized institutional press—and those who find fault with it from the outside—have often turned to press criticism, both to express their own frustration, and to attempt to effect change within the press. The best, and perhaps only, way to maintain a press that is both free of government and corporate control, and yet responsible to the demand that it function to propagate a democratic society and its attendant culture, is to encourage the growth and flourishing of a robust, public, and intellectually probing body of criticism around it.

Linda Lumsden identified four broad themes that recur throughout the history of American press criticism, and these were certainly taken up by (MORE) as well. They are: “the danger of sensationalism and inaccuracies, democracy’s dependence upon a free
press, the social responsibility of the press, and the detrimental influence of capitalism upon newspaper economics.” 60 Scholars have traced the origins of press criticism in the United States as far back as the 19th century. Hazel Dicken-Garcia puts it in the early part of that century, “as writers began to ponder the press’s effects on society.” 61 Dicken-Garcia’s book was seminal in the history of media ethics. As she notes in her first chapter:

No literature deals to a significant degree with the history of journalistic ethics. None examines what journalists have viewed over time as “right” and “wrong” practices, appropriate or inappropriate conduct, or the role of ethics in their work. No literature examines criticism of the press and how it may have changed over time, or discussions among journalists that might show what they have collectively emphasized in how they have gone about their work over the centuries. 62

Since Dicken-Garcia’s writing, that literature on the history of journalism ethics, and specifically press criticism, has grown somewhat, though not extensively. Her writing gave a thorough hearing to the concerns of the 19th century, though the writings she examines were mostly occasional pieces in periodicals, not regularly published columns on the press or entire press journals. And until the late 19th century, most thinking about newspapers (since newspapers and “the press” were synonymous for most of this history), regarded their partisanship, which was an open, acknowledged and accepted

Attacks on the press were attacks on their views, not so much on their role as an integral institution in a representative democracy. That makes sense, since systematic thinking about the role of the press in society really began to gain traction in the 20th century—even though traces of this sort of thinking can be traced back to the nation’s founding. Criticism of the press was taken up in the late 19th century by “men of letters,” as Linda Lumsden puts it. Writers such as E.L. Godkin, editor of The Nation, and others writing in The Atlantic Monthly and Forum brought more reasoned critiques than the “polemics” that preceded them.

Marion Tuttle Marzolf, one of the few academic writers to take up Dicken-Garcia’s call for a history of press criticism as a study of press ethics and performance standards, begins her history in this period. For her, the 1880s were a key turning point because, she argued, “today’s standards and values were mainly shaped around the turn of the century when a “new journalism” challenged and replaced an old journalism that was rooted in the partisan political tradition.” This, she writes, “created the need for new ways of thinking about the press.” Marzolf surveyed periodicals and professional publications for her study and concluded that in the 1880s press criticism was already beginning to regard journalism as a profession, and much of the criticism in this period wrestled with the new ideals for non-partisan journalism that had been brought to the East Coast from

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63 Lumsden, 55-56.
64 Thomas Jefferson wrote that “our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.” Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Dr. James Currie, January 28, 1786. Library of Congress American Memory Collection, Selected Quotations from the Thomas Jefferson Papers. Accessed online at hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib001765
65 Lumsden, 56–57.
the American Midwest, by publishers such as Joseph Pulitzer. The critics, many of whom were men of letters (as Lumsden also observed) were worried that newspapers were nothing more than vulgar trash.\(^\text{67}\) This sort of criticism intensified when Pulitzer’s dominance in New York City was challenged by William Randolph Hearst and the brand of “yellow journalism” that he brought with him. Critics focused on the “bad taste and moral decay”\(^\text{68}\) of this type of journalism, and openly called for a reform movement, or almost a ritual purification of newspapers.

By the turn of the century, press critics, influenced by the Progressive movement toward society’s moral betterment, began to visualize an “ideal newspaper”\(^\text{69}\) that would deal only with fact—almost a scientific reporting, in an age that venerated empiricism—or a newspaper that could be a civilizing influence on its readers and society in general. The first decade of the 20\(^{th}\) Century also brought the first journalism programs in American universities, the advent of muckraking, and a growing sense of professionalism among members of the press—and growing concern about the increasingly corporate publishers who employed them.\(^\text{70}\)

Marzolf and Dicken-Garcia (and one unpublished dissertation)\(^\text{71}\) are the only historians who give much thought to press criticism before World War I. Adding some credence to the claim that pre-20\(^{th}\) century press criticism has largely been ignored by critics, Tom Goldstein does not even acknowledge that there was press criticism before the turn of the century, or even before 1911, when Will Irwin published his 15-part series

\(^{67}\) Ibid, 7–19.
\(^{68}\) Ibid, 24.
\(^{69}\) Ibid, 45.
\(^{70}\) Ibid, 50–59.
\(^{71}\) Yasmine Tarek Dabbous, “‘Blessed be the Critics of Newspapers’: Journalistic Criticism of Journalism 1865–1930 (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2010).
“The American Newspaper: A Study of Journalism in its Relation to the Public” in *Collier’s* magazine. The subtitle of his anthology, *Killing the Messenger: 100 Years of Media Criticism*, also hints at Goldstein’s temporal limitation, and this from a writer who claims to “interpret criticism broadly.”

Most histories of press criticism do include Irwin specifically, regardless of whether or not they begin with him. Irwin’s series became canonical, eventually even being reprinted in book form. That it was published in *Collier’s*, a popular general interest magazine was key. But it also railed against the influence of commercialism and the need to attract readers and advertisers, and did so with enough vitriol that a selection from it would be included almost a century later in an anthology of “radical” press criticism. The 15-part series (announced as 14, but extended with a muckraking-style piece that Irwin’s editors requested) tackled journalism history, yellow journalism, the role of the editor/publisher and the reporter in defining the news, the influence of advertising, and the hope that a new generation of well-trained reporters would take over and improve the lot of the industry.

Upton Sinclair, associated with the muckrakers and known to history for *The Jungle*, his novel of the Chicago meatpacking industry, also warrants inclusion in the radical anthology, not least because his self-published 1919 book of press criticism, *The Brass Check*, explicitly compared newspapers to prostitutes working for the wealthy

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elites whose interests they supported in print. Sinclair was a socialist, so this view is understandable. But Robert W. McChesney and Ben Scott argue that The Brass Check actually appeared in something of a golden age of press criticism, when hundreds of examples appeared in mainstream magazines (Irwin’s Collier’s pieces included). McChesney and Scott argue that Sinclair’s work and that of other radical critics has been ignored by the mainstream precisely because it was radical.75 (MORE) would be acutely aware of the balancing act of trying to push against the mainstream and encourage change without ever completely alienating the institutions from which they came, for risk of having no influence at all.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a handful of other writers also published books about journalism. The columnist and critic Walter Lippmann published three books on the interactions among the press, the public and a representative democratic government.76 The most famous and influential of these, Public Opinion, introduced the idea that people form their ideas based on sketches of the real world, which they receive largely through media. And for Lippmann, news did not necessarily equal truth. Lippmann also argued that the “manufacture of consent” was important for a representative democracy in which not all citizens directly participate in governance.77 In the 1930s, George Seldes followed in the tradition of Irwin, Sinclair and Lippmann with two books of his own.78 In the case of Irwin and Sinclair, he did so by railing against the influence of powerful political and

corporate influences on the news. And he “agreed with Lippmann that the press needed better trained newsmen—professionals who adhered to an enforceable code.” Like Sinclair, he was seen as a “crank” by the newspaper industry, and many publishers refused advertising for his books or fired reviewers who gave the books positive notice. But still, the books sold surprisingly well, and Seldes influenced a later generation of critics. One of those critics was A.J. Liebling, perhaps the single most famous press critic in U.S. history, and a direct inspiration to the editors of (MORE), who would name their series of conventions and an associated award in his honor.

Liebling wrote 83 columns about the press for The New Yorker, 82 of them under the heading “The Wayward Press.” Though he made it very much his own, Liebling didn’t originate the column. Former newspaper reporter Morris Markey began it. Humorist Robert Benchley had the most sustained tenure before Liebling (74 pieces, just short of Liebling’s 83), and it had passed through several hands (some pseudonymous) before it got to Liebling. Nevertheless, Liebling so took command of the form, and published so regularly that he effectively established himself as the archetype of the press critic. Jack Shafer, a press critic himself, later wrote that Liebling had earned a reputation as the “patron saint of press criticism,” and while he suspects that this reputation is one of word of mouth, rather than of the printed word, his own revisiting of Liebling’s works

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79 Marzolf, 141.
80 Ibid., 141–142.
more or less bear out that reputation. Publishers were a favorite target of his (as they were to some of his predecessors) and he famously wrote the axiom, “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.” Liebling would become an avatar of press criticism for the writers and editors of (MORE), largely for these reasons, and also because of his humor and sparkling prose, both of which were qualities that the journalism review would echo.

The years immediately preceding the launch of (MORE) saw a new focus on journalism ethics and accountability, and one of the chief figures in that period was Ben Bagdikian. Though most of his career would occur concurrent with and after the run of (MORE), including his time as the ombudsman for *The Washington Post,* he had already published an impassioned critique of American newspapers in *Esquire,* an essay that first got him attention as a press critic. In that piece, he called for newspapers to have in-house readers’ representatives, or ombudsmen, and eventually got to serve in the role from 1971 to 1972 at *The Washington Post.* The idea of an ombudsman fit in with the reformist atmosphere of the late 1960s and 1970s in the American press, as did Bagdikian’s call for a press council, an idea that would also be realized at the national level, if only briefly, in the 1970s. Bagdikian would go on to publish several books of

press criticism, including *The Information Machines, The Effete Conspiracy* and his most famous, *The Media Monopoly*,\(^88\) which has had multiple editions and reprints since then.

There were other, more direct influences on the creation of (MORE) in 1971, however, including a several thriving (and more less-than-thriving) regional journalism reviews that had been popping up around the country in the years preceding the launch of (MORE), including reviews in St. Louis, Philadelphia, Colorado, and Southern California among several others.\(^89\) Although (MORE) had national ambitions, it was originally intended to be a New York journalism review—a late entry into the regional journalism review movement. There had also been at least two other attempts at a journalism review in the city, one published by something called The New York Media Project and called *Pac-O-Lies* (which had a distinctly “underground” feel to it), and one put out by some disaffected Associated Press employees. Little evidence of the reach of these publications remains.

The rise in awareness of journalistic practice and the critical culture began to spawn some thinking not just about journalism, but also about press criticism for the first time. In 1974, James Carey, a media and cultural scholar, published an essay in which he called for a regular culture of press criticism. He complained that “there is no tradition of

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\(^89\) In addition to the contemporary articles about the journalism review movement cited on page 2 of this proposal, see also M. Addis, “A Study of the Surface Accuracy of *The Columbia Journalism Review* and *MORE* (M.A. thesis, Central Michigan University, 1974); and Kristie Bunton Northington, “Media Criticism as Professional Self-Regulation: A Study of U.S. Journalism Reviews,” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1993).
sustained, systematic, and intellectually sound criticism of the press,“90 and the fragmented nature of this dissertation’s brief history of press criticism would tend to support that. For Carey, the key was that “democracy as a form of political life is essentially a theory of criticism and criticism, properly construed, is indispensable to the idea of freedom.”91 In other words, the ability to criticize the government, written into the Constitution, needs to be broadened to the criticism of the critics. The huge quantity of the press’s output, Carey argued, called out for a much more robust dialogue about it, and even more criticism than other forms of cultural production, such as movies or theater, already got. There was some, Carey acknowledged, but most of it was only reaching other journalists, and not the reading public at large (here he specifically mentioned the Columbia Journalism Review and “the new reviews that have sprung up in many cities, in the underground press” and the “coteries of professionals and students that queue up before the Chicago Journalism Review.”92 The regional journalism reviews were not all part of the underground press, but he was right that they did not reach a particularly large audience. (MORE) tried, at times, to attract a general audience, at least to the level of The New York Review of Books, but perhaps it was too difficult to attract an audience of general-interest citizens in reasoned criticism of the press. Many years later, Ben Scott and Robert McChesney suggested that the power of press criticism (and “radical” press criticism in particular) lies “in its ability to show that the modern commercial press system operates in a manner that is antithetical to the democratic values embodied in the

91 Ibid., 228–229.
92 Ibid., 236.
First Amendment.” For both McChesney and Scott, and for Carey, the value of press criticism lies in the ability of more speech to correct the failings of insufficient or incorrect speech.

The same year that Carey’s essay was published, Lee Brown, then a professor at the University of Maryland, published one of the first books that attempted to analyze American press criticism. Brown attempted to classify the various types of criticism of journalism that he saw as extant:

With the growing movement for a national press council, these have become the principal forms of contemporary press criticism: the resurgent journalist-critic; the journal, particularly the local journal, for criticism of the press; the establishment of local press councils, by individual publishers and under the auspices of the Mellett Fund; the establishment of in-house ombudsmen, on only a few newspapers, to respond to reader complaints; and the reports of presidential and other commissions.

Brown’s overview of the landscape of press criticism isn’t bad, though it probably suffers from an over-broad interpretation of what defines “press criticism,” and he leaves out a category or two that existed in 1974 just as surely as they do today (academic criticism, for instance; and if we’re to use Brown’s broad brush, we should also include criticism of the press by courts). But much has changed in the last four decades too, so I offer an updated taxonomy of press criticism:

1. **Regularly published commentary in the popular press or online.** These are columnists and press critics who critique the performance of the press for the benefit of the practice of journalism; and who demystify the press for a general audience. The archetypal press critic, of course, would be A.J. Liebling. But

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93 McChesney and Scott, 7.
95 Brown, 70.
today, this would include people with the title of press critic such as Reuters’ Jack Shafer, as well as reporter-columnists such as David Carr for the New York Times. This could also include a radio program such as NPR’s *On the Media*. This type of criticism is written for the general public, and therefore bridges the important divide between the members of the press and those reader/viewer/consumers who are not actively engaged in the production of journalism: for perpetuation of representative democracy. But this is also press criticism as film or literary or art or even restaurant criticism, really top-flight criticism that connects the creative act (insofar as journalism is a creative act) to cultural currents.

2. **Ombudsmen and public editors.** These are similar to the press critics, except that their role is more limited in two ways: One, their charge is to monitor the performance of a single outlet, their employer. Two, they are reader representatives, and therefore not independent critics guided by their own critical instincts. They tend to respond mostly to reader complaints, or at least to perceived reader complaints.

3. **Academic critics.** There are a few members of academia working to actively influence the practice of journalism for the better, such as NYU’s Jay Rosen, and Jeff Jarvis of the CUNY Journalism School. But academic critics of journalism don’t have to be only journalism professors. Why not public policy professors, sociologists, historians, philosophers, mass communication researchers, literature professors, legal scholars and economists, to name a few?
One could include the Nieman Foundation here, too, as a university-based journalism think tank.

4. **Books.** Occasional books aimed at a popular audience summarize the state of the practice of journalism, opine about its shortcomings, and offer advice for its future. There has been a glut of these recently, aiming at divining the “future of journalism,” but it’s a genre that can be traced back at least to Upton Sinclair’s ‘The Brass Check,’ and having in its lineage George Seldes, Will Irwin and a steady stream of others.

5. **Journalism reviews.** *The Columbia Journalism Review* and a few other scattered magazines all that really survive of the journalism review movement of the late ’60s and early ’70s that Brown cites. A minuscule few journalism reviews even pretend to a general audience—(MORE) probably had the broadest (and most sustained—*Brill’s Content*, a similar attempt to bring media criticism to the masses lasted only from 1998 to 2001, and watered down its criticism even earlier than that) ambitions. An argument could be made to include professional organizations such as the Society of Professional Journalists in this category too, since they share an audience and an aim: speak to professional journalists about the practice of journalism. They monitor standards and set codes of ethical conduct. However, I would exclude them since their maintenance of standards does not occur through critical writing about the press.

These five are the core, but there are arguments to be made for a few other types of press criticism. Brown sees politicians complaining about the press as press criticism, but there is a significant qualitative difference between criticism and self-serving complaint, so
Spiro Agnew does not count, in my reasoning, as a press critic, just because he criticized the press (but FAIR and AIM, the partisan press watchdogs, might). Quite a few of the capsule histories of press criticism bring up the Hutchins Commission report too, and occasionally other lesser government commission reports on the activities of the press. If you’re going to include these, I would argue that you have to include Louis Brandeis and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. as press critics too, for their masterful defense of freedom of expression in their Supreme Court decisions as well as Brandeis and Samuel Warren’s seminal article on the “Right to Privacy.”

This broad characterization of what constitutes journalism criticism (one that includes professional organizations, partisan watchdogs and legal decisions) took shape for the most part after the journalism ethics movement of the 1960s and 1970s. What ties these outlets together is a shared desire to bring accountability to the press organizations that purport to keep the government and other powerful institutions accountable. But the written sort of analytical journalistic criticism of the press has much older origins, even though the same impulse drove them: to rein in news organizations that had become institutions themselves.

In her book *Critical Conversations: A Theory of Press Criticism*, Wendy Wyatt constructs a model of criticism which argues that the main active body of press critics must come from outside the working press, so that they are not “situated in their knowledge.” She writes, must participate in the process of criticism for it to be effective, but the curation of criticism must come from outside the paid members of a

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news organization. (MORE) attempted to achieve a sort of balance, though most of its contributors were working journalists. The editors of (MORE) wrote, however, that they would try to forbid reporters from writing about their own publications, as indicated in the opening editor’s note disclaiming the Ringing Declaration of Purpose:

Many of our contributors (though by no means all) will be working journalists in the city and we hope that their employers will have the common sense to recognize that a journalist ought to be free to write about his profession without feeling his job is in jeopardy. For our part, we recognize the conflict of interest in asking a journalist to write about his own organization and consequently have established an ironclad policy never to commission or publish such articles.\(^98\)

For Wyatt, this would not be enough. Her model is a discursive one—one that seeks to foster change in the press through an active discourse, among the members of the “press” and the citizens who are affected by the actions of the press and of the government. She analogizes the relationship between the press and its consumer/critics to that between citizens and government in a democracy. In theory, membership in any one of these groups is open to all: citizens are journalists only when they are acting as journalists; citizens serve as the government only when they are elected to do so. They never lose their status as citizens. For Wyatt, press criticism must function “as a social process or communicative public sphere that facilitates the discourses of citizens who are part of a complex, decentered society.”\(^99\) The critics also have a responsibility to interest the public in the workings of the press and of the criticism. Otherwise, she says, the criticism is meaningless. Wyatt illustrates the interactions among the press, critics, and the critical public with a diagram showing the press at the “institutional center” of a bullseye. Surrounding them are the critics who are in conversation with the press. And

\(^98\) Editor’s note, More: A Journalism Review, June 1971, 2.
\(^99\) Wyatt, 134.
finally, the critical public lies at the periphery. Communication must occur between the first and second levels, and the second and third. So critics facilitate the discussion between the interested public and the institutional press that serves it.

Arthur S. Hayes has chronicled and analyzed much of the press criticism that has followed (MORE), some of it inspired, more or less directly, by that journal. Hayes takes a very broad view of press criticism, including not only partisan press watchdogs, but also the concept of citizen journalism and even the satirical news programs The Daily Show and The Colbert Report. His chapter on Brill’s Content, a media magazine from the turn of the 21st century is particularly apt, especially in comparison with the latter days of (MORE), as discussed below.

Hayes also wrestles with the idea of what makes press criticism “influential,” and unlike the undefined but likely more realistic goals of furthering a democratic discourse that Wendy Wyatt aims for, Hayes actually proposes a nine-part test for press critic influence:

1. Has the critique led to the dismissal, resignation, or reassignment of a reporter, broadcast public affairs personality, editor, or news executive?
2. Has the critique led to content or programming changes consistent with widely acknowledged journalism ethical standards?
3. Has the critique led to a reform of a news organization’s standards and practices?

100 Ibid., 149.
4. Has the critique spurred public debate in public forums and in the news media about news media performance or the business of mass media, helping to shape public opinion on the issue?

5. Do news media outlets quote the individual or organization as an authority on news media ethics and performance?

6. Does the individual or organization have a longtime and substantial following, measured in viewers, books [sic] sales or Web-site hits?

7. Has the individual or organization inspired a movement?

8. Has the individual or organization established standards of inquiry, analysis or proposals used by other critics?

9. Have the individual’s critiques gained currency among other critics and scholars who point to the individual as a groundbreaking activist or thinker in news media criticism?¹⁰²

Though Hayes’ criteria seem as if they were written in order to justify the inclusion of the subjects of his various chapters, they are actually helpful questions for judging influence in ways beyond just direct changes in the practices of a news organization that criteria 1–3 cover, and these criteria will be used in analyzing the influence of (MORE), particularly in chapter four of this dissertation, which examines the relationship between the journalism review and the mainstream press that it critiqued. But this dissertation looks most closely at those effects that are not merely operant, but more subtle and nuanced. The direct effect of a journalism review would be difficult to measure, but this dissertation attempts to trace (MORE)’s influence to the extent that it is possible.

¹⁰² Hayes, 4.
(MORE) and the Intellectual History of the Seventies

Sociologist and media historian Michael Schudson argues that this “long-term trend toward greater political sophistication and critical scrutiny of government” directly affected journalists because of the muckraking tradition of American journalism made journalists feel more disconnected in general from the government, but also “trusted more in, and cared more about, government.” As Schudson points out, an adversarial culture needs a target—something to be adversarial toward—and for journalism, this manifested in a critique of the norm of the kind of journalistic objectivity that purported to be values-free, a brand of popular social science with no political aims. Schudson, writing in the late 1970s, identified three broad aims of this criticism of objectivity:

1. “[T]he content of a news story rests on a set of substantive political assumptions, assumptions whose validity is never questioned.”

2. “[F]orm constitutes content. [T]he form of the news story incorporates its own bias.”

3. The news story is “a social form tightly constrained by the routines of news gathering.”

Schudson argues that two journalistic traditions were revived in the 1960s and 1970s in opposition to the norm of objectivity: the muckraking tradition and the literary tradition, both of which are strongly reflected in the pages of (MORE).

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103 Schudson, 179.
104 Ibid., 180.
105 Ibid., 184
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., 185
The literary half of that pairing has long been described under the term “the new journalism,” largely because of a long two-part essay Tom Wolfe wrote first for New York magazine, and later as the introduction to an anthology also called The New Journalism. But at the time, both of these strains—the literary and the hard-nosed muckraking tradition—as well as other forms of advocacy and interpretive journalism were all seen as a part of the same movement away from objectivity, and all of them carried the label “New Journalism” to a certain extent.

For intellectual historian Howard Brick, the literary New Journalism was a revolt against positivism, and a move toward the critical, the literary and the personal. Journalists began to attract the attention of intellectuals, and many of them also took a new kind of intellectual interest in their own work. But Brick sees literary New Journalism and the muckraking tradition as being at odds, since muckraking still relies heavily on the idea of objectivity, if objectivity is interpreted strictly as positivism, the journalistic equivalent of the scientific method. Muckraking still relies heavily on the gathering and analysis of information, rather than just on impressionistic feeling and critical thought. But in the eyes of many journalists, “objectivity” encompassed a broader set of ideas, including reporters’ autonomy and advocacy journalism. According to John J. Pauly, one journalism dean and historian who lived through the period saw that the New Journalism represented a change not just in form, but in the sensibility of the reporter. This dean, Ted Peterson of the University of Illinois, also “understood the New Journalism in relation to other forces

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109 This analysis is based on a panel discussion held at the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention, sponsored by (MORE) in 1972.
roiling the profession,” including “the underground press, debates over objectivity, changes in the magazine business, the founding of new journalism reviews like [MORE], protests at the annual meetings of corporations and proposals to name working reporters to the boards of directors of wire services.”\textsuperscript{111} The press was integral to the New Left movement of the sixties, and (MORE) appeared at a moment when the truly underground publications such as \textit{The Berkeley Barb} and \textit{The East Village Other} were inspiring a new breed of publications that saw themselves not so much as underground, but instead as alternatives to the mainstream press.\textsuperscript{112} \textit{The Village Voice} had been around for almost two decades as an alternative publication,\textsuperscript{113} but other papers, mostly weeklies, were springing up to provide an alternative to daily newspapers without being seen as too radical for a larger portion of readers who may have been turned off by the politics, the production values or the vulgarity of the underground rags.\textsuperscript{114} These alternative publications were occupying a constantly negotiated position between opposition and popular respectability. It is a contradiction that Grace Elizabeth Hale describes as “contradictory desires to be a part of the American center and yet separate from it, to fit in and to oppose.…”\textsuperscript{115} This was a position that (MORE) struggled with as well.

criticizing the mainstream press while going out of its way not to slide from an anti-
institutional position to a counter-cultural one.

Few scholars have looked at the intellectual history of the seventies, though some works of cultural and political history have begun to take the decade seriously, rather than as nothing more than a bridge between the revolutionary sixties and the corporate eighties. For Andreas Killen, the seventies are a time of conspiracies, cults, the all-surface-no-depth imagery of Andy Warhol, and the self-revelation and self-promotion of the birth of reality television as represented by the television series *An American Family*. For Bruce J. Schulman, the seventies were a period of multiculturalism, feminism, a lack of self-confidence and an eventual turn to conservatism with the “squares” becoming the hip by the time of Ronald Reagan’s election.

The 1970s, however, were also a period of changes in mass media. As noted in the introduction to this proposal, it was the decade that saw the Watergate scandal unfold in *The Washington Post*. It was the decade of the Pentagon Papers. It was the decade of the WBAI obscenity trial. It was the decade in which journalism became a glamorous profession when Woodward and Bernstein became Redford and Hoffman. Muckraking became a celebrity pursuit. The “writer’s newspaper,” the *New York Herald-Tribune*, had gone out of business in 1966, a victim of financial pressures in general, and the New York newspaper strike of 1962–63. Some reporters had seen the *Herald-Trib* as a place where they could have more freedom, and *New York* magazine, which would become a

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center of literary journalism in the late 1960s and 1970s, had begun life as the Sunday magazine supplement. *New York*’s rival for stylish and politically aware journalism, *Rolling Stone*, had begun publishing in 1967 (and moved to New York a decade later). The newspaper strike of ’63 also helped to spawn *The New York Review of Books*, a relative of (MORE) in terms of staff and looks.  

The death of the *Herald-Tribune* left New York a three-newspaper town. The thorough but boring (at least outwardly, as Gay Talese showed) *New York Times* was the morning broadsheet. The *Daily News* was the morning tabloid. And Dorothy Schiff’s evening *Post*, still quite a liberal paper for most of the 1970s, rounded out the trio. Newspapers of the 1970s were still very much the newspapers that had been around since early in the century, and publishers looked at changes represented by the New Journalism with skepticism. But by the end of the seventies, even the staid *New York Times* would abandon its two-section news report for a multi-section newspaper with several magazine-like sections.

The weekly news magazines were still seen as strong and important. Most national magazines of importance were based in New York (including *Newsweek*, which saw a feminist uprising of sorts in 1970) as were of course the national television network news operations, in a world where Walter Cronkite could still be seen by a

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national public as knowing what really happened in the country, and the important news could be summed up in 20-some minutes of air time. It was into this atmosphere that (MORE) launched as New York’s journalism review—but a regional journalism review, no matter what its aspirations, becomes a national journalism review when its region is New York City. And the writers and editors of (MORE) knew that what made it into the mainstream news report was only a part of the story. Hence the name.
Chapter 2: Newsroom Cabals, Barnyard Epithets and a Ringing Declaration of Purpose: (MORE) magazine from its founding in 1971 to the end of 1973

(MORE) criticism needed

A.J. Liebling, the New Yorker press critic for many years in the 40s, 50s and 60s, wrote, famously, that “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one,” and the quotation (though parenthetical in the original), has become so commonly repeated as to become almost a truism, and almost certainly a cliché. But while in the original the phrase came up owing to Liebling’s concern about newspaper consolidation, (and while those who quote it have used it profligately), the aphorism holds true in at least one seemingly paradoxical way: reporters don’t write for newspapers; reporters write for publishers. And for Liebling, publishers were the ultimate threat to the quality of the press, because their money drove the content of their newspapers (and Liebling almost exclusively concerned himself with newspapers). So the paradox here is that reporters don’t really enjoy freedom of the press, since their work is always filtered through the desires of their newsroom management. As detailed in chapter one, reporters working for news organizations at least as early as the 1890s would often feel that their own voices were marginalized, and by the late 1960s and early 1970s, as newsroom

125 In a study of reporters-turned-writers, from Walt Whitman and Mark Twain to Ernest Hemingway, Shelley Fisher Fishkin wrote that 19th and early 20th century reporters chafed under “the limits of conventional journalism as they knew it—the subjects that were excluded, the superficial, formulaic treatment of subjects that were discussed, the lack of connection to any time but the present, the extravagant claims to authoritativeness, the failure to challenge the reader to think for himself—were apparent to them....” Shelley Fisher Fishkin, From Fact to Fiction : Journalism & Imaginative
demographics changed, moving from being places dominated by hard-nosed working class reporters to being enclaves of educated journalists, something of a resistance movement sprang up—not just reporters’ unions, which had been long established, and focused mostly on salary and working conditions—but a real move toward autonomy for a group of reporters who saw themselves not just as hired hacks, but as writers.

In some ways, the culmination of this movement was the development of the reporter-run journalism review after 1968. This movement mostly encompassed local journalism reviews, one of which, *The Chicago Journalism Review*, was inspired directly by poor reporting surrounding the Chicago conspiracy trial of 1968, and became the sort of spiritual godfather of the reviews. But one of these journalism reviews succeeded at a level unseen in the local reviews—aspiring to (and reaching, to an extent) a national audience, rather than just a local one, spawning a series of well-attended and much written-about “counter-conventions,” and maintaining a tone that wasn’t quite counter-cultural, (though it was influenced by the counter-culture that surrounded it) but was certainly at least anti-establishment. That journalism review was called (MORE).

Dick Pollak—who would become the founding editor of, passionate advocate for, and editorial voice of (MORE), the monthly journalism review founded in 1971—had no thoughts of starting such a publication of any kind when his friend, the *New York Times* reporter J. Anthony Lukas invited him to dinner on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

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126 The *Columbia Journalism Review* was founded earlier, in 1962, though in its early days, it was mostly written by academics, and is therefore somewhat outside the movement that would follow it.
Pollak had written about the press before, as a reporter at *Newsweek*, but he was between jobs at the time of Lukas’s proposition, back living in New York after a stint as a newspaper editor in Honolulu. He and Lukas knew each other from the Baltimore *Sun*, where both had worked, but Pollak may have had some idea that this was more than just two old friends getting dinner when they sat down. Pollak remembers that he was eating soup when Tony Lukas told him the real purpose of their meeting: New York City needed a journalism review, Lukas said, and Pollak should be its editor.

Pollak and Lukas were aware of the journalism review movement that had taken hold in recent years, including new journals in St. Louis, Montana and Washington, DC. Both of them loved news, and the craft of gathering and reporting it, and had their ears to the ground of developments. And reporting was changing rapidly in 1970 and ’71, transitioning from being the sort of inky, salacious trade that Ivy Leaguers would turn their noses up at into a respectable profession, one with new standards of excellence. Newspapers found themselves with a new raft of employees who, buoyed by their educations and the anti-establishment social atmosphere of the 1960s, were beginning to chafe at the limitations put on them by profit-seeking publishers and editors who they saw as staid and conservative, limiting their ability to describe how they, as reporters, saw the world. As detailed in chapter 1, Michael Schudson argues that this new breed of reporter was instrumental to the rise of the “critical culture” that was becoming more pervasive in the newsrooms of the late ’60s and early ’70s:

Young people, more likely to fit into the youth culture of casual manners and language, open sexuality, and rock music, covered the campuses and social movements and were influenced by them. They often felt uncomfortable in their reportorial roles,
almost as if they were agents of “straight” society spying on a subversive culture. They found themselves sympathetic to the ideas and values of the people they wrote about and increasingly skeptical, uneasy, or outraged at the transformation of their stories between copy desk and printed page.¹²⁷

This ferment expressed itself in many ways in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Traditionally underrepresented groups including that largest body of disenfranchised—women—pushed for new, equal roles in the newsroom.¹²⁸ John J. Pauly pinpoints the New Journalism practiced by Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese and Joan Didion (among others) as the focal point for young journalists “finding themselves” in that period, but he links the form, via the files of the late University of Illinois dean Ted Peterson, to the underground press, debates over objectivity, and even specifically to the founding of (MORE). For Pauly and Peterson, these interconnected events reflect a new “intellectual seriousness” in journalism.¹²⁹

In an interview 40 years after he founded the magazine, Pollak said that at one of the A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions that (MORE) would eventually host, the reporter and columnist Murray Kempton pulled him aside and told him to go easy on most reporters, because, “They’re doing the best they can.” Pollak said he thought that what Kempton meant was that “you don’t have to have any special kind of education to be a journalist.” Pollak explained:

¹²⁷ Schudson, p. 181.
¹²⁸ For an account of the biggest women’s uprising in a newsroom, see The Good Girls Revolt: How the Women of Newsweek Sued Their Bosses and Changed the Workplace, by Lynn Povich (New York: Public Affairs, 2012).
I graduated from Amherst and went to work at the Worcester Telegram. Nobody asked me anything. They took a look at a few clips from the Amherst student paper and said yes. And they sent me to the Uxbridge bureau to cover high school football and the police blotter, and that’s how it worked. And so the combination of the staff not having any real intellectual depth and the management not having a real intellectual depth, or at least feeling any demand for it, is why a lot of people leave the profession. It’s why [David] Halberstam and [Anthony] Lukas and [Gay] Talese leave. They can’t do the long form. They reach a ceiling beyond which you cannot go. And I don’t mean money or promotions; I mean intellectual elbow room. You just cannot do it at a magazine or a newspaper. And I think that happens to anybody who has any real intellectual curiosity.\footnote{Interview with the author, September 8, 2011.}

So Lukas and Pollak were aware of the new atmosphere in newsrooms and of the small journalism reviews that were trying to keep their local newspapers honest (and in the case of \textit{The Columbia Journalism Review}, reach a national audience—though the pair saw CJR as being too close to, if not a part of, that staid establishment press, even if they saw themselves as being outside of the counter-culture, too). Lukas, who was born in 1933, was about ten years too old to be involved in the counter-culture himself, according to Pollak (who described himself the same way), but he was aware of it, covering the late 1960s like a concerned older brother.\footnote{Interview with the author, September 8, 2011.} So Pollak and Lukas were outsiders both to the counter-culture \textit{and} to the rapidly professionalizing world of daily journalism in which they had both worked.

But since historical actors rarely make their decisions as reflections of a zeitgeist seen only in retrospect, Pollak and Lukas likely did not start \textit{(MORE)} as a way of reflecting cultural currents. Instead, Lukas had a specific inspiration in mind, the first and most prominent of the regional journalism reviews, the \textit{Chicago Journalism Review}, edited by Ron Dorfman. Lukas had been spending quite a bit of time in Chicago not long
before his meeting with Pollak, in his job as a reporter for the New York Times. He was there in the fall of 1969 and winter of 1970 to cover the Chicago conspiracy trial. While Lukas was in Chicago, he met the staff of the Chicago Journalism Review and came away impressed. But perhaps more importantly, he too became one of that new breed of reporter whose capability and ambition outstripped the limits of his editors.

The Barnyard Epithet, and the Cabal at the New York Times

Tony Lukas had already won his first Pulitzer Prize and a George Polk award by the time he was in Chicago for the trial. His Pulitzer came in 1968 for a Times story called “The Two Worlds of Linda Fitzpatrick,” in which he chronicled the life and violent death of a teenage girl from wealthy Greenwich, Connecticut who had gotten involved in the hippie movement, and more disastrously, drugs.\(^\text{132}\) The Times had also sent him to India, Ceylon, Japan, Pakistan, South Africa and Zaire. Upon his return to the United States, the Times also sponsored him for a Nieman fellowship for reporters (with some reluctance to have him leave the newsroom, thinking that he might never return, but even more worried that a rising star reporter would be “exceedingly unhappy” if he were not allowed to stretch himself)\(^\text{133}\) at Harvard University, from which he had also graduated magna cum laude in 1955 (making him one of that new breed of Ivy League-educated journalists himself). So he was a seasoned and award-winning reporter who was already familiar with the counter-culture and figures such as Abbie Hoffman, Rennie Davis and David Dellinger when he came to cover the conspiracy trial, even if, in his short 1970

book about the trial, he wrote that his assumptions about the trial, as it began, “were
formed partly by inexperience, partly by a liberal’s respect for the courts and the law.”

In that book, *The Barnyard Epithet and Other Obscenities: Notes on the Chicago
Conspiracy Trial*, Lukas tells the story of his frustrating negotiations with an editor at the
*Times*, one whom he leaves unnamed. Lukas was covering the trial for *The New York
Times Magazine*, for which he had been writing, as well as for the daily newspaper, and
one chunk of *The Barnyard Epithet* was originally published in the *Times*. According to
Lukas, it was the news section of the daily paper that gave him trouble. On February 4,
1970, the Deputy Chief of the Chicago Police was testifying about observing David
Dellinger leaving Grant Park “at the head of a militant group.” According to Lukas, “At
that, Mr. Dellinger looked up from his seat at the defense table and said, ‘Oh bullshit!’”
Before the end of the day, the judge revoked Dellinger’s bail for the rest of the trial to
reprimand him for this outburst. Lukas knew that this was an important story for *The
Times*, but he was also aware that he was going to be asked to leave out the offending
word that led to the story in the first place:

Knowing the *Times*’ sensitivity about such language, I called the National Desk
and asked how they wanted to handle Mr. Dellinger’s phrase. The editor on duty said he
didn’t think we could use it and suggested I just say “an obscenity.” I objected, arguing
that it wasn’t, strictly speaking, an obscenity; that if we called it that most people would
assume it was something much worse; and that since it was central to the day’s events we
ought to tell our readers just what Mr. Dellinger had said. The editor thought for a
moment and said, “Why don’t we just call it ‘a barnyard epithet’?” Everything

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134 J. Anthony Lukas, *The Barnyard Epithet and Other Obscenities: Notes on the
considered, that seemed like the best solution, and that was the way it appeared in the *Times* the next morning.\(^{135}\)

Actually, the next morning, it appeared as “a barnyard vulgarity,” but even if the Lukas misremembered the words he and the editor settled upon, the general sense remained.\(^{136}\) But while Lukas’s reporting continued to appear in the *Times*, and even in that excerpt from *The Barnyard Epithet* which appeared in the *Times Magazine*, the “bullshit” incident was symptomatic of the limitations on Lukas’s reporting. “I concluded,” Lukas writes by way of explaining why he was adding his book to the pile already being written about the trial, “that the Barnyard Epithet was only one of many aspects which called for fuller reporting.”\(^{137}\) There was more to the story than the *Times* was able or willing to print: in fact, the *New York Times* commitment to an ideal of “objectivity” kept Lukas from being able to report his real discovery about the trial: that it was a political show trial, not a real criminal trial. Lukas sought an outlet for his frustration with “he said, she said” journalism by writing his book—and also later, in the magazine that, in its very title, alluded to the idea that just because the story in the newspaper had come to an end, the story that the article was covering continued on.

Lukas had also met Ron Dorfman, the editor of the Chicago Journalism Review during his time covering the conspiracy trial. In March, 1970, Dorfman’s magazine devoted at least half a dozen different articles about the trial. The lead article, written by Henry DeZutter, viewed the trial as a sort of play, because, as the story says, “Only a dramatist can put it all together, to distill the essence out of the official record of the

\(^{135}\) Lukas, *Barnyard Epithet*, p. vii.


\(^{137}\) Lukas, *Barnyard Epithet*, p. viii.
conspiracy trial and transmit it to those who weren’t there. Those who weren’t missed a lot. And while a complete transcript would help, it won’t do it all.”\textsuperscript{138}

There was extensive news coverage, but that’s the trouble: it was news coverage. This was not a “newsman’s” trial. First, there was simply too much to handle, too much drama, too much “nuance” to capture with the meager tools of pen-and-paper reporting. Second, the forms and formulae of the newsman—the snappy lead, the capsule summary, the few quick quotes and—yes—the objectivity (“Facts without their nuance”) simply did not work for this story.

So here may be another inkling for Lukas that there was “more” to many of the stories that the press purported to cover.

One other story in that issue of the \textit{Chicago Journalism Review} is important for the tale of Tony Lukas in Chicago though: a sidebar set into the text of a story about reporters responding to Federal subpoenas. Under the headline “Need Help?” is a brief report on a new committee, one which Lukas was a member of:

Reporters meeting informally at Georgetown University March 8 set up the Reporters’ Committee on Freedom of the Press, a 13-man (and 0-woman) group to coordinate the responses of line professionals to the government’s attempts to intimidate the media through use of subpoena power. The committee will undertake legal research independent of the media corporations, act as a national clearinghouse for information on developments in the field, and provide assistance to newsmen who request it.\textsuperscript{139}

Lukas represented the committee, with his \textit{New York Times} affiliation clearly listed after his name—even though he was not going to be long for the full-time staff of the paper.

\textsuperscript{138} Henry DeZutter, “The trial: You had to be there,” \textit{Chicago Journalism Review}, March 1970, p. 3.
In a sense, *The Barnyard Epithet* can be seen as the de facto first issue of (MORE). Lukas would continue to work for the *Times* as a contributing editor (basically a freelance writer who agrees to write on a regular basis), but he would leave the staff under which he found himself chafing. And the story that he told in his book was the first time that he was able to tell the part of the story that his institution wouldn’t let him tell.

Two months after the *Chicago Journalism Review* issue that noted Lukas’s inclusion on the Reporters’ Committee on Freedom of the Press, Lukas popped up as a newsroom rabble-rouser again, this time in *New York* magazine, in an article that provocatively suggested that there was a “cabal” afoot at the *New York Times*. This cabal, wrote Edwin Diamond, “has no officers, no dominant ideology, no agenda, and no definite plans.”\(^{140}\) In an unattributed quotation, one *Times* cabalist insists that “Lukas is not our Lenin,” almost making it clear that Lukas was, despite the source’s protests, a leader of the cabal. The article goes into some detail about Lukas’s discontent in covering the Chicago conspiracy trial, and notes that he had trouble keeping his frustration to himself:

> When Lukas returned to New York earlier this year he shared some of his discontent with other reporters and writers—and with non-*Times* people. At a seminar at Columbia University, for example, a student listened to Lukas’ complaints about the *Times*’ trial coverage and then asked him why he stayed. Lukas’ half-kidding references to his salary and “perks” (air travel card, etc.) hardly did much to assuage student doubts about the media’s integrity.\(^{141}\)

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\(^{141}\) Diamond, p. 43.
In addition to Lukas, the article mentions several future (MORE) contributors, including the *Times*’s women’s news editor Charlotte Curtis, *Washington Post* writer Nicholas von Hoffman, and *Times* reporter Earl Caldwell. (Also noted was a young *New York Post* reporter named William Woodward, who would become essential to (MORE)’s beginnings.) But most intriguingly, Diamond writes that some in the “cabal” were pondering a more public version of the *Times*’s interoffice memo “Winners and Sinners,” which highlighted good and bad coverage (and grammatical mistakes) among *Times* staffers. Diamond writes that “There is a model in the *Chicago Journalism Review*, an excellent monthly put out by young Second City reporters….“  

So it was in this atmosphere that Lukas suggested that he and Pollak create their own, New York–based journalism review. After all, wasn’t New York where most of the national press was headquartered? But in order to make this project work, Pollak and Lukas wanted to make sure that they had enough support for and enough interest in their project. To accomplish this, they would go through a two-step trial process. And of course, neither of them had the money it would take to start a magazine, so investors had to be found.

**The rebellious scion reporter becomes a publisher himself**

Lukas and Pollak decided to hold a meeting first—an open meeting, bringing in any New York City area reporters who felt the same sorts of frustrations in their work as Lukas was feeling. They both knew quite a few people at New York news organizations so they spread the word through the grapevine. There was going to be a meeting at the

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142 Diamond, p. 45
Harvard Club, on West 44th Street, near Grand Central Terminal. Come, they said, share your ideas for a new publication.

Interviewed 40 years after this meeting, Pollak doesn’t remember who came, or exactly what was said by whom (and the same is true for many of the surviving members of (MORE)’s first advisory panel, though Calvin Trillin remembered a meeting at some sort of club,143 and Ron Dorfman confirmed that it was indeed at the Harvard Club).144 But Pollak does remember that the turnout was far more than he had expected. Apparently, the frustration in the newsrooms was even higher than he and Lukas had guessed. Even though it’s not entirely possible to ascertain who attended, it seems reasonable to think that the advisory committee listed on the masthead of (MORE)’s first issue may have been there, or at least form a representative idea of the sort of journalist who was interested in the idea of a new journalism review that would hold news organizations to a higher standard. In addition to Tony Lukas, who was not officially an editor, despite being a co-founder, the advisory committee for the first issue included Paul Cowan, Ernest Dunbar, Pamela Howard, A. Kent MacDougall, Calvin Trillin and Mike Wallace.

After the meeting, which seems to have occurred sometime in late 1970, given that the magazine’s young publisher claimed to have worked on it for “more than six months” on the publication, and he hadn’t met the other co-founders before the Harvard Club meeting.145 There, Pollak and Lukas were approached by someone they didn’t know, a young man who asked how the organizers planned to fund the magazine. He was

143 Telephone interview with the author, June 21, 2012.
144 Interview with the author, August 10, 2012.
145 “Promising More,” Newsweek, June 14, 1971, 64.
interested in supporting it in some way, and had some family money he could use as he chose. This was William Woodward III, the young *New York Post* writer mentioned in the *New York* magazine article about the cabal at the *New York Times*, who, together with Lukas and Pollak would become the third founder of (MORE). He was only 26 at the time.

Woodward, who went by the nickname Woody, was the son of William Woodward, Jr., who was in turn the heir to the Hanover National Bank fortune. Woody Woodward was 11 years old when, in 1955, his parents attended a dinner party for Wallis Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor. There had been reports that night of a prowler in their neighborhood, Oyster Bay on Long Island. Woody Woodward’s parents retired to separate bedrooms, armed and nervous. Sometime during the night, Woodward’s father came into his wife’s room, and she shot and killed him while their two boys, including the young Woody Woodward slept in other rooms.¹⁴⁶

The killing was a sensation. *Life* magazine called it “The Shooting of the Century.”¹⁴⁷ A grand jury ruled that the shooting had been an accident, but there were persistent rumors that it was intentional. William Woodward, Jr., was known to have been promiscuous with both women and men, so the idea was that his wife had found out about his extracurricular relationships. Truman Capote was also fascinated by the killing and wrote part of a novel about it, with the fictionalized Mrs. Woodward clearly killing her husband intentionally. Several of these chapters were published in *Esquire* magazine,

and Woody Woodward’s mother reacted: she killed herself. Less than a year later, Woodward’s brother jumped from a hotel window on Central Park South and also died. Dominick Dunne later fictionalized the story for his novel *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles*.

But despite his wealthy, and publicly tragic upbringing, Woody Woodward was not entirely an outsider to the journalistic community that Pollak and Lukas had invited to the Harvard Club, and was in fact quite sympathetic to some of the anti-establishment sentiments that the (MORE) regulars harbored. More than a reportorial dilettante, Woodward was determined to find a worthwhile career for himself. According to his *New York Times* obituary:

In 1968, he became a reporter at The New York Post, and if newspapering seemed an unlikely career for a multimillionaire, he embraced it. He paid his own way to cover the Vietnam War, riding around the war on a motorcycle. In New York, he represented the Newspaper Guild in contract negotiations with management, another unlikely role for the heir to a banking fortune.148

According to the *New York* “cabal” article though, Woodward was chosen as the newsroom representative by the *Post’s* publisher, Dorothy Schiff.149 Woodward’s mother had socialized with Schiff, and had gotten him his job there,150 and so presumably felt comfortable talking to him if he were to become the *Post’s* union rep (Diamond describes Woodward as “both *engagé* and very social.”)151 So as a newsroom union guy, and the sort of reporter so eager to go to Vietnam that he paid his own way there, Woodward was supportive of the effort, and he agreed to fund a pilot issue of the new magazine, which

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148 Yardley, “Heir to a Fortune…”
149 Diamond, p. 45.
150 Braudy, p. 373.
151 Diamond, p. 45.
the founders would use to judge interest in their project. If there was enough, (MORE) would begin regular publication. They were inspired in this approach by the *New York Review of Books*, a publication Pollak deeply respected, and one which gave the new journalism review advice and assistance in its early days.152

In May of 1971, Woodward had lunch with Dorothy Schiff, which seems to have been done at Woodward’s request. At lunch, he told Schiff about the publication, and about Pollak. He seems to have requested a leave of absence from the *Post* the previous February,153 but at this meeting Woodward explained his connection to (MORE) and that he was going to serve as publisher. In what appears to be something of a sop to his mentor as a publisher, he also told her that “it remained to be seen how the business side and the editorial side got along, mentioning the Harper's situation, which was a clear case of business and editorial sides clashing.”154 Woodward was likely aware, of course, that the first issue of the magazine would carry an article about *Harper’s Magazine* forcing its editor, Willie Morris, out. In a memo she dictated about the lunch, Schiff also found it noteworthy that (MORE) would have an editorial policy forbidding its writers to write about their own publications. Given the defensiveness with which she would view later (MORE) articles and inquiries about the *Post*, it’s likely that she already had self-preservation on her mind, and the less interaction that the *Post* could have with a

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152 Interview with the author, September 8, 2011.
potential journalism review—even through her protege Woodward—the better it would be for her and her newspaper.

Sometime either at her lunch with Woodward or within the following two weeks, Schiff decided that Woodward could not work at the Post anymore—that his leave of absence should become a resignation. In a memo to her files, she wrote, “When I suggested Woody resign because he was now publisher of (More) and there might be a conflict of interest, Woody refused to, saying there was a man on leave from the State Department and was the editor of Foreign Affairs but he didn't have the man's name.” Woodward had apparently settled on John Franklin Campbell, the editor of Foreign Affairs, as his comparison for himself in terms of conflict of interest. But by this point, Schiff and her editor, Paul Sann, had already decided what would be done to demonstrate that the Post was not involved in starting up (MORE). They would question Woodward openly at the press conference announcing the first issue, making it clear in their coverage that Woodward was doing this on his own behalf, not Schiff’s.

Lukas and Pollak, with their new partner Woodward providing most of the early funding for the magazine from his own pocket, formed a corporation to publish (MORE). They named their company Rosebud Associates, Inc. The name was a sly nod to one of the most famous sleds in the fictional history of journalism, and the Citizen Kane reference was yet another way of acknowledging the traditions of journalism. There was, of course, an irony in referring to a fictionalized version of a corrupt newspaper publisher, but it was a foreshadowing of the cheeky tone that (MORE) would adopt

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toward the business of journalism. (MORE) would, over the years of its existence, play with several important dialectics, one of which is the interplay between journalism as a practice and its role in society versus the publication of news as a business. Others that they toyed with included being anti-establishment but proud of the traditions of journalism; and being opponents of anti-intellectualism but also given to juvenile parodies from time to time. Criticizing a particular news organization or a pervasive practice within journalism did not mean that the staffers of (MORE) disliked journalism itself. Journalism was vital to a self-regulating culture and a self-governing society. The ’60s had shown quite clearly (to a certain subset of people) that criticizing the government did not mean you disliked the country. In fact, in some ways it could be seen as the ultimate in patriotism—defending your country against its government. (MORE) occasionally came to see itself as defending journalism against the people who were actually doing journalism, and doing it poorly.

Rosebud Associates was in business, but the magazine itself also needed a name. Pollak says he is unsure who came up with the name for the magazine, but its meaning, at least, was always clear, and exemplified a dual approach that would come to define (MORE). Before electronic layout of newspaper copy, reporters would mark the end of each typewritten page with one of two choices: if there was more to the story on the next page, he would type “(MORE)” to indicate this. If that was the end of the story, he would type —30—. So on the one hand, choosing “(MORE)” as the magazine’s name indicated the thoughts that Tony Lukas was having in Chicago—that there was more to most news stories than was being told in the mainstream press. On the other hand, the new
nameplate spoke to a sense of journalistic tradition that its founders (Pollak and Lukas, at least) felt themselves to be a part of.

To lay out the magazine, Pollak and Lukas brought on Sam Antupit, a well-known designer of publications who was perhaps best known for having designed *The New York Review of Books*, with its matte paper, its bigger-than-a-tabloid, but smaller-than-a-broadsheet size, and its cartoonish line drawings, most famously by David Levine. The logo Antupit designed was striking and instantly recognizable, though its stylization would cause large amounts of stylistic variation among other publications that wanted to refer to the new journalism review. Antupit cast the letters in a thick, sans-serif, all-caps font, closed in on either side by a pair of what appear to be either parentheses or square brackets. They’re likely parentheses, but they’re squarish parentheses, and other publications never seemed quite sure what to do with them when referring to (MORE). Some went with parentheses, some with brackets, some decided to forgo them altogether, even though they were integral to the joke behind the magazine's name. The type of the word “MORE” is aligned with the top of these parentheses, and then underneath, lined up with the bottom of them, are the words “A Journalism Review.”

Rosebud Associates, Inc. filed to register the trademark for on July 29, 1971, more than a month after the pilot issue appeared. Even the trademark office didn’t quite get the idea behind the stylized “(MORE),” filing the trademark instead as “(MORE A JOURNALISM REVIEW).” That first issue had a publication date of June, 1971, but it likely left the presses on May 19, since the trademark approval document gives that date

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as the first usage of the trademark, and the date from which it was in force. The trademark listed the headquarters for (MORE) at 960 Park Avenue in New York, which seems to have been Woody Woodward’s home address. The first issue bore a cover price of 75 cents, and you could subscribe for $7.50 per year. Further discounts were available to generous patrons who believed that (MORE) would be around for more than a year: $14.00 for two years, $19.00 for three.  

When the first issue was ready, the founders held a press conference at the Algonquin Hotel in Midtown Manhattan, near Grand Central Terminal, and across the street from the Harvard Club, where the initial meeting had occurred six months earlier. The Algonquin, of course, is most famous for being the home of the Algonquin Round Table group of writers, actors and wits. Whether or not the association was intentional, the location evokes the idea of a group of intellectual, witty and cosmopolitan writers, and given the mission of (MORE), that seems an appropriate comparison, and Robert Benchley, who had founded the “Wayward Press” column in The New Yorker, was a regular member of the group.

The press conference was held on May 18, 1971, and garnered some coverage in the mainstream press. Only Pollak and Woodward seem to have attended on behalf of (MORE), with Lukas beginning what would be his regular role as an outside adviser and frequent contributor, but not a full-time staff member. Paul Sann, the editor of The New York Post, didn’t see much of a need to cover the event at first, even though he knew of

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Woody Woodward’s involvement. A few days before the event, he sent a memo to Dorothy Schiff, saying that he “would be tempted to cover only if you said so.” Schiff wrote on the memo: “I ‘said so’ by phone to Paul.”

According to the resultant article in the Post, (MORE) had an initial press run of 15,000 copies. Variety had the number at only 13,000, though both agreed that the Stern Fund for Investigative Journalism had helped to pay for the publication. The Post also noted that there had been several small private donations. Among them, Woodward himself had also contributed $2,300 of his own money to the magazine. The Post article also contains the answer to the one question Dolly Schiff wanted asked in order to distance her newspaper from the new journalism review:

Woodward, asked if he had applied for a leave from The Post to serve as publisher of (More), replied: "No I didn't. I asked the Post for a leave of absence for what I described as personal and business reasons which they asked me to elaborate on and which I did. It wasn't until, I'd say, a month or six weeks later that I decided that it would be interesting and worthwhile for me to spend some time trying to help this publication set up.

While it’s not clear if that timeline works out with the Harvard Club meeting and Woodward’s initial request for a leave of absence, the answer did seem to satisfy Schiff, as she told the Post’s advertising department to work on securing an ad for (MORE) that could run in the Post. She had seen one that (MORE) had taken out in The New York Times Book Review, featuring a bald head, shown from the top of the nose up, with slightly menacing eyes. Printed on the head was the sentence, “Every day the press

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The ad gave an overview of what the journalism review would be trying to accomplish:

(MORE) is a new monthly journalism review which will tell you a lot you don’t know about how the press is run. 
(MORE) tells you why some stories are killed, why others are “altered,” and why what is printed sometimes tells only part of the story. 
(MORE) provides you with inside information about newspapers, magazines, radio and television which you can’t get anywhere else. 
The rest of the ad summarized the content of the first issue—all of which was written on a volunteer basis by its contributors.165

The first incarnation of (MORE) looks quite a bit like *The New York Review of Books*. Sized at about 11 by 15 inches, roughly the size of a tabloid newspaper, (MORE) was printed on cheap newsprint-style paper stock (though the outside pages were often a slightly better quality paper than the inside), and usually printed in two colors (i.e., black and a second highlight color. There were very few, if any photographs in the first issues, but there were line drawings and cartoons. The (MORE) logo appeared in the top left corner, with an illustration in the top right. In fact, Antupit appears to have recruited his iconic *New York Review of Books* artist David Levine, since Levine drew the first cover illustration. There were several headlines in bold sans-serif type teasing stories that were inside, and, like the *New York Review of Books*, the lead story began on the front cover. It wasn’t fancy, but it was clean, and focused on the stories. The cover price, for those who hadn’t been on the complimentary circulation list for the pilot issue and who wanted to buy a copy on the newsstand, where it was also available, was 75 cents.166

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There hadn’t been much in the way of additions to the masthead between the Harvard Club meeting and the pilot issue. Pollak was editor. Woodward got second billing and the title of publisher. Samuel N. Antupit was listed third, as Designer. Beyond that, the only names given in the masthead are those of the aforementioned advisory committee. The names listed as the advisory committee made up an impressive group of journalists to be sure. Paul Cowan was a staff writer at the alternative newspaper *The Village Voice*. Ernest Dunbar had been the first black reporter hired by a national magazine—*Look*. Pamela Howard was the daughter of the former chief of the Scripps Howard media company. Kent MacDougall had recently edited a book of press criticism published by his employer, *The Wall Street Journal*\(^\text{167}\) (and would, 20 years later, come out as a socialist who had been working inside the establishment press).\(^\text{168}\) Calvin Trillin had been on the staff of *The New Yorker* since 1963, and would continue to be for at least 40 more years, as well as contributing to *The Nation* and writing books. And Mike Wallace had been working as a correspondent for the CBS News program *60 Minutes* since its debut in 1968. It was a serious and diverse bunch who occupied that first masthead.

In the eight years that (MORE) would exist, almost every byline in the magazine would belong to someone who was already a respected and well-known journalist, or was soon to become one. The lineup for the inaugural issue included Stuart H. Loory, then a Washington correspondent for *The Los Angeles Times*, who had worked for the New York *Herald-Tribune* and would go on to work for CNN beginning in 1980, and then teach at


the University of Missouri. Lukas contributed a story. George Reedy was a press
director in the Johnson administration, and was on a fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson
Center for Scholars when he wrote his piece for (MORE). Paul Cowan, also on the
advisory committee, contributed. David Halberstam, who had been Lukas’s *New York
Times* colleague, was already a Pulitzer Prize winner, and at work on his book *The Best
and the Brightest*, which would come out the next year. (Halberstam knew Lukas from
their time together in Baltimore, and wrote a recommendation letter for Lukas to bring
him to *The New York Times*.) He is described in his brief bio as having “recently resigned
as a contributing editor of *Harper’s*. Charlotte Curtis was the editor of *The New York
Times* women’s pages, which still existed as such in 1971. And finally, Ron Dorfman, the
editor of the inspirational *Chicago Journalism Review*, wrote a piece for the new
magazine.

Almost everything else was written by Pollak, including the brief pieces in the
front and back of the magazine, and including the letter from the editor that filled a half
column between the masthead and the table of contents. In this long paragraph, Pollak
disclaimed any grand purpose for the tenuous new undertaking that he was in charge of:

Traditionally, a new publication is launched with a Ringing Declaration of
Purpose. The trouble with such noble manifestoes, however, is that you then have to live
up to them. This often proves exceedingly difficult. Despite your best intentions, little old
ladies from Dubuque do pick up your magazine. Or some newspaper editor (or even
publisher) momentarily forgets the marble admonition in the lobby and gives the news
partially with both fear and favor.\(^{169}\)

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\(^{169}\) Letter from the editor, (MORE), June 1971, p. 2.
Here Pollak was referring to the “without fear or favor” statement of principles that Adolph Ochs, the patriarch of the modern *New York Times* published when he bought the paper and to the type of aged Iowans that *The New Yorker* was decidedly not supposed to be edited for, in the opinion of founding editor Harold Ross. Again, (MORE) is having fun with institutions of journalism while simultaneously acknowledging their importance. The editor’s note continued:

Not surprisingly, this causes a certain embarrassment. But worse, it turns out to be quite costly as well. For, having fallen short of your R.D.P., you are forced to keep up appearances by noting your achievements in large, expensive advertisements on the back page of the *Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. With luck, these advertisements will persuade your readers that at least you are doing something worthwhile. But then there’s your staff. They’re a pretty savvy bunch and they really know how far you are from the old R.D.P.

Now Pollak is pointing out that reporters are not dupes. Neither are readers. Pollak went on, saying that (MORE) was going to cover the New York area press—by which we mean newspapers, magazines, radio and television—with a kind of tough-mindedness we think the press should be seldom does apply to its coverage of the world. We hope to do this seriously but not without wit, fairly but not “objectively.”

But despite Pollak’s stated intention primarily to cover the press in New York, following the lead of the earlier, regional journalism reviews, (MORE) clearly had national aspirations. To some extent, that was a reflection of the fact that many national news organizations—*Time* and *Newsweek*, the *Times*, the broadcast network news operations—were based in New York City, and therefore covering the local press meant covering the national press. Still, the articles even in the first issue belie the magazine’s
national leanings: Lukas’s contribution was an article about *Reader’s Digest*; Paul Cowan wrote about the press’s favorable treatment of the oil industry; Charlotte Curtis told the story of how editor Willie Morris was forced out at *Harper’s* magazine. And (MORE) also reprinted an article from the *Chicago Journalism Review*, by its editor Ron Dorfman, in which Dorfman detailed the reporters power struggle at two Chicago newspapers. So (MORE) hardly put together a parochial editorial lineup for that first issue.

The quotation marks around the word “objectively” in that introductory note also begin to make clear an attitude toward objectivity that (MORE) would espouse more broadly over time. In short, the staff of the magazine thought that it was a scrim that shielded publishers from blame and stifled the troublesome individual reporters who wanted their own voice. The articles in that pilot issue also make clear the theme of the reporter’s voice, which played such a large role in pushing the magazine’s founders toward the printing press. In the Hellbox column, devoted to shorter pieces and to bestowing “Rosebuds” on reporting they deemed exceptional, the editors ran side-by-side comparisons of two paragraphs of copy that the *New York Times* correspondent Homer Bigart turned in, and the toothless one-line distillation that ran in the paper. The column quotes Bigart:

I never read my stories in the paper anymore…. It’s a safe way to avoid ulcers. You can’t win. You finally get to the point where you either have to take it or quit. People have tried to fight back, but they get nowhere. You can’t beat a newspaper bureaucracy any more than you can beat any other kind of bureaucracy.\(^{170}\)

\(^{170}\)“Hellbox,” (MORE), June, 1971, p. 2.
Paul Cowan’s article on the favorable treatment of the oil industry raises the issue of the new class of well-educated reporters, and the new sorts of ethical issues they have to deal with:

It was difficult for a man who would become a dovish writer for the *Times* or *Newsweek* to believe that his classmate, the corporation executive, would become an accessory of an institution forced by the biology of the business world to control large portions of the earth in order to survive.¹⁷¹

Charlotte Curtis’s article about Willie Morris’s forced resignation addressed the limitations of a newsroom given over entirely to the editorial and writing staff; Morris’s editing style gave writers room to be themselves, intellectually and stylistically (she quotes David Halberstam as saying that Morris was the only editor who ever understood him), but his editing also made little allowance for the financial continuity of the magazine.

Perhaps most directly, Ron Dorfman’s reprinted contribution entirely addressed the idea of reporters having their own voice. His story told of the reportorial and editorial staff of two Chicago newspapers—the *Sun-Times* and the *Daily News*, who objected so strongly to their papers’ endorsement (both papers were owned by Marshall Field V.) of Richard Daley for reelection as Chicago’s mayor, that they fought to buy a full-page ad outlining their objections to Daley, and supporting his opponent, Richard E. Friedman. In his closing paragraphs, Dorfman elegantly summarizes some of the fissures that had begun to appear in the idea that reporters were opinion-free conduits of pure fact, and he distills the issue to its core:

Some reporters have openly demonstrated their sympathy with the anti-war movement. Others have spoken out in favor of the war effort. Some women reporters have announced their commitment to the women’s liberation movement.

Others have said they are against it. Now some reporters have gone a step further and openly endorsed a political candidate. None of this is especially revolutionary, except in the sense that more such acts are bound to follow… and each makes it more difficult for the profession to perpetuate the nonsensical notion that a reporter is a non-human creature who understands everything and believes nothing.\textsuperscript{172}

By including this piece, the editors of (MORE) were declaring that they would not be that non-human kind of reporter. And in the second issue, six months after the pilot, they also showed that ethical obligation would be stronger than social ties, when Dick Pollak wrote a long piece criticizing the \textit{New York Post}, published by Dorothy Schiff, the friend and former employer of (MORE)’s publisher.\textsuperscript{173}

The most important piece in the first issue, however, was a reaction by George E. Reedy to an essay in \textit{Commentary} by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an academic and an adviser to the administrations of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Moynihan had written that there was a growing imbalance between the press and the presidency, with the scales now tipping toward the press. The Reedy piece plays an important role in the history of (MORE) for two reasons. One is that Pollak claims that the piece, and a brief editorial inspired by it, pushed \textit{The New York Times} into revising its corrections policy, nudging them into consolidating its corrections in a single box in a fixed part of the newspaper. Pollak claims that this is the most significant direct effect that (MORE) ever had on the ethical operation of a news organization.\textsuperscript{174} There is substantial evidence to support this claim too, though several other factors intervened, as well, and these are investigated in more detail in chapter five. The second reason the Reedy essay looms large as a foundational myth for (MORE) is that its last paragraph actually makes a better mission

\textsuperscript{172} Ron Dorfman, “Battling the Myths in Chicago,” (MORE), June, 1971, p.18.
\textsuperscript{173} “An Intra-Family Sort of Thing,” (MORE), October, 1971, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{174} Interview with the author, September 8, 2011.
statement for the magazine than Pollak’s self-effacing disclaimer of high moral purpose.

After dismissing Moynihan’s call for independent press councils to monitor news organizations, Reedy writes:

As an institution, the press has *not* been sufficiently self-critical and it has been far readier to protect its privileges than to correct its deficiencies. An indictment could be drawn that would make the *Commentary* article pale by comparison.

But a press adequate to the needs of a free society will *not* be produced by press boards which pass upon the “truth” or by rationing the amount of criticism to which individual groups in our society are entitled. This is *not* the road to freedom. It is the road to controlled thought.  

Reedy doesn’t quite say it, but he does seem to imply that journalism reviews such as (MORE) could serve as the proper forum for that journalistic self-criticism.

reaction to the first issue was mostly positive, at least among those publications that chose review it. *The Wall Street Journal*,  

*New York magazine* and the *New York Times* each wrote up the first issue, though none had much to say about it besides a cursory listing of its articles and occasionally a note about how it was New York’s first journalism review. But Nat Hentoff, who among other tasks, was the media critic for *The Village Voice*, did not even wait for the press conference announcing (MORE) to review it. Hentoff didn’t like the name, and cracked jokes about it in his column:

There will be enough money by fall, but the bigger the initial subscription response, the less (MORE) will have to raise. (You see what happens, Dick, when you have a title like that?)

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Hentoff preferred the more prosaic but descriptive title *The New York Journalism Review*. Of course, (MORE) had broader ambitions than a title limiting its scope to New York would allow. But still, unselfishly, Hentoff eagerly welcomed (MORE) to New York as his competition. “What a pleasure it’s going to be,” he wrote, “to have a place to send leads instead of guiltily watching them back up because one man in one city can only cover so much space and time.” Though he complimented the “many experienced hands” involved in (MORE), it’s possible, given the lack of detail in his review, and the early publication date, that he was working from the press release alone.

*Variety*’s review was similarly laudatory. The author called it “amazingly good for a first issue, critical but not with that offensive militancy that marks and mars many publications devoted to ‘exposing’ whatever it is, and those in charge.”*(MORE)* could, in fact, have taken the route of militancy, but even in this first issue, avoided that sort of confrontation, adopting a tone that would not alienate establishment press institutions in the same way that more radical publications had. It was a stance that would irritate publishers without angering them (most of the time), and would allow (MORE) to have a greater degree of influence on those they covered. *Variety* was astute enough to pick up on that tone even in volume one, issue one—though they were less astute on reading the name of publishers, misprinting “Rosebud Associates” as “Posbred.”

*Variety* picked out Charlotte Curtis’s investigation into the ouster of Willie Morris as editor of *Harper’s* as the strongest article, and *Newsweek* agreed. Dick Pollak had been the editor of the “Press” section of *Newsweek*, of course, but nevertheless, the praise bordered on effusive. Curtis’s piece is a “tour de force.” Though the *Newsweek* columnist

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noted that New York was late in getting its own journalism review, the columnist picked up on the national ambition of (MORE), unlike Hentoff. Newsweek noted that the “top-flight professional status of its contributors” also set it apart from other journalism reviews, where the contributors might have been just as incensed at the state of journalism, but did not have the same preexisting stature coming into their roles as critics. That kind of talent, all of which had agreed to write without payment for the first issue, gave the columnist hope that (MORE) could become “the best publication yet devised for journalists criticizing their own profession.”

The Newsweek piece said that Pollak and Woodward would work on soliciting subscriptions and raising more money (so that all future contributors would be paid), but quoted Woodward as saying that they weren’t in the publishing business for the money. “Face it,” Newsweek quotes Woodward as saying. “There’s probably more money in Hula Hoops than in new journalism reviews.” Woodward hoped that the magazine would be in the black in five years. And while that never did happen, the first 27 issues, which can be seen as the first of three semi-distinct periods in the history of (MORE), did establish what (MORE) really was up to, if it wasn’t for the money.

(MORE) gets its first assistant editor

As noted in the introduction, Peter Richardson, wrote that writing about a magazine is like telling the story of a rock band, with an institutional identity, but as individual personalities leave and enter the magazine, that identity changes in subtle or

significant ways. When (MORE) launched its pilot issue, only Dick Pollak, the editor and Woody Woodward, the publisher, represented the magazine at the press conference. Even then, while Woodward was important as a fund raiser, the editorial identity of the publication was established almost entirely by Pollak. But shortly after it began regular publication in October 1971, (MORE) gained a second full time editorial staff member, Terry Pristin, and this dissertation uses Pristin’s tenure as assistant editor to define the first period of its publication.

The second issue of (MORE) came out just when Pollak and Woodward had hoped it would, in the fall of 1971, just four months after the pilot issue. Pristin wrote a piece for that issue, as a freelancer. She doesn’t recall exactly how she had heard about (MORE) in that period between the initial excitement and regular publication. She was young—only 25—and didn’t have the same sort of connections that Pollak and Lukas and Halberstam did. After graduating from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Pristin worked for a television station in Boston and then for an alternative newspaper called Boston After Dark (which became the better known Boston Phoenix). She missed New York though, and quit to return without a job. But she knew someone who knew someone—maybe Lukas—and she had an idea for a story, she remembers, and Pollak took it for the first issue. That article looked into the success, or lack thereof, of the Harlem-based Community News Service, which was intended to bring black voices into majority white newspapers downtown. The service was failing to bring in enough

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182 Peter Richardson, A Bomb in Every Issue: How the Short, Unruly Life of Ramparts Magazine Changed America (New York: New Press, 2010).
183 Terry Pristin, discussion with the author, December 17, 2011.
money to support itself. The table of contents for that issue said that Pristin was a young journalist who had “recently joined the staff of (MORE),” but the masthead didn’t have a title for her yet. By November though, she had her name listed next to the title “Assistant Editor.” She remembers her pay as $160 or $180 per week, “something in that range. Very little money, but it was fun.” She called working for (MORE), “a heady experience for a very young person because I was rubbing shoulders with all these famous people. Dick [Pollak] brought in so many well known journalists and I would go to the kinds of parties that I would never be invited to today. There were always parties. Somehow there were always parties. So I was on a first name basis with people with distinguished reputations.

While Pristin found that life exciting, she also realized that the mission of (MORE) might square better with the career achievements of the more senior contributors to the magazine, since they had the experience both to write more credible stories and to be able to face up to more established journalists and institutions. “It’s really better to be a press critic when you actually have done it a little bit,” she said. “You should have actually done it so you know what goes into it, what kinds of pressures people are under, and it gives you a little bit more of a humane understanding of what it’s like to be a journalist, and I sort of reversed things in my career.” Pristin did say, though, that she mostly worked on editing and writing the shorter pieces in the magazine—the “Hellbox” stories that originally ran on page two and later the “Big Apple” section that focused on New York City media. Editing duties for the longer pieces mostly belonged to Pollak.

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Even with Pristin in the office, the staff of (MORE) remained exceedingly small. At most, there were four regular employees who would show up. Pollak and Pristin constituted the entire editorial staff. According to Pristin, Woody Woodward also came to the office regularly, at least at first. And Tom Reeves later joined the magazine as a business and advertising manager. Sam Antupit, the designer, came in toward the end of the production cycle and sometimes accompanied the group on trips to the printer in Connecticut, but he was mostly absent. Tony Lukas, the third founder of (MORE) with Pollak and Woodward, mostly stayed away, busy with other parts of his career. According to Pristin, Lukas would come into the office occasionally and help to generate story ideas or to bring in writers—and of course to write stories himself. But he wasn’t an editor.

Themes in (MORE) in the Terry Pristin era, June 1971-December 1973

In the first incarnation of (MORE), from the pilot issue until December of 1973, when Terry Pristin was replaced on the masthead, the magazine developed several consistent themes and areas of coverage—many of which would remain throughout the magazine’s run, or at least through the period in which Rosebud Associates, the founders, owned the publication. At the same time, the first two and a half years of (MORE) established the magazine’s characteristic tone. The recurring themes included the following:

- Journalists’ growing distrust of corporations and for advertising in general.
- Journalists’ growing distrust of the government, particularly in matters regarding surveillance, propaganda. (MORE) also expressed dismay at the number of journalists and media organizations that willingly complied with government efforts to censor information or mislead the public.
• In the spirit of 1970s identity politics, (MORE) was also watchful on behalf of several interest groups, advocating for their inclusion both in stories in the mainstream press and in the newsrooms that produced those stories.

• The chronicling of new and promising press ventures, interwoven with an elegiac wistfulness about the dying off of several venerable media properties.

• (MORE) was concerned with advocating protections for journalists, particularly in the area of the protection of anonymous sources.

• (MORE) covered obscenity and censorship of obscenity almost as closely as it covered the more more serious censorship of information.

• (MORE) wrote about issues of press ethics and accountability, particularly in coverage of the discussion over whether or not the United States needed a news council that could independently review stories in the press.

• Finally, (MORE) chronicled the experience of being a journalist in the 1970s in a way that its predecessors, such as The Columbia Journalism Review, never did. It was almost as if it were a lifestyle magazine for journalists.

(MORE) was a local journalism review in the way that The New York Times was a local newspaper in the 1970s. It was based in New York City, and to some extent its coverage reflected that fact. New York media organizations were much more likely to come under scrutiny in (MORE) than were magazines based in Philadelphia or Chicago, and even more so than dailies in Denver or Dubuque. And the predominantly New York–based staff had a New York–centric view of the world in much the same way that the Times often does. It’s the New Yorker’s view of the world that Saul Steinberg cartooned for the cover of The New Yorker in 1976, with Manhattan seen in granular detail, and the
rest of the country a sketchy rectangle on the horizon. Nevertheless, (MORE) did attempt to cover the entire country, as did the Times, which already in the 1970s was a national newspaper as much as it was a local broadsheet. Like the Times, (MORE) would eventually open a Washington, D.C. Bureau (one staffed by a single man, in (MORE)’s case). And also like the Times, (MORE) had a national influence. Among journals of press criticism, it was the standard bearer for its brief life. All of these factors influenced the range of coverage that made its way into the journalism review, and the beginnings of that range can be seen in its first two and a half years.

(MORE)’s tone in this period also covered a wide range, but particularly coalescing around two poles: a sort of New York Review of Books attempt at intellectual seriousness, and a cheeky satirical approach. Both of these world views can be seen as an attempt to crack the institutional press’s reluctance to engage in self-examination. That reluctance, as argued in chapter one of this dissertation, is one of the key markers of anti-intellectualism in the professions, and (MORE)’s encouragement of such self-scrutiny speaks to the journalism review’s place as an opponent of anti-intellectualism. Almost always though, whether it was being serious or mocking, (MORE) operated with an awareness of the history of reporting in the United States in mind—particularly the muckraking tradition—while also advocating for change. Theirs was a progressivism rooted in sentimentality for a golden age that was never quite real.

Coverage of business and advertising

In its first months of publication, (MORE) used a particularly large amount of printer’s ink on coverage of two related issues. In establishing its early anti-institutional
stance, (MORE) ran several articles on a theme of distrust of corporate America. Interspersed with these were several articles about the nature of advertising in news publications and the relationship between money and news in general.

Even (MORE)’s pilot issue featured two articles on the topic. Tony Lukas’s article about Reader’s Digest and its favoring of corporations over environmental issues squarely fits into a class of articles in which (MORE) faulted publications for failing to hold business accountable. Lukas describes a 1969 article that names “the two main villains” in the degradation of the environment as the growing U.S. population and a failure of oversight by Federal agencies—but leaves out any responsibility on the part of corporations. But in 1971, this was old news. The news peg for Lukas’s article was an announced supplement that would run in the September 1971 issue of Digest, which promised answers to what American corporations were doing to help the environment. Rather than being hard-hitting investigative reporting however, this was going to be an advertising supplement, which Reader’s Digest sold to companies as a terrific public relations opportunity. For Lukas, this was a violation of the public service obligation of a large circulation American general interest magazine.¹⁸⁵

As discussed above, Paul Cowan’s piece on under-coverage of the oil industry blamed the chummy relationships between oil executives and journalists who attended college with them for the lack of serious reporting. Cowan investigated whether or not the threat of losing advertising from oil companies might be to blame, but found that it accounted for very little of the advertising income of most publications. Cowan puts the blame squarely on reporters, both for being “too timid or lazy or unimaginative (or all

three) to do the kind of reading and interviewing that would help them understand how complex organizations like oil companies operate…. They eagerly accept a bureaucrat’s transparent lie if it will allow them to avoid an ominously difficult piece of research.”

But while (MORE) was never reluctant to put the blame for bad reporting on a lazy reporter, the publication was much more likely to follow the lead of its patron saint, A.J. Liebling, and give the lion’s share of the distrust to the publishers. In the first two and a half years of its existence, (MORE) ran at least seven lengthy articles that questioned the relationship between advertisers and publishers. Journalist Chris Welles addressed the issue in an article about how *The New York Times* covered business that he wrote for cover of the December 1971 issue. Welles analyzed nearly 600 business articles over a two month period and diagnosed the *Times*’s soft coverage as a combination of over-reliance on corporate public relations—the sort of unquestioning reportorial laziness that troubled Paul Cowan about the oil industry—and the publishers being cowed by advertisers. He illustrated the second point with an anecdote about airline executives storming the office of *Times* publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger after an editorial pushing for airline deregulation. The point that the *Times* was a lapdog for corporations was driven home by a cartoon depicting a tail-wagging *New York Times* puppy eagerly delivering a rolled newspaper, clenched in its teeth, to a satisfied looking personification of industry, wearing a suit, wingtips and pinkie rings, and chomping on a cigar while smoke puffs out of the smokestack that constitutes his head. It was one of the very first cartoons for (MORE) by an artist named Marty Norman, who would soon become the

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closest thing the magazine had to a house cartoonist (though he ran this cartoon under a pen name, afraid that he might lose business cartooning for *The Times*, with which he also had a business relationship).  

While the piece about *The Times* might have obliquely attacked the relationship between publishers and advertisers—no advertiser was named specifically—(MORE) took on advertising issues directly several times in the period between June 1971 and December 1973. There was an article about how newspapers were refusing to take ads from a computerized car matching system in order to avoid competition with local car dealership advertising.\(^{189}\) The same issue had an article about invasive print advertising, where articles would cut at a diagonal across a page of editorial content or take two quarter pages at the top left and bottom right, completely dominating the articles that they subsidized.\(^{190}\) (MORE) covered the *New York Times* advertising acceptability policy\(^{191}\) (an article which also pushed the conversation into First Amendment territory, by suggesting that the *Times* was censoring potentially unsavory ads). (MORE) investigated the possibly less-than-wholesome public service ads of The Advertising Council, which (MORE) found to be overly protective of “the image and interests of the nation’s industrial and governmental power brokers.” Some of the Ad Council’s “public service” ads were, according to this article, “nothing short of a public hoax.”\(^{192}\) (MORE) also

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\(^{188}\) Marty Norman, conversation with the author, December 14, 2011.  
looked at propaganda from the strip mining industry\textsuperscript{193} and even returned to an examination of the oil business too, with a more in-depth look at an advertising supplement that Standard Oil had placed in 16 national and regional magazines.\textsuperscript{194}

(MORE)’s pace of coverage of advertising and business slowed a bit from the end of 1972 into 1973, a period in which the magazine ran three pieces, one on deceptive advertising\textsuperscript{195} and one about counter-advertisements to counteract it,\textsuperscript{196} and one front-cover piece about IBM’s public relations operation.\textsuperscript{197} The general focus on advertising, business and their interaction all falls squarely into (MORE)’s anti-institutional stance. But really, (MORE) doesn’t seem to be anti-corporate in these articles—in fact, bowing to the need to make money to continue publication, they raised their own advertising rates in April 1973, with a full page ad costing $600.\textsuperscript{198} Instead, the overriding message is one of disappointment not so much with the corporations—indeed, they’re seen as naturally rapacious—but with the institutional press that was supposed to be investigating those corporations. (MORE) was goading the watchdogs, not trying to take down the press, but trying, at least, to keep those watchdogs from becoming lapdogs like the one in Marty Norman’s cartoon.

Coverage of politics

In March 1973, Woody Woodward, (MORE)’s publisher, wrote a “Column Two” essay about some physical changes to the magazine (a switch from two to three columns and a new subscription price—$10 per year, up from $7.50). More importantly though, Woodward wrote that the magazine had added a new focus. (MORE) had hired a new Washington, D.C. editor, and would be holding the second of its A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions in Washington as well.¹⁹⁹ The new hire was a young reporter named Brit Hume, who had recently worked for the syndicated Washington investigative columnist Jack Anderson, and had made his own name with the 1971 publication of his book *Death and the Mines*, which told the story of the United Mine Workers union in the 1960s.²⁰⁰ He would later publish a memoir of his time with Anderson, further bolstering his bona fides as a reporter.²⁰¹ Hume’s addition to the masthead and the location of the second of (MORE)’s “counter-conventions” were clear signs that (MORE) had ambitions beyond New York City.

Given the political atmosphere of the early 1970s, and the role of the press in uncovering national political scandals it is almost surprising that there wasn’t even more reporting on political reporting in the first few issues of (MORE). The cover story of the pilot issue was about Nixon’s exploitation of prisoners of war in Vietnam for his own political purposes, of course. And the cover of a publication’s pilot issue is a place to make a statement about the magazine’s values. But the next two issues barely mentioned politics at all. Perhaps this is owing to (MORE)’s New York centrism. In December of

1972, the coverage of politics picked up quickly, but even then, it ran in bursts until Hume joined the staff. Likely this is a result of an overwhelmed editorial staff. Pollak and Pristin just couldn’t get their heads around more national political coverage than they did, and the majority of their connections in the press were also New Yorkers. Things stabilized once Hume came on board.

The same anti-institutional stance that informed (MORE)’s early coverage of business and advertising would be equally evident in the magazine’s coverage of the press’s relationship with government, though in the era of the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, (MORE) would place more of the blame on the government in this relationship than on failures of the press. Still, the press remained the main concern.

From December 1971 to March 1972, each issue of (MORE) carried at least one story about the relationship between the press and the government. These included articles lamenting *The New York Times*’s Washington bureau chief James “Scotty” Reston’s transformation from a scrappy reporter to a “journalistic statesman,”202 about how a North Carolinian named Jesse Helms used his fame from broadcasting on the Tobacco Network to get elected to the U.S. Senate,203 or about how and on law enforcement surveilling activist groups in order to have a chilling effect on their free speech.204 And while surveillance and the comings and goings of *Times*men were interesting to (MORE), they were overshadowed by the two main veins of coverage that began to dominate once the implications of the Daniel Ellsberg’s leaking of the Pentagon

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papers to *The New York Times* became clear and as the revelations of two virtually unknown *Washington Post* reporters started to come to light. After the Pentagon Papers and while the Watergate case was beginning to build momentum, (MORE) found its footing as a critic of government reporting and found much to write about on the topics of government cover-ups and leakers in the wake of Vietnam, and more specifically about Richard Nixon himself.

(MORE)’s coverage of the Pentagon Papers case and government leakers began in January 1972, about six months after *The Times* began publishing them. That piece, by Edwin Diamond, criticized the job that wire services and newspapers had done covering the grand jury investigations “fishing” for government leaks after the Pentagon Papers were made public. In part, wrote Diamond, the news organizations just didn’t have enough writers with the intellectual firepower needed to cover such a complex case. Much of the story was taking place in Boston, which didn’t attract the top writers from the national press, and reporting the case properly involved a combination of political and legal knowledge that most stringers wouldn’t be able to pick up, especially if they were responsible for other stories. And grand jury investigations are also particularly closed proceedings, which made the reporting even more difficult, even for the strongest reporters. Diamond attempts to provide some clarity to the story as it stood in late 1971, when he wrote the essay, attempting to add to the work of Sanford Ungar of *The Washington Post*, the one reporter Diamond praises in the piece. He also examines how the ongoing investigations had begun to have a chilling effect not just on Ellsberg (whose teenage son was subpoenaed) but also on the left-wing intellectuals of Cambridge,

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including the linguist Noam Chomsky, the historian Howard Zinn, and even (MORE) contributor David Halberstam.

Bridging both the theme of Vietnam coverage and the long arm of Richard Nixon, (MORE) editor Dick Pollak wrote a piece about a series of paid political columns that The Washington Post discouraged from publication in its pages. Several foundations had banded together with the idea of running a series of 50 open letters to Richard Nixon, which would be published as paid advertisements. Some of the letters would be written by prominent Americans, and the first batch included authors such as historian Lewis Mumford, singer Harry Belafonte and psychologist Erich Fromm as well as a businessman, a rancher, and a well-known actor made so nervous by the Post’s subsequent behavior in this tale that he asked that his name not be used in this article. What the Post did is somewhat murky, but it seems to have required each of the authors to approve his or her individual ad and disclaim any liability for reactions to that ad—even though the Post had originally said that batch clearance would be fine. This created enough of a hassle for the group that was organizing the ads to cancel the entire project. Pollak suggested that the Post was trying to chill the speech of the more anti-Nixon letter writers, since the Post had already caused enough friction with the Nixon administration through its Watergate reporting. Pollak admits that the case was not clear, and that there is no inherent right for a third party to be published in a privately owned newspaper. But, he concludes, “the odds remain unjustly high against the political advertiser with a

207 Ibid., 8.
boatrocking message—even at so relatively enlightened an organization as The Washington Post Co.\textsuperscript{208}

(MORE) published two substantial articles about political leaks to the press in 1973, at the height of Watergate. A man called “Anderson Price” wrote the first, but (MORE) acknowledged that this was a pen name. Price was an accountant who dealt with politicians as part of his job (perhaps his pseudonym was a conflation of the accounting firms of Arthur Andersen and Price Waterhouse), but who was more interesting to (MORE) because of what he called his “hobby”: leaking political stories to the press.\textsuperscript{209}

The article purports to explain the specific motivations of its author, but also to provide a glimpse into the press and political pathologies that make him and leakers like him viable in the system. Price says that he had always wanted to be a reporter himself, and that leaking to them continues to give him a thrill:

Why do I do this? Because I like reporters better than any other kind of people. I like to be seen in their company in swank restaurants, to eat their food and drink their liquor as the ply me for leads. I love to exchange bits of political gossip, to join in the reporters’ cynical assessment of politicians and their jealous criticism of the columnists, who make so much more money than they for what seems to be easier work. My biggest high comes when, in the middle of a formal dinner party, I let drop a particularly juicy item and a reporter takes his pad out of his dinner jacket and starts making notes. I will give reporters almost anything they want to keep them interested in me.\textsuperscript{210}

Following through on the story’s headline (“How to Become a Reliable Source”), Price offers just three tips: tell the truth; know who you’re talking to; and don’t blow your cover. But that headline is also a bit misleading, since the story is really about how “the whole idea of reliable sources has been debased—not by the sources, but by the

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 11.
journalists.” Price argues that the vast majority of anonymous sources are unnecessarily anonymous—that most of the stories that use anonymous sourcing could just as easily be reported on the record, or even more tellingly, not reported at all. As much as he enjoys his role as a leaker, he thinks that most of the stories he leaks are actually just gossip mongering or meaningless prognostication, and for the benefit of the reader, they should disappear.

A few months later, Bob Kuttner also argues in a (MORE) cover story that the importance of anonymous reporting is largely overblown. The occasion for the essay was Vice President Spiro Agnew’s complaint that he had been the victim of a series of systematic news leaks designed to destroy his career—and the subsequent judicial order that would have allowed Agnew’s attorneys to search the private files of members of the press. Agnew had resigned by the time of the article, making that judicial order moot, but Kuttner felt compelled to argue Agnew’s complaints, combined with the reporting of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in covering Watergate, had inflated the importance of leaks in the mind of the public. Real investigative reporting, he argues, requires legwork, and even when a leak is involved. He quotes the investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, who says that the real work isn’t getting the leak, but instead calling and calling and calling to find someone who is willing (or indiscreet enough) to talk, and then calling again until that first statement can be confirmed or refuted. Kuttner asserts that the growing practice of leaks had even given the press more credit than it deserved, since some of its

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211 Ibid., 15.
revelations were really only republished leaks of information that had originally been gathered by the Senate Watergate Committee headed by Senator Sam Ervin.

Kuttner interviewed the journalists who did much of the reporting that led to Agnew’s resignation, and while they wouldn’t reveal their sources, he concluded that most of the anonymous information came not from a calculated pattern of leaks but from attorneys on either side of the case—quite normal sources for a reporter. The real lesson of Watergate, Kuttner concludes, is not that government officials are necessarily waging a covert war of words against each other by leaking to the press, but that the press needs to stay more vigilant than ever against those government officials’ lies and attempts to cover up their own wrongdoing. In the last two words of his piece, Kuttner aptly sums up (MORE)’s general attitude toward the revival of muckraking journalism: “keep digging.”

(MORE) covered the Nixon administration probably more than it covered any other single topic in 1973—which should not be surprising, given the timing of the Watergate stories, and even the general anti-Nixon atmosphere. One classified ad as early as January 1972 advertised “Dump Nixon” stickers for sale. And it was the Nixon administration together with Vietnam that spurred the return to muckraking that (MORE) pushed for in Kuttner’s article and in others, such as one that pointed out the press’s underuse of the Freedom of Information Act. Nixon’s Christmastime public relations effort made the pages of (MORE) in early 1972, as did an essay trying to determine

213 Ibid., 16.
why Henry Kissinger garnered so much love from the press corps despite his constant
evasions.\textsuperscript{216} Nixon’s press secretary, Ron Ziegler, merited a profile,\textsuperscript{217} and in a lighter
vein, (MORE) asked why \textit{The New York Times} continued to refer to Spiro Agnew as “Mr.
Agnew” on second reference, despite a policy that revoked honorifics from other people
who had been convicted of crimes.\textsuperscript{218} As prospects darkened for Nixon, CBS News
correspondent Dan Rather’s interview with him also got coverage,\textsuperscript{219} as did the general
turn in television coverage’s tone against the president.\textsuperscript{220} And a collection of short essays
published right after Nixon’s reelection asked whether it was the press or the public that
was more at fault for that reelection. If a properly informed public still makes the wrong
decisions, (MORE) wondered, could the press still be blamed for that shortcoming?\textsuperscript{221}
The authors who answered that question included Tony Lukas, David Halberstam, Nora
Sayre, Joe McGinniss, Timothy Crouse and Roger Wilkins, all of whom were well known
and well respected. Their general conclusion was that the press did what it could—but
that Nixon had found too many ways to manipulate media and control a story that he
needed controlled. They also argued that George McGovern could never be up to
matching Nixon at his own game.

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While the Pentagon Papers, and then Nixon and Watergate dominated the first two and a half years of political coverage in (MORE)—and the cited articles are only about half of those that ran—there was also regional coverage, including stories about Philadelphia, Cleveland and the quirky fraternity of the New York City Hall press room. (MORE) even requested that its readers send in tips for good regional stories to cover.222 But there is no doubt that in the first two and a half years of its existence, (MORE) found the two stories it most needed to cover. The timing was felicitous.

Coverage of women and minorities

(MORE)’s coverage of the Nixon administration so dominated 1973 that political stories almost literally crowded out cultural stories in that time. But the first year or so of (MORE) featured regular and earnest coverage of cultural trends at the end of the chronological 1960s, as a seemingly unified New Left began to splinter into identity politics. Feminism, race, and to a lesser extent a newly visible interest group, gays, all took turns in the spotlight at (MORE). Gay liberation, which borrowed its name original from women’s liberation only warranted sporadic coverage, but when it came to race and gender equality, (MORE) regularly covered these topics and both what stories and people were covered, and also who was able to be adequately included in the newsroom.

The first regular monthly issue, in October 1972, contained articles that touched on women’s issues as well as problems of racism in the press. The cover story inaugurated a story structure that would become a semi-regular feature in the magazine: running stories that more mainstream publications had “killed” or “spiked,” to use the

violent language of the newsroom, and usually explaining the story of how those articles came to be excluded from the publications that originally commissioned them. This first instance was a review by the writer and feminist activist Susan Brownmiller. She had been active in the Women’s Liberation movement for a few years by 1971, but her biggest fame was a few years off, when she would publish her book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, which argued that rape had always been defined by men, not by women.223

*Life* magazine had assigned Brownmiller to review *The Prisoner of Sex*, Norman Mailer’s critique of feminism, and reportedly told her to “keep it light,” which seems almost like a joke when assigning a feminist journalist to review a book by Norman Mailer. Though in her review, Brownmiller does, to some extent, keep it light, if only by pointing out that no one is better poised to defend manhood than a man who has both the word “man” and a homophone for “male” in his name (though comparing Mailer’s chutzpah to Charles Manson’s god complex probably didn’t help Brownmiller get her story into the magazine).224 Even though the editorial preamble to the piece focuses more on the duplicity and conflicts of interest that the publishers of *Life* engaged in when killing Brownmiller’s review, putting it on the front page of the first regular issue of the magazine did make a statement that (MORE) identified with the Women’s Liberation movement. The editorial introduction also did much to establish one of the two overriding editorial voices of the magazine: a sneering, sarcastic tone that today would be described as “snarky”:

Yet surely so high-minded a writer as Norman Mailer would not try and tamper with the editorial integrity of Life; and certainly the editors would not bow to him if he did. The whole thing was probably Ms. Brownmiller’s fault. Here is her Transgression.225

Mailer wrote to (MORE), and his letter was published in the next issue. He included the letter he sent to Life complaining that assigning a review of his book to a feminist writer would be analogous to asking Spiro Agnew to review the work of the feisty investigative journalist I.F. Stone (who would win the first “A.J. Liebling Award” from (MORE) in 1972). Mailer makes a point in his letter to (MORE) of refusing to call Brownmiller “Ms.,” dismissing it as an irksome neologism.226

Two 1972 articles looked at sexism in the media. Pamela Howard wrote a piece looking at a topic that almost certainly would have grated on Norman Mailer: the casual and careless use of sexist language by reporters. Her piece opens with a bit of satire, another example of the tone that enlivened (MORE) when it was sprinkled in between the more serious, heavy pieces. Howard wrote a mock news article about New York City mayor John Lindsay, written in the way it would have been if it had been about his wife instead:

John Vliet Lindsay, the svelte, blond, 50-year-old father of four, announced today that he is giving up gardening at Gracie Mansion and setting his signs on more fertile surroundings—the White House and its Rose Garden. As he sipped coffee in the mansion’s cozy, aubergine kitchen and his on, Johnny, age 11, whipped up an Angel Food cake, it was hard to imagine that the city’s pert, cheery, number one househusband had spent all day traipsing through Bedford Stuyvesant with his best friends, Meade Esposito, the vivacious Brooklyn leader, and Sid Davidoff, his muscular man-in-waiting. His Roland Meledandri suit and his blush

225 Ibid., 1.
of pancake makeup were hardly disturbed by the near-riot he caused when he walked through.227

But the serious message of the piece should not be dismissed because of the light tone. Howard’s concern in this piece was not the kind of blatant, intentional sexism that had been a more pressing issue for earlier feminists, but a more pernicious kind of unconscious, unthinking sexism. Unlike many articles in (MORE), this one directly addressed an audience of working journalists, and ended with six tips for keeping sexist language out of their publications. These included: try substituting the word “black” for the word “women” and see if the phrasing sounds insensitive; don’t call anyone 18 or older a “girl”; and stop referring to women by their first names on second reference. And in one of the earliest calls for reader participation, a request, set off by (MORE)’s signature squared-off parentheses, asked for examples of sexist language in the media, which would be run in a future issue. Though (MORE) never seemed to follow through on this, at least the request gave a picture of the editors when it described Terry Pristin (not by name, but by implication) as “a tenacious feminist” and Dick Pollak as “a beleaguered former male chauvinist.”228

While the reader-sourced best-of-the-worst sexist writing feature never happened, (MORE) did run a piece that looked at sexist advertising. Many of the examples that the author, Barbara J. Siegel, gives are such classics of chauvinist advertising 40 years later that they almost feel like museum pieces: There is National Airlines’ “Fly Me” ad, and one for Olivetti typewriters that openly states that the typewriter is smarter than the secretary who uses it. Siegel analyzes a good dozen others in what today might seem like

228 Ibid., 4.
an undergraduate mass communication student’s well-done but slightly obvious analytical paper. Even in 1972, these were not new issues, but they were gaining prominence, in part because of the launch of *Ms.*, “The New Magazine for Women,” which Siegel describes as “schizophrenic”—a step in the right direction, but one that was also “a bitter disappointment to a number of feminists.” The advertising in *Ms.* mixed ads that showed women becoming executives with ones that described them as being dressed by men who are taking care of them. So while the issue was not new, it was certainly one that was still incredibly pressing.

After 1972, as Watergate came to dominate the pages of (MORE), the magazine’s coverage of women’s issues tapered off somewhat. However, (MORE) did contain some coverage of women in the newsroom in 1973. In February, a short piece gave updates on actions by women at *Newsweek, Time, Newsday*, and *The New York Times*. At *Newsweek*, the women editorial employees seemed to be on the verge of signing an agreement with management, and the number of women writers was on the rise. At *Time*, the numbers had dropped. Activity was just getting underway at *Newsday*, and no one at *The Times* wanted to talk to (MORE) because negotiations seemed to be moving forward. In August, Terry Pristin, the “tenacious feminist,” wrote an update that focused on the successes of the *Newsweek* group, and reported on several other women’s newsroom movements that were still ongoing. (MORE) said that this was a new moment for executives at media companies, who suddenly found “themselves confronting firsthand a story they have been covering for the past several years, as women all over town organize.

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229 Barbara J. Siegel, “‘He’ll Think You Baked All Day.’” (MORE): A Journalism Review, May 1972, 14.
to fight discrimination with their companies.”  

The *Newsweek* staff who had originally sought to increase their numbers in the editorial departments had filed a second complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the magazine’s executives had responded by signing an agreement to increase the number of women writers (and balance that with an increase in the number of men working in the research department) and even ensure that at least one of the magazine’s editorial departments would be headed by a woman by 1974. Pristin also reported on ongoing developments at ABC, NBC and CBS. She also gave a brief update on developments at *The New York Times*, though that paper’s organizers in the fight for women’s equality in the newsroom remained fairly tight-lipped.  

A “Column Two” piece by Pristin in the same issue used the start of a morning news show to be hosted by Sally Quinn as a jumping-off point for noting how few women were on air (at CBS, she noted, there were seven on-air women reporters worldwide).  

Coverage of minorities—and in 1971, 1972 and 1973, this meant almost exclusively coverage of black Americans—followed a similar pattern in *(MORE)*, with the main difference coming in the tone of the writing. The first regular issue in October 1971 carried two articles on the subject, and the stories ran fairly regularly throughout 1972 before being crowded out by political coverage, just as coverage of women’s issues had been. But coverage of race issues was far more earnest than the often jocular tone that marked the articles about women.

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The more prominent of the two articles, framed by editor Dick Pollak, mostly consisted of a long memo to *New York Post* publisher Dorothy Schiff written by a reporter named Ted Poston (though the magazine consistently misspelled it as “Posten”), who had been the only black reporter on their staff for many years. The occasion for publication was a set of findings by the New York State commissioner of human rights, saying that *The Post* had unfairly let go of a probationary reporter named William Artis. The occasion for Poston’s memo was a similar instance, a year earlier, of a black probationary reporter not being hired. Pollak pointed out the irony of *The Post*’s being accused of being unsupportive of a downtrodden minority group in a time when it was a reliably liberal newspaper. Dorothy Schiff, the publisher of *The Post*, and an early supporter of (MORE)’s publisher, Bill Woodward, reacted strongly to the piece, and her stonewalling of the journalism review is told in more detail in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

In May of 1972, Ernest Dunbar reported from the National Black Political Convention, where he concluded that while things were better for black reporters than they had been when he was hired as *Look* magazine’s first black editorial employee in 1954, in reality “the barriers have merely been moved back a few paces.”234 In Dunbar’s view, “black reporters are still thin on the ground, still dealing with institutional racism of a massive sort in an industry that daily offers ethical standards for others to follow… all of us strivers in a profession that kept us out as long as it could and grudgingly accepted a few of us when it had to.”235 Dunbar brings up the case of Earl Caldwell, a black reporter

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for The New York Times who refused to comply with a federal subpoena after he infiltrated and investigated the Black Panther Party. Initially the Times supported Caldwell, but eventually left him to fight the case on his own. Dunbar also engages in some criticism of another piece that had run in (MORE)—Joe Roddy’s memoir of his time at Look. Dunbar recalled telling Roddy that Look had never had a black photographer, a point which never made it into Roddy’s piece. When Dunbar asked him why it hadn’t, Roddy said that further reporting had turned up the fact that Look wasn’t unusual in that regard. The irony of this was not lost on Dunbar. Dunbar in his piece, and also Bob Kuttner in a later piece on black reporters at The Washington Post also echoed the observation that Dick Pollak had made about The New York Post: sometimes it was the liberal publications—Look and both Posts included—that had the hardest time accepting black reporters in their newsrooms, no matter what sort of editorial policy they espoused.

One other piece that ran just as 1972 gave way to the Watergate year of 1973 fits into two of (MORE)’s categories. On the one hand, it’s an article about black intellectuals. On the other, it is an article about a series of profiles of black intellectuals written by Joseph Okpaku, which was originally written for Esquire. The articles and an introduction ran in that magazine, severely edited. (MORE), however ran the edited and original versions of the introduction side by side, in the same spirit of publishing Susan Brownmiller’s spiked review of The Prisoner of Sex. (MORE) is pretty evenhanded in assessing the two versions. Terry Pristin, who wrote the framing article, clearly prefer the writing of the Esquire editor who recast (and severely cut) the introduction and the profiles of black intellectuals, though she understands the Okpaku’s outrage at being
identified with writers he vehemently disagrees with.\textsuperscript{236} While (MORE), as an operation, tended to side with the writer over the editor and the editor over the publisher, this sort of fair mindedness gives credibility to the other times that (MORE) seemed to reflexively side with the little guy. In the end, the Okpaku affair seems to be mostly a matter of style, and of a writer not familiar with the editing process being chided for being too stiff in dealing with his editors.

(MORE) could also be accused of being a bit stiff in its writing about minorities in the newsroom. Certainly in 1971–73, an attitude of moral serious would be entirely justifiable, though the difference between the lighthearted coverage of women and the serious coverage of blacks does give one pause. Nevertheless, one brief item does raise a bit of a smile, and it ran, coincidentally, in the same issue as the piece about Okpaku and \textit{Esquire}. To illustrate a review of the movie \textit{Hammer}, \textit{The Los Angeles Times} originally chose a publicity photo of the film’s co-stars, the black former football player Fred Williamson and the white actress Elizabeth Harding. Williamson, shirtless, muscular and very large, reclines against a pillow while Harding, also shirtless, but obscured, rests her head and her hand on his chest. The photo only ran in the first edition, (MORE) reports.

“Comics run a mere four pages away from movie reviews in the \textit{Times},” the article notes, “causing women’s editor Jean Sharley Taylor to fear that impressionable little eyes might catch a glimpse of Fred and Elizabeth.”\textsuperscript{237} Ironically, in describing the picture that replaced it, (MORE) called another actress, Vonetta McGee, “demure,” thus denouncing institutional racism while simultaneously using one of the adjectives that Pamela Howard

\begin{footnotesize}
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specifically mentioned avoiding when talking about women. Clearly, (MORE) did not have a completely unblemished record on the subject.

Coverage of the media industry

Much as media-watcher sites such as MediaBistro or jimromenesko.com watch for announcements of new publications today, (MORE) excitedly chronicled new developments in what seemed at the time to be a rapidly changing industry. Less than a decade earlier, New York City had a vastly different newspaper industry than it had in 1971, when (MORE) began publication. In large part, this was a result of the newspaper strike of 1962, which probably helped kill off four newspapers on its own. In telling the story of that strike, Scott Sherman described pre-strike New York City as a sort of ‘news-lover’s paradise:

New York in 1962 was… a place where anyone with a serious newspaper habit lived in a state of perpetual bliss: seven dailies appeared in rolling editions around the clock. There were two upscale morning broadsheets: The New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune. There were two mass-market morning tabloids with formidable circulations and devoted working-class readers: the Daily News… and The New York Daily Mirror…. There was an afternoon tabloid, the New York Post…. And there were two afternoon broadsheets: the Hearst-owned New York Journal-American… and the New York World-Telegram & Sun…. Every few hours bundles containing the latest editions descended on newsstands: the “bulldog” editions of the morning dailies arrived around nine p.m., ideal for people streaming out of bars, restaurants, and nightclubs, while the first editions of the afternoon papers fell off the printing presses a little after eight a.m.238

By 1971, only the Times, the Post and the Daily News survived. So for serious news or literate ideas, the Times had become the only game in town. (MORE) would come to focus much of its coverage on the Times, for reasons both personal and logical

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reasons. In its subtle and long-lasting dance with critiquing and supporting the Times, (MORE) both sought new publications that might challenge the Paper of Record, and spur it on to better things, but also (MORE) lamented some of the also-rans. This was not an explicit connection, of course. (MORE)’s general stance seems to have been a support for a diverse and thriving media, and it is only through the accretion of the review’s coverage of media beginnings and endings that these conclusions can be reached.

(MORE)’s recurring coverage of the death of beloved media institutions—the more wistful, romantic side of the media birth/death dialectic—began with the November, 1971 issue. In the early days of (MORE), headlines were often cryptic—more literary than they were an indication of the content of the articles they sat atop. That November issue included a piece called “Notes from a Bargain Typewriter,” in which Joseph Roddy, a former senior editor at Look magazine, lamented the end of general interest magazines, and Look in particular. The headline referred to the typewriter that Look sold him for $50 when it liquidated its assets. Already in 1971, Collier’s had died (“gaudily,” according to Roddy) and The Saturday Evening Post had come to a “vituperative” end. In his essay, Roddy also writes that even the venerable Life magazine was on life support, and that it would probably not be long for this world (and he was right: it ceased weekly publication in 1972, though it has been revive in various forms since then).

\[239\] If the Times is the most influential paper in the profession of journalism, then obviously influencing the influencer would allow (MORE) to have its most powerful impact on the profession and the industry. This relationship is explored in more depth in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

In fact, apart from the references to typewriters, very little about Roddy’s piece feels anachronistic, even in 2014. No matter how progressive they seem to be to their readers, journalists often romanticize the past—though maybe that is mostly out of concern for the institutions that employ them. Evidence of the that worry about a paycheck can be seen in Roddy’s lead:

If only there were a few more mass-circulation feature magazines left to run tests on, I might have an axiom to set down here. In its place I offer only directions for calculating expiration dates to come: 1) watch the magazine’s staff writers closely while they are given new issues fresh from the bindery; 2) when they start counting advertising pages even before they admire their own stories, note the date; 3) add six months—that’s when the publisher’s salvage crew will begin selling off the typewriters.241

Though Roddy takes issue with some of the choices of the magazine’s publisher, he writes that Look’s demise was all but inevitable, and that editorial changes would only negligibly have prolonged the process. The magazine he wrote, was strung along in its last months by cigarette ads (an ironic foreshadowing of the final few issues of More).

Just about a year after Roddy’s piece, Life finally died for the first time, and (MORE) memorialized it with an essay by former staff writer Jane Howard. While (MORE) would often take a cynical approach to the press, its writers also knew how lucky they were to work in a field where they could meet wonderful people and have “accessibility to experience,” as Howard quotes Marianne Moore saying. This is very much akin to the sort of awe with which (MORE)’s assistant editor Terry Pristin viewed the people around her, as noted above. Life’s staff had known for some time that their publication was doomed, but at its height, it provided Howard with the chance to meet Rachel Carson, Vladimir Nabokov, James Baldwin and S.J. Perelman. “In the palmy

241 Ibid., 3.
years before the cutbacks and rumors,” she wrote, there was the heady sense that one might be assigned anytime to go anywhere.”²⁴² She writes that working at *Life* felt like being “among the chosen.”²⁴³ Part of that feeling came from the pervasiveness of the magazine even before she began to work there. *Life*, like other general interest magazines in the early to mid-twentieth century, felt like an immovable part of American culture. For Howard, this paean to the great magazine wasn’t just about a personal loss of employment, either. For the last year, she had been working there on a contract basis. This was about the death of an institution.

(MORE)’s coverage of launches was more frequent than its elegies to old media, but also shorter and snappier, in most cases. Much of that coverage showed up either in “Hellbox,” the front-of-the-book department that encompassed most of the pieces that were too short for full article treatment; or, if the publication was local, the story might show up in “The Big Apple,” a recurring spread, usually across the centerfold of the magazine, which covered New York media. In the same issue as Jane Howard’s *Life* essay, The Big Apple included short items about rumors that Bob Guccione, the publisher of the men’s adult magazine *Penthouse*, might launch a competitor to the not quite as racy women’s magazine *Cosmopolitan*; and about a magazine called *Couples* that would be launched by Clay Felker, the editor of *New York*. Neither of those went anywhere (Later in 1973, (MORE) reported that the national pilot issue of *Couples* had flopped, but that two competing magazines on a related theme would be launching on the same day:

²⁴³ Ibid., 5.
That edition of The Big Apple also had a slightly longer piece about changes at the Long Island daily Newsday, which had recently introduced a Sunday edition and a magazine called LI, which was derided as “so fluffy, so inconsequential, so trite,” by one anonymous staffer quoted in the article.

A longer article in the January 1973 issue looked at plans for a few new evening newspapers that might compete with The New York Post. (MORE) had confirmation, according to the article, that “New York oil millionaire” John Shaheen would begin publishing a new daily the following Labor Day. Nothing came of that rumor either, though (MORE) seemed more interested in running two mockups for an evening edition of The New York Times, plans for which had already been abandoned by the time of the article’s publication. The Times had gone “further than anyone” in planning an afternoon daily, the article said, but the study groups that had been put together decided that it would be too much of a drain on the resources of the Times.

While the January 1973 issue seems to have been the one in which (MORE) concentrated most of its editorial energies on births and deaths in media properties, the first two and a half years of the magazine did feature several other stories. (MORE) ran a long essayistic and impressionistic review of The 51st State, an experimental documentary news show on WNET Channel 13, New York City’s public television station. The legendary writer and editor Murray Kempton wrote the piece, and he concluded that at least in the sample he had watched, the show fell far short of the

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promise of its advertising. While the show promised to be vastly different from the restless “Action News” of the 1970s (the kind evoked by the Anchorman movies), it in fact suffered from the same inability to give its important subjects the length of treatment that they needed. The only real difference, Kempton suggests, is that “the caste mark of the self-serious is the moment they shift to the facetious whenever they feel called upon to prove that, just because they have substance, you shouldn’t think they are ponderous.” Nearly a year later though, when The 51st State was in its second season, (MORE)’s editors bestowed a “Rosebud,” (their version of The Columbia Journalism Review’s “Laurels”) on the show, for demonstrating that television journalism could do its own serious reporting, and not just recite the day’s headlines. This short piece, which ran in Hellbox, also noted that most of the show’s staffers assumed that it was doomed at the end of that season, since the show was so expensive to produce.

The 51st State was one of the publications that (MORE) outlived. So was L.A., a city magazine for Las Angeles on the model of New York. The February 1973 issue contained a long autopsy for the short-lived magazine (causes of death: a confusing editorial tone followed by financial mismanagement as the magazine gained its editorial footing). (MORE) also chronicled the disastrously short-lived television career of Sally Quinn, the Washington Post writer and eventual wife of Post editor Ben Bradlee. Terry Pristin used the occasion to write about the lack of women on television, but she was

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248 Ibid., 6.
writing before the unprepared and very ill Quinn made her debut. Joseph Roddy also returned to the pages of (MORE) to talk about *Intellectual Digest* as a haven for former writers from *Look*. Roddy’s coverage was laudatory, though few magazines billing themselves as intellectual last very long.

In the first two and a half years of (MORE), the magazine did manage to cover a few new publications that would have a lasting impact, though not always in the depth that the failed giants or the spectacular misfires would get. The Big Apple briefly noted the launch of *People* magazine as a spin-off of the “People” section of *Time*. And in her debut as a writer for (MORE), Claudia Cohen wrote about a rumored new “Living” section in *The New York Times*, which would mimic the wildly successful “Style” section (for which Sally Quinn wrote, coincidentally). Two anecdotes do not constitute enough data to substantiate a trend of course, but it’s hard not to infer that the death of the general interest magazine and the rise of gossip and home publications intimated the end of *Life* as a general interest publication, and the rise of the general interest in lifestyle publications.

**Coverage of the practice of journalism**

As befits a journalism review for which the primary audience would be journalists, (MORE)’s most consistent topics were those that addressed the requirements

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of good, ethical journalism. If, as A.J. Liebling wrote, a school for journalism was worthless without a school for publishers, (MORE) aimed to be the printed version of both of those schools. If the magazine’s coverage of the media business, as discussed in the previous section, would constitute the school for publishers, then the ethical, critical and First Amendment issues that (MORE) covered, and which are described in this section, would constitute the journalism school.

One issue that deals specifically with the interactions between editorial and business staff at news publications was the reporters’ power movement, which was an inspiration to the founders of (MORE) in its earliest days, as the first section of this chapter demonstrates. As noted above, the pilot issue of (MORE) included a piece by Chicago Journalism Review editor Ron Dorfman about movements for reporters’ autonomy at The Chicago Daily News and the Sun-Times. It was more than a year before (MORE) tackled the subject in any depth again, but in three consecutive months, it took up the issue of a staff uprising at the alternative newsweekly The Boston Phoenix. The piece was written by Bill Kovach, who was working in the Washington bureau of The New York Times and would eventually go on to lead it, then edit The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and run the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University. According to Kovach’s article, the owner of the paper decided to turn it into something more closely resembling his ideal newspaper—The Wall Street Journal—and he fired the editor in order to bring in a new editor recruited from an advertising firm. Nearly 40 members of the editorial staff rose up and demanded a say in the operation of the newsroom. They won at least a partial victory, gaining some concessions including a carefully detailed process by which an editor could be fired. Kovach sees the prospect of
true “democracy in the newsroom” as being a far-off notion, but he also sees the new arrangement as an opportunity for strengthening the paper. On the one hand, the ideas of the owner might tamp down some of the Phoenix’s tendency toward stories calculated to shock the establishment. On the other, contributions from the staff could shape cultural coverage in exciting ways. He quotes one staff member as saying that the counter culture was already washed up, but that the Phoenix was not about to serve Richard Nixon’s “dream of expanding American capitalism.”

They needed to stay on top of the culture and explain the changes in society in the 1970s.

Kovach’s Phoenix article began a four-month run of articles about democracy in the newsroom. The following two issues included updates on the Phoenix story. In August, after the optimism inspired by the newsroom union’s minor victories, (MORE) found itself reporting on what it saw as a troubling development. After the strike, the owner of The Phoenix was rumored to be in discussion with a more mainstream rival, Boston After Dark, in order to arrange a sale or a merger. By September, (MORE) had cause to report on The Phoenix again. The sale had gone through, and Boston After Dark officially changed its name to The Phoenix. But the staff who had unionized did not go with the paper after its purchase, and instead started a new rival alt-weekly, which they called The Real Paper. This new paper lasted until 1981, but The Phoenix, which eventually expanded into a small chain of alt-weekly newspapers and other media outlets,

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lasted until 2013, when it finally ceased publication. In the end, the unionized newsroom sent the paper that the staff wanted to protect into larger, and more corporate hands.

Speaking of the favorite newspaper of the publisher of *The Boston Phoenix*, the next issue of (MORE) contained a piece by journalist A. Kent MacDougall, in which he tells the story of the prank he pulled upon resigning from his reporting job at *The Wall Street Journal*, and uses that as an opportunity to critique the management style of the paper. When he quit, MacDougall wrote up a mock wire story declaring his freedom from “peonage” at Dow Jones, the company that owned the *Journal*, and transmitted it to all of the paper’s bureaus (except St. Louis, for some reason). When this led to his being fired immediately, rather than being allowed to resign, MacDougall saw the reaction as typical of a management structure that made no effort to encourage loyalty or to foster journalistic careers. He is careful to separate his complaints about the conditions of employment from the conditions that foster good journalism. In fact, he praises the *Journal* as one of the best places in the United States to practice journalism at the highest level. He even includes a cheeky bar graph showing the paper’s yearly accuracy in covering pork belly futures (each bar goes all the way to the top, indicating 100%), and sincerely praises the independence and integrity of the paper. But he also charts the paper’s profits and documents that the salaries of its employees are lower than those of reporters at less profitable competitors. While this might not be a story of true democracy in the newsroom—MacDougall made no effort to organize, deciding instead to leave—it is a story of discontent with the management structure. Ultimately, MacDougall finds the conservatism of the paper, its unwillingness to challenge the essential nature of Wall
Street or to change itself, to be too overwhelming to continue his employment there.\textsuperscript{257} It should be noted of course that MacDougall also saw himself as a radical socialist, though it would be another 16 years until he was open about that fact.\textsuperscript{258}

MacDougall’s piece ran on the cover, and was one of the longer pieces that (MORE) ran in this period. And in the same issue, Shelley Fisher wrote about efforts to achieve democracy in the newsroom in Europe, as a comparison to U.S. attempts.\textsuperscript{259} An editor’s note introducing the piece points out what Kent MacDougall likely already knew: that there was no socialist tradition in the United States, so American journalists looking to organize had to look to Europe for their models.

Firmly rooted in the U.S., (MORE) seemed to be more concerned with issues of press harassment and the issue of whether or not shield laws designed to protect reporters from testifying against their sources would be a good idea for the press. When (MORE) began regular publication in October 1971, oral arguments for the landmark (yet muddled) Supreme Court case on reporters’ privilege, Branzburg v. Hayes, was still a few months in the future.\textsuperscript{260} The threat of having to go to jail for a source was very real, and with the Branzburg case’s unclear precedent, it would continue to be for some time. In keeping with its ongoing assessment of the state of political reporting, (MORE) also kept

\textsuperscript{260} Branzburg v. Hayes, 408 U.S. 665 (1972)
a close eye on issues of access, harassment and the rights of newspeople throughout 1972 and 1973.

In April of 1972, two months before the Branzburg decision, (MORE) ran a piece by Edwin Goodman, the general manager of WBAI, a public radio station in New York.261 WBAI had recorded audio tape of a rebellion inside New York City’s detention center, nicknamed “The Tombs.” When a judge subpoenaed the tapes, Goodman refused to hand them over and he ended up in jail himself for two days. Goodman’s jailers treated him fairly civilly though, and the piece is somewhat tepid, given that it runs in the same issue as Ernest Dunbar’s piece on black reporters, which has a much more menacing tone in talking about government harassment, particularly in the case of Earl Caldwell, whose case was decided together with Branzburg’s. In June, as the case was set to be decided, (MORE) ran a piece on the case, again focusing attention on Caldwell262, a reminder that accidents of alphabet can influence how a Supreme Court decision is remembered. The court consolidated the cases of Branzburg, Caldwell and Pappas, even though (MORE) clearly saw the Caldwell case as the most pressing of the three, and which had “become the press’ symbol of resistance to subpoenas.”263 As the article went to press, journalists were cautiously optimistic that lower court rulings supporting Caldwell’s decision not to testify and reveal the names of his Black Panther Party sources would stand, but Fred Graham’s (MORE) article cautioned that Richard Nixon had carefully seated enough conservative justices to give pause to that optimism. Caldwell’s attorneys, he explained,

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263 Ibid., 1.
had asked not only for a new Constitutional right to be granted to journalists, but for that right to be taken to its logical extreme, and the Supreme Court, whatever its makeup, rarely liked to move so quickly. In fact, the court’s decision was sharply divided, with four justices clearly indicating that they saw no First Amendment right for journalists to protect their sources. Four justices indicated that there was, in fact such a right. And one, Justice Lewis Powell, wrote an opinion that said that there could be such a privilege, but it was not applicable in this case.

In the face of such a muddled outcome, (MORE) kept up its support for reporters’ rights, both in reporting on developments and in more ambitiously worded opinion and editorial pieces. (MORE) ran at least five additional articles before the end of 1973, three times in support of Peter Bridge, who was the first reporter held on contempt charges after the Branzburg decision. One of the essays was written by New York Times Supreme Court reporter Anthony Lewis, who would make a name for himself as a strong supporter of the First Amendment.

(MORE) also covered obscenity and profanity issues, which, like shield laws for reporters, is a concern that runs along First Amendment lines, but in a vein not quite as physically threatening as the specter of jail time. (MORE) wrote about profanity with all the relish of a preteen discovering dirty language and bodily humor, taking real pleasure in tweaking authority figures, such as when the editors “censored” the headline of one piece by using the word “B___shit.” Ethel Strainchamps, who wrote the piece, gives an


amusing history of “dirty words” in print, and quotes editors who were frustrated that they couldn’t use some words, even as those words became essential to telling the story of counter-culture protests. In a way of course, (MORE) was founded when an editor told Tony Lukas that he couldn’t write “bullshit” in an article for the *Times*. Reading (MORE)’s coverage of profanity and obscenity in its first two and a half years, a sense emerges that (MORE) is reminding the media that we’re all grownups, and asking: can’t we talk like grownups do and abandon this silly veneer of propriety? But the ironically juvenile way that (MORE) approached this common sense proposition was certainly funny. There was coverage of the obscenity trial surrounding the popular pornographic film *Deep Throat.*

There was coverage of newspapers censoring the comic strip *Doonesbury*, and the acceptability of an ad for a documentary entitled *Tits*—or of an ad containing cartoon nudity that had to be sent back to the artist for some well-placed towels and swimsuits. And there were at least two or three other stories in the period from June 1971 to the end of 1973. (MORE), it seems, would stop sniggering, if only the editors and publishers and judges would allow this discussion out in the open.

As a magazine of press criticism, (MORE) had opinions not just about the operations of the press, but also about the best practices for press criticism. Including the piece about Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s “scholarly tantrum” in the first issue brought up the idea of press ethics, self-policing and councils right from the start. That continued

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with articles written by some of (MORE)’s core staff and contributors. Joseph Volz reviewed the first ombudsman of *The Washington Post*, Richard Harwood. Founder Tony Lukas followed up with a piece on the limits of in-house press critics. In February of 1973, Dick Pollak wrote “A Case Against Press Councils,” to extend that argument. He wouldn’t have written the piece himself, he says, but when he assigned a writer to read the 64-page report of The Twentieth Century Fund that led to the creation of a national press council, this writer apparently could not take the report seriously enough to write the piece, and begged Pollak to let him off the hook. Pollak didn’t take the proposal seriously either, and he also cites a survey of the American Society of Newspaper Editors that opposed the idea three to one, and the strong statement by *New York Times* publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger that they would not go along with the council. However, Pollak argued, his real objection to the idea of a national press council was that any real change in American journalism had to come from within the profession itself. That view jibes perfectly with the ethos of (MORE), which was written about journalism, by journalists, and mostly for journalists. Pollak and the other leaders of (MORE) had faith that “[t]he newsrooms of the United States are full of journalists with good ideas about how to create a more responsible and responsive press. If they had the power they deserve, the face of journalism in this country might change markedly—far more than it ever will under periodic hot compresses ministered by a national press

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council.”²⁷³ (MORE) had faith in journalism, and (MORE) had faith, more importantly, in journalists.

In an interview, Dick Pollak said that he had hoped that (MORE) would have an audience beyond professional journalists, becoming something like a *New York Review of Books* for journalism and media, a forum where intelligent people could intelligently expound on the relationship between the press and the culture. And while much of the content of (MORE) aimed at bringing in a general audience, the magazine really was, as stated above, *of* journalism, *by* journalists and primarily also *for* journalists. To that end though, (MORE) served as a kind of lifestyle magazine for reporters in the 1970s, giving working journalists who might not have been at the elite national news organizations a glimpse into the day to day life of those who were, and also into the lives of other journalists like themselves across the country. So while it was a magazine of ideas, one that earnestly pondered why there was not more muckraking investigative journalism,²⁷⁴ (or explained the history of the first batch of Muckrakers²⁷⁵), (MORE) was also a magazine that built a community of like-minded readers around itself, in the way that the best and most successful magazines are. A selection of articles shows the sorts of reporters’ issues that (MORE) engaged with.

Early in 1972, (MORE) ran a piece on the special challenges of working in television newsrooms.²⁷⁶ It called out reporters for being too eager to take freebies from

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the people they covered\textsuperscript{277}, and on the next page exposed the inner workings of the Pulitzer Prizes, which a former Pulitzer judge shows to be rather less formal, organized or magical than many reporters might have hoped they would be.\textsuperscript{278} Tony Lukas profiled gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson, parodying Thompson’s style,\textsuperscript{279} and Calvin Trillin wrote about what it’s like to be an out of town reporter who swoops into unfamiliar cities and “uses” local newspapers instead of really reading them.\textsuperscript{280} NYU journalism professor David Rubin wrote about what it was like to be a reporter senior enough to be invited on a press junket to France with the actor Danny Kaye in tow,\textsuperscript{281} and at the other end of the spectrum, a young cub reporter named Peter W. Kaplan (who would eventually grow up to be the storied editor of \textit{The New York Observer}) described his experience of being “baptized” by a source who called him “the first sign of a break in the cold and rather killing front of New York journalism.”\textsuperscript{282} It must have been a heady experience—and an inspirational one for the other young journalists who read (MORE) and, like Kaplan, dreamed of a life as a big city journalist.

Like a cub reporter beginning to find his feet, (MORE) changed itself physically a bit in the years from 1971 to 1973, switching from two to three columns in March 1973 and bringing on a young graphic designer named Malcolm Frouman as the first full-time

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{277} Robin Reisig, “‘The Biggest Freeloaders Around.’” (MORE): A Journalism Review, May 1972, 5–8.
  \item \textsuperscript{278} John McCormally, “Who Cares About the Pulitzer Prize?” (MORE): A Journalism Review, May 1972, 9–11.
\end{itemize}
art director in July of that year (though Sam Antupit remained on the masthead as having created the magazine’s design). The new makeup of the magazine increased its readability quite a bit, both by giving it a slightly more polished look, and also by introducing subheads and pull quotes that gave readers a better idea of what each particular article was going to be about. Prior to this minor redesign, cryptic headlines occasionally gave little hint as to the content of each article. In the first issue, Tony Lukas’s article about *Reader’s Digest* and its bowing to corporations on environmental issues was called only “Life in These United States.” Ernest Dunbar’s piece about the experiences of black reporters in the newsroom was called only “Notes from the Belly of the Whale.”

One thing that was always consistent though was the constant injection of levity into the proceedings. In addition to the jokes that made their way into headlines and into the less ponderous articles, there was a vein of liveliness in almost every issue. The choice of cartoons to illustrate the vast majority of articles helped. Many of these were done by Marty Norman, whose accounting books from the period show that he earned as much as $300 for a complicated front page cartoon²⁸³ (but he never earned as much from (MORE) as he did from larger national publications). These cartoons, whether by Norman or by other contributors, often had the bulbous style of R. Crumb or Monty Python drawings, sometimes with an Edwardian revival flair that also seemed to crop up on restaurant menus in the 1970s.

²⁸³ Accounting books of Marty Norman. Private collection.
(MORE) also ran several satirical and parody articles. The first regular issue parodied *New York*, and Clay Felker’s city magazine became a regular target. Lynn Sherr took a stab at the style of *Mad* magazine in another issue. The magazine devoted a two-page spread to a brief article about the “poetry” of *New York Daily News* headlines, which was surrounded by more than two dozen choice examples of the art, including “He Has a Flood of Gripe, But No One Gives a Dam,” and “Heroin & LSD Used To Ease Last Trip.”

Perhaps most famously though, art director Sam Antupit came to the rescue of the magazine when a story for “The Big Apple” section fell through. Antupit came into the office with a manila folder full of clippings he had been keeping from *The New York Times*. He had more than 30 of them, all of them one or two sentence filler stories that the paper would use to plug holes in the layout when a story didn’t reach the bottom of the page. And all of them had headlines that contained the phrase “bus plunge.” Someone at the paper had made a game of collecting wire service stories about buses in Asia and Latin America that had fallen from cliffs or mountain passes. (MORE) ran about 20 of them, filling two columns. They showed a dark sense of humor in both (MORE) and *The Times*, as the press critic Jack Shafer would also pick up on more than 30 years

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later. They also showed that as much as there was to say about journalism, even a journalism review needed a little filler from time to time.

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Chapter 3: Taking Our Cue From Joe: The A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention

Make (MORE) a Newsroom Name

On February 25, 1972, Bill Woodward, (MORE)’s publisher, typed up a letter to A.M. Rosenthal, the Managing Editor of The New York Times. He was writing to ask Rosenthal to sit on a panel called “What Kind of P.M. Paper Should New York Have?” at an upcoming conference sponsored by (MORE). The four panelists he told Rosenthal that he had already booked were all current or former Post employees. As a Timesman, Rosenthal would have added a little bit of variety.

Rosenthal sent a terse response on March 1: “Dear Mr. Woodward: Thank you for your invitation to appear on the panel. I would rather not.”

Woodward was no stranger to wealth and power, but now he found himself as the official representative of an anti-establishment journalism review that publishers and editors often wished would just go away. In February of 1972, (MORE) had only published five regular issues and one pilot issue the previous June, but the topic of Woodward’s letter—the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention—was going to make (MORE) the newsroom equivalent of a household name. The convention would be held on April 23rd and 24th, a Sunday and a Monday, at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Labor Center in New York, a block or two west of Times Square and less than a block away from the headquarters of the Times itself. While that proximity may have been a

coincidence, it was certainly one that the organizers of the conference would have enjoyed. The “Counter” in the conference’s name was intended to refer to the American Newspaper Publishers Association’s annual convention, which was being held across town at the Waldorf-Astoria, certainly tonier surroundings than a labor union hall in early 1970s Times Square, in the shadow of the Port Authority bus terminal.

But while the powerful people behind the nation’s newspapers may have been meeting at the Waldorf, it was the Liebling Counter-Convention that became a sensation among a group of working reporters who had felt themselves chafing against the strictures of “objective” reporting and the move toward professionalism that had proven to be a stale substitute. They were reporters who were increasingly college-educated, and part of the youth culture of the ’60s, a decade that may have been over in numerical terms, but that in spirit had only recently peaked. And they had seen that there were alternatives. They had seen the stylistic experimentation of Tom Wolfe and Gay Talese. They had read the alternative weekly newspapers and their more raucous, subversive cousins in the underground press. And they knew that there was still a place in journalism for hard-nosed, independent muckraking, exemplified by I.F. Stone. American journalism was beginning to explode: the New York Times had begun printing the Pentagon Papers the same month that (MORE) published its pilot issue. The Watergate scandal was bubbling up and would come to a head in the next year. The Vietnam War had weakened the trust that many reporters had for institutional sources. Michael Schudson has called
this the rise of the “critical culture” in journalism, and the realization that the “straight” news story was a socially constrained form that contained its own inherent biases.\textsuperscript{291}

Reporters across the country were beginning to feel these restraints, but many of them had nowhere to go to talk about these issues, save the reporters’ bar at the end of the block. \textit{(MORE)} and a few other, more local, journalism reviews had begun to write about some of the issues that concerned American journalists, beginning with the \textit{Chicago Journalism Review}, which began publication in the wake of the 1968 Democratic Convention and what some reporters saw as the shortcomings of the Chicago press in covering it. But reading about an issue and being able to connect with other people who feel the same way you do about your profession are two different things, and the Liebling Convention allowed 1500 or more reporters to meet their idols—which is what got many of them there in the first place—but also let them meet each other and learn that they had shared complaints, which they used the conference to turn into a shared optimism.

The organizers of the convention chose as their avatar A.J. Liebling, the \textit{New Yorker}’s former press critic. Liebling worked well as a conference mascot because he was an intellectual who constantly questioned the assumptions of journalistic practice; because he was a fluid and witty stylist; and because he was an inveterate opponent of publishers and supporter of the hardworking newspaperman. In addition to being a co-founder of \textit{(MORE)}, Tony Lukas was also a co-coordinator of the conference and wrote the cover essay for the issue of the magazine that would be current during the conference. It was called “Taking Our Cue From Joe,” and said that even though Liebling had died

less than ten years earlier, his name was not as well known as Lukas had expected. “For many of our younger colleagues, it appears, Liebling has long since passed into ill-deserved obscurity….”

For Lukas, Liebling’s value as an icon lay in his antagonism toward publishers, his indifference toward editors and his support of reporters. “For what outraged Liebling far more than error or stupidity was pomposity and pretension, traits he regularly found in the publishers’ offices but rarely in the city room.”

Lukas and Pollak, along with assistant editor Terry Pristin (who may have come up with the idea for the conference in the first place after having heard of similar “counter-conventions”), and the convention’s other co-coordinator, Nora Ephron (already famous as an essayist and press critic, though not yet as a screenwriter or director), felt that same solidarity with the reporter. The unsigned editorial at the front of the magazine, likely written by Pollak, explains the reason that (MORE) had decided to hold a counter-convention:

The journalist is one of the nation’s most foolishly wasted resources. In city rooms and television newsrooms around the country, thousands of men and women capable of giving their communities the kind of enlightened, tough-minded reporting they deserve are daily demeaned by the feckless institutions for which they work. And thousands more leave or refuse to enter the profession every year because of a system that still rewards stenography and discourages enterprise.

The editorial acknowledges that none of these particular gripes was new, but felt that the convention was necessary because “working journalists are beginning to sense

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293 Ibid., 18.
294 Interview with the author, December 17, 2011.
they might be able to do something about it.” More than anything, that sense of optimism pervaded the proceedings of the convention.

The 1972 A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention wove together several of the themes that faced American journalism in the early 1970s: the questioning of the objectivity norm; the movement of journalism from being an anonymous “team sport” to a profession where bylines could become celebrities and writers could have a voice; the growth of press criticism as an activity; calls for intellectual self-awareness in journalism; calls for accountability and ethics in reporting; newsroom democracy and anti-establishment tendencies within the establishment press; a return to muckraking; and the emergence of journalism as a glamorous profession. The paper also makes an argument that these themes came together at the Liebling convention because it gave reporters a chance to see themselves as an intellectual community for the first time, allowing them to communicate in ways they could not under the watchful eyes of their editors and publishers. This paper reconstructs the Liebling Convention using reports from (MORE) and other contemporary publications, including newspapers and magazines; a complete transcript of one panel discussion; letters and memos from the archival papers of A.M. Rosenthal and Dorothy Schiff; notes taken by journalist Nora Sayre, who attended; an oral history recorded by J. Anthony Lukas; as well as interviews by the author with several surviving organizers and participants.

The … New … Journalism

Around the same time he received the letter from Woody Woodward inviting him to sit on the P.M. papers panel, Abe Rosenthal also received a generic invitation to attend
the Liebling Convention. In the envelope, he would also have found two RSVP cards. One card advertised a luncheon speaker: Tom Wicker, a Times columnist. The other invited its recipient to an opening celebration of the convention, with the New York Post columnist Jimmy Breslin as a keynote speaker. The scheduled location could hardly be further, symbolically, from the publishers’ convention: instead of dining on Waldorf salad, Counter-Conventioners would meet at the Times Square location of Nathan’s Famous, the hot dog stand. In the end, the opening party had to be moved; Nathan’s employees were beginning what would be a 44-day strike against their employer. Instead, the convention convened for the first time at a Chinese restaurant, Sun Luck West, “with its little bridge and trickling pond, tinsel and paper dragons.” Charles Long, writing for The Quill, the magazine of the Society of Professional Journalists, opened his piece about the conference in the second person, putting “you” inside the restaurant on a rainy spring evening, alongside Nan A. Talese (whom Long demeans by not naming her and describing her only as “the pretty wife of Gay Talese”). The rest of the lead continues the name-dropping, by way of scene setting: Bill Russell, retired basketball player and television analyst; Mike Wallace; Yippie activist Abbie Hoffman; Kurt Vonnegut. Then the keynote speech begins:

A path is made for the bulky form of Jimmy Breslin, the author and former columnist, and he works his up to a table top, the only place he can be seen by

everyone since no one is sitting down. There through the haze of his own cigarette smoke blending with the rest, he sets the stage for much of the vocabulary that will follow tomorrow. “The problem to be discussed here, Breslin begins, “is not so much advocacy in the newsroom as it is Shylock in the composing room.” […] Breslin disappears from the table with what has been a five-minute keynote address, and thus brings to a close Saturday night in a Chinese restaurant.

Several of the stories written about the Counter-Convention take this quasi-literary, in-the-moment approach to description, perhaps inspired by one of the two blockbuster panels that opened the meeting the next afternoon (the convention formally opened at noon, perhaps to allow for hangovers to dissipate). That panel, called (with Tom Wolfe-ian playful punctuation) “The … New… Journalism,” brought together a group of writers who were already stars in their field, and several of whom would go on to populate literary journalism syllabi in colleges across the country: Gay Talese, Gail Sheehy, Tom Wolfe, Calvin Trillin, Pauline Kael, Renata Adler and moderator Benjamin deMott. (Albert Goldman was also listed in the program, but seems not to have participated in the panel.)

The panels took place in two auditoriums, each seating about 800 people, though several reports suggest that somewhere between 1500 and 3000 people attended the sessions. Many were likely drawn by the invitations that the (MORE) staff had

302 Long, in “The A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention Colossus,” says 1500 crowded into the room for the New Journalism panel alone; in her article for the Philadelphia Journalism Review, “Seeds of Revolution,” Patricia McBroom hedged with “several hundred,” (June 1972, 3); the Chicago Journalism Review had it at between 2,000 and 3,000 (May 1972, 4); Sally Quinn in the Washington Post said “nearly 2,000 attended each day’s sessions,” (“Journalism’s New Nation…” April 26, 1972, D1); Time has “some 2,000” (“Journalism’s Woodstock,” May 8, 1972, 96); as did The Progressive (Erwin Knoll, “New Journalists, Old Journalism,” June, 1972, 38); Newsweek said “more than 1,500” (“The Enemy Within,” May 8, 1972, 61); Nora Sayre, in her chapter on the convention in Sixties Going on Seventies, (New York: Arbor House, 1973, 262), is the
distributed to the newsrooms of the New York metropolitan area, which asked recipients to invite any co-workers who hadn’t gotten their own invitation. Enclosed was a draft of the convention program, which opened with a quotation from Liebling:

Twelve years ago, the late A.J. Liebling, the *The New Yorker*’s press critic, wrote: “The (American Newspaper Publishers Association) convention reaches here at the same season as the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus… Like the Big Show, the convention bears a certain resemblance to its predecessors….” If you’re tired of circuses come to: The A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention.

Some of the non-journalists in attendance may also have been drawn by the popular media attention that the conference received even before it opened. *New York* magazine even named it one their “Best Bets” for the weekend, and noted that those who couldn’t be there could follow the convention on the local Pacifica radio station, WBAI. In fact, WBAI broadcast about 14 hours of live coverage over the two days. One of New York City’s fledgling cable television systems also broadcast much of the conference. But the reach of the conference went much further beyond the New York metropolitan area than the organizers had expected. In part, word spread through the network of regional journalism reviews that had spring up in the previous three or four

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years.\textsuperscript{308} (MORE) had also achieved a national circulation of at least 8,000 copies by this point,\textsuperscript{309} and the conference brought in participants from as far away as Iowa, Arizona and Hawaii.\textsuperscript{310} And they were all sorts of people, as Sally Quinn noted:

There were hundreds of journalism students and scattered emissaries from small-town Midwestern newspapers who had come to see the media celebrities in their New York ego center and if what they aspired to was really all that hot. Some had brought their babies, their tape recorders, their suitcases, their lunch pails, their clips.\textsuperscript{311}

The coats and ties on stage, she wrote, were watched by people in “blue jeans and raggedy jackets.” The celebrities were certainly a draw, especially for the first panel, but as Quinn insinuates, many were there to find work, to distribute their “clips.” Some also came for their own political purposes, as will be discussed below, and the whole mix lent something of a circus air to the proceedings, despite the alternative to circuses promised in the invitation.

But many also came to discuss the issues, and at the first panel, the first order of business was to define “New Journalism.” Unsurprisingly, Tom Wolfe, the great evangelist of the New Journalism,\textsuperscript{312} gave the first statement of the panel, and the first thing he did was dismiss definitions. The second was to add himself to a lineage that includes Boswell, Mark Twain, Chekhov and A.J. Liebling himself. But in addition to self-aggrandizement, Wolfe also pinpointed what he saw as the new “tremendous appeal”

\textsuperscript{308} Patricia McBroom, telephone interview with the author, April 30, 2013.
\textsuperscript{309} “Journalism’s Woodstock,” Newsweek, May 8, 1972, 96.
\textsuperscript{311} Quinn, “Journalism’s New Nation,” D2.
of nonfiction writing: “I don’t think that young writers any longer have the obsession, which I had when I left college and which I think most people my age had, which was to write a novel. I think the excitement has shifted into non-fiction now.” Pauline Kael, who, along with Adler and Trillin, represented The New Yorker, a magazine Wolfe had publicly attacked, accused the New Journalism of being excellent for some stories, but not “an adequate form of journalism for dealing with the issues that most of us are interested in.”

Trillin also raised the question of whether New Journalism relied too heavily on big ideas that the facts of the reporting ultimately could not support. He related his “airplane theories” story: when flying out to report a story, he would sometimes get a “brilliant theory” that would sum up the whole story. But after he did the reporting, the whole thrust of the story would change. “[I]t’s not just an error or a wrong date or something like that,” Trillin said of the problem with the “accountability toward truth” in the New Journalism, “but that the impression you got in your impressionistic portrait is wrong because everything you based it on is wrong.”

Gay Talese mostly stayed quiet, because, as he said, he didn’t know where he stood. “I find myself siding with Tom, then with Bud [Trillin] and Renata,” he said. “I do not consider myself anything but a journalist, old or new; I do my homework and I stand, or do not, by my record as an accurate reporter.”

None of this debate was really new in the spring of 1972. What was new was putting partisans of each side in the debate on a stage together, even if that meant risking a scene when Renata Adler might have dumped a can of Campbell’s soup onto Tom Wolfe’s trademark immaculate white suit, in retaliation for his attacks on The New

More than one story after the convention said that Adler had come armed with a can and a can opener. But whether or not that was true, she never made good on her threat. It was also a public appearance with Adler and Kael representing the same side in an argument several years before Adler wrote a very negative review of Kael’s work, sparking a feud that would last until Kael’s death.

Perhaps even more novel than having New Journalism’s advocates and detractors on stage together was allowing rank and file reporters to question them. (MORE) ran an edited transcript of this panel, but the questions from the floor survive only in notes taken by journalist Nora Sayre. She recorded the west coast journalist Paul Jacobs saying that he was troubled by the confusion of style and substance in the discussion. He argued that even doing the same work as his subjects—farm workers, in his example—didn’t let him get into their heads. He says that it can only approximate the life of those people, because the reporter has the means to escape back to the newsroom and cannot feel what it is like to be trapped in that job. Referring to Gail Sheehy’s *New York* story about prostitution, he says that she could really only say what she thought it would be like to be a prostitute, even though, as Sheehy explained, she did everything short of sleep with customers in reporting that story. Sayre punctuated this in her notes with a punchy “Yes!” Sayre also records comments and questions from a “wire service man” and a “kid,” neither of whom she seems to have recognized.

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Despite the fireworks that could have erupted at the panel, and despite its star power, which was clearly intended to open the conference with strong crowds, some in the audience did not seem to get much of substance out of the proceedings. Thomas Meehan, who wrote the most extensive piece on the supposed Renata Adler plan to dump soup on Tom Wolfe, used the “nonevent” of the soup as a metaphor for the panel as a whole: “chaotic and amusing,” but ultimately an empty threat. However, there certainly are issues of ethics and accountability deeply entwined within what the “New Journalists” were doing. The mere fact of their celebrity shows that journalism was already on its way to becoming a place where individuals could shine, even though it was often thought of primarily as something done as a team, where the individual reporter was less important than the story, and the publication that ran it. The press critic David Carr wrote that this transition was happening in 2013, but even in 1972, bylines were already becoming more than just a vanity play for reporters: readers were actually beginning to notice the names. Individual enterprise mattered to them and to reporters.

As well-attended as the New Journalism panel may have been (and as well–reported), the panel that ran opposite it in the same time slot may have been even more important to assessing the state of organized journalism. That was “Democracy in the Newsroom,” which brought together Ron Dorfman, the editor of the Chicago Journalism Review; three correspondents for French news organizations; one newspaper publisher from Iowa; and moderator Edwin Diamond, a New York magazine contributing editor. A

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couple years earlier, Diamond had written of a “cabal” at the *New York Times*, a movement to challenge the power of the editors in the newsroom; Tony Lukas had been one of the instigators.\(^{319}\) *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, represented by two of the French panelists, had won a measure of reporter control, and Dorfman had written about efforts in Chicago to do the same—though the American efforts never went as far as those in France.\(^{320}\) The Liebling Convention gave a new sense of “reporter power” to those in attendance though, and one Monday panel, about the tensions between newsroom management and reporters, would take up the topic again. And Dick Pollak, the editor of (MORE), also called midnight meetings on both conference days to consider resolutions to adopt. Charles Perlik, Jr., the president of the Newspaper Guild was one of 13 steering committee members who were set to draft a “declaration of independence from news-media management on professional matters.”\(^{321}\) But the first midnight meeting was still more than ten hours off.

Still, these first two panels were not completely devoid of progress in the eyes of all who attended them, even if none of the important questions facing the press had been answered. At least the conference-goers had begun to realize that they were mostly asking the same questions. The *Chicago Journalism Review* concluded that even the first two sessions had “revealed a surprising consensus” on issues that they had thought were unresolved. One was that “the basic style of newswriting taught in journalism schools and required by American news media is a fundamental obstacle to good journalism.” The

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second was that it should be the reporters themselves, “not the owners, not the editors, not the broadcast producers” who “should have control over what they cover and how they present it.”

How They Cover Me

The New Journalism and Democracy in the Newsroom panels were followed by a panel on covering political campaigns, featuring the syndicated columnist Jack Anderson; Washington Post columnist David Broder; Joe McGinniss, who had written The Selling of the President; Dan Rather, then the CBS News White House correspondent; Victor Navasky, author of Kennedy Justice; and U.S. Senator Fred Harris, whose name was printed on the program in a different typeface, which suggests that he may have been a last-minute addition. Simultaneously, the Committee for Public Justice co-sponsored “A Public Hearing on Government and the Press.” The late afternoon brought a panel on challenging television licenses, which was mostly a practical affair, and which Newsweek noted was under-attended, like all of the other practical-minded panels. Elsewhere, conference co-chairman Tony Lukas moderated a panel on sports reporting with former Major League Baseball player Jim Bouton and his co-author Leonard Schechter, who collaborated on Bouton’s memoir, Ball Four. Roger Angell, the New Yorker writer; Dick Young, of the New York Daily News; and Larry Merchant of the Post also pitched in.

After a dinner break, several hundred people came back from bars and restaurants and from milling in the halls—so many jammed into the halls that a closed circuit

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television was set up to serve the overflow crowd—\(^{325}\) and returned to the Martin Luther
King Center for a panel called “How They Cover Me,” another one meant to draw a
crowd. There was no announced lineup for the panel, which was supposed to be a
moderated discussion of how various celebrities saw themselves covered in the press.
Nora Ephron said that “[e]very famous person in the world was asked to be on this panel
and refused.” Hugh Hefner, Henry Kissinger, Tom Seaver, Dalton Trumbo, Alger Hiss,
Henry Fonda, Shirley MacLaine, John Lennon, Bob Dylan and Daniel Ellsberg all said
no.\(^{326}\) The mobster Crazy Joe Gallo said yes, but he was killed at a clam house in Little
Italy between the time he had signed on and the day of the conference.\(^{327}\) The woman
who arranged for him to show up as the surprise guest “made us promise not to tell a soul
because they might come here and shoot him,” Ephron said.\(^{328}\) The final group included
the activist Abbie Hoffman, actor Tony Randall, film director Otto Preminger, writer
Gore Vidal, Congresswoman Bella Abzug, and Marvin Miller, the head of the Major
League Baseball Players’ Association. Charlotte Curtis, the editor of the *New York Times*
women’s pages moderated.

*The Progressive* pointed out that any gathering of this size would have “a fair
measure of irrelevance, of showboating, of utter foolishness”\(^{329}\) and the How They Cover
Me panel was a prime example. Earlier in the day, a group from the underground press
and the “Zippie” party (having recently morphed from the Yippies), had interrupted the
New Journalism panel and demanded that there be an underground press representative

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\(^{326}\) Quinn, “Journalism’s New Nation,” D2.
\(^{327}\) Tom Folsom, *The Mad Ones: Crazy Joe Gallo and the Revolution at the End of the
\(^{328}\) Quinn, “Journalism’s New Nation,” D2.
on every panel going forward. In general, that seems to have been followed. The reporter Claudia Dreifus passed Nora Sayre a note that “by Zippie decree,” she had been added to the panel on racism, sexism and elitism in journalism. Tom Forçade, the head of the Underground Press Syndicate who would go on to found *High Times* magazine, had been added to the panel on covering political campaigns. Forçade was well known for using pies as a method of political protest, and there were rumors that he would be doing so at the conference, though like Renata Adler’s soup, that threat never materialized. But Jerry Rubin and Forçade did interrupt the “How They Cover Me” panel to make a statement supporting George McGovern for president. Throughout the two days, Fran Lee, a New York City activist whose latest cause was advocating for a “pooper scooper” law, repeatedly interrupted panels. She took the opportunity of having so many members of the working press around to make her case. The same was true of Hal Koppersmith, a fringe candidate for Congress who wore a sandwich board advertising his platform.

When the television lights turned off and the celebrities went home, the casual conference-goers filtered out, and the die-hards convened their midnight session to begin the newsroom revolution.

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335 Ibid.
Why Journalists Leave Daily Newspapers

Pat McBroom had come to New York from Philadelphia, where she had been serving six months’ hard labor on the obituaries desk of the *Inquirer*. McBroom had previously been a science writer, but according to McBroom when management found out that she was living with Donald Drake, who was the editor of the *Philadelphia Journalism Review*, they suspected that she must somehow be involved.\(^{337}\) She says she wasn’t, but after attending the Liebling Convention, she became radicalized and typed out a scathing piece about the “seeds of revolution” that had been planted in New York.

David Fitzpatrick had come from Phoenix, where he worked for the Arizona *Republic*. He became the “casually-dressed young reporter” through whom the *Chicago Journalism Review* would look at the conference. In that magazine’s story, Fitzpatrick represented all of the reporters who wanted change:

What really separated Fitzpatrick and most of the other journalists in the hall from the men on the stage was not the geography of the auditorium, but the constraints of traditional journalism as practiced everywhere in the United States. Most of those in the audience were still fettered; those on the stage had, to some extent, been able to free themselves. The question Fitzpatrick and the others had was, “How?”\(^{338}\)

Both Fitzpatrick and McBroom would soon find themselves to be unfettered, though not by their own choice. What got them in trouble was their effort to get some power in their newsrooms. They tried to answer the “How?”

One of the first panels on Monday morning was called “Why Journalists Leave Daily Newspapers.” Three of the panelists—Tony Lukas, David Halberstam and Sidney

\(^{337}\) Telephone interview with the author, March 30, 2013.
Zion—were former *Times* reporters who had found themselves limited by the objectivity that the newspaper required. They had found it inadequate to cover the Vietnam War or in Lukas’s case, the Chicago conspiracy trial. “The *Times* wanted, as they later admitted to me, [a] virtually stenographic account of what went on the courtroom,” Lukas told an oral history interviewer. “I one day refused to write a story, the only time I’ve ever done it on the *Times*. I told them to use the wire services that day because they were telling me that I could not write the story the way I wanted to write it.”

The tensions between the (MORE) conference organizers and their former employers were also demonstrated by the simmering anger with which those employers greeted word of the conference. Abe Rosenthal’s terse response to his panel invitation only told part of the story. Rosenthal must have noticed some of the names on the provisional program for the conference, and he sent a memo to Arthur “Punch” Sulzberger, the editor of the *Times*:

> Tom Wicker and Charlotte Curtis, both editors of this paper, apparently have agreed to participate. I think that this makes the *Times* look just silly. There may be no way that we can prevent Guild employees from participating but I think that we have every right and indeed a duty to insist that editors and other executives do not strike off on their own and make statements or participate in affairs that are not in the best interests of the paper.

Sulzberger sent memos to Curtis and Wicker, discouraging them from participating, but not forbidding it. Curtis, who herself had clashed with Rosenthal, sent a memo to Sulzberger (on Women’s News Department stationery) distancing herself

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from *(MORE)* and the advertising copy that she thought might have implied her approval of the conference’s themes, but standing firm in her decision to moderate the “How They Cover Me” panel.\(^{342}\) Rosenthal seems to have resigned himself to the conference and some *Times* staff participation after that, mustering his own commitment to objectivity, but certainly not making any promises to treat the *Times* people at the conference in any special way:

> While I am away, the ANPA convention will be meeting. Also, “More” will have its counter-meeting. As I have written to Arthur Gelb, we ought to cover the “More” thing on a strict news basis. I would appreciate it if you would watch the copy on this. There will be a number of people like Halberstam, Zion and Lukas, who will be spouting off. If they have anything important to say, we should print it. But we should feel under no obligation to print something just because they are talking. Nor should we feel that simply because they attack the papers, probably including this one, that we have an inherent obligation to print what they have to say. We should be fair but not allow ourselves to be used by them.\(^{343}\)

This hardly seems like the sort of toxic atmosphere that would drive out a Halberstam or a Lukas (though “spouting off” does imply a certain attitude). But a letter from several years later, when a new editor/publisher had taken over *(MORE)*, betrays a less kind feeling. In it, Rosenthal says that the journalism review is a reflection “of the psychic problems and nastiness of some of the people who used to put our More and are now still involved with it.”\(^{344}\)

Downtown, at the offices of the New York *Post*, publisher Dorothy Schiff was also bracing herself for the beginning of the Counter-Convention. When Woody Woodward, one of her reporters, first asked for a leave of absence to go to work as

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(MORE)’s publisher, Schiff seems to have felt a little bit of pride in her protégé.

Woodward had gotten his job as a Post reporter in large part because his mother had traveled in the same society circles as Schiff.345 There had been inklings of the radical in Woodward before (MORE) though. The Edwin Diamond article about the Times “cabal” also mentioned that Woodward was working as a labor negotiator at the Post. But Schiff’s opinion of (MORE) really soured when Dick Pollak wrote a piece excoriating the Post for not giving an African-American reporter the same full tryout that other, white, reporters got. Schiff wrote a scathing letter to the editor, which she never sent, calling the article “tendentious.”346 Schiff also wrote on top of a memo, that she would consider writing for (MORE) to be “gross disloyalty + dischargeable offense.”347 So it should not have been surprising that when she discovered that there would be an entire panel devoted to afternoon newspapers, she would either listen to the radio or watch on television and take angry notes on the panel—which did, in fact, turn out to mostly be a complaint-fest about Schiff. She also procured a complete transcript of the panel and marked it up, with a keen eye for minor inaccuracies and petty slights.348 She also had a staffer attend the panel and prepare a lengthy report.349

348 Annotated transcript of WBAI broadcast of “What Kind of P.M. Paper Should New York Have?” Schiff Papers, Editorial Files, Box 38, Folder “(MORE) Counter-Convention, 1972, April–May.”
349 Memo from Bill Hanway to Floyd Barger and M.J. O’Neill, April 26, 1972. Schiff Papers, Editorial Files, Box 38, Folder “(MORE) Counter-Convention, 1972, April–May.”
These are high profile cases of editors and publishers who wanted to keep tight reins on their editorial staff, but they seem to be representative of the pressures that even less prominent reporters were feeling. While it may have been cathartic or inspirational for them to hear the stories of reporters who had escaped, they really got their chance to voice their anger at the two midnight planning sessions. According to Pat McBroom, about 70 people attended one or both of the meetings.\textsuperscript{350} As in the daytime sessions, the actual solutions were left for another day. Sidney Zion said “We’ll declare it now and do something about it later.”\textsuperscript{351}

The biggest dose of inspiration came from a surprise visit on the second night from I.F. Stone, the independent investigative reporter who had just been awarded the first ever A.J. Liebling Prize “For his commitment, carried on single-handedly over two decades, to independent and unrelenting investigation of public and private power in America and his defense of individual liberty.”\textsuperscript{352} In his speech upon accepting the award from A.J. Liebling’s widow, Jean Stafford Liebling, Stone had opened with a joke that made it clear how happy—and surprised—he was to see so many “radical journalists” in one place. As an elder statesman, he had a message for the “kids” in the audience:

[W]e are up against a whole series of fundamental problems to which we have no answers. And what’s so wonderful about the kids, compared to their grandfathers is that they know there are no answers and they’re willing to act and to fight and to search and to move without a clear blueprint, knowing that we’re in a wilderness.\textsuperscript{353}

\textsuperscript{351} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{353} “As Soon As You Want Something…” \textit{(MORE): A Journalism Review}, June, 1972, 4.
Stone’s call for a perseverance in the face of uncertainty—or even the embrace of uncertainty—fit well with the tone that *Times* columnist Tom Wicker struck in his lunchtime keynote address, when he said that “there is no orthodoxy, formula or dogma… of new journalism or objectivity or advocacy or activism… that can free us from the ills of orthodoxy….”354 And echoing a call that had been issued repeatedly throughout the convention, he said that reporters needed to avoid “spurious objectivity.”355 Replacing old orthodoxies with new ones, he said, would not help journalism, but that instead reporters needed to be free to do their own best work.356 “We must let a hundred flowers bloom,” Wicker said.357 Flowers like Patricia McBroom from Philadelphia, or David Fitzpatrick from Phoenix. In the end, the *Chicago Journalism Review* piece leaves Fitzpatrick still wondering “how.” That was for the late-night session. But when Stone showed up that night at the organizing meeting, he spoke to the participants, telling them once again that he didn’t have any answers. The best he could do was to rouse the troops, telling them that “The life of the paper comes from the guys who write it, not the guy who happens to own it…. They’re the ones who make it good or bad or wonderful. They’re giving their lives to it, their talents and their devotion and they have a right to a say in it.”358

Invigorated by this talk and similar speeches and conversations throughout the conference, Patricia McBroom went home from the conference and wrote her first piece for the *Philadelphia Journalism Review*, which she had avoided so far so as not to make

357 Quinn, “Journalism’s New Nation,” D2.
trouble with the *Inquirer*. But her *PJR* piece pulled no punches, and she admits that she probably made a strategic mistake when she paraded copies of the journal through the *Inquirer* newsroom. Within hours, she was fired—and with the exception of a few freelance pieces, she didn’t return to journalism for nearly 40 years.\(^{359}\) David Fitzpatrick met a similar fate when he returned home, despite not even writing about the conference. “Fitzpatrick was dismissed for refusing to acknowledge that he owed any obligation and any loyalty to the people who were paying him,” his editor told *(MORE)*.\(^{360}\)

**Further(MORE)**

For most people, however, the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention did not end so dramatically. There were additional Monday panels including one on local television news chaired by Nat Hentoff; a panel on racism, sexism and elitism in journalism that featured Studs Terkel, Susan Brownmiller, Ernest Dunbar and Jimmy Breslin (years before his own very public racist and sexist outbursts); an alternative media panel; one on the future of women’s pages with Lynn Sherr and Gloria Steinem; and a panel about the muckraking tradition, which was part of the celebration of Izzy Stone. There was more drinking, as there is wont to be with journalists. Then people scattered back to their own newsrooms to talk about what they had seen, and to look forward to the next conference, which was going to be held in Washington the following year.

Predictably, the more establishment journals that wrote notices of the convention were skeptical and emphasized the silliness and the celebrity worship, while more anti-establishment outlets addressed the spirit of optimism and discovery that many took.

\(^{359}\) Telephone interview with the author, March 30, 2013.

away. In addition to the articles quoted above, the Counter-Convention got noticed by the Harvard Crimson and even by (MORE)’s stodgier older cousin of a press watchdog, the Columbia Journalism Review. CJR gave (MORE) a “laurel” because “the unrestricted attendance and participatory ambience of the counter-convention made it a landmark.”

Watergate changes everything: The Liebling Convention moves to D.C.

The following year, (MORE) built on its success with the first Counter-Convention by moving the proceedings to Washington, D.C. A few things had changed from 1972. Instead of being a two-day event, “Liebling II,” as the banners behind the panelists called it, had expanded to three days, Friday May 4 through Sunday May 6. Instead of being free and open to the public, Liebling II charged convention-goers $8.00, and according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator, that $8.00 had the buying power of $42.99 in 2013, so it while it wasn’t an exorbitant amount of money, it wasn’t insignificant either. Instead of being counter to the American Newspaper Publishers Association, Liebling II ran counter to the American Society of Newspaper Editors convention. But there wasn’t as much of a difference in venue between the two concurrent meetings as there was the first year. While the first Liebling convention had been held at the Martin Luther King Labor Center, a block or two away from the Midnight Cowboy seediness of 1970s Times Square, Liebling II moved into the

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significantly more luxe Mayflower Hotel, the historic hotel decorated with gilded accents and crystal light fixtures just a few blocks away from the White House.

A few months before (MORE) would chronicle Sally Quinn’s adventures in morning television (see chapter 2), Quinn attended the second annual Liebling convention. She picked up on the new establishment vibe that pervaded the atmosphere there, and attributed it to a sea change in the self-regard of the press between the spring of 1972 and the spring of 1973. The first convention, Quinn wrote, “was still decidedly unestablishment with at least as many freaks as members of respectable journalistic institutions.” In Quinn’s assessment, Watergate changed everything. For the press, she saw at the time, Watergate had given journalists a reason to be proud of the mainstream press, she argued. Of course, she might be biased, writing as she was for *The Washington Post*, which was primarily responsible for breaking the Watergate story—and since she would eventually marry the editor who directed that coverage. Also, she was basing this conclusion on observations she made at the opening night party, not including any of the actual substance of the conference.

Nevertheless, she did have a point. Coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam and cultural changes in the United States had given journalists a sense that while their work could be noble at times, they were up against an establishment that kept their strongest reporting at bay. Watergate on the other hand showed that a mainstream paper that was willing to devote time and resources to a story could actually break through the wall of spin that the establishment put up. And that put the press in the odd position of being both establishment and anti-establishment at the same time. It was a contradiction

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that (MORE) would long struggle with, though the gravitational pull of the establishment is almost always stronger than that of the counter-establishment.

In a short preview writeup for Liebling II which also included a reprint of the conference program, *The D.C. Gazette*, an alternative paper, also complained that the smaller independent papers were being shut out in favor of big city dailies and wire services:

As you will note from the program, only a few representatives of the alternative press (including your editor) have been invited to participate and underground and alternative newspapers are being charged $8 a head for the privilege of covering a journalism counter-convention. This all seems a bit odd and leads one to wonder what this convention is counter to. Sleep well tonight, Spiro. As long as it’s easier for a big city daily editor to appear at a journalism counter-convention than it is for members of the Underground Press Syndicate, you got nothing to fear.366

It should be noted that in addition to the panel that included *D.C. Gazette*’s editor, Sam Smith, there was also an entire workshop panel devoted to ideas that the “straight” press could learn from the alternative press.

Nicholas von Hoffman, an occasional (MORE) contributor, but also a *Washington Post* writer, also noticed the mainstreaming of the counter-convention in its second year. “On other days the younger, farther left and less compromising participants would be counter-conventioning against the American Society of Newspaper Editors concurrently meeting uptown at another hotel. But not in this year of Watergate,” he wrote. “The younger ones are so well pleased by the performance of their rich elders that they have invited onto their program editors from The Boston Globe, The Chicago Sun-Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The New York Times, and above all, The Washington Post.”367

According to von Hoffman, he and the other “Post Toasties,” as he called his fellow *Post*

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employees in a reference to a now-discontinued breakfast cereal, couldn’t help but sweep
with pride in “the cream” of the accomplishments of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein,
no matter how little the rest of them had to do with the Watergate story.

At the opening night party, Sally Quinn watched as reporters dutifully stood in
line for name tags and drink tickets and then stood in line again at the bar to trade them
for drinks. The proceedings were almost dignified, compared to the raucous atmosphere
of the previous year. Jann Wenner, the founder and editor of Rolling Stone, even admitted
to Quinn that his magazine wasn’t an underground publication anymore.\(^{368}\) The
alternative press had begun to move inexorably toward the mainstream. Still, it wasn’t so
mainstream that there weren’t still writers who were scared for their jobs for being at a
(MORE) convention. A journalist for U.S. News and World Report refused to identify
himself for fear of being fired.

Another example of that protest from the left came from the National
Organization for Women, which held what it called a “counter-counter convention” in the
lobby of the Mayflower. Joyce Snyder, of NOW, said that the organization was
disappointed that (MORE) apparently regarded women as “a special interest group.”\(^ {369}\)
Her objections seemed to be more to the way women were represented in the media than
with the way (MORE) included them on its panels. According to Myra MacPherson, who
also covered Liebling II for the Post, some women came away from the conference
thinking that they would have gotten a fairer hearing across town at the ASNE
convention. She cited two exchanges from the panel on women’s issues. In the first, Sally
Quinn, in her role as a panelist, said that “If a senator is putting his hand on my fanny and

\(^{368}\) Quinn, “(MORE) Party,” B2
talking about how he’s thinking of impeaching Nixon, I’m sure not going to remove his hand.” She was hissed by the crowd. And a Women’s Wear Daily reporter was asked if women who use their femininity in reporting would inevitably lose that power as they got older. Her reply was “Not if she gets a facelift.” The Washington Liebling Convention may have kept some of the “freaks” out by having the gall to charge admission, but this and future conferences (particularly (MORE)’s one foray into the West Coast) would never entirely rid itself of the protests.

Quinn closed her piece with a quote from Tony Lukas, one which, he hoped, would set the tone for the conference to come: “Last year I said that journalists only get together on two occasions, when they’re competing and when they’re drunk…. Last year they were neither. They were sober and non-competitive. This year we are aiming for higher peaks. This year we hope they will be sober, non-competitive and contemplative.”

Unlike the 1972 Counter-Convention, which was a mishmash of topics that were of concern to journalists, Liebling II had two overriding themes, which Woody Woodward had announced in a “Column Two” column. Those were political reporting and power in the newsroom. But really, all anyone wanted to talk about was Watergate—and this was before there was definitive evidence linking Nixon to knowledge of the break-in or of the cover-up. It was a lucky coincidence for (MORE).

Nora Ephron had relinquished her planning duties for this conference, though her future husband, Carl Bernstein, was in attendance. Liebling II was put together by Dan MacPherson, “Meet the Press,” The Washington Post. May 7, 1973, B3.
Quinn, “(MORE) Party,” B2
McNamee (who would become a (MORE) business staff member) and Marjorie Federbush, who would go on to a career in philanthropy. The panels that they put together were remarkably prescient, given that it took at least six months to put together a Liebling convention. Those panels included:

- Journalistic Lessons of the Vietnam War (moderated by Dan Rather of CBS News)
- Press Councils and Press Criticism (which included Dick Pollak, (MORE)’s editor)
- Is Anyone Covering the City of Washington? (The panel on which Sam Smith sat)
- Getting Subpoenaed: How to Fight Back (a workshop)
- Reliable Sources: How Reliable? (moderated by Victor Navasky)
- Political Columnists: Can They Be Cosmic Three Days a Week? (Tom Wicker, the previous year’s keynote speaker, sat on this panel, as did the economist and political adviser John Kenneth Galbraith, who (MORE) identified merely as a “gadfly”)
- Why is 90 Per Cent of Washington Uncovered? (Activist Ralph Nader and journalists Taylor Branch and Morton Mintz sat on the panel)
- Power in the Newsroom: Who Has it and How to Get it (a workshop featuring Ron Dorfman, four domestic and three foreign journalists)
- How Women Cover Washington: Do They Need a Special Style, View, Eye, Portfolio or Other Refuge (moderated by Lynn Sherr, then of WCBS, and including Sally Quinn, who also covered the convention)
- The Government and Broadcasters: Jamming the Airwaves
- A Deadline Every Minute: Is Wire Service Reporting Obsolete? (Gene Roberts, at the beginning of his run as Executive Editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer, and Seymour Hersh, who broke the story of the My Lai massacre participated)
- Investigative Reporting: How to Get the Goods on the Baddies (a workshop that featured Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, amazingly, given the time)
- The White House: Who’s Kicking Whom Around? (Moderated by (MORE)’s Tony Lukas)
- Who Decides What is News? (Moderated by (MORE)’s Brit Hume and including Jann Wenner of Rolling Stone and Victor Gold, former press secretary to Vice President Spiro Agnew)

373 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011.
As she had the previous year, journalist Nora Sayre attended the conference and took extensive notes on the panels she attended (though less extensive than her 1972 notes). She started out Friday morning at the “Lessons of the Vietnam War” panel. Murray Marder of *The Washington Post* argued that Vietnam and Watergate could not be seen just as “aberrations of justice on [the] part [of the] government.” The press he said had gotten lulled into accepting the official government view of the war under the Kennedy administration because they liked his “panache.” Bob Manning of *The Atlantic* thought that the press had missed the transition from cold war to actual war, and that it took student protests to goad the press into writing that story. He believes that the war “raised a lot of questions about whether the job of the press is simply to inform.” Marder chimed in that he didn’t think that was enough.\(^{375}\)

Afterward, Sayre attended the workshop on how to fight subpoenas. The panel itself appears to have been mostly practical tips for reporters. For that reason though, it is worth noting, since unlike at the first Liebling convention, these workshop sessions seemed geared toward real practical advice for working journalists, as opposed to more high-minded discussion (or windy bloviating). At the “And Now a Word from your Editor…” panel, which she attended next, she made note of the panelists, but didn’t record much of what she said. She did however notice that Nora Ephron and Nat Hentoff asked questions. So did Paul Krassner (“Again,” she remarked. Krassner would later take pride in “being the first to ask as meaningful a question as possible at each panel” of every Liebling convention he attended.\(^{376}\) Sayre seems to have skipped the panel


sessions on Saturday of the conference, but she does have a few notes from a Sunday panel as well. That was “The White House: Who’s Kicking Whom Around?” and thanks to Pacifica Radio, that is the most complete audio recording of a Liebling panel discussion that appears to have survived—though Pacifica clearly favored the liberal panelists in its broadcast.

The panel less notable for any spirited interaction between its participants than for its laugh lines and speechifying. The panelists mostly seemed thrilled that they had Nixon to kick around. Tony Lukas chaired the panel, which included John Osborne of *The New Republic*, Robert Semple Jr. of *The New York Times*, Henry Trewhitt of *Newsweek*, Andrew Kopkind of WBCN radio, Boston, Sarah McClendon, who ran her own McClendon News Service, and Raph de Toledano, the conservative author and friend of Nixon. After an opening montage of one-liners, the Pacifica recording jumps into the middle of McClendon’s remarks: “The whole White House operation in my estimation is so staged, so programmed, so controlled, that the Watergate just couldn’t have happened without Nixon and his top aides planning it fully.” She gets a round of applause from the receptive crowd. “The president,” she said, “runs the public relations at the White House, not Ron Ziegler,” Nixon’s press secretary. “No decision, however small is made at the White House is made without the approval of the president.” She continued on to her laugh line: “This is why so many mistakes in judgment have been made.” And the audience obliged her by laughing. She talks quickly, obviously reading from prepared remarks, but delivering her lines with excellent timing. One anecdote about Nixon’s attention to detail has him in a receiving line at the White House with 100 journalists and

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90 Chinese visitors, when he sees McClendon across the room, wearing pants to the White House for the first time. He walks over to her, looks her up and down and says, “My, my. I thought you were a traditionalist!”

Lukas called on John Osborne next. Osborne wasn’t as disappointed in the press setup at the Nixon White House, since he said he didn’t expect more than for the press secretary to deal with the President’s interests. And Watergate didn’t surprise him either, he said, given the way that he had seen the administration operating. They were secretive and sanctimonious, and while he couldn’t have predicted the Watergate break-in or the subsequent cover-up, they seemed of a piece with the rest of the White House’s actions.

Lukas moved on to Bob Semple, who opened with his explanation for why the White House Press Corps didn’t break the Watergate story: “The answer to that is fairly simple. The last people who are going to tell you of their own complicity are the people you are covering day after day. And has no doubt been pointed out her several times, Bernstein and Woodward were not only not White House correspondents, they were not on the national staff of the Post. They were aggressive and industrious local reporters who had enough sense not to go to the center to find out what was wrong at the center.”

Pacifica gave time only to those three panelists before cutting to questions. In order to cut down on the chaos that might ensue when a rowdy crowd had access to an open microphone, Lukas took written questions from the audience. They were still pointed and partisan. The first: “Why doesn’t the press corps identify the administration whores in its midst?”
Sarah McClendon closed out proceedings with what in retrospect seems like a very short-sighted prediction: “We’ll never see such secrecy around the White House again.”

On Saturday evening of the conference, David Halberstam gave the second annual A.J. Liebling Award to Homer Bigart, who had recently retired from The New York Times after a career spanning more than four decades. Yet another Washington Post article about the convention noted that Bigart’s winning the award showed again the differences between Liebling II and the first convention. He was “no one of the new journalism,” but instead “a silver-haired man honored for his four decades of integrity.”

(MORE) had never set out to be an instrument of the counter culture, but it was also always working to goad the mainstream press. It wasn’t counter-culture, but it wasn’t mainstream. (MORE) would always be caught in between. The mainstream press wouldn’t accept them, but the alternative press would always protest them.

Following the presentation of the Liebling Award, the conference held its guaranteed big-draw panel in the Mayflower’s ballroom. Simply called “Watergate,” the panel featured Ben Bradlee and Carl Bernstein of the Post. The rest of the panelists were no lightweights either: Frank Mankiewicz, George McGovern’s political director; former New York Times reporter Robert Smith; the writer Garry Wills; Walter Pincus of The New Republic, and two former Nixon aides: Richard Whalen and Kevin Phillips. According to Myra MacPherson’s account, Whalen and Phillips “locked horns” with Wills and Mankiewicz. Phillips tried to separate himself from the current batch of Nixon aides,

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saying that they were despised by Republicans in general. Wills snapped back, saying that it wasn’t enough to disavow the staff. “Nixon was doing what he was hired to do.”

The Washington Liebling convention concluded with a re-convening of the ad hoc committee that had gathered at the first Counter-Convention. It’s unclear what happened, except that they found a publisher for an intermittent newsletter. But as the new focus on the suddenly functioning mainstream press suggests, it may very well have been marginalized. With editors and publishers as supportive of dogged reporting as Ben Bradlee and Katherine Graham of The Washington Post all seemed to have become in the last year, the Counter-Conventioners appeared to be much less interested in furthering the cause of democracy in the newsroom, and far more interested in fawning over the new celebrities of the press. Dick Pollak, in assessing the conference after the fact, said that he was initially discouraged by the lack of interest in real press reform, despite 1500 journalists being in attendance. He later (by the end of the column, even) regained his optimism, but it was probably short-lived. The trend toward the conventions being a celebrity circus would return, with even greater force, the following year, when the Liebling convention went home to New York.

**Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Counter-Conventions *  
*But Were Afraid to Ask**

Between the 1973 and 1974 Counter-Conventions, (MORE) had become a slightly more polished product, as will be demonstrated in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

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The typesetting was more regular; there were more photographs. Things seemed cleaner and more professional on the page. Some new staff had come on board as well, including a young woman—a Catholic waitress’s daughter from Buffalo, as she described herself—named Kathy Jones. Jones wasn't a journalist. She was an alumna of the Peace Corps and had taught in a Montessori school, but she had been turned on to (MORE) by her friend Dan McNamee, who had organized the Washington, D.C. Liebling Convention. She was brought on to sell ads—always a difficult issue for (MORE)—and to organize the Liebling Conventions going forward. Jones did have some party planning experience, having worked for Daniel and Philip Berrigan—two brothers, both Catholic priests, known for their anti-Vietnam war activism—and also having worked for the composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein and his wife Felicia. "I think it was on the basis of that," that she was hired, she said. "I've always thrown a good party."382

More and more the counter-conventions were turning into parties, too. Whereas the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention, held in a trade union meeting hall, had the urgency of a late-night strike-planning session by a group of union hardliners who couldn't get their grievances heard by the management, by year three, the conventions had become boozy victory parties and camp reunions, with a valedictory atmosphere. The anticipation of Watergate finally catching up to Nixon had driven the mood in Washington, and amazingly, that still appeared to be the dominant mood when the Liebling Convention returned to New York City from May 10 to 12, 1974 at the Roosevelt Hotel near Grand Central Terminal. The price of admission had risen again—and significantly. After having been free in 1972 and $8.00 in 1973, the admission price

382 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011.
in 1974 almost doubled to $15.00. Of course, now that included a "free" subscription to the magazine, too, but you couldn't renew your own if you already subscribed; you had to start a new one or give one as a gift. Discounted rooms at the Roosevelt were also available, $26.00 for a single or $32.00 for a double.383

Friday night opened, as had become expected, with a party. Tony Lukas and Dick Pollak were pulled aside by a Washington Post reporter who was covering the conference, and Tony told her that he was “delighted” that Robert Redford would be playing “one of us.” Redford had recently announced his intention to play Bob Woodward in a film version of the Watergate investigation story, which would become the film All the President's Men. Lukas told the reporter that he wanted Omar Shariff to play him. “The phrase ‘star reporter’ suddenly assumed all sorts of new meaning,” wrote the Post journalist.384 Even though the meat of the conference had been squeezed back into two days, the panels were packed tighter. Instead of having two panels concurrently, there were now three or, at one point, even four. While this was probably meant to spread out the expected crowd a little bit more (and Liebling III drew about 2000, according to one source385 though another had the more convincingly specific 1850 as the paid attendance number386), it also meant that attendees began to suffer from what Dick Pollak jokingly called "panel envy," the Freudian feeling that whatever panel you didn't attend must have been better than the one that you did.387 (Art Buchwald used the same line in

385 Ibid.
387 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011
moderating the Watergate panel the previous year, though he had meant that the audience were envious of the panelists for their accomplishments.\(^{388}\)

While Watergate may have dominated the mood of Liebling III, its panels were decidedly more eclectic than those of its Washington, D.C. predecessor. The opening panel and the Saturday night gala panel—the one sandwiched between the presentation of the Liebling Award and Saturday’s party—were impressive political reporting panels, however. Author and editor Victor Navasky moderated the opening panel, which featured investigative reporter Seymour Hersh and Alger Hiss, who had been accused of spying for the Soviet Union, talking about national security and the press. That evening, \textit{Washington Post} reporter Morton Mintz received the Liebling Award, and (MORE) gave a special prize to photographer W. Eugene Smith and also gave out a student prize. Mike Wallace, the host of CBS News’s \textit{60 Minutes}, then hosted a panel on “The Press and the Presidency” featuring \textit{New York Times} writer Anthony Lewis, wire service reporter Helen Thomas and Gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson—an unlikely but probably a lively group.\(^{389}\) Dan Rather, also of CBS, was scheduled to be on the panel as well, but according to Wallace, he had been called into work to preside over Nixon’s “death watch.”\(^{390}\)

Cultural issues made something of a return at Liebling III. One panel focused on the media and coverage of gay issues. One discussed whether or not there was “a female sensibility.” Nora Ephron chaired a panel about men’s magazines that included a \textit{Playboy}

writer and Al Goldstein, the publisher of the quasi-pornographic *Screw* magazine. Robin Reisig covered the conference for *The Village Voice*, with an eye toward how women were treated. She reported that the women’s sensibility panel concluded basically that there were just good writers and bad writers, “people who make connections” and who “don’t filter things out of their consciousness.” There was also a discussion of *The New York Times*’ refusal to use the word “Ms.” instead of “Miss” and “Mrs.” Some of the participants “went into a slow burn” when the editor of the *Times* editorial page, John Oakes, said that he didn’t think it was an important question. Reisig also covered the women in the newsroom panel, where participants mostly concluded that they still had “a lo-o-o-ong way to go.”

Everyone seemed to find the panel on cable and satellite technology deathly boring. But what everyone remembers from Liebling III, said its organizer, Kathy Jones, was that the final panel had Woody Allen on it. Ostensibly, the subject of the panel was failure, and it also featured author Erica Jong. Judy Bachrach, the *Washington Post* reporter who covered the conference, wrote that the celebrities—Alger Hiss, Woody Allen—dominated the conference, and made it seem less like a conference of journalists. And according to Kathy Jones, Allen was a terrible panelist anyway. He spoke quietly, talked through his hands and mumbled.

Also, the happenings outside the official panels seemed to take precedence for the first time. Press critic Alexander Cockburn, in his *The Village Voice* column, wrote that

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393 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011.
“Large numbers of people paced the corridors of the Roosevelt Hotel, drinking, shouting, and occasionally justifying the long hours of revelry and gossip by attending panel discussions.” This sort of camp reunion atmosphere that would come to dominate the last two New York counter-conventions as well.

Rather than assigning himself to recap the conference, Dick Pollak put a reporter on it, and picked Calvin Trillin, the New Yorker writer who had been on (MORE)’s original advisory board. An in-house piece almost didn’t seem necessary to Trillin, who suggested, tongue in cheek, that there were so many reporters at the convention “doing a piece” about it that the next year’s convention should have a panel on how to cover a Liebling convention. He made up some statistics (and pretended to verify them “employing the methodology of New Journalism, by noting how symmetrical the statistics sounded when I repeated them to myself in the shower”). Though fake, they give an idea of who was attending the conference: “anyone under thirty is part of the audience, anyone from thirty-five to forty-five is a panelist, and anyone fifty-five or over is there to receive the annual A.J. Liebling Award.”

Trillin found that the Liebling conventions had grown into an institution since their first year (when even then it was accused of being too close to the institutions that it purported to run counter to). But now, Trillin joked, the conference was really only counter to the panelists. For the younger convention-goers, this may have been an opportunity to meet their idols. For more established journalists, it was time for more “panel envy”: “a [MORE] convention

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395 Cockburn, “Press Clips.”
spectator’s first reaction to seeing another writer on the dais,” Tony Lukas told Trillin, “is ‘why him and not me?’”

Mostly though, Trillin wrote about how the process of a Liebling Counter-Convention had become regularized. Of course there would be drinking (“If it ain’t catered, it ain’t journalism,” Jones said397). Of course there would be panel envy. Of course there would be ponderous self-importance. Of course there would be a protest. In 1972, the protestors had been Abbie Hoffman and his Zippies. In 1973, it had been the National Organization for Women. In 1974, there was a perfunctory protest by the National Caucus of Labor Committees. But in Trillin’s telling, even the protestors knew their part to play in the convention. “When the N.C.L.C. speaker went through his allotted two minutes before the Saturday night panel, the audience just waited for the end, like a baseball crowd waiting for the soprano to finish the Star Spangled Banner so the game can get started.”398 And in keeping with its move toward celebrity, (MORE) even managed to get a celebrity to take its pictures—the official photos were by Jill Krementz, a noted photographer, particularly of writers, and the wife of novelist Kurt Vonnegut.

So even though 1974 was Kathy Jones’s first year as convention organizer, she felt pretty confident that she knew what to expect when Pollak asked her to set up a West Coast version of the counter-conventions, something that would focus on the needs and concerns of reporters on the other side of the country, who couldn’t necessarily afford to come out to New York City. How different could things be in San Francisco?

397 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011.
398 Ibid., 18.
Not Left Enough for the Left Coast: The Counter-Convention Comes to San Francisco

San Francisco “was a zoo. That was really a zoo,” Kathy Jones said. She may never forgive Dick for the idea, she said. “This was really hard. All I remember are the pickets.” When (MORE) showed up at the Sheraton Palace Hotel—a setting more like the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. than like the Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center—in February 1975, the conference staff found a fancy hotel full of young, smart, but unemployed and very miserable writers. More than 1000 people attended, small by the current standards of (MORE)’s conventions, but still a large number. “I’ve never met so many unhappy people,” Jones said. “You couldn’t do anything right. The price was too high. Everyone wanted to get in for free—and they all wanted to get in for free to something that was clearly racist and sexist and everything else. Just personally, it was one of the hardest experiences I’ve had workwise. I can’t talk about it as the kind of fun that New York was. It wasn’t fun.”

The best document of the conference is a two-part radio documentary put together by the left-leaning Pacifica Radio of San Francisco, KPFA. Pacifícá thought that the conference was mostly “a pretty tame affair,” and that the alternative press was mostly quite well represented, though with a few glaring exceptions. Pacifica opened its coverage with part of a panel on local broadcast news, which started out from the premise that local news was more entertainment than information. It was one of the best attended panels, partly because it was, as had become the norm at Liebling Conventions, “star studded.” Chief among those was Van Amburg, the host of KGO-TV’s newscast, which

was a pioneer in “Happy Talk” news. The panel began with a Phil Jacklin, a San Jose State philosophy professor, who pushed for open access to broadcast media. His impassioned rant in favor of the Fairness Doctrine hearkened back to the passions of the first Liebling convention. He ended by reading a story lineup from a recent KGO newscast that concluded with a story about Marilyn Monroe lookalikes. “Our source at KGO says that Van Amburg had a hard-on the whole time,” Jacklin said, leaving a mixture of shock and laughter in the meeting room. Amburg won the crowd over immediately though, showing the charm that would earn him six-figure salaries on a mainstream newscast: “I don’t see anything wrong with having a hard on, number one. I think it’s a nice thing to have.” He then mounted a fairly convincing defense of news about people, rather than issues. He was unapologetic about it, but it didn’t seem to convince the crowd. And Van Amburg became the target for most of the audience’s accusatory questions.

According to KPFA, the only happening of any consequence at the panel was the appearance of black members of the Coalition for Media Change, who paraded around the podium, as they had at other sessions that day, saying that whatever else the shortcomings of the panel, the lack of minority participation was the panel's most glaring omission. Pacifica Radio, in what is either a vestige of 1970s racial sensitivities or a peculiarity of its own biases, consistently uses the phrase “third world” to mean “minority.”

A panel on alternative media and the power structure in San Francisco feels particularly local and dated, though a panel on coverage of the Middle East had some more lasting interest. The panelists included Robert Scheer, the former editor of
Ramparts magazine and Russ Stetler of Internews news service, who lamented how long it took the press to give any coverage to the Palestinian side of the Palestine/Israel conflict. Sidney Sober, a representative of the State Department also spoke at the panel. “With reasonably rare exceptions,” he said, “the news we read in the press doesn’t surprise us.” The audience could barely control its laughter. Robert Scheer called the State Department “a fog machine” for that kind of attitude.

The first episode of Pacifica’s coverage ended with a look at how racism was handled. “One serious drawback to the conference was the obvious omission of third world media organizations,” the final report began. A black media attorney who had been on the panels accused (MORE) of “white liberal racism.” Penny Gentilly, who was (MORE)’s West Coast coordinator for the conference, then found herself under attack from an activist from the Community Coalition for Media Change. He pointed out some of the racial inequality of the panels. She is defensive, and sounds young. She explained that there had been two large meetings that tried to come up with ideas for panels and panelists. They felt that it was better, Gentilly explained, “not to ghettoize” the panels, but to include black panelists and women on all of the panels. The activist challenged her, saying that it was “ridiculous” that the panel on the Symbionese Liberation Army didn’t include the organizer of its food distribution efforts. He said it must have been a conscious exclusion on the part of the (MORE) organizers. “It wasn’t conscious, really it wasn’t,” protested an increasingly overwhelmed sounding Gentilly. “We left it up to moderators to put together panels, and I wasn’t on top of it, and I regret that.” The activist continued: “Black people do exist. Latinos do exist. But they’ve been left out of history, and now they’re left out of the conference.”
“I’m sorry,” Gentilly said, finally. “I thought they were represented.”

Pacifica opened its second show with excerpts from a panel about multinational corporations. This was followed by a panel about the financial crisis, which included Anita Frankel, the general manager of Pacifica’s WPFA and Stewart Brand, the founder of The Whole Earth Catalog. More interesting than either of those two however was a panel on women’s issues, which the Pacifica show calls “by far the least coherent of the conference” but “in many ways the most revealing.” Susan Hallis, a freelance journalist, told the panel that they should forgo opening statements. “The session began in a vacuum,” Pacifica’s narrator said. Black media activist Edwin Terry from the Coalition for Media Change broke any illusion of unity right away (despite not being on the panel) with an opening statement of his own: “That two honky females who decided how this conference would be conducted, and who would be invited shows that they have no sensitivity, only to try to go to bed with a black man.” The feminist audience was outraged, but the panel tried to get on track. After a few turns of interesting discussion, things seemed to fly in several directions at once. One group of women wanted to break into small groups to discuss how to take action. Another group wanted the panelists to decide on some unified themes to guide the discussion. This group didn’t want to discuss how to get women into more executive roles in mainstream media, and accused the main panel of being the most conservative panels at the conference. The black women in the room walked out. Some women did break into small groups and began caucusing. It was an incredibly fractious session, and one which illustrates the anger and confusion that made Kathy Jones blanch when talking about the West Coast conference even four decades later.
Anita Frankel, Bill Sokol and Larry Bensky of KPFA held a roundtable for themselves, asking what they had learned from the conference. One thing that came out is the lack of real investigative reporting in San Francisco, particularly in relation to a panel on mayor Joe Alioto—who also attended the conference. One of the panelists also noted that on his way to any panel he had to pass through five lines of people who were looking for jobs, so the lack of solid reporting wasn’t because of lack of talent. They saw too that there were two conflicting lines: the yearning for professionalism, the ability to maintain standards and make a living; and the need to examine politics. But the conflict came, the KPFA panel asserted, in that journalists were unwilling to examine the politics of the news organizations that allowed them to do their work.

As for the politics of (MORE), Larry Bensky said that he had interviewed Tony Lukas and Woody Woodward, two of the three founders of (MORE) a few years earlier, and he said that they had made it clear to him that (MORE) was founded by reporters who were employed not by alternative media, but by the mainstream media, and yet who found themselves significantly to the left of their employers, and (MORE) was intended to express that point of view. They didn’t necessarily want workers’ control of the media, but they wanted fairer coverage of Vietnam. And the professional strain of (MORE) also influenced the under-representation of non-white people at the conference, according to the KPFA group, since they wanted to show the media as it was, not as it should be, and they didn’t give much thought to how to include those voices that were already excluded. (MORE), the KPFA group suggested, didn’t understand the network of alternative publications that they saw as being much more vital than the alternative media in New

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400 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011.
York. Perhaps, they admitted, this is because the underground press was less necessary because the overground press was that much stronger in New York than it was in San Francisco. In either case, (MORE) was happy to return to the New York media world, the world that it knew.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco (MORE) conference did continue one tradition: partying outside of the conference rooms. There was plenty of drinking at the Sheraton Palace Hotel, and upstairs, according to *Rolling Stone*, there were other substances being inhaled:

Upstairs, the editors of *High Times* magazine had installed two huge canisters of laughing gas in their hospitality suite. Dozens of guests were happily frying their brains and by 2 a.m. the floor was three inches deep with discarded balloons. Serving as host was Underground Press Syndicate founder Tom Forcade, who shares *High Times*’ New York office, decked out in a three-piece suit. Also on hand, ex-Yippie Jerry Rubin, shaved and scrubbed and dressed like a fraternity lounge lizard, and Garry Trudeau, the reclusive author of the comic strip “Doonesbury.”

Conference-goers from the later years in New York would remember similar scenes of debauchery even more than the panels. But of course, there were panels, too.

**The Last Two**

The original Rosebud Associates who founded (MORE) held one more conference in New York while they owned the magazine. After they sold it to a new editor/publisher, Michael Kramer (a story told in chapter 4 of this dissertation), Kramer held one final conference before they finally ran out of steam. The last two conferences followed the pattern set by the 1974 Counter-Convention, with an increased level of veneration of journalistic celebrity, an increasingly boozier atmosphere in the convention itself, and one that was almost circus-like in the hallways. The socialist journalist Kent
MacDougall referred to the later counter-conventions, with their love of celebrity journalists (and other celebrities) as “starfucks.” The convention also gave the world of journalism an iconic poster, one that would live on in the offices of journalism professors for decades, and in the toolkits of set dressers for at least a few years even after (MORE), the magazine, finally folded. That poster a bold rectangle of pure 1970s burnt orange featured a Marty Norman cartoon of a stereotypical 1920s or 1930s newsman, his striped sleeves rolled up and his tie loosened between his suspenders, but with his fedora firmly pulled down to his brow (with a card reading “PRESS” tucked into the brim, of course). He clutched a two-piece antique phone and shouted into the mouthpiece: “Hello sweetheart, get me rewrite!” The image first popped up in the ads for the 1974 convention, but he became an icon of the magazine and a symbol of its valuation of hard-bitten news values. Later, owing to popular demand, Norman and (MORE) would add a second poster, a woman in a pinstriped suit with the caption “Hello, handsome, get me rewrite!” on a much calmer blue background. The magazine sold posters with both images. “Hello sweetheart” would be the logo for the admission badges to the West Coast Media Conference. Norman would also sell version of the image to the Washington Journalism Review in 1981, except that the reporter was now holding a contemporary phone and WJR gave it the caption, “Hello, Sweetheart, Get Me the Computer!” At least WJR thought that the phrase and the image still had resonance three years after (MORE) had gone out of business. Norman asked The Columbia Journalism Review, which had acquired the rights to the image, if he could reprint and sell the posters in the

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401 A. Kent MacDougall, interview with the author, August 18, 2012.
402 Marty Norman, interview with the author, December 13, 2011.
early 1980s, and he made a small business of it for a while. The poster even found its way onto network television when a set dresser decorated the newsroom set of the 1977-1982 newspaper drama *Lou Grant*, a rare serious spin-off from a comedy, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

But even if the image now seems bigger than the conferences it advertised, those conferences did take place. There was an ever-increasing tilt toward celebrity and debauchery outside the meeting rooms, but a continued attempt to both challenge and celebrate the press when the panels were in session.

The 1975 New York Counter-Convention came less than three months after the San Francisco foray. Held from May 8-11, it was the last of the regular rites of spring that (MORE) would hold. The party had moved a few blocks to the Hotel Commodore, right next to Grand Central Terminal, and the price rose again, to $20, though still getting conference-goers a new or gift subscription to the magazine.\(^404\) (MORE) did not publish a full program for Liebling IV, though its ads gave teasers of who would be there: (MORE) regular Nick von Hoffman; Jack Newfield of *The Village Voice*; Pauline Kael again; Joe Klein of *Rolling Stone*; Halberstam, Lukas and Hume from (MORE); Gay Talese again; and Gloria Steinem from *Ms.* Steinem was a particularly important “get” for Kathy Jones and the conference planning staff, given the reaction of women’s groups in San Francisco and in the 1974 New York conference. In fact, (MORE) went a step further and sponsored a full day on the Friday of the conference that was devoted to something they called the National Conference on Women and the Media. Other panels would include covering the C.I.A., “Why the Working Man Hates the Media,” self-censorship, New

\(^{404}\) Advertisement for Liebling IV, (MORE): A Journalism Review April 1975, 11.
Journalism revisited, and the role of the critic. There would also be a screening of the documentary *Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman*, which would be introduced by its director and by Gloria Steinem. The ads also teased something called a “media midway,” which turned out to be a carnival of journalism in the hallways of the Commodore.

Even Dick Pollak admitted that something had changed significantly from the first Liebling Convention. He said the conventions’ “creeping institutionalism” was hard to miss. The attendees, he said had accepted management as a given of working in the news business and so (MORE) aimed to give them a “useful” convention more than a “counter” convention. Sure, there were critics, Pollak admitted: “too many stars, too few blacks, too much preoccupation with *The New York Times* and feminists.” But he felt that there was still no danger of becoming the *American Newspaper Publishers Association* convention under another name. “Self-satisfaction hardly seemed the rule” at the conference, Pollak wrote, and he said that it would continue that way as long as readers continued to tell (MORE) what they wanted from the magazine and the convention.

But it is revealing that the one convention panel they chose to transcribe in the magazine was nothing revolutionary, but rather “The Art of the Interview,” in which Nat Hentoff of *The Voice*, Mike Wallace of CBS, Sally Quinn of *The Washington Post* and Richard Reeves of *New York Magazine* shared anecdotes about their interviewing escapades and gave helpful tips to their audience of fawning, envious and also genuinely interested journalists.

The Chicago journalist and oral historian Studs Terkel won the 1975 Liebling Award, the awarding of which was followed by what was supposed to be the marquee

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panel that year—the one on self-censorship. But Jules Witcover, writing for The Progressive, said it was perhaps the most disappointing of the convention. The panelists, ironically, seem to have censored themselves and never got deep into the issue of why the press won’t run certain stories. The conference had become a bit staid, he said, with jackets and ties becoming the uniform on the dais. Though in the end, Witcover said, the convention still worked, even if it had become a bit boring.406

The Village Voice found the ’75 convention to be interesting enough to put on the cover—though disappointing enough to say that the convention “never really jelled” this year.407 The author, Karen Durbin, put the blame on the lack of a single galvanizing issue the way the previous years had had them. She said that in the first three conventions, there was nowhere else you wanted to be if you were a journalist. This one lacked some of that energy, so the journalists in attendance used their excesses out in the Media Midway that (MORE) had promised. Durbin found the entire women’s conference a boring rehash, and says that it gave (MORE) an excuse to leave women off the regular panels the rest of the weekend. There was one all-women panel the rest of the conference, and it was devoted to women “invading” traditionally male beats such as sports reporting. That panel did have one moment of interest though, when a group of women promoting a book of women’s humor attacked the panelists with whipped cream pies. Durbn also went to the panel on criticism, which she enjoyed, since it made her want “to go home and write,” which most panels of writers don’t do. Afterward, she ran into several people

who told her that she had missed the best panel. “I would worry,” she wrote, but people say this to each other at the (MORE) Convention every year.\textsuperscript{408}

Durbin paid a visit to the Media Midway out in the meeting room lobby. According to her, it consists of these things:

• a life-sized photographic cutout of Elaine Kaufman, the woman who owns Elaine’s, a status restaurant for writers and other famous people. Next to the cutout is a sign saying “Get your picture taken with Elaine.”
• a game called “Spot the Typos,” which features some pencils and a couple of bedraggled copies of the New York Post.
• the aforementioned Media Heavy machine. For 50 cents, you take a mallet and hit a lever that will make a ball shoot up a chart. Depending on your heaviness you may ring the gong at the top. At the top of the chart is “$500,000 Book Advance,” with “Pulitzer Price” just below and “White House Correspondent” just below that. In the middle is “(MORE) Contributing Editor.” At the bottom, just below “Copyperson,” is “Rock Critic.”

On Saturday evening, Durbin attended a party (not sponsored by (MORE), featuring “joints, hash brownies, and balloons of nitrous oxide.” She goes to the Liebling Award panel where someone who is less high than she is tells her that the panel is boring. She remembers that the last time she had been that high was at the \textit{Rolling Stone} party at the 1973 (MORE) convention. Clearly she had missed Tom Forcade and the \textit{High Times} hospitality suite in San Francisco.

One night, away from the conference, she and her friends discuss the elitist liberal racism and sexism inherent in (MORE), but like the panels at the conference, the discussion doesn’t seem to go anywhere. At least the \textit{Voice} ran a cartoon of real items overheard at the conference to keep things interesting.

\textsuperscript{408} \textit{Ibid.}, 9.
There is even less information about the final A.J. Liebling Convention than about 1975. *More* placed an ad in *New York* that gave the names of some participants including Seymour Hersh, Nora Ephron, *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt, *New Yorker* critic Brendan Gill, Nat Hentoff, Liz Smith and New York local TV newsman Gabe Pressman. One house ad in *More*, as the magazine had restyled itself after having been sold to Michael Kramer, didn’t give much more information, except to say that the conference had been scaled back to a single day, and its price ramped up again, now to $30. It had also been pushed back to the fall of 1976, likely since the sale of the magazine was being negotiated the previous spring, when the Liebling Convention would normally have been held. There were only six panels in three concurrent sessions. There was one on sources and the effect of Woodward and Bernstein’s “Deep Throat” anonymous source. There was a reprise of “The Art of the Interview” from the previous year (with new panelists, of course). There was a panel about gossip. There was one about obscenity. One panel had private investigators giving tips to reporters. And then the A.J. Liebling award would be given to the staff of 60 Minutes: producer Don Hewitt and correspondents Dan Rather, Morley Safer and Mike Wallace. This last was a change on two fronts: this was the first network news show that would be given the award, even if it was one known for its muckraking journalism; and this was the first time the recipient of the award was announced in advance. Even so, editor Michael Kramer had trouble getting the award made in time, and Don Hewitt ribbed him about it for years, asking him where his award

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409 Ad for Liebling
statue was every time the two talked afterward.\textsuperscript{411} James Aronson, who wrote the only substantial story about the 1976 conference, was offended by the conference in general—he said that he wished Liebling could rise up and reclaim his good name—but especially by the Liebling award. It was accepted, he said “by Mike Wallace, who a few months earlier on "Sixty Minutes" had helped dig a grave at CBS for Daniel Schorr in an interview marked by calculated baiting and, according to Schorr, calculated editing. The award should have gone to Schorr.”\textsuperscript{412}

Even More didn’t even run a substantial recap of the goings-on of this convention. There was a two-page photo spread instead, with a photo caption that referred to the panel about interviews as “controversial” but gave no hint as to why. And so the counter-conventions ended with a bit of a shrug, lost in the shifting management of the last two years of the magazine, and in the shifting priorities of its publishers and editors. The A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention got the worst of it, getting bumped unceremoniously from spring to fall, and then being abandoned altogether.

But the Liebling conventions did have a legacy, and they lived on in the “Hello Sweetheart” posters that young journalists brought home and used as inspiration. Bob Stepno, who recently retired as a journalism and media professor at Radford University, remembered the conferences as “a chance for young reporters from the boonies, who hadn't been to a big journalism school, to connect with the stars of the profession.” He and some friends came down to at least a couple of the conferences from Hartford, where he was then working for the Courant, and had what sounds like typical counter-

\textsuperscript{411} Michael Kramer, interview with the author, January 23, 2013.
convention experiences, looking up at his journalistic heroes, but also meeting the author of a book on polyamorous relationships at a bar across the street. It was, he said, “a very romantic time to be a young journalist:

> even if you were far from the New York excitement. We subscribed to New York Magazine and CJR and [MORE], and we had the New York mag issue that launched "Ms." and the one with a (Sorel?) cartoon showing Superman in a phone booth putting ON his Clark Kent clothes and saying "This is a job for a Mild Mannered Reporter!" under a headline something like "Investigative reporters, the new American heroes."[^413]

(MORE) may have hit on the timing of the romantic side of journalism by accident, the side that turned journalists into celebrities and heroes. But it also had a hand in the mythology—and of course led the fight to make the institutional press think more critically about itself, at least in the magazine’s early days. The Counter-Conventions undoubtedly changed from their origins at the Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center in 1972. But the magazine changed significantly in the period from January 1974 to its demise in 1978, too. It hit its highest point and then found a completely new life before it died, a story that will be told in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

[^413]: Bob Stepno, email to the author, June 28, 2012.
Chapter 4: The Press Becomes the Media, and a Journalism Review Becomes a Media Magazine

No one seems to remember how Claudia Cohen first showed up in the offices of (MORE), but no one could forget her once she did. She was in her early 20s when Dick Pollak hired her to replace Terry Pristin as (MORE)’s assistant editor, only a few months after she graduated from The University of Pennsylvania, where she had been the first woman to edit the college paper, The Daily Pennsylvanian. She was whip-smart, but had a taste for gossip, particularly about High Society. And she was a small part of Society, too. Her father, Robert Cohen, ran the Hudson County News Company, a newspaper and magazine distribution company, and her family had money as a result. For Kathy Jones, Claudia Cohen was a kind of character she had never met before, a charming one, to be sure, but one whose lifestyle was completely alien to her own. “She’d be on the phone discussing with her brother what they were going to buy their mother for her birthday,” Jones said, “and it would be something like a trip to Boca Raton, and they’d be discussing what spa to send her to.” Jones said that her family was more likely to be baking cookies as birthday gifts. Cohen would come to the office dressed like everyone else, except that she would be dragging a fur coat with her. Cohen and Dick Pollak would also occasionally burst out into show tunes, which were apparently a favorite around the (MORE) offices in the middle period of the magazine’s existence—from about 1974 to 1976, when the headquarters moved to Third Avenue, near Grand Central Terminal.414

Robert Friedman, who would edit the magazine when it had changed formats a few years later, also remembers that Cohen would sometimes—and not just on Fridays—slip into

414 Kathy Jones, Interview with the author, November 14, 2011.
the bathroom at the end of the day and come out dressed in a cocktail dress, bound for some party or other.\footnote{Robert Friedman, interview with the author, January 17, 2014.}

It’s unfair to try to extrapolate from the addition of a single person to an editorial staff to a general change in the tenor of the magazine, but Claudia Cohen is emblematic of a change that did start to come over (MORE) in the period from January of 1974 until the summer of 1976, when Rosebud Associates sold the magazine to new owners. This chapter covers the changes in the magazine in that period, when it became gradually slicker—both literally and figuratively—and in the period covered by the magazine’s two subsequent owners.

\textbf{(MORE) Adjusts to the Post-Watergate Press}

As was described in chapter three, Watergate changed the self-regard of the press significantly. In the Vietnam era, members of mainstream press organizations who found themselves to the left, politically, of those organizations, had bemoaned the failures of their institutions to cover the world and the culture as they were, and the first incarnation of (MORE), and its associated counter-conventions, allowed those journalists a place to commune, to vent, to figure out how best to reconstitute the act of journalism within or outside of the institutional press. But when \textit{The Washington Post} began following the Watergate story, or at least when the import of that story became clear, many journalists began to back away from the idea of overthrowing the existing system and focused instead on improving their own practice of journalism within the systems that they began to see as inevitable. To be clear, (MORE) was never a revolutionary magazine. While
many radical writers did attend the Liebling conventions, the core staff of (MORE) seemed to be content to work within the system. During the last few years of Rosebud Associates ownership, (MORE) continued to push up against institutions with the intention of changing them, but not with the intention of toppling them. The magazine wasn’t above embarrassing the press in order to advocate for change, either, as several of the stories that ran in this period will show.

1974: (MORE) in the Post-Watergate era

With the addition of Claudia Cohen, the staff of (MORE) had grown to eight people on the masthead in January 1974. There was Dick Pollak, still leading the magazine and editing most of the longer stories. Claudia Cohen had taken over as assistant editor, managing the Hellbox stories and The Big Apple section. Tony Lukas was still there as a senior editor, but mostly attended editorial meetings and came in with ideas—he wasn’t an every day editor. Woody Woodward had also started to show up less to the office, but Rosebud had hired an associate publisher named Dan McNamee and a business manager named David Lusterman. Malcolm Frouman was art director now, fresh from being a Columbia University undergraduate and a member of their chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society.416

The first few issues of 1974 blend a mixture of the sorts of anti-institutional reporting that (MORE) had always done with a new kind of article that is a little bit more difficult to define. The anti-institutional stuff is easy to identify. There is an article about

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416 This portrait of the office was compiled from interviews with Richard Pollak (September 8, 2011 and February 21, 2012), Kathy Jones (November 14, 2011), David Lusterman (October 31, 2011, via telephone), and Malcolm Frouman (October 27, 2011).
how the press covers David Rockefeller and Chase Manhattan Bank.\textsuperscript{417} Another cover story looks at how reporters have been covering the looming energy crisis, an article illustrated with a Marty Norman drawing of Uncle Sam on his knees, pulling a tourniquet tight with his teeth as he injects oil into his forearm as if it were heroin. A businessman clutching an armful of oil cans and an Arabian sheik look on from behind him.\textsuperscript{418} This sort of criticism of the press’s coziness with big business is very much of a piece with (MORE)’s coverage from 1971–1973. As is the April 1974 cover story, about reporters trying to prognosticate the 1976 presidential election, which follows on nicely from coverage (MORE) did of political reporting in previous years.\textsuperscript{419}

The February 1974 cover story, however, takes (MORE) in a new direction. Illustrated with a photograph of a very hirsute Al Pacino in the role of Frank Serpico, the article looks at the phenomenon of “movies as journalism,” examining the level of truth in films such as \textit{Serpico}. Unsurprisingly, critic Richard Schickel, who wrote the piece, finds the truth lacking, by the standards of journalism.\textsuperscript{420} This piece is not the kind of hard-hitting, take-down-the-abusers-of-power story that (MORE) specialized in in its early days. This isn’t to say that it’s an uninteresting or somehow less valuable piece of journalism, but it does signal the beginnings of a change in the content of the magazine. IN 1974, 1975 and 1976, there would be less of the lingering anger of the New Left reflected in the magazine (despite a design directory who was an SDS member), and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{418} James Ridgeway, “Trying to Catch the Energy Crisis,” (MORE): A Journalism Review, January, 1974, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{419} James M. Perry, “‘I See a Big White House…’” (MORE): A Journalism Review, April 1974, 1.
\end{itemize}
more articles about the role of journalism in society and more lighthearted (but often still cutting) satire.

The May 1974 issue illustrates some of the best and worst tendencies of (MORE) when it came to using humor as a tool. Alexander Cockburn, an Irish-American political journalist and critic wrote the cover story, a satirical look at the use of cliché in foreign reporting. Cockburn starts by picking apart the work of C.L. Sulzberger in particular. Sulzberger was a member of the family that owns The New York Times, and was a foreign correspondent for the paper in the 1940s and ’50s—and a columnist up through the 1970s. But he was old news in 1974, so why did Cockburn pick on him? “It seems to me that C.L. is the summation, the platonic ideal of what foreign reporting is about,”

Cockburn wrote:

It’s true that we do not find him courageously observing Cambodian soldiers on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, but this is incidental. C.L. has divined the central mystery of his craft, which is to fire volley after volley of cliché into the densely packed prejudices of his readers. There are no surprises in his work…. He never deviates into paradox. His work is a constant affirmation of received beliefs. So why spurn the work of the old Zen master?421

Cockburn continues in this mode of praising Sulzberger in order to take down cliché ridden foreign reporting in general, using irony to satire the fatuous and very old-fashioned Sulzberger. He uses much of the rest of the essay as a faux lesson for those who would seek a career as a foreign correspondent, “instructing” them in the proper clichés and received wisdom to spout in various locations. Hong Kong is “a time bomb, but also a listening post, inhabited by China watchers who will eye you with disdain.” And Chou En-lai “is civilized, but a dedicated revolutionary. He has an uncanny

command of detail. This interview should take place late at night and go on for several hours.” In a way, Cockburn seems to be lamenting that all of the really good reporters have focused their attention on Washington, leaving foreign reporting to the lazy and the superficial. It’s cutting and funny satire. Cockburn had given disaster coverage a similar working over in December, 1973, pretending to give a primer in how best to cover volcano eruptions, typhoons and earthquakes—and how to maximize their shock effect among readers. Cockburn wrote that piece with the same snide, but very funny attitude, and the pieces are effective as criticism and satire as well as being amusing. The same issue that contains Cockburn’s piece on foreign reporting, however, also contains a feature that reads more as snide, mean and holier-than-thou. The piece is called “The 10 Worst,” and purports to be an exposé of the most egregiously bad daily paper in the United States. Dick Pollak regretted running the story, nearly four decades later since, as he admitted, the staff of (MORE) really didn’t know much about regional dailies and didn’t really have a team of stringers stationed around the country to give them nominations. Instead they scraped together ideas from friends around the country, and came up with a list: The San Francisco Chronicle, The Boston Herald-American, The Cleveland Plain Dealer, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram, The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, The New Orleans Times-Picayune, The San Diego Union, The Memphis Commercial Appeal, and The Manchester Union Leader. Why those ten? The introductory note doesn’t explain much, except that they had to have a minimum circulation of 150,000 to qualify. Otherwise, the introduction basically admits that the

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422 Ibid.

choices are arbitrary and “impressionistic.” The introduction is almost apologetic for following the trend of ten-best and ten-worst lists.\textsuperscript{424} The entire exercise feels like pandering to readers and a half-hearted attempt to stir up controversy. Perhaps it’s worth noting that the May 1974 issue was tied to that year’s A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention, so perhaps the 10 Worst list was meant to be a sop to journalists traveling in from the provinces, so that they could look at (MORE) and say, “Hey, they make fun of my hometown paper too!” Or maybe it was just meant to give people something to argue about in the hallways of the Roosevelt Hotel.

Around this same time, (MORE) began running a fairly incongruous series of ads. Advertising in the magazine had always been thin. The original idea had been to capture some of the same advertising market that ran in \textit{The New York Review of Books} or \textit{The New York Times Book Review}. But publishers mostly did not seem to be interested in buying space in a journal for journalists. Many of the ads were traded space—(MORE) would get a free ad in \textit{Ramparts} and \textit{Ramparts} would get a free ad in (MORE). Most of the funding for the magazine had been coming from Woody Woodward’s pocket, with occasional foundation support. Subscriptions brought in a little bit of money too, but (MORE) had trouble getting its circulation past 20,000, and Pollak says that he would sometimes check the subscription lists to see if he could identify any ZIP codes outside of the New York tri-state area or Washington D.C. Usually it was only a smattering.\textsuperscript{425} (MORE) was never going to be a general interest magazine, and so it had to rely on advertisers who wanted to reach its particular niche audience. As publishers have long known, niche audiences with small circulation can be just as profitable as large general

\textsuperscript{425} Richard Pollak, interview with the author, September 8, 2011.
interest audiences. *Cat Fancy* can sell ads to cat product manufacturers. An architecture magazine can sell ads to companies that make plumbing fixtures. The problem with (MORE), though, is that journalists are not a niche audience in the same way. (MORE)’s business staff could conceivably sell space to typewriter companies or manufacturers of portable recording equipment, but the market would be very small. David Lusterman, (MORE)’s business manager in this period, later said that (MORE) would never have been viable as a commercial magazine because there is just no product category that makes sense to market to journalists as opposed to the general population—and general advertisers, for the most part, would not be interested in buying space in a magazine with such a small circulation.\(^\text{426}\) The ad that started appearing in 1974 was one for Mobil, the oil and gasoline company. Mobil had come up with a strategy of targeting opinion leaders with advertisements that were supposed to give the company a better name. It had started taking out ads on *The New York Times*’s new op-ed page, and Mobil apparently saw the high-level journalists who read (MORE) as a similar group of opinion leaders. Given the number of anti-Big Oil articles that (MORE) had run, this seems like a fair assumption, but it also means that Mobil would be advertising in something akin to enemy territory. In the July 1974 ad that Mobil ran—a full page—the company ran storyboards for a television commercial it had proposed to the three networks. The ad asked the public for its opinion on offshore oil drilling. Two of the three networks—ABC and CBS—turned down the ad. CBS gave the most thorough explanation, saying that it only accepted ads for good and services, not for “a controversial issue of public importance.” Mobil’s ad or public relations people clearly knew their audience, and made their appeal to (MORE)’s

\(^{426}\) David Lusterman, telephone interview with the author, October 31, 2011.
readers on First Amendment grounds. Mobil said it was “dangerous” for the advertising acceptability departments of the networks to be deciding what issues could or could not be discussed over the broadcast airwaves. Whether or not to accept the ad was an issue that divided the (MORE) staff, and probably its readers as well. Should (MORE) back a First Amendment argument for access to its pages, or should it effectively censor Mobil? And in the debate that the ad itself sparked, would (MORE) support Big Oil or Big Broadcast? Neither was an appealing choice, but (MORE) always needed money, so they took the ad—and Mobil ran ads in the magazine for years to come. Later, in the second physical incarnation of the magazine, the back page would be devoted to Marlboro cigarettes, another advertiser for which the staff felt morally compromised.

The September 1974 issue serves as a good example of the state of (MORE) in this period, and indeed could even be seen as the archetypal issue of (MORE) at its peak under the ownership of its founders. It was also the last issue of (MORE) to run a story on its front page. The next month, Malcolm Frouman switched to a more graphic cover, with an image and cover lines. The cover began to resemble a magazine more than a tabloid newspaper, though the same cheap paper stock remained, as did the general layout of the interior pages. And of course, the iconic “(MORE)” nameplate also stayed. But those changes would come in October. The September issue ran its last front page story, one that was very much in line with the magazine’s history of criticizing press complicity with the government. With Nixon finally having resigned, (MORE) looked at the “honeymoon” that the press was giving Gerald Ford, and found that this was an institution worth getting rid of. Amazingly, given the antagonism between The New York

Times and (MORE)—see chapter five for two case studies of this relationship—the Gerald Ford honeymoon article was written by William V. Shannon, a member of the Times editorial board.

Inside the issue, however, the relationship with the Times felt rockier. Dick Pollak wrote the “Column Two” piece next to the table of contents, in which he detailed how The New York Times fired a reporter named Denny Walsh, in what appears to be direct retaliation for his interaction with (MORE) the previous month.\footnote{Richard Pollak, “Column Two: The Firing of Denny Walsh,” (MORE): A Journalism Review, September 1974, 2} Walsh had written an investigative piece about the mayor of San Francisco, Joe Alioto. Walsh’s piece, which had taken three months to investigate, questioned Alioto’s testimony in a libel case involving Look magazine, and alleged connections between Alioto and members of the mafia. However, The Times never ran the story. (MORE)’s Washington editor, Brit Hume, wrote the cover story for (MORE), in which Walsh claimed that the Times had killed the Alioto story. An editor’s note that ran alongside Hume’s story explained that the original version of the (MORE) story included an excerpt from the report that the Times had killed. Because (MORE) would then be the first publication to make the allegations against Alioto, Hume called his office for comment. Eventually, (MORE) was threatened with lawsuits that—while the journalism review would likely win—might very well bankrupt it. So (MORE) backed off, and ran only Hume’s story, not the excerpts from Denny Walsh’s. Abe Rosenthal, the managing editor of The Times, denied that the story had been killed.\footnote{Brit Hume, “The Mayor, The Times, and the Lawyers,” (MORE): A Journalism Review, August 1974, 1, 16–18.}
So the next month, in the archetypal September 1974 (MORE), Dick Pollak had to report that Denny Walsh had been fired. Pollak accuses the *Times* of hypocrisy, saying that for a publication that speaks out so strongly on behalf of freedom of speech, this censorship of one of its reporters was unacceptable. Pollak justified the accusation of censorship by pointing out that Walsh had offered his manuscript to *Rolling Stone* once he was told that the *Times* wouldn’t be running it. It was through *Rolling Stone* that the story found its way to (MORE), since *Rolling Stone* said that the story wasn’t written in the style of their usual journalism. Rosenthal claimed that the Walsh manuscript had been held because of concerns about the quality of the reporting. Pollak countered this by saying that it would not have been an issue if Walsh had published with *Rolling Stone* or even with (MORE), since the quality of the reporting would no longer be the problem of the *Times*. Rosenthal was also being hypocritical, Pollak wrote, since it had lambasted the Nixon administration for its use of “plumbers” to stop leaks, and yet Rosenthal was behaving in exactly the same way.

Across the page from Pollak’s vitriolic column, the Hellbox section reported on yet another instance of *Doonesbury* censorship, this time for a strip that depicted Republican congressmen falling asleep during the Watergate hearings. After the Hellbox, (MORE) ran an article by contributing editor David Rubin about the risk of attracting a libel suit when doing muckraking journalism. The piece is part exposure of the overuse of libel and part warning to reporters who sought to do such work.430

The ads in the September 1974 issue are also pretty typical for mid-period (MORE). Following Rubin’s piece on libel suits, *The Advocate*, which was then a biweekly newspaper covering news of interest to gays, ran a full-page ad, focusing on how certain publications wouldn’t take their ads. There was also a full-page ad for Mobil, of course, and one for *The American Poetry Review*. So there is one ad for a newspaper run by and for an oppressed cultural minority group, one advocacy ad for a multinational corporation, and one ad—presumably unpaid—for a review of poetry. That spread alone says much about the state of (MORE) in late 1974.

The 1974 issue also profiled a new phenomenon in broadcast journalism—a longhaired, mustachioed television reporter named Geraldo Rivera. The occasion for the profile was Rivera’s recent leap from the local ABC affiliate in New York to his own evening news and variety show. Jane Howard wrote the piece, and like so many people who have tried to assess Rivera since 1974, she was unable to figure out how to classify him: “Is he a swashbuckling muckraker? A name-dropping opportunist? A savior? Or a phony embarked on a one-way deluxe ego trip with no return ticket?”

The piece is prescient in seeing that Rivera would be a part of the media for a long time (though Howard also speculates, jokingly, about a presidential run in 2000, when Rivera would be 57). And it demonstrates (MORE)’s growing interest in the personalities of the media world. Rivera represented something that had only just begun to exist in the first years of (MORE), a celebrity of the new world of “media,” as opposed to “the press.” Some of what Rivera did was clearly journalism, but much of it was not. And (MORE), unlike any other publication in the period, was wrestling with what these changes would mean. The

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431 Jane Howard, ““Stay Right Where You are, Geraldo is Coming!”” (MORE): A Journalism Review, September 1974, 11.
next article in the September 1974 issue dealt with a more recognizable kind of celebrity to a particular generation of journalists—Alexander Cockburn wrote about Frank Sinatra’s relationship with the press on a trip to Australia—but Geraldo was a new animal. (MORE) may not have known just what to make of him, but it had the foresight to be able to identify him, and recognize that his kind would be important in whatever was coming next.

Finally, to close out the archetypal September, 1974 issue of (MORE), Joseph Epstein, then a lecturer in English at Northwestern University, examined the possibility that with Nixon gone, the American people would be looking for a new institution to vilify, and that institution might very well be the Media (Epstein capitalizes it). Wall Street and Madison Avenue had each had their turn, and the Media looked to be next. The requisites were there, he wrote: the Media are powerful; and they have a great potential for manipulation, given their control of information. The only thing that might be missing in the formula for the Media to become the country’s next big villain was a motive. For investment banking and for advertising, the motive was clear: money. But for the Media, he argued, the reward was something more intangible: a sense of being at the center of things, a heady feeling of not merely being where the action is but of having a hand in shaping the action. In short, the media have too much power, and too little responsibility, Epstein argued. And that made people suspicious.

(MORE) continued to monitor the media, of course. That was always the guiding purpose of (MORE), particularly under its founding trio and the group of writers and editors that they brought into their circle. When (MORE) reached the September 1974 issue, it had been publishing for a few months more than three years. They had made themselves an anti-institutional institution. The three A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions that (MORE) had thrown so far had become must-attend events for a certain segment of the elite and aspirational-elite press. (MORE) had reached a peak of its influence and also probably of its performance. But underneath that influence, there were real financial problems at the magazine. In November 1974, the magazine published its required report to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, which monitored the circulation of periodicals. The average press run for the previous year had been 17,131 copies, with the latest issue having 18,909 copies. Paid subscriptions accounted for 13,459 issues, with an additional 2,112 issues being sold on the newsstand. The magazine gave away about 2,500 copies. These were not spectacular numbers, barely enough to sustain publication. The ownership disclosure in the ABC report reflected that. The Audit Bureau required that any shareholder with more than 1% be reported. And in addition to the original three Rosebud Associates, (MORE) had significant investment now from six other investors (one of which was Woody Woodward’s mother). Even at its editorial peak, the magazine was struggling financially. Rosebud Associates would only hold onto the magazine for another year and a half. In that time, the editorial staff continued to do good and important work, with some of the new, more entertainment-oriented journalism mixed in.

(MORE) celebrated the peak of its influence in 1975 by releasing an anthology of some of its best work. The book, *Stop the Presses, I Want to Get Off!*, was published by Random House, and edited by Pollak. It featured a ketchup-red dust jacket with mustard-yellow type, an illustration by Marty Norman of a foot bursting through newsprint, and promotional blurbs from four famous and influential journalists: Studs Terkel, Gay Talese, Dan Rather and Murray Kempton. Talese wrote that “The best journalists in America write for (MORE).” Dan Rather wrote that he often disagreed with it, but that (MORE) was “one of the most important publications in the country.”434 Pollak wrote an introduction to the book discussing what (MORE) had accomplished to date. He wrote that Woody and Tony didn’t share his vision for democracy in the newsroom, but that (MORE) had been a pretty effective nudge when it came to embarrassing publishers into doing better work. The anthology contains pieces by many of (MORE)’s regulars, divided into themes, including the big picture, between the lines, profiles, and institutions. Regular readers of (MORE) wouldn’t have gotten much that was new out of it, unless they wanted a volume to keep on their shelves. Its real value would have been in exposing some of the best material from (MORE) to a more general audience than it normally reached. A review of the book in *Library Journal*, called the prospect of a wider distribution of these stories “altogether healthy.”435 Everette Dennis, who was a professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota at the time, reviewed the book for the

435 Larry Friedman, review of *Stop the Presses, I Want to Get Off! Tales of the News Business From the Pages of (MORE) Magazine*, *Library Journal* 100 (10), May 15, 1975, 979.
academic journal *Journalism Quarterly*. He said that it contained “much good writing and some thoughtful analysis” of journalism.\(^{436}\) He found the book generally worthwhile, but took issue with some of the titles, which he found to be too cutesy and of little value for information retrieval. Curiously, he also calls (MORE) anti-intellectual. His complaint seems to be that (MORE) has little knowledge of the history of journalism or of other press criticism. Perhaps one could come to that conclusion from reading only the book, but the magazine in general is well aware of the history in which it is operating, openly evoking the legacy of the muckrakers and of A.J. Liebling as a press critic. On the whole, (MORE) was actually a vociferous opponent of anti-intellectualism in the American press, constantly pushing for the press to move toward the sort of self-scrutiny that is the hallmark of the intellectual.

(MORE) soldiered on as usual through 1975, with little immediately visible change in its coverage or its themes. Dick Pollak admitted that running the magazine essentially on his own had taken a physical and mental toll, as well as a toll on his personal life, and it is possible that some of this was tempering the energy and enthusiasm that had been the hallmark of the first few years of (MORE). The publication had scaled up in ambition and complexity too, with more longer stories, many more shorter pieces, and a more complicated design makeup. Also of course, external factors affected the kind of coverage that (MORE) attempted, and the magazine seems to have gone into something of a lull of creativity following the successive twin highs created by the energy of New Left anti-institutionalism and by the long Watergate saga. (MORE)

\(^{436}\) Everette E. Dennis, review of *Stop the Presses, I want to Get Off?*, *Journalism Quarterly* 52(4), December 1975, 780.
seemed to fall into a bit of a malaise, just as the country famously would at the end of the 1970s.

There were a few notable stories in 1975 and 1976, of course, with an increase in the number of stories that covered media outside of newsgathering organizations. But (MORE) also continued to excel at forcing the press to examine itself. In that vein, (MORE) assigned journalist and historian Garry Wills to critique an entire year’s issues of (MORE) and to publish the resulting criticism in the magazine. Wills takes the opportunity not just to critique individual articles (in fact, he knows that as a consumer of the elite media, he is exactly (MORE)’s audience), but in fact, Wills uses the piece to expose and undercut the very premise of the magazine. (MORE), he writes, misses the point. It spends all of its energy nitpicking the very few elite news outlets that conform at all to the vision of the press that (MORE) has internalized. He uses the “Ten Worst Newspapers” feature as his jumping-off point. Of course this feature turned out to be bland and almost meaningless, he writes. (MORE) was trying to judge the local newspapers of the United States by the standards of The Washington Post. And most newspapers in the United States in the 1970s were not trying to be the Post. They were trying to serve their readers, who wanted sports and local event coverage and service journalism. Wills makes a distinction between two groups that he calls “The Media” and the press. He suggests that there is an elite media, a group of newspapers and news magazines and a few national news programs who conform to those Washington Post or New York Times definitions of what makes something news. Most of “the press,” as he uses the term doesn’t care to play by those rules, since their circulations are gigantic by playing to the lowest common denominator. He cites circulation statistics for the
highbrow and lowbrow publications, and the contrast is startling. (MORE) does not understand, Wills writes, that it is overlooking and even dismissing most of the publications that are consumed by most of the United States, and is therefore even more of a niche publication than it probably already saw itself as being. The great “invisible journalism” doesn’t interest (MORE) because it doesn’t interest (MORE)’s readers—and so (MORE), in a way, is playing by the same rules as local newspapers or The Reader’s Digest. What it does do, Wills writes, it does pretty well. Wills is right of course that (MORE) neglected to cover most of the media, but there is of course value in pushing for change from the top. They may also just have been a group of elite media members themselves, ones who thought that they were somehow smarter than the people they covered and smug about it. Certainly both attitudes come through in the magazine’s coverage.

What was really wrong with the magazine though wasn’t just its coverage. Even if Wills was right and (MORE) was pandering to its audience as much as any other publication—even if (MORE)’s audience craved gossip about The New York Times’ internal machinations instead of about Patty Hearst’s kidnapping—even if that pandering was working, the audience wasn’t big enough to support a journalism review, and (MORE) was beginning to run out of both money and energy. In September of 1975, The Washington Post reported that (MORE)’s inspiration, The Chicago Journalism Review, would be folding. That review’s subscription list had dwindled to 2500, according to the article, down from a peak of 9000 in 1970. The Post article is confusingly edited, and it seems to be referring in places to two different New York–based journalism reviews that

437 Garry Wills, “What’s Wrong With This Magazine?” (MORE): A Journalism Review, June, 1975, 6–8.
are discussing the assumption of *The Chicago Journalism Review*’s debts and subscription list, but only *The Columbia Journalism Review* is named. At one point, the article says that *The Columbia Journalism Review* “had in recent years become more like its nonacademic counterpart,” which Ron Dorfman, the editor of *The Chicago Journalism Review* helped to organize. The sentence seems to refer to (MORE), though that review is never named, perhaps edited out by someone who found the nomenclature confusing and assumed that “the New York based journalism review” must refer to Columbia’s. At any rate, the omen of *The Chicago Journalism Review*’s death could not have been a happy one for the staff of (MORE).

Less than a year later, *The New York Times* ran an article reporting that a sale was being negotiated for (MORE). In March, 1976, the *Times* interviewed a young *New York* magazine writer named Michael Kramer, who was the leader in a group of investors who were looking to buy the magazine. (MORE), Kramer said, was “the classic case of an undercapitalized publication,” and he planned to put a substantial amount of money into it to expand it, and possibly hire another editor. According to the *Times*, Dick Pollak would stay on as editor, even after Kramer and his group purchased the magazine from Pollak, Lukas, Woodward and Robert Livingston, who was the last publisher of (MORE) in the Rosebud Associates era.438

Dick Pollak didn’t want to sell. He would rather have seen the magazine fold than watch it go into someone else’s hands, at the risk of the founders’ vision being perverted or destroyed. But Woody Woodward didn’t want to be the owner of a publication that failed. And Pollak had personal pressures. He said in an interview that when Kramer

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approached the Rosebud group with his offer to purchase the magazine, Pollak was in the midst of a divorce from his first wife, who told him that if he could get away from his all-consuming magazine and give himself a normal work schedule, then she would not contest joint custody of their daughter.439

Kramer gave more detail about what he planned to do with the magazine in an article that ran in The Washington Post a day after the Times story. Kramer hoped to convert the magazine from a 32-page tabloid into a 64-page saddle-stitched magazine that looked more like a newsstand glossy. He also hoped to bring up the circulation and appeal to a more general audience, one that was not all working journalists. He foresaw a magazine that was so successful that it could ramp up to biweekly or even weekly production. (MORE), in Kramer’s vision, would be a slick magazine with appeal to the general public. According to the final terms of the sale, Rosebud Associates would continue publishing through the June issue. Despite what The New York Times reported, Richard Pollak would not be listed as the editor when it re-launched in a July/August double issue. Michael Kramer would be both publisher and editor of the new incarnation of the magazine.

In the first issue of (MORE) that came out following the reports of its sale, the magazine devoted the cover to one of the biggest celebrity moments in the history of journalism: the release of the movie of All the President’s Men, an adventure story that had a pair of journalists, one of them played by the very glamorous Robert Redford. (MORE) reviewed the movie in that issue. It reviewed the movie eight times, in fact, hiring as temporary film critics the following luminaries: Russell Baker, Dick Cavett, Richard Pollak, interview with the author, September 8, 2011.
Jane Howard, Jeff Greenfield, Kurt Vonnegut, Sam Roberts, Roy Cohn, and Frances Fitzgerald. Mostly the reviewers praised the film, happy that it did not stray too far from the facts (though some complained that not knowing the identity of Woodward and Bernstein’s secret source, Deep Throat, left a shadowy hole at the center of the movie. But here were journalists being played by movie stars, journalists turned into heroes. Despite the fact that the issue was marred by one of (MORE)’s sillier conceits (a mosaic of nearly identical local television news anchormen who were supposedly competing in some sort of beauty pageant), this issue, the third-to-last in the five-year run of Rosebud Associates, feels like a sort of valedictory moment. As the cover line said, “News Biz Goes Show Biz. (MORE) had chronicled the press from a moment in which reporters felt equally stymied by their government and their own employers into an age when reporters had brought down a corrupt president. To top things off (and perhaps to counter-balance the frivolity of the Anchorman Face-Off, (MORE) also ran an article about how Mobil Oil was confusing the debate over the energy crisis with its propaganda.

Two months later, the last page of the last issue of (MORE) to be produced by Rosebud Associates was devoted to a full-page ad placed by Mobil.

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Michael Kramer brings *New York* slick to his new magazine

When *More* returned to its subscribers’ mailboxes and showed up on newsstands in the late summer of 1976, it certainly *looked* like a different publication. The cheap newsprint and the tabloid sized pages were gone, replaced by glossy magazine stock in a traditional magazine size—about eight inches by eleven inches. The iconic squared parentheses were gone from the logo as well. And more importantly than that, the subtitle of the magazine had changed. No longer would (MORE) be a journalism review. Now it was *More: The Media Magazine*. That change alone says as much about the new direction that the magazine was taking as the physical redesign.

That redesign was done by Milton Glaser and Walter Bernard. Glaser was a co-founder of *New York* magazine with the editor Clay Felker, and would achieve his most lasting fame when he designed the “I (heart) NY” logo for New York City tourism. Bernard was his design partner. Since Michael Kramer was a *New York* columnist, Felker agreed to “loan” Glaser to *More* for its redesign. Glaser and Bernard did not become regular staff members, but remained on the masthead of the magazine as “design consultants.” Kramer says that he took advantage of that consultant status, and took mock-ups of every month’s cover to Glaser for his criticism. According to Kramer, Glaser thoroughly reworked almost every cover, in one case practically ordering Kramer to arrange a photo shoot for a brand new cover idea.

Despite the physical overhaul, the masthead of the new *More* did not look as different from the old one as fans of the old (MORE) might have feared. Kramer was

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editor and publisher, of course, but his executive editor was the journalist Ron
Rosenbaum, who had been working for the previous incarnation of (MORE) as well.
Claudia Cohen got a promotion to managing editor. Longtime contributors Philip Nobile
and David Rubin got space on the masthead as senior editors. And even though Kramer
had, at one point, said that Richard Pollak would stay on as the editor, he was apparently
willing to move a few slots down and remain on staff as associate editor. Malcolm
Frouman stayed on as art director. Quite a few other familiar names stayed on as
contributing editors, too, including David Halberstam, Bob Kuttner, J. Anthony Lukas
and even cartoonist Marty Norman. Kramer also added seven editorial assistants, who
functioned mostly like interns—young, eager journalists who were willing to work for
nothing, or almost nothing, in exchange for being able to work with people like those
listed above them on the masthead. Perhaps the most significant change though, was the
expansion of the business side of the magazine. In addition to Kramer, who straddled
both sides, there was now an associate publisher, a business manager, an advertising sales
person and a publishing assistant.

But did the content change? In his introductory letter, Kramer outlines what he is
trying to do in revamping the magazine. He’s not changing More’s focus on print
journalism, he writes, just expanding it. Instead of covering only the press, the new More
would cover “the other kingdoms in the media realm: television, film, radio, advertising,
publishing, public relations, design and marketing.” Of course not all of this was new.
The old (MORE) had devoted an entire issue to publishing and a steady trickle of articles
afterward. It had looked at advertising and public relations from the point of view of the

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journalist—a somewhat adversarial point of view, to be sure. And Kramer was being somewhat disingenuous when he said that the old version of (MORE) had focused entirely on print journalism; surely he knew that the journalism review had done fairly extensive coverage of broadcast journalism as well.

The first issue though did reflect some of Kramer’s added portfolio. For one thing, the “Big Apple” department, focusing on New York City media was gone, but Hellbox remained, and eight or nine new departments made their debut (depending on whether or not one counts “Rosebud,” which had previously been a part of the Hellbox). Those departments were: Language, Advertising (which got two stories the first month, perhaps signaling a particular interest), Sports, Television, Timeswatch (focused entirely on More’s old bête noir, The New York Times), Foreign Desk, Nuts & Bolts, and Publishing. There were also nine major feature stories, a significant increase over the average issue in the era of the founders.

The Michael Kramer era of More started with a splash. The cover story examined Spiro Agnew’s accusation that the media was run by a “Jewish cabal.” The piece is an interesting and nuanced one, given the delicacy of the subject matter. The author, Stephen Birmingham, begins with an exploration of the different social strata of Jewish society in New York City—the differences between German and Eastern European Jewish descendants, the separation between observant and secular Jews. He does this by way of dispelling the “cabal” part of Agnew’s accusation. But, as a sidebar called “25 Jews in the News,” attests, in 1976, there was a large number of Jewish journalists and publishers, and Birmingham turns to Stephen Isaacs’ book Jews and American Politics for some of the historical reasons that Jewish people are attracted to media careers—a
history that Agnew ignored. Isaacs points to a history of support for intellectualism as a route out of ghettos and into mainstream society, as well as an emphasis on education in general. And he also notes that many of these Jews in the media consider themselves journalists first, Jews second, and he lists three *New York Times* staffers alone who go by their initials in bylines in order to avoid their revealing first name: Abraham.

The magazine also has profiles of the very well-known *New York Times* writer R.W. Apple, and one of a writer the magazine called “one of the least-known and best writers we have.”446 The critic John Leonard wrote a guide for those who planned to watch the political conventions on television—what to watch, and what not to. Regular contributor Nick von Hoffman contributed a piece, too. The debut sports column was about New York Yankees broadcaster Mel Allen, and the first television column was written by Frank Rich, who would go on to be *The New York Times* theater critic and then a columnist for *New York*. Dick Pollak inaugurated the column about the *Times*. And the “Nuts & Bolts” column, written by a science writer, literally described how a television works. And there was a piece that called William Safire stiff and old-fashioned. Safire had recently started a column about language in *The New York Times*.

It is an ambitious re-launch issue, and it is supported by significantly more ads than ever appeared in the Rosebud era. There is one for Mobil, one for International Paper, one for the book publishing arm of *The New Republic*, one for *New York* (which was likely a gift from Clay Felker to his protégé), one for a biography of Nelson Rockefeller (co-written, not coincidentally, by Michael Kramer), one for *The Progressive*

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magazine, one for Seagram’s 7 whiskey, and a back cover ad for Marlboro cigarettes. Those are all full page ads, and there is a smattering of smaller ads in the magazine, too. It’s unclear how many of them were paid, but eight full ad pages was still far short of the number Kramer had calculated that the magazine needed to turn a profit.

By the second issue under Kramer’s leadership, Malcolm Frouman was gone—off to a job at *The New York Review of Books.* Rudy Hoglund replaced him as art director. The issue itself was thinner, perhaps because the debut issue was meant to be a double issue. Advertising issues had moved to the cover for the first time too. The cover story of the September 1976 is about the outcome of a talent search for the perfect child to star in a new campaign for breakfast cakes that Hostess was going to begin marketing. Three other stories recalled the (MORE) of old—two about the *Washington Post* and one that is a collection of memories about starting out journalistic careers on the police beat. In October, the cover story returned to politics, with a story by Ken Auletta about how the Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter deals with the press. But that serious story was followed immediately by a bit of frivolity about Hollywood actors who write poetry.

Despite the new, broader focus on media, Kramer’s more populist approach to editing had not elicited huge circulation gains as he had wanted. By the end of 1976, the Audit Bureau of Circulation report that *More* filed showed that subscriptions had actually

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447 Malcolm Frouman, interview with the author, October 27, 2011.
dropped. The average number of paid subscriptions in the preceding year had been 14,626. By the end of 1976, that number had actually dropped to 11,958. Newsstand sales were up slightly, but not nearly enough to counteract the drop-off in subscriptions.

Kramer’s new vision for the magazine was struggling, as it was unable to find that general audience—even as the January, 1977 issue marked the first glossy, staged photograph to appear on More’s cover, after six years of cartoons. The image illustrated a story called “Kiss & Tell Journalism,” by Ron Rosenbaum, and it was the cover that Milton Glaser came up with and told Michael Kramer to redo. Kramer had come to Glaser with a cover done entirely in type, and according to Kramer, Glaser said, “Are you crazy? Are you out of your minds? This is the one thing you’ve done that could mildly be considered salacious. You need to get some journalists in bed together!”451 The final cover shows a shirtless Rudy Hoglund, the art director, in a brass bed with a woman model. He is tape recording something; she is typing on an electric typewriter. That issue also had a series of remembrances of The New York Post by various alumni of that publication. The feature was tied to the news that Dorothy Schiff, the longtime owner of the paper, had sold it to the Australian press baron Rupert Murdoch.

The profile of Rupert Murdoch that Rupert Murdoch killed

Rupert Murdoch had already been living in New York for three years before most of the city's journalism establishment cared much about who he was. Sure, he owned a few papers around the country, and he was known for having turned The News of the World from a winkingly naughty paper that hid behind a screen of Victorian propriety

into the screaming scandal sheet that it remained until this year. And of course he was
also known for being an Australian press lord. But in New York, he was quiet, a one man
sleeper cell getting the feel for a new place—making friends with Clay Felker, the man
who bought *New York* magazine from the ashes of the New York Herald-Tribune and
turned it into the first city magazine, and then, through Felker, Murdoch made the
acquaintance of Dorothy Schiff, the longtime Roosevelt liberal (and rumored Roosevelt
paramour) who had turned America's oldest newspaper into a tabloid aimed at a
diminishing, mostly Jewish, educated middle class readership.

And then Murdoch struck, buying the *Post* from his New York social scene
acquaintance, Dolly Schiff. She was a cantankerous, capricious publisher, to be sure, and
even those writers who respected her and were loyal to her didn't seem to like her much.
But still, the sale of the *Post* to the Australian press lord? That was a *story* (one, it seems,
that the *Post* itself was scooped on).

Clay Felker wasn't going to let this story get away, though. He too was
unpredictable as an editor, but most of the time, people threw in words like "extremely
talented" or even "genius." The man had more or less invented a category of media, and
had nurtured the careers of "New Journalists" like Tom Wolfe, Jimmy Breslin and his
own wife, Gail Sheehy. So Felker jumped into editorial action when the *Post/Murdoch*
news broke. *New York* commissioned cover art from illustrator David Levine, known for
his *New York Review of Books* caricatures. Levine came back with a portrait of Rupert as
a killer bee, his stinger pointed toward the base of the new World Trade Center towers,
and his ham-pink, crosshatched face immediately recognizable.
And for the profile itself, Felker's magazine enlisted a pair of writers, showing in his choices some of that editorial acumen he was known for. Presumably to handle the New York angle, but with knowledge of Britain, Felker charged Jon Bradshaw, a New York contributing editor who had also written a book about backgammon, of all things, and had worked as a writer in England (at the Sunday Times, long before Murdoch bought that, too). And to get the Australian side of things, Felker turned to Richard Neville, the co-founder of an Australian satirical magazine called Oz, a magazine that between its Australian and English versions, got Neville involved in no fewer than three obscenity trials (and earned him the honor of being played in movies by both Hugh Grant and Cillian Murphy).

And then, before they went to press, the story and the illustration were killed. Rupert Murdoch had bought New York.

A January, 1977 article in Time claims that “Felker thought better of it,” though it also implies that the illustration was a reaction to the news that Murdoch had wrested New York away from Felker, which seems bizarre, unless it was commissioned in the period when Murdoch was still wrestling and Felker was still clinging to his beloved creation. What seems more likely is that the story and cover illustration were commissioned in that brief period (less than two months, from Thanksgiving to New Year's) between Murdoch's purchase of the Post and his takeover of New York. And if Rupert Murdoch owned New York, there was no way down under that it would be running a comprehensive cover story about the boss's past.

The story did eventually run, just not in New York. Instead, More continued its tradition of swiping up stories that had, in one way or another, been too hot for their
According to the italicized blurb that introduced the article in the February, 1977 issue, the article and illustration (which More ran on its own cover) "were commissioned before Rupert Murdoch acquired control of that publication."

More had already run a pretty extensive package on Murdoch's Post coup, just the month before. The January number featured an article on how Murdoch's takeover of the Post might result in “old-fashioned newspaper war,” especially if the Daily News dared to enter the evening newspaper market (though of course it was the Post that switched to mornings). There was a collection of memoirs of Dolly Schiff by former Post people Pete Hamill, and Nora Ephron and by indy muckraker and proto-blogger I.F. Stone. Doug Ireland, a veteran of the Post, as well as New York and a third publication that wound up under Murdoch in the New York deal, the Village Voice, wrote the main news story, as well as a sidebar on how the Newspaper Guild would handle Murdoch if he tried to fire their unionized employees. “He ain't gettin' rid of nobody in Guild jurisdiction,” Ireland quoted the executive vice president of the Guild as saying. "We don't exist as a severance paying mechanism." As Rich points out in his piece, Murdoch didn't have to fire them. He just drove them (most of them, anyway) away.

But even with all of this prior coverage, how could More turn down the opportunity to run the profile of Rupert Murdoch that might have been inspired by Rupert Murdoch's looming takeover of the magazine that commissioned it, and that was doomed

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by the fact that Rupert Murdoch conquered that magazine, leaving story and illustration unceremoniously impaled on a spike?

Given what we now know about Rupert Murdoch, the profile isn't shocking (though it is slightly odd that Neville quotes himself in the third person). We learn about his Charles Foster Kane–like beginnings in Australia, redeeming his father's lost newspaper career. We learn about his first attempt to own a "respectable" paper when he founds *The Australian*. We learn about the takeover of *The News of the World*. There's even a seven-column spread of 21 covers of the *Daily Mirror* from 1976, most of which have pretty prosaic headlines, given the “Headless Body in Topless Bar” excesses that were to come at the *Post*. 455

The one story that sticks out and seems to have largely been forgotten is the shocking and incredibly relevant story of Digby Bamford. Here is Bradshaw and Neville (and given the kicker to this story, likely more Neville than Bradshaw)'s version of the story in full:

One day in March 1964, a bewildered migrant walked into the offices of Murdoch's *Daily Mirror*, clutching his daughter's diary in his hand. Appalled by what he had read, he sought advice from the seemingly omnipotent arbiters of community taste. For other reasons, the *Mirror* shared the migrant's concerns and decided to print the contents of the little red book on its front page: "Sex Outrage in School Lunchbreak," the Mirror blared. Reproduced passages of the girl's diary spoke of secret rendezvous and sexual encounters with schoolmates. As a result of the publicity, the 14-year-old girl and her "boyfriend," Digby Bamford, were expelled from school. And for Murdoch's readers, that is where the story ended. It was never reported that the following day, young Digby Bamford was found hanging from a clothesline in his backyard; nor was it ever reported that a pathologist from the children's welfare department filed a report of the incident in which he stated that the 14-year-old girl was still a virgin.

Only Richard Neville's "obscene" publication, Oz, printed the whole story at the time.\textsuperscript{456}

What this 1977 profile in More—one which was published almost exactly my entire lifetime ago—shows, is that we knew who Rupert Murdoch was long before the NOTW phone hacking scandals. And even then it was old news, as Bradshaw and Neville saw:

Since 1952 he has built his bordello of newspapers across three continents. For 25 years, his papers have been purveyors of cheap thrills, inciters of death and false alarms, advocates of obsolete prejudices, saboteurs of taste, hawkers of back seats and second fiddles, of cocks and bulls.\textsuperscript{457}

So our assessment today of Murdoch isn't hindsight. It's just sight. We've seen it all along. It's just that until now, we've also played along. The subhead to the More story asks, "Is this the future?" And the answer, of course, is yes. Yes it was.

**The last six months of Kramer's More**

The month after More published the long profile of Murdoch, Dick Pollak and Tony Lukas disappeared from the masthead for the first time in the magazine’s publication history. It’s not clear what happened. Neither Kramer nor Pollak remembers, and Lukas died in 1997. Meanwhile, the magazine was getting thinner again. The 64-page issue that Kramer had hoped to produce every month had fallen to a 54-page issue. The April 1977 issue had only four feature stories and four departments, plus the Hellbox. In May, that fell to only two feature stories and three departments, plus Hellbox. But that month Kramer added a young freelance writer named Robert Friedman to the masthead as a

\textsuperscript{456} Ibid., 14.  
\textsuperscript{457} Ibid., 23.
senior editor. Friedman had begun writing for the magazine when Pollak was still the editor, but even though the first and second editors were feuding over the direction that More should go in, Friedman had maintained relationships with both of them, and Kramer invited him on board as a staff member. Friedman readily agreed, not having had a regular job since he had graduated from college several years earlier.\textsuperscript{458} It is probably not a coincidence that Friedman moved onto the masthead when Claudia Cohen left the magazine. He took her spot, and within a few months he had her last title, too: managing editor.

Michael Kramer says that one of the pieces he is most proud of in his time as editor of More was a pair of articles about criticism that ran in the July/August 1977 issue. The first piece, by Gerald Nachman, a critic for The New York Daily News, critiqued the critics of the New York papers.\textsuperscript{459} But it was the second one that Kramer was really proud of: a study of the power of critics, conducted by two New York University professors with help from a University of Rochester researcher. The study took six months—half the time that Kramer owned More, and looked at the theater reviews of five critics over a ten-year period, assigning a numerical value from 1.0 (for a pan) to 5.0 (for a rave). The study did conclude that critics have the power to close a show. There was a strong correlation between critics writing pans and the show closing within 50 performances. Of course, the shows may also have closed because they were terrible. But while academics

\textsuperscript{458} Robert Friedman, interview with the author, January 17, 2014.
had long written for *More*, this article was the only instance of the magazine commissioning its own academic study.\(^{460}\)

In the last year of *More*, some of the covers begin to feel prophetic, or even as if there is an intended double meaning. The September 1977 issue devotes the cover to an article about obituaries. The cover photo has five mourners surrounding an open casket. All five mourners—and the man in the casket—are reading the newspaper. Only the dead man seems unsurprised by what he’s reading; everyone else has their mouths agape. Perhaps they’re reading some deathbed revelation about which the corpse himself was well aware. Or perhaps he’s only unperturbed because he’s dead.

But that issue was the last one produced by Michael Kramer as editor and publisher. News of the sale came just as the September issue would have been hitting the newsstands, so there was less lead-time before the next owners took over than there was when Kramer bought the magazine from Rosebud Associates. Kramer told *The New York Times* that the magazine had been losing too much money to sustain it. He claimed that the circulation had doubled from 10,000 to 20,000 (though the Audit Bureau number seem to contradict that claim), but said that the magazine had lost about $400,000 since he had bought it the previous summer, and it was currently $100,000 in debt. The new owner would be James Adler, who had made a personal fortune by founding the Congressional Information Service, a company that turned Congressional documents into microfilm and made them accessible. He would take over control of the magazine by

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assuming its liabilities. Robert Friedman would become editor.\textsuperscript{461} Friedman had maintained relationships with both Kramer and with Dick Pollak and Tony Lukas, which worked out well, since James Adler, the new publisher, had brought Pollak and Lukas back as advisers. Friedman says that during his time as editor, from the time James Adler bought it until it folded less than a year later, he did not know Adler well at all, and could never speak to his motivations for buying the magazine, even when they were ostensibly working together.\textsuperscript{462} The \textit{Washington Post} article about the sale calls Adler “a loyal subscriber” to \textit{More}, and also notes that Adler and Tony Lukas had worked together at \textit{The Harvard Crimson} when they were in college. So it is entirely possible that Pollak and Lukas knew that \textit{More} was in financial trouble and that they actively recruited Adler as publisher, hoping that he would set the magazine’s finances right again, and allow Friedman to set a clear editorial course that was in line with the one that the two co-founders had established in 1971. The \textit{Post} quotes Pollak, who expresses a tentative enthusiasm about the new publisher. “I want to feel enthusiastic,” he said. He says that it was the first time that someone who owned the magazine would have real business experience.\textsuperscript{463}

The \textit{Post} article also reveals that the investors group that Kramer had led had called themselves Namequoit, Inc. Anthony Lukas, William Woodward and Richard Pollak had called their group Rosebud Associates in a sly reference to the childhood sled of the newspaper magnate Charles Foster Kane in the film \textit{Citizen Kane}. Namequoit was named

\textsuperscript{462} Robert Friedman, interview with the author, January 17, 2014.
for “the summer sailing camp on Cape Cod that Kramer and his fellow investors attended as children.”

Given Woodward’s immense family wealth, perhaps it is unfair to see resonance in that difference, but one name clearly calls to a mythical history of journalism and the other seems to indicate a stronger interest in money. But again, that may be unfair.

Robert Friedman takes More to the end

The October 1977 issue feels like something of a reunion of the old (MORE) staff, even though the magazine has a new editor and a new publisher. James Adler, in his note from the publisher, seems to be saying the same thing: the old magazine you knew is in good hands again:

My job as publisher is to provide MORE with the kind of stability, support, and solid management it has always needed. Given this firm foundation, MORE will become a better magazine than it has ever been before. And every reader knows that MORE at its best has been very good indeed.

Adler promises to expand the magazine’s Washington coverage—since he is going to remain in Washington himself—and to refocus the magazine on strong, independent press criticism. He also announces that both Pollak and Lukas have returned as associate editors, as has David Rubin.

The first cover story under Friedman (though given the lead-time of magazine articles, it’s possible that it was commissioned earlier) looked at a growing and important issue in the late 1970s: media monopolies. More ran three stories in the package. One examined the recent Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals decision that ordered all

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464 Ibid., B12.
companies that owned a newspaper and a broadcast station in the same market to sell the broadcast station unless it could prove that the cross-media ownership was in the public interest.\textsuperscript{466} The second was a case study of a man named John Johnson, who owned the only newspaper, the only television station, and two local radio stations in Watertown, New York. He was also a powerful political figure in the area.\textsuperscript{467} The third story was a review of research on the effects of cross-media ownership.\textsuperscript{468} It was as thorough a package as \textit{More} had ever put together on a single subject, and one that was very much representative of the sort of media consolidation that was going on all over the country in 1977. \textit{More} would run a similar package of stories a few months later, looking at press freedom in South Africa. The other major stories in the October issue are a profile of the owner of \textit{Variety}, a story about an American reporter who was kicked out of the United Kingdom for violating the Official Secrets Act, and a story by Pollak about the developing law suit that a group of women had brought against \textit{The New York Times}.

The next month, \textit{More} returned to coverage of Rupert Murdoch, but this time Friedman and writer Rinker Buck got Murdoch to talk. Friedman remembered how difficult Murdoch was to deal with. Murdoch would not talk to \textit{More} unless he was able to see the story beforehand, and approve his quotes. Friedman told him that journalism did not work that way. Eventually, he was able to get Murdoch to agree to a compromise: he could see the story before publication, but could not make any changes.\textsuperscript{469} Murdoch

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{469} Robert Friedman, interview with the author, January 17, 2014.
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agreed to quite a long interview and answered questions about the tabloid’s coverage of
the Son of Sam murders (Murdoch directed much of the coverage himself), about press
monopolies (he claimed he had no ambition to grow, but admitted that there was a lot of
room for growth), and about accusations that The Post’s news coverage blatantly favored
candidate Ed Koch against Bella Abzug in the recent New York City mayoral election (he
denied it). But More, in keeping with its tradition of independence, analyzed the actual
coverage and found that Murdoch was either lying, uninformed, or just wrong. The
analysis found zero unfavorable articles about Koch after the day The Post endorsed
him. ⁴⁷⁰

The departments covering advertising, television, and all of the various other media
are notably missing from the first few issues under Friedman. Only Hellbox, Rosebud
and the catch-all Furthermore remain. The other media are still covered—they have not
disappeared completely—but they aren’t the focus that they used to be.

More continued to attract big name authors in its last few issues. Roy Blount, Jr.
contributed a piece about weathercasters in April 1978, ⁴⁷¹ and Christopher Hitchens also
wrote a piece that month, about an editor who became a terrorist target after
accompanying Egypt’s Anwar Sadat on a trip to Israel. ⁴⁷² Todd Gitlin and Michael Arlen
were contributors to the same issue. But in the unintentional tradition of prophetic cover
lines, the May 1978 issue declared: “And Then There Was One.” More would go out of
business after the June issue.

⁴⁷⁰ Rinker Buck, “Can The ‘Post’ Survive Rupert Murdoch?” More: The Media
April, 1978, 30–35.
⁴⁷² Christopher Hitchens, “Assassination in Nicosia,” More: The Media Magazine, April,
The editorial staff must have been living in dread of the end, because James Adler had been shopping the magazine around since at least April. Adler had been sick, hospitalized for a month. Adler claimed that he had fielded several offers, though he didn’t tell *The Washington Post* whom those offers were from. 473 The editors were equally desperate to find a new owner to keep the magazine in business, and were happy to talk to the press. Pollak, Friedman, Rubin and senior editor Karl Manoff told *The New York Times* that *More* had lost $1.3 million in its existence, and probably needed $750,000 over three years to be saved. 474 Adler put the number at between $300,000 and $600,000. 475 But while Adler and the editors looked for more than a month to find a savior, they were unable to find anyone willing to take on the project, without compromising *More*’s principles, and at a price that wouldn’t lose too much money for Adler.

*More* put out its June issue, featuring a cover story by Nicholas von Hoffman previewing the Supreme Court case in which WBAI, the New York City Pacifica Radio station which was challenging FCC sanctions. WBAI had aired some of the comedian George Carlin’s “Seven Dirty Words,” and the type and quantity of the “dirty” words had offended a few listeners. In the same issue, Noam Chomsky looked back on the Tet Offensive, ten years later. But there was lighthearted material too—a piece about how *The New York Times* covered animals, and a bit of black humor about how media outlets in New York City would respond to a neutron bomb going off in Midtown.

But then, in July, the obituaries came. July 22, 1978, in both *The Washington Post* and *More’s longtime nemesis The New York Times*. *More* would be ending publication and selling its subscription list to its stodgy older rival, *The Columbia Journalism Review*. Edward Barrett, the publisher of *CJR*, said that there would be no editorial changes as a result of the merger. The *Post* wrote a more perceptive article about the sale, noting the “touch of irony” that left some staff members bitter about the sale, since (MORE) was originally meant to be an alternative to *The Columbia Journalism Review*. Adler chose Columbia because he had lost $400,000, and he was donating the magazine to Columbia, which is a tax-exempt institution. That would allow him to take a tax exemption for the donation. Though Adler and the editors had been looking for a buyer since April, only two real offers had emerged. Adler turned down one from a commercial publisher that had sought to turn *More* into a sort of gossip magazine. The other had come from the liberal opinion magazine *The Nation*, which had wanted to turn *More* into a press section of the magazine. Adler had turned down that offer because they had not offered enough money.

Tony Lukas was bitter about the donation. He called *CJR* stodgy and out of touch with younger journalists, and had a special contempt for Adler: “For Adler to not only destroy the magazine, but then hand it to the magazine to which it was supposed to be an alternative, is the ultimate irony and the ultimate obscenity,” Lukas told the *Post*. He said that in ten months, Adler had done nothing to support the business side of the magazine. He called asking Adler to take over “the single biggest mistake” that the editorial staff of

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More had ever made. But the magazine was probably never commercially viable, and its end was probably inevitable, even if it had not come at the hands of James Adler. The Post article mentioned that The Columbia Journalism Review was in talks with at least one More staff member to come on board.478

And with that irony, More came to an end. There had been 58 issues under the original ownership. Michael Kramer had overseen 13 issues. Robert Friedman had put out nine issues under the ownership of James Adler. There had been six conventions, four in New York, one in Washington D.C. and one in San Francisco. Circulation had peaked at a little more than 20,000. Thousands more had attended the conventions. And maybe the magazine had influenced the press that it covered. Certainly, it had managed to annoy the media, the primary role of a gadfly. The following chapter looks at two case studies of the relationship between (MORE) and its primary target, The New York Times, to examine the complicated influence that the journalism review had over the press.

478 Ibid.
Chapter 5: The Loyal Opposition: (MORE) and The Times

From the moment that (MORE) debuted in 1971, it was clear to some observers that the new journalism review existed in large part to antagonize The New York Times. A Newsweek article announcing the new review said that the lack of a journalism review prior to (MORE)’s launch was “a notable lapse for a city that is the nation’s television center as well as the home of its two leading newsmagazines and two of its most important dailies, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.” Newsweek (which, yes, did call itself one of the nation’s leading newsmagazines) then quoted Richard Pollak, the founding editor, who said, “This is the town where the the targets are.” Though none of the major articles in the first issue of (MORE) were specifically about the Times, co-founder Tony Lukas had helped establish the magazine in part owing to his frustration with the constraints of the institution that the Times had become, reinforcing a particular culture of un-self-questioning professionalism that a certain breed of reporter found stifling. And in addition to Lukas and his former Times colleague David Halberstam, the issue also featured an article by Charlotte Curtis, the editor of the paper’s women’s page, as the section was still called in 1971.

Though none of the major stories in the first issue of (MORE) directly addressed the Times, the interplay between the venerable watchdog newspaper and the gadfly that would circle around it for the next eight years began with a short item in (MORE)’s “Hellbox” column. Homer Bigart, the respected war correspondent who, (MORE) noted, was a year from retirement, had covered the court martial of Lieutenant William Calley, who had been convicted for his role in the My Lai massacre. The Hellbox column ran Bigart’s original copy and the edited line that ran in the Times side by side. In the
original, Bigart made the point, in two paragraphs, that despite being convicted of the heinous crime, he had been treated gently by the army as he was escorted out of court. The edited version was a single line saying that Calley had not been handcuffed, but without any of the nuance or context that Bigart had put into his report. The editing incident at the *Times* has clear connections to some of the battles Lukas had with his own editors at the paper, and also foreshadows the snarky relationship that (MORE) and the *Times* would have over the next eight years.

A.M. Rosenthal, the managing editor of *The New York Times* in the period, kept several files on (MORE), and an examination of those files, along with other sources, including oral history interviews with (MORE) editors and contributors, shed some light on the relationship between an organ of press criticism and the mainstream publications that it covers. That relationship is complicated, at times indirect and subtle, but also influential. This chapter argues that (MORE) did, in fact, influence the behavior of its favorite and most consistent target in significant ways. Though the chapter will outline (MORE)’s coverage of the *Times* in general, it focuses on two case studies about which substantial records can be found: the influence (MORE) had on the standardization of the *New York Times* correction policy and (MORE)’s revealing of the identities of *Times* employees who had participated in a confidential academic book project by a scholar of organizational behavior—a book project that found the paper’s hierarchy to be stubbornly resistant to change and self-examination, in exactly the ways that Tony Lukas and Homer Bigart might have complained about.

One might expect that the organized press would be less than thrilled about having to deal with a new publication that existed almost entirely to point out its flaws.
The New York Times, in its relationship with (MORE), was certainly no exception to this. But the nuanced relationship that the Times, led editorially by managing editor A.M. Rosenthal, differs to some extent from the relationships that (MORE) had with some of the other news organizations it covered regularly. One point of contrast, The New York Post, is instructive.

Dorothy Schiff had been an early, if conflicted supporter of (MORE), seemingly proud that Woody Woodward, a protégé of hers, had left to become the publisher of his own magazine, while also making sure to distance The Post from whatever editorial policies this new anti-institutional journalism review might espouse. That caution appears to have proven immediately effective, as (MORE)’s publication of a memo from their reporter Ted Poston (detailed in chapter two of this dissertation) ended any sympathy she might have had for it. She drafted a two-page letter to the editor which she never sent. Her main complaints are that Poston’s name was misspelled, that Poston’s letter and her response were quoted in part, and that she had never said that The Post’s defense of the case might cost more than $100,000 in legal fees, as a sidebar had claimed.479 A few days later, Schiff received a memo from her assistant, Jean Gillette, saying that a reporter named Claudia Dreifus had called, asking for comment on a story she was writing about employment conditions for women in the media.480 Even though her inquiry had nothing directly to do with Artis/Poston case, Dreifus became the first (MORE) reporter to be flatly turned down for an interview by Schiff. Once she had been angered by the Poston

piece, she shut (MORE) out completely. Schiff called Dick Pollak that afternoon and
asked her assistant to monitor and transcribe the call. In the transcript, the estimate of The
Post’s legal fees is her main concern. Pollak stood by his reporter, but offered to correct
the mistake. Schiff replied that she was “going to write you a letter anyway, because there
are many, many other things in the article I need to correct.”

Pollak: In other words, you no longer will speak to anyone associated with
(MORE)

Schiff: On the grounds that I don’t dare to since this happened and I don’t
know how experienced these reporters are, because if they are going to get things
that terribly wrong and damaging, I can’t take the chance. Normally, being in this
business, I talk to reporters because I don’t like it when people won’t talk to us,
but I can’t take the chance.  

Schiff drafted another version of her letter, which was significantly terser and
more curt than her first draft. It was only a series of questions to which she demanded yes
or no answers. The article, this draft asserted, was “replete with factual errors, half truths
and unchecked statements. Because so much space would be required to call attention to
all the mistakes, I shall confine myself to a half a dozen questions.” This letter upped
the ante from her earlier draft, which had been written before her conversation with
Pollak. She and Post editor Paul Sann exchanged memos that afternoon about revisions to
the draft, but by the next day, she had changed her mind about sending it. “Why make a
contribution to (MORE), even in the form of a letter signed by me?” she said in a memo
sent to Sann and James Wechsler. And she hand wrote on top of the memo: “Not going to

481 Transcript of telephone conversation between Dorothy Schiff and Richard Pollak,
September 22, 1971, Dorothy Schiff Papers, Editorial Files, Box 38, Folder (MORE)
Manuscripts Division.
482 Dorothy Schiff, Letter to “Hellbox” (Draft), October 4, 1971, Dorothy Schiff Papers,
York Public Library Archives and Manuscripts Division.
dignify by contributing a letter." And Claudia Dreifus, who was a freelance reporter, found herself cut off from *The Post* entirely, no matter who her employer at the time. At the end of the same month, Dreifus called on assignment from *Ms*. When the memo reached Schiff’s desk, she scrawled across it in dull pencil: “She’s from “More.” Do not call her back. No reply.”

When Abe Rosenthal of the *Times* first encountered the upstart journalism review (MORE), he also bristled at the idea that these journalists—one of whom was the reporter J. Anthony Lukas, whom he had supervised—would try to tell him how to run his newspaper, the great trust that he had been asked to take care of. But he never reacted quite as strongly as Dorothy Schiff did, in the way that she cut off all access to *The Post*. Instead, the ideas that (MORE) advocated eventually found their way into the pages of *The Times*. Not directly, but subtly and through a process of negotiated levels of authority. This chapter looks closely at two instances of interaction between (MORE) and *The Times* to demonstrate how that relationship worked. (MORE)’s influence was indirect, but real, and these two episodes give examples of how the process worked. The first looks at (MORE)’s attempt to get *The Times* to run corrections in a dedicated space on a prominent page of the paper every day, as a show of accountability and transparency. The second incident involves a (MORE) article that put names to a confidential study of the management style of *The Times*. This section shows the overlap between the academic findings of a scholar who studied the newspaper and the journal of press

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criticism that pursued a similar goal of press reform. It shows that the public accountability to which (MORE) could hold The Times was more effective in showing the newspaper that it could not exempt itself from the kind of scrutiny it applied to the rest of the world. (MORE) did for The Times what The Times did to other institutions. It forced The Times to scrutinize itself.


Richard Pollak, the founding editor of (MORE), has said that the most tangible accomplishment of that journalism review was to pressure the Times to standardize its corrections policy, and while it might seem odd at first that the paper of record was not regularly publishing corrections as late as 1971, the fact is, they were not. To newspaper readers who don’t remember the 1960s, newspaper corrections, run in some semi-prominent spot in the paper, seem like an institution, something as old as letters to the editor or box scores. It doesn’t take much research however, to discover that this is wrong. A quick flip through the go-to book on corrections, Craig Silverman’s Regret the Error, will tell you that the modern newspaper correction began in The New York Times in 1972, two years after a memorandum that A.M. Rosenthal, whom Silverman identifies as the paper’s executive editor, sent to his department heads calling for such a move. From 1972 on, in Silverman’s account, “the paper anchored its corrections in one place inside the paper: on the inside of the front page. Now, the logic went, people knew where to find them every day.” The problem with this story, as irony would seem to dictate, is
that it is in need of at least three corrections, two of which don’t affect the broader
cultural and professional significance of the story. But that third needed correction
provides an opportunity to more fully explore how The New York Times came to begin
running corrections regularly, in a prominent place in the paper, under a consistent
headline.

For the record on those first two, factual corrections: The corrections that ran
beginning on June 2, 1972 (the birthdate of the contemporary newspaper correction),
were published not on page A2 of the Times, but instead in the last column of the paper’s
news summary and index, on the now-defunct “second front” of the paper, the first page
of the paper’s second section, before it moved into the more familiar multi-section format
of today, where each news department gets its own physical division of the paper. The
corrections section didn’t move to pages A2 and A3 until almost 15 years later—on
October 6, 1986. And while Abe Rosenthal did, of course, serve as executive editor of the
Times, he didn’t assume that title until 1977. From 1970 to 1977, he was the paper’s
managing editor (though for most of his term as managing editor, the title of executive
editor was nonexistent, making Rosenthal the top editor, regardless of title).

But those are somewhat minor factual corrections. Had they occurred in the
Times, they could have been dealt with in the regular corrections box without much
trouble. They don’t change the point of the story—that something new was going on
here, a format for corrections that had never (or at least only rarely) been seen before. As
Silverman puts it:

At the time, the Times, like many other publications in North America, ran its
corrections throughout the paper. They would appear in every section, in different
places, written in different ways, and often under different headings. If you read
the initial error, the chances of your happening upon the correction were slim. It
Regardless of whether the corrections ran on A2 or on the second front, the point remains that their consolidation changed their meaning in the paper, and it is unimportant for that story whether Rosenthal was managing editor or executive editor. However, the third required emendation of Silverman’s account of the birth of corrections would need more than a simple correction. It would need something more like the Editors’ Note, a format Rosenthal introduced to the paper in 1983 (after he had become the executive editor). The Editors’ Note allows for the paper to “amplify articles or rectify what the editors consider significant lapses of fairness, balance or perspective.” And the simple story that Silverman tells lacks perspective and context. Abe Rosenthal does deserve credit for standardizing the format for corrections, but the idea did not spring fully formed from his forehead like Athena from the head of Zeus, despite the versions of the story told by Silverman; by former assistant managing editor Allan Siegal (Silverman’s main source) and even by Rosenthal’s Associated Press obituary.

Silverman’s idea that Rosenthal’s 1970 memo led to the standardization of corrections likely stems from assumptions he made after reading his source, the introduction to a 2002 compilation of amusing New York Times corrections called Kill Duck Before Serving. Former Times assistant managing editor and standards editor Allan Siegal wrote the introduction. Though Siegal gets his former boss’s title and the location of the original corrections right, the way he describes the relationship between the 1970 memo and the regular printing of corrections “two years later” may very well have led Craig Silverman to conclude that there was a direct connection, even though Siegal likely

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intended only to note a temporal relationship, not a causal one:

Perfect accuracy is elusive, but accountability need not be. Years ago, reporters sometimes appeased a complainer by burying a correction in their next story. No longer. In 1970, A. M. Rosenthal, then managing editor, told his department heads that “corrections or denials or amplifications don’t really catch up with the original because they are not given proper display.” Two years later, he created a reserved space where readers could always find the corrections, just below the News Summary (then on the front of the second section, since moved to Page 2). The publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, wondered in a memo whether “we are not over-penalizing ourselves,” but he overcame his misgivings after The Times won applause in the industry and other newspapers followed its lead.486

This brief account seems to have become the basis for our understanding of the advent of regular corrections in the Times, and it is not incorrect—though it is incomplete. A fuller version of the story brings together Rosenthal, two rival journalism reviews and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, at the time an adviser to Richard Nixon. And this version of the story puts the story of corrections in the context of broader movements toward press accountability and self-criticism that have broadened and continued even up to the present. For the purposes of this dissertation, the story of how The New York Times began to standardize its corrections policy also demonstrates the subtle, indirect way in which a journal of criticism can affect the publication it is intending to make better through that criticism. The Times does not want to be seen taking the advice of the anti-institutional journalism review, even if it sees the wisdom in that advice, and so a slow process of idea filtering, almost as if to launder it from its source, takes place. While credit for the idea may actually be due to a venerable scholar and politician, the direct suggestion came from (MORE), and the Times didn’t want to pay attention to (MORE) or give it anything to gloat about.

Moynihan’s scholarly tantrum and the rather adolescent journalism review

One of the stories in the pilot issue of (MORE) was a long response to an essay published in *Commentary* a few months earlier, written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was then working as an adviser to the Nixon administration. The main (MORE) essay, titled “Moynihan’s Scholarly Tantrum,” was written by George Reedy, who had served as press secretary to Lyndon Johnson. But (MORE) also ran a second, shorter item based on Moynihan’s essay—an editor’s note, on the inside back page of the newsprint magazine, at the end of a column (MORE) called “Hellbox”:

Although much of Daniel P. Moynihan’s *Commentary* essay on the Presidency and the press seems at best wrongheaded and at worst petulant…, his final plea that the press establish a systematic method of self-correction is altogether valid.

The editorial, which was written by (MORE)’s editor, Richard Pollak, then quotes from Moynihan’s essay before continuing:

Traditionally, newspapers, magazines and television stations have been reluctant to run corrections for fear of losing credibility with their readers and viewers. But a system of self-correction, of course, would have just the opposite effect, conceding (to no one’s shame) that journalism even at its finest is an inexact art. Equally important, a regular process of correction (at the end of the network news shows, at the beginning of each day’s “A” wire, on page two of the Times every day) would make reporters and editors far more accountable than they now are and help put an end to much of the sloppy journalism that pervades the press.

By way of setting what we hope will not be too frequent an example, in future issues we will devote this final Hellbox item to correcting our own mistakes.

This editorial goes beyond Moynihan’s essay to suggest a format for prominently displaying corrections—the “standing head,” or regular column and headline, and (MORE) may be the first publication to have done so.

Just over a year later, another Hellbox item in (MORE) called attention to the fact that the scrappy magazine’s main adversary, The New York Times, had finally realized that a corrections box, published in a predictable part of the paper under a recurring headline, would actually add credibility to the paper, rather than detract from it. The editorial’s tone is hardly crowing though, and only the first sentence gives any suggestion that (MORE) might have been taking any credit for the innovation: “When we started (MORE) eleven issues ago, we promised to devote this final Hellbox item to the systematic correction of our own mistakes,” it reads, then quotes from its own earlier editorial, in which it challenged other publications to follow its lead. The overall tone is congratulatory (if snarky):

There has not exactly been a pell-mell rush in the media to establish fixed, highly visible correction boxes. But at least The New York Times has now come along. Until several weeks ago, Times policy (if that is the word) called for the running of corrections in easily overlooked nooks and crannies of the paper under the type of headline usually reserved for fillers. Now, managing editor A.M. Rosenthal has instructed that corrections appear regularly under a bold, boxed headline at the end of the index on the second front page. And if the correction requires more space than that portion of the index permits, it will be keyed to another page in the paper and run there at length. The rest of the media, please copy.490

There is not much self-satisfaction here, but more than 40 years later, Richard Pollak remembered this as one of (MORE)’s most important accomplishments. “I think we helped start a movement that has taken hold and the press is better for it,” Pollak said.

I think the movement of self-criticism, which has become established throughout journalism today was basically started by the early journalism reviews, and I think

we are partly responsible for the correction movement that began after Moynihan’s piece. Because he didn’t really throw down the gauntlet, and we did. We said we’re gonna do it, starting at the next issue, and you guys should too. And eventually they did.  

Could Pollak be correct? Could (MORE) have pressed the *Times* into running corrections under a standing headline? Was Rosenthal even aware of the startup magazine? Pollak has a point in that his editorial does directly challenge other publications in a way that Moynihan’s *Commentary* essay does not. Instead, Moynihan weaves together a complicated argument about objectivity, epistemology and ombudsmen, and even his two examples of mistakes that should have been corrected take three whole pages of the magazine to explain. The closest Moynihan comes to a prescription for correcting corrections is this: “As to the press itself, one thing seems clear. It should become much more open about acknowledging mistakes.” Because Moynihan, who was more scholar and policy wonk than newspaperman, is vague in his prescriptions, the (MORE) Hellbox item may actually be the first statement of the idea that corrections should always run in the same place.

Moynihan’s quasi-scholarly essay is important for the development of correction policies however, in that it does provide the intellectual framework for the arguments about the ethics of correction. Moynihan puts it this way:

The final, and by far the most important, circumstance of American journalism relevant to this discussion is the absence of a professional tradition of self-correction. The mark of any developed profession is the practice of correcting mistakes, by whomsoever they are made. This practice is of course the great invention of Western science. Ideally, it requires an epistemology which is shared by all respected members of the profession, so that when a mistake is discovered it can be established as a mistake to the entire professional community. Ideally, also, no discredit is involved: to the contrary, honest mistakes are integral to the

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491 Richard Pollak in discussion with the author, September 8, 2011.
process of advancing the field. Journalism will never attain to such condition. Nevertheless, there is a range of subject matter about which reasonable men can and will agree, and within this range American journalism, even of the higher order, is often seriously wide of the mark.\textsuperscript{493}

These are the same sentiments that have made their way through (MORE) and through Rosenthal’s high-minded memos right up to the language Craig Silverman uses in describing Rosenthal’s accomplishments in his book \textit{Regret the Error}.

Unquestionably, Rosenthal knew of Moynihan’s essay. Rosenthal’s papers indicate that he and Moynihan exchanged several letters both before and after the \textit{Commentary} essay. Furthermore, Rosenthal received a copy of a long letter from fellow \textit{Times} editor Max Frankel to Moynihan in response to the \textit{Commentary} essay. Frankel’s response is balanced in much the same way as Moynihan’s essay, with corrections getting only a small bit of attention toward the end of the 15-page, single-spaced typescript. “In one sense, of course, we correct ourselves every morning, a requirement and an opportunity that most other institutions, including the Presidency, lack,” Frankel writes. For the most part, he dismisses Moynihan’s arguments, but does acknowledge that “there is need, in another sense, for more correction or expansion and amendment of what we report.”\textsuperscript{494} More importantly though, the copy of the letter in Rosenthal’s files shows that he was aware of Moynihan’s essay, and Frankel’s attached handwritten note on \textit{Times} stationery also indicates that Rosenthal had been thinking of the essay even before Frankel shared his response. “This went off just an hour before you called about

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{493} Ibid., 46–47.
\end{flushright}
Moynihan’s piece tonight,” Frankel’s note, which is dated March 15, 1971, begins.\footnote{Note from Max Frankel to Abe Rosenthal March 15, 1971, New York Public Library, New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal papers, MssCol 17929, Box 30, Folder 42: Daniel Patrick Moynihan.}

This is the same month that “The Presidency & The Press” was published, and three months before (MORE) would make its debut. Also, perhaps not coincidentally, this is about two weeks before Rosenthal would issue his reminder to the news staff about corrections policy, the one that focused more on high-minded ideals of journalism ethics, and that closed with this: “What I am trying to do, simply, is to insure attention in each case to the elemental but essential question of journalistic fairness.”\footnote{Memorandum from A.M. Rosenthal to: Mr. Topping; Bullpen; Mr. Greenfield; Mr. Gelb; Mr. Roberts; Mr. Mullaney; Miss Curtis; Mr. Roach; Mr. Shepard, December 21, 1970, A.M. Rosenthal Papers 1959–2004, MssCol 17930, New York Public Library. Series II: Journals, 1971–1986, Box 4, Vol. 1: 1971.} And as far as Moynihan’s influence on Rosenthal, Allan Siegal, Rosenthal’s former deputy, writes that “Rosenthal was an admirer and friend of Moynihan, and he tended to adopt suggestions from people he admired, though he did not often convey the source to his associates.”\footnote{Allan M. Siegal, e-mail message to the author, March 14, 2012.}

But Moynihan’s essay and Rosenthal’s subsequent memo were about ideals, not policy, and if (MORE) did pioneer the idea of the regular corrections column, and if Abe Rosenthal had been thinking about corrections for at least two years, and if he knew of (MORE)’s idea, why would he not implement it in the summer of 1971, when Richard Pollak proposed it, instead of waiting a year? The simplest answer would be that in the spring and summer of 1971, Rosenthal was preoccupied with preparations for and dealing with the legal and cultural aftermath of the publication of the Pentagon Papers. A dense section of Rosenthal’s journals contains a detailed account of the months of research leading up to publication. Additionally, a letter from Rosenthal to, coincidentally,
Moynihan, in response to one from Moynihan praising the *Times’s* writing quality, alludes to the pervasiveness of the Pentagon Papers in Rosenthal’s professional life: “I must admit that in the last week or so, I haven’t paid a hell of a lot of attention to literary style,” Rosenthal wrote on June 24, 1971, “except as expressed by various benches.”

Another possibility is that Rosenthal was reluctant to take a suggestion from (MORE), a magazine he was aware of, at least by the time of the new corrections policy in 1972, if not necessarily at its 1971 debut. As Allan Siegal writes in an email, “I believe Rosenthal was NOT an admirer of (MORE), which he associated with New Left sympathies that were anathema to him in the 60s and 70s.” In addition, one of the founders of (MORE) was J. Anthony Lukas, a *Times* reporter who had butted heads with his editors when he was covering the Chicago Seven conspiracy trial in 1969. His experience of being constrained by his editors led directly to conversations with Pollak about starting (MORE). David Halberstam was also a contributor to the first issue of the magazine, and Halberstam had also clashed with the *Times* over his reporting. Quite possibly though, Rosenthal missed the first issue of (MORE), distracted as he would have been by the Pentagon Papers. By the following summer, however, the magazine had forced its way into his consciousness. In a memo to his deputy Seymour Topping, Rosenthal noted that he would be away from the paper during the American Newspaper

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499 Allan M. Siegal, e-mail message to the author, March 14 2012.
501 Richard Pollak, in discussion with the author, September 8, 2011.
Publishers’ Association meeting (which he was not attending). During the ANPA meeting, (MORE) planned to hold a “counter-convention” across town.

As I have written to Arthur Gelb, we ought to cover the “More” thing on a strict news basis. I would appreciate it if you would watch the copy on this. There will be a number of people like Halberstam, Zion and Lukas, who will be spouting off. If they have anything important to say, we should print it. But we should feel under no obligation to print something just because they are talking. Nor should we feel that simply because they attack the papers, probably including this one, that we have an inherent obligation to print what they have to say. We should be fair but not allow ourselves to be used by them.

Halberstam, Lukas and Sidney Zion, who had also written for the Times, were all scheduled to appear on a panel called “Why Journalists Leave Daily Newspapers.”502 In 1971, Zion had also publicly revealed the identity of Daniel Ellsberg, the source of the Pentagon Papers. Rosenthal never grew to respect (MORE)’s work. In a 1976 letter to Michael Kramer, the new editor-publisher who took over from Pollak and Lukas, he called (MORE) “professionally rather adolescent” and said that its coverage was less a reflection of reality than “of the psychic problems and nastiness of some of the people who used to put out” the magazine.503

Perhaps, then, Rosenthal’s lack of respect for (MORE) made it difficult for him to accept the magazine’s suggestions, even if he liked those suggestions, and even if they fell in line with his own thinking on corrections. Or perhaps the Pentagon Papers distracted him from making policy changes at a time when other crises faced the paper. But Rosenthal had read Moynihan’s essay, which introduced some of the ideas he

incorporated into his own explanations of the *Times*’s correction policy, and he knew of (MORE), which first called upon the paper to publish them under a standing headline.

**The Rosenthal record: The *Times* timeline on corrections**

The first anchored correction in *The New York Times* ran on June 2, 1972, a Friday. Except for its place in newspaper history, the correction itself seems less than momentous:

> The obituary of Theodore L. Bates in yesterday’s New York Times reported that Mr. Bates had once briefly served as a consultant to Investors Overseas Services. Actually, it was T. Rosser Reeves, a former chairman of Ted Bates & Co., who worked for the mutual fund organization.\(^{504}\)

The correction appeared, as Al Siegal described, at the end of the News Summary and Index, a feature the *Times* had been running for some time on the second front of the paper. On June 2, 1972, that meant page 39 of the paper over all, but the placement was prominent for two reasons: first, because of the way the paper was produced at the time, there were no sections in the same way there are in 2012. Arts, sports and business news appeared in discrete areas of the newspaper, but they did not each get their own pullout section. They were folded together into two folios of paper, which made the second front the second most prominent page in the paper (because the *Times* is a broadsheet, the back pages of the sections aren’t quite prime editorial real estate the way they would be in a tabloid). Although the first correction appears at the bottom of the page, it is noticeable, under a boxed headline, reading “correction” in all caps. The other reason the location chosen for corrections was prominent is that editors knew that people sought out the News Summary.

Over the first five months of 1972, before the new policy went into effect, the paper had followed its usual practice of scattering corrections throughout the paper, though there was obviously some logic behind their placement, at least sometimes. A correction running on the television listings page on March 9 corrected a mistake that had run on the television listings page (the actress Peggy Ashcroft had been misidentified in a photo caption as Helen Haye).\textsuperscript{505} But sometimes, the placement seemed to be dictated as much by where filler was needed, as in the case of a dateline correction for an international news item that was sandwiched between the bottom of the bridge column and an ad for a captain’s bed.\textsuperscript{506}

On June 1, the day before the new corrections policy went into effect, the *Times* ran three corrections, and true to practice, they were scattered throughout the paper. One was a correction of the misidentification of Burt Kennedy as the director of “Fool’s Parade” (it was actually Andrew V. MacLaglen), running on the same page as the film and theater listings.\textsuperscript{507} Another listed the wrong winner of the discus throw in a sectional championship of the Catholic High Schools Athletic Association, and ran eight pages after the film listings, on a sports page beneath a story on Lee Trevino’s performance at the Kemper Open.\textsuperscript{508} Another seven pages after that, between business stories and public notices of stock offerings, the final item corrected a typo in a story about a lawsuit concerning franchisees of Chicken Delight, Inc.\textsuperscript{509} So when the new policy went into effect the next morning, these somewhat haphazard-seeming corrections would have been

\textsuperscript{505} *New York Times*, March 9, 1972. n.b.: not the better known actress Helen Hayes.
\textsuperscript{507} *New York Times*, June 1 1972.
\textsuperscript{508} *Ibid*.
\textsuperscript{509} *Ibid*. 
consolidated—losing their attachment to the general subject matter they were associated with, but gaining visibility and predictability.

Rosenthal began the process of changing to the new style in a memo to several news department editors: Seymour Topping, Lewis Jordan, Lawrence Hauck and Socrates “Chick” Butsikares. He laid out what appears, from the memo, to be his own, original idea of consolidating the corrections, and asks for suggestions about implementation:

Every editor is entitled to a few bugs and I’m buggy about corrections. Actually, this is a matter that concerns a great many readers as my mail shows. I don’t think we have done right by corrections and I think it would be to The Times’s credit if we took some leadership in this.

I think that we are a little too stingy about printing corrections. I think that they are too small under the K-head format, that they tend to get buried at the bottom of columns, and that they are difficult to find. I think we have an obligation to our readers to do something about this.

I have some suggestions in mind that I am putting to you. Perhaps you have better ones, and I hope you do.

I think we should have a new typographical format for corrections, either a box head, or preferably something distinctive and confined only to corrections, perhaps an overline type thing.

I also think that we should have an anchored place in the paper for corrections—someplace fairly prominent, perhaps page two or the op-obit page, or even the second front so that reader would know where to look to find any correction.

This would not preclude us from giving more prominent display to corrections of a substantive matter when we consider it necessary.

Please do put your minds to this as soon as possible. I would like to put some variation of this into effect within a week.510

The process, as it turns out, took less than a day to implement; the memo is dated June 1. Another memo, dated the next day, went out from Lewis Jordan, one of the editors Rosenthal sent the first memo to, but addressed to all of the paper’s news desks, as well the editors of the news summary and index and to the composing room, where the paper’s layouts were pasted up:

510 Memorandum from A.M. Rosenthal to Mr. Topping, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Hauck and Mr. Butsikares. June 1, 1972. Private collection of Allan M. Siegal.
From now on, all brief corrections of errors that have appeared in the paper will, whatever their nature and whatever desk is the source, be carried at the end of the News Summary and Index (as one was in today’s paper).

Such corrections should first be called to the attention of an editor in the Bull Pen. Then they should be sent to the composing room marked indent and with the following slug line:

INDEX – add at end

In the case of certain longer corrections that require more prominent display than can be provided in the Index, a short paragraph giving the subject and the number of the page on which the actual correction appears will be carried under the CORRECTION head in the Index. A reference paragraph might read as follows:


Reference paragraphs should also be called to the attention of the Bull Pen.

The desks will, of course, continue to be responsible for checking the corrections or the reference paragraphs in the Index in the first edition.511

And with this memo, a one-day experiment in how best to display corrections became the policy of The New York Times.

However, this leaves open the question of the 1970 memo that Allan Siegal refers to in the foreword to Kill Duck Before Serving, forming the basis for the story of the Times’s correction policy. In an email, Siegal writes, “I wish I knew where that 1970 reference came from. Either it was a typo or there was another memo, now lost.”512 But Siegal has a reputation for being a careful editor—he was an editor of The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage. The memo he referred to appears to be one that Rosenthal sent on December 21, 1970 to eight editors and the “bullpen,” the term the Times used for an area where top editors collaborated to make decisions about the next morning’s paper (and also to describe those editors). This memo is far removed in time

512 Allan M. Siegal, e-mail message to the author, March 17, 2012.
and in specificity from the June 1, 1972 memo that spurred Rosenthal’s team of editors into creating the anchored corrections box, but it is not at all distant in intent:

One of the problems that has troubled all of us, I think, is giving adequate attention and display to corrections of stories that turn out to be wrong in whole or in major part. It happens on The Times as on other papers that the corrections or amplifications don’t really catch up with the original because they are not given proper display.

I know we have all had this in mind and that our record is pretty good but pretty good is not good enough. I would appreciate it if, from now on, all corrections, denials or major amplifications of important stories are brought to my personal attention so that a careful decision can be made on how to play them. I am not talking about minor corrections which will continue to be handled in the usual way but about stories involving corrections of substance.  

So while Rosenthal had apparently not hit on the idea of consolidating corrections by 1970, he had at least been thinking about the problem of how best to emphasize the importance of corrections that early in his career as managing editor. And it remained on his mind between the 1970 memo and the 1972 memo: on March 31, 1971, he sent another memo to several top editors that reads as much as a disquisition on the ethics of journalism as it does a directive to his staff:

There are three areas involving fair play in which all newspapers, including our own, do not, generally speaking, live up to their own standards.

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513 Memorandum from A.M. Rosenthal to: Mr. Topping; Bullpen; Mr. Greenfield; Mr. Gelb; Mr. Roberts; Mr. Mullaney; Miss Curtis; Mr. Roach; Mr. Shepard, December 21, 1970. A.M. Rosenthal Papers 1959–2004, MssCol 17930, New York Public Library. Series II: Journals, 1971–1986, Box 4, Vol. 1: 1971.
One is making sure that a correction gets decent display. The second is making sure that a denial of a charge gets decently equal treatment with the charge itself. The third is making sure that when a man is acquitted of charges against him, the acquittal gets as much attention as the original charges.\footnote{Memorandum from A.M. Rosenthal to: Bullpen; Mr. Gelb; Mr. Greenfield; Mr. Roberts; Mr. Alden; Miss Curtis; Mr. Frankel; Mr. Lieberman; Mr. Morris; Mr. Mullaney; Mr. Roach; Mr. Shepard; Mr. Witkin, March 31, 1971. A.M. Rosenthal Papers 1959–2004, MssCol 17930, New York Public Library. Series II: Journals, 1971–1986, Box 4, Vol. 1: 1971.}

The memo goes on to remind the editors of the policy of bringing major corrections to his attention, but it is notable more for its high-minded tone than for any policy change. The memo appears to be most directly triggered by a less-than-prominent correction the times had given four days earlier, but certainly Rosenthal has already decided that corrections are an important and underplayed part of the newspaper he was editing by the time he authored it. They were so important, in fact, that Rosenthal stapled copies of his December 1970 memo and this March 1971 memo into his personal journal, a hodgepodge of news clippings, memoranda and more traditional journal entries bound into plastic three-ring binders that were assembled to document his time at the Times, and perhaps done so with an eye to his legacy, of which corrections have become a part, even if, as the historical record shows, he didn’t invent the Times’s new format out of whole cloth or entirely by himself.

**Inducing labor**

If The New York Times gave birth to a new corrections format on June 2, 1972, the baby had been gestating at least since 1970, about a year after Rosenthal took the
managing editor position. Birth is a labored metaphor, so to speak, but in this case, the metaphor is Rosenthal’s. Presumably on June 1, 1972, someone named “Steph” (perhaps a secretary or news assistant) gave Abe Rosenthal a copy of a typescript written by Edward W. Barrett, director of the Communications Institute. Barrett had written a piece about corrections and Steph’s attached note asked Rosenthal to look over the draft by that afternoon. Rosenthal’s detailed response is dated June 1:

I think that your piece about corrections touches on a most interesting and important subject. But, as I said on the phone, I think that your thrust is a little awry. The thrust is that The Times has not been doing anything about this and should take leadership.

Actually, this is a subject that we have not only been talking about but moving on in recent months. I share the feeling that The Times, like other newspapers, has not given enough attention or prominence to corrections.

We have already taken substantial steps. We ran at least one correction on the front page. We have run a variety of corrections in box head form. Standing instructions have gone out from me to all desks that any correction dealing with a substantive matter must be taken up directly with me so that a decision can be made as to whether the correction should get special attention and prominence.

Furthermore, we have been discussing entirely new techniques of displaying corrections. What we will do is something that, as far as I know, no other newspaper has done.

We have devised a special typographical format that will be used only for corrections, abandoning the old K-head format. See the attached sample. We have gone one step further, and an important one. We plan to anchor the corrections in one of the most prominent positions in the paper – the second front. I had the sample made so that you can see that not only is the correction type prominent but that the anchored position entirely changes the quality of the correction, as far as calling it to the reader’s attention is concerned. I think that before long people will be turning to this to see what the correction of the day is!

We have also decided that we will not allow this new prominence in type and display to prevent us from giving even more prominence to a correction when it deserves it. That is, if a correction deserves a spread display, we will give it that space and call attention to the story under the correction box on the second front.\footnote{A.M. Rosenthal to Edward W. Barrett, Director of the Communications Institute, June 1, 1972. New York Public Library, New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal papers, MssCol 17929, Box 73, Folder 3: Errors, Complaints and Corrections: Policies and Procedures.}
The attached sample that Rosenthal refers to shows the corrections box at the end of the news summary and index, as it would appear the next day. But the text for the sample is the correction about the director of the film “Fool’s Parade,” a correction that had appeared in print only that morning. Clearly, even if the staff of the Times had been working on this project “in recent months,” this mock-up had only been prepared that day. And of course, June 1 was also the day that Rosenthal sent a memo to his top editors telling them of “his” idea and asking for their feedback. So either the memo was merely a reminder to his staff of an ongoing project, or, as the memo seems to read, this was the first time Rosenthal had mentioned these key typographical changes, and his insinuation to Barrett that this had been a long time in coming was a face-saving exaggeration.

At the end of his typewritten letter, Rosenthal scrawled a handwritten postscript: “As you may have seen, we started tonight. The Times editors are the parents of the new approach but you certainly helped induce labor!”

When Barrett’s piece appeared, it ran in the July/August 1972 issue of The Columbia Journalism Review, the older, stodgier, more establishment-friendly rival to [More]. The draft copy of the piece had included a call for “forthright, well-displayed correction” of errors, and points out that CJR had been advocating improvements in corrections since 1968, though the earlier article is not specific about asking for a fixed, prominent corrections box. Barrett added two paragraphs toward the end of the final printed article, applauding the beginning of its new corrections policy, and noting that Rosenthal had been shown a draft of the article. But he still wanted to see more, including

an “unfinished business” column that would allow for letters of clarification to be printed
more regularly. It remains unclear whether or not Barrett had read either Pat Moynihan’s
*Commentary* essay or the subsequent (MORE) editorial, but he at least had read a
common ancestor, a piece of press criticism written for *The New York Times Magazine* by
the *Times* editorial writer A.H. Raskin, an essay that Moynihan cites specifically, too.\(^{518}\)

At any rate, it was, in the end, a journalism review that pushed the *Times* to begin running
corrections regularly, but it wasn’t the impish (MORE), but the more palatable *CJR* that
finally got results from its prodding.

A.H. Raskin published his critique of the press in *The New York Times Magazine*
in 1967, and that lofty platform allowed for Raskin’s essay to become one of the
touchstones of the journalistic accountability movement. Of course, it wasn’t the
beginning of that movement. Notably, of course, the Hutchins Commission report in 1947
had called for greater self-policing among members of the press, and also for the
development of press councils, another movement of the 1960s and 1970s.\(^{519}\) Raskin
advocated for the institution of ombudsmen, internal critics of the newspapers who were
insulated from editorial pressure and answerable instead to the public. Pat Moynihan and
Edward Barrett both cite Raskin in their arguments for more internal criticism (and
against news councils as outside critics). But Norman Isaacs, the editor of *The Louisville
Courier-Journal* and its evening counterpart, *The Louisville* Times, also picked up
Raskin’s essay, and in a 1986 book that is three parts criticism and one part memoir, he

\(^{518}\) A.H. Raskin, “What’s Wrong with American Newspapers? A Newsman’s Critique of

\(^{519}\) A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication:
Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Books (Chicago: Commission on
recounts how eight days later, his Kentucky papers appointed the first newspaper ombudsman in the United States.\(^{520}\) And though Rosenthal claimed to be unaware of any other paper publishing corrections in a dedicated space, Isaacs may also have beaten the Times on that front, too.

**Reactions and aftermath**

Abe Rosenthal’s summer 1972 innovation in the presentation of corrections did not go unnoticed, either in the press; internally at the Times; among fellow publishers; or among readers. Less than two months after corrections started appearing on the second front, Newsweek’s media column ran a piece on “a candid new trend… developing among U.S. newspapers.”\(^{521}\) But as any good editor will tell you, one anecdote does not make a trend, even if that anecdote involves The New York Times—and Newsweek seems to have found examples that predate the Times. In fact, while the Times development is important for the level of influence that it has over other newspapers and their best practices, it may have been far from the first newspaper to run regular corrections in a prominent location. Newsweek gives credit, in fact, to Norman Isaacs’s two Louisville papers for being the first, with a feature called “Beg Your Pardon” that began three years earlier, which would put their debut in 1969. And according to Newsweek, “Some 50 other U.S. newspapers have already approached the Courier-Journal for advice about starting a similar feature.” It’s unclear what Newsweek’s source is for this, though the author did interview Elmer Hall, the Courier-Journal’s city editor. Perhaps he supplied the “some 50” number.


\(^{521}\) “Beg Pardon,” Newsweek, August 26, 1972.
Regardless of whether or not the *Times* was first, it had already established itself as the “paper of record,” and its editorial policy changes were widely noted and widely copied in the newspaper industry.

Internally, Rosenthal sent a memo to the *Times*’s publisher, Arthur O. “Punch” Sulzberger on June 2, 1972, though Sulzberger appears to have taken ten days to respond. Sulzberger had several reservations about the new policy, wondering “if we are not over-penalizing ourselves by always locating it within the Index.” He was worried that running more than one or two corrections in a day would eat into the index space. But more than that, he seems to have been worried that perhaps the corrections are too noticeable: “let’s not always stick it in one spot,” he wrote to Rosenthal. “We will sure as fate be accused of something if we are obliged to relocate it in the future.” To his credit, Rosenthal stuck by his policy, saying that if the editors had to cut items from the index, they would eliminate “those items which are really not very important, such as baseball games.”

More importantly though, Rosenthal wrote that he had heard so much favorable comment outside the office on its present position and on the idea that The Times was saying all the time to the reader that if we have a correction, you will know exactly where to find it, that it would hurt to shift so early in the game.  

There is no immediately apparent record of this public and industry response, at least in Rosenthal’s papers. But he refers to it again in 1973, in another memo to his staff:

“Our corrections policy is a good one, I think, and has attracted a lot of favorable comment in the business.” At least one note from a reader praising the corrections policy did make its way into Rosenthal’s files, a handwritten note from someone named Ric Cox, of White Plains:

May I congratulate the Times on its policy to correct its errors in a prominent position in the paper. Far from reducing the paper’s credibility, such display of fairness constantly restores my faith in America’s press, the Times in particular. This note so completely echoes Rosenthal’s reasoning for running corrections that it almost seems suspect (or at least explains why this note meant so much to Rosenthal).

Despite Rosenthal’s lofty aim of correcting all of the paper’s errors in order to improve reader trust, he was responsive to issues of aesthetics (a too-crowded news index) and to Sulzberger’s suggestion that publishing too many prominent corrections might be “over-penalizing.” In a brief 1973 memo to Lewis Jordan, he wrote, “On corrections, I think that two is enough for any one day. Three really looks rather heavy. Let’s stick to two unless there is a real pressing necessity for more.” He was obvious willing, at times, to compromise his ideals, though he stood by the policy for years. In 1980, he defended the paper’s policy to Richard Gelb, chairman of the Bristol-Myers Company, who had written to complain about the Times and a correction about the link between hair dye and cancer. “As a matter of fact,” he wrote, “many readers, I have

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524 Memorandum from A.M. Rosenthal to Mr. Gelb; Mr. Jones; Mr. Greenfield; Miss Curtis; Mr. Mullaney, April 4, 1973, New York Public Library, New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal papers, MssCol 17929, Box 73, Folder 3: Errors, Complaints and Corrections: Policies and Procedures.
found, turn to the second front to see what the corrections are for that day, almost before they read anything else. I am one of these.” Also, he writes, “The Times’s emphasis on corrections was noted in the journalistic community and written about. Since then, I believe that others have followed suit.”

Others do seem to have followed suit. A 1973 study commissioned by the American Newspaper Publishers Association found that “The practice of printing corrections under a standing head is popular and promises to be more so.” Nine of the 38 surveyed newspapers (24%) with circulations over 100,000 reported having a standing head for corrections, though the numbers drop quickly at smaller circulation papers. But change often comes from the top papers first, so it is not surprising that the practice hadn’t yet filtered down from papers like the Times. Even in 1983, the practice was considered “new.”

But the Courier-Journal and the Times seem to have started something, with studies of corrections and their ethics proliferating after 1972.

In 1986, Rosenthal brought out the Editors’ Note for more complicated clarifications. In May 2003, the Times published perhaps the lengthiest and most famous correction story, thoroughly investigating itself after the paper learned that its reporter Jayson Blair had been fabricating stories. But, as Silverman points out in his book,

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528 Ibid, Page 151
newspaper corrections policies have basically been unchanged for the 40 years since the *Times* began consolidating them in its news summary and index. The real innovation has been online, where technology allows for noting corrections in the text of an original story as well as consolidating corrections into a single column or even an RSS feed. Writing for *The Columbia Journalism Review*’s website, Silverman singles out the online magazine *Slate* for being particularly inventive.\(^{531}\)

So the tradition of earning reader trust through the regular, visible publication of corrections continues. It is a tradition that was most prominently started by Abe Rosenthal and *The New York Times*. But while Rosenthal should get credit for being a pioneer, he should not stand alone. Richard Pollak, the editor of (MORE), one of those two journalism reviews put it in terms that were as feisty as any that Rosenthal himself might have used: “It’s hard for me to believe that it was never discussed prior to 1971 in the halls of *The New York Times* by somebody,” Pollak said of the idea of running regular corrections under a standing head and in a prominent place in the newspaper. “But I would hesitate to give Abe—I was never a big fan of Abe, and vice versa—but I would never just reflexively give credit to him for this…. even if he’s willing to take it.”\(^{532}\)

Pollak is both right and wrong. Rosenthal deserves credit, though perhaps not as much as he was willing to give himself. Even on June 1, 1972, the idea for a fixed corrections box was part of a lineage of journalistic accountability that began at least as early as the Hutchins Commission report, ran through A.H. Raskin, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, at least


\(^{532}\) Richard Pollak in discussion with the author, February 21, 2012.
one other newspaper and two journalism reviews. The idea was already part of the culture of journalistic criticism. Rosenthal just made it happen in the *Times*.

So what, in the end was the role of (MORE) in the birth of the contemporary newspaper correction? The short answer is that it is not entirely clear what effect (MORE)’s call to the publications it covered had in pushing them toward the adoption of more visible corrections boxes. There is no direct connection clearly, since such a clear connection exists between (MORE)’s sleepy rival, *The Columbia Journalism Review*. But perhaps the answer lies exactly in *CJR*’s stodginess, a layer of insulation from the comparatively rowdy and unpalatable troublemakers at (MORE). It took the more respectable *CJR* to take the idea the last mile, but I would argue that (MORE) having plucked the idea out of Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s essay brought the idea into the discussion that working journalists were having with each other in a way that an essay published in *Commentary* would not have, particularly in 1971, when journalism was still very much a career for smart people who did not necessarily see themselves as thought leaders. They were newsmen. They wrote stories. Ideas were for thinkers. (MORE) helped to change that anti-intellectual attitude in the press.

**Publishing Clark Kent’s Name: (MORE) Lifts the Veil of Confidentiality on an academic study of The Times**

In 1974, the somewhat sleepy academic publishing house Jossey-Bass released titles in some of their core strengths. There was the scintillating *Analysis of Groups: Contributions to Theory, Research and Practice* as well as the sure best seller *Developing Programs for Faculty Evaluation: A Sourcebook for Higher Education*. And of course the
new edition of *Sociological Methodolgy, 1973–1974*. Joking aside, Jossey-Bass published serious work by scholars, mostly in the areas of sociology and the academic study of business and organizational behavior, not thrillers or scandalous *romans-a-clef*. But among those 1974 releases, the publishing house also printed the latest work by a scholar of organizations named Chris Argyris, who had moved from a position at Yale University to one at Harvard’s business school a few years earlier. Argyris’s previous works had studied other kinds of organizations and the ways that their management and workers interacted with each other to get things done. His working style involved both study and intervention. He was not an entirely dispassionate academic who observed and wrote; instead he studied organizations and then diagnosed their problems for them before working to actively improve the organizational atmosphere within them. He had worked with IBM, Polaroid, GE, the United States State Department, the National Institutes of Health and even the Defense Department, which would seem to be an organization that would not be particularly amenable to a pointy-headed academic poking his pointy head into its business and telling them that their hierarchical system wasn’t working right. And this was in the 1950s and 1960s, at the height of the Cold War. His new book was about a major metropolitan daily newspaper and the way that its publishers and top editors interacted with each other and with the people they supervised. On the surface, that seems to be very much in line with his previous work, and with the other books that his publisher was putting out at the same time. But even though Argyris

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attempted to disguise the identities of the people he wrote about, and even though he referred to the paper as *The Daily Planet* (the fictional newspaper from the Superman comics), and even though he thought no one outside the academy or maybe some in the business world would be very interested in the book—despite all of that, his book was really about *The New York Times*, and (MORE) figured that out. And when they did, they tried to make a big deal of it, in a way that probably brought more change to the organizational dysfunction at *The Times* than Argyris’s study would have on its own.

Originally, *The Times* invited Argyris to give some lectures on management, but Argyris declined, saying that he rarely found lectures to be effective. The study that resulted was his counter-offer to *The Times*.\(^{536}\) According to the preface to *Behind the Front Page*, Argyris began his study with two objectives which were, he said, independent of each other. The second of those objectives “was to add to our knowledge of the processes needed to enhance organizational health and to create effective, on-going renewal activities within organizations.”\(^{537}\) This was Argyris’s life work, even in 1974 (he died in 2013 at 90), and for the purposes of a study of press criticism, there might be some interest in seeing how the theories of organizational communication can help critics of the press influence the large organizations that were increasingly constituting that press. But the real interest really lies in Argyris’s first objective: “to discover what must be done to create newspapers that are self-examining and self-regulating.”\(^{538}\) This second goal, while it might put a review like (MORE) out of business, would also have been the sort of objective that would have pleased Dick Pollak and Tony Lukas, since their goal

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\(^{536}\) *Ibid.*, 7.
\(^{537}\) Argyris, ix.
\(^{538}\) *Ibid.*
was never to make money, but to induce some real reform in the highest levels of the press in the United States.

Argyris was inspired to examine what might make a newspaper self-examining not by his own professional interests but by a combination of civic-mindedness and the coincidence that had him in the midst of his study of The Times just as The Twentieth Century Fund released a report on the press calling for a national press council to regulate the press.\(^{539}\) Argyris had really chosen The Times because he wanted to challenge himself and his previous findings. He writes that he had mostly studied healthy institutions and how they can best be designed and managed, and found that continual self-examination and self-renewal—hallmarks of an intellectual approach to professionalism—were the best guarantors of a healthy organizations. But he had a suspicion that the press had little interest in those activities. “The Planet, I had been told by my informants, would be especially resistant to a behavioral science inquiry. ‘To put it mildly,’ said one informant, ‘they would consider your views to be nonsense.’”\(^{540}\) That challenge led Argyris to his second reason for studying The Times: he wanted to see what sort of effect his methods would have on an organization that wasn’t receptive to them. Finally, he wanted to see whether or not the necrotic management attitudes at the paper would have any effect on the output—whether or not there was any relationship between thought and action at the paper.

Even though the Twentieth Century Fund report had identified The Times as one of the most credible newspapers in the country, Argyris had heard from his sources that it


\(^{540}\) Argyris, x.
was still suffering from certain credibility problems. And by that time, Argyris had spent enough time inside the newspaper to that those problems were directly linked to internal issues of trust and competition:

Moreover, many members of the newspaper expressed a genuine sense of helplessness about changing these internal conditions, which included the win-lose dynamics among reporters and between reporters and copywriters, management by crisis and with hypocrisy, and the conception of advocacy journalism held by many of the top young reporters. If the public feels helpless in relation to newspapers, newspapermen themselves feel the same way. “Not you or anyone else will ever change this place” was a prediction I heard often at *The Daily Planet*—and it was backed up by serious offers to bet large sums of money on it.\(^{541}\)

Tellingly, Argyris writes that unlike most of his studies of organizations, the bulk of this book would be devoted to detailing his process of winning cooperation from the management of *The Times*.\(^{542}\)

Argyris spent several years on his study. The first phase alone lasted for a year. In this period, *The Times* granted him a spectacular amount of access. The top 40 executives and editors at the paper granted him unlimited access for this period. He was free to tape record any meeting that occurred naturally and he interviewed all of these editors and executives for long sessions. He came and went as he pleased, and varied his visits so that he covered all of the days of the week.\(^{543}\) Then he retreated in order to make his diagnosis, which he prepared and presented to *The Times*. The report ran to 73 typewritten pages, and he delivered it to the paper in June, 1969.\(^{544}\) This seems to be the first moment when *Times* managing editor Abe Rosenthal first became concerned about

\(^{541}\) *Ibid.*, xi.
\(^{542}\) *Ibid.*, x.
the editorial activities of the paper being aired. He appears to have mentioned it to James
Reston, either in a memo or just by speaking to him. Reston responded by memo:

I think we had better leave bad enough alone on this one. The commitment is
quite explicit, it seems to me, for not only "a study of the Times' top
management" but also of its "news activities." If we try to raise the question of the
original agreement, it seems to me that we can only get ourselves into an even
more awkward situation.545

Rosenthal does seem to have left “bad enough alone” for a few years, since his file on
Argyris falls silent, except for a collection of bills from Argyris. Though he does seem, in
the same fit of pique, to have asked for a copy of the original agreement from the paper’s
publisher, Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr., who sent along the agreement and a letter from
Argyris that clearly stated the terms: “Any written reports will be sent to you for
examination, correction, and any editing appropriate to maintaining your institution's
integrity and secrecy. However, in agreeing to cooperate there is also a commitment on
the part of the Times not to veto a publication of some sort.”546 One can imagine
Sulzberger grumbling at this news, but there is no documentary evidence of his reaction,
except that the study continued. No one at The Times seems to have recorded any reaction,
positive or negative, to the Argyris study again—until they received a draft of Argyris’s
manuscript for the book. That’s when panic set in.

When Abe Rosenthal read the draft manuscript that described all of this, in 1973,
he could only get halfway through before he felt compelled to write a letter to Argyris

Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal Papers, Box 2, Folder: Argyris, Chris (Prof.) 1968–
1975, New York Public Library.
Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal Papers, Box 2, Folder: Argyris, Chris (Prof.) 1968–
1975, New York Public Library.
with his complaints. But an executive actually put those complaints more eloquently, and despite the fractious atmosphere that *Behind the Front Page* described, *The Times* was able to put on a unified face in opposition to the book itself. The executive who wrote to Argyris on behalf of the paper was Harding Bancroft, who in 1973 was elevated from executive vice president to vice chairman of the paper. He told Argyris that of course they would abide by the agreement and not veto his right to publish a book based on his research. But he expressed the newspaper’s concern that it was too closely identified in the book. In fact, Bancroft wrote, *The Times* was requesting that he not identify the newspaper as a newspaper at all, but maybe just as a media institution.

Bancroft’s letter to Argyris is worth quoting at length:

> I don't think we need here to elaborate on the reasons why identification of The Times as the subject of your study would be a most harmful disservice to the paper. We are already too much in the news and much too frequently analyzed. Hardly a week passes that some periodical does not have a piece that recounts some real or fancied internal event that has taken place within our organization, or that scrutinizes adversely or otherwise the generation of policy decisions or news judgments in terms of personalities on our staff. Your book would surely give momentum to this trend, excite further curiosity, generate more rumors, and unnecessarily provoke embarrassment or worse to The Times or members of its staff….

> Accordingly, our first and most imperative answer to the problem is to urge an adequate disguise; a disguise that hides our identity not only from scholars and students of organizational behavior and from the lay citizen, but also from the in-group of participants and close observers of journalism in this country.

> We don't know if such an adequate disguise is possible at all, but we are convinced that it is not possible if the subject of your publication is identified as a newspaper.

> Moreover, we don't see why for your purposes it need be.\(^5\)

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It seems willfully naïve for executives at The New York Times to not understand why identification of The Times as a newspaper is essential to the project that Argyris was then undertaking. Perhaps the paper saw the original agreement between itself and Argyris as functioning something like a search warrant—where The Times had agreed that he could come into their premises and search for evidence of organizational inefficiencies, much as he had in his previous studies. But when he came, he found serious problems not only with management style, but also with the ability to provide an accurate and comprehensive news report to its readers. However, The Times saw that as being outside the scope of the original warrant. The paper doesn’t make that argument to Argyris directly, though one later internal memo makes it clear that some people within the Times’s hierarchy felt that Argyris had changed the terms of the agreement on them. After Argyris had responded to Harding Bancroft, Abe Rosenthal wrote to Bancroft: “I’ve read Argyris’ letter and it seems to me designed, consciously or unconsciously, to rationalize the fact that a couple of years after he discussed the thrust of his book, he decided that it would take an entirely different direction.” More likely though, Rosenthal and Bancroft and whichever other Times executives and editors were involved in discussions were particularly sensitized to criticism, since the last five years or so had opened the paper up to public scrutiny in a way that it never had been before. The publication of Gay Talese’s The Kingdom and the Power had opened the floodgates in 1969, and (MORE) had been a constant gadfly since 1971. Together, they had made it suddenly interesting and acceptable to write about the inner workings of the press, and

the upper management at *The Times* had not yet gotten comfortable with that state of affairs. Even more so, the newspaper did not at all like the picture of itself that it found reflected in Argyris’s book. Bancroft wrote:

> Moreover, the picture that emerges of The Times is one of a childish, badly administered, and petty group who somehow, miraculously, puts out a good paper. The study naturally looks diagnostically at the things that are wrong and even pathological, tensions and immaturities of the "living style" and organizational and administrative ineptitudes. Given your own interests, we would not expect you to picture a happy band of editors, reporters and executives whistling on their way to work with their arms about each other's shoulders. But, if we are to be identified directly or inferentially, we think we have a right to have presented a balanced picture of our strengths and weaknesses, of the normal and sound relationships that exist, as well as the morbid.\(^{550}\)

While Bancroft admitted that *The Times* could not exert its editorial control over Argyris’s manuscript, he asked Argyris to make a better effort to disguise the paper. He closed with the request to obscure the fact that it was a newspaper at all.

Argyris responded to Bancroft with a description of how he came to the main “thrusts” of his argument, a description that is very similar in its logic to the preface of the final published book. He also tells Bancroft that he thinks *The Times* may be overreacting: “I honestly believe that some of the Times people may be a bit more touchy than warranted.” He may have been right about their reaction to being called “a childish, badly administered, and petty group who somehow, miraculously, puts out a good paper,” though one can see why they may have been insulted. But Argyris turned out to be wrong if he thought that the executives at *The Times* were being too touchy about whether or not their paper could be identified.

Though Harding Bancroft spoke on behalf of *The Times*, Rosenthal also sent along a letter of his own. He said that he didn’t have much to add, but he did want to spend a few paragraphs, apparently, disparaging Argyris’s work as a scholar of the press:

I never would have given my time and confidence to a project such as yours if I had known the "thrust," because I do not believe that you can write about the whole issue of credibility and the council simply with the tools and information you had as a result of your particular method of inquiry.

The issue of credibility goes far beyond questions of management and into the nature of the press, the nature of government, the nature of secrecy, the structure of our society and an infinite number of other things on which you do not even touch. As presented, I think that the issue of credibility is a distorted one.\(^{551}\)

While Rosenthal is correct that the issue of press credibility is much more complex than the version that Argyris presents in his book, there is also certainly value in his criticisms. Institutional in-fighting certainly could lead to the kinds of credibility issues that Argyris describes, and his approach is a valid one, if not a complete one. Perhaps a media scholar covering the same material would have contextualized that material better, but Argyris’s approach is sound, and from an ethnographic point of view, his conclusions are valid.

So far of course, none of this involves (MORE). Argyris finally came up with a system of obscuring the names of the *Times* editors and executives. It was not one that made the paper entirely happy, but it certainly makes the book difficult to read. Each editor or manager is identified by a single capital letter. So one person is “X” and one is “A” and one is “C.” Argyris transcribes whole conversations that sometimes involve several of these unidentified people interacting with each other and even mentioning third parties who aren’t present in the conversation. Each is identified with a different letter.

To make matters worse, at least one of the editors, John Oakes, demanded that his letter

be switched midway through the book, to further throw potential decoders off the trail.⁵⁵²

On the one hand, it is easy to see why Argyris felt that he had adequately disguised the participants in the study. That’s especially true, given the limited and academic audience that he expected the book to have.

On the other hand, said David Rubin, who wrote a story about the Argyris book for (MORE), said that Dick Pollak “asked me to decode the book, which wasn't all that hard to do, then put names to the people and the situations that had been in the book, which I did. And I interviewed Argyris, and he basically admitted that it was the New York Times that was his subject.”⁵⁵³ So Rosenthal was right to doubt the security of Argyris’s system of concealment, especially when (MORE) got hold of the book and decoded it. At the time, David Rubin was an assistant professor of journalism at New York University, and was also one of (MORE)’s contributing editors.

In the lead to the piece he wrote for the cover of the November 1974 issue, he lays out his justification for publishing the names associated with the piece, breaching the confidentiality that The Times had negotiated with Argyris, saying that while it is clearly not a sequel to The Powers that Be, it could have been, and might even have been a more powerful and revealing book about the way The New York Times operates than Talese’s book was. But Argyris was his own worst enemy—especially because of his adherence to the standards of academic ethics:

Argyris has vitiates his own material by cloaking the name of the paper and blurring the identities of his interviewees. In doing so, he has robbed the book both of cogency and impact. With a few names restored, however, his work

³⁵³ David Rubin, interview with the author, October 19, 2011.
becomes what it could have been: a laser beam on the considerable management problems at the *Times*.

Rubin leads the next logical step unspoken, but it is here that the power of the gadfly press critic really comes through: (MORE), in “decoding” and publishing excerpts from Argyris’s book, did as critics what Argyris felt was not within the realm of propriety. (MORE) took the information that Argyris had hidden between the covers of a fairly dry academic book and turned it into a useful critique of the paper. By publishing the piece, (MORE) forced the *Times* to confront this study in a way that it might not have, had the paper’s identity never been revealed. As the *Times* itself certainly understood, publicly confronting institutions with their shortcomings was a powerful way to induce change.

To be sure, (MORE) sensationalized the coverage a bit, perhaps overcorrecting from Argyris’s tendency toward confidentiality and academic sobriety. The dust jacket of *Behind the Front Page* contains only the title, the author’s name and a geometric pattern that looks as if it is being turned back, like a page being turned. There is no jacket copy, except for a description of the book inside the flaps. No blurbs from authors. Not even a subtitle to give a bookstore browser any idea what might be inside. Though as Argyris told *The Times*, his book wouldn’t be sold in bookstores anyway. (MORE) on the other hand, trumpeted the scoop on its cover, which had switched over from an all-text front page to an image-based cover one issue earlier. They called these “The *New York Times* Transcripts,” and ran a few juicy excerpts right on the cover: A.M. Rosenthal telling editorial page editor John Oakes that his jibes make him “go home and get mean to my

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wife.” It has Oakes saying that he feels some reporters at the *Times* are becoming too much like editorial writers, and that he “would fire some of those bastards.”

But the incidents that Rubin picks out of *Behind the Front Page* for his examples are not just juicy insider gossip about the *Times*. He pinpoints the trouble (following from Argyris) in the gestation process for the newspaper’s much-lauded Op-ed page, the opinion page opposite the editorial page, which gives space for columnists and outside contributors’ opinion pieces. Argyris revealed that debate over the page (which wasn’t named in his book, of course, as that would identify the true identity of *The Daily Planet*) had raged on for four full years. But when Argyris sat down the various parties and talked them through, the specifics of the page’s content and who would be in control of it were hashed out in 30 minutes of frank discussion. In addition, reporters and lower level editors were afraid to speak out at open meetings. Staff members were afraid to criticize articles that had been praised by executives. Criticism was personalized, and every decision was portrayed as a win-lose proposition, which turned people against each other, creating fiefdoms and an air of defensiveness. Argyris also identified the insulation of the newsroom from the concerns of profit as a major impediment to improvement at the *Times*, which led to the feeling of intractability felt by the staff that he interviewed for his research project.

In the end, the excerpts that (MORE) chose to print are not particularly substantial (though perhaps this is for reasons of copyright). The text amounts to about a page and a half of (MORE)’s tabloid-size pages, a spread illustrated with a tongue-in-cheek antique portrait of some well-dressed swells out for a picnic in their suits and corseted dresses,

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labeled with a caption identifying them as *Times* executives on a management retreat. The first section (MORE) reprints is an argument between publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger and editorial page editor John Oakes about the level of control that the publisher should have in setting the topics for editorials. This is followed by a conversation between Oakes and Abe Rosenthal, in which they criticize each other’s judgment and clash over the direction of the Op-ed page. They finally find common ground in the problem of the leftward drift of the paper’s news coverage, and the rise of advocacy journalism, which they saw as pernicious (and which the *Times* continues to see as anathema to its view of the purpose of journalism, as is discussed in chapter six of this dissertation). The final set of discussions is between Argyris, Sulzberger and one or more executives to whom Rubin was unable to assign a name. They are discussing a problem that Argyris identified: the fact that Abe Rosenthal was surrounded by a group of “yes men,” who were unwilling to contradict him and also unwilling to talk to each other, preferring instead to meet with Rosenthal one on one. Sulzberger was able to see this as a problem, but unable to solve it. In the end though, he says that he is willing to dismantle the management structure of the newspaper and start over, if he has to.557

Rubin concludes his piece by saying that while the *Times* is notoriously resistant to the views of outsiders, something will need to change if the paper is going to succeed in matching the changes in media that are happening around it. He suggests that in the end, fear of competition—from cable television and from something Rubin calls “the home information utility,” which sounds awfully like the internet, in retrospect—will

force the paper to change. But it is also the thesis of this dissertation that (MORE) did have an effect on the paper it so often scrutinized.

The *Times* seems to have first heard that (MORE) was working on an article when Rubin contacted John Oakes for comment and confirmation. Oakes sent a memo to Harding Bancroft, who forwarded it along to several other editors and executives:

> It was quite evident from his questions that he knew that it was and in fact he said to me he had had this point confirmed by other people he had talked to. However, I politely but adamantly refused to discuss this aspect of the Argyris book in any way, shape or form. I did not lie to him (particularly as he obviously knew what the facts were!) but I told him that I simply wouldn't discuss this matter, though I readily admitted that I was familiar with the book as I said anyone interested in current journalism would be.\(^{558}\)

Though of course, that last bit was something of a lie. Not anyone who was interested in current journalism would have heard of the Argyris book, which was obscure from the point of view of mass circulation. And even when (MORE) published its article, only 20,000 or so journalists would have seen the story, and most of them were at the elite levels of the profession. It took some filtering for the (MORE) story to have an effect even lower down the chain of newspaper editors. One editor, a man named Ray Jenkins, found out that the *Times* had been recorded when he was solicited to run a syndicated story about the *Times* transcripts. The author of that story had clearly built on David Rubin’s work in decoding the book. Rosenthal did not retain the syndicate’s story for his files, but even the pitch makes it clear that this was the work of (MORE):

> Enclosed is an article that reveals the bickering and jealousies among the Times management, with verbatim conversations.

> The Times tried its best to suppress the identities of the principals involved,

but a journalism professor has "decoded" them.\footnote{Letter from Ray Jenkins to A.M. Rosenthal and enclosures, undated. New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal Papers, Box 2, Folder: Argyris, Chris (Prof.) 1968–1975, New York Public Library.} Rosenthal’s response to this editor dismisses Argyris, with whom he was clearly annoyed, calling his methods “tricky.” But the second half of the letter shows that Rosenthal had warmed to Argyris’s management consulting process, if not his academic publishing:

I'm not at all sorry, though, that we went into the experiment, although it made us look a little silly in the end. There was a group of quite conscientious and dedicated and serious people trying to do what you quite rightly say is so rarely done in our business—communicate with each other. We certainly weren’t entirely successful, but we certainly did come to understand each other's minds better. Obviously, there was a lot of intramural chit-chat, but the fact is that we did approach issues of journalism that meant something to us.

Rosenthal does not even seem to be particularly disturbed by the (MORE) coverage, so much as he is by Argyris. In other letters he sends to friends and colleagues who assume he must be sore about the decoding, he seems to feel more and more that there is nothing embarrassing in what was said, and that the \textit{Times} had grown from the experience.\footnote{Letter from AMR to Andy Fisher, dated January 3, 1975. New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal Papers, Box 2, Folder: Argyris, Chris (Prof.) 1968–1975, New York Public Library.} Argyris, on the other hand, sent at least two more defensive letters to Rosenthal, one of them saying that he had asked Rubin for a retraction of quotations that made it seem as if he had cooperated with Rubin in the decoding, and saying that he is willing to take legal action if necessary.\footnote{Letter from Argyris to AMR, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Chairman and President, James Reston, Vice President, Sydney Gruson, Executive Vice President, Harding F. Bancroft, Vice Chairman, John Oakes, Editor, Editorial Page, November 6, 1974. New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal Papers, Box 2, Folder: Argyris, Chris (Prof.) 1968–1975, New York Public Library.} Rosenthal dismisses this as “a piece of unbecoming piety.”\footnote{Letter from Argyris to AMR, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Chairman and President, James Reston, Vice President, Sydney Gruson, Executive Vice President, Harding F. Bancroft, Vice Chairman, John Oakes, Editor, Editorial Page, November 6, 1974. New York Times Company Records, A.M. Rosenthal Papers, Box 2, Folder: Argyris, Chris (Prof.) 1968–1975, New York Public Library.}
But one last thing that Argyris sent to Rosenthal does resonate with the mission of (MORE) to force the *Times* to engage in self-scrutiny in the way that it engages in scrutiny of other institutions of power. In closing the last letter that he seems to have sent to Rosenthal, he writes: “Someday, we should sit down together with the article that you wrote on the corrosive impact of censorship in the White House and apply it to our relationship and the living system of the New York Times.” Rosenthal does not seem to have responded or to have taken Argyris up on his offer. On the other hand, the *Times* under Rosenthal did undertake some massive changes in the 1970s and early 1980s. The paper began running regular corrections on its second front page, and eventually on page A2. It consolidated its Sunday and daily editorial staffs into a single newsgathering organization. The paper began publishing in four separate sections. It introduced a “Living” section. Business Day and Science Times debuted. The Op-ed section began. It was a time of huge changes at the *Times*. How much of that was a result of the goading and prodding of Chris Argyris and David Rubin and Dick Pollak and Tony Lukas? It’s impossible to quantify. But these gadflies did force the *Times* to re-examine itself and its practices, and that is, to a large extent, the role of press criticism and the role of the journalism review.

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Chapter 6: Gawker, Content, Bloggers, Spy: The Legacy of (MORE)

(MORE) was a part of the intellectual world of working journalists in the 1970s. Particularly at the most elite levels of journalism, it would have been nearly impossible to avoid the magazine’s existence. If you were working as a journalist in New York or Washington, and in many of the other cosmopolitan urban centers of the United States between 1971 and 1978, (MORE) would have been one of the primary ways in which you connected to your profession, whether it be through reading the monthly issues that you subscribed to, or borrowed a copy that had been floating around your newsroom, or whether you attended one or more of the A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions to meet your journalistic idols or just hang out with your friends in the industry. At its peak of circulation, (MORE) reached somewhere between 20,000 and 25,000 paid issues, with a pass-along rate that was likely significantly higher than that. For a magazine, 20,000 is a small circulation number (the smallest circulation category for the National Magazine Awards is “under 100,000), but 20,000 journalists is still a lot of journalists. If (MORE) was able to influence only those 20,000, and those journalists brought some of the ideas of (MORE) to their newsrooms and to their own work, which was read by millions more, then it is very possible that the reach of (MORE)’s ideas was much wider than those raw circulation numbers indicate. (MORE) started a conversation in the nation’s press, and the nation’s press leads the conversation of the nation.

The three editors who led (MORE) each assessed the magazine’s legacy. Richard Pollak believes that the journalism review was part of an important moment in the self-regard of the press:
I think over the long haul we were influential, because we helped start a movement that has taken hold, and the press is better for it. I think the movement toward self-criticism, which has become established throughout journalism today was basically started by the early journalism reviews.\textsuperscript{564}

Pollak and his co-founder Anthony Lukas started the magazine to counter what they saw as the rampant anti-intellectualism in the press, an entrenched belief among publishers and editors that the press operated in a certain way, always had operated in a certain way, and existed to sell newspapers, not to stimulate questions about how the institutions that determined American life functioned. And certainly not for the press to stimulate questions about itself. They knew that they could not change the entire ecosystem of the American press, that the vast majority of newspapers did exist to deliver baseball box scores and comic strips and community news. But they set out to change the attitudes of the highest levels of the press, hoping that at least those who operated the most serious “thought leader” publications had a responsibility to keep the public as well-informed as possible, and to operate as a check on the power of authoritative institutions of government and big business. It was an attitude that was firmly rooted in the anti-institutionalism of the late 1960s, but it was also an attitude that stemmed from the personal experiences of the founding editors. Certainly Pollak’s own experience validated that attitude:

\begin{quote}
I was the editor of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, and I sent myself to Vietnam during the Tet Offensive, and I wrote ten or twelve pieces from there and then I wrote a full op-ed page piece, titled “My Country is Wrong.” And I got some feedback on that, but nowhere near the feedback I got when we ran the answers to the Jumble two days in a row. The whole island lit up to tell us we made that mistake. And that was a lesson to me. And that’s demoralizing. Because if you want to do really first-rate work, you can’t do it in most places.\textsuperscript{565}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{564} Richard Pollak, interview with the author, September 9, 2009.
\textsuperscript{565} Ibid.
For his co-founder Tony Lukas, he saw that even at the best of newspapers—for him, it was *The New York Times*—there were limits to the kind of work that good reporters could do. They were constrained by the editorial policies of their publications, and forced into restrictive definitions of acceptable journalistic objectivity. Pollak described the experience of three former Timesmen, including his friend, Lukas, (MORE) contributor David Halberstam, and Gay Talese, the author of *The Kingdom and the Power*, the book about the inner workings of the *Times* in the 1960s:

The combination of the staff not having any real intellectual depth and the management not having any real intellectual depth, or at least not feeling any demand for it, is why a lot of people leave the profession. It’s why Halberstam, and Lukas and Talese leave. They can’t do the long form. They hit a ceiling beyond which you can’t go—I don’t mean in terms of money or promotion—I mean in terms of intellectual elbowroom. You just can’t do it at a magazine or a newspaper, and I think that happens to anybody who has any real intellectual curiosity.  

For Pollak then, the effect of (MORE) was at those highest levels. He believes that *The New York Times* did learn from its management issues in the 1970s, and is a better place for good reporters to do their best work than it was when he was running (MORE), the primary gadfly to the *Times* in that period. (MORE) was able to open up some “intellectual elbowroom” at the elite publications, and start a conversation that led to self-criticism at these publications. And self-criticism is a hallmark of intellectualism.

For Michael Kramer, the second editor of (MORE), the matter was a simple one of the journalism review fulfilling the same watchdog function toward the press that the press had toward other institutions of power, as well as building a community among journalists. “I think it gives people the impression that their profession is a profession and

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that people are watching. And maybe it made people a little bit more careful,” he said. So if for Pollak, (MORE) was a gadfly to the watchdogs of powerful institutions, constantly pushing the Times and other news organizations of its ilk toward better standards of performance, then for Kramer, (MORE) was more of a watchdog to the watchdogs, making sure that they maintained certain levels of performance, rather than pushing for progress. It is still a valuable approach to the role of the press critic, if a more conservative one. Perhaps in some ways that is a product of the individuals who were running the magazine, but it is also likely a reaction to the time. Pollak ran (MORE) when it was building on the anti-institutional attitudes of the 1960s. Kramer took over after the successes of Watergate, when the press was feeling proud of its accomplishments and basking in a new celebrity. The institutional press felt as if it could hardly get any better, so a journalism review bent on maintaining performance standards fits the ethos of the year or so in the mid 1970s when Kramer was in charge.

Robert Friedman sees the effects of (MORE) on the professional press to be a part of changes that were taking place in journalism in the 1970s, not necessarily driving them, but participating in them, and perhaps helping to propel those changes forward. Like Kramer, Freidman ran the magazine in the post-Watergate era. But rather than just using (MORE) as a way to try to keep the press honest, Friedman saw that Watergate and its aftermath opened journalism up as an alluring career path for young people with an idealistic and intellectual tendency:

With the popularity engendered by All the President’s Men, I think that’s the first time I can think of that reporters sort of became popular heroes, and what did they do? They brought down a president, so that was significant. It’s not just that they

wrote some good stories or covered a war well, but they actually had a huge impact. And I think that changed the attractiveness of journalism as a profession and lured a lot of people into the business who might not have gone into it earlier. And I think that new blood that came into the business helped make it better and more in tune with the kind of journalism that (MORE) magazine supported and thought should be done. Now, across the nation, newspapers still tended to be owned by conservative owners; editorial pages continued to support the war until the bitter end. But in certain mainstream institutions, I think there was a sea change that happened in the mid ’70s. What role did (MORE) play in that? Probably less than more, but some. And I think it served as a good adjunct to those changes that were happening and helped push them and propel them and that’s great.568

Some of the changes in the way the press talked about itself were already underway even before (MORE) began publishing in 1971. The ombudsman movement had started. The regional journalism review movement had been underway. The underground and alternative press had been seeking ways to report the stories that the mainstream press was not adequately representing, in their opinion—stories about minority experience, stories about women, stories questioning the received wisdom that American capitalism was an unquestionable good, and that the government was a benign institution that always worked for the good of individual Americans. But many of these ideas were too radical for the mainstream press. (MORE) served as a bridge to bring some of these fresh ideas to the mainstream.

As the 1970s ended, and (MORE) finally disappeared, Friedman (like both Pollak and Kramer before him) feels that the magazine did have a lasting influence on the way that the media are discussed in the press. Prior to (MORE)’s existence, there was very little writing about how publications or broadcasts were assembled and delivered to their readers or viewers. There were a few critical studies, and a smattering of in-house

568 Robert Friedman, interview with the author, January 17, 2014.
ombudsmen, but the 1970s saw the quantity of this sort of writing skyrocket. “I think (MORE) did change the dialogue about media coverage, how people think and talk about the media,” Friedman said. “And I think a lot of it got absorbed into the media, so that you’ve got people who, only after that period of time were hired to write about the media as a beat, who were hired as ombudsmen, to think about the foibles of the publication and to write critically about the media.”

This chapter attempts to assess the claims of (MORE)’s influence made by its editors. It applies some of the standards for assessing the effectiveness of press criticism that were laid out by other scholars that are described in chapter one of this dissertation, and it also describes some of the press criticism that has followed in the wake of (MORE), drawing parallels between those publications and (MORE), showing the influence that the magazine had, whether those parallels were intentional or not.

Wendy Wyatt’s Discursive Press Criticism and Intellectual Self-Scrutiny

Wendy Wyatt argues that true press criticism could only come from outside the press, from critics who are not situated in the knowledge of the operations of the institutional press. For Wyatt, press criticism functions when discourse exists between a peripheral “critical public,” a self-appointed group of critics outside the press, in conversation with that critical public, and with the institutional press at the core of her model. Wyatt pictures this model as concentric circles, with the press at the core, the

569 Ibid.
critics representing the concerns of the public in a ring around them, and the concerned public, feeding those concerns to the critics in a ring at the periphery.\textsuperscript{570}

In Wyatt’s model, the writing in (MORE) would exist almost exclusively at what Wyatt calls “third level criticism.” In third level criticism, ideas for reform are introduced by the press itself, and discussed within the profession, what could be called self-criticism. Wyatt’s model requires that these ideas then be shared with the critical public at the periphery of her model. One shortcoming of this model is that it fails to account for the fluidity with which people move from one level to another of her model in American society. As there is no licensing or regulatory system for who can and cannot work as a journalist in the United States, people are simultaneously journalists and concerned citizens. And from the standpoint of individual press institutions, (MORE) made sure that its writers were outsiders at least to those institutions about which they were writing. They may have been journalists, by and large, but they were not journalists for the particular institutions that they were covering. Their intent, in most cases, was to induce the sort of self-criticism that Richard Hofstadter saw as central to intellectualism.

So while (MORE) did function as third level critical discourse, facilitating the conversation among members of the working press, it also served to encourage the sort of searching and quest for self-betterment that Hofstadter describes. The difficulty would be in trying to create the public that would be interested enough in the operations of the press to engage with the same ideas that concerned these self-examining reporters. The incarnation of More that Michael Kramer created attempted to reach this audience,

aiming its coverage and criticisms of the press not just at the press itself but also at an imagined interested public. However, it quickly found that no such public existed, or at least not enough of one to make a general-interest media magazine a profitable enterprise. The popularity of journalism and journalists at the height of the *All the President’s Men* era might have been the best opportunity to foster that sort of public. But given the lack of interest in the general public, (MORE)’s attempts to foster discussion within the profession seems to be as strong an effort as could have been made in the 1970s. At least the journalism review was able to spur self-criticism, and to help incorporate whatever little outside criticism (such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s analysis of the press) into that discussion. Wyatt also sees press criticism as a form of regulation for the press, but one that the press would find more palatable than outside regulation from bodies such as press councils, which journalists tend to find as reprehensible as government regulation. The discursive critical process allows for journalists to have a discussion about the values they want to support and how they can best serve the public interest. Given Richard Pollak’s repeated arguments against the idea of a national press council, he would likely agree with Wyatt’s assessment.

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571 Ibid., 149–150.
Arthur L. Hayes’s Criteria for Judging Press Criticism

As described in chapter one of this dissertation, Arthur L. Hayes proposed a nine-part test of the effectiveness of a press critic. This section will address those questions, as applied to (MORE), one by one.

1. Has the critique led to the dismissal, resignation, or reassignment of a reporter, broadcast public affairs personality, editor, or news executive?

(MORE) certainly got people fired in the course of its existence, though it was rarely for the reasons that the magazine intended. A reporter was fired from The Philadelphia Inquirer for attending the first A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention (see chapter 3), and another was fired from The New York Times for supplying a copy of a rejected manuscript to (MORE) via Rolling Stone. But there are few if any examples of (MORE) demonstrating the incompetence or malfeasance of someone in the press, and that person’s employer firing him or her for the offense. Though this seems like an arbitrary criterion for judging the success of an institution of criticism.

2. Has the critique led to content or programming changes consistent with widely acknowledged journalism ethical standards?

As chapter three of this dissertation argues, (MORE) had substantial, if indirect effects on its primary target, The New York Times. Whether or not that change can be directly attributed to the call to action that (MORE) published in its first issue, the Times certainly changed its policy on corrections in the 1970s. The direct mover may have been The Columbia Journalism Review, but (MORE) initiated the idea. To some extent, that offers

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an answer to Hayes’s question three more than it does question two. But (MORE) was less concerned with forcing individual institutions to adhere to “widely acknowledged journalism ethical standards” and more concerned with establishing those standards in the first place.

4. Has the critique spurred public debate in public forums and in the news media about news media performance or the business of mass media, helping to shape public opinion on the issue?

(MORE) found itself covered by general interest news media on several occasions, though most consistently for the A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions. (MORE) likely had little direct influence on the way the public at large viewed issues of ethical standards for the press, but most of that is attributable to the fact that the public had little interest in establishing ethical standards for the press. Perhaps through a sort of two- or three-step process, (MORE) did have some effect on how the press was viewed by the public at large, but that would have been filtered through changes in the behavior of the press, either from direct agitation from the journalism review, or through following the lead of national news outlets such as The New York Times

5. Do news media outlets quote the individual or organization as an authority on news media ethics and performance?

Nearly every reference to (MORE) in the press identifies the magazine as an influential voice of press criticism.

6. Does the individual or organization have a longtime and substantial following, measured in viewers, books [sic] sales or Web-site hits?

(MORE) reached a circulation of more than 20,000 at its peak, which is a substantial number for such a niche publication. And the attendance at its annual conventions
indicated that the magazine had a very devoted following, if not a large one by the standards of general-interest publications. Though the magazine lasted for only eight years, that can be seen as a surprisingly long time, given the publication’s narrow content and the lack of advertising support for most of its history.

7. Has the individual or organization inspired a movement?
This is a difficult question to answer, since, during (MORE)’s run, there was certainly a change in the way that journalists thought about themselves and about the institutional press that employed them. It is very hard to say how much of that is attributable to (MORE) and how much (MORE) was just chronicling a movement that was already underway. (MORE) was not the first journalism review, though it was the one within the movement that had the broadest mandate and the most nationwide appeal. Robert Friedman, the magazine’s final editor, argued that (MORE) was a part of the reason that there was an influx of talented young journalists in the 1970s, who helped to shape the journalism of the forty years that followed, but without survey evidence, it would be difficult to substantiate that claim.

8. Has the individual or organization established standards of inquiry, analysis or proposals used by other critics?
9. Have the individual’s critiques gained currency among other critics and scholars who point to the individual as a groundbreaking activist or thinker in news media criticism?\footnote{Hayes, 4.}

(MORE) has had a broad influence in the ecosystem of press criticism that has persisted in its wake. The remainder of this chapter looks at some of the organizations and individuals that have followed in (MORE)’s footsteps, whether consciously or not. The
development of reportorial coverage of the press as well as press criticism owe much to the example set by (MORE) from 1971 to 1978.

The Inheritors of the (MORE) Legacy

Very few of the journalism reviews that sprang up around the country before or during (MORE)’s run remain today. The Columbia Journalism Review is the most prominent of these. Even though the founders of (MORE) saw a bitter irony in having their subscription list donated to CJR when their own magazine went out of business in 1978, the (MORE) approach to press criticism has eventually come to influence the more conservative, institutionally-minded magazine to which they saw themselves as an alternative. When (MORE)’s subscription list was being sold to CJR, The Washington Post reported that the Columbia review was in talks with one of (MORE)’s staff members to join its own staff. That staffer was (MORE)’s final senior editor, Robert Manoff, who did in fact take a job at CJR, and eventually served as editor. Later, Victor Navasky, who had been a friend of (MORE) and an occasional contributor became the chairman of CJR, a post which he retains as of the writing of this dissertation. Manoff and Navasky (as well as other (MORE) contributors who eventually wrote for CJR) helped to bring some of the (MORE) approach to press criticism—a more freewheeling, impish, and critical way of looking at the media—to (MORE)’s former rival.

The 2013 issues of CJR, which is published every other month, illustrate some of those changes. Cover stories include the very (MORE)-like “How Can We Improve American Media’s Coverage of Race, Class, and Social Mobility?” an article about the

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574 Farai Chideya, Columbia Journalism Review, March/April 2013.
serious dangers of bad personal health reporting, \(^575\) and a survey of journalists and academics that attempted to come to an answer (or a range of answers) on what the true purpose of journalism is.\(^576\) The cover for the last of those articles also contained a very (MORE)-like gesture in that it reprinted one reporter’s answer to the title question: “What is Journalism For?” That answer was “It’s not fucking rocket science.” The very bold word “fucking” was placed just above the UPC code on the cover, not far from where the address label would be placed. It is reminiscent of (MORE)’s coverage of obscenity regulation, and the early headline that contained the playfully “censored” word “b___shit.”

A few of the regional journalism reviews remain as well. And at the national level, the Washington Journalism Review eventually became The American Journalism Review, published by the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. In 2013, the magazine ceased print publication, but publishes online at http://ajr.org/. Perhaps (MORE) could have made a similar transition, saving itself the tremendous cost of printing, if the Internet had existed in 1978.

*Columbia Journalism Review* and *American Journalism Review* are the only print publications devoted to coverage and criticism of the press that have published consistently since (MORE)’s demise. But there have been other attempts to launch similar publications. In fact, in 1990, several of the journalists involved with (MORE) at various stages, as well as a few other likeminded journalists attempted to launch a new magazine that would very much have continued (MORE)’s legacy. The magazine would


\(^576\) “What is Journalism For?” *Columbia Journalism Review*, September/October 2013.
have been called *Mercury*, though according to a *New York Times* article about the project, no one involved really loved the name (others that had been floated included *Tell*, *Media Watch*, and *Gadfly*). The “inner circle” of the nascent magazine was Ken Auletta, who had written for (MORE), J. Anthony Lukas, Frances Fitzgerald, and the venture capitalist Arthur Dubow. Other (MORE) alumni and friends of the magazine, including Richard Pollak, David Halberstam, Bill Kovach, Robert Caro and Bill Moyers became involved. The idea had come from a public relations person named John Scanlon, who had told Ken Auletta that there was a need to revive a magazine like (MORE), but with a broader appeal and focus. Perhaps it would have been more like the late-era (MORE) that attempted to cover more of the media than just the news. At that early stage though, the main players in this magazine were not optimistic that the $6 million they needed to launch the magazine could be raised in what was then a very weak magazine market.\(^5\)

Nothing ever came of the proposal, though it was the closest attempt to reviving (MORE) that has happened in the more than 35 years since it went out of business.

The attorney and journalist Steven Brill had made a splash with his creation of *The American Lawyer* and the Court TV network when he decided that the country was ready for another general-interest magazine about the media. That magazine was *Brill’s Content*, which debuted in the summer of 1998 and ran until fall of 2001. Brill wrote the cover story himself, a 25,000-word opus indicting the media’s coverage of the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky sex scandal. But he also hired veteran reporters to work for him, including (MORE) alumni such as former editor Michael Kramer and contributor

Calvin Trillin. Brill spent lavishly to promote the magazine too, reportedly spending about $1 million to attract attention to the first issue. Brill intended to market the magazine to a general audience, in much the same way that Kramer had hoped to do when he took over (MORE). But Kramer had hoped to reach 30,000 subscribers; Brill was aiming for half a million. Brill’s Content did approach a circulation of nearly 300,000, but as Arthur Hayes argues, Brill ran up against the same two problems that face all publications devoted to coverage and criticism of the media: an overestimation of public interest in the subject, and a lack of desire to advertise to whatever that market is. “Nevertheless,” Hayes writes, “reform-minded media professionals cannot seem to part with the idea that there is a substantial readership beyond those who subscribe to trade publications willing to spend money to read about how the sausage gets made in the news media business or to read critiques of press performance.” No one has attempted such a publication since, but that does not mean that press criticism or coverage of the press have languished because of this.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Spy magazine, a satirical monthly founded by Kurt Anderson and Graydon Carter, ran a column under the pseudonym J.J. Hunsecker, which was the name of the press agent character in the movie Sweet Smell of Success. Whoever was writing the articles was, appropriately, a spy inside The New York Times, and while most of the Hunsecker columns were not really press criticism intended to prod the paper into better coverage, the puckish stories are reminiscent of some of the more sophomoric

579 Ibid., 87.
580 Ibid., 93.
pranks that (MORE) undertook. Hunsecker and Spy were mostly interested in the romantic life of Abe Rosenthal, who was still in charge of the news division of the Times in 1987. So even though the aim was not at all high-minded in Spy, that magazine’s editors obviously took some of the same delight in prodding Rosenthal that (MORE)’s did. And Rosenthal apparently expressed as little interest in Spy as he did in (MORE).581

In somewhat of the same snarky, sophomoric vein, but also with what seems to be a real, if occasional, intent to better the media through criticism, the blog Gawker has been mixing outrage, gossip and real news about Manhattan media since 2003. Mostly, Gawker is nothing like (MORE), except that it is a New York City-focused publication that claims to focus on media news and gossip. Gawker mostly interests itself now with posts that will drive web traffic, but will also address real issues of press coverage from time to time. In 2012, for instance, Gawker ran a series of insider articles written by a then-anonymous employee of Fox News Channel, who called himself the Fox News Mole. Fox quickly identified him as a producer named Joe Muto, but his dispatches describing the working atmosphere inside the most successful national cable news network created a brief stir, and are a direct descendent of Spy’s J.J. Hunsecker.582 Very little of Gawker’s content addresses the media anymore, but they are a part of the ecosystem of media coverage and criticism that has evolved online, and were an early and vociferous participant in the social media conversation about the press.

Much of that conversation takes place now over Twitter, where a significant community has been built up. That community is an ideal version of the sort of community of journalists that coalesced around (MORE) in the 1970s, except that instead of being able to meet and discuss ideas with each other once a year at the A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions, press critics, press junkies, members of the press and journalism and media professors can all interact with each other, share ideas and articles, and instantly react to the latest developments in media news. On a typical day, one might find the New York University professor and press critic Jay Rosen linking to a long essay about the role of the press on his PressThink blog or discussing his role as an adviser to the new publication being started by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and journalist Glenn Greenwald, who helped bring to light the revelations of National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden. Or perhaps City University of New York journalism professor Jeff Jarvis is discussing his reaction to a published conversation between Greenwald and former New York Times editor Bill Keller over whether the Times paradigm of objectivity or Greenwald’s preferred advocacy journalism is a better model for the future of journalism.\(^{583}\) Or maybe it is Jack Shafer, the press critic who writes for the Reuters news service, engaging with David Carr, a media columnist for, of all publications, The New York Times. Or maybe one of them is discussing an issue on On the Media, a weekly radio show on NPR. The Times also now has a “public editor,” their version of an ombudsman, and while the quality of their work has been variable, the current public

editor, Margaret Sullivan, has been an active and inquisitive writer and critic, often forcing the *Times* to be more introspective.

The Internet has opened up a realm of debate and discussion that was never really available in the days of (MORE), when journalists had to subscribe to a 32-page newsprint tabloid to see what the latest news of their profession was, or had to travel to a hotel in New York City in order to hear the most thoughtful and provocative journalists of their day have a heated debate about the issues that they were facing in their work. The diffusion of press criticism has allowed it to survive, too. Unlike (MORE) or *Brill’s Content*, which relied on expensive printing and distribution, the Internet allows for press critics to work anywhere, and for the discussion to continue without the pressures of filling a monthly magazine. The world of press criticism is as robust now as it was in the heyday of (MORE), with as many interesting topics in flux as journalism works through another huge moment of transition, much as it did in the 1970s.

**Coda: What Happened to the Staff of (MORE)**

Robert Friedman, the last editor of (MORE), went on to edit *The Village Voice*, and later worked as an editor at *Life* and *Fortune* before he became an editor at Bloomberg News, where he manages and edits long-term, in-depth coverage of global finance.\(^{584}\)

Michael Kramer, who preceded Friedman as editor, went back to writing political commentary after he sold the magazine. After working at *Time*, he turned to being a

playwright, having his play *Divine Rivalry*, about Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Macchiavelli, produced by the Hartford Stage.\(^{585}\)

Malcolm Frouman, (MORE)’s second art director, left the magazine to work for *The New York Review of Books*, which had also been designed by his predecessor at (MORE), Samuel Antupit. Frouman went on to be the long time art director of *BusinessWeek* magazine until it was sold to Bloomberg.\(^{586}\)

Longtime contributor and senior editor David Rubin continued to teach at New York University, until he left to become the dean of Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication. He retired as dean in 2008.\(^{587}\)

Claudia Cohen, (MORE)’s second assistant editor, left the magazine to pursue a career as a gossip columnist, first with *The New York Post*’s Page Six, beginning in 1977, and eventually moving on to being a broadcast entertainment reporter. She was a regular on WABC, and then on the syndicated talk show “Live with Regis and Kathie Lee.” She married and divorced Ronald O. Perelman, the chairman of the cosmetics company Revlon. After the divorce, she received a settlement of $80 million. When Cohen died of ovarian cancer in 2007, Perelman donated a large sum of money to have a building named in her honor at The University of Pennsylvania, her alma mater.\(^{588}\)

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\(^{586}\) Malcolm Frouman, Interview with the author, October 27, 2011.


Cohen’s predecessor as assistant editor, Terry Pristin, worked for more than a decade at *The Los Angeles Times*, where she covered Hollywood, among other topics. She eventually moved to *The New York Times*, where she covers commercial real estate, and continues to write for other publications as well.\(^{589}\)

Kathy Jones, who arranged several of the A.J. Liebling Counter-Conventions, left (MORE) to work for *The New York Review of Books*, where she rose to be associate publisher and advertising director. Despite not having any journalism experience, she surprised herself by marrying a journalist, *New York Times* reporter Clyde Haberman. She is now the director of special projects for Human Rights First, where she manages relations with donors and, true to her Counter-Convention experience, arranges major events for the non-profit organization.

Brit Hume, (MORE)’s Washington, D.C. correspondent, left for a long career in television news. He spent over two decades with ABC News, and is now a political analyst for Fox News.

Of the three members of Rosebud Associates, the founders of (MORE), only Richard Pollak is still alive. William “Woody” Woodward added to the trail of tragedy in his family in 1999. His mother had shot and killed his father, and then killed herself after being portrayed as guilty by Truman Capote, even though she had been officially exonerated. Woodward’s younger brother, Jimmy, killed himself by jumping from a hotel window. Woody Woodward ran for public office, seeking the support of his old mentor Dolly Schiff, and later worked as a bureaucrat for New York State, supervising the

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\(^{589}\) Terry Pristin, interview with the author, December 17, 2011.
banking system. But at age 54, he jumped from the window of his apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and fell 14 stories to his death.\textsuperscript{590}

J. Anthony Lukas continued to write as a freelancer and book author, achieving his highest level of fame—and his second Pulitzer Prize—for the book \textit{Common Ground}, which chronicled the stories of several Boston families in their struggle over their city’s government-imposed school busing. Shortly after he finished his last book, \textit{Big Trouble}, however, Lukas, who had been battling depression, killed himself at home, tying a cord around his neck and strangling himself. Terry Pristin’s husband, Clyde Haberman, wrote Lukas’s obituary for the \textit{Times}.\textsuperscript{591} The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism gives two annual prizes named in his honor.\textsuperscript{592}

Richard Pollak served as a literary editor and executive editor at \textit{The Nation}, and wrote several books, including an account of an around-the-world trip on a container ship after the 9/11 attacks, and \textit{The Creation of Dr. B: A Biography of Bruno Bettelheim}. He recently published a memoir about the death of his brother when they were children. He lived for many years on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, but recently moved to Portland, Maine with his wife Diane Walsh, a concert pianist.\textsuperscript{593}


Several other (MORE) staff members still work in various capacities in the press, and dozens or hundreds of the magazine’s readers have taken their experiences of professional journalism from the 1970s into their careers. And those experiences were likely colored by the magazine that chronicled it all.
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