International Center for Journalists

Advancing Quality Journalism Worldwide

Dig Deep & Aim High

A Training Model for Teaching Investigative Reporting

By Lucinda S. Fleeson

International Center
for Journalists

About the International Center for Journalists

The International Center for Journalists, a non-profit, professional organization, promotes quality journalism worldwide in the belief that independent, vigorous media are crucial in improving the human condition.

Since 1984, the International Center for Journalists has worked directly with more than 50,000 journalists from 176 countries. Aiming to raise the standards of journalism, ICFJ offers hands-on training, workshops, seminars, fellowships and international exchanges to reporters and media managers around the globe.

At ICFJ, we believe in the power of journalism to promote positive change.

This guide is dedicated to the ideals embodied by the Eugene L. Roberts, Jr. prize, to ".... the story of the untold event that oozes instead of breaks; to the story that reveals, not repeats; to the reporter who zigs instead of zags; to the truth as opposed to the facts; to the forest, not just the trees; to the story they'll be talking about in the coffee shop on Main Street; to the story that answers not just who, what, where, when and why, but also, 'So what?'; to efforts at portraying real life itself; to journalism that 'wakes me up and makes me see'; to the revival of the disappearing storyteller."

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Introduction

Reporters in developing countries and emerging democracies face obstacles that are higher, deeper and more impenetrable than any faced by the average American reporter. In many ways, everything these new journalists do is investigative reporting. They often have no information access laws in place, nor libel protections. They work in small staffs, under daily pressure to produce copy. Sometimes they face threats of violence or imprisonment. Often the pressure is psychological, as they receive little support from their news organizations. While pioneering in a new profession can be thrilling, it is difficult and often lonely.

Many of these journalists are working for new organizations invented less than a decade ago, by colleagues whose only experience was with state-supported party publications. In a few short years, they have set up publishing systems with new technology, created advertising bases from scratch, and recruited eager, but untrained staffs. Now they are setting out to break the kind of stories that were once only dreams. Just the fact of publication represents a triumph of a kind that we Americans forget. Even so, enterprise, explanatory, in-depth reporting as we know it at large American newspapers is generally unknown. Also lacking at many news organizations is what we would call the basics: interviewing both sides in a controversial issue; getting a response to allegations; use of documents to support source material.

This brief course curriculum does not pretend to be a definitive text, but rather a practical outline to introduce American-style investigative reporting in foreign countries. Class exercises are designed to encourage reporters to use a new approach on stories of their own choosing, to dig deeper, and aim higher.

The manual was developed during a nine-month Knight International Press Fellowship which sent me to the Centers for Independent Journalism in Budapest (Hungary), Bucharest (Romania), Bratislava (Slovakia) and Prague (Czech Republic). Most of my reporting experience was at The Philadelphia Inquirer, so I tend to talk about of the evolution of investigative reporting there.

Initially I was sympathetic when journalists protested that they couldn't do big stories, couldn't get documents, were denied information from authorities, and didn't have more than a few hours to work on a story. But I began to see that the biggest obstacles to first-rate, in-depth journalism were not the result of a repressive regime, or threats to personal security, but rather the obstacles of convincing editors to spend money and time on stories, and the lack of persistence and willingness to take on a difficult, enervating story and bring it to conclusion.

Lack of tradition does matter, as there are few role models here, few stories to serve as inspiration. I began to emphasize that these problems plague journalists everywhere, including the United States. The message was: there are no shortcuts to ambitious reporting, but stories that take a lot of time and effort are always worthwhile.

I liked to have workshop participants begin by identifying all the obstacles to this kind of reporting. Then I said: "Yes, these are all serious obstacles, and will require years of work by journalists here to change conditions, years of growing strong and stable publications that can afford to cut loose a writer for weeks or months, years of lobbying for freer access to information laws and libel protections, years to create a tradition and community for investigative reporting. But we can't wait for all that to happen, so we're going to be investigative reporters right now, in this class."

Unless there is an ongoing relationship in which a trainer works with a staff over a number of weeks or months, it is unrealistic to think that an in-depth story can be completed during a workshop. Therefore, courses proposed here are designed to plan how to attack a complex subject and take beginning steps.

Nearly all of my classes included sessions on Internet training and library research. Although many local newspapers were not yet available on the Internet, and often not even indexed, the point was that some newspapers do have electronic libraries and others will in the near future.

The greatest learning came when participants worked on projects of their own choosing. Hungarian students chose ambitious topics: One group wanted to explore the environmental problems that occurred when a former Soviet military site was transformed into an American-style shopping mall. Another team probed what happened when a small town evicted a Roma community. In Slovakia, efforts were also impressive: One group selected the topic of confusing, non-itemized telephone billing records; another wanted to investigate how the country's inadequate weather service contributed to problems stemming from recent flooding.

I collected authentic public documents to demonstrate to students that it could be done. Most countries require businesses to register all sorts of interesting information, for instance, but many journalists are not aware of this data bank.

In Hungary, public corporate documents showed that the Hallo Bar, recently blown up by a hand grenade, was owned by two well-known figures with suspected organized crime connections. When I went to Prague three months later, I found that in early 1998 the Czech corporate registry had become available free of charge on the Internet.

While it can be instructive to talk about American examples of stories and the resources available to the best in the business, I came to believe it was essential to include local stories as case studies.

Teaching investigative reporting is primarily a lesson in attitudinal adjustment, always delivering the message: Think big; incorporate enterprise stories along with the routine news stories; never assume that documents are unavailable; develop relationships with sources and experts who can help you; interview many people with various points of views; make the extra phone call.

Lucinda S. Fleeson
Budapest, Hungary

A Sample Workshop Outline

The following workshop was designed for working professionals who could devote four full days to training sessions. This model begins with two full days of training sessions at the beginning of the program, followed two weeks later with two more full days. During the period between sessions, reporters were to work individually on their own projects.

Topics and exercises can be adapted for shorter workshops. A workshop for experienced Hungarian agricultural reporters and editors, for instance, devoted only one morning to the topic of investigative reporting. In that case, the trainer presented a lecture on American investigative methods and stories, distributing reprints of specific stories. Then the class identified four of the most serious agricultural stories, divided into groups and prepared plans for reporting the stories.

Longer workshops could include more sessions on reporting basics. The general format that should be noted, however, is to alternate lectures with practical sessions in which the participants work on their own story projects.

Investigative Reporting: A Training Model

(This course outline can be translated and reproduced for distribution.)

Dates: ______________________________ Hours: ____________

Location: ____________________________ Trainer: ___________

Objective: To familiarize journalists with some of the traditions and methods of American investigative reporting as exemplified in specific long-term projects and stories; to inspire journalists with the vision that they can accomplish more investigative reporting than they had thought.

Goals: To define investigative reporting in broad terms as in-depth reporting and story-telling about how systems work, not always revealing corruption;

- To familiarize journalists with the inherent obstacles facing investigative journalists everywhere and offer strategies to overcome them;
- To show, through case studies, how journalists can "think big" in attacking big issues and problems but break down large subjects into smaller case studies;
- To show, through class assignments, how to research subjects with documents and interviews;
- To analyze current news stories and prepare outlines to advance stories using investigative techniques.

Requirements: Attendance at sessions and completion of assignments. Reading of daily local newspapers and provided materials.

Day One:

Morning:

Introductions and welcome by trainers and host. Participants introduce themselves, including their journalism experience and expectations for the course.

Trainer: The trainer's experience with in-depth reporting, citing specific stories.
Class Discussion: What is investigative reporting? What are the obstacles?
Visual aid: Flip chart
Lecture: Case history of investigative reporting at an American newspaper (The Philadelphia Inquirer).
Visual aid: Reprints of Inquirer series shown in lecture and passed around class to show length, scope and packaging of stories.

Lunch: 12:30–1:30 p.m. On your own.

Afternoon:

Class discussion: What are local issues that are suitable for student investigative projects? Students choose a story project and divide into teams.
Visual aid: Flip chart
Team assignment: What issues are involved with this story? Planning of story: prepare list of kinds of people to be interviewed, sites to be visited, documents to be gathered.
Lecture: Basic tools of good reporting: direct observation, document research, interviews.
Handouts:
Trainer biography
Class outline
Chapter in journalism text or research

Day Two:

Morning:

Lecture: Digging Deep - Hunting for information on the "dark web." This should be a hands-on day with lots of examples for everyone to try.

- The basics about the Internet: what it is, where it is, defining parts of a URL, differences between http, ftp, etc.
- Looking up a domain to see who owns it.
- Searching for information from a particular domain: by country (site:jp, site:de, etc.), by type (site:org, site:net, etc).

- Searching for particular filetypes using commands: filetype:xls, filetype:doc, filetype:ppt and all of the new extensions.
- Searching for particular keywords using commands: intitle, inurl
- Combining search terms to look for budgets, government documents and more.
- Dark web databases.

Lunch: 12:30–1:30 p.m. On your own.

Afternoon:

Continuation of lecture and hands-on activities.
- Setting up social networks to begin hunting for information.
- Searching the social networks: Twitter, Facebook, Friendfeed, LinkedIn and more.

Day Three:

Morning:

Class projects and research: Team presentations of projects and class discussion.
Introductory Internet Research and Resources (demonstration of CD-Rom access to major U.S. and local newspapers, reference books, Internet sites for local newspapers).

Lunch: 12:30–1:30 p.m. On your own.

Afternoon:

Lecture: Use of documents: primary and secondary materials. Assembling your own data base and file, creation of team project file.

Class: Library research of group project
- Identification of specific person to be interviewed over the break.
- Team consultations with trainer: what research needs to be done, review of interview list, discussion of how to set up interviews.

Assignment: Each student to set up and conduct at least one interview for team project, type notes for group file.

Reading:
- Chapter in journalism text on interview techniques
- Case studies to prepare for discussion: Skin grafts in Slovakia, Secret Files in Romania

Two-Week Break

Day Four:

Morning:

Students: Presentations of progress on team projects and interviews.

Lecture: Document Research

Class: Break into groups to analyze records from the corporate registry.

Lunch: 12:30–1:30 p.m. On your own.

Afternoon:

Lecture: Direct observation, a little-used tool.

Assignment: Direct observation of nearby site.

Participants: Break into groups for discussion of Slovak skin graft story and Romania files. Presentations of groups' conclusions to class.

Assignment: Written exercise in direct observation.
Reading: Fleeson story: "Child Labor Violations at Fast Food Restaurants."

Day Five:

Morning:

Class: Students read their direct observation reports; class critiques.

Lecture: Cultivation and maintenance of sources. Use of confidential sources and on-the-record interviews. The importance of verification and confirmation. Use of multiple sources. Preparing for the confrontation interview.

Lunch: 12:30–1:30 p.m. On your own.

Afternoon:

Class: Role-playing: students interview Colonel Chicken

Class: Break into groups to examine "Child Labor Violations at Fast Food Restaurants."

Group presentations: How many and what kinds of sources used in article? Critique of story.

Lecture:
- Classic steps in the investigative project.
- Using case studies to organize a project.
- Packaging.
- Investigative reporting in daily journalism.

Handouts:
- Sources: 12 Tips
- Chapter: Sources
- The Paul Williams Way

Class party: Certificates awarded (optional)

What is Investigative Reporting?

A class discussion to define investigative reporting is a good place to begin. The goal is to list as many definitions as possible, and then stretch possibilities to include not only stories that expose corruption and criminal activity, but also stories that explain how systems work or fail, or construct complex narratives.

Common definitions include stories that:

- Contain original work, not leaked investigations from law authorities
- Show a pattern of systemic problems, not just one isolated incident affecting one individual
- Right a wrong
- Explain complex social problems
- Reveal corruption, wrongdoing or abuse of power

What are the obstacles?

Identification of the obstacles leads to solutions. A trainer needs to acknowledge that these obstacles exist everywhere, even in the United States. This list should be saved and reviewed at the end of the class to measure progress. Common obstacles:

- No information available
- No access to documents
- Media owners aren't interested in publishing a controversial story
- Fear of retribution by political or business interests
- Threats to personal security
- Not enough time
- No budget for travel or other expenses
- Inner obstacles of loneliness and burnout
- Fear of failure
- Lawsuits
- Losing your job
- Lack of tradition

Project examples

Reporters at many newspapers have found that readers have a great interest in stories that do not focus solely on government corruption, but are about how things work, what is going on, how it may affect ordinary people. These are some of the topics over the last 20 years that have formed the basis of good investigative projects:

- How the nuclear power industry was creating reactors without having any place to store the waste
- How a family decided to take an aging, comatose parent off life-support systems in a hospital
- How a squad of police dogs bit and mauled citizens suspected of the most trivial crimes
- How a private high school pretended it was so bankrupt that it could not operate its computers, while its directors invested millions of dollars of school funds in a coal mine and other business enterprises
- How the mentally ill were no longer confined to state hospitals but instead wandered the street homeless
- How the Defense Department hid millions of dollars in expenditures in a so-called "black budget," using the claim of national security to keep secret ordinary expenses as mundane as toilets.

People care enough to sit down and spend 30 minutes reading a long and compelling story. So part of the fight for all of us is to convince owners, publishers and editors that good stories that take time are worth doing.

Visual aids: Reprints of newspaper series to show length, scope and packaging with graphics, sidebars and photographs.

Institutional Support

Many news outlets have special investigative teams, which include editors who act as coaches throughout the reporting process and then marshal the paper's resources to get the story into print. In talking about the history of investigative reporting at The Philadelphia Inquirer, for instance, I present an ideal: It was located in the United States, where we have a strong tradition of access to information and an openness in which many people feel free to talk to reporters. The newspaper was financially successful and was willing to expend resources for lengthy, expensive projects. But I add that this only occurred after a long period of building the newspaper, from one of the worst to one of the best in the nation.

Points to emphasize:

1. Building support for investigative reporting is an evolutionary process at news organizations. Usually individual reporters begin the process with breakthrough stories. For instance, at *The Inquirer,* such a breakthrough story was published in 1977: “The Homicide Files,” by two young reporters, William Marimow and Jon Neumann. It was a textbook story that is now taught in journalism classrooms. The story reported that Philadelphia police were beating and illegally coercing innocent men—often poor and defenseless—to confess to murders. Some suspects were later proved innocent. Or confessions were thrown out of court and suspects went free. The story resulted in a change of the system at the police department. The story was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and brought the newspaper acclaim. The reporters became editors and role models, helping dozens of other young reporters.

   Those first stories are the hardest. Eventually, the newspaper gains experience in how to pursue tough stories, and also enjoys the rewards: a sense of purpose; respect; acclaim; sometimes prizes; the sense among the journalists that they are doing their best work.

2. A conducive environment encourages reporters to tackle ambitious stories. Hallmarks of successful investigative news organizations include:

   - Willingness to expend resources: relief from other responsibilities when warranted; travel; special projects editors; library resources and research help

   - A mentor system with role models

   - Editors willing to commit space for important stories

   Investigative reporting is seldom done alone. It is a cooperative effort that depends on great individual perseverance by pioneering reporters, but they need support and encouragement from editors and publishers, who ultimately make the decision whether to publish.

   American newspapers have a longer tradition of institutional support for ambitious project reporting, but it has been a slow process.

3. Beginning in the 1960s, “sunshine laws” requiring access to public meetings, libel protection and freedom-of-information laws were enacted that created a culture of access to information. There is a strong professional community for investigative reporters, who have formed their own association, Investigative Reporters and Editors, to share published articles, techniques and offer moral support.

Students Select Their Own Investigative Project

Class discussion: What local issues are suitable for an investigative project?

The first goal is for students to suggest a dozen or more topics. After the possibilities are listed on a flip chart, the trainer can lead a discussion analyzing which of the stories might make the most fruitful subjects for class projects, ultimately selecting the best three or four topics for team research. Participants should then choose which team they would like to join.

Smaller groups sometimes make more headway than bigger groups, but each story should have at least two people working on it.

Once participants select topics, they break into teams to prepare a story plan. In this initial phase, they identify aspects of the story and divide assignments. Their plan should include: people to be interviewed; sites to visit; documents and research materials to obtain.

The rest of the course then alternates between trainer lectures on reporting technique and work on team projects.

Participants usually enjoy the interaction within their teams. Oral presentations to the rest of the class are motivating. Participants tend to praise each other on progress and discuss ways to overcome obstacles. Team meetings with the trainer allow for tailored counseling. One group, for instance, got so overwhelmed with the amount of published material on its subject that reporters wanted to abandon the project.

Some participants will not do homework and will drop out. The trainer can either accept a natural attrition rate and work with the most committed ones, or try to encourage reporters to attend even if they don't do their work. Either choice has its drawbacks.

Here is a step-by-step chronology for the class project:

1. Selection of topic.

2. Teams meet to draft initial campaign plan with list of stories, people to interview, kinds of research to pursue and sites to visit.

3. Presentation of team plan to rest of class with discussion.

4. Library and Internet research on subject: local newspapers and magazines, Web sites, books, brochures, reports and other material.

5. Refine list of interview subjects for further research.

6. Presentation of team plans for class discussion.

7. Each participant to identify at least one interview subject by name and contact information.

8. Discussion with trainer about strategies for arranging interviews.

9. Creation of team file to store research materials, labeled notes and interview transcripts.

10. Each team member to set up and conduct at least one interview and then type notes for group file.

11. Presentations to class of team progress on interviews.

12. Teams meet to plan additional research and interviews, make final recommendations for story.

Good Reporting Tools: How They Work Together

Relying on only one source of information can be misleading. People lie or make mistakes. Documents may be erroneous or tell an incomplete story. Even our own eyes can sometimes deceive us or may require expert help to explain what we are looking at.

The goal for in-depth reporting is to get information from a multitude of sources, using the following three methods of obtaining information, each of which independently corroborate, expand or explain each other.

Three methods for obtaining information:

- Direct observation: We are the witnesses.

- Documents: Paper sources reveal or explain.
- Interviews: People tell us what happened.

A. Direct Observation:
A little-used tool

Lecture: Direct observation is one of the most powerful tools we have as reporters, but it is underused.

Reporters need to get in the habit of closely observing their surroundings, both for news stories and in-depth reports. Often journalists are eyewitnesses to events attended by few people. One of the functions of their articles is to describe what happened and what the scene or people looked like. Direct observation should be used for non-news events as well because descriptions are often important elements of the story. Consider the power of descriptions of gaunt, starving children; demolished buildings after an earthquake; or empty market stalls in an impoverished city. Sometimes these descriptions are more important than official statements. This kind of detailed description is the basis of all good writing, whether in novels, literary classics or journalism. All share the ability to draw the reader into a setting and a story. But in order to write this way, a reporter must be out of his office and at the scene. Interviews must be in person.

First-hand observation of a scene has many advantages:

- Large amounts of reporting can be done quickly, on the spot, while memories are fresh and people gathered. For instance, a reporter on the scene of a fire can quickly find a dozen eyewitnesses and interview them there instead of trying to find their names and addresses to telephone later.
- By making the first-hand observation, the reporter does not have to rely on second-hand accounts by untrained observers who may lack objectivity.
- Direct observation can be used to verify or amplify other information. It is often crucial to understanding of the story. For instance, if an investigative project examined the sale of a former military site, the reporter would quickly grasp aspects and details of the story simply by visiting the site. A story about a Roma village would be incomplete unless the reporter visited the community and described the village, living conditions and its inhabitants.
- On-site reporting offers rich detail and texture that can make the story lively and interesting. Description evokes a scene and allows the reader to see, hear, touch, smell, even taste what happened. Details and descriptions lend color, mood and vividness to an account for both painting a word picture and establishing a you-are-there credibility. During interviews, note the subject's surroundings, facial expressions, tone of voice, even silences.
- First-hand observation cannot be repudiated or easily covered up. For instance, a Philadelphia Inquirer reporter observed Russian troops firing on Chechen civilians—an

incident later denied by officials in Moscow. The correspondent was able to report the shootings because he saw it himself.

- Sometimes we need a guide to help us see. For a story on a new virus, a reporter might look through a microscope and have a scientist explain what is revealed. For a story about alleged damage to oil paintings or sculpture, an art conservator may be needed for an expert evaluation.

Once we are in the habit of observing, it then becomes important to select relevant detail. For instance, descriptions of clothing, hair or eye color may not tell us anything about a subject's personality, but if we mention that a scientist is wearing a lab coat spattered with chemicals it adds to the portrait.

Class exercise

A simple but visual exercise is to have someone enter the classroom for a brief statement then leave. Ask students to describe the man. What was the color of his tie? Do we care what color his tie was? That may not reveal character, but what detail about his appearance does?

Assignment: Participants are assigned to visit a public venue such as a courtyard or cafe and quietly observe the surroundings for 10 to 20 minutes, recording what they see in detailed notes. The reporters are not allowed to talk to anyone, although they may listen to people talking and include dialogue in their written descriptions. They are then asked to write an evocative description without using adjectives or summary descriptions. If the site is an old building, phrases such as "old and in need of renovation" do not tell as much as specific details such as: "the building is covered with pigeon droppings, the windows are broken, a door hangs by one hinge." Reporters should not put themselves into the description with opinions or phrases such as "it reminds me of my grandmother's attic." Avoid judgmental descriptions such as "ugly"or "beautiful." How many senses can reporters appeal to in their writing? Are there smells? Sounds? Even tastes?

This is a difficult assignment and many students do not understand it the first time. They may try to construct a narrative story, or they may interview people. Another common failing is to use summary adjectives. For instance, one student described a ballroom as "big" and "bright." "How can you describe something without using adjectives?" she asked. A description of the room as "1,000 square feet and lit with two chandeliers, each with 100 light bulbs," is more informative.

Alternative assignment: If the reporters are not doing homework, or if the trainer is looking for something to do as a classroom exercise, the trainer can select a nearby site such as the foyer of the classroom building and send reporters there to observe and take notes for 15 minutes, then return to class and write a detailed description. The students then read descriptions aloud and critique their observations.

Overnight reading assignment:

"Two Days in Securitate's Archives," by O.C. Hogea, published April 2, 1998, in Evenimentul Zilei of Bucharest, Romania.
(See Appendix 1.)

This is an example in which access to a previously closed site became the whole story. A member of a team of seven investigative reporters, Hogea spent two days visiting the secret police archives, stored in a locked military weapon dump in west Bucharest. He was the first reporter allowed inside the file rooms. Facts in the story are few: During the 45 years of the totalitarian regime of Nicolae Ceausescu, the dreaded secret police, named the Securitate, spied on 6.5 percent of Romania's population. Relatives, friends, priests and shopkeepers were all pressed into service as informers.

The story is an important peek into an institution. Everyone had lived in fear of the Securitate, so there was a natural curiosity about the secret files. The story had additional importance because Parliament at the time was debating a proposed law to open the files to public access.

Class discussion: Participants break into groups for discussion, followed by presentations to the class:

1. Is the story effective in its description?

2. How could it have been improved?

Finding Documents:

There may be more than you think

1. Primary source documents: Primary source material provides the best, most reliable evidence. These include original documents that can be quoted directly, although they should be attributed to their source. Valuable documents do not have to be secret, leaked reports. Some examples of common public documents:

- Corporate registry documents, which may include: date of incorporation, annual financial reports, names and addresses of directors and the history of the company.

- Reports filed by publicly traded companies with the local securities regulatory authority. Often these statements are required to disclose negative developments within the company, such as pending lawsuits.

- Company annual reports, which often include audited financial statements about profit and losses.

- Company public relations brochures and reports can often give names, addresses and include public promises about company plans.

- Bills before parliament.

- Census data.

- Medical records.

- Court and police records.

- Individual records, such as identity cards, birth and death certificates, diaries, letters, photographs.

While many countries lack the sunshine and freedom of information laws that American reporters routinely use to access government information, Americans also find that obtaining government documents can be an arduous process that is greatly facilitated by having a personal relationship with a willing source. An important message to deliver is that there is more available than most journalists realize. Use examples of real documents. Many new economies are building new data bases with computer access, some already online. With such rapid changes occurring every day, more and more information will likely be available within the journalists' lifetimes, if not in the next few years. In many countries, legal documents such as civil or criminal cases are not available for inspection. Even so, reporters have been able to access some records. Reporters at Evenimentul Zilei in Bucharest, for instance, reported a feature story about how gypsy witches were increasingly being sued by dissatisfied clients. The reporters asked lawyer and courthouse sources if they had heard of any cases, which allowed them to construct an interesting trend story based on current lawsuits. The records alone rarely make a story—they often need to be brought to life with interviews and direct observations.

Some important reminders:

- Often the documents are not enough alone. Journalists unskilled in financial accounting may need a financial expert to interpret material.

- Sometimes the data is old and must be updated when new public material is filed or by requesting information from the source.

- Financial reports and company materials are excellent briefing materials for later research and interviews.

- When people come to you with tips, don't be afraid to ask them how to document it, and get them interested in helping. After all, they are talking to you because they want the information to get out!

Looking for hidden documents

When searching Google, there is a way to search just for specific filetypes and keywords. Most often, useful information is "hidden" - it is available digitally, but not necessarily indexed by the search engines.

Governments, companies, schools and others often store sensitive information in ways that make it accessible to you - as long as you know where to look. As long as you're not using a stolen username or password to enter a site, there is nothing illegal about using the information you find online using the examples below.

- Search for information from a particular domain: by country (site:jp, site:de, etc.), by type (site:org, site:net, etc).
- Search for particular filetypes using commands: filetype:xls,

filetype:doc, filetype:ppt and all of the new extensions (docx, etc.).
- Search for particular keywords using commands: intitle, inurl.

For example, if you wanted to find a municipal budget for the city of Chicago, you might try using the following search: site:gov filetype:xls budget Chicago.

Class exercise

Break the participants into groups and distribute copies of corporate reports, either from a corporate registry or annual reports, and ask them to list more than 10 facts that can be determined from the material. Facts can be as simple as names, titles and correct spelling of company officers, or as complex as the profit or loss reported for the last several years. In Kosice, Slovakia, one group of reporters worked on a project about telephone billing practices. We obtained the company's corporate registration filings and its annual reports for the previous three years, in both Slovak and English.

Handout: Information sheet describing location, process and price for obtaining documents from the corporate registry.

2. Secondary sources: Secondary source material is not original, but has been obtained by another reporter or author and published. Secondary sources include: newspapers, books, magazines, newsletters and other periodicals. This previously published secondary source material is a vital step in the research process to familiarize reporters with their subject and to construct a road map to follow for additional research. However, all of this information must be independently verified with further reporting. One of the first steps for any reporter is to check the clips in his or her own library as well as other news indexes for published stories about the subject. This is still one of the most basic and most important research tools, yet many reporters, particularly beginners, don't do it. This can lead to a discussion of which news libraries are available to local reporters, either online, on CD-ROM, or in old-fashioned hard copies, sometimes filed only in chronological order. There are other periodicals available for research, such as magazines, industry journals, government reports, newsletters, reference books and doctoral theses.

Library research—Introductory Internet research and clip research: The goal is to get journalists who are unfamiliar with the Internet onto the World Wide Web for the first time. For those already familiar, the task is to research local and foreign press published on their subjects, print out stories and start assembling a file on their subjects.

The Internet has widened the range of material available to reporters but also contains dangerous information. As the Internet is open to anyone with a computer, it is a vast resource—almost a dumping ground—for raw, unedited material. It is both valuable and dangerous, filled with primary documents as well as second-hand gossip. It is important to distinguish between primary and secondary material on the Internet.

(When computer access is unavailable for classroom work, it may be possible to purchase research from local computer data services.)

Printed library sources should not be abandoned. *Who's Who*, the encyclopedia, and even the telephone book offer valuable information. Sometimes it is easier and faster to open a book.

Class exercise

Assign participants to research a subject with its own home page, and also look up recent articles in local newspapers. This subject should be researched in advance by the trainer. For young reporters in Prague, the Web site of a popular rock star was available and students also found reviews of the musician's recent performances.

Question: Which material is primary material that can be quoted without further verification? Which material needs to be verified by another source?

Exercise: Each team conducts Internet and library research on its story project, prints out material, labels it with source and date and starts assembling a group file to be kept at a central location that is available between classes for team members.

Handouts:

- Chapter of journalism text on research.
- List of Internet sites of local newspapers.

3. Advanced data base analysis: A brief mention American reporters are increasingly employing computer-assisted reporting techniques to analyze vast quantities of information. For instance, a New Jersey newspaper obtained health records from a number of hospitals (without names of patients) and analyzed the numbers of natural and Caesarian births. The report showed that women who had comprehensive health insurance were receiving more Caesarian sections, while poor women had more natural deliveries, suggesting that a great many of the more expensive operations were unnecessary.

American reporters have also found that it is possible to negotiate to reduce fees for obtaining data bases. For instance, a Boston, Massachusetts, newspaper requested the computerized files of all state drivers' licenses, and was told that the fee would be $300,000. Eventually, the newspaper obtained the computer tapes for $10, although it took more than a year of negotiation.

The U.S.-based National Institute for Computer Assisted Reporting (http://www.nicar.org) has made tremendous strides in advancing data-driven reporting and investigative work. NICAR offers a free listserv that's open to everyone interested in data reporting, and it will give you the ability to tap into a wonderful network of very smart reporters and editors. In addition, there are numerous resources available on the NICAR site, from how-to tipsheets to help with math and statistics.

Question: Increasingly, a number of countries have computerized corporate registries with readily available computer printouts. What kinds of stories would be possible if journalists could gain access to the entire data base?

A software program might be written to analyze data that could lead to many interesting stories. For example: What percentage of companies is owned by foreign investors? Is ownership of companies concentrated within the hands of a few large companies or people?

Interviewing Techniques

Learning to Negotiate: This is a place for general tips on interview techniques if the workshop reporters are inexperienced. The mission for a reporter working on an in-depth piece is different from that of the news reporter who needs to write for tomorrow, or the television reporter looking for an on-camera response. The goal is to get material that explains a situation, reveals something new or constructs a narrative. The place for this kind of interview is rarely in a press conference or with a pack of reporters, but rather in individual interviews.

Beginning reporters need to remember that their basic goal is to get information, and they should learn what “edge” or advantage they possess to help persuade reluctant sources to cooperate.

A reporter on a very small newspaper might gain such an edge by saying: “All the reporters at the big papers have all the connections, give me a break.” Everything works. Even seemingly gimmicky things, such as: “I can’t go back without getting this information because my editor will kill me.”

Some of these persuasive arguments might seem foolish, but the point is to get reporters used to dealing and negotiating with people.

The Confrontation Interview: Verification and Confirmation: Findings from in-depth reporting are often not welcomed. The reporter needs to convince people to respond to findings before publication. This means making repeated telephone calls to arrange an interview, sending registered letters if there is no response, perhaps even showing up on someone’s doorstep. There are several reasons for getting a response. It is the decent and fair thing to do. If unflattering information is going to be printed in the newspaper about someone, it is only right that the person has a chance to tell his side of the story. A response may include some sound and unanticipated explanations. Or the person may correct information that is just plain wrong. Sometimes a person gives a reporter more and better information. At times the response is a short denial, which also needs to be included for fairness.

A confrontation interview occurs when the reporter goes to his subject and reviews the findings. It is important to remember that such a review needs to be complete and thorough, covering each fact that is going to be published in a complex story.

Tips for the Confrontation Interview:

- Before you start, decide what you need to get out of the interview. Make a list of, and perhaps script in advance, some of the most difficult questions and rehearse them with a friend.

- To arrange the interview, it is sometimes necessary to reveal the purpose of your visit, but it isn't always necessary to reveal too much. Helpful phrases include: "I'm doing research on this subject." "I've assembled a report, but it isn't complete without your view. I really think this deserves an interview in person with you."

- Assume nothing. Use this as an opportunity to check material from second-hand sources. Most people are only too happy to help ensure that information about them is correct. Don't neglect basic questions such as: What is your title? How long have you been in this job? What is your degree? From where?

- Ask the question over and over if you have to get an answer, or return the subject to the question you asked.

- You need a full response, both to the thrust of the question and to the specific details. Review specifics, even if you have to introduce them by saying, "For the record, I just want to go over these cases with you."

- Sometimes just a simple question, such as: "What happened?" elicits a valuable point of view.

- Don't judge the response as good or bad; just note it, or ask for elaboration. The more they talk, the better.

- Make sure you understand the spirit of the response as well as the exact words—remember, you're not trying to trick the person into a mistaken word; you're looking to incorporate their point of view!

- Ending the interview is a good time to set the stage for a return: "I may need to check facts or spellings or get amplification on some points. If I have any question about the material or need clarification on certain points, I would like to call you."

- Go back again and again if necessary.

Class role-playing exercise:

Colonel Chicken and the Frogs
In this exercise, students are given a short fact sheet describing a news story about alleged health violations at several local fast food restaurants. At six different franchises of the same fast food company, pieces of frogs were discovered mixed in with the chicken sandwiches.
(See Appendix 2.)

Three reporters are selected to interview in front of the class the restaurant chain owner, a fictitious Colonel Chicken. Unknown to the interviewers, Colonel Chicken has been given three different scripts for his responses, in which he:

1. Denies all.

2. Delivers a smooth, plausible response and pledges to correct the situation immediately.

3. Can't shut up and admits that strange things have been turning

up in his restaurants in several countries.

After the exercise, the class and Colonel Chicken critique the interviewers, although every time this exercise was conducted by the author, most of the students received long ovations. One of the important lessons here is to show that even in the face of a blanket denial, the reporter should review all of the specific findings with the subject of the reports.
(See Appendix 2.)

Sources

Sources are developed over a number of years, establishing a relationship of trust. Most students and beginning reporters don't have any sources, so the goal is to identify types of people with whom they can develop ongoing relationships.

As reporters become experienced, they develop contacts with a wide array of people who have useful information. Some of these people's names will never appear in the newspaper, but they can provide information that may turn into stories. They may act as sounding boards for ongoing issues. These contacts may include clerks in government offices, government officials, community leaders, attorneys, police officers, business representatives, firemen, friends—virtually anyone. Other people may never give you a useful lead about a story, but can be interviewed to provide quotes on a specific news story. These may include elected officials, attorneys, politicians, hospital officials, and public relations representatives.

Independent observers and experts are also useful contacts to develop. These may include university professors, authors, pollsters and researchers at public policy institutions.
A reporter needs to evaluate a source's reliability and whether the information was obtained first-hand or is third-hand gossip.

On the record: The goal

Many newspapers have policies that news articles must rely only on quotations and material from on-the-record interviews, in which the source is identified by name and title. Use of confidential or anonymous sources should be limited. Many newspapers, for instance, require that a high-level editor must approve the use of an anonymous source before publication. Too frequent use of anonymous sources can undermine a newspaper's credibility because readers question whether the sources are fictitious. It is also risky, as many people are willing to provide negative information anonymously, but won't stand behind it themselves because it can't be proved.

When a reporter promises confidentiality, his or her word functions as a written contract, so it is a promise that needs to be considered carefully. Reporters have gone to jail rather than reveal their sources.

Reliance on anonymous sources can become a bad habit, both for the reporter and the source. Savvy officials try to elicit confidentiality when it is not necessary. Beginning reporters in particular fall into this trap. Often a source can be brought onto the record by simply saying: "I'm interviewing you in your official position and need to have this on the record." Sometimes a reporter has to refuse to listen to something off the record.

What is off the record?

When a reporter talks to a source, there can be several levels of confidentiality: off-the-record, not for attribution, deep background and various other confusing categories, which are defined in varying ways. What is important is that no matter what the terminology, the reporter and the source are in agreement on the conditions of how the material is to be used. These conditions are worth discussing explicitly with the source.

Common definitions:

• *Off the record:* The identity of the source cannot be revealed nor can the information be used until and unless it can be confirmed independently.

• *Not for attribution:* The source can be quoted but cannot be attributed in a way that can identify him or her. How the quote is to be used can be negotiated. For instance, the quote can be identified as from "a participant in the negotiations," "a high-level government official," "a member of Parliament who asked not to be identified," etc.

Two independent sources:

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette incident

In order to ensure accuracy, many newspapers have a policy prohibiting publication of controversial information

unless it is verified by at least two independent sources of information. This is especially true when dealing with anonymous sources.
A recent incident at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette illustrates why many news organizations have decided to never, ever, put anything into the newspaper unless it has been verified with another source.

In 1996, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, in the home state of President Bill Clinton, published several stories about the investigation of the President by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr. Much of the information came from an anonymous source, who worked directly with the Office of the Independent Counsel and whose reliable information had led to several accurate and good stories. In early 1997, the source told a reporter that Starr had convened mock jury trials to present evidence that the Clintons were involved in perjury and obstruction of justice. The mock juries, said the source, voted to acquit the President of all charges. The reporter could not find another source to confirm the account, but the editors decided to publish anyway. The story ran on Page One, on Feb. 15, 1997. The next day Starr vehemently denied the existence of mock juries. The newspaper had printed an erroneous, very embarrassing story.

Attribution and plagiarism

Reporters frequently ask about using material from other newspapers, magazines and publications. How much can they use? Common practice among some reporters is to "lift quotes" from one publication and use them again in their own stories. It may be common, but it is lousy journalism. Several American reporters have been fired for lifting quotes. Other publications may provide useful background, but material needs to be checked before using it.

If there is no better alternative to borrowing a quote, then it should be attributed to the original publication. For example: "I'm through with politics," Mayor Brown told the Daily News.

Handout: "The Art of Sourcery" (See Appendix 6.)

Case study:
Skin Grafts in Slovakia

"On the night of June 16, 1997, when the watch showed five to eleven, a 58-year-old woman died in the Presov Hospital. Cause of death: heart failure."

Thus begins a controversial story published by The Presov Evening Post in eastern Slovakia, under the headline: Human Skin Missing Under the Burial Shroud. The story recounts in gripping detail, complete with grisly photographs, how the relatives of the dead woman opened her coffin and found that her skin had been flayed, taken for skin grafts by the hospital where she died.

The story by the Presov Post sparked a national debate over the ethics of skin grafting, prompted a threat of a lawsuit by the hospital and received an award for regional reporting by the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists. (See Appendix 3.)

The story is a good example of enterprise by a small regional daily newspaper but could have been improved by following some basic procedures for verification of information and obtaining a response. It is offered here to demonstrate how local stories can become important learning tools.

Class exercise
Break into groups for discussion of the Slovak skin graft story and questions. Presentation of conclusions by groups to the rest of the class.

Discussion points: A response from the hospital director would have saved the newspaper from serious factual mistakes such as quotation of an out-of-date law, and possibly from a threat of a lawsuit. It also would have been fair.

The newspaper did no follow-up stories, including what may have been a more important story showing a pattern of skin removal from other corpses. Other possible follow-ups: A science story explaining the medical issues of skin grafting; a human interest feature tracking what happened to the skin of the dead woman —was it used to save three teenage boys?; news stories on lawsuits filed by the family of the dead woman.

Tackling the Big Story

Big stories can be packaged dramatically in ways that also help the writer organize material. Packaging can enhance readability and presentation.

Useful tips:

- Organize reporting and writing into case studies of separate incidents. In a story about police abuse, for instance, 12 incidents of abuse are reported and written one story at a time. They can be presented all together as one large report, with a simple organization: an introductory summary beginning, followed by documented cases.

- Consider an occasional series, particularly if publication pressures prevent a reporter from saving his material until he can present it in one big story. In this format, stories are presented as they are finished over a period of several weeks or months. A logo signature for each of the stories alerts readers to the common theme.

- Consider breaking out sidebar stories, charts, maps, and other graphic presentations such as chronologies of important dates in the story, or a list of main characters.

- Share documentation with the reader. Original letters, photographs, transcripts or other documents can be exciting visual aids and also enhance credibility. Consider a sidebar or small box about how the story was written with pictures of the reporters and photographers and their backgrounds.

Handouts:
- “The Paul Williams Way: Steps in the Classic Investigative Project” *(See Appendix 7.)*

- Reprints of a published series showing dramatic use of graphics.

Investigative Reporting in Daily Journalism: Make the Time

Reporters in Eastern and Central Europe complained that they weren't given time by their news organizations to develop ambitious investigative reports. The same complaints are often heard from American reporters. There is really only one answer to this problem: make the time.

Sometimes investigative reporting means making an extra phone call instead of being content with only two or three. Do the daily assignments that must be done, then use spare time for your own project.

Often the very best stories come from a reporter's routine rounds on his or her beat, talking to people, following the news, discovering a weird or unusual event and then seeing if the same sort of thing has been happening over and over again. For instance: If a fast food restaurant serves contaminated food, it is a story. If five restaurants in the chain serve tainted food, it is a more important story. And if 25 restaurants serve contaminated meals, then it has become a systemic problem.

These are the kinds of stories that come from the reporter, not "top down" reporting where editors sit around and consider the big issues. What it takes is a reporter who covers a beat, becomes an expert on a subject, and is not afraid to ask sources, in the normal course of events, what they consider their biggest problem or their most serious issue.

Class discussion: "Laboring — At fast food chains, the help is low-priced, too," by Lucinda Fleeson *(See Appendix 4.)*

Background: This is an old story but is presented here because it was a short project that demonstrates how a story can be found in the normal course of talking with sources. It involved young people working at the same fast food restaurant chains that are becoming a visible presence worldwide.

I had covered the labor beat for two years and was making routine telephone calls to sources to talk about current issues of the day. One of my regular sources was in the research department of the AFL-CIO, the national union organization. He told me that fast food restaurants were lobbying Congress to create a special new minimum wage to pay teenagers a lower rate. He mentioned that fast food restaurants were the biggest abusers of wage laws. Maybe this was common knowledge among labor and restaurant experts, but it was news to me.

Under U.S. freedom of information laws, anyone can request government records on a variety of materials. I requested records of wage-law violations at several dozen restaurants in Philadelphia. It took several weeks to get the results. Once I had the results, I had a detailed record of wage abuses at specific restaurants, with dates, addresses and case histories of violations of law. I was able to show that a pattern of abuse was occurring, documented with real cases. One case showing that McDonald's cheated one employee out of his overtime would be a small story. A dozen examples of that kind of behavior is interesting. A hundred examples, involving millions of dollars and billion-dollar corporations, is a great story.

I interviewed employees about their working conditions, so I had real names and real people for the story. I contacted experts: not only union critics, but sociologists who talked about the value of this kind of employment, and who referred me to studies that revealed that when kids work at these places they don't learn much, and their school grades drop. I then called the companies to get their reactions. I was referred to an attorney for the fast food industry, and reviewed with him the cases and violations.

In retrospect I wish I had handled this story a little differently. This was really a much better story than the one I wrote. I gave it a cute, soft lead instead of a hard news lead stating that fast food restaurants were systematically cheating their minimum wage workers out of millions of dollars each year and explaining how they do it. This was the first story in the country to reveal that McDonald's, Burger King and others were engaging in a pattern of abuse that amounted to violating child labor laws.

Class exercise

Assign students to read the story, break into groups and discuss the kinds and number of sources used to report the story; the success of the story; its weaknesses.

Discussion points:

- Could you do this story here?
- What records could you obtain?
- How would you develop a similar story?

Handout: "To Achieve Enterprise: Make it Routine"
(See Appendix 8.)

Can you trust it?

Consumer technology has advanced so that anyone with a computer can now create sophisticated websites. It can be difficult, therefore, to determine if a website is trustworthy. Some people are now using websites as a way to subvert the truth, to defraud others of their money or to hide important public information.

There are many ways to determine whether or not to trust a website. Below is a standard list of questions to ask whenever you encounter a website that seems suspicious. But as a general rule, it's good practice to scrutinize many websites on a regular basis.

1. **Does the website contain working contact information?** A trustworthy website will make contact information very clear. It may be a web form rather than an email address, but you should receive some notice that your message has been received.

2. **When you click on a link either on the site or from an email, does the URL change?** For example, many bank scams will make it seem like you're clicking on www.citibank.com, but you'll be redirected to something totally different, such as www.monygr.ru/eirg/876632. The real Citibank webpages don't suddenly change like that. You can also look to see if there is an "@" within the URL. Hackers use an "@" within the URL to redirect users from one site to their hacked version.

3. **Look at the source code information.** This is found in different places, depending on your browser. In Firefox on a Mac, look at the very top bar, where it says Firefox, File, Edit. The next option is View. After clicking there, select Page Source. A new window will pop up with source code for the page. It is okay if you can't interpret the code...what you should look for is an indication that the site has been hacked. Almost always, if the site has been compromised or if it is a fake site, you'll see something at the top of the screen that says "Hacked by..." or "Down with Prime Minister..." etc.

4. **Look up the domain.** You can tell who has registered a website by going to http://www.networksolutions.com/whois/index.jsp. Simply follow the instructions and enter the domain without the "http" or "www," and you'll find out all of the names and contact information for that particular website. Note: there are instances when you may find that a site has been registered through a proxy to keep information private.

5. **Look up old versions of the site.** Using the Wayback Machine at http://www.archive.org/index.php, type in the URL to see older versions of the website. If the company or website claims to have been around for 10 years but the website was created 10 days ago, that may give you pause.

6. **Use your instinct.** Sometimes, the best way to determine whether a website is trustworthy is to use your own instinct. Does it feel right? Does it seem strange? If so, it probably is.

International Center for Journalists

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Useful Web sites

International Journalists' Network: **www.ijnet.org**

Investigative Reporters and Editors: **www.ire.org**

Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press: **www.rcfp.org**

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists: **www.icij.org**

National Institute for Computer Assisted Reporters: **www.nicar.org**

Helpful Books

There are three excellent investigative reporting books that can help you navigate to resources online and understand them once you're there:

Computer Assisted Reporting: A practical guide, by Brant Houston, is published by bedfordstmartins.com and offers very practical tips on data analysis.

The Investigative Reporter's Handbook: A guide to documents, databases and techniques is now in its fifth edition and is a fantastic resource for investigative reporters.

Sarah Cohen's *Numbers in the Newsroom: Using Math and Statistics* is a primer on how to use statistics and numbers commonly found in reports. It's available at http://www.ire.org.

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Appendix

Appendix 1
An Example of Direct Observation

Evenimentul Zilei, April 2, 1998

While Parliament debates free access to Securitate's files, an Evenimentul Zilei reporter spends Two Days in Securitate's Archives

By O.C. Hogea

If the statistics on the Securitate, Romania's most feared repressive institution, are true, 6.5 percent of the country's active population was subject to Securitate's monitoring. More than 500,000 informers cooperated—willingly or by force—with the Securitate. Over the 45 years of totalitarian regime, more than one million years in prison were served by those "processed" by Securitate.

In a military neighborhood in western Bucharest, at the far end of a street bordered by proletarian blockhouses, in a former weapon dump surrounded by half-a-meter thick walls, lies, under lock and key, "at constant temperature," the tragedy of a whole generation.

The 1,120,000 Securitate files, placed here after 1990, hold between their grayish covers, sealed with Manila string, almost like a mass grave, the lives of nameless martyrs, of class enemies and dissidents.

One hundred thousand files of criminal cases, with prison sentences pronounced, are stored next to another 100,000 files of informers. But most of the shelves are full of monitoring files; nearly one million people were subject to it.

The most appalling thing about these archives is the scientific way they deal with human weakness, weakness that turned victims into scoundrels, cases where fear perverted moral integrity.

This bookkeeping of weakness produces a sharp fear of the past. In Parliament, the law to open access to Securitate files has had a difficult birth. There has been a lot of foot-dragging, as MPs are looking desperately for inspired words that could seal the past between the walls of these archives.

Meanwhile, an Evenimentul Zilei reporter touched by hand this storehouse of fear, shelf by shelf. For two days, he had a face-to-face encounter with the scary past of 6.5 percent of Romania's inhabitants.

The storehouse of fear

One can see several buildings behind the concrete fences surrounding a zone of several acres next to the "Electrotehnica" factory in Bucharest. The people in the neighborhood believe this is a fire station, as fire engines noisily go in and out the gates. But this is not the main entrance; there's another one, along a little muddy street among blockhouses, an alleyway to the Securitate's archives, currently looked after by the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI). SRI occupies only one of the four twin gray buildings, of about 3,000 square meters.

Over the last two years, the former ammunition dump built by Germans during the war, was refurbished and blessed by a procession of priests, in order to host files that in totality will amount to 9 kilometers and 720 tons. Each and every Romanian was taxed 50 lei to pay for the cost of this refurbishing to achieve “optimal conditions.” The billion lei allotted for building purposes was used to fortify the foundations to withstand major earthquakes. The half-meter thick walls have been painted, mice have been chased from their holes, protections against unauthorized entering and discreet cameras were put in place. Major Florin Pintilie, head of SRI archives since 1996, says he’s satisfied with the result.

Twenty halls of rooms are located on an underground level, a ground floor and another floor, all still smelling of paint and incense from the blessing by priests. In more than half of them are stored files from 1920 to 1989.

Other rooms are used for thousands of kilograms of papers bearing the Securitate label. Here the files are tied and untied, they receive numbers and, if necessary, new covers, but none of them, as Major Pintilie stressed, see sunlight. In a pavilion of the building, in two other storerooms—one for current activities, one for preservation—are held the operative archives of SRI, with top secret documents, filed after 1990. This is the only “living section” of the archives, where officers can access information that might help them with their current investigations.

From the outside, there is nothing unusual about the building that stores 45 years of terror. But inside, the past and fear seem to be as palpable as sweat on the painted walls. In the patio of the compound, stray dogs from the neighborhood sleep carelessly. Eight officers formerly employed by Securitate and 12 others hired by SRI after 1990 take care of the archives.

A small door is cut in the main gate, which is wide enough to let a truck through. On the right side of the hallway are the toilets, on the left is a study room for the researchers, right in front of the security officer. Above twinkles a small light of a tiny but active surveillance camera. The room near the security desk is sealed with plasticine, the linoleum on the floor is recently washed, the freight elevator nearby is out of order; and it is so quiet and deserted that the smell of chlorine makes me feel like I’m in a strange hospital, where the past is awaiting a diagnosis.

The polite voice of the officer invites me to wipe my feet before stepping with my boots on the cheap carpet lining the past of millions of people. Major Florin Pintilie has 20 officers under his command, working in the archives. According to their job description, they deal exclusively with the current SRI activities and only secondly with the Securitate files. “They are on top of it,” stresses Pintilie, to underscore the efforts his officers make. Because Pintilie cares for them: “On their service of duty, they carry on their arms more than 500 kilos of files daily. Dermatitis is a professional disease running in the group. One guy had his nails practically fall of from this disease, due to the dust on the files.” As the officer assures us, they are immune to only one virus: curiosity.

(Translated and Edited Version)

Appendix 2

Confrontation Interviews: Colonel Chicken and the Frogs

Class Exercise

You are a reporter working for a major daily newspaper in Budapest and have received a tip from a caller who said he had been eating lunch at a downtown fast-food chicken restaurant. He bit into a chicken burger and chewed on something that seemed stringy. When he examined it, he saw that a whole frog leg had been deep-fried and mixed in with the chicken. He was outraged and wanted you to publish this horrifying tale.

Skeptical, you called the health authorities and found that there had been a rash of similar complaints from six different people in the last few months. All complained that they had found what appeared to be deep-fried frogs mixed in with their chicken. You obtained a copy of records showing six complaints:

1. **Sept. 15**: Man complains that he found a frog head in his sandwich at the Colonel Chicken restaurant on Kiraly utca. He brought the frog head to the Health Department. Restaurant was issued a violation and fined $1,000.

2. **Oct. 11**: Woman finds webbed foot in her chicken sandwich on Vaci ut. She is so upset that she throws it out, but complains to Health Department. Health department investigates but without evidence, no violation was issued. She filed a civil suit seeking $10,000 for emotional trauma. Suit is pending.

3. **Oct. 31**: Woman says she found a strange leg in her French fries at the Castle Hill Colonel Chicken. Health Department issues violation to Colonel Chicken and fines restaurant $500.

4. **Dec. 12**: Man eating at Liszt ter Colonel Chicken finds what appears to be frog leg in his fries and takes it to the Health Department for analysis. Fine levied of $500.

5. **Jan. 20:** Young boys eating at Liszt ter Colonel Chicken find a whole, deep-fried frog in their bucket of fried chicken. Health Department issues second violation, orders restaurant closed for one day. Fine levied of $2,000.

6. **March 30**: Man eating at Vaci ut Colonel Chicken reports finding a whole frog in his chicken and reports it to the Health Department. Investigation is pending.

The Health Department inspector tells you confidentially that another fast-food operator has told him that Colonel Chicken's marriage is on the rocks because Mrs. Chicken discovered that the Colonel has been fooling around with his secretary.

You have scheduled an interview with Colonel Chicken.

Colonel Chicken Responds:

Response One: Colonel Chicken denies all.
Colonel Chicken denies that there have ever been any frogs discovered at his restaurants. As for the six complaints recorded by the Health Department, those were mistakes. The Health Department is harassing American businesses and making it impossible to operate here.

All of the chicken used in Colonel Chicken products undergoes rigorous inspection.

He refuses to answer questions about his private life. He says he will sue for libel or invasion of privacy.

Response Two: Colonel Chicken went to Public Relations School
Colonel Chicken says there has been an unfortunate tampering with some frozen foods. A massive internal inspection has been carried out that revealed that in certain isolated instances an employee had mixed frog pieces into chicken pieces. The employee has been discharged, arrested and is undergoing mental evaluation. In all, the employee mixed in 12 frogs—six were in Hungary and the other six were found and destroyed.

“This was an extremely rare occurrence, and I ask the public to understand that all problems have been corrected.” He announces a campaign to offer free coupons to Budapest customers. He insists on giving the reporter 10 coupons. He says he and Mrs. Chicken, his wife of 40 years, will appear together to open the campaign in Budapest. If anyone asks about his marriage, he says he is very happily married.

Response Three: The Colonel Can’t Shut Up
Colonel Chicken says that there have been some problems in Budapest, but reports have been exaggerated. His company has the highest health standards in the world.

He says that occasionally a customer complains about something in his food, but that it usually amounts to nothing. “Heck, last month somebody in Austria claimed there was a snail in his burger,” he confides, “but he just wanted someone to pay for his dental work.”

Colonel Chicken says that the restaurant chain has received frog complaints in six European countries: Czech Republic, Romania, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia.

Appendix 3
Skin Grafts in Presov

A Case Study of Investigative Reporting by a Local Slovak Newspaper

"On the night of June 16, 1997, when the watch showed five to eleven, a 58-year-old woman died in the Presov Hospital. Cause of death: heart failure."

Thus begins a controversial story published by The Presov Evening Post in eastern Slovakia, under the headline: Human Skin Missing Under the Burial Shroud. The story recounts in gripping detail, complete with grisly photographs, how the relatives of the dead woman became distraught when they opened her coffin and found that her skin had been flayed, taken for skin grafts by the hospital where she died.

Background situation

Since the fall of the Communist regime in Slovakia in 1989, there has been a proliferation of new media businesses, both print and broadcast. Almost immediately after the Velvet Revolution, five editors and publishers in the city of Presov in eastern Slovakia decided to start their own daily newspaper, and did so on April 1, 1990. Four of them worked as journalists for state-supported newspapers in the Communist era, another as a book publisher. Starting their own newspaper was a dream come true for them. In eight years they have built The Presov Evening Post into a circulation of 10,000, using their own desktop publishing system and creating their own distribution system. They now have 15 employees and proudly feel they have accomplished a great deal.

Limitations on both media freedom and independence continue in a highly politicized environment. International journalism associations classified Slovakia as "only partially free," citing attacks on journalists and lack of free access to information. The ruling government party, HZDS, gives financial support and other favorable help to state-supported media outlets, which have been criticized as government mouthpieces. Opposition media also have been criticized as biased. There have been a number of violent attacks on journalists identified as opposition. Two journalists' cars were bombed in 1997, including that of Peter Licak, chief editor of The Presov Post. No one was hurt, although his car exploded at 7 p.m., when it was parked outside his block of flats near playing children. He says his sources indicate that the SIS—secret Slovak police—were responsible for the bombing. In 1997, more than 67 cars were bombed throughout Slovakia, in incidents that have been variously attributed to mafia racketeering threats, intimidation by police and other criminal sources.

Presov is a town of 100,000 people near Kosice, the second largest city in Slovakia. The region's economy is dominated by a large steel mill that is the largest source of employment and owns several newspapers.

The Story

In late June 1997, one of the newspaper's enterprising reporters, Viliam Drabik, received a tip from a source that on June 16 the local hospital had taken skin grafts from a dead woman without the permission of either the woman or her family. The body had been left in a deplorable condition, according to the source. Drabik comes from a family of newspaper men, and has worked in the profession for 12 years. At the time, he was 36 years old and had been free-lancing for the Presov newspaper when they offered him a full-time job. He was rapidly making a name for himself as one of its most talented and enterprising reporters who regularly contributed to the special Page Three reports that broke new stories.

Drabik went to the village of Raznany and tracked down the family of the dead woman. He struck up a conversation with the woman's son-in-law, a young sanitation truck driver of about the same age as he. They got along well and eventually shared a couple of beers. Drabik learned the details of the story of how two daughters and their husbands went to the funeral home in nearby Sabinov to view the body of their dead mother, a 58-year-old woman who had died in Presov hospital of heart failure. They noticed that there were odd marks on her legs and traces of blood. As they examined the body more closely, they discovered to their horror that more than a square meter of skin had been removed from various parts of her body. "She looked like a train ran over her," the son-in-law related.

The reporter talked with the two daughters of the woman, who tearfully confirmed the story.

The son-in-law volunteered to the reporter that he had photographed the body as evidence and gone to the district attorney to file a complaint that his mother-in-law's body had been abused. The photographs were still contained on an undeveloped roll of film. Drabik convinced the son-in-law to accompany him to the newspaper's darkroom to develop the film. The son-in-law was uncertain, but Drabik assured him that no one would see the film except people at the newspaper and that the son-in-law would be able to choose which pictures would be published. The son-in-law agreed and the photographs were developed. The son-in-law viewed the prints, and gave permission only for pictures in which the dead woman was not immodestly exposed.

Drabik knew that he had a compelling, big story, and the photographs provided irrefutable proof. He became worried that another newspaper or broadcast media would learn about the story and beat him to it before he could get it into print. Still, his editors urged him to go deeply into the story. Four or five days after he received the tip, the report was published on July 1, 1997.

Three photographs of the corpse were published, giving readers grisly views of a mutilated body. The story was a detailed, graphic narrative of the family's experience in viewing the body of their mother, and their frustration in trying to get information about the skin grafts from the Presov hospital. There were extensive quotations from the son-in-law. The newspaper also quoted a Slovak law that forbade the removal of any body tissue or organ without proper authorization, although it was unclear whether authorization should be from family members or medical authorities.

The article identified the son-in-law and daughters by their full names, but only referred to the dead woman as Jolana K. One daughter was quoted as saying that the family would probably have given permission for the tissue removal to help save a living patient if they had been asked, but they never had been.

The article also included a lengthy dialogue between the son-in-law and the deputy director of the Presov hospital, as related by the son-in-law. In this interview, the deputy director is quoted as saying that “bodies are the property of the hospital.” The deputy director is also reported to have said: “We would have cut out more (skin) but our knife broke.”

The article raised several questions without offering answers: “Where did the removed skin go and what was it used for? This woman was, after all, 58 years old, so what is happening in cases of deceased young people or even kids who have healthy and firm skin?” asked the newspaper. “And what about the others, whose dear deceased have gone through an ‘examination’ at the Department of Pathology in Presov and who have for a few hours become the property of the hospital?”

No one from the Presov hospital or the funeral home that handled burial arrangements was quoted or apparently interviewed.

The night before publication, The Presov Evening Post ran a headline on the Front Page, promoting the skin graft story and alerting readers that it would be in the next day’s edition. That evening, editor Licak was at home in his apartment when he received a telephone call from Dr. Peter Biros, director of the Presov hospital. The director and the editor exchanged heated words, and the hospital director said he didn’t know what was in the article, but asked if the editor considered it an important enough story to be distributed to the public if the hospital had operated within the legal framework of the law. The hospital director warned that there would be serious consequences if the story was published. The editor said the story would be in the next day’s newspaper. “I hope you sleep well tonight,” said the hospital director. “And you as well,” retorted the newspaper editor.

Post Publication

After the article appeared the next day, the hospital director and his deputy arrived unannounced at the newspaper office to meet with editor Licak. Dr. Biros, the hospital director, said that he wanted to clear the name of Presov hospital. He explained that a special team from the Saca-Kosice Hospital had done the skin removal. Dr. Biros said that the weather was extremely warm in July, and the funeral home had failed to refrigerate the body for several hours, causing bruises to be heightened and bleed. If that hadn’t happened, the family would never have become aware of the skin removal, he said. Dr. Biros also argued that the photographs of the woman's body pictured her lying on the ground, which unfairly gave the impression that the hospital treated the body carelessly, when in fact, the family removed the corpse from the coffin themselves and laid it on the ground to photograph it. He said that sarcastic captions under the photographs also implied wrongdoing by the hospital without actually stating it.

When the newspaper refused to print his explanation, Dr. Biros angrily announced that the hospital's name was defamed and the hospital would file suit against the paper for 10 million Slovak korunas ($294,000 U.S.)—a sum that would force the newspaper out of business.

Editor Licak telephoned colleagues in print and broadcast media throughout Slovakia and alerted them that the newspaper had a story they might be interested in. He also told them that the Presov Hospital threatened to sue the newspaper for 10 million korunas. Hospital director Biros began his own media campaign in an attempt to get his side of the story out, and he was interviewed giving his point of view on radio, television and in several articles.

In the next few weeks, several newspapers, television and radio stations reported on the story of the mutilated body. Two weeks after the story appeared, The Presov Evening Post published a letter from Dr. Biros, in which he stated that the Presov hospital was not involved in the removal of the skin from the woman's body and that it was the private funeral service's responsibility to present the body in a more respectable fashion. He said the newspaper should seek information from all sides before publishing an article and asked for an apology from the newspaper. The editors published their rebuttal immediately under the Biros piece, and declined to offer an apology.

The Presov Evening Post published no other story about the case.

New Facts Emerge

Various publications and broadcast media carried articles about the case in what became a national debate on the removal of body organs by hospitals. One newspaper disclosed that the current Slovak law had been recently revised, although few people knew about it. In 1983, a law stated that body part removal required permission by the deceased or relatives; in 1993 a new law was passed, allowing tissue removal without permission.

One story criticized the hospital for not seeking permission from the dead woman's family—who were sitting in the hospital waiting room at the time the skin grafts were taken.

Several articles said this practice of taking tissue from corpses without relatives' permission was routine throughout Slovakia. At Presov hospital alone, for instance, the special team from Saca came for tissue 20 times in the previous year. Several medical experts wrote columns in favor of or in opposition to a proposal to revise the current law to require that no body part removal could be made without permission. One expert cited an unnamed study showing that in countries where permission is required before organ removal, only 15 percent of the population gives permission. A member of Parliament proposed a

new law based on the American model in which citizens have the choice of identifying themselves as organ donors on their driver's licenses or national identity cards.
Another article reported that at the time skin was taken from the body of Jolana K., three 16-year-old boys were being treated at the Kosice Burn Treatment Center, with burns that covered more than 60 percent of their bodies, and skin from the woman's corpse was used in their treatment. The burn treatment center is renowned as the most advanced in the country for this type of therapy and treats many industrial accident victims from the nearby steel mill.

A health magazine wrote about the technical aspects of skin grafts, revealing that some skin must be removed within 20 hours after death to be successfully grafted. Other skin that is removed later can be used to cover exposed flesh and offer protection from infection while new skin regenerates underneath.

Further reports revealed that the local police department had also taken photographs of the dead woman's body, but that negatives had been mysteriously exposed to light and destroyed, causing the son-in-law to speculate on why the police investigation never resulted in any charges.

In interviews for this case study, the editors said they did not seek interviews with hospital officials before publication of the original story because they were fearful that Dr. Biros would use his political connections to the ruling political party to stop publication—the newspaper relied on a large printing company that they feared would be subject to pressure. The newspaper publisher cited the bombing of editor Licak's car as reason to be fearful. The hospital director, however, stated that he is a not a member of any political party and to use the car bombing as an excuse not to hear his side of the story was ludicrous. He also criticized The Presov Evening Post for sympathetic coverage of the opposition party.

Both Dr. Biros and Dr. Juraj Vancik of the Burn Treatment Center in the Saca hospital outside of Kosice, accused the private funeral service of mistreating the body. Usually, said Dr. Biros, family members never realize that body parts have been removed because special synthetic materials are used to cover the skin grafts.

Dr. Vancik suggested that two funeral home services have been competing with each other for the hospital's business, and the company that failed to win the contract had leaked the story to the newspaper. The newspaper editor, on the other hand, suggested in an interview that the Presov hospital gave an exclusive contract to the funeral home that was operated by the head of the Department of Pathology. No story was ever published about these accusations.

In an interview for this study, Lubomir Lorinc, co-owner of the Styx Funeral Service in Presov, said that the body of Jolana K. had been prepared in a satisfactory fashion, but that the problems arose when clothing was later removed from the body. He said that the skin graft areas had been covered with a special treatment by the Kosice-Saca skin graft team, which was dislodged when the clothing was lifted in Sabinov.

Jozef Kolarcik, of the Sabinov Funeral Service, however, disputed that account. He is a resident of the village of Raznany where Jolana K. lived and a friend of the family. He said that when the coffin was opened, blood was immediately visible and the body was in poor condition. “I’ve never seen anything like it in more than 15 years in the business,” he said. He said the newspaper account was accurate.

Aftermath

The Presov hospital never filed suit against The Presov Evening Post. Editors say they believe that the national coverage given the story by other media made the hospital director back off. Dr. Biros said that he realized the suit would close the newspaper, and he lost interest. Dr. Biros ran for mayor of Presov in the November 1998 election as a candidate unaffiliated with any political party.

Reporter Viliam Drabik was awarded second-place prize for regional coverage from the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists in March 1998.

Parliament has taken no action on a proposed change in law governing permission for removal of body parts, but a revision is favored by many medical officials, including the directors of the Presov hospital and Saca Burn Treatment Center.

In January 1998, The Presov Evening Post owners bought a 50 percent interest in a small printing company to ensure continued printing of the newspaper. Although this new arrangement will give them an attractive independence, the main reason for it was to lower printing costs.

The son-in-law had filed suit against the hospital, asking for information about what had happened to the skin removed from his mother-in-law’s body. He also sought financial assistance for the cost of a gravestone but no other financial restitution. He lost the case, and in October 1997 also lost an appeal. He said he never heard one word from either of the hospitals. “Absolutely nothing.”

“Bloody funeral coffin”

Human Skin Missing Under the Burial Shroud

The Presov Evening Post, July 1, 1997, pages 8 and 9

By: Viliam Drabik

According to Dr. Emil Turik, deputy director of the Presov Hospital, a body is the property of the hospital and therefore it can do whatever it wants with it.

On the night of June 16, 1997, when the watch showed five to eleven, a 58-year-old woman died in the Presov Hospital. Cause of death: heart failure. The death was communicated to her close relatives. Painfully, but with the deepest humility, they accepted this sad news. After all, they had been warned a few times about this possibility by the woman’s attending doctor. There was a much more painful event waiting for them to happen the next day. The woman’s three daughters with their husbands arrived at the Department of Pathology in Presov the next day around noon with the intent to arrange transport for the deceased to her birthplace, the village of Raznany. After they reached the funeral home in Sabenov accompanied by a hearse, they wanted to check funeral arrangements for the body. The coffin was opened and one of the daughters removed a white blanket of tulle. What she saw was terrifying. The dead woman was missing a part of her skin at the outer side of her calf….

If Not for the Stockings

“At first we had no idea what that elongated light-red mark was. We did not understand, because our mother died of heart failure,” began Maria Zalehova, one of the daughters of the deceased, Jolana K. from Raznany. “We asked Mr. Kollarcik, who is the head of the funeral home. He looked at it and told us that it was a mark left after skin was removed. We asked him to take off the stockings of our mother in order to see it better. While doing that he lifted her skirt and there was another mark from a skin removal from the same leg.”

They felt an anxiety and had a suspicion that there was more. They were not mistaken. After this shocking moment, relatives, together with the head of the funeral home, took off more parts of her funeral shroud. Twice more they had a similar view that shook them up. On the other leg and…worse was her back. Someone from the Department of Pathology in Presov had really worked her over. Son-in-law Michal Zaleha had the presence of mind to photograph the woman’s disfigured body. He begins his story this way: “It all began when my wife wanted to buy for her mother to wear in the coffin a dark brown, opaque pair of stockings, the kind worn by village women. She could not find them in any shop. Therefore she had to buy whatever was available—transparent stockings. After we arrived at the funeral home in Sabinov my wife was curious about the stockings, and wanted to see if they had put them on. She removed the cover of tulle and noticed a mark on the left calf. It was elongated, or rather in a shape of an ellipse, approximately 10 by 25 centimeters. After discovering something similar on the thigh, I immediately went home and returned to the mortuary with a camera, with color film. We sent the women away. I stayed there with my brother-in-law and with the head of the funeral home."

We Paid Twice

"I was shocked," says one of the close relatives, Viera Zalehova, mother of three young children and currently on a maternity leave, when she recalls the recent event with tears in her eyes. I would have never thought that something like that is possible in this day and age. "Why did they do it, were they entitled to do it and for what reason? Mother did not suffer from any skin disease. For her age, she had beautiful shining legs, slim, not feeble," she says. "Or is it precisely because of this? The cause of her death was clear—a heart failure, so perhaps there was not even a need for an autopsy, who knows? Before she died, my mother had surgery on her pancreas. After surgery she was in intensive care for three weeks, and after that, she died. If they had simply asked, we would have agreed in order to help someone live, but like this…? This is a turpitude of the worst kind."

There is a movie made in the West that features a young man—a mortician—who in the film brought his profession almost to an artistic level (he colored the hair of deceased women, gave them permanent waves, put makeup on their faces), and in a few years earned a comfortable living. What a mortician from the Department of Pathology in Presov did for a regular fee of 200 Slovak korunas ($7 USD) was simply throw the deceased into the coffin. "Don't even ask about the so-called 'arrangement' of my mother. There was none! Everything was dirty, bloody marks on her head and on the pillow. Poor thing, they did not even put her false teeth in. And for the so-called arrangement of the corpse we had to pay twice.

As If the Train Ran Over Her

Afterwards the men took the dead woman out of the coffin and laid her on the floor on a piece of plastic. When they took off her jacket collar, they noticed a bloody stain on her white blouse. This made them suspect that skin had been removed from her back. Their suspicion was a correct one. Under her blouse the woman wore a nylon undershirt. "At the upper part of her body, under the neck, I noticed the beginning of a scar from another skin removal," explained Michal Zaleha. "I couldn't go any further. I photographed only that part of the body above the undershirt. The medical report talks about a skin removal in the shape of the letter L. From what I remember, it was 55 by 15 centimeters. we add up how much of skin they removed without our permission, we find that it was not a matter of centimeters, but more than a square meter. They literally skinned her, just like some…."

Immediately, the relatives reported the case to the police. Police detectives from Sabinov arrived soon after with a camera. They also could not believe what they saw. The bereaved relatives went to complain to Dr. Peter Biros, director of the Presov hospital. "He listened to me and told me to file a written complaint and hand it to him directly. I was not only talking about the skin removal but also about the 'arrangement' of the deceased by the Department of Pathology in Presov. The coffin was full of blood after we lifted our mother-in-law! She looked as if a train ran over her, not like death from heart failure. Her neck and the edges of her scarf were bloody. If you undid the buttons of her jacket, a large bloody mark showed on her previously white shirt. (Note from editors: We have not published this picture for ethical reasons.) They did not put her false teeth in her mouth but sent them to us in a plastic bag," adds Mr. Zaleha. "Can you still call it an 'arrangement'? There was none. And someone was paid for this. For this 'arrangement' we had to pay twice. A lot of blood came out of her mouth in the mortuary in Sabinov…"

Corpse as a Piece of Furniture

In the name of their father-in-law, the two sons-in-law wrote a complaint about the practices at the Department of Pathology in Presov. The father-in-law was not capable of doing it, as he is missing fingers from his hand. He read it and signed it. On the day of the funeral, June 19, 1997, he again knocked on the door of the secretary of the hospital director, Dr. Biros. He referred them to his deputy, Dr. Emil Turak.

"Do you know what this man told me?" asked Michal Zaleha shaking his head with incomprehension. He is a brave man. He works as a truck driver in Presov. Despite his young age he is quite experienced, yet he can not explain this: "The deputy director told me: 'Bodies are the property of a hospital! We can do with them whatever we like!'

> --I asked him if it includes skin removal from a body?

> -- 'Yes, we can do even that.'

> --Then, according to you, doctor, if you claim that a body is the property of a hospital, does it mean that it is just like a piece of furniture? You can than treat it like this table or chair?! OK, if it is your property, I continued, I would appreciate if you could kindly cover funeral expenses —coffin, excavation of a grave, a priest, church bells and a funeral festival… ?

He responded that after you take away a corpse it becomes the property of the bereaved.

> — Are you telling me that you can simply take anything that you need from a deceased, you can simply cut off any part, because it is your property… and then, for example, you threw four or five bones into the coffin, you will tell me: This is what has remained from your dear deceased. Take it and bury it, now it is your property…?!

> — 'Mr. Zaleha, don't go into such details. Something like that can't happen,' responded the deputy director of the hospital, Dr. Turak. At the end of our discussion I told him that I was going to get some advice from my lawyer.

> — 'We will also consult ours. We would have cut out more (skin) but our knife broke.'"

This last exchange took place at the head offices of the hospital the very morning of the funeral.

"A few days later, one of the employees of the autopsy room claimed that what had happened was a normal, daily operation at autopsies —a claim that was at the very least cynical and ironic: He told me that what they did to my mother-in-law was… simply, a doctor came from Kosice and… 'It is a property of the state, so what? We have permission to do that, from the Ministry of Health Care … Milan, you can't do anything about it.' He was trying to calm me down. What paper? What kind of a paper? What permission, why… to defame a corpse?" asks Zaleha.

"I would like to ask the Minister if he would let anyone skin his deceased relative!? I would really like to know that. Maybe, if they would have asked us. It was a human who has left bereaved behind. It was not a homeless tramp or unidentified corpse found in the midst of a forest!"

The detectives from Presov have, in an informal discussion, expressed the same opinion. This woman was, after all, 58 years old, so what is happening in cases of deceased young people or even kids who have healthy, firm skin?

This Is Not The Only Case

The fact remains that none of the relatives was asked either orally or by a written form for permission to remove tissue. Nor did the deceased, Jolana K. from Raznany, do anything of the kind during her life. Her attending doctor, Dr. Ondrejcakova, had, after an examination of the body, confirmed to the detectives from Sabinov that the skin was removed in a professional manner only a few hours earlier. Ondrejcakova also confirmed that her former patient had no similar scars on her body. Another important task for the detectives to discover is to find out where these tens of square centimeters of removed skin went, and for what purpose was it used? Discussion at legal and police offices is already revolving around subjects such as medical ethics and defamation of a corpse. It is, however, most of all, focusing on paragraph 209, letter B, clause 5 of the criminal code: "Whoever obtains for personal use or for the use of another person an organ or tissue from a dead body without authorization could be sentenced to prison for a period from six months to three years."

Epilogue

The departure of a close person from this world still largely remains a very painful experience for those who remain. It does not matter at what age they are, what stage of life, or in what way the human life ended. What often remains in the minds of close relatives after this irreversible event are long-lasting memories, and in some cases, even a deep furrow of pain in the heart, a wound that will not be healed until death. How will the bereaved of 58-year-old Jolana K. from Raznany feel? Will they find satisfaction? And what about the others, whose dear deceased have gone through an "examination" at the Department of Pathology in Presov and who have for a few hours become the property of the hospital… ?

(Translated Version)

Presov case study questions for discussion:

1. Was this story newsworthy?

2. What documents were used to prepare the story?
   What further documents could have been obtained?

3. Was the story fair?
   Captions? Headlines?
   Use of quotes of deputy director?
4. Was this a case in which the newspaper could have waited to do more reporting before publishing, or were competitive pressures legitimate?
   What should have been added before publication?

5. Do we now know what happened with this corpse, and if not, why?

6. What follow-ups could have been done by The Presov Evening Post?
   Which of these stories could have been included with the original story and presented as a package?

7. What results came from this story?
   What if it had been done differently -- would the results have differed?

Other topics for a discussion on newspaper ethics and policy:

1. Should the newspaper have published the threat of lawsuit by the hospital?

2. What do you think about the editor contacting other newspapers and alerting them to the story and the threat of a lawsuit by the hospital?
3. What about naming the relatives but not the dead woman?

Appendix 4

Child Labor Violations in Fast Food Restaurants

Laboring--At Fast-Food Chains, the Help is Low-Priced, Too

Monday, January 17, 1983, Page: A01

By Lucinda Fleeson, Inquirer Staff Writer

Mary Catinella, a 95-pound senior at George Washington High School, quit her job last summer at a McDonald's restaurant in Woodhaven Mall.

"I hated it," she said with a grimace. "The pay was lousy, the work was too hard, and the uniforms were embarrassing. Puke green. Very ugly. Ugh," she said, sticking out the tip of her tongue. "They said I wasn't fast and that I wasn't smiling enough. But it was hard carrying the trays. I could only carry two at once, and they wanted you to carry four or five."

Miss Catinella, like many teenagers who work for fast-food chains, complained that the work was a physically demanding routine. She had to learn from videotapes a step-by-step process for frying a hamburger or wiping a table. Each step had to be memorized, and then she was tested on it.

"They had this little trick, you see," she said. "When you were in training you wore a yellow hat, and when you had learned all the tasks, you got a green hat. If you earned your green hat in one month, then you got a nickel raise." Neither she nor anyone else she knew ever did learn fast enough to get the nickel raise, she added.

Miss Catinella lasted five months on the job—longer, actually, than the average employee. Turnover in the fast-food industry is about 300 percent a year. An average jobholder lasts four months.

Such rapid-fire turnover and booming growth—McDonald's opens at least 500 outlets a year and employs more people than U.S. Steel—has turned the fast-food industry into a rite of passage for America's teenagers. The restaurant industry estimates that 60 percent of all teenagers in this country work at a fast-food outlet at one time or another.

In total, an army of more than two million people—about 75 percent of whom are under 21—are hired by the industry to flip burgers and mop floors. And a key to the success of the fast-food industry has been its ability to pay most workers the lowest wages allowed by law—minimum wage, currently $3.35 per hour.

Now, if the Reagan administration gets its way, there may be even more young people working for fast-food outlets. The U.S. Department of Labor has proposed revising the federal child-labor laws to allow 14- and 15-year-olds to work longer hours and later at night than is now permitted. On Wednesday, Reagan administration sources said that the President had decided to propose a "subminimum wage," to allow businesses to pay teenagers $2.50 an hour for summer jobs. Labor groups who vehemently oppose the proposals call them "the hamburger amendments."

While fast-food chains say they have not lobbied the government for the changes, the Labor Department agrees that the fast-food industry would probably stand to gain the most from them. Critics contend that the changes would be an unjustified boon to an industry that already is a notorious and frequent abuser of federal wage-and-hour laws. Industry spokesmen say that as the largest employer of minimum-wage workers, it is only natural that fast-food restaurants would have the greatest numbers of violations. Frequently, they say, the violations occur in franchised outlets, over which the chains have limited control. Court and Labor Department files in Philadelphia and around the country are filled with cases detailing how fast-food restaurants have bent or broken federal wage laws. Violations have ranged from charging employees for uniforms to just plain failing to pay them for all the hours they work.

For employers found to be in violation, restitution of back wages has ranged from a few dollars to millions. In October, for instance, the Labor Department won one of its largest out-of-court minimum-wage settlements, when the Howard Johnson's chain agreed to pay $5 million in overtime owed to 5,000 current and former employees.

"Often when we find violations and get back pay for employees, it only amounts to $100 or so. But when you're working at minimum wage, that can mean a lot to an employee," said Ted Rogers, director of the Wage and Hour Division of the Labor Department in Philadelphia. A review of cases brought by division investigators against area franchised and chain-owned fast-food restaurants revealed instances of restaurants that had illegally required employees to buy their own uniforms, had failed to pay workers for all the hours they worked, or had neglected to pay premium overtime rates when employees worked more than 40 hours in a week. For instance, at the McDonald's at 10th and Chestnut Streets and at the former Burger King at 40th and Market Streets, the Labor Department found workers bearing the brunt of periods of slack business. Upon arriving at scheduled times and finding the restaurants not very busy, the employees would be made to sit in a back room-without pay-until more customers arrived. Often, it meant waiting as long as an hour without pay, according to a Labor Department investigation.

At the same Burger King, investigators found, some workers were required to attend training sessions without pay.

Other area restaurants applied for permission from the Labor Department to participate in a program that allows them to pay full-time students a special subminimum wage of $2.85 an hour—but then were found to have paid that rate to nonstudents or part-time students as well.

One of the most common illegal practices occurred when workers were promoted to be assistant managers. They quickly found that promotion was not always the golden arch to opportunity. At the Burger King at Bustleton and Hendrix Avenues, for instance, these new supervisors were paid $250 a week. But their new managerial status required that they work longer hours—and, as managers, they were treated as exempt from laws requiring premium overtime pay after 40 hours a week.

Eight such employees won $1,159 in back wages after Labor Department investigators found that as supervisors, they spent most of their time doing the same tasks that they had done as hourly workers—cleaning and running the restaurant.

Last February, Burger King outlets in Massachusetts and Connecticut were ordered to pay $95,000 to 186 assistant managers after a federal judge ruled that Burger King's color-illustrated "How to Do It Bible" specified each step of every task in such minute detail that managerial discretion was virtually nonexistent.

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While praising the fast-food work experience for teaching students promptness, courtesy and a sense of responsibility, some teachers complain that the restaurants have little regard for a teenager's school day, sometimes scheduling them to work past midnight.

Miss Cantinella, the high school student from Northeast Philadelphia, said she frequently had been scheduled to work at McDonald's until closing, not getting home until after midnight on some school nights and as late as 2 a.m. on weekends.

Still, she said, she never complained; she was thankful for the job: "I didn't have any experience and it was the only kind of job I could get." She said it had given her work experience so that she could move on to her current job, doing part-time secretarial work.

Indeed, while students griped about crabby bosses, pushy customers, and hard work, they said they felt lucky to get the jobs at all.

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But the quality of experience in a fast-food shop itself has been criticized by sociologists and labor experts. They question whether it has much positive effect and suggest that it may even be detrimental.

Two social scientists at the University of California at Irvine, Ellen Greenberger and Laurence Steinberg, interviewed 531 high school students from Orange County, Calif., to compare nonworking teenagers with those who worked in fast-food and other industries. They found that "employment is associated with lower school involvement, diminished school performance, decreased school attendance, increased cynicism about working, acceptance of certain unethical business practices, and increased alcohol and marijuana use."

The study showed that the more the youngsters worked, the more their grades dropped. As for what they learned on the job, Steinberg maintained that the skills of communication, courtesy and punctuality were acquired in a few weeks. After that, the "learning curve" quickly dropped off.

The AFL-CIO's Harbrant echoed these concerns: "Kids learn three colors on the job: chocolate, vanilla, strawberry; they learn three sizes: big, medium, small."

Appendix 5
In Praise of In Depth Journalism

A speech by Eugene Roberts, delivered in 1987 as the Ninth Annual Otis Chandler Distinguished address before students and journalists at the University of Southern California School of Journalism. Roberts was editor and president of The Philadelphia Inquirer from 1972 through 1990, during which time the newspaper won 17 Pulitzer Prizes and was regarded as among the foremost practitioners of investigative journalism.

USA Today celebrated its fifth birthday this year. That prompted, in some magazines and newspapers, a celebration of the colorful, readable simplification that is the paper's trademark.

We were assured that the route to the reader's heart, if not his mind, is the short paragraph; the clever graphic; the weather; the sports; and avoidance, whenever possible, of any detailed governmental coverage.

I go into this today not to disparage USA Today, or short stories, or graphics, and certainly not sports or the weather. But I must argue that in journalistic circles in recent years—and especially since the birth of USA Today—we have not talked enough about in-depth journalism, investigative reporting, and the art of writing understandably about complex subjects in an increasingly complicated world.

These days, almost every editors' meeting I go to seems to have a group of panelists who either imply—or say head on—that the survival of Western journalism depends on quick adoption of a three-part formula:

- Drastically increasing the number of stories we run.
- Writing shorter and shorter stories.
- And making our front pages look like transcripts of the six o'clock television news with color graphics.

It is not that I don't believe in short stories and news briefs. Indeed, we have, over the past 14 years, recast The Philadelphia Inquirer so that it bristles each day with short summaries and news digests.

We have two national and international briefs columns; a local briefs column; two columns of people shorts; two shorts columns in sports; a column of television briefs; a column of business shorts; and even a daily summary on Page Two of all the major stories in that day's Inquirer.

All of them have high readership, according to the surveys, and there are no plans to drop any of them. So I'm not saying that brevity is bad. What I am saying is that as government gets bigger and more unwieldy, as society gets more complex, as science and technology explode, as issues get more opaque and overwhelming, the old-fashioned, time-honored, inverted-pyramid, one-column-or-less, wire-service-style news story becomes more inadequate.

Let me emphasize that I used the word “inadequate”—and not the words “obsolete” or “unimportant”—in describing this kind of story. The conventional story will work most of the time, perhaps as much as 80 or 90 percent of the time. Obviously, the major reason for the existence of daily newspapers is that they, in fact, report the news daily, as it happens.

But I am suggesting that for the other 10 or 20 percent of the time, the conventional story doesn’t work. Sometimes with important and complex stories, newspapers confuse the reader by giving him or her daily dribs and drabs—punchy little shorts that stimulate but don’t slake the appetite for information. People are prepared for a short-hand version of events on radio and television—but not, to the exclusion of all else, in their daily paper.

And it is to this remaining 10 or 20 percent of news coverage that I turn my attention today. I am not sure that it is always what everyone would call investigative reporting, but it is almost always difficult and hard-to-do and time-consuming reporting.

And when it is done well, it explains to readers things they should know and will find important to their lives. On The Inquirer, we stay away from the term “investigative stories” or “explanatory journalism” in favor of terms like “take-outs” or “project pieces” or “enterprise stories.”

The finest reporting—whether short or long— is always investigative in that it digs, and digs, and digs. And the finest writing is almost by definition explanatory in that it puts things so vividly, so compellingly, that readers can see and understand and comprehend.

One of the reasons I don’t much use the term “investigative reporting” is that it misleads and it confuses. To many people investigative reporting means nailing a crook or catching a politician with his pants down. This, I think, is too narrow a definition. And, these days, catching a politician with his pants down does not require a great deal of investigating.

And while we at The Philadelphia Inquirer are reputed to do quite a bit of investigative reporting, we don’t put a heavy premium on the catch-a-crook variety, or the exposure of the sexual secrets of politicians. I can’t for example, imagine assigning an investigative team to explore Pat Robertson’s premarital sex or to determine whether a would-be Supreme Court Justice smoked pot 20 years ago.

At The Inquirer, investigative reporting means freeing a reporter from the normal constraints of time and space and letting the reporter really inform the public about a situation of vital importance. It means coming to grips with a society grown far too complex to be covered merely with news briefs or a snappy color graphic.

Some papers fail their readers by refusing to do any investigative reporting at all. Still other papers try to do investigative reporting but go astray by narrowly defining it as unearthing a wrong-doer. This immediately casts reporters as cops rather than as gatherers of information.

Society will get along quite nicely without newsrooms that view themselves as police forces. But our democratic society tends to falter when it doesn't get adequately informed.

And does a newspaper that shuns in-depth reporting, investigative reporting, if you will, truly inform its readers? The answer, I think, is an emphatic no.

Without a willingness to undertake investigative reporting, a newspaper fails its readers in fundamental ways. It shortchanges them. It gives them incomplete coverage. It fails to provide journalistic follow through.

Take, for example, court coverage. A newspaper cheats its readers if it covers trials, but avoids such subjects as trial delays, sentencing disparities and the ethical standards of judges.

And consider legislative coverage. How good is a newspaper that devotes tons of ink to following the progress of bills through the state legislature, but doesn't go out into the streets a year or so after an important bill passes and determines how it is working?

Think, for a moment, about tax coverage. A paper distorts if it only covers the revenue department's press conferences and never looks into how the department decides which tax returns it will audit.

But suppose a paper grants that investigative reporting is desirable, how does the paper go about getting it? The short answer is commitment.

To do in-depth reporting on a sustained basis of more than a couple of stories a year requires that the highest levels of a paper be concerned and committed. You especially need commitment on space.

It also is important for a paper to provide reporters with time, although a reporter all by himself can sometimes scrounge the time, an hour here, a day there. He can scrimp on travel. I once knew a reporter, a dedicated man named Charlie Black, who badgered his paper to send him to cover the war in Vietnam. The paper, I am told, finally agreed, gave him $100 in expense money and told him to return when the money was gone.

Charlie came back more than six months later and gave the editors something like $22 in change. He never saw the inside of a hotel room. He simply moved into the field with the troops and slept on the ground. He produced some of the most interesting reporting of the war because he reported first hand on the life and problems of the combat soldier.

But a reporter all by himself, even if he has scrounged the time and gotten the story, has real problems if his or her newspaper will not deliver the space. You simply cannot do an in-depth job in a standard one or two column newspaper hole.

The right reason for a newspaper to provide space for project reporting is that it opens windows into society, into government, into problems and opportunities. Windows that, chances are, will never be opened if the newspaper doesn't open them.

The wrong reasons are for mere shock value, or impact or to win awards. And if you seek awards for awards sake, they probably will not come. At The Inquirer, we have won a good number of major journalism prizes but those awards have come only as a byproduct of our coverage. We ask ourselves constantly if we are really getting to the guts of a story. And if the answer is no, we redouble our efforts.

The result is at the end of the year, we often have a dozen or so things we are proud of and two or three may catch the eye of contest judges. Some of the stories I'm proudest of have won nothing more than a quiet purr of satisfaction from the staff and our readers. And that is reward enough.

Three years ago, Don Bartlett and Jim Steele of The Inquirer wrote an exhaustive series on the failed federal policies for disposal of nuclear waste.

The story was a blistering indictment of mismanagement and neglect within the nuclear industry and the government. It warned of dire consequences and real health hazards. The series did not win one major award, possibly because it was ahead of the news, as the best of investigative series almost always are. But almost every month that passes sees the validation of yet another warning raised by the series.

Recently, one of the major newspapers in America—I mean one on everybody's top ten list and many people's top five—sent an emissary to my paper to find out just how we do investigative and in-depth stories. One of my editors asked the emissary exactly what his task was back home. He said, "I'm in charge of getting us a Pulitzer Prize this year."

The Inquirer editor, who has worked on, literally, half a dozen Pulitzer prize-winning projects realized his visitor wouldn't, in the end, produce meaningful stories because he was confusing the ends with the means. That editor showed our visitor the door as soon as possible. A Pulitzer Prize may be the icing, but it's not the cake.

At The Inquirer, we do not go on open-ended fishing expeditions. We don't look into a government agency because we "think," its director may be stealing. You can spend a lifetime drilling dry holes if you do that. We act on concrete leads, not mere conjecture.

In the absence of concrete leads we look for subjects that are so intrinsically important and underreported that there has to be a story there no matter how it comes out.

I don't want to give you the impression that The Inquirer has a patent on this kind of reporting. To the contrary, there are newspapers that have done enterprise stories so dazzling they make me wish I'd been there to take part—or simply watch. Such as The Pittsburgh Press series last year that disclosed how many airline pilots have serious medical problems or drug addictions. Or the way the Akron Beacon Journal ganged up on the story when a European tycoon tried to take over Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Akron's biggest employer. Within days they had a fix on what that corporate raider was like—to the great advantage of otherwise uninformed people.

Leon Dash told a superlative story in The Washington Post last year about teenage pregnancies. His series not only debunked the widely held notion that these kids are too ignorant to take precautions with sex; it explained that they are largely motivated by loneliness or despair, and explained it so well that the federal government reexamined its approach to the problem.

There was a gifted set of stories in The Miami Herald last year about the vanishing rain forests—stories that explained why we are fools if we don't care about the destruction of these distant parts of the environment.

And it goes almost without saying that The Charlotte Observer has demonstrated the virtues of paying attention, in detail, to the conduct—or misconduct—of Jim and Tammy Baker.

All of those stories were important because, despite their complexity or their length or the cost it took in time or newsroom budget to get them, they told people things that were vital to know. That's the kind of "investigating" we like to do. Stories that deal with the quality of life.

AIDS is an example of that. Three weeks ago we undertook a story about the way that epidemic has affected every corner of the earth—from Rio de Janeiro to Moscow, from Subic Bay to Grand Forks, from Kyotera, Uganda, to San Jose and San Francisco. What you may not realize is that we put that 10,000-word story in the paper on the Thursday of the same week that the stock market crashed on Monday.

You can be sure we had some moments that week in which we thought about postponing the AIDS project. It involved positioning 23 staff writers and 16 staff photographers in 15 United States and 7 overseas locations, and then putting their reports into a coherent single story across four open pages of the paper. On deadline.

And we wondered if anyone would read it at the same time we were giving people an enormous wad of information about Wall Street. Of course they read it. We got a huge, positive reaction. We reached readers who wouldn't even have seen the story if they hadn't bought the paper to find out how IBM or Standard Oil was doing.

We in effect reaffirmed the value of enterprise reporting.

And, importantly, of enterprise reporters. Let me make sure you understand that no editor on The Inquirer had the wit to suggest that we send a platoon of reporters and photographers in search of the AIDS story. It was a reporter, Don Drake, who came up with that idea.

The most direct route to enterprising reporting, it is clear, is to have on your staff a bunch of enterprising reporters like Don Drake and enough editors who are either secure enough or smart enough to know that sitting on your duff in an office is not the way to know where the really good stories are.

Editors, in short, who encourage reporters to be enterprising and who reward reporters when they are. Reward them by giving them the time and the support and the space to tell a big story in a big way. Because a newspaper that contains nothing more than shorts and briefs and colorful graphics may be the easy way to attract readers, but it isn't the right way. Nor, often, the most effective way.

My first paying newspaper job more than 30 years ago was on what was then a daily of only 9,000 circulation, the News-Argus in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as a farm reporter. Even then, perhaps especially then, we worried about brevity. The editor, Henry Belk, even wrote his editorials without articles, no a's or the's—space was too precious. But Henry and his successor, Eugene Price, knew when enough wasn't enough. Their readers were mostly tobacco farmers or merchants whose business depended on tobacco.

And because Henry and Gene understood their readers and because they understood impact journalism—which is what grabs your readers and holds them—there was never any talk at the News-Argus about writing short, or not jumping stories where tobacco was concerned. If I had had it in me to write the War and Peace of tobacco, it would have been published and it would have been read.

I know this because I was out in the fields with these farmers every day and despite what the surveys tell you, I never ever heard a single farmer complain because he had to jump to another page of the News-Argus to follow a tobacco story. But I heard them complain a lot when we weren't on top of a tobacco story, or didn't dig or didn't investigate, or when they heard a snatch of a story on the radio that was inadequately explained in the next issue of the News-Argus. They were prepared for brevity and a short-hand version of events on radio and television—but not in their daily paper.

Twenty-five years later, we at The Inquirer found the same thing true when the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor went haywire in our backyard and 600,000 people were put on evacuation alert.

For 10 harrowing days, our readers were hungry for every snippet of information we could give them but the strongest public response of all came when on the 10th day we published a 25,000-word minute-by-minute account of the accident. That account, which was intensively investigative, took up 10 pages of our Sunday A section. And it was probably as well read as anything we've ever written.

A newspaper should be a cohesive force, a constant that can hold its coverage area together. An editor's task is to make a newspaper more meaningful and relevant and readable. And sometimes the best way to do that is short, and sometimes it is long. Sometimes it is simple, and sometimes it is complex. Just like American society. Just like the cities and countries we live in. Just like life itself. Which, after all, is what we are supposed to be reporting.

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Appendix 6
The Art of Sourcery

The arcane art of getting people to tell you the truth:

1. **Ask for help**. If you ask people to tell you everything they know, that is a precious possession not readily surrendered. But people like to be asked for their help. Ask them to help you understand what is happening. That is what you want, isn't it? You're a little confused and lost, and you need help in figuring things out. In helping you, people just may tell you what they know.

2. **Be prepared.** Know what you're talking about. Know what they're talking about. Study the subject—and the terminology of the topic. Know what your questions are. Know what the answers could be. Don't parade your knowledge. But use it to prompt discussion—and replies.

3. **Listen**. Shut up and listen. A good reporter is a good listener. You shouldn't be trying to tell people everything you know. You want to get what they know. Sometimes the best questions are "Uh-huh." "Why?" "How?" "What do you mean?" and "I don't understand," the short questions which keep people talking, while you keep listening.

4. **Be honest.** You want your sources to be honest with you, don't you? Be honest with them, if you want to build mutual trust. That doesn't mean putting everything out on a platter before the first question. But do try to be candid rather than coy. If you're working on a story, say so. Take people part of the way into your confidence. Maybe they will do the same for you.

5. **Talk to everyone.** There is no magic formula for finding sources. Figure out everyone who might know something about what you're looking for. Talk to them all. Keep asking. Go back and forth. You may find a piece here, a piece there. Getting stories is akin to assembling puzzles—without knowing how many pieces there are or what the final picture may look like.

6. **See people face-to-face.** You can't look a telephone in the eye. And if you're in someone's office or living room, they can't hang up or put you on hold or ask you to call back another time—when they won't be in. In fact, few people know how to throw you out gracefully. So stay, and try to keep asking questions. Walk into an office two minutes after quitting time, when the secretary has gone but the boss with all the work to do is still there—and has no more appointments or ringing phones to interrupt him or her at that hour. Knock on doors at home at night and on weekends. Show up unexpectedly. Often people will see you to find out what you want.

7. **Go back.** Go back again and again. Keep knocking on doors. You may feel foolish, but be polite and persist. Keep asking for help. It may seem hard to ask questions when you may feel foolish, but

remember one rule: the only way you're certain of never getting the answer is to be too embarrassed to ask the question. One reporter's axiom: "There aren't any embarrassing questions—just embarrassing answers."

8. **Be pleasant.** Make small talk. Be humble. After all, you don't know everything, you need help, or you wouldn't be there. And you should try to be sympathetic, when it's merited. Try to be a friend—but always remember you are a reporter.

9. **Remember the obvious question.** That's not as easy as it sounds. You can get caught up in the small talk, the story-telling, the new angles, the listening, the good humor and charm of a source. But remember what you came for. Identify the question before you go in, and keep working on it, keep asking. If people ignore or evade your key question, or lead you down another trail, you have to come back. Reword your question, rephrase it, ask it in different ways, as many times as you must until you do have an answer that's understandable and believable.

10. **Challenge your sources.** Contradict them a little. Don't accept the easy explanation. Say you don't understand, say it doesn't make sense from what you know from other people. Ask them, "How can you be certain?" Let them prove it to you—with more details, other names, any documents.

11. **Never trust your source,** at least not completely. Double-check. Look not only for corroboration, but also for contradictions, for evidence to the contrary. Not even your best source has a perfect memory.

12. **Don't socialize with reporters** all the time. Socialize with people whose stories have not already been in print. Remember all the friends you ever met. Sometimes the person you once dated in college will grow up to be a top official of the Justice Department. Never underestimate anyone as a potential source.

13. **If you want to protect your sources,** don't tell anyone, particularly your fellow reporters who are (with the exception of you, of course) the worst blabbermouths in the world. If you want a sensitive source to talk with you, he or she has to decide whether to trust you. And your word must be golden. A bad reputation will quickly ruin even the best reporter.

14. **You set the rules,** and you clarify the terms on which you're talking. If this is background, or not-for-attribution, make certain you and the source have the same definition of that, and recognize that the information will be used. It's up to you to avoid any misunderstanding. Spell out the terms, if necessary, at the outset so you both understand them. Don't take off-the-record information—that's unusable in any form, and let your sources know that. Most of them want to tell you something anyway, and

will do so, at the least, on a background basis that allows you to pursue confirmation elsewhere. Don't let the source change the rules at the end of the evening. Your job is to tell stories to the public, not to your grandchildren someday.

15. **Give your worst enemy a fair shake.** Always give someone his or her best defense in the printed story. Even if you don't believe it, let the readers have a chance to judge for themselves. You may earn that person's respect. He or she may even tell you the full story later on.

16. **Be cruel**. This is the unwritten rule. When all is done—but not yet said—let the facts fall where they may. You have no friends now. You are a reporter—tell the truth. But don't pass judgment on people unnecessarily. You're a reporter, not God. Let people's deeds speak for themselves.

17. **Always say thank you.** Say thank you at the end of the day. Go back when the story is over and say thank you again. Say thank you to sources even when nothing is happening. An honest thank you is as rare and as encouraging as a good listener.

18. **Keep trying.** Keep working. It is the drudgery of making sure of details that uncovers the unexpected. A sage of this profession has said, "I've met a lot of lucky reporters. I've never known a single lazy lucky reporter."

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These guidelines were written by James Polk, NBC News ('74 Pulitzer winner), with the advice and assistance of David Hayes, Kansas City Times ('82 Pulitzer), Prof. Carl Stepp of the University of Maryland, and Prof. Steve Weinberg, University of Missouri.

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Appendix 7

The Paul Williams Way
Steps in the Classic Investigative Project

To pull everything together, Paul Williams said, investigators ought to follow a procedure with 11 major steps (and numerous substeps). Williams outlined these steps as follows:

1. Conception

The search for investigative ideas is “unending,” Williams said in his book. Ideas can:

> *“come from anywhere—legal advertisements, estate sales, bankruptcy notices, transfers of business executives, company and professional newsletters. The bulletin of the local dental society, for example, once provided one of my reporters...with a story. He read a one-paragraph item about disciplinary action being proposed against two dentists. Why? He asked questions, found some public records, and established that the two had been milking Medicaid with false billing, and that the local prosecutors were waffling about whether to file charges.”*

One-Time Tips

Williams said never to discard a tip without screening—it might be the kernel of a story. Williams looked for proof of facts that gave credence to the tipster’s claim. That might mean a few calls to reliable sources to intuit whether or not the tip is plausible. Often, checking a tip means visiting the courthouse, the library or some other record repository.

Listening to Regular Sources

For general assignment and beat journalists, developing regular sources is necessary. They need to leave the office, meet sources face-to-face, listen to conversations in elevators and restrooms, and cover government meetings that no other investigator attends. For freelance investigators who jump from topic to topic, regular sources are likely to be friends or social acquaintances. Every person an investigator meets knows something the investigator does not, and therefore is a potential source.

Reading

The best investigators read local and national newspapers every day, watch television news and listen to radio, look at a range of magazines, visit bookstores and libraries and place their names on mailing lists maintained by government agencies, corporations, charities and other organizations.

Using Breaking News Stories

A curious investigator will accumulate a thick file within a month simply by paying attention to breaking news, then asking why or how something described briefly in a story happened.

Following Up On Angles From Other Stories

Williams related an example involving a reporter investigating a political kickback scheme. A source mentioned a young man being intimidated by a probation officer. The reporter made a note, then returned to the tip several months later. It turned out that the intimidator was more than a probation officer. He reported directly to the mayor and to a judge who was the mayor's former law partner. The reporter documented that the subject also drew $1,500 a month as a consultant to the police department, plus receiving questionable fees as a security consultant to a municipal agency. He was eventually convicted of income tax evasion.

Direct Observations of the World

"Sit and stare at the wall and ask what things happen in this town that affect a lot of people but are never written about," Williams advised. "What institution—public, educational, nonprofit, corporate—manages to stay out of the news?" Banks, savings and loans, credit unions, insurance companies, law firms, accounting firms, hospitals, labor unions and other major employers are usually among the institutions escaping scrutiny.

2. Feasibility Study

What Obstacles Exist?

Williams mentioned some to be considered: "Are records available? Will sources talk about the subject? Is there time to do the job properly before, say, the next election or the next session of the legislature or the next meeting of the city planning board? Do you or your colleagues know how to interpret the technical material related to the story? Will the target of the investigative story apply pressure on people not to talk? Will he sue?"

Can One Reporter Do It All?

If not, are resources for assistance available? Those resources might involve other reporters, editors, a researcher, a student intern, and a librarian who handles data base searching and outside experts.

Is There a Downside for the News Organization?

Is it likely there will be a lawsuit, withdrawn advertising, a reader boycott? Disturbing answers should not derail a planned investigation, but should be thought through. Editors must be a part of this discussion.

Can the Investigation Be Kept Quiet?

Is there a strong possibility that competing news media might print or broadcast something before the project is ready?

3. Go—No Go Decision

Is it likely that an investigation will yield at least a minimum story? Williams quoted Bob Greene of Newsday on the minimum-maximum thinking: "We received information that the Metropolitan Transit Authority had bought an airport here on Long Island, then leased it out to a fixed-base operator at incredibly advantageous terms to the operator. We got a copy of the contract…. What had been run as a private business at a $250,000 annual profit…was running $600,000 in the red. So we said all right, we have a minimum and maximum here —the minimum is that we can show there's been a huge waste of taxpayers' dollars…and the maximum is that we can show somebody's been paid off."

4. Basebuilding

How will the investigator go about learning the norms of the individual, institution or issue to gain historical and contemporary perspectives?

To understand how something works, it is necessary to learn how it is supposed to work. Williams told of how a reporter started looking at an insurance agency. He found it had advanced $163,000 to finance one of its directors as a general agent for the company. "The transaction was listed in a state-required report and meant little…until he discussed it with an expert source," Williams commented. The expert said such an advance was unusual. "This discovery of self-dealing became a basic reference point for…subsequent stories about an ingenious circular hustle involving the insurance company and a small bank in Washington acquired by California promoters."

5. Planning

How Will Information Be Collected and Filed?

A chronology of an individual's career, an institution's existence or an issue's evolution is usually a powerful organizational tool. All documents and interview notes should be painstakingly cross-referenced among relevant topic files.

Who Will Perform What Tasks, and On What Schedule?

Those tasks include reporting, filing, writing, copyediting, photography, graphics, accuracy checking and libel readings.

6. Original Research

- Following The Paper Trail (*See chapters 1,2,3 and 4 of this book*.)
- Following The People Trail (*See Chapter 5 of this book*.)

7. Reevaluation

Should the investigation continue to move ahead? Should it be filed for now? Or should it be dropped permanently?

8. Filling the Gaps

Key interviews and additional documents work should be targeted at answering the questions that have not yet been answered.

9. Final Evaluation

(See Chapter 23 of this book.)

10. Writing and Rewriting

(See Chapter 22 of this book.)

11. Publication and Follow-up Stories

From *The Reporter's Handbook: An Investigator's Guide to Documents and Technique* by Steve Weinberg, reprinted with permission from Investigative Reporters and Editors.

Appendix 8
To Achieve Enterprise: Make It Routine

Enterprise reporting ought to be the lifeblood of daily newspapers. (Enterprise is the widely used term for digging out non-breaking hard news.)

Enterprise ought to be our thing. If we do it consistently, and if we do it well, we can have a real impact on our home communities.

But to do that, enterprise must become a way of life in our newsrooms. It must be not something we do at occasional intervals, but something that is a part of our ordinary, daily routine.

Enterprise reporting will not happen by itself. The top editors, and all the department heads and section editors, must be committed to it. All must understand and accept the premise that a meaningful portion of the newspaper's resources—both staff and space—must be devoted to enterprise work on a regular basis.

Here are a couple of ideas that might help to sustain an enterprise routine or to get one started:

- Devote a few minutes of your news meeting every day to talking exclusively about enterprise possibilities—long-term projects, Sunday stories that can be done within the next week or so, or even fast-turnaround pieces that can be done in a day's time or less for the daily newspaper. (Not nearly enough of the quick-hit daily enterprise stories are being done at most newspapers.)
- Assign a city-desk editor or a copy editor to be in charge of local enterprise for a week, on a rotating basis. Among other things, it would be this editor's responsibility to make sure an enterprise story is offered every day, or twice a week, or at whatever interval may be right for your newspaper.

Once you've got the commitment and the routine in place, the biggest problem you're likely to encounter is maintaining a high level of quality control on major enterprise projects. Unfortunately, there isn't any sure-fire, 100-percent-guaranteed way of doing that. But here are a handful of rules that may help:

The idea has to be good. Good ideas can come from both reporters and editors. But be selective; not every project idea is a good one. Remember that a great series cannot emerge from a mediocre idea.

Plan, plan, plan. I like to begin each year with a rough plan for how many major enterprise projects we will tackle, by department, and a list of project ideas that might be done during the year. I solicit staff ideas and meet with editors in framing this plan. And it's subject to change throughout the year as new ideas arise and conditions change. But the intensive planning process sets a course and helps keep you on track.

Don't cut corners. This is a commitment. You should be prepared to have a portion of your reporting staff unavailable to cover the day's news, except in an extraordinary situation. You may have to slide a back-up reporter into a beat. Be sure to allow sufficient writing time and editing time.

Know the point of diminishing returns. Project reporting can go on forever; there's always one more document to review, one more interview to conduct. But at some point, the additional time can't be justified in terms of the likely return.

Always have something in the works. I like to have three projects in some stage of development at all times. Don't wait until one project is completed and published before beginning to think about the next one. That severely limits what you'll be able to accomplish.

Approach project reporting with a can-do attitude. I've always argued that there isn't any project that we can't do. Given enough time, we can do just about anything. The question we should ask is this: is the final product likely to be worth the time invested? If the answer is "yes," do it.

Keep it manageable. This is the most important rule. The surest route to failure in project reporting is to let a project get out of control. You've got to be able to see your way through a project from the beginning, visualizing the shape it will take and how you will get to that point. Sometimes a little reporting time may have to be invested to arrive at this stage. But if you can't get to it at a relatively early point, be prepared to cut your losses and abandon the project.

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