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Connecting

April 17, 2014



Colleagues,

Here are first responses to a reader comment to a Spiegel Online International story that said slain AP photojournalist **Anja Niedringhaus** "*accepted the risks, let's move on*" - and the situation that confronts journalists who go into a danger zone to cover news, as well as the editors who assign them to that duty.

If you have been in either position, Connecting would welcome your own reactions and thoughts based on your personal experiences to share with your colleagues. Send them to me at: stevenspl@live.com

[George Krimsky](#): (AP, 1969-1984)

You were right to spotlight that comment, which certainly comes across as brusque and inhumane. Perhaps the reader was implying that too much has been written about Anja Niedringhaus when 13 other journalists have died this year alone (according to the Committee to Protect Journalists).

But CONNECTING is an AP retirees' site, and she was one of us (or would have been one day).

I think the attention to her is warranted, especially since Anja was such a well-known and experienced photojournalist who died in a particularly senseless way. Yes, she knew the risks, but those who take them would like to think they will not be targeted for their work or identity as a foreigner.

When I worked from Beirut during the Lebanese civil war in the late 1970s, I, too, was aware of the risks, but I regarded them as acceptable in that environment. Foreigners and foreign journalists were not targeted then. That would come later, as the Terry Anderson kidnapping testified. In fact, we were treated rather protectively in my day, if not with respect. The combatants in the civil war were not rabid fanatics in the sense we know them today. Random suicide bombings, for example, were unheard of.

In my case, when I complained to Arafat's media man, Mahmoud Labady, that the PLO propaganda magazine had singled me out for my activities in Moscow, where I was accused of being a CIA spy, he offered to give me a bodyguard for the duration of my stay in Lebanon. I declined the offer, but it reflected a cool-headed judgment that the western press could be valuable to one's cause, even if AP journalists were known for not taking sides.

Photo shooters took the most risks, because they had to be where the action was. In fact, it was a maxim that word hacks like me should never stand too close to a shooter with a long lens. It looked too much like an RPG and was prone to snipers.

Anja Niedringhaus was a special breed, and the attention she is getting has put a needed human face on a highly dangerous profession.

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[Robert Meyers](#): (AP, 1986-2007)

Re: comment on "she knew the risks" & "move on". First let me say I never had to work in a war zone, although during riots and IRA attacks London (with World War II bomb sites and damage still visible in the 1980s) felt like that, at least as close as I've been, as did 9/11/2001 Washington, D.C., with the Pentagon burning and another plane on the way and rumors reported on broadcast news of truck bombs at the state department. But I did get to know and talk almost daily with many photographers in war zones as they checked in after filing images from Lebanon, Sarajevo, Somalia, Rwanda, Chechnya, Gulf Wars, Iran-Iraq war, Eritrea, Northern Ireland, Palestine, Tianamen Square, Sri Lanka, East Timor, Kurdistan, Moscow, Fiji, Sudan & many other places and wars, riots, coups, unrest and terrorist attacks that were often ignored and always under reported in major media.

I think photographers and reporters always know the general risk, but the specific threat that resulted in their death would not be foreseen until it was too late. Anja in a car in an Afghan police secured area in a heavily guarded convoy. Hansi Krauss

and Dan Eldon trusted a source to lead them to safely cover the helicopter crash in Mogadishu which instead was a trap where they were among a small group of journalists attacked by a vicious mob. Chris Hondros in Libya. There could be many, many more as these are daily situations with unpredictable changes. Horst Faas told me how he could walk the streets of the Congo without fear in the 1960s by being a white man in a nice suit while death raged all around him. Not so in Vietnam and certainly not anywhere now. Bob Dear told me how he wore black in Beirut so that he could blend into the shadows and the sniper's scope could not pick him out. but "Move on?" Why should we not remember and honor these people whose lives are cut short by sudden and often misguided violence, like the the many in the stories they brought us out of conflicts. The commenter who wants to move on was never interested in the first place.

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[Steve Graham](#): (AP, 1974-2002)

I don't know if Joe Frazier (now retired) is on this list, but I believe he was wounded ... or at least shot at during the coverage of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

Additionally, Joe's wife was killed when Joe was correspondent in San José, Costa Rica. Joe's wife was working for the Tico Times, (English language) and covering a press conference by former Sandinista comandante Edén Pastora over the border in Nicaragua. Somebody set off a bomb and blew off her legs and she bled out.

When the revolution in El Salvador was underway, I went down on my own hook to visit Joe, whose name was on the hit list of the death squads. Our people in El Salvador had tee-shirts with a bullseye on them, front and back, with the inscription "If you ain't on the list, you ain't shit."

(I succeeded Joe as news editor in Portland, Ore. and we kept in touch)

Journalists aren't the only AP people facing danger.

When I was working in London and responsible for Mideast as well as European and African communications, Beirut technician François Ghattas regularly braved the crossfire of no-man's land (crossing the Green Line) in Beirut to keep AP communications running. When I asked him how he could continue to do it, he replied "We're used to it."

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[David Briscoe](#): (AP, 1971-2009)

Moving on is what we all have to do in the end. But pausing and even lingering to honor those who share the risks of our profession is an honorable reaction. Those

who would rush on without reflection, either into the fray or away from it, are condemned to die in ignorance and alone. It's rude and ridiculous to imply or infer that any death should be ignored because the victim knew the risks.

As a journalist, I have stood between armed police and demonstrators, spent the night with rebels being pursued by government troops, embedded with soldiers during an invasion, and interviewed powerful figures guarded by armed maniacs. As a supervisor, I sent others on dangerous missions and had brave reporters and photographers choose to disregard their own safety. But I always felt we had some protection just for being journalists in pursuit of truth.

When that protection and respect crumble, we have to let the world know and mourn those who have fallen. To suggest that we simply move on is to suggest that journalists are somehow suicidal or on a fool's errand. We must shout loudly that was not the case for Anja, and it is not the case for those who carry on her work.

[Joe McGowan](#): (AP, 1955-1997)

There are many facets to the question about reporting from dangerous situations.

One is that I have not heard of a company that really prepares a reporter for the conditions he/she will be facing. When I went overseas, I was sent to the company doctor, who gave me a full packet of medicines, syringes and instructions. I even had to give shots to my wife and infant son periodically while in India. Today, you wouldn't get on a plane or through customs with the stuff. A day's briefing in human resources or by a foreign editor would have been advantageous.

Two is that good common sense should prevail. We here in the USA accept everyone as equal. But the harsh realities of foreign assignments should rule. Whoever sent Daniel Pearl, a Jew, to Pakistan, was inviting his death. Even back in 1965, when I was in Pakistan covering the India-Pakistan war, the information officers complained because the Time mag guy was Marvin Zim, a Jew. And the Muslims were much milder back in those days than many of them are today. Similarly, to have two women in Afghanistan in these days is really defying the odds.

As for my experiences, I had many, and was quite lucky to have survived and come home. In 1964, I was sent from Miami to Panama, where Panamanians were shooting into the U.S. Canal Zone. About once a day I needed to get into the Canal Zone to get the American side of things. There was an understanding that you hired a taxi, had it stop at the stoplight across the street from a gate into the Canal Zone. I would go to a pay phone at the corner, call the Marine guard, identify myself and the taxi. Then when the light turned green for us, the taxi would barrel across the street, the Marines would roll back a steel-laden gate and we would rush through. One day, a sniper on the roof of one of the high rise buildings pumped two bullets into the trunk of the taxi, not far from me in the back seat.

Once I flew into Port au Prince, Haiti when Papa Doc was expelling Americans. One of his Ton Ton Macoute guards at the airport shoved a submachine gun into my stomach and threatened to kill me. I told him I was a correspondent doing my job. He turned and walked away!

I arrived in India in time for the 1965 war and one day was riding in a Pakistani military Jeep with an army information army. We were in a convoy heading into Kashmir and the convoy was just beginning to ford a small stream when four Indian Air Force Canberra bombers and three Gnat fighters attacked. They bombed, strafed, fired machine guns etc. They attacked the convoy at a right angle, coming up the stream. They destroyed a Jeep and the two soldiers in it. I had bailed out of my Jeep and sat against a nearby canal bank, taking pics of the attack. After it was over, I found an eight inch piece of shrapnel in the sand two inches from my right side!! I still have it and put a picture of it in the book I wrote. Any closer and I would not be here today.

Once in Calcutta I was chased for several blocks by an angry mob of students who had just torched a streetcar.

Of course, there was the hazard of flying on Indian Air Lines. They had twin engine Caravelle jets. I rarely took a flight anywhere in the country that one engine did not fail. Eventually British experts found out the Indians were improperly storing the jet fuel and building up sulphur which was destroying the jet engines! And then there was just staying healthy, and keeping my young son healthy. The infant son of one of my predecessors died in India. I was there before the advent of safe bottled water. So when I traveled, I bought a bottle of beer, opened it, and used it to brush my teeth!

Today, I would not want to be in the Middle East as a reporter. In my day, you knew which direction the bullets were coming from. Today, some guy can walk up to you wearing a suicide vest and you are dead.

Would I rather have stayed stateside and reported. No way. I was young and probably thought I was invincible. I admire the men and women out there today.

Connecting mailbox

[Ferd Kaufman](#): Paul, you will be interested to know that my friend of later years, Clyde Jackson, was a member of the squad that climbed Iwo Jima to check on the flag. I printed the story about the Kansas guy and he said he knew all of them. His claim to fame was that Joe Rosenthal said "Hey you get out of the picture" of the flag raising. Small world.

News about AP

25-Year Club Celebration to be held June 5

AP retirees received this email Wednesday from Diane Parker of AP Human Resources:

Mark your calendar for Thursday, June 5. That's the date for the 2014 25-Year Club Celebration in New York, AP's annual salute to retirees, alumni and current staff with a minimum of 25 years of AP service. The 25-Year Club Celebration will be held at AP headquarters at 450 West 33rd St., between Ninth and Tenth Avenues. Check in first at the AP reception desk in our headquarters lobby and then proceed to the

15th floor conference center. Mingle and revisit with your former colleagues from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Your spouse or a guest is welcome to join you. Please click on this link [HR - Service Recognition](#) to RSVP no later than Friday, May 16, and provide the name of your guest.

[Michelle Faul named AP Nigeria chief of bureau](#)

JOHANNESBURG (AP) -- The Associated Press has named Michelle Faul, who has covered the major stories of Africa over the past three decades, as its bureau chief in Nigeria. Faul has been AP's chief Africa correspondent based in Johannesburg since 2005, traveling widely in sub-Saharan Africa.



['The Deadly Cost of Fashion'](#)

AP freelance photographer Ismail Ferdous recounts his experience covering the Bangladesh building collapse in a NYT's Op-Doc video, 'The Deadly Cost of Fashion' - last April 24, Ismail Ferdous, my co-director on this Op-Doc video, photographed the deadliest disaster in garment industry history: the collapse of Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, which killed more than 1,100 workers and injured around 2,500.

Texas editor's column on Anja Niedringhaus

Dave Berry, editor of the Tyler (Texas) Morning Telegraph, wrote this great column Wednesday on the loss of AP photojournalist Anja Niedringhaus. Thanks to Dallas CoB **Dale Leach** and ACoB **Barry Bedlan** for sharing.

News always bears a cost

She died doing the job she loved.

Pulitzer Prize-winning Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus was gunned down April 4 when a uniformed Afghan police commander riddled her car with AK-47 bullets, killing her instantly and wounding veteran AP correspondent Kathy Gannon.

Click [here](#) for the rest of Dave's column.

Stories of interest

[ABC, Center for Public Integrity Pulitzer spat turns nastier](#) (Bob Daugherty)

The executive director of The Center for Public Integrity, Bill Buzenberg, offered to release what he says is evidence of how little ABC News knew about the investigation into coal miner black-lung benefits that was awarded a Pulitzer Prize this week.

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[Journalists Face Jail Time For Republishing Reuters' Pulitzer Prize-Winning Report](#) (Bill Beecham)

Two journalists in Thailand will face criminal charges on Thursday for using information from the Reuters investigative piece that won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting.

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[Is Philadelphia Inquirer architecture critic's job safe now that she's won a Pulitzer?](#)

Romensko: The Philadelphia Inquirer won a Pulitzer on Monday for architecture criticism - a beat that one of the paper's owners wants eliminated, according to two Inquirer sources. Twice in late 2012, I'm told, George Norcross criticized Inga Saffron - she won the paper's Pulitzer this week - for not being a Philadelphia booster. He told an Inquirer journalist that "she brings down every major building in the city" in her reviews, one of my sources reports.

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[New Star Tribune owner: Paper will be less liberal when current reporters retire](#)

In an interview with MinnPost's Britt Robson, new (Minneapolis) Star Tribune owner Glen Taylor said the paper's reputation as a liberal outlet will change whether he owns it or not. That said: "Will it change because of the ownership of Glen Taylor? Yeah. To say it won't wouldn't be accurate," Taylor says, continuing:

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[Broadcasters Don't Own the Airwaves](#)

Opinion: On April 22, the Supreme Court will hear a case that could alter the way Americans have used and benefited from broadcast airwaves since the dawn of

radio and television. The case, *American Broadcasting Companies v. Aereo*, aims to shut down the startup Aereo's two-year-old video streaming service and claim ownership of the airwaves as the sole right of broadcasters like ABC, NBC and CBS.

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[3 signs you're in a bad relationship with your editor](#) (Mark Mittelstadt)

Just like any successful romance, a good editorial relationship starts with two people, a mutual attraction, and the hope that they can build something special and lasting together. While staff writers tend to settle down with one or two people, freelancers have a harder time committing: We juggle one-piece stands, steady dates, and editorial partners that are always up for a romp, all while pining for the sexy publication that's out of our league. But as with all relationships, even when you've done everything right, editorial liaisons sometimes end.

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[Employers are shifting the burden of health care to retirees](#)

If you expect your employer to help cover the cost of your healthcare in retirement, you may be unpleasantly surprised. The number of employers providing health benefits for retirees has been in a state of steady erosion over the past few decades - dropping from 40% of firms to 28% between 1988 and 2013, according to a new report by the Kaiser Family Foundation. At larger companies (200+ employees) the drop has been even more dramatic, falling from 66% to 28%.

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[2014 Dart Award Winners Announced](#)

This year's Dart Awards went to the Las Vegas Sun for *Grace Through Grief: A Shattered Family Recovers* and *This American Life* for *Harper High School: Parts I and II*. Honorable mentions went to *More Magazine* and the *New York Times Magazine*. Join us on May 8 to mark the Dart Awards 20th Anniversary and to celebrate this year's winners!

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[There Are Far Fewer Reporters In America Today Than Ten Years Ago](#)

Here's an alarming fact for you: the number of working journalists in the United States dropped by nearly 20,000 in just six years, according to the Pew Research Center. The decline of print media, as well as a host of other factors, has led to a tidal wave of job losses, Pew said. There were 55,000 journalists working in 2006; there were just 38,000 in 2012. That is a loss of 17,000 journalists.

AP Beat of the Week

Colleagues,

A picture can be worth a thousand words, but Brussels News Editor **John-Thor Dahlburg** had just one word in mind when he exclusively obtained six satellite images showing military hardware and units amassed near the Ukraine-Russian border: Proof.

Following a key meeting of NATO foreign ministers earlier this month, Dahlburg began pursuing an interview with the alliance's supreme commander in Europe, U.S. Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, to learn more about Russia's latest moves in and around Ukraine and the alliance's response.

But he also requested something no other journalist had thought to seek: tangible proof of the alliance's accusations that the Kremlin had positioned thousands of troops along or near the Ukrainian border that could be mobilized within hours for invasion.

After submitting an email request to NATO military headquarters in southern Belgium _ known by the acronym SHAPE _ Dahlburg followed up with a telephone call and a tenacious challenge: "Give us something we can show the world that makes your case." An officer said they'd look into the request but made no promises. Besides, the officer said, any pictures released to the media would have to be vetted by intelligence officers, not often the most generous of sources when it comes to providing information.

A slew of emails and phone calls later _ some of which came as Dahlburg biked through the countryside around Brussels on his days off _ a date was fixed for an interview with Breedlove in Paris. Last Wednesday afternoon, at a luxury hotel near the Paris Opera, Dahlburg arrived with Jamey Keaten, newsman, Paris, who specializes in security issues; photographer Remy de la Mauviniere; and videojournalist Oleg Cetinic.

The interview itself provided a scoop: Breedlove told the AP team that plans in the works to counter the Russian military's threat against Ukraine could include deployment of American ground troops to alliance member states in Europe that feel at risk, including Poland and the Baltics.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/nato-send-us-troops-eastern-european-allies-23257669>

As Breedlove said goodbye and began heading out, Dahlburg buttonholed a member of his entourage: What about the proof of Russia's hostile military

posture? he asked. Stand by, he was told, and check your email in the next two hours.

At 6:30 p.m., as Dahlburg was putting the finishing touches on his story, the email popped up. The photographs were clear and crisp. The product of a commercial satellite service, they were reviewed by NATO's military arm, which said they showed Russian tanks, combat helicopters, warplanes, troops and other assets deployed in an arc around Ukraine's eastern border.

Dahlburg sent the material to news and photo editors in London and Moscow. Bob Burns at the Pentagon, whom Dahlburg had alerted in advance, also jumped in and quickly found a non-governmental expert for an independent view of what the satellite photos proved or didn't prove. The analyst said that the forces depicted did not appear to be involved in training exercises but, rather, were "in combat readiness" and that they could "go quickly" if ordered into Ukraine.

The AP story and pictures were on the wire a full day before NATO released the photos to AP's competitors, and got wide play in the U.S. and Europe. CBS TV called Dahlburg for information on the photos' provenance. A competing news agency was "running like hell" the next day to match the pictures, the AP was told. The Kremlin also took notice, and the RIA Novosti news service, a government mouthpiece, issued a story that claimed the photos were from military exercises last year.

For the gumption to push for evidence that no other journalist bothered to request, Dahlburg wins this week \$500 prize.

Others whose work impressed the judges:

_ Tamara Lush, newswoman, Tampa, Fla., for asking the questions no one else asked about the death of a 12-year-old Florida girl who police said committed suicide after being bullied online. Lush was the lone reporter to request the 300-page investigative file into the death of Rebecca Sedwick and found the girl had little history of being bullied in the months prior to her death and instead had a troubled home life.

<http://bit.ly/1p79VCV>

_ Ryan J. Foley, correspondent, Iowa City, Iowa, for obtaining a list of all fired state workers who had been blacklisted for rehiring. Foley obtained the names and positions of some 1,000 former workers days after a state official argued no such list existed.

<http://dmreg.co/1gwi9Tn>

_ Anthony McCartney, entertainment writer, Los Angeles, for his story on Mickey Rooney's will, which showed the actor had disinherited his eight surviving children and estranged wife and left his modest estate _ only \$18,000 _ to a stepson who had been his caretaker.

<http://ti.me/1p7d8Cy>

_ Eric Tucker, newsman, Washington, D.C., and Michael Biesecker, newsman, Raleigh, N.C., for revealing that the father of a North Carolina prosecutor had been kidnapped and terrorized for days in retaliation for his daughter's work and that the case involved the Bloods street gang. <http://wapo.st/1p7aH2l>

AP Best of States

Colleagues,

When 12-year-old Rebecca Sedwick in Florida jumped to her death last September, the case garnered national attention in large part because of what the county sheriff said pushed her to do it: relentless bullying by classmates via social media.

Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said Rebecca had suffered personal confrontations and a barrage of cruel text and other online messages before her death. Two of Rebecca's classmates were charged with stalking.

At the time, Tampa correspondent **Tamara Lush** led the AP's daily coverage, also managing to write enterprise stories off the news, including a strong takeout looking at how it was nearly impossible to prosecute for cyberbullying; The charges against the teens were later dropped.

That all would have been fine, but Lush always considered the bullying-related charges questionable at best, and wondered: Were there other things going on in Rebecca's life that might have pushed her toward suicide?

So Lush made a public records request for the investigative file of the case. After months of waiting and prodding, she recently received it. What she learned provided a complicated picture of Rebecca and her home life before the suicide, and was an AP exclusive (<http://abcn.ws/QnKHjQ>) used widely and cited by Slate (<http://slate.me/1gJadLC>) and the Christian Science Monitor (<http://bit.ly/1n1tsCX>).

In the file, there was little evidence that Rebecca was bullied in the weeks and months leading up to her death. There were, however, many other things clearly weighing on the preteen: she had just broken up with her boyfriend, she had a troubled relationship with her father and she was concerned about fights between her mother and stepfather.

Rebecca had previously been involuntarily committed, was in counseling and had written in her diary that she cut herself to "ease the pain." In a diary entry two weeks before she leaped to her death, she wrote that she had been called, "pretty, nice beautiful, funny, awesome," but also, "ugly, stupid, slut, fat, not good enough," according to the report. At the bottom of the page she wrote one word: "suicidal."

A friend of Rebecca's told investigators that in a conversation with her five days

before the suicide, Rebecca did not mention bullying but did state that she "hated her life and wasn't doing good."

The file makes clear that Rebecca had had problems with students at her middle school, specifically in December 2012 and January 2013. One girl in particular had picked on Rebecca, and the two were suspended for fighting. But such skirmishes were arguably minor compared to everything else Rebecca was going through.

After declining several interview requests, Judd, the sheriff, agreed to speak to Lush for her story. While before he had been adamant that bullying lead to Rebecca's death, he was now more measured in his characterization of what happened.

"Rebecca was a very fragile child," Judd said. "Rebecca's wagon was already pretty heavily burdened with bricks. And we never said that bullying was the only reason Rebecca committed suicide. But what the bullies did, is that they continued to stack bricks on an already overloaded wagon, 'til finally it broke."

For sticking with a story long after other media had moved on, and for producing the fullest picture to date of what was happening in the life of this troubled girl before she died, Lush wins this week's Best of the States prize.

Other work that impressed the judges:

_ Ryan J. Foley, correspondent, Iowa City, Iowa, for obtaining a list of all fired state workers who had been blacklisted for rehiring. Foley obtained the names and positions of some 1,000 former workers days after a state official argued no such list existed.

<http://dmreg.co/1gwj9Tn>

_ Anthony McCartney, entertainment writer, Los Angeles, for his story on Mickey Rooney's will, which showed the actor had disinherited his eight surviving children and estranged wife and left his modest estate _ only \$18,000 _ to a stepson who had been his caretaker.

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_ Eric Tucker, newsman, Washington, D.C., and Michael Biesecker, newsman, Raleigh, N.C., for revealing that the father of a North Carolina prosecutor had been kidnapped and terrorized for days in retaliation for his daughter's work and that the case involved the Bloods street gang. <http://wapo.st/1p7aH2l>

_ Charlie Krupa, photographer, Boston, and Michelle R. Smith, correspondent, Providence, R.I., for their unique photo essay marking the anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombing. The duo tracked down the people in Krupa's 2013 photo of bombing victim Jeff Bauman being rushed from the scene and persuaded them to pose for portraits and talk about their experience that day.

<http://bit.ly/1p7awog>

_ Peter Banda, hybrid, Denver, for his video-first report on a tumbleweed invasion

that has wreaked havoc in cash-strapped towns across southern Colorado.

<http://youtu.be/aOa4wCXNhxc>

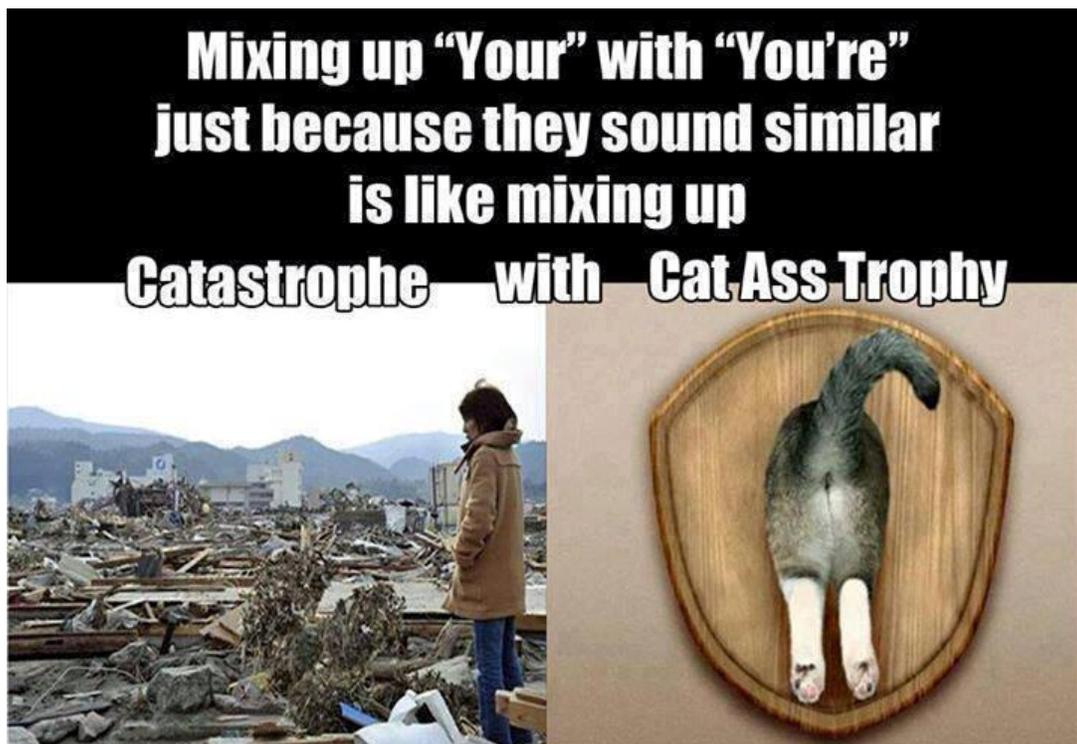
_ Sports writer John Wawrow and supervisory correspondent Carolyn Thompson of Buffalo, N.Y., newsman Michael Virtanen of Albany and newsman David Klepper of Providence, R.I., for breaking word about a closed meeting in which a new stadium in Niagara Falls was part of discussions about the future of the Buffalo Bills.

<http://goo.gl/WvV2ML>

(Both shared by Valerie Komor)

And finally...

Cat-loving grammarian Mark Mittelstadt spots...



Paul Stevens

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