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Connecting

August 20, 2014

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The death of James Foley



Colleagues,

Good morning. Here are stories of interest, leading off with the sad news of the death of journalist James Foley.

Click [here](#) for the latest AP story on his death. The photo above by GlobalPost was taken in in Benghazi, Libya, in 2011, a year before his capture.

He and his family are in our thoughts and prayers.

Paul

American killed in Syria a journalist at heart

By Rik Stevens

ROCHESTER, N.H. (AP) - Journalist James Foley, captured and held six weeks while covering the uprising in Libya, knew the risks when he went to Syria in 2012 to cover the escalating violence there. It didn't matter. He was a journalist at heart, once saying he'd cover local news if it meant doing the job he loved.

Foley was snatched again in Syria in November 2012 when the car he was riding in was stopped by four militants in a battle zone that Sunni rebel fighters and government forces were trying to control.

Two U.S. officials said Tuesday they believe Foley was the person executed by Islamic State militants in a video posted online. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the video by name.

Foley's family confirmed his death on a webpage created to rally support for him. His mother, Diane

Foley, said in a statement on the webpage he "gave his life trying to expose the world to the suffering of the Syrian people."



At Foley's family home in Rochester, a light burned yellow in a center upstairs window and a yellow ribbon adorned a tree at the foot of the driveway. The Rev. Paul Gousse, of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, where the Foleys are parishioners,

spent about 45 minutes at the house but left without commenting.

Foley, 40, worked in a number of conflict zones in the Middle East, including Syria, Libya and Iraq. He and another journalist were working in the northern province of Idlib in Syria when they were kidnapped near the village of Taftanaz.

After Foley disappeared, while contributing video for Agence France-Presse and the media company GlobalPost, his parents became fierce advocates for him and all those kidnapped in war zones. They held regular prayer vigils and worked with the U.S. and Syrian diplomatic corps to get whatever scraps of information they could.

Diane Foley, asked in January 2013 if her son had reservations about going to Syria, said softly: "Not enough."

He had seen the dangers to journalists up close.

Upon his release from Libya and return to the United States, he recalled in an interview with The Associated Press seeing a colleague, South African photographer Anton Hammerl, killed by forces loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. He tried to pull his friend's body out of harm's way but was turned back by heavy fire.

"I'll regret that day for the rest of my life. I'll regret what happened to Anton," Foley said. "I will constantly analyze that."

Foley also covered the war in Afghanistan but called the Libyan fighting the worst he had ever experienced to that point.

Foley grew up in New Hampshire and studied history at Marquette University. He later taught in Arizona, Massachusetts and Chicago before switching careers to become a journalist, which he viewed as a calling.

"Journalism is journalism," Foley said. "If I had a choice to do Nashua (New Hampshire) zoning meetings or give up journalism, I'll do it. I love writing and reporting."

Marquette University said it was "deeply saddened" by Foley's death. It said he had a heart for social justice and used his talents to tell stories in the hopes they might make a difference.

"We extend our heartfelt prayers and wishes for healing to James' family and friends during this very difficult time," it said in a statement.

Associated Press writers Lara Jakes and Julie Pace contributed to this report from

Washington.

Rieder: Paying the ultimate price for journalism

Rem Reider, USA Today:

It is a vivid reminder of the dangers that journalists encounter to bear witness, of the extraordinary bravery they often bring to their craft.

It appears that James Wright Foley, the American photojournalist kidnapped in Syria almost two years ago, has been beheaded.

Journalism takes its practitioners into many extremely frightening places. Syria is top of the charts.

Sixty-six journalists have died there since the rebellion against President Bashar Assad began in 2011, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Another 30 are missing.

Two of the finest foreign correspondents of their generation died covering the rebellion there against Assad: American-born Marie Colvin, who wrote for The Sunday Times of London, and Anthony Shadid of The New York Times.

There's a lot of cynicism about journalism today, about the preoccupation with the sensational and the trivial that stems from the frantic effort to build large digital audiences.

But it's important to keep in mind that journalists continue to do important work, work that is critical in a democracy. Sometimes they pay the ultimate price.

Covering combat, of course, is extremely risky. But the journalists reporting on the tumult in Ferguson, Mo., also place themselves on the front lines as they run the gantlet of law enforcement officers and now protesters who don't want them chronicling the confrontations, as they try to sort out a chaotic situation replete with gunfire and tear gas.

Why do journalists, particularly war correspondents, do what they do? Why do they subject themselves to the risks? Why would James Wright Foley, a freelancer who worked for, among others, GlobalPost and Agence France-Presse, venture into such treacherous, unforgiving terrain?

Because there's only one way to tell the story. And that's by being there. The official briefings only take you so far. War isn't just strategies and body counts. It's real people, real soldiers putting their lives at risk, innocent civilians caught up in the carnage. You can't tell the story unless you see it firsthand.

Colvin, who covered seemingly every major conflagration, from Kosovo to Chechnya to Syria, lost the sight in her left eye when she was hit by shrapnel in Sri Lanka in 2001, That slowed her down not at all.

How did she keep going? "It's a human mechanism," she once told American Journalism Review's Sherry Ricchiardi. "You put your fear, emotions and physical exhaustion on hold. You get so cold, hungry and dirty. You exist on a few bites of stale bread and drink water out of mudholes but, no matter what, you don't walk out on the story."

And why did she keep going? Colvin bitterly resented the notion that she was an adrenaline junkie, a "cowgirl" as she put it, who simply loved the action.

"I don't do this for fun," she said. "I do this because it is necessary."

Nov 2012, photo, posted on the website freejamesfoley.org, shows missing journalist James Foley while covering the civil war in Aleppo, Syria. (Photo: Nicole Tung, AP)

Social Media Companies Scramble to Block Terrorist Video of Journalist's Murder

Twitter and YouTube moved quickly on Tuesday -- but with decidedly mixed results -- to suspend accounts that linked to a jihadi propaganda video purporting to show the murder of American journalist James Foley at the hands of Islamist terrorists. The crackdown provided a vivid example of the pressure on social media companies to police violent terrorist propaganda, but at the same time it showed the difficulty they have in stopping individuals intent on spreading violent images and rhetoric.

The video, which shows a member of the Islamic State beheading Foley, appeared on YouTube shortly after 5 p.m. U.S. Eastern time. Within minutes, Twitter users were noting the video's existence, and many people encouraged others not to share the video or post any links to it. The video was reportedly produced by al-Furqan Media, the official news outlet for the Islamic State, which formerly used the acronym ISIS.

Less than an hour after the video was first posted to YouTube, the company removed it. But the same video was soon posted by a different YouTube user, and it remained accessible for at least another half an hour. The company eventually removed the video from the user's account, but it didn't suspend the account itself, and within minutes, the user had posted it again. Twitter suspended the user's account after he included a link to the video in his feed. Foreign Policy is not linking to the video or to accounts posting it.

Click [here](#) to read more.

Connecting Mailbox

Praise for AP staff covering Ferguson

[Margy McCay](#) - Today's focus on Ferguson prompts me to ask that you pass along to Jim Salter and crew how much I'm thinking about all of them and how grateful I am for their good work.

I've never been to Ferguson, but I feel like I have from my frequent drives to/from Lambert and my sister's home in Springfield, Ill.

I'm sure I speak for many Connecting colleagues when I say thanks and stay safe.

News from Ferguson

Living up to your responsibilities

[Dick Weiss](#), a 30-year veteran of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch who now operates [WeissWrite LLC](#), posted this on Facebook:

I was out of town the past week and not physically present for #Ferguson. Watching from afar, I was so proud of the work of my friends and former colleagues. I was glad to see many getting national recognition.

But with that said, I would like to offer just a bit of advice from someone taking this in as a consumer of news. This is not the time to let people know how many hours you are working (which is a way of bragging that you are tireless) or that you are scared (which is a way of saying you are really brave) or that you are appearing in 15 minutes on BBC or CNN (which is a way of saying you are special) or that your news site got 10 zillion hits or tens of thousands of viewers or listeners (which is a way of saying you are more interested in your brand than in what's going on) and it's not even the time to praise your colleague for his/ fine work (which may be appreciated by that person but will be construed as tribalism by others.)

Rather stick to your knitting... let your fine work speak for itself. Send your colleagues your appreciation back channel. For my money, those are far more meaningful even if not so widely distributed. Retweet those great stories, to be sure. But tell us what's in them that's worth reading. In other words, continue to inform.

I worked for Jim Millstone, perhaps the finest journalist I have ever known. He walked the streets in the wake of the riots after Martin Luther King's murder and reported it all out effectively and elegantly. I only learned this after his death. I

cannot ever remember a time when he shone a light on himself. He was also incredibly sparing with his praise for others and to great effect. We felt affirmed when he would say, "I have no major problems with your story" and over the moon when he would say, "nice work."

I don't think he ever used the words awesome or amazing. So I can't say your work is awesome nor amazing. You are living up to your responsibilities. Beautifully.

[St. Louis radio stations listen to Ferguson](#)

The shooting of 18 year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri has become a statewide, nationwide and even worldwide story over the course of the past eleven days. The shooting sparked protests and a massive police response, along with riots, looting and violence. Protesters and journalists have been arrested, and while local, state and national leaders appeal for calm, many are demanding answers as the investigation into what happened continues.

Journalists have scrambled to cover the story from many different angles, with most directing their coverage to the statewide or national audiences they serve. But for a pair of St. Louis radio stations, responding to the crisis is all about serving their local listeners and giving them a voice.

[In Ferguson, the ride continues outside America's comfort zone](#)

FERGUSON, Mo. A long bike ride more than 40 years ago with childhood friends - from near downtown to the airport - was as close as I had come to this St. Louis suburb. Until Sunday.

For that summer adventure our folks chewed us out. I didn't understand it then but I do now.

There have been too many tragic examples of unarmed black youths through no fault of their own attracting the wrong kind of attention from either the police or "concerned, law-abiding citizens." The most recent example was Michael Brown, 18, who was shot Aug. 9 by 28-year-old Ferguson police Officer Darren Wilson.

[Unethical journalism can make Ferguson more dangerous](#)

"Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief," reads the Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics.

As police in Ferguson, Missouri, prepared to enforce the first night of curfew on Saturday, I was transfixed on Twitter, refreshing the feeds of deployed journalists and waiting for them to drop the next tidbit of information. From these feeds,

thousands of other people and I watched the countdown to curfew as though it were a high-stakes sports game - hungry for details and visuals. We learned that the police were firing tear gas, that the police said it was just smoke and that photos of the tear gas canisters eventually emerged, putting the cops' credibility into question.

Other stories of interest

[Apple can't hide from a 20-year-old reporter](#)



The best-sourced reporter covering Apple Inc., one of the world's most secretive companies, is a 20-year-old junior at the University of Michigan. His name is Mark Gurman. He makes more than six figures a year as senior editor and scoop master at 9to5Mac.com, a news outlet most people have never heard of. In the interest of

truth, which Gurman is known to pursue with almost religious zeal, it should be noted that he sometimes types stories in class.

Gurman's scoops, beginning in high school, have included stories about Apple's foray into tablets, new phone designs, the arrival of Siri, the dropping of Google maps, how Apple stores operate, how new operating systems work and look, and, most recently, how the company plans to integrate health and fitness tracking into its devices. Gurman's stories serve multiple audiences. The primary one is Apple obsessives, for whom even a report on a new button design is life changing. Another is the mainstream tech press, which reads his stories for clues about Apple's larger strategy, a Rubik's-like puzzle given Apple's stealthiness and complexity.

"He drives that site the way Nate Silver did at the New York Times," said Kara Swisher, who with Walt Mossberg co-founded Re/Code, one of many outlets that have tried unsuccessfully to lure away Gurman and his scoops. "He's the show as far as any of us are concerned in Silicon Valley. He's the brand."

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[The newest important person in newsrooms: audience-development czars](#)

(Carol Riha)

The New York Times' Innovation Report pointed out the need for audience-development specialists to get Times content in front of more readers. While the Times called for a new, cross-departmental approach to this function, other news

outlets have already been putting more muscle behind the role.

In the past four years, The Washington Post two-person search-traffic team morphed into a nine-member staff that also oversees a new breaking-news desk. Slate hired its first director of traffic and social media strategy a few years ago, Katherine Goldstein, now editor of Vanity Fair's site, VF.com, which it has grown to a three-person team. Time Inc.'s Time and Entertainment Weekly have added audience development czars (and czarinas) in their newsrooms as well.

[Gannett cribs from Advance Publications playbook for struggling newspapers](#)

Gannett's latest Great Leap Forward will go "digital first," heavily emphasizing metrics to guide coverage. It will have significantly smaller newsrooms with a few more reporters and a lot fewer editors, in part because it is centralizing production work like copyediting and page design in regional hubs. All newsroom jobs have been redefined and current staff must apply for new jobs. And, of course, there are the buzzwords and the chirpy editors' notes to readers. Assignment editors become "content coaches." Managing editors are now "content strategists." A diminished newsroom is a "bold new structure."

Sound familiar? It's essentially the do-more-with-less playbook pioneered by Advance Publications, owners of The Times-Picayune, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, and other regional papers. There's at least one big difference, though, between Gannett's move and the Advance model. "We don't have any plans for reducing print," says Kate Marymont, Gannett's vice president for news, in an interview.

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[The 60-second interview: Reto Gregori, deputy editor in chief, Bloomberg News](#)

Click link for the interview.

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New York Times Correction of the Day: No purple poop with these birds (Bob Daugherty)

The logo for The New York Times, featuring the words "The New York Times" in a classic, blackletter-style font.

Correction: August 19, 2014

An earlier version of this article described bald eagles and ospreys incorrectly. They eat fish, and their poop is white; they do not eat berries and excrete purple feces. (Other birds, like American robins, Eurasian starlings and cedar waxwings, do.)

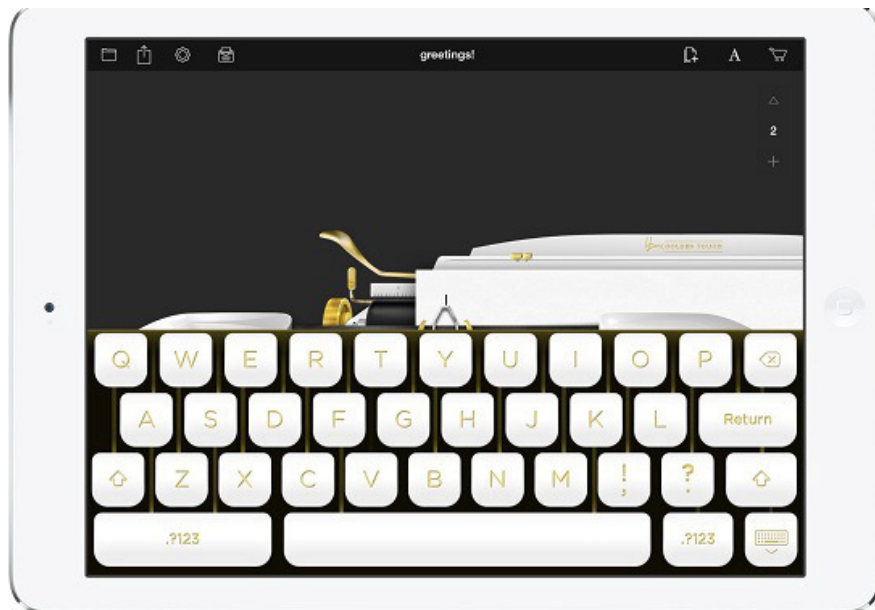
The Last Word

[Tom Hanks' Free iPad Typewriter App Climbs to No. 1 on Apple's App Store](#) (Kelly Tunney)

Award-winning actor Tom Hanks now has the most popular iPad app on Apple's iTunes App Store, as the thesp's Hanx Writer free app - emulating a manual typewriter - currently sits atop the service's ranking for the tablet devices.

Launched on Aug. 14, Hanx Writer simulates the experience of a manual typewriter (including the "ding" at the end of a line) but with modern conveniences like a "delete" key. The app connects via Bluetooth to external keyboards that work with the Apple iPad.

Hanks, who professed his love for manual typewriters in an essay in the New York Times last summer, believes the look and feel of an old-fashioned writing instrument is central to the writing process.



If you knew James and would like to share your thoughts on his death, or if you would like to share your thoughts or experiences on the dangers that journalists face in covering the news, send them to Connecting.

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