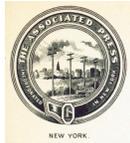


From: Paul Stevens [stevenspl@live.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 04, 2014 9:05 AM
To: stevenspl@live.com
Subject: Connecting - September 4, 2014

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Connecting

September 4, 2014

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Colleagues,

This editorial cartoon that appeared Wednesday in The Salt Lake Tribune is graphic, but the work by cartoonist **Pat Bagley** conveys a powerful message on how

journalists risk their lives to tell the truth as members of what some term "the lame-stream media."

(Shared by Bill Beecham)

We lead with several stories in follow-up to the murder of Steven Sotloff, the second journalist in two weeks to be beheaded by extremists.

This issue also contains a great account by regular Connecting contributor **Richard Pyle** on preparedness stories, and the obituaries he has written for the wire of some of his notable AP colleagues.

I have heard from some of you on more than one occasion say that - "I don't want it to happen anytime soon, but when I die, I want it to be Richard Pyle who writes my obituary."

With that, good Thursday morning to each of you.

Paul

The death of a journalist

Steven Sotloff and the Stories He Told

"The civilians of Aleppo are trapped in a violent stalemate, left to endure a war whose suffering and hardships grow larger with every passing day. ... [P]eople in Aleppo fear they are stage players in a war with no end in sight."



So began Steven Sotloff's dispatch for Foreign Policy from the Syrian city of Aleppo on December 24, 2012. Nearly two years later, there is still no end to Syria's brutal war in sight. But now one of the few journalists telling the world about it has been murdered.

On Tuesday, two weeks after the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria beheaded the American journalist James Foley, the SITE Intelligence Group reported that ISIS had carried through on its threat to do the same to Sotloff. The Sunni extremist group posted a video of the beheading online, claiming, as with Foley, that the murder was in retaliation for U.S. airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq. "The same masked fighter with British-accented English who appeared in the video of Mr. Foley's beheading also appears beside Mr. Sotloff, asserting, 'I'm back, Obama, and I'm back because of your arrogant foreign policy towards the Islamic State,'" The New York Times reports.

Before his kidnapping in northern Syria in 2013, Sotloff, a 31-year-old freelance journalist from Miami, had spent two years covering the Arab Spring and its chaotic aftermath. He'd risked his life to report from Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Turkey. His reporting vividly captures the Middle East's convulsions in recent years--the ecstasy of revolution, the tortuous paths of political transitions, the anguish of civil war.

Click [here](#) to read more.

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Back-to-back display killings of journalists unprecedented

<http://cpj.org/blog/2014/09/back-to-back-display-killings-of-journalists-unpre.php>

Committee to Protect Journalists, by Frank Smyth:

The apparent back-to-back murders of two American freelance journalists by the same group are unprecedented in CPJ's history. The beheadings on camera in a two-week period of first James Foley and then Steven Sotloff appear to be an acceleration of a pattern--dating at least to Daniel Pearl's killing in 2002--of criminal and insurgent groups displaying the murders of journalists to send a broad message of terror.

Despite heartfelt pleas from their families including each reporter's mother, Islamic State militants operating in Syria and northern Iraq beheaded first Foley, in a video released August 19, and then apparently Sotloff in a video released today, as a grisly way of telegraphing the group's strength and influence to the world. As of late today, U.S. officials had not confirmed the Sotloff video's authenticity.

With the rise of mobile Internet technology and social media in recent years, nonstate actors like Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram have tried to leverage platforms like Twitter and YouTube for themselves, bypassing traditional media to disseminate their messages directly, as CPJ documented in a 2013 essay in *Attacks on the Press*. As both insurgent groups and the governments they fight have become more sensitive to how they are portrayed, CPJ found, journalists have been squeezed between threat of violent attack from one side and pressure of censorship or prosecution from the other.

But the beheadings of journalists as a public warning is something much more stark: rather than bypassing the media to transmit a message, Islamic State made journalists' murders the message itself.

Islamic State is not the first group to use the beheading of journalists as a way to make a point. Three years ago this month the decapitated remains of freelance Mexican journalist Maria Elisabeth Macias Castro were found by the side of a road with a pair of headphones and a computer keyboard. A note left at the scene

indicated that she was murdered for her reporting on organized crime that she posted anonymously on social media as "the girl from Nuevo Laredo."

Back in June 2002, drug traffickers in Rio de Janeiro beheaded the TV Globo journalist Tim Lopes with a sword after he recorded some of their criminal behavior on video. Only four months earlier, Al-Qaeda militants in Pakistan had cut off the head, on camera, of The Wall Street Journal correspondent Pearl.

The accelerated risk comes at a time when news organizations have cut back, leaving freelancers like Foley and Sotloff to navigate the risks of places like Libya, where Foley was captured and held for 40 days in 2011, largely on their own.

Lopes and Pearl were staff journalists; Foley and Sotloff were working solo in the both exciting and dangerous field of international reporting.

Castro was also trying to fill an information vacuum. In Mexico, organized crime groups have terrorized the local press into silence, leading citizens to report criminal activities on websites and social media, either anonymously or using pen names. Castro's murder was the first ever documented by CPJ worldwide that was in direct relation to journalism published on social media.

Unfortunately, the executions of Foley and Sotloff are unlikely to be the last.

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Why Violent News Images Matter

A recent slew of situations resulting in catastrophic violence and death, including the Israel-Gaza war, the armed expansion of the Islamic State, the downing of a Malaysian Airlines plane in the Ukraine, the ongoing conflict in Syria, and also the spread of the Ebola virus, has led to a renewed debate as to what kinds of imagery media outlets should be expected to show.



One argument is that editors working for mainstream outlets, and perhaps even photographers as well, are unethically withholding from readers certain horrific imagery of contemporary conflicts and disasters because of a fear of offending or shocking, or even from a fear that readers will abandon the publication altogether. In his new book, *War Porn*, photographer Christoph Bangert asks: "How can we refuse to acknowledge a mere representation—a picture—of a horrific event, while other people are forced to live through the horrific event itself?"

Click [here](#) to read more.

(The photo above, right, by Jerome Sessini of Magnum shows remains of a passenger on board Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 that was shot over eastern Ukraine, July 17, 2014.)

Writing 'prep obits', chronicling AP colleagues

[Richard Pyle](#) - Writing prepared-in-advance obituaries, or "prep obits," as the AP calls them, is a task familiar to theater critics, Hollywood beat reporters, sports writers and other specialists.

Though not one of those, in the years between my last foreign assignment in 1998 and retirement from AP in 2009, I became a more or less accidental member of this group.



If memory serves, my first "prep obit" in NYC was for author Norman Mailer. There was already one on file with the mandatory "hold for release" cautions, but Mailer had outlived it, so some updating was called for.

Over the next two decades in New York I found regular duty as an obit writer, not so much for the likes of Norman Mailer (more on him later) as for journalists, a distressing number of them being people that I'd known as colleagues and friends.

If that sounds a bit ghoulish, it wasn't. I found that researching and writing obits fit well into my passion for history. Journalists, like explorers, aviation pioneers, scientists and (some) political leaders, have the chance to break new ground.

But for most of us, just standing by the side of the road, witnessing and recording the march of events, may be all we need, whether any of the kicked-up dust of passing fame settles on us or not.

It might seem obvious but the key to writing obits is to place the subject in his or her most important historical context, often a single noteworthy moment in the person's life.

And sometimes that's not a simple choice.

When I wrote the prep obit for AP photographer Marty Lederhandler, I could have led with his landing at Utah Beach on D-Day, making what is arguably the most story-telling of all photos on 9/11 (**see photo above**), accompanying Gov. Nelson Rockefeller and bride on their honeymoon, or on his 66 years with AP - a company record unlikely to be broken any time soon.

Malcolm Browne was easier. As AP bureau chief in Saigon in 1963, he was the only foreign correspondent present with a camera when a Buddhist monk committed suicide by fire, and his photos shocked the Kennedy White House into a major policy decision that changed the early course of the Vietnam war.

Mourning the loss of some AP friends was made easier simply by the chance to reach for words about them from their writings and my own heart.

Feature writer Jules Loh, I could say, traveled the United States for years in search of the offbeat and unusual, "charming strangers with his honeyed Georgia accent," and being honored by an American Indian tribe with the title, "Many Pencils."

For Hugh Mulligan, another master of eloquent prose in AP's legendary "Poets' Corner," nothing could have been better than his description of a Mississippi river steamboat "spinning rainbows from its stern wheel." Unless it was his report on the present-day city of Sodom as "without sin," although "you might find a Bedouin three sheets to the wind in a sandstorm."

It's not uncommon for literary types, including journalists, to prepare their own obituaries in advance, but it's rare, at least in my experience, that people ask to see what somebody else has written about them.

One who did was John Roderick, whose role as AP's long-time China watcher dated back to covering Mao Tse-tung's revolution in the 1940s. A few days before he died at age 93, in 2008, John asked the Honolulu bureau for a look at the obit it had on file. Ever the cheerful gentleman, he declared it "worth dying for."

I still had a few prep obits on file when AP decided recently that as a matter of policy, such copy should carry bylines of current rather than retired staffers. But when six former Saigon colleagues - George Esper, Roy Essoyan, Horst Faas, Mal Browne, Edwin Q White and George McArthur - died over 15 months between February 2012 and April 2013, I was credited at least as having contributed to their obituaries.

Oh, yeah - about Norman Mailer.

When I was asked by the NYC bureau to update his prep obit, I realized one

question right away: Mailer was known for writing his books in longhand, and I wondered whether he had changed to a computer as many other writers had done. I called his agent, who professed not to know, and referred me to his editor at Random House. Odd as it seemed, he didn't have an answer either.

One alternative: I could ring the bell at Mailer's house in Brooklyn Heights and maybe ask him directly. Having never discussed any obit with the subject, that would be a first, and I didn't know how Mailer might react. Just "Who the hell are you and why do you want to know?" or something more in line with his mercurial reputation, like "get the f--- off my porch?"

But one day, while walking my German Shepherd in Brooklyn Heights, here came a short, stocky, bowlegged elderly fellow with a cane.

"Excuse me, Mr Mailer?"

"Yeah," he said. "I'm going to the store here. What can I do for you?"

"I'm the husband of Brenda Smiley, the actress. You remember she was on Broadway and in your movie, 'Maidstone.' "

"Yeah. I remember. How is Brenda? Is she still acting?"

"When she can get parts, but a lot of them go to Hollywood people these days."

"My wife's an actress and she can't get a goddam part either."

"I have a question for you. I've read that you wrote all your books in longhand, but I wonder if you've moved to the computer age."

Mailer paused a moment.

"Naw," he said. "I never learned that."

Then he leaned toward me with a feigned confidential whisper. "But I've got a girl who does that."

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Stories of interest

[Is it time to end media blackouts?](#)

The brutal murder of journalist James Foley and now Steven Sotloff in Syria has sparked disbelief and raw outrage. Now, a broader debate is opening about the

role of the media in conflict zones: Are some stories just too dangerous for journalists to cover? Should governments pay ransom when reporters are kidnapped? How should the media cover terrorist propaganda like that surrounding the beheading of these journalists?

Answering these questions requires accurate and timely information from conflict zones, precisely the kind of thing journalists risk their lives to report.

But there is one story the media has not been covering fully, at least until recently. And that is the story of the kidnappings themselves. Under a practice known as a "media blackout," news organizations have routinely suppressed information about the widespread abductions of journalists and others that have taken place in Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, and other countries around the world. The number of journalists kidnapped each year varies greatly from conflict to conflict, but there has never been anything like Syria. More than 80 journalists have been kidnapped since the conflict erupted in 2011.

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[And Now, the News Through Catholic Eyes](#)

All of us are seekers, in one way or another. In everyday life, we seek meaning, understanding, ways to pass the days. On the Internet, everyone's looking for something, be it news articles or cat pics. But there's a spectrum: Websites like Beliefnet or Biblegateway.com cater to a more stereotypical version of "seekers," offering endless inspirational quotes and meditative-looking stock photos. Traditional news sites satisfy a different kind of craving, a desire for straightforward information about what's going on in the world—readers are just seekers by another name.



It's a tricky thing to try balance seeker and reader, but The Boston Globe is going to try. On Tuesday, the newspaper launched a new site called Crux, dedicated to coverage of the Catholic Church. The site will include reported pieces about the Vatican, discussions about topics like abortion and gay marriage, and "lighter fare, including quizzes, travel coverage, and recipes ... and a column called 'OMG,'" which will focus on ethical and moral dilemmas, according to the press release.

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[Legendary Cartoonist Pat Oliphant: 'We Are in a Forest Fire of Ignorance'](#)

Pat Oliphant is perhaps the most influential political cartoonist in the world. He has drawn - and quartered, some might add - 10 American presidents, and assorted political figures and events that have caught his attention since he arrived in the

United States from his native Australia 50 years ago.

The full collection of more than 10,000 Oliphant cartoons, sculptures, paintings, and other works comprises a priceless historical and often hysterical review of a half-century of America's leaders and the misadventures through which the country has followed them. The dose of humor is what makes political cartoons powerful, Oliphant says: "Humor makes things palatable and induces people to look at things they wouldn't otherwise want to think about without the humor."

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[Michael Bloomberg to Return to Lead Company He Founded](#)

Michael R. Bloomberg will reassume the leadership of his business empire only eight months after ending his final term as mayor of New York. Late Wednesday, Mr. Bloomberg told close confidants and senior executives of Bloomberg L.P., a financial data and media company, that Daniel L. Doctoroff, its chief executive and a longtime friend and lieutenant, would leave the company at the end of the year and that he would take over.

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[USA Today lays off between 60 and 70 staffers](#) (Bob Daugherty)

USA Today laid off between 60 and 70 staffers Wednesday, with about half those cuts hitting its newsroom, a company source tells Poynter.

Gannett, which owns USA Today, announced in August it plans to spin off its publishing business. At about the same time, some of Gannett's local papers announced changes to their newsrooms. Tennessean Executive Editor Stefanie Murray told Poynter the plan was to have "self-sufficient reporters producing publication-ready copy."

Gannett spokesperson Jeremy Gaines told Washington Business Journal reporter Drew Hansen that "USA TODAY is working to align its staffing levels to meet current market conditions. The actions taken today will allow USA TODAY to reinvest in the business to ensure the continued success of its digital transformation."

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[Merged newsroom boosts St. Louis Public Radio's response to tumult in Ferguson](#)

The aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.,



proved to be a critical test for the newsroom of St. Louis Public Radio, whose expansion through a merger with a local news nonprofit provided a larger staff for covering the chaotic fallout.

St. Louis Public Radio sent all of its 30-plus journalists to cover the protests and skirmishes in Ferguson, taking advantage of its expanded resources to deliver both breaking news and more nuanced pieces that took a broader look at the issues involved. It augmented on-the-ground coverage with multimedia components, including video and social media updates, while using its local programs to engage its audience in discussions about the events.

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[How the NY Daily News went from a local tabloid to a national news site](#)

For New Yorkers, the Daily News has been the city's reigning tabloid. But with print's future in question, it relaunched its website as a national news destination two years ago, betting that its urban sensibility could play to the rest of the U.S.

The bet seems to be paying off. Daily News desktop unique visitors are up 5 percent to 12.6 million since the site relaunched in July 2012, according to ComScore. Including mobile, traffic is up 6 percent to 27.3 million in the past year, versus flat growth for the news/information category in general. That puts the New York daily ahead of sites like NPR (23 million), MSN News (26 million) and within striking distance of the BBC (27.4 million) and Time.com (32.6 million). In terms of the audience composition, 80 percent of the site's traffic now comes from outside New York, up from 50 percent.

McGruder diversity award winners announced

Michael Days, editor of the Philadelphia Daily News, and the **New Haven Register** are the recipients of the 13th annual Robert G. McGruder Award for Diversity Leadership, awarded by the Associated Press Media Editors in partnership with the American Society of News Editors and other journalism organizations.

The McGruder Award for Diversity Leadership is given annually to individuals, news organizations or teams of journalists who embody the spirit of McGruder, a former executive editor of the Detroit Free Press, managing editor of The Plain Dealer in Cleveland and a graduate of Kent State University. McGruder died of cancer in April 2002. A past president of APME and a former member of the board of directors of ASNE, McGruder was a relentless diversity champion. The awards will be presented Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2014, at the annual awards luncheon of the ASNE-APME conference at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Chicago.

This year, the 13th annual McGruder awards were sponsored by the APME

Foundation, ASNE, The Plain Dealer and Kent State University. Supporters include the Detroit Free Press, the Chips Quinn Scholars program of the Newseum Institute and Annette McGruder. The honorees will each receive \$2,500 and a leadership trophy at the awards luncheon.

Days and the New Haven Register are being honored for their commitment to diversity in news content and in newsroom recruiting and staff development.

"This year's McGruder recipients have diligently and relentlessly made diversity a key priority in their newsrooms even as so many other urgent priorities pull for attention," said APME President Debra Adams Simmons. "We are proud to honor their work. Each of these news organizations faced considerable challenges during the past year, yet they held true to diversity as a core value. When we look at news developments around the nation and world, in Ferguson, Missouri, and in Israel, there is no question that diverse voices make us stronger and make us better."

In the nominating letter for Days, his colleagues wrote: "These days, when covering basic news is a challenge, a commitment to diversity might be considered by some as a luxury, a fashionable trend we all pursued in better times. At the Daily News, diversity has never gone out of fashion.

"It is deeply embedded in our DNA, and Michael ensures that it remains critical and relevant," the nomination said. "Under Michael, the Daily News has become what may be one of the most diverse newsrooms in the industry, and both our day-to-day coverage and our daily discussions bear this out."

The Philadelphia Daily News newsroom is 22 percent minority, three of the paper's four regular columnists are women; of the 15 columnists across all departments, six are minorities, six are women. Readers of the newspaper are evenly divided between whites and non-whites. And of the non-white readers, 44 percent are African-American.

"Those are the data," the nomination said. "What is harder to quantify is the spirit of diversity that Michael encourages and inspires. Ours is a street-sales paper in a big city with many challenges, including poverty, a nearly bankrupt school system and a legacy of political corruption. In many ways we're a city of underdogs and one of our core missions is championing the underdog. We speak for the little guy, and constantly challenge the status quo - especially our own. Even our obituary page, a leader in the industry for transforming 'death notices' into a repository for human stories, reflects the full fabric of the city: janitors and grandmothers get the same treatment as political leaders and dignitaries."

Days fosters a sense of community partnership, making the Daily News a convener of conversations about President Barack Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative and public education. And, he brokered a collaboration with Al Dia, Philadelphia's Spanish-language newspaper, to publish World Cup soccer sections at the beginning and end of the games. Reporters, editors and designers from both

papers worked together to create bilingual sections that were published in both papers.

The New Haven Register's attempt to tackle the online comments on Web stories unveiled some important truths. The Register's nearly all-white newsroom three years ago, its unsuccessful attempts at recruiting and retention, and limited staff development were reflected in the paper's content and disconnect with readers. The newspaper developed an action plan and quickly got to work. In 2011, the New Haven Register and its sister publications in Connecticut had three minority journalists in its 120-person newsroom. In the spring of 2014, there were 15 minorities out of 100. Today, there 13 out of a staff of 83. The newspaper's leaders recruited staff members in non-traditional ways. For example, they identified a community member who was managing a cellphone store, active in a local mosque and volunteered at a food bank who had some experience writing for the Muslim Journal and connected him with the Chips Quinn Scholars program for training. He is now the Register's community engagement editor. Within a year, they hired another fellow from the training program.

The New Haven Register also diversified its leadership team. And it encouraged risk-taking and debate within the newsroom. It now has frank discussions, and in one example published a story about the media attention generated by Sandy Hook compared with the sometimes limited coverage of gun violence in urban New Haven.

"Our approach over the past three years has been not just to report and offer options, but to engage and facilitate," the nomination said. "The Register is regularly an outlet that now helps the black community talk through and debate important issues."

The newspaper's front pages now include black and Hispanic faces in all kinds of news stories. It has developed community relationships; hosted live and online forums on education, violence, neighborhood redevelopment; hired a talented reporter from a sister publication, and came up with a new strategy for online comments - each comment is reviewed before it is posted. The paper stopped calling undocumented immigrants "illegal." It also worked closely with Digital First corporate leaders and has placed 10 Chips Quinn scholars in Digital First Media newsrooms.

In his nomination, Matt DeRienzo, Group Editor of Connecticut Digital First Media, said the news group experienced a wake-up call: "We were limited by our own world view, our own life experiences and our own circle of friends and contacts, which were homogeneous. In that moment, we learned one of the most valuable things of all: we didn't, and couldn't, know many things about life in our community and country. If that was going to change, if we were to become a better newspaper, we would have to diversify our newsroom and the leadership of our newsroom. We decided it would be a top priority."

The 2014 judges included representatives from APME, ASNE, The Plain Dealer and Kent State University and previous recipients of the McGruder award. Jurors assessed nominees based on their significant contribution during a given year or over a number of years to furthering the cause of diversity in content and in recruiting, developing and retaining journalists of color.

The Last Word, or Photo...

Connecting colleague [Cliff Schiappa](#) has been retired from the AP for seven years, but his name popped up twice in photo captions for AP file photos in Wednesday's New York Times in a feature on the resurgent Kansas City Royals baseball team.

Cliff began a 23-year career with the Associated Press in Kansas City in 1984 as a photographer, then digital technology adviser, assistant bureau chief and Midwest photo editor based in Kansas City.

Below is one of the photos, an exclusive he shot of Royals Hall of Famer George Brett kissing home plate in the final game of his career at Royals Stadium in 1993.

Cliff provides this account of the photo:

At the end of the game on Sept. 29, 1993, George Brett was driven around the stadium on a golf cart for all the fans to wave to him after the final home game of his career. As the cart approached third base, Brett got out and walked from his well-known infield position toward home plate. I was standing behind the plate about 25 feet or so and was preparing to make a photo of him crossing it. Suddenly he dropped to his hands and knees, planted a kiss on the plate, then got up and walked to the dugout. I fired off a few frames of film using a reliable but not very fast Nikon FM2 with a 28mm lens and headed back to the darkroom.

There were four photographers from The Kansas City Star in different positions, but I was the only one who captured the moment. I loaded the negative into the Leafax transmitter and sent it to New York and a few minutes later the phone started ringing from the Star desk asking their photographers why they didn't have the photo. It ran in the local paper the next day, as well as hundreds of other papers around the country. A few days later, the groundskeeper in the photo was apologetic for "ruining" the photo. I assured him it was okay, after all, he was just doing his job.

The photo won first place in the Baseball Hall of Fame photo contest and was on display at the museum when Brett was inducted a few years later.

And click [here](#) for the Times' story on the Royals.





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