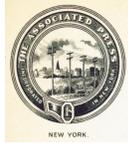


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**From:** Paul Stevens [stevenspl@live.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 13, 2015 9:04 AM  
**To:** stevenspl@live.com  
**Subject:** Connecting - February 13, 2015

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# Connecting

February 13, 2015

Click [here](#) for sound  
of the Teletype



Colleagues,

A day after the journalism world was rocked by the death of CBS journalist **Bob Simon**, another icon of our profession passed away.

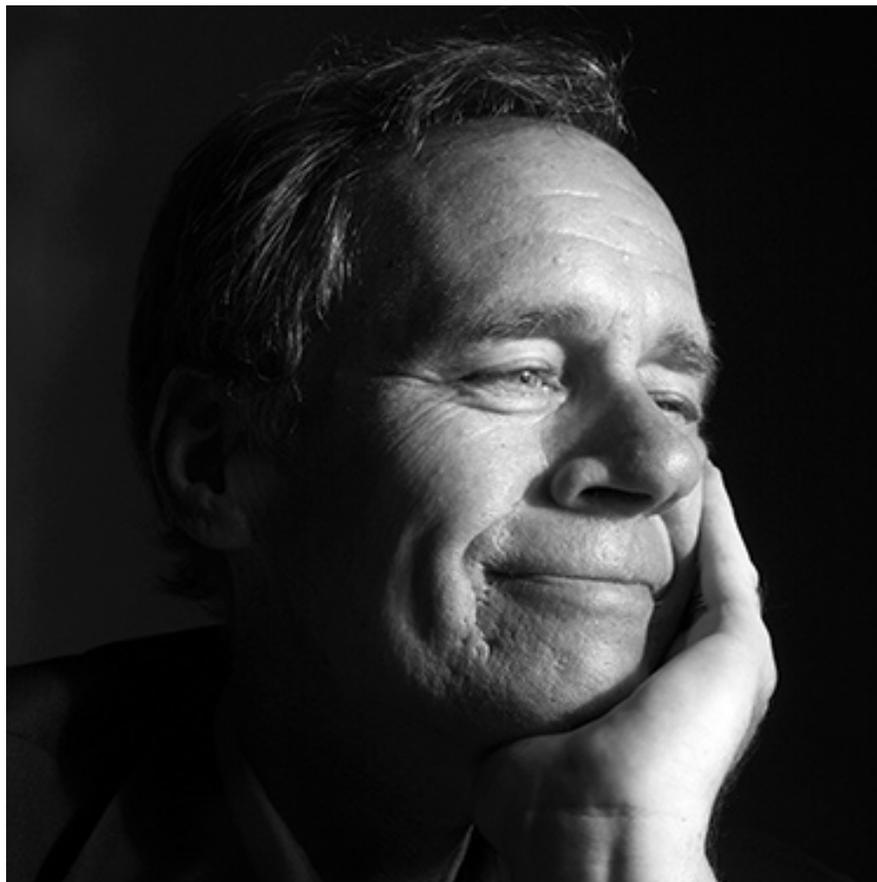
**David Carr**, media columnist for The New York Times, collapsed in the Times newsroom Thursday night and was taken to Roosevelt Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

His writing on the media was shared frequently in Connecting and was known throughout journalism circles. I know I am among many of you who admired his work and mourn his passing at just 58 years of age.

We lead today's Connecting with a fine account of his life by Times writers Bruce Weber and Ashley Southall, whose story concludes with this quote from Carr in his 2008 memoir, "The Night of the Gun":

*"I now inhabit a life I don't deserve, but we all walk this earth feeling we are frauds. The trick is to be grateful and hope the caper doesn't end any time soon."*

Paul



## **David Carr, Times Critic and Champion of Media, Dies at 58**

David Carr, a writer who wriggled away from the demon of drug addiction to become an unlikely name-brand media columnist at The New York Times, and the star of "Page One," a documentary about the newspaper, died on Thursday in Manhattan. He was 58.

Mr. Carr collapsed in The Times newsroom, where he was found shortly before 9 p.m. He was taken to Roosevelt Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Earlier in the evening, he moderated a panel discussion about the film "Citizenfour" with its principal subject, Edward J. Snowden; the film's director, Laura Poitras; and Glenn Greenwald, a journalist.

Mr. Carr wrote about cultural subjects for The Times; he initiated the feature known as The Carpetbagger, a regular report on the news and nonsense from the red carpet during awards season. He championed offbeat movies like "Juno," with Ellen Page, and he interviewed stars both enduring and evanescent - Woody Harrelson, Neil Young, Michael Cera.

More recently, however, he was best known for The Media Equation, a Monday column in The Times that analyzed news and developments in publishing, television, social media -

for which he was an early evangelist - and other mass communications platforms. His plain-spoken style was sometimes blunt, and searingly honest about himself. The effect was both folksy and sophisticated, a voice from a shrewd and well-informed skeptic.

Click [here](#) to read more. Shared by Sibby Christensen.

## Bob Simon: Not always two sides to every story



Connecting colleague **Pat Milton** ([Email](#)), now with CBS News after a distinguished AP career, shares this tribute to Bob Simon by her CBS News colleague Christina Ruffini, noting that "I found it compelling and thought you would find it interesting too. I think it captures a part of Bob Simon and how he viewed his role as a journalist."

The story begins:

There are not always two sides to every story.

For me, that is Bob Simon's legacy. I heard him say that for the first time only this morning, a soundbite from an old Emmy acceptance speech edited into his obituary -- one of many, I imagine, crafted quickly in newsrooms overnight.

There were not two sides in Sarajevo, he said.

There were not two sides in Rwanda.

Sometimes the truth is obvious. Sometimes, it's right in front of your face.

Modern journalism puts a lot of emphasis on digging. Getting dirty. Getting involved. But

some stories don't require reporter participation. They don't need to be sifted. They don't need to be scooped. Sometimes our job -- our only job -- is to stand there and point:

This is what's happening. Pay attention.

Look here. Help here. Fix this.

Click [here](#) to read more.

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## ***'Bob was one of those who didn't back down'***

**John Gaps** ([Email](#)) - Just a few words on Bob Simon.

As Richard Pyle and others can confirm, covering an area of conflict usually meant that there was a fairly safe media area, usually far in the rear, many times with room service. For those serving in an area of conflict only a very small percentage of the journalists, editors, technicians, etc., would ever get anywhere near combat. For we few fools who did, most days were "gear up, load up" and head to where all that thumping was happening in the distance. We weren't fearless. Most of us could flee like an Olympic sprinter. But we did it because it was what we were good at and felt we were charged with telling the story of soldiers, refugees and all of those in-between.

Most of the "faces" of television would never go forward. They would await the return of the photos, dispatches, videotape, so they could narrate the action of the day in freshly pressed khakis. Bob Simon was not one of them. During the first Gulf War, Bob would wander into our AP ad hoc bureau in Dhahran and make small talk. Very respectful, but always probing for where we thought the action was headed next. And then he'd go forward. He was one of the few that had to see the action in person. My impression, from several conversations with him, was that he had a sense that the only way to be legitimate in narrating the footage from the front was to be there.

And that, in the end, is the difference. Many journalists have covered wars. A scant few have actually sought the front lines, over and over again. That process, many times, meant spending useless days at a roadblock or waiting on the tarmac for a helicopter that never arrived... not very dynamic. But there was always your first time fleeing for your life from incoming artillery or sniper fire. To me, the measure of that person was if they would "gear up, load up" and return to their job of telling the story. Bob was one of those who didn't back down. For that he paid a hard price after crossing into Kuwait during the first Gulf War.

Anyway, I respected him greatly and mourn the loss of a great talent and distant friend.

## **Connecting mailbox**

Connecting colleagues: Got a story to tell about how your name was mangled, in a byline or elsewhere? Send it along.

Connecting colleague **Richard Horwitz** ([Email](#)) shares his experience:

### ***Horwitz, not Horowitz***

People have been misspelling my name for as long as I can remember, and it doesn't really bother me. Sometimes it's an annoyance - like when the AP had to reprint my business cards. And when I'm introduced to someone, they may ask if I'm related to the famous piano player. I explain that the branch of the family with two "o"s has all the talent; I'm in the other one.

Once, however, it became a bigger annoyance.

On Feb. 26, 1979, I was near Winnipeg, Canada, temperature -4(F), for a total eclipse of the sun. My hobby is astronomy and my passion is eclipses. I've traveled to 15 of them in 13 countries, usually transmitting pictures to AP. In this case I was working with a team from Canadian Press. I made my usual sequence picture of the sun disappearing. No big deal. It just takes a camera that makes multiple exposures, a solar filter, telephoto lens, a tripod, a clock and careful timing. The rotation of the earth spaces the images, and the filter is removed for totality.

The New York Times was impressed. They used it on Page 1 with credit: Associated Press/Dick Horowitz. Those were the days when a photographer's credit was your initials, not names. I found out later that the Times picture desk called the AP NY photo desk and asked who was "RH." The response was "that's Dick Horwitz." How's that spelled? H-o-r-o-w-i-t-z. I heard from many old friends. Thinking the Times is never wrong, some apologized for spelling my name wrong for years.

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### ***A report from Connecting's Ghana correspondent***

**Jim Reindl** ([Email](#)) - As Connecting's resident Ghana correspondent, I think most people know that Graca and I are here serving in the Peace Corps for two years. I've filed a couple of dispatches through Connecting and my blog ([jamesreindl.wordpress.com](http://jamesreindl.wordpress.com)) but haven't explained how we came to be here.



*In his photo by Gifty Bgabga, Connecting Ghana Correspondent Jim Reindl is shown working in the Wusuta bureau. Jim reports that Gifty is a 14-year-old girl "who lives in our compound and wants to be a news person." It's her first photo byline.*

We both did volunteer work in Chicago. I ran a breakfast program at a men's center once a month for five years. Graca did a lot of free work for her elderly house cleaning customers. Back in the fall of 2012 we started talking about what might come next even though "retirement" seemed a long way off.

I casually mentioned I'd thought of PC (Peace Corps) years ago and it piqued my native Brazilian partner's interest. We visited a recruiter and then the holidays and another brutal Chicago winter followed. That was enough for Graca, who declared she was done with Chicago winters after 26 years in the U.S.A. And THAT made PC seem like a great option.

We applied with a nothing-ventured-nothing-lost attitude and said we'd like to be posted to sub-Saharan Africa if we were accepted. Here we are. The process took more than a year.

We're in Wusuta, a farming town of about 2000 in the Volta Region. Don't look for it on Google maps. If you find Vakpo, picture an impossibly rutted dirt road stretching 3km to the west that ends where Wusuta's one black topped road starts. We're just another 2km

from Lake Volta, the world's largest manmade lake (formed as part of a huge hydroelectric project but we still don't have power 24-7).

We're working in agriculture (another story) but we'll also do work in education and health care. We've started working with a nearby school on a school garden. We're also raising chickens and have added a cat (Nina) and a dog (Koko) to the family. Our work really is based on what the community needs. We're finding that out by attending churches and simply being in the community meeting people. We live in a compound that includes a gari factory, which I hope to restart after organizing local cassava farmers. Gari is fried cassava flour and is a Ghanaian staple.

It's a far cry from anything I ever did for AP and the pay is even lower than the bad old days of AP salaries. The rewards are greater and the frustrations you have to take in stride. As PC Ghana staff told us, the patron saint of PC volunteers is Gumby for his flexibility (as I write, they just cut the power).

Stay tuned for further dispatches.

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### ***Voices: Better ways to teach than 'Whiplash' model***

Connecting colleague **Lindel Hutson** ([Email](#)) shared this story from USA Today, containing prominent mention of former AP NYC staffer **Jerry Schwartz** in a story by former AP staffer **Rick Hampson** at USA Today:

It begins:

"There are no two words in the English language more harmful than 'Good job.' "

Aspiring painters, violinists and point guards - and their parents - bristle at those words, recited by J.K. Simmons in his role as a young drummer's tyrannical teacher in the Oscar-nominated film Whiplash.

Simmons' character, Terence Fletcher, drives his students to excellence and/or despair by constantly belittling them, their talent, even their sexuality and parentage.

There are better models of teacher-student relationships. I stumbled on one recently when I asked a former colleague at the Associated Press, Jerry Schwartz, about his experience teaching journalism at New York University.

"Well, I had Terry Winter," he said.

Click [here](#) to read more.

## **Setting the standards for journalists' safety**

The Associated Press has joined 25 other news organizations and journalism groups in endorsing an unprecedented set of safety standards designed to protect freelance reporters on dangerous assignments.

A document spelling out the safety guidelines, titled "A Call for Global Safety Principles and Practices," will be discussed this evening by leaders of the organizations during a gathering at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in New York sponsored by the school's Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma.

*(In the photo at right, photographer Visar Kryeziu, left, covers riots in Kosovo's capital Pristina, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015. Thousands of protesters clashed with police for hours in the city's streets, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. More than 80 people, including over 50 policemen, were injured, while 160 were detained. (Photo by Petrit Rrahmani)*



Among the seven international safety standards for reporters working in perilous regions, the document says, "We encourage all journalists to complete a recognized news industry first aid course, to carry a suitable first-aid kit and continue their training to stay up-to-date on standards of care and safety both physical and psychological. Before undertaking an assignment in such zones, journalists should seek adequate medical insurance covering them in a conflict zone or area of infectious disease."

In addition, the document says, "Journalists in active war zones should be aware of the need and importance of having protective ballistic clothing, including armored jackets and helmets."

Also included in the seven standards for news organizations making assignments in hot zones are these:

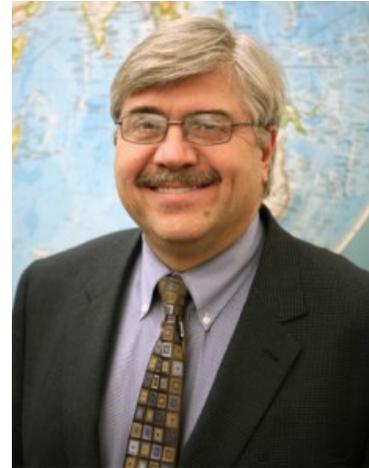
"News organizations and editors should endeavor to treat journalists and freelancers they use on a regular basis in a similar manner to the way they treat staffers when it comes to issues of safety training, first aid and other safety equipment, and responsibility in the event of injury or kidnap."

"News organizations should not make an assignment with a freelancer in a conflict zone or dangerous environment unless the news organization is prepared to take the same responsibility for the freelancer's well-being in the event of kidnap or injury as it would a staffer. News organizations have a moral responsibility to support journalists to whom they give assignments in dangerous areas, as long as the freelancer complies with the rules and instructions of the news organization."

"Over the last two years, killings, imprisonments and abductions of journalists have reached historic highs," the document notes. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 61 were killed in 2014 and 73 in 2013.

"As journalists from AP face ever-increasing risk to gather the news that the world needs, it is vitally necessary to put in place best practices to keep them as safe as possible to do their jobs," said AP Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Kathleen Carroll. "We have embraced the values represented by these practices, and we believe they will help set the standard for the industry to protect journalists and ultimately to save lives."

A preamble to the new guidelines was a meeting of foreign news editors last September in Chicago hosted by John Daniszewski, AP's senior managing editor for international news. (Photo at right) "Foreign editors were asking what we could do to strengthen the commitment to safety, especially for freelancers and local journalists, after the horrific killings of journalists in 2014," Daniszewski said, "and we were concerned that some of the newer organizations did not have organized standards and rules for protecting the journalists that they sent on assignment."



Reuters investigative reporter David Rohde, who attended the Chicago meeting, shared the results with his colleagues. Reuters Editor in Chief Stephen J. Adler had already launched similar discussions. Steve Coll, dean of Columbia's journalism school, and Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the Dart Center, also had concerns, which led to other meetings.

As a result, the resulting guidelines were drafted by an international group of freelancers, foreign correspondents, press advocates and news executives.

Daniszewski added: "We are proud of the AP's deep and ongoing commitment to safety and security of journalists and hope the values represented in these best practices can serve as a guide for all news organizations."

Besides AP and Reuters, the 26 signatories include the British Broadcasting Corp., Agence France-Presse, Bloomberg News, the Miami Herald, GlobalPost, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Overseas Press Club, USA Today and Reporters Without Borders.

A video of this evening's discussion is expected to be available within a few days on the Dart Center's website.

Click [here](#) for a link to this story, shared by Paul Colford.

**Company automating stories for AP is purchased,**

## will turn to sports

Automated Insights, the company that has enabled the Associated Press and others to automatically write earnings reports stories, announced Thursday it was acquired for an undisclosed sum.

The buyer is Vista Equity Partners, which in May purchased sports data company STATS LLC. Automated Insights will become a subsidiary of STATS and plans to expand its sports media operations, said CEO Robbie Allen.

"Much like what we did for the AP around earning reports, I think most if not all of sporting events coverage, at least in terms of writing previews of events and recaps, should be automated to some degree," Allen said.

Allen added that some sports previews and recaps might initially be written by software and later augmented by quotes and context from a journalist.

Automated Insights began providing software for The Associated Press to automatically generate earnings reports in June. AP Managing Editor Lou Ferrara told Poynter in July that the data-processing software freed up the news cooperative's journalists to do meaningful stories that put the data into context. Last month, Automated Insights reported that the software increased the Associated Press' earnings reports by tenfold and resulted in "far fewer errors" than stories written by journalists.

Automated Insights plans to spend the capital from the acquisition on payroll, Allen said. The company plans to add between 20 to 30 staffers in the next 18 months, mostly in areas of product development and engineering. The company currently has about 35 employees. Allen will stay as CEO and day-to-day operations will remain relatively unchanged.

The Associated Press was among the company's investors in June when Automated Insights raised \$5.5 million in Series B funding, Allen said. Although he would not disclose how much the company was purchased for, Allen said the company's previous investors were "happy with their return."

Allen says the company's purchase is an indication that automation is the future for news organizations.

"Just like when the AP invested in us and signed up to do this significant partnership with us last summer, I think the acquisition is further validation of the space in general that is natural language generation and the promise of what is going to deliver in the future."

Click [here](#) for a link to this story.

## AP Sports Editors announces contest winners

Click [here](#) to view the final results from the 2014 APSE Contest, judged Feb. 7-11 in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.:

## Stories of interest

### [David Carr, a Journalist at the Center of the Sweet Spot](#)



**By A.O. SCOTT**  
**The New York Times**

For a while, a few years ago, there was a weekly video on the New York Times website called The Sweet Spot, taped during off hours in the cafeteria on the 14th floor. The idea was that it would be an informal, incisive discussion of various developments in the world of culture and media. Sometimes it managed to live up to its name, and sometimes it didn't, but for me the show - or webcast, or schmooze fest, or whatever it was - had a much simpler reason for being: It guaranteed that I would have a few hours a week in the company of David Carr. For anyone who cared about journalism, there was simply no better place to be.

David's public contribution to the profession - his columns and feature stories, his interviews and investigations - is part of the record, and part of the glory of this

newspaper. He covered every corner of the media business (including, sometimes, his own employer) with analytical acumen, ethical rigor and gumshoe tenacity.

He managed to see the complexities of digital-age journalism from every angle, and to write about it with unparalleled clarity and wit. His prose was a marvel of wry Midwestern plainness, sprinkled with phrases his colleagues will only ever think of as Carrisms. Something essential was "baked in." Someone was always competing to be the tallest leprechaun.

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### [Lester Holt seen as heir apparent to Brian Williams at 'Nightly News'](#)

In the hallways at NBC headquarters here, the walls are adorned with photos of "Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams covering stories around the world, underscored by snippets from a recent ad campaign: "He's been there. He'll be there."

Not anymore. Lester Holt is now in the anchor chair as Williams serves a six-month suspension for his misstatements regarding his role in a helicopter incident while covering the U.S. military invasion in Iraq. Holt reported on the suspension handed down Tuesday and followed it up with a personal remark aimed at comforting the viewers of the No. 1 evening news broadcast.

"Brian is a member of our family but so are you, our viewers, and we will work every night to be worthy of your trust," Holt said.

Holt now finds himself thrust into an heir apparent position as NBC News grapples with serious questions about whether Williams can return. His name has been removed from the opening titles of "NBC Nightly News."

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### [Ned Colt, NBC News Journalist, Dies in Boston at 58](#)

Ned Colt, who reported from Asia and around the world for NBC News before joining two humanitarian agencies, has died in Boston after suffering a massive stroke. He was 58.



Colt left NBC in 2009 to work in the aid sector with the International Rescue Committee and the United Nations office dedicated to refugees. He joined NBC News in 1996 in its London bureau, then moved to Asia in 1997, working from Beijing and Hong Kong. He covered devastating earthquakes in India and Turkey, the ever-evolving relations between Washington and Beijing, reuniting families in North and South Korea, and the U.S. war against terror in Afghanistan.

Colt was instrumental in the network's coverage of the Iraq war, and was part of a four-person team that was kidnapped and held for three days near Fallujah.

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[How The New York Times Works](#) (Shared by Claude Erbsen)



1:35 A.M. A Tuesday

Ernie Booth, the operations manager of the main printing plant of The New York Times, is walking the floor. The plant is a 515,000-square-foot building in Queens, on the Van Wyck Expressway, half a mile from LaGuardia Airport. Booth is a big man with enthusiasm to match his heft, and tonight he's wearing a collared shirt, sweater, and chinos in various shades of beige. He glides through the place like a small-town mayor, jabbing the noisy air with quick chin nods, offering ritual greetings to some of the 350 employees who work here each night.

"What's happening, Tom?"

"Hey, Andy."

"All quiet, Dennis?"

Dennis Díaz, a coordinator in the control room, responds that one section of the plant's fourteen miles of conveyor belts is not working.

Booth draws a breath and scans the control room, a glass-walled office he compares to an indoor air traffic control tower, overlooking the floor. "You see all these flashing things?" he says, pointing to one of several screens displaying different parts of the plant. "Flashing things are bad. Flashing things mean we have a problem." He appears to have a lot of problems at the moment. But this night is not much different from most, and Booth's only real complaint as he circulates the floor is that he'd rather be on his wheels: The plant is so large that many employees travel from one area to another on adult-size tricycles. (Booth

has a trike and a golf cart.) During daylight hours, when the plant isn't in use, the Times sometimes rents it out-in the most recent Jason Bourne movie, it stood in as a crowded factory in the Philippines.

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### [So, When Does Rev. Al Sharpton's Suspension Begin?](#) (Shared by Mark Mittelstadt)

With its swift and severe punishment of Brian Williams, NBCUniversal declared yesterday that it will not stand for on-air talent lying to viewers.

Now that the media conglomerate has delineated that bright line, when does the Rev. Al Sharpton's suspension without pay begin?

In the wake of last year's lengthy TSG report about Sharpton's secret work as a paid FBI Mafia informant, the MSNBC host sought to blunt the story's disclosures with a series of lies told at a pair of press conferences, on his nightly "Politics Nation" program, and in a report on Williams's own NBC Nightly News (which was rebroadcast on NBC's Today show).

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### [Senior New York Times Editor Named LSU Media-Literacy Chair](#)

BATON ROUGE, La.-A senior New York Times editor has been named the first Wendell Gray Switzer Jr. Endowed Chair in Media Literacy at the Manship School of Mass Communication at LSU.

The chair is the only one of its kind in the country devoted to teaching and researching media literacy. Leonard Apcar will join the Manship faculty after a 24-year career at The Times that included business, international and Washington editing posts, as well as web editor-in-chief and chief Asia editor.

"Both the public and those in the media need better tools to evaluate information and information sources, whether it's news or advertising, especially with the growth of social media and the disruptions that have revolutionized how we take in information," said Manship Dean Jerry Ceppos.

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### [Thomson Reuters CEO says multi-year turnaround nearly complete, growth ahead](#)

NEW YORK-The head of Thomson Reuters says a turnaround of its global professional information business is nearing completion and he expects growth will return this year and accelerate in 2016.

"I believe 2015 will mark the first year of organic growth since I took over as CEO (in

January 2012) and we're making this prediction in spite of the negative impact of commercial adjustments we need to make this year," Thomson Reuters chief executive Jim Smith said Wednesday in a conference call with analysts.

Smith said Thomson Reuters expects it will take another year to fully complete a turnaround of its Financial and Risk division, which competes with Bloomberg in the delivery of specialized information and terminals for institutional investors and investment firms. The division typically accounts for about half of the company's overall revenue.

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### [Photo of Loving Couple Wins World Press Photo Award](#)



Danish photographer Mads Nissen has won the 58th World Press Photo contest for his portrait of Jon and Alex, a gay couple, during an intimate moment in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The deeply personal and subtle portrait stands in stark contrast with the hundreds of graphic images of protests, suffering and death that have marked 2014 - from Ukraine to Gaza, Ferguson to West Africa, and from parts of the Middle East where militants associated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria have shared gruesome images of decapitated hostages.

"We were looking for an image that would matter tomorrow, not just today," Pamela Chen, a member of this year's World Press Photo jury and the editorial director of Instagram, said in a statement. "The winning image demonstrates what a professional photographer can do in a daily life situation, setting a professional standard for storytelling in life. This is a contemporary issue, it is daily life, it is news, it has spot news resonance, it has general news resonance, but it also brings up the issue in a very deep and challenging way. It is quite universal."

## AP Beat of the Week

It was one of the most closely held secrets in publishing. Not even Harper Lee's longtime editor knew about it. In fact, just a few people did - but one of them was AP national writer **Hillel Italie**.

Thanks to years of meticulous reporting and source building, Italie - pictured below - had been tipped off that Lee, the author of "To Kill a Mockingbird," one of the 20th century's most beloved novels, had long ago written another book, and it would be published in July. Italie's exclusive, one of the biggest literary scoops in memory, is the Beat of the Week.

For decades, Harper Lee had lived quietly in Monroeville, Alabama, deflecting media inquiries and, when pressed, denying any intention of writing or publishing again. Italie, who has covered book publishing for the AP for nearly 20 years, was not convinced; in the course of his regular conversations with her publishers at Harper, he would often ask about Harper Lee. That's how he broke the story that she would permit "Mockingbird" to come out as an e-book in 2014, despite her stated preference for paper.



Last week, his interest paid off when a source at Harper tipped him off to the stunning news of the plan to publish "Go Set a Watchman," essentially a sequel to "Mockingbird," although it was finished earlier. The publisher was planning to announce the news the next day, but the AP would have an exclusive head start on the story.

Italie told only his editors. Preparing his story, he included details that were not in the publisher's press release: The book's length (304 pages), the editing process (it would be published as is, without editing) and the fact that it would be published both in print and as an e-book.

When the news broke - a NewsNow, and a tweet from the AP - the impact was overwhelming. The story was immediately shared thousands of times on social media as other news organizations hurried to catch up. Harper, on its website, linked to Italie's story. He talked to public radio, and the interview was replayed throughout the day.

The interest was unimaginably huge for a literary story - but then, this was not just any book, or just any author. Birmingham newsman Jay Reeves drove to Monroeville, shot photos and video and talked with folks there about the news of the town's most famous citizen. The next day, he followed up with a story about questions raised by some of Lee's neighbors as to whether she was able to make informed decisions about her work. In another piece, he focused on the role of Tonja Carter, Lee's lawyer, who had discovered

the "Watchman" manuscript.

<http://www.startribune.com/entertainment/books/290830751.html>

Lee's fellow Alabamian and author, Rick Bragg, told the website al.com: "Last year, I did probably more than 80 book events of one kind or another. At no point, not over a rubber-chicken banquet or in a bar or in a chance meeting at an airport, did I ever hear anyone say anything about a new Harper Lee book. I'm just flabbergasted."

**For leaving uncounted others flabbergasted, too, with a story that no one - well, just a few - saw coming, Itale wins this week's \$500 prize.**

## AP Best of the States

Minutes after a rush-hour commuter train slammed into an SUV on the tracks north of New York City, killing six, two AP staffers more than 1,000 miles apart went immediately to work.

In the New York suburbs, breaking news staffer Kiley Armstrong was at home reading her Facebook feed when a message appeared about the collision on the busy Metro North line. Without hesitating, she grabbed her coat, her notebook and her camera, and headed out the door.

It wasn't until she reached the snowy crash site two miles away that she called the New York City desk to say she was there, and began dictating the first details of smoke pouring from the train and rescuers trying to get survivors to safety.

Armstrong was the first AP staffer on the scene, and the only one of our text reporters to get anywhere near the site. Her reporting and photography (two of her photos made the wire) helped AP get out front on a story everyone in the nation's biggest media market was covering.

Meanwhile, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U.S. investigative team reporter Michael Kunzelman was at home reading his iPad when an alert moved about the New York crash. He immediately began scouring documents he received months before as part of a Freedom of Information request - on railroad crossings that had received federal money for safety improvements.

He found this listing next to the New York crossing: "Commerce Street Crossing of Metro North Railroad for a crossing upgrade." There was an amount of money allocated, \$126,000 and a status code: "Active." He quickly contacted his New York-based investigative team colleague, David Caruso, and together they started tracking down the details.

Armstrong, Kunzelman and Caruso demonstrated the essence of what it means to work

for the AP in a breaking news situation: No matter your job title or your schedule, EVERYONE is a reporter, and speed is of the essence.

Armstrong's dash to the scene captured the color and details that populated our breaking updates through the night. She would eventually be joined by at least four more AP staffers across formats, and two more making calls in the bureau, but the work she did on the ground early on was invaluable to staking the AP's claim to a story that would go on to lead most major websites, including Yahoo and MSN, and rank No. 3 on AP Mobile.

Kunzelman and Caruso, meanwhile, found that the railroad crossing had undergone a number of upgrades in recent years to reduce the risk of accidents, including the installation of brighter LED lights and new traffic signal control equipment.

But the "active" item from the documents, a 2009 plan to install a third set of flashing lights 100 to 200 feet up the road to give motorists a few seconds' extra warning, was never carried out. The \$126,000 budgeted for the lights and other work was never spent. New York transportation officials were unable to explain why, though they cautioned it was too soon to say whether it would have made any difference in preventing the collision.

The APNewsBreak moved on Friday shortly before public officials held a news conference at the crossing where the crash occurred.

"I just saw that report, the AP report, that they said there should have been more work done, in 2009," said Democratic U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer of New York. "That's something that we have to find out the answer to right away. Why wasn't the work done? Would it have made a difference? Could it have made this preventable? It's a looming question."

**For fast work and hustle that made AP stand out on one of the biggest national stories of the week, Armstrong, Kunzelman and Caruso share this week's \$300 Best of the States Prize.**

*(Beat of Week and Best of States shared by Valerie Komor)*

## The Final Word

**The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, answered "Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."**



## **Today in History**

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Friday, Feb. 13, the 44th day of 2015. There are 321 days left in the year.

### **Today's Highlight in History:**

On Feb. 13, 1935, a jury in Flemington, New Jersey, found Bruno Richard Hauptmann guilty of first-degree murder in the kidnap-slaying of Charles A. Lindbergh Jr., the son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh. (Hauptmann was later executed.)

### **On this date:**

In 1542, the fifth wife of England's King Henry VIII, Catherine Howard, was executed for adultery.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln was officially declared winner of the 1860 presidential election as electors cast their ballots.

In 1914, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, also known as

ASCAP, was founded in New York.

In 1920, the League of Nations recognized the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland.

In 1939, Justice Louis D. Brandeis retired from the U.S. Supreme Court. (He was succeeded by William O. Douglas.)

In 1945, during World War II, Allied planes began bombing the German city of Dresden. The Soviets captured Budapest, Hungary, from the Germans.

In 1960, France exploded its first atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert.

In 1965, during the Vietnam War, President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized Operation Rolling Thunder, an extended bombing campaign against the North Vietnamese.

In 1975, a late-night arson fire set by a disgruntled custodian broke out on the 11th floor of the north tower of New York's World Trade Center; the blaze spread to six floors, but caused no direct casualties.

In 1980, the 13th Winter Olympics opened in Lake Placid, New York.

In 1988, the 15th Winter Olympics opened in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In 1991, during Operation Desert Storm, allied warplanes destroyed an underground shelter in Baghdad that had been identified as a military command center; Iraqi officials said 500 civilians were killed.

Ten years ago: Final results showed clergy-backed Shiites (SHEE'-eyetz) and independence-minded Kurds had swept to victory in Iraq's landmark elections. The late Ray Charles' final album, "Genius Loves Company," won eight Grammy awards. The AFC won the Pro Bowl, defeating the NFC 38-27.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama delivered a video address to the 7th U.S.-Islamic World Forum meeting in Doha, Qatar, as part of his continuing effort to repair strained U.S. relations with the world's Muslims. Hannah Kearney won the women's moguls for first U.S. gold medal at the Olympic Games in Vancouver; Apolo Anton Ohno won the silver medal in the short-track 1,500-meter speedskating final, to tie Bonnie Blair as the most decorated U.S. Winter Olympian.

One year ago: Comcast Corp. agreed to buy Time Warner Cable Inc. for \$45.2 billion in stock (the deal is under regulatory review). Justyna Kowalczyk of Poland dominated her favorite event at the Sochi Olympics, winning the women's cross-country 10-kilometer classical race despite skiing with a fractured foot; Japanese figure skater Yuzuru Hanyu won the men's short program on a night that four-time Olympic medalist Evgeni Plushenko retired from competitive skating. Actor Ralph Waite, 85, died in Palm Desert, California.

Today's Birthdays: U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager (ret.) is 92. Actress Kim Novak is 82. Actor George Segal is 81. Actor Bo Svenson is 74. Actress Carol Lynley is 73. Singer-musician Peter Tork (The Monkees) is 73. Actress Stockard Channing is 71. Talk show host Jerry Springer is 71. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., is 69. Singer Peter Gabriel is 65. Actor David Naughton is 64. Rock musician Peter Hook is 59. Actor Matt Salinger is 55. Singer Henry Rollins is 54. Actor Neal McDonough is 49. Singer Freedom Williams is 49. Actress Kelly Hu is 47. Rock singer Matt Berninger (The National) is 44. Rock musician Todd Harrell (3 Doors Down) is 43. Singer Robbie Williams is 41. Singer-songwriter Feist is 39. Rhythm-and-blues performer Natalie Stewart is 36. Actress Mena Suvari (MEE'-nuh soo-VAHR'-ee) is 36. Michael Joseph Jackson Jr. (also known as Prince Michael Jackson I) is 18.

***Thought for Today: "The world has no sympathy with any but positive griefs; it will pity you for what you lose, but never for what you lack." - Anne Sophie Swetchine, Russian-French author (1782-1857).***

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