

## Connecting - November 10, 2015

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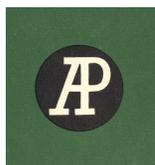
**Paul Stevens** <stevenspl@live.com>

Tue, Nov 10, 2015 at 9:09 AM

Reply-To: stevenspl@live.com

To: pjshane@gmail.com

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# Connecting

November 10, 2015

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning!

Today's Connecting brings you a review by colleague **Marty Steinberg** on the movie Truth, one of two movies just out that focus on journalists - the other being Spotlight. If you've see Spotlight and want to review it for your colleagues, our door is open,

And a final reminder - tomorrow's Veterans Day newsletter will salute Connecting colleagues who served in the military. If you haven't done so yet, please send me your branch of service, dates of service and a favorite memory. Accompanying photos are welcomed, too.

Paul

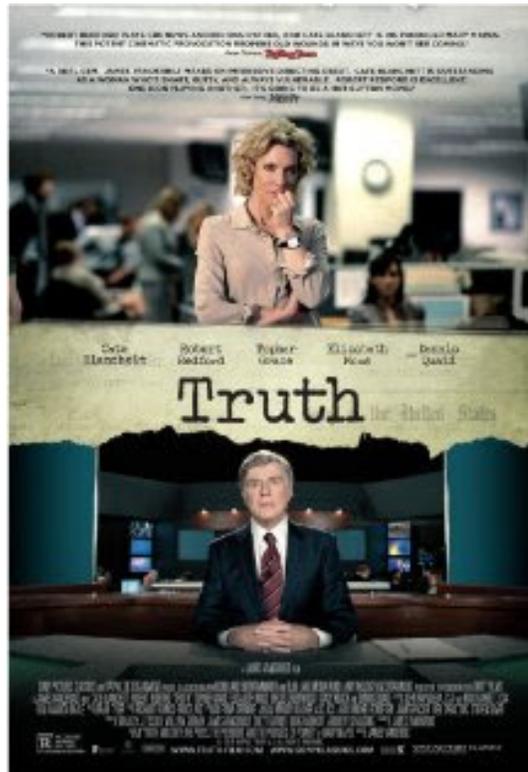
# The truth in 'Truth'

By **MARTY STEINBERG**

Where's the truth in "Truth," and why did I like the movie so much despite its flaws?

The film starring Cate Blanchett and Robert Redford has been criticized for a simplistic take on CBS' botched report - months before the 2004 election - about President George W. Bush's military service record.

Some critics say that with compelling characters (and outstanding acting) and a political agenda, director James Vanderbilt tried his best to manipulate the audience. His theory, voiced by a character: CBS refused to stand by one of its biggest investigative pieces and its iconic anchor, Dan Rather (Redford), because its owner, Viacom, needed Republican help for favorable legislation.



"Instead of truth, what it primarily delivers is revisionism," David Zurawik wrote in The Baltimore Sun.

Under deadline pressure, producer Mary Mapes (Blanchett) thought she had the story wrapped up. But as we know, the "60 Minutes" report that Bush received preferential treatment in the Texas Air National Guard to avoid service in Vietnam turned into a fiasco that ended Rather's 41-year career at CBS.

According to the movie, the story started to come undone by a conservative blogger who questioned whether the font used in a crucial letter that supported the

story existed at the time it was supposedly written. Another key attack point was that two of four experts on documents said they could not verify its authenticity, especially since the letter was a copy, not the original. That made it impossible to date the document by testing the ink and paper. The coup de grace came when the source who provided the letter admitted he had lied about how he attained the documents.

Then, Mapes, her production crew, Rather and CBS itself were forced into self-preservation mode to explain the disastrous report. The network created an internal investigatory panel led by a Republican, former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, who the movie pointed out served under another Bush, H.W.

Mapes was told of one hope on the panel, its lone journalist, our own Lou Boccardi. (The movie also showed a clip from a White House news conference in which Bush 43 jovially took issue with a reporter who squeezed three questions into one. The reporter? AP's Terry Hunt!)

Alas, the evidence against Mapes & Co. was damning -- flimsy reporting that seemed solid on the surface but revealed its weakness under scrutiny. For us nonmillennials, there's no spoiler here. We remember the sad ending -- Rather apologized on air. Mapes and her crew were fired, Rather forced to leave.

So where's the truth and why did I like the movie so much and empathize with the characters when I should have been screaming at them for their journalistic malpractice?

The personal stories were compelling. But the main reason is that it reminds us that journalists have the right, indeed the obligation, to ask difficult questions. We were reminded of this just last month, by the complaints of GOP candidates about questions they were asked at the CNBC debate. CNBC's answer: "People who want to be president of the United States should be able to answer tough questions." Where CBS failed in the Bush-Guard saga was that the damning answer to the tough question needed absolute proof -- before it was shared with millions of viewers.

***Former AP senior journalist Marty Steinberg is now chief copy editor at CNBC.com. Opinions in this piece are his own.***

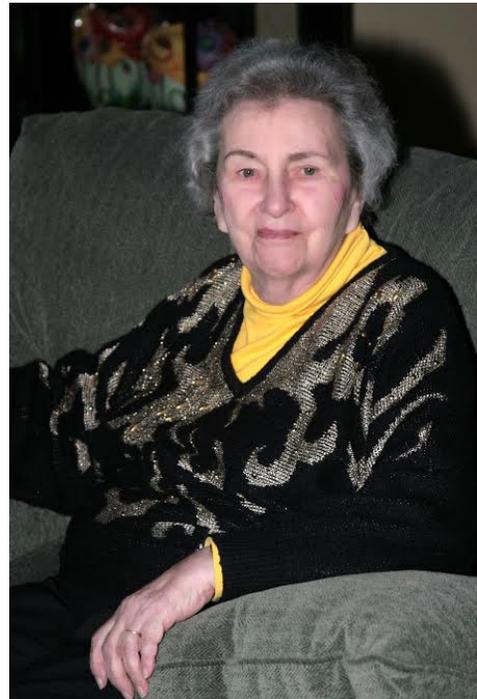
## **Connecting mailbox**

## ***Polly Torrence, wife of AP's Elon Torrence, dies at 95***

**Polly Torrence**, who was married to AP retiree **Elon Torrence** for 70 years, died Monday in Topeka, Kansas. Her daughter, Mary, confirmed her death at age 95. Polly suffered a stroke in late October and had since been under palliative care from hospice at the McCrite Retirement Home in Topeka where they lived the last several years.

Elon, a Topeka staffer from 1946 until retirement in January 1982, will be 99 in January. He and Lois, nicknamed "Polly," married on March 17, 1945, after his discharge from Army Air Force duty in WWII.

They had five children, Bobbie, who died of complications of type I diabetes in 1996; Mary, the oldest, who lives in Topeka; and three sons, Rick of Oklahoma City, Ron of rural Montana and Buckeye, Arizona, and Chuck of Topeka. Mary was director of the Legislature's bill-drafting arm until her retirement a couple of years ago. Chuck heads the legislative maintenance department. Elon and Polly had seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Friday at First United Methodist Church in Topeka.

If you would like to send a note of condolence to Elon and his family, here is daughter Mary's email address - [marytorrence@att.net](mailto:marytorrence@att.net)

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### ***Media criticism - from Dick Morris?***

**Terry Anderson** - I don't mind reading criticism of journalists when it is accurate and factual. We surely deserve it, and I do my share. But from Dick Morris? And an assertion of a political hack that smears all journalists and journalistic

organizations? A "three-year rule"? Surely there's someone with better credentials who can provide criticism that has merit.

## **AP WAS THERE: 50 years ago, power failed across Northeast US**



EDITOR'S NOTE: Subway riders stranded underground. Workers trapped between floors in elevators. Streets packed with honking cars and pedestrians, some panicked, some exhilarated. And illuminating it all, only the light of the November moon.

The Great Northeastern Blackout came at the height of the evening rush hour on Nov. 9, 1965, and plunged tens of millions into darkness across the northeastern U.S. and southern Canada for hours, including New York, Boston and Toronto.

The nation had never seen a power failure of such scope before, and Cold War tensions instantly stoked fears of sabotage. In New York, the nation's communications capital, news organizations including The Associated Press were stymied in finding out what happened and in getting the word out to the public.

It was soon established that problems with the electrical grid caused the blackout, the first large-scale realization of infrastructure worries that would resurface in major blackouts in 1977 and again in 2003.

Fifty years later, the AP is making a version of its original coverage and photographs available.

[Click here](#) to read more.

## **AP WAS THERE: 40 Years Ago, Edmund Fitzgerald Sinks**



EDITOR'S NOTE: The Great Lakes have claimed thousands of ships since European explorers began navigating the waters in the 1600s, but few have captured the public's imagination as has the Edmund Fitzgerald, which sank on Nov. 10, 1975, in Lake Superior.

Much of that attention is owed to Gordon Lightfoot's haunting ballad, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," which memorialized the ship and its crew members, whose bodies remain with the sunken vessel.

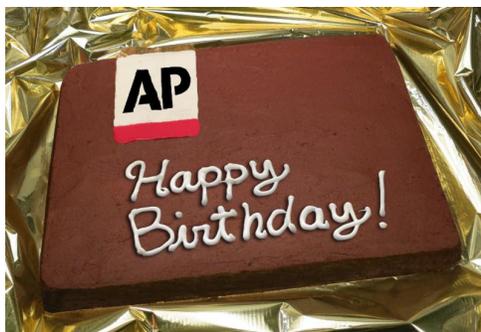
"Lake Superior seldom coughs up her victims unless they're wearing life jackets. As of this time, we have no reason to believe the men of the Fitzgerald had time to get into life jackets," Capt. Charles A. Millrad, commander of the Soo Coast Guard Station, said at the time.

Nothing so tragic has occurred on the Great Lakes since.

Forty years after the Fitzgerald sank to its chilly resting place, AP is making a version of the story available with photos.

[Click here](#) to read more.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



to

Tim Curran ([Email](#))

Eva Parziale ([Email](#))

Dianne Smith ([Email](#))

## Welcome to Connecting



Ray Henry ([Email](#))

Randy Herschaft ([Email](#))

# Stories of interest

## As Missouri Activists Block Journalists, a Divide Over 'Respect' and Rights (New York Times)

COLUMBIA, Mo. - A video that showed University of Missouri protesters restricting a student photographer's access to a public area of campus on Monday ignited discussions about press freedom.



Tim Tai, a student photographer on freelance assignment for ESPN, was trying to take photos of a small tent city that protesters had created on a campus quad. Concerned Student 1950, an activist group that formed to push for increased awareness and action around racial issues on campus, did not want reporters near the encampment.

Protesters blocked Mr. Tai's view and argued with him, eventually pushing him away. At one point, they chanted, "Hey hey, ho ho, reporters have got to go."

"I am documenting this for a national news organization," Mr. Tai told the protesters, adding that "the First Amendment protects your right to be here and mine."

[Click here](#) to read more. Shared by Latrice Davis, Bob Daugherty.

**AND**

## **A Young Journalist Setting an Example for the Rest of Us** (Atlantic)

It's too easy, and also rash and risky, to criticize people on the basis of perhaps-out-of-context social media snippets.

So let me compliment someone! You may already have seen the video below, shot this afternoon at the University of Missouri. The drama involves a photographer who wants to take pictures of the student protestors who have wrought such change at the university, and the students and their supporters who want him to go away.

The point the photographer makes is that they're all standing on public property, and just as they have a First Amendment right to protest, he has a First Amendment right to record what is going on. And, as he points out, to document it for history.

[Click here](#) to read more. Shared by Dick Chady.

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## **Virtual Reality: A New Way to Tell Stories** (New York Times)



One hundred nineteen years ago, the inaugural issue of this magazine published the first photographs ever to appear in The New York Times, beginning on the cover with three small halftone images of the former presidential candidates Stephen Douglas, John Bell and John Breckinridge. Elsewhere in the magazine, readers found images of X-rays, then a nascent technology, showing a hand and a foot. Now, more than 6,000 Sundays later, the magazine is proud to introduce another visual innovation: In conjunction with this week's cover story on the global refugee crisis, we are unveiling The New York Times's first contribution to the new field of virtual-reality journalism.

[Click here](#) to read more. Shared by Bob Daugherty.

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## **Writing for social media: a class for beginning journalists**

**By Steve Buttry**

Six times last week, I taught a class that I first presented last spring when I was interviewing for my current job at LSU: writing for social media.

In the context of a beginning "Media Writing" class that we require of all Manship School of Mass Communication students, I teach the techniques of good writing in the context of social media. While my background is strongest in journalism, I apply the points of the class to other specialties within the Manship School: political communication, public relations and digital advertising.

This is going to be a long post, probably helpful only to mass-comm teachers (or last week's students who would like a review). But that's who I'm writing it for, and it's long because I want to invite you to use some of my slides and points in your classes and/or to invite me to cover these or similar points in your own classes or in a workshop at your university or a conference. Of course, I could adapt the presentation to a professional audience, too.

I will tell about the class mostly through the students' tweets. At the opening of the class, I assigned students to tweet about my points, ask questions on Twitter, make observations, etc. during the class, so they would be applying the lessons as they were learning them.

[Click here](#) to read more.

# Today in History - November 10, 2015

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 10, the 314th day of 2015. There are 51 days left in the year.

## Today's Highlights in History

On Nov. 10, 1975, the U.N. General Assembly approved a resolution equating Zionism with racism (the world body repealed the resolution in Dec. 1991). The ore-hauling ship SS Edmund Fitzgerald mysteriously sank during a storm in Lake Superior with the loss of all 29 crew members.

## On this date:

In 1775, the U.S. Marines were organized under authority of the Continental Congress.

In 1871, journalist-explorer Henry M. Stanley found Scottish missionary David Livingstone, who had not been heard from for years, near Lake Tanganyika in central Africa.

In 1919, the American Legion opened its first national convention in Minneapolis.

In 1925, actor Richard Burton was born Richard Walter Jenkins in Pontrhydyfen (pahn-trhy-DY'-fehn), Wales.

In 1938, Kate Smith first sang Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" on her CBS radio program. Turkish statesman Mustafa Kemal Ataturk died in Istanbul at age 57.

In 1942, Winston Churchill delivered a speech in London in which he said, "I have not

become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

In 1951, customer-dialed long-distance telephone service began as Mayor M. Leslie Denning of Englewood, New Jersey, called Alameda, California, Mayor Frank Osborne without operator assistance.

In 1954, the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, depicting the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima in 1945, was dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Arlington, Virginia.

In 1969, the children's educational program "Sesame Street" made its debut on National Educational Television (later PBS).

In 1982, the newly finished Vietnam Veterans Memorial was opened to its first visitors in Washington, D.C., three days before its dedication. Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev died at age 75.

In 1990, the movie comedy "Home Alone," starring Macaulay Culkin, premiered in Chicago.

In 2004, word reached the United States of the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at age 75 (because of the time difference, it was the early hours of Nov. 11 in Paris, where Arafat died).

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber killed some three dozen people at a Baghdad restaurant frequented by police. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former finance minister of Liberia, claimed victory in the country's presidential election. Chris Carpenter of the St. Louis Cardinals won the National League Cy Young Award.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama cut short his visit to his boyhood home in Indonesia because of an ash cloud from Mount Merapi, and flew to South Korea for an economic summit. French President Nicolas Sarkozy's reform raising the retirement age from 60 to 62 became law, a victory for the conservative government and a defeat for unions that had waged massive strikes and street protests. Miranda Lambert received three Country Music Association Awards on her 27th birthday, including album of the year; Brad Paisley was named entertainer of the year. Movie producer Dino De Laurentiis, 91, died in Beverly Hills, California.

One year ago: President Barack Obama, at the start of a visit to Beijing, announced that the United States and China would start granting visas to each other's citizens valid for up to a decade. A suicide bomber set off explosives at a school in northern Nigeria, killing at least 48 students in the latest attack by suspected Boko Haram militants. Chicago White Sox first baseman Jose Abreu was a unanimous winner of the AL Rookie of the Year award and New York Mets pitcher Jacob deGrom was voted NL Rookie of the Year.

Today's Birthdays: Film composer Ennio Morricone (EHN'-yoh mohr-ee-KOHN'-eh) is 87. Blues singer Bobby Rush is 81. Actor Albert Hall is 78. Country singer Donna Fargo is 74. Former Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., is 72. Lyricist Tim Rice is 71. Rock singer-musician Greg Lake (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 68. Actress-dancer Ann Reinking is 66. Actor Jack Scalia is 65. Movie director Roland Emmerich is 60. Actor Matt Craven is 59. Actor-comedian Sinbad is 59. Actress Mackenzie Phillips is 56. Author Neil Gaiman (GAY'-mihn) is 55. Actress Vanessa Angel is 52. Actor Hugh Bonneville (TV: "Downton Abbey") is 52. Actor-comedian Tommy Davidson is 52. Actor Michael Jai (jy) White is 51. Country singer Chris Cagle is 47. Actor-comedian Tracy Morgan is 47. Actress Ellen Pompeo (pahm-PAY'-oh) (TV: "Grey's Anatomy") is 46. Actor-comedian Orny Adams is 45. Rapper-producer Warren G is 45. Actor Walton Goggins is 44. Comedian-actor Chris Lilley is 41. Contemporary Christian singer Matt Maher is 41. Rock singer-musician Jim Adkins (Jimmy Eat World) is 40. Rapper Eve is 37. Rock musician Chris Joannou (joh-AN'-yoo)(Silverchair) is 36. Actor Bryan Neal is 35. Actress Heather Matarazzo is 33. Country singer Miranda Lambert is 32. Actor Josh Peck is 29. Pop singer Vinz Dery (Nico & Vinz) is 25. Actress Zoey Deutch (DOYCH) is 21. Actress Kiernan Shipka is 16. Actress Mackenzie Foy (Film: the "Twilight" films) is 15.

***Thought for Today: "Not doing more than the average is what keeps the average down."  
- William M. Winans, American clergyman (1788-1857).***

## Got a story to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

**Paul Stevens**  
**Editor**  
**Connecting newsletter**



[stevenspl@live.com](mailto:stevenspl@live.com)

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