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## Connecting - February 11, 2019

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# Connecting

February 11, 2019

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning!

As an AP journalist for nearly 25 years, he has covered news, politics, Congress, the White House and is an original member of the AP's Race & Ethnicity team in Washington.

As an author, he has made a name for himself with books dealing with African-American history and Marvel Comics' Black Panther.

**Jesse Holland** is the subject of our Monday Profile today and our Connecting colleague relates his journey from his birthplace in Holly Springs, Mississippi (population 7,600) to the present day and his busy professional life and his treasured family.



Today's issue also brings you the story on an AP statement on how executives and lawyers of American Media Inc. raised concerns in 2017 about AP's reporting on actions of the National Enquirer and a statement by AP executive editor **Sally Buzbee** that these actions "did not affect or stop AP's reporting." And some background by colleague **Ted Bridis**, former AP investigative reporter now teaching at the University of Florida.

### ***Annie Shooman: Rather than hiding from the storm, she learned to dance in the rain***



Finally, we feature a remarkable post to Connecting on the death of AP veteran **Annie Shooman** last week from complications of multiple sclerosis. Our colleague **Ed Tobias** ([Email](#)) - a retired AP Broadcast journalist who was diagnosed with MS in 1980 - wrote:

*Annie's death saddens me greatly. The news came as a surprise, yet not really a surprise as MS can steal away life too soon for too many.*

*Annie and I shared the special bonds of both broadcast news and of MS. It was a pleasure to have worked with her as she moved through the AP system.*

*Professional and personable is how I remember Annie as well as someone who, rather than hiding from the storm, learned to dance in the rain.*

Here's to a great week ahead!

Paul

**Connecting profile**

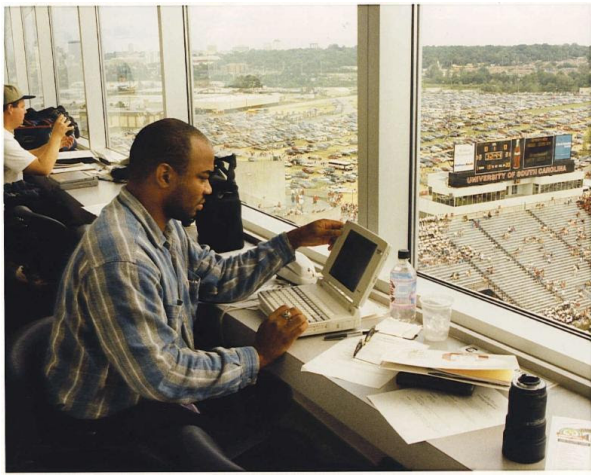
# **Jesse Holland**

**What are you doing these days?**

Nowadays, I'm working in Washington, D.C. as a member of AP's Race & Ethnicity Team. I also host the Saturday edition of Washington Journal on C-SPAN, and teach creative nonfiction at Goucher College in Towson, Md. I'm also putting together for Marvel Entertainment and Titan Books the first Black Panther prose anthology, *Black Panther: Worlds of Wakanda*, due out in 2020.

**How did you get your first job with the AP? Who hired you? What were your first days like?**

I started at AP in Columbia, South Carolina, as an intern, after taking the AP test in the Jackson, Mississippi, bureau as I was on my way to Mardi Gras (that's a really long story and not appropriate for tender ears.) I ended up working for South Carolina Bureau Chief John Shurr and News Editor Doug Fisher, and about four weeks into my internship, I accepted a full-time job inside the bureau. As an intern, I had a great time learning all of the jobs



**Jesse in early AP South Carolina days**

prison. That was my first big story for AP.

available for people in the bureau, but as soon as I accepted the full-time position, I got shifted to the 3:30-midnight broadcast shift. But, if I hadn't been working that shift, I wouldn't have been on the desk when the State Law Enforcement Division called to say that Susan Smith had reported that a black man had stolen her car with her two boys inside. I worked on that story from that night, was in Union, South Carolina, when the sheriff announced she had been arrested for murdering her children, and there when she was convicted and sentenced to life in

### **What were your different past jobs in the AP, in order? Describe briefly what you did with each?**

After Susan Smith, I covered state law enforcement and courts before moving over to cover politics, elections, the governor and the Statehouse in South Carolina. I left South Carolina in April of 1999 to move to Albany, New York, and work for then-Bureau Chief Robert Naylor where I covered the statehouse and education, and helped Marc Humbert and Joel Stashenko cover Hillary Clinton's first Senate campaign for a year. I left upstate New York in April of 2000 to move to Washington, D.C., to work for Bureau Chief Sandy Johnson, who assigned me to cover Congress. A couple of months after I got to D.C., Sandy moved me from Congress and sent me to cover the White House, where I covered the end of the Bill Clinton presidency and the beginning of the George H.W. Bush presidency. I left the White House and returned to Congress to cover the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, and was inside the Capitol on 9/11. I stayed at the Capitol until 2005, when I took a leave to write my first book. I returned to AP in 2007 as National Labor Writer, where I covered the first campaign of President Barack Obama focusing on the union endorsements. In 2008, I left the campaign trail to cover federal courts and in 2009, I joined Mark Sherman in covering the Supreme Court, including the Citizens United and Obamacare cases. During this time, I also served as de facto social media editor for the Washington bureau, taking over the @AP\_Politics Twitter handle and creating the current AP Politics Facebook page and the workflow process that was used in the Washington, D.C. bureau for years. In 2014, I left the Supreme Court to take on covering race and ethnicity stories, which is what I do today.

### **Who played the most significant role in your career and how?**

There are way too many people to pick out one person, but I'll focus on two: **Will Norton**, dean of the School of Journalism and New Media, is going to be the first one, considering he was the first person who had faith in me as a journalist. He



recruited me to go to Ole Miss, got me my first job as a reporter at The Oxford Eagle and made sure I didn't give up when times got tough. He also left Ole Miss two years after recruiting me to take a job at the University of Nebraska, but always kept in touch with me and checked in to make sure things were going okay for me. He's one of the few people that I call when I have decisions to make, and he always gives me the best advice, even if it's something I don't want to hear. The other



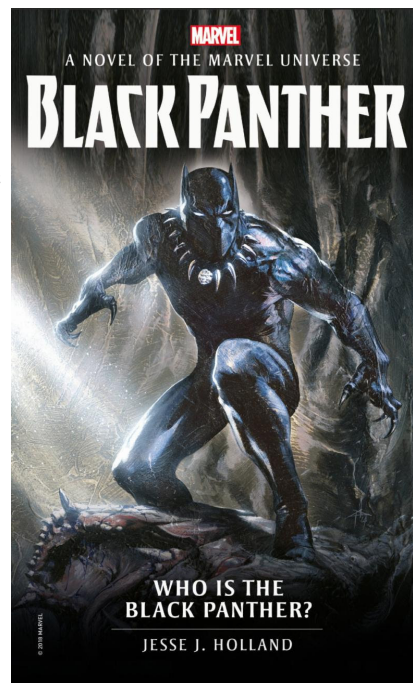
person is author **Barry Hannah**, under whom I started my writing career at Ole Miss. Barry told me a long time ago there was more to writing than just writing, and was the first person to explain to me that a story was more than just the facts that a journalist puts on the page. He also held me to a higher standard than I held myself at the time and gave me a "D" in Short Story Writing because he didn't feel I was giving him the effort he deserved from me. He was right, and I took his class over again, and I've never forgotten the advice he gave me about being a writer and an author.

### Would you do it all over again- or what would you change?

Given that I love my life, I would say that I would do it all over again. But if I could change anything, I would have started writing books a long time ago instead of waiting until 2005. There's way too much I want to do and as I get older I am becoming much more aware of the ticking clocks we all face. It's never too late, but man, when I look back on the time I wasted I just shake my head and hunker back down to work.

### What's your favorite hobby or activity?

I'm a comic book geek, and have boxes and boxes of comic books inside my house. I'm moved to electronic comic books nowadays, with subscriptions to Marvel Unlimited, DC Universe and Comixology still ongoing. I'm also a fan of learning new forms of writing, and am in the middle of my third movie screenplay (or I will make it to the middle as soon as I can focus on it again. I actually wrote a full-fledged Shazam! screenplay back in 2009, but never did anything with it. I will be fascinated to watch this year's Shazam! movie to see the difference between what they funded and what I wrote years and years ago.) I also play tennis, swim and bike but not as much as I should.



**What's the best vacation trip you've ever made?**

My best vacation would have to be my honeymoon, where my wife and I started in London for week, and then went to Bath, stayed for a few days in Nice, France, and then drove down to Monte Carlo, Monaco, and ended up in Paris for a week, capping the trip off with a boat ride on the River Seine watching Bastille Day fireworks above us. That was a good trip.



**Names of your family members and what they do?**

My wife is retired Navy. Cmdr Carol June Holland, who is an associate vice president and market segment leader in Washington, D.C. and Maryland for Dewberry. She's also a former Seabee and held several track and field records at the U.S. Naval Academy for years and years. We have a 12-year-old daughter, Rita and a 10-year-old son, Jesse III.

Jesse Holland's email is - [jesseholl@aol.com](mailto:jesseholl@aol.com)

***Sally Buzbee: 'Did not affect or stop AP's reporting'***

## **AP approached by AMI executives, lawyers in 2017 while covering actions by National Enquirer**

The Associated Press has issued a statement that said it was "approached by American Media Inc. executives and lawyers in the summer of 2017 as AP reporters dug into actions taken by the National Enquirer. They raised concerns about AP's reporting."



**Sally Buzbee**

AP executive editor Sally Buzbee made the statement Friday in AP Definitive Source blog and said these actions "did not affect or stop AP's reporting."

In a story in The Washington Post last Friday, Allyson Chiu wrote that Ronan Farrow, a contributor to The New Yorker, said that he and "at least one other prominent journalist" who had reported on the National Enquirer and President Donald Trump received blackmail threats from the tabloid's parent company, American Media Inc., over their work.

Farrow's allegation came just hours after Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos accused the Enquirer of attempting to extort and blackmail him by threatening to publish intimate photos unless he stopped investigating the publication. (Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

In a tweet Thursday night, Farrow wrote that he and the unnamed journalist "fielded similar 'stop digging or we'll ruin you' blackmail efforts from AMI." Farrow, who last



April published a story in the New Yorker about the Enquirer's "catch and kill" practice -- in which stories are buried by paying off sources -- that benefited Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign.

@RonanFarrow: I and at least one other prominent journalist involved in breaking stories about the National Enquirer's arrangement with Trump fielded similar "stop digging or we'll ruin you" blackmail efforts from AMI. (I did not engage as I don't cut deals with subjects of ongoing reporting.)

In response to Farrow, former Associated Press editor Ted Bridis tweeted, "We were warned explicitly by insiders that AMI had hired private investigators to dig into backgrounds of @AP journalists looking into the tabloid's efforts on behalf of Trump. Never saw evidence of this either way, and it didn't stop our reporting."



**Ted Bridis**

Bridis spent 11 years as the editor of the AP's Washington investigative team. He resigned from the AP last July 31 and now teaches investigative reporting at the University of Florida.

Bridis claimed in a separate tweet referencing Bezos's Medium post that AMI, the Enquirer and its lawyers "tried to shut down public interest reporting on tabloid's work on behalf of Trump."

The AP issued this statement Friday from Buzbee about earlier AP reporting on the National Enquirer:

*The Associated Press was approached by American Media Inc. executives and lawyers in the summer of 2017 as AP reporters dug into actions taken by the National Enquirer. They raised concerns about AP's reporting.*

*Separately but near the same time, AP editors heard that people were looking into the backgrounds of the reporters working on the story, but AP never saw any evidence that had occurred.*

*Actions by AMI did not affect or stop AP's reporting. We often face intense pressure from outsiders attempting to influence our journalism and we do not back down.*

*AP published a story in the spring of 2018 based on the reporting, once the story met our standards. We are proud of the work AP reporters did on this subject.*

Bridis provided the following background to his Connecting colleagues:

Then-Washington investigative reporters Jeff Horwitz and Jake Pearson (Pearson technically was based in NYC but assigned to me) were reporting furiously starting in early 2017 about a tip that the National Enquirer and its publisher, American Media Inc., had paid \$30,000 to a former Trump Organization doorman in exchange for a tip about another woman with whom Donald Trump had an affair years earlier - then spiked the story as a political favor to Trump. Tellingly, AMI's deal with the ex-doorman included a \$1 million penalty if the doorman talked with anyone else about what he had told the Enquirer.

Early on, even before we overtly asked the tabloid company for an explanation, AMI's editor Dylan Howard and its lawyers sent emails to AP accusing Horwitz and Pearson of encouraging Enquirer staffers to violate their non-disclosure agreements ("tortious interference") to discuss happenings inside the Enquirer newsroom. I replied to Howard that AP was conducting a lawful, ethical reporting investigation into matters of significant public interest and we would be in touch as our reporting progressed.

After several months of reporting, AMI insiders warned us credibly that the company had hired private investigators to dig dirt on Horwitz and Pearson to undermine the credibility of AP's reporting (which was still going on). We discussed among ourselves and with AP managers what areas AMI might try to publicize about their backgrounds, personal lives and work history and were satisfied there were no concerns. We discussed good security hygiene, such as overall personal awareness, shredding documents when we were done with them, using encrypted phone and texting services to eliminate phone logs that might reveal who we were calling, being especially mindful of phishing attempts, being careful with curbside trash pickups, etc. It never hindered our reporting, and we never witnessed any evidence that Horwitz or Pearson might actually be under surveillance or the targets of surreptitious research.

Both Pearson and Horwitz have left the AP: Pearson joined ProPublica as a reporter and Horwitz left AP on Feb. 1 for the Wall Street Journal, where he will cover Facebook for the Journal from the West Coast.

## Regrets over career choices? Here are more of your views

**Jim Carlson** ([Email](#)) - I have no regrets about my career in journalism, including 38 years with AP, and I have no regrets about stepping up to defend the AP and newspapers that are still carrying on the same traditions. They are in an awful position of having to cover a White House that is beset by lies from the top and anti-government agendas throughout. We can expect to deal for decades or more with

the effects from the rejection of man-made climate change, push for polluting energy sources and disdain for science. And that's not "fake news."

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**Mike Holmes** ([Email](#)) - The letter shared by Adolphe Bernotas certainly is food for thought. Here are mine:

My regret after 45 years in journalism is that our profession didn't start earlier - and do a better job of - explaining our work to readers.

Beginning with Spiro Agnew's infamous "nattering nabobs" speech, we should have responded to attacks by thoroughly explaining what we do, how we do it, why we do it and how our decisions are made.

Instead, we bought into the old saw that readers didn't care how we got the story, only about the story itself, and we kept ourselves out of our news columns.

We didn't fully explain the differences between news reporting, news analysis, commentary and editorials. We didn't respond when cable TV talking heads - sometimes former campaign operatives or even politicians themselves - to spout opinions yet brand themselves as "news."

Is it any wonder a confused public began lumping all of us together in the same boat?

Too many reporters and editors bought into the notion that we should write "with authority" rather than telling readers the sources of all of our important information.

Particularly in the realm of national politics, the profession grossly overused anonymous sources. Seldom did you see a Washington dateline without one. Seldom, if ever, was it carefully explained to readers why anonymity was allowed in this case and why they should believe someone who wouldn't give his name.

All of this allowed the profession's reputation for integrity to erode, and journalism is paying the awful price for that now.

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**Joe McGowan (Email)** - Paul Shane really said it as well as I could. The opinions I see in stories, unfortunately including AP stories, are disgusting. Yes, an AP newsman writing as they are writing today in too many cases, would have resulted in them being fired.

I can remember calls from AP headquarters with someone on the general desk questioning a story that had been sent in from my bureau. The gendesker would say "if you can find a reliable source to quote, then we will use it. AP does not give opinions." But the stories on AP today, especially those from Washington, D.C. are full of leftwing opinions.

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**Mike Short (Email)** - Friday's Connecting exemplifies yet another polarizing effect of the Trump administration.

To some journalists the media have become opinionated pamphleteers. The excellent email from Chuck McFadden represents the other side. He mentions some of the reasons that the Trump presidency is unlike any other in living memory. Covering this administration requires an unswerving pursuit of facts. Reporters and editors have made mistakes (including careless use of Twitter), but imagine what coverage would be like if Trump had been covered the way Sen. Joseph McCarthy was usually covered in the 1950s: Just report what people say and let it go at that.

Terry Gross' radio interview with Michael Schmidt of the Times yesterday brings out the need for the highest standards of journalism. If there is an individual Trump enemies list, Schmidt is surely on it. Yet Schmidt is largely responsible for the story of Hillary Clinton's emails. When Gross asked if he ever felt troubled about his role, Schmidt said he keeps a steady focus on reporting facts, not consequences of reporting facts.

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**Dave Tomlin (Email)** - I'm not learning much yet from the conversation about editorial bias. Everybody on both sides of it seems so sure they know the score. Not me.



I do still believe AP's traditional approach is the right way to cover controversial issues on which reasonable people can differ.

But I also believe that our public life is straying ever farther into a zone where that's very often not the case at all, and where acting as if it is can produce "false equivalency" distortion that's worse than bias.

How do you report that the emperor is wearing no clothes while pretending not to notice how freakish and disturbing his nudity is?

I'm grateful not to be one of the people who has to figure that out.

**From the Grammys - Kevin Bacon,  
Mick Jagger? No, it's AP's Bruce  
Hanselman**



**AP technical manager Bruce Hanselman on the red carpet during the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on Sunday. Bruce, based in Orlando, has been with the AP 41 years. One of his Facebook friends thinks he's a dead ringer for Kevin Bacon. Or a young Mick Jagger!**

# AP to automate men's college basketball game previews using Automated Insights

The Associated Press, using automation technology from Automated Insights and data from STATS, announced Feb. 8 it will deliver automated previews for all NCAA Division I men's basketball games.

While AP has typically provided previews for all NCAA Tournament games, this marks the first time the news cooperative will offer previews for over 5,000 regular-season games.

Automated stories previewing the matchups will begin appearing on the wire the week of Feb. 11.

"We're pleased to deliver significantly more content of value to our customers," said Barry Bedlan, AP's director of sports products. "Given the large number of college games played each season, using automation as a tool to more thoroughly cover this sport makes sense."

Read more [here](#).

## *Best of the Week*

# Exclusive AP analysis: The NFL keeps getting younger and cheaper



**A Pittsburgh Steelers fan holds a Le'Veon Bell jersey during a game between the Steelers and the Carolina Panthers in Pittsburgh, Nov. 8, 2018. The steady exodus of mid-level veterans from the NFL is one element of a long-standing tension between players and the league over the structuring of contracts. The contract holdouts by Bell and Earl Thomas this season put the issue into vivid focus. AP Photo / Don Wright**

The unusually short career span for NFL players has long been a thorny issue among the players, the league and even fans of one of the most injury-prone leagues in sports. A pair of high-profile contract disputes during the 2018 season involving star players placed the topic front-and-center yet again.

But what more was there to say?

Starting in September, Denver-based national sports writer Eddie Pells and Global Sports Editor Michael Giarrusso brainstormed with the hope of breaking news during the week leading up to the Super Bowl - the most competitive window for news on the most competitive beat in U.S. sports.

Conversations led them to the idea of mining data that could illustrate how average experience on NFL rosters has changed since 2011, when the league and players union agreed to a contract designed in part to help veterans get a bigger share of revenue. The way veterans are treated, combined with the lack of guaranteed contracts in the league, are two longstanding sticking points between the NFL and union.



Pells had some ideas for finding and organizing the data, and was joined by New York-based data journalist Larry Fenn who started digging. After weeks of scouring season-opening rosters from the last 14 years, Pells and Fenn had the data to exclusively tell several stories around an issue had been told anecdotally in the past, but never backed by this amount of hard data: Average experience in the league was going down consistently as every team was choosing younger players with restricted salaries over veterans who would earn more - even if the veterans were better players. Further, average experience in the league had gone down at every position other than kickers and quarterbacks. And at the most expendable positions, linebacker, running back and center, experience had gone down so much that the average player now doesn't even reach 4 years, the amount needed to qualify for an NFL pension.

Armed with the data, Pells asked more than a dozen writers in the field to take it to key players on the teams they covered. The reporters set out to find the right players, and to ask them the right questions. Larry Lage, Noah Trister, Teresa Walker, Mike Marot, Mark Long, Dennis Waszak, Josh Dubow, Arnie Stapleton, Will Graves, Barry Wilner and Tim Booth solicited thoughtful, insightful responses about an issue that clearly resonates across the league.

Fenn turned over his data and the draft visualization to Top Stories designer Phil Holm, who produced five sharp, insightful and easy-to-understand illustrations of the data, and helped format the stories and graphics. Pells did a voice-over explainer with the illustrations, working with New York digital producer Trenton Daniel and Deputy Director Darrell Allen to create four videos that were used on social and embedded and hyperlinked into the story.

Meanwhile, the News Research Center helped Pells find a player who fit the profile of the typical 4-year player who is cut just as he became eligible for a larger contract.

Top Stories photo editor Alyssa Goodman created a combo of former player James-Michael Johnson in several different uniforms to illustrate some of the teams that cut him in just a couple seasons.

Gainesville, Florida-based Long did extra reporting at the Pro Bowl to add a chapter to the series focusing on the shortened career lengths of centers, and Atlanta's Paul Newberry reported out a column foreshadowing storm clouds ahead in upcoming collective-bargaining negotiations. Pells also did another story looking at how Super Bowl champions shed expensive players after winning the title.

When it came time to present the work, the Top Stories desk continued to refine the package. Deputy Director Shawn Chen worked with Pells, Holm and Giarrusso on storyboarding each piece and planning the stacking, while New York's Brian Friedman and Philadelphia's Pete Brown helped edit the project, making it more

understandable for non-NFL fans. Goodman scoured the photo archive for the perfect images.

The package was released Sunday through Tuesday before the Super Bowl, the first weekend since August with no meaningful football games. The stories got about double the usage of typical top sports stories, with a combined 1,384 uses online and 4,300 social interactions on Facebook and Twitter. The Twitter Amplify videos we produced from the charts had 225,000 views, generating social media revenue.

"A blueprint for how to plan coverage around big events."

Sally Buzbee, AP senior vice president and executive editor

In addition to commanding attention across the football landscape, the package won praise throughout the week from senior AP leaders who said the work was as an example of the collaborative ambition we are striving for in 2019 and beyond. Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Sally Buzbee called it a blueprint for how to plan coverage around big events by timing enterprise and breaking news when attention is high.

For using data and creative storytelling to quantify one of the NFL's central issues and break news during the biggest sports week of the year, Pells, Fenn and Holm share this week's Best of the Week award.

## ***Best of the States***

# **The 'Left Behind'; AP profiles the other victims of opioids**



**Doug Biggers, whose 20-year-old son Landon died of an opioid overdose in 2017, pauses in his home office in La Quinta, Calif., Aug. 14, 2018, next to a framed photo of his son wearing his favorite jersey. When the paramedics walked out, shaking their heads on Nov. 21, 2017, Doug pounded on the kitchen counter and pleaded "no, no, no." His daughter Brittaney glanced at the clock on the stove to record the moment hope was lost: 11:43 a.m. In an instant, the yearslong cycle of treatment centers, detoxes and jail cells, the late-night phone calls, the holes punched in walls, the nights spent pleading with God, the emptied 401(k)s - it was all over. And a father, mother and sister were left to torment over what they should have done, or shouldn't have done, or done differently, or better, or sooner. AP Photo / Jae C. Hong**

As the opioid epidemic barrels into its third decade, it's increasingly hard to find fresh ways to report on the problem. One group was always present in stories but as supporting characters in the background: parents, hundreds of thousands of them who desperately tried to save their children, then buried them anyway. Louisville, Kentucky-based AP national writer Claire Galofaro chose to focus on them, the people from whom the epidemic has taken the most.

The result was two beautifully written and photographed narratives - one a deeply personal look at a California family struggling to cope with grief and guilt a year after their 20-year-old's death; the second a moving story on the "sisterhood of grief," a Massachusetts support and advocacy group of bereaved parents - along with an extensive Q&A about the epidemic, a full video story and three digital videos in which we hear three different mothers talking about the extreme lengths they went to to try and save their children.

The project involved journalists across formats throughout the country - Jae Hong, Steven Senne, Pat Semansky, Jeff Roberson, Mark Humphrey, Rodrique Ngowi, Krysta Fauria, Dario Lopez, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Carla Johnson - teaming with Galofaro and enterprise editors Pauline Arrillaga, Jeannie Ohm, Raghu Vadarevu and Enric Marti to think creatively about how text, video, multimedia and photos could work together. For example, Semansky, Roberson and Humphrey went to homes in Maryland, Tennessee and Missouri to shoot digital videos that all used the same specific format - we see photos of the children over time as their mothers share memories of their lost battles. Galofaro conducted each interview via FaceTime while the photo/video journalists were on site, and Lopez put the pieces together into miniature documentaries.

In a nation inured to a crisis that has burned for two decades, with a death count so high it's hard to comprehend, this series struck a raw nerve. Engagement was extraordinary: The main story was No. 1 on [apnews.com](http://apnews.com) the day it ran, with an average engagement time of longer than two minutes. The following day, it got an additional 10,300 page views, with an engagement time of three minutes. Two days after it published, readers still stayed with the main story for nearly three minutes. The stories ran on newspaper front pages from Vermont to Oklahoma, Ohio to Washington state. A week later, newspapers were still using it: It appeared in the Sunday Chicago Tribune and The Virginian-Pilot.

Hundreds sent emails and tweets. People who have lost someone to the epidemic wrote that the coverage made them feel less alone. People who haven't lost someone wrote that they felt for the first time like this is not some faraway problem unworthy of their attention. A chronic pain patient, long frustrated that the epidemic spurred regulation that makes it harder to get prescription opioids, wrote that the stories made him see it from the other side. More than one person said that they felt like they were sitting with these families in their living rooms. One printed out copies of the stories and mailed them to her congressman, with a demand that they finally get serious about finding a solution.

For a cross-format effort so intimate, so devastating, it recaptured the attention of a nation that had been exhausted by stories about the opioid epidemic, the team that produced the Left Behind package wins this week's Best of the States award.

## Stories of interest

***How it feels to... be a war reporter following in Marie Colvin's footsteps*** (Sunday Times)

By LOUISE CALLAGHAN



No one knew better than Marie Colvin the thrill of skirting the edge of death and surviving. It is an exhilaration like very little else, and Marie did it a thousand times over. As a foreign correspondent for The Sunday Times, she spent decades in the most dangerous parts of the world, reporting on the worst of humanity, cheating death.

"Were you ever terrified?" asked an interviewer in 2004. "Often," said Marie in her deep American drawl, and began describing how she had walked into Kosovo in the 1990s with a group of rebels at night, mines all around her. She kept walking. She survived. But then she had to come back to normal life in London. She drank hard, played hard.

Her luck finally ran out in Homs on February 22, 2012, when an artillery shell fired by the forces of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, ripped through the roof of the house where she was staying, crushing her under the rubble. Last month, the Syrian government was found liable for her killing in a landmark US ruling that awarded \$302m in damages to her family.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

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## ***Put the killer states on an 'iniquity list', then make them pay*** (Sunday Times)

**By HAROLD ADAMS**

"Democracy dies in darkness." The masthead slogan of The Washington Post everywhere justifies the intensity of press scrutiny of power. The trouble - strike that, the tragedy - is that around the world it is the journalist who dies in darkness. Nine out of 10 of the targeted killings of journalists have never been investigated, let alone prosecuted, convicted and punished.

The majority of journalists' deaths are not bad luck on a battlefield. They are planned assassinations. Nine out of every 10 have been killed in their own countries at the instigation of government and military authorities, drug traffickers and criminal gangs. Since 1992, a total of 737 journalists have been murdered with impunity: not a single perpetrator identified.

It is exhilarating to celebrate an exception. Marie Colvin, the brave and accomplished correspondent for The Sunday Times, died reporting Syrian atrocities in the besieged enclave of Homs. Family, friends and colleagues mourned - but they did more. The family sued President Bashar al-Assad for the assassination. To sue the leader of a hostile foreign state was seen by all as a forlorn cause, no more than a thumb-to-nose contempt.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

## The Final Word

### *A farewell column from the last copy clerk*

(Commercial Appeal)



**This was my second interview with former President Carter, at Habitat for Humanity's Carter Work Project site in 2015. I interviewed him a third time for a podcast in 2016 and a fourth time when he and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter came back to Memphis to help build the site in 2016. (Photo: The Commercial Appeal)**

**By DAVID WATERS, Columnist**

This is my final column for The Commercial Appeal. I'm taking an "early retirement opportunity" offer from the company that owns this storied and stoic newspaper. Feb. 15 will be my last day at 495 Union. Leaving will not be easy. This newsroom has been my classroom, press club, civic chapel and home away from home since I started working here as a copy clerk in 1980.

I was 21 and a junior at Memphis State University when I first walked into this holy place. I spent the next two years embedded in a bustling, big-city newsroom, fetching cups of coffee and cigarettes for hustling reporters, retrieving files and photographs for cranky editors, compiling obituaries, and wondering if I'd ever have the mettle and gumption to be a daily newspaper journalist.

Turns out, all I needed was a bit of desperation. A month after I graduated, my wife, Robin, found out she was pregnant with our first child. I had a new deadline. Within days, I started my next job as a reporter in The Commercial Appeal's Jackson, Tenn., bureau. I had no idea how to be a father or a newspaper reporter.

I spent the evening before my first day on the job studying a coffee-table book filled with historic front pages from The New York Times. It took me six weeks to get my first byline, six more to see it on the front page. I was almost fired twice in the first six months. I thought about quitting and going back to work for the paint department at the Sears at Poplar and Perkins - a job I knew I could handle at a place I knew would last forever.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Scott Charton.

## Today in History - February 11, 2019



## By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Feb. 11, the 42nd day of 2019. There are 323 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 11, 1990, South African black activist Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in captivity.

### On this date:

In 1531, the Church of England grudgingly accepted King Henry VIII as its supreme head.

In 1929, the Lateran Treaty was signed, with Italy recognizing the independence and sovereignty of Vatican City.

In 1937, a six-week-old sit-down strike against General Motors ended, with the company agreeing to recognize the United Automobile Workers Union.

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin signed the Yalta Agreement, in which Stalin agreed to declare war against Imperial Japan following Nazi Germany's capitulation.

In 1963, American author and poet Sylvia Plath was found dead in her London flat, a suicide; she was 30.

In 1968, New York City's fourth and current Madison Square Garden, located on Manhattan's West Side at the site of what used to be the Pennsylvania Station building, opened with a "Salute to the USO" hosted by Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. (The same evening, the New York Rangers played their final game at the third Garden, tying the Detroit Red Wings 3-3.)

In 1979, followers of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (hoh-MAY'-nee) seized power in Iran.

In 1986, Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky was released by the Soviet Union after nine years of captivity as part of an East-West prisoner exchange.

In 2006, Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shot and wounded Harry Whittington, a companion during a weekend quail-hunting trip in Texas.

In 2008, the Pentagon charged Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (HAH'-leed shayk moh-HAH'-med) and five other detainees at Guantanamo Bay with murder and war crimes in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks.

In 2012, pop singer Whitney Houston, 48, was found dead in a hotel room bathtub in Beverly Hills, California.

In 2013, with a few words in Latin, Pope Benedict XVI did what no pope had done in more than half a millennium: announced his resignation. The bombshell came during a routine morning meeting of Vatican cardinals. (The 85-year-old pontiff was succeeded by Pope Francis.)

Ten years ago: The nation's top bankers went before the House Financial Services Committee, pledging to build public trust with greater lending and fewer perks. All-Star shortstop Miguel Tejada pleaded guilty to lying to Congress about steroids in baseball. (He was sentenced to a year's probation.) Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., who first went to Congress in 1955, became the longest-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives. President Robert Mugabe (moo-GAH'-bay) swore in longtime rival Morgan Tsvangirai (SVAHNG'-ur-eye) as Zimbabwe's prime minister.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, during a joint White House news conference with French President Francois Hollande, vowed to come down like "a ton of bricks" on businesses that violated Iranian sanctions while nuclear



negotiations were under way, and conceded "enormous frustration" with stalled Syrian peace talks. At the Sochi Games, Carina Vogt of Germany won women's ski jumping's first-ever Olympic gold medal.

One year ago: A Russian passenger plane crashed into a snowy field six minutes after taking off from Moscow, killing all 65 passengers and six crew members; investigators would blame human error, saying the pilots had received flawed air speed readings after failing to turn on a heating unit for the measurement equipment. Amid swirling winds, 17-year-old snowboarder Red Gerard won the United States' first gold medal of the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, capturing the men's slopestyle event. Singer Vic Damone, who possessed what Frank Sinatra once called "the best pipes in the business," died in Florida at the age of 89.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Conrad Janis is 91. Fashion designer Mary Quant is 85. Actress Tina Louise is 81. Bandleader Sergio Mendes is 78. Actor Philip Anglim is 67. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush is 66. Actress Catherine Hickland is 63. Rock musician David Uosikkinen (aw-SIK'-ken-ihn) (The Hooters) is 63. Actress Carey Lowell is 58. Singer Sheryl Crow is 57. Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin is 55. Actress Jennifer Aniston is 50. Actor Damian Lewis is 48. Actress Marisa Petrora is 47. Singer D'Angelo is 45. Actor Brice Beckham is 43. Rock M-C/vocalist Mike Shinoda (Linkin Park) is 42. Singer-actress Brandy is 40. Country musician Jon Jones (The Eli Young Band) is 39. Actor Matthew Lawrence is 39. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kelly Rowland is 38. Actress Natalie Dormer is 37. Singer Aubrey O'Day is 35. Actress Q'orianka (kohr-ee-AHN'-kuh) Kilcher is 29. Actor Taylor Lautner is 27.

**Thought for Today: "Life does not count by years. Some suffer a lifetime in a day, and so grow old between the rising and the setting of the sun." - Augusta Jane Evans, American novelist (1835-1909).**

## Got a story or photos 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!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.

- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.

- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.



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