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Connecting - January 29, 2020

1 message

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Wed, Jan 29, 2020 at 8:55 AM

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this the 29th day of January 2020,

"Turmoil at the AP" was a headline in **Brian Stelter's** Reliable Sources push Monday night.

Not often do you see a phrase like that applied to the AP - but the CNN journalist explained the use of the term by quoting heavily from a story filed Monday by the AP's **David Bauder** that leads today's Connecting.

The story focused on what AP's executive editor **Sally Buzbee** called a "mistake" in a decision to crop an African climate activist out of a photo sent to AP members and customers. That prompted soul-searching and some tense staff conversations, Bauder wrote, over issues of racism and inclusion Monday, and said the AP will expand diversity training worldwide as a result.

Buzbee held three town hall meetings with staffers on Monday. CEO **Gary Pruitt**, who attended the first town hall, told Bauder that "our values are to cover the world - not the white world, but the whole world. And we need to do it." Pruitt said he continues to have "complete confidence" in the AP management. Bauder's story said no disciplinary actions against the journalists involved have been announced.

Your thoughts on the matter are welcomed.

CORRECTION: In Tuesday's Connecting, a story by John Willis, it should have said it was Charlie Bruce, not Charlie Price in the Miami bureau, from whom he got some fishing tips on a lake in Quebec.

Have a great day!

Paul

Photo cropping mistake leads to AP soul-searching on race



Climate activist Vanessa Nakate, Luisa Neubauer, Greta Thunberg, Isabelle Axelsson and Loukina Tille, from left, arrive for a news conference in Davos, Switzerland, Friday, Jan. 24, 2020. The 50th annual meeting of the forum is taking place in Davos from Jan. 21 until Jan. 24, 2020 (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) - A "terrible mistake" in cropping an African climate activist out of a photo sent to customers of The Associated Press prompted soul-searching and some tense staff conversations over issues of racism and inclusion Monday at the news organization.

The AP acknowledged that it aggravated the error through its initial response on Friday, and that it will expand diversity training worldwide as a result.

"My hope is that we can learn from this and be a better news organization going forward," Sally Buzbee, the news service's executive editor and senior vice president, said Monday. "I realize I need to make clear from the very top, from me, that diversity and inclusion needs to be one of our highest priorities."

An AP photographer at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland took a picture Friday of five activists, including the well-known Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg and Ugandan Vanessa Nakate, who were there to discuss climate change. Preparing to send the image, the photographer cropped out Nakate, leaving a picture of four white women before a scenic mountain backdrop.

The initial explanation for the cropping was that it enabled a close-up of Thunberg, and that it removed a distraction - a building behind where Nakate was standing.

The image was sent to AP's customers worldwide by an editor who was unaware that someone had been cropped out. After seeing a critical tweet about it, editors at the AP said they realized it was insensitive and a journalistic error.

Other photos were sent out that included Nakate. The AP waited more than a day to take the original cropped shot out of circulation.



A tearful Nakate posted a video on social media saying that when she saw the photo online, "it was the first time in my life that I understood the definition of the word 'racism.'" She said she felt like her story had been erased.

"I don't feel OK right now," she said in the video posted on Twitter. "The world is so cruel."

Thunberg supported her on social media, saying over the weekend that the picture was "totally unacceptable in so many ways. Like Vanessa said herself: 'You didn't just erase a photo. You erased a continent.'"

After an initial response from AP that Buzbee acknowledged was wrong in tone, she issued a statement Friday evening expressing "regret" and saying that management had spoken with the AP's journalists about the "error in judgment." On Sunday, she sent out a second statement on Twitter personally apologizing to Nakate.

Wrote Buzbee: "Vanessa, on behalf of the AP, I want to say how sorry I am that we cropped that photo and removed you from it. It was a mistake that we realize silenced your voice, and we apologize. We will all work hard to learn from this."

Buzbee said that she emailed and tweeted to Nakate but has not been able to speak to her.

Concern over the issue bubbled up internally over the weekend to the point that Buzbee scheduled three "town hall" meetings on Monday, done so AP journalists in New York headquarters and more than 250 locations worldwide could either attend or call in on a videoconference line. Beyond the initial episode, the discussion expanded to take on issues of racial sensitivity involving the AP's overall journalism, and with AP workplaces themselves.

"This is a very important issue for the AP, and it's bigger than a bad mistake on one photo," said Gary Pruitt, president and CEO of the AP, who attended the first meeting. "Our values are to cover the world - not the white world, but the whole world. And we need to do it."

Pruitt said in an interview that he continues to have "complete confidence" in the AP's news management.

Buzbee said it was important to emphasize that it was "everyone's responsibility" at the AP - not just members of underrepresented groups - to be sensitive to issues of inclusion and to be sure the reporting reflects that. The AP already has diversity training in the works for staff members in the United States this year; Buzbee said staff members all over the world will be given such training.

The AP is also challenging editors in different regions to set goals for making its journalism more inclusive, she said.

No disciplinary actions against the journalists involved have been announced.

Click [here](#) for link to story. Shared by Ric Brack.

Journalistic aftermath of Kobe Bryant tragedy

Washington Post reverses suspension of reporter who tweeted about Kobe Bryant (NBC News)

By Dylan Byers

The Washington Post has reversed its widely criticized decision to suspend one of its reporters over her tweets about Kobe Bryant.

One of the paper's managing editors, Tracy Grant, wrote in a statement released Tuesday afternoon that while reporter Felicia Sonmez's tweets were "ill-timed, she was not in clear and direct violation of our social media policy."

Sonmez responded to the reversal with a statement on Tuesday night calling for an explanation from the Post's executive editor, Marty Baron.

"I believe that Washington Post readers and employees, including myself, deserve to hear directly from Marty Baron on the newspaper's handling of this matter," Sonmez said in a tweet.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

Why the suspension?

Malcolm Barr Sr. (Email) - I cannot imagine why the Washington Post suspended reporter Felicia Sonmez for tweeting regarding Kobe Bryant's past history of alleged sexual assault when today, Tuesday, Jan. 25, on its "Tuesday Opinion" page under Molly Roberts byline, it published a 750-word article describing in detail the allegations against Bryant in 2003. Can you?

(This was written before the Post announced its reversal.)

Remembering Kobe Bryant required the hammer of truth

By David Von Drehle

Columnist, The Washington Post

Now and then, a friend or family member asks my advice on navigating the news media. Something has gone wrong in their neighborhood or workplace and they want to bring it to light, make it right. Call me a traitor to the business that pays my mortgage and feeds my kids, but I always suggest they think twice, because while the news can be an instrument of truth and a tool of justice, publicity rarely makes fine distinctions. The news is not a scalpel; it is a sledgehammer.

This distinction applies, I think, to a controversy at my journalistic home, The Post. It began with the extremely newsworthy death of basketball legend Kobe Bryant in a helicopter crash that also killed Bryant's daughter, Gianna, and seven other people. Two of them were teammates on Gianna Bryant's squad of middle school basketball stars. Those girls also had parents dead in the wreckage on a rugged California hillside.

Such layers of sorrow saturated that story. On the largest scale, the crash brought home that most unwelcome and unbearable fact of life: that it ends for absolutely every one of us - at a time of its own choosing, not ours. No armor of wealth or fitness or fame is proof against fate. Planes are dropping from the sky all around us, and one may be headed our way.

Read more [here](#).

In #MeToo era, Kobe and other athletes often get a pass

By **EDDIE PELLIS**

DENVER (AP) - Folded conveniently into the narratives about his "complicated past" was the detail about Kobe Bryant that could've wrecked him.

It was a rape allegation by a 19-year-old employee of a Colorado hotel. It happened in 2003. Some argued that making that life-altering detail a mere footnote to the stories detailing Bryant's life and unexpected death was the human thing to do on such an awful day. Others felt it was another example of an icon being given a pass of sorts because he was a successful athlete.

While dozens of high-profile figures - including senators, movie producers, news anchors and comedians (but not the president or the newest Supreme Court justice) - have seen their careers vanquished by allegations of sex abuse and domestic violence, high-profile sports figures have skated past similar accusations at a far more frequent rate.

"We look up to them to win games," said Miki Turner, a longtime journalist who is now a professor at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. "But we don't really scrutinize their values as closely as we might for politicians or news anchors. I think there's just a different line there."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

Guild rips Washington Post over reporter placed on leave for Bryant tweet

BY **JOE CONCHA**

The Hill

The union representing editorial staff at The Washington Post is ripping the company's management over its decision to put Post reporter Felicia Sonmez on administrative leave over a tweet she sent Sunday linking to a 2016 story about the Kobe Bryant rape case.

The Post Guild also urged the Post to provide a security detail for Sonmez, who has been the target of death threats over the tweet.

"We write to share our alarm and dismay that our newsroom leaders have chosen to place Felicia Sonmez on leave over a social media post, and to urge The Post to take immediate steps to ensure the safety of our colleague," the Post Guild wrote in a statement addressed to Post editor Marty Baron and managing editor Tracy Grant.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

Connecting mailbox

Favorite college newspaper memories

Hal Bock (Email) - In 1960 Sigma Delta Chi's national convention was held in NYC. Ken Brief and I were co-editors in chief of NYU's student newspaper, Square Journal. Nelson Rockefeller was keynote speaker at the SDX banquet. We thought it would be cool to cover the speech, get it in print, and have the paper delivered to delegates' rooms the next morning.

Brief and I rented tuxedos, went to the governor's speech, took notes and then hopped on a subway to get to our print shop in Brooklyn. There we were, looking spiffy, riding alongside some shady looking characters.

Forty-five minutes later, we were at the print shop, writing the story, feeding the copy to the linotype operator (remember linotype machines?) and watching the printing press churn out our paper. The next morning when the delegates opened their doors, there was Square Journal, waiting for them.

It was my best college all-nighter.

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On Larry McDermott's Monday profile

Brent Kallestad ([Email](#)) - Larry McDermott's profile in Monday's "Connecting" was particularly interesting to me since I had lost touch with him after his days with AP.

Larry was inbound to Minneapolis in 1981 to replace Joe Dill as CoB for Minnesota and the Dakotas at the exact time I was headed out as the Broadcast Executive for those three states and Wisconsin to become the General Broadcast Executive for the Central U.S.

As it turned out, we'd had Larry over to our home during the transition for each of us and he liked the house so well that we worked out a deal (might still be my favorite of the 10 homes I've bought over the years).

Larry went on to some great opportunities in his career and appears to be enjoying retirement.

And...he wasn't kidding about those North Dakota state newspaper meetings. The 8 a.m. Sunday morning Bloody Mary's came very shortly after unusually long Saturday night sessions as well! (I was correspondent in Fargo and Bismarck during the Ben Brown and Joe Dill regimes in the '70s.)

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RIP, Nikon D5200



Brian Horton ([Email](#)) -Rest in peace, Nikon D5200, serial number 2715894. You served me well, providing hours and hours of enjoyment over several years. When that "fatal error" alert popped up on your screen, I felt your pain. When you look back, remember that this was the last image you captured, a red-tailed hawk in the wildlife refuge on Cedar Bonnet Island, the scene of many of your best days. You did well! Now, safe travels to wherever Nikons go on their final journey. Rest easy, we've got it from here.

Stories of interest

Pompeo Called Me a 'Liar.' That's Not What Bothers Me. (New York Times)

By Mary Louise Kelly

Ms. Kelly is a co-host of NPR's "All Things Considered."

Ask journalists why they do the job they do, and you'll hear a range of answers. Here's mine: Not every day, but on the best ones, we get to put questions to powerful people and hold them to account. This is both a privilege and a responsibility.

January has been an interesting month on this front. I've had the opportunity to put questions, one on one, to the top diplomats of both the United States and Iran, in their respective capitals.

Iran's foreign minister, Javad Zarif, spoke to me on Jan. 7 in Tehran. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to me last Friday, in Washington. Each man represents a nation in conflict with the other; speaking with them, I wondered what path either could see out of the situation. In both cases, I was allotted 10 minutes for questions.

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

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Nebraska women push for work-life balance in newsroom, media jobs (Gateway Journalism Review)



Jenna Liston is a former TV news reporter for channel FOX42 in Omaha (Courtesy of Jenna Liston)

By Kamrin Baker

When longtime Omaha World-Herald reporter Cindy Gonzalez had her first child in 1991, her water broke in the newsroom. On deadline, she finished the story after she got to the hospital.

In a parallel scenario in 2015, former Omaha World-Herald copy editor Courtney Pitts Mattern would finish her assignments during health emergencies even when she knew she needed to see a doctor.

As women in a newsroom, even almost three decades apart, both said they didn't feel like they could listen to their bodies without facing some kind of backlash- or burn out.

"I left journalism after I had a baby-four months after he was born," said Mattern, who now works in marketing and public relations. "For me, it seemed like there was no way possible. I worked the night shift, and my husband also worked in news. Something had to give."

Even though women account for two-thirds of students earning journalism degrees, professional newsrooms are still male-dominated, reports show. In 2018, women made up more than a third of newsroom employees overall (41.7 percent in 2018 compared to 39.1 percent in 2017), according to annual diversity survey from the American Society of News Editors. Women comprised 41.2 percent of daily newspaper employees in 2018 compared to 38.9 percent in 2017 and 47.8 percent of online-only news organization employees, holding steady from 2017. Of all newsroom managers who participated in the survey, 41.8 percent were women (compared to 38.9 percent in 2017).

Read more [here](#).

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Longtime N&O writer AC Snow reflects on his 70-year career as his column winds down (Raleigh News & Observer)



A.C Snow, former Editor of the Raleigh Times, poses for a portrait in his home on January 15, 2020 in Raleigh, N.C. Robert Willett
RWILLETT@NEWSOBSERVER.COM

By JESSICA BANOV

RALEIGH - A.C. Snow, like many journalists, finds it a little unnatural to be on the other side of an interview. He has shared his life's stories for decades in The Raleigh Times and The News & Observer.

But to sit on a couch and have someone ask him questions about himself, he finds himself initially uncomfortable.

"Be prepared for a somewhat dull interview as my life and career have been rather mundane," he writes over email before the interview.

Over the next two hours, though, he reflects on his decades-long career in newspapers, stretching from The Burlington Times-News to The Raleigh Times (of which he was editor-in-chief for 16 years) to The News & Observer.

Though 95 years old, having written thousands of articles and columns, Snow has a remarkable memory for his career highlights. He periodically checks a list just to make sure he hasn't forgotten a story he wants to tell. But he remains a natural storyteller, and common themes emerge.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Frank Daniels Jr.

Today in History - January 29, 2020



By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 29, the 29th day of 2020. There are 337 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 29, 2002, in his first State of the Union address, President George W. Bush said terrorists were still threatening America [-] and he warned of "an axis of evil" consisting of North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

On this date:

In 1820, King George III died at Windsor Castle at age 81; he was succeeded by his son, who became King George IV.

In 1856, Britain's Queen Victoria introduced the Victoria Cross to reward military acts of valor during the Crimean War.

In 1861, Kansas became the 34th state of the Union.

In 1936, the first inductees of baseball's Hall of Fame, including Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth, were named in Cooperstown, New York.

In 1963, the first charter members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame were named in Canton, Ohio (they were enshrined when the Hall opened in September 1963). Poet Robert Frost died in Boston at age 88.

In 1975, a bomb exploded inside the U.S. State Department in Washington, causing considerable damage, but injuring no one; the radical group Weather Underground claimed responsibility.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally welcomed Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (dung shah-oh-ping) to the White House, following the establishment of diplomatic relations.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan announced in a nationally broadcast message that he and Vice President George H.W. Bush would seek re-election in the fall.

In 1995, the San Francisco 49ers became the first team in NFL history to win five Super Bowl titles, beating the San Diego Chargers, 49-26, in Super Bowl XXIX.

In 1998, a bomb rocked an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, killing security guard Robert Sanderson and critically injuring nurse Emily Lyons. (The bomber, Eric Rudolph, was captured in May 2003 and is serving a life sentence.)

In 2005, jetliners from China landed in rival Taiwan for the first time in 56 years. Serena Williams defeated Lindsay Davenport 2-6, 6-3, 6-0 in the Australian Open final.

In 2006, ABC "World News Tonight" co-anchor Bob Woodruff and a cameraman were seriously injured in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

Ten years ago: In a face-to-face confrontation, President Barack Obama chastised Republican lawmakers during a GOP event in Baltimore for opposing him on taxes, health care and the economic stimulus, while they accused him in turn of brushing off their ideas and driving up the national debt. A jury in Wichita, Kansas, swiftly convicted abortion opponent Scott Roeder (ROH'-dur) of murder in the shooting death of Dr. George Tiller, one of the only doctors to offer late-term abortions in the U.S. (Roeder was sentenced to life in prison.) Haitian authorities detained 10 U.S. Baptist missionaries who were transporting 33 children to a Dominican Republic orphanage, though as it turned out, most of the children had living parents; all of the Americans were later released.

Five years ago: Nine Democrats joined 53 Republicans in passing a Senate bill to construct the Keystone XL oil pipeline in defiance of a presidential veto threat. Rod McKuen, whose music, verse and spoken-word recordings made him one of the best-selling poets in history, died at 81.

One year ago: The largest utility in the U.S., Pacific Gas & Electric, filed for bankruptcy as it faced billions of dollars in potential damages from wildfires in California. Actor Jussie Smollett from the TV show "Empire" told police he had been physically attacked in Chicago by men who shouted racial and homophobic slurs. (Investigators concluded that Smollett made a false report because he believed it would give his career a boost; he was charged with 16 felony counts related to making a false report, but the charges were dropped without any admission of guilt.) The FBI wrapped up its investigation into the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history; it found that the high-stakes gambler who killed 58 country music fans in Las Vegas in 2017 sought notoriety, but that there was no "single or clear motivating factor."

Today's Birthdays: Writer-composer-lyricist Leslie Bricusse is 89. Feminist author Germaine Greer is 81. Actress Katharine Ross is 80. Feminist author Robin Morgan is 79. Actor Tom Selleck is 75. Rhythm-and-blues singer Bettye LaVette is 74. Actor Marc Singer is 72. Actress Ann Jillian is 70. Rock musician Louie Perez (Los Lobos) is 67. Rhythm-and-blues/funk singer Charlie Wilson is 67. Talk show host Oprah Winfrey is 66. Actor Terry Kinney is 66. Country singer Irlene Mandrell is 64. Actress Diane Delano is 63. Actress Judy Norton (TV: "The Waltons") is 62. Rock musician Johnny Spampinato is 61. Olympic gold-medal diver Greg Louganis is 60. Rock musician David Baynton-Power (James) is 59. Rock musician Eddie Jackson (Queensryche) is 59. Actor Nicholas Turturro is 58. Rock singer-musician Roddy Frame (Aztec Camera) is 56. Actor-director Edward Burns is 52. Actor Sam Trammell is 51. Actress Heather Graham is 50. Former House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., is 50. Actor Sharif Atkins is 45. Actress Sara Gilbert is 45. Actress Kelly Packard is 45. Actor Justin Hartley is 43. Actor Sam Jaeger is 43. Writer and TV personality Jedediah Bila is 41. Actor Andrew Keegan is 41. Actor Jason James Richter is 40. Blues musician Jonny Lang is 39. Pop-rock singer Adam Lambert (TV: "American Idol") is 38. Country singer Eric Paslay is 37.

Thought for Today: "Misquotations are the only quotations that are never misquoted." [-] Hesketh Pearson, British biographer (1887-1964).

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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