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End of America's longest war, recorded by rare AP 'flash'



In this image made through a night vision scope and provided by U.S. Central Command, Maj. Gen. Chris Donahue, commander of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps, boards a C-17 cargo plane at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, as the final American service member to depart Afghanistan. (U.S. Central Command via AP)

Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Aug. 31, 2021,

The Associated Press made the rare use of a “flash” on Monday afternoon.

WASHINGTON (AP) -- America's longest war ends after 20 years as last US troops depart Afghanistan, concluding final, frantic airlift.

A “flash” is saved for only the biggest news stories. AP’s internal guidelines say, “In the case of exceptionally important news, AP may send a ‘Flash.’” Click [here](#) for a 2019 Definitive Source story about the use of a “flash.” The story, written by our colleague **John Daniszewski**, AP vice president for Standards, notes that the AP has been sending flashes for at least 113 years, and probably longer.

The Pentagon made the announcement of the completion of Afghanistan withdrawal a little before 5 p.m. Eastern time. (Shared by Tom Jones, Poynter.org)

Have you been involved in the use of a “flash”? If so, send along your story behind it.

The death of actor Ed Asner – the gruff but lovable newsman on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” – hit home for AP Washington desk editor **Doug Daniel**.

Three decades ago, Daniel spent an afternoon at Asner’s home in California when he was in his 12th year of portraying Lou Grant. Daniel published a book in 1996 - [Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama](#).

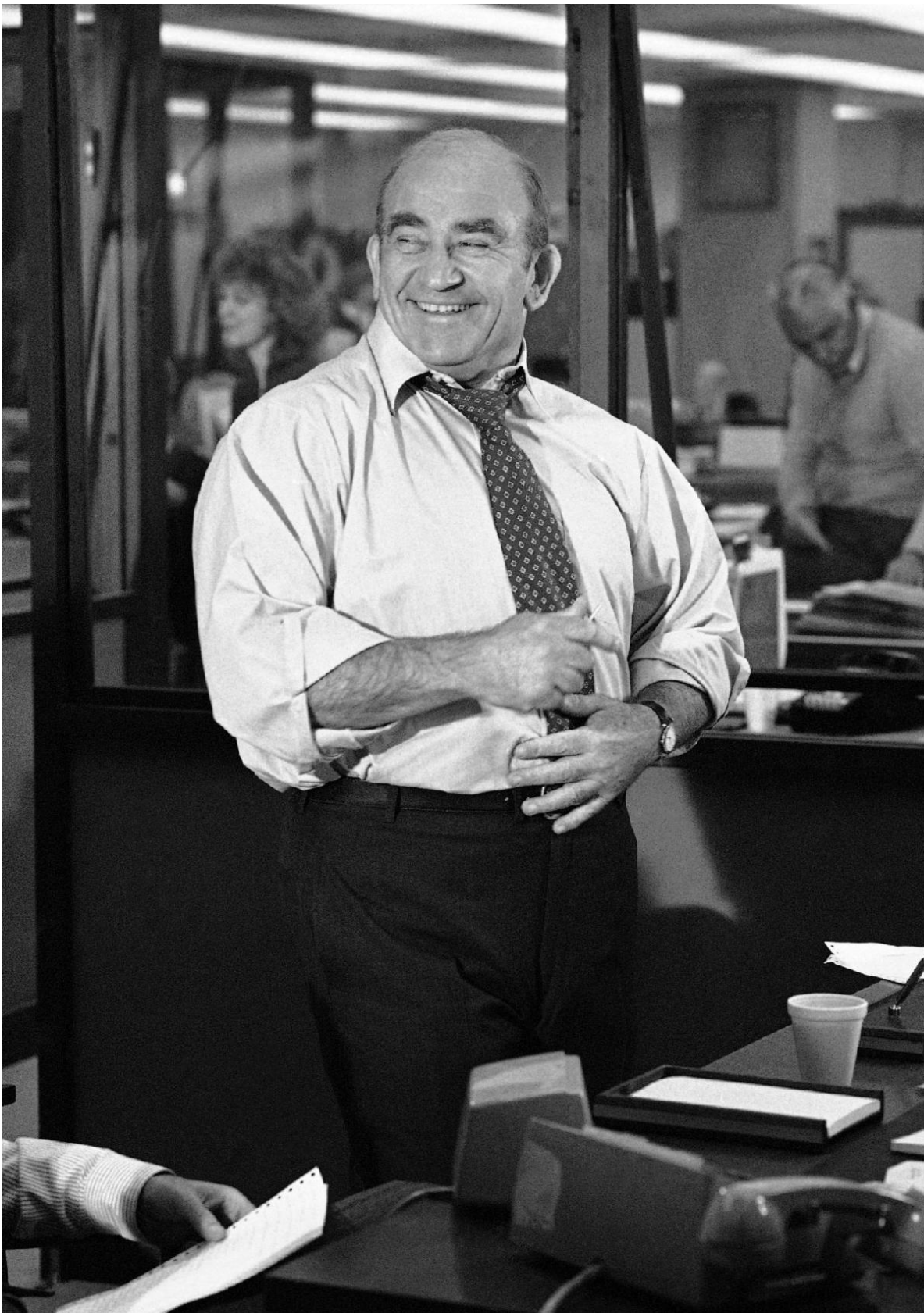
He shares memories of Asner, who died Sunday at the age of 91, as the lead story in today’s issue.



Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Ed Asner remembered: ‘Lou Grant’ and his four favors



Ed Asner on the set of "Lou Grant" in 1980. He played the title role on the show, a one-hour drama, the same role he had played for laughs on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." AP Photo/Wally Fong

By Doug Daniel ([Email](#)), Washington bureau

Ed Asner was widely known as a fine actor -- and as a pretty generous guy, especially with that most valuable asset: his time. Charities, liberal causes and especially those in need often turned to Ed for support because he cared and liked to help.

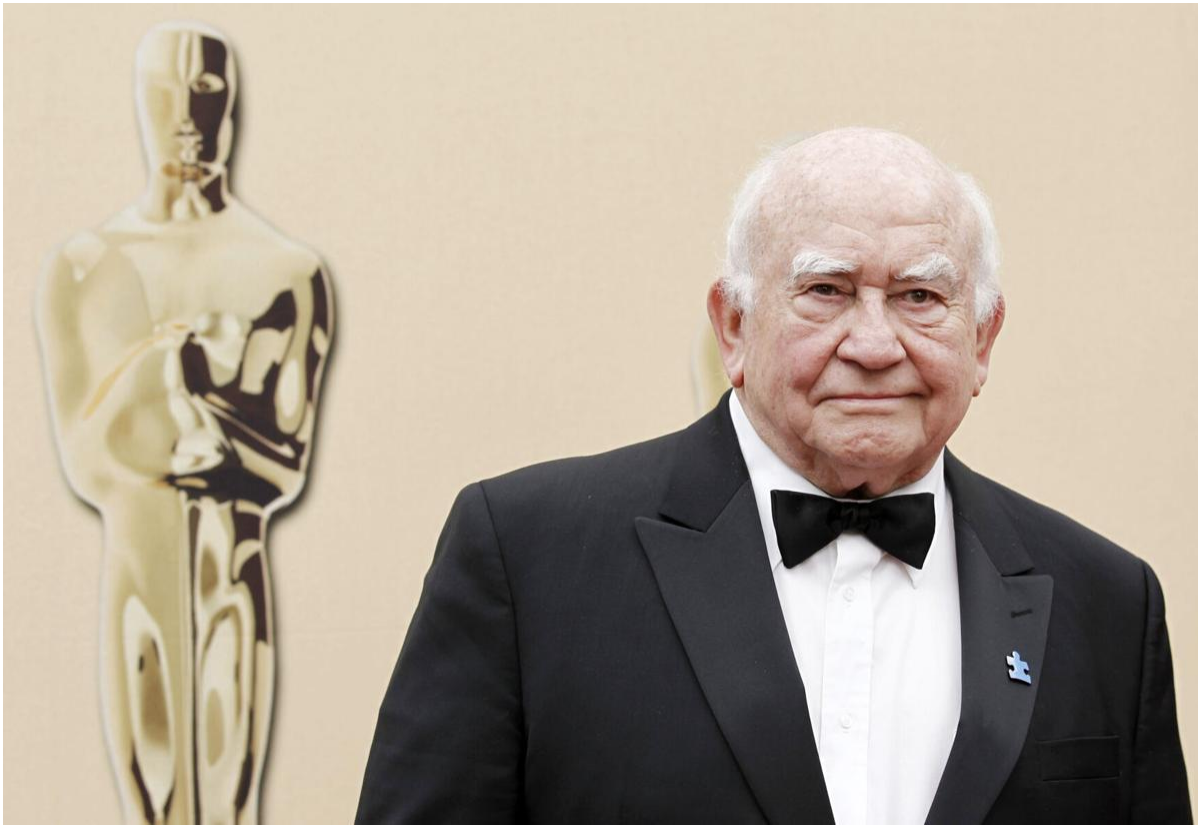
He certainly helped me. I spent an afternoon with Ed 30 years ago and spoke to him only a few times after that. Yet the favors he did for me back then made me a fan of the man, not just the actor.

The first favor came when Ed opened the door to his house, then a few blocks off Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, California. The relatively modest neighborhood was an easy walk to the MTM Studios, where he had worked for 12 years playing the character Lou Grant ("I hate spunk!") in two different TV series. Ed stood in the doorway wearing a blue track suit, still a little sweaty from an afternoon effort to control his weight.

It was December 1991 and I was a graduate student in mass communication at Ohio University. I had pitched my doctoral committee an unusual dissertation idea: a study of the drama series "Lou Grant" and how it depicted newspaper journalism to its weekly audience of 20 million to 25 million viewers. Ed was at the top of the list of actors, writers, producers and directors I hoped to interview. Opening his door to me opened many other doors.

We spent several hours talking about Lou Grant and "Lou Grant" (1977-82) including how difficult it was -- he called it "hell" -- to turn the supporting character on the sitcom "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" (1970-77) into a dramatic lead as well as a respected city editor in a show more about issues than laughs. Such a transformation hadn't been tried before. "I regarded it as the most impossible task in the world," Ed told me. Two Emmy awards for best actor in a drama suggest that he figured it out.





I was surprised that Ed didn't do research into modern journalism as many of his "Lou Grant" co-stars did. He relied instead on the show's writers and its technical adviser, a Los Angeles Times veteran. "My job is to act and to get the greatest meaning out of the simplest line," he told me. "And if I do that well and interestingly, then I will have done my part for journalism." Indeed, the writers and producers provided the push away from "The Front Page" stereotypes and toward the realism of the film "All the President's Men." But it was Ed and his co-stars who made viewers care about Lou, assistant city editor Art Donovan, managing editor Charlie Hume, reporters Joe Rossi and Billie Newman, photographer Dennis "The Animal" Price, and the publisher, Mrs. Pynchon.

"Lou Grant" ended its five-year run back in 1982, but the years hadn't dimmed Ed's pride in his work or the bitterness he felt over its cancellation. His activism on behalf of people in El Salvador that year was misreported by some news media and mislabeled anti-American by some conservatives, who called for advertiser boycotts of the show. Ed became a hot potato, which tarnished the show's image as a prestigious production and made its relatively low ratings seem no longer worth the trouble.

The experience of being the focus of critical news stories changed Ed's view of the press. "Those five years on 'Lou Grant,' I was like a sacred cow. Nobody ever touched me," he told me. "I realized that as long as things were kosher, I was the greatest p.r. implement known to journalism. ... But once I showed some warts and was no longer the great p.r. vehicle for journalism, then they pulled out all the stops." Hearing Lou Grant say the average Russian citizen probably had a better awareness of the truth than the average American -- the Russian knew he wasn't hearing the total truth -- might have made Mrs. Pynchon blush. For me it was gold.

The second favor Ed did for me came at the end of the first. It turned out that he had a personal archive, if you could call it that: several manila envelopes stuffed with newspaper clippings from the five years of "Lou Grant" sitting on an upper shelf in a closet. Before the internet and online searches, his archive was a godsend for a researcher. When Ed agreed to let me borrow the clippings for an extended trip to Kinko's copy center, he asked, "You aren't going to fuck them up, are you?"

Fast forward to 1994 and favor No. 3. I had finished my dissertation, earned my doctoral degree and turned the manuscript into a book for Syracuse University Press. At my request Ed wrote a foreword for the book, "Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama," giving it even more credibility.

In the same vein came a fourth and final favor: He told me and others that I had done a good job. When the book came out in 1995 Ed called me -- I was teaching journalism at Kansas State University -- and complimented my work. He said he felt better now that somewhere was the truth behind the controversy over his activities and the cancellation. In an inscription for a signed copy auctioned for charity Ed wrote: "I suffered and I celebrated as I read his account ... but to me (even in the critical areas, warts and all) his history and his truth are all I could ask for." I couldn't have asked for a better review.

Later still, Ed told a friend of mine in a letter that the book had "arrived at a low period of my life and did much to sustain me." I didn't realize he was that down. Back when we had spoken in 1995, I asked Ed if he had considered writing a memoir. He told me he had written a Michael Moore-style takedown of conservatives but that no publisher wanted it. Ed said he was told he was passe with no TV show on the air. My guess is that publishers predicted their readers wanted to hear from gruff but likeable Lou Grant rather than angry Ed Asner.

The reading public caught up with Ed in 2017, the year his book "The Grouchy Historian," came out. A broadside against "right-wing wackos" probably fit the Trump era far better than his previous effort would have landed in the middle of the Clinton years. Just last year Ed released a rather thin memoir, "Son of a Junkman." In between, Ed kept working on TV, in movies -- the animated "Up" won an Oscar -- and occasionally in theater. From what I read over the years he was never far from a protest or a cause.

Or from Lou Grant, an indelible character who seemed to have more than a little of Ed Asner inside him. While we were talking that winter afternoon in 1991, a knock at the front door interrupted us. A young man was selling magazine subscriptions, but instead of his patter he blurted out, "Hey, you're Lou Grant!" Ed was willing to buy a subscription to Esquire to help the cause, but that wasn't on the guy's list. Instead, Ed gave him a few dollars for a Coke and sent him on his way.

I think Lou Grant would have approved.

Connecting mailbox

More on that World Airways flight

Neal Ulevich (Email) – Arnold Zeitlin's piece on the evacuation aircraft in Monday's Connecting: Some years ago I attended a Vietnam conference in Texas where I met the pilot of that World Airways flight. The aircraft flew from Danang to Saigon with the rear boarding airstair down, from takeoff to landing. The pilot told me World Airways boss Ed Daly, who was aboard the flight, pulled a revolver to try to control the desperate parade of South Vietnamese soldiers entering the Boeing 727. The soldiers ignored him and in the crush knocked the pistol out of his hand. The pilot said the weapon fell into the airstair and jammed it. He made the decision to take off immediately, the only escape from the airport chaos. We cannot know Daly's state of mind at that moment, but he did spend much of his time in Saigon drinking. The pilot also told me he wondered if he had enough fuel to reach Saigon - the lowered airstair was a serious drag - and thought to land at Phan Rang to refuel, a plan scotched when he learned Phan Rang had just fallen to Hanoi troops.

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Criticism of photo caption is wrong

Tom Eblen (Email) - It is fact, not opinion, that the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 was made up of former President Donald Trump's supporters. Ed McCullough's criticism of the AP photo caption is wrong.

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Came to see Lou Grant, instead got Sanford and Son

Dave Tomlin (Email) - Former AP Pittsburgh sports writer Gary Mihoces brought his brother up to see the bureau when it occupied a cramped, tired-looking space in an old building on Liberty Avenue. It was 1979 or so, and the office, always untidy at best, was jammed with junked printers and reperforators removed from newsrooms that had just installed their first computer systems. "Holy s###," Gary's brother muttered as he surveyed the mess. "I came up here hoping to see 'Lou Grant' and instead I'm getting 'Sanford and Son.'"

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Misleading coverage of Hurricane impact

John Wylie (Email) – In watching coverage of the hurricane, I see that a battle I've been fighting for almost 50 years is still not resolved.

Simply put, as you probably know, a utility CUSTOMER is NOT the same as a PERSON.

I've advocated for years for style books to reflect that reality by using two little extra words in first reference: Instead of saying 900,000 customers (which in utility speak is the number of affected meters and/or physical locations with multiple meters under a

single billing account number). Don't use customer use the phrase homes and businesses.

Obviously a customer does not equal a single person in most cases. If the customer is a home, it may house a couple, a couple with parents and children, or even a couple with parents, children, and an older offspring who has a partner. So in that case, treating that customer as a person understates the number of people by as few as two-fold or in the last case assuming the parents, four offspring with one having a partner, nine-fold.

I hate to pick on any one outlet, but I noticed the same issue coming up in a breaking news story from The Washington Post and a breaking news broadcast from CNN. CNN had converted to referring strictly to customers in less than an hour, but that really doesn't help Joe Sixpack.

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A California get-together



Rachel Ambrose got together with her Los Angeles bureau chief, Andy Lippman, Sunday. The long-delayed lunch took place at the Norton Simon Art Museum in Pasadena, Calif. Photo by Kitty Felde, who filed news out of the LA bureau for KPCC-FM in Pasadena.

Majdanek: 'The most terrible place on the face of the earth'



Russian troops examine a crematorium at Majdanek

Marc Lancaster
WW2 on Deadline

On August 27, 1944, a group of about 30 American and British correspondents got a firsthand look at the remnants of the atrocities committed by Germany against European civilians.

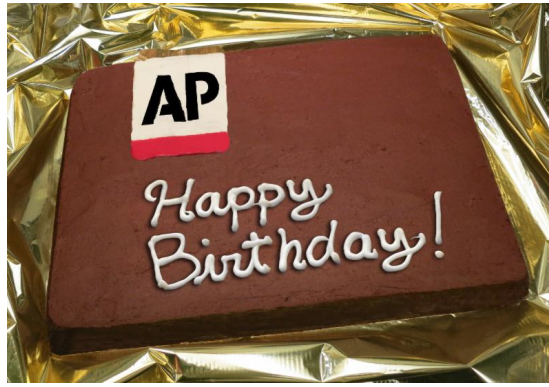
"I have just seen the most terrible place on the face of the earth -- the German concentration camp at Majdanek, which was a veritable River Rouge for the production of death, in which it is estimated by Soviet and Polish authorities that as many as 1,500,000 persons from nearly every country in Europe were killed in the last three years," wrote W.H. Lawrence in his front-page New York Times story.

The Majdanek facility — described as an “annihilation camp” by John Evans of Reuters — was located outside Lublin, Poland. It opened in the fall of 1941 and operated with increasingly horrifying efficiency until the Red Army arrived on July 24, 1944. Its existence was no secret; Majdanek is mentioned occasionally in U.S. newspaper dispatches for months before the liberation, usually in Jewish or Catholic publications.

But because it was the first of the major Nazi death camps liberated by Allied forces, it offered the first chance for the press to examine the infrastructure of Germany's industrialized killing machinery.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



John Dowling - jdowlingchicago@gmail.com

Dana Fields - farceide@aol.com

Ellen Nimmons - enimmons@optonline.net

Nancy Shulins - nshulins@mindspring.com

Jeff Ulbrich - jeulbrich@hotmail.com

And a day late to...

Kristi Chew - kachew1@aol.com

Stories of interest

Why Jim Cantore and hurricane reporters in the eye of the storm matter (Poynter)



A look at NBC News' Tom Llamas covering Hurricane Ida on Sunday. (Courtesy: NBC News)

By: Tom Jones

One of the most powerful storms to ever hit the U.S. — 16 years to the day that Hurricane Katrina hit the same part of the country — dramatically overtook the news on Sunday.

Right there in the middle of it was Jim Cantore. You know Cantore. He's the Weather Channel meteorologist with a cult-like following for going, literally, into the storm. There's a joke that really isn't funny: If there's nasty weather out there, the last person you want to see in your town is Jim Cantore.

And there he was on Sunday.

Wearing a baseball helmet (not a hat, a helmet) and rain gear, Cantore stood on Canal Street in New Orleans, shouldering against a driving rain and winds gusts of over 80 mph. Toppled and mangled garbage dumpsters were strewn around him. Shouting into a microphone, Cantore tried to describe the devastating power of the Category 4 hurricane. He looked like he might get blown down the alley at any second. There were few more haunting images than Cantore standing on a pitch-black street in downtown New Orleans on Sunday night as power was out everywhere around him.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lindel Hutson.

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Man confronts NBC News correspondent Shaquille Brewster on live TV during Ida coverage (NBC)



By David K. Li

An irate man confronted NBC News' Shaquille Brewster on live television Monday as he was reporting on Tropical Storm Ida in coastal Mississippi.

Brewster was doing a live MSNBC shot from Gulfport when a white pickup truck pulled up behind him and a man jumped out and sprinted toward him.

Moments later, the man got in Brewster's face before he calmly ended the report. The man could be heard shouting at Brewster to "report accurately."

"Hey, hey, hey," concerned anchor Craig Melvin said. "We're going to check in with Shaq Brewster just to make sure all is well. There's a lot of crazy out there, a lot of crazy."

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

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Why Lou Grant mattered (in memory of Ed Asner) (Quill)

By Bill Hirschman

In the mid- to late 1970s, hundreds, perhaps thousands of young people were inspired to become journalists after seeing the movie “All The President’s Men.”

But for those who already were journalists, even those of us with only a few years in the trenches, the real cultural avatar of the time was the CBS-TV show “Lou Grant.”

And at its core, barking orders from behind his desk, clad in rolled up shirt sleeves and loosened tie, was Ed Asner as the city editor we only dreamed of having.

Despite a long and varied career, for many of us, the death of Asner on Sunday at age 91 reminded us of the loss of a fictional recreation that, perhaps for the first time in the mass media, reflected the complex reality of our profession.

The Los Angeles Tribune that Lou helmed from 1977-1982 memorialized a radically different world of journalism from today—far, far from perfect but still generally respected as an integral facet of the American democratic paradigm.

Read more [here](#).

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Can Afghanistan’s Leading Broadcaster Survive the Taliban? (New York Times)

By Dan Bilefsky

Over the past two decades, the Afghan broadcaster Tolo has been known for provocative programs like “Burka Avenger,” in which an animated superheroine uses martial arts to vanquish villains trying to shut down a girls’ school.

Millions of Afghans have also tuned in to its racy Turkish soap operas, its popular “6 P.M. News” and the reality show “Afghan Star,” featuring female singers dancing energetically on Afghanistan’s version of “American Idol.”

Since the Taliban captured Afghanistan’s capital, Kabul, on Aug. 15, however, Tolo’s usual lineup is being supplemented by something else: educational programming about Islamic morality. Whether its menu of pop music and female television hosts will survive in the Taliban’s new Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will be a barometer of the insurgents’ tolerance for dissenting views and values.

“To be honest, I’m still surprised we are up and running,” said Saad Mohseni, Tolo’s co-owner, an Australian-Afghan former investment banker who started Moby Group, which owns Tolo, in 2002. “We know what the Taliban stand for.”

Read more [here](#).

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Press Democrat launches investigative team (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)

By RICHARD GREEN, Editor

In far too many American newsrooms and media organizations, there has been a sharp decline in the number of journalists charged with keeping politicians and public agencies honest.

It's easy to identify the causes: A dramatic drop in print advertising, economic uncertainty triggered by the COVID-19 health crisis and readers' shift from ink-on-paper to smartphones and the digital space.

The results have been painful. Once-robust staffs have been stripped of resources. Jobs have been jettisoned; salaries frozen. And today, a diminishing number of newsrooms has the means to hold those in power to account.

Here at The Press Democrat, we're taking a different approach.

I am proud to say we are expanding our content staff and launching a five-person investigative and enterprise reporting team.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Marty Thompson.



Celebrating AP's 175th

AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



The AP has created a store with 175th anniversary merchandise available for purchase, as well as items branded with some of AP's most historic logos.

Click [here](#).

AP Through Time: A Photographic History



AP Through Time: A Photographic History” - created by Director of Corporate Archives, Valerie Komor, is a keepsake commemorating AP's 175th year. Small in size (6 ¾ x 6 ¾ in.), it is organized chronologically in eight segments that trace the broad outlines of AP's development from 1846 to the present: Beginnings, Evolution, New Century, Modernity, Expansion, One World, Speed, and Transformation. Click [here](#) to view and make an order.

AP at 175 video

This video celebrates the unique role AP has played since 1846.

Oops!

The embed code for this video is not valid.



Today in History - Aug. 31, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 31, the 243rd day of 2021. There are 122 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 31, 1980, Poland's Solidarity labor movement was born with an agreement signed in Gdansk (guh-DANSK') that ended a 17-day-old strike.

On this date:

In 1886, an earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 7.3 devastated Charleston, South Carolina, killing at least 60 people, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1939, the first issue of Marvel Comics, featuring the Human Torch, was published by Timely Publications in New York.

In 1972, at the Munich (MYOO'-nik) Summer Olympics, American swimmer Mark Spitz won his fourth and fifth gold medals in the 100-meter butterfly and 800-meter freestyle relay; Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut won gold medals in floor exercise and the balance beam.

In 1986, 82 people were killed when an Aeromexico jetliner and a small private plane collided over Cerritos, California. The Soviet passenger ship Admiral Nakhimov collided with a merchant vessel in the Black Sea, causing both to sink; up to 448 people reportedly died.

In 1992, white separatist Randy Weaver surrendered to authorities in Naples, Idaho, ending an 11-day siege by federal agents that had claimed the lives of Weaver's wife, son and a deputy U.S. marshal. (Weaver was acquitted of murder and all other charges in connection with the confrontation; he was convicted of failing to appear for

trial on firearms charges and was sentenced to 18 months in prison but given credit for 14 months he'd already served.)

In 1994, the Irish Republican Army declared a cease-fire. Russia officially ended its military presence in the former East Germany and the Baltics after half a century.

In 1996, three adults and four children drowned when their vehicle rolled into John D. Long Lake in Union, South Carolina; they had gone to see a monument to the sons of Susan Smith, who had drowned the two boys in Oct. 1994.

In 1997, Prince Charles brought Princess Diana home for the last time, escorting the body of his former wife to a Britain that was shocked, grief-stricken and angered by her death in a Paris traffic accident earlier that day.

In 2005, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin reported "a significant number of dead bodies in the water" following Hurricane Katrina; Nagin ordered virtually the entire police force to abandon search-and-rescue efforts and to instead stop increasingly hostile thieves.

In 2010, President Barack Obama ended the U.S. combat mission in Iraq, declaring no victory after seven years of bloodshed and telling those divided over the war in his country and around the world: "It is time to turn the page."

In 2018, Aretha Franklin, the "Queen of Soul," was laid to rest after an eight-hour funeral at a Detroit church, where guests included Bill and Hillary Clinton, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson.

In 2019, a gunman carried out a shooting rampage that stretched ten miles between the Texas communities of Midland and Odessa, leaving seven people dead before police killed the gunman outside a movie theater in Odessa.

Ten years ago: The Wartime Contracting Commission issued a report saying the U.S. had lost billions of dollars to waste and fraud in Iraq and Afghanistan and stood to repeat that in future wars without big changes in how the government awarded and managed contracts for battlefield support and reconstruction projects.

Five years ago: On Mexican soil for the first time as the Republican presidential nominee, a firm but measured Donald Trump defended the right of the United States to build a massive border wall along its southern flank, standing up for the centerpiece of his immigration plan during a joint press conference with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. The first commercial flight between the United States and Cuba in more than a half century, a JetBlue Airbus A320, landed in the central city of Santa Clara, re-establishing regular air service severed at the height of the Cold War. Brazil's Senate voted to remove President Dilma Rousseff from office. (Rousseff was accused of breaking fiscal laws in her management of the federal budget.)

One year ago: At a rally in Pittsburgh, Democrat Joe Biden resoundingly condemned violent protesters and called for their prosecution; he accused President Donald Trump of causing the divisions that had ignited the violence. Trump reiterated that he blamed radical troublemakers who he said were stirred up and backed by Biden. The U.S. Open, the first Grand Slam tennis event in nearly six months, began in New York

with no fans in attendance because of the pandemic. The family of John Thompson announced that the former Georgetown University basketball coach had died at the age of 78; he was the first Black coach to lead a team to the NCAA men's championship. Police in Rwanda announced the arrest on terrorism charges of Paul Rusesabagina, who'd been portrayed in the film "Hotel Rwanda" as a hero who saved the lives of more than 1,200 people from the country's 1994 genocide. The Federal Aviation Administration said it had granted Amazon approval to deliver packages by drones; Amazon said it was still testing and flying the drones.

Today's Birthdays: Rock musician Jerry Allison (Buddy Holly and the Crickets) is 82. Actor Jack Thompson is 81. Violinist Itzhak Perlman is 76. Singer Van Morrison is 76. Rock musician Rudolf Schenker (The Scorpions) is 73. Actor Richard Gere is 72. Actor Stephen Henderson is 72. Olympic gold medal track and field athlete Edwin Moses is 66. Rock singer Glenn Tilbrook (Squeeze) is 64. Rock musician Gina Schock (The Go-Go's) is 64. Singer Tony DeFranco (The DeFranco Family) is 62. R&B musician Larry Waddell (Mint Condition) is 58. Actor Jaime P. Gomez is 56. Rock musician Jeff Russo (Tonic) is 52. Singer-composer Deborah Gibson is 51. Actor Zack Ward is 51. Golfer Padraig (PAH'-drig) Harrington is 50. Actor Chris Tucker is 49. Actor Sara Ramirez is 46. R&B singer Tamara (Trina & Tamara) is 44.

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.

Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

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