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Connecting November 30, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Nov. 30, 2021,

AP spread racist Jim Crow-era coverage to a national audience

That headline topped a story released Monday by the Howard Center For Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland and which we bring you as the lead of today's Connecting.

An analysis of newspaper and wire clippings by the Howard Center, it said, found AP stories labeled Black lynching victims as fiends, ravishers and monsters in stories distributed to a national audience.

Amanda Barrett, AP vice president and head of news audience, was quoted, "Some of our past coverage was good. Some of our past coverage is problematic...Looking at it, we have to think about how we want to do differently and think about who's not in the coverage, whose perspective is left out. And where we need to grow from."

The story was shared on LinkedIn by **Sonya Ross**, editor in chief of Black Women Unmuted and a 27-year veteran of The Associated Press who was Race & Ethnicity Editor in Washington for the last nine years of her AP career before she left in 2019.

"Can't say this is a surprise, given how long The Associated Press has been around," she said in the LinkedIn post. "Even so, I applaud the student journalists behind this project for their clear-eyed analysis of American media's complicity in fomenting

racism over the generations. Kudos to The AP too, for addressing its unflattering past with honesty and candor.”

Also quoted from AP was **John Daniszewski**, AP vice president and editor at large for standards, who acknowledged shortcomings in AP’s coverage of lynchings and racial terror.

“We know of no instance in which the AP deliberately promoted racist violence,” Daniszewski said in an email to the Howard Center. “However, the AP reported on lynching and other forms of racial violence over many years, sometimes in disturbing detail with flaws and omissions. These shortcomings clearly reflected the attitudes and prejudices of the era in which these reports were written but that is no excuse and we regret them.”

This work is a collaboration of the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism and Capital News Service at the University of Maryland, Morgan State University, Hampton University, Howard University, Morehouse College, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University and the University of Arkansas.

In the story, **Linn Washington Jr.**, who teaches journalism at Temple University, said that in the wake of the racial reckoning spurred by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, news consumers and journalists are demanding more from newsrooms, not just the AP, and that accountability starts in the newsroom where better coverage comes from a racially and culturally diverse staff.

The story said:

AP’s news management is 81% white. The AP reported in October that 76% of full-time employees in the U.S. are also white, while 8% are Latino or Latina, 7% are Black and 6% are Asian. Compared to the racial breakdown of the U.S., where Black people make up over 13% of the population and Hispanic people are nearly 19%, people of color are underrepresented in the AP newsroom.

Barrett said over the last three years, 50% of new hires inside and outside the newsroom — including for internships, fellowships and full-time roles — were people of color.

“We (have) a concerted effort to make our culture inclusive, and allow people to have a sense of belonging and grow their careers, and grow into journalists doing the best work that they can do,” Barrett said. “I know that our past coverage doesn’t always reflect that. But we are learning and growing. I think we will continue to do so in the future.”

AP does not have percentage goals for its hiring, she said.

Your thoughts are welcomed.

Here’s to a good day ahead – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

AP spread racist Jim Crow-era coverage to a national audience

A BLACK FIEND

**The Monster Expiates His
Horrible Crime.**

**He Violates a Child, Then Tears Her
Limb from Limb.**

**Infuriated Citizens Scour the Coun-
try Until They Find Him.**

**They Torture the Wretch With Redhot
Irons from Feet to Head, Then
Burn Him at the
Stake.**

By Telegraph to The Times.

PARIS (Tex.,) Feb. 1.—[By the Associated Press.] Henry Smith, the negro ravisher of four-year-old Myrtle Vance, has expiated in part his awful crime by death at the stake. Ever since the perpetration of his terrible deed this city and the entire surrounding country have been in a wild frenzy of excitement. When the news came last night that he was captured at Hope, Ark., and identified, the city was wild with joy over the apprehension of the brute. Hundreds of people poured into the city from the adjoining country, and word was passed from lip to lip that the punishment of the fiend should be death by fire. The whisky-shops were closed, unruly mobs were dispersed, schools were dismissed by proclamation

A headline in the Feb 2, 1893, Los Angeles Times calls lynching victim Henry Smith "A Black Fiend." The story, from the Associated Press, labeled Smith a "negro ravisher." (Digital image courtesy of Newspapers.com)

By Tatyana Monnay And Eve Sampson
The Howard Center For Investigative Journalism

When 17-year-old Henry Smith left Paris, Texas, after being questioned in the rape and murder of a white toddler, a railroad company offered free transportation to anyone who wanted to take part in the manhunt for him.

Scores joined the chase, catching the Black teen in Arkansas and sending him back to a lynching posse in Paris, Texas. On Feb. 1, 1893, the mob tortured Smith with red-hot irons before burning him alive in front of a crowd estimated at 10,000. He had not been charged with the crime.

Newspapers in Los Angeles and Indianapolis ran the Associated Press dispatches about the killing. Other papers also ran the AP story, but didn't credit the wire service.

"Henry Smith, the negro ravisher of four-year-old Myrtle Vance has expiated in part his awful crime by death at the stake," the stories begin.

"Every train that came in was loaded to its utmost capacity, and there were demands at many points for special trains to bring people here to see the unparalleled punishment of the fiend for his unparalleled crime," the story reported.

The AP, along with its member papers, reported in depth on these extra-judicial killings by racist, white mobs throughout the late 1800s and 1900s. The news outlets labeled Black men, sometimes without any attribution, as rapists of white women and murderers of white men, women and children. The AP story about Smith, for example, called him a child rapist and murderer without citing any official source.

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On the road to the scene of the fire, Porter stopped, with the rope about his neck, and reading St. Luke and the Psalms, while The Times' photographer took a time picture. He seemed glad to pose.

In this 1900 photo, Preston Porter is being led to his death with a rope around his neck. He was reportedly reading a Bible when photographed. (Photo by Denver Times)

"Some of our past coverage was good. Some of our past coverage is problematic," said Amanda Barrett, AP vice president and head of news audience. "Looking at it, we have to think about how we want to do differently and think about who's not in the coverage, whose perspective is left out. And where we need to grow from."

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Read more [here](#).

Connecting series:

Where were you when JFK was assassinated?

Carl P. Leubsdorf ([Email](#)) - Where was I? Taking a nap.

As the most junior member of the AP's Washington bureau, having arrived five months earlier from the General Desk, I was scheduled to come in at 10:30 pm that Friday night. I was home, trying to catnap after picking up one child at pre-school and waiting to get the others, and I had a music station on in the background. I kept hearing interruptions, but it took a while for my half-asleep brain to focus on what the announcer was saying. Once I realized what had happened, I immediately called in to the office, figuring that my services would be needed at once. No, I was told; just come in at your regular time. The fate of a junior staffer, working the overnight. In retrospect, that made sense; the bureau was fully staffed during the day and all regular news promptly came to a halt. But a fresh crew would be needed for the overnight (there were still many Saturday PMs papers that relied on the AP). And as it turned out, I got to write the PMs follows on several aspects of the assassination; I still have one of the clips, laying out the next day's plans. Eighteen years later, I got to play a much larger role when an attempted presidential assassination again stunned the nation, this time when John Hinckley Jr. shot and nearly killed President Ronald Reagan outside the Washington Hilton Hotel. Having moved on from AP and The Baltimore Sun, I was now the new Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News. This time, I got to write the main story, both for an EXTRA that The News published at mid-afternoon and for the next day's paper.

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Different JFK Recollection: Co-workers Covered 1963 Assassination

Diana Heidgerd ([Email](#)) - I want to thank Paul Stevens for compiling the Connecting series: "Where you were when JFK was assassinated?"

The topic brought up much different memories for me, not as being a child in South Dakota at the time of President John F. Kennedy's slaying but instead as an adult in awe hearing fellow AP staffers in Texas talk about how they covered the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination and the aftermath.

I joined AP in March 1983 in Miami, after working in radio & TV in the Midwest. I relocated to Dallas two years later as Texas broadcast editor. One of the first things I thought, upon accepting the promotion, was -- "Dallas, that's where Kennedy was killed." For many years, a copy of the AP bulletin about the president being shot was tacked on a wall in the Dallas AP office break room.

[AP Was There: The Assassination of President Kennedy | AP News](#)

I'd like to take a minute to praise some of those AP folks who did their jobs that life-changing day when JFK was assassinated and stayed with the story during the weeks, months and years that followed.

I remember the first time I heard now-late administrative assistant Anne Jackson, who was the heart and soul of the Texas AP for decades, talk about answering phones in the Dallas office amid the chaos.

Longtime AP correspondent Mike Cochran, when prodded, would talk about covering the sparse funeral for Lee Harvey Oswald and being a pallbearer because nobody else was around to do it. Mike in 2013, during the 50th anniversary/observation of the assassination, shared his thoughts.

[Ex-AP writer recalls serving as Oswald pallbearer | AP News](#)

Denne Freeman, who went on to become Texas AP sports editor, covered JFK's death while working for UPI.

Both men, now long retired, attended the September AP Connecting Regional Reunion in the Dallas area.



TROPHY CLUB, Texas _ Former Texas AP staffers Kelley Shannon and Mike Cochran visited on Sept. 17, 2021, during the Connecting Regional Reunion in the Dallas area. (Photo by Diana Heidgerd)

It always struck me that this long-ago horrific story, which changed the world, was covered by people I proudly knew as my co-workers.

My husband and I, in mid-November, were in the Washington DC area and toured Arlington National Cemetery. It was my first visit. As I stood at Kennedy's gravesite, I mourned his loss but also thought of all those Texas journalists whose dedicated efforts and bylines became part of JFK history.

Memories of Mercer Bailey

Jim Bagby (Email) - I left a sports writers and editors job I loved (except for the pay) in southwest Oklahoma to come to Kansas City. The first voice I heard was growly COB Fred Moen as he told me over the phone that I was hired and I should get here without delay.

The next was that of ACOB Mercer Bailey, giving me my basic marching orders about how to find the Star Building and to report for the midnight shift. Doug Tucker earlier in this space described that deep voice as always retaining its deep Georgia accent

I wondered a little what I'd gotten into. In person, both administrators struck me, initially, as imposing as they sounded. But as everyone else has noted, both Fred and Mercer proved to be perfectly easy to get along with if you did your job swiftly and accurately (and frugally in Fred's case).

Mercer Bailey had arrived in KC only one year before me, and I spent my entire 33-year AP career working with him – and an equally talented cast of writers, editors and photographers. It could have taken me awhile to realize that I'd begun with the AP at age 28 and Mercer had been a copy boy since 17 (not long after I was editor of my high school paper). But he was glad to remind me, while he taught me many things and better ways to do them.

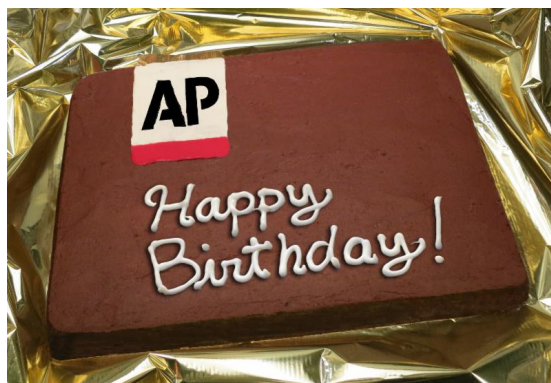


When he was copy boy there was no AP broadcast; I became broadcast editor for our regional bureau in 1974. Like most of the veterans, MGB was a newspaper man to the bone, but he saw the value that broadcast brought to AP – especially in later years, and our bond became stronger.

Mercer and I shared a great fondness for fishing. He was not one to take office time to talk about his personal life, but his face would light up when the subject of fishing came up.

After he retired, he usually came to our AP retiree lunches and everyone enjoyed the conversation. He will be missed on all counts.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Chris Pederson – ccpederson@caregivershome.com

Stories of interest

Karine Jean-Pierre becomes second Black woman behind White House briefing podium (Politico)

By NICK NIEDZWIADK

Karine Jean-Pierre on Wednesday sought to downplay the historic nature of her leading the White House's daily press briefing, saying the Biden administration has embarked on a broad effort to ensure representation.

"I appreciate the historic nature," she said when prompted by a reporter. "I really do, but I believe that being behind this podium, being in this room, being in this building is not about one person. It's about what we do on behalf of the American people."

With Wednesday's appearance, Jean-Pierre — the principal deputy press secretary — became just the second Black woman to ever take the podium and the first since Judy Smith did so in 1991 under former president George H.W. Bush. She's also the first openly gay spokeswoman to field questions in the briefing room.

"The president believes representation matters," Jean-Pierre said. "This is not about me, this is not about any of us."

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

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Chris Cuomo's off-air role: Brother Andrew's strategist (AP)

By MICHAEL R. SISK and MARINA VILLENEUVE

NEW YORK (AP) — CNN anchor Chris Cuomo had a bigger role than previously known in helping defend his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, from sexual harassment allegations that forced him out of office, newly released transcripts and text messages show.

The TV journalist offered to reach out to "sources," including other reporters, to find out whether more women were going to come forward and relayed what he was hearing to his brother's advisers, according to the materials made public Monday.

He also sparred with the former governor's aides over strategy, urging an apologetic tone and critiquing an early statement that he saw as downplaying the allegations. He accused a top aide of hiding information from his brother.

At the same time, Chris Cuomo told investigators he spoke regularly with his brother, coaching him on his response and admonishing him for "bad judgment."

Read more [here](#).

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Chinese province targets journalists, foreign students with planned new surveillance system (Reuters)

BEIJING, Nov 29 (Reuters) - Security officials in one of China's largest provinces have commissioned a surveillance system they say they want to use to track journalists and international students among other "suspicious people", documents reviewed by Reuters showed.

A July 29 tender document published on the Henan provincial government's procurement website - reported in the media for the first time - details plans for a system that can compile individual files on such persons of interest coming to Henan using 3,000 facial recognition cameras that connect to various national and regional databases.

A 5 million yuan (\$782,000) contract was awarded on Sept. 17 to Chinese tech company Neusoft, which was required to finish building the system within two months of signing the contract, separate documents published on the Henan government procurement website showed. Reuters was unable to establish if the system is currently operating.

Shenyang-based Neusoft did not respond to requests for comment.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

The Final Word

Oh! Christmas tree? Cardboard display is the talk of a town



This Nov. 26, 2021 photo shows "The Giving Tree," a Christmas tree display made out of cardboard at Asbury Park NJ's Convention Hall that is delighting many in the seaside town, but dismaying others who miss the fresh-cut natural tree that is usually on display there during the holidays. (AP Photo/Wayne Parry)

By WAYNE PARRY

ASBURY PARK, N.J. (AP) — It has been called beautiful, awesome and brilliant, a transcendent work of art that reimagines the holiday experience with local touches of the Jersey Shore.

It also has been called ridiculous, ugly and hideous, something akin to a pile of Amazon shipping boxes or a giant cat-scratching post.

Good grief!

A fresh-cut natural Christmas tree usually graces the Grand Arcade at Convention Hall on Asbury Park's historic boardwalk.

But this year, in its place is art made of cardboard in the shape of a tree that also incorporates elements of the seashore, the city's architecture and its rich musical heritage, which most notably includes Bruce Springsteen. It is designed to be recycled after it is dismantled.

"I like that it's different," said Chris Trifari of neighboring Neptune as he strolled by the tree. "It's pretty interesting."

Read more [here](#).



Celebrating AP's 175th

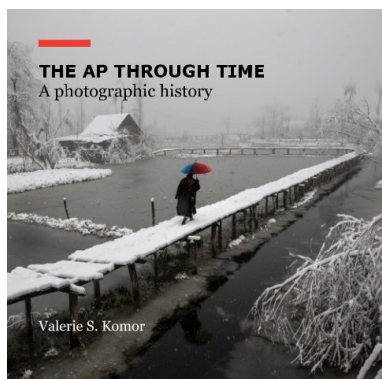
AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



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.

Today in History - Nov. 30, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 30, the 334th day of 2021. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 30, 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Brady Bill, which required a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases and background checks of prospective buyers.

On this date:

In 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris for ending the Revolutionary War; the Treaty of Paris was signed in September 1783.

In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.

In 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens — better known as Mark Twain — was born in Florida, Missouri.

In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1900, Irish writer Oscar Wilde died in Paris at age 46.

In 1965, "Unsafe at Any Speed" by Ralph Nader, a book highly critical of the U.S. auto industry, was first released in hardcover by Grossman Publishers.

In 1981, the United States and the Soviet Union opened negotiations in Geneva aimed at reducing nuclear weapons in Europe.

In 1982, the Michael Jackson album "Thriller" was released by Epic Records.

In 2000, Al Gore's lawyers battled for his political survival in the Florida and U.S. Supreme Courts; meanwhile, GOP lawmakers in Tallahassee moved to award the presidency to George W. Bush in case the courts did not by appointing their own slate of electors.

In 2010, the Obama administration announced that all 197 airlines that flew to the U.S. had begun collecting names, genders and birth dates of passengers so the government could check them against terror watch lists before they boarded flights.

In 2013, Paul Walker, 40, the star of the "Fast & Furious" movie series, died with his friend, Roger W. Rodas, who was at the wheel of a Porsche sports car that crashed and burned north of Los Angeles.

In 2018, former President George H.W. Bush, a World War II hero who rose through the political ranks to the nation's highest office, died at his Houston home at the age of 94; his wife of more than 70 years, Barbara Bush, had died in April.

Ten years ago: The central banks of the wealthiest countries, trying to prevent a debt crisis in Europe from exploding into a global panic, swept in to shore up the world financial system by making it easier for banks to borrow American dollars. Police in Los Angeles and Philadelphia dismantled Occupy Wall Street encampments. An Arizona jury sentenced convicted "Baseline Killer" Mark Goudeau (goo-DOH') to death for killing nine people in the Phoenix area.

Five years ago: Air conditioning company Carrier Corp. said it had reached a deal with President-elect Donald Trump to keep nearly 1,100 jobs in Indiana instead of moving them to Mexico; however, some 600 other jobs were still eliminated by outsourcing. House Democrats reelected Nancy Pelosi as their leader. A prosecutor cleared a Charlotte, North Carolina, police officer in the killing of a Black man whose death touched off civil unrest, saying the officer was justified in opening fire on Keith Scott.

One year ago: Two battleground states, Wisconsin and Arizona, certified their presidential election tallies in favor of Joe Biden, even as President Donald Trump's legal team continued to dispute the results; Biden's victory in Wisconsin was certified following a partial recount that only added to his 20,600-vote margin over Trump. Moderna Inc. said it would ask U.S. and European regulators to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine as new study results confirmed the shots offered strong protection. Americans returning from Thanksgiving break faced strict new coronavirus measures as health officials braced for a disastrous worsening of the nationwide surge because of holiday gatherings; Los Angeles County imposed a stay-at-home order for its 10 million residents.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer-recording executive Jimmy Bowen is 84. Movie director Ridley Scott is 84. Screenwriter Geoffrey C. Ward is 81. Movie writer-director Terrence Malick is 78. Rock musician Roger Glover (Deep Purple) is 76. Playwright David Mamet (MA'-meht) is 74. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 69. Musician Shuggie Otis is

68. Country singer Jeannie Kendall is 67. Singer Billy Idol is 66. Historian Michael Beschloss is 66. Rock musician John Ashton (The Psychedelic Furs) is 64. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 64. Former football and baseball player Bo Jackson is 59. Rapper Lilil (Whodini) is 58. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 56. Rock musician Mike Stone is 52. Music producer Steve Aoki is 44. Singer Clay Aiken is 43. Actor Billy Lush is 40. Actor Elisha Cuthbert is 39. Actor Kaley Cuoco (KWOH'-koh) is 36. Model Chrissy Teigen (TY'-gihn) is 36. Actor Christel Khalil is 34. Actor Rebecca Rittenhouse is 33. Actor Adelaide Clemens is 32. World chess champion Magnus Carlsen is 31. Actor Tyla Harris is 21.

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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