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# Connecting

March 29, 2024

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Staff at the Wall Street Journal's New York office hold signs in support of their colleague Evan Gershkovich, who was detained by Russia a year ago while on a reporting assignment. (Courtesy: Wall Street Journal) Credit: Cam Pollack/The Wall Street Journal

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WSJ.com



ONE YEAR STOLEN | Evan Gershkovich

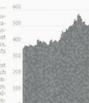
A year in Russian prison. A year of stolen stories, stolen joys, stolen memories. The crime: journalism

#### What Evan Has Lost During His Year Detained

WSJ correspondent has languished in a Moscow jail cell on a false accusation

Evan Gershkovich was sup-posed to be with his friends in Berlin the first week of April 2023.

## **Authoritarians Threaten** Journalists Around Globe



#### INSIDE



TIMELINE

# **Families of Others**

## Held in Russia Feel Same Sense of Pain



From CNN Reliable Sources: The WSJ will make a big statement in its Friday print edition (see above), intentionally leaving blank a large section of the front page to represent the missing journalism from Evan Gershkovich. "A year in Russian prison. A year of stolen stories, stolen joys, stolen memories. The crime: journalism," the paper will state. Along side it, The Journal will feature dispatches on Gershkovich and spotlight the destructive consequences of authoritarian regimes.

Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this March 29, 2024,

How The Wall Street Journal is keeping Evan Gershkovich in the news "We want everyone to feel they've got skin in the game here."

Those were headlines from this story by Nieman Labs' Sarah Scire:

Friday, March 29 will mark the one-year anniversary of reporter Evan Gershkovich's wrongful imprisonment in Russia. His employer, The Wall Street Journal, says it won't rest until he walks free.

As outlined in a flurry of recent editorials and features, Gershkovich was working as a Moscow-based correspondent with official accreditation from the Russian government when he became the first American journalist to be accused of espionage in Russia since the Cold War. Hoping to bring renewed attention to his cause, Gershkovich's friends, family, and colleagues are joining news industry luminaries and other backers to cold-water swim, run in cities from Brussels to Hong Kong, read for 24 straight hours, gather to demonstrate, and otherwise call for his immediate release.

Read more here.

Click here for Poynter story.

Here's to a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest.

Paul

Why did more than 1,000 people die after police subdued them with force that isn't meant to kill?



BY REESE DUNKLIN, RYAN J. FOLEY, JEFF MARTIN, JENNIFER MCDERMOTT, HOLBROOK MOHR AND JOHN SEEWER

Carl Grant, a Vietnam veteran with dementia, wandered out of a hospital room to charge a cellphone he imagined he had. When he wouldn't sit still, the police officer escorting Grant body-slammed him, ricocheting the patient's head off the floor.

Taylor Ware, a former Marine and aspiring college student, walked the grassy grounds of an interstate rest stop trying to shake the voices in his head. After Ware ran from an officer, he was attacked by a police dog, jolted by a stun gun, pinned on the ground and injected with a sedative.

And Donald Ivy Jr., a former three-sport athlete, left an ATM alone one night when officers sized him up as suspicious and tried to detain him. Ivy took off, and police tackled and shocked him with a stun gun, belted him with batons and held him facedown.

Each man was unarmed. Each was not a threat to public safety. And despite that, each died after police used a kind of force that is not supposed to be deadly — and can be much easier to hide than the blast of an officer's gun.

Every day, police rely on common tactics that, unlike guns, are meant to stop people without killing them, such as physical holds, Tasers and body blows. But when misused, these tactics can still end in death — as happened with George Floyd in 2020, sparking a national reckoning over policing. And while that encounter was caught on video, capturing Floyd's last words of "I can't breathe," many others throughout the United States have escaped notice.

Over a decade, more than 1,000 people died after police subdued them through means not intended to be lethal, an investigation led by The Associated Press found. In hundreds of cases, officers weren't taught or didn't follow best safety practices for physical force and weapons, creating a recipe for death.

Read more here.

# The UPI strike – for me, scary, uplifting, sad, a bit weird

<u>Lee Mitgang</u> - Mike Kaeser's excellent recounting of the 1974 UPI strike brought back my own memories as a cub reporter with UPI's financial news desk, where I worked for two years before joining the AP later that year. For me, the strike was scary, uplifting, sad and a bit weird.

Scary...because I, like everyone else who worked in UPI's New York headquarters, suddenly had to make ends meet in the nation's most expensive city on strike benefits amounting to about 40 bucks a week. As the days of three-hour picketing tours dragged on, we swapped increasingly urgent tales of stretched savings and steep rents coming due. I was one of the lucky ones who got a few freelance gigs to help tide me over. But that wasn't a sustainable answer if the strike had lasted any longer than it did. I also remember it was a cold March, and those of us picketing in front of the old Daily News building on East 42nd Street where UPI was based were grateful that the Guild had booked a room in the nearby Tudor Hotel where we could warm up with a free cup of coffee, then head to Costello's as needed a block or so away for something stronger.

Uplifting...because as Mike points out, the Guild had greatly increased its membership in the run-up to the strike. We felt a unity and pride in our Guild membership that had been largely missing in our workplace, and that feeling of empowerment and belief in the union lingered even after the strike yielded less than rousing results. I especially cherish the memory of my father, a long-time Newspaper Guild member named Herb Mitgang, walking cross-town several times during lunch breaks to march in solidarity with his son.

Sad...because no one that I personally knew on either side of the strike wanted it to happen. UPI in the early '70s could be a rough place to work (back then, we referred to the "country club atmosphere" at the AP). But while scores of other news organizations wouldn't take a chance on a green 22-year-old kid like me, UPI's Business Editor Dean Miller and Desk Supervisor Dorothea (Dottie) Brooks, hired me and patiently mentored and encouraged me as a fledgling business reporter. So I found it poignant to walk out on the folks who had given me my entree into the news profession. They certainly had nothing to do with the corporate decisions that we Guild members were fighting. When the strike finally ended, I remember Dottie hugging each of us and welcoming us back warmly, with no hard feelings whatever.

And a bit weird... because I happened to be dating someone in UPI's personnel department at the time. So every day, my "I'amour du moment" would of necessity turn scab and cross my picket line. By prior agreement, we pretended not to notice each other. except for an occasional wink. Each night, all was forgiven and we'd swap inside stories about how each of our "sides" was really bearing up. That's how I knew for a fact that UPI management's daily spin during the strike about how effortlessly

they were putting out a bare-bones news report without us was, well, a load of merde.

# **Enjoying the simple pleasures**

<u>Norm Abelson</u> - I have long been taken with the idea of simple pleasures. They put a shine on my life to this day. A sizzling grilled cheese for breakfast. Watching re-runs of The Twilight Zone. Spotting a new bird perched on the feeder. An unexpected phone call from a grandchild. Finishing a NYTimes Friday crossword puzzle.

You get the idea: Down to earth good stuff that's within the realm of the possible, while out of reach of the "downers," peddling anger, ignorance and negativism. I have wondered whether these simple pleasure feelings have a foundation in my early life, when our post-Depression financial limits couldn't imagine – or afford – anything more fancy.

I've come up with a few, and share the first of these memories today. Do they call up any similar simple pleasures of the past for you?

#### JOE PERRY'S PENNIES

It was just two pennies. One for me, and one for Charlie, my best friend. But for us, it was an eagerly awaited weekly treasure trove.

In the 1930s, the nation was still in the shadow of the Great Depression. Charlie's dad, Joe Perry, worked a menial job at a tool and die factory. My dad, Harry, had recently moved up from working on a rubbish truck to a slightly better-paying job at an artificial ice manufacturing plant. Money was hard to come by, so it wasn't often that any of it made its way into the palms of a couple of kids at seven or eight.



So on Friday afternoons, payday for our dads, Charlie and I would sit impatiently on the curb in front of

our side-by-side houses. Time dragged by slowly until one of us would shout: "Here he comes!" Then we'd run to meet Mr. Perry as he ambled up Stearns Street.

"Hi. Daddy!" "Hello, Mr. Perry." He'd smile tiredly, reach into the pocket of his bluedenim overalls, extract two pennies and hand one to each of us. The ceremony completed, we wasted little time before dashing the 50 paces or so to Tesler's Store, a tiny emporium tucked into the corner of a low-rent tenement at the corner of our street.

Once inside, we faced the weekly dilemma: With the acquisition of means, we now faced the problem of selection. We had no interest in the grocery or dairy or tobacco wares in Tesler's. Our sole desires were lined up neatly on shelves behind the curved glass front of the candy counter.

First, we would stand on tip-toe to get a glance at the goodies in the back rows. Then we'd scan the rest, taking time so as not to miss a single sweet option. Here's a sample I recall of what was on display: Mary Jane, Tootsie Roll, Kits, Bulls Eyes, Banana Splits, Boston Baked Beans, Nips, Wax Bottles, Bit-O-Honey, Turkish Taffy, Bubble Gum Cigars, Chocolate Cigarettes.

Our inspection complete, Charlie and I would confer. Should we pool our wealth for a two-cent special treat or opt for a couple of penny candies for variety? That we would share whatever we chose, was always a given. Here's the happy part of our dilemma: Whatever we finally selected, there were no losers.

### On AP headlines in electronic kiosks

<u>Tom Kent</u> - It's nice indeed to see AP headlines on electronic kiosks in NYC, as captured by Malcolm Ritter's photo in Thursday's Connecting. However, the kiosks sometimes show the impracticality of simply putting AP headlines up in lights. The one in Malcom's picture reads, "Travelers through Maine's biggest airport can now fly to the moon. Or at least a chunk of it," which means very little without further explanation or the ability to click. (The actual <u>story</u> in this case was a pretty routine one, 200 words about a moon rock on display at the airport.) It used to be that AP carefully curated headlines destined for public display, like those on the "zippers" around street-level TV studios in New York. Now it looks like an automated process.

Y.S. Press Freedom Tracker, March 21, 2024 - Update

# Man who punched AP photographer sentenced to prison

The man who assaulted Associated Press photojournalist Matt Rourke while Rourke was covering a press tour by Philadelphia city officials was sentenced to prison on March 21, 2024, according to court documents reviewed by the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker.

Rourke was photographing Philadelphia's then police commissioner and mayor in North Philadelphia in June 2020 as they toured the area following days of Black Lives Matter protests spurred by the police killing of George Floyd. Philadelphia resident Derreck King approached Rourke and punched him in the face, seemingly without cause, according to the AP. The AP, the Tracker and other sources originally published King's first name as Derrick, one of several aliases listed in his court documents.

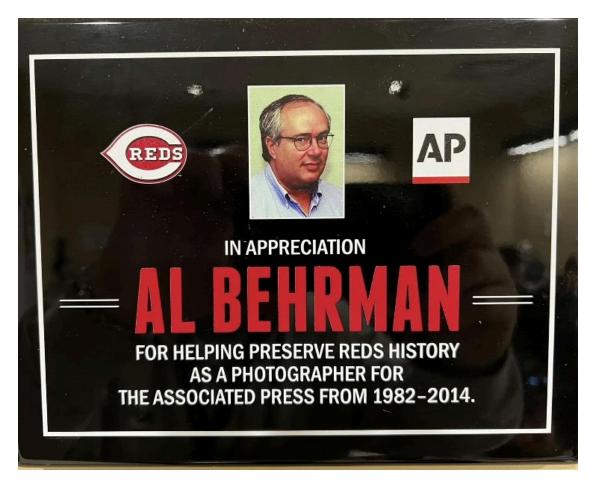
Rourke lost consciousness and fell to the ground; he was treated at a hospital for facial injuries. King was tackled by police officers and taken into custody.

King was sentenced in Philadelphia County's Court of Common Pleas to at least four and up to 20 years in prison for assault, and to four years of probation for reckless

endangerment and resisting arrest.

Click **here** to view. Shared by Doug Pizac.

### Tribute to AP retiree Al Behrman



A photographer working the Reds Opening Day on Thursday took note of this hanging in the stadium photo room. Al says he was pleased to see no one has drawn a moustache or anything else on it.

<u>Al Behrman</u> retired from the AP in September 2014 after serving as staff photographer in Cincinnati for 32 years. He earlier was an AP freelancer in Indianapolis from 1977 until being hired in Cincinnati in 1982.

(Shared by Dan Sewell)

## **Rusted Relic**



Rachel Ambrose - I found this along Route 66 in Barstow, Ca., last weekend. It's part of the Bottle Tree Ranch installation.

Travel partner Susan Helm took the above picture of me with the rusted typewriters.



# **Connecting wishes Happy Birthday**



**Nick Ut** 

On Saturday to...

**Helen Mitternight** 

### Sarah Nordgren

On Sunday to...

**Ed Bailey** 

### **Nancy Salem**

### Stories of interest

# Trump's team cites First Amendment in contesting charges in Georgia election interference case (AP)

#### BY KATE BRUMBACK

ATLANTA (AP) — The charges against Donald Trump in the Georgia election interference case seek to criminalize political speech and advocacy conduct that the First Amendment protects, a lawyer for the former president said Thursday as he argued that the indictment should be dismissed.

The hearing before Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee was on a filing from Trump and on two pretrial motions by co-defendant David Shafer and centered on technical legal arguments. It marked something of a return to normalcy after the case was rocked by allegations that District Attorney Fani Willis improperly benefited from her romantic relationship with Nathan Wade, a special prosecutor hired for the case.

"There is nothing alleged factually against President Trump that is not political speech," Trump's lead lawyer, Steve Sadow, told the judge. Sadow said a sitting president expressing concerns about an election is "the height of political speech" and that is protected even if what was said ended up being false.

Read more **here**.

-0-

### Karlie Kloss to Reboot Life Magazine (Hollywood Reporter)

#### BY ALEX WEPRIN

More than two decades after it was shuttered by Time Inc., Life magazine will be revived

Bedford Media, the holding company founded by model and entrepreneur Karlie Kloss and her husband, investor Josh Kushner, has acquired the publishing rights to Life from Dotdash Meredith.

Bedford says that Life will be relaunched as a print magazine, with a "vibrant" digital and video presence.

"We see Life as an uplifting and unifying voice in a chaotic media landscape," said Kloss in a statement. "While Bedford is a new media company, we are deeply inspired by Life's iconic legacy and ability to connect diverse audiences with universal narratives of humanity."

Read more here. Shared by Bill Sikes, Doug Pizac.

-0-

# In Saga of NBC and Ronna McDaniel, Perks and Perils of Partisan Talk on TV (New York Times)

#### By Michael M. Grynbaum and John Koblin

Trying to juice ratings in an election year, a major TV network hired a pair of provocative commentators from the political establishment to inject some spiky opinion into its otherwise-staid campaign coverage.

The result — the Gore Vidal and William F. Buckley Jr. debates of 1968 — was a hit with viewers and an unexpected success for ABC News. It also inspired television news divisions to bring more partisan voices into their coverage, a trend that intensified at the dawn of the 24-hour cable news era in the early 1980s.

These days, the role of the "paid contributor" — a commentator on contract, to bloviate on demand — is fully baked into the TV news ecosystem. Typically, the role is occupied by a political veteran who can offer an insider perspective on the news of the day, drawing on experience as, say, an elected official, Beltway strategist or West Wing aide.

Or, in the case of Ronna McDaniel, as the former chairwoman of the Republican Party.

Read more **here**.

-0-

# Russian media 'told to publish' torture footage of Moscow terrorists (The Telegraph)

Russian state media employees were instructed to publish footage of the Crocus City Hall terrorist suspects being tortured as a "prevention measure", Vertska reported.

Graphic images of Russian authorities torturing the suspects began circulating on Telegram soon after their arrest. One showed someone cutting off Saidakrami Rachabalizoda's ear and forcing him to eat it while another showed Shamsidin Fariduni being electrocuted.

Employees of a Russian state TV channel were told to emphasise the battered and bruised appearance of the defendants during their court appearance, the independent Russian news outlet reported, citing an inside source.

Security officials who spoke to Vertska also alledgedly said the publication of the torture videos "was sanctioned" and that they wanted the footage to spread as widely as possible. "Burned balls and a cut-off ear — that's just the beginning. Next will be fingers getting cut off, one by one. It's a prevention measure," an anonymous official said.

"The population demands blood and revenge, so that's what we're showing them," another official added.

Read more **here**. Shared by Dennis Conrad.

# Today in History - March 29, 2024



Today is Friday, March 29, the 89th day of 2024. There are 277 days left in the year.

#### Today's Highlight in History:

On March 29, 1973, the last United States combat troops left South Vietnam, ending America's direct military involvement in the Vietnam War.

#### On this date:

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln ordered plans for a relief expedition to sail to South Carolina's Fort Sumter, which was still in the hands of Union forces despite repeated demands by the Confederacy that it be turned over.

In 1867, Britain's Parliament passed, and Queen Victoria signed, the British North America Act creating the Dominion of Canada, which came into being the following

July.

In 1943, World War II rationing of meat, fats and cheese began, limiting consumers to store purchases of an average of about two pounds a week for beef, pork, lamb and mutton using a coupon system.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted in New York of conspiracy to commit espionage for the Soviet Union. (They were executed in June 1953.)

In 1971, Army Lt. William L. Calley Jr. was convicted of murdering 22 Vietnamese civilians in the 1968 My Lai (mee ly) massacre. (Calley ended up serving three years under house arrest.) And a jury in Los Angeles recommended the death penalty for Charles Manson and three female followers for the 1969 Tate-La Bianca murders. (The sentences were commuted when the California state Supreme Court struck down the death penalty in 1972.)

In 1974, eight Ohio National Guardsmen were indicted on federal charges stemming from the shooting deaths of four students at Kent State University. (The charges were later dismissed.)

In 1984, under cover of early morning darkness, the Baltimore Colts football team left its home city of three decades and moved to Indianapolis.

In 2002, Israeli troops stormed Yasser Arafat's headquarters complex in the West Bank in a raid that was launched in response to anti-Israeli attacks that had killed 30 people in three days.

In 2004, President George W. Bush welcomed seven former Soviet-bloc nations (Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Latvia and Estonia) into NATO during a White House ceremony.

In 2010, two female suicide bombers blew themselves up in twin attacks on Moscow subway stations jam-packed with rush-hour passengers, killing at least 40 people and wounding more than 100.

In 2020, country singer Joe Diffie, who had a string of hits in the 1990s, died at 61 from what a spokesman said were complications from COVID-19.

In 2018, Russia announced the expulsion of more than 150 diplomats, including 60 Americans, and said it was closing a U.S. consulate in retaliation for Western expulsions of Russian diplomats over the poisoning of an ex-spy and his daughter in Britain.

In 2021, the former Minneapolis police officer charged with killing George Floyd went on trial with prosecutors showing the jury video of Derek Chauvin pressing his knee on the Black man's neck for several minutes as onlookers yelled at him repeatedly to get off and Floyd gasped that he couldn't breathe. (Chauvin would be convicted of murder and manslaughter and sentenced to 22 1/2 years in prison.)

In 2021, G. Gordon Liddy, a mastermind of the Watergate burglary and a radio talk show host after emerging from prison, died at age 90 at his daughter's home in

Virginia.

In 2022, the Foo Fighters canceled all upcoming concert dates four days after the death of the band's drummer, Taylor Hawkins.

Today's Birthdays: Author Judith Guest is 88. Former British Prime Minister Sir John Major is 81. Comedian Eric Idle is 81. Basketball Hall of Famer Walt Frazier is 79. Singer Bobby Kimball (Toto) is 77. Actor Bud Cort is 76. Actor Brendan Gleeson is 69. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Earl Campbell is 69. Actor Marina Sirtis is 69. Actor Christopher Lambert is 67. Rock singer Perry Farrell (Jane's Addiction) is 65. Comedian-actor Amy Sedaris is 63. Model Elle Macpherson is 61. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., is 60. Actor Annabella Sciorra is 60. Movie director Michel Hazanavicius is 57. Rock singer-musician John Popper (Blues Traveler) is 57. Actor Lucy Lawless is 56. Country singer Brady Seals is 55. Actor Sam Hazeldine is 52. International Tennis Hall of Famer Jennifer Capriati is 48. R&B singer PJ Morton is 43. Actor Megan Hilty is 43. Pop singer Kelly Sweet is 36.

# Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Central Region vice president based in Kansas City.

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:

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

Paul Stevens
Editor, Connecting newsletter
paulstevens46@gmail.com





Connecting newsletter | 14719 W 79th Ter, Lenexa, KS 66215

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