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MR. JONES: Welcome, everyone. I'm Alex Jones. I'm the Director of the Shorenstein Center and we are here at a kind of post-mortem mode, which is really a very, very interesting part of the whole Goldsmith Prize experience, because it gives a chance for the various investigative teams and these are the people, to my mind, are operating at the very top of the game, to talk about how they did what they did. And in many cases how they did what they did is even more interesting or just as interesting as what they found out, at least if you're a journalist. So what we're going to do is begin with the Goldsmith Prize winner, the *Chicago Tribune* and then each team in turn will just give a brief kind of summary of not exactly what happened necessarily so much as what were the problems which you had to overcome. What were the things that made you have to either come up with a plan B or overcome a particularly difficult hurdle or had some particularly curious dimension to it that would make it a fascinating thing to talk about this morning.

And I'm going to presume to begin by asking Tricia to repeat the story she told me last night at dinner about the confrontation with Dr. Heimbach and sort of wrestling him to the ground. First of all, recognizing him as a charlatan and then how the team, after having done its research, got this guy. Well, Tricia, would you tell that story? It's such a great one.

MS. CALLAHAN: Sam's going to help me here, because he did a lot of that too. David Heimbach is the burn surgeon that testified at that hearing I went to in California where they were considering a bill that would have changed the rule that is the reason why we have flame retardants in our furniture and our baby products and why they are

so ubiquitous in our lives. And I went to that hearing. At the time I thought I had a good story about tobacco and I didn't know what I would -- I didn't know what to expect there. And quite honestly, if they had passed the bill then the project might have been dead. At that point there wouldn't have been a problem to write about, to a certain degree.

So I didn't know what to expect. I showed up and I heard David Heimbach testify and he really did -- there was this gasp in the room when he testified, telling the story of this tiny little baby, this tiny little infant who had been so horrifically burned. And I was sitting in the audience thinking, because he told a very specific story about a mother who had put a candle inside her baby's crib. The candle tipped over and the baby, you know, it was this terribly sad, sad, and he went on to describe and really detail how awful this child's final days were. And at the time my own kids were really young. I had two that were -- twin boys that were in cribs at home and a daughter not much older than that.

And I just couldn't wrap my head around why would a mother put a candle inside, inside. I actually turned to the person next to me because I wrote down, did he say inside? Inside? And no one asked him. And this is a Senate hearing. No one said, excuse me, Dr. Heimbach, inside the crib? Or should we be basing public policy on a mother's decision to put a candle inside her crib. And I guess and I don't mean to laugh at this, because I do -- I think we've probably all covered stories in our careers where there is a parent who would do anything to take back one mistake, to take back one moment that they made a terrible error in judgment. So I didn't know at that point if that's what we were talking about or not.

But I came back to the office and decided, well, I need to know more about this David Heimbach. Put tobacco aside for a minute and let me figure out, you know, I already knew he was being sponsored by this Citizens for Fire Safety. I had a pretty good sense that that was going to be a very fruitful line of reporting. It was clear that they, just from looking at their 990 that they had very strong connections to the chemical industry. And I figured with some digging I probably -- I ultimately found out they were a front group.

So at that point I wanted to find out where else has he testified, what else has he said.

And sure enough, he had testified in Alaska about a different baby who had been burned, different age, different circumstance. A dog knocked a candle into the crib. And then another time he testified in California, different hearing, and it was mom left a candle beside the crib and left the room for seven minutes, something like that. I mean I might be getting the details slightly wrong, but it was definitely mom leaving a candle in the room. And the candle was really important because the tests in California that was all up for debate and the reason why we have flame retardants in our furniture is based on a candle like flame, holding a candle light flame to raw foam for 12 seconds. And so the candle was everything to the chemical industry.

So it was exactly, you know, all these people arguing it doesn't work, the standard doesn't work. This is crazy. We're getting our kids, our bodies, everybody is getting, you know, there are flame retardants in our bodies, in our children's bodies, in our world, all over and they don't work. And here is this burn surgeon saying they could have prevented the death of these children. So Sam and I talked about it and we just said we have got to find that baby, those babies. And so at that point we talked about, well, how could we? It's really hard to prove a negative. How do you prove someone doesn't exist.

MR. ROE: We wondered, did these children even exist. We had our suspicions that they didn't, but how do you prove that? One of the first things I thought we should probably do is check the rules at his hospital. And if any baby or toddler dies at his hospital, unusual circumstance, and he works in a burn unit, he would have to report that to the county medical examiner's office. There would have to be some kind of paper trail. And so we thought, okay, we can't prove these kids didn't exist, but maybe we can show which kids did exist and see if those children are on that list. So we had the county, up in Seattle, King County, run 16 years worth of coroner's records, medical examiner's records of every child under the age of three, going back 16 years.

And lo and behold, when we got the records back it showed that no, there was no child that matched David Heimbach's description of any of these kids. And so I thought

that was really important to know, because once I got him on the phone you had to sort of anticipate what his responses would be and how he might be able to try to dance around this. Had he just told me, listen, these kids exist, patient confidentiality, I'm not going to tell you where they live. I'm not going to tell you when they died, but these kids are real. It would have been a tough nut to crack at that point.

But one of the first questions out of my mouth, I said, so, these children, they died at your hospital, right? You were treating them? Oh, yes. So we established that. I thought that was really important. And then it sort of backed him into a corner where, at the end of the interview, he had to admit. He said, listen, this is anecdotal, okay? What do you want me to say? This is anecdotal and the principle is more important than the facts. That's what he said, the principle. And I said what's the principle? He says the principle is that flame retardants work. And he was being -- he was a star witness.

MS. CALLAHAN: He also said and I wasn't under oath.

MR. ROE: He says, yes, and I wasn't under oath, so what do you want from me?

MR. JONES: When you asked him whether they were in his hospital, that was a calculated first question?

MR. ROE: Yes, absolutely. Yeah, I was really—-

MS. CALLAHAN: I was holding my breath at that moment.

MR. ROE: It was funny, my wife and I, we were playing video chess late at night, just to kill time, and I was thinking like this is sort of -- interviewing is like a chess match. You've got to anticipate moves and stuff and I felt like if he just -- I knew if he would have just said, listen, I'm not going to tell you, it's confidential. And he would have been right.

MS. CALLAHAN: We had gone around and around with the hospital at that point too. I'd been talking to the hospital and at first it was, well, we need the name. Because I thought, you know, if they exist maybe they would want to talk to us.

MR. ROE: They were no help.

MS. CALLAHAN: They were no help whatsoever. And at one point they said he

wasn't the treating physician. He couldn't remember her name. I mean, they were dancing around it too. And I honestly don't know what they knew or didn't know, but my feeling about that was typically people who I've come across, even first responders, firefighters, if there was a child that we could find her. Or if there were three babies, in this case, we could find them. Because it seems like most people remember. Maybe they have thousands of cases in their careers. They're going to remember a six week old, seven week old baby. It's just a rare thing and it's so sad that those are cases that I think really stick with someone.

MR. ROE: And he was really symbolic for this whole issue. It really put a face on this issue. Because flame retardants and the science of flame retardants, this can be a really dull topic. It could be really hard to make it accessible to the average reader. But when you have a prominent burn surgeon who is making up children that died in these horrific fires, that was something that I felt, you know, we felt that could resonate with people and it made some sense so that we felt that was important.

MR. JONES: Was there any, for instance, crafting that first question was trade craft, if you will, for investigative reporting. Was there anything else in the investigation that you were particularly proud of that you either anticipated or had a leap to that helped advance the story?

MS. CALLAHAN: I think that the -- I can't say enough great things about the repository of tobacco documents. I mean, those are just a gift to our profession. They really are. They're just amazing. It's as though the executives -- everybody from the executives, CEO's of the cigarette companies down to their secretaries just said come on in, have a look at my files. I mean, it's really a phenomenal thing and I think the challenge, the beauty of those, at the time we were looking, there were 13 million documents. The challenge of it is there were 13 million documents, right? So kind of culling through those and knowing that they are, well, in geek speak they're -- they use OCR technology, optical character recognition technology. So if the computer, looking at it, figuring out what the text is, so it's really imprecise because a lot of these documents

are very old and smudgy and so you're not going to get -- it's not LexisNexis. You're not typing in things and all of the documents are coming up. So a lot of that work was figuring out kind of key dates of different things that were happening and then literally looking through every document on that date. So it was pretty painstaking, I would say.

And then I think the challenge there was that I'd find a great document that was really interesting and it was tantalizing. It didn't have -- it wasn't the full picture. You needed to do some -- I needed to interview people to find out a little bit more, only to find out that every single person on the document was dead. Because you know a lot of folks in the tobacco industry smoked. A lot of these things happened long ago and they're just not around anymore. So there were many, like, wow, this is so interesting. Okay, well, they took it to their grave.

MR. ROE: The one thing I'll add is that the flame retardant industry has always said that flame retardants in your homes work well, they save lives, and that's something that we had to deal with. Because if they do work well and they do save lives it's much less of a story, it's not a story. So we had to wade into that whole arena and understand the industry science and drill down and follow their footnotes and debunk the science, in which we had to do at the end of the day. It took a long time to do. The last five months of 2012 I spent working on a single 11 page paper that the industry had done. But if you don't do that then the industry can just hold us up and say, well, flame retardants work and they save lives. But if you can show that it's biased science or it's completely flawed then that argument goes away. And we did that time and time again.

It was like talk about whack-a-mole, they would come up with a scientific study we'd knock down and they would say, but, yes, we have this one over here. And you would knock that one down. So one of the challenges as a journalist is that, you know, how much time and effort do you have to continually knock down these scientific studies, because they'll keep popping up because the industry has so much at stake.

MR. JONES: I'm assuming the industry is not taking this lying down. So how is that going? I mean, are they in defensive mode? Are they hoping that this will be a moment

that simply passes? Do they–-

MR. ROE: I think they're wounded a bit, but they're not dead. I mean, they make a lot of money, so they're going to keep coming up with scientific studies. They're going to try to create as much doubt, scientific doubt as possible, which is a hallmark of some of these new street tactics and we're just going to have to, I guess, keep following them and keep at it.

MR. INGRASSIA: Can I ask a question? Why did you decide to focus on this in the first place? What brought you to this story?

MS. CALLAHAN: You know, we were actually looking at a story on something completely different, on pesticides. And I usually at the end of an interview will ask so what didn't I ask you? What should I have asked you that I forgot or that I didn't think of? And nearly everybody I talked to said what you really should be looking at is flame retardants. What you really should be looking at is flame -- I mean, it was over and over and over again and so, finally, I thought, okay, well, maybe it was flame retardants. But part of me thought, yeah, but flame retardants, who doesn't have a fear of fire? If they work then perhaps the trade-off, maybe it's not such a bad thing if they're protecting us on a regular basis from fire.

And early on, the very early rounds where I thought, okay, I should at least understand flame retardants. A couple people said, ah, but yes, yes, of course you have a fear of fire, everybody does. But they don't work. And I said, well, yeah, how do you know that? How do you know that? Well, you need to talk to this scientist who is sort of held up as sort of the preeminent fire scientist in the country. He'll tell you that they don't work. So we actually went to the chemical industry early on and said, okay, send me everything you've got that tells me flame retardants work. How do you know they work? And it's a little unusual for me in that we went to the front door saying all right, I'll read everything you send me. And it was a three -- Sam and Mike and I had these conversations and they sent me -- they sent Sam one study, one study from 1988 that showed flame retardants work.

And interestingly enough, the lead author on that paper was the guy that people had told me to call, the same scientist who was going to tell me that flame retardants didn't work. So I call him really early on and said, tell me. You're being held up as proof that flame retardants work. And he said, you know, we talked about the tests, this arcane technical bulletin 117 and he said, no, this is the worst of all possible worlds in that you're providing this trivial amount of -- from a chemistry perspective it's a small amount, it's like three to five percent of weight of the foam, but in reality couches are big, foam is heavy, you wind up with pounds of them in your house. They migrate into dust. We ingest dust. It could wind up in our bodies. But he said by the time the fabric cover, the upholstery fabric burns and the flames get to that foam, the fire just laughs at it. And that's when I went to my editor and said I think it's time to pivot here. I think we have a different story.

MR. ROE: And it is a good strategy, I think, to early on maybe go to the subject of your investigation, whether it's an industry or person or whatever, and ask them some basic questions. Because it sort of forces their hand. You see what cards they hold. And I think we learned a lot in the very beginning about what they would come back at you, because you don't want any surprises at the end of the day. You certainly don't want to spend a year working on a story and have some surprise. They have an argument you didn't think about. So get that out on the table early on.

MR. JONES: Thanks. We don't have time, unfortunately, to linger. I wish we could. I think that all of you would be worthy of a long disposition. Atlanta, from your perspective, what were the moments? What was the craft? What were the leaps?

MS. VOGELL: Well, I'll just go back to how it started, if that's okay. We had been writing for years about the Atlanta districts and our incredibly suspicious scores. And finally in 2011 a state investigation had basically confirmed that there was this widespread cheating ring that had been happening for years in the Atlanta district. And we'd had these questions. Okay, if it's going on here it's got to be going on elsewhere. It's kind of sort of hanging around. But it just seemed like such a monumental task to try to

obtain the data that would allow us to really investigate that. We just kind of kicked the idea around. And I was talking to a researcher with a nonprofit that does some testing work for another story. And he said, you know, I really think this is going on all over the place and you guys should think about taking a look.

And I said, well, we know there's going to be data challenges because the form of the data we were able to obtain in Georgia, which was student by student records, would not be available in every state. And so we would have to devise a method that allowed us to still identify the extreme score changes without that level of precision. And he thought it could be done and agreed to help advise us basically on the work. So I think our editors were still kind of on a high from the whole Atlanta story breaking and they agreed to commit the resources to try to obtain all this data and take a look at it. And it was a bigger project than the newspaper had taken on. And I don't know, what did they say?

MR. JUDD: A while.

(Laughter)

MS. VOGELL: That they even agreed to it. I don't know what they were thinking. But we pretty quickly sucked in several other people to the team and they even had a computer assisted reporter in Dayton, Ohio, at a sister paper helping us out. And so I guess the challenges really took two forms. And one was the challenges that we had with the data and I'll just try to summarize those fairly quickly, because they are not as dramatic to listen to, I guess, as hearing about -- but the problem was again trying to get something uniform from 50 states when the states don't handle this uniformly themselves. There's uniform federal reporting requirements, but there's a very widely varying level of access to the data that each of these states have for the public. And so for some states it was no problem. They were like, yeah, here's the link on our website, go ahead and download it.

For other states, it was like pulling teeth. I mean, it took months and months and months and we had one of the reporters on our team, Mike Pell, we used to just listen to him. He's fantastic calling people up and really just bugging the hell out of them almost

daily about this.

MR. JUDD: It's like listening to somebody in a boiler room calling, making cold calls.

MS. VOGELL: He really, yeah, and he could do sort of the good cop/bad cop, back and forth. And we would kind of hear him doing that.

MR. JUDD: He'd use Mississippi against everybody. Well, Mississippi gave it to us.

(Laughter)

MS. VOGELL: Right. Gave it to us. And Mississippi was great actually, they have pretty good access. So you're the only state or you're the only state in the Northwest. Are you the only state? Anyway, it just took us months to negotiate that. And I guess the biggest data challenge we faced was that, again, each of these tests, the state standardized tests are given on a state level, not on a national level. So you have a different test, different scales, score scales, different everything really in every single state. And what we needed was a way to compare across states in a way that was statistically valid and that wasn't going to be really picked apart by statisticians as soon as we published. We wanted to do this in a sort of -- do it as closely to how an academic researcher would do it as we possibly could.

And so our data analyst, John Perry, basically what we did is we analyzed each data set in each state separately and we were all using this computer software to do these regressions, sort of just hour after hour after hour after hour for weeks and weeks and months in order to -- we had to analyze basically at the grade and school level for every school, every state in the country. We would analyze the state data looking at which grade -- so the fourth grade, which schools in the fourth grade in this state had score changes that were so far off the average, basically, that they needed to be explained in a way other than testing progress or a testing setback. Because we knew from talking to researchers that essentially that test scores don't change from year to year that dramatically, typically without some sort of intervention, like perhaps a school reconstitution or a school becomes a magnet school that used to be a low performing school. There's got to be an explanation.

So basically we're sort of assembling this list of really extreme outliers for each state. And what our data analyst figured out was that there was a way to look for concentrations of these outliers within school districts and compare and convert that to odds so that we would be able to sort of have a common language to speak from state to state. It said the odds of having a concentration of aberrant score changes in this district is so -- here's how unusual it is, there's a one in a million chance of this happening. And behind sort of these multiple layers it was also a way for us, what we really wanted to do was to only identify the most extreme outliers, because when you're doing statistical analysis like this crazy stuff does happen.

Statistically there will be some really strange changes, rarely, maybe one in a million times, but when you're analyzing as much data as we were it's going to happen for no particular reason. So what you want to do is sort of reduce the chances of highlighting someone for a reason that was not, you know, that was just random essentially. And so basically by looking for these concentrations we were able to find the most extreme outliers in the districts. And that was just the beginning really, because that was, you know, we spent months and months and months getting to that point. But essentially the data, a database like that is really only a tip sheet. It sort of tells you where to focus. And that was when we had to start calling people and saying what explains this? Explain to me why this happened. What are we looking at here?

And a lot of the times I think a lot of the districts and the schools really resent the question. And the danger with that is that they can resent the question even if there was nothing wrong going on. So you've got to figure out a really -- sort of talk people into talking to you.

MR. JONES: How did you explain what you were doing? You're not the school--

MS. VOGELL: I don't know if I'm even doing that right now.

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: You can call and say we're *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and we are doing a study, we are doing an investigation, we are doing--

MS. VOGELL: We try not to use the word investigation, I think, in something like that.

MR. JONES: We're gathering information?

MS. VOGELL: Yeah. People knew what happened in Atlanta and so I think when they saw us coming they knew what we were looking at. And we were open about that. But we really did, you know, when people didn't -- especially if we were -- there were some instances, usually we would identify districts because a concentration is much, you're not going to have all the schools reconstitute in a district or you're not going to have something that affects district wide. The chances of there being a real explanation other than cheating are infinitesimal when you're at that level. But occasionally we did, we did identify schools, in particular when we were looking at the Blue Ribbon Award, the federal award for rapid test score gains.

And in those cases, principals wouldn't call us back and we really had to, you know, and you're calling from another state and they're like they're so busy anyway.

MR. JONES: How do things stand with Nevada?

MR. JUDD: Not so well.

MS. VOGELL: Yeah. So, again, there was sort of a resistence even when, you know, in some cases there was an explanation. I remember there was one school that -- and also a lot of them are trained to be proud of these scores, so you just sort of get this response where, yeah, yeah, our scores went up that much, I mean we worked really hard.

MR. JUDD: We went to some schools, like the Blue Ribbon schools, for instance, which are supposed to be the best schools, the most dramatically improving schools, and you can show them that one group of kids, say third graders, were at one level, the next year as fourth graders the same kids just miraculously were up here. And then maybe if there had been some questions about how that happened the next year they would be right back to the bottom.

MS. VOGELL: Drop back down again.

MR. JUDD: And they would just look at that and like, yeah, but we were up higher

right here. So we focused on this one school in suburban Washington in Montgomery County, Maryland, where Arne Duncan had actually gone out and presented them their Blue Ribbon Award. And making all these statements about this is truly incredible what happened here. Well, it turns out it was.

(Laughter)

MR. JUDD: It was almost impossible what happened there could have happened without some kind of intervention. And we got to know -- a lot of places around the country's school systems, in some cases they knew that there had been cheating. We had to pry it from them, these documents of their own internal investigations.

MS. VOGELL: Yeah, there was that too. It was a wide range of responses that we got and you couldn't always take it at face value, because sometimes people who are being resistant, there really was an explanation. Their school, there was a re-drawing of the boundaries and so you really had to make sure that you were able to cover, you know, ask those questions and get answers to them. Because just because they were pissed at you for asking the question didn't mean that they were guilty.

MR. JUDD: We ruled out a large number of districts and schools over time.

MS. VOGELL: Yeah, a lot of what we were doing was sort of investigating our own findings. I think we spent really an incredible amount of time doing that to make sure that when we did publish that what we focused on truly was the worst of the worst, without explanations.

MR. JONES: We have to move on, I'm sorry to say. Thank you both very much, very interesting. How about the consortium. What are the craft, the leaps, the epiphany moments?

MR. HELLER: Maybe to the original question Alex asked, what were the challenges? So the two short answers for me would be working with American journalists and I'll explain why and then New Jersey was the second one.

(Laughter)

MR. HELLER: So the project was born out of sort of work that we had done at Global

Integrity in many other countries looking at essentially the strengths and weaknesses of anti-corruption systems and institutions at both the national and local level. We combined a lot of reporting and data work and built software to gather this kind of data at mass scales. So we'd been doing stuff at the municipal level in Mexico and Alex mentioned the provincial level in Argentina and then we'd go look at right to information issues in health care in Papua New Guinea, like really kind of arcane in depth stuff, but we saw it would lead to change. We're reporting on these things and government had a roadmap for reform. And so kind of over coffee we said why wouldn't we do this in the U.S.? So the ironic thing for us, at least, I don't know how Gordon felt, but we hired, to get the project going, all of these incredible statehouse reporters around the country, drawing from the INN Network and the Centers on Network and NPRI and public radio, including folks that have won Pulitzer Prizes, like Mike Stanton, right down 95, worked for us in Rhode Island.

And the interesting thing for me and where the pain came was we were demanding such intensive levels of sourcing and narrative to back up the data they were gathering that we got a lot of push back. And the push back was basically kind of how dare you question my authority, I've been doing this for 25 years and I don't need to give you a second source. I don't need to give you another reference why I'm choosing 50 out of a hundred for this random indicator. And I think that was -- it was unexpected. We hadn't experienced that before and frankly because the quality of journalism in this country, despite all of this sort of neuralgia is so much better than the rest of the world, quite literally.

I think reporters naturally and for some justifiable reason have that kind of reaction. So as we kept going back and back, knowing that we would be hammered if we published without that kind of sourcing, we kept demanding this sort of fairly intensive levels of justification and rationale for all the data they were sending us. That generated a lot of friction.

MR. JONES: Did you have to make some changes?

MR. HELLER: In a few states. It was a very small number where we swapped teams, but it was only a handful. I mean, we had some very intense conversations and conference calls. But there was no violence.

MR. WITKIN: Well, we're also, you know, we're a not for profit, so this project was supported by foundations and we had a particular budget. And we tried to be up front with the freelance reporters that this -- the statehouse reporters in each state that this was going to be a pretty labor intensive project. We paid $5,000 to each of our freelance reporters. In the end this worked out to something like seven cents an hour, something like that. So the group was in rather open revolt. I'm exaggerating, but not that much. The group was in rather open revolt by the end of the project. But there just wasn't any more money available. And then there was the New Jersey problem.

MR. HELLER: Yeah, so the second one, just briefly. So the ironic thing with the project when it was all done and we were very actually good, probably because we were so busy, but we didn't actually look at the final result until a few weeks before we were ready to publish. And ironically at the top of the list for the country's state level anti-corruption mechanisms was New Jersey, despite the fact that no state including Jersey received an A or anything. So we obviously weren't going to cook the books. We said we'll generate some sort of raised eyebrows and how did we come to this and we really had to sort of steel ourselves and we did get -- we had some very difficult conversations with some, you know, especially Bloomberg and some others that honestly just would not believe that we had done it correctly, despite the vast data set that sat behind this, despite all the sourcing and reporting and the 120,000 words, just how could we claim that this was a solid method if that's the results.

And we had a whole explanation for why that was. You come out of scandals like you have in New Jersey and actually there is real reform that tends to emerge. So that was unexpected. Frankly, had any of the other 49 states been at the top of the list we would have avoided a huge amount of intense suffering in the first few weeks of that launch. So that was, you know, it couldn't have been avoided, but it was certainly a surprise barrier.

MR. JONES: How much suffering came with the states that you gave F's to?

MR. WITKIN: Well, I think we got a fair amount of push back, but the beauty I think of the way we did it is that primarily in the first phase Nathaniel and Caitlin Ginley on our team who is sitting in the front row here, the first phase of the project was to spend about six months interviewing something like 75 to a hundred experts in state government to determine exactly what it was we were going to be looking at. And what emerged from that was a list of 330 different questions. And the beauty of the questions was this was all objectifiable data, i.e., do you put your -- do your state legislators have to disclose their outside financial interests? It's a yes or a no. Is that information put online? Do they put that online? It's a yes or a no. The questions were a yes or no.

So there wasn't a lot of, we felt, wiggle room with which to quibble with the conclusions. And we made, after some internal angst, we made a decision to put all the questions, all the documentation, even all the reporters' notes online, publicly available, because we felt it was so important to have this be transparent. We're the Center for Public Integrity. We're supposed to be about transparency. I see the founder, Chuck Lewis, is nodding there in the front row.

(Laughter)

MR. WITKIN: So it made it objectifiable. And then the other thing which we wanted to do from the beginning, but journalistically you also have some trouble with is this idea of rankings. And the idea there was to make it more interesting and accessible to an average person. I mean, the fact is, let's be honest, most of us if you went to your managing editor and said, look, I have a great idea. We're going to spend a year and a half looking at the accountability of state government, what do you think? The answer would be get out of my office. So we had to have foundations behind it and then we had to find a way to make this accessible and interesting. And we wanted it to get attention on its own for what we thought were strong conclusions.

But I think it's a fact that Americans love rankings. They love Top 10 lists. You go on any media now, everything is Top 10 this, Top 10 that. And that's the way to get people's

attention. I hesitate to mention this, but I spent 26 years as a writer and editor at *U.S. News & World Report*, which is of course the bane of higher education's existence for its college and grad school rankings.

MR. JONES: That doesn't apply to Harvard.

(Laughter)

MR. WITKIN: Yes, of course. But it gets attention. And the fact is that we've been very pleased that many states, but particularly those that got F's, that got coverage from every outlet in the state. There was a level of outrage, shame, etcetera, that has resulted in many of those states, including states that didn't do well, like Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, in the 2013 legislative session right now. There are all these ethics reform packages and on our site you can see something we're very happy about is that Nikki Haley, the Governor of South Carolina, in her State of the State address, she spends about three minutes saying that the state integrity investigation gave us an F in this category, an F in that category, an F in this category, an F in that category. And as a result we have this commission that's going to propose a package of reforms.

And just to elaborate a little bit on Nathaniel's point is what we found was, in many cases, that states going back some time that had had really horrific scandals as a result of the shame and post mortems on those scandals, those were the states that had moved most aggressively to change some of the things we were measuring. And so that was true for New Jersey, but there were others that caused us also a chuckle. Illinois was another state. They didn't get an A, they didn't even get a B, but they had made a bunch of changes, despite the fact that something like four out of the last six governors are in prison.

MR. JONES: Do you have any, I doubt immediately, but do you have any plans to come back to see what has happened in response, how much it's changed?

MR. WITKIN: Well, we got some follow up funding and since the project has come out, it came out last March, we have had enough funding to employ a very talented young reporter, Nick Kusnetz, half time to track exactly what's going on. And so since

the original project we've done a whole run of stories looking at what's going on to change things. And if you look at the site, which is State Integrity Investigation has a reform page which tracks all the states that are making changes. And the other thing we've tried to do is with this huge vat of data, we've tried to look at the data, sort of across themes, and do, I think, up to now about a half dozen what I'd call thematic investigative stories, where we look at problems that cropped up in state after state after state. We've done one on state ethics commissions, one on open records laws, one on redistricting, one on the revolving door and we're preparing another that we hope to come out in about a week that looks at the many ethical problems and conflicts of interest inherent in a part time—

MR. JONES: Are you also keeping an archive of the articles that are done by other news organizations that are linked to—

MR. WITKIN: We're trying. We're a little overwhelmed with that. I don't have the statistics in front of me, but it's been literally thousands, because the whole thing was set up so that in a given state, when it came out, basically every outlet in the entire state would do at least a one day story with often the expressions of outrage, etcetera. So it was just a really good tool to get people to cover what we had done.

MR. JONES: Thanks. *Los Angeles Times*, how did you come to, first of all, know about the Perversion Files? That would have, I would have thought, been a closely guarded secret just in terms of the name.

MR. FELCH: The existence of the files was known and had been reported on, but the files themselves hadn't been released. And as we learned about the files we knew about an ongoing lawsuit in Oregon. *The New York Times*, the AP, the *Oregonian* were all suing to get access to a big chunk of these files. But we were able to get our hands on a larger and more recent batch of those files. So we began going through those and trying to figure out a way to make sense of tens of thousands of pages of somewhat old and confidential reports of alleged sexual abuse of boys and digest them in a way that would allow us to make sense of them for the readers.

MS. CALLAHAN: Was it a different lawsuit or just a tipster that gave it to you?

MR. FELCH: No, there had been a lawsuit in the 1990's, early 1990's in California actually. And this is one of those weird ways in which lawsuits turn out files. And those files had been produced in discovery as evidence, so they were protected documents in that sense. And then they'd kind of been in a lawyer's basement for many years. And then a journalist had unearthed them and written about them and then they had been handed from lawyer to lawyer over the years. And lawyers who were suing the Boy Scouts would share some of these. And so they were out. It wasn't wide circulation, but they were -- frankly, it wasn't that hard to get the documents.

What was hard was what to do with the documents once you got them. I think when we first looked at this and got the records we spent some time going through a few hundred of them and said, okay, what do we have here? And then we had a serious meeting with our editors and Julie Marquis and more senior editors at the paper saying if we're going to go through this and do this in a comprehensive way, it's going to require at least a year and probably several people helping out. To sit down and try to read each of those pages and really get to the bottom of each story and to try to make sense of it was a huge commitment.

So we talked about, well, could we just take a sampling and could we write a few stories without doing the full -- and we realized that you really couldn't. First of all, these documents hadn't been released publicly before. We didn't know what secrets might be hidden in those and so we felt like there was an obligation to go through all of them. And so when we took that on then it became a matter of kind of trying to systematize our work. And as kind of I think a lot of us do these days build a database that could try to capture what was ultimately uneven and sometimes incomplete anecdotal -- kind of very uneven information in these files about what had happened. And make that into, you know, systematize that in some way that you could come write an authoritative story at the end of the process that would say, you know, this is what we found while also kind of acknowledging the limits of the information.

So not included in a lot of these files was any information about what the outcome of any lawsuits had been that had resulted from the abuse allegations, whether there had been criminal convictions, I mean, there's a lot of missing information. Another issue that we wrestled with from the beginning was how much of these files should we release? We felt that it was important to get this information out there. The Boy Scouts had been hiding this information, both, from parents, from the rest of the scouting community and certainly from law enforcement for decades, really for a century. And so our whole motive here was to get it out. At the same time the documents were full of very sensitive detailed accounts, sometimes handwritten accounts by ten year old boys about the abuse they had suffered. So not the kind of information you want to kind of recklessly dump on the internet.

So we wrestled with that for a long time. We actually went through and kind of reviewed all the documents, Kim and I and a team of other people. And it was only after having done that review that we kind of decided, okay, we do want to publish not just the database with summary findings, but actually the underlying files. We should get those out. And so at that point we had to go back through 35,000 pages and redact page by page any information, not just names of victims, but any information that kind of could be constructed to identify victims, so any addresses, any phone numbers, you know, there's police reports in there, so the redaction process, which was very necessary, took a really long time and a big team of people.

MR. JONES: Two of the finalists are from newspapers owned by Tribune Company, which is having great financial problems and both of these newspapers are perceived to have a lot of pressure on them, financial pressure. How difficult was it to sell your editors, and this goes for the *Chicago Tribune* too, on a long commitment to a national story that had relevance to your local situation, but no real necessarily close hook? How hard is it in the environment we're in now to get something like that done and, for instance, do you have another one cooking?

MR. CHRISTENSEN: Well, I figure it was a little difficult to sell it. We had done one

story on a particular case a year ago and it sort of led to getting into all of the files. And to really, to go through the files definitively takes a lot of time. And as time goes by there were people higher up the food chain that our editor who was, you know, what are you guys doing? Why is this taking so long? Why can't you just grab a couple of stories out of here, write about them and go back to work. As we actually came up with some findings of trends of cover up and started rolling out stories I think it became a little easier to sell it internally. And then when some of those stories got a lot of attention, it was, hey, this was a great idea.

(Laughter)

MR. CHRISTENSEN: One of the other challenges of doing this particular story is that we were dealing with old material. And in addition to just analyzing the files we wanted to pick some particular cases, write about them more fully, that got at some of these things. For example, the Scouts, oftentimes when they'd catch somebody abusing kids they would just let them resign. So we were looking for specific cases and in many cases we're dealing with 35 year old files. But there was one case that we found where five boys in Pennsylvania had written very detailed descriptions of how their Scout leader, who was a local drug and alcohol counselor, who had met some of their parents through his work and come to know them through that, how he had raped some of them. Pretty brutal stuff. And we thought, well, this might be a good one to take a look at because it turned out the Scout leader had gone on to be fairly prominent in academia and he was an assistant professor, a very prominent guy in AIDS research.

So to do that story we ended up going to Pennsylvania and basically just knocking on people's doors. And it took a pretty good commitment from the paper to let us do it. And in the end we found two of the victims whose recollections of what had happened to them 35 years ago was still crystal clear. And they had never discussed it with anybody. One guy had been married for 22 years and hadn't told his wife until—

MR. FELCH: Kim showed up at his door.

MR. JONES: Did you guys have trouble selling it?

MS. CALLAHAN: No, not at all. I think that's really surprising, given all the stuff that's been written about Tribune Company and *Chicago Tribune* in particular is, you know, we feel really, really, really lucky in that despite all of the turmoil of the company and the exodus at the paper, the editor, Gerry Kern and Jane Hirt, the editors in charge and Kaarin Tisue, who is right over there, and George Papajohn, our editor, they were incredibly supportive from the get-go. And the paper, I mean, the editors have kind of made investigative and local reporting, that's their focus of the paper now. We don't -- the *L.A. Times* does our national and international reporting now. And the paper has taken a lot of heat, understandably so, but they've made -- they have decided that this is what, with finite resources, this is what we're going to do. So our investigative team has actually grown during that entire time.

I mean, we wrote this all, this whole project, all of the reporting on it was when we were in Chapter 11 and while we were in Chapter 11 the investigative team grew. So for us the big question is -- I feel like we have the best job in journalism right now and that they're so supportive of what we do and I couldn't be happier. The big question is we're on the block again. We're not in bankruptcy anymore and we're up for sale and what will the priorities of the next, you know, whoever owns us next. That's the big -- that's the thing that keeps me up at night.

MR. JONES: Is there an *L.A. Times* version of that?

MR. FELCH: Of that story? Yeah.

MR. JONES: That anxiety?

MR. FELCH: Yeah, we're in the exact same situation and we're for sale and there are various billionaires expressing interest in us and all of them are known as meddlers, so yeah, there's some anxiety about what will happen and what impact that will have. And I think I agree with Patricia that they kind of threw out the bankruptcy. The bankruptcy, in some ways, has been lovely because it's been this kind of umbrella. There's been a lot of awful stuff that's happened during it, layoffs. But in a way it's been -- it's allowed us to focus on the work and so throughout the bankruptcy I think we just kept doing our jobs

and the questions and push back that we got I think were journalistic, not economic. And that's expected.

But, yeah, I think we are facing all the same questions about who will be our next owner and what will their commitment be to this type of work, particularly if we go from this kind of absentee owner in Chicago far away who doesn't particularly care about L.A. and what happens in California and doesn't have vested interests there. If we go and move towards a local owner, which a lot of people are hoping, you know, that will involve them having vested interests most likely. And so that's the kind of every white knight that the Tribune Company has had has turned out not to be a white knight. So I think that's something, you know, we're all waiting to see what happens.

MR. JONES: Let me move on to the "iEconomy." Who posed that question that sort of got the investigation off the dime or was that more apocryphal than real?

MR. INGRASSIA: It was real. It was a question that I had and I'll kind of just talk quickly and then turn it over to Charles, because Charles and I have worked together for five or six years now and you know when you have that kind of relationship, you know, that's one of the things that I think that's really neat, that you can develop that. And I'm sure just about everybody on this panel probably has worked with the editors that they've worked with and reporters together. And that collaboration often is what leads to great journalism. And just as a business editor for a number of years, it occurred to me that kind of one of the transformational technologies of our time is mobile. And devices are truly ubiquitous.

And I don't know what clicked, but it went off in my head that, gee, for the first time in our history this is a product that kind of is the most ubiquitous consumer product of our time. And we don't make any of it. And that was, you know, just started with that and what are the implications of that, what does it mean, why is that? We know some of the answers to that. But it actually started as more of a general idea, not kind of we should focus on Apple. And I was ruminating this and I kind of stumbled across another little factoid that said that Apple had the highest profit per employee of any company,

public company in the United States, higher than Goldman Sachs. And this was I think for 2010, because we actually started working on this, thinking of it, kind of in the middle of 2011. And that's, you know, kind of talk about that pivot and the fact that you kind of turn on and you say while this is true broadly, you know, Kim and I thought, gee, kind of why is that? Well, part of it is because they don't employ a lot of people. They have all these people work for them.

But also focusing a story on a company like Apple that is so iconic and so recognizable probably would be a better way than some survey story that kind of looked at kind of how an industry operates. And also part of the beauty was that Apple was this wonderfully admired company for all sorts of good reasons. Kind of it makes great products. When we had a lunch with Tim Cook, the first thing I did was took out my iPhone and put it next to me, just so that he could see that I didn't have anything against their products. This wasn't about that. In fact, in my eyes it was more than an Apple series, even though it kind of focused on Apple. It was about job creation, elevation, challenging some conventional wisdom they said that couldn't be made, couldn't be made in the U.S. Well, that's what the Japanese auto makers said and that was another kind of part of the series. In fact, you could make them in the U.S. if there was a will.

But I kind of sat down with Charles. I didn't have ten ideas. I had just this kind of idea. I said let's start talking about this and tell me, how would we approach this and what would we do?

MR. DUHIGG: And I had just come off of a book leave, I had written a book. And carried away from the writing that book a kind of profound insight, which is that historically I have felt that newspaper writing should inform and then educate. And the book writing should educate and then inform and that magazine articles fall somewhere within that spectrum. I now feel very strongly that given the challenges facing the industry and how people consume media, that newspaper is much like books, should at least educate and inform at the same time. And apply the same level of priority to both of those goals.

So one of the goals that I had, when Larry and I first sat down and when I came back from book leave was I knew I was going to do another series because I enjoyed doing series at the paper, was that I wanted to write a series where every article was an article that, A, was enormously steen and narratively driven; and B, was an article that I would read if I hadn't written it. And we had done some great series, but some of the articles in the series that I've written were articles that I probably would not have read if I hadn't written them, at least read all the way through.

And what attracted me to this particularly was Larry's idea of looking at -- first of all, Apple is something that everyone wants to learn about. There's a fascination with it. B, the stories are inherently narrative because we're living through a period when the tech world is a narrative world. It's such a young world, things are happening so quickly that it has a beginning, a middle and an end that you can describe. And equally I wanted to write about something that was a metaphor, that dealt with the metaphors of how we discuss capitalism and how we discuss power in this country. And Apple, right now we are living in a time of competing metaphors, particularly in the absence of a credible alternative to democracy or a credible alternative to capitalism. The metaphors have become dominant in how we discuss the problems of our time and challenging and interrogating one of the greatest metaphors that Apple is this fountain of innovation and a great thing for the nation and embodies what is good about this nation.

MR. INGRASSIA: Which it does in a lot of ways.

MR. DUHIGG: Which it does, it absolutely does. And has been an incredibly powerful driver--

MR. INGRASSIA: That is one part of the narrative.

MR. DUHIGG: That is one part of the narrative and that is the part that is usually focused on and as we all know in this room every narrative has multiple facets and the opportunity to illuminate for readers in a way why they should think about the product in their pocket at least a little bit differently, even if they keep it in their pocket and love it in their pocket, seemed like a powerful opportunity.

MR. INGRASSIA: The other thing I would say is that it's good to have a discussion early on in a story, a series like this. And I think that all of us did, you know, kind of worth devoting the time to it. And I wouldn't say that we had a lot of push back, but there was a little bit, like, Apple? You guys are going to -- I mean, they're like wonderful, right? Really, because everybody kind of has their products. And it was yes, we agree. But that's part of the reason. That's why we want to focus on them is kind of that is because people have this kind of image. And a lot of it is right, but there's a lot more to it that people don't know.

And then the other thing was, well, gee, yeah, don't we know that electronics are made overseas? And it was, yeah, but we're going to tell you kind of something about that and kind of maybe, you know, examine it and also examine conventional wisdom about whether that has to be forevermore.

MR. JONES: Was there any attraction to the story because of the cult of secrecy around Apple?

MR. DUHIGG: I don't think it was. No, I mean, if anything that made it just incredibly more difficult to report. I mean, the lengths that we had–-

MR. INGRASSIA: That was Charles' problem.

MR. DUHIGG: Yeah, the lengths of source development we had to go to was more extreme than anything else I've every worked on.

MR. JONES: Talk about that a little bit, Charles, would you?

MR. DUHIGG: Sure. I mean, for those of you who don't know, Apple is incredibly secretive. It's a core part of their DNA. It's considered radically inappropriate to ask someone you have lunch with every day, if you're an Apple employee, what they're working on or to have any idea, except for your team, what other people are working on. Very frequently people are hired into positions where they don't know what they will be working on when they are hired. And that creates a culture of secrecy that's very hard to pierce. Basically I did the same thing that all of us do. We just had to do it at greater scale, where we just called hundreds and hundreds of people and said I know you used to

work for Apple or that you currently work for Apple, would you mind, can I ask you a couple of questions? And if you, under the law of big numbers, if you get that big number big enough you find enough people who say yes for whatever reason they wish.

I will say that I actually think that -- so the secrecy was not attractive at all. The opportunity to go to look at a company where there is a legitimate criticism that the press is too fawning in its coverage was, I think, attractive. For many years and I don't think people think about this deliberately, journalists at least don't, if you are online you have a certain amount of coverage about Apple because it draws audience. If you look at Gizmodo, any of these tech websites, Apple is a mainstay of their coverage, even some magazines that I think are wonderful magazines have featured Apple executives on their covers and had interviews inside. It seemed a little softball-ish, perhaps, to me. And I think that one of the reasons why is because having access to Apple is so difficult and is so valuable from a journalistic enterprise, not just financially, but in terms of getting information that your audience genuinely wants and is genuinely hungry for.

And so I was attracted to the project because an opportunity to, you know, spitting in the eye of the giant is always a valuable exercise. And I think within American capitalism we certainly didn't try and spit in the eye, we were respectful and we tried to essentially do our job, but Apple is important in a way that other companies and other tech companies isn't.

MR. JONES: Here's a bit of craft for you and for everybody else on this panel. When you are in a situation where you are trying to persuade people in a culture that does not want their people to talk with you, but you're trying to persuade them and you're basically having to do it randomly, you assembled a list, does it make a difference if you call them or you knock on their door? David Barstow has said knocking on the door works much better, he thinks. What do you think?

MR. DUHIGG: I would love to have knocked on the door. I mean, unfortunately we made over 1,200 phone calls and I just couldn't spend enough time knocking on those doors. But, yeah, absolutely, if I can identify a source where I think would be useful I'd

love to knock on their door.

MR. JONES: Have you all found any?

MS. CALLAHAN: Always knock on the door if you can. I mean, obviously you can't, 1,200.

MR. JONES: Well, I mean, not everybody would want to knock on the door because there's a kind of a -- that's much more intimate and risks more somehow, personally. But it is more effective.

MS. CALLAHAN: Absolutely. I mean, don't you think it's so much easier to hang up on somebody on the phone than to shut the door on them? Absolutely.

MR. INGRASSIA: I think it partly depends on the particulars. I think, yes, it always is, but then it also depends on the story. And some of the stories that we're talking about here, kind of individual sources were much more important. There wasn't like any key source absolutely have to have in these particular cases. Whereas, I think some stories hinge on kind of getting that person to talk and to go in person often kind of is the way to get it out.

MR. JONES: So, Charles, you're on the phone, you're dialing somebody's number, you don't know them from Adam and you hope they are going to talk to you. What do you say to them?

MR. DUHIGG: And let me apologize in advance. I actually have to leave a little bit early because my flight is early. So if I stand up it's not because I don't want to hear David speak. I'd actually desperately love to hear David speak. So this is what I do, I call them up. I basically have this kind of theory which hopefully I'm not giving away too much trade craft. I'm sure everyone does something similar where my goal is to convince them that I am not particularly intelligent or threatening.

(Laughter)

MR. DUHIGG: And that we can have a casual conversation. Because the truth of the matter is I don't usually know the right question to ask. What I'm trying to do is I'm trying to get them to think for me. I'm trying to trick them into doing the thinking for me

and figure out what question I should ask them. So I ask these very, like, kind of frustrating questions, like I don't actually even really know what to ask you; I'm kind of interested in patents, but I just don't know enough about it to even know what question I should ask you. What would you ask you if I had called you--

(Laughter)

MR. DUHIGG: But literally I will say that and very often the person at the other end of the phone is so flattered that they're getting a call from a *New York Times* reporter and that I clearly don't seem to be able to tie my shoes and they say, well, you know, what I would ask me about is like this meeting that we had, like this thing happened once and it's -- and then I always say, you know, I want you to know *The New York Times* takes our commitment to confidentiality very, very seriously. And people have gone to prison in the past to protect their sources and we need to have a conversation about what confidentiality means and the promises I'm making to you.

But I think it's the same thing we all do. We just do it intuitively, right, to put someone at ease. And then I find that there's two stages to it. There's, first of all -- or there's two types of people. There's the person who basically, like, you pick up the phone and they're like, oh, my gosh, let me tell you everything and you had no idea why they're telling you this, but you're enormously thankful. And then there's the type of person who like kind of just has a chat with you and then three months later you're sitting in a bar and they say something and they don't understand the significance of what they just said at all. And that becomes the lead of your story. What we do is fundamentally has sort of the this Janet Malcolm-ish approach that our duty is not to our sources, our duty is to our readers. And I think that the source management, as a result, is a complicated one, but one that becomes very intuitive. And I think one that we don't spend a lot of time angsting over because we understand how to do our job in an ethical and a productive way.

MR. JONES: Would you repeat what you told me last night about the role the Goldsmith Awards played in your career?

MR. DUHIGG: So the reason this ceremony is actually very meaningful to me because I was a student at the Business School and I was trying to decide whether to go into private equity or into journalism.

(Laughter)

MR. INGRASSIA: Increasingly they are the same.

MR. DUHIGG: I was thinking how can I maximize my paycheck. Journalism is the way to go. And I decided to go into journalism. I came to the Goldsmith Awards, I guess six years ago now when Marty Baron and *The Boston Globe* won for the priest scandals. And I met Marty at that ceremony and introduced myself and he basically got me hired at the *L.A. Times*. So I essentially became a journalist because I came to this ceremony 11 years ago. And my students have been regretting this ever since.

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: David, if you would -- where's Paul? Paul, why don't you join us at the table? Okay. David, the Wal-Mart story, how did it start, how did it proceed and what were those moments for you?

MR. BARSTOW: Oh, my god, those moments. I had some of the best moments of my entire journalism career on this particular story. I mean, it began with a tip that sort of came to me and it was basically a few pages of internal Wal-Mart documents. And I took a look at these documents and basically what they suggested was that a number of years ago, back in 2005, a guy who used to be sort of the key guy in terms of obtaining permits, zoning permits, building permits, etcetera, for all Wal-Mart stores in all of Mexico had come forward to Wal-Mart, to Wal-Mart's leaders in Bentonville and said, hey, guess what, we've been paying bribes on this sort of systematic basis. And that's sort of all that was sort of in these documents.

This guy had come forward and had made some really specific allegations about wrongdoing by Wal-Mart to Mexico and that was sort of it. And I looked at this and I thought, wow, I'm probably like the least equipped reporter in the world to go after this story. I have never written a single story about Wal-Mart. I know nothing about Mexico. I

had been there once like 20 years ago for an afternoon and I don't speak a lick of Spanish. And yet, there was something about the specificity of -- there were two things. One was there was a very specific quality to some of the allegations that were in these few pages of documents, which we didn't know at the time. We didn't know where these documents came from. We didn't know anything about whether or not they were legitimate or not. We knew next to nothing about these documents.

And they came to us in the most bizarre, unexpected, strange way, which I really can't talk about here, but it wasn't like we had somebody coming to us who was like a whistle blower. These few things fell into our hands. But the thing that really grabbed me about those documents was that we've all dealt with whistle blowers, right? Most of us have been dealing with whistle blowers our entire career. And one of the things that really jumps out to me when I'm dealing with whistle blowers is, number one, the person who is coming forward as the alleged whistle blower, are they in a position to witness the events firsthand. And this guy clearly was.

Secondly, any time a whistle blower is implicating themselves in the wrongdoing, that's an interesting moment for me. And then third is just from knowing enough about the way allegations like this will ripple through a corporate structure, you have to know that something like this is going to trigger some kind of significant reaction within any major corporation in America. So I felt really intrigued to try to figure out what happened. What was the end of the story here? And so in this particular case, and I think one of the things that I think -- one of the really good reasons for trying to get out of your office and go knock on doors is, among other things, it's really fun. It's actually the fun part of doing this.

And for me the most amazing moment, the breakthrough moment in this particular story came when I was in a hotel in a pretty desolate part of this country trying to make contact with somebody who I thought would be really useful for me. And I got a text message telling me to stand by the ice machine on the fourth floor of this hotel at a designated hour. And so I sort of sheepishly went to the ice machine and waited and

waited. And somebody came to the ice machine and handed me a plastic bag. And inside the plastic bag was this hard drive. And I didn't know what was in the hard drive. I hoped there was good things in the hard drive. But I flew back to New York. I went to our computer guys and I said tell me, you know, help me figure out what's in this hard drive and how can I search it, like today.

And so I started searching through this thing and I remember I would walk over to Paul every couple of hours, like holy cow, you wouldn't believe. And it was like this -- it just was Christmas every day for weeks on end.

(Laughter)

MR. BARSTOW: And so there's a lot. I mean, there is a kind of element of luck in these things. I had this one person who I was desperate to get to and I drove to their house. This was in a place where they don't speak English and, lo and behold, it was a gated community. And I was like, oh, god, gated communities, I can't stand gated communities. So I went to the security guard and the security guard is speaking this language to me and I'm just playing dumb, like I'm just saying over and over again the address that I'm trying to get to. And the person just kind of finally just sort of like gave up and let me go through.

No one was at the house and I just camped -- I was so afraid if I left I'd never get back in. And so I just waited and waited and waited and waited. Eight hours later this person showed up. And I approached them and said I'm David Barstow. I'm from *The New York Times*. And they were -- they looked at me and they said, oh, I know why you're here to see me. And what it turned out was that this person worked for a new company that had been raided by the FBI a couple of days ago for some completely unrelated thing.

(Laughter)

MR. BARSTOW: So when I said no, no, no, I'm not here for that. I'm here for this other thing. It was like, oh, they were so relieved that they were like come on in.

(Laughter)

MR. BARSTOW: And so I had like all of these like moments like that along the way

where you have these wonderful sort of things. There's a saying, my sister once hiked the Appalachian Trail and when she came back she told me that there is this saying on the trail, it's called there's moments of trail magic, where when you are like at your worst moment, when you're like at your hungriest and when you're just ready to give up, something wonderful will happen on the trail that will carry you along. And I often feel like kind of what we do, if you really throw yourself out there and you really commit to it, you'll have these wonderful moments of trail magic. And that's what I kept having along the way here.

MR. JONES: The guy with the drive, was he the guy that you were hoping to meet? I mean, was this someone you had been cultivating? I know you can't be very explicit, but the thing is, did you know the guy who gave you the hard drive?

MR. BARSTOW: I really can't talk about that, but it was a great moment.

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: And did you get some ice too?

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: We have just a few minutes and I want to open the floor to all of you who may have questions of this group or about their craft or about investigative reporting in general. If you have a question you would like to ask, just indicate and the floor will be yours.

FROM THE FLOOR: Could I just ask *The New York Times* particularly, the tax, the reason they were avoiding tax, did you stumble on that by accident or was that part of your whole -- because it's so -- from the poor workers in China and also the people getting paid selling the products and then also this much larger thing of the effort they went to reduce their tax. Did that happen accidentally or were you on that from the beginning?

MR. INGRASSIA: Again, and this is a slightly different series I think than some of the other series and that's one of the neat things about this award is it's the range of stuff, I think. In that first conversation that we had with -- that I had with Charles, you know, we

probably envisioned three or four stories, much more focused around jobs and manufacturing in the way they operated that way. In fact, initially, in a certain way I thought of it as a jobs series and it happened to be in tech and tech is like the most important or one of the most important industries in this country. But as within a kind of good collaborative effort in the newsroom and you're sitting around and you do a couple of stories and you start thinking what does this suggest broadly about kind of the way this thing that we're looking at works and does it work? I think that early on we had a pretty good idea that we wanted to do something about -- actually, we did the story about retail workers, retail stores. And that wasn't Charles' story.

But what happened there was kind of -- we found out they have X number of employees and they said, well, look, we've really increased the number of employees in this country. And maybe, yes, kind of a million people are involved in making it elsewhere, but we've increased a lot. And then you ask, okay, where are those workers? Because we know they're not in Cupertino. Well, it turns out they were mostly in the Apple stores. I think it's like two-thirds of their U.S. employees work for Apple stores. And everybody's been in Apple stores. Oh, my god, what a wonderful experience it is to walk in a beautiful kind of designed Apple store. As much work has gone into designing those stores as has gone into designing these things. By the way, how much are those workers paid and what's the turnover of those stores?

And when you start -- that's where kind of something leads you. And then we knew there had been criticism about kind of taxation. And David Kocieniewski, who last year won a Pulitzer for his coverage of corporations and what taxes they do and don't pay, he sits right next to Charles in the newsroom, and so I think he was overhearing that and that led to a little bit of a conversation of, you know, I had actually been thinking when I was doing that series of taking a look at kind of Apple and what it did, but maybe now is a better time, a better time to look at it. I had fairly early on the idea of looking at the auto industry as a parallel and they said it couldn't be done and kind of basically Nissan starting in kind of the early `80's with a very small plant. Kind of now they are what

suppliers in Tennessee, they are a hundred thousand. So it kind of started building on its own. It wasn't started with the design of just being–-

FROM THE FLOOR: This is like an Apple culture, you know, an Apple culture along with the genius of their product, everything looked as if let's try and get as much money out of this. That's what I meant, reading this.

MR. INGRASSIA: Yeah, and that's where, to some extent, kind of we felt with the tax thing it was like they were as creative in figuring out kind of how to reduce their taxes as they were in packing all the miniature stuff in there. So there was a common theme to it, but I can't say we started with a list of stories and then at the end that same list of stories was done the same way. It was kind of started with this narrow thing but then other things occurred to you as you report. And then you kind of brought it out.

MR. JONES: If those of you on the panel have questions for each other you would be most welcome to respond as well. Yes, Bob.

FROM THE FLOOR: This is for *Atlanta*. I'm curious about the reaction of the newspapers in the communities where you were reporting test scores. Did they know what you were up to? Did they try to help, if they did or did they see you as a competitor on their turf and sort of try to do a story on their own?

MR. JUDD: Some of all of that. But it was interesting that what we ran into in a lot of places was there would be education beat reporters who had been covering the school systems. And they had become somewhat protective of their school system. In fact, in one case I think this woman was probably more defensive about what happened there than the superintendent was. Because they have created this narrative themselves of success, of education reform has led to all kinds of great results. So in a way they have a stake in, in some cases. And there were other situations where people actually wanted to replicate what we did or at least reported on it after we did so. But there were, I would think as much as not, they were simply like how dare you come in here and tell me how I haven't been doing my job basically.

MS. VOGELL: I think those are the ones you remember the most. But I do know that

-- I think Mike Pell was taking a lot of those calls for a couple of weeks after the series ran. We were just getting tons of calls and a lot of it was just interest. How can I do something like this and is there any more data that you can share with us?

MR. JUDD: And then they would start hearing how you do it and kind of, well, that's very nice, thank you very much.

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: Are all of you at work on other projects now? Everybody's got something going? Anybody want to talk about it?

(Laughter)

MR. JONES: I didn't think so. Well, we've come to the end of our time. I want to say, this has been mentioned to me already several times that this was an extremely strong field of Goldsmith finalists. And all of you were chosen because the judges recognized extraordinary work and not just extraordinary work, but extraordinary work on very important things. And they've all had that critical word for the Greenfield Family and for the Goldsmith Awards. You've had impact. And I think that is something that has been demonstrated amply. So, again, my congratulations to you all. We have -- Alison? We try to make these look as much like Harvard degrees as we possibly can. So when I call your name, if you would just come forward and let us present you with this. And there is, as you know, money attached and you'll get that too. Alan Judd, Heather Vogell. I'll give one of these to each of you. Nathaniel, Gordon. Jason, Kim. And would you see that Charles gets this. And David. And if you would join me in saying thanks for working for us. I feel like this is the group that is working for the benefit of us all. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. JONES: And thank you all for being with us.

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the preceding transcript is an accurate record based on the recordings of the proceedings taken before: Alex S. Jones

In the Matter of:

THE GOLDSMITH AWARDS IN POLITICAL JOURNALISM

Date: March 6, 2013

Place: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Date:_____

Allyson R. Farley

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