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BEFORE: RICHARD PARKER
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INDEX

OPENING REMARKS	PAGE
Richard Parker	3
PANELISTS	
Raquel Rutledge	6
David Raziq	13
Steve Riley	14
David Fanning	15
A.C. Thompson	16
Sean Murphy	17
Mark Higgins	19
Mark Greenblatt	21
Keith Tomshe	28
John de Leon	30
Andrew Curliss	34
Tom Jennings	41
Brendan McCarthy	55
Joe Stephens	67
Lena Sun	69
Tiffany Campbell	74

PROCEEDINGS

(9:04 a.m.)

MR. PARKER: I'm Richard Parker and I'm a Senior Fellow here at the Shorenstein Center and with the absence of Alex Jones, I'm going to be chairing this session this morning. Before we start, I would like to just thank a couple of people and I would like them to stand.

Alison Kommer, where are you? Alison Kommer is the heart and soul of the Goldsmith Program here, she does all of the work that makes this happen. She is the one who handles everything from A to Z and she, Nancy Palmer, and Edie Holway and Heather McKinnon are the lifeblood of this organization. So, Alison, thank you very, very much.

(Applause)

MR. PARKER: Now, what I would like to do this morning is organize the discussion in the following way. First, I want to say again thank you to David Fanning for being David Fanning--

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: --and the work that you've produced over the years and also for giving just a terrific talk last night. It was, in the best sense, a

provocation to us all I think is the best kind of talk imaginable and we need to be doing more of those at Harvard, so thank you for setting the bar high. Second, my congratulations, our congratulations to Michael Hindman and to John Maxwell Hamilton for extraordinary books, fully deserving of the Goldsmith Prize, and I look forward to the next ones.

I was talking with Michael about what he is doing for the next book and so we'll be sitting, ready with the prize, Michael.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: So keep writing, terrific. What we are going to do this morning is invite all of the journalists who are here at the table to give some background about how they came to the story and both the challenges they faced and some of the techniques they used.

This is meant to be both a craft discussion, in some sense, but it's also an opportunity for journalists to tell a larger audience about what it means to be and how it works doing investigative journalism. I have a particular fondness for the field. I co-founded a magazine called *Mother Jones* many years ago and then went on to help found Investigative Reporters and Others when Don Bolles was murdered so horribly in Phoenix many, many

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years ago.

So I think of investigative journalism as the Hope Diamond of the jewelry collection that is journalism today and that part of journalism which most needs to be protected as we go forward through a difficult financial period for the industry. What I thought we would do is start with Raquel Rutledge, who won the prize for "Cashing in on Kids", ask her to speak for about ten minutes and then talk with the rest of you, each of the finalist groups, for about ten minutes.

Rather than have just be a straight monologue by each of you seriatim, my encouragement to all of you would be to feel comfortable intervening as your colleagues speak to say yeah, yeah, we had that same problem, or did you ever try or where did you get push back on that because we got heavy push back on that and this is what we did to get around it.

In other words, I want this to feel like a conversation in which the speaker of the moment is leading the conversation but in which we are not simply sitting passive like students in a lecture hall. So my invitation to the rest of you is all of you here at the table feel free to participate as we go through this morning.

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So, with that, let me start with Raquel. Again, our congratulations, a terrific job.

MS. RUTLEDGE: Thank you very much. Let me say thank you very much to the Shorestein folks for having us in this and to the judges, it's much appreciated. The "Cashing in on Kids" series started with a tip from a concerned government worker who was worried about a child who was left in a daycare van in the hot summer in Milwaukee for several hours and then died.

And this person called the newspaper and left a message late in the evening when I wasn't working, but left a message with our night guy and said that child never should have been in daycare that day because his mother had been laid off from work.

And that tip landed in my e-mail box the next day. And it's one of those things that easily could have fallen through the cracks in a lot of newspapers because if it went to the cops reporter, he would have been following up on the death.

And so you would look at a tip like that and say well this is not a quick daily, I'm busy with this other follow-up, there is no way I'm going to get to

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this. But at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* we had a system set up where, and I had been covering what we were calling public investigator interest or consumer angle news.

And so when that tip landed in my box, I thought, the first thing I thought was if this is true, if this happens to be true, this would be huge. So it's one of those things that could have fallen through the cracks, but it didn't, and so I started looking at it and met with the person who called.

And I remember very clearly that first meeting when I sat down and this person was telling me how they knew that this mother shouldn't -- that the child should not have been there because it's the first question of course you ask is how do you know? How do you know that?

And the person pulled out a stack of papers and said well I can show you very clearly here. So your eyes light up and you go ah, all right, now I have something to work with. But those papers were just a road map. They weren't in themselves enough to prove anything, but they could direct me and so I could go out, basically they spelled out what kids should be where and when and where their parents were employed which is very -- it's sensitive information.

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The person that was giving this to me had complained repeatedly to supervisors, to legislators, had been very vocal about the fraud that this person had been seeing and nothing was done. Everyone said well, you know, there's nothing I can do about it.

It's a big issue to tackle, nobody wanted to take it on. So the politicians knew about it, it was not a secret, but this person again was risking their career to give this information but felt like it was very important.

So, anyway, it spelled out all this confidential information, but then it was my job to go out and find out what was actually happening. So, with that information, I would go with a photographer and we would stakeout some of the places that were supposed to have 100 children or supposed to - - we started small.

There was one particular provider that was billing the state for almost -- she billed every single day of the week, claimed to take care of children seven days a week, every day in the winter, while she worked at a lawn care service, even on the day she had her seventh child. She was delivering the baby that day, it was the--

MR. PARKER: A lawn care service in Milwaukee?

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MS. RUTLEDGE: That's why it was a red flag.

(Laughter)

MS. RUTLEDGE: I thought maybe shoveling, maybe, but -- and it was second shift, so what are you doing in the evening hours? I mean it just didn't make any sense. Anybody with any common sense would say well let me look at this. And that's what the workers, the county workers, weren't doing. They weren't verifying anything.

So people were being qualified for child care based on completely bogus jobs, there was nothing to verify. You could write on a scratch of paper I'm employed at such and such a place and stamped approval. Nobody was verifying that there was actually employment going on.

This program was set up in the 1990s as part of welfare reform primarily to move women into the workforce. And so it was set up in such a way to push people off. Again, by design it pushed women into the workforce, yes, but not a lot of thought was given to what was going to happen to their children. So, where else can I go with this? So once we started doing the stakeouts we found out that in fact kids were not showing up. We ran our first -- we investigated for about four months before we ran our first two

stories.

We found that in one case there were sisters that were allowed to stay home and take care of each other's children, supposedly take care of each other's children. There were four sisters who stayed home and made about half a million dollars of the course of less than two years for taking care of each other's children. They actually didn't even have to take care of each other's kids because, again, nobody is looking.

MR. PARKER: Let me ask you a question. I want to ask you a technique question that relates to how a tip becomes a story. You said that your paper has a system so that rather than routing to the police beat it came to you. What is that system? I mean is it Smart Editor? What happens? I mean how does a tip then become a potential story in different news organizations?

MS. RUTLEDGE: Well I think, yeah, I mean with us it was the public investigator beat was a beat that was designed to kind of pick up, it was kind of a safety net beat that was designed to pick up what could be what other reporters would look at and say oh that's kind of petty, it looks like the pothole beat or I don't want to do that story. It's not a glamorous beat at all.

When it was first considered, for us kind of our thinking was oh, do I

really want to do this? But I realized once I got into it that little tips that look like little tips, when you dig into them, they often -- I mean our stories, I work with -- there are two of us and my colleague, Ellen Gabler, who is now at the *Chicago Tribune*.

But she and I together, these things would turn into page one stories almost every time we wrote about anything. Because when you look into the little stuff and you take the time, you will find systematic problems almost everywhere you look, so they are not the petty things that they appear to be.

And so Marty Kaiser, our editor, had long, for years, wanted to establish a beat like that that would pick up things that nobody else kind of wanted. And we called it public investigator which was, like I said, consumer stuff. Everywhere you turn somebody, consumers are getting screwed over in a lot of ways everywhere, so this was an avenue for them to come.

MR. PARKER: Let me ask the second question which, is on the one level this could be a story about individual fraud, but on other it reflects on a welfare reform system that was supposed to be the jewel of state-based welfare reform systems that propelled Tommy Thompson from state level success to being a national figure of great renown. This sounds like a big

screw up, systemically, that they sort of built the system and then forgot to put the engine in the car, I mean--

MS. RUTLEDGE: Yeah, I mean they also forgot how -- yeah. It's definitely smoke and mirrors. I mean that was, yeah, Tommy Thompson really rose quickly, being able to say yes, we got almost everybody off the welfare rolls but they weren't. They were off the rolls, the welfare rolls, but they were actually getting more subsidies through all the different programs that were then designed to pick it up. So it would be interesting to go back and talk to him now. I mean what Tommy Thompson would say is that everything was in place when he left.

But the truth is when I've talked to investigators that were around during that time in the 1990s, they recall sitting in meetings and they were there. I've talked to numerous ones who were there at the time and they were told let this go, you are a fraud investigator, you don't need to look at these daycare providers, we need them. We are moving people into the workforce and we need people to take care of children and so don't go after it.

MR. FANNING: Can we ask--

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MR. PARKER: Yes, absolutely.

MR. FANNING: --Dean Ellwood about this because he was a--

MS. RUTLEDGE: I talked to him last night about it.

MR. PARKER: You remember that he and Mary Jo Bane left the Clinton Administration, too. Let me ask the rest of you, do you have systems in place? What kinds of tip conversion systems do you have in place? And are they efficient or are they slapdash? Or is it literally luck of the draw that somebody calls you, you pick up the phone or get the e-mail? Is there any kind of systemic oversight of conversion of tips into a story by finding the right reporter match?

MR. RAZIQ: Our situation is a little different in terms of that I run the unit. I've been with it since '98, which is when we first created it there, and what we do is originally it was myself acting as an investigative producer and then we had a reporter and a photographer.

That expanded to where now we have Mark and another reporter and we have Keith Tomshe who does both the editing and photography. The point being is that so we've kind of worked out a haphazard sort of system or I guess you could say an impromptu system in terms of who gets which

story.

Part of it is based on does it come over the transit, is what we called it. Did it not come directly to them from a source. So if that occurs, of course, then they have -- they are the primary on the story, basically. We also have a web system which works very well and. So then what will happen is that I kind of make the call on those.

And then of course basically I mean we are all looking for stories all of the time. If it's myself or Keith who happens to pull up a couple of investigations, then we go through a process of figuring out who is best for the story. What's the best timing in terms of is somebody deep into another investigation and therefore the other guy can handle it.

MR. PARKER: Anybody else?

MR. RILEY: Well I was going to say in Raleigh it's a little more haphazard than we would like and we are trying to brush it up. The senior editor for news and I try to communicate. So our guys on the I Team field a lot of tips, thankfully. And they are very good at trying to evaluate quickly is this something that we ought to dive into or is it something that we should pass on to a beat reporter.

And I want to know about these tips because I want the editor for those beat reporters to know that those tips are being passed out. Because depending on the reporter and how aggressive they are and how busy they are at a given time, they could fall through the cracks.

So we are trying to get more systemic or systematic I guess about making sure we know where the tips are, but there is no replacing the reporter who will just take it and run with it--

MR. PARKER: Grab it, who thinks it's a story.

MR. FANNING: We did something that's sort of -- we of course get stuff in the mail, phone calls, those types of leads. And you pass them on to the kind of reporter or producer who is likely to follow up on them. It's not often that they pay off, at least on the scale of work that we do. We need quite a lot of water behind the dam before we can really figure out whether or not it's going to be possible.

But we tried something, just in a very small way, on the web site around "Law and Disorder" where we actually put a tip line up. And we asked people to do -- there's a very interesting part of it. It is that the photographs that were evidence, with what turns out to be first what appears to be one

body but then upon examination it turns out to be two bodies.

A photograph taken by a photographer working for the *Times-Picayune* with a reporter of a group of policeman standing around and there is no further record of what happens to those individuals. So that photograph is on the web site and if you click on it, it's a PDF that becomes a poster. The poster says can you identify any of the people in this picture. And there are little sort of phone numbers at the bottom.

So in a neighborhood that's not wide into the internet, you can stick it in a shop window or the message board, which was a kind of first step for us at least. And I don't know what you've done or what's happened on the tip front. Have we got any tips that have come out of any of this?

MR. THOMPSON: We've gotten some tips but we had this discussion last night. And that is an issue for us, for the people that we are looking for, for particularly that story. Two bodies laying on the ground, are they alive, are they dead, what happened to these men in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. And the wired issue is still an issue for people who may not be in New Orleans, are they going to *Frontline*. Are they going to NOLA.com, *Pro Publica*? Maybe not, probably not.

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And even if we put up some posters and gotten that out there, is that enough to find the people who know what happened there? And we've gotten some tips.

(Laughter)

MR. FANNING: There is something potentially out there, which is what you -- it's called crowd sourcing or whatever. But there is a chance that we can, in an increasingly wired world, as with mobile devices and others, we can get closer to being able to encourage people to bring information to us. It's going to be something that's a work in progress.

MR. MURPHY: Richard, I would like to put in a word for adding your e-mail address to the bottom of your story. I do that in all cases and I get a lot of results from it. I also want to put a word in for being a little bit proactive.

The recent stories that I did, I had received information about pension abuse generally. I hit then a roadblock or I had stalled in fact. So I just called, cold, various retirement boards around the state, introduced myself and tried to build up a little rapport very quickly, what's going on?

In this case, one of the executive directors said well I'll tell you, Sean,

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there is a former state rep who engineered a bill through the legislature to get himself credit for being a library trustee and he is about to cash in.

(Laughter)

MR. MURPHY: And so I said great, who is it? And he said I can't tell you.

(Laughter)

MR. MURPHY: But he did say it's in a city north of Boston.

MR. PARKER: Oh, great.

MR. MURPHY: Oh, great.

MR. PARKER: Yeah, fabulous.

MR. MURPHY: So if anybody is local here, you know that I picked up the phone and called Revere.

(Laughter)

MR. MURPHY: And they said, the Revere Library, and they said no, we don't have a former rep here. Then I called Chelsea, no. Medford, no. Everett, no. Finally, Malden and the librarian there said oh, no, we don't have a state rep but there's a former state senator who just got off the board, the library board. And I said oh, how long had he been on the board? She

said oh, my, she said oh, my, ever since he got out of the state senate. As soon as she said that, I knew the whole story, the he had engineered this, linked the two services, and it was just now a matter of documenting it and that was good.

MR. PARKER: Mark?

MR. HIGGINS: Just a quick comment about how global commenting on our stories has worked. We do have a news tip line, like most news organizations, and we get lots and lots of tips and typically not a high quality tip. And that can also be said of some of the people commenting on the stories. It's a mixed bag, you get some very intelligent people and you get some not so. However, embedded in those comment threads are some really very intelligent ideas and commentary. So the trick, the challenge for us has been to, you know, weeding those out and then put them to use.

And there was one story in particular about -- it was kind of a real estate fraud case and we had highlighted an individual who lost some money on a deal. Before long we had people commenting about this individual and their background in real estate and the property he'd owned. And so we were sort of schooled in the background of this individual through our commenting,

so it's a difficult process but it can be rich with ideas.

MR. PARKER: Let me turn to Sean and have you say something about your story so that we can use that as the next sort of focus for moving this forward.

MR. MURPHY: Well I'll just add, thank you, Richard, and thanks, it's great to be with all of you fine folks who do this kind of work. Another technique that I found successful is, well relatively successful, is if you need somebody who is a state legislator and they are ducking you, just go to the office. When the chief of staff well he's not available, we'll call you when he is available, you just say okay, I'll wait. Just wait in that office and eventually I think you'll flesh him out.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: Bring a book.

MR. MURPHY: In this recent case, I finally managed to get the state senator to bring me in, it was about three hours or so. And I had already briefed his chief of staff and his media person. He says all right, come on in, and with some sort of nicety, he looks at me and he says, Sean, I am not going to lie to you. That's the first thing he said.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: There's the Pulitzer right there.

MR. MURPHY: Which made me think what?

(Laughter)

MR. MURPHY: And get out, if you possibly can, into these different offices, there's some good stuff like that.

MR. PARKER: That's great. Mark Greenblatt, David Raziq, Keith Tomshe, Robyn Hughes and Chris Henao did a great job on "Under Fire" with the Texas National Guard. David and Keith, you're here, say a little bit about that.

MR. RAZIQ: In terms of the beginning, actually I'll let Mark take that, as far as how it came in through the window.

MR. GREENBLATT: We, much like Raquel talked about, in looking at what could be viewed as a small story, watching it before it balloons or explodes, it started very simply. I got a call from an upset mother who had a daughter who was in the Texas Air National Guard who had witnessed a very unusual award ceremony, very different than the Goldsmith Prize.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: Hooray for Harvard.

MR. GREENBLATT: Hooray for Harvard. They gave out the Vagisil Award in the Texas Air National Guard. And this was not a single incident but this had gone on for a number of years where they would essentially take the woman who had literally "bitched and complained" the most, as the quote that we had heard. They put a pink crown on her head and made her parade around in front of her colleagues with a trash bag. It's as if, you know, this is how we are training the future leaders of the military and don't be mistaken, the National Guard is not what it used to be. The National Guard is now in many ways the backbone of the folks that we send overseas to fight the wars, to these are--

MR. PARKER: Not like the Texas Air National Guard in the late '60s where they didn't go the fight the war--

MR. GREENBLATT: Well that's--

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: That's about a Yale graduate, so that doesn't involve Harvard.

MR. RAZIQ: I just want to interject one other thing here, it wasn't just a

pink foam crown. It actually had a Vagisil seal on it and little fatigues on it too.

MR. GREENBLATT: It was really something, but you hear that and you say okay, well that's upsetting enough, and it obviously gets a rise out of folks when they hear about that. But one of the things that we just systemically are trained to do, I think like a lot of the folks in this room, is to think, is to say well is this an isolated incident or is there something bigger here?

And so we started looking around and asking around. And it led us to a local congressional source that we had heard through the grapevine that there had been a group of very decorated women who had joined together to complain about systemic discrimination in the Texas Air National Guard at the time.

And what happened is that we had a very difficult time convincing this group of people to talk to us so--

MR. PARKER: Because they were still serving and there was--

MR. GREENBLATT: One of them was still serving, a couple. In the military, they, on this level, and we are talking about colonels, we are talking

about medical doctors who were the flight surgeons for the bases. And there truly is a code in the military, especially at a higher level. You don't want to rat out the problems. You want to handle it internally. So many of these people had been trying. They had been filing internal Inspector General complaints, getting nowhere.

And what we did was, the breakthrough for us was we employed a technique that I think Sean used to go after a confrontational source. We used it to go after a friendly source and that is to get off the phone. And I called up one of the women who had filed a complaint and I said listen, Rita, let me come down in person and let me just talk to you, no cameras, no notes, no tape recorders, let me just -- I'm going to drive an hour south from where our station is, let me sit with you and learn from you and just get to know you.

And sure enough that proved to be a tipping point I think for our story because we were able to gain their trust. They were able to not see us as some intimidating investigative reporter and journalist team. But it was more about we were just people trying to help them. And we went from one source who ended up opening up a treasure trove and ended up calling up

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the other people, the other women in their group and they said you really ought to talk to Mark, and from there we just started, the whole problem started unraveling from one thing to the next.

MR. RAZIQ: If I could just say one other thing too is that part of why what worked worked is because we try to approach sources with a win-win approach. So frequently we will be on background immediately because we are talking about, you know, we just want to know the map, at that point. And we use it as a trust building situation also.

So if we get the information that we need, the overview to be able to figure out then okay, what's our next approach, great. And if we do build that trust where -- I mean where I think generally most of us, we actually care about the people that we are reporting on, still maintaining some distance.

But the point is that we don't mean harm to them and we appreciate the fact that they have spoken out and we make that very clear to them. And so of course why would I want to damage you in any sense? So what can we do here, what are your problems and how can we handle them? And that goes a long way, especially when what Mark did because it just snakes through the

grapevine very quickly.

MR. PARKER: I have two questions, one is are you telling me that these women went to the Inspector General's office of the National Guard and there was no significant action taken that satisfied them that this would be even stopped, period? Let alone punished, I mean just stopped?

MR. GREENBLATT: Ironically, today, even today, one of the Inspector General complaints is still languishing within the National Guard and I think they are well beyond four years after she filed a complaint. And you have to understand once you file a complaint, these people are still working within the system and they have to report to the people that they are complaining on. And there are regulations that say that they need to be filed and adjudicated within a very short period of time. Yet the way the Guard works is it's a closed system. It's technically the National Guard but really what it is is it's 50 different fiefdoms.

And it's a great national story that remains in many ways unexplored on the national front where you have, if you complain to the National Guard about a problem, they will forward it right back to the very organization you are complaining about. That's what happened in Texas.

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MR. PARKER: That doesn't seem to me to be a positive, am I just--

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: --a naive New Englander here that doesn't understand justice?

MR. GREENBLATT: Well the next version of the tipping point in this story is that one of the key people that eventually came out of the woodwork was a financial auditor whose job it was to audit the Texas National Guard on behalf of the federal government. And she had been trying for years to get them to, on the financial side of things, do what was right and stop stealing money from the state and federal government.

But then she had a problem too because unlike the Vagisil Award, she was then given what was called the Dinosaur Award. And they literally did this in front of the entire command staff, all the top generals in Texas, and they said well you are old school, we don't think, literally, we don't think that you need to follow the law as closely as you think. And we think we can take a little bit more of a liberal approach to--

MR. PARKER: Is this a states rights claim that was federal law and therefore Rick Perry could get in on this?

MR. GREENBLATT: Well what they really were doing was they decided they could take loans out from public money. They could even do what's really classic double dipping. They were billing the state and the federal government for work that they did at the same time and they were piling up literally thousands of hours of pay at a very high rate in order to enrich themselves.

But the auditor came forward and said, essentially blew the whistle on this practice. She took what we had was a story initially from a discrimination story into a whole new level of true, absolute corruption throughout the top ranks of the Guard.

MR. TOMSHE: And there I would add, Mark, because to me the best, they shot themselves in the foot by not responding after we did the first series of stories because by not doing that it stirred up a hornet's nest with these women. You do not want to get them fired up and that's what happened. And they just started coming out and talking to Mark and of course Mark, trying to hold their hands and make sure they understood that we weren't going to burn them.

But once we got past that, this adjutant general who is in charge of all

the different branches of the Guard in Texas, who made Mark stand in a hallway with him, gave him a time limit of five minutes or something ridiculous like that. Wouldn't let Mark, you know, it was like you can put your camera there and you can talk to me right here, and promised that he would look into things.

Well he didn't look into them. That stirred up the women and because he did that, he shot himself in the foot. Because a year or so later, when we came back to revisit the story and nothing had been done, that's when we found out about all the money trail.

So the sad part, to me, of the story is that a story that started about these women that were being persecuted, if you will, it ended up that didn't get solved until the money problem came up. To me that's the tragedy in this story. But in the end, there has been a lot of reform. So, anyway, if they hadn't done that, you mentioned how does the system work, if they hadn't done that, the rest of this never would have come out.

MS. RUTLEDGE: Can I jump in really quick too because we had a similar -- if the case of the baby dying in the van wasn't enough, if they didn't die in vans, I guess people don't -- that's not what got them worked

up. What got them worked up was their tax dollars were being misspent. So when you coupled those two together, that's when actions started happening, which is sad.

MR. DE LEON: May I interject? How much time elapsed between the point where the anguished mother came in and complained about the treatment of her daughter to the point where the women finally agreed to open up? Was this over a period of months?

MR. GREENBLATT: Well, it's a good question. I would say that we were tackling the project on different fronts. It took me, I focused entirely on the women at first. And then we, once we realized that there were other people involved, it probably took us -- it really only took us about a week and a half in order to start getting them on camera. But there was one woman in particular, a woman by the name of Colonel Sue Beckenger, who lived up in Dallas, who lived in Houston, and I'd been trying to convince her to go on camera.

She's a Bronze Star winner who literally commanded a base in Qatar during the war, during the most recent Iraq war, and won a Bronze Star for her service and was praised by the top general running the war. And she was

nervous about going on camera with us. Well we continued to have conversation, conversation and conversation on the phone and finally she said, Mark, we'll do the interview, and this was in the morning.

I said okay, well we are going to fly up. And thankfully David here is a good enough boss that gives us the leeway on big interviews to go after them. And so I said well we and a crew are going to fly up. We'll be on a plane within an hour and a half, I'll see you soon. So we got her on camera before she could just change her mind and it evolved, it evolved from there.

But I will tell you one other lesson and I think it's really inspirational to me to be in this room with the other journalists here and seeing the stories and seeing the work that's all around us that all of you have done. But I think there's a commonality here that's worth noting. And that's that these are not single stories that any of us have done.

Every news organization in here that's being honored today did report after report after report after report and one thing leads to the next and it evolves over time. And I think that that is the key to really substantial reporting that's memorable, that actually gets action, that's not just a splash or a headline in a newspaper or on TV but that actually leads to serving our

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communities and doing the job that we all aspire to do.

MR. PARKER: Systematic coverage of systematic problems.

MR. FANNING: How many stories did you guys do?

MR. GREENBLATT: We probably did 14 stories. There's others that have done more over time.

MR. RAZIQ: We went after it for two plus years. It was more than 14 actually.

MR. PARKER: Andy Curliss and Steve Riley from the *News and Observer* in Charlotte, you guys spent a year looking at "Pay to Play", tell us about that.

MR. RILEY: Let me get the geography in, we're in Raleigh.

MR. PARKER: I'm sorry, sorry.

MR. RILEY: We get a little sensitive about that.

MR. PARKER: I understand.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: North Carolina State, North Carolina, I'm getting confused.

MR. RILEY: Going back to the discussion about Tommy Thompson and welfare reform, and at the risk of stating the obvious here, governors are really important people and that's true whether they are in office or whether they are just out of office. And I think that's one of the lessons that we take from what we did. Just very quickly, and I'm going to get to the guy who did all the work, we had been interested in Mike Easley, in his behavior, for several years when 2009 rolled around.

We knew from looking just at the records of state aircraft that he was not in town very much, he was at the beach a lot.

MR. PARKER: Not hiking the Appalachian Trail though is what you're--

MR. RILEY: Not as far as we know.

(Laughter)

MR. RILEY: He was a very absent leader and one of the first things Andy did when he was covering the governor several years ago was ask for his travel with the state highway patrol, which provides his security. And on the basis of laws passed after 9/11, they denied it saying security, whether it's travel that's about to happen or travel that's already happened. And we couldn't get through that.

But what we did do was, in the course of examining some state policy work, both in mental health and in probation, we were able to show over time that he had been a really ineffective leader, both in the people that he put in charge and in the way that he didn't pay attention to the people once he put them in charge . And the mental health was a fiasco and probation was just as bad.

At the same time, during that year of 2008, his wife, who already had been working at N.C. State, had her salary doubled and then we really got interested about whether Easley, on his way out of office, was really attempting to set things up, both through pensions and through other ways. So when Andy came to our I Team at the end of 2008, my instructions to him were to find out how Mary Easley really got her job. And then I just stood back out of the way, and I'll turn it over to Andy.

MR. CURLISS: Remind me, if I forget to say it, to talk about stakeouts. There is one where Andrew Young is holed up in Chapel Hill and they called the police, we've got the 911 tape, and they are on the phone and they say there are some men in the bushes, they are out back, they are in the bushes, please get the police here, we are going to be broken into. And

pretty soon then you hear the guy come around to the front door and he says well I'm with the *National Enquirer*, so--

(Laughter)

MR. CURLISS: We usually knock on the front door when we go to someone's house. But anyway.

MR. PARKER: They were also selling subscriptions?

MR. CURLISS: Yeah. But, anyway, so Easley was a secretive governor, I had wanted these records of his private travel. Wherever he goes, a trooper goes. So my way in was to get these trooper expenses. I didn't even want the governor's expenses, I wanted the trooper's, and at least then I could show where the trooper had gone all of these times.

They kept those closed off for years. And so he tells me to look into Mary Easley's job and I do what reporters do, you start asking around. And I come across this guy named McQueen Campbell, and that's a picture of him over there, if you see him--

MR. PARKER: In the red jacket there?

MR. CURLISS: Yeah. He is the youngest trustee in the history of N.C. State, Easley appointed him when he was 30. And he is a pig farmer, he

owns a lube shop, he has a furniture business that went bankrupt and he is in real estate. And so McQueen became, I managed to figure out that McQueen was also a pilot and that McQueen had flown the governor.

And so I'm doing some reporting on McQueen and he figures this out. He is trying to move up to the board of governors, which oversees the entire university system. And he decides that he would like to talk to me about the questions I've been asking about him, and I said this is great, come on in.

So we talked and the key point of this meeting is what was your discussions with Mary Easley about her job? And he says I had no involvement in that, I had nothing to do with it, I had no influence, I didn't influence her job at all.

And I said well that wasn't the question, the question is just what were your conversations? Did you talk to her about it? Here you've flown her, you're long time friends, you're on the board and she gets a job at N.C. State and there's not a conversation between the two of you? And--

MR. PARKER: --administrator or a teacher?

MR. CURLISS: She was an executive in residence, which was--

(Laughter)

MR. CURLISS: It was essentially to run a speakers bureau. And what she would do, we wrote a whole story that dissected her job, what she would do is she would call the Washington Speakers Bureau and they would send her a list of who was available and how much they cost and then she would choose. And that's pretty much how it went. So I wish I could get that job.

MR. PARKER: I think we would all like that job.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: Add tenure and you would have the whole room standing here for North Carolina State.

MR. CURLISS: And so we have phone records that showed them making phone calls at the same time and, anyway, long story short, the provost had waived all the job search requirements, created, funded a job for her in a day. And at the time he was the interim provost and he was about to lose his job. The new provosts were all on campus being interviewed. This was not a normal thing. If anybody has tried to get a job at a university, you know it doesn't happen in a day.

So when I'm talking to McQueen about this there's phone calls on that day between the Easleys and him and he is saying there's no conversation.

And so ultimately that was the first story that we reported was that he said that there was no involvement and it came crashing down immediately, as McQueen had to basically acknowledge it.

The pressure of the story forced him to acknowledge that well actually maybe I did talk to them. And it became this shifting story. And eventually we got e-mails that showed the governor had actually created the job for his wife and it was--

MR. PARKER: --the provost?

MR. CURLISS: Yeah, he worked through McQueen and it was McQueen, the chancellor and the provost who were all in constant phone calls and e-mails. I'm talking about they were talking about the salary, what it would be, what she would be doing. It was very detailed, it wasn't just a passing mention kind of a thing, and she ends up with two contracts, seven years, or I'm sorry, eight years, a million dollars. I mean this is not inconsequential.

The e-mails were produced by the university, they did not give them to us pursuant to our requests. It was only after the FBI began subpoenaing them they produced them for the grand jury and they voluntarily gave them

to us. And they gave them to us first, that was nice.

(Laughter)

MR. RILEY: Just to give Andy some credit here, I sat in on that McQueen Campbell interview, and it was three hours, and when McQueen Campbell said there were no conversations, Andy looked at him and said I find that hard to believe, and McQueen did not enjoy that.

(Laughter)

MR. CURLISS: And just to be clear, I wasn't confrontational about it though, I just said well I find that hard to believe. He said well that's your problem, you've got your mind made up. And I said no, I don't have my mind made up, I'm just saying. So the thing that was interesting about McQueen is he is a real estate guy and he was running a real estate deal down on the coast, and so this was another part of our story was the governor gets the choice lot in this development on the waterfront, on the marina, the best lot in the neighborhood for, according to the public records, \$550,000.

The neighboring lots are all going for \$700,000, and I'm talking about the wife gets the job on May 25th, and Easley gets the lot on June 9th. And

McQueen gets reappointed to the N.C. State board on June 9th, and the developer of the development gets appointed on June 9th to the Wildlife Resources Committee. It was just a big--

MR. PARKER: Timing, timing, timing.

MR. CURLISS: A very powerful time line, let me say, and ultimately we were able to -- and what Easley said is I paid the list price, list price, no negotiating, there was no special deal for me. We were able to ultimately get the closing documents on that real estate deal, and that took a period of about four months. They are not public records, and they are still not public records, and there's only a few people who have them.

And I really can't say more about that. But we were able to get those records and what they showed was he didn't pay \$550,000, which is what the public -- the public record shows, if you go up right now today, you would think he paid \$550,000 for that lot. But at closing they just crossed it out and gave him a \$137,000 discount, so he paid about \$410,000 for this lot.

That was purely an investment. This was at the height of the hot market on the coast, and he was going to turn around and sell that for probably a million dollars. And so they basically just lowered his end of it until he

could flip it.

MR. JENNINGS: So McQueen was the linchpin?

MR. CURLISS: He really was, yeah.

MR. JENNINGS: Was it straight ego that brought him in that day? How did you bring him in?

MR. CURLISS: He was trying to preserve his candidacy for the UNC Board of Governors. So he thought that he was going to come in and make this all go away. He was going to come in and he was going to explain everything and that was going to be the end of it, and it didn't turn out that way.

(Laughter)

MR. CURLISS: But one of the--

MR. PARKER: Do you do standup in the evening when you are not doing reporting? That's great stuff.

MR. CURLISS: No. I'll tell you there's a whole other interesting aspect to this, the governor was -- this is where the stakeouts helped. He was driving cars that they didn't own. His family, and of course these car dealers, there were interesting things that they had gotten from state government.

He had gotten a \$50,000 membership at this exclusive golf club and then appointed all of the guys who gave him the membership to all these, the lottery commission, DOT board, so on and so forth. And the thing that was neat about that was that we were able to show that in the drought, and we had a severe drought, and the governor is on TV telling everybody to shower with your neighbor and don't flush the toilet--

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: This isn't California, shower with your neighbor?

MR. CURLISS: But this was a severe, severe drought that, over a period of weeks, the governor was adamant on saving water. They were cutting the towns off and everything, and they pumped the creek to keep the golf course green.

So we were able to show, and the governor's office intervened and that's what's great about, I think, reporting on state government is these engineers and these low level people, they like to cover their memos. They cover themselves in memos. So there was this great memo in there about the governor's office had intervened on this.

One of the things about the stakeout, Raquel, and I would love to hear if

you have any more details on that, but it turns out that stakeouts are not very fun. They are really boring, you forget to bring your lunch and you are afraid to leave because when you leave something is going to happen and--

MR. RILEY: You have to go to the bathroom.

MR. CURLISS: Yeah, and I'm sitting in--

MR. PARKER: You can't call Dominos on your cell phone and have them deliver?

MR. CURLISS: You're sitting in this neighborhood, and you stand out, and people are walking their dogs looking at you. So you are on your cell phone acting like you are looking for something. And one time I was trying to find Easley's son and I had never been able to establish his car. He was interning at the court house, and so there I am in front of the court house all day. I waited and I saw him in the court room, so I'm up and down every parking deck in Downtown Raleigh trying to find this car and I can't find it.

It gets to the end of the day and I'm sitting there and this older gentleman comes out, and I'm on the street, and he gets in the car behind me, and you can see where this is going. He starts trying to edge out of this space and he is getting closer to me and closer to me and then he runs into

me, wham. And I'm like oh, my gosh, and so I get out and sure enough there goes the son--

(Laughter)

MR. CURLISS: --down the sidewalk, and this guy is going should we call the police, and it was an entire day literally wasted. And there he went down the street to his car and I had no idea where he was going.

(Laughter)

MR. CURLISS: So there's one other thing, just that the heart of the story really was on permitting, which is something that we haven't said.

McQueen, we obtained a memo from a separate private source, private documents, McQueen bragged about his ability to get fast permits, and that was the other sort of part of the -- there's a quid and there's a quo and what they were able to do was get permits fast for their developments. And so that has helped to answer well why is this going back and forth. They needed permits fast, and so they were essentially buying influence.

MR. GREENBLATT: I've just got a short, Richard, you had mentioned you can't order a pizza and I just wanted to let you know sometimes you can order a pizza--

MR. PARKER: Oh, good.

MR. GREENBLATT: We had been on, just a short story, we had been a story about another military story, this time the Army recruiters had thought it was okay to threaten young children with arrest, federal warrants for their arrest if they didn't essentially sign up and join the military. And we were--

MR. PARKER: This is what they called impressment, I think, didn't you drop this?

MR. GREENBLATT: It's interesting, but we were staking out the recruiter who was at the center of the allegations, and we had him on tape so we knew he had really done this. Keith and I were in a car outside of his house waiting for a moment when we could have what we call an attempted interview with him. And what happens is we had been waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting and we got hungry so we decided to order a pizza--

MR. PARKER: Ordered to your car?

MR. GREENBLATT: Delivered to the house that we were sitting next to but when the pizza driver pulled up, we got out of the car and the pizza driver says to us you guys look like you're on a stakeout.

(Laughter)

MR. GREENBLATT: And we said oh, never mind that, here's a tip, now just go away. The ironic thing about the whole thing is eventually the guy that we were really staking out, after we have our pizza, he gets in his truck and he himself drives to the pizza store to buy himself a pizza. So we actually finally get him in a moment that ends up on the CBS Evening News. They ended up lifting it, the moment as Keith and I are walking up to the Army recruiter at the pizza store--

MR. RILEY: --coming out with his pizza.

MR. GREENBLATT: With his pizza, yeah.

MR. TOMSHE: That's the best part, he's got like a stack of them.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: That's a great story. A.C. Thompson, Brendan McCarthy at the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. You've been working with *Pro Publica* and with *Frontline*, talk about "Law and Disorder".

MR. THOMPSON: Well there's sort of two phases to this investigation and I'll talk about the first phase of it and turn it over to this guy for the second phase of it and try to kind of explain the tangled mess of reporting

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that we've done. And, like everyone, this started with a tip for me.

Unfortunately it started in 2007, so I've been doing this forever. but it started with a tip from a friend of mine who is a historian and she was doing a book about disasters. And she said I'm interviewing these people in New Orleans and they keep telling me about this little white army of white residents that formed in one neighborhood and were attacking African Americans. And I really don't know how to deal with this. I'm not an investigative reporter. You cover crime stories, can you try to figure out what happened here?

And that was the middle of 2007 and the Nation Institute Investigative Fund gave me a grant to go down there and start checking it out. At first I was skeptical but the more time I spent there, I found out that this was in fact true, that this is what had happened.

That on the West Bank of the Mississippi River there is a pretty little neighborhood that's predominantly white and there was an evacuation center set up by the Coast Guard there that was bringing people from across the river to the area and then bussing them out of town.

Also, people who were on foot were coming to that area to be bused out

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of town. And that there was massive friction between the white locals and the predominantly African American evacuees who were coming there. And I was thinking a lot of different things about it.

Then when people started showing me video and talking about running around with uzis, I started believing that this in fact was really what had gone down. And the videos that they were showing me were videos of this little white army creating barricades in their neighborhood, taking down trees and debris and blocking off the streets so people couldn't come in.

And it was people talking about shooting people on the video tape, saying oh, yeah, so tell us about -- this is home video from 2005 -- tell us about the shooting, oh, well maybe we shouldn't talk about the shooting. And then somebody else says oh, but no jury would ever convict on that.

And then it got to video that was people just outrightly bragging about shooting folks and saying it was like pheasant season in South Dakota, if it moved, you shot it. And so what we did over the course of that first prong of the investigation is we found people who had been shot, who were African American folks who had been passing through that neighborhood.

We found people who were involved in the shootings who said yes, I was

there, and typically what they would say is oh, my neighbor shot this guy on this date, at this time, in this intersection and it was because the person was "a thief or a thug or a looter". And then we found doctors and all kinds of other corroborating evidence that showed, for example, we went to the trauma surgeons for one of these people who had been shot in this neighborhood, an African American gentleman, and said is this -- got the medical records, got the doctor on the record.

And he said yes, this man was shot on this date, at this time and if he hadn't come in here, he would have died, since he was shot in the jugular vein, basically in the neck with a shotgun from close range, got the medical records, all that. So that was the first sort of prong was--

MR. FANNING: Can I ask you how you got the medical records?

MR. THOMPSON: Yeah, that's a good story. How I got the medical records was I connected with the person who had been shot. He and I went to the hospital, and the way I got to him is because everybody's phone numbers have changed in New Orleans, I looked up an obituary in the *Times-Picayune* with his family name in it.

Called every single -- found numbers for all of his relatives who were all

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listed there. Finally found one who had a working phone number, said I'm working on a story, trying to find out who shot your brother, can you get him in touch with me?

And he called me and I said yeah, I was just hanging out with these guys in Algiers Point neighborhood who were talking about shooting people and maybe they are the guys who shot you. So when we got the medical records, which helped verify that all this happened, we went over to the hospital, myself and Darnell Harrington, who had been shot, and--

MR. MURPHY: So the victim gave you the records?

MR. THOMPSON: The victim and I went to get the records because he didn't have them. We went to the hospital and they looked at us really weird when we were in the records room. They were looked at us like what is going on here? And Darnell and I are just standing there and finally the lady says so you've given me your date of birth and your name and there is somebody with that date of birth and a very similar name in here. And I'm not sure whether you are trying to fake us or not and get these records and do some identity theft thing.

And Darnell said, Lady, what does the name say? And she says it says

Daniel Marrington was in here with this date of birth at that time. And he pointed to his neck, which has this huge scar on it, and he says well the problem was I got shot in the neck, and in the back and in the front, and I wasn't really talking very clearly at that time.

(Laughter)

MR. THOMPSON: I think somebody got my name wrong. And of course by page three they had the right name on there and--

(Laughter)

MR. THOMPSON: When he could speak a little more clearly. They eventually gave us the records, but at first they thought it was a big scam. And having like a big, huge scar, that helped convince the people there.

So that was the first prong was looking at the reaction of this white neighborhood, this fear of African American people coming into the neighborhood. And really the really blunt things that people said to us in that neighborhood, the white community there that said, look, these people were outsiders, we could look at them and see that they were outlaws.

One person told me, well all African American gang members in New Orleans wear white T-shirts. So if we saw somebody wearing a white T-shirt,

we knew they were a criminal. This is in New Orleans in the middle of summer when it's very, very hot and everything is--

MR. STEPHENS: Could I ask, the people who bragged to you, the shooters who seemed to kind of brag early on, do they talk to you now? Do you know how they feel now? Have they--

MR. THOMPSON: They're really unhappy with me because the FBI keeps coming and talking to them.

(Laughter)

MR. THOMPSON: They are not big fans.

MR. STEPHENS: They are not still talking.

MR. THOMPSON: No, not so much. And so that was the prong one. But the weird thing is when you go down these paths and you look at this stuff, it's that often times you stumble into something else that's equally as crazy, equally as disturbing.

And that was the Henry Glover story. Another reporter said to me, and I'm pointing this out, that people were helping out all along, reporters, historians, etcetera. And she said, look, I know you're doing this thing about New Orleans. I encountered this weird thing down there, I don't know what

it means but check it out.

And it was the statement of a guy who had gone to a police accountability group about what happened to him in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and it was a really, really crazy story. He said, I was driving along one day, it was September 2, 2005, the storm had just hit and I encountered a man who had been shot, and I tried to rescue him. I tried to save him. I put him in my car and I put his friends in my car and I drove to where the police were camped out to try to get him medical attention.

And the problem is the police kicked our asses and they were physically abusive to us and they let the guy bleed to death in the back of my car. And the next thing I know my car turned up behind the police station burnt up with his body in it. And I've been covering crime stories for a long time and I had never heard anything like this. And I thought this is some craziness, why did this person give me this lead? This is like the anti lead, it's some hallucinogenic, hysterical thing.

(Laughter)

MR. THOMPSON: And I was thinking that and then I got the autopsy from the coroner, who we had to sue to get the autopsies from, even though

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they are public record. And there was an autopsy for the guy described in this statement to the police accountability group. And it was the autopsy for Henry Glover. And Henry Glover was indeed burned up, he was so burned up that his remains were put in five separate body bags and from the autopsy you could tell there was very little left of him, but it also noted that there were metal fragments in his body that were left there.

And the more I pursued this story, the more I interviewed witnesses to it, the more I interviewed law enforcement sources who showed me photos of the charred body, the more it turned out that actually there had been some really awful thing that had happened involving the police, shooting and burning of Henry Glover. And that was the first prong of it.

And I should turn it over to Brendan to sort of talk about how the story developed and what we learned from there and how *Frontline* and the *Times-Picayune* came into it. So we start with that sort of place, the mystery of Henry Glover.

MR. PARKER: Let me just ask, to keep going, I want to get the other two groups in, so I want to hear from you but I also--

MR. MCCARTHY: Sure, sure. So A.C. has got his Algiers, his vigilante

incident, and he has done some reporting. Meanwhile we are looking at it, the FBI is starting to come around on some other cases and we are doing some report on some police corruption stuff.

We decide essentially -- at one point we're almost working on the same stuff and our bosses somehow had talked and said let's do this together. So we had this really weird meeting in which A.C. here and Tom from *Frontline* comes down, and we sit down and we basically open our cabinets and say this is what we have, what do you have?

He had been working, chipping away at this for two years at least prior. I cover crime locally, as well as my colleagues. And we had some stuff and both, at times our eyes widened when we looked, well you've got this and well we've got this. Then everything started to come together.

We ended up looking, because in the wake of the storm the police didn't write reports for months, they threw things away, they hid -- I mean it runs the gamut. And essentially we looked at all these incidents after the storm in which the police shot people.

We found cases in which we got autopsies of guys shot in the back, of just wild accusations that further and further, as we reported, started to ring

true. This all kind of dovetailed with some other federal investigations which we had been writing about in the wake of the storm that are just now coming to light. So essentially, the long story short is we are really still plugging along. It's kind of tip of iceberg on some of these other cases and the "Law and Disorder" series came out in mid-late December.

MR. THOMPSON: And give them sum up of what we know about Henry Glover now.

MR. MCCARTHY: Oh, yeah. So now we know Henry Glover was walking to pick up some pots and pans at sort of a strip mall in suburban New Orleans. He's about a middle aged, African American male, New Orleans born and bred. He was running at the building and a middle aged, kind of rookie cop, who is an expert marksman, figured that he was a threat to him so he shot him in the chest.

MR. THOMPSON: Allegedly.

MR. MCCARTHY: Allegedly, and then Henry fell to the ground. This good samaritan comes by, picks him up, and then that's where he takes him to the police compound. So we found doctored police reports, all kinds of things, just in the last few months. And all the questions which we sort of

rose in started asking in our series now match the description of these others cases we had been writing about.

There's been several indictments and many more to come in the next coming weeks. So the same questions, like where did this gun come from, we are learning that in another case it's a drop gun that the police had, a sergeant had in his garage.

MR. THOMPSON: He planted it at the scene of the shooting.

MR. MCCARTHY: Yeah. So it still is a work in progress and throughout this whole thing we've been -- our agencies have been really proactive in suing, getting records and Tom has been down here. And it's kind of cool too because sometimes I can call up some of these folks and say hey, I'm from the *Times-Picayune*, whereas I'm the local guy and whereas A.C., and vice versa. So it's very much this snowball thing that's still very much a work in progress.

MR. HIGGINS: Can you all talk about the shaping of the package, how *Frontline*, *Pro Publica* and the papers came together? And what were the stumbling blocks and what did you learn about that kind of collaboration?

MR. FANNING: I mean we a long relationship with *Pro Publica*, Steve

Engleberg was -- was investigations editor of the *New York Times* when we did co-productions with them. We went to the *Oregonian* and we did a major co-production called "The Meth Epidemic" with Steve then, when he came to *Pro Publica*, there was sort of conversations about how to work together, continued.

It's quite complicated to think about how to put a documentary team into an investigative project. And the truth is that, with all respect to our good friends, they don't quite get what we need. We understand that they have deadlines that are running all the time and they need to keep printing.

So it takes a huge degree of trust to figure out how to make this work together. We knew about A.C.'s work, his previous work, when he joined *Pro Publica* we had already talked about some other projects previously that he was going to do with us.

Steve Engleberg was just, like any great editor, totally passionate and a great salesman. He would say look at this stuff, this is going to be a -- so we said okay, why don't we -- they had a witness to another incident and they could get somebody who was prepared to go on camera and said well, we'll just pay for it, go shoot the interview.

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We've got that interview. We're about to put it on the air, put it together, finally, it looks like, but it's been, what, six months now that we've been sitting on that interview.

MR. THOMPSON: A year.

MR. FANNING: Is it really a year? We started to gather material, we made a commitment without yet knowing quite what the documentary was going to be, and then we got Tom and sort of said to him hey, have we got a job for you. We want you to go in for a few months here and then a few months longer, and so kept him on the job as an investment in the story. He's been shooting himself, having to do a lot of that because it's been a sort of low budget project.

And now we are just at the stage where we look at the whole body of work. There's a large narrative to do and we will -- we lose the kind of -- we don't have a kind of scoop idea on camera. But on the other hand that doesn't matter. The fact that the story is coming out progressively, over time, when you put it together in television terms, it's going to be an extraordinary narrative and will be backed up with all the material.

At the same time we are publishing on the *Pro Publica* web site, on the

Times-Picayune web site and on our own web site. Each of those are somewhat differently designed. Ours is a lot more interactive and has some elements that we are working on and trying to figure out the grammar of how you present these multiple cases on the web site and integrate video and print.

So it really is, as I said last night, it's a work in progress. I think the idea of a rolling investigation that happens sort of online and in print and that then turns into a major broadcast piece and then feeds back into the project is a great idea. Some years ago we did a project actually with Mother Jones and Mark Shapiro came in and said we have a story about a nuclear trigger being exported to Pakistan via South Africa. And he said why don't we do a film about that? I said well I don't have a budget for it, we can't afford it, so good luck.

And he came back and said actually I've got three people in South Africa, the go-betweens who will talk to me, and I'm going to Cape Town on my own dollar, you know, Mother Jones' dollar, and I said okay, well buy the cheapest cameraman in Cape Town we can find to shoot those interviews with you.

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So when he came back we literally published the print story with those three interviews. The result was the justice department guys, who wouldn't talk to him before, and had been following the stories, who watched them online, have called him up and said yeah, well maybe we'll talk to you.

So I said okay, I'll buy the cheapest cameraman in Washington for you and so--

(Laughter)

MR. FANNING: --we shot those interviews as well.

MR. PARKER: Are you sending in cell phone guys?

MR. FANNING: Well basically, but at this point it's sort of little bits of money here and there, and we got those interviews up, put those on the web site. Some new material came in, the *L.A. Times* did a story as well. We posted that, and the next minute he gets a call from Mr. Kahn, who is the man who is the receiver of all of this, not A.Q., another Mr. Kahn, who calls up quite outraged because he has read all this on the web site and he records the interview.

So we've now got Mr. Kahn, we've got all these pieces on the web site and finally it's summer, *Frontline* is off the air. We cut a piece for the News

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Hour, put it up as a 15 minute long story. So that was a great kind of model for a sort or project that I can see in the future any of us doing together.

And what we don't do enough of is have chances to sit down together with Andy and say what are you doing next, Andy, because I would love to know. Because we would love to be able to see whether there's a way to plug into a story, if it's got a national potential.

MR. RAZIQ: David, can I ask a question here? We do essentially long form, especially for local. I mean we've done nine minutes, ten minutes. Our Firestone Tire piece, for example, was about ten minutes long. And we also do continuous series of, say, six minutes at a shot.

One of the reasons for that is because we do stress narrative and the main reason why is because I think that it pushes a particular question, reportorial question that doesn't get asked enough or emphasized enough which is the why, which is what really is really where all the riches are and the perspective.

And so I'm sort of curious in terms of we have a sort of system for keeping straight what we might project might be happening here. In other words, we toss out a number of theories in terms of where the story might

go, just to prepare us from a production standpoint so that we're on our feet.

But we divorce ourselves from it too in the reportorial process.

So that works for us. I'm sort of curious how do you deal with something like this where -- I mean are you hearing a narrative already, in terms of the stuff that you are seeing or are you thinking --

MR. PARKER: Because he's got a longer forum to play with?

MR. RAZIQ: Yeah. And then it's still evolving and that actually, in a sense, it's easier to kind of figure out what the narrative might be when you are actually doing the first person reporting too.

MR. FANNING: Yeah. Well I mean Tom should talk a little bit about it, but he started to sketch out a version of a narrative, how we might take -- these are five or six cases. It's very hard to put it all together. And I think our job now is to do the puzzle, is to sort of move the pieces around on the board in front of us and to say what's the best kind of narrative structure here? Is it once upon a time where A.C. Thompson gets a tip? You can do that kind of a -- you can find narrative hooks to hang this stuff on.

You can do a chrono -- and then we found, and then we found, and that always works. Chronology is your friend, that's always--

MR. RAZIQ: Of course.

MR. FANNING: That's always a great story. And sometimes it's Shakespearian, it's five acts. And you say I've really got to think about this in acts. I mean I find all the time when I got to editing rooms lots and lots of material, somebody -- people get confused, don't quite know. I just say find the acts or find the chapters.

If you find the chapters and give them a name and really just stop thinking about all the rest of it, but just do that story on its own and do this story on its own, we'll figure out which order they will come in later. And maybe we'll even break them apart and reweave them. But at some point you've got to get the stories to sort of work on their own terms, each on its own terms as a story on its own.

MR. JENNINGS: I know you want to go on, I would just say that there's a tricky part to this particular project, which is the evolving nature of the story and our partnership. And at a certain point *Frontline*, as a documentary, you do kind of have to stop. You have to say okay, we have to have a story now, we have to structure a film now. Meanwhile, these guys keep on finding more stuff and any day that you come to the office it's

completely altered, this story, just completing changing and we don't deal with that very well, as an hour long program.

(Laughter)

MR. PARKER: This is the Thomas Wolfe syndrome and this is Maxwell Perkins--

MR. FANNING: That's right, thank you.

MR. JENNINGS: So we have to build a tremendous amount of flexibility into whatever the stressor is because I strongly feel that this story is going to evolve up until the last moment.

MR. FANNING: Well the great art of editing is weeding things out.

MR. PARKER: Copy that down, all of you, that was it right there. I'm going to arbitrarily say we are going to run a few minutes late because I want to get everybody in on this conversation, so just a few minutes late. Joe Stephens, Lena Sun, "Death on the Rails", *Washington Post*, tell us about it.

MR. STEPHENS: Well I'm an investigative reporter and Lena was, as of last summer, was covering mass transit and Metro Rail. We didn't start with a tip, like most people, we started with stark disbelief. There was the a -- the impossible happened on June 22nd when and there is supposed to be a fail

safe system and a computer to prevent that from happening.

It happened, the head of Metro Rail said this was a freak occurrence and, speaking for my colleague, she didn't believe it was a freak occurrence.

Twisted my arm, as an investigative reporter, to join her, and we have spent most of our waking moments since then disproving that it was a freak occurrence.

When we were able to get documents that showed, eventually, this was a long trail because Metro gave us nothing under their freedom of information policy for months, throughout the reporting of these stories.

We were able to find documents showing that Metro was actually an accident waiting to happen.

And just yesterday we were killing time after we got into town and Lena was at the Harvard Co-op and pulled a book down off the shelf and came over to me and said look at this and it said -- it was a book on mass transit and it said, Washington's Metro system is the most impressive system in the country. And I don't think anyone would agree with that now.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: What we found was documents which showed that

they had almost had catastrophic crashes time and again and the transit would come very close to crashing. They had narrowly averted crashes often by the train operators doing what they weren't supposed to do is override the crash avoidance system and hit the emergency break.

And the first instance we found was on Capitol Hill. They had not told anybody about this. And they had never boiled down why these trains came close to crashing and you would think if the impossible almost happened, you would stop everything and figure out why a bunch of people almost died and they didn't. They just kept continuing on.

MR. JENNINGS: Can I ask you quickly which documents were these?

MR. STEPHENS: The documents we eventually got, we initially just asked Metro for all the documents related to this and that and they said essentially go fish. Actually, initially they said nothing. They didn't acknowledge even getting our FOIAs.

And then when I came in to join Lena, who had done great work on the crash, the aftermath of the crash, and Lyndsey Layton, who covered Metro previous to Lena, and she was exhausted and had been working nights and weekends. And I had been on vacation. I come in and we brainstorm on

how are we going to get these documents.

And so we came up with a plan to ask other entities for the records, where else would these documents be? Metro is not going to give them to us. We could sue them, but that would take forever, where else can we get them? And the very first idea I came up with, which I thought was brilliant, was to ask other subway systems around the country for any correspondence they had or notes on discussions with Metro.

And I said let's go to San Francisco because Lena had done this fabulous story with Lyndsey Layton about how San Francisco's subway is very similar to Washington's Metro. But they had put a redundant system to stop crashes in. We thought and my brilliant idea was oh, maybe on the day this crash happened someone from Metro e-mailed a colleague in San Francisco and said my God, that system you told us to put in, we didn't do it, we just killed nine people.

So we put in this FOIA and very quickly it comes -- can I tell this? This always embarrasses Lena, I'm not sure why. But the response comes back from San Francisco immediately. And there's actually something there and I said great, pay dirt, and it wasn't what I expected at all.

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What it was was a series, and I'm going to paraphrase now in case this is being recorded, it was a series of e-mails and letters from Metro to their colleagues in San Francisco saying, we are in deep trouble. We are being beat up by the press, listen, would you mind, here is a ghost written letter to the editor of *The Washington Post*, would you mind signing this and sending it in immediately and ask that it be published, and suggesting that Lena's earlier reporting was inaccurate. And they, to their credit, in San Francisco, said apparently ah, no way.

(Laughter)

MR. STEPHENS: So that was the first thing we got.

MS. SUN: They asked Boston too.

MR. PARKER: So they asked Boston next?

MS. SUN: They actually talked to the folks in Boston because Boston has--

MR. MURPHY: The MBTA.

MS. SUN: Yeah, and they have similar systems but everybody's system is a little bit different.

MR. MURPHY: Did you get anything from the MBTA?

MR. STEPHENS: Oh, that was my next request was to Boston and I got a Blackberry message back almost immediately from the woman who I think was their general counsel, their top lawyer anyway, and she said too broad.

MR. MURPHY: Too broad?

MR. STEPHENS: It was just like too broad. What's broad about it, it's very simple and succinct and I made a legal argument. And then they came back a couple of weeks later and said we'll look for those for \$4,000.

MR. MURPHY: Oh, yeah, I know that one.

MR. STEPHENS: So we never got those. But, to make a long story slightly shorter, we ended up doing a series of work-arounds and from Metro we decided was a compact of three states, essentially, Virginia, Maryland and D.C., and so we thought copies of their records would be there. On paper is a safety oversight organization, which became a big deal over time. We thought they would have copies of documents. They declined to give us those documents also.

We filed FOIAs with D.C., they, to this day, and we filed over a dozen of these, D.C. has not acknowledged even receiving one of these FOIAs. We

filed these with Maryland and got a tepid response and thank God we filed requests with Virginia.

And this is like a third string for these documents that were copied from Metro, copied to their safety oversight organization, which was a compact of the three states as well. And some of these documents were also copied in a file cabinet in Virginia and we got documents from Virginia. They actually take their open records laws seriously. But it was a long, convoluted process to get these documents and the people who should have been giving them up still haven't given them up.

MR. FANNING: Fantastic. Mark Higgins, John de Leon, *Seattle Times*. You guys did a terrific job. Tell us something about that.

MR. HIGGINS: Well the story is quite different than some of the ones that you've all described. It's not a traditional investigative piece, as you know, but we were fortunate because we have the investigative fire power within the organization. And that informed our approach to this story in a very profound way.

In a nutshell, a gentleman went into a coffee shop several days after Thanksgiving with the intent to kill some police officers and he did so. He

murdered four officers and then went on the run. By the end of that day, and I don't know exactly how late it was, but we had Mike Huckabee and his people on the phone describing how he was -- how this individual had been granted clemency in the State of Arkansas.

And from that point on we knew we had a much broader, deeper story to tell and very little time to tell it because it was a very competitive story. As you can imagine, everybody who had a notepad or a camera wanted to swarm this thing and we are good at that and that's what we did as well.

And so over the course of a week we went from the first breaking news alert, the first media outlet to name the suspect, the first outlet to profile the suspect, to sort of the cradle to grave profile the following Sunday. So within that one week period we accomplished quite a bit and covered a great amount of ground.

We sent a reporter immediately to Arkansas, went to a little town called Marianna to pull the story of this young man who grew up in poverty, had experienced horrible conditions along the way and by 17 was facing a 96 year prison sentence. Huckabee, unlike Bill Clinton, was actually known for granting these pardons and he did so over 1,000 times. And the odds are

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that in fact sooner or later somebody that you've let out will do something horrible. And that's exactly what happened.

And so we started calling in Arkansas, one of our lead quotes was from the prosecutor saying I knew this day was going to come and it did, and so profound results. So what we did was we did the print job that you all are familiar with and then we did quite a bit more online than we had every done before. And Tiffany Campbell, one of our producers, and John de Leon can talk about those elements.

But, in essence, we really did some different things using Google Wave and Dipity and some other techniques that I'm still not familiar with, but it produced an impact that we hadn't seen before. And there was an involvement with our stories. There was an appreciation for the folks that do get their news on their phones. There was an understanding that *Seattle Times*, known for its great narratives and its great investigative pieces, was transforming right before the public's eye, and so it was a very interesting moment for us.

We had Dave Boardman, the Executive Editor, who many of you probably know, out in the news room at one point tweeting out bits of the

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story. It was really quite a scene. So, I don't know, Tiffany, do you want to talk a little bit about the online?

MS. CAMPBELL: Sure. Probably one of the more interesting applicable things that we did was in terms of online we have all these tools and a lot of times we have all this cool stuff. We were kind of looking for a way to apply them, and so when we got in the middle of this manhunt, I think the manhunt was about 40 hours probably, total.

Seattle is a pretty techie town and Twitter was kind of exploding. There was just all this interaction, but we decided Google Wave, all of us had just gotten Google Wave invitations like maybe a couple of weeks before that and we had been passing it around the producers.

And we decided to open up a wave and make it public and kind of see what would come out of it. And probably the most interesting thing was that as Seattle was kind of in this chaos of trying to find this guy, he was coming from way down south, it was about a 40 mile -- about 40 miles in between Parkland where they were shot and where they thought he was going.

And so for about 40 hours the police were chasing him and there were

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sightings everywhere and scenes. So someone put up, started a Google map of basically tips and it was just kind of like an ongoing live, real time map, tip line of the police were here, we saw this, we did that and it was actually really fascinating to watch.

And it got so popular that we eventually crashed Google Wave. We still have a hard time accessing it. But fortunately some people were smart enough to take some PDF screen grabs of it, so we actually have a record of what happened, so that was good.

Some of the other interesting things was we just had photographers who were already on Twitter and at the stakeouts where they were. The SWAT teams were charging in the houses where they thought the suspect was and they were out there just kind of giving these real time updates and photos and iPhone photos and Twitter and things like that.

So you could really participate and really be there with that story, kind of with everyone and it was really kind of amazing to watch the community come together and kind of work with all of the journalists that we had around during that.

MR. FANNING: Do you have any concerns about people coming in and

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putting false information into that? How would you handle that if it happened?

MS. CAMPBELL: Absolutely, sure. Some of it was just like, just like in any sort of plan, there's a lot of suspect stuff coming in, just as much as there is real stuff. And so it was mostly just opening up to things that were verifiable. Like someone could say the police were here and they stopped here or I took this photo of this police car going here, I don't know what it means, okay, but I'm going to put it in this thing and see if we can make a larger sense of it.

So I think there's always that risk when something is as public as that. And so it was kind of more of the community was able to as much say well that didn't work or that wasn't right or now we found this more information so that we can update things that were clearly inaccurate. But with something like this, where it was so verifiable, I mean the police were either there or they weren't, everything was so verifiable.

MR. PARKER: John, did you want to --.

MR. DE LEON: Well I just wanted to briefly state the back drop to this story was less than a month earlier. We had another individual who drove

up on a couple of Seattle Police officers who were sitting in their car. One was a training officer and the other was a rookie and they were comparing notes or what not, and this man point blank opened fire and killed one of the officers and wounded the other.

So, for Seattle, that's relatively unheard of, we rarely have cops killed. So the whole area was still getting over that tragedy when this thing happened. So immediately, obviously four officers killed is quite an event and immediately struck a chord in the community. I think we all noticed right away that there was a thirst for any and all information that we could provide.

Me, being an old cop reporter and breaking news editor, this was one time where literally for the 40 hours that was mentioned it was a real time story. I mean we really -- we were in the newspaper, but the deadlines were a secondary thought because we were posting information when we got it.

As Mark said earlier, almost immediately when we got it in, again through good sources and from a reporter, we went back to the cops and said we are hearing this is the guy, is this your guy? The cops lied to us and said the guy -- Flagg said no, he's not the guy. But we had reason to believe

he was lying, so we went ahead and went with it.

Right before we broke that, he went ahead and went on TV, and he knew we were about to go with it, so he mentioned it, he did confirm that it was the individual that we were looking at. From there the story just basically exploded. And we were in the news room continuously for those 40 hours basically chasing this thing down.

MR. THOMPSON: Were you guys concerned about, kind of along the lines of what David was saying, about a certain kind of mob rule that would kick in with such an emotional story? How it would impact your reporting?

MR. DE LEON: To a certain degree because there was some of that earlier on with the Seattle shooting. During the 40 hour manhunt, particularly that Monday, the Monday was basically spent, the day after the shootings, it was basically spent chasing lead after lead after lead and seeing here and seeing there.

A columnist did a piece on how basically any young African American male of stocky build was suspect. And any time there was a sighting that a citizen would call in, the police group would storm to that area. There were any number of people who were questioned and searched. It sort of took on

kind of an ugly atmosphere to that point. I mean a lot of the comments, we had to closely monitor the comments and pull of quite a few.

MR. PARKER: I want to say this has been the most enjoyable hour and a half that I've spent in a long time around here. We see a lot of journalists in but there is something special about having investigative reporters and editors come in to the Shorenstein Center. You guys are reminders of what's best about the American press and I want to thank all of you on behalf of the Shorenstein Center and on behalf of Harvard and, frankly, a little audaciously on behalf of the American people. You are the guardians that keep us safe as a democracy.

And I heard once again that it requires patience, strong intuitions and tenacity and a commitment to more than just day to day reporting to do first class investigative reporting and you've all proved that you do it, so thank you. Thank you all very much for coming here to be with us and spending time with us this morning. Alison has some things that she would like to give you before we go.

(Whereupon, at 10:40 a.m., the session was concluded.)

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This is to certify that the preceding transcript is an accurate record
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Before: RICHARD PARKER, Moderator

In the Matter of:

THE GOLDSMITH AWARDS SEMINAR

Date: March 24, 2010

Place: Cambridge, Massachusetts

03/31/2010

T. Karen Farley
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