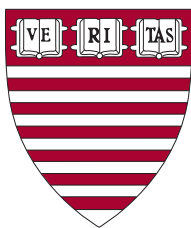


**RICHARD S. SALANT LECTURE
ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

WITH

MARCUS BRAUCHLI

Joan Shorenstein Center
PRESS ▪ POLITICS



▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪

Harvard University
John F. Kennedy School of Government

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HISTORY

In 2007, the estate of Dr. Frank Stanton, former president of CBS, provided funding for an annual lecture in honor of his longtime friend and colleague, Mr. Richard S. Salant, a lawyer, broadcast media executive, ardent defender of the First Amendment and passionate leader of broadcast ethics and news standards.



Frank Stanton was a central figure in the development of television broadcasting. He became president of CBS in January 1946, a position he held for 27 years. A staunch advocate of First Amendment rights, Stanton worked to ensure that broadcast journalism received protection equal to that received by the print press. In testimony before a U.S. Congressional committee when he was ordered to hand over material from an investigative report called “The Selling of the Pentagon,” Stanton said that the order amounted to an infringement of free speech under the First Amendment. He was also instrumental in assembling the first televised presidential debate in 1960. In 1935,

Stanton received a doctorate from Ohio State University and was hired by CBS. He became head of CBS’s research department in 1938, vice president and general manager in 1945, and in 1946, at the age of 38, was made president of the company. Dr. Stanton was an early proponent of the creation of a Press and Politics Center at the Kennedy School. He served on the advisory committee for the proposed Center in the early 1980s and was on the Shorenstein Center’s advisory board from 1987 until his death in 2006.



Richard S. Salant served as president of CBS News from 1961 to 1964 and from 1966 to 1979. Under his leadership, CBS was the first network to expand its nightly news coverage to a half-hour on week-days; start a full-time election unit; create additional regional news bureaus outside New York and Washington; and launch *60 Minutes*, CBS Morning News and Sunday Morning programs. He was credited with raising professional standards and expanding news programming at CBS. Salant was known as both a defender of the news media’s First Amendment rights and a critic of what he considered the media’s excesses and failings. Salant graduated from Harvard

College in 1935 and from Harvard Law School in 1938. He worked in government and as a lawyer. Mr. Salant represented CBS in hearings before the FCC and Congressional committees and in a suit with RCA-NBC over which network would develop color television. Although CBS lost, Salant impressed the network’s president, Frank Stanton, who later appointed him vice president of CBS News in 1952.



Marcus Brauchli is executive editor of *The Washington Post*. He oversees all news coverage by *The Post*, digitally and in print. He has led *The Post's* newsroom since September 2008, through the presidential election that year, the global economic and financial crises, the legislative and political battles of 2009 and 2010, and the continuing policy debates over and fallout from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Before joining *The Post*, Mr. Brauchli was managing editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, with responsibility for its newsrooms and editions in the U.S. and internationally, in print and online. He

also had editorial responsibility for MarketWatch, the financial-news website. He was appointed managing editor in April 2007 and resigned one year later, after News Corp. acquired the *Journal's* parent company, Dow Jones & Co. Mr. Brauchli spent 15 years as a correspondent in Asia and Europe. He served as the *Journal's* national editor during the 2000 election, the corporate scandals of that era, and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the *Journal's* coverage of which won a Pulitzer Prize. He later became global news editor, and led the redesign of the *Journal's* overseas editions. He also oversaw planning for a new luxury lifestyle magazine, *WSJ*.

Mr. Brauchli is a graduate of Columbia University. He was a 1991–92 Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and led or participated in projects that won two Overseas Press Club awards and two citations for excellence. He has served on the boards of the OPC and the International Center for Journalists, and is an advisor to the Knight-Bagehot Fellowships program at Columbia. He also is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the New York Economic Club.

RICHARD S. SALANT LECTURE

OCTOBER 28, 2010

Mr. Jones: I am Alex Jones, director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. It is my great pleasure to welcome you here tonight to the Third Annual Richard S. Salant Lecture on Freedom of the Press. We are very pleased to have you with us tonight.

This is a night where we honor press freedom and look at the challenges we face in these tumultuous times. Those challenges come in many forms. Later we are going to hear from Marcus Brauchli, who is executive editor of *The Washington Post*. But before I introduce Marcus, I want first to spend a moment or two on the two men who made tonight possible, and whose contributions to the free press were genuinely in earnest.

Richard Salant was considered the greatest-ever head of a network news division for his tenure at CBS during a time when CBS was truly the news leader in the 1960's and 1970's. When Richard Salant became president of CBS News, the keystone nightly news program was 15 minutes long. There was no *60 Minutes*. There was no full-time unit assigned to covering elections. There was no *CBS Morning News*. He changed all that and made CBS the leader in raising television news to something respected journalistically as it had never been before.

He stood for high quality news and a willingness to fight for that high quality. And I think it is important to mention another great CBS icon. I speak of course of Frank Stanton. Frank died on Christmas Eve of 2006. He was a great friend of the Shorenstein Center and of the Kennedy School, and it is from a bequest in his will that the Salant Lecture was born.

Frank Stanton was not a news man in the literal sense. He was to the best of my knowledge never a reporter, never covered a story, but as president of the CBS network he was a champion of news and of press freedom. For one thing, he was Dick Salant's ally and champion. He made it possible for Dick Salant to win the reputation of being the world's greatest news division chief and made it possible for CBS to become respected as the nation's Tiffany network for news.

The point is that this lecture could have been called the Frank Stanton Lecture on Freedom of the Press. That it is named instead for his friend Richard Salant was the decision of Dr. Stanton who among other things was remarkably modest.

Marcus Brauchli, our Salant Lecturer tonight, would have been a man after Dick Salant's heart. Dick was a man who was a ferocious advocate for what was in his time the new thing, television news. But he was also

someone who worried about news and technology, about where it was going and what were the consequences—some unintended and largely unforeseen—of these innovations in news that were happening with what seemed then, back in the '60's and '70's, like breakneck speed. The difference between the worries of Dick Salant and Marcus Brauchli is that Dick, for the most part, had to do his worrying with money. Marcus has had a more complicated challenge as the *Post's* top editor.

He took over as executive editor in September of 2008, which now seems a world away. The economy was in a tailspin and newspapers all over the country were being hammered by a precipitous decline in advertising, in other words, money. I am an alumnus of *The New York Times* and I know that Marcus, in assuming the top news job at the *Post* had another huge issue to deal with.

He was, from the *Post's* perspective, an outsider. He certainly was not an outsider to journalism. Indeed he was one of the world's most distinguished journalists. Immediately before he came to the *Post* he had been managing editor of *The Wall Street Journal* where he had responsibility for its newsrooms and editions in the U.S. and internationally in print and online.

He resigned after a year as the *Journal's* top editor after Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. acquired the *Journal's* parent company Dow Jones. And *The Washington Post* came calling. The point was that Marcus came to the *Post* to be that critically important and deeply traditional newspaper's new editor without ever having worked at the *Post*, which was near heresy.

His father and name are Swiss. His mother West Virginian. And as a Tennessean I know that that is as distinct a cultural stamp as anything Switzerland bestows. He grew up in Boulder, Colorado, and then went to Columbia University, was a copy boy at *The New York Times*, among other things, a Nieman Fellow, and spent the vast majority of his career until he went to the *Post* at *The Wall Street Journal*.

He spent 15 years as a correspondent in Asia and Europe, served as the *Journal's* national editor during the 2000 election and the corporate scandals of that era and 9/11 when the *Journal's* coverage won a Pulitzer Prize. He came to the *Post* with a gigantic mandate. Settled down a newsroom that was roiled by staff reductions and fear of the future. Integrated the *Post's* paper with its online operation which had never been fully done. Restructured the newsroom to deal with a new media environment and fewer resources. And restored the *Post's* morale as well as its swagger, its confidence as well as its quality.

All of us know, I think, that news is not out of the woods. But what happens now at institutions such as *The Washington Post* is critical to our democracy as much as it is to the *Post* itself.

So how has Marcus done in his two years at the *Post's* helm? He arrived with a big vision. He has by all accounts righted the ship and is leading it strongly, firmly and well. But perhaps his finest hour in that two years has been also his worst. The *Post's* publisher made a serious misjudgment and entered into a scheme to make money in a way that could have undermined the paper's long established independence. I won't go into the details but Marcus had signed on.

It was by everyone's judgment a mistake and an embarrassment. Marcus dealt with it by telling his very upset news staff that he would be available to anyone who wanted to talk to him about it, to scold him, to upbraid him or even to listen to him. He would be available as long as people wanted to talk with him. And if they didn't want to do it in the newsroom, he would do it over a beer, at dinner, wherever.

This went on for weeks. Marcus never flagged. People saw his values. He was, and this is the greatest compliment a newsroom can pay its top editor, judged a stand-up guy. Marcus Brauchli has one of the toughest, most challenging and most important jobs in journalism. It is our honor to have him tonight as our Richard Salant Lecturer, Marcus Brauchli. (Applause)

Mr. Brauchli: Thank you very much. That was just an incredibly generous introduction. I would like to thank you all for being here tonight and a special thanks to Alex and to Edie Holway who first introduced me to the Shorenstein Center when I was a Nieman Fellow in the 1991–92 year. Things must be going pretty well here. I think the last time I spoke to the Shorenstein Center it was a brown-bag lunch and you had to bring your own food. (Laughter)

There are many people in this room for whom I have really the greatest respect. And who are eminently more qualified than I, I think, to be talking about any matters of journalism. So we can have a good conversation after I finish. And it is an honor to be invited to pay tribute through this event to Richard Salant and Frank Stanton, who really were two epoch-defining figures who belong on journalism's Mount Rushmore.

Over many years, as Alex said, they oversaw such great advances in television journalism from the half-hour evening news to *60 Minutes* to morning news. The commitment to journalism required special courage, I think, because the people with whom they often found themselves in con-

flict were government officials who controlled the licenses that permitted CBS to operate. Their steadfast belief in free and independent media and in the First Amendment is and should remain an inspiration to all those who have followed. For most journalists most of the time the First Amendment itself is more of an abstraction than a reality. But then from time to time you realize it is power.

In September of last year one of our more enterprising contributors, a young self-starter named Bob Woodward, got hold of a report General

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Stanley McChrystal had produced about the war in Afghanistan. General McChrystal wrote the report for the president and his top advisors, not for the public. But when we read it we found it informative and this being the Facebook age, naturally we wanted to share it with all of our friends. So Bob told the Pentagon and the White House that not only did we intend to write about the report but we intended to post the whole thing on our website.

The government did not share our enthusiasm for the exhilarating social networking reach of the Internet, and within an hour or two the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Advisor and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had interrupted their Saturday afternoons to call and ask that we reconsider our plan. We should pause on that word, “ask.” There is nothing unusual, I am sure, as some in this room probably can attest personally, about officials the world over calling editors to suggest, demand or even order them not to publish their information.

But it is a curiously American phenomenon that the most powerful officials in the world’s most powerful country have virtually no power to do anything but ask an editor to waive the national interests against the impulse to publish and then leave the editor to make his decision. It is hard to describe how central this is to our system. Yet I constantly try.

From time to time I meet with delegations of officials from China, where I used to live. Usually they want to hear about how American media is representing China, do we really care about the currency, do we think China is an adversary and so on, and I say yes, yes, whatever, but have you ever heard about the Pentagon Papers?

And then I astonish them with the story of how two newspapers, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, took on the government of Richard Nixon and how the press won the Supreme Court’s endorsement of

the once radical notion that the First Amendment precludes government almost absolutely from restraining a news outfit from publishing, even a secret report on a war then underway on the far side of the globe. So when that phone call came in from the White House situation room Saturday a year ago Bob Woodward and I agreed to meet with senior officials at the Pentagon the next day and hear their concerns.

We did so because we knew that the power to publish resided with us and not with them. And when the government expressed serious national security concerns we listened carefully and took account of their views in deciding what to publish. We had similar conversations last summer when we published a comprehensive online database documenting all sorts of information about top secret contractors and agencies and the staggering growth of the national security state since September 11, 2001.

Likewise *The New York Times* consulted the government before it published classified material recently provided to it by WikiLeaks. Some critics, including backers of WikiLeaks, have suggested that such behavior shows that the mainstream media are government lapdogs. I think that is nonsense. The certainty that we control our destiny, that we have the freedom to publish what we will, that we are truly independent gives us the confidence to account for all sides and variables, all possible fallout, even the government's invariably cautious viewpoint before we publish.

Our journalism often is better and it is certainly better informed because of this. This approach obviously is not new. It is the product of important legal advances over the last century that have greatly benefitted traditional bastions of journalism.

What is new and worth focusing on is that these instances of mainstream news organizations scraping against the national security state in this case involve material that is being published online. And that increasingly is where press freedom is being shaped. It is unsettled territory, you might say, in the way that the standards and practices of television news were unsettled when Frank Stanton and Richard Salant were forging CBS News.

There are differences, of course. Theirs was a time of centralization and media power, not diffusion and splintering. It was a time when television was a new medium trying to adapt traditional journalism rules, not a platform without rules. It was a time when media clustered around the center of the ideological spectrum and was not scattered across it to the very fringes. It was a time when events described by one news organization would fairly closely resemble the same events described by another but not, I should say, because they were lifted straight from the competitor's pages.

Much has changed, make no mistake. We are once again on a frontier. What was crucial then and remains so now is extending the notion of freedom of the press and of speech in new media. Many important questions are resurfacing. What constitutes journalism? What are the limits of free

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speech? What happens when politics permeates the press? How should mainstream news organizations view untraditional media?

Just to be up front with you, I don't have answers to all these questions, but I would like to talk a bit about how some of these challenges are playing out. For established places like ours, there are precedents to fall back on, as we saw in the McChrystal report. So far they have not automatically extended to digital newcomers,

even though their roustabout, establishment-defying ways are very much within the traditions laid down over the 220 years since the First Amendment was ratified.

That's troubling because the interest of traditional mainstream news organizations can't be easily separated from those of the upstarts. All of us today are part of a digital ecosystem, one that is highly complex and highly symbiotic. In the past newcomer technologies co-existed with the media that came before. So television co-existed with radio which co-existed with magazines and newspapers.

Now suddenly we all inhabit the same digital realm. How we differentiate ourselves is in our approaches to information in journalism.

Now suddenly we all inhabit the same digital realm. How we differentiate ourselves is in our approaches to information in journalism. Here, too, newcomers co-exist alongside traditional players. So for example right- and left-wing poison-pen political bloggers co-exist alongside fanatic political news aggregators and specialized political news websites which, in turn, co-exist alongside traditional newsrooms that cover politics.

Now this ecosystem is not necessarily a harmonious place. Indeed there is a lot not to love about new media, especially those who cloak their ideological agendas in journalistic garb or those who depend for their existence on others' work, something I will address a bit later on. For now

though, let me say that it is an ecosystem in which there are considerable important cross dependencies.

You cannot be sure after all which of us will be the source of the next big story or the next big idea. There is a wonderful Václav Havel essay on the nature of dissent and creativity in which he explains the impossible challenge Czechoslovakia's communist dictators faced in trying to suppress dissent. Havel, a playwright, made the point that political dissent, like art and any good idea, can spring from anywhere.

So it is with journalism and the ideas that shape an open society like ours. In this country's history, perhaps histories, the courts have recognized that diverse sources of information are a national strength. Chief Justice Hughes wrote in a 1938 case involving an attempt in Georgia to clamp down on religious pamphlets masquerading as news that the liberty of the press is not confined to newspapers and periodicals. It necessarily embraces pamphlets and leaflets. They have indeed been historic weapons in the defense of liberty.

Thus in our digital age while you may expect scoops from *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* you know they will also emerge now from investigative start ups like *ProPublica* or news types like Voice of San Diego or guerilla outfits like WikiLeaks or bloggers with specialized knowledge of a subject or industry.

An example surfaced about a year ago when a tech website, Gizmodo, laid hands on a prototype of Apple's latest product, the new iPhone. I am beholden here to Stuart Karle, the former general counsel of the *Journal*, whose version of the facts I am, for lack of a better word, aggregating. The story, photos and video that Gizmodo produced were the basis of news reports around the world. But within days of the publication of this story a sheriff with a search warrant seized computers from the home of a Gawker editor who wrote the story. Presumably the sheriff was acting on Apple's view that the prototype phone was stolen property and, in fact, it turned out that Gizmodo had paid a \$5,000 bounty to get the phone.

In taking the computers though, my former general counsel, Stuart, points out that the sheriff effectively enjoined an editor from publishing any future stories that might have arisen from the files on those computer drives. Gawker believed that its employee should have been protected by California's shield law, which was written to keep journalists from having to give up their sources if subpoenaed.

But it turns out that California's shield law is written to protect "newspapers, magazines or other periodical publications." Nothing there, as Stuart observes, about the Internet. In addition Apple's lawyers had laid down some interesting arguments in other cases that it presumably hoped it might apply. In 2006, the company subpoenaed a blogger to learn the

source of a confidential Apple document the blogger had posted. Apple claimed that republishing the document was not really journalism.

In a claim that will have special resonance these days, Apple asserted that people who simply post documents on a website are “not members of any professional community governed by ethical and professional

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standards.” It probably didn’t help Gawker in this regard that its founder Nick Denton told *The Washington Post* that “we may inadvertently commit journalism. That is not the institutional intention.” (Laughter)

Now I don’t mean to hold up Gawker as a model of great journalism or Apple as Big Brother, not exactly. But the precedents that are set for Gawker have the power to affect us all. When, for example, Denton distances

himself from journalism, he stokes unhelpful discussions about who is or who is not a journalist. More and more people these days seek to draw distinctions among the journalistic *bona fides* of various media, now so rapidly emerging, and to discriminate in favor of some and against others.

Even the people drafting the federal shield law now moldering in the Senate came up with rules to define who should be covered. However it begins though, any system that licenses or defines journalists will end badly. It by implication invests power in those who award the licenses who are usually those we most need to cover, again, as Dick Salant and Frank Stanton knew all too well.

The Internet has liberated our voices.

These efforts are also particularly worrisome because they lend credibility to efforts to license journalists internationally. Abroad there is no First Amendment. Instead there is Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil

and Political Rights, which says that the rights of journalists carry special duties and responsibilities and “may therefore be subject to certain restrictions concerning public safety or morals.” If you have ever worked in an authoritarian state you will recognize the ominous tenor of those words.

And I should point out it is in the authoritarian states that digital media have so much to offer. A friend recently told me of a Chinese professor who explained the importance of the evolution of media in that country. Newspapers, he said, liberated our eyes. Television liberated our ears. The Internet has liberated our voices.

The proliferation of new media voices is difficult for those in power, whatever the country. They try to decide whom they will talk to or perhaps more accurately whom they will ignore. Some do it for convenience. I know of a U.S. government department, for instance, that was irritated by and would not cooperate recently with an online investigation being done by a bunch of university journalism students. Others do it for political reasons. Most famously, the White House briefly tried excluding Fox News from the presidential television pool though Fox's domestic audience exceeds that of CNN or MSNBC. And I recognize that Fox is something of a lightning rod for people in this debate as you all know from events concerning Juan Williams. Though it is in fact merely the highest profile of many media outlets that gets dragged into partisan exchanges.

Indeed partisanship, whether left or right, pro or anti this or that, a believer or non-believer in global warming, is often cited as an argument that many in media today are not practicing journalism. So it is probably worth a brief digression on partisanship and American journalism to make the point that what is happening today is hardly new or undeserving of protection.

At the time the First Amendment was written newspapers loyal to Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton often savaged each other and their benefactors with distortions and half truths. So harsh were the attacks that within years of the ratification of the First Amendment some of those same political combatants sought unsuccessfully to undermine it with sedition laws. Yet much of the press remained ferociously partisan through the 19th century. *The Washington Post* was founded in 1877 as a Democratic Party newspaper.

It was one of many 19th-century papers with a political streak in the Capital. I recently went back and looked at an old document from the '30's that listed all the papers that had been opened in Washington and the names of the 19th-century papers give away their affiliations. There were *The Federalist*, *The Federal Republican*, *The Republican*, *The National Republican*, *The Madisonian*, *The National Whig*, *The True Whig*, *The Whig Standard*, *The Democratic Expositor*, *The Democratic Flagship*. Also in the more generic constellation were two *Stars*, two *Suns*, two *Comets*, and a *Tornado* whose political affiliation is interesting to imagine.

That was then. Today, the bigger worry is not a return to an age of political or other specialized media, but the impact of this splintering, whatever their leanings, on our economics. Many new purveyors of news are what Chris Anderson, writing recently in *Wired* magazine, called "junkshop content providers...which have determined that the only way to make money online is to spend even less on content than advertisers are willing to pay to advertise against it."

Among those are outfits you might call content pirates. These are organizations that conflate the idea of a free press with a free-for-all, the notion of a free press with free content. The right to publish is an essential dimension to a free press. But take away the economic incentive to publish original journalism, and there are considerable costs in that, and our free press will atrophy. This may be a case of where your rights end is where my rights begin.

The right to publish is an essential dimension to a free press. But take away the economic incentive to publish original journalism, and there are considerable costs in that, and our free press will atrophy.

Which brings me to the final point I will make. Beyond ensuring that the principles of a free independent and combative press extend into the digital realm, we in mainstream media must do what we can to support the journalistic standards of emerging media. We have

a powerful interest in working with and helping to build audiences for upstarts that are pioneering new forms of journalism, new ways of delivering information.

What we can bring is audience and credibility. We can deploy those assets to encourage the spread of standards and practices we consider central to the practice of good journalism. I do not agree with those who argue that the protections of a free press ought to be available only to those who abide by our approach, but I do think our approach to journalism is ultimately the right one. Thank you very much. (Applause)

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Mr. Jones: Marcus is going to respond to your questions. Let me, if I may, ask the first one. Marcus, as someone who has been dealing with this situation in a very front-lines kind of way and has also been watching the way this world is evolving, do you think that there is genuine jeopardy for professional journalism as we know it?

Mr. Brauchli: That's an interesting question. I think probably not right now. And I think probably not. Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel did a book that just came out that said something like a third of journalists who were employed 10 years ago are no longer employed at newspapers in America, something like that.

But I think it is important to remember that our industry, like many other industries, has a massive amount of redundancy in it. And when

technology touches an industry, as we have seen in other industries, those aspects that are redundant are eliminated. And that in cold terms is what I think is happening in media. A lot of journalism jobs went away that weren't necessary to be able to continue to produce the kind of journalism that the society needed. But those who produce good journalism also continue to have the largest audiences online, and continue to run very large businesses.

If you look at *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*, these remain enormous journalistic enterprises with very large staffs. I think all of us are now operating in a sustainable way and probably will continue to operate in a sustainable way. I think that people seek out information that is good. They have their own civic and economic motivations for wanting good information.

I used to think, as I think a lot of people did, that the proliferation of alternative outlets of information and journalism was somehow a mortal peril to us. My thinking has evolved, and now I think this ever-deepening ocean of information actually favors islands of clarity. If you are an organization that practices good journalism and is providing people with good and reliable information, they will seek you out.

In a sense you look for those places you can trust and you can rely upon rather than depend on sources of information that are flawed. Maybe that is wishful thinking, but the evidence suggests that it is working, that the places that do produce good journalism in fact do drive the biggest audiences.

Mr. Engardio: Hi, I am Joel Engardio. I am a mid-career student at the Kennedy School. I have two quick questions. One, I am curious, what do you think of the Huffington Post as a news outlet? Arianna was here recently and telling us that she is hiring reporters and trying to generate news. And secondly, I'm curious about your sibling *Newsweek*, how you felt about the radical change to become more niche, more like *The Economist* and now the parent company has sold it, and how you feel about losing your sibling?

Mr. Brauchli: On the first question, the Huffington Post has done some good journalism. They have a few people who are real talents and it certainly is a place that you, if you are in journalism, you pay attention to what they are doing. I think they are innovating in many ways digitally and they are primarily and remain primarily a source for aggregated news and information.

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They have launched an investigative unit and the investigative unit has done a few things, nothing hugely impactful. They have some good people covering politics. It will be interesting to see how they evolve. We respect all of our competitors and we pay a lot of attention to the ones that are growing as fast as the Huffington Post to see whether they are doing things we should be considering. And I think in general we feel like our approach to journalism is probably the right approach.

On *Newsweek*, former sibling, once again we are back to my family here. I think Jon Meacham made a valiant effort to come up with approaches to journalism that would work and they made a terrific effort. I was happy to see that Sidney Harman was able to step into the void and take over *Newsweek* and I am sure that he has big ambitions for it and that it will continue to grow and, well, perhaps not grow, but it will continue to survive as a news organization for some time to come.

And I wish them, I guess I want to say luck, but they are in a very difficult spot, news weeklies are finding their audience is served a myriad of other ways. We are all going up the food chain. If you look at what newspapers do now, we do more of what news weeklies used to do and what I think Jon was doing with *Newsweek* is he was trying to do more of what some of the monthlies and other journalists did. We'll see how it goes.

Mr. Kuttner: Hi, I'm Bob Kuttner, co-editor of *The American Prospect* and I was a national staff writer on the *Post* and then a syndicated columnist by the *Post's* writers group. I am quite confident that the *Post* will continue defending its integrity against encroachments by the federal government. I am a little more worried about corporate encroachments, and I want to flag one in particular. And that was the *Post's* decision to outsource its coverage of fiscal issues to an online publication sponsored by Peter G. Peterson who has put a billion dollars into his crusade to go after social security, Medicare and to preach the gospel of austerity during the recession. So can you defend that decision?

Mr. Brauchli: You really think he has put a billion dollars into it?

Mr. Kuttner: Yeah, that's a fact. He has committed a billion dollars of his own money to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. He is spending a billion dollars to propagate his viewpoint. And one of his many ventures is Fiscal News—

Mr. Brauchli: Fiscal Times. For those of you who don't know, Fiscal Times is an online news site that the Peterson Foundation, I believe it is called, set up. It has a separate board. It is funded by Peter Peterson or by the Peterson Foundation, I believe. We used an article from them the first time last December and the article that we ran was on the subject of social security, it was on the commission that was reviewing the viability of social security. And the story that we published was a story that quoted another

organization that was funded by Pete Peterson and we should have disclosed in every way the funding of both the organization that we quoted and the fact that Pete Peterson's foundation was affiliated with the Fiscal Times. We didn't disclose that.

I do believe that that organization, the Fiscal Times, is capable of producing independent strong journalism on matters pertaining to the economy and the fiscal state of the United States. It has a separate board. It is a separate entity from other Peterson-funded organizations. It is staffed by people whom I consider to be extraordinarily talented and independent journalists. And we continue to use some content from them.

But we obviously look closely at the nature of that content to make sure that there is nothing that would, in any way, concern us. We have seen nothing to suggest that it is not reliable journalism. And we edit that journalism before we publish it, just as we edit journalism from other sources.

Mr. Reidy: My name is John Reidy and I am on the Shorenstein Advisory Board. First of all, Rupert Murdoch, you certainly watched him. You worked for him. And I was involved with financial companies which advised him and I saw a lot of Rupert over the last 25 years. Is he a liberal? Is he conservative? Is he in the middle of the road, or is he just interested in making money? And that's the first question. Just how do you characterize Rupert, but the more important question is how would you characterize the Obama administration's ability to manage the news contrasted with the Bush 43's management of news or attempts to manage the news?

Mr. Brauchli: I think Rupert Murdoch is a pragmatist and you have sort of described him exactly right. He has a lot of interests and I think he is interested in seeing his businesses do well economically, but he clearly likes having a voice in the public debates of his time. I guess that's probably what I would say on that subject. (Laughter)

On Obama versus Bush, it's funny, the Bush people were famous for their message discipline but actually didn't do it terribly effectively. In fact, Maralee Schwartz is here, she was a very brilliant political editor at the *Post* who could tell you all about it in more detail than I. But I think especially towards the end many people in the Bush administration were talking about everything that was going on. And there was a lot of dissent. Not everybody was happy with the way things ran and they all talked about it.

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The Obama people I think have exercised a great deal of discipline, which was clear when these books started coming out in the last several months, including Bob Woodward's book, showed you how fractious some

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of the policy discussions were that at the time they were taking place did not seem to be anything like as fractious as they later appeared. I think the Obama administration is quite skilled at delivering a narrative line about what is happening inside the White House.

What I don't think they have done effectively and I think this is evident based on the political situation in the country today, I don't think they have effectively sold their accomplishments to the people of the United States. So while we may not know minute to minute, day to day, week to week, who is up and who is down in the White

House, I don't think that the political mood of the country suggests that the Obama administration has connected effectively with everyone in the country with what they have done in legislation and in policy.

Mr. Kidder: My name is Tracy Kidder. I am taking a vacation here at the Shorenstein Center. This is a parochial question, probably unfair but was it really necessary to get rid of Book World? (Laughter)

Mr. Brauchli: I would not want to ever go to a public event where I wasn't asked that question. Even if it was in a different state. At the time that we made the decision to close Book World, it was necessary. We are not the only newspaper obviously to close a book review section and we

Publishers don't support book reviews. And this is one of the fundamental problems.

continue to publish a large number of book reviews. In fact, Marie Arana, the former editor of Book World who was very protective of that domain now counts how many book reviews we do and makes sure we are maintaining a number somewhat similar to what we had before.

I think on average we basically have about 80 percent or 85 percent of the number we had before of book reviews. Publishers don't support book reviews. And this is one of the fundamental problems. The car advertisers don't necessarily want to advertise alongside the books and the movie guys don't want to advertise alongside the books.

And at the end of the day, if the book publishers aren't going to support book reviews and coverage of publishing, it's hard. Not every section of a newspaper is supported by the advertising connected to that area. But we felt that as a stand-alone section which had fairly limited but very loyal readership we could not sustain it, but we could sustain the area of coverage. We kept the staff. We moved the book reviews into other sections of the paper, which actually now get more readership than they would have gotten in Book World. So under the circumstances I think we did what we had to do.

Ms. Shahani: Hi, my name is Aarti Shahani and I am a second-year student at the Kennedy School of Government. I got to be part of the student team this summer that gave a hard time to the Department of Transportation that didn't want to respond to us.

Mr. Jones: She was on the front page of *The Washington Post*.

Ms. Shahani: It was pretty cool.

Mr. Brauchli: Thank you. You obviously read between the lines of what I said.

Ms. Shahani: So as a young journalist stepping into an industry when all the elders tell me to run away, I have a lot of curiosity about every setback is a set up and transformations are moments of opportunity. And I think that in your comments and your speech you did some mapping of the media industry and I wanted you to speak more specifically about what do you see as the inefficiencies of a prior era that you think that the Internet, particularly the online economy, has fixed or there is an opportunity to fix.

Mr. Brauchli: Well, the first thing, in the pre-Internet age, each newspaper was sort of like a little, moated fief. Nobody else was in your terrain. You might have local competitors, but basically by the middle of the last century, certainly by the 1970's, most cities had gone down to one newspaper. You basically operated a monopoly and nobody else was delivering content in your domain and you had 30 or 40 percent profit margins.

And that was even after spending all kinds of money to have a larger staff by far than you needed because your editor kept coming and saying

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he wanted to cover this and he wanted to cover that. And you might be a metropolitan newspaper somewhere in the middle of the country, but you would have two or three people covering Washington. And your justification to the publisher for sending them to Washington is they are going to cover the delegation from the state. And in fact when they get to Washington they all want to cover the White House and you have a huge number of people all covering the White House and they are all getting exactly the same information. Now it is true that you could have just taken AP for that content. It wasn't always true that you could have just taken AP for some of the other things you decided to do.

But a lot of the news organizations just spent a lot of money building up a lot of costs and doing a lot of things that when suddenly everything was available to everybody, they no longer had a clear mission. Too many

newspapers were trying to do everything, cover all areas for their audience themselves.

This notion that you are a newspaper of record is something of an absurd notion. The newspaper of record is called the Internet.

I'll give you an example. When I came to *The Washington Post* there was a school shooting in Finland. And we had a reporter in Berlin, very talented reporter, Craig Whitlock. The next morning I pick up the paper and there is this big article by Craig Whitlock from

Berlin about the school shooting in Finland. So I inquired why it was that we had the guy in Berlin writing this story from Finland. And I was told, when I thought after all that AP and Reuters might have correspondents based in Helsinki and I was told that the rule at the *Post* was that if we were going to do a major story we had to have a staff byline on it.

In reality, that didn't serve anybody well. I'm sure that the AP and Reuters people on the ground in Helsinki were getting better information than Craig was able to get by phone, as good a reporter as he is. And too often too many newspapers follow that same kind of approach. So what has happened is newspapers have had to look hard at what they really need to do.

This notion that you are a newspaper of record is something of an absurd notion. The newspaper of record is called the Internet. Anything you want to know is available on the Internet. What you need to do is define what it is you can do best for your audience. For a lot of newspapers, that means covering your community. Covering your community really closely and covering your community really well because probably nobody else is coming into your domain, because you probably still are the monopoly provider newspaper in that community and at this point it is not likely somebody else is going to come along and start a newspaper.

So that is what I mean, that there was a lot of redundancy in this industry, and there were a lot of people who did things that were truly not economically necessary. While all of us come to journalism thinking it is a mission or a calling, it is also a business. And if it is not a viable business, there is no mission, there is no calling. So newspapers have gone through this period of great retreat and contraction.

Now if I can just digress a little bit further, I was talking before dinner to somebody about the foreign correspondent, the issue that is often raised that the number of foreign correspondents has diminished now to the point where there is not good foreign coverage. And this is I think the biggest myth of all. In fact there are more foreign correspondents today than there have ever been, more correspondents working abroad for often English speaking or English language news services.

They work for Reuters, they work for Bloomberg, they work for Dow Jones. When I went to Hong Kong as a reporter in 1984, I was one of four reporters in Asia. We had two in Tokyo, one in Hong Kong, one in Singapore for a wire service, Dow Jones International Wire Service it is called. And when I left from Shanghai in 1999, there were six reporters in Shanghai at that point. And today there are something like 200 for Dow Jones in Asia. I was talking to a guy from Reuters the other day. Reuters has 50 people in India. Bloomberg and Reuters have a hundred-something people in Tokyo.

And by the way, they don't just cover economics. You can't cover economics and not cover politics and even culture. If you want news about the world there is abundant news about the world. It just is no longer being done by the guy who may be the *Baltimore Sun* correspondent in Beijing who used to get on the airplane and fly to Manila when something would happen and

if you get there, it would be his first time in Manila. And he would run around and do a bunch of interviews and find out what the taxi driver thought on the way to the interviews and publish the story.

And it is true that newspapers no longer publish as much foreign coverage as they did. But I don't know that that is as terrible a thing as people would have you believe, because I think many people go online for information. They seek out information if they find it useful on other sources. And the information that you can find is as good or deeper, certainly

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deeper than it ever was in the days when newspapers had a handful of correspondents around the world.

Mr. Parker: Richard Parker, the Shorenstein Center. As you began your speech you underscored the importance of the *Post's* independence from political forces. Could you circle back and talk about how the *Post's* independence politically served both the *Post* readers and the republic in the two-year run-up to the Iraq war? And then, secondly, in terms of its economic independence in the three to five years prior to the collapse of Wall Street?

Mr. Brauchli: On the Iraq war as I am sure you know, my predecessor, Len Downie, has quite publicly said that he regrets the way the *Post* covered developments running up to the Iraq war, and was not aggressive enough. And I don't think anybody who is in mainstream American journalism probably feels that American journalism did as good a job as it could have at that time.

When you are in the middle of an economic bubble and when people feel like they are getting richer by the day from their house values, from the stock market, from their 401K's, the notion that you can stand between them and their greed and their avarice and get them to change their behavior because there might be some peril is just a flawed notion.

As for the Wall Street issue, that's a question I would love to take. In fact, I was listening to some lectures on audio that have been done here at the Shorenstein Center and I was listening to one by Matthew Bishop from *The Economist* who went on at length about how he felt the news media had not done a good job covering economics during the run-up to the 2007–08 downturn. I actually dispute that. I think that is a very simplistic analysis.

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that you can stand between them and their greed and their avarice and get them to change their behavior because there might be some peril is just a flawed notion. There was a lot of superb coverage of the imbalances in the U.S. financial system leading up to the catastrophic downturn in 2008. I would commend anybody here, Steve Pearlstein's columns in 2007 which were written immediately before everything went to hell, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize.

He described all of the risks, very specifically in many cases, that were emerging in the U.S. financial system. If you go back and look at *The Wall Street Journal's* coverage starting in 2000 or so of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the housing finance system you will see stories by Patrick Barta who covered Fannie Mae at the time that described exactly the problems that emerged later at Fannie Mae. Exactly the kinds of foolish decisions that were being made by mortgage finance companies to make loans with no money down, exactly the kinds of moral hazards that led to the problems that occurred later.

I do think that the media in general didn't hammer on this perhaps as hard as they could because I think it's very hard for people in media to get in front of a big popular sentiment like a bubble and change the way people think. You can present the information to people but people are not going to respond the way you wish they would respond because no politician, no member of Congress reading a story in the newspaper warning him of the risk is going to take on his constituents and say it is time for us to change the way mortgages are being granted. Because then his constituents won't be able to get mortgages and move up to the bigger house and profit from what their neighbor is profiting by. I think the Federal Reserve bears some culpability for not having acted earlier than it did. But I think that the media is less guilty of anything than people would have you believe.

Ms. Hewitt: Hi, my name is Perry Hewitt. I work on digital and social communications for the public affairs office here at the university. And a couple of weeks ago there has been a kerfuffle: a tweet between GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) and *The Washington Post* over what is the role of Twitter and responding to a question about an editorial decision made at the *Post*. I was wondering if you could comment on that please.

Mr. Brauchli: You may have to help me with the details. We publish a website called On Faith which has a lot of different contributors talking about matters of religion and politics and faith. We published a contribution by Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council. In that post, he was basically asserting that homosexuality was virtually a physiological problem and that it was a sin and it could be cured and all these other things. We then were being attacked for publishing that article and somebody in the *Post*, a junior staffer, made what I think was a bad decision to put out a Twitter comment basically saying we publish both sides of the issue.

That is not our position. We don't consider that Tony Perkins's comment was another side of an issue. We do think that there are people who play big roles in these national debates who deserve a platform, not

because they themselves earn that platform but because it is useful for people who are interested in the debate to know what they are thinking and what they are saying and to understand where they are coming from.

It is not a matter of feeling like there are two sides. I don't think we were taking a view on what he published. We were simply acknowledging that this is somebody who has a very loud voice in this debate and particularly whose group has a lot of influence with some legislators and members of Congress.

Mr. Jones: I would like to ask one final question before we adjourn. Those of us who value *The Washington Post*, and I think that is everybody here and many others, had been concerned about the economic stability

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and the sustainability of the *Post*, given all the difficulties all newspapers are having. You made a comment that you thought *The Washington Post* is now basically on an economically stable basis. I wondered if you would expand on the economic situation of the *Post* as a newspaper and The Washington Post Company.

Mr. Brauchli: I am really not the person who should be addressing those questions. I will say that we are in better shape now, considerably better shape now than we were during the really severe times over the last couple of years. And I think we have made a lot

of changes that will enable us to continue to remain viable and sustainable going forward. As for the company, I am really not the right person to answer any questions about the company, since The Washington Post Company is much larger than *The Washington Post* newspaper, let alone *The Washington Post* newsroom.

Mr. Jones: But you are confident, optimistic, worried, about the newspaper?

Mr. Brauchli: Oh, I'm confident. I am quite confident about the newspaper. I am quite confident about The Washington Post Company. We have an infinite amount of work to do as I think anybody does in media these days. Just to stay abreast of the changes and adapt to the ever-evolving economic climate. But I am quite confident we will do it.

Mr. Jones: Marcus Brauchli, thank you very much. (Applause)
Thank you all for being with us.