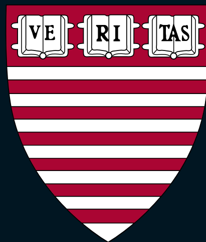
The Theodore H. White Lecture

with

David S. Broder

The Joan Shorenstein Center
PRESS ▪ POLITICS



▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪

Harvard University
John F. Kennedy School of Government

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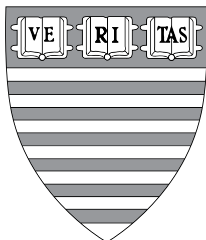

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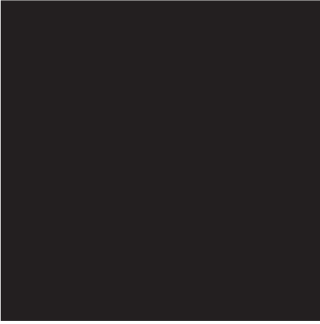


The Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics commemorates the life of the late reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

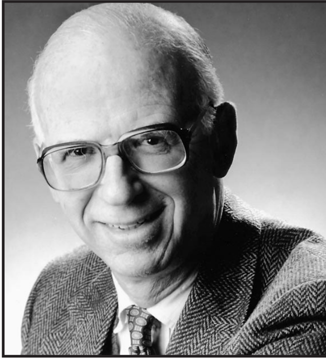
White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post,* entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and Oriental languages. In 1939, he witnessed the bombing of Peking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship, and later explained, "Three thousand human beings died; once I'd seen that I knew I wasn't going home to be a professor."

During the war, White covered East Asia for *Time* and returned to write *Thunder Out of China,* a controversial critique of the American-supported Nationalist Chinese government. For the next two decades, he contributed to numerous periodicals and magazines, published two books on the Second World War and even wrote fiction.

A lifelong student of American political leadership, White in 1959 sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised to drop such an academic exercise by fellow reporters, he took to the campaign trail and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with *The Making of the President 1960.*

White's *Making of the President* editions for 1964 and 1972, and *America in Search of Itself* remain vital historical documents on campaigns and the press.

Before his death in 1986, Theodore White also served on the Kennedy School's Visiting Committee, where he was one of the early architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. Blair Clark, former senior vice president of CBS who chaired the committee to establish this lectureship, asked, "Did Teddy White ever find the history he spent his life searching for? Well, of course not, he would have laughed at such pretension. But he came close, very close, didn't he? And he never quit the strenuous search for the elusive reality, and for its meaning in our lives."



DAVID S. BRODER is the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and correspondent of the *Washington Post*. He has been with the Post for more than 30 years. He writes a twice-weekly column on American politics which is carried by more than 300 newspapers across the globe.

Broder began his newspaper career at the Bloomington (Ill.) *Pantagraph*, going from there to the *Congressional Quarterly*, the *Washington Star* and the *New York Times* before joining the *Post* in 1966. He has covered every national campaign and convention since 1960. Broder's political insights and astute observations about political trends have earned him the deep respect and title of "dean" of America's political reporters.

Broder is a regular commentator on CNN's "Inside Politics," and makes regular appearances on NBC's *Meet the Press* and *Washington Week in Review.* He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in May 1973 for distinguished commentary. In 1997 Broder was named among the 25 most influential Washington journalists by *National Journal* and among the capital city's top 50 journalists by *The Washingtonian Magazine*. He is author or co-author of six books including *The System: The American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*, with Haynes Johnson; *The Man Who Would Be President: Dan Quayle*, with Bob Woodward; and *Behind the Front Page: A Candid Look at How the News is Made*. He has been a fellow of the Institute of Politics at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and a fellow of the Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs at Duke University.

In a January 1990 column, Broder expressed his dissatisfaction with the state of politics by crusading "for a genuine rebellion against the cheapening of our politics." He proposed a 5-point plan for returning the discussion of issues and concerns to voters. Put the "voters in the driver's seat; determine what is on their minds." Instead of saturating the public with negative TV ads so characteristic of the 1988 election, return to the discussion of issues which are on the minds of Americans. Broder's view is that politics has been taken hostage by political pros who are taking the process from the voters and offering "empty campaigns, negative ads, and the money that fuels them." Some consultants counter by saying that the public's pervasive cynicism about American politics creates the "market" for these tactics—that negative campaigns are the result of public cynicism.

Broder and his wife, Ann, have four grown sons.

Theodore H. White Lecture
November 12, 1998

Professor Schauer: Good evening. I am Fred Schauer. I am the Academic Dean of the Kennedy School of Government. But we are not here, to put it mildly, because of me. We are here primarily to honor Theodore H. White, in the Theodore H. White Lectures.

Theodore White, known to those who knew him, which unfortunately I did not, as Teddy, was a native of Boston, came from a Dorchester working-class background; spent two years working as a newsboy, a term we rarely hear anymore, in order to be able to pay his way to be a commuting student at Harvard College.

He went from Harvard College to a distinguished career as one of the great political journalists of our time or this century. Much of his career was spent at *Time* magazine, a publication we all know about; *Collier's* magazine, a publication that some of us may remember. But most importantly, his books, especially *The Making of the President: 1960,* transformed the nature of political journalism as we know it.

He was perhaps the first and almost certainly the best at getting inside the process, getting inside the election, getting inside the campaign and was able to describe, interpret, and explain the presidential election and presidential elections in general in ways that no one else has been able to do.

It is perhaps the best testimony to the influence of Theodore White that since 1960 or even since 1980, when he wrote his last of *The Making of the President* books, anytime anyone writes a book about a presidential campaign, the reviews invariably measure it against *The Making of the President: 1960* and invariably conclude that it doesn't quite make that standard. It either comes up a little short or a lot short, but I have yet to see a review of a book about political campaigning in which the book reviewed is thought to even come close to *The Making of the President: 1960.*

I have talked a little bit in describing the work of Theodore White about the presidency, but for White it was not about the president, it was not about the presidency. For him, the idea of a presidential election was more important. In his own words, he described the presidential election, any presidential election, as the most awesome transfer of power in the world; the power to marshall and mobilize, the power to send men to kill or be killed, the power to tax and destroy, the power to create and the responsibility to do so, the power to guide and the responsibility to heal, all committed into the hands of one man.

In many respects, by focusing on presidential transitions, elections as events of transitions, White captured the essence of democracy. Democracy is not about who wins the elections. Democracy is about the fact that the losers of the elections go along with the process. And by recognizing the importance of the process of transition and the process of peaceful, even if

combative transition, White captured the essence of what's important about elections and made crucially important contributions to understanding the idea of elections and the role of the press in reporting on those elections.

White transformed political journalism. Marvin Kalb has transformed the study of political journalism. Marvin came to the Kennedy School after thirty years of distinguished practice in journalism, primarily television journalism, but also some number of books primarily focusing on the diplomatic and international side of things.

Democracy is not about who wins the elections. Democracy is about the fact that the losers of the elections go along with the process.

When he came here, he recognized that press and politics was not about the press covering politics, it was rather about the inseparable relationship between the press and politics, the fact that press and politics exist in a symbiotic relationship.

In his own writing, most significantly, a book called *The Nixon Memo*, and a large number of other papers, articles, and speeches that he's done since he's come here, and in his teaching, Marvin has given us a vision of the relationship between press and politics; of the way in which politics affects the press, the press affects the politics and that thinking of the press just as covering politics doesn't capture the essential inseparability of the relationship.

Marvin Kalb has done this not only through his own work, but also through the creation, fostering, and flourishing of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, which in every respect owes its current enormous successes to Marvin's energies.

You haven't come here to listen to me. With that, let me introduce Marvin Kalb, the Edward R. Murrow Professor of Press and Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government and Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.

Marvin.

(Applause)

Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much, Dean Schauer.

How do you do, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure this evening to introduce David Broder, a political columnist and a reporter for the *Washington Post* since 1966.

Broder, a modest man, would probably be content with that simple description. But as a former president once said: "That would be wrong."

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: The fact is that Broder's contributions, first to the Joan Shorenstein Center, are centrally important. Broder was Joan's colleague at the *Washington Post* when they worked together. And later on, with Al Hunt, a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*, who is here, and with Walter

Shorenstein, who is also here—and I'd like both of you to stand up for just a second and accept my applause.

(Applause)

Mr. Kalb: Thank you.

Broder, together with Hunt and Shorenstein, suggested and urged that I become the Center's first director. That was twelve years ago. I accepted and it's been a fabulous time ever since. So I thank you, Sir Broder, for that.

Second, and much more important, Broder's contributions to American journalism have been extraordinary. And over the years his peers have recognized and honored them. For example, in 1973, Broder won the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary. Author Timothy Crouse of *Boys on the Bus* fame called him the high priest of political journalism. *U.S. News & World Report* described him as the unchallenged dean of a priesthood of political reporters. Columnist Richard Reeves said Broder is probably the most respected and influential political journalist in the country.

In 1990, *Washingtonian Magazine* surveyed the editors of the country's 200 largest newspapers. They rated Broder best reporter, hardest working, and least ideological of the 123 columnists they were considering. And CBS's media critic Ron Powers, adding whipped cream to this cake, compared Broder to an anchorman.

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: He's not famous like Peter Jennings, said Powers, he's not glamorous like Tom Brokaw, but underneath that blue suit there is a superman.

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: Superman is not exactly the way Broder sees Broder. Two years ago Broder described himself as a 97 pound weakling, as unthreatening a sight as any voter about to be interviewed by Broder is likely to see. And in a current issue of *Brill's Content*, when Broder was asked to explain why he had gone into journalism, he replied it had to do with being skinny, wearing glasses and being uncoordinated.

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: But when his friend and former editor at the *Post*, Ben Bradlee, became editor of the paper in the mid 1960s, Broder was among his first conquests. And ever since, for Broder and for the *Post*, it has been a love affair.

Somehow, while covering ten presidential campaigns and all those other campaigns in between, ever since 1960, Broder has managed to find the time to author or co-author six books and appear regularly on such television programs as CNN's "Inside Politics," NBC's "Meet The Press," and PBS's "Washington Week In Review."

And, when he feels so moved, he has also been known to take up a crusade or two. After the 1988 presidential campaign, he began to rip into political consultants and politicians who he said, "force fed the voters a garbage diet of negative TV ads, polluting the political environment and

encouraging the kind of pervasive cynicism that we all see even today." He believes that journalists ought to help voters get their concerns and their agenda to the heart of a political campaign and he's tried to encourage that development.

Broder has also criticized his own craft of journalism for welcoming political operatives of one sort or another into its ranks; a rather controversial condition that has produced over the years what he's called androgenous insiders. It has also produced this sharp rejoinder from William Safire, who had been a Nixon speech writer before becoming a Pulitzer Prize winning *New York Times* columnist: "Is opinion keen and judgment independent only if the pundit has never been deflowered by political experience?"

. . . journalists ought to help voters get their concerns and their agenda to the heart of a political campaign . . .

At this stage, more important to Broder is the resulting condition of American governance. "I'm afraid," he said recently, "that my generation of journalists will be seen to have told people everything about what's going on in politics except that the system is collapsing." He fears that the credibility of our system of representative government may be going down the tubes.

Now, if most journalists would have produced that kind of somber judgment, people might, with a simple wave of the hand, dismiss it as another example of journalistic negativism. But when Broder expresses such a gloomy thought, most people aware of his track record will listen carefully and respectfully, certainly here at the Kennedy School, where public service is still regarded as the highest possible calling.

It is therefore entirely proper that David Broder is the 1998 Theodore H. White Lecturer. Broder met Teddy White during the 1960 campaign and was powerfully influenced by his example and his writing. So, when Broder speaks, we listen.

David, speak.

(Applause)

Mr. Broder: Thank you, my friend.

That introduction was about as long as your title.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: It's a great pleasure to be here and particularly to be in the presence of several members of Teddy White's family. And I wonder if we could just ask them to stand for a moment and be recognized.

(Applause)

Mr. Broder: I'm very glad to be back in this precinct again. I've been here many other times, usually up about the second landing up there listening to speakers here in the Forum. I remember particularly an address

in the winter of 1991 by Mario Cuomo. For those of you who were here, you will recall, it was just an absolute smash of a speech, great rapturous enthusiasm. I think the Harvards were ready to carry him out on their shoulders and straight to the White House. And I thought to myself, if he's this popular at Harvard, this man has no future in American politics.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: And he realized the same thing, so instead of getting on the plane to New Hampshire that day, he stayed in Albany.

That gift of fore-knowledge is something that comes to very few of us pundits. And it is the product of long years of experience. And that, more than anything else, explains why we, as a group, and I, as an individual, were so wonderfully accurate in our forecasts of the recent election.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: As Mark Shields likes to say, we were the first to inaugurate President Muskie and the first to declare Bill Clinton finished at least five different times now and still counting.

If you will indulge me for just a moment, I want to say a word about Teddy White and about Joan Shorenstein Barone because my life was enhanced immeasurably by the good fortune of knowing both of them.

Teddy was, as has already been said, the role model for my entire generation of political reporters. *The Making of the President: 1960* was a revelation to us, especially to a kid reporter like myself who was covering that presidential race for the first time on the press bus.

Teddy White showed us first how fascinating the view could be from inside the campaigns. We tried to emulate him, but none of us succeeded in gaining the trust of the politicians or the access that he had, which encouraged the candidates and handlers to open up to him in a way that they did to no one else.

And second, he showed us how a story whose outcome everyone knew could become, in the hands of a great storyteller, the most compelling of narratives. The first chapter of *The Making of the President: 1960* is one of the great pieces of sustained narrative writing in this century. I go back and re-read it often just for the sheer pleasure of it, but I've never figured out how to develop the same kind of head of steam that Teddy could generate with his words and sentences and paragraphs.

For all that we've venerated him, equally we treasured his companionship on the campaign trail. He was extraordinarily generous to me simply by including me in his conversations with other reporters when I started out covering John Kennedy and Richard Nixon for the old *Washington Star*. And in later years, as we became friends, his enthusiasm and his insights and his wisdom and his humanity got you through the worst drag-ass moments on the trail. And he sustained the excitement when there were real dramas that occurred.

Joan was a different personality. I met her when I was up here at Harvard on a boondoggle year next door at the Institute of Politics. And she

was a graduate student of Zoroastrian philosophy, of all wonderful things. She spent a lot of time at the little house on Mt. Auburn Street where the IOP was then located and we became friends.

When she finished that academic year, I arranged for her to come to Washington as the political researcher at the *Post* and took great pride in her ever-expanding role in the coverage of politics at our paper and then when she took her talents to CBS and truly flourished there with wonderful mentors like the late Sylvia Westerman.

Joan was well on her way to carving her own great reputation as a political journalist when cancer cut short her life. This institution that her family endowed and that Marvin has led so ably since its inception, is a marvelous tribute to her qualities and her memory.

It's those qualities that marked such outstanding political journalists as Teddy White in his generation and Joan in hers, that have now become somewhat murky. That fog about our identity and role is what I hoped to dispel when I borrowed the title of this talk from Admiral Stockdale's famous question in the 1992 vice presidential debate, "Who am I? What am I doing here?"

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: But I realized when I sat down to write these notes that answering those questions is way beyond my capacity or your patience. So, do not expect in the next twenty minutes to get any answers.

The issues that those questions raise are now being addressed, fortunately, in many places by the Committee of Concerned Journalists, the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Task Force on Credibility, various projects of the Pew Charitable Trusts and not least, here at the Center, where the discussions and the publications have been of great service in a dialogue that is taking place in many, many newsrooms now, including my own.

So take these comments as a few reflections on a subject which properly is engaging a great many other people.

My starting point is a comment that Gloria Borger of *U.S. News* and CBS News and "Washington Week in Review," made to our friend Marvin in a recently published interview. She said: "I am not Matt Drudge." And she said it even in cold print with a fair amount of indignation. Not only is she much prettier, she's almost in a different business than the on-line columnist. But for much of America, I suspect, the Drudges and the Borgers and the Broders are all the same breed of creature.

If you will forgive the first of what I fear will be several old geezer comments, when I broke into this business on the Bloomington, Illinois *Pantagraph* 45 years ago this autumn, it was pretty clear what we meant when we said somebody was a journalist. It was somebody who was working on a newspaper or a wire service or someone who had graduated from one of those two places.

It was a time when the news magazines, radio and television, were staffed largely by people like Walter Cronkite, who had learned the trade

on the wires or newspapers. They had been indoctrinated, all of them, in the credo of the old City News Bureau in Chicago which sadly has now died. The wonderful sign that they had on the wall in the City News Bureau: "If you think your mother loves you, check it."

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: They also imbibed the ethic of the *Baltimore Sun's* Frank Kent who said: "The only way a reporter should ever look at a politician is down."

Today, the definition of who is a journalist is a lot harder to come by.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: A lot of them were itinerant drunks, but when they were sober, they prided themselves on their independence, their skepticism, and they relished their role in exposing the follies and the larceny of public officials.

Our beloved friend Pete Lisagor told a story that when he was a young student at the University of Michigan and working on the *Michigan Daily*, he wrote a piece for the paper that took the athletic department of the University of Michigan to task. And he was sitting in the *Michigan Daily* office that afternoon and he said, 'The biggest guy I had ever seen in my life comes through the door and says, 'Is there anybody here named Lisagor?' And he said, I was convinced that the athletic department had sent a goon over who was just going to pound the hell out of me. And he said, this great big thing stuck out his paw and says 'My name's Dick Scammon, I'm agin' the government and I liked what you wrote.' That's how he met our friend Richard Scammon, our great source for so many years on election statistics in this country.

But in the newsrooms where those folks worked, the search for facts was taken very seriously. And the transmission of information was the commonly accepted definition of the job. Today, the definition of who is a journalist is a lot harder to come by. Part of it is obviously that journalism has expanded greatly with cable and the Internet. Part of it is that the paths of entry are far more numerous; you don't have to have passed through the typical newspaper city room or wire service experience.

Radio and television have developed their own career paths where the emphasis is often, I believe, as much on learning how to package a story in a fashion that attracts listeners or viewers as it is on digging for and verifying facts. Brilliant writers and bright students can jump directly from college to opinion magazines, often with dazzling results and sometimes with Stephen Glass' disdain for the distinction between fact and fiction. And, as Marvin has already alluded to and as I have tediously described on too many other occasions, the revolving door between politics and journalism is spinning more and more rapidly.

I am certain, without knowing it, that the networks and the cable channels are vying with each other tonight to sign up Newt Gingrich for their

talking head shows because the more prominent and controversial your political role has been, the hotter ticket you are in that form of electronic journalism.

. . . the emphasis is often, I believe, as much on learning how to package a story in a fashion that attracts listeners or viewers as it is on digging for and verifying facts.

This reached some kind of a climactic point for me, but it will pass soon, when after the 1996 election cycle, CNN began running house ads celebrating the return of Pat Buchanan to "Crossfire." And the ad was a wonderful one; it showed a motorcade leaving the White House and heading up Capitol Hill, a scene that we've seen so many times on State of the Union nights and other important occasions. And the camera followed the car, the limousine going up Capitol Hill, and then just at the point you think you're going to see the President disembarking at the Capitol, veered off to the left and deposited Pat Buchanan back at the CNN building. And I thought now we've got it; you run for president to prepare yourself for your return to CNN.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: Journalists, and particularly the more visible in our business are being subsumed, as Marvin has said, into a larger and bigger category called Washington insiders. And it's not done great wonders for our credibility since the only category of people perhaps more reviled by the public than journalists are Washington insiders. But more important, it has led to real confusion about who is and who is not a journalist.

So what do we do?

Any notion of licensing journalists is totally abhorrent. We surely want no government agency or professional board saying this person may write or draw or speak in the public print or on the public air and this other person may not. But if that's the case, I think we still have the right and responsibility within each news organization to set standards for ourselves.

. . . you run for president to prepare yourself for your return to CNN.

It's appalling to me that so many of the owners and managers of major news organizations have decided to go down market in the search for readers or listeners or viewers; to put a Geraldo Rivera up there with a Tom Brokaw. It's bothersome to me that they have pursued politicians and political handlers for op-ed pages and TV panels, and thereby have sent the message to the young journalists, to today's reporters and to those

aspiring to enter the field, that the greatest rewards in their hands will not go to those who have established their reputations by diligent pursuit of facts and information, but to those who can most glibly mouth off with their opinions.

The more we structure our journalism to fit the conventions of sitcoms or TV dramas, the more we induce reporters to bark at each other like politicians; the more we take the meaning out of journalism and blur the definition of what a journalist is.

The more we structure our journalism to fit the conventions of sitcoms or TV dramas, the more we induce reporters to bark at each other like politicians . . .

I'm going to take just two small pieces of the puzzle; what we think we're doing in our new and uncomfortable role as character cops and what we need to be doing much better in our old and sometimes abandoned role of giving people the information that they need to be effective citizens.

I was on a panel with a group of students last Sunday morning. And one of the students asked "Why did you people decide that you had to prowl around in the private lives of public officials; what makes you think this is part of your job?"

Well, there's no question that things have changed. Ken Walsh of *U.S. News* was the first person to take a swing at it. And he said that when he started at the White House the questions at the briefings tended to be about arms control treaties and budgets and now they're about what the White House stewards may have observed.

I said I wanted to add just four words of explanatory footnote; at least to offer a theory of why it had changed. And the four words were, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon. The Washington press corps learned, along with the rest of the country, how character flaws in presidents, when magnified by the power of the Oval Office, can have truly terrible consequences.

The Washington press corps learned, along with the rest of the country, how character flaws in presidents, when magnified by the power of the Oval Office, can have truly terrible consequences.

And for me and for, I think, others, including I believe, Al Hunt, who is at this session, out at the American Press Institute, in Reston, before the 1984 Presidential campaign got launched, Doris Kearns Goodwin spoke to us and told a story that you've probably heard her tell on other occasions. When she was working as an aide to President Johnson, down at the ranch, on his memoirs, her job was

to take his dictated reminiscences and do the due diligence part, check them against the historical record, so that there wouldn't be any embarrassing discrepancies when the memoirs were published.

. . . somebody who will invent a heroic death for his own grandfather will take an equivocal incident in the Gulf of Tonkin and turn it into a pretext for something that will get lots of people killed.

And Johnson had dictated into his tape a story that he had told thousands of times as a president, and before that in his campaigns about how his grandfather had died at the Alamo. And Doris told the story that day down in Reston, that one morning she said "I summoned up all of my courage and said to him, 'Mr. President, I've gone through the records at the Alamo and I can't find a Johnson there.' And she thought, he's going to take my head off.

Instead of which he said, 'Well, you're right. I did not have a grandfather who died at the battle of the Alamo; he actually died at the battle of San Jacinto, and we Texans knew that was much more important in our history than the Alamo was, but nobody outside of Texas had ever heard of the battle of San Jacinto, so I just moved him.' "

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: And she said that sounded quite plausible. And then, of course, when she checked the records of the battle of San Jacinto, he wasn't there either.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: His grandfather had died in bed.

And I remember this moment because I still get the shivers down my back when I think about it. She said, "When you come across anybody who is president or running for president and there is some anomaly, no matter how trivial, in the story that he tells about his own life, his own family, his own experiences, pay attention to it because," she said, "somebody who will invent a heroic death for his own grandfather will take an equivocal incident in the Gulf of Tonkin and turn it into a pretext for something that will get lots of people killed."

I think that's how we got into this business of trying to pay attention to character. The second reason is that the whole presidential nominating system changed from the time that Teddy White was writing about it, starting in 1960.

The question is always raised, why didn't you reporters tell people about John Kennedy? Well, my boss, Ben Bradlee, said because we didn't know what Kennedy was doing. But even if we had, remember, Kennedy ran in two contested primaries in 1960, Wisconsin and West Virginia. All of the other delegates that he won were given to him by people that we would, in

retrospect, call party bosses; people who had had their own first-hand experiences with this young man and had decided for themselves whether he would be an embarrassment to them if they gave him the nomination.

The notion that some reporter was going to come along and tell Mayor Daley or Carmine DiSapio or Governor Lawrence, "Hey, there's something you ought to know about this fellow Kennedy," was ridiculous.

Today, by contrast, the nominating system is controlled by twenty million people who vote in the presidential primaries. Essentially all of the information that they have about these candidates comes either from the candidates themselves or from the press.

And so I think the rule of thumb has become that when something becomes a matter of sustained conversation and concern among the reporters themselves, we better find a way to share it with people, rather than withhold it. The problem is that the bright line that used to be there—we deal with the public lives of public officials and not their private lives—has been erased and what's left is very, very fuzzy.

We had a serious debate, which has now become public knowledge, at the *Washington Post*, in the fall of 1996 about whether a thoroughly verified story about a thirty year old affair that Bob Dole had had when he was ending his first marriage should or should not be published as news in the paper. And the debate went back and forth because our editor, Len Downie, invited people to express their views.

In the end, he decided this was not going to be published as news in the *Washington Post*; he made the decision with full knowledge that the story would be published because the woman involved wanted it out and felt that it should become public knowledge, but he said we shouldn't be the ones to break that story.

I was personally very comfortable with that decision, but I have to tell you that there were very powerful arguments on the other side. And it was a demonstration that what is and is not relevant for readers and what is and is not part of our job has become very, very murky indeed.

I think that illustrates not only the murkiness of the new standards, but a more serious problem. The character questions have too often been dumbed down into issues of sexual morality. Those issues are important, and for some people they are decisive in their judgment. But I think the American people have been telling us pretty clearly that they make a distinction between questions of private morality that affect relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, and the issues that affect the public performance of a president.

And without abandoning our own judgment on what is news to public opinion, I think that as journalists we should recognize that there are aspects of political character that are worth exploring that go much beyond the questions of bedroom behavior. What kind of a relationship does a would-be president have with his political peers or her political peers? How comfortable is he or she with conflicting views when they are

presented? How much of a risk taker? How decisive? What's his or her energy level? How has he or she recovered from career policy setbacks? And veering back, I suppose, in the direction of the bedroom, how solidly rooted is this person in family life, in community, a sense of his own self?

Campaigns can answer some of those questions, but more can be learned by serious examination of the person's prior political life and from conversations with those who have shared those formative experiences. My colleague David Maraniss in his Pulitzer Prize reporting on Bill Clinton in 1992 and the fine book that came out of that, *First In His Class*, I think really has seriously advanced the art form of that kind of serious looking at the formative experiences of someone who had become president. And I think we can build on that.

. . . there are aspects of political character that are worth exploring that go much beyond the questions of bedroom behavior.

The second aspect of the what are we really doing question goes back to basics. And that is the problem of conveying information that citizens need. Jeff Bell, who is a conservative writer, published a little book a few years ago about elites and masses. And he made a point in that book that we too often forget, I think, in our political journalism. He said the political elites care most about who wins and why. The personalities, the tactics, the strategies of an election campaign are very important to the elites. The mass of people care much more about what emerges, what actions or policies will ensue that affect their lives. And that's a point that I think cannot be overstressed.

It applies to governmental reporting as well because so often in our writing about government we frame our stories in terms of political conflict, forcing government, if you will, into the framework of a permanent campaign. Did Clinton best Gingrich in squeezing out money to begin hiring 100,000 teachers? That's the way that story was framed. The basics of that story were lost, I think, with that focus. Where are they going to find those teachers? Which districts will get them? When will they show up? How will they be paid over time—by the federal government or by local taxpayers? And by the way, what's the evidence that adding teachers to the mix by itself will change the performance of schools?

The reason that the public debate seems so stunted in this country today is, in part at least, that we in the press have abandoned that basic informing function. I saw it happen, as Bob Blendon has reported, in the whole health care debate in the early '90s, where the measurements that he and his colleagues took demonstrated that the longer the debate went on, the fuzzier the people were in their understanding of the alternatives that were under discussion. I think the same thing was true in the welfare debate. It's been true in the ongoing debate in Washington about education policy.

And I fear it's going to be true next year when Social Security and Medicare may move onto the agenda.

So part of the answer to the question of what are we doing here is simply to remind ourselves that our basic function in this free society, the reason we were given this special status under the First Amendment, is the informing function. Now, it's not ours alone. Politicians, including presidents, have to share in that duty. The president is the communicator in chief. And when he chooses to speak about a subject, obviously the public will pay attention. If he chooses not to speak about a subject, it's very unlikely that people will get a sense that it is important for them to focus on it.

Our unique role is to help make the citizens of this great republic capable of forming a serious public opinion . . .

But politicians have other responsibilities. They have to run the government or run the Congress or whatever it may be. Our unique role is to help make the citizens of this great republic capable of forming a serious public opinion because, in the end, we hope that public opinion will be the arbiter of public policy. But that hope is justifiable only if there is some real basis for them to make their judgments.

Too often those citizens see this governmental process now as a game controlled by the infamous insiders, politicians, handlers, contributors, interest groups and the press. People who hoard the vital information, who talk to each other in a kind of special, inaccessible language. Most voters feel frustrated that decisions are made without their awareness or their real participation. They feel manipulated, not just by the politicians but by the press as well. And they damn well don't enjoy the situation. It does not have to be that way.

I began by talking about one young woman, my friend Joan. Let me conclude by speaking about another who also sadly is no longer with us, my colleague at the *Post*, Ann Devroy. Ann covered the White House first for Gannett Newspapers and then for the *Post* until her death a little over a year ago at the age of forty-nine. When she died, a lot of us in the news business and particularly in her own newsroom tried to convey in what we wrote, something of what made her so special to us.

But Martha Kumar, who is here tonight, writing in the *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* published by this very Center, probably said it best of all. She wrote in her appreciation: 'Scholars, government officials and citizens recently lost an important friend and ally at the White House when *Washington Post* reporter Ann Devroy, who covered four presidents, died on October 28th. Her reputation as a reporter was one of fairness and accuracy; a gift for straight and impartial news reporting and a tenacious pursuit of information. She had an interest and a style well-suited to the institution that she covered. And she worked for a news organization that

had the resources and the inclination to support her work.'

Professor Kumar then went on to cite a lot of comments from Democratic and Republican press secretaries and other White House officials who knew Ann because she had covered them. And they talked about her tenacity pursuing a story and her scrupulous fairness in checking out stories before she put them in the paper.

Professor Kumar noted that Ann believed her first obligation was, and I quote again, "To allow the president to say to the American people what he wanted to say. So she gave prominence in her White House stories to quotations from the president and other material that was supplied by the White House." But Professor Kumar noted, "Once she gave the White House version of events, she then traced the reaction to the president's words and analyzed the impact."

I would add also that she showed great diligence in comparing what the White House was saying today with what that same White House had said the day before or the week before or the month before or the year before, and holding them accountable for their consistency or lack of consistency.

At the end of the article, Professor Kumar said, again I quote: 'Both in interest and style, Ann Devroy was ideally suited to the White House beat. She not only had the persistence required to strip the bark off the White House publicity tree, but she also possessed an avid interest in understanding the institution she covered, including the rhythms of its operations over time. She respected the people who worked there, including the president. But she never let that respect turn into awe that prevented her from putting real pressure on them to disclose what they were thinking and doing.'

Professor Kumar concluded, 'Ann Devroy established a lasting standard of how the White House should be covered.' To which I think all of us at the *Post* and her many friends in Washington would simply say, Amen.

Ann was a journalist and she was never in doubt about what her job was. Examples like hers will do much more than any speeches to keep alive the values that can redeem journalism and perhaps help it to serve the citizens of this great republic.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Kalb: David Broder, thank you. Thank you very much, indeed.

It is that time in the evening now when we can have questions from the audience. There are four microphones, two down here and two in the balcony. If you have questions, please come to the microphone, I will recognize you, give us your name, your class, school identification, don't make a speech, just ask the question.

And while you're getting there, why don't I start with my first question.

You have spoken, David, of the function of journalism as being an informing function and you seem to imply that the press at this stage, is

not living up to that informing function properly. What do you think have been the major reasons why that is the case, in your judgement?

Mr. Broder: I will try to answer without giving you a speech as long as the last boring one.

I guess there are a couple things. One, the people who are on the receiving end are extraordinarily busy. We know from measurements how much time or how little time people spend with the newspaper that I work for. We give them far more every day than they can possibly cope and deal with and their lives are very busy. So, part of it is simply how much investment the readers, listeners and viewers are willing to make.

I think, second, that there has been in the shift from reliance principally on the printed word to what is seen on the screen; a necessary kind of fore-shortening of the view. My friends who work in television, and you know this better than I do, Marvin, will tell you that it is essentially a picture medium. And where the story cannot be told in pictures, television has a hard time telling it.

. . . where the story can not be told in pictures, television has a hard time telling it.

I mean, the budget story which was sort of the preoccupation in Washington for a hell of a long time, would be told on television typically against the background of the printing presses at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, churning out dollar bills. And you learned a hell of a lot about the production process of our money, but because that picture was so much more compelling than the words that were being said, I think the ability of people to grasp the essentials was lost. It wasn't really until Ross Perot, bless him, took television and used it in a different way with those charts that people said, "oh, now I get it, I can see why it's a problem."

Mr. Venkataraman: Hi. My name is Aneesh Venkataraman and I'm a sophomore at the college.

I like how you described the growth of sensationalism as something that, "the press, got into" as kind of a line that always existed but suddenly the press had decided to cross it. And with that analogy of the press going into it gives the possibility of the press coming out of it.

And so I would like to ask you if you see in the future any time where sensationalism will actually decrease? And if that is to happen, who is going to initiate that? The politicians by not having adulterous affairs or doing that stuff or the press by not asking those questions?

Mr. Broder: It's a good question. I don't suppose that we're going to see any radical turning around in the next election cycle. It's clear from conversations with several of the wannabe's for 2000 that they are prepared and fully expect to be asked about their family life, their private life, their earlier history. So the expectation is, I think already there, that this line of questioning will persist.

The answer to your question honestly is, that the politicians have to act for themselves and decide for themselves; within the press, that decision will be made within each single news organization. I have no hopes that somebody is going to call a meeting and say, "Okay, press, let's clean up your act," and we will all agree to some new set of standards. It doesn't work that way.

The decisions will be made in individual newsrooms by conscientious editors and reporters wrestling with the question and saying, "This is what we're comfortable doing and this is what we're not comfortable doing." And for that reason, I suspect, that the line is going to continue to be a very fuzzy line, at least for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Kalb: Brian Silverman.

Mr. Silverman: Hello, my name is Brian Silverman. I'm a student at the Kennedy School.

If we suppose that the nightly news is going to disappear and that even the local news disappears and is going to be replaced by either some type of magazine show or "Entertainment Tonight" and they come to you and they say, all right, we want to have content; how do you make that change effective? Because the change is probably going to happen, so how do you keep the hard news in a nightly news magazine show?

Mr. Broder: Well, the encouraging part of the picture, I think, is that with the multiplication of channels of information and particularly those that can be activated by the consumer, there is a way now for people who want information to get it. I've said it in another place, that in some ways journalism is headed downhill because of all the forces of commercialization, tabloidization and so on that are familiar to everybody.

But on the other hand, there is a counter trend which doesn't get nearly as much attention. Wherever you live in this country now, you have access to information sources that you simply did not have before. In addition to whatever the local radio, television and newspaper market may provide, you have, one, National Public Radio, which, in my view, is an enormous resource and an increasingly widely used resource. You've got the cable television channels that bring you the actual events unmediated and a lot of serious journalism on public affairs, CNN and the rest of those.

You now have the Internet where you can read, as many of us do, as many different newspapers a day as you want to read and find out what the people in those local communities are hearing and reading and seeing about what's going on in their own communities. It is a much richer diet of information.

And I would tell you from my own experience traveling the country, you can go into a community now of any size, anywhere in the country, and you will find a cadre of people, self-selected, who are every bit as engaged and every bit as well informed about public affairs as the people here in this room at the Kennedy School tonight. So that's the advantage that we have in this changing information technology.

Mr. Kaber: Mr. Broder, I'm Phil Kaber. I teach occasionally here at the Kennedy School and at the School of Public Health.

You're known as a reporter who spends a great deal of time outside of Washington talking to people in communities around the country. And it seems to me and to a number of people I know that there has been an increasing disconnect between people, that inside the Beltway crowd, and Washington and the rest of the country, and I think you alluded to that in your talk this evening.

First of all, do you agree with that? And, if you do, to what do you attribute that phenomenon?

Mr. Broder: There is certainly a disconnect in terms of trust and distrust. I'm part of a parochial community that still believes in government not only because is it our industry, not only is it our bread and butter, not only do our readers make their living out of government, and I must say it was pretty amusing when Vice President Gore came at the beginning of the first Clinton Administration to a lunch at the *Washington Post* and talked about the dreams of re-inventing government.

And about halfway through the lunch it occurred to my publisher, Don Graham, that what this fellow was proposing was really downsizing government. And at that point, Don became very animated in his questioning about the wisdom of this entire policy, because he could see readers disappearing with this folly that this new administration was embarking upon.

But I think the most serious reason is that if you have the opportunity to watch people struggling with the task of governing this country, I think for most of us, despite our assumed cynicism, we come away impressed with the seriousness and the conscientious effort that those people are making.

If you go out of Washington and tell the people, for example, the standard of ethics is much higher in the Congress now than it was when I started covering it, and two, people in government jobs work much harder than most of us do in the private sector, they look at you as if you were from some other planet; what kind of a fool are you to be telling us things like that, because we know better.

So, I think in those three respects, at least, there is a real disconnect between the inside the Beltway and the public view.

Part of that reflects on the press because for every story that we do about a screw up in government and someone who has abused power or taken advantage of official position for some personal benefit, there are stories that we're aware of, where people have worked conscientiously to try to move things ahead.

Those success stories are harder to write. We somehow feel more inhibited about saying "Here is an interesting example of useful work that's being done by the government." I was asked the other day at the end of a CNN interview, "If you had one wish for politics, what would it be?" And I said, without giving it a moment's thought, "I wish that the people who handle public relations for NASA would be substituted for the political

consultants in the country because then it is possible that we might feel some pride in what our political system is doing instead of thinking that it's a game of choosing which scoundrel you want to put in office for two years."

Ms. Sullivan: My name is Amy Sullivan and I'm at the Divinity School here.

I'm particularly interested in the problem of the androgenous insider you've talked about, people who move back and forth between politics and journalism. And you've mentioned that news organizations should be setting standards to address that and many problems. I'm wondering if you have any specific ideas of what they can do to help out viewers and readers for viewing everyone on TV and in print through the same lens?

We somehow feel more inhibited about saying here is an interesting example of useful work that's being done by the government.

Mr. Broder: I don't have any ideas for doing it except simply to keep raising the issue. I mean, owners, publishers, editors, managers are going to make those decisions. They have the responsibility for designing their products and deciding who they are going to hire and who they are going to promote.

If we could send every publisher and every network news chief and every CEO of the corporations that now own the networks, who are not communications people themselves, back to Journalism 101, we might have some success in that.

But I think that that stone is rolling down the hill faster and faster. And I do think, in the years ahead, it is going to be a struggle, a real struggle to help define what it is that is special about being a journalist that makes it worthwhile for news organizations to cultivate and to employ journalists in their own work rather than jump and pull in celebrities from outside journalism and fill the most prominent jobs in that way.

Bill Safire was here a year ago, gave a very good rebuttal, as you know, to that whole argument. There's no question that we've gotten some brilliant practitioners from the political world, Bill being a perfect example of that.

But I strongly feel that unless we somehow can establish in our own minds and in our own organizations that there is something worthwhile about the art of being a journalist, about all of those basic things that we learned in the newsrooms when we started out, I think this thing is going to continue to roll downhill.

Mr. Kalb: David, how do you think that can be turned around? How can you persuade the publisher of a great newspaper who sees this trend? How do you persuade that publisher to turn it around when the incentives seem to be going in the opposite direction?

Mr. Broder: I'll bring him here to the Shorenstein Center.

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: Yes, please.

Mr. Williamson: Hi. My name is James Williamson and I'm attending a study group here at the Institute of Politics.

You used the expression communicator in chief and I found that rather frightening in a way. And to me, it comes perilously close to the notion of journalism or journalist as stenographer for the state. I don't think that's quite what you meant, obviously, in your example, to some extent, about the reporter from the *Washington Post*.

Aren't there very important voices to be heard and voices that in fact are providing important leadership in our country that are not elected public officials? Pete Seeger's favorite bumper sticker, he said one time, is if the people lead, the politicians will follow.

> **. . . I am shying away . . . from writing stories that I know will add to the depth of an already deep public cynicism . . .**

Isn't there an obligation by the Fifth Estate to bring these voices forward and not be a stenographer for elected officials, including the president?

Mr. Broder: Well, let me make two quick comments.

One, I hoped by quoting what Martha Kumar had written about Ann Devroy to indicate, and it's my own strong belief and it was absolutely Ann's belief, that recording and reporting the president's words is the beginning of the job, not the end of the job. Presidents are chosen by the American people; they have legitimately earned the position of being able to address the American people and to convey their thoughts to the American people. And part of our job in the news business is to help convey the thoughts of elected officials.

But that's just the beginning. We need to examine their rhetoric. We need to examine their rhetoric against their actions. We need to use all of the accountability mechanisms that are there.

On your second point about empowering the people, I agree with that point. And I would have to say, just if I may be personal for a moment, I have realized in my own choice of stories in the last few years, that I am shying away, maybe more than is justified, from writing stories that I know will add to the depth of an already deep public cynicism about what's going on in this country.

When you go into local communities, and I've done it most frequently in my home city of Chicago, you find citizens who have taken power and are changing blighted neighborhoods by their own actions. They have often been helped by bank loans, by groups like LISC and by some federal programs. But they are doing it with their own will and energy.

Those are stories that are wonderful to write because they say to people, "You don't have to give up hope. It's not all a corrupt system. There are ways of changing things for the better that are within your own hands." So I absolutely agree with your last point.

Mr. Klannery: My name is Charlie Klannery.

You see a fuzziness in the way people perceive politicians these days. Don't you think that that's also a representation of their wider knowledge of what the politicians have to deal with in the world?

Mr. Broder: I wish I could say it's because they understand better. But I have to tell you that at the *Post* we do a lot of very old-fashioned kind of shoe leather reporting. We're partners with ABC News in a regular polling operation, and that's fine, I'm as addicted to reading polling results as anybody. But separate and apart from that, we go out and just do it the old-fashioned way, walk precincts, knock on people's doors, talk to them in their homes.

In the summer of last year when the campaign finance issue seemed to be at its height with the hearings that were then going on in the Senate about the financing of the 1996 presidential campaign, we decided to talk to people about what their perception is of what's going on in campaign finance and what they would like to see happen. Over and over and over again in Eau Claire and LaCrosse, Wisconsin which is where I happened to be, I heard people say, "Well, of course it's crooked, why would you think it would not be crooked? Why would anybody spend ten million dollars to win an office that pays $100,000 a year if it wasn't a crooked deal?"

I don't argue with people when I'm interviewing them. But I felt like saying, "Time out. First of all, they're not spending the ten million dollars; they're raising the ten million; but it's not their money. And second, I've just got to tell you, most of them are not in it for the money. They may have a lot of other faults, but they're not looking for ways to get rich in these jobs."

That is a case where we have helped create a perception that isn't fuzzy, it's just plain wrong. And because of that, I think it's been, in this case, very difficult to develop any real public support for measures that would change the way in which the campaign finance system is run. You've just done it here in Massachusetts and we're going to watch this experiment, I think, with great interest.

But this is a place where the public cynicism is actually a barrier to the possibility of useful change.

Mr. Daniloff: I'm Nick Daniloff and I do teach Journalism 101 at Northeastern.

I have a very disarmingly simple question for you, as a denizen of the Beltway, but a bone on which I think you could usefully chew tonight. Why did Newt Gingrich really resign?

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: Reporters make damned good reporters, but very bad mindreaders.

I was astonished, flabbergasted. I would not pretend otherwise. When somebody came through the newsroom saying "Newt's going to step down," my instant reaction was "You've got to be kidding." Elizabeth Arnold and I had, for our sins, to run over to "Washington Week" that evening and babble about the subject and I don't know about her, but I felt like I was saying a lot of things that I didn't know on the air that evening.

In retrospect, it was probably a pretty sensible decision. Trying to manage the Republican majority with a margin of five seats is going to be a hellish job. I remember hearing people at the Clinton White House saying, off the record, before the 1996 election, that the worst possible outcome for them would be to have a five seat Democratic majority in the House of Representatives. They would much rather have it be five seats away from the majority.

Why? Because you've got all of the responsibility, and given the lack of party discipline on Capitol Hill these days, no real capacity to weld that majority together. I think that's one reason.

Second, I think the comment that one of the Speaker's friends made, which was that his approach to the job was more presidential than speakerly, if that's an adverb or adjective that you can use, is correct. Gingrich is a big picture, big idea kind of a person; some of his ideas strike me as being farfetched, but they are genuinely big ideas. And the day-to-day management of the House Republican majority was nothing that he was particularly skilled at and nothing that he particularly enjoyed.

So I think he's probably better off bailing out, even though it denies him the platform that he's enjoyed these last four years.

Mr. Kalb: We've only got a few more minutes and perhaps time for two more questions. So it may be just these two.

Mr. Meyers: I'm Ron Meyers. I'm a student at the law school.

What is the journalist's role in our times when what we might call the primary sources of public affairs are so available to the public, such as Congressional debates on C-SPAN or the Starr Report on every imaginable medium? Is it a good thing for the public to have access to these primary materials? And do you trust either the public or the journalists to interpret them responsibly?

Mr. Broder: It's a very good thing for the public to have access because my interpretation or Candy's interpretation, or Hunt's interpretation, or Elizabeth's interpretation, will be different, each of us will bring to it a set of biases, values, of which we're probably unconscious, but which will shape the way in which we treat that raw material. Having access to the raw material is as useful for a citizen as it is to a historian trying to go back and recreate the history of a period.

But I think, for practical reasons if for no others, there is value in having somebody do a first sort of that raw material for you to try to organize it in some fashion. And I think we're finding that people want and still think they need that sorting function.

The definition of journalism obviously changes when anybody can look behind the front page or behind the NPR report or behind the CNN summary and see for themselves what was really going on. But there's a value, if we can just use those summaries, that we all know in our heart of hearts are inadequate representations of reality, to signal the people, "Here's something going on which you might like to know more about," and then trust them to search through the raw material that is of importance to them.

Mr. Kalb: Last question, sir.

Mr. Grant: Colin Grant, I'm a member of the public.

My question is about politics and television and the debates.

In principle, having the two opponents side by side, each making a short speech and then replying to the opponent ought to be the best possible method of finding out who is the best man. But in fact, as I watched these things, I find myself thinking that the art of talking is so skilled, so highly developed that I usually end up not sure who is the best man. If we had fact checkers on the platform, that might raise the standard, but the politicians wouldn't agree to it. But do you have any other comments or suggestions for this?

Mr. Broder: My only thought about presidential debates is a borrowed thought. Before the final debate in 1996, the Reagan Presidential Library assembled a group of people who had either participated in preparing candidates for presidential debates or been on the panels or, in the case of Don Hewitt, had produced one of the presidential debates, to talk about the art form; what was good about it, what was not.

One of the points that emerged in the discussions about the 1960 presidential debates was that, going into them, nobody knew what those debates were going to be like; they had no idea. I think part of the problem that we have today with presidential debates is that the format has become so familiar that the candidates can in fact rehearse and do rehearse for the debates.

So I think there's a case to be made willy-nilly for changing the format every four years for at least one of the debates; throw something at them that they haven't been able to study the videotapes before, and then let's see how they react.

Mr. Kalb: David, I've just changed the ground rules and I'm adding one question. That's because Barrie Dunsmore has asked me to add it and everything he wants, he gets.

Mr. Dunsmore: Thank you very much, Marvin.

I have enjoyed the evening enormously, David, and am one of your greatest admirers.

But there's one word that hasn't passed anybody's lips here tonight and it seems to me that it's still a very important issue if not the most important issue on the public agenda today and that's the word impeachment.

Mr. Broder: Out of order. Give him the hook.

(Laughter)

Mr. Dunsmore: Can you give us your best reading of where that issue stands and where we are likely to end up.

Mr. Broder: I can answer the second question very easily. I have no idea where we're going to end up. What we're witnessing now, I think is an interesting phenomenon that, as political reporters, we should not have been totally surprised by. A process, once it launches, develops a kind of a life of its own, we've all seen that many times at a political convention. You plop down those 1500, 2000 delegates in one city, in one hall, and external reality sort of disappears from their mind and they are caught up in the dynamic of what's going on in that convention hall and convention city.

That's why so often a party has had what it considered an enormously successful convention, because everybody who was there left feeling really good about what had happened. They go back home and the people who were watching it on television say, "What were you people doing there; you looked awful."

. . . there's a case to be made willy-nilly for changing the format every four years for at least one of the debates . . .

I think something like that is now beginning to take place in the House Judiciary Committee. This is small group dynamics. They are in a process. The terms of that process are somewhat undefined, but we know it's a lawyer's argument at this point and they are focused on those legal, constitutional questions. And for the moment at least, I think they have sort of lost sight of what seems to those of us who were on the outside looking in, the most obvious political reality, namely, the country doesn't want the president impeached. But they're going to go forward with this process.

And I think it's very difficult now to gauge how and when that process ends. We have been surprised at almost every stage of the thing. We thought the president, when he finally was ready to deal with the subject would, in typical Bill Clinton fashion, knock it out of the park; he bombed on August 17th. We thought that when the tapes were released, it was going to be the end of the game for him; the public looked at the tapes and said, "Oh, we don't need this; get rid of it. We don't need it."

Now Ken Starr is coming up for his day in front of the cameras. I have no idea what is going to happen in that dynamic between Ken Starr and a highly partisan Judiciary Committee, but I guarantee you, it will change the dynamic of this process in some significant way. I just don't know where it's going to come out.

Mr. Kalb: Before I say goodnight on behalf of all of you, let me just say, on behalf of the Shorenstein Center, thank you very, very much for coming

up here, sharing your insights with us on this incredibly complicated press/politics connection. We study it here. We try to teach it here. And we're grateful for all of your insights on that.

Thank you all very much for coming and thanks again to David Broder.

Theodore H. White Seminar
November 13, 1998

Mr. Kalb: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm Marvin Kalb, Director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy here at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. And it's my pleasure to host this event this morning. It is the second half of the 1998 Theodore H. White Lectureship.

Last night, the first half took place when David Broder, columnist and reporter for the *Washington Post* since 1966, delivered the 1998 Theodore H. White Lecture. And it's our responsibility this morning to discuss and analyze a number of the aspects of Broder's presentation. There were two questions that came up in that presentation. The first was, who are we and what are we doing.

And what I would like to do first is introduce our very distinguished panel. Number one, I'll go from left all the way to right and start with Albert Hunt who is the Executive Washington Editor of the *Wall Street Journal.* He writes a weekly column, "Politics and People" and directs the paper's political polls. Hunt has appeared on "Washington Week in Review," "CBS Morning News" and "Meet the Press."

Two, Blair Clark, formerly my boss. More important though, formerly General Manager and Vice President at CBS News; was a reporter for the *St. Louis Dispatch* and the *Boston Herald*, a correspondent for CBS, during World War II was the Deputy Historian in General Patton's Third Army.

Elizabeth Arnold, national political correspondent for National Public Radio, shared NPR's 1994 Silver Baton Award from DuPont Columbia University for her coverage of the 1994 Republican takeover of Congress. She is a regular commentator on PBS's "Washington Week in Review."

David Broder, whom I will introduce in a moment.

To my immediate right, Candy Crowley who is CNN's award-winning Congressional correspondent based in the network's Washington bureau. In 1997, she won the Joan Shorenstein Barone Award for Excellence in Journalism for her coverage of Bob Dole's campaign for the presidency.

Michael Sandel is a professor of government at Harvard University. His teaching and research interests include contemporary political philosophy, the history of political thought and the American political and constitutional tradition. Among his many publications is *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Political Philosophy.*

And to my right, Matt Storin who is the Editor of the *Boston Globe*. He joined the *Globe* in 1969, rose to the position of Managing Editor, left the *Globe* in '85, returned to the *Globe* in '92 and in between worked for *U.S. News & World Report,* the *Chicago Sun Times*, the *Maine Times* and was Managing Editor of the *New York Daily News*.

Those introductions now behind us, let me just quickly give a summary of those two questions that were raised by Broder last night.

Who are we? If we knew what journalism was, we're not quite sure what it is today.

What it should be doing, is to convey information to the citizenry. And if the citizenry is not sure about the reliability of that information, then we all may be in a bit of trouble.

An issue that came up has to do with punditry. Now, on this panel there are any number of people who could be identified as pundits, even people who aren't journalists end up being pundits. And I'm wondering whether there are too many journalists who are pretending or who are acting as pundits and perhaps not enough pundits who are performing as journalists.

And so to get the discussion going, let me raise an opening question and start with Al Hunt and then go to Matt Storin and then we'll work our way down to the middle to David Broder who was the lecturer last night.

. . . news organizations now . . . hire PR teams in order to try to get their correspondents on television.

And the question is, supposing newspapers decided, as a matter of policy, and I'm picking up one of Broder's points last night, that individual editors and publishers may have to make the tough decisions to right the ship of state. Supposing newspapers were simply to declare that none of their reporters would appear as pundits, as opinion makers, on television or on radio ever again, that there would be a clear line between those people that worked for newspapers, those people that worked for television and that the line would not be breached.

Al Hunt, you've been on both sides. What do you think?

Mr. Hunt: Well, it would be easy for me to say fine, because my wife contributes two-thirds of our household income anyway, so, my sacrifice would be less than others, I suppose.

(Laughter)

Mr. Hunt: I also could go along and kind of reverse John Mitchell and say do as I say, not as I do and say it's not a bad idea.

But it's not going to happen. Not only is it going to increase, but you actually have news organizations now that hire PR teams in order to try to get their correspondents on television. And I think it does create a problem. I think the proliferation of outlets and what those outlets do has clearly created a journalism problem.

If you will, I'll just tell one anecdote about, David referred last night to Ann Devroy who I think was a heroine to many of us who covered politics. She was one of the great reporters I've ever known. I have a reporter on my bureau who I think is very much like Ann Devroy, a fellow named

David Rogers, who I stole from Matt's newspaper about twelve or fifteen years ago. He returned the favor by stealing David Shribman back about ten years later.

But David Rogers is just somebody who never makes a mistake. He covers Congress with a distinction that is just, I think, unsurpassed, breaks stories, has tremendous insights, and no one knows who he is other than the fraternity of journalists and people in Congress who really care.

. . . the appearances on television . . . give you a visibility that is ego affirming.

And I had a young Georgetown student who wants to go into journalism, very, very bright. And I was talking to her one day and she said to me that a number of her colleagues over there at Georgetown wanted to go into journalism, too. And that their role model, this is one of the nation's great universities, their role model was Chris Matthews and that they wanted to be Chris Matthews. And I said, would anybody want to be a David Rogers. And she looked at me like I was insane.

Mr. Kalb: Did she know who David was?

Mr. Hunt: Well, she had worked for us one summer, so she did.

But I think that's only going to increase. I told David last night that he gave a brilliant speech and he told me he did not. And since I can never disagree with David Broder, I think in his quasi-brilliant speech last night, he did a fantastic job of saying, who are we, where are we, how have we gotten here. And a less satisfying job of saying, what could we do about it. And I don't think he could have done a better job because I don't think very many of us have the slightest idea of what we really can do about it that is practical.

Mr. Kalb: Matt Storin.

Mr. Storin: Well, I think that editors and publishers, if they're honest, would confess that they're pretty ambivalent about this because this goes to a little bit of what Al said, the appearances on television particularly if you're the *Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune* or papers outside of New York and Washington, give you a visibility that is ego affirming.

And yet, I'm sure that many of us wince at some of the things we hear. Actually our honored guest, David Broder is an example of the fact that you can go on television and not sell your soul. I think David is very careful, as he is in his columns, about what he says so that those words don't compromise his reporting principles.

There are some restrictions you could make. First of all, you could set some guidelines on what people can and can't say; how far they can go. Also, the time is a problem and I think David alluded to this. If people are spending all their time preparing for and angling to get on these programs, it's taking away from their primary function. There are some people at the news magazines, I wonder if they ever write anything because they're on so often.

The flagship paper of my company, the *New York Times*, you may have heard of it, they have now forbidden any of their writers, op-ed or news, to have any regular gigs, you cannot appear weekly on some show. This was done at some loss of income. My understanding is they only sweetened the pot for one person and I don't know who that was but they did. But there are these huge restrictions.

Arthur Sulzberger was very good about this. I mean, the *New York Times* is just terrific about granting us our independence. Sulzberger told me about it, but he didn't say I had to do it, but he did send me the policy in the mail, worth looking at it and thinking about it. It would really be easier for us than it was for them.

So there are going to be, at least in some papers and some institutions, some restrictions.

Mr. Kalb: Isn't it true that the *New York Times* now, as Al was saying, hires somebody to place its reporters on different television and radio programs?

Mr. Storin: I don't know that. I wouldn't be surprised, but it's a little bit contradictory to this policy.

Mr. Kalb: Blair Clark.

Mr. Clark: Well, nobody has yet mentioned the economic factor, either for the reporter, quasi-pundit, or for the media, for the owners of the media. Because, of course, talk, the reason there is so much talk is mainly that it's so cheap as compared to other kinds of programming or broadcasting.

And I don't know what would happen if Marvin's radical stricture actually took effect. What would happen to the poor media, they might have to produce decent programs and things like that. But don't underestimate the economic factor on both sides of the equation would be my thought.

Mr. Kalb: Michael Sandel.

Mr. Sandel: The assumption of your question, Marvin, is that for print reporters to go on television is somehow to impair their dignity or diminish their vocation. And I think it's worth exploring why that assumption seems to be taken for granted by all of us.

I think it depends very much on what news reporters on television talk shows, particularly, are asked to talk about. If they were talking about the governor's race in North Dakota or something like that, that would be no more objectionable, no more a threat to the dignity of their vocation than writing in the newspaper about the governor's race in North Dakota.

But what I think so often happens is that because of the nature of the television programs that seek out journalists, well, talk becomes cheap in more ways than one. It's tawdry talk, it's punditry that isn't about the substance of politics. I suppose print journalists on television are drawn into the culture of celebrity and scandal and salaciousness and sensation that is so much the fare of television talk shows, and for that matter, television coverage. That seems to me a big part of the problem.

I suppose the question then is whether the pull of that kind of talk, it's also very often talk not about the campaign or the politics or about impeachment, but coverage of the coverage. It's second order talk which often lends itself to celebrity mongering. When people are interviewed by Geraldo or by Don Imus or by Larry King, very often they're not being asked, what's doing in the governor's race in North Dakota, they're being asked to really become implicated and drawn into the swamp of celebrity mongering, salacious talk at the border of journalism and entertainment. That seems to me the real problem.

Mr. Kalb: They get drawn into offering their own opinions. I mean, the two biggest words on these programs I think are 'I think.'

Elizabeth Arnold.

Ms. Arnold: Well, and I would just jump on that and say it's much simpler than that and it's not what's doing in the governor's race in North Dakota, it's who is going to win in the governor's race in North Dakota.

I think the question isn't necessarily broadcast versus print. I think it's reporter versus pundit. I mean I winced when you, in your introduction you described me as a commentator. My God, I hope people don't think I'm a commentator, I hope that people think I'm a reporter. I think most of these shows do ask you what you think as opposed to what you know.

. . . I hope people don't think I'm a commentator, I hope that people think I'm a reporter.

I can only speak from personal experience, that "Washington Week in Review" and the "News Hour," those are the two shows that I've decided that I will do because they don't ask me what I think, they ask me what's going on out there, what have you learned. When you find yourself saying I think, that's when you're in big trouble.

My hero, David Broder, I learn a lot from him. And just the other night on "Washington Week," you were asked to make a prediction. I can't remember what it was, it was who is going to be the frontrunner in 2000 or whatever, and you said, Gloria Borger, she'd make a good candidate. I mean, you just totally skipped the question which is what you have to do in those situations.

I think David Rogers would be terrific on one of these shows as a reporter, telling people what he knows about policy and how policy gets made on Capitol Hill, not telling people what he thinks or what he predicts or what's going to happen. I think it's more what we say on these shows and not necessarily whether we do them or how many times we do them or how much you get paid.

And I don't think it's necessarily broadcast versus print. There's plenty of punditry in print. I won't say who this is, but I was reading this on the plane on the way here and it was sort of a mea culpa thing, we're really

sorry that we misjudged the election, we misjudged the mind of the American voters this year by a country mile. We will try to guess better next time. I mean, what's that?

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: I apologize very much for calling you a commentator.

Ms. Arnold: Okay.

(Laughter)

Mr. Kalb: Candy Crowley, CNN, that's the home base for all of these talk shows anyway.

Ms. Crowley: You know, just picking up on one of the things Elizabeth just said which is, I agree that you have to get some sort of definition of what a pundit is, I'm not even sure what that is. Is that someone that tells you what they think? Is it someone that tells you what they know? Is a pundit a commentator? Is a pundit an analyst? I don't know.

There's plenty of punditry in print.

To the basic question, the flip side of what Michael said is that TV has always had an inferiority complex. It loves to have these print people on because it means, print people are serious and TV people are fluff. And so there's always been that sort of inferiority complex of television managers, that they have to get on a serious print person because they can write really long sentences and they can do 750 word stories and that sort of thing.

(Laughter)

Ms. Crowley: So that's why they want them.

What would happen if the newspapers suddenly said, look, none of you guys can go on? Well, we'd fill the air with someone else. I mean it's as simple as that. Twenty four hours is twenty four hours and they're not going to stop putting pundits on. I mean, there's just this giant monster, as we call it, that you've got to feed. And if you can't feed it with a newspaper reporter, you're going to feed it with a radio reporter or you're going to feed it with your own reporters or you're going to get Newt Gingrich, you're going to get George Stephanopoulos, you're going to get all the government people.

So, I don't think you can stop punditry. You might do a lot for the newspaper credibility. I don't know what you'd do for their circulation.

Mr. Kalb: David Broder, you were joking last night when you commented that not all of the pundits got it right in this last election and it was certainly true. But in your view, is there any answer to the question about newspapers possibly stopping their own people from appearing on radio and television. And then I've got a follow up as they say.

Mr. Broder: Well, I'll give you an example just to footnote Al Hunt's point about the forces that are moving in the other direction.

For the first twenty-five years or so that I worked at the *Washington Post,* there was an ironclad rule that we did not allow any filming in our

newsroom; couldn't bring a camera into the newsroom. And to the point when they were making the movie "All The President's Men," they had to build a replica of the newsroom out in Hollywood, USA. And, there was a wonderful period of about a month where we were keeping all of our old press releases and we still had carbon paper, tossing them into cardboard boxes and shipping them out west so that they could have authentic newsroom litter on the set.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: It's now gone to the point that we actually have a little mini TV studio right in the front of the newsroom so reporters can go up there without having to leave the building and do a thing for news channel 8 or for PBS or for whatever it may be.

News organizations have become media companies, including the one that I work for. And they want to get the synergy, as they like to say, of their reporters also doing stuff on other media for the company. So I think the forces are exactly as Al describes.

If there is any salvation, it's in what Michael has said and what Elizabeth has said about trying to define the role. But I have got to tell you, it becomes harder and harder to figure out where you can be a reporter and where you get pushed into playing pundit roles that are less comfortable.

To mention a program with which you have some familiarity, "Meet the Press." "Meet the Press" was a reporter's program, but the last time I was on, which was the Sunday before the election, my good friend Mr. Russert decided to turn us all into pundits in the last eight minutes. And he simply went around the table saying, "Okay, call the New York Senate election, call this other election." And of course we ended up looking like a bunch of jerks because none of us knew what was going to happen in any of these elections and it wasn't a reporter's kind of a role.

So the question of where you can work and still be a reporter in television becomes, I think, harder and harder.

Mr. Kalb: Is it possible at that point, when Russert creates that kind of environment, to say, on air, no, I don't want to do this? Is that just too rude?

Mr. Clark: You wouldn't be asked back again.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: Well, in this case, it was, the dumb thing on my part was not to ask beforehand, "What are we going to do in this roundtable?" I went in assuming that we were going to be talking about what we had seen on the campaign trail. But once the camera is rolling and once he is into this, "We're going to go through eight races now and I want each of you to tell me what's going to happen in these races," it's pretty hard to back out at that point.

Mr. Hunt: Marvin, can I just say—

Mr. Kalb: Yes. And I would like to say, Al, before you popped in right now, I was going to encourage everybody at this point to come on in and now it's just a discussion.

Mr. Hunt: Let me just say two things about that and then I'm going to raise another issue.

First of all, Elizabeth, when I became bureau chief, I stopped doing television for a while. And I, as a matter of fact, tried, we didn't hire a PR firm, I tried to get some of my reporters on television because it goes to Matt's point, it is ego gratifying, it helps them a little bit. And as a matter of fact, I got David Rogers on "Washington Week In Review" one week and they told me, he is dullsville.

(Laughter)

Mr. Hunt: And they have not invited him back for fourteen years.

Ms. Arnold: Probably because he didn't make predictions.

Mr. Hunt: And I must say, I don't really get that upset. Of all the sins we have to worry about, I don't think making predictions at the end of the campaign, there are things that we do that are a lot worse when we go on television than that. David's probably right, it would probably be better not to.

But I think David raised an issue last night which troubles me a lot more and that's this whole revolving door question. And I don't think that Broder and Safire really disagree that much. I think it is a more rhetorical disagreement because I think David would probably—I hate to put words in your mouth—would probably agree, that one revolution is okay. I mean Bill Safire and Tim Russert have made enormous contributions to our business.

But that's not what we're seeing now. What we're seeing now are people, because of the proliferation of television outlets and because of, I think, a general lowering of standards, we're seeing people who you know are just using this as an audition to get back in government at some point, to get back in politics if need be. Whether it's George Stephanopoulos or whether it's Dick Morris, can you imagine Dick Morris is now a columnist and a television commentator?

I think that worries me a lot more because the lines are so blurred that I think for the average viewers and readers out there, the question again that David raised of what is a journalist, has just become an unanswerable question to them.

Mr. Kalb: What are the dangers that your question right now, and comment, raise? What are the dangers to, one, the craft itself? I mean, what prompted David to ask that opening question, who are we? And if that is not that easy to define, how easy does it then become, Michael Sandel, for the American people to find out or to be sure about a reliable source of information on the basis of which you make these large decisions having to do with self-government?

Mr. Sandel: I think David put the point very well and very scathingly last night, which is that journalism essentially has failed in its responsibility to enable citizens to be informed sufficiently to exercise citizenship.

And I think that has not so much to do with the distinction between TV and print, but to the distinction which has blurred, maybe beyond

redemption, between journalism and entertainment. Entertaining journalism is more profitable and the economics of the industry puts a premium on ratings and profits in a way that it didn't before. So this is the blurred line between journalism and entertainment that may be very difficult to recover and to re-articulate.

. . . journalism essentially has failed in its responsibility to enable citizens to be informed sufficiently to exercise citizenship.

And unless we can, then the loss of the higher calling of the journalist that David was speaking about last night, will be the loss of an important ingredient of American democracy.

Mr. Kalb: Matt.

Mr. Storin: Marvin, I understand that when some public opinion polls are taken nationally, that the public shows little distinction between Matt Drudge and Albert Hunt.

But that isn't what I hear from the readers of my newspaper who seem to have, now maybe it's just a portion of them, but they have a very firm notion of what it is we're supposed to do. And quite apart from the scandals of our columnists this year, if we stray by putting something on page one that they don't think belongs there, if we push the envelope on that concept, they're all over us. And I don't think we give at least the more intelligent portion of the readership and viewership enough credit on this. I think they do know differences.

the loss of the higher calling of the journalist . . . will be the loss of an important ingredient of American democracy.

Mr. Kalb: Blair Clark, you've got a couple of years of looking at this problem. What are the dangers as you see them?

Mr. Clark: Not only looking at the problem, but I'm a horrible example of the two worlds because having been a reporter on the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* and started a newspaper in New Hampshire that ran for two years and then a couple of other things, I then became the press secretary to Averill Harriman in 1952—you're all too young to remember that. And also none of you know that I got him born in a log cabin and he was elected in 1952 as President of the United States.

(Laughter)

Mr. Clark: A truly helpless candidate.

(Laughter)

Mr. Clark: But also then, later on, you may know, in a later period in my life, after the CBS twelve years, I was the campaign manager for Gene

McCarthy, “campaign manager,” of course he didn’t want to campaign, but I was the campaign manager and we haven’t been on speaking terms for twenty years.

(Laughter)

Mr. Clark: Because he quit, as you know.

I don’t know. I’m talking archeology when I tell you those stories.

(Laughter)

Mr. Clark: I come back to the Joe Liebling quote that a free press depends on who owns it. The only things that are really going to reform the media in my view are political things that are done about the organization of politics and of the media. The FCC is out of business; right? I mean, it has nothing to do with the standards that I had to pay attention to in the 1960s, when I was running CBS News with Dick Salant, I mean the FCC is just not a factor.

Some of you remember when the Federal Communications Act was passed, Herbert Hoover lobbied hard to keep the manufacturers of electronics out of the ownership of the media and that was in the original act. So where has that gone now? Westinghouse, GE and Disney and so on. It’s an institutional question and I don’t have the answer.

Mr. Kalb: David Broder, is there any danger of licensing arising either out of a disgruntled Congress or an unhappy public? To get back to Michael Sandel’s point, the press is not doing the job. Governance itself is suffering and then people are going to say this is too good a country to watch go down the drain, we’ve got to do something about it, let’s start with the press. Because of television, the press is the most visible, it’s always there, a target. Are you concerned about any kind of government move?

Mr. Broder: I don’t see that as an imminent threat. But I do think that over time we are at great risk because the only claim that we have to this extraordinary constitutional protection is if we are seen as being separate from and somehow a monitor of government.

And the more that distinction gets blurred, as Al Hunt was talking about, the harder it is to make that claim. Why would George Stephanopoulos be given some sort of a privilege during the period of his life, however long it may be, that he is working as a commentator, that he would not have if he were back in the White House, where the Supreme Court has just said that any conversation he may have with the President of the United States is subject to inquiry.

That’s where we’ve got to watch out. Because the more we get these hybrids there, the more we become subject to the same laws and regulations as any other person in this country and particularly any other person in government. And that’s the risk I think that we’re taking.

Mr. Kalb: CNN, Crowley, once again.

David was telling us last night in his talk the Pat Buchanan story and the ad that you end up not up at the Hill, but you end up at CNN. So, is

there any feeling perhaps that within CNN, there is too much of this going back and forth, of being a presidential candidate one day and a pundit or commentator the next?

Ms. Crowley: You're a little above my pay scale at the moment because I don't know what their thinking is. Is there, among reporters and the people who do the beats?

Mr. Kalb: The guys who cover the stories.

Ms. Crowley: Yes, the guys who cover the stories? Sure. I mean, I look up there and I think, I'm sorry, you know, I get a memo that says, reporters, and then it names them by their last name, and I'm there with Jesse Jackson and Pat Buchanan. And I'm thinking, well, wait a minute, I don't do the same thing they do. But we get memos all addressed to the same thing. That, to me, just drives me, you know, on the blackboard, because I think we do completely different things.

. . . the public is a much shrewder judge of what we do than we give them credit for.

Management is interested in keeping their jobs and the interest in keeping their jobs is directly tied to what the ratings look like. And if Jesse Jackson brings in the ratings or if Pat Buchanan on "Crossfire" does or Geraldine Ferraro, you know, the day after Ferraro lost up in New York, David Dryer was on "Crossfire" talking about how "Crossfire" now was 2 and 0, with Buchanan. You know, we just keep throwing those politicians through there.

I think it's a bad thing, but they don't ask me. And probably for good reason, because I'll tell them. And in general, I think the reporters do look up and think this erodes what we do because there's not a clear definition.

I do think that people can . . . make the distinction between something that I say based on what I've seen on the House floor that day and Arianna Huffington talking about what she learned at a dinner party.

Mr. Kalb: Reporter Elizabeth Arnold, I have a question for you and that is for you not to commentate, but rather to analyze this phenomenon. And has it reached a point of some danger within the craft itself? And, is there anything, in your mind, that could be done? Because I'm hearing a number of people here say maybe it's gone too far and there's nothing much that can happen.

Ms. Arnold: Well, I would agree with Mr. Storin that the public is a much shrewder judge of what we do than we give them credit for. There is a loss of accountability, I think, and it does reflect poorly on us when, I can

think of the campaign press secretary or assistant press secretary for Bob Dole, shortly after the campaign there was a debate in Congress over late term abortion, and I'd been working so hard on that story, it's so difficult to tell that story, and I looked up at one of these talk shows and there she was, and she was discussing late term abortion and underneath her was "correspondent." Correspondent for who? Who was she accountable to or for and the things that she was saying on the air, if someone wanted to challenge those? And that does reflect poorly on me.

That whole system of government is now being challenged in half this country by a growing public preference for direct legislation through initiative.

I'm not sure what we can do about it. And I guess it's an easy out, but I do think that people can listen to what some of these, you know, Arianna Huffington says and George Stephanopoulos who appeared to be announcing his candidacy last night on Larry King, and decide for themselves or make the distinction between something that I say based on what I've seen on the House floor that day and Arianna Huffington talking about what she learned at a dinner party.

Mr. Kalb: David, pick up the thought that you provided to an interviewer earlier this month, which I quoted last night also, this idea of, 'I'm afraid that my generation of journalists will be seen to have told people everything about what's going on in politics except that the system is collapsing.' Do you mean that?

Mr. Broder: Well, on my darker days I mean that and I'll tell you why. I don't think we have to take full responsibility for this by any means in journalism, but we're part of what's bringing it about.

What I've observed and what I spent a lot of time this year reporting, is a growth of a different way of governing in this country. The Constitution, as everybody here knows, created not a democracy but a republic, in which public opinion would have a central role, but it would be somehow distilled, refined, tested through a process of debate and deliberation and compromise, performed by elected officials who would be accountable to the public through frequent elections.

That whole system of government is now being challenged in half this country by a growing public preference for direct legislation through initiative. They've said, "We don't trust these politicians to make policy for us; we're going to do it ourselves." And in the part of the country where Elizabeth now lives and where I spent most of my time this year, the western half of the country, more and more of the fundamental public policy is being written not by elected officials but by folks who have the resources, legal talent and most specifically, money, to place on the ballot initiatives which achieve their public policy goals. It bypasses all of the mechanisms

of representative government, which means, among other things, it bypasses any consideration for accommodating the views of the minority.

And all this came sharply into focus for me about two years ago now when the State of Oregon voted on the issue of physician-assisted suicide and decided to legalize physician-assisted suicide by the overwhelming margin of 51 to 49 percent.

Any legislative body, I think, knowing that public opinion in the state was that closely divided, would have found some way to defer that decision until there was a larger public consensus about a matter of such moral, religious, ethical import. But in this new system of government which we're increasingly using, 51 percent is as good as eighty percent and that is now the law of the land in Oregon.

And increasingly, this is the way to get our objectives done. We don't have to fool around with all this messy business of legislatures and compromise and trade offs. We don't have to fool around with all the messiness of electing people. We just do the thing ourselves. And, to me, that is a different form of government from what our Constitution established.

We go where there's conflict. And the fact that some legislators have spent hours and hours and hours crafting a bill that produces a genuine consensus somehow is not news in our business.

Mr. Storin: David, you said it wasn't entirely the fault of the press, but what role do you think we've played in terms of negative reporting or investigative reporting or tearing down politicians?

I was at a lecture that Ellen Goodman gave last night up at Colby College and she said, the more we got closer to their personal lives, the more we drag them down.

Mr. Broder: Not just their personal lives. I think the way in which we cover their professional lives also tends to drag them down.

Elizabeth and Candy have spent a lot of their time covering Capitol Hill. I would like to know their views, but my own view is that the journalism profession, including myself, has done a great disservice to the legislative branch of government because we tend to focus, I think, often on the people who are the most contentious, the most obstreperous, and we give damned little attention to the people who make that system work when it does work.

I was at a luncheon here in Boston yesterday where Senator Kennedy made a comment about the fact that, almost unnoticed in the last Congress, they passed a major overhaul of the Federal Job Training Program which is going to make a real difference in people's lives in this economy. That was not a news story because it passed the Senate like 93 to nothing and by a similar margin in the House of Representatives.

We go where there's conflict. And the fact that some legislators have spent hours and hours and hours crafting a bill that produces a genuine consensus somehow is not news in our business.

Mr. Kalb: Candy, can you see the Internet as playing a positive role somehow in re-establishing some kind of connection between elitist journalism and the public?

Ms. Crowley: Not so far. I'm torn about the Internet because I think it's great that anybody can get almost anything, no matter where they live. So I think that part is wonderful.

I think to the extent that the Internet drives other forms of the media that it's a problem. I think insofar as Mr. Drudge or anybody with a home page, which is nearly everybody, can put something out immediately, it then drives television and drives the next day newspapers with that pressure to put on whatever the story is without the kind of fact checking that I think is necessary when you're doing large stories.

. . . there is an intense amount of pressure to be tough on politicians . . .

In the Monica Lewinsky story, you just were driven by the fact that something would pop up on the Internet and you had to react immediately. I think that's dangerous. On the other hand I think the wonderful part is it's so neat to go on there and just find absolutely anything.

I'm not sure that until more people get the bulk of their information off the Internet, that it changes the relationship between the media and the public or between the government and the public.

I think part of the problem that you were talking about earlier, there's a lot of peer pressure when you're doing a story, a profile. I know Elizabeth does a lot of profiles, I do a lot of profiles, there's a lot of peer pressure to not be soft on the guy. You can't genuinely like or respect somebody when you do it. You worry a lot about, boy, was that a puff piece, is someone going to call this. Because this seems to be a guy that genuinely wants to do what he says he wants to do and whether you like his ideas or not, he has honest values and he strongly believes it.

Mr. Kalb: But if you say that, you'll appear to be in his pocket?

Ms. Crowley: Absolutely. You've gone native.

Mr. Kalb: Even if it's fair?

Ms. Crowley: Absolutely.

What you do with that pressure is certainly up to you. I sort of, you know, once you get old enough you go, yeah, well, whatever, and you do what you think that you need to do. So it's okay for me now at this point. But I think early on, there is an intense amount of pressure to be tough on politicians, some of whom, by the way, most of whom I think, are pretty

honest men and women who really actually care about what they're doing. I don't think that comes across. Even my mother is stunned when I say things like this. She says, Really? I mean she just has this idea that they're all a bunch of crooks. They're not. They're not. But I know that that impression comes across. I think part of it is the desire to be tough and not to get taken.

Mr. Kalb: Blair Clark, is there anything such as an objective journalistic view of a politician these days?

Mr. Clark: Well, I don't know about that, Marvin. But I was thinking that nobody has used the term objectivity yet.

And in my day, back in the dark ages, it was considered that it was possible intellectually to become objective. As you know, Ed Murrow, when he came back from London in the late '40s and became briefly an executive at CBS News, labored mightily to produce the doctrine of objectivity. But he really gave it up because the final operative word was "attempt" to be objective.

. . . for young journalists, there's tremendous pressure to do hit pieces and bring down important people.

But I don't know. You know my peculiar hybrid experience, and you left out of my biography that I was, for three years, editor of *The Nation* in the 1970s. So obviously my sins are compounded. But it's not impossible to have objectivity and identification, I think. It needs work.

Mr. Kalb: Al Hunt, in a world in which journalism with edge is prized and words like objectivity are so carefully defined as to be defined into meaninglessness, is there a possibility these days for a reporter to get through to the public as a disinterested party?

Mr. Hunt: Yes, I think a lot do, as a matter of fact. I'm just afraid that oftentimes they're drowned out by others who are more dramatic.

And the question of edge, there's a young man who writes for a conservative publication called *The Weekly Standard*, his name is Tucker Carlson. And he was quoted a few months ago as saying that for young journalists, there's tremendous pressure to do hit pieces and bring down important people. If that's what bright young journalists are learning, that worries me a lot.

There aren't enough people who pay their dues anymore. I think some of the most important lessons I ever got in journalism were not covering presidential candidates or anything but the first day I was a journalist I was writing obituaries for the old *Philadelphia Bulletin*. And I clearly thought that was a little beneath my dignity and a wonderful city editor named Earl Selby came and realized that and he thundered at me that, any time you make a mistake in an obituary, you have offended that family forever. And if you ever do that, you will embarrass this newspaper and don't you ever forget it.

And the second time I remember is three or four years later when I was a young reporter covering the Treasury and they did something called a refunding, I didn't have the slightest idea of what a refunding was, but I went over to cover it. And the interest rate was something like 4.2875 and I got it in the paper as 4.2857; I thought I was awfully close.

(Laughter)

Mr. Hunt: And a fairly young undersecretary of the Treasury named Paul Volcker called me into his office the next day and told me how many millions and millions of dollars I had affected.

And I think there's a lot of people in this business now who don't pay their dues and they provide an edge; the Ruth Shalits of the world, the infamous *New Republic* reporter. And I think that, along with the politician journalist, is creating a lot of problems in our business and I think they tended to, as I say, crowd out those young Ann Devroys and young David Rogers and I think they're plentiful.

And I think a lot of news organizations do a marvelous job. I think at this table, to be pompous for a second, we have the crown jewels of American journalism. I think all these organizations probably do as good a job, if not a better job than they've ever done before. But I also think something that David said last night is true, which is when you look at something like health care, the longer it went on, the less people seem to know and there's a disconnect there that is terribly troubling.

Mr. Kalb: And that disconnect leads me to think and ask Elizabeth Arnold, why is it that there are so many well-educated reporters, probably better educated today than ever before in the history of American journalism, and yet there are so many people who either don't believe them or simply distrust them? There is this disconnect or appears to be a disconnect between the public and many members of the press.

Maybe it's because they feel what Mr. Carlson said in his piece for the *Weekly Standard*, that you've got to go and get a hit. But if that's the case, who is telling him that? Is that something in his own mind? Is that something that the publisher is saying to him? Is that something that some distant economic force is indicating to him? What is it?

Ms. Arnold: I'm going to defer to my colleague, David Broder.

Mr. Kalb: No, no, no; I didn't mean to go on, but what's going on here?

Ms. Arnold: There were a number of questions there.

It goes back to sort of the blur between the Arianna Huffingtons and the David Rogers and also the blur between journalism and politics and politicians and reporters. To some people, we're all part of the problem and we're the folks that don't get it back in Washington.

I guess I would agree with Al Hunt on the whole notion of paying your dues. We're hiring more reporters from *Congressional Quarterly,* people with no radio experience, who have no idea how to cut tape, but people who have firm roots in public policy, who really know what's going on and who are going to do those kinds of stories and not the hit stories. So I

don't find it in my organization, in terms of trying to hire the Matt Drudges or the folks who are going to go out and take people down.

Mr. Kalb: But they are out there. They are out there still being confused for you and a lot of your colleagues.

Ms. Arnold: So what do we do about it? I don't think we set standards. I think we, by example, have to keep going out and doing the stories.

. . . maybe the problem can't be solved by conscientious old timers restoring the dignity of the craft and resisting the siren's song of food fights on talk shows on television.

I think about one of the State of Union addresses a couple of cycles back. So many news organizations, and ours included, did stories the next day saying it was too long. That was it, it was too long. And can you believe this guy, he still hasn't learned his lesson, it was too long. And lo and behold, people tuned into that State of the Union address for longer than they had ever done before and really liked it.

The reporter who went out and really did their job, and as David was pointing out last night, put some of the speech on the air or put some of the speech in his or her story and then went the distance to compare and contrast it to what the President had said two years back, that was the kind of news story that people really wanted to read or hear or watch the next day, not some pundit saying the speech was too long.

And perhaps, you know, maybe I'm sounding a little too altruistic here, but I think by example, if we do the stories that inform, as opposed to the stories that predict or who won, who lost, but as David said last night, the stories that talk about the actions or policies that will come out of a certain contest, you know, that's our job.

Mr. Kalb: I'd like to get to questions now from the audience.

And as you get yourselves organized for questions, I wanted to ask Michael Sandel, what has happened in this country to individual responsibility; to the idea that a reporter, an individual reporter can say no, I don't want to write that kind of story, it's the wrong thing to do, I know in my gut it's the wrong thing to do; I'm not going to go along with the tide. You can get yourself fired for that, too, but what's happened to it?

Mr. Sandel: Well, listening to the discussion so far, Marvin, one of the things that strikes me is that maybe we have around this table, anyhow, not only an excess of conscientiousness, but maybe also in the discussion, an excessive appreciation of individual responsibility. A lot of the diagnosis of the problem has been from the standpoint of the ethics of the profession, what can be done to redeem the craft by people who are conscientious practitioners of an old-fashioned vision of the craft.

But then there was a stray comment that didn't get picked up, by Blair Clark, which said maybe the problem can't be solved by conscientious old timers restoring the dignity of the craft and resisting the siren's song of food fights on talk shows on television. Maybe it has something to do with bigger factors including the economics of the industry, the structure of ownership.

And if we agree, as we seem to, that the sorry state of so much of American journalism is a real problem for American democracy, maybe we should start introducing, politically, into the debate, into the argument, ways of addressing the economic incentives that so shape the industry and therefore the profession that Blair was talking about.

One way, which may be the old FCC way, would be to think about limiting ownership, maybe restricting megamedia conglomerates from owning networks or a certain number of stations or some certain combination of stations and newspapers.

Another way would be to try as a matter of public policy to carve out sanctuaries, ratings free zones or commercial free zones building on the strength, the examples of strength that we see with NPR and PBS and, in a different way, with a different kind of funding, C-SPAN.

Maybe at least half of our discussion should be about the economics of the industry that create the tide that conscientious journalists have to struggle to lean against and resist.

Maybe at least half of our discussion should be about the economics of the industry that create the tide that conscientious journalists have to struggle to lean against and resist.

Mr. Kalb: It's fascinating how we went from individual responsibility to the economic underpinning of the industry.

Mr. Storin: Marvin, I just want to testify, as a newsroom manager in the newspaper business, that I am personally unfamiliar with the concept of a reporter doing anything he or she doesn't want to do. It just doesn't work that way.

Mr. Hunt: There are days you wish you could find someone, I suspect.

Mr. Storin: Exactly. We spend a lot of time on it. I do understand that in local television it may be a problem.

Mr. Kalb: Professor Tom Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: I was wondering if I could put a slightly different spin on a couple of the points that have been made.

You know, one of the things that concerns me is not so much the punditry as the feedback from the punditry into the news. We have pretty good studies now that the news looks more and more like the punditry; increasingly cynical, increasingly about the inside gain and the like. And,

you know, I think that punditry establishes a role model for young journalists. I think those who go out and do that, it feeds back into the way that they do their job. It's a lot easier, obviously, to do punditry than to do hard reporting.

A second point, on this question of the politician journalist. I think one could argue that they kind of leaven the process a little bit; that it may not be an entirely bad thing. What the studies show is that if you look at television, you look at the newspapers over the last twenty or thirty years, the voice that's being driven out of the news is the voice of the news maker. And the voice that's rising to the fore is the voice of the journalist.

To take one example, the coverage of the 1996 campaign; for every minute that Dole and Clinton and Perot spoke on the evening news, the reporters who were covering them had six minutes. I think it's hard for people in politics to get their voice into this process or increasingly difficult for them to get their voice into the process.

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And if you look at what people like George Stephanopoulos and Bill Safire bring to the table, I think they bring something different than the journalists. From the journalists, you get a lot of inside baseball. The edge is usually cynicism, putting down someone in politics or in institutions. I think people who have come out of politics feel more comfortable, talking about the values at stake, what's really at issue here. They do less of the inside stuff and I think when they sort of tip toward the inside stuff they're much less interesting than when in fact they are acting in the role of political actor, not of journalist.

And somewhere in that mix, I don't think it's altogether a bad thing to have some of those voices in the process.

Mr. Storin: I would agree that this is just a practical application. That an op-ed columnist who came out of government, like Safire, I don't see that that individual, in that role, does any great harm. But I think there are other examples where the public can get very confused when they turn on the questioning, become the questioner or the moderator of a show and such that it can be more confusing. But I take the point.

Mr. Hunt: I'll disagree with much of what Tom said.

I do agree with you in your analysis that the news maker is being driven out. I think the study you've just cited is one example. Harvard did a study some years ago that the average sound bite, I think in the '68 campaign, for a candidate was about a minute and the average sound bite in '92 was about eight seconds. It was just something so dramatic. At one point when

Muskie was the Vice-Presidential candidate, he gave his famous answer to some of the anti-war demonstrators, CBS or NBC put it on for two minutes. I mean, that would be unthinkable now. I agree with that.

I also lament the Sunday talk shows, as much as I love my dear friend Tim Russert, I think the old days where you just had a news maker sit and be interviewed for a half hour was, in many respects, better than the smorgasbord that we get today.

But where I really disagree with you, Tom, is that these people bring what you say they bring to the table. I think sometimes they bring more of a cynicism, more of an inside game, more of a politicking than people do in journalism. Bill Safire I think is different, he's been a journalist now for twenty five years, he's paid his dues, he's there. George Stephanopoulos, Dick Morris, Pat Buchanan I think are of a different ilk and it bothers me in the sense that it confuses viewers. It bothers me in the sense that I don't like to see them use news organizations as auditions to a senate or a presidential candidacy, which is what many of them are doing. And I'm very suspicious of their motives and oftentimes in what they say.

. . . I don't like to see them use news organizations as auditions to a senate or a presidential candidacy . . .

Mr. Sandel: If I could just quickly pick up on what Al has said about the famous shrinking sound bite study that was begun here at the Shorenstein Center by—

Mr. Kalb: By his wife, Kiku Adatto.

Mr. Sandel: —Kiku Adatto, who wrote it up in the book, *Picture Perfect.* She began here, and so I remember the shrinking sound bite part of it.

There was another part of her findings which fits also with what Tom has said about the news maker receding and the journalists' presence increasing which is that there was a shift from 1968, which was the benchmark, to 1988 and then '92 in what the journalist, this was on television news coverage of presidential campaigns, was saying during that time; what was the content of the coverage.

In the past, the traditional mode of coverage, drawing from print, was coverage of what the news maker was saying, what the policies were, what the arguments were. By 1988, Kiku found there was more and more theater criticism, more and more coverage of the way in which the politicians were clearing a field to get a better angle for the television coverage. So it was really covering the way the politicians were creating conditions for their own coverage.

And today we find that tendency carried one step further in that so much of the coverage is really coverage about the coverage, it's second order coverage rather than coverage of what the news maker is doing or saying or thinking.

Mr. Broder: The problem I have, Tom, with your argument is that, you were careful to say that they can leaven the mix. And I think they could, if we were using them clearly identified as people who are bringing a perspective that is different from the journalistic perspective to the story. But that's not the way in which they are identified; that's not the way in which they are used.

But the fundamental point, I think, of disagreement would be going back to something that Elizabeth said. It suggests on the part of the owners and the managers of journalistic enterprises, that they no longer have confidence in their own system of apprenticeship and training. It says there are no special values that are important journalistically, that are inculcated in that daily grind.

What you heard Elizabeth say was that she worked extremely hard to tell the story of late-term abortion because it's such a difficult story. As a journalist, having worked on a story and really trying to hear and listen to what people with fantastically opposing points of view are saying, and figuring out "how can I represent that reality in the compressed time and space that I've got to tell that story?" I would suggest to you that that is a question that just simply does not occur in the minds of people who have not been through the kind of experience that she's had.

Mr. Kalb: Kay Fanning.

Ms. Fanning: Just to pick up on what Michael was talking about earlier, about journalism as entertainment, it seems to me that you have a fueling of the bottom line concern that produces the need for more listeners, viewers, readers, that makes conflict something to be pursued and appreciated.

And I would like to hear particularly from Al and Elizabeth and several others here who are on talk shows, to what degree the pursuit of conflict and of having a polarized view dominates many of these programs, particularly the ones that become the most dramatic, the most conflicting?

I remember several eons ago when I used to be asked occasionally when I was at the *Christian Science Monitor* to be on one of the talk shows, including "MacNeil-Lehrer," which is certainly one of the best, if I didn't carve out a clear position, that I was either for this or against it, whatever the issue was, that they weren't very interested in somebody who was able to see more than one side of the issue. And most of these problems, everything from impeachment on up and down the line is not necessarily a black and white issue.

So to what degree are you encouraged to take a position that's going to conflict with somebody else in order, I think the eventual aim is to increase the drama. And I think it spills over into newspapers, that the more dramatic you can be, the more viewers you're going to have, that that is a big part of the game. And I'd like to hear what David has to say about that, too.

Mr. Kalb: Elizabeth, why don't you start.

Ms. Arnold: I was just thinking about "Washington Week in Review," I certainly don't think they encourage conflict there. I think it would be

pretty bad if Gwen Ifill leaned over and said, Elizabeth, you ignorant so and so.

(Laughter)

Ms. Arnold: And you get these calls from shows where they say, we want you to be on the show next week to talk about Gennifer Flowers. And I'll say, well, actually I've been covering the minutiae of the budget for the last three weeks, I really don't know anything about her case. And then they say, well, that's fine. Are you available? We'll send a car.

(Laughter)

Ms. Arnold: They don't really even get to the questions.

This CNN show, where you're in boxes, I remember the one and only time I said yes to that show was because it was about a congressional issue that I had been covering and I went down to do it and I found myself in one of those boxes and I had a congresswoman on my right and a congressman on my left and they were in the boxes. And we were sort of encouraged to mix it up.

. . . I certainly don't learn anything when people are shouting at each other, but people do watch these shows.

Well, I wasn't going to mix it up with congressmen. I wasn't going to interrupt the congressman or congresswoman and say, no, you've got that wrong. That's not my job. And I found myself sort of asking questions to the boxes. I mean I must have been like an idiot, and never got a word in edgewise. It was Maxine Waters, so you can understand why I never got a word in edgewise.

(Laughter)

Ms. Arnold: But I vowed never to do it again because it was exactly what you said. There was more interest in mixing it up and "Crossfire" is a great example as well.

But, you know, there is a segment of the public that really enjoys these shows. You know, God knows why, I certainly don't learn anything when people are shouting at each other, but people do watch these shows.

Mr. Kalb: Al?

Mr. Hunt: Well, I have it easy because Marvin left out of my resume that I do a show every week with Robert Novak, so I don't really have to worry about having conflict, just having him there is conflict itself, darkness itself, if you will.

(Laughter)

Mr. Hunt: I do two shows, one of which is like that. I happen to enjoy the people I do it with: Robert Novak, Mark Shields, Kate O'Beirne, and Margaret Carlson. I don't for a minute suggest it's one of the more important or edifying things I do in my life, it's not, it just happens to be fun which is the reason I do it.

And I do an interview show for CNN, which I do get a great deal more satisfaction out of and I enjoy a lot more. And I think, sure, in the interview show, you try to have an edge to questions or conflict, to some extent, if you will, maybe more than we used to, maybe more than we should. But I think there's distinction between those two types of shows.

Mr. Kalb: David.

Mr. Broder: There are shows and shows. And I think the wisdom is what Elizabeth said, "Try something and if it's not something that you're comfortable with doing, don't do it again." My pal, Jack Germond, inveigled me years ago into going with him once onto the "McLaughlin Group" and he said, "It's not that bad, nobody takes it seriously and so on." Well, what I found was that it was every bit as bad off the air in the conversations as it was on the air. And there's a market for it, but it doesn't mean that you have to play the game if those are the rules that they're laying down for you.

I mean, you asked about individual responsibility, none of us have very much influence, but we can at least damned well say, I'm comfortable doing this or I'm not comfortable doing this and decide for ourselves.

Ms. Fanning: But what does it do to the public's view of journalists to see them in that kind of situation?

Mr. Broder: I can only repeat what I've said at boring length last night. I think the more that journalists are induced to behave like politicians and argue about policy, about outcomes and so on, the harder it is for the public to understand that journalism has a different kind of a role and responsibility.

I think the more that journalists are induced to behave like politicians and argue about policy, . . . the harder it is for the public to understand that journalism has a different kind of a role and responsibility.

Mr. Rodriguez: My name is Roberto Rodriguez. My wife and I, Patricia Gonsalvez, we write a nationally syndicated column for Universal Press Syndicate.

Our philosophy of our writing is called panche ver, and it's a Mayan concept which means, to seek the root of the truth and for that we are considered radical to seek the root of the truth.

And I'm wondering, you know, as journalists, I mean I thought that's what the objective was, and so I'm wondering, you discussed a little while ago the concept of objectivity. Is truth in the same realm as objectivity? To anyone.

Mr. Kalb: Matt Storin.

Mr. Storin: Oh, thanks.

(Laughter)

Mr. Storin: Well, I agree that objectivity is an elusive goal and concept and so is the truth. But I think there's a great difference between a lot of what we're talking about here today, and rightfully, and the younger journalists that I see in my own newsroom. I've been at one university and one college this week: Northwestern, the Medill School of Journalism and last night, Colby College, with students who are interested in journalism. And I'm happy to say that they say all the right things and have all the right aspirations.

It's something that happens to journalists when they get more successful, I think, that begins to dull the lines and color their performance. And I was encouraged the other day out in Evanston, Illinois, at Northwestern, that Bob Woodward was giving a lecture and it was not only standing room only in the fairly large auditorium, but a number, probably a hundred, a hundred and twenty five students were turned away because they didn't have enough room. And this is someone who made his bones before all of these kids were born. They still get into this business with a tremendous amount of idealism and I think would articulate it very similarly to the way you did.

Mr. Kalb: David King.

Mr. King: I'm going to make two comments.

First, reacting to the notion of conflict, another study we've done at the Kennedy School was to estimate the supply of news by various types; how much conflict there was, was it about foreign policy, was it about domestic policy, was it about government, was it about sex and so forth, thirteen categories. And we also tried to estimate the demand for news stories using the Times Mirror Index of what we followed very closely.

The bad news out of that is that government and public policy is dramatically over-covered today based on what the actual demand appears to be from the public. So if we're trending toward the marketization and the market is really that strong, we're over-covering the things I care about, based on what the public demand appears to be.

But second, I want to take on Matt Storin directly with respect to journalists and journalism schools and how people are trained.

A hundred years ago we had the partisan press or democratic press and a republican press in many cities. On most college campuses of any major size, we now have the partisan press of the late 1800s. So you get a Dinesh D'Souza coming out of Dartmouth or my best friend from high school who went on to be the editor of the *Badger Herald* in Wisconsin which was more widely known as the badger everybody, which is, of course, funded by right wing organizations, not by subscriptions or circulations at the college level.

I think that the journalism schools are training people who go into PR, who come to the Kennedy School eventually and study other things. But the kids in college who are writing daily for the *Michigan Daily* and surviving the incredible political battles at those papers, are the ones who then

go and work for the local newspapers. They come out of a tradition where journalism has a point of view.

And I think there's far too much of a disconnect between our journalism schools and the daily papers that come out of all of our major universities. And the folks who are being hired at the regional papers, the local papers are coming out of this highly partisan, highly ideologically trained background of the daily battles on college campuses, not out of our journalism schools. And I think that's something we have to pay more attention to.

Mr. Kalb: Would anyone like to comment on that?

Mr. Storin: Well, I guess I ought to say something. My name was mentioned.

Some of what you say sounds familiar to me, but not in terms of who is getting hired on at least the newspaper that I'm familiar with. A great route of entry for people involved in journalism at the college level is our intern program and we have about 300 applications for about fifteen slots. And I don't see all of the applications, but the people who get those slots are not involved, I mean, they would not be hired if they're writing opinion or if they're writing editorials or they're involved in that kind of thing.

I have to admit I don't know as much about it, I think, as you do, with regard to what these school papers are doing. I don't happen, myself, to be a strong believer in undergraduate journalism education. I would rather hire somebody who does work on the paper but is studying English literature or political science or history or whatever. And some of the people you mentioned I'll bet never even applied to a daily newspaper, they wouldn't get in the door. I think that people who demonstrate reporting ability and writing ability are the ones who get hired, not the polemicists.

Mr. Kalb: Yes, please.

Mr. Kemmis: My name is Daniel Kemmis. I'm a Fellow at the Institute of Politics here at the Kennedy School. And the background to that is a lifetime in politics in which I moved from state legislative leadership to local government. And part of the reason for the move was a real interest in democracy and how it actually works.

I found, at the local level, that while there's a lot of pressure on politicians, even there, to engage in what people experience as the worst politics, at least there was the possibility of engaging something that lies between the representative government that you talked about, David Broder, and direct democracy. What lies between is something like deliberation. At least at the local level, it is possible for politicians to reach out to people in their communities and invite them to actually deliberate about the issues that are most important to them.

And that, it seems to me, is a different kind of democracy than either of the other two necessarily. It's one that has received some support and encouragement from the movement of civic journalism. And in my work with local government leaders and politicians around the country, I find

great hope there about the civic journalism movement because it's an attempt to use journalism to give people tools for deliberation, which is what I hear Elizabeth Arnold talking about, when you make the distinction between giving what you know and what you think. What you know is a tool for people to use to deliberate.

But I don't hear very much talk here about any kind of national equivalent of civic journalism and I wonder what the reason for that is and is there some way in which, what I think is a very deep fundamental human desire to be engaged in democratic deliberation, is being overlooked systematically by our system.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you.

Elizabeth?

Ms. Arnold: I get wary when I hear the phrase civic journalism because I think it means different things to different people. And I also get concerned myself when I think about myself as an advocate, I don't think my job is to be an advocate. I've had this discussion within the confines of NPR when they talk about civic journalism projects. I don't think my job as a political reporter is to go out and make sure or encourage people to vote. I think the decision not to vote is a valid decision and some people do it for all kinds of different reasons.

It's interesting to me, in fact I'm doing a story about people like you, that you moved back, I guess down is not the word I should use, and am I right, is it access that you think is improved?

Mr. Kemmis: I think even access is too weak a word. I think that people in this country have a sincere belief that they have something to offer to the solving of public problems, that their minds can be engaged in the solving of public problems but that our system simply doesn't know how to engage their minds in deliberation.

So, in fact, all we do with them politically is to ask their opinion. That's all we ever do is to ask their opinion. And that is such an entirely different thing than asking them to take hold of issues, sit down face-to-face and work through issues.

And I think the reason people so much hate campaigning is because it has no elements of deliberation in it. They don't even see deliberation going on in front of them, let alone be encouraged to participate in it.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much.

Next is Barrie Dunsmore.

Mr. Dunsmore: I thought that very early on in the discussion, Blair Clark put his finger on what might be the essential issue, problem, solution, call it what you will, when he mentioned the economic factor as to where we are today, both in terms of the reporter and in terms of the news organization.

On the reporter's side, having spent my entire adult life as a television news reporter, I can tell you that there was a reward, a financial reward because it related to your position in the pecking order, for being opinion-

ated, for being prepared to express those opinions publicly, which would allow you to get on the kinds of programs that made those things possible.

So the atmosphere in which pundits emerged from the networks was one created by the networks themselves and there was a real economic incentive for the reporter to, I won't say disassociate himself or herself from objectivity, but certainly there was a far slighter reward for objectivity than there was for opinion.

But that's, I think, the smaller side of the issue. The much grander side is the extent to which economics now dictates the news media. And I'll just give you some numbers. Marvin, you've heard this speech before, but other people perhaps have not.

When I joined ABC in 1965, the annual budget for the news division was five million dollars and we lost money. We could not generate in commercial revenues enough to cover that five million dollars. Now, admittedly, we had a rather small news operation at the time, it was ABC, we were number three, but it was young and it was vital and we did a lot of things and we felt no pressure whatsoever from any other aspect of the corporation. When I left ABC thirty-one years later, the annual news budget was 500 million dollars and the company at that time was grossing another three to four hundred million above that from the various news adjuncts, the prime time magazine shows and so on.

It seems to me inconceivable that those numbers don't tell us an enormous amount about what has happened to the news business and that is that it has become a giant business. It's what attracted many of the new owners to the business. I don't think Disney got into it for any kind of reasons of public responsibility. Certainly I don't think that Rupert Murdoch did. They got into it because they can make a lot of money at it.

And of course, the whole issue of making money has to do with ratings and it has to do with the number of people you can get into the tent. And that means going back to Michael Sandel's line about the blur between entertainment and news. It's no longer a blur, I mean it's just not there. And the reason it is being done is because that's how you successfully sell quasi-news programs and that's how you earn a tremendous amount of money for your corporation.

If we ignore those factors, then all these other discussions about whether we have revolving doors, I agree that the revolving door can certainly be a negative one, although I am reminded that one of the more interesting persons involved in that revolving door, although not in this country, was Winston Churchill who did rather well both as a journalist and as a politician.

That's a speech. I don't pose that as a question to anyone. Those are my convictions and beliefs and I'd be willing to hear anyone challenge them, but nevertheless, I leave that on the floor.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much, Barrie.

Blair, would you like to offer a comment on that.

Mr. Clark: I'm looking for a way to defend myself.

I think those are good points. When I left the management, I was General Manager of CBS News for four years, and my budget was sixteen million, three times what the ABC one was then and we were not a profit center. And, of course, now the news divisions are required to be profit centers. And look who owns the bottom line, they are people who are responsive to stockholders and other interests and have very little professional interest at all.

I'm a little bit of a skeptic about the sainted William S. Paley of CBS. I used to have lunch with him every week. And I never thought he understood what news was all about. Despite his reputation, he hired some good people like Ed Murrow and others, Marvin.

. . . ownership restrictions have been either removed or relaxed while there's been a growing concentration of the media . . .

But the profit center thing is a real corrupter of the news and the church and state relationship, I think.

Mr. Kalb: I always had the feeling at that time that Paley brought in the best correspondents he could and that the correspondents, though they did not make money for CBS, provided Paley with a ring of respectability which made it possible then for him to make money in all kinds of other ways and at the same time claim, if he did not in fact believe, in a form of public service, that the news was a public service.

But the news department was filled with people he regarded as his crown jewels. And I think he liked us all very much, but made his money elsewhere. We helped him, we provided that authority and legitimacy.

Nolan Bowie.

Mr. Bowie: Blair Clark and Michael Sandel raised issues of public policy and technology that I would like to explore and question. And the question is, has the print press and the electronic media generally been adversely affected by broadcast deregulation?

And I point out that in 1981, then in 1983, first video and then television lost any obligation to provide any news and informational programming. And then by 1987, the Fairness Doctrine was eliminated, therefore, undermining any obligation to provide issue access for contrasting views. Which, in part, the Fairness Doctrine was a form of agenda setting, at least at the local level, and sometimes those issues were picked up by the larger media.

In addition, all throughout the '80s and '90s ownership restrictions have been either removed or relaxed. There's been a growing concentration of the media, while at the same time, more and more channels of communication have been created. With digital and digital compression, it's going to be expanding even more so. That leads to what some are calling the

attention economy. And in such an economy, the audience is migrating to these other channels.

Is there an imperative, is there a choice for the media to do other than to entertain, to try to grab that audience. And moreover, if in fact there is a role for individual responsibility of true journalists and reporters, why is it that there is so little reporting as to the impact of these changes on democracy? And that usually you find questions about media concentration being good and it's found only on the business pages.

Mr. Kalb: Michael Sandel can help us answer that one.

Mr. Sandel: I think there should be more reporting of media concentration and of the economic environment that creates a lot of the incentives that good journalists must struggle against.

But I also think there has to be more political debate about those questions. And I imagine that my journalist colleagues on the panel would say, well, if the politicians aren't debating it, if it's not on the agenda, then it's difficult for journalists, by themselves, to introduce it onto the agenda. So I think the fault also lies with the political parties and those who set the political agenda. But I think that should be a question on the political agenda.

There is nothing written in nature or in the First Amendment that says that the ownership structure of television stations and networks and newspapers must be completely subject to unfettered commercialism and capitalism and mega media conglomerates. That is a legitimate public policy question and it raises big questions about democracy.

Mr. Broder: The problem that I have with the implications of your questions and Barrie's comments is that, I can't speak about the television, electronic world because I don't know enough about it. But, on the print side, the notion that there is some inherent conflict between profit making and commitment to quality, I just don't think holds at all. Matt's paper, Al's paper, the one that I work for are very interested in making profits. But I think what they've learned is that you don't secure your competitive position by going downscale, that there really is a market for quality journalism. And they put a hell of a lot of money back into trying to maintain and improve the quality of the product.

And on the print side, the great example of the turn around in a healthy direction, is *USA Today*. *USA Today* started out to be a dumb newspaper deliberately and found that that was not the way to secure a market niche for yourself. And that paper is probably the most rapidly improving newspaper in the country because they've come to understand that doing something in some depth is probably a way to secure a market niche.

Mr. Kalb: I think one of my students is lurking in the background there.

Ms. Medd: My name is Marge Medd. I'm a student at the Kennedy School.

My question is, as the country changes, how does the media start to speak to America and its new democratic make up? Is it doing that? Has it

changed? Will it change? And will the economic forces prevent that from happening?

Mr. Kalb: Candy Crowley.

Ms. Crowley: This is sort of one of my pet things that I get on a soap box about. I do think the way to change is you have to have diversity of management because only with diversity of management does there come diversity of the people you see on the air, the people who are making the news decisions. It's not enough to have people of color being reporters, they have to be in the decision making process.

A really quick story. When I was covering Clinton's first campaign for the presidency in whatever year that was—I now can remember months and not the years, so I think that's some sort of an old thing—but in any case it was his first attempt, he was in New Hampshire and then the draft story broke. I read it and thought, it just did not ring any bells with me and I thought, well, I know a lot of people that figured a way out of the draft, that doesn't strike me as a big story.

. . . only with diversity of management does there come diversity of the people you see on the air . . .

Whereas, Jack Smith who was a long time politico and older man was absolutely apoplectic about the story. He was like, this is a great story because, my gosh, he dodged the draft and he did this. And I'm thinking, what is he talking about?

And so I went out and covered the story and that was fine. And it turned out that it was a big story and that it did matter to a lot of people that this man made active efforts to avoid the draft and did it in what seemed like a very political way. And it mattered to a lot of people. I would have missed it entirely had there not been someone there with a little more age to them that came out of a generation that I did not come out of.

The same can be held true for the African-American experience or the Hispanic-American, all of that. But it isn't enough to be the reporter. Just even as a female, it isn't enough for me to be a female reporter, I need to have some female support up here so that when I say, I think we're a little off on this story or I think we ought to do this story because it's important, I need to have that support. And I can't imagine that it's any different for covering Hispanic issues or African-American issues or what have you.

Having said that, I don't think you need to have, I think you can be sensitive to all kinds of things without coming from that, you know, two of my best children are white males, so, you know, I'm all for them.

(Laughter)

Ms. Crowley: And I think that there is a sensitivity that can be there, but it's an experience gap. It's not a sensitivity gap, it's what you've lived through and what you bring to the table. And so you have to have that

kind of experience to fill in the gaps that a lot of us didn't live. And so you've got to get them in management.

And I guess the only way to get them into management is if they first start as reporters. I don't think I see enough people of color on the air or in management.

Mr. Kalb: We are quickly running out of time and we've got a lot of people who want to ask questions. So let me start with, Walter Shorenstein who wanted to ask a question and then we'll go to Henry Morgenthau.

Mr. Shorenstein: I hear no discussion on the impact of polling and the impact of the integrity to get ratings as a result of pollings and not their own personal opinion.

Mr. Kalb: David Broder, fire away on polling.

Mr. Broder: Well, let me just be very personal and brief.

I thank God that nobody in all the time I've worked at the *Washington Post* has ever told me how many people who buy the *Washington Post* actually read what I write in the paper. I'd be paralyzed, I think, if I knew if somebody was keeping tabs on that. And I have nothing but sympathy for my friends in the electronic side where this is measured all the time.

It can be a pernicious force and that's why, along with the variety of backgrounds that Candy has just spoken about and which I agree with entirely, you've got to have managers who have some guts and say this is my feeling about what we ought to be doing.

When you say, we're giving people more information about public affairs than they really want, tough munchies; that's what we're about.

(Laughter)

Mr. Broder: And if we're not doing that, then what the hell is the point of being in the business.

Mr. Kalb: Henry Morgenthau, please.

Mr. Morgenthau: I'm formerly one of Marvin's kids at the Shorenstein Center five years ago and before that I worked for twenty years at WGBH here in Boston.

Starting with Blair Clark, there has been a lot of discussion about the economics and more specifically about ownership. Something that relates very much to ownership are the advances of technology. Last night David Broder said that he uses both the old shoe leather technique of going around and talking to people, knocking on doors, but he also has access to any number of local newspapers all over the country which he couldn't have had previously.

And he also said with all due modesty, that there is a real role for the journalist to screen and, in the best sense, edit his material, which everybody could do for themselves if they had the time and the ability, but who wants to do that. That is the role of the journalist.

But technology has really changed a lot of things, including ownership.

I'd like to hear some discussion of the importance of technology in terms of increased access and greatly increased proliferation, digital

opportunities, and the opportunity for a national, even international, ownership of media.

Mr. Kalb: Candy, you work in the international operation of journalism.

> **. . . if you're worried that people are confused watching the television, once they get onto the Internet, they'll be even more confused.**

Ms. Crowley: I think it's kind of like everything, it's two-edged. There's some great positive points to what Ted Turner used to call the electronic village. I think it's wonderful that people can get any paper they want on the Internet. This assumes, of course, that somebody in a village in China has a phone. So, we are leaving out a huge portion of people, we're not there yet. I think it's great.

The problems I have with the Internet is, one, it's unedited. You can dump anything you want onto the Internet. And if you're worried that people are confused watching the television, once they get onto the Internet, they'll be even more confused. You don't know what's authoritative, what's not authoritative. I think that's a problem.

I think the problem with the electronic village that I just cringe at is that policy is made on the basis of what's going on the tube. And I just find that wacko. The idea that Saddam Hussein has a press conference with a little kid that, because he knows CNN is going to cover it, and then he sends a message that he wants to get to the president and then the president gets on because he's got a message. And I think, wow, don't they have phones?

> **I just find it appalling that somehow diplomacy is coming through the television set.**

(Laughter)

Ms. Crowley: I would feel much better if they talked to each other instead of our putting on the camera. I have a problem with our being used. For their part, it doesn't seem like the best way to conduct global policy is through CNN or through wherever it happens to be.

So I think it's wonderful and I think it's awful. And hopefully we'll be able to rein in some of the awful parts and exploit some of the great parts.

Mr. Kalb: But we're doing it, government and the press are doing this constantly now, at all times. It is a new form of diplomacy.

Ms. Crowley: And doesn't it make you a little frightened? I mean, I just find it appalling that somehow diplomacy is coming through the television set.

Mr. Kalb: Elizabeth.

Ms. Arnold: I had a much simpler point of entry here.

I worry, and this is probably due to the fact that I spent an hour this morning trying to find the save key on my laptop.

(Laughter)

Ms. Arnold: I worry that some of it's to the detriment of what David describes as shoe leather. I was in Borders bookstore the other day and it's easier for me to go to Borders, where they have all the newspapers from all across the country right there, and look at the front page of all the newspapers and say, wow, this is amazing to me, there's a gambling or gaming story on the front page of every newspaper. That's a lot easier for me to do than to get on the Internet and get to all the sites.

My colleagues now can get the equivalent of the *Congressional Record* down at headquarters on Massachusetts Avenue. And someone was saying how terrific that was. And I worried in the back of my mind, I thought, you know, you can just go up to the Capitol and you can get the *Congressional Record* and you can look at it. And while you're up there, you might run into a policy maker or two and find some real news. You might just run into it on the elevator.

There's something called the Wand where you can basically get all the hearings and get all the sound off the hearings and never leave your booth. I worry about that, I think we all need to mix it up and we're all people and talk to the Majority Leader and talk to the staffer and communicate.

Mr. Kalb: Hushang Ansary.

Mr. Ansary: Marvin, I've made a mental note to go look up Mr. Webster and find out where he draws the distinction between a reporter, a journalist, a commentator and a pundit and everything else that represents the universe that we are discussing today.

But it's my belief that this particular universe has been very positively impacted by the development of high technology and is also negatively impacted, handicapped by it. Namely, speed. When we talk about objectivity, I wonder if the pundit believes that this universe can continue to make an effort to stay objective as it has traditionally been aiming on doing as we develop more advanced technology, which means with a great deal of speed.

Dean Rusk had a favorite letter that he quoted from. It was written by Thomas Jefferson as the first Secretary of State to George Washington and it went like this: 'Dear Mr. President, we are still without any news worth reporting to you. I have not heard from our minister to Spain in the last five months. If I don't hear from him in the next two weeks, I'm thinking of writing him a letter.'

(Laughter)

Mr. Ansary: Now, how far have we come from those days?

Mr. Kalb: Al Hunt, how far have we come?

Mr. Hunt: Gee, I didn't cover that administration.

(Laughter)

Mr. Hunt: But I'm going to do something that the politicians frequently do which is just to answer a totally different question, if I may, because I want to make sure we get to it before we close. And David raised the issue again last night, this is something that we're going to cover in the next two years, and that's the question of character.

I have real reservations about the way the press, including the good press, if you will, is going to approach that issue because I think we too often try to fight the last war. And our definition of character now has become largely sex related and I don't argue that that's not relevant, but I think there are more relevant issues. I'll give you two examples.

. . . our definition of character now has become largely sex related . . .

Steve Forbes has been happily married for twenty-seven years, has five kids, great family, I assume he's never had any sexual indiscretions. John McCain, his first marriage broke up because, as he has acknowledged, he was a philanderer. So, therefore, by the definitions that we're coming up with now, Steve Forbes passes the character test and John McCain does not.

And if that's the way we're going to cover it, then that will be the answer we get. And of course we'll ignore the fact that John McCain spent six years in a prisoner of war camp and refused to leave when they tried to let him out because other people had come in earlier, that he is someone, to go to some of the issues that David raised last night, who has been a tremendous risk taker, on issues like campaign finance reform. When he has received setbacks, Viet Nam, he became the lead advocate for recognizing Viet Nam. And on the Keating Five, where he really got screwed, he became the lead advocate of campaign finance reform.

On the other hand, four years ago, when we at the *Wall Street Journal* asked Mr. Forbes what was the greatest crisis, the greatest challenge he had ever faced in his life, he replied it was going to prep school. And I'm sure that was difficult.

(Laughter)

Mr. Hunt: But I really do think that if we are going to cover character, which I think is incredibly important and very difficult, then we're off to a very bad start. Already three or four candidates have taken the pledge that they never engaged in any kind of marital infidelity. I don't know why in the world they would do that, but I wonder even more why we're setting that as the most important standard.

Mr. Kalb: Two good points.

On Hushang's point, I would just say very briefly, Hushang, that speed fights reflection. In television today, parachute journalism exists. You arrive and an hour later you have to go on the air and broadcast. Sometimes it's a minute later; but you've got to be there and you've got to do it.

And that obviously fights that long-time journalistic tradition of trying to think a little bit before you say something or before you write something. And I think that it's one of the dangers that exist, but it's a danger that is not going to go away, it's only going to get worse.

And Al Hunt's point, in the way in which private life issues are going to be covered now, it seems to me you're absolutely on target, that the people have already taken the pledge are only the beginning of any number of others who are going to take the pledge as the race for the presidency gets more serious.

And the other side of that is what is going to happen when one politician running for the presidency turns to the journalist asking the question and says what about you? Have you ever committed adultery? And then where do you go from there. I don't know. But it sounds like a horror story.

What I would like to do is ask David Broder to give us a minute of his concluding thoughts on the 1998 Theodore H. White Lecture. We give you that opportunity to just have an idea or two that you want to share with us and then we're going to wrap it up.

. . . if we're going to restore the credibility of journalism and if we're going to restore the health of representative government in this country, it's probably going to come from the bottom up, not from the top down.

Mr. Broder: The comment that struck me the most was the one from Mr. Kemmis about what's happening in his community in Montana.

I think if we're going to restore the credibility of journalism and if we're going to restore the health of representative government in this country, it's probably going to come from the bottom up, not from the top down. And what you see happening in communities around the country where both the local news organizations and the local citizens are becoming engaged, whether you call it civic journalism or just old fashioned journalism, is, I think, the healthiest thing.

And eventually it may be that those of us who have to work for our sins at the national level will catch on to some of those healthy things that are happening in the local areas.

Mr. Kalb: Thank you very much, David Broder.