



HARVARD Kennedy School

**SHORENSTEIN CENTER**

on Media, Politics and Public Policy

## THE GOLDSMITH AWARDS IN POLITICAL JOURNALISM

March 3, 2015

**Mr. Ellwood:** Good evening everyone. I'm David Ellwood. I'm the Dean here at the Kennedy School and I want to welcome you to the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum for what is always one of the very great nights of the year.

For the Goldsmith Awards celebrate much of what we all admire and also what we all desperately need. Before I begin, I do want to thank the Shorenstein Center on Media Politics and Public Policy for all the work you all do. It's made an enormous difference.

I'd also like to acknowledge Doug Shorenstein, who couldn't be with us here tonight, for his longstanding support and his commitment to excellence in journalism.

And to the late Walter Shorenstein, who was a very good friend of the Kennedy School. We owe him a very great debt, for without his years of inspiration, support and badgering, none of us would be here tonight or be nearly as effective as we are tonight.

My job is actually a very simple one. Which is simply to introduce Alex Jones. And you have a lovely bio in front of you, which I often, in these occasions, repeat, and you know, this is a man who won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting in *The New York Times* from '83 to '92.

He's authored a number of things that have been, every one of the books he's done, several with Susan Tift, for example, *The Patriarch: The Rise and Fall of the*

*Bingham Dynasty* –*Businessweek* magazine selected it as one of its ten Best Business Books of the Year in '92.

He left *The Times* to work on *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind The New York Times*, also with Susan Tift, which was a finalist in the National Book Critics' Circle Award in Biography.

His most recent book, *The Future of News That Feeds Democracy*, was published in 2009. *The New York Times Sunday Book Review* called Jones a “bringer of light in the encircling doom.” (Laughter)

**Mr. Ellwood:** So, that's the part that we all know. But I want to just pause for just a moment, since this is the last Goldsmith Awards where he will be the emcee, though we have proven that former Center directors do sometimes return for Goldsmith Awards in other settings.

I just want to say one or two other few words about Alex, the person. For Alex is really quite a remarkable man. And as all of you know, after 15 years of leading the Center, he'll be stepping down.

During his leadership, the Center's demonstrated enormous commitment, teaching, learning, it's had a remarkable class of Fellows and Visiting Residential Fellows, world class speakers, extraordinary research, and things like the Goldsmith Awards.

But Alex Jones is first and foremost a journalist with a nose for what is important, an understanding of what lies at the very heart of the matter.

He's a writer, and by the way, though I never aspired to be a journalist, I do aspire to be a writer like Alex. But that's hopeless, for I'm an economist. Indeed, he has uncommon clarity, he knows just the right phrase to invite you in and excite you about the argument, and a wonderful gift for framing and pace.

What really drives Alex is a set of values, principles that lie at the very core of the press and the media. The risk in bemoaning the decline of the traditional press, that gathering circle of doom in the media, is that we lose sight of the real goal. The goal that drives Alex, which is the never ending fight to ensure that values like accountability, transparency, depth and independence are nurtured, protected and celebrated.

For Alex and I believe that they lie at the very heart of democracy. I think Alex sees the changing role of technology in journalism both as a threat but also as an opportunity to reinforce those core principles.

Finally, and most importantly, Alex brings a deep and inviting humanity to his dealings with everyone who has had the pleasure and honor to know him.

Whether in his intense support for Susan Tift in her valiant battle with cancer, or just kind and generous words to colleagues, Alex is simply a very good person. Ladies and gentlemen, Alex Jones. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** You saw an example of my writing just a few moments ago when David was speaking those words, of course. (Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** Quite seriously, thank you very much. It means a great deal to me. One of the great pleasures of being at the Kennedy School is being here during much of the tenure, well, all of the tenure of David Ellwood as Dean. And it's been a great pleasure and honor to work with him through all these years.

This is a night that the Shorenstein Center always looks forward to. It's one of our really big nights. In many respects, maybe the very biggest. This is the year that marks the 24th anniversary of the Goldsmith Awards Program.

Each year we look forward to this night as a high point for the Shorenstein Center. And if I may say so immodestly, for American journalism. There is of course a story behind the Goldsmith Awards.

Bob Greenfield, then a Philadelphia lawyer, had a client named Berta Marks Goldsmith, who had told him of her intent to leave him her entire estate, which was not insignificant.

Bob simply declined to accept it, and went searching for a good way to use the money for a purpose that Berta would have approved. She was passionately interested in good government, followed the news ardently, and was particularly outraged at misconduct by people with public responsibility.

Eventually Bob connected with Marvin Kalb, the Shorenstein Center's founding Director and our career award winner tonight. The result was the Goldsmith Awards in Political Journalism, which includes the investigative reporting prizes, book prizes, fellowships and the career award.

In 2012, after an extraordinary life of achievement and many, many contributions to the common good, Bob Greenfield died at 97. I believe that the creation and support of the Goldsmith Awards was one of Bob's proudest accomplishments, a pride that his family shares.

We are joined tonight by several members of the Greenfield family and members of the Greenfield Foundation. Mike Greenfield, who serves as a Goldsmith judge, his wife Elaine and their two children, one of whom is in the hands of his father right over there. Jill Greenfield Feldman, President of the Greenfield Foundation, and Bill Epstein.

Without the Greenfield Foundation's continued support and good faith, this would not be possible. This night would simply not happen. Please join me in

showing our appreciation to the Greenfield family and to those associated with the Greenfield Foundation. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Our Career Award this year goes to the remarkable Marvin Kalb. We'll be hearing from him later. But first, the Goldsmith Prizes.

The first Goldsmith Awards are the book prizes. Making those presentations will be my colleague, Tom Patterson, the Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press at the Kennedy School. (Applause)

**Mr. Patterson:** Thank you, Alex. Each year, we award two Goldsmith Book Prizes. One for the Best Academic Book in the field of media, politics, and public policy, the other for the Best Trade Book. Each prize carries with it a \$5,000 cash award.

Before introducing the winners, I'd like to acknowledge this year's other judges. I'm one, Alex is another. Matt Baum is here and Marion Just, who's probably also here.

I'll start with the Goldsmith Book Prize in the academic category. The recipient is *Media Commercialism and Authoritarian Rule in China* by Daniela Stockmann. China's news media today looked nothing like they did during the Cultural Revolution. China now has more daily newspapers, roughly 2,000, than does the United States.

Only a small number of these newspapers are state controlled. The rest support themselves the American way, through advertising and circulation. And they compete the American way, through infotainment and other forms of attracting audiences.

This style has given the commercial media in China audience credibility. In opinion surveys, they rank much higher on the trust level than do the state-owned outlets. Now this would seem to threaten China's government.

But contrary to what we might assume, as Professor Stockmann's content analysis and survey data show, the commercialism of China's media has strengthened the Communist Party's control.

The reason is that though the commercial media differ in all other respects from the state-owned media, their coverage of politics mirrors that of the state outlets. And because the private media are perceived to be more credible, the effect is to strengthen the state's version of politics.

And nearly all of this is accomplished through self-censorship. The commercial press knows that it's free to cover other areas of Chinese life as it chooses, as long as it conforms to the party line when it comes to politics.

*Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule in China* is an important book, one of the most important ever to get the Goldsmith Book Award. Its author, Daniela Stockmann, is on the faculty at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. Her teaching schedule prevents her from being with us tonight. But I'd like to acknowledge her book with a round of applause. (Applause)

**Mr. Patterson:** Now as I mentioned at the outset, we also award a Goldsmith Prize in the trade book category. This year's winner is *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself*. Its author, Andrew Pettegree, is a British historian who's on the faculty of Scotland's oldest university, St. Andrew's.

Now what can a history book that ends in 1800 teach us about the digital era? Well, as it turns out, just about everything. In tracing the history of news from the era of the town crier to the dawning of the daily newspaper, Andrew Pettegree shows us that there's nothing really new about digital news.

People have always had a thirst for the gruesome and the amusing. Stupid cat videos, the click bait of our time, have nothing on the past.

The early German newspapers had a fascination with lurid crime, often spicing up the story with a woodcut. One woodcut showed the murderer hacking a child into symmetrical pieces. The Brothers Grimm found inspiration on their doorstep.

We also learned from this book that control of the news has always interested the powerful. What we just said about China and often say about the White House, has nothing on the early Christian church, medieval kings, or the French Revolution's Reign of Terror. Robespierre was one of several former journalists at the heart of that exercise in mind control.

Changes in news delivery have always rearranged power structures, usually toward democratization. We see that happening with the Internet. In an earlier age, the rise of the newspaper fueled the decline of monarchy.

We also learned from this book that information seeks to be free. Today's investigative journalists, the ones that we celebrate here tonight, have centuries-old counterparts, like those that exposed the financial corruption within the Catholic Church that helped fuel the Protestant Revolution.

But the central lesson of *The Invention of News* is that people have always had a thirst for news. We may be witnessing the death of some community newspapers. But you can't kill the news. People need it and they want it.

*The Invention of News* is a fascinating book that deserves a place on your nightstand. Andrew Pettegree, please step forward to receive the Goldsmith Trade Book Award. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** It is now my honor to introduce each of the six finalists for the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting. This year's competition was extremely competitive, I'm glad to say.

In these difficult times for journalism, one might fear that the quantity and quality and ambition of investigative reporting would be in decline. But that was definitely not the case with this year's entries.

This year's judges, in addition to Mike Greenfield, were Lorelei Kelly, Susan Smith Richardson, David Shribman, and Paul Tash. No judge is allowed to vote for an entry from his or her own news organization or affiliate.

In January, after long deliberation, the judges select the six finalists and also the winner. We announce the finalists at once, because part of the purpose of the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Journalism is to call attention to the excellent work that they all did, and to other great investigative work as well.

That's part of the idea of this prize, to focus attention on investigative reporting and what it can do. So, it is with great pleasure that I describe the six finalists, each of which in its own way was regarded as extraordinary. They will be presented in alphabetical order by news organization.

Binland Lee was a 22-year-old senior at Boston University who lived with 13 others in a house meant for far fewer people. Her room was in the eaves of the attic, where she had slung a beach-ball colored hammock, inspired by a school trip to Belize.

In the early hours of April 28th, 2013, she had trudged up the stairs and gone to sleep. A fire broke out and spread quickly. There was only one way out, which was a gross violation of fire codes, and Binland died.

Alarm bells should have gone off all over Boston, the self proclaimed "College Capital of the World." But nothing happened, except we mourned her.

But in 2014, *The Boston Globe's* famous Spotlight Team decided to focus on situations like Binland's that were the norm for much of Boston's college

population. What they found was a harrowing pattern of opportunistic exploitation and official indifference.

Often lawless landlords drove a specialty market in student housing by chopping up large homes, to cram in as many tenants as possible in basements, attics, and living and dining rooms.

Conditions were both squalid and dangerous, with scampering rodents, broken locks, missing smoke detectors and inaccessible exits. Financially strapped students facing huge tuition bills were easy prey.

But these shabby, overcrowded student tenements were hugely profitable because so many were paying rent. The city, it turned out, was utterly unable or unwilling to address the problem. Its inspectors were outnumbered, passive, and disorganized.

The city had no clue how many units were illegally overcrowded, which landlords were the most chronic offenders, and the universities were often unwilling to share the information they had about where their own students lived as a matter of privacy.

So *The Boston Globe* set about creating its own database from the chaos of inspection records and scraps of information. The team undertook months of house-to-house interviews and commissioned a student survey that found overcrowding endemic.

They sent out student journalists as undercover agents to act as student renters and found landlords scoffing at occupancy limits and substandard conditions. And they also did a deep look into the fire that killed Binland Lee.

The result was a three-part series that rocked Boston and changed things. The city's new mayor vowed immediately to boost the ranks of inspectors and pursue the most persistent landlord violators.

He demanded that colleges add thousands of new dorm beds. Colleges that had been reluctant to share information about student housing changed their policies. The City Council convened hearings on a major university's business ties to one especially notorious rental housing magnate.

The problem was real and the peril immediate. And the impact of the journalism was powerful, which is the bull's-eye for Goldsmith quality investigations. Please join me in recognizing Thomas Farragher, Jonathan Saltzman, Jenn Abelson, Casey Ross, and Todd Wallack of *The Boston Globe's* Spotlight Team, for their exemplary work on the series, "Shadow Campus: Overcrowded, Unsafe Housing." Would you stand? (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** The story in the *Miami Herald* a year ago began this way. Fraternal twins, Tariji and Tavont'ae Gordon, were born together but died two years, eight months, and 24 days apart.

One was buried in a potter's field, the other was disposed of in a shallow grave covered by earth, plywood and a sheet of tin. Tavont'ae, the first to die, suffocated at two months of age while sleeping on a couch with his mother, Rachel Fryer, who later tested positive for cocaine.

Child welfare authorities took Tariji away from Fryer and put her in foster care. Then they gave her back, convinced Fryer had tamed her drug habit and neglectful ways. Three months later, Tariji was killed by a blow to the head. Fryer stuffed Tariji's body into a leopard-print suitcase, caught a ride and buried her 50 miles from her Sanford home.

The girl's pink and white shoe, an unintended grave marker atop freshly turned dirt, was the only hint of her life and death. That's how the series started. The story of these unlucky innocents were two of 477 children that the *Miami Herald* took it upon itself to tell.

All of them died because they were returned, because of state policy and state neglect, to parents who killed them. They weren't children who died the first time their parents abused them. They were killed because they had been put back in homes where they were in mortal danger.

The state of Florida had a policy of favoring what it termed “family preservation” over child protection. This is a worthy concept on its face. But it's also one that can be horribly flawed. Especially if the state does not monitor the home environment that these endangered children are put back into after first being removed because of the abusive behavior of parents.

When the *Herald* set out to explore this murky area of child welfare, they had to file multiple lawsuits to be able to probe these totally preventable child deaths. The state did not cooperate.

When the *Herald* began to review the records after winning court orders, they found not a policy story, but a very, very human one. At the time of publication, they had identified 477 children who had died after being returned to their families, a number that has now grown to more than 530.

Their stories and the accompanying database gave a human face to each one of those children and it rocked Florida. Since publication, the state has rewritten its child welfare laws to better safeguard the lives of vulnerable children.

Lawmakers voted nearly \$50 million in new money for child protection and the Department of Children and Families was ordered to create a website that lists all child deaths and post relevant data and reports, ensuring that these deaths will no longer be cloaked in secrecy.

Two child protective investigators, whose fumbled cases were highlighted in this series, were subsequently arrested, which may be a deterrent to the lackadaisical efforts that the series found again and again. And a new head of the

Department of Children and Families was appointed with a mandate to fix things.

The point of the series was not that children should never be returned to families, but that simply making that default decision has been a death sentence time and time again.

Please join me in recognizing the work of Carol Marbin Miller, Audra Burch, Mary Ellen Klas, Emily Michot, Kara Dapena, and Lazaro Gamio, for their *Miami Herald* series, “Innocents Lost.” (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you. In September of 2013, nonprofit organization Violence Policy Center in Washington, DC, named South Carolina as number one in the nation when it came to women being killed by men.

South Carolina is a Bible Belt state, a bastion of conservatism and a southern tradition of protecting women. And yet, as the *Charleston Post and Courier* reported in its sweeping series on the way the state actually protects its women, the reality is starkly other.

*The Post and Courier* assembled a set of horrific statistics that put the priority that South Carolina gives to the safety of its women in vivid relief.

For instance, in the last decade, three times the number of South Carolina women had been killed in domestic violence incidents than all the soldiers, sailors and airmen from the Palmetto state than had been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.

A woman is killed every 12 days in South Carolina. And while there is an animal shelter in every one of the state's 46 counties, there are only 18 safe houses for battered women. That statistic seemed to have special resonance.

*The Post and Courier* is not a hell raising, liberal publication. But it is a real newspaper and it went to work on holding a mirror up to its state and its people. It wasn't easy.

The state is awash in guns, which is the weapon of choice in domestic violence deaths and anti-gun sentiment is deeply ingrained. The state legislature has for years throttled legislation that would have the effect of protecting women.

And simply getting the facts was a huge challenge. *The Post and Courier* team compiled a first-ever database of domestic killings, their circumstances and outcomes of each case.

The team used police reports, court records, criminal rap sheets and other documents to plot the locations of killings, determine what had happened and to look for commonalities and trends. The team also studied the conviction rates and plea deals of domestic violence, something the state's judicial system did not do.

The result was a shocking and harrowing five-part series of articles headlined "Till Death Do Us Part." The final article, the paper called "Enough is Enough," listed 13 explicit ways the state of South Carolina could take a stand against rampant domestic violence.

The impact was just as shocking as the series. Two days after the series ended, the speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives appointed a special committee to strengthen the state's domestic violence laws. He cited the series in doing so and directed the committee to have reform bills ready when the new legislature season opened.

The chairman of the powerful Judiciary Committee threw his support behind the reform effort and offered his own bill, including a provision to ban guns from

those convicted of domestic violence. Then Governor Nikki Haley, a Tea Party favorite, formed a Domestic Violence Task Force and expressed her support for the gun legislation.

The attorney general announced a push to put more prosecutors in the field to combat domestic violence. And in Charleston, the series was credited with a joint effort by police, prosecutors, social workers, victim advocates and medical officials to join in creating a Fatality Review Team, something that had not existed before.

For South Carolina, it was a powerful demonstration of journalistic independence and willingness to take on a serious problem with politics pushed aside.

Please join me in recognizing Jennifer Berry Hawes, Doug Pardue, Glenn Smith, and Natalie Caula Hauff of the Charleston *Post and Courier* for “Till Death Do Us Part.” (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Going after the American Red Cross is not unlike going after the Red Cross. (Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** It's one of the nation's most admired and respected charitable organizations. When disaster strikes, the Red Cross is the beneficiary of a surge of donations based on the faith that, as the organization has long claimed, “more than 90 cents of every dollar goes to people in need.”

Open-hearted citizens donated more than \$300 million to the group after Superstorm Sandy in 2012, and another billion dollars in 2013. So when ProPublica, the author with NPR, of this Goldsmith finalist project, got a tip urging a close look at how the Red Cross had used that avalanche of donations, it seemed doubtful that there was a story there.

Indeed, the journalists were unable to confirm that money had been wasted or misspent. But that lack of confirmation was due largely as a result of the opacity of the annual reports and IRS filings that charities like the Red Cross submit.

What became clear was that attempts to follow the money were especially difficult at the Red Cross, which was far less transparent than other charities. Rather than take on a big project, a small story was published, laying out what the journalists did not know.

Then they published another story about how the Red Cross had hired an expensive law firm to fight one of the public records requests about Hurricane Sandy spending, citing concern that the documents might reveal what the Red Cross termed “trade secrets.”

We live in a viral age. And this went viral. People were outraged that a nonprofit would cite trade secrets as a reason for withholding information about how it had used money from donors.

At the end of both stories, there was a callout asking anyone with knowledge about the Red Cross to get in touch. It worked – sources poured in bearing documents and personal stories.

Throughout the reporting that followed, the Red Cross was opaque and dissembling. Officials leaned on sources to stop talking, but that didn't work. The product of the journalist inquiry was a portrait of a well-intentioned organization with its priorities skewed and its execution terribly flawed.

For instance, trucks that were to be used for distributing aid were instead told to create an impressive backdrop for press conferences intended to boost the image and fundraising of the Red Cross.

The articles showed failure to deliver basics such as food, blankets and batteries to storm victims, and trucks of meals that were spoiled before they could reach those in need.

As far as the journalists were concerned, the series was a harsh lesson but a necessary one if the Red Cross is to be ready for the next great storm. Red Cross executives have now said that they have made changes that would prevent such failures in the future, though there is evidence this may not really be true.

One thing is certain. The Red Cross culture of opacity has been breached. The charity withdrew its attempt to block the New York attorney general from releasing a report on how Sandy donations were spent, dropping its trade secrets argument.

Please join me in recognizing the work of ProPublica's Justin Elliott and Jesse Eisinger and NPR's Laura Sullivan for "The Red Cross' Secret Disaster."

(Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** The marble facade of the U.S. Supreme Court building proclaims a high ideal, "equal justice under law." *Reuters* tested that promise. To get a sense of the impact of the *Reuters* series, "The Echo Chamber," here are a few reactions.

"Fascinating," wrote Jeffrey Toobin, who covered the Supreme Court for CNN and *The New Yorker*. "Big," tweeted Nina Totenburg, who covers the court for NPR. "Spectacular," wrote Linda Greenhouse, the dean of Supreme Court reporters and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for her coverage. Bill Moyers blogged, "How is it that a branch of government that's supposed to serve as a neutral arbiter falls so frequently on the side of the wealthy and powerful?"

The thing that had dazzled these veteran Supreme Court watchers was *Reuters'* utterly novel and unprecedented examination of the court's docket to

scrutinize its most secretive process: how the Justices select which cases they will hear.

And it turns out that the result was a genuine insight. A small group of lawyers had secured special entree to America's court of last resort. And given their clients, almost always the nation's largest corporations, a disproportionate chance to influence the law of the land.

The *Reuters* team dissected more than 10,000 appeals and spanned nine Supreme Court terms and involved almost 17,000 lawyers. Among those attorneys, 17,000, they identified a group that might best be called “the elite of the elite” – 66 lawyers who succeeded in getting their cases before the court at an incredible rate. And of those 66 lawyers, 51 were for law firms that primarily represent corporate interests.

Although they accounted for far less than one percent of the attorneys who sought the court's agreement to hear their cases, these lawyers were involved in an astonishing 43 percent of the cases the justices chose to decide during the period *Reuters* examined.

To explicate these findings, the reporters interviewed hundreds of America's top lawyers and Constitutional lawyers. And in a true reporting coup, they got on the record interviews with eight of the nine sitting Justices.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with her typical candor, said it flatly. “Business can pay for the best counsel money can buy. The average citizen cannot. That's just reality.”

To cite another statistic from the series, 30 percent of individual petitions were accepted when filed by a member of this legal elite. When the lawyer was not from this elite group, the number accepted was one percent.

Might this change because of the series? Probably not much. But at least now we know. Please join me in recognizing the work of Joan Biskupic, Janet Roberts, and John Shiffman of *Reuters* for “The Echo Chamber.” (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** The roots of *The Wall Street Journal's* “Medicare Unmasked” go back to 2009. When *The Journal* first requested Medicare claims data from the government, in hope that it could be used to inform the debate over healthcare reform, the agency that runs Medicare declined, saying that such data couldn't be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

There ensued years, literally years of negotiations and lawsuits. Finally, last April, Medicare was forced to reveal for the first time billing data for 880,000 Medicare providers. Not patients, but providers.

The new data just concerned 2012. But it was a watershed moment in government transparency. *Journal* reporters analyzed the data's 9.2 million records and the result was a series of articles *The Journal* headlined “Medicare Unmasked,” which shed new light on the workings of the nearly \$600 billion program for the elderly and disabled.

And what did *The Journal* investigation reveal? High payments to specialists, pain specialists to test for PCP and other drugs rarely abused by seniors, and an effort by the testing industry to cover even more unnecessary tests, an effort that the agency stopped after the series ran.

*The Journal* revealed that a high-profile laboratory collected hundreds of millions of dollars through Medicare by using the quite controversial practice of paying doctors to send it patients for blood testing.

Two weeks after *The Journal* article, the lab's CEO resigned under pressure. A separate article examined providers who collected more from Medicare for a single procedure than anyone else, prompting an FBI investigation.

And of course, there was the political angle, in the sense that politics sometimes trumped Medicare's anti-fraud efforts.

The abuses continue to be revealed, but *The Journal's* determination to get access to the data and then to mine it was a model of the kind of journalism possible in our data-driven world.

Please join me in recognizing Christopher Stewart, Christopher Weaver, John Carreyrou, Tom McGinty, Rob Barry, and Anna Wilde Mathews of *The Wall Street Journal* for "Medicare Unmasked." (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Before I announce the winner of this year's Goldsmith Prize, I would like to ask all of the finalists to stand once more so we can show our appreciation for their excellent work. Please stand. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** And now the winner of this year's Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting: The *Miami Herald's* "Innocents Lost" by Carol Marbin Miller, Audra Burch, Mary Ellen Klas, Emily Michot, Kara Dapena, and Lazaro Gamio. Please come forward. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** That one's for you. This one is for you. And we have a photograph of course. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** I think I should say that in my class this morning – and there are some people in my class in the audience, I can see – we went over all of the finalists and voted. And it was a close vote, but you won. Thank you very much. Do you want to say a few words? (Applause)

**Ms. Miller:** Thank you very much. At a time when most newspapers were downsizing, and one of the real victims of that were the specialty beats such as social services and child welfare, the *Miami Herald* made a commitment to this beat and to these issues and did so when no one else really was.

Before I say anything more, I have to recognize my boss. His name is Casey Frank and he's sitting right over there. He is the investigations editor and before that he handled some beats, including mine.

For a number of years, we saw these cases come and go with tremendous frequency and every single one of them was a horror story. And we kept writing. It got to the point where we had file cabinets in the news room that are groaning under the weight of files of dead children, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them. And we've written stories on every one.

At some point we said, "We have to try something different," because of course we were seeking some way to affect change. What we settled on was to take a deep dive, a comprehensive look at the policy and economic issues that were underpinning all that carnage.

We also decided to do something unusual. We wanted to try marrying two different genres of reporting and that was sort of traditional investigative reporting and classic narrative storytelling. And more than that, I really wanted to work with Audra.

I just really wanted to work with Audra because she's an absolute joy and the best writer I know. And that is the result that you saw, a series that could have been dry and flat and talked about policy issues and been wonky that way, except it wasn't, because Audra so viscerally elevated the storytelling. And she's going to talk about that in a little bit.

We also did something that was very new for the *Miami Herald*. We had a guy there who was really our first data visualization specialist, Lazaro Gamio, who is really the key to that database. And we use the word database, but it's the wrong word. It's the place where we stored the stories of now, close to 550 dead children.

We made a commitment early on to recognize every one of those kids because they were the reason why we did this. There's so much more to say but I really want to hand the mic over to Audra.

I want to thank you all very, very much. I want to thank Casey and our bosses, who made an incredible commitment to take a dive that lasted three or four years and for an expenditure of resources that was unprecedented in this market, this economy.

If you've seen what's happened to the *Herald*, we were stretched so thin to devote the kind of resources that we did to this. Thank you. (Applause)

**Ms. Burch:** Early on, we decided that we wanted to really humanize this project, and Carol and I decided that we really wanted this, as she said, to rise above policy. In order to do that, and the way that we decided to do that, is that we really, really wanted to write about every single one of these children, every one of them. All 477 of them, and that's what we did.

We literally wrote about every single one of them. And the idea was not just to mark their death, but in fact to mark their very, very short lives.

And to do that, we zigzagged the state with Emily Michot, who is a remarkable photographer and videographer. We went to prisons, we went to cemeteries, we went to funeral homes, and we went everywhere that we could that we thought would fill in the blanks and help us to understand who these children were.

And then when we came back, we collected as many photos as we could. We read through obits, we read through medical examiner reports. Then we went to these bereaved families and they most often were grandmothers. And sat with them and asked them to please tell us who these children were.

And so we started to learn things like their favorite dump truck color and the fact that little girls want to be princesses when they grow up and little boys love pets that they can call, that they can be with and play with and in some cases, we had a little boy who died with his pet. He died with his pet in a garage.

In addition to the policy and in addition to letting our readers know how flawed the system was, most importantly, it was to give our readers a sense of the toll, what this really, really meant to our community, what the losses were.

And so, in the end, what we really felt like we had done was that we weren't going to leave any child behind. That's why it took so long, so I'm thankful, I'm thankful that Carol wanted to work with me. And I'm thankful for Casey, who was an amazing editor and who also was the greatest person on earth to go get Subway sandwiches at 10 o'clock at night. (Laughs)

And most importantly, we thank the *Herald*, because they didn't have to. They chose to invest in this project. And so on behalf of the *Miami Herald*, Carol, Casey, thank you. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Tomorrow morning, we're going to be having a panel over on the top of the Taubman Building with all of the finalists, talking about how they did what they did. So I hope you'll join us for that.

Some of you, not all, but some, first heard the distinctive baritone voice of Marvin Kalb when he was part of the celebrated golden age of CBS News. Marvin was in fact the last of the fabled Edward R. Murrow hires at CBS, the "Murrow Boys."

It included a group of pioneering newsmen who created, quite literally, created television news. That second generation of Murrow Boys included such newsmen as Walter Cronkite, Daniel Schorr, and Marvin. Not a bad start for a career in news.

The word most often associated with Marvin Kalb professionally these days, is distinguished. But a few decades ago, the words would have been “indefatigable” and “insightful.” Those words in fact could just as well be used today.

Marvin and his brother Bernie, who is with us tonight, were two of television news’ true stars. And they have remained in the top level of hard-working journalists for such a long time, it sets a standard that is hard to imagine anyone besting.

For Marvin, the career journey has had many way stations, and all of them high points. First, CBS News, where he earned himself a place on President Richard Nixon’s “enemies list,” which carried as much prestige as any journalism award.

Then at NBC News, he was Chief Diplomatic Correspondent and Host of “Meet the Press.” Throughout, that unmistakable voice was one of probing, of reason, and of journalistic inquiry. Marvin Kalb, from the start of his career, stood for a kind of ethical, painstaking, and searching journalism that made him a model of enduring values.

In the mid 1980’s, he was persuaded to become the founding director of what is now the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. I am his successor, an honor that makes me quite proud.

At Harvard, Marvin was not only the center director but also the Edward R. Murrow Professor. Interestingly, one of his students was Bill O’Reilly. (Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** Though I’m not sure O’Reilly did his homework when it came to the part about not exaggerating. (Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** Marvin shaped the Shorenstein Center after his own image. A place of seriousness and high mindedness, committed to the best in journalism, a legacy that endures.

He also has co-authored or authored nine nonfiction books and two novels. His latest, *The Road to War: Presidential Commitments Honored and Betrayed*, examines the presidential commitments and decision making that has led to war, a subject of prescient importance. And he has a new book coming out in June, entitled *Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War*.

Those of us who know Marvin continue to marvel at his work ethic. He is host of The Kalb Report, a monthly discussion of media ethics and responsibility, where he has interrogated everyone from Rupert Murdoch to Hillary Clinton.

He is the James Clark Welling Fellow at George Washington University and a member of the Atlantic Community Advisory Board, and a guest scholar in foreign policy at The Brookings Institution.

While Marvin has had many awards and honors, none was more of a gesture of respect and affection than the creation of the Marvin Kalb Professorship at the Kennedy School.

When Marvin left the Kennedy School to return to Washington in 1999, his great friend and the Shorenstein Center's great friend, Ambassador Hushang Ansary, endowed the professorship in his name. We hoped that he would be with us tonight. He wanted to be, but was not able to.

Since leaving Cambridge, Marvin has continued his active, productive life at his usual blistering pace. And it's my guess that there are several more books in that very fertile mind, that incredibly determined will to stay engaged in the issues that have fascinated and intrigued him for more than half a century.

Tonight we are here to celebrate his long and distinguished career as a journalist, a scholar, an author, and a man of great character who has devoted his life to journalism of the very highest caliber. It is my pleasure to award this year's Goldsmith Career Prize to my colleague and friend, Marvin Kalb.

(Applause)

**Mr. Kalb:** Alex, thank you very much for that overly generous introduction, and you know the story – my father would have loved it and my mother would have thought it woefully inadequate. (Laughter)

**Mr. Kalb:** I want to thank a number of people here tonight Alex. Not just you, but the people at the Shorenstein Center, where I spent 12 marvelous years. Loved every moment of it, and I want to thank them. And I want to thank you for having led the Center so impressively over the past 15 years. You deserve a big hand. (Applause)

**Mr. Kalb:** I want to thank Dean Ellwood, who has been a great fan and a great supporter of the Center and is terribly important to us from day one to tonight. Thank you for being with us. (Applause)

**Mr. Kalb:** I want to thank the Greenfield family. And I want to tell you guys that I've met a lot of people in my life, but Bob Greenfield was so incredibly special. He was for some people on this planet, a mensch of the highest dimension.

He was a class act and it was an honor to work with him to set up the Goldsmith Prize. And when we did, we didn't know if it would really take, but it's now rooted in journalism. And of course, \$25,000 a year per prize doesn't hurt.

I also want to thank Walter Shorenstein. I know he's no longer with us, but so far as I'm concerned he's here, sitting right up front. I want to thank members of

my family for coming tonight, my friends, students, faculty. Thank you all very much.

I want to start with two stories about a journalist and a craft we call journalism. There may be some things to these stories for us to think about. The first story takes us back to December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

Edward R. Murrow, the CBS journalist then covering the London blitz in World War II, had a dinner date with President Roosevelt, made weeks before. He was sure it would be postponed, given what had happened earlier that day. But Roosevelt wanted to hear about how the British people and the British government were holding up during the blitz.

Murrow was informed that dinner with the President was still on. But it might not start until after midnight. Is that okay? It was okay.

During dinner and after, Roosevelt asked Murrow about the Brits and the blitz. And then he turned to Pearl Harbor. Murrow, like most Americans, knew only what the White House had released earlier that day. The surprise Japanese attack, American casualties, ships and planes lost. No more.

We did not have live broadcasts back then. We could not see the destruction nor interview people caught up in the confusion and turmoil. Roosevelt, setting no ground rules, what was on the record or off, proceeded to fill in many of the blanks. The number of ships sunk, the number of planes destroyed. He lamented at one point, "On the ground, by God, on the ground."

And of course, the number of Americans killed and wounded. These were not exact numbers, they were estimates. It was still too early after the attack. But exact enough to paint for Murrow a dismal, depressing picture of an unforgettable moment in American history.

There was no longer any doubt in his mind that the U.S. was going to enter World War II. Roosevelt also told Murrow that on December 8, he would go to Congress and request a declaration of war against Japan.

The last declaration of war, by the way, ever requested by an American president, though we have been involved in many wars since, but that would take us into another story.

When this extraordinary briefing was over, Murrow left the White House with a question on his mind. He had a great story, no doubt of that. Roosevelt had never said, “off the record,” and in fact, there were no ground rules at all.

Murrow could have gone to the CBS bureau and done the first report on the true costs of Pearl Harbor. In fact, maybe that was what was on the President's mind, really. Maybe that's what he expected that Murrow would do.

Roosevelt, after all, was no innocent in press management. He understood the game of politics and the role of the press in it. But Murrow did not do a broadcast. He returned to his hotel room to think about what had happened to America on that day, December 7, 1941. And then, to think some more.

Later in the morning, Murrow went to Capitol Hill to hear the president request the declaration of war and that night, on CBS radio, Murrow's report was a work of art. It was rich with detail, much of it still new, thoughtful, well written, important. Question: What would the Murrow of today do with this kind of presidential exclusive?

My second story also concerns Murrow, only the date and location have changed. It is now April 12, 1945, the day Roosevelt died, by the way, and the place is Buchenwald, the Nazi death camp liberated that day by General Patton's Third Army.

The small group of reporters, including Murrow, visited Buchenwald. He smelled death, “evil smelling,” he later said. He saw corpses stacked like cordwood. He saw men too thin, too weak to get out of bed, 1,200 men in a stable built to hold 80 horses.

During his visit, Murrow did something he would not normally have done. He'd won a lot of money the night before with his CBS colleagues playing poker and he kept giving it away – small gifts to any of the liberated prisoners who came his way.

On reflection, it's clear Murrow could not deal with what he had just seen: what man was capable of doing to other men. When he left Buchenwald, Murrow could not find the words to report on this visit.

Other reporters could and did, but Murrow could not. For three days, he suffered with a search for what he called “the right words.” When he found them, he composed what are the greatest reports in the history of broadcast news.

I hope, by the way, that everyone here will take the time to listen to it. In fact, with the rise of Islamic fanaticism, and anti-Semitism in Western Europe in the last several months, this may be the right time to listen to Murrow on Buchenwald.

“Permit me,” he began, “to tell you what you would have seen and heard had you been with me on Thursday. It will not be pleasant listening. If you are at lunch or if you have no appetite to hear what Germans have done, now is a good time to switch off the radio.”

Then, with contained passion, delivered with his characteristic staccato beat, he described the camp, the emaciated bodies, the anguished look in the

survivors' eyes. He hoped his words, the pictures that they drew, could somehow convey the reality of the Nazi death camp.

But he wasn't sure, and he closed with these words, "I pray you to believe what I have said. I have reported what I saw and heard, but only part of it. For most of it, I have no words."

Another question: How would the Murrow of today deal with a Buchenwald type story? Perhaps a more appropriate question would be, can there be a Murrow today? Someone who has a December 7 exclusive with the President, no less, and doesn't report it. Someone who could wait three days before telling the story of Buchenwald.

My sense is CBS would not take kindly to that kind of reporting. In the journalistic art, from Murrow to let us say, Brian Williams, it could be argued that not only the business of journalism, but the very definition of journalism has changed dramatically and irrevocably.

In, out, next. That is the rapid, relentless rhythm of contemporary newsmaking. Except for the people we honored tonight. In, out, next. On the other hand, thinking, reflection, perspective, that's all well and good. But not for now and maybe not ever.

Of course, it could also be argued that journalism as a craft has not changed at all. Only the technology has changed. Like the Gutenberg Bible, like the telegraph in the 1840s, like the Internet today, the technology keeps changing but not the craft of journalism. It is still the same effort to find out what's going on and tell us about it.

Maybe, many years from now, when we look back upon this time, we'll learn the true impact of the digital age on our democracy, how we govern ourselves. We already know its impact on journalism: fewer newspapers, tighter budgets,

continuing cutbacks, personal anxiety, less respect for journalists and journalism.

Fighting this depressing trend is the mushrooming of alternative journalistic enterprises, mostly on websites, but any number of newspapers do, which provide not only jobs but hope for the future.

I have in mind GlobalPost, for example, and the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, where I currently hang my hat, and others such as ProPublica. Everyone is trying to find a workable, sustainable, financial model for modern journalism.

And this is not exactly the right time to sit back and figure out where we are in American journalism. In the last month or so, we have all lost a courageous journalist in CBS' Bob Simon, a remarkable journalist and columnist Arnaud de Borchgrave, an incredibly talented writer in David Carr of *The New York Times*.

We have also lost, if that is the right verb, John Stewart of Comedy Central, the man more undergraduates turn to for their daily news fix than any other TV performer.

And we have all watched the evening news descend another step toward irrelevance, when NBC's chief anchorman Brian Williams was forced to step down for six months – I think it will be a lot longer – charged, charitably put, with the modern TV version of self-aggrandizement. Clearly, he exaggerated his role in covering the Iraq war and the Katrina storm, something other anchors, such as Fox's Bill O'Reilly have also been accused of doing.

On talk shows, Williams seemed to boast about his role as a reporter, the risks he faced, and the courage he showed. All I suspect in an effort to beef up his ratings for the nightly news program. Forgetting that, whether on talk shows or nightly news, he was the face of NBC and many people believed him.

O'Reilly, in a similar situation, reacted by fighting back fiercely and then watching his ratings soar by 11 percent.

Why did Williams do what he did? One, because he's a terrific storyteller. He loves to spin a yarn. And two, the pressure of ratings drive TV anchors, newspaper columnists, probably even university professors, excuse me, Dean, to push the boundaries of truth telling to attract a wider audience, sometimes for no reason more compelling than the desire to get a return invitation.

Truth in the digital age has become a slippery commodity, exploited, expanded, and manipulated for maximum personal or professional advantage. My concern is the effect of digital reporting on our democracy.

In the mid 1990s, I did a research paper for the Shorenstein Center called "The New News," my very modest attempt to explain the changes then rocketing through the industry. Looking back, I realize I barely scratched the surface.

We have in fact been living through a revolution in communications, unlike any the world has ever seen or experienced before. It's Gutenberg to the nth power. It affects everything: reality and our perception of reality.

We see and understand things through the many prisms that compose the digital age. The ubiquitous iPhones, Twitter, social media, Instagrams, all the rest. New today, discardable tomorrow. Nothing any longer seems durable.

We are understandably fascinated by the new news, the new technology, the digital age. But so is the Islamic State. So are Presidents Obama and Putin. The world is now wired for instantaneous communication, everyone searching for and expecting immediate answers and gratification.

For example, a morning Poroshenko comment on Ukraine becomes instant fodder for analysis and decision making. Not just by journalists but also by presidents. What's new here is the speed and the effect of that speed.

It has now come to be expected by the noon briefing or sooner. The administration will have produced an official policy statement or an evasive non-statement in response to Poroshenko.

Let's say that the question is, should we send lethal weapons to Ukraine? "Yes," says a ready Senator McCain, and he's on television, by the way, more than an anchorman. "Yes," echoes the Washington think tank, Brookings in this case. "No, for God's sake," implore a few pale and innocent professors.

If someone is keeping score, the yeses seem to be winning this debate. Mid-afternoon, an always reliable source hints that the President is close to a decision. And by evening news time, the White House says definitively, that the president has not yet made up his mind. That he's still thinking about sending lethal arms to Ukraine.

Reporters frown. They've heard all this before. Their copy reflects their impatience and disappointment. "He is indecisive. He is a poor leader," they say. This judgment, by the way, is made in Washington. But because of the technology, it becomes instantaneous wisdom all over the world.

Tom Brokaw calls this "The Big Bang Theory of Modern Day Journalism," and I should add, public policy deliberation as well. And presidents, frustrated often by much of this mindless chatter, seek new ways to go around the mainstream media and directly to the voter – an unfortunate pattern of evasion that presidents from Richard Nixon to Barack Obama have employed to duck the inquisitive reporter – put off by the headline writers and understandably perhaps, and aware that only 20 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 14 actually read a daily newspaper. President Obama now prefers to give interviews to targeted audiences, generally websites such as Vox, BuzzFeed, and more recently, YouTube, where younger audiences get their news.

Dan Pfeiffer, Obama's media guru until recently, has been absorbed at the White House for a lot of years studying politics in the digital age. "We're on the cusp," he said, "of a massively disruptive revolution."

A revolution, I suspect, that will also have profound consequences for our democracy. Rather than deliberate, if necessary, slowly, carefully, we're pressed into quick decisions by the relentless demands of digital technology. Little priority is reserved for a careful consideration of policy options. Not always, but rarely.

I know, I know that we have all survived. And some of us have even prospered as a result of earlier technological revolutions and maybe we'll survive this one too. But we don't know. In a revolution such as this one in communications, we can't know until it's over.

Crane Brinton used to say here, the same thing about the French Revolution. "But when it is over, I fear, we may only be left with a tattered, fragile version of our once vibrant democracy."

Allow me for a moment to invoke Murrow once again. Way back in 1958, when his best days as a reporter were behind him, Murrow wondered whether the new technology of his day, namely, television, was helping or hurting our democracy. Whether it was raising the educational levels, making people smarter, more knowledgeable about national and world affairs, or whether it was doing no such thing. He concluded that television in the preceding decade had failed the American people, producing in his words, "Decadence, escapism, and insulation from the realities of the world in which we live."

I think Murrow, were he alive today, would find little reason to change his judgment. And with what is now called cable news, he would, I suspect, be even more inclined toward his original judgment.

He did advance a possible solution. Now, I'd advance it again this evening, but I don't think it represents our salvation, even if accepted and acted upon. And that is, that each of the 20 or 30 major corporations sponsoring radio and TV programs devote one hour or two every year to the networks, for a discussion of important issues like the presidential election.

That would represent minimally 20 or 40 hours of additional programming on these issues, all without the usual six minutes per hour break for commercial interruption. Murrow's idea was not accepted in 1958 and I doubt that it will be accepted today. But his concerns ought to be explored and respected.

He described the American people as “wealthy, fat, comfortable, and complacent.” True then and probably true today as well. He then quoted columnist Heywood Broun, saying “No body politic is healthy until it begins to itch.”

Murrow in a sense wanted us to itch. And what produced the itch, as he saw it, was good television. It has awesome potential and its influence and power are still pervasive. It's even invaded the iPhone and the wristwatch.

But in Murrow's view, “if this instrument, television, is good for nothing but to entertain, amuse, and insulate, then the tube is flickering.” And then he added a short paragraph, which has been quoted thousands of times.

“This instrument can teach, it can illuminate, yes, it can even inspire. But it can only do so to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise, it's nothing but lights and wires in a box.”

Now today we know it's wires and lights in a cloud, no longer a box. But the same challenge beckons to the leaders of American media and is important to American journalists operating now under severe financial and technological pressures.

We are still a free and open society, and in my experience, the best lubricant for a free and open society is a virile, unafraid press. Doing its constitutionally guaranteed job of finding out what's going on and telling us about it, even if people in authority do not like what you're telling us.

With a free press, the sky's the limit. Without it, we are, to quote a former President, “in deep doo doo.”

I close now with a story about my undergraduate days at the City College of New York. I took a course there in creative writing, thinking one day, like the Dean, I could be a writer. Professor Teddy Goodman was my teacher. He asked his students to write short stories, measuring them all in fits of wild exuberance against the work of James Joyce.

Every week, a student or two would read his short story to the class and invite comments, good or bad. And then Goodman, standing in the back of room, would walk to the front and pronounce, “Yes, you may be a writer one day.” Or, “No, you ought to go to dental school.” (Laughter)

**Mr. Kalb:** Well, one day my turn came. I read my story. I thought it was pretty good. A few students agreed. And then came the Goodman moment. He strode to the front of the class. I thought I saw a mischievous look in his eyes.

He asked for my story. I handed it to him. He glanced at it, looked at me, and pronounced, “This is a very promising story.” And then he paused, but only for a moment, before proclaiming in a loud, theatrical voice, “for the waste bin,” at which point he threw my story in the waste bin. (Laughter)

**Mr. Kalb:** I was left in a state of shock. My mouth opened, tears forming, before I rushed out of his room only to hear Goodman shouting after me, “Kalb, all you will ever be in life is a journalist.” (Laughter)

**Mr. Kalb:** Poor Teddy Goodman. He didn't realize he had just paid me the ultimate compliment. Thank you all very much. (Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** We're running a bit late, but if there are some of you who have a question or two, we will be glad to, I'm sure Marvin will be glad to use his journalistic voice to respond. There are microphones here and there, up here and over here.

If I may, Marvin, I'd like to ask the first. You've talked about journalism in pretty despairing tones. And yet, you persist. And yet, you keep on keeping on as a journalist.

When you do your work, do you feel that you're doing something that has meaning now? Is it something that you hope will inspire others? What is the thing that motivates you to keep on producing, keep on inquiring, keep on working?

**Mr. Kalb:** Alex, it depends on the day of the week. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, I'm very optimistic. And the other days, I have my doubts. But I did mention here that there are new organizations being formed now. ProPublica, GlobalPost, whose chief is right here with us, the Pulitzer Center, where I hang out, that are together trying to create and trying to fill the blank left by what newspapers and networks used to do so well, and still in many cases do superbly well.

But it's always the exception that is really so terrific. And I believe that in this struggle to find some place between what was and what could be, there are these new organizations coming along on the websites, that as I said, create jobs and create hope.

And in that creation of hope, one likes to believe that though we may not be around to see it, we would like to believe that, what is it, five, 10, 15, 20 years

down the road, the depression which many of us feel about journalism today will have passed. And we'll be back to where we should be. And I always feel and, I mean, the joke about Teddy Goodman was that while he may not have produced the writers that he liked, he produced a lot of terrific journalists. And that for me is just a wonderful place to be.

**Mr. Jones:** On that note we will adjourn. Thank you very much. I want to say again, congratulations to all the finalists and winner and of course, to you, Marvin. I would like to invite you all to join us tomorrow at 8:30 for breakfast on the top of the Taubman Building, which is just across the way, and then for a riveting panel.

It really is quite fascinating, in which the people who are the journalists who created this Goldsmith Award winning journalism will talk about how they did what they did, what they had to overcome, the way the sausage is made. It's always a riveting experience. Hope you'll join us. Thank you all very much. Glad you were here. (Applause)