

**ARTICLE-REVIEW ON THE BOOK BY Stephen J. Berry Watchdog Journalism:  
The Art of Investigative Reporting (University of Iowa, 2009. New York,  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 290 p.)**

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**СТИВЕН Ж. БЕРРИНИНГ "КУЗАТУВ ЖУРНАЛИСТИКАСИ: ЖУРНАЛИСТИК  
СУРИШТИРУВ САНЪАТИ" КИТОБИГА ТАҚРИЗ-МАҚОЛА (Айова  
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**СТАТЬЯ-РЕЦЕНЗИЯ НА КНИГУ СТИВЕНА ДЖ. БЕРРИ  
«СТОРОЖЕВАЯ ЖУРНАЛИСТИКА: ИСКУССТВО ЖУРНАЛИСТ-СКИХ  
РАССЛЕДОВАНИЙ» (Университет Айовы, 2009. Нью-Йорк, Оксфорд:  
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**Abstract.** While witnessing a flood of media failings in 2002 and 2003 in the United States, and especially, *the New York Times* stunningly detailed mea culpa concerning its mistakes in covering the run-up to the United States' war in Iraq, the author, a former investigative reporter, decided to show how watchdog journalism should work. The author selected six Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative projects of various-size newspapers and showed how the projects started, proceeded, and brought about change. The selected newspapers are *The Orlando Sentinel* in Florida (chapter 1), *The Willamette Week* in Oregon (chapter 2), *The Toledo Blade* in Ohio (chapter 3), *The Baltimore Sun* in Maryland (chapter 4), *The New York Times* in New York (chapter 5), *The Los Angeles Times* in California (chapter 6). Each chapter presents a backstory on each investigative reporting based on the author's interviews with the reporters who carried out the investigative project. The book supplies full details on the path to finding out the truth by various investigative skills. The author emphasized that investigative journalism can be done individually or as a team at any size newspaper regardless of obstacles or corporate pressures, if only the journalist is armed with the investigative mentality. The

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author writes that this investigative mentality is required these days when corporate pressure on the media is widespread.

**Keywords:** investigative reporting; investigative reporter; investigative mentality; project; beat reporting; cash seizure; Neil Goldschmidt; Tiger Force; shipbreaking industry; adult homes; King/Drew hospital.

**Аннотация.** Америка Қўшма Штатларида 2002 ва 2003 йилдаги медиа муваффақиятсизликлар тўфони, айниқса, New York Timesдаги ҳолатни кузатганидан сўнг, АҚШнинг Ироқдаги урушини ёритишда йўл қўйган камчиликларини тасвирлар экан, муаллиф, журналистик суриштирувлар олиб борган собиқ мухбир, watchdog журналистика қандай ишлаши кераклигини кўрсатишга қарор қилди. Муаллиф олти Пулицер мукофоти совриндори бўлган тадқиқот лойиҳаларини танлаб олди ва бу лойиҳалар қандай бошлангани, тараққий этганини кўрсатди. Танланган газеталар: Флоридадаги “The Orlando Sentinel” (1-боб), Орегондаги “The Willamette Week” (2-боб), Охиодаги “The Toledo Blade” (3-боб), Мериленддаги “The Baltimore Sun” (4-боб), Нью-Йоркдаги “The New York Times” (5-боб), Калифорниядаг “The Los Angeles Times” (6-боб). Ҳар бир бобда суриштирув лойиҳасини олиб борган журналистлар билан муаллифнинг интервьюлари берилган бўлиб, улар асосида суриштирув лойиҳалари қандай олиб борилгани очиқ берилган. Китобда турли суриштирув кўникмалари ёрдамида ҳақиқатни топиш йўли батафсил баён етилган. Муаллиф журналист суриштирув менталитети билан қуролланган экан, тўсиқлар ёки корпоратив босимдан қатъи назар, журналистик суриштирув ҳар қандай ҳажмдаги газетада яқка тартибда ёки жамоада олиб борилиши мумкинлигини таъкидлаб ўтади. Муаллифнинг ёзишича, бундай суриштирув менталитети оммавий ахборот воситаларига корпоратив босим кенг тарқалган шу кунларда зарур.

**Калит сўзлари:** журналистик суриштирув; суриштирув олиб боровчи мухбир; суриштирув менталитети; лойиҳа; уруш мавзусини ёритиш; нақд пул олиш; Нейл Голдсмит; Tiger Force; кема саноат; катталар уйлари; King/Drew шифохонаси.

**Аннотация.** Наблюдая за потоком неудач средств массовой информации в США в 2002 и 2003 годах, и особенно в *New York Times*, в потрясающе детализированной статье о своих ошибках в освещении подготовки к войне Соединенных Штатов в Ираке автор, бывший журналист-расследователь, решил показать, как должна работать сторожевая журналистика. Автор отобрал шесть исследовательских проектов газет разного размера, получивших Пулитцеровскую премию, и показал, как эти проекты начинались, развивались и привели к изменениям. Выбранные газеты: *The Orlando Sentinel* во Флориде (глава 1), *The Willamette Week* в Орегоне (глава 2), *The Toledo Blade* в Огайо (глава 3), *The Baltimore Sun* в Мэриленде (глава 4), *The New York Times* в Нью-Йорке (глава 5), *The Los Angeles Times* в Калифорнии (глава 6). В каждой главе представлена предыстория каждого репортажа о расследовании, основанная на интервью автора с репортерами, выполнявшими исследовательский проект. В книге подробно рассказывается о том, как узнать правду с помощью различных исследовательских навыков. Автор подчеркивает, что журналистские расследования могут проводиться

индивидуально или в команде в газете любого размера независимо от препятствий или корпоративного давления, если только журналист вооружен исследовательским менталитетом. Автор пишет, что подобный исследовательский менталитет востребован в наши дни, когда корпоративное давление на СМИ широко распространено.

**Ключевые слова:** журналистские расследования; журналист-расследователь; исследовательский менталитет; проект; отчеты об ударах; изъятие наличных денег; Нил Гольдшмидт; *Tiger Force*; судоразделочная промышленность; дома для взрослых; Больница Кинга / Дрю.

## I. Introduction of the Book: An overall view, the author, and motivation

The book, entitled “Watchdog Journalism: The Art of Investigative Reporting” (2009) authored by Stephen J. Berry, is a product by a journalism professor and former journalist who had participated in the investigative journalism himself. This book of 290 pages tries to provide education and description on how and why investigative journalism should be practiced by giving details of investigation in the form of backstories on six Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative projects (p. 1). The book consists of eight parts: introduction, six chapters, and conclusions. Berry spent multiple hours interviewing 25 journalists for this book, and on each of the six project stories, i.e., six chapters, he extracted lessons from each project with the purpose of teaching or showing how to do investigative journalism to journalism students, practicing journalists, and readers. The format of each chapter consists of various sections or points of the investigative reporting, postscript, and lesson of each investigative project.

Here is an overview of the six chapters. Chapter 1 disclosed a special antidrug team’s race-discriminatory seizure of cash from motorists driving south on the I-95 highway. Chapter 2 revealed the truth of a rumor of three decades that a powerful and influential Oregon politician had sex with an underage babysitter, which constitutes a statutory rape, and covered it up. Chapter 3 brought to light the concealed war crimes committed during the Vietnam War by members of the Tiger Force unit of the US Army. Chapter 4 exposed how the new industry called “shipbreaking” could kill, maim people, and pollute the environment through national and international coverage. Chapter 5 showed how the mentally ill were exploited by money-pursuing doctors and managers of adult homes. Chapter 6 presented a tenacious journalistic challenge to the disastrous malpractices of King/Drew hospital, which had been protected by the cocoon of black people’s interests, by adroitly avoiding a racially sensitive issue of the black vs white. The book reviewer mostly summarized the chapters and attached personal comments where deemed needed. The reviewer shed light on the starting point and the situation, because when and under what situation the journalist makes a decision to launch the investigative project is significant. However, the author showed each step of the investigation.

The book does not provide any separate space for the author’s biography. The Introduction gives some information about him. The author worked as a journalist for 33 years at small, medium-sized, and large dailies and spent four years studying and teaching basic and investigative reporting. He liberally detailed his career background in Chapter 1 entitled “Investigative Mentality Exposes Cash Seizure Abuse”. According to the author, the idea of this book is rooted in his personal reaction to the rash of major media failings, particularly

in the coverage of US march to war in Iraq in 2002 and early 2003. The author, a lifelong admirer of *the New York Times*, described that this newspaper's "stunningly detailed mea culpa concerning its shocking mistakes in covering the run-up to the war" was a wake-up call for him. The author also cited other media failings such as CBS, where broadcasting icon Dan Rather muffed the story about President George W. Bush's National Guard record (p. 2). While mentioning the outpour of studies about what went wrong and the flourishing of media criticism industry, it seems, the author decided to buttress the investigative reporting. The author shows six cases of investigative reporting and puts emphasis on the investigative mentality regardless of the sizes of news organizations, whether one journalist or a team of journalists takes on the projects. The author argues that journalists armed with the investigative mentality can overcome all the obstacles including profit pressures and that thereby they can carry out the "sacred mission of giving voice to the voiceless."

## II. Six chapters, six investigative projects

### Chapter 1. Investigative Mentality Exposes Cash Seizure Abuse

Outline: "Tainted Cash or Easy Money" by *The Orlando Sentinel* was written by Steve Berry, the author of this book, and Jeff Brazil. The chief editor Mike Ludden was involved. This investigate reporting was entitled "Tainted Cash or Easy Money? Volusia Deputies Have Seized \$8 Million from I-95 Motorists. The Trap Is for Drug Dealers, But Money Is the Object. Three of Every four Drivers Were Never Charged." The first three-day package ran on June 14-16, 1992, and the second package on August 23, 1992. This series of stories dealt with an event where a special antidrug police team confiscated cash from motorists driving south on the I-95 highway in Florida. Although the general press coverage of this team's feat was a success story in cracking down on drug transportation, a closer look into this team's antidrug operation by the two investigative reporters disclosed selective confiscation of cash from drivers, mostly targeting black and Hispanic motorists. This kind of investigative reporting could be meaningful to the book reviewer in the U.S., where racial discrimination theoretically and in principle disappeared during the last century but it still is realistically widespread even in 2020.

Situation: Florida had a ballyhooed state law called the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act. This act permitted police to confiscate money from drug dealers and suspected drug dealers. It was known that the highway Interstate-95 is the perfect narco-trail. Sheriff Bob Vogel was one of the most popular and well-known law enforcement officers in the state for his operation of specially trained Selective Enforcement Team (SET) for his feats in stopping illegal narcotics trafficking. The Central Florida press coverage of the I-95 drug interdictions program played to the public support for law enforcement's battle against drug crimes. In appearance, there was no problem with this antidrug team's operation. But a closer look by investigative reporters showed a totally different aspect.

The starting point and investigation: The section "Big Haul Stirs Press" in the text shows the starting point of this investigation (p. 8). On January 30, 1992, Sgt. Jones unknowingly put the drug interdiction program on the newspaper's front burner when he stopped a van on I-95 and found \$697,599 hidden in a secret compartment under the vehicle. It was a record and brought the total seizure amount since the program's inception to \$7.7 million. That caught a lot of people's attention, including editor Ludden's. In February, Ludden directed Brazil to take a look at the program. Brazil's initial

examination of a sampling of records for about a dozen cases revealed something that could shatter the public's perception of Vogel's I-95 antidrug campaign (p. 8). "It was not what the program had appeared before — kicking ass in the drug business." Brazil recalled that most of the motorists and their passengers were either Hispanic or black. Equally intriguing was the fact that Vogel had struck deals with several of them in which he returned a portion of money to persons Vogel had claimed were drug dealers in exchange for their written promise not to sue the department for confiscating their cash. Those files only suggested a pattern; they did not establish it. The journalists knew that "they were going to have to look at every single case" (p. 8).

It was time to start the journalistic investigation. Under the 'most open' Florida's Sunshine Law, the investigative team tried to obtain copies of forfeiture files, while Vogel tried to seriously delay their investigation by forcing them to initiate legal action and throwing up administrative procedures that would slow their search considerably or allow him carefully monitor every record the journalists wanted. In addition, the law's flimsy standard of proof gave Vogel's policemen carte blanche to take any amount of money from just about any motorist for almost any reason. In the journalists' view, the standard, known as "probable cause" in legal parlance, let the antidrug team take the money if they could list three or four observations or facts that they considered evidence of illegal activity. According to the files, the incriminating evidence included traces of cocaine on the money, nervousness, too much luggage, too little luggage, a wrinkled military uniform, the way the money was folded, if the money was packaged in \$100 denominations, if the money was in \$20 denominations, hiding the money in a safe place, and so forth (p. 18). To the reviewer, the probable causes sounded so ridiculous. And just having what the policemen believed was a large amount of cash was an element of suspicion? Although carrying a wad of money conflicts with the credit-culture of the educated middle class in the US, it is not unusual to run across many people who carry cash for a variety of reasons (p. 18).

The series and aftermath: The stories started this way. "Volusia County Sheriff Bob Vogel's elite Interstate-95 drug interdiction squad has taken tens of thousands of dollars from motorists against whom there was no evidence of wrongdoing nor any criminal record. (Omitted) And in virtually every case, the people stopped and stripped of their cash were either black or Hispanic. Seizing cash from drug dealers is nothing new. But a review of records by *The Orlando Sentinel* raises questions about tactics and about the ethics of allowing this free-wheeling drug squad to beef up the sheriff's budget with selective traffic stops of people never charged with a crime. (Omitted)" (p. 28, p. 221). The story listed "a series of bullets summarizing the major findings from 262 cases: 90 percent of the motorists who lost their money were black or Hispanic. To avoid court, Vogel's department struck a bargain with motorists, including some who were clearly drug dealers. The story also disclosed that the practice of using a drug-sniffing dog was questionable because most Florida currency carried traces of cocaine (p. 28).

The book reviewer thinks it is a good topic for investigation. But the reviewer has a question about the ways to beef up the sheriff's budget. Although the story explained that the confiscated money was spent on buying better equipment or tools for anti-drug operations, the text does not offer any explanation as to whether this method of beefing up is correct or wrong and as to whether sheriff's budget is sufficient or not. It seems that the series judged that this method of buttressing the budget is plainly wrong. The reviewer would be a bit relieved if the confiscated cash had not been put into the antidrug



teamsters' individual pockets. The reviewer's continuing question is why did the journalists not deal with this issue? Or, did they deal with this but the author did not write about it in the book? Why are Hispanics and blacks targeted instead of whites? The last question could be asked by a foreigner not familiar with the sensitive racial issue in the U.S.

The series was an enormous success. Governor of Florida Lawton Chiles held a press conference to express his outrage at the abuses. He announced a task force would be launched to investigate Vogel's department, determine if other departments were abusing the law, and recommend legislative reforms.

Lessons: Is a new approach to 5W+1H formula required? The author emphasizes journalistic inquisitiveness, investigative mentality, the renewed concept of beat (i.e., beat as a basis of investigative project), how to treat records in a probing manner, and so on. What strikes the reviewer is his new approach to "5W+1H" questions. The author's argument is that backpack journalism based on "5W+1H" formula fails. It does not foster thoughtful use of those questions. "What" and "why" should cover the other four questions. The author emphasized that journalists should produce better stories by asking penetrating what and why questions (p. 37). A useful comment.

## **Chapter 2. Secret Sources, Documents Unlock Dark Secret (of Criminal Underage Sex)**

Outline: *The Williamette Week* in Oregon published investigative stories on several scattered days including May 6, May 12, and December 15 in 2004. Editor Mark Zusman and investigative reporter Nigel Jaquiss were involved. Jaquiss was just one of all the five reporters for the weekly newspaper. Such a small newspaper. The author writes that *The Williamette Week* was not some wimpy weekly newspaper; it was an aggressive, irreverent, but well-established newspaper serving 90,000 readers (pp. 43–44). Jaquiss dug into a local rumor, which had floated for 30 years, about a powerful politician and proved the rumor to be true. The rumor was about a sordid tale of underage sex that involved a 30-year-old secret, a 14-year-old babysitter, and the most powerful man in Oregon State — former Democratic governor and behind-the-scenes kingmaker Neil Goldschmidt. Underage sex constitutes a "statutory rape" and is a crime. Jaquiss investigated the rumor that Goldschmidt had engaged in sex with an underage babysitter starting during his period when he was mayor of Portland, which was 1973 to 1979. Despite serious worries about a potential all-out retaliation from the Goldschmidt and his friends, publisher Richard Meeker gave a final permission to the publication of the story. There was applause and no retaliation to this well-investigated project.

Situation: Reporter Nigel Jaquiss heard a rumor and relayed it to his editor Mark Zusman. In Oregon politics, most anyone who was anybody, including the current governor, had Goldschmidt to thank. Goldschmidt had been a progressive, wildly popular, two-term mayor, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation for President Jimmy Carter in 1979–1980, a top executive for Nike, the governor in 1987–1991 and was now a lobbyist and consultant for some of the biggest corporate names in the state. He had immense influence in local politics. Goldschmidt's influence on publisher Meeker's way of thinking also had been immense. With Goldschmidt's personality and circle of admirers reaching so far and wide and even into the leadership of this newspaper, the question was whether the reporter assigned to investigate might hold back. Given that this man's friends can control the oxygen supply to the paper and that his boss respects Goldschmidt immensely, would he back off? Despite Goldschmidt's connection to Meeker and his power to inflict damage on the

small newspaper Meeker and Zusman had built their lives around, the two owners of the paper gave the reporter free reign to investigate the rumor (p. 45).

Why can a rumor 30 years old be a serious story? Tips about public officials' affairs are fairly routine in journalism. Most are either not true, not worth pursuing, or useless because they cannot be proven or are unimportant even if provable. But this one was different, not just because it involved Neil Goldschmidt, a political heavyweight. This was more than just another rumor; it came with an official public record as a starting point. It was more than just another salacious sex story; it was a statutory rape, a third-degree felony punishable by up to three years in the state penitentiary. And, more importantly, it was a felony that had been covered up for more than 30 years (p. 49). A confidentiality agreement effectively silenced everyone involved (p. 50). However, rumors of womanizing had always dogged Goldschmidt, who was married and a father of two children (p. 48).

Starting point and investigation: At the very least, the tip deserved a due diligent effort, and Jaquiss began the investigation in a routine way — he ran the woman's name through public records indexes. He was hoping the woman had left footprints of her life on a paper trail that he could follow. He wanted to find out everything he could, starting with her date of birth. That would let him calculate whether she would have been under the age of 16 — the age of sexual consent — between 1975 and 1978. The date of birth also would help him confirm that other records bearing the same name applied to her. (p.49) Jaquiss plowed through more than 1,000 pages of official documents, including a trial transcript. Although this case did not involve Goldschmidt, it revealed that the babysitter had been sexually abused from 1975 through 1978. In the rape case, the babysitter said the abuser was a neighbor, a trusted family friend and 21 years her senior. "It was a perfect match" for Jaquiss (p. 52).

After weeks of hard work and relying strictly on the public record, Jaquiss turned a mere rumor into something more concrete. Jaquiss found that the babysitter lived three doors down from Goldschmidt and was the daughter of one of his aides; that she called Goldschmidt "her best friend"; that she was 21 years younger than him; that she had been sexually abused in the 1970s by a neighbor and family friend 21 years older than she; that the abuse occurred between 1975 and 1978 when she would have been 14 to 17 and Goldschmidt would have been mayor of Portland, Oregon; and that she had received about \$350,000 in a hastily arranged settlement that forestalled a suit and swore the victim and her family to secrecy (p. 52). Jaquiss met many anonymous sources who heard stories from the babysitter, who told her heart to them here and there, while drinking and partying with barflies, lawyers, developers, musicians and dope dealers. While collecting details of the girl's unhappy life after the sexual abuse by Goldschmidt and other rape cases, Jaquiss found that the rumor involving Goldschmidt was true.

Publish or not publish? A decisive moment approached when the stories were ready. Goldschmidt offered lunch and there were worries about possible economic retaliation from his loyalists after the publication of the story. Publisher Richard Meeker pondered what was at risk and girded for the worst that could happen. "If we had been wrong, we could have been in very serious trouble." Meeker fully expected Goldschmidt would deny the story, and he worried how the paper could survive if Goldschmidt's powerful friends declared an all-out war on the *Williamette Week*, a paper which did not have bountiful resources. Although the paper survived economic retaliation before, this project had Meeker more on edge than usual. As publisher, Meeker felt it was his job to prepare for what could happen after publication. He expressed

his feelings this way: “I would have this disconcerting sense that in addition to doing good journalism, we were also driving off of a cliff. I was thinking what I can do to help protect us from the potential fallout, and there was nothing that I could do”. But he did not convey his worries to the two investigative reporters, Zusman and Jaquiss (p. 65). Did he ever think about not publishing the story? Meeker’s comment: “The thought never crossed my mind. It’s not that I am some kind of fearless person; but this is the kind of work I did; this is the kind of work we run this newspaper for. To say no to publication in the face of a completed and properly done story would have undercut everything this paper was about”.

Aftermath and Lessons: The stories were bombshells. Reader reaction was instantaneous with hundreds of letters pouring into the paper, most of which condemned Goldschmidt’s behavior. The stories permanently changed the political landscape. In the state capitol, his portrait had been removed from a wall bearing the portraits of other Oregonian governors. At the *Williamette Week*, its staff luxuriated in the afterglow of its journalistic feat. The accolades poured in. It was the greatest feat in its 30-year history, and on April 4, 2005, the national journalism community gave the paper the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting.

What strikes the reviewer is that this small newspaper with only five journalists turned a rumor into a serious investigative story. It is remarkable that the small number of journalists at this newspaper are armed with investigative mentality. Another point is that the newspaper has a very special configuration of advertisers: The biggest advertiser occupies only 3 percent of advertisement revenue. Given that the story deals with a very influential local political figure, it is understandable that many news sources are anonymous. The courage of the publisher should also be noted. In a nutshell, the stories are meaningful in that they uncovered a sex crime that a highly powerful politician had tried to cover up for years. One short note to the title of the chapter. It appears to the reviewer that if the chapter title had “of Criminal Underage Sex,” it could more clearly and powerfully express the message than without the four reviewer-added words.

### **Chapter 3. Persistence, Empathy Used in Tacking Tiger Force Terror**

Outline: *The Toledo Blade* in Ohio. On October 19–22, 2003, the *Blade* published a four-part series entitled “Buried Secrets, Brutal Truths” by national affairs reporter Mike Sallah and state editor Mitch Weiss. This project revealed cruelties tantamount to “war crimes” committed by a unit of US soldiers called the “Tiger Force” during the Vietnam War. This project showed that “covered-up history can also become news.” Persistent pursuit of documents and various interviews revealed wrongdoings committed long ago by some US soldiers for months. After the series, it is not clear whether the Pentagon carried out its promise to look into this case again despite its promise to reexamine the case.

Clues: The project started from the private papers of the military’s top cop, the late Colonel Henry Tufts, commander of the Army Criminal Investigation Division from 1972 to 1974, during the Vietnam War years. His papers led to a revelation of the hidden truth. Before death, Tufts had appointed his personal friend, Michael Woods, the *Blade*’s science and technology writer to be the custodian of the papers. Woods had given Tufts’ papers exclusive access to the *Toledo Blade* for six months. Woods would carry out Tufts’ instructions to open the papers to the public afterwards. Papers amounted to 25,000 pages. Reporter Sallah picked through the papers trying to find stories



for nearly five weeks. Sallah underwent a very long and frustrating process, sometimes working 12 hours a day, not sure he would be able to squeeze anything. When he opened the last box of papers, he found a thin file tabbed the “Coy Allegation.” His eyes locked on to the first 13 words of a crude spreadsheet: “COY alleged that YBARRA killed a Vietnamese infant by cutting the infant’s throat.” In this file Sallah read about American soldiers in a unit called “the Tiger Force” committing barbaric acts: killing elderly farmers working in a rice paddy, raping a teenage girl, dropping grenades in underground bunkers where terrified women and children had sought refuge, torturing prisoners, mutilating dead Vietnamese, and so on (pp. 79–80).

Situation: When the *Blade* launched its war crimes probe into the Tiger Force in late January 2003, Americans were feeling a mix of fear, pride and patriotism. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, still shadowed the American psyche. A wave of patriotism and support for the military swept the country as American soldiers battled Taliban and were assembling near Iraq (p. 80). That backdrop assured the *Blade* that any story of decades-old war crimes would draw controversy and why-now complaints. Critics would pick it apart line by line looking for weaknesses. Sallah and Weiss, who would soon join the investigation team full-time, also were thinking about the ongoing controversy over the Associated Press’ Pulitzer Prize-winning story in 2000 about American soldiers killing more than 100 unarmed refugees at No Gun Ri, South Korea, in 1950 during the Korean War (1950–1953). The team thought that the story should be absolutely flawless to guard against any possible counterattack.

Starting point and investigation: With “Coy Allegation” on hand and some preliminary research on the Vietnam War and the Tiger Force by means of Google, Lexis-Nexis, and other databases, Sallah wrote a memo to his editors outlining possible stories that he could draw from Tufts’ papers. Everybody agreed on the Coy Allegation. The case seemed worse than, or at least substantially different from, the My Lai massacre, because the alleged crimes involved a single unit during a sustained rampage over seven months in 1967. Nearly a dozen soldiers were describing atrocities in about two dozen incidents, with most of them involving one or two Tigers and a few involving larger groups. ... The military investigation appeared to have lasted about four years starting in early 1971, but the Coy Allegation file did not say whether the military had formally charged the accused soldiers and brought them to trial. The case may have been ancient history by the here-and-now standards of journalism, but history becomes news if it has never been revealed, especially if the government covered it up, they thought (p. 80).

An investigative team of two journalists was formed. Upon the team’s request based on the Freedom of Information Act, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Command had sent the investigative records on the Coy Allegation, but the records of only about 100 pages were heavily redacted “for reasons of privacy.” This appeared unconvincing. The team sensed that the Command did not want to supply the whole documents, and in turn had suspicions that they were on to a good story. The records custodian from the National Archives in College Park, Md. found 600-page file on the Tiger Force and would provide access after redacting names and social security numbers in two weeks’ time.

The investigative team collected official documents, books on the Vietnam War, searched the website of the Tiger Force, sent emails to former members of the Tiger Force, and so on. Some wanted to talk, some just shut up. Rion Causey of Liverpool, Calif., a former Tiger Force medic, seemed to talk.

The reporters had to be always conscious of the *Blade*'s financial situation and tried to work on the cheap as much as possible throughout the investigation. The team made a California trip and met Causey. He opened up to the team entirely. He confessed that he used to wake up in cold sweats for years (pp. 89–90).

Causey was with the Tiger Force from October 1967 through March 1968, a period that included the last three months of the unit's rampage through the Central Highlands near Chu Lai area of Vietnam. When he joined the unit, he found a stressed-out, angry platoon bent on revenge for heavy losses in the previous month. "Everybody was bloodthirsty," he told Sallah. "We just came in and cleared out the civilian population." Causey told him that he counted 120 villagers killed by the Tiger Force in the Chu Lai area in one month. Causey confessed that he clearly knew the killings were wrong but did not condemn them at the time (p. 90). This was the first clear breakthrough for the team. The team began to realize that there was definitely a story and that they could track it down (p. 90).

The documents of about 600 pages from the National Archives gave descriptions about the Tiger Force and the battalion to which the squad belonged. Although there were lots of missing pages, the documents essentially backed up what was in the Coy Allegation spreadsheet. Luckily the redactions were sloppily done and many names were not blocked out. They could match war crimes in the archives with the Coy Allegations. The records provided more sources, including the name of the chief investigator. The records fleshed out the Coy Allegation. Moreover, the records contained no evidence that any of the alleged crimes were ever tried in a court-martial, increasing reporters' suspicion of a cover-up (pp. 90–91).

The Investigation was carried out in the US and Vietnam. The investigative travelled to Vietnam, visited the places where killings occurred, and heard details of the killings and ear-cutting and so on from the Vietnamese witnesses. The Song Ve Valley, the venue of cruelties, was declared a "fire-free zone" and killing unarmed civilians was not permitted, the team found out.

The reporters had interviews with former Warrant Officer Gustav Apsey who was the lead investigator of the Tiger Force case for four years, and they met the platoon leader Lt. James Hawkins who was in charge of the Tiger Force. They met Sam Ibarra, a member of the Tiger Force, who was living in an Indian Reservation after a dishonorable discharge due to his cruel "wartime crimes." Former Sgt. William Doyle openly and unremorsefully talked about his brutalities to reporters. Apsey, a dogged military investigator, completed the investigation into the Tiger force and recommended criminal charges against several veterans, but he was shipped out to Seoul for his next assignment without explanation. His reports had provided the foundation for the Coy Allegation. Lt. Hawkins was summoned to Washington in November 1975, where he was told the Pentagon concluded wrongdoing occurred. However, the Pentagon concluded that "it's not in the interest of this, that and the other to try to pursue this." It seemed that the Army did not want another round of My Lai controversy (p. 100).

Why go back and write about something that happened 30 years ago right now? The reporters had an answer. "The United States is in another engagement right now in 2003 and this is all the more reason to do this story. The government and we need to make sure this does not happen again." Reporters were resolute.

Aftermath and Lessons: *Blade*'s stories were picked up across the US, and ABC News' *Nightline* followed up with its own interview. NBC and CBS

News, the *New York Times* ignored the story but picked up the story after severe criticisms from some media commentators. The author of this book writes that “the Tiger Force” can be a beat, citing journalists who could accumulate expertise in related areas. The author emphasized skills in developing sources and dealing with anonymous sources, persistence in pursuing stories, and investigative reporting as a matter of news culture.

In comparison with No Gun Ri, this story about the Tiger Force is little known in South Korea. No Gun Ri story was widely reported in South Korea because Korea and Koreans were involved. Given the My Lai stories, it is notable that US journalists did another investigation revealing cruelties committed by US soldiers in Vietnam. It is a bit understandable that the soldiers wanted revenge because of the heavy casualties inflicted on them very recently. However, killing unarmed civilians is war crimes. After the series, the Pentagon announced it would reopen the case by interviewing former soldiers of the Tiger force. However, as of the writing of the book, that is, 2009, there still had been no dramatic action by the government that can be traced directly to the series, the author writes (p. 105).

#### **Chapter 4. Soft Touch Shows Shipbreaking Kills, Maims**

Outline: The stories were published on *The Baltimore Sun* on December 7~9, 1997, entitled “The Shipbreakers” as a three-part series. Reporters Will Englund and Gary Kohn and others formed a team. It came out of Englund’s new newsbeat “waterfront” featuring ships and harbors. A new industry of shipbreaking and its dangers on workers and environmental damage were described in detail. Top editor John Carroll ordered the journalist to dig deeper upon reading Englund’s copy and after domestic and overseas digging and grueling editing processes, the series on shipbreaking came to light. The series provided an impetus for changes in the shipbreaking industry.

Situation: Reporter Englund, 44, who had just finished a long stint as the *Sun*’s Moscow correspondent, was trying to establish a new newsbeat specializing on the waterfront. Early in 1995, Englund motored about Chesapeake Bay and found a 45,000 ton ship, the *USS Coral Sea*, a diesel-powered aircraft carrier. It was once hailed as “The Ageless Warrior.” The ship was lashed to a pier in a sad state of deconstruction. The ship had been moored there because some guy’s contract to break up the ship did not work out due to lack of money. The scrapping had ceased about a year ago, and the latest word was that the ship would be towed to India. There, workers were to swarm this ship and finish the job (pp.113–114).

The ship remained there for a spell, while Englund did several stories on shipwrecks and others. In December 1995, he heard that a Chinese tug had pulled into the harbor to tow the battered aircraft carrier to India. He called the scrapper Kerry Ellis and heard that the US government’s environmental regulations had scuttled his effort and blocked plans to tow it to India. Englund produced a simple feature “about a man with a bright idea that didn’t pan out.” No sooner had the story run than an anonymous tipster called Englund and asked why he did not mention a host of environmental problems linked to shipbreaking, such as disposal of asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which are hazardous compounds used in ships’ electrical and hydraulic systems. He did a couple of stories about this issue, too (p. 114). In mid-March 1996, Englund had learned that the scrapper was in a bankruptcy court, where he found boxes of court records that exposed industry problems publicly (p. 114).

Starting point and investigation: While doing stories on his new beat “waterfront”, an idea occurred to him that the shipbreaking could be an interesting story. Englund’s story on April 28, 1996, described financial problems engendered by US Environmental Protection Agency’s regulations in dealing with PCB’s, dirty and dangerous working conditions in the shipbreaking industry and so on. When this story was published, top editor John Carroll was so fascinated by it. Carroll sensed that there might be a bigger story. Carroll wanted Englund to dig deeper saying that the term “shipbreaking” was new to him and that the topic could take his readers into a world they did not know. The top editor called in Rebecca Corbett, his managing editor, to direct the project, and pulled in Gary Cohn, one of his top investigative reporters. A partnership formed among them. Cohn says, “Editor has unbelievable knack for seeing possibilities in stories” (p. 116).

The investigative team gathered details of mayhem and sights and sounds from visits to a half-dozen shipyards, including Wilmington, N.C., where they found what one source described as “one of Dante’s levels of hell.” In Brownsville, Texas, they saw poorly trained and equipped laborers working in dangerous conditions. (p. 120–121). Journalists usually build cases and then go to the subjects. However, Cohn and Englund approached the shipbreakers as individuals intrigued by the business and wanted to understand their perspective. In approaching the shipbreakers, they sought a neutral, nonjudgmental stance. In joint interviews, Englund characterized their individual roles as “good cop, better cop” approach that seemed to play well with the shipbreakers. They encouraged the laborers, whereas they blamed the poorly-managing supervisors (p.122). While interviewing laborers, a young Mexican law student at a Hispanic rights advocacy group translated and established rapport with mostly Hispanic workers on the sites and assisted reporters in various ways. The student played an intermediary role. The journalists talked to hundreds of workers through the beautiful student (p.123).

Englund’s memo had shown that the shipbreakers were part of an international industry and the line editor Corbett had seen a documentary on Alang, a shipbreaking place in India, and the shipbreaking conditions there. However, she raised the “so-what question.” It is a scene far away from America, not directly linked to Americans. The investigative team found the answer. US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently decided to exempt the Navy and the US Maritime Administration from rules that prohibited them from exporting hazardous materials. The warships and commercial vessels were filled with asbestos, PCBs, lead and other toxic materials. Caught between conflicting federal demands that they profit from the sale of mothballed ships but adhere to all environmental and worker laws, the Navy and maritime authorities saw India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh as the perfect answer. With low wage scales and governments that turned blind eyes to environmental and safety problems, shipbreakers in those distant lands were happy to take American ships with their high-grade steel and handsome pay. Cohn said the linking of US and India, that is, the answer to the “so-what question,” started with a secondhand tip originating from someone inside the EPA. Nevertheless, the Navy and the EPA confirmed the tip (p. 126).

The investigative team went to the sites of shipbreaking in India. It was like a journey to hell. Three journalists visited Alang, India, where imported ships were broken by Indian workers who were eager to work for \$1.5 a day without fussing about dangers under loose Indian government’s regulations. To their eyes, Alang had become the mecca of shipbreaking. The place was haunted by death, but for the workers it was better to “work and die than to starve and

die.” An Indian woman journalist Sharmila Chandra who spoke Hindi played the interpreter, guide and fixer for the American journalists. Chandra helped Americans to collect details on the site from the poor Indian workers (p. 127).

Aftermath and Lessons: When the series was published, the Bill Clinton administration declared a moratorium on sending old ships abroad. A fundamental change in shipbreaking process started. This project could be an instance where “Stories beget stories” was proven. Ideas for news stories can be found in the stories that have been published. Interestingly, it also shows that “some pressure on a beat reporter” from the editor sometimes bears fruit. This project shows that journalists need to look globally even when doing a local story. While writing his beat stories, there was no light-bulb moment, no insightful analytical revelation, no compulsion to drop everything — nothing to hint that he was on the brink of something new and big. It did not even stir him to immediate action. He had a shipwreck story to do and the old warship to be broken would have to wait. But he kept note of it by putting it “in his back pocket.” However, it is certain that Englund’s efforts and the leadership and insight of some senior journalists led to investigative reporting. In the writing process, frontline editor Corbett’s role was also crucial, playing the devil’s advocate. The word was “If you can’t convince your editor, you won’t convince the readers.” It was also proven that all the reporters can be investigative reporters. Englund was a foreign correspondent, and this piece was his first investigative reporting.

### **Chapter 5. Paper Trail Reveals Exploitation of Mentally Ill**

Outline: The investigative reporting by *The New York Times*, April 28–30, 2002. The project was published with the title “A Final Destination; For Mentally Ill, Death and Misery” as a three-part series. Investigative reporter Clifford J. Levy looked at mountains of documents and interviewed concerned people, and revealed that adult homes in New York did not carry out their duty to look after the mentally ill properly. Many residents of adult homes died due to treatable diseases and doctors performed unnecessary operations to make more money. Reporter Levy alone dug into this story and disclosed the miserable conditions of adult homes. The New York State government announced it would take remedial measures, but even after four years, that is, in 2006, it was not clear whether the promises were kept.

Starting point and Investigation: Investigative journalist Levy said, “We came upon this by accident.” It started in early March 2001, when the fax machine at the metro desk ground out a news release announcing that an advocacy group would sue an adult home for the mentally ill in Queens, New York. The fax said that Leben Home for Adults was putting some men through unnecessary prostate surgery. The news release was probably one of the hundreds that flooded the news desk that day. “No one saw it, and we missed the story,” Levy recalled. Only *The New York Post* wrote 210 words on March 10 and stuck it on page four (pp. 145–146). Somehow, the news release landed in front of 47-year-old Joe Sexton, a deputy metro editor. Sexton devoted much of his *Times*’ career to sports and was relatively new in the editing ranks at the paper at that time. Sexton read the release and he thought it was “pretty ghastly.” Sexton hooked Levy with Sarah Kershaw, *Times*’ reporter in Queens, to see if they could find any substance to the claims in the release. A few days later, Levy and Kershaw turned out a 2,000-word, page-one Sunday story reporting how a doctor performed questionable surgeries on 24 Leben Home men. No one had contacted the patients’ relatives for the operation, guardians or primary physicians (p. 146). The problems at the Leben Home had been no secret for



years. At any rate, Levy was intrigued by what he saw. He talked with Sexton and the two agreed to dig a little deeper. The investigation catapulted Levy into a bizarre world chasing a story for the next 12 months (pp. 146–147).

*The New York Times* is famous for its coverage of national and international affairs. However, Levy and Sexton thought that it was a good chance to show that this newspaper was also committed to solid and thorough reporting in its backyard. In addition, Levy, as a computer-savvy journalist, was fully qualified to carry out the investigation by searching and dealing with lots of documents. He began his research. Although the adult home coverage was sparse, the news clips helped to give Levy and his editors reasonable grounds to believe an investigation would bear fruit. Sexton gave Levy free rein. At the start, Levy knew nothing about adult homes for the mentally ill, except for what he had read in the clip files. However, interviews with advocates, clip searches and other research helped him find the paper trail. The clip files had revealed a few suspicious deaths in years past, including a suicide in which the adult home was criticized for failing to provide sufficient security and properly administering the resident's medication. Levy had decided early that the story had to have a strong "statistical undercarriage" about deaths at the adult home, and that the story would focus on the largest homes with the worst conditions (p. 153).

Death certificates were not public in New York. The coroner's records were secret. Someone told Levy that he could get the names of people who had died from Social Security Administration (SSA) records. That would be a good place to start, especially if the SSA records listed the addresses of the dead people. Levy filed a public records request, and launched what he described as "a four- or five-month crusade" for him (p. 154). After two or three weeks, Levy and his editors knew they were on to something. They already knew from the first two stories about Leben Home that it probably would not be a bust. But they did not know where it would go. Nonetheless, they kept broadening it. After two months, they realized that there was a lot to the story (p. 154). The initial reporting was revealing some horrid details: seizure-prone residents dying alone in the throes of a fit; people dying in their rooms from treatable illnesses like appendicitis and no one noticing until the stench of their decaying bodies became overwhelming; suicidal patients leaping from rooftops; a young man dead from a brutal knife at the hands of a roommate with a history of violence; and people dying from the ovenlike heat in their rooms during the hot summer months (p. 152).

Levy and a photographer wanted inside stories and photos. They entered and wandered around adult homes freely because the homes were almost deserted by the staff, although they should be performing their duties. Management was lax at the adult homes. The journalists talked with residents of adult homes and took photos without much restriction. Oftentimes, workers of adult homes gave full details of their patients' deaths and injuries and the adult homes' ugly situations. In talking with workers of adult homes, the journalists used the "classic shoe-leather reporting" approach, finding the name of one and asking for the name of another. The SSA sent Levy an Excel spreadsheet of the dead people. Levy used this spreadsheet as a useful source for further contacts. He regarded it as a Holy Grail (pp. 157–158). After six months on the project, Levy had made substantial progress. By that point, like many project reporters, Levy was so deeply immersed in his work that he developed a tunnel vision (p. 159).

Editors' Perspective, Stages of Reporting vs Writing: While doing the investigation, Levy got the nuts and bolts of the project. But he was so deeply

immersed in the details that he lost perspective, as many investigative journalists do. This was an example of lack of perspective, Levy says. At this stage, editors played the role of “sounding boards.” The editors had good story guts and they were like story doctors. One editor suggested Levy to get “more of a sense of what life is like in the homes,” sending him back into the facilities late in the reporting stage (p. 160). By the time Levy had accumulated “a mass of material,” he somehow had to convert it into an organized, manageable series of stories.

Readers, and probably journalists who have never been involved in a long-term project, do now know how much gets into the writing or the crucial role that editors play at this stage of the project. For many project reporters, the writing starts at various stages. Some write daily by putting chunks of information into draft story form to help them analyze their material. Levy said he found himself reporting and writing simultaneously after halfway through the reporting. Defining a cutoff point on the writing phase is impossible. The reporting continues whether it is for tying up loose ends, making final efforts to get a response from a source or making another round of fact checks (pp. 165–165). For Levy and his line editor Christine Kay, this process started during the reporting stage when they met weekly to analyze his material. As the reporting drew near its conclusion, they began sketching outlines. A plan of three-day series was set up. Tightening and tightening, and reworking and reworking continued. Line editor Kay did the line editing and the structural editing. Levy and Kay edited each other’s edited stories until the stories reached the top editor. “It’s a grueling and intense process,” Levy said (p. 165).

Aftermath and Lessons: After the series, New York State government promised to build thousands of new community homes for the mentally ill. However, by the summer of 2007, adult homes were rarely mentioned in the *Times*. The state government did not fulfill its promise. The adult homes apparently had fallen off the public agenda.

This project was carried out by an individual, talented journalist at a huge newspaper. The author writes that big newspapers have resources to hire talent like Clifford Levy. However, the author suggests that small newspapers can do this kind of project by narrowing the scope of the project and by tackling manageable pieces one segment at a time. This series also shows that *the Times* tried to pay heed to its own backyard and that it tried to carry out the solemn duty of giving voice to the voiceless.

The author writes that if journalism does not carry out public scrutiny, the government simply covers up their failures. Does the government really do so? If they do, it strongly justifies the reason of being for journalism. The author also raises doubts about objectivity claims. If a journalist gathered a tremendous amount of documentation that established adult homes’ serious problems and can present the facts in a forceful and commanding manner, there may not be a need to fuzz up the truth by citing government officials’ denials of the miserable reality. The logic sounds quite persuasive, although it may violate the principle of objective reporting. The book reviewer was shocked that this kind of treatment of the mentally ill occurred in the US, which is regarded as one of the advanced countries. People’s greed for more money by deserting their missions — in this story, doctors’ excessive chasing of money, forgetting their solemn Hippocrates’ oath — can be found in America too.

#### Chapter 6. Daily Coverage Key to Hospital Horrors

Outline: *The Los Angeles Times* ran the stories on December 5–9, 2004, as a five-part series with the headline “The Troubles at King Drew.” Reporters

Tracy Weber and Charles Ornstein formed an investigative team to dig into medical malpractices at the notorious King/Drew Medical Center in Los Angeles. It was a sensitive issue to criticize because the hospital was regarded as a symbol for black people's human rights. The journalists carried out their beat coverage, while simultaneously carrying out this project. This method helped. Reporters discovered that the deep-rooted culture of laxity had ruled at the hospital under the protection of the black community. After the investigating project and continued stories about the problems at the hospital, the size of the hospital was reduced and the control of the hospital was finally handed over to someone who knew how to manage hospitals.

**Situation:** In the summer of 2003, Martin Luther King/Drew Medical Center, South of Watts, was the proverbial sacred cow in Los Angeles. Filled with immense significance in the city's racial history, it symbolized a hard-fought black victory against white oppression. The idea for King/Drew hospital arose from the fire and anger of the 1965 Watts riots, and its advocates had to beat back white resistance before it finally opened in the early 1970s. One of the wrongs King/Drew righted was a health care system that had forced many black residents to travel long distances to find a hospital that would serve their race. As the pride of blacks for more than three decades, it was run almost entirely by black administrators and doctors, who had cemented deep relationships with community leaders. To criticize the King/Drew hospital was seen as an effrontery to the black community and anyone daring to do so risked being branded as a racist.

That was the racial and political reality in that summer when Weber and Ornstein began investigating the entire county-owned hospital system. The records they had been reading turned up enough horrendous medical mistakes at King/Drew, so they realized their investigation should focus on the mistakes alone: nurses had been silencing or ignoring monitors and letting patients die; doctors were puncturing vital parts of the body; a pathologist erroneously told a patient she had a cancer, because lab slides got mixed up. Committing a series of compounding mistakes, doctors and nurses killed a frightened little girl who went to the emergency room with a few scratches and some broken teeth from a minor traffic accident (p. 176).

Although all of those may be shocking to newcomers, the story had the whiff of stale news in Los Angeles. People in the community had been calling it "Killer King." The *Los Angeles Times* had written about many of the incidents at the King/Drew and provided reasons to have this cruel pseudonym. The *Times* had already done an impressive investigative project in 1989. Why do another project? Weber and Ornstein had read inspection reports, inspectors' notes, and court records, which were publicly available. What they had read trumped all of those considerations. King/Drew was failing disastrously. So this was news again, the two reporters judged (p. 177).

**Investigation:** Weber and Ornstein dug through state inspection reports on the hospitals at the California Public Health Service's district office in Orange County and inspectors' notes, both of which are public records. The inspection files on King/Drew were much thicker than other files and the malpractice settlements were greater and more frequent. Weber said, "It wasn't just that the volume of reports was so much greater. It was the types of things that went wrong were pure crazy" (p. 180).

The *Times* had run stories about King/Drew several times before. In September 1989, for example, former reporter Claire Spiegel produced a three-day package called "Critical Conditions" on King/Drew. In the stories, she described specific cases of malpractice, staff shortages, broken-down

equipment, physician incompetence, and doctors moonlighting at other hospitals at the expense of King/Drew. Because of serious problems, the County Board of Supervisors tried to shut down the hospital, but the black community rose up to oppose it. The supervisors tried to fire the hospital administrator, before Spiegel's package but backed off when the black community protested. After the Spiegel's package, the supervisors fired the hospital administrator, and the community again protested. This time, the paper's investigation would stop that vicious cycle. Weber said, "One of the reasons things never got fixed was because of the racial politics, and it always wore this weird cocoon around it." However, to Weber and Ornstein, the evidence they were uncovering made concerns about racial sensitivities pale in comparison to the life-and-death severity of the hospital's problems (p.182).

The full story behind the malpractice anecdotes and the King/Drew figures was much larger and the foundation for its narrative was deep-seated and solidly constructed. The reporters' digging revealed that behind the walls of King/Drew, a culture of fatal laxity had infected the staff. It emanated from the top ranks and permeated the staff at all levels, creating an environment where negligence and incompetence flourished and a sense of commitment to patients and public service had died. To create a journalism project that is a powerful story, Weber and Ornstein gave the abstractions shape, form and action. The numbers and writing smartly accomplished this in several ways. Mixed in with numerous depressing anecdotes about killed and maimed patients and grieving loved ones, the project fed readers numbers about absenteeism, overly high salaries and employee injury claims. For example, to illustrate the chronic absenteeism, the journalists reported specific days when patients filled the orthopedic clinic only to find there was no one to care for them (p. 187). In one word, it was supervisors' failure of leadership. Uncovering the full accounting of the black community's responsibility for obstructing reform at the hospital was more difficult to obtain. The clips from years past and the community's actions in the 12 months provided some evidence. The supervisors sometimes blamed the black community. Supervisor Yvonne Burke once publicly stated that she had been remiss in not pushing for the dismissal of some hospital administrators. She also said that "any time anything is done, the black community has become totally upset" (p. 194).

Reporting, Writing, Editing: The journalists' investigation showed that supervisors should have cleaned house a long time ago, and the community should have demanded such action instead of fighting even the most timid proposals for reform. Instead, the project found, stagnation set in and the culture of laxity took root. Although the horror stories of patient care had been told before, this project had to tell them again to ensure that readers never lost sight of why it was important to diagnose the malady, to find the cure and to administer treatment without making any more mistakes (p. 196). By late summer 2004, the journalists had written so much and found so much that was new and complex and multilayered. For more than a year, they had been working sweatshop hours in reporting and refining their writing. Weber said, "So often investigative reporters spend so much time and work so hard on the reporting that the writing is not given the same weight as the reporting" (p. 196).

Top editor John Carroll, who led news staffs to 13 Pulitzer prizes, was famous for being a tough reporter and editor for the past 40 years. Carroll gave a gruelling editing experience to the investigative team. Tracy Weber had decided to send "her ego to Guatemala." The reporters knew that the rewriting would be endless, that haggling over words and phrases would be exasperating. Carroll edited closely, hated superlatives and insisted that the writing be tough,

authoritative and as graphic as possible. Carroll challenged them on virtually every word, repeatedly questioning “Do we really need this word?” Carroll’s goal was to make the project reflect the best that the news organization can provide (pp. 196–197).

Impact and Lessons: Immediately after the five-part series had run its course, Weber and Ornstein distributed it to experts across the country asking them for their suggestions on how to solve the King/Drew problems. The overriding answer was that the hospital should be taken away from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and be handed over to someone who knows something about running hospitals. Even after the serial stories, the two journalists continued to write about it, because the troubles there continued without any let-up. Other journalists also covered the problems at the King/Drew. Finally, the Board of Supervisors agreed to reduce the beds from 233 to 43 and to give administrators at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center control of reshaping King/Drew. They changed the name of King/Drew to King-Harbor (p. 201).

Like any good news story, a good project idea has to be important, interesting and new. But the King/Drew project provides a new dimension to what can be considered new, by showing that no matter how old a story may be, asking the how and why questions and revisiting the what question almost always yield new ideas, even about subjects journalists tend to cast off as “old news” (pp. 201–202). It is also noteworthy that the journalists covered their own beat while handling the project “King/Drew beat,” a second mission. In fact, Weber and Ornstein, and their line editor, Julie Marquis, said the daily beat coverage helped their long-term project immeasurably. The author writes that every good beat reporter should make their second mission – investigation -- a part of the way they approach their beat. What Weber and Ornstein did fit neatly with Marquis’ adamant belief that to be a good beat reporter, a journalist must be a good investigative reporter (p. 203).

## II. Conclusions

After spending hour after hour interviewing 25 journalists for this book, and after months studying the hundreds of articles written on their topics before and after their Pulitzer projects, a host of “what if” questions emerged. What if, for example, a project of the magnitude and vision of “Troubles at King/Drew” had been written in the early 1980s when patients first started calling the hospital “Killer King”? How many lives would have been saved? Why does good journalism have to wait until people die (p. 210)?

The above is the author’s questions after having presented six project series for this book. The book reviewer’s immediate question related to the author is “Why did the hospitals not fulfill their duties appropriately before the investigative reporting?” and “Why do the hospitals try to carry out their duties properly only after critical investigative reporting on their troubles?” The reviewer merely raises this question and would not try to answer. Does this justify the existence of journalism as the watchdog of the environment? Was the proper management of their institutions not their first and basic responsibility? The following are focal points raised by the author:

Covering beats as investigative projects: The reporting seen in these six projects and several others researched for this book illustrates that journalism should not consider investigative reporting as a separate genre of the profession held in reserve until a problem becomes an expensive, resource-draining project that comes too late for substantive and long-lasting reform. Much of what these reporters did in investigating their projects mimics beat reporting. Scott Higham



at the *Washington Post*, the winner of a Pulitzer in 2002, started as a beat reporter in Florida, and found similarities between investigative reporting and beat reporting. Higham did a lot of short enterprises and “quick-hit investigative reporting,” while on the beat (p. 213). Sari Horwitz, *the Washington Post* reporter, said that “the best stories had always come off the beat.” The King/Drew story could be the best example of investigative journalism treated as a beat and a project simultaneously. Beat reporters should learn to analyze daily stories from a perspective that is broader and more comprehensive (p. 214). In this regard, all reporters are investigative reporters.

Revising the pursuit of objectivity?: If a body of evidence is of equal weight and 90% of that evidence pointed to guilt and 10 percent pointed to innocence, a story balanced 50–50 would have required a distortion of evidence. So journalists must not flinch from making some evidence-based news judgment rather than give the frivolous as much authority as it gives to the credible (p. 216). The author of the book has given the subtitle “Reviving the Pursuit of Objectivity” to this section. However, it appears that the word “reviving” should be changed to “revising.” In this vein, CNN’s journalist Christiane Amanpour’s comment on objectivity is also noteworthy. In a *New York Times* forum held years ago, she reflected on a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. “In war, it is the reporter’s duty to confront the lies, not simply to repeat them as slaves to some misplaced notion of objectivity”. She expressed disagreement with the idea that objectivity means “treating all sides equally” if to do so conveys the notion that all sides are morally equivalent. “If you draw a moral equivalence between victim and aggressor, then you are just a step away from being neutral, and when you are neutral, you are just a step away from being an accomplice.” In the case of the Bosnia crisis, that would mean being “an accomplice to genocide,” she said. (John Vivian, 1999. Chapter 10, Journalism in *The Media of Mass Communication Media*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., p. 256. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.)

The new newsroom culture: Incorporating the investigative mentality in daily journalism will require editors and reporters to make adjustments to overcome some very real challenges. One of the challenges is to feed the “beast,” the gaping columns of white spaces that constitute the daily news hole, whose appetite for copy is never satiated. There also exist other hurdles such as fear of advertisers, reporters’ fear of losing access to top officials, editors’ pressure to make the newspaper a journalistic cafeteria that caters to the appetite of every conceivable reader desire, and most worrisome of all, Wall Street pressure on corporate owners to show profit growth even in the face of declining advertising revenue (p. 218). These could be hurdles on the path to meaningful investigative reporting. Finding a place for watchdog journalism may be difficult in today’s media environment. But the mission, nevertheless, has traditionally been mandatory in the profession. It is a good, even noble, mission that should not be the preserve of big news organizations, I-Teams or individually anointed reporters. To carry this mission is no pipe dream; it is possible even at the smallest newspaper. The modest-sized *Toledo Blade* with a circulation of about 150,000 did an excellent investigative reporting, and even the smaller *Willamette Week* did it (pp. 219–220). What is important is to cultivate the culture of investigative mentality in daily journalism, the author concluded.

#### IV. Epilogue: Book Reviewer’s Comment

The book “Watchdog Journalism” struggled to show how investigative reporting could be carried out at various news organizations. Professor Berry at

the University of Iowa, the author and former investigative journalist, showed that even a small newspaper with only five journalists did an excellent investigative project. He showed that investigative reporting can be done individually, as a team, at a small newspaper, mid-sized newspaper, and a big newspaper. Investigative journalism can also be done step by step, in minor enterprise stories. The author also showed that investigative reporting can be done while implementing daily beat reporting. He also showed that good investigative reporting comes off the beat reporting if journalists are armed with the investigative mentality. If journalists are full of investigative mentality, they can overcome many hurdles that can weaken the investigative reporting. In a nutshell, he placed emphasis on the investigative mentality. If only journalists are equipped with the investigative mentality, investigative journalism can be realized. This was what he wanted to show to the readers. Probably, his argument can also be applied to other countries, not to speak of the United States only.

While reading the book and writing this book review, the reviewer discovered some similarities and differences in judgment of news values and in social issues. The six chapters may be outstanding examples of investigative reporting selected by the author, but the reviewer as a foreign reader found something that the author did not intend to show. For example, police seizure of cash mostly from Hispanic and black motorists (chapter 1) is directly related to the racial issue, and the malpractices at King/Drew hospital is obliquely linked to the racial issue. However, the investigative reporters avoided touching on the racial issue, which is very sensitive in the US. As pointed out earlier, the piece of money seizure by the antidrug team did not discuss whether it was justifiable or not to put seized cash to buttress the budget for the antidrug team.

The project related to war crimes committed by US soldiers during the Vietnam War is also very peculiar to the US. The investigative reporters pursued this project in the spirit that war crimes by Americans should not be repeated in other areas. Problems at adult homes and King/Drew hospital showed that US doctors are interested in making more money, sometimes in an inappropriate manner. Revealing a sex crime committed three decades ago by a currently powerful politician appears to be quite American. Journalists in many countries may not do it unless they have an antipathy against the particular politician and unless they have an intention to disgrace or weaken the power base of the politician. Problems of the shipbreaking industry could be an issue that could attract readers of various countries. It also seems meaningful in that the US media revealed Americans' export of pollution to other poor countries. The above are the reviewer's personal observations and comments.

In summarizing the investigative projects, the reviewer put emphasis on the starting point for the project, because making a decision as to whether or not to launch the investigation is extremely important. Finding out the clues to start the project and making a definitive decision to embark on the investigative reporting can make or break the project.

The book reviewer was so absorbed in reading details of the book that he could not see the wood for the trees. Here are the important elements of the six investigative projects:

#### <A Brief Sketch of Cases by Reviewer>

##### Chapter 1.

Cash seizure abuse by Selective Enforcement Team (SET) was revealed *The Orlando Sentinel* in Florida. Reporters Jeff Brazil and Steve Berry.

Stories published June 14-16, 1992. Part one of three part series; August 23, 1992. Main part of the three-part package

Gist: SET mostly stopped Hispanic and black motorists on I-95 highway south and seized cash before and after January 1992. Police seizure was racially prejudiced and it was arbitrary abuse of police authority. The Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act, which served as grounds for cash seizure, was flawed.

## **Chapter 2.**

Thirty-year rumor of underage sex, which constitutes a “statutory rape,” was revealed.

*The Willamette Weekly* in Oregon. Five journalists, serving 90,000 readers. Reporter Nigel Jaquiss. Stories published May 6, 12, Dec 16, 2004.

Gist: Former governor of Oregon and the powerful behind-the-scenes kingmaker Neil Goldschmidt (D) committed underage sex with a babysitter in 1975-1978 (babysitter age 14–17) while he was mayor of Portland and covered up the sex crime with a confidentiality agreement. Reporter traced papers and interviewed people, and proved the rumor to be true and changed the political landscape in Oregon.

## **Chapter 3.**

Brutal war crimes committed by Tiger Force soldiers during the Vietnam War was revealed.

*The Toledo Blade* in Ohio. Reporters Michael D. Sallah & Mitch Weiss. Stories published Oct. 19-22, 2003, as a four-part series.

Gist: Journalistic investigation starting from private papers left by a deceased former military investigator led to the disclosure. The Pentagon covered it up. Reporters checked papers, met former Tiger Force soldiers in the US and visited Vietnam to meet Vietnamese witnesses.

## **Chapter 4.**

Problems in the new business of shipbreaking were revealed: Humans killed and maimed, and the environment polluted.

*The Baltimore Sun*. Reporters Will Englund & Gary Cohn. Stories published Oct 7–9, 1997, as a three-part series.

Gist: Journalists’ investigation revealed that the new industry “shipbreaking” killed, injured humans and polluted the environment and that America was exporting mothballed ships to India to be broken.

## **Chapter 5.**

Exploitations of the mentally ill at adult homes in New York were disclosed.

*The New York Times*. Reporter Clifford J. Levy as alone-wolf journalist. Stories published April 28–30, 2002, as a three-part series.

Gist: The journalistic investigation showed that the adult homes were in extremely inhumane conditions and the mentally ill were treated merely as a means to make more money. They were dying of treatable diseases and were put to unnecessary operations.

## **Chapter 6.**

Extremely poor management at the King/Drew Medical Center was revealed and remedial measures were taken.

*The Los Angeles Times*. Reporters Tracy Weber & Charles Ornstein. Stories published Dec 5–9, 2004, as a five-part series.

Gist: The King/Drew hospital, the symbol of black people's human rights, have had serious troubles for three decades, but the Board of Supervisors could not handle problems owing to the sensitivity of racial implications. The investigative project focused on malpractices by black doctors and administrators. The *Times* gave a strong impetus to take reform measures.

< End >

August 17, 2020.