



# Through the Revolving Door: Blurring the Line Between the Press and Government

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## BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN THE PRESS AND GOVERNMENT

by

Lewis W. Wolfson

Research Paper R-4  
June 1991

The Joan Shorenstein Barone Center

**PRESS • POLITICS**



**• PUBLIC POLICY •**

Harvard University  
John F. Kennedy School of Government



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## PREFACE

People in a large number of seemingly diverse professions spend much of their professional lives describing, analyzing, and explaining the activities of other people. Some of the people who do this are sociologists, some are psychologists, some are anthropologists, some are historians, and some are economists, but it is a mistake to assume that all of those who fit this description are academics. Although in many respects as different from each other as they both are from academics, both writers of fiction and journalists are necessarily involved with trying to see, to understand, and to depict human behavior, human institutions, and the human condition in general.

Although the best fiction achieves its power partly through its connection with some corner of reality, the writer of fiction still has by the definition of the craft a degree of freedom not allowed to practitioners of other descriptive and explanatory professions. In particular, the scholar and the reporter both operate under an obligation to the truth, and under an obligation to provide the best possible account they can of some aspect of human activity.

But when it comes to trying to work out procedures for performing this task, things get a bit trickier. In particular, both the scholar and the reporter know that totally external knowledge is likely for reason of its very externality to be incomplete or distorted. To explain Japanese culture requires being in Japan, in the same way that understanding national politics requires spending at least some time in Washington, and reporting on sports requires spending some time in the locker room.

But if locational proximity is important, than what of social proximity? If it is valuable in understanding and in explaining to be near the action, then it seems as if it should be even more valuable to be part of the action. Insofar as the outsider remains an outsider, then she lacks some knowledge perhaps available only to the total participant in the enterprise to be explained.

But again both scholars and reporters understand the risks of being too much the insider. As an insider one may assimilate just the insider's perspective, failing to recognize that insider knowledge and the insider perspective is just one of many. More seriously, the insider may by virtue of being inside lose the distance necessary to evaluate critically, and criticize when necessary. If part of being a scholar and much of being a journalist is the ability to work at an angle to society, to provide a critical perspective, then avoiding what in the 1960s was referred to as "co-optation" becomes increasingly necessary.

The academic lawyer or the academic journalist who is too much the latter of each pair and too little the former may lose the perspective necessary to offer serious challenge to the institutions of law and journalism as they now exist.

So too with the practicing journalist. Everything that might be said on one side or the other about academic lawyers or academic physicians or academic journalists might be said as well about journalist policymakers, and that is precisely the subject of Lewis Wolfson's pathbreaking study presented here, a study focused on national policymakers, the national media, and the special problems and positions of the Washington reporter and the Washington insider. In a lengthy series of interviews, conducted while he was a Fellow of the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Wolfson (Professor of Communication at American University) tried to get the widest range of experiences and perspectives he could locate. He now offers a perceptive analysis of the results of this research, and tries to sort out the dilemmas facing the reporter who has or would spend some time as part of the national government rather than reporter or explainer or critic of it. Just as with academic inquiry, the reporter facing such a situation must consider whether the insider information gained is worth the risk of some loss of the distance that reporters take to be so central to their self-definition.

Wolfson's conclusions, with which I am in much sympathy, are largely critical of the phenomenon of the revolving door. Backed up by results of his research, Wolfson argues that the pitfalls of being too much the insider and too much dependent on or associated with those whom the reporter is supposed to criticize generally outweigh the advantages that might come from having access to inside information. Wolfson's analysis, of course, is more subtle than this, and he deals effectively with the arguments and data supporting a variety of positions. Many readers will likely agree, and many others will likely disagree. But whether one agrees or disagrees with the conclusions, it should be easy to agree with the importance of the subject for all journalists and for all policymakers, and it should be just as easy to agree that Wolfson has made a great contribution by putting the subject on the table for continuing discussion.

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## THROUGH THE REVOLVING DOOR Blurring the Line Between the Press and Government

### INTRODUCTION

At a National Press Club dinner in his honor in 1988, David Broder of the *Washington Post* sounded an alarm about what he saw as an unhealthy two-way traffic between the press and government.

Journalists became government officials and then went back to the press. Top presidential aides filtered into the media. Political consultants popped up on television looking and sounding like journalists, although they were not. They were Washington's "androgynous insiders": One day you are "a public official or political operative; the next, a journalist or television commentator," he said. Then, you "slip into a phone booth and emerge in [your] original guise."

These people blur the line between the press and government, said Broder. Journalists and the free press were supposed to check government. They had better make it clear they are not part of it—not members of a Washington insiders' clique "where politicians, publicists, and journalists are easily interchangeable parts." He said that once the press "loses its distinctive identity, it will not be long before we lose our freedom." One day the press could have to answer to the public for failing to honor its vow to be independent.<sup>1</sup>

Broder touched a nerve. Carl Rowan, William Safire, and Pat Buchanan, all of whom had crossed the line, struck back in op-ed columns.<sup>2</sup> Buchanan called Broder "a sermonizing, sanctimonious prig, the Malvolio of the print-heads."<sup>3</sup> Christopher Matthews, who turned journalist after being an aide to former House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, said the press was not a closed guild where only the elders could judge who could be members.<sup>4</sup>

Journalists scrapped over the issue. Were newspeople part of a priesthood and thus compromised if they served in government? Had an elite group of print journalists, buoyed by their TV prominence and a heady influence in policymaking, become part of the Washington political establishment? Did the blurring of the line Broder talked about threaten the press's independence? And what effect might such movement have on public policy?

The *Washington Post* ticked off a list of journalists with political pasts and talked about

the potential perils of insiders "trading places."<sup>5</sup> Although the debate was furious, it was short-lived. Yet, questions lingered. Broder's warning reflected an undercurrent of concern that the news media's sense of mission could be diluted when journalists aspire to political power and politicians are transmuted into press figures.

This study was undertaken to explore line-crossing and its implications for the independence of the press and the making of public policy. While some people interviewed saw hardly any problem, others felt that Broder had exposed only the tip of an iceberg that in time could undermine the press's credibility. They felt the blurring of the line could confuse the public about journalists' role and taint press coverage.

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*The study examines the movement of senior journalists who crossed the line into government, some of whom returned to the news media, and prominent figures who went from government to the press.*

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Several Washington veterans who had themselves crossed the line lamented that old distinctions were dying. Frank Mankiewicz argued that many Washington journalists, whether line-crossers or not, had become "cozy insiders" who protect rather than question the institutions of government. The press elite was not seen by the public as "objective, scholarly, distant and serious," but as "part of the ruling class," said the public relations executive. Hodding Carter called the press "common carrier" for the establishment view of the world. Journalists enthusiastically "serve in the largest party, the party of Washington players," according to the journalist who had been State Department spokesman. Carter saw all Washington journalism as "an insider's game, an androgynous blending." David Gergen, Reagan White House publicist-turned-journalist, felt that line-crossing and preening for TV can leave journalists, himself included, "trapped by establishment thinking." They don't reach for ideas on the

fringes of policy. They avoid offending people in power. "There's a self-satisfaction, a self-congratulatory air about this city," he said.

The study examines the movement of senior journalists who crossed the line into government, some of whom returned to the news media, and prominent figures who went from government to the press. While there also has been movement to and from Congress and political campaigns, the study focuses on the federal executive, where line-crossing often involves well-known journalists and political figures, is visible, takes place at high levels, and has the greatest potential impact on policy. The study also explores the activities of a larger press-corps elite who may blur the line because they are perceived as part of the Washington establishment.

The interviewees selected were veterans of the Washington press and political communities who had crossed the line. They also included others seen as part of the elite, additional members of the press corps, and media analysts. Sixty-two people were interviewed. With a few exceptions, sessions were face-to-face. While similar questions were put to each interviewee, the interviewer pursued issues that arose and tailored questions to the individual's career. Research covered articles and book excerpts on the issue, about which surprisingly little has been written.<sup>6</sup>

Among the people interviewed were journalists who became major cabinet department spokespeople, such as Eileen Shanahan, William Beecher, Bernard Kalb, and Hodding Carter; journalist-policymakers such as Leslie Gelb, Ambassador Richard Burt, and John Seigenthaler; and people who joined the press after cutting their teeth on government and politics, including former White House officials Jody Powell, Pat Buchanan (who had previously been a journalist), and Gergen. Can line-crossers themselves or other Washington insiders provide a clear perspective on the issue? The interviewees were mindful of the ambiguities in Washington life and inside-the-Beltway standards. They were sensitive to press ethics, even if they might interpret them in different ways. It was possible to sift out self-serving comments.

For some in the press, this is a fundamental battle over who is the true keeper of professional standards. According to this view, journalists should be like priests, fulfilling a vow to convey as full a story about Washington as possible. Going into government or hobnobbing with

cabinet members means you "lose your virginity." Mixing in power games weakens you as a watchdog. Others find this a stiff-necked attitude. Newspeople should have free choice and mobility. They can gain valuable experience working in government. And press corps members can mingle with officials without being co-opted.

There is also the question of whether this two-way traffic affects public policymaking. As alarms have grown about the 800-pound press gorilla's impact in the policy process, some social scientists have speculated that the classic iron triangle of Congress, the bureaucracy and interest groups has become four-sided. Do people crossing the line between the press and government further affect the policymaking equation?

This is a testing time for the press. Americans are increasingly uneasy about the media's power. They wonder whether newspeople really are on their side. Some seem to write more for Washington than for people at the grassroots. Broder labels it "coverage of the insiders, by the insiders, and for the insiders." Veteran newsman James Doyle said, "This easy separate society we've developed in Washington is bad for the country and bad for journalism."

Meanwhile, the demands on the press grow. The news media more than ever are expected to prod and inform serious debate of public policy. At home, we are pushed to reassess the nation's economics, politics and social fabric. And we face dizzying changes in world affairs. Are some veteran press corps members being diverted from the press's mission by temptations of status, celebrity, and glittering opportunities to add to their income?

The study finds growing apprehension among some press corps members that hard-won advances in reporting and press independence can be eroded by line-crossing and other flirtations with the establishment. Jim Lehrer of the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour said, "Anytime Billy Bob reporter does something like this, it leads somebody to not believe what I am doing." He thought that most Americans do not understand "why we do what we do. They think we do it for ourselves, [not] for them... They don't understand the First Amendment." He worries that journalists think "we can do as we damned please" and never have to explain.

## WHEN JOURNALISTS GO INTO GOVERNMENT

The study first examines the experience of senior journalists who have gone into the federal executive: why did they go into government; what did they learn; what kind of scrutiny did they get from editors if they returned to the press; how did colleagues regard them?

This is a sensitive subject. For example, two accomplished journalists who had crossed the line, William Beecher and Jerrold Schecter, seemed to revert to the role of cautious spokesperson by asking to review anything quoted from their interviews. Some other line-crossers declined to be interviewed.<sup>7</sup>

### What Journalists Who Have Crossed the Line Think

Indeed, many journalists who had served in government were defensive about it. It did not seem to matter how long ago the experience occurred, how brief it was, or how well-entrenched they were back in the press or other pursuits. They seemed especially concerned about how other journalists might judge them. There were recurring themes in their reflections on the experience:

**You Remained a Journalist:** Most of the newsroom veterans who crossed the line said that when they went into government they still thought of themselves as journalists, and intended to return to the press. One called the time in government a "sabbatical" separate from my "real profession." Beecher, bureau chief for the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* who was Defense Department spokesman in the Nixon and Ford administrations, said, "I didn't see myself as an advocate, [but] more as an honest broker." They argued that they helped open up information to old press colleagues, showed officials that unreasoning hostility to the press can get in the way of effective governance, and headed off ridiculous statements some officials wanted to put out. "You can expand the frontiers of disclosure. Otherwise, [officials] are just talking to themselves," said Bernard Kalb, former NBC diplomatic correspondent who became Reagan State Department spokesman.

**You Learned How Government Really Works:** Most said the experience was educational, even uplifting. They were privy to information few journalists have. They participated in internal debates and made contacts that

broadened their view of government. Baltimore *Sun* National Editor Ed Goodpaster said he learned more about government while serving in the Department of Agriculture for three and a half years than he had in a career of newswork, including tours in top posts at the *Washington Post* and the *Sun's* Washington bureau.

They learned that government is not nearly as monolithic as journalists think. You react "to the day's events, news stories, and what other people do," said Vice President Quayle's press secretary, David Beckwith, formerly of *Time*. You don't have time to plan; you have to put information out quickly. There aren't "masterminds and master hands behind everything," said Gergen, now editor at large with *U.S. News and World Report*. Things are more likely to happen from a "screw-up or accident" than a conspiracy, said former Jimmy Carter speechwriter James Fallows.

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*Washington Post* Outlook editor Jodie Allen, who worked in three government departments, felt someone could only fully understand the dynamics of an institution from the inside, and that to know government is to know its limitations. Lawrence O'Rourke of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, who served as deputy assistant secretary for policy and planning in the Department of Education under Jimmy Carter, learned a lot about the "built-in traps" in bureaucracies: people going through the motions, concealing things, delaying decisions. He found that the press wrongly "vests" officials with an "almost regal" authority when they in fact are ordinary human beings wrestling with difficult problems. Shanahan said she learned that "the press is hardly ever wrong in its judgement about who [in government] is smart and who's dumb, who's industrious and who's lazy. But journalists are often wrong about who's a nice guy."

They got a different slant on how former press colleagues operate. Several felt themselves unfairly the target of the press's suspiciousness about government. Shanahan said many journalists assumed that "all public officials are lying



sons of bitches, and you shouldn't have any sympathy for them." The mistrust was "very difficult to take," said Schecter, a former *Time* correspondent who was National Security Council spokesman under President Carter. He would think, "Yesterday I was one of them. They know who I am. Why can't they trust me?" Nevertheless, several of them also said that the press did not dig hard enough. Coming up with sensational stories to make a name for yourself was more important than explaining issues, said Schecter. Newspeople garbled facts and misspelled names. You saw "how fast and loose journalists operate," said Fred Barnes of the *New Republic* (who did not serve in government). He felt there was nothing wrong with returning with a "healthy disdain" for your old profession.

**The Lure of a Government Post:** The senior professionals who crossed the line felt that Broder short-changed journalists' evolving interests and ambitions. Goodpaster went into government because he wanted to help rural communities and was frustrated at the lack of immediate impact as a journalist: "I was tired of being an observer and wanted to be a participant." Schecter said it was exciting to be part of a Carter White House "team" that had "high hopes and grand dreams." Some talked passionately about serving their country, although they also knew the experience could lead to fame, hefty speech fees and, perhaps, a book contract. Doyle called government "a high calling." Dean Fischer of *Time*, who became spokesman for Secretary of State Alexander Haig, called it "a high privilege."

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Some were at an impasse in their careers and looking around when the offer came along. Although diplomatic correspondent Bernard Kalb saw being moved by NBC to a cultural affairs beat as a challenge, he was more excited by an offer to serve as State Department spokesman. O'Rourke, then Washington bureau chief for the

*Philadelphia Bulletin*, knew his newspaper was about to fold when the government offer came. Very few of these people were comfortable where they were, said press analyst Stephen Hess.

**The Reentry into Journalism:** Those who returned to the press found editors or broadcast executives questioned them little about potential conflicts of interest. John Seigenthaler, publisher of the *Nashville Tennessean* and editorial director of *USA Today*, said that "unless there is [an editor] who is sensitive about reentry problems, there are almost no rules."

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*... some news executives see journalists who have been in government as having valuable access, contacts and inside information.*

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Indeed, some news executives see journalists who have been in government as having valuable access, contacts and inside information. Some of the line-crossers became national figures and attained greater luster than they would have had if they had remained in journalism. Ron Nessen, vice president for news for NBC Radio/Mutual Broadcasting, doesn't doubt he was hired because of a feeling that his "public recognition and celebrity" as Gerald Ford's press secretary "opened doors" to high officials. Doyle thought his work with the Watergate special prosecutor in the Nixon administration probably helped in his returning to the press with *Newsweek*. A few went through a period of 'sanitizing', where they could not deal directly with the same area of government in which they had worked. Haig's spokesman, Fischer, was restricted from reporting for two years when he returned to *Time*. (At this writing, he is reporting from Cairo.) After his stint in government, O'Rourke covered Congress for the *Post-Dispatch*. He subsequently was invited to cover the president, but only after his editors discussed whether he could be objective and credible as a former Carter appointee reporting on the Reagan White House.

But news organizations by and large have not developed guidance for such situations. The returnees attributed the lack of scrutiny to respect for their professional integrity. As journalists, they were as independent as ever. Their work spoke for itself. An editor, reader, or viewer could spot any bias, they were convinced.

## The Cost of Line-Crossing to the Press's Independence

Critics felt this was not such a simple move. The press's independence and the public's view of it were at stake. *Washington Post* Managing Editor Leonard Downie would not hire journalists who had been government spokespersons. He called them "priests who have gotten married...They're gone from our kind of work." *New York Times* Bureau Chief Howell Raines would also reject any who applied, although he and Downie conceded there were line-crossers in both news organizations, including Downie's boss, *Post* Executive Editor Ben Bradlee, who once worked in the American embassy in Paris. Bill Kovach, former *New York Times* Washington bureau chief who later was editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, said he would not hire former spokespersons because "they [had] engaged in deception and withholding information from the public. Maybe they can turn that switch off and on...But I wouldn't believe it." Television's Roger Mudd said readers and viewers have "every right to be suspicious of you as a born-again journalist."

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The journalist who has worked in a federal department or agency clearly can provide added insight into how the political system works. Broder himself talked wistfully about what a taste of government or political work might have done for his perspective, although his editor, Downie, and others argued that a good journalist can gain that understanding without the experience.

Do the insights developed outweigh the risks to the press's independence? Some veteran journalists who have crossed the line worried the most about this, including Seigenthaler of the *Tennessean* and *USA Today*; Shanahan, now executive editor of *Governing*; and Gelb, now a *New York Times* columnist, who went from

reporting for the *Times* to a State Department post and eventually back, in one of the most controversial examples of line-crossing. None of these people would give back their experience in government, but all were concerned about how the public views such revolving. They feared that, as Broder put it, "every time somebody goes across the line they erase a little bit [more of it] and pretty soon the line isn't there at all."

While line-crossers may see themselves still as journalists who are above partisanship, they are touting a partisan administration's policies. "The idea he does the same thing [as before]—that instead of standing in front of the desk he stands behind it—is nonsense," said Hess. "They have different jobs, bosses, needs and constituencies." The public perceives people who speak for government as cheerleaders for an administration. "It is pretty clear that when you're in government, you're in government. You are not a journalist," said Nessen.

When they return to the press, how can they claim not to have been "a political person" after taking a job "that is political communication at its heart?" asked Everette Dennis, director of the Gannett Foundation Media Center. ABC's Diane Sawyer, a former Nixon White House aide, said as moderator of a forum on the issue at Fordham University that she was incredulous that a journalist could see himself or herself as a kind of "mercenary" who went into government and came out without a commitment to ideology or any particular policies.<sup>8</sup> The *Times's* Gelb said, "It is incredible to walk away from a responsible job and say it didn't mean anything. You have to think about what it meant and how it might affect your reporting." Nor can journalists say they were "just" spokespersons and not policy-makers, as he was. Presenting policy is a key part of making it.

**Why Officials Hire Journalists:** You are hired as a spokesperson because of your credibility with newsmen, said Walter Pincus of the *Washington Post*, who twice served as an investigator for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Your superiors want you to shape coverage. As a spokesperson, Pincus said, you are "manipulating your own profession." You find out not only "how easy it is" to do, but also how widespread the practice is. Doyle said there is no question but that you try to manipulate the press. When he was spokesman for the special prosecutor's office in the Nixon administration, he was "a sort of anti-spokesman," spending most of his time making sure the press did not

get information about investigations. Dean Fischer felt the press is used all the time, and can be a willing partner in putting out leaks and gossip. "You are playing on [journalists'] stupidity or intelligence," said *New York Times* Editorial Page Editor Jack Rosenthal, who served in the State and Justice Departments.

You deflect and dodge questions. "I wouldn't lie. [But] I wouldn't volunteer things that would make the department look bad," said Beecher. "Your job is to restrict and regulate the flow of information," said Fallows. Official colleagues are watching, some of them suspicious that you are a pro-press Trojan horse.

#### ***What Do You Do About Inside Information?***

What should returning journalists do about the sensitive information they glean through work in government? Richard Burt, the *Times* correspondent who became ambassador to West Germany and is now chief U.S. arms control negotiator in Geneva, felt that while classified information may have only a brief life in newswork, returning reporters are forced "to censor themselves." He thinks no journalist should be in a position "where he cannot report what he knows."

What about alliances with former superiors or subordinates who become likely sources when you return to the press? Would newspeople pull their punches more in dealing with former associates who supplied them key information? Terry Eastland, a journalist who became spokesman for the Reagan Justice Department, thinks people in the press should recuse themselves from writing about a former official colleague or friend. For example, he would not write about William Bennett, who is a friend. Journalists who understand the pressures on officials can become "too apologetic," said the *New Republic's* Barnes. They may develop a tolerance for the ethics of officials whose ethics "should not be tolerated," said Bill Monroe, editor of *Washington Journalism Review*.

But shouldn't the ultimate judgement about whether or not they are compromised depend on what they write, as returning journalists argue. The problem is that it may be difficult even for an editor to track the subtle relationships between journalists and their former official colleagues, to say nothing of the special interests or hidden agendas that may motivate a source. No one may know about the tradeoffs newspeople make to get a story. Hodding Carter said that journalists give "the first, second and third benefit of the doubt to those we cover because

we are already complicit with them." There are "a lot of inside games" the public knows nothing about, said Pincus. If you are a press expert on diplomacy or defense, you build a "whole infrastructure" of relationships. A handful of specialized reporters operating in a parochial world can influence the public's views. "If you come out of government, you know all the people back in. But the people covering [the area] are so deep into it they are part of the game too. There are a whole bunch of places where you cross over" the line, said Pincus.

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#### ***Serving as Spokesperson vs. Policymaker:***

Pincus felt that the journalist who had been a policymaker was in a less sensitive position than one who had been a spokesperson because he or she had not been on television publicly advocating positions on issues.

But Bill Kovach, now curator of the Nieman Fellows at Harvard, disagreed. He said he worked hard as *Times* Washington bureau chief to make sure that Burt's work as a reporter "met my needs rather than his own" which, Kovach felt, were sometimes to move policy in a certain direction. Ambassador Burt, who respects Kovach, said he was not aware he was watched so closely. He said that while he had not expected to make a career in journalism, he worked hard to be fair and balanced in his reporting. A number of journalists strongly criticized his revolving-door exchange with Gelb, in which Gelb returned to the *Times* after being director of political-military affairs in the Carter State Department and reporter Burt then took the same post in the Reagan administration. (There was, however, a gap of a year and a half between the moves.)

Kovach, who unsuccessfully opposed the return of Gelb, subsequently set ground rules and closely monitored his work. Gelb was not permitted to write about his specialty, strategic weapons, for a year after his return. Kovach

thinks Gelb recognized that the rules protected him from critics. In time, Kovach was convinced that Gelb was "a journalist and not a policy-maker, who understood the significance of [developments in government] in a way no journalist could." He felt this was a case where readers were better served by the journalist's government experience. Some people interviewed for the study felt Gelb had achieved a discipline in his reporting; others detected partisanship. Downie, the *Post's* managing editor, felt Gelb would always be "a policymaker at heart."

**Opening the Way to Public Relations and Lobbying:** A line-crosser who returns to the press usually is back for good. But a journalist who has served in government also becomes part of a network of official friends and acquaintances, and may later parlay these contacts into a more lucrative job. Some people who built their reputation as Washington journalists eventually touched all bases—the press, government, and public relations or lobbying. They include Loye Miller of Northrop Corp., Tom Ross of Hill and Knowlton, Jerald terHorst, formerly with the Washington office of Ford Motor Co., and Schechter. More than one person observed that it was much harder to go back into newsworld from public relations than from government.

**How Press Colleagues View Them:** Some members of the press corps thought journalists who went into government or politics could return with a clean slate. ABC correspondent Robert Zelnick, who supported hiring lateral movers from government and politics when he was an ABC bureau executive, argued that the press should not be "holier than the Pope" and say that anyone who has dabbled in government or politics is "poisoned." You can return from government and still be a "responsible, productive journalist," he said. "It doesn't necessarily make you more ideologically driven," argued *New Republic's* Morton Kondracke (who has not served in government).

Other newspeople saw difficulties. Could someone who had consistently been seen on TV as a government spokesperson later look like an independent journalist? While the public might not perceive the problem in sharp focus, the ambiguities could feed skepticism about journalists in a world attuned to appearances. Steve Roberts of *U.S. News* said journalists should show the same sense of propriety they expect of politicians. The Gannett Center's Dennis worried about a Beecher who "moved back and forth

almost incognito between two worlds that are supposed to be based on different assumptions."

Several people, including some line-crossers themselves, talked about letting time elapse before a person returns to the press, or at least having him or her serve on probation in another area of a news organization. Before going back to the press, the *Times's* Jack Rosenthal took time for a fellowship and avoided working on foreign policy or for people with business with the Justice Department after serving in those areas. He said he had to "work very hard to repackage myself...to regain my virginity." You are "guilty until proven innocent," said Lehrer.

A number of interviewees kept coming back to the same issue: How can individual journalists, and the press as a whole, preserve credibility and independence in the long run if crossing over is done so easily?

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*Could someone who had consistently been seen on TV as a government spokesperson later look like an independent journalist?*

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Many press corps members have spent a career striving to keep their independence. They like and respect certain line-crossers. It was hard to say that press leaders like NBC's John Chancellor, who had once been director of the Voice of America, or Bill Moyers, who had been Lyndon Johnson's press secretary, were any less dedicated to the ideals of the craft. Journalism is not a priesthood, said Burt. It is unreasonable to say that at some point you have to decide "to be a lifelong journalist."

Yet all line-crossers faced the question of being marked because of their involvement with a partisan administration. TV's Mudd who, unlike many veteran journalists, said he had never been approached about a government job, said, "You were declaring that you were in sympathy with [say] the Reagan approach to government and I don't think you ever lose that." Those who went over to 'the other side' potentially sacrificed "a semblance of objectivity." Even if you were born again, "you would always have that label stitched upon the sleeve," Mudd felt. It's not evil, said Roberts, but "you forfeit a certain credibility and purity, and you've got to accept that."

## The Impact on Public Policy

While journalists tend to focus on the effects of line-crossing on the press, there is also a question of what impact it has on public policy. A journalist who moves to government can inject a fresh perspective into deliberations. Beecher felt the outsider comes in with a "different mind-set" and can ask tough questions. At the Defense Department, he was a member of policy councils on strategic arms limitation, and the Middle East. He spoke proudly of a position paper he wrote on Arab-Israeli relations in the 1970s that challenged the conventional wisdom and was turned into a Defense Department memorandum to the president. The *Post Dispatch's* O'Rourke thought it was healthy for government to bring in people "with an independent eye, who will ask critical questions that careerists may be unwilling to ask," although other officials might not like it.

But the newcomer also can feel less of a frontline player when operating among specialists schooled in the complexities and code words of international economics or nuclear arms. Few journalists come equipped with an academic speciality, much less credentials as a player in debates over esoteric policy issues. But the spokesperson knows about politics and publicity. He or she may help shape policy outcomes by counseling officials on how to promote policies with the public, and steering them away from politically unwise actions.

The journalists who become officials often pledge to push for greater openness in airing internal policy debates. But even with the best of intentions, they ultimately wind up holding back information and working to neutralize unwanted press probing. They may have to defend a course of action they fought against internally. If you are too uncomfortable, you can resign and have the last word. Bernard Kalb quit the State Department to protest White House disinformation policies invoked to deceive the press. Shortly afterwards, the public learned about the Iran-Contra affair, which was steeped in bald manipulation of information. Jerald terHorst resigned as Gerald Ford's presidential press secretary after a month because he had mistakenly led the press to believe Ford would not pardon Richard Nixon for Watergate crimes.

A few line-crossers like Gelb and Burt were in the thick of policymaking. They brought to bureaucratic wars a combination of expertise in their field and wide-ranging understanding of government. Gelb had worked on Capitol Hill

and in the Pentagon. Both could write persuasively, no small asset within the bureaucracy. Seigenthaler, another revolving journalist, became a figure in shaping civil rights policy in the 1960s as part of Robert Kennedy's Justice Department. On the other hand, journalists are not noted for patience with drawn-out policy deliberations. They expect things to happen. Gelb admitted he quit the State Department finally when he tired of the "bureaucratic dance one has to do to push the peanut [of policy] along the floor."

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*Some social scientists feel the press's general influence on policy is so great it has become a fourth partner in the iron triangle.*

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Political figures who cross from government to the press definitely want to have an impact on policy. White House alumni Safire in the *New York Times*, Gergen with *U.S. News and World Report* and MacNeil-Lehrer, and Buchanan with Cable News Network and his syndicated column have prime outlets for their views. They are read and watched by top government policymakers as well as the public. It may be hard to pinpoint where their words shaped a policy decision, but nobody would deny that they have the kind of clout official Washington pays attention to. The clout lessens, however, if they are too predictable.

Some social scientists feel the press's general influence on policy is so great it has become a fourth partner in the iron triangle. Officials, lobbyists, all the other players court the press. They all know the extent to which publicity can shape policy outcomes. Still, journalists operate on a different playing field. Their job is not to champion narrow interests or desired outcomes, but to report what the other players' interests are. A journalist who goes into government and then returns to the press is expected to shift to independently questioning the interests of all the players in the policy triangle.

More study is needed of the line-crosser's impact on public policy. Martin Linsky's *Impact* showed ways the press can shape policy outcomes, but did not specifically probe the consequences of lateral movement.<sup>9</sup> It is, nevertheless, likely that some journalists who go through the revolving door and return, and some beat reporters as well, can sacrifice a measure of

detachment and affect policy by falling in with policymakers' view of the world and their suspiciousness of radical ideas. They can drift away from being a true public surrogate in Washington. Their closeness to officials and absorption with inside politics may leave the public feeling like an outsider struggling to play a part in policy debates.

#### WHEN PUBLIC OFFICIALS JOIN THE PRESS

While it is arguable whether there has been a measurable rise in the number of journalists going into high executive branch posts, some interviewees saw an increase in the number of prominent Washington officials who had gone into the press in recent years.<sup>10</sup>

Former White House aides who have moved to visible posts in the news media include John McLaughlin, Hendrik Hertzberg, William Safire, Jody Powell, David Gergen, Diane Sawyer (who began in journalism), James Fallows, and Pat Buchanan (who also started as a journalist). What better way for former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, or former UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick to promote their policy ideas and keep in the limelight than with syndicated columns and TV appearances, interviewees said. Former Speaker O'Neill's aide, Chris Matthews, became *San Francisco Examiner* bureau chief and a TV commentator. Mark Shields came out of Democratic politics to the *Washington Post* and the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour. Many of the transplants argue that there is a world of difference between becoming a columnist and commentator, which is what most of them are, and being a reporter. "Everybody" knows where you stand ideologically. Are they journalists? Chris Matthews in a forum at American University insisted that a free press meant anyone could be part of it. He and other converts understood what the press demanded.<sup>11</sup>

Most important, they believed that they brought a special asset to their new line of work: a unique understanding of government. While the reporters waited outside, they had been behind the closed doors, either participating in making the decisions or seeing how they were made. No journalist could provide such a rich perspective. NBC Washington bureau chief Tim Russert, who spent eight years in government, said his staffers often marvel at his "sixth sense" about what is being said by officials on the inside.

#### Government Transplants and the Press's Independence

Some journalists and press analysts interviewed felt there was room for all under the tent, and that former officials' columns and commentary have created a lively press forum. But others raised questions about how the movement of these johnnies-come-lately has further blurred the line between the press and government:

*Are They Journalists?* It would not be right to say the new arrivals weren't journalists, said a number of people interviewed. But some had difficulty equating a Gergen or Buchanan with a Broder. Kovach, who admires Gergen's intellect, nevertheless recalled that he was the man who said of Reagan that as long as the president is expressing a symbolic truth which he believes, the literal truth makes no difference. Kovach could not understand how someone who said that could "then function as I think a journalist has to function." An incredulous Bradley said that maybe some people think that "Buchanan and me are in the same business."

Does the public make distinctions? Do they say: this is a reporter and that is a columnist; this one is a journalist and the other is different. Broder said the evidence is "overwhelming" that a large part of the public sees everyone in the press as a journalist. Anything more "presumes a level of sophistication that just does not exist." Shanahan thinks confusion about who is a journalist may have "fallout" that makes people more skeptical about the news columns. "The more movement, the more the public begins to think there isn't much difference," said Dennis.

Some journalists chafe at former officials' lack of underpinning for their new role. They had not worked their way up through the ranks. Their journalistic judgement and probity had not been tested. Many had been deep in ideological battles or plumping for policy positions. Their stock-in-trade was trying to engineer favorable news coverage. Political ambition runs in their blood. You learn to say, or avoid saying, certain things, said *Washington Monthly* Editor in Chief Charles Peters. You keep trading on "the appearance of insiderhood," said Fallows.

The former official might adopt the trappings of journalism, but had he or she internalized its standards—fairness, balance, open-mindedness? They "know how the game is played" and the "trigger points," said Marvin Kalb, director of the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard. "They cloak themselves in an ever-expanding industry

called journalism," but they are not journalists in the same sense as press veterans, he felt. Is someone "wearing our robes and calling himself a reporter, but doesn't know the liturgy [or] have the training that the rest of us have?" asked *Wall Street Journal* correspondent David Shribman. "A lot of people find it deeply offensive." Some were not likely to agonize over problems such as journalists collecting honoraria for speeches to interest groups, or joining in causes—issues that have troubled the press corps in recent years.

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*A few former insiders said they joined the press because they felt it was the best vehicle for keeping government honest and effective.*

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**Opinion vs. Reporting:** Issuing opinions is what most government emigrés do and, indeed, it is what they felt separates them from reporters and editors. But a number of interviewees said opinion-writing should have a certain rigor and not simply be based on a few selected facts. Jodie Allen of the *Post*, who became an editorial writer after serving in the Pentagon, the Department of Labor, and the former Department of Health, Education and Welfare, said you are obliged to collect facts, check them out, and "mull them over." Did these people go through these steps? Jody Powell, who turned columnist after being Jimmy Carter's press secretary, was surprised to find how little he and other columnists were edited compared to reporters. 'Facts' were not always checked out. "It's easier to get away with sloppy journalism in a column," said Powell. The former officials were seen as taking varied approaches to opinion-writing: Gergen and Shields are partisan, but fair-minded; Safire, the former Nixon speechwriter whom a number of interviewees praised for his original reporting, will criticize other conservatives; Buchanan wants to be seen as both a journalist and leader of a movement; Kissinger and Kirkpatrick push policy lines as though they were still in government.

Some journalists were angry about officials who become members of the press. They were seen as advocates, ideologues and propagandists pushing their agendas. "They have vested personal interests in what they are doing," said Jack Nelson, *Los Angeles Times* bureau chief. The critics saw little relationship between this kind of newswork and journalists unearthing the truth about government. Seigenthaler recalled

the suspicions created, rightly or wrongly, in the 1960s when people who had worked for the CIA moved to prominent positions in the press.

**Why Government Officials Join the Press:** A few former insiders said they joined the press because they felt it was the best vehicle for keeping government honest and effective. Carter speechwriter Fallows found it "demoralizing" to write cheerleading speeches, and not be able to tell about what was really going on in government.

But former officials often are seen as moving to the press to promote policy ideas and themselves. "There are politicians who are just plain envious of what they see as media power, and they want to join the circus," said CBS Washington bureau chief Barbara Cohen. Some may not rule out a return to government. No matter what he says, wouldn't Gergen be "sorely tempted" to take a challenging government post, said Harvard's Kalb. (Gergen denied he would go back into politics, although he admitted an ambassadorship would be attractive.) "Let's say that, by some fluke, Dick Gephardt would become president. Would you be surprised if Chris Matthews were his spokesman?" asked Kalb. (Kalb did not revolve, although he served briefly in the U.S. embassy in Moscow during an early teaching career. He later went on to a 30-year career in broadcast journalism before returning to academia.) Fallows thought journalists should condemn playing both sides of the street: "If you want to have a holding tank, be a lobbyist."

**Is This a Form of Influence Peddling?** Were some lateral movers little different from the lawyer or would-be lobbyist who treats the contacts made and information gleaned in government as an avenue to big money in industry? In this case, the door was open to the media, book contracts, honoraria, and private consulting. TV commentators were more famous than most presidential aides. The press was open to exploitation. Should it run frequent columns written by Henry Kissinger, who also worked for private international business interests, or by an ideologue like Buchanan? Editorial departments have fought fierce battles over where the line should be drawn on syndicated columns. But some editors have been eager to buy the former officials' wares. "They go strictly on the point of whether the [columns] are provocative," said Jack Nelson. And "saleable," said Dennis.

### ***Should They Be Identified as Former Officials?***

Is the public aware of these conversions? A line is flashed on the TV screen about the press analyst's former government post. Would the viewer catch it? Would there even be a line? Who outside the Beltway remembers that Gergen was Reagan's public relations chief? How many knew that Bob Beckel, who appeared on TV as an analyst in the 1988 elections, had managed Walter Mondale's 1984 presidential campaign and was still advising candidates. Beckel fed his analysis to many television stations around the country. No doubt many viewers saw Beckel as a journalist, although CBS's Cohen argued that it is possible to be a "media personality" without being seen as a journalist. Others think TV news's hiring of commentators out of politics is as troublesome as the hiring of journalists by public officials.

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*...others felt the press-government line is further blurred when journalists hobnob with officials, and shop for inside tidbits to spice up TV appearances.*

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**Advising People in Government:** While most former insiders insisted they drew a sharp line on giving private advice to politicians or policymakers, critics doubted that people in the media could resist. "You cannot be adviser to the prince and the tribune of the people at the same time," said Powell, who feels a lot of people in the press are flattered by the politicians' interest. "If you sat all the political reporters in Washington down in a room and told them that only those who had never given advice to a politician should stand up, hardly a soul would dare rise," wrote Mary McGrory.<sup>12</sup>

Editors may know little about the special relationship a former official has with an old government friend. When Vice President Quayle asks Ken Adelman, former Reagan director of arms control, "What would you do about this issue, Ken?" does Adelman say, "Read it in my column, Mr. Vice President?" Adelman said that while he does not "advise" Quayle, "I talk to him all the time, and he calls and asks my opinion on something." He thought it would not be proper to talk this way if he were a journalist. But he sees a distinction "between journalism and column-writing," although he has also done free-lance writing.

Adelman thought that it was a problem for a Henry Kissinger to be writing about China policy without the public's knowing that his firm has had clients involved in China. Buchanan said he has been asked to give "counsel" to high officials as a "citizen and friend." He felt that because he is not a reporter, he can put meetings with "cabinet people and presidents" off the record. Former partisan workers Gergen and Shields are favorite speakers with Republicans and Democrats respectively, although both point out that they also talk to opposition groups.

### **THE WASHINGTON PRESS ELITE**

There is another dimension to the problem of journalists sailing under different colors. Many of the people interviewed wanted to talk about celebrity journalists who issue judgements about Washington on network television. Colleagues worry that lines are blurred and serious journalism devalued when newsmen go from reporting and analysis to dispensing opinions and speculation about policy. The needs of TV force them to overdramatize and oversimplify policy issues and government process, it is argued. They rarely suggest new ways of looking at things, but tend to think as "predictably" as politicians, said Fallows. He and others felt the press-government line is further blurred when journalists hobnob with officials, and shop for inside tidbits to spice up TV appearances.

In the past, journalistic voices like Walter Lippmann and Joseph Alsop used, and were used by, presidents and cabinet members. Now television has created a larger opinionmaking elite, which includes some line-crossers, but also journalists who would never consider working in government.

The establishment courts them assiduously. One government veteran, Russert of NBC, estimated that serious politicians now "spend a minimum of 50 percent of their day either reading, watching, talking to, or preparing to talk to the media." The officials know they may not win support for a policy or program unless they sell media opinionmakers on it. The elite journalists tend to play down their power, some picturing themselves as just scribblers who stand outside government looking in. "They're lying," said William Small, former president of NBC News, and now professor of communications at Fordham University. "Everyone likes to feel they're important. But journalists get very nervous when you say the press is powerful."



They take pride in being critical of government, but the criticism has limits. "They play the game between the 40-yard lines," said Mankiewicz, vice chairman of Hill and Knowlton in Washington. The adversaries horse-trade daily over information, and sometimes the ground rules for independent press behavior are shaded to get a good story. Socializing can blur lines. One veteran journalist said he was disgusted at how press friends boasted about inviting a cabinet member or senator to their house for dinner. Eugene Patterson, retired chairman of the *St. Petersburg Times*, deplored reporters' eagerness to be "inside," and fishing for high-powered social invitations. "Better they should be out on the porch with their noses to the windowpane," he told the *Washington Post*.<sup>13</sup> Mankiewicz thinks a journalist should not go to dinner at the White House or any place "where he can't function as a journalist."

Journalists hotly debate whether personal relationships with politicians are natural and manageable, or corrupting. President Bush makes it seem natural for correspondents to play tennis or jog with him. *Los Angeles Times* bureau chief Nelson ticked off a list of high officials who had been his court partners. The press players argue that in such situations you can cull information and still keep your distance. But editors, readers and viewers may not know about unspoken tradeoffs involved. Several interviewees said some journalists will soften critical reporting or comment about an official who feeds them information.

### When Journalists Become Performers

A key part of the elite is print journalists who feel they can widen their audience through television. Doing this requires the right mix of analysis and performance. Jim Doyle, editorial director of the Army Times Publishing Co. said the journalists' hunger to appear on TV and the willingness to be packaged and sold for that purpose corrupts reporting and blurs the line between serious news and 'infotainment.' One day a journalist is chief of a respected news bureau, a magazine writer, or columnist, setting standards; and the next, he or she is on television, talking about anything from Lithuanian independence to holes in the ozone layer.

The *Post-Dispatch's* O'Rourke felt the press-government line is blurred when journalists are pushed by John McLaughlin on TV not just to explain what is happening, but to declare "what

should happen" in government policy. Panelists boil government down to a weekly scorecard, oversimplifying the political process and inflating short-term triumphs and failures. Score-keeping can crowd out a longer view of public problems. While officials are criticized, Doyle suggests that some of this may only deepen people's alienation from government.

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McLaughlin Group member Jack Germond said such shows put a premium on journalists looking forceful regardless of their credentials and "almost without regard for what they say." Mankiewicz said TV wants big audiences to sell ads, and they can do that much better "with Chris Matthews than with David Broder, with John McLaughlin than with Johnny Apple." Producers don't like a Broder because he's "not inflammatory;" he's "too balanced and thoughtful," said Germond. They value "sharp-edged disagreement and oversimplified opinion," said *U.S. News's* Roberts. You want to perform well so you are invited back. You say "cute things" and avoid offensive comments to protect your TV career, said Gergen. Columnist Colman McCarthy calls it hootchy-kootchy carnival tricks to "get the suckers into the tent." The public thinks that "all the gab is what the news business is about." They "look at the top of Washington journalism as entertainment," said Doyle.

Germond, a syndicated columnist for the *Baltimore Sun*, felt he is on solid ground when he talks about domestic politics, but not necessarily on other subjects. "It cheapens the currency to talk about a lot of things we don't know about directly and haven't reported on. When I'm talking about Eastern Europe, it's about what I'm reading in the paper and seeing on TV like everyone else," he said.

Fallows thought such journalism spelled trouble for the press's reputation in the long run: "What are these people doing talking about stuff they don't know anything about?" he said. He admitted he had been a guest on the McLaughlin Group and had enjoyed the notoriety, but said he

has sworn off such appearances. He said that on one program, during an argument about the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos, "I heard myself making up these opinions. I realized I didn't know the slightest thing about Marcos or about the Philippines."

Germond is amazed at how seriously the public takes such programs: "They think they get information" which, he said, is "very dangerous" because the talk shows can distort rather than clarify how government works. The public gets the "extremes of the debate," said Germond. Fellow McLaughlin Group members Kondracke and Barnes of the *New Republic* conceded that the panel was not conducive to deep thinking. "It's fun, but it isn't journalism," admitted Kondracke. But he likes the attention and "the fruits of it," and doesn't feel he is being "dishonest."

Jack Nelson, who has developed a *Los Angeles Times* bureau admired for its strong staff and a record of breaking important stories, has commented on a multitude of issues for 18 years on public television's Washington Week in Review. He thinks such appearances enhance the *Times's* reputation and access. He prizes them. So, apparently, do others in the press corps who lobby to get on panel shows. Jerald terHorst, who worked for Ford Motor Co., Washington Week's underwriter, said he was courted by journalists eager to be panelists, including one who assured him that he bought only Fords.

Al Hunt built a *Wall Street Journal* bureau that has attracted top young journalists and is acclaimed for its thoughtful reporting. His television appearances have ranged from a long stint on Washington Week to counterpoint to Pat Buchanan and Robert Novak on Cable News Network's Capital Gang.

Hunt disapproves of line-crossing but does not believe you can have an "ironclad" rule against it. He felt television appearances have become a "way of life" and a supplement for communication by print journalists in Washington. He said that TV's needs lead to an oversimplifying of government compared to print, but felt that work in one medium did not reflect on your work as a journalist in the other. He disagreed with people who see any significant difference between panel shows—clothing Washington Week in "more analytical" garb does not make it any weightier or the panelists any less ideological. Hunt felt columnists and bureau chiefs have more latitude than reporters to state their views on issues.

The McLaughlins, Buchanans and Matthews

of that world are not at all shy about making their views sound like the last word on Washington. Even Washington Week participants seem to leave little room for argument about the acuity of their analysis—until the next week's news surprises.

### Blurring the Line Without Crossing It

Bill Kovach is convinced that the elite journalists blur the press-government line even if they don't cross over. They look independent, the Nieman curator said, but are still being used. Clever officials exploit the panelists' hunger for the kind of inside information that gets them on these shows week after week. The journalists shop for sound-bite ideas, which "sends a message to official Washington: Here is somebody I can use for my purposes," somebody "to move my line" and further official ambitions, said Kovach. Some panelists who would weigh their words more closely in print pass on speculation and official trial balloons as insights into government, he said. John McLaughlin solicits his panelists' predictions; Washington Week moderator Paul Duke asks, What can we expect down the road? Behind the answers, said Kovach, may be tradeoffs the public is unaware of. "Every [official] in Washington knows the way to get on your good side is to give you information, and the way to punish you is to withhold it," said Kovach. "They use each other," said the *Post-Dispatch's* O'Rourke.

Mudd said that although the lines grow fuzzier, few journalists will publicly criticize colleagues. They are like doctors who won't break ranks with the fraternity. Some interviewees criticized specific journalists, but most did not want to be quoted. George Will (who once worked briefly for a senator) was nominated as the man most likely to compromise standards. His closeness to the Reagans and his role in preparing the candidate for the 1980 debates were seen as serious transgressions of the line between press and government. He is not "in and out" of the revolving door, but "still walking around in it," said Seigenthaler. (Will once dilated in print about press people who are "'little moral thermometers,' dashing about taking other persons' temperatures" and spreading "a silly scrupulosity."<sup>14</sup>) McLaughlin and Matthews were labelled opportunists by a number of people, but Matthews had defenders. Ambiguities about Gergen's changeover raised some hackles.

The elite insist their heads have not been turned. But some have slipped into enterprises that might even have raised Walter Lippmann's eyebrow. People applied to them terms such as "personal commercialization," "merchandisable products" and "properties." They promote their television panels with roadshows before interest groups. Some earn thousands in honoraria for speeches that may sound like inside information, but may be largely repackaging what is currency in Washington. Nelson said that columnists Rowland Evans and Novak are more "entrepreneurs" than journalists when they run special conferences for businessmen and others. Prominent officials obligingly agree to speak at the conferences, and the journalists cash in on the attraction.

The hectic life of a celebrity journalist cuts into the time for far-sighted reflection and the need to focus on the print home base. Barnes said that the McLaughlin Group, speeches, and travel can steal time from reporting.

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*The hectic life of a celebrity journalist cuts into the time for far-sighted reflection and the need to focus on the print home base.*

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But some print editors are delighted to have their correspondent's name in lights and, as one person suggested, have television supplement an ambitious staff member's salary. Other editors heartily disapprove. *Washington Post* Managing Editor Downie said such practices threaten to "trivialize" print reporters and "make them serve their own egos and pocketbooks rather than readers." The *Times's* Howell Raines warned that the print person's job of plumbing government can become "secondary" to the goal of getting on television and "cashing in" with speakers' fees.

Steve Roberts ran hard up against a *Times* anti-TV policy. As a White House and congressional reporter for the paper, Roberts had reached a pinnacle many young journalists only dream of. But Washington pinnacles change. He moved on to *U.S. News and World Report*, which promotes his television appearances. While Roberts is respected for his analysis and still speaks gratis to academic groups, he also gets honoraria and other TV benefits. In his own words, he is "CEO of Steve Roberts Inc."

By contrast, Knight-Ridder's James McCartney

felt that print reporters should not be tossing off opinions on TV. The prize-winning correspondent was urged by an executive of his news organization to get on television more. Said McCartney: "That was an insult to my professionalism. I don't consider myself to be a television performer. I consider the job I have as a reporter or writer to be the job of a professional in its own right. I don't need to go out and peddle it on television."\*

TV-journalist Mudd thinks the temptations of easy money and attention divert newspeople from their real job and further blur the separation between journalists and the political establishment. If newspeople are after "things other than the truth" about what goes on in Washington, they have "leaped the wall that defines the adversary relationship." He thinks journalism is a priesthood—not one where you "take vows of poverty, but of single-mindedness" not to compromise in your approach to government.

#### HOW JOURNALISTS' AMBITIONS MAY BLUR LINES

Washington journalists think a lot about career moves and marketability these days. While many follow conventional paths, others see a variety of options open to them, including tasting an insider's role and the prominence of a top federal appointment. Beckwith, the *Time* reporter who became Vice President Quayle's press secretary, sits in an office once occupied by Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt when each was assistant secretary of the Navy. He admits he is part of a Washington "game" and believes he eventually can return to a good position in the press. Others move around the communications bazaar. Powell could be Broder's androgynous archetype, going from politics to government to the press to CEO of Ogilvy and Mather (now Powell, Adams and Rinehart) in Washington.

Can newspeople advance their ambitions and still preserve their detachment? Broder thinks that more and more journalists "feel they can have it all, that there are no inhibitions on your personal or professional activities." One person argued firmly that journalists who go into government give up the best ideals of the profession and justify public skepticism about the press's credibility. But he also saw numerous

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\*McCartney recently retired from reporting for Knight-Ridder, but continues to write a column.

options open to newspeople, and admitted he could not be certain where his own career might lead. Financial concerns play a part. Interviewees talked about the cost of college for their children. People were also wary about the uncertain economics of news organizations. Although most press corps veterans have done well, and the elite rakes it in, they have seen colleagues laid off.

Some reporters gravitate toward people in the Washington establishment who might help their career. "Some position themselves so they don't make enemies [and] get a job," said McCartney. Peters called it making yourself "maximally employable." The process is subtle and those caught up in it may not realize that it is blurring lines. One journalist told of doing a profile of Michael Dukakis during the 1988 presidential election. He had known the governor, and it crossed his mind that if Dukakis became president, he might be tapped for a post in the new administration. Was he choosing his words more carefully? Had he pulled his punches? One would think that a good editor would catch any softening, but the effect may be subtle, and an editor may not have the personal information by which to judge.

Journalists do not have uniform rules about relationships with officials. They "thrive on information gleaned through close relations" with them, wrote the students of Prof. Richard Stout of American University in a 1982 *Quill* article on "turnstile" journalism.<sup>15</sup> Beecher said: "Do people pull punches so they don't ruin a relationship? Probably. Would they lie? Only a bad reporter would do that. Would they just choose to leave certain things out? Possibly." Kondracke felt "you fall in with people you like and start seeing things their way." But "the minute you say, I'd better write this story this way or else I'm not going to get a [particular] job, invitation to a dinner party, or speaking engagement, you're on a slippery slope and you may not even know that it's happening."

Critics think some Washington journalists are increasingly caught up in status-seeking. When Broder came to Washington more than three decades ago, journalists had bit parts in policy and "the social status of a dentist," as Gelb put it; now they are major players. Buchanan sees the media stars as "more famous, better paid, and largely much more influential with the American people" than all but a handful of senators. Fallows wonders why this should be the case. Elsewhere in the world, journalists are considered the social inferiors of the people they

write about. He sees the media elite as no better than "court hangers-on." Judy Woodruff, chief Washington correspondent for MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, is troubled by journalists who may think they are more important than the people they report on. Several interviewees recalled the axiom that journalists should never see themselves as more important than the story they report.

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*Some journalists recalled the days when it was taboo even to think of making a move into government, much less of returning to the press.*

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What are up-and-coming journalists learning from the elite? Broder thinks newspaper and magazine editors who hire former officials or encourage television appearances by staffers send a message to young journalists that such ambitions will be rewarded. Some see a visible job in government simply as a ticket to career advancement rather than a fateful decision. "I know a lot of guys who would like to have it on their record," said Schecter.

John Seigenthaler worked for Robert Kennedy in the Justice Department during the heady civil rights battles of the 1960s. Seigenthaler, who was moved by a sense of public service, relished the experience, although he knows Kennedy set out to co-opt him and other journalists like Jack Rosenthal who were drawn to work for the attorney general.

Seigenthaler now worries journalists may make such moves more easily than they once did, and with less concern about what the public thinks. Some newspeople have come to him for advice, saying they are contemplating a move into government but also want to keep open the option of returning to the press. Much as he valued his own experience, Seigenthaler advises them to think carefully about what doors they may be closing. He thinks they will have "a lot more trouble" than he had in returning to daily journalism. The *Nashville Tennessean* publisher said he "would have grave reservations about hiring me" as editor of the paper, the job he got when he left the Justice Department. He sees such movement as most prevalent in the executive and legislative branches at the state and local levels. Eileen Shanahan, who twice went into and out of the federal government and was

slow to find a top-level job in journalism when she returned, also warns young journalists against taking a step they might find irrevocable. Shanahan said, "I used to feel I'm untainted and I'm smarter," but she is no longer as certain about such moves.

Some journalists recalled the days when it was taboo even to think of making a move into government, much less of returning to the press. Jim Lehrer said that in the Texas journalism of his younger days, if you went into "PR," which is what all such moves were called, you were "tainted" and barred forever. You could not regain your virginity "if you went to the despised forces of government [or] partisan politics," said the *Times's* Jack Rosenthal. "Now it is not routine, but you are not automatically stamped with a red 'S' for sellout."

#### DEMANDS ON THE PRESS

There is today ever-increasing pressure on the press to be a serious fourth branch. The nation is dealing with a crisis of governance—deepening hostility toward government, a decline in voter participation, doubts we can find leaders who will tell us the truth and provide national direction. People need to understand better why Washington does what it does, and be able to debate ways to remedy government's weaknesses. The conventional wisdom holds that most Americans want only packaged news and soundbite journalism. But others argue that many Americans, from the CNN or *USA Today* consumer to the *Times* or *Wall Street Journal* reader, seek to understand the political processes that dominate their lives.

Gergen felt all of this leaves less margin for "inward" thinking by journalists. Newspeople who play narrow games "in this little [Washington] cocoon" fail to appreciate just how radically the country and world are changing. He conceded he is as prone to this as anyone. The danger is that "we will settle back with our speech fees and television appearances and not practice serious journalism." The press corps has failed to bring its best thinking and writing to bear on the issues government faces, he felt.

Hodding Carter called for an "engaged" press corps that reaches for policy ideas "outside the narrow confines of daily establishment wisdom." Carter felt journalists accept too many "things we ought not to accept" and get used to too many things "we ought not to get used to." Several interviewees even speculated about

returning to the feistiness of the partisan press in the nation's early years. If the rowdy press of the 18th century carried partisanship to an extreme, ABC Washington bureau chief George Watson said, perhaps the press of the late 20th century is the opposite—"too anodyne, too anesthetic, not as aggressive as it ought to be." Others warned against losing objectivity and fairness. You can never achieve it completely, said McCartney. But if you don't strive for it, the reader or viewer cannot be sure of the integrity of the reporting.

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For all its faults, no one can beat the Washington press corps at probing public problems and policy when it puts its mind to it. But journalists moving to government or issuing instant opinions on TV don't add to the press's hoped-for image of probity. Broder said many journalists outside Washington "find the mores and standards of the press corps appalling. They think we are the ones who have lost our way by what they see very clearly as normal standards of journalism." American journalists pride themselves on being more independent than journalists in other countries who frequently cross the line into government or routinely supplement their income in public relations. Could our press be losing its claim to distinctiveness?

#### PRACTICAL MEASURES TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUE

For some in the press corps Broder's warning about androgynous insiders and blurring of the press-government line was a tempest in a teapot. He was seen as stiff-necked and alarmist. "Are there two priesthoods, one Protestant, one Catholic, and 'God help you' if you cross over... You don't belong to either one?" asked Kondracke. Some felt it was overkill to say that individual journalists' behavior endangered the press's independence. And how can Broder talk about blurred lines when he is both reporter and columnist? Loye Miller called him a "classic insider," with doors open to him that are not open to many other journalists. Carter said

Broder was part of the establishment.

But others felt journalists should weigh measures to deal with the questions being raised. The following are some steps the press might take:

### **Debate the Hiring of Line-Crossers in News Organizations**

News staffs should discuss the place of line-crossers in their organization. If one is to be hired, he or she should be tested for potential conflicts of interest. Editors should talk about "how hard it is going to be to be dispassionate" in certain situations, and set out two or three cases to test what the person might do, said the *Post's* Allen. "Ask, 'Are there arrangements you made with government [about information] that might put you in a compromising position?'" said Gelb, who faced these decisions. Look out for "new blinders a reporter would put on as a result of this experience," said *Washington Monthly's* Peters.

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*News staffs should discuss the place of line-crossers in their organization.*

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Prominent officials who become columnists should get similar scrutiny. It may be hard to discern the voice of personal political involvement or commercial interests, but editors should not be lax about watching for it. Make the line-crosser aware you are watching. Columns should be closely edited and the writer clearly identified. Remind us about Henry Kissinger's consulting interests, or about Ken Adelman's relationship with Vice President Quayle, if that is germane.

The TV networks should root through the background and attitudes of political veterans they want to hire, such as David Burke, until recently president of CBS News. Burke had previously worked for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and former New York Gov. Hugh Carey. Russert of NBC had worked for Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan and Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York. If TV uses a political operative as an on-air analyst, he or she should be clearly and repeatedly identified. Producers sometimes ignore such fine points in their eagerness to use sound-bite specialists. Several people interviewed called for truth-in-labelling in television news.

### **Establish a Permanent Program for Research and Debate of Press-Government Issues**

Debate about Washington reporting and press-government issues is often ad hoc. Media crises come and go, but underlying questions and connections go largely unexplored. While there is no shortage of media centers and panels on press issues, the news industry has no Washington institution it can turn to for systematic research of press-government problems.

Many other issues remain unresolved: the press's overreliance on government authorities; the proliferation of anonymous sources; the implications of journalists' socializing with officials; government's power to control information about itself; the gap between Washington reporting and Americans' understanding of government; and growing alarms about the news media's power in the policy process.

There is more to press-government relations than simply drawing a line in the dirt between the adversaries. Government news reporting deserves the kind of well-financed study and debate the industry has given to legal and economic problems of the press. This could be accomplished by establishing a program in a university in Washington to study the whole range of press-government issues for practitioners. With line-crossing, for example, there is a need to explore further its impact on policy-making. Through the program, journalist-fellows could do their own research into the press-government process without being at the mercy of "experts" with other agendas.

A persuasive case can be made to prospective funders—news organizations, professional associations and foundations—that this kind of self-examination will produce greater substance in Washington reporting and increase respect for the press.

### **Develop Government Internships for Journalists**

A journalist unquestionably can learn from the experience in government. The *Washington Monthly's* Peters, who developed pathfinding reporting on Washington based on what he saw as a West Virginia legislator and Peace Corps administrator, thinks every young journalist should spend time in government or risk being "shown up" by a reporter with that experience. He doesn't think lower-level government jobs are seductive enough to lure a journalist away or permanently compromise his or her integrity.

Skeptical interviewees called instead for an

internship program patterned after the American Political Science Association's Congressional Fellowship Program, which has produced numerous Washington correspondents. A young journalist would spend a term in a federal agency, but be expected to return to the press. The Gannett Center's Dennis said the experience would be "very valuable." Kovach agreed but felt the person must remain an observer, foregoing reporting about what he or she saw. Some people questioned whether this would work. "Go around with Jack Kemp [secretary of housing and urban development]? You know damned well if he had something potentially controversial to talk about with aides, you would be asked to leave the room," said Marvin Kalb.

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*There is more to press-government relations than simply drawing a line in the dirt between the adversaries.*

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Kalb thinks practitioners can learn more from experts in the classroom. In one experiment in 1979, Harvard's Institute of Politics brought 28 members of the Massachusetts statehouse press corps to the Kennedy School of Government for three days to study and debate cases of state policymaking. They were guided by faculty and former state officials, including Michael Dukakis. They developed fresh insights into official decisionmaking on Massachusetts stories they thought they knew inside out. Dukakis ran a session where journalists took the roles of a governor and his staff cutting a state budget, adjudicating among the interests involved, and packaging their decision for the press. Participants said the program was the most stimulating mid-career learning experience they had ever had. For greater depth, classroom study could be combined with a practicum in a federal agency under university sponsorship.

A number of journalists now go through master's degree programs in public administration or public policy such as the ones at Harvard. They better understand policymakers' and bureaucrats' thinking and the trials of government decisionmaking, and are less intimidated by official arcana. As they move into positions of leadership in the press, they will enlarge its view of government process and provoke other journalists' curiosity.

## Commission Case Studies of Line-Crossing and Its Impact on Public Policy

A media-study program like the one proposed for Washington, and schools of journalism or public policy should further research the implications for the press or policy when journalists become insiders, or officials join the press. We could learn a lot from case studies that analyze the careers of line-crossers like Gelb, Burt, Chancellor, Seigenthaler, Shanahan, Sawyer, Gergen and Buchanan. What about line-crossing in Congress and party politics? How does all of this work in other countries? It also would be useful to have a fuller examination of the press corps' ambitions and their impact on Washington reporting to follow up on Stephen Hess's ground-breaking study of *The Washington Reporters* of a decade ago.<sup>16</sup>

## THE CHOICES

Is the line between the press and government being blurred? The Baltimore *Sun's* Goodpaster felt we have had two decades of "a blurring of journalism, period. The easily definable roles for the journalist are just not there any more. People wander in and out" of the profession. *Washington Journalism Review's* Bill Monroe talked about "a loss of identity, a sense of mission, of place."

Saying the line is blurred does not necessarily question a line-crosser's integrity or devalue his or her contribution to journalism. Seigenthaler is highly admired. Shanahan, who was spokesperson in the Treasury Department and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, helped build a respected magazine on state government. It would be hard to argue that Ben Bradlee's embassy stint in Paris diminished his toughness as an editor. The *Post's* Pincus has developed insight into the bureaucracy in good part because he worked as an investigator for the Senate—the kind of job journalists have most frequently been hired to do, next to being spokespeople or press secretaries. Peters produces a magazine that probes government process in ways others have come to emulate. Gelb may have participated in the most notorious case of journalists' line-crossing; yet he also earned a Pulitzer prize and became a top editor at the *Times*. Many Washington journalists fiercely opposed the movement of Nixon aides Safire and Sawyer into the news media, but both are praised today. On the other hand, journalists who would never go into government may commit sins in relations with

official sources that we know nothing about and that similarly blur the line between press and government.

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*...when journalists join a partisan administration, or are drawn to power games, or let other concerns affect their news judgement, the credibility of the press is at risk.*

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Some who cross from the press to government see themselves as pursuing their ideals about public policy. But there is also a curiosity to taste and exercise political power after having watched others do it for so long. Since American newspapers began, publishers and editors have coveted federal appointments, sought to be kingmakers, or run for office themselves. Journalists have become ambassadors.<sup>17</sup>

People will continue to cross over. They will say they uphold high standards in both capacities and that there is no evidence the public worries about this. But if the public understood how readily some journalists may move in and out of government, or how unquestioning some news organizations are about hiring former officials, there could be a backlash. What is the public to think when it hears that news organizations that vow to be independent hire people out of the White House? Seigenthaler said that while the public might have only a vague perception that something is fishy, "every time the line is crossed, it contributes to the blurring." Said the Gannett Center's Dennis, "The more you blur [the distinctions], the more the press is perceived as being in bed with government."

Ironically, the Washington press corps in some ways is in the strongest position ever to be a tough and independent watchdog. Reporters today have the skill to bring to light the in-bred worlds of policy development and bureaucratic maneuvering. They are free to grill presidents, force legislators to defend their actions, and to push into areas closed to the average citizen. A determined press can work around officials' iron grip on information.

Most journalists who swim in the deep waters discussed in this study are respected for their accomplishments. But it is hard to get around the fact that when journalists join a partisan administration, or are drawn to power games, or let other concerns affect their news judgement, the credibility of the press is at risk. It can affect

the reputations of the thousands of press corps members who strive to preserve their detachment. Judy Woodruff thinks every line-crossing between the press and government "makes it a little bit harder for the rest of us to maintain our credibility." Terry Eastland sees an analogy between the press corps elite and the academic experts who were intoxicated with their power in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and later became influence brokers. Mankiewicz says, "When a Washington celebrity at a party is as likely to be a journalist as a cabinet officer, that is corruptive."

Every able journalist who thinks of going into government inevitably erodes the press's unique role. Journalists should be outsiders and skeptics, challenging the conventional wisdom, searching for political vision and new approaches to policy, pushing for reform of government even if the odds are long. "Being a reporter is a serious responsibility. There are so few places you can go in our society and rely on what you are told. It's all the more precious when people are so manipulative about information. [The public] needs someone they can count on" for a straight story, said Gelb. Many journalists are willing to make sacrifices of ego, personal ambition, and income to preserve that independence.

Good journalism does not blur lines; it clarifies them. It does not accept crossings or ambiguous relations with officials merely because these are common practice. Newspeople do not have to be monks or ascetics; but, more than ever, we need a watchdog who is truly independent and seen to be so. It is still a special privilege to be a journalist in America, and the press should earn, and get, the respect it deserves.



## Notes:

1. Broder, David, Remarks at Fourth Estate Award Dinner, National Press Club, Nov. 29, 1988.
2. Safire, William, "Color Me Tainted," *New York Times*, Dec. 12, 1988; Rowan, Carl, "'In and Out' Journalists," *Washington Post*, Dec. 21, 1988; Buchanan, Patrick J., "Self-appointed Priests of Print," *Washington Times*, Dec. 28, 1988.
3. Buchanan, *op. cit.*
4. Matthews, Christopher, panel on "The Revolving Door: Should Reporters Become Officials and Should Officials Become Reporters?" at American Forum, School of Communication, American University, C-SPAN, Feb. 2, 1989.
5. Trueheart, Charles, "Trading Places: The 'Insiders' Debate," *Washington Post*, Style section, Jan. 4, 1989.
6. The most notable analysis was a survey published in *Quill* in 1982 by a team of graduate students directed by Prof. Richard Stout of American University. Bunnell, Robert, and James R. Ross, Kevin Settlege and Christine Tierney, "The turnstile journalists," *Quill*, July-August 1982.
7. Those who turned down interview requests included line-crossers John McLaughlin, Christopher Matthews, Carl Rowan and William Safire.
8. Sawyer, Diane, at "Journalists In and Out of Government," panel on Mass Media in a Constitutional Democracy, sponsored by Fordham University, March 19, 1987.
9. Linsky, Martin, *Impact, How the Press Affects Federal Policymaking*, W.W. Norton Co., New York, 1986.
10. There are no exact figures on lateral movement to and from the federal executive. The Media Research Center in Alexandria, Virginia has published a book listing a total of 235 people as of April 1990 who had gone through the "Revolving Door" during administrations dating back to John Kennedy. The group periodically adds to the roster. But it is a catch-all list. The right-wing organization broadly defines what amounts to government service and who is a journalist, and it pigeonholes people according to ideology. The list also includes people who moved to and from Congress and political campaigns. Bozell, L. Brent III and Brent H. Baker, editors, "The Revolving Door," in *And That's the Way It Isn't: A Reference Guide to Media Bias*, Media Research Center, Alexandria, Virginia, 1990, Appendix A.
11. Matthews, *op. cit.*

12. In Broder, David S., *Behind the Front Page: A Candid Look at How the News is Made*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1987, p. 355.
13. Patterson, Eugene, in Trueheart, "Trading Places."
14. Will, George, "Journalists and Politicians," *Newsweek*, Jan. 19, 1981.
15. Bunnell et al, "Turnstile journalists."
16. Hess, Stephen, *The Washington Reporters*, Brookings Institution, Washington, 1981.
17. Some recent examples of ambassadors are John Scali of ABC and J. Russell Wiggins, former *Washington Post* editor, who served at the United Nations; the late William Shannon of the *New York Times*; former *Time* Editor-in-Chief Henry Grunwald; the late William Attwood, magazine editor and writer; and Burt.

## Interviews:

### People Who Have Served in the Press and Government

Kenneth Adelman, columnist, Tribune Media Services  
Jodie Allen, editor, Outlook, *Washington Post*

David Beckwith, press secretary to Vice President  
Quayle

William Beecher, Washington bureau chief, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*

Tom Braden, former columnist and commentator

Benjamin Bradlee, executive editor, *Washington Post*

Patrick Buchanan, columnist, Tribune Media Services,  
and commentator, Cable News Network

Richard Burt, ambassador and chief U.S. arms negotiator,  
Geneva

Hodding Carter, political analyst and commentator

James Doyle, editorial director, Army Times Publishing  
Co.

Terry Eastland, resident fellow, Ethics and Public  
Policy Center, Washington

James Fallows, author

Dean Fischer, correspondent, *Time*

Leslie Gelb, columnist, *New York Times*

David Gergen, editor at large, *U.S. News and World  
Report*, and commentator, MacNeil-Lehrer  
NewsHour

Philip Geyelin, author and former fellow, Johns  
Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute

Ed Goodpaster, national editor, *Baltimore Sun*

Bernard Kalb, author and political analyst  
 Colman McCarthy, columnist, *Washington Post* Writers Group  
 Frank Mankiewicz, vice chairman, Hill and Knowlton, Washington  
 Loye Miller, director of public information, Northrop Corp., Washington  
 Ron Nessen, vice president for news, NBC Radio/Mutual Broadcasting  
 Lawrence O'Rourke, White House correspondent, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*  
 Charles Peters, editor in chief, *Washington Monthly*  
 Walter Pincus, national correspondent, *Washington Post*  
 Jody Powell, chairman and CEO, Powell, Adams and Rinehart, Washington  
 Jack Rosenthal, editorial page editor, *New York Times*  
 Tom Ross, senior vice president, Hill and Knowlton  
 Tim Russert, Washington bureau chief, NBC  
 Jerrold Schecter, author  
 John Seigenthaler, editorial page editor, *USA Today*, and publisher, *Nashville Tennessean*  
 Eileen Shanahan, executive editor, *Governing*  
 Mark Shields, columnist, Words by Wire, and commentator, MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour  
 Jerald terHorst, former director of national public affairs, Ford Motor Co.

#### Other Journalists and Press Analysts

Fred Barnes, senior editor, *New Republic*  
 David Broder, national correspondent and columnist, *Washington Post*  
 Arnaud de Borchgrave, former editor-in-chief, *Washington Times*  
 Barbara Cohen, Washington bureau chief, CBS  
 Everette Dennis, executive director, Gannett Foundation Media Center  
 Leonard Downie, managing editor, *Washington Post*  
 Jack Germond, columnist, *Baltimore Sun* and Tribune Media Services  
 Joseph Goulden, director of media analysis, Accuracy in Media  
 Stephen Hess, senior fellow, Brookings Institution  
 Ellen Hume, executive director, Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy

Al Hunt, Washington bureau chief, *Wall Street Journal*  
 Reed Irvine, chairman, Accuracy in Media  
 Marvin Kalb, director, Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy  
 Morton Kondracke, senior editor, *New Republic*  
 Bill Kovach, curator, Nieman Fellows  
 Jim Lehrer, co-anchor, MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour  
 James McCartney, columnist, Knight-Ridder Newspapers  
 Bill Monroe, editor, *Washington Journalism Review*  
 Roger Mudd, chief congressional correspondent and commentator, MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour  
 Jack Nelson, Washington bureau chief, *Los Angeles Times*  
 Howell Raines, Washington bureau chief, *New York Times*  
 Steven Roberts, senior writer, *U.S. News and World Report*  
 David Shribman, Washington correspondent, *Wall Street Journal*  
 William Small, professor of communications, Fordham University  
 Charles Trueheart, staff writer, *Washington Post*  
 George Watson, Washington bureau chief, ABC  
 Judy Woodruff, chief Washington correspondent, MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour  
 Robert Zelnick, Washington correspondent, ABC

#### Selected Readings:

Bonafede, Dom, "Crossing Over," *National Journal*, Jan. 14, 1989.  
 Bozell, L. Brent III and Brent H. Baker, editors, "The Revolving Door," in *And That's the Way It Isn't: A Reference Guide to Media Bias*, Media Research Center, Alexandria, Virginia, 1990.  
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 ———, "Beware the 'Insider' Syndrome: Why News Makers and News Reporters Shouldn't Get Too Cozy," *Outlook*, *Washington Post*, Dec. 4, 1988.  
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Randolph, Eleanor, "News Media 'Buckraking,'" *Washington Post*, April 18, 1987.

———, "Should Journalists Report Their Own Honoraria?" *Washington Post*, April 14, 1989.

Rowan, Carl, "'In and Out' Journalists," *Washington Post*, Dec. 21, 1988.

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Trueheart, Charles, "Trading Places: The 'Insiders' Debate," *Washington Post*, Style section, Jan. 4, 1989.

Weisberg, Jacob, "The Buckrakers," *New Republic*, Jan. 27, 1986.

Will, George, "Journalists and Politicians," *Newsweek*, Jan. 19, 1981.

Willrich, Michael, "Renting the Fourth Estate," *Washington Monthly*, March 1990.

Witcover, Jules, "Revolving-Door Journalists," *Washington Journalism Review*, April 1990.

## Panels:

"Journalists In and Out of Government," panel on Mass Media in a Constitutional Democracy, sponsored by Fordham University, March 19, 1987. Panelists: Diane Sawyer, ABC News, moderator; John Chancellor, NBC News; Leslie Gelb, *New York Times*; Bernard Kalb, author; Tom Ross, NBC News (now with Hill and Knowlton).

"The Revolving Door: Should Reporters Become Officials and Should Officials Become Reporters?" panel at American Forum, School of Communication, American University, C-SPAN, Feb. 2, 1989. Panelists: Sanford J. Ungar, Dean, School of Communication, moderator; David Broder, *Washington Post*; Christopher Matthews, *San Francisco Examiner*; Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois; Eileen Shanahan, *Governing*; and Loye Miller, director of office of public affairs, Department of Justice (now with Northrop Corp., Washington).

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