



Opening Shot



Photo: Bettmann/Corbis

DEFENDANT JOHN T. SCOPES STANDS BEFORE THE JUDGE DURING THE MONKEY TRIAL IN DAYTON, TENNESSEE IN 1925. Compare and contrast the issue which landed Scopes in court to those presented today by supporters of intelligent design.

UNDOING DARWIN, PP. 30-39:

What is intelligent design? Who originated it? What are its ideological underpinnings? How is ID different from creationism? What do so many people seem to believe ID is true? Why do the authors believe that in this case at least, giving equal space to both sides of the story may not be good reporting? Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Name other situations where balance may not be called for in a story. Why do you think newspapers do give so much space to intelligent design's advocates? Why do the authors believe that science reporters and not political reporters should be assigned to ID stories? What other solutions do they suggest for improving coverage of teaching ID in the schools?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Read the coverage of ID and related issues in your local newspaper. Comment on them in light of the criticism raised by this story. Study the arguments of those who support ID. Research evolution science and make a point by point refutation of the ID arguments. The authors say that the word "theory" when used in conjunction with ID lends it a legitimacy it doesn't deserve. Make a list of other buzzwords that can subtly shade a story. Create a reading list that can help journalists be better prepared to cover ID and other stories relating to scientific issues.

Talking Points

IN THIS issue are several stories about journalists who found terrific stories when they went the extra distance in their reporting. Jimmy Breslin, whose metro columns earned him a Pulitzer Prize, believes that a good reporter has to climb a lot of stairs. What does he mean by that? How can that lesson be applied to other aspects of journalism, for instance the current debate over intelligent design?

As you will see from the articles in this issue, quality reporting can rarely be done from an easy chair. The best reporting is a product of thorough, courageous, inventive hard work. It's not unusual that important information is uncovered when a tired reporter decides to make one more phone call or pay one list visit. As a reporter you will learn that the nuggets which so often result from that extra effort make it all worthwhile.

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DISENGAGED, PP. 40-50:

Why do you think the word “disengagement” was used instead of a more direct word describing Israel’s forced removal of the settlers from the Gaza strip? Why have Israel’s major newspapers ceded their responsibility for questioning Sharon’s motives and decisions in regard to Gaza? Do you think the role they played in the disengagement was the proper one for a newspaper in a democracy? What would happen if major American newspapers behaved similarly? Why do you think Israelis for the most part didn’t object? Would Americans respond differently? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** *Yedioth Abronoth* and *Haaretz* both have Web sites with English content. Search their stories on the disengagement. Compare and contrast their content, coverage, and style with that of *The New York Times* and/or *The Washington Post*. Find examples of the reporting of Gideon Levy and Amira Hass on the *Haaretz* site. Based on what you’ve found, is the criticism of their work fair? Why or why not? According to the stories, how can headlines, captions, and positioning change or even undermine a story? Can you find examples of this in your local newspaper?

BEYOND DEEP THROAT, PP. 51-53:

Read Woodward and Bernstein’s *All the President’s Men*. What reporting techniques did they use to unravel the scandal? What were the reasons for their success? Look at the “to do” list on page 53. What does it tell you about the carefulness of their work? Using that list as a starting point, create a general “How to” list for any reporter doing investigative work. **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Read Woodward and Bernstein’s stories on Watergate in *The Washington Post* archives. Answer the question posed by Greenberg: How important were their stories to the exposure of the full scandal?

Quick Takes

1) Locate as many blogs being written by combat troops in Iraq as you can. Sift through them and select those you think are the best. Share excerpts of them with the class and explain your reasons for choosing them.

2) After you and a partner interview each other, write each other’s obituary, using Steve Miller’s guidelines for an interesting obit. Then write your own. Compare it with the one composed by your partner.

3) Find a good local story in your town or city and write a metro-style column about it.

4) Create a curriculum for the graduate journalism program at the City University of New York. Incorporate courses that you think will give aspiring journalists the tools they need to be effective reporters.

DEEP DIVERS, PP. 54-70:**Between the Lines**

- 1) If you were the managing editor of a newspaper and were under orders to make the paper a financial success, how far would you go in reporting on salacious stories to help sell newspapers? What do you think is the best way for a newspaper to boost its circulation?
- 2) Answer the questions posed by Ralph Gross at the bottom of page 11. What new information system can you create to carry out Gross’s mandate?
- 3) Are journalism and public relations mutually incompatible? Why or why not?
- 4) What do the elements in the American Newsroom photo reveal about *The Atlantic* magazine?

Compare and contrast how the authors of the five books in this section conducted their investigations. What hurdles did each of them face in gathering information? How were they overcome? What makes them such good reporters and their work such excellent reporting? List the ways that each of the authors went the extra distance to get his or her story. What special techniques did he or she employ? Which of their methods could you adopt to improve your own work? How did the authors’ own points of view influence their reporting and writing? How did each of them look past common perceptions of their subjects to find the real story laying beneath? The introduction to this article states that increasingly the best journalism is being done in books rather than in newspapers. Why do you think this is changing? What pressures exist in newspaper publishing that might work against in-depth investigative reporting? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** From your local bookstore or library, select a nonfiction book on a topic of similar breadth of those included in the article. Review the book, with an eye toward whether the

writer has succeeded in achieving what he or she set out to do and the reasons why or why not, the thoroughness and inventiveness of the reporting, and the quality of the storytelling.