



FASPE

FELLOWSHIPS AT
AUSCHWITZ
FOR THE STUDY OF
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

2016
JOURNAL

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With special thanks to

Dr. Jeffrey Botkin, Dr. Mary Gentile, Dr. Sarah Goldkind, Professor Ari Goldman, Professor Lonnie Isabel, Professor Judith Lichtenberg, Professor David Luban, Rabbi James Ponet, Professor Markus Scholz, and Professor Kevin Spicer.



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FASPE
JOURNAL
2016

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 2016 FASPE Journal

BY DAVID GOLDMAN

CHAIRMAN, FASPE

The world has survived 2016. Yes, we live in interesting and challenging times. Artificial Intelligence, post-facts (the Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year!), questions about freedoms of press and religion. FASPE's mission, with its focus on ethical behavior, becomes ever more important.

You will see in the following pages a representative sample of work produced by the 2016 Fellows during the course of their fellowships. The FASPE fellowships, and the connections that the Fellows make with each other and with FASPE, do not end with the Fellows' return to their schools and to their places of work. In recognition of this continuity, we have also included in the Journal pieces written by two of our more distant alumni.

FASPE challenges its fellows and alumni to reflect and to think — about themselves, about their professions, about their responsibilities as leaders. The one common thematic thread shared by all of the papers published here is that they confront *ethical* issues within the professions.

Ethical challenges are not linear, they are not predictable and they are not fundamentally political. Issues can arise in an operating room, in a C-Suite, in a partner's office in a law firm, in the mind of a blogger or in a clergyperson's office. They can also arise because of the actions of a legislature, decisions made in a courthouse or as a result of the policy proposals of a mayor, governor, president or prime minister.

Our fellows and alumni are tasked with identifying ethical failures and ethical risks within the professions, however and wherever they may arise. We also seek to offer tactical suggestions as to how to act after having identified an issue. For instance, we have a session in the Law program on how to handle a situation in which a senior partner asks a young associate to act in a manner that appears inappropriate (the answer is *not* to lecture the senior partner). Moreover, FASPE intends to speak out on these matters where they have broader implications.

The issues that we face today are, of course, different from those that existed in Germany during the Nazi era. However, the influence, and therefore the responsibilities, of professionals are no less impactful.

We hope that the following pages pique your interest and demonstrate the ethical foundations that FASPE Fellows are building. On behalf of FASPE, I congratulate the 2016 class of FASPE Fellows. We look forward to their leadership in their communities — small and large.

FASPE Overview

FASPE operates fellowship programs for graduate students in professional schools — business, journalism, law, medical, and seminary — and early stage practitioners in those professions. The fellowships are comprised of intense two-week study trips in Germany and Poland where fellows study the actions and choices of their professional counterparts in Germany between 1933 and 1945.

Through this examination of the ethical failures of the professions in what was a progressive, modern society, fellows learn about the critical role that professionals play in society and the consequences of their actions — positive or negative — on the world around them. FASPE challenges its fellows to become acutely aware of their responsibilities as respected professionals in their communities and to act in an ethical fashion.

FASPE offers a contemporary approach to the study of the Holocaust by focusing on the actions of perpetrators rather than on victims. Drawing on the powers of place, the study of history, and a rich contextual education, FASPE creates a uniquely effective means for studying professional ethics — well beyond what is achieved by the rules-based approach often seen in the traditional university classroom.

Originally piloted in 2009 and launched in 2010, FASPE marked its seventh year of operation in 2016 and now has nearly 400 alumni. As a highly competitive program, FASPE accepts only 65 fellows (12 - 14 in each of the five professions) from nearly 1,000 applications per year. Its faculty is drawn from international Holocaust historians, practicing professionals, and leading academics. Fellowships are granted to students and recent graduates from professional schools throughout the United States and internationally.

FASPE seminars engage fellows in thinking across several themes that span the five disciplines, including: defining professionalism; considering a professional's responsibility to the larger society; and the tactics of enacting an ethical decision. Seminars also focus on topics that are discipline specific, such as:

- **Business:** Are there products that simply should not be sold to particular consumers? What are the responsibilities of the C-Suite, or of the corporation, beyond formalistic legal compliance? What are appropriate penalties for corporate wrongdoing?

- **Journalism:** How do journalists balance the costs and benefits of access? What ethical issues arise in political reporting? What challenges arise in fact-checking a victim's story? Does advocacy fit into journalism?
- **Law:** How do attorneys manage duties of candor and confidentiality? What control do lawyers have over decisions that impact a client? Does the duty to a client supersede all other responsibilities?
- **Medical:** What are the ethical issues involved in medical research on human subjects? Should physicians participate in assisted suicide? How should doctors deal with resource limitations in making healthcare decisions?
- **Seminary:** What is the role of religious leaders as ethical, and not just religious, educators? When and how should they address political issues with a congregation? What are the challenges of pastoral care during times of crisis?

FASPE has far-reaching goals. On an individual basis, it seeks to instill participants with a sense of personal responsibility for the ethical and moral choices they make. By extension, it also seeks to have an impact on these professions, improving the practices of all business executives, clergy, doctors, journalists, and lawyers.

JOURNALISM
PAPERS

Introduction to Selected Journalism Papers

BY THORIN TRITTER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FASPE

Under the guidance of Professors Ari Goldman and Lonnie Isabel, both from Columbia University's Journalism School, the 12 2016 FASPE Journalism Fellows formed a cohesive and tightly bonded cohort that was equally at home debating journalism ethics, editing each other's writing, or exploring the back alleys of Krakow. They were a joy to travel with and will be an impressive force to be reckoned with in the field of journalism.

The Journalism Fellows participate in seminar discussions about contemporary ethics topics and explore historic sites, much like the Fellows in all FASPE programs. However, unlike those in other fields, the Journalism Fellows also practice their craft while traveling, meeting in the "FASPE Newsroom" to write, edit, and publish pieces about the trip, which they then publish on the FASPE Journalism blog. One final piece of writing is done after the trip ends, when fellows submit longer feature pieces that explore a contemporary ethical issue in journalism. The following three pieces are examples of these feature pieces.

The first story is by Katrina Clarke, who writes about one of her least favorite tasks as a reporter, the "death knock" — when a journalist has to stand on a grieving family's doorstep to ask relatives about a family member who has died. Drawing on her own experience, as well as the experiences of others, Clarke explores the challenges journalists face and the reasons to nevertheless take such an assignment.

The second story, by Ilgin Yorulmaz, turns to a more contemporary political topic, exploring the role of journalists as unbiased observers when they have only limited access to information. Focusing on the political situation in her native Turkey, Yorulmaz asks whether reporting based on whomever grants access runs the risk of inadvertently turning an otherwise excellent piece of journalism into propaganda and what a reporter can do to prevent that.

The third piece, by Dayton Martindale, questions the impartiality that Yorulmaz seeks to maintain. Martindale examines situations in which journalists are in a position to intervene and offer assistance, but don't because of a desire to remain impartial. Martindale moves from these cases to a broader exploration of the reasons why objectivity became the widespread ideal in journalism and what may have been lost by giving up on advocacy.

I offer my thanks to the FASPE Journalism faculty and all the fellows for their dedication, thoughtfulness, and desire to make a difference in the world.

When a Reporter Has to Make the “Death Knock”

BY KATRINA CLARKE

FREELANCE REPORTER, TORONTO

Standing in the doorway of a man whose nephew died in a police shooting 36 hours earlier, I felt like an intruder.

“I can’t deal with this,” said Mejad “Jim” Yatim, a tired-looking man in a bathrobe, waving me away when I introduced myself as a reporter. “It’s a very tough time.”

Tears sprung to my eyes as I reached for a piece of paper to scribble down my email address. I was two months out of journalism school, and this was the first time I’d come face to face with a distraught person grieving. I felt guilty for intruding on his private pain, sad for what he was going through, and unprofessional for letting my emotions show.

I asked him to email me if he wanted to talk. Then I left.

The so-called “pickup” or “death knock” is hard for reporters. It often involves showing up on a doorstep on the worst day of a family’s life, asking about a loved one who’s just died. The best case scenario is they invite you in, share intimate details and help you paint an accurate, full picture of the deceased. The worst case scenario is they slam the door in your face and you skulk back to the newsroom empty-handed.

For some reporters, a vulture-like feeling of asking families to share private grief never goes away. For others, they find comfort knowing their actions — giving a family a last chance to share their loved one’s stories — serve a higher purpose.

But, as seasoned reporters, editors, journalism professors, and grieving families will tell you, there are right and wrong ways of approaching a grieving family.

Reporters struggle with ethical implications of grief interviews

Lauren Miller was folding laundry on a Saturday morning in 2013 when she got the call.

Her editors at *Bloomberg* were sending her to Lac Megantic, Quebec, where a freight train had derailed and exploded, leaving scores missing and presumed dead. This was a huge get for a summer intern still in journalism school.

Miller eagerly accepted the assignment, hopped on a plane, landed in Quebec, rented an SUV, and drove straight to ground zero.

“Everything was so tranquil until you got to this downtown part,” she recalled. “It was just burnt. Everything was gone.”

Miller — then known by her maiden name, Murphy — started talking to residents. She spoke with a teenager whose brother was missing and a group of women sitting on a porch. One of the women’s young relatives was missing. She was dazed but agreed to an interview.

For Miller, the interaction was emotionally draining.

“I felt like such a grief vulture,” said Miller. “These people are on their porch grieving and I’m like, ‘Hey, do you want to talk into my phone and answer some questions?’”

The ensuing days were difficult, marked by one particularly disturbing incident.

Miller was on the street, walking away from a media scrum, when she overheard a woman talking to another person about her dead daughter-in-law and two grandchildren, who were all incinerated in the blaze. Miller stood transfixed, eavesdropping from a distance, when a swarm of reporters suddenly encircled the woman, shoving recorders and iPhones in her face.

After they left, Miller apologized to the woman for the other reporters’ actions. The woman thanked her.

Miller then trekked to a McDonald’s with the other reporters to access wifi. There, she overheard a reporter boasting about the great content she had for her story. “Got crying grandmother of two grandkids that died. Feature, written!” exclaimed the reporter.

“I was like holy f***. You are talking about people,” said Miller, recalling her disgust at the reporter’s behavior, though she didn’t react at the time. “These are people. And sometimes ... we forget this is the worst day of somebody’s life and their whole family’s life.”

Miller’s experiences reporting in Lac Megantic left her shaken. For months, she had recurring nightmares about her loved ones burning in fires. She spoke to a counsellor, which helped her, but she eventually decided to stop covering hard news entirely. Miller now works as a freelance photographer and travel writer, roles she is happy in.

For other reporters, their aversion to grief interviews dissipates over time.

As a rookie reporter, *Toronto Star* crime reporter Wendy Gillis questioned if she was cut out for journalism, believing that interviewing grieving families was ethically dubious.

Six years of reporting experience later, she now understands the value of giving a family a platform to speak and is convinced talking to grieving families is an important, albeit always difficult, job.

“It’s kind of the least you can do,” said Gillis. “If somebody has taken away your relative, one thing you (as a reporter) can give back to them is a medium for their grief, for their sense of injustice ... and a way to memorialize somebody who is now gone.”

Gillis realizes not all families want to talk. To personalize the interaction, she always prefers to visit families in person, or at least to call them. If they don’t want to speak, she asks if another relative would, or she leaves a note and her contact information at the door. She describes her approach as “not pushy” and respectful — a method that sometimes entices a family to speak, other times not.

When a family does agree to talk, she recognizes her work may re-traumatize them. She gives them time to get comfortable with her and open up about memories of their loved one.

“The good details that really resonate with readers are the really painful ones that are hard to extract and hard for people to go over,” she said. “Like, the final moment of their son’s life. Or the final text message they got from them.”

Gillis now strongly believes it’s a reporter’s responsibility to give a victim’s family a chance to speak. Otherwise, the only information the public knows will be “name, age, date of death, way of death,” she said.

Victims’ families tell reporters to be sensitive, patient

When a *London Free Press* vehicle pulled up outside Al and Pauline Newton’s London, Ontario home in 1997, just a day after a drunk driver had killed their daughter Catherine, their first thought was, “Oh God, here’s the press. Don’t we have enough to deal with?”

But between the time the reporter got out of his car and reached the doorstep, Pauline Newton changed her mind.

“I turned to my husband and I said, ‘You know what? Catherine’s story needs to be told,’” Newton said.

The Newtons spent well over an hour with the reporter, John Herbert, telling him how loved 20-year-old Catherine was and what her aspirations had been. Catherine was a “closet nerd” who would have been a great mother one day, they told him.

Herbert listened.

“Part of the healing process in grieving is telling your story,” Newton said. “Being able to tell our story and have this reporter listen and take notes, it helped us.”

The Newtons had another reason for speaking: they knew Catherine’s death — she was hit by a drunk driver while crossing the street — was preventable. They hoped to help stop similar tragedies from occurring in the future by telling her story.

“The public needs to be aware of what was lost and why,” said Newton, who, along with her husband, speaks to journalism classes about how to interview grieving families. “This is the victim, this is the life they would have had, and this was the cause.”

Nineteen years later, Londoners still remember Catherine Newton and the tragedy her family endured. But not all families are ready to speak in the immediate aftermath of tragedy.



“We were in shock,” said Joanne MacIsaac, recalling the days after a Durham, Ontario, police officer killed her brother, Michael MacIsaac, in Ajax, Ontario on December 2, 2013. “We went into family lockdown.”

But in the hours after the shooting, as her brother lay near-death in a hospital bed, Joanne MacIsaac distinctly recalls one interaction with *Toronto Star* reporter Jennifer Pagliaro outside St. Michael's Hospital. Pagliaro was there waiting for a press conference about an unrelated incident to start, and MacIsaac was waiting for more family to arrive. MacIsaac was distraught and Pagliaro noticed.

"Jennifer said, 'Why are you crying?'" said MacIsaac. "I said, 'My brother's been shot.'"

Pagliaro's response and compassion struck a chord with MacIsaac.

"The look on her face ... She looked sad. She looked like she felt bad for me," MacIsaac said, recalling that Pagliaro handed MacIsaac her business card before they went their separate ways.

For weeks after his death, Michael MacIsaac was known only as the "naked man," shot by police as he ran through a quiet neighborhood on a cold winter morning. Durham police did not release Michael's name, at the request of his family.

When the family did share Michael's name with the public, the MacIsaacs let Pagliaro into their homes. MacIsaac said she wanted to speak to reporters to "set the record straight" about who her brother was, beyond what was reported by the police.

In March 2014, Pagliaro wrote a touching, in-depth feature story about Michael MacIsaac, his heartbroken family, and his death. Reading the article felt therapeutic, MacIsaac said.

Ethics experts say go with your gut

Karyn Greenwood-Graham knows what it's like to be on the receiving end of a reporter's death call. A Waterloo Regional Police officer killed her son, Trevor, who had mental health issues, during a botched drug store robbery in 2007. She remembers reporters staking out her Paris, Ontario home in the days after he died.

"It was a horrific time," said Greenwood-Graham. "You want to talk about the person who died but you're not sure who to talk to."

Today, she is the founder of a self-advocacy group called Affected Families of Police Homicide. Part of her role involves reaching out to victims' families and helping them deal with media. One of the first things she tells families who want to speak to the press is: "interview the interviewer."

"Make sure you feel comfortable with them," she said. "Ask them the questions that you want to know ... Are you a father? ... Do you have a family?"

For Greenwood-Graham, it's important that the interviewer feel genuine empathy with the family or that they try to understand what the family is going through.

Kathy English, the *Toronto Star's* public editor, believes empathy is one of the most important qualities a journalist can possess.

“(Empathy is) the ability to put yourself into someone else’s shoes, into someone else’s heart, to imagine what it feels like to be a mother whose child was just killed on the street,” she said. “I think people know if you sincerely feel that.”

At the same time, it's necessary to strive for objectivity, in the sense that reporters are able to see the facts clearly and ask probing questions, she said. English firmly believes there's value in asking a grieving family to speak and in aspiring to humanize their loved one, but reporters must also decide how far they'll go to get a story.

“You know inside what is right and what you can live with,” she said, acknowledging that she recognizes rookie reporters are eager to land big stories and that the journalistic culture can promote big egos. “I think you have to know, do you have an ethical compass that goes beyond all that?”

English openly admits that as a journalist she sometimes lied to editors when they told her to push a grieving person who had already said no to an interview, telling her editors she returned to doorsteps when she hadn't. She knew her limits.

But for young reporters, a more personal concern might be showing real emotion. What if you cry? What if you don't?

“It's okay to show the emotion that you genuinely feel,” said Larry Cornies, a journalism program coordinator with Conestoga College. “We are human,” he said.

For broadcast journalists, showing real emotion can be a powerful tool — reminding the viewer that journalists have empathy, Cronies said. He pointed to CNN reporter Anderson Cooper's coverage of the Orlando gay nightclub shooting, including one broadcast in which the veteran reporter choked up reading victims' names.



Anderson Cooper reporting from Orlando for CNN in June 2016.

“To have that come through is amazing. That is professionalism,” Cornies said, adding that it would be problematic if a reporter got emotional during every broadcast.

For him, there is no question that reporters must accept that speaking with grieving families is part of the job. It may never get easier, but its value to journalism is intrinsic.

“It’s our responsibility as journalists to journal. You’re chronicling a day in the life of the world or your town or your community. Along with that is a lot of sad stuff and a lot of tragedy,” said Cornies. “There is value in honoring the loss of a person ... and making somebody more than a statistic.”

As for my own experience with Sammy Yatim’s uncle back in 2013, after he rejected my interview request, I returned to the newsroom, dejected.

Then, hours later, he sent me an email.

“Please forgive me. I have been fighting to sort out my emotions,” Yatim said. “Anger, pain, sorrow. All I can do is cry, ‘why not me?’ I probably deserved those bullets more than he did.”

He went on to say he didn’t want the public to retaliate against the police officer responsible for the death of his 18-year-old nephew, Sammy, who was alone on a streetcar holding a knife when police shot him. Nothing would bring him back, he said.

I had my story. It wasn’t a sit-down interview or an exclusive for the paper, but it gave the public a glimpse into the pain of a family reeling from a tragic loss, at a time when the violent incident was sending shock waves through the city.

As a person and a journalist, I felt good.

[Note: This piece was initially published by *J-Source* on December 8, 2016. It can be found at <http://www.j-source.ca/article/when-reporter-has-make-%E2%80%98death-knock%E2%80%99>]

Backstory

One of the assignments I dread most as a reporter is the “death knock” — when you have to stand on a grieving family’s doorstep, asking them to talk to you about their dead relative.

As a human, I feel gross. As a reporter, I know it’s my job to give people a platform to share their stories.

During FASPE, the concept of empathic objectivity — the ability to write about other people’s lives from their perspectives, in a way that they would recognize themselves — helped me to reconcile my human instincts with my reporter responsibilities. It’s natural to feel guilty about intruding on a family’s grief, but it’s also a necessary and important part of our jobs to give families a chance to memorialize their loved one.

Our group discussions after visiting Auschwitz also helped me realize that it’s okay to feel and show emotion as a journalist, and that my emotions shouldn’t hold me back but motivate me to dig deeper into stories I care about.

Talking to compassionate journalists, insightful ethics experts, and victims’ families who spoke candidly, confirmed for me the importance of the death knock. I hope that by sharing their experiences, my story can serve as a guide for other journalists when they interview grieving families.

KATRINA CLARKE

Whose Truth Are We Telling?

BY ILGIN YORULMAZ

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, CLASS OF 2016

Is it ethical to report a complex conflict from only one side under certain circumstances?

For an article published by *The New York Times Magazine* in May 2016, reporter Robert F. Worth traveled to Mardin province in southeastern Turkey to report on the latest episode of violence in the decades-long battle between Turkey and Kurdish separatists.

The main character in Worth's story was a Kurdish militant named Ömer Aydın — a mature and confident Kurdistan Workers' Party, or P.K.K., commander with a sense of humor, according to Worth, a former *Times* Beirut bureau chief.

On the face of it, it seems that hardly any Turkish sources appear in the article — official or otherwise — except for an academic based in Washington D.C.

Denied access by the Turkish military, or not wanting to parrot the official government line, Western journalists like Worth can't help but bypass important stakeholders when reporting such a story.

One such stakeholder was the mother of the Turkish soldier whom Ömer Aydın had killed and whose face Aydın couldn't forget: "At the end, they are human, too," he said. Soon after that conversation, Ömer Aydın was dead, too.

In a conflict as complicated as Turkey trying to put down a Kurdish rebellion on the edge of the brutal Syrian civil war in which both sides are combatants or participants, the questions about reporting on the conflict have gotten thornier. The debate over how to cover the Turkey-Kurdish conflict becomes even more combustible in the aftermath of the failed coup d'état in Turkey on July 15, 2016.

Does the approach of reporting on whomever grants access (or is likely to grab the biggest headline) run the risk of inadvertently turning an otherwise excellent piece of reporting into a mouthpiece for one side?

There is no easy answer.

Dangers and obstacles in conflict reporting

When reporting any news story, a basic rule of journalism calls for interviewing sources from all sides.

Yet, in practice, this is often impossible in conflict reporting. Conflicts, by their very nature, are complex and dangerous for reporters. Just look at the second Iraq war, the Syrian civil war, Egyptian protests and their aftermath, or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which dozens of journalists have been killed, injured, or jailed.

In my opinion, there are four common ethical issues raised for journalists in reporting each of these conflicts.

First, combatants vary widely in their definitions of basic concepts and labels, so that one side's "terrorist" is the other side's "freedom fighter." This is what presents the journalist with the most basic quandary before he or she even sets foot on the ground to report.

Since 1984, Kurdish insurgent groups headed by the P.K.K, have been fighting with the Turkish military to have greater political rights in Turkey. The P.K.K's ultimate goal is an independent Kurdish nation. The Syrian civil war is now five years old and Kurds in Rojova in the northern part of Syria have plans to declare an autonomous region within Syria, accelerating Kurdish nation-building efforts.

The P.K.K. labels militants such as Ömer Aydın as heroes fighting against an unjust, even fascist Turkish military — much like Palestinians view the occupying Israeli military or Sunnis in Syria view the Syrian army that serves Bashar al-Assad's Alawite (a branch of Islam close to the Shi'a branch) government. Hard-liners in Turkey think that the P.K.K. is willing to work with the Western press, but does not grant the same full access to the Turkish press, because this preference serves their media strategy of creating sympathy for the militants. Broad coverage of the lethal force used by the Turkish military shows the Kurdish side's savvy in its attempts to discredit Turkey's war on terror, according to these critics.

Yet, how are the Turkish government's policies different from, say, those of the U.S. government in pursuing targets belonging to a terrorist organization such as Al Qaeda? Or the Israeli government in targeting Hezbollah? As many Turkish people see it, the P.K.K. is able to get its message across loud and clear in the Western media, despite the fact that it is firmly recognized as a terrorist organization in the West.

A veteran reporter on Syria told me that on a reporting trip to the region, those journalists

who weren't able to embed with one group embedded with the opposite side. It was impossible to decide who was actually a freedom fighter or a terrorist member of Al-Nusra (an al-Qaeda affiliate), or a part of the Free Syria Army (members of the Syrian Armed Forces who broke away in 2011 and began fighting the Assad regime). "They killed an Alawite in front of our eyes," she said of her horrific experience of being embedded with one of the insurgent groups fighting the Syrian Army.

The second ethical dilemma is that while access to a great source is highly desired, presenting just that source's version of events is troubling. Should the price of access be to drop the journalism rule of telling all sides to a story?

When political developments in Turkey ended peace talks between the P.K.K. and the government in June 2015, the P.K.K.'s branch of patriotic youth started to barricade the streets in Kurdish-majority towns in southeast Anatolia in what was regarded by Kurdish nationalists as a "self-defense" effort. Turkish security forces responded heavily to clear the streets and imposed a curfew. In February and March of 2016, two suicide bombings by Kurdish militants killed 66 people in Ankara, the Turkish capital. In the past year alone, the conflict has cost the lives of hundreds of Turkish security forces, Turkish and Kurdish civilians, and P.K.K. insurgents.

I spoke to Worth about his decision-making process and the ethical challenges he faced while reporting specifically on his *Times Magazine* story. He told me that, from the beginning, his deliberate focus was on finding young P.K.K. militants behind the barricades. "My goal is to try to make these characters come alive. Who are they? What's motivating them?" Worth said.

The third ethical dilemma concerns the audience that the story targets. When CNN shows up in a conflict zone, its reporters are catering to a multinational audience that is different from that of a local paper, say, in Tel Aviv, Karachi, or Istanbul. A story like Worth's about the underreported Kurdish conflict was almost certainly going to touch upon ISIS, Worth told me. It's not just because the Kurdish conflict is an extension of the overarching ISIS conflict, but it shows that the editor made a deliberate decision to present an aspect of the issue (ISIS in this case) most likely to engage the average American. On the other hand, had this story been written for a Turkish audience, ISIS would probably have received very little mention, if any, because in Turkey the Kurdish conflict is much more of an everyday reality than ISIS is.

Furthermore, a Turkish audience would also find it unacceptable if there were no Turkish sources interviewed for an article on the P.K.K.

In our digital age, the audience has enormous influence over a story's popularity and newsworthiness. During my visit to Turkey this summer, I was asked several times in my meetings with Turkish professionals, industrialists, and business owners why the news

from Turkey in the international media was always negative. Referring to the rise of Taha Akgül, a Turkish wrestler and gold medalist in the 2016 Rio Olympics, one businessman asked me, “Why doesn’t anyone write about the rags-to-riches story of that wrestling medalist boy?” The answer is that it has little newsworthiness or context outside Turkey.

The fourth and final ethical issue for journalists is how to overcome government restrictions and censorship, or even self-censorship. Worth says that despite his efforts, he failed to get permission to embed with the Turkish military and chose not to approach local Turkish government bodies. “One would like to sit down with [and interview Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan. He personally is the decision-maker of all that, so why talk to the second or third person in command?” he told me. I slightly disagree with this approach. Ideally, he should have insisted on talking to any source from the Turkish side, whether a public official or a civilian.

You might ask: What if Worth had decided to reach out to the governor of, say, Mardin province for an interview? Resentment against the Kurdish insurgency is so high in most Turkish-majority provinces that even if Worth had managed to secure an interview with the governor, the governor may have refused to be included in Worth’s story. A senior press adviser to President Erdoğan told me recently: “I notice that many government officials refrain from appearing in the same article with P.K.K. commanders. They think it’s an insult.” This official, who advises Erdoğan on which reporters to speak to, thinks this works against Turkey’s image. When a foreign reporter cannot (or chooses not to) talk to the governor and when the governor chooses not to grant an interview so as not to be seen as sharing a platform with a Kurdish militant, then the result can be incomplete, even biased reporting.

Moises Saman, who accompanied Worth as the photographer for his story, accepts that a journalist should try to interview both sides of a conflict and make an effort to reach the other side. “But when you know that’s not going to happen, what do you do?” he asks. He advises being practical: “If you wait, no story would ever get done. Just because one side blocked access shouldn’t be a reason to kill a story.”

After the failed coup d’état against the Turkish government on July 15 and an alleged assassination attempt on President Erdoğan, the Turkish government imposed a three-month state of emergency that began on July 21, 2016 and was extended on January 4, 2017 for a further three months. Accordingly, Turkey temporarily suspended The European Convention on Human Rights, a move similar to France’s derogation from the Convention after the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris and in France’s fourth extension of the state of emergency since then. This has meant temporary restrictions on publishing and the photocopying and distribution of newspapers, books, magazines, brochures, and printed matter deemed illegal under the state of emergency. This is another step toward a less free press, which will also almost certainly further impede reporting on regional conflicts.

Turkish media coverage of certain stories has indeed become more restricted. The state of emergency led to an immediate ban on publishing stories on events such as terror attacks or Turkish military operations aimed to bolster national security. Even if there are no apparent restrictions on a story, editors in Turkey now choose to self-censor to avoid the risk of prosecution. For example, CNN Türk ran an abstract of Worth's article soon after its publication. But they cut out certain parts and only published the sections where a civilian from Cizre criticizes the P.K.K. for the terrible mess they created in the town by getting into a war with Turkish government forces, and where a female sniper regrets taking part in a conflict of which she no longer sees the point.

The example of CNN Türk's approach to publishing Worth's story points to a fifth ethical issue specific to Turkish media in reporting on a conflict: the role of nationalism. The nationalistic stance taken by the mainstream Turkish media on sensitive issues related to Kurds, Armenians, and Alawites in Turkey is an historic problem. For a speech he gave to a conference in May on the coverage of the Turkish military campaign against Kurdish riots in the 1930s in what is today Tunceli (Dersim) in eastern Anatolia, prominent Turkish media critic Ragıp Duran analyzed hundreds of newspaper clippings. Duran found a systematic lack of information and news, one-sided reporting, a lot of biased language (such as calling the local public "primitive"), and propaganda. "Much like in the 1930s, today's pro-government media uses phrases like 'War on Terror,' 'PKK is finished,' and in an effort to link the Kurdish issue to external forces, 'Armenian progeny,'" said Duran in his written statement from the conference.

At the same conference, Duran also listened to the accounts of women from Cizre, the Kurdish town in the east, which bore the brunt of the latest military operation and which Worth also visited for his story. Duran suggests that reporters avail themselves of three key sources in order to support ethical reporting of a conflict: official documents (especially reports by foreign diplomats and organizations); academic papers on the sociology, psychology, and demography of the issue; and interviews with witnesses, like the women Duran met, using oral-history methodology.

Any coverage of the Kurdish conflict in mainstream Turkish media has mainly been from a nationalist angle. Earlier in 2016, Nazlı Çelik, a reporter for the pro-government Star TV station, was embedded with the Turkish military during operations in southeast Turkey. She filed a video report showing her next to Turkish forces blowing up a suspected militant hideout, as well as sharing meals with her at a makeshift dinner table. The reactions were mixed. Some hailed her as a hero, while others thought she was a show-off. Partisan reporters in a fact-challenged political landscape hardly do any service to the ethical reporting of the news. On top of that, as developments in technology allow users of social media to also become publishers, people tend to become more polarized after reading reports from their "own side."

In his new book titled *A Rage for Order: The Middle East in Turmoil from Tahrir Square*

to *ISIS*, Worth tells the story of two women who were childhood friends, one Alawite, the other Sunni, whose friendship falls apart during the Syrian war. Given his years spent living in the region and his extensive reporting time with both of the women, Worth was able to report extensively and give an accurate account of the conflict as seen by each side — a luxury, understandably, he didn't have in his *Times Magazine* piece on the Kurdish-Turkish conflict. Part of the difficulty with reporting conflicts around the world lies in the fact that when working in danger zones, foreign reporters have limited time to spend in the region, are bound by deadlines, and have very specific reporting goals. This reality and the distrust Turkish public officials have that a foreign publication will report on them fairly hamper a balanced approach to sourcing a story.

Even when a veteran reporter like Worth genuinely made the effort to engage with pro-government stakeholders or people outside the region, it was not possible to get the other side's view. The closest Worth got to this was when his team was detained briefly by the Turkish police during their time in Mardin. He told me he meant to ask the detaining officers how they felt about the Kurdish conflict. In the end, he refrained from asking this question, thinking it would jeopardize not just the story but perhaps also the team's safety. "I just think we journalists should adapt ourselves to the story and the situation," Worth told me.

One solution to the single source problem may be to employ local reporters who speak the language and know the culture. Furkan Temir, a young Turkish photographer who accompanied Worth and Saman in reporting the story, said that as a Turkish journalist, even *he* has trouble getting access to the government and military sources "unless one embeds with [the government's] own media organizations like Anatolian Agency, A News, or TRT, the state-owned Turkish Radio Television." Temir pointed out that the aforementioned distrust of media from the "opposite side" is present on the Kurdish side as well. He said the Kurds hesitate "to accredit" a journalist if a Turkish military member appears in one of his or her photographs.

In fact, there was one short-lived glimpse of hope in reaching out to the other side. *Özgür Gündem* is a Turkish-language Kurdish newspaper reporting on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and is regarded by the Turkish authorities as a PKK propaganda outlet. *Özgür Gündem* recently started a guest editorship program whereby prominent journalists would edit the paper for one day. However, of the 34 or so editors who have done so, 17 have been detained by Turkish security forces on charges of terrorism propaganda. In August, *Özgür Gündem* was accused of being the media arm of the P.K.K and was closed down by the government.

Sometimes reporting both sides of a conflict as a responsible journalist can lead to a negative outcome for the journalist, as Andrew E. Kramer, who reports on Ukraine's two-year-old war, recently found out. Kramer wrote in *The New York Times* about how he ended up being blacklisted as a terrorist by a Ukrainian pro-government website for

“simply doing our jobs: reporting both sides of the war, including the pro-Russian rebel side.”

What do we owe to our readers?

A recent article in *Columbia Journalism Review* reports the findings of research conducted last spring by the magazine and the George T. Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism.

Researchers found that sometimes the content of a well-narrated story matters more than its sources — whether those sources are based on one side or the other in a conflict — even to politically polarized readers. Despite the lack of Turkish voices in his story, Worth’s extensive explanations of the historical context of the conflict and his full disclosure of the obstacles he encountered to accessing critical sources, leads me to believe that his story fits into that rare category.

In today’s highly populist and polarized media landscape, many Turkish readers will regard a story about P.K.K. militants by a Western journalist that does not include a Turkish official source’s comments as tipping the balance dangerously toward one side. As photographer Saman put it to me, “Truth is somewhere in the middle.”

Backstory

We are going through very difficult times. Some call it the “new world disorder.” Democracy in Europe and elsewhere is in retreat. Politics have taken a sharp rightward turn in many countries from Hungary to the United States. The surge of the strongman’s rule is becoming inevitable with Putinism in the east and Trumpism in the west.

In such politically charged environments, journalists must act even more responsibly and tell the truth without any hesitation. Yet, sometimes, the truth is defined by certain circumstances and sources, none of which are in the hands of the journalists.

I first thought about constraints on truth when I read an article on the FASPE required reading list. At the beginning of World War II, as Nazi Germany was getting ready to murder Jews and to rule most of Europe, all foreign news agencies were forced out of Germany one by one, except for one: the Associated Press. The Associated Press chose to negotiate with the Nazi regime and to give up its independence in return for access to

Nazi-occupied Europe. The AP ended up being the only agency to report from Berlin, and it received enormous credit for it. But, one might ask, at what cost?

I decided to make the challenge of reporting on wars and conflicts as the main topic of my FASPE paper. Does the approach of reporting on whomever grants access (or is likely to grab the biggest headline) run the risk of inadvertently turning journalism into a mouthpiece for one side?

There is no easy answer.

During our trip to Auschwitz, we discussed the importance of truthful journalism when reporting on atrocities such as the Holocaust. For example, it was shocking for me to learn that for a long time, the American media was skeptical of and dismissed stories of concentration camps and the systematic torture and execution of Jews, saying that these stories were simply unfounded rumors. In one part of the trip, each fellow introduced a journalist or illustrator from the past whose conduct we wanted to analyze. During our visit to the House of the Wannsee Conference, we learned how pro-Nazi government publications, like Der Stürmer, manipulated the truth and published articles full of inaccuracies.

I believe I came out of the FASPE Fellowship as a better and more responsible journalist. On the one hand, there is increasing pressure today to do a story no matter whether it can be done in a balanced manner. On the other hand, there is the moral responsibility of the journalist to hear the story from both sides. “The truth,” one of the photojournalists told me during my reporting for my paper, “is somewhere in between.”

ILGIN YORULMAZ

Deciding When Intervention May Ruin the Story

BY DAYTON MARTINDALE

UC BERKELEY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, CLASS OF 2017

A few years back, journalist Anne Hull went to Kentucky to write about welfare for the *St. Petersburg Times*. In the anthology *Telling True Stories*, she writes that she spent three separate one-week spans with the same family.

During the second week, the family's baby developed a fever, but they didn't have money for gas to take her to the hospital. Hull and her photographer's "rental car sat about two hundred feet away," she writes. "They were looking at it. I could, of course feel the ethical dilemma developing: 'Should I offer to drive them to the hospital in my car?'"

She decided not to at first:

I was there reporting a story about living on the edge. If I, an accidental visitor, solved their problem, then it would no longer be a true story. As a newspaper reporter, changing their situation didn't seem appropriate.

But, understandably, she didn't find waiting easy:

I started to think, "Why am I doing this job? This is horrible." I wanted to throw the notebook down, stop being the reporter, and take care of the baby. The photographer and I decided to wait just fifteen more minutes. The purpose of the story was to ask: What happens when the government money shuts off? What will people do then?

Hull got that story. Before the 15 minutes were up, the baby's father pawned a shotgun to pay for gas, and they took the baby to the hospital.

Consider another, similar case, also from *Telling True Stories*. Writer Sonia Nazario was following a young boy, Enrique, as he attempted to migrate into the United States:

[Enrique] struggled for two weeks in Nuevo Laredo, just south of the United States-Mexico border, to get the money to call Honduras for his mother's phone number in North Carolina. The piece of paper with the number on it had been stolen from him. He was washing cars, eating once a day, and really struggling. The whole time, I had a cell phone in my pocket. I knew that my intervention would significantly change the story; I would have had to start all over with another main character. Most important to my decision, though, was that Enrique was not in imminent danger.

Enrique did eventually find a phone, and Nazario wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning series for the *Los Angeles Times* that she later adapted into a bestselling book, *Enrique's Journey*.

Neither Hull nor Nazario were available for comment for this piece.

In their essays, both journalists write that they would have helped had the situation become more dire (and in fact, Nazario writes that she did help a different boy who was not her main character and whose danger was more "imminent"). But who decides what constitutes a sufficiently dangerous circumstance — and would intervention necessarily ruin the story? These two cases each raise an obvious (though still important) question — should Hull and/or Nazario have intervened? But we can't answer that without at least attempting to address a larger, deeper question: What is journalism for?

Objectivity and news outlets

Nazario is up front about her goals in telling Enrique's story: "In a city like Los Angeles where immigrants are often demonized, humanizing them is an important part of a newspaper's civic mission." Yet, she also understands the impulse to help:

[Reporters] must weigh the harm to an individual child against the usefulness of witnessing reality and conveying it powerfully to readers. Stories like *Enrique's Journey* can motivate our readers to think more about the issues and to act on them. As narrative reporters we must aspire to write the most moving stories we can. That is our mandate. It is all we can do.

For me, at least two things stand out about Nazario's framing of the discussion. First, her approach to journalism here is very much about advocacy. She does not appeal to journalistic impartiality, but rather argues that writing a certain type of story about a cause (in this case, humanizing immigrants) is actually more *useful* to that cause than intervening to assist in individual cases. Second, Nazario limits herself to her trade. Writing "is all we can do," she says.

I find several issues with this. As Nazario seems to, I think journalism can and should have an advocacy mission. But if so, I believe we should take her injunction to “weigh the [preventable] harm ... against the usefulness of witnessing reality and conveying it powerfully to readers” on a case-by-case basis. Perhaps in this case, showing Enrique’s struggle to find a phone is essential to humanizing him for readers. But it’s also possible that depicting him looking for a phone doesn’t add much that can’t be found in the rest of the story. In such a case, writing would not be “all we can do” — we can also lend Enrique our phone.

Nazario wrote that had she lent her phone to Enrique, she would have needed to start over with a new subject. But this also isn’t entirely obvious. The story may be a *better* story if it includes more hardship for Enrique, but, ethically, I don’t think that should be our sole standard. I think it’s at least debatable whether immigrants would be significantly more humanized by a story where Enrique struggled to find a phone than in one where he borrowed one from a reporter. (In fact, imagine that Nazario had offered him her phone, and he had given her a grateful hug — couldn’t that not also humanize?) In short, I am not convinced that giving Enrique a phone would have conflicted directly with Nazario’s goals for her piece.

But there is still the idea, common among many reporters, that inserting oneself into the story somehow taints it, a view apparently shared by Hull. Hull differentiates newspaper reporting, which “operates under the strictest of codes,” from other types of nonfiction, stating that “firmer boundaries” make newspaper reporters “freer to examine and explore.”

But that code is not etched in stone. Rather, it emerged over time, for specific historical reasons. In *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945*, historian Deborah Lipstadt explains that during World War I, many U.S. journalists coordinated directly with the government to promote pro-war propaganda.

This was not terribly unusual in a profession fraught with naked partisanship and “yellow journalism,” but, according to Columbia University journalism professor Michael Schudson in *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*, it was a key turning point. The public — and journalists themselves — began to question the supposed facts found in newspapers. The press turned to objectivity — a specific set of journalistic standards that had been around for decades but had not yet become dominant — as a way to restore confidence.

Thus, objectivity was a response to a real problem, but that doesn’t mean it is the only, or even the best response. Journalist Glenn Greenwald and other critics of objective journalism argue it contains an inherent bias toward those in power, and therefore results in pro-war propaganda of the sort it was intended to avoid.

It may also be an unattainable ideal. Lipstadt writes: “Neither the journalist nor the historian is completely objective. Their values inform their view and understanding of events, and thus influence the creation and interpretation of the historical record.”

But, according to the article “Objectivity Precludes Responsibility” by Stanford University journalism professor Theodore Glasser, which appeared in the February 1984 issue of *Quill*, “the “most important” consequence of objective journalism is that it’s “biased against the very idea of responsibility; the day’s news is viewed as something journalists are compelled to report, not something they are responsible for creating.”

There is a rich legacy of journalism that rejects the notion of complete objectivity, from the abolitionist newspapers of the early-to-mid-1800s, which included writers and editors who participated in the Underground Railroad, to George Orwell’s reporting on the Spanish Civil War, in which he also participated.

I do not want to dismiss out of hand the notion that the stricter code Hull talks about — while it would have prevented journalists from participating in the Underground Railroad — could also have helped them examine and explore their subject more freely. And I am not saying that intervention is always right, or that Nazario and Hull were necessarily wrong.

But I suspect that this self-imposed code of restraint can handicap reporters and deprive them of what could otherwise be great stories. Remaining detached and impartial may be the right approach to covering some stories, but it is only one approach. Other approaches offer their own strengths, which can either complement an impartial approach or, in some cases, be preferable to it. As Glasser put it, “objective reporting is more of a custom than a principle, more a habit of mind than a standard of performance.” If journalists or readers see objectivity as always preferable, that is because they have been trained to see it as such, not because of any inherent virtue in the approach.

I do see value in independence — at the magazine (*In These Times*) where I work, for instance, we report on social movements extensively. Yet, we generally don’t accept pieces about events that are written by the leader of the organization that organized it. In most instances, this would amount to providing free PR to these organizations or causes. And an outside, critical eye is a useful tool to have. But we do regularly take pieces from people involved in advocacy — for example, pieces on Israel/Palestine from members of the organization Jewish Voice for Peace. I would argue that the intimacy with the subject matter they have gained from being activists often improves their pieces.

Deciding our role

Most of the journalism classmates with whom I've discussed the Hull and Nazario cases believe that Nazario did the right thing, but think that Hull should have driven the baby to the hospital.

Part of the reason for this assessment is the perceived imminence of the threat. Hull had been planning to assist the infant if the fever had persisted for much longer, but many of my journalist friends think she shouldn't have waited as long as she did — a feverish baby is no time to tempt fate.

On the other hand, while Enrique was presumably suffering as he struggled to find a phone, he was not close to death. But what constitutes "imminent danger?" Surely there are moral gradations between providing shelter to a fugitive slave on the Underground Railroad and lending a boy a phone, and even if we think the former is obligatory, then we must draw a line somewhere.

Obviously, it would be impractical, not to mention illegal (although so was the Underground Railroad) for Nazario to fund and organize Enrique's journey herself. But while lending Enrique a phone might not have made the difference between life and death, it also would have been a very easy way to offer help that would have made a big difference to him without significantly altering the story. This is, at least potentially, a case in which abandoning the conception of a journalist as simply a reporter or a fly-on-the-wall, would have been better.

Another critical difference between Hull's case and Nazario's is the age and capacity for reason of their subjects. The feverish baby had no capacity to reason, whereas Enrique, while still young, could understand why a reporter would choose not to intervene. Both Hull and Nazario explain the importance of laying down clear ground rules before starting to report, including explaining to the subjects one's role as an observer (if that is the role the reporter chooses to take). To a baby, such ground rules would mean nothing. Enrique, at least, could understand them and — insofar as a minor can — consent.

True to the spirit of this essay, let me now insert myself into the story. In college, I had been writing a story on Princeton University's primate labs when news of an abused monkey in a Princeton lab leaked. A friend from PETA (with which I had no formal affiliation) reached out to me, asking if I could write and circulate a petition around campus in response. For a moment I wasn't sure — I had intended my article to be predominantly third person, and if I started a petition, that would inevitably become part of the story.

My reason for wanting to write in the third person was not to adhere to policy. At the alternative weekly student paper where I wrote and edited, we didn't follow any particular

codes, and I had free rein in my writing style. Most of our pieces, including my own, included at least some first-person narrative. However, at that time I thought a third-person article would be taken more seriously and granted more respect by primate scientists — and, perhaps, it might also look nice on a grad school application.

But this friend had been helpful to me in the past, and given the docile state of animal advocacy on campus, I was worried no one else would do anything if I declined. So I ended up circulating a petition, meeting with lab administrators about potential reforms, and putting off the article until some closure had been achieved. One of the administrators proved very receptive to dialogue, but only the most minor of my proposed reforms were even partly adopted.

While this process changed the article's focus, it also offered me valuable insights into how advocacy works and how the university viewed its labs — insights that I would not have otherwise gained. By becoming involved in my topic I gained access to information that proved useful to my story. The administration hadn't wanted to talk to me when I was just a journalist; it wasn't until I submitted the petition that anyone agreed to meet — and even then, I was asked not to include the details of those meetings in my piece.

In the end, I believe my own intervention improved that article — and potentially, in some tiny and ludicrously insufficient way, also improved the lives of the monkeys, rodents, and fish at Princeton's labs, which had been my primary goal from the start. Had I not become involved, had I chosen to adhere to a specific set of guidelines for respectable, third-person investigative reporting, I believe I might have been sacrificing the monkeys on the altar of my journalism career. They, like the feverish baby, can't consent.

Ultimately, my own reporting (on both humans and nonhumans) *does* come with an advocacy mission, and I still think of myself as an activist. Perhaps starting a petition — let alone civil disobedience — might be too much to ask of reporters. But perhaps, subtle contributions like a ride to the hospital or loaning a phone need not threaten the integrity of a story. As journalist Nick Miroff put it, explaining in *The Washington Post* why he sometimes gives food or aid to people he reports on, arguments for total nonintervention “have never felt more hollow than when I'm in Haiti and someone is telling me they haven't eaten in two days.”

Hull writes, “We must stick to the basic framework, telling ourselves: ‘I am here to do a job.’” But whether we admit it or not, we, as reporters, are physically there. We are doing a job, yes, but we are also citizens and we have our own thoughts and feelings and our presence both consciously and unconsciously affects our subjects' behavior, no matter what we do. We are thoroughly enmeshed in complex social and ecological relationships. Thus, we have affected the story already, and if we can do vulnerable subjects some small favor, without compromising our independence or diminishing the social utility of our work, then maybe the basic framework is ready for an update.

Backstory

The pen, we are often told, is mightier than the sword. But at FASPE, we talked about some of our journalism forebears who weren't particularly confident in the political power of the pen alone.

In our discussions of World War II-era journalists, several of the individuals whose careers we examined had blurred the line between their journalism and their advocacy. Some firmly tried to keep their biases out of their reporting; others continued to report while getting involved in political advocacy; and one left journalism altogether to dedicate himself to smuggling Jews out of Nazi-occupied France. Someone in our group suggested that, in some situations, there may be higher callings than journalism.

These examples stuck with me — I'd like to believe that if I were in a position to smuggle people to safety, but had to give up journalism to do so, I would give up journalism. Does this mean that if I believe some issue today demands similar urgency, that I should throw aside my pen and throw myself into direct action? Should I have quit my job to move to the Standing Rock encampments, for example, to combat the climate crisis and the dispossession of indigenous people?

At this point in time, I have decided that I am more useful to the climate movement as an editor for the progressive In These Times magazine than I would be as an activist at Standing Rock. (In fact, at In These Times I have edited multiple articles about Standing Rock and conducted a Q+A with an indigenous organizer, doing my part to help get the word out). But it does not make sense to me that the two have to be mutually exclusive.

The example I return to over and over again — although I'm far from an expert — is that of the abolitionist press of the early-to mid-1800s. Regarded at first as a fringe group, these writers and editors participated in the Underground Railroad and helped build a movement; this is the sort of model I'd like to follow in my own career.

I realize this is somewhat at odds with modern conceptions of objective journalism, and my advocacy bent has been the subject of many productive discussions both at FASPE and within journalism at large. In this piece, I wanted to explore it further, trying to determine where, why, and how to get involved in the stories we tell. Even if I haven't come up with definitive answers, I wanted to at least challenge the notion that we must remain as flies on the wall.

DAYTON MARTINDALE