

News Literacy Lecturer's Background Pack

Lecture Title: Mission of the American Press

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Bin Laden Satellite Phone

President Bush asserted this week that the news media published a U.S. government leak in 1998 about Osama bin Laden's use of a satellite phone, alerting the al Qaeda leader to government monitoring and prompting him to abandon the device. The story of the vicious leak that destroyed a valuable intelligence operation was first reported by a best-selling book, validated by the Sept. 11 commission and then repeated by the president. But it appears to be an urban myth. The al Qaeda leader's communication to aides via satellite phone had already been reported in 1996 -- and the source of the information was another government, the Taliban, which ruled Afghanistan at the time. The second time a news organization reported on the satellite phone, the source was bin Laden himself.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/21/AR2005122101994.html>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1862579.stm

Wiki Leaks: Red Cell

The memo, classified Secret, asks, "What if Foreigners See the United States as an 'Exporter of Terrorism?'" Dated February 2, 2010, it was produced by the CIA's "Red Cell," a brainstorming team established in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks to provide an "alternative viewpoint" in the intelligence community. The release is the second CIA Red Cell document published by WikiLeaks. In March, the site published another Secret memo analyzing possible PR strategies to shore up public support in Europe for the war in Afghanistan.

<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2010/08/wikileaks-red-cell/>

The Right to Know v. National Security (Secret Joint Raid Captures Taliban Top Commander)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/world/asia/16intel.html>

Alien and Sedition Acts 1798

Signed into law by President John Adams in 1798, the Alien and Sedition Acts consisted of four laws passed by the Federalist-controlled Congress as America prepared for war with France. These acts increased the residency requirement for American citizenship from five to fourteen years, authorized the president to imprison or deport aliens considered "dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States" and restricted speech critical of the government. These laws were designed to silence and weaken the Democratic-Republican Party. Negative reaction to the Alien and Sedition Acts helped contribute to the Democratic-Republican victory in the 1800 elections. Congress repealed the Naturalization Act in 1802, while the other acts were allowed to expire.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Alien.html>

Near v Minnesota

The Saturday Press

In 1927, Guilford and Jay Near began publishing The Saturday Press. On September 26, 1927, the Monday after the first issue, Guilford was injured when he was shot in an ambush. Near continued running the paper.

Near and Guilford claimed that Jewish gangsters were running gambling, bootlegging and racketeering in Minneapolis and that the city government and the police force were doing nothing about it. Their editorial in the November 19, 1927, issue read:

There have been too many men in this city and especially those in official life, who HAVE been taking orders and suggestions from JEW GANGSTERS, therefore we HAVE Jew Gangsters, practically ruling Minneapolis.

A Complaint Filed

On November 21, 1927, County Attorney Floyd Olson (whom Guilford had branded a "Jew lover") filed a complaint against the paper under the Public Nuisance Law. Judge Mathias Baldwin issued a temporary restraining order, which was to last for more than a year.

<http://www.class.uh.edu/comm/classes/comm4303/section3/nearvsminnesota.html>

Louis Brandeis

May want to mention that he was the first Jewish Supreme Court Representative (nominated by Woodrow Wilson, who ironically restricted the press during WWI- Sedition Act and Espionage Act). His appointment was highly contentious given the climate of anti-Semitism. Yet, as in this case, he sided with individual liberty even though Near was an anti-Semitic and racist.

<http://www.brandeis.edu/legacyfund/bio.html>

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/filmmore/fm_act.html

Libel v Slander (Jeff Green)

A libel suit is a rare step for a political figure. While many candidates complain about unfair news coverage, few go as far as making their complaints a legal case. But Mr. Greene, who has deep pockets and apparently the wherewithal to pursue the case all the way to trial, has proved he is no ordinary politician.

Dogged by rumors about wild parties aboard his 145-foot yacht and about fraudulent real estate deals, Mr. Greene will seek at least \$500 million in damages in part, he said, to teach the news media a lesson. "I want to send a message to every newspaper in the country: Do your homework," he said Tuesday in a telephone interview. "I deserve to have the record corrected, and they deserve to be punished."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/01/us/politics/01greene.html>

U of Illinois

Exposing influence and admissions at the University of Illinois

An ongoing Tribune investigation has revealed that subpar applicants gained admission to the U. of I. with the sway of lawmakers and university trustees, at times over the objections of admissions officers. See updates below.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/college/>

The Pentagon Papers

The dramatic collision between the Nixon Administration and first the New York Times, then the Washington Post, raised in a new and spectacular form the unresolved constitutional questions about the Government's right to keep its planning papers secret and the conflicting right of a free press to inform the public how its Government has functioned (see story page 17). Yet, even more fundamental, the legal battle focused national attention on the records that the Government was fighting so fiercely to protect. Those records afforded a rare insight into how high officials make decisions affecting the lives of millions as well as the fate of nations. The view, however constricted or incomplete, was deeply disconcerting. The records revealed a dismaying degree of miscalculation, bureaucratic arrogance and deception. The revelations severely damaged the reputations of some officials, enhanced those of a few, and so angered Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield—a long-patient Democrat whose own party was hurt most—that he promised to conduct a Senate investigation of Government decision making.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,905234,00.html>

CIA Holds Terror Suspects in Secret Prisons

The CIA has been hiding and interrogating some of its most important al Qaeda captives at a Soviet-era compound in Eastern Europe, according to U.S. and foreign officials familiar with the arrangement.

The secret facility is part of a covert prison system set up by the CIA nearly four years ago that at various times has included sites in eight countries, including Thailand, Afghanistan and several democracies in Eastern Europe, as well as a small center at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba, according to current and former intelligence officials and diplomats from three continents.

The hidden global internment network is a central element in the CIA's unconventional war on terrorism. It depends on the cooperation of foreign intelligence services, and on keeping even basic information about the system secret from the public, foreign officials and nearly all members of Congress charged with overseeing the CIA's covert actions.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/01/AR2005110101644.html>

Joshua Bernard Photo

NEW YORK — The Associated Press is distributing a photo of a Marine fatally wounded in battle, choosing after a period of reflection to make public an image that conveys the grimness of war and the sacrifice of young men and women fighting it.

Lance Cpl. Joshua M. Bernard, 21, of New Portland, Maine, was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade in a Taliban ambush Aug. 14 in Helmand province of southern Afghanistan.

The image shows fellow Marines helping Bernard after he suffered severe leg injuries. He was evacuated to a field hospital where he died on the operating table.

<http://www.tampabay.com/incoming/article1033549.ece>

Steve Wright

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1575810/Ipswich-murders-DNA-link-to-Steve-Wright.html>

Hosty v Carter and Morse v. Frederick

<http://www.studentpress.org/acp/trends/~law0705college.html>

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/06-278.ZS.html>