Journalists Join Forces to Fight Trump Smears as Threats Escalate

By Allan Dodds Frank

This story was written before a pipe bomb was sent to CNN and a gunman attacked a Pittsburgh synagogue killing 11.

Letters to the editor—not telephoned death threats—are the index newspapers normally rely on to measure the impact of their opinion pages. But visceral reactions count also, so score one for the Boston Globe following the arrest of Robert Darrell Chain, a 68-year-old Encino, California man indicted for phoning in 14 obscenity-laced death threats to the paper.

For Chain, who claims President Donald Trump “saved the country,” the trigger was the Aug. 10 announcement by the Globe enlisting newspaper editorialists to challenge the President’s claim that the free press is the “enemy.” Chain called twice that day, before the editorials had even been published, to threaten: “You are the enemy of the people and we are going to shoot you all.”

The paper immediately alerted the FBI and local authorities while hiring a private security firm to guard the building and its employees. Within three weeks, the FBI tracked down Chain, discovered he had...
Greetings, Silurians

BY DAVID A. ANDELMAN

well, it’s been barely five months since the new year began, and when the world of Harvard turned over the (virtual) gavel to yours truly, we’ve already had some remarkable accomplishments.

• We’ve changed our name to The Silurians Press Club, so that the uninitiated will understand immediately—though the new name won’t be official until the legal niceties are resolved (in this age of instant communications) what we are all about.

• We’ve created a Press Free Zones Committee, under the leadership of ex-President Allan Dodds Frank, and one of our newest Silurians, Bill Collins.

• We’ve embarked on a detailed study of our Awards program, master-minded by Jack Deacy.

• We’ve added a video screen at the National Arts Club which, together with a new sound system, will allow for the first time at our events to see and hear all that’s going on at the podium. This will allow us to accommodate groups of at least 170 so that all the new members MortScheinman has been so diligently recruiting will have an opportunity to participate.

It’s all part of my effort to bring our organization into the forefront of journalist organizations. I was struck a short while ago by what President Legrand-Wittich, a press representative of the Luncheon Society of the Silurians, said: “It’s all part of my effort to bring journalists into the forefront of journalist organizations. I was struck a short while ago by what President Legrand-Wittich, a press representative of the Luncheon Society of the Silurians, said: “What a journalist is.” Pritchard continues. “And it’s really true, because the press, but the threats also showed the danger of the president’s rhetoric against the media.”

Majorie Pritchard of the Boston Globe launched an initiative that resulted in editorials in 456 newspapers protesting Donald Trump’s attacks on the media.

A sampling of the editorials:

The Boston Globe: “Trump can’t outlaw the press from doing its job here, of course. But the model of inciting his supporters in this regard is how a dictator has long used the press to legitimate representatives for the masses.”

“The ones that I really liked said journalists are not the enemy of the people; they are the symbolic gesture by unanimously passing the resolution. ""I hope that it’s clear, because I really do believe that it is clear, that the press has hurt journalism, at the root of things. It’s about what we do. And it was time collectively to remind people of that.”

Some big papers, including the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, declined to join. Above all, for reasons of ""editorial independence."" Still, the editorial page was a success. Although its lasting effects may be hard to measure, Pritchard believes the campaign gave life to ""a conversation about the importance of the First Amendment.""

""I work for the New York Times. It’s my job to remind people of that,"" Pritchard tells the Silurian News: ""Every newspaper weighed in on their editorial response to Trump’s attacks on the media. Majorie Pritchard of the Boston Globe launched an initiative that resulted in editorials in 456 newspapers protesting Donald Trump’s attacks on the media.

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The New York Times: ""...insisting that truths you don’t like are ‘fake news’ is dangerous to the lifeblood of democracy. And calling journalists the ‘enemy of the people’ is dangerous, period.""...These attacks on the press are particularly threatening to journalists in nations with a less secure rule of law and to smaller publications in the United States, already buffeted by the industry’s economic crisis.”

The Tampa Times: “A free press builds the foundation for democracy. Citizens depend on honest, independent media for accurate information they need about their government, their elected leaders and their institutions. That is just as important in Tampa Bay and in communities across the nation as it is in Washington, and the Times takes that responsibility seriously.”

The Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Ill.: “We could start, of course, with his latest declaration that the press is the ‘enemy of the people,’ a characterization he declared in a tweet just last week: ‘They’re fake news outlets! purposefully cause great division & distrust,’ he tweeted on Aug. 5. ‘They can also cause War! They are very dangerous & sick!’ We repeat: This is dangerous. It is the language of despotism — Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Chavez, Mao and countless other individuals and organizations who style themselves as the only legitimate representatives for the masses.’

The Des Moines Register: “Reporting on growing federal deficits, climate change, disasters, voting records of lawmakers, government spending, immigration and numerous other important and controversial issues every day is not ‘fake news.’ Neither is reporting on a county board funneling money to private schools, the impact of Medicaid privatization in Iowa or the effects of tariffs on Iowa farmers and livestock producers, or providing information people need to recover from floods and tornadoes, all of which were covered by Register journalists in recent months.”

Even the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, where the libertarian editorial director Keith Burris and owner John Robinson Black recently fired anti-Trump cartoonist Bob Rogers, got in the act. Under the head-

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An Immigrant’s Lament

BY JOSEPH BERGER

When you still harbor memories of immigrating to this country, it’s particularly disturbing to see the scenes last summer of families from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico arriving at the U.S. border and finding their lives torn apart, as hysterical children are ripped from powerless parents and sent off half a continent away to foster care.

My family immigrated to this country in 1950 after spending five years in so-called displaced persons camps in Europe because Congress and the State Department were not yet willing to drop quotas and allow immigration. Holocaust survivors. We may have been illegal too because during the Red Scare years my parents, Polish Jews fleeing the Nazis, concealed an important fact from American officials: that they had survived much of World War II by making their way to the Soviet Union. They married and gave birth to me there before heading west to join the flood of refugees.

We arrived on a wobbly Merchant Marine vessel, the SS General Grecley, that had earlier been used to transport troops to the European theater. Refugees like us were aided by organizations such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the American Joint Distribution Committee. We were placed in an SRO hotel on New York’s Upper West Side. Our entry was relatively painless, yet the uncertainty of my parents carried with them weighed as heavily as the valises and duffel bags they lugged. With almost no marketable skills, would they find jobs in a country whose language they did not speak? Would a staff writer for the Village Voice and tight postwar housing market? Would they be able to locate the relatives who might guide them in gaining a foothold in New York? Would they make friends to replace the communities the Germans destroyed?

One thing they did not have to worry about was whether American officials would snatch their children out of their arms and ship them somewhere where that they would not see them again for months or longer. (At last count, 500 Latino children still had not been returned to their parents.) I can easily imagine my mother throwing herself at any official that would dare take her children away, beating them with her fists or clawing them with her fingernails. Basic animal instincts take over and observance of the law becomes inconsequential.

No, whatever hardships they endured in their first years did not include the kind of greeting the Central American families have had to endure. Ultimately my parents were extremely grateful at what America had to offer. They both got factory jobs, they were soon able to house themselves in an apartment on West 102nd Street, and their children found decent schools. They proudly attended an annual patriotic extravaganza in Central Park called “I Am an American Day.”

A congressional proclamation created the special day in 1940 to celebrate the bountiful gift of American citizenship with speeches, music and celebrities. My parents mocked those who would unfavorably compare the opportunities in America to those in the Soviet Union and communist Eastern Europe. They had lived in those places and knew how corrupt, prejudiced and dysfunctional they were.

Our current President wants to limit the right of immigration and citizenship to the well-heeled, well-educated and those who subscribe to a Judeo-Christian faith. He looks at a refugee and sees a rapist. He has no tolerance for families so desperate to escape the violence and poverty in their own lands and take advantage of American freedoms and security that they risk crossing a desert or ride for hours in an airliner.

Goodbye to the Village Voice

BY CLARK WHELTON

After a run of 63 years, the Village Voice, which closed in August, joins the long list of former New York City newspapers. But the Voice would not have existed at all if for fellow Silurian Ed Fancher, who founded the Voice (along with Dan Wolf and Norman Mailer) in 1955.

As publisher, Fancher guided the Voice through difficult years. Bankruptcy was sometimes a postdated check away. Then, on December 8, 1962, a fateful moment. Powers moved online. Even free distribution Voice’s profitable classifieds and display ads moved online. Even free distribution.

The three founders of the Village Voice planning their first issue in the fall of 1955. Left to right: Norman Mailer, Ed Fancher, Dan Wolf.

My parents’ generation of haggard postwar refugees worked hard to rebuild their lives and they produced children who imbibed their habits of resourcefulness and diligence and grew up to become Andrew Grove, a founder of Intel, architect Daniel Libeskind, Hadassah Lieberman, wife of the vice presidential candidate, fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg, CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer and so many others less celebrated but essential to our well-being. I also think of all the journalists that I know who were immigrants or children or grandchildren of immigrants who fell in love with the suppleness of the English language and who might have never graced their newspapers, magazines and TV stations if the current restrictive policies were in place: Max Frankel, Ralph Blumenthal, Clyde Haberman, Ben Patrusky, Sam Norich, Jean Patman, Ray Corto, David Chen, Winnie Hu and so many more. How much poorer our profession, our nation, would be without them.

The policy the Administration ought to be pursuing is embodied in the slogan of HIAS: “Welcome the Stranger. Protect the Refugee.”

Berger, a member of the Board of Governors of the Society of Silurians, is a former reporter and editor for The New York Times. His 2001 book about his family’s immigration experience, Displaced Persons, is available from Amazon.
Veering Off Tobacco Road

BY ANNE ROIPHE

WHEN I was 22, I took a job as the receptionist at a public relations firm to support my playwright husband. I answered the phone. I typed up notes from client meetings. I ran out for coffee and dainties. A woman came in who was smoking a cigarette---T.S. Eliot at Sarah Lawrence. The real world was more than disappointing; it was a nauseating stink.

The firm had a client, the American Public Health Association. They held a convention in Atlantic City and I was invited to speak there. My job was to hand out to the press the articles that had been presented at meetings held all over the hospital. I stacked the papers on a long table. Reporters pushed forward to get to the table where the papers of the day were neatly stacked; the Daniel Horn papers were right there. I knew where each of them was. It was quiet in the press room. I dreamed.

There was a phone peeking from the press room. Reporters pushed forward to get to the table where the papers of the day were neatly stacked; the Daniel Horn papers were right there. I knew where each of them was. It was quiet in the press room. I dreamed.

Suddenly there was a rush into the hotel. I stacked the papers on a long table. Reporters pushed forward to get to the table where the papers of the day were neatly stacked; the Daniel Horn papers were right there. I knew where each of them was. It was quiet in the press room. I dreamed.

Suddenly, three large men pushed their way up to the press table. I all the Horn papers, one said. I grabbed them and put them back on the table, and my hands on his mouth. The reporters in the room shouted at me to give them anything. I remember a lot of noise and then someone said, “Those guys are with the Tobacco Institute. Hold on to the papers.”

I held on. I was frightened but it was clear who the bad guys were.

The newsmen got the story. All the major papers printed it. It has been demonstrated, the science tells us, that cigarette smoking is directly connected to death from cancer in the lungs. Of course the trumpet was smoking---people not used to inhaling but I pretended. Smocking made me look sophisticated, I thought. It also made me look more than a few cigarettes than I put to my lips.

My mother smoked three packs of Camels a day. She was in a Miami Beach hotel one day when the magician Joseph Dunninger gave a performance. He asked anyone who wanted to quit smoking to come on stage. I was a farsighted and agile student. I had, he said, “another side to the story.”

Not “Just a Journalist”

Continued from Page 1

notes, with the headline, “Trump Gives Up a Lie But Refuses to Repent,” which was above a story saying that Trump had finally, though reluctantly, acknowledged that President Barack Obama was born in the United States. It was the first time the Times had ever called any politician a liar when addressing them.

In her remarks to the Silurians, Greenhouse noted that on the prior day Trump had made a speech to the United Nations. In the speech, he said, “he can’t turn the page. …It is a serious challenge.”

On the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act:

All these major news outlets got it wrong because the headline, the official court summary of the opinion, said on the first page we strike it down under the Commerce Clause and the second page we uphold it as a tax. These people were under such time pressure that they couldn’t turn the page. …It is a serious challenge.

What does the coverage of the Ka

A federal judge in New York City told the Times that the coverage of the case was “inaccurate” and “deceptive”---standing by that which was more than disappointing; it was a nauseating stink.

Standing by that which was more than disappointing; it was a nauseating stink.
On Oct. 17 the Silurians were honored to host Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, chairman of The New York Times and former publisher, for a luncheon at the National Arts Club. He was introduced by Silurian Governor Clyde Haberman, who noted with a smile that he was Sulzberger’s boss when they both worked for The Times metro section in the 1980s. Sulzberger gave an upbeat report on the present and future of The Times, while noting that his son A.G. Sulzberger is the one steering the ship today as publisher. Excerpts from Sulzberger’s presentation:

By Arthur O. Sulzberger

When Clyde first asked me to speak here today, the first thing I did was make sure it wasn’t a mistake. When people called Sulzberger these days, they usually meant my son. But as Clyde alluded to, he can relate. When people want a Haberman, they usually mean Maggie. I became publisher of The New York Times in 1992, when the paper was the beating heart of a large, diversified media company. Clyde actually wrote The Times’ story about my first day as chairman of the company, in 1997, five years after he published a piece that day saw the single largest daily edition of The Times in our history—138 advertisement-filled pages. Between the industry’s healthy advertising dollars and company momentum, the road ahead seemed smooth.

But then, of course, something happened. The Internet. If you’re not familiar with the story, I’ll tell you. The advertising-supported business model that sustained our newspapers for more than a century strained, and then started to break. And that was before the financial crisis. In January 2009, as the economy was in free-fall, a feature story appeared in The Atlantic. It was headlined “End Times,” and the subtitle said, “The New York Times was on the verge of going under. While reports of our death were greatly exaggerated, the article did identify a very real set of challenges: declining circulation, declining revenue, and declining cash reserves. Needless to say, The Atlantic, thank goodness, had it wrong. The New York Times is still in business. In fact, we’re thriving.

A fifth generation of the Ochs-Sulzberger family is now at the helm, among them — my son, A.G., and his cousins, Sam Dolnick, a top masthead editor, and David Perpich, who runs the Wirecutter and sits on the company’s executive board. The New York Times was on the verge of going under. While reports of our death were greatly exaggerated, the article did identify a very real set of challenges: declining circulation, declining revenue, and declining cash reserves. Needless to say, The Atlantic, thank goodness, had it wrong. The New York Times is still in business. In fact, we’re thriving.

The Times has long had a major international presence, with journalists on the ground in over 150 countries around the world. But even though The Times reported from all over the world, we weren’t doing enough to attract readers around the world. We’d been co-owners of The International Herald Tribune since 1967, and we assumed full ownership in 2003. But the Trib had always been more of an expat’s newspaper, especially in the early days. That started to change when we unified the paper under The New York Times name and began integrating our newsrooms around the world into a truly 24/7 operation on three continents.

The improved New York Times Global Edition is an important piece of what is now a multifaceted strategy to expand our worldwide readership. In 2016, we launched The New York Times En Español, which offers original journalism in Spanish, as well as translated Times content. We’ve also expanded into Canada and Australia, opening ambitious operations in Toronto and Sydney. Since 2012, we’ve published a Chinese-language website with Times content, even though it’s been blocked by government censors as retaliation for our investigative reporting. Still, Chinese readers evade the “Great Firewall” to read millions of articles each year.

Naturally, this expansion has been good for business. At a time when our advertising business is growing faster than ever, our international readership is growing even faster. And these readers are reaching into their wallets to subscribe. In January 2017, we launched The New York Times International, which is now in 14 countries, from Papua New Guinea to Kazakhstan. Ten years ago, that would have been inconceivable.

Our digital innovation began when we launched our website, nyt.com, on Jan. 22, 1996. On an average day back then, just 25,000 people visited our site. There were other obstacles, besides the meager traffic. Some of my Times colleagues were so suspicious of the digital operation that I had to move that group out of the building. We found separate office space a few blocks away which gave our digital pioneers a safe space to grow and innovate. We kept investing in our digital effort, and eventually it caught on.

I’ll never forget one day in the late 1990s, when our remarkable columnist, Tom Friedman, came to me with a story. He said, “Arthur, the most amazing thing just happened to me. I was on a flight from Tokyo to New York. The man seated next to me says, ‘You’re Tom Friedman!’ And I said yes, yes I am, and he said, I just read your new column. To which I replied, ‘That’s impossible. We’re in Japan. He looked me in the eye and said, ‘I read it, on the Internet...’” That really hit home for Tom, who became an early and effective evangelist for our web expansion.

Today, competition online is fierce and constant—and it requires differentiation. Which is why we’ve leaned into, not away from, our commitment to story. And, in turn, we’ve stretched the boundaries of what is possible in journalism. Today, we’re using the web to redefine storytelling. Words, photos, video, audio, interactive graphics, data visualization, virtual reality, augmented reality—our website and app are using each to bring stories to life in the most compelling ways. And the results are breathtaking:

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger

The Daily has more listeners each morning than the print newspaper ever had subscribers. These new offerings are neither gimmicks nor indulgences. Rather, they provide our journalists with a larger and better toolkit than they’ve long excelled at: helping people understand the world. Our bets on the web and on expanded reach set the stage for our third gamble, perhaps the biggest we’ve made in the last decade. That was our decision to put up a paywall.

There was an early consensus that you couldn’t expect readers to pay for online news. And when I announced our pay model, I became painfully aware of that consensus. So, I read you a few headlines from 2011: “Why Newspaper Paywalls are Still a Bad Idea,” wrote Bloomberg. “Why the New York Times Will Lose To The Huffington Post,” wrote And my favorite, “Here’s an Idea for Saving the New York Times: Don’t Charge. In stead, Fire Sulzberger.” That was from The HuffPo.

In those days, The Financial Times and The Wall Street Journal had paywalls, but much of their subscription revenue came from businesses buying in bulk. It was unclear whether individual readers would be willing to pay. But our hunch was that people, particularly people in California, Texas, and Illinois would appreciate the depth and breadth of Times journalism and would be willing to pay. The result is that our digital subscriptions are the foundation of a business model that has sustained our newspapers for more than a century, and, in turn, we’ve stretched the boundaries of what is possible in journalism. Today, we’re using the web to redefine storytelling. Words, photos, video, audio, interactive graphics, data visualization, virtual reality, augmented reality—our website and app are using each to bring stories to life in the most compelling ways. And the results are breathtaking:

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At a moment of tumult in the advertising industry and increasing dominance by the duopoly of Google and Facebook, this subscription revenue has been central to the health and vitality of The New York Times. It took us more than three and a half years to reach 1 million digital subscriptions. It took less than half that time to sign up the second million.

And as the term “fake news” was becoming a household word, we added over 300,000 subscribers in the first three months of the new administration. The Citizens United vs. FEC decision that we, among no other two thirds of the company’s revenue comes directly from our readers. We now earn more from digital subscriptions than from print.

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ENEMIES OF WHICH PEOPLE?

BY MARVIN KITMAN

Our president has called the media dishonest, hypocritical, purveyors of fake news, disgusting, sleazy, traitors, the scum of the earth. ... And those are the good things he has said about us. He has run through the thesaurus part of his twitter brain, calling us ‘everything but ‘ink-stained wretches.’

Still, I keep wondering whom he has in mind? It certainly couldn’t be me. As a pundit I have gone on the limb and said things he has called me ‘a Mormon,’ ‘a moron,’ ‘a moron,’ and ‘an imbecile, or simply intellectually challenged,’ “the nation’s idiots. Trump may be a moron, an imbecile, or simply intellectually challenged, as my defense ran. If he was an idiot, he was America’s Idiot, a sizeable constituency, judging by the election. There was one in every village, sometimes two or more.

Some may have thought there was something corrupt or unscrupulous about the way the president and the first family seemed to be profiting while in office, theoretically banned by the Emoluments Clause. But that was the floundering fathers fault. Article I, Section 8, the Santa Clause, was so badly written a Mack truck could be driven through it’s loopholes. Anyway, the Prez probably hadn’t read the document. The facts would only confuse him.

Without meaning to further blow my own fuses, I assert that there was one who said we should give the man a break. It isn’t easy being president, especially when it all began as what satirists call a caper, a stunt, perhaps research for his next book or a movie—a horror movie. The premise: Could a totally inexperienced, unqualified real estate mogul actually win an election for the top job in the country?

Once he won, I said we should mark his performance on a curve while he is getting the hang of the job in the next four or eight years.

It must have been the other guys the President had in mind. The cable news networks were the real enemies of the people. They were the ones who gave the first real estate mogul $2.4 billion in free airtime, according to the Washington Post (“The Most Trusted Name in Fake News”) or The New York Times (“All the Fake News That’s Fit to Print”). They were spending 247 covering every wild and crazy thing he said and did in 2016, followed by panels the next two or three nights discussing what it meant, thus sucking the air out of the other 15 candidate’s campaigns.

With the courage of their lack of conviction, the guilty parties can argue that they were under the influence of that powerful drug money, which is a broadcast outlet do anything. The clown act gets the highest ratings.

Yes, Mister President, some of us are as guilty as sin. The Report Murdoch Fake News Brigade should apologize for hurting a president’s feelings. Yes, we are sleazy, disgusting, untrustworthy traitors. If this be treason, so be it. And if this rally ing to the flag doesn’t get a true patriot like me on the president’s official enemies list, the nation’s highest honor (except maybe a seat in the administration), I will tell you what I really think of the 45th president.

**FOOTNOTE**

To further show my support for the best president we have, I am planning to donate my fee ($50) for this paeon of praise to the Donald J. Trump Library, an establishment the size of the latest Apple computer, which will house the Official Collected Tweets of the President of Some of the People All the Time.

Silurian Marvin Kitman is the pundit-in-chief of “The Marvin Kitman Show” (Est. 1969), formerly of Newyork, now available on the web site marvinkitman.com. His motto is: Often wrong, but never in doubt.

First Assignment

BY MARTHA WEINMAN LEAR

I had no business in this that was made clear on the first day of my first year in journalism school, when the welcoming committee greeted us at our class – 120 males, 3 females – and said: “And you girls, if you’re smart, you walk out of here. The newspaper business no business for women.”

I applied for a job on the college paper. The editors gave me a trial assignment: to interview Al Capp.

Al Capp, as anyone born before the 1970s must know, was the creator of Li’l Abner, one of the most popular comic strips of all time. It ran for four decades, through every one of our president’s terms, syndicated in 900 American newspapers and 100 foreign papers, and had some 60 million supremely devoted fans, including me.

I felt that my future, my everything, hung on this assignment. I had never before conducted an interview. I had never before met a famous person. Over the decades since then, I have interviewed scores of celebrities, famous and anonymous. I have felt as nervous as when I went to interview Al Capp.

I was 18 and cute. Dumb, but cute. He was in his 40’s and not cute. He lived in a second-floor apartment over some shops on Newport Street in downtown Boston. He ushered me in, settled me into a cushy sofa, and sat down beside me. Since there were plenty of other places to sit, I took this as a kindly, paternal way of making me feel welcome.

I consulted my Ten Questions To Ask and opened with what I think to be a terrific question: “Mr. Capp, how did you get the idea for Li’l Abner?”

“Have you very pretty, hair,” he said. “Um, ‘Did you ever know anyone like Li’l Abner?”

“Very pretty,” he leaned in closer. I moved a few inches closer. “Are you shy?” he said.

“No.”

“Do you want to be a reporter?”

“Yes.”

“You can’t be a reporter if you’re shy.”

He got up, moved behind the sofa and put his hands on my shoulders.

“What should I do? Where can I hide? But I thought there was something corrupt or unqualified real estate mogul actually win an election for the top job in the country?”

Once he won, I said we should mark his performance on a curve while he is getting the hang of the job in the next four or eight years. The publisher sends me on the kind of red-carpet tour you don’t get anymore unless your name is – oh, I don’t know, James Patterson? There are newspaper, radio, TV interviews, all local. Then, wow! I am invited to appear on The Tonight Show, with Johnny Carson. There is simply no better vehicle for flogging a book than The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. My publisher is gaga. I am ecstatic verging on nervous breakdown.

The night arrives. In the Green Room, Carson graciously introduces my husband and me to the evening’s other guests. Here is the actor Sterling Hayden. Here is the comedian Alan King. Here is… Oh, God. Adrenaline floods my throat. We go up to the stage. Where is he? Of course, clearly, the creep remembers nothing. He smiles and cordially extends the paw that once groped me.

I am taken to the make-up room. It has perpendicular mirrored walls. I am tilted 90 degrees. I am just a pretzel with a barrage of one-liners. I say the creep. “Have you still got that dime?”

On air, it’s payback time. He interrupts Carson, who is chatting me up about my book, to ask, “How many children do you have, Mrs. Lear?” None, I gulp. “Well, then,” he says, “you’re a real expert, aren’t you?” and laughs such a nasty laugh that no one else laughs. In the commercial break, Carson whispers to me, “Don’t worry, we’ll take care of him.” And they do. On air, the three men twist Capp into a pretzel with a barrage of one-liners. I am saved.

I remember is how I got home.

P.S. Several years later, Capp was charged with indecent exposure and sexual assault on various college campuses and kicked out of one campus police. (Later, it turns out Goldie Hawn and Grace Kelly both accused him of sexual assault.) He lost most of his syndication deals, saw his reputation ruined, and goodby.

I was 18 and cute. Dumb, but cute. He was in his 40’s and not cute. He lived in a second-floor apartment over some shops on Newport Street in downtown Boston. He ushered me in, settled me into a cushy sofa, and sat down beside me. Since there were plenty of other places to sit, I took this as a kindly, paternal way of making me feel welcome.

I consulted my Ten Questions To Ask and opened with what I think to be a terrific question: “Mr. Capp, how did you get the idea for Li’l Abner?”

“Have you very pretty, hair,” he said. “Um, ‘Did you ever know anyone like Li’l Abner?”

“Very pretty,” he leaned in closer. I moved a few inches closer. “Are you shy?” he said.

“No.”

“Do you want to be a reporter?”

“Yes.”

“You can’t be a reporter if you’re shy.”

He got up, moved behind the sofa and put his hands on my shoulders.

“What should I do? Where can I hide? But I thought there was something corrupt or unqualified real estate mogul actually win an election for the top job in the country?”

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Well, you know. We remember the first of everything – first tooth, first love, first journalism assignment, first creep. As sexual assaults go, Capp’s was small potatoes. Yet, more than six decades later, I still remember the good things he said – and the bad. What do not remember is how I got home.

Silurian Martha Weinman Lear, a former editor and staff writer for The New York Times Magazine, has written four books, including HeartSounds and Where Did I Leave My Glasses?, and articles for many magazines.
When Diehl reminded Steve Allen his name was once a household word, he quipped, “So is deep sense of right and wrong.”

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Actually exciting preparing and voicing what are essentially mini-biographies. I often rely on old interviews I did years ago—on reel-to-reel tape!—with stars ranging from Sean Connery to Cher. Those two are still alive, but ABC will be ready on the day they ascend to the Great Beyond.

One thing that’s frustrating is that my obits must be no more than 35 seconds when I arrive at our network newscasts. It’s a job I began back in the ABC Radio newsroom to start working on obituaries. It’s not a grim duty at all, but a chance to write mini-bios and interview fascinating people.

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I told Tom Hanks he always seemed to have that “boy next door look” in his early films. “Yeah,” he said, “but sometimes that boy next door is Ted Bundy.”

George Carlin’s thoughts on life: “Life is a big game, it’s a big circus, a dumb comedy parade. There’s no man in the sky watching us.”

Some celebrities are so old that their obits will only need modest updates when they pass away. Dame Olivia de Havilland, the original “Blond Bombshell” from Hollywood’s Golden Age, is 102. Another British-born Dame, Vera Lynn, known as the Forces Sweetheart because she was so popular during World War II—singing songs like “The White Cliffs of Dover” and “We’ll Meet Again”—is 101.

Advanced age doesn’t stop some celebrities. Betty White remains in the public eye at 96, while Doris Day, also 96, her acting and singing days long gone, has her furry friend, her kaos, Doris Day Animal Rights League. We don’t know if she and Bob Barker collaborate.

Bill Diehl is a longtime radio newsman, and a member of the Board of Governors of the Society of Silurians.
JARED LEBOW, whose journalism career took him from sportswriting duties at the Fort Lauderdale News in 1962 to the sports copy desk at The New York Times, died of an apparent heart attack at his home in New York on June 8. He was 76. A few years after joining the Lauderdale newspaper, Lebow moved to New York to edit Time Inc.’s FYI magazine. That was followed by editing arts columns at Signature and Look magazines, and at the latter he was assistant sports editor. He eventually found his way to The Times, leaving in 1979 to pursue a career in public relations.

ELEPHANT IN THE BOOKCLUB: Confessions of an Accidental Essayist

Eleanor Randolph was a member of the Editorial Board of The New York Times from 1998 to 2016. Before joining The Times, she covered national politics and the media for the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times and other newspapers. She’s currently a fellow at CUNY’s Leon Levy Biography Center.

Elliott Rebuffin is senior vice president of the Classroom Magazine Group at Scholastic Inc., overseeing almost two dozen magazines, including The New York Times Upfront, a biweekly news magazine composed of Times articles edited for teenage students. Before joining Scholastic in 2003, Rebuffin was with The Times for nine years. From 1984 to 1991, he was an editor at Newsweek.

Jack Schwartz, a newspaperman for almost 50 years, worked for six metropolitan dailies: the Mirror, the News, the Post, Newsday, the Long Island Press and The Record. In a show that spanned the International Herald Tribune in Paris. He was a reporter and columnist but primarily distinguished himself as an editor. When he retired in 2005, he was assistant editor of the Times Weekend section, in addition to working on the daily culture pages.

Lon Senpersky was a newcomer from 1962 through 1975, reporting for the Staten Island Advance, the New York Post, the Herald News in Passaic, N.J., the Hudson Dispatch in Union City, N.J., and for the Passaic County Breaking News, among them: Bridgegate.” An avid traveler, Brush embarked on a four-month trip to China before checking into graduate school to work on his editing and writing, and hone his focus on political reporting.

Brush’s scholarship includes a $2,000 scholarship.