



The Second Annual Walter Cronkite
Awards for Excellence in Television
Political Journalism

Presented by Reliable Resources, a project of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear
Center

The Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas

April 8, 2003

USC ANNENBERG

The Norman Lear

CENTERTAINMENT

Exploring Implications of the Convergence of Entertainment, Commerce, and Society

The Second Annual USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Awards for Excellence in Television Political Journalism

Proving that good political coverage can make great television, Reliable Resources, a project of the Norman Lear Center, held its second annual USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism awards ceremony on April 8, 2003. The awards were presented during RTNDA@NAB, the premier conference and exhibition for radio and television news. The Awards ceremony was hosted by CNN correspondent James Hattori, and John Cochran, chief Washington correspondent for ABC News, gave the keynote address.

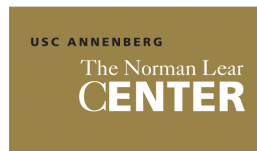
The Cronkite Awards

The Cronkite Awards honor outstanding achievements in political coverage. Broadcast journalists can and should play a uniquely powerful role in informing and reconnecting the public to civic life. The purpose of the award, named for Walter Cronkite, the most prestigious broadcast journalist of the past thirty years, is to encourage and showcase television journalistic excellence in political coverage, particularly innovative, issue-focused coverage that informs viewers about their electoral choices. The award recognizes coverage that helps viewers understand who the candidates are, what the issues are, and how the electoral choices will affect their lives. This includes providing candidates with opportunities to explain their platform and views about governing.



The Norman Lear Center

Founded in January 2000, the Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center exploring implications of the convergence of entertainment, commerce and society. On campus, from its base in the USC Annenberg School for Communication, the Lear Center builds bridges between schools and disciplines whose faculty study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. Through scholarship and research; through its fellows, conferences, public events and publications; and in its attempts to illuminate and repair the world, the Lear Center works to be at the forefront of discussion and practice in the field.



Reliable Resources for Broadcast Political Coverage

Boring. Ratings poison. That's what many TV news professionals say about political reporting. Does it have to be that way? What if television coverage of politics were compelling, engaging, and meaningful? The Reliable Resources project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, was created to help generate conversation and ideas for improving broadcast political coverage. With the help of educators, journalists, TV broadcasters, and the public, Reliable Resources develops tools to improve the quality and quantity of campaign coverage.





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Hearst-Argyle Television president & CEO David Barrett accepts the Station Group Award from emcee James Hattori of CNN.



Betsy Fischer, executive producer of NBC News' *Meet the Press*, accepting the Broadcast Network Award



WFAA-TV, Dallas, won one of the Local Station, Large Market Awards. XXX accepts on behalf of the station.

2003 Cronkite Award Winners

The 2003 Walter Cronkite Awards were given for coverage of the 2002 election. Judges gave special consideration to innovative, issue-focused reporting that informed viewers about their electoral choices, and that helped them understand ballot issues, the candidates and how electoral choices would affect their lives. The following are descriptions of the work for which the winners received their Award.

Station Group Award

Hearst-Argyle Television, winning its second consecutive USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award, organized a seminar for their stations to discuss innovative ways to provide candidate-centered coverage. The judges said the Hearst-Argyle group demonstrated a consistency of quality from small to large market stations. They noted each Hearst-Argyle station generated material appropriate to its own market and avoided "cookie cutter coverage."

Broadcast Network Award

NBC News' *Meet the Press*, winning its second consecutive USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award, created a Senate Debate Series to serve the interests of viewers nationwide who wanted to learn about key U.S. Senate races. *Meet the Press* explored the relationship of local Senate races to the national struggle for control of Congress. The judges said *Meet the Press* "drove the national agenda" through its series of live debates with moderator Tim Russert.

Local Station, Large Market

The judges praised WFAA-TV, Dallas, for its creative collaboration with other Belo stations in its coverage of Texas electoral contests. Called Project Texas, WFAA collaborated with other Texas Belo stations to identify critical issues and report on various aspects of that issue. The judges also noted the station's unique storytelling techniques and strong reporting efforts. The station produced segments called Dinner with the Candidates, where two major party candidates sat down for a home cooked meal and questions from a North Texas family; Ad Watches, weekly reports on political advertising; Debate Watch, a series of reports checking the accuracy of statements made during debates; and College Voters, a report revealing a lack of interest and knowledge about the campaign on a college campus.



KING-TV, Seattle, won one of the Local Station, Large Market Awards, accepted by Peter O'Connell, executive producer.



Andy Moore, senior news producer at Wisconsin Public Television, accepted the Local Station, Medium Market Award.



The Local Station, Small Market Award was accepted by Joe Jordan of KM3 News of Omaha.



Mike Tobias, reporter/producer at Nebraska ETV, accepts the Local Station, Small Market Award.

KING-TV, Seattle received its second USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award. The Seattle area was battling some of the worst traffic in the country and major roads and bridges were in poor condition and considered unsafe in earthquakes. KING-TV created a transportation unit and assigned two lead reporters to the project. Over five months, the unit produced an ongoing series of reports. The Taxing Traffic series included explanatory pieces, Reality Checks and Ad Watches, in-depth coverage on the station's weekly current events program, and an hour special that aired 10 days before the election. The judges praised KING-TV for devoting a substantial amount of time and resources to an important, but complicated, community issue—an issue that many stations would have ignored.

Local Station, Medium Market

Wisconsin Public Television set out in 2002 to “break the predictability plaguing campaign coverage.” To break from traditional “canned” campaign trail segments, WPT took the candidates on the road to locations known only to the television station. Each of the eight gubernatorial candidates was taken to a different part of the state and spent the day meeting with citizens and answering their questions. WPT also aired innovative debates that challenged candidates to discuss how they would solve the state's budget crisis among themselves in an unmoderated, live broadcast.

Local Station, Small Market

Political Reporter Joe Jordan at **KMTV or KM3 News, Omaha**, exposed efforts by pharmaceutical giant Pfizer to influence state and federal elections with a questionable campaign tactic – a TV commercial paid for by Pfizer featuring a congressional candidate promoting a prescription drug card for senior citizens. Even though the ad did not mention the election, it featured the candidate and appeared to violate the ban on direct corporate political contributions. KMTV's story was picked up by the *Washington Post* and other newspapers, shedding light on the ad as a new attempt to influence voters. Judges said this story illustrates that “simple can work,” which is particularly important in smaller markets that don't have as many resources available.

Nebraska ETV Network drew attention to candidate apathy with its Missing Candidate series, an issue rarely covered by the media. The station provided an in-depth look at the problem across the state, exploring why people don't want to run for office. They included input from election officials, political scientists and politicians and included a segment on possible solutions to the problem. ETV used their Web site to display streaming video, transcripts and additional resources for viewers. Judges commented that ETV exhibited old-fashioned, rolling up the sleeves reporting.



News 8 Austin won the Local Cable News Station Award, accepted by Kevin Benz, news director.



Jay Warren, reporter at WSLS-TV in Roanoke, accepts one of the Individual Achievement Awards.



Randy Shandobil, political editor at KTVU-TV in Oakland, accepting one of the Individual Achievement Awards.



The Coverage of Money and Politics Award went to Laure Quinlivan of WCPO-TV, Cincinnati.

Local Cable News Station

In 2002, **News 8 Austin** dedicated over 50 hours of news coverage to state and local elections. With a goal to avoid allowing candidates control the news cycle, they attempted to bring the voters' interests and issues to the forefront. Stories focused on individual and party issue coverage, voter profiles and positions on the issues, and Election Day coverage. Judges especially liked the station's commitment to a diversity of voices in the community in its political coverage.

Individual Achievement

Roanoke was faced with a relatively "boring" election year, so **Jay Warren** of **WSLS, Roanoke**, set out to develop innovative approaches to political coverage. Because there were no competitive races or defining issues, he came up with new methods to cover the elections in an informative and interesting manner. "The Road to 2002" focused on how key issues affect viewers in their every day lives. Stories were told through the eyes of viewers. "No Choice" was a series that shed light on non-competitive races and powerful incumbents. Judges noted that whereas many stations use the excuse of a "boring" election year to limit coverage, Jay Warren turned it around with an innovative approach.

Randy Shandobil of **KTVU-TV, Oakland**, allocated a great deal of airtime to election coverage, displaying the station's serious commitment to political news. KTVU tried to encourage other stations to devote more time to election coverage by putting an hour's worth of their stories on a statewide satellite feed for others to use. Judges said Shandobil demonstrated outstanding storytelling techniques to engage viewers and used intelligent approaches to getting California's gubernatorial candidates to talk about issues that directly affect many of the station's viewers.

Coverage of Money and Politics

Laure Quinlivan of **WCPO-TV, Cincinnati** exposed a secretly taped political conversation that revealed one of the biggest problems in politics today – party leaders practice of limiting voters' choice by hand-picking candidates and intimidating other good people from running for office. The station aired two well-told eight-minute in-depth reports plus follow-up stories.

You, here in this room, are the key to providing accurate, unbiased information to the public. It is my enduring belief that this is necessary so that we can maintain a free and self-governing society.
Walter Cronkite



I urge you to continue to inspiring people to pay attention to their world—well-balanced political reporting creates awareness, opens dialogues and services our society.
Walter Cronkite

Comments by Walter Cronkite **Prepared for the Second Annual Walter Cronkite Awards Ceremony**

Good afternoon. I want to congratulate all the winners of the Second USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism, and welcome all of you to today's luncheon. I wish I could join all of you in person this afternoon, but circumstances prevented me from doing so.

First a few thank you's—to the organizations responsible for bringing us all here this afternoon: The Pew Charitable Trusts, the USC Annenberg School for Communication, Reliable Resources and the Norman Lear Center. Your devotion to media and democracy is unparalleled. Thank you for being so instrumental in making these awards possible.

Geoffrey Cowan, the Dean of the USC Annenberg School, deserves praise for his hard work in making this event a success, as well as his dedication in helping journalists achieve high standards.

This Award holds great meaning for me, and I am pleased to pay tribute to such outstanding examples of political journalism. You, here in this room, hold the key to providing accurate, unbiased information to the public. It is my enduring belief that this is necessary so that we can maintain a free and self-governing society. You are fulfilling the mission of the founders of our constitution. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "The only security of all is in a free press. The force of public opinion cannot be resisted when permitted freely to be expressed."

In a time of hostility around the world, the media and its ability to inform are more important than ever, and the very fabric of democracy is dependent on excellent political reporting. I urge all of you to continue inspiring people to pay attention to their world—well-balanced political reporting creates awareness, opens dialogues and services our society.

I know that I'd like to be remembered as someone who did his best, as a person who tried to give the news as impartially, as factually as possible, and succeeded most of the time—and hopefully that is the goal for many of you in this room today.

I hope I've inspired you—just remember old anchormen don't fade away. They just keep coming back to make more speeches...and that's the way it is Tuesday, April 8th 2003. Congratulations again to the winners of this year's Award.

Keynote Speech

By John Cochran

Chief Washington Correspondent, ABC News



John Cochran, ABC News chief Washington correspondent, gave the keynote speech at the Awards

I have nothing to say to you winners. I should be listening to you, not the other way around. So feel free to leave at any time and go play the slot machines. But I do want to talk to the students and young journalists just starting to cover politics.

A former speaker of the house, Tip O'Neill, once said all politics is local. I would add one more thing: politics is about everything, not just politics. Whether you cover business, or science, or the military, or even sports, you're going to find politics...You're going to find people lobbying behind the scenes and people using political strategy.

My first TV job out of college was in Charlotte, North Carolina. And I wanted to cover politics. First though, my station had me covering the school board, which I wasn't too happy about...at first. But then Charlotte was put under a federal court order to desegregate its schools by busing white students to black schools and vice-versa. It proved to be the best political story in the state. Several board members wanted to stall, delay and drag their feet as long as possible...and to avoid reporters whenever possible through secret meetings in private homes and sometimes by literally running away from reporters. One board member tried to have me arrested on a charge that I was harassing him—because I chased him for two blocks.

Since then, I have covered six presidents and seven presidential campaigns. And I have never covered a tougher political story than that school board in North Carolina. So, to those of you just starting out, don't think that because it's local, it's easy...because it won't be.

I know you winners will always be proud to have earned an award with Walter Cronkite's name attached to it. I have a little story about Walter and me. Twenty years ago, I was working overseas in Poland for NBC. The big story was the confrontation between the anti-Communist trade union, Solidarity, led by Lech Walesa, a charismatic shipyard worker, and the communist government led by General Wojciech Jaruzelski. It was a great story to cover, and if you think about it, it was a political story—just like covering city hall or the county commission.

The stakes were just a little higher. It was the first crack in the Soviet empire. Walesa and the Solidarity Union were so popular in Poland that it seemed nothing could stop them, short of Moscow sending its armies to smash the opposition as it had done in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

But Walesa and his people got a little ahead of themselves, a little carried away. Walesa, in a meeting with Solidarity leaders, talked of bringing down the Communist government. The Communists had a spy in the meeting with a tape recorder.

Late one night in Warsaw, about a week later, I was filing a radio spot to New York when the phone line went dead. I kept trying for about an hour to reach New York, then gave up and went to bed. When I woke up around dawn, I looked out of my hotel window, and there were tanks ringing the hotel...but they were Polish tanks, not Russian.

It was the Polish government, not Moscow, that cracked down. Martial law set in. No communication with the West. For the next few months, the only way to report was to take pictures very carefully and then smuggle videotapes out of the country in trucks from neutral countries, such as Sweden. A favorite tactic was to hide the tapes inside hubcaps.

Eventually, martial law was eased and NBC said it was sending in another correspondent to replace me for a week or two. I was supposed to get to New York, where NBC wanted me to speak at a meeting of the Foreign Policy Association. It was a fancy luncheon in a big ballroom in a New York hotel. Tom Brokaw introduced me, and as I walked up to the podium, I looked out at this crowd of two thousand New Yorkers. And there in a table just before me was a bunch of broadcasting executives from NBC along with the chairman of the board of the company that owned NBC. His name was Thornton Bradshaw.

And sitting next to him was, oh my God, Walter Cronkite. Yes, Walter Cronkite. What was he doing there? Nobody told me he was coming. I would have written a better speech. Too late now. I had to go ahead. I was supposed to talk about what led up to the martial law crackdown in Poland. So I told them what I thought anyway. I said the communist leader, General Jaruzelski, had been warned by Moscow that if he didn't crack down, then Moscow would. Jaruzelski did not want Soviet troops firing on his countrymen. So, he cracked down. But it was done with a lot of arrests, and a minimum of violence.

In his own tortured way, I said, General Jaruzelski could be said to be a Polish patriot of sorts. As for the good guys, Lech Walesa and his people, I said it appeared they had overplayed their hand, that, as noble as they might be, they had made some serious political errors.

Well, I had not realized that while I was in Poland, pretty much out of touch, Americans had fallen in love with Lech Walesa. And they hated that awful Communist general, Jaruzelski. And there I was telling them Jaruzelski wasn't all bad, and that the good guys had screwed up.

I don't know if you have stood before a couple of thousand people, and suddenly felt waves of hostility coming back at you. It's not a good feeling. I looked around for a friend. I looked at Brokaw. He looked the other way. I looked at those NBC executives and the chairman of the board. They were looking the other way—very carefully looking the other way.

I looked at Walter Cronkite. He was intently studying the green peas on his plate.

Eventually, it was over. I slumped back to my chair. I was ready to go back to martial law. It had to be better than this.

The NBC executives came over to speak to Brokaw, and since I was standing there, they had to speak to me too. The chairman of the board told me Walter Cronkite had been sitting next to him. Yes, I said. I noticed that. Did Walter have anything to say about me? Yes, said Mr. Bradshaw. He did. He said, who the hell hired that bozo?

For years now, I have tried to convince myself that either the chairman of the board was joking or Walter Cronkite was joking. But I'm not really sure either of them was joking.

Well, that was a pretty long story. But today I am enjoying the luxury of having a lot of time. As the winners here know only too well, people like us usually have a couple of minutes to tell a story on TV, sometimes less. I hope some of you get a lot more time to tell your political stories. I'm told that during election years there are still stations that devote entire hour programs to politics. Imagine that. How quaint.

At the moment, we are not in a political campaign. We are in a war. And reporters who specialize in politics are not much in demand. That will change, of course. Hard to believe, but by the end of this year we will be up to our ears in presidential politics. Critics say we did a terrible job in the last election. And we'll get to that in a minute.

For the moment, our critics, especially those opposed to the war, are more interested in accusing us of doing a terrible job in the run-up to the war. That we failed to challenge the administration as it was making its case for war. Their argument goes like this: the Democrats got cold feet, and were afraid to challenge Bush's assumptions. So reporters rolled over for Bush.

A professor at Columbia University had an interesting take on this: he said Washington reporters are too consumed by politics—that we care about stories that have a political edge—that pit one side against the other. When the Democrats folded, he said, Washington reporters didn't know what to do and lost interest.

There may be some truth in the charge, but I don't think it is our job to do the Democrats' job for them. And I don't think we totally lost interest. There were plenty of TV stories that

Who says elections don't matter? Obviously you don't, or you wouldn't be here.



Bush and Gore. Did it make any difference who won? Yes, it did, but unless you were paying close attention, you probably thought it didn't. And we journalists weren't a lot of help.

raise questions about the administration's diplomatic strategy and about the possible impact of a war on the economy and on the Muslim world—as well as the human cost.

But as this war progresses, I have a question. Who says elections don't matter? Well, obviously you don't, or you wouldn't be here. And I'm sure people who voted for Al Gore say that in all likelihood, we would not be at war if Florida had tilted into the Gore column.

But at the end of the Clinton era there was an awful lot of nonchalance about elections. Think back to the year 2000. A strong economy. No terrorism. Life was pretty good. Most voters didn't worry about their jobs or their personal security. And we had had, as my Alabama relatives used to say, a belly-full of politics.

They had gone through Clinton and Lewinsky. They were turned off by his amorous exploits, and they were equally turned off by the way Republicans tried to exploit his exploits. So voters were saying the heck with all of them. We can get along just fine without the politicians.

And then, too, there were those guys running for president—Bush and Gore. Voters had difficulty working up much enthusiasm for either of them. And did it really make any difference who won?

Yes, it did. But unless you were paying close attention, you probably thought it didn't. And we journalists weren't always a lot of help. Did we pay too much attention to Gore's wooden personality and not enough to his experience in foreign and defense matters and his view of the world?

Did we pay too much attention to Bush's grammatical gaffes and not enough to his views of the kind of world he wanted?

Should we beat up on ourselves for failing to tell voters what they need to know?

Well, we were far from perfect—but actually we did report what we knew. Some things we didn't know.

We didn't know that September 11th was coming. We didn't know how Bush would react when confronted with such a threat. During the campaign, we did report that Bush was a successful governor. But we also reported that Texas governors, by law, do not have as much authority as governors in most states.

After the battle for Baghdad, can you imagine spending much time on the color of a candidate's clothes, the way we did with Al Gore's earth tones?



It's going to be a SERIOUS campaign. We will make sure voters eat their spinach. I know you Cronkite winners found ways to make political reporting interesting. You make really tasty spinach.

Truth was, we didn't know how well or poorly Bush would do. Same with Gore. He did not have executive experience. He had been a congressman, a senator, and a vice president, but never the top guy. Gore as president? A good leader? We will probably never know, although I am not convinced we have seen the last of him.

We failed to tell voters that, for good or ill, Bush would lead us into war with Iraq. But from all we now know, Bush didn't know it himself. I think he really meant it during the campaign when he said he was opposed to getting the United States involved in nation-building.

You know, back in the presidential campaign of 1940, Franklin Roosevelt assured voters that, if re-elected, he would do everything to keep us out of conflict then raging in Europe. He was not totally honest about that.

Historians now tell us that, while Roosevelt was not hell-bent on war, he was secretly prepared to take actions toward Germany and Japan that might persuade them to go to war against us. Roosevelt was brilliant, but he could be devious.

I don't think that is true of Bush and Iraq. He changed after September 11th. And he started listening to people in his Administration who felt that the United States could transform the Arab world by getting rid of Saddam Hussein.

I do think that this war, however it comes out, is likely to change the way we cover the next presidential campaign. After the battle for Baghdad, can you imagine spending much time next year on the color of a candidate's clothes, the way we did with Al Gore's earth tones?

Probably not. It's probably going to be a really S-E-R-I-O-U-S campaign. We will make damn sure the voters eat their spinach. Doubtless, that will be good for them. But not much fun. And that would be a shame. I know you Cronkite winners have found ways to make your political reporting interesting, or you wouldn't have won. You made really tasty spinach.

I hope that next year we could find a way to make some of our coverage fun for our viewers, and for ourselves. I know that sounds pretty mindless and insubstantial, but the best political reporters I know really enjoy politics, and they find a way to make others enjoy it.

And yes, part of that enjoyment is something we are often criticized for—the horse race. How often have our high-minded critics said you pay too much attention to the horse race, not the issues. Well, you know why we do it? Because horse races are fun. Keeping score, who's up, who's down is fun. That's how I got hooked into politics, and I'll bet it's true of a lot of people.

In the 1950s, I was a kid in Alabama watching, on our first TV set, the Republican convention, which was divided between two candidates: a war hero, Dwight Eisenhower, and a conservative senator from Ohio, named Robert Taft, known then as Mr. Republican.

Maybe I was intrigued by Republicans because they were so few of them in the deep South where I was. Those were the days of the solid south—solidly Democratic. Those were also the days when you could go into a convention without knowing who the winner was. It was a contest, not a coronation.

Until that convention, my main interest was baseball. I wasn't even interested in girls yet. But I sat there mesmerized by the flickering black and white images, as horsetrading went on over which delegates would be officially recognized. Eventually, the convention refused to seat some of Taft's delegates. Eisenhower got the nomination, and I was hooked on politics.

The 1956 Democratic convention offered more entertainment. This time it was for the vice presidential nomination. Senators Estes Kefauver from Tennessee against a skinny young guy I had never heard of from Massachusetts, John Kennedy. As the vote tilted first one way and then the other, it was better than any baseball game. And the political reporters were every bit the play-by-play announcers I was used to.

And somehow, as I got pulled in by the horse race, I got to know something about the issues. It was more fun if you knew what these candidates stood for. Civil rights? What was the difference between these guys on that? And what were they going to do about the communists? And another burning issue of the day. Marty Kaplan, where are you? Remember the big issue of off-shore oil drilling? Should the tax revenue and control go to the federal government or the states?

For some reason, I suddenly cared. Why? Because of the horse race.

So next year, when the media critics start complaining about horse race, I'm going to say...Oh please...drop it. I hope we have a lot of tight



In the 1950s, I watched the Republican convention. Until then, my main interest was baseball. But I was mesmerized by the flickering black and white images, and I was hooked on politics.



races all over the country—close races that will draw in our audience and, in the process, get them to pay attention to what the people you are covering stand for. Our conservative critics accuse us of being biased in favor of liberal politicians. Not true. Our bias is in favor of close campaigns.

It is not our job to make races closer. But it is our job to pay attention to candidates who seemingly have little chance. There is always the temptation to give up on a race. If we do, our viewers will.

And sometimes, they will anyway, as anyone who covered the 1996 race between Clinton and Bob Dole will remember. We tried everything we could to get people to take notice. They were too smart for us. They knew Bob Dole never had a chance. Nice man—terrible candidate.

David Bloom and I used to talk about the frustrations of covering Dole. David was good a political reporter, as he later proved to be as a war correspondent. But covering Dole was tough, even for David.

I know we all try to find compelling ways to illustrate issues or tell the stories of who the candidates are. Sometimes though, our job is simpler—not easy, but simpler. Sometimes it means we can't just zone out on what the candidates are saying. And, if you have covered a campaign, you know how hard that can be.

That happened shortly before the 1996 campaign. Clinton was gearing up for his re-election—going around the country speaking at one Democratic fundraiser after another. And he always gave The Speech. You all know about The Speech—the one the candidate gives so often that you can mouth the lines before he does.

It was late on a Tuesday night in Houston. It was after the evening news shows. It was after the deadlines for the morning newspapers. The White House press corps had been traveling hard with Clinton, and was tired, grouchy, and most of them decided to take the evening off, thereby raising the metaphysical question: is there news if there are no reporters around to report it?

On this night, Clinton was speaking to wealthy donors, and going along with his usual speech. Then without warning he said, "Some of you are still mad at me because you think I raised your taxes too much. And it might surprise you to know that I think I raised them too much, too."

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There will always be pressure on political reporters to make their stories vivid and entertaining. And that's fine, we should. But remember, the first job of a reporter...is to report.

Well, there was one reporter there who had not taken the evening off—who had not zoned out—a woman who worked for Reuters. She filed the quotes in her overnight story. Needless to say, there was an uproar: Democrats were angry with Clinton for bashing the taxes they voted for. Republicans were gleeful, saying even Clinton admits your taxes are too high.

All because a reporter had paid attention. There is a footnote to this story. Several reporters were embarrassed by missing the story. They went back through some old transcripts of Clinton speeches. Turns out he had said the same thing a couple of weeks earlier, and not a single reporter had caught it.

So, as I congratulate you winners, I would just say this to any young people who would like to win this award themselves someday. There will always be pressure on political reporters to make their stories vivid and entertaining. And that's fine. We should.

But remember. The first job of a reporter...is to report. Thank you.

