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Journalism - Front Row Seat To History

It's not always a pretty view

By

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Journalists have been on the front row of history for centuries. It's the job of the journalist to **gather, confirm, and report the news of the day**. Based on what we know about history, that has not always been a pretty view. History is made up of people and events. Some good, some not so good. Journalists see it all. How they report on those people and events depends on how good they are at their jobs and the principles that guide them.

My Concern

My concern for many years is what's been happening within journalism. That's the reason I started the *Real Journalism* Substack. I've written other journalism articles on my [GraceLife Blog](#) but thought a weekly newsletter addressing journalists and others in various communication's industries might be helpful.

Journalism is being challenged across the world. Journalists in many countries have little, if any, freedom to report independently of a government script. As many governments become more powerful and autocratic, journalists are struggling to cover news independently. Journalists also have challenges from the news agencies for whom they work. Many reporters, producers, and editors are being told what news they can and cannot report and how to report it. That has given rise to more citizen/independent style journalism, which has challenges of its own.

Everyone, it seems, has a phone camera and access to the Internet. Some people are shooting video and uploading that video to social media, adding their own comments and acting at times as ‘citizen journalists.’ Rarely do I see the kind of reporting with these viral videos that is needed to be journalism the public can rely on and trust. The videos usually lack ‘context’ and are often misleading. The comments are often more ‘opinion’ than ‘objective news.’ It’s easy for someone to edit video or upload only the portion of a long video that supports their particular viewpoint.

Professional and citizen journalists need more training in order to present ‘news events’ accurately and objectively. This is something I’ll address in coming weeks and months. If you have not read some of the articles I wrote at the beginning of this series, please take a look at these to begin —

- [Factual Story Telling](#)
- [Truth Be Told](#) (Part One - Covering Politics)
- [Truth Be Told](#) (Part Two - Being Curious as a Journalist)
- [Truth Be Told](#) (Part Three - Being Skeptical as a Journalist)

- Journalists and Objectivity
- Journalists and Accuracy
- Information - Mis or Dis

Resolution and Resolute

The word ‘resolution’ is a noun that is similar to the verb ‘resolute.’ **Resolute** means “marked by firm determination, purposeful, set in purpose, determined, unwavering, dogged” (definitions from various dictionaries). The Collins English Dictionary has an interesting description of a ‘resolute’ person — “If you describe someone as **resolute**, you approve of them because they are very determined not to change their mind or not to give up a course of action.”

It’s one thing to have a resolution; it’s another to be resolute about completing a resolution. Journalists are going to need both. They need to make a resolution to find the truth and tell the truth no matter the consequences to them personally or professionally. They will need to be ‘resolute’ in order to make that happen.

The government 'hammer' is coming down hard on journalists across the world. There are many things government leaders do not want their citizens to know. Information about the things that are known are controlled to a large part by the government in power. Journalists who do their job 'resolutely' are often seen as 'being in the way.' Some governments across the world think nothing of 'disappearing' or arresting those journalists.** Other governments place pressure on corporations to control or dismiss journalists who won't 'obey.' Interestingly, many 'dismissed' journalists are turning to social media, podcasts, and other communication means to continue reporting the news as they view it.

The public should be **wary and aware** of information reported as truth in the 'social' media sphere, but that doesn't mean truth can't be found there. News consumers will have to be diligent to find 'journalists' (professional and independent) who they can trust. How can they do that? You may find this article about the [Process of Journalism](#) helpful.

The Challenge of 'Future' News

The news that journalists will cover in the United States during the coming years may be unlike anything we've seen in our lifetimes. Elected officials are talking about the possibility of a third 'world war,' which could directly impact people living on American soil because of the weapons other nations may use against the U.S.

Governors and mayors of both political parties across the country are deeply concerned about how the growing number of migrants coming into the U.S. from across the world, primarily crossing at the southern border, is affecting cities and states negatively.

Mayor Eric Adams of New York City recently said this -

“I'm gonna tell you something, New Yorkers, never in my life have I had a problem that I didn't see an ending to. I don't see an ending to this ... This issue will destroy New York City. Destroy New York City.”

Mayors of other cities, large and small, across the country have made similar statements about how the flood of migrants coming into the U.S. is affecting their ability to provide basic public services to citizens and immigrants. Many citizens believe immigrants who have entered the country illegally are taking jobs and other financial services away from them.

Whether it's the immigration crisis, international sex trafficking, drug trafficking, gang killings, out-of-control crime in cities and suburbs, food shortages, medicine shortages, supply chain slowdowns, wars, economic crisis, or other challenges, journalists will have a front-row seat to history.

Get Ready

Journalists, get ready for your job to become more difficult and dangerous in the months and years to come — wherever you live. Your front-row seat to history is going to become a ‘hot seat’ as national and international forces attempt to suppress a ‘free press’ reporting the truth about what governments are planning and how they are carrying out those plans.

Be ‘resolute’ in doing this vital work of informing the public about government activity. Use the legal tools available to you. Learn as much about journalism as you can. Be wise. Be careful. Pray for guidance.

** Committee to Protect Journalists reports more than 2,200 journalist and media workers have been killed worldwide during the last 30 years. Last year is just one example: “Deadly year for journalists as killings rose sharply in 2022.” Many other journalists are missing or have been arrested.



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