

In promotions, the Army uses "goals" but not "quotas." The stated aim is "to achieve a percentage of minority... selection not less than the selection rate for all officers being considered." Usually the goals are met. But if they cannot be without violations of standards, "the chips fall where they may," Moskos writes. For example, the number of blacks promoted from captain to major is usually below the goal. This probably is due, he says, to the fact "that about half of all black officers are products of historically black colleges, where [many] do not acquire the

writing and communication skills necessary for promotion to staff jobs." Promotions to colonel and above, however, show little racial disparity.

Unlike black civilian leaders, says Moskos, black officers and NCOs refuse to rely on racial politics and reject "the ideology of victimhood." They instead embrace a sort of "bootstrap conservatism." Younger black officers are advised by their seniors that while they will encounter "plenty of bumps on the road," as a black general put it, they must surmount them, for the benefit of those who follow.

**PRESS & TELEVISION**

*Naming the Victim*

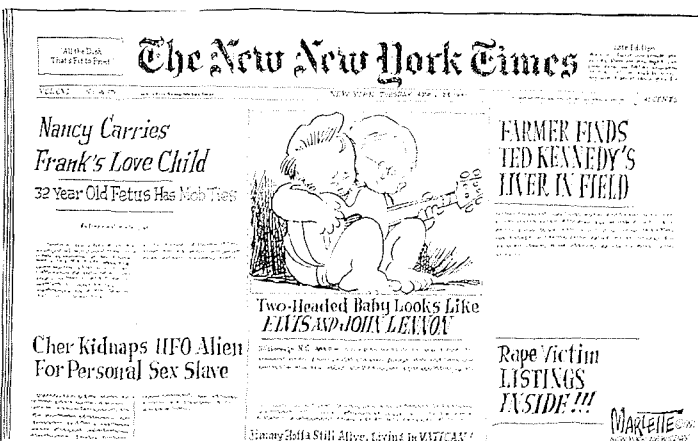
"Media Goes Wilding in Palm Beach" by Katha Pollitt, in *The Nation* (June 24, 1991), 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

After Senator Edward M. Kennedy's nephew, William Kennedy Smith, was accused of raping a Palm Beach woman last March, the news media's longstanding practice of preserving the anonymity of rape victims was broken by two major institutions—first, NBC News, then the *New York Times*. "Who she is is material in this . . .," claimed NBC News chief Michael Gartner. "You try to give viewers as many facts as you can and let them make up their minds."

Pollitt, a contributing editor of the *Nation*, dismisses such journalistic rationales as self-serving and invalid. "There is no good reason to publish the names of rape complainants without their consent, and many compelling reasons not to."

It is not as if the Palm Beach woman's charge is being made anonymously, Pollitt points out. Her name is (or will be) known to all who need to know: Smith and his attorney, the judge, and the jury. If the case goes to trial, "she will have to appear publicly in court, confront the defendant, give testimony and be cross-examined." But there is no need for her to be identified and "tried" in the news media too, Pollitt maintains.

Nor do the media have any duty to "tell all" they know. The media frequently hold back information, Pollitt notes, on grounds of "taste" or the "national interest." In fact, says Pollitt, when it serves their own purposes, the news media favor anonymity, not only for their cherished sources but for some rape victims.



The decision of New York Times editors to name the woman in the Palm Beach rape case drew criticism from other journalists.

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The major news media, for instance, "went to extraordinary lengths" to shield from the public the identity of "the Central Park jogger," a young Wellesley graduate and Wall Street investment banker, who was brutally beaten and raped by a gang of youths in 1989.

Gartner and others argued that naming rape victims will help to eventually remove the social stigma against rape victims. The contention, Pollitt observes, rests on a dubious assumption. "Why would society blame rape victims less if it knew who they were?" The issue of naming the victim, she says, cannot be divorced from blaming the victim.

The news media's coverage of the Palm Beach case, Pollitt says, underlines the fact that rape is treated differently from other crimes. "There is no other crime in which

the character, behavior and past of the complainant are seen as central elements in determining whether a crime has occurred." No one, for instance, would tell an elderly lady cheated out of her life savings by a con man that she had been "asking for it."

Why is rape different? "Because lots of people, too often including the ones in the jury box, think women really do want to be forced into sex, or by acting or dressing or drinking in a certain way, give up the right to say no . . ." That being so, Pollitt says, privacy for women who claim to have been raped is justified. Instead of denying it to them, "we should take a good hard look at our national passion for thrusting unwanted publicity on people who are not accused of wrongdoing but find themselves willy-nilly in the news."

## *Vox Populi?*

"The Power of Talk Radio" by James C. Roberts, in *The American Enterprise* (May-June 1991), American Enterprise Inst., 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Overshadowed first by television and then by the rise of stations on the FM band, AM radio once seemed well on the way to obsolescence. Now, however, this stepchild of the airwaves has found a new formula that may be balm not only for its bottom line but for American democracy.

That, at least, is the hope of Roberts, president of a Washington, D.C.-based radio syndicate: "At a time when the public is reading less and is coming to rely on the 30-second sound bite for information, talk radio . . . provides a forum for in-depth discussions of . . . public policy issues."

There are about 10,000 radio stations in the country, reaching 80 percent of Americans at least once a day. Roughly 400-500 of the stations had a news/talk format in 1990, up from 300-400 a year earlier. Today's national talk shows were made possible by two key developments: Satellite technology of the late 1970s allowed programs to be aired nationally; phone deregulation a few years later fostered the cheap "800" number service that let listeners call in from far and wide. (About five percent of the shows' listening audience

phones in.) Today, a big-name syndicated talk show, such as Rush Limbaugh's, which originates at WABC in New York, reaches four million people a day on 250 stations nationwide.

With audiences has come influence. Jim Gearhart's show on WKXW Trenton, reaching half a million New Jerseyites a day, was instrumental in forcing a partial rollback of Governor James Florio's 1990 tax increases. That same year, talk-show hosts across the nation spearheaded a successful grass-roots protest against the proposed congressional pay raise. Joe Klein of *New York* magazine has dubbed the hosts the "political organizers of the '90s." A less sympathetic David Broder, of the *Washington Post*, accuses them of "know-nothing demagoguery."

Attitudes such as that, say Roberts and other defenders of talk radio, show how distant the national news media are from common concerns—and help to explain talk radio's success. Talk-show hosts tend to be conservative or "populist." (Ralph Nader was a frequent talk-show guest during the congressional pay-raise campaign.)