

coauthor of the controversial *Bell Curve* (1994).

From the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which began in 1978, Murray carved out a “utopian sample” of 733 sibling pairs. Their parents were married and stayed together for at least the first seven years of their children’s lives. They were also relatively affluent (median income \$64,586, in year-2000 dollars). In other words, these children enjoyed major advantages. Only one significant difference divided them. In each pair, one sibling had “normal” intelligence (an intelligence quotient between 90 and 109), while the other had an IQ outside that range, either higher or lower.

By the time the siblings reached their thirties, Murray found, there were big differences in income. Those with “normal” intel-

ligence had a median family income of \$52,700, while their “bright” brothers and sisters had a household income of \$60,500 and the “very bright” ones (120 IQ or higher) \$70,700. The “dull” siblings (80–89 IQ), meanwhile, had a household median of only \$39,400, and the “very dull” ones (below 80 IQ) just \$23,600. These differences are only likely to widen over time, Murray adds.

These findings could point in several directions, toward policies that seek to equalize incomes or toward an acceptance of intractable inequality as the price one pays for freedom. But it won’t do for scholars to “live in a Lake Woebegone world where everyone can be above average,” says Murray. Inequality in abilities is “a driving force behind inequality in the distribution of social and economic goods.”

#### PRESS & MEDIA

## *A Plague of Lawyers*

“The Heroic Media Attorney: An Endangered Species” by Willy Stern, in *AAN News* (Feb. 11, 2003), Association of Alternative Newsweeklies, [www.aan.org](http://www.aan.org).

*Lawyers, lawyers, lawyers.* Everywhere investigative reporters turn these days, there seems to be an attorney. As a result, the media watchdog has lost some of its bite, says Stern, an investigative reporter for the *Nashville Scene* who teaches at Vanderbilt University.

Investigative reporters, who may spend months on a single story, are a tiny fraction of working journalists. As corporate ownership has supplanted family ownership in recent decades, many newspapers have become “far more reluctant to undertake lengthy, expensive, and high-profile investigative reporting projects,” Stern notes. Such efforts may win journalism awards, but they also generate angry letters and lawsuits—which are anathema to publishers intent on maximizing profits and pleasing shareholders.

The libel lawyers employed by family-run newspapers to vet investigative stories typically had “a bias to publish” and would work with journalists to get the hard-hitting exposés out. Corporate media attor-

neys today typically prefer to play it safe. Increasingly, “the lawyers, and not the editors, are calling the shots,” says Joel Kaplan, a former investigative reporter at *The Chicago Tribune* who teaches at Syracuse University.

At many newspapers and television stations, Stern says, investigative teams have been replaced by “project teams,” which turn out exhaustive but safe features, with no “bad guys” exposed. Some investigative efforts avoid risk by eschewing anonymous sources and relying upon computer-assisted reporting to reveal disturbing trends or problems. This can be valuable, but it is not investigative reporting, at least in the eyes of traditionalists.

When newspapers or TV stations do undertake traditional investigative reporting, news media attorneys increasingly get involved early on, advising reporters, for example, whether they can go undercover or secretly record conversations. This can be helpful, but it reduces the reporters’ prized independence.

When investigative reporters approach, many people now “lawyer up” quickly. “As a result,” Stern says, “instead of interviewing people, many investigative reporters spend hours upon hours preparing ques-

tions, which are faxed to attorneys . . . [who] then send back carefully worded responses.” That’s not much fun, and it’s another significant restraint on the media watchdog.

## A Newshounds’ Utopia

“Imagine” by Liz Cox, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jan.–Feb. 2003), Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027.

At many newspapers, it is, or once was, a hallowed tradition for spirited young reporters to gather after hours at a nearby bar to talk about their stories, gripe about their editors, and imagine how much better their paper could be. Updating this custom for the Age of Focus Groups, *Columbia Journalism Review* recently persuaded 67 young journalists from 18 papers around the country to get together in small groups to discuss their “Dream Newspaper.”

Meeting over half-priced beers on Chicago’s North Side, or in places such as the Elvis Room at Mama’s Mexican Kitchen in Seattle, the twentysomethings decided that one thing they don’t want is more “news” about J.Lo and Ben. “Newspapers assume our generation wants nothing more than fluff, 24–7 entertainment,” said one participant. “That is flat-out wrong.” Even so, the Chicago bunch, along with many others, want their Dream Newspaper “entertainment-heavy, but not at the expense of news.”

Some of the journalists’ ideas were fairly predictable. They would like more freedom to express their own viewpoints (“When

something is just blatantly one-sided or wrong, it would be nice to point it out,” said Anand Vaishnav, a 27-year-old *Boston Globe* education reporter), to be more “smart assed,” even more foul mouthed (“We’re a foul-mouthed generation,” argued Andisheh Nourae, a 29-year-old columnist for *Creative Loafing*).

But one desideratum advanced by the Dream Teams is quite surprising: more international coverage. “As it turns out,” writes Cox, an assistant editor at *Columbia Journalism Review*, “the young people in our groups—far from being disengaged or self-involved, as the prevailing wisdom goes—see themselves very much as part of a global community.” Along with breaking foreign news and diplomatic coverage, they would like more stories about foreign folk—“people who could be here, but just happen to be there,” as Leslie Koren, a 30-year-old writer for *The Record*, in northern New Jersey, put it. An example of what she craves: a *Boston Globe* story about local rock bands emerging in Afghanistan after the defeat of the Taliban.

### RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

## Socrates’ Last Words

“Have We Been Careless with Socrates’ Last Words? A Rereading of the *Phaedo*” by Laurel A. Madison, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (Oct. 2002), Department of Philosophy, Hunter College, 695 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021.

If all of Western philosophy is footnotes to Plato, then Socrates’ best lines are the epigraphs: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” “He is wise who knows he knows not.” “All of philosophy is training for death.” What to make, then, of his not-so-

quoteworthy final words: “Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius; make this offering to him and do not forget”?

This apparent “trivial concern with Crito’s unreliable memory,” as Madison, a doctoral student at Loyola University,