

PRESS & TELEVISION

CBS News treated 1980 frontrunners Carter and Reagan favorably—and gave each the lion's share of attention in their party's primaries. Thirty-five percent of the stories on the President *as a candidate* and 36 percent of the Reagan items were judged "good press" (versus neutral or "bad") by Robinson. Anderson came in third with 28 percent. Carter, however, received 13 more *personality* knocks than plaudits, and Reagan 3 more. Senator Edward M. Kennedy's personality plaudits balanced out the gibes, as was the case with GOP contenders John Conally, Philip Crane, and Robert Dole, and Democrat Jerry Brown. Republican Senator Howard Baker came out slightly behind. Only Anderson consistently came out ahead.

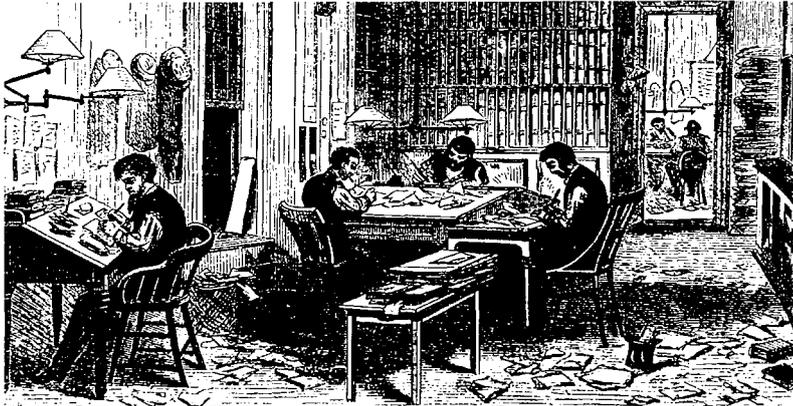
Robinson speculates that liberal, articulate reporters instinctively warmed to the liberal, articulate Illinois Congressman. And Anderson's remote chances of winning the GOP nomination saved him from the tougher scrutiny imposed on front-runners.

*The Good
Old Days*

"The Reporter, 1880-1900" by Ted Curtis Smythe, in *Journalism History* (Spring 1980), Journalism Dept., Darby Annex 103, California State University at Northridge, Northridge, Calif. 91330.

The sensationalistic "Yellow Journalism" of the late 19th century arose not only from fierce competition among rival newspapers. It stemmed, too, from a payment system that rewarded reporters for the longest, most lurid stories they could concoct, writes Smythe, professor of communications at California State University, Fullerton.

Most reporters worked 10- to 14-hour days. In New York and other big cities during the late 1880s, the few beginners lucky enough to be on



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Late 19th-century editors demanded scoops and scandals from poorly paid reporters. Some of the most memorable stories were newsroom creations.

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salary received \$15 to \$25 per week—about what the average plumber in New York State earned. Many more journalists were paid by the story—\$6 to \$8 per news column in New York, where rates were highest, \$16 for exclusives, and 50 cents an hour when assigned stories fell through. Reporters were rarely reimbursed for their expenses.

Since cost-conscious editors cut stories to the bone, and since column inches meant money, a reporter always handed in reams of copy. Moreover, he quickly learned that “the plain ‘fire’ is worth a dollar and the ‘conflagration’ will make him a possible ten,” as one editor observed in 1884. Though most tried to stay *near* the truth, some journalists created events and paid “witnesses” to “confirm” them. Others got their scoops by flouting the law, such as the St. Louis reporter who found a corpse in the street, hid it, and tantalized readers with a gripping “missing person” story before clearing up the mystery by “discovering” the body. Moonlighting and writing for rival publications were common practices. In fact, two salaried New York journalists simultaneously held down full-time \$2,500 per year jobs as city court stenographers. And some journalists picked up cash by discreetly plugging certain politicians or products in their stories.

Typically covering 14 or 15 assignments per day—ranging from weddings to political conventions—many reporters split their news gathering duties with journalists from other papers. The “pool” then shared the information, agreed on the specifics of the story (whether correct or not), and, as H. L. Mencken recalled from his reporting days in Baltimore, “synthesized” the final product. Few editors protested; these practices, after all, extended news coverage but not news budgets.

The Black Press and ‘Bakke’

“The Black Press and the Bakke Case” by Paula M. Poindexter and Carolyn A. Stroman, in *Journalism Quarterly* (Summer 1980), 431 Murphy Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455.

A major threat to minority progress was what black leaders called the *Bakke* “reverse discrimination” decision of 1978—in which the Supreme Court ruled, in part, that a rigid racial quota system had unconstitutionally denied a white man admission to medical school. How did the nation’s black press cover the story?

The coverage was thin, “event oriented,” and surprisingly low-key, say Poindexter, a researcher in journalism at the University of Georgia, and Stroman, an Afro-American studies specialist at the University of North Carolina. They surveyed four of America’s oldest black papers—New York’s *Amsterdam News*, Los Angeles’s *Sentinel* (both weeklies), the *Atlanta Daily World*, and the *Chicago Daily Defender*. Of the 99 items dealing with Bakke before the presentation of oral arguments to the Court in October 1977, 48 percent were hard-news reports on the hearing, anti-Bakke demonstrations, and statements by black