

Agence France-Presse versus Google, Inc.

Expert Witness Report

Prepared for Venable LLC

By Myron L. Belkind

Washington, D.C.

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The Introduction

Washington – Myron Belkind, who worked for The Associated Press for four decades primarily as a foreign correspondent and bureau chief and who now teaches journalism at The George Washington University, sided with Agence France-Presse in its contention that its headlines and news leads can not be used on Google News because of their originality and creativity.

That is the headline and the news lead that provides the “heart” of this Expert Witness Report.

It was created by the author, Myron Belkind, who worked for the AP from 1962 until his retirement in 2004, first as an editor in New York City, then as correspondent in Kuala Lumpur, and later as a bureau chief in New Delhi, London and Tokyo. He is now an adjunct professorial instructor at GWU’s School of Media and Public Affairs, teaching Reporting and Writing News, a rigorous 14-week course in which writing news leads and stories is a key element of the syllabus.

The above headline and lead represent the main news of this Expert Witness Report in the same way that AFP headlines and news leads (and those of other agencies and media publications) provide the most important elements of news stories. Indeed, they are so important that readers can tell from that headline and one paragraph lead the essence of the story.

And thus, so it is with this Expert Witness Report. Its conclusions are noted in both the headline and the news lead at the beginning of the Report.

If you wanted only to know my conclusions, you would not need to read anything further, again, in the same way that these days the increasing amount of readers of news stories on online Websites can find out the main point of a story by just reading the headline and the lead.

However, since the author has taken considerable time to research, create and carefully write this report, please do not stop at the lead. Please read on....

THE IMPORTANCE OF NEWS AGENCIES

Journalism thrives on competition, with newspapers, broadcasters, news agencies and now online Websites trying to attract the most readers and viewers. Nowhere is this competition more pronounced than among news agencies, which cover breaking stories around the world for thousands of subscribers, many of which rely primarily on the agencies for their news. News agencies have more correspondents, more news bureaus and more sophisticated communications than newspapers and broadcasters to enable them to report on news developments and transmit stories and photos from anywhere as quickly as possible.

Reliance on news agencies is becoming even more important for those newspapers that in recent years have reduced editorial staffs for financial reasons, often resulting in the closure of news bureaus domestically and internationally. More and more, it often is the news originating from the news agencies that is used by newspapers and by online Websites rather than from the newspapers' own correspondents.

The leading international general news agencies are recognized as Agence France-Press, The Associated Press, and Reuters, each more than 150 years old, each with reputations for high professionalism and high standards based on accuracy and credibility.

They rely heavily on subscription revenue to finance their operations, and protecting their editorial products from any form of piracy, plagiarism and illegal use is critically important to their survival. If readers are going to be able to read their news without any form of subscription or revenue payment, the news agencies would face major financial hardship that could affect their survival. Put more simply: why would someone want to subscribe to a news agency, if they can get the "heart" of the news for free? And in the one growth area of journalism today—online news Websites---a very high percentage of persons make their news judgments about stories based on the headlines and the lead paragraph of a news story, the two elements that Google News is using to produce its news presentation.

Whether one enters journalism by studying it in college or learning it on-the-job, he or she quickly learns that in a competitive media world, the headline and the first paragraph, known as the lead, are most important to trying to attract readers, and to do so, one must be creative and original.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING GOOD HEADLINES AND NEWS LEADS

Writing headlines and news leads is an art. It is a craft. It takes special skills and creativity to inform readers of the importance of a story in as few words as possible, especially for news transmitted to online Web sites.

A journalist must be original and creative (and accurate, of course) to condense to a mere few words the highlights of stories that oftentimes are complex and comprehensive. **There is no easy formula or format except creativity and originality exhibited under continuous deadline pressure.**

Headline Writing

The art of headline writing is a growing addendum to journalism curriculums. It is considered so important that the American Copy Editors Society, founded in 1997 to promote professional excellence, gives awards for headline writing annually.

In the view of Steve Buttry, the Director of Tailored Programs of the American Press Institute, “Headline writing is one of the most creative pursuits of newspapering.” He wrote that assessment in a paper prepared for a workshop for the newspaper publishing group, Lee Enterprises, in Tucson, Arizona, February 16, 2006. The same paper quotes Roger Buddenberg of the *Omaha World-Herald* as follows: “Heads are like poetry. Hell, they are poetry. You’re a poet: You choose words that tell and find a way to fit them into given limitations.”

Today, mastering headline writing is particularly important for news agency journalists, a point emphasized in the AFP Stylebook. “An increasing proportion of subscribers take AFP’s service on-screen and many of them may see nothing more than the headline before deciding whether to call up the story or to spike it unread.”—AFP Stylebook (2001 edition, page 10).

Because readers first see only the headline, the AFP Stylebook also stresses that “the headline should contain the same information as the lead paragraph and must accurately reflect the information in the main text.”

And that bring us to the importance of creating good, original news leads.

Writing News Leads

Rene J. Cappon, recognized as a leading wordsmith who was a senior editorial news executive for The Associated Press for more than four decades, devoted a chapter in his highly acclaimed book, “The Word,” to the writing of leads, which he described as “The Agony of Square One.”

Cappon wrote: “In the beginning of every news story is the lead---the bait, the lure, the tender trap for the reader, a source of much fear and loathing for the writer. Like a fiddle string, a good lead is the product of the right tension. Or, to get the metaphors out of the way, the lead is a hors d’oeuvre, supposed to whet the appetite, not to provide a three-course dinner.

“A good lead makes a clear statement of the essential news point and when possible includes a detail that distinguishes the story from others of its kind.”

In the highly competitive world of news agencies, each agency strives to ensure its lead is the best, and to do so it must be the most creative and original while ensuring accuracy and speed.

John Chancellor and Walter Mears, in their book, “The New News Business,” also emphasized the importance of leads.

“Leads are the keynotes, the overtures, the tee shots of newswriting. Properly crafted, the lead answers questions before they are asked and promises more answers to follow. The lead sets the theme and points the way.”

In the syllabus I have used since Autumn 2005 for my course at The George Washington University, SMPA 110, Reporting and Writing News, my lecture in the first week each semester discusses the basic hard news writing format known as the Inverted Pyramid, in which the the most important news—the hard news---is reported first, followed by subordinate developments in decreasing importance.

The Inverted Pyramid is the basic format used by all news agencies to report breaking news developments. How successfully a journalist masters the inverted pyramid format rests almost entirely on how good the lead paragraph is.

Going beyond the 5Ws in the Lead

Most readers make their decisions about which story to read from the headline and the lead paragraph. That is why a good news lead is informative and unique so that it stands out from those written by competitors, another essential requirement for news agencies.

The traditional 5Ws—the Who, What, Where, When and Why—are common elements of news leads. **However good leads can still be original and creative and add perspective and information beyond the 5Ws, beyond the basic facts, even for basic hard news developments.**

This goal is achieved by having journalists add information to a lead that puts the 5Ws into context, to give that extra meaning to the “bare facts” so that readers will better understand the importance of the lead.

That is why I have been impressed by the detailed manner in which the AFP Stylebook provides guidance on good headline writing and leads.

Moreover, as outlined on page 16 of the AFP 2001 Stylebook, AFP journalists have an added responsibility in reporting breaking news developments, and that is that they must continually update news stories—every 60 to 90 minutes. AFP must do so for individual markets globally in different languages.

In brief, AFP adheres to a practice, in my view, of **Multiple Creativity and Originality** in the presentation of its news leads.

Continual updating of news developments by news agencies is what makes them especially important, since their work never stops; there is literally a deadline every minute somewhere in the world where a subscriber counts on AFP and its competitors for the latest news through its headlines and leads. That is why the value of each news agency—and the protection of its product---is so important to its survival.

To better understand the efforts made by AFP and other media organizations in fulfilling their mission to their subscribers, I have devoted the following pages to examples of news leads and headlines using originality and creativity.

AFP Headlines & Leads: Continual Updates of Breaking News

(Following are four sets of examples of headlines and news leads created by AFP journalists under deadline pressure for the news agency's worldwide markets on a variety of news events: a presidential press conference, the Congressional elections, the release of the Iraq Study Group Report, and the death of Augusto Pinochet.)

Example I: President Bush's Press Conference on Oct. 11, 2006

Three leads moved in quick succession within minutes of the press conference beginning at 11am: at 11:08am, 11:16am, and 11:27am. Each is a model of creativity and originality, with each succinctly written and giving readers context and perspective beyond the traditional 5Ws of Who, What, Where, When and Why (see underline portions).

11:08am

NKorea will face "serious repercussions" over claimed nuclear test: Bush

WASHINGTON, Oct 11, 2006 (AFP) – US President George W. Bush said Wednesday that North Korea would face "serious repercussions" over its claim to have carried out a nuclear test explosion.

11:16m

US will step up ballistic weapons defenses after NKorea nuclear test: Bush

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11, 2006 (AFP) – US President George W. Bush said Wednesday that the United States would increase its cooperation with its allies on ballistic weapons defense systems, following North Korea's claim to have carried out a nuclear test explosion.

11:27am

Bush says US budget deficit halved years early

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11, 2006 (AFP) – US President George W. Bush said Wednesday his government had halved its budget deficit ahead of schedule after new figures showed the shortfall fell sharply in the past fiscal year.

Example II: U.S. Congressional Elections Nov. 7, 2006

(Election coverage requires immense skills for journalists, especially for those working for news agencies, who have to give continuous updates of developments, from early in the morning when the polls open until the final conclusive results late in the evening or early the next morning. Again, journalists don't only use the 5Ws, but, as will be noted in underlined portions below, each lead tries to give that little "extra" beyond the basic facts, and that takes creativity and originality. The purpose: to make your leads better than those of competitors.)

Iraq on the ballot as America votes

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Americans vote Tuesday in congressional elections shrouded by carnage in Iraq, with Democrats hoping to punish President George W. Bush and fracture his Republican Party's monopoly on power.

War in Iraq seen as key to US vote Tuesday

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Americans vote Tuesday in congressional elections likely to shape President George W. Bush's last two years in the White House, with the carnage in Iraq dominating debate on all sides.

URGENT ---First polls open in US election

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - The first polls opened on Tuesday in US elections widely seen as a referendum on the Iraq war, with Democrats hoping to wrest back control of Congress from President George W. Bush's Republicans.

Bush votes in hard-fought US election

WACO, Texas, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - US President George W. Bush voted Tuesday in down-to-the-wire US legislative elections shaped by anger over the Iraq war and urged Americans to turn out and cast ballots nationwide.

Democrats eye big gains as America votes

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Democrats mining public discontent over President George W. Bush's war in Iraq battled to break the Republican stranglehold in Congress Tuesday, as millions of Americans went to the polls.

Vote machines crash in Ohio

EAST CLEVELAND, Ohio, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Early trouble with crashing electronic voting machines Tuesday sparked immediate problems in some areas as US elections again went ahead amid fears of delays and polling irregularities.

America votes with Republican control on the line over Iraq

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - After a bitterly fought campaign, Americans voted in legislative elections Tuesday with opposition Democrats hoping to profit from discontent with President George W. Bush and the Iraq war.

Democrats seek to profit from Iraq backlash in US vote

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Americans voted in legislative elections Tuesday with opposition Democrats set to make major gains in Congress on the back of discontent with President George W. Bush and the Iraq war.

Iraq and corruption sway US election

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Americans voted in midterm elections Tuesday with the Iraq war and discontent with President George W. Bush weighing heavily on voters and Democrats expected to rack up big gains against scandal-tainted Republicans.

Democrats draw first blood in congressional polls

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Early projected results suggested Democrats positioned for major gains against Republicans in congressional elections marked by anger with President George W. Bush, Iraq and corruption.

Republicans suffer defeats in key Senate races

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Democrats won three key seats Tuesday in their battle to reclaim control of the US Senate from President George W. Bush's Republican party, US media said.

Democrats punish Republicans in early US returns

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Democrats took major strides towards taking control of the US House of Representatives Tuesday, in congressional elections driven by anger with President George W. Bush, Iraq and corruption.

Resurgent Democrats seize back House in US election

WASHINGTON, Nov 7, 2006 (AFP) - Democrats recaptured the House of Representatives for the first time since 1994 Tuesday, media projected, in a major blow to President George W. Bush's Republicans in his final two years in office.

Battered Bush sounds conciliatory tone

WASHINGTON, Nov 8, 2006 (AFP) - President George W. Bush pledged Tuesday to work with opposition Democrats now in control of the House of Representatives after a bitter campaign powered by voter anger at corruption and the Iraq war.

US Democrats grab House, chase Senate

WASHINGTON, Nov 8, 2006 (AFP) - Jubilant Democrats seized power in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1994 and had the Senate within reach, punishing President George W. Bush over Iraq and dramatically reshaping US politics.

Example III: Iraq Study Group Urges New Strategy (Note: Leads in bold include material that AFP obtained from a copy of the Iraq Study Group's Report, thus enabling AFP to provide its subscribers with recommendations of the Study Group on a very prompt basis, thanks to AFP's diplomatic contacts.)

Panel hands Bush new strategy on Iraq

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - A top-level US panel Wednesday offered President George W. Bush a new strategy for Iraq, reportedly urging talks with Iran and Syria, a gradual pullback of troops and threats to energize the Baghdad government.

Iraq group says conflict 'grave and deteriorating'

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - A report by a bipartisan panel on Iraq, handed to President George W. Bush on Wednesday, said the crisis in the country is "grave and deteriorating" according to a copy obtained by AFP.

Iraq must make progress or face cut in US support: panel

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - A policy panel urged US President George W. Bush Wednesday to reduce political, military and economic support to the Iraqi government if Baghdad does not make "substantial progress" on security and national reconciliation, according to a copy of its report obtained by AFP.

Iraq panel urges action on Arab-Israeli conflict

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - A top-level policy panel told US President George W. Bush on Wednesday that efforts to resolve the Iraq war must include a renewed drive for Arab-Israeli peace, according to a copy of its report obtained by AFP.

Iraq panel sets 2008 goal for pulling combat troops from Iraq

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - A top-level policy group on Wednesday set a goal of early 2008 for withdrawing most US combat troops from Iraq, according to a copy of their report to US President George W. Bush obtained by AFP.

Bush pleads for political truce on Iraq

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - US President George W. Bush vowed Wednesday to act in a "timely fashion" on a heavyweight commission's blunt call to change course in Iraq and pleaded for a political truce over the unpopular war.

'No magic formula' to solve Iraq's problems: Baker

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - Former US secretary of state James Baker said Wednesday there is "no magic formula" to solve Iraq's problems, as he unveiled a report on the way forward in the war-torn country.

Panel demands overhaul of US Iraq policy

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - A top-level panel Wednesday called for a complete overhaul of US policy in Iraq, including talks with Iran and Syria, a withdrawal of most combat troops by 2008, and threats to press Iraqi leaders to quell violence.

(Following lead focuses on James Baker for a story that AFP developed on its own, in another example of creativity and originality.)

Political fix-it man Baker helps US repair Iraq policy

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - Bush family loyalist James Baker has served as Republicans' political handyman for decades, and wrapped up his latest fix-it project on Wednesday, as his group unveiled a major report mapping the way forward in Iraq.

Lawmakers urge Bush to quickly act on Iraq panel findings

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - Supporters in Congress of reducing US forces in Iraq said they were vindicated by a report Wednesday urging possible cuts in US economic and military support there.

Panel's call for direct US talks with Syria, Iran crosses Bush red line

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - The Iraq Study Group, as expected, called on US President George W. Bush Wednesday to hold direct talks with Iran and Syria -- until now a diplomatic red line for an administration that has long branded the two states part of an "axis of evil."

US Iraq policy said failing amid deepening crisis

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - The United States should engage Iran and Syria and coerce Iraqi leaders into a security crackdown, in a tough new strategy to get US combat troops out of Iraq by early 2008, a top-level US commission said Wednesday.

Iraq report calls for diplomatic offensive

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, 2006 (AFP) - The United States must launch a diplomatic offensive and begin withdrawing troops from Iraq to halt a "grave and deteriorating" crisis, a top panel recommended Wednesday on another crushing day of violence in the stricken nation.

Example IV: The death of Augusto Pinochet.

Obituaries routinely contain the 5Ws, of Who (name of deceased), What (died), Where, When and Why (cause or other circumstances of death). In the examples below, AFP goes beyond the 5Ws to bring more perspective to the death of Pinochet in an effort to provide a more original, creative lead, with the underlined portions emphasizing the writers' creativity.

Ex-Chilean dictator August Pinochet dead at 91

SANTIAGO, Dec 10, 2006 (AFP) - Former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, whose brutal 17 year rule became a symbol of Latin American military repression, died Sunday at 91, his doctor at the Military Hospital in Santiago said.

US tied to Pinochet, from ascent to demise

WASHINGTON, Dec 10, 2006 (AFP) - Former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, who died at a Santiago hospital, was a long-time protégée of the United States who backed him in 1973 when he overthrew the Socialist government of Salvador Allende.

Chile's Pinochet a symbol of military repression

SANTIAGO, Dec 10, 2006 (AFP) - Augusto Pinochet, who died Sunday one week after suffering a heart attack, came to symbolize Latin American military repression and was linked to thousands of tortures, abductions and deaths.

ORIGINALITY OF NEWS LEADS IN COMPETING MEDIA

Writing original, creative leads is an essential ingredient of journalism throughout the world—not just for AFP but for other media that operate in the fiercely competitive world of getting the news out to subscribers and readers swiftly and accurately.

This section of my report is devoted to demonstrating how other competing media, in addition to AFP, write original and creative news leads (and headlines) from the same basic news developments.

If all the media stuck to the basic 5Ws in their writing of leads, there would be near uniformity in leads and headlines. In fact, the opposite is true, because of the effort by journalists universally to write their own unique news leads.

The following examples demonstrate clearly how journalists from leading publications write leads and headlines with originality and creativity.

(I have chosen most of the examples from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, because they distribute their stories to hundreds of U.S. newspapers through their own syndicated news services and thus effectively compete with the traditional news agencies like AP, AFP and Reuters.)

Example I: Resignation of U.N. Ambassador John Bolton

The New York Times:

Votes in Doubt, Bolton Resigns As Ambassador

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4 – President Bush reluctantly accepted the resignation of the United Nations ambassador, John R. Bolton, on Monday, conceding that the envoy would not win Senate confirmation and signaling that the administration was unwilling to make another end run around Congressional opponents in order to keep Mr. Bolton in his job.

The Washington Post:

U.N. Ambassador Bolton Won't Stay

WASHINGTON – President Bush surrendered to congressional foes yesterday in his fight to install John R. Bolton as permanent ambassador to the United Nations, a harbinger of how the political world has changed since Democrats captured both houses of Congress.

The Washington Times

Bolton quits fight for U.N. Nomination

WASHINGTON – President Bush yesterday accepted John R. Bolton’s resignation as U.N. ambassador, giving in to the objections of Senate Democrats and one Republican a month after the White House pledged to push to confirm him.

Example II: Iraq Study Group Issues Report

The New York Times

Panel Urges Basic Shift in U.S. Policy in Iraq

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6 – A bipartisan commission warned Wednesday that “the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating,” and it handed President Bush both a rebuke for his current strategy and a detailed blueprint for a fundamentally different approach, including the pullback of all American combat brigades over the next 15 months.

The Washington Post

Iraq Panel Proposes Major Strategy Shift

WASHINGTON – A panel of prominent elder leaders yesterday offered a stinging assessment of virtually every aspect of the U.S. venture in Iraq and called for a reshaping of the American military presence and a new Middle East diplomatic initiative to prevent the country from sliding into anarchy.

Example III: Bush response to Iraqi Study Group Report

The New York Times

Bush Backs Away from 2 Key Ideas Of Panel on Iraq

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 – President Bush moved quickly to distance himself on Thursday from the central recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, even as the panel’s co-chairmen opened an intensive lobbying effort on Capitol Hill to press Mr. Bush to adopt their report wholesale.

The Washington Post

Bush Appears Cool to Key Points of Report on Iraq

WASHINGTON -- President Bush vowed yesterday to come up with “a new strategy” in Iraq but expressed little enthusiasm for the central ideas of a bipartisan commission that advised him to ratchet back the U.S. military commitment in Iraq and launch an aggressive new diplomatic effort in the region.

Example IV: Death of Pinochet (Originality in Obituaries)

The New York Times (Page One, Dec. 11)

Augusto Pinochet, Dictator Who Ruled By Terror in Chile, Dies at 91

Gen. Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, the brutal dictator who repressed and reshaped **Chile** for nearly two decades and became a notorious symbol of human rights abuse and corruption, died yesterday at the Military Hospital of Santiago. He was 91.

The Washington Post (Page One, Dec. 11)

A Chilean Dictator's Dark Legacy

Gen. Augusto Pinochet, 91, the former Chilean dictator whose government murdered and tortured thousands during his repressive 17-year rule, died yesterday at a Santiago military hospital of complications from a heart attack, leaving incomplete numerous court cases that had sought to bring him to justice.

Example V: Death of Peter Boyle (More Originality and Creativity)

The New York Times

Peter Boyle, 71, Is Dead; Roles Evoked Laughter and Anger

NEW YORK -- Peter Boyle, who left the life of a monk to study acting and went on to become one of the most successful character actors of his time in films like "Joe," "Young Frankenstein" and "Monster's Ball," then capped his career as the curmudgeonly father on the hit sitcom "Everybody Loves Raymond," died on Tuesday evening in Manhattan. He was 71.

The Washington Post

Peter Boyle: 'Raymond' Dad Put Some Ritz in "Young Frankenstein"

NEW YORK -- Peter Boyle, 71, a prolific film and television actor who was a working-class bigot in "Joe," the tap-dancing monster in Mel Brooks's horror spoof "Young Frankenstein" and the crotchety father in the long-running sitcom "Everybody Loves Raymond," died Dec. 12 at New York Presbyterian Hospital. He had multiple myeloma and heart disease.

Example VI: British Police Inquiry Report on Death of Princess Diana (This is an outstanding example of creativity and originality; take a look at how *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* each wrote distinctive headlines and leads from the same report.)

The New York Times (Page 1, Dec. 15)

The Final Word on Diana's Death (Don't Bet on It)

LONDON, Dec. 14 – No, she did not stage her own death and sneak off with her boyfriend to a remote island love nest. Nor was she murdered by M15, M16, the Mossad, the C.I.A., the N.S.A., the Freemasons, the Scientologists, the military-industrial complex or a cabal of sinister British establishment figures led by Queen Elizabeth II's 85-year-old husband, Prince Philip.

The Washington Post (Page C1)

British Police Conclude Diana's Death An Accident

LONDON, Dec. 14 – Nine years after Princess Diana died in a car crash in Paris, one of the most exhaustive official investigations in recent British history has concluded that her death was a “tragic accident” and not murder. Nor was she pregnant.

CONCLUSION

The views expressed in this report are based on my knowledge and experiences as a journalist, from reporter to bureau chief to educator, over the past four decades.

The heart and soul of news writing is based on journalists' own initiatives, originality and creativity in selecting stories to cover and then presenting the facts accurately, fairly and objectively.

To persons outside the profession, the work of a journalist may seem easy: gather some facts, such as what are commonly referred to as the 5Ws, and put them together in a news story that is then published or broadcast.

But that oversimplification belies that the final product—the actual story, starting with the headline and lead---involves every journalist seeking to be original and creative in how he or she presents the facts so as to impart the most meaning of the significance of the basic facts.

That is why competing journalists covering the same story—or the same press conference or speech—can come up, as they often do, with their own original leads that are the product of that individual journalist and the media organization for which they work.

I often have said in my lectures to my students that the journalism profession is unique: unlike law, there is no equivalent of a Bar Exam to take; unlike medicine, there is no Medical Board that licenses or certifies (and re-certifies) that a doctor can practice.

Journalists derive their sanction for working in their profession based on one basic criteria: their credibility, which is their reputation that is based on how their work is viewed by their editors and their readers and viewers. Lose your credibility, and you lose your ability to practice as a journalist.

The fastest way for a journalist to lose his or her credibility is to use someone else's product, someone else's creativity, without permission. That, in my opinion, is what Google News is doing. That is why I have sided with AFP in its suit against Google Inc., as started in the Headline and News Lead on Page 1 of this Report.

--Myron L. Belkind

Appendix A:

Biography
Myron L. Belkind

Myron Belkind worked as a journalist for The Associated Press for 42 years. He joined AP in 1962 while completing his master's degree from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, where he was awarded a Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship, which is given to the three top members of the class.

Belkind used the fellowship throughout 1963 to report for the AP from Malaysia, Borneo, Indonesia, and Burma.

Belkind returned to AP headquarters in New York to work on the International Desk as an editor and reporter and then went back overseas in 1966, first as a correspondent in New Delhi and Kuala Lumpur and then back to New Delhi from 1968 to 1977 as bureau chief.

During this period, he reported on major news developments on the Subcontinent, including the rise and fall of Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi of India, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh, all three of whom he interviewed. He also traveled to Sikkim and Bhutan to interview their leaders. Among the major stories Belkind covered were the India-Pakistan War of 1971 that led to the birth of Bangladesh, India's first nuclear explosion in 1974, the Indian famine of 1966 and 1974-75, and the Indian government's State of Emergency from 1975-1977.

Belkind transferred to London in 1977, spending his first three years as assistant bureau chief before becoming bureau chief, a position he held until 2001, when he became bureau chief in Tokyo until his retirement in 2004.

As AP London bureau chief, Belkind oversaw coverage of the governments of Prime Minister Margaret and John Major and the coming to power of Tony Blair, the Falklands War with Argentina in 1982, and the Royals from the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana in 1981 to her death in 1997.

Even after retirement from AP, Belkind continues to remain active professionally as an educator. Since 2005, he has been an adjunct professorial instructor at The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, where he teaches SMPA 110, Reporting and Writing News. He also lectures and conducts seminars internationally on maintaining professional standards in journalism. Since March 2005, he has made six trips to Eastern Europe, a region of emerging press freedoms amidst emerging democracies.

Belkind resides in Washington, D.C. The AFP vs. Google case is his first as an Expert Witness. His compensation is \$250 per hour.

Education:

B.A., The Ohio State University, 1961

M.S., with high honors, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, 1962

Appendix B:

Materials Relied On For This Report

AFP News Wires

AFP Stylebook, 2001 Edition

The Washington Post, daily newspaper and washingtonpost.com

The New York Times, daily newspaper and nytimes.com

Belkind, Myron:

Syllabus for Reporting and Writing News, SMPA 110,
Autumn Semester 2006
The George Washington University,
School of Media and Public Affairs

Buttry, Steve:

Copy Editor Struggles With Headline
Report prepared for workshop for Lee Enterprises,
Tucson, Arizona, Feb. 16, 2006

Cappon, Rene J.:

The Word, An Associated Press Guide to Good News Writing
Copyright 1991, The Associated Press

Chancellor, John & Mears, Walter R.:

The New News Business
Copyright 1995, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

The Missouri Group:

News Reporting and Writing, Second Edition
Copyright 1985, St. Martin's Press, New York

Rich, Carole:

Writing and Reporting News, Coaching Method, Fifth Edition
Copyright 2007, Thomson Learning, Inc.

Appendix C:

"Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it and, above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light."—Joseph Pulitzer

SMPA 110

Reporting and Writing News

Instructor: Myron L. Belkind

Autumn 2006

**School of Media and Public Affairs
George Washington University**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays
3:55-5:10p.m.**

MPA B01 (Lower Level Media Lab)

Myron L. Belkind

Home/Office phone: 202-337-1413

Cell phone: 202-412-9257

Office Hours:

Thursday 3:00-3:45pm

And by request

Email: mbelkind@gwu.edu

Welcome to SMPA 110: News Writing and Reporting.

This course serves two essential GWU objectives. It is the introductory class into the journalism major sequence, and it has been certified as Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course. It thus attracts many non-journalism majors, although perhaps by the end of the semester some of these students might be inspired to become journalism majors!

Per the title of the course, SMPA 110 will emphasize both reporting and writing skills, starting with the initial building block of a good lead and moving on to developing longer stories including spot news, interviews, features, obituaries and profiles.

We will learn from the reading materials, lectures and discussions and by doing practical exercises and assignments during the laboratory sessions and outside the classroom.

At all times, the course will stress the importance of the most essential requirements of our profession: responsibility, accuracy and fairness, what I call the RAF of journalism. Together, these basics of journalism give us our **credibility**, something that is essential for everyone who wants to be a professional journalist.

By the end of the course, you should:

- Be adept at writing basic and concise news stories accurately and on deadline.
- Have a solid grounding in the mechanics of writing: correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Be a good editor so that you can improve your own writing and---whether editing your own stories or the work of others---be able to think critically to find holes in logic or unanswered questions.
- Understand the importance of adherence to a basic writing style through use of The Associated Press Stylebook.
- Understand the basic issues facing journalists today: ethical lapses, protection of sources, limited access, the right to public information and the right to privacy.
- Understand the fundamentals of libel.

During the last week of class, we'll use these goals as a checklist to review the course and assess what hopefully will be major strides toward becoming a professional journalist or, for those non-majors, better writers and reporters in their own fields.

Required Readings

--*Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method (5th edition)*, by Carole Rich
--*The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (2004 edition)*
--*The Washington Post* (daily print edition)
--*The Washington Post*, weekly columns by Deborah Howell, ombudsman, Sunday Editorial Page in the Outlook Section, and Howard Kurtz, media correspondent, Monday Style Section.

Assignments and Grading

To meet the WID requirements, 75% of the overall grade will be devoted to 12 writing assignments totaling at least 4,000 words. Some assignments will be done during the classroom lab sessions, and others will be assigned as fieldwork.

The final grade for the course will be comprised of the following components:

WID Assignments 75%

Five quizzes: style (2), editing/ accuracy (2), libel 25%

The 12 WID assignments will be weighted more heavily as the course progresses and the assignments become more challenging. The final assignment, incorporating the disciplines and techniques learned in the course, will be due on the last day of class (after two required revisions) and will represent 25% of the grade. There will be no final exam.

Grades on the WID assignments will be converted to a numerical scale as follows:

A 10, A- 9, B+ 8, B 7, B- 6, C+ 5, C 4, C-3, D 2, F 1 (**Note:** Journalism majors need a final grade of B or better in this class.)

Mandatory Attendance, Punctuality and Deadlines

Unless arrangements have been made in advance, attendance is mandatory. Our classes begin at 3:55pm and everyone must arrive on time. Journalism is a profession built on meeting deadlines. Any assignments turned in late will be marked down a grade.

Academic Integrity

The foundation of journalism rests on credibility and professional integrity. Our profession sadly has had numerous examples in recent years of journalists who destroyed their own reputations and damaged those of their newspapers. Setting the highest professional standards starts in the classroom, in your first practical journalism course, in this case Jour 111. Thus, any form of plagiarism, cheating or fabricating material will not be tolerated. Any violation of these standards on an individual assignment will result in an "F" for that assignment and may result in an "F" for the course. The GWU Code of Academic Integrity will be enforced.

About the Instructor

I recently retired from The Associated Press after 42 years' service, nearly all abroad as bureau chief in New Delhi, London and Tokyo and correspondent in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I received a B.A. from Ohio State University, where I majored in journalism and was editor of *The Lantern*, the campus daily, and a Master's Degree from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. While in London, I developed and taught a course on "Fundamentals of Journalism" for Webster University of St. Louis, Mo. I frequently lecture and conduct seminars abroad on media issues, and I am chair of the National Press Club's International Correspondents' Committee.

Schedule, Assignments & General Outline **Autumn 2006, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:55-5:10pm**

Tuesday, Sept. 5—Introduction to the course and to each other

The Road to being a Journalist—It starts here!

Core Professional Requirements: Good Writing, Reporting and **Credibility**

RAF: Responsibility, Accuracy, and Fairness

Review syllabus.

Complete Survey Questionnaire

- Read Rich, Preface, Chapters 1, 2 & Familiarize with Style Guide, Pages 501-513
- Associated Press Stylebook (skim and familiarize with content headings)

Thursday, Sept. 7—The Basic News Story- Part I

Continuation of discussions from initial class

Leads, Structure, Attribution, Quotes

- Read Rich, Chapter 7
- WID Assignment #1 (writing leads)

Tuesday, Sept. 12—The Basic News Story-Part II

Writing first story and Grammar, Usage & Style

- Read Rich, Chapters 6 and 8 (Pages 153-161)
- Skim Associated Press Stylebook

Thursday, Sept. 14---Writing basic first stories in class

- Lab exercise/WID #2 (writing news leads and briefs from fact sheets)

Tuesday, Sept. 19—Story Structures

- Read Rich, Chapter 8 (Pages 161-185)

Thursday, Sept. 21----Story Structures II

- Lab Exercise—Style/Grammar quiz in class
- WID Assignment # 3

Tuesday, Sept. 26---Curiosity & Story Ideas

- Read Rich, Chapter 3

Thursday, Sept. 28—Collecting Information

- Read Rich, Chapter 4
- Lab Exercise
- WID Assignment #4

Tuesday, Oct. 3---Interviewing

- Read Rich, Chapter 5

Thursday, Oct. 5—Interviewing II

- Interview assignment
- WID Assignment #5

Tuesday, Oct. 10—Storytelling and Feature Techniques

- * Read Rich, Chapter 9

Thursday, Oct. 12—Feature Writing

- Work on assignment in computer lab, but turn in Oct. 17 at beginning of class
- In-class conferences as requested
- WID Assignment #6

Tuesday, Oct. 17—Accuracy and Media Law

- Read Rich, Chapter 13
- AP Stylebook (Briefing on Media Law, pages 338-369)

Thursday, Oct. 19—Media Ethics & Multicultural Sensitivity

- Read Rich, Chapters 14 & 15
- Lab Exercise on Libel
- WID Assignment #7

Tuesday, Oct. 24—Speeches, News Conferences and Meetings

- Read Rich, Chapter 18

Thursday, Oct. 26—Speeches, News Conferences and Meetings II

- Writing Assignment #8

Tuesday, Oct. 31 —Obituaries

- Read Rich, Chapter 22

Thursday, Nov. 2—Writing Obituaries

- Lab exercises
- WID Assignment #9

Tuesday, Nov. 7—Political Election Coverage

Focus on Congressional elections and DC Mayoral election

Thursday, Nov. 9—Crime Coverage & Election Coverage Analysis

- Read Rich, Chapter 20

Tuesday, Nov. 14—Crime Coverage II

- Lab exercises, WID Assignment #10

Thursday, Nov. 16--Profiles

- Read Rich, Chapter 22
- Assign WID Assignment #11

Tuesday, Nov. 21—Writing Profiles

- WID Assignment #11 (with two revisions as required)
- Due start of class, Nov. 28

Thursday, Nov. 23—Thanksgiving Day (No Classes)

Tuesday, Nov. 28—Disasters, Weather, Tragedy

- Read Rich, Chapter 21
- WID Assignment #12 (Draft outline due Nov., 30, final version due Dec. 5)

Thursday, Nov. 30—Disaster Coverage (Cont)

- Lab Exercise, Disasters, etc
- WID Assignment #12 (draft due)

Tuesday, Dec. 5—The Road Ahead: Media Jobs and Internships

- Read Rich, Chapters 23
- Class discussion
- WID Assignment #12 due

Thursday, Dec. 7 (Last Day of Class)

Discuss SMPA 110, Conferences

- WID Assignment #12 (further revision due if necessary)