

Panel 1 Q&A and Group Discussion

Fred Harris: All right. Thank you very much Terence Smith for a perceptive and very worthwhile presentation. You mentioned leaders and it just made me think that I'm a Democrat and among Democrats I think it's been 40 years since anybody has said anything about poverty publicly. The appeals these days are to the middle class. I should note the exception of John Edwards who's been talking about poverty and he's the first politician that's done so in 40 years. It would help if we had leaders who were talking about this to get the media to pay more attention to it. For other questions or comments from participants. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich?

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: I am struck by the synergy between what our panelists have said, all of you, and what is going on in my head. As a matter of fact, I had an epiphany. Ray, when you talked about John McWhorter, I had written just before you started talking, "how is it that John McWhorter; how is it that Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, who are very faulted and failed social scientists, not even to begin to address their bigotry and bias? How is it that these false prophets gain such a foothold on the front page of the print media and on panels and electronic media vehicles that do exactly what Ray described? How do they intentionally present sub-text just by virtue of who the image is? The superior/inferior equation between people of color, particularly blacks and whites." So, what you have said certainly resonates, but I'm very disappointed that you said, "Don't ask me for the solution. I don't know what the solution is, because it is an intractable problem."

I wonder, is it the merger of the news organizations and the influence, the foreign influence, is that part of it? And the other part of my question is why, when groups, affected groups like African-Americans and women hold press conferences, nobody shows up. Here are the leaders willing to share perspectives and information, very prestigious and credible leaders - we just went through two press conferences right after the election and there was nobody there. Here are all of the leaders of the women's organizations in this country and all of the African-American leaders in this country. C-Span came to one and no reporters showed up. And it's not that it wasn't professionally handled. We know how to do this. We got on the date books, we sent out releases on the event. The question 1) is it the mergers, and 2) when there are reporters who really know that we have something to say, why don't they come?

Terence Smith: Yvonne, may I respond?

Fred Harris: Yes sir.

Terence Smith: Yvonne, you mentioned the merger of news organizations and that's a short hand way, really, of referring to the economic pressures on news organizations. I should add, I am the former media correspondent for The News Hour. But for eight years until last year I focused on looking at news organizations and coverage and found it very interesting, as

somebody that had been in the business for 40 years, it's perfectly possible to be so consumed with deadlines and datelines and the story that you don't look at yourself very much or your business very much at all. And, that's just in the nature of the business.

But that business has changed, let's say since 1968. It's a perfectly good period of time to look at. That business has changed dramatically since then, with, not only the consolidation and, if you like, the conglomeration of ownership, which is a fact of life. So that news organizations that had, I believe a greater sense of themselves and their responsibility are now rather small cogs in very large economic wheels. I cited NBC news. NBC news stood on its own feet for many years and was considered an important asset to the NBC television network. It is of course now a very small factor in the huge world that is General Electric, and it is supposed to make money. And so, it has become a cost center like any other. This is not an excuse, this is an explanation of the way motives and priorities and imperatives have changed in the news business in the period of time we're talking about.

Fred Harris: All right. Leila?

Leila McDowell: So I'm curious, I wanted to dig in a little deeper on solutions other than us going out and inciting a couple more violent rebellions in a number of cities to get your attention. But, my question, is the solution regulatory, for example, back in the day we had requirements on television, FCC had requirements that in order to get your license, for example, you had to present a certain amount of news content, you had to present a certain amount of public affairs content and a result of that there was an explosion of shows like America's Black Forum and Latino Today, and shows that dug in on issues that didn't necessarily have an audience, but because they were required, mandated by the FCC? Under President Reagan that regulation was decimated, it was reversed. So there's very little regulation on the market place now that holds such sway over the newsrooms. Even PBS now is subject to market forces in a way that perhaps it wasn't at one point and so there's not a sense of media as part of the public good. It doesn't seem like there's a sense of media as an important part of a democracy that you need an informed electorate on many issues in order for the electorate and the people of the United States to make good decisions about their democracy.

So is there a role for regulation, for legislation that reigns in some of the market forces that is determining what happens in the media and reminds the media that perhaps it does have a role as part of the public good?

Ray Suarez: It's very tough to re-regulate once you've de-regulated. There are big companies, as Terry mentioned, behind these media outlets and the idea that they will simply countenance being re-regulated just doesn't seem very likely. If there was a big public push behind it, maybe, but how do you generate a big public push in America? Through the media, and the idea that media is going to tell people to militate in favor of itself being re-regulated is very unlikely.

If you look at the last major rewrite of the rules of the road for American broadcasting, the ownership rules and the redrafting of all the, sort of, architecture of the American Communications Business, there were almost no stories about that on television. It passed with almost no public comment. Why? Because the public would be driven to comment by being told that the thing was even happening. For something as big a change in broadcasting as had happened in 50 years, to go almost un-remarked is an illustration of the predicament. And, you know, if you put on information-based requirements and that kind of thing, stations would list Entertainment Tonight and Access Hollywood as information programming and they'd list, because Giselle Fernandez is one of the hosts of Access Hollywood, minority representation on information programming. Regulation, when it is passed, is often so toothless as to be ludicrous and never really meets its intent.

It might be more useful just to talk about getting into reality-based journalism again. Journalism was supposed to, by its very nature, be reality-based, but we've gotten so far away from talking about what's real in the United States that the image, as I said earlier, of what you, what America is and what it's like to live there doesn't even show up on the screen in a lot of context and it's what people say and what they symbolize that becomes much more important than what is.

Colbert King: Let me jump in here a little bit on Leila's question. And to stay with the theme I try to strike in my comments about the journalists themselves and today's journalists, today's journalism. My own sense is that there is a timidity among the young journalists today. A timidity that causes them not to pitch stories and not to press editors and not to demand that we go out and cover or write about certain subjects. An inclination among young journalists to get along, get ahead by going along with things. To be so grateful to be part of a news organization that they'll do anything and they sell out.

If you don't have the push from within, you talk about the push from outside, but the push from within, journalists insisting that we cover certain stories and here's why they need to be covered or write about certain subjects. I think you're not going to get it. And, so you can do the thing that we talk about, having a racially diverse newsroom, greater minority representation, but you've got to get next to the other question, who are you talking about?

And you've got to have a certain quality of journalists in there and that's missing, I submit, in today's journalism, whether we're talking about print or electronic. Your news conference that you hold. Why doesn't that journalist show up in that newsroom? Who knows? Why isn't that journalist insisting to the editor that we go cover this? Why doesn't that journalist go and write about it and push their copy? Why, because even if that journalist senses that the editor doesn't want it, there's always room for pushback, and that's not happening in newsrooms.

And I submit if you ask among my colleagues with the National Association of Black Journalism, you give them a shot of sodium pentothal, they'll

tell you that. And it starts there, not only NABJ, but all of the other groups as well. There's a militancy that was once in journalism, that was there during the time of the riots where the African-American reporters came in and then insisted and then got into the stories and wrote about the stories and then wrote the issues in the community. That's not there now, yet it should be. And it extends to other groups as well. I've seen too much of it and I despair of it and I've seen it in the newsroom where I work.

The younger generation and you, it's not there, and you see the same thing on college campuses. You have on college campuses students of color who are not as involved in issues that previous generations were involved in. They just don't associate themselves with some of the problems we're talking about.

The stories I told you about between the Afro-American and the Washington Post, the Carver Terrace story. The Washington Post reporter was African-American, who wrote that antiseptic piece that was approved by an African-American editor.

So we have to go beyond. We want to get the numbers mixed up, we want to get the diversity and all that, but we also want to talk about the kind of people who are coming into this business, because that effects how these issues get covered. How we cover race, inequality, how we cover poverty, it has to do with the kind of coverage of women's issues and the women who are covering those issues and where their heads are as well. We have moved so far backwards in terms of the kinds of people who are getting recruited into this business and what they bring to this business and I think it shows up in the kind of work that you're seeing on the screen and the kind of work that you see in the newspapers.

Fred Harris: Good. Terence?

Terence Smith: I would just add a thought in a search for answers and accepting that there are no silver bullet answers. One place to begin is in journalism education so that you get people who are studying journalism either in the undergraduate or graduate level and you try to inculcate in them the idea that there is a mission here, there is a responsibility here that goes beyond the most obvious advancement issues and other things, that there's something you can do here and this is a vehicle and you can actually make a difference. I wonder, I've never seen a survey as to how much of that is addressed. Colby, do you know? I don't. In journalism schools across the country, if you start there you might get that notion fixed in peoples head.

Colbert King: As a matter fact, I did spend a little time at a journalism school recently, not recently, but within the last couple of years and I had that sense of mission that you're talking about, why do people go into journalism? You go in because you want to lift up the rocks, you want to turn them over, you want to get it, so, that is not there. It's not being taught, it's not being advanced inside of newsrooms. You take the pecking order in the newsroom. You go in, you become a local reporter where the real stories are, but they don't want to

stay there. They want to become national reporters and move up to the national political beat or they want to become foreign reporters. But the real story is at the local level. But the kind of pecking order that ought not to exist, but really does exist, at least at some of the larger newspapers, is: to get in, do your time, do the local thing, do it well and then move on to the financial page or some other sections of the paper. That's not the way it used to be as I understand it, where the good reporters, the really good reporters, stayed after the local beats because that's where the best, good stories were and that's where you learned about what was going on in the community.

That's changed now and it's reflected in what you read in the newspaper, at least that's my view and that's why people are turning away from newspapers, and you wanted to get into that, because they don't see anything that they relate to as well. And so the newspaper tends to be written for people in Foggy Bottom and on Capitol Hill and all the think tanks and that's the way we gravitate, as a newspaper gravitates, and we're losing our readers, the people who want to know what's going on in their communities. The people who want to know what's happened down the street and why does this local person behave this way or where's our contribution? All that's gone. That's taken out of the newspaper. Until you come along with something like an Afro-American who talks about seventy-five kids, who's so bothered by the violence they take to the streets themselves, elementary school kids.

And we miss that, this whole city missed it except for one small newspaper, very close to the people that caught it. How do we then write about the larger question of race? How do we write about inequality? How do we write about poverty? If our focus is so skewed now as a newspaper that we can give you all you want to know about the Ukraine and Latvia and there's a lot to know about the Ukraine. I'm not knocking stories about the Ukraine, but you don't know what's going on east of the river or you don't know about the anguish that is, that affects people to the same extent that it affects some people in certain neighborhoods in Baghdad. That they're people who are as afraid of going outside of their homes in urban areas or in the nation's Capitol as they are of going outside their homes in Mosul and we don't reflect that. And it goes to the kind of journalists we have now, it goes to our editors, it goes to the way in which we do our work and what's happening. Is the public turning off to us because we're not telling them what they want to know. And it's reflected in all the circulation numbers, you don't have to make this up. It's all there.

Fred Harris: I want to go around the room now.

Alan Curtis: I want to address Colby's sense that the militancy of the reporters of the sixties is gone today and I think about the key election of 1964. After the loss of Barry Goldwater there was a long-term concerted movement created, very well-financed, to take this country to another place in terms of the media, to develop the FOXs of the world in terms of alleged think tanks -- that often are not real heavy on thinking, but release a lot of propaganda. And it was a long term plan, it was a decades-long plan and I think in many ways it succeeded and got this country to a different place in terms of the media and

financing. So that, for example, a typical Sunday New York Times News of the Week, World in Review piece we'll say, on the one hand. On the other hand it sounds like we don't do anything because we want to be balanced.

Do you agree, all of you, that that has happened, that process has moved America to a different place and it has moved media to a different place and if so, how do we move it back to a more reasonable place?

Ray Suarez: Well part of, certainly what you described happened and a different structure was built up here, but I think we're leaving out what happens down here. There was a tremendous resorting of the American population in the roughly 30 years between Richard Nixon's re-election and the early years of this century. And millions of people moved and they left their problems behind and they left what they perceived as problem people behind. They thought that an addressing of the structural injustices of the United States was a one-off deal and they weren't going to have to hear about it for the rest of their lives.

When you're a reporter and you go to places where people feel that very, very keenly and I'm talking about middle class whites whose parents or grandparents may have had some association with the historic urban center of the metropolitan area that they live, but they themselves don't. They don't want to talk about, they don't want to hear about, every conversation they perceive as being an accusation or an assessment of guilt and they don't feel guilty about anything. So you're saying, when you talk to them about these structural problems in the United States, they say, what are you saying? Do you want more taxes from me to give to people over there who I don't know and I don't care about? What are you saying to me? Are you saying I'm doing something wrong, that I'm a racist because I want my kids to go to good schools?

We can't talk about think tanks without talking about the tremendous hostility of this conversation that exists at ground level where people have made their decisions about how they want to live their lives. They don't want to be asked about it, they don't want to be told about it, they don't want to be accused of anything and they certainly don't want to be sent a bill, which they perceive their tax levy as, for the social inequalities of the United States.

When you talk about militancy in the newsroom, either we decide, well if they don't want it, we're going to give it to them anyway and we're going to make them like it. So we're going to run these stories over and over and over again. Well, they'll just do what Colby was just suggesting and leave the newspaper behind. They've already demonstrated that they're more than willing to do that over the last 30 years, where I grew up thinking it was the mark of an adult to read a newspaper. Every adult I knew read a newspaper every day. Now when I get on the same train to go from Brooklyn into Manhattan that I took when I was a kid and a young worker, nobody on that train is reading a newspaper. And that's a one generational difference in what it means to be an adult and to have a sense of what's going on around you.

Well, along with that is a tremendous bailing out of what is still the largest single group of people in America, the white middle class, that says this has nothing to do with me so I don't want to hear about it.

Gregory Stanford: I think what you say is true, and that was, you know, shown by points that that did happen, but I think as Ray points out, if people are receptive to that message, and that the opposite message would have a harder time because a majority of people are not as receptive to the opposite message. So I don't know if it's only a few moments of American history where whites have been receptive to the idea of advancing rights for other people. It happened during the 60's, it happened during the previous 60's, 1860's. It happens once a century.

Colbert King: I don't agree. I don't agree, I really don't. I think it's incumbent upon us in this business in journalism to tell the truth as we see it and to report the truth as we see it. That's what our purpose is. It's not a question of finding a message that's palatable to people and giving them that or finding what they will find acceptable and reporting that. That's not what we're all about. I can understand, having once also been in the private sector, where we were very much concerned about the bottom line and banking. I can understand news executives or executives in the media being concerned about the bottom line. I understand that impulse, but at the working level, that's not my responsibility.

My job is not to be concerned about the bottom line, although the bottom line affects whether I work or not. My job as a journalist is to tell it the way it is; and my job as a columnist is to tell you why I feel the way I feel. If that doesn't square with the editors, and if it doesn't square with the person who owns the media, then I'm out. But my job is not to help them with the bottom line. My job is not to be part of a corporate structure. My job is to afflict comfort and to help the uncomfortable.

Gregory Stanford: I do want to make it clear, I agree whole-heartedly.

Colbert King: And whether the public likes that -- see I don't agree with that, that the public turns off to that. I don't believe that. I have a different feeling about American people. We all know the history very well, bottom line, people are basically decent, they are uncomfortable with certain things. There are certain things they don't want to know about. But when they see it and they have to focus on it, they tend to respond in the right way. Maybe not at the pace I would want, but they tend to respond.

Our job is to take it to them. I don't need to push it down their throats, but I do need to tell them this is what's happening here. You talk about not wanting to spend money on the problem here. We're spending \$2 billion a week in Iraq. Hello.

(Laughter.)

Colbert King: You know, why be timid about talking about problems domestically?

Terence Smith: Ah, could I add one thought to that, Senator, which is that there is a phenomenon in a kind of movement, the conservative movement, to gets its voice out in the public after 1964 and since.

What's happened in the public is interesting. There is a kind of tendency right now that seems greater to me than in the past for people to seek out news and news sources that reconfirm their view of the world, their often ideological view of the world. They want news that conforms to the world as they see it and so if they have a more conservative view, they'll find that probably reflected in Fox and Fox News. If you feel strongly on the subject of immigration, you'll tune in Lou Dobbs on CNN and every night he will beat the drum about the great dangers of immigration, the great failings of border security.

And what astonishes me, is that Lou Dobbs, who previously had a fairly straight news broadcast on Business News has built an audience by switching to a soapbox approach on one or two subjects and relentlessly pounding away at it. Fox has built audience for a particular approach. But, I don't see a comparable phenomenon on issues, let's say, of race or inequality or poverty and so forth. Where is that? And if it was to come to the fore, would it too build an audience? I'm not sure I know.

Fred Harris: Okay, I am going to go around the room now starting with Emmett Folgert.

Emmett Folgert: Thank you, I'm Emmett Folgert, I'm from the Dorchester Youth Collaborative in Boston and I want to thank the Eisenhower Foundation for this tremendous forum. Thank you very much, you gentlemen are so helpful. For something positive, we've set up a standing media arts group in our youth center of staff and young residents that are comfortable with the media and we invite people like yourselves to come by when there isn't a story to help us become comfortable because not everybody's comfortable with the media. I mean, maybe 1 out of 20 actually enjoys the spotlight. And what we do is we then extend an invitation to all you guys anytime, call us on the cell phones, you need a young person, you need a parent, whatever you need. So these voices can be heard and we understand your deadlines, we understand your business and how you have to turn things around. So that's something I would suggest in all communities that have these stories that are not being covered. That we do our part and be ready to fit into your schedule and to work with you and that's been helpful.

The other thing that concerns me, is the medieval salary structure of the media. There're people who are paid like royalty and there're people who are paid like serfs and the serf, unfortunately, is when you enter as an unpaid intern and you work twelve, fourteen hours a day. And even associate producers and people with incredible amounts of responsibility, labor for long, long periods of time and then either they're plucked for a better position or they're not. Most of those young people that I've seen, especially in advertising, film, and radio are subsidized by their parents during this period of time and none of my young people have that, have that resource for them.

So, we've got to create some pathways that are reasonable, that people from the communities we're can become involved in the media. Otherwise, we might achieve our goals of racial representation, but they won't be you, they won't have the stories you told us today because they won't be able to survive with the high cost of living in some of these major media cities. I've got a friend who got excited because his daughter got a very low paid internship at Rubicon & Young in New York, just thrilled. It's going to cost this guy thousands of dollars to subsidize her for this grand opportunity. And then, you know, she'll either be picked or she isn't. Our kids don't have that luxury and we've got to find a way that they can get into the business. Thank you.

Fred Harris: All right. Good comment and now Martin--

Martin Gilens: Hi, I'm Marty Gilens, I teach media and politics at Princeton University and I wanted to pursue this question of the changing economic environment of the news business and how that affects coverage of race, poverty, and inequality.

You know, we've mentioned a few of the factors that have created much greater profit pressures on news organizations than existed 20, 30, or 40 years ago including the demise of the fairness doctrine and the conglomeration of news media organizations, of course, the rise of cable television and so on. And, you know, something Ray said early in his talk really struck me, which is that stories about poverty don't sell.

And in an environment where the ability to generate viewers and readers has become more and more important that is going to be -- if not the problem -- certainly one huge problem that we face if we care about coverage of these kinds of topics. And it seems to me that, to the extent that there's a solution to this problem, it is centered in being able somehow to connect the kinds of issues and the kinds of stories that we're concerned with, with things that the public does already care about with the kinds of stories that do sell. And that's not easy to do, but that seems to me to be the kind of creativity that journalists will need to exhibit to be successful in this way.

And we heard already one example of that, I think, which was the continued coverage, I guess, by NBC in the aftermath of Katrina, which was a decision that one network made as a vehicle, at least in part, to continue to present the kinds of stories about inequality and race and so on, but to hook it with something that they thought viewers cared about already.

During the Cold War era many scholars argued that one of the reasons why there was an opening towards progress in civil rights and race relations was the concern with the image of America in competing with the Soviet Union for the allegiance of third world countries. And the need to project an image of democratic equality to the world. Now, I haven't seen any link between our current efforts to project a particular image in the world and these kinds of domestic concerns, but there is certainly an opening there and I don't know if this is something that journalists can take the lead on or whether we need political leaders to step forth and say that educational equality, economic equality, racial

equality more general is something that is important, not just for domestic justice, but that is linked to our efforts to be a leader in some ideological sense on the world stage. But it seems to me that these kinds of ways of linking stories about poverty and inequality with broader themes that viewers already care about is going to be central to success in getting them back on to the journalistic and public agenda.

Terence Smith: May I, Marty? I have one addition on NBC, I suspect. They did very well in the coverage of Katrina both in terms of ratings and I would say in the coverage itself was quite good. I believe that this wasn't an entirely altruistic decision that NBC did well ... it believed it owned the story, and that it wanted to continue to own the story as time went on. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but I suspect it was a strong motivating factor in their conspicuous decision to do much more coverage than their competitors and to make it a mark of distinction for their broadcast and their network because they believed that that would accrue well to them. And yes, it was a dramatic, obviously dramatic story that was arresting visually and therefore could be told well on television. These are all realities, but that, I'm sure was a factor as well.

Fred Harris: Next to Colbert King

Colbert King: I'm just going to briefly comment on what Marty said. Actually you can use that Cold War analogy and apply it today to what's going on in Iraq and their own problems and struggles with poverty and inequality. You look at the front page of today's paper. They're proposing a major jobs program in Iraq, something that we couldn't possibly get started here in this country. You look at the programs that they're preparing, they're talking about for infrastructure, rebuilding the infrastructure in Iraq, something that we could never get off the ground here. They're putting together a government in which there have been informal quotas so that there could be X percentage of Shiites, X percentage of Sunnis, and a little percent of Kurds because they want to create a diverse society. And that's something that's been abandoned here in this country because it's really a no-no.

I think there are some wonderful stories to be done, contemporary stories to be done on our own problems of poverty, inequality, and race and the problems, similar constructs in Iraq as well, and how there's such an interesting contradiction in the way in which we approach that. We are running a War on Poverty-type program in Iraq, something that we have, that conservatives thoroughly denounced in this country. And I think that's one way to draw attention to our own problems.

Fred Harris: Good.

Colbert King: Perhaps less cynical, a less cynical way that I'm talking about.

Fred Harris: I want to go next to Sophie --

Sophie Body-Gendrot: Okay, my name is Sophie Body- Gendrot. I am the trustee for the Foundation. I am also a professor at the Sorbonne (Paris) and

I write books about issues like that, the production of urban fear mostly. And so I would like to say two things.

First, I teach a course in urban politics in the United States and generations and generations of students have loved articles covering U.S. poverty. And, for instance, there was an article in the Sunday New York Times about the invisible poor that I have used forever. There is a demand for articles like this and we don't want them every day, of course, but now and then it's a good story. You have no idea how important it is because young people are interested in inequalities. They want to make comparisons, so it's instrumental, very instrumental that we have more stories of this type, one.

Secondly, opposite example, completely opposite example from what is said here. The coverage of urban outbursts one year ago. The reason they went so far, sorry to say that, but was due to this greed the TV professionals had to cover this type of exotic savagery, whatever, for the middle classes quietly sitting in their living rooms. It's not without consequences because the first time they did that, we had a far right candidate in the first round of Presidential elections. It seems to me that this is exactly what is going to happen again next year with our Presidential elections. If you constantly have the barbarians at our door, you are going to be in trouble. So what we have done, several things, first of all the mayors have made public statements this year and told, especially the international TV crews, one year later, if you do come back once more to excite the young people, your cameras will be broken. Warning.

Lastly, civic organizations like Eisenhower, but the French equivalent, have asked low-level reporters doing the coverage to come and discuss with us and measure the consequences of their coverage. And so they did exactly what you said, Oh, I'd like to, you know, be fair, but my Editor in Chief doesn't let me. Except, that after this real difficult morning there were little columns here and there saying, Yes, you know, we should be more objective. We have to give voices to the people from the bottom up, they are not exiled, And so I think that things can be done.

Fred Harris: Thank you very much. Let's see, I want to go to Steve Randell first, then to Jay Rosen, then to Pablo Eisenberg, then Loretta.

Steve Rendall: Thanks. I'm on a later panel. I'm from the media watch group FAIR and I really appreciate the comments here today. I think what I've been hearing a lot about is, there's not enough coverage of poverty, inequality, and racism and it's not good enough when it is done. What about the other side of that? What about the openness of our media to racism, to outright racism, to outright anti-poverty content? I'll point to two things. One is Charles Murray's Bell Curve. That book was greeted with real applause in the media. Malcolm Brown at the New York Times recommended it along with an even more odiously racist book. The New Republic, the so called liberal magazine had a whole seminar and dedicated a whole magazine to it. About half of the people defending it.

We have Denish D'Souza, who is still considered a legitimate media commentator, still respected, as is Charles Murray, the surviving co-author of *The Bell Curve*. He says that discriminating against young black men is okay, that's okay.

When I moved to New York 20 years ago from San Francisco. I am a big fan of one of the lower forms of media, of talk radio. And in every other city that I'd been in the United States, talk radio usually consisted of white guys on the right railing against the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the peace movement. However, the racism was almost always codeword. When I moved to New York City, I heard Bob Grant refer to black men mainly as savages. He called on the New York Police Department, on the air, to wish, devoutly wish that they would show up at a gay parade with machine guns and mow them down .

This sort of bigotry -- now I should mention, Bob Grant followed Rush Limbaugh on WABC, that was both of their home stations. He had three times the listeners, Limbaugh did. Limbaugh had 300,000 listeners in New York, Grant had one million. Grant had politicians lining up to be on his show. When we would go to news media organizations, we'd go to the News Hour, the networks, we would take our quotes, and these were not controversial quotes, and over and over again for seven years we were trying to pressure news organizations to cover this racism. We finally had some success when we got together a group of black clergy and one rabbi, almost all of them from New Jersey.

Reverend Reginald Jackson was the leader of this group and we got them to go to Christine Todd Whitman who was one of the politicians who had previously lined up to be on this show and asked her to challenge Grant's racism. She did, in fact, she went on his show. She said she wouldn't go on his show again after she heard the tapes that we produced.

So we had to go to a Republican politician to bring some attention to this, really gutter racism, that was huge in New York. A million listeners a week. Now, he was not finally fired by WABC until he made a comment about Ron Brown's airplane when Ron Brown died in a crash. There were early reports that somebody had survived and Grant went on the air and said, with my luck it will be Ron Brown. Now the only reason that he actually was brought down was because we were able to get that to Jack Newfield, the New York Daily News and Post and Village Voice reporter who was good friends with Mario Cuomo who had taught Ron Brown in law school. And Mario Cuomo, this powerful elite white man, was able to deliver the coup de grace. Now FAIR took out a quarter page in the New York Times asking the Disney Company, which had just acquired ABC, if bigotry was a Disney family value? And we asked them if the ABC company was much more vulnerable now because Disney owned it? Before it had been owned by Cap Cities, which was a very conservative company.

We've heard a lot about how there's not enough coverage, enough good coverage. What about the openness of our media to outright racism, outright anti-poverty sentiment?

Fred Harris: Any response on that?

Gregory Stanford: I think that what you're talking about is one of the things that is poisoning the air against what we want to do. It's just out there and it's one of the things that influences public opinion and makes it difficult to do good stuff and there is hope. I think the last election showed that there is hope, that these guys don't necessarily control the public agenda, that reason can prevail despite this stuff. At least that's one of the lessons I took from the last election. But it poisons the air and I think it's the air newspapers also breathe so it makes it more difficult to do good stuff like talk about poverty and race. It's one of the things that we have, you have to go up against, I mean, when I was referring to ... you have this attitude that black people, Hispanic people are simply not worthy, poor people aren't worthy of attention. That's one of the reasons why that's the case. That's how I see it.

Jay Rosen: Thank you, Senator Harris. This has been a very good panel. I want to make just one observation. My colleague, Todd Gitlin (Columbia University), once did a study of prime time programming on major networks. It was called, *Inside Prime Time*, and he interviewed about 200 producers and he simply tried to get them to answer one question, which was, "how do people make decisions about what gets on the air?"

And, among the many conclusions that he came to, one in particular I recall - he organized it under the category of audience lore, L-O-R-E, audience lore and what this referred to was a sort of collection of truth claims and statements about the people out there, the audience, and what they would tolerate, not tolerate, what they wanted, didn't want, what they would watch, and didn't watch. And his point was that many decisions get made based on what someone can claim the audience wants and what the audience will stand for. And this factor of audience lore, which was not so much based on data or actual knowledge as on the kind of negotiations inside the organization, the tussles and struggles and status of various speakers, he found what was a major factor in what happens.

So, I would suggest that in addition to looking at the audience and how it's changed the demand for news and how that has changed, and the economics of the business and how that is changed, you should look at this factor of audience lore, meaning who controls the definition of the audience, who controls information about it and what it is supposedly demanding? Who controls the imagery of the people out there and what they are requesting?

And I think one of the things you would find, which has been tragic for the journalism profession is that journalists more or less wash their hands of this knowledge. They considered sophisticated knowledge about the people out there as the province of the business side of the operation; as something that the marketing people knew about, and as something that wasn't all that relevant to their own job. And they surrendered their understanding of the audience out there in a misguided attempt to be kind of pure, to be unsullied by matters of marketing and related things.

And so we can't just look at the journalists, the problems, and the audience. We have to slide in the middle of this complicating factor of audience lore because it has way more power on decision making than we might otherwise think.

Terence Smith: All right. I would just quickly say that you're absolutely right Jay, and examples abound, I mean, look at any evening news broadcast and once you get past the breaking news of the day there are certain absolute staples that are in there. There will be a medical story. It is amazing to me with the number of medical breakthroughs that are reported that there is any disease left because almost nightly another one is cured and yet somehow it goes on.

Any celebrity controversy or celebrity story of the day will be in there as well. There's certain absolute givens. What I would argue in terms of the subject of this panel is that you can take some of these issues and make them human and make them real and make them riveting if you have the commitment and energy and creativity to do it. And, you can take any one of those young kids in Lou Dantzler's group, The Challenger Boys and Girls Club there in Los Angeles and make a great story out of it. Once you get to know enough about them.

So I believe that, in fact, this notion that it is not marketable and inherently not interesting to the large audience can be turned on its head.

Fred Harris: Pablo Eisenberg?

Pablo Eisenberg: I'm Pablo Eisenberg, a Senior Fellow at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. The panel's delineating of the problems in the media in a funny sense resembling that which we find in our graduate schools of public policy and non-profit administration. They do not deal with the issues of poverty, race, and inequality and therefore perpetuate among the general public, and I suspect some of the students go into journalism schools with the same problems that you've outlined.

I've a two-prong question. The first is, I suspect that the journalism schools aren't much better than the other graduate schools and so what's the answer? How do you transform journalism schools into institutions that really promote the tough journalism that Colbert King has described, and is there the leadership in those journalism schools to do the job?

Two, the Eisenhower Foundation, on whose board I sit, is one of many non-profit organizations that's concerned with problems of poverty, race, and inequality and yet all these non-profit institutions, which have a very important message to say to the country, and to localities, can not get a hearing in the media. There is virtually no coverage except if there's a personality that's done something hot or is in the news. And the question is how can non-profits that are doing a good job get to the media, get a hearing, get on the Today Show, and get that coverage which could expose the American public to those issues that you've articulated so well?

Colbert King: To take your last question first, I think you have to have a targeted approach to the media. Don't approach the media, approach individuals.

Get to know who's writing about what inside of a newspaper, who covers what subject in the electronic media and work on that individual. Go directly to that individual and develop a relationship with that person. Even then it can be difficult, but I guess there's nothing short of a direct contact to make something like this work. We live in hope.

Terence Smith: And as to journalism education, you've simply got to begin with the faculty and you've got to get people teaching who believe this and convey it. I've spent two periods of time this fall semester on two very different campuses. One, a ten day journalism seminar at Fudan University in Shanghai where the students were graduate students of journalism and young Chinese journalists. And secondly, at Journalists in Residence Week at Notre Dame of largely senior undergraduates studying journalism and American studies. I found the latter group at Notre Dame was most interested in sports journalism and how they could be anchors and make a lot of money. Nothing wrong with that, but that was the focus.

Interestingly in China, with all the restrictions that apply to working in the media in China, there was a hunger to get into journalism because of a conviction shared by these young people who were mostly in their twenties, maybe a few around thirty or early thirties, that things are going to change in their country, in their lifetime, in their professional lifetime. That things are going to change and they want to play a role in it. And I found it amazing that the sense of mission to convey and cover change was greater at Fudan University than it was for the far more comfortable students paying probably \$40,000 a year annually at Notre Dame.

Gregory Stanford: I just want to know one small thing and that is, are there any more journalism schools? I went to a journalism school, now that school's called, School of Mass Communications and what I'm trying to point out is that just from what I have noticed, the mission is more diffuse than it used to be at these schools because they encapsulate more stuff. When I was going to school you had people that really wanted to be reporters. They wanted to be reporters because this was their vocation. They were going to set the world on fire. That's why they wanted to be reporters, to cover stories, to cover big stories and expose everything. And I just don't find that to be so prevalent anymore. I hate dealing a downer.

Fred Harris: Finally we will hear from Loretta Metoxen.

Loretta Metoxen: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'm Loretta Metoxen. I'm the tribal historian for the Oneida Tribe of Indians in Wisconsin, and I'm a trustee of the Eisenhower Foundation. I would like to suggest this, I don't have the numbers, but I have read something to the effect that the percentages of people of color in the United States Armed Forces really don't match up with those percentages that you discuss in the newsroom. I suggest that they are quite higher than they are in those situations and that perhaps poverty has something to do with that. Coming from an American Indian background I know that the native population in the Armed Forces are extremely high compared to the Native

American population and they are primarily volunteers, about 90 percent of those are volunteers and I am among those.

On the other hand, in terms of those folks who are in the media, we have few people the likes of Hattie Kauffman and at that level or any other level except perhaps those who are writing their tribal newspapers, so that's my short comment and I thank the panel very much.

Fred Harris: Thank you very much. Excellent.