

FOLLOWING THE MONEY:
HOW SALIENT IS MEDIA OWNERSHIP INFORMATION TO U.S.
CITIZENS?

A Thesis
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
ASHLEY MOORE
Dr. Timothy Vos, Thesis Supervisor

DECEMBER 2010

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

FOLLOWING THE MONEY:
HOW SALIENT IS MEDIA OWNERSHIP INFORMATION TO U.S.
CITIZENS?

presented by Ashley Moore,

a candidate for the degree of master of journalism,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Timothy Vos

Professor Victoria Johnson

Professor Charles Davis

Professor Paul Bolls

As with all things I do,
that work towards the edification of the Truth,
I dedicate this research to

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

~AND~

HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

“...Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies...but I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.”

-Psalm 40: 4, 17

I would like to first thank the most High God and His only begotten Son for the inspiration and ability to have conducted and written this research. Through the Son who strengthens me, *all* things are possible. Tawada, Abba.

To my patient and encouraging mother, thank you. You always know what to say to keep me going. I love you.

To my uncle, thank you. Your support has never let me down and is undoubtedly there whenever I need it.

To my sisters and brother, thank you. At times when I began to doubt myself and my ability, you never did. I'll never forget that.

To my Hebrew Israelite family, thank you. Iron sharpens iron. Thank you for sharpening me.

To my friends, near and far, thank you. Your warm voices, kind words, and generousities are forever appreciated.

...Shalom!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Timothy Vos. You, as well as the vast amounts of knowledge you've shared with me during my time at Mizzou, have played an integral part in my education. Your enthusiasm and passion for educating is contagious. Oftentimes we go through life unaware of how we affect others' lives. I hope you truly understand, and never forget, how you have touched mine. And to my committee, thank you.

FOLLOWING THE MONEY: HOW SALIENT IS MEDIA OWNERSHIP INFORMATION TO U.S. CITIZENS?

Ashley Moore

Dr. Timothy Vos, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study seeks to assess how significant media ownership information is to citizens' lives and to understand on what bases this information is salient for some citizens and not others. Ten respondents were recruited from the cities of St. Louis and Columbia, Missouri. In-depth interviews were conducted along with a short, written quiz to evaluate individuals' bases for salience (expectancy, frequency/recency, emotional valence, and involvement) and levels of knowledge regarding media ownership. For the respondents of this study, results show higher levels of media ownership salience and knowledge correspond to those who perceive objectivity in news as a process while lower levels of salience correspond to respondents who perceive objectivity in news as an end-product.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 Theoretical Perspectives	12
2.2 Salience	13
2.3 Political Economy	24
2.3.1 Hegemony and Exploitation	25
2.3.2 Commodity Fetishism, False Consciousness, and Reification...30	
3 RESEARCH DESIGN	38
4 RESULTS	45
4.1 Prior Knowledge	45
4.2 Expectancy	49
4.3 Frequency and Recency	57
4.4 Emotional Valence	61
4.5 Involvement	64
5 DISCUSSION	69

APPENDIX	82
1 INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	82
2 QUIZ.....	86
3 TABLE OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES	88
4 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	228

LIST OF TABLES

Figure	Page
1. Table of Interview Responses.....	87

1 INTRODUCTION

“To expect to be free and ignorant is to expect what never was and never will be.” – Thomas Jefferson

Karl Marx asserts economic processes underlie all other social processes. Agreeably, economic historian and media theorist Harold Innis maintains, “Throughout the course of human history, cultures, cultural artifacts, and cultural processes have generally supported, and were supported by, their society’s predominant mode of economic and political organization” (Babe, 2009, p. 4). Journalism is such a cultural artifact and within the United States, it supports and is supported by capitalism. However, when operating within a capitalistic framework, the role of journalism is threatened and undermined by the very exploitative nature that defines capitalism – a nature engendered by a few, the elite, to maintain power over subjugated groups. The exploitative nature of capitalism and unequal class relations it breeds are possible for one reason: it is often masked by the fetishism of the visible exchange relation between commodities (Onimode, 1985). Marx likens this fetishism to religious worship. He contends the religious world, like the commodity world, is no more than a reflex of the real world and that,

The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of every-day life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to Nature (Marx, 1887, p. 79).

Commodity fetishism transforms social relations between *individuals* into exchange relations between *commodities*, and falsely portrays capital-labor relations as natural and inevitable (Onimode, 1985). Such a false portrayal or false consciousness is a hegemonic inculcation by which the elite rob the working class of their class consciousness, thereby forcing them to accept a reality detached of their actual social experience. For these reasons, it is in the best interest of media corporate owners to perpetuate a false consciousness whereas media ownership information is downplayed or nonexistent. Consequently, *who* controls the U.S. media system and for what purposes is left out of political debate and public discussion while the attitude of profit-seeking, concentrated commercial media is accepted as rational and natural (McChesney, 1999).

Knowing the nature of the U.S. corporate media system is critical when judging the impartiality of news or when determining how free media systems are throughout various countries. In light of the level of importance of media and communication to any society, knowing *how* the U.S. media system is owned is of equal importance because it can help reveal the presence of hegemony and indicate the effectiveness of democracy and press systems within given societies.

This research seeks to understand how salient media ownership information is to citizens, specifically, citizens of Columbia and St. Louis, Missouri. The researcher contends the vast majority of citizens are unaware. But for what reasons do some individuals find media ownership information salient for various facets of their lives? How do individuals differ in degree to which they are psychologically oriented to media ownership information?

The ability to assess the extent to which people are aware of media ownership and attach significance to it may contribute to an understanding of their psychological responses to systems of mass communications and production in general. Research into this issue could be used as a gauge by which to judge how knowledgeable U.S. citizens are concerning their nation's press system. Knowledge gained from this study could also be used alongside other information when ranking how free journalism is in the U.S. Additionally, this knowledge could be useful to newsrooms as a means of providing audience feedback to better understand viewer, reader, and listener complaints that may stem from the audience's lack of knowledge of how newsrooms and media organizations are owned.

Studies assessing levels of media ownership salience among citizens have not often been conducted. This is poignant considering media are primary tools of socialization that people use to understand economic and other vital aspects of their public and private lives (McChesney, 1999). And like other social institutions, media systems are, too, subject to and struggle with the nature of capitalism.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

“The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 12). In a democratic society, journalism is responsible for informing citizens about public affairs so they are knowledgeable when participating in the process of self-government (Curran, 2005). Journalism satisfies this responsibility by promoting five basic functions: information dissemination, accountability, representation, deliberation, and conflict resolution (Curran, 2005). Each of these functions rests on the presumption that democracy requires media that are both open to the voices of the public and powerful enough to hold centers of power accountable. Journalism should be,

Fearless watchdogs, vigilantly examining the exercise of power and protecting the public from wrongdoing [... and] should also provide a platform of open debate that facilitates the formation of public opinion [...and] should be the voice of the people, representing to authority the citizenry’s views and expressing the agreed aims of society (Curran, 2005, p. 120).

Equally critical is a media system in which citizens are knowledgeable of the parameters wherein it operates. McChesney criticizes how undemocratic U.S. media policy making is by highlighting its insignificant public participation.

Most notable about media policy making in the United States is not that it is important and that it exists, but, rather, that virtually the entire American population has no idea that it exists and that they have a right to participate in it (1999, p. 64).

Together, a free media system and a public knowledgeable of how its media system is owned play integral roles in sustaining and monitoring a healthy democracy. They contribute to greater accountability, good government, and economic development.

The idea of free media resides in two notions of freedom: negative and positive freedom (Berlin, 1958). Negative freedom is defined as freedom from state and economic interference while, positive freedom signifies freedom for the purpose of promoting and sustaining democratic life, facilitating self-governance, rational debate, self-realizations, and prosperity (Berlin, 1958). Yet, oftentimes within the U.S., negative freedom is solely associated with media protection from political and legal obstruction while economic obstruction goes overlooked (Merrill, 1990). In fact, even though the journalism institution is the only industry protected by the U.S. Constitution, the First Amendment nevertheless fails to address additional sources of control or pressure beyond the sphere of government. This oversight is no accident according to McChesney.

It reflects above all the economic, political, and ideological power of the media corporations and their allies and makes it difficult to challenge existing corporate media power (1999, p. 7).

Challenging existing corporate media power is further complicated by journalism's dual nature as both economic and cultural industries. Since the printing press, the journalism industry has evolved into big business and expanded to greater masses due to production capabilities created by innovative technologies (Compaine, 2000). Consequently, this duality creates multiple allegiances which can produce conflicts concerning journalism's purpose and

who it is to serve. On the one hand, if economic interest and influence within the journalism industry go unchecked, journalism stands to be an undemocratic means by which a few elite keep control and power out of the hands of the majority, the public. “The wealthier and more powerful the corporate media giants become, the poorer the prospects for participatory democracy” (McChesney, 1999, p. 2).

However, scholars such as Hayek (1961) assert free markets in factwork to facilitate the effectiveness of democracy. By representing the micro and macro components of various elements of production in society, markets are able to take advantage of larger amounts and more detailed accounts of information in society (Hayek, 1961). Additionally, other arguments in support of free markets purport markets serve as a check on power whereby no single player possesses the ability to determine prices and, thus, is incapable of ruling over the other. Criticisms of this ideal say it is not only harmful but imaginary (Polanyi, 1944). Still, while some arguments may not go as far as to claim free markets are a check on power, some claim free markets help to allocate and produce resources most efficiently as well as promote innovation, leading to cheaper, better goods (Schumpeter, 1942).

Yet, to deny economic pressure and its significance within journalism is, firstly, to deny how capitalism structures and circumscribes the exercise of social and economic power and, secondly, to deny how journalism champions the status quo by supporting capitalism (Hardy, 2008). McChesney (1999) affirms this denial when he takes note of how the issue of *who* controls the U.S. media

system, and for what purposes, is left out of political debate and public discussion while ideas of profit-seeking, commercial media are accepted as rational and natural. Therefore, economic freedom is essential if journalism is to make *all* forms of power transparent, not simply governmental power.

On the other hand, journalism is a tool of socialization that “stands not simply for the power to convey information, but more crucially for the assumed ability to shape attitudes, opinions, and beliefs” (Compaine, 2000, p. 538-9). By facilitating the adoption of behavior patterns and social norms of the surrounding culture, journalism is a means of education thereby influencing the way people see the world and each other. And like any other social institution or cultural artifact, journalism exists in the pseudo-environment which individuals have created for themselves (using pictures inside their minds) and not in the natural environment which exists independently of human thought. Even more, people act upon these pictures inside their heads (Lippmann, 1949). Ultimately, this has dire implications for a tool like journalism because it possesses the power to construct reality (both factual representations and credible fictions) by fostering rational-critical debate about the major problems of society (Hardy, 2008).

One reason journalism is such a powerful tool of socialization is because citizens have been convinced to believe one type of account is far superior, more credible, and more objective than all others – that of the journalist (Glasser, 1984). The journalism industry reserves for itself the right to be the exclusive authority of information. The acceptance of this belief can be explained by the nature and the acceptance of culture itself. Bourdieu (1984) likens culture to a

game continuously shaped, produced, and consumed according to the material demands of life. He defines culture as a social stake that assumes and demands individuals take part in it and be taken in by it via a false belief in the naturalness of the desire to participate and the pleasure of participating (1984). Like a cycle, the race and competition that culture produces are the very things that sustain it, and without them, there is no interest in culture. Bourdieu says,

The value culture, the supreme fetish, is generated in the initial investment implied by the mere fact of entering the game, joining the collective belief in the value of the game which makes the game and endlessly remakes the competition for the stakes. The opposition between the 'authentic' and the 'imitation', 'true' culture and 'popularization', which maintain the game by maintaining belief in the absolute value of the stake, conceals a collusion that is no less indispensable to the production and reproduction of the *illusio*, the fundamental recognition of the cultural game and its stakes (Bourdieu, 1984, p.250).

Likewise, the opposition between "credible" news and "less credible" news conceals one of the many aims and stakes of media owners and practitioners who advocate the notion of objectivity. The belief of objectivity allows citizens to substitute news as information from the natural environment rather than the packaged predisposition of a small, exclusive collective of individuals.

Glasser(1984) says objectivity was used to convert efficiency into a professional standard and was championed by media owners and practitioners because it increased their credibility and status as proponents of democracy. Through the perpetuation of an ongoing impression that media organizations act as authorities of objectivity and in the best interest of the public (rather than stock holders by offending the least number of people, thus, maximizing audiences),

journalism distracts from the more encompassing issue and takes a blind eye to its role of maintaining power for a few – capitalists.

The rise of what John McManus (1994) calls “market –driven journalism,” is criticized by media scholars and practitioners as a danger to both the vitality of democracy and a public well-enough informed to govern itself. Markets are not the appropriate regulators for media systems (McChesney, 1999). The distinct features possessed by media systems and other cultural industries are unsuitable for market regulation because markets can be undemocratic, create unequal access to the marketplace, and lack differentiation between good and bad. As newsrooms attend and respond to market trends and journalism is shaped to serve it, a duality begins to emerge and, thus, news is approached in at least two ways: as a commodity or a public service. As a commodity, there exist economic pressures on media organizations to generate profit.

Market-driven journalism creates less diversity of ideas and presenters and favors corporate expansion while ignoring consequences of economic forms of power such as media oligopolies and concentrations of ownership (Baker, 2007). The majority of U.S. media systems are owned by five giant media conglomerates, which Bagdikian describes these as “operating with many of the characteristics of a cartel”: Time Warner, The Walt Disney Company, Murdoch’s News Corporation, [General Electric], and Bertelsmann (2004, p. 3). Debates and critiques of media ownership concentration have become “the information-age version of the industrial-age struggle over the control of the means of production” (Noam, 2009, p. 10). These debates are disputed on issues of fact,

value, and evaluation. Although many scholars including Baker, Compaine, Iosifides, and Kunz disagree about which particular media sectors have increased concentration and the appropriate measures to identify and calculate ownership concentration, most scholars do agree media concentration has increased, generally (Noam, 2009).

In addition to fiscal concerns, other debates surrounding media concentration involve its effects on content diversity, content quality, and society, as well as its potential dangers such as the abuse of power or the underrepresentation of significant voices. For proponents of decreased media ownership concentration, increasing concentration creates alarm of homogenized news controlled by a decreasing amount of corporations with the capability of affecting public opinion, the national agenda, and democracy itself (Noam, 2009). “Concentrations of media ownership narrow the range of voices that predominate in the media and consequently pose a threat to the interests of society” (Doyle, 2002, p. 6). Bagdikian addresses these fundamental issues of distribution of power and wealth when he asserts, “our view of the social political world is deficient” if there is a regular omission and lack of inclusion for particular ideas in society (1992, p. xxiv). Furthermore, he says cultural institutions such as journalism are increasingly becoming owned by the largest beneficiaries of this deficient reality who “seldom refrain from using their power over public information” (1992, p. xxiv). Thus, giving media conglomerates more power “than was exercised by any despot or dictatorship in history” (Bagdikian, 2004, p. 3).

However, there are those who disagree with notions that suggest increasing concentration of media ownership stifles the endeavors democracy, such as the Federal Commission of Communications (FCC). On the contrary, the FCC purports deregulation furthers the prospects of a participatory democracy by relieving state interference. In 2003, the FCC passed regulation relaxing the limits of media ownership, permitting media corporations to own greater amounts of television and radio stations and cable systems. In an interview with NPR's Renee Montagne, FCC Chairman Michael Powell reiterates his beliefs in the democratic aim of deregulation. Montagne reports, "The fact that only five or six corporations dominate U.S. media doesn't worry him. In fact, Powell says, that represents more competition than exists in many other areas of industry and commerce."

If economic interests and aspects of the industry are not at least made transparent for citizens, journalism stands to become reduced to an illusion where social control efforts by a few successfully maintain the status quo. And whereas the U.S. media system is not solely the product of corporate and commercial pressures, journalism unapologetically embraces the notion of business as the proper steward of society (McChesney, 1999). This is evident by the general lack of labor coverage and overwhelming coverage of business affairs in the news (McChesney, 1999). To the detriment of citizens, the public's lack of awareness of media ownership information threatens to undermine the integrity of the journalism institution.

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Salience and political economy are the two theoretical perspectives that will serve as the foundation of this research. Marshall McLuhan (1970), protégé of Innis and influential contributor to the field of media ecology, said culture is our business. Babe interprets this maxim in two ways. Firstly, he defines culture industries as industries that produce cultural artifacts or events which may take the form of art, entertainment, or information (2009, p. 3). He says, “Cultural industries manufacture, buy, sell, and distribute symbolic [cultural] wares for money” (p. 3). This implies cultural artifacts, such as journalism, which pass through a series of production points, are to be understood as cultural commodities to be bought and sold. Secondly, Babe (2009) interprets McLuhan’s maxim as implying that cultural artifacts are “means to fabricate, support, reinforce, condone, justify, or extend the fundamental organization of the consumer society” (p. 3). In other words, business is a culture wherein consumer culture is manufactured. The production and distributions of cultural artifacts create and reinforce a cultural philosophy of production and consumption. This philosophy of consumer sovereignty is made apparent by the definition of success in a consumer culture. As within the U.S., success is often highlighted by the praise, admiration, and promotion cultural products receive when achieving high sales in the market.

2.2 Saliency

Individuals are connected to culture through the process of perception; more specifically, saliency (Guido, 2001). Saliency determines how citizens interact and view society; and information that citizens devote the most attention to directly influence the infinite ways in which individuals can interact with and perceive society. Traditionally, the field of psychology has adopted the concept of saliency; particularly, the area that focuses on the facets of human behavior involving individuals and their relationship to other individuals, groups, social institutions, and society in general (Guido, 2001, p. 15). Throughout the various fields of social science, saliency has been defined in many ways, such as: importance, preeminence, attention, and accessibility of available knowledge. However, one definition serves as the common denominator for each of these interpretations – prominence. “A stimulus is salient when it is prominent [or] has a superior impact than that of other perceived stimuli” (Guido, 2001, p. 21). Saliency allows a stimulus to distinguish itself from a variety of stimuli available in the environment. It determines the degree to which stimuli are perceived. Taylor and Thompson (1982) define saliency as,

The phenomenon that when one’s attention is differentially directed to one portion of the environment rather than to others, the information contained in that portion will receive disproportionate weighting in subsequent judgments (p. 175).

Additionally, one’s attention can only be attracted to stimuli available from the situated environment and, thus, the saliency of stimuli depends on the state of the system of stimuli offered (Bourdieu, 1984).

This definition of salience represents two fundamental aspects. Firstly, it portrays salience as a relationship between salient stimuli and other less salient stimuli. And, secondly, it portrays a relationship between salient stimuli and pre-existing cultural knowledge and expectations. Salience recognizes the process of perception is a selective process where individuals do not give equal amounts of attention to all facets of the environment. Perception is the cognitive conversion of the physical world into the mental world that individuals experience (Guido, 2001). This transformation takes place only at the first three stages of information processing by an individual: sensation, when a stimulus is detected; attention, when process capacity is allocated to a stimulus; and interpretation, when a meaning is assigned to a stimulus (MacInnis&Jaworski, 1989).

It is worth noting that, traditionally, perception-based salience has focused on social stimuli that comprise people rather than objects. However, applying these same premises to objects should prove to be useful in so much that “product schemata are like person schemata in that they contain well-organized beliefs that guide the interpretation of new information” (Guido, 2001, p. 21).

A general definition of salience can be further understood through a list of classifications of the various causes of salience. These various causes are organized according to the context in which a stimulus occurs: the immediate context, the larger context, and in relation to other attentional tasks (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Since the issue of salience of media ownership information in society is connected to a larger social context and other attentional tasks, only these two will be examined.

The principle of “unusuality” denotes a stimulus as salient if it is unusual to the perceiver or disturbs the perceiver’s prior knowledge and expectations that can be derived from that knowledge (Guido, 2001). In such a case, the stimulus or information is regarded as statistically novel, unexpected, or negative (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, 248).

Statistical novelty refers to a stimulus’ uniqueness or rarity. The degree to which a stimulus is unique or novel depends on its frequency and freshness (Guido, 2001). During information-processing, redundant information or information that is expected to appear are less likely to be recalled. Oppositely, novel or rare information are processed to greater extents (Lynch & Srull, 1982). Nevertheless, while novelty may direct attention, it will not, necessarily, direct choice. Simply directing attention to a stimulus does not determine if the perceiver will use or respond to the stimulus (Woods, 1981, p. 280). This means media ownership information may not be salient to citizens because such information is already known and aligned with expectations or because citizens are not exposed to such information from the onset. While statistical novelty may not affect evaluations concerning this information, another aspect of salience does - unexpectancy.

Similar to the concept of unusuality is “unexpectancy.” However, unlike unusuality, which is derived from the *existence* of the individual’s organized representation of prior knowledge, unexpectancy is derived from the *results* of that existence, namely, expectations (Guido, 2001, p. 42). There are many sources of expectations like past memories, information from others, and

inferences from related experiences. Some expectations stem from personal experience and insights while others from repetition and reinforcement obtained from the past or mass media messages (Katona, 1975).

Likewise, when equated with beliefs, expectations can be classified into three categories: descriptive, informational, and inferential (Fishbein&Ajzen, 1975). Descriptive beliefs arise from direct experience with an object and are usually held with much conviction. Informational beliefs arise from receiving information generated by outside sources and the extent of conviction to which the individual holds these expectations is largely dependent upon the source's characteristics, like reliability, expertise, power, and format. Lastly, inferential beliefs arise from logical reasoning such as causal attribution. Under this process of logical reasoning, Guido (2001) maintains that salience not only shows the unexpectancy of a stimulus but it also lies at the root of any causal relationship with the expected event. Thus, the expectations citizens put upon the role of journalism or even capitalism are derived from the pictures inside their heads produced by culture, including mass media messages.

Causal attribution is the most vital route to the development of expectations (Guido, 2009). The process of causal attribution entails the perceiver piecing together various bits of information to make inferences about the reason of a stimulus event. Such reasons can be internal, external, or circumstantial. Salience influences the perception of causality. Perceivers usually search for one rational and salient explanation for a stimulus event (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Often this explanation is the first to develop and is deeply

dependent upon what is salient to the perceiver, irrespective of the accuracy of the explanation. This phenomenon is what Taylor and Fiske calls “top of the head.” More specifically, it implies “[...] the respondent has spent little on the matter, gathered little or no data beyond that of the immediate situation, and responded with an opinion nonetheless” (Taylor & Fiske, 1978, p. 252).

A definitive explanation for this phenomenon has yet to be found; however, causal attribution is not without context. The perception of irregularity, when events fail to confirm established expectations, is an issue of unexpectancy reliant on the perceiver’s expectations or prior knowledge. In fact, every instance of salience can be explained by a mismatch, or an incongruity, between a stimulus and the perceiver’s prior knowledge (Guido, 2001). Even more, perceivers engage in a more extensive and effortful type of information processing when stimuli are incongruent rather than similar to their expectations or ambiguous to the perceiver (Strangor & McMillan 1992). This is critical for the implication of mass media and journalism. If media ownership information is not salient to citizens, it is because either the information is not available to citizens or the information received about media ownership is consistent with the beliefs of the society and its expectations.

Additionally, expectations effect more than the ability to recall information from the top of the head (Guido, 2001). The same prior knowledge that is used when a perceiver determines the incongruity of a stimulus is also used to create perceptions of attributes. Prior knowledge is motivated by personal experiences rooted in culture. Thus, a stimulus’ attributes are separated into two categories

during perception: anticipatory attributes, those which are expected or learned by the perceiver; and actual attributes, those which are perceived upon exposure to the stimulus (Guido, 2001). Because culture is a major tool for socialization, it creates expectations in individuals that shape their perception (Guido, 2001). Ultimately, culture and cultural artifacts, such as journalism, have power in determining which stimuli are perceived as incongruent to individuals by its ability to reproduce itself and determine which information is most salient to citizens.

Furthermore, prior knowledge can effect perceptions relating to evaluations. Individuals evaluate stimuli in two ways: by piecemeal processing, where individual attributes of a stimulus are evaluated and combined; and by category-based processing, where a stimulus is filed into a pre-existing category and evaluated in association with that category (Fiske, 1982). Category-based processing occurs before piecemeal; yet, when a stimulus is found to be incongruent, piecemeal processing ensues instead (Fiske & Pavelchak, 1984). Piecemeal processing results in evaluations from a more informed individual due to an increase in information-processing.

Lastly and similarly, the principle of unusuality says negative stimuli generally create salience more than positive stimuli and have a more intense effect on decisions and judgments. A negative stimulus is able to increase salience because it is more informative and attracts selective attention upon processing (Guido, 2001). This is because most individuals share an optimistic point of view about the pictures inside their heads (Parducci, 1968).

Saliency is also determined by other attentional tasks. The principle of involvement is used to explain motivational forms of saliency and is related to the perceiver's *drive* to attend to a stimulus and not the perceiver's *spontaneity* to attend to it. This principle explores the causes of saliency due to instructions to attend a stimulus (external causes) and personal relevance to perceiver's goals (internal causes) (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Instructing a perceiver to pay attention to a stimulus makes the stimulus salient. Additionally, a stimulus is more salient for individuals where increased levels of involvement are present (Guido, 2001). Thus, citizens who find media ownership information salient are likely to be highly involved with the issue.

Attention within the social environment is selective and saliency is garnered as a function of the perceiver's prior knowledge and cultural disposition. Causal perception is determined by the amount of attention directed at a stimulus, which itself is a determinant of which information is salient. Hence, saliency results in judgments about causal relationships and these relationships are the mental pictures which individuals act upon. Consequently and essentially, perceptual manipulation of a stimulus' causal relationship and attributes is possible by controlling which information is salient. Herein lays the symbolic power of the media and journalism industries and the center of controversy among media ownership concentration opponents. By controlling such resources as the means of information and communication, media owners are able to manipulate the process of human perception to their advantage.

“In any large society, the mass media constitute probably the most crucial institutional structure of the public sphere” (Baker, 2007, p. 7). In order to be self-governing, citizens require the ability to form public opinion and have it influence government, laws and policies (Baker, 2007). Through the creation of public opinion, not only is the public sphere able to influence how people decide to exercise their vote, but also “how elected and appointed public officials actually exercise their formal decision making-power” (Baker, 2007, p. 7). Control of the most popular means of distributing media content can grant substantial influence on public opinion (Doyle, 2002). By manipulating which information is salient to citizens, media owners are capable of manipulating public opinion and, ultimately, democracy.

Perceptual manipulation is made possible by the symbolic, economic, and political power possessed by media. Thompson asserts political power “stems from the activity of coordinating individuals and from regulating the patterns of their interaction” (1995, p. 17). However, the capacity to exercise political power, as well as economic power, is dependent on the ability to exercise symbolic power (Hardy, 2008). Thompson defines symbolic power as the “capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others and indeed to create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms” (1995, p. 17). Within the U.S. media system, symbolic power works in conjunction with political and economic forms of power to create various sources of power that further reinforce the symbolic power of the media. These sources of power include: discursive power, the ability to privilege particular discourses and

construct particular forms of reality; access power, the ability to control which voices, identities, and interests are presented; and resource power, the ability to affect the actions of governments and states (1995, p. 18). Together, discursive and access power of the media work to control what information is salient to citizens by regulating the availability of what goods are offered and, thus, public opinion.

Bagdikian argues dominant media corporations indeed use each of these sources of power “to enhance the values preferred by the corporate world of which they are apart” (2004, p. 25). He argues the money of elite and corporate interests, not voter interests, is the single most contributive force that dominates American politics and determines which issues and candidates are available to voters at polls. He goes further to explain “the political and social content projected by these media to the country’s population has had real consequences: the United States has the most politically constricted voter choices among the world’s developed democracies” (2004, p. 11). Due to corporate campaign contributions and concentrated media power, voter influence and preferences, including non-market values and interests, have diminished (Bagdikian, 2004). As journalism’s most significant source of revenue,

Advertising finances tends to favor commercially friendly media content, large aggregate audiences or affluent niche audiences, and disfavor less popular content and the preferences of those constituting poorer groups, or interest, in society (Baker 2002; Gandy 2004).

While the role that external factors, such as politics and economics, play in journalism is vital, Bourdieu urges the importance of not overlooking the work of

journalism professionals which also should be analyzed as a distinctive, autonomous contribution to the news. He describes the journalistic field as “a microcosm set within the macrocosm – it obeys its own laws and, thus, what happens in it cannot be understood by looking only at external factors” (Benson, 2006, p.). In fact, Bourdieu asserts most of the social world is structured in opposition between economic and symbolic capital. Equally, within the journalistic field, economic capital is conveyed by circulation, advertising ratings, or audience ratings; conversely, symbolic capital is represented in terms of journalistic excellence. Journalists, as a corporate body, perform a semi-autonomous role in shaping the news by establishing and implementing a set of implicit rules and principles. Furthermore, Bourdieu contends news is a constructed taste,

Raised from the vague semi-existence of half-formulated or unformulated experience, implicit or even unconscious desire, to the full reality of the finished product, by a process of objectification which, in present circumstances, is almost always the work of professionals (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 231).

As both external and internal constraints maintain tension within the journalistic field, each contributes to a particular degree of internal homogeneity in news production and audiences. Consequently, in news production, this tension accounts for the “culturally rich but often economically starved, alternative or literary journalism and culturally poor but economically rich market journalism” (Benson, 2006, p.). In the same way, the spaces of media production and audience reception are equal in that they both are structured around this same tension. Bourdieu says,

With or without conscious coordination, cultural production seeks out its homologous space of reception, that is, an audience predisposed by education, wealth, and social background to readily accept the kinds of information and ideas being proposed to it (Benson, 2006, p.).

This relationship between production (goods offered) and reception (tastes) is reciprocal in nature in so much that tastes are determined by the environment of goods offered; and every change in that environment induces change in tastes and vice versa (Bourdieu, 1984).

Capitalist manipulation of salient information and, thus, public opinion, lies at the heart of Marx's theory of exploitation and Gramsci's theory of hegemony. According to Gramsci, hegemony is,

The manner in which dominant forms of thought and practice permeate the people's consciousness, including the consciousness of subaltern groups, contributing to the fashioning of their subjectivities (Borg & Mayo, 2002, p.97).

It is the means by which the elite secure and maintain power – through cultural dominance. By elite manipulation of which information is salient to citizens and consumers, such as media ownership information or capitalism's dual nature, labor exploitation and cultural hegemony are given the force they need to exist. Together, salience manipulation and labor exploitation engender a culture wherein social class divisions are concealed and external relationships of exchange are highlighted. Under such circumstances, the working class is robbed of its class consciousness and becomes inculcated into a false consciousness by elites through their control over significant tools of socialization such as media and, specifically, journalism. Even more, subjugated groups can actually participate and help facilitate the permeation of elite ideology through the

activities of cultural organizations, political movements, and education institutions (Borg & Mayo, 2002). And while consumer tastes are essential, they are only to the extent that those tastes strengthen and do not undermine primary relationships with wealthy investors, corporate managers, and corporate advertisers (McManus, 1994).

2.3 Political Economy

Further examination into the external constraints of the journalistic field can be understood with the assistance of the labor theory of value. Developed together by classical economists and Karl Marx, it is used to explain the nature of the capitalist system including the economic, political, and social culture of capitalist societies. Particularly, it considers both external and internal exchange relationships. Capitalism manifests in two forms: a visible commodity exchange relationship between capital and labor and an internal social exchange relationship between social classes concealed behind legalities and regulations (Onimode, 1985). Since exploitation is unobservable and thereby deniable when considering merely external exchange relationships, the theory uses two consequent but complementary theories (value/surplus-value and exploitation) in order to illustrate these parallel and simultaneous relationships. Accordingly, each can be used to help expose the economic implications of media concentration as well as the sociopolitical and cultural implications of media power. Similarly, the theory of hegemony corresponds to these two theories whereas it explicates elite cultural hegemony is anchored in economic strength.

In addition, the theory contends capitalist control of consumer culture is purposed to appeal, influence, and exploit subjugated groups to maintain power for the elite (Borg & Mayo, 2002). Collectively, each of these theories explains the connection between exploitation and profit and outlines the social categories they foster.

2.3.1 Hegemony and Exploitation

The theory of exploitation defines three fundamental characteristics of the capitalist system which simultaneously serve as the origins of the capitalist mode of production as it has developed throughout the last 200 years. The first characteristic/origin involves the separation of the producer from the means of production wherein the capitalist trades money capital as another commodity in exchange for labor-power (Mandel, 1970). Capitalism is incapable of developing in a society where the working class has the ability of supplying its own needs. In such pre-capitalist societies, there exists no economic compulsion to sell a worker's only asset, labor-power, as a commodity to capitalists (Mandel, 1970).

In the United States, there exists an economic compulsion for citizens in a democracy to purchase news whereas individuals are incapable of mass producing original reporting without the means to do so. Hence, citizens have been dispossessed from the means to produce mass media messages and, to an extent, to produce their own culture. Agreeably, Livingstone says the increased availability and control of "socialized forces of knowledge" to citizens represents "a continual challenge to private capitalist efforts to appropriate creative control of the social relations of knowledge production via such means as conglomerate

ownership of mass media and commodified information packages” (Livingstone, 2002, p. 229).

The second characteristic/origin of capitalism concerns ownership concentration and capitalists’ monopoly of the means of production (Mandel, 1970). The economic compulsion generated by capitalism is a result of not only the worker’s dispossession of the means of production, but also by the capitalists’ monopoly of those means. In a capitalist society, the means of production lies exclusively in the hands of a single social class, the elite, of whom the capitalist represents (Mandel, 1970). However, giant media corporations do not adhere in exact accordance with the laws of capitalism in its classical and absolute sense. If they did, each corporation would work to produce unique creations and innovations where the end goal is a winner-take-all victory with only one media conglomerate remaining (Bagdikian, 2004). On the contrary, the five media conglomerates maintain control by means of an oligopoly and are mutually interdependent, operating within an agreed on informal set of rules (Compaine, 2000, p. 514-5). They routinely share financial investments concerning opportunities of corporate expansion as well as influence governmental policies in their favor of maximizing profit, reducing competition, and restricting barriers of entry (Compaine, 2000). In fact, the top five media conglomerates share a total of 141 joint ventures whereas they share many interlocking board members from several associated corporations (Bagdikian, 2004).

Since this “class monopoly [or oligopoly] is the ability of capitalists to deny access to the means of production which they own,” ownership is made

impossible for the majority of laborers (Milward, 200, p. 118). These barriers of entry remain high enough that even the most innovative technological creators are forced to either sell their inventions or risk a potential takeover by larger corporate entities (Bagdikian, 2004). By the very nature of capitalism, herein lies an unequal class relation in so much that the class which possesses capital continually accumulates more while the class without it rarely obtains it (Mandel, 1970).

As giant conglomerates increasingly operate in relation to one another to maintain power and secure profits, pluralism diminishes thereby adding a degree of homogeneity to media production and amongst audiences. Doyle (2002) explains pluralism is about diversity within what goods are made available to the environment, including diversity of ownership and output. He says it is about “public access to a range of voices and a range of content, irrespective of patterns of demand” (2002, p. 12). The mutually interdependent relationship between media conglomerates coupled with an increase in media ownership concentration both contribute to extremely duplicative content even when produced by a vast amount of media outlets (Bagdikian, 2004). However, democracy requires media representation of a range of political voices and viewpoints and is threatened when any single-powerful voice becomes too dominant. Doyle argues,

Excessive concentration of media ownership can lead to overrepresentation of certain political viewpoints or values or certain forms of cultural output (i.e. those favored by dominant media owners, whether on commercial or ideological grounds) at the expense of others (2002, p. 13).

Consequently, when a limited amount of choices in media programming is offered, particular tastes are cultivated; thus, conferring media owners with the ability to influence public opinion by manipulating which information is available, thereby salient to citizens.

The domination of news production and ownership held by elites creates challenges for citizens who attempt to mass produce their own media messages. This dynamic leads to the third characteristic/origin of the capitalist mode of production - the emergence of a social class whose only possession consists of its own labor and whose only means of sustaining itself is through the sale of its labor-power (Mandel, 1970). According to Lenin,

Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung from nowhere, it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in Proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the result of the natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society (1979, p. 44).

This third characteristic is recognized and further examined by the theory of value and surplus-value which delineates two types of labor, namely, necessary labor and surplus labor. It states any increase in production beyond necessary labor, or labor socially required in production for the subsistence of the producer, is surplus labor. The production of surplus labor frees certain segments of society from performing necessary labor for its own survival, thereby, providing the means by which this segment can become the ruling class or wealthy elite (Mandel, 1970). In other words, the social surplus product “is that part of social production which is produced by the laboring class but appropriated by the ruling class [...]” (Mandel, 1970, p. 9). A society in which labor is sustained at a level

where everyone produces only what is needed, social division becomes impossible.

In a capitalist society such as the U.S., the dominant economic operation that exists is buying in order to sell. The single purpose of this operation is to leave the buyer with a value more than that at the start - a surplus-value (the monetary form of the surplus product). This means, capital is defined as *a value which is increased by a surplus-value*; it is consumed and restores itself by transferring its pre-existing value to the produced commodity. Opposed to common belief, capital neither increases nor decreases in value during production. It is simply a means of production used only to increase the productivity, or the physical output, of labor (Onimode, 1985).

Essentially, surplus-labor alone accounts for the creation of profit; that is, free labor supplied by the worker but allocated by the capitalist. In the capitalist mode of production, there can be no profit without exploitation (Onimode, 1985, p. 91). Particularly, labor power is a commodity and, like all commodities, it can be bought and sold in the marketplace. Its value is determined by the labor time socially necessary to produce it, i.e. food, shelter, and clothing. However, regarding average needs, a laborer does not need the entire corresponding value labored for during the production process, therefore, the living costs of the laborer are always lesser than the value created by labor-power (Mandel, 1970). Thereby, the laborer whose only possession consists of its own labor becomes compelled to sale its labor-power for sustenance; and as result, the laborer is

exploited and the equivalent wage paid is always only a fraction of the entire day's newly created value.

Notably, scholars disagree on the definition and nature of labor exploitation. Whether or not all value is derived automatically and solely from labor is one topic of debate. Even more, Bawerk(1884) asserts it is incorrect to conclude the laborer is exploited at all. While he agrees the laborer is entitled the entire value of the newly created value, he says present goods are more valuable than future goods and must be treated as such.

The completely just proposition that the worker is to receive the entire value of his product can be reasonably interpreted to mean either that he is to receive the full present value of his product now or that he is to get the entire future value in the future. But Rodbertus and the socialists interpret it to mean that the worker is to receive the entire future value of his product now (1884, p. 263–64).

Still, while scholars may disagree on the extent and parameters of labor exploitation, collectively, the three characteristics of capitalism combine to outline the capital-labor relation and the basis of class inequality generated by capitalism.

2.3.2 Commodity Fetishism, False Consciousness, and Reification

The essence of the capital-labor relation is the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist to generate profit. This unequal social relationship is possible for one reason. That is, it is often masked by the fetishism of the visible exchange relation between commodities. According to Marx, commodity fetishism is a state of relations where,

The productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and [enter] into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands (Eaton, 1966, p. 84).

In commodity fetishism, the capital-labor relation appears naturally inevitable and the social characteristics of labor as autonomous spheres of activity (Fine & Harris, 1979). Under this perspective, capital and labor both appear as commodities whose values are determined not by human intervention but by natural external forces. Commodity fetishism transforms social relations between individuals into exchange relations between commodities (Onimode, 1985).

However, Appadurai(1986) disagrees with certain elements of commodity fetishism, particularly, how it assumes an item is without meaning or value until it is assigned by human incentive. For Appadurai, to determine the meaning of an item, it is necessary to follow it through various societal discourses in to conclude its value independent of potential human usage of it (1986, p. 5). He says commodity fetishism ignores the contextual, historical movement and value of items throughout various cultures over time.

Additionally, Lee argues the value of a commodity is not simply indicated by an inherent value of the object but instead by a value related to other commodities which contain their own value (2000, p. xii). He argues a commodity is without exchange value unless it is placed within a system of other commodities.

In commodity fetishism, the appropriation of the surplus-value by the class of capitalist is falsely legitimized as the productivity of capital instead of

labor. This false legitimization is the life-line of the elite ideology because it makes visible only the external relations of exchange while simultaneously concealing the presence of exploitation, making it both unobservable and deniable (Onimode, 1985). Because commodity fetishism conceals the true relations of capital and labor, the working-class, or the subordinate, often accepts this false understanding of the nature of capitalism to its disadvantage. This phenomenon is called false-consciousness and it refers to people's understanding from what is objectively true, such as journalism's conflict between serving the market and the public, against what is commonly true, such as equating private corporate profits with the common good (Babe, 2009). It is a failure of comprehension, a condition where persuasion by the elites of the working-class moves the latter from knowing its manifestly real conditions by its willfulness to participate in its own domination (Borg & Mayo, 2002). Gramsci identifies this as the key of capitalism - its ability to achieve hegemony over civil society because the elite rule citizens by consent instead of force (Borg & Mayo, 2002).

Critics of false consciousness question the attainability of consciousness. For example, Zizek (2006) believes it is impossible to attain true consciousness. He particularly notes that even those who are aware of the social construction of reality, or the cultural game, they, too, like their counterparts, participate in the perpetuation of the game. Zizek suggests mere consciousness is not enough to cease involvement or continuation of the construction of the game.

Even still, the exchange of news rests on an unequal relationship between news consumers (working-class) and media owners (elite). The exchange of news

is incorrectly assumed as equivalent based on the assumption of equality between the buyer and seller (Onimode, 1985). Within the U.S. cultural framework and economic background, the foremost powerful and influential relationship is that of investors and corporate owners. This has dire consequences for journalism because consumer tastes are indivisibly linked to cultural interests that are, in turn, shaped by elite interests (Bourdieu, 1984). Gramsci states,

Every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interest of the ruling classes (1971, p. 258).

Since capitalists (investors, advertisers, media corporations and firms) benefit from the capitalism mode of production, informing news consumers, majority working class, of the conflict that exists between the market and public sphere or the true nature of capitalism is not in the best interest of advertisers (news' most significant source of revenue) or media investors and owners who financially benefit from a lack of citizen awareness.

As commercial journalism almost always stays within the parameter of mainstream opinion, the tenor of journalism has become less conciliatory toward ideas critical of capitalism and the 'free market' and less receptive of ideas laudatory of social spending, poor people's social movements, and regulation of business (McChesney, 1999, p. 62).

Such information could possibly create enough salience to generate extensive information processing and create new evaluations and social judgments about the status of journalism.

Because the elite have unequal access to economic and social resources, the tendency to dominate is manifest by their control of the production of news.

Curran (2005) recognizes there exist real differences of interest and struggles among social classes in regards to the allocation of public resources and opportunities, particularly in terms of access to information. However, he says these struggles can be marginalized by elite interest and passed off as the interest of all. This marginalization frames public debate in terms of opposing elite positions. Consequently, the more attention given to a stimulus, the more rational the impression of that stimulus becomes. And “although salience does not reliably enhance the quality of recall, it reliably increases the organization and consistency of impressions in several ways” (Fiske & Taylor, 2008, p. 55). This would mean a culture where the external relationship between commodities is highlighted and the internal relationship between social classes is ignored is more ideal for a market model approach to journalism than a public sphere approach because it fosters a false consciousness whereby elite maintain power and control. Media ownership salience could possibly break the trance of false consciousness and curb news profits by increasing consumer awareness and the diversity of voices in society, and, thereby, class consciousness.

Additionally, capitalism further intensifies false consciousness by indicating to the working-class that the present social system is natural and inevitable; whereby, individuals passively experience life as products of a constant and autonomous social system estranged to humans (Babe, 2009). Similar to commodity fetishism and false consciousness is the concept of reification. “Reification forces the working-class to relinquish any responsibility for economic life and confine [its] actions to individual efforts to maximize

utilities in accord with the iron laws of capitalism” (Albritton, 2003, p. 62). This apparent inevitableness of capitalism’s nature makes it difficult to observe or criticize because it’s regarded as absolute. Even among critics of media corporate concentration and conglomeration there exists a sense of inevitability (McChesney, 1999). Reification emphasizes capitalism’s emergence as a central role in social life that further complicates criticism due to its inclination to reproduce individuals as “egoistic subjects focused primarily on advancing themselves in the economic game in opposition to all other individuals who do the same” (Albritton, 2003, p. 63).

The three remaining dimensions of reification (totality, use-value, and subjectivity) can be used to further understand the implications of a lack of citizen awareness in regards to media ownership and to what extent capitalism and journalism play their roles in such awareness. According to the theories of reification, capitalists choose despotism over partial systems of society since they lack control over its entirety. As illustrated above, such a partial system is media systems. As a major tool of socialization, media play an integral role in the creation of social judgments. Likewise, media support and are supported by its predominant mode of economic organization – capitalism. Thus, citizen awareness of elite despotism of particular social institutions, such as journalism, would be counter-productive to elite ambitions of veiled control.

The problem with this dichotomy in journalism is that capitalism focuses solely on the quantitative side of life (external exchange relationships) while neglecting the qualitative aspect of social reality (unequal internal social

exchange relationships). Not surprisingly, capitalist explanations of market movement are lacking and neglect to address the array of economic activity in total. Thus, markets are perceived as amoral, making no claims about right or wrong and only concerning profit. So much so that national economies are assessed by the elite according to the increase in gross domestic product rather than the quality of life for its citizens. Consequently, unless monitored, reification will facilitate the undermining of critical social institutions such as journalism, health, education, welfare, and other critical use-values. “It’s only because reification is resisted that capitalists are held accountable” (Albritton, 2003).

If monitoring is one answer to restraining reification, then it seems citizen participation is a practical solution. However, Lukacs’ (1971) final dimension asserts capitalism tends to disconnect personalities from each other to the point where individual agency is weakened. Here, individuals become passive observers to society and the very products they have created. Individuals’ worlds are no longer produced but presented to them and reduced to that which can be owned and disposed of. With this type of compartmentalized perspective, reification weakens society’s ability to resist it even as it proves itself to be harmful, like producing pollution, waging war, increasing poverty, or, as with journalism, limiting knowledge, misinforming or distorting information (Albritton, 2003). Reification, therefore, forces individuals to act as passive onlookers, gazing at themselves and society in fragments which come to be objectified as commodities.

Alas, capitalism can pose dire implications for the journalism institution as well as the vitality of democracy. In a society where social relationships are reduced to relationships between commodities, where all social institutions support and are supported by capitalism, and where societal wants are preferred over needs in the marketplace, market-driven journalism, if left unchecked, will strangle the process of democracy by slyly holding public opinion hostage and forcing it into a trance induced by the allurements of commodities.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Keeping with the ideas of false consciousness, commodity fetishism, and reification, the researcher expects media ownership information may not be salient to most citizens, either because of media organizations' failure to disseminate such information or citizens' lack of involvement with media ownership information, but most logically, both. So, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How salient is media ownership information to citizens?

RQ2: Are citizens knowledgeable about media ownership information?

RQ3: On what basis (unexpectedness, emotional valence, frequency and recency, or degree of involvement) is media ownership information salient for some citizens and not others?

To determine individual's levels of awareness regarding media ownership, in-depth interviews were conducted along with a short, written quiz. Unlike questionnaires and surveys, in-depth interviews answer process and perception questions as exhaustively while simultaneously calling for a smaller number of participants. Even more, focus groups are less suitable for questions about deep meaning-making; such an objective goes beyond the capabilities of focus groups (Greenbaum, 1993).

Assessing media ownership salience among individuals requires an examination into the processes in which people assign value and interpretation to symbols. Fittingly, qualitative research is a method that focuses on understanding the perception process of individuals or collective bodies. It starts from the assumption that to study humans is to study a creative process by which people produce and maintain systems of meaning and value. Qualitative research seeks to understand *how* social experience is created and given significance. It emphasizes the quality of matters – the ways persons live by intention, purposes, and values – that are not solely measured or examined in terms of quantity i.e. amount, intensity, or frequency (Denizen, 2003).

Qualitative research deals with the combinations and rearrangements of ideas and feelings in social context (Christians & Carey, 1989). It embraces a naturalist approach and assumes realities are multiple, socially constructed and holistic rather than single, tangible, and fragmented because, after all, cultures are complex systems of fluidity and continuity. This notion corroborates Marx's belief that the economics of society are crucial to understanding how society functions at all levels, and, thus, reinforces why media ownership salience probes into both theoretical realms of cultural studies and political economy. Mass communication is a cultural, political and business practice in which issues of power, identity, and social structure are negotiated (Denizen, 2003). It is for these reasons that two theories are necessary to approach the above research questions.

In summation, a qualitative approach is an appropriate to facilitate an understanding of media ownership salience among individuals. This approach is useful when asking questions about people's experiences, inquiring into the meaning people make of their experiences, studying a subject in the context of the subject's social environment, or where not enough is known about a phenomenon.

Interview questions were designed to determine how media ownership salience is related to citizens' self-reported knowledge and experiences of media ownership as well as their prior knowledge and expectations regarding media ownership. The types of questions necessary to attain this objective were designed to reflect the different ways citizens find media ownership to be psychologically significant. Specifically, the foundational constructs that will be incorporated into interviews are: unexpectancy (the extent to which media ownership information is incongruent to the prior knowledge and expectations of individuals), emotional valence (the extent to which media ownership information gives rise to primarily positive or negative emotions), frequency and recency (the extent to which media ownership information is unique, rare, or unusual), and degree of involvement (the extent to which individual motivation affects salience)(Stewart, 2009).

In addition to in-depth interviews, a brief written quiz was used to analyze relationships between media ownership salience and other factors. Quiz responses were associated with responses from in-depth interviews in order to assess and explore levels of salience among participants as well as their

knowledge of media ownership information. Quiz questions were designed to be simple and diverse, including multiple choice, fill in the blank, and true/false questions. The types of questions asked reflect basic knowledge of media ownership and ownership patterns thereby giving participants the opportunity to demonstrate as accurately as possible their knowledge. When evaluating quiz responses, more specifically fill in the blank questions calling for the name of media parent corporations, more than one answer was evaluated as correct and some answers were more correct than others. For example, repeat responses or responses involving the government or governmental agencies were given zero points. Responses involving the names of members who sit on the boards of "The Big 5" corporations were given 3/4 of a point while the names of parent corporations not belonging to "The Big 5" were given 1/2 of a point. See Appendix B for an illustrative list of quiz questions.

In-depth interviews involve a discussion between the researcher and subject who has been selected by criteria of interest. Subjects for the research were requested by word of mouth, street soliciting, and informal invitations to members of university organizations, schools, community groups, churches, and social clubs by other members. Volunteers were casually recruited from various organizations to tell their members about the research. For the purposes of this research, subjects were selected according to occupation; more specifically according to their degree of involvement with the news-making process or media organizations in general. Half of the respondents reported to be involved while the other half reported not to be involved in any way.

The average interview lasted between 60-70 minutes. This was an appropriate amount of time because understanding salience and perception is a highly complex task and enough time was needed to make sure the interviewer understood the subject's perspective.

When conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher is allowed to influence the length of subject responses by asking open or closed questions. Depending on the nature of the question, an objective or subjective response may be warranted. Therefore, the type of questions that were considered to be most appropriate for the purpose of this research was a combination of both open and closed questions. A general interview guide helped steer the interview to ensure its productivity. The interview guide and illustrative list of questions can be found in Appendix A. The guide and questions are adapted from a salience questionnaire created by Stewart (2009) but tailored to this study.

The research was low budget, therefore, in exchange for participation, volunteers were placed in a raffle lottery for the chance to win a \$30 Visa gift card. This was thought to lessen the difficulty of getting volunteers. Recruitment was limited to the cities of Columbia and St. Louis, Missouri as the interviews were conducted face to face and the interviewer was limited in distant travel. Furthermore, all interviews were both video and audio recorded to ensure security in the instance one device was to fail.

Ideally and practically, 10 subjects were interviewed. Subjects varied by occupation, more specifically, by their level of media involvement. Of the ten (10) respondents, five (5) respondents' occupations were media or news related such

as the reporter/anchor, former news crew sound technician/business manager, radio producer, photo-journalist, and former newspaper reporter/communication student. The remaining half who are not involved included a cosmetologist, freelance legal consultant, certified public accountant, social worker/school social worker, and transit operator. Interview locations varied to accommodate participants, such as participants' homes and work offices. All, but the CPA and business manager who conducted interviews in the work offices, conducted interviews in their home.

Three ways in which the validity of the research was improved include reflexivity, participant feedback, and peer review. Reflexivity involves self-awareness and self-reflection by the researcher on potential biases and predispositions as these may affect the research process and conclusions. Jensen recognizes this potential problem of bias and self-insertion when he says language is the main object of analysis and a primary tool of data-gathering in interview studies, while the primary tool of research is the interpretive capacity of the scholar (Jensen, 1991). To limit this potential bias, the interviewer received participant feedback periodically throughout each interview in addition to reflexivity. Participant feedback involves the researcher occasionally rephrasing and reflecting back to the subject what seems to be expressed and summarizing the remarks as a check on understanding (Whyte, 1982). Participant feedback seems to have been an effective method of improving the validity of the research because participants appeared more engaged and inclined to communicate their thoughts when they felt empowered and perceived to be in control of the very

perceptions and ideas they intended to reproduce to the interviewer. Lastly, peer review, discussions of the researcher's interpretations and conclusions with other people, was actively sought when formulating interview and quiz questions in order to ensure clarity and concision.

Other ways whereby the validity of this study could be improved include examining and managing the potential limitations of this study. Since respondents of this study were selected by a single criteria- occupation, the researcher was able to explore only limited levels of respondents' prior knowledge and expectations. Thereby, deeper exploration into the bases for which media ownership salience could be even more beneficial. In the future, more selective criteria involving not only occupation, but also race/ethnicity, gender, geography, religion, identity, generation, and other factors of class beyond occupation such as wealth, income, and education, could prove to deepen understanding of media ownership salience among citizens across various subcultures and societal experiences.

Additionally, the results from this study are limited to the capacity of the researcher's interpretation of the data. In the future, a collaborative approach could limit the potential bias of a solitary, non-collaborative interpretation by a single researcher. If performed again, this study could be conducted with research collaborations involving multiple researchers. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach including multiple researchers of multiple areas of study could provide even greater insight into media ownership salience.

4 RESULTS

As previously asked, on what basis (unexpectedness, emotional valence, frequency and recency, or degree of involvement) is media ownership information salient for some citizens and not others? Essentially, the principle of “unusuality” defines a stimulus as salient if it disturbs the perceiver’s prior knowledge and expectations that can be derived from that knowledge (Guido, 2001). Thus, every instance of salience can be explained by a mismatch, or an incongruity, between a stimulus and the perceiver’s prior knowledge (Guido, 2001). So, in order to determine the basis for which media ownership may be salient for respondents, first, it is necessary to determine respondents’ prior knowledge and expectations of media ownership.

4.1 Prior Knowledge

Results highlight one central notion that serves as the foundation wherein each respondent’s inventory of prior knowledge regarding media ownership information rests upon - the notion of objectivity. Hence, every instance of salience will be explained by a disturbance in respondents' prior knowledge and expectations concerning objectivity in news coverage.

Respondents’ answers regarding their prior knowledge and expectations of media ownership fell into three (3) groups: respondents (cosmetologist, transit operator, anchor/reporter) who say their news preference is not at all influenced by media ownership, respondents (CPA, Photo-journalist, business manager,

communication student) who say their news preference is sometimes influenced by media ownership, and respondents (social worker, freelance legal consultant, radio producer) who say their news preference is strongly influenced by media ownership. These categories will not only be used to assess and understand respondents' prior knowledge and expectations but also the four basis for which media ownership is salient.

Interestingly, all ten (10) respondents, whether they admit to allowing or not allowing media ownership to influence their outlet selection, express what they perceive to be as a lack of objectivity found in news coverage. Many of the words respondents use to insinuate or to describe this lack of objectivity include terms such as verification, accuracy, bias, persuasion, balance, fairness, facts, reliability, credibility, etc. While each of the respondents uses these terms to talk about objectivity, the manner in which talk about them differs. For example, two (2) respondents (cosmetologist, transit operator) out of the three (3) who say media ownership has no influence on outlet selections, use these terms to help explain why they believe news outlets, in general, can never obtain objectivity. The cosmetologist says news is not "100% reliable." Likewise, the transit operator says, "None of it is 100% accurate."

Differently, those who admit to sometimes allowing media ownership to influence their choice of news outlets use these terms to describe why they believe some news outlets are capable of being more objective than others, namely, more objective than FOX News. Such as the CPA, whosays,

I think it's the general human nature to think that because I think it, it's right. And so, when you get media that's controlled by

individuals that think that that's what they report, then you're not getting the true variables that you need to make good decisions. So, I don't know who that is, but you know, FOX news is an example, whatever that ownership is, is an example of that. They're saying well, we know what's right for America, so we're going to report the stuff this way."

Even more, of these two (2) groups, three (3) respondents (CPA, cosmetologist, photo-journalist) of the six (6) respondents who say they do not or sometimes allow media ownership influence agree this lack of objectivity is the consequence of media ownership consolidation. For example, the cosmetologist says media ownership does not influence her outlet preference,

Because they are pretty much owned by the same people. I believe they give some media sources a little bit more leeway to tell you certain things...I still think they're under the same umbrella.

Similar to the cosmetologist, the CPA says,

Everything is being consolidated...I think you have fewer and fewer companies that own these assets and if they are applying a bias to what they report then I think that's a real problem...If you've got an organized effort within the media by a particular individual or company to report certain things and slant them a certain way, I think it's a real problem and I think that's a problem we're currently experiencing in this country.

The photojournalist also acknowledges that sometimes media ownership consolidation influences his news outlet selection. He says,

Knowing the ownership and the message that's being spread with these outlets really affects how I choose to consume the news when FOX is reporting it versus how CNN is reporting it. Most people don't understand who owns these various companies. A lot of people don't know they're umbrella organizations owned by some other company.

Slightly different from the other six (6) respondents, the business manager believes the lack of objectivity is due to the manipulation of coverage by

reporters. He says because of advances in technology, such as digital technology, news is capable of traveling much faster than before and reporters are given less amounts of time than they were previously given to create and manipulate a story. He says, "Everything can be broadcast live if it's that important and it takes it away from the editor. You can't slant it; you're going to see it."

Of the seven (7) respondents who do not or sometimes allow media ownership to influence their news outlet preference, the reporter/anchor says he does not allow media ownership influence but for a very different reason. He says it is because "the owners are not on the air, they're not presenting the news so there's no reason to really care who owns it. As long as I'm satisfied with the presentation I don't really care who owns it."

The remaining respondents who admit to certainly allowing media ownership information to influence their news outlet preferences also express perceiving a lack of objectivity. For example, the social worker uses these same terms to describe the range of objective news outlets she perceives to be available. She says,

Well, The Morning Joe is a conservative republican and his co-host is Mika Brzezinski. She's a democrat but they are not unbiased, he is very biased. That's okay because I like to hear the other point of view. But in the evening they are all left, yea, they can be extreme left and I like that. When I need to know, when I just want to hear the facts I go to CNN because to me they are the least skewed. CNN is the most objective to me."

Results show all respondents agree there appears to be a lack of objectivity found in news coverage. Yet, upon closer examination, another pattern emerges to reveal a more complex perception of objectivity, more complex than simply

acknowledging its short supply; specifically, the perception of its attainability as well as its varying degrees. This perception is particularly determined by the manner in which respondents are oriented to the notion of objectivity. Objectivity can be viewed as a process or product. Consequently, these orientations possess the capability to affect the degree to which objectivity is perceived as obtainable and, thus, observable to respondents. More specifically, these orientations influence respondents' perceptions and expectations concerning the range or variety of available outlets to choose from in the environment. And, as will be shown, this latter perception regarding the expectation of a variety of news outlets, the lack thereof or the degree thereof, ultimately, determines the degree to which respondents need to experience and seek out particular news outlets.

4.2 Expectancy

Expectancy is one basis for which media ownership information is salient to some citizens and not others. Those who see objectivity as a product find it impossible to achieve and, therefore, admit they do not allow media ownership to influence their outlet selection because they expect all news outlets are inevitably biased, diminishing these respondents' need to experience and seek out specific news outlets. Contrarily, those who view objectivity as a process find objectivity attainable to varying degrees and, therefore, admit to sometimes allowing media ownership to influence their outlet selection because they expect some news outlets to be more objective than others, intensifying these respondents' need to

experience and seek out a specific news outlet. As a result, a respondent's orientation towards objectivity affects the degree to which the respondent expects objectivity to be attainable by news outlets. This perception of the degree of attainability of objectivity by news outlets affects to the same degree whether or not respondents admit to never, sometimes, or indeed allowing media ownership to influence their choice of news outlets. Subsequently, this is the same degree to which respondents will perceive the need to seek out or assign preferences to specific news outlets. Those respondents (6) who admit to not allowing or sometimes allowing media ownership to influence their news outlet choice reflect higher degrees of disinterest in experiencing and seeking specific news outlets than those (3) who purport to indeed allowing media ownership to influence their outlet selection.

For example, two (2) respondents (cosmetologist, transit operator) of the three (3) who say media ownership has absolutely no influence both neglect to express any amount of need to experience or seek out a specific news outlets. For example, the transit operator expects objectivity is absent from news coverage, in general, so she doesn't seek specific outlets, but rather surveys the most convenient resources available to her at the time. She says,

A lot of the stories are often times repeats or giving you a more concluded version of an earlier story or something of that nature...so just to have a different version is why I switch from channel to channel...If it's not giving me the information that I want, I'll switch and look at a different station or go to a different channel.

The cosmetologist shares this same expectation of objectivity.

Accordingly, her disinterest is indicated by her casual surveillance of news

outlets. When asked if anything besides media ownership influences her outlet selection, she says,

Unless somebody might send me a text message and say that something important is on the news, I may click it on then at that specific time but I don't have a specific set time that I sit down and watch the news. Like some people always have to catch the six o'clock news or the five o'clock news or whatever. Nothing like that, it's just kind of flip to CNN see what's going on or happen to be browsing on the internet and come across some stuff to see what's going on...I really think all the news channels in a nut shell have certain guidelines they have to follow. That's why I don't necessarily have a preference when it comes to what media I will watch on TV or what media source I might look up or go to on the internet.

Of the four (4) respondents (CPA, photo-journalist, business manager, communication student) who answered both yes and no to whether media ownership influences their selection of news outlets, each express a greater expectation of the obtainability of objectivity in news coverage and, therefore, a greater need to seek specific news outlets than the two (2) respondents who answered unwaveringly no. Perhaps these respondents answered both yes and no to the question of media ownership influence because their idea of objectivity alternates between the two orientations of objectivity, product or process. While these four (4) acknowledge the lack of objectivity as a major issue in all news coverage, they simultaneously articulate the notion of objectivity as a process entailing various degrees of objectivity whereby they consider some sources more objective than others and, therefore, to some degree, experience the need to seek particular news outlets. Unlike their counterparts, who say media ownership information has absolutely no influence on their outlets of choice, these respondents say they perceive a small degree of outlet variety available in the

environment. Oftentimes, this same degree is indicative of the degree to which they seek particular news outlets. In other words, the degree of the perception of outlet variety, ultimately, to the same degree, affects how purposeful and consistent respondents are when seeking specific outlets. More often than not, because a respondent acknowledges the limited availability of outlet variety in the environment, the respondent usually expresses a just as limited need to seek particular news outlets.

For example, three (3) of these four (4) respondents' scope of outlet diversity is so narrow, that the only preference they articulate is not to consume FOX News. The CPA acknowledges a limited variety of outlet offerings when he says,

It's a catch 22, we have wider varieties, whether it be television, radio, Internet, all of those kinds of things, and there's sources within each one of those. But what we also have going on is the consolidation of ownership of those things so you're really getting the same news.

This limited scope allows him to exhibit a just as limited need to seek particular news outlets whereas he solely defines his preference in terms of the outlet he avoids, FOX News. When asked about media ownership influence, he says,

I think there's certainly a feeling. I'm not so sure that I am specifically aware of it that I really can say I know, but there's a lot of controversy and a lot of discussion about FOX News, I guess, and there being a conservative bias. And I don't watch it so I don't know that for sure."

The business manager's perception of limited outlet variety also minimizes his need to seek particular outlets. He, too, seeks his chosen news outlets by

avoiding FOX News. Talking about media ownership's influence on his outlet selection, he says, "I'm just thinking of the one I don't like and that's FOX, but other than that it doesn't bother me, whether it's CBS, NBC, or CNN. Ownership has nothing to do with it." As for the communication student, although he is not explicit about his perception of the variety of news outlets, he decisively limits the degree to which he seeks his preferred outlets, just as the others, by avoiding FOX News. Concerning media ownership influences on his preference, he replies,

If it's FOX News, then yes. I know it's owned by Rupert Murdoch who's very well known and he makes it very clear that he is right-leaning and if I look very closely I can see that reflected in his news product. But there's not many examples I could point to like that. Most other news companies I couldn't tell you who owned them.

The photo-journalist, the fourth respondent of this group, differs a little from the other three (3) respondents. While he acknowledges a degree of outlet variety, he goes further than the others to mention his preferred news outlets (NPR, CNN, blacknews.com, worldstarhiphop.com) as well as those he seeks to avoid, FOX News. He says, "The daily average consumer doesn't know Rupert Murdoch...us as trained journalists know these people and we also know their biases. They changed the reasons why I don't prefer to watch a network like FOX News."

From this group, it is evident that those respondents who answered yes and no and whose approach to objectivity alternates between its two orientations, acknowledge they sometimes allow media ownership to influence their choice of which news outlets to consume to greater extents than those who say media ownership does not influence their outlet choice. In addition, all four (4)

respondents supply FOX News as an example of how media ownership influences their outlet choice; but more specifically, three (3) out of the four (4) respondents purposely emphasize FOX News is the only outlet wherein they will not pay attention while purporting all other outlets are fair game. This pattern generally shows the more respondents expect objectivity to be attainable, the more they view it as a process and, thus, the greater the degree to which media ownership influences their outlet choice, and the greater the degree to which respondents experience the need to seek out specific news outlets. Note that this pattern only pertains to those interviewed not the general population.

Of the three (3) respondents who undoubtedly say their news preference is influenced by media ownership information, each express an even greater need to seek specific news outlets among the vast variety they believe is offered. In addition to listing the news outlets they prefer less or may consume differently than others, they also voluntarily list those they most frequent. For example, the social worker says,

I don't like anything, any news on FOX nationally...I don't like the man that owns FOX, the Australian man...I can't stand anything he produces...I think he's a racist and I think it's obvious when you look at cable FOX news and how racist they are...I prefer, well of course everybody wants to hear their point of view, so I like that, but when I'm trying to get an objective, good journalistic report, I go to CNN...I love CNN and I love Katie Couric...But when I want to hear just what I want to hear, my point of view, I go to MSNBC.

Similarly, the freelance legal consultant claims to perceive a large range in variety of news outlets in the environment whereas some are better and more objective than others. He says,

News is a source of propaganda to shape public opinion. There can be accurate, fair, and balanced reporting and then there can be misinformation for a particular special interest group's purpose...[outlets] report from different perspectives, FOX being ultra conservative, CNN being, I would say moderate and MSNBC being progressive.

He also agrees with the social worker that FOX has a negative and conservative slant and says this is why FOX News's ownership is important to him. He says,

FOX news is a reflection of Rupert Murdoch, who is probably one of the worst people in the world; therefore, their reporting is terrible. It's biased towards a racial segment of the population because it reflects his own views in my opinion.

He goes further to say that while he does not prefer FOX News because of its conservative or racist perspectives, he says he will watch because sometimes he prefers to look for "entertainment as in Bill Maher, Rachel Maddow, or Keith Olbermann, they put a hilarious spin on the news. They use levity. The information is good, but it's the way they present the information that's entertaining."

The radio producer says she seeks out news coverage from NPR sources, "I prefer, well I'll say NPR, because I like their style of reporting...I just got a fancy cell phone two weeks ago through work and I downloaded an NPR application." Additionally, when stating that media ownership influences her outlet preference, she makes note of Clear Channel Radio's conservative slant in conjunction with the effects of ownership concentration. She says,

Clear Channel...for instance, donated millions of dollars to the Republican campaign, they also carry more conservative talk shows. Like when the Dixie Chicks spoke out against Bush in 2001, the

Dixie Chicks were no longer played on any Clear Channel station in the country and they own thousands of radio stations.

Again, noting results from interviews are not generalizable beyond the respondents of this study, results show the greater the degree to which respondents expect objectivity to be attainable, the greater degree to which respondents expect and perceive variety among news outlets; the greater the degree of the expectation and perception of news outlet variety, the greater the degree of media ownership influence on respondents' news outlet preferences. Furthermore, the greater the degree of media ownership influence on news outlet preferences, then the greater the degree to which respondents report the need to experience and seek specific news outlets.

As stated before, salience portrays a relationship between salient stimuli (media ownership information) and pre-existing cultural knowledge and expectations (objectivity). Therefore, the same three categories (those whose outlet preference is not at all, sometimes, or definitely influenced by media ownership) that were used to assess respondents' prior knowledge and expectations will continue to serve as a reference and indication of prior knowledge whereby to determine and analyze the remaining basis for media ownership salience: frequency/recency, emotional valence, and involvement. As results will show, the greater degree to which respondents report the need to seek specific news outlets, then, generally, the greater frequency in which respondents pay attention to news, the greater degree to which respondents name parent media corporations, the better respondents perform on the quiz, the greater

degree to which respondents report overall positive experiences with news, and the more likely they are to be involved with the news-making process.

4.3 Frequency and Recency

As mentioned before, the principle of “unusuality” says a stimulus is considered to be salient if it disturbs the perceiver’s prior knowledge and expectations that can be derived from that knowledge (Guido, 2001). In one such case, the stimulus can be classified as statistically novel (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, 248). Statistically novel information, the degree to which a stimulus is unique or novel, is dependent upon its frequency and freshness (Guido, 2001). Herein, redundant information is less likely to be recalled while novel information is processed to greater extents (Lynch & Srull, 1982). Interview responses reflect this same occurrence.

More often than not, interview respondents who say they indeed or sometimes allow media ownership to influence their news preferences (as well as express the need to seek particular outlets) have a propensity to pay attention to news more frequently (more than 2 times per day) than those who do not allow media ownership to influence their preference (2 times/day or less). Perhaps this relationship can be explained as one wherein pre-existing beliefs regarding the nature of objectivity (process orientation or product orientation) is what allows media ownership to influence news preferences; this perception of objectivity is likely to direct the degree to which a respondent seeks particular outlets because,

after all, the intention of this search is to fulfill or realize the respondents already pre-existing, perceptual orientations about objectivity.

For example, of those who say media ownership does not influence their outlet choice, two (2) out of three (3) respondents (cosmetologist, transit operator) pay attention to news twice per day or less. Conversely, of those who say media ownership does influence their outlet choice, all three (3) respondents (social worker, freelance legal consultant, radio producer) pay attention to news at least three (3) times per day or more. Of those who replied both yes and no to media ownership influence, two (2) of the four (4) respondents (CPA, communication student) pay attention to news at least three (3) times per day or more while the other half (business manager, photo-journalist) pays attention twice per day or less.

Inevitably, each respondent's media preferences and tastes have been influenced and shaped, to different degrees, by their perception of the nature of objectivity. Again, in turn, this nature affects, to different degrees, a respondent's need to seek out specific outlets. Generally, and to a larger extent, those who allow media ownership to influence their outlet preferences and thereby experience the need to seek certain outlets pay more attention to news because they have found news outlets to match their various preferences and tastes as well as their prior knowledge and expectations. Because these respondents are more satisfied with news or have a positive outlook towards news (as will be discussed later in further detail), they watch the news at higher rates.

In addition, results show these same respondents exhibit a type of understanding that indeed suggests the more particular the respondent is when selecting news outlets, the more the respondent pays attention to news, and the more informed he or she is about media ownership information. Respondents (radio producer, CPA, Communication student, anchor, social worker, freelance legal consultant) who pay attention to news more frequently scored higher on the quiz, overall, by an average of nearly 16 points. More specifically, those who pay attention to news more than twice a day are more likely to recall the actual names of corporations or members who preside on the boards of those corporations. Of the six (6) respondents who pay attention more than twice a day, five (5) of them named at least two or more corporations than the four (4) respondents (cosmetologist, transit operator, business manager, photo-journalist) who do not pay attention as often; three (3) named no corporation correctly and one respondent (1) named only one corporation.

As results indicate, the more attention given to a stimulus, the more organized and consistent the impression of that stimulus becomes, therefore, information that is considered statistically novel depends upon this organized and consistent impression (Fiske & Taylor, 2008). The perception of the nature of objectivity is linked to the degree and frequency of outlet consumption. For those that allow media ownership information to influence their news outlet preference, objectivity is perceived as attainable to various degrees and is sought out by seeking particular news outlets as well as increasing news consumption for these particular outlets. This could be due to the fact that news outlets champion

the notion of objectivity; therefore, the more particular about news outlet selection respondents are and the more they pay attention to those news outlets, the more organized and consistent the impression of those news outlets become or the more the appearance of various degrees of objectivity and outlet variety they will perceive.

Even more interestingly, results show that for those who experience an increased propensity to seek out particular news outlets, what usually becomes statistically novel for them is only that information that can be attained from the goods available in the environment or those particular outlets. Most respondents who express the need to seek usually regard information as statistically novel only to the extent that it remains within the confinement of a process orientation, yet, disturbs the respondent's *personal* method to identify and measure objectivity. Even more, this same confinement is more often than not restricted within the parameters of political partisanship and affiliation. Importantly, what becomes disruptive to these respondents is information incongruent to the respondents' self-identified political affiliation: liberalism (5) or independency (1).

This perception of a range of objectivity with news outlets via political variation (conservative, liberal, independent) helps to create the respondent's political taste/orientation, and any disruption to this taste/orientation ensues category-based processing, where individual attributes of a stimulus or outlet are evaluated and combined thereby creating salience for the respondent (Fiske, 1982). This is why FOX News is referenced for most respondents who say they

indeed and sometimes allow media ownership to influence their outlet choice and, more specifically, why Rupert Murdoch is the only name of a board member of a parent media corporation given by respondents; all other times, the names of parent media corporations are given. However, no outlet at all is referenced for those who say no to media ownership influence. For the latter, the disruption of prior knowledge is irrespective of political orientation. Because objectivity is seen as unattainable, particular outlets are not sought and a less amount of time is spent on news consumption, thereby diminishing the appearance of various degrees of objectivity as promoted by news organizations.

For example, results show five (5) out of the six (6) respondents who express a need to seek and pay attention to news more than twice a day cite conservative outlets (counter to their own political affiliation) as examples of ownership influence whereas FOX News and Rupert Murdoch are mentioned by four (4) respondents and Clear Channel Radio by one (1) respondent. None of the five (5) provide examples of media ownership influence on their outlet selection and/or media coverage by what they perceive to be liberal or independent outlets that share their same political bias.

4.4 Emotional Valence

The principle of "unusuality" says a negative stimulus creates salience more than a positive stimulus and has a more intense effect on decisions and judgment. As mentioned before, a negative stimulus is able to increase salience because it is more informative and attracts selective attention upon processing

(Guido, 2001). This is because most individuals share an optimistic point of view about the pictures inside their heads ((Parducci, 1968; Lippmann, 1949). And as results show, respondents (transit operator, cosmetologist, business manager, CPA) who admit they do not or sometimes allow media ownership to influence outlet decisions are more likely to have had no personal experience or have had a negative experience with the news, while others who say they sometimes and indeed allow media ownership to influence their outlet selection most often purport having a positive experience and overall impression of news.

Unlike those who say they do not at all allow ownership influence, respondents who say they certainly or sometimes allow media ownership to influence outlet consumption, pay attention to news more often, perform better on the quiz (an average of 68% versus 52%), and identify more media parent corporations, tend to be more involved with news and report having more overall positive experiences. For example, the business manager, who scored 56% on the quiz, named one corporation, and pays attention to news less than twice a day, recalls a negative experience with news. He cites his own experiences as a former sound technician for a news crew in the '70s and describes a time of biased news coverage, using mainly examples of reporter manipulation. He says, "that was a time when reporters made the story, but now technology makes the story." As Guido said, because negative stimuli create more salience, the business manager's negative experience led him to report his overall experience with news as negative.

Similarly, the CPA, who scored 44% on the quiz, pays attention to news more than twice a day, and identified no parent corporation, cites his personal experience with reporters whom he felt attempted to manipulate his interview responses. He admits to having media training sponsored by his clients, politicians, but only remembers one lesson from the classes, “no matter what they ask you, tell them what you want them to know.” Yet, he says this advice did not work for him when being interviewed. He says, “Most of my encounters with media have been negative because they always wanted me to say something bad about somebody.” These negative experiences undoubtedly contribute to the prior knowledge and expectations of the two (2) respondents. Results also reveal the remaining two (2) respondents (cosmetologist, transit operator), who scored a 56% and 33% on the quiz and do not allow ownership influence, both report having no experience at all with the news-making process. Thus, results show respondents who admit they allow or sometimes allow media ownership influence are more likely to account positive experiences than those who admit to not allowing media ownership to influence their choice of news outlets.

Additionally, as stated before, the negative stimulus that becomes salient to all respondents (social worker, communication student, CPA, business manager, radio producer, photo-journalist, freelance legal consultant) who say media ownership indeed or sometimes influences their outlet selection and report and overall positive experience with news is a conservative outlet, either FOX News or Clear Channel Radio. This shows that for these groups of respondents, even negative stimuli are, too, assessed and categorized within the

parameters of political partisanship and affiliation. However, the three (3) remaining respondents cite no specific outlet, either conservative or liberal, in reference to media ownership influences. This is interesting because of the three (3), one (1) respondent (anchor) believes media presentation is more important than ownership and the remaining two (2) believe objectivity is inevitably lacking from news coverage in general.

Results further indicate that those who purport an overall positive experience with news are more likely to be involved with the news-making process. Four (4) out of five (5) respondents (anchor, radio producer, communication student, photo-journalist) who are more involved with the news-making process articulate an overall positive experience unlike the three (3) out of five (5) respondents (transit operator, cosmetologist, CPA) who are not involved and articulate overall negative experiences.

4.5 Involvement

The principle of involvement is related to a perceiver's drive to attend to a stimulus and not the perceiver's spontaneity to attend to it. This principle explores the causes of salience due to instructions to attend to a stimulus (external causes) and personal relevance to a perceiver's goals (internal causes) (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). According to results, again, which cannot be generalized beyond the respondents of this study, those who are more involved with the news-making process are more likely to identify media parent corporations and perform better on the quiz on average. The highest quiz scores (89%, 78%)

belong to the radio producer and communication student while the lowest scores (33%, 44%) belong to the transit operator and CPA. In fact, respondents who say they allow media ownership to indeed or sometimes influence their choice of news outlets are not only more likely to seek particular outlets, pay attention to news more frequently, perform better on the quiz, identify more media parent corporations, express an overall positive experience with the news-making process, and be involved with the news-making process, but they also are more likely to assign journalism's overall performance in the U.S. a higher grade than those who admit to not allowing media ownership to influence which outlets they choose to consume.

For example, the highest grades given to the U.S.'s overall performance by respondents (A, A-/B+, B-, B-, C+) are from four (4) out of five (5) of those (the anchor, photo-journalist, communication student, business manager) involved with the news-making process by reason of external causes or instructions to pay attention to media ownership information. Meanwhile, the lowest grades given to journalism's overall performance in the U.S. (F, C-, C, C, C) are from four (4) out of five (5) of those (the cosmetologist, radio producer, transit operator, freelance legal consultant, CPA) not-involved with the news-making process.

Additionally, those involved with the news-making process tended to voluntarily insert their financial/economic concerns and interests when it comes to media ownership. More specifically, two (2) respondents (CPA, radio producer) explicitly mention information about media concentration; five (5) respondents (CPA, photo-journalist, business manager, anchor, communication

student) explicitly mention information about media competition; and eight (8) respondents (CPA, photo-journalist, business manager, communication student, radio producer, cosmetologist, transit operator, freelance legal consultant) explicitly mention information concerning the control and manipulation of media. However, when comparing interview responses and quiz responses, it becomes evident that quiz answers do not reflect the level of knowledge concerning media ownership concentration among respondents as during interviews. When asked if media concentration in the U.S. is remaining the same, decreasing, or increasing overall, seven (7) out of ten (10) respondents answered this quiz question incorrectly. Even more, of the three (3) respondents (cosmetologist, radio producer, photo-journalist) who did answer the quiz question correctly, only two (2) respondents (cosmetologist, radio producer) voluntarily inserted information about ownership concentration into their interview.

Furthermore, the two (2) respondents (CPA, radio producer) who explicitly mention information about media concentration display a pattern of salience involving those respondents whose internal causes, personal goals, are relevant to media ownership concentration; the CPA “performs audits as it relates to tax returns” and other financial information, and the radio producer “studied media ownership.” Unlike those respondents who do not exhibit personal relevance and goals associated with media ownership concentration, these two (2) respondents demonstrate higher levels of salience regarding media ownership concentration

by their initiative to voluntarily communicate to the interviewer their understanding of the consequences of consolidated media ownership.

For example, the radio producer goes in-depth about her personal involvement and goals with media ownership concentration and why it is such an important issue to her. She says, “because I’ve studied media ownership, it’s a topic that I care about and I really wish more people knew about it and understood it.” She goes further to provide an example that addresses the problem of media concentration.

If corporation A has a certain agenda that they want to fill and they own 20% of the media market in the country and let’s just say 20% of the population only goes to that one source for their information, then that’s 20% of the population that doesn’t understand what’s going on or that’s not getting that bit of information.

Similar to the radio producer, the CPA is the other respondent who takes the initiative to mention the implications of media ownership concentration.

Everything is being consolidated. The newspapers are going out of business and a lot of that coverage has moved to the Internet. I think you have fewer and fewer companies that own these assets and if they are applying a bias to what they report, then I think that’s a real problem.

Both respondents

In conjunction with the various bases (unexpectedness, frequency/recency, emotional valence, and involvement) for why media ownership is salient for some respondents and not others, media ownership information is most salient to interview respondents who believe objectivity in news coverage is attainable through a process, a process which some news outlets enact better than others. This perception of "more objective" and "less objective" news outlets is what

allows media ownership information to influence their outlet selection, thereby causing them to seek particular news sources as well as pay attention to news more frequently. Since the more attention given to news coverage creates a more organized and consistent impression of news coverage, these respondents, correspondingly, identify more parent media corporations, express an overall positive experience with the news-making process than interview respondents who see objectivity as unattainable and thereby admit to not allowing media ownership to influence which outlets they choose to consume and so forth. Additionally, they are also more likely to be involved with the news-making process. Ultimately, interviews results show media ownership information is most salient to respondents in this study who view objectivity as a process.

5 DISCUSSION

In association with false consciousness and commodity fetishism, the researcher initially expected media ownership information would not be salient to most citizens due to media organizations' failure to disseminate such information as well as citizens' lack of involvement with media ownership information. Results reveal this expectation to be only partially correct for it underestimated and failed to take into account the breadth and complexities of these concepts.

At first, the researcher found these results to be incongruent with the principles of salience, false consciousness, and commodity fetishism, but upon closer inspection it can be seen that the results of this study do indeed contribute to these concepts and existing literature. Particularly, results confirm Bourdieu's (1984) argument that the relationship between production (goods offered) and reception (tastes) is reciprocal in nature in so much as tastes are determined by the environment of goods offered; and every change in that environment induces change in tastes and vice versa. As such, each respondent's media preferences and tastes have been influenced and shaped, to varying degrees, by the respondent's expectation of or orientation towards objectivity and, thus, by the respondent's perception of the variety of news outlets available in the environment as well as by the respondent's consumption of those outlets.

More specifically, respondents who find media information more salient or significant to their lives tend to consume specific news outlets at higher

frequencies and vice versa. As results concur with existing literature, the more attention given to a stimulus, the more rational the impression of that stimulus becomes, meaning, the more organized and consistent the impression of that stimulus becomes (Fiske & Taylor, 2008, p. 55). For example, respondents who consume news at higher frequencies tend to perform better on the quiz and name at least two parent media corporations on average. Thus, to a greater degree, those who admit to allowing media ownership to influence their outlet preferences, and thereby express the need to experience and seek specific outlets, have successfully found news outlets to match their various preferences and tastes because their various preferences and tastes are influenced by the very news outlets they seek; in turn, this satisfaction or reciprocal nature leads them to consume news at higher rates than those whose tastes have found little to no equivalent match or outlet available in the environment.

At the heart of this satisfaction, and forerunner of all subsequent results regarding the salience of media ownership information, is the respondent's expectation of or orientation towards objectivity. The notion of objectivity (goods offered) is championed by media owners, organizations, and practitioners; as more attention is given to news coverage, it is the impression of objectivity as an attainable, necessary, and a natural eventuality of news, that becomes more organized and consistent (Glasser, 1984), . This impression of objectivity not only creates but satisfies respondents' expectations and prior knowledge because it affirms their perception of differing degrees of variation within news outlets

according to the degree, or range, of objectivity they perceive to be available in the outlet environment (tastes).

The researcher was surprised to find how significant of an effect respondents' orientation toward objectivity has on their media consumption. This significance even further helps to clarify Glasser's claim that objectivity inherently contains a financial bias where it was used to convert efficiency into a professional standard and championed by media owners and practitioners because it increased their credibility and status as proponents of democracy (1984). As will be discussed, interview results corroborate his notion of objectivity as a false portrayal or false consciousness by which the elite, media owners, rob the working class of their consciousness, thereby forcing them to accept a reality detached of their actual social experience.

However, before addressing the results that corroborate Glasser's idea, it is necessary to understand the manner in which objectivity is used to portray a false consciousness. Bourdieu helps with this when he provides a blueprint for understanding culture. Firstly, the journalism industry reserves for itself the right to be the exclusive authority of objective information. Bourdieu says the acceptance of this belief can be explained by the nature and the acceptance of culture itself. Even more, the researcher contends it can be explained by the nature and the acceptance of objectivity itself. As Bourdieu likens culture to a game, objectivity can just as equally be likened; for culture is no more an objective phenomenon than the very the notion of objectivity itself. Like the culture game, the objectivity game is continuously shaped, produced, and

consumed according to the material demands of life. Expanding further from Bourdieu, objectivity can be defined as a social stake that assumes and demands individuals take part in it and be taken in by it via a false belief in the naturalness of the desire to participate and the pleasure of participating. Unforeseen by the researcher, this naturalness and desire to participate further explains why those who are most likely to admit to allowing media ownership to influence their news outlet preferences or are involved with the news-making process report a positive experience with the news-making process.

Even more, the false belief in the naturalness and eventuality of objectivity in news coverage conceals the hidden aims of objectivity as a business strategy. Bourdieu says this financial bias is hidden behind the very race and competition that objectivity produces, the race between the "more objective" and the "less objective." This race and competition are the very things that work to maintain the collusion via a belief in the absolute value of objectivity, and without them, there is no interest in objectivity. Results affirm this assumption. Respondents who more frequently pay attention to news outlets available in the environment, accept the belief in the absolute value of objectivity and its stakes and, consequently, perceive a variety of news outlets with varying degrees of objectivity. In contrast, respondents who purport to not allowing media ownership to influence their news outlet selection and view objectivity as an end result have significantly less knowledge concerning media ownership; as evident, the race and competition that is created from the belief in the naturalness and pleasure of objectivity, do not reside with them.

As stated before, the false consciousness in the absolute value of objectivity produces the very race between the "more objective" and the "less objective" news outlets. However, those respondents who admit to allowing media ownership information to influence their outlet selection go beyond simply believing in the absolute value of objectivity, they go even further to define objectivity in terms of political partisanship i.e. conservative, independent, liberal, etc. This is also false consciousness, a failure of comprehension whereby persuasion by the elites of the working-class moves the latter from knowing its manifestly real conditions by its willfulness to participate in its own domination (Borg & Mayo, 2002).

Correspondingly, results show respondents who admit to allowing or sometimes allowing media ownership information to influence their outlet selection are unaware of their manifestly real conditions of the economic disparities and internal social exchange relationship between social classes, in this case, media owners (elite) and consumers (working-class) (Onimode, 1985). These respondents are generally confined to the parameter of political partisanship and unable to expand into that of economic partisanship because of their willfulness to participate in their own domination. They perceive the degree of differences between elites, in terms of political partisanship, is so significant that those differences would affect the working class' lives significantly more than the elite's collective similarities that already work to their disadvantage.

This willfulness to believe in the absolute value of objectivity and, thus, to participate in its own domination, is explained by Bourdieu. He says cultural

production seeks out its homologous space of reception, meaning, an audience predisposed by education, wealth, and social background. In fact, all seven (7) respondents who admit to allowing or sometimes allowing media ownership information to influence their news outlet preference are each, to various degrees, predisposed to readily accept the kinds of information and ideas about objectivity being proposed to them as made evident by the significant role they claim media ownership information plays in their news outlet selection. They are so predisposed to readily accept the ideas about objectivity being proposed to them that, as results show, each of them goes as far as to categorize and measure objectivity as well as media ownership by political partisanship (6, FOX News; 1, Clear Channel). Not only do they cite ownership influence by using conservative outlets as examples, they also implicitly and explicitly articulate their own political partisanship as either liberal or independent. Therefore, what becomes salient is information contrary to the respondent's own political ideology, in this case liberal and independent political parties. Additionally, of the two (2) respondents (transit operator, cosmetologist) who pay less attention and who say their preferences are not influenced by media ownership, neither makes reference to FOX News nor make mention of outlet preferences, but rather groups conservative, independent, and liberal outlets within the same category.

Results also show that while consumer tastes are essential, they are only to the extent that those tastes strengthen and do not undermine primary corporate relationships (McManus, 1994). It remains in the best interest for media corporate owners to perpetuate a false consciousness by the perpetuation of an

ongoing impression that media organizations act as authorities of objectivity and in the best interest of the public (rather than stock holders by offending the least number of people, thus, maximizing audiences). But in doing so, journalism distracts citizens from the more encompassing issue of how "concentrations of media ownership narrow the range of voices that predominate in the media and consequently pose a threat to the interests of society," and more specifically the working-class interests of society (Doyle, 2002, p. 6). It takes a blind eye to its role to maintain power for capitalists by exercising its ability to privilege particular discourses (such as political partisanship and not anti-capitalist sentiments), construct particular forms of reality (both factual representations and credible fictions), control which voices, identities, and interests are presented, and affect the actions of governments and states (Bagdikian, 1995, p. 18; Hardy, 2008).

Bagdikian also addresses this ability as well as fundamental issues of distribution of power and wealth when he asserts "our view of the social political world is deficient" if there is a regular omission and lack of inclusion for ideas in society (1992, p. xxiv). Because consumer tastes are indivisibly linked to cultural interests that are, in turn, shaped by elite interests,

Commercial journalism almost always stays within the parameter of mainstream opinion and the tenor of journalism has become less conciliatory toward ideas critical of capitalism and the 'free market' and less receptive of ideas laudatory of social spending, poor people's social movements, and regulation of business (McChesney, 1999, p. 62).

Affirming these beliefs and to the researcher's surprise, results show those who don't believe in the absolute value of objectivity are able to discern the

media's various roles beyond the confinement of political partisanship; while, those who pay more attention to news coverage and admit to allowing or sometimes allowing media ownership to influence their news selection oftentimes frame discourse concerning objectivity in terms of political partisanship and find media ownership information to be more salient as well.

Additionally, as Bourdieu suggests, the work of journalism professionals should also be analyzed as a distinctive, autonomous contribution to the news. Notions of false consciousness perpetuated by news organizations cannot be understood by solely examining media ownership. Because Bourdieu describes the journalistic field as a microcosm set within the macrocosm that obeys its own laws, he says journalists, as a corporate body, fulfill their responsibility and perform a semi-autonomous role in shaping the news by establishing and implementing a set of implicit rules and principles. Subsequently, results show respondents involved with the media or the news-making process undoubtedly fulfill their responsibility of perpetuating the belief in the absolute value in news.

For example, the reporter/anchor who believes ownership is not at all important, says about the variety of news outlets available,

I look for the most objectivity I can find...Sometimes I'll listen to some of the opinionated journalists who have a view because often they bring their positions into a sharp focus and so I'll listen to them occasionally. But, generally, more or less, just objective and relative news.

In fact, some of those involved with the news-making process go even further to admit the role reporters and photographers play in perpetuating the interests

of media owners. Interestingly, they admit media ownership influence is more implicit than explicit when it comes to news practitioners.

For example, the reporter/anchor says,

Certain people might gravitate to certain operations by the ownership. There may be people who share the owner's political views, for example. So, the owner won't have to come down and say, you know, here's what we believe. More than likely the people who are coming to work for that publication are going to believe that going in.

Similarly, the photo-journalist also admits this same implicit role media ownership plays on news practitioners. He says,

Rupert Murdoch's not sitting in his office saying I want to show people this, this, and this. But I do believe they're saying our television station, our company, our multi-billion dollar corporation's going to aim towards this line of storytelling or talk about these types of issues. And so it's a more unconscious, but very deliberate sense of making and creating the news – it's this process of gate-keeping and what it means to be a gatekeeper. And so execs, owners, board of directors may choose to go one way with the news station instead of the other way.

Likewise, the radio-producer admits to the semi-autonomous role reporters sometimes hesitantly play in the news-making process. She says,

In my college there was some alum who went to work for MSNBC, he came to speak with us and he told us about certain stories, MSNBC which is owned all the way at the top by Disney soon to be Comcast, I don't really understand what their interest are but he said some of his colleagues who were told they couldn't report on certain things. If GE wanted to do something like raise electric rates, I don't understand how all of that works, but they didn't report negatively on GE because GE owned them.

As stated before and in accordance with results, typically, the more attention a respondent gives to a stimulus, the more organized and consistent the impression of that stimulus becomes, including notions of the absolute value of

objectivity and media ownership information. This propensity for those involved with the news-making process to fulfill their role in perpetuating the idea of the absolute value of objectivity supports why these same respondents generally performed better on the quiz and identified more parent corporations than those uninvolved due to their lack of instructions to attend to the stimulus.

By fostering rational-critical debate about the major problems of society and facilitating the adoption of behavior patterns and social norms of the surrounding culture, journalism is a means of education thereby influencing the way people see the world and each other. Thus, every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interest of the ruling classes (Gramsci, 1971, p. 258). In this case, since journalism champions capitalism, by both concealing the financial bias behind the notion of objectivity and by unapologetically embracing the notion of business as the proper steward of society (Hardy, 2008; McChesney), the cultural and moral level of society is limited to that of political partisanship between conservatives, independents, and liberals, and not a level of economic disparity between capitalists and laborers, or media owners and consumers, as results suggest.

In light of the unexpected results of the in-depth interviews concerning media ownership, the researcher contends for the purposes of this study that objectivity can now be understood as Bourdieu's "supreme fetish" and Marx's coveted commodity in commodity fetishism. Because commodity fetishism, the

fetishism of the belief in the absolute value of objectivity, conceals the true relations of capital and labor, the working-class (consumers), or the subordinate, who is robbed of its class consciousness, accepts this false understanding of the nature of objectivity to its disadvantage, and becomes inculcated into a false consciousness by elites (media owners) through their control over significant tools of socialization such as media and, specifically, journalism.

Operating within the boundaries of an oligopoly, media owners routinely share financial investments concerning opportunities of corporate expansion as well as influence governmental policies in their favor of maximizing profit, reducing competition, and restricting barriers of entry; however, this information is hidden behind notions of objectivity (Compaine, 2000). In corroboration with the knowledge offered by Bagdikian, Baker, Bourdieu, Glasser, Gramsci, Lukacs, Marx, McChesney, and McManus, results show those who allow media ownership to influence their news outlet preferences are generally more knowledgeable about media ownership information, yet, only to the extent that this salience does not undermine media's primary corporate relationships. This is because these respondents, too, support and perpetuate the notion of the absolute value of objectivity, to their disadvantage. By supporting and perpetuating the elite's decision to focus on political partisanship between news outlets while distracting from more encompassing issues of economic disparities between media owners (the elite) and consumers (the working-class), these respondents participate in elite efforts to maintain despotism over culture via control over partial systems of society, such as one of the most indispensable tools

of socialization possessing profound ability to facilitate and manipulate the creation and re-creation of culture - media systems.

If this research were to be conducted again, two interviews would be conducted for each respondent instead of only one. While some interview responses provided in-depth detail, some did not and to ensure each respondent addresses the same aspects and issues as equally as possible, a second interview should be conducted after an initial analysis of the first interview's responses. This will ensure clarity and consistency. Additionally, because each of the respondents either self-identified as members of liberal or independent parties, it would be interesting to see how those who self-identify as conservative members would respond. Thus, for future studies, not only should occupation be taken into consideration when selecting participants, but also party affiliation.

Another limitation of this study is that since this research was qualitative and results can only be generalized to the respondents in the study, a quantitative study should be conducted for the purposes of understanding how salient media ownership information is to the general U.S. population as well as how the general U.S. population responds to systems of mass communication and production, in general.

It should be noted the results of this study, arguably, as with all studies, were conceived through the perception of the researcher. As stated before, language is the main object of analysis and a primary tool of data-gathering in any interview study, while the primary tool of all research is the interpretive

capacity of the researcher. Thereby, potential biases and predispositions may have possibly affected the research process and conclusions.

This qualitative study sought to assess how significant media ownership information is to citizens' lives and to understand on what bases this information is salient for some citizens and not others. Ten respondents were recruited from the cities of St. Louis and Columbia, Missouri. In-depth interviews were conducted along with a short, written quiz to evaluate individuals' bases for salience (expectancy, frequency/recency, emotional valence, and involvement) and levels of knowledge regarding media ownership. For the respondents of this study, results show higher levels of media ownership salience and knowledge correspond to those who perceive objectivity in news as a process while lower levels of salience correspond to respondents who perceive objectivity in news as an end-product.

APPENDIX

1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant: _____

Occupation: _____

- Job description:

- Years of position: _____
- When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news? (Why?)
- With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it? Why is this?
- And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news? Why is this?

- Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for? Let's make a list from most important to least important.
- Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say? Why or why not?
- Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?
- Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?
- From your perspective, what role or position does news play in our society? What does it do for you?
- People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

- News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.
- Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.
- Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.
- As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job? Who or what would you say is responsible for this success?

- Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst? Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?
- From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?
- Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? Why?
- Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with? How would you improve them?

2 QUIZ

This section is designed to gauge your knowledge of media ownership. You have 15 minutes to answer all eight questions.

- What corporation owns the largest share of the NBC network?

- As closely as you can, identify the number of corporations that own the majority of U.S. media (television and radio networks, book publishing, and newspapers)? Circle one.
 - 1-6
 - 9-15
 - 30-50
 - 75-100
- Name at least two of these corporations. _____
- What is the largest source of revenue for commercial news organizations?

- News Corporation owns the largest share of the ABC network. True or False? Circle one.
 - True
 - False
- Due to The Constitution's guarantee of free speech rights, journalism is the only commercial industry to receive First Amendment, Constitutional protection. True or false? Circle one.
 - True

- False
- Excluding the Internet's blog sphere, overall, U.S. media ownership concentration is:
 - Remaining the same.
 - Increasing.
 - Decreasing.
- The best word to describe U.S. media industries is:
 - Monopolistic – one corporation operating with exclusive control
 - Oligopolistic – a small group of corporations operating with exclusive control
 - Non-competitive – a large group of corporations operating and coexisting mutually
 - None of the above

3 TABLE OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Frequency/ Recency	Ownership Influence on Outlet Selection	Ownership Influence on News Coverage	Journalism's Grade	Aspects Most Dissatisfied With	Involvement with Media Organization/ News-making Process	Overall Experience with News	Quiz Gr
Everyday: 3 times/day	Yes, says doesn't like anything on FOX. Murdoch is a conservative, not a U.S. citizen	Yes, says FOX is racist.	B-	Shotty journalism due to a lack of fact-checking and verification, and propaganda	No	Positive	75.00'
Once every other day: 4 days/week	No, says all outlets are owned by the same people	Yes, says b/c media serves as a mouthpiece for the elite	F	Nothing is 100% true, its just distractions	No	N/A	56.00'
Everyday: all day	Yes, says b/c FOX reflects Rupert Murdoch, a racist with a superiority complex	Yes, says Rupert Murdoch only hires those who think like him, says whoever controls outlets has the ability to shape public opinion	C	Local news because it carries local political thought; negative coverage of urban areas	No	Positive	72.00'
Everyday: 2 times/day	No, says switches to another program if not provided with the information sought	Yes, says all new s reports are repeats or more concluded versions of the same stories	C	Most of the time inaccurate, facts are hidden, the information isn't new sworthy; new s designed to control people emotionally	No	N/A	33.00'
Everyday: varies several times/day	No, says presentation is more important b/c owners are not presenting the news but rather editors, anchors, reporters, producers, new s directors, and general managers	Yes, says but only to the extent that audiences gravitate to outlets that share similar views in ownership	A	No aspects of journalism are dissatisfying	Yes	Positive	50.00'

Frequency/Recency	Ownership Influence			Journalism's Grade	Aspects Most Dissatisfied With	Involvement with Media Organization/News-making Process	Overall Experience with News	Quiz Gr
	on Outlet Selection	on News Coverage	Journalism's Grade					
Everyday; 2 times/day	Yes/No, but says only FOX News; for all other outlets media ownership is not an influence	Yes, says only FOX	B; Network C; Local average = C+	Young reporters care more about showing themselves than the story	Yes	Negative	56.00	
Everyday; varies several times/day	Yes, says b/c ownership trickles down prepackaged with certain political preferences	Yes, says it affects the flow of information	C-	Everything's so politically partisan, reporter are afraid to ask the tough questions, persuasive journalism, superficial journalism	Yes	Positive	89.00	
Everyday; 2 times/day	Yes/No, say yes b/c media ownership influence is more implicit than explicit, but no b/c wants to be in objectivity	Yes, says b/c competition waters down potential capabilities of news stories and photographs due to its demand for immediacy	A-/B+	The quality of journalism suffers from competition; only Euro-centric perspective is offered; journalist that write for other journalist rather than the audience	Yes	Positive	64.00	
Everyday; varies several times/day	Yes/No, says yes b/c FOX is conservative & it comes across in the product, no b/c media ownership is not an influence for all other outlets	Yes, says b/c practitioners of journalism are no longer crusaders as were 100 years ago, now business men focus on profit and control editors	B-	The plasticness of TV; intense competition leads journalist to value being first than being correct, the disproportion in pay among journalists	Yes	Positive	78.00	
Everyday; all day	Yes/No, say no b/c no completely aware of media ownership but Yes b/c increased concentration is dangerous when organized effort manipulates information	Yes, says b/c media ownership consolidation proposes problems when the bias of ownership are projected into the news product	C	The consolidation of media ownership	No	Negative	44.00	

4 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

What's your occupation?

School social worker.

Tell me what a school social worker does.

Our main focus is to make sure students attend school and however we can facilitate that we do in terms of what the family needs what the child needs, whatever it is. If there homeless, they need clothing, mental health needs, all of that, we handle that.

How many years have you worked at this position?

A school social worker 22 years.

Why the hesitation?

I've been a social worker over 30 years.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

Everyday

Why?

Just because I like to stay on top of things, I like to know what's going on. Now locally I watch every evening but nationally I watch the cable networks every single day; depending on, well in the summer, but in the evening I watch the local news but I always watch CNN or MSNBC, in the morning, too.

About how many times a day would you say you watch the news?

At least three: first thing in the morning when I get up, in the evening I watch the local news at five and I watch the national news, I like Katie Couric so I watch her at 5:30 and from there I do the cable after Katie Couric goes off.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

Television or the computer.

Why is this?

It's just most convenient. I read the paper but I just scan it, I get it so I can see what's going on, but I don't read it in detail, like I don't read every single word. I get me one and I get my aunt one.

Is it because it's too time consuming?

No, because it's late. Usually I've already seen it on the internet or I've heard it on the news on the television. Their news is just stale, really it's just late.

So why would you get the newspaper?

Because it's habit, you don't not want to have a newspaper...that's stupid. Plus, I like the crossword puzzles, too.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

National is my preference.

Why is this?

I just love to know what's going on. I like to know what people are saying, especially for me because they give the majority view. That's another thing, I get it from the radio, too, and I'm not sure how credible people would think Tom Joyner is or Michael Baisdon but I like to listen to them, too, because they give you a whole 'nother point of view, it's a whole 'nother demographic and it's people who look like me. So, I need to know what everybody is thinking, that's just me.

You would say you like to news from different sources because the majority view may not express your view?

Right. Many times it does not and I'm wondering well who are they polling who are the people they are calling because I don't know people who, I know there are people who think like that, but it couldn't possibly be the majority.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

I prefer, well of course everybody wants to hear their point of view, so I like that, but when I'm trying to get an objective, good journalistic report, I go to CNN. They are the most objective to me. But when I want to hear just what I want to hear, my point of view, I go to MSNBC.

What about MSNBC has your point of view? What's your point of view?

Well, I'm a liberal. They may even be a little more liberal to the left than I am. This is the evening MSNBC, not the morning.

So MSNBC in the morning and the evening differ?

Well, The Morning Joe is a conservative republican and his co-host is Mika Brzezinski. She's a democrat but they are not unbiased, he is very biased. That's okay because I like to hear the other point of view. But in the evening they are all left, yea, they can be extreme left and I like that.

So you like to hear both the objective point of view and the biased point of view?

When I need to know, when I just want to hear the facts I go to CNN because to me they are the least skewed. CNN is the most objective to me.

What others things do you look for?

The way it's framed. I'm trying to think of an example. Like the November elections and how everybody is talking about how the republicans are going to sweep the house and the senate, but when I listen to Rachel Maddow, she has documented, I'm lazy, so she has documented races and times and off years where that's not the case. It's like this is just rhetoric, this is what everybody says but that's not what always happens. And I like to know that, I'm like, hmmm, I'm glad to know that's just not true and I'm not taking things at face value.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

I don't even know who owns MSNBC or, yes I do know who owns CNN, but I don't like anything, any news on FOX nationally, now I will look at the local FOX news but I don't like the man that owns FOX, the Australian man. And it should be illegal for him to own the media.

Why do you say that?

I didn't think you could own the media if you weren't a citizen, a natural born citizen. That is what I thought was the law but apparently it isn't. Rupert Murdoch, that's who I'm talking about, I can't stand anything he produces.

Why is it important to you that you should be a citizen?

To me, you should not be able to come from another country and able to infuse your point of view on our country. If you're a natural born citizen, it just seems to

me that it shouldn't be legal for you to be able to have media influence on the people of a different country.

Why media? How do you feel about media?

I think it makes a big difference, it influences people – these tea bagger people. I think all that was generated by the media. Going back to the civil rights movement, we people saw police and dogs attacking people, the outrage helped passed the civil rights bill as a matter of fact. Yea, so I think the media plays a big part and so I think it's important who owns it. But like I said, I don't know who owns MSNBC, it might be GE but I'm not sure, it doesn't matter as much. I just don't like that Rupert Murdoch has been allowed to have a huge media outlet like FOX and whatever else he owns. I don't like that so for me that is important.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

My job? Yes, sometimes because if I find out certain programs or policies that have changed either impact my job or my families, that's useful. I know okay then I can go over here for this resource. Just like I know the stimulus helped saved my job as a school social worker. It's good to know that so when people say the stimulus isn't doing any good I say excuse me, the stimulus helped save my job, it saved my brother's job, Rusty's a bus driver. That's a lie, I know personally that it was helpful. That kind of thing helps, watching the TV, reading the paper, going on the internet. Knowing about those things and knowing specifically that I am personally affected, yes, it's helpful.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Yes, yes. Just like I keep talking about FOX and Rupert Murdoch. I think he's a racist and I think it's obvious when you look at cable FOX news and how racist they are. It comes across in the programming, their point of view on everything, how they skew things. And just how they present information, like the tea baggers talking about taking the country back and all that stuff is promoted on his station all through the day. I can't even watch it, it makes me sick.

What role or position does news play in our society? What does it do for you?

The intention is to give factual information. The role it plays sometimes I think is it influences people's ideas and the positions they take on things. But I think news that's good journalism only gives you the facts. For example, CNN has Keeping Them Honest and they give you just the facts. I don't care if you're left, right, liberal, or conservative, this is the issue and here are the facts. I like that. I like to know what really is, not what you want me to know in terms of news. That's how I see news should be.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

Weather is one big one. First thing in the morning before I go to work I need to know what's going on weather wise. I love sports so of course. I love ESPN and NFL network on Sundays. Just for information, to know what's going on locally, nationally, and in the world.

What do you do with the information that you get?

Form my opinions about whatever. For football, I either agree with it or not and if it's somebody I respect, I'm like oh okay, I accept it as true. In terms of national and local news, I just form my own opinions and get happy or depressed depending on what the issues is.

I heard you talking about policies earlier, I assume you vote

Oh, gosh, yes!

So you use it to make decisions at election time?

Now that's when the newspaper comes in handy because they will list, or you can go onto the internet, but I like to read it in the paper, the candidates, their background, and where they stand and how they've handled things in the past. That I do use the paper for, I will go and read it more carefully.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

In terms of breast cancer I think that information has been very helpful because even though your doctor tells you you're supposed to have one – because of my history I should have one every year, you know, I might think about it but those campaigns, when they're televised and when I know, and you have to wear the pink ribbon and all that, I'm like Oh Lord let me make my appointment for my mammogram. So it's very helpful for keeping myself healthy.

Give me another example.

Smoking is the big one but that colonoscopy thing which I avoided but I went on and made my appointment because of something I heard on, I think it was with Sanjay Gupta the doctor on CNN. I thought Oh god so I went back and told my doctor I want the colonoscopy and I had it because I want to live even though I still smoke.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

You mentioned Haiti and I very seldom donate but I did donate \$10, which is not a lot of money but it was my money and I did donate it to the rapper Wyclef Jean's campaign and I deliberately sent it to him instead of the Red Cross or anybody else because that was the statement I wanted to make. And I seldom send money for anything. Hurricane Katrina was sad, it did not move me to send money anywhere but I was outraged, I was angry but I don't think it motivated me to do anything.

Well did you talk to people about it because even that could be motivated?

Oh yea, well you know there was disgust all over the place. Oh, 9/11...when 9/11 happened I called my brother, that motivated me to find someplace safe to be. We were going to go into the Meramec Caverns but as we kept listening, I was

able to calm down and knew I didn't have to run to Meramec Caverns, because I was, I was getting ready to go get my child out of school and everything and follow Rusty to Meramec. That was our plan, we were actually making plans to be safe. So, yes it does sometimes motivate me to action.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

Yes, this was a promotion for when I was a supervisor for a home finding unit. We found foster homes for children who had come into foster care and we were trying to promote adoption with Sally Jesse Raphael was helping us to promote foster care and adoption. And we went down to union station and we had to have children on the rides so we all brought our kids and her first question was were these foster children. And we said well you can't put foster kids on TV, you can't put their pictures on TV, none of them are foster children, these are all of our kids! And I'm like you're the one in the media and you don't know that! So anyway, and then they taped it, I think it was a local channel 5, KSDK, because there was a local channel helping us promote foster care and adoption and it was on their news segment. That is the extent of my involvement with any kind of news media.

Did you like the finished product?

Oh yea, it was wonderful. Then we got little picture because it was just a campaign on television but it was a print campaign and I saw my child so I loved that. I was very pleased with it.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

You know what? When Barack Obama was elected president. I don't know if it was a good job or not but it was so overwhelming. I saw journalists who I know are just excellent journalists break down. It was like they knew it was history in the making, it gave me chills because it gave them chills. It was just exciting, it was something. I mean Wolf Blitzer, Eugene Robinson, you know, people like that, they wanted to be the one to announce that he was the 44th president. So, I think that was really something. I thought it was the most outstanding reporting and I was flicking on every station, too.

It was outstanding because of the moment and because of how the journalists were responding to the moment?

Yes, their response was unbelievable. They appeared to be overwhelmed like they couldn't believe, like they were experiencing the moment. And the other time it was at its best was Hurricane Katrina and Anderson Cooper even got a new show out of it because he was outstanding.

What made him outstanding?

He covered everything he showed America this was what was really going on and this was an outrage. But it was excellent reporting and, to me, he forced other media to cover it properly. His coverage was just awesome. He was good.

Would you say Cooper himself was responsible for the success of that?

Yes, I do. I think he was responsible for forcing other media to actual cover what actually was going on.

What was he doing that the others weren't doing?

He was right there in the stadium, showing you people just lying there, one person dead in a wheel chair. It was awful and his coverage showed every little dirty detail about how Bush was not responding properly.

So he held the administration accountable?

He held everybody accountable, everybody, the local administration, the state administration, the national administration and he was calling them out. I loved it, it was so successful. That's why he got that show, the Anderson Cooper Show!

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

I think, and maybe it wasn't the news so much as the administration when Bush and Cheney lied about weapons of mass destruction. I don't think real journalists did their jobs. To me you're supposed to try to uncover. And when Bush got reelected, maybe because they didn't give my point of view. It couldn't been good journalism but I was so offended.

Did you feel like your voice was left out of the conversation?

Absolutely, especially with them going over to Iraq. I'm like what the heck? I don't care what they have, they did not bomb this country. Why are you there? And I just felt like everybody was going along with it and they were making ogres out of people who wouldn't go along with it. That girl that was in Georgia, she voted against going into Iraq and they made her a monster.

Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

The media, all media because everybody was on the same page – we are Americans and if you're not for this you're un-American and I don't think that's the purpose of media. That's not your job.

What's the media's job?

I think just to give us the facts. Why would you try to frame who is American and who's not American? Why would you portray somebody as un-American because they disagree with going to war? That isn't right. To me that's just not right but that's because I was on the minority side of that issue so of course I didn't like the coverage.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

I'll give it a B-.

Explain.

There are some awesome journalists. I mean some who are so good that it offsets those that are the pits, who actually do their homework. I'm telling you CNN is

just a model and I understand they're in trouble financially in terms of their ratings. But to me that is the most unbiased view of what's going on nationally, world-wide, whatever. I love CNN. I like MSNBC, too, but it's like everybody has to have a gimmick now because people are not interested in just facts. Because I figure the journalists that are superior bring the ones that are the pits up a grade so I give them a B-.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? Why?

Well, CNN, I love CNN. And I love Katie Couric. I guess the television is the medium that I prefer. The paper is okay it's just that I already saw or heard all the stuff that's in there. Like today, I bet you most of the articles in there, unless it's strictly local, I already know.

What about the different aspects that make up journalism? Is there anything about it that you're most satisfied with?

I like knowing that people have done their homework. I like to know that a journalist has actually investigated, has done real investigation. I admire people that do a good job because I think Rachel Maddow is the stuff even though she's left of left. I really like her. Because her staff will go on a blog and get something that's absolutely ludicrous and show you how crazy this is with actually facts. I like that. I like good journalism. I like people who do good investigative reporting and work. I can't think of that little fat girl's name, but she's good too on CNN – Andy Crowley, that's it! I really like her. I like good journalist, that's what I like.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with? How would you improve them?

People who come on and just say anything and don't verify it. And I'm like why would say that? Why would you even report that and you didn't check to see if it was true. Or write something in the paper, you know just the opposite of what I really like, you know shotty journalism: not checking your facts, not making sure what you're saying is accurate. Just saying whatever, you know, this is the case because I'm saying this is the case. No! You have to give me more information than that. You've got to give me more proof than that. Not being able to prove what you say is true is probably where the minus comes in. There is shotty journalism so there are people guilty of that, there are outlets, there are organizations guilty of just propaganda. That's the issue I would have. I resent propaganda, I don't care if it's to the left or to the right. If it's my bias or not, I don't like propaganda, I want the truth. That's my issues, that would be it.

What is your occupation?

I'm a cosmetologist.

Give me a description of cosmetology.

I do hair, manicures and pedicures. Prefer natural hair.

How many years have you been a cosmetologist?

About 3 years.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some

take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news? (Why?)

I would say often. Um...

Often like...how many days per week?

I would probably say about 4 days per week on average.

Why do you watch it 4 days per week? Is there any specific reason?

Yea, I watch it to be watchful in regards to prophecy...watch or read it.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it? Why is this?

I would say TV, newspaper, internet, or a lot of times while out maybe I might be somewhere and catch it. Like, not necessarily the gym, but if I'm out somewhere it might be on the TV somewhere and just might be passing by and hear something.

Is there anything that depends on when you're going to go to the TV or newspaper or internet?

Not per say, unless somebody might send me a text message and say that something important is on the news, I may click it on then at that specific time but I don't have a specific set time that I sit down and watch it the news like some people always have to catch the six o'clock news or the five o'clock news or whatever. Nothing like that, it's just kind of flip to CNN see what's going on or

happen to be browsing on the internet and come across some stuff to see what's going on.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news? Why is this?

I say all the above. I like to watch BBC news, which is more international news, just to see what's going on worldly. Locally, I do like to watch the local news just to see what going on within the community. CNN gives you a mixture of the two.

So, it pretty much for surveillance.

Exactly. Just to see what's going on as a whole actually, a broad range of information.

Why do you think it's important to have this news on a global scale or on a local scale? Why is it important to you that you need to know what's going on on many different levels?

To be watchful in regards to what's going on as far as Bible prophecy. Really, that's the reason why I watch the news, period. I need to know what's going so I know what moves to make and to act accordingly as far as my life is concerned.

Elaborate on the Bible prophecy for me.

Okay. Basically, Bible prophecy tells you about end times and what things you should be watch for during those times and I believe that we are living in the end times according to Bible prophecy. An example is earthquakes in diverse places which there are many earthquakes in diverse places. A news search that I do is on the US geological survey which gives you earthquakes daily, the number of

earthquakes that the news don't tell you. Also just the wars, rumors of wars, famines and pestilence, things like that to watch for.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

It's not necessarily about popularity. I guess convenience would be good just for the simple fact that it's accessible, but at the same time I know that I have to decipher the truth from the deceit. I know it's not 100% reliable. I do know that they have to mix some truth in with some of the lies that they tell. It goes back to just being watchful, knowing to decipher the truth in what the news or the media is telling you as opposed to the b.s. they shoot of a lot of time.

Is there much difference in the news to you? When some people pick the news it's because they actually see differences in the news. Some prefer MSNBC as opposed to FOX because they see those differences in the news. Do you see differences in the news?

I do see differences in the news, yes I do have preferences. I would probably watch CNN more than I might watch FOX news, but I would still watch FOX news. But I find myself that I watch CNN more. Why? I can't really tell you why to be quite honest with you. It just seems I watch CNN more than FOX news but

I will look at FOX news and I will look at MSNBC. But I do find that I watch CNN more.

What qualities do you really not like about the other ones that you do in CNN?

On the others they just babble a little too much, they just ramble on and on. It's not focused, it's scattered.

Any other adjectives you want to use to describe those? You can take your time.

We don't have to rush through the questions.

Not scattered...I know the media are the elite's mouthpiece. They're only going to tell you what they've been told to tell you anyway. Which goes back to being able to decipher what is true from what the b.s. is. For real, I really think all the news channels in a nut shell have certain guidelines they have to follow. That's why I say I don't necessarily have a preference when it comes to what media I will watch on TV or what media source I might look up or go to on the internet. But I do find that there are certain ones I may go to or access more than others.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through

which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say? Why or why not?

No, because they pretty much owned by the same people. I believe they give some media sources a little bit more leeway to tell you certain things. I've noticed you have some media stations that are more conservative than others and then you have others that are more lax, like, is Glenn Beck on FOX news? He is either on FOX news or MSNBC and I find on those you have more people going against

the grain than you would find on CNN, they're more conservative, play by the book, keep it consistent type of news. Whereas FOX news and MSNBC go against the grain, more voicetress and bold in their media approaches.

So, one is more conservative or more liberal than the other. You were saying one has more leeway, does that mean that ultimately they are both under the same umbrella?

I still think they're under the same umbrella. I think it's purposefully made that way. It's not an accident by far. It's not, oh well, FOX news you can have your people do and say what they want but CNN you need to be structured this way. I believe it's all set up that way for a purpose.

And what purpose would you say that is?

I mean it's deception at a mass level. The media is the elite's mouthpiece and so it's a way to help keep people quiet and try to keep them cool. And if you see on this one channel rebels that seem like, from the outside looking in, they're going against the grain, then you'll have some people that think that's good you do have these higher up people that feel the same way that I do but they don't have the understanding that they're all under the same umbrella. It's like you're paid off to be my bold mouthpiece on this news channel. They still all fall under the same umbrella. They're all working for the same master.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

Yeah!

How so?

It goes back to Bible prophecy. It helps me know what kind of moves that I may need to make as far as my life is considered according to what the scripture say you need to do in certain situations. Using the media sources to be watchful for certain events that are taking place in the world help me to act accordingly or share information with other who are on the same page as I am that may want to act accordingly. I make get a text message from someone that says breaking news turn on this channel. It may be knowledge at the moment that I didn't know so that's important to me.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Most definitely. The media is ran by the elite of the society and the elite only what the elite to know what they want them to know and at the level they want them to know things. I believe that they put certain things in the media to distract your attention away from important issues at hand. I believe that they don't tell the full truth of give all of the pertinent information that people need about the important issues at hand. That's because who the media is ran by, your Rothschilds, Rockefellers, Buildabergs, Trilateral Commissions. Those types of things because if the world really knew the true news about what is really going on, a lot of people wouldn't be too happy.

Where do you find the true news?

In the scriptures, in the Word.

What role or position does news play in our society? What does it do for you?

I think it plays a major position in our society because a lot of people really rely on the news. It's a major source of people's information and even their belief system. I mean, that's the main thing we have in life is what we believe and if people are able to twist and contort our belief systems and get away with it they will. And the news is one of the best ways to do it. You have people that rely on that certain local news channel in their community, that's their information system and they believe everything that that news channel says or you have people who completely rely on CNN and take it as truth and then will go a debate with another person and say yes because CNN said it or because my local news channel 5 said it so yes that's what's true. It affects people's belief system, what the media says truly affects people's belief system. So yes it's important in people's lives because a lot of people live by it. As far as me, I don't live by it but I do believe some of the information that they give is useful. Which is why I do look at it, or read it, or look certain things up but it's not a part of my belief system. I don't take everything that the media feeds us and run with it.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

I do use the news for the weather. You definitely want to dress accordingly when it comes to the weather, you want to know what's going on. You don't want to walk outside into a tornado.

You mentioned earlier you like to know what's going on, would surveillance be a reason?

What do you mean by surveillance?

Survey the field, survey the country and the world. Just to know what's going on out there, not necessarily monitoring the people but to monitor situations.

I would definitely agree with that. Really, that's the main reason why I watch the news. Just to keep an eye on what's going on around me locally and around me nationally. Because I'm in one part of the world and it's a lot going on outside of where I am and that doesn't make me obsolete from what's going on outside of where I am just because I'm in the United States. Myself, my family, those I care about as well as those around me are just as affected by the things that are not going on in this country. I think it's important to know and have an understanding of what's going on outside of our country because it does affect us whether people want to believe it affects America or not – it does.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

In the past I would definitely say before I really understood the scriptures from what I do now, it influenced things like how you eat, what you should go to the doctor for, even fashion because news will even tell you the latest look and who's doing what. I guess I would keep up with the news as far as that was concerned in the past. But now it's strictly for information purposes. Having the

understanding that I have now and who are the puppets pulling the strings behind the media, I don't want to be influenced by the media.

Well, take some time to think about a time to think. Give me one example of a time when you thought I should or shouldn't do something because you saw it in the media.

The H1N1 shot.

What do you mean?

I was definitely like I should not do that because the vaccines have substances in them that are harmful for our bodies. So, for a person watching the media sources and listening to the media stories that say how everyone should get this shot because you don't want to get this type of flu when really the truth behind the swine flu is that it wasn't as harmful as the regular seasonal flu, but yet the mainstream media spins it as if it's so dire important to get this shot or you could be plagued with this flu. But what the media won't tell you is the negative effects it'll have on your body if you do take it.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

Yes, the media had me deceived with Mr. Barack Obama. When all that was going on and I didn't truly have the understanding of who truly this man was, I

was telling people to vote for Barack Obama and yes I was influenced by the media because they did a very good job of dressing this man up, he did a good job dressing his own self up. The media did a very good job of getting people emotionally involved with the whole situation. Especially black people because he was spun off to be someone like us when really he's not and being that what our people believe and are yearning for some type of freedom or peace and looking for it so hard in a man or person in the here and now, it was the perfect way to get our people as a whole in a whole emotional uproar. Which is really what happened, you saw on the news, you had people crying when this man became president, millions and millions of people in Chicago standing outside in the cold when he won. It had me emotional and now I know those emotions was for nothing.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

No, I haven't. I haven't ever been interviewed by a news source or anything like that. I've never been in a newsroom.

Do you know anyone who has?

No, I don't.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very

best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job? Who or what would you say is responsible for this success?

There's actually two websites that are alternative media sources. There's one called Last Trumpet Ministries and another called Prophecy News Watch. I really believe those two alternative media sources do an excellent job in tying in what the main stream media is telling us and how it relates to Bible prophecy, how the truth and deceit that the media tells us ties into Bible prophecy and these two sites actually take you directly to the scriptures in the Bible and link it to the information that they're pulling from certain media sources and letting you know what the Lord says in regards to these certain issues or topics that the mainstream media is talking about and passionate about. For example, the BP oil spill, H1N1, the war in Iraq, Obama's new healthcare plan and just where certain major topics that the mainstream media is passionate about and how it relates to our world and where we are at as far as prophecy is concerned. So, I wouldn't necessarily say I rely but for lack of a better term those are two sites that I rely on for I would say 9 times out of 10 for solid media information.

What about those sites do you like? Elaborate on the solid media information and how they actually go to the sources of the news and Bible. What about their news gathering process or what about them do you really like?

What I like about it is the fact that the scriptures that they may use to explain what the Lord says according to prophecy, the fact that I can go to my scripture and look up that same scripture and read it for myself. I can see it with my own

eyes that it's not just b.s. or anything like that so it's the fact that I can relate it my own self as opposed to just taking with the media says on TV and running with it.

Who or what do you think is responsible for this success? Is it because they're fact-checking and showing where they got their sources and information?

Yeah, I would definitely say that, that it's fact checking and they're going to the main sources as far as I'm concerned. And what better source than the script, than what the Lord says. You know, thus says the Lord. I roll with that.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst? Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

Hurricane Katrina! It was at its worst because most of the news coverage was negative news coverage. It wasn't about people being helped, it was about how many black people the police was shooting. They went from being refugee to looters and thugs and gangsters. It was some complete bullshit. To me, what they did was take a tragic situation and enhanced their view of how they already see black people. How the world sees black people, for real, especially how the elites that run the country see the black people because if they cared they would've been down there helping those people but instead everything was a waiting game and people were down there losing their lives over nothing, over trying to go to police officers and getting help and police officers shooting them for walking up to them asking for help or because you have some people running that happen to be running with the group that happen to be doing a little looting or whatever, you're shooting innocent people who just happen to be running, and

you may have had some people looting but you never know the circumstances of why they were really doing what they were doing.

So you don't feel like there wasn't an accurate picture?

No, I don't think it was an accurate picture whatsoever. I believe and I speak for myself, I believe that was one of the worst media coverages ever.

And who was responsible for that?

Like I said, the people who run the media your Rothschilds, Rockefellers, Buildabergs, Bushs, Tri-lateral Commission, all them. Even when the media covered Bush being told that the incident happened the whole look on his face spoke a million words like oh, ok. That's like me going over to a friend of mine and whispering some information in their ear and they just being like oh, cool. That's basically what his body language said was like oh, ok.

Explain to me the connection between the Rothschild and Buildaberg and the media for me? A lot of people, just for clarity purposes might say media corporations are owned by other corporations and those names are nowhere in there. Can you explain that connection?

You have a certain group of individuals who are behind the reason the United States of America is the United States of America how the whole United States of America even developed into being a country. They are behind everything: media, Hollywood, music, any of your major influential systems that affect people on a low level all the way to a mass level. They're behind it because they're bloodline built and founded this country. So it's a what we say goes type policy and if you want to be a part of the media, or reporter, or top actress, or top pop

star or rapper or whatever, you need to get down with our rules and how we run things and if that's at the expense of lives of people that you love or lives of people that you don't know if you want to be a part of this elitist society and what we have going on then this is how you need to get down. Kill or be killed, basically. And the people who want the power and the money and things like that, they aren't trying to be killed so they'll sacrifice lives of innocent people, they'll sacrifice lives of their own loved ones for selfishness.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

I'm not even going to be nice, I would have to give them an F. The majority of it are lies and deception. It goes back to what people believe in and the media plays a humungous part in how people even operate in the everyday lives. I believe people are looking so hard for somebody here and now to lead them that they're willing to sacrifice their own soul they're willing to sacrifice their own belief system trying to keep up with this world.

Would you say the media promotes ideas of "this world"?

I do. The media definitely promotes ideas of this world to the point that people build their lives and raise families on the belief system of others. Because I guess your media sources are considered higher up and important or deemed to be important in society so a lot of people if they believe that it's important then they going to lean more toward the information the media gives. Like I said, people begin to form their whole belief systems and how they raise their kids or what

they teach their kids based off somebody else's thoughts and opinions or what the media or somebody else is telling you opposed to even what you know or feel in your own heart is true. Like the media could tell you a lie and you may know or feel in your heart it's a lie, but because it's coming from the media you believe you that you should trust your country. And so you believe the media wouldn't lie, that's why the media is there, to tell you the truth. So, even though I got this feeling within me telling me it's not right, they're telling me it is so I'll go ahead and go with them. So it begins to twist and contort people's perception and reality, for real. So they get an F.

Are they getting an F because they have the ability to twist people's perceptions or is it because they're twisting perceptions in a deceptive way?

Both.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? Why?

It would depend on the person that's reporting, for real. You probably will find some journalists out there actually that do care and might go against the grain and even put themselves on the line for a story or to try and get some truth out there. But I believe for the most with media and journalists part it's about getting a story so if I got to twist and contort my story to get in on the first page or on the second page, then that's just what I'm going to do.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with?

I mean, it's just, nothing is the truth. It's just nothing is completely 100% true and it's just a whole bunch of distractions. Even when I watch news or read news or get news from people you have to decipher what's true from what the b.s. is. They'll always find a way to throw some b.s. in or a deceitful story to distract your attention away from what's important.

What's important, for clarification, is the Bible?

Yes, Bible prophecy.

How would you improve them?

I mean, if I could, the news would be about prophecy according to thus says the Lord, to the scriptures to what we should be watchful for because this world will pass away and I believe that people need to be on one accord with who God truly is and they need to do what to do according to his laws, statutes, and His commandments and how to really live their life so they can inherit eternal life and the world that is to come because all of this is going to pass away. This is pastime.

What is your occupation?

I am a freelance legal consultant.

Give me a description of what that job entails.

I do tax related, real estate related, and I handle wills, trusts, divorce. We do real estate transactions in terms of deeds. We write business plans, accounting.

And how many years have you done that?

Since 1981.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

I watch MSNBC or CNN almost all day every day.

Why?

Because I want to be informed. I want to see what the Tea Party has cooked up. I want to see what the Republicans have planned.

So you watch it for a lot of politics?

Yes.

So almost all day, every day. You leave it on a station and flip through it?

I leave the TV on all the time. If we weren't doing this interview it would be on. It would MSNBC until they start running a loop and then I'd switch to CNN and then go to FOX.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

Well, there's a combination. Depending on where I am, I might use my phone. If I'm home the television or the internet.

And the phone, you use that because of convenience or...?

Convenience.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

Mostly, since I'm watching CNN and MSNBC it's mostly national or international.

Why do you prefer national or international news?

Current world events.

What's important about current world events?

The wars, terrorism, and the fluctuation of currency.

So you like national and international news because it gives you a larger scope of the news, of what's going on around the world or...?

What's going on around the world. More particularly what's going on in Washington.

Do you watch any local news at all or rarely?

Rarely.

Why would you say that is?

Local news mostly focuses on tragedies and that's not really news.

What do you consider news?

I consider news something worth reporting other than a murder or a robbery.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes.

The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than

other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

Accuracy, fair and balanced reporting, sometimes entertainment as in Bill Mar or Rachel Maddow or Keith Olbermann.

You look at those as entertainment?

Yes.

Why?

Because they put a hilarious spin on the news. They use levity.

So you don't really go to them for information?

The information is good, but it's the way the present the information that's entertaining.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through which the news is delivered?

Certainly, FOX news is the reflection of Rupert Murdoch. Who is probably one of the worst people in the world; therefore, their reporting is terrible. It's biased towards a racist segment of the population because it reflects his own personal racist views in my opinion.

How did you come to your conclusions about Rupert, where did you get your information concerning Rupert's ideology?

Well, the newspapers that he owns prior to him getting into television news all have an ultra-conservative slant. I mean, look, he's from Australia. Look at what

they do to aborigines. So, his heredity and environment comes from a background where he has a superiority complex.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage in general?

Sometimes, because if the Supreme Court renders a decision it may affect, let's say social security or workers' rights in some manner then yes. It will be discussed on the various news shows.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Yes.

Elaborate.

We just talked about Rupert Murdoch and how he only hires people who think like him i.e. Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, and Bill O'Reily, Sara Palin is on that station, Newt Gringrich. It speaks for itself.

And in this particularly case you would say it affects it negatively?

Well, that's their brand of propaganda. You have to realize that the media is the outlet for propaganda to shape public opinion. So, it's very important who controls news outlets because they shape public opinion.

From your perspective, what role or position does news play in our society?

What does it do for you? We kind or just touched on that.

News is a source of propaganda to shape public opinion. There can accurate, fair, and balanced reporting and then there can be misinformation for a particular special interest group's purpose.

Why is the shaping of public opinion important?

Because the masses then respond according to the way they are led. Political decisions are made based on public opinion. Political choices are based on public opinion.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

All the above.

Are there any other usages that I left out.

Not that I can think of.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? If so, tell me about it.

Yea, especially when you start talking about food recalls. It determines if I'm going to stop eating that particular item. That would be a classic example. Or let's say automobile recalls, like the Toyota situation, which would tend not to make me want to purchase one.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall

Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

Sure, I donated clothes during Katrina, I donated money to Haiti. And I'm generally outraged when I see Tea Parties with these racist signs and they refuse to admit that they're racist. And I'm outraged when I see Uncle Tom black people participating with the Tea Party.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

Yes, I've been interviewed by a reporter.

Tell me about that.

A group of my clients were trying to do development actually where the old GM plant was. And as a result of that I spoke to the press. We represented Al Sharpton when they shut down Highway 70. We spoke to the press then. We represented the NAACP when they were boycotting some of the banks relative to placing well qualified minority applicants in sub-prime mortgages when they were well qualified for conventional mortgages. So those are examples when I've been particularly interviewed.

How did that news experience go? For instance, once you saw the finished product were you satisfied with it? Did they do a good job explaining all sides of the story?

Yea, they did a good job.

Overall, your take away experience was...?

Positive.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

I think they did a really good job reporting on Katrina.

How so?

Well, because all through the process before it hit your reporters on the ground they were showing pictures of the waves coming in, and all through the devastation there were reporters who stayed there and reported the news and because of that reporting I think they saved some lives.

Who or what would you say is responsible for this success?

Cable news outlets.

Why?

Because they reached a broader audience. They participated in relief efforts in terms of getting the message out where to donate and what numbers to call to donate.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst? Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

Anytime I watch Bill O'Reily, Sean Hannity, or Glenn Beck.

Why would you say that?

Because they have no concept of reality. Their reality is based on I have enough money and I don't understand why anybody else doesn't. And I don't see where government needs to do things for people who can't do for themselves. Let them sink.

So they have more of an elitist attitude would you say?

Yes.

What's wrong with the elitist attitude?

Well, I have a different phrase for it. I would say they have a racist superiority complex. They're against immigration even though at some point their parents and grandparents had to be immigrants because they aren't native to this soil. But they're against immigration, they're against healthcare reform for those who can't afford it, they're against social security as a safety net.

So it seems like they're in a position of privilege economically and the fact that they don't empathize with those who are not like them is what you're upset about with them particularly.

That and if they had it their way we would still be slaves.

If you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

C.

Why is that?

That is because each particular network or station presents the news with their own slant or bias. There's not truly a free press. There's not a free press that has a mass audience. As much as we would like to say we have a free and open society, we don't. The bias in the news is not so much how the stories are covered but what stories aren't covered.

Do you think MSNBC and CNN has the same bias?

They report from different perspectives, FOX being ultra conservative, CNN being, I would say moderate and MSNBC being progressive. I'll give you an example, let's just say the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. All new reports are filtered through government censors as to what you're allowed to report and what you're not allowed to report. And in a free and open society, the press is allowed to report what it feels the people need to know, not what the government dictates or what the government allows you too.

You're talking about how during times of war the government has...?

Or not just that, if sponsors don't like a particular slant then they pull their programming. So, again, that's why I say it's a C because it's dominated by various other factors beyond the reporter who want to report the honest story.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with?

Sports reporting, ESPN.

Why is that?

Either one team won or one team lost. There's no way you can slant that, you can dislike a particular player but you can't slant who one or who lost.

So there is no bias in sports reporting?

Oh yea, in terms of when they're discussing particular players, there's a lot of bias. There are some players that reporters hate. I'll give you an example of bias in sports reporting, when it comes to voting for the hall of fame, a lot of guys played for the Boston Red Socks, mostly all white with lesser numbers than Jim Rice who got into the hall of fame before him because he refused to speak with reporters. It took the veterans committee to vote him in. Now he has 3,000 hits and over 500 homeruns and 300 lifetime average and he couldn't get into the hall of fame but Freddy Lynn who played center field with him has way less numbers, like only probably 350 home runs and he got in as soon as he was eligible where it took Jim Rice maybe 15 years after he retired.

Why is sports reporting like ESPN your favorite.

Because it's accurate, it's either win or lose.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with?

Local news is biased in terms of local political thought. It slants coverage and accentuates negative coverage of urban areas. Meaning, the headline story is

always a robbery, murder, or a rape as if that's the most important story that happened that day.

How would you improve them?

By focusing on issues that affect people's daily lives.

Some people will argue that crime does affect their daily life. What would you say against that?

Yes it does but it isn't the most important thing that happened that day. For instance, the other day the senate voted on a defense appropriation bill. In that defense appropriation bill there was an amendment to repeal the don't ask don't tell policy and on the local news the lead story that particular day was a robbery. Which impacted a larger segment of the population? The robbery or the defense appropriation bill and repeal the don't ask don't tell policy?

What audience do you think the local news serves right now?

It depends on which channel but there is no liberal media outlet for local news in St. Louis other than radio.

What is your occupation?

I'm a transit operator.

What does that entail?

Basically, it entails picking up passengers and traveling to certain destinations on a fixed route.

How long have you been a transit operator?

I've been a transit operator for 34 years.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

I watch the news every day.

Why?

Just for communication purposes.

When you want to communicate with who?

Just the everyday person.

You said every day, about how many times a day do you think?

I watch it at least twice a day.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

Usually the television or radio.

Why is this?

Accessibility, so I can switch from station to station and compare what the commentators are saying.

You listen to the radio in your car?

In my car.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

All of them.

Why?

Just to know just what's going on; just not local here in the area.

You like to know what's going on around the world?

Yea.

Why is that important to you?

Well, it's just a personal thing where I just want to know.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes.

The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

I guess reliability of the station in reporting although some of them are kind of inaccurate. What I look for is just the reliability of the station.

Because you want to feel like the information you are getting is correct? Is that why reliability is important to you?

Yes.

What do you do with the information that you get from stations that are less accurate? If you think that this story they're presenting isn't accurate, what do you do with the information?

Oh, it's not that I don't watch it, I mean, I will watch it. But it's more or less like I will make comparisons of how they are reporting the story.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through

which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

No.

Why not?

Basically, it's like I said, I watch if it's not giving me the information that I want, I'll switch and look at a different station or go to a different channel.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

Absolutely not.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Yes, definitely.

Why?

Because a lot of the stories are often times repeats or giving you a more concluded version of an earlier story or something of that nature.

How is that affected by who owns it?

I say that because I know that none of it is 100% accurate but to have a different version is why I switch from channel to channel.

What role or position does news play in our society? What does it do for you?

I can't say that it has an impact but it does generate people to communicate as to what's going on, what's happening when it happened and things of that nature.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

Just general information and keeping up with the weather.

Do you pay attention to politics or anything like that?

Oh, definitely.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

No.

Any specific reason why it hasn't?

Because usually my point of view is always somewhat different than what is being reported.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

Yes, it has affected me when it's tragic news such as Katrina or the situation in Haiti it makes me want to do the humanly thing which is to try to help or assist people.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

No.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

I would have to say, again, that usually it's best when something tragic has happened.

Why is that?

I guess it's just the attention that you want to know, you want the latest information, you want the most updated information.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

Most days I feel that way.

Why do you feel that?

It's just my personal belief is just that your inner self lets you know that they're not reporting it with 100% truth and accuracy.

Do you think they're doing that because they're human or do you think it's intentional.

I think it's controlled as to what they can report, how often they can report and oftentimes the most vital information is never reported.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

C.

Why is that?

I guess it's because of the way the reporting is done and the accuracy. True accounts of the story are sometimes withheld from just general information. Most of the time, the *real* stories are never reported. What is news to one person may not be news to the next person.

You feel like a lot of the time the news isn't news to you?

Isn't newsworthy.

Why do you think they put stories that aren't newsworthy on?

It goes back to the inaccuracy of reporting real news.

And you were saying you think it's because it is controlled?

Right.

What's wrong with real news? Why won't they report real news?

I guess it's a mechanism they use to more or less control the population emotionally.

Who are you talking about?

The media itself.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with?

I like international reporting.

Why is that?

Just because I like to know other things than local news. I like to know what going on in different parts of the world.

You think that we do a good job on international reporting?

Not too good.

What's wrong with it?

It goes back to withholding stories. Stories that are newsworthy are oftentimes not reported.

Do you have an example?

I guess my best example of this would be the AP Press or UPI International or Reuters. I would prefer news or information being reported by Reuters.

Why do you like them?

Because oftentimes it's global news and news that is worthy of being reported.

What do you consider newsworthy to be? Define newsworthy.

When I say something is newsworthy, it doesn't necessarily have to be something bad, it can be somewhat indifferent, but as long as it's accurate and the real story is being reported.

If the real story isn't getting reported, what do you think is getting reported?

What is being reported is what they want you to know.

What they think is in the best interest for you to know?

Yes, and this goes back to controlled reporting?

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with? We talked about this already so how would you improve them?

It could be more detailed. I guess some of the hidden facts about certain stories could and should be reported.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Well, to add clarity to the whole fact about reporting or journalism within itself. For the most part I know that it's not 100% accurate and a lot of the stories that are being reported, it's not newsworthy. I mean, that's just my perspective and how I look at it.

Would you say that when you look at the news, you look at it as a skeptic?

Yes. And if I read or watch the news I look at in detail: what they want to tell you, how often they want to tell you, and if they want to tell you. Because there's a big difference in sitting and watching a report and knowing that you maybe possibly read something else somewhere else about this story that's being reported.

What is your occupation?

Reporter anchor.

What does that consist of?

Basically, gathering and disseminating information.

How many years have you been a reporter anchor?

About 30.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

Every day.

Why?

I like to be up on what's going on for a variety of different reasons and a variety of different interests that I have. I have, I think, a lot of interest that the average person doesn't have and not only in local and national news but the international news as well. So I tend to like to stay well versed.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

Generally newspaper, unless there's something immediate, unless the Arch falls over, or it was 9/11, or the Challenger blew open or something that's a real time huge event that I want to know about it right now. But usually those things have

to be super major, like the stories of the year where I want the information right now because it's going on now. Beyond that I tend to read a lot, so I tend to like newspapers so that's how I get a lot of my information, newspapers.

You said you like newspapers because you like to read, is there any other reason specifically?

It's relaxing. With the hectic pace of the day I get actually to slow down and concentrate on stories and I get more out of them. So, in addition to reading and getting informed it allows me time to relax as well.

You said you get more out of a newspaper, do you get less from the other media outlets?

No, they serve their purpose. If I want to get something immediate I turn on television. They can tell me right away what I need to know about a particular thing. So, that serves that purpose. If I want more in depth information then I can always go to my phone, the internet and find out more of what's going on with that particular thing and read the newspaper the next day. But television serves it's purpose of giving me instant immediate information.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news? Why is this?

Probably national and international.

Why is that?

I'll pay attention to the local stories that are most significant but I have a great interest in national politics, for example. And because invest a lot I have a great interest in international finance because I invest in international banks. So, I will

tend to read the financial times and wall street journal and a lot of newspapers like that. Why? Because I have a specific interest in foreign banks and that's because of investments. It's because of my interest mainly that I spend a lot of time reading material that related to that.

Why are you interested in politics?

My major was political science. Everything is governed by politics. It pretty much affects your everyday life. What your rights are going to be, what direction the country is going to go in, how problems are going to get solved. Everything I think revolves around politics. And particularly because I'm in the news business and you need to know a lot about what's going on because you're covering a lot of people, a lot of different events. You kind of really need to know a little about a lot of things to be able to be fairly knowledgeable so when you get out on the news set you have enough working information that you can at least discuss the topic with someone and you're not totally in the dark.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

I look for as much objectivity as I can find. I like the straight forward facts, I like to be able to hear all sides presented in the presentation of those facts. Generally, I don't really look for as much entertainment. I really want to know what's going

on, what are the views. Like if it's polls, for example. Tell me what the polls are and I can make my own decision. If there is a discussion to be had on it then I like to hear from both sides of the issue and then I can make my decision or what side I'm going to fall on. So, I just generally like a presentation of the facts. Sometimes I'll listen to some of the opinionated journalists who have a view because often they bring their positions into a sharp focus and so I'll listen to them occasionally. But, generally, more or less just objective and relative news.

What do you mean by objective?

Presenting both sides of the argument where the facts will be laid out.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through

which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

No, not at all.

Why not?

No reason. The owners are not on the air, they're not presenting the news so there's no reason to really care who owns it. As long as I'm satisfied with the presentation I don't really care who owns it.

The responsibility of the presentation would be on who? Who would you say the players are?

The assignment editor, the producers, anchors, reporters, news director, those are the people assigned the day to day management. The general manager is involved in overall station direction.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

Yea, if there's a negative story about something I'm less likely to get involved with it. For example, if there was a negative story about a charity and the report said they were a bunch of crooks or frauds then I'll be less inclined to volunteer and work with that charity. Negative and positive stories both influence what I think of the organization and would influence whether I would tend to get involved with the organization. As far as hobbies and interest, is it affected? Yea, it depends on what the story is. If it's a bad story that say European banks are going to fail and here are the facts, I may say maybe I need to get out of European banks. Or some information about a political candidate that may help determine my level of support. So, yea, news coverage does impact all that.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Not really. Certain people might gravitate to certain operations by the ownership. There may be people who share the owner's political views, for example. And so they're more likely to, for example, if it's a minority newspaper for example, minority reporters may gravitate to it. If there's a gay and lesbian newspaper, gay and lesbian folk may gravitate to it. Any type of newspaper is likely to attract those people who are more likely to share the views of ownership or station management. So the owner doesn't have to say do this or do that because many times they're going to be on the same page. So, the owner won't have to come down and say, you know, here's what we believe. More than likely the people who are coming to work for that publication are going to believe that going in.

So it's more implicit than explicit?

Yea, absolutely.

What role or position does news play in our society?

It plays the same position as it has since its first person carved out a newspaper out on tablets or something, keeping the society informed. That's the first, keeping the government in check by keeping citizenry informed, I think that's the second. Provides a check on power because the only counted measure against power in government, power in business, power in any manner of things is an informed and alarmed and activated citizenry who, because of their sheer numbers, is able to exercise a power over the government, business, or other force. So you have to get a lot of citizen informed to overwhelm a bureaucrat. And media is able to take that energy and focus it laser like on one target and that's how it's able to make change.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

Keep up on politics and help in financial decisions and help generally keep knowledgeable about national and worldwide events.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

Yes, it has influenced candidates I've voted for, where I invest my money, some charities I've decided to donate to. That's just a few things I can think of right of the back.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

Yea, 9/11. I think that had an impact of inspiring togetherness in the country and patriotism and I think as a result of that it was something we often talked about at that time. Hurricane Katrina was another instance where your heart went out to the people who were caught in that situation as they tried to get the government moving to respond to it quickly. The Iraq War, again, which I was covering. The first Desert Storm where Iraq invaded Kuwait and the nation was kind of unified that something needed to be done. And so that was a sense of pride in the nation's armed forces that they were able to get going and accomplish something. Those are all ranges of emotion. Absolutely.

As an investigative report, do these same emotions drive you when deciding which stories to cover?

I don't get as involved emotionally. I think I'm able to separate a lot of my emotions from the story. I have an intense curiosity, it's a difference. If you're too emotional in a story you're going to overlook facts and you could be guilty of tunnel vision and of being too subjective and of missing something that needed to be included or it may affect whether you did the story at all. So I try not to approach things on an emotional basis but I try to say this is something that needs to be exposed, this is an issue.

Why?

Because of the way I'm wired and the way I approach it. I'm keenly interested in cases where people are wronged but I tend not to react that emotionally to it as opposed to looking at it as a mission that needs to be accomplished or an issue that needs to be tackled. So you're able to kind of step back from it but charge full speed ahead in getting it done. So, it's almost like big game hunting or something like that, like a hunter more than someone on a great emotional mission, it's like a quest and bring about change if you can or at the least you give people a voice.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news?

Yes.

Explain.

I've been interviewed on a couple of TV shows and interviewed on probably every major radio news show in the city as well as by different newspapers. But one of my dramatic was after my photographer was shot and while we were investigating a story. I drove him to the hospital and I was asked by the reporters from the other stations that were camped outside of the hospital (because this was a story that all the other stations covered including us) for an interview. Now that was an emotional time for me because my photographer is my best friend and he and just been shot and I'm wondering how he's doing. I mean, we knew he was going to pull through but still it was a very serious thing and I was still shaken up. I was out there and there was a contract out on my life and he caught the bullet instead of me. It was an emotional time, but I was more angry than scared or whatever the case might be. So you have reporters asking you questions, not about what you think, but about what happened. So, those questions were emotional for me and I got teary eyed and everything. I even had to stop in the middle of the interview to collect myself. It gave me the

opportunity to relate to those who we interview daily. So, yea, that was my most dramatic experience.

How would evaluate that experience?

I thought the reporters were sensitive and consider. I really do. I was a victim and generally reporters have compassion to the victim.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

9/11.

Tell me about it.

They were able to cover a dramatic instance yet keep it in a perspective of providing relevant information quickly so as to calm a lot of frayed and national nerves and do all this in real time. They captured the plane flying into the building, for one, so you could actually see in real time what was going on. Then the buildings collapsed, then be able to note that there were other planes still in the air and report at the same time the measures the government had taken about that. It shut down air travel and where did it come from and who was in charge and then featured the people on live continuously updating the people that someone was in charge of the situation and someone was calling the shots. So, it informed the people of what happened but also prevented a national panic all at the same time. So, I think that on 9/11 media was at its very best.

Who or what would you say is responsible for this success?

No one person. It was a concerted team effort by a lot of well-trained individuals. Each of them got out there and did their jobs. So no one person could have done all that: from the assignment editors sending out the crews, to the news director organizing who's going to do what, to the individual reporter out on the field getting that interview, taking chances, getting as close to the scene as they could, photographer, engineering units, writers, those answering the phones and all this in real time. Having to do this with no preparation and that's where all the experience of these people paid off. No one network stands out, all of them did an outstanding job. They all did an excellent job.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

The balloon boy.

Explain.

It was a hoax and I think everybody jumped on it giving it full coverage because everyone believed that this little boy was in a balloon floating across the country, across Colorado I think. And I understand why they did it, it's because police said initially that they thought the kid was in there. But everyone devoted a whole lot of time to it and no one really knew that no one was actually in there. Sometimes the media gets taken. They relied on police, and you have to rely on police but it was a hoax perpetrated by the police too. So usually when the media gets taken it's that the authorities are taken also, the police, and the folk running whatever jurisdiction it is, but it was overkill.

Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

The police fell for the con and then they pass it on to the media. And then the competitive energies are going because if your competitors are covering it then you are more or less put into a situation to have to make a decision to wait and verify? And some outlets did.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

I give them an A. In journalism, I think they do a good job covering issues. I think they bring to light the most important issues of the day. I think that there are so many political outlets that you can find one that fits your persuasion. So if one network isn't covering the things you think they should be covering, generally, you can find another station whose of a political persuasion that will agree that the stories you think are important are important. So, there is enough diversity of views, opinion, and coverage to give you maximum opportunity to find out everything that's important going on. And generally I think the reporters do a good job of trying to get information out there to the public. They do it quickly. Do people have own their biases? Yea, but you find somebody on a different network with another bias that may be more to your liking and that's generally where you end up getting your news from. In the US you have that choice. I also think our journalists are not afraid to challenge the government. If you go some other places like Mexico or Iran, you're likely to end up dead, killed by some government operative. Unlike the US were politician have been forced

to resign due to media, the media here have much more access and are less pressured by government reprisals.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? We pretty much just answered that so I'll go on to the next question.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with? How would you improve them?

I don't think there's an aspect that I'm dissatisfied with. I think on the whole they really do a good job and I think that you have so many choices that if you say well I think this operation is biased, well you can look another channel, another network to your liking that more reflects. They've got Spanish channels, Asian channels, Black channels, they've got Republican leaning channels, they've got democrat leaning channels, they've got some that are somewhat in the middle. So whatever your view you can find the station or the network that you feel most comfortable with, that you feel accurately reflects how you think or at least presents the information, the facts that you think need to be presented.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Not really.

What is your occupation?

I am a business manager for a labor union as we as an international vice president of a union.

Give me a brief description of your job.

Negotiating contracts, handling grievances and arbitrations, sending people to work and organizing.

How many years have you done that?

I've been a business manager for 33 years and an international vice president for 6 years.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

I watch the news everyday: morning, national news; and evening, national news and local news as well.

Why is that?

It's a quick way to find out what's going on in the world as well as your community. 20 minutes in the morning to see the Today Show and in the evening we watch the national news to see what happened during the day as well as the local news. Kind of gives me an update of what happened in the city, I live in St. Louis.

And it's important for you to know what's going on?

Yea, it gives you a good idea of which way the world is moving and what I'm doing.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones

and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

I will get it on television.

Why do you prefer the television?

Well, I originally worked in television, both locally and nationally. Just, to me, it's a truer form of communication.

Why do you say that?

Well, I know how new is created and radio a lot of times is nothing more than people reading the newspaper, etc. Normally on the news you're going to see the face of somebody who's being interview or you're going to see the disaster video, etc. To me, it's just truer.

What did you do when you worked in television?

I was a sound technician for a news crew.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

Which kind of news do I watch the most?

Yes.

I watch both exactly. It's kind of like a little contest. I watch the evening national news at 5:30 and turn on the local news and see if it coincides, too see if they carry the same major stories.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes.

The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than

other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

On the national level it is really the politics and followed by any kind of disasters or crime sprees or something of that nature. Versus the local news it's more of just the local interest of what's happening in the community that I live in, the politics of it, what they're building, what happened during that day.

Be more specific. What qualities do you look for among your news preference. For example, what's important that a particular source has for you?

I've just over the years rated them. CBS, NBC and I have my favorites only from the fact that of what I believe is really true news, the way they present it.

Well, break it down for me.

The credibility, I guess that would be the word, the credibility of the story. The unbiased presentation I guess would be a good way to put it.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

I'm just thinking the one that I don't like and that's FOX but other than that it doesn't bother me whether it's CBS, NBC, or CNN. Ownership has nothing to do with it.

So what bothers you about FOX?

Fox is very slanted, they're very much, I guess, republicans and are just against the everyday person.

What's the everyday person?

Just a working class person, I guess they're against the democrat, they're against what a person is supposed to be able to do. They just, to me, they just lie; it's slanted.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage in general?

My job is affected by news coverage because of the people I represent and what they do, etc. And then on the national level as an international vice president of the largest entertainment union in the world, and politics play a whole lot into contracts and our people who travel cover the news, we do setups for the president and so it does affect it; and well as national contracts.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

No. I mean, the only one I've ever seen that is affected is FOX. I mean, I worked locally in St. Louis back when it was called CBS ONO back in the early 70s. Later I went to work in New York for ABC then I went to CBS and even working for them the ownership didn't bother me a bit or when I watch it.

From your perspective, what role or position does news play in our society?

What does it do for you?

For me it kind of keeps my eyes wide open to what's happening in the world and seeing how it really affects the rest of the people I deal with every day. I mean,

I'm out in the streets talking to people and I can tell sometimes when people watch the news and know what's going on and the people who don't watch the news. It's a good conversational piece to talk to people when you're dealing with them as well about the news and what's happening locally and throughout the United States, and the world.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

I use news just to stay on top of what's happening in the world every day. The local news, again it just about the community as well as what the weather is the next day and a little bit of the sports that tells you what's happening with the local teams.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small?

It just opened my eye to politics more than anything else. As far as buying anything it's never made me decide to buy or not to buy something because of the news program but you can hear something on the news one night about a person or activity that catches your eye and the next day you pay attention to see if its changed or change the channel to see if somebody came up with another side to the same event.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

The only affect I've experienced I guess would be a catastrophe such as Haiti that would make me want to find out where I can donate money to Haiti or other disasters around the world. Other than that, the news is strictly an eye opener for me.

And by eye opener you mean it gives you information that maybe you hadn't known before?

Yea, it shows me what's happening in maybe someplace else in the world or brings my attention to something that's happening in France and I'm in St. Louis. It hadn't been for the news then I probably wouldn't have known about it. The news, the half hour or 22 minutes, gives the strong, the top subjects that you can read about later on. To me that's what it is.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

Oh, I have. I have experienced being a sound man, watching a reporter, how they ask the questions and how a person answers them, the slant they do when they go back to do the editing and such. It's very different the news is, you have to be careful about the news. That's why you just can't take everything for just what it shows right there. I've learned it for a long time, I've always said that you could interview the President of United States, he could say something very important and ten minutes later you show a gun battle. Two days later they only thing everyone will remember is that gun battle. I've been interviewed on TV, been behind the camera a lot of years, so, I've seen it all.

Is that one of the reasons you say the news would strictly be an eye opener?

Yea, if it's interesting enough I'll check it out. Attention getter I guess would be the word, and eye opener.

You mentioned that you witness that slanting reporting that can take place when reporters tell stories. Talk about that a little bit more. Was there a lot of that going on?

Back in the 70s there was an awful lot of it. There was a lot of one-sided...the reporter made the story. I remember I went to work for ABC and the first correspondent I worked for at that time was Peter Jennings. Peter always had

one thing, he was a young correspondent back then, he said the best thing a correspondent can do is to not be seen. Let the film at that time show the story and do the voice-over, not show the correspondent because people want to see the story. And a lot of time pictures won't lie. In interviews people can lie, they can edit it whatever way they want to do it.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

At its very best? Probably the news at its very best is right around now this present day. The news is gathered quickly because of the videotape, the electronics back in the 70s were recorded on film, so the stories were always old, being old meaning 18, 20 hours old. Whereas now the videotape or anything else, they can put it right in your living room as it's happening. So, it's got to the best that it's been right now. Live is good.

You're saying that it's at its best because the technology allows it to come quicker and faster?

Yea, I mean I was there when news reel was going from film to video and before with the lab it would take 2, 2 1/2 hours to developed that whereas the videotape, they could have it on. Back then it took a little bit longer but it's now out in the film and they could beam it live.

Who or what would you say is responsible for this success? You were saying technology...

Yea, technology makes the story. Everything can be broadcast live if it's that important and it takes it away from the editor, you can't slant it, you're going to see it. The voice-over may say something different but you're looking at it with both of your eyes.

You said live takes away from the reporter so that he/she can't slant it, is that because she/he has less time to put together the story?

Right, if they're live on the scene or wherever, you're watching that, you're seeing that and not that they're liars. Because they're not, but maybe it could've been said differently.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst? Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

I would say during the riots in the 70s with civil disobedience. It was all about the race riots, I covered numerous race riots. It was a point when we as a crew got beat several times by the national guard and the police and everyone hated the news and in turn the news hated everybody else. The stories when they came out, they didn't show both sides of anything. Not that I'm a right on person but it was just really a lot of bad slanted news back then. And to me it was more of a get even. You caught in the middle of tear gas and beat on and the correspondents, their tendency was that these were bad people when really, when the truth is we were in the wrong place. And that was the 70s, bad, and it rolled over into the

80s with the politics. News now is more accurate than it was before. In the 70s and 80s, you could take a story back and make it anyhow you wanted and make whoever you want look good or look bad because you had the time until they put it on the air and such.

You think it's changed much?

Yea, it's changed because people see it live, they see these town hall meetings, campaign where news crews follow people around but they're all one-man bands, etc. And I think people in today's age, the 21st century, understand there's no secrets to this: there's a camera, there's a microphone and we know it's going to be there so why hide it? And they're going to see it. And I think most people I know will check it out at another station to see who's telling the truth. Today's audience, today's person, they understand that there's a microphone somewhere. This is not magic, just aim with a camera. But there is a difference.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

Actually, I would say the network level a B and at the local level a C-. It's just such a difference.

Like what?

Just in the way they present a story. I suppose it's because they have more money at the upper level. But, of course correspondents are wiser, sharper, did their homework in their stories you could say, whereas at the local level everybody is looking for sensationalism versus reality. Local correspondents

want to make it to the top and they thought sensationalism would get them to the top.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with?

I guess the ability to put it live on the air and the follow-up on it. There's more time given today for stories than back in the 70s and 80s. I guess it's because they have more air time to fill. News seems to be able to run a story longer than before like the oil spill whatever else they follow-up on, you know, in depth. They leave very little to your imagination, they will investigate it.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with? How would you improve them?

Actually, on the same thing it would be at the local level. I think that the local TV stations look to hire the younger people, but the younger people are looking not to present news, but they're looking to present themselves: it's me, here's my picture. Nobody cares who it is, if they cared it would be the anchor newsperson. Overall, the news is supposed to be the news and a pretty face is a pretty face. But that's got to do with the economics as well. The smarter more intelligent person is going to move forward. At the local level if you go from a 2 million person city down to a 100,000, the news is...I guess you get what you pay for.

What is your occupation?

A radio producer.

What does that entail?

The entails reporting, anchoring, social media updating, website updating, editing, mentoring, and getting up in the morning.

How many years have you been a radio producer?

A little over three.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

I pay attention to news on a daily basis. But, I guess as far as how much news I'm consuming varies on the days of what I'm doing that day.

Why do you consume it daily?

Well, I'm interested to know what's going on like in my world and some days I pay attention more attention to national news than I pay attention to local news but it's also a part of my job obviously. Personal interest and work related.

You say it varies on the day because you could be doing one of these other tasks?

Correct. Or maybe there's like a really big story that's going on that I'm very interested in and I've decided to put some other things aside to look at that more.

So your personal interests and work related things can combine?

Yes, yes.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones

and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it? Why is this?

Probably from the internet, and then radio, and then, well I just got a fancy cell phone two weeks ago through work and I downloaded an NPR app, so now I guess cell phone is number three.

So when you said the internet before you meant like on your desktop?

Yea, yea and that could be a variety of sources like newspaper and radio websites mostly.

Why do you prefer the internet and radio sources?

Radio I prefer, well I'll say NPR, because I'll like their style of reporting. I like to be able to listen to the story and I also just appreciate the type of reporting that they do. And as far as internet consumption goes, I consume it mostly that way because I'm at my desk at work and I can just sit and look something up if I want to or need to. And it's the same on the weekend, because also I don't have cable and like I don't tune into the nightly news.

Is that because you don't have cable? If you did have cable would you tune in to the nightly news?

Probably not because I don't really like television news.

Why not?

It's very superficial. It just gives you the basic facts and I'm more interested in understanding why something is going on and how it has gotten to that point. And as far as TV news goes, you have your 24 hour cable channels which is just

like such a mess for the most part. But then you have your local TV stations. And while I appreciate what they're trying to do, it's just not for me.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

I would say local and national. If there's an international story, I guess it just depends on what's going on. I really haven't been looking at a lot of international news lately. I guess it's because there's so much ridiculous stuff that's going on in the U.S. lately or the media makes it ridiculous or whatever. It's election season, so... I guess I do consume a lot of international stories through the radio. I guess I'm not seeking international stories as much, that's the difference. I think NPR does a pretty good job with their international reporting.

And so the times you're not able to seek out international reporting you like NPR because they can bring it to you?

Yea, it's not perfect but...

Would you say local and national stories are more important to you?

I think it's all important, I think besides stuff going on in the middle-east right now, I feel like not as much affecting my daily life and not that the stuff in the middle-east is affecting my daily life but it's affecting things that are going on around me.

More immediately?

I guess so...it's not a matter of importance, I think it's just a matter of...maybe it is importance. Or maybe what I feel like what I can have some sort of impact on by choosing also to report on something.

Things that are more direct in your environment?

I guess so, or maybe my outer circle, my future, our future.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes.

The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

Can I break it up by internet and radio?

Sure.

Okay, so like with radio, I want a story that's going to be informative but it's also going to be interesting to listen to. Like a reporter can take a really in-depth topic, and then make it personal and get me to care about it and then show the broader picture...tear at my emotions, get me a little riled up and inform me. And then as far as the internet, I guess when I go on the internet to consume news, I'll go to a website that goes maybe more in depth like a newspaper website because I want all the little details answered and the questions that I have.

So you like the ear platform of the radio.

I like that I can imagine it in my brain.

Do you think that television takes away from that imagination?

Oh yea, because they're forcing you to look at these b.s. shots. Like a radio story about healthcare and maybe the healthcare debate, you're going to get from the reporters some politicians, you're going to get analyst, you're going to get some

people in the healthcare field; whereas on TV it's going to be this image of someone on the senate floor just spewing a bunch of stuff with their arm waving around, and then they're going to show the front of some clinic – who cares? When you're forcing me to look at a shot of whatever building because you don't know what else to put there, it takes away from it. Your brain is focusing on the image instead of the grander idea.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

Yes.

How so?

There are certain companies that own specific news operations and knowing, because I've studied media ownership, it's a topic that I care about and I really reallyreallyreally wish more people knew about and understood. There are certain news organizations that have certain political preferences and that trickles down into local media coverage. You know it might not always be apparent but – do you want me to go into specifics?

Yes, you can.

Like Clear channel, there are no Clear channel stations here in town. I actually used to work for them. For instance, they donated millions of dollars to the republican campaign, they also carry more conservative talk shows. I've never talked to the brothers that own Clear channel but like when the Dixie Chicks spoke out against Bush in 2001, the Dixie Chicks were no longer played on any

Clear channel station in the country and they own thousands of radio stations. So for something like that to happen that's a really big deal. To know that there's the possible political bias behind certain news outlets. And I think that I'm smart enough to see through all that and any news report that comes out, I take it with a grain of salt. Obviously there's some sources that I trust more than others, but I can still know when to fill in the blanks and that's just because I'm trained to do that. I think non-profit reporting is generally more trustworthy because they don't have to report to anyone and they're not worried about selling their product, they're just worried about reporting and getting their product out there. So, that's why I think public media or independent newspapers, while they still could have a bias, at least they're less likely to have a financial bias or political backing.

Would you say you're more conservative or liberal?

Liberal.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

My job is and I guess because of my job I'm not allowed to participate in political and social activist activities like I have in the past. I used to be pretty active. And while I miss being able to go and protest and knock on people's doors and try to convince them to go vote, at least I can draw attention to some issues by reporting on them. I take my job very seriously in the sense that I want to report as fairly as I can on a story no matter what my own opinion is. Like I don't want my opinion out there, I want people to decide for themselves.

You said because you're a radio producer, your job tends to limit the types of activities you would have formerly participated in.

Correct.

How does that make you feel?

It was really hard for me at first, at this point I'm a little more used to it. But, at first it was hard because political activism and social activism was such a huge part of my life. But it was a decision I had to make. It was like okay, you can do this or you can keep signing petitions but what is that really going to do; whereas I could take my thoughts and views...and tell people's stories on a massive scale that maybe people wouldn't have known. And so that made me feel a little more comfortable with it.

How long would you say you've been politically aware?

I guess when I first got into it was when the war first started I think March 2002, when we first bombed Iraq. I was 17. A little after September 11th.

How did you feel about September 11th?

I didn't know what the hell was going on. I knew something really bad but I also saw it as people taking advantage of a situation and I didn't like that. And it was hard for me to because I was a junior in high school and it was hard for me because I was becoming pretty passionate about current affairs and a lot of my friends around me really didn't care so that was difficult.

You felt a negative emotion about 9/11 and that's what really sparked your attention about politics?

Yea, I mean, I was sad about it, it was very sad but I also didn't understand why we had to go to war with a country because of it.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Yea, I mean you could have someone at the top saying no I don't want you to cover that, I don't think we should talk about that and that affects the information flow for everyone in that market.

You've experienced that before?

I have never been told not to cover a story which I have been very very lucky. I don't know if it's the people I worked with...that's a big part of it. I've had really wonderful bosses, people have even told me to like simmer down, I know why you're passionate about this and why you want to do it but you need to like remove yourself from it and you can talk about it, just be careful.

You said you consider yourself lucky, is that because you've heard stories?

Oh yea, I've heard other stories and it's not all political, it's also with television. Like there may be a story that's really important but it's boring for television; there are some stories that just don't translate to television because they don't have pictures to fill. But I have heard of people. In my college there was some alum who went to work for MSNBC, he came to speak with us and he told us about certain stories, MSNBC which is owned all the way at the top by Disney soon to be Comcast, I don't really understand what their interest are but he said some of his colleagues who were told they couldn't report on certain things –

Disney, GE, right? No! Disney is ABC...anyways GE. If GE wanted to do something like raise electric rates, I don't understand how all of that works, but they didn't report negatively on GE because GE owned them. Stuff like that. That's a problem, a really big problem.

Why is that a problem?

Because you can be any corporation with a ton of money and you can get away with murder because you control the information flow.

Why is important who the information or who's sending the information, why is that information important?

Because if corporation A has a certain agenda that they want to fill and they own 20% of the media market in the country and let's just say 20% of the population only goes to that one source for their information, then that's 20% of the population that doesn't understand what's going on or that's not getting that bit of information.

And information is important?

Information is very important, I know that some people think that the news doesn't matter to them because it doesn't affect them on a daily basis but somewhere it does; whether you're talking about raises taxes or going to war, everything affects everyone and we need to be informed. With the Telecom Act, that's when theylaxed all the media ownership laws and that's when the media just started going crazy and they got rid of the Fairness Doctrine. If Rush Limbaugh started talking stuff about John Kerry, before the Fairness Doctrine John Kerry could come back on Rush Limbaugh's show within two week and for

an equal amount of time talk about why that was bad. So that got done away with along with the media ownership laws and that's when Clear channel started scooping up all these stations because they could buy them up because they had the money to, they had the power to. And in some towns there are still some regulations which is good but it's just frightening.

From your perspective, what role or position does news play in our society?

What does it do for you?

I think it does the best job it can of keeping people informed to what's going on. Whether it be an important issue like a mayoral election or if there's an art event this weekend, come support your local painters and potters and know that there are people in your community who do beautiful art work, or school starts Monday. It's just a way for people to know what's going on and to be able to lead productive or entertaining lives. It connects people, brings them together in different ways. Keeps people in check or tries to keep things in check.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

Probably just making sure that the world hasn't blown up yet. Also to see what's going on this weekend, what should we do this weekend, or what should I wear in the morning, who should I vote for next election, do I need to pick up a second job because my insurance rates just went up again. I guess it's just a dorky form of entertainment for me.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

I guess well sometimes I wonder...I guess elections would be the biggest but I say sometimes I wonder how much my vote actually counted. I think it matters more on a local level, city council, more so than presidential elections but I still vote. Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

Today I got really worked up because I was reading about this Catholic Church sex abuse case in Milwaukee and there's this group of deaf boys molested by this one priest, 200 of them. But there's a group of people suing the church and they're even suing the Pope right now because he was the Cardinal at the time that pretty much pardoned this guy and that got me really riled up because growing up in Catholic Church and Catholic School I had very good priests and none of them were anything like this guy. I got really fired up and started talking to my co-worker about it. I don't really know what I could do about it. I don't go to the Catholic Church anymore, that is a much bigger issue than just that, but

that is one of the reasons I would never return to the Catholic Church, reading stories like that.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

Yea, I create it on a daily basis. I have been the interviewee once and it was really awkward. I can't imagine being the interviewee.

What have your experiences been like creating the news?

Mostly positive. I really like it because if I'm reporting on an area it means I care about that area and I care that the community is being informed. I like to think that what I'm doing is good for the community and I also get personal pleasure out of it, I enjoy it and try to be creative with it. Sometimes I get really annoyed because I'll feel like I'll try to do a story and I feel like I'm not getting the answers that I want. I know people aren't being straight up with me, that's the most frustrating part about my job. Especially, if you're interviewing the governor, you will never get a straight answer out of him, ever.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

This American Life, which I love and I guess could be a news program although it's an entertainment program, they teamed up with NPR's planet money and

they just straight up explained what was going on when all this financial nonsense started hitting the fan. What, a year or two ago? They took what was going on and broke it down historically and just brought it on a level that was like aha, ok I understand what led up to this process and why it happened and what's going on now and the fact that these people are getting away with a lot of nonsense and how this whole system is a bunch of nonsense. It was good they were like alright we're breaking it down to the most basic facts and that was really great because I think that people forget to do that and you need to know the back story before understanding the story. Especially on a concept that complex and as someone who comes from I don't know anything about business and economics.

Who or what would you say is responsible for this success of that story?

People who just took a step back and said okay what's missing from this? Because everyone was reporting on it but no one really knew what to do with it. So, yea, for someone to say hey we need to step back and figure out what's going on at its most basic level. I mean we've all taken a history class at some level but sometimes we need a reminder. The full story is more than just that 50 second bite.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

Probably like every day for the past ten years. I mean, I blame myself for it too. I know there are a lot of days when I'm not at my best and I don't know if whether it's because I just don't have the brain to really dig into the story or the time. I

think the media has been really really bad lately with all of this reactionary – I mean, everything is just so partisan and I know that’s real cliché to talk about right now but everything is just do goddamn partisan that we’re not getting anything done and the media is totally contributing to that and I know politicians are buying into it. But it’s just become like any other reality show, it’s like a reality dating show. You know people just going back and forth and bickering and not working with each other. It’s just so frustrating. It’s all so black and white.

Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

The media, the media is a big part and politicians together are responsible and businesses and corporations. It’s also in the newsrooms like cutting staff. Like imagine, if our newsroom had 3, 4 times the number of staff members, think of all the great news we could do. Newspapers across the country are cutting reporters, stories are going uncovered because they have to cover other things and there isn’t as much time to investigate.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism’s overall performance in the US?

A C-.

Why is that?

Because I think that some people are really trying and some places to a good job but a lot of its really superficial. News and opinions shouldn’t be mixed. You

should report on the news, give varying opinions and not just spew out what you think because you have a goddamn microphone.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? Why?

I think daily local news, especially in this town because there's so many reporters, daily local news is doing pretty good, not great, but good. I think NPR is not doing great but they're doing good, there's still a lot of things I wish they would talk about and wouldn't be scared to talk about.

Why do you think these are good?

Well, for Columbia there's so many reporters to actually go out and cover the news.

What about overall?

Overall I think NPR because they're not afraid to ask how and why and because even if a story is really boring, let's say, they'll still report on it and try to make it interesting so it'll appeal to listeners, you can still go in depth, you have a variety of stories versus ones that are just going to sell sponsorship. I think that a lot of state public radio consortiums, not Missouri, but like Wisconsin Public Radio and Minnesota Public Radio do really good job looking at what's going on in their own state. I would also say Iowa Public Radio does a really good job. I don't know about others ones, but most of those people have the time and they have a vested interest in where they live. Obviously, I'm biased toward public radio. It's interesting, sometimes I read a newspaper story and am bored half way through.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with? How would you improve them?

I'm dissatisfied with the fear that some places have to ask the tough questions or big questions that people have, some refer to them as conspiracy theorists, and if it's a conspiracy theory then why not go and debunk it? So, I'm dissatisfied with the political partisanship that some stations and media organizations play into. I wish more journalists took their jobs a lot more seriously and realized that it should just be up to the people to make up their own mind, it shouldn't be you feeding that information to people. So, yea, political partisanship and the lack of questions that some people have.

What is your occupation?

I am a student studying for my master's degree in journalism here at the University of Missouri.

What all does that entail?

My specific area of emphasis is photojournalism. So I'm dealing with photography, storytelling, and written stories, and multi-media.

How many years have you been a student of photojournalism?

I've been studying photo-journalism now for about two years and a couple of months.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some

take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

Being that it's my profession, I pay attention to news pretty much every day.

Why?

Because I'm a photojournalist, specifically, I'm always looking at photographs. And whenever headlines or bylines capture my attention I'll read the story that follows. But I stay on top of news specifically because I want to keep up with current trends in journalism and how they can affect my employment in the industry. So being able to be newsworthy on all fronts and not just fancy with images and photographs.

Do you look at news for any other reasons beyond that?

To stay informed, we live in the most technologically sound and stable time of history that we've ever lived in and with information so readily available it's important to know what world you live in and what's going on around you. To kind of be knowledgeable about what's going on in your world.

Why is important to be knowledgeable?

It affects your everyday decision making, being informed of the news will affect your smallest decisions to the biggest decisions you'll ever make in your life. So, if for whatever reason you decide you want to be financially responsible and you find out via the news that Starbucks uses slave labor in the harvesting of their coffee beans then you can make a conscious decision to not patronize Starbucks due to what you've read and what has been researched via the news and presented in the news. So, from small decision to long term decision as to what

to invest in as a financially responsible person or even what to support or even what's going on in your own local community so that you can protect yourself, your family, or your rights as an American. And so, it's very important to stay informed so you can make proper decisions.

About how often daily do you watch the news?

At least twice, once in the morning and once in the evening: CNN.com or just plug it in to my browser at least sometime during the day to know what's going on.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it? Why is this?

Well, in the two methods that I cited as how I get the news every day, one is definitely on the radio, NPR, it's a big new source for me and I think radio will continue to be a huge newsworthy medium particularly because we don't deal with media in terms of mobile media (cell phones, laptops, computers) on our drive to work that we make every day, at the same time, going to the same location and a lot of people don't sit in silence. Some choose to listen to music, some sit in silence, some people choose listen to the news because that might be their daily dose. And so for me I listen to NPR in the mornings and then in the evenings I'll go like a CNN.com on my computer or even on my iPod. Mobile media is becoming the standard with journalism so now whereas early 90s when internet was just popping up and it was really cool and progressive to have a

website, now you find that it's more innovative, progressive, and important for companies to have a mobile sight so that their users can access the content from their mobile phone. Particularly apple devices or whatever you want to call it to get the news.

So you think the mobile methods for receiving news are more popular and convenient for people?

Definitely convenient.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news? Why is this?

Local and I should say national because NPR is National Public Radio so you get stories that are from all over as well as snap shots of what we would consider soft news, different programs that are on the radio that aren't necessarily September 11, 2001 type news. And because my two major inputs are CNN and NPR, I get national news first. And then if I want to dig deep into local markets I will find a KOMU or a Missouri broadcast station to find out how national stories make their way to the local level. KOMU is the only local television news I watch, mainly because it's produced by students and I want to be in touch with what they're doing here at the University of Missouri as well as online. I go to the Columbia Daily Tribune and the Missourian quite often.

Why do you prefer NPR and CNN, any particularly reason?

It's a very credible newsworthy source. It is a place that people have learned to respect over the years in terms of their policies and methods of presenting information to the public. It's very rare that you see CNN make mistakes versus

magazine based news like Time, or whatever. You could talk about recent examples of a bias attitude or how they tell stories or even how they present images on the cover of their magazine. At the same time, CNN's web presence, television presence, mobile presence, and just their overall tactics online have been very consistent and have had very little issues in terms of questioning their validity of stories and facts. NPR also because I'm a journalist and I like to hear about stories of people, they humanize the issues. And it's great that they can do an audio presentation on something that's affecting the nation but they can bring you different examples of personal profiles of people who are dealing with the same stuff. It humanizes news and becomes more attractive because of the way they tell and package stories and it's not the average method or same delivery every time. They mix it up and are a little bit more creative.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

I would say more than anything else I look for credibility, reliability, and the way they tell stories. Because at the end of the day I want the information to be correct and accurate. I don't want a TMZ.com where they have to pull back something they just said ten minutes ago. I want it to be confirmed by reliable sources and real in terms of how the outcome of a particular event changes how

decisions are made. And I want to care about it. I want to hear about housing foreclosure, I want to feel the effects of it, I want to know how it would affect me or my family if it hit me and by telling stories in a particular way I think you can do that very effectively but it takes more skill and a little bit more time to do that which now because of the increased web presence that it's almost impossible because new organizations are so pressed to get things out that sometimes they don't even make sure it's accurate before it's printed or published or whatever. So I would say those three things are the types of things I look for.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say? Why or why not?

Absolutely not. The daily average consumer doesn't know Rupert Murdoch, they don't care about Rupert Murdoch, they have no idea who this man is. Us as trained journalists know these people and we also know their biases; they changed the reasons why I don't prefer to watch a network like FOX news. And so knowing the ownership and the message that's being spread with these outlets really affects how I choose to consume the news when FOX is reporting it versus how CNN is reporting it. Most people don't understand who owns these various companies. A lot of people don't know they're umbrella organizations owned by some other company. What people do know is that they identify with certain attitudes, belief systems, and personalities that are promoted by that particular news company. And so in a situation where a person watches FOX News, they may come away with a totally different belief system and attitude on how the

show is ran, produced, and presented in terms of their information as opposed to someone who watches CNN.

You're saying that people say these things, what is it that you say?

Yes and no. Yes, because I know that news is funneled and there's all types of news that you'll never here about, there's plenty of stories that will never go told and will always forever be untold. And somebody has to make the decision on what is newsworthy or not. And the people who make those decisions on what to present at 6 o'clock are giving you a very limited look at what's going on in your community, your nation, and internationally. And they choose those images very carefully and sometimes very uncarefully. I understand that owners of media companies...Rupert Murdoch's not sitting in his office saying I want to show people this, this, and this. But I do believe they're saying our television station, our company, our multi-billion dollar corporation's going to aim towards this line of storytelling or talk about these types of issues. And so it's a more unconscious, but very deliberate sense of making and creating the news – it's this process of gate-keeping and what it means to be a gatekeeper. And so execs, owners, board of directors may choose to go one way with the news station instead of the other way. And no because ultimately I would like to believe that news is unbiased or what people like to call objective. And that they're presenting to me the information I need to know to make decisions based off what I see. I know that's not always the truth but even then that's a load term, this idea of truth and what that means. So yes because I know things are presented a different way or not as the way the probably were played out in reality. But no because it's easily

accessible, it's the news that's available to me. And so I can go on to CNN.com , I can't always get the newest, freshest update about what happened around the corner from me if it's not ever reported or an issue that matters yet, meaning someone hasn't considered it newsworthy. It's a double edge sword so I choose to get my media from other sources, too like worldstarhiphop.com or allafrika.com or wherever I choose to get my information from just to see how people report similar stories or completely different stories that I never knew existed, blacknews.com. I find sources everywhere. I want to know what's going on, maybe it's just the nature of my profession or what I'm studying.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

Absolutely, as a photographer, people have the notion that photography changes the world, it can have a great impact on people from different cultures. Which is absolutely true at the same time news affects photography because sometimes it's not about the photographic concepts or theories or thought processes that go behind trying to make a great photograph. Sometimes it's just about doing your job and going to downtown New York where the first plane crashed into the World Trade Center and taking photographs. Yea, that may change some lives but while you were in the process of out photographing a man jumping from stories up heading down into the ground, you were also doing your job and getting paid to be there. It affect photography in a lot of way because the world's most memorable images were created for no other purpose than telling the story or news story. It wasn't the photographers own initiative that got him out there, it was an assignment on a piece of paper that said you need to be here at this time

to handle this story and sometimes that affects the way we as photographers handle story telling. It kind of sucks because you would think every photographer would go out because they love photography, but every photographer doesn't do that, they do it because they need a check.

What are the effects of that? What makes that good or bad?

What makes that good or bad is that every now and then you'll come across a beautiful moment where stories need to be told and the photographer captures something absolutely incredible, like when Emmett Till was beaten in 1955 in Muddy, Mississippi. And Ebony and Jet publishing decided to run that photograph of Emmett's disfigured face and body in his casket when they had the funeral in Chicago, Illinois and it changed the way the nation, the world saw America and racism in America. And so I believe really strong, political, and social statements can come out of photography but at the same time, especially in a world now where citizen journalism really rules because the first to respond pretty much wins in every case, it waters down the actual story telling capability and impact that photographs can actually have. We live now in a society that is flooded with images, you see images everywhere you go: on the walls, posters, billboards, cell phones, internet, TV. You're just bombarded with images every day and it diminishes the value and impact that particular images might have if you're just beat over the head with the same old stuff. So, in that way it's bad and in others ways it can be good to bring light to a lot of different issues.

So you think news coverage affects it because some photographers are less passionate because it's just an assignment?

Somewhat, but at the same time it's more about the attitude of image making.

It's not about making the newest, most breathtaking, informative images, it's just about making images; which is totally contrary to what we're taught in journalism school.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Yes, and only because of the statement I made earlier about new being about who gets it out first because everyone is in such competition with each other and now with digital media you want that cell phone update, you want that tweet, that CNN.com breaking news text message. It's about getting the information out there, especially if it's something visual like they'll pay big bucks for nice photographs of stuff that a citizen took on their cell phones camera or someone had a video camera laying around and taped the plane crashing into the harbor or the man that cell phone video recorded the plane where half of the landing gear got stuck and the plane had to land on its wing and caught the sparks coming off the plane. It was a cell phone camera! It wasn't a professional video, no one got out there with a camera crew, they used the stuff that was there that was relevant to the situation and was easily accessible and ready to produce a story.

You say that competition produces that?

Yea, I don't want to say that the quality of news has changed, but the expectation to get news out as soon as it comes to you has definitely increased by far because of competition and technology. You want to be first to break the news.

Why?

It gives you that sense of credibility, especially if you're right, you can always go back and say hey we broke the story first, and sometimes even when you're not right they sometimes still value that type of breaking news coverage.

What's the value in being credible?

Views, you want people to support you financially. You want people to view your work and you want to provide a platform for your work that advertisers so they can get to your consumers. So, it pays the bills to be able to compete and be valid or seen as the primary news provider.

From your perspective, what role or position does news play in our society?

What does it do for you?

News always used to be described and taught as and used to provide a watchdog for the US government. Now, news is so sensationalized and surrounds pop culture and popular media that it really has nothing to do with being a watchdog for the government it actually just helps to endorse the sick and pathetic things that go on around culture, society, and government. It's no longer investigative, in depth and detailed, it doesn't even really help the viewer to make decisions; it just presents the issues in any way that it sees fit to either go for or against the story anyhow and then tries to persuade the readers or viewers instead of informing them. I guess the best and most recent example of this is the LA Times had the entire front page, they had the Mad Hatter on there from an upcoming movie that was coming out in theatres. I was like okay. They paid something crazy like \$700,000 to have it and it ended up being a fake cover to the news but

basically were like go see the Mad Hatter in Alice in Wonderland. I was like are we to the point where nobody even questions how ethical of a decision that was for a major news outlet? And even though they may have ties to the movie studio that's putting it out, decides to put a big, full page, I mean, can't miss Johnny Depp's face on the newspaper to try to sell it and try to get people to go see Alice in Wonderland! Have we gotten that far that we don't care about the issues of the day but would rather see Alice in Wonderland on the front of the newspaper? We're desperate to keep print alive and in our desperation we've chosen to sell news at a rate that we can't get it back so we sell every bit of print space to advertisers and we try to justify our credibility by putting an emphasis on being non-partial. And in reality what we're saying is we have to be more careful because people are noticing that we're filling our papers with ads from companies that also have stock in their own clients' future.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

I absolutely watch and listen definitely for updates with sports. I probably watch Sports Center every day. I also stay up on news to stay up on financial decision because I own some stocks and so whenever I see opportunities to purchase new stock or to hear about my own existing companies and how they're doing as a stock holder, I'm really interested in that. I keep a stock feeder on my desktop and on my phone, on my iPod touch. But also just to know what major

developments are going and how they will affect me here and what I'm doing at that particular time.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

iPhone.

What do you mean?

When iPhone 4 came out I thought it was the most exciting thing in the world and I even worked for Apple for a long period of time. And so I just knew I was getting an iPhone. Initial reviews were good, people liked it. All of sudden someone complained about the iPhone 4 dropping calls. It became a huge national and international story. People all of a sudden said they had software issues, their phones were dropping calls... Apple had to call their own press conference as offer a solution to buyers who had already bought the iPhone 4. They ended up giving out these free cases to however many users requested them at that point and it was so funny because I remember so vividly the day it came out and having the media there telling us that this was the best thing ever. That this was the best phone probably that apple had ever put out! And about a week later them telling us the Apple made a disastrous decision to put this phone out there on the market and that everybody was just stupid, for lack of a better term, for purchasing this phone. And it's like wait, you just told me a few days ago that

this was best ish on earth. Now you're telling me that it's not? So, I think it affected my decision to purchase an iPhone 4 right away.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

Absolutely.

Like what?

Like at least inform other people who don't have access or don't at least pay attention to news and what's going on. The particularly last feeling I had about that was Hurricane Katrina. I remember just telling people about it and people not even knowing. Like, I can remember 9/11 like it was yesterday. I remember my teachers and I remember going to class and my sociology professor picking up the phone to try to call whoever she knew was in New York at the time and crying in front of everybody in the class and I remember us looking at this on the television, all standing up gathered around the television of my junior high school sociology class. Like looking at the television and trying to figure out what's going on. I don't have those feelings from Katrina, at least not from the media sense. All I remember from Katrina is George Bush doesn't care about black people, Kanye West, and images of people on their rooftops. And it wasn't until I started looking deeper into Katrina and how it affected people that I really felt

compelled to tell people how media is the most powerful tool that a nation has to justify their democracy but at the same time it can totally turn against you and make it the worst excuse that you could ever imagine as to why or why not you show stories. I remember our Katrina conversations being about the ethical considerations to show people suffering on TV. And I'm like we show suffering on TV every day! It's not about showing people suffering; it's do you want to show the people from your nation suffering in your homeland going through a situation where they couldn't even get help for days. So, of course, at that point all those things come into play with decision makers, gatekeepers, what to show, what not to show, what to print, what not to print, and it's frustrating. And at that point in my life I was like I need to tell people about this.

You were saying that the coverage of Katrina didn't make you feel as compelled as 9/11. It was until you started hearing from people about Katrina that you felt compelled to talk about it?

And reading it because it really opened my eyes as to how race is portrayed in media. As much as we want to talk about we're a color blind society, we elected our first black president, race still plays an issue in how people perceive news and media or even just real life situations. And I think what did it for me was the article with the man and woman buried up to their chest in water and reading the caption that said the white family, a man searches and scrambles to find resources for his family and it's basically saying he's being good and leaning on his survivor skills, he's being resourceful; and then seeing a black man in the same situation taking items and the caption reading such and such loots a store

for whatever he could find at the time and it was so negative in connotation. And I was just looking at the photograph like these are two couples doing the exact same thing, trying to survive buried chest deep in water and one man is surviving and resourceful while the other is loots and steals from the store? What the hell man? I felt like there was a better way for us to be represented in media especially being a culture that has its own historically rooted problems of how they've been represented in media since the beginning of the first film. And it really made me want to do something in terms of how to present positive images of people of color in the news and that's why I do the work I do.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news? If not, do you know anyone who has? Tell me about it.

Yes.

Tell me about them.

I worked at a newspaper for a semester as a student at the Columbia Missourian and I also worked at the Austin-American Statesman in downtown Austin, Texas for the summer. There I had direct access to the news-making process even to the point that I saw how the newspapers were printed. It was actually kind of cool, and how they were distributed. So, yes I've had direct contact with the news-making process.

Would you say overall that was a positive, indifferent, negative experience?

Positive, to understand how things work, how many meetings take place, how many times people talk about it before it becomes a finished product.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

I remember 9/11 was the most covered event that's happened within the United States in the last 100 years by far; more so than Watergate, more so than any earthquake, hurricane that's hit the US before. I think 9/11 was the best of all around coverage of a single event ever. Is it the best or the most proud moment of news coverage, maybe not. But I think 9/11 was the first time we saw all media outlets firing on all cylinders, everyone was working, everyone was trying to get the story, and trying to produce some killer images, and it took a tragedy to kind of get news jump started again. Who or what would you say is responsible for this success?

The people who blew up the buildings, the people who created the act of terrorism itself. I mean, they were successful in that it gave people something to write about.

So, you're saying that any major event like that would be covered, it doesn't necessarily have to be the 9/11 event but any that's that huge, then the news outlets would automatically cover it?

I can't think of an event that was that big, I mean, this is going to sound bad, but when you're talking about killing a group of people that historically had privilege

and wealth and they're were in the world trade center. The only black people down there were probably janitors or interns. And so you're talking about something that directly affected white America and I'm not saying that it didn't affect black people to because it did and I'm sure there were black people in that building too, let me not be so dense. But at the same time the perception is Wall Street, this is the middle of New York City, this is an area that has a lot of attention, an area that caught live footage of two building being brought down by however many men. It was really sick and I think in those types of cases that big, we have no choice but to really dig into it to figure out why that happened.

Beyond the act of the terrorists themselves, you would say that is was every echelon in the journalism industry?

Absolutely, at that point they had a duty to report it.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

Absolutely, the whole OJ Simpson, Time Magazine debacle was terrible.

You're talking about the two different pictures?

Yea, I remember that like it was yesterday. Because I remember seeing the photograph and not really thinking twice about it and this was just in may limited experience with news. And I also put Katrina in that category, the limited coverage of Katrina, it was like a 9/11 event and I would never compare tragedies, that's like comparing slavery to the holocaust even though I feel certain ways about each of those events because you don't compare human suffering. At the same time both people in 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina suffered tremendously.

And they suffered in some ways a lot more than previous tragedies. I'll just leave it at that. The news coverage was definitely ill, they made people victims, they displaced people legally, literally gave them a little bit of money and told them to move somewhere else. Took their land away, took their property away which is ill to me. None of that was reported in the news, we're finding out about these affects five years later. But we didn't know what happened to those people nobody told us, I personally interviewed a doctor who was displaced and who saw his patients die in a hospital when Katrina happened and then had to move to Austin, Texas. He had a complete, full practice for 13 years and saw it all washed away literally just like that. Didn't know if he was ever going to see his family again. I remember his daughter telling me she watched her father's practice get washed away on television and didn't think she would see her father again. So, news coverage at its worst. And then the whole OJ Simpson thing, digitally manipulating the photograph to make the man seem more menacing, giving a more evil connotation than what was there in the photograph. Then you talk about the ethics of photographer. It was the worst news decision made.

Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

Definitely had to come down to someone who was designing the cover, who thought it would look cooler. Maybe it was or wasn't intentional. Maybe they were trying to pass guilt in these first reports that OJ Simpson supposedly killed his wife. But somebody consciously made that decision to run that cover that way. And whether it was a racist act or not, those people who released the cover were not informed that there was a certain connotation that came along with that

type of image and people were going to know what they did to the photograph. I mean, given that another magazine cover published that same image, same day and didn't manipulate and people could tell. Why is he so much blacker on this cover versus this cover? So, I think the worst coverage and insensitive and not well thought out.

Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming of Katrina?

Leadership of the government. The non-sense of urgency made it okay for people to wait to bring cameras and help to Katrina. At the time, only the local media was really covering it. It wasn't until 4, 5 days later that we actually heard President Bush on the news talking about it's a national emergency. It's been a national emergency for like 5 days dude! So in those cases I can't really blame one particular person in the media. We'll say the government's response to a tragedy like that was so delayed that people didn't think it was for real or that many people affected. When in fact the area that was affected was humungous.

So you think media took their cue from the government?

Yea, the always do.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

I give it an A-, or a high B+ because we've dumbed it down and become more sensationalized and more popular culture driven which is fine because we have to pay the bills but it lends itself to not covering issues that need to be covered.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? Why?

The internet, the accessibility of news. I think news is more accessible than it's ever been. And how easy it is to get information and the interactive nature of news. Because now you can literally find news from all around the world that even translates to a pop culture sensation.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with?

I'm most dissatisfied with the quality of journalism.

How so?

I want less ads and more in depth reporting. Reporting that's interesting and relevant to the people who are reading the papers. It seems now that people aren't taken into consideration as much as they use to their target audience.

How would you improve them?

I would find ways to make news less time based and more accurate. Less about trying to get it out just because it's there and more fact-checking. Make sure we know what we're talking about before putting it. And I would also like to see the news come from various perspectives, not always having the Eurocentric perspective pushed in your face every day. Having people of color, people of different genders, write about their own experiences because they can connect with people that the traditional sense of journalism can't connect with.

You said it doesn't seem like they're writing for the target audience, who does it seem like they're writing for?

Other journalists. It doesn't seem like they're writing for the people, it sounds like they're writing to the people with no consideration of what the people have to say about particular topics. They don't have the people's voice in mind, they're not providing the watchdog role based on what the consumer says needs to be watched over.

What is your occupation?

Student, graduate student.

What were you doing before you became a grad student?

A newspaper reporter.

And you're in grad school for?

Communication.

What did you have to do as a newspaper reporter?

Conduct interviews, pitch story ideas, write stories, edit.

How many years were you a newspaper reporter?

3 years.

How many years have you been a grad student?

2.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some

take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

Every day, several times a day. I'm a news junky.

Give me a number, about how many times a day?

2.

Why is that?

I'm in the news business, I find it fascinating, I like to keep up with current events.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

If I'm at home, the internet. If I'm not at home, mobile. And television.

Why is this?

They are quick, they're accessible and for the most part they're free.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

National would be first and then some local and some international but national would be first.

Why is that?

It's the most comprehensive.

Elaborate on that. Do you think the others aren't comprehensive.

It's related to my world without being right up in my world but it's close enough that it's a channel to everything else that's going on. I think once I live abroad I'll become more interested in international news but it's not directly in front of me. Local news I'd be more interested if I knew I was going to be in Missouri for the next 10 years. If I knew I was going to be here then I'd be a lot more interested and engaged.

So you like international news because you're situation changes pretty often?

Yea, I'm a national dude. I go to a lot of places, I've lived in different parts of the country.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

Content, entertainment.

What about the content?

The quality of the reporting or the writing, the subject matter if it's of interest.

So any newspaper that has good quality and a subject matter that you're interested in you'll look at it?

Sure.

And by quality what do you mean?

It's been well researched, it shows two sides to the story, it's written well, it's engaging, it keeps me interested.

And entertainment, talk about that.

Some of the same words, it's interesting, compelling, it holds my attention. I mean, there's so many options today it almost has to be entertaining in order to hold someone's attention.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through

which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

Sometimes yes, most of the time no.

Explain.

Well, if it's the Wall Street Journal, I know it's owned by...or if it's FOX News, then yes I know it's owned by Rupert Murdoch who's very well-known and he makes it very clear that he is right-leaning and if I look very closely I can see that reflected in his news product. But there's not many examples I could point to like that. Most other news companies I couldn't tell you who owned them. I might have a vague idea like this is Time Warner or that is some other media company but for the most part no.

You said Rupert Murdoch is right leaning, what leaning would you say you are?

I'm independent, in the middle.

You mentioned FOX News, how do you view their programming?

It's clearly biased but that doesn't mean it's not entertaining or I don't watch it sometimes. I just want to see people's opinions other than my own. It's keeping up with the times, and most people want to watch news that already fits their world view rather than have their world view challenged.

Does Rupert Murdoch fit your world view?

No, and Australian billionaire, no; who's 80 years old, no.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

Yes.

Explain.

Well, whichever side of the fence I'm on when I was a reporter if I'm a public relations practitioner or communicator, yes that's part of it. You're either keeping up with the news about your industry, you're doing media relations with journalist who cover the industry, so yes, it's integral – integrated.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Sure, yes. How could it not?

In what ways?

I mean, people who are going into the news business nowadays aren't crusaders the way they were 100 years ago. For the most part, they're business men, they're in it to make a profit. And there are going to very clearly direct their editors in that direction.

So, you think their goal of making a profit is directed in their news coverage?

Yes.

What does it do to the news product?

It turns it into the bottom line. It put more emphasis on certain elements and less on others. It could mean that international bureaus get cut, it could mean that staff is laid off, it could mean that people have to do more with less, it could mean salaries get frozen. I mean, it could mean all the reasons I left the reporting business.

So, you left because it became more bottom line oriented?

It just seemed like nothing positive was happening, everything seemed so negative. Our health insurance benefits were cut, they were asking us to pay more and more of them, the salary was stagnate, I was getting a lot of validation from it.

What role or position does news play in our society?

I think there's a lot of good positions they play. They can be gatekeepers, they can hold public officials accountable, they can bring issues to light that wouldn't see the light of day otherwise, that there are two sides to the coin, also highlight celebrity dramas that really had no business being front and center for weeks and weeks, months and months on end, or it can invade privacy. So, I think it can do both good and bad functions.

What does news do for you?

It keeps me up on current events, it keeps me interested in people, places, events that I may not know or have been to. It keeps me informed, keeps me smart, entertains and amuses me. Half of itsb.s. but the other half amuses me.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

Keep up with weather, keep up with community events, help me figure out what I want to do with my life, shape my opinions on politics and current events, post my feeling about those events on social media.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

A small decision, the weather was cold, it was a little bit cooler than I expected so I put on an extra shirt. Big decision, voting for President Obama.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

This morning I watched a story where all these local municipalities and city officials in California were getting hundreds of thousands of dollars salaries under the table, basically stealing money from their communities or doing it legally but in shady way. I found that to be infuriating. The city manager was

drawly nearly a million dollar salary for years and nobody knew it. Now he's in jail but there were like 10 other places like that mentioned in the story.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news?

Obviously, yes. I worked in newsrooms.

And overall how was that experience for you?

It was very positive.

Overall very positive but there are some things that you would change about it?

Sure.

Like what?

There's no money, salaries are atrocious. Too much emphasis on the daily grind, need more in depth pieces, more investigation and those are the things being cut.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

I remember during Clinton's first election there was a lot of excitement, it was like JFK all over again. This very media savvy, all-American man made you just want to root for him and it seemed like at the end of the election that the good guy had actually won. At that time in 1992, that was probably the last time I

remember believing in that old power of the news, at least until I started working in news.

What about Clinton's election and the news coverage made you think it was good?

He was so camera ready. Every time you turned on the TV you would see him campaigning. It was the first time that I saw like a slice of life of somebody's life being covered on TV. He's campaigning here, he's speaking there, or he's being quoted in this newspaper. I felt like I knew him.

So, the coverage was all around the board?

All encompassing. It was also at its best because the industry was strong. Newspapers were expanding at that time, profit margins were good, places were hiring. I mean, a newspaper startup at this time is a little bit unheard of. At that time in the early 90s, like a newspaper had just launched in St. Louis, it was a two newspaper town.

Who or what would you say is responsible for this success?

I think the industry as a whole was thriving.

You said you believed in the power of the news at that time, elaborate on that.

Well, I was a teenager so I wasn't as jaded. But just as far as the news doing its job of very thorough coverage of an event and getting me very interested and engaged it was the first time that I remember wanting to read a newspaper daily to see what was going on in the world. I mean, you could say since that they do a good job covering major catastrophes or events and drawing attention to them.

Now what do you think about the power of the news?

A double edge sword, it can do a lot of good and it can do a lot of bad.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

Non-stop coverage of Anna Nicole Smith. It just became over and over and over to the point that it was putting everything else to the side. I mean, even presidential addresses they would put on a split screen. It brought back memories of OJ Simpson.

And how his trial was covered non-stop?

Well that was a case of just news really, that was not the coverage itself it was more of the subject matter. It felt like it was dividing the country by putting you into this camp or this camp. Like it somehow brought out your true feelings about other races or certain ideologies. Anna Nicole Smith was just the classic celebrity obsession to the tenth power.

Who are what would you say is responsible for this short coming?

I think the thirst for ratings became ten times more important during that period. I also think no one knew how to handle with the internet and how to adapt to it and it became very chaotic.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

I give it a B-.

Why is that?

Personally it's been good to me, I've learned a lot, I grew as a person in doing journalism especially in smaller towns and communities where you feel like you are doing good. But from the big picture, a lot of events happened in the last 20 or 30 years and journalism just missed the boat. They Watergate, they totally missed the Savings and Loans scandal, they totally missed Iraq, they totally missed the most recent economic crisis, they didn't see any of that coming. So, wtf? So that's why I give them such a low grade because of just missing, not seeing some of the big events coming and being blindsided.

Based on the grade you gave, what parts of journalism are you most satisfied with? Why?

Local news coverage, still a lot of heart.

What do you mean?

The people who work in it genuinely believe in what they're doing. It's not about how they look on TV, it's not about getting the next million dollars, it's a lot of people who really love their communities and want to report on them and want the best for them and that's where I saw the best in journalism.

So, it's the reporters' zeal?

And the editors, and their values, too. They're hearts in the right place.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with?

Probably the plastic-ness of TV and so much emphasis on being first over being right or being correct. Seems like there's a hand full of people who are

millionaires and everyone else is scraping by. Or to a lesser degree in other arenas there's one hot shot columnist at paper who can do whatever they want while everybody else is struggling and expendable. I think it makes all the other reporters resentful and less inclined to do a good job. It's like when Katie Couric comes into CBS and gets 5 or 6 million and brings in all of her people and then 5 or 6 years later you fire a bunch of people but she's still pulling it in. I watch her and I think I don't see what's so special about her.

How would you improve that if you could?

It's hard to say. I mean, journalism has never really made a lot of money from day 1, salaries have never been there. If you look at the history there were periods where anyone who wanted to could pretty much be a journalist. Journalism schools are a relatively new thing. But to improve it I would say it doesn't have to be daily news per se but because of the internet it's a lost cause. I would make sure that everybody who does journalism gets paid something. This trend towards citizen journalism, in places like the Huffington Post where they're trying to get everybody to write for free, I'd make sure that everybody's getting paid something. That's what I'd do.

What would that do?

It makes it more accountable. Makes sure an editor is reading what you're writing and ensure it's more correct and accurate, and people would put more time and care into their stories. Otherwise, who knows what their motive is.

What is your occupation?

I'm a certified public accountant.

Give me a brief description of what that entails.

Well, CPAs do a number of different things. They are most noted for doing audits, whereby they review financials statements that have been produced by a company and certify that they are reasonable so that other people can rely upon them, in addition to that, CPAs do accounting services type work, preparation of financial statements, budgets, things like that. CPAs also do tax work, income taxes, both corporate partnerships and individuals, trusts, estates, and in addition to that we do management consulting type activities which could be almost anything, usually it's a matter of the CPA and the client agreeing upon what the particular tasks are for an engagement. I do more management consulting and tax work than anything else.

How many years have you been a CPA?

35 years.

When it comes to news, some people pay attention to it every day, some a few times per month, some never and try to stay away from it altogether, while some take notice when they regard an event as attention worthy. Where would you say you fit in this range? About how often would you say you pay attention to news?

Every day.

Why?

Because I just want to be informed. I think that you get news from a variety of different sources and directions and I just like to listen to, or read, or see what

everybody has to say and make my own judgment about that. So, that requires listening to the radio when I'm in the car, watching the news on TV when I'm at home or newspaper, one of those things.

So how many times a day would you say every day?

My job is to be a sponge so it's always on. Maybe getting up in the morning reading the paper...all the time!

It varies?

Yes, I'm not a radio music person, I'm a radio talk show person. So I spend several hours every day in contact with some type of news reporting.

With the help of today's technology, there are now different ways people can get news; some from televisions at home or in the gym, the internet on cell phones and computers, car stereos, newspapers in bars or libraries and so on. Whenever you pay attention to news, how are you most likely to get it?

Probably, most likely radio.

Why radio?

Because it's just convenient when I'm driving. Part of my daily routine is driving from one place to another so it's just the easiest thing. Probably the second source would be probably television, that would be number 2 just because I like to watch the morning news shows, I like to watch the evening news if I'm at home. Probably third would be the computer, internet when I'm at my office or at a client's office, I might go to a news site on the internet.

And which type of news would you say you're most likely to get whenever you get new: local, national, or international news?

A mixture of local and national.

Why?

Certainly want to know what's going on in my surrounding but I'm also interested in national affairs, especially political and government type stuff. A lot of the client work I do is with municipalities so I'm concerned about governmental issues.

Within the U.S. there are a variety of individual preferences and because of this there also exists a variety of news programming to satisfy those different tastes. The reasons why some people prefer certain types of news programs rather than other types widely differ. For instance, some people look for entertainment, or reliability, or popularity, or convenience, etc. So, when you're choosing news, what types of things are important to you or what qualities do you look for?

We already talked about convenience probably being the top priority, the availability at the particular time that I have the time to consume the information, so convenience is certainly an issue for me. I don't think I have any particular, I probably do have some preferences as to which media I use or which source I use, but it's primarily convenience, it's primarily the opportunity that I have at a particular time.

Talk about those other preferences. You said you probably do, like what?

Like, I prefer to watch the news on channel 5 rather than channel 2 or 4. I can't tell you why, but I do. That's just it. I like from a radio preference, I think you

get more news on KMOX versus any other AM radio station that's available to me in my car. I don't always agree with it but at least it's available. I do have certain stations, TV and radio. On the internet I go to a general site like ATT.net or something and then they'll have an option of world news, local news, entertainment, sports, something else. So, I kind click through all of that.

What do you think channel 5 does that channels 2 and 4 don't do?

I don't know. I think it's maybe just the people, just the personalities, they just fit for me better. I don't know. Maybe their methodology, I guess I think that they are reporting rather than presenting I guess. I think they're just saying what happened, and that's all I want, just say what's happening. Just tell me what's happening and let me interpret it for myself.

So maybe they don't put their bias in it?

Or they probably do but just not as much as the others.

Is your news preference in any way influenced by who owns the media outlets through

which the news is delivered? Some people say it's not important, some say it is; what do you say?

I think there's certainly a feeling. I'm not so sure that I am specifically aware of it that I really can say I know that but there's a lot of controversy and a lot of discussion about FOX news I guess and there being a conservative bias and I don't watch it so I don't know that for sure but I do know that the media has because of the changes in technology and that kind of thing that media has become more controlled. There are fewer people, or companies, or entities that

have control of the media whether it be print media, or television, or internet. To me, that could certainly be a problem especially if there is a conscious effort to manipulate people and information because I think our society, there's just too many people in our society that believe that if they read it in print it's true or if they saw it on TV it's true. So, if you've got an organized effort within the media by a particular individual or company to report certain things and slant them a certain way, I think it's a real problem and I think that's a problem we're currently experiencing in this country.

Why is that a problem?

Well, because I think if anything has become clear to me in the last few years, it is that because of the things that you see on TV or hear on the radio, whatever, I think the American people in general are...I don't think people think through things, I don't think they apply logic to situations and really analyze what's being reported to them or said to them, they just take it at face value so people have a tendency to seek out sources of information that they feed on. For example, Rush Limbaugh, I get mad when I listen to him because it's just stupid and it doesn't make sense, and it doesn't make sense to me that people actually believe the things that he says – I don't even think he believes the things that he's saying, but it rouses certain people. I think that's scary that people can be so easily manipulated just because they saw it on the television or heard it on the radio or they read it in the paper and the sources of this information have an internal bias from the beginning.

Are you conservative?

Probably, I think conservatism is a state of being, I think it's a function of where you are in your life at a given time. The older you get, the more set you get in a certain socioeconomic group, the less you want things to change. So, if conservatism is resistant to change, then I think we all become more conservative as we go along.

Well, you were speaking on FOX news and that's why I asked such a question.

That's in a political sense of left-wing versus right-wing, I think they're leaning extremely to the right.

Would you consider yourself to be conservative in that sense?

No, not in that sense because I think conservatives tend to be for themselves of the people that they think fit into that same group. I think I am for the betterment of everybody. I think that's really the issue that we have wrong right not in this country, the conservatives versus the liberals. And not they're trying to say liberal means socialists and all those kind of things.

Is your job, volunteer activities, or hobbies in any way affected by news coverage?

My job certainly is because a lot of what I do is, as it relates to performing audits, as it relates to doing tax returns, as it relates to doing other services, a lot of what I do is regulated or there's some kind of process of procedure that's either in the law or in the tax code or something like that. So, things that they do in congress impact me and so what people think about those things and what they try to do in terms of lobbying congress to do certain things.

Do you think this coverage is in any way affected by who owns the news outlet?

Why yes, I think that's exactly the point now. Everything is being consolidated. The newspapers are going out of business and a lot of that coverage has moved to the internet. I think you have fewer and fewer companies that own these assets and if they are applying a bias to what they report then I think that's a real problem.

What role or position does news play in our society?

I think it should be information. I think it should be reporting of the facts to the degree that people can formulate their own opinions about the situation.

Is that what it does for you, it allows you to see what information is out there and come to some kind of conclusion?

Certainly.

People use news for different reasons. For example, some use it to help make financial decisions, some keep track of the weather, and some use it to know about crime or sports. What ways do you use news in your individual life? List some of your own reasons for keeping up with news.

I use it for all of those things. I use it, certainly crime is an issue, certainly if it's local. Weather, I check the weather every day because I like playing golf. I use it for all those things, entertainment, what movies are showing, concerts, those kinds of things. I use the vehicles that are available to me through the TV, radio, internet, to do all of those things.

News has the ability to influence the way individuals make decisions; anything from how often women should have mammograms, which products to buy or

avoid, to which candidates to vote for. Has news ever influenced any decision(s) you've made, big or small? Give me an example of both.

Oh, I'm sure, absolutely. I don't have a particular example of that but again my process is to take in the information and analyze it. For example, we have elections coming up in November so you've got a lot of campaign ads and I think most people that are watching these ads have a bias one way or another from the beginning so there's nothing you can say too bad about my candidate or so bad about my candidate that it's going to make me not vote for them. There's nothing you can say so good about the other guy that's going to make me vote for them. I guess what interest me is they would even say those things, or that those things would even be on TV and that anybody that's watching it would have an opinion other than that's crazy. I'm sure that if you're a democrat and they are and you're for this candidate that no matter what they say you're still going to probably vote for that person and if you're republican or a tea party person or independent, whatever they say, you're still going to vote for that person. What scares me is the person who doesn't have a clue about what's going on and the kind of information they might rely on to make a decision because it's all negative. So you end up saying, okay, of these people, who's the best considering they're all terrible. Those are the choices that you get in the media now. What scares me is what is it I think there are people out here that really don't have or have not applied the analytical process to making decisions. Am I going to make a decision purely by what I read in the paper or purely by what I see on TV or purely by what I hear on the radio? Probably not. I'm going to put it all together

and I'm going to process it, but I have been influenced by propositions, the tax for Metro. I don't ride Metro, it really don't make no difference to me, but a lot of people do, a lot of people depend on that. And yea, I heard the ads that talked about the people that go to West County for jobs and all that. And yea, that concerns me that they can still do those things. So, yes, I probably was going to vote for it anyway, but something like that just reinforces why I should do that and I know that it had a greater impact for the good, for less fortunate people than it did for people like me. I mean, I'd be hard pressed to get on Metro. I might ride to the airport just to check it out but that's not something I would do every day. So, yea, I get information but I analyze it. It helps me to make a decision, very seldom will it make a decision for me.

Sometimes news can emotionally affect people causing them to feel a range of emotions from happy, fearful, sympathetic, or uneasy, etc. For example, some people donated money to victims of Haiti's earthquake, others were vaccinated for H1N1, while some boycotted BP for the oil spill, and others spoke against Wall Street for the bank failure. Has news ever affected your mood in a way that you felt compelled to talk about it to others or to do something? Give me an example.

I think I've gone that whole range. Like I made contributions to Haiti, I didn't boycott any oil, but I think those bring issues to the forefront that we wouldn't be thinking otherwise. Like, the oil spill and the ramifications of that in terms of the planet. It makes me think that we need to be about doing something about those things. Exactly what we do? I don't know. And how? I don't know but certainly all the topics you mention have been part of discussion I'd been having during

those times when those things were in the news. So I think those are good things, it raises the public's awareness of things. It should let us know, I mean there are a lot of people out there that all they're about is the money, they don't care about the people and things like that, like the planet. So, yea, part of what I do on a day to day basis is communicating with other people and you can't just talk about tax laws or accounting pronouncements. In order to be a good service provider, you have to be a person, too. You have to be able to talk to people about different things that are going on in the world. Which means you have to have an opinion about them, or at least some facts about them. So, certainly, the news is the source of that.

Not everyone in this society has had direct contact or experience with the news-making process beyond that of the finished product itself. Not everyone has been interviewed by a reporter, or stood in a newsroom, or observed how news stories are created. Have you ever experienced any direct or personal engagements with news?

Yes, I have.

Tell me about it.

Well, it's primarily been in my role at various times for providing consultant services or financial management services to governmental entities in some kind of issues that was both financial and political. I've been called upon to give opinions about certain things. I've been to media training because I've provided services to politicians and there's always the need to know how to deal with that kind of situation, especially when you perceive it to be a potentially hostile

environment. The only thing I remember about media training is that you should, no matter what they ask you, tell them what you want them to know. And I see that all the time.

What do you mean?

You see a politician being interviewed and they'll say why did you do all this crazy stuff and they say we have done great jobs since we've been in office, we've done all of these great things. So, they always, no matter what the question, they tell you what they want you to know because they know when you see it on TV, it's going to be that long and you want it to be something positive. So, you never respond to negative stuff. Most of my encounters with media have been negative.

Why do you say that?

Because they always wanted me to say something bad about somebody.

They were trying to coerce into saying something...

Something bad, yes.

And that was the reporters who tried to do that?

Yes.

Once you saw the final product, the finished product on those stories how did it come out? What did you think?

It was nothing like I anticipated because the press has the ability to cut and paste and use things the way they want to use it to fit into the objective of the story that they're putting out. The intent was to write a story that was critical of the operations of the City of St. Louis in the License Collector's office in June. So, even though you answer questions in a positive way in your opinion, the lead in

to what you see can be something totally different so the answer looks dumb. So, I think most people are at a disadvantage dealing with the press because ultimately the final product is what they want it to be.

As best as you can, take a moment to think back to all the news you've ever encountered and try to recall an instance when you thought news was at its very best. When's a time when you thought news outlets did a really great job?

I'm not sure there is such a thing.

Why do you say that?

Well, because, I would say maybe the coverage of Haiti or something like that, when it's certainly a disaster and everybody understands it as such. When there's general consensus that people ought to do something and the news has decided, well, we're going to assist in this effort. I would say put it in a situation where in general everybody has the same opinion and I think it's easy for the news media to perform a service. Rather than being a part of a process to remind people they're part of a process to unite people. Haiti is a good example of that.

If that situation is not there and there isn't this general agreement of disaster, do you think that news performs a good service or has done a good job outside of that?

In the absence of a situation like that, I think news, media, sources, outlets, take sides. So, they report, for example, in the presidential campaign. They have a tendency to report good stuff about one person and bad stuff from another, or bad stuff from everybody. I mean, I think it's not clear-cut, it's not a let's rally around this kind of situation. It's a, okay this is the news and our job in general is

to find all the dirt we can find and make sure it gets on the news. I think if you have a good situation and generally everybody's in a could not believe the disaster that took place in Haiti, and it was reported, and they were calling for help and assistance, then I think news is good for that.

Take another moment, can you remember an instance when you thought news was at its worst?

I think news has been at its worst in every major political campaign in my lifetime because it's all about the negativism, it's all about the bad stuff, the crazy stuff that has gone on in people's lives or in their campaigns or in the homes, or whatever. One thing about the media today is that we certainly have access to more information than we've ever had. And maybe it's a good thing, but if that's a good thing then it's telling us how what bad people we really are. So, everybody's bad so where's the silver lining because it's a matter of you reporting so many bad things that you have to make that choice among the evils. So, when I see a candidate, for example, Obama who has a, when they give him the opportunity of just showing what he says, who has such a positive vision for America, for the world, I guess that's a good thing that that's a good situation. The difficulty in it is that I think we have very few people who have the ability to consistently present that positive message so they don't get caught up in the negative stuff. Political campaigns in general are the worst media reporting.

Who or what would you say is responsible for this?

I think it's the general human nature to think that because I think it's right. And so, when you get media that's controlled by individuals that think that, that's

what they report, then you're not getting the true variables that you need to make good decisions. So, I don't know who that is, but you know, FOX news is an example, whatever that ownership is, is an example of that. They're saying well, we know what's right for America, so we're going to report the stuff this way. Maybe you do, maybe you don't. What's responsible is that attitude.

From your experiences with news, if you could assign journalism a letter grade, A-F, what letter grade would you give journalism's overall performance in the US?

C.

Why is that?

Because there's some good stuff and then there's some bad stuff. I mean, you said overall so I'm going to put them all together. And maybe that's good, the only problem with that is that if you put them all together and you say it's a C, that means that if everybody is focusing in this C category of the media outlets that report on that level, then everything is fine. But the problems is that you have people over here who only view conservative type things, you got people over here that only view liberal type things, so unless you, which I try to do, unless you're following something throughout the entire spectrum, you get a very narrow – it's very easy for people to take a very narrow approach to where they get their information from and therefore stay in this polarization of conservatives versus liberals which really are just words. I don't think you have any news outlet in particular that's operating at the C level. You're either here or here and it seems to me that the more you have, because we're saturated with

news, you get 24/7 news somewhere, the more you have the more sensation news has become because they're all trying to pull people and they have these sensational stories. You know, they report that 50 million people got killed in the earthquake, that's the first time you hear it, and then 4 days later they say they had a minor earthquake and 5 people lost their house. But you see that happen all the time. They report something really sensational and if you just take that in and just go with that – this ATM robbery in St. Louis. They were talking about 18 million dollars...and as the story evolved, and a lot of this stories you say that can't be true, it's going to be different when we...so, the problem may not necessarily be the media itself, the problem may be how people interpret the information they're given, digest it, and analyze it, and follow up on it because with this robbery, everyday there's something new. So where you are in the spectrum of what you believe about it depends on the last thing you heard. The news media aren't taking the time to get the whole story before they report it, they just report it as it comes in, whatever it is. Don't make no sense compared to what they said yesterday but they just keep on reporting the same things.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most satisfied with?

It's probably the thing that makes it so difficult, to really come up with honest interpretation and that's the wide variety of sources. It's a catch 22, we have wider varieties, whether it be television, radio, internet, all of those kinds of things, and the sources within each one of those. But what we also have going on is the consolidation of the ownership of those things so, you're really getting the

same news. It might be coming from 4 different places but there's a central, like FOX news I guess, that's controlling some print media, they're controlling some radio media, and they're controlling some internet media. More people have access but at the same time they're ability to read between the lines has become less.

Based on this same grade, which aspects of journalism are you most dissatisfied with?

Consolidation of ownership.

How would you improve that?

I can't. I think we really need to revisit this whole thing about freedom of the press because I don't think that the founding fathers anticipated the internet and all of those things. I mean freedom of the press back then was just a printing press. I guess you still had the issue that everybody couldn't afford a printing press so there was limitation but at least you had competition. In my lifetime, I think we had like 3 newspapers in St. Louis at one time, 3 daily papers. All of that is consolidated now and then the ability to get it out through the internet and over the TV and all that kind of stuff, I think the press has crossed the boundaries of fairness in reporting.

What do you mean?

I think that they say it's just about who can get a story out there quickest and let's just check the details later. And you see too much of that happening. But it's the nature of the beast, that's the competition that they're in now. That's why newspapers are going out of business, it's not fast enough.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albritton, R. (Ed.). (2003). Superseding Lukacs: A contribution to the theory of subjectivity. In R. Albritton and J. Simoulidis (Eds.), *New dialectics and political economy* (pp. 60-77). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Ltd.
- Appadurai, A. (1986). *The social life of things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Babe, R. E. (2009). *Cultural studies and political economy: Toward a new integration*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Baker, E. C. (2002). *Media, markets, and democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, E. C. (2007). *Media concentration and democracy: why ownership matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bagdikian, B. H. (1992). *The media monopoly*. 4th ed. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bagdikian, B. H., (2004). *The new media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bawerk, E. B. (1884). *History and critique of interest theories*. Capital and interest. 1
- Benson, R. (2006). News Media as a journalistic field: what Bourdieu add to new institutionalism, and vice versa. In *Political Communication*, 23(2), 187-202.
- Berlin, I. (1958). Two concepts of liberty. In I. Berlin, *Four essays on liberty*. Oxford: University Oxford Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1979).
- Borg, C. & P. Mayo. (2002). Gramsci and the Unitarian school: Paradoxes and possibilities. In Borg, C., J. Buttigieg, & P. Mayo (Eds.), *Gramsci and education* (pp. 88 – 108). New York: Rowman& Littlefield Publisher, Inc.
- Christians, C. G. & J. W. Carey. (1989). The logic and aims of qualitative research. In *Research Methods in Mass Communication*, ed. Guido H. Stempel III and Bruce H. Westley, 354-374. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Clark-Ibanez, M. (2004). Framing the social world with photo-elicitation interview. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(12), 1507-1526.

- Compaine, B. M. & D. Gomery. (2000). *Who owns the media: competition and concentration in the mass media industry*. 3rd ed. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Curran, J. (2005). What democracy requires of the media. In G. Overholser & K. H. Jamieson, *The press* (pp. 120-140). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Denizen, N. K. & Y. S. Lincoln, eds. (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Doyle, G. (2002). *Media ownership: the economics and politics of convergence and concentration in the UK and European media*. London: Sage Publications.
- Eaton, J. (1966). *Political economy: A Marxist textbook*. New York: International Publishers.
- Fine, B. & L. Harris. (1979). *Re-reading Capital*. London: Macmillan.
- Fiske, S. T. (1982). Schema-triggered affect: Applications to social perception. *Affect and Cognition: The 17th Annual Carnegie Symposium*. Ed. M. S. Clark and S. T. Fiske. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 55-78.
- Fiske, S. T. & M. A. Pavelchak. (1984). Category-based versus piecemeal-based affective responses: Developments in schematic triggered affect. In *The Handbook of motivation and cognition: Foundations of social behavior*, ed. R. M. Sorrentino and E. T. Higgins, 167-203. New York: Guilford Press.
- Fiske, S. T. & S. E. Taylor. (1991). *Social cognition*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Fiske, S. T. & S. E. Taylor. (2008). *Social cognition: From Brains to Culture*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Fishbein, M. & I. Ajzen. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Glasser, T. (1984). Objectivity precludes responsibility. *The Quill*.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. New York: International.
- Greenbaum, T. (1993). *The handbook for focus group research*. New York: Lexington Books.

- Hardy, J. (2008). *Western media systems*. New York: Routledge.
- Hayek, F. A. (1961). The Use of Knowledge in Society. *Freeman*. 11(5), p. 44.
- Jensen, K. B. & N. W. Jankowski, eds. (1991). *A handbook of qualitative methodologies for mass communication research*. London: Routledge.
- Katona, G. (1975). *Psychological economics*. New York: Elsevier.
- Kovach, B. & T. Rosenstiel. (2007). *The elements of journalism: What newspeople should know and the public should expect*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Lee, M. J. (2000). *The consumer society reader*. (Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Lenon, V. (1979). In H. Entwistle, *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative schooling for radical politics*. London: Routledge&Kegan Paul.
- Lippmann, W. (1949). *Public Opinion*. New York: MacMillan.
- Livingstone, D. W. (2002). Working-class learning, cultural transformation, and democratic political education: Gramsci's legacy. In Borg, C., J. Buttigieg, & P. Mayo (Eds.), *Gramsci and education* (pp. 219 – 240). New York: Rowman& Littlefield Publisher, Inc.
- Lukacs, G. (1971). *History and class consciousness*. London: Merlin Press.
- Lynch, J. G., Jr. & T. K. Srull. (June, 1982). Memory and attentional factors in consumer choice: Concepts and research methods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18-37.
- MacInnis, D. J. & B. J. Jaworski. (October, 1989). Information processing from advertisements: Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Marketing*, 53, 1-23.
- Marx, K. (1887). *Capital. Volume I*. F. Engels, (Ed.). (S. Monroe & E. Aveling, Trans.). Moscow: Progress Publishers (originally published in 1867).
- Mandel, Ernest. (1970). *An introduction to Marxist economic theory*. New York: Pathfinder Press.
- McChesney, R. W. (1999). *Rich media, poor democracy: Communication politics in dubious times*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press
- McManus, J. H. (1994). *Market-driven journalism: Let the citizen beware?* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

- Merrill, J. C. (1990). *The imperative of freedom: A philosophy of journalist autonomy*. New York: Freedom House.
- Milward, B. (2000). *Marxian political economy: Theory, history and contemporary relevance*. New York: St. Martin's Press
- National Public Radio.(2010). *Interview with FCC chairman Michael Powell*. Retrieved November 30, 2010, from <http://www.npr.org/news/specials/fcc/index.html>
- Noam, E. M. (2009). *Media ownership and concentration in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Parducci, A. (1968). The relativism of absolute judgments.*Scientific American*, 219, 84 – 90.
- Polanyi, K. (1944). *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time*. Boston: Beacon Press Books.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1942). *Capitalism, socialism, and democracy*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Stangor, C. & D. N. Ruble. (1989). Strength of expectancies and memory for social information: What we remember depends on how much we know. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (25), 18-35.
- Stewart, Alan E. (2009). Minding the weather: The measurement of weather salience.*Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 90, (12), 1833-1841. Retrieved from <http://proxy.msl.missouri.edu:4920/archive/1520-0477/90/12/pdf/i1520-0477-90-12-1833.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2010).
- Taylor, S. E. & E. J. Langer. (1977). Stalking the elusive 'vividness' effect. *Psychological Review* 89 (2), 155 – 181.
- Thompson, J. B. (1995). *The media and modernity*.Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Whyte, W. F. (1982). Interviewing in field research. In *Field Research: Sourcebook and Field Manual*, ed.Robert G. Burgess (pp. 111-122). London: George Allen &Unwin.
- Woods, W. A. (1981). *Consumer behavior: Adapting and experiencing*. New York: North Holland.
- Zizek, S. (2006).*The parallax view*. Cambridge: MIT Press.