



# Women In Leadership: Journalism

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Women journalists have impacted the reporting and editing of our nations news. What are the challenges they have faced? And what has changed in the roles, expectations, opportunities, and obstacles for women in American journalism? A panel of journalists and news executives discuss what it took to succeed and the future challenges for women in journalism. The panel includes **Cokie Roberts**, political commentator for ABC News; **Gwen Ifill**, moderator and managing editor of Washington Week on PBS; **Diane Rehm**, host of the Diane Rehm Show on NPR; and **Katharine Weymouth**, publisher of The Washington Post and president and CEO of Washington Post Media.

**THORA COLOT:** Good evening, everybody. Hello and welcome to our beautiful William G. McGowan Theater. I'm Thora Colot. I'm the Executive Director of the Foundation for the National Archives. And the Foundation is very proud to be a partner in the creation of the National Archives Experience here, as well as bringing exhibits and programs like these to larger audiences nationwide. So, thank all of you for coming here tonight. We are extremely grateful to the William G. McGowan Fund. Their very generous support not only made this physical space possible, but they continue to be fabulous partners, offering ongoing support with additional grants, but just as important, they are great friends. In fact, Sue Ling Gin McGowan first suggested this Women in Leadership forum years ago. And so 2010 boasts our third year hosting this forum. As of this week, Sue Gin McGowan is our newest Director of the Board of the Foundation for the National Archives. So, although she had business and could not attend this year's discussion, we want to extend our congratulations as well as our thanks for her support, which includes her participation in the last 2 forums.

In 2008, we did "Citizens by Choice: Women in Business Leadership," and in 2009, we did "Big Strides" and "Paths: Women's Journey to Political Leadership." The people you will hear from tonight are fabulous. They're powerhouses—diverse in their backgrounds and contributions, and not only in the field of journalism, but also in terms of their influences on society and the American culture as a whole.

But the gentleman who's going to open the program--and, yes, I'm really only up here to remind you guys to turn off your cell phones. I'm so sorry about that. But this gentleman is celebrating this coming week, I believe, his four month anniversary as the



10<sup>th</sup> archivist of the United States. David Ferriero, our new Archivist, has brought a new ray of sunshine to the National Archives. And this ray isn't just about a new brightness or a new halo. I'm talking about the strong dose of vitamin D that offers the strong boost to curing all of your ills. From an interesting stint in the Navy to shelving books in libraries at M.I.T. in Cambridge, to leading the whole public library system in New York City, David is bringing to the National Archives tons of experience with books and records and papers and manuscripts, electronic materials, and, yes, even people--especially people. For those of you who have met him, you understand how delighted that we are that David is here in Washington, DC, and at the helm of the National Archives. And for those of you who haven't yet, you can look forward to that pleasure. It's my pleasure tonight to welcome David Ferriero to the stage.

**DAVID FERRIERO:** Thank you, Thora, for that kind introduction. Thora told me that she had read my remarks and had to run upstairs to change her introduction. Thank you, Thora. Welcome, all of you, to the National Archives and to the William G. McGowan Theater. Tonight's program, by the way, is made possible by the generous support of the foundation and the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, inc. for many years, American journalism was a man's game, and women were relegated to the women's or food pages, or to secretarial or support jobs. It was a long, slow trip to the front pages, the evening news, and corner offices. Now women are a major force in the leadership and management of our mass media. They are owners, publishers, and editors of major newspapers, columnists with large followings, proprietors of influential internet sites, star TV reporters, and anchors of the evening network news shows. To talk about the challenges women have faced, and still do face, in journalism, we have assembled a panel of women who have distinguished themselves in the news industry. They're here to discuss not just what it took to succeed in journalism, but what the future challenges are for women at a time when the gathering and reporting of news is undergoing a radical, and in many cases painful, transformation. I'm eager to hear what they have to say.

Moderating our panel is someone who is no stranger to the Archives or around Washington--Cokie Roberts. Cokie does political commentary for ABC news, where she has covered Congress, politics, and public policy for nearly 20 years. And for 8 years at ABC, she and Sam Donaldson co-anchored the Sunday morning public affairs show "This Week." She is also senior news analyst at National Public Radio, and over her more than 40 years in broadcasting, her reporting has brought her countless awards and honors, including three Emmys. She grew up around Congress, where both her father and mother served in the House of Representatives from Louisiana. In addition to her broadcasting work, she also writes a weekly syndicated newspaper column with her husband, Steve Roberts, and has authored or co-authored four books, including two about women who helped shaped this nation in its early years. And--this is important--she has long been a strong and active supporter of the National



Archives, and is currently serving as a Vice President on the board of the Foundation of the National Archives. Cokie Roberts.

**COKIE ROBERTS:** Thank you very much. This is going to be an informal evening, so we're going to all just sit down. I don't think we need a lectern. And you have biographies of each of our distinguished panelists in your programs. And I think you know them well. Gwen Ifill from *Washington Week in Review* and the *Lehrer News Hour*. Katharine Weymouth, who is publisher of the *Washington Post*, and someone who's really bringing that paper into the 21st century. And Diane Rehm, whom of course you know quite well from WAMU here in Washington with her program. *The Diane Rehm Show* is on hundreds of public radio stations around the country and on armed forces radio and other outlets around the world. Susan Tift was supposed to be with us tonight, and we are very, very sorry that she's not, for several reasons. One is that she would have brought a perspective of someone who is a real student of the history of journalism. She's written two major books about journalistic families, one about the Sulzberger's of the *New York Times*, and one about the Bingham's of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. And she has taught journalism, and has that perspective as well. She is unfortunately quite ill and tried her best to make it, and she was just not able to do it. But as sick as she is and undergoing harsh radiation treatments, she still queried her current and former students--female students-- at Duke University's School of Public Policy and Journalism and asked them about some of the questions that were on our minds for tonight, and we have their answers. And so we will get to some of those at some point in the program tonight.

It is, of course, Women's History Month, as many of you know. And the theme for this year's Women's History Month is "Write Women Back into History," which basically just cracks me up. I mean, when they were ever written into history? I mean, I've done my best, God knows. But, you know, we need more of them. I have actually attended several fabulous events this week with my mother, who will be 94 on Saturday. So, you know, I'm kind of living women's history through this month, you know. She's got a good most of a century. And she does have this incredibly annoying habit of saying "plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose" no matter what happens. And of course, she's right. There is a lot of continuity in a lot of things that have happened before, even if we don't recognize them as such at the time. So that, for instance, we hail-- and rightfully so--this bright young woman as the publisher of the *Washington Post*. But in going back through the history, I realize that at one point in the American colonies, out of 78 newspapers, 16 of them were edited or published by women. We haven't been anywhere near that number since then. That was the high water mark. Now, of course if you owned the press, you published the paper, and some of them were good businesswomen, which was always true. But there are very interesting stories about women throughout--in journalism--throughout our history. My personal favorite is actually Anne Newport Royall who's buried here at the Congressional Cemetery. And



she was an investigative journalist, and as with many investigative journalists, a bit of a nut. And she was actually arrested in 1829 for the crime of being a common scold. And I--

**REHM:** We're all guilty.

**ROBERTS:** Exactly.

**IFILL:** For which we would all be arrested at this point.

**ROBERTS:** If this were still a crime, we'd all be in deep trouble. Her fellow news--members of the trade--newspapermen paid the \$10 fine to get her out of jail because they thought that they had to do so for the honor of the press. Now you can imagine what they were like, you know. They weren't scolding anywhere near enough. Actually, my favorite story about Anne Royall might not be true, but it's too good a story not to share, which is that she had been trying and trying and trying to get an interview with John Quincy Adams, who is a, you know, a prig. And the story goes that she finally one day, when he was swimming in the Potomac, she sat on his clothes. So he had no choice, you know. But then again, now, wrap your mind around this mental image, right? He comes out in his birthday suit, and what has she got, a quill mean--what's going on, you know? But she was--there have been a couple biographies of her, called "Grandma of the Muckrakers." and, of course, the very, very famous Nellie Bly--much more famous than anybody in any TV--journalist in America today. And she was an investigative journalist in the truest sense: disguising her to get into the notorious Blackwell's Asylum. Now, of course people were ready to believe that a woman was crazy, you know mean--no, seriously. And so it was the equivalent of a hidden camera story today. And she became a household name. And then the "world" newspaper decided that they would take advantage of that. So they sponsored a contest to see who could guess how long it would take her--this was in 1889--how long it would take her to go around the world--if she could beat Phineas Fogg. And people--something like a million people--in 1889--submitted entries into the contest. And she did go around the world on burros and all.

The whole story is just fabulous. And she did it in 72 days, 6 hours, 11 minutes, and 14 seconds. Her train trip—because she landed in California—her train trip across the country-- people came out all along the tracks to greet her and all that. So, you know, there is a tradition here that has been going on for a long time. And about the same time that Nellie was writing, Ida B. Wells, one of the bravest women, certainly, in the history of journalism--a former slave--was in Memphis, and she started writing about the poor conditions in the schools for black children and got fired. And then she started writing some more, and launched an anti-lynching campaign, which resulted in a mob landing in the newspaper office and destroying the presses. And she then went on the



lecture circuit in Europe, and came back and continued her advocacy and was one of the founders of the NAACP.

In World War II we have lots of women reporters. They all had terrible stories of the problems that they had in getting the jobs and then getting the stories. But they managed to scoop the men over and over and over again. And women who were here on the home front, of course, got good jobs in newspapers here. But as with Rosie the Riveter, you had Rosie the Reporter. And when the men came back from war, the women were sent either home or to the women's pages. But what they did when they got to the women's pages was something very different, and it was something that Nellie Bly had done and Ida B. Wells had done, which was to write about the conditions of women and children in poverty. And they looked at things differently. They did things different from the men who were writing at the same time. And we have seen this over and over again. Also in broadcasting. When Pauline Frederick, so some of you might remember, went to apply for a job at NBC, she was told, "stay away from radio. It doesn't like women." but fortunately she didn't listen and had a wonderful radio career--was the first woman reporter on television at the 1948 democratic convention. My mother always talks about that convention, saying, "you know, there were two new inventions—television and air conditioning. Television worked." But these women were, right up until--certainly, into my time in broadcasting and print journalism--shut out of the institutions that made it easier to do your job, so that the press club here, for instance, where all of the powerful people who came in from abroad, but also from around the country, always stopped there and made a speech and answered questions. Women weren't allowed in the press club. And when they finally protested that they couldn't get the story, they were sent up to the balcony. And Nan Robertson, a wonderful woman who recently died, from the *New York Times*, wrote a terrific book about it called *The Girls in the Balcony*. And there they were, sweating away while the men sat downstairs in air conditioned splendor having lunch, but at least they were allowed to hear the speech and get the questions they couldn't answer. They couldn't ask any questions. They were in the balcony. But they could at least hear the question and answer.

What changed, of course—and people, particularly young people, are way too slow to realize this--what changed it all was the 1964 Civil Rights act. And before that time, help wanted ads had been male, female, white, colored. And the word "sex" was inserted into the employment section of the Bill so that you couldn't discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, or sex. It was kept in by segregationists as a killer to the bill. But it didn't kill the Bill, and women in the house and senate made sure that it stayed in up until the President's signature, and that changed everything. And brave women at the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* and CBS brought suit under the Bill and did change the opportunities for women in journalism from there on out.



That's not to say it's been easy. Katharine's grandmother, Katharine Graham, wrote a wonderful book, talking about the problems she had as a woman in journalism as the boss. And it still wasn't an easy situation. So no matter what your path was--and all of our paths are quite different as we came into this field, and all of our experiences are different, and all of our--all of what we do today is different. But there are some commonalities. And so I think we want to start with talking about those, and then we will get on later in the program to your own questions. So, I want to ask Diane, you know, as the person who's been at it longest--do you see, as we saw with these women from an earlier time, that women in this field bring a different set of sensibilities than men do?

**REHM:** Cokie, I feel such a sense of humility as I hear you talk about the struggles through which women of prior generations have gone through. Just to offer a little bit of background, I was at home for 14, 15 years, taking care of two wonderful human beings who are now, you know, sort of 48 and 50. And I marvel at what they've accomplished, and I find myself recalling a woman who was a broadcaster here in Washington, whose name was Betty Groebli. And I would, as a homemaker, make sure to tune in to her program every day at noon because, as a homemaker, she was my linchpin to the outer world. Now, what I have experienced is a totally, totally, sort of sideways entry into broadcasting, because I had no background, I had no education, I had no education or experience, and found myself showing up one day as a volunteer and being on the air that very first day.

Now, what I have experienced, in direct response to your question, and listening to men and women as they behave as interviewers, is that—and I swear this isn't sexist--is that women listen more carefully. Women--and I'll give you an example. Women are willing to wait for an answer. A perfect example is Jimmy Carter, who has been on the program several times. But on his last visit, he was talking about his autobiography, and at one point he talked about the fact that he had never--can you believe this--never informed his wife that he was going to run for political office.

**ROBERTS:** It's cause for death.

**REHM:** So, you know, he talked in the book about the various issues that they had had, and this seemed to me rather central. And so I said to him out of the bottom of my feet, "Mr. President, have you and your wife ever considered divorce?" There was 10 seconds of silence on air. Now, Cokie knows--everybody knows--you don't let 10 seconds go by. But I was willing to wait.

**ROBERTS:** And what did he say finally?



**REHM:** And what he finally said was, looking at me this way, "Yes, Diane, we did." And I then said, "Mr. President, what did you do then?" And I had to wait 10 more seconds. At which point he said, "We got down on our knees and prayed." Now, I'm saying to you that it's hard to wait for an answer. It's hard to let that other person talk. But what's hardest of all is to learn to listen. And that's what I see in my job as--as learning to listen, and that's what I do.

**ROBERTS:** Well, that's great. Well, I, you know, I often accuse men--when I'm on a roundtable, for instance-- of just waiting for my lips to stop moving. They have no idea what I'm saying. They're just--Gwen, you have been in the position of being a girl on the bus in political coverage. I have always had the thesis--and tell me if you think it's right--that once we got on the bus, things changed in terms of coverage, that what happened on the bus didn't necessarily stay on the bus.

**IFILL:** When I first got a chance to cover a national political campaign for the *Washington Post* in 1988, the first thing I did was read *The Boys on the Bus*, because that's the bible. You wanted to know what happened. And it had great stories. There were actually some people still alive who were in it. So I read every page and thought, "this is so romantic, so interesting." and, of course, it was nothing like that by the time I got there. But in addition to that, you're right. Part of the reason why there was nothing like that is because we were there. Now, I was at the bottom of the totem pole. I was the one woman on the *Post* political staff, and they sent me out there for to cover all of the people who might lose. Which is to say, if Dick Gephardt or Paul Simon or Pat Robertson--

**ROBERTS:** My worst was Alan Cranston.

**IFILL:** Alan Cranston. It became--after awhile it became like I was the angel of death. "Oh, no. here Comes Gwen. Flee!" and finally I ended up with a candidate, the last one left standing, who was Jesse Jackson, who refused to quit until he got to the convention. So that gave me a really nice ride. But it also meant that you had to--you had to use whatever advantages you had, and I don't mean that the way it sounds. It meant that if someone underestimates you, as they always will, the secret is to allow them to do it.

It's a huge advantage to be underestimated, because just when they've blown you off, you come back for the kill. And I've been underestimated as a woman. I've been underestimated as a black person. I've been underestimated as a young person--now, probably as an old person. And each time--it took me awhile to figure it out that it was a great thing, because they, while waiting for your lips to stop moving, didn't realize you were coming in with another question, with another follow-up. It's really been--it's turned out to be an advantage, but it also means that when I sit down--and when Diane



does this on Fridays, it's the same thing--and when you did it, Cokie--and try to put together a roundtable conversation we're thinking about a conversation. We're not necessarily thinking about a shout fest.

We're thinking about eliciting information in a way--I call *Washington Week* my sandbox--on Friday nights. because we sit around and we have what I'd hope feels like an eavesdropping in a really cool dinner party. You're not just sitting there listening to people talk. You're listening to people converse, and say, "Really? I didn't know that." When it works, that's what you get. And that's why you almost have to always have a woman at the table. To me, it's the advantage of the--"diversity" the word has been devalued, because that's what we do with good ideas. We devalue them after awhile. But the point of diversity is not just so there's one of each at the table. It's that one of each of these people bring something different to the conversation, and therefore makes it richer. When I covered the department of housing and urban development for the *Washington Post*, I was probably the only one covering the had scandal who had ever lived in public housing. Now, this didn't mean that I was going around, you know, carrying the truck for public housing. It meant that, if someone were to demonize the people who are occupants of public housing, I could say, "hey, that was me." I'm not so bad. Let me listen to them. "let me hear it differently. let me see this set of circumstances differently."

So I brought the diversity of background to that conversation, the same way bringing the diversity of gender or the diversity of race to a conversation helps defuse a lot of conversations we don't have. We hate talking about race. People love to come to me and say, "why do we have to mention that the president's black?" and my answer often is, "why would we not want to, unless we thought it was a bad thing?" "oh, right." Because if it was a good thing, we'd celebrate it, right? So, when you talk about race, when you talk about gender, when you talk about background, it ought to be about what makes us richer and what makes us tell the stories better. And that's why we need to be in the room.

**ROBERTS:** And the diversity of interest.

**IFILL:** Exactly.

**ROBERTS:** Katharine, as someone who is, really, the next generation, do you, in terms of a journalistic experience-- do you--does this even enter into your thinking?

**KATHARINE WEYMOUTH:** Not that much. And I should say I didn't rise up as a journalist, obviously, and--come here sort of by way of fraud, since I was just born into the right family. But, um--



**IFILL:** Like that's never happened.

**WEYMOUTH:** So I was a lawyer and then went into the business side of the *Washington Post*, and subsequently became publisher. So--no, not really.

And as I was preparing for this panel, I ran around my newsroom like, "what do you have to say about being a woman in journalism?" is it different? So, not really, although I will say I am--we often have a meeting of what we call "the major metro paper publishers," which is sort of what it sounds like--Chicago, Atlanta, L.A., Boston, et cetera. And I am the only woman in the room when we have that. There are not a lot of- there are no major metro women publishers. There's obviously Janet Robinson as the president and CEO of the *New York Times*. but I don't feel like it changes the conversation. I feel like I'm treated just like everybody else, except that they all go to the bathroom together.

**IFILL:** And who knows what happens in there.

**ROBERTS:** And then they have a completely different conversation.

**WEYMOUTH:** And then, to Gwen's point--I mean, for a long time I was running the advertising department. And, you know, use what you got. Sometimes it helps you sell it out. I once took an advertiser out golfing, which I'm not very good at, but that's what they like to do. And so I called him up to warn him and I just said--I won't mention his name--I said, "Just, by the way, my game is not very pretty." and he said, "That's ok, because you are. Just wear some short shorts and we'll be fine." and I said, "Hey, whatever sells. I'm there."

**IFILL:** Did it work?

**ROBERTS:** There you go.

**WEYMOUTH:** You know--well, anything for the business.

**IFILL:** Absolutely.

**WEYMOUTH:** Support what you guys do.

**ROBERTS:** One of the numbers, though, that I did find sort of striking is that 2/3 of the students in journalism school are now female. But the numbers are still pretty bad in terms of people being hired and the stories that they write. Let's see. In 2006, women reported only 28% of the major stories on network news, minorities only 15%. At newspapers, where the pay isn't as good, the numbers are a little better. The American



society of newspaper editors' most recent census counts women as 39% of the writers, reporters, and 35% of the supervisors, whatever that means. so, what's the disconnection there? Anybody want to take it?

**IFILL:** I have one theory, which I don't think is I speak at a lot of college campuses, and no matter how many questions I get from students, it takes about 2/3 a way into the quad before a young woman stands up and says to me, "So, what kind of personal life do you have?" When I came out of college, we were told we could do it all, which was a lie. We can do it all eventually in serial fashion, but we can't do it all at once. But nobody told us that. This was the seventies. We could do it all. We could fry the bacon—you know that whole thing. But what is dawning on these women--a lot of these young women--is that you can't do it all, and what are the choices--they want to know the choices you had to make, and whether they're willing to make those choices. and I think that's part of the disconnect between the people who are in school and the people who are practicing the craft. you make choice--it's the same thing, like women in politics. you make a choice at some point--do I want to run for office or do I want to run a nonprofit, which allows me more flexibility to raise my family? It doesn't mean it's not leadership. It means it's a different choice of leadership that allows them to prioritize their lives.

**REHM:** I think there is also the notion that there is a lot of grunt work.

**ROBERTS:** You don't start out as the anchor?

**REHM:** You don't start out at the top. And the pyramid is becoming steeper, that it's exactly the same as it is, for example, at the Department of State. You've got all these people who spend years and years dedicating themselves to the diplomatic service. How many reach that ambassadorial position? And how many reach the microphone? How many reach the publisher's office? How many reach the anchor's office? Not many. And, is it worth it to do the overnight shifts? To do, literally, the grunt work to get there? I don't know.

**ROBERTS:** Do you see that as a problem in terms of hiring and retaining people?

**WEYMOUTH:** I think, yeah, and I guess I see it, having been a lawyer; it's not unique to journalism. I think Gwen is on to something, that people do have to--as a litigator, you know, I looked at the partners in my old law firm and I thought,"I don't want to do that. I will never see my children if I have them." And I talked to some of our reporters who are, you know, foreign correspondents, and end up having to go somewhere for a month and leave their kids behind. You look at Christiane Amanpour. I mean, this is--or going on a campaign and being on a bus for 3 months in Iowa. So, I think--you know, we have a managing woman editor, so we have, actually, some--lots of women, both



on the business side and on the journalism side. But you are making choices, and I think people do see that.

**ROBERTS:** Although aren't there ways to make that better? I mean, there's no need to be on the bus for 3 months, you know. I mean, some of it is just the way it's always been. And it was the way it's always been because the guys liked it that way. And is there any real--isn't one of the challenges to take a look at these people coming in who are people we don't want to lose, and say, "How can we make it so that their lives will be--"

**IFILL:** There have been examples of that. For instance, that's why there are so many husband and wife teams in foreign postings at newspapers around the world, because they became—they found a way to split the job--save the company some money by splitting the job--and also still have their family intact. So that's one reason. and the other way is technology. Technology is the reason why we don't have to be in the bus 3 months at a time anymore. There are so many other ways to cover a story. And I don't know whether newsrooms have adjusted to that in terms of how to diversify staff.

**ROBERTS:** Of course, we're talking at a time about women in journalism at a moment in history where the whole trade of journalism is in trouble, and that there are lots of broader questions, which I don't think, with this particular panel here, that we want to ignore.

**REHM:** Why not? How about radio? Radio lives. It does.

**ROBERTS:** It does. It's true. But the--I have some of Susan's students, and they speak to these issues. So let me read one of them. "While I remain passionate about journalism and continue to be an avid consumer--" Oh, she went into management consulting-- "I'm thrilled with my work as a management consultant and I'm glad I did not pursue journalism. My peers, who should all now, are earning their way into fulfilling editing roles are instead looking for work. I know enough about how vital talent management is to the "success of any enterprise, and I know enough about journalism to know that we are all losing something very, very important: the fourth estate and its watchdog role, and it pains me." What about that, Katharine?

**WEYMOUTH:** I think, as is often the case, there is some truth and not some truth. I think we definitely have seen the ranks of journalism—as certainly, at least in print--shrink dramatically. And that is sad. At the same time, I think we are just in this period of incredible transition, and it happens in every industry. and I don't believe that journalism--quality journalism--will go away at all. And in a way you could say the conversation has just exploded and it's really exciting in a way. I mean, you know, during the snowstorm, we took advantage of user-generated photos. We had 2,000



people send in their photos of the snowstorm. And so it's anything from that to the campaign trail, when somebody sends you-- you know, people use crowd-- Twitter for crowd sourcing now, or the journalist have their video cameras with them. So, in my mind, it's a huge and very disruptive transformation, and it's very frightening for people who got used to--ok, basically, it was really just a 40-50 year window where newspapers were profitable and we can plow the profits back into our journalism. and I wish I had lived that period. I'm sure it would have been fun.

**ROBERTS:** I keep saying it's great to be old.

**WEYMOUTH:** But it's not the journalism, I think, that's going away. It's the business model that's challenged, and I think we'll figure out a way to support great journalism.

**REHM:** My concern--excuse me, Cokie. my concern is about journalism and the layers that once existed that no longer exist in the newspaper industry. And this has very little to do with women, but has more to do with the business model and eliminating positions and going directly from those twitters and those face book messages without any sort of intervention as to what is true.

**ROBERTS:** You mean an editor.

**REHM:** You bet. And they're gone.

**IFILL:** It's a difference between news and information. We got a lot of information coming at us. There's no reason to believe that you can't find out everything you want. But I have to decide that my Comcast homepage tells me what's important. So what's important is that Farrah Fawcett was snubbed at the Oscars? Is that really the most important story today? They--people who aren't journalists make the decision about what information's going to come over the transom at me. I like to still think that there will be some filters somewhere--maybe not the same filter we've always had, and maybe not as many layers of filter--but something that is between me and the guy with the handheld camera and the Photoshop who can send me anything and tell me its news that troubles me still.

**ROBERTS:** Well, the other thing--I tend to completely agree that we're in a transition period, and that something will come out the other side of it that will be journalism. But in the process, the...because--I mean, I'm not blaming anybody. Somebody's got to pay for it, you know. But when you lose a foreign reporting because it's really expensive--it is really expensive--then where is the news coming from that you need to get out the other end and still be intact as--



**IFILL:** There were massacres in Nigeria this week. Have you seen a single picture of it? No, because there's nobody who's going to spend the money to send someone to the site—it was a pretty horrific story-- to tell the story. We'll maybe eke out the money to cover major disasters like earthquakes. and getting back to the topic of women--you know, the last hired are the first fired. So, if you're doing what is necessary for the business model to survive and slashing left and right--broadcast and print, by the way. what--300, 400 people at ABC about to lose their jobs? I think that you're also going to lose a lot of the people who just got to the party. They are going to be the first ones to go.

**ROBERTS:** Well, one of these students actually makes the point. She is now a graduating senior who writes columns for the Duke paper. And she says, "I hope to choose journalism when I graduate, but that depends on whether I can get a job." Good point. But she says--she says, "I know the newspapers and news organizations in general cut back. They are cutting back on their internship programs as well." So, how does she get in if that kind of thing is--

**REHM:** She volunteers.

**IFILL:** Which everybody can't afford to do.

**REHM:** Absolutely.

**ROBERTS:** She says she's exhausted her allotment of her parents' financial resources.

**IFILL:** See?

**ROBERTS:** The other theme in these answers, that I must admit kind of cracks me up, is that they are--these young women are asked if they expect to experience any kind of sex discrimination, and they say universally, "no." And, you know, that's one of those things where you find yourself the Wicked Witch of the West, you know. "Just you wait, my pretty." And then it's so awful to be happy when it happens, you know? But they've also been told--and this somewhat surprised me--by people that they have talked to about this, not to report harassment.

**IFILL:** Really?

**ROBERTS:** That this is a big mistake, to report. And several of them said this.

**WEYMOUTH:** Because?



**ROBERTS:** Because it'll make you a whiner and a troublemaker and all that. So what do we think about that?

**IFILL:** We're depressed about that. We're depressed that we reached to this point where we thought we had this new understanding, this general understanding, of what's acceptable and what's not acceptable in the workplace, only to discover that our daughters aren't walking through the doors we opened. How depressing is that? Why is that?

**REHM:** My own daughter...

**ROBERTS:** Is a doctor.

**REHM:** Who is a physician now, went through Carleton College in Minneapolis, and then had one last course--that hideous Biochemistry course that she had to take here in Washington. And without mentioning anything--I mean, this child had top grades, she had this last course to take. And this professor began harassing. She would sit in the back of the class and he would crack jokes, and she would not smile. And one day she came home and she cried, and I said, "I'm going to kill him. "I'm just going to go kill him." and she laughed and she said, "Mom, you can't kill him."

**REHM:** I was ready to kill him!

**WEYMOUTH:** Like any good mother.

**REHM:** Yes! Absolutely. she got an "A". She is now a physician at the Lacey Clinic. But I think back to that and I did not experience that. She, younger than I by 25 years, experienced that. Why? Why? Because there is this power question that is still in play. And, Cokie, you were telling us earlier about the number of white males who voted and created this power structure--37%, is it?

**ROBERTS:** The percentage of white men over 30 in the electorate in the last election was 28%, and it's not that they didn't show up--I mean, that's all there are of them. And I was just, you know, joking earlier with my colleagues here.

**REHM:** It was not a joke.

**ROBERTS:** But they're still running everything-- into the ground.

**REHM:** Right, right. Forgive us.



**ROBERTS:** Ha! Let me just read you this one other thing, and then we're going to soon open this up. But this is another graduate. This is a kid graduating in 2011. "Today the technological skills are the most marketable, especially in the news industry. Of course a station wants to see traditional skills such as your ability to find interesting stories, conduct the interviews, write concise conversational copy. But a growing importance is now being placed on your ability to shoot the story, edit it yourself, create the graphics, alter audio levels, et cetera., formatting stories online for web purposes and utilizing social networking sites such as face book and twitter are also extremely important. With all that said, I hope to attend graduate journalism school to gain more technological skills." Is that right? Is she right?

**REHM:** Boy, I'm glad I'm moving along. Whoa!

**IFILL:** She's right. It's--and then she's got to worry about the shade of her lipstick and the way she curls her hair, because in the end, women are still going to be judged disproportionately by appearance. Let's just be honest about it.

**WEYMOUTH:** On TV.

**IFILL:** On television. well, you know--

**ROBERTS:** Men, too.

**IFILL:** People in print now have to be on television as much. We spend a lot of time talking to *Washington Post* reporters on the air, and we--you know, its television. You've got to worry about everything, and then how to shoot it and how to cut it and how to put it online and how to use social media to gather information. It's what it is, and the reason why you're doing more of these things is because there are fewer people. You can't split it anymore because we're cutting back. I don't look forward to the day--and maybe the day will never come where I personally have to pick up a camera and carry it out on a shoot. You don't want to see that. Producers I know laugh at me when they hear me discuss this sort of thing, because the idea of it-- the camera would crash to the ground. But I have to be prepared for the idea that even if I'm not shooting a piece for broadcast, they might do something for the web with a little flip cam that I'm going to post. that becomes part of the job.

**ROBERTS:** And is there a problem with that?

**IFILL:** It's what it is. It's where we are.

**WEYMOUTH:** I think these kids also--they grow up doing this stuff. I mean, I look at, you know, my 9-year-old-- I was driving her to school. She was playing on my phone.



and I said, "Madeleine, you know, when I was growing up, we didn't have computers, cell phones, DVD players," and she was like, "Wow, mommy. It must've been hard growing up in the olden days."

**WEYMOUTH:** But for her--I mean, you know, she is on Facebook all the time, even though you're not allowed to have an account if you're under 13. I had to set up a whole other account because she was telling all my "friends" everything we were doing in our house. But, you know, she—editing movies is so natural for her, using a flip camera, using-- my 5-year-old can't read, but she knows how to take a video from my phone. So to my mind, it is a lot, but its storytelling. Journalism is storytelling, and now the tools we have to tell stories are flip cameras and, you know-- it's everything, and it's going to change even more. God knows what it's going to be in 5 years. So it is an amazing skill, and the younger journalists that we see coming in-- for them, it's intuitive.

**IFILL:** If you're going to be a woman in this business, you've got to compete with all the skills that are available to you. So there is no way to say "I want to do it the old way." We're not going back to the old way. People aren't even watching the news at 6:30 anymore. They know it all, so we are the ones who have to adapt. And, by the way, news consumers have to adapt, as well, because you have to know that the first wave of information you get is not necessarily your last one. I tell college students all the time "you start at Wikipedia, you don't end at Wikipedia," and they all go "really?"

**IFILL:** But that puts the onus on a news consumer to get to the bottom of the story, to get the questions answered and know they're not going to get it at the first pass.

**ROBERTS:** Another one of these people talks about thinking that maybe her best shot is to--is the blogosphere. and that is—look at the faces: really happy about that.

**WEYMOUTH:** I say good luck making some money doing that.

**ROBERTS:** Well, that's it. but even aside from that--I mean, that's--her problem would be making the money. my problem would be, why would I want to read it? And then the next question is, do we have data? Do we know? Are people getting their news from the blogosphere?

**IFILL:** Some people. I mean, I think the blogosphere is very useful as a complement to what we do. I think that the best--the blogs I read are all written by people who are professional journalists who also blog. So they have a basic understanding and a basic line of reporting expertise, and then they add more with a blog. That's fine. My thing is the people who just sit down and say "this is what I think," and 5 years ago they would've been standing on the street corner with a sign.



**WEYMOUTH:** And now they're a publisher.

**IFILL:** And now they're a publisher. and I--

**WEYMOUTH:** Making about as much money as I am.

**IFILL:** Exactly.

**ROBERTS:** What did you say?

**WEYMOUTH:** Making about as much money as I am.

**IFILL:** I mean, once again, it's not all bad, it's not all great, but there's got to be room for a combination of all this.

**ROBERTS:** Well, I mean, I think that gets back to what you were saying earlier, Katharine, though. You know, in some ways, it's very exciting: let 1,000 flowers bloom. but the problem is the flowers are not all equal.

**WEYMOUTH:** Sure. But I think, to some degree, you have to believe in the audience, that people will get to the bottom of it, that they will find trusted sources. The best blogs that are the most read and that tend to be able to support themselves tend to be the best blogs. They rise to the top.

**REHM:** And in a sense, that's what the callers are doing to a talk radio program-- bringing their own informed ideas to the table and broadcasting to millions of people their own ideas that are informed by sources like blogs, like their radio programs, like Glenn Becks, television.

**IFILL:** Well, there's informed, and there's uninformed.

**REHM:** Yeah. Right. You got it.

**IFILL:** But let me be more precise. It's under-informed. It's someone who calls Diane's show and says "why haven't you done a--" oh, there goes my earring. "Why haven't you written a story about x?" And you say, "Well, where'd you hear about that?" Well, it turns out it was the *Wall Street Journal*. But to this person, there is a conspiracy-- isn't this cute: watching me put my earring back in? To this person, it's a conspiracy for us to keep some odd story they saw as a link in a blog out of the mainstream media, when, in fact, if you trace it back, it goes back to the mainstream media. And that's under-informed.



**ROBERTS:** Well, and also-I'm trying to say this nicely.

**IFILL:** Oh, don't do it.

**ROBERTS:** At the moment we're in our political history and our journalistic history, is relying on the listener, viewer, and reader such a great idea? Because there's a lot out there that is just screaming and yelling.

**REHM:** I think there's a winnowing process that's going to take place that right now we're seeing this explosion, and that's fine. But as we go along, I am confident, more confident, in the sense and sensibility of the American people to do their own winnowing and use good judgment. that's my view, and it may be misdirected, but I believe.

**ROBERTS:** Do any of you see women playing a role in that and try to be mothers, impose a little civility on the conversation or on the journalism as a whole?

**REHM:** I'm trying the best I can.

**IFILL:** I think it's possible. I do-- you know, I'm trying the best I can, too. I mean, if you shout, you're not back on the *News Hour* or *Washington Week*. "It was nice knowing you. Good-bye." But that doesn't mean that people don't choose that for entertainment. They love to watch the shouting. They sometimes just want to see a good old-fashioned fistfight, and that's fine. I tell students who tell me they don't watch the news, they only watch *Jon Stewart*, and for the longest time I didn't know what to say to that except "uh, me, too." And I finally realized the perfect answer someone gave me, actually, was "tell them this," and it's true. It has the advantage of being true--guess who Jon Stewart watches." now...

**IFILL:** Yeah! But what's important about that is in order to get Jon Stewart's jokes, you have to know who Nancy Pelosi is. So he's getting his information. Now, understand that he then puts his own spin on it and he's being funny and he's being opinionated. Understand the distinction. So I tell them to watch me and Jon Stewart, and they can have a full diet.

**WEYMOUTH:** And the *Washington Post*.

**IFILL:** And the *Washington Post*. Yes, I say that all the time.

**WEYMOUTH:** Right. I figured.



**IFILL:** Yeah!

**ROBERTS:** Well, no, it's true. The comedians are getting their information from mainstream media.

**IFILL:** And they'll be the first to tell you that.

**ROBERTS:** Yes, they will be the first to tell you that. But we are now eager to get your questions, and there are microphones at each side, and let's hear what you have to ask and say. Can we get these lights down a little bit, please, so that we can see these nice people? Ok, go ahead. I see a body over there somewhere. Ok, there you go. Thank you.

**WOMAN:** Hello. I have recently encountered my first experience dealing with the media this year in 2010, and I have to say it's been overwhelming. I've been interviewed by *CNN*, *USA Today*...

**ROBERTS:** What did you do bad?

**IFILL:** That's where I'm going.

**WOMAN:** Nothing. and when they want a story, they want a story. My phone is still ringing. But--so as a result, I have recently found a new love in journalism, writing, and--and public relations. So I have an MBA in accounting, I don't know the first thing about journalism, and I'm ready to hang up my MBA and go back to school and study journalism, but don't know where to start. I don't know what to do. Do you have any advice for me? Do I start as an undergrad? Do I go to grad school? What do I do?

**ROBERTS:** And then you'll never get a job.

**WEYMOUTH:** But she's got her accounting degree.

**ROBERTS:** That's true.

**REHM:** Go with it.

**IFILL:** If you noticed, we have this long pause. First of all, I'm glad that your first experience was not a negative one, as most people will tell you. When you started telling us about your first experience, we all went "uh-oh." so I'm glad it wasn't, and I'm glad it inspired you to want to do it. I have to say that the advice I give is pretty old-fashioned, which is write.



**ROBERTS:** Read and write.

**IFILL:** Well, read first, and then write everything you can. Write for your local paper. Write for your community weekly. Write a blog for yourself. Just write a journal. There is nothing, no matter what you eventually aspire to in journalism, where writing and being a good and felicitous and compelling writer won't come in handy, even if you decide to practice accounting in the end. It is something that will get you in the door. It will allow you even to write the cover letter. You'd be amazed how much correspondence we get over the transom from people who say they want to be journalists who cannot put together a sentence. Because they think journalism is standing in front of a highway overpass and saying "behind me, the snow is falling." they think...that is journalism. when, in fact--maybe it's I have a bias because I worked at four different newspapers and then was talked into television. Tim Russet dared me to come to television full-time, and I didn't fail, thank god, but there was a bridge very carefully constructed back in case I did. Except then the bridge collapsed because newspapers-- well, anyway...

**WEYMOUTH:** Hey!

**IFILL:** Hey! The point being that you still need those fundamentals, and you need to be endlessly curious. And you need to see what it is in your life that you're exposed to that we might not be that--the stories that other people aren't telling and find a way to tell them.

**ROBERTS:** Over here.

**WOMAN:** Thank you for taking my question. I wanted to ask about the trend in both movies and, you know, how it relates to both the print and the television media, as well as the radio. In terms of movies that portray women who are mothers, like myself, who are also directors-- I mean, these were showcased at the recent academy awards, and we're seeing redemptive qualities, even Christian qualities, to films. Will that filter over? I'm so happy to hear that someone here recognizes that there was--a crisis is still in Nigeria. and will the media be more open--the print, the television, and especially the radio--about portraying the trend, the struggle of Christians in the world today? Thank you.

**REHM:** I think that NPR was one of the few this morning that reported on that struggle in Nigeria. It's going to be part of our "Friday News Roundup" tomorrow. I do think that struggles all over the world are incorporated to the extent we have time in each and every broadcast. Is Christianity part of that? When it's relevant to the news story, and certainly in that Nigeria question, it is.



**IFILL:** As a Christian myself would really actually tell you that I would shy away from the idea of doing a story that's human only because one group or one set of beliefs are affected. Our jobs still are to tell the best story and to tell the story about humanity, which crosses lots of lines, not just lines of religion and sectarianism.

**ROBERTS:** But I'll tell you a sad story. When Gwen talks about people not being in Nigeria, there's a reason for that, and it has to do with resources. And the reason that the resources are pulled from a place like that is because we have--technology has provided us with data that shows that the minute we go abroad, period--but certainly to Africa--the clicker comes out. and we can do minute-by-minute ratings, and that is what happens, is people--you know, the enemy is us when it comes to this. I would love to tie somebody to a chair and stick toothpicks in their eyes and make them watch and listen to and read something worthy. But that does not happen, and it is not because there are venal people at the top. It's because people are not buying the product when we do that.

**REHM:** Just one more comment on that. A couple of years ago we decided that because we could not cram into one hour of broadcasting all of the national and international news on the "Friday News Roundup," we would do two hours: one, domestic stories, the other, international. and we broke all records of fundraising in our last fundraising efforts, going beyond \$50,000 for one hour of fundraising in that international hour. So though there may not be sponsors out there, though some people may tune out, we did it. You bet.

**WOMAN:** I just wanted to make a comment. I'm so glad you brought up about men not listening. I--well, I wanted to bring up the point about *Crossfire*, if you all remember *Crossfire*. I believe it was on HBO--

**IFILL:** CNN.

**WOMAN:** I mean, CNN. sorry. and it was out of GW University, and it was Tucker Carlson...

**ROBERTS:** It was various incarnations, but that was one.

**WOMAN:** Yes--and James Carville-- and it was a bunch of yelling. and I'm telling you, it was intolerable. and if they had had at least tried a woman at one point, it would not have gone off the air.

**IFILL:** Actually, the name of it was *Crossfire* for a reason. It was truth in advertising.

**WOMAN:** Yeah. well, anyway, thank you for bringing that up.



**SECOND WOMAN:** Good evening. Thank you so much for taking my question. I have to say I'm a recent transplant from Colorado. I picked up and came here in 14 days when somebody said "come." And I love DC and I love the people and I love everything about it, so don't complain. It's awesome. But it's fantastic. And I've only seen you on TV, and I had to come and see you in person. I mean, this is amazing. So thank you. And you're much greater in person than you are on TV.

**ROBERTS:** Thank god.

**WOMAN:** You totally are! You're so much funnier!

**WOMAN:** But anyway, I have noticed, I think, that the generation beneath my generation, the women seem to be needier of men and really to be looking out in the wrong ways for companionship. and I'm wondering, do you think--and I could be totally wrong, but I've seen that in my profession. Do you think that it's because the media's fueling that or that it's being fueled and the media's just picking it up? Because it hurts me to see--

**ROBERTS:** Fueling women needing men?

**WOMAN:** Yeah. Not being empowered so much, and not--I see in my profession dating on the internet quickly, needing somebody to take care of them, wanting somebody to take care of them. I see that a lot, and I'm really surprised because I thought we got rid of that.

**ROBERTS:** It does sound nice.

**IFILL:** Actually, after I got older, I thought, "you know, well, if someone wants to, that's ok." I don't think that's new. I don't think it's different. I think we went through this period where we said, you know, "a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle," and we realized that was kind of stupid. And I don't think that we necessarily-- and I don't think everything can be blamed on the media. I mean, we go through cycles of socialization, and--we go there, we come back out--but it's not all fueled by us, I don't think. I mean, I think that we reflect it often as much as we fuel it.

**ROBERTS:** But I also--I mean, one of the things that when you say "the media," there's no such thing as "the media." There are lots of different people and lots of different places, and they don't all get together and say "now let's make women need men." You know, it's just not the way it operates. And I do think that there is that perception that there's some secret room--the men's room--where people are getting



together and sort of deciding as an industry to push some idea, and that's just not the case at all. It's not even vaguely the case.

**REHM:** I want to add something else, and this is from someone who's been married now for 50 years. When my husband and I were married, I really thought that that was going to be the scenario. That he was going to take care of me for the rest of my life, and all I had to do was raise the children and have parties and, you know, do this and that and keep the house clean. Now my husband has Parkinson's, and I am now doing not only my job but everything: writing the checks, doing the errands, making sure the dates are clear. You know, life changes, and we change with it because we are strong. And we have to adapt to what life brings us, and I feel so fortunate having had the opportunity while he was strong to get into broadcasting as I did. And now to watch him in a different place, you never know what life is going to bring. You never know, and you adapt and you are strong always.

**WEYMOUTH:** The only thing I'll add to that is I have a lot of strong, interesting girlfriends, and we talk a lot about the power dynamic, and I remember--I will never forget my grandmother, Katharine Graham, telling me once that Warren Buffet—and they were very good friends-- Warren Buffett once said to her, "Kay, you are fundamentally unmarriageable." And he didn't mean it because she was difficult. He meant because you have the money, you have the power, and what man is going to want to be Mr. Graham? And so my girlfriends and I--

**IFILL:** That's so depressing.

**WEYMOUTH:** I know. It is, isn't it? So, you know, my girlfriends and I are by no means Katharine Graham, but we talk a lot about can men tolerate and put up with a woman who's earning more money or, you know...

**ROBERTS:** My husband's answer to that is "it's great."

**REHM:** Yeah. That's what John Rehm said. Absolutely.

**WEYMOUTH:** That's a good man.

**REHM:** Yeah, that's a good man.

**ROBERTS:** But the point that Diane made, and I think it's something that--actually, if I were going to launch a media campaign where I got everybody organized, this would be my message. Diane made the point that you have different stages of life, but, you know, at pretty much every stage of life women find themselves caretaking. and whether it's for your children or your parents, now there are almost 1/3 of American



families who are taking care of an elderly or disabled relative. Or it's your sibling or your spouse or a friend, a good friend, or an institution in your community, and-- which also means caretaking-- and there is where I would like to see the women coming into power make a change. Because we have got to create more family-friendly or caretaker-friendly workplaces, because, otherwise, it is just really...

**ROBERTS:** We are going to drive out the best and the brightest. When more than half of our college graduates are female and 2/3 of our graduate school graduates are female, we can't afford to lose those people in the workplace because we'll lose our competitiveness as a country. So it's a real issue, and it's something that'll be with you for the rest of your life--sorry.

**WOMAN:** Thank you.

**ROBERTS:** Over here.

**MAN:** Thank you very much for having this fabulous panel. I wanted to jump back to the first questioner who asked about whether her MOA would be enough to get her started in journalism today. And one of the things I wanted to sort of add to your responses, that the fundamentals of journalism will always serve you well, is that I think increasingly in this environment entrepreneurship is serving journalists well, and I just wanted to give one quick example of this. In the six months prior to the disastrous earthquake in Haiti, there were two news stories on American television about what was going on in that country. One of them was on the *News Hour*--bravo to the *News Hour*. But it was a story that the *News Hour* bought from a small media startup called the Bureau for International Reporting, done in partnership with the Pulitzer Center. And this was--you know, it was a great report, but it was done...

**IFILL:** Was the report done the week before the...

**MAN:** The day.

**IFILL:** Before the earthquake in which we talked about how Haiti was about to turn around?

**MAN:** It was the day before. Remarkable. But, you know, it was a report done by a very small team with a very small budget, and there are more and more startups like Minnpost, Global Post, et cetera, that are having an impact now. and I wonder if all of you, you know, would see that entrepreneurship is a tool you need to have, and how, as a woman, do you get that tool? How do you teach it? How do you learn it?



**IFILL:** We call it partnerships, actually, and it's survival for us in public broadcasting because we can't afford to send anyone out to go do this. So we have partnerships with Global Post. We have partnerships with the group you mentioned. We have partnerships that underwrite our global health reporting, that underwrite any number of things. Because we don't have a pot of money where we can put me on a plane and send me to Nigeria, but hopefully one of our partners will be able to do that. Now, we do not surrender our editorial control to these people. We still vet what they do, and we make sure they are people who rise to our journalistic level. So, yeah, entrepreneurship is great, but it still has to have journalistic principles that meet someone else's, you know, cutoff. So, yeah, you're right. that's another way to use your MBA. But I also think that the basics still serve you well in the end. you still have to use that as your ultimate judgment call.

**ROBERTS:** It's also true that there are now nonprofits doing a lot of reporting and doing it well.

**IFILL:** Propublica.

**ROBERTS:** Propublica. Kaiser health news. School's still out on "fiscal times," but we'll see how that goes. So there are lots of different kinds of models rising up because we are in a transitional stage.

**REHM:** We don't know where we're going.

**ROBERTS:** Do you, Katharine, deal with some of those?

**WEYMOUTH:** Yeah, we've done a bunch of stuff with Propublica. So I think it's Gwen's answer. our standards are the same. But to the extent we can use people out in the field, we are also resource-constrained and we want to do that.

**WOMAN:** I'm a former communication professor. This is such an incredible time that we live in. There are so many things that are stirring the technology is stirring, as you say. The world is changing by the second. Our access to information is changing by the nanosecond. And yet--and I think this goes back to one of the original points that you were making about what women do very, very well: the way we approach things and our point of view that I think can have a big impact on this. we need--because of the time we live in, no matter what kind of person we are or what our work, we need good information, and we need to understand. but what we're reading and what we're seeing is often coverage of the fight and the argument at-- not the argument, the fight and the race. The who said this and who said this back, or who's ahead, or how does this position the democrats, or how does this position--ahem, excuse me--the republicans, when what we need to know is, what's in the bill and what's the



substance, the background of what people are saying, and where is the truth in this? And it seems to me that women are--have a perspective that can help to get this kind of coverage out, and I was wondering if you'd comment on any portion of that.

**WEYMOUTH:** I think it goes back to exactly what Cokie was saying earlier, which is, I think, all of our organizations do that. We cover both the race and who's winning and who's not and what's up and what's down, but we also cover what's in the bill and all the innuendos of the health care bill and what not. And our challenge is that most people don't want to make the commitment to sit there and read about the nuances of abortion in the health care bill because...

**ROBERTS:** Or the comparative charts.

**WEYMOUTH:** It's complicated. It's really complicated and it can be boring to a lot of people. So that is our challenge, is that what people want often-- you know, I talk to a lot of young students, and often I will ask them "what do you read?" and "how do you read?" And a lot of these are journalism students, so presumably they are people who are already interested in the news, and one woman said it exactly right. She said it without meaning to. She said, "Well, I glimpse at my phone headlines." right? Because that is the way. A lot of people are, like, glimpsing. They're clicking. When we look at our slipstream data on the web, people are-- you know, they're all over it. It's what we're all doing. And so, you know, in the newspapers, still, people engage. We call it, like, the sitting-back experience. They're sitting, they're spending 40 minutes or an hour, whatever it is, or sometimes 5 minutes. But I think it really is about what the--at the end of the day, we are serving an audience. And so we can tell the stories till we're blue in the face, but, you know, it's kind of like a tree falling in the forest.

**IFILL:** But at least because of the web, it's there. I mean, in the days when I was growing up, you'd read the paper in the morning or in the afternoon and you'd maybe see the evening news, and, basically, whatever they told you was all you knew. Now look at all of the places you can go to get more information.

**ROBERTS:** And some of them are even right.

**IFILL:** And some of them are even correct. But I also--you have to be good about that. But there's also a piece I will concede to you, which is we-- I wrote about this today in our "Washington Week" blog-- which is we love the bright and shiny things. We are easily distracted. Did you see the movie "up" where the talking dog would go, "well, you know, I'm a talking dog. Oh! Squirrel!"

**IFILL:** That's us with Eric Massa, you know?



**ROBERTS:** Oh, now, come on. come on. I mean, tickle fest.

**IFILL:** I know, but that's what I'm saying: you can't resist it. The key is not--I read every word. It's ridiculous. It's a great story. But it shouldn't be all you see, all you read. It shouldn't consume all your news information so that all you can talk about is whether that guy tickled a man and exactly which 50-year-old man's birthday party have you been to. You see what I'm saying? "Squirrel."

**ROBERTS:** My--my very grown children and their children and I saw "up" together, and Steve wasn't with us. And we were at lunch right afterwards and the Yankees were on, and he was midsentence and looked at me, and I said, "squirrel."

**ROBERTS:** Over here.

**WOMAN:** ...very much. It's been very informative. to the gentleman before me, his point, I just was wondering what your thoughts were on citizen journalism, not so much the social media but actual real journalism. And in terms of cutting back in traditional media in the U.S., how are you engaging with international people on the ground doing citizen journalism to filter in information for your work? Are you forming partnerships with citizens or are you working with groups such as the nonprofits you're talking about or organizations that are reporting like global voices, et cetera?

**REHM:** Trying to bring in as many voices as possible from different venues. We've been criticized for having Al Jazeera Arabic on the air during our second hour of the "Friday news roundup." We have voices from other non-U.S. networks on to bring different perspectives. It is--you know, we are so fortunate in this country to have a "free press," and we have the opportunity to hear so many different voices but switch to Al Jazeera Arabic one night or switch to the BBC one night and hear the different perspectives that you get. And it's so important for us to hear those, because even with our beautiful NPR, even with our beautiful PBS, newspapers in this country, including the "Washington Post," we are missing the full world view, not only of what is happening around the world but what their view is of what's happening here.

**IFILL:** And we understand the distinction between citizen journalism and getting as many voices as possible. It still has to be journalism. Everybody with a camera, everybody with a notebook isn't a journalist. I'm on a board of a committee to protect journalists, which we spend a lot of time with limited resources trying to basically rescue imprisoned journalists around the country or threatened journalists around the world. but we spend also a fair amount of time as we make these decisions about who to defend, who's a journalist? Many of them are online bloggers. many of them in this country would just be considered a guy with a microphone. And so we have to debate



it on a case by case basis who actually is a journalist. to me, that's still the bottom line. just because you're a citizen who has access to the information doesn't necessarily mean that you get automatic air time or you get automatic ink.

**ROBERTS:** And it's often with a point of view.

**IFILL:** With a point of view.

**ROBERTS:** Over here.

**WOMAN:** Thanks. there's a lot of discussion during the previous election surrounding the coverage of the female candidates, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, particularly with regard to how some of the male journalists covered them: comments by Chris Matthews and Bill O'reilly and so on. And I'm just curious, given that many of you, I'm sure, were involved in the election coverage, what your thoughts are on that.

**ROBERTS:** I thought it was about the most sexist campaign--sexist coverage I had ever seen, and I was amazed that it was still taking place in the year 2008. And I thought it was sexist both toward Clinton and toward Palin. I thought that questions were asked of them that would never have been asked of a man. We have never-- ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever-- had a male candidate asked "who's going to take care of the children?" just doesn't happen. and, you know, they actually have children. but--

**ROBERTS:** The--but so it is--I was--the words that we used to describe the women, the questions that were asked, the comments that were made I found appalling and depressing. And I think that the campaign has probably set--the coverage has probably set back the goal of having a woman in higher office by several years.

**REHM:** Cokie, give me an example of how you think the campaign was sexist as far as--

**ROBERTS:** I mean coverage.

**REHM:** Coverage as far as Hillary Clinton was concerned, and how it was sexist as far as Sarah Palin.

**ROBERTS:** I gave the example of asking about the children. The words that we used--actually, Anne Kornblut has a very good book out now that I recommend, "cracks in the glass ceiling," where she just goes through in chapter and verse all of the kinds of comments that were made and the questions that were asked. And when you look at them all together, it's pretty shocking stuff. and the truth is I think that one of the



antidotes actually turned out to be "Saturday Night Live" because it was very funny. When they had started the new season, it was kind of doing takeoffs on the debates, the democratic debates, where it was, you know, "Senator Clinton, when did you stop beating your child?" you know? And "oh, Senator Obama, would you like a glass of water?"

**IFILL:** I always have a soft spot for "Saturday night live" because they picked Queen Latifah to play me.

**REHM:** I love it!

**IFILL:** Nothing wrong with that.

**ROBERTS:** Just even being played puts you way up there with 13-year-old girls.

**IFILL:** Well, sadly, many of the audiences think I am Queen Latifah.

**MAN:** Thank you for allowing us to have our say here. I just had a comment on what you all were talking about in Nigeria. Now, if you watched Al Jazeera, as Diane mentioned, there are vivid pictures of everything that took place in Nigeria, and lots of women reporters who work for Al Jazeera, okay, and they work in some of the most troubled spots, especially in JOS. This young lady by the name of Ndege, Yvonne Ndege-- she actually has been there, and she almost was one of the victims of this massacre. that being said, I also wanted to make another comment. I'm a Christian myself, but I just want to state this: that some of the commentators who were actually commenting on that story likened it to what was going on in Darfur, or what actually took place in Darfur. But this was nothing to do with religion, but it was actually something to do between the cultivators and the pastoralists.

**IFILL:** That's true.

**MAN:** It was a question of land and water resources.

**IFILL:** This is true. But we just use a handle, which is the Christians versus the Muslims, and a lot of people don't make the effort of taking it beyond that because it was way more complicated than that.

**ROBERTS:** I'm afraid that was the last question, but, Gwen, I want you to take off from that for a minute from the perspective of the committee of concerned journalists, because one of the things that I think people don't realize is how many journalists and how many female journalists around the world are really persecuted, and some of them because of their sex.



**IFILL:** Absolutely, and they are persecuted in places that we pay scant attention to like China, or places that we pay scant attention to like Sri Lanka, or Russia, where they will actually just shoot you in the stairwell of your apartment building if you've written something, or they will burn the presses that you own in Zimbabwe. The reason why there are so many more women around the world who are involved in these kinds of cutting-edge journalism is because journalism is not the elite profession it is here. It is often folks just trying to tell the story, and trying to tell the story in the best way they know how, often in an environment where the government owns all the media and there's no room for an independent voice. So it is not getting better. It is getting worse. and the truth is even when it is men who are arrested, imprisoned, tortured, the people who are fighting for their release are often their wives who are out there and are just as involved in issues of press freedom as we are, if not more.

**ROBERTS:** Well, thank you all so very, very much for coming. Thank you, panel.

**REHM:** Thank you, Cokie! You did a wonderful job.

**ROBERTS:** Thank you.

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