

January 2023

To The Bart Richards Award Judges:

From the start of 2022 to its close, NPR media correspondent David Folkenflik embarked on an ambitious array of stories and projects dedicated to shedding light on how journalism works, and why it fails. He did it with an eye to revealing how information makes its way to the public and how much trust people can place in it.

Folkenflik accomplished this consistently and persistently, examining matters of national import and strong local resonance; historical moments and breaking news.

Consider his piece on Walter Duranty, Ukraine, and the New York Times. Folkenflik forced attention on the shame of a 90-year-old Pulitzer Prize against the backdrop of the current conflict there; for the first time, former Times executive editor Bill Keller, who had led the newsroom during an earlier review, conceded he could not defend the paper's decision to hold onto the award.

Folkenflik presented proof of the harm caused by the conspiracies and misinformation broadcast by Fox News: the first interview of the parents of Seth Rich since they settled a suit over Fox's coverage of his death. The network never apologized. Nor did it explain what went awry. In this magisterial profile of parents in pain, Folkenflik's reports filled that void.

In Los Angeles, tensions have roiled relations between the police and the press for decades. Folkenflik conceived and, with the collaboration of NPR producer Marc Rivers, investigated a single night on which that relationship utterly collapsed. Press advocates in Los Angeles credit it, at least in part, for welcome developments, including a new chief media relations officer at the LAPD who has adopted a more constructive approach to the press; an unprecedented rapport between the LAPD and the National Press Photographers Association; and the return by the LAPD of fraudulently obtained press passes.

Folkenflik offered sweep, context and a sense of journalistic history in writing about the January 6th House Select Committee's use of the visual and narrative language of television news.

Folkenflik's coverage is in the tradition of our nation's finest press critics, from Murray Kempton to David Shaw to Margaret Sullivan. I have posted links to selected stories below because they are worth absorbing as intended – as radio stories, written articles, and multi-media displays.

Sincerely,

Terry Samuel

Executive Editor

NPR NEWS

LAPD & THE PRESS:

When police cracked down on reporters on one chaotic night in LA's Echo Park (Part 1)

March 31, 2022

<https://www.npr.org/2022/03/31/1087495900/echo-park-protest-lapd-journalist>

(With Marc Rivers)

March 31, 2022

From kid gloves to rubber bullets: How LAPD ties to news media unraveled (Part 2)

<https://www.npr.org/2022/03/31/1089643078/lapd-media-echo-park-history>

WALTER DURANTY, UKRAINE AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

'The New York Times' can't shake the cloud over a 90-year-old Pulitzer Prize

May 8, 2022

<https://www.npr.org/2022/05/08/1097097620/new-york-times-pulitzer-ukraine-walter--duranty>

FOX NEWS AND THE STAIN OF SETH RICH

Seth Rich's killing was exploited on Fox News and online. His parents are fed up

June 15, 2022

<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/15/1104511732/fox-news-seth-rich-murder>

THE JANUARY 6TH SIEGE, THE JANUARY 6TH COMMITTEE, AND THE ROLE OF TELEVISION NEWS

Jan. 6 hearings use TV tricks to great effect even as critics call them show biz

June 23, 2022

<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/23/1106933879/jan-6-committee-hearing-tv>

Analysis: Trump's infamous obsession with TV helped define Jan. 6 too

<https://www.npr.org/2022/07/21/1112610189/january-6-hearing-trump-tv-obsession>