

Dear Bart Richards Award Committee:

How news organizations covered the October 2023 bombing of a Gaza hospital could be taught in journalism courses, as it raises crucial questions about how news organizations relay what's happening thousands of miles away in a war zone and the pitfalls in immediately framing events from one side's perspective. *Vanity Fair's* Charlotte Klein exclusively obtained Slack messages that revealed real-time discussions among *New York Times* editors, an invaluable resource for looking now at how the media is covering the war now, and perhaps, the future.

The Gaza hospital story was one of several instances in which Klein delved "inside the *New York Times*." She returned to the *Times* newsroom the following month to report on debate over a magazine writer's exit after signing a letter in support of Gaza, exploring the tensions over the paper's journalists engaging in "activism"—or what might be perceived as such.

If those two pieces captured the challenges the *Times* faces in terms of covering a highly charged news story, a third article of Klein's deeply explored the company's future as a news business — through the prism of games. At the *Times*, games are not just a fun diversion, but increasingly key to the paper's bottom line, serving as a "funnel" to bring in paying customers, all in hopes of reaching 15 million subscribers by 2027. For the article — which ran online in December 2023 and in the February 2024 print issue under the headline "Throne of Games" — Klein embedded with the brainy team behind Wordle, Connections, and the Crossword, while also speaking to high-ranking executives and newsroom leaders, including top editor Joe Kahn, to reveal how arguably the world's most influential news organization is competing for eyeballs in new ways.

Plus, Klein reported in September 2023 on how the *Times* is confronting the rise of AI, rolling out enhanced bios and increasing transparency with readers. The idea, said one editor, is to "emphasize the people behind our work as generative AI begins to creep into the media landscape."

I believe Klein's peerless reporting this past year on the *Times*, and how the company is tackling everything from war to AI to the future of news, is of benefit to anyone interested in the state of journalism today and where the industry goes next.

Sincerely,

Michael Calderone
Editor, *Vanity Fair's* The Hive