

**The Image of the Washington Journalist in Movies and Television  
1932 to 2013**

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**Introduction**

In this article, we examine images of the Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup> journalist in film and television appearing in 127 English-speaking films and television programs from 1932 to 2013.<sup>2</sup> This is the first study of its kind ever attempted. In analyzing the 61 films and 66 TV programs, we discovered that the Washington journalist is one of the more heroic images of the journalist in popular culture. This study concludes that the majority of Washington journalists in most of the 20th century want to serve the public interest and to inform the people, in the words of one expert, “about what power is doing in their name, or to them, or to others on their behalf . . . to sound the alarm when fault is found.”<sup>3</sup>

Many of these Washington journalists serve this watchdog function by acting as the public’s representative, as a member of the fourth estate, to make sure that those who wield power are doing so in service of the people and not for personal, political, or financial gain. Washington journalists are often investigative journalists trying to ferret out corruption that

affects the public interest. They may be comic figures or serious dramatic figures, but they always seem intent on doing the right thing and exposing crooked politicians to public scrutiny.

By studying the image of the Washington journalist in popular culture, we can better understand why the public believes what it does about the specialized profession of the Washington journalist and what this means to the profession as well as the news media and the public as a whole.

### **Literature Review**

There has been very little research done on the image of the Washington journalist in popular culture. There have been few studies of the image of the Washington journalists in movies and television, although many films about Washington journalists have been featured in various books on the image of the journalist in movies.<sup>4</sup>

There is also a key study of 13 novels portraying Washington female journalists, “Crime, Romance and Sex: Washington Women Journalists in Recent Popular Fiction,” by Stacy L. Spaulding of Columbia Union College and Maurine H. Beasley, professor emerita, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland.<sup>5</sup>

At a special panel at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) annual conference in Washington, D.C. in 2013,<sup>6</sup> three presentations offered rare insight into the image of the Washington journalist in popular culture. Matthew C. Ehrlich, professor of journalism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, investigated “Broadway Takes on *The Columnist*: A Case Study with Joseph Alsop.” Sammye Johnson, professor of communication at Trinity University, analyzed “Passionate and Powerful: Film Depictions of Women Journalists Working in Washington, D.C.,” and Maurine H. Beasley, professor emerita at Maryland University, presented her paper on “Washington Women Journalists: Fact Versus Fiction.”<sup>7</sup>

Books on real-life Washington journalists offer comparisons between those who were part of the Washington press corps and the fictional representations. The best of these include Donald A. Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington: The History of the Washington Press Corps* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Helen Thomas, *Watchdogs of Democracy?: The Waning Washington Press Corps and How It Has Failed the Public* (Scribner, 2006); Maurine H. Beasley, *Women of the Washington Press: Politics, Prejudice and Persistence* (Northwestern University Press, 2012), and Stephen Hess, *The Washington Reporters* (The Brookings Institution Press, 1981), and his follow-up study, *Whatever Happened to the Washington Reporters, 1978-2012* (The Brookings Institution Press, 2012). Also helpful was a study from the Pew Research Center's Journalism Project Staff updated in 2009 evaluating the corps of journalists covering Washington, D.C.<sup>8</sup>

### **Methodology**

This study looks at the images of the Washington journalist in a variety of movies and television programs. For the current study, a key source was the online IJPC Database of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Project.<sup>9</sup> Films and TV programs with unnamed characters or characters who appeared briefly and then disappeared are included. The television category included TV series with a Washington journalist, specific episodes of a TV series featuring a Washington journalist, movies-made-for-television, and miniseries. More than 150 movies and TV programs were initially identified, viewed, and analyzed. A complete list of the final 127 films and television programs with each character identified and all of the table information encoded can be found in the Appendix.

Each film and television program was viewed, excerpted, and categorized by decade, genre, gender, ethnicity, media category, job title, and description (evaluation of the image

presented by each journalist or group of journalists on a subjective scale from very positive and positive to negative and very negative and neutral). When a film or television program features more than one journalist character, multiple instances of gender, ethnicity, job title, and description were recorded. These results were checked and re-checked until accuracy and consensus were confirmed.

A Washington journalist is defined as one who is identified as working for a Washington publication, working in Washington for any news media, or covering an election campaign with Washington connections.

The most difficult category was in determining whether a character's image is positive or negative. Often a central character combines both positive and negative attributes.

For example, the journalist "could get away with anything as long as the end result was *in the public interest*—he or she could lie, cheat, distort, bribe, betray or violate any ethical or oral code as long as the journalist exposed some political or business corruption, solved a murder, caught a thief or saved an innocent."<sup>10</sup>

How do you rate a journalist who is unethical throughout the film (negative), but is considered a hero by the audience (positive) by the end of the film? If the end result serves the public interest or if the journalists were just doing the job expected of them, the image was given a positive designation. If the end result was not in the public interest, "if the journalist was using the power of the media for his or her own personal, political or financial gain,"<sup>11</sup> the image was given a negative designation. Very positive and very negative were reserved for those images that left no doubt whether the journalist was a hero or a villain. Neutral was reserved for mostly anonymous journalists who were in groups or seen in the background, or who figured slightly in the plot or action of the film or television program. Most were just doing their job in a quiet, unobtrusive way.

## Results

The following 10 tables summarize the results by decade, genre, gender, ethnicity, media category, job title, and descriptions of the journalist's professional and personality traits.

### *Decades*

A breakdown by decades (20th century) and years (21st century) appears in the following Table 1. A total of 127 films and TV programs were documented, of which 61 were movies and 66 were TV programs.

**TABLE 1: Decades**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>Movies</b>	<b>TV Programs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>127</b>

### *Genres*

The 127 films and TV programs were separated into generally accepted genres to see how the image of the Washington journalist was treated in drama, comedy, science fiction/horror, satire/parody, and true stories/biographies.<sup>12</sup>

**TABLE 2: Genres**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>Drama</b>	<b>Comedy</b>	<b>Science Fiction/ Horror</b>	<b>Satire/ Parody</b>	<b>True Stories/ Biographies</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>127</b>

*Gender*

As can be seen in Table 3, males overwhelmingly dominated the image of the Washington journalist in the movies from the 1930s through the 1990s (81 male characters to 25 female characters). But by the 21st century, female Washington journalists in the movies were catching up to their male counterparts (17 female characters to 23 male characters).<sup>13</sup> Washington journalists were also dominated by males on television. From the 1950s through the 1990s, there were 30 female characters as opposed to 55 male characters. It got worse in the 21st century—65 males to 39 females. Since many of these TV programs were weekly series or highly rated movies for television, the impact was even greater than the numbers suggest.

### *Groups*

When journalists are seen in groups—pack journalism, news conferences, miscellaneous groupings—it is difficult if not impossible to get an accurate count of males and females. In the 1930s and 1940s, however, the group is predominantly, if not totally, male. Groups are counted as one group no matter how many journalists may be seen on the screen.

**TABLE 3: Gender**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>Movies MALE</b>	<b>Movies FEMALE</b>	<b>Movies GROUP</b>	<b>Television MALE</b>	<b>Television FEMALE</b>	<b>Television GROUP</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>453</b>

### *Ethnicity*

As can be seen in Table 4, Caucasians overwhelmingly dominated the image of the Washington journalist in the movies and television, reflecting the same ethnic diversification found in most Washington newsrooms.<sup>14</sup> Of 453 characters, 306 were Caucasian.<sup>15</sup> African-American journalists don't make an appearance in the movies until the 1990s. Three

African-Americans show up on television in the 1980s and 1990s, with 10 more in the 21st century. No Latino characters appeared in movies as Washington journalists, but 9 were tracked on television in the 21st century. There may have been more ethnic diversity in the unspecified category in later years, but there was no way to verify what ethnic groups were included.

**Table 4 Legend:**

**C** – Caucasian.

**AA** – African-American.<sup>16</sup>

**Latino**<sup>17</sup> – Includes Hispanic, Chicano, and other Spanish cultures.

**Unspecified** – Mostly groups of journalists who are not easily identified by ethnicity. Also includes journalists who do not fit into ethnic categories, or were not identified as major or minor characters such as Asians, Native Americans, and Indian people.

**TABLE 4: Ethnicity**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>Movies C</b>	<b>Movies AA</b>	<b>Movies Latino</b>	<b>Movies Unspec.</b>	<b>TV C</b>	<b>TV AA</b>	<b>TV Latino</b>	<b>TV Unspec.</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>453</b>

***Media Category***

The six areas of employment in journalism listed are newspaper, magazine, radio,



television, Internet, and undefined (includes many different job categories that are undefined in the film or TV program). Many of these journalists are shown in large settings such as press conferences, newsrooms, or editorial and technical staff in the field). As expected, newspapers and television lead the field, but in recent years, journalists on the Internet are not only being featured, but in typical conversations in the newsroom, they are also being talked about.<sup>18</sup>

**TABLE 5: Media Category**

Decade	Newspaper	Magazine	Radio	Television	Internet	Undefined	Total
1930s	05	00	02	00	00	04	11
1940s	08	00	02	00	00	05	15
1950s	03	01	02	02	00	03	11
1960s	04	00	01	02	00	03	10
1970s	09	01	00	04	00	05	19
1980s	15	01	00	11	00	11	38
1990s	16	00	02	20	00	22	60
2000-2005	12	02	02	17	01	18	52
2006-2013	12	00	00	20	03	15	50
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>266</b>

### *Job Titles*

There are 10 specific job titles. Here are the definitions:

**Reporter/Correspondent<sup>19</sup> (R):** A person who reports news or conduct interviews for newspapers, magazines, television, radio, Internet, or any other organization that disseminates news. Referred to as a journalist, a newspaperman or woman, or a newsman or

woman. A correspondent is a person who contributes reports to a variety of news media from a distant, often remote, location.

**Columnist/Blogger**<sup>20</sup> (C): A person who writes a regular column for a newspaper, magazine, Internet site, or any other medium.

**Editor/Producer**<sup>21</sup> (E): A person who assigns stories and edits copy for a newspaper, magazine, Internet, or other medium. Usually referred to as a city editor, managing editor, or editor-in-chief. A producer is defined as a person who controls various aspects of a news program for television, radio, the Internet, and other media. He or she takes all the elements of a newscast (packages, video, graphics, audio) and integrates them into a cohesive show. The title includes the producer of a specific news program, a field producer who is in charge of field production of individual news stories, and an executive producer in charge of news programs.

**Photojournalist**<sup>22</sup> (PH): A person who creates still or moving images in order to tell a news story. Titles include photographer, cameraman, shooter, stringer, paparazzi, and anyone else using a photographic device to make a photographic record of an event.

**Anchor/Commentator**<sup>23</sup> (A): A person who presents news on television, radio, the Internet, or other media; a news presenter is also known as newsreader, newscaster, anchorman or anchorwoman, news anchor, or simply anchor. A commentator is defined as a person who adds analysis and occasionally opinion to his or her news reports for any media, usually radio or television.

**News Executive**<sup>24</sup> (NE): A person at a broadcast station or network or other media who is in charge of the news department or is an executive in charge of news; a management position.

**Publisher/Media Tycoon**<sup>25</sup> (P): A person who is a successful entrepreneur or

businessman who controls, through personal ownership or a dominant position, a mass media related company or enterprise. Referred to as a media proprietor, media mogul, or media baron. A publisher usually specifically refers to someone who owns a newspaper or a collection of newspapers.

**Press Conference Journalists**<sup>26</sup> (PC): A person who attends a news conference or press conference in which newsmakers invite journalists to hear them speak and, most often, ask questions. Washington journalists generally attend presidential news conferences or news conferences held by members of Congress.

**Pack Journalists**<sup>27</sup> (PJ): A person who joins other reporters chasing after stories. They travel in packs, usually armed with television cameras and microphones. They cover fast-breaking news by crowding, yelling, shouting, bullying, and forcing their way into breaking news events. They often show up with their lights, cameras, microphones, and digital recorders as they shout out questions to the usually reluctant newsmaker in question. Pack journalism is also defined as journalism practiced by reporters in a group usually marked by uniformity of news coverage and lack of original thought or initiative.

**Miscellaneous** (M): Individual journalists unidentified in the film or TV program as to job description; usually in the background functioning as editorial and technical staff.

In the movies, the predominant Washington journalist is the reporter/correspondent. The 179 reporter portrayals are a bit misleading since journalists featured in press conferences (41), pack journalism (8), and miscellaneous (64) are usually anonymous characters (113 instances as part of one of those groups, featuring many more reporters). The next largest categories are anchors/commentators (60). Editors (mostly newspaper) and producers (television) add up to 52, followed by columnists and the Internet bloggers (27).

**TABLE 6: Job Titles**

Decade	Reporter	Columnist Blogger	Editor Prod.	Photo- journalist	Anchor Comm.	News Executive	Publisher Media Tycoon	Press Conference	Pack	Misc.	Total
1930s	05	00	00	00	01	00	02	02	00	02	12
1940s	05	04	09	01	00	00	03	01	00	04	27
1950s	04	01	01	00	05	00	01	00	01	04	17
1960s	12	00	00	00	01	00	00	01	01	02	17
1970s	10	00	06	00	00	01	01	02	00	05	25
1980s	23	06	09	01	10	02	00	02	00	08	61
1990s	39	04	11	02	11	03	00	11	03	17	101
2000- 2005	53	07	08	00	10	01	00	13	01	10	103
2006- 2013	28	05	08	01	22	01	00	09	02	12	88
TOTALS	179	27	52	05	60	08	07	41	08	64	451

### *Descriptions*

All film and television Washington journalist characters were evaluated as to their positive and negative personality traits and whether they followed popular culture perceptions and/or stereotypes of their professional roles. Five descriptive labels—very positive, positive, negative, very negative, and neutral—were determined, as follows.

**Very Positive (VP)**<sup>28</sup>: This is the Washington journalist as an heroic character. This is the journalist who does the right thing, who fights everyone and anything to get the facts out to the public. He or she often exposes corruption, solves a murder, catches a thief, or saves an innocent. Everything done is in the public interest. This kind of image makes the public believe their journalists are invaluable to any democracy.

**Positive (P)**<sup>29</sup>: These Washington journalists will do anything to get a story they believe is vital to the public interest, to the public welfare. They try to do their job without hurting

anyone, and are basically individuals trying to do the right thing, but often frustrated by the system. They may be flawed, they may make mistakes, they may drink too much, or quit their jobs in disgust, but they always seem to end up by doing the right thing by the end of the story. The reporter or editor could get away with anything as long as the end result is *in the public interest*. The journalist could lie, cheat, distort, bribe, betray, or violate any ethical code as long as the journalist exposed corruption, solved a murder, caught a thief, or saved an innocent.

**Negative (N)**<sup>30</sup>: These Washington journalists are villains because they use the precious commodity of public confidence in the press for their own selfish ends. They use the power of the media for their own personal, political, or financial gain. They care less about the public interest than their own interests. They are interested in making more money, gaining power, and doing anything to get what they want.

**Very Negative (VN)**<sup>31</sup>: These Washington journalists often engage in unethical and often unlawful activities to get what they want at all costs, even committing murder or serious crimes. They are manipulative and cynical. Often they are publishers who use their power to corrupt government or business, to take advantage of the public. They are cheaters who are only interested in what is good for them, no one else. They usually are involved with the tabloid or sensationalistic press and often make up the anonymous news media chasing after individuals without regard to their privacy or safety. These anonymous journalists travel in packs, usually armed with television cameras and microphones.

**Neutral**<sup>32</sup>: These Washington journalists usually make up the anonymous members of the Washington press corps and usually can be seen at presidential press conferences taking notes or reacting to what the president is saying. They are usually nondescript characters who are simply there as journalists doing their job without offending anyone. They are often in the background and figure slightly in the plot or action of the film or television program.

Using a subjective scale from very positive to very negative, there are surprisingly far more positive images of the Washington journalist in films and television programs than negative images (Table 7). There are 243 very positive and positive images compared to 60 negative and very negative images in the 127 films and television programs sampled. There are 151 neutral images.

**TABLE 7: Descriptions Movies and Television Show, Major and Minor Characters**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>454</b>

Tables 7A through 7D separate the images of the Washington journalist in films and television to show major and minor characters in each medium. We discover that there are 103 very positive/positive major characters compared to 44 negative/very negative major characters (48 very positive/positive to 20 negative/very negative characters in movies and 55 very positive/positive to 24 negative/very negative characters on television programs). When it comes to minor characters, there are 140 very positive/positive characters in the movies and television

and 16 negative/very negative minor characters (50 very positive/positive to 9 negative/very negative minor characters in the movies, 90 very positive/positive to 7 negative/very negative minor characters on television programs).

A major character influences the outcome of the story or event. He or she is usually a leading character played by a major actor of the time.

A minor character does not play a significant role in the development of the film or TV program. He or she is usually a part of a larger group—i.e., journalists at a news conference, the Washington press corps, or a part of the editorial or technical staff.

**TABLE 7A: Descriptions in Movies Only – Major Characters<sup>33</sup>**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>68</b>

**TABLE 7B: Descriptions in Television Only – Major Characters**<sup>34</sup>

<b>Decade</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>79</b>

**TABLE 7C: Descriptions in Movies Only – Minor Characters**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>138</b>



**TABLE 7D: Descriptions in Television Only – Minor Characters**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1930s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>1940s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>1950s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>1960s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>1970s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>1980s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>1990s</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2000-2005</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>2006-2013</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>169</b>

In Table 8, there seemed to be little difference between genres as to positive and negative images, although when Washington journalists were being satirized, there was a more even distribution between positive and negative. Characters in dramas (56 very positive/positive images to 24 negative/very negative), comedies (26 very positive/positive images to 11 negative/very negative), and science fiction/horror (7 positive images to 2 negative/very negative) showed overwhelmingly positive portrayals of the Washington journalist, although true-life stories or biographies offered more negative images than expected (8 very positive/positive to 4 negative/very negative).

**TABLE 8: Descriptions Movies and Television Show, Major Characters by Genre**

<b>Genre</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Drama</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Comedy</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Science Fiction/ Horror</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>Satire/Parody</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>True Stories/ Biography</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>147</b>

In Table 9, Washington male and female journalists are usually portrayed positively (a total of 103 very positive/positive to 44 negative/very negative portrayals). There were 63 very positive/positive images to 26 negative/very negative images for males and 40 very positive/positive to 18 negative/very negative images for females.

**TABLE 9: Descriptions Movies and Television Show, Major Characters by Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>147</b>

In Table 10, when it comes to major characters, reporters/correspondent portrayals are overwhelmingly positive (62 very positive/positive to 24 negative/very negative images). So are editor/producer images (21 very positive/positive to 4 negative/very negative) and

columnist/bloggers (11 very positive/positive to 5 negative/very negative portrayals).

Anchors/commentators, however, split the difference with 6 very positive/positive and 5 negative/very negative portrayals.

**TABLE 10: Descriptions Movies and Television Show, Major Characters by Job Title**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>VP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>VN</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Reporter/ Correspondent</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Columnist/Blogger</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Editor/Producer</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Photojournalist</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Anchor/ Commentator</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>News Executive</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Publisher/Media Tycoon</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>147</b>

## **Discussion**

In analyzing more than 127 films and TV programs, we discovered that the Washington journalist is one of the more heroic images of the journalist in popular culture. The majority of Washington journalists depicted in most of the 20th century films and television programs want to serve the public interest. As veteran White House correspondent Helen Thomas said about her real-life colleagues, “The media do not—and should not—expect to win popularity contests. But they will be respected only if they remain true to the ideals of the profession. They must be detached. But they must also care.”<sup>35</sup> Many of the Washington journalists in films and television

program serve this watchdog function acting as the public's representative, a member of the fourth estate, to make sure that those who wield power are doing so in service of the people and not for personal, political or financial gain.

Perhaps this is why images of major Washington journalists in films and television programs were so overwhelmingly positive—103 very positive/positive to 44 negative/very negative portrayals.<sup>36</sup> In fact, all images of Washington journalists in films and television shows, major and minor, were overwhelmingly positive—243 very positive/positive to 60 negative/very negative portrayals.

### **The Investigative Journalist**

No Washington journalist performs this watchdog function better than the investigative journalist. Investigative journalists, whether they work in Washington or not, are among the most heroic images of the journalist in popular culture. Many Washington journalists are often investigative journalists trying to ferret out corruption that affects the public interest.

The most iconic image of the Washington investigative journalist is the one of reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of *The Washington Post*, who were immortalized in the 1976 film *All the President's Men*.<sup>37</sup> The Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters were portrayed by two of Hollywood's top actors of the time, Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman. According to film critic Roger Ebert, the film "provides the most observant study of working journalists we're ever likely to see in a feature film (Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein may at last, merciful God, replace Hildy Johnson and Walter Burns as career models). And it succeeds brilliantly in suggesting the mixture of exhilaration, paranoia, self-doubt, and courage that permeated *The Washington Post* as its two young reporters went after a presidency."<sup>38</sup>

The image of hard-working journalists checking public records, interviewing people on

the phone and in person, working with editors to check and double-check facts, using anonymous sources when no one would go on the record—all of this was unique to films and television programs depicting the image of the journalist in popular culture. The result was an heroic image of the journalist that sent hundreds of students into journalism and created a positive image of the celebrity journalist “in which reporters become the story” and investigative journalism was “sexy” that lasted for more than a generation.<sup>39</sup>

The Woodward-Bernstein image was so well-known that 23 years later, *Dick* (1999) resurrected Woodward (played by comedian Will Farrell) and Bernstein (played by comic Bruce McCulloch) as two buffoons bickering and relying on information from two teenage girls (Deepthroat) who were dog handlers at Richard Nixon’s White House.<sup>40</sup>

Other images of Washington investigative reporters built on these images. They may be serious dramatic figures or even comic figures but they always seem intent on doing the right thing and exposing crooked politicians to public scrutiny. In *The Pelican Brief* (1993), investigative reporter Gray Grantham (Denzel Washington) of *The Washington Herald* reveals a political conspiracy involving the deaths of two Supreme Court justices. It was not only an heroic image of a Washington reporter, but also a rare image of an heroic African-American reporter.

In *State of Play* (2009), *Washington Globe* investigative reporter Cal McAffrey (Russell Crowe) is a street-smart reporter who represents the old world of journalism who is teamed up with Della Frye (Rachel McAdams), a cocky blogger who represents the 21st century generation of investigative reporters who use the Internet and social media as well as traditional media to get the story out to the public. In *The Last Debate* (2000), investigative reporter Tom Chapman (Peter Gallagher) exposes four journalists who crossed an important line in journalism when they baited a Republican nominee with unsubstantiated charges, thus costing the candidate the

election. Internet reporters Adam Penenberg (Steve Zahn) and Andie Fox (Rosario Dawson) of Forbes Digital Tool expose a young *New Republic* magazine writer of fabricating most of his stories (in *Shattered Glass*, 2003).

Reporter Paul Verrall (William Holden in *Born Yesterday*, 1950, and Don Johnson in the remake in 1993) has been trying to expose corruption in government for years, but has hit a brick wall until the hard-nosed investigative reporter is hired by a businessman to educate his seemingly dim-witted girlfriend. She ends up providing him with enough evidence to write the story of his career: proof that the businessman has been paying off senators for years. In the television series *Scandal* (2012-2013), investigative reporter Gideon Wallace (Brendan Hines) of the *D.C. Sun* discovers that the vice president's right-hand man leaked information to incriminate the president. When Wallace threatens to expose him, the enraged politician grabs a pair of scissors and stabs Wallace in the neck, killing him ("The Trail," aired 5-10-2012).

In one of the most brutal portraits of an investigative reporter who will do anything to protect her source, *Nothing But the Truth* (2008) features journalist Rachel Armstrong (Kate Beckinsale) who works for the *Capital Sun-Times* in Washington, D.C. She exposes a CIA agent's cover and ends up in jail for refusing to reveal her source. Although she wins a Pulitzer Prize, she is beaten up, her marriage is destroyed and her young son alienated, and she ends up in prison for obstruction of justice. In *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), columnist Melinda Stuart (Isabella Hofmann), who writes "Inside the Beltway" for the *Washington Tribune*, is accused of murder when her source is killed.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Columnist**

Real-life legacy Washington, D.C. columnists were very powerful. Matthew C. Ehrlich, in his analysis of the Broadway play *The Columnist* by David Auburn,<sup>42</sup> points out that Joseph

Alsop's column appeared in as many as 300 newspapers across America for nearly 40 years, from 1937 to 1974. Ehrlich quotes Alsop as saying; "No columnist has any power at all. They always *think* they do, but they don't. If you act as a transmission belt for facts that have an impact, you can have an impact as a transmission belt. But the idea that anyone in the United States is foolish enough to think the way they do because some damn columnist thinks that way in the morning paper is an idea that only a columnist could believe." Ehrlich counters that with another quote, this one from journalist David Halberstam, who called Alsop "the most imperial and imperious of American journalists ... a man of Washington and its power ... who wrote not to enlighten but to *effect*, to move the principal players."<sup>43</sup>

More powerful than Joseph Alsop was gossip columnist Walter Winchell and while Winchell worked primarily out of New York, he often visited the powerful in Washington and wrote about politics and the nation's capital. In *Winchell* (1998), the columnist (Stanley Tucci) becomes a friend of influential Washington politicians, including the president of the United States. Like Alsop, Winchell got his "facts from highly placed sources with whom he regularly interacted socially as well as professionally."<sup>44</sup> Winchell was not above blackmailing his sources to get information and Washington sources were no exception.

Other images of the Washington columnist are similar: Columnist Robert Blevins (Roger Clark) writes the "Washington Whirligig" for *The Clarion*, routinely attacks the powerful, often ridiculing them in his columns (*So This Is Washington*, 1943). Washington Columnist Poppy McNaughton (Ella Raines) will do anything to expose Washington politicians as the corrupt, stupid people she thinks they are. When she tells Lew Gibson (Peter Lind Hayes), the senator's publicity director, that she is just quoting what the senator said, he yells back, "You can't go around quoting politicians accurately, Poppy. That's dirty journalism and you know it." (*The Senator Was Indiscreet*, 1947).

Columnist Spike McManus (Van Johnson), who is called “the poor man’s Drew Pearson,” after one of the most famous and influential Washington newsmen in the country, does whatever the Thorndyke Press tells him to do until he finally leaves the dark side at the end of the film (*State of the Union*, 1948). Political columnist G. William “Bill” or “Billy” Howe (Robert Lansing) of the *Washington Telegram* plans to write an exposé and people in Washington will do anything to stop him, including blowing up his car with his estranged wife in it (*Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure*, 1988). Gossip columnist Miles Plato (Kurt Fuller), who works for a Washington, D.C. newspaper, is an influential, flamboyant journalist hated by his colleagues for the kind of stuff he writes. But he’s also someone they go to for help when no one will talk to them because everyone in Washington will talk to Plato—he knows everyone’s darkest secrets (*Capital News*, 1990).<sup>45</sup>

Some Washington columnists turn out to be the most vicious journalists in films and television. Arthur Six (Richard Romanus) is one of the most successful Washington columnists (“Arthur Six Almanac”) and broadcaster in the capital. The way he works is to gather sensitive information about important people in politics, law, and business. He then uses this information to blackmail people in high places, making him one of the most powerful men in Washington until he is exposed on television for what he is (*Mission Impossible: The Fixer*, 1989). Syndicated Washington columnist-broadcaster Gilbert Nunnally (Philip Ober) isn’t much better. He is known for blackmailing anyone who doesn’t cooperate with him and he’ll do anything to destroy a politician who goes up against him or sues him for libel. When an honest congressman confronts him and punches him in the face, Nunnally goes on the air to attack him in an attempt to destroy his career (*Washington Story*, 1952).

The modern columnist, a blogger on the Internet, is just as bad as his legacy print counterparts. Matt Burns (Julian Acosta) runs the site *beltwayburns.com* out of Washington,



D.C. and ruins a lot of Washington careers by making up information about important people, including a potential Supreme Court nominee. Burns accuses him of plagiarism and possible infidelity, and the nominee is forced to withdraw his nomination. The lying blogger goes to meet a source and instead is thrown off a bridge and onto a construction site where his body is impaled on a rebar (*NCIS: The Inside Man*, 2009).

Sometimes a columnist just loses his way and does something he regrets. Columnist Mike Howley (James Garner) convinces three fellow newspeople and debate panelists—Barbara Manning (Audra McDonald), Henry Ramirez (Marco Sanchez), and Joan Naylor (Donna Murphy)—to follow his plan to hijack the electoral process by supporting the Democratic candidate. They ask the Republican nominee questions about unsubstantiated charges that he is a violent man. The candidate leaves the stage in a huff after throwing a microphone, destroying his chances of being elected. When the plot is exposed after the election, the columnist loses credibility at the end of a long and distinguished career (*The Last Debate*, 2000).

### **The Washington Press Corps**

The great majority of Washington journalists in film and TV seldom have names and usually show up at press conferences that take place with the president or various members of Congress. They are usually seen shouting out questions or listening in shock when something extraordinary is being told to them. They have been compared to a “Greek Chorus” in commenting on Washington politics and the people who run Washington, D.C.<sup>46</sup>

The real Washington press corps doesn’t seem to be much different in gender and racial composition from the fictional one. “The Washington press corps as a whole is not young, not female and not black; it is heavily from the Northeast and well educated,” writes Stephen Hess in his book, *The Washington Reporters*.<sup>47</sup>

Sometimes the reporters can get aggressive. In *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), Washington press corps reporter Mr. Thieson (Mischa Auer) asks the president tough questions about the nation's failing economy that the president only answers with platitudes and then tells the reporters he will not be quoted. TV reporter Murphy Brown (Candice Bergen) takes no prisoners in trying to get President George H.W. Bush's attention, fighting with her print colleagues and demanding that Bush recognize her during a press conference (*Murphy Brown*, 1988-1998). In *Deep Impact* (1998), TV reporter-anchor Jenny Lerner (Tea Leoni) of MSNBC holds back a controversial story in exchange for getting to ask the key questions at a White House press conference. In *The West Wing* (1999-2006), journalist Daniel "Danny" Concannon (Timothy Busfield), the senior White House correspondent for *The Washington Post* and a Pulitzer Prize winner, won't take "no" for an answer as he asks one hard-hitting question after another during various press conferences.

In *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), reporter Frank Halloran (Steven Marcus) of *The Washington Post* and the rest of the news media question the police's effectiveness in dealing with guns on the streets of Washington, D.C. In *The Day Reagan Was Shot* (2001), reporters issue a barrage of questions to the assistant press secretary about who's in charge after President Ronald Reagan is shot. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, furious over the wishy-washy answers given to the reporters, takes over the press conference and destroys his career in the process. *Washington Post* correspondent Langston Whitfeld (Samuel L. Jackson) is antagonistic in questioning South Africans during a press conference (*In My Country*, 2004).<sup>48</sup>

As the years progress, the fictional presidential press conferences, like the real ones, change as the technology changes. *Seven Days in May* (1964), for example, showcases one of the earliest presidential press conferences to feature television in an authentic reproduction of the real thing.

Sometimes the members of the Washington press corps are real-life journalists, including Richard Reeves and one of the most famous Washington journalists at presidential news conferences, the late Helen Thomas. They add an authenticity to the fictional images of these mostly anonymous journalists. In *Dave* (1993), both Reeves and Thomas are recognizable reporters at presidential news conferences involving an imposter pretending he is the president (who has suffered a stroke). Thomas also appears as herself in *The American President* (1995) when the Washington press corps wants to find out all about the widowed President's new relationship with an environmental lobbyist.

Washington press conferences have become so commonplace in films and TV programs that *Saturday Night Live* has been parodying presidential and senatorial press conferences for decades.<sup>49</sup> In *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976) and *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), SNL players portray famous journalists of the era: Journalist Liz Montgomery (Jane Curtin) of *The Washington Post*, Tom Burke (John Belushi) of *Rolling Stone*, and Earl Roland (Garrett Morris) of *Chicago Tribune* quiz Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter in 1976. An overly accommodating Diane Sawyer (Jan Hooks) and an aggressive ABC correspondent Sam Donaldson (Kevin Nealon) quiz the president in 1988. In *Chappelle's Show: Asteroid Is Black President's Fault* (2003), reporters listen patiently as the first African-American president responds to reporters blaming him for everything that happens, including an asteroid coming towards Earth.

### **The Female Washington Journalist**

With rare exceptions, female journalists in Washington also offer very positive images. Some might do unscrupulous things in getting the story, such as sleeping with a source or using sex to get information, but in the end they are heroic because their stories expose wrongdoing in

the nation's capital. The image of the Washington female journalist is not unlike the images of other female journalists. In summing up novels written since 1990 that feature Washington women journalists, Maurine H. Beasley concluded that "the books show Washington women journalists as ambitious, intelligent, well-educated, competitive, supervised by male editors, likely to encounter sexual harassment, experiencing conflicts between their careers and personal lives, and caught up in office politics, including rivalries with other women."<sup>50</sup> That image is not only true to real-life, but also similar to images found in films and TV programs since 1990 that feature Washington female journalists.

Sammye Johnson discovered similar "characteristics shared by women journalists over time in film and fiction. The female reporter is attractive with sex appeal. She works hard to prove herself in the male dominated journalism field and she wants to get an exclusive or scoop. She has crusading journalism instincts and is determined to find out the truth behind a story. Her career takes precedence, to the extent that she doesn't have much of a personal life. She is not desperately seeking a man and she continues to be an aggressive journalist despite romantic, emotional, mental, or physical setbacks."<sup>51</sup>

Female Washington reporters are usually no-nonsense reporters who get furious if male reporters are given special privileges.<sup>52</sup> In *Adventure in Washington* (1941), radio broadcaster Jane Scott (Virginia Bruce) covers news—and gossip—in Congress live on the air and is furious when she is excluded from an impromptu news conference in a congressman's office because she is a woman. Washington columnist Poppy McNaughton (Ella Raines), who is "just about the best newspaperman in town," refuses to take a back seat to any man in reporting presidential politics, even fighting her boyfriend, the senator's publicity director, to get an exclusive (*The Senator Was Indiscreet*, 1947). NBC reporter Molly Hark (Veronica Cartwright) becomes a nasty, unpopular opportunist in her battle to get the news before anyone else (*Tanner '88*, 1988).

No one takes less guff from her male counterparts than Murphy Brown, a recovering alcoholic, single mom and breast cancer survivor, who can stand toe-to-toe with any journalist, male or female, in the business (*Murphy Brown*, 1988-1998). Cocky blogger Della Frye (Rachel McAdams) forces street-smart reporter Cal McAffrey (Russell Crowe) of the *Washington Globe* to work with her and not belittle her as they investigate a scandal involving a congressman (*State of Play*, 2009). In *Hostile Makeover* and *Killer Hair* (2009), fashion columnist Lacey Smithsonian (Maggie Lawson) of *The Eye Street Observer* writes “Fashion Bites,” but wants to cover hard news and fights her male editor and fellow male reporters for the chance to write front-page stories. She ends up getting her own stories by solving crimes, usually murders.<sup>53</sup>

Fiction often emulated the real-life status of women who worked in Washington news media. Real-life TV journalist Jessica Savitch (Sela Ward) works her way up the all-male Washington Bureau facing sexism, being treated as a second-class reporter who the males think was hired for her looks and nothing else. She is given no help at all, made to look ridiculous on live TV, and works hard to overcome her inexperience in the nation’s capital, which operates as a closed men’s club. She barely survives—but not without the help of drugs and alcohol (*Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story*, 1995).

Washington female journalists often fight the good fight against terrible odds and will do anything to get a story,<sup>54</sup> even if it means sleeping with a source or a colleague. In *The Internecine Project* (1974), political correspondent Jean Robertson (Lee Grant) of *The Washington Daily News* sleeps with her source, who tells her she should give up political reporting and write a cook book because he is sick and tired of aggressive female journalists. TV reporter Dorian Waldorf (Helen Shaver) of CVN News Service gets secret information from the White House aide she is sleeping with. He wants her to go away with him, but she won’t leave the story of her career (*Countdown to Looking Class*, 1984). Reporter Liza Hearn (Emmanuelle

Vaugier) of the *Washington Recorder* gets in trouble with the CIA for writing articles that contain secret information no one else knows. The head of the CIA meets with her, but she won't reveal her sources and she doesn't tell anyone that she is sleeping with a blind CIA computer genius, who it turns out is not her source (*Covert Affairs*, 2010).

When it comes to doing anything to get exclusives, few are more obvious than reporter Zoe Barnes (Kate Mara) of the *Washington Herald* in *House of Cards* (2013), a young journalist burning to get scoops and launch a blog on her newspaper's website that will make her a celebrity journalist. She makes a deal with House Majority Whip Frank Underwood for information and offers to be his media leak in return for exclusive information. Her colleague Janine Skorsky, a veteran political correspondent, confides, "We've all done it. I used to suck, screw and jerk anything that moved just to get a story ... I even had a fling with a congressman."

In *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), reporter Heather Holloway (Katie Holmes) of the *Washington Probe* gets her exclusive information for her front-page expose while having sex with a lobbyist for cigarette companies. When he complains that there is a lot of information in the article that is off the record, she tells him: "You never said anything about off the record." The lobbyist responds, "I presumed anything said while I was inside you was privileged." Without missing a beat, she answers, "Nick ... If you wanted to talk on a plane or at a movie or over dinner that would have been fine. But you wanted to fuck. That's fine by me."

In *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), journalism novice Melody Shepherd (Heather Locklear) sleeps with CNS News' chief executive Brad Duggan (Jed Allan), who dumps her after he finds out that she will do anything she can to take over TV correspondent Tess O'Brien's job. O'Brien (Barbara Eden) is a star veteran TV correspondent who covers the White House and tried to be a mentor to the corrupt Shepherd, who lies, cheats and does everything she can to destroy O'Brien's career.

In *Political Animals* (2012), columnist-reporter Susan Berg (Carla Gugino) of the *Washington Globe News* is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who not only sleeps with her editor Alex Davies (Dan Futterman), but also blackmails the female secretary of state into an in-depth interview when she gets sensitive information about the secretary's son and threatens to leak the story. She also has sex with another source, the secretary of state's other son, her chief of staff, on a private jet.

Of course, women aren't the only ones sleeping with a source or a colleague. Editor Alex Davies (Dan Futterman) of the *Washington Globe News* sleeps with his star reporter, and then cheats on her with a younger staff member who runs the newspaper's blog, Georgia Gibbons (Meghann Fahy). Journalist Jack Whittier (Dean Stockwell) is the youngest member of the Washington press corps when he has a relationship with the president's daughter. As punishment, he is sent to Budapest, attacked by a werewolf, returns to Washington, becomes a werewolf when the moon is full, kills several people, then tries to kill the president before being destroyed (*The Werewolf of Washington*, 1973).

Sometimes reporter favors don't involve sex—just preferential treatment for certain sources. Political correspondent Ida Horowicz (Marisa Tomei) of *The New York Times* will do anything to get a story, even pretend to be best friends with an inside source, promising special favors and coverage in exchange for information. When Horowicz crosses one source, he says to her, “You're supposed to be my friend, Ida. You'd stab me in the back like this? You'd ruin my reputation.” “Is that what you thought?” Ida asks him. “That we were friends?” He yells at her: “I've given you everything—every fucking scoop.” She answers: “You're right – you've given me a lot. But let's get real here. ... The only reason you ever treated me well was that I work for *The Times*. Not because I was your friend. You give me what I want, I write better stories. Don't pretend it's any more than that” (*The Ides of March*, 2011).

Female Washington journalists are strong and independent women until they meet and fall in love, and then they often are willing to give up everything for that special man in their lives. Capitol Hill radio reporter Jane Scott (Virginia Bruce) fights U.S. Senator John Coleridge (Herbert Marshall) tooth and nail until she realizes she's falling in love with him (*Adventure in Washington*, 1941). In *Washington Story* (1952), reporter Alice Kingsley (Patricia Neal) goes to Washington to "get a sensational series of articles about Washington and I don't care who I impose on to get them," but then falls in love with the congressman she plans to expose. After lying to him and pretending she's a reporter from the *National Women's Home Gazette*, she proves her love for him by writing a positive article about him and falling into his arms on the Capitol steps.

Another strong woman, publisher Dorothy "Dottie" Peale (Susan Hayward) of *Newsworld* magazine, goes after a general with every weapon she has, then falls in love with him and will do anything to fix the damage she has caused (*Top Secret Affair*, 1957). In *Up Close and Personal* (1996), TV reporter Tally Atwater (Michelle Pfeiffer) falls in love and marries her mentor, the experienced-weary Warren Justice (Robert Redford) as she goes from local reporter to network Washington Bureau chief for the I.B.S. Network. It looks as if Atwater has it all until her lover Justice is killed on assignment. An editor at the *New Republic*, Caitlin Avery (Chloe Sevigny) lets her infatuation with a young writer, blind her judgment when that writer is accused of fabricating stories (*Shattered Glass*, 2003).<sup>55</sup>

TV news producer Jane Craig (Holly Hunter) is the epitome of the image of a hard bitten, tough professional TV journalist. She falls in love with TV anchor Tom Grunick (William Hurt) even though she can't stand his lack of professional experience. She eventually breaks up with him when she discovers he crossed an ethical line by faking an emotional moment after the fact.<sup>56</sup> Craig is the preeminent producer whether she is preparing a story at the last minute for air



or is inside Grunick's brain via his earpiece in the control room during live coverage of a breaking news event. Grunick appears flawless on camera, but it is Craig who is feeding him facts and summaries over the headphones with an assist from her friend and top reporter Aaron Altman (Albert Books). Craig is cool under pressure, screaming orders on the phone and in person. She is always sure of herself, convinced she knows what is best when it comes to news coverage and news personnel. She confronts the news executive in charge who has decided that Grunick is ready for a major live-TV assignment. "Tom isn't ready for the job you're about to hand him. Not near ready," she tells the executive. Craig favors the more professional, experienced Altman, saying, "I think he's essential to do the job we're capable of and I think it's my responsibility to tell you that." The executive listens, then says, "Okay, that's your opinion. I don't agree." Jane: "It's not opinion." Executive: "You're just absolutely right and I'm absolutely wrong?" Jane nods and the executive continues: "It must be nice to always believe you know better. To think you're always the smartest person in the room." Jane, looking pained, responds: "No, it's awful." (*Broadcast News*, 1987).

Often female journalists are criticized for being too ambitious. In the TV series *Vanished* (2006), TV reporter Judy Nash (Rebecca Gayheart) of WCN News is not only sleeping with her cameraman, Adam, but is also determined to solve a case that involves a missing senator's wife which she believes is far more complex than a simple kidnapping. An FBI agent says to her: "Let's not pretend we're on the same team. I do want to find these two women. You want them missing for as long as possible. With any luck, your face might end up as famous as theirs."

TV reporter Tori Wheeler (Elaine Hendrix) alienates Senator Sterling when she uses an impromptu statement made to her after an on-camera interview is over so she can broadcast an exclusive story (*Mister Sterling*, 2003). In an episode of *Veep* ("First Response," June 9, 2013), reporter Janet Ryland (Allison Janney), who works for a television program called "First

Response,” and her male producer agree to do a puff piece on the vice president. They win her confidence and then hit her with controversial “gotcha” questions to make her look bad, turning the interview into a “rough puff.”

Sometimes female journalists go to great lengths to be the best reporters they can be. In *Lions for Lambs* (2007), TV journalist Janine Roth (Meryl Streep) of the ANX Network is a veteran journalist who arrives for a one-on-one interview with a Republican senator who wants to give her an exclusive bombshell story about his new plan to resolve the deadline in the war in Afghanistan. Most Washington reporters would jump at the chance for an explosive exclusive, but Roth isn't sure it's a legitimate story and she feels she is being used. Her editor wants to go with it, but Roth argues against it.

TV reporter Samantha “Sam” Coleman (Sheila McCarthy) for WWTW responsibly covers a terrorist attack on Dulles Airport, helping police capture the bad guys (*Die Hard 2, Die Harder*, 1990). In *NCIS: Obsession* (2010), TV reporter Dana Hutton (Ashley Scott) is a ZNN correspondent who comes to Washington, D.C. to find out why her brother was murdered with a lethal injection that has no antidote. It turns out she has also been injected with the poison and while the murderer is caught, it is too late to save her life. Another female journalist won't let anything stand in the way of good story—even becoming invisible in the process (*The Invisible Woman*, 1983).

Washington reporters also cover routine stories on a regular basis. In *Running Mates* (2000), TV reporter Jody Daniels (Caroline Aaron) and the rest of the Washington news media cover a Democratic Party presidential candidate who is having a hard time deciding on his vice president. TV reporter Samantha Tate (Sibila Vargas) of ZNN News is covering a feature story when a man with a camera gets hit by a truck. It turns out he is a wanted assassin (*NCIS: Enemy on the Hill*, 2011).

Parodies of female Washington correspondents are commonplace. On *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), correspondent Samantha Bee reports on election machine fraud and in *Tracey Ullman's State of the Union* (2008), TV Washington correspondent Campbell Brown (Tracey Ullman) for CNN reports from in front of the White House to tell the nation that all the news is filled with terror and horror. Her report is brief and to the point: "Horror, terror, horror, terror, nightmare, horror, fear. Back to you, Brian."

### **The Reporter**

TV reporters can be particularly nasty and unethical and devoid of morals. Dick Thornburg (William Atherton) for WZDC News is an obnoxious reporter who learns about a terrorist attack on Dulles Airport while he is on a plane circling the airport. He goes live on the air and his report panics everyone in the airport, causing a stampede of frightened people (*Die Hard 2: Die Harder*, 1990). TV newscaster Monica Hunter (Beth Broderick), host of the syndicated program "Hunt for the Truth" on the BNI Network that originates out of Washington, D.C., demonizes innocent people for ratings. Her tagline: "Join us tomorrow as we hunt for the truth." She goes after a school bus driver involved in an accident, destroying his career and causing him to attempt suicide. She is tricked into broadcasting a false story and is thrown off the air (*Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job*, 2009).

Some reporters lose their moral compass and will do anything to make it to the top. Reporter James Novak (Dan Bucatinsky) is the husband of the president's chief of staff, Cyrus Beene. Novak quit *The Washington Post* to become a stay-at-home father, but when Beene balked at adopting a child, Novak got a job at the *Washington D.C. Times* as chief White House correspondent and began an investigation that reveals voting machines were rigged, giving the election to the current president, Beene's boss. In an attempt to stop Novak, Beene procured a

baby girl. In exchange Novak gave his husband a voting machine memory card with the incriminating evidence and the story faded away. A year later, BNC offered Novak a job as an on-air live field reporter and his first assignment was a one-on-one interview with the first lady, during which he got her to admit that the president was having an affair. Later, Novak learned he had been played—the president's wife had personally requested him for the interview to hurt both husbands—the president and Beene (*Scandal* 2012-2014).

Other reporters aren't above blackmailing or threatening sources for information or personal favors. White House TV reporter Ken Dellao (Tim Guinee) of CNB tells the president's daughter, who is now her chief of staff, that unless she comes to his hotel room and has sex with him, he will print a story saying she was responsible for the leak that caused the former chief of staff to resign. Later, he tells her he still has to go public with the exclusive story because it will make his career. She then shows him a recording she made of their sexual encounter and tells him that unless he gives up the White House beat, she will show the recording to his boss and his wife. She leaves the angry reporter alone in the hotel room (*24: Day 7*, 2009). In *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), Melody Shepherd (Heather Locklear) steals files, makes up stories, sleeps with the boss, and sabotages a veteran TV news correspondent in an attempt to get her job. Newspaper blogger Zoe Barnes (Kate Mara) of the *Washington Herald* uses push-up bras and offers herself as a sexual object to clinch deals with sources and colleagues in an attempt to get journalism stardom and celebrity (*House of Cards*, 2013).

Desperate to become a successful magazine journalist, Stephen Glass (Hayden Christensen) makes up and fabricates many of his stories for the Washington D.C.-based *New Republic*. When editor Chuck Lane (Peter Sarsgaard) discovers the lies, he confronts Glass with the truth. In a chilling ending, Lane faces Glass and his lawyer and says, "I'm going to read you a list of suspicious titles, one by one. If you raise an objection to a particular title, we'll

fact-check it again in the hope of removing it from the list. If you remain silent, we'll assume that piece is fabricated ... either partially or entirely, and it will stay on." As Lane reads each title and pauses, the camera stares at the silent Glass's face. The silence is deafening (*Shattered Glass*, 2003).

Sometimes the reporter simply isn't candid with a person being interviewed, promising the interviewee that everything will be all right even when the journalist knows that may not be the case. TV journalist Timber Tucker (Jay Thomas) of Time Zone shows up at a Sunday brunch to interview the president's nominee for surgeon general. Tucker brings along a camera crew and inadvertently discovers that the nominee misplaced a jury summons years ago. He tells the nominee it isn't important, yet when he reports her innocent mistake, it becomes the scandal of the day, eventually making her candidacy impossible as the news media go after her in earnest (*An American Daughter*, 2000).

Some reporters, however, do their job well and at times are even heroic. Washington veteran reporter Diz Moore (Thomas Mitchell) does everything he can to get the news out about a Senate filibuster against a media tycoon who is doing everything he can to smear a senator's reputation. He and his fellow reporters know who they are and why they are reporters and Moore doesn't hesitate to tell the young senator the facts of life: "What do people read in the paper? This morning they read that an incompetent clown had arrived. Parading like a member of the Senate." The senator yells: "If you thought as much about being honest as you do about being smart ...." And Moore fires back: "We're the only ones who can afford to be honest. We don't have to be re-elected. We tell them when phonies come to make their laws ... You're not a senator! You're an honorary stooge. You ought to be shown up." (*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, 1939).

TV reporter-anchor Patrick Hale (Sean Connery) of WTN News is even more critical of

the business he is in. While he is going around the world getting stories and trying to save the world from nuclear annihilation, he takes time out to sum up his view of journalism: “We’re in show business, baby, make them laugh, make them cry, make them buy, buy, and buy. Get that guy on camera ... The soldier with the bleeding stumps. You’re rolling. Hey sarge, you’re on TV. How does it feel losing your legs? Call that news. We peddle it faster. Violence ... Blood and tears. And football and cheers. Performers, superstars. Get them on, get them off ... We’re in the entertainment business and there’s nothing wrong with that if you call it that. And now folks, for my next act, I’m going to try to save the president’s neck.” (*His boss: “You bum, you’re the one that exposed him”*) “Right. And that’s not wrong, that’s my job and if he’s told the truth, I’ll get the facts to prove it and that’s my job, too.” (*Wrong Is Right*, 1982).

Other TV reporters do their job with mixed results. TV reporter Patricia Traymore (Lynda Carter) goes to Washington to do a series of profiles on women in government and ends up solving a family mystery (*Stillwatch*, 1987). TV reporter Al Freundlich (Al Franken) works for LateLine, a late-night news program based in Washington, D.C. He is constantly ridiculed by anchor Pearce McKenzie (Robert Foxworth) and producer Vic Carp (Miguel Ferrer), who run the newsroom. In one episode of *LateLine* (1998-1999), McKenzie threatens to quit in a plot to become the richest anchor in TV news. He shocks everyone when he announces on the air that his replacement will be Al Freundlich. But the announcement was a hoax and Freundlich is the last one to find out. Still, his heart is in the right place and he always tries his best to be an honest, hard-working reporter.

TV reporters Natalie Lake (Sarah Jessica Parker) and reporter Jason Stone (Michael J. Fox) work for GNN and report on the first Martian landing on Earth with disastrous results—Stone is vaporized by Martian guns and Lake’s head ends up on the body of her pet dog when she is transferred to the space ship (*Mars Attacks!*, 1996).

## The Publisher

Publishers are among the most vicious villains in films and television programs, and those who own news media in Washington are no exception. Media tycoon Jim Taylor (Edward Arnold) in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) fights a senator who is staging a filibuster against his interests by keeping any news about the filibuster secret from the public. When the senator's paper, *Boys' Stuff*, publishes the facts, Taylor's henchmen beat up the boys delivering the papers and silence the opposition by stealing the papers.

In *State of the Union* (1948), newspaper magnate Kay Thorndyke (Angela Lansbury) is just like her deceased father, Sam of the Thorndyke Press, and will do anything possible to get her way. She plans to use her newspaper chain's influence to deadlock the 1948 Republican National Convention so it will choose her candidate, who is also her lover, as the compromise dark horse candidate. When many of the editors of her newspaper refuse to go along with this unethical behavior, she fires them on the spot. Picking a president seems to be something publishers like to do. Ellsworth T. Banning (Grant Mitchell), who owns a chain of newspapers, promises to do whatever it takes to get a favored candidate elected (*First Lady*, 1937).

Some newspaper publishers even resort to murder to get what they want. In *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure* (1988), publisher Dale Linseman (Al Waxman) blows up a car with a columnist's estranged wife in it because they were going to get back together. That meant the columnist's explosive memoir giving away the secrets of the powerful people in Washington would not be completed—the columnist was only writing it because he was unhappy about the separation. Linseman wanted to make sure the memoir would be published and he was afraid it wouldn't be if the columnist were married again.

Less vicious, but still determined to get her way is magazine publisher Dorothy "Dottie" Peale (Susan Hayward) of *Newsworld* magazine, which is part of the media conglomerate Peale

Enterprises. She wants the person she has championed to be head of the Joint Atomic International Commission. When he is passed over in favor of an heroic general (Kirk Douglas), she uses all of the power of her magazine to destroy the general's career. Then she falls in love with him and tries to do whatever it takes to fix the damage her media empire has caused (*Top Secret Affair*, 1957).

Publishers are sometimes treated as enemies of freedom of the press. In *The Searching Wind* (1946), a famous correspondent returns from London to write a column on "The Washington Scene" for the *Washington Bulletin*, which is part of the Harvey chain. Her editor warns her: "You'll have to learn that when you attack what Gus Harvey doesn't like, that is freedom of the press. But when you attack what he does like, you're overthrowing the government."

In *Broadcast News* (1987), network news executive Paul Moore (Peter Hackes) makes decisions based on economics and ratings. After he fires an old-time newsman, the man shakes his hand and tells him, "You know I'm just old enough to be flattered by the term, 'early retirement.'" Moore smiles and says, "That's wonderful ... what a lovely line. If there's anything I can do." They shake hands again and the old-time newsman smiles and tells him, "I certainly hope you die soon."

### **Pack Journalism**

Pack journalism is defined as journalism practiced by reporters in a group that is usually marked by uniformity of news coverage and lack of original thought or initiative. Most journalists, in and out of Washington, consider this kind of journalism "bad journalism." It is a fact of life, especially in Washington, that reporters are packed together covering scheduled or impromptu news events. One observer remembers that Eugene McCarthy "once compared the



press to blackbirds on a telephone line. One flies off, the others fly off; one comes back, the others come back. All in a row.”<sup>57</sup> It is this idea that reporters consider troubling for “it implies they do not form independent judgments or even that they are somehow cheating.”<sup>58</sup>

Sometimes pack journalism can appear favorable or neutral in films and television programs. In *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *Washington Story* (1952), for example, reporters rush to telephones and teletype machines to report what has happened on the Senate floor. In *Advise & Consent* (1962), the journalists cover the Senate investigation to determine if the president’s candidate for secretary of state is qualified. They stop senators in the hallway to ask them questions. In *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), reporters storm a hearing room to surround the senators, shouting out questions to find out what is really going on.

Much of that kind of reporting is benign, but often pack journalists can appear menacing with their microphones and cameras, seemingly having no regard for the individual’s dignity or privacy. In *The American President* (1995), they do whatever they can to find out all about the widowed president’s new relationship with an environmental lobbyist, surrounding each of them alone or together whenever the opportunity arises. Pack journalists surround the car carrying a politician who has been wounded by an assassin’s bullet and try to find out how he is doing (*Bob Roberts*, 1992). They show up outside the home of a besieged nominee for surgeon general, shouting questions and demanding answers (*An American Daughter*, 2000). In *Scandal* (2012-2013), journalists arrive in packs, standing on the lawn of a Supreme Court justice nominee and refusing to leave until she comes out to make a statement.

In *Homeland* (2011), pack journalists surround the house of a U.S. Marine sergeant who returns home eight years after being tortured as a prisoner of war in Iraq and they stay there, night and day, until he comes out to talk to them. One reporter tries to interview him in his backyard, but the Marine attacks him with an open-hand hit to his throat while the Marine’s

son looks on in horror.

### ***The Washington Post***

*The Washington Post* seems to be the most often referred-to newspaper in films and television. By using the real *Washington Post* as the capital's newspaper of record, the images of the Washington journalist in films and television programs gain an authenticity and reality that gives the images higher import to the audiences. *The Post*, founded in 1877, is the most widely circulated newspaper published in Washington, D.C. It gained even more positive publicity in 2013, when Amazon founder Jeff Bezos purchased the newspaper for \$250 million in cash. As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* puts it, *The Post* is the "dominant newspaper in the U.S. capital and usually counted as one of the greatest newspapers in that country."

So it is not surprising that the image of the Washington journalist is often defined by their working for *The Post* in one capacity or another. The best known *Post* reporters are, of course, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who were portrayed by Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman in *All the President's Men* (1976) and by Will Farrell and Bruce McCulloch in the satire-comedy, *Dick* (1999). Bernstein was also the inspiration for the columnist in *Heartburn* (1986), played by Jack Nicholson; J.T. Walsh was Woodward in *Wired* (1989), with *The Post* editor played by Dakin Matthews.

Other portrayals taking advantage of *The Post's* reputation are political correspondent Harris (Rene Auberjonois), who has the bad fortune to have a headache sitting next to journalist Hunter S. Thompson (Bill Murray) on a plane with journalists covering a political campaign. Thompson gives him a pill and Harris goes on a trip he will never forget, ending up in the plane's restroom, on the floor singing "Lucy in the Sky of Diamonds" (*Where the Buffalo Roam*, 1980). *Post* editor Ben Bradlee (Henderson Forsythe) gives an aspiring journalist Alex Finch

(Robert Downey) a job as a reporter after Finch and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* journalist Philip Train (Ryan O'Neal) get the goods on a corrupt judge (*Chances Are*, 1989). *Post* reporter David Dahl (Stan Kirsch) gets incriminating photos of a Supreme Court justice's uncle talking to a member of the Mafia after the justice had assured everyone during his appointment hearings that no member of his family ever had dealings with the Mafia (*First Monday: Family Affairs*, 2002).

Other *Washington Post* journalists include Daniel "Danny" Concannon (Timothy Busfield), the senior White House correspondent for the newspaper and a Pulitzer Prize winner (*The West Wing*, 1999-2006); correspondent Julia Richardson (Susannah York) in *That Lucky Touch* (1976); Liz Montgomery (Jane Curtin) on *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976); *Post* financial editor Sidney Courtney (John Harkins) in *Being There* (1979); Samantha Davis (Anjelica Huston) in *Gardens of Stone* (1987); two *Washington Post* reporters #1 and #2 (Joe Bays and Joe Basile) in *Winchell* (1998); an actual *Post* journalist, E.G. Dionne in *The Last Debate* (2000); Frank Halloran (Steven Marcus) in *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000); columnist John Klein (Richard Gere), *Post* editor Cyrus Bills (Bob Tracey), and a *Post* reporter (Ron Emanuel) in *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002); correspondent Langston Whitfield (Samuel L. Jackson) in *In My Country* (2004); and repeated mentions of *The Washington Post* and their reporters and editors in *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006).

In 1990, a television series, *Capital News* (1990), took the audience into the newsroom of a Washington, D.C. newspaper not unlike *The Post*. Its editor is Jonathan "Jo Jo" Turner (Lloyd Bridges) and he is surrounded by a hard-working staff that includes metro editor Clay Gibson (Michael Woods) and national editor Edison King (Mark Blum). Reporter Mary Ward (Kathryn Harrold) is meeting with the editor and lawyers to vet her latest hot story. There is gossip columnist Miles Plato (Kurt Fuller), who knows more about what is going on in Washington than

any of his reporter colleagues. Reporter Ann McKenna (Helen Slater) joins the metro staff hoping to make an impression. Hotshot reporter Redmond Dunne (William Russ), who is on the metro desk, takes McKenna under his wing. Reporter Cassy Swann (Chelsea Field) is on the national desk. The series didn't last more than a season. It might have fared better if the audience thought it was the real *Washington Post*.

## **Conclusion**

Representations of Washington journalists are often riddled with stereotypes and mythologized.

- Any investigative reporter worth his salt must emulate Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein—by having two sources for every story, a secret source only known to them, an editor who berates them while trusting them with saving the paper, and even the world.

- Any columnist must have terrific sources, be a powerful presence in the media, and not be above blackmailing someone to get a better story.

- Any reporter must be willing to go to any lengths to get a story even if it means violating every ethical code in existence.

- Any publisher must be ruthless in gaining power and influence.

- Any female reporter has to be ambitious, feisty, eager to outcoop the men around her, and willing to sacrifice her career if necessary to be with the man she loves.

- Members of the Washington press corps must always have a hand raised and a mouth open to ask any question that pops into his or her head.

- Journalists traveling in packs must be willing to chase a news source and do whatever it takes to get a quote or a confession.

- And it surely doesn't hurt to work for *The Washington Post* if you want to make it in films or television programs.

These images influence public knowledge and attitudes about the men and women who cover Congress and the presidency.

Surveys show that the public seems to acknowledge that without these journalists reporting day in and day out what the American government is doing, without these journalists serving as the public's representative and as a watchdog to make sure that those who are in government serve the people and not themselves, there is little the American people can do to stop corruption by their elected officials. But those same surveys also show that most Americans harbor a deep suspicion about the media, worrying about their perceived power, their meanness and negativism, their attacks on institutions and people, their intrusiveness and callousness, their arrogance and bias.

Positive images of the Washington journalist reassure the public that these journalists are protecting their interests, while the negative images of the Washington journalist show that even the fourth estate is susceptible to influence and corruption. Images of the investigative journalist in Washington offer reassuring evidence that journalists are doing what the public wants journalists to do—protect the public interest. Images of villainous columnists, reporters, and publishers do the opposite. They convince the public that the more powerful journalists become in Washington, the more corrupt they become and the more they are like the politicians they are supposed to be exposing.

Images of press conference and pack journalists are a mixed bag. On the one hand, these groups of journalists ask questions that the public wants to have answered. On the other hand, these groups of journalists can look menacing and uninterested in the worth of the individual, and the public ends up identifying with the person being pursued, rather than the journalists who

are doing the pursuing.

Studying the image of the Washington journalist in movies and television, decade by decade, image by image, is one way to understand why people feel the way they do about a particular group of journalists who work out of a 68.3 square mile capital district to inform the public about its elected national representatives. More often than not, the image is heroic and the public is satisfied.

According to a study from the Pew Research Center's Journalism Project Staff that was updated in 2009, the corps of journalists covering Washington, D.C. is not only smaller but has been "dramatically transformed. And that transformation will markedly alter what Americans know and do not know about" their government as well "as who will know it and who will not."<sup>59</sup> Also, as the "mainstream media have shrunk, a new sector of niche media has grown in its place, offering more specialized and detailed information than the general media to smaller, elite audiences, often built around narrowly targeted financial, lobbying and political interests."<sup>60</sup>

How all of this will affect the images of the Washington journalist tomorrow is open to speculation. The findings of the Pew Research Center study can also apply to fictional portrayals of the Washington journalist in the future. The question is how will movies and television reflect these changes.

- How will movies and television reflect "the significant decline in the reporting power of mainstream media"? In fictional representations as well as real-life examples, the daily newspaper has been "historically the backbone of American journalism, whose robust Washington presence and aggressive reporting has uncovered scandals that toppled a president, sent members of Congress to jail and does the daily job of covering congressional delegations and federal agencies."<sup>61</sup> Now this is changing dramatically.

How will movies and television reflect the decline in the mainstream press "that has been

nearly matched by a sharp growth among more narrowly focused special interest or niche media?”<sup>62</sup>

How will movies and television reflect “a marked jump in foreign media now represented in Washington”? This “contingent of foreign reporters in Washington has grown to nearly ten times the size it was a generation ago. And the picture they are sending abroad of the country is a far different one than the world received when the information came mainly via American-based wire services and cable news.”<sup>63</sup> How will movies and television images reflect this new reality?

And finally, how will movies and television reflect “the shift from media aimed at a general public toward one serving more specialized and elite interests,” which comes as pieces of the government “have become more circumspect, more secretive, and more combative in their dealings with the media?”<sup>64</sup>

As it becomes evident that the Washington press corps is no longer the homogenous group of journalists they were in the 20th century, films and television programs dealing with the Washington news media will surely be exploring these new images—some heroic, some not—in the years ahead. And the image of the Washington journalist will change accordingly.

### **Future Research Possibilities**

There has been virtually nothing written on the image of the Washington journalist in popular culture. While several books mention films and novels about Washington journalists, there are few studies analyzing the image of the Washington journalist in television and other aspects of popular culture. This is a rich field for future academic research and we encourage colleagues to mine this field as a means of understanding how the image of the Washington journalist influences the public’s understanding of a subcategory of journalists who influence the way the public thinks about its government in action.

## **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> Washington throughout this paper refers to Washington, D.C., formally the District of Columbia, the capital of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> The original sample included more than 150 films and television programs, but the list was reduced to 127 films and television programs because the portrayals of Washington journalists in the items eliminated were either insignificant or unavailable to review. The final study includes 61 movies and 66 television programs.

<sup>3</sup> Briar McNair, *Journalists in Film: Heroes and Villains* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 59.

<sup>4</sup> These books include Matthew C. Ehrlich, *Journalism in the Movies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Howard Good, *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism and Movies* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998); Brian McNair, *Journalists in Film: Heroes and Villains* (Edinburgh, Scotland, Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Richard R. Ness, *From Headline Hunter to Superman: A Journalism Filmography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), and Joe Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film* (Los Angeles: Norman Lear Center, University of Southern California, 2000). There are also numerous essays on the image of the journalist in various aspects of popular culture on the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture website, [www.ijpc.org](http://www.ijpc.org). The Resources section and the “Sob Sister: The Image of the Female Journalist” section contain material on male and female journalists that is applicable to this study.

<sup>5</sup> Stacy L. Spaulding and Maurine H. Beasley, *Crime, Romance and Sex: Washington Women Journalists in Recent Popular Fiction, Media Report to Women* 32.4 (2004): 6-12.

<sup>6</sup> The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) panel, sponsored by the History Division and the Entertainment Studies Group, was held on Friday, August 9, 2013 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at the Renaissance Hotel, Room 156.

<sup>7</sup> The three AEJMC presentations are included in this edition of *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal*.

<sup>8</sup> The Pew study can be found at <http://www.journalism.org/2009/07/16/new-washington-press-corps/>.

Pew Research Center’s Journalism Project Staff and Tyler Marshall, “The New Washington Press Corps: As Mainstream Media Decline, Niche and Foreign Outlets Grow,” Pew Research Journalism Project (July 16, 2009) at <http://www.journalism.org/2009/07/16/new-washington-press-corps/>.

<sup>9</sup> The Online IJPC Database includes more than 85,000 entries (2013). Using key words such as “Washington”(764 entries, 51 more with “Washington” in the title in early 2013); “President” (939 entries, 63 more with “President” in the title); “Congress” (124 entries); and “Press Conferences” (27 entries), it was possible to isolate more than 300 movies and TV programs of



interest. In addition, various online databases, including the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), were searched for verification and new possibilities.

<sup>10</sup> Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*, 146.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 146.

<sup>12</sup> **Dramas** include *Washington Merry-Go-Round* (1932), *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Wilson* (1944), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *State of the Union* (1948), *Washington Story* (1952), *Madison Avenue* (1962), *Advise & Consent* (1962), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *The Best Man* (1964), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Being There* (1979), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Under Siege* (1986), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure* (1988), *Mission Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *Wired* (1989), *Capital News* (1990), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Special Report: Journey to Mars* (1996), *Air Force One* (1997), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), *An American Daughter* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Agency: Deadline* (2001), *First Monday: Family Affairs* (2002), *Mister Sterling* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *Medical Investigation: The Black Book* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *Vanished* (2006), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *NCIS: The Inside Man* (2009), *Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job* (2009), *24: Day 7* (2009), *State of Play* (2009), *Covert Affairs* (2010-), *NCIS: Obsession* (2010), *NCIS: Enemy on the Hill* (2011), *Homeland* (2011), *The Ides of March* (2011), *Bones: The Crack in the Code* (2012), *Political Animals* (2012), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

**Comedies** include *Stand Up and Cheer!* (1934), *First Lady* (1937), *Rovin' Tumbleweeds* (1939), *Government Girl* (1943), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *The Senator Was Indiscreet* (1947), *Born Yesterday* (1950), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1962-1963), *That Lucky Touch* (1975), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show: The Seminar* (1976), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Heartburn* (1986), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Chances Are* (1989), *The Powers That Be* (1992-1993), *Hearts Afire* (1992-1995), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Dave* (1993), *Born Yesterday* (1993), *The American President* (1995), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Dick* (1999), *Running Mates* (2000), *Head of State* (2003), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *First Daughter* (2004), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Veep* (2012-2013), *1600 Penn* (2012-2013), *The Campaign* (2012).

**Science Fiction/Horror** include *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Captain America* (1990), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998), *First Wave: Depththroat* (1999), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *Category 7: The End of the World* (2005).

**Satire/Parody** include *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate*

(1992), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994), *Wag the Dog* (1997), *Chappelle's Show: Asteroid Is Black President's Fault* (2003), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *The Colbert Report: Election Night* (2006), *Tracey Ullman's State of the Union* (2008).

**True Stories/Biography** include *You Are There: The Vote That Made Jefferson President* (1954), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Kennedy* (1983), *Nixon* (1995), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *Winchell* (1998), *The Day Reagan Was Shot* (2001), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *W.* (2008), *The Special Relationship* (2010).

<sup>13</sup> According to Stephen Hess, *The Washington Reporters* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1981), 67: “The most striking demographic difference between Washington’s male and female reporters is that the women as a group are considerably younger. They are twice as likely as men to be between twenty and twenty-nine years old. Nearly 84 percent of women reporters are under forty years of age; 52 percent of male reporters are under 40. Otherwise, what is notable is that the reporters, regardless of gender, come from similar backgrounds.” Also, Hess 69: “It is not that women reporters do not get beats that are important or beats that generate a good deal of news, merely that they get the beats the men do not want.”

<sup>14</sup> Hess, 45: “In all types of Washington news organizations most reporters are male, white, urban, and Northeastern. Some organizations, of course, are more urban (network television), some are more male (wire services), some are more white (specialized publications).”

<sup>15</sup> Hess, 71-72: “In the United States 38 percent of minority employees on daily newspapers are not black. But in Washington’s national news corps, *black* is virtually synonymous with *minority*. . . . making other minority groups—Asians, Chicanos, Latinos, native Americans—collectively, one person removed from nonexistent. At the same time, there are so few blacks in Washington national journalism (less than 4 percent) that the statistics—when arranged in units as small as beats—become quite shaky.” Also: “Just as white women break into the Washington news corps by way of specialized publications, blacks (both women and men) enter through broadcast journalism, most notably at low-prestige radio and local television, but increasingly also at the television networks.”

<sup>16</sup> African-Americans appear in *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *The American President* (1995), *The Last Debate* (2000), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006).

<sup>17</sup> Latinos appear in *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Agency: Deadline* (2001), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *NCIS: Enemy on the Hill* (2011).

<sup>18</sup> **Newspaper** journalists appear in *Washington Merry-Go-Round* (1932), *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), *Stand Up and Cheer!* (1934), *First Lady* (1937), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Government Girl* (1943), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *State of the Union* (1948), *Born Yesterday* (1950), *Washington Story* (1952), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Madison Avenue* (1962), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1962-1963), *Advise & Consent* (1962), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *That Lucky Touch* (1975), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show: The Seminar* (1976), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Being There* (1979), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Kennedy* (1983), *Under Siege* (1986), *Heartburn* (1986), *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure* (1988), *Mission Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *Chances Are* (1989), *Wired* (1989), *Capital News* (1990), *Captain America* (1990), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *Hearts Afire* (1992-1995), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Dave* (1993), *Born Yesterday* (1993), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994), *Nixon* (1995), *The American President* (1995), *Air Force One* (1997), *Winchell* (1998), *First Wave: Deepthroat* (1999), *Dick* (1999), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Day Reagan Was Shot* (2001), *The Agency: Deadline* (2001), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *First Monday: Family Affairs* (2002), *Mister Sterling* (2003), *Head of State* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *First Daughter* (2004), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *W.* (2008), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *State of Play* (2009), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Covert Affairs* (2010-), *The Special Relationship* (2010), *The Ides of March* (2011), *Bones: The Crack in the Code* (2012), *Political Animals* (2012), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

**Magazine** journalists appear in *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *The Last Debate* (2000), *Shattered Glass* (2003).

**Radio** journalists appear in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Rovin' Tumbleweeds* (1939), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Washington Story* (1952), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *Dave* (1993), *Winchell* (1998), *The Last Debate* (2000), *In My Country* (2004)

**Television** journalists appear in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *You Are There: The Vote That Made Jefferson President* (1954), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *The Best Man* (1964), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show: The Seminar* (1976), *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *Kennedy* (1983), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Under Siege* (1986), *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Mission Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *Captain America* (1990), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1992), *The Powers That Be*

(1992-1993), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Dave* (1993), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994), *Nixon* (1995), *The American President* (1995), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Air Force One* (1997), *Wag the Dog* (1997), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Winchell* (1998), *Deep Impact* (1998), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *Running Mates* (2000), *An American Daughter* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Day Reagan Was Shot* (2001), *Mister Sterling* (2003), *Head of State* (2003), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *First Daughter* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005), *Category 7: The End of the World* (2005), *Medical Investigation: The Black Book* (2005), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *Vanished* (2006), *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *The Colbert Report: Election Night* (2006), *W.* (2008), *Tracey Ullman's State of the Union* (2008), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job* (2009), *24: Day 7* (2009), *State of Play* (2009), *The Special Relationship* (2010), *NCIS: Obsession* (2010), *NCIS: Enemy on the Hill* (2011), *Homeland* (2011), *Political Animals* (2012), *Veep* (2012-2013), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *1600 Penn* (2012-2013), *The Campaign* (2012), *House of Cards* (2013).

**Internet** journalists appear in *Shattered Glass* (2003), *NCIS: The Inside Man* (2009), *State of Play* (2009), *Political Animals* (2012).

<sup>19</sup> Reporters and correspondents appear in *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Rovin' Tumbleweeds* (1939), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Government Girl* (1943), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *Washington Story* (1952), *You Are There: The Vote That Made Jefferson President* (1954), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Madison Avenue* (1962), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1962-1963), *Advise & Consent* (1962), *The Best Man* (1964), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *That Lucky Touch* (1975), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Kennedy* (1983), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986), *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Chances Are* (1989), *Wired* (1989), *Capital News* (1990), *Captain America* (1990), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1992), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *Hearts Afire* (1992-1995), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Dave* (1993), *Born Yesterday* (1993), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994), *Nixon* (1995), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Air Force One* (1997), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Deep Impact* (1998), *First Wave: Depththroat* (1999), *Dick* (1999), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *Running Mates* (2000), *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), *An American Daughter* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Agency: Deadline* (2001), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *First Monday: Family Affairs* (2002), *Mister Sterling* (2003), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with*

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Tim Russert (2005), *Category 7: The End of the World* (2005), *Medical Investigation: The Black Book* (2005), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *Vanished* (2006), *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *Tracey Ullman's State of the Union* (2008), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job* (2009), *24: Day 7* (2009), *State of Play* (2009), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Covert Affairs* (2010-), *NCIS: Obsession* (2010), *NCIS: Enemy on the Hill* (2011), *Homeland* (2011), *The Ides of March* (2011), *Bones: The Crack in the Code* (2012), *Political Animals* (2012), *Veep* (2012-2013), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *The Campaign* (2012), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>20</sup> Columnists and bloggers appear in *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *The Senator Was Indiscreet* (1947), *State of the Union* (1948), *Washington Story* (1952), *Heartburn* (1986), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure* (1988), *Mission Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *The American President* (1995), *Winchell* (1998), *First Wave: Deepthroat* (1999), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *NCIS: The Inside Man* (2009), *State of Play* (2009), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Political Animals* (2012).

<sup>21</sup> Editors and producers appear in *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *State of the Union* (1948), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *The Internecine Project* (1974) *All the President's Men* (1976), *Being There* (1979), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Under Siege* (1986), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Chances Are* (1989), *Wired* (1989), *Capital News* (1990), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Dick* (1999), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *State of Play* (2009), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Political Animals* (2012), *Veep* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>22</sup> Photojournalists and camerapersons appear in *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Under Siege* (1986), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Vanished* (2006).

<sup>23</sup> Anchors and commentators appear in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *Washington Story* (1952), *You Are There: The Vote That Made Jefferson President* (1954), *The Best Man* (1964), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Under Siege* (1986), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Captain America* (1990), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1992), *The Powers That Be* (1992-1993), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *The Last Debate* (2000), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *Vanished* (2006), *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *The Colbert Report: Election Night* (2006), *Political Animals* (2012), *The Campaign* (2012), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>24</sup> News executives appear in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show: The Seminar* (1976), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *Lions for Lambs* (2007).

<sup>25</sup> Publishers and media tycoons appear in *First Lady* (1937), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *State of the Union* (1948), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973).

<sup>26</sup> Journalists appear in press conferences in *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), *Stand Up and Cheer!* (1934), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Kennedy* (1983), *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Dave* (1993), *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994), *Nixon* (1995), *The American President* (1995), *Special Report: Journey to Mars* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Air Force One* (1997), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Dick* (1999), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *Running Mates* (2000), *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), *An American Daughter* (2000), *The Day Reagan Was Shot* (2001), *Head of State* (2003), *Chappelle's Show: Asteroid Is Black President's Fault* (2003), *First Daughter* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005), *Medical Investigation: The Black Book* (2005), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *W.* (2008), *24: Day 7* (2009), *The Special Relationship* (2010), *Homeland* (2011), *Political Animals* (2012), *Veep* (2012-2013), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *1600 Penn* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>27</sup> Pack journalists appear in *Washington Story* (1952), *Advise & Consent* (1962), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *The American President* (1995), *An American Daughter* (2000), *Homeland* (2011), *Scandal* (2012-2013).

<sup>28</sup> **Films** that have characters who rate Very Positive include *State of the Union* (1948), *Born Yesterday* (1950), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Chances Are* (1989), *Captain America* (1990), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *State of Play* (2009).

**Television** programs, Movies for Television and Miniseries who have characters who rate Very Positive include *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Stillwatch* (1987), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *NCIS: Obsession* (2010), *Scandal* (2012-2013).

<sup>29</sup> **Films** that have characters who rate Positive include *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Rovin' Tumbleweeds* (1939), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Government Girl* (1943), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *The Senator Was Indiscreet* (1947), *State of the Union* (1948), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *Washington Story* (1952), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Madison Avenue* (1962), *The Best Man* (1964), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *That Lucky Touch* (1975), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1976), *All the President's Men* (1976),

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*Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Being There* (1979), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Chances Are* (1989), *Wired* (1989), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Dave* (1993), *Born Yesterday* (1993), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *The American President* (1995), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Dick* (1999), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *Head of State* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *State of Play* (2009),

**Television** programs, Movies for television and miniseries with characters who rate Positive include *You Are There: The Vote That Made Jefferson President* (1954), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show: The Seminar* (1976), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Kennedy* (1983), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Under Siege* (1986), *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure* (1988), *Capital News* (1990), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1992), *The Powers That Be* (1992-1993), *Hearts Afire* (1992-1995), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Winchell* (1998), *First Wave: Deepthroat* (1999), *Running Mates* (2000), *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Day Reagan Was Shot* (2001), *The Agency: Deadline* (2001), *First Monday: Family Affairs* (2002), *Mister Sterling* (2003), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *Vanished* (2006), *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *The Colbert Report: Election Night* (2006), *24: Day 7* (2009), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Covert Affairs* (2010-), *NCIS: Enemy on the Hill* (2011), *Homeland* (2011), *Bones: The Crack in the Code* (2012), *Political Animals* (2012), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *1600 Penn* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>30</sup> **Films** that have characters who rate Negative include *First Lady* (1937), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *Washington Story* (1952), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), *Heartburn* (1986), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *The American President* (1995), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Dick* (1999), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *First Daughter* (2004), *The Ides of March* (2011).

**Television** programs and movies for television who have characters who rate Negative include *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1962-1963), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (1988), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *An American Daughter* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *Category 7: The End of the World* (2005), *Tracey Ullman's State of the Union* (2008), *Homeland* (2011), *Political Animals* (2012), *Veep* (2012-2013), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>31</sup> **Films** that have characters who rate Very Negative include *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *State of the Union* (1948), *Washington Story* (1952), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005).

**Television** programs and movies for television who have characters who rate Very Negative include *Mission Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *NCIS: The Inside Man* (2009), *Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job* (2009), *24: Day 7* (2009), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>32</sup> **Films** that have characters who rate Neutral include *Washington Merry-Go-Round* (1932), *Stand Up and Cheer!* (1934), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Wilson* (1944), *The Senator Was Indiscreet* (1947), *State of the Union* (1948), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *Washington Story* (1952), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Advise & Consent* (1962), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *The Best Man* (1964), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Being There* (1979), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Captain America* (1990), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *The Distinguished Gentleman* (1992), *Dave* (1993), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Nixon* (1995), *The American President* (1995), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Air Force One* (1997), *Wag the Dog* (1997), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Dick* (1999), *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), *In My Country* (2004), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *W.* (2008), *State of Play* (2009), *The Ides of March* (2011), *The Campaign* (2012).

**Television** programs, Movies for Television and Miniseries who have characters who rate Neutral include *The Missiles of October* (1974), *Kennedy* (1983), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Under Siege* (1986), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Mission Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *Capital News* (1990), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *The Powers That Be* (1992-1993), *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *Special Report: Journey to Mars* (1996), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Winchell* (1998), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *The District: Dirty Laundry* (2000), *An American Daughter* (2000), *Chappelle's Show: Asteroid Is Black President's Fault* (2003), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Debate* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005), *Category 7: The End of the World* (2005), *Medical Investigation: The Black Book* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006), *Vanished* (2006), *Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job* (2009), *24: Day 7* (2009), *Special Relationship* (2010), *Political Animals* (2012), *Veep* (2012-2013), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>33</sup> **Films** that feature major characters as journalists include *First Lady* (1937), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Rovin' Tumbleweeds* (1939), *Washington Melodrama* (1941), *Adventure in Washington* (1941), *Government Girl* (1943), *So This Is Washington* (1945), *The Searching Wind* (1946), *The Senator Was Indiscreet* (1947), *State of the Union* (1948), *Born Yesterday* (1950), *Washington Story* (1952), *Top Secret Affair* (1957), *Madison Avenue* (1962), *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973), *The Internecine Project* (1974), *That Lucky Touch* (1975), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), *Heartburn* (1986), *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Broadcast News* (1987), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Full Disclosure* (1988), *Chances Are* (1989), *Wired* (1989), *Captain America* (1990), *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *Born Yesterday* (1993), *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Up Close and Personal* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Dick* (1999), *The Mothman*



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*Prophecies* (2002), *Shattered Glass* (2003), *In My Country* (2004), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *Lions for Lambs* (2007), *Nothing But the Truth* (2008), *State of Play* (2009), *The Ides of March* (2011).

<sup>34</sup> **Television** programs and movies made for television that feature major characters as journalists include *You Are There: The Vote That Made Jefferson President* (1954), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1962-1963), *The Missiles of October* (1974), *The Mary Tyler Moore: The Seminar* (1976), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Kennedy* (1983), *Countdown to Looking Glass* (1984), *Under Siege* (1986), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998), *Tanner '88* (1988), *Mission: Impossible: The Fixer* (1989), *Capital News* (1990), *Her Wicked Ways* (1991), *Hearts Afire* (1992-1995), *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* (1995), *LateLine* (1998-1999), *Winchell* (1998), *First Wave: Deepthroat* (1999), *The* (1999-2006), *An American Daughter* (2000), *The Last Debate* (2000), *The Agency: Deadline* (2001), *First Monday: Family Affairs* (2002), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *Vanished* (2006). *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: Election Night* (2006), *The Colbert Report: Election Night* (2006), *Tracey Ullman's State of the Union* (2008), *Leverage: The Three Days of the Hunter Job* (2009), *24: Day 7* (2009), *Hostile Makeover* (2009), *Killer Hair* (2009), *Covert Affairs* (2010-), *NCIS: Obsession* (2010), *Political Animals* (2012), *Scandal* (2012-2013), *House of Cards* (2013).

<sup>35</sup> Helen Thomas, *Watchdogs of Democracy? The Waning Washington Press Corps and How It Has Failed the Public* (New York: Scribner, 2006), xxii.

<sup>36</sup> In films, there were 48 very positive-positive major characters to 20 negative-very negative major characters and in television the number was 55 to 24.

<sup>37</sup> *All the President's Men* is an Academy Award-winning film directed by Alan J. Pakula with a screenplay by William Goldman based on the 1974 non-fiction book of the same name by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, the two journalists investigating the Watergate scandal for *The Washington Post*.

<sup>38</sup> Roger Ebert, "All the President's Men," (January 1, 1976) at <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/all-the-presidents-men-1976>.

<sup>39</sup> Alicia Shepard, "Investigative Reporting is Now Endangered," *The New York Times* Opinion Pages, June 13, 2012. Shepard, the former ombudswoman for NPR and the author of *Woodward and Bernstein: Life in the Shadow of Watergate*, is a media consultant for the News Literacy Project. <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/06/13/did-any-good-come-of-watergate/the-journalism-watergate-inspired-is-endangered-now>  
 "The *Post* and 'Woodstein' played a key role in helping bring down President Richard Nixon, who resigned in August 1974. As a result, an entire generation went into journalism because of the two men—and the influence of the book and movie about them, *All the President's Men*. Several other changes came about: the advent of celebrity journalism in which reporters become the story, a greater acceptance of anonymous sources, a far more skeptical attitude of reporters toward government and a sharp rise in investigative reporting. The reporting duo played a key role in romanticizing investigative reporting, although Bernstein has said repeatedly that all good reporting is investigative."

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<sup>40</sup> Bernstein was also played by Jack Nicholson in the role of Washington columnist Mark Forman in *Heartburn* (1986); Woodward was also played by J.T. Walsh, who is writing a book about the life and death of comic John Belushi in *Wired* (1989).

<sup>41</sup> Other films with heroic images of investigative journalists include both versions of *Born Yesterday* (1950, 1993) in which Paul Verrall (William Holden, Don Johnson) exposes pay-offs to government officials; *Wrong Is Right* (1982) in which TV reporter-anchor Patrick Hale (Sean Connery) of WTN News investigates a nuclear conspiracy; *Captain America* (1990) in which newsman Sam Kolawetz (Ned Beatty) of the *Washington Dispatch* is shot and killed by people trying to bring down the government; *Bob Roberts* (1992) in which reporter Bugs Raplin (Giancarlo Esposito) of the *Troubled Times* is framed for an assassination attempt on a candidate before being vindicated. Television featured investigative reporters in *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *First Wave: Deepthroat* (1999), *The Last Debate* (2000), and *The Agency: Deadline* (2001). In the television series *Murphy Brown* (1988-1999), investigative reporter Frank Fontana (Joe Regalbutto) for *FYI Magazine* provided a positive image every week for more than a decade.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew C. Ehrlich, "Broadway Takes on *The Columnist*: A Case Study with Joseph Alsop," *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal*, vol. 5, Fall 2013-Spring 2014.

<sup>43</sup> David Halberstam, *The Powers That Be* (1975; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 449; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972), 499.

<sup>44</sup> Ehrlich, "Broadway Takes on *The Columnist*."

<sup>45</sup> Films featuring columnists include Mark Forman (Jack Nicholson) in *Heartburn* (1986); John Klein (Richard Gere) of *The Washington Post* in *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002), and blogger Della Frye (Rachel McAdams) in *State of Play* (2009). Television programs featuring columnists include Melinda Stuart (Isabella Hofmann) who writes "Inside the Beltway" for *The Washington Tribune* in *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987); Hayes Taggerty (Kevin J. O'Connor) and Mary McGrory (Herself) in *Tanner '88* (1988); Vernon (David Storch) of *The Washington Examiner* in *First Wave: Deepthroat* (1999); Lacey Smithsonian (Maggie Lawson) of *The Eye Street Observer* who writes "Fashion Bites" in *Hostile Makeover* and *Killer Hair* (2009), and Pulitzer Prize-winner Susan Berg (Carla Gugino) of *The Washington Globe News* in *Political Animals* (2012).

<sup>46</sup> In Donald A. Ritchie's *Reporting from Washington: The History of the Washington Press Corps*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, xv): "In his immensely popular novel *Advise & Consent*, the former Washington correspondent Allen Drury employed the press corps as a Greek chorus, identified not by their names but by their news outlets. This device advanced the plot brilliantly but diminished the Corps's individualism." Drury's book was written in 1959. A film version of *Advise & Consent* was made in 1962.

<sup>47</sup> Hess, 90.

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<sup>48</sup> Other films and television programs featuring aggressive reporters at press conferences include *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* (1977), *Wrong Is Right* (1982), ~~and~~ *Her Wicked Ways* (aka *Lethal Charms*, 1991), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *The West Wing* (1999-2006), *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), *Commander in Chief* (2005-2006).

<sup>49</sup> Examples include *Saturday Night Live: President Reagan Press Conference* (1986) in which SNL Reporters Milt, Trudy, and Jess ask President Reagan (Robin Williams) questions. *Saturday Night Live: Jesse Helms Press Conference on C-Span* (1994). *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference at the White House* (2004), in which CNN reporter-anchor Fredericka Whitfield (Maya Rudolph) and reporters Margaret (Amy Poehler), Tom (Seth Meyers), Lamar (Finesse Mitchell), and Sharon (Rachel Dratch) ask questions. *Saturday Night Live: Presidential Press Conference – NBC News Special Report with Tim Russert* (2005) in which NBC News Anchor Tim Russert (Darryl Hammond) moderates with reporters Terry Moran (Jason Sudeikis), Norah (Amy Poehler) and CNN Anchor Wolf Blitzer (Chris Parnell).

<sup>50</sup> Maurine H. Beasley, “Washington Women Journalists: Fact vs. Fiction,” *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal*, vol. 5, Fall 2013-Spring 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Sammye Johnson, “Passionate and Powerful: Film Depictions of Women Journalists Working in Washington, DC,” *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal*, vol. 5, Fall 2013-Spring 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Hess, 70: “After her first year in the capital, an experienced newspaper reporter claims, ‘Washington is the most sexist place I’ve ever lived.’ When covering the government, says a reporter for a specialized newspaper, ‘There’s the ‘ole boy network,’ and if you aren’t a boy you don’t get in. There just aren’t enough women in high places out there to keep the tips flowing.”

<sup>53</sup> Beasley, “Washington Women Journalists: Fact vs. Fiction”: “As a journalist ... the stylish Lacey longs to be taken seriously as a ‘hard news’ reporter, recognizing that the fashion beat does not have the prestige of political reporting.”

<sup>54</sup> Females who work hard to do the right thing include *The Searching Wind* (1946), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *Matlock: The Power Brokers* (1987), *Stillwatch* (1987), *Capital News* (1990), *Deep Impact* (1998), *Running Mates* (2000), *Wanda at Large* (2003), *In My Country* (2004).

<sup>55</sup> Other films that feature women in love with their sources include *Rovin’ Tumbleweeds* (1939), *Madison Avenue* (1962), *That Lucky Touch* (1975), *Gardens of Stone* (1987), *Mars Attacks!* (1996).

<sup>56</sup> Jane Craig is asked by her co-worker Aaron Altman about her boyfriend Tom Grunick crying on camera during the date-rape *Evening News* piece that had everyone applauding him: “Jane, you know how Tom had tears in the piece the other night? Ask yourself how we were able to see them when he only had one camera and that was pointing at the girl during the interview.” Craig goes to look at the outtakes and hears the soundwoman’s voice: “It kills me we didn’t have a second camera. It was so powerful seeing your reaction ... for a second there, I thought you were

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gonna cry yourself. That would have been something.” Jane sees Tom considering what the soundwoman has said, then tells her: “Then give me a minute. . . .” Jane is furious as she sees Tom work up the tears that were shown on the *Evening News* piece. The soundwoman tells him, “Oh, that’s amazing.”

<sup>57</sup> Hess, 130.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>59</sup> The Pew study can be found at <http://www.journalism.org/2009/07/16/new-washington-press-corps/>.

Pew Research Center’s Journalism Project Staff and Tyler Marshall, “The New Washington Press Corps: As Mainstream Media Decline, Niche and Foreign Outlets Grow,” Pew Research Journalism Project (July 16, 2009) at <http://www.journalism.org/2009/07/16/new-washington-press-corps/>.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*