

Abstract: Fictional journalists are routinely portrayed as having complicated personal relationships. The character must choose between a professional or personal sacrifice--especially if she is a woman.

Jessica Strait
Washington and Lee University
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**Popular Portrayals of Journalists and their Personal Lives:
Finding the Balance between Love and the “Scoop”**

Introduction

A recurring protagonist in popular culture is a journalist who works long and unpredictable hours, someone who is simply too busy for any kind of “real” life—including love, family or relationships. These fictional journalists, when they do find love, experience a tension between the relationship and the job—having both is usually presented as out of the question. Journalism films and fiction often imply that in order to be successful in the journalism industry, you must have a one-track mind, which means you can’t be distracted by love. This explains the stock character of the loner editor who’s been worn down by the business and has nothing else to show for in life. Another common plot device is the inter-office romance between reporters and the possible complications of the romance—the most famous and enduring journalism industry couple is Lois Lane and Clark Kent. In this paper, I will analyze film portrayals of journalists and their personal lives. The works span from the 1940’s to 2010, because I also aim to discuss whether these portrayals of the delicate balance between journalism and love have changed over time as the profession itself has also changed. This topic of study can contribute to the discussion of the role of journalist in society.

Love Triangles: Boy, Girl and Paper

Love has always been an audience favorite in movies, hence the popularity of romantic comedies, and it’s no different in journalism flicks. Matthew Ehrlich writes, “A common theme [of

the journalism film] concerned an idealistic young reporter suffering a multitude of humiliations at the hands of his brutish editor before finally getting a big scoop and winning his true love”—describing *The Front Page* plotline perfectly.¹ *The Front Page*, which debuted on Broadway in 1928 and on film in 1931, is the “prototype of the journalism movie genre.”² The popularity of journalist characters lasted through the century and continues still today. *The Front Page* addresses the dilemma between love and journalism—Hildy, an ace reporter, wants to leave his position to move to New York City, get married to Peggy Grant and start a higher-paying advertising job. Hildy spends much of the screwball comedy trying to distract Peggy so he can work on the story. The main conflict in the plot is between Hildy and his editor, Walter Burns, who doesn’t want him to leave the paper. Throughout the play and film, Burns attempts to delay Hildy so he can keep covering the story of the hanging of Earl Williams. At one point Walter says to Hildy, “So you’re leaving me for marriage.”³ This comment fits in with the stereotype of a journalist as married and loyal to his job or newspaper. Walter continues, telling Hildy it will be nice to live in a quiet suburb and have a home-cooked dinner every night and be in bed by ten. Hildy’s reaction shows that he realizes what he will be giving up for love. Because of the long hours and demanding nature of the journalism profession portrayed in movies, it makes love and journalism seem incompatible. Peggy is fed up with Hildy and the paper, and her conversations with Hildy tell us that it’s not the first time Hildy has put his reporting job ahead of her: “Every time I’ve ever wanted you for something—on my birthday and New Year’s Eve, when I waited till five in the morning...”⁴ Peggy even refers to Hildy’s struggle and tie to the business as a sort of love triangle—“Oh, I’ll be so glad when I get you away from [Walter].

¹Matthew C. Ehrlich, *Journalism in the Movies*. “Chapter 2: The Front Page.” (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004): 25.

² Ehrlich, 20.

³ Ehrlich, 36.

⁴ Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, “The Front Page: A Play in Three Acts.” 1928: 64.

You simply can't resist him."⁵ This interaction reveals a common theme in journalism movies—the significant other is often *competing* with the newspaper or editor, fighting for the reporter's undying affection, which he can't seem to give because he's simply too busy. The paper is the “other woman.” And just as Walter harasses and mocks Hildy for his decision to leave the business to get married (he says, “Why? You've been married once before!”), Hildy's cohorts in the Press Room also give him trouble. Schwartz asks Hildy, “What do you want to get married for?” and Murphy teases, “Ooooh! He's in love! Tootsie-wootsie!”⁶ In *The Front Page*, two institutions—journalism and marriage—are portrayed in a negative light. Walter is the opposite of Hildy and the epitome of a loner. Instead of getting married and settling down, he's an old grouch who lives alone, always waiting for the big story. His demanding job as editor is portrayed as the reason for why he has never married.

Ultimately, Hildy and Peggy board their train, but due to Walter's stolen watch trick, it's unclear whether they'll live happily ever after or if Hildy will be reeled back into the newspaper business.

Of course, these portrayals are at least somewhat exaggerated, and as Alex Barris explains, “if a real-life reporter would grudgingly miss a meal to meet a deadline, a fictional one must sacrifice his romance or marriage rather than miss a scoop.”⁷ Nevertheless, the stereotypical portrayals can be telling about how society sees journalists and their priorities. Even more important, since many of these “newspaper films” and books are written by ex-journalists, the portrayals can give us insight into how journalists see themselves. A 2006 article published in *Quill* seems to suggest that films may simply be reflecting the reality of the all-consuming journalism job—“Work & Play” articulates the need for editors to run a well-balanced newsroom.⁸ The article touches on the difficulty for women to balance families and work, and sets up the scenario, “When a breaking news tip comes at 6

⁵ Hecht and MacArthur, 66.

⁶ Hecht and MacArthur, 32.

⁷ Alex Barris, *Stop the Presses!: The Newspaperman in American Films*. (London: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1976):13.

⁸ Michele Holtcamp Frye, “Work & Play.” *Quill*, 94 (9). 2006.

p.m. or later, editors have to figure out who to put on the story and fast. The decision isn't as easy as picking the strongest reporter; all journalists have lives outside the newsroom that are beckoning. One reporter may have to pick up a child from the day car that closes in 30 minutes. Maybe a reporter left early because a child got sick at school. Another may have plans with a spouse, family, or friends.”⁹

The conflict created by this balancing act can be seen in the 2005 film *The Devil Wears Prada*.¹⁰ Miranda Priestly is the demanding, cynical, and calculating editor-in-chief of *Runway*, the hottest fashion magazine. Priestly is a married mother of two who has been divorced once before and doesn't spend much time with her twin girls. In a pivotal scene in the film, the intern Andy (who is struggling to become a “real” reporter instead of a fashion intern) overhears an argument between Priestly and her husband. He says to Priestly, “There I was again, alone in the restaurant, with everyone thinking, ‘there he is again, waiting for her’”. Priestly is portrayed as an editor who will sacrifice *anything* for success. Near the end of the film, Priestly tells Andy that she's getting another divorce. It's clear that she's upset, but when Andy suggests that they cancel her RSVP for a Fashion Week event that night, Priestly responds flatly and without feeling, “And why would we do that?” Later, Andy criticizes Miranda for backstabbing one of her oldest friends and co-workers. Miranda tells Andy that she did the same thing to her friend, Emily, who she replaced as the assistant who traveled to Paris. Andy says, “No, that was different. I didn't have a choice.” Miranda replies, “No, no, you chose. You chose to get ahead. You want this life. Those choices are necessary.” Andy asks, “But what if this isn't what I want?” Miranda says, “Oh, don't be ridiculous, Andrea. Everybody wants this. Everybody wants to be us.” Miranda's inability to balance personal and professional life leads to her second divorce, but younger Andy has a happier ending before it's too late—she quits *Runway*, reunites with her boyfriend, and starts working at a small newspaper. She finds time for her

⁹ Holtcamp Frye, 23.

¹⁰ *The Devil Wears Prada*, DVD, 2006.

boyfriend only after giving up her higher-status job. In a 1991 *Editor and Publisher* article titled “Stereotyping Journalists,” Debra Gersh writes, “Journalists are rude, many times divorced, hard-drinking, cigarette-smoking, social misfits who will do anything for a front-page byline—that is, if you believe what you see in most movies. Be they movies from the early 1930s or 1980s, the basic story lines and images are often the same.”¹¹ Gersh’s description used to just apply to *male* editors and journalists, but it seems like the stereotype has now extended to include women as well, as seen in the case of Miranda Priestly.

Love in the Newsroom

All of the film samples analyzed so far have dealt with journalists in relationships *outside* of the newsroom, but another common plot device in journalism fiction and film is the inter-office romance and the chaos that ensues. While some fictional characters, like Hildy, fall in love outside of the newsroom and spend much of their time telling their significant other, “You just don’t understand!” others fall into the arms of fellow reporters who really “get” the burning desire to find the big scoop or story. But sometimes, journalism romances are portrayed as even more dysfunctional than out-of-newsroom relationships. Clark Kent and Lois Lane, who have a complicated relationship, are no exception. Scholar Loren Ghiglione writes about their relationship on the TV series *Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*, and lays out the stereotypical banter-filled script of two reporters in love:

“Even though the TV series is set in the 1990s, reporters Kent and Lane act as if they’re in an old-fashioned newspaper film. They do anything to get the story including breaking into offices to get information. Lois Lane and Clark Kent are no different from the rival reporters who appeared in one movie after another in the 1930s and 1940s. They each try to be the best reporter on the paper, they argue, they eventually kiss and fall in love. Lois and Clark even

¹¹ Debra Gersh, “Stereotyping Journalists.” *Editor and Publisher*. Winter 1991: 18.

*marry: 'Our byline is going to look great on a Pulitzer some day,' Lane says to Kent. 'Yeah, but whose name is going to go first?' he asks. 'Mine, of course,' she says, and they smile.'*¹²

A similar competitive spirit exists between Ron Burgundy and Veronica Corningstone in the 2004 film *Anchorman*.¹³ Ron, a hotshot news anchor, tries to drunkenly pick up Veronica at a party but fails. The next day, it's announced that she has been hired to work with the news team. Ron tries to seduce her and eventually succeeds. She goes against her usual policy of not sleeping with co-workers and succumbs to Ron, but the next day, he's told everyone on air. They break up, and after she is made co-anchor, the two become rivals. The film continues as they both try to sabotage each other's anchor success—in one scene, Veronica puts funny words for Ron to read on the teleprompter. After an outburst on camera, Ron is fired from the station. A few months later, he rescues her from a bear enclosure at the zoo while she's breaking a story about the birth of a panda, and the two reconcile. In a flash-forward scene, we see that they later become co-anchors on a network news program. Clearly, the film is a parody on the journalism broadcast industry in the 1970s, but plays on the stereotype that anchors who are good-looking but rather dumb are destined to end up sleeping together based solely on those good looks.

That stereotype is also realized in *Broadcast News* when Tom has a one-night stand with Jennifer, the attractive broadcast reporter who has converted a bedroom into a closet.¹⁴ Love and relationships are the main point of focus in the film. Jane is caught in a love triangle between the gorgeous Tom and talented but slightly neurotic Aaron. But Jane can't shake her journalistic ethics, and she refuses to be with Tom when she finds out he faked his tears in one of his interviews—she ultimately chooses journalism and what she stands for over love and “great sex.” The film also gives

¹² Loren Ghiglione and Joe Saltzman, “Fact or Fiction: Hollywood Looks at the News.” *IJPC*. 2005: 26.

¹³ *Anchorman*, DVD, 2004.

¹⁴ *Broadcast News*, DVD, 1987.

journalists the stereotypical character traits—as children, Jane is labeled “obsessive” by her father as she pounds on her typewriter late at night, and Aaron is an overachiever who graduates early from high school. As an adult, Jane has a wretched personal life—she spontaneously cries and practically lives at the office, barking orders, and even sends her love rival Jennifer off to Alaska to cover a serial killer’s trial. Nevertheless, she still loves what she does. Near the end of the film, assistant producer Blair (Joan Cusak) hugs Jane and says, “Except for socially, you’re my role model.” Jane is portrayed as a fantastic producer but not someone you would particularly want to spend time with. Furthermore, because she’s a woman, her falling in love with Tom, who represents everything she stands against, makes her lose some of her credibility and professionalism. In this movie, journalism and love are intertwined, and the characters even speak in journalistic terms when discussing love—as Aaron confesses his feelings to Jane in a long-winded explanation, he then says, “And I’m in love with you. How do you like that? I buried the lede.” The film shows the complexities of relationships within the newsroom. Despite kissing both of them, Jane ultimately ends up with neither of the men, but all of them stay friends. Jane later becomes managing editor for Tom and finds a man *outside* of the newsroom, and Tom is engaged to someone who doesn’t “edit him” all of the time like Jane did. *The Spectator* writer Samira Ahmed, in an online article titled “Journalists Starring on the Silver Screen,” writes, “*Broadcast News* set the benchmark for journalism on film.”¹⁵ She quotes writer-director James L. Brooks, who “said he wasn’t interested in the world of news, but the relationships.”¹⁶ Ahmed, who once worked for BBC, says the film depiction of the journalism world in *Broadcast News* turned out to be pretty accurate. Ahmed writes, “Most of the things that happen in the film, right down to the periodic mass sacking, have become a reality across my profession. The

¹⁵ Samira Ahmed, “Journalists Starring on the Silver Screen.” *The Spectator*. 2010. <<http://www.spectator.co.uk/arts-and-culture/night-and-day/6645903/film-journalists-on-the-silver-screen.thtml>>.

¹⁶ Ahmed.

film manages to humanize the hacks and their wretched love lives, but does not sentimentalize us or our world.”¹⁷

Chip Rowe, a former *American Journalism Review* editor, also wrote about these “hacks” on film and the tarnished image on the journalist in film.¹⁸ He interviews Bill Mahon, a former reporter who examined more than 1,000 films about the press for his master’s thesis at Penn State. Rowe asserts that “journalists appear again and again as something less than role models.”¹⁹ Mahon identifies four “pigeonholes” that Hollywood repeatedly shoves journalists into: newsroom monster, cardboard cutout, saint with a crooked halo, and newsroom saint (“the rarest of all forms”).²⁰ Rowe also cites a quote from author Howard Good, who said, “even the crusading film journalist is streaked with darkness and moral decay. His reporting may benefit the public, but his first loyalty is to scoops and circulation.”²¹ And because of this priority to scoops (the very title of *The Front Page* is telling), just as fictional journalists are not role-models in life, they are usually not role-models in love either.

If we talk about love, we also need to talk about sex. In his article “My White Whale, or the Great Newspaper Novel,” Steve Weinberg writes about common stereotypes of journalists: “Turns out that as a group we have a lot of sex on the job, have no scruples and, of course, solve murders frequently enough to obviate the need for police in some parts of the country. And that is about it.”²² *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*’s Mikael Blomkvist fits this description perfectly. Throughout the novel, there are references to Blomkvist’s habit of sleeping around, and he beds Lisbeth Salander, Cecilia Vanger, and his longtime flame Erica Berger, even though she’s married. Even though sleeping with his co-worker and best friend doesn’t seem to have any long-term repercussions for

¹⁷ Ahmed.

¹⁸ Chip Rowe, “Hacks on Film.” *American Journalism Review*. November 1992.

¹⁹ Rowe.

²⁰ Rowe.

²¹ Rowe.

²² Steve Weinberg, “My White Whale, or the Great Newspaper Novel.” *The New York Times*. August 27, 1989: 1.

Millennium's success, others do find the situation odd and seemingly dysfunctional. As Salander is presenting her report on Blomkvist, she says, "Blomkvist is obviously a big hit with women. He's had several love affairs and a great many casual flings. But one person has kept turning up in his life over the years, and it's an unusual relationship."²³ Blomkvist is portrayed as a great journalist who is an agent of change, but seems to have a personal life that's somewhat in shambles. As he sits alone in his cabin for days on end researching and writing, he also fulfills the loner stereotype of the journalist.

Sometimes the two reporters in love in popular culture portrayals may be not just competitors in the same newsroom, but competitors from two rival news sources. In *Big News*, a 1929 film starring Carole Lombard and Robert Armstrong, the two are "newshounds working on rival papers."²⁴ His marriage is threatened because of his drinking and his being accused of a crime he didn't commit. More recently, in the 2008 film *Marley & Me*, Jenny (Jennifer Aniston) and John (Owen Wilson) play a couple recently married.²⁵ They move from Michigan to Florida and begin working for competing newspapers, which initially causes trouble in the marriage. Jenny quickly begins getting front-page stories but John is stuck writing small stories and obituaries. Soon, Jen decides she wants to have a baby, so the couple first adopts a dog, Marley. John takes on a column and begins writing about his misadventures with Marley. Jenny loses her baby and experiences postpartum depression, but later has two more kids. The column, which he took on for extra money, sometimes causes friction between John and Jenny, but when she realizes that the columns are all about Marley, everything ends up okay. Eventually John becomes sick of his reporting job and they move to a farm in Pennsylvania, where he writes a new column. The movie, which portrays his writing job as sometimes getting in the way of his family and home life, is based off of a book written by John Grogan, who was a journalist himself.

²³ Stieg Larsson, *The Girl with Dragon Tattoo* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009): 57.

²⁴ Barris, 16.

²⁵ *Marley and Me*, DVD, 2008.

In *His Girl Friday*, the romance is not only in the newsroom, but between a reporter and editor.²⁶ Hildy and Walter Burns are divorced, and the film implies that the relationship didn't work out because Walter was too busy for Hildy—he missed their first honeymoon because of a big story. Walter is still in love with Hildy and wants to keep her around not only because of his feelings, but also because he wants his ace reporter to cover the big story on Earl Williams. But Hildy is engaged to an insurance man—the routine and cautious nature of his business is contrasted with the unpredictable nature of the news business. Ultimately, Hildy chooses the newspaper business over her new life in the suburbs of Albany, where she had envisioned starting a family. In this case, women journalists are depicted as having *more to lose* when they put their job as a priority. But in the classic happy endings of Hollywood, Hildy ultimately ends up with both love *and* her job. She reunites with Walter and seems willing to accept that he will put the job first (and that he won't ever carry her luggage). In an ironic twist, the two happily head to, of all places, Albany for their honeymoon.

The Professional “Mentor”: What NOT to Do

Another common thread I found in the love plots of the films I watched is an older mentor character who tries to stop the young, hard-working and obsessive character from making the same life mistakes. In *Morning Glory*, Becky Fuller, played by Rachel McAdams, is similar to Jane Craig—she is driven and obsessive, staying up all night to prepare for the next day's show.²⁷ In the beginning of the movie, we see her on a blind lunch date, constantly taking phone calls and ignoring her date, even joking that he probably just wants to go ahead and get the check. She plays an upstart television producer at *DayBreak*, a breakfast news program with low ratings. McAdams tries to up the ratings by hiring Mike Pomeroy (Harrison Ford), an award-winning, Dan Rather-like character

²⁶ *His Girl Friday*, DVD, 1940.

²⁷ *Morning Glory*, DVD, 2010.

who is offended that Becky thinks he would take the job. However, he needs the money and is under contract with the network, IBS, so he reluctantly agrees. Mike Pomeroy is the epitome of the “hack” character—he has nothing in life, is constantly drinking on the job, and despite all of his professional awards, he is a failure in his personal life. However, he eventually softens a little and becomes a mentor to Becky. Becky begins to date Adam, a fellow producer at IBS, but her motivation and dedication to her job hurts their relationship. The first time they kiss passionately on his couch, she stops to ask, “How reliable is your alarm clock?” At a critical point in the movie, Mike warns Becky about losing everything for professional success:

Becky: “It’s only my job. It’s not my whole life, right?”

Mike: “You’re worse than I am. I was never at home. When I was, I took every phone call, watching TV out of the corner of my eye...let me tell you how it all turns out. You end up with nothing, which is what I had—until you came along.”

Even though Becky’s personal life suffers, her professional life looks promising—*DayBreak* rises in the ratings, and the *Today Show* calls her for an interview. Mike, who is upset that she might leave as producer, does a fluffy cooking piece for Becky (a segment he normally wouldn’t do), and Becky sees it during her *Today* interview. She remembers what Mike told her, and sprints back to *DayBreak*, where she stays as producer. In the end, realizing that her job isn’t her “whole life” is what allows her to stay with Adam and also be successful (and more tolerable by others) in her career. Mike’s advice allowed Becky to stop herself and change her life before it was too late and she ended up like him. This older “mentor” character can also be seen not only in *Morning Glory* and *The Devil Wears Prada*, but also in the 1994 film *The Paper*.²⁸ These “mentors” essentially shower the younger, aspiring characters what *not* to be. *New York Sun* metro editor Henry Hackett faces problems similar

²⁸ *The Paper*, DVD, 1994.

to Becky Fuller. Bernie White, the paper's editor-in-chief, put his work before his family, and Hackett worries he might be heading down the same path.

Choosing Love over Journalism Success

Sometimes, fictional journalists choose love over the big scoop and a tempting front-page byline, as in the case of 1953's romantic comedy *Roman Holiday*, starring Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn.²⁹ Joe Bradley, an American reporter working in Rome, finds Anya, a princess, asleep outside on a bench, escaped from her room after she received a sedative because she was so stressed from her official duties. Joe takes her home and lets her sleep on his couch. The next day, he realizes that she is the princess when he sees a picture of her on the front page. Meanwhile, the royal family has simply told the press that Anya is ill. Joe sees an opportunity for an exclusive interview with the princess. Without telling his editor that he has the princess on his couch, he says he can get the interview for \$5000. His editor agrees but bets him \$500 that he won't succeed. Joe starts to spend time with Anya and shows her around Rome, not telling her that he is a reporter. Joe and Anya quickly fall in love and she tells him all kinds of secrets, including that she longs to live a normal life. At a dance one night on a boat, police finally track her down, but Joe and Anya escape. However, they realize their relationship can't go on, so she says goodbye and returns to her duties. At the press conference the next day, Anya is surprised to see Joe is a newspaperman. He discreetly hands her the photographs from their "holiday" adventure, a gesture that implies that he won't publish any of his story. In this film, love wins, and Joe chooses to give up his "scoop" and a whopping \$5000 even though he doesn't ultimately end up with the princess.

In 2003's *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, starring Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey, Andie Anderson is a writer for *Composure* magazine and Benjamin Barry is an advertising

²⁹ *Roman Holiday*, DVD, 1953.

executive.³⁰ To win a big campaign, he bets his boss that he can make someone fall in love with him in ten days. At the same time, Andie, who aspires to write about politics and real issues, is assigned to write an article on “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days.” Her motivation is to finally get off of her “How to” beat—she says to Ben, “Hey, listen Sparky. I have a Master’s in journalism from Columbia, my boss loves me, and if I do it her way for a while, I can write about whatever I want.” As she tries everything possible to turn him away and get rid of him, he holds on to win his bet. The two ultimately fall in love, but then both discover the other’s agenda. Andie tells her editor that she can’t write the article, but her boss insists. She changes the tone of her column, making it more of a confession of her love for him. She quits and leaves to board a plane for an interview in Washington, D.C., but when Ben finally tracks her down on the way to the airport, he asks if she meant what she wrote. “Every word,” she says. The two reunite despite what they’ve been through, but not before Andie quits her job and forgoes the Washington, D.C. interview.

In both of these films, even though there was some trickery and bets involved, the journalist did not fit the “loathsome misconception that journalists are hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, dim-witted social misfits concerned only with twisting the truth into scandal and otherwise devoid of conscience, respect for basic human dignity or a healthy fear of God?” description that Chip Rowe blames Tinseltown for perpetuating.³¹ However, the overriding romantic comedy nature of both of these films may be the explanation for the smooth endings and relatively harmless portrayal of journalism.

Conclusion

Journalists are often stereotyped because the “journalist’s job is easy to simplify and stereotype, although its reality is complex and nuanced.”³² This explains how easy (and convenient) it is to equate a fictional journalist’s *objectivity* with detachment from life and love in general. However,

³⁰ How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, DVD, 2003.

³¹ Rowe.

³² Weinberg, 1.

since many movie watchers may never step in a real newsroom, popular culture plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion of the press. Who wants to believe or trust a newspaper or broadcast station when it seems like the people behind the news have wretched personal lives and are workaholics? Overall, the profession of journalist, thanks to long hours and low pay, is portrayed as a job not conducive to a life outside of work. The portrayal may not only shape the public's view and deter future journalist prospects, but also forms current journalists' self-expectations. There also appears to be a relationship between how incidental journalism is to the plot and the manner in which the profession is portrayed—the more essential it is to the story, the more negative and intense the portrayal tends to be. The journalist's personal life is portrayed all along the spectrum, but the journalist tends to be more likely than a normal character to have messy and complicated love situations, and is also more likely to have a chaotic personal life. However, since filmmakers usually aim to entertain and please their audience, most fictional journalists, especially in less serious portrayals, somehow end up succeeding both at the job and in love, but not without a struggle and some self-searching along the way. Not much has changed in the portrayal of journalists and love; the same plot twists and turns still remain. All characters still seem to sacrifice something professionally for love—this is even truer if the journalist character is a female, because they are portrayed as having more to lose in the realm of motherhood and love. If anything has changed over time, it's the setting—the newsroom has morphed from the good ol' boys club of *The Front Page*, where the reporters drank, played cards and practically invented stories, to the home of a more polished and ethical profession. As a result, journalism is now portrayed as no differently than any other demanding profession with long hours, such as a lawyer or doctor. However, the prevalence of portrayals of the profession in fiction and film over the last century suggests that the journalist protagonist isn't retiring anytime soon.

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