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The Death of Movie Journalists?

By [Richard Lawson](#), 5:24 PM on Thu Apr 16 2009, 3,097 views



State of Play—a political thriller about a dogged reporter uncovering... a conspiracy—may be the last Hollywood movie to feature a hero journalist. Because, you know, that industry is dying.

That's what *Reason* editor [Matt Welch](#) [considers today](#) in a biting little think piece. Russell Crowe's character in the flick is one of those beloved newsboys of

old—the one bound by integrity to dig up the dirt and do what's right. Real meat and potatoes, rock-moving journalism. It was once such a vibrant, heroic genre in the movies, from *All the President's Men* to noble Denzel in *The Pelican Brief*.

And *State of Play* is archetypal of that. Reporters who see the film are actually [bursting into applause](#) when they watch the characters go about the business of reporting the news—lots of furrowed brows and pit stains and paper flying. And of course they're ecstatic; the media *loves* to look at (and aggrandize) itself and just overall lovingly navel gaze to the point of myopia. As Welch puts it, "There is more than enough incestuousness in this feedback loop to remind non-newspaper employees anew why big-city journalism can be so off-putting." Heh.

Welch actually figures that this self-importance is so strong that *State of Play* probably won't, in fact, be the last movie of its kind. Rather, a whole new genre of swollen pride let's-save-newspapers movies might come storming into your multiplex as the real-life industry yaws and keels over: "Think of it instead as the first of many movie treatments

about the long, tedious, and over-publicized death of a business that only occasionally resembles its noble cinematic self."

Oh Ron Howard. You were just [fifteen years too early.](#)

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