

Journalists strike out in Bonds case

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM CAN BE A DIRTY JOB. One often has to deal with a lot of sensitive material and wade through tons of paperwork just to confirm or deny the validity of said material. Moreover, investigative journalists are the writers most likely to provoke a libel or defamation lawsuit. Yet the biggest stories that newspapers break usually come from the deepest research into the darkest doings.

For example, when *San Francisco Chronicle* reporters Lance Williams and Mark Fainaru-Wada received leaked grand-jury testimony, it allowed them to blow the lid off the Bay-Area Laboratory Co-Op (BALCO) steroid scandal and make the most damning evidence against Barry Bonds and other alleged steroid users available to the public. But as of 21 September, the pair are faced with 18 months behind bars—pending appeal—for contempt of court since they refused to reveal who leaked them the information.

Back in March, Fainaru-Wada and Williams turned their series of pieces in the *Chronicle* into a best-selling book, *Game of Shadows*, which intricately details the scope of alleged steroid use in Major League Baseball. Granted, it made them famous—and probably quite rich—but it also gave the first full account of the steroid issue, which had previously been shrouded in statements made behind closed doors.

As a budding journalist, the decision against Williams and Fainaru-Wada scares me. I dream of breaking a story of this magnitude (seriously, I awoke one morning after dreaming that Bears basketball head coach Don Horwood took his team on an exhibition trip to Mexico and came back with a suitcase full of elephant growth hormones). But now, I wonder if it's something I even want to get involved in.

By protecting their source, Fainaru-Wada and Williams are causing no public harm, yet the court system is prepared to use prison time to compel them to give up the goods. In the words of US District Judge Jeffrey White, "The court is hopeful that perhaps they'll reconsider their position when faced with the reality of incarceration."

However, it seems that a ruling like this is more likely to scare people away from reporting the heavy cases. No one wants to have a job that could land them in a cement cell next to a 300-pound roommate with an ironic nickname. Likewise, fewer people will want to reveal important information to journalists for fear that maybe not all will be as trustworthy as Williams and Fainaru-Wada—after all, just because these two were willing to go to jail to protect the identity of their source doesn't mean every reporter will do the same.

Williams and Fainaru-Wada aren't the bad guys here: that would be whoever it was that actually broke the law and leaked the grand jury transcripts. The journalists were merely reporting on the information they were given—in other words, doing their duty as reporters. But thanks to a 1972 US Supreme Court precedent that says no one is exempt from testifying before a federal grand jury, they could be headed to jail.

Edmonton Journal investigative reporter Charles Rusnell—one of the reporters who broke the "Overtime Scandal" in November 2004—told the *Gateway* recently that his is a dying breed. This ruling is only going to further that trend. If breaking a big story could potentially land you in prison, no one is going to want to do it anymore, and those that do, like Williams and Fainaru-Wada, are just going to wind up behind bars.

PAUL OWEN
Sports Editor

OMG, it's the GG!

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO talk to Governor General Michaëlle Jean but haven't been able to get past the security guards at Rideau Hall, your chance has finally come. At 8am MST tomorrow, the GG will be partaking in her new online chat forum at citizenvoices.gg.ca, with her very own new blog and forum to come. If you listen closely, you can actually hear Viscount Monck of Ballytramon rolling over in his grave.

ADAM GAUMONT
Opinion Editor

"I LET THE [ALBERTAN] PEOPLE DOWN"



LETTERS

Second-hand account too subjective as well

The indictment of "terrorist" means very little when it comes from one who supports the atrocities committed by the state of Israel in Lebanon and Palestine (re: "First-hand account of Lebanon evacuation too subjective," 21 September).

The hypocrisy of Mr Lloyd Suchet actually reaches the status of cynical fraud. It is terrorism to blow one's self up on a bus, killing scores of innocents. No one could possibly dispute that. So then why is it not terrorism to bomb a building, tearing some sixty innocent people to shreds, as was done in Qana, Lebanon, this summer?

Mr Suchet is absolutely correct in saying that the indiscriminate killing of Israeli civilians by thousands of rockets fired into such urban areas as Haifa is detestable, but he then goes on to lie about the order of events. How could the state of Israel be protecting its citizens from rocket attacks? There is no dispute about the fact that the Hizbullah rockets were fired *after*, and in response to, tens of thousands of Israeli artillery shells being fired indiscriminately into urban areas in southern Lebanon.

No one wants to see the cowardly killing of innocents on both sides. However, this situation is unlikely to change if those who blindly support Israel are allowed to continue to consciously deceive people in forums such as this.

Mr Suchet, help me help you "marginalize ... those evil factions bent on destroying others." You can start by lobbying Israel to abide by international law and meeting the

obligations of UN Resolution 242, among many others, long ignored by hypocritical apologists for Israel who write letters before they know the facts on the ground in the Israel/Palestine conflict.

BENJAMIN CLELAND
Science VI

G-G-G-Gateway and the Jets a winning combo

I read your article on the *Gateway's* website (re: "NHL out to bring Jets fans more pain," 21 September). I was in attendance that night and it was a bit heart-wrenching knowing that we don't have the Jets any longer. Tons of fans were wearing their Jets jerseys and other Jets gear. A "Go Jets Go!" chant started six minutes into the first period. We had the wave go around about six or seven times consecutively. It was an awesome sight.

The Jets will return to Winnipeg one day. I predict by 2010, we will see NHL hockey back in Winnipeg. Thanks for the great read.

LAUREN ROBB
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libellous or otherwise hateful in nature. The Gateway also reserves the right to publish letters online.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the name, student identification number, program and year of study of the author to be considered.

LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

HUB daycare the hub of debate on campus

This letter is in response to the article entitled "U of A Governors vote to Cover Daycare Deficit," which appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* recently. The article devoted most of its attention to the dissenting opinion of a board member, Peter Savaryn, who was quoted as opposing the extension of funding to a daycare centre located in HUB in order to cover their operating deficit in 1976/77.

Mr Savaryn made the following comments: "Mothers should educate their children at home;" "Spending on the daycare centre would take money away from education;" "When mothers have children they should make a choice either to educate themselves or their families;" "It is better for a child's development to have the mother at home."

We feel that it is indeed unfortunate that a person who holds such an influential position adheres to such an archaic and callous point of view. As law students, we are keenly aware of the difficulties, financial and otherwise, faced by our fellow students who have children. To deny these people adequate daycare facilities means denying them an education, and in some cases, denying the entire family a chance at a better life. Mr Savaryn's opinion denies a mother's right to an education, but in many cases a father's as well. In order to afford law school, the spouse of

a student must often work. If that spouse is also a mother, according to Mr Savaryn, she should be at home with her children.

We take issue with the viewpoint that mothers must choose to educate themselves or their families, not both. An educated mother can provide a more intellectually stimulating environment for her children. Furthermore, both parents owe a duty to their children. The onus on the mother should not be greater. We believe a healthier family atmosphere develops where both parents take an equal interest in the children and both parents have an opportunity to achieve some of their personal goals.

We recognize that where children are of preschool age, it may be desirable for one parent to take some time out of his or her career to take care of them. But this is simply not feasible economically for many parents. The full-time wife and mother is fast becoming a luxury in our society. Two incomes are essential for low-income families as well as a rapidly increasing sector of the middle class. The high cost of housing and the basic necessities of life often ensure both parents will always have to work.

Single parents are also faced with finding suitable daycare. Would Mr Savaryn prefer that single parents stay at home, accept welfare, and remain an economic burden on the province indefinitely? Education is the quickest way to break the welfare cycle. We believe that single parents should be given help, through government-funded daycare centres, to upgrade their education and support their family in the future.

BARBARA HORNER HOWELL
AND 95 OTHERS
31 March, 1977