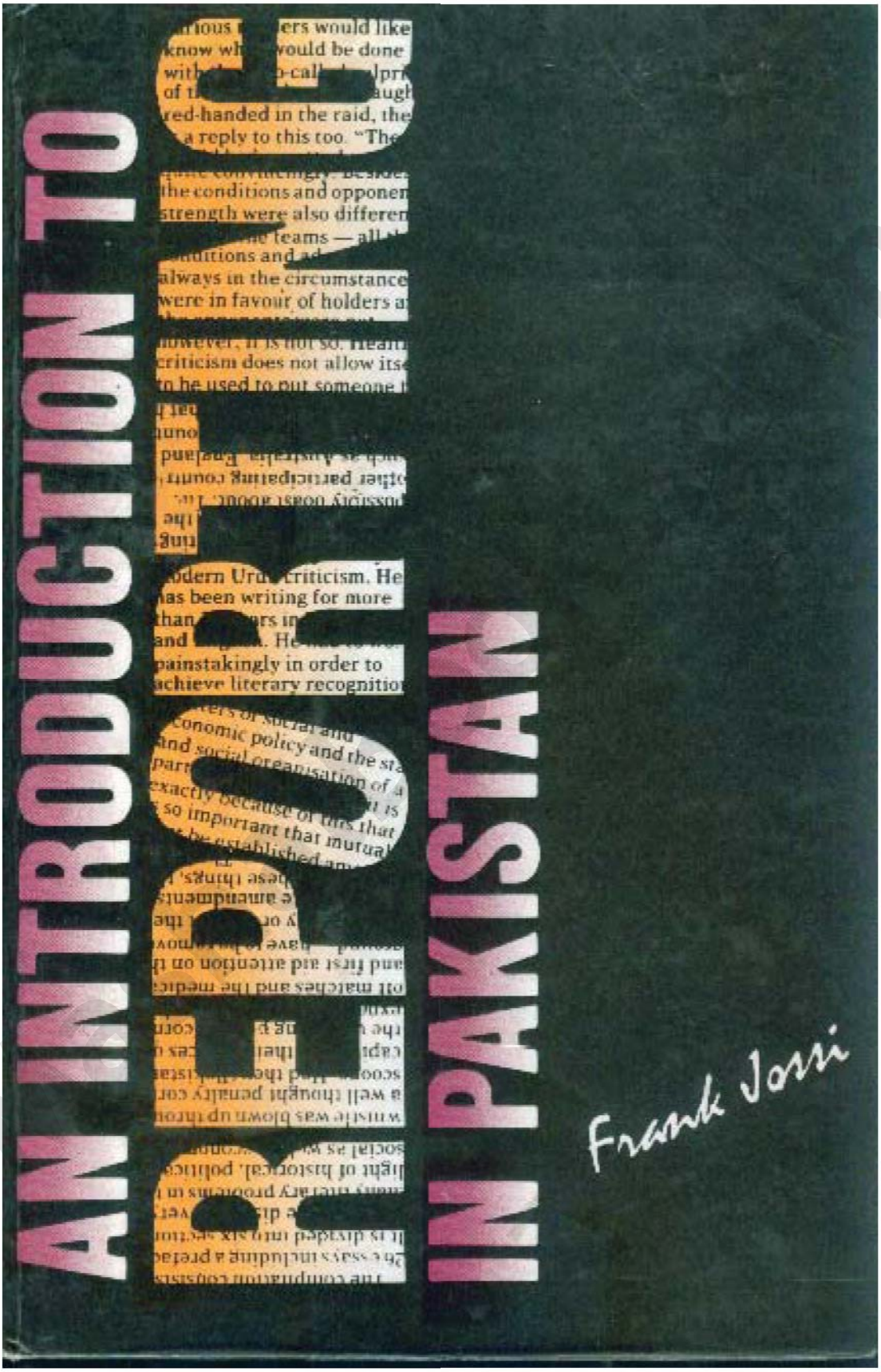
AN INTRODUCTION TO
IN PAKISTAN
Frank Josse

AN INTRODUCTION TO REPORTING IN PAKISTAN

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AN INTRODUCTION TO REPORTING IN PAKISTAN

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CONTENTS

Just as every theatrical manager is primarily a gambler, so every journalist is primarily a sort of vagabond. He enjoys adventure and turmoil. He'd rather be where the stink bombs are going off and innocent thousands are losing their arms and legs than sit all day in a steel bank, protected from drive managers and rats. He has romantic and experimental mind. When, as sometime happens, age brings wisdom, he retires form journalism.

An introduction to reporting in Pakistan H.L. Mencken

Foreword

Sharif-al-Mujahid

The teaching of journalism as a subject in Pakistani universities was first started in the mid '50s. The universities of Punjab and Karachi were the first institutions to establish departments for journalism, followed by two other large universities. At the moment nine Pakistani universities are offering degrees or diplomas in journalism or communications.

These courses have been designed on the pattern of journalism courses in the United States and the textbooks are also American. It is a matter of concern that the textbooks on the various aspects of reporting and editorial-writing which have been compiled in Pakistan are rare. This lack becomes all the more conspicuous when we compare the situation in Pakistan with other Asian countries, for example the Philippines, where the teaching of professional journalism began much later than in Pakistan

In any case, all the Pakistani books on journalism have been written in Urdu, and for some reason or other no attempt has been made to write a book in English which is suited to conditions in this country. It is for this reason that the book by Frank Jossi, published by Mashal Pakistan, is especially welcome. The real merit of this book lies in the fact that it is written in a manner that would be of use to the students of journalism. Indeed, the methodical, task-oriented approach followed by the author in presenting his material puts the book in the category of practical manuals. He takes the reader

through the intricacies of his subject step by step. The newcomer to news reporting learns how to write the introduction to a news story, how to organize his material, what style of writing he should adopt if he wants to present the news in the form of a feature, and so on. The author sho *Forward* lend prominence or distinctive flavour to a particular discusses in detail the methodology at work in creating the maximum impact by a story — for example, how best to combine facts, figures, contextual references, circumstantial details and background material.

Similarly, on the subject of fine arts, the author identifies the kind of headlines that would attract the reader, the ingredients necessary for a good review, and the preparation the writer must make before undertaking as assignment in this area of journalism.

What makes jossi's book especially interesting and useful is that he has drawn examples from Pakistani as well as American newspapers and publications. Moreover, the book is written in an easy-to-read style that should appeal to the undergraduates in our universities.

Frank Jossi is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, USA, where he specialized in History and Journalism. He started his professional career as a reporter on a provincial newspaper in Georgia. He has assisted in the editing o three publications and also collaborated with Jack Anderson on his famous syndicated column. He has written nearly fifty articles which have been published in mass-circulation newspapers in the US and other countries. In 1988-89 he spent three years teaching in the mass-communications department of the Punjab University as a Fulbright scholar. Subsequently he worked as advisor at the Afghan Media Resource Center, Peshawar. His duties at the center included teaching, reviewing manuscripts, writing articles and formulating proposals regarding the work of the center.

Frank Jossi is obviously not only an expert in his field; he has a good idea of the specific needs of the students of journalism in Pakistan. Jossi's book will, however, be of interest both to students and to the general reader.

PREFACE

In the autumn of 1988, I moved to Pakistan from Savannah, Georgia to teach journalism on a Fulbright Professional Award. My assignment was teaching MA. Candidates in the Department of Mass Communications at the University of the Punjab, one of the subcontinent's oldest institutes of higher learning. Tired of newsrooms and wanting a new challenge, I had happily and heartily accepted the offer to teach in Pakistan even though I knew nothing about the country except that it stood somewhere between Iran, Afghanistan and India. When I left the U.S., newspapers were offering instant courses on Pakistan via stories about the death of President Zia-ul-Haq, the opportunity for the first free elections in 11 years and the emergence of Benazir Bhutto as the potential prime minister.

The Fulbright people had not told me what to expect or how sophisticated-- and unsophisticated-- my students would be. I had never taught. I had never worked in the developing world. And I knew few journalists who had done either. A friend teaching at Holy Cross College near Boston, Massachusetts suggested I write out my notes just in case I forgot the points I wanted to make during my lectures, a great piece of advice.

Once I began teaching, I realized many students had trouble understand my flat Middle West accent. Pakistani students have fewer problems with a British accent for obvious

reasons, but mine caused some problems. Since I had all these lecture notes — written on a computer in my parents' cool basement during the hot days of a Wisconsin *Preface* decided to have them copied and made available tc

No student ever turned down anything free and the lecture notes quickly became a department best-seller. The mass communications department's copy machine worked overtime, as did the man who operated it. More than a thousand pages of the notes were copied. Even on the last day of class, students were still asking for a set of the notes.

In a more refined form the lecture notes have become this book. It is internationally written in an elementary style for beginning journalists. The book's information comes from American journalism books, observations made by Pakistani and U.S. colleagues and personal experience. The examples are drawn from distinguished dailies in the United States, Great Britain and Pakistan, as well as from a collection of Pulitzer Prize winners published in the U.S. There is an admittedly American bias to this book. I am an American and I know and understand the American Press better than any other. And frankly, finding good examples of reporting was difficult in the Pakistani press. Allow me an ethnocentric view in proclaiming that despite unhealthy trends and a slide towards corporatism the American press remains the strongest, freest and finest in the world.

The chapter on investigative reporting is largely hypothetical at this point. In most developing countries, the government looks down upon investigative reporting in a big way. In Pakistan, Ms. Bhutto promised a free press and the result has been some investigative stories on drugs and corruption in former President Zia-ul-Haq's regime, but nothing has yet surfaced to shake her government ordepartments of it. Perhaps her opinion of press freedom will change if her administration becomes the target of investigative reporters and editorial writers. As an erstwhile investigative reporter, I would be gratified beyond belief if my classes produced one or two reporters who try investigative reporting.

This book also covers my favorite subject, the arts. As the developing nations of the world grow more stable politically and healthier economically, the criticism of artistic will grow in every medium. Art is a mirror of serves to be written about and criticized. For these reasons-- and because so little writing on the arts exist-- I have added the chapter.

The rest of the book is meant as a simple introduction for journalism students and even for working journalists who may not be aware of new reporting and writing techniques. Each of the eight chapters concludes with a checklist for reporters to use as a refresher when they are actually working in the field.

I have learned much about my own profession by doing the research for the book and talking to different reporters. Had I more space, I would have provided more samples, but the intent of the book is briefly to cover some important aspects of reporting. That is also why I avoided the topic of editorials page opinion writing, a craft not practiced by many reporters and which, in any case, deserves more space than I could give it.

I would like to thank the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan for extending my Fulbright grant one month to complete the book and Punjab University Mass Communications Department Chairman Dr. Miskeen Ali Hijazi, who encouraged me and served as Lahore's most gracious host. The staff of the Afghan Media Resource Center in Peshawar, where I worked as an advisor for five months in 1989 after completing my Fulbright, was kind enough to offer suggestions and the use of a computer. A word of thanks also goes out to the Mashal Foundation for publishing the book and to Dr. Mohammad Shafiq Jullandry for his support.

My time in Pakistan has been the experience of a lifetime, to borrow a cliche. I hope this book will some way help future journalists work to achieve a high level of professionalism in the world's newest democracy.

Frank Jossi

Peshawar

April 1980

An introduction to reporting in Pakistan

ONE

WHAT IS NEWS

News: Information about recent events, especially when published or broadcast; broadcast report of news; new or interesting information

Oxford Dictionary of Current English

"What is news?" is a painfully difficult question, on par with "What is the meaning of life?" Definitions do not come easy because every publication has its own idea of news. A new kind of automobile tire might not be news in a general circulation newspaper, but it might be a cover story in a car magazine. A cynic might respond to the question by saying the media defines the news-- that it says is news. That is certainly true and that is why sexual scandals, not inherently anybody's business, become front page news. The media makes them news.

The general print and television media, nonetheless, usually agree on what is worth covering. Two barometers in deciding news are proximity and power. If an event, say a fire killing six people happens within a newspaper's circulation area, it becomes front page newspaper several hundred miles away, or in another country. If the event is of national

magnitude, such as the anti-Salman Rushdie rally in March 1989 in Islamabad that left seven dead, all the newspapers will

 ront page.

Timeliness defines news. A speech given last week is not news-- unless the speaker made some incredible accusation that went unreported. What is said today is news, three weeks from now it will not be. By then the situation will have changed. News moves quickly. Newspapers, bound by time constraints, nearly always go with what happened that day. If they do not, they risk being beaten by competitors. Magazines, with more leeway (known in the business as "lag time"), can pick and choose topics less tied into daily events. A magazine can take a more comprehensive view of an issue, but a newspaper, writing first draft history, needs to go with most stories immediately If war ends in Afghanistan tomorrow, No newspapers can afford to wait for more information or for a reporter to do an overview. Those stories will come later.

What is news? The powerful are news. If Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto gives a speech, it is front page news. If a National Assembly member from a village makes a statement, it will probably go on page six in the lower left hand corner. If a powerful person, committee or country makes an important decision, it is news. What happens in Albania is probably important only to Albanians, whereas when a major United States official makes a statement, the world listens.

Politicians are news. In Pakistan and other countries a major source of news is politics. An editor once told me everything in life comes down to politics, a statement I have never managed to disprove. Look at a front page in this country and 90 percent of it will be about national and international politics, the rest small advertisements for copiers and fax

machines. Pakistan like many developing nations is an intensely political country full of politicians making statements and counter-statemer actions. Barely a day goes by without at least one politician proclaiming the goal of helping the masses achieve a better life.

The government is news. If a road is built, a works program introduced or a new tax imposed, readers should know about it. In a democracy people must see and understand the direction the government is taking. Since they do not have the time to attend budgetary meetings and hear speeches, it is up to journalists to report the details accurately and objectively. The information contained in news articles will, near election time, help readers to make an assessment of those in power.

Crime is news. It touches the lives of nearly everyone. The think unrest in Sind that leaves dozens dead every month is a continuing story. Car bombs in downtown Peshawar that kill and maim can be front-page news. News is also what happens to those charged with crimes. The criminal courts always yield good, interesting stories.

Tragedy is news. A bus accident killing 24 people, tribal violence killing six members of two families and a flood washing away 42 homes are all news stories. Any time a number of people are killed in an accident or murder or natural disaster, it should be covered. But this unfortunately is not the case in Pakistan. A statement by a national politician on the need to eliminate poverty – his 21st speech on the issue--rates as a more substantial story. Pakistan newspapers could do better in this area.

Human beings are news. Human interest stories about people dealing with problems or trying out new ideas make for

good feature stories. These can be well-known personalities or common people doing something potentially interesting, from to starting a new social club.

News is not just politics, despite the emphasis on it in Pakistan. Education is a good producer of stories because so many people have children in schools and colleges. The struggle to keep campuses open in the country is a constant story. Moves to improve schools are also another revolving issue. The Supreme Court produces many stories. A decision on bonded labor can result in changing business practices throughout Pakistan. So can decisions involving human rights.

The environment in the West has emerged as a particularly sensitive issue warranting daily coverage. As readers have grown more interested in the subject, editors and reporters have devoted more space and time to it. Business reporting, too, has become popular within the last decade and is catching on here. Global issues and business concerns are as intriguing to many readers as the old stalwart politics.

Sports, entertainment and celebrities are topics no one really needs to know about yet many readers have a fascination with them. No one really has to know what Imran Khan thinks of India's cricket team or which Punjabi actresses command the highest salaries. No one has to know how many important British men Pamela Border-- the Indian-born model who served as a high-class prostitute-has been with, but what good reading it makes! Newspapers magazines are in the business of selling newspapers and magazines, so adding a little spice about sex, entertainers and sports is nothing out of the ordinary.

These subjects are in fact necessary ingredients in good newspapers, something to break off the monotony of reading

about global problems, politicians, social issues and other serious matter. In a good newspaper some of the wittiest and best writing can be found on the sports and on the arts and entertainment pages. [1] *An introduction to reporting in Pakistan*

not, in the grand scheme of things, as important as what Benazir Bhutto says about Pakistan's future but many readers. will find his comments as exciting as hers. He is definitely news— probably too much so. (In my first few weeks in Pakistan I saw no fewer than 50 interviews with Imran Khan and Jehangir Khan).

News, in essence, is what newspapers decide is news. And newspapers reflect what reader's desire. But generally politics, government, education, crime, courts, sports and arts and entertainment produce the most news, in about that order in Pakistan. News is something happening in the city or country in which readers live; it usually comes from the influential powerful and famous, as well as the tragic and farcical.

TWO

NEWSWRITING

A riot that breaks out in the old city leaves two men and one boy dead. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto gives a speech at a businessmen's luncheon. A bandit robs a bank of 34 million rupees. Flooding destroys two villages. A Pakistani wins an international award. Unrest causes four campuses to close.

Telling these news stories required the skills of news writing. They are the kinds of stories confronting a reporter in Pakistan every day, offering the challenge of taking complex issues and presenting them in an organized way using a writing style clear enough for a child to understand. Ideally, all news stories should give unbiased and balanced accounts of events in a readable style unadorned by opinion or overly descriptive pros. Readers should be able to consume a news story quickly and understand the issues presented so they can make intelligent political and economic decisions in the future.

COVERING NEWS STORIES

Every reporter covers an event with a few basic tools. One is a pen, the other a note pad. Do not rely on memory, memory breeds mistakes. Too many Pakistani journalists seem to write from memory. A U.S. government official in Islamabad recalled an interview in which a Pakistan reporter took no notes and later, in his story, got several statistics and

quotes wrong. Notes serve to remind journalists of what the speaker said at an event and how he phrased it. A reporter-- especially an inexperienced one-- who uses only his memory, is bound to get quotes and facts wrong.

The goals of a reporter should be accuracy and clarity. Inaccurate reporting can destroy a reporter's and newspaper's reputation. Sources shut up in front of reporters who do not get the story right.

Moreover, a great story is no story at all if the writing is badly organized and written. If a reader does not understand what the reporter is attempting to explain, what good is the story? Pakistani newspapers have problems with clarity. Sentences run on, writing goes opaque, non – sequiturs grow like weeds in a garden. Structure and clarity make all the difference in the world.

Finally, it is important to try to achieve a balance by getting information from all sides of an issue. A reporter with integrity always attempts to give each side of an issue a say in a story In a crisis situation involving marches and students, for example, he will get quotes from protesters, student groups and other agitators, as well as from government officials. (See "Beat Reporting" for more information).

WRITING A NEWS STORY

I keep six honest serving men,
They taught me all I knew:
Their names are What and Why and When,
And How and Where and Who.

Rudyard Kipling

Inverted Pyramid

News stories have a tried-and tested structure that should almost always be followed. The really good journalists who have experience can experiment with different leads and structures, but even they rely on the using formulas for most stories.

The traditional shape of a news story has been called an "inverted pyramid". What does this mean? Think of a pyramid of the least consequential at the bottom. Facts and quotes appear in a descending order of significance.

The reasons for this method are twofold: busy readers want to see the essence of the story in the first few paragraphs before deciding whether to read on; editors, suffering space restrictions, find it easier under deadline to chop off the last few paragraphs rather than carefully edit the whole text.

The Lead

The lead paragraph—the first paragraph—is the most crucial paragraph in any journalism story, from a straight news articles to a feature. A lead tells nearly the entire story in short for by condensing into a paragraph who, what, when, where and why. The paragraph will contain what happened, who was involved, where it happened and, if space permits, why it happened. If all this information cannot be placed into the lead paragraph, some of the details can be placed in the second paragraph. With practice journalists can fit most of the five Ws, as they are called, into a lead paragraph.

Deterring the Lead

Young journalists sometimes have a problem coming up with what should be the lead in a daily news story. They may attend a meeting in which a parliamentary body passes several resolutions and have no idea which one is the most important. Or, they attend a talk where the speaker covers a wide range of topics without the semblance of a focus.

When a politician or organization makes a major announcement on one topic, it is not difficult to figure out what the lead will be. If Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has a press conference to announce a new program, that program will be the lead. But what about covering a day's session at the National Assembly, when several legislative actions can occur in one day?

There are a few guides to choosing leads. Is certain subject in the news? If it is and someone makes a few points concerning it-- such as the Afghan war-- the reporter may use it as the lead. If a large amount of money is being stated, a reporter should focus on it. Money makes the world go round and money, when spent on projects affecting people, makes a good lead. If a speaker talks on a wide range of issues, choose to focus on two or three that are in the news. If several speakers discuss a variety of topics, chose the ones that readers will identify with immediately.

In press conferences-- another forum where a variety of topics come under discussion-- reporters have to decide what issue to go with in the lead. If Ms. Bhutto answers questions at length about Pakistan's involvement in the Afghan war, that might be the lead. Or, if she changes her position on an issue,

that becomes the lead. Anytime a politician takes a new position or changes course in some way it becomes news.

In disaster stories the number or people killed, the magnitude of the damage, geographically or financially and the place where the incident happened should be highlighted in the lead. Death is news. Damage and destruction are news.

Other news stories without an immediate time element time element still require a strong news peg. If India has made several moves on the border over the past few weeks, a lead should point that out and explain why is and few words as possible. Readers want to know what is happening and why in the first paragraphs, even for non-deadline stories.

Some Samples

In 1988 Sri Lanka became a battleground between insurgents and government forces supported by the Indian government. The Associated press described one gruesome weekend this way:

> Continuing violence in southern Sri Lanka has claimed the lives of 45 people, among them 13 Sinhala rebels, in a space of 30 hours, police sources said on Saturday.

Readers learn the number of people and terrorists shot dead (45), over what period of time the violence occurred (30 hours), where (Sri Lanka), the source of information (police) and note this is an ongoing problem.

Another disaster lead from the Associated Press exhibits again how a lead can provide an extraordinary amount of information in just a few words.

> The death toll in floods which devastated large parts of southern Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia soared to more than 350 on Saturday as troops and rescue workers continued their grim search for bodies trapped under a sea of mud.

This is a lead for an ongoing story in which the writer assumes many people will have already read about the flooding. The writing describes where the flooding has occurred, how many have died as of Saturday and the "grim" search rescue workers undertake to find the dead.

Although long, the lead works well. Studies of newspaper readers in the United States have shown that the most effective leads are those falling under 40 words, which this lead falls under by just one word. The lead should always be written tightly, with excess verbiage cut out. The ideal lead is one short, clearly written sentence summarizing the main issues. When necessary, a reporter can break the lead into two sentences.

In disaster leads, such as the two printed here, reporters usually give the death toll in the lead since that is of interest to most readers. If the authorities have damage estimate, placing it in the lead gives people an idea other environmental tragedy.

From the British newspaper *The Guardian* comes a brief lead on an upcoming court case in 1989 that shows how a reporter covered the main points of a story in just a few words. The issue concerns the right of parents to ask hospitals not to prolong the lives of severely handicapped children.

> "The Court of Appeal will deliver judgment today in Britian's first case over a handicapped baby's right to die".

Only 19 words, the lead tells readers the five Ws and lets them read on for details.

In Pakistan's English language newspapers lead paragraphs tend to be long and confusingly written, difficult for even an English speaker to decipher. *The Nation* printed following lead in a 1988 story. It illustrates a writer struggling with the English language and trying too hard to get all the story's issues into the lead.

Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani, convener of Pakistan Awami Ittehad and chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistna, has said that his party has no contact with the PPP and IJI, however, he said, his party will take a positive decision about its future line of action at a meeting of the Central Working Committee.

Rambling and difficult to read, this lead tries to pack in too much information and contains two disparate thought: that the Maulana party has no contact with the Pakistan People's Party or Islami Jamhoori Ittehad, and that it plans a future meeting. How the two are related is unclear. The writer also did not spell out the names of two political parties in referring to them for the first time. A rule of journalism is to always spell out the names or organizations before referring to them by acronyms.

Since Mr. Noorani spoke in his capacity as chief of the JUP, the writer could have introduced the convener's title at a later point in the article. It only clutters this lead. Some Pakistan newspapers persist in giving an individual's many titles in the lead or second paragraph, which makes for boring reading.

Rewriting this lead is not difficult. A simple way to break up the two ideas in the original lead is to break the lead into two sentences and two paragraphs.

> Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan party chief Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani said Tuesday his party has had no contact with the Pakistan People's Party of Islami Jamhoori Ittehad.
>
> The JUP, which won few seats in the November elections, will meet to discuss its future, said Noorani.

A different problem is presented in a lead on a law story, again from *The Nation*. (I mean not to criticize *The Nation*, my favorite Pakistani newspaper, but only to highlight examples of poor writing).

> Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Mohammad Hakeem has urged that the rule of law should be upheld in the country in order to maintain national integration and to protect human right. He contended that the ideological cohesion of social order depended on proper enforcement of human right through law.

This paragraph sounds like a term paper, not a news story. Phrases such as "ideological cohesion" have title relevance to most readers, even highly educated ones. What is the man saying? Every speech has a theme, what was his? And where did he say it, a question which should have been answered in the lead.

A rewritten, shorter lead for this story might look like this:

> Human rights can only be protected if the government upholds the rule of law, contended, Pakistan Chief Justice Mohammad Haleem [illegible] Lahore High

Later in a story using this lead, the writer can discuss the issue of national integration and ideological cohesion, explaining both terms and giving the judge's opinions on them. but in the lead, it is best to take the core of a speaker's speech-- the strongest point he is trying to make-- and use it as the lead.

Sometimes a news story is not about an event which happened yesterday or an announcement. Rather, the story addresses an ongoing issue and seeks to analyze recent developments surrounding that issue. It may concern activities of a government, a political party or foreign governments. The leads for these stories make a statement without reference to date or individual.

An example, albeit a complex one, comes from a May issue of the newspaper *The Muslim*. The article discusses the spectre of generic pesticides destroying the livelihood of Pakistan's pesticide manufacturers.

> A cold chill is running through the spine of pesticide companies in Pakistan. Suddenly they are confronted by what they fearfully regard as the spectre of generics in an area which has greatly contributed to boosting Pakistan's cotton production to 8.2 million bales, making it the world's third largest cotton exporter today.

Like most leads in the English press in Pakistan, this is too long. The writer talks about the danger generic pesticide

manufacturers pose to name-brand Pakistani manufacturers-- a story happening now but without any urgent time element. *The Muslim* could have run the piece later in the week. It is news but not daily news. The lead summarizes the prol
Newswriting
solid time reference.

Another lead, this one from a 1989 New York Times article, shows better a lead for a news story without a time element.

> Washington—U.S. officials and specialists on Soviet affairs say one reason for Moscow's recent diplomatic efforts in the Middle East is its growing concern that Israel, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt either have or are developing missiles that can hit Soviet Territory.

Again, the lead introduces the reason for Moscow's recent diplomatic overtures but it is not tied to a particular news event. It is an emerging trend by Moscow and one which the reporter describes in fine detail.

The Body

The body of manyy news story gives the details of the events, quotes from observers or participants explain decisions and arguments on both issues. How these components are organized can make for a readable and sound news story, or one utterly opaque and confusing. Writing a news story follows the same principles a chef might in preparing food: too much of one ingredient and not enough of another will destroy the flavor of a meal. Balance is necessary, as well as an appropriate number of facts and background history to fill readers in on the subject. Often in Pakistani newspapers, the

reporter fails to allot a paragraph or two of background on a particular issue. For example, dozens of articles published on the question of repealing the Pakistan constitution's 8th Amendment never included even a brief description of the

 had memorized and

Reporters composing a story have to concentrate upon the key element, the differing sides worthy of coverage, the contacts required and time and space considerations. When actually writing the story, reporters should remember to keep sentences in active tense rather than passive ("He continues" instead of "he is continuing", "he ran" instead of "he was running"). They should vary the length of sentences. They should use quotes to illustrate important points. They should cover no more than two ideas per paragraph, preferably one. They should keep the various issues within a story together and not jump around.

In the process of writing a news story it is difficult to avoid some kind of bias. A reporter's predilections and even upbringing can play a part in his perceptions of the world. The way a Pakistani reporter views the world is different than the way an American reporter views it. "We talk of objective reporting" wrote H.L. Mencken, the great American journalist who wrote in prose full of jaundiced wit. "There is no such thing. I have been a reporter for several years and I can tell you that no reporter worth a hoot ever wrote a purely objective story. You get a point of view in it. If your reporter is a Guild man (labor supporter) and it is a political story, it is New Deal propaganda. If he is an anti-Guild man, it is probably anti-New Deal propaganda".

Bias certainly is a problem in Pakistan-- it seeps into the writing of the reporter. One way to ensure that one is opinion-less--is to cover both sides of an issue as well as possible. This is as simple as calling the opposition when the party in power makes announcement of a statement of some kind. A weakness of the papers here is to publ[illegible] and counter-statements the next day witho[illegible] *Newswriting* describing the issue. Why not get in touch with the opposition party the same day? There may not be competing sides on every story but on those that have an argument going, it is imperative to cover each side.

Facts

Facts add solidity and accountability to charges. A politician or expert will have a stronger case if he can cite facts instead of just opinions. The same is true of a journalist. To claim corruption is one thing, to prove it through research and statistics is another. Reporters must try to incorporate facts in every story.

The business pages of a newspaper contain stories with a lot of figures. Much of business revolves around numbers and reporters can learn to incorporate figures, without slowing down the story, by studying the financial pages. *The International Herald Tribune*, (to be referred to as *IHT* from now on) which has a fine business section, printed a Reuter story in May 1989 on the Bank of China. In just a few paragraphs the writer gave an overview of the bank's assets and growth:

> The bank, which is capitalized at $3.5 billion had assets of $81 billion and posted a pre-tax profit of $1 billion in 1987, the latest year available.

> But if Bank of China is still a small operation on the international level, it is a major presence in Hong Kong. It has control of over 300 branches, up from 130 four years ago, and accounts for 20 percent of all deposits in the colony. Its expanding role has been highlighted by the new,

> hich towers
> rapers.

The two paragraphs--which started three paragraphs from the lead--inform readers on the bank's assets and profits, the increase in branches, the effect on Hong Kong and the size of its skyscraper.

In an article from *The Guardian* in the same month and year, two political reporters wrote about the threat of British strikes for 1989. In the third and fourth paragraph, they give a prescient analysis of why the country is heading in that direction, with plenty of facts.

> Inflation, which has more than doubled to 7.9 percent in a year, and nine successive rises which took interest rates from 71/2 percent to 13 percent in less than six months up to November, have combined to put growing pressure on pay negotiators throughout the industry.
>
> In the public section, pay offer set by British Rail, London Transport and the Electricity Council is 7 percent, although important groups in gas and water have already settled for 7.5 percent. In the private sector, settlements are

slightly higher and are bunching between 7 and 8 percent.

Again, the newsmen provide evidence for the unrest--inflation, high interest rates and lower-than expected wage increases. Both samples illustrate the use of facts by studying daily newspapers beginning reporters will learn how to [illegible] them into stories without slowing them down.

Background

A major problem in Pakistan is the lack of back ground in news stories. Reporters automatically assume readers have a thorough knowledge of the issue at hand and require nothing to refresh their memories. This is a false assumption--even reporters covering issues on a day-to-day basis forget basic facts on occasion.

A few paragraphs of background enables readers unfamiliar with the issues in the story to comprehend them. The background does not have to contain the entire history of an issue, only enough to give readers an understanding of the problem. Those familiar with the story can skip those paragraphs and move on.

In a story on the Indian Punjab transmitted by the Dutch Press Agency, the reporter gave a brief but important account, of Sikh violence in the region. Ongoing insurgency movements such as the one launched in Amritsar usually have a long and antagonistic history worth recounting. After a short lead on the Golden Temple, the holiest temple of the Sikhs, the story's second and third paragraphs offer an historical edge:

> But the calm is deceptive. All around the broad sweep of the temple compound are signs of the bloody confrontations which have been going on between Sikhs and Hindus for the past five years. Here in the fertile plains of the north-west Indian state of East Punjab, last year alone saw [illegible] veen militant

> The exterior of the Temple is pockmarked in many places with bullet holes left after the two attacks by Indian troops in 1984 and 1988 when Sikh extremists were holed up here. Today, the 28 hectares of the Temple grounds look like they have staged a war. Indian army bulldozers have cut a broad swathe all around the boundary of the grounds.

The writer explains how long the insurgency has been going (five years); the death toll from last year (3,000); the location of the state (north-west India); the combatants (militant Sikhs, Indian Army); the temple's appearance and size of grounds (28 hectares).

In a story on the heavily-covered trial of Lt. Col. Oliver North in Washington, The Guardian offered a paragraph of background near the end of its story of the matter. The reporter had labeled North in the first paragraph as "the man at the heart of the 1986 Iran-contra affair". The story's final paragraph added the following background:

> The case came to light in November 1986 when a Lebanese newspaper reported that the US government has been secretly supplying arms to Iran. It grew into a scandal when North revealed under questioning from Attorney General, Mr. Edwin Meese, that money from the Iran arms

> sales had been diverted to the contras as part of a wide-ranging illicit effort to avoid the scrutiny of Congress.

The Iran-contra was an incredibly complex scandal that will, in detail, fill books. To belabor the story with too much background would slow the article down--most of the world, by now, is acquainted with Oliver North. *The Guardian's* reporters chose to give a brief recapitulation leading up to North's demise.

Quotes

Partial Quotes, Paraphrasing and Attribution

Quotes and paraphrasing make up the bulk of many news stories and each one should, in most cases, be attributed to someone, even an unnamed "source". Nearly every sentence of a news story tells readers what someone said in their own words, or in words filtered through a reporter. A name of a person, group or unknown entity is always attached to the quote or paraphrase in a traditional news story.

A quote contains the words and sentences actually spoken by a source to a reporter. A paraphrased sentence actually spoken by a source to a reporter. A paraphrased sentence has been called "indirect quote", which means, in any case, that the reporter is interpreting and condensing and individual's words. Attribution tells the reader who said what.

Quotes should be sprinkled throughout the story, especially when they can crystallize an issue or event, such as in the article about the flooding in Thailand discussed earlier, in which one person was quoted as saying: "I have nothing left....." That told the entire story. Since most of what sources say can be condensed and made clearer by reporters, quotes

should be used to highlight issues and opinions, rather than relay statistics and long-winded historical information.

Quotes should be exactly what a person said to an audience or reporter. They should have open quote marks at the beginning (“) and close quote marks at the end (”). When the attribution comes after the quotation, a comma should be placed before the closing period comes before the closing quotation marks. Here are examples of these rules:

* “I think the planned highway is a bad idea,” he said.

way is a bad idea.”

The attribution for a longer quote can be in the middle: “It will be a difficult time for Pakistan,” he said. “But I believe the economy will grow.”

One difficulty in quoting is that people jump from topic to topic, often jumping back and forth between the same topics. One quote on an issue might have taken place at the start of a meeting or interview that same issue might be under discussion again 20 minutes later. To keep these quotes together, reporters have three options they can put the attribution in the middle, which indicates the quotes did not necessarily come after one another. The second method is to use an ellipse, or three dots. for example: Jones said he thought Bush “can do a better job.... one area in particular he can improve is economic planning.” Or, a reporter can simply place the two quotes together even through the person did not say them at the same time: Jones said Bush “can do a better job. One area in particular he can improve is economic planning.”

Quotes from important politicians should be incorporated into news stories when they are voicing an opinion on an issue. A politician’s actual words in response to questioning on the issue of the day can avoid the charges that a reporter purposefully misinterpreted what was said at an event. When Iran called for Palestinians to assassinate Westerners in

1989, the Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat said to the Washington Post: "I reject the plea in its entirety", a good quote showing strong words from a one-time radical.

Quotes can also illustrate a point a writer has been making in piece A Washington post article on Americans fearing chemicals in the food they eat started with four paragraphs describing how Americans overreact to the trivial risks. Once the point is established, the writer talked about how few people fear what will really kill them-- drinl and saturated fat.

The paragraph followed with a quote by an expert, which fit the context perfectly.

> "It worries me greatly, but the facts don't seem to help much", said Surgeon General Everett C. Koop. "People just have an inappropriate sense of what is dangerous. They get overly upset about minor problems. "

If you do not believe the reporter, he offers the opinion of Mr. Koop.

In a 1989 story on student unrest in China, a *New York Times* reporter quoted a student leader for a glimpse of his thinking:

> "It would be difficult for the communist party to move forward without a push", Mr. Xia said. "The aim of the student movement is to give the Communist Party an outside push so that it can reform itself".

The quotes from both the Surgeon General and the student leader encapsulate their beliefs. The interviews

probably took several minutes, may be an hour. The reporters chose just a quote or two out of that time.

Partial Quotes

When an individual says something significant within a sentence or phrase which clearly summarizes his point of view, a reporter can single out those terms and quote them within a sentence he has written. Often, people will say something significant in one part of a speech or interview, followed by a back to quotable

The partial quote allows reporters to use only the essential parts of a speech or discussion to illustrate the speakers' beliefs. The whole quote might have been dull or to long bother reprinting in it entirely. Because it conveys only essential information, the partial quote helps move stories along.

The quote marks in a partial quote fall only around what the person actually said. This helps distinguish the quote from the sentence, written by the reporter, surrounding it. Depending on the structure of the sentence, a comma might have to be used when closing the quote.

A good example of partial quoting comes from an 1989 *IHT* article on a speech by U.S. President George Bush about the policies of Soviet Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev:

> Mr. Bush said he would make it clear to Mr. Gorbacheve "that we look forward to continual improvement in the bilateral relationship" between the countries, but that he was not

> prepared to make specific recommendations on "arms control or anything else".

When Bush used these phrases in the speech n not clear—they may have come minutes apart. What the reporter has cleverly done is to take the quotes representing the heart of the matter, Bush's stances and use them together.

IHT reporters—who actually work mostly for the *New York Times* and the Washington Post—use partial quotes frequently. In a dispatch from Washington, a *Post* reporter used one in a 1989 lead to show a house member's stance on West Germany's reluctance to place new U.S. missiles *Newswriting*

> Washington — The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Les Aspin, said Sunday that the United States, "not this year, but down the line," might pull its troops from West Germany if Bonn refused to allow short-range nuclear weapons based on its soil.

Indirect Quotes

Indirect quotes are the reporter's summary of what the speaker said in a meeting, speech or conversation. The Pakistani press may well use indirect quotes too much. A reporter will cover an entire speech by Benazir Bhutto and never once quote her in her own words. Part of the reason for this practice in Pakistan is the difficulty in translating speeches to English.

Yet indirect quotes offer great advantages. Indirect quotes allow reporters to condense what is said into an organized, manageable story. All the excess verbiage, a real

problem with politicians, can be removed and the essence of what was said highlighted.

The Muslim reporter Kaleem Omar used indirect quotes extensively in a story taken from an interview with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1989.

> Prime Minister Bhutto said her government had looked into the question of the tax on agricultural income. But this, she said, was a provincial matter and the federal government would be discussing it with the provinces to get

> She said that on the issue of broadening the tax base, the government was looking into the question of tax reforms and was also seriously thinking of taxing black money. It was not fair for the government to keep increasing taxes for those who pay tax and not for those who evade taxes, she said.
>
> Replying to a question abut the conditionalities imposed by the international Monetary Fund in exchange for giving Pakistan a three-year structural adjustment facility, the Prime Minister said that the IMF had now agreed that the budget deficit could be 6 percent of the GDP instead of 5.5 this year.

Although not an overwhelmingly exiting story, the reporter has summarized several difficult concepts that quotes may not have been able to convey. He took care to attribute all the comments to Ms. Bhutto. The idea of taxing "black money", mystifying and no doubt implausible, could have been

discussed in greater detail. (Were Pakistan to develop a way to tax black money, the governments of the world would let out a big cheer.)

Indirect quoting allows a reporter to abbreviate what has gone on in an event or interview, but every news story needs at least a few direct quotes to liven the prose.

Attribution

Every quote or indirect quote should have a attribution identifying its source. Even if the story contains information from only one individual, reporters are obliged *Newswriting* source. On the first reference to the individual being cited in an article, the reporter must spell out his first and last name, as well as his title, if he has any, as in: "Dr. Imran Ali, chief surgeon of Punjab Hospital, says....."

The Attribution should be varied, with "he said" or "she said" alternating with then individual's last name. Some newspapers allow far less at attribution than others; the British press does not have the habit of attributing all statements to someone.

Not all lad paragraphs require attribution. If a reporter covers a speech or a statement by a politician, attribution is usually required in the lead. However, if the lead is about a subject rather than an individual, as in the lead on page 23 from *The Guardian*, no attribution is needed. The reporter is introducing a topic which will be discussed in the story in later paragraphs.

Reporters using several sources in a story try to keep clear who is speaking. "He said" in a story with four sources may be confusing-which "he" said the quote? When confusion is possible the reporter should use the speaker's name.

Samples

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the lead of a story concerning a flood. The rest of the story dealt with specifics. The lead, along with the text, follows to provide a sample of good spot news reporting:

> The death toll in floods which devastated large parts of southern Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia soared to more than 360 on Saturday
>
> *An introduction to reporting in Pakistan* ıtinued their a sea of mud.
>
> Local officials said 218 bodies had been recovered so far from the villages of Katun and Khiriwong in Nakorn Sri Thammarat province, some 550 kilometer south of the capital bringing to 300 the death toll in southern Thailand alone.
>
> "I have nothing left. My children disappeared in seconds when the logs came crashing through the house," said Nongart Kane, 30, who lost two daughters and a son in Thailand's worst national disaster in decades.

From these paragraphs, readers learn where the flood hit the hardest and how the communities looked. A quote from family brings in an important human element that strengthens the story. The key to any disaster story such as this one is to mix facts and figures with quotes from people effected. Numbers matter, but readers want a human element, too.

From an article in the Muslim in May 1989 reporter Tariq Butt exhibits a good organization of the facts and quotes.

Islamabad—Malik Mohammad Salim became the first Pakistani to be extradited to the United States to face criminal proceedings in an American Court.

Describe as a billionaire, Malik Mohammad Salim, 58 who has been accused by the Americans of smuggling thousands of pounds of hashish to America and other countries, was flown aboard a New York-bound PIA aircraft on Saturday. Earlier, the Supreme Court, which had stayed his extradition, vacated its stay order on Wednesday, allowing his extradition. *Newswriting*

The extradition came as the climax to a lengthy legal battle put up by Malik Mohammad Salim, nick named "chef" allegedly in the international drug world. He fought against the government's extradition order through the lower courts to the superior courts. The Supreme Court passed an order staying his extradition on a technical objection about two weeks ago. But on a review filed by the government, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict of the lower court and vacated its order, while rejecting an appeal filed by Malik Salim's brother.

According to APP, Malik Salim reached Miami on Sunday and was produced before an American court the next day. He faces a maximum of 15 years in prison if found quilt of the charges against him.

> The extradition effected on United States request carries immense significance for the Bhutto government, which has launched a major anti-narcotic drive. The American administration is believed to have been continuously putting pressure on the Pakistani authorities for extradition of the person they considered an alleged drug baron.
>
> An American official in the United States embassy in Islamabad had said that they were regularly monitoring the progress of the

> Besides the extradition, which was eagerly awaited by many Western countries, Government agencies had recently arrested two other alleged drug smugglers—Major (Retd.) Farooq and Anwar Khattak. The ongoing crackdown on persons suspected of being drug traffickers is different from earlier drives when the "big fish" in the trade went scot-free and small time peddlers were caught.

Butt's article could use some judicious editing, but overall it present an example of a well-structured news story. The lead gave readers the name of the smuggler and his status as the first Pakistani ever. The second paragraph pointed out his worth ($1 billion), when he was extradited, when he left for America, what airline he flew and how he came to be extradited.

The third paragraph offers details of Salim's extradition and his nickname. It is a little too long but the details are important, the fourth paragraph quoting a wire service, says Malik will be tried in Miami and may face 15 years in prison.

The next three paragraphs offer background on the case and its significance to Pakistan and the United States.

The story is a long one—24 paragraphs follow these printed here. It paints a fascinating picture of the court case involving extradition, Malik's connection with a British drug lord and biographical information on him.

Other Methods

In the United States and other countries, a number of methods are employed to make news stories shorter and easier to read. Among the most often used techniques are "bullets", which allow reporters to cover a series of different issues quickly and clearly. Bullets are simply a list of it *Newswriting* debated or approved by a person or legislative body. They are set off from the story by stars (the number 8 key, upper-case*) without indentions.

Bullets can be complete sentences. Or they can be sentence fragments, each bullet ending in a semi-colon except for the last one, which carries a period (Methods for setting up bullets change from newspaper to newspaper.) In the second case, the bullets would appear in this manner:

> In other legislative action Tuesday, the provincial assembly approved:
>
> * A plan to study traffic patterns in the provinces;
> * Construction of a 1 lakh bridge over a creek near Islamabad;
> * An addition to a school near Islamabad.

Bullets can be used almost anywhere in a story. If a reporter would like to introduce several topics high in the story

and then discuss them in detail later he can used bullets. If a reporter wants quickly to mention a few issues discussed in a meeting, bullets work well at the end of a story.

For stories about reports or surveys, bullets work well to highlights the results. Readers can scan the bullets and get an idea of the report's findings without even reading the rest of the text. Bullets can also summarize opinions of an individual or arguments being brought forth in an editorial.

Here are a few illustrations of how reporters have applied bullets in news stories. In a piece from Moscow, the *New York Times* correspondent used bullets to highlight the [illegible] eading Polit buro

> Mr. Yakovlev, named during last month's leadership shake-up to head a new central committee commission on international relations, also made the following points during a two-and-a half hour conversation Wednesday in his large, sunlit office at Central Committee headquarters near the Kremlin.
>
> * Moscow sees no reason to dismantle a disputed radar in Siberia that has become an arms-control issue just because Washington has rejected a Soviet plan to place the station under international control.
>
> * Political change in Eastern Europe poses a threat to Soviet security when it is encouraged and directly supported by the West, which, he said, happened in Czechoslovakia.

* A return to Stalinism is unthinkable in the Soviet Union, even if the changes introduced by Gorbachev fail.

The reporter, Philip Taubman, employed a few more bullets to describe issues he and the Soviet leader covered. His idea was to place the man's opinions on a number of issues high in the story and then deal with the more important ones later in the text.

Finishing Touches

A reporter should check over his article before giving it to an editor. He should read it out loud to himself, a good method of locating a missing word or a badly composed sentence. He double-check the spellings of statistics to assure accuracy. He should make certain that the varying sides of the issues mentioned are represented—if not equally, at least noted. If he has any questions, he should make a few calls to confirm his quotes or statistics. Nothing hurts a reporter's and a newspaper's reputation more than inaccuracy. Sometimes it cannot be avoided, but a story littered with errors is nearly always inexcusable.

Reporter's Checklist

(1) Have all the angles involved in the story been adequately covered?

(2) Have you written a good lead, capturing the essence of the story by telling readers who, what, when, where and why?

(3) Is the story written tightly and clearly?

(4) Does the story have active tenses, rather than passive?

(5) Does each paragraph hold no more than one or two ideas or issues?

(6) Have you checked the spelling of names, words and have the structure of sentences been checked for accuracy and clarity?

THREE

BEAT REPORTING

At the most basic level, reporting on newspapers comes down to covering "beats". A beat is a subject—the police, courts, politics, cities or villages—that a reporter covers on a daily basis. Beat reporting requires tenacity, an agile personality, keen perception and an analytical mind. Great writing ability is not always necessary, but an ability to understand a topic or subject is.

Every newspaper breaks up its staff into beats, some more specialized than others. These beats in include: city government, provincial government, national government, police, the courts, transportation, education, human services, religion, environment, sports and entertainment. In Pakistan, each national daily has correspondents in major cities such Lahore. Karachi, Peshawar and Islamabad who cover not only those cities, but the provinces in which they are located. If a national newspaper has lots of money, it will have correspondents in Washington, D.C., London and New Delhi.

Beat reporters are managed by different editors within the newspaper's structure. The Peshawar correspondent reports to the editor handling articles coming in from different regions. He has a title such as "regional editor". The sports reporters report to the sports desk. The Washington correspondent talks with the top editor. Local reporters deal with the city desk.

Clearly, beat reporters need quickly to learn what editors expect of them and the limits within which they will function. A close working relationship with an editor will, make a reporter's life easier. Knowing when to fight over a story and when to back down and take advice will save a lot of grief. So will knowing how long a piece can be and if a certain angle will be acceptable to the editors.

Editors are a necessary evil. An old joke is no reporter ever found an editor he liked. Edna Buchanan, the *Miami Herald's* brilliant police reporter, gives this advice to journalists the world over:

"1. Never trust editors. 2. Never trust editors. 3. Never trust editors. They can be cavalier with your copy. They can embarrass you, lose your sources, strip the best stuff out of your story, insert mistakes and misspellings, top it off with a misleading headline, and get you in trouble".

Words to live by.

Every city and every country s a living organism. Beat reporters stand at the center of the action. They cover speeches, murders, meetings, riots, battles, labor disputes, visiting dignitaries. Journalism has been called first draft history. This is why beat reporting serves such an intrinsic role on newspapers and in communities. Most readers do not have time to attend political meetings, watch fires, or call government department heads to talk, complain or argue. Beat reporters do the work for them and in so going give their fellow citizens a closer look at what goes on in their communities and countries.

Starting Out

How do reporters cover beats? By doing legwork, talking to people, attending meetings, making contacts. Day to day personal contacts with government officials, campaign worker, secretaries, business people and others can open a treasure chest of stories.

Each beat has its own characteristics, personalities, drawbacks and pulses, and the beat reporters' job is to learn about them. The best way to begin is first to talk to the reporter who covered the beat before. Quiz him on the issues, the important people, the "unofficial" contacts. He serves as the introductory guide to the beat.

The next step is to read articles on the beat in the newspaper's files. A list of the major issues will emerge from just a glance at the headlines. Reading deeper, a new beat reporter will begin to recognize the names of people shaping policies, solving crimes, introducing reforms. Allegiances and enemies will be clearly identified, battle lines drawn, triumphs and defeats duly recorded.

Without leaving the office, the beat reporter reading through two years of clips has a world of information. He should study any government reports or investigations done concerning his beat. The final step for him is to go out and meet department heads, politicians, workers, businesses, community groups and whoever else is affected by the beat.

Meeting people is not a one-shot deal. Best reporters need to make the rounds just as doctors do, at least once a day. An education reporter will stop off at the school board or make calls on various institutions. A police reporter will check in with the different departments—many provide a newsroom for reporters. Political reporters will be on the phone checking with sources and covering speeches and meetings. Beat reporters must stay on top of all the issues constantly or on stories by the competition.

Beat Reporting

Once a beat reporter has established himself, he learns from which of the above mentioned people might give him information or "leaks". A good beat reporter will use these sources to break some big stories before other papers do. Such

a breaking story, for example, might be about the dismissal of a government official, a new government program, the arrest of a cabinet official, an embarrassing revelation. (Prostitutes and drug-use among politicians are perennial favorites).

Once on the beat for a few months, beat reporters learn a key element to all good investigative reporting: act as if you know more than you know. Turn a rumor into a certainty while interviewing someone and they may tell you the whole story. "I heard the government may announce terrorists made an attempt on the nuclear plant Tuesday. What do you hear?

Your source, figuring you know everything already, may say: "Well, Iqbal, off the record you're right. Three Sindhi separatists tried to take over the plant Tuesday....."

An Example

Let's say for our purposes that you, the reader, are the new transportation reporter on the national weekly *Friday Times*. You have read over files room other newspapers on transportation issues. You have read a few reports by the local government on the city's horrible traffic problems.

Now, you are sitting in the office having tea with the head of transportation for the city of Lahore. Here are a few questions you would want to ask: What is the state of roads in Lahore in your opinion, compared to other Pakistani cities? What improvements need to be made? Where are the worst problems? Does the city require more roads or highways? What goals have you set for the office? What have been your achievements? Have your adequate funding to make improvements? What shape is the budget in? What will the money be spent on? What are some problems the department suffers?

These are a few of the more obvious questions to ask. Take notes, especially record the man's goals. A year later you can measure his performance against these statements. Now you know the department head. Figure you received a favorable assessment of the department. Government officials are not hired to tell the truth, they are hired to tell citizens what they want to hear. An old journalism adage is this: Never trust a government official they are all liars.

Now where? The underlings. Talk to his assistants. His employees further down the ladder. Make a few friends. Find out what they think are the city's major transportation problems. If the department head has a critic, go talk to him. What do employees think of their boss, off-the-record? Is he fair? Efficient? Hard working? What are his strengths? Weaknesses? Know the scuttlebutt. Have roads through politician's districts been built as a copy of the budget and learn it or find someone who can explain it to you.

The next steps are to talk to citizen's groups and politicians. Does any particular citizen's group keep watch over the city's transportation woes? Or a neighborhood group? Find their spokespeople and talk to them. Discover their view of the city's traffic problems. Talk to any local or provincial ministers with an interest or expertise in road

Time for more research. Has anyone in government or at a university done a study of transportation in Lahore? Find out. Read it if it exists. Mark important passages. Check for many regional or international studies. How does Lahore match up to Karachi or other large cities on the subcontinent? These reporters in themselves make for stories.

Start visiting transportation sites. Is progress being made anywhere? Are repairs taking too long to complete? Who are the contractors? Are they related to the transportation department head? (Watch out, this is investigative reporting!).

By now you know more about transportation than anyone in his right mind should want to know. You have talked to the right people, done the research, read the reports. The next big step is to cover meetings involving transportation. Learn to recognize the faces of the committee members. Engage them for a visit, for tea. Look interested, act knowledgeable, but not too much so. The greatest flattery you can offer someone is to listen to him-- his failures, triumphs, problems. Learn to listen.

And get your face known. Win the trust of a few good sources by using their information but never against them. Keep contact with sources and the departments you cover every day. Attend the meetings of importance. Keep covering the beat every day-- interviewing, listening, writing and searching for more sources.

Finally, watch yourself, too. A source can try to use a reporter to purposefully cause dissension in a department, topple someone, power or even destabilize a government. The press has extraordinary power. Therefore, reporters need to be on guard against people who would use them for their own

With this kind of approach, you should be a star reporter at the *Friday Times* in no time.

Individual Beats

Rather than describe how to cover every possible beat on a newspaper, which could fill the rest of this book, I have decided instead to concentrate on the most common beats: politics, police and fire, education and business. The suggestions overlap and apply to all departments. The author has never covered politics and education in Pakistan, but he assumes that reporters follow the same general guidelines be they in Islamabad or Washington. Where they differ is in how much they can publish of what they know. For our purposes, the following outlines on beat reporting are mere guidelines for the beginning reporter looking for idea. Later, he will devise his own methods as he grows as a reporter.

Politics

The center of action in any country is politics. Every aspect of life in a country revolves for better or worse, around politics. In developing countries the governments play an even larger role because they control from 70 to 90 percent of the country's commerce and industry. Nearly every move in business, agriculture and industry invariably involves government officials and programs.

Reporters covering the government should have a keen understanding of how decisions are made and how wields influence. Generally speaking, reporters in Islamabad, Lahore and other cities-- in the U.S and the West-- operate in a similar fashion when covering politics. Successful political reporters have their own persona and reportorial style many of the same techniques and characteristic

By nature political reporters and political junkies. They live and breathe politics, love the ceremonies and antics and egos and sycophants, tolerate the boring meetings for the exciting stories, revel in discussing the minutiae of political

decisions. Politics is the center of the world and political reporters are at the center of it.

Going about covering politics requires energy, drive, tenacity and an ability to withstand criticism and outright disgust. Political reporters are not always well-liked by the establishment. But a reporter with good sources and the character to withstand the pressures can gain the trust of a loyal readership and support by editors.

The keys to political reporting are:

* Know how the system works: how a bill becomes law, how a bill is defeated, amended, withdrawn, how committees work, what chambers or houses handle what issues first.

* Learn the important players-- politicians, committee chairmen, department heads, key employee, union and community leaders, party heads and political analysis.

* Develop a network of sources to tell you what is going on within the political establishment. This could be a high level official or department lead. You will probably never quote these people in print but they will give you the inside scoop on what is happening.

* Know the histories of politicians, such as the makeup of their district, extent of their last victory, their family ties, their connections to the Prime Minister and other power brokers, different governmental and business position.

* Attempt to understand the budgetary process and learn whom to ask to unravel any confusion. When writing will be spent rather

* Persistence pays. Try kindness first, then be firm. If a politician or public official will not discuss an important issue continue calling him or, better yet, go

and sit in his office until he agrees to say something, even "no comment."

* Try not to let friendship interfere with reporting. No doubt reporters begin to like many of the people they cover, but the ideal is to be fair to the public. Do not hide something to protect a friend if the information is valuable to the public.

* Come prepared. For interviews-- and meetings, talk to people before hand to find out what issues are important.

* Write to inform, not to impress. Tell readers what effect a decision will have on them and do not employ jargon or an academic style. Simplicity is best.

* Ask questions. If the reporter does not understand an issue, how will his readers? Ask questions of department heads, politicians and anyone else who might have answers.

* Know the concerns of a politician's district, of a newspaper's readers. Are these being adequately addressed by the politician(s)? And the readership-- are they getting the important news?

* Read other newspapers and magazines. Check on how radio and television cover issues. Reporters often get ideas from each other's work. In any case, seeing, reading or listening to how the competitor covers stories is a good experience.

Police And Fire

The daily grind of police reporting brings those who cover it in contact with sad, hopeless, tragic, sensational and hilarious situations. It is a difficult beat to cover without becoming a little hardened and cynical. At first the wrecks, dead bodies and drug busts are horrifying. After a month or two they become just events in another day on the job. The unfairness of life and the stupidity of people are illustrated daily on the police beat.

On the other hand, the police and fire beat can be an exciting place to observe human nature at a close range. From standing next to a woman watching her house burn down to seeing a dead body in the middle of the road after a drug deal gone bad, police reporting ranges over the fascinating, the lurid and the poignant.

1. Police

The practice of police reporting is much the same as political reporting. Getting to know the various department heads and committees which oversee the police is a must. Being familiar with the important names and faces is necessary. Most importantly, finding a few good sources within the department who can be counted on to provide reliable information is essential.

Police officers are a tight-knit crowd who, on the whole, would rather not deal with the press. They often believe if they talk to a reporter the police chief may find out and fire them. Legal issues frequently arise, forbidding police from talking to the press for fear of jeopardizing the case in court. (This is more of a problem in the U.S.) Nonetheless, there are always a few officers or officials within the department who can serve as anonymous source once a reporter gains their

trust. It takes a while to find them, but a reporter must keep looking.

When actually covering crimes, it is preferable to visit the scene of the crime and talk to officers in charge, as well as eyewitnesses. It is better to visit the crime scene than to try to get a description from a police officer on the telephone. His report will read like a term paper in flat, drab prose. Quotes from eyewitnesses add color to police stories and a sharp reporter can use those quotes to compare with the police version of events. Sometimes reports are not at all alike, especially if police violence is involved.

A simple police story of a murder, robbery or car accident should cover the following facts:

* Name of victim or victims.
* Site, time and day of crime, arrest or accident.
* Details of crime, capture and arrest, or of accident.
* Details of conditions of anyone injured. Call hospitals, morgues for information (never call a live person dead!)
* Name, age and address of those arrested.
* Quotes from police officers, suspects, victims and bystanders.

Everything should be double-checked. Police officers are close to illiterate, even in the U.S. Many people share the same name, so remember address and age.

The stories are organized in the same fashion as a news story. Reporters try to summarize events in the lead paragraph without cluttering it up with names of the deceased or too

many details. The detail of the story can be inserted in the second and third paragraphs.

Imagine covering a crash of a tonga and a shipping truck in Lahore. The lead might read like this:

"Four tonga passengers were crushed to death Tuesday afternoon when a truck rammed into them from behind during rush hour traffic in a traffic chowk near Shalimar Gardens."

2. Fire

Fire stories require the same information as police stories. Leads reveal how many died or the extent of damage. Stories must note the following:

* Location and tie of fire.
* Names of injured or deceased, cause of death.
* Description of scene.
* Status of police and fire investigation.
* Name of owner of building.
* Estimated cost of structure and damage.
* Name of insurer.
* Response time of fire fighters—how long did it take them to get there?
* Length of time to get under control.
* How long firefighters spent at the scene.
* When fire was reported, by whom, if available.

ıd bystanders.

Naturally, you want to play up any heroics. The best leads identify quickly where the fire was, how many were

killed and when it happened. The names and exact locations can come in the second paragraph. Again a hypothetical sample lead:

"Four people died and six severely injured after fire swept through a University town apartment building Tuesday afternoon, leaving the entire Jamrud complex in shambles."

At the scene of a fire, seasoned reporters might even try to get a few quotes from families that lost a home or relative. If these people seem unwilling to talk, back off and let them grieve in peace.

Education

Education is an exhausting beat on nearly every newspaper. It is of interest to many readers who have children, teen-agers or young adults in college. It is an area subject to countless debates, symposiums and dinner arguments.

In Pakistan and some other developing countries, education is also a focus because of the tremendous campus unrest. Covering education in this context is more like covering politics. The issues, unfortunately, are too intertwined.

When starting out on his job, a beat reporter on education must first ascertain how much he has to cover. Will it be everything from elementary schools to colleges? Once defined, he needs to start, as on all beats, to learn who the players are: school board members, college presidents, important school principals, student groups, community groups, private educational think-tanks and government bodies funding education. He must discern the structure of funding- What sources does it come from, how much is it per year, it is

going up or down. He should also be aware of education programs that are working in the community.

Education institutes produce mountains of studies. Education reporters locate the best ones and read them. They try to see how their community shapes up with others in the country and region. Whenever educational reforms are introduced, as they often are, education reporters should track their progress.

Education reporters need also understand budgets. Is the budget increasing? What programs are getting more funding? What less? People will want to know because education is one of the most visible places where their taxes are spent.

Finally, the education beat is a fountain of feature stories on teacher, students and different projects. The nature of education is that it is constantly changing. It sometimes attracts many aggressive people who would like to change the world. For that reason alone, it is rarely a dull beat.

Business

Business reporting has taken off over the last decade and become significant area coverage for newspaper and magazines. It is one of the growth areas of journalism. As Pakistan's economy grows and private industry asserts itself, business reporting will have an even greater impact. Once though boring and often relegated to the back of the newspaper, business pages now attract thousands of readers

Business reporters are made, not born. Taking a few business courses is one-way to learn how markets operate and

how the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund function. Any developing country business writer must know the role these two bodies play in funding third world governments. He must understand the way in which stock markets work in Karachi, Lahore, London and New York, and how they effect Pakistan. Finally, he must understand simple economic cycles: inflation, recession, depression, government intervention, public and private owner ship, market, regulations and banking.

Business men and women are sometimes reluctant to talk to the press. They worry that misinterpretations by a reporter, read by stockholders and clients, could cause them to lose business. They can be quite sensitive. Reporters have to assure sources and interviewees that they will get the story right and that in most cases their quotes will not cause financial harm. When a business obviously has had problems and the reporter calls for an interview, he should point out he wants to get "their side" of the story.

* Build clip file of financial news.
* Read as much national and international financial news as possible, from banking magazine to *The Economist*.
* Learn how to analyze and explain facts, figures and complicated economic data.
* Read annual and quarterly reports from the government and major businesses.
* Develop sources within the business [illegible] banking communities.

* Stay in contact with professional associations representing various businesses, such as the Chamber of

Commerce, small business associations and other. They can be good sources of features and news.

* Follow the Karachi markets, economic growth in provinces, government policies and programs for business, decisions by international lending institutions.

Business stories are structured like any other news story. A feature lead can be more appealing than a straight lead in some cases, as frequently do writers for the *Wall Street Journal*. But overall, the inverted pyramid works best.

A cautionary note to business writers-- do not assume readers know anything about markets or business. It is a complex subject indeed, and one which must be fully explained for non-business readers. Even when using the term "gross national product," it is good practice to define just how economists arrive at this figure.

A Final Note

Events happen quickly on all beats. The reporter not on top of issues is a reporter who may lose his job. Stay fresh and competitive. Know the names faces, issues. Know the past of a person or institution so well you can guess the future with a decent level of accuracy. Knowledge is the key. The rewards of good reporting are front page stories, a few friends, a few enemies and an understanding of how the world works.

Reporter's Checklist

* Do you know the major figures and have you done your research on the subject?

* Have you been persistent in getting the news?

* Have you cultivated a few good sources?

* Did you write with enough clarity and insight so that a reader unfamiliar with the subject can comprehend the issues under discussion?

* Are you making the daily rounds via telephone or by foot?

* Are you attending the important meetings and functions?

* Can you after six months on the job, predict with a degree of accuracy what will happen?

FOUR

INTERVIEWING

Interviewing is the cornerstone of journalism. The ability to sit down in someone's office for an hour's conversation or to call someone on the telephone for a quick chat might not seem too difficult, but it can be. Interviewing is an art. Knowing how to ask the right questions, who to ask them of and when to ask them is a necessary ingredient of all good journalism.

Reporters interview people to gain information on a subject or a variety of subject. The people being interviewed are frequently called "newsmakers"-- politicians, government officials, entertainers, artistes, business people and military authorities. However, reporters also spend a good deal of time talking to lower-level government officials who remain nameless in news stories and common people who become involved in a news events such as natural catastrophes, terrorist hijackings, crime and warfare.

Good interviewing requires diligent preparation, thoughtful questions, amenable personal style and excellent listening skills. These traits can all be honed over time. The need for interviewing skills should not be underestimated, as John Brady points out in his book. *The Craft of Interviewing* (available at some American centers):

"No matter how fine a writer might be, his style is crippled if he is not an effective interviewer. The most valuable and original contributions in journalism today are usually obtained in interviews."

Initial Questions

Before interviewing anyone, a journalist must ask himself a few simple questions.

* How much information do I need form an interview?
* Will a telephone interview take care of what I need or should I make an appointment?
* How long will the interview take?

Telephone Versus In-person

When a reporter is not attending news conferences of meetings he can gather quotes and statistics through interviews done either on the telephone or in person. If he requires only a quote and a few statistics, he may opt to use the telephone. If pressed by deadlines he may have no choice but to call sources on the telephone for information.

Personal interviews demand time. Travel, especially in Pakistan's crowded cities, takes time. Waiting in the office for an interview takes more time. Having tea adds another half hour. The return to the office adds more minutes. What may take an hour and a half could be done on the telephone in 10 to 14 minutes if the connection goes through.

Personal interviews allow a closer look at individuals. The key is to determine which is more suitable -- an interview by telephone or in-person.

Telephone Tips

Manners are crucial to all interviewing. A journalist using the telephone should politely introduce himself to the subject's secretary available. The reporter should identify himself and ask if the subject has a few minutes to talk about an issue.

A journalist dealing with the same sources every day may not need to be so engaging, but he may have to do some coaxing and cooing with someone new to being interviewed.

"Listen, I forgot to ask you....."

Nonetheless never let a forgotten question go unanswered. If a story has a gap in it, call the interviewee back. Hedge a little by saying "My editor wanted me to straighten out this one detail about your stance on ....." Remember, the busier the subject, the tougher it is to get him back on the line.

The disadvantage of using a telephone in Pakistan and other developing countries is obvious. Connections are often poor and interrupted by static or cut off. Telephoning is at the reporter's risk but in a tight time squeeze, it is an efficient way to get quotes and facts.

In-Person

A journalist who wants to write a longer piece on an individual, political group or organization will want to do personal interviews. This is especially true if he wants to write a profile of a politician, an artist, writer, scientist or others in influential positions. Or he may have to interview someone at length for background information on a particular subject, such as politics, the economy, the environment or something else.

A few simple steps will ensure a good interview first, call the individual and set up a time for the interview. Secondly, study newspaper and magazine stories on your subject. Make a trip to the library for research. A rule of research is for every one minute spent in the interview spent 10 minutes on research. Another guideline comes from the American writer Cornelius Ryan, who once said "Never interview anyone without knowing 60 percent of the answers."

Third, write down the questions that you want to ask. List more than you need just in case the answers are short. Put a spin on some of the questions. Instead of asking a Pakistani politician "What's your opinion on Pakistan having a nuclear bomb"? relate it to today's events: "The US is pressurizing Pakistan to release information it has on construction of a nuclear bomb. Do you believe research should continue?"

The American political columnist Richard Reeves, author of *Passage To Peshawar*, says he asks politicians the same questions they've always been asked: if their new answers differ from the old, the story has taken a new turn.

Interviewing Structure

Once a reporter has reached a list of questions, he should organize them. He should use the following interviewing methods for longer interviews which will be for profile pieces or in-depth stories.

One technique is called the "funnel-shaped" interview. The interview starts with general questions about career, family and even childhood. Then the interview moves into turning points in his subject's life career goals, response to current issues and desires for the future. Finally, the difficult questions

start with referring to criticism made by observ and others. *Interviewing*

Start with tough questions and the interviewee is likely to think the reporter is out to get him. Later in the interview, pointed questions will go down easier and the interviewee will hopefully be more predisposed to give honest, thoughtful answers. (With politicians, do not count on it).

Another technique that can be employed is an "inverted funnel" interview which begins with a specific question and then moves to general issues. These work best with government officials and law enforcement personnel accustomed to dealing with the media. On a story about a government tax collector, a reporter's first question was "when you were auditing people's returns, did anyone try to bribe you?" This is elicited a 20 minute answer.

Questions fall into two categories, open-ended and close-ended. An open-ended question to a politician might be: "How can Pakistan reduce unemployment?" Close-ended questions take into account specifics such as "Last year you supported a measure for higher taxes. In a recent speech, though, you said "I will not support any tax hike. Why the change?

Tough Questions

Asking tough questions is never comfortable, but there are four ways to take the burden off the reporter.

* Start out playfully by saying "Let me play the devil's advocate" or "your major critic says ....."

* Use praise before criticism. "Your work in the past has [illegible] mbasted your latest

* Be polite and blame someone else for the criticism. (Always blame someone else.) "Your critics, Gen Khan, have said your military budget is wasteful and full of corrupt practices."

* Ask sensitive questions in a matter-of-fact way. Get to the point. "Do you have AIDS? "How do you defend your record after disclosures that you stole 500,000 rupees from the government?"

Follow-up Questions

During interviews several responses may come as surprises. If the interviewee brings up a topic a reporter had not thought of or offers a promising revelation, follow up. Probe deeper. If an interviewee begins to speak in generalities, request specifics. "We plan to improve education" is not a sufficient answer. Follow up with "How?" "How much will it cost?" "When will it be implemented?"

Dumb follow-up questions can elicit great answers. If reporters do not understand an issue or idea, neither will their readers. When your knowledge is thin in a certain area, admit it: "Look, I never understood science but I want to get this down correctly. Can we go over it one more time?" Good reporters ask questions until they understand an interviewee's stance or idea.

Some Interesting Questions

Tired of the same old question? Here are a few examples from the American television interviewer Barbara Walters. *Interviewing*

* Describe an average day from the time you wake up until you go to sleep.

* If you were recuperating in a hospital, who would you want in bed next to you, excluding a relative.

* What was your first job?

* When was the last time you cried? (Most politicians will look aghast at this one.)

* What was your first job?

* When was the last time your cried? (Most politicians will look aghast at this one.)

* Who was the first person you ever loved?

* What has given you the most pleasure this year?

When interviewing a politician, Ms. Walters suggests asking him how he handles disappointments when campaigning for office or pressures on his family; if he was a leader as a boy, who taught him the most about succeeding in life. Ask him if he feels an obligation to feel neat and trim, if he has a hobby and a hero.

Another reporter offers the following: Who was the person who most influenced your life? What book if any? What do you believe about people -- can they be changed for better or worse?

Problems

If the reporter agreed that the interview would be off-the-record, he cannot attribute quotes to the person that said them. He can use "sources said" "a Western diplomat said" and

use a quote, but never a name. In a small town, even a quote cannot be used because it is too easy to trace from where it

, especially a good

Some journalists will not listen to off-the-record or "on background" comments. It is better to listen. Once a reporter has the information, he can try to pry it out of someone else on -- the-record. A convincing reporter may even talk the interviewee into changing off into an on-the-record quote. But not often.

Before interviews, some people will ask that certain topics not be discussed. These may not be important to the article anyway. If they are, journalists will try to move slowly into those topics later in the interview. If a person does not want to talk about his childhood at the beginning of an interview, he may at the end. If he notices the back door approach, respect his rights. Play fair.

The End

To end an interview, several questions can be attempted. Ask first if anything was missed or if the interviewee has anything to add. A final question might be: "How would you like to be remembered?" "What are your future plans?" or "How would you like your epitaph to read?"

Many interviewees open up with good material once the reporter has closed his notebook. Reporters may just want to listen and afterward walk into the hall and quickly write down what was said.

A Final Note on Structure

"A good interview....begins with easy, rather mechanical questions; shifts to knottier, more thoughtful (favorite writers, future projects) and closes with a query that offers a ring of finality (one effective question: h *Interviewing* like to be remembered?)," writes Brady. "If the interview has a logical structure -- a sense of beginning, middle and end -- it will have an emotional structure as well. The interview as a whole will have an impact that exceeds the sum of its parts."

A Few Sample Interviews

A reporter has to write a feature on the expansion of the American Center in Peshawar. He had some problems knowing just what to ask the Center's director. After some thought he came up with the following:

* Can you give me the dimensions of the expansion?
* How much room will it add?
* How much will it cost?
* Is this the first expansion?
* How will this help researchers and library users?
* Was it hard to get funding?
* How big is the new center compared with the other in Pakistan?
* How many other centers are there in the country?
* How will the expansion help the center?

Now the reporter needed more background on the center and the director to fill out the piece. Later, he could

choose what to use. Better to have too much information than too little.

* How long has the American Center been in Peshawar?

* Has it always been at this location?

* What's the center's annual budget?

* How long have you, the director, been here and how old are you?

What do you think about Peshawar?

* What are your future goals for the center?

The interview will yield more than enough information about the center for a feature. Notice how the structure started out with the issue at hand and then went into background on the center and its place in the community, as well as the director's role. This would be an inverted funnel technique, where the reporter goes for specifics first.

Let's take a hypothetical example of an interview with a movie actress. These are some of the generic questions a reporter might ask:

* How did get involved in acting? Does anyone else in your family act?

* Were you frightened in the beginning about being seen on a huge screen?

* Did you ever doubt your talent?

* What are you working on right now?

* How does it compare with your other films?
* Is it a bigger challenge, a better role for you?
* What is your favorite role so far?
* What roles are you looking for?
* Who is the favorite director you've worked with and who would you like to work with?
* What about male co-stars?
* Do you believe the roles of women in film are too limiting?
* Can this be changed? How?
* What about your opinion of the movie industry itself. Pakistan films seem so escapist. Couldn't it be more realistic, better done?
* You are considered one of the country's most beautiful actresses. Were you always so beautiful? And what do you think of that assessment?
* Who are some of the actors and actresses you admire and why?
* Who are your influences?
* Are you planning to have a family someday? Can you have a film career and a family?
* Looking toward the future, will you be choosing your roles more carefully? Critics said you were not at the top of your form in your last film. What would you say to them?

* There has been gossip that you and Iqbal Akbar are carrying on a liaison. Is this true and do such rumors bother you?

* What are your future goals?

 red?

The ideal here was the funnel-shaped interview, starting out with an obvious question, working toward current projects, influence, a fun question (about her beauty) and moving into criticisms of her work as well as gossip.

The Day Of The Interview

Always show up to interviews on time. Make certain you have made arrangements for enough time. Dress well. Know what is appropriate, Western dress or Shalwar Kameez. If you have agreed to an hour interview, keep to it. If you need more time, always ask first. Do not wear out a welcome.

Note Taking Versus Tape Recoding

Interviewing people is fun, taking notes or transcribing tapes is not. Decide before an interview whether to tape or not to tape. That is the question! Two ways to judge if a tape would be helpful is to find out if the person talks rapidly and / or articulately. If your subject is not particularly eloquent, opt for note taking. Any pearls of wisdom can be duly recorded among statistics, sentence fragments, non - sequiturs.

Interviews no longer than 15 minutes to a half hour usually are not worth taping. Here is a discussion of the pluses and minutes of both forms of recording information.

1. Note Taking

Roughly 70 percent of what most people say comes out twisted, contorted, rambling, tangential and confused. When taking notes, reporters try to eliminate pointless sections of the interview by not recording them. It's a good idea for reporters, though, to continue to look as though they were writing in these passages. When an interviewee sees a reporter put down a pen, he often loses his train of thought. (He may also realize what he's saying is not relevant--a blessing, perhaps.)

When a subject begins to ramble, the reporter can often go back to any unfinished quotes and quickly complete them before forgetting what was said. A good idea is to catch up when a subject tails off into something usable.

Another point is to have the subject spell out difficult names or technical terms. When interviewing scientists, doctors and other people in highly technical fields, it is best to go through the spellings of their lingo.

Each journalist develops his own method of speed writing unless he knows formal shorthand. Beginning reporters should learn or condense words like "the", "that", to "t" and so in. For words used over and over again, such as "Pakistan," a simple "P" will tell the reporter the interviewee said "Pakistan." Another method used is to record the first and last letters of words. The context of a piece tells what word was used in most case. However, this method sometimes leaves the reporter wandering around news rooms asking "What starts in c and ends in t and keeps people warm in winter? Ah, right, a coat!"

2. Tape Recording

Recording interviews on cassette frees the hands and the mind. It allows the reporter to think through a subject's answers instead of busily copying them down. In addition to the list of prepared questions, a journalist with a recorder has

more time to devise follow-up questions which might get lost in the note taking shuffle.

Tape recording frees the reporter, too, to pick up facial expressions, body language, the surroundings and the verbal pauses.

Whenever interviewing well-known writers or politicians, using a tape recorder is a wonderful advantage. These men and women have a flowing, witty, lively vernacular that journalists will want to convey to readers.

Tape recorders also give proof someone said what he said, just in case an editor wants proof. It frees journalist to interview in cars and restaurants. It can also be used for investigative journalism, when you have the quote on tape it might make a difference.

The drawbacks of taping are twofold: mechanical, malfunction and transcription. Weak batteries destroy a taped interview. Check batteries before starting the machine. (Or else, as some journalists have found out, they must play the tape at full blast through a stereo system to transcribe it.)

Transcribing is a long, painful, boring process of stopping and starting the tape to capture quotes. Much of most interviews can be summarized instead of quoted, but transcribing still takes time, two hours for a one-hour tape on average.

A few cautionary hints: stay away from restaurant kitchens, factories and other noisy places. Always ask permission to tape before doing so. Have a note-pad and pen available. Do not forget to turn the tape over when the side ends.

The smaller the recorder, the easier to transport and the less distracting to the interviewee. A foot pedal, which can stop and

start the tape automatically, can also be purchased at electronics stores.

If All Else Fails

If a subject declines to be interviewed on tape and forbids note taking. A journalist has a major problem. The American writer Truman Capote faced this difficulty when writing his classic *In Cold Blood*, a harrowing account of the murders of a Kansas farm family.

The killers refused to let him tape or take notes, so he trained himself to be able to listen to an hour-long interview and then recite it word for word. Or so he says…

Press Conference Questions

The least comfortable place to interview someone is a press conference. Reporters only get to ask on average one question each. Some reporters feel acute pressure when asking questions at an event where television cameras and the eyes of colleagues are upon them.

Most press conference questions are thoughtful and deal with issues under discussion. Journalists asking the questions do not voice their own opinions. They do not ask five-minute questions. They are not rude. They try to phrase their questions as simply as possible so the subject will not be confused.

Most press conferences questions move from questions about the subject's opening statement to other topics in the news. Questions frequently center on getting more details out of what a politician or public official has announced. The idea behind the press conference is to clarify issues, and quotes.

When, and if, the press conference organizers allow for an open period of questioning. Reporters are free to inquire

about a variety of issues. Journalists wanting to put a prime minister on the spot may ask questions such as: "In 1985, you said inflation would be contained at five percent a year. Why haven't you been able to control inflation?" Or: "You promised to eliminate bribery and corruption in your government. But we have seen no evidence of this. Can you give us some examples of how it has been reduced? Is it still a priority of your administration?"

An American editor once advised his staff to save the best question for after the press conference. Rather than announce good question with all the other reporters present, it can be wise to catch the subject just after he leaves the podium. This only works if the reporter has an excellent working relationship with the subject and knows that he can get the quotes after the interview. Otherwise ask your questions in the conference.

On-site interviewing

On-site interviewing takes place after a meeting, fire, shooting, tragedy or public announcement of some kind. If a disturbance breaks out at a speech, for example, journalists try to get quotes from eyewitnesses. A simple question at the scene of a fire like: "What did you see happen?" should provide a reporter with sample information.

Writing about tragedies such as fires and airplane crashes are a hard part of journalism. So is interviewing the victims and the members of his family. To try to ask a question of a mother who has just lost a son is painful, but the quote can add color and depth to a story. And often these people, caught in horrible circumstances, are looking for someone to talk to. A reporter can usually get some good quotes if he shows some sympathy and does not press the subject too much.

Interviewing people after a meeting or a press conference entails less hardship. Journalists gather quotes and opinions after decisions have been made. "Why did you vote against construction of the new roadway that was passed today by the provincial council?" is a sample question commonly heard after a civic meeting involving a roadway. The idea behind the question is to ascertain a politician's support or rejection of an issue and his reasons for his position.

Since reporters covering meetings are often under deadlines, they are wiser to limit themselves to the issues discussed in the meeting. If time permits, many reporters use a meeting to gather information on other issues under review. If a province is studying a proposal for more public housing but no one at the meeting mentions the issue, a reporter can still inquire afterwards when the study will be completed.

On-site interviewing is no different than other kinds of interviewing except there is a limited time to ask and record the answers to questions. The key is to get to the point, keep the questions brief and keep at it if the answers are not clear.

On-site interviewing is no different than other kinds of interviewing except there is a limited amount of time to ask and record the answers to questions. The key is to get to the point, keep the questions brief and keep at it if the answers are not clear.

Preparing The Story

Newspapers have policies regarding quotes. Some editors will allow reporters to clean up the grammar of interviews. Changing an "a" to a "the" will, in most cases, not damage the integrity of the newspaper or the subject.

Untwisting syntax can be done through "paraphrasing"--explaining what the subject said by summation, not by direct quote. Journalists put what the subject said in phrases readers can understand.

When an interviewee speaks colorfully, quoting directly is appropriate. Capturing someone's way of talking can reveal as much about him as any reporter's observations. This is not an invitation to quote a subject or talks in jumbled sentences, but to quote something that has been said in a striking manner.

After a long interview, subjects may want to see the story before it is published. American reporters generally never give the subject an opportunity to see the story before it is printed. Subjects, if given a chance, will forever change quotes and observations.

A better practice is to offer the subject an opportunity to check over the facts via a phone call. On medical stories, for instance checking over the description of a certain procedure with a doctor is not a bad idea, especially if it is the one the reporter interviewed. The same goes for engineering. But quotes and it is best never to change them.

Reporter's Checklist

* What information is needed? Will a phone call do or should a time be set up to meet in person?
* Have you done the required background research?
* Have you written down the questions, especially for long interviews?
* Does the interview have a structure?

* Will you tape or take notes?
* Are you wearing decent clothes and have you requested enough time?
* Is the tape recorder working?
* Have you followed up important points?

FIVE

FEATURE WRITING

Feature stories are the spice of every newspaper. Between news of politics, crime, the economy and inevitable natural disasters stand features about people, places and things. They may not have immediate news value, but they tell stories of interest about the tragic, funny, heroic, mundane, familiar or fantastic. The best of them have the timeless quality of a good book or musical composition. They can come the closest to literature or expository writing in newspapers.

To the writer, features present a number of challenges. They allow writers to take off the shackles of daily news reporting--with its emphasis on the inverted pyramid--and write with style, wit, irreverence, grace and poignancy on almost any topic. The techniques of literature involving dialogue, description and interpretation can be incorporated into a story. So can irony and humor. So, on occasion, can opinion.

Feature writing is by no means easy. It looks easy. Tell a story with a few quotes and that is it. Not quite. Problems arise because the feature has no standard structure, a potential hurdle for a journalist accustomed to news stories. Others are put off by the lack of weight that features carry. They are not front page news in most cases nor do they involve the important events of the day. Yet, for those with a yearning to write creatively, there is no better place to start than a feature staff.

Finding Ideas

The greatest lesson a feature writer can learn is that nearly everything can be made into a story if the writer knows how to observe, question organize information and write. The most unlikely feature ideas can yield terrific feature stories. *The Chicago Reader*, a weekly newspaper, once printed an excellent 19,000 word piece on beekeeping. *The Atlantic* magazine ran a short, colorful account of a study of neighborhoods and garbage in an Arizona city. The list goes on and on.

Editors are naturally a good source of ideas, but feature writers often come up with their best ideas on their own. They hear like musicians, see like artists. They have a strong addiction to reading, researching, listening and living.

Friends, relatives and newspaper themselves are great sources of ideas. A friend tells you, the feature writer, about a trend in his field of business. A potential feature. A relative tells you of a neighbor who studies the manuscripts of lost Moghul writers in his spare time. Another feature. A bumper sticker describes a group of activists lobbying in Islamabad for funding for children injured in sweat shops. Yet another feature.

The key is to keep your eyes and ears open. Check into everything of interest you hear. Look at the business pages of the telephone directory, or the daily meeting of interest you hear. Look at the business pages of the telephone directory, or the daily meeting schedule newspapers publish. Any civic groups dealing with problems your paper has not covered? Alcoholism? Overeating?

Look for trends. What is everyone wearing this year? What colors? What kind of parties are they throwing? What kind of cars are they driving? Attending what events? A good example of trend piece was the story by a Lahore daily on the tradition of having brass bands at weddings. Trend pieces are great fun to write.

Listen in on conversations at restaurants. Read other newspapers. Check the small items which do not get much coverage. There may be more of a story than the news reporter noticed. (This is especially true of murders). Read the magazines, too. Even the advertisements. They may trigger an idea. Peter Greenberg, a well-known travel writer in the US once gave a speech on freelance writing in which he claimed to peruse 16 daily newspapers a day in search of ideas. A few of these stolen ideas became major magazine pieces.

In New York they say there are a thousand stories in the naked city. The same goes for Lahore, Karachi, Jakarta, Bangkok. Street peddlers, auto rickshaw drivers, street barbers, poetry readers, child prostitutes, drug abusers among the rich would all make good features. So would interviews with artists, poets, musicians, people with unusual hobbies or weird jobs.

Structure

Telling a reporter how to write a feature is like trying to tell a budding novelist how to write a book. There are tricks of the trade, but no surefire formulas, unlike the inverted pyramid in newswriting. Skill comes with experience, with knowing the subject and knowing how to attract and keep a reader's interest.

If composing a story is in a small way similar to constructing a building, feature writing brings out the architect

ually in the writer's head--providing a start, body and finish to the piece. Rewriting is a must, much more so than news writing. Feature stories take more creativity. Understanding where to start and where to end comes with experience, but the advantages of features are that they allow writers a chance to write more freely than in any other form of journalism.

The Lead

An introductory paragraph, or lead, can start out in many ways. A key to a good lead, however, is the human element. Making grand generalizations about something does not make a good lead. Bringing the subject matter down to a human level will help the story connect with the readers--through anything from humor to description.

A lead, of course, need not always involve a human being, as a few of he following samples will illustrate. But it can help when appropriate. Here are a few common methods used by good writers to begin stories.

Description

This lead gives the writer an opportunity to describe a person, scene or event. Through colorful prose, the writer will attempt to bring to life what something looked like. For example, an *IHT* writer began a piece on the legendary American movie actress Bette Davis in the following way:

> Bette Davis is 80, a frail little woman with hollowed cheeks. She stands on her spindly legs as erect as a grenadier at attention, her eyes alert. She resembles her portrayal on the screen

> of the haughty Mrs. Skeffington advancing years in stride.

Readers learn Ms. Davis' age, her looks and how she resembles a characters she once played in a movie. The lead's weakness is that the writer assumes everyone has seen the movie, which is not always the case. Another writer, from a British newspaper, began in this way a piece on a woman who planned to swim Lake Ontario between the United States and Canada.

> It's a strange sight. Four Canadian marine policemen, bundled in fleece-lined jackets worn over sweaters, shirts and long johns, watching in awe as the swimmer enters the frigid water of Lake Ontario, the Toronto skyline behind her. It's 8 a.m. and a hill wind blows across the giant lake. "Will we have to pull her out?" worries an office, gloved hands flexing. "Ordinary human beings die in five minutes in this water."

Again, the writer sets up the reader by first passing a judgment. "It's a strange sight" and then fulfills the promise of the lead with a description of a woman in a bathing suit being eyed by warmly dressed Canadian officials on a cold winter day.

Dialogue

As the above lead shows, dialogue can be effectively incorporated into a lead with description. Dialogue gives readers an idea of how someone talks or of a scene and just how the participants reacted. An officer reacts in the above lead with consternation. *Time* magazine's Martha Smilgis,

writing about British publishing baron Robert Maxwell,

: telephone.

> The telephone console resting on the gargantuan round table boasts 90 buttons, and the man seated before it seems bent on using them all at once. His plumb fingers, the nails freshly manicured with clear polish, poke impatiently at the instrument. Visitors flow into the office in a steady stream yet all the while the man continues a separate dialogue with the console. "He wouldn't be a bureaucrat unless he was in a meeting." He booms into the speaker in a British-accented baritone that is powerful yet velvety. "I want a man, not the message." Poke. A button away, he barks in German, "Cease officers. It is 400 million locked up for duration. Poke. In French, he issues his son, Ian, 31, to Paris: Poke. Now, in English, he asks another son, Kevin, 29, a workaholic like his father and heir apparent to the empire, "How is the market?"

In one paragraph, the reader sees in description and dialogue Maxwell's manic style, fluency in languages and quick phone manners.

Anecdotal

Features, especially dealing with people, can begin with a story. If a millionaire was once a street urchin, the lead might contrast his life now. A writer for the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* effectively tried this style:

> At about the age of ten, a young boy, Riaz, went to the theatre of China Pehalwan at Ferozabad an implored that he wanted to be a had a good voice and had picked up singing from the 78 RPM discs which were played on mechanically operated gramophones. Alam Lohar, who was at the time performing for the company, sensing the enthusiasm took the lad to sing. He did and was good enough to be engaged at Rs. 3 a night. Later he formally became Shagird of Alam Lohar, who gave him the name Bashir Lohar.
>
> In the same theatre company 14 years later Bashir Lohar performed for 50 Rs. per show. Now he has established his own company.

The lead might have been shorter and slightly more engaging a few commas were added that did not appear in the original--but overall it provides a concept of the contrast lead.

The anecdotal or "story" lead can also take a significant moment in the interviewee's or organization's past. It could be turning point in someone's life. A death. A career change. A lifestyle change. A remembrance.

After Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's election in 1988, *Time* ran a story on her which stated:

> "Standup to the challenge. Fight against overwhelming odds. Overcome the enemy. "Such were the words of encouragement that Benazir Bhutto remembers her father, Zulfikar, the late prime minister, teaching her when she was just a child. "In the stories my father told us over and over again," she writes in her just published autobiography, "good triumphs over evil".

For Bhutto, 35, last week must have seemed like
childhood

Again, the quotes set up the reader for the result: the elections of Benazir Bhutto. Her father's childhood added up to an elections victory.

General

The general lead comes right out with the issue of the feature story. It may begin with a sample but it usually gets to the point right away. From *Dawn* comes a story about child labor which goes for the jugular:

By the age of ten they are making fireworks in India, bricks in Pakistan, carrying loads in Bangladesh, knotting carpets in Nepal and working on tea plantations in Sri Lanka. The children of SAARC countries share a common fate--plunged prematurely into the adult world, their thin frames are taxed with long hours and poor food, physical abuse and, not seldom, hazardous work conditions.

There is no question what issues the article will raise. The writer could have started out describing the average day of a child but he chose instead to present a sampling of child labor in Asia. It proved a good technique.

Here is another example, this time from a *New York Times* on decoding the Mayan language.

> Using the tools of linguistic analysis and with modern languages as guides, scholars are making rapid progress in deciphering the ancient Mayan language.

Again, the lead tells readers in general terms what the piece is about.

Humor

Starting a piece with a little wit or humor, perhaps a funny story, is yet another method to get into a piece. These are difficult leads which may or may not work, depending on the hard-to-define quality called a "sense of humor". Confident writers can try a light touch to begin with. P.J. O'Rourke, one of America's most popular comic writers, wrote a piece on the Afghan war in a 1989 issue of *Rolling Stone* with this lead:

> We took a shellacking in Nam. The Ayatollah handed us our hat. Congress put the fix in, and we had to take a dive in Nicaragua. We got our clock cleaned in Lebanon. And everybody laughed at us for picking on Grenada.

But that was then, this is now. The U.S.A is back, kicking butt and taking names. We went head-to-head with the entire comic Russians in the world, right in their own back yard, and sent them home, tail twixt knees. And we did this with clear-sighted policy objectives guts, determination and just a little help from 6 million dead, maimed and displaced Afghans.

O'Rourke jumps all over the globe to show American policy failures. By using popular American cliches "clock cleaned: and "Kicking butt" he gives readers some humor before reminding them of the cost--to someone else, to the Afghans.

The Guardian's Maev Kennedy offers a rare glimpse of a butler training school.

> The first sentence alone makes us want to keep reading. The only problem with the piece is that s another nine utler school.

News Peg

A feature can be tied into the news of the day. This is commonly called a "news feature." during the 1988 election, for example, feature writers in Pakistan wrote about a 185-year old woman who was carried to the pools by her two grandsons. That age is hard to believe, but the piece made good reading anyway. Another story, reprinted in a preceding paragraph, tells of wallchalkers at work. During the American election, readers were treated to news features about cities the candidates visited, their families, their wardrobes, staff and hometowns.

Other news features might deal with an even or person visiting a town or city. For instance, a visit from Benazir Bhutto might elicit an article on preparations by the city for her visit.

In a news feature the first paragraph does not have to have a straight news lead. However, within the first few paragraphs the writer tries to establish the story with events of the day. A writer for *Dawn* opened the wallchalker piece like this:

> As electioneering picks up and the polling date draws nearer, amidst the cut and thrust of political alliances, the work of wallchalkers, banner writers and hoarding makers has increased manifold.

> Writing on walls, display of banners and hoardings is far cheaper than publicity through the newspapers of wide circulation. Candidates keen to contest the polls have move(*Feature Writing* get their place on the city walls. Every inch of the walled city is painted with some sort of election slogan. Most city walls too are no exception. Here the great demand for the wallchalkers who have spread even to the rural constituencies of Lahore.

Quote

If a quote from a story is a grabber--it captures an issue or is particularly colorful or humorous--it can be used as a lead. *The Guardian's* Alan Combes used a quote effectively to start a piece which we will look at in greater detail, on a wheelchair marathon in London.

> "Applaud us for our sporting achievement not out of sympathy," is the message from wheelchair athlete Chris Hallam to spectators at Sunday's London Marathon. More wheelchair competitors will line up than ever before, and the oddity is that the fastest man in the field gets peanuts compared with the winner of the foot race.

The Body

Arranging any story is the hard part, Arranging the details and quotes into a readable order is a difficult task, particularly when the writer has great number of quotes, statistics and details. Writing down an outline for a long feature

might help, or simply trying a few rough drafts is recommended.

If you, the writer, are trying a descriptive lead, do not

the story is about. ad half way through a piece to get to the background or introduce the subject. Do not play with the reader's attention span or he is liable to turn the page. Writers can delay the reason for the story until the sixth paragraph or so--and longer in magazine articles--but they risk losing a few readers by this style.

Each feature piece has a beginning, middle and end. A common method is, like a news story; try to place important or interesting elements first. Introducing a topic, then following up with a quote, description or dialogue is a good technique. Weak feature writers avoid generalities by giving solid examples of every point they wish to make.

Writing style is especially important in feature writing. Writers have to compose sentences filled with active tenses, vigorous prose, colorful details and important statistics. A topic, if inviting, can be treated in an irreverent manner. Or a serious one. Understand the meaning of "tone" in an article and once you establish it, keep it through out the piece. Do not go from somber to humorous too quickly, and vice versa.

A list of feature writing tips would include notes on background, color, quotes and dialogue and endings. The careful reader will discover that in the leads section discussed earlier, many of these same traits cropped up. Now, those examples of leads can be incorporated into the text.

Background

Do not forget to inject, somewhere in the first six paragraphs, some background on the group, individual or trend under discussion. Giving a person's age and noting when he

got into a specific field will allow readers to learn more about him: when did the movie star get his big break? When was the women's group formed? When did a politician first run for office and what are considered his achievements? These are some of the questions that must be ans paragraph of background.

Every individual of feature writer introduced should be allotted a paragraph or two or background depending on his or her importance to the story. *New York Time's* reporter Alex Jones captured a newspaper mogul's son in this passage:

> He was also a reckless, profane and overbearing personality, according to Sallie (his sister) and others who were close to him. He loved to take risks, as through the family's seamless lifestyle had cheated him of being rested. As a young man he delighted in fast driving and in trips to Las Vegas, where his losses sometimes forced him to make urgent calls to non-family executives who managed the Bingham holdings, asking them to replenish his bank account and not tell his parents. He was one of the Louisville businessmen who originally syndicated Muhammad Ali, then a young Louisville boxer named Cassius Clay.

Not all features need this kind of detail. A short sentence or clause can be enough background, depending on space considerations. "Massoud, 40, wrote seven mystery novels before penning his new television play. The shorter space, the less background. Also, for famous people with whom the readers are familiar, the background section of the story can be brief one paragraph highlighting major achievements.

Color

Show, do not tell. "He is a rich man" is not as good as "he owns two Mercedes Benz' and earns a million rupees as a

An introduction to reporting in Pakistan ive features solidity.

Generalities rarely work. A paragraph from a feature in *The Frontier Post* provides look at weak feature writing.

> Most trucks plying on roads in Pakistan are painted with different kinds of pictures spread all over the vehicle. It appears that no surface that can hold paint is spared. These paintings have their own special art, peculiar to these vehicles. The designs are interesting, intriguing, colorful and attractive.
>
> There are basically five kinds of designs--floral, mythological, portraits, landscape and animal life. They can come in combinations, too. Flowers are an important feature of drawing on trucks. The rose appears to be a favorite among drivers. Landscapes or portraits are usually bordered with stylized flowers.

This is lifeless prose, the writer telling the reader, not showing. Show, do not tell—advice from the Great Russian novelist Tolstoy. The reporter of this piece gives a laundry list of what appears on trucks, not what they look like. It reads like a term paper.

Contrast this "color" writing with a sample from Philadelphia Enquirer reporter Steve Twomey's 1987 Pulitzer Prize winning feature about life on an aircraft carrier:

> The aircraft fly off a deck that is 1,047.5 feet long, not the biggest in the Navy, an honor that belongs to the Enterprise at 1,100 feet. But if stood on end, America's flight deck would be almost twice as high as William Penn's hat on city Hall. It is 252 feet wide. All tol *Feature Writing* covers 4.6 acres, an expanse coated with black, coarse, non-skid paint. The crew has plenty of straightaway to jog in the hot sun when the planes aren't flying. Five lengths is a mile.

The piece contains at least 50 or 60 more statistics about the size, cost, personnel and missile capacity of an aircraft carrier. To give it a scale his readers would understand, he pointed out that the flight deck is twice as long as the Philadelphia City hall is high. In just a few sentences, he gives the size and scope of the aircraft carrier.

Quotes and Dialogue

Just as a feature can start out with a quote or a piece of dialogue, so can a body of a feature. Quotes should come from a variety of sources, if possible. A story about literacy, for example, would include quotes from government officials, international experts, illiterate people, non-government officials, international experts, illiterate people, non-governmental organizations working with them and any one else with information.

As noted in previous chapters, quotes add texture to the facts and background of a story, giving us how people feel who are involved in an event feel. They show us how they talk and think. ("I'm bloody upset with my treatment by the other Parliament members".) A quote might also elaborate in idea.

("With strong fiscal management the program I outlined will bring down the national debt in four years.") Give us a turning point in someone's life ("When I heard my first concerto at the age of three I decided to become a violinist".) Express an

:act the way it did.")

Dialogue is much more difficult to write. It must serve some purpose in the feature--illustrating how someone speaks and reacts to others. A dialogue about the weather will not work, a dialogue between a cricketer and his manager might be perfect, showing how the two interact.

From the *Chicago Tribune* comes an example of a profile on Pamela Zekman, a crack investigative reporter on a local news show. The prolific writer captures Zekman's attempts to get a security guard company owner to speak about the problem of criminals being hired as security guards.

> "But that's the point I want to make, she is saying to the owner of a security-guard company who hired and assigned a man to guard a printing plant without knowing that the man had been convicted of armed robbery. The state of Illinois is two years behind in running the background checks it is legally required to do on security guards --- some 9,000 guards behind, Zekman will claim. She's also finding murderers, rapists, armed robbers, drug addicts and psychotics among those who have been given guns and assigned as guards to everything from hospital pharmacies to Chicago's federal buildings. "Why won't you be interviewed?" she asks the security-guard company owner. "There are lots of companies involved. I have

interviewed many of them," she says into the phone. "That's exactly the point. Nobody in the state Department of Registration and Education notifies these companies even after their employees have been arrested for violent crimes. Your company is not alone.

"Hmmmmmmmmm? Yeah. Uh huh. Wouldn't everyone like you want some mechanism in place so you don't hire a murderer? Or, if your employee notifies you?

"No, a guy in your association is not somebody I can talk to ..... it didn't happen to him. It happened to you. I need you saying it."

Zekman hangs up. The fish got off the hook, at least temporarily.....

Anecdotes

Stories about subjects add color and depth to features. A reporter writing a profile might call several people for quotes and any stories that might shed light on the subject's character. It could be a childhood story or something more recent. Ideally, the story tells us an important detail about the subject's history and character.

A *Newsweek* cover story on Florence Griffith Joyner, the sprinter Olympic gold medalist, contained several anecdotes, among them one from the athlete's sister.

"She told on me thousands of time," says sister Sissy. "I never told on her. She used to blackmail me and say 'I won't tell if you wash

> my dishes'. I'd wash them three nights in a row and on the fourth, she'd tell on me anyway. But I loved her so much."

This little story hints that Mrs. Griffith was a good and

 ghtening the feature.

The Ending

Features, unlike news stories, can have an ending-- a quote or phrase that adds touch of finality. It can wrap up the theme of the piece or of an individual's life. It should not be so intriguing as to throw the reader off, wondering what the subject said. Or, just like a news stories, it can end with least important aspects of a story.

Many features end with a quote. On a piece about the wife of an associate of the Great Russian ruler Lenin, a *Washington Post* writer used the following quote: "he suffered because he thought he had destroyed my life," she says softly. "Oh, he loved me so."

In *The Guardian* piece on wheelchair racers, a quote from a racer appears.

> He's trained single-mindedly for this year's London (race) and knows just who his opponents are. "The one I fear most is a double amputee from Canada named Ted Vince. He won last year in just over two hours. But if things go right, I'm planning on one hour 55, and he'll have to beat that."

It's no use inventing a great ending just for the sake of one. Do not force it. End on a less important details if

necessary. In an interview piece on Pakistani film director Jamil Dehlavi, who lives in London, the writer ended in piece simply:

> Meanwhile, in unavoidable pauses as he negotiates financing for more films, Dehlavi is returning to his childhood interest, pa

Profile Writing

Profiles of individuals go beyond simple interviews and feature stories. They are long, analytical and stylishly written pieces appearing in magazines, newspaper magazine supplements and occasionally in newspaper feature sections. Although profiles are rarely seen in Pakistan, they are staples of many American magazines available at local American centers. Many times, profiles will cover several pages, run several thousand words long. Profiles mainly center on well-known figures, but they can be on unknowns--the infamous--if the subject is compelling enough. Or, they can be on an unknown subject who holds an important job but has little public exposure.

How does a profile differ from an interview piece on a subject? In several ways. First, the writer composing the profile might spend several hours or days with the subject, trying to get as close a glimpse as possible of his work routine, contacts, interests and lifestyle. Several interviews will be done at different times and places.

An American freelance writer I once spoke to said that when interviewing famous people, he requests six interviews because in the first three subject will always tell him what they've told every other interviewer. In the last three they

begin fully to reveal themselves. Profile writers can at least ask to spend a day with the subject and check back at other times, perhaps during public appearances, for more color.

While a newspaper reporter might just go interview subject and go back to the office and write the story, a profile writer goes further. He interviews people who are close to the subject: friends, family, colleagues, and adversaries. To do a piece on an actor, a writer would talk to the director of the film he currently stars in and with co-stars, agents, wife, former girlfriends, male friends, parents, children. For a piece on a politician, the reporter would talk to political leaders of his party, the adversary party, leaders of the government body he serves, constituents of his district (neighborhood groups), old friends, wife, office staff and children.

Profiles involve more research, too. For the profile of that actor, the reporter would look at his previous movies and how they fared critically and financially. If the actor had done some writing, the reporter would read it. And he would inquire about what the writing meant to the actor. The same goes for the politician. The writer would discover all about him by studying his voting record and public utterances, even his performance in high school and college. (Was he politically active?)

Through research and interviewing, writers learn the turning points of an individual's life. They learn how his ideas formed and what helped form them. His defeats and successes will al reveal clues to his personality and his standing among peers.

After the interviewing and research, writing begins. It is not like news writing. Profiles contain descriptions of an

individual's behavior, history, influence, personal quirks. Does he raise his eyebrows a lot? A small detail, but one which a profile writer would include. Is he wound up all the time or laid-back. Profiles weave a tapestry of a person's life. Quotes, observations and history come together into a cogent description of an individual that should, by the end, lead readers to believe they know the person.

(For organizational ideas, refer to the subheadings in this chapter. A good profile is a good feature. It is arranged in the same way, there is just more of everything--dialogue, quotes, description, background and comment from others.)

Quicker on wheels

First man home in the London Marathon on Sunday is likely to be not a runner but a handicapped competitor in a wheelchair, reports.

Alan Combes

Line-up at the start of the 1988 London Marathon

PHOTOGRAPH DAVID SILLITOE

"Applaud us for our sporting achievement, not out of sympathy, is the message from wheelchair athlete Chris Hallam to spectators at Sunday's London Marathon. More wheelchair competitors will line up than ever before, and the oddity is that the fastest man in the field gets peanuts compared with the winner of the foot race.

For the top wheelchair competitors are much faster than the runners. Forget all those pictures of the leading runners streaking past the disabled competitors: the top wheelchair men are way out in front. The world marathon record for a wheelchair is one hour 36 minutes, compared to just under two hours seven on foot.

A tight camaraderie exists among the wheelies who have so much more in common than the runners. Most of them have suffered a disabling illness or accident which dramatically altered their lives; they share problems of income, mobility, and equipment.

And they have to rely on the help of an ablebodied person simply to get to the start line.

Peter Carruthers, 13th last year, has made a virtue and a business out of his paraplegia. Under the name Bromakin he manufactures 200 sporting wheelchairs a year, exporting to the States and the Middle East. The average cost of a marathon chair is 1,500 pounds, and 12 months is its predicted lifespan.

As in the main event, female wheelchair competitors are playing an increasing part. In 1998 Karen Davidson took two hours 41 minutes, and came in the first 20. More women than ever will be in the disabled section on Sunday. Chris Hallam is the best known British disabled competitor. The cameras usually pick him out at the start: dark glasses, long hair tied back, massive tanned biceps. He won in 1987. "I've always been mad on sort, even before my accident. I was lifeguard at Cwmbram pool and I used

to get up at six in he morning to go for a run. I was serious swimmer as well."

He had a motorcycle crash eight years ago; his spine snapped and he found himself in Stoke Mandeville trying to patch his life together. Despite being a paraplegic, he couldn't exist without sport, so they encouraged him as part of his rehabilitation to get involved again with swimming. His immersion was total and in the 1984 Paralympics the took the gold in the breast stroke.

"And hardly anybody heard about it. I hoped by achieving a gold, I might get noticed and attract sponsorship." that was when he decided to become a marathon man, an unfamiliar notion in Britain at that time, but catching on in the States.

"I wanted some independence — a hard thing to achieve in a wheelchair, but sport offered the best chance." Chris Hallam spent all of February in the US, racing in Florida and Los Angeles. "The roadside crowds in America are generous with their applause, and you can win $5000 for taking a major marathon title in a wheelchair." The London disabled winner gets 400 pounds in subventions, but this year's new sponsor, ADT, has promised a new deal. Money is a problem for all wheelchair athletes. In order to travel they must rely on a compound of sponsorship, free accommodation when abroad, cash from sporting trusts, and their own life savings. I once asked Chris Hallam if he had a job, Sardonic wit came to the fore: "I'm an apprentice beach bum, on as His obsession is with working out. At Owmbran pool they clear a lane for him to practice alone. If he's not doing that, he'll be out on the roads. There are comprehensive safety problems; Hallam follows the same route at the same time, and he travels on the same side as traffic. "I have to guard against surprising people. On roads around Cwmbran now, they're used to seeing me."

At home he has a treadmill with a computer strapped to the front of his chair which feeds back speed and mileage. "But the treadmill can't really prepare you for the hills. Going uphill you can slow a wheelchair down to 3 mph as against 15 mph on the flat. Downhill speeds can take you up to 30. Then there's the wind: you offer a lot more resistance in a chair than on foot."

He's trained single-mindedly for this year's London and knows just who his opponents are. "The one I fear most is a double amputee from Canada named Ted Vince. He won last year in just over two hours. But if things go right, I'm planning on one hour 55m and he'll have to beat that."

"*Guardian*" 20-04-89

A LOOK AT A FEATURE STORY

"Quicker on wheel is a cute, tightly written features story that is standard fare in the West. The event was wheelchair race--something unique and rarely seen. The lead opens with a quote telling the name of the event and the time it was held. It moves on to the interesting fact that wheelchair athletes can whip runners in a race.

The third paragraph gives more information, in a general way, about the wheelchair runners and their "tight camaraderie". The fourth paragraph gives readers an example of on a wheel chair athlete who sells specialized chairs for racing. The fifth paragraph introduces women and than goes back to Chris Hallman, who spoke the quote in the lead. This section could have used a few transitions; the topics go from one to another without any introduction.

After a quote from Hallman, the reporter gives background on his life and follows it up by another quote describing how his first achievement was overlooked. Hallman then decided to become a marathon man and went to the United States. The feature then describes the money problems Hallman faced, his training routine interspersed with quotes to substantiate the various points the writer is making.

Reporter's Checklist

* Have you tried to find interesting story ideas through different sources?
* Have you done some research on the subject?
* Have interviews been set up with the right people, and questions formulated?

* Do you have a good idea for a catchy lead?
* Does the piece contain description, quotes, background on the individuals cited in the piece?
* Does the piece capture a reader's attention and does the writing have a style?
* Does the piece tell a good story and end well (if possible)?

SIX

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Investigative reporting in Pakistan and other developing countries is hypothetical. The press is certainly not entirely free to investigate the affairs of state and commerce. In India, Great Britain and other powerful countries the press has the ability to probe malfeasance in the corridors of power. But strong press laws in Pakistan have continually hampered anything that could be remotely considered investigative reporting.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto plans to change this situation by freeing the press and dissolving the National Press Trust. Time will tell if she can accomplish these goals. The chapter will have a greater use in the future when the press, hopefully, can expose corruption, bribery and other problems slowing Pakistan's political maturation and economic growth.

All reporting is by nature investigative. The idea of investigative reporting is to take basic reporting several steps further. These projects can take months, weeks, even up to a year. Investigative reporters probe an issue or subject in great detail, often revealing corruption, graft, governmental incompetence or fraud. Military kickbacks and heroin smuggling are always apt topics. In Pakistan 1,000 investigative reporters could remain busy for years.

In the West, the stories of investigative reporters have changed societies when *Washington Post* reporters Bob

Woodward and Carl Bernstein brought down the Nixon White House, they also promoted passag measures by the U.S. Congress dealing with presidential power and congressional accountability. In Atlanta, Georgia the *Journal-Constitution* produced a series on discrimination against blacks trying to receive home loans. Two weeks after the stories were printed, banks in the city announced changes in lending practices. Hundreds of other samples can be cited of how newspapers in free countries have shed light on important problems and, in so doing, have prompted change.

Investigative reporting can also explore a topic of a non-controversial nature. These stories combine news and feature writing styles in a story about societal ills or national trends. These stories might be called "in-depth" or "issue-oriented" reports and they differ from investigative reporting in that they analyze subjects which many readers are already familiar with, such as crime, poverty, drug abuse, child and bonded labor.

This chapter is meant as an introductory guide to investigative journalism and in-depth reporting. They follow the same general guidelines. It is a complex kind of reporting which is hard to describe. Each reporter has his own style of finding stories and exposing them. Yet, a few standard formulas apply to investigative and in-depth reporting and these will be discussed now.

Starting Out

An investigative reporter listens closely to what goes on in his community. What are politicians and authorities talking about? Contacts in government, industry and the police

produce "leads" or ideas a good investigative reporter can y not.

For instance, people in Pakistan have discussed the country's heroin problem for years. Yet while newspaper in the West reported the skyrocketing number of addicts, only recently have Pakistani newspapers begin to write about the issue. Another potential story--albeit less sensational-- is the simple problem of ordering and installing a telephone. In Karachi the national telephone company filled the orders placed in 1977 in 1989. These are concerns of common people, issues which Pakistanis talk about in daily conversations. And they would make excellent investigative stories.

Government contacts may tip off reporters to military cost overruns, bribe-taking vote-buying, kickback schemes and other acts of malfeasance. The smart reporter will follow these stories up but provide enough proof for an editor to risk publication. Strong allegations require strong evidence. This chapter will take a look later at how to get information.

Comparing how a system should work with how it is actually working makes for potential stories. "Frequently the reporter will want to examine some facet of government to determine whether the system is working the way it was intended to work," write the authors of *The Reporter's Handbook,* a sensible guide to investigative reporting available at American centers in Pakistan.

Following The Paper Trail

The paper trail is elusive, especially in Pakistan. Before starting an investigation, a reporter must first comprehend the system under investigation. Investigative reporters have to do

legwork. Acquiring budgets, table of an organization and other written material is a start. Studying laws pertaining to the target is yet another step. So is reading an *Investigative Reporting* asking questions of experts and attempting to understand the system's jargon. When talking to specialists, reporters constantly need to ask: "What does this mean? What does that mean?"

Reporters must then know what to look for and what is available. In many nations, cooperate records, planning and zoning deeds and business licenses are open to public scrutiny. Public officials sometimes have to file certain forms, but this is more the case in the U.S. than anywhere else. This is what following the paper trail all is about.

Learning the family tree of power-brokers is extremely important in developing countries. Nepotism runs rampant. Contracts in government often go to friends of friends of the family. Who got where and why and with what family connection open a path in an investigative story.

Understanding how government agencies are funded is also a key to investigative reporting involving the government. Talking to government officials and different foreign aid foundations will give reporters an idea of how things work.

A reporter undertaking an investigative story must use the information gathered to formulate questions and write them down. You probably know the answers before you ask the questions. Correlate them with statistics and quotes from informed sources. Do government officials deny allegations that their own official reports say are true?

Knowledge is the key. The more a reporter knows, the better prepared he is to go forward with an investigative story.

A few examples will shed light on how to follow the e Pakistan has a it one of the most corrupt societies in the world. Imagine yourself the enterprising reporter wanting to expose how aid money is wasted. Ask for a list of projects from USAID and other foundations and talk with officials off-the record about projects that have died. Ask to see a list of projects done, or slated for completion, over the past five years. Then check to see how may actually were completed. With the help and guidance of a public official who would remain anonymous a reporter could show how money went to supporting projects which never even started.

The reporter could show the cost of the projects and the waste of money. He could reveal the names of Pakistani officials who led the projects and ask them where the money went. Give them a chance to explain what happened. Those who are part of the project might also want to talk, as well those who would have benefited by it--villagers, farmers, whomever. Different aid sources might speak off the record about the corruption.

The aid which flows through Pakistan has to be accounted for by the grantors unless it comes from the C.I.A. (Records of arms shipments to the Afghan Mujahideen only exist in Washington, if they exist at all.) Using all that paper to unravel the scam of skimming off aid that should have gone to construction and other projects would make for interesting reading. (And perhaps result in a dead reporter: Be careful.)

Interviewing

One or two interviews will not do in an investigative article. Twenty or thirty interviews is common for a long piece, 50 to 100 might even be required. Investigative reporters talk

to anyone who will talk to them. Building up evidence through interviews is one way investigative re

Working from the outside circle in is one method tried by investigative reporters Fruit has layers of skin until it reveals the sweetest part; investigative reporters start from obvious interviewees and work toward the most important sources, perhaps even the very people who will get in trouble because of the article.

Several years ago I did a series of articles on fraudulent chating and air conditioning contractors biking the public out of thousands of dollars. After getting most of my evidence from court records, I spoke with state officials regulating the contracting trade, homeowners who had lost money, layers, and city councilmen and contracting trade association representatives. Finally, I interviewed the contractors themselves. Armed with the evidence, quotes and first hand accounts of their damage, I was able to ask them about specific cases and refute their excuses with statistics.

The same methods would be used in an investigation of heroin production in Pakistan. You, the reporter, would not want to try to interview drug king pins right away nor even officials monitoring the drug trade. Why? Once these people know a reporter is snooping around, they can quickly send out a strong message to let people know they should keep quiet. Once a department head knows he is being investigated for incompetence, he will put everyone on notice not talk to reporters--unless they want to lose their jobs. Once the drug baron knows a reporter is looking into his trade, he will tell middlemen and dealers to shut up. Save the most important individuals until last to interview.

Structuring an Investigation

Where to start and who to interview pose a challenge in any investigation. So does the idea of following the paper trail because with many stories, there might not be one Illicit enterprises rarely keep voluminous records. There fore,

 s in trying to reveal

Relying on sources will work up to a point, but hard data or actually seeing something strengthens a story. When using sources, try to get everything verified by two reliable people. This is a rule of thumb followed by the *Washington Post* and other major American newspapers. A reporter's hunch, or guess, should play into the decision to print the story too. He must believe that the sources are telling him the truth and that his tips from other avenues lead to the same conclusion. Sometimes a story will be based solely on sources, but with some thought most reporters fan come up with data from other means.

Take the example of a story on police corruption. The police will certainly not have documents describing their bribe-taking unless they are extremely stupid. But that does not mean the story cannot be done. A reporter could begin by talking with shopkeepers, taxi and auto rickshaw drivers and police officers themselves about corruption. This would reveal some good stories, but no hard facts.

The reporter could instead go to the Punjab government and look at documents to find out which Lahore streets allow vendors and which do not. He could mark streets where vending the forbidden and visit those streets to count the vendors. He could interview the vendors and get off-record comments (see "interviewing") on how much they pay per day in bribes. He could watch the vendors paying off the police perhaps even take a few photographs from a hidden location. Or, he could set up his own vending operation and tape a police officer asking him or a bribe.

The next step would be to see which officers get the bribes and to determine how much they might earn in a month, week or year. Take the average of two days and multiply by a week. If 20 streets have about the same amount of vendors, the reporter could calculate how much the police force earns a week through bribes paid by vendors.

Along with comments from vendors, the reporter has a good illustration of police corruption at work. A kind of rough total could be arrived at for auto rickshaws and taxis.

The Lahore Police, incidentally, would be a fine topic for an investigation. For years the hotels near the Railway Station have had a reputation for planting heroin in the rooms of travelers, especially Westerners, and then asking the police to move in for arrests. Naturally, travelers then have to pay a bribe to the police who in turn pay off the hotel owners.

Another potential story in Pakistan and other developing countries is the horrendous telephone service. This problem has to hurt Pakistan in attracting more international business and in the day-to-day business inside the country. A telephone is considered a necessity in the West, while here it is a luxury.

First, try to find people who recently had a phone installed. Was bribe required? How much was the bribe? Each year the telephone company publishes a list of people receiving phones. Try to get a phone yourself or have a friend place an order. Offer a bribe. If they take it, see if the phone is indeed installed. What a sorry if the bribes do not even work!

As mentioned earlier, people who ordered a telephone in Karachi in 1977 will be getting one in 1989. Why the wait? Find this lit for every major city in the country. There is the

paper trail in this story. Find out about government efforts to [illegible] Get quotes from abroad, to find out what they think about the phone system and if poor service hurts business. Talk with the committee in Islamabad which oversees phone operations. Then, talk to executives in the phone company. This is one of those stories which show they system failing.

Other stories carry other challengers. In a society without a paper trail, estimates of the level and cost of a social problem can be estimated by experts and reporters. Remember, reporters have to find their own ways, within ethical bounds, to expose various stories.

Playing Fair

Even when a reporter has mountains of evidence against corrupt officials or other, he must always give them an opportunity to respond to the charges. This is called playing fair. In Pakistan this might cause the government to censor the story. It is a fine line for a reporter and newspaper to walk.

Confidential Sources

Using confidential off-the record sources is appropriate only when absolutely necessary. Reporters should plead with sources to go on the record. If they say no, listen to the information. Ask if they know anyone willing to go on-the record. If they do not, reporters have to keep trying for the on-record quotes from someone.

Going Undercover

American Journalists have argued over the issue of misrepresentation, or going undercover, for years. Misrepresenting yourself is telling someone you are something you are not. A black reporter investigating discrimination

against blacks by realtors might vis never mention his profession, or mak

We say a reporter goes undercover when he actually takes a job somewhere without revealing his occupation. In the United States, reporters once opened a bar in Chicago to reveal widespread corruption in the ranks of the city's housing and health inspectors; reporters elsewhere have worked at a state prison to show conditions in it and purchased drugs in high school bathrooms to show the ease with which it could be done.

Chicago Tribune reporter William Recktenwald given the following advice to reporters considering undercover work:

* Do the job correctly and do not jeopardize lives.
* Do not encourage people to break the law to make a good story.
* Use a phony background, but keep as much of it true as possible. The reporter should keep his first name so he responds when called and fill out applications with real work experience-- except that as a reporter.
* Never break the law.

Checking Facts

Due to the controversial nature and potential of legal action in investigative or in-depth stories, it is essential to double and triple check all facts every of-record comment should be confirmed by one other source, more if possible. In the U.S., the newspapers law firm checks most investigative stories for legal problems. In Pakistan unfortunately, it is usually the government who handles that burden.

Structure And Style

The most difficult task of an investigative reporter is condensing hundreds of quotes, statistics and observations into

st relay the facts but not fall victim to the kind of dead prose employed by academicians writing on equally complex topics. The articles must be cogent, analytical, readable and balanced. Great investigative reporters provide a glimpse of how programs and people go awry. They do not preach, but they may condemn. The best stories explain a problem, the major characters and the issue's history. The readers and politicians and editorial writers will pick up the case from there.

These stories often cover complex systems and arrangements which may confuse readers. Reporters must write with a firm idea of how to convey complexity in simple prose. When too many issues cloud a story, investigative and even-depth stories become series-- four or five pieces on the same topic. In this manner, readers can digest the information at a reasonable pace and on newspaper pages the stories broken up, will look less imposing.

I once wrote a five part series on fraudulent heating and air conditioning contractors which took two months to complete. When the series was published in the *Savannah Morning News* and *Evening Press*, it included several different stores. One dealt with an overview of the situation and how contractors use the courts and flaunt the laws to avoid paying refunds to customers who won court cases against them. Another story reported the stories of people who had hired the contractors and lost money. Another dealt with the city and state reaction to the series. Another recorded the contractor's responses to the charges brought by irate consumers. Finally, one other brief piece gave consumers information on who to

contact in case they wanted to report a poor repair job and fraudulent repairmen. The series launched a state investigation by a state consumer protection agency

The Pittsburgh Press won the 1985 Pulitzer Prize in the public service category for a series of articles about airline pilots on drugs. The series contained five pieces. The first article concerned the difficulty of reporting pilots who have taken drugs because of strict U.S. confidentiality laws. The piece quoted doctors, nurses, federal officials and pilots. Another piece which ran the same day described in detail the life and death of an alcoholic pilot who died in a crash. A third article described how pilots with alcohol and drug problems continue to fly, even though doctors have asked the government to ground them. A fourth article delved into drug treatment for pilots idea. The final article illustrated how easily air crews moved thorough customs because officials believe they are a "low risk" category. Drugs can be easily shipped using airline personnel, the article pointed out.

Both examples are meant to give reporters an idea of how to begin splitting up information into several stories. After composing an outline many reporters will come up with an outline for each story before writing. It gives them an idea of what direction the story will take.

The Lead

In investigative reporting, journalists can choose to draw the reader in by immediately getting to the point or by using a person to illustrate a problem. In a Pulitzer Prize winning investigative series, the *Pittsburg Press* opened the first section of a multi-part series with the following lead:

> Doctors and nurses at six *Pittsburgh* area hospitals say they have treated members of US Air flight crews for cocaine overdoses but are forbidden by law from reporting the potential

> The most recent incident occurred shortly before midnight on Sept. 10, when Chris Ganas, a 30-year-old US Air pilot, blue-faced and near death from a cocaine overdose, was brought by friends to the parking lot of Mercy Hospital. "He wasn't breathing and was far more dead than alive," said a doctor.

Yet another way is to give an example of the problem the piece describes. I used this lead on my series about heating and air conditioning contractors:

> Last February Eugene and Ivey Brown wanted to add a new porch and have interior remodeling done to their old house at 1143 Calhoun Street.
>
> They contacted J.R. Contracting, operated by James Tommy Ramage, advanced him $2,000 in the form of cashier's check and a month later gave him another $700. Eugene Brown remembers seeing the results of Ramage's first visit to the house where his wife's father had once lived.
>
> "He tore up the house, he destroyed it,'' said Brown, 50, a part-time employee of Sidney A. Jones Funeral Home. "He knocked out all the walls and knocked holes in the floor. It was really demolished, so what I had to do was tear it down. It was cheaper to start from the bottom up."

A few paragraphs later Ramage was one of four contractors who had virtually stolen $124,614 over a three year span from more than 60 different clients. The idea behind the

lead--which I would rewrite given ano
the problem in personal terms and then

For in-depth pieces, readers of this work should consult the "Feature Writing" chapter on feature leads. Generally, anything from short staccato sentence to an anecdote can start a long piece. Just as in features, observations, anecdotes and narration can be sprinkled throughout the piece, with the ending calling for surprise, humor or irony.

The Body

The body of an investigative article can be like that of features, with a beginning, middle and definite end. However, they usually require a great deal more explanation, description, background and factual information.

Organizing the structure is difficult, but keep in mind a common rule: facts or statements can be followed by quotes or examples. In the sample from the *Pittsburgh* Press, several paragraphs into the first part of the series comes a perfect example of introducing an issue and then following it up with quotes.

> All doctors and nurses interviewed, while asserting the importance of patient confidentiality expressed great frustration at being unable to keep drug-impaired airline crew members from climbing back into the cockpit.
>
> "The law puts doctors and nurses in an unbearable position where we are being forced to run our backs on what may be a genuine threat to public safety. We're in the business of saving lives and we have a moral responsibility to do what is right, but the laws block our way,"

> "We need a law that allows us to report serious, debilitating, medical conditions in those cases where an individual is employed in a position where he or she is responsible for the lives of others, and flight crews clearly hold the lives of hundreds in their hands."

Many journalists try to tell the story in human terms, using real people, as in the lead for the heating and contracting story. Readers are interested in people. In a story on crowded airports, the trials and tribulations of a passenger will probably draw more readers than a litany of facts and quotes from officials.

For a story on an emergency room, an American newspaper followed two patients through an average day and night. This in-depth feature illustrated life in an emergency room. Like all good investigative and in-depth articles, the piece was filled by anecdotes dealing with how patients ended up in the clinic that night. Again, anecdotes, the human element, play well into a feature story. A reporter for the *Providence Journal* once told me that he often tries to choose a family and by telling its story describe the woes afflicting a culture and a nation. This is how some reporters have tried to capture the issues and problems of the Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan.

A rule on statistics is to avoid piling too many into one paragraph. A laundry list of facts does not read all that well. Here is an example from the emergency room piece from a Minneapolis newspaper, the *Star Tribune*.

> "Doctors and nurses call it the stab(pronounced with a long a) room. The sign outside labels it "Red Room." The 24 × 30 room is filled with

> gadgets only doctors unders
> names too hard to spell or rem

The sentences gives the reader details but dismisses the idea of using the names of the machines. That would have slowed the piece down.

In the piece on pilots the reporters had several facts that had to be published together to prove a point. Here is how they handled that over three paragraphs:

> Most of the country's 700,049 aviators are in good health. It is only a fraction of this group, about 2,000 a year, who have medical problems so severe that they must be evaluated by the federal surgeon.
>
> Federal records show that in 1985 Austin (the U.S. federal air surgeon) granted 944 exemptions or special issuances, to pilots with illnesses that would normally disqualify them from flying. That represented 75.1 percent of all exemptions requested. A year earlier, under former air surgeon Dr. Homer Reigard, 584 special issuances were written, or 46.7 percent of those requested.

These paragraphs contain a lot of facts, but they do not clutter up the piece. We learn in the first paragraph how many pilots the U.S. has and how many have medical problems. The second paragraph reveals how many pilots who had medical problems were still allowed to fly. Then, the reporters show how the level of exemptions had risen dramatically under Dr. Austin. By breaking up the statistics over two paragraphs, the reporters made their points well.

Bullets

A way to give examples quickly, as noted in the newswriting chapter, is to use bullets. In just a few brief paragraphs, the writer can sum up statistics, relevant facts and

. In my piece on contractors, I used bullets to disclose the number of suits against the contractors and the sums for which they were used. After descibing one contractor's problems in court, I used the following bullets:

* Johny Carthon of J.C. Refrigeration, sued 23 times for more than $ 20,993;

* Joe Garrett of J.G. Services or Savannah Refrigeration and Appliance, sued 19 times for $ 4,138;

* Charles Altemos of C and K Enterprises, sued 13 times for $ 14,713.

In the *Pittsburgh Press* series, six bullets were used to list several pilots by age but not name, who were allowed to fly despite severe medical problems. Three of the bullets looked like this:

> According to government documents the cases include:
>
> * A USAir pilot with bypasses on three of the arteries of his heart and transplanted plastic heart valve.
>
> * A 37-year-old pilot for People's Express who had six bypass grafts, two of which show strong clinical indications of becoming clogged.
>
> * A Western Airlines pilot who had two heart bypass operations, an artificial valve transplant

and "greatly diminished blood flow" in critical areas.

Investigative Reporting

The bullets show how the reporters quoted specific passages of the men's medical records to highlight how dangerous they could be in the cockpit.

Keeping Ideas Together

Finally, within each article of a series--as with any journalism article-- it is important to keep ideas together. Before you write an investigative piece, make an outline to help guide you. Jumping around to too many issues will confuse readers. For example, the *Pittsburgh Press* series deals with each issue, one at a time. Quotes from doctors in the first article follow quotes from concerned pilots. The rest of the first story delineates the concerns of doctors. The next piece describes the alcoholic pilot. The third deals with the politics, and within that piece, each issue is described and debated in a logical order.

Each article in a series, too, always has a paragraph or sentence reminding readers what the topic is. Drugs and pilots. Shoddy contractors. Poorly operated courts. Drugs in Pakistan. The thread in every investigative story is the topic and each article must deal with it. Tangential information will only mess up a piece. A short history of cocaine would not work in the pilot's story. A description of bad repair in mind-numbing detail would not fit the contractors' story. A discussion of an average lawyer's lunch has little to do with the courts. Stay on the topic, keep the thread moving.

Every article of an investigative series is essentially a story of how and why a system or individual went wrong. Explaining it for the common reader is an extraordinary challenge for even an experienced reporter. But by breaking the articles by topics, by keeping information about each point

ıecessary, a reporter
;.

Reporter's Checklist

* Have you understood the system?
* Have you done enough research and interviews conducted to cover the topic adequately?
* Have you contacted all the sources who could contribute?
* Have the interviews led from the last important to the most important people?
* Have you written an interesting lead?
* Have bullets been incorporated to summarize major points?
* Has a thread been attempted throughout the article to tie things together?
* Have observations and anecdotes been employed?
* Does the text make sense to a common reader?

SEVEN

ARTS WRITING

Writing about the arts is one of the most enjoyable and challenging fields in journalism today. In just the two decades, arts writing has exploded as a full-fledged discipline requiring its own staff, expertise and skills. No longer are arts pages the refuge of frustrated would-be-novelist English professor and cast-off social page editors. Today's arts writers in the West often have degrees in the fields they cover or at the least a keen knowledge gained by years of following a particular field.

The prospect of more arts writing in the future is good in Pakistan. The age of democracy in countries like Spain has spurted a tremendous artistic explosion. Perhaps the same will happen in Pakistan. Whatever the style of government, however, the arts are here to stay. As Pakistanis grow more prosperous, so will their collection of theater tickets, records, audio cassette tapes, videocassettes, books, paintings and other arts-related items.

This chapter will explore various faces of arts reporting covering everything from beats to critical judgment. It is probably the first time in Pakistan that the subject of arts criticism has been seriously described an analyzed, all the more reason for discussing it. The chapter will serve as a introduction to a complex subject argued ever since the first critic ever launched his first tirade against an artist. It is a topic forever under discussion in artistic fields: the role of the critic,

the role of the artist via the critic, the role of the media in art. There are no rights or wrongs, only suggestions for those who think it is a field for puffballs, take another look. Arts critics, this one included, can launch 100 letters-to-editor with just one review or a play before is second performance. Art critics do have power. They also have plenty of detractors who love criticizing the critics!

Covering The Arts

Covering music or dance or theater is not all that different from covering politics and business. The arts, in fact, often have intriguing connections to politics and business. Just as a regular reporter covers a beat, arts reporters keep contacts in the field, making plenty of phone calls and keeping a close eye on the arts scene. They keep schedules of all major arts organizations, know their directors and personnel. They also recognize the names of the city and country's leading "artistes" --a generic noun used for many purposes, to mean painters musicians, directors, actors, writer, dancers and other creating what we call art.

In reporting on the arts, it is wise to remember the following:

* Call for arts calendars, stay abreast of changes.
* If an artist is coming to town find out from the sponsoring agency or his agent if a telephonic interview can be arranged.
* Stay alert to regional, national, international and subcontinent trends, noting how Pakistan compares.
* Read constantly on the artists and the arts in the national and international magazines, watch for writing style, as well as content.

Interviewing

Artistes make marvelous interviewees. No other subjects have examined life as painfully clo *Arts Writing* revealing and articulate. With the right questions and a working tape recorder, an interview with an artiste can be among the great pleasures of journalism.

Before conducting an interview with an artiste, do some homework. Find out his personal history and his theories, if any.

Read what he has written. Read what has been written about him, both interviews and critical analysis. Try to understand his work. Come prepared and do not waste his time.

Note the turning point in his career. Has he changed styles frequently? Why? What themes does he concentrate upon? What about problems with alcohol, or money? Probe for the turning point and try to get him to elucidate on those.

Ask for an hour maybe more. Ask for a day if he can spare the time and aggravation. Visit him in his workspace to see where he creates.

Have questions written down to serve as guides. If the interview drifts off into interesting territory, let it go. The questions are guides, not written in stone. Use references. “In your third book you argue.....” Show the man you’ve done you research.

Deal with his intellectual beliefs. What makes him do what he does? Why does he not have a regular job? Inquire about his youth and family, often sources of artistic inspiration. What makes him tick?

Deal with his latest work. Is he satisfied with it? With the audiences reaction to it? How does he compare it with his other work? How long did it take what emotions does it

Ask about criticism of his work, but shift the source of criticism to someone besides yourself. If things are comfortable, go ahead and say, "I enjoyed your first book but the second didn't seem as well-written. It seemed light and hurried. How do you view the difference between the two?

If you haven't asked all the questions you had in mind and the time is running out, you should politely enquire if you can stay longer. Go back over any points you did not understand or over areas of further interest.

Writing Arts Stories

The kind of arts story written depends on its value and on space restrictions. Not every story deserves 40 column inches. Interviews and pieces on upcoming events range from as few as seven paragraphs to as many as 24. Editors will make the decision on the length with the writer's input, but obviously every story cannot be long. Writer should have a good idea what warrants extensive coverage--and what does not.

Every piece written on the arts needs to convey several basic pieces of information: who, what, when, where and why. Far too many arts writers forget these basic facts, especially in Pakistan, where art reviewers wax poetic for 20 paragraphs without ever telling the reader where the show under review is being held! For a concert story, the writer would say where the concert will be staged, the name of the performer or group, the ticket prices and show sponsor. (It could be a charity worthy of

mention.) Stories about arts shows require the same information, including length of stay of a gallery show and gallery hours. The same goes for theatrical productions, movies and other performances.

In addition to these facts, arts writer just discuss the type of artistes showing or performing, their biographic and the current state of their careers (upswing or downswing). For a music show, for example, their work would contain a brief biography of the musicians, their style or genre of music, famous songs, influences and standing in the musical world. An art show would name artistes, mediums, techniques, genres (abstract expressionism, neo-realism?), academic affiliation, and biographies. The reason for the show--perhaps given with quotes from the curator--should be included.

This same information must be featured in any arts story that has more than one artiste or several artists in different fields. Emphasize the point in bringing them together. (Later the critic, perhaps you, can assess whether the show worked.) It is important to capture the significance of the event. Have these artists ever been shown together before? Is this the first arts festival of its kind in Pakistan? If the information is relevant, incorporate it.

From *The Herald* of October 1988 come a few paragraphs by critic Gregory Minissale on a Karachi show providing a sample of placing the details in a logical order.

> Both these artists (Peter Daglish and Bartolomeo dos Santos), along with the 30 other printmakers, have contributed their work to an enormous exhibition, to be held at both the V.M. Gallery (from October 10) and the Chawkandi (from October 11). Around 125 prints will be on sale.

> Almost all these printmakers are associated with the Slade School of Art's printing department, and it is through the efforts of Jamal Shah been made

> It is of course, hard to describe the wealth of the styles and variety that such a show represent. The overall standard is very high, with few exceptions, and some are simply world class. Much of the work will appeal to Pakistani tastes through some pieces specific to the British context might be difficult to appreciate.

This three paragraph slice of the story gives readers information on location of the shows, school of art represented and a quick note on the quality that will be expanded later in the piece.

In a piece on a New York neighborhood of black artistes, a *New York Times* reporter, E.R. Shipp, wonderfully described the artistic endeavors of the neighborhood:

> On any given day in Fort Green, (Spike) Lee, the wunderkind of black filmmakers may be pedaling his bicycle over to the jazz saxophonist Branford Marasalis' house to discuss their latest projects, or more likely, basketball. Or Henry Threadgill, the jazz-based composer and saxophonist, might be working on a new opera with Thulani Davis, who wrote the libretto for the opera "X" the story of Malcolm X presented in 1986 by the New York City Opera. Davis' husband, Joseph Jarman, a composer and founder of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, one of

> the most influential jazz bands of the 1970s, might be discussing artistic form with one of their neighbors, the figurative Expressionist painter Emilio Cruz.
>
> *Arts Writing*

The piece goes on to discuss how the neighborhood came to attract the artistes and their concern in the 1980s. In this paragraph, the reporter weaves a nice series of sentences describing how close-knit the neighborhood's residents have become and what they might be working on each day.

When time and space permit, talk to musicians or artistes visiting Lahore and other Pakistani cities. Arrange for a telephonic conversation and have a list of questions ready. A few quotes; always enliven a piece. If a performer or artiste is not available for an interview, past interviews can be used, as long as the reporter makes this clear by using "the artist has said..... "or" In a 1987 interview with '*Time Magazine*,' the director noted...." Do not make it look as though you recently interviewed the person. This is dishonest journalism.

If reporters have only a limited amount of space for the interview, hit the high points of a performer's life during an interview. Keep up high in the story what he is doing now, what his future projects are and what he thinks of this tour or particular show. In a few paragraphs, give his artistic biographic, hitting family background may have to be short shifted and in any case, they are not topics easily dealt with in short interview.

An example of featuring important information into a tightly written piece comes from the "Weekend" section of the *Washington Post* last year in a piece heralding an upcoming opera.

> In one of the major events in Washington's musical history, the Deutsche Opera Berlin will perform two complete cycles of Richard

> Wagner's epic "Der Ring des Nibelungen" at the Kennedy Center next June.
>
> y, with more
> rst time the entire "Ring" cycle of four operas has been performed in Washington, and one of the rare times on the East Coast outside New York. The operas will be staged in a contemporary setting. "It's really something quite extraordinary," Kennedy Center Artistic Director Marta Istomin says. "It seems it has never been done as a cycle here, and of course the Berlin Opera as a whole hasn't been to the United States since 1976."
>
> The opera company's visit, scheduled for June 2-18, 1989, was timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In just three paragraphs, readers learn when the opera will be held, its significance to Washington and the uniqueness of the German company's visit. Since this piece was published in 1988, later stories no doubt described ticket sales, Wagner's life and the complex arrangements involved in bringing the massive company to the U.S.

Trend Pieces

Reporters covering the arts must stay alert to trends in different artistic fields. Perhaps more than other beats, the movers and shakers in the arts change styles rapidly and with reason. Popular artistes copy each other and are copied by lesser mortals. Picasso begot Braque and together they started the cubist movement. Pop singers David Byrne of Talking Heads and Paul Simon introduced African music to pop listeners and spawned a host of imitators. Today in the West there are probably 20 major artistic trends emerging every year

in painting, film, literature, video, television and theater. The arts reporter and critic's job is to detect and wr
trends as they happen, to after they happen.

It has often been stated that the arts are a mirror held up to society. Artistes reflect the times in which they live to a greater degree than anyone else. Arts reporters must keep informed of today's arts world to see the trends effecting the arts of tomorrow's world.

Detecting Trends

Keeping abreast of developments in all artistic endeavors in Pakistan and the West is a way to begin to see trends. If just one performer is practicing a certain style, that is not a trend. If several musicians have employed sultry female Urdu singers, now we are talking trend! The second example would be worth a piece describing the styles with quotes from the musical groups and the sultry singers.

Arts writers and critics sometimes have to be the ones to point out a trend, but it helps if quotes from other experts or artistes can back up the claim. If a musician says "We hear two other groups use sultry singers to achieve a unique sound so we thought we'd try one," provides the reporter with evidence for his assertion. Should a trend surface, use examples. Name the singer, quote the bands. Name the singers, quote the bands. Talk not only to musical groups but to record producers, record stores and even record buyers. Why are these sultry singers so popular?

An erstwhile arts writer, your friendly author, would like to offer some generic trend pieces that a Pakistani audience would find interesting in the following fields:

* The music world. Which groups or individuals are selling? What is not? Who is hot? What kind of new sort of traditional instruments are being revived? Are vocalists' changing styles? Have lyrical concerns progressed beyond love poems? Who are Pakistani's young rock musicians? Is traditional music losing ground to Western pop music?

* The art world. Who are Pakistan's leading artistes? What are their concerns? How does the arts scene in Karachi differ, if at all, from the one in Lahore or Islamabad? Do artistes earn a living here, or must they take other jobs? Do they earn money by selling work abroad? Do they feel they have more freedom under Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto than under President Zia-ul-Haq? Remember, these same topics apply to sculptors, photographers and other craftsmen.

* Theater. What kind of plays are being produced? Why? How do Urdu and English plays compare? Is theater today better or worse than in previous years? Why is there not more theater? Does religion or education effect output?

* Cinema. What issues are directors exploring? Why is violence such a popular element? What has happened to downtown movie districts? Is there an independent cinema movement? Why do so many young and talented Pakistani actors and directors move to London? Who are the serious filmmakers? What are the common themes in Pakistani movies? Who are the popular actresses and actors? Are they satisfied with the roles they are offered?

* Television. Why is Pakistan Television so bad? Are actors and directors embarrassed with the network? What can be done to improve it? Who chooses the scripts? Who chooses

what Western shows can be seen? What is the criteria? How many people watch Indian television?

* Literature. What are the themes of authors in the 1980s? What is the difference in themes between Urdu and English, if any? What about the problems of censorship? Why are books so much cheaper in India? Do authors have ideas on attacking the literacy problem? Can an author earn a living just publishing in Pakistan?

A wise arts writer will, in a few years, compare the arts under martial law and under democracy. This could reveal if artistes are using their freedom to express new and challenging ideas or if they have remained the same.

In-depth Articles

The topic of in-depth articles has been discussed in the previous chapter, but it should be pointed out that these can be written about the arts. They are not common in arts reporting, but they do have a place.

A reporter could explore the way in which the government funds arts groups and how the results compare with other Third World and other Muslim countries. He could look at who gets funded and why. Is the money used or skimmed off the top? Do political motivations exist for funding certain groups?

An investigation of politics and the arts would attract plenty of readers. Do politicians care about the arts? Should they? How, for example does the Alhambra Arts Center in Lahore works? Who decides what and who will appear there? Why don't they have more shows at the theatres, which are often empty? Why is there such a childish reaction from young people during performances at the center? (And to the arts in

of immaturity as I

Anytime an important arts group disbands, it is news and worth an analysis. A reporter would write about financial problems, artistic arguments, lack of support in the community and whatever else arose. The arts world is full of potential investigative/in-depth style articles.

Critical Writing

The most difficult part of arts reporting is critical writing. On most newspaper staffs, only limited number of reporters can writer critiques. The movie critic writes weekly reviews of what is playing in town, as well as a few features. The music critic has the same kind of job. They would not ever trade beats except if the staff was small. In Pakistan this seems the case--writers trade off reviewing various functions.

A review is the opinion of the writer. Unlike an editorial or editorial column where a writer can marshal statistics and quotes from experts to back his point, a reviewer relies more on insight, instinct, judgment and arguable evidence. Rather than use statistics, reviewers employ examples from a performance to illustrate points. That an actress performed weakly in a movie because her acting was superficial is one opinion; another critic might argue the depth of her performance made the movie excellent.

Although this can happen in reviewing, bad movies and bad books usually get bad reviews. There is some critical agreement on the exceptionally good and the terrifying bad. This is not a sign that they copy each other's reviews. It says more for the idea they hold art to similar standards.

Critical writing requires more than just opinions. It calls for skillful writing, sound and unswerving judgment, an eye for

details, a head for analysis, a vast knowledge and, naturally, a love of the arts. Combining together is a delicious intellectual challenge which makes critical writing painfully unpredictable and revelatory. A critic learns much about himself in gauging his response to art. And his readers learn much about him.

Before knowing down shoddy performances and twisting knives in the backs of second-rate artists, critics need to understand a few rules of critical writing.

Obligation

Critics have responsibility to know and understand an artistic field intimately before writing about it. A person cannot decide one day to write about movies if he has never seen one. A considerable knowledge of the field is required, a love of it is even better.

Not only is it wise to know the subject, but its history. Critics covering films know cinematic history, from origins in Hollywood to stature as an international art form. They are keenly aware of the impact films have on society. They have seen enough films to know film noir from German expressionism, avant garde from mainstream, thriller from comedy.

The reason for the obligation is not only that artistes deserve the respect of being judged by someone familiar with their fields, but also to protect the critic from charges of ignorance and vapidity. Critics are journalists. Many professors of cinema, literature and theater resent the idea of journalists judging performances because they do not often have the appropriate academic backgrounds. If you are planning to be a critic, do not let this put you off; America's best known movie

critic, Roger Ebert, studied philosophy in college. The writer and playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote about the visual arts for a few years and established himself as a tart and knowledgeable critic even though he had never studied art. Both these men--and hundreds of men and women like them--stand as examples of fine critics with no academic training in the arts. Yet their love of the subject and knowledge gained from years of independent study gave them a solid base for critical writing.

Academic training should not be dismissed. It can lead to a greater knowledge and comprehension of the arts. Good critics, however have survived without it.

Judgement

How do we judge art? Very carefully. Works of art represent anywhere from a few months to a few years work. The piece, if it is worthwhile, will reveal something of the artiste's life and experience. He will naturally be sensitive to criticism. By putting the work--the movie, book, painting, songs or play--before the public the artiste begs to be recognized and to be judged.

Art demands standards. The same standards should not be applied to each and every piece. Not every artiste sets out to create a masterpiece and very few should be judged by the standards set by the masters. Consider the artiste's intent and the scope before judging the piece.

Each critic establishes his own standards for reviewing. The following factors are commonly taken into account:

* Genre. A book that is a spy thriller should not be compared to works by Gabriel Garcia Marquez or V.S.

Naipaul. Critics judge books, movies, music and films against their genre. If they rise above it--if a thriller bec*Arts Writing* -the critic should certainly focus part of the reviews on it. And if the writer or artiste begs to be judged by a higher standard (a difficult thing to detect, but one which critics can pick up after a few months), the critic should use the same high standard. But trying to compare a horror movie with the work of a great director serves neither the reader nor the artistes involved.

* Comparison with past work. How does an artiste's current labor match his past efforts? Critics not only judge artistes with others in the field, they also judge them against themselves. Is an artiste slipping? Is he exploring new avenues of expression? Is he stale? Is he simply staying the same, churning out solid professional products that are neither better nor worse than past works? (This is a notable achievement-most artistes eventually start slipping.)

* Artiste's intent. If an artiste reaches for the sky and falls flat, the critic makes note of it. If the writer of serious fiction decides to write a funny novel, the critic may want to judge it in a different way. Not every musician or writer turns out a blockbuster or work of brilliance every time out. If an artiste tries something new--always admirable--critic may want to contrast it with past work but think hard before dismissing it. If the piece does not work the critic does has an obligation to tell readers Marquez cannot write something on par with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* every time he publishes a book, nor would he want to. Critics appreciate that and have praised his lighter works of fiction.

* Comparison with other contemporaries in a calendar year. Not every year is a good one for the arts. A movie that is considered fine in 1988 might not have made that cut in 1986. A critic looking for a barometer the last six months of the year can compare a piece with other releases that year. The judgment is sounder as December draws near.

* Gut feeling. The critic, in the end, must ask himself a simple question: Do I like this piece? And then: Why do or don't I like it? This is the basis of the review.

These suggestions have not taken into account works by new artistes. New artistes are compared to contemporaries and what had gone before. The first album by jazz saxophonist Brandord Marsalis was compared to the great master John Coltrane. Marsalis not only sounded better than his contemporaries, he had a style fluidity and strength comparable to the greatest saxophonist ever, Coltrane.

A debut by a less talented jazz artist will meet with less enthusiasm. Yet if he sounds more promising than his contemporaries, he'll capture a few good notices. If he has no talent and has obviously badly copied other players and shows no originality, the critic has a right to denounce the recoding. It is all opinion, but it is based on what the critic has heard that year and how it measures up.

Writing a Review

Structure

A review contains all the elements of a news story. In reviewing a play, a critic always includes where it was held, by what company, when and how the performers did. Every review contains a plot synopsis--except for art shows---and notes major characters. The director, curator, actors, actresses, book publisher or concert promoter are mentioned, as are any other relevant people. All reviews required these basic facts; plot synopsis, four Ws, characters and people involved. They also have a structure with a beginning, middle and end.

The Lead Paragraph

Reviews try to have catchy lead paragraphs which attract readers. They can begin with a description of a scene from a movie or deal with a general statement or theme.

An example of a descriptive lead comes from *Time* magazine's Richard Schickel, in a review of, "The Accidental Tourist."

> Edward is a dog, a sad-eyed but otherwise lively Welsh corgi. When he is upset he makes trouble of a colorful, forgivable kind. Macon Leary (William Hurt) is his master, also sad-eyed, but with no redeeming manners or habits. Early in this lugubrious recounting of his struggle against clinical depression, one begins counting the minutes between dog cutaways. By the end, one is praying for them.

A general lead is embodied in another lead from *Time*, this one by Richard Corliss.

> Fagin, Scrooge, Uriah Heep, Mr. Micawber and Mrs. Jellaby--so many of Charles Dickens great grotesques lurk in the memory with the clarity of caricatures. They seem made not just for the page but for the screen. As the popular novelist of his or any age, Dickens has always been filched by other media. And as a social reformer who, as George Orwell wrote, "Succeeded in attacking everybody and antagonizing nobody," Dickens invented outsized villains and situations applicable to almost any taste or

> decade. The endless Broadway and movie adaptations of Dickens stories testify to the vitality of the world he observed and created. That three new films based on his novels are on view this pre-Christmas season would surprise no one but Scrooge.

These examples show two common leads. Another way to start a review is to use a touch of history or philosophy or both, as Los Angeles times Pulitzer Prize-winning book reviewer Richard Eder did in a review of Blanche D' Alpuget's "Winter In Jerusalem."

> Every nation that I can think of, except one, has defined itself by virtue of existing. Israel is the exception; it exists by virtue of defining itself.
>
> The distinctive national characters of Britain, Russia and China and so on have formed out of particular amalgams of geography and history. Their respective ideas of themselves were formulated as they went along. We may sometimes think of the United States as initiated by an idea -- freedom from Old World order -- but mainly it is a country whose character has been assembled by letting itself happen to itself. Our Founding Fathers were great grandsons, at least.

The lead starts with a highly philosophical premise which Eder carries for another two paragraphs until he introduces the book. By backing into the review by separating Israel from other counties, he eventually shows how the novel's characters come to represent the predicament of their nation.

Writing under deadline, which none of the above critics had to do, is tough. Coming up with a lead under deadline circumstances is difficult, especially at 11:30 p.m. at night and when the review will go into tomorrow's newspaper. Stuck for ways to begin, the critic of Lahore daily the *Nation* wrote a straight lead which got to the point.

> The students of Lahore University of Management Sciences surfaced on Lahore's amateur stage with productions of Voltaire's Candide and Ionesco's Bald Soprano that opened at the American Center Sunday night.

This is not an exciting lead but it tells readers what plays will be discussed, who wrote them and where they were held. Obviously written under deadline, it pulled no tricks to attract readers.

Each good lead subtly hooks the reader into finishing the review. The lead goes toward a plot synopsis and discussion of characters and quality of the work. No one ever starts: "I did not like the movie." No one will bother reading much further. The idea is to draw the reader in to hear the critic out.

The Body

A good review of a work of literature, film or television will contain a synopsis of the plot. A critique of a music program will cover structure, lyrical concerns and musicianship. Criticism of an art exhibit will refer to a medium, style, subject matter and setting. These elements are woven together with opinions in the body of the story. The process is as hard to describe, as it is to perform.

In their reviews, many critics open with a few introductory paragraphs before starting a pot synopsis and commentary. Often, the synopsis -- or description of an art show or musical cassette tape -- will take five or six paragraphs, maybe more. Critics can intersperse opinion in recounting the plot or save opinions until after the synopsis. Either method works. Critics vary the structure from review to review. They try to never write the same review twice.

Schickel's review of the Accidental Tourist took up four more paragraphs. He uses the space to provide an idea of what the movie was about and why it was so bad. The following paragraphs pick up after the lead paragraph.

> This is not to say Macon's gloom is without just cause. A year before "*The Accidental Tourist*" begins his beloved son has been killed in a particularly senseless crime. As the film opens, his wife Sarah (Kathleen Turner) walks out on him because his grief has made him so deeply withdrawn that he cannot help her bear her sorrow. Her departure leaves Macon with his dismal career as a writer of travel books for people who hate traveling, with the dubious consolations of his own family, a sister and two brothers who are as joylessly guarded and compulsive in their behavior as he is and of course, the excellent but increasingly (and understandably) snappish company of Edward.
>
> Muriel Pritchett (Geena Davis) who insinuates herself into Macon's life by becoming Edward's trainer, does wonders for both of them. Doggy learns to heel, master learns to lighten up. Or so we are supposed to believe, though it is very hard to tell performance in the monosyllabic role.

> There should have been a dramatic crux: Macon's desertion of Muriel for an attempted reconciliation with his wife. But the tone and dynamics of this scene are indistinguishable from the rest of the film that looks as though if it were shot in a brownout,. Depression, obviously, is not amusing. But depressives, as the history of humor from Mark Twain to S.J. Perelman proves, can be. Anyway, it should be possible to analyze an illness without falling prey to it.
>
> In the end, everything about this glum and self-important adaptation of Anne Tyler's upper-cute novel is dim. Director Lawrence Kasdan (The Big Chill) knows how to get Edward on and off the screen effectively, but he is far less witty and adroit with his nominal stars. Dim too is the judgment of the New York Film critics Circle, which last week named Tourist best English-language picture of the year.

In a very short review, Schickel has analyzed the film, the performances its shortcomings and slapped a major critics group in the face. A good performance! Note in the second paragraph how he discusses the causes of Macon's gloom (the death of his son, his wife's departure, his dull career and difficult family). He mentions who plays Macon but uses the character's name in the review, a good practice. This is accepted practice: use the character's name, not the actor's. The third paragraph introduces another character and who plays her, gives away a little more of the plot and makes fun of William Hurt's acting in this particular role.

Following this up, he notes the most dramatic scene fell flat and the reason why it did (too much darkness). Adding to the movie's woes, Schickel says its portrayal of depression, by being so glum, is clinched.

At the end he labels the film "self-important" and plays on the term "upper-class" by using "upper cute," which implies Ms. Tyler's books are neither very deep nor profound.

A review by Richard Eder of a book by one of America's finest novelists, John Updike, provides a glimpse of how a book critic sums up a plot and talks about the writer. What follows is only a few paragraphs of the review, a sampling of a good critic at work.

> Throughout "Roger's Version," in fact, Updike's cleverness is prodigious. His capacity to interrogate every moment and get surprising answers, his ability to encapsulate, skewer or celebrate in a phrase; all these are remarkable as ever. He is a master of sheer elegance of form that shows itself time and again.
>
> It can be too much. He keeps interrupting himself. When he stops Roger in the act of fetching cranberry juice in order to tell you why cranberry juice depresses him, it is brilliant. But is it necessary? Sometimes you feel in this radiant rightness of details, repeatedly exercised, is exercised the hope that it will attach to the larger dimensions of the writing.
>
> The brilliancies of "Roger's Version" often make its darkness palatable, but I think ultimately the darkness is a defect. It is more a

state of weariness than an act of negative affirmation. There is a heaviness about it; it is perhaps his only novel without a sympathetic character.

Eder makes the reader aware of just how brilliant the novel is with the example of the cranberry juice. Yet he illustrates clearly near the end of this passage his reservations about the book in a convincing style. He is not so much saying do not read the book as saying this great American author has begun to see the world in a permanent state of darkness.

Not every reader of the book will realize this because his perceptions will not be as well tuned as Eder's. And he will not separate the good critic form the mediocre one. The good one sees beyond what the average person sees, exposing the aesthetic and perfunctory aspects of an artistic creation.

Reporter's Checklist

* Have you checked the schedules of art groups around town?
* Have you made contact with different art agencies?
* Have you planned advance stories about events coming to town and set up telephonic interviews to accomplish this?
* Have you done research before interviewing sources and writing all your stories?

* Are you detecting trends and writing about them?
* Have you attempted investigative or in-depth stories on arts-related topics?
* Do your critical pieces provide a judgment based on knowledge and criticism using other reference when required?
* Are you remembering to include plot synopsis and where events are taking place in al your reviews?
* Are readers writing to disagree vehemently?

EIGHT

FINAL WORDS

The next few years should be among the most fascinating in the history of Pakistan. If controls are finally loosened on the press, the country could experience a flood of new publications and a growing readership. Educational institutions and the press must respond to the new freedom by training journalists to pursue stories with a sense of accuracy, fairness and accountability. Slander may sell newspapers, but it does not help win friends to a press standing uneasily at the brink of change. Young and old journalists need now to be told to use note pads and tape recorders to record events and to write with as few preconceived ideas as possible. To cover the issues fairly and accurately are signs of a robust and healthy press.

If all goes well, the country's reporters can begin to investigate institutions without immediate condemnation by the government. This has already begun happening as I write this, in May of 1989. They will begin to prod the government into attacking bribery, corruption, poverty, drug abuse, the birth rate and the inequity of wealth, to name just a few topics. Moreover, reporters may be able to cover events more fully, without the heat of influence from political parties and the government. Perhaps a freer society will in fact create more for journalists to write about. Growth spurs creativity in the arts and commerce in the business world. Pakistan has too many

political reporters regurgitating dreary quotes from potbellied politicians. They country could use a few more reporters with a wider range of interests.

When covering any field, reporters should remember they are conduits of information, the bringers of news of good and bad tidings. Reporters tell the world what is going on and why. It is communication at the most basic level. That is why reporters must continually strive for knowledge, and for excellence.

And, as I have often found, a reporter requires a sense of humor. Journalism is a frustrating field of underpaid reporters who cover individuals they often have little regard for. And there are other pressures. Sources make demands. Editors rant and rave. Publishers get in the way. Sanity slips. The life of a reporter is never perfect and will never pay as much as it should. But, Inshallah, it will never be boring.

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SUGGESTED PRESS READINGS

(The following list is by no means complete. new publications seem to crop up every week. Also, American Center libraries stock a wide selection of magazines that could not all be listed here. Nearly all these publications can be bought at good Pakistani bookstores and newsstands.)

Pakistani English Publications

Dawn, the Frontier Post, The Khyber Mail, The Herald, The Muslim, the Nation, Viewpoint.

Foreign English Press Publications Available in Pakistan. In Pakistan

Daily Telegraph (London), The Economist (London), The Guardian (London), Independent (Landon), International Herald Tribune (Paris), New York Times, Newsweek (New York), The Observer (London), Time (New York), The Times (London), Washington Post (Washington, D.C.)