

Kidnapped reporter exposes dangers of job

Imagine this: it's a regular day at the office. You come in, sit down and begin to work on the pile of paperwork that is cluttering up the corner of your desk. As you start to tackle the

Just ask Daniel Pearl. You see, Pearl is a reporter for the Wall Street Journal who was working on a story in Pakistan about terrorism. He was last seen on Jan. 23, 2002, after leaving the home in Karachi where he and his pregnant wife were



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Sports Editor

Telling it like it is.

figures for the budget, a group of extremists breaks down your door and proceeds to blindfold you, while at the same time is leading you out of the safety of your office building and into a secret hideout.

While this will most likely never happen to people with regular jobs, there are a few jobs out there that are becoming increasingly dangerous.

staying. He was on his way to meet one of his contacts at a restaurant and disappeared. Four days after his meeting at the restaurant was to have taken place, the people responsible for Pearl's disappearance e-mailed photos of the reporter to news organizations and government officials, including one showing a gun pointed at his head. The last e-mail message

received was on Jan. 30 and threatened to kill Pearl in 24 hours. Pearl's captors also mentioned in one of the e-mails that all American journalists would become targets if they didn't leave the country within three days. All of this drama came about because Pearl was doing his job; the group that kidnapped him called itself the National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistani Sovereignty and was convinced that he was working for the CIA.

This incident has brought up some serious issues, the first being the dangers of being a journalist in a hostile environment. I'm sure that if Pearl was only on vacation in Pakistan (why ever you would want to go to Pakistan right now for a vacation is beyond me) instead of tracking down a story, he never would have encountered a problem. But because

of his job of uncovering the news, Pearl was targeted. As a hopeful future journalist, this frightens me. If the bad guys of today are feeling threatened by reporters and taking action against them, what are the ones of tomorrow going to do? According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2001 there were between 37 and 55 newspeople fatalities. At least 25 of these victims were murdered. Eight reporters have died in Afghanistan since Sept. 11, but not all of them were victims of land mines or flying shrapnel—four of them were slain in an ambush and another during a burglary.

One way to ensure that this never happens again is to make sure that reporters stay out of dangerous situations such as this. Of course, it is difficult to judge how quickly a relatively safe environment can turn hostile, just as it is difficult to keep

a reporter away from a really hot story. And even if one reporter isn't willing to go, chances are there is another one out there who is. So maybe the solution isn't to keep reporters out, but for the media to stay away from the tough stories. Who needs to know about the important news of the world anyway?

Okay, but seriously, there is only one real solution to this problem: make the people who do this kind of thing stop. We need to find out where they are hiding out and let them know that we won't stand for this type of thing. We need to get the message across that kidnapping innocent people, whether a reporter or not, is inexcusable. We need to make sure that Daniel Pearl is the last reporter to have to go through this type of situation for doing his job.

Retaking control of the government

Every year in the United States, voter turnout is lower than the previous year. Most people, it seems, see no point in voting.

The limited vote that we are allowed does not make the United States a democracy, and the low voter turnout suggests that other people are feeling that as well. Politics (to the politicians) is a corporate-sponsored party, and we're not invited.

Even so, our vote has not quite come to mean nothing. The problem is that when the government lies to us or acts irresponsibly, we do not hold it accountable by withdrawing our support of it (through taxes and general acceptance of it). The government lies to us because we let it, and we have let it do so for so long that does so as a matter of its

regular policy.

"People are dropping out of democracy," said Ralph Nader during his presidential campaign. "That's a very dangerous trend. You have people saying, 'I'm not turned on to

politics.' Well, history shows that if you're not turned on to politics, politics is going to turn on you."

A lot of the problem is that the consensus party (that is, Democrats and Republicans) receives enormous amounts of funding from multinational corporations to ensure that all other voices are drowned out. Having a virtual monopoly on media coverage, party members see fit to avoid the real issues that concern us, like environmental devastation, corporate

control of media, and the failure of democracy in the United States itself.

Thankfully, there is a growing resistance to the shutting out of the people from politics. Just the other day I discovered an organization that is working to inform U.S. voters of what the political candidates really stand for. Found at <http://www.vote-smart.org/>. Project Vote Smart's website is designed to make it easy for voters to find out who their candidates are, and expose each candidate's record on voting, campaign finance, statements of position, backgrounds and evaluations.

I think that registering to vote and doing so (especially at the local level) is important to get the current government under our control. In voting, it's also important to be knowledgeable about candidates and issues. That's an area for which alternative information sources are very important, since the corporate-controlled media is strongly biased toward business-as-usual consensus party candidates.

Be Human



Jesse Gurzynski
Staff Writer

Letter to the Editor...

CCCPrint,

Well, I'll take this opportunity to say what is on my mind. You decide what it is worth.

I am sick of walking to class through clouds of smoke because smokers congregate at doorways and other covered areas. We have a policy regarding where one can smoke, but it's not working. I don't think the answer is to enforce our current policy. I think the answer is to designate (or build) certain covered areas for smoking. These areas need to be convenient (not too far out of the way), but located so that non-smokers could generally avoid or walk around these areas if they wished (i.e. certainly not right in front of a

door!). Enforcement could then come in the form of simply directing a "dislocated smoker" to the nearest designated area. The designated areas should have benches, would be the only areas equipped with ashtrays, and would perhaps even house a cigarette vending machine.

As a teacher at CCC, I want my smoking students to have a place to smoke. I certainly don't want them coming to class totally stressed-out because they haven't had a cigarette for quite some time. Otherwise, I'd get so stressed-out myself I'd have to take up smoking!

Thank you for your time,

Adam Hall
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