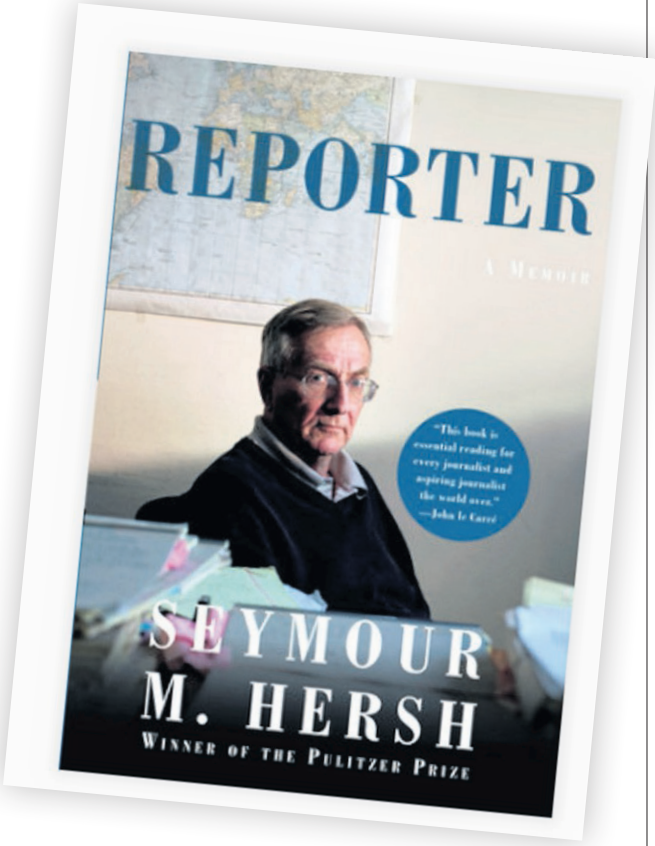


For Seymour Hersh, a long career is the best revenge

Longtime friend Abbott “Kit” Combes, a former editor at the New York Times Magazine, bequeathed me his collection of journalism, memoirs, biographies and autobiographies: Harrison Salisbury, James Reston, Katharine Graham, among many. Political journalist Jack W. Germond penned perhaps the most colorful title, “Fat Man in a Window Seat,” an on-the-road recounting of politics in backcountry.

Whether a big newspaper superstar or a small-town journalist, reporting is reporting, with the same toolkit at the Washington Post or the Cannon Beach Gazette. Only the megaphone is different — and even that is changing with the widening reach of regional papers online.

CANNON SHOTS
R.J. MARX



‘I LEARNED EARLY IN MY CAREER THAT THE WAY TO GET SOMEONE TO OPEN UP WAS TO KNOW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT AND ASK QUESTIONS THAT SHOWED IT.’

Seymour Hersh

‘Smitten’

As a teenager in Chicago’s south suburbs, Hersh was about to enter his father’s dry cleaning business when a community college professor recognized Hersh’s writing talents and paved the way to Hersh’s entry to the University of Chicago.

“I could always write — say exactly what I wanted to say in one take — and that ability got me through college with better grades than I deserved,” Hersh recalls in “Reporter.”

That skill would serve him well in the world of journalism.

Working for Chicago’s City News Service, tutored by cynical editors and reporters wise to “the Chicago way,” a beat where the cops were on the take and the mob ran the city.

According to Hersh, the City News reporters, with rare exception, ignored the corruption and in return were given access to crime scenes and allowed to park anywhere they wished as long as they displayed a press card on the dashboard.

The young reporter “was smitten” with his profession.

Hersh learned journalistic rules that would be rules that we should all live by: “If your mother says she loves you, check it out. The guys on the streets who did not get their facts straight or were consistently being out-reported did not last long.”

The best way to tell a story, no matter how significant or complicated, “was to get the hell out of the way and write it,” said the man who broke details of Lt. Wil-

liam Calley Jr.’s shooting of 109 Vietnamese civilians in 1969. Twenty-six American soldiers were charged with criminal offenses in the aftermath, but only Calley Jr., a platoon leader in C Company, was convicted.

The piece “made a lot of people irrational,” Hersh reflects. The story was to be among his first to shine a light on the government’s costly military secret operations, a path from Vietnam to Cambodia, Panama and the Middle East.

His early experience as a reporter in Chicago “kept me from falling into a funk when my work was being savaged, as it occasionally was,” he writes. “I would survive any criticism of a story I knew to be true.”

‘Doing his thing’

Hersh repeatedly turned down offers to take an editorial desk job or to settle in at one place for too long. But he was to maintain the respect of his peers and the grudging admiration of government officials and journalistic peers.

Again and again, it was Hersh’s stories — and his publishers’ willingness to run them — that deserve praise in a world too eager to break for the next commercial or to kowtow to whoever holds office.

Hersh’s advice to reporters is fundamental, and serves well newsrooms large and small:

“I learned early in my career that the way to get someone to open up was to know what I was talking about and ask questions that showed it.”

Note to Kit Combes: I’m adding this to the bookshelf.



Lucy back from a walk on the beach. Plus sand.

Sweeping up sand

Lately, I’ve been doing a lot of sweeping. Mostly I’ve been sweeping sand. As summer winds to its inevitable end, I’ve been trying to spend as s much time as possible on the beach; walking it; planting my bare feet in the sand; staring into the mysteries of the water.

When you live in a beach resort town, you either avoid the beach all summer (bummer), or learn to tune out or accept the hordes of summer people who converge on your sacred spaces pretty much nonstop June through August.

One of the blessings when the crowds finally thin out is having the beach to your self again, or at least you, and a handful of dog owners.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX



There’s been sand in my moccasins and sand in my trouser cuffs nearly every day now as I arrange and rearrange my schedule to accommodate more beach walking. It seems no matter how diligent I am about getting sand off my person before entering the house, I fail and fail again in this endeavor. Sand blows across the wooden floors. It collects in the bathroom corners. I find it on the counter tops and in between the chair cushions. One night I awoke in the early dawn hours to discover a fine scrim of sand strewn across the bottom sheet, delivered no doubt off the feet of Lucy, our miniature pinscher, who is a bed burrower.

Sand, I find, is best removed from the house by broom sweeping. Sand is not really good for the vacuum cleaner, particularly if I have a nice one. We’ve had the same Miele machine for quite a few years. I find twice as effective than the central vac that came with our house when we bought it. Beach sand, no matter how clean, is a bit stinky; once it gets inside your vacuum cleaner hose, it causes a low tide kind of reeking. I took the Miele in to Astoria Vacuums on Marine Drive in Astoria for a cleaning and tune up, which resulted in a few days of me having no choice but to sweep the sand up.

There’s something mesmerizing about the act of sweeping. Unless you’ve taken up farming in Nehalem, sweeping might be the closest thing many of us will ever experience to manual labor. On the other hand, If you work in a shop or a restaurant in Cannon Beach in the summer, it must seem there is no end to the sweeping.

Many people have other people to do the sweeping; the days of people cleaning their own houses seems a relic of the past. And yet I remember the lazy mornings of my own childhood summers at the shore, my assigned chore to sweep down the stairs. Day after day I recall small mountains of sand piling up, blowing in the wind.

If you’re looking for an accessible mystical experience, try sweeping sand. There is something magical about every grain.

And now, my daily sweeping done, I will reward myself with a slice of crystallized ginger, which, come to think of it, is sort of like eating candy lightly dusted with sand.

LETTERS

Vote yes on ballot measure 105

In my third-of-a-century in law enforcement — which includes almost 14 years as sheriff of Clatsop County — the most important thing I’ve learned is this: Respect for the law, among citizens and noncitizens alike, is indispensable to a free society.

That’s why I urge Oregonians, in November, to vote “yes” on Measure 105 and repeal the state’s, illegal immigrant sanctuary statute.

The statute undermines respect for law in significant ways. It tells illegal immigrants that Oregon considers immigration-law violations so inconsequential as to be unworthy of police and sheriffs’ attention. In doing so, it legitimizes those violations and encourages more. As well, the statute invite the contempt of U.S. citizens and legal residents, whom Oregon expects to, abide by all laws.

Certainly, immigration-law violations are federal offenses. But they are precursors to other crimes illegal immigrants routinely commit in their efforts to conceal their illegal pres-

ence — crimes, like identity theft, that harm everyday Oregonians at the local level.

Such crimes are well with in local police and sheriffs’ purview. But Oregon’s “hands off” sanctuary statute works to keep law enforcement from pursuing many of the people who commit them for the very reason that they are here illegally, and innocent Oregonians pay the price.

Most often the common intersection with illegal immigration and alleged criminals and alleged criminals is your County Jail.

This is an additional strain on the system which should not be happening in the first place. To have the ability to work with our federal partners would alleviate the inconsistency and stop the erosion and ineffectiveness of these sanctuary laws.

Mollie Tibbetts’ recent murder has refocused attention on the violence and heartbreak illegal-immigrant criminals can visit on Americans and their families. Tibbetts’ killer “was here because our government neglected its responsibility to keep him out,” writes Agnes Gib-boney (whose son, Ronald Da Silva,

also was murdered by an illegal immigrant). Oregon’s sanctuary statute not only compounds that neglect, but issues a de facto invitation to illegal immigrants to settle in our state.

Another pro-sanctuary argument is that the statute’s repeal would make illegal immigrants afraid to report crimes. Oregon Sen. Michael Dembrow, for instance, has argued the statute is needed so if illegal immigrants “have to call the police ... they don’t have to worry about state law enforcement turning them in” to U.S. authorities for deportation.

More nonsense. Can any sanctuary supporter cite a single instance of an illegal immigrant being deported for reporting a crime? To the very best of my knowledge the answer is no and always has been. When people step forward to volunteer information about criminal activity, law enforcement officers are not going to look a gift horse in the mouth by inquiring into their immigration status. Certainly no prosecutor I’ve ever known would want to deport witnesses who could help them obtain convictions.

More, when they provide information that helps prosecute crimi-

nals, illegal immigrants can qualify for federally-issued nonimmigrant visas (the “S,” “T,” “U” and “VAWA” visas) or deferred action or parole.

Illegal immigrants, without disclosing their identities, can easily report crimes via law-enforcement agencies’ anonymous telephone and online “tip lines.”

Last and most nonsensical and insulting of all to the men and women who have sworn to preserve the peace — is the assertion that sanctuary repeal would unleash a wave of profiling against Hispanics.

First, all across the State, law-enforcement officers undergo formal rigorous training which includes antiprofiling training. More importantly however is this: People who choose to devote their lives to law enforcement are people of uncommon integrity. From their first day on the job, when they raise their right hands and take the oath, they commit themselves to treat everyone equally under the law. This commitment is at the core of their professional being and informs all their professional actions. I can honestly say that I have never witnessed an instance of racial

profiling from any of my deputies. They serve and protect all who need assistance regardless of race, origin or creed. Whatever the outcome of Ballot Measure 105, they, and law enforcement officers everywhere throughout Oregon ,will continue to do their jobs with integrity and don’t believe for a minute they won’t.

In November, please join me in voting “yes” on Ballot Measure 105 to repeal the illegal-immigrant sanctuary law.

Tom Bergin
Clatsop County Sheriff

Idea to address parking problem

We have only owned a home here for a little over two years so don’t know all the ideas presented to help alleviate the parking problem. Would ask why not use the old school area, paved and grass? Seems ideal for various groups such as scouts, churches, Elks and other fundraising groups to alternate times to collect fees and direct traffic. We certainly haven’t seen any other uses?

Marvin Parnell
Portland