

How to Get Real News, in One Easy Lesson

Written by Alex Baer

Saturday, 03 November 2012 21:14 - Last Updated Saturday, 03 November 2012 21:15

There's nothing like going to another country to get news about your own.

At least the internet / internets / internet / interwebz / internexus -- whatever you choose to call it -- makes dashing out for an electronic paper tons easier than before, boarding an international flight every morning in your PJs.

There are at least three advantages that come to mind. First, the United States no longer has a press corps interested in journalism -- they have become professional softball lobbers and the current culture's fluff-and-product-placement pimps.

If you're looking for starched and shellacked hair, capped teeth, tan-in-a-bottle good looks, and someone who can provide the set clothing a fairly good hang, well, that's one thing. If you're scouting around for those who hunger for hollow fame for fame's sake -- recognition without achievement -- then, you're also in the right place. Trolling for nominal celebrities with seven-figure paychecks? Bingo again!

If you're looking for news -- *Hey! You there! Move along, nothing to see, nothing to see, folks. Go on back home. Keep moving, nothing for you here...*

Whatever actual journalism that's now performed in the U.S. is done by independent writers who do not work at any corporately-controlled broadcast or cable behemoth. The main product of these titular *news* organizations is profit.

Doing an actual, real news program is staggeringly expensive, labor intensive, and requires vast resources all around the world. Opinion, on the other hand, once all dressed up as news, is as cheap as yesterday's Big Mac, out back, in the dumpster -- and every bit as nutritionally fulfilling and relevant to real life and the here-and-now.

Just as entertainment trumped news to turn a bigger profit, corporate desires to goggle at its own ass in the rearview mirror -- along with guarding its own tangled, Hydra-headed business

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interests, and of allies -- has long since trumped truth.

Earnest effort to gather the relevant facts in any situation? A moral imperative and driving desire to *get it right*? Time and staff enough to connect the dots and present intelligent, well-labeled interpretations of the meanings of the facts as they come to light? Providing more than a 5-second sound bite on a national issue affecting millions?

You must be *Lost in Space*, wandering loose in the *Time Tunnel*, sleepwalking in the *Twilight Zone*

taking some weird

Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea

, and spending way too much time out there, in the *Outer Limits*

If you're looking for real news in the U.S., presented in an intelligent and factual manner, with a minimum of opinion and a maximum effort to tell the truth as it's currently best known, why, you'll have to rewind your country to those other TV shows back then, too. *Happy Trails*, as they say.

There's also the long view of things that's available only from the foreign press. Why? Well, short-term, all media mills in the 'States are hopping all over a hot diner grill, barefoot, cranked on coke, suffering hyperbolic fits of ADD, competing with each other, racing around to cover the pop-up and throw-down arrival of *hotnew* trends every six seconds. Attention spans over 60 seconds are as rare as pay phones -- another outmoded communication device, along with mainstream news.

Long-term is now defined as anything older than four minutes ago. (Makes sense -- we have no sense or knowledge of history, either.) If you're tired of tap-dancing, shoeless, on the meaningless -- but bright! flashy! sparkly! -- hot coals, then you'll need to go abroad.

In any event, until you're deprogrammed and your heart rate stops slamming around in your chest and settles back down to normal, the foreign press may seem sedate, calm, and unjangled -- perhaps, even well-rested and not frantically berserk and electricity-blasted, as in

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the U.S.

The foreign news groups generally take time to reflect on information and developments, continuing to do the basic grunt work disdained by American-superstar, froufrou-boutique journalists: the hard work of collecting information, following trails of facts, talking with people, connecting the dots, and asking the hard questions.

And, once it's been collected for the day, providing it all to users in coherent, non-fireworks-driven ways, but in helpfully communicative displays instead.

If you've ever spent time in foreign countries, by the way, you'll understand how much more you can learn about your own home by spending time in someone else's. The clarity from such comparisons can be startling, on the order of being a mortal *shlump* stuck in Death Valley one moment, and being Zeus the next, surveying the world from high atop Mount Olympus.

If that's not enough to recommend a trip to the UK for your news, say, there's learning about the broader world that exists outside the shores and borders of the contiguous United States -- that No-Person's Land on your American media maps that read, *"Beyonde Heare Be Stronge ande Strange-Appeerin' Beers That Be-taste Awfully Goode."*

Yes, it's a scary world if the only map you have is from 1053 CE, has dragons drawn on it, and shows massive, continent-sized whirlpools sucking down surface ocean and a setting sun, along with depictions of hordes of enormous, rocky outcrops where splintered ships litter the sea. As far as American media is concerned, these maps are all still state-of-the-art and supremely accurate, *if the real truth be told...*

Not only that, but it's also invigorating to be exposed to a vocabulary beyond a thousand key words, with 40 percent of those being either camouflaged descriptors for war or decorative language used in agenda-hiding within religions, and thought-clouding in politics.

And, *no*, we are not always separated by a common language, as has been said about English. Seeing "color" as "colour" once or twice provides a good grip of things, as does seeing

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"program" as "programme," when it comes to segments of news or entertainment.

Otherwise, the slangs are inventive, creative, and humorously revealing. For example, where we have reporters who uselessly toss politicians easy-to-whack pom-pom questions, the Brits have "useless tossers" at their disposal.

In any case, even with some partial loss in translation, *jerks* by any other name, all the way around.

The mainstream media has all but completely polluted its own stream and is no longer viable for routine truth-telling or trust. You want news, to get some understanding of what's going on in the world, you'll have to go dig it out for it yourself, unearthing fresh-water sites that provide cool, clear reflection -- locating well-springs, headwater sources, pundit guides, and fonts of information you can trust to be as pure, and as non-poisonous as possible.

If you haven't noticed that phenomenon for the last decade or so, everything in America is coming to be metered out DIY -- with the cost savings to corporations astronomical.

Self-check-outs at stores -- why wait for a highly-paid, benefit-heavy cashier! □ That's right -- you can be your own health care researcher-advocate on pharmaceuticals, diagnoses, and needed surgeries! □ Do your own taxes with this program! □ Tear out a wall and redecorate your home on a weekend! □ Pressure-wash and paint the house! □ Pour a foundation and slide the old garden shack onto it! □ Bulldoze a backyard pool with this kit! □ Let's get busy!

Give it time, there'll be a home brain surgery kit, one that comes with a DVD, tool kit, and a large-type, 10-page pamphlet, *"It's Not Like It's Rocket Surgery!"*

And, as we all know from daily practice and observation, boys and girls, all that extra money saved by corporations from the DIY approach will be passed along and shared with workers whose sweat-equity, skill, and hard labor actually helped build the corporations -- with all those distributions to be done in equitable, profit-sharing bonuses, and with additional company contributions to individual employee pension plans, plus a significant upgrade of health care

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benefits for all employees and their families...

Oh! □ What am I saying?! □ Sound the alarm! □ Hit the panic button! □ Fast-forward, quick! I must have hit "rewind" by mistake!

Ka-chunk! ...whirla-whirla-whirla-whirla-lur-lur-lur-lur-lur-lur-clack!

...and, as we all know from practice and observation, boys and girls, all that extra money will be passed along to CEOs for additional vacation homes, personal jet aircraft, and multi-million-dollar bonuses (when earnings are so-so to in-the-gutter) and multi-million dollar severance deals (when earnings go sourly south for years upon years). Why, a few percent of it will even trickle down to shareholders!

Yes, that 600-to-one ratio of CEO-to-regular-employee pay is the real mark of the strong American economic model of today! It's one of the countless ways corporations are helping America maintain its Number One ranking among countries, and in every major category, across the boards, in the world today!

Pardon me. □ I need to go see someone about these lightning-bolt migraines and thunderous hallucinations I've been having. □ They... they seem so real sometimes -- like they actually happened...

The world according to Americans: <http://www.ritholtz.com/blog/2009/11/the-world-according-to-americans/>