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Shattered Glass

By Billy Ray

There are
so many show-offs in journalism.

So many braggarts and jerks.

They are always selling,
always working the room,

always trying to make themselves
look hotter than they actually are.

The good news is,

reporters like that make it easy
to distinguish yourself.

If you're
even a little bit humble,

a little self-effacing or solicitous,
you stand out.

So you bring a co-worker lunch
if he's buried under a deadline,

:

you remember birthdays.

:

It's true,
journalism is hard work,

:

everybody's under pressure, everybody's grinding to get the issue out.

:

Nobody's getting any sleep, but you are allowed to smile every once in a while.

:

I mean, even Woodward and Bernstein went out for a burger now and then,

:

and they won a Pulitzer.

:

Some reporters think it's political content

:

that makes a story memorable.

:

I think it's the people you find...

:

their quirks, their flaws,

:

what makes them funny, what makes them human.

:

Journalism is just the art

of capturing behavior.

:

You have to know
who you're writing for.

:

And you have to know
what you're good at.

:

I record what people do,

:

I find out what moves them,
what scares them,

:

and I write that down.

:

That way, they are the ones
telling the story.

:

You know what? Those kind of pieces
can win Pulitzers too.

:

"Contributing writer
for Harper's Magazine,

:

contributing writer
for George magazine,

:

contributing writer
for Rolling Stone,

:

and of course,
associate editor

:

of the New Republic magazine
in Washington D.C.

:

Sorry if I'm beaming, but, you know,
I was his journalistic muse.

:

- It's true.

:

Just seven years ago,
he was sitting...

:

right there.

:

I'm sorry.
Right there.

:

And I was doing the exact
same thing you guys are doing...

:

grinding out pieces
and then having horrid nightmares

:

of Mrs. Duke
and her infamous red pen.

:

And see what happens
when greatness is demanded of you?

:

Now he's at
The New Republic.

:

And now I'm at
The New Republic.

:

In May, the editors
of The New Republic magazine...

:

... with The Washington Post,
The New Republic, and The Boston Globe.

:

But the bill was blasted
in The New Republic this week.

:

You're very helpful.
I just wanted to get a confirmation...

:

So, I said,
"Network news, network news. Hmm.

:

Oh, right, that's that show
that's on every night

:

between those "Fixodent"
commercials, right?" That shut him up.

:

Hey, Steve.
Hey, Steve.

:

Hey, guys.

:

- Gloria, that necklace is you.
- Thanks, doll.

:

I got some new merchandise.
For your girlfriend.

:

- As soon as I get this piece done.
- How is it coming?

:

- Horrible.
- Uh-huh.

:

It's the fundamental nature
of the magazine, Lew.

:

- Mallory, can I get some copies?
- Sure.

:

People want photographs,
they can buy Newsweek.

:

They do buy Newsweek.
And Time,

:

and US News & World Report.
And our losses are a joke.

:

Let me guess. He's on you again
about a redesign.

:

- Yeah, cover page and graphics.
- And photographs.

:

Let me remind you Steve,

:

this magazine hasn't changed
its look since the ' s.

:

How is it?

:

It's good.

:

- You hate it.

- No, it's good, It's a little rough.

:

No, it's the worst thing
I ever wrote. It's horrible.

:

If you guys don't help me with it,
I'm not even going to send it in.

:

- When is it due?
- Tomorrow.

:

Tsk...

:

I may have to kill myself.

:

I mean, The New York Times
Magazine!

:

Will you guys
help me with it, please?

:

- Of course.
- Of course.

:

Thank you.

:

Call for you on three, sweetie...
someone from Policy Review.

:

When did you start talking
to Policy Review?

:

I'm not. It's probably nothing.
Send it to my voicemail, okay?

:

- Oh, and sweetie...?
- Mm-hmm?

:

Caitlin just told me that she needs
gifts for... two showers next week?

:

You think you might have
something for her?

:

I'll get my box.

:

I couldn't resist.

- So, do you want to do this now, or...

:

Yeah, in a second.

I have to return a quick phone call.

:

I got you some gum.

:

Oh...!

:

If I were to throw a party,
where all we did was play "Monopoly,"

:

- would you guys come?
- Could I be the little shoe?

:

Of course.

:

The lawyers have asked us
to tone down the cover on Serbia.

:

They have?
- It might invite charges of libel.

:

I know a little bit of libel law,

:

it's only relevant if the person in question has been out of the public eye.

:

Well, yes.
So there is Serbia, hidden,

:

unknown to the world
at large, until...

:

it appeared on the cover
of The New Republic.

:

Our weekly circulation
of .

:

- . .
- You almost done with it, Rob?

:

- Two days. Tops.
- Yes, two days from Chanukah.

:

Hey, it's basically finished...
for the most part.

:

Next up. Amy?

:

Just finished the piece
on ethanol subsidies.

:

There are magazines
in this country.

:

But only one calls itself "the in-flight
magazine of Air Force One."

:

And that's the thrill
of working at The New Republic.

:

You're underpaid,
the hours are brutal,

:

but what you write gets read
by people who matter.

:

Presidents, lawmakers... your work
can actually influence public policy.

:

That's...
that's an amazing privilege,

:

and a huge responsibility.

:

I'm sorry.

They don't want to hear

:

the whole "journalistic
responsibility" speech... do you?

:

You just want to know how to get
your name in print, right?

:

That sounds familiar.
Okay.

:

Let me take you through the life
of your typical piece

:

so you can see
what some of the hurdles are.

:

We'll use one I wrote last year,

:

about a bunch of Young Republicans
at a Conservatives' convention.

:

Now, journalism is about
pursuing the truth.

:

And I would never encourage you
to do anything sneaky or dishonest

:

in pursuit of a story,
such as assuming a phony identity.

:

I don't know, man. It seemed like
a pretty good turnout to me.

:

No, man.
Conservatism is dead.

:

- Dead?
- We're lost.

:

Damn straight.

:

On a story like that,
your notes are crucial.

:

You have to record
everything you see and hear.

:

Every quote, every detail...

:

all the way down
to the mini-bottles in the fridge.

:

We're like this guy
who has to pee,

:

lost in the desert,
looking for a tree.

:

That's true.
Completely true.

:

You guys know what
you're shopping for, right?

:

Yeah, totally.

:

Get us a real "heifer."
The fatter the better.

:

Bad acne would be a bonus.

:

Let's do it!

:

- Hey, Steve.
- Hey, Chuck.

:

What are you working on?

:

A piece Gabriel García Marquez wrote about the Falklands War.

:

How about you?

:

Young Republicans at a CPAC Conference.

:

Pretty standard stuff.

:

Hotel ballrooms, boring speeches. Chicken dinners.

:

Which is why everybody spends their time in the suites upstairs

:

committing felonies.

:

Oh, yeah?

:

Yeah. I went to one.
The ballroom was empty.

:

Every delegate under the age of
was on the fifth floor getting loaded.

:

Drugs, binge drinking,
hookers...

:

it gets pretty ugly.

:

- Sounds great, Steve.
- So does yours.

:

Okay, well, I gotta get back to work.
Have a good lunch.

:

Thanks.

:

Hold it. Have to give myself
a demerit for poor scene setting.

:

Let me explain. A year ago,
Chuck Lane and I were peers.

:

He hadn't become editor yet.

:

Michael Kelly was editing
the magazine then.

:

Sorry, Mrs. Duke.
I know how you feel about clarity.

:

We've got to start calling
some other places.

:

I don't think I can
eat this stuff every day.

:

It was the Cannon Building.
You had it as "Russell."

:

I fixed it.

:

- Thank you.
- I really liked it, Ames.

:

But boring, right?

:

No. No. I really,
really liked it.

:

- Ahem...

- Yes, dear?

:

Somebody for you on three...
someone from Harper's.

:

When did you start
talking to Harper's?

:

I'm not. It's probably nothing.
Could you send it to my voicemail?

:

- Very good.
- By the way, Glo',

:

that lipstick is the bomb.

:

- Thanks, doll.
- Was it "Midnight Mist"?

:

- I've really got to stop doing that.
- What?

:

All I do is give people
more reasons to assume I'm gay.

:

I mean, lately,
it's everyone.

:

The other night, I went out to dinner
with this guy from The Post...

:

- Who?
- I can't tell you, he made me promise.

:

Anyway, we're walking afterwards,
talking about Medicare for God's sakes,

:

the next thing I know is we're standing
on the corner of th and "T"...

:

and he somehow managed
to slip his tongue down my throat.

:

And I'm like, "Wait a minute,
how'd this happen?"

:

I don't understand.
- Neither did I.

:

- Hey!
- Michael.

:

- Do you have a minute?
- Of course.

:

We have a problem
with the "Spring Breakdown" piece.

:

Just got a letter from David Keene.
He ran the CPAC Conference.

:

- He's made...
- Are you mad at me?

:

He's made some pretty serious
charges. We need to answer them.

:

Okay.
My notes are at home.

:

I can be back in minutes.
Is that too long?

:

Do your notes have anything
about the minibars? That would help.

:

I think so.

No, I'm sure. Why?

:

He claims the Omni Shoreham
doesn't even have minibars.

:

- He mentioned it specifically.

- No, I saw them.

:

There were little bottles
of booze all over the room.

:

Okay. I'll get Aaron
and Rob into it,

:

and start
the fact-check again.

:

I'll get my notes.

- Thank you.

:

I'm sorry, we're gonna
have to finish this later.

:

No, no. I understand.

Thank you.

:

What's wrong?

:

Just tell me.

:

Keene was right,
Michael.

:

I messed up.

:

I made a huge error.

:

I don't know what to say.
If you want me to resign, I will.

:

I want you to tell me
what happened.

:

They don't have minibars
at the Omni Shoreham Hotel.

:

I guess I just saw all those little
bottles and I made an assumption,

:

which I know we're
never supposed to do.

:

I'm really sorry.

:

Those guys were drinking
out of a rented refrigerator.

:

A mini-fridge.

:

- That's it?

- Yeah.

:

- The rest of the piece is solid?

- Well, yeah, of course.

:

Go home, Steve.

Your resignation will not be required.

:

- Really? You're not mad?

- Of course not.

:

Do you want my notes?

:

Have a good night.

:

Thanks, Michael.

:

Thanks for backing me.

:

It's what editors do.

:

Good night.

:

Hi, front desk, please?

:

Hi, I need some information.

:

Do the suites of your hotel
have minibars?

:

Well, can a guest
rent something like that...

:

like a mini-refrigerator
or something?

:

They can? Okay,
thank you very much.

:

And she says, "I didn't invite
Vernon Jordan that evening,

:

because my guests of honor
were girls from Smith College.

:

Some of them were virgins,
and I wanted to keep it that way."

:

And you are going to put that
in the article, right?

:

Gosh, Alec,
I don't know.

:

I mean, George
is such a dignified publication.

:

You wouldn't want to put in something
that gossipy, would you?

:

No, absolutely not.

:

Of course I'm putting it in.

:

Thank you Steve. You are going
to make me look very, very smart.

:

Er, the Fritos are running
dangerously low.

:

I'll be right back.

:

Can't hide in here
all-night, Ames.

:

Can I ask you something?

:

What is this?

:

I found it in the freezer.

:

You said you hated
how the Diet Coke at parties

:

was always at room temperature.
And if you wanted to drink it cold,

:

you'd have to put it on ice and it would

get too watery. Don't you remember?

:

Yeah, I do, but...

:

I said that
a couple of years ago.

:

Steve?

:

I'm going to call it a night,
but thanks for having me.

:

Thanks for coming.

:

Alphabetized beer,
that's perfect.

:

Drive safe, Alec.
- Who's he?

:

Associate Editor
of George.

:

When did you start
talking to George?

:

I'm really not.

:

It's probably nothing.

:

You know,
if they stoop any lower,

:

you won't be able to tell the difference
between Time and People.

:

You say that as if there is a difference
between Time and People.

:

Exactly. Hey!
Thank you, Steve.

:

What?

:

Are you mad at me?

:

I told you, I do not respond
to "Are you mad at me?"

:

I'm not your kindergarten

teacher.

:

I thought we'd been over this
a thousand times already.

:

You can't go to law school.

:

You "don't want to go
to law school," remember?

:

I know. It's only nights.
I wouldn't have to stop working.

:

I'm going to put these down.
I'll be right back.

:

No, I want to talk about this.

:

I told you, it's my parents.
Okay?

:

They never shut up about it.

:

If I don't go, they won't let me
be a journalist anymore.

:

"Let you"?

You're years old, Stephen!

:

You don't know how things go
where I grew up, Caitlin.

:

There are rules there.

:

If your son's not a doctor or a lawyer,
you keep your curtains closed.

:

You're writing
for The New-fucking-Republic.

:

Isn't that good enough?

:

Not in Highland Park.

:

- I'm sorry, l...
- Stop apologizing for everything!

:

I was looking through your mail.
You should be pissed at me.

:

I'm not.

:

You're going
to throw this out, right?

:

I can't. I'm sorry.

:

Every station on the radio
was talking about it...

:

Mike Tyson
biting Evander Holyfield.

:

And these are supposed to be
news stations,

:

so on Tuesday I started
calling a few of them,

:

and I finally
got through to one.

:

A Bible-talk station
in Kentucky.

:

And I managed

to convince the screener

:

that I was a behavioral
psychologist

:

who "specializes
in human-on-human biting."

:

I told the guy that I'd done
all this extensive research

:

on people who chomp flesh
under extreme stress...

:

And what did they say?

:

They put me on the air,
I took calls for minutes.

:

Oh, my God!

:

Where does he find
these people?

:

It's kind of stupid,
I know. It's silly.

:

I'll probably just kill it.

:

Does that mean
you'll help me with it?

:

Why? Do you have finals
this week?

:

Okay, moving right along.

:

Chuck, what do you have
for us?

:

That's a bit of a hard act
to follow.

:

Very hard act to follow.

:

Okay.

:

I'm starting the piece on Haiti,

:

and I'll be going to...

:

Hey.

Don't let me interrupt.

:

- Hey, Marty.

- Michael.

:

I'm going to be going
to Port-au-Prince for a few days.

:

Uh-huh.

:

Marty Peretz, our boss,
he's a little scary.

:

How about the commas and dates?
Are we supposed to circle those too?

:

Let's just get this done, okay?

:

What the hell is this?

:

Marty told us to circle
all the commas in the last issue,

:

so he could show us
how we used them improperly.

:

What?

:

He said, "Commas
should always appear in pairs."

:

Apparently the issue was rife
with comma errors.

:

- "Rife"?
- That's what he said.

:

I see.

:

No, I'm not angry, Marty.
I'm embarrassed for you.

:

These people work
grueling hours for meager pay.

:

They deserve a thank you,

:

not another one

of your world-famous tantrums.

:

Yeah, okay. I'd resign before
I'd let you bully them like that again.

:

And I will.
Do you understand that?

:

Okay. Thank you.

:

"The Great Comma Debate"
is history,

:

so we can all
go back to work.

:

There are good editors,
there are bad editors.

:

You'll have both.

:

My hope for you though
is that once,

:

at least once
you get a truly great one.

:

A great editor
defends his writers...

:

against anyone.
He stands up, and fights for you.

:

Michael Kelly
was that kind of editor.

:

He had that kind of courage.

:

And that's what hung him.

:

Hello.

:

Hey, Chuck, it's Marty Peretz.
You got a minute?

:

Of course,
how are you, Marty?

:

I'm in a bit
of an uncomfortable situation.

:

I thought you might
be able to help me out.

:

- Sure.
- It's about Mike.

:

- Oh.
- He and I...

:

well, it hasn't been working out
for some time now, as you know.

:

The tone of the magazine
I think it's... gotten too nasty!

:

It's strayed from the traditions
that make it great.

:

And... I'm going to be
making a change.

:

I see.

:

I'd like you to step in for him, Chuck.
I'd like you to become Editor.

:

Editor?

:

There's a catch, of course.
Mike doesn't know any of this yet,

:

and it's gonna be
two or three days before I tell him.

:

It'll have to remain between us
until then. Would that be a problem?

:

- Marty, Mike's a friend.
- I appreciate that, Chuck.

:

But I can't remove him until I know
who is going to be his replacement

:

for continuity's sake.
So this is how it has to be.

:

I'm gonna have to think about this.

:

I'm gonna have to discuss it
with Caterina.

:

Of course, of course!

Listen...

:

Marty, have you thought about the impact
this might have on the staff?

:

They feel very...

:

he's earned
a lot of loyalty there.

:

Yes, mostly by fighting with me.

:

The point is, I haven't earned
that kind of loyalty. If it looks like...

:

I'll be there tomorrow.
We'll go over all this in detail.

:

- Will you call me at the hotel?
- Yeah.

:

I really appreciate this, Chuck...
your discretion.

:

- Good night.

- 'Night, Marty.

:

So, I just got off the phone
with Marty,

:

and I've been fired,
effective immediately.

:

I'm to be out
of the building by : p.m.

:

Chuck Lane has been
chosen to replace me.

:

Chuck is not an editor.

:

He's barely even a writer.

:

There's no way I'm gonna
be able to work for him.

:

We should've seen this coming...

:

the way he laughs whenever
Marty tells a joke in the meetings.

:

They're never funny, but there's Chuck completely howling. He's so political.

:

And stiff,
and humorless.

:

And pissy. I mean,
how pissy does he get

:

whenever you try to fact-check
one of his pieces?

:

It's like I'm sorry, but we have
an obligation to get our facts straight.

:

Okay, let's not overdo it.

:

This is still a great magazine,
it's still an important magazine.

:

And... Monday morning
he's going to be running it.

:

- I'm going to barf.

:

All right.

Let me get out of here, okay?

:

Well, I just want
to thank you all again. Truly.

:

I've loved every second of this.

:

Good luck, Mike.

:

You too, Chuck.

:

Hi.

:

Hi.

:

- Hi.

- Hi.

:

So...

:

sorry about
what happened when he left.

:

I just didn't know what to do.

:

Thanks.

:

If you need a hand with the boxes,
I'll be in my office.

:

So Chuck took over,

:

and the job,
for the first time ever,

:

began to feel like a job.

:

But I'm being unfair.

:

The truth is, I wrote pieces while
Chuck was editing the magazine.

:

And the last of them,

:

was the biggest story
I ever wrote.

:

Is anyone interested
in hackers?

:

Because I met this kid
named Ian Restil.

:

Biggest computer geek
of all time.

:

He hacked his way into the database
of a company called Jukt Micronics,

:

and posted naked pictures
of women

:

and the salary of every Jukt employee
on Jukt's website with a note

:

saying, "The Big Bad Bionic Boy
has been here, baby!"

:

Outstanding.

:

The guys at Jukt decided
that it would be cheaper to hire him

:

as security consultant
than it would be to try to stop him,

:

so they met with him
last week at the hotel

:

where the National Hackers'
Conference was taking place.

:

It was the chairman
from Jukt,

:

Restil, Restil's mother
and Restil's agent.

:

No...!

:

Yes, hackers
have agents too.

:

All right, I was at the table
with these guys.

:

Restil's just laying out
all of his demands.

:

- I want a Miata...

- "I want a trip to Disney World."

:

I want "X-Men"

comic book No. .

:

"...a lifetime subscription to Playboy."

- And throw in Penthouse.

:

And they're complying

with every single word.

:

Excuse me sir,

pardon me for interrupting.

:

We can arrange more money

and you can buy the comic yourself.

:

And when you're

of a more appropriate age,

:

you can buy the car

:

and pornographic magazines

on your own.

:

Cool.

:

After that,
after they have the meeting,

:

he goes back into the conference,
where all these hackers have gathered,

:

and they're treating him
like he's a rock star.

:

Then, Restil jumps up on a table,
and he's like...

:

I want a Miata!

:

And he's gyrating his hips like this.
"I want a Miata!

:

I want my Playboys!
I want a trip to Disney World!"

:

Show me the money!

:

"Show me the money!"

:

Turns out there are now states

:

considering versions of a law

:

called the "Uniform
Computer Security Act,"

:

which would criminalize
immunity deals

:

between hackers
and the companies they've torched.

:

Meanwhile, Restil's agent claims
a client list of over

:

one of whom was once paid
a million dollars...

:

and a monster truck.

:

That's unbelievable.

:

It's really silly, I know.

:

I'm not even sure
if I'm going to finish it.

:

Shit.

:

You rang?

:

Yes, I rang.

:

Why didn't you get this?

:

Yeah. Oh, that...

:

I don't know.

:

Hey.

:

Hey.

:

Is it pronounced
"jooked" or "jucked"?

:

It's pronounced,
"give me back my article."

:

Adam...! Can you give
a man a minute?

:

Oh, yeah.
I'm sorry.

:

Er, it's just that...

:

this New Republic piece
is a fucking sieve.

:

I started with a check
on "Jukt Micronics,"

:

which is supposed to be this major
software company in California.

:

I went through every search engine
on the Web... no matches found.

:

So I called
every area code in the state.

:

There's no listing anywhere
for a company called "Jukt Micronics."

:

Tried the California
Tax Franchise Board,

:

there's no record of taxes
ever having been paid

:

by a company
called Jukt Micronics.

:

Tried the State
Comptroller's Office,

:

no license has ever been applied for
by a company using that name.

:

Then I called
all the hackers I know,

:

asking if any had heard
of a "National Assembly of Hackers,"

:

or a hacker by the name
of "Big Bad Bionic Boy."

:

Nothing.

I even tried Ian Restil himself.

:

There's no listing for the kid in D.C.,
Virginia, Maryland.

:

There's no record of him ever having
attended a public school before.

:

- More?
- Please.

:

This guy Joe Hiert was described
in the Glass piece

:

as being this a former
basketball agent,

:

yet no one by that name has ever
been registered with the NBA

:

and none of my hackers
knew of him.

:

I even checked the names

of every government...

:

I was just getting some coffee.

:

I checked the names of every
government employee quoted in the piece,

:

against a book listing the names
of every government employee

:

in the entire United States.
None of the Glass sources were listed.

:

But there is one thing
in this story that checks out.

:

What's that?

:

There does appear to be a state
in the Union named Nevada.

:

David.

:

- For Christ's sakes.
- God, I'm sorry, Stephen.

:

I wanted to see if you read it yet.
It was sitting right here, you know?

:

Don't hate me, okay?

:

Stephen, you shredded it.

:

I'm trying to spare you
a spanking, David.

:

You've got blind quotes
all over the place.

:

Your facts are shaky.
I mean...

:

The line about the turnover
at DOT

:

was low by / %,
I checked.

:

Of course you did.

:

Rob and Aaron would kill you
over that kind of stuff.

:

This is The New Republic,
remember?

:

Nothing slides here. If you don't have
it cold, you don't turn it in, ever.

:

Okay.

:

Look, bring me your notes later,
and we'll go through it together.

:

There's a lot about it
that I liked.

:

- Really?
- Really.

:

And get back to work, okay?
The mailroom floor needs scrubbing.

:

Okay.
Thanks, Stephen.

:

"You have one
unheard message. First message. "

:

Hi, Stephen, this is Adam Penenberg,
from Forbes Digital Tool.

:

I just got done reading
your hacker article.

:

First of all,
congratulations.

:

I mean, everybody here
just loved it.

:

But we wanted to do
a companion piece to it,

:

sort of a "Day Two" story...

:

and I'm having some trouble
tracking down Ian Restil.

:

Do you think I could get
a phone number on him from you?

:

Look, I think it's good
that you tried this.

:

It's good to stretch.
I just...

:

I don't think you're writing
to your strengths here.

:

- I mean...
- Can I?

:

I'm wondering why you'd want to stray
from the things you do so well?

:

Have you noticed the way

:

Steve's phone
has been ringing lately?

:

Did you see all those editors
at the Correspondents' Dinner?

:

- The way they were circling him?
- Is that what you want, Amy?

:

To get a bunch of smoke blown
up your ass by a pack of editors?

:

Yes.
Yes, it is.

:

Caitlin, he's going
to double his salary

:

freelancing like that.

:

These guys don't want
policy pieces anymore.

:

They want color,
they want nuance, humor.

:

But Amy,
you don't write funny.

:

It's a little funny...

:

isn't it?

:

- I was just looking for Steve.
- He's in his office.

:

- You got a minute, Steve?

- Yeah.

:

Do you have phone numbers
for sources on the "Hack Heaven" piece?

:

- Mm-hm, but they're at home.

- Can I get them?

:

Of course. Did I do something wrong?
Are you mad at me?

:

No, I just need
the phone numbers.

:

Okay.

:

Okay. Okay, I'm trying
to keep cool about all this, but...

:

you know the "Uniform Computer
Security Act," in the Glass piece?

:

Supposed to be under debate
in state legislatures?

:

I just checked off ...
no such act.

:

Beautiful.

:

And Julie Farthwork,
from the "Computer Security Center"?

:

Not too sure she exists either.

:

Same with Jim Ghort of the "Center
for Interstate Online Investigations."

:

And I've got nothing

:

on the "National Assembly
of Hackers," or "Frank Juliet."

:

Man!

:

Do you know why this is so great?
I mean, do you see the irony here?

:

The New Republic,
snobbiest rag in the business...

:

"the in-flight magazine
of Air Force One"...

:

and their star goes out and gets
completely snowed by a bunch of hackers.

:

I mean, God couldn't have
written this any better.

:

- Adam?
- Yeah?

:

As long as I'm grinding away
on this thing,

:

any chance you'd share
your byline with me?

:

Forget it.

:

We're in uncharted
territory here, Adam...

:

an online magazine
going after a giant.

:

You should have somebody
beside you to take some of the flak

:

in case this thing blows up.

:

- Gosh, that's touching.
- You're completely swamped.

:

You're behind on the Kim Polese piece.
I know it's due Friday.

:

I'll get to it.

:

Everything that I'm working
on is so-- dull,

:

and this is
spectacular.

:

Andy... no.

:

It's not like you found the story
yourself. Kambiz handed it to you.

:

If I hadn't been at the dentist,
it might be me about to get famous.

:

So why don't you just...
share the wealth, okay? Shit!

:

That came out a lot uglier
than I meant it. Sorry.

:

Hey.
Hey.

:

Well, Ian Restil
e-mailed me right back.

:

It might be tough to put you
in touch with him directly, though,

:

or at least until next week.
This is his e-mail:

:

"Your story screwed up my deal,
I don't to talk to y..."

:

I think he meant...

- "I don't want to talk to you."

:

Yeah. "I'm on vacation with my parents,
so leave me alone."

:

What kind of parent goes on vacation
with their kid in early May?

:

That's a good question.

:

I guess you have to know his mom.
She's a little quirky.

:

That's his e-mail address,
if you want to write him yourself.

:

These are all my notes.

:

That's the number for the National
Assembly of Hackers.

:

Don't be thrown if all you hear
is a dark, deep, heavy breathing.

:

It's... I don't know,
their outgoing voicemail message.

:

Don't ask me why.

:

And then that's the number
for Jukt Micronics.

:

The chairman's name
is George Sims.

:

I can't figure why this Penenberg guy
would have such hard time finding it,

:

but you know, whatever.

:

That's the URL
to their website.

:

And then, I can't seem to find
Joe Hiert's number.

:

I was looking all over at home.
It's somewhere there. I know it is.

:

I'll get that to you tomorrow,
if that's okay.

:

- Sure.

- Yeah.

:

He's Restil's agent.

:

Should I...

I'll give you some privacy.

:

No. Have a seat.

" " is that Palo Alto?

:

Er, no, Silicon Valley.

:

You'll probably get
a voicemail. I usually do.

:

"You've reached
the offices of Jukt Micronics.

:

Please leave a message. "

:

This is Charles Lane, I'm calling
from The New Republic magazine

:

in Washington D.C., I'd like to speak
to George Sims, if I could.

:

They already have
our number.

:

I guess you already have
our number. Thank you.

:

I'm sorry. We've just like spoken
a million times now.

:

That's actually his voice
on the answering machine.

:

Sims is so hands-on,

:

he won't even let his secretary
do an outgoing message.

:

Who's next?

:

Er, Penenberg.

:

Oh.

:

- This is Adam.

:

- Hi, it's Chuck Lane.

- Hi, Chuck.

:

- I've got a phone number for you.

- Phone number for what?

:

For George Sims, at Jukt Micronics.

You got a pen?

:

Yeah, sure.

:

Okay, thanks.

:

It's a phone number
for Jukt Micronics.

:

"You've reached
the offices of Jukt Micronics.

:

Please leave a message."

:

Do me a favor.

:

Call this number,
the same time I do, okay?

:

Ready?
- Yeah.

:

- Go.

:

"You've reached the offices
of Jukt Micronics.

:

- Please leave a message."
- What did you get?

:

- It's voicemail.
- I got a busy signal. Hang up.

:

Try again, okay?

:

Redial.

:

- Busy signal.

:

- "You've reached the offices of Jukt..."
- I get a voicemail. Hang up.

:

A major software company
with one phone line?

:

How are you doing?

:

Good.

:

- He's up to °.
- Oh, shit.

:

Come here, buddy.

:

- Should I give him a bath?
- That would be great.

:

- Yeah.

:

How are you doing?

:

Hello?

:

Hello, this is George Sims.
May I speak with Charles Lane?

:

One moment, please.

:

Honey,
it's George Sims.

:

Oh.

:

I'll take him.

:

Come on, sweetheart.
Yes, yes...

:

Hello?

:

Yeah, this is George Sims,
from Jukt Micronics.

:

Am I speaking
with Charles Lane?

:

Mr. Sims, thank you
for calling me back.

:

I don't have time for this actually.
We're trying to have an office party.

:

Uh-huh.

:

Look, if you were calling
for a comment on your story,

:

I don't have one,

:

other than to say, I wish
you'd never run the stupid thing.

:

That stuff was supposed
to be off the record,

:

and your reporter knows it,
that Glass guy.

:

- I'm calling to verify information.
- I'm not verifying anything.

:

Bottom line is, I'd like you guys
to basically get lost, okay?

:

- Hello?

:

- Hey.

- David.

:

- I'm sorry, Steve.

- Shit.

:

I didn't mean to startle you.

I thought you'd like a cup of coffee.

:

- What are you doing here?

- Working late.

:

Working on my article,

so I don't get shredded again.

:

- Thank you.

- You're welcome.

:

I always forget to ask you.

How are your studies coming?

:

Their fine.

I'm... just buried.

:

You're buried.

Right.

:

Okay. I should probably let you
get back to it.

:

- Is there anything you need?

- No. Good night, David.

:

Good night.

Thanks, Steve.

:

I got it.

:

- Hello?

- Chuck? It's Steve.

:

Hi, Steve.

:

Sorry to be calling
so late.

:

I was just wondering...

:

did you get a call from

the Jukt guy? George Sims?

:

- I did, yeah.

- Yeah. I was just sitting here,

:

and I realized that I'd given him
your home number

:

without asking you first.
And I wanted to apologize.

:

- It's fine.
- Sort of a prick, didn't you think?

:

I couldn't really tell
because he hung up so fast.

:

- Are you at home, Steve?
- No. Why?

:

I left a message
on your machine.

:

Those Forbes guys
want to talk to us again.

:

There's a conference call

at :

:

Sure.

Sounds like a party.

:

Yeah?

:

- Okay, night, Chuck.

- See you in the morning.

:

That's weird.

:

Morning.

:

Hey.

:

- Want a laugh?

- Sure.

:

- The website for Jukt Micronics.

- Oh, good.

:

Yeah, you might not think so
when you see what's on it.

:

I don't think Mr. Sims
liked our piece that much.

:

Yeah. And I found this too,
from my fridge for some reason.

:

Ian Restil's agent,
Joe Hiert.

:

I'd like to pause for a moment.

:

You can't go into the world of
journalism without first understanding

:

how a piece gets edited
at a place like "TNR."

:

This is a system that Michael Kelly
brought with him from The New Yorker.

:

A three-day torture test.

:

If your article's good,
the process will only make it better.

:

If your article's shaky,
you're in for a long week.

:

A story comes in,
and it goes to a senior editor.

:

He, or she, edits it
on computer,

:

then calls in the writer,
who makes revisions.

:

Then the piece goes to a second editor,
and the writer revises it again.

:

Then it goes through a fact-check,
where every fact in the piece...

:

every date, every title,

:

every place or assertion
is checked and verified.

:

Then the piece goes to a copy editor,
where it is scrutinized once again.

:

Then it goes to lawyers,
who apply their own burdens of proof.

:

Marty looks at it too. He's very
concerned with any kind of comment

:

the magazine is making.

:

Then Production takes it, and lays
it out into column inches and type.

:

Then it goes back on paper,
then back to the writer,

:

back to the copy editor,
back to editor number one,

:

and editor number two, back to
the fact-checker, back to the writer,

:

and back to Production again.

:

Throughout, those lawyers
are reading and re-reading,

:

looking for red flags,
anything that feels uncorroborated.

:

Once they're satisfied, the pages
are reprinted and it all happens again.

:

Every editor, the fact-checkers...
they all go through it one last time.

:

Now, most of you will start out
as interns somewhere.

:

And interns do a lot of fact checking,
so pay close attention.

:

There's a hole
in the fact-checking system.

:

A big one.

:

The facts in most pieces can be checked
against some type of source material.

:

If an article's on,
say, ethanol subsidies,

:

you could check for discrepancies
against the Congressional Record,

:

trade publications,
LexisNexis,

:

and footage from C-SPAN.

:

But on other pieces,

:

the only source material
available

:

are the notes provided
by the reporter himself.

:

Steve?

:

This doesn't look like
a real business card to me.

:

Yeah, I know.
That's the kind of clown this guy is.

:

He won't even pay

to have real cards made.

:

All right.

:

- My office at : okay?

- Yeah.

:

Good morning.

:

A few other people
we can't seem to locate...

:

Julie Farthwork, Frank Juliet

:

and Ian Restil's agent,
Joe Hiert.

:

We called the numbers you gave us,
got voicemails for all three.

:

And the e-mails were sent back
"No address" or "Account closed."

:

Really? 'Cause I've e-mailed them
about a million times each.

:

Hiert's online all day long.

:

Did you call these people
and get them directly?

:

No, I always left messages

:

and spoke to them
when they called me back.

:

And the references in the article
to Nevada law enforcement officials.

:

Was Jim Ghort
the only one you spoke to?

:

- Yes.
- Do you have a number for him?

:

- Yeah, definitely.
- By the way, what was your basis

:

for writing that Jukt
was a big-time software company?

:

I didn't. That was added
by the copy desk, or during editorial.

:

Was the hackers' conference
where you met the Jukt executives...

:

That part of the article
is misleading.

:

I was never
in the Restils' home at all.

:

You weren't in Restil's home,
with the Jukt executives?

:

No, I didn't mean
to imply that I had been.

:

Sorry about that.
Did the fax come through okay?

:

Yes, it did.

:

I think the address must've gotten
garbled. We can't find the site.

:

- You want to read it back to me?

- Sure.

:

You gave us

"members.aol.juktn.html."

:

- Wait. Was that an "M"?

- I'm sorry?

:

After Jukt, was that an "M,"
as in "Micronics"?

:

No, it was an "N",
as in "Not working."

:

- Try "M."

- Okay.

:

Sorry about that,
I was rushing.

:

Of course.

:

But I do find myself
wondering, Stephen.

:

Why would a major software
company put their website

:

where only AOL members can
access it, as opposed to the entire Web?

:

I have no idea.

:

I don't have a website so I don't really
know that much about them.

:

I would trust you guys
to know better than me.

:

Okay. Looks like...

:

we have
the Jukt website up now.

:

I have to say, Stephen...

:

this looks very
suspicious to me.

:

How so?

:

Quite frankly,
it doesn't look like a real website.

:

It looks like a site that was...
created to fool someone.

:

I don't know much about computers.
Could somebody do that?

:

Of course.
Very easily.

:

So easily, in fact,
it's incredible.

:

Do you still want that number
for Jim Ghort? I found it in my notes.

:

Yeah, sure.

:

All right. ...

:

- Wait.
- Sorry?

:

"Six-zero-five,"
that's not Nevada.

:

Oh.

:

I guess I got him mixed up
with another source.

:

Er...

:

Sorry about that one.
Oh, you know what it was?

:

Jim Ghort was the guy who told me
about the law enforcement officials.

:

I don't know what I was thinking.
I'm going to have to get you...

:

Steve.

:

Give him the number.

:

This guy is toast.

:

All right, Stephen,
in light of all this,

:

how confident are you
in this story of yours?

:

Are we off the record?

:

If you like.

:

Well, off the record...

:

some of the things
that you've brought up...

:

the website...

:

the idea that I was always speaking
to these people through voicemail...

:

that is, that they were
always calling me...

:

it didn't seem strange before,
but clearly,

:

there are some problems with the story.
You've pointed them out.

:

One portion of it
was structured in a way that...

:

I just... well...

:

in light of all this...

:

I just...

:

I'm increasingly beginning to believe
that I've been duped.

:

And so we hang up,

:

after he's basically let these guys
interrogate me for an hour.

:

And I go, "Chuck,
wh-what happened?"

:

I mean, why
didn't you back me up?"

:

He goes, "I'm sorry, Steve,
I've got to protect the magazine.

:

- I mean, I'm the editor."
- Typical.

:

He's being such an asshole.
So I'm dead, pretty much.

:

Yes, this is Kambiz.

:

Can we have a talk here?
Just editor to editor?

:

Sure. Go ahead.

:

Completely off the record, and really
almost human being to human being?

:

Of course.

:

You guys have discovered something
that a troubled kid has done,

:

but I still don't know
how you plan to play it.

:

We're not in the business
of "gotcha" journalism here.

:

I have no interest in embarrassing
you or The New Republic.

:

I'm not worried about me
or the magazine. That's fair game,

:

But there's a kid here
who basically,

:

just plainly, screwed up.
Big time.

:

His reporting was sloppy,
we know that.

:

But we're trying to handle it
internally at this point,

:

just as you would.

:

Listen, we're going to run
something

:

along the lines of,
"A trick was pulled,

:

and some very clever hackers
managed to create an illusion."

:

I can't tell you
what to print or not to print.

:

You guys are journalists.

:

But... he could be very hurt
by what you guys publish. His career.

:

Chuck, I understand.
I do.

:

I would hope if I made
the mistakes he made,

:

people would be
generous with me.

:

But...

:

this concerns the very field
we cover.

:

We have to run it.

:

And when we do, we're going to need
a comment from you.

:

So given everything
that's happened,

:

how strongly are you going
to stand behind the story?

:

I'm looking into it.

:

It's really not that big a deal.
You got fooled by a source.

:

It happens. They'll print
a retraction, and that'll be that.

:

Steve, it's not like
it's going to hurt your career.

:

Of course, if you weren't
so distracted by your classes,

:

- maybe this never would've happened.
- I know, I gotta quit. You're right.

:

Can I speak to you
for a minute, Steve?

:

What about?

:

Let's do it in private.

:

We need to take a drive
to Bethesda.

:

- What for?
- I want to meet Joe Hiert.

:

I already told you,
nobody knows where he is.

:

Maybe if we go to the hotel
where he met with Restil and Sims,

:

someone will remember him,
or have some clue...

:

There were hundreds
of people there, okay?

:

These Forbes guys
want to come down on you.

:

They are highly suspicious about some
of the material in that article.

:

- You know that.
- Yeah.

:

But they're going to go online
with their piece tomorrow.

:

- Oh.
- Okay?

:

- Yeah.
- Now...

:

- Steve? Steve.
- Yeah?

:

If we can find Hiert,

:

I can back them off
for a day or two, okay?

:

- Okay. I'll get my notes.
- Okay.

:

- Let's go.
- All right.

:

We were at this table.

:

Restil sat here,
his mother was on his left,

:

Hiert... sorry,
his mother was on his right.

:

Hiert sat there,

:

but Restil wanted him closer,
so he slid his chair over.

:

Sims sat here.
He had a lawyer next to him.

:

I forget the guy's name,
it's in my notes.

:

Somebody was smoking
at this table,

:

so Restil's mother insisted
that we move to one farther away.

:

Over there.

:

The Hacker Conference
was near here, right?

:

Yeah, the building next door.

:

I don't remember from the article.
How many people were at this thing?

:

It looked like a hundred,
might have been two. It's in my notes.

:

people? Here?

:

Yeah, they moved in and out.
I mean, most of them were kids.

:

That doesn't seem
credible to me.

:

All I know is I was here.

:

All of us were right here.

:

- Excuse me sir, can I help you?
- Yes, you can.

:

We're looking into a conference
held here a couple of Sundays ago.

:

Computer hackers.
Do you remember anything like that?

:

Are you sure you're
in the right building, sir?

:

- Yes, we're sure.

- Why is that?

:

Building's closed on Sunday.

:

All I know is, I was here.

:

The conference was right here.

:

That's why the Restils
only stayed a few minutes, okay?

:

Because it was such
a dumb place to squeeze into.

:

So they went to a restaurant for dinner,
with some of Ian's hacker friends.

:

Thank you.

:

- How many?

- Huh?

:

People at the dinner.

How many?

:

About I think,
including me.

:

Ian even put on a jacket.

:

- Hiert was there too?

- Yeah.

:

- Is it near here?

- Yeah, it's across the street.

:

Good,
let's cross the street.

:

You know, I really don't like
the way you're treating me, Chuck.

:

It's like you won't even
talk to me.

:

- This is the place?

- Yes.

:

I didn't do anything wrong, okay?

I didn't do anything wrong.

:

You saw my notes,
everything was in there.

:

I got tricked. I got fooled, I'm sorry.
What are you being so mad for?

:

- It was people?

- Yes.

:

- For dinner?

- Yes.

:

They're closed at :
on Sundays.

:

Yeah, I know. I know, they almost
didn't let us in. Okay?

:

But it was a couple
of minutes before :

:

and Ian looked like he was about
ready to cry, and so they said okay.

:

- But for dinner?
- Go in and ask them yourself, Chuck.

:

See if they would serve
a party that came in at :

:

and the answer would be yes,
because that's when we got here.

:

The Forbes guys
are gonna have all this too,

:

and dig through the records
at that office building.

:

They have surveillance cameras
and they're gonna check them.

:

I didn't do anything
wrong, Chuck!

:

I really wish
you'd stop saying that!

:

Steve...

:

come on, anyone
can make a mistake.

:

You know,
this is not right, Chuck!

:

Okay, I feel really attacked.

:

And you're my editor.
You're supposed to support me,

:

and you're taking
their word against mine?

:

You're supposed
to support me!

:

Criticism
of the President's program has been...

:

- Leave it off.

:

I'm sorry I yelled at you
back there.

:

Chuck?

:

Steve!

:

- Pull the goddamn car over.

- Yeah.

:

All right.

:

There's been
so much pressure.

:

Chuck, I didn't mean
to get anybody in trouble.

:

Okay. Okay.

:

You weren't
at the conference?

:

No.

:

You know, I had a description of it
from so many sources,

:

I thought I had it solid.

Okay?

:

And I wanted the piece
to have an eyewitness feel to it,

:

for color... so...
I said I'd been there myself.

:

And everything
we just told the Forbes guys...?

:

I'm so sorry, Chuck.

:

I just panicked.

:

If you want me to say
that I made it up...

:

I will.
If that'll help you, I'll say it.

:

I just want you
to tell me the truth, Steve.

:

Can you do that?

:

There might be facets
of this that you're not considering.

:

- Why are you defending him?
- Nobody's defending him, Chuck.

:

- Of course you're defending him.
- He's a kid.

:

He doctored his notes, Lew.
Just consider that for a second.

:

You know?
He sat down,

:

and he hand-wrote
a bunch of phony quotes

:

and handed them in
as source material for the fact-check.

:

- Doesn't that offend you?
- Of course it does.

:

He also lied to his editor.
That's supposed to offend you too.

:

He's a confused, distraught kid
obviously, Chuck.

:

So suspend him for a couple of months,
but let's not bury him.

:

Suspend him...

:

There are also political considerations
to take into account here...

:

the rest of the staff,
the way they feel about him.

:

- I already know all that.
- What I'm saying is,

:

if you fire him,
some of these people will leave.

:

I don't know if we'd still have
a magazine at the end of the day.

:

- Hey, Caitlin.
- Not now, David.

:

- How's he doing?
- Well, he's a wreck, of course.

:

- I want him in here, Caitlin.
- He's too scared to come in here.

:

He thinks you want to destroy him.
He knows what he did was horrible.

:

He knows how badly
he messed up.

:

The part he's most upset about
is lying to you, Chuck.

:

Because he knows you took it
as a sign of disrespect

:

instead of a panic move,
which is what it was.

:

Think about the workload he's been
carrying... all this and classes.

:

He hasn't slept more than two hours
in nine months.

:

So he got a little sloppy and he lied to
cover his tracks.

:

- He's sick about it.
- Caitlin...

:

the building he described,
it doesn't even exist.

:

He just made it up.

:

So...?

:

Obviously
he needs some help.

:

- He needs help.
- Just get him in here.

:

You can't fire him.

:

I don't think he'll survive.

:

You don't understand,
we're all he has.

:

You can't fire him,
Chuck.

:

Thanks, Lew.

:

Would you guys excuse us
for a minute?

:

...watered-down stock,

:

and you know, within...
Steve!

:

What are you doing here?

:

I'm so dead.

:

I mean, I'm over.

:

Nobody's ever going

to hire me again, are they?

:

I was so sloppy,
trusting my sources like that.

:

And then lying about it.

:

And to Chuck,
of all people...

:

I mean, the one guy
who's hated me all along.

:

I'm sure that none of this
is personal.

:

No?

:

Chuck keeps a list
in his head...

:

everybody who's
a "Michael Kelly" person.

:

A couple of times,

:

I said some things
I shouldn't have said...

:

about you.

:

So now I'm on it.

:

That's why he's so set
on killing me now.

:

Well, I have to tell you, Steve,
he's within his rights.

:

The things you did
were fireable offenses.

:

I know, I'm not saying
that they weren't.

:

I did some terrible,
terrible things.

:

But believe me, Michael,
Chuck doesn't care about any of it.

:

It's my loyalty to you
that he's punishing me for.

:

I'm such an idiot.

:

Now who's going to hire me?

:

Steve, I have to ask you
something.

:

Did you ever "cook" a piece
when I was your boss?

:

Did you ever lie to me?

:

The "Young Conservatives" piece,
the mini-bottles?

:

Was that true?

:

- Hello.

- Chuck, it's David Bach.

:

I'm really sorry to bother you at night,
but it seemed important.

:

It's fine.
Is there a problem?

:

Well, I don't know.

:

I just got off the phone
with Stephen.

:

He sounds horrible.

:

Did you suspend him,
Chuck?

:

David,
what is the problem?

:

He asked me if I would drive him
out to Dulles later tonight.

:

He said he wasn't sure
he'd be safe driving by himself.

:

I just thought I should
draw your attention to that.

:

Did he say
where he was going?

:

Yeah, he said he'd be staying
with his family for a while.

:

That could only be
one of two places.

:

His parents live
in Highland Park, right?

:

Yeah. Or his brother,
out in Palo Alto.

:

- I'm sorry?
- His brother, at Stanford.

:

Chuck?

:

You had your brother pose
as "George Sims."

:

What?

:

The phony recording
from Jukt Micronics?

:

It's a Palo Alto number.

:

Your brother is a student at Stanford.
You had him pose as Sims.

:

- No, Sims is a real guy...
- Steve, Steve...

:

I've talked to him a million times.
My brother and I aren't speaking...

:

Stop it. You faked Sims,
you faked a website...

:

- You faked all those voicemails...
- You don't know, Chuck.

:

- Restil, Hiert, Ghort...
- You got this totally backward.

:

It's all crap. I can trace it if you
make me. I'll find it all billed to you.

:

I don't know what you're talking about.
Those are all real people.

:

- They are?
- Yeah.

:

Look at me.

:

And say that again.

:

Those are all real people.

:

Tsk... okay.

:

I want you out of here.

:

What?

:

I want you out of here,

:

and you can't take anything
with you.

:

There are some files, okay?
I have to put them on a disk.

:

- No.
- No, there are mine. Personal stuff!

:

I don't care.

:

I know you don't.

:

- Can I at least shut down my computer?
- Don't touch it!

:

- I'm in the middle of a file, Chuck!
- Back away from the desk!

:

- God damn it!
- Leave it or I will call Security!

:

- Jesus Christ.
- Okay?

:

Can I take my Rolodex?

:

Steve...

:

Can I take my law books?

:

Sure.

:

But I'm gonna need to have
your security key.

:

I'm not a criminal, Chuck.

:

Okay?

:

- I'm not a criminal.
- Oh, I heard you.

:

Come on.

:

Chuck...?

:

I said I was sorry.

:

I know.

:

But you have to go.

:

"Bond traders as a rule,

:

do not have much time
to loaf around.

:

And the Wall Street
investment house, RVL,

:

takes its work ethic
to a particularly..."

:

"...one trader is now testing
a hand-held urinal

:

normally used
by cops on stakeouts..."

:

"A few days after Mike Tyson
was disqualified

:

for biting Evander Holyfield,

:

I offered half a dozen talk shows
my services as a biting expert.

:

I'm someone who knows..."

:

"The mini-bar is open,
and empty little bottles of booze

:

are scattered on the carpet. "

:

"It was the monthly gathering

:

of 'The Commission to Restore
the Presidency to Greatness. "'

:

"Patriotic prophets
will have a hard time

:

holding back
this merchandising bonanza..."

:

- Thanks, George, sorry for the trouble.
- No problem, Steve.

:

Chuck?

:

Um...

:

The... the thing
with George Sims?

:

That was...

:

the voice... the voice that you heard
on the telephone,

:

that was my brother.
I'm sorry.

:

There really is a George Sims.

:

L... I've spoken to him
a million times.

:

He just stopped talking to me.

:

You know,
because of the article.

:

He was so mad about it.
I didn't know what to do.

:

And the guys from Forbes were
putting so much pressure on me.

:

You know?
And you were so mad!

:

I just thought that if I could get
everybody off my back, okay?

:

For just a day.

:

Just a day would give me
enough time to... go and find him.

:

You can understand that,
can't you?

:

You're fired, Steve.

:

What?

:

You're fired.
You've lost your job.

:

But you can't...

:

Chuck...

:

will you please
take me to the airport?

:

Jesus.

:

Please, okay?

:

You don't have to talk to me
if you don't want to.

:

It's fine.

:

But I can't be by myself
right now.

:

Okay? I'm...

:

I'm afraid
of what I'm going to do.

:

And you know,
I... I can't get there by myself.

:

I'm not going anywhere
with you.

:

Now, if you feel like
you're a danger to yourself,

:

you can sit down for a few minutes
until you feel calm enough to go.

:

But I am not going anywhere
with you.

:

But... I'm afraid that I'm...

:

I'm going to do something,
okay?

:

Did you hear what I said?

:

Yeah.

:

It's a hell of a story.

:

Chuck, please?

:

Stop pitching, Steve.
It's over.

:

"Spring Breakdown,"
"The Jungle."

:

"A Fine Mess,"
"After the Fall,"

:

"Peddling Poppy,"
"Cheap Suits,"

:

"Kicked Out,"
"No Free Launch,"

:

"Ratted Out,"
"State of Nature,"

:

"Clutch Situation,"
"All Wet," "Plotters,"

:

"Praised Be Greenspan,"
"Monica Sells..."

:

"Hack Heaven."

:

What the hell did you do
to Steve?!

:

He called me from his car, hysterical.
I asked him what was wrong,

:

- he said, "Ask Chuck..."
- I fired him, okay?!

:

Not suspended, fired.

:

Because this wasn't
an isolated incident, Caitlin.

:

He cooked a dozen
of them, maybe more.

:

We're going to have to go
through them, you and I. All of them.

:

No, the only one was "Hack Heaven."
He told me that himself!

:

If he were a stranger to you, if he was
a guy you were doing a piece about,

:

pretend that guy told you
he'd "only done it once."

:

Would you take his word for it?

:

Of course not,
you'd dig and you'd bury him!

:

And you'd be offended
if anybody told you not to.

:

Everyone of those pieces
was fact-checked. They...

:

So was "Hack Heaven"!

:

You're a good reporter.

:

You've always been a smart, thorough
reporter. Why can't you be one now?

:

Because what you're telling me

is impossible, Chuck.

:

Go upstairs.

:

- Read them again.
- This is bullshit!

:

Make sure you go
all the way back,

:

because half of them ran
when Mike was still here.

:

That's what this is.
Of course.

:

What are you going to do, Chuck,
pick us off, one by one?

:

Everybody that was loyal to Mike,
so you have a staff that belongs to you?

:

Is that the kind of magazine
you want to run?

:

When this thing blows, there isn't

going to be a magazine anymore.

:

If you want to make this about Mike,
make it about Mike.

:

I don't give a shit.
You can resent me,

:

you can hate me,
but come Monday morning,

:

we're all going to have to answer
for what we let happen here.

:

We're all going to have
an apology to make!

:

Jesus Christ! Don't you have any idea
how much shit we're about to eat?

:

Every competitor we ever took a shot at,
they're going to pounce.

:

And they should.
Because we blew it, Caitlin.

:

He handed us fiction after fiction

:

and we printed them all as fact.

:

Just because...
we found him "entertaining."

:

It's indefensible.

:

Don't you know that?

:

- Is everyone in the conference room?
Um-hm.

:

You know what could've prevented
all this, don't you?

:

No. What?

:

Pictures.

:

How could you
make up characters

:

if everyone you wrote about
had to be photographed?

:

You know, Stephen...

:

if you wanted to, you could
do these kids a giant favor.

:

- Yeah?
- Yeah.

:

You could write something boring
one of these days.

:

Give them a little less
to live up to.

:

I suppose I could.

:

We don't want a bunch
of teenagers getting ulcers, do we?

:

Good morning.

:

Hi.

:

It's funny...

:

...because I thought I was going
to have to explain all this to you.

:

Well, what do you think
of this guy?

:

Thank you.

:

Thank you.

:

Thank you, everybody.

:

Thanks.
Thank you.

:

Steve?

:

Stephen?

:

We've read through
all the pieces now,

:

the entire staff, and we've
come up with a list of those

:

whose facts and sources
we couldn't verify independently.

:

I know you can't admit
guilt of any kind,

:

but I want you to confirm
a few titles for me.

:

We're not prepared
to confirm or deny anything...

:

What I'm going to do is this.

:

I'm going to read to you a list
of suspicious titles, one by one.

:

If you raise an objection
to a particular title,

:

we'll fact-check it again in the hope
of removing it from the list.

:

If you remain silent,
we'll assume that piece is fabricated...

:

either partially or entirely,
and it will stay on.

:

Is that clear to everyone?

:

Okay.

:

"Hazardous
To Your Mental Health."

:

That means it stays
on the list of suspicious pieces.

:

Fabricated pieces.

:

We understand.
Can we move along?

:

"Holy Trinity."

:

"Probable Claus"?

:

"Don't You Dare."

:

"Spring Breakdown."

:

"State Of Nature."

:

"Rock The Morons."

:

"After The Fall..."

:

You have to know
who you're writing for,

:

and you have to know
what you're good at.

:

I record what people do.

:

I find out what moves them,
what scares them,

:

and I write that down.

:

That way they're the ones
telling the story.

:

And you know what?

:

Those kinds of pieces
can win Pulitzers too.

:

Steve?