In this fifth edition of *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal (The IJPC Journal),* authors explore the depiction of journalists in movies and novels and on radio, television, and stage. A broad range of scholarship offers concepts, connections, and critiques—good, bad, and ugly—of journalists' roles as professionals and how they are perceived by the public.

Anchoring the issue are four articles about the image of the Washington, D.C. journalist. In the first study of its kind, IJPC director Joe Saltzman and senior research associate Liz Mitchell reveal the results of viewing 127 English-speaking films and television programs from 1932-2013 that include Washington, D.C. journalists as correspondents, anchors, editors, columnists, producers, photojournalists, publishers, and more recently, bloggers. Their special research report, "The Image of the Washington Journalist in Movies and Television: 1932 to 2013," categorizes journalists by decade, genre, gender, ethnicity, media category, job title, and description. Each image presented by an individual journalist or group of journalists is coded on a subjective scale of very positive, positive, negative, very negative, and neutral. An appendix provides a brief description of each film and breakout of the categories.

Saltzman and Mitchell point out that the Washington journalist is one of the more heroic depictions of the journalist in popular culture. Images of the investigative journalist in Washington in movies and TV offer reassuring evidence that journalists are doing what the public wants them to do—serve the public interest, inform the people, and provide a watchdog function by making sure that those who wield power are doing so in the service of the people and not for personal, political, or financial gain. Images of villainous columnists, reporters, and publishers in the movies and TV shows studied do the opposite. They suggest to the public that the more powerful journalists become in Washington, the more corrupt they become; even the

fourth estate is susceptible to influence and corruption.

Accompanying the special report on Washington journalists are papers presented by Maurine H. Beasley, Matthew C. Ehrlich, and Sammye Johnson at a Professional Freedom and Responsibility (PF&R) Panel at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) annual conference in Washington, D.C. in 2013. The program, titled "The Image of the Washington Political Journalist in Popular Culture," was sponsored by the Entertainment Studies Interest Group and History Division.

Beasley's paper, "Washington Women Journalists: Fact vs. Fiction," looks at six books of fiction published between 1990 and 2013 featuring women journalists working in Washington, D.C. All the books are written by women with wide experience in journalism. The authors of two books—*Girls No More* by Caryl Rivers (a journalism professor at Boston University) and *The List* by Karin Tanabe (a Washington journalist who has experience in on-line journalism)—are interviewed. Rivers told Beasley her characters are based on real women working in Washington journalism during the Vietnam period, while Tanabe said her characters are drawn from her own experience working at *Politico*. These two books show Washington journalism as extremely competitive, run by male editors, rife with sexual harassment, difficult to balance with personal lives, and, particularly in the Tanabe one, filled with interoffice politics among women journalists themselves.

The other four books discussed by Beasley are by a sports writer, a restaurant critic, and two experienced reporters. Echoing the themes of competition and conflict, *Squeeze Play, Corruption of Faith, Murder on the Gravy Train*, and *Grave Apparel* also depict Washington women journalists who are ambitious, intelligent, and well-educated.

When *The Columnist* premiered on Broadway in 2012 starring John Lithgow, theatergoers

were taken to the world of Joseph Alsop, one of the most powerful newspaper columnists of the 1960s, with close ties to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson. Matthew C. Ehrlich's "Broadway Takes on *The Columnist*: A Case Study with Joseph Alsop," is an assessment of the role of Washington columnists—for good or for ill. Ehrlich argues that *The Columnist* speaks to 21st century concerns, and points out that playwright David Auburn saw "historical parallels between the columnist and the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003," particularly the refusal of some officials and pundits to admit they were wrong about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Alsop affected national and international policy because of his connections and intellectual hubris; he saw himself as "a transmission belt for facts." What is the role of that kind of expertise and authority, asks Ehrlich, in today's model of news? The need for accuracy and context is as paramount as ever, but it's difficult to think of any Washington journalist having that much of an impact today.

Johnson's paper, "Passionate and Powerful: Film Depictions of Women Journalists Working in Washington, D.C.," focuses on four dramatic movies that take place in the capital and feature women reporters as the primary protagonists. Johnson, who teaches a course titled "Women Journalists in Film" at Trinity University in Texas, asks whether journalistic themes and images about female reporters have changed since 1940 when Rosalind Russell lit up the screen as Hildy Johnson in *His Girl Friday*.

Several themes permeate journalism movies well into the 21st century: the perceived and real power of the press that can be used for good or for evil; the shifting morals and sloppy ethics of the press; and the pursuit of the scoop or exclusive. These themes are still significant in today's changing mediascape, and particularly come into play when the work setting is the

national seat of power, Washington, D.C. Identifying five characteristics that are shared by women reporters over time, Johnson's analysis of *Up Close and Personal, Thank You for Smoking, Lions for Lambs*, and S*tate of Play* reveals that the female journalist remains independent, aggressive, and self-assured. The female reporter working in Washington understands about power and passion, plus she "more often than not outwits, outfoxes, and outreports every male reporter in sight."

The research article in this issue, "Pseudo Newsgathering: Analyzing Journalists' Use of Pseudo-events on *The Wire"* by Patrick Ferrucci and Chad Painter, investigates the negotiations that occur between journalists and their sources in the construction of the content and reality of news. Using cultivation theory and textual analysis, the article examines season five of the gritty television series for implicit and explicit meaning in how viewers are influenced in their perception of the news industry.

*The Wire* depicts *Baltimore Sun* reporters and editors dealing with public officials who have created pseudo-events to control their image and manipulate the press. Journalists are shown as failing to ask tough questions and allowing public officials to spin the news. Consequently, state Ferrucci and Painter, "Even people with favorable opinions concerning journalists could view season five and find themselves disillusioned with journalism."

However, a more positive note is sounded in Jefferson Spurlock's feature article, "The Participant Observer: Journalist J.B. Kendall as a Social Research Practitioner in Old Time Radio's *Frontier Gentleman*." Spurlock's essay explores a popular radio show about a British correspondent for the *London Times* who reported on the American Frontier, roaming the Montana and Wyoming Territories during the 1870s for stories. The series, *Frontier Gentleman*, lasted for 41 episodes in 1958.

Spurlock argues that Kendall was not a traditional reporter, or unobtrusive observer, who was looking for stories of interest to pass along to his readers in London. Instead, Kendall would become involved in the story as a participant observer, even serving as a lawman and an attorney in some episodes. He's clearly the good guy in the tradition of the Western movie formula: Kendall would arrive in a new town, be drawn into a conflict with villains, confront them, and get rid of them—saving the day for the community and for society.

By studying the image of the journalist in popular culture, we can better understand why the public believes what it does about this specialized profession and what this means to the news media and the public as a whole. We hope you enjoy this latest issue of *The IJPC Journal*. As always, we invite your feedback and submissions.

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*Sammye Johnson*
*Joe Saltzman*