

Part I: Gold for a New Century

3 A Newsroom Challenged, 2002: 9/11 and the New York Times

Chapter 3 Discussion

1. Imagine yourself in the first week of running a newsroom when a major story happens—as it happened for Gerald Boyd. What extra challenge would there be for you as a brand-new leader? How do you think Boyd did in reacting to the challenge? What might you have done differently?
2. How is it that an editor like Boyd could describe one of the busiest nights of the newsroom's year—9/11—as “the easiest night”?
3. Was it right for reporter David Barstow to avoid police after he returned from his out-of-town assignment, and to spend several days near Ground Zero even as reporters were being told to leave? If you were an editor, what advice would you give to such aggressive reporters?
4. Considering how Christine Kay approached the need to write about people missing in the World Trade Center disaster—with “Portraits of Grief”—how else might she have handled the issue of describing “the victims”?
5. How would you react as a reporter if you discovered that a fellow reporter had lied to editors—as Jayson Blair did to avoid doing articles that didn't promise the recognition of a stand-alone byline?

Chapter 3 Quiz

1. The citywide event scheduled for the day of the 9/11 attacks in 2001 was a
A Parade
B Raffle
C Journalism competition
D Primary election
2. What is the New York Times “A book”?
A A children's novel
B Its first section
C An accounting manual
D Its crossword puzzle book
3. How many words were the reporters asked to write for each “Portrait of Grief”?
A 200 words
B 2,000 words
C 2,500 words
D Reporters didn't write the Portraits
4. Which was NOT suggested as an alternative to “Portraits of Grief”?
A Portraits of Sorrow
B The Street Art of Despair
C Portraits of the Dead
D Portraits of Loss
5. Gerald Boyd and Howell Raines left the Times because of the Jayson Blair scandal:
 True
 False