



## These are sources



**A student** locked down inside a classroom told CNN by phone that the shooting began in the cafeteria.



"We have to rethink how we address infection control," **CDC Director Tom Frieden** said Monday.



Officer Kenneth Healey and three on-duty colleagues were posing for a picture when a hatchet-wielding man charged at them "unprovoked," according to **Police Commissioner Bill Bratton**.



"The statement of me dating a sex offender is totally untrue," **family matriarch "Mama June" Shannon** said.

## Why sources matter

THREATS AND RESPONSES: INTELLIGENCE  
**THREATS AND RESPONSES: INTELLIGENCE; Defectors Bolster U.S. Case Against Iraq, Officials Say**  
 By JUDITH MILLER  
 Published: January 24, 2003

**BOOKS OF THE TIMES; Sounding an Urgent Terrorism Alarm to Deaf Ears**  
 By JUDITH MILLER  
 Judith Miller reviews book The Age of Sacred Terror by Daniel Benjamin and Steven Miller; photos  
 November 20, 2002



**THREATS AND RESPONSES: GERM WEAPONS; C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie to Soviet Smallpox**  
 By JUDITH MILLER  
 CIA investigates informant's accusation that Iraq obtained

## Why sources matter



“Indeed, the facts and Iraq’s behavior show that Saddam Hussein and his regime are concealing their efforts to produce more weapons of mass destruction.”  
 — U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell to the UN Security Council, Feb. 5, 2003

## Why sources matter



U.S. invades Iraq to capture weapons of mass destruction



## Why sources matter



## Why sources matter



*New York magazine*

### The Source of the Trouble

Pulitzer Prize winner Judith Miller’s series of exclusives about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—courtesy of the now-notorious Ahmad Chalabi—helped the *New York Times* keep up with the competition and the Bush administration bolster the case for war. How the very same talents that caused her to get the story also caused her to get it wrong.

If Miller is an extreme example of the *Times*’ ultracompetitive mind-set, she is also an example of an inherent problem of journalism: its reliance on sources.

## Why sources matter

“The problematic articles varied in authorship and subject matter, but many shared a common feature. **They depended at least in part on**

**information from a circle of Iraqi informants, defectors and exiles bent on ‘regime change’ in Iraq,** people whose credibility has come under increasing public debate in recent weeks.”



## Evaluating sources is all about **critical thinking**



Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon  
**Main Entry:** critical thinking  
**Part of Speech:** n  
**Definition:** the mental process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to reach an answer or conclusion

Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon  
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Housekeeping,  
announcements & notes

## Last week's Quick Quiz

- 1. Direct Evidence:** Photos, video, audio, documents, eyewitnesses.  
**Indirect Evidence:** Accounts from spokesmen, press releases or hearsay, along with expert reconstructions, computer models and inferences.
  - “Scientific truth is a statement of probability proportional to the **evidence**. It will change over time as the **evidence** changes.”
- Your questions and comments ...**
- ❖ “So would a journalist prefer video footage over actually seeing a newsworthy event first hand?  
 — Jeremy Tse
  - ❖ “Evidence is stronger when it is coming from a reliable source, but what happens if the source itself is biased? Will it not provide information that might alter the evidence according to their own beliefs or practices?  
 — Rasheequr Rahman
  - ❖ “Even if many sources confirm something, could it still be false?”  
 — Jake Acito

## LOOKING BACK

A new edition of the ...

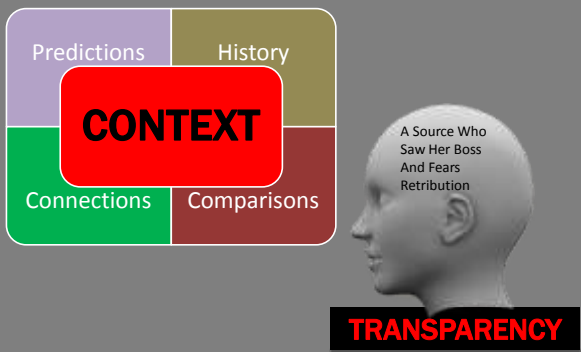


After this lecture, you should be able to ...

1. Articulate the difference between a news outlet and a news Source.
2. Use the IMVAIN criteria to evaluate sources in news stories.
3. Justify reasons for differential ratings of sources' credibility based on IMVAIN analysis.
4. Use specific examples to illustrate the difference between a source who asserts and one who provides verifiable evidence.
5. Use a three-part test to judge the reliability of anonymous sources.

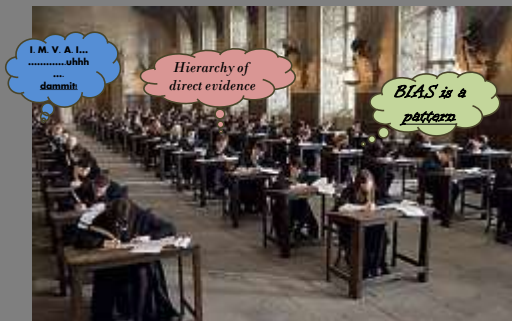
## LOOKING AHEAD

Two ideas students struggle with



## LOOKING AHEAD

**TEST 2:** Covering lectures since the last test will be held in recitation the week of Nov. 17



**LOOKING AHEAD**

Reminder: Bring your deconstruction workbook to the next lecture



Print it.

Read it.

Bring it

**Common sense source evaluation**

- ✓ Who is this source?
- ✓ How would this person know about this?
- ✓ Is anyone else telling the same story?
- ✓ Is this person providing evidence or just making assertions?
- ✓ Does this source have a dog in the fight?

(Don't copy these. Wait for the mnemonic device)

Can cell phones  
crash airliners?



Says who?

**Says who?**

Cellonplane.wmv

# I-M-V-A-I-N

A SYSTEM FOR EVALUATING THE RELIABILITY OF SOURCES

**I**ndependent sources are better than self-interested sources

**M**ultiple sources are better than single sources

Sources who **V**erify with evidence are better than sources who assert

**A**uthoritative/**I**nformed sources are better than uninformed sources

**N**amed sources are better than unnamed sources

## “Think twice”

A silent minute  
to absorb  
the material



## A case study in source evaluation



## Judging the reliability of sources

**I**ndependent sources  
are better than **self-interested** sources

(Does this source have anything to gain by withholding information or making misleading statements? If there is a conflict, the most reliable sources have no stake in the outcome. Independent experts, for example, are less likely to mislead us than partisans.)



## Self-interested sources...

In a statement on Sept. 20, the agency said Mr. Gonzalez "was physically apprehended after entering the White House North Portico doors" — leaving the impression that Secret Service officers tackled Mr. Gonzalez just steps after he opened the door and walked through. Secret Service officials said



White House officials also did nothing in the last week to correct the impression that Mr. Gonzalez had been stopped just inside the front door

Do Secret Service agents have a motivation to downplay the security breach? Does the White House staff?



## Independent sources?

- Intellectually independent?
- Politically neutral?
- Financial interests at stake?
- Family involved?



"This is really just part of a pattern of bias..." Ron Weisler, author of "If to the President's Secret Service," said on CNN, citing several notorious examples during the Obama administration, including Tariq and Michaele Satali crashing the state dinner and agents being prostitutes in Colombia.

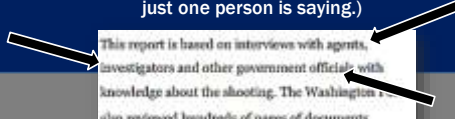


"I'm very surprised," former FBI assistant director Tom Fuentes said on CNN. "You know, everybody's in a little bit of shock that someone not just jumped the fence, but that they got that close."

## Judging the reliability of sources

**M**ultiple sources are better than **single** sources (Information coming from multiple sources is usually more reliable than something just one person is saying.)

This report is based on interviews with agents, investigators and other government officials with knowledge about the shooting. The Washington Post also reviewed hundreds of pages of documents, including transcripts of interviews with officers on duty that night, and listened to audio recordings of in-the-moment law enforcement radio transmissions.



## Multiple sources



### 2-Tier Secret Service Faces a Test

WASHINGTON — Had last month's White House fence-training and the behavior of its agents. But relatively little attention has been given to a structural issue that has divided the agency and defined its culture since 1930, when Congress folded what was then the White House Police Force into the Secret Service.

There's a disparity between agents and officers," said **Manuel Ovalle**, who spent decades in the Uniformed Division and served as its commander, where the officers stood in the line of duty as agent run organization.

That disparity, along with the questions about morale and training, is one of the issues the Secret Service says it is investigating in response to the intense criticism it has received over the security breaches. "Everything is going to be looked at," said **Kevin S. Simpson**, the chief of the Uniformed Division.

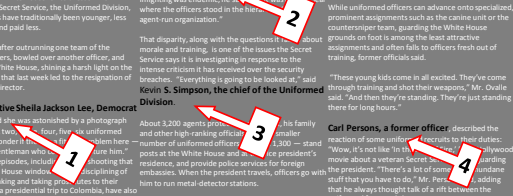
Representative **Sheila Jackson Lee**, Democrat of Texas, said she has been hammered by a ping-pong showing "one, two, three, four, five" uniformed officers — I wondered what the hell are you doing here chasing this gentleman around the White House? Other recent episodes, including a shooting that broke a White House window, disciplining of agents for drinking and taking pot in their rooms before a presidential trip to Colombia, have also raised questions about the agency's competence, its

training and the behavior of its agents. But relatively little attention has been given to a structural issue that has divided the agency and defined its culture since 1930, when Congress folded what was then the White House Police Force into the Secret Service.

While uniformed officers can advance onto specialized, prominent assignments such as the canine unit or the counter-sniper team, guarding the White House grounds on foot is among the least attractive assignments and often falls to officers fresh out of training, former officials said.

"These young kids come in all excited. They've come through training and shoot their weapons," Mr. Ovalle said. "And then they're standing. They're just standing there for long hours."

**Carl Persons**, a former officer, described the reaction of some uniformed agents to **President Obama's** move about a veteran Secret Service agent joining the president: "There's a lot of some 'condemne stuff that you have to do,'" Mr. Persons added that he always thought talk of a rift between the uniformed force and the agents was



## Judging the reliability of sources

Sources who **V**erify  
with evidence are better than  
sources who **a**ssert

(Sources who back up what they say with facts  
are more valuable than  
ones who make unverifiable accusations  
or offer opinions, inferences or  
hunches without corroboration.)

## Verifying or asserting?

SourcesThatAssertingraham.mp4

"I guess...you do get the sense that political correctness  
could have been a factor here..."

## A corollary to last week's lesson:



Did the  
**source**  
open the  
freezer?

## Judging the reliability of sources

**A**uthoritative / **I**nformed  
sources are better than  
**u**ninformed sources

(Sources who know what they're talking about  
are always more valuable  
than sources who don't  
have the credentials  
or information to speak knowledgeably  
about a subject.)




## Authoritative or informed?

**Secret Service fumbled response after gunman hit White House residence in 2011**

...ing that someone who didn't really plan it hit the White House and people here (Ed... several days later," said William Daley, who was White...

Daley said he recalls the late discovery of the bullets striking up the Obama and their staff. The Secret Service could not have prevented the shooting, Daley said, but it should have determined more quickly what happened.

"The handling of this case or good," is evil



## Authoritative or informed?

**Secret Service fumbled response after gunman hit White House residence in 2011**

This is symptomatic of an organization that is not moving in the right direction," Rep. Jason Chaffetz (Utah), a leading Republican on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, said in an interview. The committee, which oversees the Secret Service, has invited the director to testify at a Tuesday hearing on security issues.

**Versus ...**

**SERVICE**

I question the scope of the weapon in the car firing with that much accuracy at 800-100 yards. To make that shot pattern from that distance, at night, with that weapon is next to impossible




## Judging the reliability of sources

**N**amed sources are better than unnamed sources

(Sources who are fully identified and speak on the record are accountable for what they say. The chief problem with anonymous source is how little readers have to go on as they try to assess reliability.)

## Who are these people?

**Secret Service fumbled response after gunman hit White House residence in 2011**

A woman in a taxi stopped at a nearby stoplight immediately took to Twitter to describe the actions of "this crazy guy."

Driver in front of my cab, STOPPED and fired gun shots at the White House," she wrote, adding, "It took the police a while to respond."

Another witness — a visiting neuroscientist who was riding by in an airport shuttle van — later told investigators he had seen a man shooting out of a car toward the White House.

"When the president came back ... then the s— really hit the fan," said one former aide.

meeting about the incident. Michelle Obama addressed him in such a sharp and raised voice that she could be heard through a closed door, according to people familiar with the exchange.

they raise bullets from an assault rifle instead in the rolls of her hand?



Ward1.wmv

Ward2.wmv

Ward3.wmv

## I-M-V-A-I-N

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## The News Literacy source evaluation rubric in exams (as opposed to real life!)

**Tim Menke, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services investigator (3 points)**

Menke has no financial/personal stake in the truth of ABC's report, making him independent. He and other investigators say fraud is rampant. He's not giving factual material, just observations, though his comments are informed by his work investigating fraud. He is authoritative in general and appears well-informed on ABC's findings. He asserts as to the legality/severity of what is shown to him. He is named. Menke is a reliable source. (Students may not notice the second HHS investigator is not Menke. No penalty, as this got past most instructors.)

## The News Literacy source evaluation rubric in exams

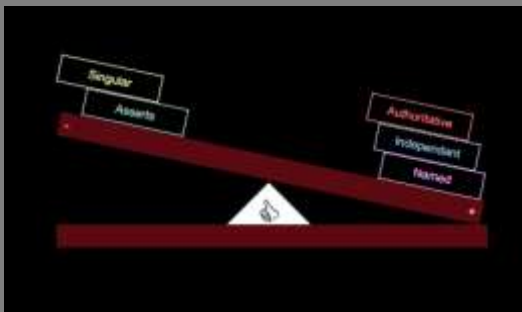
	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 A great deal
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Multiple	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verifies	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authoritative or informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Named	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Rate Moore on a scale of 1-3, with 1 being unreliable, 2 being somewhat reliable and 3 being very reliable. **ONE OPTION AND ONLY ONE OF THREE ANSWERS.**

Moore's comments are a mix of unverifiable assertions and solid facts.

The "explain" box is where you reflect nuances when the choice isn't clear cut.

## Weighing sources: Independence can tip the scales



## Weighing sources: Looking beyond self-interest

The Straits Times  
www.straitstimes.com Publication on 26, 2014

**'History will judge us well' on MH370: Malaysia**

SEKELA LAMPUNG (AFP) - Malaysian government said on Wednesday that it would be judged historically by posterity over its multi-pronged handling of the crisis over missing flight MH370.

"I think history will judge us well," Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told a daily press briefing on the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines plane.

**Hishammuddin Hussein**  
Malaysia's Transport Minister

## Reconstructing the Blackwater incident in Nusoor Square



Blackwater.wmv

## In pursuit of truth: The Blackwater shooting



## Pivot Point

Every other row  
pivots to the row behind  
to discuss in groups of four

## Key lesson



**Evaluate sources**  
Evaluate sources  
Evaluate sources