

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY School of Journalism • News Literacy "News Literacy and Why It's Important"

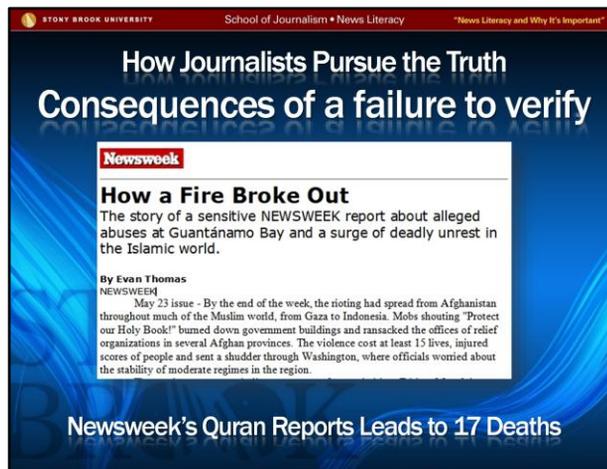
# Truth and Verification

*What is Journalism's First  
Obligation?*

The slide features a dark blue background with abstract, glowing blue light trails. A large, faint watermark of the Stony Brook University logo is visible in the lower-left quadrant of the slide area.



May 9 of 2005, Newsweek reported investigators at Guantanamo prison had placed Qurans on toilet seats and even flushed one. Within a week, there were riots against the US and its moderate Muslim allies, from Gaza to Indonesia. In all, at least 17 people were killed.

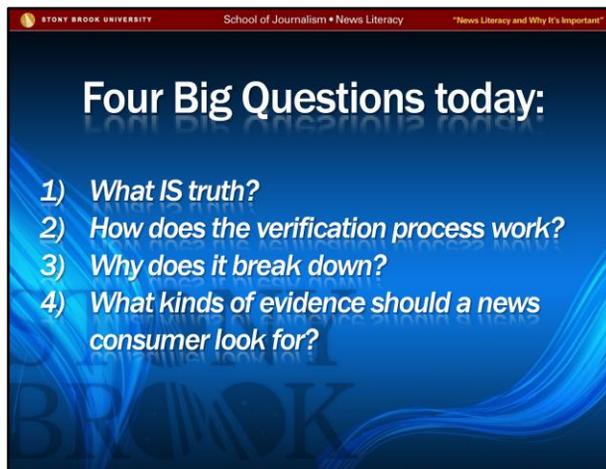


Shortly afterward, it was learned that while various prisoners had made the claim, (in stories in the UK, Russia and on Al Jazeera as well) there was no way to verify the “flushing” story.

June 3, 2005, base commander Brigadier General Jay Hood released his investigation, which found guards had in general followed strict military regulations with four exceptions:

- A soldier intentionally kicked a Qur'an;
- An interrogator intentionally stepped on a Qur'an;
- A guard's urine came through an air vent, unintentionally splashing a detainee and his Qur'an;
- Water balloons thrown by prison guards at one another unintentionally caused a number of Qur'ans to get wet.

Hood also reported that a two-word obscenity was written in English on the inside cover of a Qur'an, but whether US personnel were responsible for this act could not be confirmed.



Today is a big day.

We tackle the eternal question: What is truth? As a way to frame some of the most important skills you'll learn this semester.

By studying how journalists define truth, how they verify facts and what the risks are, you'll develop the ability to pop the hood on any news story and judge the evidence for yourself...Ready?

Okay, we interrupt this lecture for important housekeeping announcements...



## NEWS MATTERS

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## News Matters

Finding reliable information to make your choices  
What's at stake in this election?

November 2  
Governor (No incumbent)  
Attorney General (No incumbent)  
U.S. Senator (Gillibrand is incumbent)  
U.S. Senator (Schumer is incumbent)  
U.S House Incumbents:  
Steve Israel (east end)  
Tim Bishop (Suffolk)  
Peter King (west end)

*Rep. Peter King: "The fact that the Obama Administration would cut New York's homeland security funding just 11 days after the Times Square car bomb attempt is dangerous and unconscionable."*

*Rep. Anthony Weiner: "Cutting Big Apple homeland security funding to the core is mind bogglingly bad judgment."*

When all federal funding is totaled, according to White House spokesperson Nick Shapiro, the city is getting \$47 million more for port and transit security over the previous year's budget, the last signed into law by the Bush Administration.

If students aren't sending News Matters slides on the elections, you can prime the pump with this slide



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**If students aren't sending News Matters slides on the elections, you can prime the pump with this slide**



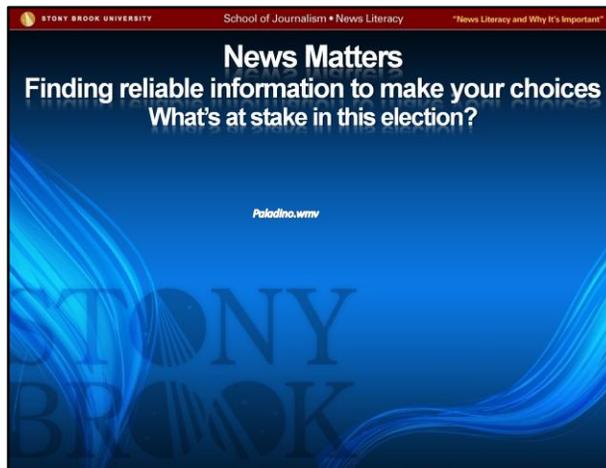
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## Metrics: Alexa Rankings

#1 among Blogs

#9 among all news sites (Yahoo, BBC Online, CNN, NewYorkTimes, BBC News, My Yahoo, Weather Channel, Google News, Huffington Post, NBC News and MSNBC News)

Arianna Huffington (born Arianna Stassinopoulos on July 15, 1950) is a [Greek-American](#) author and [syndicated columnist](#). She is best known as co-founder of the news website [The Huffington Post](#). A popular [conservative commentator](#) in the mid-[1990s](#), she moved sharply to the left in the late 1990s. She is the ex-wife of former [Republican congressman Michael Huffington](#).

In 2003, she ran as an [independent candidate](#) for [Governor](#) in the [California recall election](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

In 2009, Huffington was named as number 12 in Forbes's first ever list of the Most Influential Women In Media.<sup>[2]</sup> She has also moved up to number 42 in the Guardian's Top 100 in Media List.<sup>[3]</sup>

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## Shattered Glass Viewings:

Screenings in Javits 110  
Wed. 20<sup>th</sup> 6:50 p.m.;  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> 7:45 a.m.;  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> 7 p.m.

You will write this up after lecture #9



Link trailer here

Shattered Glass

The true story that shocked the nation.

The poster for the movie 'Shattered Glass' features a central image of James Freese, played by Ryan Murphy, with a red circle around his face. Below him are the faces of other cast members. The title 'Shattered Glass' is prominently displayed in the center, with the tagline 'The true story that shocked the nation.' at the bottom.

NEWS FELLOW. PLEASE LINK SHATTERED GLASS TRAILER HERE.

Students can watch Shattered glass using Netflix, using copies at the library or by attending on-campus viewings set up by the Center for News Literacy.

Warn them to wait until after next lecture to write the assignment.

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## Information: Power to Save Lives?

**Tyler Clementi, 18**  
Rutgers Student  
Suicide off GW Bridge  
9/22/2010

**Raymond Chase, 19**  
Johnson and Wales  
College,  
Suicide by hanging  
9/29/2010

**Asher Brown, 13**  
Houston, TX  
Suicide by gun  
9/23/2010

**Billy Lucas, 15**  
Greensburg, IN  
Suicide by  
hanging  
9/9/2010

**Seth Walsh, 13**  
Tehachapl, CA  
Suicide by  
hanging  
9/19/2010

Counseling and Psychological Services at 631-632-6720  
Center for Prevention and Outreach at 631-632-2748.

**Resources:**  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force - <http://www.thetaskforce.org>  
Human Rights Campaign - <http://www.hrc.org/>  
PFLAG - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays -  
<http://community.pflag.org/>  
PFLAG Long Island - <http://www.pflagli.org/>  
Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth - <http://ilgaly.org/>

## EXCERPTS FROM STATEMENT FROM STONY BROOK'S "SAFE PLACE" PROGRAM Christina Vargas Law, CCDP

Director, Diversity and Affirmative Action

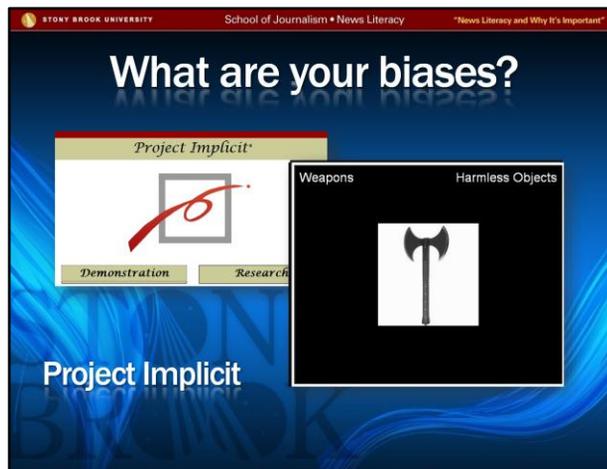
"We're sure many of you have already heard the sad news of the deaths by suicide of two young college students (Tyler Clementi and Raymond Chase) and three teens (Asher Brown, Billy Lucas and Seth Walsh) reported to be connected with antigay bullying and/or harassment based on their gay identity or perception of gay identity.

It is important to recognize that people are still hostile toward gay men (and likely toward all LGBTQ people) and feel that it is okay to bully and harass fellow human beings based on their sexual orientation and/or gender expression. Second, that although we will never know for sure, these men were potentially severely embarrassed by their gay identity. And last that these men had nowhere else to turn for help or were reluctant or unable to seek the help that was available.

SBU is intent on ensuring this does not happen here.

If you or anyone you know needs to talk to a counselor please call Counseling and Psychological Services or the Center for Prevention and Outreach.

A range of resources are available using the phone numbers and links on this slide.



SLIDE. \*Project Implicit.  
Recognizing our own prejudices  
or biases. GIVE ASSIGNMENT.  
Point of this isn't that it's a  
perfect measure of your implicit  
biases. You're doing a light  
version of the experiment. Our  
point is that this gets you  
thinking.

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### Another Take on Cognitive Dissonance

*"Rarely do any of us sit down before a table of facts, weigh them pro and con, and choose the most logical and rational belief, regardless of what we previously believed.*

*Instead, the facts of the world come to us through the colored filters of the theories, hypotheses, hunches, biases, and prejudices we have accumulated through our lifetime. We then sort through the body of data and select those most confirming what we already believe, and ignore or rationalize away those that are disconfirming."*

— Michael Shermer, "Why People Believe Weird Things"

Here's a nother look at last week's key lesson about cognitive dissonance; "Rarely do any of us sit down before a table of facts, weigh them pro and con, and choose the most logical and rational belief, regardless of what we previously believed. Instead, the facts of the world come to us through the colored filters of the theories, hypotheses, hunches, biases, and prejudices we have accumulated through our lifetime. We then sort through the body of data and select those most confirming what we already believe, and ignore or rationalize away those that are disconfirming." -- Michael Shermer, Why People Believe Weird Things

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## Start Thinking About The Essay Due @ Your Last Recitation

Your final essay will be written after a semester-long pursuit of reliable information on a single topic or question currently in the news that interests you. You will be expected to engage with multiple news sources, and employ the News Literacy tools and principles we study in class to reach a conclusion, make a judgment or take an action on the topic you have selected.

What kind of questions can you pursue? Here are a few examples.

- *"What impact would I have if I boycotted BP gas stations in protest of the spill in the Gulf?"*
- *"Has President Obama's stimulus plan accomplished more harm than good?"*
- *"Is there a candidate for governor with a public record that resembles my views on issues that matter to me?"*
- *"Is it safe to eat seafood from the Gulf Coast? Does the U.S. FDA adequately protect consumers from unsafe food?"*
- *"Will the proposed cultural center near Ground Zero encourage or discourage terrorism?"*
- *"Should the government regulate stem cell research? If so, to what extent?"*
- *"Does Facebook do a sufficient job of protecting users' privacy?"*

Students can start thinking about a topic and a question that interests them. Recitation instructors will go over the assignment in detail...



Now ...where were we?

Not-so Simple questions like What Is Truth...

And this question...Based on what you have read, and on what you already believe...What is Journalism's first obligation?



Journalism's First Obligation is to the Truth.

That's pretty simple.

Find the truth, share it.

What's so hard about that?



We are returning to the very first question we asked: Do students believe they are getting the truth from the news media? Our first job was to define what we meant by the news media. Hopefully we have done that. Now, the heart of the question

ASK:What is truth?

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## What Is Truth?



'A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to put its pants on.'

Not Winston Churchill  
Not Mark Twain  
Possibly an obscure Baptist Preacher's sermon on April 1, 1855

WHAT IS TRUTH? A series of slides

## Cool Verification Lesson....

Even some famous quips about truth need to be verified.

Prof. Saavedra spent an afternoon trying to confirm Churchill said it. He could not. Sometimes it is credited to Twain. The best Twain quote lists and "Wit and Wisdom" collection do NOT credit it to Twain. It's funny, and it sounds like Churchill, but we're not sure who said it.

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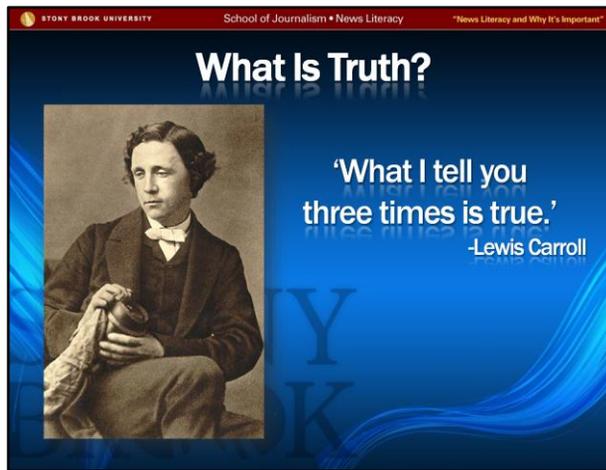
## What Is Truth?

'Often the surest way to convey *misinformation* is to tell the strict truth.'

-Mark Twain

A black and white photograph of Mark Twain sitting in a rocking chair on a porch. He is wearing a light-colored suit and is looking towards the camera with a thoughtful expression. The background shows a porch railing and some foliage.

– Twain: Often the surest way to convey misinformation is to tell the strict truth



– Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*:  
What I tell you 3 times is true.  
(Repetition of false information can  
create the perception of truth.)

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# What Is Truth?



**'Truthiness'\***  
-Stephen Colbert

\*'The quality of stating concepts or facts one wishes or believes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true.'  
-The American Dialect Society

On the October 17, 2005 pilot episode of The Colbert Report, he coined the word that would become Merriam Webster's 2006 Word of the year: Truthiness.



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“Truth that comes from the gut, not from books.” Colbert has used it to skewer Wikipedia, the 2003 decision to invade Iraq and President Bush’s defense of his nomination of Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court. The American Dialect Society says in conversational use, “Truthiness” is the quality of stating concepts or facts one wishes or believes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true.”



Quote is from *Elements of Journalism (reading assignment)* on the elemental need for truth.

Everyone – critics and defenders of the press – agree on one thing: Journalism’s overriding goal is the Disinterested Pursuit of the Truth.

ASK: What does that word, “Disinterested” mean?

“Interest” is a word at the core of the code of ethics for every profession. In every situation, a professional is trained to maintain clarity about whose interests they are obligated to protect.

Disinterested doesn’t mean bored.

It refers to your having no stake in the outcome...Being able to follow where the truth takes you: free of entanglements...biases... self-interest..

*ASK: What are some interests that can affect your ability to pursue the truth?*

- Pay or holdings could be affected
- A relative, lover or close friend could be affected
- Religion, race, gender, profession could be affected
- Pride, safety or reputation could be affected

Self-interest is toxic to truth-seeking.

We’ll explore this in depth in the next lecture, but it’s essential to understanding the need for verification.

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## What Do Journalists Mean By Truth?

- Is getting the facts right the truth?
  - Is being 'objective' the same thing as being truthful?
  - Is being 'fair' the same thing as being truthful?
- Is there one truth we can all agree on?

## What do JOURNALISTS MEAN BY TRUTH?

Is getting the facts right the same as the truth?

Is being 'objective' the same as being truthful?

Can we even agree on a common truth?



## A. The Truth Debate: A *scintillating video*.

Stony Brook Dean of Journalism Howard Schneider debates the meaning of Truth with a philosopher and a scientist to gain insight into different meanings used by different disciplines.

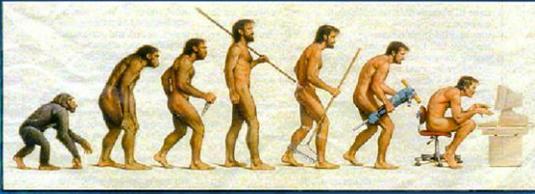
Video available on Blackboard



To the surprise of the scientist in the debate—and probably to many of the science majors in attendance— what emerges are strong similarities between way truth is defined by scientists and journalists...

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## Journalism and Science



Like scientists, journalists do not believe in absolute truth. Truth is *provisional*. It changes over time.

If you accept this idea that truth is a statement of probability relative to the weight of the evidence...then you grasp the concept of truth as a moving target. Few, if any, facts will be immutable. Truth changes over time as new evidence is discovered. *This is one of the key lessons of the lecture...the course...your college education.*



In a world where we uncover new information every day and where a constantly changing universe daily reveals itself in new ways, both disciplines seek functional or pragmatic truth that helps explain the world; information we can act upon every day.

Borrowing from *The Matrix*, the terms *Red Pill*, *Blue Pill* have become a popular metaphor for the choice between ignorance between the blissful ignorance of the blue or the red's embrace of the painful or at least ever-changing nature of reality.



--Both disciplines employ a system of peer review. (Explain: In journalism, there is “peer review” *before* in the form of editing *and after* publication or broadcast in the form of commentary, competitors. Examples: Newsweek’s Qur’an mess, RATHERGATE, NYT reporting on Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction.

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## Journalism and Science



Like the scientific method, the journalistic process of verification relies on a system of sorting and testing information

(EMPHASIZE PARALLELS)

Scientists propose hypotheses to explain why or how things happen in the world (phenomena) and design controlled experiments to test those explanations. A successful experiment is repeatable, which means it accurately predicts a future re-run of the same controlled conditions. Scientists document and share their data and methods for careful scrutiny (peer review) by other scientists.

Journalists collect, sort and analyze observations as well, sometimes even venturing an explanation of phenomena. But because they work outside a lab and on much shorter deadlines (publication takes minutes instead of months) they cannot easily control variables and run parallel protocols or perfect repeats.

Journalists' work is automatically submitted for careful scrutiny by other journalists and news literate news consumers, call it peer review.

The journalistic ethic that calls for disclosure of data and methods is called "Transparency."



The recent Hofstra rape case. Within days the story turns upside down as new information is disclosed.

After recapping the case

ASK:

What was the rush?

Why not wait until the facts were settled?

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# How Big Was That Gulf Oil Leak?

**BP falls short in estimate of oil spill rate**  
Crews now capturing 5,000 barrels a day, the supposed size of the leak  
By MONICA WATCHEB  
PHOTO BY GREGORY HILL  
May 17, 2010 at 12:30pm

**Up to 40,000-plus barrels per day pouring into Gulf: US**  
June 10, 2010

**BP oil leak likely far less than 100,000 bpd**  
View May 6, 2010 at 2:06pm EDT

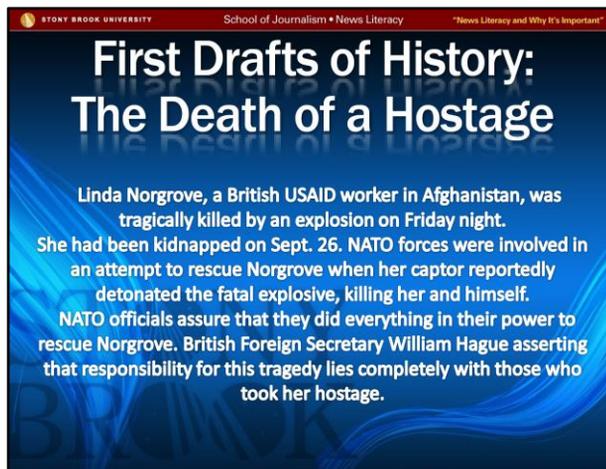
**Numbers of Gulf oil spill flow keep looking worse as US revises them up for third time**  
Harry H. Weber, Seth Dorenstein, The Associated Press  
Thu, Sep 11, 2010 at 11:44 AM

**BP oil spill estimates double**  
US government figures show twice as much of spilling into the Gulf of Mexico than earlier estimations suggested

**Q&A: Why estimates of the BP oil spill keep changing**  
Despite the number of circulating facts, BP's August spill in the Gulf of Mexico has more than 500 other the disaster suffered on 2010. So why does the government's latest report keep being so far from the mark?  
Just how deeply have the estimates changed?  
US coast guard says a spill of 25,000-40,000 barrels (3.2-5 million gallons) per day on 10 June



What about the Gulf Oil Spill last summer and spring.  
Was the wreck of the Gulf Deep Horizon leaking 5,000 barrels a day?  
40,000? 100,000?  
Can't these journalists get ANYTHING right?



Which is it?

The first reports said Linda Norgrove, a USAID worker who was kidnapped Sept., 26 in Afghanistan was killed by her captor when NATO troops stormed in to rescue her. Officials said one of her captors killed himself, and her, with a grenade.

Within days, the story changed...she was killed by a grenade thrown by one of her rescuers. (Worth noting that what makes war different from video games is that heroes make mistakes sometimes.)

Beware the first rough draft of history  
Coverage of Linda Norgrove's death



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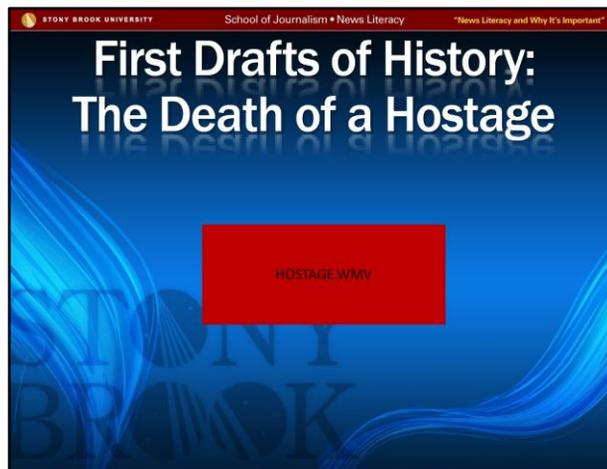


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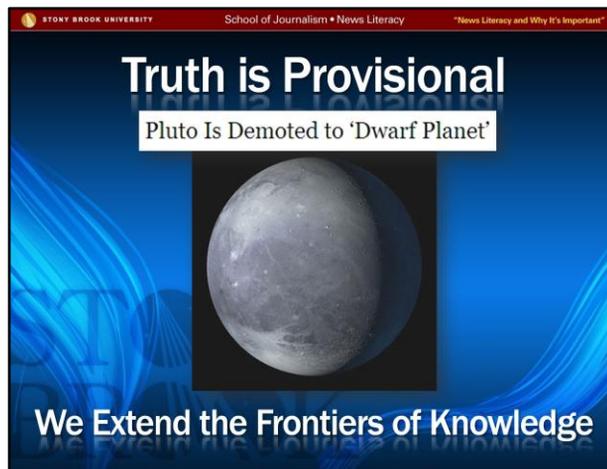


\* Sometimes it can take *centuries*.  
Recently disclosed information on the  
deaths of Mozart and Beethoven.  
(See background pack)



\* Sometimes it can take minutes because of *erroneous information provided to reporters.*

January 2006, the press corps gathers outside a mine in West Virginia, awaiting word on 12 trapped miners. Geraldo Rivera, Anderson Cooper, Newsday, Washington Post, New York Times, USA Today. They get bad information (based on an overheard and misunderstood shout from the rescue site) and the mining company clams up...All run with it. All wrong...

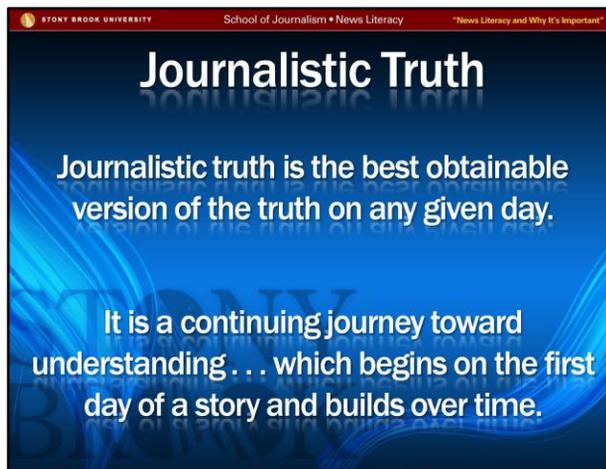


Based on observation of orbits of other objects, astronomers long theorized a ninth planet and in 1930, an Arizona observatory confirmed it with photos. But then in 2006, newer and more sophisticated images showed it is just another object in the Kuiper belt...a mere dwarf planet. Around the same time, the IAU realized it had no precise meaning of the term planet. So they voted Pluto out.

*WHAT? You can't just change facts like that, can you? If they don't know for sure, why didn't they wait until they knew for sure, ...those astronomers?*

*ASK: So how long should the International Astronomical Union have waited to tell people about Pluto's discovery...76 years?*

*ASK: Why should we publish or teach changeable truths?*



This idea, that journalistic truth  
*“Grows as a stalagmite in a cave, drop by drop over time”* (Elements of Journalism) makes sense when you accept change as inevitable...



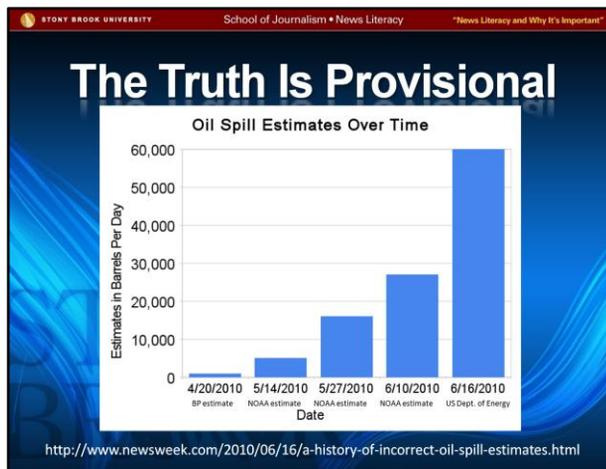
*For good journalists the lesson is to keep digging until you get to the bottom of a story...*

*For savvy news consumers, the lessons is you can't drop in and out and get the "truth" on any one day. If you do, your information becomes unreliable...you make poor decisions, take unwise actions, make unfounded judgments.*

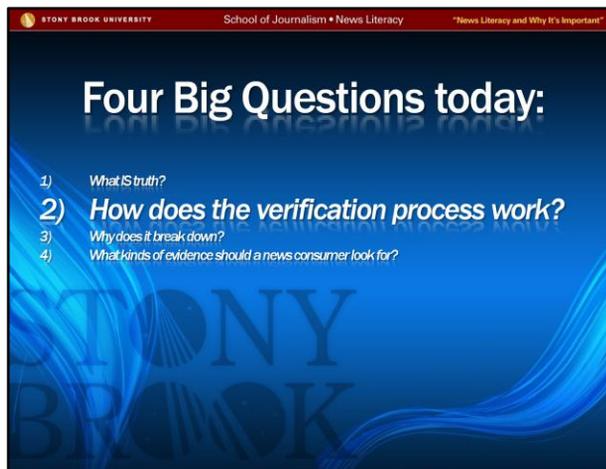
ASK: What are recent examples in which a consumer not aware of the provisional nature of truth could have been misled?



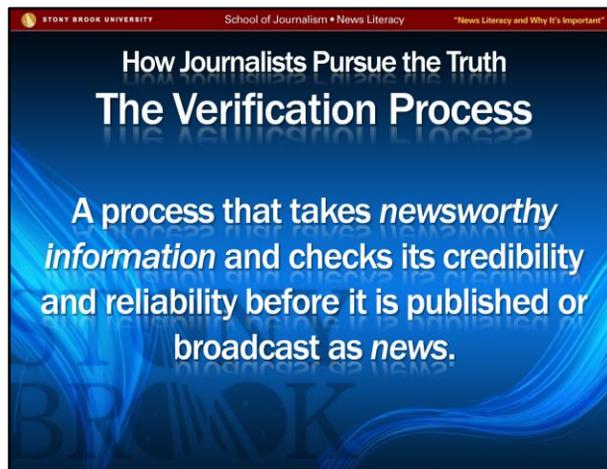
For *news consumers*, the LESSON is:  
FOLLOW THE STORY OVER TIME!!!!  
(This will be one of the key lessons of  
the entire semester; why it is  
important to get in the habit of  
following the news.)



We built this graph this summer as we were tracking changes in the estimated size of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. It's one example of the way truth can change if you're not paying attention.



Let's think now about how one goes about verifying "truth"

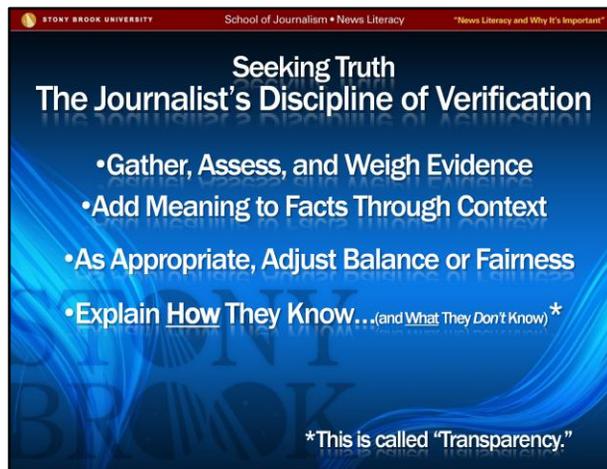


## THE VERIFICATION PROCESS

A key to becoming a smarter news consumer is to understand the process of verification of each day's facts and decide for yourself if a story is solid or not.

Just because some Producer or Editor decides to run a story doesn't mean you should blindly accept their judgment.

Any credible news organization or reporter subjects newsworthy information to a discipline of verification to check its credibility and reliability before it is published or broadcast as news.



\*Journalists gather, assess, and weigh information

\*Journalists add meaning to facts through context.

\*Journalists seek enough information to make a story balanced or fair, as appropriate.

\*Journalists explain how they know what they know – and what they don't know: transparency.

Explain that we will return to the concepts of context and transparency in much greater detail in later lectures and that both are terms that bedevil many news literacy students.

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## Financial Oracle Suze Orman



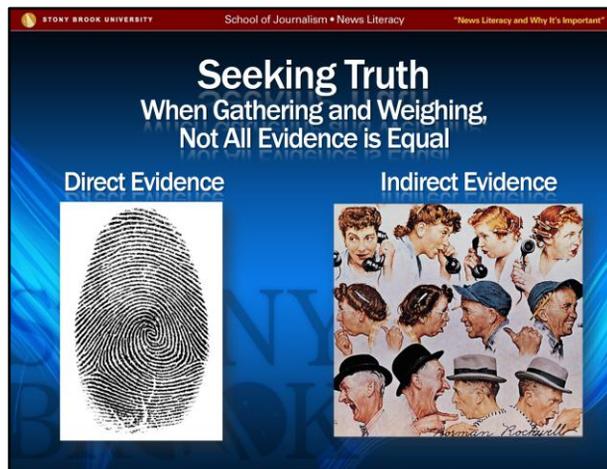
Did you know that this month- we have 5 Fridays - 5 Saturdays and 5 Sundays This only happens once every 823 years. COOL

11:45 PM Cst 11h via web Retweeted by 100+ people

SuzeOrmanShow  
Suze Orman

Why News Consumers Must Weigh Evidence

Suze (pronounced Suzy) Orman is...runs a financial advice show. We could debate if she's a financial journalist or not. But she is certainly trusted by a lot of her viewers. As this particular meme has made its way across the web, you've had debates over the definition of weekend, etc, etc...



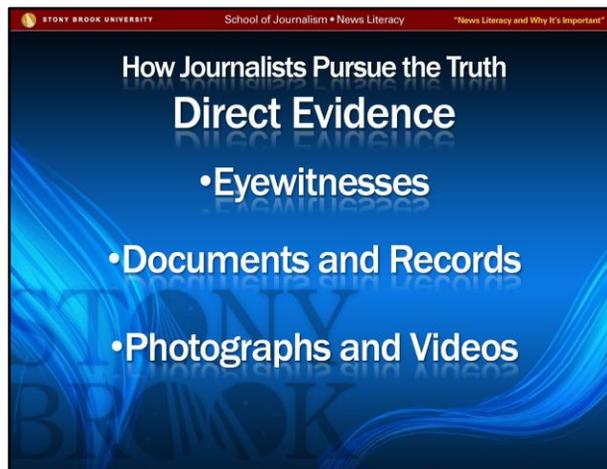
Journalism's discipline of verification calls on its practitioners to seek the truth, a high ideal.

Sometimes, the evidence is as clearcut as fingerprints that confirm someone has been someplace they did not belong.

And sometimes, the evidence is a combination of direct and indirect evidence.

As a news consumer, you need to pay attention to which is which when you are deciding for yourself if a story stands up.

So let's talk about those types of evidence: Direct and Indirect.



Examples of DIRECT Evidence:

- **Participants and Eyewitnesses**  
(first-hand accounts)

- **Documents and records**  
bearing signatures, official seals, date stamps, that forensics experts can use to authenticate the provenance of the document.

- **Photographs and videos**  
Which, un-doctored, provide a single viewpoint on events. (Only one lens, only one point of view, literally).



Eyewitnesses are often asked to describe events the journalist did not observe.

ASK: Are eyewitnesses always reliable?



Reuters News Agency went to the court file for copies of the documents collected in the Madoff investigation. What reporters found was evidence that United States securities regulators had received a number of detailed allegations that Madoff was bamboozling his clients. In addition, reporters found case files dating back several years that showed irregularities worthy of further investigation...





NEWSFELLOW: NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT)  
VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT “START  
AUTOMATICALLY”

Last April, Wikileaks released a leaked excerpt of on-board video of a 2007 incident in which a U.S. Army helicopter on patrol killed about a dozen civilians, including two Reuters news service employees. The video was taken on board the Apache during a July mission in which the pilots' conversation can be heard.

Wikileaks spokesman Julian Assange said the U.S. rules of engagement that soldiers must follow when using force, were not followed. Whether you agree or not with his conclusion, the videotape is direct evidence of some elements of what happened.

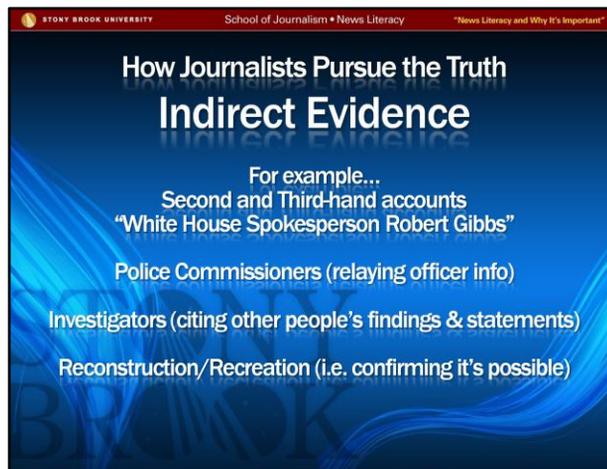


NEWSFELLOW: NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY"

June 2,  
ESPN: Armando Galarraga of the Tigers lost his bid for a perfect game with two outs in the ninth inning on a call that first base umpire Jim Joyce later admitted he blew. First baseman Miguel Cabrera cleanly fielded Jason Donald's grounder to his right and made an accurate throw to Galarraga covering the bag. The ball was there in time but Joyce signaled the runner safe. "It was the biggest call of my career, and I kicked the [stuff] out of it," Joyce said, looking and sounding distraught as he paced in the umpires' locker room. "I just cost that kid a perfect game."  
"I thought he beat the throw. I was convinced he beat the throw, until I saw the replay," he



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"I thought he beat the throw. I was convinced he beat the throw, until I saw the replay," he said after the Tigers' 3-0 win.



Sometimes there is no witness, or they are not available, or there is no direct evidence. In those cases, journalists have to rely on second-hand or indirect evidence:

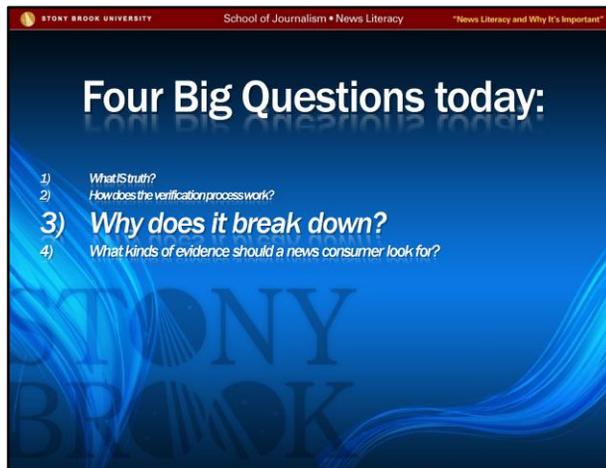
An appointed spokesperson (official or informal)  
The police commissioner who has been briefed by the investigator

The investigator who talked to witnesses;  
In 1982, Seattle Times reporter Paul Henderson did a Tic-Toc analysis of the sequence of events surrounding a rape and proved that Steve Titus could not have committed the rape for which he had been convicted. Titus was released. Police followed Henderson's leads and found the rapist. Henderson won the 1982 Pulitzer for Investigative Reporting.

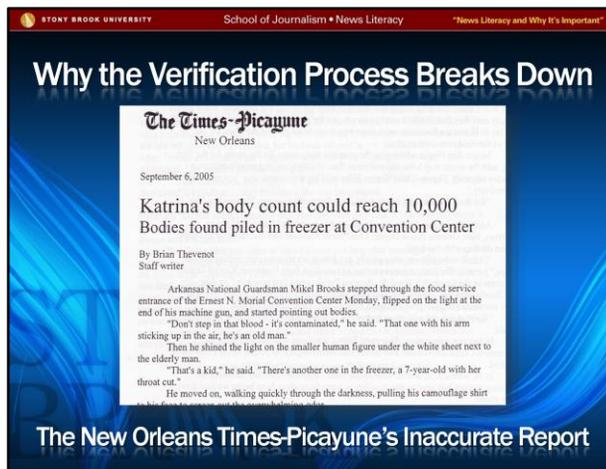
Reports published or broadcast by others who were witnesses (fraught with peril.) As in the Sherrod case or the helicopter shooting in Iraq...



Here's an example, where the story is based on interviews with a police spokesperson who was not a witness to events, but has more access to documents and investigators.



How can that system of using direct and indirect evidence break down?



## A CASE STUDY OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE VERIFICATION PROCESS BREAKS DOWN

ASK: Who can summarize the story? How was it wrong? Why was it wrong?

- Rumors?
- Chaos, confusion?
- Bad information from officials?
- Sometimes can't get direct evidence?
- Relied heavily on indirect sources?

What is the lesson Thevenot says he took away? He should have examined the evidence for himself...He should have opened the freezer. If he had, he would have seen the evidence didn't back up the lurid tales he'd been told.

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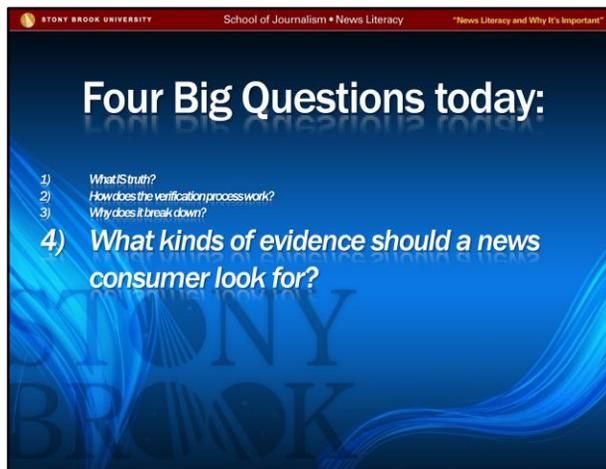
## Lesson #3 for the News Consumer



Always ask:  
Did the  
Reporter Open  
the Freezer?

The year News Literacy was born as an undergraduate course, Dean Schneider started to notice that students, when analyzing a news story, were saying things like, “I’m not sure this reporter opened the freezer...”

So that’s become a catch–phrase for News Literacy courses nationwide: “ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF: TO WHAT DEGREE DID THE REPORTER “OPEN THE FREEZER?”

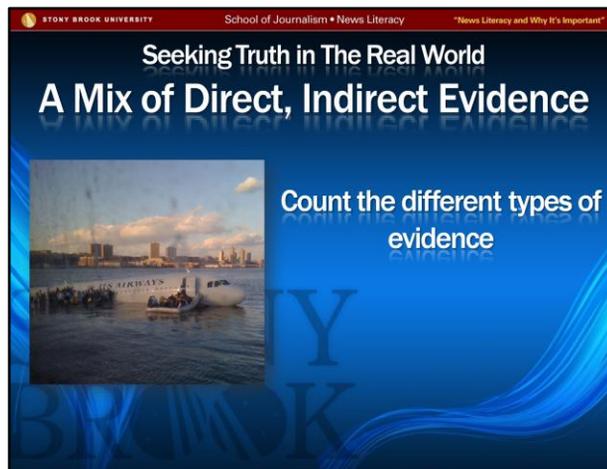


What kinds of evidence should a news consumer look for?

Should every story be based only on direct evidence and eyewitnesses?

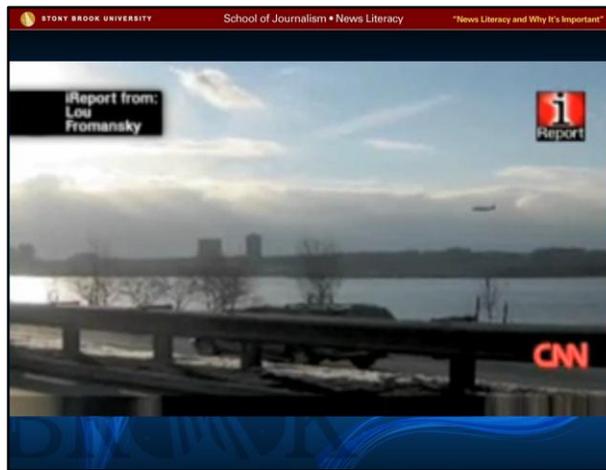
That's not realistic.

So let's look at some examples and see how a solid story is put together on deadline.



Jan. 15, 2009, a plane carrying 115 people crash lands in the Hudson River. Here is CNN's report assembled from a variety of sources.

ASK: Count the different types of evidence, Direct and Indirect



Cell Phone Video  
Two-way Radio Traffic From  
Recordings from Air Traffic Control  
tower  
Google Earth recreation of flight path  
Still Photos  
Interviews.



NEWSFELLOW: NEWS FELLOW: LINK  
(INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND  
SELECT “START AUTOMATICALLY”

Cell Phone Video

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Google Earth recreation of flight path

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Interviews.

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## Pursuing Reliable Information

- 1) *What IS truth?*
- 2) *How does the verification process work?*
- 3) *Why does it break down?*
- 4) *What kinds of evidence should a news consumer look for?*

Here's what we did today...

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## How Journalists Pursue the Truth

# Anatomy of a Car Accident

**Direct Evidence:**

- Driver of Car
- Eyewitnesses
- Breathalyzer Report
- Driving Records
- Accident Reports for the Road

**Indirect Evidence:**

- Campus Police
- University Officials
- Lawyer for Driver
- Friends and Relatives of Victims
- Family of Driver
- Students on Campus

ANIMATION: Image, headline and “Direct Evidence” and “Indirect Evidence” all come up automatically. Each successive click brings up a new bullet point, starting with the direct evidence.

(Lecturer: rehearse animations so you are ready to click through this)  
 Now, to prepare for next week’s lecture, which blends these lessons with a lesson about sources, let’s go back and analyze the SB WORLD front page story on the drunk driving fatalities.

ASK: What DIRECT evidence would be most helpful in this story?

(Have a student write class’ responses on the blackboard, then click to bring up comprehensive list)

DIRECT: Driver of car; Eyewitnesses; Breathalyzer report; Driving records; Accident reports for that roadway.

INDIRECT: Driver’s lawyer; Campus police (unless witnessed); University officials; Friends and relatives of victims; Family of driver; Students on campus.

# A Big Day: Two Key Lessons

- Follow the story.
- Ask yourself: has the reporter opened the freezer?

# Assignments:

For Recitation: Read "Journalism of Verification" chapter: in digital textbook

Read, print, bring to recitation the Sean Bell shooting story.

Paper due, "The Secret Sponsors"

For Next Lecture: News Log 3

For Students in Professors Miller and Schneider's Lectures, check Blackboard to see if your instructor assigned the "Opposing Viewpoints" paper.