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CHAPTER 10 ______ **Marc Edge**

And "The Wall" Came Tumbling Down in Los Angeles

> Because the country's top editors are being integrated into the managerial imperatives of the corporation, journalists, through their editor, become less responsible for the integrity of the news and more for the profitability of the whole enterprise. That is not journalism. It is advertising and marketing. Combining journalism with advertising and marketing ultimately will destroy the integrity of the news.
>
> —*Ben Bagdikian,* The Media Monopoly[1]

By the 1980s, the newspaper industry was at a crossroads. As circulation and advertising revenue fell, new forms of competition appeared in the form of cable news networks and the Internet. Newspaper executives knew something had to change. Their response was to adopt a "marketing" approach, designed to make newspapers more attractive to readers and advertisers. Newspapers became more "audience-based," giving readers what they told marketers they wanted instead of what editors thought they needed. The changes worked, as daily circulation rose from 60.7 million in 1975 to 62.8 million in 1990.[2] But many complained that the resulting superficiality—shorter stories on increasingly trivial topics—was a perversion of journalism's traditional mission to inform the public.

To compete for business, newspapers also became more cooperative with advertisers. To promote their advertising as cost-effective, newspapers sought to attract more upscale consumers by targeting affluent readers with changes in content. That led to charges that editors were selling out and tearing down the sacred barrier between church and state—The Wall—that had been erected decades earlier to insulate the newsroom from commercial pressures.

But the attempt to attract advertisers was less successful than the readership campaign, and in the 1990s advertisers began deserting newspapers for new promotion strategies, such as direct mail. The decade also brought a new readership drain by the Internet, with its promise of instant, in-depth news. The resulting threat to the very survival of the newspaper industry brought a new strategy that went beyond cooperation with advertisers to outright collaboration. But that new closeness increased fears of journalists that their news-gathering efforts would become secondary to the new profit focus of newspaper content.

The marketing movement was led vocally by Mark Willes, who was hired in 1995 to head the Times Mirror Co., the parent company of the *Los Angeles Times,* despite having no previous newspaper experience, and given huge financial incentives to boost profits. Advocating closer cooperation between journalists and advertising sales staff, Willes brought the controversy that had been simmering in the industry to a boil two years later when he named himself *Times* publisher and declared war on The Wall.

A 56-year-old Ph.D. in economics, Willes had been a university professor, a bank president and vice chairman of General Mills before taking over as president, chairman and CEO of Times Mirror, but he had never been a journalist. Worse for him, as far as news professionals were concerned, he was an itinerant executive with a penchant for the bottom line. Willes was practically demonized by a nervous journalism community that saw The Wall as its last defense against corporate homogenization of news. Most widely quoted were such heavyweights as former *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee ("He has no commitment to the pursuit of the truth") and media critic Ben Bagdikian, former dean of journalism at the University of California at Berkeley ("Mark Willes has done more to increase cynicism about the news media than any other person in the industry").[3]

The indelicate Wall-busting directive worried many journalists who thought it shortsighted and misguided. Seeing integrity as their stock in trade, they feared their franchise would be diminished if they were forced to tailor editorial content to please advertisers. They felt that, as an outsider, Willes did not understand the root business of journalism. And they were convinced that closer collaboration with advertisers would result in their newspapers being less vigilant against the excesses of business. Under this new regime, they felt, consumer-oriented exposés of companies would likely be a thing of the past.

As an outsider, Willes had shown his naïveté repeatedly by blundering in some of the bold moves he made after taking over the *Times.* He first canceled the newspaper's money-losing Washington edition, but then reinstated it two weeks later after staff protests, admitting it was a "hellacious" goof to remove the paper's presence in the capital. More embarrassingly, he had to apologize to staff for insensitivity after they objected to his musing in interviews that women readers would be attracted by stories that include more emotion. Perhaps learning from that experience, Willes stopped talk of a section aimed at underrepresented Latino readers when more than 100 staff members signed a petition protesting the plan as journalistic "ghettoization."

Even on basic points, Willes often revealed himself as wholly uninformed about journalism ethics. After questioning why reporters and editors didn't take an active part in civic politics, Willes had to admit his ignorance when told it was to avoid perceptions of conflict of interest in the paper's coverage.[4] One result of his stewardship has been the "steady exodus" of writing talent to other publications, including, by one count, at least 20 to the rival *New York Times.*[5]

On the plus side of the ledger, Willes made some tough business decisions that have already paid big dividends for Times Mirror. He closed company publications that had proved financial disasters, like the *Baltimore Sun*'s evening edition and *New York Newsday,* the Long Island paper's 10-year attempt to take Manhattan that had resulted in losses of $100 million. Willes also bit the bullet and slashed jobs at the *Times,* cutting adrift 200 of its 1,300 newsroom staff. And in what could turn out to be a stroke of genius, he cut the cover price of the *Times* in half, from 50 cents to a quarter. The move immediately increased readership and has a limited long-term downside, given the small percentage of total revenue any newspaper derives from circulation sales.

But the jury is still out on other Willes' inspirations, including a national edition and a quota system where reporters are expected to include women and minorities among their sources. The most controversial of the innovations is Willes' plan to turn each section of the *Times* into its own little business, with a nonjournalist "brand manager" from the paper's business side working with its editor to focus on profitability. If it works, and some of the heat Willes has attracted dies down, others are bound to follow his lead.

Ironically, the point had become increasingly moot by the time Willes made it the focus of attention. The Wall had been crumbling incrementally for years and was largely dismantled in many places prior to the frontal assault launched by Willes. Doug Underwood, in his continuing scrutiny of MBAs in the newsroom, pointed out that editorial cooperation between journalists and sales staff had by then become commonplace at such major dailies as the *Arizona Republic, Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *Houston Post.*[6]

The industry magazine *Presstime,* in its enthusiastic endorsement of the trend, surveyed newspapers across the continent in early 1998 and found that fully 57 percent of respondents had marketing committees that included editorial employees. Newspapers from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to Tampa, Florida, it found, were encouraging journalists to consult their business-side counterparts on what to put in the paper—and where to put it. Willes, it seemed to suggest, was more scapegoat than instigator: "Like it or not . . . he became poster boy in the church vs. state debate."[7]

But far from starting the revolution, Willes had merely taken it to the next level. At the *Chicago Tribune,* another elite daily, The Wall toppled long ago, according to former editor James Squires. In his 1993 book *Read All about It! The Corporate Takeover of America's Newspapers,* Squires confessed his role in The Wall's fall while he was editor from 1981 to 1989:

> By the time I left the *Tribune* . . . the hallowed separation between church and state was hardly more than a pretense. For this, no one was more responsible than I. And for the ease with which I let it happen, I can only offer the lamest of excuses, "I really didn't know at the time what I was doing."[8]

According to Squires, "the camel's nose had gotten into our tent" when newspapers went the audience-quality route to convince advertisers that the papers could deliver more desirable consumers than radio and television could. That meant constructing audience profiles and sharing them with advertisers. "Nobody thought much about this at the time because the traditional walls separating the church and state of the press—editorial from advertising—were still firmly in place," he laments. "But it was a critical development."[9] Bagdikian, onetime assistant managing editor of the *Washington Post,* decried the same movement in his book *The Media Monopoly:*

> It has always been a somewhat porous wall, but it is the one principle almost every journalist would agree is central to uncorrupted news. . . . But the wall . . . is being systematically dismantled at institutional levels of journalism. . . . The news thus becomes profoundly altered for financial reasons unconnected to the principle of never permitting business advantage to influence the news.[10]

The marketing approach to news, begun in earnest in the 1980s, took on tones of urgency in the early 1990s as several trends converged to lead many to fear for the very survival of the newspaper as a medium. Recession brought a drop in advertising revenue industrywide in 1990, the first decline in 20 years. It got worse in 1991—advertising revenue plunged 5 percent, the biggest drop in almost 50 years.[11]

But the recession was the least of it; economic trends always turn back upward eventually. More serious was a fundamental shift in retailing—and advertising. Department stores, traditionally a newspaper's best customer, were being put out of business by large discounters less reliant on advertising. Worse, other advertisers began to abandon newspapers in favor of mass campaigns of direct marketing. And the advent of 24-hour cable news networks, with their ability to provide instantaneous news, and the Internet, which combined the speed of television with the depth and browsability of newspapers, led many to predict a bleak future for print on paper.[12]

This shift led to a movement to "reinvent" the newspaper by taking the marketing concept one step further. In his 1992 treatise on newspaper marketing, *Wisconsin State Journal* editor Frank Denton saw the problem as "journalists' traditional beliefs that they really *are* the newspaper, that the commerce of the newspaper is potentially evil and intrusive (or at least threatening)."[13] In a road map Willes has followed closely, Denton laid out his solution to the challenge facing the newspaper industry:

> Newspapers need a new attitude of holism, an understanding that their organic whole can be more than the sum of their separate functions. . . . The journalists—without any compromise of their independence, integrity or mission—can work side by side with their advertising and circulation counterparts to find or develop markets they can serve, to their mutual benefit.[14]

In their compendium of influences on news content, *Mediating the Message,* Shoemaker and Reese point to a structural change at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in the mid-1980s as a significant breach of The Wall. There, the paper's editor was put in charge of circulation and promotion and also made president of its parent publishing company, "an unusual move that broke through the traditional wall between the editorial and business sides of the organization."[15] The net effect of elevating corporate values over journalistic ones, they concluded, changes the organizational culture and the relative influence of those values: "If the editor controls both the editorial and business sides of the paper, the relative power of the journalistic division is less. The person making decisions primarily on journalistic grounds occupies a place somewhere below the editor in this case."[16]

Blurring of the line between editorial and advertising came under scrutiny even earlier with "advertorial" sections, devoted to such big-ticket consumer items as cars and real estate, where advertising revenue is especially lucrative for newspapers. The thinly disguised fluff surrounding the advertising is usually produced by advertising department copywriters, but what galls journalists is that such sales-oriented content is not always plainly marked as advertising to warn readers of its origin. And, needless to say, it is not where one is likely to find fearless investigative reports detailing the pitfalls of purchasing these products, nor where to read of the excesses of their purveyors.

The revenue inherent in real estate advertising especially is unlikely to make publishers question the source, as one study concluded: "Real estate profits translate directly into newspaper profits; few advertising sources are more lucrative. . . . Because of the millions of dollars that real estate advertisers pour into them, this is the place where papers are most tempted to sell their souls."[17] Car dealers are notorious for using strong-arm tactics to discourage newspapers from printing exposés of their sometimes questionable sales tactics.[18] Such reporting often is met with a boycott by car dealers of the offending publication, which ends only when one side realizes it can't live without the other. Whichever party capitulates first, the message has inevitably been sent, at no small cost in advertising revenue to the newspaper—and journalistic independence. The implication of such future antagonism is thus clearly translated into bottom-line terms every manager can appreciate.

At smaller newspapers, less insulated from advertiser pressure, editorial coverage has always featured an aspect of boosterism, sometimes blatantly. The mutual dependence between advertiser and publisher dates back to the 19th century, when newspapers evolved from political publications with party affiliations to commercial ventures funded by advertising. From the beginning, advertisers tried to influence the editorial content of newspapers they patronized, first in the form of mandated "reading notices" carried in the news columns that touted merchants and their products.

When publishers realized this partiality was detracting from the credibility of their news reports, the puffery gradually disappeared. But

that didn't deter advertisers from prevailing on the press to print news it considered conducive to its purpose. As Gerald Baldasty points out in *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century,* "Some advertisers and their agents were not shy about offering editors and publishers advice on what made a good newspaper. In particular [they] wanted newspapers to be bright and entertaining."[19] Advertisers came to realize one basic law: good news sells, bad news doesn't. Anything that puts readers in a bad mood does not put them in a buying mood. News pointing out the cruelties of life and the world around us, especially political news, should be avoided, advertisers urged publishers, exhorting them to "present more of the bright side of life."[20] The underlying tension between advertising and journalism has been ever thus.

The result was The Wall, which grew up between the "church" of editorial and the "state" of advertising. A leading proponent of the concept was *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce, to whom the religious metaphor has been attributed. Luce, himself the son of a missionary, decreed that the magazine's editor would report directly to him, and to the board of directors after his death, and would also pick his own successor. According to one *Time* history, "the formality of the separation was unique in journalism."[21]

But even the erection of a formal barrier between the social mission of journalism and the financial pressures facing any business did not stop advertisers from trying to shape the product in which they placed their advertising. Even at *Time* the separation of church and state was often illusory: "Like much of Luce's theorizing, the hierarchy of journalists leading and their business patterns following was more a concept than a reality."[22]

Bagdikian chronicled the increase in "fluff" favored by advertisers to put readers in a buying mood in his analysis of content of the ever-increasing pages of newspapers between 1940 and 1980. While the size of newspapers more than doubled during the period, he found that their percentage of hard news was almost halved, from 13 percent to 7.5 percent. What filled the extra pages was soft feature material, including special sections on such subjects as food and fashion, devised as "advertising bait." An article that put the reader in an analytical frame of mind did not encourage the reader to take seriously an advertisement that depended on fantasy or promoted a trivial product. An article on genuine social suffering might interrupt the "buying" mood on which most ads for luxuries depend.[23]

In the parallel universe of magazine publishing, the economic exigencies of that industry dictated long ago that editorial content would be largely supervised by advertisers. As the market for magazine advertising is mostly national in scope, compared with a largely local market for newspapers, advertisers are free to pick and choose the vehicle to carry their messages. With the proliferation of titles in the 1980s, advertisers have been increasingly able to demand—and receive—what they call "value added" in the form of favorable editorial coverage. The result, according to one survey, has been "the selling of pieces of editorial integrity, from slivers to chunks to truckloads."[24]

The trend reached a height of audacity in 1997, when corporations, such as automaker Chrysler, began to demand advance notice of upcoming stories. That moved the American Society of Magazine Editors to state its "deep concern" over the compliance of many of its members. A 1997 study revealing many of the transgressors concluded the shift was fundamental:

> Just about any editor will tell you: the ad/edit chemistry is changing for the worse. Corporations and their ad agencies have clearly turned up the heat on editors and publishers, and some magazines are capitulating, unwilling to risk even a single ad. This makes it tougher for those who do fight to maintain the ad-edit wall and put the interests of their readers first.[25]

Some ascribe the trend toward advertiser-journalist cooperation to the increasing corporatization of media outlets, which are often owned by a conglomerate that itself is a major advertiser. The trend to corporatization has led to more attention to the bottom line, especially as the profit potential of newspapers has become apparent. Corporations buying newspapers at increasingly inflated prices began looking for ways to maximize their investment by cutting costs and boosting revenue.

As newspapers are increasingly owned by publicly traded companies, pressure for quarterly dividends has led to the use of management techniques that have proven successful in other industries.[26] Executives with proven track records in marketing—like Mark Willes—have been brought in from corporate parents to improve the profit performance of flagging publications. The goal orientation has been manifested in profit-sharing bonuses tied to the bottom line. After his cost cutting as CEO of Times Mirror saw the company's stock price almost triple, Willes pocketed a $1.35 million bonus in 1996, which was in addition to his $798,000 salary.[27] The incentives proved so effective that as part of his reorganization, Willes has offered them to his section managers as inducement to improve their profit performance. The resulting temptation to "try anything" is enormous.

The challenge Willes inherited in Los Angeles was considerable. The recession of the early 1990s hit Southern California particularly hard because its large share of the aerospace industry had slowed with the end of the Cold War. The sprawling Los Angeles metropolitan area also has provided special problems for the *Times,* which has found itself at a disadvantage in competing with satellite dailies for readers—and advertising—in the affluent suburbs. The sheer physical size of the market has worked against the city paper, as merchants in communities 20 or 30 miles away are more likely to advertise in a newspaper closer to their customers, both physically and in coverage of local news.

One of the earliest and most extensive sets of "zoned" editions, special sections carrying news of interest to residents of specific suburbs, was started in the 1960s and has helped the *Times* compete south of Los Angeles with the *Orange County Register* and *San Diego Union-Tribune.* But *Times* market penetration has remained at a low 28 percent—half that of some dailies in more compact areas. And circulation, which peaked in 1991 at 1.24 million daily and 1.58 million on Sunday, was dropping close to the 1 million mark.[28]

A study by Diana Stover Tillinghast of competition in the Southern California newspaper market found support for Rosse's "umbrella" model, under which the economic base of a metropolitan daily is eroded by suburban competitors. "Even the tremendous outlay of funds for capital investment and expanded news coverage have not allowed the *Times* to overcome market limitations to growth in areas away from the center of its market."[29] A sobering fact was that the *Times* trailed its various competitors in seven of 11 Southern California market areas. A fickle readership had resulted in a "churn" rate—annual stops divided by home delivery circulation—of more than 90 percent, well above the 66 percent rate for all papers with circulation of 400,000 or more. That did not deter Willes from setting a target of gaining 500,000 in circulation.[30]

Worse, the Tillinghast study showed that while the *Times* once had a "virtual lock" on large retailer advertising, chain-owned satellite dailies had begun to cut into that revenue source by offering package deals to publish advertisements in a combination of several suburban papers.[31] Even more important than going after readers, Willes had to try to win back advertisers.

One of his first moves after coming over from General Mills was to symbolically move the office of editor Shelby Coffey III from the newsroom, where an editor traditionally is found, to the paper's corporate offices. Lunching with reporters, he urged them to spend more time socializing with advertising staff.[32] Willes began to talk of trading on the brand name of the *Times* and threw around analogies from his previous posting, including Cheerios and Hamburger Helper.

A consultation with 87-year-old management guru Peter Drucker in May 1996 helped formulate the plan to create interdepartmental teams—a concept once known as *synergy* until the term was taken over by corporate raiders to describe their own strategy of acquiring companies to become complementary arms of the conglomerate. Drucker also suggested separating the newspaper's sections into distinct entities responsible for their own profit performance. Both ideas were enthusiastically adopted by Willes and other top *Times* management.[33]

Before the plan was put into motion, however, publisher Richard Schlosberg III, 53, opted to step aside in mid-1997. Willes said he tried to talk Schlosberg into staying on but, unable to do so, ultimately decided to take up the post himself. A few days later, Coffey similarly took a pass on implementing the radical plan, despite similar claimed attempts by Willes to change his mind. Willes then picked longtime foreign correspondent Michael Parks as point man for his new regime. A five-page press release in early October 1997 announced the reorganization, which partnered section editors with managers from the business side in an attempt to drum up more advertising. Willes went on record as vowing to obliterate the journalists' beloved Wall, "with a bazooka, if necessary."[34]

For six months, Willes endured the slings and arrows of a profession defiled. But then, with spring came the 1997 results, including a 12 percent return on capital companywide, a target Willes had set in 1996. Times Mirror's profit margin was a paltry 8 percent back then, well below industry leader Gannett's robust 22 percent. The profit margin at the *Times* itself, without assistance from its sister publications, mostly monopolies, was believed to be lagging at about 5 percent, down from a high of more than 20 percent in the late 1980s.[35] Willes soon got more good news—an increase in advertising revenue of almost 5 percent for all Times Mirror newspapers for the first two months of 1998.[36]

But while Willes' cost cutting was doubtless behind much of the economic improvement, a markedly improved economy may also have played a part. Newspaper circulation industrywide blipped up marginally for the six months ending March 31, 1998—the first increase in 10 years.[37] Emboldened nonetheless, Willes went on the road to defend his vision of market journalism, making the convention rounds as the

person most journalists wanted to excoriate. But perhaps with an eye on the bottom line as ever, all his speeches and interviews stressed editorial independence. In all the bad press Willes had received, the one point his critics had made well was that aspersions cast on the journalistic integrity of the *Times* would prove self-defeating to his plans to trade on the paper's brand image.

"Never once have I interfered with editorial independence," Willes told the American Society of Newspaper Editors convention in Dallas. "We understand there are lines not to be crossed."[38] A few weeks later in Washington, he addressed the Newspaper Association of America's national conference: "We are not confused about the fact that we have a compact with our readers to tell the truth; . . . it is why people trust us and why people read us. And it is therefore why we can provide a way for our advertisers to reach the people they want to reach."[39]

More problematic to the Willes plan might be overcoming the early reviews out of Los Angeles, which were not favorable. One incident widely noted saw business reporter Debora Vrana finding a press release in her mailbox soon after the wall-busting announcement, with a note from a *Times* advertising executive requesting prominent placement in the paper. Editors all up and down the chain of command took pains to point out that that was going too far, and a line was seen at least drawn in the sand, even if lines in the sand have a way of shifting more easily than an inviolate wall.

Keeping a close watch on what it called "the publication formerly known as a newspaper" was the alternative *LA Weekly,* which soon drew connections between stories in the *Times* and corporate partnerships it was forming, such as that with the Los Angeles Kings professional hockey team. A quarter-page story on an award-winning teacher described her classroom technique as showing "how effective hockey statistics are for honing math skills."[40]

Even more embarrassing, however, was a *Times* advertisement that the *LA Weekly* pointed out was passed off as front-page news. A front-page *Times* story touted a new service by long-distance provider Sprint that promised to "revolutionize the way people use their telephones." This story, published on the day after an election, was questioned by *LA Weekly* as blatant boosterism. "Odd, but the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* indeed most major dailies missed this big news break," an article in the weekly noted sarcastically. "The *Wall Street Journal* relegated it to a couple hundred words, tucked into a corner on Page 3. Even *USA*

Today left it in the business section."[41] *LA Weekly* also noted a second story in the *Times* business section that brought total coverage to almost 2,300 words. Then it pointed out an interesting juxtaposition: "Follow the front-page story to the jump on Page 14, and you can't help but notice that the facing page and the preceding page carried full-page ads for . . . ION, Sprint's 'Revolutionary New Network,' as the ad copy puts it."[42] A *Times* spokesman passed off placement of the advertisement as coincidence, but the damage was doubtless done. The scrutiny shows that at least others are watching, even if *Times* editors don't choose to avoid such appearances of conflicting interests.

The implication becomes obvious that Willes and his attempt to capitalize on the brand name of the *Times* could backfire and destroy the franchise that Otis Chandler spent decades building in Los Angeles. For readers to see the *Times* as merely a mouthpiece for advertisers, a shopper with a few friendly stories wrapped around the advertising—the newspaper equivalent of a Muzak-filled shopping mall—would be to transform the Times Mirror flagship from Cheerios to Brand X. Such disenfranchisement could turn out to be the journalistic equivalent of killing the goose that laid the golden egg. As media stock analyst John Morton said of the Willes experiment, it "could turn out to be the dumbest thing ever tried with a newspaper. . . . Or it could point the way to the future."[43]

Despite Willes' verbal assurances, *Times* staff members viewed with some alarm an announcement in late 1998 that the paper would reorganize to raise its national profile and, as a result, deemphasize its trademark regional coverage. Some staff members believe that even the way the announcement was made—as a joint statement of top officials of the editorial and business departments—symbolizes Willes' commitment to change. Others fear the move will cause staff layoffs, although company officials said that is unlikely with attrition and redeployments. *Times* officials said they wanted to reduce and streamline some of the paper's regional bureaus, including those in the San Fernando Valley and Ventura County.[44]

As the storm raged around him, Willes continued to ask if reaction to his decree that The Wall must fall would have been less strident if he had worked his way to the publisher's post as a reporter and editor. That could be answered with another question: If he had, would Willes have so boldly declared war on The Wall in the first place?

Notes

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CHAPTER 11 ______________________ **Mark Tatge**

Taking CAR for a Spin:

Conventional News Gathering Goes High-Tech

The small meeting room in a Providence, Rhode Island, hotel was packed one summer day in 1996 with journalists who had come to hear what might happen to the world's premier organization for investigative journalists, Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE). IRE was talking about leaving its home of 18 years at University of Missouri for the University of Maryland. For months, IRE board members had debated whether IRE and its sister organization, the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR), should leave Columbia, Mo. The IRE board was supposed to make a decision in Providence. As the debate dragged on, it became clear that one major obstacle stood in the way.

Brant Houston, NICAR's managing director, publicly said he hadn't made up his mind, but board members said he was waging a backdoor campaign to keep NICAR in Missouri. If IRE moved without NICAR it would effectively split the organization. Houston's objections were taken seriously by many IRE members. In a short period, he had built NICAR into an organization that now rivaled IRE. Computer-assisted reporting was widely believed to hold the key to the future of reporting, and NICAR was the organization best positioned for training those journalists. Some IRE board members feared NICAR's loss could spell trouble for IRE, an organization already suffering from newspaper cost cutting and a decline in investigative reporting. Worse yet, there was talk that Houston might stay in Missouri and set up a competing organization to teach computer-assisted reporting. Even board members who supported NICAR's goals worried that the organization was becoming too powerful and was having too much influence over IRE.

IRE and NICAR never divorced. Both organizations remain head-