

# AMERICAN NEWSPAPER GUILD

## Code of Ethics (1934)

1. That the newspaper man's first duty is to give the public accurate and unbiased news reports, and that he be guided in his contacts with the public by a decent respect for the rights of individuals and groups.
2. That the equality of all men before the law should be observed by the men of the press; that they should not be swayed in news reporting by political, economic, social, racial or religious prejudices, but should be guided only by facts and fairness.
3. That newspaper men should presume persons accused of crime of being innocent until they are convicted, as is the case under the law, and that news accounts dealing with accused persons should be in such form as not to mislead or prejudice the reading public.
4. That the Guild should work through efforts of its members or by agreement with editors and publishers to curb the suppression of legitimate news concerning "privileged" persons or groups, including advertisers, commercial powers and friends of newspapers.
5. That newspaper men shall refuse to reveal confidences or disclose sources of confidential information in court or before other judicial or investigating bodies, and that the newspaperman's duty to keep confidences shall include those he shared with one employer even after he has changed his employment.
6. That the news be edited exclusively in the editorial rooms instead of in the business office of the daily newspapers.
7. That newspaper men shall behave in a manner indicating independence and decent self-respect in the city room as well as outside, and shall avoid any demeanor that might be interpreted as a desire to curry favor with any person.

From the Founding Statements of the American Newspaper Guild (1934), reprinted as an appendix in George Seligson, *Freedom of the Press* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Company, 1935), 370-71.

## Integrity of the Press

### Resolution Adopted by the Newspaper Guild, in Convention, St. Paul, June, 1934

WHEREAS, freedom of the press is a right of the readers of news and a responsibility upon the producers of news; and is not a privilege for owners of news channels to exploit; and

WHEREAS, reporting is a high calling which has fallen into disrepute because news writers have been too often degraded as hirelings compelled by their employers to serve the purposes of politicians, monopolists, speculators in the necessities of life, exploiters of labor, and fomenters of war; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Newspaper Guild strive tirelessly for integrity of news columns and opportunity for its members to discharge their social responsibility; not stopping until the men and women who write, graphically portray, or edit news have achieved freedom of conscience to report faithfully, when they occur, and refuse by distortion and suppression, to create political, economic, industrial and military wars.

## LEO C. ROSTEN

### The Corps, the Press, and Democracy (1937)

There is ample evidence to support the belief that some newspaper interested in furthering the interests of their publishers than in enlightening the public. Other newspapers possess great journalistic integrity, permit freedom to operate as honest newspapermen, and draw a meticulous editorial and the news columns. This point of view was expressed by Paul Y. Anderson:

It required no particular courage to write the truth for the *Baltimore Sun*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* or the Scripps-Howard papers. Such newspapers expect it. But what would happen to the correspondent who writes the truth about "Coolidge economy" for the *Boston Transcript*, or Mellon tax refunds for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, or about the for the *Washington Star*? What would happen to any man who dishes up the bald truth about any Republican administration? Papers as the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *St. Democrat*, the *Chicago Tribune*, or the *Los Angeles Times*? The Washington of correspondents has its inevitable percentage of sycophants, politicians and lads with an eye on the main chance, and it has, sad to say, a solemn bevy of "gallery statesmen" who have been duped into a of being "part" of the government, and hence bound to conceal and knaveries. But on the whole they are ten times better men owners of their papers.<sup>1</sup>

How much journalistic integrity is to be expected from the reporter, in an interview with Professor H. Gilpatrick of Columbia University?

From *The Washington Correspondents* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1937), 271-306.