

Daniel Schorr Had A Secret

Then he passed it on—and all hell broke loose

By Philip Hilts

The telephone would not leave him alone. He had just hung up and taken a few steps away from his desk to shake hands with his visitor. Behind him the telephone was ringing already. He answered, spoke, and hung up. Two sentences later the phone announced another intruder.

It was a Tuesday, Daniel Schorr's last full day as a working television reporter before his suspension and he was at the center of a dark, spreading whirlwind of chatter and contention. When the first gusts of the trouble blew up and rattled CBS's tree, Schorr continued working. In fact, he was called in to do some extra weekend work especially to make the point that he was on the job as always.

But reports said that Schorr was the man who leaked a sort-of-secret document on the misdeeds of the CIA and the FBI. The document was the report of the House Intelligence Committee and most of its contents was already made public by stories in the New York Times and by Schorr on CBS.

The document itself was almost published by the committee, as is the usual practice. But the House of Representatives got tangled in an unusual knot of politics and protocol with the White House, and no one seemed able to untie it. The House voted on January 29 to keep the report from the public, until and unless the messy kink could be unwound by getting White House approval for publication. To this knot of Gordius's, Daniel Schorr took his sword. The Village Voice printed a copy of the sort-of-secret report, and Schorr was

Philip Hilts is author of Evening Stars, a book on television's anchormen that will be published in the fall.

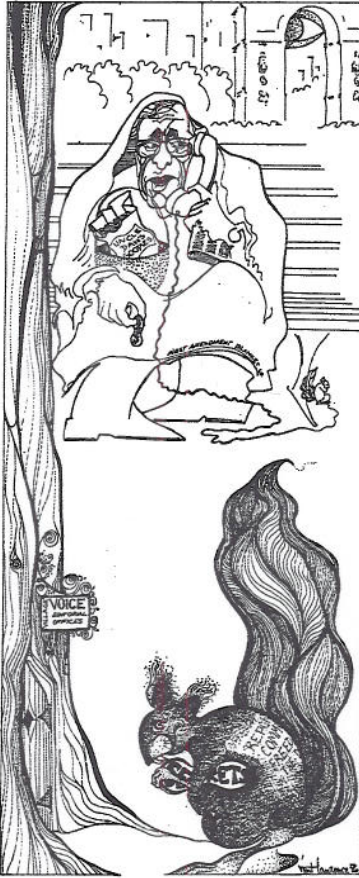


Illustration by Vint Lawrence

named as the man who gave it to them, Schorr denied it, and then, amid the growing ire of congressmen, Kissinger, and others, Schorr admitted it.

Schorr and CBS thought that Schorr might be able to go on with his work—covering the committee, and the report.

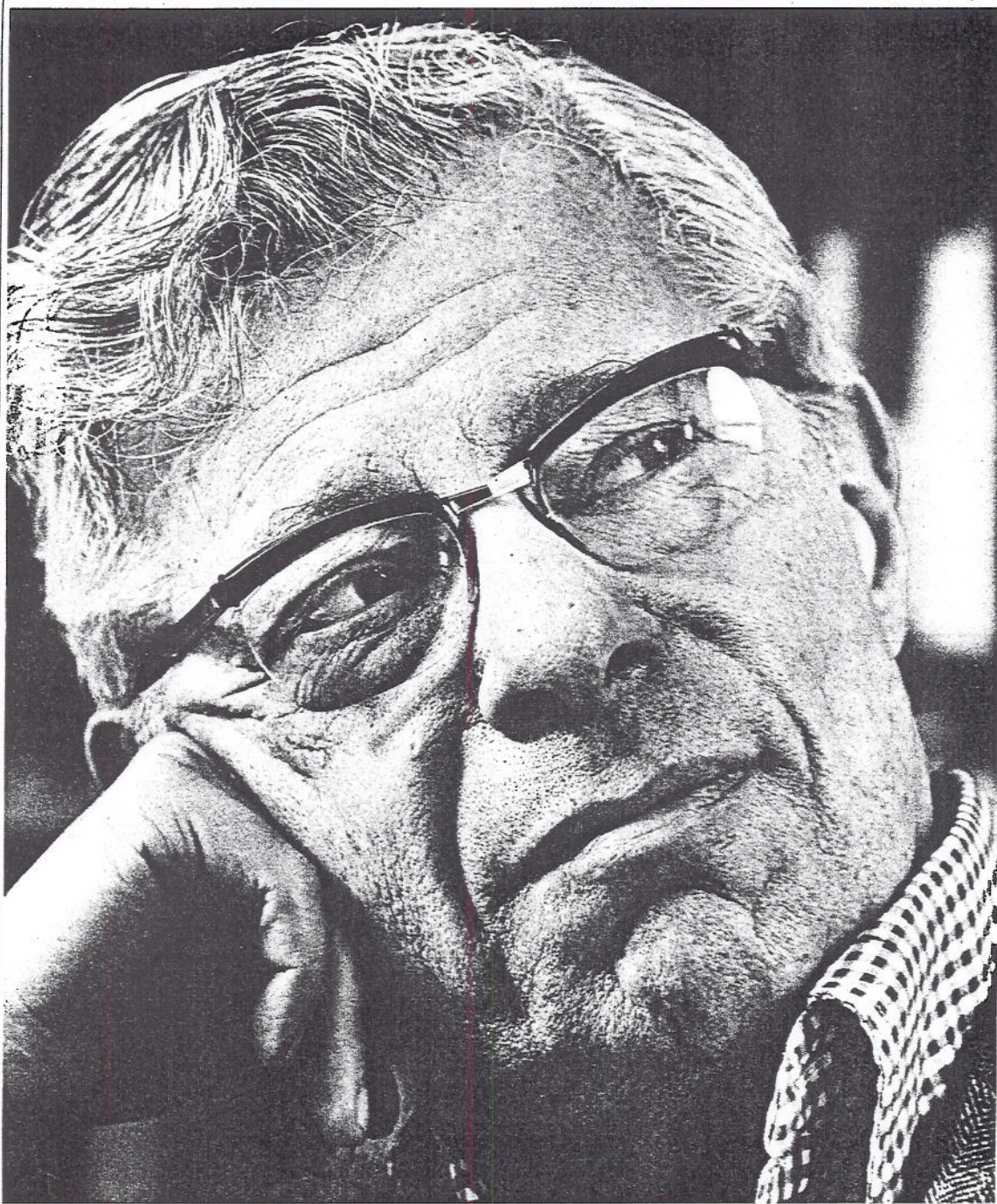
He could not, obviously, report on his own part in the story, the leak of the report. But he could continue to cover the misdeeds of the CIA and FBI. He had, after all, contributed several important scoops in the unraveling of the story.

But the pitch and volume of the noise around Schorr kept growing. In this one, Schorr had caused great displeasure among CBS executives in New York. One congressman was leading an attempt to have Schorr cited for contempt of Congress, and there were sympathetic murmurings from others. President Ford was so riled he offered the House some FBI agents to begin their assault. Henry Kissinger held a bitter, emotional news conference. He condemned leaks and a "new version of McCarthyism."

Even the New York Times had run an editorial condemning Schorr. (Later, Times managing editor A. M. Rosenthal called Schorr and let him know the sentiments of the piece flabbergasted him and were not widely believed at the Times.) But the Times editorial was ammunition that could be used against Schorr, and other editorials condemning Schorr began to appear.

The telephone, which Schorr like most journalists used as an instrument of his will, was now turned against him—the hunter was the hunted.

But for Daniel Schorr, it is not the first time, or the second, or the third, or the fourth . . . Schorr calls them flaps, and he has been at the center of many. Schorr works hard at becoming the center of attention, and he has a knack for setting off alarms everywhere he goes. In many senses



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Daniel Schorr: "A real criminal face if I ever saw one," said Nicolai Bulganin.

Photographed by Matthew Lewis

his career illustrates both the highest achievements and the grimmest gaffes of journalism on national television.

Schorr says he sometimes feels like Joe Batspik, the Lil' Abner character who sparks catastrophe: "I'm just going my way, getting a story, but I keep looking behind me and buildings are falling down."

• In 1959 there was a special press conference called by President Eisenhower's press secretary to personally denounce Dan Schorr and his reporting. "It's as low a form of reporting as I know of... utterly irresponsible." Schorr had reported that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles would soon resign. The President's press secretary not only denied the story and denounced Schorr publicly, he angrily called Schorr's boss to try to bring more pressure. Seven days after the denial, Dulles resigned.

• In 1957 while CBS Moscow correspondent, Schorr ignored censors' red pencils, read forbidden passages on the air anyway, and had his plug pulled again and again. He was arrested once, had his film confiscated, and was attacked in the Soviet newspapers. Finally, he was expelled from the Moscow press corps and not allowed to cover the Soviet Union. When back in the United States, he found he was a hero to the right wing for his defiance.

• There were many run-ins with the Richard Nixon White House, including the moment in a press conference when Nixon called Schorr a liar. And Nixon ordered an FBI investigation of Schorr after a story detailing the falsity of a Nixon claim to support parochial schools. Schorr also made the top twenty on Nixon's enemies list, and beside his name was the notation, "A real media enemy."

• Schorr egged former CIA director Richard Helms into calling him "killer" several times, "son of a bitch" twice, and "c-..." once, in a stream of epithets shouted in public after Schorr broke the story that the CIA had apparently attempted political assassinations.

• In 1964, he enraged Senator Barry Goldwater, CBS chairman William Paley, and CBS News President Fred Friendly by reporting that immediately after accepting the Republican nomination for President Goldwater would travel to Germany to "join up" with the right wing in Germany.

Goldwater cancelled his trip to Berchtesgaden ("Hitler's one-time stomping ground," in Schorr's characterization) and launched a verbal attack on Schorr and CBS for a "campaign of falsification" against him. Goldwater mentioned the Schorr story and other, unrelated matters as evidence of a CBS conspiracy.

Within a few days, Schorr was told to issue a "clarification": He did not mean to say that Goldwater intended to join up with the German right wing, but rather

that there was a "process of gravitation visible here in Germany." Correction of the error did little to cool the furor, sounding strange and half-hearted as it did.

Schorr's present difficulties with his own company were summed up by one knowledgeable CBS reporter: "It is very complicated. It seems that someone way up in the CBS hierarchy thought very poorly of what Dan did with the Village Voice. But to extricate that from all the rest he did on the CIA for CBS is very difficult. On top of that, no matter whether you like the Village Voice thing or not, what Schorr is heading into with Congress is going to set precedents for a long time and a lot of other people. Somebody's undoubtedly up there saying, 'He's a son of a bitch but we've got to protect him. If we could figure out a way of defending the cause without defending him, that would be lovely!'"

As the winter day grayed into afternoon Schorr left his tiny CBS office, and its jangling telephones, to go on assignment. Half a block away from the CBS building, he climbed onto the cracked red leather seat of his old Mercedes; the car's gray paint long ago oxidized to a whitish color. The drive to the CIA in Langley took twenty minutes. For Schorr it was a familiar assignment. When he arrived at the CIA, gate the guard waved hello. Though Schorr did not know it, it would be the last CIA assignment of this phase of his CBS career—and perhaps his last ever.

•••

"Why do you keep getting into these things?" Schorr was asked, "There are a lot of good reporters at CBS, like Bruce Morton. Morton is a good reporter, but he never runs into these things..."

"True," said Schorr.

"Well, why you?"

A pause. "I guess the reason is," said Schorr with a straight, serious gaze that playwright Arthur Miller called exquisitely suited to news drama, "that if you had been a poor kid in the Bronx and no one had ever made it easy for you to get anywhere, and the only way you have ever gotten anywhere is by catching people's attentions with something more dramatic, or more exclusive, or in some way more interesting... then you know you're not going to just sit there having other people read your scripts, and be a star. You're not pretty. Your voice isn't especially good... Then your entire career is forced into attention-getting..."

It sounds like a confession, but not an apology. His attention-seeking and scoop-chasing are ancient habits, after thirty-five years of work. He is an old fashioned newspaper scoop artist, but one whose nerves and liver didn't go at forty.

Daniel Schorr was raised in the Bronx, in an atmosphere in which raw hustle was as necessary and natural as breathing. But Schorr's family was afflicted even more than most: His father died when Schorr was five years old, and his mother worked as a seamstress to support the family. Schorr's younger brother fell into a series of illnesses—including pneumonia, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and polio—which drained the family. Brother Alvin survived, partly with the help of young Daniel who went out to hustle for odd jobs before he was ten years old.

Schorr reflects for a moment on how those years forged his character.

"I grew up one generation after 'Hester Street.' Have you seen the picture? 'Hester Street' is a movie about Jewish immigrants, and how they come and settle on the Lower East Side... and the fierce struggle to crawl up and make your way in American society. Turning your back on the old culture..."

"I am second-generation Russian Jewish immigrant. My mother was scraping for the survival of her family. There was ethnic tension already there in the Bronx, with the Italians and the Irish. I grew up with a sense that you had to make your own way without help. Nothing is on a platter. You've got no money and live on a narrow margin of survival. And you gotta go out and do it."

"Unfortunately for me, and I can't help it, it sounds a little like *What Makes Sammy Run?* I guess the only difference is you have to do it without totally losing your dignity, as Sammy did. Can you maintain some sense of standards? ... But I will not deny what I came from and how it has shaped me..."

He did odd jobs, he sold the Saturday Evening Post and delivered the Bronx Home News, he was a salesman for a printing company at twelve years old. Before high school there was already no doubt that he wanted to be a journalist. He became the editor of his Hebrew School newspaper, and later editor of his high school paper, and his college paper. Before he was out of school he had jobs as a stringer for the Bronx Home News and the short-lived Jewish Daily Bulletin.

"My first scoop came one day when I was on the ground floor of an apartment building, and I heard a big plloop outside the window. I looked outside and there was a body lying there. Someone had jumped off the roof. I got \$5 for the story."

He went to college at the City College of New York between 1933 and 1939, and worked for the Jewish Daily Bulletin and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "Among other things I was covering the growing Nazi Party in New York, and had very early the thrill of investigative reporting, in

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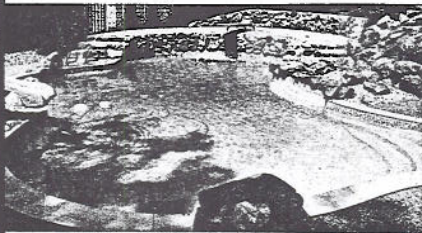
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enemy territory. It was also a very early experience in mutual manipulation." . . .

"The Nazis wanted publicity, and they wanted to be perceived as a threat to the Jews. They wanted to sound the way Hitler sounded in the thirties, they wanted attention, especially from the party in Germany."

"The Jewish Daily Bulletin thrived on its headlining of the Nazi threat to the Jews. So we and the Nazis had a common interest . . . They were all publicity drunk, and we gave them more attention than anybody . . . It's kind of a funny thing to say, but the Jewish Daily Bulletin became, in a sense, their house organ . . . They had factional fights and riots and all these things, and there was I in the center of it. I should have been afraid, sitting in the middle of it with all these people marching with swastikas on their arms and all, but I kind of had a feeling that these guys would protect me because they wouldn't know where their next headline was coming from . . ."

Schorr's chutzpah was full grown by the time he worked for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in the 1940s: He was fired after he went in to his boss to demand a raise. He worked for the New York Journal-American for a while, but he quit when the paper sent an efficiency expert around to save time and money by doing such things as taking the doors off the booths in the men's rooms.

His first great venture outside the city of New York was as a young man in the Army. Though he achieved the rank of sergeant in the intelligence branch, he did not see eye to eye with the Army. "When a contingent of us got off the train at Camp Polk, everybody was sent to the barracks to wait around until we were called out for classification. I, without asking anyone, simply walked over to division headquarters and found the public relations office because I wanted to get an assignment in writing. I found a lieutenant there, and asked him, "Could you use a trained newswriter?" I told him that I had just arrived, and that if he moved fast enough he could probably get me on his staff, and save me from some worse fate. It worked. If that is what is meant by hustling, I guess I've done that all my life."

The hustling continued

through and after the war, and in 1948 it produced his first major flap when he was reporting on the delicate negotiations for independence between the Dutch and what is now Indonesia. The negotiations were going badly when a secret proposal was introduced by another government, to help push the Dutch to settlement. Schorr got hold of a copy of the secret proposal, reported it, and soon was at the center of an international incident which included Schorr as a topic for debate in the United Nations Security Council.

For several years after that period, Schorr worked as a stringer in Holland, grabbing assignments from whatever sources he could. They included the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, ABC, the London Daily Mail, others. As it has been with so many of television's other star journalists, Schorr's first big broadcasting break came not with a scoop, but with his coverage of a natural disaster—severe floods in Holland. Schorr received a telegram soon afterward from Edward R. Murrow, who was in London. "Would you at all consider a staff job with CBS in Washington?"

In the twenty-three years since that telegram, Schorr has worked for CBS in South America, North America, Europe, and the Soviet Union. CBS had submitted over a long period of time, name after name to the Soviets, hoping that at some point, one correspondent would be allowed a visa. Schorr's name happened to be in the hopper when the Soviets decided to let CBS back in their country.

He went to Moscow with a one-week visa, hoping to get full accreditation when he got there. But after his visa expired, the Soviets said nothing to him. He got no credentials, but he wasn't booted out of the country either. Schorr was frustrated. So, one evening at a party for Soviet officials, Schorr got bold. He confronted Nikolai Bulganin, then premier of the Soviet Union, and blurted out, ". . . my visa has expired and I am in your country illegally!" Bulganin laughed. He reached out and with both hands patted Schorr on the cheeks, "A real criminal face if I ever saw one. . ."

His biggest scoop of those years was purely accident. "Life in Russia," he says, "consists of making requests.

When you've got nothing else to do, you file requests. You renew them every six months." One day Schorr was startled to get a call saying that one of his requests was being granted. "It was a big coup. I got Nikita Khrushchev on 'Face The Nation.' In the Kremlin. For an hour! It was his first time on television anywhere, including the Soviet Union."

But with his continual violations of censorship, the Soviets eventually threw him out.

Schorr's next beats were in Europe. It was there, in Germany, in 1964 that the Goldwater flap occurred.

Today Daniel Schorr's reputation among his colleagues in Washington, to which he returned full-time in 1966, remains controversial. Many of the adjectives used to describe him are potent pejoratives: arrogant, abrasive, aggressive, egocentric, callous. They are the reactions to a cluster of Schorr characteristics that make an unusual combination. His natural chutzpah, his deadly earnestness, and his bluntness.

That bluntness is one of many tricks he uses to give his stories added spin and play incorporating it into the snappy closing line. Schorr writes bold ones whenever he has the chance, and it is one of the reasons that he makes people so mad. His example is the famous moment when former CIA director Richard Helms shouted obscenities at him.

"Helms told me that what made him angry and what made him snap at me that way was not the way I was covering the story. He said he could understand that. 'But there was one line in one of your broadcasts,' he said, 'that made me so furious!'

"What was the line?" Schorr asked.

"I can't remember," Helms said, "But it was so unfair!"

"Can you remember when it was?"

"Well, it was one of those first assassination stories," Helms said.

Schorr was curious about what it was that could set off the CIA director so severely in a public place. He searched the early scripts, and soon found the troublesome line. It

was in the story that broke the news for the first time that the misdeeds of the CIA may have included political murder. Schorr finished his story with the appropriate macabre touch:

CIA director Colby is on the records as saying, 'I think that family skeletons are best left where they are, in the closet.' He apparently had some literal skeletons in mind...

"Well," Schorr said "that was unfair. After he said it to me, I had to work it out in my own mind. What was unfair was that there were no skeletons in the CIA's closet—all the people they had tried directly to kill, they had failed, and the people who had been killed were not directly by intention, but indirectly. So it was not literally true that they had a dead body on their hands. Now, to the outside person, that's drawing a rather fine point in view of what's come out." Schorr shifts back to his point about TV tricks.

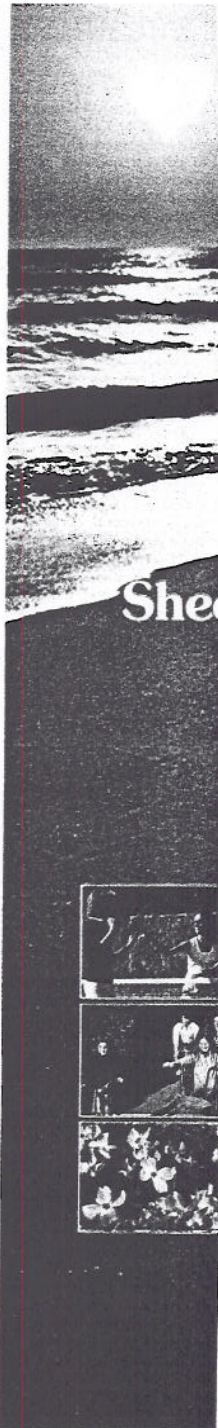
"But anyway, once I've got the goods on them, I will do what television seems to require. That is, utter some line at the end that will help to make the story memorable..."

Sam Donaldson of ABC, generally rated the second most aggressive television reporter in Washington, says that Schorr's brass is so normal that he automatically calculates it into his own work. He recalls a time during Nixon's wage and price controls that three TV reporters, including himself and Schorr, were trying to get George Meany in front of their cameras after some important negotiations. The correspondents got a flat no. Meany wouldn't answer questions. But, asked an aside, what if he read a statement? We want an interview, said the reporters. The tug and pull continued until, finally, the correspondents agreed to film a Meany statement and not to ask questions.

"The instant we agreed," says Donaldson, "I knew Schorr was going to break that agreement. I could just hear my executive producer when he sees Dan Schorr and George Meany on the film, and wonders where I am..."

Meany came down the stairs, and read his statement. Within the same second that Meany finished, Schorr was on him. Meany answered the question without hesitating.

"When he finished," says



Donaldson, "I knew Dan was going to say 'Thank you very much,' and cut it off. I broke in instantly, just as Schorr ended, and got my question in. Then there was (Irving R.) Levine. Poor Levine. By the time Levine opened his mouth to ask his question, Meany was mad. When Levine tried to ask his question, Meany jumped on him. 'What's the matter with you? I made an agreement that there would be no questions! I don't like people who make agreements and then break them! . . . Meany stormed back upstairs."

Even a dozen years ago, Schorr's reputation for hustle was enough to give a competitor bad dreams.

Roger Mudd recalled his: "It was in 1964, and I was covering the Goldwater campaign. One of the events was a dinner in Louisville, Kentucky, and beside everybody's plate in the hall there was a Goldwater mask. When Goldwater arrived and walked into the hall, everybody put on the masks . . . It was really spooky to see the hall filled with a crowd of identical faces.

"I went back to Washington and there was one week of feverish activity on the Hill. Throughout the week, everywhere I went, there was Dan. I kept bumping into him on every story I did." Schorr's beat at the time was an amorphous one that allowed him to jump from story to story and invade other people's turf.

"I was doing the Saturday news at the time, and I went up to New York on the weekends to do it. Well, after this one week on the Hill, I had a dream that I left the Hill, and I was so glad to get away from Dan, I ran to Washington National Airport, I ran up the steps of the plane, and started looking for a seat.

"All the seats were filled, and all the passengers, everywhere I looked they turned around and looked at me. They all had these Dan Schorr masks on . . ."

Those who have competed on stories with Schorr over the years come away with two complaints. The first is that Schorr beats them far too often for their own liking, or what is worse, for the liking of their bosses. The second is that he gets wrong or inaccurate stories on the air far more often than he should, and most are never corrected. It

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is, in the eyes of his competition, a sort of Babe Ruth syndrome. He knocks them over the fence so often it becomes expected; but he also strikes out far more than the average hitter. The zeal of the swing accounts for both.

Some of the errors were during the hottest time of competition—the unfolding of Watergate. During one period he seemed to be on the air almost continuously with one story after another ahead of the other networks. One story Schorr did in the early months of Watergate said that indictments would be coming in the next few days, the grand jury was ready with them. "That story was wrong," Schorr admits, "The indictments didn't come until much later. Jaworski held onto them."

In another story, Schorr reported that a lawyer for one of the Watergate defendants would file a motion in court the next day to have the Watergate hearings cut off because they would be prejudicial to fair trials. "I cannot honestly tell you if the motion was ever filed," says Schorr. It wasn't.

Schorr also reported, the day before the first batch of Watergate indictments were reported out, that thirty-one persons would be named in the indictment. The next day, when only seven were indicted, Schorr's report looked foolish.

Schorr was upset, because he too thought the story was wrong. Now he says that technically, it may not have been wrong. Schorr called his source after the indictments came out, and he demanded to know, "How could you let me go on the air with such a ridiculously high figure of indictments?" The source pointed out to him that he did not say thirty-one people would be indicted, but that thirty-one would be named in the indictment. Some would be indicted later, and some fell into the category of unindicted co-conspirators.

More recently, Schorr interviewed Fletcher Prouty on the CBS Morning News and made headlines with Prouty's claim that Nixon aide Alexander Butterfield secretly served as the CIA's man in the White House. Schorr was unable to verify Prouty's story before putting him on the air, and he now regrets the decision to put him on with the story. Af-

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Schorr, from page 17

ter Butterfield vehemently denied the story, Prouty backed off his claim.

An error which was not made on the air, but which cost him more dearly among his CBS colleagues was an event which has come to be called "the Duke University thing." At a Duke media conference in January of 1975, Schorr was answering students' questions, when one asked about why CBS newsmen "went soft on Nixon" in their commentaries immediately after the Nixon resignation speech. Schorr told the students that CBS executives told the commentators to "go easy" on Nixon, and that the commentators did take it easy, except for Roger Mudd, who "didn't get the message" because he got to the studio late from the Hill. The episode apparently had its beginnings in the fact that Schorr was excluded from the post-speech analysis and the feature story Schorr prepared on Nixon's career was not used on the air that night. (None of the rest of the more than two hours of feature material prepared for the night was used either.)

The accusation that Schorr apparently made at Duke sparked the rage of those supposed to have taken the fall—Eric Sevareid, Dan Rather, and Walter Cronkite. After some time of public charges being traded and ducked, Schorr sent a private note to the commentators to try to smooth the troubled waters. But since the commentators got their black eyes in public, they wanted a public apology or clarification from Schorr. He hasn't come up with one, and much ill-feeling still flows between the parties.

The list of exclusive stories that Schorr got without error is, of course, far longer than any list of mistakes. It is only because Schorr comes up with so many good stories so often that anyone bothers to keep track of his missteps.

His obsessive work habits begin the moment he wakes up at 7 a.m. His wife is still asleep, and Schorr doesn't get out of bed, but he turns on the CBS Morning News and listens quietly to it through an ear-plug near the bed. After half

an hour or so, he rises and goes in to take his shower and shave.

But even there he listens to the news. He has a special speaker box installed in the bathroom so he can listen to the news while he showers.

Schorr's work habits are like those of a bachelor in many ways, because he was unmarried until he was fifty years old. Ten years ago, he married a 35-year-old woman who worked at the Office of Economic Opportunity, Lisbeth Bamberger. Mrs. Schorr, known as "Lee," now works part-time with the Children's Defense Fund, and full time raising the Schorr's two children, eight-year-old Jonathan and five-year-old Lisa. Whatever abrasiveness Schorr has at work, it melts quickly away when he is around his children.

Before arriving at work, Schorr soaks up the morning papers, and listens to radio news in his car. While he is at work, his habits generally don't allow much time for a favorite pastime of journalists—newsroom jawing. He stays at work after seven o'clock on many nights, and even after he arrives at home, he frequently settles into reading that is directly related to his job. And then there are the dinners and parties which often turn into useful working contacts.

One of the things he does in those long hours is to read voluminously in newspapers, magazines, and government reports. And out of that wading comes a habit that most television reporters rarely use. From scraps of information he has heard or read, he forms a hypothesis—the basic element in his success. Working from that, he then makes a barrage of calls to try to confirm or dismantle it.

In the story which launched the famous FBI investigation of him, he worked in that manner. After hearing Nixon speak before the Knights of Columbus and promise that his administration would help rescue the parochial schools from their financial troubles, Schorr recalled hearing something that did not fit with that. He guessed that the Nixon speech was utterly empty rhetoric. That might easily be proved or disproved by checking to see what programs were going or were planned to help the parochial schools. Checking first with Catholic lobby-

ists, who would benefit from such programs, and then with H.E.W., Schorr found nothing to support Nixon's claim. And he reported that.

Nixon ordered out the FBI. In digging out the necessary information, Schorr's interviews are not, as some might expect, the abrasive kind used by reporters like Seymour Hersh or Mike Wallace. Schorr is just the opposite on most occasions, interviewing conversationally, gently. He is direct with his questions, but he couches them genially with chatter and humor.

But what often trips Schorr up in the eyes of his colleagues and in making mistakes on the air is his zeal after he has got the story. Most days, CBS Washington reporters sell their stories to the Washington producer, John Armstrong. He in turn negotiates with the CBS producers in New York to get the stories on the Evening News. While most reporters are satisfied simply to state what their story is, Schorr pitches very hard for his stories once, twice, three or even four times during an afternoon.

He will banter and argue with the producers, and there have even been a few times when Schorr would not take the producer's no for an answer. Schorr's will prevailed on one Watergate story only after an afternoon's screaming match with producer Don Bowers. Rarely, Schorr has carried his pitch above the level of the Washington producers, to the New York executive producer or Cronkite himself.

Schorr describes one of the end-runs he made late in the day. It was during the early days of the wage-price freeze, and Schorr got the details of the wage and price council's first major vote. It was anti-labor, and it set the pattern for all future votes. Schorr got the details at 6:10, twenty minutes before air time. He talked to the Washington producers but couldn't convince them to break in at the last moment. Then he called Les Midgley, who was then executive producer in New York. It was 6:25, and Midgley said, "I don't have time to talk to you, I'm working on today's show."

"I'm talking about today's show!" shouted Schorr, "A big story for today's show!"

"It was a case," says Schorr, "Where I had to knock Midg-

ley's head. Finally, he put me in the lineup at the top of the show. I went straight into the studio and did it, ad-libbing."

Even more important for a reporter's career than getting on the air is getting visibility, Schorr says. "You have to do stories in which you are identifiable . . . I watch the show all the time, and I can't tell you who did all the stories, and the daily bits that are voice-over film. It's the ones in which you stand out that count . . ."

With a chuckle, Roger Mudd says that Schorr carries that principle about as far as anyone could. "I kid Dan about it a lot. It's his way . . . he wants to have his own name and face on everything he does. That zeal sometimes trips him up and gets people mad at him."

"You know if the producers here ever manage to produce and edit a Schorr piece without having Dan's face in it, they come out of the cutting room laughing and giggling . . . It's a major happening in the bureau, it is just so rare! He just doesn't do voice-overs . . ."

"I'd rather be talked about than not talked about. I liked being on Nixon's enemies list. Yeah," says Schorr. "But this flap I'm in now is becoming very unpleasant. There are a lot of tangential issues which are becoming major issues. Like, why did you tell them to pay some money to somebody? What did money have to do with it?"

"Yes, I like attention. But I would prefer other kinds to this one. You see, that FBI thing was perfect!"

He says it with relish. "The FBI thing got me a lot of attention in a situation where I had done nothing. And something very stupid and objectively not very harmful had been done to me. That's perfect! When you just sit there, and people call you up and say, 'How could they?'"

"But in this case, it's gotten past the point where I enjoy it. I feel somewhat on the defensive. I don't know exactly how or why. But I'm on the defensive. Not a lot of people saying 'you did what you had to do, and it was wonderful.' Quite a lot of people either confused, or tending to feel something happened which wasn't quite right. And I do

not enjoy it . . . Not this time."

This one is very messy. The clouds around it keep gathering, gusting, and darkening. There is a long list of circumstantial reasons for that. But now it has at least the potential for getting completely out of hand, for becoming *Daniel Schorr's Final Flap*.

The seeding of the trouble began immediately. Just after the *Village Voice* published the report, reporters found that Schorr was the one who had passed it. So they called Schorr. And Schorr made a serious mistake. He lied.

If anyone knew the hazards of lying in the face of the obvious, it should have been Schorr, who had so carefully watched Richard Nixon's fall. But he went ahead. "I thought," says Schorr, "that if I confirmed officially that it was I who gave it, then the only next step would be challenging them to subpoena me and ask my source. The only way of maintaining one additional layer between my original source and disclosure of my source, I thought, was to fuzz even the fact that I had given it to the *Voice* . . . That was an ill-conceived tactical action. I made it look as though I was being evasive and uncandid, which at that point I was being . . . I thought there was reason to be."

There was also the fact that the report was leaked to the *Village Voice*, a biased publication to many, and certainly a strong political publication. As one CBS executive was quoted as saying, "publication of the report there made Dan's actions very political. It could reinforce the conviction some of our conservative affiliates have, that while CBS news management is not politically oriented, underneath them are some reporters who wear their hearts on their left sleeve . . ."

Schorr had asked the committee to have some one find an outlet. He hated the idea of giving the material to the *Village Voice*. "Oh Christ," he protested. "The *Village Voice*! Can't we get something, anything, other than that?" But the attorney, Peter Tufo, searching for a paper, told him no.

Still further complicating the public image of the matter was the money. It was a simple enough idea. Schorr had no intention of making money. He saw no reason why

the Village Voice or any other commercial outfit should profit from the publication. It was a matter of principle. So he tried to make an arrangement that would send proceeds of publication to a suitable place—the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press.

But even reporters who understood Schorr's intentions had some bad feelings about it. Peter Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News Washington Bureau said, "Selling any document that's been leaked is intolerable for a newsman, whether it's for personal profit or for charity. Dan's conduct only helps those out to discredit the press."

Schorr was soon finding it a little hard to do his job. "There was a story I had to do about which way the White House was going on the intelligence plans . . . I had to say on the air that 'it appears they are going to be tightening up on people in the executive branch, establishing criminal penalties for leaking.' Then I had to say, 'However, there seems to be no indication that they will try to extend beyond that and establish penalties for reporters . . .' It takes me a lot of very straight face to deliver that line on the air under present circumstances. People look at you, and you want to add, 'Thank God!'"

He would find that at President Ford's recent press conference, security would be the central topic of the whole program. "Before I went to the news conference, I told the people at CBS I was going. They all said, 'You are?' I know immediately what's in their minds. It's so clear that Ford is trying to make political hay on this issue, just imagine if he would point to me and say, 'There sits Daniel Schorr who is one of those who would try and ruin our country.' Bang! The camera pans to Schorr who sits helplessly while Ford makes him a national symbol. Well, does CBS need that kind of thing? Who needs it? On the other hand, I am not going to be scared away if Ford is talking about my beat. So finally, I went, but I determined I was not going to ask any questions, I am not going to do anything that appears provocative. I've got a beat, and I've got to be there, but I won't ask any questions. And I won't sit up in front. I'll sit in the back, where if there is a picture of me it will be a little

bit in the shadow and hard to get . . .

"You're already paralyzed if you have to think of those things. That was Tuesday night, and then Wednesday morning I started out, I had to talk to (CIA director) George Bush about something that needed clarification from the day before. I caught him just as he was going into the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the morning. I chatted with him in a very friendly manner for a minute. All the cameramen were staked out taking pictures of people going into the closed meeting, and one of the photographers took a picture of me with George Bush. So here's the four-column picture that evening in the Star, with the caption over it, 'SCHORR CONFRONTS ANOTHER CIA CHIEF.'"

When Schorr got home that night he got a call from Bush, who apologized to him. "I seem to have embarrassed you. I don't think we had a confrontation in the hall, but I guess my face when I'm thoughtful may have looked angry . . . I'm sorry." Schorr laughed, and said he was the one who should apologize. "Everywhere I appear with somebody these days, somebody's got an angle as to what that might mean . . ."

That meeting with Bush was Wednesday morning, and Wednesday afternoon there was a White House briefing with the Attorney General, again dealing with leaks. "At the White House briefing it took a lot of getting my spunk up just to ask a question that I wanted to ask. You could feel the electricity in the air. I was wondering if people were going to write stories saying things like Schorr got up to ask a question about leaks of the Attorney General, who at that moment was considering whether to prosecute Schorr on leaks."

That Wednesday afternoon, as Schorr was putting together his part of the story on the President's new approach to secrecy, Washington Bureau Chief Sandy Socolow called Schorr into his office.

The word had come from New York: "They really think that it has gotten too tough for you to continue covering the CIA beat like that, at least right now. Wouldn't you agree?"

Yes, said Schorr. So, as of four o'clock, Wednesday,

February 18, Schorr was relieved of his beat. It was agreed that he should go home and take a long weekend off.

When Schorr reflects on it, he is a little awed by the fact that CBS has kept him for twenty-three years, through all the turbulence and flaps. Edward R. Murrow was forced to leave, Howard K. Smith was fired, and there have been others. But still CBS has managed to tolerate Schorr.

As a matter of politics, Schorr points out that the Murrow and Smith troubles ended up in the office of CBS Chairman William Paley. His own flaps, on the other hand, bubbled up only to the presidents of the news division, and at that level, compromises can be reached, executives can back down. But when William Paley is aroused, there is no compromise, no backing down.

But now, after twenty-three years, Schorr may have aroused Paley and drawn him into the flap. Less than twenty-four hours before the Village Voice with its secrets was published, Daniel Schorr was on the CBS Evening News telling a part of the story of William Paley and the CIA. Paley, according to Schorr's source, once called a subordinate into his office, introduced two CIA men to him, and said they would be working for CBS. Schorr had some second thoughts before putting the story on the air, but he went ahead. The next day, the furor over the Village Voice broke.

It now appears that the ominous rumbling from corporate CBS may have come from William Paley. At the end of the corporation's press release which said Schorr was being relieved of his reporting duties 'indefinitely,' there was one further line. It noted that CBS would wait until after the trouble blew over before delivering its own decision and consequences on the head of Schorr.

It may be that Daniel Schorr has finally raised himself up to the level of media canonization, and will become, along with Murrow and Smith, one of William Paley's martyrs of Black Rock. ■