

Bulletin Winter 2007

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## **Top Story**

### **Wolf Sets Jail Time Record for Refusing to Comply with Grand Jury Subpoena**

Freelance journalist and self-proclaimed anarchist Josh Wolf remains in jail after a judge denied his latest attempt at freedom, and has become the longest-jailed journalist for refusing to comply with a subpoena. [Continue reading](#)

## **Reporter's Privilege News**

### **Attorney Admits Leaking Information to BALCO Reporters**

The government has withdrawn subpoenas issued to *San Francisco Chronicle* reporters Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams. [Continue reading](#)

### **Libby Trial over Leaked Information Ends in Conviction**

The criminal trial against I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the Former Chief of Staff for Vice President Cheney accused of perjury and obstruction of justice in an FBI investigation into the disclosure of former CIA agent Valerie Plame Wilson's identity in 2003 began in January 2007 and ended in March with a guilty verdict on four of the five charges. [Continue reading](#)

### **Wisconsin Circuit Court Rules Journalist's Privilege Protects Documentary Filmmaker's Non Confidential Sources**

A Wisconsin Circuit Court Judge ruled in January 2007 that a student documentary filmmaker did not have to turn over hundreds of hours of tape to the state, determining that even information given to a journalist without the promise of confidentiality is protected under the limited state journalist privilege. [Continue reading](#)

### **Pennsylvania Court Rules Reporter Need Not Reveal Source**

A Pennsylvania appellate court has ruled that a reporter does not have to reveal the identity of her source used in an article that prompted a defamation lawsuit. [Continue reading](#)

### **Supreme Court Rejects *New York Times*' Motion to Block Access to Reporters' Phone Records in Leak Investigation**

In November 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court denied *The New York Times*' motion to temporarily prevent the government's review of its phone records. [Continue reading](#)

### **FBI Ends Investigation into Anderson Files**

The FBI has decided to abandon its investigation into the files of deceased investigative reporter Jack Anderson. [Continue reading](#)

### **Reporters Excused from Testifying at Military Tribunal**

On Jan. 29, 2007, two reporters were spared from testifying at the court-martial of the first Army officer to publicly oppose the war in Iraq and refuse deployment. [Continue reading](#)

### **Judith Miller Testifies in Hamas Funding Trial**

Former *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, once jailed for 85 days for refusing to reveal a source to government prosecutors, testified on the government's behalf in November 2006 in an obstruction of justice trial in Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Continue reading

## **Media Ethics**

### **Marketing Stunt Causes Terror Scare in Boston**

A marketing stunt gone awry in February 2007 led to the resignation of Cartoon Network's general manager, Jim Sample, and an agreement that the advertising agency responsible for the stunt and the network's corporate parent would pay \$2 million in restitution to the City of Boston and the Department of Homeland Security in February 2007. Continue reading

### **CNBC Anchor's Ties to Former Citigroup CFO Scrutinized**

The most recognizable anchor for CNBC has found herself the subject of controversy, and some have questioned her relationship with the people and entities she covers. Continue reading

### **"To Catch a Predator" Criticized after Suspect's Suicide**

*Dateline NBC's* popular "To Catch a Predator" series returned to air in January 2007, fueling an ongoing debate over journalism ethics and public service crime coverage. Continue reading

### **Nancy Grace Sued over Interviewee's Suicide**

CNN Headline News host Nancy Grace was sued in November 2006 by the family of Melinda Duckett, a woman who committed suicide one day after being interviewed by Grace about the disappearance of Duckett's son. Continue reading

### **O.J. Simpson Book, TV Special Cancelled Amid Controversy**

O.J. Simpson, who was acquitted in 1995 of criminal charges of murdering his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman, returned to the public eye in the fall of 2006 when News Corporation, parent company of HarperCollins and the FOX Network, agreed to publish a book he wrote about the murders and later cancelled it. Continue reading

### **Minneapolis *Star Tribune* Reviews Writer's Work for Plagiarism**

Accusations of plagiarism in December led the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* to review a year's worth of work by an editorial writer before allowing him to remain on staff. Continue reading

## **Student Press News**

### **High School Paper Told to Remove Photograph or Lose Funding**

A public high school principal in St. Francis, Minn., suspended the school newspaper's funds and threatened legal action because he found an image that student editors planned to publish was offensive. Continue reading

## **Defamation/Libel**

### **Illinois Supreme Court Justice Awarded \$7 Million Libel Judgment Against Newspaper**

After deliberating for nine hours over two days, a jury awarded Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Thomas \$7 million in damages after finding a Kane County, Ill., newspaper liable for four separate counts of libel against the state's highest-ranking judicial officer. Continue reading

### **Judges Sue Newspapers for Libel**

The \$7 million judgment awarded to Illinois Supreme Court Justice Robert Thomas on Nov. 14, 2006 by a Kane County, Ill. jury for defamatory statements made by a local columnist is one of a number of recent cases across the nation entangling judges and the media, including two notable verdicts that awarded a Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice and a local Massachusetts judge millions of dollars in damages for libel. Continue reading

### **Illinois Supreme Court Upholds Innocent Construction Rule**

In December 2006, the Illinois Supreme Court upheld the "innocent construction rule," solidifying the state's status as one of the few remaining jurisdictions where such a rule exists. Continue reading

### **Suit Against *The New York Times* over Kristof's Columns about Anthrax Investigation Dismissed**

A federal judge has dismissed a defamation action filed against *The New York Times*. Continue reading

## **Information Access**

### ***New York Sun* Reporter Joshua Gerstein Wins FOIA Victory**

On Nov. 29, 2006, Judge Maxine M. Chesney of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California ordered the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Justice (DOJ), and the FBI to process *New York Sun* reporter Joshua A. Gerstein's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and produce, within 30 days, non-exempt responsive records to his request for information regarding unauthorized disclosure of classified information. Continue reading

### **Budget Cuts Lead to Closures, Reduced Access at EPA Libraries**

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Library system suffered drastic funding cuts in 2006 and was forced to shut down several of its regional libraries and even its headquarters library. Continue reading

### **Washington State Courts Reopen Sealed Records**

After nearly a year of investigative reporting and legal challenges to sealed court records, *The Seattle Times* says Washington judges and court commissioners are now playing by the rules. Continue reading

## **Endangered Journalists**

### **Russian Spy May Have Been Poisoned for Investigating Journalist's Death**

Responding to reports that "rogue elements" of Russia's security forces may be responsible for poisoning former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko, close acquaintances of Litvinenko publicly accused Russian authorities of targeting the ex-spy because of his investigation into the death of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya. Continue reading

## **International Updates**

### **CPJ Urges Defense Department to Release or Charge AP Photographer Detained in Prison Camp**

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) urged former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to personally investigate the detention of Bilal Hussein, a freelance photographer and Iraqi citizen who worked for the Associated Press (AP) at the time he was taken into custody by U.S. military forces. Continue reading

### **Global Internet Censorship on the Rise**

Early results from a forthcoming report conducted by Internet watchdog group OpenNet Initiative (ONI) show that censorship on the Web is spreading and becoming more sophisticated. Continue reading

## **International**

### **Al-Jazeera Launches English-Language Channel**

After years of speculation and delay, the Arabic broadcasting network Al-Jazeera launched an English-language news channel, Al-Jazeera English (AJE), on Nov. 15, 2006. Continue reading

## **FCC Update**

### **Broadcasters Challenge Indecency Standards**

Television networks and the creative guilds continue to fight the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) over indecency standards and the fines assessed to violators. Continue reading

## **Broadcasting News**

### **Public Broadcasting Facing Drastic Budget Cuts**

President George W. Bush proposed steep budget cuts for public broadcasting in his fiscal year 2008 budget released in February 2007. Continue reading