

emci **now**

THE COLLEGE OF MEDIA, COMMUNICATION
AND INFORMATION MAGAZINE

Spring 2019



University of Colorado **Boulder**

7 Techie
toddlers

21 Images
through the ages

36 Wrangling
Ralphie



Founding Dean Lori Bergen

Field(s) of vision

im·age /'imij/ noun

- a representation of the external form of a person or thing in art
- the general impression that a person, organization or product presents to the public

I'm inspired almost daily when I hear—and see—what CMCI faculty, students and alumni are up to: They're forming new knowledge through research, digging into tough issues and using innovative methods to create media.

You may notice—as we did while this issue of *CMCI Now* was taking shape—how many of the stories in these pages center on images and representations.

In a process he started out of curiosity, **Pat Clark**, an instructor in critical media practices, uses visualization tools to make connections between the world we can see and the world that exists on a much smaller scale. He creates images that appear to be something other than what they are by taking photos and video through a microscope (Page 1).

Alumna and information science PhD student **Jordan Wirfs-Brock (MJour'10)** is studying how to use visualizations and sound to convey complex information (Page 4), and sophomore **Will Brewer** illustrates environmental issues with 3-D images (Page 12).

As part of Carnegie-Knight News21, a national reporting initiative that brings together top journalism students, **Tessa Diestel (Jour'18)** and **Ashley Hopko (Jour'19)** traveled across the country to report on hate crimes, racism and intolerance. They found that telling individual stories through video and multimedia puts a personal face on a difficult topic, and the importance of this work is being recognized. As we were going to press, we learned that the project won a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award in the college category.

"Images can reveal, but they can also conceal," says **Sandra Ristovska**, an assistant professor in media studies. Born in Macedonia in the 1980s and shaped early on by images of the breakup of Yugoslavia, she has dedicated her career as a filmmaker and media scholar to exploring the intersection of visual images and human rights (Page 20).

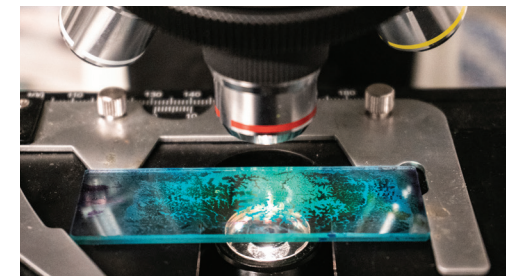
And back to Pat Clark's images. Our magazine cover art, *Blue Landscape*, is not terrain after all, it's molded tissue paper stained with a variety of blue inks. By taking a photo through a bright-field microscope, which has an incredibly shallow depth of field, he produced what looks like a landscape from minute materials and textures. We've included a key for his extraordinary images that appear in View, and you can experience some of the multimedia versions in our online edition at colorado.edu/cmcinow.

As you enjoy this copy of *CMCI Now*, I wonder if these stories might change your image of us. Let us know what you think of the new college, and stay in touch. We'd love to know what's happening in your part of the world.

Warm regards,

Lori Bergen, PhD

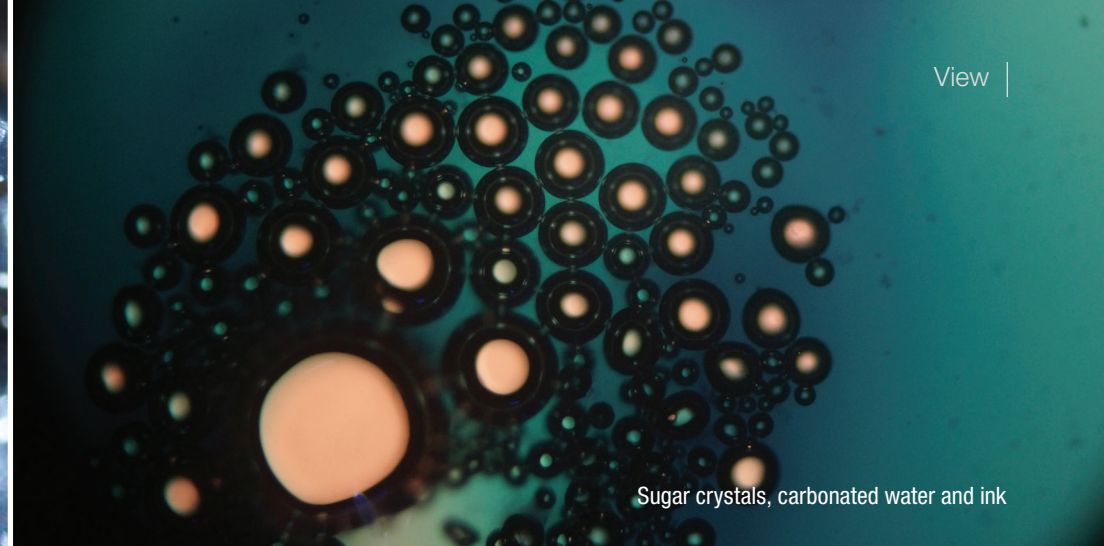
Founding Dean, College of Media, Communication and Information



About the cover *Blue Landscape* was created by Critical Media Practices Instructor Pat Clark as part of his photo series "Microscopy." See View on the facing page for more.

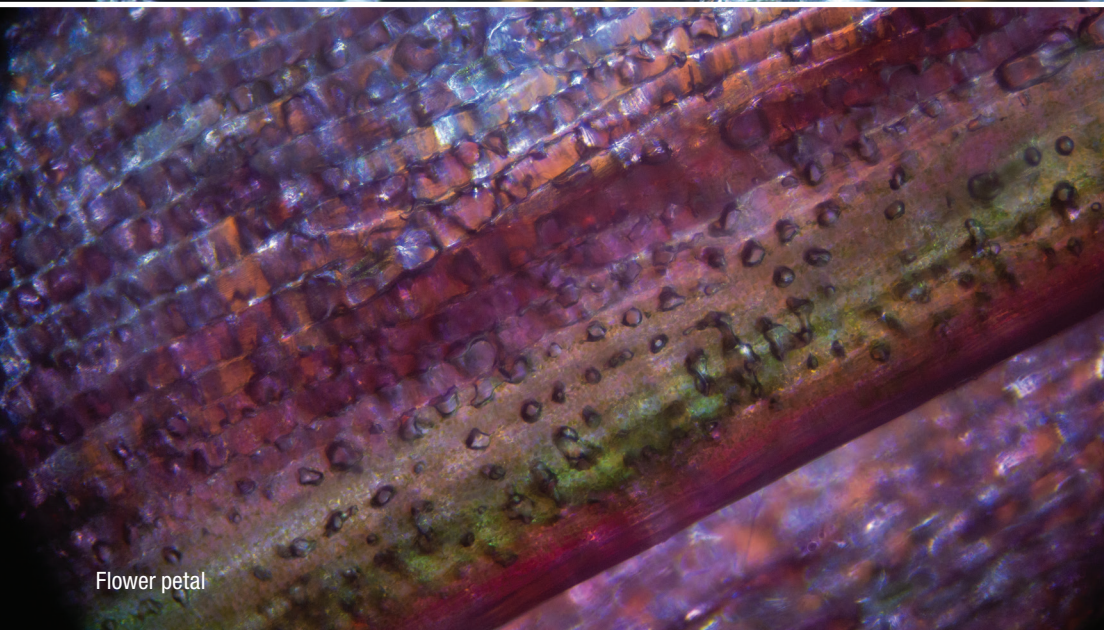


Velcro



View |

Sugar crystals, carbonated water and ink



Flower petal



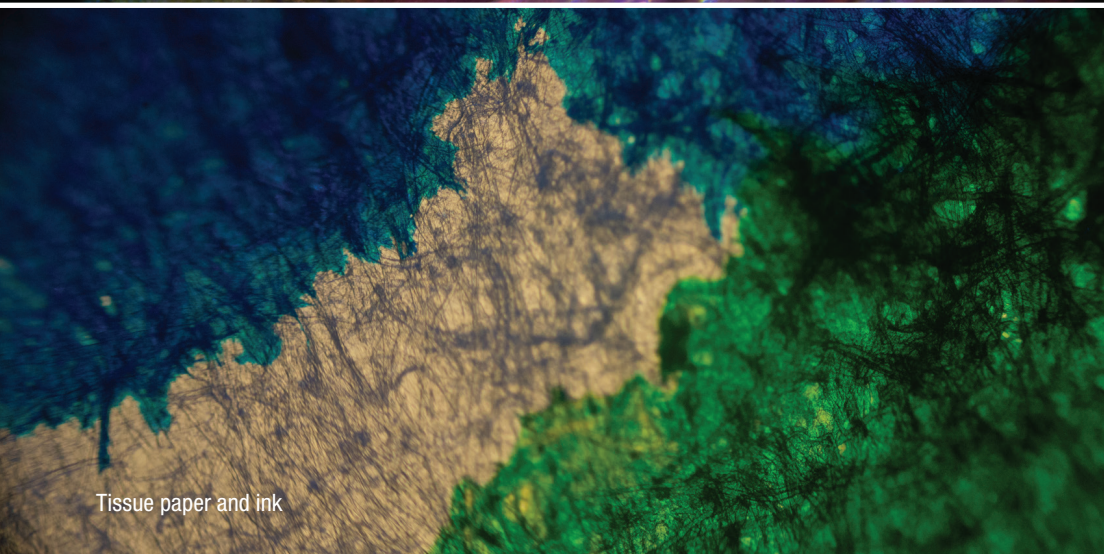
The *small*

Silk and colored gelatin

picture

For the series "Microscopy," Instructor Pat Clark photographed media such as ink, clay, cotton, flower petals and melting ice through a microscope to create technicolor, abstract works of art.

As an instructor in the Department of Critical Media Practices, Clark teaches students to create images for unique visual platforms using emerging techniques. He recently hosted a "Moving Image Microscopy" workshop for students and colleagues, sponsored by CMCI's Nature, Environment, Science and Technology (NEST) Studio for the Arts.



Tissue paper and ink



Ink on glass

OBSERVATION
DECK

NBC STUDIOS



Zoe Beard-Fails (Advert'17) moved to New York City after graduation, where she works as a page at NBC Universal assisting with audience services on *Saturday Night Live*, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* and *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. During her time at CU, she was a forward on the women's basketball team. See Alumni News on Page 33 for additional updates from our alumni—now more than 18,000 strong.

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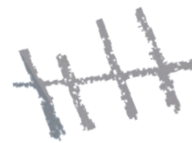
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Dimensions of data

To **Jordan Wirfs-Brock (MJour'10)**, data points on a graph and cascading notes on a piano can tell similar stories.

By Shannon Mullane (MJour'19)

“Once you start thinking about sound and the ways that sound is used to convey information, you’ll notice it everywhere,” says Jordan Wirfs-Brock, an information science doctoral student who explores how audio and visual tools can better connect audiences to data.

After earning a master’s degree in journalism from CU Boulder, Wirfs-Brock worked for three years at Inside Energy. As a journalist often reporting on complicated, data-oriented issues, she kept running into an intriguing question: What is the best way for people to receive and understand complex information?

One solution she found was music to her audience’s ears.

For a story on declining coal production, she created an audio graph on the varying rates of weekly U.S. coal production between 1984 and 2016. Rather than reading off statistics, Wirfs-Brock used notes on a piano to represent the data.

Production spikes are played as high notes, while production lulls are played as low notes. The resulting cascade of sounds rises for the early 2000s, lowers slightly after a peak in 2008, and then dramatically drops after 2015. For 2016, the notes are a series of low, ominous thuds representing a 30-year low in coal production as both coal jobs and companies began to disappear.

As the volume of data people create and collect has grown, data communication has become a rising field with implications for

everything from traditional news stories to home design. It’s a trend that excites Wirfs-Brock and leaves her constantly searching for new ideas and solutions.

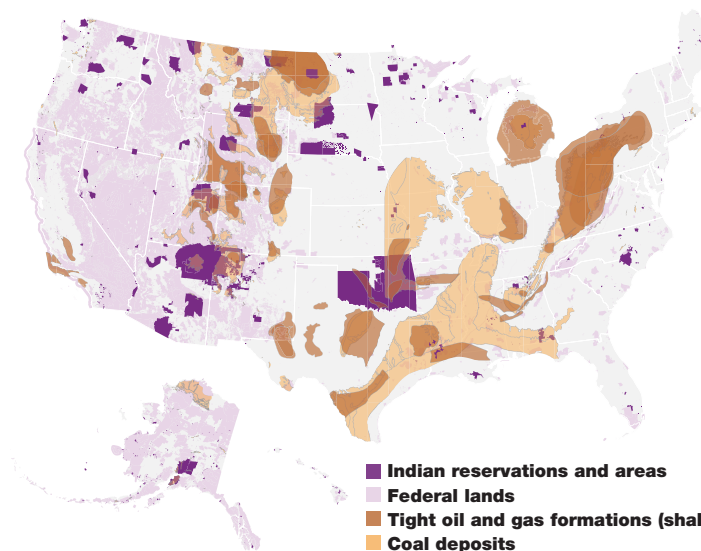
Through new technologies, she says, users could soon hear ambient sound data that tells them how much energy their house is using. Or, they could listen to similar audio graphs while Alexa or Google Home give them their morning news briefing or financial stock update.

“If we’re shooting for the moon, I want to help develop technologies that will lead to a better future of journalism,” she says. “How do we bring data into the conversation in a way that encourages people to ask questions?”

As she imagines the possibilities for audio-based information, Wirfs-Brock is also identifying ways to make information more visually compelling.

In 2018, she won first and third place in the University of Colorado Libraries inaugural data visualization contest, with entries highlighting newsworthy events she had covered in the past.

The first-place winner, “Indian Lands and Fossil Fuel Resources,” was created during the Dakota Access Pipeline protests at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The third-place winner, “Mapping Colorado’s Invisible Pipeline Network,” was an Inside Energy interactive mapping project that showed where oil and gas flowlines might intersect with buildings around Colorado.



Indian Lands and Fossil Fuel Resources

As the United States expanded west, claiming territory across North America, Indian tribes were pushed onto progressively smaller areas of land. Today, Indian reservations comprise 326 separate areas and 56 million acres of land. As shown here, many Indian lands include extensive coal, oil and gas deposits.

The map was a response to a fatal explosion at a home in Firestone, Colorado, caused by leaking gas from an inactive flowline in April 2017.

Wirfs-Brock’s advisor, information science Assistant Professor Brian Keegan, says he’s fascinated by the range of skills she uses to communicate information.

One day, she is scraping data or writing code for websites and interactive tools, and the next she is drawing on her experience as a journalist to spot newsworthy topics and conduct participant interviews, he says. Then, with her sense of design, Wirfs-Brock can take that information and create an engaging visual experience for an audience.

“I wish I knew what her secret sauce was that let her pull all these different strengths

together,” he says. “I think people like Jordan are poised to be the leaders, to set the agenda for what journalism can be as it starts to happen . . . beyond the screen, beyond the paper.”

According to Wirfs-Brock, the interdisciplinary nature of information science is part of what drew her to the field in the first place. It’s an area where she can combine her varied qualitative, quantitative and design skill sets—a balance she has sought for years.

“If you’re someone like me who has lots of eclectic interests, you’re probably not going to see a job description that just describes you. But that shouldn’t deter you from going after it.” ■



#TomboyCulture

By Stephanie Cook (MJour'18)

Search for Title IX and you'll find a landmark federal civil rights law passed in 1972. Search for the term "title nine," however, and the top result will likely be a national chain of women's athletic clothing stores.

Legally, the implications of Title IX—which established new requirements for gender inclusivity in federally funded educational programs—were broad. Publicly, the law is known mainly for one thing: allowing women in sports.

As women growing up with Title IX took to fields, courts and arenas, the trend became woven into the fabric of society. Sporty girls became known as "tomboys," a term that fascinates Jamie Skerski, senior instructor in the Department of Communication.

"That's my generation, that's Mia Hamm's generation," Skerski says. "For the first time, you have a generation of women who benefit from Title IX, and in the 1990s, imagery of sporty girls explodes in popular culture. Books and movies depicting athletic girls went mainstream."

Originally, "tomboy" described a young boy who was out of control or didn't conform to polite culture. Later, it shifted to describe unruly women. The modern incarnation is a young girl who is biologically female but prefers the activities we associate with boyhood, Skerski says.

"They exhibit gender behaviors that we associate with masculinity," she says. "That used to be seeking education or wanting to wear pants, and now, because of Title IX—because girls and women have had more opportunities in athletics and sports—tomboy has come to mean athletic girl."

The word "girl" is important, as society's acceptance of tomboys almost always has an expiration date.

"Most narratives have tomboys trading in their soccer cleats for high heels in the end," Skerski says. "It's a way to discipline that rebellion. You can do it, but popular culture says this isn't a permanent status. You should grow out of it."

At TEDxUCU in 2018, Skerski presented the talk "Tomboys and Gender Rebellion," inspired in part by students in her senior seminar on gender and rhetoric, whom she'd asked to present gender collages.

"I had not even talked about tomboys at this point in the semester, but I heard, over and over again, 'Here was my tomboy stage.' It was all about freedom—freedom of dress, freedom of being strong—until you hit that junior high-middle school adolescence," she says. "When I heard it coming out of my students' mouths, I was like, 'Wow, it's cultural, it's personal, it's on an identity level as well as a narrative level.'"

As industries from entertainment to fashion embrace—and profit from—tomboys, Skerski warns that they often rob tomboys of an essential function: gender rebellion.

"You get sexy tomboy or pretty tomboy," she says. "It's becoming more of a normative, dominant kind of identity rather than that rebellious woman or girl."

#TechieToddlers

Many toddlers can unlock a phone screen before they can walk or talk in full sentences. Some preschoolers open cartoons on YouTube or take selfies before they can hop on one foot or pedal a bicycle.

Digital native kids approach media differently from their digital immigrant parents, says Art Bamford, a PhD student in the Department of Media Studies who co-wrote the book *Every Parent's Guide to Navigating Our Digital World*, published in 2018.

"If you have those early formative experiences in one sort of media environment, then you carry a lot of that baggage," he says.

For Generation Alpha and Generation Z kids, new technologies present possibilities and challenges their parents couldn't have anticipated.

"One thing I've thought a lot about since writing the book is data collection," he says. "The sooner kids are on social media, the sooner that's being collected."

Advertisers, who gear messaging specifically toward adolescents, pose another issue.

"Adolescence is this identity-forming period, where you're figuring out who you are separate from your family," Bamford says. "When I was that age, I'd be really into hip-hop for a while, then I'd be really into indie rock. You're trying stuff out and things are changing. But if every time you go onto Facebook or Google or Instagram, the ads that you see—because they're based on your search history—are about hip-hop, then you'd think, 'I guess I'm really into hip-hop.'"

Because many parents rely on a model set by their own parents, dramatic shifts in technology can leave them feeling lost, but it's normal to feel that way, Bamford says.

"I'd just remind parents that it is new—there's a lot of new questions and challenges, and they shouldn't think they've got to figure it out right out of the gate," he says. "And when they do trial and error and start to figure some stuff out, share that with parents who have younger kids."

#MiningForKnowledge

What can kids learn from building up and breaking down blocks?

It's a question that speaks to the past and future of education.

In 1798, Maria and R.L. Edgeworth made one of the earliest known references to toy blocks in their book *Practical Education*, calling blocks "rational toys" that could be used to teach kids about gravity and physics.

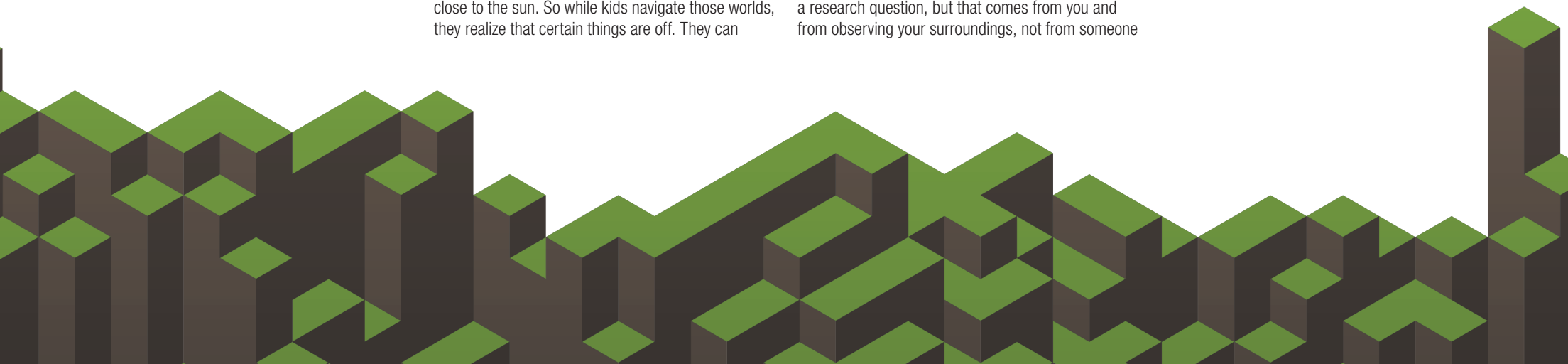
In 2019, Jorge Perez-Gallego—scholar-in-residence at CMCI's Nature, Environment, Science and Technology Studio for the Arts—is co-principal investigator of a project that uses the block-based video game Minecraft to teach children about the same things.

"Physics works in the world of Minecraft, and you can actually dictate what works and what doesn't," Perez-Gallego says. "We created worlds in which we have two moons, or no moon at all, or we're really close to the sun. So while kids navigate those worlds, they realize that certain things are off. They can

notice that, and they start asking 'why' questions." For the project, funded by the National Science Foundation, Perez-Gallego creates digital worlds that present "what if" scenarios. In research terms, he is providing kids with an informal learning environment: an educational setting where there is no defined task or goal, other than to be curious and explore.

"When you become a scientist, no one's telling you what to do. You're out navigating the world and trying to make sense of it. You might come up with a research question, but that comes from you and from observing your surroundings, not from someone

telling you what the question is," he says. "In a way, we're just taking their hands and walking them through a space that they can explore freely. At the end of the day, that's what science is."



HATE IN AMERICA

Students travel the country to investigate hate

By Stephanie Cook (MJour'18)

Ashley Hopko (Jour'19) surveyed the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, landscape as 93-year-old Ellie Dahmer sat in a chair nearby. The two chatted about gardening. Dahmer loves blue flowers, she told Hopko. They remind her of her husband.

A leader in the civil rights movement and former president of the Forrest County, Mississippi, chapter of the NAACP, Vernon Dahmer—Ellie's husband—died of smoke inhalation in 1966 after the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan firebombed the family's farm in the middle of the night. As Vernon exchanged gunshots with members of the Klan, Ellie and three of their children escaped through a window. Ellie rebuilt a home on the same land and still lives there more than five decades later.

Over the summer, Hopko and other students interviewed Ellie and her daughter, Bettie, as part of the Carnegie-Knight News21 fellowship program. Afterward, the group toured the still-operational Dahmer farm.

"They'd just walked us through this event that ultimately lost them their husband and dad," Hopko says. "It was almost a story of recovery, how they've moved on with their life and family business. It was overwhelming."

Based at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Carnegie-Knight News21 is a national reporting initiative that brings together top journalism students from across the country to produce in-depth reporting and multimedia

projects for major media outlets, including *The Washington Post*, NBC News and *USA Today*.

As fellows in the program, CMCI students Hopko and Tessa Diestel (Jour'18) worked with 36 other students from 19 universities to report on hate crimes, racism and intolerance in 36 states. The result is an ambitious project called *Hate in America*, which includes a feature-length documentary, longform stories, a blog, a podcast, data analysis and photo stories. The team also collaborated with ProPublica on its Documenting Hate project, and with the Anti-Defamation League.

Diestel compared the experience to a bootcamp. In 10 weeks, she co-produced the documentary *American Hate* while conducting interviews and shooting video footage in California, Oregon and Florida. The experience was emotionally charged and logistically challenging.

In Los Angeles, she reported on the murder of Vicky Gutierrez, a Latina transwoman who was stabbed and burned in her own home.

"My team and I visited her apartment a few months after this happened, and it was still charred and being cleaned out," Diestel says. "It was difficult to stand outside and look at her apartment and think about the horrific way that she died."

On another assignment, in downtown Portland, Oregon, Diestel and four other students filmed a clash between supporters of the far-right group Patriot Prayer and anti-fascists.



Top: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Hate Crime Coordinator Christopher Keeling speaks with fellows at his office. Photo by News21 fellow Angel Mendoza.

Center: News21 fellows Angel Mendoza and Tessa Diestel prepare their shot while filming in Los Angeles, California. Photo by News21 fellow Brendan Campbell.

Bottom: News21 fellows Ashley Hopko and Justin Parham conduct an interview with Alex Monsour, the South Ward alderman of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Photo by News21 fellow Alexis Egeland.



“We believe these stories are important and can have a bigger impact, if only they get told.”

“I found that it was very difficult to interview anyone who was protesting because they did not want to be on camera, show their face or tell me their real name,” she says.

Hopko conducted interviews throughout Mississippi and in rural Texas. She spoke with sources who’d been impacted by hate, or who identified with a range of social groups and ideologies, including an antifeminist classified as an “alt-right mommy,” undocumented and documented Latino immigrants, and families whose lives had been torn apart by the KKK.

“I still don’t understand why people have such extreme hate in their hearts for certain groups of people, but one thing that did surprise me: They’re still humans, and they still share certain traits of humanity that everyone else does,” she says.

Her work on the project also put her face to face with a former KKK grand wizard, and the experience was far different from her expectations.

“One thing that was eye opening and slightly startling for me to realize is that people’s personalities are extraordinarily complex,” she says. “It’s impossible to stereotype a person. Just because they’re friendly and outgoing and have a compassionate personality doesn’t mean they might not be extremely racist or have biased beliefs that don’t align with what you might see when you first meet them.”

The students also met with groups working to stem hate and aid victims.

Hopko spoke to people from the Southern Poverty Law Center and Anti-Defamation League, and Diestel interviewed officials from the Guatemalan-Maya Center in Palm Beach County, Florida; the TransLatin@ coalition, based in Los Angeles, California; and the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department Hate Crime unit.

For Hopko, the fellowship was far more emotional and fulfilling than she’d anticipated, and it shaped the type of work she hopes to do after graduating this spring, she says.

“This was a total career shift for me, and I’m walking out of this with a renewed passion for the industry and enthusiasm for my future,” she says. “Before this, I didn’t think I wanted to do anything nearly as investigative, but I kind of fell in love with it during the program.”

Diestel, who graduated and works as a social media manager while pursuing a career in broadcast journalism, agrees that the experience was formative.

“With a project like this, I think it’s difficult to walk away from it without the people and their stories impacting you,” she says. “After all, that’s why we do it. We believe these stories are important and can have a bigger impact, if only they get told.” ■

Anna Blanco (Jour’19) contributed to this story.



Top: Tessa Diestel adjusts the lighting while she and Brendan Campbell prepare to interview Maria Roman, a board member of the TransLatin@ Coalition and friend of Viccky Gutierrez. Photo by Angel Mendoza.

Center: Tessa Diestel interviews Tim Gamwell, director of the Guatemalan-Maya Center in West Palm Beach, Florida. Photo by Angel Mendoza.

Bottom: Ashley Hopko and Alexis Egeland conduct an interview. Photo by Justin Parham.





Supreme Dreams

Serene Singh isn't working toward a career—she's working toward a movement.

A senior studying journalism and political science, her mission is distinct: to help others develop the same sense of confidence and courage that propels her into uncharted territory.

"I believe so recklessly and relentlessly in my dreams," she said while speaking at a CU Boulder NEXT event in Denver last January.

This year, Singh became the first woman in university history and the first CU Boulder student in 25 years to earn a Rhodes Scholarship to attend graduate school at Oxford University in England. She's also a Colorado Boettcher Scholar and the winner of a Truman Scholarship, granted to college students who show a commitment to public service leadership.

"Her leadership skills are rooted in the notion of helping others rise along with her, which I deeply admire," says Assistant Professor Ross Taylor, who has taught Singh in several of his journalism classes.

Singh began her college career as a political science major to prepare for law school. After taking a video editing class with Taylor, she added journalism as a major. She found that classes on video editing and visual storytelling gave her technical skills to back up her natural strengths—a lesson she first learned as a head editor of Rampart High School's weekly student newscast, *KRAM*.

"I had to tap into my strengths at that time and say, 'I don't really know how to edit, I don't know programs, but I do know public speaking. I do know how to write a good story. I do know how to phrase things in a way that make sense to the heart,'" says Singh, who grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In and out of class, Singh has leveraged her interests—from journalism to political science to public speaking—to forge her own path. In doing so, she's found ways to support others, as well.

In 2012, Singh, who is Sikh American and whose parents are from India, founded the Colorado Bhangra dance team with two other students. Later, she founded the Serenity Project, a nonprofit that aims to build confidence in young

Pictured: Singh presents at a CU Boulder NEXT event in Denver.

women through beauty pageants and mentorship. Her experiences building inclusive spaces, especially for women and ethnic and religious minorities, have influenced her worldview. In summer 2016, while interning with Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., in Washington, D.C., she noticed that policies designed to help women in need often lack representation or contributions from the groups they're geared toward.

"I was constantly going to briefings about foster care, about education, about domestic abuse, about human trafficking," she says. "I noticed, whenever they were talking about women's issues, very few times were women in the room."

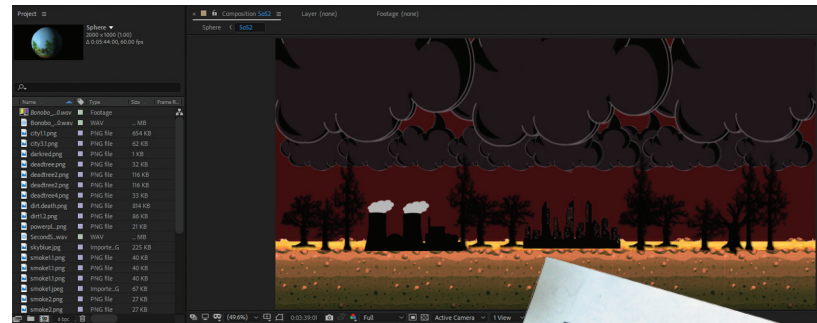
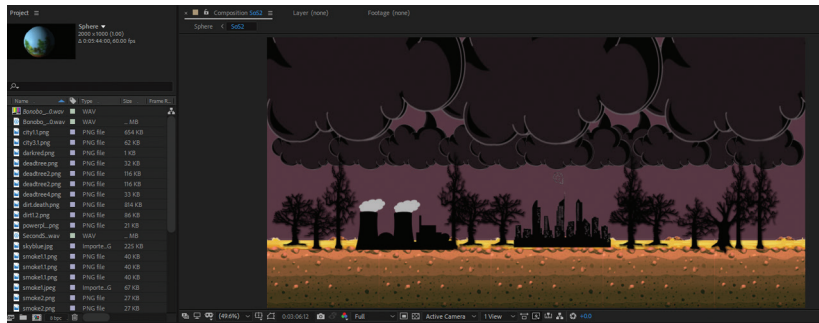
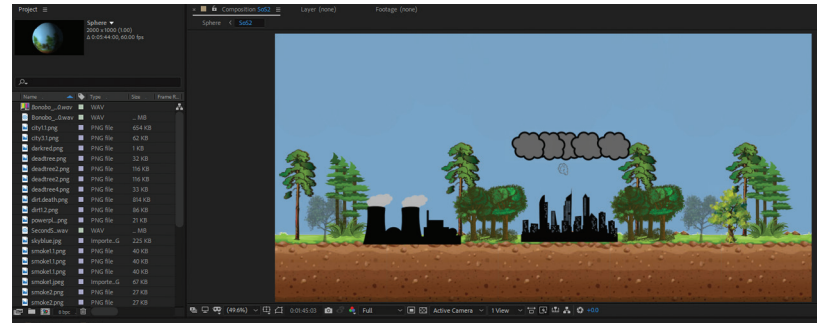
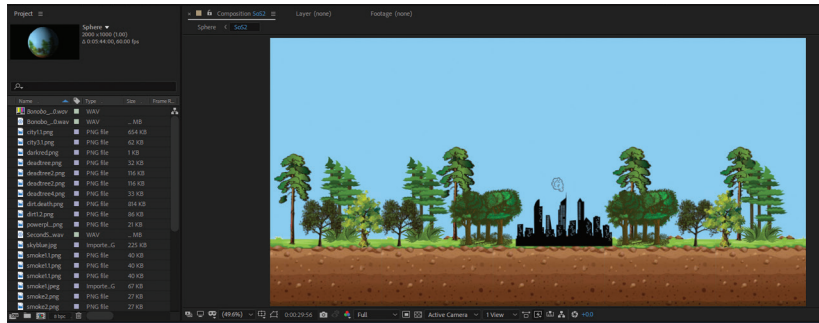
Singh, who also serves as chief justice of the CU Student Government, ultimately hopes to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

"No American of South Asian heritage has sat on the nation's highest court," she says. "I want our government to look more like our country in every single sense of the word."

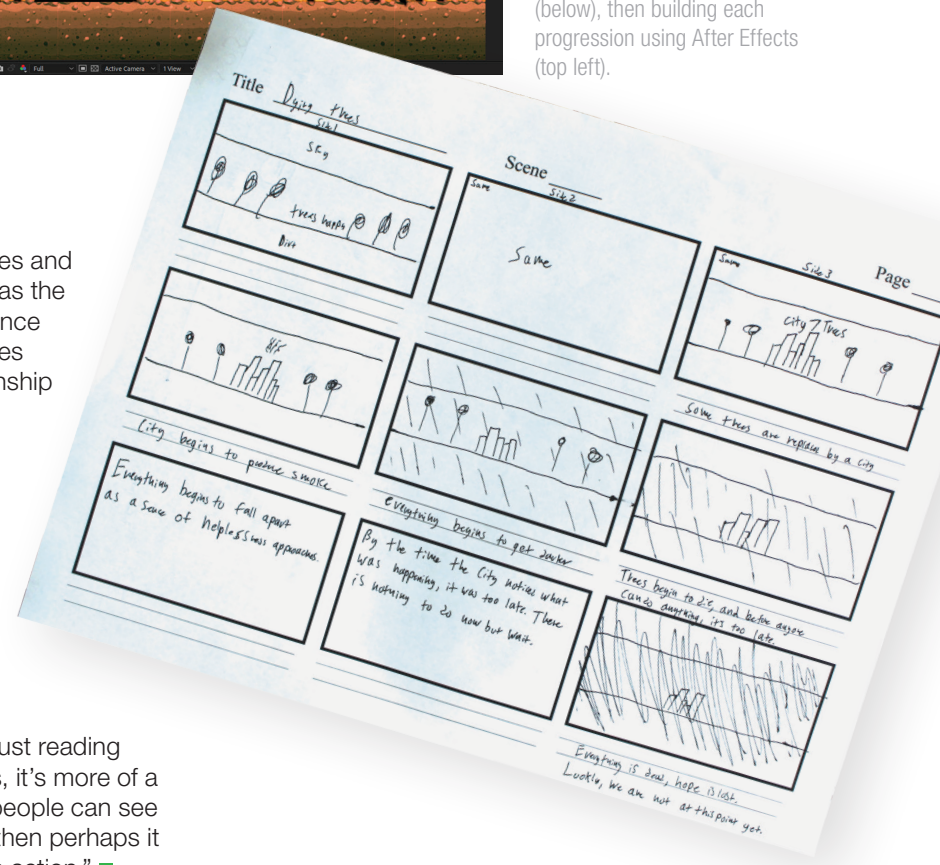


New spin on narrative arc

By Malinda Miller (Engl, Jour'92; MJour'98)



Sophomore Will Brewer created a visualization for NOAA's global display system (Page 12) by sketching ideas on a storyboard (below), then building each progression using After Effects (top left).



Moving images of a forest against blue sky wrap around a 6-foot-diameter sphere at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder. In a slow progression, factories appear in the sea of trees, the sky darkens, and the upbeat music becomes increasingly somber as evidence of human encroachment takes over the visuals.

“There’s something special about moving around a 3-D space, or seeing it move around you, that makes it seem more real,” says Will Brewer, a critical media practices student who created the display for his Immersive Storytelling class.

Brewer hopes that the unique storytelling platform will reach people who wouldn’t otherwise pay attention to environmental issues or take action. “This class has shown me the possibilities of storytelling using multiple senses.”

Pat Clark, an instructor in the departments of Critical Media Practices and Journalism, works with students on how

to communicate using new visual perspectives and platforms for immersive environments, such as the dome at Fiske Planetarium and NOAA’s Science on a Sphere program. “This project challenges students to think differently about the relationship between content and visual presentation.”

Students in the 15-person class created storyboards, built the visualizations on flat screens using the digital program Adobe After Effects, and then tested them at NOAA’s SOS facility—a room-sized, global display system that uses computers and video projectors to display data and images in 3-D.

“It’s a different way of showing it; instead of just reading words on a paper and going by the numbers, it’s more of a feeling than anything else,” Brewer says. “If people can see something, and feel something, and hear it, then perhaps it will resonate with them more and provoke an action.” ■



Actor Pat Finn teaches students improv games in his class, Improv for Strategic Communication.

“Yes, and...”

“Zip, zap, zop!” “Zip, zap, zop!”

The sound bounces around the classroom as students call out the words in order. A fellow student’s pointed finger prompts the next turn. “Zip, zap”

In Improv for Strategic Communication, taught by actor and improv aficionado Pat Finn, students learn the same games that he and other comedians—including *Saturday Night Live* alumni going back decades—play to prepare for the stage.

Finn, who lives in Los Angeles and teaches the special topics course over two weekends, has appeared on *Friends*, *Seinfeld* and, most recently, *The Middle*. He started his career in improv comedy with The Second City troupe and at Chicago’s famed iO Theater, and is the co-founder of Improv-Ability, a company that incorporates improvisation in the business world.

“The columns that are the temple of improv are amazing things that will help you whether you’re a banker, a nurse, a scientist—anything,” says Finn, whose daughter Caitlin is a senior studying communication at CMCI and whose daughter Cassidy (Comm’17) recently graduated. “In almost any career, people want somebody who’s a better listener, a better collaborator, a better team player who is not averse to failure.”

Improv actors use these columns—or guidelines—to keep scenes going without a script.

The first lesson is to say, “Yes, and,” whenever they’re presented with a new idea.

Erin Baptiste (StratComm’18), who took Finn’s class as a senior studying advertising and now works at a record label, applies the “yes, and” concept in meetings.

“If you don’t like someone’s idea to begin with and you say no, they might not come to you with *the* idea later on,” Baptiste says. “And in a creative world, that’s what you’re always looking for, *the* idea.”

Focusing on making others look good is also central, Finn says, to creating a better overall environment.

“You see business people who are very ‘my idea’ oriented, and don’t really open their minds or even ears to understanding or hearing another person’s idea because they’re so locked on theirs,” he says. “The thing about improv is, it won’t work unless you do. You have to make the other person look good, and thereby the scene gets created. It’s like Jenga.”

The class changed how Kimberly Coffin (CritMedia, StratComm’18) views brainstorming.

“With video and other creative projects, a lot of what you’re doing is playing off of other people’s ideas,” she says. “Now I see a clear connection to how improv helps you thrive in a creative world.” ■

Water Desk makes a splash

An initiative based in CMCI's Center for Environmental Journalism will strengthen water journalism through original content, support for journalists, public engagement, and education. The Water Desk, funded by a two-year, \$700,000 grant from the Walton Family Foundation, is dedicated to boosting coverage of Western water issues, with a focus on the Colorado River Basin. The goal is to help educate the public and inform policy decisions.

"Some 40 million people in the United States and Mexico draw water from the basin, and the region is confronting unprecedented challenges managing its most precious natural resource," says Professor Tom Yulsman, director of the CEJ.

Students in Yulsman's class Reporting on the Environment focused on water issues last spring, and CU News Corps—an investigative journalism capstone course—will do so in the fall.

Pictured is the Lake Mead "bathtub ring" in Nevada, where a white ring reveals how far water levels have sunk.



FOR INSPIRATION

A professor's advice on how to stoke your **CREATIVE FIRE** when you're drowning in the day-to-day

Essay and photos by Jeff Curry,
Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design visiting professor

Raja Ampat, Indonesia. July 2018.

A divemaster returns to the surface for the third time, still less than satisfied with the location where the 10 of us are about to enter the water. Back on the boat, he quickly finishes suiting up and tells us that, because of the dangerous current, we'll need to do a "negative descent."

A seriousness takes over the group as we now have seconds before flipping backward into the ocean.

"Negative descent?" I ask.

The answer: Race to the bottom, greatly expediting the usual scuba ritual of gradually equalizing—what one does to prevent one's head from feeling like it's going to explode.

This is my fifth dive at Raja Ampat. It's considered the Amazon of the ocean for its extreme biodiversity, but I'm still too busy getting used to the advanced nature of diving here to bring my brand new, giant, underwater camera rig down with me.

Most serious underwater photographers are solid divers first. I'm a novice at all of this except for the taking pictures part—on land, anyway.

I've found that in order to grow, I have to go into the unknown.

I came to Indonesia for a water-based photo adventure—to see and shoot unique sea creatures and the most pristine coral reef systems on the planet, brave big surf for dramatic wave shots, and orchestrate an evocative production involving statuesque freedivers.

It had been three years since my last dedicated art mission, and I needed one.

I have more than 25 years invested in the design and advertising world. For others with a similar ambition, know that you're expected to have several creative ideas each day.



With so much to see and focus on in the underwater world of Raja Ampat, it's easy to forget to look up. You're never alone here—at least seven schools of fish can be identified in this image.



From left:
Java's massive Tengger volcanic complex—a tight grouping of five active volcanoes—one of which has over 50 documented eruptions.

A handsome hairy frogfish spotted while muck diving in the Lembeh Strait. Some of Earth's most alien creatures live here.

One of the experimental freediver-mermaid images. The challenges of underwater styling presented opportunities.

Is this possible day in and day out? Some days it's easier than others. A big part of the job is staying inspired.

To do my best work, I've realized it's critical to look outside of the j.o.b. Fifteen years into my career, I began to feel drained and started to seriously doubt my own creative abilities. I contemplated several remedies, some more extreme than others. The demands of the job were relentless, but I had to get my creative mojo back.

Inklings and insights can come from anywhere. Creatives need regular infusions of those. Sustained inspiration is something different. The experience that comes from regularly engaging in creative or artistic pursuits resonates. It changes you.

It turns out my struggle at the agency was the genesis of an entirely new creative obsession: making art and sharing it in galleries.

For the last decade, I've relied heavily on extracurricular creative pursuits for inspiration. The result has been wide-ranging art shows: *Untotaled*—sculptural photography that involved crushing cars; *Zoom*—impressionistic, painterly photography of the natural world; and *Eternal*—an evocative shoot in an Indiana-Jones-like site in India.

These projects aren't linked by common themes. I've been asked if I'm drawn to ideas because they're complicated or if I'm just determined to make them that way. My goal, like

nearly every other creator, is to make unique things. That often creates complexity. For me, creative growth is the prime motivator.

I traveled to many points in Indonesia, but the greatest opportunity for me to create material for a new show came in Amed, Bali. I went there to work with impressive athlete-models who practice freediving. Some refer to themselves as mermaids. I knew if I could pull it off, the resulting work had the potential to be empowering and beautiful.

I aspired to capture their grace and power, soaring in an infinite liquid world. I wanted to play with the perception of gravity and space.

For most of us, freediving is just plain crazy. The goal is to push to go deeper and deeper into the dark, cold water on a single breath of air. The most important thing, I'm told, is to relax and "resist the urge to breathe." I'll bet most humans would agree, being more than 100 feet underwater and wanting a breath you cannot yet take is about the scariest thing imaginable.

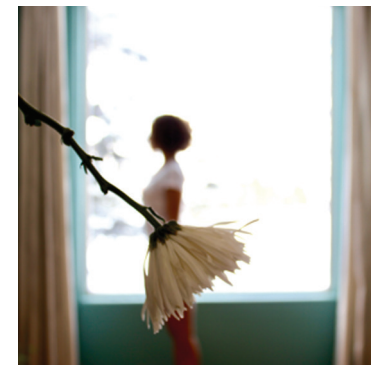
I was to be on scuba, but I had no experience directing models underwater. It's difficult and potentially dangerous. There were too many variables for me to anticipate, let alone control in a production like this, like the magnitude 7 earthquake that rocked the island in the middle of the shoot.



Solid glass blocks from Curry's *Untoaled* show. Cars were collected, crushed into cubes, and then photographed from all six sides to create the imagery for this "sculptural photography."



Curry asked his students to bring in their own creative passion work. Clockwise from top: Blair Astrop, Graciela Robertson and Abigail Cotter.



We shot for three days in stunning Jemeluk Bay. Sharing the images daily with the models proved essential. Their enthusiasm grew as did their awareness of how they looked through my camera. We dialed in the plan on land and again on the surface, but the models were great improvisers, taking turns diving down to my location and beyond, surprising me time and again with their creativity, athletic prowess and control.

The second evening, we were together reviewing images when the building began to shake. Hundreds of people died 50 miles away, and Amed suffered some damage. While our group wasn't harmed, we felt our nerves kick in as the aftershocks continued for days. A crazy energy took over the project as we created some of our best images of the shoot.

I took more than 10,000 photos during my six weeks in Indonesia. Simply being there was rejuvenating and inspiring—but for me, the full-on act of planning, connecting, coordinating, adapting and creating feeds my soul and makes me who I am.

Days after landing in the United States, I returned to Boulder for fall classes. It was definitely my most fulfilling semester to date.

As a rule, I ask students to share their outside art interests and where they find creative inspiration. We talk about it regularly, but in the final week of my *Creative Concepts* class last fall, I asked the students to really share, as in *bring your art into the classroom*.

Projects ranged from collage and photography, to painting and illustration, calligraphy and tattoo artistry, short films, personal poetry and a beautiful violin solo. From the reactions, I'm sure we were all moved.

Design and advertising students fundamentally understand that creative outlets are important. But beyond doodling, beyond posting phone pics to Instagram, beyond occasionally journaling—a wholehearted investment in one's own creativity will make a career of difference.

I've been lucky, but I've also worked hard for success. Looking back, the extra effort required to produce personal passion projects has been more than worth it. In fact, I'd say that my success as a design leader and as an artist are inextricably linked.

Agency life can be all-consuming. Literally, it can consume all your creative energy, but once you experience the symbiotic effects of creative pursuits enhancing one another, you'll dig deeper and find the energy.

It's not about choosing a creative pursuit that relates to your job. Do things you love, and do them regularly. Keeping the creative fire burning is essential. ■

VIDEO REVOLUTION

Assistant Professor Sandra Ristovska (far left) films the short documentary *Filmmaking for Democracy in Myanmar*, for which she was the cinematographer.

With smartphones and social media fueling a new era of video activism, **Sandra Ristovska** says it's time we give images their due respect.

By Lisa Marshall (Jour, PolSci'94)

"A picture is worth a thousand words." A New York editor coined the phrase in 1911.

But only recently—with the rise of smartphone cameras, social media and citizen journalists who deploy them to expose human rights violations—have we begun to recognize the full potential of images, says media studies Assistant Professor Sandra Ristovska.

"Images have always mattered, but they have traditionally been treated as a sort of illustration on the side—an afterthought," she says. "Today, they are finally being recognized as a valuable mode of information on their own, whether in court or journalism. Because of that, we need to take them more seriously."

Born in Macedonia in the 1980s and shaped early on by images of the breakup of Yugoslavia, the filmmaker and media scholar has dedicated her career to exploring the intersection of visual images and human rights.

In recent years, eyewitness videos have exposed everything from police brutality in the United States to chemical weapons attacks in Syria. They've ignited race riots, swayed international

policy and helped to jail perpetrators of genocide. They have also been co-opted by terrorist groups, misused by news organizations, and faked, Ristovska notes.

She's working with activists, human rights courts, media organizations and future journalists to raise the bar on how images, particularly videos, are vetted and presented.

"We have this very powerful tool in our evidence toolbox now," Ristovska says. "But it's a bit of a Wild West out there."

Telling the untold stories

Ristovska clearly remembers sitting in front of the TV at her home in Macedonia's capital, Skopje, watching as morning cartoons were interrupted by footage of war in nearby Bosnia and Croatia.

"I remember images of refugees fleeing and hospitals being bombed. It sticks with you."

She also remembers her mom's friends baking pies during the NATO bombing of Serbia, 45 minutes from her home. "People learn how to live under these circumstances. To me that was an untold story."

To tell it, she made her way to film school in London and Kansas, and spent her early career making documentaries in Macedonia, Myanmar and elsewhere.

During graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, she began reading about the history of images in human rights activism and noticed a disheartening trend.

Although print journalists took pains to assure accuracy, the same care was not taken with images.

Holocaust photos were routinely mislabeled. The first photojournalism program wasn't launched until 1946. And it wasn't until the 1963

Images through **the ages**



1888

The Kodak camera was unveiled. Missionaries quickly used it to expose "crimes against humanity"—a term they coined—in the Belgian Congo.

1945

Photos of prisoners in concentration camps alerted the world to the Holocaust, but they often lacked captions or were mislabeled.

1948



The United Nations General Assembly drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A year later, UNESCO organized a traveling Human Rights Exhibition of photos.

1991

The Rodney King beating launched a new era of video-driven human rights activism.





2011

The Arab Uprising: Egyptian activists take to the streets, filming with their smartphones and broadcasting video internationally via social media.

2017

The International Criminal Court issues an arrest warrant for an alleged military commander in Libya based solely on social media video evidence.

2018

Eyewitness video shows hospitalized children being treated after a chemical weapons attack in Syria.

2018

Filmmaker Jordan Peele releases a fake video of former President Barack Obama making a speech. It turns out to be a public service announcement warning that videos can be manipulated.



“Images can reveal but they can also conceal. We have to learn how to live with that and not necessarily demand more from them than they can give.”

assassination of John F. Kennedy that people began to view TV as a legitimate news source.

Then, in 1991, a man holding a camcorder captured footage of four Los Angeles police officers savagely beating 25-year-old Rodney King. Millions of viewers at home soon saw the footage on TV.

A new era of video activism was born.

The power of video

For research, Ristovska has watched hundreds of hours of hard-to-witness footage. One video has stuck with her.

It's July 1995 in Srebrenica, Bosnia, where Bosnian Serbs killed 8,000 Bosnian Muslims that summer.

The grainy footage shows an armed paramilitary group forcing young men out of a truck and onto the ground. One young man looks back and quietly pleads: “But, sir. Please, sir. Please.”

Then the boys are marched into the woods and shot in the back.

“It's chilling to not only see these men in this horrible situation but also hear those words,” she says. “A photo couldn't do that.”

The video served as evidence in the trial of Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and was aired internationally, spreading word of the genocide.

Today, with such footage more accessible via smartphones, groups like WITNESS and Human Rights Watch actively train people to film in a way that will have the most impact in the media or courtroom.

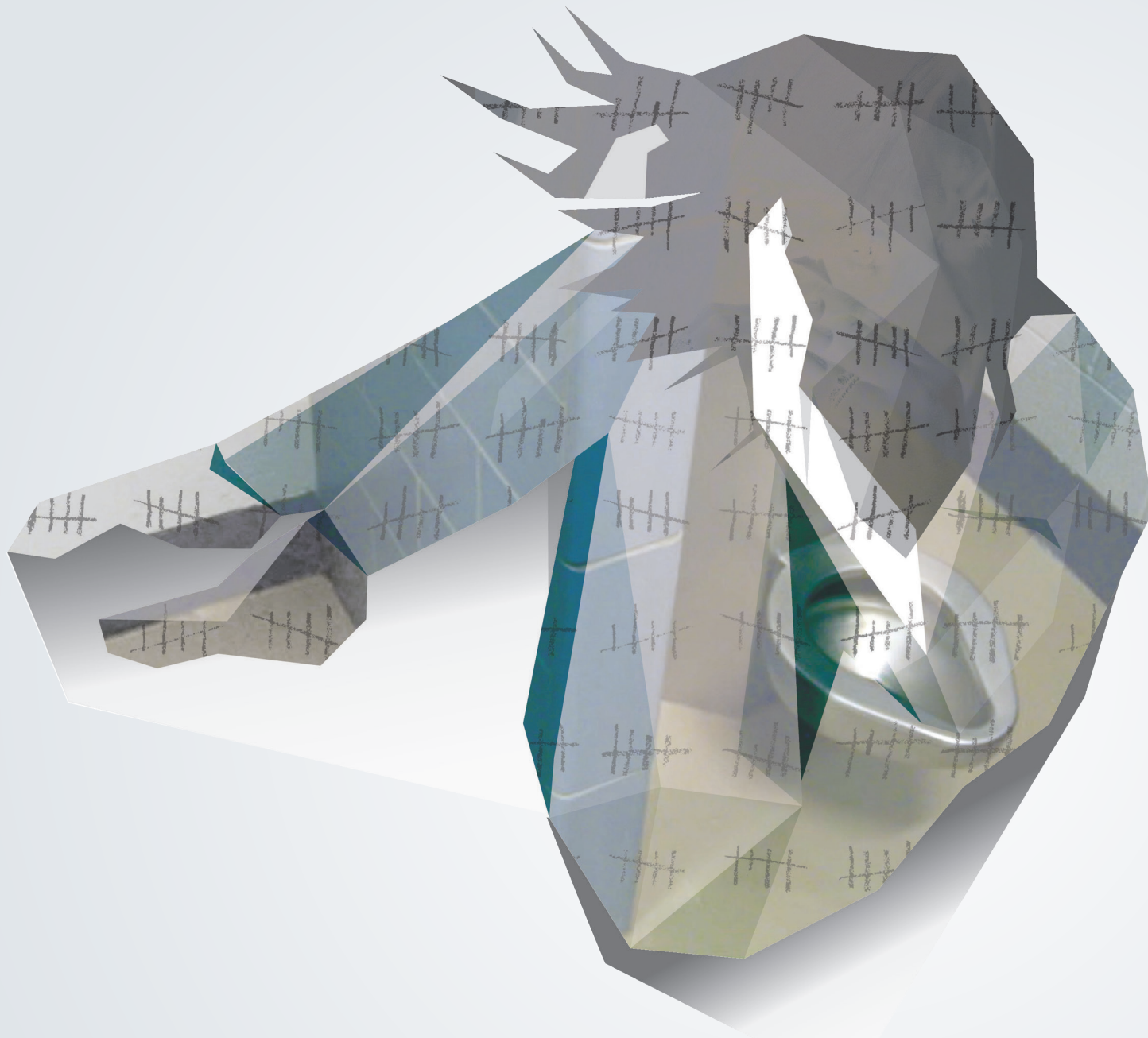
But with this revolution has come a challenge: How does one assure the video is what it says it is?

“Whether it is TV satire or Netflix films, we are always responding to images and looking to them to tell us about the world. But the news does the least good job at engaging with those images responsibly,” says Barbie Zelizer, director of the Center for Media at Risk. “That is the dilemma, and Sandra's work targets it spot on. She is fearless.”

Through her books, *Visual Imagery and Human Rights Practice* and *Seeing Human Rights: Video Activism as a Proxy Profession*, Ristovska argues that news organizations and courts need to do more to verify accuracy (cross-checking against satellite imagery, street views or geotagged photos), give credit to those who shot them and not overstate their meaning.

She tells her students the same thing: “Images can reveal but they can also conceal. We have to learn how to live with that and not necessarily demand more from them than they can give.” ■

Photo of Kodak No. 1 by Rick Soloway/Flickr



In Conversation: *JAILED*
WITHOUT JUSTICE

By Malinda Miller (Engl, Jour'92; MJour'98) and Chuck Plunkett

Al Nakkula Award for Police Reporting

Each spring since 1991, the Department of Journalism at the College of Media, Communication and Information and the Denver Press Club have honored the late Al Nakkula, a 46-year veteran of the *Rocky Mountain News* whose tenacity made him a legendary police reporter. Nakkula died in 1990.

The award is for work produced by a reporter or reporting team in print and/or online platforms in the United States the previous year.

The first-place prize is \$2,000, and the winner is invited to speak to classes and accept the award at the annual Denver Press Club's Damon Runyon dinner.

A full listing of past winners and entry guidelines are at colorado.edu/cmci/thenakaward.

- 2019 | Gary Harki "Jailed in Crisis" *The Virginian-Pilot*
- 2018 | Topher Sanders and Ben Conarck "Walking While Black" ProPublica, *Florida Times Union*
- 2017 | Jennifer Bjorhus and Kelly Smith "A Cry for Help" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*
- 2016 | Ken Armstrong, T. Christian Miller "An Unbelievable Story of Rape" The Marshall Project, ProPublica
- 2015 | Brad Heath "Fugitives Next Door" *USA Today*
- 2014 | Megan O'Matz and John Maines "Cops, Cash, Cocaine" *South Florida Sun Sentinel*
- 2013 | Ryan Gabrielson "Broken Shield" Center for Investigative Reporting's California Watch
- 2012 | Gina Barton "Both Sides of the Law" *The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*
- 2011 | Cris Barrish "Dr. Earl Bradley Sex Abuse Case" *The News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware
- 2010 | Mark Puente "Undue Force" *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio

In 2015, 24-year-old Jamycheal Mitchell—who had schizophrenia and bipolar disorder—stole a Zebra cake and Mountain Dew from a convenience store in Norfolk, Virginia. Police arrested him on April 22, 2015, and about four months later, on August 19, he was found dead in his jail cell.

The case brought up a lot of questions for reporter **Gary Harki**, who covered it for *The Virginian-Pilot* and won the 2018 Al Nakkula Award for Police Reporting, co-sponsored by CMCI's Department of Journalism and the Denver Press Club.

As he learned more about Mitchell's case, Harki was left with as many questions as answers.

"Why was this guy in jail for so long? He wouldn't have gotten that much time had he been tried and convicted," he wondered. "It was that small of a case, but he was caught in this criminal justice system that is not prepared to handle people that have his type of illness."

Harki decided to look for similar cases, both locally and nationally. To his surprise, he found dozens of other cases throughout the country that were just as troubling. His attempt to build a more comprehensive investigation revealed another issue: No agencies or individuals collected the information necessary to document the extent of the problem.

After some urging by his editor, Harki applied for, and was awarded, the O'Brien Fellowship in Public Service Journalism at Marquette University. The opportunity allowed him to spend the 2017–18 school year working with Marquette students to further his study. With Harki's guidance, the team built a database to track 404 deaths of people with mental illness in jails across the country since 2010. According to

their reporting, at least 11% of people with mental illnesses who died in jails had family or friends who warned the jails about their condition.

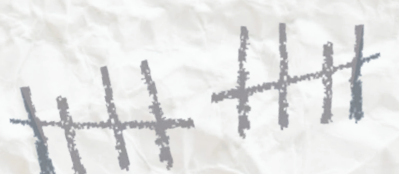
Based on these findings, Harki published "Jailed in Crisis," a series illuminating the deaths of mentally ill people in jails throughout the country—often under horrific and preventable circumstances. His reporting led to a U.S. Justice Department investigation into how the Virginia jail was treating inmates, especially those with mental illness.

"Harki's reporting discovered highly disturbing trends," says CU News Corps Director **Chuck Plunkett**, who oversaw the 2018 Nakkula award selection process and discussed the investigative series with Harki and **Rebecca Carballo**, a *Charleston Gazette-Mail* reporter who helped build the database while she was a Marquette student. "Too often, those being held against their will for lack of appropriate beds in clinical settings are subjected to inhuman treatment."

Plunkett: We've seen horror stories for decades about problems that result when people suffering from mental illness are housed in jails, when what they need is treatment at a mental health facility. Why has it been so hard to find useful data about what happens when those jail stays go wrong?

Harki: I think a lot of it comes down to the fact that nobody collects the data. The federal government doesn't track it, and the states don't really track it. The Bureau of Justice Statistics tracks things through a death-in-custody report, but they have never really tried to track what somebody's medical history was, which mental illness would be a part of.

I think it's frustrating to a certain degree to sheriffs, too, but it's also part of a larger problem of criminal justice data in general, which is that there's all these questions out there—police



shootings, different things with jails and prisons and isolation—and none of it is tracked very well. Part of it is there's just not a lot of will from jailers or communities to track the data because then you might have to deal with a problem.

Plunkett: That might be the better way to fine-tune it. Is there some kind of institutional bias in these entities that's just too embarrassing or too much trouble or too many potential pitfalls?

Harki: I think a lot of it comes down to, one, it is work to try and track this stuff, and two, a lot of the time the data that gets collected is with the federal government, where you've got a carrot and a stick. It's like, 'We might withhold funding from you if you don't provide us with information.' That's how the uniform crime report data gets collected. That's never been the case with this jail data, and it's also a lot more decentralized.

Carballo: No one really seems to have the data looking at why people are dying in jails. A lot of states had it where they tracked jail deaths, and they tracked how many mentally ill people were in jail, but they didn't track how many mentally ill people died in jail. And some of the states had data where they could have figured it out, but their open record laws would say, 'Well, that would require us to create a record and we don't have to create a record for you,' so they don't give you the data. So some states actually do have the capability to figure it out, but that's time, effort and money.

Plunkett: This was quite an ambitious project. I'd like to hear your thoughts on a state newspaper uncovering social injustices across the country.

Harki: It was a tricky thing to do a national story at a local paper, but I had written about this issue since 2015. It just seemed like, look, here it is and it's a national story. We need to write it because

it's not just happening here in Norfolk, Virginia. It's happening all over the country.

Once I got the O'Brien Fellowship for Public Service Journalism from Marquette, the question was, 'What do we do with this issue? How do we go at this again?' It was almost like a movie or something. We just needed to pull the camera back and look at it through a broader lens. My editors were thankfully on board from the beginning, saying, 'Let's create the database and let's do the story. We think we have the knowledge to do it and the right location to do it because of Mitchell.' And that's what happened.

Plunkett: Let's talk about the role that data journalism played in your work. How should newsrooms think about equipping their journalists with these skills? Not every beat accommodates the time and resources for this kind of work, but what's the right mix?

Harki: On some level, I think everybody should have a basic level of data journalism or a basic knowledge of it. It's just going to help you as a journalist. You're going to know a little bit more than other people about how to handle some of this stuff because everyone comes into contact with data.

I feel like in terms of skill sets in data, I'm not that advanced. But I can look at something and know what the data is, and know that we need to work with it, and know what's out there or find it ourselves to be able to do stories like this—to be able to look at it and say, 'OK, what is the best we can do? What is the best information we can have so that we can speak about this on some authority?'

It is easy to dismiss things sometimes because it's one story—it's anecdotal evidence. Being able to put a number on it and say there are patterns to it and there's a reason behind those patterns,

that's a really important thing to be able to do as a journalist and at the heart of why I believe in data journalism.

Plunkett: Your reporting highlights comments from jailers and sheriffs who argue that more resources should be invested in mental health treatment facilities, even if it means pulling funds from traditional policing budgets. What research needs to be done to help policymakers bring this kind of reform?

Harki: It gets really complicated. This is such a localized issue because of the way mental health systems are decentralized in the United States and because jails are decentralized. In a lot of places there's not a lot of oversight over county jails, including Virginia. What really needs to happen—almost on a municipal level, not even a state level—is sort of a cost-benefit analysis and people saying, 'Hey look, if we put more money into treatment, then you're not going to have as many people getting into jails and into the criminal justice system, and that's going to save money in terms of court costs, lawyers, housing.'

Carballo: As Gary was saying, treatment is a more long-term solution. It's definitely something that might help with recidivism, and in a lot of the cases we looked at while building the database, sometimes they weren't in there—this wasn't their first offense—so it is definitely a more long-term solution to the problem.

Harki: If you look at places like Miami or Tucson, they've done that analysis over time, and they've recognized that not only is this better for us as a society because we're keeping people out of jail and keeping people from suffering in these places because we don't have the ability to treat them there, but we're also likely saving money and resources by doing it this way. It's just easier on everybody for both moral and monetary reasons. ■

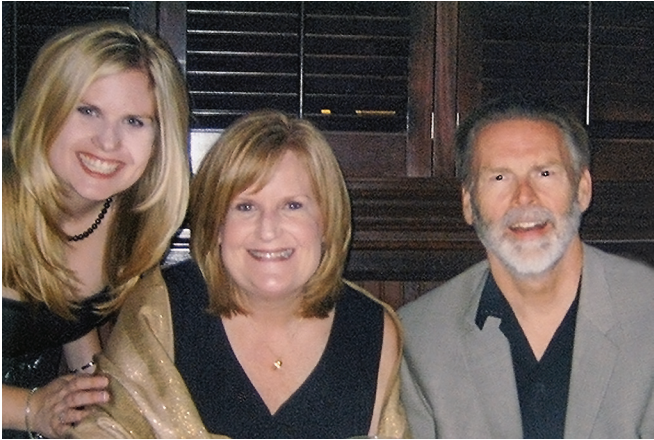


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Left to right: Megan McCarty Johnson (Comm'02), Julie Moriarty McCarty (Comm'74) and John Thomas McCarty Jr. (Comm'74)

“

I'm inspired every time I step onto the CU campus, where I'm reminded of a wonderful and magical time in my life. Where I had the chance to learn from outstanding professors who engaged me and my fellow classmates. Our dreams were encouraged and nurtured. We graduated with a strong understanding about the importance and significance of journalists in our world.”

Kim Christiansen (Jour'84)

“

It's my pleasure to help CMCI. I've not been able to visit Boulder lately, but the then-J-School definitely paved the way for my career from broadcast to tech communications. I've read from afar and been pleased with how proactively CU has attacked the teaching of the ever-evolving media/digital landscape—way ahead of the curve.”

Tom Stilwell (Jour'98)

“

We all talk about how much we enjoyed attending CU and the beautiful town of Boulder. We recall that time as being some of the best years of our lives. I look back so fondly on the entire experience that I believe it is my responsibility to honor those years by

donating whatever I can to the school that has provided so much to my life.

So, the next time you tell someone how much you loved being a student at CU Boulder, remind yourself that you can give back to the university that provided you the opportunity you took and the joy you remember.”

Brian Cameron (Comm'08)

“

I was a communication major at CU, and my husband was, too. We met in a class called Communications and Social Change in 1972 held in a building on the Hill. After CU, my husband, John Thomas McCarty Jr. ('74), went to law school and I started a career in sales with IBM, selling typewriters. My husband practiced law and later started his own land use and permit business. Our background in communication was general enough to allow us to do a variety of jobs throughout our lives.

We loved our time at CU and would probably have never met if not for our shared communication major. Sadly, my husband passed away three years ago. My CU friends bought a Legacy

Brick in his memory that is located in front of Folsom Field, and I purchased a Legacy Locker in his name located in the women's ski locker room. I wanted him to be back at CU where it all started.”

Julie Moriarty McCarty (Comm'74)

“

I support CMCI because of my experience as a graduate student in the former SJMC. I was applying for the program while deployed to Iraq. SJMC did everything possible to ease the application process and make sure that my application was fairly considered despite the difficulty in correspondence and getting some of the application materials. It was made clear that I would be welcome into the diverse student body and that my opinions and contributions would be valued. That never wavered in my two years in the program. I came to expand my experiences beyond the military and left with friends and acquaintances that I still have today. My CU degree benefited me every day as I continued my military career and continues to do so today.”

Rich Spiegel (MJour'07)

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Alumni News

1964

Ken Frazier (Jour) and his wife, **Ruth (Eng'65)**, made the trip to Boulder from their home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, last fall to attend CMCI's Homecoming reception and the CU football game. Ken is the editor of *Skeptical Inquirer: The Magazine for Science and Reason*, which publishes critical scientific evaluations of controversial and extraordinary claims, including pseudoscientific and fringe-science matters. He won CU Boulder's Norlin Award in 1985.

1971

In November 2018, **Sheila Hollis (Jour)** received the Petroleum Economist Legacy Award in London for achievements in energy law and policy worldwide. She is a partner in the Washington, D.C., office of Duane Morris and lives in Charleston, South Carolina, with her husband, John.

1973

Ken Jones (Jour) is a tax attorney for Eversheds Sutherland in the firm's Washington, D.C., office. Previously he was a partner with a Big Four accounting firm, beginning in its D.C.-based national tax office before becoming a national partner in charge of the firm's tax controversy services practice.

1974

William Hessin (Comm) has worked for decades in the Denver broadcast community, including at radio stations such as KIMN, KOA, KPPL and KTLK. He's done voice-over work for local television stations and national clients such as Frontier Airlines, Starz!, Encore, the NHL and the Department of Defense. A member of Broadcast Pioneers



Ken Frazier (Jour'64)



Barbara Vobejda (Jour'75)

of Colorado, William lives in Englewood, Colorado, with his wife, Polly. They have two daughters and four grandchildren.

John E. "Ned" Walker (Comm) is senior vice president and chief communications officer of Delta Air Lines. He and his wife, **Jeanne Bryant Walker (Educ'74)**, split time among Aspen, Atlanta and Boulder.

1975

In 2017, **Barbara Vobejda (Jour)** was named deputy managing editor of *The Washington Post*.

1979

Vicky Collins (Comm) is president of the Denver-based television production company Teletrends. She is an Emmy-winning freelance producer for NBC Network News and works primarily as a field producer and booker for *NBC Nightly News*, *Today*, MSNBC and *Dateline NBC*. She also produces long-form stories and image-oriented videos for nonprofit organizations. Vicky is the proud mother of two boys: a University of Kansas graduate and a junior at CU Boulder's Leeds School of Business.

1980

In 2018, **Laurie Cantillo (Jour)** left NASA's headquarters in Washington, D.C., to start a job as deputy director of communications and education directorate at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

As senior vice president of government affairs for T-Mobile, **Kathleen O'Brien Ham (Jour)** is the company's chief public policy advocate and manages all public policy issues before federal and state governments. Previously, she worked for the Federal



Shannon Lukens (Jour'82)

Communications Commission in several top policy positions, including deputy chief of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. Kathleen and her husband live in Arlington, Virginia.

1982

Steve Getzug (Jour) spent 15 years as a journalist in Colorado, Wyoming and California before becoming a corporate communications executive at AECOM, a global infrastructure firm based in Los Angeles. He manages CEO and strategic communications activities while occasionally daydreaming about moving back to Boulder.

Shannon Lukens (Jour) is the award-winning news director for all seven radio stations in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. She can be heard daily on the radio and as a sports announcer for events across Colorado. As president of Lukens Mountain Media, she manages social media for clients. Shannon and her husband, Jeff, have three children, two of whom are CU Boulder alumni.

Marsha Piccone (Jour, Law'85) is a partner with Fox Rothschild LLP and was named a top appellate lawyer for 2018 by *5280* magazine. She and her husband, David, have two sons, one of whom is a freshman in the CU Boulder College of Engineering and Applied Science.

David Plati (Jour), longtime CU Boulder associate athletic director/sports information director, was honored in January with the Football Writers Association of America's Lifetime Achievement award. David, who has been with the athletic department at CU since he was a freshman in 1978 (and worked there full time since he graduated), will also be inducted into the national College Sports Information Directors of America Hall of Fame in June. He has worked on the game-day statistics crew with the Denver Broncos for 39 seasons, is an official scorer for the Colorado Rockies and is on the game week PR staffs for the Rose Bowl and College Football Playoff championship game.



David Plati (Jour'82) pictured left

1984

Joanne Bischmann (Comm) retired in January from Harley-Davidson after nearly three decades with the company, most recently as the company's vice president and chief communications officer, as well as president of the Harley-Davidson Foundation. In December, she was inducted into the PRWeek Hall of Fame. Joanne lives in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, with her husband, Rob, and four sons.

Karen Reid (Jour; MJour'90) was named chair of the 2018–19 Foundation Fundraising Committee for the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). As president and founder of Kaber Communications, she engages workforces through ambassador and volunteer programs that enrich organizational culture and maximize community impact. Karen and her husband, **Charlie (PhDMechEngr'89)**, live in Dallas.

Neal Scarbrough (Jour) is an award-winning journalist, content creator and multimedia executive who has delivered a diversity of revenue-generating franchises across print, digital and broadcast. He is vice president and executive editor for Fox Sports. In this capacity, Neal has editorial oversight of FS1's studio programming and serves as the daily talent coach for Fox Sports' on-air personalities. He and his wife, Michelle, live in Los Angeles.

1985

James Whitlow Delano (Jour) is a Japan-based documentary storyteller. He has published four photo books. In 2015, he founded the EverydayClimateChange Instagram feed, where photographers from six continents document climate change on seven continents. He says his time in the CU Boulder School of Journalism and Mass Communication fortified his dreams and taught him the skills to pursue them.



Kevin Corke (Jour'88; MJour'02)



Priscilla Slocum Lacy (Jour, PolSci'91)

1988

Kevin Corke (Jour; MJour'02) lives in Washington, D.C., and is a White House correspondent for Fox News. He travels the globe on Air Force One, including trips to Finland, England, Scotland, China, Canada, France and Argentina, where he covered the 2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit.

1991

In 2018, **Priscilla Slocum Lacy (Jour, PolSci)** started a new business, Andy Lacy Art, with her artist husband. Priscilla serves as the business manager and uses her communication skills daily to launch products, develop the brand and close sales. The couple live in Louisville, Colorado, and their son, Jack, is a CMCI junior studying strategic communication. They also have two daughters, Katherine (IntlAf'09) and Megan, a 2018 Willamette University graduate.

Joe Nahra (Jour) is a senior business affairs executive at CAA Sports, a subsidiary of Creative Artists Agency, in New York City. He also teaches Intellectual Property and Licensing to graduate students in the Tisch Institute for Global Sport at New York University. Before joining CAA in 2010, he spent 10 years at the NFL Players Association and formerly worked at IMG. The Cleveland native lives in Montclair, New Jersey, with his wife, Meredith, and twin daughters, Cate and Lizzie.

Sarah Dawson Rothenbuhler (Comm) is the owner, president and CEO of Birch Equipment Co. in Seattle. Her responsibilities include strategic positioning, employee development, financial marketing and customer outreach. Once upon a time, she worked as an intern for the Seattle Seahawks.

1992

Tom Brown (Advert) is the director of Facebook's Creative Shop. Based in Menlo Park, California, the Creative Shop helps major brands and small businesses develop Facebook-specific content.

1993

Doug Claussen (MJour) is the founder and chief editor of the *I-70 Scout & Eastern Colorado News*. The publication, established in 1994, covers news on the Eastern Plains of Colorado, including the towns of Watkins, Bennett, Strasburg, Byers, Deer Trail and Agate.

Megan Garcia (Jour) has worked for Chevron in San Francisco for more than a decade. She is a communications advisor for the company's digital transformation program.

1997

Don Heider (PhDComm) served as dean of the Loyola University Chicago School of Communication from 2008 to 2018 and received the Scripps Howard Foundation Journalism & Mass Communication Administrator of the Year Award in August 2018. Shortly after, he accepted a position with Santa Clara University, where he is the chief executive of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics.

Since 2003, **Norm Shearer (Advert)** has been chief creative officer at Cactus, one of Colorado's top creative advertising agencies. A graduate of the Art Center College of Design in California, Norm lives in Denver with his wife, Dawn.



Kirk Siegler (Jour'00)



Ian Cohen (Jour'02)



Steven Alvarez (MJour'99)

1999

Steven Alvarez (MJour) is a former U.S. Army public affairs officer with 26 years of military service. In 2016, his book, *Selling War: A Critical Look at the Military's PR Machine*, was published by Potomac Books, an imprint of the University of Nebraska Press. The book provides readers with insight into the inner workings of the military's public relations apparatus during wartime.

Since March 2017, **Justin George (Jour)** has been the Washington, D.C., correspondent for the Marshall Project. He previously worked at *The Baltimore Sun*, where he was embedded with the local police department to cover the internal investigation into the death of Freddie Gray, part of a body of work that made the *Sun* a Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Richard Khleif (MJour; PhDMediaSt'07) has held global leadership positions in communication for various technology companies for 25 years. He has also been an adjunct professor for nearly 20 years, serves on strategic advisory boards at two universities, and is an invited speaker at home and abroad on media and communication topics. He established a CMCI scholarship in 2018 to help graduate students channel their research interests toward engaging various publics in meaningful dialogue and critical thinking about media. Richard lives with his family in northern Colorado and enjoys travel, languages and anything with an engine.

2000

Brendan McNicholas (Comm) is the executive director of media services for the Colorado Avalanche Hockey Club. He previously spent time with the Colorado Rockies, Denver Broncos, University of Colorado and University of Denver. Brendan lives in Lone Tree, Colorado, with his wife, Eimear, and son, Caoimhin.

Since 2012, **Kirk Siegler (Jour)** has been a correspondent for National Public Radio News, covering the urban-rural divide, culture and politics in America. He has recently brought listeners and readers to a timber town in Idaho that lost its last sawmill just days before the 2016 election, as well as to small rural towns in Nebraska where police are fighting an influx in recreational marijuana coming from nearby Colorado cities. When not chasing a story, Kirk lives in Los Angeles.

2001

Michael Maney (MComm) moved to Austin, Texas, in 2018 to become the senior director for internal communications for Whole Foods Market. In 2019, he was promoted to the global head of internal communications and engagement.

Jessica Schilling (Jour, Mus) lives in Boston and is the senior product designer and information architect at Solaria Labs, the innovation incubator at Liberty Mutual Insurance. She is the user experience director for its new Certainly insurance platform. Jessica also travels nationwide as a DJ for Argentine tango events and festivals.

Lauren Gullion Utecht (Jour) lives in Los Angeles and is the vice president of human resources and corporate communications at Penske Media Corp., which owns more than 20 media brands including *Rolling Stone*, *Variety*, *Robb Report* and *WWD*. In 2012, she earned an MFA in creative writing from Colorado State University.

2002

Ian Cohen (Jour) joined PayPal in November 2018 as the head of global content creation and innovation. He previously was the global executive producer and president of content creation and innovation at Weber Shandwick. Ian also merges his background as an Emmy-winning daytime TV producer. He lives near Boston with his wife, Lauren, and three children—who all know the CU fight song!



Chris Avantaggio (Advert'06)



Jake Loskutoff (Comm'03)



Brit Stueven (Comm'06)

In August 2018, **Robin Johnson (Jour; MJour'05)** became director of the University of Idaho's School of Journalism and Mass Media. Before that, he was an associate professor in Sam Houston State University's Department of Communication. Robin's research focuses on gender, technology, labor and digital media. In addition to his teaching and research roles, he serves as the department's graduate program coordinator and multiplatform journalism track coordinator.

2003

Abby Chin (Jour) works for NBC Sports Boston as the Celtics courtside reporter, a role she has held since 2013. In 2018, she was part of NBC's coverage team for the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, Korea. Abby lives near Boston with her husband, Mike Schmidt, daughter, Mabel, and son, Silas.

Jake Loskutoff (Comm) is an award-winning videographer, editor and producer based in the greater Los Angeles area. In addition to myriad collaborations with studios and media groups, he works with Fox Sports West, where he won an Emmy in 2014 for multi-camera videography.

Alicia Wallace (Jour) recently completed a Knight-Bagehot Fellowship in economics and business journalism at Columbia University. Before that she was the national marijuana policy and business reporter for *The Denver Post*. She will be staying in New York City and joining CNN Business as a senior writer covering cannabusiness.

Ian Weintraub (Comm) is vice president of marketing for Limelight Media, a Los Angeles-based entertainment marketing firm. He also heads the company's New York office. Ian has worked with A-list talent such as Sylvester Stallone and developed successful engagement programs for Samsung, TaylorMade-Adidas, Motorola and Lexus.

2004

Beth McDowell Cleveland (Jour) is a partner at the creative communications firm Praytell, a two-time winner of *PRWeek's* Agency of the Year and the only agency to ever win Best Place to Work every year in business. She helped start Praytell in 2014 and has grown the company to six offices across the U.S. and London. She lives in the San Francisco area.

2006

Chris Avantaggio (Advert) is an associate creative director at The VIA Agency in Portland, Maine, and founder and creative director of the Maine lifestyle brand LiveME. He and his team at The VIA Agency recently developed the "Be an Outsider" campaign for L.L. Bean. He misses the Rockies but is happily rooted back in Scarborough, Maine, with his wife and three young sons.

Brit Stueven (Comm) is the creator of The Break Changer, which helps people break smarter, work better and live with more intention. The idea for TBC was sparked while she was living in Dusseldorf, Germany. Since June 2015, she has worked with more than 2,000 people through workshops, online programs, one-on-one coaching and sessions for companies. As the owner of Brit Stueven PR, she helps small-business owners with storytelling, email newsletters, design and community building. Since 2013, she's worked with over 100 businesses and nonprofits. Brit lives in Lakewood, Colorado, with her husband, David (Bus'07).

Mike Tarson (Jour) has been with CNN in New York since 2007 and is a senior producer at CNN Business. He leads production of "Markets Now," which streams live on Wednesdays at 12:45 p.m. ET. He is also working on a number of other streaming projects and initiatives. Mike lives in Fairfield, Connecticut, with his wife, Allyson Valentine



Baker Machado (Jour'11)



Rachel Dubrovin (Jour'12)



Wisdom Amouzou (Comm'13)

(Advert'06), an elementary school STEAM and gifted teacher. They have a 2-year-old son named Wesley and recently welcomed twin girls, Ryan and Emery, to their family.

Andrew Villegas (Jour) recently moved back to Colorado from Louisville, Kentucky. In January 2019, he started a new job as morning editor for Colorado Public Radio.

2007

Rich Spiegel (MJour) is the director of public and congressional affairs for the U.S. Army Materiel Command, an organization of more than 200,000 soldiers and civilians that provides materiel readiness to U.S. joint forces in more than 120 countries. In that position, he oversees traditional media, social media, internal communication, crisis communication, media training, media advising, community relations and interactions with Congress. Rich and his wife, **Paulette (PoSci'90)**, live in Huntsville, Alabama.

2011

Baker Machado (Jour) is an anchor and host at Cheddar, the business-and-lifestyle TV network that broadcasts from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. His daytime program, *Between Bells*, airs at noon ET. Baker was a correspondent for *E! News* in Los Angeles from 2011 to 2016. In March 2019, he married Jared Shulman.

Cydney Ricker (Jour) is the manager of football communications and administration for the Kansas City Chiefs. The 2018 season marked her seventh season with the club's communications department. Previously, she was a public relations intern for the Denver Broncos and worked for the CU Boulder Sports Information Department from 2006 to 2010.

2012

Rachel Dubrovin (Jour) is the manager of digital editorial for Major League Fishing. She joined MLF in 2017, before the league's expansion and creation of the MLF Bass Pro Tour. She manages a team of professionals and has the privilege of visiting some of the most beautiful communities and lakes in America to tell stories about one of the greatest sports there is: professional bass fishing.

2013

Wisdom Amouzou (Comm) was nationally recognized for his social justice impact in education. In 2015, he co-founded the HadaNōu Collective, an organization that co-creates innovative learning spaces in K-12 schools. He serves as the executive director of Empower Community High School, an innovative high school launching this fall in Aurora, Colorado, that will feature a four-year ethnic studies program, experiential project-based learning and a student-led school model. Wisdom was a 2017 Camelback Ventures Fellow and winner of the 2017 Teach for America Social Innovation Award.

Jackie Fortier (MJour) is StateImpact Oklahoma's senior health care reporter. In a partnership with Kaiser Health News and National Public Radio, Jackie covers health in Oklahoma and the health care industry for local and national audiences.

2014

In June 2018, **Adrian Garcia (Jour)** joined Bankrate in New York City as a data reporter. He previously covered business and data stories for the online news startup Denverite and the *Fort Collins Coloradoan*.



Paige Ensor (Advert'18)



Sepp Kuss (Advert'17) pictured left



Gloria Dickie (MJour'15)

Fashion photographer **Sammy Keller (Comm)** has always loved taking photos. She works for the Denver-based vintage shop Orenda Lou and has also worked with Urban Outfitters. When she isn't doing freelance work, Sammy works full time at *Rooster Magazine* in Boulder.

Lauren Lanier (Jour) is a digital sales strategist for Learfield, a sports marketing firm that manages multimedia media rights and sponsorship initiatives for more than 130 collegiate institutions nationwide. Lauren's focus is on managing digital and social media markets for college programs in the Western region, including the Colorado Buffaloes. Before taking this position she was a communications coordinator for College Football Playoff.

2015

Freelance journalist **Gloria Dickie (MJour)** recently received a National Geographic Early Career Explorer Grant to fund her reporting on human-bear conflict in northern and western India. She previously spent two years reporting on trash management and black bears in the American West for her master's project in CMCI. Gloria has reported on bears from around the globe, including polar bears in Svalbard, Norway, grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park and panda bears in the Min Mountains of China.

2016

Vanessa Harmoush (Jour) is the deputy communications director for the Colorado speaker of the House and the Colorado House majority. She also sits on the Denver Young Democrats board as its community liaison, and on the Policy Committee of the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

2017

In 2018, **Sepp Kuss (Advert)**, a professional cyclist, won the Larry H. Miller Tour of Utah and debuted in a grand tour, the Vuelta a España. He also represented the U.S. in the World Championships held in Innsbruck, Austria. In 2019, he'll be based in Girona, Spain, while racing for Team Jumbo-Visma. His goals for the season are the Volta Catalunya, Amgen Tour of California, and he's hopeful for another grand tour. Sepp returns to Boulder as often as possible to train at altitude, visit friends and enjoy the Colorado lifestyle.

2018

After graduating from CMCI, **Kimberly Coffin (CritMed, StratComm'18)** found a way to stick around. She joined the college staff in 2019 as CMCI's video and multimedia coordinator, and loves capturing the stories of students, faculty, alumni and friends. Kimberly specializes in video production and photography, and has previously worked for clients including Modern Market, Buck Ross Productions, HGTV's *Tiny Paradise* and the University of Colorado Law School.

Paige M. Ensor (Advert) moved to New York City shortly after graduation to pursue a career in advertising. Through the 2018 MADE program, she was selected by IBM to participate in its summer advertising internship, after which she was hired as a campaign production manager for the Watson and Developer campaigns in IBM's Worldwide Advertising department. In December 2018, she launched her first global advertising campaign, called "Behind the Code," for IBM.

cmci now

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Peter Lasser (Comm'76) is a producer and director at Lasser Productions in Atlanta, Georgia. He's produced 10 Olympic Games throughout his career in broadcast.

As an alumnus, Peter stays connected with the college and our students. In October, he joined a panel of sports media professionals during CMCI's inaugural Sports Media Summit. In April, he returned to speak with broadcast journalism classes about his experiences in the field.

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Running with **Ralphie**

By Christie Henry (Jour'12)



Top: Strategic communication student Hunter Rief as a child caring for buffalo on his family's bison farm in Durham, New Hampshire. Bottom: Rief, now a Ralphie handler, stands with the mascot on CU Boulder's campus.

Hunter Rief (StratComm'20) likes to think outside the box.

In fact, when his father, **Craig Rief** (Econ'93), needed help designing packaging for his company, Hunter—an advertising student at CMCI—developed a unique stand-up pouch.

"I like not being restricted to a certain method or way," says Hunter, who aspires to create advertisements and package designs as a career.

The same qualities that draw him to advertising—an ability to embrace spontaneity and delve into the unknown—are at the heart of his main extracurricular activity: bolting across Folsom field with one of America's most famous buffaloes, CU Boulder's Ralphie.

Rief, 20, grew up on a bison farm in Durham, New Hampshire. In seventh grade, he woke at 5 a.m. daily to bottle feed a weak bison calf born unable to nurse. He then fed her after school and again before bedtime. The calf, Suzy, quickly became a family pet, and even bonded with their black lab.

"She was the only one we kept," he says.

Rief's father, Craig, decided to raise and sell bison around 2004 to maintain the overgrown pastures on his farm.

"We considered Scottish highlander (cattle), elk and bison," Craig says. "Being a CU Buffalo, the choice was obvious."

Rief's fondness toward the animals paid off when he transferred to CU Boulder as a sophomore from Colorado State University. He tried out and made the team of Ralphie Handlers, a group of 15 CU athletes who care for and run the university's female buffalo mascot, Ralphie, at football games and other special events.

"I was dead set on becoming a Ralphie Handler," says Rief, who has aimed to be a handler since he attended a CU football game at the age of 12.

In the fall, Rief spent 20 to 30 hours a week training with Ralphie, caring for her and lifting weights. Football game days could last up to 12 hours and included the elaborate transport of Ralphie to and from her farm at an undisclosed location east of Boulder.

"As soon as Hunter was selected for the team, he immediately started working hard in the weight room and running sprints to ensure he was strong enough and fast enough to run with Ralphie," says John Graves, manager of the Ralphie program.

Rief developed an immediate and comfortable bond with the animal, who weighs 1,200 pounds and can run up to 25 mph.

"I love her," he says. "It's the best experience I could ever imagine." ■



then and now

In 1934, “Buffaloes” was the winning entry in the *Silver & Gold’s* student newspaper contest to choose a team nickname. Weeks later, a group of students rented a live buffalo calf for \$25 and brought it to the sidelines of a football game.

CU’s official mascot didn’t debut until 1966, when John Lowery donated a 6-month-old calf to the university. Lowery’s son, Bill Lowery (Bus ex’69), and other students trained Ralphie I and ran her across Folsom Field that October.

Now there are 15 handlers—including advertising student Hunter Rief—who care for Ralphie V and run with her at home football games.



An IBM 5150 PC—in circulation from 1981 to 1987—from the Media Archaeology Lab's collection.

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That evening we'll hold a **reception at CMCI Studio at 1301 Walnut St. from 5 to 7 p.m.** You'll have a chance to meet Dean Lori Bergen and CMCI faculty while reconnecting with fellow alumni and friends.

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