

## Book Reviews

**Lebovic, Sam. *Free Speech & Unfree News: The Paradox of Press Freedom in America*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016. \$39.95. 352 pp.**

In an age when citizens and politicians berate, belittle and marginalize traditional news media, the core philosophies supporting the need for a free press in democracy are seemingly under attack. In *Free Speech & Unfree News: The Paradox of Press Freedom in America*, historian Sam Lebovic questions the adequacy of the First Amendment in protecting both the press and citizens' access to information.

Lebovic explores what he identifies as a paradox involving freedom of the press in America and "freedom to the news," that is, an implicit right of citizens to have access to diverse and independent sources of news. Throughout the book, he outlines a number of other paradoxes, as well. Classic notions of a press free from government restraint and interference are depicted as competing with other influences in the twentieth century, such as corporate ownership, collaboration with the government in wartime, clashes with secrecy and classification in the rise of the bureaucratic state, and pressures to push for professionalism and social responsibility.

While the book sets out to be a look at press freedom in America, it is more accurately a deep examination of the legal, political, social, and cultural discussions of the role of the press in America in the twentieth century. A dash through the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the free press before World War I sets the stage for the clash of ideas to come, between Walter Lippmann's view of the failures of the free press to ensure strong democracy and John Dewey's vision of a free press that improves communication and builds a more vibrant democracy. Meanwhile, jurists such as Learned Hand and Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. advanced legal theory on free speech and free press under the First Amendment rooted in liberalism and the marketplace of ideas that has served as a relatively consistent benchmark for jurisprudence over the past century.

This is familiar territory for most journalism and mass communication scholars, particularly those in the media law and history fields, and serves as a solid background for those who may be coming to the free press debate from a philosophical and legal perspective for the first time. But from there, the book launches into a deep dive into the free press debates in American politics and society from FDR to Nixon, a crucial period that is sometimes thought the quiet time between when the Supreme Court bolstered free press rights in 1931 in the *Near v. Minnesota* decision and further upheld them in the Pentagon Papers case in 1971.

Lebovic examines the challenges to press freedom through a number of perspectives in that period. Newspapers, as an industry, contentiously fought efforts at government regulation in the New Deal era, both through antitrust and truth-in-advertising movements that the press viewed as threats to their independence. Meanwhile, newspaper industry workers—whom Lebovic portrays as "dependent journalists" in the world of "independent journalism"—debated how they might maintain their own independence to serve society through a "labor theory of press freedom" via the rise of the Newspaper Guild.

The book is at its best when telling the story of this complicated period between the world wars and shortly after, providing a richly sourced narrative that brings together the legal, social, political, and cultural understanding of the role of the press in American democracy. As fascism and totalitarianism were on the rise in Europe, American democracy bolstered by its unrestrained press are held up as a heroic and ultimately successful liberal counterpoint, championed by heroes such as Elisha Hanson, the lawyer for the American Newspaper Publishers Association, who figures into many of the key disputes of the time.

It is a narrative that is lacking in other classic press freedom books such as Fred Friendly's *Minnesota Rag* and Anthony Lewis's *Make No Law*, covering several cases and debates that have not received proper attention. For example, Lebovic delves into the free press arguments at the heart of *Associated Press v. United States*, a case that reached the Supreme Court in 1945 striking down the AP's effort to bar certain competitor newspapers, such as Marshall Field's upstart *Chicago Sun*, from becoming members of the service. It is one of a handful of examples where courts recognized, at least to some extent, the importance of protecting a diversity of voices in the press, even if it intruded somewhat on classic notions of a press free from government interference.

If the book has a weakness, it's in largely limiting press freedom debates to newspapers, with the emergence of broadcast media and the Internet on the sidelines. Lebovic also faces a particular challenge of researching and writing a strong work of history that was compiled well before the chaos in media and politics that came to pass in 2016. Nevertheless, the core questions he identifies remain, as journalists fight for their own existence and relevance. Is the idealized American free press that was held up as an effective counterpoint to the Nazis and Soviets in the twentieth century adequate today? Is the satisfied press that engaged in voluntary censorship and access journalism in the postwar era up to the task of fighting modern challenges to its independence and relevance?

Lebovic's work would fit nicely into a media history course for undergraduates or graduates, as it serves as a deep introduction to both the law and the theory of press freedom in the United States, and it would also work as a text for graduate media law courses that emphasize free press theory beyond the legal context.

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Campbell, W. Joseph. 1995: *The Year the Future Began*. Oakland, : University of California Press, 2015. 274 pp. \$27.95.

In his preface, W. Joseph Campbell makes clear his new book is “not a diary, not an almanac, not an exhaustive catalogue or chronicle of the year . . . makes no glib or expansive claims that 1995 was a year that changed everything . . . [nor claim] too much significance for a moment in time.” Campbell’s preface then concludes “that the present, as we know it, began to take shape during those consequential twelve months” of 1995, which is exactly what he shows the reader throughout his book.

After a comprehensive, and entertaining, introductory chapter that sets the historical context of 1995, Campbell focuses on five key events.

1) The web of twenty-two years ago was a nearly unrecognizable space, but as Campbell points out, major players and extraordinary developments for the present online world arose in 1995. Campbell focuses primarily on Netscape, Amazon, the wiki, and their driving personalities, with a nod to cyberporn and the Communications Decency Act to set the stage.

2) Campbell mounts a strong argument that the Oklahoma City terrorist bombing of the federal building “signaled the rise of a more guarded, more suspicious, more security-inclined America, and what can be called ‘a national psychology of fear.’”

3) The value of the O. J. Simpson “Trial of the Century” chapter is in clarifying that, while the trial had little impact on race relations in America, it did help reinvigorate a national discussion on race relations and the growing economic gap. Of greater lasting importance, though, is Campbell’s explanation of how and why the Simpson trial introduced and publicized to the American public the significance of forensic DNA analysis as decisive in criminal trials.

4) Campbell argues the Bosnian War peace talks held in Dayton, Ohio, revived the rhetoric of “American Exceptionalism,” defining the United States as a “singular virtuous force in a dangerous and troubled world,” which led to deeper U.S. engagements in the Middle East and Afghanistan during the George W. Bush presidency, though fell out of favor during the Barack Obama years. Campbell’s exposition leaves the reader anxious regarding the fate of “American Exceptionalism” in the nascent months of the Donald Trump presidency.



5) As with the Simpson trial, including the Clinton/Lewinsky presidential sex scandal as a key event of 1995 at first seems only an acknowledgement of its media and cultural emphases. Campbell, however, reveals how the scandal so drove political events that the Clinton impeachment battles significantly contributed to the increasingly deeper partisan divide that has strangled federal governance ever since.

Campbell includes a useful “Timeline for a Watershed Year” and detailed notes. He emphasizes primary sources, including extensive interviews, with appropriate, complementary secondary sources that provide depth and perspective to his arguments.

Familiar with his other work, I expected Campbell’s deep, exhaustively sourced arguments to withstand critical scrutiny and they do. The unexpected impact of reading 1995 was the emotion that Campbell’s writing produced, and in this case emotion generates factual understanding. His chapters, “revealing anecdotes and personal narratives that help capture the vigor, spirit, suspicions, and novelty of 1995,” are carefully crafted essays that engage the reader’s humanity as well as intellect. I have visited the remarkable Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. As did the museum, reading Campbell’s descriptions of people and events transported me directly into that terrifying moment twenty-two years ago. Heartbreak, despair, disbelief, anguish encompass the reader as Campbell reveals the fates of victims and courage of

first-responders and volunteers. Yet, Campbell also communicates the confusion and happenstance that led to the surprisingly quick apprehension of Timothy McVeigh, while comprehension of the “psychology of fear” infuses the reader as Campbell details the inaccurate suspicions of Middle-Eastern terrorist connections that arose within law enforcement agencies, spread through the news media, and got absorbed by citizens. By chapter’s end, the reader not only understands the events and implications of the Oklahoma City terror attack, the reader also has experienced the events.

The other chapters similarly clarify facts and evoke their defining emotions. The explosive creativity and nascent business acumen of Internet companies produce elation and awe as the reader absorbs their personality-driven stories, even as present-day awareness of web dangers, such as privacy issues, dance around the perimeter. The Simpson trial elicits anger, disbelief, fascination, and the very definition of media excess, all the while driving the reader to the sudden surprising revelation that O.J.’s lasting benefit is DNA criminal science. Campbell registers the disgust, disappointment, frustration, anger, satisfaction, and lack of surprise experienced during the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, even as the reader lives the opportunity and gamesmanship of politicians as the tug-of-war for power develops into a partisan disregard for democratic governance; country first, indeed. And Campbell so clearly enumerates the calculated, bloody, inhumane horrors of Bosnia the reader pauses, and pauses, throughout the chapter to simply breathe. Yet it is that very emotion that brings understanding of the three intractable Balkan participants and the impossible-task-made-possible by the U.S. negotiators that resuscitated an arrogant mindset of “American Exceptionalism.”

While Campbell uses and assesses news reportage of 1995 events throughout the book—it could be used in long-form reporting or political journalism courses, e.g.—journalism itself is not the book’s focus. Courses that emphasize media and society, political science, or late twentieth-century history would also find the book or select chapters highly useful, as would a non-academic general audience. I gave this book to my daughter, born in January 1995, so she could see how she and her world in many ways began together.

David J. Vergobbi  
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**Vance, J.D. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York: HarperCollins, 2016. \$27.99. 264 pp.**

Readers of this academic journal may wonder what might be of interest to journalism historians in a memoir written by a thirty-one-year-old that was published less than a year ago.

Fair enough.

Historians tend to dismiss or disdain attempts to do meaningful and accurate historical analysis of events within the recent past. Barbara W. Tuchman, a favorite amateur historian of mine, commented in her book *Practicing History* that in a landscape populated only with contemporary events, both the meaningful and the ultimately meaningless loom equally large. It is only with the distance of passing years, allowing one to observe which acorn expanded into an oak, that a historian might properly weigh the evidence and see the connections that contribute to the shape of our time. As a rule of thumb, in my capacity as editor of *Journalism History*, I tell inquiring manuscript authors that many paper reviewers would be reluctant to consider any subject of the last five to ten years.

So, it is with some reservation that I suggest the value of *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance to an audience of academic media historians. Nevertheless, I do.

Vance's book appeared with little fanfare in summer 2016. Passing months, accompanied by the rise of Donald Trump to be the Republican Party standard-bearer and eventually the forty-fifth president, have turned Vance into what some have called the "Trump whisperer," a translator of right-wing frustration for a broad array of middle- to upper-class whites, people of color, women of a variety of backgrounds, and the well-educated. I generalize here, for which I apologize, but I know I was not alone among my academic peers when looking at my hundreds of Facebook "friends" and finding only two or three excited about Trump on Election Day. We woke up a day later and said, "What happened?"

Vance fulfills his role as cross-cultural envoy because he straddles divides: He grew

up poor but proud, splitting time between Kentucky coal country and Rust Belt Ohio, where his family moved in response to the siren call of the American Dream. Steady, good-paying work at a steel company provided, for a while, a ramp out of poverty. But when the steel plant suffered hard times and his hometown withered, Vance flirted with the possibility of a life with little or no hope, haunted, like so many other hillbillies (his word) by a culture of addiction, single-parent homes, poor education, and few prospects for change. Yet Vance made it out, becoming a Marine, a Yale University law graduate, and devoted husband—and, not coincidentally, a conservative who believes that family support and the power of individual choice mean more than government antipoverty programs.

Vance's book is essentially a focus story. He weaves his own personal narrative around demographic and economic studies of the last fifty or so years to create a compelling portrait of a nearly invisible people. And it is here that I see the connection to journalism history.

Vance's hillbillies—the working-class Scots-Irish of Appalachia, the South, and the Rust Belt—seldom see themselves in the news media unless a major event, such as Presidents Kennedy's and Johnson's Appalachian programs of the 1960s, swing the spotlight their way. Absent such a news peg for media attention, trends such as a cancer of the spirit strangling working-class ambition go underreported.

When they don't see themselves in the mainstream journalism, Vance's hillbillies come to distrust it. This echoes the findings of the Kerner Commission, also of President Johnson's time, which criticized the news media for presenting a grossly distorted picture of African Americans during the urban riots of the mid-1960s. People of color did not exist in major newspapers or TV news programs unless they were entertainers, sports figures, or criminals. Their grievances seldom got a fair shake.

Vance writes, "Many try to blame the anger and cynicism of working-class whites on misinformation. Admittedly, there is an industry of conspiracy-mongers and fringe lunatics writing about all manner of idiocy, from Obama's alleged religious leanings to his ancestry. But every major news organization, even the oft-maligned *Fox News*, has always told the truth about Obama's citizenship status and religious views. The people that I know are all well aware of what the major news organizations have to say about the issue; they simply don't believe them. . . . To many of us, the free press—that bulwark of American democracy—is simply full of shit."

He gives examples of fake news that gained traction before the election. No need to go into them here. Rather, one takeaway lesson is that a vast subgroup of Americans felt so underappreciated, if not unknown, that voting for Trump must have seemed a way to shake their fists in the faces of all the elites in government, academia, entertainment, and big business that deserved reciprocal abuse. (Vance's book appeared before the election, but it's not hard to connect the dots to a Trump presidency.)

Media historians should take away this lesson, too: Newspapers, as Tuchman noted, long have been mined as a source for details about the lives of ordinary people. They help create the kind of "bottom-up" history that complements the "top-down" biographies of major figures and events. But what if the daily press is incomplete, and we as readers or historians don't realize that such lacunae exist? What if, to paraphrase Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, the pictures in our heads, supplied by the media, are incomplete at best or false at worst?

*Hillbilly Elegy* can be read a cautionary tale about smart people, including smart journalists and smart journalism historians, assuming their chosen primary sources provide a slice of Truth with a capital "T."

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**Peterson, Jason A. *Full Court Press: Mississippi State University, the Press, and the Battle to Integrate College Basketball*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016. 262 pp. \$65.00.**

In March 1963, the Mississippi State University (MSU) men's basketball team arrived in East Lansing, Michigan, for their first-round NCAA tournament game against Loyola University of Chicago. It was the first tournament appearance for both teams, but this was no ordinary game.

MSU's appearance in what would eventually be billed as the "Game of Change" marked the first time a sports team from the school—or any four-year college or university in the state—played against an integrated team or participated in an integrated sports tournament. In doing so,

the MSU basketball team defied the state's so-called "unwritten law," a non-binding agreement between the state government and its public colleges and universities that would keep its athletic teams segregated—thus maintaining the state's social and political allegiance to Jim Crow.

However, school administrators and many alumni and students were tired of handing the NCAA invitation over to rivals such as the University of Kentucky (which finished behind MSU in the most recent conference standings), as they had done on three other occasions, and thought that student athletes should be allowed to compete at the highest level. To be sure, many MSU supporters wanted to see, too, if an all-white team could beat an integrated one—perhaps confirming, then, the myth of white superiority.

With very few exceptions, including Russell Henderson's historical analysis, "The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law: 'Something More than a Game Will Be Lost,'" for *The Journal of Southern History*, no scholarship has been produced regarding the "Game of Change." Most certainly, an examination of the role of the press in reporting and framing the event is nonexistent and long overdue. However, Jason Peterson, an assistant professor of communication at Charleston Southern University, does his part in helping fill that void.

The book, the origins of which can be traced to Peterson's doctoral research at the University of Southern Mississippi, is divided chronologically into six main chapters. The first three chapters: "Sometimes, Even College Administrators Act like Freshmen," "We'll Stay at Home and Tell Everybody We're the Best," and "The Less Said, the Better," provides readers with some much-needed context regarding the political, racial, and social circumstances of the era and, given that most readers are

unfamiliar with the history of both MSU and Southeastern Conference basketball, important details regarding the university's success in the league in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Included in this discussion is a thorough telling of the reasons behind the state's "unwritten law," which can be traced to Jones County (Mississippi) Junior College's participation in the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl and the team's loss to the integrated Compton (California) College. The final three chapters—"Is There Anything Wrong with Five White Boys Winning a National Championship?," "This is the Biggest Challenge to Our Way of Life since the Reconstruction," and "I've Made My Last Trip to Places like Mississippi"—cover the "Game of Change" and its implications, the public debate surrounding it, and the press's role in managing and framing both.

In each chapter, Peterson examines the role of the press in defining the intersections between sport and race in Mississippi, and more specifically, its part in framing the discussion around the "Game of Change." In doing so, he gives readers a necessary and detailed study of how the local and state newspapers functioned in the state, with exception, as fierce guardians of the "unwritten law" and segregation itself. In particular, the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* and its afternoon counterpart, the *Jackson Daily News*—both owned by the Hedermans, a family who made no secret of their allegiance to Jim Crow—were among the most vocal in their opposition to any break with segregation, no matter how slight. "No one stuck out in defense of the unwritten law and the Closed Society quite like *Jackson Daily News* editor Jimmy Ward," Peterson

argues.

However, Peterson gives ample evidence that the state press was not monolithic in its coverage of the "unwritten law" or the "Game of Change." Papers such as the *Greenville Delta Democrat Times*, owned by the Hodding Carter family, and the *McComb Enterprise Journal*, edited by J. Oliver Emmerich, stood out for their condemnation of the "unwritten law"—if for no other reason than it was not practical, reasonable, or in the best interest of the state. "The McComb based editor, who had long recognized the need for civil rights in Mississippi," Peterson writes about Emmerich, "argued that the continued observance of the unwritten law . . . would lead to the degeneration of college athletics as they knew it."

While Peterson's analysis is repetitive at times—in reminding readers over and over, for example, where different papers, editors, or publishers stood on the issue of segregation and the "unwritten law" or how much space specific publications reserved for reporting on MSU's participation in integrated basketball—such blemishes can be overlooked given the overall value of the book to sports and journalism history and related areas. Accordingly, scholars who teach graduate courses or are interested in the intersection between civil rights and journalism history, journalism history and sports, or civil rights and southern political history, may want to reserve a place for Full Court Press on their reading lists or in their personal libraries.

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**Williams, R. Scott. *An Odd Book: How the First Modern Pop Culture Reporter Conquered New York*. USA: R. Scott Williams, 2017. 284 pp. \$18.99.**

A show of hands: How many readers have heard of O.O. McIntyre?

I thought so.

McIntyre was the Forrest Gump of the 1920s and 1930s, befriending a who's who of cinema, Broadway, literature, sports, and politics. His friends, acquaintances, and co-workers included Rudolph Valentino, Flo Ziegfeld, Theodore Dreiser, Gene Tunney, Charlie Chaplin, and Will Rogers. All of them, and more, found their way into McIntyre's newspaper column, "New York Day by Day," which he and his wife self-syndicated until it was picked up by hundreds of newspapers nationwide as well as *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

McIntyre also was his era's Zelig, the Woody Allen movie character who feels

most comfortable imitating those around him, but does so out of intense emotional deficiency. At Zelig's core, it is hard to tell who he really is when nobody else is there—and thus, too, with McIntyre.

And finally, McIntyre was the Richard Harding Davis of his time, in the sense that he reached the pinnacle of popularity, yet his works and his name have virtually evaporated after death. Davis's books sold millions at the turn of the century, but were eclipsed by those of Dreiser and Jack London. It is the same with McIntyre, who set the table for better-known celebrity-watching media commentators such as Walter Winchell and Hedda Hopper.

R. Scott Williams's biography of Oscar Odd (pronounced "Udd") McIntyre (1884-

1938) does not restore him to the pantheon of journalistic immortals. Nor should it. McIntyre's writing, that of a small-town Ohio boy gawking at the parade of life in New York City, resonated with an American audience ready to roar in the decade after World War I and then dream big during the Depression. But to a modern eye, it lacks snap and depth. O.O. was A-OK with readers who never visited New York and experienced movie and theater stars only in dribbles provided by publications, radio, and movies. Today's tastes and today's media, which Tweet a new celebrity scandal seemingly every minute, have saturated the market and would leave McIntyre's audience ho-humming at his gosh-a-mighty prose. Toward the end of McIntyre's reign

over New York culture, his critics correctly pointed out that his persona of boyish enthusiasm had grown stale.

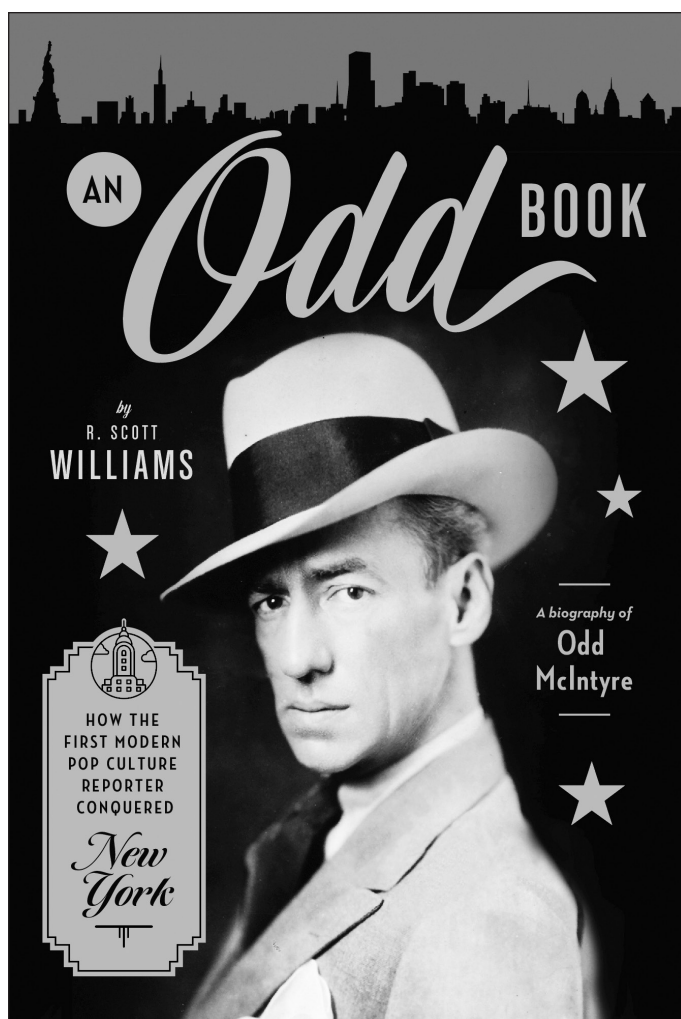
However, that does not mean McIntyre is not worth studying. Williams, an executive at the Newseum, embeds his biography of McIntyre in a narrative of demographic and technological change that created what may have been the first truly mass culture, the first global village where readers in Idaho and Louisiana could imagine, through “New York Day by Day,” that they knew the stars almost as well as they knew their families and friends. McIntyre told them what they ate, where they stayed, how they dressed, and how they spoke. Almost all of it he cast in a positive light, stopping short of fawning but still hesitant to bite the hands that fed him.

What does this tell us about McIntyre’s time, and of the people who populated it?

First, Williams’s self-published, professional-quality book leaves the reader astonished that Horatio Alger stories of hard work and pluck sometimes came true. McIntyre and his manager/wife, Maybelle, nearly starved while devoting themselves to creating and mailing prototype copies of the column that would become “New York Day by Day,” essentially begging newspapers to print them and send any amount in return. Through extreme effort and the occasional break, McIntyre rose from dirt-poor reporter in Gallipolis, Ohio, to a journalist who earned millions of dollars, traveled the world, and lived the highest of high lives.

Second, McIntyre’s life adds to the type of ground-level history that enriches our understanding of an era. If elite history provides insights through chronicles of big-name scientists, statesmen (and -women), and intellectuals, then history at the other end of the spectrum reveals life as the ordinary person lived it. That’s an equally telling portrait of a time. We may read about Richard the Lionheart, but to understand England in the Middle Ages, the muck-covered peasants in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (minus the proto-Marxist intellectual played by Michael Palin, of course) provide just as much, if not more, understanding. Celebrity culture remains integral to this discourse. Whom we idolize, and why, tells much about us, whether it is Aimee Semple McPherson or Kim Kardashian.

And finally, the book contributes to our understanding of the all-too-common links between journalistic genius—and we can grant that title to McIntyre, given his razor-sharp understanding of what the public wanted—and eccentricity. James Gordon Bennett (Senior and Junior) exhibited erratic behavior; Joseph Pulitzer had his Tourette-like outbreaks and outrages; Ernie Pyle dived into black depressions. More examples abound. McIntyre suffered per-



nicious anemia, which left him weak, agoraphobic, and eventually virtually unable to meet people. To continue his column under such circumstances seems heroic.

*An Odd Book* is worth a visit for those wanting the flavor of journalism in the Jazz Age, as well as the tenor of life in its American mecca, Manhattan.

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