

vice offices in exchange for free legal help. (Here's a pleasant surprise: The IRS has declared such exchanges tax-free because they aren't undertaken for profit and hence are not what the tax code calls "commercial barter.")

Once one really begins to think of time dollars as a currency, the possibilities seem endless. College students could use them to pay their tuition. Homeless people could build up credits through work at shelters. Public housing tenants could pay off part of their rent by providing services in their buildings. Seniors could use credits to buy insurance, the way members do at Elderplan. Local governments could develop programs to encourage more involvement from citizens: people who volunteer to patrol the sub-

way at night, for example, could get subway passes in return. Eventually, individual programs could link up their computers as banks do now, only this time to establish a state or national market in good works.

But there is a wonderful difference between this new currency and the one we're used to: Bankruptcy is not much of a problem. If Elsa Martinez had been paying for a nurse, she would have been abandoned once her bank account emptied. But when her service credit account ran dry, the women who originally came to call on her as anonymous volunteers did not stop visiting. They continued to call on their friend until she died and then mourned at her funeral. Service credits, it turns out, even earn interest and pay dividends. □

WHO'S WHO

Does **Nicholas Brady** think someone else is secretary of the treasury and that he is merely a friend of the president who has been given a nice office next door to the White House? Observers here are becoming increasingly suspicious that such thoughts must be the explanation for Brady's pale performance thus far. It's not that he's stupid: as chairman of the Brady Commission after the 1987 stock market crash, he seemed to understand much of what had gone wrong. It's just that he seems to feel removed from responsibility for using his authority as the nation's chief financial officer to right the wrongs in the financial system. . . .

Those who read Alexander Kippen's article in our February issue will recall its report that in 1982, **Alex Kosinski**, who then headed the Office of Special Counsel, which was supposed to make sure that whistleblowers got a fair hearing, was forced to resign after being accused of teaching federal managers how to fire whistleblowers. We have since learned that **Ronald Reagan** rewarded Kosinski with an appointment to the United States Court of Appeals on the Ninth Circuit, where he now sits. . . .

Speaking of whistleblowers, **James Watkins**, the secretary of energy, has ordered DOE contractors not to discriminate against the contractors' employees who file complaints about violation of safety and environmental rules. Karen Silkwoods will be protected from unjust retaliation by the contractor. . . .

Watkins, by the way, was recently red-faced when one of his subordinates mistakenly faxed to governors around the country a confidential list of various environmental disasters in which the DOE had a hand. . . .

The confirmation hearings on **Richard D. Austin's** nomination to be head of the General Services Administration have revealed that Austin, as acting director,

kept a political appointee he had hired at the request of **Robert Michel**, the House Republican leader, on the payroll from the time the appointee was convicted of bank fraud until he was actually jailed, even giving him a raise during that period. Michel has been the chief sponsor of Austin's nomination. . . .

Evan J. Kemp Jr. is the first person from the ranks of the disabled to be named a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. As the new chairman, he will bring first-hand experience with discrimination to the commission's deliberations. After graduating near the top of his class at the University of Virginia Law School in 1954, he was turned down by all 39 law firms he applied to because he was in a wheelchair. Finally, he was able to get a job with the government. . . .

In—Commerce: Undersecretary for Technology—**Robert M. White**. **Health and Human Services:** Assistant Secretary for Family Support Administration—**Jo Anne B. Barnhart**. **Labor:** Inspector General—**Julian W. De La Rosa**. **Treasury:** Director, Office of Thrift Supervision—**T. Timothy Ryan Jr.** **Agencies and Commissions:** CIA, General Counsel—**Elizabeth Rindskopf**. Resolution Trust Corporation, Inspector General—**John J. Adair**. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Director—**Wallace Stickney**; Deputy Director—**Jerry Jennings**.

Out—Health and Human Services: Acting Assistant Secretary for Family Support Administration—**Eunice S. Thomas**. **Labor:** Acting Inspector General—**Raymond Maria**. **Agencies and Commissions:** CIA, General Counsel—**Russell J. Breummer**. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Director—**Robert H. Morris**.

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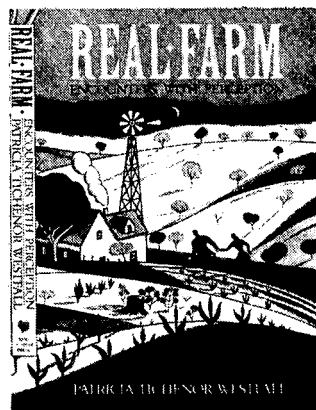
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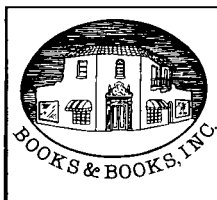
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ON POLITICAL BOOKS

The Journalist: A Source's Captive or Betrayer?

Janet Malcolm's obsession with psychiatry made her miss the real betrayal in journalism. Too often, reporters cheat their readers by *not* turning on their sources.

by J. Anthony Lukas

Every reader of this magazine who isn't a moron or a pompous ass knows that his literary taste is utterly depraved.

There. Have I got your attention?

A year ago, writing in *The New Yorker*, Janet Malcolm fashioned a lead of comparable authority: "Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible."

The ensuing articles were particularly arresting because they purported to be not just another haymaker thrown from the disaffected ranks of Middle America but sophisticated critiques by a practitioner of the very craft under attack.

But a rereading of these articles and a new "afterword," now collected between hard covers,* convinces me that Malcolm is writing from well outside the journalistic tradition—which accounts for both the strengths and weaknesses of this book.

The outsider's perspective enables Malcolm to plumb ironies that might be missed by workaday reporters. And there are some fine glancing insights: "The subject is Scheherazade. He lives in fear of be-

ing found uninteresting, and many of the strange things that subjects say to writers—things of almost suicidal rashness—they say out of their desperate need to keep the writer's attention riveted."

But Malcolm is rather like a clever chiropractor examining the practice of medicine. Finally, *The Journalist and the Murderer* is a work of inspired quackery.

Now a disclaimer. Since Malcolm has been widely accused of disguising a secret agenda, let me concede that I have long been a friend of Joe McGinniss, the target of her attack. On the other hand, for nearly 10 years, until he became editor of *The New Yorker*, my book editor was Robert Gottlieb, who is Malcolm's greatest patron and defender. With a foot in each camp, I'll try to walk a straight line.

Just who is this person who claims to have unveiled the dirty little secret of American journalism? She presents herself here as a reporter, explaining, "I have been writing long pieces of reportage for a little over a decade." But there is reason to suspect this appellation. For, as Malcolm herself warns us, "the 'I' character in journalism is almost pure invention." In her case, I think it is.

Malcolm has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1965, exploring a limited range of subjects—food, Shaker furniture, photography, and psychoanalysis among them. So far as I can determine,

J. Anthony Lukas is the author of Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families, for which he received a Pulitzer Prize in 1988.

**The Journalist and the Murderer*. Janet Malcolm. Knopf, \$18.95.