

## Career Choice

By April Edwards

Whether you are opening a newspaper, turning on the television, listening to the radio, or even surfing on the internet, there is always some type of information being reported and presented. We live in a world that demands up-to-date coverage of world issues, sports, and entertainment. In order to meet this high demand, the world needs someone to tell the story, and that is where journalists step in. The art of journalism has been applied for centuries as a way to create change throughout the world. Henry Anatole Grunwald once said that “journalism can never be silent: that is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately, while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph, and the signs of horror are still in the air” ([www.thinkexist.com](http://www.thinkexist.com)). This is the task that Jennifer Mrozowski faces everyday.

Jennifer Mrozowski writes in the local section for the Cincinnati Enquirer. She has been writing for the Enquirer for almost seven years. She received a degree in journalism from Ohio University and decided to become a reporter because she felt it was a great way for her to make a change in society. She says that she really feels “like I’m doing something that is going to make the world a better place. Right now I’m just trying to improve Cincinnati, but I hope one day to be really affecting the world.” And she has already accomplished this. In 2004 she received first place for her coverage of education at the Society of Professional Journalists awards and in 2002 she received first place along with some of her peers for her coverage of the race riots that arose in Cincinnati after the death of Timothy Thomas by two police officers. Jennifer Mrozowski loves her job, and loves changing the city one issue at a time.

In order to be an effective journalist one needs to possess the correct qualities. These attributes vary from the ability to grab one's attention to being assertive to physical characteristics. As in all jobs, the better one's personality fits to the job he or she is pursuing, the more successful one will be while at the job. Also, in some jobs a person's physical attributes can empower their success. As in all jobs, a person's capabilities are a necessity to thrive in certain work environments. All qualities and talents contribute to the success and failure of a person's career.

For a newspaper or magazine reporter, one must contain the ability to write well. They must be able to captivate their audience with their words. Sometimes the greatness of an article lies in its title; a more dramatic title will better catch the eye than one that is common or boring. In an article about the decline in attendance at public schools in Cincinnati, Jennifer Mrozowski chose a title that would grab both the reader's attention and curiosity: Battle to lure students begins. Because of the title's negative connotation, the reader is captured by the words and anxious to discover the "lure". As she explains, "it's all in a name."

In the media, an outstanding reporter must be both appealing and forceful. He or she must have the confidence to force his or her way into a story in order to uncover the information that the viewers desire to see. He or she must be able to know when his or her chance is, and be strong enough to leap forward to grasp it. However, a journalist must also be genial and suave. Sometimes while collecting information for her next story, Jennifer Mrozowski often feels frustrated when her interviewees are uncooperative: "Sometimes, I just want to shake them until they tell me what they know, but if they refuse to tell me when I'm pleasant, I doubt that they would be helpful while I'm shaking them around!" They must be both sociable and approachable in order for the subjects they are reporting and interviewing to feel comfortable speaking with

them; perhaps even so relaxed that they will divulge much more information to this reporter than the next.

Another characteristic in all reporters, especially newspaper and internet, is the ability to remain calm and to perform well under pressure. As the world is always changing one must be able to maintain one's composure as deadlines quickly approach, and as more news occurs throughout the world. Jennifer Mrozowski sometimes feels overwhelmed when she has to meet a deadline: "There is always something to do and more information to get, and sometimes keeping up with all of your tasks can be exhausting." Because of the overwhelming amount of pressure and stress they endure, an ability to be able to work quickly and well is a vital part of any journalist.

Sometimes, however, one's physical attributes aid in a reporter's success. According to Weaver and Wilhot in their novel, most journalists are between 20 and 34 years old (34). If one alternates television stations during the local news broadcasts, one will find that a greater amount of reporters are either in their late twenties or early thirties. However, this statistic is very different during the national news broadcast. Most of the more renowned journalists are much older. With the recent induction of Katie Couric to the Columbia Broadcasting System's evening news anchor team, the number of older anchors remains, and the amount of female reporters rises. The number of women journalists in both the written world and the media is beginning to escalate. In the 1970s women only comprised one-fifth of the total journalist, but in the 1980s, the number rose to one-third, and today the total is nearly one-half (Weaver and Wilhot). Jennifer Mrozowski feels unintimidated by these numbers: "A few years ago I would have felt overwhelmed in a business full of men, but women are really stepping up; soon I think that it will become a woman-dominated business."

Other physical attributes assist in the successfulness of a journalist. A person's height, and race may assist a reporter while out in the field. Jennifer Mrozowski explains that during the race riots in Cincinnati in 2001 her race became aided her immensely:

After Timothy Thomas was shot by a white cop, many of the blacks in our community felt personally victimized by the cops, especially the white ones. There was so just much hostility throughout the city. So when I went out to find information about the escalating feud, people felt much more comfortable confiding in me.

The better one blends into a crowd, it will become easier to report a story. World-renowned photojournalist Alfred Eisenstaedt utilized his height in order to capture more candid photographs of his subjects. Standing barely over five feet tall, Alfred Eisenstaedt was able to blend into a crowd and could more easily maneuver himself past others to find the correct angle to capture his shots (Carlebach).

It is all in a reporter's job to inform the nation, whether it is consistent with the reporter's views or an impartial declaration. However everyone is opinionated, so many reporters attempt to influence their views to the nation. It is impossible to be completely unbiased all of the time. The news that journalists report affect our views everyday. Just by turning on the ten-o'clock news, we see that the news media possesses the great ability to transform America's ideas. If one hears a story about a war, a pro-war reporter may persuade readers or viewers to agree with the war while an anti-war reporter has the ability to do just the opposite. A report about a crime committed by a religious figure can either make one feel sympathy or hatred toward that person. Jennifer Mrozowski feels compelled everyday to sway her readers:

Everyday there is a story that can turn the nation against each other. There are so many issues in this country that the people are either completely for or completely against. If

someone wrote the right story a certain way, it would be like lighting a fire underneath those problems. If journalists collaborated together, they would probably cause World War III.

The power lies in their abilities to influence.

Today, a media source's political views are well represented throughout their coverage; in America most conservative sources siding with Republicans and the more liberal ones with Democrats. In a 1982 survey most people working for a news-information service declared themselves either Democrats or independent (Weaver and Wilhot). As broadcasting over television and radio became more and more of an increasing trend, politicians took advantage of this technology in order to advertise to the public. While most reporters try to remain impartial during presidential elections, and other government events, it is very difficult to remain neutral. "I remember writing a story about the 1996 election," Jennifer Mrozowski says, "I am a huge supporter of Bill Clinton, so when I had to write about Dole, it was really hard for me not to completely oppose him." Most journalists do, however, oblige to remaining unbiased in their reports.

Journalists also use their power to influence the politics of world. During the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy attempted to create a fear of communists and supposed communist in the United States. During his rampage, McCarthy continuously referred to a fictional list of suspected communists infiltrating the United States. It took the talent and strength of reporter Edward Murrow and the Columbia Broadcasting System to use factual evidence supporting their views to put an end to McCarthy rampage (Knudson). In the early 1970s the work of two Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, and an anonymous tipster to capture President Richard Milhous Nixon. People from Nixon's administration were caught

breaking into the Democratic National Committee in Watergate, a grand hotel in Washington, DC. An informer disguised as "Deep Throat" and members of the FBI divulged information to Woodward and Bernstein about Nixon's attempts to illegally infiltrate Democratic sources. Their publications in the Washington Post eventually forced Nixon to resign from office in 1974 (Farnsworth).

Many times a journalist feels that he or she has the obligation to take the right course of action while others refuse or fear to do so. In the McCarthy scare, most media workers were afraid to step forward and speak out against the senator, because they too did not want to find their name on his list. After Murrow spoke out, McCarthy attacked him as well, but Murrow stood unwavering, because he felt obligated to take action. During her career, Jennifer Mrozowski has encountered many issues in which she felt morally obligated to create a story that would help to influence change in Cincinnati. Currently, her focus is on the public school system in Cincinnati. She explains that she is torn because

The state is passing out vouchers to allow for students in low income houses to go to private schools. While this can be a great opportunity for the children, it is also tragic for the public schools, because they will lose both the students and funding from the state.

The parents need to know they have this opportunity, but the city of Cincinnati needs to know the consequences of taking the students out of the public schools.

The responsibility to do the right thing is always the criteria for what a journalist writes, but sometimes feels ambivalent.

In this field, education and experience are a vital necessity. In the 1970s, just barely more than one-third of all reporters graduated from a college or university. In the 1980s, the number of reporters who had completed college rose to half. Today, that number is well over to two-thirds

(Weaver and Wilhot). Most journalists, who continue their education after obtaining a job, chose to further explore English, political science, history, economics, law or journalism (Weaver and Wilhot). However, the vital part in succeeding as a journalist is experience. "Most of this job," Jennifer Mrozowski says, "is being able to do your job well. Anyone has the ability to report news, and anyone can achieve a college degree, but it takes a lot of hard work to get comfortable enough at this job. Eventually, with all of the experience you get from working long, chaotic hours, you become great at what you do."

Journalists' work continuously influences the culture and current events of the world and community. It is their duty to inform the viewers and readers of the changing times, and current issues. While it is difficult for them to remain completely impartial, journalists often times are viewed as "misinformants" instead of the informants they are. Thomas Jefferson once explained that "The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers" ([www.quote garden.com](http://www.quote garden.com)). Although journalists possess the ability to deceive the reader by fabricating the truth in a story, the journalist also has the responsibility to report information to the public. And as Thomas Jefferson also said, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost"

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