



## **BREAKING NEWS: How the Associated Press has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else**

By Reporters of the Associated Press  
Foreword by David Halberstam  
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## **Elections — When is AP Going to Call This Thing?**

Tom Jory

It was after 2 o'clock in the morning on November 8, 2000, an election night like no other. The phones were lighting up at AP headquarters in New York. All five television networks had projected that George W. Bush would win Florida and thus the presidency. This election, though, was so close that it would be called only by the U.S. Supreme Court, not AP.



The pressure was enormous. In New York, newly appointed deputy managing editor Kristin Gazlay, just in from London to troubleshoot election coverage, was helping with the phones when Fox News became the first to

declare Bush the winner, at 2:16 a.m. Within minutes, more than a dozen newspapers called, "frantic, frustrated, nervous," as Gazlay remembered it. "Our presses are holding. When is the AP going to call this thing?" a typical editor pleaded.<sup>1</sup>

Counting votes and declaring winners in presidential elections was something AP had done every four years since 1848. But on this night, it was the race AP did not call that distinguished the news service from the nation's other leading media organizations.

Washington bureau chief Sandy Johnson reasoned that the race was still too close and held the line against the rush to send Bush to the White House.<sup>2</sup>

"We were stunned when the networks started calling Florida for Bush," Johnson remembered. "[Washington editor David] Pace and I thought they were crazy to call not just the state but the presidency on such a close count. We frantically studied one set of numbers after the other, and consulted statistical models over and over, assuming the network analysts were seeing something that escaped us. Scarily, the vote count kept getting closer and closer."

Johnson was shielded from outside telephone calls, but that didn't mean she didn't feel the pressure. Jon Wolman, AP's executive editor and Johnson's predecessor in the election night hot seat in Washington, asked her several times what she was thinking. "I just kept saying, 'We're not there yet,'" she recalled.<sup>3</sup>

AP was being doubly cautious because of what happened earlier in the night. AP and the networks had jumped the gun and called Florida, if not yet the

White House, for Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic nominee. That call soon was pulled back by all, and AP was going to make sure it didn't make the same mistake again.

"They held back even when the networks called it, and when major newspapers like ours and Reuters, their own wire service competitor, decided the networks could not be wrong," wrote Adam Clymer, Washington correspondent for the *New York Times*. "The last network call was at 2:20 a.m., and AP kept staring at its numbers, as members all over the country phoned to ask why it had not called the race."<sup>4</sup>

AP's decision to wait, Clymer said, "was the smartest campaign coverage of the night."

At 3:11 a.m., AP sent an advisory to newspapers reporting that Bush's lead in Florida had dwindled to about 6,000 votes and that uncounted votes in two heavily Democratic counties could affect the outcome. AP never did "call" Florida or the election.

"As the night descended into chaos," wrote one managing editor, Curt Anderson of the *Daily Times-Call* in Longmont, Colorado, "I told my guys we were going to stick with AP. No call from the AP, no 'Bush wins' heads. After a quarter of a century in the business, I know who I can trust."<sup>5</sup>

The presidency ultimately was decided when the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision on December 12, blocked further manual recounts in Florida.

AP and the networks had actually jumped the gun much earlier on election night, calling Florida, if not yet the election, for Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic nominee. That call was soon pulled back by all.

There were a number of consequences of the election night debacle in Florida, among them a congressional inquiry early the next year ostensibly to determine what went wrong. AP and the networks were summoned to appear before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce for what the *New York Times* described as a “flogging” for declaring Gore the winner, then Bush, then retracting that second call.

Again, AP took a distinctive stand before the congressional committee while the networks looked for someone to blame. Louis D. Boccardi, president and chief executive officer of AP, acknowledged that there had been “serious shortcomings--call them terrible mistakes ... that cannot be allowed to happen again. But fixing them,” he told the committee, “is a job for the nation’s editors, not its legislators.”<sup>6</sup>

The committee, presumably satisfied it had humiliated the network executives who had appeared with Boccardi, would allow its inquiry to fade away.

“Journalism’s reputation for getting it right was preserved by the oldest of the national news outlets, the Associated Press,” Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Paul Waldman wrote in *The Press Effect*. “Although it followed the network in the first mistaken call of Florida for Gore, the 152-year-old news organization that has

been reporting on elections since Zachary Taylor's in 1848 did not call Florida or the election for Bush...

“In an unusual recognition of the value of another news source, both CBS's and NBC's post-election reviews of election night coverage suggested that in the future each would pay more attention to independent sources such as the AP.”<sup>7</sup>

The 2000 election was also the beginning of the end for Voter News Service, a consortium of media organizations including AP that had been counting the vote in national elections since the mid-1960s. VNS returns from Florida when the network stampede for Bush began showed the Republican with a much greater lead than AP was reporting at the same time. And there were problems with the VNS projection of votes still to be counted in Florida.

“In the closest race in history,” said Roger Ailes, head of the Fox News Network, “the wheels apparently came off of rattletrap computer systems which we relied

It would get even worse two years later. After an attempt to overhaul the old system, VNS was unable to produce meaningful returns for much of the night.

By 2004, AP would be the sole source of returns for all media. Again, it was a cliffhanger. Bush wasn't declared the winner over his Democratic challenger, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, until 11:04 EST the morning of November 3, 2004, just over 17 hours after the first polls had closed in Kentucky and Indiana.

Remarkably, it didn't take that long to determine the winner of the presidential election of November 7, 1848. The morning after, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, presumably using an incomplete count from AP, could report that the "few returns which came in last night by telegraph, point with moral certainty to the success" of General Zachary Taylor, a Whig who ran against Lewis Cass, a Democrat, and Martin Van Buren, the thirteenth president and a former Democrat who ran on the Free Soil ticket.<sup>8</sup>

The election on November 7, 1848, was the first in which all states voted on the same day, and the first in which the telegraph was used to gather returns from all over the country.<sup>9</sup> Dr. Alexander Jones, educated in medicine but drawn to journalism and AP's first general agent, brought that election and the telegraph together to collect results from the 30 states that voted then. The count went on for seventy-two hours, and telegraph tolls exceeded \$1,000, an enormous sum in those days.<sup>10</sup>

There is no direct attribution to be found that would credit AP for the published returns. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which was not part of the initial AP organization, cited an original AP newspaper, the *Journal of Commerce*, for its tally of electoral votes published on November 10, 1848.<sup>11</sup>

Over the years, AP used every available means to secure reliable returns. On December 11, 1860, the *New York Times* carried a dispatch from Fort Kearney, Nebraska, reporting that "the California Pony Express passed here at 5 o'clock this morning and left the following to be telegraphed to the Associated

Press.” Included were full election returns from every county in California, showing Lincoln with 38,702 votes and Douglas with 8,060.<sup>12</sup>

Roughly sixty years later, Melville E. Stone, reflecting on his long tenure as general manager of AP, described a typical election night this way:

**“The moment the polls close, the counting begins. Associated Press men everywhere are gathering precinct returns and hurrying them to county headquarters where they are hastily added, and the totals for the county on Presidential electors are wired to the state headquarters of the Association. The forces of men at these general offices are augmented by the employment of expert accountants and adding machines from the local banks, and the labour [sic] is so subdivided that some years the result of the contest is announced by eight o’clock in the evening, and at midnight a return, virtually accurate, of the majority of the state presented to the newspapers.”<sup>13</sup>**

Accuracy was always the overriding goal, although at times an elusive one.

“We make a clean breast of an election error,” the Boston bureau proclaimed in 1921 after a “single error by a string correspondent” caused returns in the Sixth Congressional District to go “slightly awry.” The mistake did not change the outcome of the race, but the bureau nevertheless investigated and

produced an internal report on every detail of the counting and checking of votes.<sup>14</sup>

In the presidential elections of 1876 and 1884, AP was accused of influencing the outcome, through its reporting and, more precisely, non-reporting, and its relationship with the Western Union telegraph agency.

Democrat Samuel J. Tilden, the governor of New York, appeared to be the clear winner in the centennial election of 1876 over Ohio's Republican governor, Rutherford B. Hayes. With the tally all but complete, Tilden had a lead of about 250,000 in the popular vote but was one electoral vote shy of winning the election, with the outcome still in question in Oregon and three Reconstruction states, Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Both parties claimed victory in the southern states.

AP service at the time was a loose alliance of the New York Associated Press and the Chicago-based Western AP, and both were tied to Western Union for telegraph transmission of the news. The NYAP was operated by seven New York newspapers and sold its service to others, including the Western AP, whose membership extended into the South as well as the Midwest.

Prominent board members of the Western AP, and especially the association's general agent at the time, William Henry Smith, made no secret of their support for Hayes. Smith, in fact, had been a Republican secretary of state in Ohio and one of Hayes's closest friends.<sup>15</sup>

Before the election, by one historian's account, the Western AP "made it virtually impossible for Tilden's campaign material to reach the public through its service" while Hayes's supporters used "the AP machinery" so effectively that "emissaries of Tilden" tried unsuccessfully to counteract it by bribing AP reporters.<sup>16</sup>

The contest dragged on for months after the election, and AP's support of Hayes became even more pronounced. "So zealously did AP distribute allegations against Tilden and bury news supporting his side just after the election," one historian recounted, "that Democrats dubbed it the 'Hayesociated Press.'" <sup>17</sup>

AP's dependence on the Western Union Telegraph Company dated to 1867, and was, almost from the start, contentious, generally in regard to tolls and Western Union's exclusivity as a transmitter of AP reports. That latter concern ultimately brought both agencies before Congress, which had charged the two as "co-conspirators in building a press monopoly." AP protested the accusation, which ultimately faded from congressional scrutiny.

Smith nonetheless appears to have put the arrangement to work for Hayes in 1876, particularly in the contest for electoral votes in the South. "Smith played an important part in changing Hayes's apparent defeat of November 7, 1876, into the victory of [his inauguration] March 5, 1877," wrote historian Edgar Laughlin Gray. "Smith, an astute politician, very early realized that the Republicans virtually owned canvassing boards of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida; and that these Boards were the key to the entire situation." He immediately dispatched

“some of the ‘best and the wisest’ Republicans in Illinois to New Orleans to look after Republican interests.”<sup>18</sup>

Smith’s relationship with officers of the telegraph agency also gave Republicans “access to Democratic dispatches to and from the South during the crucial stages of the count. He could thus anticipate the movements of the Democrats and accordingly give instructions to Hayes’s ‘visiting statesmen’ in the South.”<sup>19</sup> The tactic worked, and on December 6, Louisiana officials declared Hayes the victor in the state.

There is no evidence that AP doctored numbers, though it selectively reported Republican activities while ignoring those of the Democrats.

Hayes was declared the winner just before his inauguration on March 5, 1877. He appointed William Henry Smith as collector of the Port of Chicago, a position held simultaneously with his job as general agent of the Western AP, which would be an unthinkable conflict of interest today. The board of the Western AP approved the political appointment after being assured by one director that “the customs house would be run by a deputy and that the General Manager would still give his full time to the press association.”<sup>20</sup> He maintained the government post until he was removed by Chester A. Arthur, Hayes’s successor as president and Smith’s political enemy.

In 1884, AP again was at the center of an election night firestorm, accused of manipulating the count. By then, the Western and New York associations had agreed to a form of power-sharing. Smith was named to run the

consolidated organization as general manager. Western Union, now run by financier Jay Gould, who also owned the *New York World*, backed the consolidation and would provide telegraph service to the newly constituted AP.

The Republicans chose James G. Blaine, the “Plumed Knight” who had served in both the House and Senate from Maine, as their candidate in 1884, to run against Democrat Grover Cleveland. Blaine was linked to railroad interests, while Cleveland had to explain an affair that had produced a son before he was married.

It wasn’t clear where Smith, his Republican background notwithstanding, stood on this race. What was plain was the position held by Charles A. Dana, owner of the *New York Sun* and chairman of a five-member board that ran the consolidated AP. Though his newspaper had historically been Democratic, Dana was known to have pounded his fist and declared: “It isn’t Cleveland! It can’t be Cleveland! It shan’t be Cleveland!”<sup>21</sup>

As a hint of things to come, the AP-Western Union count in the primaries in at least two states, Maine and Ohio, differed markedly, in Blaine’s favor, from official returns. In those days, some states held elections for Congress and state offices before the November presidential election, and “the parties threw their money by the crateload at the October elections, because the whole country saw them as a significant signal in pointing the direction for November.”<sup>22</sup>

“What a reckless and supernumerary liar in the matter of election returns the Western Associated Press is getting to be,” the *Washington Post* screamed

under the headline “Reckless Perversion” after the Ohio election in October. AP said the Republicans had won by 20,000 votes, far more than the actual margin. “How outrageously its agents have lied during the whole of the Ohio campaign,” the *Post* ranted, “embracing and including Blaine’s two hippodroming trips and winding up with a studied perversion of the voting returns.”<sup>23</sup>

These discrepancies were widely noted, and at one point, the *Buffalo Courier*, reporting from Washington, said, “The conduct of the Associated Press in working systematically in the interest of Blaine continues to be severely commented on here by persons having facilities for obtaining inside information.”<sup>24</sup>

The general election was extremely close. In a field of four, no candidate won a majority of the popular vote. The election came down to New York and its electoral votes, and for three days, “the AP tally either favored Blaine or was inconclusive. The count of every other source that collected returns, including United Press, pointed to a victory for Cleveland.”<sup>25</sup> “That there has been an attempt at jugglery in the Western Union Telegraph office participated in by some of the agents or employees of the Associated Press there is no doubt,” the *Washington Post* reported the day after the election.<sup>26</sup>

The next day, AP sent a bulletin giving New York to Blaine by 572 votes, even though 30 districts had not reported.<sup>27</sup> In the face of the AP call, the *New York Times* all but awarded the election to Cleveland, attributing AP’s inconclusive count to the “suspected manipulation of the Associated Press

returns” in New York by Gould himself.<sup>28</sup> Angry crowds chased Gould from his office on Broadway, in the building that also housed AP, and the financier fled to his yacht on the Hudson River. Newspapers now were unrestrained in their condemnation of AP and its count.

The *New York World* accused AP and Western Union of scheming to “steal the elections,” largely by delaying the report of final results long enough to give upstate New Yorkers time to manipulate the vote to favor Blaine.<sup>29</sup> David M. Stone, publisher of the *Journal of Commerce*, declared that “the partisan character of the service is most painfully apparent.”<sup>30</sup>

The anger at Gould, Western Union and AP had an effect. The Thursday after the election, AP said it had invited party officials and representatives of New York’s newspapers to examine returns “as received direct from the various districts throughout the State, and also its mode of tabulating totals, and to assist in re-tabulating them.”<sup>31</sup> Three weeks later, AP acknowledged “some serious errors in telegraphing our reports” for New York State but said the one mistake of any importance involved a failure, two days after the election, to correctly project results from uncounted districts upstate. “The subagent in charge of the office sent this out without sufficient scrutiny,” AP’s report on the error continued, “but it was corrected as soon as its inaccuracy was positively ascertained.”

Smith’s partisanship was not an issue this time. The *Journal of Commerce*, in a report reprinted by the *New York Daily Tribune*, blamed an “agent of the telegraph company” along with a “subagent” of AP for manipulating the returns

in New York, adding that, “the latter was certainly guilty of some errors of judgment, but of no intentional wrong.” Referring to Smith, the report said, “there is no cause of complaint.”<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, it may have been sound AP reporting that cost Blaine the election. With the election approaching, Blaine addressed a meeting of clergy at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City. During the meeting, the presiding officer, an elderly minister named Samuel D. Burchard, told Blaine and the gathering, “We are Republicans and don’t propose to leave our party and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism, and rebellion,” which was later taken to be dig at Cleveland’s character as well as his temperance.<sup>33</sup>

With Blaine considered far ahead of Cleveland, New York newspapers more or less ignored the meeting. At least one reporter, however, was present. Frank A. Mack covered it for AP and confirmed with his stenographer what he had heard Burchard say. “Bet your life, the old fool,” the stenographer replied.

Blaine apparently recognized what was heard to be a slur on Catholics, and later told a friend that “the remark had cut through him like a knife.”<sup>34</sup>

He may have compounded his problem the next night by speaking at a fund-raising banquet at Delmonico’s restaurant attended by some of the country’s most prominent business leaders. Historian Mark Wahlgren Summers described the event and AP’s coverage this way: “Over *pommes a l’Anglaise* and kingfish *a la Richelieu*, prospects looked rosier to the diners than to newspaper readers, and

every dish was lovingly listed in the official AP report.”<sup>35</sup> By Election Day, Blaine had become the underdog in New York. He lost the state by fewer than 1,150 votes.

“Eulogizing wealth when the great mass of voters were suffering from the severe depression was impolitic and unwise,” Summers observed a century later.<sup>36</sup>

It never was proved that AP and Western Union had tried to steal the election of 1884, but by 1888, Western Union had dropped its involvement in collecting votes on election night. AP’s board of directors determined to “make whatever arrangements are necessary to collect the general election results, and that they should not be limited by any question of expense.”<sup>37</sup>

In December 1892, the Associated Press was incorporated in Illinois, combining once and for all the New York AP and the Western Associated Press. Melville E. Stone, who had been editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, became general manager of the new association. Over the next three presidential elections, AP gradually set up its own vote-counting machinery and called more and more on its own staff and member newspapers to provide results.

The issue of preferential treatment for one candidate over another lingered, however. Stone continued as president of the Globe National Bank of Chicago while running AP, and some time before the 1896 Republican convention in St. Louis, William McKinley, the party’s eventual nominee, asked Stone for his position on financial issues, which he gladly gave. Similarly, during the Democratic convention in Chicago, Stone spoke with William Jennings

Bryan, the party's nominee for president, and, in fact gave him a message from John R. McLain, chairman of the Ohio delegation, asking whether Bryan would consider McLain as his vice presidential running mate. Bryan said he would not.

“During the campaign, party feeling ran so high that I was charged by both campaign managers with bias,” Stone remembered. “Each was convinced that I was using the Associated Press to further the interest of the opposing party.” After the election, both McKinley and Bryan sent letters to Stone “attesting the strict impartiality of the service.”<sup>38</sup>

Politics and political reporting being what they are, bias often is in the eye of the beholder, and the modern AP has always been on guard against accusations of partisanship.

Coverage of the national political conventions has always been a vital part of the events leading up to AP's tally of returns on election night, and the extent and the quality of AP's convention coverage is even celebrated in fiction.

Charles Schermerhorn Schuyler, Gore Vidal's newspaper reporter-narrator in the historical novel *1876*, grouses about being sent to cover the Republican convention in Cincinnati. “After all,” he says, “the Associated Press does this sort of reporting far better than I.”<sup>39</sup>

AP's delegate count has long been an important part of convention coverage, although the numbers ceased to be as important when the conventions yielded their decision-making power to presidential primaries and caucuses. Even

so, the delegate survey is a valuable tool in gauging political opinions and positions on campaign issues.

Stone, in his memoir, told of attempts to influence the AP delegate count. “In 1896,” he recalled, “the friends of Speaker [of the House Thomas B.] Reed were incensed because we were unable to see that a majority of the delegates to the Republican National Convention were Reed men. Not that I think they really believed this; but everything is accounted fair in the game of politics, and they thought it would help their cause if the Associated Press would announce each delegation, on its selection, for Reed.” Stone concluded that the convention “verified our declarations, for Mr. Reed’s vote was insignificant.”<sup>40</sup> McKinley was nominated on the first ballot.

AP’s polling of delegates, a task that requires reporting in every state, begins months before the conventions, as soon as delegations are chosen in party caucuses and primaries. Their views are checked and rechecked, week after week, as candidates drop from the race, issues arise and national concerns change.

The AP delegate count foretold a major part of the story as Senator George McGovern of South Dakota won the Democratic nomination in 1972, climaxing “an incredible campaign that carried him from the back row of the Senate to the pinnacle of party power,” as Walter Mears reported in the AP bulletin on McGovern’s selection in Miami Beach.<sup>41</sup> But although McGovern had won a clear majority in the presidential primaries, holding onto it wasn’t easy. He had defeated former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in the California

primary, which was winner-take-all for the biggest delegation, even though McGovern's own reform commission had recommended dividing delegations in proportion to the primary vote. (That would become the rule, but not in 1972.)

At the convention, reformers and regulars switched sides. Humphrey, with support from labor and conservative southern Democrats as well as what was left of the campaigns of Edmund Muskie of Maine and Henry Jackson of Washington, tried to change the rules to allocate delegates proportionally. That would have given McGovern only 120 of California's 271 delegates and would have threatened to deny him the nomination. McGovern finally won, though he had to go to federal court to hold the full California delegation.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of the challengers' maneuvering, AP's delegate count was remarkably on target, only 3.8 votes fewer than McGovern's actual total, 1,728.35, before losers started throwing their support to him.

The AP count was even more accurate for the Republican nomination in 1976. The tally just before the convention began gave President Gerald Ford a total of 1,187, which is exactly what he got, to 1,066 for Ronald Reagan, the former governor of California, with six delegates uncommitted or abstaining. Four of those six ultimately went to Reagan.

Even though the political parties move their conclaves from city to city every four years, AP's Washington bureau runs the coverage, aided by state political reporters whose knowledge of their delegations is crucial. An internal memo in 1920 explained the reason for this: Conventions are "most efficiently

reported when handled by a news-gathering staff which is a permanent organization rather than one organized for the occasion, and for that reason they are always covered, in the main, by men of the Washington bureau, which has the largest staff in the service, if not, indeed, the largest of its kind in the country.”<sup>43</sup>

Renowned columnist and author Franklin P. Adams stated AP’s role more plainly in the *New York Tribune* in 1920:

**“The big arc lights of literature, as usual, will illuminate the conventions; and the best stories, as usual, will come from the journeymen reporters. If we owned a newspaper -- an ambition we have abandoned, leaving us with none whatever -- we’d rather have the A.P. service and one first class reporter on a story than the whole directorate of the Authors’ League.”<sup>44</sup>**

By 1900, AP had become the standard for election night reporting. The *Washington Post* advised its readers of plans to display results on a huge screen in front of the newspaper’s building, including bulletins from AP, “always to be relied upon,” so the public could have returns “hot from the wires and without a moment’s delay.”<sup>45</sup>

The *Post* and others who counted on AP were not disappointed. For the 1904 election, Wilmer Stuart of the New York office set up a system to count the vote in his state that was independent of any other agency or service. “He

organized the election force in every county and personally superintended the state service,” an internal AP review reported, “and its thoroughness was attested by the fact that by midnight the Association was enabled to give figures on the result, both for Governor and President, which closely approximated the complete counting of the following day.”<sup>46</sup> Stuart extended his system, in which each county was assigned to a correspondent or member newspaper, to other big states in 1908, with similar success.

Stone, clearly mindful of the ground AP was making up after the elections of 1876 and 1884, distributed to the members a memo to the staff after the 1904 election. “For promptness, accuracy and comprehensiveness,” he enthused, “it has never been equaled in any general election before.”<sup>47</sup>

Stuart, meanwhile, refined his system in subsequent elections, broadening his network to include more and more states. By 1916, “practically the entire burden” of counting more than 17 million ballots was in AP’s hands. AP and Stuart were ready, which was a good thing, “since no one else made any effort to do it,” members were advised in the annual report issued the next spring. “There were precisely 99,659 regular polling districts in the United States, besides the temporary arrangements for the soldier votes on the Mexican border. The polls closed all the way from 5 to 9 o’clock local time.”<sup>48</sup>

Preparations had begun two years earlier, under conditions of “unusual uncertainty.” As AP’s annual report said, “We could not compare the vote with 1912, because of the split in the Republican Party in that year. Increased woman

suffrage was also a perplexing factor. We made no predictions, guessed at nothing, went on quietly, and gave the results when we knew the facts, and not before.” This description has echoes today in what is known as “quality control,” in which incoming returns are compared with those of past years’ elections to make sure they are consistent and, as a consequence, as accurate as possible.

The 1916 election, in which Republican Charles Evans Hughes challenged President Woodrow Wilson, was expected to be close, and it was. Stuart’s system of county correspondents was fully implemented in about 30 states, those with large numbers of electoral votes and those in which the race was thought to be tightest.

Hughes led in early returns from the Northeast and later the Midwest. The candidate was reported to have gone to bed election night believing he was the winner, and, in fact, wire messages and phone calls bombarded Stone demanding that he call the race for the Republican. There were suggestions that AP was pro-Wilson and too stubborn to admit defeat.

“Early in the evening and long before the polls had closed in the Far West,” Stone recalled in his memoir, “the Democratic papers of the East conceded Hughes’s election. Of course, it was not our business to announce anybody’s election until we knew what the count would disclose. Then began the clamour [*sic*]. Message after message came asking if I was owned by the Democrats, and why on earth I did not accept the admissions of the Wilson papers and announce Hughes’s election.”<sup>49</sup> The general manager conferred with Stuart, who had set up

the system, and then insisted, “The Associated Press will make no statement on the outcome of the election until the result has been definitely decided.”<sup>50</sup>

At 4 o’clock in the morning the day after the election, Stone left the AP office for a breath of air. Minutes later, he stuck his head through the door and called out, “Don’t let any flash go on the wire until California is complete!”

That didn’t happen for almost two days. At 11:24 p.m. Thursday, in New York, the operator on the main transcontinental wire shouted, “FLASH!” and sent the message:

**SAN FRANCISCO – WILSON CARRIES CALIFORNIA  
AND IS REELECTED.**

The margin was 23 electoral votes, and California was the difference.

The 1916 election, Oliver Gramling wrote in his history of AP, “was a triumph of the efficiency of Stuart’s service. In several states, the pluralities were only a few hundred votes and the smallest percentage of error in tabulating the count would have given a totally inaccurate result.”<sup>51</sup>

In 1926, AP provided for the first time a “complete broadcasting service” in which reports were “handled to make it more adaptable” for use on radio. AP in New York, working with radio station WJZ in the city, provided a special radio report throughout the night. “In addition,” said an internal review of AP’s election night performance, “other stations in various parts of the country were given

returns by member papers so that the entire country was covered with AP broadcasts.”<sup>52</sup> Sensitive, however, to newspaper members’ concerns about competition from radio, the report went on to say that “radio was not permitted ... to crowd out the regular report for publication. Leads and comment were freely handled from all states with general leads at intervals throughout the night from New York.”

By 1928, Stone had retired as general manager, but he visited his successor, Kent Cooper, on election night. “Well, I just couldn’t stay away,” Stone said. As he was leaving, he stopped in the boardroom where the votes for Herbert Hoover and Al Smith were being tallied. “Isn’t this beautiful, Elliott,” he exclaimed to Jackson Elliott, Cooper’s assistant who was supervising the count. “Here is the staff of the Associated Press doing the same work that has been done in our organization in preceding elections over a long period. The staff is made up of new blood, young men whose faces are new to me, and yet nothing is changed. It is just like every preceding election staff—an efficient group carrying on without fluster or bluster.”<sup>53</sup>

AP approached 1933 as an off-year but soon had to fire up the election service as states voted to repeal the Prohibition amendment to the Constitution. “From early in April, when Michigan started the parade of states voting for repeal, until the end of the year,” Gramling recounted in his history of AP, “the Election Department was especially active. In all, forty-three special election services were set up.”<sup>54</sup>

By the 1940s, counting votes on election night had shifted to the Washington bureau, which managed coverage of the campaigns as well as of the conventions.

As Election Day dawned in 1948, few gave Harry Truman, who had become president when Franklin D. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, much chance of beating Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York who was back for a second try as the GOP candidate. Nationwide opinion polls conducted by the Gallup and Roper organizations, along with those of the *New York Times* and other big-city newspapers, showed Dewey the clear leader.

So sure of Dewey's winning was Arthur Sears Henning, Washington bureau chief of the *Chicago Tribune* (whose poll forecast a Dewey victory), that he wrote the next day's lead declaring Dewey president while the votes were still being counted. Even when returns showed Truman running a much better race than expected, Henning assured nervous colleagues, "Oh, that's just nonsense. That's nonsense. Forget it. The AP is all wrong."<sup>55</sup>

The *Tribune*, with its first edition declaring "DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN," was barely off the press when editors in Chicago determined that Henning had blown the call. The *Tribune* picked up most copies before they got to readers but neglected the stack delivered to the newspaper's own lobby. There the *Chicago Herald Examiner* bought a pile that ultimately produced one of the most famous election photos of all time--a beaming Truman, the unlikely winner the day after, holding up a copy of the *Tribune*'s headline.<sup>56</sup>

Had AP also been influenced by the pre-election polling? Ben Reese of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* told a meeting of the AP Managing Editors Association, “The early leads [on AP stories] named Dewey first, although Truman led in vote totals.”<sup>57</sup>

The observation caused some reflection at AP. News executive Victor Hackler, in a memo to an inquiring Tennessee publisher, suggested that AP might have started earlier with leads showing Truman making a “close, hot scrap” of the race. “I wish now that we had done it earlier,” Hackler said, “although I can see how the lead writers were trying to keep the picture in focus and not to draw too definite a conclusion from fragmentary returns.”<sup>58</sup>

The election in 1952 was notable for another innovation to speed up the count for AP, a nineteen-hundred-pound machine that was almost too big for the freight elevator at the Washington bureau, and required special wiring and extra fuses to run. “Yup, the mechanical brain really is a whiz on elections,” White House correspondent Douglas Cornell wrote after the votes had been tallied. “Feed in a stack of cards with holes in them, and 35 seconds later out comes a complete table showing just how the presidential election is going, state by state.”<sup>59</sup>

The “mechanical brain” was an IBM accounting machine. “In other elections,” Cornell remembered, “returns were penciled onto mimeographed forms, compiled on adding machines and posted on a big blackboard used by lead writers and editors. The modern version is to write key figures on cards which are

run through the punching machine, one card for each state.” But that did not mean an end to the old tote boards and blackboards, comforting relics that were set up in the Washington bureau every election night until 2004, when high-tech computer displays took over.

The election in 1960 turned out to be the closest since 1916, with a tighter vote than would occur in the election of 2000, and, as before and after, restraint marked AP’s coverage.

When California seemed a sure thing for Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts on election night 1960, many major news organizations jumped to give the election to the Democrat over Republican Vice President Richard M. Nixon. In its second Late City Edition, shortly after 2 in the morning, *The New York Times* carried a headline, “Kennedy Elected President.” The article that accompanied the headline said the call for Kennedy was based on 53 percent of the popular vote, which gave JFK a lead of more than 2 million. A later edition of the *Times*, at about 7 a.m., declared, “Kennedy Is Apparent Victor.”

“The basic problem,” the *Times* said in retrospect, “was that the Kennedy tide that seemed to be running strongly until about midnight began to trickle off as yesterday morning wore on. Added to this were too-optimistic reports from the key states of Illinois and California.”<sup>60</sup>

A substantial early lead for Kennedy in California had eroded sharply as the night wore on. But with all precincts in the state reporting, Kennedy remained ahead of Nixon by about 40,000 votes. Still, AP refused to call the election.

Ultimately, it was Minnesota and not California, which went to Nixon several days later on the basis of absentee votes not counted on election night, that triggered the AP call late the next afternoon. Those who jumped the gun for Kennedy were right for the wrong reasons.

“Traditional AP accuracy and care were highlighted by the work of two bureaus, Minneapolis and San Francisco,” an AP report on the count proclaimed. “Minneapolis’ sharp pronouncement saying that the state was safe for Kennedy assured his victory, and San Francisco’s cool insistence under pressure that California was not safe for him was vindicated by absentee ballot returns.”<sup>61</sup>

Radio in 1948 and then television in 1964, with their voracious appetites for faster, more-immediate returns, began to encroach on a territory--counting votes--that had belonged to AP alone for almost a century.

Walter Mears, who would win a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the 1976 presidential campaign, was in Concord, New Hampshire, the night of the first Republican primary of 1964. “Eighteen minutes after the polls closed, before anyone had a chance to count and tabulate ballots the old-fashioned way, Walter Cronkite was on CBS reporting the Lodge write-in victory,” Mears remembered in his 2003 memoir.<sup>62</sup>

Mears and the AP coverage team, meanwhile, were set up in the “rambling, wooden” Highway Hotel in Concord, “surroundings as antique as our vote-counting operation turned out to be.” AP, as it had in previous elections, would wait for stringers to call with returns, post the vote on color-coded index

cards on a large board, and ultimately write about the outcome. “It would not be done that way again,” Mears wrote. “The CBS report was based on instant calls from an army of vote watchers and on the outcome in selected sample precincts, and it was the future.”<sup>63</sup>

Television, in the words of one CBS News executive, had gone “overboard” in New Hampshire with its “saturation” coverage involving more than a thousand correspondents, technicians, producers and support people.<sup>64</sup> But Mears was right: There was to be no turning back.

The cost of this kind of coverage, it soon became apparent, would be prohibitive even for the free-spending networks. In a matter of weeks, the networks met at AP headquarters at the invitation of General Manager Wes Gallagher to consider ways to pool coverage and, consequently, reduce the cost to each participant. The meeting ended without agreement.<sup>65</sup>

After the extremely tight California primary on June 2, in which each network as well as AP and United Press International counted the votes in competition with one another, the pool idea resurfaced.

The result was creation the Network Election Service that which would hire 100,000 people on election night to gather returns at the precinct level from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>66</sup> The pool consisted of ABC, CBS, and NBC, along with AP. UPI joined later. The pool would cover races for president, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, and governors. AP would continue to count the vote in

other state races, including ballot propositions, which would not be part of the pool report.

Returns in 1964 ran ahead of those reported in 1960 by at least an hour. The joint effort, Gallagher said at the time, “saved money for the participating news services and gave the public one set of totals at each stage of the collection process instead of conflicting totals.” Further, he noted, the count was so fast that newspapers no longer had to consider projecting winners “since they had definite results in hand for early editions.”<sup>67</sup>

By the middle of 1965, the organization had been renamed News Election Service. Thousands of hours went into programming the NES computer system for the 1968 General Election. Stringers were assigned to 120,000 of the 175,000 precincts nationwide, plus another 4,500 to county collection centers. The count seemed to be running smoothly until someone noticed that the tally for Dick Gregory, the comedian and activist who was running for president, had jumped from about 2,300 votes to 9 million. That error was traced to a single county in Pennsylvania with no more than 50,000 registered voters. But by then, aberrations had begun to crop up in other states. At 10:20 p.m., the NES count was shut down.<sup>68</sup> AP said in its 1968 annual report that the NES breakdown “forced the AP to resort to a backup system in which bureaus and members cooperated to provide figures. This system slowed totals in states with close races, but at no time was there any question of the reliability of the returns.”<sup>69</sup>

AP did not declare Republican Richard M. Nixon's victory over Democrat Hubert H. Humphrey until the day after the election, when the decisive call came from closely contested Illinois.

Wilmer Stuart's system, developed around the turn of the century, was still vital 70 years later. Even when News Election Service worked, AP covered thousands of state, district, and local races that neither the combine nor competitors included in their counts. As important, AP bureaus were set to produce full coverage if other systems failed.

So in Texas in 1978, when an election bureau established for the state's newspapers and broadcasters shut down for the night before contests for governor and the U.S. Senate were settled, assuming no more votes would be counted until the next day, AP kept counting and finished the job.

"I calculated the results myself on a small hand calculator that cost \$9.95," Dorman Cordell, who was bureau chief in Dallas, recalled years later. The special election bureau had been wrong; the counties kept tallying ballots, and about 9 a.m., when the Texas Election Bureau was just getting back to work on the "unsettled" contests, AP declared them settled, for Republicans Bill Clements for governor and Senator John Tower for re-election. "According to the Associated Press, I have been re-elected," Tower began his post-election news conference.<sup>70</sup>

Gradually, in the 1960s and '70s, AP brought computers into the mix, frequently hiring local data processors to tabulate results phoned to state centers. The AP bureau in New Orleans was a pioneer in computerizing election-night

vote-counting. The first computerized go-round involved punch-cards which, when fed into a processor, produced tabulated returns that then had to be keyed onto AP wires.

Later, a computer firm hired to do the job in the '60s was "so delighted with the AP contract that they decorated and dressed up," recalled Faye Prince, who supervised election nights for AP in New Orleans. The problem was that the firm's system was so slow that uncounted returns began to pile up. With writers demanding fresh returns, Prince said, she "stormed the barriers" into the separate vote-entry room and found the firm's supervisor, "in flaming red silk chiffon cocktail dress with matching spiked heels and bow ribbons, looking dazed and clutching dozens and dozens of unentered returns."<sup>71</sup>

NES faltered again in the nonpresidential elections in 1978. This time, according to an AP account, a breakdown in the system "just cropped up" shortly after 7 p.m. "We're slowed down, we're crippled, but we're still trying to put out the votes," NES's Richard Eimers told inquiring reporters. Results were compiled from NES backup systems and telephoned to New York, where they were entered into a functioning computer, a process that delayed reports to pool members. AP, as it had a decade before, tabulated the vote independently and served its own members with accurate, if slower, returns.<sup>72</sup>

Covering state races other than those reported by NES became increasingly expensive, with a significant portion of the cost run up by outside data processors. In 1984, a private data processor in North Carolina resolved a

long-standing problem in handling AP election coverage: how to deliver tabulated returns to AP computers in formats ready for newspaper production and TV display. AP then decided to create its own computerized election system.

Although NES worked smoothly after the 1978 breakdown, the idea of sharing information that had been AP's alone for well over a century was rankling. "I remember being frustrated and I guess angry that UPI was going to have the same numbers we had," Walter Mears recalled in an interview years later. "I didn't think that was appropriate. We'd always competed fiercely with United Press ... and all of a sudden you were feeding at the same trough and the competition was gone."<sup>73</sup>

Mears, as executive editor, pushed the AP election system project through a sometimes-reluctant management in 1985, and defended the approach despite some state system problems in 1986. In 1988, the system performed flawlessly, and by 1990 all states and the District of Columbia were served by the tabulation system.

Meanwhile, through the 1980s, each TV network conducted its own exit polling, at a steeply rising cost. Exit polling let the networks call races faster than ever before, in some cases with outcomes evident before any votes had been counted. That was too fast for some public officials, especially on the West Coast, who complained that voters were being discouraged by "disruptive" pollsters. In Washington state, the legislature passed a law banning exit polling within 300 feet of voting places. That law was struck down by a federal court in 1985.

The first real complaint about calling races before the polls had closed was triggered by a presidential candidate rather than the media. The year was 1980, and Mears, who was writing AP's main story for the presidential election, was puzzling over how to call Ronald Reagan the winner without flatly declaring the race over. It was before 10 p.m. on the East Coast and the outcome was clear, but the polls still had not closed in California and other western states.

"At that time," Mears remembered, "I was trying to figure out the wording for an election story lead that would almost but not quite declare Reagan the winner, hedging because we were still counting votes." Then came word that President Jimmy Carter had called Reagan about an hour earlier to concede. "No presidential candidate had conceded early since Alton B. Parker bowed to Theodore Roosevelt, at 9:00 p.m. on election night 1904," Mears wrote.<sup>74</sup>

Carter's concession made Mears's story, and the reporting of the networks, that much easier, but it didn't please the speaker of the House. "Tip O'Neill was in a rage at the early concession he'd been unable to stop," Mears recalled, "saying it took votes from Democratic House candidates on the West Coast because when people there heard the presidential election was over, they stayed home instead of standing in line to cast ballots." That argument was echoed often over the next two decades by secretaries of state and other public officials, mostly in the West. The response from the networks and others who use exit polls was then, and is to this day, that no one has ever demonstrated that voters are discouraged by an early call in the presidential race.

For the 1990 non-presidential election, the four network-members of News Election Service--ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC--combined their polling in an organization they called Voter Research and Surveys. NES continued to serve the networks and AP with tabulated votes. VRS lowered costs to the networks for exit polling but not enough. By 1994, VRS had combined with NES, and a new organization was named Voter News Service. That would bring a dramatic new dimension to election nights at AP.

It was 2 p.m. on Election Day 1996 when editors clustered around the desk of Jonathan Woman, AP bureau chief in Washington, to study early exit poll numbers that showed, hours before polls would close even on the East Coast, that Bill Clinton would be back for another term in the White House. For the first time, AP, in partnership with the TV networks, now including Fox News, had information from Voter News Service that would make it possible to call the race when the polls in enough states had closed for one candidate to accumulate 270 electoral votes. In previous elections, AP's involvement in exit polling was to report network projections when they were made on the air. Now AP writers and editors had plenty of time to prepare stories that would report not only that Clinton had won but also why.

In the meantime, AP analysts in Washington studied state poll results that would help them advise bureau chiefs across the country as to which states could be called at poll close and which had to wait for actual election returns. The call for Clinton came precisely at 9 p.m., when the polls had closed in enough states to

give him sufficient electoral votes for another term. Political writer John King's bulletin followed momentarily:

**President Clinton won a decisive victory Tuesday night as Americans rejected Bob Dole's challenge on taxes and trust. Two years after storming into power promising revolution, chastened Republicans battled to extend their hold on the House and the Senate.**

**Clinton showed strength in every region of the country as he became the first Democratic president to be re-elected since Franklin Roosevelt.<sup>75</sup>**

In the end, the presidential race was called by AP in 34 states at poll close on the basis of exit surveys. The count continued through the night and into the next day on thousands of other races.

After 2000, AP began to move back to relying on its own devices. The VNS partners tried to rebuild the system but failed. On election night 2002, VNS pulled the plug on its polls early in the evening, "after concluding that its computer analysis could not be trusted."<sup>76</sup> With the collapse of VNS, AP struck out on its own. For the 2004 election, it built and tested a new system, with checks and double-checks for accuracy, to take over the vote count. A new consortium, the National Elections Pool, was created to manage exit polling.

In the end, AP counted the vote in 6,860 races, posting 171,795 updates in a 12-hour period up to 6 a.m. the day after the election. In addition to the TV networks which were served exclusively by AP, more than 600 members and other customers took special state election wires and 336 signed up for AP Elections Online, a Web-based service that included for many a customized page of continually updated returns, with color maps to help display voting patterns in states and across the country. Many customers signed up for the AP Politics Web site which included access to a browser similar in design to that provided to the TV networks.

AP Television News broadcast live from tabulation centers in New York and Spokane, Washington, to a worldwide audience estimated at more than a billion viewers. Media customers in England, Italy, Hong Kong, Thailand, Japan, China, and Taiwan took AP election returns. The Nielsen audience ratings service listed America Online Elections as “the fastest growing news and political site with a 324 percent increase from November 1 and 2, causing its traffic to spike at two million unique visitors.” Nielsen said AP was second to AOL with a “288 percent growth ... and one million unique visitors.”<sup>77</sup> The BBC, meanwhile, reported 4.5 million unique visitors but noted, “It is thought the true figure was 10-15 percent higher as the sheer volume overwhelmed the logging system.”<sup>78</sup> Both AOL and the BBC got their returns from AP.

AP political writer Ron Fournier wrote 67 leads on election night, went home to take a shower, and returned to wrap up the campaign and election with

20 more leads after the race was decided. All night long and into the morning, Fournier kept after his sources, and was talking to the White House when he learned that Kerry was on the phone at that moment, conceding the election to Bush.

Shortly after 11 a.m. Wednesday, Fournier filed his bulletin:

**WASHINGTON (AP) – President Bush won a second term from a divided and anxious nation, his promise of steady, strong wartime leadership trumping John Kerry’s fresh-start approach to Iraq and joblessness. After a long, tense night of vote-counting, the Democrat called Bush to concede Ohio and the presidency, The Associated Press has learned.”<sup>79</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Kristin Gazlay, conducted by Darrell Christian, May 18, 2006, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Sandra Johnson, conducted by Tom Jory, May 18, 2006, New York.

<sup>3</sup> Sandy Johnson, correspondence with author, May 18, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Adam Clymer, “Better Campaign Reporting: A View from the Major Leagues,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* (December 2001), 784.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Mattiace, e-mail message to Jonathan Wolman, November 8, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Katharine Q. Seelye, “Network Chiefs Get Flogging at Capitol for Election Fiasco,” *New York Times*, February 15, 2001. Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>7</sup> Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Paul Waldman, *The Press Effect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> “The Election,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 8, 1848.

<sup>9</sup> Richard A. Schwarzlose, *The Nation’s Newsbrokers, Vol. 1* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 142.

<sup>10</sup> Oliver Gramling, *AP, The Story of News* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1940), 24.

<sup>11</sup> “The Election,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 10, 1848.

<sup>12</sup> “Later From the Pacific,” *New York Times*, December 11, 1860. Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>13</sup> Melville E. Stone, *Fifty Years a Journalist* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921), 367.

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- <sup>14</sup> AP 34 (AP Publications). *The Service Bulletin*, (December 1921), 41. The AP Corporate Archives.
- <sup>15</sup> Menahem Blondheim, *News Over the Wires* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 180.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Press Gang* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 303.
- <sup>18</sup> Edgar Laughlin Gray, *The Career of William Henry Smith, Politician-Journalist*, (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 1951), 102-3.
- <sup>19</sup> *News Over the Wires*, 181.
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- <sup>21</sup> John Barbour and Wes Gallagher, "While the Smoke Is Still Rising: The Story of The Associated Press," chapter 7, "Trouble on the Block," 102. AP 28, Writings About The Associated Press, Series I. Unpublished Writings. The AP Corporate Archives.
- <sup>22</sup> Mark Wahlgren Summers, e-mail message to author, June 9, 2005.
- <sup>23</sup> "Reckless Perversion," *Washington Post*, October 17, 1884. Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- <sup>24</sup> "Trouble on the Block," 102-3.
- <sup>25</sup> *News Over the Wires*, 186.
- <sup>26</sup> *Washington Post*, November 7, 1884, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- <sup>27</sup> "Trouble on the Block," 104.
- <sup>28</sup> *New York Times*, November 8, 1884. Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- <sup>29</sup> *News Over the Wires*, 186.
- <sup>30</sup> *News Over the Wires*, 187.
- <sup>31</sup> "Stop Thief!" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 7, 1884.
- <sup>32</sup> "Taking It All Back," *New York Daily Tribune*, November 27, 1884.
- <sup>33</sup> Mark Wahlgren Summers, *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion: The Making of a President 1884*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 282.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion*, 286.
- <sup>36</sup> *News Over the Wires*, 185.
- <sup>37</sup> Proceedings of the Western Associated Press, August 15, 1888, 5. The AP Corporate Archives.
- <sup>38</sup> *Fifty Years a Journalist*, 223.
- <sup>39</sup> Gore Vidal, *1876* (New York: Random House Vintage, 2000) 258.
- <sup>40</sup> *Fifty Years a Journalist*, 365.
- <sup>41</sup> AP bulletin, Democrats Bjt 7th NL Miami Beach, Fla., July 13, 1972.
- <sup>42</sup> Walter Mears, *Deadlines Past* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews McMeel, 2003), 116.
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- <sup>44</sup> AP 34 (AP Publications). *The Service Bulletin*, (August 1920), 3. The AP Corporate Archives.
- <sup>45</sup> "The Post's Election Returns," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1900. Proquest Historical Newspapers.
- <sup>46</sup> AP 34 (AP Publications). *The Service Bulletin*, (August 1920), 2. The AP Corporate Archives.
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- <sup>49</sup> *Fifty Years a Journalist*, 314.
- <sup>50</sup> *The Story of News*, 250-1.
- <sup>51</sup> *The Story of News*, 254.
- <sup>52</sup> AP 34 (AP Publications). *The Service Bulletin*, (December 1921), 34-5. The AP Corporate Archives.
- <sup>53</sup> *The Story of News*, 350.
- <sup>54</sup> *The Story of News*, 379.

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- <sup>55</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, *Reporting From Washington, The History of the Washington Press Corps*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26.
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- <sup>57</sup> John Hightower, "AP: The Chief Single Source of News," chapter 37, "Ballots and Bulletins," 50. AP 28, Writings About The Associated Press, Series I. Unpublished Writings. The AP Corporate Archives.
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- <sup>63</sup> *Deadlines Past*, 36.
- <sup>64</sup> Martin Plissner, *The Control Room: How Television Calls the Shots in Presidential Elections*, (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 7-8.
- <sup>65</sup> "Ballots and Bulletins," 52.
- <sup>66</sup> "Ballots and Bulletins," 53.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>71</sup> Faye Prince, e-mail message to author, February 4, 2005.
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- <sup>73</sup> Interview with Walter Mears, conducted by Tom Jory, May 6, 2005, New York.
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- <sup>75</sup> AM-ELN—Election Rdp, 6th Ld, November 5, 1996. The AP Corporate Archives.
- <sup>76</sup> Howard Kurtz, "Polling Service's Meltdown Halts Exit Poll Data," *Washington Post*, November 6, 2002.
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- <sup>78</sup> British Broadcasting Co., news release, November 11, 2004.
- <sup>79</sup> BC-ELN-Election Rdp, 5th Ld, November 3, 2004. The AP Corporate Archives.