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Bill Kovach, Tom Rosenstiel

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## WARP SPEED



**America in the Age  
of Mixed Media**

With a Preface by David Halberstam

A CENTURY FOUNDATION BOOK

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#1686675 in Books 1999-05-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 6.00 x .501, .73 #File Name: 0870784374192 pages | File size: 15.Mb

**Bill Kovach, Tom Rosenstiel : Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fine condition. By Katrina Scales Needed it for a class. Cost me one cent. Fine condition. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Who watches a flawed watch dog? By Theodore A. Rushton The fundamental reason for the public distrust and contempt for the news media is amply evident in this 96-page book analyzing coverage of the Lewinsky-Clinton affair -- Americans have never tolerated a "holier than thou"

attitude from anyone. Now, don't get me wrong. This is a great book. It covers a recent major story and all of the hazards of reporting; in fact, it is what the print media does best when it investigates and reports controversy with depth, detail, discernment and presumed accuracy. But, after reading it, you'll understand why President Clinton continues to be popular and why the media is so reviled. Clinton regularly apologizes for his mistakes. The media, even when egregiously wrong, never apologizes. It brings to mind a McNaught Syndicate "Grafitti" cartoon from the 1960's, "An editor isn't always right but he's never wrong." In other words, never accuse an editor of a mistake; instead, explain "Here's some added details that would have led you to a different conclusion had you had it beforehand." `Warp Speed' piously quotes Walter Lippman's observation that a journalist's role ". . . is to sift out rumor and innuendo from fact and publish what one believes are facts." It ignores the common newsroom view that ". . . an editor's job is to separate the wheat from the chaff, then print the chaff." It may be somewhat cynical, but if the media were as cynical about their own performance as they are about the performance of everyone else they would be held in much higher regard. It reminds me of news coverage about the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbour. The media got the basic story right; but, most details in early stories were muddled, incomplete, inaccurate or even fanciful. That's expected in the fog and confusion of war. The Lewinsky-Clinton coverage was equally muddled, incomplete, inaccurate and fanciful. That's to be expected in the fog and confusion of politics and instant news coverage. The difference in today's world is the willingness of the media to rigorously investigate itself, which is about as objective as a church investigating the sins of its priests. Yet, a flawed watch dog is better than no dog at all. In this case, the investigating "dogs" are from Harvard and Columbia universities -- which style themselves as the College of Cardinals of journalism. It's like asking the Attorney General to investigate the President. Okay, "Who watches the flawed dogs?" Two hundred and some years ago, the founders established a House and a Senate to provide "sober second judgment." It's part of the checks-and-balances of our society. Today, the House and Senate are run by political parties -- and the media provides the "sober second judgment" from city hall to the presidency. If it's "political," most people know it has little merit; if it's policy, the media highlights the issues. Who do you think has uncovered every major scandal of the past 25 years? Barry Goldwater once called Richard Nixon the most dishonest man he ever met. The salacious details of the Lewinsky-Clinton affair were backdrop for whether or not "Bunco Billy" is now trying for the title. A politician accusing someone of lying is "politics." When the reputable media raises the same issue, it's good investigative journalism. Remember, Goldwater didn't comment until the media proved it to be true. It's a welcome trend. Had the media investigated the Bay of Pigs or Tonkin Gulf resolution, we would have been spared much grief. This book is a great start in self-criticism. The media investigating the media? Sure. First question: "How many professions can be trusted to investigate themselves?" Second question: "How many will investigate themselves?" Okay, who better to investigate the media? If the media can't investigate itself, then what can we trust it to investigate? By the end of this book, the media looks pretty good. Not because of the Lewinsky-Clinton reporting, but for this investigation. It's a fascinating inside look at "news values." They can be improved, but still, the media is refreshingly open to outside scrutiny. So, who really investigates the media? The type of people who read books of this nature.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Excellent analysis of state of the current and coming mediaBy A CustomerThis is a first-rate analysis and explanation of the state of the news business. Looking with special care at the coverage of the Lewinsky story, the authors describe and demonstrate the ways in which the news business has gone awry. and in the final pages, they provide useful suggestions about how coverage of the news could improve. Readers will enjoy the description of the problems, will be interested to relive parts of the Lweinsky story, and will find the recommendations provocative. An excellent read for anyone interested in the press.

Did the coverage of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal set a new low for American journalism? How has news gathering and reporting changed, and what effects has this had on the political and cultural landscape? In this insightful and thoughtful book, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, two of America's leading press watchers, explore the new culture of news--what they call the new Mixed Media Culture--and show how it works. Warp Speed describes a world of news in which the speed of delivery is reducing the time for verification, sources are gaining more leverage over the news, and argument is overwhelming reporting. The press, forced to adhere to the demands of the bottom line and keep its audience, is straining more and more to find the Big Story to package as a form of entertainment, turning news stories into TV dramas; and turning history into a kind of Truman Show. As a result, the role of the press in a self-governing society is undermined. Grounded in extensive research, Warp Speed is informed by interviews and testimony from the principal journalists who covered this story and who covered the other great scandals of Washington politics. It offers detailed recommendations on how journalists can right their ship, such as using anonymous sources more responsibly and turning good journalism into good business.

.com In the wake of scandal over Bill Clinton's "inappropriate relationship" with intern Monica Lewinsky, media watchdogs Bill Kovach (the ombudsman for Brill's Content) and Tom Rosenstiel offer a detailed analysis of how the news is made and unmade in the information age. A "journalism of assertion," they pessimistically observe, is starting to eclipse the more traditional "journalism of verification," as media outlets feel compelled to feed "the never-ending

news cycle" of 24-hour cable news channels and Internet sites rather than allow reporters the time to pursue tips and fact-check their material. The result is a debased form of journalism in which reporters rely on unnamed sources and often run with stories before finding second sources to back them up. Sources often control the flow and content of news by timing their leaks and striking deals with reporters, while editors increasingly replace expensive reporting with a much cheaper staple of professional debaters and so-called experts who engage in prepackaged conflict. The authors zero in on how the media reported the Monica Lewinsky affair: in its first weeks, they show, a full 41 percent of the media's "reporting" was actually opinion and analysis, rather than hard news. "The study's most important finding," they write, "was the extraordinary degree to which reporting and opinion and speculation were now intermingled with mainstream journalism." Kovach and Rosenstiel perhaps underestimate the liberating potential of the new media--journalism's tired old gatekeepers no longer hold a monopoly over information--but Warp Speed is nevertheless an important contribution to our understanding of what we know and how we know it. --John J. Miller In Warp Speed, Kovach and Rosenstiel have written a fascinating deconstruction of specific stories and rendered a public service to journalism. -- The New York Times Book , James B. StewartFrom the PublisherThe Century Foundation