15 Secret Papers, Secret Reporting, 1972: The Pentagon Papers and the Times

Chapter 15 Discussion

1. Revisit Chapter One's discussion of the NSA documents provided to the Washington Post and Guardian-US by Edward Snowden. Forty-three years later, what are the similarities in the cases and what are the differences?

2. Discuss what Richard Nixon's opposition to the publication of the Pentagon Papers says about his administration.

3. How might the New York Times have handled the Pentagon Papers differently in today's digital news environment?

4. Discuss how you would feel if your editors stopped publication of important stories you had prepared and submitted. How would you react if the Supreme Court supported resumption of the publication?

5. Notice New York Times editor Abe Rosenthal's quote on p. 248: "If we had... allowed the government, without a court battle, to dictate to us, I really believe that the heart would have gone out of the paper and American newspapering." Is Rosenthal exaggerating? Why or why not? Do newspapers today still have the will, and the resources to pursue such legal battles?

Chapter 15 Quiz

1. How old were the Pulitzer Prizes in 1966?
   A ☐ 30 B ☐ 50
   C ☐ 75 D ☐ 100

2. At what New York hotel did reporters and editors write their Pentagon Papers stories?
   A ☐ Marriott B ☐ Waldorf
   C ☐ Holiday Inn D ☐ Hilton

3. Which New York Times reporter is NOT mentioned as having worked on the Pentagon Papers stories?
   A ☐ Nicholas Kristof B ☐ Hedrick Smith
   C ☐ Fox Butterfield D ☐ Neil Sheehan

4. Richard Nixon's Vietnam policy was a major part of the Pentagon Papers:
   ☐ True ☐ False

5. The New York Times delayed publishing the Pentagon Papers for
   A ☐ Three days B ☐ One week
   C ☐ 15 days D ☐ It did not delay publishing