21 The Post Rings Twice, 1999–2000: Police Shootings and Shameful Homes

Chapter 21 Discussion

1. Compare and contrast the Washington Post's investigative team working on the police shooting story with the Boston Globe Spotlight Team that won for reporting on the priest sexual-abuse scandal, the Pulitzer-winner in 2003 (Chapter 4.)

2. The Post was "scooped" by the City Paper on one of the stories that it was preparing for its winning series (p. 366.) How would you react if your big story was written first by a competitor? What could you do during the reporting process to make sure that didn't happen?

3. Sari Horwitz warns that investigative journalism isn't for everyone, in part because it's so tedious (p. 368.) Discuss.

4. Kate Boo was covering the Washington Post "poverty beat" in the shadow of the Janet Cooke scandal relating to her fictionalization of a story (p. 371.) How might you establish yourself in covering a beat if the reporter before you had acquired a bad reputation?

5. Kate Boo was named to the Pulitzer Prize Board even though she had begun working for a magazine (The New Yorker.) Look at the changes in the "mix" of Board members over the last few years—by clicking on the "Board" tab on www.Pulitzer.org—and discuss how member affiliations have been changing.

Chapter 21 Quiz

1. The Washington Post's stories about shootings by police officers started with

   A   A statistic cited by the FBI   B   The shooting of a reporter by an officer
   C   A whistleblower from the police force   D   A report about the Glock 9-milimeter sidearm

2. The Post's publisher in 1999, Donald Graham, was a former policeman:

   True   False

3. Jeff Leen was involved with both the 1999 and 2000 Pulitzer public service winners:

   True   False

4. Post reporter Kate Boo

   A   Went on to work for a magazine   B   Joined the Pulitzer Prize board
   C   Covered the poverty beat   D   All the above

5. A printing mistake in one of her stories made Kate Boo cry:

   True   False