7 Stocks and Soldiers, 2007–2008: The Journal on Options, the Post on Walter Reed

Chapter 7 Discussion

1. The Wall Street Journal reporters were energized by one of the company executives saying "blind luck," rather than any scheme, was behind the fortunate stock-option payments. Can you even see yourself hoping that someone you interview will tell a lie so you can use it in the story? Discuss.

2. How would you feel if an opinion columnist for your own publications challenged your work publicly? Consider how Mark Maremont reacted to the negative appraisal of Wall Street Journal columnist Holman Jenkins Jr.

3. For what other kinds of stories, besides the Post's Walter Reed work, might it be beneficial for a skilled investigative reporter to team with a skilled writer, as Dana Priest did.

4. The Post reporters thought that Building 18 was a good "symbol" for showing the nature of the problems at Walter Reed. How important is it for reporters and editors to have such a symbolic element in organizing a project?

5. What benefits can there be to making a photographer part of the reporting team, as Dana Priest and Anne Hull did with Michel du Cille?

Chapter 7 Quiz

1. On the front page of the Wall Street Journal "The Perfect Payday" was an example of
   A ☐ Good news for reporters B ☐ A flashline
   C ☐ A typographical error D ☐ An oxymoron

2. Other publications quickly followed the Journal's stories on stock option backdating:
   ☐ True ☐ False

3. To gain entrance to Walter Reed the reporters pretended to be
   A ☐ Family members of patients B ☐ Nurses
   C ☐ Soldiers D ☐ They didn't represent themselves in any way

4. Dana Priest views the online presentation of the Walter Reed stories as a high point of the coverage:
   ☐ True ☐ False

5. What administration official spoke highly of the Post series?
   A ☐ President George W. Bush B ☐ Vice President Dick Cheney
   C ☐ Secretary of Defense Robert Gates D ☐ It was universally criticized by the administration