



Top Stories



Plotter of USS Cole attack freed from prison

Couple's body found slain in scrapyard



Bodies of an elderly couple have been found in Barlows scrapyard in Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, United Kingdom.

Featured story

Gay Talese on the state of journalism, Iraq and his life



Gay Talese has had trouble finding an agency to give him credentials to report in Iraq. "Even if I was on Al-

Jazeera with a gun to my head, I wouldn't be pleading with those bastards! I'd say, 'Go ahead. Make my day,'" said the 75 year old legendary journalist.

Wikipedia Current Events

Curlin wins the Breeders Cup at

Wikipedia Current Events

- the Monmouth Park racecourse.
- At least 30 people are killed and 100 injured in flooding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Some fires are reported in the Mexican state of Baja California, south of the U.S. border, but these are generally brought fairly swiftly under control.
- The Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger vows to personally "hunt down" those responsible for starting the fires.
- Yu Zhengsheng leaves his post as party chief of Hubei to replace newly promoted Politburo Standing Committee member Xi Jinping as Shanghai party chief.

Conspirator of USS Cole attack freed from prison

Jamal al-Bedawi, one of the planners of the USS Cole bombing in 2000 that killed 17 American NAVY personnel and injured 39 others in Yemen, has been freed from a prison in Sanaá, the capital of Yemen after he "pleaded allegiance" to the president of the country, and will be kept under house arrest with extreme security.

Al-Bedawi, who was serving a death sentence for his role in the attack, escaped from a Yemeni prison in February of 2006 along with another plotter of the attack, Fawaz al-Rabeiee, who has yet to be captured. Al-Bedawi turned himself in to authorities just over

two weeks ago. 21 other militants, 13 of which who were members of al-Qaeda, also escaped from the prison.

United States officials have described the move as "disappointing." "This action is inconsistent with a deepening of our bilateral counter-terrorism co-operation. We have communicated our displeasure to Yemeni officials," said a U.S. National Security Council spokesman.

There has been no official information has yet to be released to the press about the decision or the conditions of al-Bedawi's release.

2007/08 FA Premier League: Manchester United vs. Middlesbrough

Manchester United beat Middlesbrough 4-1 in a game where they scored 4 goals in 4 games which tied a 100 year old record. It was a one-sided affair as Manchester United as they had the majority of possession and had 21 shots on target.

Both Manchester United and Middlesbrough have the week off since they were eliminated from this season's Carling Cup.

Oral Roberts University attorneys seek gag order

Attorneys for Oral Roberts University requested a gag order on court filings related to alleged illegal political and financial wrongdoing as well as wrongful firings. According to a court filing,

ORU believes "their legal motion that publicity allegedly manipulated by the professors and their attorneys could lower the possibility of a fair trial. They want the professors and their attorneys barred from talking about the case outside of court." Specifically, "The motion refers to a report allegedly compiled by Roberts' sister-in-law, Stephanie Cantees, that Roberts has said consists of false rumors."

Wikisource has original text related to this article:

Swails, Brooker, Brooker v. Oral Roberts University

Also on Friday, the ORU Regents hired the Washington, D.C., law firm of Miller & Chevalier Chartered to investigate ORU expenses and the Arlington, Texas accounting firm Pickens Snodgrass Koch & Company will support the investigation.

The controversy has forced ORU president Richard Roberts to step down as his father Oral Roberts returns to the school. ORU Board of Regents Chairman George Pearsons said the change was temporary and did not imply guilt.

New bill will ban Muslims from wearing veils at polls; Canada

A new bill will propose a law to amend the Canada Elections Act to ban Muslims from wearing veils (or niqab's) while at polls.

"During the recent by-elections in Quebec, the government made it clear that we disagreed with the decision by Elections Canada to allow people to vote while concealing their face. That is why, in the Speech from the Throne, we committed to introducing legislation to confirm the visual identification of voters," said Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Peter Van

Loan. "Today, with the introduction of this Bill, we have fulfilled that commitment."

"While there was no apparent case of fraud in the recent Quebec by-elections, it was widely reported that numerous individuals voted while purposefully concealing their face," said Member of Parliament Lawrence Cannon. "This caused people to question the credibility and integrity of the voting process. In a democratic system, it is crucial that confidence in our democracy be maintained. This Bill will maintain that confidence."

Muslims will need to uncover when voting at all federal elections, by-elections, and advance polls. Citizens who are vouching for a voter who doesn't have an ID will have to uncover their face as well. People who are medically required to have their faces covered are given an exception but will need to show photo ID and two pieces of other ID, or they will have to be vouched for by someone, who is not wearing a face covering, or removes their face covering. Alternatively they can make an oath saying it would be against the rules of their doctor or be harmful to their health to remove their face covering.

Elections Canada volunteers would need to, somehow, suit the voter to their religious needs, if necessary.

According to the press release it will allow "someone to be recognized, who is attempting to commit an offense at the polls (e.g. someone trying to vote twice)," and it will "restore public confidence in the electoral process."

Bill C-31 allowed voters to wear veils as long as they showed two

pieces of ID, with one displaying their address. If they only brought one piece, photo ID or not, they would be required to remove their veils. If the person had a voting card, the problem would not exist. However, the new proposed bill would require Muslims to remove their veil regardless of if they have a voting card.

The Chief Electoral Officer for Elections Quebec refused to come to agreement with the Federal Government's opposition of his position of letting voters only remove their veils when they only brought one photo and no other ID, so they could compare their identity to the photo. He could have supported the Federal Government's opposition and change the requirements, but since he didn't the Canada Elections Act has been proposed to be amended.

"If anybody had actually bothered to ask the women that are actually concerned, and we are talking about a very small minority of women, they would have told them that they always take it off to identify their faces. And they do it at the bank, they do it at border crossings, they do it at the airport," said Sarah Elgazzar, a spokeswoman for the Canada Council on American-Islamic Relations in September.

Dalai Lama to meet with Canada's PM on Monday

Stephen Harper will be meeting with the Dalai Lama XIV, 72, on Monday at the Prime Minister's Office in Ottawa at 2 p.m.

The Dalai Lama is scheduled to give a speech the day before in Ottawa in a downtown arena. He will meet with secretary of state for multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, in Gatineau, Quebec on

Monday, then hold a news conference, later meet the prime minister, and meet at a reception with all the parliamentarians. Governors General Michaëlle Jean will meet with him at her Rideau Hall residence, followed by a meet with Liberal MPs at a hotel on Tuesday.

This is the second time the Dalai Lama will meet with a Canadian Prime Minister. Former Foreign Affairs Minister Peter Mackay and the PM made a controversial move and appointed the Dalai Lama honorary Canadian citizenship in June 2006. Jason Kenney, who visited the house of former Communist party chief Zhao Ziyang in China, and accidentally went to a rally supporting the People's Mujahedin of Iran, was instrumental in granting him honorary citizenship. Paul Martin later criticised him for visiting the home. Kenney is a member of the Canada-Tibet Committee.

Former Liberal Canadian PM Paul Martin met with the Dalai Lama at a Roman Catholic archbishop's house, showing he respected the figure but there were some wide religious differences. Harper is also a Catholic.

Two weeks before, U.S. President George W. Bush met with the famous religious figure, which sparked up controversy from the Chinese government. He is the first sitting U.S. president to appear with the Dalai Lama in public.

"I think what some of these countries are now seeing is that the changes that were promised in China have not happened at a fast enough rate, and that the Dalai Lama's travels are an opportunity for those countries to continue the exertion on China for democratic

reform and better protection of human rights," said executive director of the Canada-Tibet Committee, Dermot Travis.

"China is not looking very good in all this. They're coming across as bullies. China can send out these press releases, but I don't believe they'll stop doing business with all these countries," said Consiglio Di Nino, a Canadian senator, who is co-chairman of the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet, and was instrumental in organising the visit.

"Whoever this young man was he had taken a tremendous risk. He was just like many others trying to send a message out to the world," said Nino, recalling in the 1990's a young boy from a monastery who left a sad help note in his hand. Nino gave him a picture of the Dalai Lama to reassure him. "It's got to be one of the most wonderful moments of my life, the incredible unspoken message between us."

2007/08 Bundesliga: Stuttgart vs. Bayer Leverkusen

Stuttgart beat Bayer Leverkusen 1-0 on a 2nd half goal by Andreas Beck which moved the defending champions up to 12th in the table.

Stuttgart 16 shots of which 4 hit the target while Bayer Leverkusen had 23 shots while 4 hit the target. However, Beck's goal proved to be the difference.

Next week, Stuttgart is away to FC Nürnberg while Bayer Leverkusen are home to Arminia Bielefeld.

Tony Blair speaks in Canada

Tony Blair, United Kingdom's former Prime Minister, made his first public appearance since stepping down as PM yesterday at a speech entitled Global Relations:

A Conversation with Tony Blair to an audience of about 2,400 in Calgary, Alberta from noon to 2:30 p.m. in the Telus Convention Centre, sponsored by Toronto-Dominion Bank (TD Canada Trust).

Lunch was served with an authentic Alberta beef steak. Alberta premier Ed Stelmach, Calgary mayor Dave Bronconnier, and other public officials were there. "Congratulations on winning a third term. As a three-term prime minister I can tell you that's when things get rough," Blair told Bronconnier.

During the speech he talked about Canada on the world stage, the controversial military role in Afghanistan, defending the country in war-devastated places, as well as other large issues facing Canada.

Blair said it's not about being on the left or right side of politics, it's about being open or closed.

"If we want to win, we can't just be for democracy and freedom. We have to be for justice and fairness," Blair said to the audience that paid CA\$400 to attend the event. "It's a battle of ideas."

"If we're going to fight this terrorism off, we're going to have to show them we're as tough as they are ... and stay the course." Blair said even though it'll be a long-road in the war it's important to not give up the fight against "the forces of extremism."

Blair is an Envoy in the Quartet on the Middle East, which is involved in mediating the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He become Envoy the same day he stepped down as PM.

"This morning I looked at your local papers and saw 'Premier Under Fire'. And I thought, 'Oh God, why, what have I done now?' before realising that I wasn't PM anymore. I'm still adjusting."

He also commented about Alberta's oil and gas royalty dispute saying, "I'm just glad it's not my decision," and after three terms of being PM he's "learned when to keep my mouth shut." Alberta has the second largest oil reserves in the world and Abu Dhabi National Energy Co. recently made their third offer for \$5-billion to buy Alberta-based company Prime West Energy Trust. In relation to that, Blair said, "Calgary is not only the new centre of Canada or North America, but a global centre for the world."

"I often say to people, Canada will become one of the most powerful nations in the world." He also pointed out, "As power grows... so does more responsibility. What you need to do is carry with it your optimistic spirit. You're a country that can easily play as large a role as anyone else."

"Optimism is something you get very easily when you come to Canada," he said relating to Canada's strong alliances with other countries. He said Canada has a "can-do" attitude.

After, he sat down with former premier of New Brunswick Frank McKenna, now TD Bank's deputy chairman, in green armchairs, part of TD's advertising campaign, and had a Q&A period.

Journalists were not allowed to use cameras or recording devices during the event as ordered by Scotland Yard, the Globe and Mail reports, who were told by event organisers.

Blair also praised Canada's wine, "This is a secret you've just got to get out."

Unexpected comet 'outburst' could be visible for weeks

If you've noticed a fuzzy yellowish object at night in the northeast sky, immediately to the left of the constellation Perseus, that's because it is the Comet Holmes which has suddenly got brighter in what scientists say is "absolutely unprecedented" in comet research.

Earlier reports were that the object might have been a star that went super nova, or that a new star might have formed, but because the comet does not have a tail, the earlier reports were later dismissed.

"This is a terrific outburst, and since it doesn't have a tail right now, some observers have confused it with a nova. We've had at least two reports of a new star. When the Deep Impact probe hit Comet 9P Tempel, there was almost no change in brightness. This outburst by Comet Holmes is extreme!" said Minor Planet Center director, Brian Marsden.

Not more than a few days ago, the comet began to get brighter and appear larger in the sky, in what scientists call an "outburst." The comet is usually only visible through telescopes, but the outburst has caused it to be visible through the naked eye and it will continue to grow brighter with its coma eventually reaching the size of The Moon. Currently, only people living in the Northern Hemisphere are able to get a glimpse of the show. Binoculars and a small telescope can be used to get a close up view.

The comet took just 24 hours to get more than 400,000 times

brighter than it usually is, and is currently over one million times brighter, but Marsden says the comet's brightness could dim in days or even weeks.

The comet was discovered on November 6, 1892 by Edwin Holmes while he was looking at the Andromeda Galaxy through his telescope. Researchers say that the comet may also have had an outburst at the time it was discovered. It was seen once after that in 1899 and then 1906, but disappeared until it was "rediscovered" in 1964 after a prediction Marsden had made.

"Since then, it's been behaving well – until now," added Marsden.

Gay Talese on the state of journalism, Iraq and his life

Gay Talese wants to go to Iraq. "It so happens there is someone that's working on such a thing right now for me," the 75-year-old legendary journalist and author told David Shankbone. "Even if I was on Al-Jazeera with a gun to my head, I wouldn't be pleading with those bastards! I'd say, 'Go ahead. Make my day.'"

Few reporters will ever reach the stature of Talese. His 1966 profile of Frank Sinatra, Frank Sinatra Has a Cold, was not only cited by The Economist as the greatest profile of Sinatra ever written, but is considered the greatest of any celebrity profile ever written. In the 70th anniversary issue of Esquire in October 2003, the editors declared the piece the "Best Story Esquire Ever Published."

Talese helped create and define a new style of literary reporting called New Journalism. Talese himself told NPR he rejects this label ("The term new journalism

became very fashionable on college campuses in the 1970s and some of its practitioners tended to be a little loose with the facts. And that's where I wanted to part company.")

He is not bothered by the Bancrofts selling *The Wall Street Journal* ("It's not like we should lament the passing of some noble dynasty!") to Rupert Murdoch, but he is bothered by how the press supported and sold the Iraq War to the American people. "The press in Washington got us into this war as much as the people that are controlling it," said Talese. "They took information that was second-hand information, and they went along with it." He wants to see the Washington press corp disbanded and sent around the country to get back in touch with the people it covers; that the press should not be so focused on--and in bed with--the federal government.

Augusten Burroughs once said that writers are experience junkies, and Talese fits the bill. Talese--who has been married to Nan Talese (she edited James Frey's *Million Little Pieces*) for fifty years--can be found at baseball games in Cuba or the gay bars of Beijing, wanting to see humanity in all its experience.

On Gay Talese

David Shankbone: Does it bother you that your name has come to mean 'homosexual'?

Gay Talese: No, it doesn't bother me at all! I've always been called that, I had bylines in high school. I started getting bylines when I was in high school and I wrote for the *Ocean City Sentinel*. I was Gay Talese. I even had a column when I went to college in Alabama, it was called *Sports Gay-zing* - I was the sports editor for the college paper.

DS: [Laughs] "Sports Gay-zing"?
GT: I don't know when gay revolution or gay rights...I don't know how it happened or when it happened, but it was a parallel movement that happened at the same time I was alive. What's the difference? It makes no difference.

DS: Is your ancestry Sicilian or Northern?

GT: No, it's Southern Italian.

DS: Southern, not Sicilian?

GT: Calabrian. But it is close enough. It's the total of both. That's my ancestry. My father was born there, in fact. He was the only person from his family that came to the United States and he did so in 1920.

DS: Do you ever pay any attention to Italian politics and the happenings with the Lega Nord?

GT: I pay attention to it when it's in the headlines. I read the papers. But do I pay attention to the point of caring? No. I don't know that the Italians much care about politics. They capitalize on it. They exploit it. I think it's a country of family influences. Families matter so much there. They've had a mistrust of government ever since the fall of Rome. I mean they're really clans. Just a bunch of clans. Little cliquish people, even now. Even now, with transportation and communications pervasive. It used to be they were stuck in the hills and they didn't have any means of getting from one part of the mountain to the other so they were insular. Their dialect was held firm. Now, it's different, but it's still not a country that's a unified country. I mean Italy is called a nation, but

DS: They can't seem to do anything politically. They can't

save Venice

GT: They can't do anything. But on the other hand they live damn well. There's a kind of underground economy that's been there, probably for centuries. The surface tells you one thing. The statistics tells you this, this, this. But underneath, there's a core management this kind of internal management of mercenary affairs, or family connections, or ways of gaining what is known on the surface, but underneath there's a whole mysterious way of prosperity in Italy that isn't shown. It's very interesting. You find the news reports or the books that are out saying one thing. I don't exactly ever see it and I've traveled a lot. I haven't traveled very much in the last ten years in Europe.

On a higher power and how he'd like to die

DS: Do you believe in a higher power?

GT: I believe a higher power can exist for inspiring people toward fulfilling a dream. That's religion.

DS: What do you think happens when we die?

GT: I was raised as a Catholic, and while I didn't marry within the church, my wife is also Catholic. It doesn't necessarily hold that there dies within you all that you believe when you were shaped by the process of being born Catholic, so I do believe--I comfort myself, I comfort myself--with the notion of an eternal life. But as George Eliot said in that great novel you probably read, religion is a fear of the hereafter. Religion is a fear of the hereafter. That's what it is. It provides you a conviction or belief that there is something there in the hereafter, or else you won't have any long view. Religion gives you a long view that what you do on Earth is going to shape your

destiny in heaven. That's comforting.

DS: Do you have religion?

GT: To the degree I stated I do, but to the degree that the Pope...I don't go to church, and I don't abide by anything the church preaches.

DS: Do you pray?

GT: Privately I do, sometimes, yes, I do.

DS: In certain moments more than others?

GT: In moments when I feel that I'm out of control. That I can not affect the result.

DS: When do you feel out of control?

GT: When I fear I am going to die. I remember praying on an airplane between Denver and Santa Fe. It was a small commuter flight. The co-pilot came back and said we are going to have turn back because our left landing gear will not go down, and we are going to have to dump gas over the dessert because we need to go back to Denver, because it is better equipped as an airport to deal with this crash landing we need to have. More foam and the fire department is bigger. We had twenty minutes before our crash landing. During that time I prayed. I wrote a letter to my wife. I was just about fifty. I wrote a letter to my wife and daughters and prayed and thought, "This is it."

DS: What did the letter say?

GT: How much I loved them. How sorry I was I didn't have more time. How happy I was with the time I had. How lucky we were, and how sad I was that I wasn't going to be back. I feared that the letter was going to burn with me. It was ridiculous to be writing a letter, but I did. What a fucking

place for the end of me, Denver airport! So that was fear. Fear of the hereafter? Religion and prayers.

DS: How many times have you seen your own death?

GT: Well, sadly, my best friend was killed this year. David Halberstam. We were brothers. I was his first friend when he came to New York to join The New York Times. He lived in this house when he first came. He lived upstairs. When he got married to his present widow, who I was with last night, I was the best man. That was the late 1970's. And the last year we traveled together as a foursome, his wife and mine. Then he gets killed. Jean calls me up, "Some student in San Francisco...he got killed just like that!" So that's a death! Now that is horrible, but that's not so bad. I wouldn't mind dying like that. The way I would not want to die...every time I go flying I see the porters by the plane waiting for some old crippled person to get off the plane and then they roll them through the airport. I don't want to go like that. I'd rather go like Halberstam.

DS: You wouldn't want to be a Terri Schiavo.

GT: I don't even want to be a cripple who gets pushed across the airport! Forget brain damage. I'm just talking about infirm, getting along and can't walk.

DS: You're quite sprite.

GT: Yeah, I wouldn't want that. That's why I'd like to go to Iraq. Why? I don't care about dying. I'd rather go out like Halberstam. Quick--

DS: Doing what you love

GT: Yeah. Yeah. Even if I was on Al-Jazeera with a gun to my head, I wouldn't be pleading with those

bastards! I'd say, "Go ahead. Make my day." Because when you're 75 you see around you your own generation, some of them hobbling along. Some writers I know--Gore Vidal; poor Norman Mailer. Not that he's feeling sorry for himself, I was just with him in Texas earlier this year. He gave his papers to the University of Texas at Austin. I saw someone has to push him in a chair. I've known Norman Mailer for some fifty years, and this is the first time someone has to push him. I had a dinner party for him as recently as a year ago, here. And I said, "Norman, you have to come up the steps, maybe we should go some place where there's an elevator." He said, "No, no." So he had to come up the steps outside where you did with his canes. But in Austin with the campus there was someone who needed to push him in a chair. That may happen to me soon enough, but I don't like to think about it. Halberstam...he finished his work, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*, was also thinking of another book and was in the process of researching it, and he gets rammed by a student who shouldn't have been driving him in the first place. But he went out like that--quick! And he had a great life.

On the media and Iraq

DS: What do you think is the reason there is this collective idea to give Americans a certain view of a place or a people that is not necessarily accurate? I think Iran is another good example, where we are consistently fed images and notions about a people and a culture that aren't really accurate. GT: Or fair minded.

DS: Or fair minded. But the reality is far more interesting than the same stories we are consistently fed.

GT: Well it involves more work. I think most journalists are pretty lazy, number one. A little lazy and also they're spoon-fed information, such as the weapons of mass destruction back in 2003. It's easy. There are all these lobbyist groups, these special interest groups. Each of them has a position with regard to Taiwan, for example. The anti-China lobby is very strong. Whether it's the gun lobby or the Israeli lobby or the Taiwan lobby, whatever the hell it is, you have these people who create a package of news, develop it as a story line, a scenario, and they find, as Mailer once said about the press, that they're like a donkey. You have to feed the donkey. The donkey every day has to eat. So these people throw information at this damn animal that eats everything. Tin cans, garbage.

DS: And Americans are the donkeys as well?

GT: Well the media

DS: But people are still consuming what they're throwing out there though.

GT: Yeah, they are, because they're getting stories. In Iraq the whole press is embedded. Those correspondents who drive around in tanks and armored personnel carriers, who are spoon-fed what the military gives them and they become mascots for the military, these journalists. I wouldn't have journalists embedded if I had any power! You said what would you do? Well there are stories to be done. There are a lot of stories to be done. You don't have to have military protection. There are stories you can do that aren't done. I've said that many times. What story would you do? Well even if you're stuck in the Green Zone you can do stories.

DS: It's dangerous to actually go out there and hit the pavement.

GT: Supposed you don't have to go out there? There are stories to be done in the Green Zone, within whatever the walls of protection are. You could do stories about Iraqis who work within the Green Zone. You could do stories about what kind of sexual activity goes on. Back to sex now. Here's what's important: In times of occupation of every historical event involving the United States, whether it's World War II, whether it's the war in Vietnam, Korea, occupation of Japan after World War II, World War I, there's always been a private relationship with the people of the country that's been invaded. Always.

DS: How could there not be?

GT: Sometimes it leads to marriage. Sometimes it's just affairs. Sometimes it involves just dealing with bar girls in Okinawa or Leone or Sicily or somewhere.

DS: Sure.

GT: Not so now. This is the first war like that, in Iraq.

DS: Have you been there?

GT: No, I haven't been there. I'd like to go.

DS: Why haven't you?

GT: Well, I have to have somebody that will give me credentials.

DS: That shouldn't be too hard for you.

GT: Sure it is, because you think The New York Times, the Time Magazine, Newsweek Magazine....?

DS: Esquire?

GT: Esquire?

DS: Esquire does political reporting.

GT: It so happens there is

someone that's working on such a thing right now for me. I haven't heard from them yet.

DS: What would be the difficulties for you in achieving that? It seems like you would just have to make a phone call.

GT: You very much overrate whatever stature you think I have. I mean there are people that are there. The New York Times has probably fifteen, twenty people there. And they're not going to underwrite me as a freelancer. People want staff now. Obviously you have to be covered by health and all this....

DS: I think you're underrating your stature.

GT: The point is, I'm not there, okay. We can talk all morning about this, but the point is I am now working on something. But I'm trying to get back to what I was saying before, whether or not I'm there, I'm now here. Will I be there? Maybe. But there are stories. I mean I'm quoting myself as to what kind of stories. The television shows American troops kicking down doors and I wonder: who fixes the doors? The other day I was on an airplane coming back from Bogotá and I sat next to a guy, an American, who was a Green Beret guy years ago. Well now he's in Baghdad as one of these civilian contractors. He has a company and he invited me to go with this company. That's my little thing that I have in the offing. But he told me that the worst thing, not kicking down the doors, but they go in there and they open the locks of what we'll call the hope chests of women who hope to marry. The soldiers go in and they just break open the locks of these women's hope chests or whatever you call them and that is really the ultimate insult. It's like raping the women right there. And this stuff

goes on all the time. Well you could write about that. And no one writes about that.

DS: I always wanted to know what the cemeteries are like there. What the funerals are like there. Are they like town meetings in a place where there is so much death?

GT: The journalists define news and their editors want news....

DS: It fits a template.

GT: And the reporting out of Washington is the worst.

DS: The press is often cited for it's laziness and for reporting any source without checking its accuracy.

GT: The press in Washington got us into this war as much as the people that is controlling it. They took information that was second-hand information, and they went along with it. It wasn't only the Judy Millers who got credit for being in the pocket of Hamad Chalabi and Wolfowitz and the rest of those people. All of them. The New York Times bureau, not only Miller, but all of them. They went along. They don't want to get off Air Force One; they want to have access. Also, you mentioned Floyd Abrams. I wouldn't defend what he defended, this kind of sourcing that goes on. These sources that lie? New York Times allow such liars to affect news. I'll give you several examples: the story of the so-called Chinese spy, Wen Ho Lee, the guy who four or five years ago in Los Alamos was supposed to be a spy. He was locked up with chains around his ankles. That was leaked information, one of these celebrated reporters--Risen, or something, was the guy. The story about that Anthrax fellow in Maryland who was supposed to be identified the source of this anthrax. Wrong. The Duke

Lacrosse players, we were told raped that girl; the New York Times pushed it on their front page. We didn't know the facts. You use sources and identify, crucify people who never committed any wrong. It turned out not true. Then it's too late. It's just like that whole period before the Iraq War. That information--it was leaked, coming in, publish it. Saddam has an atomic bomb. And they publish it. They publish it and we don't know the truth. Journalists should withhold information like that.

On the Iraq War...

DS: Has the war affected you as a person?

GT: I wish it had. The war hasn't affected America as a person. The only ones affected are the 165,000 troops, relatives, kinfolk, cousins. That's all.

DS: It hasn't affected you then?

GT: I wish it had! It hasn't. It hasn't affected you either. It hasn't affected anybody!

DS: It's affected me.

GT: It's affected you?

DS: Every single person I interview I ask about the war because I think it's important and it has affected me.

GT: Then you must have a human spirit unmatched since Billy Graham made his first speech! I mean you have to have a real conscience, social conscience, to care. Where are the protests coming out of the Ivy League or the University of Alabama? They're not there because there's no conscription. There should be conscription. There should be a draft. There should be. Everybody should serve.

DS: That's what Charles Rangel says.

GT: He's the only voice in Congress that ever said that and he said it five years ago. I don't know of any other voice. I am not aware of another member of the Congress who said what Rangel said. Not one. Certainly not these candidates, Clinton and the rest of them. Because why? Because they know it would stop the war in an hour. Because then we would have involvement. Right now what's the involvement? The ridiculous stickers, 'Support Your Troops' on the back of an SUV? The cost of gas matters not at all. Nobody sacrifices.

DS: That's the only thing that does seem to motivate people to be against the war is to be paying more at the gas pump.

GT: They don't care. Don't care. There's no sacrifice. Americans are unaffected, except those in the military or related to military people, doesn't matter... I go out. I mean, yes you can have conversations at dinner parties about this, but it's very political. It's about whether McCain says this or Hillary says this and what's the position of somebody in the defense department. That's all bullshit. Really nobody cares.

DS: Does it bother you that there's a lack of outrage?

GT: Yes it does. It does bother me. And it does bother me that the poor people who need money join the National Guard Reserves because they needed that money or they want to go to college. What most bothers me are the college students – the worst generation is what I call them. These college students are the worst and I've been to a lot of campuses. I taught last year at USC. I always go to USC in the spring in April every year. I go for a week or so. And I hang around. Across from the campus, there's a

motel I stay in. College students are always hanging around there. And I was, this year, at the University of Pennsylvania and I was at the University of Alabama, and I've been to a number of campuses this year and nobody cares about this war.

DS: Or really much about anything.

GT: Less so because of this technology that's absorbed them, you know with their God damn ears closed and their eyes affixed. and the God damn games they play.

DS: It doesn't get better as you go higher

GT: It doesn't?

DS: No, that was one of the things that stood out to me at Fordham Law. It's a top 25 law school in a very vibrant city with a lot of thinkers. I told this anecdote to Floyd Abrams: I was in a Constitutional Law class right after Alito was nominated to be on the Supreme Court. The professor asked 120 law students on the first day of class how many of them thought he should be confirmed. About five students raised their hands. "New York," I thought. Then he asked how many of them thought Alito should not be confirmed. About ten students raised their hands. Then he asked how many did not feel they had enough information to know. about another five students raised their hands. What is that? 100 students in a Constitutional Law class at a top school can't proffer an opinion on a Supreme Court nominee? Is that apathy...confusion...fear...? What is it?

GT: When I was in the military, there was no war. 1954, 1955; Korea was over by then. I had to camp with people from different parts of the United States.

Farmers, sons, rich people, poor people. We were all together for at least six weeks of basic training, and then later on when you are assigned to a unit you really had a sense of the country if you didn't have the opportunity to travel. Very few of us did; I never traveled anywhere until I was in the army. I went to college, from New Jersey to Alabama as a student, so I was at least in a different part of the United States than that where I was born. Out of college I went into the army, Fort Knox, Kentucky, and I was with people from Texas, North Carolina and people from Boston. Those who don't have to serve, or choose not to, can say that it's not their war. But it's an economic war; it's a sad commentary on who has to serve, because it is mercenary. They are economic mercenaries. They are economically deprived people, without opportunities, and they seek this opportunity and they never imagine how ill-chosen was their choice when they are missing a leg, or witnessing the horror. It's been close to five years, and still no protests? You don't find the students at Columbia protesting? They can protest the President of Iran! They're good at that, but they are no good at protesting what is going on in to their generation that couldn't afford to get into Columbia, or any place. It's so unfair, and so un-protested after so many years...it's been close to five years!

DS: After Hurricane Katrina there was a lot of debate on whether we would rebuild one of our own cities as we were over in Iraq demolishing their cities. How did you feel about that?

GT: I was there a month after it hit. I had a friend down there, Julia Kass, who I went to see. I stayed in a hotel--there were

hotels functioning. It wasn't that everything was destroyed; there were parts that weren't--

DS: Yeah, the high areas; the rich areas--

GT: --that's right. And this was a rich area. It was a good hotel. She would get in her car, Miss Julia Kass, and take me around. And boy did I see that town...it...it...it was just like what you read. And it's like the military: the outside people just didn't care. The poor blacks, as there are always those who are invaded by the forces of nature and are not protected then or later, they are the people who get sucked up into this swamp of military life or a disaster such as Katrina. And the sense of humanity and human rights aren't there. We have a human rights lobby in this country. Amnesty International is very quick to point fingers at countries who are failing, at Darfur or the Chinese with regard to the Tibetans. But right in our own country--New Orleans--the outrage was never equal to what should have been proper and humanely expedient. It's still a class thing. The country is really divided by class.

DS: More than it used to be?

GT: Well, considering that what this country's history should be, which is a learning experiment, which is going back to the time of legally abolishing racism in schools and jobs, what came out of the civil rights struggle; all those wonderful laws like Brown v. Board of Education and all. But we are still a racial society. And it's no less true with the schools in New York than the schools in Alabama. I've been to Selma, Alabama every year for the last thirty or forty years. I wrote about it when I was one of the reporters in 1965, and I have not failed to go to that town since then once every year.

DS: Every year you go to Selma? Why?

GT: To watch it. I think it's a little town that gives a good face of America.

DS: There was a Times report, I think, about Selma and they say that it is very changed.

GT: Bullshit! There's always a report. Absolute bullshit! They go down there every March 7, John Lewis comes out of Atlanta and they go march, and there's some old crotchety group of what's left over from the Bloody Sunday massacre.

DS: Recently Obama and Clinton were down there marching...

GT: Bullshit! It's all total bullshit. The city of Selma--not to just single it out, the country is racist. New York is racist. This neighborhood! I've lived in this house for fifty years, where you and I are now, and this neighborhood. When I first moved in here in 1957, it didn't have any black neighbors. I'm speaking in 2007. No black neighbors. Does that mean Michael Jackson couldn't move in? I guess. I don't see them. I guess you could have stars. But even they would have trouble. And we still have a Harlem. We wouldn't have a Harlem if we had an integrated and assimilated society.

DS: And that's going.

GT: If they drive them out...they'll go. But what I'm saying is they are sectioned off. So we talk about the segregated south, the black ghettos--the black quarter--of Birmingham. We still have that. We aren't so up front about it, meaning they are less honest and more devious in undemocratic ways.

DS: Did you see the election in

Alabama when the Christian Coalition defeated the ballot measure to remove the segregation language from the Alabama Constitution that said nobody is guaranteed a right to an education?

GT: Such a high level of hypocrisy that has existed in this country from decade to decade. I'm 75 years old, and it wasn't so different when I was 25 years old. That's a fifty year difference-- what's so different? I don't know. I travel and I don't see much change.

DS: Have you changed?

GT: I've gotten older and maybe more cynical.

DS: When you were 25 did you look at black people the same way as you look at them now?

GT: Yeah. When I was 25 or 15, it was the same, because in my town Ocean City, New Jersey, I went to school with black people. It wasn't segregated. I was born in 1932 and when I was in 8 or 9 I saw the Klan in their white sheets on the Boardwalk. This is not Birmingham, this Ocean City, New Jersey. I saw the Klan. My father was a tailor and he was a practicing Catholic. A cross was burned across from his store; I was six or seven. And we knew who the Klan were. The leading pharmacist was a Klansman, my father told me that. Two firemen in the town. They would meet publicly, and black people were in the town. They had their own Harlem in Ocean City. So there is a real estate racism. Ocean City, New York City, Selma, Alabama. They all have their black quarters still.

Julia Kass wrote a book about a black attorney that I go to see in Selma, his name is JL Cheston Jr. He's a character in my book A Writer's Life. Schools that used to

be all white are now all black, so now there's a reverse segregation. Alabama it used to be kids couldn't get into white schools. Now there is white flight and they are all black. That's true of Selma, public schools in New York, too. They are minority schools, now. They are either black or hispanic.

DS: Do you think Joel Klein has improved it?

GT: Nope. He might have improved the education because the mayor we have now is a very good mayor, and he chose Klein and he brings a certain articulation and wisdom to an egalitarian education. But do we have it, really? Every public school teacher that's in the system in this town is almost like a missionary. They go off and risk life in the interest of humanism. But the private schools, the disgusting sight of drivers picking up children, disgusting sight of limousine drivers lining up. I'm only a block away from one of them here. All over this city at two and three o'clock, you find dark-skinned women waiting for their young, white blazer-clad private school boy and escorting him either into a car that has a driver or walking the kids to wherever their homes are in the neighborhood. The public schools and private schools are two different worlds. Just like our American military. The people who do not have the resources, and therefore they become dependent on the largess of military life to support their income or because the military affords them opportunity--so they think--because the military provides a life better than the meaningless life they have in private life. They get out of high school--maybe, maybe not even that-- and what do they have to look forward to, these people? Particularly the men, the

undereducated male. A life of minimum wage in some shopping mall working for some fast food place or driving a truck.

State of Journalism

DS: What do you think about Murdoch buying The Wall Street Journal?

GT: It doesn't bother me. It's not like the wonderful Bancroft family was some noble dynasty! It's not like we should lament the passing of some noble dynasty to the corrupt News Corp.

DS: It's painted that way.

GT: He's better than they are! It doesn't bother me. Journalism -I think there is some very good stuff. There's some wonderful writing as well as reporting in The New York Times every day. It's not on the front page, necessarily. The sections I enjoy reading are The City section, stories about life in the city; and the Real Estate section. There's stories about neighborhoods at night and neighborhoods at day. If you are thinking about renting an apartment or moving into a neighborhood, the story says, "look at it at night. Because at daytime when you usually look at a place you think you might want to rent or buy, it looks a certain way. Then go at night and it looks a different way. It might be more isolated at night; it might be the fact there are nightclubs you aren't aware of during the day so it has a lot of noise. This is the real estate section - very interesting section. The level of writing is now better at the paper in 2007 than when I was there up until 1965. Of course, people are better educated now. The journalist is now far more formally educated than we were. The journalist today is probably second generation of college education in the family. In my generation, most of us were

probably the first to go to college in our families. We had more of a sense of being an outsider. Jews, the Irish and Italians back in the 1950s and 1960s, I do believe we had a sense of being isolated from power and therefore on the outside looking in.

DS: Not any more?

GT: Now the journalists and the people in power, the government and financial world, they're all of the same class, which is privileged class. Journalists are people who are distant from those who are "The Deciders", to use Bush's phrase. I think there is an all-inclusiveness, and I think the Washington Press Corp is representative of what I am saying. They co-mingle; they live in the same neighborhoods and they go to the same places. The Washington Press Corp. is the worse.

DS: Did you see Stephen Colbert roast the Washington Pres Corp and Bush at the White House Press Correspondence dinner? Nobody laughed, because they were all coming from the same place.

GT: And it got a bad review, and then a revised review! The first account I read--I didn't see it or watch it--was that it was boring. Then it took on a life of it's own!

DS: Because nobody reported about it, or they just said he bombed. Then it went out on the internet and took on a life of its own and people said, "This isn't bombing, this a roasting of the entire power structure and the power structure decided they didn't like it."

GT: I feel the Washington Press Corp. should be broken up. Just have them distributed around the country. Put them in state capitals and just feed the state capitals with more reporters and have

them feed the big papers. Cover the country not from Washington. It's so federalized. More state's rights kind of reporting; represent power across the country not just overloaded in one place.

DS: A view of the federal government from the national scene? "Here in Denver the reaction to Washington..."

GT: That's right! It would be harder, because they won't fed. They'll have to do more...

DS: Reporting?

GT: [Laughs] That's right! They wouldn't really like that. And they would probably be able to report the war better as it is reflected in towns with a lot of soldiers, and returning injured and dead in those towns. They would really get a feel for the country, and not just those non-participants in Washington who are mouthing this-and-that and getting defense appropriations.

DS: The way it is now, they don't get an interview with so-and-so if they write something, or they don't get to go to someone's party!

GT: Yeah, well, cut half the leaking. Just leave the capitol and cover the country.

DS: Do you think Bob Woodward is still an intrepid Washington reporter? He's often been accused of being too close to the people he covers.

GT: I don't have an opinion on Woodward; he's been successful. I mean, when I was a young man there was a James Reston. I wrote about him in The Kingdom of Power a lot. He was the most important reporter when I was coming up in the 1950's, and he was in Washington and in bed with enemy all the time. He had sources in the administration of

Kennedy, of Eisenhower before Kennedy, or Johnson. He was a guy who liked power and liked being around power, and he was very much a patriot writer. He was very popular and wrote easy-to-read pieces.

On travel to Cuba

DS: When I was in my teens and early twenties my travels were very Europe-centric. But as an adult I have been drawn to places either seemingly "dangerous" to me or places that I don't feel like I know because I've read so much about them or seen so often in books and magazines. So Europe is off my map now, though I did sneak into Cuba.

GT: You have? When?

DS: In 2002.

GT: How did you sneak into Cuba?

DS: Through the Caymans Islands.

GT: How did you do it?

Gay Talese at The Strand bookstore promoting *A Writer's Life* in 2006.

photo: David Shankbone

DS: Just took a flight on Aero Caribbean. Now they've stopped using the dollar. But back then, they were very much encouraging American tourists to come via Mexico.

GT: When was this you were there? 2002?

DS: 2002.

GT: They stopped using the dollar?

DS: They stopped using the dollar.

GT: I was there in '96. I was there in '82. And I didn't sneak in, but I had to get a visa from the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Washington to get in there in '82. Reagan was in power then and he didn't want me to go to Cuba. I went. My wife also went for two

weeks. And then in '96 I went. And now you don't have the dollar. What do you have?

DS: You have the Cuban pesos.

GT: Where do you get them?

DS: I'm not really sure now because when I was there they had the system where you could actually just use dollars. That's what we used. The local currency was called pesos convertibles that were convertible into dollars. Of course they have no value anywhere else in the world except in Cuba, but then they stopped doing that. Castro has kind of created Batista's society in some ways; not in every way. The poor are certainly a lot better off than they were under Batista. But with the embargo, the economy is now very tourist-based, which creates this tourist class. We didn't stay in the hotels. We wanted to stay in what they call casa particulars and I remember talking to a woman who made \$30 a month as a doctor. But running this casa particular, she was making around \$300, \$500 a month, which made her very rich.

GT: What's the interpretation of that, translation of that mean? Casa particular. Like a rooming house?

DS: Like a rooming house. Exactly.

GT: Or like a Bed and Breakfast?

DS: That's probably the best analogy. Staying at those the money goes more to the people. The other thing they tell you when you go to Cuba to bring aspirin and all these things that are in short supply there. The people who run these Bed and Breakfasts, if you will, make out with all the stuff the tourists give them to be dispersed in their communities. I went to Ecuador. I went camping in the Amazon. These are the

places that interest me now. Do you find it similar in your own travels to really seek out things underneath, to pull up rocks and try and find places off the beaten path. Going to Timbuktu or wherever. Do you have a travel philosophy?

GT: Well since we're talking about Cuba, it was only four weeks in 1982 in which I traveled in Cuba to baseball towns. My idea often is to go to places with the announced notion of dealing with almost inconsequential parts of society. In China it was women's soccer. In Cuba, when I went first in '82, it was the idea of writing about sports fans and baseball games. The idea was to get me out of Havana. The only way I was going to get freedom, certainly nothing political. But if you're writing about baseball fans in Cuba, it means you can go to towns, sit in the stands....

DS: And talk to the people.

GT: The people, how they get there, how they're dressed, how they behave and really observe a lot of people because the town, four or five baseball towns. They're big. And you can travel around the country. 'Where are you going?' 'We're going to the baseball game.' You always can explain yourself. And I was very impressed in '82. When I went back, I was writing a story I published called "Ali in Havana." It's in a collection of mine called *The Gay Talese Reader*, but it was published in *Esquire* in '96. Since you mentioned medical supplies, I went back to accompany Muhammed Ali on a private jet that left Miami for Havana. He and about twenty people were on that plane able to circumvent the embargo because he was on a humanitarian mission, or at least convinced the government authorities in Washington he was.

He got clearance because of who he is. And he took medical supplies down. But he, himself, was so sick with Parkinson's. At the time, I didn't realize how unable to communicate I would be with him because I couldn't hear him. He didn't make any sense. But that didn't matter because I don't really write Q&A kind of stuff anyway. Just hanging around with him was fine. But I was able to see a lot of the Cuban people. I was able to go to the medical facilities, hospitals and clinics to see nurses, see doctors, get a look at the interior of the medical quarters of the doctors and how the patients were dressed and what kind of equipment was around in a medical sense. I was very impressed by the resources of the people. Despite the attempts by such hostile nations as the U.S. toward Cuba, despite the embargo and all the other restraints and restrictions, to say nothing of the assassination attempts on Castro himself, people were very strong and, as you suggested, it's a very egalitarian society and I was with a lot of black people who were part of the contingent of Ali.

DS: And a happy society. At least I found a lot of people who were very content. They may not have an easy life, but they were quite content.

GT: They have their honor. They have their dignity. They're not a serf class to the aristocracy.

DS: People dancing in the streets at night.

GT: I went out at night and I saw a lot of that. That's true. They have their values.

DS: And friendly.

GT: And friendly. Much more than those Cubans in Miami.

DS: My friend I was with was

Colombian from Miami, and he made the exact same observation. He had a prejudice against Cubans from his time in Miami and he said, "These people aren't anything like the Cubans in Miami."

On Chinese gay bars

David Shankbone: Do you have a favorite country you have visited?

Gay Talese: Well I think the city I found most interesting was Beijing.

DS: You talk about China a lot.

GT: I found that really a place that changes every year. And it's what you can do. That's one city. I spent so much time in Europe when I was young.

DS: Is it interesting to you to watch China change?

GT: Yeah, I read everything that's in the papers about China. I completed a story today about how the Bush administration was being used by China.

DS: Do you get tired of going to the same region and then you're like, 'I need to go to Asia for a while?'

GT: That's right. That happened to me in 1998. Kind of interesting. I was able to see without being interrupted with interpretation because I couldn't understand anything. I so so enjoyed being places I've never been before like Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, not Hong Kong, but other places. You asked me about Beijing. It's the most interesting city because it's an international city in which there is this history going back hundreds and hundreds of years of turmoil, accommodation. They are such entrepreneurial people on the lowest level to the highest level, the Chinese. And they're so quick in understanding how to survive and there are so many of them.

God, there are so many of them. Have you been to Asia?

DS: I haven't been to Asia. It doesn't particularly interest me all that much. There are countries I would like to see, Cambodia being one. South America is one of the areas that I am most interested to explore because I speak Spanish.

GT: You do? I don't speak anything. I felt similarly when I first got out of Beijing. I said Beijing is an interesting city because it's international, because it has the press from around the world and the political representation of the whole world in that capitol city. But at night, especially if you have some Chinese friends who speak English so you're able to have them tell you a little bit about what you're seeing as they take you around and you go to clubs. What first impressed me in Beijing was the great number of gay men, and women I guess, but gay men who had clubs, gay bars in Beijing. I don't read this in the paper. But what impressed me was how open it is. One called Club Vogue. I went there.

DS: What are the gay bars like?

GT: They were just as you would find them in New York where gay men hang around and they have their music and their dancing.

DS: Are they flamboyant?

GT: When I first became aware of it, it's like in Iran, Ahmadinejad says there's no homosexuals in Iran...

DS: It's because they kill them.

GT: Well whatever it is, but in China I don't hear of any, either boastfully or with reticence, the acknowledgment of homosexuals. I always stayed in the hotel because I don't have the language so I couldn't stay in a Bed &

Breakfast in China or wherever you did in Cuba. You speak Spanish, you said. But I do not speak anything. When I noticed this, I would sometimes have room service, and invariably it was a guy, sometimes two, who were very very effeminate. They really were. There's just one thing about how free it could be.

DS: How did you get introduced to a gay bar in Beijing?

GT: I got introduced to it because I needed interpreters and in order to get interpreters, I had people who were college students, Americans, sometimes of Chinese origin. One of them in particular who went to Yale, who came to Toronto from Canton as a young boy, and when he graduated from high school in Toronto he went to Yale and after graduating at 21, returned to China and taught English in one of the high schools in Beijing. When I went it was very hard to get interpreters because anybody who could speak English and Chinese was taken by corporations at high paying jobs because all of these multi-national corporations having Chinese partners needed interpreters.

DS: Including the European ones, right? English is the international language.

GT: Everybody. Everybody. So people like me would have to really scratch around to find somebody. I would get to know journalists very easily because I knew the bureaus. I could go to the New York Times and they had a five or six man bureau and some of the Chinese workers were there. "Can I get somebody to moonlight for me for a little bit?" "Well no, we can't give you one of our people, but he has got a cousin over here, who's working part-time at Kentucky Fried Chicken and you can see him after. So this

is how I met this fellow from Yale. Because he knew the city, he not only served as my interpreter when I had interviews, but he took it upon himself to escort me places, including these bars and sex shops. I'm always interested in prostitution because that is really something that involves danger. It involves a kind of corruption because everybody abolishes it, but it exists.

DS: And it's so basic.

GT: So basic. And who are the Chinese prostitutes? Are they from Mongolia...those are the things I wonder.

On the literary canon

DS: I spoke with a young novelist named John Reed. He wrote a book called Snowball's Chance that was an attack on Orwell and we were talking about the literary canon that's taught in grade school and high school. He raised an interesting idea that I wanted to run by you. His point was that kids are not becoming readers. So much of what they learn with books and reading doesn't seem applicable to their lives. I read in Newsweek that your five favorite novels and there was a lot of classics – The Scarlet Letter, The Great Gatsby, things like that. Reed's point was that kids have a hard time bonding with these materials. What should be taught at those levels is modern literature. At the more senior levels, once they've developed acumen for reading and they relate to it on a personal level, then they'll go exploring the classics and it's almost more pertinent to them being able to understand it. An analogy would be as if you had children and they only watched Bette Davis and Joan Crawford movies and then the film genre, would wither because young people found it difficult to

relate to it. What do you think about that idea?

GT: I think if you delay the reading of the classical works or whatever is defined as enduring in value, you postpone it. It's too late. As to reading, what is contemporary? People do that anyway.

DS: Not kids.

GT: God, starting with Ms. Rowling, you've got Harry Potter. What's more contemporary than that?

DS: That's a phenomenon. It's not really that typical; I mean, it stands out because it's a billion dollar author.

GT: I think so much of what we read that's in the canons is pretty political, more now than ever. I mean you have to have women in there, you have to have blacks in there, you have to have Latinos in there. Go, if you should dare...

DS: And they can't say certain things.

GT: That's right. Of course, I grew up as a Catholic. When I was a boy you couldn't read certain things, say certain things, think certain things. So it's not that we need this political correctness to remind me of restriction, restraint, guidance, governments. I grew up with them. It didn't much matter. Do what you want to do anyway, but it's covert. We were all in the closet in those days, one way or another.

DS: Would you agree with the idea that children don't grow up reading much anymore, outside of what's required?

GT: I think they do. There's always been a number of young people who are in the category of being readers and the majority are not. And that was true when I was a child and when my wife was a child. My wife has now been a

professional reader and editor for fifty years. But there were those who were drawn to reading and those who were not, found it boring or were more outward than internalized in their nature. Many of the people I know, who are very successful and read a lot, are people who experienced illness or injury when they were young. They grew up with books because they could not interact at a young age with their contemporaries. Off the top of my head, Frances Ford Coppola, people I know, Scorsese, Lee Iacocca... Or many people who have had to sit when they were eleven or six or five. They had to stay in bed, they were drawn to books and the books became their action. The books became their activity. They vicariously lived through the work of writers or maybe they lived through music, maybe they lived through something else. But that idea of being kept apart from the drive to be popular, the drive to be part of a clique that seemed to be in favor, when you are isolated, then maybe you are drawn out of your isolation by what you read and get a larger sense of the world.

DS: You're saying that there never was really a time when people read more unless they had cause to read a lot based upon their circumstances?

GT: Well I'll talk about what I really know, which is what I have personally experienced. I grew up in a home with very few books. There was one book, and I had no idea how my father got it. Maybe someone gave it to him. Short stories by the French writer Guy de Maupassant. I read those stories, all of them, twice probably, when I was ten. Later on, when I was in high school, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, I was reading fiction. The fiction I was reading, and I wrote about

this in my last book, was Frank Yerby. People have never heard of him; he's not in any canon. Frank Yerby was a black man, who lived in Spain and wrote these romance novels. And there must have been seven or eight or nine of them. They sold very well. A few of them were made into movies I never saw. I loved those stories because they were richly described. The characters were very very detailed. Very precise detail. And that shaped my life. I was a writer who does very much insist on and has affection for detail.

DS: Is that who you were reading at that age?

GT: When I became more mature, if that's the word, it was about my senior year, going to college, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years of age, I fell under the sway of the classic writers who were the generation or two before my own. Namely, Fitzgerald and Hemingway, and to a lesser degree Faulkner. I went to Alabama College, as you know. I assume you know. And so Faulkner was a name I reckoned with. And then, while I was still in college in my third year there, fourth year there, I started reading *The New Yorker* and reading the great stories of John O'Hara and Irwin Shaw and others ... John Cheever. All those stories and all those writers I mentioned give detail. They are really descriptive writers, scenic writers, writers of city life whether it's Fitzgerald invoking the sense of St. Paul, Minnesota or *Coming To Princeton*, his novel, or Irwin Shaw walking through the streets of the city of New York or O'Hara getting into New York with a chip on his shoulder from Pennsylvania or later on their literary inheritors, John Updike, William Styron, those other people closer to my generation. Philip Roth is my

favorite writer. They all gave a sense of reality. Roth gives a real sense of history. I've read every novel he's written.

DS: I've read *The Plot Against America*.

GT: Yeah, well that's a distorted sense of the Wilke campaign. But you really get a sense of time and place with Roth, including his latest novel. All of his novels, every one of them. And I've never been tempted, with one exception, to write fiction. One exception being I did write a short story in 1965 and got it published and I was never interested in writing again because I thought reality is so remarkable. All you have to do is spend the time, take the time, and you're going to find things that are hardly believable that are real. At least real to the degree that you say, this is as verifiable as it gets. I'm not saying it's the truth, the full truth, the half truth, but this is at least something that did indeed happen, at least in the minds of those to whom it happened. And you are a chronicler of their reality. And you can write stories without changing names and altering the facts. And they sound as if they are concocted, imagined works of fiction, but they're not. They're not works of fiction. But my reading was fiction and remains fiction. I don't read much non-fiction unless I have to. If I want to write about China then I'm going to read biographies of Mao. Or if I want to write about *Unto The Suns*, which is my book about my ancestry in Italy, I have to read all these book about Naples or 20th Century Mafia in Palermo or the English writers who were the great travel writers of the 19th century.

Couple's body found slain in scrapyard

Bodies of an elderly couple have

been found in Barlows scrapyard in Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, United Kingdom. BBC reports the bodies were found on Friday night.

A 29-year-old man was the only person at the scrapyard when police and ambulance crews arrived and has now been arrested as a suspect.

The scene has been cornered off by police.

"The bodies remain in situ and the scene has been cordoned off and a forensic examination has begun," a police spokesman said at 17:30 BST, "It is expected that post-mortem examinations will be carried out (Saturday)."

Today in History

312 – Constantine the Great defeated Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in Rome, leading him to end the Tetrarchy and become the only ruler of the Roman Empire.

1886 – In New York Harbor, U.S. President Grover Cleveland dedicated the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France, to commemorate the centennial of the United States Declaration of Independence.

1940 – The Balkans Campaign in World War II: Italy invaded Greece after Greek prime minister Ioannis Metaxas rejected Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's ultimatum demanding the occupation of Greek territory.

1954 – The Kingdom of the Netherlands was re-founded as a federacy with the proclamation of the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

1965 – Nostra Aetate, the "Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions" of the Second Vatican Council, was promulgated by Pope Paul VI, absolving the Jews of the killing of Jesus, and calling for

increased relations with all non-Christian religions.
October 28 is Okhi Day in Greece.

Quote of the Day

I have dreams, and I have nightmares. I overcame the nightmares because of my dreams. ~ Jonas Salk

Word of the Day

retinue; n

1. A group of servants or attendants, especially of someone considered important.

About Wikinews
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page Quote of the Day http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page Word of the Day http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page
About Wikinews Print Edition
For more information about Wikinews Print Edition visit: http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print

About Wikinews

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including **you**) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons.

Got news and no computer? Call the Wikinews Hotline

- +1-866-653-4265
(toll-free in the U.S.)
- +1-202-742-5918
(outside the U.S.)
- +44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

License

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. Articles published in this Print edition were created by Wikinewsies. Other content released under the GNU Free Documentation License.

To view a copy of the CC-BY license, visit:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>
 or send a letter to
 Creative Commons
 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor
 San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

To view a copy of the GFDL, visit:
<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>

Wikipedia Current Events
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Current_events
 Today in History