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FOIA, Paperwork, and the Dialectic of (Media) Tactics and Strategies

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Since its adoption in 1966, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has played a pivotal role in American democracy. Enabling every citizen – and even foreigners – to access federal government information and documents, FOIA fits with the standard liberal political categories which oppose secrecy and the autocratic power of the state in favour of transparency and the power of democratic citizenship. The "FOIA" expression itself made its way into the vernacular language, referring to any request for information filed under the disposition of the 1966 law.

FOIA has been widely used by journalists and is now part of the professional practices taught in curricula. It has its best practices and experts, as well as its dedicated digital tools.[1] FOIA has played a key role in some of the most famous pieces of American investigative journalism of the last decades, including, among many examples, the highly mediatised torture scandals in the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo prisons, as well as the "PRISM" mass surveillance programme developed by the National Security Agency (NSA), first uncovered by Edward Snowden. In all these prominent cases, FOIA requests sparked complex legal processes, public discussions, and scholarly analyses which became as newsworthy as the subject matter.[2]

Star journalist Carl Bernstein's 1977 investigation into the relationship between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and American news media, published in *Rolling Stone* magazine, is an intriguing case of investigative journalism making use of FOIA.[3] The subject matter and the revelations were not only relatively new to the public; they also concerned the whole apparatus of American journalism in its relation to state secrecy, that is, at the interface where FOIA takes place.[4] The article points to the long-standing entanglements of the CIA with American journalism. Bernstein claimed that over 400 American journalists, including well-known figures such as Joseph Alsop (*Washington Post*), Hal Hendrix (*Miami News*), and Jerry O'Leary (*Washington Star*), carried out missions for the CIA,

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which also maintained a close working relationship with some of the top executives of American news media. Furthermore, Bernstein evoked connections with scholars and universities and alluded to a mysterious CIA training programme teaching secret agents how to act (that is, how to "make noise") like journalists.[5]

Bernstein's piece is one of the first journalistic investigations conducted following the 1974 and 1976 amendments to the original 1966 FOIA. In the aftermath of the 1972 Watergate scandal, a journalist-led movement for reforming the dispositions of the FOIA gained momentum. The many limitations associated with the original 1966 FOIA law included its cost (USD 1 per page and USD 7 per hour of research), and the so-called contamination tactics (mixing confidential exempt material with non-exempt material in the same folder to prevent its communication) used to limit access to information.[6] The new amendments of 1974 and 1976 made the process less costly, allowed for a judicial review of classification, and significantly narrowed the agency's power to withhold information and documents.[7] In the same spirit, the House Committee on Government Operations issued the first Citizen's Guide in 1977, detailing the process for requesting records from federal agencies.[8] Bernstein's FOIA request was timely since some of these new provisions were soon to be revised, at least with regard to the activities of the CIA. In 1981, shortly after his election, President Ronald Reagan made a systematic effort to control the flow of information coming from government agencies. While Reagan failed at getting completely rid of the FOIA, he was successful in exempting the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from many of its dispositions.[9]

Although Bernstein's 1977 FOIA seems to take place during the golden age of FOIA, it nevertheless highlights a major problem with the process, which is not at all adapted to the temporality and rhythm of journalism. Bernstein's FOIA request from 7 October was only answered on 4 November. What is more, the response did not contain the list of expected documents, but instead announced dilatory measures: "We are suspending your request until we receive notification from you of your willingness to accept responsibility for all charges incurred in processing your request, or if there is an upper limit to what you are willing to pay".[10] Given that Bernstein's article was published on 30 October 1977, the response was belated and insufficient. Due to the reliance on anonymous CIA sources in Bernstein's article, the extent to which its information is grounded in FOIA requests remains uncertain.

Another puzzling aspect is the timing of Bernstein's *Rolling Stone* article, which came out only a couple of months after Alan J. Pakula's Oscar-winning movie, *All the President's Men* (1976). Pakula's true-story account of the journalistic efforts to uncover the Watergate scandal in

1972, in which Carl Bernstein (played by Dustin Hoffman) has the leading role, tells the reassuring story of the press's victory over state secrecy. However, on the pages of *Rolling Stone*, at the very same time, Bernstein himself is telling a far more disturbing story, that of "how America's most powerful news media worked hand in glove with the Central Intelligence Agency".[11] Moreover, as an anonymous CIA official then confessed to Bernstein, further investigations into the matter "would inevitably reveal a series of embarrassing relationships in the 1950s and 1960s with some of the most powerful organizations and individuals in American journalism".[12] Among them, Philip and Katherine Graham, the owners of *The Washington Post*, the former employers of Carl Bernstein and the media outlet who led the Watergate investigation.[13]

This chapter proposes a reflexive historical exploration and a theoretical reconstruction of the complex relationship between US state agencies – focusing primarily on the CIA – and American journalism (as a set of institutions, actors, practices, et cetera). Largely shaped by the shifting dispositions of the FOIA, these relationships can be approached through the various media tactics used by journalists, and sometimes by academics, and the media strategies of state agencies. The case of Bernstein's "The CIA and the Media" is noteworthy as it demonstrates the multifaceted nature of media tactics and strategies, which operate on various interconnected levels: first, at the level of the discursive and material details of FOIA requests; second, at the level of media content and publications (for example, Bernstein's article, "The CIA and the Media"), and third, at the operational level, that is, at the level of intelligence gathering and reporting, or in the context of secret agents using journalistic cover or of journalists participating in CIA operations (meeting with sources and agents abroad, for example). Following up on Bernstein's work, this chapter aims to gain a better understanding of the different tactics and strategies operating at these different, yet interconnected, levels, with a narrower focus on (1) FOIA as a specific form of "paperwork" and media tactic, and (2) at the operational level, with regard to journalism education and journalistic practices within the CIA.

This chapter's primary material comes from two FOIA requests made in 2016 and 2017. Back then, a colleague and I were contemplating writing a follow-up piece to Bernstein's article for its 40th anniversary.[14] The documents we obtained had fragments of novel information but were nonetheless disappointing in relation to the topics we were aiming to investigate, especially regarding the CIA's "formal training program" to which Bernstein alluded and which was said to prepare CIA agents to be "placed in major news organizations with help from management".[15] The coveted smoking gun turned out to be a fantasy, and we did not go forward with the project of writing the 40th anniversary follow-up piece. Nevertheless,

the process was thought-provoking as it pointed to several other leads regarding the relationship between the CIA and different actors and institutions associated with journalism. Moreover, these FOIA requests broaden our understanding of the different media tactics and strategies at play, especially with regard to the contemporary functioning of FOIA requests, with all its little details and subtleties, at the level of local media tactics.

My approach in part draws on Michel de Certeau's canonical definition of tactic and strategy. That strategy is the privilege of the powerful, while tactic is an "art of the weak",[16] remains useful to understand how FOIA requests work. But my approach, in some respects, also differs from de Certeau's emphasis on asymmetrical power relations.[17] To be sure, the rationale behind FOIA – back in 1966 and still today – is the asymmetry of power and information between the ordinary citizen and the state. As a prominent FOIA scholar points out, FOIA has the function to "ensure an informed citizenry, vital to the functioning of a democratic society, needed to check against corruption and to hold the governors accountable to the governed".[18] At the same time, in the context of FOIA originating from journalists and powerful news media organisations, this asymmetry may very well be reversed.[19] Going against the grain, legal scholar David A. Pozen argues that the cost of FOIA is "pathologically asymmetric".[20] The resources needed to fulfil the dispositions of the law are enormous and constitute a major burden for the concerned agencies.[21] Such an argument is not exactly new. Jean-Marie Roland, who served as Minister of the Interior during the French Revolution, made a similar claim. Roland famously complained that his critics "assume that I have a lot of power because I have a lot to do", suggesting that the opposite was true.[22]

In other words, the assertion that tactics and strategies refer to distinct power positions may be tricky and may suggest, for example, that the CIA has no tactics but only a grand strategy. In order to embrace the full scope of the many tactics at play, my analysis focuses less on the asymmetry of power than on the complex entanglement of tactics and strategies through the three aforementioned levels. de Certeau's notion of tactic and strategy is inherited from previous works by Michel Foucault, on which I also draw. Foucault's conception of power, strategy, and tactic slightly differs from de Certeau's, as he highlights that power is not so much a characteristic (or a property) as it is a method, and that tactics occur on a small scale, at the level of a "micro-physics" of power dynamics, inside a broader predetermined strategic framework.[23]

Methodologically, I am also borrowing from Foucault's archeo-genealogical perspective, since I am approaching historical writing as a contingent and situated media practice. Using only material gathered through FOIA requests made at a given point in time shows how historical and journalistic knowledge is derived from specific power relations and is

situated in technological and media environment(s).[24] Furthermore, Foucault considered that such an approach to history – as practised by Henri de Boulainvilliers and Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès – is indeed "tactical": local and situated historical knowledge serves to subvert universal historical narratives and their claim to truth.[25] In a similar fashion, my work is not aiming at generalisation but rather at reflexively exploring the local power dynamics, forms of knowledge, and media tactics associated with two specific FOIA requests.

FOIA and the Tactics of Paperwork

In 2016–2017, a colleague and I prepared two FOIA requests, asking for material that would help us to further clarify – in the footsteps of Carl Bernstein – the complex entanglement of the CIA with American journalism from the 1950s to the 1970s. This was a new endeavour for both of us, and we tried our very best to make a "good FOIA" that respects all the rules and is as clear as possible, ensuring that it would likely lead us to documents containing new information. To put it differently, our approach was eminently tactical in the sense of de Certeau, who defined tactics as a "calculus" based on incomplete information in a situation where "the other" has no clear institutional or spatial boundaries.[26] Since there are no clear spatial grounds for tactics, de Certeau insists that a tactic "depends on time", that it is "always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'".[27] These definitions seem to perfectly fit the context, as the whole problem at stake concerns the boundaries of the CIA, specifically with regard to institutionalised journalism.[28] In this respect, the ontological theatre of our FOIA requests is precisely the one of tactic.

Our letters were filled with certain legal and institutional lingo, which served to make it appear legitimate. Using the official letterhead of the university, we mentioned, for instance, the "Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. subsection 552", while also making sure our inquiry was framed in the acceptable terms of both contemporary social sciences and journalism. Our letters also try to prevent and preempt any reticence from the CIA by insinuating that we have the knowledge and resources to escalate things on the legal front if necessary ("If my request is denied in whole or part, please justify all deletions by reference to specific exemptions of the act and notify me of appeal procedures available under the law. I will also expect you to release all segregable portions of otherwise exempt material").

Our media tactics operate within the strategy of what Max Weber called the "rational-legal authority" which characterises most modern organisations and especially those associated with the sovereign functions of the state.[29] Such media tactics can be approached by the concept of "paperwork" defined as "all those documents produced in response to a

demand – real or imagined – by the state".[30] Building on previous work by Ben Kafka and Cornelia Vismann, I argue that paperwork constitutes both a set of media tactics and a broader media strategy.[31] At the micro-physical level of media tactics, it plays out discursively, through the very specific choice of words, and materially, through document treatment and processing, the latter inevitably implying time delays. As Ben Kafka puts it, "paperwork is a refractive medium in that power and knowledge inevitably change their speed and shape when they enter it".[32] At the level of strategy, paperwork is both concerned with the accumulation and organisation of knowledge and relies on well-known media practices such as "recording", "filing", "archiving", and so on.

The CIA responses to our FOIA requests were also tactical in several ways. The documents were often heavily redacted. Most names were crossed out and so was the content of several pages. As a result, documents bearing secrets were disclosed while simultaneously preserving the "secrets" they contained. Such a tactic of secrecy, taking place in the context of a general strategy of publicity and visibility, is a well-known practice of the state dating back to the early days of the mediaeval state. In the thirteenth century, Emperor Frederick II similarly made sure that "the exposed files guarded their mysteries well (…). A politics of visibility and effective tactics of secrecy were two sides of one and the same strategy of power".[33]

Such a paradoxical strategy of publicity and visibility is pivotal in a CIA initiative such as the CREST 25-Year Program Archive. Launched in 2006, the CREST (CIA Record Search Tool) makes every CIA declassified document available online – that is, searchable and discoverable – after 25 years. Every year, a great mass of 25-year-old documents is dumped online – a process that is regularly covered by news media outlets. In this respect, the CIA's regular document dumps are *also* public relations operations aimed at journalists. They are publicised media events prioritising topics that are most likely to generate clicks. For example, *Wired* summarised a massive 2017 dump of 12 million of pages in six short paragraphs on topics such as "German Disappearing Ink Recipe", "Project Stargate" (1990s programme exploring the military application of psychic power) and "UFO Photos and Analysis".[34]

While such attempts to achieve greater transparency undoubtedly contribute to democratic life – the CIA keeps bragging about it – they nevertheless involve media tactics whose main purpose is the preservation of secrecy by means of opacity-through-publicity. The mass of documents available on the database creates an important shift. At this magnitude and in such a technological and media context, (paper) documents are turned into something else, more akin to digital archives or even big data. A traditional approach to such digital material – the so-called close reading of documents – is beyond human capacities. One needs a team of people,

or even better, automated reading (*distant reading*) and data visualisation tools. These large volumes of textual documents are the privileged material of contemporary journalism, and digital tools and resources are its new fetish. Such a convergence is worrying. If distant reading is offering new entry points into textual data, it also gives a false impression of exhaustivity and may lead to a generic and totalising approach to media texts.[35] Distant reading results from a set of not so reliable remediations, including scanning or digitising, which imply both reproduction and erasure, and can make a document barely readable. Error-prone optical character recognition software is often much more about composing new texts than mere reproduction.[36] Distant reading is not only unreliable, it is also useless for taking into account several dimensions of the documents (ordering of the documents, handwritten annotations, boxes and files, colour and smell, et cetera). In other words, documents are not solely converted into digital format, and a virtual reading room does not provide the same capabilities as its analogue counterpart.

These dumps of documents on the CREST database also challenge the epistemological assumptions associated with FOIA requests. It reverses the temporality and the connection to knowledge implied by the mechanism of FOIA requests, which are necessarily guided by a specific interest and eventually lead to specific documents, identified by specialised staff. The CREST database is offering the documents first, as if they were related to a pre-existing and specific interest.[37] The twin hermeneutic assumptions that users know what they are looking for and that these research interests are coherent with the functioning of the database (based on in-text occurrence of words), and that so-called normal users are better at identifying key documents than specialised personnel are both very challenging hypotheses, to say the least.

As the new privileged entry point to CIA material, CREST also contributes to blurring the distinction between FOIA and CREST. While CREST only concerns previously unclassified documents, FOIA allows requests of classified material. If a FOIA request alludes to the CREST initiative or if it mentions "unclassified documents", it is likely that CREST documents – that is, documents already available on the CREST website – will be processed, charged (USD), and sent by snail mail. Previously classified documents may or may not be included, and the distinction between these two types of documents would remain unclear. For instance, our first FOIA request, which alluded to CREST and mentioned "declassified documents", resulted in the obtention of documents that had already been released through CREST. Since the distinction between the documents that were already available and the new declassified material was not explicit or systematic, this FOIA request is essentially equivalent to reproducing and sending out previously accessible digitised documents.

To go back to the tactical matter of time, the CIA answered our first request of 6 August 2016 on 25 August 2016. This latter date was the one used on the letterhead, but the letter was received a couple of weeks (or even months) later (I lost track). Trying to avoid the delay that faced Bernstein, we mentioned that we were willing to pay a maximum amount of USD 200 for the documents. Nevertheless, the CIA's letter makes clear that a payment of USD 10.60 – way below the aforementioned maximum – was needed before they would process the documents. While this may sound reasonable, it implies further delays and the possibility to not follow-up with the process. The nitty-gritty of the payment method is also dilatory. As they then specify in bold characters, "Checks must be *drawn* in US dollars on a United States bank or branch thereof. We *cannot* accept payment by checks drawn on a foreign bank". Being then based in Canada, these specifications were certainly not easy to follow and involved further administrative procedures. The fact that an organisation capable of monitoring the clandestine activities of thousands of persons and organisations in foreign countries cannot process a check in a foreign currency or drawn from a foreign bank (or use PayPal) may seem surreal, even comical. It also speaks to the strategic use (and paradoxical entanglement) of digital and analogue media in FOIA requests.

Our second FOIA faced another type of supplementary dilatory measure. Our request for "all the documents related in whole or in part to a course named 'Information Reporting, Reports, and Requirements'" was answered by a letter asking if we were willing to revise the scope of our request to "documents that describe the course, what was covered, and how the course was taught", a sentence we also used in our letter. According to the officer, "'all documents' is too broad as our systems are not configured to search for the information as requested". The fact that "all documents" related to a training course may be too broad is a given. What about the November 1984 pay slip of a CIA operative who took the class in 1961? Since we already unpacked what we meant by "all documents" and qualified their nature and relation to the course, such a response is difficult not to be considered a dilatory measure. It is also a reminder of who is running the show: systems and their specific configurations, which should be taken into account pre-emptively. Furthermore, it makes clear who is in control of the "language game" which consists of qualifying the relationship of words to reality in a specific context.[38] As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari explained, "a rule of grammar is a power marker before it is a syntactical marker".[39] Let us add that specifying that "all documents" cannot be considered literally is a troubling suggestion that bears the deep metaphysical implication that language, in some contexts, can literally square with reality. This tenet is at the cornerstone of the CIA approach to reporting, which is the main topic our FOIA helps us explore.

A Mysterious Training Course

The documents obtained attest to the existence of a CIA course titled "Information Reporting, Reports, and Requirements" (IRRR) which was taught from 1956 until at least the mid-1960s and has not been the object of scholarly attention so far. While it remains unclear whether IRRR is the course referred to by Bernstein, the course raises many interesting questions regarding the parallels between the worlds of "intelligence" and secret services and that of professional journalism. In fact, the course constitutes a point of contact between the two universes, showing some of their commonalities.

The size of the record concerning IRRR seems to be rather small. In response to our second request, which was specifically about IRRR, we received 26 documents of various kinds (including memoranda, course catalogue, and course syllabi). While many of them are repetitive, reporting on the day-to-day running of a course repeated more or less identically several times a year, some nevertheless contain little surprises, nuggets of information. In this respect, these documents testify to the heterogeneous nature of administrative files and to the dialectic of paperwork, which is both repetitive and predictable but also full of surprises and mishaps.[40]

Under the responsibility of the CIA's Office of Training, IRRR is presented as a "Specialized Skills Training" course destined for the "Clandestine Service". In the course catalogue, IRRR sits next to much more exotic topics such as "Soviet Bloc Operations", "Counterintelligence Operations", and "Introduction to Covert Action". The course would usually be followed by around ten students and would last 120 hours, over a period of three weeks. A certain "Joe" seems to have been associated with the course, possibly serving as a lecturer. Internal reports often mention good student performance as well as occasional disciplinary problems.[41] The course would include lectures, presentations by guest speakers, screenings,[42] and "laboratory work", which consists of "reporting from direct observation".[43] This last dimension was central to the pedagogical approach of the class since it was deemed that "students working with live material is considered to be the heart of the course".[44]

Reporting is undoubtedly the core competency developed during the course. IRRR is presented as "a straight reporting course that would be useful for all intelligence officers assigned to the clandestine services".[45] Reporting includes "consideration of the qualifications of a reporter, the reporter's job, the application of tradecraft to reporting, collecting the information, and the content and the organization of the agent's report".[46] Speed, accuracy, and careful editing are often mentioned as key components of reporting and skills to be developed. In sum, "to develop agents as reporters"[47] seems to be the main objective of the course.

In this context, "reporting" refers primarily to the writing and editing of internal reports by agents based on direct observation. But the idea that a reporter is a type of professional journalist (defined by a set of specific journalistic norms and practices) is also implied in the context of the course, which includes many elements borrowed from journalism. As one CIA report makes clear, "First, we must get the idea that we are reporters. We seek information from our sources".[48] The same report suggests that CIA reporting should be made "in a more journalistic style".

In fact, the concept of "reporting" plays a similar role in the "boundary-work"[49] of both the universes of professional journalism and in the practices of intelligence agencies. In journalism, reporting is undoubtedly a strong marker "on which the break between opinion press and information press is founded".[50] At the CIA, reporting similarly serves to draw a line between the realms of opinions and facts and appears to be central to the professional identity of agents, which is partly modelled on established journalistic practices. For example, one principle taught in the class is the well-known formula of the "5Ws and How",[51] a writing rule whose institutionalisation is at the very core of the "discourse order" of modern journalism.[52] The laboratory work includes working with so-called morgue files,[53] an expression originating from newspaper slang. Such files – consisting of clippings, pictures, and notes – are commonly kept in newspaper editorial offices for quick reference, including to rapidly write obituaries of famous people.

These connections with standard journalistic practices were obvious to the CIA personnel involved in the course and were the object of internal debates. In April 1959, a CIA official criticised the new version of the course syllabus, which he deemed to be "completely unacceptable".[54] As he explained, "IRRR has been too heavy on the side of journalism as opposed to the collection, evaluation and dissemination of intelligence information obtained through clandestine mechanisms".[55] The CIA's internal debates about the course, which revolved around the places of theory and "historical perspectives",[56] as opposed to the time devoted to laboratory work, are standard and enduring dilemmas in most journalism schools.

In sum, IRRR was not about teaching agents how to "make noise" like a journalist (Bernstein), but to "improve the quality of field reporting".[57] In fact, not making noise and discretely gathering information was the preferred approach. The laboratory work includes practising the gathering of information from people and observation ("Collection of Information Through Talk"), which should involve persistence, concentration, and maturity, but exclude loudness or overt aggression. The instructor of the course once lamented about two students who were deemed too loud, and even aggressive. One of the students "was resourceful with perhaps a bit too much emphasis on being pleasantly aggressive", and the other was "too much of an extrovert to be an unnoticeable and therefore a secure one".[58]

The CIA focus on reporting can nevertheless be approached with the twin concepts of media tactics and strategies. Writing "good" reports, accumulating them, indexing them efficiently, and developing the associated competencies to do so are all soluble within the development of a large state intelligence and security apparatus and its core strategy. "Paperwork", as Karl Marx puts it, is the "bureaucratic medium" *par excellence*.[59] The grand strategy of the CIA is largely a specific media practice, paperwork, that needs to be tamed and perfected, and IRRR serves this purpose. "Good reporting", in this context, is a metaphysical fight against entropy. It is not only a means to counter the inevitable errors and semantic approximations but also to keep up with the pace of events. As reports keep multiplying, meaning is paradoxically both accumulated and dissolved, and only new reports can help to navigate the ever-growing paper Leviathan. As Reinhart Koselleck puts it, "because … a lot had to be written, even more had to be written".[60]

Conclusion: Towards a Broader Understanding of Media Tactics

Discussing two recent FOIA demands and internal CIA courses taught in the 1950s and 1960s, this essay sought to explore some of the media tactics at play at the interface of the worlds of journalism and the CIA. These tactics can be approached by looking at the complex implications of paperwork, the dialectical interplay of analogue and digital media, as well as the shifting boundaries and epistemologies of reporting. While the project of writing a follow-up piece to Bernstein's "The CIA and the Media" did not come to fruition, this essay stands as a tribute to the uncertainty and mishaps of paperwork and archival research.

Reflecting on specific attempts at FOIA and exploring internal CIA courses taught in the 1950s and 1960s, this research points to many questions that would deserve further scholarly investigations. Media tactics taking place at the level of media content and publications should be considered more closely. In the mid-1970s and early 1980s, several publications developed editorial projects in line with Bernstein's article and often focused on CIA actions. Magazines such as *CounterSpy* (1973–), *Covert-Action Information Bulletin* (1978–), and *Lobster* (1983–) often make use of FOIA and regularly focus on the interface of news media and the CIA. Several CIA agents left the agency to work with these magazines, which are also an interesting locus to explore the intersections of professional identities and practices of reporting. In the same vein, the place of journal articles in CIA files deserves greater attention and further reflection. Our FOIA requests turned out a lot of press clippings, which were carefully kept and sometimes commented on. This practice cuts across several tactics and strategies, including the surveillance of journalists, the gathering

and accumulation of information, and the writing of intelligence reports, which were often based on the format and content of press clippings.

This research also suggests promising leads with regard to the debated question of the origins of journalistic objectivity. Showing that the CIA's media practices are partly modelled on journalistic reporting seems insufficient and raises troubling questions regarding the genealogy of journalistic reporting and practices. Some well-established journalistic practices and key concepts may have been inherited from, or may have been modelled on, the media practices of the nascent state surveillance apparatus. The cross-examination of sources, the accumulation of files, and methodical verification were all common practices of state surveillance at the end of the eighteenth century. Such a hypothesis is yet to be substantiated and differs widely from the canonical historical narratives focusing on the role of the telegraph or the development of the news agencies.[61] Developed from a Foucauldian perspective, the concept of media tactic is perhaps particularly relevant in that it allows us to revisit such historiographical questions, while simultaneously pointing out that the practice of media history cannot be abstracted from the media tactics it reports.

Notes

1 Jonathan Peters, "'Always Appeal', and More Pro Tips from a Dozen FOIA Experts", *Columbia Journalism Review*, 17 March 2017, https://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/foia-expert-pro-tips-sunshine-week.php (accessed 12 November 2023); Paroma Soni, "A New Tool Allows Journalists to Quickly Sort through FOIA Data Dumps", *Columbia Journalism Review*, 2 March 2022, https://www.cjr.org/innovations/gumshoe-foia-data-dumps-ai.php (accessed 12 November 2023).

2 See Seth F. Kreimer, "Rays of Sunlight in a Shadow 'War': FOIA, the Abuses of Anti-Terrorism, and the Strategy of Transparency", *Lewis & Clark Law Review*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2007), 1141–1220; Devin S. Schindler, "Between Safety and Transparency: Prior Restraints, FOIA, and the Power of the Executive", *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2010), 1–48; Sioban Ghorman, "The Snowden Effect on the NSA and Reporting", *Journalism after Snowden*, eds. Emily Bell and Taylor Owen (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 197–208.

3 Carl Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media", *Rolling Stone*, 20 October 1977.

4 The Congressional investigation of the Church Committee revealed some of the abuses of the CIA in 1975, including its troubled relationship with American journalists and media (Operation Mockingbird), but its conclusions on the topic were overshadowed by the disclosures of CIA programmes such as MKULTRA (mind control experimentations on civilians), COINTELPRO (infiltration of civil-rights and progressive organisations), and Family Jewels (covert assassination). Also in 1975, British journalists blew the cover of Forum World Features, a CIA propaganda operation which operated as a news service. See John Jenks' chapter in this edited volume.

5 In the 1950s, there were also discussions about setting up a "propaganda school", a project promoted by journalist Walter Lippmann which also includes media scholars. See Dominique Trudel, "Walter Lippmann and the Second World War's Propaganda and Psychological Warfare Network", *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 11 (2017), 3721–39.
6 United States Congress, Committee on Government Operations, *U.S. Government Information Policies and Practices: Administration and Operation of the Freedom of Information Act (Part 4)* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), 1254–55.
7 Sam Lebovic, "How Administrative Opposition Shaped the Freedom of Information Law", *Troubling Transparency*, eds. David E. Pozen and Michael Schudson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 13–33.
8 Committee on Government Operations, *A Citizen's Guide on How to Use the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act in Requesting Government Documents* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977).
9 Anthony R. Fellow, *American Media History*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 354.
10 Gene F. Wilson to Carl Bernstein, 4 November 1977.
11 Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media".
12 Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media".
13 Bernstein writes that Phil Graham's "closest friend" was Frank Wisner, deputy director of the CIA and "the Agency's premier orchestrator of 'black' operations". The two men committed suicide in the mid 1960s.
14 I would like to thank my colleague, Dr. Juliette De Maeyer (Université de Montréal, Canada), for her contribution to this research.
15 Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media".
16 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 38.
17 See de Certeau, *The Practice;* See also the introduction of this edited volume.
18 Cf. Seth F. Kreimer, "The Freedom of Information Act and the Ecology of Transparency", *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law*, vol. 10, no. 5 (June 2008), 1013.
19 In the context of small and local newspapers, journalists' use of FOIA has been declining as their resources – including time, money, and expertise – are limited. FOIA is thus increasingly developing as a specialised niche for large media outlets. See James T. Hamilton, "FOIA and Investigative Reporting: Who's Asking What, Where, and When – and Why It Matters", *Troubling Transparency*, eds. David E. Pozen and Michael Schudson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 116–31.
20 David E. Pozen, "Freedom of Information Beyond the Freedom of Information Act", *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, vol. 165 (2007), 1097–1158.
21 Moreover, Pozen argues that FOIA is "neoliberal" and "reactionary" as it typically empowers opponents of regulation and powerful private and corporate interests. See David E. Pozen, "Freedom of Information". For a similar critique, see also Seth F. Kreimer, "The Ecology of Transparency Reloaded", *Troubling Transparency*, eds. David E. Pozen and Michael Schudson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 135–65.
22 Cited in Ben Kafka, *The Demon of Writing: Powers and Failures of Paperwork* (New York: Zone Books, 2013), 17.
23 See Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (New York: Picador, 2003).

24 For a clear overview of Foucault's approach, see Michael S. Roth, "Foucault's 'History of the Present'", *History and Theory*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1981), 32–46.
25 Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.
26 "I call a 'tactic', on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a 'proper' (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality", de Certeau, *The Practice*, xx.
27 de Certeau, *The Practice*.
28 The entanglement of the CIA with media and communication research is another dimension of the problem. See Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research & Psychological Warfare* 1945–1960 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Timothy Glander, *Origins of American Communication Research during the American Cold War: Educational Effects and Contemporary Implications* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000).
29 Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations* (New York: Free Press, 1947).
30 Kafka, *The Demon of Writing*, 10.
31 Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).
32 Kafka, *The Demon of Writing*, 117.
33 Vismann, *Files*, 84–85.
34 Lily Hay Newman, "UFOs, Psychics, and Spies: The CIA Just Put 12M Pages of Files Online. Start Here", *Wired*, 19 January 2017. https://www.wired.com/2017/01/ufos-psychics-spies-cia-just-put-12m-pages-files-online-start/ (accessed 8 December 2023).
35 See Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso Books, 2013).
36 On the transformative aspect of digital remediation, see Juliette De Maeyer and Dominique Trudel, "@franklinfordbot: Remediating Franklin Ford", *Digital Journalism*, vol. 6, no. 9 (2018), 1270– 87.
37 See Ted Underwood, "Theorizing Research Practices We Forgot to Theorize Twenty Years Ago", *Representations*, vol. 127, no. 1 (2014), 64–72.
38 I use the concept of language game in the sense of Wittgenstein. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953).
39 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 49.
40 See Vismann, *Files*, and Kafka, *The Demon of Writing*.
41 A report highlights the childish behaviour of students who, among other things, drew a swastika on the blackboard. See Office Memorandum, Chief Instructor, Information Reporting, Reports, and Requirements to Chief, Operations School, 1 February 1960. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-04308A000100080001-8.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
42 In 1966, the course includes screenings titled "Language in Action" and "Eye of the Beholder", the latter probably referring to the 11th episode of *The Twilight Zone* (1960), a CBS series.
43 Memorandum for Senior Staff and Division Training Officers, 19 July 1956. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP62-00939A000100110010-8.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
44 Memorandum, Assistant of Headquarters Training to Chief, Operations School, 20 March 1957. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/cia-rdp78-05787a000200010044-5.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).

45 Office Memorandum, Chief, Headquarters Training to Director of Training, 26 March 1959. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/cia-rdp61-00442a000100050017-7.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
46 Information Reporting, Reports, and Requirements, undated, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP62-00939A000100110011-7.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
47 Memorandum for Senior Staff, 19 July 1956.
48 Free-style Writing, undated, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP81-00706R000300030036-4.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
49 I use the concept of boundary-work in reference to the work of Gieryn, whose definition points to the "attribution of selected characteristics to [an] institution of science (i.e., to its practitioners, methods, stock of knowledge, values and work organization) for purposes of constructing a social boundary that distinguishes some intellectual activities as 'non-science'". See Thomas F. Gieryn, "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 48, no. 6 (1983), 782.
50 Roselyne Ringoot and Denis Ruellan, "Journalism as Permanent and Collective Invention", *Brazilian Journalism Research*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2012), 71.
51 Reactions to a "Critique of the IRRR course with suggestion for change", undated. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-04308A000100020055-5.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
52 Jean Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998).
53 Reactions to a "Critique of the IRRR".
54 Office Memorandum, Chief, Headquarters Training to Director of Training, 2 April 1959. https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP61-00442A000100050008-7.pdf (accessed 8 December 2023).
55 Office Memorandum, 2 April 1959.
56 Reactions to a "Critique of the IRRR".
57 Office Memorandum, 26 March 1959.
58 Office Memorandum, 1 February 1960.
59 Cited in Kafka, *The Demon of Writing*, 10.
60 Cited in Vismann, *Files*, 111.
61 See Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News. A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); James W. Carey, "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph", *Prospects*, vol. 8 (1983), 303–25.