



JUSTICE PROJECT STUDIES SHAKEN-BABY SYNDROME

The Medill Justice Project, formerly known as the Medill Innocence Project, published its first investigation of a shaken-baby syndrome case on Dec. 11. The project is also working to create the first publicly accessible shaken-baby criminal case database in the country. As the traditional understanding of shaken-baby syndrome is being increasingly questioned by medical experts, the belief is that there may be individuals unjustly imprisoned.

The Medill Justice Project's first story raises significant questions about the murder conviction of a Chicago-area licensed daycare provider in the death of a young child nearly 20 years ago. Pamela Jacobazzi, now 57, is serving a 32-year prison sentence for the death of Matthew Czapski. When she was convicted, shaken-baby-syndrome was a largely uncontested diagnosis based on a triad of symptoms: brain bleeding, brain swelling and bleeding within the eyes. When all three signs were detected, authorities often accused the last caregiver of abuse, believing the symptoms surface instantly and catastrophically.

But a number of medical studies in recent years have shown the three symptoms can surface from other causes.

Ten undergraduate journalism students in a fall investigative class led by Professor Alec Klein, director of the Medill Justice Project, consulted medical experts, examined recent studies, interviewed Jacobazzi family members, neighbors and former clients, submitted five Freedom of Information Act requests and obtained thousands of pages of court records, police reports and other hospital, pediatric, medical examiner, children and family services and property documents.

Jacobazzi was convicted of first-degree murder on May 18, 1999, and is incarcerated at Lincoln Correctional Center in Lincoln, Ill. After losing a series of appeals, she is seeking a new trial. A new evidentiary hearing is scheduled for May to consider her request.

FACULTY NEWS

Professor **David Abrahamson** led a seminar entitled "Literary Journalism: Borders and Boundaries" in September at Bogazici University in Istanbul at the biennial conference of the European Society for the Study of English.

Assistant Professor **Beth Bennett** moderated an Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication panel discussion about anonymous comments on news sites. Associate Professor Emeritus **David Nelson** was one of the panelists for the event.



Assistant Professor **Stephanie Edgerly** co-authored a study in the August issue of Communication Research. The article, "Partisan Evaluation of Partisan Information," examines how anti-vaccination partisans evaluate levels of bias in news stories about vaccines, compared to non-partisans.

Lecturer **Judy Franks** presented the findings of a research study she helped design for the Association of Magazine Media (MPA) to determine how social media usage influences magazine media engagement. The results were presented at the MPA Research Committee Meeting on June 26.



Assistant Professor **Jeremy Gilbert** received a grant from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation for the development of Headliner, a game that records the news readers consume and encourages new reading habits. The grant came from the foundation's "Why News

Matters" program, which is focused on different approaches to news literacy.

Professor **Rich Gordon** completed a research project on hyperlinks and user traffic in Chicago's "news ecosystem," made up of 301 websites that provide news and information about the Chicago region.

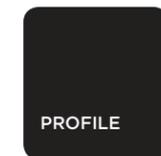
Associate Professor **Ava Thompson Greenwell** presented her paper, "Black Women Journalists: (Un) Silencing Sexual Subjugation," at the 97th annual academic conference of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History on Sept. 27 in Pittsburgh.

By Shannon Shelton Miller (MSJ00)

THINKING VISUALLY

PROFESSOR CRAIG DUFF PREPARES HIS STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL JOURNALISTS IN A MULTIMEDIA WORLD

As the 2012 presidential campaign reached its final frenzied stretch, The New York Times sent a team of reporters that included Professor Craig Duff to Cincinnati. There he filmed groups of enthusiastic volunteers knocking on doors and working phone banks, attempting to reach every potential voter they could.



Duff spent just two days in the election battleground of Ohio before heading back to Chicago, where he dispatched 16 urban affairs reporting graduate students throughout the city to do similar work. The students captured the sights and sounds of election night and the morning after through social media, videography, photography and writing.

In today's world of cross-platform reporting, journalists are long past the days when reporters were "just writers" or "just photographers." Although anyone can be considered a video reporter today with the touch of a smartphone button, Duff, an award-winning multimedia journalist, instructs his students as they complete their work to remember the "J" in "VJ," meaning focus on the journalism as a video journalist.

"We want to make sure students are prepared for what they'll confront in the real world," says Duff, who began teaching broadcast reporting and documentary courses at Medill last spring. "I want to help reporters become better visual thinkers and visual journalists become better reporters."

John V. Santore (MSJ13), a student in the urban affairs class, visited The New York Times' website the weekend before the election and watched his professor's video, which for a period on Sunday, Nov. 4, appeared at the top of the page.

"Knowing I would be seeing him in class the next week was really exciting," says Santore, who recalled Duff's tips when he spent election night at McCormick Place covering President Barack Obama's eventual victory. "Telling a visual story is less intuitive than you might think. He teaches us how to ask questions, how to display photos to advance a story and develop a narrative through video."

In the relatively short history of online multimedia journalism, Duff is among the field's pioneers. He previously worked as director of multimedia and chief video journalist for TIME and with The New York Times as lead video journalist. His team at TIME won an Emmy in the New Approaches to News & Documentary Programming category for a series that delivered a behind-the-scenes look at iconic photographs taken on D-Day and during the fall of the Berlin Wall, among other historical events.

Duff started his career as a video journalist at CNN, completed teaching stints at Columbia University and Princeton University, and spent a year as a Knight International Journalism Fellow at the American University in Cairo.



PHOTO BY RAY WHITEHOUSE (BSJ12)

ELECTION NIGHT COVERAGE

- <http://medillelectionnight.com/>
- <http://medillelection2012.tumblr.com/>
- <http://storify.com/medillschool/medill-students-cover-election2012>

Duff faced a new challenge last summer when he taught a graduate documentary course where students had less than 10 weeks to produce a 10-minute documentary. By the end of the quarter, the students completed six successful documentaries.

"He always has this way of making a student believe it can be done," says Thomas Owen (MSJ12), now a production assistant at the Chicago Tribune. When Owen faced challenges getting access to a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder for a documentary on service dogs aiding veterans, he said Duff drew from his extensive professional background to offer assistance and suggestions to keep the story alive.

"I never felt like he would allow me or anyone else to fail," Owen says.

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