SECRETS OF THE CITY, PP. 22-31: What are the different philosophies of journalism that are the basis for at least part of the dispute between David Simon and his former editors? Compare and evaluate both points of view. Which side do you think is correct? Why? Which side do you think the author, Lawrence Lanahan, takes? Considering the comments of those interviewed in this story along with those of E. J. Dionne (p. 15), should stories about poverty get more space in newspapers? Why or why not? Why do you think they don’t? Suggest some ideas for using the Web to focus creatively on poverty-related stories. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Watch an episode of The Wire. What does the program reveal to you about covering issues related to urban poverty from the different points of view of editors, reporters, and publishers? Imagine you are the city editor of a local paper. Find a story in your town or city related to the issues...
raised in the article. Write a pitch to your local paper, outlining the story and what it reveals in a larger sense about American society’s relationship to the poor. To whom would you speak for your story and why?

The Redemption of Chris Rose, pp. 32-35: What is it about Chris Rose’s emotional makeup that made him both a talented news reporter and vulnerable to the breakdown that he suffered? Would you have taken on the gossip columnist job that he accepted before the hurricane? Why or why not? The article points out the Times-Picayune’s spotty journalistic record before Katrina. Would the post-Katrina problems have been as severe had the newspaper taken its role more seriously before the hurricane? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Go to the Times-Picayune Web site (www.nola.com). Find Chris Rose’s post-Katrina columns. Read through a number of them. Chose two or three that you think are especially well done. Discuss your reactions to them, and break them down to explain why they are so effective. Imagine you are David Simon. Come up with what you think are two big post-Katrina stories for New Orleans. Outline how you—as Simon—would have covered them.

The Language of Strangers, pp. 36-40: What are the different ways a community newspaper can make a real difference in the life of a small town? Would you want to be the editor or publisher of a community paper? Why or why not? What were the major mistakes made by Robert Plotkin? If you had been the new publisher, how would you have insured an easier transition for the readers? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Go online and read recent issues of the Point Reyes Station. Critique it. Does it serve the community well? How would you improve it?

Uncomfortable Truth, pp. 51-53: How and why are the attitudes among Indian English-language publishers about covering poverty similar to those of many of their American counterparts? Compare Palagummi Sainath’s and David Simon’s approaches to covering poverty. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Find and read one of Sainath’s articles. Compare his approach and technique to writing and reporting to that of American journalists. Whose work in America comes closest to Sainath’s? Why? Go online and read some of the English-language newspapers that are mentioned in the article. Critique what you read in the context of the issues raised by the author. Compare their news coverage to that of a major American paper with which you are familiar.

MAY I SPEAK FREELY? PP. 46-51: Do you agree or disagree with Lewis’s position (as explained by Neier) that reporters are not entitled to hold special privileges? Explain. According to the author, First Amendment protections for journalists have not been seriously threatened by the Bush Administration’s “war on terror.” Do you agree or disagree? After reading of the ordeal suffered by the Hill family in the wake of Time magazine’s story about them, would you have published the story had you been a Time editor? Why or why not? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Research the history of the major court decisions that have advanced press freedoms since 1789. Write an essay discussing the importance of the decisions you cite, but focus on the one decision that you feel was the most important in establishing the freedom that the press enjoys today. Explain the reasons for your choice.