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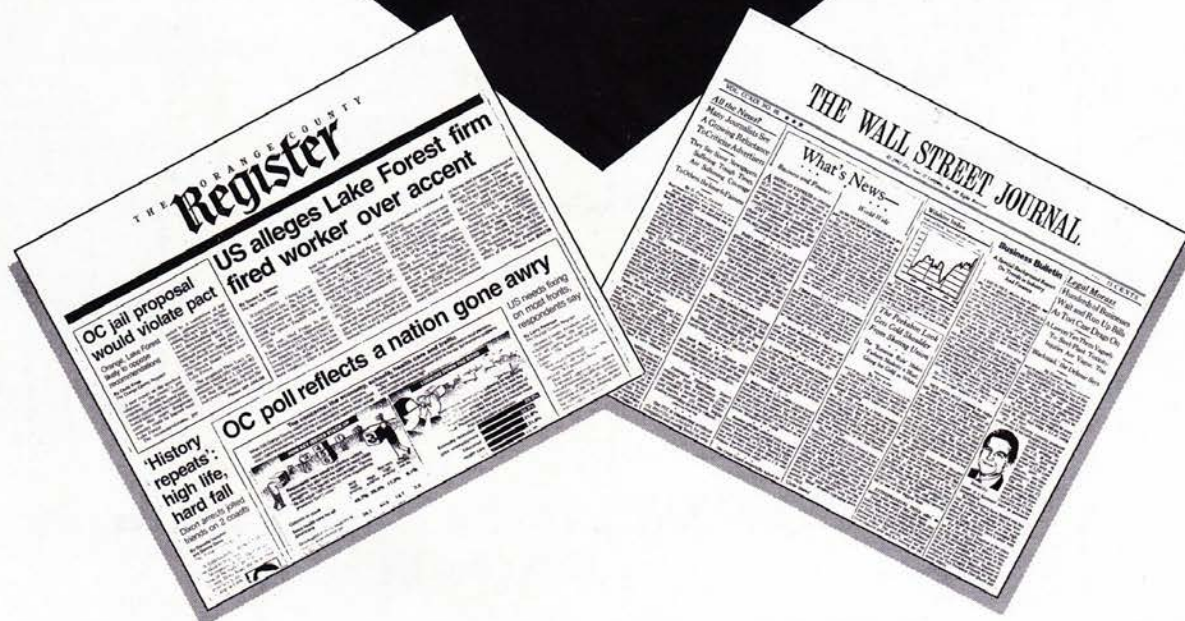
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Vivid memories of famous trials

**Linda Deutsch of Associated Press has had
a front-row seat since the late 1960s**

By M.L. Stein

Linda Deutsch has many vivid memories of the famous trials she has covered for Associated Press, but one in particular stands out.

It concerned the 1976 bank robbery trial of Patty Hearst in San Francisco.

The jury came in with an unexpected verdict of guilty and Deutsch dashed to file a bulletin from a hallway phone a colleague was holding open for her.

However, there was a problem. The judge, in the emotion-charged courtroom, had ordered that everyone remain seated until he left the bench.

Deutsch was perfectly positioned in a jury box close to a side door, which was blocked by a six-foot deputy marshal, who took the judge's admonition very seriously.

"I was in panic," Deutsch recalled. "I could see people being let through the main door but this guy stood fast. Every paper in the country was holding open the front page.

"I said, 'You've got to let me out of here.' He wouldn't move."

The diminutive reporter recalls that the next few seconds are still a kind of blur in her mind, but she does remember getting out.

"I got an elbow under his chin," she related. He tumbled back and I climbed over him. As I ran for the phone I figured I would be arrested for assaulting a marshal but my first thought was to get the bulletin out.

There is a footnote to the story.

When Deutsch returned to the courtroom a month later for the sentencing, the same deputy was there. I said to myself, "I can't go through this again," she recounted, "but he held open the door for me and said with a funny smile, 'You didn't get another chance at me, huh?'"

As American journalism's pre-eminent trial specialist, Deutsch has had plenty of chances for other court-related experiences. Her latest was the William Kennedy Smith rape trial in Florida.

Much of the testimony was riveting, she allowed, but what sticks in her mind is an almost steady diet of room-service food at her hotel.

"The judge was running the trial



Linda Deutsch

seven days a week and I often worked 19-hour days," Deutsch said. "When you looked down the corridor of the press floor in the hotel, you could see room-service trays outside every door."

The trial so exhausted her that, upon her return home, she came down with pneumonia and spent a week in bed.

The 48-year-old New Jersey native is assigned to AP's Los Angeles bureau with the title of Special Writer but do not count on reaching her there.

More than likely she will be covering a trial somewhere.

Since the late 1960s, Deutsch has had a front-row seat at virtually every Page One trial in the nation, beginning with that of Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Robert F. Kennedy.

The list, which reads like a legal Who's Who, includes the trials of Charles Manson, Angela Davis, Daniel Ellsberg, Manson-follower Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, John Z. De Lorean, former Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham and *Exxon Valdez* skipper Joseph Hazelwood.

Some of her trials are remembered more by the defendant's nicknames—

the Hillside Strangler, Freeway Killer, and the Nightstalker.

In civil court, she has reported the landmark "palimony" case of Marvin vs. Marvin, Art Buchwald's plagiarism suit against Paramount Pictures, and the sensational AIDS-related lawsuit against Rock Hudson by his gay lover. In between times, the AP veteran has covered Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan at their Western White Houses, assassination attempts on President Gerald Ford, and, from Guam, the evacuation of Vietnam after the fall of Saigon.

Next up for Deutsch is the trial of four Los Angeles police officers in connection with the beating of black motorist Rodney King, which was videotaped by an amateur cameraman and became a national story. The case has drawn so much local attention that the trial has been moved from Los Angeles to a small town in neighboring Ventura County, where a massive media glut is expected.

Deutsch sees herself as carrying on a tradition of an almost extinct species: the traveling trial correspondents who flourished in the 1940s and '50s — legendary figures such as Theo Wilson of the *New York Daily News*, Doc Quigg of United Press International, the *Chicago Sun-Times*' Ray Brennan, Dorothy Kilgallen of the *New York Journal-American*, Gene Miller of the *Miami Herald*, and Hearst writer Bob Considine.

Wilson who, according to Deutsch was the "heart and soul" of the group, lives in L.A. and is currently writing a book about her experiences.

To Deutsch, the trials she has covered go deeper than whatever sensational stories they provided.

"They are a mirror of our times," she said. "The Pentagon Papers trial was about the Vietnam war, Patty Hearst illustrated the gap between parents and children, the Manson case told us about the drug culture in the '60s, the Marc Christian [Rock Hudson's boyfriend] trial was the first examination of AIDS in our courts, De Lorean gave us a look at the yuppie culture of the '80s and *Exxon Valdez* highlighted the entire environmental movement.

trial was about politics but it was really about the whole issue of rape," she asserted.

Deutsch remembers the *Exxon Valdez* trial for more than its historical significance.

"[AP bureau chief] Andy Lippman called me over one day and said, 'Guess where you're going? Alaska.' I said, 'Andy, I live in California and this is February. I don't have the right clothes for Alaska.' It became an office joke that I wanted AP to buy me a mink coat," she related.

Deutsch did not get a mink coat although the wire service furnished her with snowshoes, boots, a heavy jacket, thermal underwear, and other gear to survive in Anchorage's 20-degree-below-zero weather.

Even so, she said, there always was the danger of her face freezing in the short walk from her hotel to the overheated courthouse, where she had to shed all her outerwear.

News coverage always adds something to a reporter's education but trial reporting is in a special class when it comes to acquiring knowledge, according to Deutsch.

"During the *Exxon Valdez* trial I absorbed so much nautical technology, I really felt that I could steer an oil tanker," she remarked.

Deutsch also bones up before a trial but in one case, she admits, she studied the wrong subject.

Assigned to cover the National Football League franchise trial pitting then NFL president Pete Rozelle against Al Davis, owner of the former Oakland Raiders, she first hit the books.

"I'm not a sports fan so I crammed in everything I could about football," she said. "I needn't have bothered. The trial was not about football but about money. I didn't even have to know the number of players on a team."

Deutsch, who is active in First Amendment and bench-bar-media groups, believes that part of her job is "educating judges" to help eliminate the conflict that frequently erupts between the courts and the press, leading to gag orders, closed proceedings, and other restrictions.

"Some judges think we are there to make money for our newspapers by sensationalizing," she observed, "but I have found that things go a lot smoother when a judge gets to meet the press and realizes that we are professionals, that we understand the system, and that we are there to cooperate and not interfere. And that we represent the public."

Deutsch encourages reporters covering trials to attempt an informal

"It's not as hard as you might think," she said.

Still, Deutsch is concerned about the "constant battle" between the courts and the press, a struggle she largely attributes to "misunderstanding and miscommunication."

Television in the courtroom and inexperienced reporters also play a part in judges' attitude toward the press, she added.

"During the *Exxon Valdez* trial I absorbed so much nautical technology, I really felt that I could steer an oil tanker."

"Judges who see themselves on tv are going to be a bit more critical of press coverage," she explained. She remembers one bench-bar-press meeting in which a judge "mostly complained about how he was photographed on tv."

Then, some young reporters are assigned to trials knowing little or nothing about the court system and the rules, she continued. She told of one such newsman who slyly left his running tape recorder on a seat in the courtroom after the press had been sent out of a hearing. He was caught and severely reprimanded by the judge, Deutsch said.

is to be assigned to a courthouse beat, she stressed. "You learn pretty fast what you can and cannot do."

Deutsch first learned her court reporting on the *Perth Amboy Evening News* and *Asbury Park Press* in New Jersey after graduating from Monmouth College with a degree in English.

Having been a film critic for her college paper, Deutsch came to Cali-

fornia with the idea of becoming an entertainment writer and, for a while, she was for AP. She still covers the Oscar awards each year and frequently reviews movies.

Now this AP expert believes that there is more drama and entertainment in the courtroom than produced by Hollywood.

"What screenwriter could have invented Charles Manson and his murderous family?" she asked, "and who could have dreamed up the bizarre tale of Patty Hearst and the Symbionese Liberation Army? These are characters and drama larger than fiction."

Cable industry reports revenues

The cable tv industry achieved gross revenues of more than \$20 billion for the first time in 1991, according to estimates of Paul Kagen Associates Inc.

The data is published in the research company's *Cable TV Investor* newsletter.

The industry's total revenues grew 12% over 1990, the latest in an unbroken string of double-digit gains since PKA began compiling revenue data

15 years ago.

In 1982, cable tv companies' revenue totaled just under \$5 billion. Revenue per subscriber advanced 7.5% in 1991. Increased revenues were also built on increasing acceptance of cable by consumers: total subscribers rose 4.6% to an estimated 52.8 million. Penetration also rose, from 59% of 86 million tv households in 1990 to 60% of 88 million homes in 1991.

Kalikow puts \$1 million into N.Y. Post plant

New York Post publisher and owner Peter S. Kalikow announced the awarding of contracts totaling \$1 million for capital improvements at his paper's South St., Manhattan, headquarters.

Most of the investment is going toward replacing the newspaper's entire conveyor systems, for which project the Post signed Hall Processing Systems of Westlake, Ohio. The

job, now under way, is expected to be completed by next year. It requires installation and testing of the new conveyor system while the existing mailroom workflow continues uninterrupted.

Last fall the Post upgraded its plate-making equipment with two NP-120 NAPPlate processing machines from NAPP Systems (USA) Inc., San Marcos, Calif.