

The Center for Public Integrity

The Center for Public Integrity, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supported by foundations and individual contributors, was founded in 1989 by investigative reporter and former *60 Minutes* producer Charles Lewis. Lewis' idea behind establishing the Center was quite simple: What needs to be investigated? What hasn't been reported? What is significant to our society?

The Center's work is based on the conviction that the public has a right to know what its government, public officials, and corporate leaders are doing. Its mission includes providing the American people with information—often not available elsewhere—about how these entities are performing their duties. By providing thorough, thoughtful, and objective analyses, the Center serves as an honest broker of information, which in turn leads to a more informed citizenry that demands a higher level of accountability from its government and elected leaders.

Widely acknowledged as the preeminent online journalistic enterprise in the United States, the Center does investigative reporting and research on public policy issues in the United States and around the world. Virtually all of our findings are posted online at www.publicintegrity.org, while many of our investigations are later published as books or reports.

During 2003 the Center published more reports, received more Web site hits, won more awards, and began more projects than in any previous year. The numbers are telling: more than 40 investigative reports posted online triggered nearly 3 million unique visits and more than 75 million hits. In addition, the Center was cited in some 1,500 print and broadcast stories around the world.

More importantly, there was evidence in both Washington and the country at large that Center reports made a difference: in at least two instances, for example, these investigations spawned changes to the law.

It was, in short, a banner year.



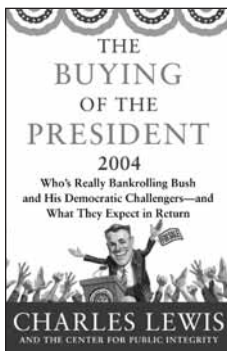
“the paul revere of our times....”

The *Village Voice* about Chuck Lewis and the Center for Public Integrity

Center Projects in 2003

PROJECT: NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY.

This project, which is the core of the Center's activities, includes both short-deadline investigations and longer-term initiatives. Below are some of the stories and reports published by the Government Accountability team during 2003:



■ **The Buying of the President 2004** is the third in a series of books researched, reported, and written by Center staff on money and politics in a presidential campaign year. BoP, as the book is known internally, was a mammoth undertaking that drew upon the resources of staff Center-wide. In their research, staffers uncovered a number of incidents in which presidential candidates failed in their fund-raising efforts to meet the spirit of the law.



■ **Windfalls of War: U.S. Contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan**, perhaps the most publicized of all the Center reports this year (Web traffic jumped from 132,000 daily hits to 862,456 hits the day the report was released), provided the most comprehensive list of American contractors working in those two foreign nations. The report also showed that these 70-

plus companies and individuals collectively contributed more money to the presidential campaigns of George W. Bush—a little over \$500,000—than to any other politician or presidential campaign over the last dozen years. Shortly after we issued the report, an official at the Iraq Infrastructure Reconstruction Office requested a meeting with the Center to discuss how the office could perform its duties with more transparency.

■ **Justice Department Drafts Sweeping Expansion of Anti-terrorism Act**, which made public a draft of the secret sequel to the 2001 “Patriot Act,” was the Center's scoop of the year. Hours after the so-called Patriot II Act was posted online, more than 100 Web sites had linked to the Center; within two weeks, the leaked document proved to be a magnet for more than 500,000 unique Web site visits.

■ The Center's report disclosing that nine members of the Defense Policy Board have ties to companies that won huge defense contracts (**Advisors of Influence: Nine Members of the Defense Policy Board Have Ties to Defense Contractors**) attracted enormous attention from both the public and the media. In fact, the report triggered so much criticism of former assistant defense secretary Richard Perle that he resigned his chairmanship of this influential Pentagon advisory board.

■ **The Politics of Energy**, posted online during the final days of congressional debate over energy policy, traced the unprecedented influence that the coal, oil and gas, and nuclear industries have in Washington. This study also analyzed the industries' lobbying, campaign contributions, and policy wish lists and how the Bush administration and Congress have granted those wishes.

PROJECT: GLOBAL ACCESS. Launched in early 2003, Global Access assesses anti-corruption mechanisms and accountability in 27 countries. This unprecedented research has attracted the attention of such organizations as the United Nations, which is eagerly awaiting the results of the Center's new methodology. The Center is leading a team of international social scientists and investigative journalists, who are measuring transparency, freedom of the press, and the rule of law from Nicaragua to Nigeria, from Argentina to Australia. Along with each country report is the country's ranking (in the new Public Integrity Index) as determined by the project's access indicator methodology. The report is scheduled for completion in early 2004. In the future, this project will be the springboard for more international projects focusing on corruption.

PROJECT: INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS (ICIJ). This unique network was created in 1997 by the Center to extend its style of watchdog journalism globally. ICIJ marshals the talents of nearly 100 of the world's leading investigative journalists in almost 50 countries to produce collaborative, multinational reports on issues that transcend borders, such as organized crime, political corruption, international security, and environmental degradation. This year the Center published two important books based on months of research conducted by ICIJ reporters around the world:

■ **The Water Barons: How A Few Powerful Companies Are Privatizing Your Water** shows that since 1990 the world's three largest private water utility companies have expanded into nearly every region of the planet, raising

concerns that a handful of private companies could soon control a large chunk of this vital natural resource. In November the project was a finalist for the notable Online News Award for Enterprise Reporting.

- **Making a Killing: The Business of War**, winner of the prestigious Sigma Delta Chi award for investigative reporting, shows that at least 90 companies provide services normally performed by national military forces. In over 100 countries these companies provide everything from military training to logistics, and even engage in armed combat. This project also was a finalist for the Online News Award in the category of Feature Reporting.

These two books have brought worldwide attention and acclaim to the Center, which in turn has both attracted new members and motivated existing members to increase their contributions in support of our work.

PROJECT: HARMFUL ERROR: INVESTIGATING AMERICA'S LOCAL PROSECUTORS. This three-year project on prosecutorial misconduct was conducted by a team of researchers who studied state appellate court opinions throughout the 50 states going back to 1970. They scrutinized more than 11,000 opinions and found that judges had ruled in over 2,000 of them that prosecutors' behavior inside or outside the courtroom prejudiced juries or judges against the defendants. The report, which ran to nearly 50,000 words, also documented cases in which prosecutorial misconduct had played a role in convicting innocent men and women. Response from both the media and the general public demonstrated that this project struck a nerve in the American psyche, and indicates that more reporting on this subject needs to be done.

PROJECT: WELL CONNECTED: A SERIES OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS ON THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY. This multi-faceted look at telecommunications has revealed and documented the influence of the industry over officials at the Federal Communications Commission. The project included an exhaustive database showing who owns the television and radio stations, as well as cable-TV and telephone companies, in every American Zip Code. It also revealed startling new information about control of broadcast outlets in various markets, industry contributions, and lobbying efforts at the congressional level. In



the year to come, "Well Connected" will look into influence at the state and local government levels.

"Well Connected" received enormous news coverage this year for a story on the cozy relationship between FCC officials and staff and the industries they regulate, with particular emphasis on industry-financed travel. Days after release

of this story, Senator John McCain, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, introduced legislation addressing the Center's findings about privately funded trips taken by FCC officials. In addition, Representative Frank Wolf, Republican of Virginia, urged FCC Chairman Michael Powell to request additional funds so that Commission officials would no longer have to rely on industry sources to pay for travel—a request with which Powell complied.

PROJECT: STATE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY. Various portions of this ongoing project won major journalism awards in 2001 and 2002, and new reports are well on their way to breaking new ground this year. *Hired Guns*, the story of how lobbyists spend vast amounts of money to influence state legislators, was the most comprehensive effort ever on this subject, while *The New Soft Money* detailed how fund raisers use loopholes in all 50 states to raise money for national and local candidates and showed how special committees (known as "527s" to the finance cognoscenti) violate the spirit, and sometimes the letter, of the law on election fund raising. These unprecedented reports have attracted a sizable number of readers from across the country who are interested in lobbying at the state level.

A complete list of reports follows:

January:

- A Most Favored Corporation: Enron Prevailed in Federal, State Lobbying Efforts 49 Times
- Phone Funds for Schools, Libraries, Riddled with Fraud
- Relaxing Media Ownership Rules Conflicts with the Public's Right to Know
- Congressmen Call for Proof of Fraud-Plagued Phone Fund for School Libraries
- It's a Millionaires' Race: New Financial Disclosure
- Database Details Assets of 2004 Presidential Candidates

