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After Five O'Clock Friends Kent Cooper and Roy W. Howard Terhi Rantanen

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Kent Cooper and Roy W. Howard

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Terhi Rantanen was a visiting scholar at the School of Journalism, Indiana University-Bloomington, from May 26-June 4, 1997; May 19-24, 1996; November 14-18, 1993; and October 31-November 12, 1991. She did research for this monograph and her previous ones in the Roy W. Howard Archive in the School of Journalism's library and also at the Lilly Library here in Bloomington. She is presently Senior Researcher and Docent in the Department of Communication, Helsinki University, Finland. Her interests are in the relationship between international and national news agencies in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and she has also written on the history of U.S. and Finnish news agencies. She has done research on news agencies in archives in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Paris, London, Washington D.C., and at Harvard University, Indiana University, Stanford University, and the University of Illinois. She holds a master's degree in communication, a licentiate in communication, and a doctorate in communication, all from Helsinki University in Finland. This monograph was edited by David H. Weaver, Roy W. Howard Research Professor at Indiana University's School of Journalism.

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Acknowledgements

The present monograph examines the "after five o'clock friendship" between Roy W. Howard (1883-1964) and Kent Cooper (1880-1965), two big media business executives of their time, who have their pictures in the Hoosier Hall of Fame at Indiana University. Both Cooper and Howard had a profound influence on the development of news agencies not only in the U.S., but also *globally* with the increased availability of U.S. news services abroad. Since time wipes away the reasons why certain people were considered important in their own time and why rooms or scholarships were named after them for the generations to come, this monograph may also have *local* interest for those who work or study at Indiana University.

Few universities have such valuable collections on the history of journalism as Indiana University has. For news agency researchers the Roy W. Howard Archive in the School of Journalism and the Kent Cooper papers in the Lilly Library are especially valuable, since neither the AP nor the UPI has given access to individual researchers to work in its own archives. During my several visits to Bloomington since 1991, I have admired the way these archival collections have been preserved and cared for. Together the materials in the Journalism Library and the Main Library at Indiana University provide excellent working conditions for media historians. I would like to thank again their staffs.

As previously, I am grateful to Professor David Weaver for his generous help and for editing this monograph. I would also like to extend my thanks to his family—Gail, Quinn and Lesley—for their hospitality that made a Finnish globetrotter feel always at home in Bloomington.

I first thought to dedicate this monograph to all of us who have lost a friend because of competition. However, as Cooper's and Howard's relationship shows, friendships do not necessarily have to break up, although tensions seem sometimes to be impossible to overcome. Instead, I would like to dedicate it to my family and fellow travellers who not only tolerated my working on this monograph during the summer holiday, but reminded me of *joie de vivre*.

Terhi Rantanen
Bloomington-Kotka-Perrot-Helsinki
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Kent Cooper (left with hat) and Roy Howard on a hunting trip off the coast of Georgia in December 1928

Source: Roy W. Howard Archive, School of Journalism, Indiana University

After Five O'Clock Friends—Kent Cooper and Roy W. Howard

Kent Cooper (1880-1965), the general manager of the Associated Press 1925-1948 and Roy W. Howard (1883-1964), president and general manager of the United Press Associations 1912-1920, later chairman of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers, were once described as "after five o'clock friends." How was it possible that these two men, who ran competing news organizations, could be friends, even if only after five o'clock? What was the basis of their friendship? How did their friendship affect the development of the news business in the first half of this century? And how did the development of the news business affect their friendship?

As Peter M. Nardi observes, much of the writing on friendship tends to emphasize a personal or an individual approach, thereby neglecting the relationship between friendship and social structure. This has happened despite the fact that there is a strong connection between social structure and male friendships.² Nardi's observation also has wider implications which could be applied to journalism/media history research, for a long-standing tradition of the histories of "great journalists" has gradually given way to media history, which considers structures more important than individuals.

There is no need to deny the value of individuals in any historical process just because the different traditions seem to live their separate lives. One could also say that since media research is not only about journalism, but to a large extent about business, business executives should be studied as well. The history of media business executives combined with media history can reveal much about the relationship between individuals and structures that have so far mainly been studied separately. Further, by concentrating not only on one individual, but on the relationships that individual has with her/his associates and competitors, the narrative can reach dimensions other genres may have missed. This approach stands thus at the crossroads of several research traditions including journalism and media history, media business history, and organizational communication.

This monograph is primarily about the "after five o'clock friendship" between Kent Cooper and Roy W. Howard. It explores its dimensions, ranging from a feeling of closeness to extreme tensions. Simultaneously, it is about two competing news organizations that originally presented different business concepts, the co-operative Associated Press and the privately-owned United Press Association. The essay relies heavily on two archival collections: the Roy W. Howard Archive at the School of Journalism and the Kent Cooper papers in the Lilly Library, both at Indiana University in Bloomington.

EARLY YEARS

Kent Cooper and Roy W. Howard shared many things in life, although they were very different from each other. The first common factor was that they were both from small Midwestern towns. Kent Green Cooper was born on 22 March, 1880, in the small Midwestern town of Columbus (population 4,000) in Indiana.³ Roy Wilson Howard was born three years later in Gano, in southwestern Ohio, on New Year's Day in 1883 in a noisy turnpike tollhouse presided over by his grandmother. The town was so small that it did not appear in an ordinary library atlas. However, Howard referred to himself as a Hoosier because his family moved to Indianapolis seven years after he was born.⁴

Their family backgrounds were strikingly different from each other in size, wealth and education. Cooper was the youngest child and only son of six children born to George William Cooper and Sina Green Cooper. His parents were both graduates of Indiana University and their home was a highly literate household. Sina Green Cooper was in the first group of women students ever admitted to Indiana University in 1868. Cooper's father became a lawyer and Democratic politician who served three terms as congressman between 1889 and 1895. Howard was the only child of his parents. His father, William Howard, was a railroad baggageman of Scottish-Irish origin who later became a conductor. His mother was Elizabeth Wilson, a toll-gate keeper's daughter. William Howard was tubercular and a good part of his income went for medical care.5

Despite the differences in their family backgrounds, both Cooper and Howard delivered newspapers and took their first steps in journalism while still in school. Cooper started delivering newspapers at the age of 11. Later, he began to set type and report for Columbus newspapers during his high school years. He was described as a freckled school boy who was bright-eyed and alert, with a natural aptitude for learning, though no great longing for books. Cooper was mostly a boy to whom a good many other things in the world were more important than books.6 Howard stood on an Indianapolis street corner selling newspapers at the age of 13. He became a copy boy and then a sports

editor while he was still a teen-aged schoolboy. He also wrote the school notes for the *Indianapolis News*.7

Both Howard and Cooper lost their fathers at the age of 19, and this changed their lives in many different ways. Cooper's father died in 1899 at the age of 48 after a long battle with tuberculosis. His mother died five years later. One of his father's last acts was to write a letter to a friend asking that his son be given a job on the Indianapolis Press.8 As a result, after attending Indiana University one year, Cooper left school. Howard's father died of tuberculosis in 1902 at the age of 43. Earlier that winter his father's tuberculosis had taken a turn for the worse, and he had gone to Arizona for treatment. While there he received a letter from an Indianapolis neighbor upbraiding him for neglecting his family. Howard's father took the next train back to Indianapolis and died there three weeks later. As Frank Ford writes, Howard became obsessed with the idea that a small reserve of money might have saved his father's life. Even into old age Howard could not speak of his father without emotion. He looked up to him as a man of heroic character and hoped to prove worthy of him.9 When Kent Cooper was elected general manager of the AP, he said that he wanted "more than anything for his parents to know the goal he had reached." 10

Cooper recalled that he became friends with Howard in 1900 when Howard was a high school reporter and Cooper took a job on the Indianapolis Press to support himself. Two years later Cooper became a police reporter with the Indianapolis Sun. At the same time, Howard became a full-time reporter on the Indianapolis News. Then he transferred to the sports editorship and the assistant editorship of the Indianapolis Star. 11

Karen W. Hansen cites Rotundo's research on middle-class male friendships that shows that men in the 19th Century formed friendships throughout their lives, but established intimate relationships with men virtually only in the period between boyhood and manhood. Rotundo defines intimacy as "a sharing of innermost thoughts and secret emotions." He claims that young men psychologically break from their families and seek to establish themselves in the world at a time when they have reached physical maturity but have not yet established the two identifying marks of middle-class manhood—a career and marriage.¹²

There are no documents available from the period Cooper and Howard learned to know each other that would show the degree of their intimacy. As Rubin observes, friendship is a non-event, a relationship that just becomes, grows, develops, waxes, wanes and, too often perhaps, ends, all without ceremony or ritual to give evidence of its existence. Further, she writes that when talking about men's friendship we should use the term "bonding" instead of intimacy. However, during that time, when Cooper and Howard both had lost their fathers and started their work as reporters with a low income and were trying to establish not only their careers but their futures, they shared things they could share only with a few people at later stages of their lives.

There would be a few self-made men as news agency executives, but they were the only two Hoosiers who had known each other since they were young men and could understand each other's background. Howard was later to become to be known for his "pious Midwestern fear of Wall Street" and as a man who preferred "the company of transplanted Midwesterners" like Cooper. Cooper referred to this after Howard's death in a letter to Lee B. Wood:

Roy and I were friends long before either of us got started on our upward climb, and we were both proud of the fact that though competitors in the business our friendship continued loyally. I have always felt so deeply about that friendship that I doubt if any one could have enjoyed knowing Roy more than I did except, of course, his wife and family, and perhaps yourself.¹⁵

COOPER STARTS NEWS AGENCY WORK

It was Cooper who was the first to be introduced to news agency work. He joined the small Scripps-McRae Press Association in 1901, working first as a stringer and then as a manager of the Indianapolis bureau. In 1905 Cooper got married, asked the association for a raise and was turned down. Two months later he organized the United Press

News Association to provide news from the state capital for 18 Indiana newspapers. A year later Scripps-McRae bought him out and rehired him at \$35 a week. Later, the Scripps-McRae Press Association, the Publishers' Press Association and other small associations were amalgamated, and a new agency, the United Press Association (UP), was established in 1907.

The UP was founded by E.W. Scripps (1854-1926), the owner of a newspaper chain of "liberal, shoestring papers in towns so much alike in their outlook that the publications could have practically interchangeable parts," thus needing an agency that could provide news to these papers. Scripps once said that 95 percent of all newspaper readers were not rich and would read a daily published in the interest of the have-nots. Scripps established his chain by going into towns where there was an established conservative newspaper and starting an opposition sheet on a minimum budget. The Scripps formula, as expressed by a cynical veteran, was to "hire a shed down by the railroad station, put in a press that Gutenberg had scrapped and some linotype machines held together with baling wire, then put in a kid for 12 dollars a week to be editor and promise him one percent of the profits as soon as the circulation hit a million." ¹⁸

Scripps' main objection to joining the Associated Press had been, according to his own words, that "I knew at least 90 per cent of my fellows in American journalism were capitalists and conservatives." The United Press started off with the same independent left-wing slant for which the Scripps-McRae newspapers were known. 19 In its formative years, the UP was poor. The motto was that every dollar had to count, none was for show. Scripps insisted that his properties pay their way plus at least 15 percent net on the gross—not on the capital, which often was insignificant. Salaries were moderate, the Scripps enterprises seldom having erred on the side of profligacy or paternalism. In the absence of high-salary rewards, the Scripps enterprises always encouraged their employees to purchase non-voting stock in lieu of salary. The stock often paid good dividends but had no market value, and employees wishing to sell could lose part of their savings. 20

The UP thus offered an excellent opportunity to young ambitious

men like Cooper and Howard. However, it was hard work. Cooper later described his experiences as a UP salesman:

Eagerly rushing about the country as I did was a real test of physical endurance. When I first started to travel for the UP I had a healthy body and good digestion. I soon lost both by living at hotels where the rates were not more than \$2 a day for room and meals. Many nights I had to drink quantities of strong coffee to keep me awake in order to catch trains which were seldom on time, and which, especially in icy winter, seemed always to leave after midnight from unheated stations where I had to wait, distance travel by any other means than rail not being available.²¹

HOWARD'S CAREER TAKES OFF

Cooper and Howard were now in a similar professional and financial position. They also resembled each other in their insatiable curiosity and restless energy, but were also very different from each other in their appearance and likings.

Cooper was more "masculine" in a traditional sense. He was described as a man of fine physique, who looked like an athlete with wide and friendly eyes. He was quiet and retiring, and, while very sociable by nature, he preferred to let the others do the talking.²²

Howard was the opposite: he was described as "flashy, mercurial, and enormously energetic." Howard was also one of those men who walked through life surrounded by phrases framed to describe their appearance. "Colorful," "dynamic," "dapper" were the most frequently used by his friends and associates. Those who saw him recalled chiefly the wine-red shirts with large plaids of shrill green; the shirts of turquoise-and-gold squares; the orange, mauve, and pistachio shirts; the shirts of jade, rust red, and tangerine, lovingly picked out with electric blue; and invariably, the matching bow ties and pocket hand-kerchiefs cut from the shirting.²³ Howard was five feet seven inches tall, and this may have been the motive behind the taste for splendor he had already developed in Indiana, declining to acknowledge "the

Midwestern conception that scrupulous attention to dress was indicative of foppishness or a lack of brains."²⁴ Howard's looks became his trademark: "When a product is going well, you don't change the package," as one of his friends used to remark.²⁵

When Cooper started his news agency work, Howard was still working for newspapers. From Indianapolis he went St. Louis and became the assistant telegraph editor for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and then to Cincinnati to work for the *Cincinnati Post* as telegraph editor. The *Cincinnati Post* belonged to the Scripps-McRae League of newspapers, for whose news agency Cooper was working. In 1906 Howard became the League's New York correspondent with a salary of \$38 a week.

In contrast to Cooper, Howard had already achieved at an early phase of his career something Cooper had not: He became a protégé of E.W. Scripps. Howard's first meeting with Scripps became a legendary story that has been told several times, probably by Howard himself. Scripps lived on his ranch in California, loved the out-of-doors and liked to wear high boots, into which he tucked his trousers. The boots were made to order and cost him plenty, but the costume gave the impression of a rough-and-ready dresser. As a result, his employees generally assumed that he really disliked good clothes. Accordingly, when one of his men was summoned out to the ranch he wore a well-worn outfit.

When Howard got his first invitation to the ranch he was warned by his senior colleagues, but he proceeded promptly to dismiss the warning. He arrived in clothes which were not very fashionable but could be heard several blocks away. The giant boss in high boots looked down at Howard, about whom he had heard so many stories and cracked a rude joke. Quick as a flash Howard shot back at him. Scripps loved a verbal battle. In a minute they were in the middle of the first of their several hundred battles. In Howard he found a personality that would not be submerged, a mind which made its own decisions. According to the story, the two men became friends at once.²⁶

As a result of his meeting with Scripps, Howard was appointed New York Manager of the Publishers' Press Association, another small news agency owned by E.W. Scripps that later was amalgamated with the Scripps-McRae Press Association to form the UP. Both Cooper and Howard now worked for the same agency—Cooper as a travelling salesman of UP news and the chief organizer of the state pony service in the Midwest, and Howard as a general news manager running a New York office that consisted of 12 persons. Next year Howard was sent to San Francisco to start the service on the coast and later to Europe to organize the UP's foreign service. He had no difficulty coming in contact with both the political and military leaders of the countries he visited, and he continued his work as a journalist interviewing these luminaries or gaining background information. Scripps followed his protégé's career with satisfaction and compared with amusement "the little tollgate house with this friend and intimate of a belted Earl, the great statesmen and famous generals." 27

Baron Reuter of the British Reuters agency invited Howard to London in 1912. Reuters had difficulties in negotiations with the AP and was interested in replacing it with the UP in the European news cartel. Instead of joining the news cartel, Howard decided that the UP was to establish its own independent relations with agencies outside the cartel and directly with newspapers. Howard became the chief architect of this new policy. He wrote:

For the past twenty years and until the past two years, during which the UP has become active in the foreign field, the only organized effort for the distribution of American news abroad has been in the hands of foreign agencies [...] Reuters, the English agency, Wolff's the German and Havas the French have been met by American news agency enterprises. That the work has thus far fallen chiefly to the UP is due the circumstances in the making of which we had no part, but of which we have endeavored to take the advantage. The existing situation is attributable to the exchange arrangement of the AP with foreign agencies by which the AP is, and for years has been, barred from serving or selling its own American news abroad.²⁸

In 1912, Howard's career reached its zenith in the UP when he succeeded to the presidency and general managership at the age of 28. Howard wrote ecstatically about the UP:

Young, independent, full of life and enthusiasm, unhampered by tradition and unfettered by precedent, with its success a thing of the future, and with no occasion or necessity for looking backward, the new organization sensed the spirit of change and deliberately sought attunement with it. Yesterday became lower-case: TODAY and TOMORROW were set in caps.²⁹

Howard's new position was to become financially rewarding, if the UP was to make profits. His contract, which went unchanged for the next six years, fixed his pay at \$150 a week, sliding up to \$300 depending on the agency's profitability. Still more important, Howard gradually bought up UP stock and eventually became its second largest shareholder.

COOPER MAKES A MOVE

Schwarzlose writes that Cooper felt forgotten among the UP's legions of aggressive and aspiring young men.³¹ As a result, Cooper decided to made a radical career move and jumped to the rival Associated Press in 1910, then called "grandma" or "apathy" among the UP staff. Cooper wrote about his reasons:

I thought I might go further with [AP] that I could at the United Press where there were several competent young men with high ambitions, including Roy Howard, then only 27 years old. Some of them, like Howard, had even met Scripps, the owner. They had gotten personal inspiration and assurances from him. I had been there seven years and had not met him.

Moreover, in my travels for the UP, I had observed The Associated Press at work. Its men were elderly. I had seen few young AP men anywhere. At the UP I was in competition for advancement

with men who were my own age or younger. Even Clark [UP's president] was young enough to be Melville Stone's son. I thought I might have less rivalry at The AP. 32

The AP's general manager, Melville Stone, gave Cooper a roving commission as travelling inspector. Cooper covered his departure with a joke by saying that "when I left the UP to go with the AP I jocularly told Howard that two Indianapolis boys, who were friends, couldn't profitably aspire to get to the top in the same organization. With further jocularity he said that he had better to go to the AP and try to get to the top." Cooper had decided that "they would work both sides of the street as heads of the two big press associations".³³

Financially, the move was not rewarding. Cooper had to sell all his UP stock when leaving the organization. When he started as the AP travelling inspector he earned 10 dollars more a week than in the UP. Cooper's first assignment was to undertake a reorganization of the communication system of the AP, and at Stone's direction he organized the traffic department and became its first chief. Cooper again travelled incessantly. He visited all of the 70 AP bureaus in the US not once, but many times. His life was "long and short rides, nights in lonely small town hotels, mixed by days with recitals of troubles members were having with the AP."³⁴

Cooper's early years in the AP were not happy. Although he soon identified himself as the "eyes and ears of Mr. Stone," many of his ideas were rejected, and at the age of 30 he was still considered a young man among the elderly AP executives. The AP had been doing certain things in certain ways for such a long time that no one thought they could be done otherwise. The organizational culture of the AP was very different from that of the informal UP which appreciated youth and fresh ideas. Also Cooper's "insatiable inquisitiveness" won him the reputation among his associates of being something of a nuisance.³⁵

Knowing Cooper's unhappiness inside the AP, Howard offered him a position in the UP that would later lead to the presidency. It carried with it an offer of substantial stock interest. Cooper consulted Stone and asked whether there was anything fundamentally wrong with him that he could go no higher in the AP. Stone said: "Not at all," and then according to Cooper, "with that backhanded slap he loved to give with a smile," Stone added: "but personally I am in very good health." When Cooper turned Howard's offer down, he realized the financial sacrifice he was making and wrote to Howard: "I believe that financially speaking I am giving up the greatest opportunity that will ever come to me; the loss is to be all mine, however, as I know, your work will go on just as prosperously without me." Howard, on his part, sent Cooper a letter that revealed the role of competition as an essential part of their friendship and also his firm belief that Cooper was to become the AP's general manager. Howard wrote:

While I regret, more, possibly, than you can imagine, that you are not going to be associated with us in the bully fight which we have ahead, I want you to know that you have our very best wishes for the big success of which I know you are capable. You will not misunderstand me when I say that if we can't have you in our organization, nothing would suit us better than to see you at the head of the other one. I don't say this because I think that your big success would make things easier for us. I say it because I believe you are the one man in the other organization who appreciates uselessness and the waste of energy in much of the so-called competition between the UP and The AP. I believe that you and I realize thoroughly that neither organization can be or should be out of business, and I believe that when the day comes that you become the head of the other organization, many of the raw deals that are put over on both press associations now, because of the common knowledge that we will not be together even for defensive purposes, can be stopped very quickly.³⁸

COOPER'S AND HOWARD'S PATHS CROSS

Despite the growing U.S. interests in South America, the U.S. news agencies did not have direct relations with South American media, because their news transmission was controlled by the French Havas

agency. The AP board had been debating several years as to whether it should make an effort to break the French monopoly in South America. Cooper, still a junior manager, could not attend the board meetings, but was able to read the stenographic reports and was aware of the situation. In 1915 Jorge Mitre of *La Nacion*, one of the most significant newspapers of the world at that time, asked the AP for the service of German official war communiques that Havas had refused to transmit. Because of its agreement with Havas that defined South Africa as Havas' exclusive territory, the AP could not supply this material and indeed never even bothered to rely to the query. Mitre later sent a similar inquiry to the UP. Although Howard did not like the idea of selling war coverage instead of entire news reports, he agreed to a two-month trial period.³⁹

In 1917 Howard made his first trip to South America. This was in accord with the UP policy of independent foreign relations. Following the increasing interests of U.S. trade and with the assistance of the State Department, Howard made contracts with two Rio de Janeiro newspapers, including *La Nacion*, and established a UP bureau there. According to Frank Ford, it was Howard who, after his first trip to South America, suggested to Cooper that the AP should also go there so that the two agencies might together counteract the Havas influence. Cooper took the idea to Stone who turned it down, citing the cartel agreement.⁴⁰

After the AP's major competitor had opened direct contacts with South American newspapers, the AP had to do something. Stone himself was hesitant to break cooperation with Havas, but Cooper was assigned to investigate the situation. He took his new job seriously and started to learn Spanish. Jorge Mitre, the proprietor of *La Nacion* of Rio de Janeiro, had become increasingly dissatisfied with the UP, because the latter refused to sell its service exclusively to his paper in keeping with the UP principles of non-exclusivity. Mitre then approached the AP, which immediately saw its chance to enter the South American news market.⁴¹

Howard had spent the whole winter of 1917-1918 trying to convince *La Nacion* to stay with the UP and negotiating with other news-

papers. Cooper came later, and suddenly Howard found his friend and competitor among his fellow passengers. They ended up travelling together, visiting many countries, each not disclosing to the other what he was actually doing. As a result, they both negotiated with *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires at the same time in the same building. Howard was hoping that because *La Nacion* chose the AP, *La Prensa* would not be satisfied with the same service. He was waiting with his UP colleague in one room for Don Ezequel Paz, the proprietor of *La Prensa*, to respond to his proposal while Paz was signing a contract with Cooper in another room.

Howard covered his disappointment with a joke. As Cooper writes:

When I saw Howard that night he laughingly told me it was then he got his congé. He said that Don Ezequel came into the room, squared his shoulders and, speaking delicious Castilian, announced: "I am now a member of the Associated Press."

Howard may have been joking in front of Cooper, but privately he felt that he had reached the lowest point of his career. He wrote to his mother:

I have often wondered to myself, how much of any success I have had was pure bull luck and how much it was deserved. I have always had a curiosity to know whether I have a yellow streak and what it would take to show it. Believe me I have had a bit of light on both proportions during the last two weeks here.

On the 30th of May the UP had eight clients in Argentina, Chile and Brazil, yielding a profit of \$85,000 a year. On the 31st of May the UP had one client in South America, on which it stood to lose \$104,000 a year if we continued to serve it. The action of Mitre in breaking his contact with me not only wiped out all that we had done in two years but actually put us in the hole.⁴³

Howard was forced, by pressing obligations elsewhere, to leave Argentina in September of 1918. His bad luck followed him to Europe: Howard was to be remembered even after his death as a man who sent the false armistice news to the UP and its clients four days before it actually took place. As a result, millions of people celebrated the end of the war before it actually ended. Factory whistles blew, church bells rang, and office workers began throwing paper out of windows. It cost New York \$80,000 to clear the debris of the celebration off the streets. The signing of the real armistice saved Howard and the UP from further humiliation.

HOWARD LEAVES THE UP, COOPER BECOMES THE AP'S GENERAL MANAGER

Despite its losses in South America, the UP was rapidly growing in size, business and profits. During Howard's eight-year tenure the number of newspapers served by it jumped from below 300 to 780. According to one estimation, in 1924 the UP was netting almost a million dollars a year on a gross of \$4.5 million.⁴⁵ Howard himself had continued to buy stock and owned 30 percent of the UP.

In 1920 Howard was offered the position as Chairman of the Board of the Scripps-McRae Newspapers. Scripps had long planned to withdraw and had trained his two oldest sons to follow in his footsteps. Both of them died, and the role fell to Robert P. Scripps, a younger son who was ready for editorial control. Scripps asked Howard, and after long negotiations Scripps agreed that his son and Howard should have a free hand to reshape the editorial policy. In 1923 the name of the chain was changed into Scripps-Howard Newspapers.⁴⁶

In the same year that Howard made his move into newspaper publishing, Cooper became assistant general manager of the AP. Unlike Howard, Cooper felt that he was not anyone's protégé. Despite the fact that he was known as one of the "M.S. boys," he felt that Stone never wanted him to have the general management. He later remembered that from 1921 to 1924 there was just one person who kept him in the AP, his executive secretary Sarah Gibbs, who was convinced that in a short time Cooper would be general manager.⁴⁷ When Stone retired in 1921, Frederick Roy Martin was made general manager instead of Cooper.

Cooper's turn finally came in 1925 when he was appointed general manager at the age of 45 after working for 25 years in the news agency business. According to Cooper, it was Frank B. Noyes, the AP's president, together with Adolph S. Ochs, a director of the AP, who forced Martin's resignation and put Cooper in against Stone's protest. He inherited the task of running an agency that was losing its former dominance in the market: Between 1918 and 1925, the AP had grown by only 75 members while the UP had added 300 clients and Hearst's International News Service (INS) gained 150 clients. Much later, Cooper still felt bitter and complained to Howard that after his appointment, Stone moved back into his big office, forced Cooper to take back a small obscure one and made his life miserable for him a year until Stone, tiring of the experience of being back on the job, finally withdrew. Cooper also felt he could not oppose Noyes and Ochs because he owed his job to them.

Despite the fact Howard had now officially left the management of the UP, he actively followed its development. When Cooper was elected AP's General Manager, Howard wrote to Karl Bickel, the UP's president:

There was a time when I would have said that Hearst was your biggest potential opponent. I will not say it now. The AP is your meat. Make no mistake about it, Cooper is going to work a tremendous improvement in that service. [...] The entire personnel of the Associated Press is not stupid. There is some young blood in it, and if I am not greatly mistaken there is going to be a lot more in it within the next twelve months. Cooper knows our game well enough to believe in young men. He also knows that no press association can be a one man band. He is going to encourage original thinking in that organization - on the news side - as it had not been encouraged in the entire history of the AP. Cooper's office is going to be the clearing house for ideas instead of the sole source of them as it was under Stone and Martin.⁵¹

COOPER REDEFINES THE AP'S FOREIGN POLICY

Howard was right about Cooper. He was going to make radical changes in the AP, not only in the home market, but in its foreign activities as well. As Cooper knew very well—and Howard and the UP people never lost a chance to point it out publicly—the AP was a junior member of the international news cartel which the British Reuters and the French Havas controlled. Already in 1920 Cooper had presented a memorandum on agency contracts in which he proposed the modernization of the AP's foreign relations. According to Cooper, Reuters was much more dependent on the AP than the AP on Reuters. He suggested an international cooperative organization with the members representing the press associations within their respective territories. The senior members of the AP Board and especially Stone, however, wanted to maintain existing relations with Reuters.

Although the AP had secured free hands to operate in South America, its activities were restricted elsewhere. Simultaneously, the UP rapidly expanded in different parts of the world. In principle, there was always a danger, despite the UP's official policy, that it would replace the AP as Reuters' partner in the US. Moreover, Cooper did not get along with Sir Roderick Jones, general manager of Reuters, while Howard had won Jones' appreciation. Cooper was also concerned that the UP would take advantage of the situation. He complained that the UP was not polite while riding to prosperity, delighting in exposing the AP as the tool in America of the European news agencies.⁵⁴

Securing the South American market for the AP, Cooper started to investigate the situation in other continents. The UP followed Cooper's foreign travelling carefully. Whenever Cooper left for abroad, his movements were reported by UP men, and these reports were also forwarded to Howard. This happened, for example, in 1927 in Warsaw during the Conference of the League of the Allied Agencies at which the UP, as a non-member, was not represented. The AP had sent Cooper to participate, and it was accepted as a full member in the conference.⁵⁵

Cooper's foreign policy was dubious. First, he tried to improve the AP's position inside the cartel, as can be seen in his coperation with

the League of the Allied Agencies. This policy had already been successful in South America. Furthermore, as a result of the AP's growing influence, it was accepted as a member of the cartel and signed a three-party agreement with Havas and Reuters in 1927. Nevertheless, the AP was restricted in its operatations in the Far East, where the UP had already established contacts. For the league members the Far East was Reuters' exclusive territory, and they had no right to operate there. Gradually, Cooper probably came more and more convinced that the AP should break its contract with Reuters to achieve a foothold in the Far East.

Thus Japan became Cooper's next objective, because he wanted to sign a contract with Rengo, Reuters' business partner. Together with Yukichi Iwanaga, the general manager of the Rengo agency, Cooper worked out a joint plan for the creation of a full-scale alliance between the two agencies in which Rengo would undertake to distribute the AP news directly in Japan, and vice versa. ⁵⁶ Naturally, the plan was highly secret because it conflicted with the AP's agreement with Reuters and also challenged the UP's position in Japan as the sole distributer of American news to Japanese media.

Howard himself followed Cooper to the Far East in May 1933 at the request of Bickel, the president of the UP. Howard was, of course, the best possible choice: Not only did he know the Orient, but Cooper as well. About a week before Cooper's departure, Howard had called Cooper to say he had learned Cooper was going to the Far East and wanted to know when Cooper was leaving, asking by what boat. Cooper had answered him, and Howard hoped Cooper would have a nice trip. Howard did not tell Cooper anything about going himself, but bought his tickets for himself and secretary immediately.

Cooper (who travelled with his wife and secretary) thought his itinerary was a dark secret and had no idea that he would find Howard abroad. After running into Howard on the train, Cooper wrote to the president of the AP in some despair:

I was amazed one morning to confront Roy Howard on the same train. I was consternate to learn he is going to Japan, and, as he put it, "wherever you force me to go, besides." Once before, namely in the summer of 1918, Howard followed me around South America. I say "followed," but he really accompanied me, because he was always on the same train. With such meager facilities of travel it was never possible, nor will be it be possible out here for one individual to get away from each other. With his long experience in and knowledge of the Far East, and his superior attitude in respect to Oriental news, you can imagine that he will not make a congenial traveling companion.

[...] He [Howard] is the organization's biggest gem, and I suppose I should be complimented that I drew the fire of their biggest gun.

He will see what we will see. His tactics I do not understand. I cannot imagine myself sneaking on to a boat to go to some place because Bickel or Howard was going. It will be a second experience of being racked around, and I guess I can stand it if he can.⁵⁷

Howard described his encounters with Cooper in his report to Bickel in a different tone:

By Thursday Kent had evidently thought it all out as to what it was he wanted to think, and evidently he finally arrived at the conclusion that he didn't think a hell of a lot of his travelling companion. Thursday he was frostier than a traffic judge's smile, and today his action was such that had I been thin-skinned or disposed to give a damn, I might have reached the conclusion that I was being snubbed. [...] I haven't given any explanation as to why I am going to Japan and I haven't asked his permission to go on the boat. Unless he brings the matter up, I don't intend to even broach the subject of my business, as I think his uncertainty as to what I am going to do is causing him considerably more worry than he is causing me. 58

Howard's superior social skills compared to Cooper's stood out particularly sharply in the Far East, which was Howard's "territory" because of his previous visits. Howard loved publicity and was con-

stantly interviewed by reporters. To Cooper's bitterness, Howard turned a joint UP-AP reception by the Mikado into a solo interview for the UP.⁵⁹ Cooper, who had planned to travel incognito and was terrified that his mission was to be discovered, avoided the media. When a reporter of the *Shanghai Post and Mercury* tried to interview Cooper, he basically told the reporter to write it up for him.⁶⁰ Howard sent the newspaper clipping to Bickel with a comment: "Poor Kent! The gaping has apparently been quite a little rough for him out there. All newspaper crowd in Shanghai already knows of his unhappy sessions with both Chancellor [Reuters' manager in the Far East] and with Iwanaga and the Rengo crowd."⁶¹

Despite Cooper's intention to hide the purpose of his trip, Howard was able to inform Bickel that the AP-Reuters combination was very near to a complete collapse and advised Bickel to remain in Europe until Cooper's meeting with Jones and Chancellor in order to take advantage of the break-up. Over ten years after the South American trip Howard got his personal revenge in the Far East and boasted triumphantly:

As I look back on this whole trip, it seems to me that we'd had all the breaks. Cooper undoubtedly was in bad health and in a highly nervous state when he started for the Orient. [...] I think that the fact that I was on the way out to take a hand in the matter sufficed to put Cooper up in the air higher than I have ever known him to be. While it was true that he is not a master of tact or diplomacy at any time, I have never known him to perform so stupidly on any previous occasion. His whole performance out here was one series of bone-headed plays after another. He apparently had no understanding of Oriental psychology or methods before he left New York, and if I am any judge, has less now.⁶²

As usual, however, Cooper did not give up. The question of the AP's relation to Reuters was still unresolved. Both the UP and the AP held negotiations with it. It became a situation in which they had to decide whether they chose as their ally a British or a U.S. agency. Cooper suggested a "gentleman's agreement" to the UP in which they

committed themselves not to sign exclusive agreements such as the AP had with Reuters.⁶³ Cooper considered the pact a landmark in the history of journalism because it was intended not to secure exclusivity, but on the contrary to insure that agencies did not have exclusivity.⁶⁴ Bickel, the president of the UP, was at first hesitant to sign it, because "it meant that Kent was offering to agree to do exactly what we had always done and which we had been insisting in speeches and articles for years was the thing a press association should do." The UP, however, signed the agreement on February 8, 1934.⁶⁵ In practice, it meant that the AP was free to make contracts with any news agency it wanted. Howard sent a congratulatory telegram from Honolulu to Cooper hoping that the agreement marked the beginning of a long overdue era of intelligent co-operation between the two agencies.⁶⁶

COOPER ACHIEVES FAME

Both Cooper and Howard had now established their positions. Cooper had moderated the AP in several ways. He himself considered as his personal achievements the establishment of the AP Newsphoto Service, the special Washington service and regional services, the breakthrough in South America and the freedom of action around the world.⁶⁷ Howard had successfully expanded Scripps-Howard's newspaper empire. Howard did not establish any more papers, as Scripps had done, but instead bought up operating dailies. By the late 1930s the Scripps-Howard newspapers were probably worth more than \$100 million.68 They included 24 newspapers in such cities as New York, Washington, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, Indianapolis, Memphis, Houston, Denver and San Francisco, not to mention the UP, the world's largest newspaper-feature syndicate, and minor radio, feature and photographic adjuncts. The newspapers also owned \$28 million in real estate. 69 There was another feature that separated Howard from Scripps: the Scripps papers were much more liberal and pro-labor than those of Scripps-Howard, which started to give way to moderate Republicanism, although in 1932 and 1936 the chain still supported Franklin Roosevelt.70

In 1942 two things happened that have so far been considered separate phenomena: Cooper published his book, *Barriers Down*, and the U.S. Department of Justice was preparing a civil suit against the AP, charging it with monopolistic practices based on the Anti-Trust Act. The AP's by-laws made it possible to select its own members, and the AP had withheld membership from newspapers that competed with AP members. According to Cooper, his strategy was to show how he had divested the AP of the exclusive cartel contract which could have been the main basis of the government's case:

The book did not save the AP from the suit, but the record it contained on the cartel matter undoubtedly had an influence on the members of the Supreme Court whose decision neither destroyed the exclusive contract with the Canadian Press nor the exclusive right of the AP to the news of its regular members.⁷¹

Barriers Down contains Cooper's recollection of how he revealed the nature of the international news cartel and broke it down. At the same time, it praises the AP, its cooperative ownership form as opposed to government ownership, and its concept of true and unbiased news. The book was written at the request of the AP board. Cooper provided in the book contract that all royalties be paid not to him but to the AP. As a result, he received no money from its sale.⁷²

There was hardly any paper in the U.S. that missed the chance to review *Barriers Down*. The reviews were without exception positive. The book was described as "breathtaking," "inspiring," "fascinating," "sensational." As one reviewer wrote: "Perhaps no one but Kent Cooper could have done the job that he did, and this great fighter has the barriers come down one by one of his ideal, a truly American ideal, which, pray heaven, will always remain with us." Another said that "no student of contemporary history can afford to miss the book; it is fundamental. And none of the peace planners should ignore Mr. Cooper's suggestion that guarantees of a free press and the unhampered circulation of news should be clauses in the peace terms after the Second World War."

Cooper expanded his ideas into a crusade for the free flow of news. In 1943 the American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted a resolution calling for a "world guarantee of freedom of the news" as did the Republican National Congress in 1944. Finally, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution on September 21, 1944.⁷⁵ Hence, *Barriers Down* had long-term effects not only on the reading audience, but also upon the U.S. information policy more broadly.

Howard was annoyed with Cooper's book. In his opinion, Cooper and the AP directors had known for years all about the tainted nature of the government-dominated European agencies. Howard claimed that the AP nevertheless elected to continue their links with these government agencies because it was cheaper for them to do so and relieved them from the necessity of establishing a newsgathering organization of their own in Europe, as the United Press had done from its inception in 1907. Howard wrote:

Kent Cooper's book is the damnest literary omelet that has been fed to the public in years. He has so thoroughly scrambled facts, fiction, sanctimony, and distorted or improperly emphasized truths, that it would be a ten year job and would take ten volumes to segregate the real truth from the false innuendo that have been combined to present an utterly inaccurate, unfair, and completely misleading picture of the press association business, and especially of the handling of foreign news for American consumption, which is embraced in the volume "Barriers Down." Without, to the best of my knowledge, having anywhere stated a deliberate untruth, Kent has, with great subtlety, drawn a picture that is utterly misleading and as false as hell.⁷⁶

Howard's reaction was private, not public. Still, Cooper's book annoyed Howard even ten years later. Howard, who seldom read books, had his spouse read it to him again and concluded that Cooper's first purpose had been to glorify the concept of a press association operating cooperatively and without a profit-making objective. The book's second major purpose had been, according to Howard, to develop in the minds of present and future newspapermen the titanic role

played by Cooper in breaking Reuters' monopoly on the world's news.⁷⁷ Howard suggested to his former UP colleagues that a book should be written on the history of the UP. Despite the mild response received, they also had their doubts about the significance of Cooper's book. The result, however, was Joe Alex Morris's book, *Deadline Every Minute: The Story of the United Press*, which was published in 1957.⁷⁸ It never achieved the same fame as Cooper's book did.

FRIENDS OR COMPETITORS?

Rubin writes that it is generally true that friends accept each other so long as they both remain essentially the same as they were when they met, or change in similar directions. If they change or grow in different or incompatable ways, the friendship most likely will be lost. Few people manage to retain their friendship throughout their lives. Howard and Cooper started their friendship when they were young, but claimed to have preserved it throughout their lives.

If friendship is defined in an idealized way including such qualities as trust, honesty, commitment, support, generosity and loyalty, Cooper and Howard were not friends but competitors. They spied on, cheated, played tricks and bad-mouthed each other. However, they accepted to a certain extent that competition was an essential part of their lives. Rubin writes that boys, trained in competive team sports, learn young to value group cooperation and interpersonal competition. Friends play against each other, and to win for his team a boy beats his best friend and his team.⁸⁰

If Cooper and Howard remained friends despite their tensions, even if only after five o'clock, why were they not able to work for the same organization? Cooper had already given one answer: He could not compete with his friend Howard in the UP. However, he had the chance to succeed Howard as president of the UP but declined the offer. There are several possible explanations why he went over to the AP.

First, it was a question of their different characters. Cooper was once described as a "man who shunned the limelight that always clung to his fellow cub and reporter from Indianapolis, Roy W. Howard."81

Although Cooper was different from Howard, he could not accept the role of a silent partner. This role was accepted by W.W. (Bill) Hawkins (1883-1953) who was described as "Howard's phlegmatic second-incommand." Hawkins succeeded Howard as president of the UP in 1920-23 and then became executive manager of the business department of the Scripps-Howard newspapers. Hence, Cooper and Howard could only be after five o'clock friends because they always remained competitors despite their original mutual appreciation and affection. As Howard wrote to Cooper:

I have thought many times how very different things might have been in many ways, had your decision been different. Bill Hawkins was a friend and true friend. Possibly few people understand what I mean as well as you will, when I say that a very considerable part of any credit by rights should have gone to Bill. I've always realized that, by reason of our wide difference in temperament, we supplemented each other, and complemented each other, to a degree that is not always found in partnerships such as ours, not even in those that lasted for 40 years, as did ours. Even so I am certain that had you elected to go along with us, the results developed by the three-way team would have been something of which we could have been all proud.⁸³

Second, Howard and Cooper partly shared the same ideas, but partly differed from each other. In the early years their associations had a different organizational culture and ideology. The UP claimed to be young and radical, but it lacked the AP's public service spirit. The UP expected its employees to work hard and rewarded them with financial benefits, never pretending to be anything more than a business. The AP employees, on the other hand, felt that they were in a degree public servants, and the interest of the "game" compensated for the small salaries and exacting hours. For Howard, it was money that mattered most; for Cooper it was fame. Both received what they wanted, but neither of them was fully satisfied with what he had. Howard became a millionaire, but achieved little fame for his noble cause. Cooper

achieved fame for being a public servant, but not significant wealth: When he died his estate came to a little over \$100,000.85 He referred to his financial losses several times, saying on one occasion to the AP Board of Directors:

Perhaps I am qualified to speak of the UP competition. I have taken the pitching of six presidents and am now taking the seventh. They are either living millionaires or their widows are wealthy from the proceeds their deceased husbands got out of the UP earnings. I did not stay long. I don't know why. At any rate I went over to the AP. 86

Third, the concept of one's own niche seems to be important in men's friendships. It was important for Cooper to achieve autonomy, an organization of his own. Ironically, because Cooper and Howard partly shared the same ideas, their organizations started to resemble each other. The AP became more "radical" compared to the old AP before Cooper. He was, for example, remembered as a "humanizer of the news,"87 which was an old UP concept. In addition, the UP was the first to establish independent relations with foreign agencies, and then the AP followed its example. Simultanously, the UP changed as well. It was not only the UP that became more conservative after Howard's departure, but also the Scripps-Howard newspapers under Howard's leadership. They no longer maintained their working class concept and started to emphasize the same news values as the AP. Together the AP and UP developed the U.S. concept of news that was exported abroad. Hence, the U.S. became the only country in the world to have two global news agencies and thus a dominant position in the world's news market that lasted several decades.

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