

Selig, Zoe  
Monday, December 4

## **Journalism, Done Well(s)**

“Democracy dies in darkness,” declares *The Washington Post* at the top of every paper. The field of journalism aims to provide an honest account of world events and perspectives, seeking out stories and spreading them to a larger audience. Good journalism, most people agree, should be objective and fact-based—but this does not mean journalism must represent all sides of an issue equally and never challenge the status quo. On the contrary, the best journalism searches for issues of contention and injustice, aiming to inform the public of wrongs being committed. As *The Washington Post* motto s

spite of threats and violence, Wells continually sought out and spread facts with the goal of reaching justice, using journalism to speak truth to power and pursue the end of lynching.

The first step Wells took in using journalism to

dates, locations, and allegations of those who had been killed (Wells 1895, 16-20). Then, she went into more detail, describing many specific instances of lynching. She reported that in almost all cases, the offenses of which people were accused had never actually happened and described the much more

Wells, had believed that lynching was a just punishment for Black men who raped white women (Francis 2021). Through her reporting, Wells showed that lynching neither carried out justice nor occur

journalism to magnify voices that were typically silenced once again

Wells' constant pursuit of the truth did not stop with her journalism. In addition to reporting on facts in the newspaper, Wells traveled around the nation and the world informing citizens and local governments about lynching and imploring them to act against it. In 1893 and 1894, Wells traveled overseas to England on two speaking tours, where she garnered significant British support against lynching. This led to the creation of the London Anti-Lynching League, which pressured states in the American south to end lynching (Argyros 2019). In her talks, Wells









Wells, Ida B. 1892. *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. The New York Age Print.  
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/868f8db7-fa74-d451-e040-e00a180630a7#/?uuid=63dd1850-4abc-0134-786d-00505686a51c>.

Wells, Ida B. (1895) 1969. "A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States." In *On Lynchings: Southern Horrors, A Red Record, Mob Rule in New Orleans*. Arno Press and The New York Times.