

Telling
the **Truth**
and Nothing But

National Summit to fight
**PLAGIARISM &
FABRICATION**



Plagiarism and fabrication are not the same



Plagiarism

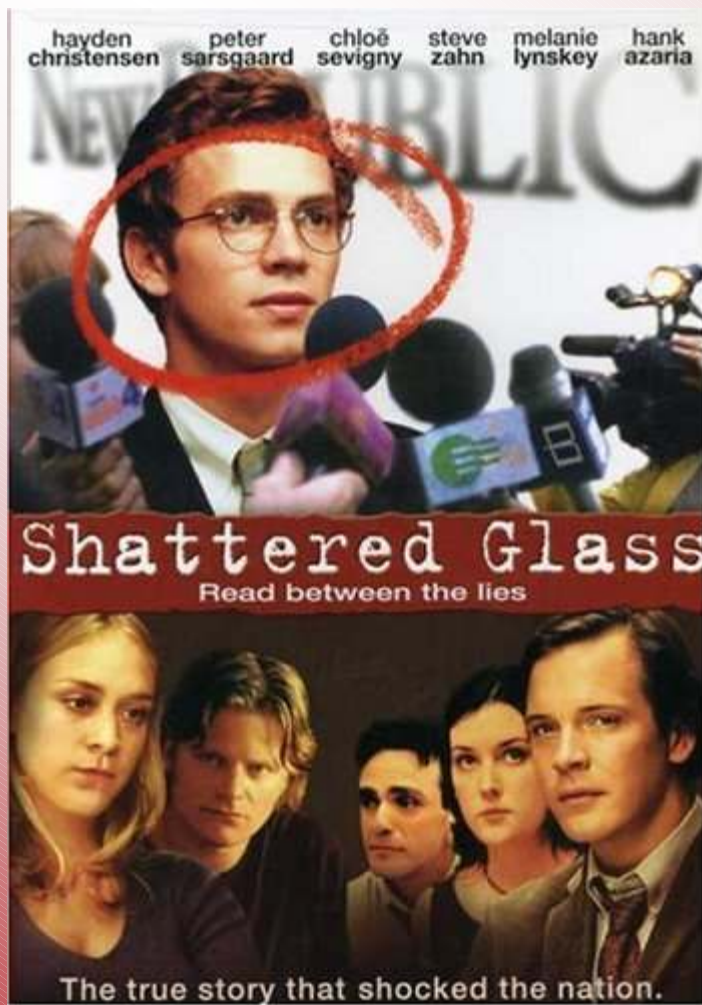
Nonfiction;
copying sans
attribution



Fabrication

Fiction;
making up
people, facts

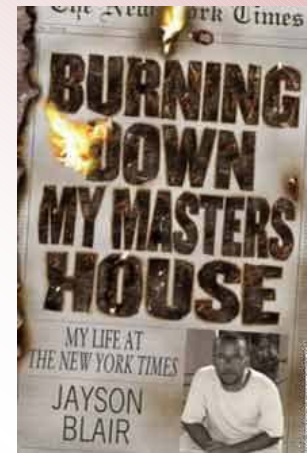
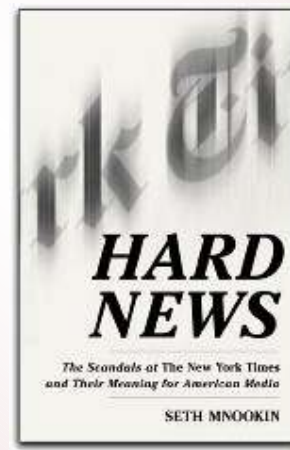
Fabrication is inexcusable.



Stephen Glass

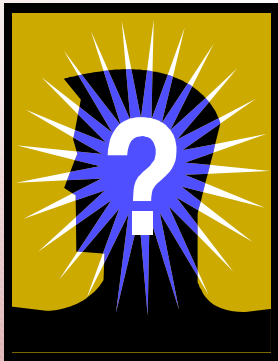
Plagiarism is gray

- What was intent?
- How much of article?
- How often?



Serious cases are rare – only 4% of cases reach the level of a Jayson Blair or Janet Cook.

Plagiarism is a serious mistake but not common

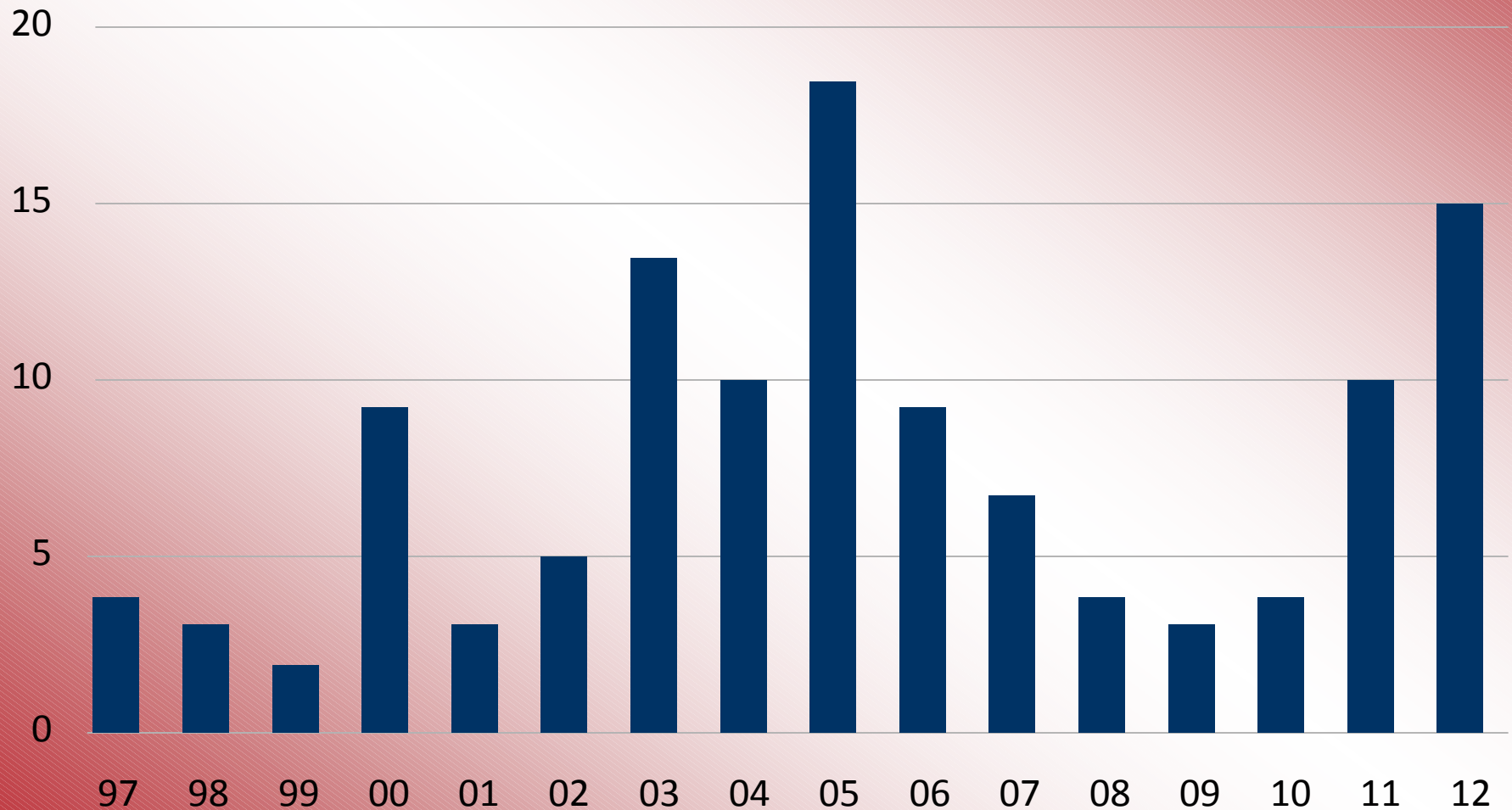


Editor of a
major metro
daily, 2005

“We believe plagiarism is among journalism’s most serious professional breaches, if not the single most grave thing.”

Plagiarism by full-timers at daily, professional
U.S. news organization, 1997 to 2012

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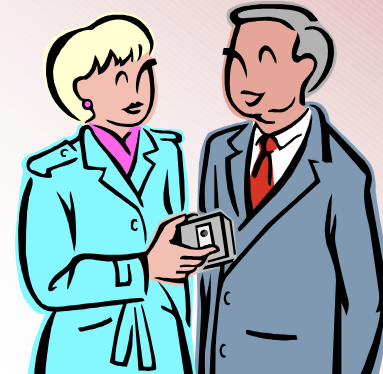


Key findings

- Most plagiarists use pressure as excuse
- Most plagiarism due to inadequate methods or unclear rules
- No evidence problem is greater among inexperienced vs. veteran or small v. large newsrooms

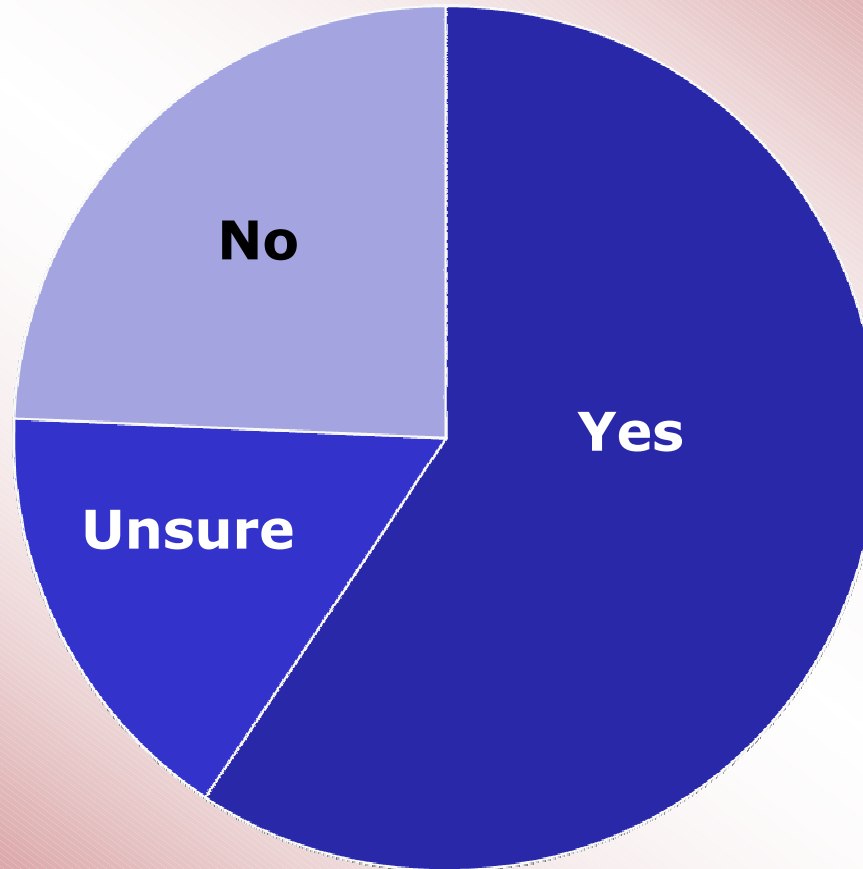
The solution

- Attribute everything



(b) Should we attribute a press release?

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Source: Author's national survey of journalists, 2011

Newsroom policies

- Often clear about why plagiarism is wrong and a serious transgression
- Rarely outline prevention steps or policies on sourcing and attribution
- Nor do they spell out how the news organization will deal with an incident or discipline an offender

Good policies

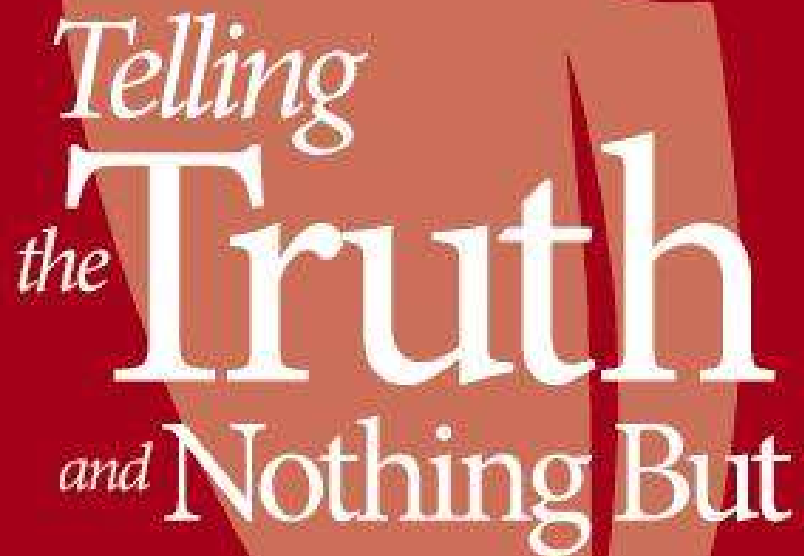
- Be clear that offenses will be dealt with
- Share policy widely and confront incidents with openness
- Conduct random spot-checks of reporters' sources
- Specify discipline: Plagiarism judged by severity; fabrication always dismissal
- Treat everyone equally

How newsrooms can prevent

- Encourage video or audio of interviews
- Require reporters to discuss unnamed sources with at least one editor
- Make digital reporters link to material that will confirm sources' identities
- Editors should challenge and check digital material

Hints there's a problem

- No or sparse attribution
- Change in voice
- Writing beyond skill level
- Perfect source, perfect quote, perfect detail



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The book

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