

TRANSCRIPT - QE Newsletter 2: The Journalist and the Firefighter

Brian Reed: How did it feel at that point to report that statement as fact when you were writing it?

Barton Gellman: So, of course, my editors, uh, uh, interrogated that.

Brian Reed: They did. Okay. I was wondering.

Tell me about the reaction of your editors.

Barton Gellman: It was like, uh. The first thought is, don't we want to say unlikely to, or

Brian Reed: He's unlikely to concede. Yeah.

Barton Gellman: Yes. Uh, or there's a risk and so forth. And I said, no, it's actually really central to this story. I want to make this argument and it's based on. you know, kind of history and circumstantial evidence. Uh, but I want to make this as a flatly stated, uh, premise of the story. No pretense here. This is, this is gonna happen.

I just try to make it really clear. I am making a prediction. I believe it is bulletproof. But obviously it's, It's not literally possible for me to know this now. So go along with me if you want, but let's just suppose this is true, then what?

Brian Reed: Did it feel like, uh, you were kind of innovating a bit or like doing something different than you'd normally done as a journalist?

Did it feel like a moment in your career where you were taking a bit of a leap?

Barton Gellman: It did. I, I've never done something like this before. It was not, strictly speaking, traditional kind of evidence based journalism, uh, but I thought as a story device, it was essential to raise the alarm the way I thought it needed to be raised.