

**PCNY presents**

**THE NEW YORK BUREAU: NEWSPAPERS**

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**JOSH GETLIN's bio**

I've worked at the LA Times in New York since 1990; have been NY bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times since just before 9-11. I cover a wide variety of stories--hard news, politics, publishing, entertainment, business occasionally, you name it. I was born in New York but grew up in LA; got a master's degree from Columbia University School of Journalism, broke into newspaper journalism in 1979.

**REMARKS:** To give you a brief overview of our bureau in New York, we have eight reporters now. We're going up to nine as of January 1 which is a fairly large bureau for an out-of-town newspaper but that's because *Los Angeles Times* really does take its role very, very seriously in New York. It's a two-pronged role: first of all, like my colleagues up here, we take national news and the responsibility to cover it very, very seriously. We have reporters on nationally significant stories involving breaking news, politics, disasters, economics and Wall Street, culture and entertainment, science, you name it. And in each and every one of those cases we're writing stories with the idea that these are stories that are as significant as you will read in any other major newspaper in this country and it requires us to travel frequently out of New York but also to do stories *in* New York. It's a very healthy mix, it's always unpredictable but that's the nature of the news business and that's why in the last year I've covered a lot of stories in New York, I also went down to Florida to help out with coverage of the Terri Schiavo case, traveled in New England when a new Pope was selected, like Lisa I spent more time than I ever thought I would in central Pennsylvania writing about Intelligent Design and evolution and my colleagues in the bureau have the same mix of responsibilities as well. That's one part of what we do.

The second part, which is what I'm actually more interested in speaking to this group about, is focused very much on our role as a news gateway to California. We function obviously are reporters covering our own stories but we are always thinking about stories that have specific resonance for readers in southern California and perhaps California as a whole. Although all of the story ideas we've talked about, whether it's the changing fortunes of Hillary Clinton or what's happening on Wall Street will matter to people in California, what we have found and what we have put more and more of our emphasis into is stories that deal with the worlds of entertainment, publishing and culture, how they interact with each other and even more specifically how there is a bi-coastal link that people sense but don't always put their finger on and write about between New York and California. If you take a look at almost any aspect of culture and entertainment or publishing you can find a link in terms of whether it's books-into-film or whatever. Increasingly, in our bureau, we are going to be putting more and more focus on those kinds of stories. As a matter of fact, although the configuration has yet to be really settled on, I know that as of January 1 we are going to be putting even more emphasis on enterprise stories, breaking news stories, analysis pieces out of New York dealing with publishing, culture and entertainment. Stories that stand on their own two feet, whether it's a profile, let's say, of Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick or something which really

speaks to, perhaps, connections you never thought about but that are very real and rather significant between the two coasts. At least as of now I'm probably going to be the go-to person for those kinds of stories in addition to everything else we've been doing.

And I may live to regret this but we welcome your contacts, we need to hear from you. So many times there are really excellent story ideas that we wouldn't have a clue about because we're no *The New York Times*. One of us might cover a breaking metro story and they've got a newsroom with 200 people they could potentially jump on it. We have to triage our time, we have to pick stories very carefully out of the mix and inevitably there are going to be times when you guys have really great ideas and out of ten great ideas we may be able to do two or three on a good day. Some days none at all, but that doesn't mean that we don't want to hear from you. It's important that you contact us. It's very helpful when you pitch a story that doesn't simply on its face say, "I'm representing an author who has written a book." If you can somehow take it two or three steps further and say, "Here's one way you might approach this story," or "Maybe it's just a wild idea, but this is a California link that might not be instantly apparent." And that would work with almost any kind of story, but in the past when I've written about publishing and the publicists... *some* publicists would call and make that kind of enriched pitch it's always very, very interesting to ponder. And if you can do that, more power to you.

Like everybody else on this panel we're on deadline. If you call and say, "Can you speak to us," acknowledging the fact that deadlines invade our lives, it's always very helpful. But emails and phone calls are extremely helpful. I think the fax is, yes, absolutely a dead issue, it piles up, they get tossed into the circular file and nobody really reads them anymore.

But as I said, we *do* need to hear from you. I'm glad to be able to speak here today to your group and happy to answer any questions.

**PH** – The deadlines are, what for the *LA Times*, I imagine they're later?

**JG** – Well, it's a blessing and a curse. It's a blessing in the sense that we have at least three extra hours sometimes to file a story. We can get a story into our paper sometimes as late as midnight our time here on the east coast. But the curse is that an editor in Los Angeles will know that you have far more time to work on a story than someone who works for an earlier deadline. We get hit with that all the time.

**PH** – So what time do you leave the bureau on a daily basis?

**JG** – Oh, it really does vary on the story. There used to be predictable hours, there aren't anymore.