

USA Today®

by
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A newspaper is a paper that is printed and distributed usually daily or weekly which contains news, articles of opinion, features, and advertising. Its functions are many. For example; knowledge and entertainment being just two of them.

They are also used to line the bottom of bird cages, housebreak new puppies, clean windows, and serve as packing material. Sometimes their use is more sinister.

Portions of non-inventoried newspaper pages were delivered to the ATF National Laboratory Center in Rockville, Maryland in August, 1990, for examination and comparison in connection with a major mail bombing investigation, along with a request to identify the newspaper and the printing site where it was printed.

The basis for this request was an ongoing investigation of two mail bombings. On January 26, 1990, an explosive device was entered into the mails at Elizabethtown, North Carolina, and was sent to the church of Reverend John Osteen in Houston, Texas.

Lisa Osteen, 30, director of ministries at the 10,000-member Lakewood Baptist Church, the Pastor's daughter, was injured when she opened the package delivered to an office across the street from the church in northeastern Houston.

On April 20, 1990, another explosive device, addressed to Pat Robertson, was mailed from Bladenboro, NC, and delivered to the mail room of the Christian Broadcasting Network in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

At approximately 12:25 p.m., on Friday, April 27, 1990, Security Officer William S. Scheepers opened the package. It detonated when opened, causing him shrapnel wounds to his abdomen, left leg, groin and left hand.

This investigation actually originated with the explosion of the second device mailed from Bladen County, NC, to the televangelist. The two devices were similar in design and construction. Based on this, and since both bombings seemed to be related, a joint investigation was coordinated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Both devices were pipe bombs delivered through the U.S. Mails in a brown paper wrapped package about 8-10 inches long,

6-8 inches wide and 3 inches thick bearing typed, peel and stick-type labels for both the addressee and return address, but from different typewriters. The outer wrapper (brown craft paper) was secured by 1/2 inch nominal width Scotch type tape and 2 inch nominal width tan/brown packaging tape. Both the tape and craft paper had been cut with (what appeared to be) pinking shears.

The materials comprising the bomb consisted of the remains of a length of metal pipe nipple which had been capped on each end and contained a quantity of an improvised explosive mixture. The device incorporated a modified switch, 9-volt battery, improvised bridge wire and electrical wire that interconnected the contraption together. This explosive was then concealed in a cardboard box. The device reflected the design characteristics of an improvised anti-personal weapon, commonly referred to as a booby trap pipe bomb.

Cursory examination of the newspaper shreds revealed them to have at one time, been part of a USA Today® newspaper sports section. Because of supposed anonymity, sections of USA Today® newspaper pages have been used as packing material in mail bombings, arson, explosive and other cases investigated by the ATF National Laboratory Center. A thorough and detailed examination of the torn fragments narrowed the newspaper date to January 8, 1990, and disclosed what appeared to be a flawed portion on a commercial photograph caused perhaps by a scratch mark on a negative or the printing plate.

From time to time it becomes necessary for me to seek outside assistance in search of answers to specific forensic questions. Such was the case in which I found myself.

After determining the paper's date and discovering the printing defect, I made arrangements to meet with USA Today® representatives in Rosslyn, Virginia to inquire about the possibility of identifying the printing site and more importantly, come up with the name of the potential subscriber in addition, to learning all that I could about the making of a large newspaper, its nomenclature and newspaper jobs (see Attachments A and B for details.)

USA Today® is the product of a complex, technologically advanced process that combines the talents of thousands of people working in a variety of capacities and departments, from accounting and computer programming to reporting and editing to printing, quality control and production.

The NEWS department consists of reporters, columnists, editors, photographers, artists, researchers and administrators. The typewriter, long a fixture of the newsroom, has given way to modern technology.

Working around the clock, people in various sections of PRODUCTION are involved in the process of converting raw newsprint and ink into three editions.

To accomplish this task efficiently, the paper is produced at 33 separate printing plants (see Attachment C for their location.)

From various observations of the torn and tattered pages that I examined, it was possible to determine that the newspaper was printed at the Columbia, South Carolina printing plant on January 8, 1990 and was either a first or second edition. First or second indicated that, in all probability, the newspaper was delivered to someone on a subscriber list, as opposed to the final edition which is purchased on the street. European Soccer vs. American Baseball scores formatting/page arrangement/layout established that the paper was a first edition.

IT WAS POSSIBLE TO ISOLATE THE PRINTING SITE BECAUSE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Scratch mark on printing plate
- Regional commercial advertising (sold according to region)
- Roller marks, right hand margin of page, from web fed press
- Format (European Soccer vs. American Baseball Scores)

THERE ARE EASIER MEANS OF IDENTIFYING THE PRINT SITE. IF FOR EXAMPLE, YOU HAVE THE ENTIRE FRONT PAGE TO WORK WITH. i.e.:

- "Codes" for (33) USA Today® Market Sites
- Series of (pin holes) at the bottom of all pages as the newspaper leaves the press further identify the printing site
- Arrangement (lay out) two kinds of tint, paper, print type, edge cut
- Methods of delivery: first, second, and final editions by mailing to subscribers and dropped on the street

By isolating the Columbia plant printing site, not only was it possible to determine the circulation route; i.e., Elizabeth, NC, but

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it was also determined that this site printed only two editions; first and final with 6,000 to 8,000 regular subscribers with a 15,000 drop to hotels and another 15,000 to U.S. Air.

In conclusion, though some of the then available information may not apply or be non-existent today, a familiarization of the individual identifying features and methodology used in constructing a large city newspaper; i.e., markets, site name, identification numbers, pin holes, lay out format, first, second, and final editions and other significant characteristics may provide investigative leads, ultimately isolating the site where the paper was printed.

Attachment A

Newspaper Nomenclature

Terms vary from newspaper to newspaper. Those listed below are some used by large city newspapers. Small-size newspapers are called tabloids.

Agate line	Issue date
Art	Italic refer
Banner headline	Jumpline
Bar line	Lead/lede
Body of story	Left ear
Byline dateline	Nameplate/flap/logo
Caption/cut line	Out-of-town prices
Copyright	Price
Credit line	Readout dash
Deck/bank	Skyline
Dingbat	Subhead
Folio line	Twinned stories
Hairline rule	Volume number
Head	Weather ear
Index	

Attachment B

Newspaper Jobs

Reporters go out on stories to get the facts. They take notes. Some use tape recorders. Sometimes they interview people over the phone. They must do a lot of research and speedy but accurate writing. They have to meet deadlines. Reporters are also called journalists.

Columnists give their own ideas on issues or events.

Executive editors are in charge of the whole editorial or news staff.

Managing editors are in charge of the day-to-day operations of the new staff. They are the executive editors' top assistants.

Metro editors assign reporters to cover local events.

Copy editors proofread stories for mistakes and often cut out or edit words so the stories will fit into a certain space.

Editorial writers give the newspaper's opinion on certain subjects.

Sports editors and reporters cover sporting events.

Graphic editors are in charge of the artists and photographers.

Photographers take and develop pictures.

News artists illustrate news stories.

Advertising - Ad salespeople call on businesses to sell ads. Ads that have pictures and prices and advertise such things as clothes, food, furniture, and automobiles are called display ads.

Classified, or want-ad, salespeople usually take ads over the phone. Classified ads are short ads that are bought by the word or by the line.

Graphic arts - Artists often use computers to create ads, diagrams, charts and maps.

Circulation - The circulation dept. delivers the newspaper and collects the money.

Mechanical - Staffers who work in the pressroom must keep the presses rolling and get the papers out on time.

Telecommunications - These experts know how to use the latest technology to move information from one place to another. They work with such things as computers, satellites and phones.

Promotion - Staffers in the promotion department figure out how to promote the newspaper. They often do research to find out what their readers want and like.

Business - Business departments manage the paper's money.

Personnel - People who work in this department try to find and hire the best workers for the paper.

Wire service reporters - Many newspapers subscribe to news services that hire reporters to gather news around the world. Their reports are sent by satellite and phone wires to subscribing papers. These stories often have the initials AP or the words Associated Press at the beginning.

Cartoonists - Cartoonists draw comic strips. A newspaper feature syndicate makes copies of that strip and sends it out to newspapers that have agreed to pay a fee for the right to run it. A syndicate is a company that sells stories, features, cartoons and comic strips to newspapers. Syndicate salespeople travel the country talking to newspaper editors.

Quality assurance - A program for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service, or facility to ensure that standards of quality are being met.

Attachment C

USA Today® Markets

Market	Site Name	Site ID
1. Philadelphia	Lansdale, Bridgewater	(LN) (BR)
2. N.Y. City	Harrison, Rockland	(H1,H2,H3) (RC)

3. W. New York	Batavia	(BT)
4. Boston	Boston (offset)	(BO,B2)
5. Pittsburgh	Tarentum	(TT)
6. Washington DC/Baltimore	Springfield 1 (Army Times)	(SP1,SP2)
7. Charlotte/Carolinas	Greensboro, Columbia	(CR)(CO)
8. Atlanta	Gainesville, Atlanta Offset	(GN)(AO)
9. Houston	Pasadena	(PS)
10. Dallas	Dallas (Arlington)	(DA)
11. Minneapolis	St. Cloud	(SG)
12. Detroit	Pt. Huron	(PH)
13. Cincinnati	Richmond	(RH)
14. Chicago	Chicago, Kankakee	(CH)(KN)
15. Denver	Ft. Collins, Salt Lake City	(FC)(UT)
16. Los Angeles	San Bernardino	(SB)
17. San Francisco	Marin County	(MC)
18. Seattle	Olympia	(OL)
19. Phoenix	Phoenix	(PX)
20. Kansas City	Kansas (Lawrence)	(LK)
21. Cleveland	Mansfield	(MS)
22. New Orleans	Hattiesburg	(HT)
23. Nashville	Nashville	(NS)
24. N. Central Florida	Brevard (Cocoa)	(BV)
25. Southern Florida	Florida Offset, Ft. Myer	(FO)(FM)
26. St. Louis	St. Louis Offset	(SL)

Attachment C

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