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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Nice work, Joyce.



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 'We have to go to where the silence is'

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Amy Goodman of 'Democracy Now!' speaks about the
3 critical importance of independent, noncommercial journalism in
4 today's world, ahead of her visit to Brattleboro to introduce a new
5 documentary that tells her story

####END SUBHED####

6 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

7 NO ONE IS more passionate about independent media
8 than the fearless broadcast journalist Amy Goodman of
9 *Democracy Now!*

10 Over the past 30 years, while covering stories, Goodman
11 has been beaten, arrested, threatened with arrest, charged with

12 criminal trespass, and detained at borders, among other fearful
13 things. Yet the focus of this high-energy and deeply admired
14 woman remains single-minded: protect the First Amendment,
15 protect free speech, tell truth to power, and, most of all, get the
16 news out.

17 And with *Democracy Now!*, the news definitely gets out.
18 The show airs on more than 1,500 radio and TV stations with
19 more than 700 across the U.S. and Canada, and in more than 40
20 countries across Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean,
21 Australia, and New Zealand, according to Angela Karran, who
22 manages the program's station relations.

23 As Goodman, 69, puts it, "Reporters know no borders."
24 "When we cover war and peace, we're not brought to
25 you by the weapons manufacturers," she says. "When we cover
26 the climate catastrophe, we're not brought to you by the oil, gas,
27 and coal companies. When we cover inequality, we're not
28 brought to you by the banks and other financial institutions.
29 We're brought to you by you, the listener, the reader, and the
30 viewer. And it's a global critical audience."

31 Now filmmakers Carl Deal and Tia Lessin have made a
32 documentary film about Goodman, her life, and her work: *Steal*
33 *This Story, Please!*

34 The film — along with Deal, Goodman, and her brother,
35 Vermont journalist David Goodman — will be at the Latchis
36 Theatre on Friday, June 19, for a special showing of the film at 7
37 p.m. The film will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

38 The film will continue to run through Thursday, June 25.

39 Before the show, Vermont Independent Media, which
40 publishes *The Commons* and *The Deerfield Valley News*,
41 Brattleboro Community Television (BCTV), and WVEW-LP will
42 host Amy Goodman at a reception at 5 p.m. at Sages at 6 Flat St.

43 The program is broadcast on both the radio station and
44 the television station.

45 *Steal This Story, Please!* has already been shown at
46 almost 200 theaters and is still building up steam. Goodman was

47 poised to catch a plane to England to promote the film at two
48 major festivals when she and Deal took time last week to talk by
49 phone to *The Commons*.

50 They also did an [interview](#) with BCTV Executive Director
51 Johnny Gifford on behalf of BCTV and WVEW.

52 With Goodman, what you see is what you get. She is
53 exactly as intense, warm and passionate in conversation as she is
54 on her program.

55 * * *

56 THE FIRST QUESTION was an easy one. Was the name of
57 this film — ahem — lifted from Abbie Hoffman’s 1971 book,
58 *Steal This Book*?

59 Of course, Deal said.

60 “Obviously we’re aware of that, and in fact, we modeled
61 the principal design of the title on the first edition of his book,”
62 Deal said.

63 Goodman agreed and pointed to some of the other
64 shoulders she stands on: muckraking journalists like George
65 Seldes and I.F. Stone.

66 “There was a film made about Stone, you know,” she
67 said. “He said to young journalists, ‘If you can remember two
68 words, remember these: governments lie. And if you can
69 remember three words, remember: all governments lie.’”

70 As a journalist, Goodman believes passionately that
71 having an exclusive story is a failure.

72 “It’s the idea of, ‘Please, take this story, spread it far and
73 wide,’” she said. “I consider an exclusive a failure if we’re just the
74 ones that are broadcasting it. I want people to take it. It’s why we
75 never put a paywall at [Democracynow.org](#).”

76 She referred back to 2016, when she went to Standing
77 Rock in North Dakota when the Lakota and Dakota tribes were
78 opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline, which was designed to
79 transport crude oil over 1,172 miles.

80 “We thought we’d be there among many journalists, but
81 as usual we were the only national journalists who were there,”

82 Goodman said. "As you know, the Dakota Access Pipeline
83 security guards unleashed dogs and there was footage of them
84 with blood on their noses and mouths. We posted online within
85 24 hours and we had 14 million views. Then all the networks
86 played the video.

87 "And that's what we consider a success," she said.
88 "That's what independent media is. That's why it's so important."

89 After Goodman broadcast her footage, the North Dakota
90 authorities issued an arrest warrant for her.

91 "I think that also shows the importance of independent
92 media," Goodman said. "I went back to face the charges. They
93 elevated them to felonies, which was ludicrous. We broadcast
94 from there, and when the judge had to sign off on the charges,
95 there was so much coverage.

96 "Imagine, a journalist being charged for showing the
97 images!" she continued.

98 "So the judge refused to sign off on it," Goodman said.
99 "That really shows how critical it is when the media really shows
100 what's happening on the ground."

101 The judge also dropped charges against Native
102 Americans who had also been protesting.

103 "We've got to show the images," Goodman said. "We
104 have to tell the story. We have to go to where the silence is
105 because it's not silent. People are organizing, people are raucous
106 and rowdy, but it doesn't hit the corporate media radar screen."

107 Despite the dangers, Goodman said that she is not afraid
108 while she is working.

109 "The people that we cover face so much worse,"
110 Goodman said. "I mean, surviving a massacre, or the Indonesian
111 military armed with U.S. weapons."

112 There, on Nov. 12, 1991, the military killed 270
113 Timorese.

114 "As American journalists, we enjoy a certain privilege,"
115 Goodman said. "Not always, but more often, certainly, than the
116 people we cover. And they are incredibly brave, whether in Haiti,

117 whether in East Timor, whether people in the streets of
118 Minneapolis. I think we just have to move forward.”

119 * * *

120 MEDIA CHALLENGES today include billionaires buying
121 corporate media so they can control the message.

122 Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, for one, owner of the once-
123 mighty *Washington Post*, laid off one-third of its entire workforce,
124 including 300 journalists, in February. CBS News brought in a
125 new editor-in-chief, Bari Weiss, who not only fired 6% of her staff
126 but decimated the once-revered *60 Minutes*.

127 Deal, the film’s co-producer, is part of [Block the Merger](#),
128 a group that has organized to fight media corporate mergers.

129 “This is what Amy said, about working every single day
130 and organizing and having your voice heard,” he said. “It does
131 pay off, and you can make a difference.”

132 The latest in the series of corporate managers by allies of
133 President Donald Trump “is the one between Paramount and
134 Warner [Bros.] Discovery, which owns CNN, HBO, and HBO
135 Max, among many other properties,” Deal said. One of those
136 properties is CNN, the 24-hour cable news channel.

137 “So, you see what’s happening here is commercial media
138 capitulated into the power of the Trump administration,” he said.
139 “It’s bad for the consumer, it’s bad for the public, and it’s even
140 bad for the people who create the entertainment that you
141 consume.”

142 Thousands of activists have come together to oppose this
143 merger, including actress Jane Fonda and her Committee for the
144 First Amendment, Deal said.

145 “And the latest reporting is showing that it’s having an
146 impact,” he said. “Paramount said before that they wouldn’t
147 budge, but now they’re willing to negotiate. And part of that is
148 because this movement has organized the [California] state’s
149 attorney general to threaten legal action.”

150 Calling Goodman “the greatest champion today for
151 independent media, for independent voices,” Deal said that at
152 Block the Merger, “we’re trying to emulate that.”

153 “We’re trying to rally support for people to find local
154 independent media outlets,” he said. “For journalists to realize
155 that there are other ways to have an impact.”

156 * * *

157 CAN REPORTING change the reality of a political situation?
158 Goodman believes it can and it will.

159 “You never achieve democracy,” she said. “You have to
160 fight for it every single day, and you never know when that magic
161 moment comes. But if you’re involved with building social
162 change, you’re helping to build a foundation. And when that
163 moment comes, you’re going to make history. You’re going to
164 help shape the future.”

165 Goodman got into the news business as a child,
166 following the lead of her younger brother, Vermont journalist
167 David Goodman, who hosts VTDigger’s *Vermont Conversation*
168 podcast.

169 “My brother lives in Waterbury,” Amy Goodman said.
170 “We’ve written books together. He’s a great political and outdoor
171 environmental journalist. I was inspired by him when we were
172 kids.”

173 Goodman said that David, 2½ years her junior, started a
174 newspaper, *Dave’s Press*, when he was 8 years old.

175 “It was sort of a glorified family calendar, and when he
176 wrote in the newspaper that my mother spanked me, my mother
177 put her foot down and said, ‘No dirty laundry in the paper!’” she
178 said.

179 “That’s because it went out to the whole extended
180 Goodman family. And David cried censorship! And he really
181 cried, because he was 8 years old. But we got this newspaper
182 out, and we would debate the issues of the day in the Letters to
183 the Editor page.”

184 For example, their grandfather would write in and say, “I
185 love you very much, but I disagree with your views on war.”

186 At the time, it was the Vietnam War.

187 According to his sister, David wrote back: “Dear
188 Grandpa: Thank you for being my first subscriber, but your views
189 on war are stupid.”

190 “And that’s how it would go,” Goodman said. “So we’ve
191 been partners in rhyme and crime ever since.”

192 Behind that wordplay is a serious problem.

193 “All too often now, committing journalism is considered
194 a crime in this country,” she said. “Journalists are being sued by
195 the president of the United States. It is a very severe threat to the
196 First Amendment.”

197 The First Amendment, adopted in 1791, prevents the
198 government from interfering with five fundamental freedoms:
199 religion, speech, press, assembly, and the right to petition the
200 government.

201 “There’s a reason why our profession, journalism, is
202 explicitly protected in the Constitution,” Goodman said. “It’s
203 essential to the functioning of a democratic society. And the flip
204 side of the freedom of the press is the public’s right to know. That
205 is what makes a democracy meaningful, that people have
206 trustworthy information they can make decisions on.”

207 * * *

208 GOODMAN AND HER STAFF just celebrated the show’s 30th
209 anniversary at Riverside Church in New York. “Angela Davis
210 came there and talked about the importance of dissent,”
211 Goodman said, describing the day.

212 Juan González, who has been her professional partner
213 since *Democracy Now!* Began, was a founder of the Young Lords
214 in New York, a radical Puerto Rican civil rights and community
215 empowerment group that was analogous to the Black Panthers.

216 “He talked about framing the story, and that’s what he
217 talks about in the film — how important it is to frame your own

218 narrative," Goodman said. "Those who started the Young Lords in
219 New York became some of the leading journalists of New York."

220 Also at the event was Bruce Springsteen, who sang a
221 song he wrote earlier this year, "Streets of Minneapolis," a protest
222 song that speaks to the federal government's immigration
223 enforcement surges by militarized federal personnel in that city
224 who claimed the lives of Renée Good, Alex Pretti, and other
225 civilians.

226 "I think that shows us how important it is to have
227 community media across the political spectrum, because the
228 community in Minneapolis rose up with the ICE surge,"
229 Goodman said. "They rose up across the political spectrum and
230 said, 'We will protect our neighbors.'"

231 At the end of the night, all the musicians gathered on the
232 stage, including Michael Stipe of REM and Patti Smith, and they
233 sang Smith's song "People Have the Power."

234 That is what *Democracy Now!* will continue to do,
235 Goodman said.

236 "Covering the movements that make history, that is our
237 job," she said. "It is to go to where the silence is. As I said, it's not
238 silence. That's where the action is. And for so long, the corporate
239 media has brought you this same sad circle of pundits who know
240 so little about so much, explaining the world to us and getting it
241 so wrong.

242 "We need the people closest to the story telling us what
243 is happening. That's why I call *Democracy Now!* 'News with a
244 heart.'"

245 Goodman, who has visited Brattleboro in the past, is
246 excited to be coming back.

247 "This is a celebration of independent media," Goodman
248 said. "And being at the Latchis, where the film is going to run for
249 a week, I consider all of these outlets, whether it's Brattleboro
250 Community TV or *Democracy Now!* or The Latchis, I consider
251 them sanctuaries of dissent. And dissent is what's going to save
252 us."

253 She pointed out that “*Democracy Now!* is a global news
254 outlet. We started on nine stations, and we now broadcast on
255 1,500 public radio and television stations around the country and
256 around the world. We are supported by listeners, viewers,
257 readers, and some foundations, but we don’t take government
258 support. We don’t take corporate support. We are independent.”

259 The Latchis is equally excited to host the show.

260 “I have been feeling a deep sense of anxiety and concern
261 over the severity of the current threats to our democratic
262 institutions and how crucial free, vigorous, and independent
263 media are as bulwarks against these threats,” said Latchis
264 Executive Director Jon Potter.

265 “I also regard the Latchis as a similar bastion of free
266 thought and open, honest discourse” he continued.

267 “When the opportunity to show this film and have Amy
268 come to the Latchis came up, it took less than a nanosecond to
269 jump at the chance,” Potter added.

270 “Few Latchis events have garnered as much intense
271 interest as this, which speaks to Amy’s heroic place on
272 journalism’s front lines and to how much people recognize the
273 importance of the freedom of the press,” he said. “This is a big
274 deal for our community and hopefully a rallying cry for all of us.”

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

275 **JOYCE MARCEL** is a reporter and columnist for *The*
276 *Commons*, where she regularly covers politics, homelessness,
277 economic development issues, and the arts.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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