**The 21st Century Image of the Journalist in Hallmark Films**

**2000-2020**

Joe Saltzman

Professor of Journalism and Communication

Director of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC)

A Project of the Norman Lear Center

Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism

University of Southern California

Los Angeles, CA

saltzman@usc.edu

# Introduction

This is the first study of the 21st-century image of the journalist in Hallmark films. It analyzes 360 films that appeared on the Hallmark channels from 2000 to 2020. There are also seven alphabetical appendices[[1]](#endnote-1) totaling 936 pages that document each of the encoded films in the study. Other related documents include a list of all films by job titles and a list of all films by year.

Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries[[2]](#endnote-2) aired approximately 860 movies, an overwhelming number originally produced for the Hallmark, during the first two decades of the 21st century. Although general viewership and revenue at most TV networks are declining, since 2016, Hallmark channels have done surprisingly well – both the Hallmark Channel and its Movies & Mysteries continue to rise in viewership.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Television preferences seem to follow the nation’s political divide. A 2017 survey showed that those “who backed Hillary Clinton prefer political satire and stories with darker themes, antiheroes and unconventional families. People in regions that backed Donald Trump were more likely to watch shows that express traditional family values and also to steer away from political themes and stories that denigrate religion.”[[4]](#endnote-4) Hallmark’s appeal is strongest in the Midwest and the South. Though the channel’s programming is politically agnostic, if the audience strongholds in red are highlighted on a map, “it would look much like the electoral college results in the 2016 election. Ratings for Hallmark programs are higher by 50 percent or more outside of the top 10 TV markets that include blue state centers New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston and Chicago.”*[[5]](#endnote-5)*

One professor who has studied media messages, points out that “people tend to consume culture that is in accordance with their own attitudes, values and behaviors.”[[6]](#endnote-6) People in red states enjoy watching active affirmation of their beliefs about how the world should be. Hallmark provides a realization of a certain kind of ideal America. For women 25-54 especially, Hallmark movies provide family-friendly, comfort viewing.[[7]](#endnote-7)

The Hallmark formula usually involves a high-powered career man or woman living in the big, cold city. This plot device includes magazine and newspaper journalists, bloggers, TV and radio anchors-hosts and public relations practitioners. For some specific reason, these successful men and women often return to the small town in which they grew up. It may be because a relative is sick or injured, a family business is in jeopardy, or someone or something back home needs their help. This usually happens during a holiday, mostly Christmas[[8]](#endnote-8), but occasionally, Easter or Halloween or Thanksgiving. The man or woman, usually divorced or widowed, meets a former sweetheart or childhood friend, usually with a child or two, and a courtship develops in a cute, unexpected meeting in which the children occasionally play an important part. The romance continues and the man or woman decides to give up everything to come back to their hometown and a new life. Then about one hour and 36-minutes into the film (including commercials) a crisis develops – a misunderstood overheard conversation, a glimpse of a document seen mistakenly or a conversation with a friend, relative or co-worker revealing that the small-town significant other has been deceptive, lied, or misrepresented who and what he or she is. Angry and disappointed, the man or woman then decides to go back to the big city and their old life. The hometown turned out to be no nicer than the city in which they live. After very long commercials, everything turns out the way it should. The man or woman usually figures out the misunderstanding and returns to true love, leaving their successful career in the city. They usually give up the promotion they have worked so long and hard for or a coveted job in a different place. By the film’s end, the romance couple kiss and pledge to live together forging a better life in their beloved hometown. Tradition and warm small-town family values have won over the cold, heartless, cynical urban environment. The film abruptly ends before anything can jeopardize the happily ever after ending.

 Hallmark manufactures “feel good” TV for those who see America’s past with rose-colored glasses. Bill Abbott, president and CEO of Crown Media Family Networks, the parent of Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries summed up the company’s philosophy: “I think we were just able to fill a void and make people feel better about their day-to-day lives,” Abbott explained. “I don’t think there’s any real limit on people wanting to feel good. There are plenty of places to find darkness but few places to find positivity.”[[9]](#endnote-9) Walter Metz, professor in the department of Cinema and Photography at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, agreed: “The political orientation of the films is deeply conservative: the big city is always a place of evil, while small towns in rural America are the only locations where the true meaning of Christmas can be discovered. Given the country’s contemporary political divide, the films might as well equate Republicans with Santa Claus, ever so much healthier than the holiday Democratic Party-poopers.”[[10]](#endnote-10) Another scholar pointed out, “The Hallmark brand has been around long enough that it has become a holiday tradition in its own right.”[[11]](#endnote-11) A popular reviewer added, “The characters do the right thing. The problems get worked out. The guy and girl, whatever their age or grumpiness level at the start, always end up together.”[[12]](#endnote-12)

One analyst wrote: “It affirms what people in red states believe and it reaffirms how their world would be without nonbelievers and cynics who they believe control most of what they watch on television. It's not an escape from America, but a full realization of a certain kind of ideal America.”[[13]](#endnote-13) Hallmark films reinforce the notion that America can be great again – not as it actually was, but as a storybook idyllic past created out of yearning for a safer, more comfortable, less divisive place.

# Literature Review

There has been no previous study of the image of the journalist in Hallmark films.

Finding, watching and analyzing the individual 360 films provided the most information for this study. Two key references used throughout were the Internet Movie Database (IMDb; imdb.com),[[14]](#endnote-14) “the world’s most popular and authoritative source for movie, TV and celebrity content,”[[15]](#endnote-15) and the online IJPC Database of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Project.[[16]](#endnote-16) These comprehensive databases provided the primary sources for specifics of individual films. They helped resolve in decisions concerning inclusion, date and genre determination, spelling, and other details. Much of the other research involved the Hallmark company, its channels and film production, Hallmark websites (hallmarkchannel.com and hallmarkmoviesandmysteries.com) as well as Internet reviews from a variety of sources were used to verify plot and cast details.

 Research from the books *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film* by Joe Saltzman and *Heroes and Scoundrels: The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture* by Matthew C. Ehrlich and Joe Saltzman,[[17]](#endnote-17) the IJPC Database and *The IJPC Journal* were used in analyzing the image of the journalist in popular culture.[[18]](#endnote-18)

An article by Walter Metz, professor in the department of Cinema and Photography at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, “A Hallmark of the Classical Holiday Cinema, or Meeting Two Christmas Queens" in Film Fiction and *Media Literacy* and *Keys to Interpreting Media Messages, Fourth Edition* by Art Silverblatt, professor of communications and journalism at Webster University, St. Louis, MO, were helpful in establishing Hallmark conventions and traditions, and in how people use popular culture to reinforce their beliefs and stereotypes. Most of the other articles quoted came from newspapers, magazines, and Internet publications dealing with Hallmark channels and the films they present.

# Methodology

The first problem was to identify any Hallmark film dealing with journalism. We started with various lists of complete Hallmark films including a list from Hallmark of all films created since 2000. The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC) database (ijpc.org) yielded 151 results. Hallmark lists averaged more than 860 films. Then each of the films were checked to see if any journalists or journalism was involved. More than 860 films were analyzed, with 360 films finally selected for the study. Each film is categorized by decade, genre, gender, ethnicity, media category, job title, and description. These results were checked and rechecked to confirm accuracy and consensus.

 A journalist is defined as anyone who performs the journalist’s function: to gather and disseminate news, information, and commentary, regardless of the medium.

The most difficult category to determine was whether a character’s image is positive or negative. Often a central character combines both positive and negative attributes.[[19]](#endnote-19) Obviously some of these decisions are arguable even after hours of debate. This is a subjective category. However, any researcher can go through each appendix, check each film’s coding, read the comprehensive reviews, see the film and determine whether the description should be revised.

We divided characters identified as journalists into major and minor categories.

We also decided to include films in which a newspaper story played a significant plot point. Anonymous journalists responsible for such articles were listed as Unidentified News Staff.

# Results and Discussion

The following 10 tables and graphs[[20]](#endnote-20) summarize the results by decade, genre, gender, ethnicity, media category, job title, and descriptions of the journalist’s professional and personality traits.

# Decade

A breakdown by years appears in Table 1. A total of 360 films were documented, 101 of them broadcast for the first time in 2019 and 2020.

**Table 1: Decade**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Decade** | **Movies** |
| **Pre-2000** | **1** |
| **2000** | **2** |
| **2001** | **1** |
| **2002** | **3** |
| **2003** | **3** |
| **2004** | **1** |
| **2005** | **9** |
| **2006** | **13** |
| **2007** | **7** |
| **2008** | **3** |
| **2009** | **5** |
| **2010** | **7** |
| **2011** | **8** |
| **2012** | **14** |
| **2013** | **23** |
| **2014** | **22** |
| **2015** | **36** |
| **2016** | **28** |
| **2017** | **36** |
| **2018** | **37** |
| **2019** | **61** |
| **2020** | **40** |
|  |  |
| **Total** | **360** |

# Genre

The films were separated into generally accepted genres to see how the image of the journalist was treated in action-adventure, animation, drama, comedy, crime-mystery-thriller, romance, satire/parody, science fiction/horror, serial, sports, true story-biography-documentary, war, and western.[[21]](#endnote-21)

Of the Hallmark films studied, nearly three-fourths of the entries were romance films, a Hallmark Channel staple, and many of the films classified under a different genre maintained significant romantic undertones. Crime-Mystery-Thriller movies made up the only other large grouping of films, accounting for more than one-fifth of the entries, and many featuring a continuing series in which journalists and others solve crimes.

**Table 2: Genre**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Action-Adventure** | **Animation** | **Drama** | **Comedy** | **Crime/****Mystery/****Thriller** | **Romance** | **Satire/Parody** |
| 0 | 0 | 12 | 3 | 74 | 261 | 0 |
| 0% | 0% | 3% | 1% | 21% | 72% | 0% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sci-Fi/Horror** | **Serial** | **Sport** | **True Story/****Biography/****Documentary** | **War** | **Western** | **Totals** |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 360 |
| 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 100% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 10: Descriptions-Major Characters by Genre** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Genre** | **Very** | **Positive** | **Transformative** | **Transformative** | **Negative** | **Very** | **Neutral** | **Total** |  |
| **Positive** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Negative** |  |
| **Action-Adventure** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **0** |  |
| **Animation** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **0** |  |
| **Drama** |  | **5** |  |  |  |  |  | **5** |  |
| **Comedy** |  | **3** | **1** |  | **1** |  |  | **5** |  |
| **Crime Mystery** | **3** | **68** | **5** |  | **11** | **1** |  | **88** |  |
| **Romance** | **2** | **334** | **27** | **4** | **28** | **1** |  | **396** |  |
| **Satire** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **0** |  |
| **Parody** |  |
| **Sci-Fi** | **1** | **2** |  |  |  |  |  | **3** |  |
| **Horror** |  |
| **Serial** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **0** |  |
| **Sport** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **0** |  |
| **True Story-Biography-Documentary** |  | **2** |  |  |  |  |  | **2** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **War** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **0** |  |
| **Western** | **1** | **3** |  |  |  |  |  | **4** |  |
| **TOTALS** | **7** | **417** | **33** | **4** | **40** | **2** | **0** | **503** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Gender

For most of the 20th century and into the 21st century, journalists featured in movies and television programs were predominantly male. Surprisingly, in the Hallmark films studied, women made up 40 percent of the journalists depicted, making the split between male and female journalists narrow – 43 percent of the journalists portrayed were male. In previous IJPC studies of films and TV programs, white males overwhelmingly were seen as reporters and editors, but the Hallmark films of the 21st century differed dramatically. In 1,026 major and minor characters, 496 were female compared to 531 who were male. Groups of journalists with men and women made up 17 percent of the 1,240 characters listed by gender.

**Table 3: Gender**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Male** | **Female** | **Group** | **Total** |
| 531 | 496 | 213 | 1,240 |
| 43% | 40% | 17% | 100% |

Although there were more male journalist characters overall in Hallmark films, women made up a larger portion of the major characters (278 females to 225 males) and were depicted slightly more positively with fewer negative characteristics then men. There were 258 female journalists compared to 199 male journalists who rated very positive, positive or transformative positive (93 percent to 89 percent). There were 26 male characters (11 percent) who rated very negative, negative or transformative negative compared to 20 female journalists (7 percent).

**Table 3A: Major Characters by Gender**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Very** | **Positive** | **Transformative** | **Transformative** | **Negative** | **Very** | **Neutral** | **Total** |
| **Positive** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Negative** |
| **Male** | **1** | **184** | **14** | **1** | **24** | **1** | **0** | **225** |
| **Female** | **6** | **233** | **19** | **3** | **16** | **1** | **0** | **278** |
| **TOTALS** | **7** | **417** | **33** | **4** | **40** | **2** | **0** | **503** |

#

# Often the women who were depicted were strong career women who fought gender discrimination to become successful, giving up a personal life in the process. Only when they returned to their small-town home did they realize that family life and doing what they truly wanted to do were more important than success and power in the urban world. Female journalists[[22]](#endnote-22) showed up as reporters,[[23]](#endnote-23) editors,[[24]](#endnote-24)producers,[[25]](#endnote-25) photojournalists and camera-sound women, [[26]](#endnote-26) columnists,[[27]](#endnote-27) meteorologists,[[28]](#endnote-28) newscasters and anchor-hosts,[[29]](#endnote-29) critics,[[30]](#endnote-30) bloggers,[[31]](#endnote-31) podcasters,[[32]](#endnote-32) publishers-owners,[[33]](#endnote-33) station managers,[[34]](#endnote-34) and non-fiction book writers.[[35]](#endnote-35) They worked for every conceivable publication, including magazines, newspapers, television, radio, podcasts and the Internet (bloggers and online publications) as well as in every area of information, including travel,[[36]](#endnote-36) crime,[[37]](#endnote-37) entertainment,[[38]](#endnote-38) books,[[39]](#endnote-39) art,[[40]](#endnote-40) music,[[41]](#endnote-41) food-restaurants-wine,[[42]](#endnote-42) fashion,[[43]](#endnote-43) pop culture,[[44]](#endnote-44) lifestyle,[[45]](#endnote-45) advice, relationship and gossip,[[46]](#endnote-46) crossword puzzles[[47]](#endnote-47), and even war reporting.[[48]](#endnote-48)

 Often, reporters in Hallmark films not only show dedication to the profession, but also will do almost anything to get the story. Investigative Reporter Cheryl Collins exposes corruption in a major corporation in *Murder 101* (2006). TV reporter Laurie Stephenson, without the support of her news director, risks her life while covering corruption involving the discovery of a supernova that threatens to destroy the earth in *Supernova* (2005). TV investigative reporter M.J. Jensen in *A Town Without Christmas* (2001) is a jaded and world-weary journalist who takes a break from hard-hitting stories to find the identity of a boy who wrote a letter telling Santa Claus he wanted to die so he wouldn’t be a burden to his divorcing parents. TV journalist Susan Allison works for Global Network Television in *The Lost Valentine* (2011) and uses every resource to return a dead husband’s body to a woman who has waited at a train station every Valentine’s Day for 65 years hoping her missing-in-action husband would return.

#  Hallmark Movies & Mysteries feature female journalists solving crimes in several continuing series. Ruby Herring,[[49]](#endnote-49) for example, is a popular consumer reporter at a Seattle TV station who finds herself involved in one criminal case after another before winning her stripes as the station’s crime reporter. Her father, a legendary, investigative crime reporter and now journalism teacher, encourages her. But she is often confronted by an arrogant male crime reporter who constantly criticizes her before dismissing her as an amateur. Alex Pherson[[50]](#endnote-50) is a true-crime podcaster in *The Chronicle Mysteries*,[[51]](#endnote-51) solving one crime an episode. Her uncle, who owns *The Harrington Chronicle,* names her managing editor of the paper and she agrees as long as she can continue to do her much-listened-to podcasts. In the popular series *Aurora Teagarden Mysteries,[[52]](#endnote-52)* the best friend of popular librarian Teagarden is Sally Allison who reports crime news for the local newspaper. A tough and intelligent woman in her late forties, Allison gets a bit too involved in her stories and often acts unprofessional in her responses. Investigative reporter Jackie Shawl shows up in *Martha’s Vineyard Mysteries* [[53]](#endnote-53) and proves to be a responsible, witty and professional reporter who helps the main characters solve the crime. In *Morning Show Mysteries,[[54]](#endnote-54)* TV morning show food anchor and segment host Billie Blessings not only owns a successful bistro, but also ends up solving a series of murders. All of these journalists repeatedly show courage, determination, professionalism, and intellect in solving crimes that the police –

# who constantly ignore them and occasionally ridicule them – fail to solve. But no matter how successful they are in previous episodes, they seem to have to start all over again trying to win respect and credibility.

# Ethnicity-Race

Some viewers and analysts are critical of Hallmark because the majority of the lead characters are “a bit too Christian and white.”[[55]](#endnote-55) While White people did overwhelmingly make up the majority of journalists depicted in Hallmark films (808 or 65 percent of the major and minor characters depicted), Black characters did show up in more frequent numbers than most films and TV programs featuring journalists (130 or 11 percent of the journalists depicted). In addition, 60 journalists or 5 percent of the total were Asian. Together these two people of color groups made up 190 or 23 percent of the journalists depicted in Hallmark movies. Hispanic-Latinos didn’t fare as well with only 15 journalists or 1 percent of the total showing up in the 360 films surveyed. Other people of color were not represented at all, although 227 characters (18 percent) were unspecified, meaning they were either multicultural or not identified as White.[[56]](#endnote-56)

**Table 4: Ethnicity-Race**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **White** | **Black** | **Hispanic/Latino** | **American Indian/Alaskan Native** | **Asian** | **Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander** | **Unspecified** | **Total** |
| 808 | 130 | 15 | 0 | 60 | 0 | 227 | 1,240 |
| 65% | 18% | 1% | 0% | 5% | 0% | 18% | 100% |

People of color were ignored by news media throughout the 20th century and this reality was mirrored in film after film and TV program after TV program. While Blacks and other people of color are making gradual inroads, the progress has been agonizingly slow. Without the very important viewpoints from journalists who are not white males, the coverage of news in the United States will always be incomplete.[[57]](#endnote-57)

# Hallmark movies surprisingly offer a number of powerful Black women and men in leading roles as journalists. Many portray strong editors, publishers and radio and TV producers.[[58]](#endnote-58) Others showcase hard-working reporters,[[59]](#endnote-59) photojournalists,[[60]](#endnote-60) TV field producers and production assistants,[[61]](#endnote-61) and TV and radio hosts.[[62]](#endnote-62) When ever-optimistic single mom Emma Sanderson looks for a Christmas miracle to write about for a lifestyle magazine, she gets more than the story. She also ends up saving the White female editor’s job and falling in love with the magazine’s Black photo editor Marcus in *A Christmas Miracle* (2019). Fashion journalist Lauren helps editor Julia transition their print magazine into an online success in *Fashionably Yours*  (2020). Tough producer Julie guides her home renovation host to greater success in *Love in Design* (2018). Megan Marquant starts off as a magazine production assistant in *One Winter Weekend* (2018) and proves herself as a successful writer-editor in *One Winter Proposal* (2019). Host and executive Sharon St. Clair runs a shop-at-home network with an iron hand and a loving heart in *Love in Store* (2020). TV morning-show segment host Billie Blessings proves her expertise in solving crimes and murders in *Morning Show Mysteries* (2018-2019). Station Manager Eric Damon runs a tight ship in *Romantically Speaking* (2015). TV reporter Lindsay Tuttle is a take-no-prisoners journalist who will do anything to get an exclusive story in *Love on Ice* (2017). Columnist Parker, with the help of her assistant Kadee, explores her real feelings and is rewarded with self-realization and higher readership in *The Love Letter* (2013). TV field producer Leslie Mitchell enthusiastically covers a live Christmas Eve broadcast that almost ends in disaster in *Finding Santa* (2017).

In addition, many minority characters playing reporters, editors, interviewers, camerapersons, producers, anchors-hosts, interns, staffers, and others are included in many other Hallmark movies.[[63]](#endnote-63)

# Asians were also featured in leading roles in several Hallmark movies. Internet magazine reporter Kendra Adams in *The Christmas Ring* (2020) won’t let anything stop her from discovering the story behind a ring she finds in a pawn shop. Maneet Chauhan plays herself as the anchor-host-interviewer of a TV baking show competition in *The Secret Ingredient* (2020). Senior Editor Kendra tries to save her publisher from self-destruction in *It's Christmas, Carol* (2012). Magazine editor Syndra displays strong leadership qualities and photojournalist Ethan wins his stripes and a promotion in *One Winter Proposal* (2019). Sheyla Greenis is a tough, but fair newspaper editor who calls all the shots and keeps her reporters in line in *A Little Christmas Charm* (2020). Features editor Elsie Baxter, who works with an Asian cameraman, reports on a competition between two rival house flippers in *Flip That Romance* (2019). Freelance photojournalist Penny teams up with a magazine writer to save a wilderness sanctuary in *Nature of Love* (2020). TV producers-anchors-hosts also play major roles in a handful of Hallmark movies.[[64]](#endnote-64) In addition, Asians show up as minor characters as reporters, critics, magazine staffers, interns, editorial assistants, anchor-hosts, TV producers, blogger’s assistants, and photojournalists-camerapersons-soundpersons.[[65]](#endnote-65)

# Several Hispanics have major roles as journalists in some Hallmark films and series. Weatherman-TV Personality-Host Ramon Rodriguez for KBC News appears in a variety of roles in *Signed, Sealed, Delivered* (2014-2018). Podcaster Alexandra “Ally” Urbinati hosts a popular video podcast in *Love at Sea* (2018), and documentarian David Campos plays a leading role in *A Midnight Kiss* (2018). Minor roles include radio producer Carl in *Romantically Speaking* (2015), reporter Carmen Fayos in *Jane Doe: Now You See It, Now You Don’t*  (2006), and a news reporter, one of many, covering the terrorist takeover of a passenger jet in *Final Approach* (2008).

# When people of color portray journalists in Hallmark movies, they display the same characteristics that all Hallmark characters exhibit: they are attractive, positive personalities who, no matter what the odds, end up doing the right thing and usually finding romance and true love in the process. The only key difference between characters portrayed by White actors and characters portrayed by non-Whites is their ethnic designation.

# Media Category

# Newspapers and television dominated the media categories covered in the films, each accounting for about a third of all portrayals (67 percent). Magazines and the Internet were the next most prevalent, making up 20 percent of the media categories depicted. Many of the journalists portrayed, however, published newspaper, magazine, and broadcast stories on the Internet. Most of their readers and viewers saw what they wrote on the web and not in a printed newspaper or magazine or on a television set. Because of this, portrayals of journalists are far more up-to-date than most depictions of journalists in movies and television programs

For example, journalists often were seen working at home writing blogs for a publication or just for their own Internet websites. While the great majority of these journalists were doing positive jobs[[66]](#endnote-66) in informing the public, several were using their blogs for nefarious purposes.

# In *The Thanksgiving House* (2013), blogger Ashleigh Mulligan, who writes “The Inquisitive Pilgrim” gossip blog, is a rumor-monger who calls herself a “disseminator of useful information” but constantly distorts the facts and even makes some of them up. Henry Kael writes a travel blog in *The Good Witch’s Charm* (2012) starting out to do a hatchet job on the town before falling in love with a townswoman. He then writes a final article on how charming the town and its people are correcting previous misinformation he published.

# Frequently, magazine, newspaper, and Internet stories were seen breaking on smart phones and other electronic devices. Paparazzi and tabloid publications cause the most reactions as their pictures go viral.[[67]](#endnote-67) Other stories written by journalists get their primary and immediate audience from smart phones and computers even when printed in traditional publications.[[68]](#endnote-68)

There were films involving newspaper reporters and editors losing their jobs because the newspaper is either going out of business or is being bought by a newspaper chain resulting in personnel changes. In *Holiday* Engagement (2011), Hillary Burns shows up at her newspaper office and no one is there but the editor who informs her that the newspaper is going out of business for lack of circulation and advertisements. Reporter Cynthia Tamerline comes up with a plan to stop a newspaper chain from buying a small-town newspaper in *The Wishing Well* (2010).

# Table 5: Media Category

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Newspaper** | **Television** | **Magazine** | **Radio/Podcast** | **Internet** | **Nonfiction Book** | **Documentary** | **Undefined/Other** |
| 173 | 166 | 54 | 27 | 47 | 19 | 1 | 17 |
| 34% | 33% | 11% | 5% | 9% | 4% | <1% | 4% |
|  |
| **Total** |
| 504 |
| 100% |

# Job Title

There are 18 specific job titles.[[69]](#endnote-69) Reporters and their editors are often the most publicly recognizable practitioners of journalism, and their prevalence in the Hallmark films reflects this. Reporters make up almost one-fourth of the total journalist characters depicted 24 percent), significantly more than the next-best-represented job. Editors hold the second-place spot, accounting for 15% of journalists in the films. Photojournalists (12 percent), anchors/hosts (12 percent) and employees doing various media jobs (6 percent) were the next largest groups.

**Table 6: Job Title**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Anchor-Host-Commentator** | **Columnist-****Blogger** | **Critic** | **Cub** **Reporter** | **Editor-****Producer** | **Illustator-****Cartoonist** | **Executive** | **Employee** |
| 173 | 35 | 26 | 8 | 184 | 0 | 46 | 73 |
| 34% | 3% | 2% | <1% | 15% | 0% | 4% | 6% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Photojournalist-****Newsreel Shooter** | **Publisher-****Media Owner** | **Reporter** | **Real-Life Journalist** | **Sports Journalist** | **War-Foreign Correspondent** | **Press Conference Journalists** |
| 148 | 33 | 295 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 15 |
| 12% | 3% | 24% | 1% | 1% | <1% | 1% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pack Journalists** | **Miscellaneous** | **Unidentified News Staff** | **Total** |
| 49 | 110 | 40 | 1,240 |
| 4% | 0% | 3% | 100% |

# Descriptions of Major and Minor Characters

It is rare to find a major character in a Hallmark movies who is not a positive character. Hallmark films seldom have villains and even the villains, usually minor characters, often redeem themselves at the end of the film. So it is not surprising that 899 or more than 72 percent of the journalist characters are depicted as positive, very positive or transformative positive. About 10 percent or 223 of the characters are depicted as negative, very negative or transformative negative. Characters who have no definable characteristics and are listed as neutral made up the remaining 18 percent or 218 characters.

# Table 7: Descriptions of Major and Minor Characters[[70]](#endnote-70)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very Positive** | **Positive** | **Transformative Positive** | **Transformative Negative** | **Negative** | **Very Negative** | **Neutral** | **Total** |
| 7 | 851 | 41 | 7 | 114 | 2 | 218 | 1,240 |
| <1% | 69% | 3% | 1% | 9% | <1% | 18% | 100% |

**Major Characters by Description**

 Major characters, as expected, are overwhelmingly positive – 457 or 91 percent of the major journalists portrayed were positive, very positive or transformative positive. A mere 46 major characters (9 percent) were negative, very negative or transformative negative.

**Table 8: Major Characters by Description**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very Positive** | **Positive** | **Transformative Positive** | **Transformative Negative** | **Negative** | **Very Negative** | **Neutral** | **Total** |
| 7 | 417 | 33 | 4 | 40 | 2 | 0 | 503 |
| 1% | 83% | 7% | 1% | 8% | <1% | 0% | 100% |

**Minor Characters by Description**

Although minor journalist characters were also depicted largely positively, there were

more negative portrayals when it came to minor characters, mostly because they traveled in packs of journalists or paparazzi trying to get sensational photographs or stories for tabloid publications. Even so, minor journalists who were depicted as positive, very positive or transformative positive totaled 60 percent. Those depicted as negative, very negative or transformative negative came to 10 percent. Thirty percent were depicted as neutral, meaning they simply were doing their job without fanfare or recognition, appearing at press conferences or other news events in groups, or simply populating a newsroom.

 **Table 9: Minor Characters by Description**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very Positive** | **Positive** | **Transformative Positive** | **Transformative Negative** | **Negative** | **Very Negative** | **Neutral** | **Total** |
| 0 | 434 | 8 | 3 | 74 | 0 | 218 | 737 |
| 0% | 59% | 1% | <1% | 10% | 0% | 30% | 100% |

The majority of journalists are mostly positive trying to do their best to inform the public and expose the bad guys.[[71]](#endnote-71) Positive female images were presented under the Gender category, but there were also positive images of male journalists in many Hallmark films.[[72]](#endnote-72) Crime Reporter Macintyre “Mac” Sullivan teams up with a home renovator to solve murders (*Fixer Upper Mysteries,* 2017-2018). Jack Griffith, editor of the local newspaper who appears in 36 episodes of *Cedar Cove* (2013-2015), is a burnt-out, alcoholic big-city journalist. He comes to the small town to get his life together and falls in love with the local judge. In *Picture Perfect Mysteries* (2020), reporter Daniel Drake offers a realistic portrayal of a young journalist in action and in *Time After Time*  (2011), Richard Kerm portrays a young newspaper reporter who meets an older version of himself, “Dick” Woodstein. In *Mystery 101: Pilot* (2019), a student journalist is killed while investigating the theft of examination answers, which turned into a case of corporate espionage. His girlfriend, another student journalist, fears she will be next and the student newspaper editor helps her escape.

 Often Hallmark goes back into history to find hard-working, courageous journalists.

Journalist Avery is hanged by men working for corrupt cattle barons while reporting on a range war in Wyoming in *Johnson County Wars* (2002). Photojournalist Ned Giles joins the 1932 Great Apache Expedition to search for the young son of a wealthy Mexican landowner who was kidnapped. He and the boy barely escape and his pictures, which document the adventure, become famous (*Wild Girl,* 2010). Cub reporter Samuel Clements creates the name Mark Twain for his first article with help of seasoned journalist William “Will” Wright and editor Joe Goodman (*Roughing It,* 2002). Reporter-photographer Mike Ward figures out that something is wrong when he arrives to do a profile of a contest winner in a small coal-mining town in western Canada in 1917 (*When the Heart Calls: New Year’s Wish*, 2019).

Sometimes, journalists in Hallmark films start out being portrayed negatively but by the end of the film they have been transformed into positive images.[[73]](#endnote-73) Newspaper reporter Maggie Chalke deceives readers and her editor by being the real Secret Santa in her popular story, but in the end, she comes clean and is forgiven (*On the Twelfth Day of Christmas,*  2015). Tabloid reporter Greta Kaine who works for *Pulse! Gossip!* exposing the rich and famous, falls in love with the son of a politician she is supposed to print lies about. She quits her job in protest (*Snow Bride,* 2013). Editor Nicole Sweeney of *Chocolate Monthly Magazine* will do anything to get what she wants, including framing a chocolatier into trying to poison her. At the end of the film, she makes amends and apologizes for her behavior (*Yes I Do,* 2018). Publisher Carol Huffler is a driven, heartless employer who is visited by her former boss who shows her the error of her ways (*It's Christmas, Carol,* 2012). Carol Cartman is a conceited, cynical sensationalist talk-show host who treats her employees with cold contempt. But she totally changes after the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future visit her (*A Carol Christmas,* 2003). Jennifer Wade is a pampered, arrogant TV host who gets amnesia and becomes a better person for it (*A Christmas to Remember,* 2016). TV host-reporter Holly tells tabloid lies on her TV show, recants at the end of the film and becomes an accurate, fair reporter (*I Married Who,* 2020). Magazine writer Stephanie Carlton uses her position as the publisher’s daughter to get special favors from the woman she is interviewing by promising her the cover. Carlton takes back the offer when the woman fails to deliver, but by the end of the film she makes amends by giving her the cover she deserves and treating her fairly in the magazine (*Over the Moon in Love*, 2019).

 While there are negative portrayals of journalists in Hallmark films, they generally are not the lead characters. Network news producer Doug Ellis is a callous TV newsman who puts the story above everything, including the welfare of his employees, in *Final Approach* (2008). The Weston publishing family members are ruthless owners of a media empire whose crimes include embezzlement and murder in *The Gourmet Detective: Eat, Drink and. Be Buried* (2017). Finance TV anchor-commentator Len Leonard does bias interviews to develop scandalous stories, before he is murdered in *Jane Doe: The Harder They Fall* (2006). TV talk-show host Marty Caine is an outrageous, mean-spirited man whom everyone hates, especially his producer Becky Tranter who ends up murdering him in *McBride: Anybody Here Murder Marty?* (2005). Radio talk-show hosts Ron Garrison, Leslie Summers, Kyle Ward, Ed Harding and station manager Paul Belsen will do anything to keep their jobs even it if means murder. It eventually does: Garrison is killed and it turns out that sports radio host Ward is the killer in *McBride: Tune in for Murder*  (2005). Editor-in-chief Abigail Miller, who edits a leading fashion magazine, steals designs by her assistant, Caitlyn Enderby, destroying her reputation in the process in *Royal New Year’s Eve* (2017).

As in most of popular culture, paparazzi and tabloid reporters[[74]](#endnote-74) usually provide the worst images of the journalist. In *Once Upon a Prince* (2015), Morris Alderman sneaks around getting scandalous pictures before he is bribed by the royal family to sell them his pictures instead. in *Mystery Woman: Pilot* (2005), tabloid investigative reporter Mike Landy breaks into a house and a bookstore to get information he can sell. In *Rescuing Madison* (2014), reporter Cynthia Montana of the Gossip News Network, paparazzo Jake and pack journalists stalk a popular singer and a firefighter who saved her life, giving them no privacy and printing fake stories. In *Homecoming for the Holidays* (2019), a tabloid female reporter takes secret pictures of a country singer and prints a made-up, scandalous story. In *Snow Bride* (2013), tabloid editor Lou Blanco and reporter Westley “Wes” Sharp vow to get the story at all costs no matter whom it hurts. In *Romantically Speaking* (2015), radio host Bethany conspires to get a national program by lying, cheating and bad-mouthing the competition until she is exposed. In *Cancel Christmas* (2010). TV reporter Eric Simms tries to expose the real Santa Claus but fails. In *Christmas Incorporated* (2015), reporter Rebecca Neston will stop at nothing to get a job on a major newspaper. *Eat Play Love* (2017) features Kristi Waters, a TV reporter, known sarcastically as “the queen of news,” who cares only about herself and her future).

In *The Gourmet Detective: A Healthy Place to Die* 2015), magazine reporter

 Kathleen Evans deals in scandal and gossip and when she is killed, there are plenty of suspects. In *Lake Effects* (2020), reporter Mark Futterman is a womanizer not above faking a story. In *Once Upon a Holiday* (2015), TV reporter Ross Hargreave is obsessed with seeing himself on the air and will do anything to assure his success. In *The Perfect Catch* (2017), a TV reporter and pack journalists harass a Boston baseball pitcher who gave up a bases-loaded home run to lose the World Series. In *SnowComing* (2019), reporter Cassie Carns creates scandals if she can’t find anything to report. in *Ruby Herring Mysteries* (2019-2020), crime reporter Todd Powers bad-mouths, degrades, and discriminates against reporter Ruth Herring because she is female).

**Conclusion**

A number of surprises emerged in this first analysis of the 21st-century image of the journalist in Hallmark films.

\*Since a majority of Hallmark’s viewers favor family-friendly, comfort viewing

as an affirmation of their beliefs about how the world ought to be, the Hallmark image of the journalist becomes one of the few positive images that this audience sees as it gathers news and information friendly to its point of view.

\*Leading Hallmark characters are usually likable, positive role models and journalists are no exception. Surprisingly, a larger portion of the major characters are strong females and they are generally more likable than their male counterparts. While these Hallmark women end up with traditional goals (love and marriage), they spend the majority of the film as successful and often powerful reporters, editors, producers, photojournalists, columnists, meteorologists, newscasters and anchor-hosts, critics, publishers, and bloggers-podcasters. They often outmatch and outwit their male competition.

\*While White people overwhelmingly make up the majority of journalists depicted, Black and Asian characters show up in more frequent numbers than most comparative films and TV programs featuring journalists. Together they make up 23 percent of the journalists depicted in Hallmark movies. Even more impressive, was that Black and Asian characters in leading roles usually are as powerful and positive as their White counterparts. One of the characteristics of Hallmark characters is that regardless of their ethnicity, they act and sound the same, overcome the same problems and end up in a small town with their true love. Hispanics, however, were disproportionally underrepresented. They had few major roles and made up about one percent of the total characters.

\*Hallmark’s portrayal of the journalist is more up-to-date than other depictions of the journalists in movies and television programs. While journalists often work for traditional news media, they also write blogs and frequently, magazine, newspaper and internet stories are seen breaking on smart phones and other electronic devices. The public in Hallmark movies read newspapers and watch television, but a great majority first get their news -- especially a scandalous photograph or story -- on smart phones and computers. Also, several films deal with newspapers going out of business or being bought up by large chains.

\*The majority of journalists in Hallmark movies are mostly positive. Many show great courage and risk losing their jobs to do the right thing. Often, when a journalist starts out as a negative image behaving unethically or inappropriately, he or she usually end up doing the right thing and becoming the positive Hallmark character audiences expect. Those journalists who remain negative are usually minor characters.

\*The most negative journalists in Hallmark movies are usually found in the mystery series on the Hallmark Movies & Mysteries channel. They are either murdered or the ones doing the murder, and they can be ruthless in committing crimes against the major characters. In line with most movies and television programs of the 21st century, paparazzi, and tabloid reporters are usually the worst images of the journalist in Hallmark movies. Occasionally, if the paparazzi are major characters, they do the right thing before the movie is over and redeem themselves.

Those who condemn the Hallmark product as overly sentimental and always looking at the real world through rose-colored glasses usually dismiss these films as unimportant and trivial. But a large portion of the viewing public who watch these films include many whose political viewpoint is conservative and who get most of their information from social media, news organizations that reflect their point of view, and that of their friends and clergy. For them, the image of the journalist presented in Hallmark movies is a vastly different portrait of the journalist than anything they have seen before. What is now needed is research to discover if these positive images of the journalist have any effect on an audience trained to believe that the mainstream newsgatherers of the country create “fake news” and are not to be trusted.

**Endnotes**

1. Appendices contain 936 pages: Appendix One (A-CHA), 120 pages; Appendix Two (Christmas to CU), 119 pages; Appendix Three (D to G), 129 pages; Appendix Four (H to L), 1,50 pages; Appendix Five (M), 119 pages; Appendix Six (N to R), 141pages; Appendix Seven (S to Z), 158 pages. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The Hallmark Channel was officially launched in August 2001 with 31 million subscribers, with its sister channel Hallmark Movies & Mysteries (originally Hallmark Movie Channel) launched in January 2004. In addition to stand-alone original films, both channels broadcast a number of original franchise series. “Hallmark Channel Hits the Streets,” *AdAge,* July 30, 2001, and John Dempsey, “Hallmark launches pic outlet,” *Variety,* November 12, 2003. Hallmark Original Movies after 2000, Internet Movie Database (IMDb) lists 856 titles (six appearing in 2021) (<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls041975619/>). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. In 2017, the Hallmark Channel as the third most-watched network on cable television averaging more than 2 million viewers per day. Revenue has followed ratings. In 2018, Hallmark Channel had 89 million subscribers and its Movies & Mysteries, which began broadcasting in 2004, boasts 67 million. “In 2017, the company launched a third channel (Hallmark Drama) and a subscription service for viewers who want direct access to the company’s library of past productions.” Steven Malanga, senior editor of *City Journal*. *Los Angeles Times,* January 9, 2018. (<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-malanga-hallmark-success-20180109-story.html>). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Malanga, Steven, “Op-Ed: Hallmark Channels’ Competitive Advantage? Red State Appeal.” *Los Angeles Times,* January 9, 2018. (<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-malanga-hallmark-success-20180109-story.html>). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Neilsen data for 2017 quoted in Stephen Battaglio’s article, “Hallmark Channel Isn’t Winning Emmys, but Red States Love It.” *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/business/hollywood/la-fi-ct-hallmark-red-state-20170914-story.html>.. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Silverblatt, Art et al. Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages. Fourth Edition. Praeger, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Rosa, Chistopher, “There’s a Reason You See the Same Women in All Those Hallmark Christmas Movies.” Condé Nast, 2018, “During the week of November 20, 2017, the Hallmark Countdown to Christmas subscriber television programming was the highest rated for women in the age ranges 18-49 and 25-54.” <https://www.glamour.com/story/hallmark-christmas-movie-actresses>. Long, Heather, “The Feel-Good Hallmark Channel Is Booming in the Age of Trump,” August 21, 2017, the *Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/21/the-feel-good-hallmark-channel-is-booming-in-the-age-of-trump/> and Hill, Samantha Rose, “Why the Hallmark Channel Is Completely Dominating in 2017,” Thrillist Entertainment, December 22, 2017 (<https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/hallmark-channel-movies-success-2017>). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. There are at least 136 Christmas holiday-themed movies in the Hallmark library with 40 brand-new holiday movies in 2020 alone (23 on Hallmark Chanel and 17 on Hallmark Moves & Mysteries). Martha Sorensen’s article, “There Are 40 New Hallmark Holiday Movies & Only 12 Hallmark Holiday Movie Plots,” (Refiner 29 - <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/11/10137808/hallmark-christmas-holiday-movies-2020-full-list>) lists three Christmas films about main characters discovering a passion for music; two films about royal families and the commoner who finds live with the prince; two films dealing with time travel; seven films dealing with opposites attract in which two people who should have each other fall in love; five films about a single parent finding love (kids are usually involved); three films about heading home for the holidays and finding true love in very unlikely places; four films about childhood sweethearts; two films about traveling out of town for the holidays; four films about falling for a handsome local resident who works with his hands, usually a fireman; three films about Christmas weddings; three films about journalism. Sorensen says journalists and writers are frequent rom-com leads
“so naturally Hallmark also has a bunch of movies about reporters.” The three films, covered in this study, are *USS Christmas* (a newspaper reporter), *A Little Christmas Charm* (newspaper reporter), *The Christmas Ring* (an Internet magazine reporter). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Wong, Tony, “The Hallmark Channel gets derided for its family-friendly fare, but its rating are growing,” *Toronto Star,* April 4, 2018. Wong is the newpaper’s television critic. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Metz, Walter, “A Hallmark of the Classical Holiday Cinema, or Meeting Two Christmas Queens,” Film Criticism< Meadville, Vol. 42, Iss. 4 (2018) https://search.proquest.com/openview/e9572070a25b3a9cfdd4d7b585164c4f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=45984. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Danailova, Hilary. “Party, Gift and Hallmark Stores: Trends in Year-End Selling.” Souvenirs, Gifts, & Novelties, vol. 56, no. 4, May 2017, pp. 182-184. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=123229254&site=ehost-live. Accessed 12 November 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Long, Heather, “The feel-good Hallmark Channel is booming in the age of Trump,” The *Washington Post*, August 22, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/21/the-feel-good-hallmark-channel-is-booming-in-the-age-of-trump/> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Hill, Samantha Rose, “Why the Hallmark Channel Is Completely Dominating in 2017,” Thrillist Entertainment, December 22, 2017 (<https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/hallmark-channel-movies-success-2017>). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) is an online database of information related to films, television programs and video games, including cast, production crew, fictional characters, biographies, plot summaries, trivia, and reviews. By November, 2019, IMDb had almost six million titles in its database. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. The AFI Catalog of Feature films is the most authoritative filmographic database on the web. It includes entries on nearly 60,000 American feature-length films and 17,000 short films produced from 1893-2011. Director Martin Scorsese wrote, “No other source of information is as complete and accurate, and no other source is produced with the scrupulous level of attention to scholarship and research as the AFI catalog.” The AFI catalog “is a unique filmographic resource providing an unmatched level of comprehensiveness and detail on every feature-length film produced in America or financed by American production companies. Detailed information on cast, crew, plot summaries, subjects, genres and historical notes are included for each film.” No page numbers are referenced since the catalog can easily be referenced by searching a specific title. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. The Online IJPC Database includes more than 92,000 entries (2019) including almost 22,000 film titles. In addition, various online databases and Websites, including the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), and Richard R. Ness’s definitive journalism filmography (*From Headline Hunter to Superman: A Journalism Filmography*) were searched for verification and new possibilities. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Joe Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film* (Los Angeles. CA: The Norman Lear Center, University of Southern California, 2002); Matthew C. Ehrlich and Joe Saltzman *Heroes and Scoundrels: The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Available on the ijpc.org website. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. For definitions, see the Introduction to the Appendices [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. The tables, percentages, and graphs were compiled by Tajwar Khandaker, IJPC Senior Researcher, a USC graduate 2021 and IJPC Manager, 2019-2021, who also was one of many who checked the coding for accuracy and helped resolve any differences of opinion and preference. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Many genre designations could include multiple designations. The first genre listed in the American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films and the Internet Movie Database is usually used for continuity purposes. When the IMDb fails to offer a genre, other sources were used to form a consensus. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. For details on specific films, see the seven appendices, A to Z.
 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Magazine reporters in print and on the Internet can be seen in *The Angel Tree* (2020), *Christmas Detour* (2015), *Amazing Winter Romance* (2020), *Christmas in Evergreen*: *Tidings of Joy* (2019), *A Christmas Miracle* (2019), *My Favorite Bachelor* 92020), *The Christmas Ringi (2020).*

Newspaper reporters in print and on the Internet can be seen in the *Ruby Herring Mysteries I (2019-2020), Aurora Teagarden Mysteries* (2015-2021), *Martha Vineyard Mysteries*  (2019), *Angel of Christmas* (2015), *The Christmas Spirit* (2013), *When Sparks Fly* (2014), *Holiday Engagement* (2011), *Love on a Limb* (2016), *Love at First Glance* (2017).

TV reporters can be seen in *Family for Christmas* (2015), *The Lost Valentine* (2011), *Mending Fences* (2009), *A Town Without Christmas* (2001), *Love in Design* (2018), *Hearts of Winter* (2020), *Love on Ice* (2017), *Strawberry Summer* (2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Editors in print and Internet publications can be seen in *Daniel’s Daughter* (2008), *A Stranger’s Heart* (2007), *Crossword Mysteries* (2019-2020), *Finding John Christmas* (2003), *‘Tis the Season for Love* (2015), *A Family Christmas Gift* (2019), *Crossword Mysteries: Puzzle to Die For* (2019), *Farewell Mr. Kringle* (2010), *Nature of Love* (2020), *It's Christmas, Carol* (2012), *One Winter Proposal* (2019), *Just Add Romance* (2019), *Rome in Love* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Producers in television, radio, podcasts, and online can be seen in *Cooking With Love* (2018), *Love in Winterland* (2020), *Love, Take Two* (2019), *My One and Only* (2019), *Road to Christmas*  (2018), *Love on Iceland* (2020), *Love on the Air* (2015), *The Secret Ingredient* (2020), *Fiinal Approach* (2008), *MatchMaker Mysteries: A Killer Engagement* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Photojournalists in print and on the Internet can be found in *Pearl in Paradise* (2018), *Picture a Perfect Christmas* (2019), *Straight From the Heart* (2003), *Christmas Bells Are Ringing* (2018), *Romance at Reindeer Lodge* (2017), *Nature of Love* (2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Columnists in print, TV and on the Internet can be found in *One Winter Weekend* (2018), *A Convenient Groom* (2016), *Recipe for Love* (2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Meteorologists can be seen in *Cloudy With a Chance of Love* (2015) and *Love in the Forecast* (2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. TV and Radio and Internet newscasters and anchor-hosts can be seen in *A Christmas for the Books* (2018), *Cupid, Inc.* (2012), *Morning Show Mysteries* (2018-2019), *Good Morning, Christmas* (2020), *Love in Design* (2018), *Love in Store* (2020), *Match Maker Mysteries: A Killer Engagement* (2019), *Midway to Love* (2019), *Road to Christmas* (2018), *A Valentine’s Match* (2020), *Growing the Big One* (2010), *Love on the Air* (2015), *Romantically Speaking* (2015), *A Feeling of Home* (2019), *Cranberry Christmas* (2020), *Love in Store* (2020), *You’re Bacon Me Crazy*  (2020), *Just Add Romance* (2019), *The Secret Ingredient* (2020), *Broadcasting Christmas*  (2016). [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Female critics dealing in food-restaurant, wine, art, music and theater can be found in *A Novel Romance* (2015), *Chateau Christmas* (2020), *The Wedding Gift* (2020), *Summer in the Vineyard* (2019). Male critics are more common and can be seen in *The Wedding Gift* (2020), *Love, Lights, Haukkah!* (2020), *The Memory Book* (2014), *Summer in the Vineyard* (2019), *Summer Villa* (2016), *Paris, Wine and Romance* (2019), *Picture Perfect Mysteries: Exit, Stage Death* (2020), *Portrait of Love* (2015), *Sweeter Than Life* (2013), *A Taste of Romance* (2012), *A Taste of Summer (2019).* [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Bloggers for online magazines and newspapers and on the Internet can be seen in *Farewell Mr. Kringle* (2010), *Hearts of Spring* (2016), *My Favorite Bachelor* (2020), *All Things Valentine* (2016), *A Convenient Groom* (2016), *Recipe for Love* (2014), *The National Tree (2009).*  [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Podcasters can be seen in the *Chronicle Mysteries* (2018-2019), *Love on Iceland* (2020).

Non-Fiction book writers appear in *Magical Christmas Ornament* (2017), *A Joyous Christmas* (2017), *Just in Time for Christmas* (2015), *Hearts of Winter*  (2020), *How to Train Your Husband*  (2017), *Mystery 101: Education in Murder* (2020), *Love at Sea* (2018), [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Publishers who own print and Internet publications, can be seen in *Love Locks* (2017), *Merry Matrimony* (2015), *Fixing Pete* (2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Radio and TV station managers are featured in *Falling for You* (2018) and *Every Christmas Has a Story* (2016). [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Non-Fiction book writers can be seen in *A Joyous Christmas* (2017), *Just in Time for Christmas* (2015), *Hearts of Winter* (2020), *How to Train Your Husband* (2017), *Mystery 101: Education in Murder* (2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Travel writers in print and on the Internet can be seen in *Christmas Getaway* (2017), *Follow Your Heart* (2020), *Love on the Slopes* (2018), *One Winter Proposal* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Crime reporters are featured in the *Aurora Teargarden* *Mysteries* (2015-2020), *Ruth Herring Mysteries* (2019-2020), *USS Christmas* (2020), *Martha Vineyard Mysteries* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. An entertainment reporter is featured in *The Christmas Parade* (2014), but numerous entertainment reporters show up in small roles in many of the Hallmark films. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. A book editor is featured in *Magical Christmas Ornament* (2017) and various book publishers and editors appear in minor roles in *A Joyous Christmas* (2017), *Just in Time for Christmas* (2015), *Hearts of Winter* (2020), *How to Train Your Husband* (2017), [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. *Follow Your Heart* (2020) features a publisher of a successful art magazine. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Editors and writers on music can be found in *A Family Christmas Gift* (2019), *Chateau Christmas* (2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Food-restaurant and wine critics are featured in *Summer in the Vineyard* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. *Fixing Pete* (2012) and *Fashionably Yours* (2020) feature fashion journalists. *A Stranger’s Heart* (2007) include fashion writers in smaller parts. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. *Just my Type* (2020) offers a pop culture journalist. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. *Nature of Love* (2020) features a lifestyle writer. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Advice columnists in *All Things Valentine* (2016), *Before You Say I Do* (2009), *Christmas She Wrote* (2020), *The Note* (2007), *The Note II: Taking a Chance on Love*  (2009), *Notes From the Heart Healer* (2012), *Dear Prudence* (2008), *Perfectly Prudence* (2011), *The Love Letter* (2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. *Crossword Mysteries* features a crossword puzzle editor who solves crimes before the police do. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. *The Christmas Train* (2017) features a hard-bitten male war correspondent who meets up with a female war correspondent who used to cover conflicts all over the world with him, but who now is writing and producing a Hollywood film. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. There are three Ruby Herring Mysteries (2019-2020): *Her Last Breath, Prediction Murder,* and *Silent Witness.* [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. McPherson appears in four *Chronicle Mysteries* (2018-2019): *The Deep End, The Recovered, The Vines That Bind and The Wrong Man.* [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. There are four *The Chronicle Mysteries* (2018-2019*: The Deep End, Recovered, The Vines That Bind,* and *The Wrong Man.* [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. There are 13 *Aurora Teagarden Mysteries* (2015-2020) in the study: *A Bone to Pick, A Bundle of Trouble, Dead Over Heels, The Disappearing Game, A Game of Cat and Mouse, Heist and Seek, An Inheritance to Die* *For, The Julius House, Real Murders, Reap What You Sew, Reunited and It Feels so Deadly, Three Bedrooms, One Corpse,* and *A Very Foul Play.* [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. *Martha’s Vineyard Mysteries* featuring a reporter include *Beautiful Place to Die, Riddled With Deceit, and A Killer Engagement,* [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. There are five *Morning Show Mysteries* (2018-2019) in the study: *Countdown to Murder, Death by Design Mortal Mishaps, A Murder in Mind*, and *Murder on the Menu.*  [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Lesley Goldberg, “Hallmark Channel Struggles to Give Diversity a Home for the Holidays,” Lesley Goldberg, TV Editor, The *Hollywood Reporter*, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/hallmark-channel-struggles-give-diversity-a-home-holidays-1257946> In 2019, four of the 24 original holiday movies had Black leads. In 2018, five of the 21 original holiday movies had Black leads. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. **White –** a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.

**Black or African-American** – a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

**Hispanic or Latino** *–* a person who classifies him/herself as Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban or anyone who indicates that they are of Hispanic, Latino, Latinex or Spanish origin.

**American Indian or Alaska Native –** a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

**Asian**―a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and residents of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, and Thailand.

**Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander –** a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**Unspecified** – Mostly groups of journalists who are not easily identified by ethnicity. Also includes journalists who do not fit specifically into ethnic categories, or were not identified as major or minor characters. This category can include mixed-race characters. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Much has been written about the lack of people of color in the newsroom including this summary by the *Washington Post*: “Urban Uprisings highlight the need for more journalists of color in newsrooms. Black journalists will help erode racial stereotypes perpetrated by the media,” by Sage Goodwin, June 1, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/01/uprisings-across-nation-highlight-need-more-journalists-color-newsrooms/> Also see, *Heroes and Scoundrels: The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture”* by Matthew C. Ehrlich and Joe Saltzman, Chapter Three, “Difference,” pp. 69-75, University of Illinois Press, 2015, which shows how popular culture reflected this reality throughout the 20th century. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Examples include music magazine editor-reporter Amber Aldridge in *A Family Christmas* *Gift* (2019), newspaper editor M. Rappaport in *Crossword Mysteries: Puzzle to Die For* (2019), magazine editor Zoe Marsden in *Farewell, Mr. Kringle* (2010), magazine editor Pete McHugh in *Love on the Slopes* (2018), executive Nicole Turner in *Love, Take Two* (2019), magazine editor Sabrina in *Nature of Love* (2020), news director Ted Kinkaid in *A Town Without Christmas* (2001), news network manager Lauren Foster in *Every Christmas Has a Story* (2016), radio producer Tanya in *Love on the Air* (2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Examples include reporter Angela Birchman in the *Ruby Herring Mysteries* (2019-2020), fashion journalist Lauren in *Fashionably Yours* (2020), magazine travel journalist Megan in *One Winter Weekend* (2018), and *One Winter Proposal* (2019), TV reporter Hunter Roberts in *Strawberry Summer*  (2012), staff writer Enid in *The Wishing Well* (2010). [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Examples include photojournalists Greg and Kayla in *Romance at Reindeer Lodge* (2017), Trip Bancroft in *Ruby Herring Mysteries* (2019-2020), Carl in *Supernova* (2005), photo editor Marcus and photographer Barry in *A Christmas Miracle* (2019), videographer Emerson in *Hearts of Winter* (2020), cameraperson Beth in *Cranberry Christmas* (2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Examples include field producer Beth in *Cranberry Christmas* (2020), field producer Kadee in *The Love Letter* (2013), assistant Colin in *Morning Show Mystery: A Murder in Mind* (2019), publisher’s assistant Hannah in *Do I Say I Do* (2020), assistant to the editor Zoe in *Fashionably Yours* (2020), TV field produer Leslie in *Good Morning, Christmas!* (2020), assistant to the editor Jones in *The Wishing Well* (2010). [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Examples include TV host Pamela Franks in *Cranberry Christmas* (2020), TV host Frank and host Sharono St. Clair in *Love in Store* (2020), host Norman Duncan in *You’re Bacon Me Crazy* (2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Examples include reporter James Thompson in *Jane Doe: How to Fire Your Boss* (2017), editor Jasmine in *North Pole* (2014), staff writer Calie and associate producer Justin in *My Favorite Bachelor* (2020), assistant producer Tyler Curfey and a cameraman in *Good Morning, Christmas* (2020), morning show anchor in *Broadcasting Christmas* (2016), editorial assistant Gina in *Christmas, She Wrote* (2020), TV producer-editor Paula Marshall, a female production assistant and a prop man in *A Christmas to Remember* (2016), video blog producer Anna and cameraman Henry in *A Convenient Groom* (2016), staffer Jim Johnson, assistant intern Mandi in *The Note* (2007), radio-show host Morning Mike in *Project Christmas Wish* (2020), morning talk-show host Sabrina in *Entertaining Christmas* (2018), TV host Taryn in *Fixing Pete* (2012), radio host Kenneth LeGrange in *Small Town* Christmas (2018), magazine staff member Tina in *A Stranger’s Heart* (2007), food critic-blogger Peter Seldon in *A Taste of Summer* (2019), blogger Serena in *True Love Blooms* 2019), executives Tim and Lowenstein and a cameraman in *A Valentine’s Match* (2020), editorial assistant Doris in *Royal New Year’s Eve* (2017), TV reporter on Channel 45 Reaction News Sylvia Sherwin in *When Sparks Fly* (2014), WNKW reporter and cameraman in *The National Tree* (2009), a morning talk-show host in *Country Wedding* (2015), radio talk-show host in *Winter Love Story* (2019), an interviewer in *Daniel’s Daughter* (20008), an internet reporter in *Engaging Father Christmas* (2018), a field producer in *A Homecoming for the Holidays* (2019), a radio station intern in *Falling for You* (2018), cameraman Jack in *My One and Only* (2019), TV reporter in *Time After Time* (2011), a sound man in *Cooking With Love* (2018) and *The Last Valentine* (2011), female camerawoman in *Cupid, Inc.* (2019), black cameraman in *A Fixer-Upper Mystery: Concrete Evidence* (2017) [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Examples include network news producer Christie in *Final Approach* (2008), producer Paige of a TV reality show in *MatchMaker Mysteries: A Killer Engagement* (2019), and anchor-host Beverly Chadwick in *Just Add Romance* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Examples include TV reporter Lucy Grace in *Road to Christmas*  (2018), TV reporters in *Undercover Bridesmaid* (2012), *Miss Christmas* (2017), *Hometown Hero* (2017), *Garage Sale Mysteries: Murder by Text* (2017) and *Christmas Cookies* (2016); TV Channel 7 news staffer Derek Saylor in *Ruby Herring Mysteries: Prediction Murder*  (2020), newspaper reporter in *True Love Blooms* (2019), TV anchor Craig Powers in *Ruby Herring Mysteries: Silent Witness* (2019), TV anchor Jane Lei in *Naughty or Nice* (2012), producer Kenny in *Recipe for Love* (2014), “Wake Up, Denver” female host in *Date’s Handbook* (2016), Web segment producer Gina in *A Feeling of Home* (2019), magazine staff member Jennifer in *A Stranger’s Heart* (2007), publisher’s assistant Andi Fitzgerald in *Magical Christmas Ornament* (2017), editor assistants in *Fixing Pete* (2012) and *Cupid Inc.* (2019), blogger’s assistant Lucy in *The Gourmet Detective: Pilot* (2015), assistant Julie to a tabloid reporter in *Snow Bride* (2013), camerawoman Trish in *Once Upon a Holiday* (2015), soundperson Nancy in *My One and Only* (2019), cameraman in *Good Morning, Christmas* (2020), photojournalists in *A Novel Romance* (2015), *Holiday Hearts* (2019), newspaper intern in *Crossword Mysteries* (2019-2020). [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Examples included Carly Abby, a famous Mom blogger writing “Bestie Mom” in *Hearts of Spring* (2016). Annabelle “Anna” Wahl files her story for print and then an Internet blog in *Farewell, Mr. Kringle* (2010).Blogger Megan Collins works for an online company called, “Newsmaze,” which features many blog columns in *My Favorite Bachelor* (2020). Avery writes an anonymous newspaper advice column and Internet blog in *All Things Valentine* (2016). Blogger Dr. Kate Lawrence writes a relationship blog for *A Convenient Groom* (2016). Blogger Lauren. Hennessey writes a food blog in *Recipe for Love* (2014) as does food critic Peter Seldon in *A Taste of Summer* (2019). Video blogger Rock Burdock creates a national campaign in *The National Tree* (2009). Black journalists Anna (*A Convenient Groom,* 2016) and Serena (*True Love Blooms,* 2019) each has a successful blog. Asian journalist Lucy is the hard-working assistant to a blogger in *The Gourmet Detective: Pilot* (2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Celebrities and innocent bystanders who get involved are commonplace. *Christmas in Homestead* (2016) shows tabloid pictures by eager paparazzi of a popular actress and a hometown mayor going viral, *I Married Who?* (2012), *Marry Me at Christmas* (2017), *MatchMaker Mysteries: A Killer Engagement* (2019), *Rome in Love* (2019), *Snow Bride* (2013), *True Love Blooms* (2019). If you are a member of the royal family, stories and photos spread like wildfire over electronic devices, especially the smartphone (*My Summer Prince* (2016) and *Once Upon a Prince* (2018)show photos and stories of rebellious princes, and in *William & Catherine: A Royal Romance* (2011), the paparazzi follow Kate Middleton everywhere she goes.In one film, astory is leaked to a mainstream reporter to prevent a tabloid reporter from exploiting the story. Its widespread exposure on electronic devices makes the story useless to the tabloid (*Engaging Father Christmas,* 2017). [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. In *Flower Shop Mysteries: Snipped in the Bud* (2016), an interview appearing in newspaper and electronic devices sets the record straight in a murder case; in *The Good Witch’s Charm* (2012), a video blog goes viral embarrassing a small town, and in *Supernova* (2005), stories on the end of the world flood the Internet. Stories on saving valuable trees also go viral (*The National Tree* (2009) and *Love on a Limb* (2016). Other examples include *Amazing Winter Romance* (2020), *Chateau Christmas* (2020), *Christmas Tree Lane* (2020), *The Christmas Ring* (2020), *Do I Say I Do* (2020), *Love at First Glance* (2017). [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. See definitions of each job title in the Introduction to the Appendices on the ijpc.org website

**Anchor, Commentator, Host**: a person who presents news and information on television, radio, the Internet, podcasts, or other media. A news presenter also known as newsreader, newscaster, anchorman or anchorwoman, news anchor or simply anchor. This category also includes commentator – a person who adds analysis and occasionally opinion to his or her news reports for any media, usually radio or television. Also can be a television, radio or Internet talk show host, radio announcer, meteorologist, or anyone who presents information orally or in print.

**Columnist, Blogger, Podcaster**: a person who writes a regular column or opinion piece for a newspaper, magazine, pamphlet, Internet site, podcast or any other medium.

**Critic**: a professional judge of art, drama, film, music, food, literature or any form of human activity, specializing especially in the evaluation and appreciation of literary or artistic work such as a film critic or a dance critic. Forms and expresses judgments of the merits, faults, value or truth of a matter.

**Cub Reporter, Student Journalist:** a person who is young and inexperienced and works in all media. An aspiring reporter who ends up in the job, a novice reporter, a trainee. Knows little about journalism. First job in journalism. An intern. Someone who works on a newspaper broadcast or multimedia project in school or as an extracurricular activity.

**Editor, Producer**: a person who assigns stories and edits copy for a newspaper, magazine, broadcast, Internet or other media. Usually referred to as a city editor, managing editor or editor-in-chief. This category also includes producer and executive producer – a person who controls various aspects of a news or information program for television, radio, the Internet and other media. He or she takes all the elements of a newscast or information program (video, graphics, audio) and integrates them into a cohesive show. Title includes the producer of a specific news program, a field producer, a producer in charge of news and/or information programs. If the journalist is primarily working as an editor – gathering the news, writing the stories, headlines and editorials, being the person responsible for the production and distribution of the newspaper – we use that job title (editor). If the journalist does little as an editor, but acts mostly as the owner making publishing decisions, we use that job title (publisher). The same is true for television and radio, the Internet and other media where the journalist is either actually producing the program or just in charge of the program.

**Employee**: a person who works in any media with a nondescript job such as editorial assistant, any newsroom employee, printer, and miscellaneous worker in composition, telegraph operator, copy boy or girl, office boy or girl, newsboy or girl, web developer, graphic designer, audio and video technician, multimedia artist, digital media expert. Also includes printer’s devil, typically a young boy who is an apprentice in a printing establishment. Also includes production staff, technical staff, stage crew, staff personnel, any miscellaneous employee working in a multimedia situation.

**Executive**: a person in print, broadcasting or the Internet who is in charge of the news/information department. Executive in charge of news or any other information product. A management position. Newsreel supervisor. director of news in any medium. Head or director of a department in a media company.

**Illustrator, Cartoonist**: a person who provides decorative images to illustrate a story in a newspaper, magazine, or other media. A commercial artist-journalist. A cartoonist who creates drawings that depict a humorous situation often accompanied by a caption. Drawings representing current public figures or issues symbolically and often satirically as in a political cartoon. A caricaturist: drawing humorous or satirical cartoons. A political cartoonist.

**Photojournalist**: a person who creates still or moving images in order to tell a news story. Titles include photographer, documentarian, cameraman, shooter, stringer, paparazzi, newsreel shooter, and anyone else using a photographic device to make a photographic record of an event. Also includes newsreel cameramen and women, and documentary producers, writers, and directors.

**Publisher, Media Owner**: a person who is a successful entrepreneur or businessman who controls, through personal ownership or a dominant position, a mass media related company or enterprise. Referred to as a media proprietor, media mogul, media baron. A publisher usually specifically refers to someone who owns a newspaper or a collection of newspapers.

**Reporter, Correspondent**: a person who reports news or conducts interviews for newspapers, magazines, television, radio, websites, or any other organization that disseminates news, information, and opinion. Referred to as a journalist, a newspaperman or woman, newsman or woman, a writer, a sob sister, a magazine writer, a writer of non-fiction books, a freelance writer for any multimedia.

**Real-Life Journalist:** a person who exists in real life. Uses real name and real occupation in a fictional film or TV program. He or she is not played by an actor.

**Sports Journalist:** a person who writes, reports or edits sports news and features for any media. Includes writers, reporters, editors, columnists, commentators, hosts, online specialists. Includes sportscasters and correspondents.

**War Correspondent, Foreign Correspondent:** a correspondent is a person who contributes reports to a variety of news media from a distant, often remote, location, often covering a conflict of some sort.

**Press Conference Journalists**: a person who attends a news conference or press conference in which newsmakers invite journalists to hear them speak and, most often, ask questions.

**Pack Journalists**: a person who joins other reporters chasing after stories. They often travel in

packs, usually armed with television cameras and microphones. They cover fast-breaking news by crowding, yelling, shouting, bullying and forcing their way into breaking news events. They often show up with their lights, cameras, microphones and digital recorders as they shout out questions to the usually reluctant newsmaker in question. Pack journalism is also defined as journalism practiced by reporters in a group usually marked by uniformity of news coverage and lack of original thought or initiative. A pack of journalists can also be a group of reporters, photojournalists, war correspondents, freelance writers, even newsboys, following a story or a specific activity. Any group of journalists covering the same story at the same time.

**Miscellaneous:** Individual journalists unidentified in the film or TV program or any media. Usually in the background functioning as editorial and technical staff.

**Press Conference Journalists**: a person who attends a news conference or press conference in which newsmakers invite journalists to hear them speak and, most often, ask questions.

**Unidentified News Staff:** Use of the news media – newspapers, magazines, radio, television, Internet, multimedia – by some unidentified news personnel or by some monolithic news organization as a significant plot point. Examples include articles or pieces that expose scandals and wrongdoing, provide erroneous information (such as a fake death), alert principals about some important news or events. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. **Major Character (Major)** – a major character influences the outcome of the story or event. He or she is usually a leading character played by a major actor of the time.

**Minor Character (Minor)** – a minor character does not play a significant role in the development of the film or TV program. He or she is usually a part of a larger group – i.e., journalists in a news conference or roaming around in packs, or those journalists who function as a part of the editorial or technical staff.

**Very Positive**: This is the journalist as a heroic character. This is the journalist who does the right thing, who fights everyone and anything to get the facts out to the public. He or she often exposes corruption, solves a murder, catches a thief, or saves an innocent. Everything he or she does is in the public interest. This is the kind of image that makes the public believe that journalists are invaluable to any democracy. Journalists in a film would be evaluated as Very Positive (VP) if they have the following characteristics:

\*Shows that the journalist is an unqualified hero – he or she does everything possible to get a story out to the public resulting in making the world a better place to live.

\*Shows the public that journalism is an important profession that holds the public interest above all else, that without journalists representing the public interest, corporations, government, and individuals would do terrible things. It makes the viewer feel that journalists are essential to making democracy work and to give the public the kind of information it needs to make informative decisions in a democracy.

\*Presents an unvarnished image of the journalist as a heroic, important member of society.

**Positive:** These journalists will do anything to get a story that they believe is vital to the public interest, to the public welfare. They try to do their job without hurting anyone, basically people trying to do the right thing, but often frustrated by the system. They may be flawed, they may make mistakes, they may drink too much or quit their jobs in disgust, but they always seem to end up by doing the right thing by the end of the story.

\*Shows the journalist often doing wrong things in pursuing stories that are in the public interest. The good the journalist does, however, outweighs the bad.

\*Shows the public that even when journalists are offensive, their jobs are important in making a democracy work.

\*Presents an overall impression that the journalist is more of a hero than a villain.

**Transformative Positive:** a journalist who conveys a negative image throughout the film constantly doing negative things (unethical behavior, drinking heavily, stealing, wearing disguises, committing crimes to get a story), but who in the end serves the public interest and transforms into a positive image.

**Transformative Negative:** a journalist who conveys a positive image throughout the film, but ends up not serving the public interest and using the news media for personal, economic, or political gain.

**Negative**: These journalists are villains because they use the precious commodity of public confidence in the press for their own selfish ends. They use the power of the media for their own personal, political, or financial gain. They care less about the public interest than their own interests. They are interested in making more money, gaining power, doing anything to get what they want.

\*Show that the journalist ignores the public interest in favor of personal, economic or financial gain, thus losing the public’s respect.

\*Shows the public that journalism is – more often than not – a profession that is more concerned with personal gain than serving the public interest. It makes the public suspicious of journalists and creates a bad impression of what journalism is all about.

\*Presents an overall impression that the journalist is more of a villain than a hero.

**Very Negative**: These journalists often engage in unethical and often unlawful activities getting what they want at all costs, even committing murder or serious crimes. They are manipulative and cynical. Often, they are publishers who use their power to corrupt government or business, to take advantage of the public. They are cheaters who are only interested in what is good for them, no one else. They usually are involved with the tabloid or sensationalistic press and often make up the anonymous news media chasing after individuals without regard for their privacy or safety.

\*Show that the journalist is an unqualified villain who has no redeeming value, who has no concern for basic values, who will do anything to get what he or she wants regardless of the damage caused.

\*Shows the public that journalism is a profession filled with arrogant, morally bankrupt individuals who only care about themselves and not about the public or an individual. These journalists ignore the public interest completely.

\*Presents a clear image of the journalist as a villain who engages in unethical and often unlawful activities including crime and murder.

**Neutral:** These journalists usually make up the anonymous members of the press corps and usually can be seen at press conferences taking notes or reacting to what the person is saying. They are usually nondescript characters who are simply there as journalists doing their job without offending anyone. They are often in the background and figure slightly in the plot or action of the film or television program**.** They are not major characters. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Reporters just doing their jobs well include *Mr. Hockey: The Gordie Howe Story* (2013), *My Summer Prince* (2016). *Pandemic* (2007), *Season for Love* (2018), *A Song for Christmas* (2017), *Stop the Wedding* (2016), *Supernova* (2005), *The Sweetest Christmas* (2017). *This Magic Moment* (2013), *True Love Blooms* (2019), *Truly, Madly Sweetly* (2018), *Winter Princess*  (2019), and in *In* Icon (2005), pack journalists do a positive, commendable job of reporting the story of Soviet Union political struggles. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. In *A Little Christmas Charm* (2020), investigative reporter Greg Matthews teams up with a jewelry designer to find the story behind a charm bracelet. In *Love’s Complicated* (2016), Cinco Dublin, a popular radio shock-jock falls in love with a senator’s daughter and finally makes peace with his father, a renowned newspaper editor and journalist. Newspaper reporter Aaron Gold sticks his nose into everyone’s business to get a story before falling in love with a wedding planner involved in one of his stories (*Wedding Planner Mystery,* 2005). In *Silver Bells* (2005), young photojournalist Danny Bryne runs away to the big city to follow a career in photography. In *Finding John Christmas* (2003), photojournalist Noah Greeley discovers the real Santa Claus, but no one believes him. In *Final Days of the Planet Earth* (2006), reporter Jake Roth covers a terrifying story of an invasion of insect aliens determined to destroy the planet. In *The Last Bridesmaid* (2019), documentarian Kyle Taylor works on a program to return combat dogs to their military owners who have returned home, while paying the bills as a wedding videographer. In *Meet Me at Christmas* (2020), travel photographer Beau Sullivan gives up traveling to settle down with the woman he loves. In *Rome With Love* (2019), American reporter Philip Hamilton is assigned to write a story on an actress playing a princess and falls in love with her. In *Christmas Connection*  (2017), columnist and investigative reporter Jonathan has to find a subject with a deadline closing in on him and finds true love in addition to a great column. In *Entertaining Christmas* (2018), reporter Jack Ryan starts out by trying to expose a lifestyle publisher’s lack of homemaking skills, but ends up falling in love with her instead. In *Five Star Review* (2020), a critic who reviews bed and breakfast inns and writes under the name Bea Turner, falls in love with one of the owners and writes a rave review. In *Holiday Hearts* (2019), reporter Milkes Kowski does a front-page story on an inn’s 25th Christmas party. In *Harvest Wedding* (2017), magazine journalist Payton Ellis covers a wedding planner and falls in love with her, but is rejected. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Examples include TV reporter Jessica Saunders who sleeps with a source and then regrets the decision and resigns in *Jane Doe: Ties That Bind* (2007), TV reporter Pietra Nero who tries to get a story at all costs regardless of who she hurts, but ends up by doing a fair story on a magical Kris Kringle in *Santa Jr.* (2002), reporter Kelly Fogelle who, while covering a murder, goes for a cheap headline and a sensational story quoting a professor who didn’t know he was on the record. When she gets fired, she reforms, legitimately gets an exclusive story and her job back. Reporter-photographer Ted Conacher arrives in town to do a story with a preconceived idea of what the story should be, but at the end he writes the story that his reporting dictates (*When Hope Calls: House in Order,* 2019). Others include reporter Connor McKay, who is relentless in pursuing a story, but ends up doing the right thing in *Flower Shop Mysteries: Snipped in the Bud* (2016), hotel critic Phyllis Selig in *A Christmas Duet* (2019), tabloid photographer Ian Carter falls in love and changes his ways in *Homestead* (2016), top food critic Martin who is sarcastic and mean, gives a chef a bad review but by the end the film returns to give him a good review after the chef redesigns his menu in *Love on the Menu* (2019), travel writer Sterling Masters who is the face of a TV show but all of his material is written anonymously by journalist Al Barlett. At the end of the film, Masters reveals all, proving he is a good guy after all in *The Mistletoe Secret* (2019). [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Other examples can be found in *Catch a Christmas Star* (2013)*. Christmas at the Palace* (2018), *Christmas in Homestead* (2016), *Citizen Jane* (2009), *Date With Love* (2016), *Detective* (2005), *I Married Who?* (2012), *McBride: Semper Fi* (2007*), Mystery Woman: Wild West Mystery* (2006)*, Once Upon a Prince* (2018)*, Rescuing Madison* (2014), *William & Catherine: A Royal Romance* (2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-74)