

# Investigative Reporting & The Investigative Reporter: From Concept To Implementation

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*Abstract: In-between theory and practice is a human being who implements. Since “ideas rule the world,” the uncanny task of investigative reporting reveals someone behind the wheels. The researcher undertook a conceptual study of “Investigative Reporting and the Investigative Reporter: From Concept and Implementation.” With the aid of the social responsibility theory of the media, the study discovered that investigative reporting is a risky venture which requires serious preparation and in-depth knowledge of the subject under review. It recommended ongoing training for journalists, developing a sense of outrage as well as a sense of public interest for optimum performance.*

*Keywords: Investigative, reporter, concept, journalism, implementation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND & AIM OF THE STUDY

In journalism, the gathering, processing and dissemination of information places the journalist on his or her toes. Despite the general coverage of stories, special beat journalism presents the journalist with an opportunity to specialize in one beat. However, there is another kind of journalism which involves thorough investigating of a topic of interest which usually deals with crime or political corruption geared towards the common good. This is why investigative reporting stands out from other types of journalism.

Because it involves unraveling scandals rocking the society, with the aim of calling perpetrators to book, investigative reporting is a risky profession. The risk involved requires a sense of outrage, courage and having a sense of the common good. By unearthing important information about matters of public interest, investigative reporters push the agenda-setting nature of the media to its climax. Through irregular methods and techniques, investigative reporters are able to go through the fire-line to divulge information for the good society. This paper hopes to navigate through the murky waters of the conceptualization and implementation of this

kind of journalism with the aim of finding the nexus between theory and practice.

### B. AN EXPOSITION OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Asemah (2011, p. 410) defines investigative journalism as “a story that requires a great amount of research to come up with facts that might be hidden, buried or obscured by people who have a vested interest in keeping those facts from being published.” In like manner, Hassan (2014, p. 235) conceives investigative reporting as: “A kind of journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a topic of interest, often involving crime, political corruption, or some other scandal.” She contends that it involves “situation reporting” in place of event or personality reporting in a calm restrained and detached manner of arriving at conclusions. For Dominick, (cited in Asemah 2009, p.111) investigative reporting unearths important information about matters of public importance through the use of non-routine information gathering methods and techniques.

Investigative reporting is the most difficult and challenging type of reporting because it involves scoops and exclusive coverage (Ganiyu, 2010, p. 127). While both introductory and specialised reporting are common place, investigative reporting is not. As to its emerging nature, the

*Investigative Journalism Manual* (2010, pp. 1-3) has this to say:

...it was only a century or more later, when news media had grown much more established, larger, and more diversified, that specialised investigative “desks” began to emerge, often to work on longer stories that needed more resources and skills.

Accordingly, as to when investigative reporting actually started, Underwood (cited in Houston, 2010, p.45) claims that investigative reporting dates back to sixteen century England and its religious reformers, who traced their zeal to the New Testament through: “many elements of the prophetic tradition: the spirit of righteousness, the indignant moralism, the effort to maintain the purity of values, the call for spiritual and ethical renewal, the fierce sense of corruption abounding everywhere are as typically found in today’s best investigative reporters or crusading editors.”

As a corollary, Houston (2010, p.45) and Aucoin (2005) goes further to establish that in 1975, *The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ*, was closely involved in the formation of IRE (Investigative Reporters and Editors) and the choice of its apt acronym which brings about the heavy burdens that underlie the standards of fairness, accuracy, thoroughness, and transparency for the investigative journalism of the future.

It should be noted that investigative journalism is a form of journalism in which reporters deeply investigate a single topic of interest, often involving crime, political corruption, or corporate wrongdoing. Weinberg (1996) conceives it as “reporting, through one’s own initiative and work product, matters of importance to readers, viewers or listeners” while other scholars holds that it as a process which involves digging deeply into an issue or topic usually of public interest (Ansell, Serino, Djokotoe & Mwaba, 2002, pp. 4-5).

## II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH, FRAMEWORK

### A. METHOD OF STUDY

This study adopts the conceptual research method which focuses on analysing data existing data established by seasoned scholars on the subject under review. While reviewing earlier literature, the author shall explore the “why” and “how” of investigative reporting and the investigative reporter noting the implications of the nuances of its conceptualization and implementation.

### B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is weaved around the social responsibility. Thanks to the Hutchins Commission (1947) on Freedom of the Press which was established in the United States of America, the social responsibility emerged to ensure and preserve press freedom while obliging the press to observe certain social standards and responsibilities in performing its professional role (Adaja, 2012). Coming from the Western world, the theory places emphasis on the moral and social responsibilities of persons who, and institutions which, operate the media (Dyikuk, 2015). These responsibilities are: obligation to provide the public with information on important social issues

and avoidance of activities that are harmful to public welfare and state security. Although it admits of no censorship, it relies on the maturity of proprietors, editors and reporters to act according to required norms (Moemeka, 1980, pp. 1-2).

According to Galadima and Embu journalists are expected to “... promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding” (2000, p). This places a moral responsibility on media practitioners hence the choice of this theory.

The six-fold functions of the social responsibility theory are:

- ✓ To serve the political system by making information, discussion and consideration of public affairs generally accessible.
- ✓ To inform the public to enable it to take self-determined action.
- ✓ To protect the rights of the individual by acting as watchdog over the government.
- ✓ To serve the economic system, for instance the bringing together of buyers and sellers through the medium of advertising.
- ✓ To provide good entertainment, whatever “good” may mean in the culture at any point in time.
- ✓ To preserve financial autonomy in order not to become dependent on special interests and influences (Adaja, 2012).

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: GLOBAL, AFRICAN & NIGERIAN HISTOTICAL SKETCH OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

### A. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The *Investigative Journalism Manual* (2010, pp. 1-3) presents another account of how investigative reporting began:

And for many readers, it wasn’t until the 1960s and 1970s and, most prominently, the worldwide publicity given to the Watergate investigation in the USA and journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, that the idea of the ‘investigative journalist’ took root. Woodward and Bernstein followed up a tip to uncover and painstakingly prove large-scale illegal activities by then US President Richard Nixon and his agents. Nixon was forced to step down, and the book – and later a film – *All The President’s Men*, made Woodward and Bernstein, what they did, and how they did it, the foundation for much popular discussion and imaging of investigative press work.

Given the historic presentation above credited to the duo, Woodward and Bernstein of *Washington Post* newspaper, it is important to recall the contributions of early investigative journalists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which led to their being called “muckrakers.” According to Nwabueze (2009, p. 91), this term was said to have been first used in a speech on April 14, 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt of the United States of America, when he likened an investigative journalist to a man with a muck-rake in his hands, always looking down, yet is recognised for his job. As such, the term “muckraking” eventually became popular as a

derogatory term used by investigative journalists to expose corruption in America at this time. Today, the term is used to right the wrongs of society, expose good as well as corrupt practices in the society.

Due to the nascent nature of investigative reporting, one of its images that keeps coming to mind comes from a film - *All The President's Men*. The movie leaves a particular legacy of the image of what investigative reporting does: "brave and quite individualistic reporters, alerted by tip-offs, bringing down a powerful and corrupt figure. This image has shaped many of the definitions of investigative reporting we encounter. But as we'll see, while it is important, it doesn't present the whole picture of investigative journalists and their work worldwide" (*Investigative Journalism Manual*, 2010, pp. 1-3).

#### B. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING: ITS BEGINNINGS IN AFRICA

As regards investigative reporting in Africa the same document has this to say:

Many news organisations in Africa, for example are not yet large and diversified enough to afford a specialised investigative unit. Many journalists lack access to formal skills training. Many African countries – and especially their rural areas – have poor communications infrastructure and limited access to official archives and records. Sometimes official archives are incomplete, poorly-maintained and subject to tough official secrets or privacy laws, often left over from the colonial era (*Investigative Journalism Manual*, 2010, pp. 1-3).

Does this make the "Woodward and Bernstein model" an attractive option for Africa? The *Investigative Journalism Manual* continues by arguing that trying to follow the "Woodward and Bernstein model" may not always be practical. As such, African journalists may have to be far more creative and flexible to find alternative methods to the evidence they need. There are ongoing debates as to whether "the Woodward and Bernstein model" is the only possible model. The argument is tied to the practice of a country where infrastructures and resources are far more readily available. It equally seems to suggest that investigative reporters should focus only on big stories like presidents taking multimillion bribes from oil companies or rigging elections. (*Investigative Journalism Manual*, 2010, pp. 1-3).

#### C. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING IN NIGERIA

From America to Nigeria, the waves of investigative reporting were felt when in 1999 *The News* magazine uncovered the certificate forgery scandal of Salisu Buhari, former Speaker of the House of Representatives which led to his exit from office and eventual presidential pardon by the Olusegun Obasanjo led-government (Ganiyu, 2010, p. 13). It is important to note that two charismatic journalists, Dele Giwa and Bagauda Kaltho were reportedly killed in their attempt to unravel the atrocities of both Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha respectively (Kukah, 2011, pp. 399 & 420). This again, brings to the fore, the role of investigative journalism in Nigeria which shall be looked into in the later part of this study.

The role of Dele Giwa and his fellow journalists - Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed in debuting print-investigative journalism in Nigeria cannot be easily forgotten. These veteran journalists founded NEWSWATCH in 1984. Its first edition was distributed on January 28, 1985. The paper which initially seemed compromising began to carve its own creative and journalistic niche via investigation of technical issues which included business practices and numerous interviews. Its whistle blowing techniques namely visiting Federal or State governments to get documents, data and informative parcels is what endeared most Nigerians to NEWSWATCH MAGAZINE (Dyikuk, 2012).

NEWSWATCH had an in-depth style of reporting that was original and proactive in content and style. One is not surprised that in a 1989 description of the magazine, Jeter et al noted that it "changed the format of print journalism in Nigeria [and] introduced bold, investigative formats to news reporting in Nigeria" (Jeter, J. P, Rampal K.R, Cambridge V.C & Pratt C.B. p. 30, 1996).

Dele Giwa he met his end in his home on 19 October 1986 courtesy a letter bomb. His son, Billy who handed over the parcel to his father was in the study with Kayode Soyinka, the London Bureau Chief of the (Newswatch) Magazine. He reported that the brown envelope that killed his Dad was heavy and had a white sticker on which Dele Giwa's name and address were written. It was marked "Secret and Confidential" with a warning that it should only be opened by the addressee - The sticker also had the Nigerian Coat of Arms with the inscription "From the office of the C-in-C" (*Vanguard*, 2011). Touching on the killing of Dele Giwa, Dare (2009) states, while asking: "Murder by parcel-bomb, with threats of more of the same if the media did not stop asking: Who killed Dele Giwa? To which we should add: Who killed Bagauda Kaltho?"

The journalist's death may not be separated from NEWSWATCH magazine. At the inception of General Ibrahim Babangida's administration (August 1985), the magazine flattered him and shamelessly by printing his face on the cover four times and even criticized "anyone who attempted to make life unpleasant for Babangida" (Lyn, Kenneth & White 1998, p.150). Whatever may have happened, things took a nose-dive. The paper began to take an unfriendly view of his regime (e. g, his structural adjustment program). From that time on, the magazine began to fish in the trouble waters of the military junta (Dyikuk, 2012).

#### D. HAZARDS OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING IN NIGERIA

This year, *Sahara Reporters* reported that Nigeria has recorded a decline in the international press freedom index with six percent regression between 2016 and 2017. According to the 2017 World Press Freedom rating compiled by Reporters Without Border (RWB), Nigeria's record of press freedom came down from 111 in 2016 to 122 in 2017, out of 180 countries which were graded. The report places Nigeria alongside countries like Afghanistan, Chad, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Colombia and others who are hostile to free press (*Sahara Reporters*, 2017). This shows the

difficulty of being a reporter here and worst for accountability reporting (Dyikuk, 2012).

Noting the occupational hazards that Nigerian journalists face, Dare (2009) opines that the story of the press is that of persecution and perseverance and “closure of newspapers, often without an enabling law. Flogging, of a journalist who ruined a military governor’s birthday by reporting a strike by teachers demanding payment of their salaries...shaving his head with broken glass. Beating, by aides of a military governor, of a television reporter on duty –a beating so severe that the reporter’s leg had to be amputated...”

He further discloses that it is not unlikely for journalists to be jailed for publishing a story that was only 99 percent accurate. At other times, the wives of journalists are seized. It did not matter if the wife was eight months pregnant or had an infant children at the breast and the children would be left to fend for themselves: “Jailing journalists for life on false charges of being “accessories” to a phantom coup plot. Forcing journalists to choose between being shot on sight and exile...” (Dare, 2009).

Between 192 and 2012, the following Nigerian journalists were killed on the line of duty:

- ✓ Eneche Akogwu, Channels TV - January 20, 2012, in Kano.
- ✓ Zakariya Isa, Nigeria Television Authority - October 22, 2011, in Maiduguri.
- ✓ Sunday GyangBwede, The Light Bearer - April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State.
- ✓ Nathan S. Dabak, The Light Bearer - April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State.
- ✓ Bayo Ohu, The Guardian - September 20, 2009, in Lagos.
- ✓ Samson Boyi, *The Scope* - November 5, 1999, in Adamawa State.
- ✓ Sam Nimfa-Jan, *Details* - May 27, 1999, in Kafanchan.
- ✓ Fidelis Ikwuebe, Freelancer - April 18, 1999, in Anambra.
- ✓ Okezie Amaruben, *News service* - September 2, 1998, in Enugu.
- ✓ Tunde Oladepo, *The Guardian* - February 26, 1998, in Abeokuta.
- ✓ Nansok Sallah, Highland FM - January 18, 2012, in Jos.
- ✓ Edo Sule Ugbagwu, The Nation - April 24, 2010, in an area outside Lagos.
- ✓ Ephraim Audu, Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service - October 16, 2008, in Lafia.
- ✓ Paul Aboyomi Ogundeji, This Day - August 16, 2008, in Dopemu.
- ✓ Godwin Agbroko, This Day - December 22, 2006, in Nigeria.
- ✓ Bolade Fasasi, National Association of Women Journalists - March 31, 1999, in Ibadan.
- ✓ Chinedu Offoaro, The Guardian - May 1, 1996, in Nigeria.
- ✓ Baguda Kaltho, The NEWS - March 1, 1996, in Nigeria, (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2017).

One Benedict Uwalaka, a photojournalist with Leadership Newspaper was also said to have been brutally assaulted at a government hospital in Lagos on August 9 - on August 31, precisely 22 days later, one of his assailants, Bayo Ogunsola was allegedly arranged before a court on a two-count charge

of assault and destruction of the journalist’s camera. He pleaded not-guilty to the charges (Nkanga, 2012).

Commenting on this phenomenon, Nigeria’s award-winning investigative reporter Idris Akinbajo noted that, “When you really want to expose human rights abuses (proper investigative reporting)... it becomes more dangerous.” He further descried the difficulty thus: “Sometimes we get intimidation from security agencies. You get threat calls, you get a lot of bribe offers. People offer you extreme sums of money to stop investigating a story. And despite the Freedom of Information law that was passed last year, government agencies don’t want to give information. They hoard information. You have to go the extra mile to get information” (Teffer, 2012).

Challenges such as lack of sufficient staff by media corporations, lack of full insurance cover, limited time and money as well as lack of commitment puts the journalism profession in jeopardy – this also often creates a situation where journalists take bribes, commonly known as the brown envelop syndrome, to make ends meet.

#### E. PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

There are certain aspects of investigative reporting that journalists, media academics and commentators all agree about. These aspects are better described as purposes of investigative reporting. The *Investigative Journalism Manual* (2010, pp. 1-3) articulates some of them as:

- ✓ It digs deeply into issues: As the word implies, investigative reporting does not end simply by relaying a simple “bite” of information but a painstaking investigation of the pros and cons of the topic or issue the investigative reporter is digging into.
- ✓ It pursues stories of public interest: Investigative reporting seeks after public good or interest. “Public interest” means that either a community stands at a disadvantaged position by not knowing this information, or it will benefit materially or through informed decision-making by knowing it. There are times that what benefits one community may not be of importance to another. For example, if forest-dwellers know the world market value of trees where a logging company wants to fell trees in its vicinity, they may demand higher prices. However, the logging industry may not want this information to spread because logging will cost it more. As such, “public interest” means the interest of the community that is affected which may not necessarily be the whole country – “public interest” may not be the same as “national interest.” There are times that government uses this term to justify illegal or unethical actions on the pretext of “my country, right or wrong,” or to dissuade journalists from reporting concrete issues and societal ills.
- ✓ It is procedural in nature: Investigative stories follow a process – it is not just an event. Investigative reporting is achieved through stages of planning and reporting aimed at standards of accuracy and evidence. As such, investigative stories do not come instantly.
- ✓ It is original and proactive: Investigative stories are usually based on the work of the journalist or a team of journalists where the resources are available. Investigative



reporters do not simply rely on a tip or go ahead to print an anonymous secret document at their disposal because such rash actions may carry huge risks since the identity, *bona fides* or motives of the source or the authenticity of the evidence has not been properly investigated. To avoid a lazy and careless approach, investigative reporters must develop hypotheses about what the tip means, plan additional research and decide on most relevant questions. The formula here is see, judge and act – the reporter must see evidence and hear and analyse answers himself/herself and go beyond sentiments to verifying tips so as to arrive at correct data or information pertaining the story under investigation.

- ✓ It produces new information or ties hitherto old information in a new way: At the heart of investigative news stories is freshness or newness. The reporter has to reveal the significance of the story. Without the information or the understanding of its importance, no story is worth investigating.
- ✓ It is multi-sourced: Although a single source may provide a fascinating revelation or insight into an investigative news story, depending on who the source is, the story must be cross-checked with other sources via experiential, documentary and human underpinnings for veracity – only then can the story be explored and real investigation take place. It is at this point that access to more insights and information that would have otherwise been hidden, be made open.
- ✓ It calls for greater resources, team work and time: Because of its in-depth nature, investigative reporting calls for more resources than a mere routine news report. This poses problems for local or community publications who have small number of staff, limited time and money or specialised skills. As an antidote to these challenges, it is advisable for a journalist to seek grants to support an investigation as well as learn how to tap the skills of others outside the newsroom to help with specialist expertise.

However, Ganiyu (2010, p. 128) argues that investigative journalism fulfils the two purposes of human beings namely, the spiritual and the animal side. While the former embodies the finer, noble and godly elements associated with striving after good, the latter embodies the beastly nature – the base side of man associated with the urge for power, to dominate and satisfy man's raw instincts of hunger, thirst and erotic desires. He contends that the spiritual side of man which are refined and disciplined dominates the animal side so that human beings can live in a harmonious and peaceful society. However, the flip side is that some people allow the carnal self to dominate their lives that brings about all types of atrocities which if not checked, creates an animal kingdom of jungle justice.

He further opines that the purpose of investigative reporting is: "To ensure that justice not only prevails in the society, but that the mighty who oversteps the boundaries of human decency is brought back to the right tract, so that the society can continue to run in an orderly and peaceful fashion" (Ganiyu, 2010, p. 129). What is important here is that the primary purpose of investigative reporting is to uphold the

interest of the general public by holding all wrongdoers accountable for their actions.

#### F. NATURE OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Investigative reporting involves painstaking digging and research into an issue that benefits the public. This makes the task of investigative reporters a tedious one. According to Nwabueze, the nature of investigative reporting is one that has an "ugly side." He lists some hazards associated with investigative reporting as: risk to the reporter's life, hostile sources, strangeness of the route to the facts (a reporter may never have been to a town where he is investigating a report) and orientation of security operatives/public figures (they often see the press as their enemies).

Other hazards of investigative reporting include: Lack of motivation, risk to life of family members of a reporter (a journalist's family members could be abducted by aggrieved persons), risk to media houses, risk to a life, a source and non-existence of legal guarantee of access to information (2005, pp. 46-48). These tailbacks prove the point that investigative reporting by nature is one aspect of journalism that does not come by chance.

#### G. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING AND THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

Investigative reporting presupposes that there is an investigative reporter. While the former is an act of painstaking gathering, processing and dissemination of information which was hitherto hidden from the eyes of the public, the latter speaks of a dogged professional who is trained for in-depth news stories. Proper to their profession, every reporter has nose for news.

According to the World Bank (cited in Nwabueze, 2012, p. 23), the investigative reporter is engaged in journalism of outrage, outrage at unfairness, outrage at abuse and exploitation by the powerful. What therefore, are the qualities required of investigative reporters as they embark on covering investigative news stories?

MacDonald (2015) lists the qualities an investigative need to have as:

- ✓ Passion for the story
- ✓ Determination to get the facts
- ✓ Logical thinking and organisation
- ✓ Strong ethics to ensure accuracy and truthfulness
- ✓ Purposes. Those who hear or read the report are called to do something significant.

For Nwabueze (2012, pp. 24-31), the following constitute the qualities required of the investigative news reporter: Sound news judgment, sense of public interest, research, analytical and communication skills; others are, capacity to make good and sound judgments, a mind for adventure, good writing skills, courage and good interview skills; the list includes, ability to see news behind the news, knowledge of photojournalism, computer literacy and joviality. Ganiyu (2010, pp. 134-138) holds that the investigative news reporter ought to have, courage, an incisive mind, persistence and perseverance, single-minded, incorruptible and have good inter-personal relationship (good mixer); have an open-

minded, sense of mission, sense of courage and love for reading. Some of these qualities include:

- ✓ Sound news judgement: The investigative reporter is expected to have sound news judgement without which, it will be difficult to determine what to investigate. Although every reporter requires this skill, it is appropriate for the investigative reporter to “nose” for news so as to know what to report to the audience upon investigation. According to Tsadi (cited in Nwabueze, 2012, p. 52), “nose” for news means “being able to recognise interesting facts and ideas where most people ordinarily would not.” In like manner, Ngwu (2000, p. 30) conceives “nose” for news as the ability to recognise a news-worthy event or person when we see one. Nose for news implies recognising what makes news at a first glance or identifying news leads and following such to a logical end. As such, it is what makes news that gives the investigative reporter a task.
- ✓ Sense of public interest: This appears as the most important characteristic of the investigate reporter. It is public interest that makes the investigative reporter to take risks to dig up news stories that those concerned would prefer no one knows about. This puts the reporter in a position of causing a reform or much needed change in society since from the onset, he is working in the interest of the citizenry. Nwabueze (2012, p. 25) cited Dodoo (2003) as saying this about the need for a reporter to have public interest at heart: “...developing an acute sense of public interest is necessary for investigative journalism, without a compelling urge to advance the public good, you are not likely to find the motivation or inner strength to engage in investigative journalism.”
- ✓ Courage and a mind for adventure: Since the point has been made that investigative reporting is an extremely risky business because it involves stepping on people’s toes, one cannot predict their reaction - especially reporters who investigate corruption among the high and mighty or crime involving drug cartels. Chances are that such reporters are sometimes attacked or killed. Such threats may weaken the morale of the investigative reporter in which case he or she may back out. Though the threat may be silent or explicit, “when it comes, the reporter needs to summon courage to damn the consequences and continue. Even where no threat comes, investigative reporting requires courage to confront the powerful and influential in the society face to face not only with allegations of some wrong-doing, but asking tough, probing and embarrassing questions” (Ganiyu, 2010, p. 134).

Nwabueze (2012, p. 28) argues further that being courageous is a major quality that keeps the investigative reporter going in the profession: “for someone to make up his mind to travel to a place he has never being and may not have heard of before the investigation, requires courage. This is not just the boldness to walk up to any person for an interview no matter his status. It has to do with treading where others cannot tread just to fetch a story.”

The investigative reporter ought to have a mind for adventure because, “most times, investigative reporting takes a reporter to places he has never been before or places that are

far from his base or simply to obscure areas” (Nwabueze, 2012, p. 27). In the book *The Newswatch Crisis and the Agony of the Nigerian Media Worker: A Reporter’s Account of the Inside Story*, after acknowledging that “journalists get to travel a lot” the author, Anthony Akaeze added that “investigation takes time and often requires one to travel far distances, whether within or outside one’s country” (2013, p. 15). He went ahead to relate a graphic picture of his experience with Gbolahan Ajayi-Bembe, a fellow journalist: “during our days in Newswatch, he and I worked on many stories together, the most challenging of which was that trip to Adamawa State” to investigate the situation of Koma people who were said to be living naked at the time (Akaeze, 2013, p. 85). Only courage and a mind for adventure could have made the duo of Akaeze and Ajayi-Bembe to take such a risk to the Koma hills.

- ✓ Love of reading and good interview skills: The investigative reporter must have passion for the written word. Needless to state that updating is required for a good reporter. Since documents are important sources of information, the investigative reporter must be abreast with current literature to authenticate his stories. The reporter is expected to master reading drills so as to read fast and digest the information. It is important to visit the library when you are investigating various fields of human endeavour (Ganiyu, 2010, p. 138).

Similarly, being skilled in the techniques of good interview is a *sine qua non* for the investigative reporter. Good communication skills, boldness, joviality among other qualities aids the investigative reporter in conducting interview and doing his investigation successfully (Nwabueze, 2012, p. 31).

- ✓ Ability to see news behind news and a sense of outrage: The investigative reporter has to have the ability to look beyond the surface straight-news to see news behind news. It is common place for dailies to report news but it takes an investigative journalist to ask questions behind such incidences – this is where the idea is conceived. For instance, “killings in a particular state or community could be dismissed as insecurity caused by hoodlums but a second look could reveal politically motivated killings” (Nwabueze, 2012, p. 29).
- ✓ Equally, a sense of justice should cause outrage for misdeeds in the investigative journalist. This is why Ganiyu surmises that: “the typical investigative reporter is an angry person whose temper is often on a short fuse. He is angry when he sees injustice and his anger does not abate until the injustice is redressed. It is the anger, this sense of outrage that makes the investigative reporter to pursue his task with zeal and a sense of mission” (2010, p. 138).
- ✓ Computer literacy and knowledge of photojournalism: In this digital age, the investigative reporter needs to be computer literate to store, process and retrieve data in a computer so that his report can be out of the public eye until it is reported. The advantage of being computer literate is that it helps the professional to surf the net and search for materials that are relevant to his investigation. It is appropriate for the investigative journalist to develop the skills of photojournalism which will aid him in reporting

in pictures. This makes for good photonews judgment – the ability to know which pictures are good for which story. It is safe to conclude that pictures add credibility to any investigative report (Nwabueze, 2012, pp. 29-30).

#### H. TOOLS FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

The business of scouting for news and presenting stories for broadcast or print publication puts the reporter ready with the requisite tools for his trade. Every professional is known through the tools of his trade. For any task at hand, the investigative reporter cannot go empty handed as that will amount to not only carelessness but irresponsibility. Therefore, the investigative journalist needs tools that will serve as his or her companion in the course of the investigation. These tools are often used by both print and broadcast investigative reporters.

Nwabueze (2012, pp. 31-39) lists these tools as – a midget, writing pen, jotter, tape recorder, still camera, a small bag, cash, mobile phone and personal computer. As such, it is not unlikely to find any reporter with these requisite tools ready to go about his or her job. What makes investigative reporters stand out is that their kind of reporting requires extra spirit of sacrifice, finesse, mental and physical alertness, courage, burning desire for public good, focus, patience and an enduring character.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

##### A. RECOMMENDATIONS

###### a. TRAINING & ONGOING EDUCATION

Because of the emergency of citizen journalism which enables those who are not professionals to also practice journalism, it is incumbent on journalists to be well trained and understand the dynamics of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) if they must remain relevant. This is where computer literacy and ongoing education is a *sine qua non* for investigative reporters. Managers and operators of media houses must understand and ensure that.

###### b. PASSION FOR THE WRITTEN WORD

The onus lies on all journalists, especially investigative reporters to be all-round-readers. They ought to be at home with the library and master reading drills so as to read fast and digest large information within a short time. By being current with literature, they are able to be authentic to their calling.

###### c. INSURANCE COVER FOR JOURNALISTS

The dearth of investigative reporting in the developing world has been attributed to lack of insurance cover. It becomes necessary for those responsible for media operations and stakeholders to initiate insurance covers and prize for journalism to encourage journalists towards optimum performance.

###### d. COURAGE, SACRIFICE AND A SENSE OF RAGE

Investigative journalists and those who intend to go into the profession must understand that the job demands courage, sacrifice and a sense of outrage. Journalists in this beat must approach their job with zeal and a sense of mission.

###### e. MEDIA-INDEPENDENCE

By way for responding to the libertarian media theory of the press, governments everywhere must give way to media-independence if the latter must play its role as the Fourth Estate of the Realm. The watchdog role of the media is without responsibility on its part in ensuring the advancement of the democratic principles of freedom and justice which hinge on the Social Responsibility Theory of the Media.

###### f. GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION

While advocating for media-independence, the intervention of government in creating a favourable environment for the media to operate as well as funding courses for media professionals is a welcome development which will go a long way in the advancement of investigative reporting.

###### g. SENSE OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Since it has been established that journalism is about public interest, investigative reporters ought to develop a sense of changing society through objective scoops and coverages. The sense of working for the interest of the citizenry must supersede personal interest.

###### h. SENSE OF SOUND NEWS JUDGMENT

Journalists ought to develop the sense of sound news judgment without which it will be difficult to determine what to investigate. This involves having the required skills as well as a “nose” for news so as to know what to report to the audience upon investigation.

###### i. SEEING NEWS BEHIND NEWS

The investigative reporter must develop the capacity to look beyond surface straight-news through asking questions behind incidences so as to see news behind news. They must shun the popular practice where dailies rush to break the news without painstaking investigation.

##### B. CONCLUSION

We have established that investigative reporting involves unearthing important information about issues of public importance through irregular methods and techniques of information gathering. This discloses the risk involved in investigations as well as the painstaking nature of the topic under review. The unwillingness of looters of common-wealth to let their deeds come to limelight and the zeal of reporters

“for naming and shaming” further puts investigative journalism at high risk.

Since journalism seeks after public good, the investigative reporter should be abreast with the dynamics of investigative reporting in a manner that is congruent with conceptual analysis and proper implementation of the techniques thereof. This shows that investigative reporting has a priori and posteriori implications for anyone desirous of delving into the dogged road of journalism which involves scopes and exclusive coverage.

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