

CREELMAN IN CUBA:

***HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNALISM AND
THE "YELLOW" SEEDS OF
WAR WITH SPAIN***



*James Creelman: yellow journalist
In China*

Frederic A. Moritz

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A CLASSIC CASE OF YELLOW

Who would have guessed that pioneers in human rights reporting would have opened the door to create an American empire in Cuba and the Philippines?

That is exactly what happened.

In a "classic case of yellow."

James Creelman, a major player, was a veteran of two yellow chains, the Pulitzer and the Hearst.

"Yellow press" reporting of Spain's often brutal attempt to suppress the Cuban independence rebellion beginning in February 1895 helped turn the predominantly Protestant American public against what was seen as an autocratic, medieval, Catholic Spain.

American correspondents were sensational, adventurous, biased, emotional. Yet yellow journalism was also a pioneering human rights "watchdog." It exposed the brutality of Spanish armies to the glare of world opinion.

The **reporting** opened the way for the American gunboats and expeditionary forces. It helped shape American popular

opinion to embrace "jingoism" and to back the Spanish American War of 1898.

Over the years it has been easy to dismiss this reporting as a low point in journalism history. After all it led to the Spanish American war and to American imperialism.

Yellow journalism was often sensational and sometimes inaccurate. It frequently pandered to prejudice and extreme patriotism (jingoism) in order to gain attention, sell papers, and claim credit for prodding government into action.

Competition between the Hearst and Pulitzer chains could increase the pressure for dramatizing, sensationalizing, printing of unverified rumors in order to portray developments in Victorian age "black and white."

It became fashionable for critics of yellow journalism to ignore what the Spanish actually did in Cuba and focus instead on the great newspaper publishers' greed for profits, circulation, and power.

Yet the facts are crystal clear: brutal Spanish abuses did take place even though the worst reporting might be distorted, based on unreliable information, or even simply made up.

Then came the sinking of the Maine.

REMEMBER THE MAINE

The yellow press helped create a fire storm of anti-Spanish feeling when the Maine was mysteriously blown up in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898.

On April 20 President McKinley reluctantly declared war on Spain, despite his painful memories of "stacked corpses" from his service in the Civil War. Ironically the sinking came at just the time a new Madrid government moved away from harsh suppression of Cuban rebels and indicated it wanted negotiations with the U.S. to avert war.

Press coverage of the sinking and the inquiry into it encouraged a rush to judgment that the Spanish government had sunk the Maine. Another possibility was sabotage by hard line Spanish in Cuba or others who opposed Spain's new conciliatory tack. Cuban rebels might also have done the sinking, hoping to bring the United States to their aid. Another possibility was an accidental blast exploding an ammunition storage compartment.

Within a few years Americans who opposed the move toward empire were protesting atrocities committed by U.S. soldiers against Filipino rebels in America's new Pacific colony.

(See [Imperialism in the Making of America](#). For a discussion of opposition to imperialism in America see [Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935](#).)

A CENTURY OF GUERRILLA WAR

When America's yellow correspondents "took on" Spanish atrocities in Cuba, they pioneered in the coverage of moral issues which would loom large in a coming century of guerrilla wars.

How would journalists cover these brutal conflicts where atrocities were often a fact of life on both sides?

America's war against [Philippines insurgents](#) after the Spanish American war, Britain's turn of the century war against the Boers in South Africa, Japan's war against Chinese resistance in the 1930's, partisan wars throughout Europe in World War II, and America's war against Vietnamese communists all too often made academic the niceties of the Geneva Conventions: the ideas that the lives of civilians and prisoners of war should be respected.

(For a broad comparison of Spanish tactics in Cuba and Santo Domingo with later anti-guerrilla tactics around the world see also on this website Jaime Garcia-Rodriguez, [Spain in The Americas: The Impact of Santo Domingo](#)).

British opponents of the the [Boer War](#) charged their country had copied Spanish tactics in Cuba when it herded Boer civilian populations into concentration camps to isolate Boer guerrillas.

British armies first defeated Boer armies in conventional warfare. Then they faced the difficult challenge of mopping up guerrilla resistance.

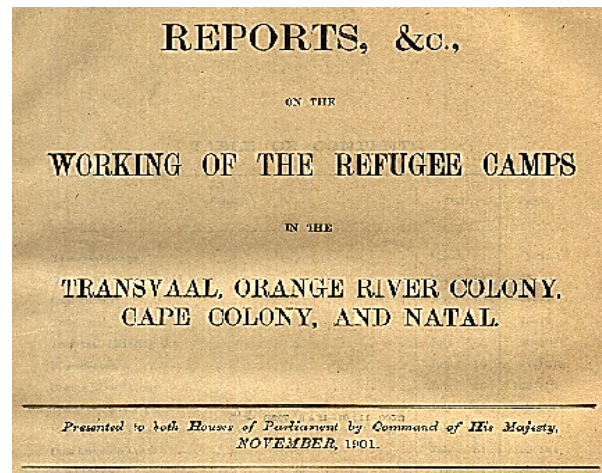
Thomas Pakenham highlighted the general brutality of the period in [The Boer War](#), Random House, N.Y., 1979. It took over eight years of research, several months of traveling in South Africa and a frantic quest to find interviewable survivors of this tragic time.

In his introduction Pakenham wrote:

"To deny the guerrillas food and intelligence, Lord Kitchener ordered the British army to

sweep the veld clean. The farms were burnt, the stock looted, the women and children concentrated in camps along the railroad lines. Between twenty thousand and twenty-eight thousand Boer civilians died of epidemics in these 'concentration camps'...The conscience of Britain was stirred by the 'holocaust' in the camps, just as the conscience of America was stirred by the 'holocaust' of Vietnam."

(Check [British documents](#) at Stanford University libraries as well as [photos](#) of concentration camps at the Anglo Boer War Museum.)



On the brutalization of this war see also Pakenham, page 571 in Chapter 41, "Blockhouse or Blockhead?: The New Colonies, November 1901-March 1902." :

"The guerrilla war was fast brutalizing both adversaries. The worst scandals on the British side concerned colonial irregulars --Australians, Canadians and South Africans -- whose official contingents, ironically had won a reputation for gallantry in so many set-piece battles.

"The most notorious case involved a special anti-commando unit, raised by Australians to fight in the wild northern Transvaal, and called the Bush Veldt Carabineers. Six of its officers (five Australians, one Englishman) were court martialled for multiple murder.

"The facts were admitted: in August 1901, twelve Boers, earlier taken prisoner, had been shot by the Carbineers on the orders of their

officers. The Australian's defense: as a reprisal, shooting prisoners was now accepted practice. Two of the Australian... Lieutenants "Breaker" Morant and Handcock, were executed in February 1902 on the orders of Kitchener [British high commander}.

"The affair caused an outcry in Australia. There arose a misconception (still current) that foreign political pressures had induced Kitchener to make scapegoats of Morant and Handcock. In fact Kitchener's motives were cruder: evidence of his own army's indiscipline drove him wild with frustration."

(See the [Bushveldt Carbineers](#), on Morant's commando unit, specially formed to travel light and strike hard against the guerrilla tactics of the Boers.

Morant's execution raised indignation from Australians who felt the British army had made a scapegoat of an Australian soldier on charges which would not have brought the death penalty for an Englishman. See a [biography](#) of Morant. Also [The Poetry of Breaker Morant.](#))



*In prison cell I sadly sit,
A d---d crestfallen chappy,
And own to you I feel a bit--*

A little bit -- unhappy.

*It really ain't the place nor time
To reel off rhyming diction;
But yet we'll write a final rhyme
While waiting crucifixion.*

*No matter what "end" they decide --
Quick-lime? or "b'iling ile?" sir--
We'll do our best when crucified
To finish off in style, sir?*

*But we bequeath a parting tip
For sound advice of such men
Who come across in transport ship
To polish off the Dutchmen.*

*If you encounter any Boers
You really must not loot 'em,
And, if you wish to leave these shores,
For pity's sake, don't shoot 'em.*

*And if you'd earn a D.S.O.,
Why every British sinner
Should know the proper way to go
Is: Ask the Boer to dinner.*

*Let's toss a bumper down our throat
Before we pass to heaven,
And toast: "The trim-set petticoat
We leave behind in Devon."*

&&&&

CREELMAN'S CUBA STINT

James Creelman's stint of less than a month in Cuba ended with his expulsion by Spanish authorities. (For a photo of Creelman and a brief biography by a distant cousin, John E. Creelman, click [here](#).) It was but a tiny fragment of American reporting from the flare up of the insurgency in February, 1895 to the the U.S. declaration of war signed April 20, 1898 after the sinking of the Battleship Maine on February 15. Still, it remains an instructive example of how yellow journalism could shade over into what today is called

human rights journalism. It also illustrates how a practitioner of yellow journalism might directly intervene and become part of the story he covered in the name of pushing a moral cause. James Creelman saw yellow journalism as a positive force for progress. In his memoirs he openly defended it:

"How little they know of yellow journalism who denounce it! How swift they are to condemn its shrieking headlines, its exaggerated pictures, its coarse buffoonery, its intrusions upon private life, and its occasional inaccuracies! But how slow they are to see the steadfast guardianship of public interests which it maintains! How blind to its unfearing warfare against rascality, its detection and prosecution of crime, its costly searchings for knowledge throughout the earth, its exposures of humbug, its endless funds for the quick relief of distress!" (See James Creelman, [On the Great Highway](#), Lothrop Publishing Company, Boston, 1901, [Chapter 9](#), p. 177.)

Both William Randolph Hearst's [Journal](#) and Joseph Pulitzer's [The World](#) seized on Spanish abuses such as summary executions of civilians. These were sometimes intended to terrorize the rural population against supporting the rebels and sometimes carried out by local commanders who wanted to report to the Spanish high command that they had successfully located, engaged, and killed rebels.

In [Chapter 9](#) of his reminiscences [On The Great Highway](#) Creelman reported Hearst's memorable response to artist Frederic Remington, bored with his assignment in Cuba; "You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war." While years later Hearst strongly denied he ever said such a thing, the quote is still attributed to him and was paraphrased to great affect in Orson Well's movie [Citizen Kane](#).

The reported violations, if true, appeared to condemn Spain as flouting the civilized and modern concept growing in the 19th Century that civilians should not be executed without trial.

Heated competition between two yellow papers helped take James Creelman to Cuba. Frederick Lawrence of Hearst's [Journal](#) was filing gripping but inaccurate or simply made up accounts of fantastic rebel victories, including the exploits of beautiful, ferocious machete wielding "Amazons" fighting on the side of the rebels. (Charles H. Brown, [The Correspondents' War](#), p 36).

Joseph Pulitzer deliberately sent to Cuba a "star" with a reputation for thorough and accurate reporting. He wanted his Cuba correspondent to be someone with a track record

who could not be easily dismissed as a sensationalist. By now Creelman was now one of *The World's* most famous reporters after gaining national and international attention with his shocking eyewitness accounts of the Japanese massacre at Port Arthur. Creelman had a reputation as an adventurous, experienced reporter meant he could not easily be dismissed by the Spanish government or others as an irresponsible sensationalist.

Subjective reporting with its potential to incite readers to outrage was characteristic of the the era's yellow journalism. Creelman made no pretense to be objective. His conclusions, opinions, and actions were liberally sprinkled through his reports. But unlike some other journalists of the period who sought the easiest way, Creelman's credibility depended on his reputation and track record for courage, getting to the scene, and intensively interviewing for relatively reliable information. In an age with great faith in scientific inquiry Creelman's reporting was couched in the style of a rigorous almost scientific search for the "truth" - rather than a balanced presentation of two or more points of view.

YELLOW JOURNALIST: INVESTIGATOR; PARTICIPANT

Creelman's record for digging is reminiscent of modern investigative reporting - or of the work of the "muckraking" magazine journalists who followed him. He could be counted on to follow a story even if he got in trouble with the Spanish government. He did exactly that, and was expelled from Cuba May 7, 1896, not even a month after his first story from Cuba appearing in The World April 20.

Creelman made no pretense toward objective, balanced reporting, to avoid becoming "part of the story." The language was often emotional, containing what today would be called "editorializing," which included his own thoughts, emotions, or even actions. Willis Abbott, once a journalist for Hearst and in the 1920's editor of The Christian Science Monitor maintained that Creelman's egotism "often impelled that very enterprising writer to put so much of himself into an interview or a story that the real subject of the article was utterly obscured. (Willis Abbott, Watching The World Go By, p. 208).

On several occasions Creelman abandoned the notion of the journalist as observer to become an active part of the story. He personally appealed to the Spanish commander Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau to investigate after filing a dispatch to The World concluding Spanish troops were executing non-combatants without trial . He personally helped lead an American charge against Spanish forces at El Caney when he returned to Cuba to cover the Spanish-American war in 1898.



The Assault on El Caney

THE TIGHTENING SPANISH NOOSE

In December 1895 rebels began an extended campaign involving bands ranging from a score of men to two to three thousand. In a strategy familiar to students of modern guerrilla wars these units tended to avoid engagements with larger Spanish forces but instead roamed across the island torching sugar cane plantations in an attempt to pressure the Spanish and alarm the United States into intervention by destroying the island's Sugar exports.

That same year a conservative hard line government took power in Madrid under Antonio Canovas del Castillo. Canovas declared there could be no compromise with the rebels. He sent Gen. Martinez Campos, who had defeated a Cuban insurrection in the 1870's, to crush the new one. Campos used the same strategy he had successfully used in the earlier rebellion. He sought to contain the rebels in the extreme east of Cuba by constructing a 50 mile trocha across the middle of the island in Camaguey province along the railroad from Moron on the north to Jucaro on the south.

The railroad along the 200 yard wide trocha was guarded by blockhouses and barbed wire barricades strung out along each side, with the approaches cleared of underbrush and forest. The strategy was essentially defensive, too passive said its critics.(David F. Trask, The War With Spain in 1898, Macmillan, New York, 1981, p.7.).

After rebels successfully penetrated into western Cuba in late 1895 and early 1896, the Canovas government decided to replace Campos with Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau Weyler, a

general with a reputation as a ruthless fighter. He replaced Gen. Campos in February, 1896.

(See Jaime GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ'S [Spain in the Americas](#) for an account of how Weyler brought to Cuba the ruthless repression he had pioneered in Santo Domingo)

The much criticized "reconcentrados" strategy of isolating rebels from their country supplies and farmer sympathizers by moving civilians into what might today be called "concentration camps" drew growing American press attention. American newspaper readers saw graphic line drawings of starving Cuban women and children. (Americans later employed a [similar tactic](#) to suppress the [Philippines insurrection](#) following the Spanish American War.)

By this time the yellow papers had turned their focus on Cuba as Hearst and Pulitzer fought it out in a great circulation war. Here was a story with action and violence and wonderful potential for banner headlines. Cuban political exiles in New York and Florida were a vocal source of information or propaganda on Spanish actions.

Their public meetings and attempts to smuggle arms and fighters to Cuba got repeated press attention, especially when, as was several times the case, the U.S. government seized ships being used on these "filibustering" expeditions. The yellow coverage turned toward full blast when less than a week after his arrival, Weyler issued a decree of reconcentration calling for a massive resettlement of civilians in order to isolate the rebels and deprive them of food and ammunition.

All inhabitants around Sancti Spiritus, Puerto Principe and Santiago de Cuba were ordered to move two locations near military headquarters. The army sharply restricted civilian travel, and military commanders were empowered to act summarily against insurgents and to apply strict military law to those accused of aiding the insurrection. Weyler built a second north to south trocha from Mariel to Majana, separating the more westerly provinces from the east. (David F. Trask, [The War With Spain in 1898](#), Macmillan, New York, 1981, pp. 8-9).

Reports of summary executions and other cruelties grew under Weyler's crackdown and the extension of military law. Hearst's [Journal](#) quickly seized upon the violence in Cuba to grab readership and build a name for itself in war reporting. Journal editorials denouncing Weyler as fierce and cruel and in mid-February a headline proclaiming, "Weyler Orders a Reign of Terror." One Journal had writer called him, "the most cruel and bloodthirsty general in the world" whose "career and bloody crimes are more terrible even than those of the Turks." (Charles H. Brown, [The Correspondents'](#)

War, p 27).

BITE IN THE GUISE OF BALANCE

Creelman's first dispatch from Havana appearing in the World on April 20, 1896, p.1. struck a "balanced" tone. He described rumored secret executions of war prisoners in Havana as "mere gossip," adding their conditions of confinement " are no worse than in the American military prisons during the civil war. He went on to say of General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau, the man who was shortly to expel him:

"In some respects Gen. Weyler is moderate almost to the point of negligence. Rebel Propagandists are permitted to freely circulate in public places here and to denounce Spain in the bitterest terms" But in the next graphs Creelman described acts attesting to the tough. Spanish tactics toward insurrection.

"On the other hand, prisoners of war are condemned to death as incendiaries without proof of actual guilt. Evidence that a rebel soldier belonged to a column of the enemy which burned property is sufficient to insure his death. A prisoner's conviction depends on whether he joined the offending band before or after the incendiarism occurred.

"I saw two white men and a negro shot under this law yesterday. A Cuban lieutenant, nineteen years old, was detailed to give the word to fire, but he induced the Spanish commander to relieve him of the dreadful duty. There was not a Cuban present at the execution. The killing was done decently.

"It is said that nearly a hundred prisoners will be shot as incendiaries within a few days." (p. 1)

The seemingly balanced style even defending conditions of military prisoners and suggesting that Weyler in some respects is "moderate" undoubtedly was designed to lessen the possible offense Weyler might take. In this first article Creelman indicated he was not personally attacking General Weyler who had become known as "Butcher" Weyler after massive and sensational American coverage of his policies, especially by Hearst's Journal. Clearly Creelman sought to disassociate himself from the personally hostile coverage of the Journal.

Weyler had replaced Gen. Martinez Campos as Spanish commander in February, 1896. Hard line officials in Madrid had concluded that tougher tactics toward the rebels were needed because Campos, in Cuba since 1878, had been too conciliatory towards the rebels.

Weyler had a reputation as a ruthless soldier. Hearst's Journal quickly took up the theme with editorials denouncing him as fierce and cruel and in mid-February a headline proclaiming, "Weyler Orders a Reign of Terror." One Journal had writer called him, "the most cruel and bloodthirsty general in the world" whose "career and bloody crimes are more terrible even than those of the Turks." (Charles H. Brown, The Correspondents War, p.27).

The World's home office was also careful to avoid a sensational headline and prominent display of the execution reports as might be expected in Hearst's Journal. The execution reports appeared far down in paragraph seven of a story that at the top focused on rebel plans to cross an eighteen mile containment barrier known as the Trocha despite an offensive of 50,000 Spanish soldiers pressing in from several sides. Instead of focusing on the executions the headline focused on the precarious position of the Spanish if the rebel commander Gen. Antonio Maceo successfully crossed the Trocha: (The World, April 20, 1896, p. 7)

MACEO IS CONFIDENT

**Sends Words to Havana
He Will Cross Trocha
When Ready.**

**IF HE DOES, WEYLER FAILS.
Then It Must Be Confessed
Spain Cannot End the War Unaided**

GOMEZ'S HEALTH IS IMPROVED.

**Promises to Send a Picked Column to
Co-operate When Maceo Forces
the Trocha.**

A HUNDRED PRISONERS TO BE SHOT.

**Fitzhugh Lee's Arrival Looked For-
ward To Eagerly by Both
Spaniards and Cubans.**

Still on the substance of Spanish actions Creelman's first

article did not shrink a detailed accounts of controversial Spanish actions. Thus he made a major: prisoners of war were being executed when their units were accused of incendiarism even though there might be no proof of personal involvement.. Creelman attests to one he actually witnessed.Creelman's report set a pattern for later such reports by newly arrived correspondents. New arrivals would routinely witness an execution by firing squad and then right colorful accounts with horrifying detail. (Charles H. Brown, The Correspondents War, p.37). Sensational play continued to reinforce anti-Spanish sentiment in the U.S.

JOURNALISM BY INVESTIGATION NOT BY RUMOR

Creelman's approach was to avoid some of the fiery smoke of sensationalized rumor reporting while pushing rapidly to investigate reports of Spanish brutality, including massacre. His first massive atrocity headline splash occurred on May 1 in a page one story telling of his investigation into execution of non combatants in a farming community near Havana. The story reported 33 deaths with names and dates. The headline, eye catching but limited to a one column front page headline, was comparatively conservative by yellow journalism standards. However it jumped to a massive four column inside story. It was headlined (The World, May 1, p. 1):

MASSACRE

**Slaughter of Innocent
Non-Combatants In
Cuba Continues**

NOT BY WEYLER'S ORDER

**Untried Prisoners Shot by
Squads at Campo Florida by
Gen. Minas's Command**

WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITNESSES

**Dates and Places of the Murders;
survivors' Stories Investigated by
The World Correspondent**

AUTHENTIC FACTS FOR CLEVELAND

**The Slain Were All White and na-
tives of Cuba - Bodies Thrown
Into Trenches and Left Un-
buried- The Crimes De-
scribed All Occurred**

**in a Farming District Near
Havana.**

Creelman seeks to convey an impression of impartiality even as he describes his conclusion that abuses are brutal and massive, and openly calls for some kind of American intervention. He seeks to project an image that his personal conclusions do not flow from preconception or bias but from intensive investigation by a professional journalist.

The article began:

"I have personally investigated the deaths of the following white men, who were shot without trial at Campo Florida, near Havana the afternoon of April 2. The front page column then listed the 33 documented victims by name and occupation."

The details of this limited investigation are graphically spelled out, in a manner that would produce revulsion in the reader. Still the writer is careful to protect himself from possible charges by Gen. Weyler that he is spreading propaganda and unverified rumor. The broader more sinister implication that summary executions may be occurring throughout Cuba is left out of the headline and buried on the inside page far down in the story:

"I have confined my dispatch to one little farming district close to Havana. The same stories reach me from all parts of the island. But I have set down nothing without investigation. Imagine the scenes in the interior. No wonder foreign correspondents are not allowed to accompany the Spanish columns and are nearly all bottled up in Havana."

Also buried inside is a less carefully documented account of larger numbers of men shot near the same area:

"About a hundred quiet and inoffensive men have been shot without trial in the neighborhood of Campo Florida. Their neighbors were helpless to save them....Several unarmed peasants were shot without trial at Guanabo near Campo Florida, six or seven days ago, and the soldiers did not even take the trouble to bury them. I have talked with a farmer who saw dogs and vultures eating the bodies."

Although he downplays those reports he has not thoroughly investigated, Creelman shows know hesitance to frankly state his own conclusions based on the investigations he has made. Even as Creelman insists on his own impartiality and

admiration for many Spanish officers, he compares Spanish atrocities to persecutions of Armenians by Turks, an extremely emotional issue at that time.

"I take no sides in this war, and have no wish to harm the Spanish name. Many of the royal officers are men of fine character. But it is time to let the world know that America has an Armenia almost within sight of her shores."

Creelman implicitly called for American intervention in one form or another when he wrote, "If Mr. Cleveland (the President) could have heard the terrified Cuban women trooping with their children into Gunabacoa asking me whether the United States would allow Spain to slay the whole population, their appeals might not have been in vain.

High on the inside jump page Creelman goes to great length to present himself as fair and impartial investigator, not driven by any bias against Gen. Weyler and Spain. He implies Gen. Weyler should himself investigate the atrocities, noting the desire for revenge builds enlistments to the insurgents:

"The situation is horrifying, unspeakable almost. It cannot be possible that Gen. Weyler knows the facts. He seems to be a brave and intelligent officer, and he has won his high place by brains and energy. With the heavy responsibility of the war resting on him, he could have no intelligible for ordaining barbarities which swell the ranks of the insurgents and drive hundreds of old men, women, and children into the larger towns and cities to be a burden to the Government. I prefer to believe that the Captain-General has been deceived by officers in the field, who are indiscriminately killing non-combatants and reporting victorious engagements with insurgent troops. Everywhere the breadwinners of Cuba are fleeing before the Spanish columns, and the ranks of life are being turned into the ranks of death, for the Cuban who has seen his honest and harmless neighbors tied up and shot before his eyes in order that some officer get credit for a battle, takes his family to the nearest town or village for safety, and then goes out to strike a manly blow for his country."

Creelman clearly is concerned that his reports not be dismissed by authorities as rumor mongering by a reporter who has not been on the scene. He concentrates high up only on those cases he has personally investigated and explains to the reader the interviewing process he has used:

"Witnesses of these butcheries from the country

shrink and grow silent when they are questioned. They are dumb with fright. I have only succeeded in getting them to talk by convincing them that their names will not be revealed at present. In every case I have been careful to ascertain the reputation of the witnesses for truthfulness....Nor have I confined my investigation to the peasants.

Educated planters tell the same story.....Within an hour I have talked to one of the most conservative plantation owners on the island, and he told me that laborer after laborer has been gathered up on his estate within the last three weeks and shot on the roadside without trial of any sort. In every case newspaper reported skirmishes with the insurgents, and this in the last days of the nineteenth century."

CREELMAN BECOMES PART OF THE STORY

Creelman, as an early yellow journalism human rights reporter, made no attempt to avoid becoming "a part of the story." He opened the way for personal intervention when he suggested in the May 1 story that Gen. Weyler, known as the "butcher" by American critics, must be unaware of the atrocities because he was too intelligent to tolerate the misreporting of summary executions as battles.

Indeed Creelman personally appealed to the General to investigate, thus openly participating in Cuba's political drama by meeting personally with the general, who denounced his reporting and threatened to expel him. By making himself part of the news Creelman produced a compelling page one article starring himself in the May 3 The World. Indeed newspapers of the day thrived on their reporters becoming a part of the news or even influencing it, for that demonstrated to the readers the importance of the newspaper.

A THREAT BY WEYLER

**To Expel from Cuba The
World Correspondent for
Telling the Truth**

ABOUT THE SPANISH ATROCITIES

**Refuses to Investigate the Awful
Charges So Circumstan-**

tially Made

APPEAL TO THE BISHOP OF HAVANA

**But that Well-Paid Prelate Also
Complacently Discredits the
Massacre Stories**

In this dispatch justifies his direct appeal by noting in the lead, "The butchery of non-combatants continues in all parts of the island. Some of the stories from remote districts which reach me are appalling, but personal investigation is impossible at present. I do not feel justified in giving the details.

The third paragraph continues:

"Yesterday I made a personal appeal to the Captain-General to investigate the massacres. He challenged me to name a place where peaceful inhabitants were being shot without trial, and I named Campo Florida....Gen. Weyler declared that he did not believe the charges....I furnished the names, ages, and previous occupations of nearly two score of non-combatants who had been shot by Spanish soldiers without trial.

"The Captain-General said that if I continued that if I continued to telegraph the results of my investigations, he would expel me from the island. I replied that so long as I remained alive in Cuba I would let *The World* know the truth about the war. I again pressed him for an investigation, and the Captain-General once more repeated the threat. I also made an appeal to the Bishop of Havana, Santander y Frutes, hoping that he might be induced to raise his voice....The stout old Bishop rustled his silk robe,rattled the gold chain around his neck and said in a very comfortable way he did not believe the Spanish army could be guilty of such crimes. He receives \$18,000 a year from Spain."

EXPULSION FINALLY COMES

The order to expel came just four days later, reported in The World May 7 in a dispatch from Havana brief because Creelman's news and personal dispatches had been suppressed. The expulsion gave both The World and its correspondent national recognition.

The World used a news cartoon across three center columns of page one to trace the evolution of Creelman's early cautious, diplomatic treatment of Weyler to a more full scale attack on Weyler. On the left is a pompous looking general in a plumed hat and carrying a bloody sword, wearing belts labeled "Butcher Gen. Weyler." The general holds high a sign declaring:

**"THE NEW YORK WORLD
CORRESPONDENT IS HEREBY EXPELLED
FOR TELLING THE TRUTH! By ORDER of
BUTCHER WEYLER."**

An upstanding bearded Creelman wearing a tropical pith helmet boldly confronts Weyler while writing in his reporter's notebook,

**"TRUTH REGARDING SPANISH
ATROCITIES."**

REMEMBERING JAPAN'S APOLOGY

Under the main cartoon is a large line drawing of Creelman, with an article by Frederick Villiers, a war correspondent for the London Graphic praising Creelman's persistence, courage, and determination to uncover true facts. The World's page 3 featured a large spread designed to buttress Creelman's credibility, with the secondary affect of discrediting Weyler's argument Creelman's dispatches were false.

One box includes a picture of Weyler and a summary of the dispatch for which Creelman was expelled. A separate box reminds the reader of the scoop for which Creelman's gained international fame: his exclusive exposee of the Japanese army massacre of Chinese civilians at Port Arthur, Manchuria in November, 1894. (Click [here](#) for "Creelman at Port Arthur"). Underneath is a picture of Japan's Field-Marshal Oyama, with the head reading:

**"Japanese government admits the Port Arthur Massacre,
Deplores it,
and Makes an Apology."**

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