

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

## Style and the Columnists



- Student Activity: Almost Automatic: Use Your Experience, Knowledge and Literary Devices
- Student Activity: Read with More Depth
- Post Reprint: “Appreciation: Warren Brown’s freewheeling commentary on cars and life”
- Post Reprint: “Warren Brown, *Washington Post* auto writer who chronicled his health struggle, dies at 70”
- Sunday Magazine Reprint: “Why you shouldn’t go toe-to-toe with a sports columnist”
- Think Like a Reporter: Why You Are Not a Columnist

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They have a distinct voice that they use to express their points of view. Two columnists are featured in this resource guide — Warren Brown and Gene Weingarten. Brown, who died in August 2018, reviewed automobiles and commented on life. Weingarten, in an irreverent, humorous tone, often creates characters or brings in real people to spar with him. Just two of the many styles and approaches to be used to study the art of column writing.

“Almost Automatic:  
Use Your Experience,  
Knowledge and  
Literary Devices”

provides activities that may be used with the Brown and Weingarten reprints and with the work of other columnists. The activity in “Think Like a Reporter: Why You Are Not a Columnist” helps students to distinguish the balanced and objective requirements of the reporter from the subjective and style-conscious work of columnists.



**The Warren Brown Model**

# Almost Automatic: Use Your Experience, Knowledge and Literary Devices

Long-time *Washington Post* automotive industry columnist Warren Brown presented all the facts and data about cars in his On Wheels column. This he could do in a sidebar listing. It was capturing the experience of test driving and relating it to life with his particular style that made his column so popular with auto aficionados and people looking for a good read alike. As one reader stated in a letter to the editor: “His columns were a must-read for me every week. ... His reviews were as much about the society in which cars exist as about the merits or drawbacks of any particular model.”

Read “Appreciation: Warren Brown’s freewheeling commentary on cars and life.” Let’s take a look together at the excerpt from his Dec. 6, 1996, On Wheels column.

1. What car is he reviewing? In which paragraph do you know this for sure?
2. How much does this model cost?
3. Who manufactures this automobile?
4. Give two examples of his use of a conversational style. Do you feel as if you and he are seated together with him sharing a story?
5. Where does the test drive of that week’s car take place?
6. Brown begins with a biblical allusion. What is it? Why do you think he uses it?
7. Give examples of his extending this image beyond the first mention.
8. When the woman asks for the price of the car, we know why Brown told us it in the second paragraph. Give another example of using the order in which details are given to make a statement.
9. A review requires an evaluation of the product — buy it, don’t buy it, buy it if. What do you think is his recommendation for this car?
10. Reality: Brown didn’t own the car. What is the social comment implied in this column?

Get behind the wheel. Try writing the first of many pieces for a column. You will have to do some shifting of gears along the way. With more practice, finding the right words, angle and devices will become almost automatic.

## Read with More Depth

After reading columns, find examples of the following devices the columnist and other columnists use in their works. Be sure to provide the date of publication.

Analogy

Anecdote

Background or context

Biblical allusion

Comparison

Contrast

Data and/or facts

Description

Dialogue

Historic allusion

How-to

Lede that grabs attention

Literary allusion

Metaphor

Parallel structure

Personal experience

Process (order)

Reference to contemporary events or people

Simile

Striking or surprising word choice

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## BUSINESS

# Appreciation: Warren Brown's freewheeling commentary on cars and life

By Kelly Johnson

• Originally Published August 3, 2018

For years, Warren Brown's insights about cars and the automotive industry were a staple for *Washington Post* readers.

He wove in observations about race and class and meditations on the ideals of faith and liberty. A set of wheels, he said, was freedom: to move, to explore, to live, to thrive.

"Freedom came when my parents

and black neighbors bought their own cars," he said in a C-SPAN interview in 2010. "That way they could not only sit up front but could also drive the things. And that to me was power, that to me was freedom."

He loved road trips, of course. And, as his writing reflected, he was a devotee of poetry. He wrote with wit, style and oomph.

Brown twice received kidney transplants. First, from his wife, Mary Anne Reed Brown. And then from Martha Hamilton. He died July 26 at age 70.

His legacy is an oeuvre that spans decades — and was written for the ages.

As Toni Morrison, accepting the first Nobel Prize in literature awarded to an African American woman, put it: "We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives."

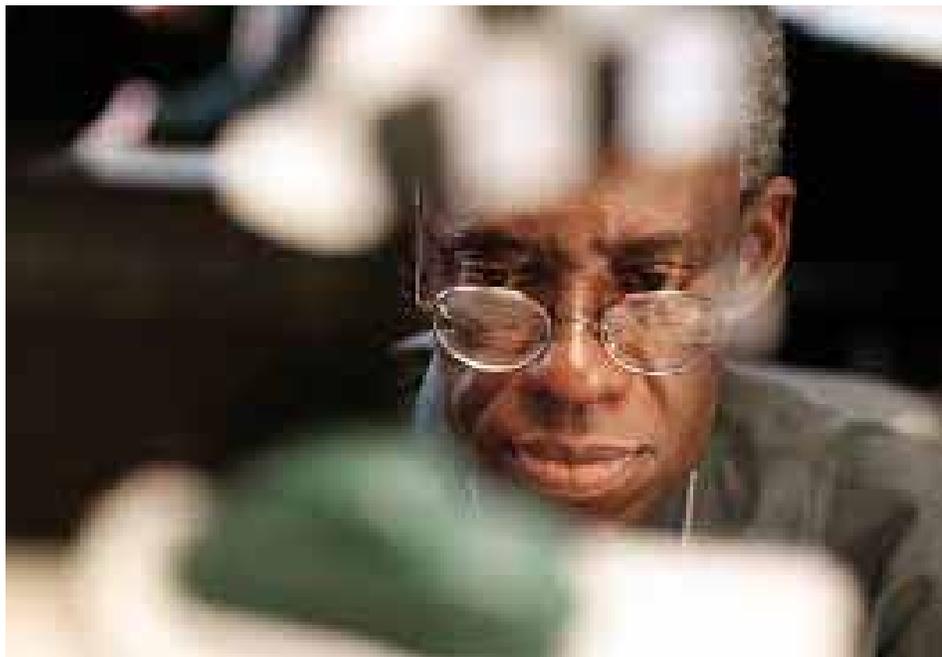
### Dec. 6, 1996

Spare me the sermon about the meek inheriting the Earth. They can have it. I want to go to Heaven in a Bentley.

If that's too sinful a wish, I'd like to ask the Almighty for more time to raise Hell in the tested Bentley Continental T. The way I figure it, the car could lift the value of that burned-out neighborhood — by more than \$300,000. By \$324,500 to be exact.

That would be a deed good enough to earn celestial consideration. That's the upside. The downside is that a car such as the Continental T could cause another War Between the Angels. Jealousy, you know. Messes up things all the time.

Look at what happened to me during my day in the Bentley, which is manufactured by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in Britain. I was tooling



MICHAEL WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Washington Post reporter Warren Brown at his keyboard writing while awaiting a kidney transplant.

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along Washington's streets, minding my own business, when a woman pulled up next to me and shouted into my half-open window.

"How much you paid for that beautiful car?" she asked.

I told her that I didn't pay for it. She seemed puzzled.

"Well, how much does it sell for?" she demanded.

I told her. She gasped.

"GD rich people," she said, though she didn't use the letters "GD."

"Must be nice."

She stunned me. But I've since thought about her mini-harangue, and concluded that she was right: Driving the Continental T was nice. Rich is nice. I like rich. I like rich very much.

### Nov. 23, 1990

The 1991 Mercedes-Benz 350SD Turbo is everything demanded by auto-safety advocates and environmentalists. But only bankers can afford it.

### Jan. 28, 1994

The truth is that the car was an embarrassment in the snow. Its expensive rear end skittered about, even on flat surfaces. Its humongous weight, all 4,401 pounds of it, threatened to become an uncontrollable mass on downhill ice. Its sensuous body, covered with salt spray, slush and grime, looked like a fallen thing — wealth and elegance come to naught in some macabre, motorized version of "Les Miserables."

In short, I did not like the 1994 Jaguar XJ12 sedan.

### Feb. 4, 1994

Ford named the car "Aspire." That's a good thing. Had the company called it "Inspire," it would have violated truth-in-advertising laws.

### June 25, 1994

It was a revival meeting, replete with prayers, tents and gospel music. There were ministers aplenty, one of whom presided over an impromptu wedding. There were children everywhere, running through fields and playing on bales of hay, while their parents huddled in groups and talked about God, family, country — and Saturn.

It's unbelievable," said Richard "Skip" Lefauve, president of Saturn Corp., a small-car company that began as a laughable idea 12 years ago but has blossomed into a full-scale religion.

"Who would've thought? All of these people — my God! All of these people are our customers," said Lefauve, looking at a crowd of 15,000 Saturn owners. (Reported from Spring Hill, Tenn.)

### May 12, 1995

Ford's Ecostar Electric Vehicle arrived via a flatbed truck. That told me something. All other test cars or trucks coming to my driveway get there under their own power.

But I would've had to wait a week or so for the Ecostar to make the

700-mile trip from Michigan to Northern Virginia running on its own juice. The vehicle's sodium-sulfur battery pack is good for 100 miles between charges. A full battery charge takes at least eight hours, using a special, portable charging station that must be plugged into a 220-volt outlet.

Without the charging station, juicing up the Ecostar's battery to 90 percent capacity could take 32 hours. You might as well travel by stagecoach.

### Oct. 25, 1996

Volvos are goody-two-shoes cars, which is why they're always square. They are motorized versions of that silly new book, "The Rules," which purports to tell women how to get men.

Volvos only kiss on the first date. You give them a commitment, and they give you rejuvenating virginity. To wit: "Yes, we drove. But it didn't count. We were en route to a meeting of the Society for the Protection of Everyone, and we were being safe."

### Nov. 29, 1996

People chortled when Ford introduced its latest version of the Taurus — a sexy, muscular sedan, immodest by the standards of Middle America.

### Feb. 14, 1997

The 1997 Buick LeSabre Limited is an old folks' car. It's big and roomy. When it moves, it galumphs

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— bounding along highways in a self-satisfied, triumphant manner.

### March 21, 1997

You can stop laughing at Korean car companies.

You can forget those poor-quality Hyundai cars that littered repair garages in the late 1980s. You can close the book on that awful little Kia sedan that Ford Motor Co. had the temerity to sell as the Aspire.

You can get real about competition. The Koreans are here to stay. Anyone doubting that should take a ride in the 1997 Kia Sportage, a small sport-utility vehicle designed to compete against Toyota's RAV-4 and Honda's CR-V.

### May 23, 1997

It's an old formula: Stick a big engine in a little car. Tweak the suspension. Attach fat brakes. Add 16-inch rim diameter, or larger tires. Install a smooth, five-speed manual gearbox. Simplify the instrument panel — analog gauges only. Put nice, body-hugging seats up front. Raise hell.

What's surprising is how often this formula works so well, as it does in the 1998 Ford SVT Contour sedan.

Warning to parents: If your teenager's date shows up in this car, invite him or her inside. Go over the family values rules. Get a copy of the driver's license. Call the date's parents, preferably while the date is still trapped in your house. Do a conference call so that everyone understands the rules. Have the date and your child sign a behavior agreement.

Hey, you can't be too careful with someone who shows up in something that looks like a family car, but runs like the devil. That person is up to no good.

### March 29, 1998

I've driven thousands of cars. But no one ever followed me home. No one begged me to stop for photographs, or pleaded with me to linger in a mall parking lot to placate a friend who was trapped at a checkout counter, and who would "just die if she couldn't see this" — the 1998 Volkswagen Beetle.

And that wasn't the half of it.

Teenage girls squealed in unison at the sight of the new Beetle.

People allowed me to get in front of them in traffic. Allowed? Heck, they invited me to go before them.

At a Wendy's in Northern Virginia, customers pulled out of the drive-through line to get a closer look.

All this for an update of a putt-putt econobile — designed for Hitler's Third Reich — that arrived on these shores in 1949 and remained for a generation marked by hippies, free love, the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the assassinations of Bobby, Martin and John, and the eventual demise of flower power.

The new Beetle is packed with comparable emotion, minus the unhappy stuff. It is a smile-mobile — and comes with a dash-mounted flower vase.

### April 24, 1998

Some bullies fear the dark. I learned this as a sixth-grader at Holy Redeemer Elementary School in



MICHAEL WILLIAMSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Warren Brown, in 2001, at work with Martha Hamilton and his editor at the time, Frank Swoboda.

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New Orleans. Lil' Man, the class terrorist, used to beat me up. He'd slap my head. I'd protest. He'd punch me.

The abuse continued until my Grandma Dora told me about voodoo. "You put the gris-gris on that boy," she said, referring to a spell. "You tell him that gris-gris gonna come and snatch him up at night. That'll fix him," she said.

And so I told Lil' Man that he was in danger of disappearing in the night. He punched me, but I laughed and taunted: "Gris-gris gonna getcha, gris-gris gonna getcha, gonna snatch you up at night!"

Next day, Lil' Man's mom came to school to complain that he couldn't sleep because of "some awful thing" a classmate told him about vanishing in the night. She told this to Sister

Irene, our teacher, who whipped me. But Lil' Man never punched or slapped me after that. He was a bully without portfolio, just like some sport-utility vehicles.

**Sept. 11, 1998**

It was a Ferrari weekend, but Frank wouldn't stand for it. Frank is my editor, and something of a curmudgeon. He's into political correctness. He thinks Ferrari is too rich, too excessive for this column.

Can you believe it?

This used to be one of the few columns in any newspaper that openly discusses sex.

The tested Ferrari 456M is nothing but sex. It's motorized Viagra, a candidate for a Kenneth Starr subpoena. But Frank thought it would be more appropriate if I wrote about the 1999 Lincoln Town Car, which I also drove. So, that's what I'm gonna do.

**Oct. 23, 1998**

The 1999 Oldsmobile Alero is a work of ordinary excellence — outstanding because it succeeds so well at being normal.

The Alero is, in a word, friendly. Were it a day of the week, it would be Saturday. Were it a politician, it would be vice president — always there, frequently useful but never obtrusive.

**Aug. 15, 1999**

The 1999 Chevrolet S-10 Xtreme was so disappointing, it reminded me of Gloria.

She went to St. Mary's Academy, a black all-girls Catholic high

Cars • Perspective

## As my journey takes a new turn, Honda shows how carmakers are turning, too



The new midsize, front-wheel-drive Honda Accord in Touring trim shows the direction the industry is taking, and it makes sense, Warren Brown writes. (Honda)



By **Warren Brown**  
Columnist  
December 24, 2017

It is appropriate that I finish this last column for The Washington Post on Christmas Eve. It is an ending and beginning — for me and, looking forward, for the global automobile industry.

The industry is changing in terms of products and function. Those shifts are represented in the subject of this week's review, the all-new 2018 Honda Accord Touring, and in an important introduction to the 2018 Washington Auto Show: Mobility Talks International, Jan. 23 and 24 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

**Warren Brown's last Washington Post column written on Dec. 24, 2017.**

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COURTESY OF WARREN BROWN

**Warren Brown and his wife, Mary Anne Reed Brown, who donated her kidney for his first transplant. Together, they raised three children. Mary Anne was also a constant travel companion who especially liked to drive trucks.**

school in New Orleans. I went to St. Augustine, the counterpart for boys.

I had a crush on Gloria. She was pretty, hot and tempting, and she liked me, too. We had a date — a school dance, one of those events where nuns and priests walk around keeping male and female bodies apart. Didn't matter. Gloria winked, smiled, nodded and squeezed my hand in a way that only a teenage boy could love.

I left the dance with her thinking, "This is it. Yippee!"

But Gloria said that would be a sin. She just wanted to talk — about becoming a nun.

"Shock" doesn't begin to describe my dismay. There was a pervasive feeling of stupidity, of being so

wrong about something, it was embarrassing. That is how I felt in the Xtreme.

Such a silly truck!

### Feb. 3, 2008

She's so cheap she has an almost religious compulsion to return an item to a store if she discovers that she could have gotten the same thing from somewhere else for 10 cents less.

But when it comes to trucks in general and Jeeps in particular, the woman is insane. Fuel economy doesn't matter. Her usual preference for small cars disappears. Bigger becomes better. Her mild demeanor is supplanted by a lust for power. Mary Anne — the sweetly smiling

schoolteacher and gentle, churchgoing wife from Marshall, Tex. — becomes Texas Truck Mama. (From a review of the Jeep Liberty Limited sport-utility vehicle.)

### May 4, 2008

The styling is governmental. It would fit nicely into any municipal, state or federal vehicle fleet.

That is our first impression of the 2008 Ford Taurus Limited AWD sedan, a full-size car designed to haul parents, children, police, perpetrators or politicians. Even with its bright, bold, three-bar grille, the new Taurus appears devastatingly official.

### Feb. 4, 2011

When does price stop making sense? Exactly what am I getting for \$93,000 that I'm not getting for \$60,000 or \$30,000?

Consider: The Porsche Cayenne S, redesigned for 2011, can move from 0 to 60 mph in 5.6 seconds. It supposedly can reach a cruising speed of 160 mph. So what? In our recent East Coast snowstorms, my Cayenne S moved at the same speed as every other vehicle on the road, which was barely moving at all. And where, oh, where in the heavily regulated United States of America am I going to legally, safely drive anything at 160 mph?

### Dec. 24, 1995

My mother, Lillian Gadison Brown, always wanted a Cadillac, but she couldn't find a dealership that would sell her one — not in segregated New Orleans, anyway.

She was black. And in the 1950s

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and 1960s, the few blacks entering Cadillac dealerships in New Orleans tended to be the people who cleaned those places.

My mother was a professional. That is, she belonged to what was known in black New Orleans as a “professional family.” Her husband was a teacher who did some occasional biological research for the National Science Foundation. But that wasn’t enough to get her respectful passage through the doors of local Cadillac dealerships, where some salespeople laughed at her outright, or directed her to a used-car lot to shop for battered Chevrolets.

So my mother did the next best thing. She bought a Cadillac from a rich white man in nearby Metairie, La., for what she deemed a “good price.” It was a 1965 Cadillac Coupe DeVille, midnight blue with a cream white top, white leather interior and whitewall tires.

My mother cleaned that car weekly — at least, she ordered her children to wash, wax and polish it (“With clean, soft cloths, please. Don’t scratch my car!”). And when she stepped into that sparkling Caddy, she would become a black Cinderella en route to a ball, even though her destination was Schwegmann’s supermarket in east New Orleans.



KAFI DREXEL

**Warren Brown on one of his final test drives, with his daughter Kafi Drexel.**

**Jan. 10, 1997**

A good car is as quiet at highway speeds as it is coasting along suburban streets. And it is as effortless — that is, it gives no sense of engine stress or strain at higher rotations per minute.

A good car is tight. Every visible piece fits together perfectly, and not one of those pieces is given to squeaks or rattles during travel.

A good car is attractive — not necessarily “Wow!” attractive, but appealing enough to be as inviting

on its last payment due as it was on its first.

A good car feels good over bad roads and good roads. It mutes the bumps and grinds of the rough stuff; and it turns good roads, replete with sharp turns and twists, into a driving experience worthy of a Walter Mitty dream. And that means a good car allows you to escape — if only for the briefest of moments — the cares of your everyday world.

And though it has its moments of poetry, a good car is practical — and safe.

**April 3, 2005**

I recall a conversation with a terminally ill woman at Georgetown University Hospital who heard about my case. She congratulated me on my latest extension of life. She asked: “What are you going to do with the extra time you’ve been given?”

I responded quickly, almost without thinking: “I am going to love and work and write as well as I can as long as I can; I am going to see and learn as much as I can, travel wherever I can whenever I can. I am going to live.” (From a column about the two organ donations Brown received after his kidneys failed.)

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## Obituaries

# Warren Brown, Washington Post auto writer who chronicled his health struggle, dies at 70

BY ADAM BERNSTEIN  
*Obituary editor*

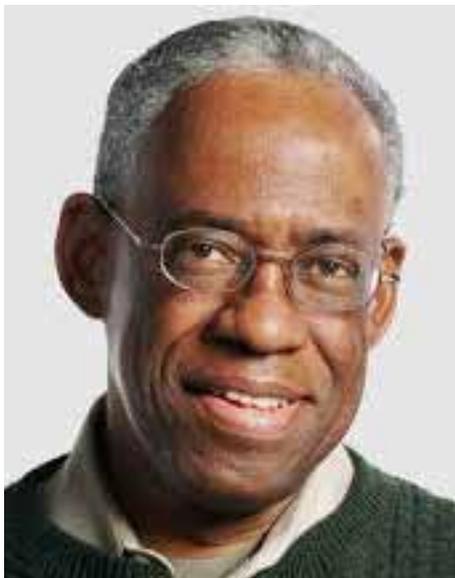
• Originally Published July 26, 2018

Warren Brown, a *Washington Post* reporter and columnist who brought race and class-conscious insights to his coverage of the automotive industry over three decades and who bared his personal health struggles in a book about the donated kidney he received from a colleague, died July 26 at a hospital in Manassas, Va. He was 70.

The cause was complications related to kidney disease, his family said. Mr. Brown received two kidney transplants, the first from his wife in 1999 and the second from a Post colleague in 2001. Neither transplant lasted, and he had long been on dialysis.

*Road & Travel* magazine, which honored Mr. Brown in 2009 for career excellence, called him a “lively and detailed writer” and “one of the most respected and influential automotive journalists in the industry.”

He described himself as a “servant” to his readers — a representative who looked out for their financial interests while also trying to satisfy car enthusiasts’ passions for details about fuel efficiency, horsepower and torque. But in writing about



JULIA EWAN/THE WASHINGTON POST  
**Warren Brown, reporter and columnist**

one of the largest sectors of the U.S. economy, he also challenged readers who might have preferred that he stick to interiors and exteriors, penning columns that could veer sharply into politics and race.

Race, he once said, was a factor in his backing of the 2008 government bailout of Detroit’s auto industry amid recession. “They were the companies that gave my people a break,” Mr. Brown, who was black, told C-SPAN in 2010. “We would not have a black middle class had we not had General Motors, Ford and Chrysler.”

He observed in a 2008 column of detecting a sneer in the way “well-paid, well-known” pundits seemed

to summon outrage over lending money to unionized workers but did not write in high dudgeon over the government’s financial rescue of Wall Street leviathans.

“There is a feeling in this country — apparent in the often condescending, dismissive way Detroit’s automobile companies have been treated on Capitol Hill — that people who work with their hands and the companies that employ them are inferior to those who work with their minds and plow profit from information,” he wrote. “How else to explain the clearly disparate treatment given to companies such as Citigroup and General Motors?”

If he harbored a bias of his own, he said, it was for companies seeking “to triumph over seemingly insurmountable odds.” They included South Korea’s Hyundai Motor Co. in the mid-1980s when it was the “laughingstock” of the industry, and Ford Motor Co. when poor leadership looked poised to hasten its demise leading up to the 2008 recession.

He was particularly troubled, he wrote in a 2006 column, by the “incessant outpouring of criticism from the media and Wall Street about all things Detroit.”

“I liken that criticism to the stuff I’ve heard all of my 58 years of life about what certain people can’t do, how certain people are naturally

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inferior to others, how certain people are destined to fail,” he wrote. “It may seem the unbusinesslike, un-journalist-like thing to do, but I always look for that spirit — that willingness to keep fighting when everyone is counting you out as a sure loser — whenever I look at a corporation.”

After a stint at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mr. Brown arrived at *The Post* in 1978 as a national reporter covering urban affairs, race and labor. The newspaper was trying to diversify its reporting ranks, and Mr. Brown — a New Orleans native who held degrees from a historically black college and an Ivy League journalism school — seemed destined to advance to a prestigious beat.

A colleague advised him that to “make it” at *The Post*, he should carve out a beat no one else wanted and make it his fiefdom. Flummoxing some editors, he petitioned to leave the national desk to join the business staff and write about the auto industry.

He explained that he felt called to the job for reasons he traced to his upbringing in the segregated South. Black passengers, including his college-educated father, were almost always forced to the back of city buses.

“Freedom came when my parents and black neighbors bought their own cars,” he said in the C-SPAN interview. “That way they could

not only sit up front, but could also drive the things. And that to me was power, that to me was freedom.”

Mr. Brown reported on automotive safety regulations, trade unions and executive shake-ups at General Motors and other companies. He eventually launched a weekly column, now called *On Wheels*, and hosted a weekly online chat called *Real Wheels Live*.

After accepting a buyout in 2009, he continued as a *Post* contractor and contributed to other media outlets including NPR, CNN and the minority-oriented publications *Decisive Magazine* and *African Americans on Wheels*.

Invariably he was asked by friends and strangers to disclose his favorite car. He said he learned to swerve around that trap, calling himself an “automotive gigolo” who could never be content with one.

Warren Aloysius Brown was born in New Orleans on Jan. 17, 1948. His father was a chemistry and biology teacher, and his mother a former student.

In 1969, Mr. Brown received a bachelor’s degree in English and secondary education from Xavier University of Louisiana, a historically black Catholic institution in New Orleans. He earned a master’s degree the next year from Columbia University.

He was a longtime resident of Arlington, Va., before moving to Gainesville, Va., in 2016.

Survivors include his wife of 48 years, Mary Anne Reed Brown of Gainesville; three children, W. Anthony “Tony” Brown of Arlington and Binta Niambi Brown and Kafi Drexel Brown, both of New York; a brother; and two sisters.

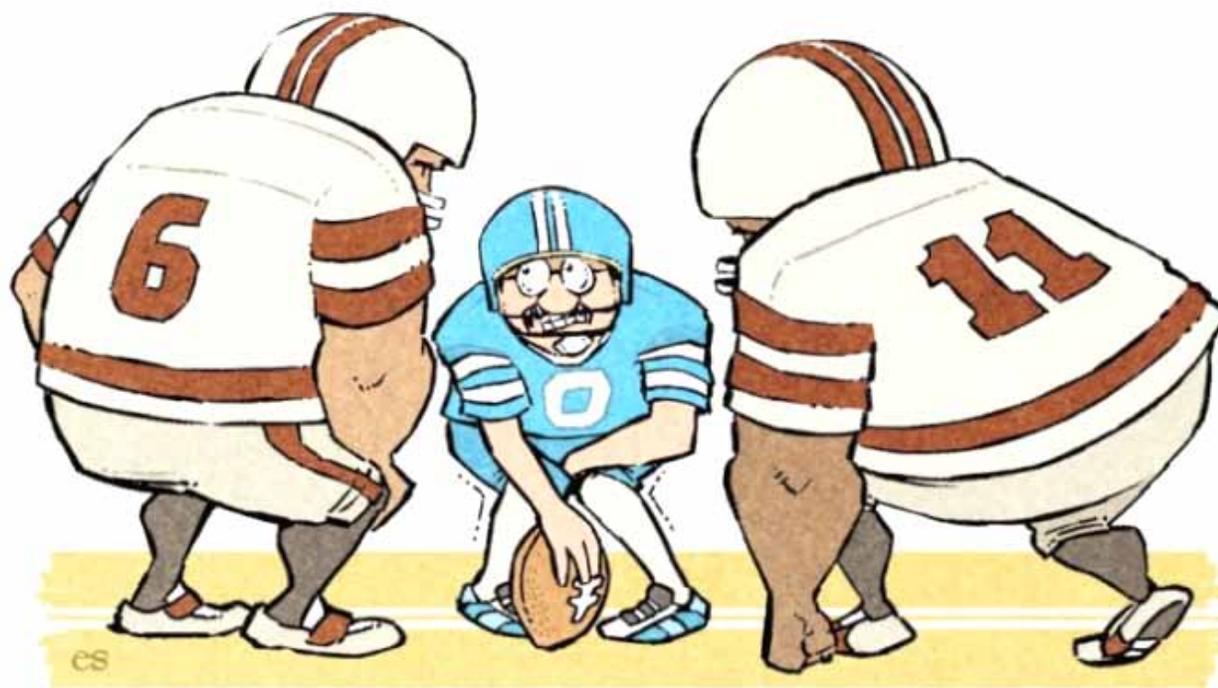
Mr. Brown suffered for years from high blood pressure, and hypertension ultimately damaged his kidneys. After his first transplant failed, a business section colleague, Martha McNeil Hamilton, volunteered to help a friend she described as a fellow “aging, ink-stained” member of the section’s “elder pod” who had stood by her amid her own family ordeals.

With Hamilton, Mr. Brown wrote about their friendship and the operation in *The Post* as well as *Black & White & Red All Over*, published in 2002. The title alluded to the old joke about a newspaper — “What’s black and white and read all over?” — and also served as a commentary on the color of skin and the blood underneath. Hamilton is white.

“People often talk about Mary and Martha in terms of having ‘saved’ my life,” Mr. Brown wrote in a 2005 column in which he expressed his eternal gratitude to his two donors. “I smile and privately dismiss the suggestion. Nothing physical can be saved. Its useful life can be extended. But houses eventually crumble. The best of cars won’t run forever. People die.”

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# Why you shouldn't go toe-to-toe with a sports columnist



(ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC SHANSBY)



**By Gene Weingarten**

Columnist

May 18, 2017

Like most men, I deeply impress myself with my knowledge of sports. I spend many hours in earnest philosophical debate with myself involving what-if scenarios and such. I recently decided to share these insights in an exchange of emails with one of the few people savvy enough to appreciate them, my colleague Tom Boswell, *The Washington Post's* brilliant sports columnist whose work I sort of worship.

**Me:** Close game. One out, runner on third. Batter flies out to left field, deep enough to allow the runner to tag up and score. Knowing this, the fielder lets the ball hit his glove and bats it up in the air. Then he catches it.

Runner will have sprinted for home when the ball first hit the glove and will be easily doubled off third. Great idea, right?

**Boz:** Wrong. This play was tried more than 70 years ago and is now specifically outlawed in the rule book. I even vaguely remember that one of the three outfielding DiMaggio brothers was a perpetrator. Catch up with the class, Weingarten.

**Me:** Fine. Ten seconds on the clock. Bears lead the Packers by one. Fourth and goal for the Packers on the Bears' 5-yard line. Obviously, they are going to kick a chip-shot field goal to win. So the Bears jump offside and clobber the long snapper. Tweet! They are penalized half the distance to the goal, which is meaningless. Then they do it again. And again. Finally, from the 1¼ -yard line, they back off, but the victim is so woozy he shanks the snap, and the Bears win. Isn't that good strategy?

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**Boz:** It's a stupid strategy. This is against the unwritten rules, and everybody knows it. The first time you did it, every player on the field would have to be "separated." The second time, there'd be the biggest brawl of the last 10 years and the revenge would be played out in future meetings until the end of time and at least one season-ending injury would be administered. These guys didn't go to finishing school. They have their teammates' backs, and the more vulnerable the guy — defenseless QBs, snappers, kickers — the greater the payback.

**Me:** I think that Bryce Harper should call a news conference tomorrow to say life is not all about money, that he will forgo free agency to accept a long-term deal with the Washington Nationals for \$100 million less than he would get in an open market, and that he is doing it as a gift to the fans, whom he loves and respects, in a city where many people have trouble making ends meet. I think that would make him a living god.

**Boz:** You are 180 degrees wrong. It would be a spectacularly selfish thing for Harper to do.

**Dear Bryce:** There is a union. It has fought the bleeping owners on your behalf for 50 years. It has gone eight-for-eight in "winning" work stoppages for you.

The reason you have a chance to get this \$400 million contract, not a \$200,000-a-year contract, is 100 percent because of the union. The best players have a moral responsibility — to all the players who fought for them in the past and to all who will follow them in the future — to negotiate a salary that is in the vicinity of fair market value.

You can't leave \$100 million on the table, because you aren't just giving away your own money, you are giving away EVERYBODY'S money in the future.

BTW, here's what will happen if you screw every other player in the game with your pious BS. Hughie Jennings holds the MLB record for being hit by a pitch 287 times in his career. You will break it. Next year.

**Me:** Should a sportswriter be shot like a rabid dog if he writes that a player or a team that has been playing poorly is trying to "get untracked," when he means "on track"?

**Boz:** Yes.

**Me:** You mean I got something right?

**Boz:** Yes, and I never thought of it.

**Me:** We're gonna end right here.

## An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program



## Think Like a Reporter | *Why You Are Not a Columnist*

Reporters provide factual information to readers and viewers. They get out of the newsroom to observe events and conduct interviews. Their articles provide the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of a story. They do not include their opinions. Points of view are expressed in quotations from experts and people who are involved in issues, events and debates.

Columnists often begin their careers as reporters and have extensive experience in covering a wide variety of subjects. Some have had overseas postings that have added to their knowledge. Others have become experts in a beat area. All columnists are expected to express opinion and have a distinct point of view. Columnists have areas of expertise or focus; for example, politics and policies, environment and local culture.

### Be the Reporter | *Be the Columnist*

- Form pairs. One of you is the reporter. The other is the columnist.
- The reporter needs to remember to cover the story in a balanced and fair manner. What are the facts? Who might be interviewed? Write in the third person voice. The columnist needs to determine the type of column that he or she writes. Do you include humor to highlight life's idiosyncrasies? Do you keep a friendly, conversational tone or distance yourself slightly in a teacher-student relationship with your readers?
- The reporter is to cover the story as it would appear in the A section as a news story. The columnist is to write an essay (or column) responding to the event with a distinct perspective.

### Select the Work and Event | *Determine Your Focus*

Select one of the literary works for the pair to cover as reporter and as a columnist. You do not cover the entire book or story. Report from a section; for example, Goldilocks' entry into the house of the Three Bears or Atticus Finch in the courtroom.

Jack and the Beanstalk  
 Make Way for Ducklings  
 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn  
 To Kill a Mockingbird  
 I Am Malala  
 A Separate Peace  
 1984

Little Red Riding Hood  
 Snowy Day  
 The Diary of a Young Girl  
 Romeo and Juliet  
 The Kite Runner  
 The Fellowship of the Ring  
 The Crucible

Goldilocks and the Three Bears  
 Cinderella  
 The Outsiders  
 Animal Farm  
 Of Mice and Men  
 Night  
 The Grapes of Wrath

