
Remembering Ed Bradley

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Ed Bradley was a great client. Although this wasn't mentioned in any of his eulogies and Ed would undoubtedly laugh if he heard this, any lawyer who had the privilege of working with him and the honor of defending his broadcasts will attest to it. From the perspective of a prebroadcast lawyer, he was careful, reasonable, and receptive to all suggestions—even if they came from a lawyer. Litigators knew him as a thorough journalist, a witness juries loved, and a person whose strong ethics and morals motivated him to take an active role in helping his lawyers defend his reports. He was compassionate, devoted to doing the right thing, had a great sense of humor, and was a lot of fun to work with.

My colleague Rick Altabef's favorite Ed Bradley story involved a report in which, at Ed's behest, a social worker got a job as an orderly at a psychiatric hospital and wore a hidden camera to record the abuses we had heard were taking place there. One such abuse was the unnecessarily brutal treatment sometimes meted out to teenagers the staff decided needed to be "restrained." When Rick, Ed, and other members of Ed's team met with the social worker, the producers emphasized that this brutality was something that, if it occurred, should certainly be taped. Ed jumped in and said: "But don't let them beat up the kid too much. If brutality breaks out, tape it, but at the same time do your best to stop it. Try to get the others to back off." Ed anticipated the legal constraints, and then some. He was far too decent to go for the best possible footage. He cared more about the patient than the footage.

My favorite Ed Bradley story took place almost ten years ago. Summary judgment had been denied in a defamation case pending in El Paso, Texas,

and the judge had ordered that the trial commence in August. It was July, *60 Minutes* was on hiatus, and Ed was on vacation at a cooking school in Italy. I called him in Italy to tell him that he had a choice between trying to settle the case and spending August on trial in El Paso. He asked me if we had done anything wrong in the report. I told him that we had not. Then he asked: "When do I have to be in El Paso?"

When Ed arrived in El Paso, he took me and my colleague Naomi Waltman aside and told us that he had put on a few pounds at the cooking school in Italy and that he was going to lose that weight during the trial. He said that he was on a diet of soup and bagels. I was somewhat concerned about getting bagels in El Paso and shared my concerns with Tom Leatherbury, the Vinson & Elkins partner who had led the team that prepared our case for trial. A Vinson & Elkins associate quickly volunteered his father's restaurant. The next morning, the associate showed up with the oddest-colored bagels I had ever seen. They were sort of a reddish greenish color. He proudly put a plate of them in front of Ed. Ed looked at them and politely asked what they were. The associate responded, "Jalapeno bagels, Mr. Bradley." Ed threw back his head laughing and said: "I love it."

Before the trial started, Ed was a bit cranky. I don't know if it was the diet, the weather, or the fact that he was spending August on trial in El Paso, but he was not in a great mood. Then our lead trial counsel, Harry Reasoner (no relation to the former *60 Minutes* correspondent and anchor), delivered his opening statement. He won over the whole courtroom, including Ed. During a break in the trial after the openings, we went into an empty jury room. Ed took off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves, pulled out his reporter's notebook, and jumped in. He remained an active part of the trial team until the

jury came back with a defense verdict.

After the verdict came in, our local counsel told Ed that the court reporter had drawn a picture of him and there were a few people in the court house who would like his autograph on their copies. Somehow the request grew to include all members of the defense team and various others. Ed ended up autographing over fifty drawings. On many of them, including mine, he wrote a personal note.

The drawing has been hanging on my wall for almost ten years in a place where I can always see it. The sun faded his note a few years ago. Naomi and I kept saying to each other that we needed to take our pictures and a Sharpie back to Ed to ask him to sign them again. We never did it. It never occurred to us that he wouldn't be there to do it. I still consider that picture my favorite memento of my career at CBS. Nothing will ever replace it. And, more importantly, no one will ever replace Ed Bradley. 

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