

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

#### David Simon, Series Creator

---

Welcome to a special series of podcasts by the Center for Emerging Media.

**On Sunday, the Wire will air its final episodes, marking the end of five seasons of intense social and political commentary transmitted in the form of a groundbreaking tv drama, set right here in our own city, Baltimore. I sat down with the showcreator, David Simon, who also serves as a writer and producer, to hear his thoughts on what the Wire has meant to him and what he thinks The Wire says to all of us in the 21st century. Here is our conversation.**

**The conversation I had with Ed was really good, we were talking a lot about the philosophy behind it and it's funny, I said to him about whose characters were whose and how you work together to write things and he said that McNulty was probably more you than him.**

No, I say it's more Ed than me. I do, listen, there's some of me in there and there's some of Ed in there and there's some of nobody, there's some of Dominic West. So, ultimately, I think plausible deniability requires Ed to say it's more of me and requires me to say it's more of Ed.

**We were talking about how the characters in this, those that stand up against the system, those that have some sense of honor and righteousness no matter who and what they do, are the ones that seem to always get it in the end, or get hurt in the process and not be able to come out on top.**

Yep.

**People always criticize you, some critics will say, like what's his name, Salam wrote that piece where he said that David Simon thinks he's constructed a critique of capitalism, but ultimately he's constructed a moving brief for despair, and ultimately indifference.**

Yeah, I saw that.

#### What'd you think?

I would quote Camus back to him, Camus said, I think in "Myth of Sisyphus," to rebel against injustice against overwhelming odds is perhaps absurd and futile but to not rebel is equally absurd and futile, but only one act has the slightest chance of resulting in any human dignity. I'm not quoting him exactly, I don't have the capacity to quote people exactly without a notepad in front of me. That, or the Kafka quote that is read to Bubbles by his AA sponsor in this season, is where I think The Wire places its humanity and I think there's a lot of people trying to tilt at windmills all through the world in various ways and I think their efforts are the only possibility for human dignity and I think that's where the Wire is actually a very affectionate, and a very sentimental.. I don't want to say sentimental, a very affectionate piece, and there is some sentiment in The Wire, it's on the human level and it is arguing for a certain degree of dignity on the part of individuals. But it is a show that is modeled on the Greek tragedies and you might as well ask me why Antigone, or Medea, or Oedipus have to go through such hell. It really is modeled on the Greek dramatic tradition, and not on sort of the Shakespearean. Given that, and given that that was our intent, of course we're writing a tragedy, and we're writing a tragedy that is, we hope, reflective of postmodern America.

**Let me ask you two questions, when you talk about the role of drama and the role of a writer and how you view the world, you've just made a really interesting distinction about looking at America in the twenty first century, either through a Shakespearean lens, or a classical Greek lens. Talk a bit about that, define what you mean.**

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

Most of our drama is rooted in Shakespeare, it's the internal tumult of the individual, sometimes in the most Freudian of possible ways. You look at, I'm talking about some excellent drama here, I'm not trying to pick a fight, because I am an admirer of *The Sopranos*, or of *Deadwood*, for example. But the life and times of Tony Soprano, or Al Swearigan, on those other two shows, it bears more of a resemblance to a Macbeth, or a Richard III or a Hamlet. To act or not to act, you know, how do they see themselves, it's the journey into the self that propels *The Sopranos* forward dramatically. Perfectly valid, not arguing for one way over the other, but what you don't see a lot of in modern American drama, certainly not in television, is the Greek tradition, which was much more the notion of fated individuals, of people put in conflict with inexorable gods and indifferent gods, and you don't see a lot of that. And I think one of the reasons is our Western culture, particularly in the modern sense, I don't think even we give our due to Yahweh, I mean, you know, unless, you're a fundamentalist, we're not, we don't like the notion that we're not in manifest control of our lives and that we don't choose our beginnings, our middles, and our ends. It's almost a fundamental myth of capitalism, and of democracy, that the individual controls his outcome. I think a lot of what we go through in modern life is trying to argue against and defeat the randomness of modern life and of inequality and injustice, and even death. And so the idea that you are fated or doomed or that by exercising free will in the truest sense you are going to be martyred, which was the very essence of Sophocles and Euripides and all them other fellers, that really bothers us, and it doesn't have as many adherents. You see an awful lot of Shakespeare done, you see an awful lot of O'Neill done, on the stage, you see an awful lot of Ibsen. You don't see a lot of Greek, a lot of the Greek plays done, every now and then, but you know I think it really speaks to the world of *The Wire* in a way that makes *The Wire* unique and that's why we leaned hard on it, and we stole big. Cagney said, "Never steal anything small. Steal big." So, we did.

**But the characters you've developed, that came out of *The Wire*, one of the things they do though, they may not control the beginning, middle, and end, and the randomness of existence, and the power of the corporate world and the capitalist world that comes at them and surrounds us all, but they are controlling their responses to it.**

Absolutely, and therein lies the dignity, and therein lies the heroism, sometimes, depending on the character and depending on the moment. And therein lies the humanity and it's for that reason that our hearts break for them, and I think in one way that is an improvement upon some of the original plays we were ripping off, because the Greeks were, those playwrights, were adept at writing about man in an unforgiving world, trying to maintain dignity, but the interior psyche of the characters, I think that truly did elude them at that point, it certainly was eluding playwrights in the western canon at that point. That really was for Shakespeare to invent. In some ways, somebody writing drama today, pick from one, pick from the other, do what you want with it. It's the humanity and the wit and the humor of the characters. You know, without the humor, I mean, *The Wire* to me is one of the funniest shows about the decline of the American empire that's ever been written. And you may quote me.

**We will.**

I'm not going to say it's one of the funniest shows on tv, but if you're going to do one about the decline of the American empire, it's pretty damn funny. Without the humor, it's unbearable. Without the wit and the humor and the humanity, it would be unbearable.

**What did you think of Barack Obama, and his love for *The Wire*, saying his favorite character was Omar?**

I think it was a crass appeal for my vote.

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

#### Did he get it?

It may have worked. I don't quite know, yet. I mean in the primary, the privacy and sanctity of the vote is sacred, and I'm going to invoke it here. But as far as the general election, McCain's going to have to come out with a very heartfelt love of Bunk to counter what Obama has offered me.

**McCain and Bunk, that's interesting. I'll have to think that one through.**

I don't know if the guy has it in him.

**I don't know either, I'm not quite sure. But Omar, though, people loved Omar, and it's interesting that a lot of people don't get all the time this idea that Omar doesn't kill civilians.**

He doesn't. He's in the game, he will kill, he is a murderer, but he has one personal distinction, which is if you're in the game, you're in the game, and if you're not.. it's what the mafia used to have, supposedly had, in its heyday. What was it, that great line from, it's wasn't Luciano, it was Frank Castell, once said to a reporter, "Relax, we only kill each other." That code doesn't originate with Omar, but he actually practiced it, I thought, quite beautifully.

**And you created this character, Omar, I'd like to find out, I'm curious about the creation of this character. Here you have a black, gay, bad man from the streets. The cumulative part of this human being portrayed on the screen is, I mean, it's unique.**

Credit Michael Williams with a lot of it, a lot of it. He really did bring it. It's always been said, we didn't plan the character to go along that way, and he only had seven episodes, and actually, I don't know where that came from. I know that we told Michael, of the 12 or 13 episodes of season 1, I guess it was 13, he was only signed up for 7 of them. And that's what we told him, you know, you're only going to be working 7, and we don't know if we have a pickup for season two, but if we did have season two, we expected the character to go on, but I think that you only have 7. I think I was telling him, you only have 7 of the 13, and he came to the conclusion that he had 7 and he'd better act his ass off. And he did, but you know, if the show went forward, Omar was going forward, as well, but I think he became convinced that he had some planned obsolescence in the character that he overcame, you know, not really true. We had a lot of great actors and we killed some of them, and we let some of them live, and it was totally dependent on story.

**And the Omar/Bunk relationship was fascinating to me, too.**

Yeah, I love that, and that I gotta credit George Pelicanos with developing in the most fundamental way. He wrote that scene on the bench between Bunk and Omar..

**Oh, I thought, that should be one of the great dialogue scenes for acting students anywhere..**

I thought, what he did with that scene and how he spoke to Omar's ultimate place, it grounded Omar in the original sin of his life, and of what he was doing. It made sure that you understood that any love you felt for Omar for the way he carried his business, had to be equivocal, and to have Bunk do it, and to do it on such a personal level, I thought was just brilliant. That's George, man, he brings it.

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

#### **You and George Pelicanos met where?**

We met at the funeral of the lady who ran the Mystery Loves Company bookstore in Fells Point. She was a great fan of Pedro's, a great fan of George's and his work, and a big supporter of the book *Homicide* and a fan of that show. So we both knew her and when she passed, we were both at the funeral over in East Baltimore, and he gave me a lift to the Shiv'ah afterwards and we talked in the car. I said, "Listen, I got this show up and it's going to get a full run, at least one season. I'm thinking it should be more like a novel than a television show. I'd read some of George's stuff by this time, I'd been turned onto him. Laura, my wife, also a mystery writer, had been saying, you've got to read Pelicanos. I was resistant in that Baltimore way, you know. He's from Washington? He's gonna tell me about crime. No, no.. back up off me. But, I finally cracked "The Sweet Forever" that was the first book of his I read, so by the time that funeral happened and I encountered him again, I tried to recruit him the best I could and he agreed to do an episode and start working on the show.

#### **He's an incredible writer, obviously, the stuff he came up with.**

Absolutely, and the other guys, too. Lehayne and Price, it really was a murderer's row after a while.

#### **And Zorzi.**

And Zorzi, an elemental part of the writing staff, just cause of his sheer knowledge of politics and of the Maryland culture of politics. And we had Rafael when we did the port story. He was invaluable that year..

#### **Rafael Alvarez.**

..and nobody is more essential to this than Ed Burns, in terms of plotting, and Ed's influential in every part of the story, obviously, but what he did in Season 4 with his take on the school system couldn't have been done without his seven years of teaching. It really was a writing staff tailored to what we were trying to do, and I don't expect to have it that easy ever again.

#### **I'm curious about, and I think many people would be curious about, your relationship with Ed Burns and where it began and how you two, I think in many ways, as Ed had told me, your relationship has really deeply affected one another, and the way you look at life.**

I think so, I mean, I've learned a lot from Ed. Ed's one of the smartest people I know, one of the most genuine. He is an unlikely compadre for projects like *The Wire* or *The Corner*, by the resume. When I encountered him he was a police detective. Some of those guys are very, very smart, I don't mean to suggest that, but the notion of being adept at narrative, and at storytelling, and at parable, that's a lot less likely. There's a joke that inside every police officer there's a book, and that's probably where it should stay. But Ed, I met Ed when I was researching a series of articles on Little Melvin Williams. Ed was the arresting officer. It was a wiretap case, went back to '84. I met him and his partner, Harry Argerton, in the DEA offices. I had sort of a pro forma interview, it was my first interview on the project. It occurred to me that everyone was being really polite. They were being helpful, but it was very polite. The surrounding weren't helping, up in the Fallon building, and I asked Ed if I could meet him outside of work, and I'm thinking, my usual cop reporter self, some bar somewhere, I buy the beers. Except, I don't think Ed had been killing bars since his time in the Western district. There's some stories about Ed, back in the day, but I think he'd settled down. So, he asked me to meet him at the Towson library branch, so right away I knew it was really furtive, you know this is some real CIA stuff we were involved in. I got there and I met him and he was ready to check out. He had this stack of books, and I remember some of them. One of them was a series of essays by Hannah Arendt, "Finality of Evil" and all that. And then, uh, John Fowles "The Magus," Bob Woodward's "Veil" and about two or three others. And it was such an eclectic reading list that I looked at him and I said, "You're not really a cop, are you?" And he just gave this little

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

weird smile and then we started talking about everything that was wrong with the police department, and the drug war, not only about the Melvin Williams case. He became, I think it's fair to say now that we're both out of it, and I can say this, I would have never said this, obviously, if either one of us was in the game, he was a great source, and a very accurate source. He had a lot of axes to grind, and he never ground one unfairly, that I could tell. And he also became, sort of a guidance counselor, in terms of my reporting. I remember when I was getting ready to do Homicide, and he was actually in the FBI doing the Boardley case, so he was not in the homicide unit then, but they were letting me in the unit, and the one thing he told me, he said, "You know, there's some good guys up there. There's some guys who aren't very much good at all, but the one guy you have to follow, the one guy you have to pay attention to, is Donald Warden."

**Yes.**

And I said, "What's with Donald?" Cause I don't know if you've met Donald, he's this gap-toothed polar bear guy who doesn't look like he's got as much on the ball as some of the others. Truth is, he's unbelievable as a detective. Ed said, "Don't sleep on Donald Warden. This guy is natural police." That's the first time I heard that line. And he was right, Donald was an essential part of the book. So, from a very early point in our relationship, I began to trust him. And when it came time for him to retire, I asked him if he wanted to do "The Corner," and that was sixteen years ago, so we're off and running.

**You just finished this other film together as well, right, the one you did in Namibia?**

Yeah, we did a seven part series on the Iraq war based on a book "Generation Kill" by Evan Wright. I think it's the best war reporting, certainly the best narrative war reporting out of Iraq, yet. I would compare it to Michael Herr's "Dispatches." I think it's that good. I don't think that's hyperbole. I wrote the scripts with Evan, and with Ed Burns, who, of course, is a Vietnam vet, and I thought brought something really special and some real special perspective to the project. Ed was actually the guy who went over to Africa for the full six months. I was there at the beginning, and at the prep, and at the end. But Ed was the guy who really shepherded that thing in, in terms of the writer-producer. We're doing it in conjunction with a British producing crew, as well, who've been wonderful to work with.

**I can't wait to see the final episode of this, and kind of reflect on that. Many people have The Wire is going to end up being one of these things that's studied in colleges 20 years from now when you want to look at what urban America was like at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

Hopefully, it won't be looked upon for its nostalgia. Hopefully some stuff is gonna get better, you know?

**Do you think so? How does that live within you?**

Listen, I don't. I don't. Politically, I am a pessimist at this point. I don't believe we can actually even recognize our fundamental problems, much less begin to address them. And that is what the last season of The Wire was about. So, no, I don't think it's going to get better. But having said that, I live in Baltimore, and I also happen to be an America, and I'm with everyone else who's waiting around to see the game on Saturdays, and you know, trying to figure out where you can get a good meal, and you know, looking at the price of gas at the tank, and Jesus, you know, I'd love The Wire to be wrong about everything. This is not a gleeful pessimism, it's a worried pessimism. And if The Wire is wrong, nobody will be happier than me.

**I guess it was about a year and a half ago, Ed Burns and I were on a panel together, down at the University of Maryland. He really pissed off a lot of people.**

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

Really?

Oh yeah.

Ed?

**No, not Ed. How could that happen?**

I am shocked.

**He said that, um, he said that, "I was tired of hearing about saving one body at a time. It's all a waste of time. I don't want to be involved with anything, unless it has to do with thorough systemic change." And..**

I know where he's coming from, which is, everyone's trying to play with the fine tuning knobs, in all of these institutions. As if, if they get the treble and the bass and the balance just right things'll start to work. And the back of the machine is on fire. And nobody can actually see it because everyone is actually either co-opted within the institution, or we're engaged in a political dynamic that's sort of an either/or with a limited range of choice. Ed, in addition to being a storyteller, and working on *The Wire*, and working on these other projects, Ed has spent a lot of time trying to get, like, non-profits in Baltimore, and school systems and various institutions to try some things that he believes in, you know, try some programming that he believes in. And it is, talk about a Greek tragedy, it's that fellow and the rock and the hill. So, I understand Ed's frustration.

**And he hasn't given up on that either. One of the other things that really fascinates me, I think the challenges of viewer's psyche, the American psyche, watching *The Wire*, is the question of honor and humanity, and the levels on which it's found, and where it's not, and how it crosses all plains from the corner, to the police officers, whoever else you're portraying, that's something that really challenges, kind of, our notion of what honor, honesty, and humanity mean.**

Right. I'm not interested in, like, labels of good and evil. Like, this guy's a drug dealer so he's evil. This guy's a cop, so he's good. Or this guy's a politician, so he's either good or evil. He's either a good guy, a reformer, or a bad guy, a guy who needs to be thrown out of office. That whole dynamic is, this probably is hyperbole but I'm going to go for it anyway, that's the pornography of American entertainment. That's every cop show and every lawyer show. Every single drama that is offered up for popular entertainment is on some level a political or cultural form of pornography, and I'm tired of it and it bores the hell out of me. That's not to say that there aren't moments where it's done so well that I want to stand up and cheer now and then. Give me Atticus Finch and Gregory Peck, and yeah, I'm in for a pound along with everybody else. But it's done so badly so often that there's nothing there anymore. It's been almost eviscerated. And, we were after something else. We were trying to look at systems, and systemic failure. We were depicting an America that has become a "can't do" country. We can't resolve. We can't get the intelligence right on Iraq. We can't figure out what these guys are doing in flight schools all over the country. We can't tell ourselves the truth about No Child Left Behind and look behind the stats. We can't tell ourselves that our police department is making up stats so a guy can be elected governor. It's like, whatever the task is, we will somehow find a way not to do it. That, to me, is America at the millennium, I'm sorry to say. I no longer believe that we are the "can do" harbinger of the world's last best hope.

**When people say that, and people have argued that, and Mark Bowden did in his article, but other people have as well, that you miss a layer of the black world, you miss the beauty and**

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

**the love that goes on inside inner city streets. Or people called the quote unquote good souls, who fight against the corner. Is that a fair critique?**

Mark said a lot of things. I apparently am the angriest man in television, which, I take that as a vague manner of praise, but I think it's rather faint. The second angriest man in television, I believe, is by a kidney shaped pool with his cellphone in Bel Air somewhere, and he's screaming because he doesn't have enough points on the DVD's. I hate to tell you what the third angriest man in television is doing. He's probably asleep. There was a little bit of personal hyperbole in that piece that I didn't know quite what to do with. Mark is very good friends with a couple of editors that hold me in low regard and I hold in low regard and I've made no bones about it for about a decade. And he, I recently found out, he blurbed the book of the fabricator I had a hand in outing at The Baltimore Sun. So, there's something very loyal and personal to this thing for Mark. I sort of admire that in a way. I've gotta tell you. Loyalty is something that I do admire. But I think it colors in a sense his view of what The Wire is and isn't. The first thing is, it's fiction. And people who write fiction get to make choices. And if I decide that the premise is going to be the interior of the drug trade and the interior of the police department, and the second season is going to be the interior of unionized America at the port, and the third season is going to be the interior of the political structure, the home life, or the ordinary lives, of ordinary people who are not engaged in those endeavors are certainly going to be peripheral. That's a storytelling choice. Any story cannot be everything; it has to be something. And that's a fundamental of any form of narrative storytelling. Now, having said that, wherever we had the opportunity to depict viable working class and middle class people, be it the Colvins at home, adopting Namon, or the teachers who were working in the school system and trying to go good work, or the deacon, representing, I think, the best aspects of the black church in a place like Baltimore. Or in a variety, I could go on and give you about 12, 15, 20 different characterizations that had nothing to do with anything other than moving through their day, trying to make their lives better, and trying not to do any harm, and being regular folk. I would say that they are represented in the piece. Are they the center of the piece? Nope. Nor do I think they have to be for the piece to be valid, and so I'm not sure..

**But they're essential to the piece? Don't you think?**

Yeah. Oh, they are essential. I think they're essential parts of the frame in which the picture is perceived. And ultimately, I think the question becomes, what are you trying to say and what are the tools you need to say it? And one of the fundamental things we were trying to say is that the drug war is a disaster, and it needs to be ended. And that was unequivocal. If The Wire comes out of this with one fundamental and practical political message, that would be it. I'm not sure that anything other than depicting the drug war gets you there. Obviously, it's a lovely thought that you're going to also include every other aspect of African-American life in The Wire. But I don't think The Wire ever or ever intended itself to be a chronicle of African-American life in America. That is too broad a statement to be covered by any show, anywhere. I certainly wouldn't attempt that. One of the fundamental flaws that a new critic always makes, when they're not used to endeavoring in criticism, I think, is to criticize, or to critique the show that they wanted to see, rather than the show that's there. Or the book that they wanted to read rather than the one that's there, or whatever. I kind of know how to ruminate on somebody who has an interesting critique of what is on the screen. But somebody who wants to see a different story entirely, well, more power to you. Go make it. Go write it.

**And, finally here, David, a non-Wire question. What are you doing now? What are you into now besides the work you're finishing? What are you reading and thinking about at the moment.**

I just read Richard Price's new book "Lush Life," which is set on the Lower East Side of New York. It is a police procedural, but it's one with ghosts. It's just beautiful. It's really about America, and post 9-1-1 America in that sense, and I think it's just magnificent. I would love to get a chance to make that and I've

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

been talking to Richard about that and I hope we get it together. I'm finishing a pilot on New Orleans post-Katrina about musicians, again..

**Oh, I heard about this, this is a dramatic piece, right?**

Right, this has nothing to do with, yeah it's a continuing series for HBO. I hope they greenlight it. It obviously is not about crime or drugs. So maybe that's an answer to the previous question. There are lots of different stories, and there's lots of reasons to tell different stories, and you'll get no argument from me. Also, I think Ed is now engaged in starting to beat out the story of Donny and Fran, you know the prototype Omar and protagonist from the corner, who found each other and have married. I think basically should be, they are the prom king and queen of Baltimore, or they should be. I love Fran to death and I love Donny. It really is a remarkable story of redemption, and it has an honest to god, earned happy ending. I don't know what we'll do with that. We'll mess it up, probably. But Ed's starting to work on that. That has sold as a film to a film company, and we're trying to write that now. So, I'm making more movies, if I can.

**That's great.**

Like I don't have enough, Zorzi, Bill Zorzi, and myself are working on a book about Pennsylvania Avenue and the rise of drugs in Baltimore in terms of the creation of the drug culture in American life. Pennsylvania Avenue from the 50's to the 70's. Cause a lot of those guys are dying out.

**Yes they are.**

And we're trying to get to the ones who are still around and get their stories and get it down on paper before it's gone.

**Well, I don't think you're doing enough, David. You should do some more.**

Absolutely. I'm not working hard enough.

**Thanks a lot, man.**

Sure, thank you. I gotta tell you this, too, and I know it didn't come up in the interview, but this is the part that I'm totally loving this year, which is everyone's paying attention to the fabricator, the fabricating reporter, because that's the overt outrage in this story, but the real critique of the media that's in this season of The Wire is that with the exception of a very good act of journalism on either end, you know, in the beginning episode, they dig the stuff out of the city council meeting. They do a good piece of adversarial journalism, and at the end, the Fletcher character writes a beautiful narrative piece about Bubbles. Between those bookends, The Baltimore Sun depicted misses every single story. You know what's going on in the world. You know they're cooking the stats. You know that No Child Left Behind third grade test scores are bullshit. You know how the Clay Davis prosecution was undercut. The viewer knows everything and they see just where the disconnect is with the eviscerated, half-gutted newspaper missing the real dynamic of the city, episode by episode. Down to not knowing who Prop Joe is, and running it as a brief. That's the total theme. And here is the great moment of meta. I am the king of meta. With the exception of one or two guys who've been watching closely, the people who are freaking out about the season are the journalists, not necessarily the tv critics, they're just watching it as tv, but the journalists are just freaking out, and, angry and petulant. They sound like a heard of cats in the alley. And not one of them is referencing that. And if you think about it, it's so beautifully meta. All across the country, newspapers that have been killed by out of town ownership, are missing, are no longer covering their city in a viable way. That's depicted, and nobody notices that it's depicted.

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

**But it's so obvious, it's not just, see, even in the middle, when you talk about, because most of the characters in the newsroom are honorable newsmen trying to do a job.**

Absolutely, but between the economic preamble of the internet and the cutbacks and everything, and the fact that, the ambitions are so stunted and small trick, in terms of the Pulitzers and prize journalism. When you look at what they're capable of, in terms of sustained journalism, that's the depicted tragedy. And nobody will talk, it's not that they're not arguing about it, they don't even see it. Which is again, I thought the king of meta. They don't see it because they don't actually see it in the newspapers. If they did, they'd be freakin out, saying we don't cover our cities anymore. That's why people have turned away. So, I'm fascinated by the fact. I figured I'd pick an argument, and they'd argue over that depiction. They don't even notice it.

**That's amazing.**

It's a season about, we can't even recognize our own problems, and the institution that's supposed to recognize problems, can't even recognize it's own. They're arguing about whether the fabricator is a fair portrayal, and whether the editor's would, you know.. Yeah I know guys, that's the easy part. Look at how the newspaper connects or doesn't connect to the city. The only guy who got it was a guy Brian Lowry who writes for Variety. He used to be at the L.A. Times, and now he's at Variety, and I think it's the distance of walking away from a newspaper, and standing a few steps away. He got it instantly. Everybody else is arguing about, you know, they're arguing about character, they're arguing about this scene or that scene. Why would, you know, Zurawick is about the cameos of Olesker. He's like, you know, a little something about forest and trees, you know. They're arguing about whether or not Alma would have driven down, why didn't she just look at her first front-page byline on the website.

**Those are such minor details. Actually, Dave and I talked about that on the air together.**

Oh, I never heard it.

**Cause I thought that everyone had missed it. He and I really did disagree about the analysis of what that was about.**

Yeah, it's amazing how forest and trees this thing is. I feel like I'm the king of meta. I really do. I'm loving it. It's just beautiful. I'm really having a fun time with it. It's making me giggle.

**It's good to see you giggle man, you've got to giggle sometimes.**

Yeah, absolutely.

**Alright, bro.**

Alright, be well, man.

**You too.**

Talk to you anytime.

**Take care, soon.**

Bye bye.



a 360° view of the people and stories behind the issues

## THE WIRE

### Series Wrap-Up

marcsteinerblog.wordpress.com, or just Google Marc Steiner Blog. And I'm Marc Steiner, for the Center for Emerging Media.

Copyright ©2008 Center for Emerging Media

2901 Chestnut Avenue • Baltimore, Maryland 21211 • 443.927.7209 • [www.centerforemergingmedia.com](http://www.centerforemergingmedia.com)