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## The Message

**A hard-nosed TV reporter is peddling a new line -- of cosmetics.**

BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

Throughout her years in Denver television, Channel 7's **Julie Hayden** has specialized in being where the action is. She's been to more crime scenes than she can count, reporting about **JonBenét Ramsey** and innumerable lesser-known casualties, and has provided viewers with close-up views of just about every natural disaster to strike Colorado on her watch. But while reporting about last summer's Hayman fire, she says, something happened that made her reconsider her career path.

"We were going to cover one of the burn areas," she recalls, "and someone from an Evergreen newspaper said, 'You're Julie Hayden. I grew up watching you.' And that's when it hit me. I don't want to say I was burned out" -- she laughs at the semi-Freudian fire reference -- "but I realized I was ready for some new growth."

Of course, the urge to change course in mid-stream is hardly unprecedented -- but the particular direction in which Hayden plans to head may be. After March 31, her last day at Channel 7, Hayden will become a full-time saleswoman for Mary Kay cosmetics.

There's no shortage of irony in this move. In a medium where some personalities layer on the makeup like employees at an **Earl Scheib** auto-



Jay Bevenour

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News

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Off Limits

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RAIN

Ghelsea  
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paint shop, Hayden is known for looking natural and unfussy, as befits someone who's frequently seen by the glow of spinning police lights. Maybe that accounts for the reaction of her family and friends when they learned that she wants to trade in Channel 7's news trucks for a Mary Kay pink Cadillac. "They looked at me like, 'Hello? Will you please send the real Julie home now?'" she says.

Hayden began her broadcasting career at KGNU, Boulder's progressive public-radio signal, back in 1979, then skipped to several commercial radio outlets before transitioning to television in 1987. After stints with KRDO in Colorado Springs and Channel 2 in Denver, she joined the Channel 7 staff in 1990, becoming one of the station's most recognizable faces. But as the years wore on, her frustrations grew. "The nature of the business has changed," she says. "I like covering cops and courts and crime, but basically what they want is general assignment reporters who can turn a story that day. I have no quarrel with that. But it used to be that if you had a tip or an idea, you had some time to check it out -- and that's a luxury a general-assignment reporter doesn't have anymore. So it occurred to me that if I re-signed my contract, I'd be doing a lot of the things I'd been doing since college."

About a year ago, as these thoughts were going through her mind, Hayden says she "fell into" the world of Mary Kay with the help of a station photographer. "We were driving around one day, and I'd gotten an infection from some other name brand that I won't go into," she remembers. "I was griping about it, and he said, 'You should try Mary Kay. My wife sells it, and you'll love it.' Well, I let him call her out of politeness and let her come to my house. But I really liked the products, and I've had a ball selling them. It's an opportunity to help enrich people's lives in little ways and bigger ways. And the biggest appeal for me is the chance to be my own boss.

"No one believes it," she adds, "but the financial opportunities are amazing. One woman made \$100,000 in a month selling Mary Kay, and there are women in the Denver area making \$40,000 to \$70,000 a month -- and bunches more that are able to make my current salary in half a year. That's what I'm shooting at. Or else, like my husband says, we'll be living in a van."

Television may continue to play a part in Hayden's life; she'd like to land the occasional freelance assignment. But for the most part, she's casting her lot with Mary Kay, even though this turn of events is as surprising to her as it is to everyone else in her life. As she puts it, "I don't know in what alternate universe this could have occurred."

dark.

Chotz

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Letters

#### [Letters to the Editor](#)

From the week of February 20, 2003

**The gone Ranger:** Like Julie Hayden, **Ron Franscell**, who recently served as the so-called Rocky Mountain Ranger for the *Denver Post*, has a new project, albeit one that has nothing to do with lipstick and blush. After leaving the *Post* at year's end, Franscell, who's written a pair of novels, set to work penning what he calls a "true-crime memoir, about a crime that happened thirty years ago in the small town in Wyoming where I grew up. All this time later, it continues to resonate in this town, and I'm eager to explore how that happens -- how some people heal and some people don't."

As for Franscell, he's licking his wounds over the end of his Ranger gig. "To me, it was probably the best assignment in the United States -- and certainly in the West," he says. "But the new management had a different mission for the paper..."

The Ranger concept, in which a reporter was allowed to roam the region in search of stories that might escape notice otherwise, has gone in and out of vogue at the *Post* over the years. But shortly after being named to the *Post*'s top spot in 1999, editor **Glenn Guzzo** revived it. **Mike Ritchey**, Guzzo's first choice to fill the position, responded with copy so generally mediocre that few tears were shed when he departed in mid-2000 after only a few months on the job. Guzzo turned next to Franscell, whose resumé includes a stint as the editor and publisher of Wyoming's *Gillette News-Record*. "I was asked to sort of combine some of the style of fiction writing with the presence and the impact of journalism," Franscell says. "And that was a terrific challenge to me."

Franscell bowed at the *Post* in the spring of 2001, coming up with material that, if sometimes inconsistent or predictable, was infinitely more engrossing than anything that had appeared under Ritchey's byline. But when Guzzo was ousted in May 2002 in favor of former *Boston Globe* managing editor **Greg Moore**, Franscell lost the man most committed to keeping the Ranger in the saddle. Once Moore was ensconced behind the big desk, he wasted little time eliminating the feature entirely. According to Franscell, Moore initially said the former Ranger would be able to work on long-form pieces, but things didn't develop that way. "I don't know if his vision was translated down the line or not," Franscell says. "Maybe it just got lost in the shuffle. But in the end, I was moved to the newsroom as a general-assignment reporter. I worked on some good stories, just not many of them. By and large, they were less important to me than they had been, and since this book was *very* important to me, I decided that I should take the time to write it."

As a veteran journalist who's served in managerial capacities, Franscell doesn't resent Moore for trying to make the *Post* his own, and as evidence that he harbors no animosity, he points to an informal agreement for him to write book reviews in the paper on a sporadic basis. But the gutting of the Ranger does raise some concerns in his mind.

"The *Post* has the potential to be a very good newspaper, and Greg Moore seems to be pretty sharp and awfully energetic," he says. "By and large, the people he's bringing in are capable, too. But I do worry

that he and the editorial leadership seems to be tilting more toward people who don't have a Western sensibility. And since Westerners have a mistrust of people from outside the region, that's a gap that will have to be closed by the newspaper eventually."

**Flight plan:** On February 12, smack-dab in the middle of the ratings period known as sweeps, Channel 7 ran the first chunk of a multi-part story by investigative reporter **John Ferrugia** about alleged rapes at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. By the standards of local TV news, where three-minute items are often portrayed as in-depth, the piece was extraordinarily hefty, taking up around twelve minutes of airtime in a broadcast that boasts about kicking off with *ten* consecutive minutes of news. The result was compelling television -- but viewers who glance at the occasional *Westword* may have experienced a sense of déjà vu. This paper published "The War Within," a cover article by staffer **Julie Jargon** about the same topic, back on January 30.

It's common practice for news outlets of every description to pretend a story is theirs, theirs, all theirs, even if it has previously turned up elsewhere. In this instance, Channel 7 used the word "exclusive" sparingly in talking about its story but employed near synonyms on several occasions. On night one, the intro stated that "a high-level Air Force investigation is under way after 7News uncovered information about sexual assaults at the Academy"; on night two, anchor **Mike Landess** referred to the story Ferrugia "broke."

Ferrugia believes this phrasing was appropriate, although stories about rapes had already shown up in *Westword* and the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, whose reporting was mentioned by Jargon. He stresses that Channel 7 worked independently of other media outlets, many of which received identical tips last October. And while Channel 7 focused upon two of the women who spoke to *Westword* (both of whom were referred to by pseudonyms sans any on-screen acknowledgement), Ferrugia says the station also dug up plenty of other sources and info not in earlier reports "and broadened the story to a national investigation."

This last claim is evidently an allusion to the participation of Senator **Wayne Allard**, who, says Allard press secretary **Dick Wadhams**, was shown some of Channel 7's footage weeks before it aired (an approach that's viewed as manipulative by many print journalists but is widespread in local television) and reacted with an on-screen call for an Air Force investigation. Ferrugia sees no problem with implying that his station was solely responsible for spurring this probe, despite the fact that Congressman **Tom Tancredo** wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Air Force on behalf of one victim way back in November. Jargon documented Tancredo's efforts and cited a review of academy policy toward sexual assault by Lieutenant General **John Dallager**, the institution's superintendent, that was launched several weeks before the Channel 7 report debuted but expanded considerably after its airing.

Another curious moment took place in part two of the report, in which Allard expressed outrage at an e-mail sent to Channel 7 by Brigadier

General **Silvanus "Taco" Gilbert**, because, says the station's script, he didn't "even mention the women cadet victims" and "focused on the men who are accused." Since Gilbert's e-mail to Channel 7 stated that "each case is evaluated on its own merits with a view toward respecting the best interests of the Air Force, the victim and the accused," these statements are highly dubious; in addition, they seemingly apply more to a Gilbert e-mail sent only to *Westword*, which did indeed contain blame-the-victim language. Furthermore, Wadhams confirms that he asked Jargon to send him a copy of the Gilbert e-mail the week before Channel 7's story was screened, because it so upset Allard.

Nonetheless, Wadhams says Allard's response to Channel 7 was specific to the e-mail received by the station, and Ferrugia emphasizes that he never mentioned *Westword*'s Gilbert e-mail when speaking with Allard's office, going so far as to declare that he "didn't care about" the earlier, spicier communication. But Associated Press writer **Robert Weller** certainly did. Weller excerpted the Gilbert e-mail to *Westword* in a February 17 article that ran in newspapers and on Web sites across the country, including the *New York Times* and [CNN.com](http://www.cnn.com), but neglected to identify its source. Likewise, he ran a verbatim quote given to Jargon by Major **Kelly Phillips-Henry**, described as "the psychologist in charge of providing assistance to sexual assault victims at the academy," without any reference to *Westword*.

Weller did not return calls from *Westword* about what looks like an indisputable case of plagiarism, but **George Garties**, new bureau chief for the Associated Press in Denver, offers no defense on the reporter's behalf. "Using those quotes without attribution violates our policy," he says. "The story ran on both our state wire and our national wire, so we're talking here and in New York about ways to make sure it doesn't happen again." Garties won't discuss potential disciplinary action aimed at Weller, but he allows that both quotes "came from *Westword*."

Jargon's feature was nearly 10,000 words in length and wide-ranging by any measure, but Channel 7's Ferrugia describes it as more of a "narrative" than "a large, comprehensive story about a systemic issue." But appearances to the contrary, he insists that taking credit and boosting ratings are unimportant to him, especially in light of problems at the Air Force Academy. "The bottom line is, these women have been terribly hurt and damaged, and if collectively the media can bring this to the fore and get something done so that they get some justice and the system changes, that's great. That's why we do these stories."

**For better or verse:** Last month, Channel 9 anchor and consumer reporter **Mark Koebrich** was among those rewarded for their toils with a new multi-year contract; also invited to stick around were sports anchor/guilty pleasure **Drew Soicher**, weatherman **Nick Carter**, and reporters **Dana Knowles**, **Paul Johnson** and **Cheryl Preheim**. For Koebrich, the new deal was testimony to his longevity - he's been with the station since 1980 -- as well as proof that an embarrassing episode triggered by last December's 9News Christmas party hadn't come back to haunt him.

Each year, Koebrich notes, he emcees the outlet's yuletide festivities -- and as part of his annual duties, he composes a poem about his co-workers. This time, however, the poem wound up making the rounds. He says that "a lot of people in the newsroom started adding verses and stanzas" to his doggerel, some of which portrayed certain colleagues in an unflattering light. Although Koebrich insists that he didn't pen any of the offensive material, he was called on the carpet anyway. Channel 9 news director **Patti Dennis** declines to discuss specifics, calling the affair "a personnel matter," but Koebrich confirms that "our local management got involved, and I apologized to everyone -- and it went no further than that. It was just one of those unfortunate inter-office things."

Make that *another* of those unfortunate inter-office things. In August 2001, Koebrich made headlines after being cited by Denver police for getting into a physical confrontation with an engineer from his own station while covering the first game at Invesco Field. Afterward, Koebrich was quoted in **Penny Parker's** *Rocky Mountain News* gossip column as joking, "Look out, I'm pretty volatile" -- a self-deprecating approach that worked to his advantage, since his on-air presence is so pleasantly benign. He takes a less humorous tack when talking about the poem.

"I don't know how these things get blown out of proportion," he says impatiently. "But I do regret that it happened."

**As the print flows:** The February 13 edition of this column stated that a letter sent to the *Rocky Mountain News* by two organizations at the University of Colorado in reference to a January 16 **Dave Krieger** column hadn't been published as of February 11. In fact, the letter ran in the *Rocky's* February 11 issue. Oops.


Joining me in error was the *Denver Post*, which, due to an editing goof, printed the second mom-related botch to appear in a **Diane Carman** column this year. Last month, Carman wrote that when **Lola Spradley** officially became Colorado's first female speaker of the house, "the eyes of her proud mother" were "trained on her beaming face," despite the fact that the woman who'd given birth to Spradley was no longer among the living ("Seeing Red," January 16). Then, in Carman's February 11 column, dialogue from the play *King Hedley II* was put down as "God is a bad mother" instead of the actual line, "God is a bad motherfucker" -- or, as the *Post* prefers it, "God is a bad mother (expletive)."

To paraphrase the theme from *Shaft*: Shut your mouth! You're talkin' 'bout God! Can you dig it?

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