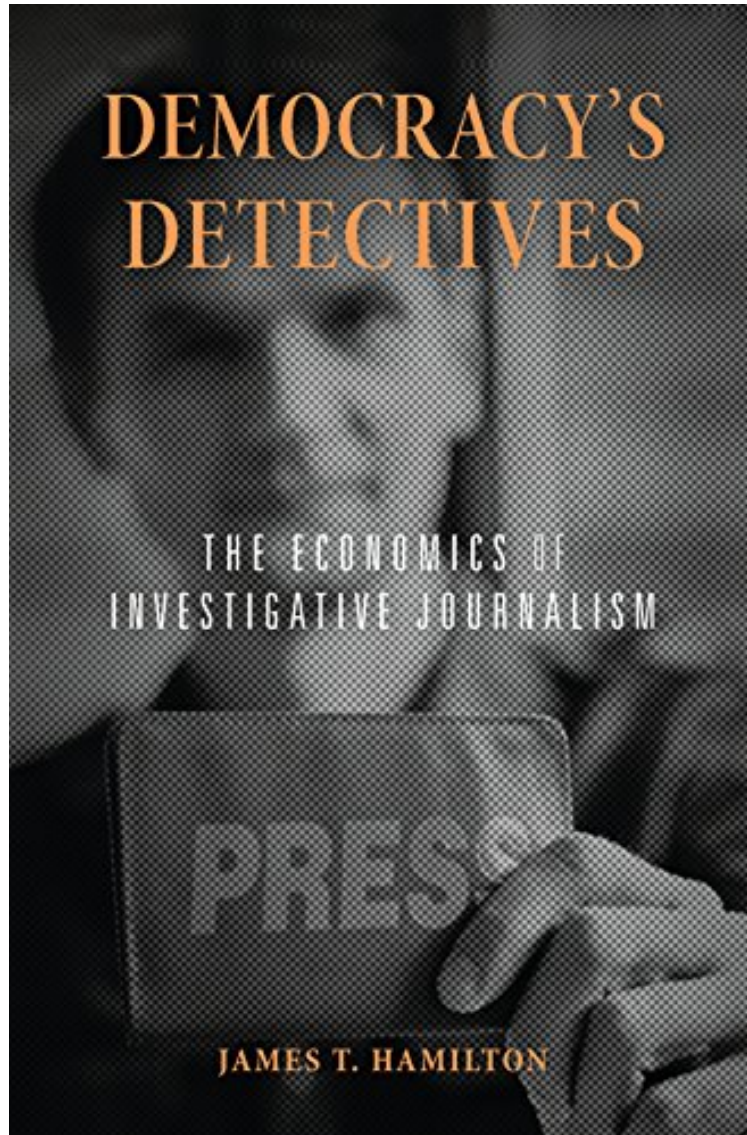


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## Democracy's Detectives

*James T. Hamilton*

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**James T. Hamilton : Democracy's Detectives** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Democracy's Detectives:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Terry BurnsGreat book!5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Illuminating read about the positive impact of investigative journalism in our societyBy Vignesh"Democracy's Detectives" is an illuminating read about the past, present and future of investigative journalism. Great book. I appreciated the use of story data, economic perspectives of investigative journalism's impact and case studies. The book inspires a sense of urgency to sustain and create conditions for investigative

journalism to thrive today and into the future. Jay Hamilton pushes the conversation forward by explaining how computational journalism and new methods can help lower the costs for discovering important stories. My favorite part of the book was when Hamilton calculated the positive monetary impact of investigative stories: how society received \$X net societal benefits for each \$1 invested in a project by a news organization. That's pretty powerful to see story impact calculated with numbers, and I hope newsroom editors and managers across America read that.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Paying for the investigative journalism we need By Jim Bettinger I've recently finished "Democracy's Detectives," by my friend and former colleague James T. Hamilton, and want to recommend it to anyone concerned about the status and fate of investigative reporting in the U.S. Hamilton, known to one and all as Jay, examines investigative reporting from an economic perspective (which makes sense; he is an economist by training). It won't surprise many journalists when he finds that there's not much of an market incentive for a publication to spend resources on investigative journalism: it's expensive, sometimes you come up empty, and successful investigative journalism doesn't generate much revenue. But that's not to say there are no economic benefits. In one fascinating chapter, he looks at the economic benefit to society of three investigative projects. The most riveting is an examination of the Washington Post's 1999 "Deadly Force" series, which investigated the D.C. police department's use of deadly force. After changes prompted by the series, the number of people killed by police dropped from 12 in 1998 to four in 1999 to one in 2000. Hamilton estimates the series cost the Post \$487,000 (in 2013 dollars) and that the net benefit, in lives saved, was \$69.4 million. Divide that benefit by the story's cost of reporting, Hamilton writes, "and the bargain for society becomes clear: For each dollar the Post invested in reporting, society gained over \$140 in net policy benefits in the first year." Jay's academic focus on computational journalism makes an appearance as one of the potential remedies for the challenges facing investigative reporting. I hope he's right. But more than that, this is an excellent, clear-eyed (and clearly written) assessment of the kind of journalism that we need, now more than ever.

Investigative journalism holds democracies and individuals accountable to the public. But important stories are going untold as news outlets shy away from the expense of watchdog reporting. Computational journalism, using digital records and data-mining algorithms, promises to lower the cost and increase demand among readers, James Hamilton shows.

Provides an extraordinarily precise and painstaking examination of the state of investigative journalism in the United States. Using a wide array of statistical measures and a case study of Pat Stith, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for The News and Observer of Raleigh, North Carolina, Hamilton demonstrates that investigative reporting (involving original work about important issues that someone wants to keep secret) costing thousands of dollars can produce millions of dollars in benefits to society. And Hamilton issues an urgent warning that this essential public service is underprovided in the market. His book should command the attention of every citizen who is concerned about the implications for our democracy when sunlight, which is the best disinfectant against corruption and incompetence, is obscured and blocked. (Glenn C. Altschuler Huffington Post 2016-10-18) A highly original look at exactly what the subtitle promises... Has this topic ever been more important than this year? (Tyler Cowen Marginal Revolution 2016-10-06) Bracing. (Rick Edmonds Poynter 2016-10-10) In riveting detail, Hamilton meticulously examines the storied history of investigative journalism in America, chronicles its current malaise, and makes a convincing case that pouring resources into gumshoe reporting makes economic sense for sclerotic news organizations. Why? Because readers hunger for more of it and are willing to pay to read it. (Walter V. Robinson, Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist and Editor-at-Large at the Boston Globe) This is an outstanding book, the product of careful thinking, of remarkable and painstaking gathering of data on investigative reporting past and present that no one in academia or in journalism has ever undertaken before. It is a moving, evidence-based affirmation of the value of journalism to democracy. (Michael Schudson, Columbia University) By bringing the economist's eye to the business of investigative journalism, Hamilton sharpens our appreciation of the craft as he explores its history, the motivations publishers have to fund the work, and the cash benefits investigations pay out. (Jack Shafer Reason 2017-02-22) Hamilton provides what is likely the most comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the economics of investigative journalism yet conducted... "Democracy's Detectives" is essential reading for anyone interested in the economics of news, and it is a master class in methodological creativity and ingenuity in conducting social science research. (Philip M. Napoli Journalism Mass Communication Quarterly 2017-04-05) [A] terrific new book. (Sam Lebovic Los Angeles of Books 2017-04-30) Hamilton's book presents a thoughtful and detailed case for the indispensability of investigative journalism and just at the time when we needed it. Now more than ever, reporters can play an essential role as society's watchdogs, working to expose corruption, greed, and injustice of the years to come. For this reason, "Democracy's Detectives" should be taken as both a call to arms and a bracing reminder, for readers and journalists alike, of the importance of the profession. (Anya Schiffrin The Nation 2017-02-01) About the

Author James T. Hamilton is Hearst Professor of Communication at Stanford University.