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IPG POSTS 5.4% Q2 GROWTH

Interpublic Group reported a 5.4 percent rise to \$2.5B in Q2 revenues and a 6.0 percent jump in operating income to \$264.2M.



Michael Roth

Organic growth (excluding results from the 2018 \$2.3B Acxiom acquisition) advanced 3.0 percent.

IPG's media, global creative networks, PR and digital offerings sparked the Q2 performance, according to CEO Michael Roth.

The McCann, FCB and Mullen-Lowe integrated agency network group registered a robust 10.8 growth in Q2 revenues to \$1.8B while organic growth advanced 3.2 percent.

The Weber Shandwick, DeVries Global, Rogers & Cowan, Jack Morton, Octagon, Current Global and Golin constituency management group lagged the ad network unit. CMG's revenues were up 0.3 percent to \$320M in the quarter and rose 1.9 percent on an organic basis.

Andy Polansky, who was upped from Weber Shandwick CEO to CMG head on July 17, said Weber enjoyed a mid-single digital growth organically during the first half and had 19 units showing double-digit gains.

Roth expects IPG to achieve its three percent organic growth goal for the year and to deliver "significant shareholder value creation."

SKDKNICK JOINS TEAM OF EX-NISSAN CEO

SKDKnickerbocker is representing ousted Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn, who was arrested in Tokyo in November for allegedly under-reporting millions of dollars of the automaker's income and using company funds for personal expenses.



Carlos Ghosn

Jill Zuckman, managing director of PA in SKDKnick's Washington office, handles the effort to advocate for a "responsible and fair trial" for Ghosn. She led the campaign that resulted in the freedom of Alan Gross,

who was jailed in Cuba for five years.

SKDKnick is working as a sub-contractor to Paul Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison law firm, which was hired by Ghosn to engage the US media and government and to "call attention to Japan's criminal justice system and heighten awareness of the impact of the case on the willingness of U.S. business executives to engage in business in Japan."

Brad Karp, chairman of Paul Weiss, is on the case. Mark Penn's Stagwell Group owns SKDKnick.

MMGY ACQUIRES NEXTFACTOR

MMGY Global has acquired Vancouver-based travel and tourism strategic planning agency NEXTFactor Enterprises Inc. Financial terms were not reported.

NEXTFactor provides strategic planning and marketing services for clients in the tourism and travel sector. It was founded in 2015 by Paul Ouimet, who also serves as CEO.

The agency's name will change to MMGY NextFactor. Ouimet will remain at the firm as partner and MMGY NextFactor president. No other staff changes were reported.



NEXTFactor is MMGY's first Canada acquisition. MMGY NextFactor's Vancouver offices will remain for the time being, but agency staff told *O'Dwyer's* that MMGY intends to open an office this fall to accommodate NextFactor and other MMGY Global brands.

Kansas City-based MMGY in April acquired London-based content, media and creative solutions agency Digital Spring, following acquisitions of London-based luxury travel, spa and property agency Grifco (and sister shop Ophir PR); McLean, VA-based travel and tourism market research firm D.K. Shifflet & Associates; London-based tourism and travel PR agency Hills Balfour; Los Angeles-based lifestyle and travel specialists Myriad Marketing; and New York travel and tourism agency NJFPR.

MMGY in 2016 said the agency's strategy is to effectively double its operations by 2020.

NAACP ISSUES PR RFP FOR AWARDS DINNER

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund seeks a firm with nonprofit and fundraising savvy to bolster the profile of its National Equal Justice Awards Dinner. The Dinner celebrates the NAACP Fund's work to further civil and human rights and honors individuals who are driven by that same social justice calling.

Past Dinner awardees are Eric Holder, former US Attorney General; John Legend, singer/songwriter; Howard Schultz, former Starbucks CEO, and Bryan Stevenson, founder of Equal Justice Initiative.

The Fund is looking for a firm with strong connections to the lifestyle media to boost celebrity interest/attendance at the Dinner, manage "red carpet" festivities and to expand social media following of the Dinner and Fund.

Budget is \$30K. Proposals are due July 30. Contact is Ella Wiley at ewiley@naacpldf.org.



FTI POSTS 2.8% Q2 REVENUE SPURT FOR PR

FTI Consulting reported that the strategic communications group registered a 2.8 percent rise in Q2 revenues to \$59M due to robust demand for its project-based corporate reputation business in the North America and EMEA regions.



Mark McCall

Mark McCall, global segment leader, said FTI enjoyed strong growth in the energy, financial services, life sciences, telecom and technology sectors.

He's confident of the "long-term growth trajectory" of the stratcom group, which will benefit from increased "global instability."

"Investing in people" and the public affairs sector are among the priorities for McCall and the PR unit.

As an example, he cited the June hiring of Joanne Wong as senior director in Hong Kong to bolster the Asia region. Wong joined FTI from FleishmanHillard, where she worked for 19 years and left as executive VP/client services & head of business development for APAC sector.

FTI's operating income for the quarter slipped 4.2 percent to \$9.1M but rose 8.4 percent to \$19.3M for the half. First-half revenues jumped 5.9 percent to \$116.8M.

CROSSROADS WORKS CHINESE RAILROAD

Crossroads Strategies represents China's CRRC North America, the unit of the world's largest maker of railroad cars, as it seeks to fend off moves to ban it from US contracts.

US lawmakers fear that CRRC, which has lucrative contracts to make subway cars for transit systems in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston, poses a security threat to America's infrastructure.

Crossroads handles issues for CRRC, a Chinese state-owned entity overseen by Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, regarding funding for capital grant programs and transportation.

The firm's consulting agreement calls for a \$15K monthly retainer through May 1, 2020.

SHIPLEY SAILS FROM BRUNSWICK TO KEKST

Joe Shipley, a nine-year veteran of Brunswick Group, has joined Kekst CNC in London as director in its public affairs offering.



Joe Shipley

Shipley will support the firm's offices in Brussels, Berlin, Paris and Stockholm with a focus on private equity and alternative assets.

At Brunswick, he worked on the IPO of Saga, restructuring of Dubai International's European portfolio and launch of the High Street Fund to back small businesses hurt by the 2011 riots.

Earlier, he did a three-year stint at Permira, venture capital/PE firm, and two years at now-defunct Bell Pottinger.

Richard Campbell, Kekst CNC partner, praised Shipley's "strong relationships with Westminster."

Publicis Groupe owns Kekst CNC.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Hotwire is partnering with **WaterAid** to support its goal of making clean water, reliable toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone within a generation. Hotwire will work to increase awareness of the charity and its mission, with the goal of driving donations, volunteering and advocacy.



The partnership, which kicked off at Hotwire's recent Bootcamp event in Dublin, will develop and execute an ongoing creative campaign throughout the next year. Since 1981, WaterAid has reached 26.4 million people with clean water and 26.3 million people with decent toilets.

5W Public Relations has been named PR agency of record for **Avalon GloboCare Corp.**, a clinical-stage global developer of cell-based technologies and therapeutics. 5W PR will highlight the expertise of Avalon GloboCare Corp. CEO and president Dr. David Jin, as well as the company's CellTech research, to develop a multifaceted national and international media profile for the brand.

Number Twelve Marketing, a female-led PR and marketing agency based in Los Angeles, has added **WAYB**, a family-focused product development company, and **Pure Azul Beverage Company**, a beverage development and manufacturing company, to its client roster. For WAYB, Number Twelve Marketing will manage public relations efforts, including the official launch of the Pico—an ultralight, compact forward-facing car seat. Pure Azul Beverage Company has retained Number Twelve Marketing to provide brand marketing and communications support for the launch of two beverages – a sparking tequila product, as well as a CBD-infused tea.

HL Group has been selected as U.S. communications firm for Swiss hotel chain **The Bürgenstock Selection**. The agency will work to grow the chain's presence through a strategic media relations campaign. HL Group's efforts will center on three properties: the Bürgenstock Resort Lake Lucerne, the Hotel Schweizerhof Bern & THE SPA, and the Royal Savoy Hotel & Spa Lausanne. HL Group's portfolio of travel clients also include Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts (global agency of record), NetJets and Puntacana Resort & Club.



Caryl Communications has been appointed media correspondent for Steven Kratchman Architect, P.C., an architecture and design firm that specializes in renovating underused and overlooked properties. Caryl's work for the firm includes media relations, social media, content development and other strategic public relations activities, such as speaking opportunities, award nominations and special events. SKAPC works with developers of properties throughout New York City, the Hudson River Valley and along New Jersey's Gold Coast. The firm is known for designing vertical additions to existing buildings and has completed nearly 50 projects which involved adding a rooftop terrace, penthouse, single story and sometimes six or more stories to an existing structure.

THE RISE OF FRINGE SOCIAL PLATFORMS

Across the spectrum of social platforms there are the familiar players like Twitter, YouTube or Facebook, and a complex ecosystem of forums and sites with the power to shape public discourse, derail brand narratives, and trigger crises. Known as “fringe” platforms, the sites are home to some of the savviest social media users on the planet and have become fertile ground for cultivating



Ebonie Newman

reputational threats. They manufacture disinformation (the willful creation of false or misleading information) helping to propel the rampant spread of misinformation (the unwitting spread of false information).

At Storyful, we’ve witnessed these communities develop sophisticated strategies that include message testing and distribution tactics across

mainstream social platforms to hijack news cycles and injure brand reputations. They understand how to create content that provokes powerful emotions, how to generate engagement with their content and which social channels to leverage for the most reach.

Yet, corporate reputation management teams do not understand the influence of these communities nor the flow of information and content between platforms. Or they lack the tools and resources to protect themselves against the pitfalls. As mis- and disinformation continue to proliferate online, companies will continue to face serious social media-driven threats to their reputations. It’s really a case of when, not if. There’s no excuse for not preparing for the inevitable.

Is your company prepared?

Assessing your company’s digital preparedness is one of the biggest challenges for organizations today. Take Starbucks, for example. After a racially-charged incident at one of their Philadelphia locations last year, fake coupons promising free coffee to African Americans spread across the web. The coupons were part of a disinformation campaign dubbed Operation Mermaid by alt-right 4Chan users, who hatched the plan to sow further chaos and exacerbate the backlash against Starbucks.

While it was difficult for Starbucks to predict exactly how an antagonistic disinformation campaign would play out, an attack like this was highly likely—and, indeed, had precedent for Starbucks. Disinformation is a feature of the news cycle today and it follows recognizable patterns. Building the muscle in your organization to detect and address disinformation requires being ready for it and scenario-planning for how to address it.

What is the cost of disinformation?

The *New York Times* recently reported on the Russian state-sponsored news network, RT America, which coordinated efforts to spread misinformation about 5G. RT America pushed back and others, including respected journalists, have criticized the Times report. Such a chaotic news environment can be very confusing for consumers, and, in turn, very problematic for businesses involved in telecommunications or otherwise reliant on the development of high-speed mobile networks.

Mitigating these issues is possible, and it comes

down to the time it takes to address an attack and how fast you understand what is going on. That may require rethinking the toolset you have and asking yourself how you get out of the reactive, 24-hour news cycle.

What do we do now?

Treating social platforms solely as a distribution channel puts your organization in a defensive position. Fundamentally, social media has to be considered a medium to mine for insight into the risks and opportunities for your reputation. That is the first and best practice. Here are three ways to do that:

Get familiar with the fringes: Smear campaigns often start in communities that have their own chat rooms, forums or platforms. These fringe platforms may only represent a small set of people, but developing an understanding of how they operate is critical to shifting your approach to social media and responding to the threats your company will face.

Understand the flow of information: Malign actors do not target individual platforms but rather move seamlessly between them. It is critical to understand how information flows across the social spectrum to garner a complete view of relevant business conversations.

Develop an eye for authenticity: Studies suggest that, year after year, less than 60 percent of web traffic is human. Spotting real content from the false content intended to distort and derail a narrative takes more than checking the sources. You need to be fluent in the information being shared and even the language being used.

With the rise of fringe platforms’ influence, social understanding is more important than ever in protecting brands’ reputations. By gaining a deep understanding of the conversations happening around their brand and industry, companies can tackle threats to their brands head-on and get ahead of any serious risks.

Ebonie Newman is chief commercial officer of Storyful.

MTI NETWORK HANDLES STENA BULK CRISIS

Stena Bulk, owner of the British-flagged tanker that was seized in the Strait of Hormuz by Iran on July 19, is using MTI Network for crisis support.

Pat Adamson, MTI chairman & founding partner, said July 24 that Sweden-based Stena Bulk contacted the crew of the Steno Impero on July 23. They are in “good health and they’re getting good cooperation with the Iranians on board.”

The company hopes to get “somebody on board to check up on the crew” but it has no idea when the 23-member crew would be released, according to Adamson.

Britain calls the seizure piracy, while the Iranians claimed Steno Impero was boarded after it collided with a fishing boat.

MTI Network bills itself as the “world’s leading incident response network dedicated to the shipping, energy, offshore and transportation industries.”

The London-based firm offers crisis response, reputation management, media training, cybersecurity and social media services through 23 offices around the world.



HUNTSWORTH SHOWS PR REVENUE GROWTH

Huntsworth CEO Paul Taaffe says the Grayling, Citigate Dewe Rogerson and Red communications division has reported Like-For-Like revenue growth “for the first time in a number of years.”



Paul Taaffe

Though overall revenues were flat for the first-half of 2019, LFL revenues advanced 0.9 percent to \$43.5M. Operating profit surged 18.5 percent to \$3.8M.

Grayling, Huntsworth’s PR flagship, registered a 3.2 percent dip in LFL revenues to \$20.2M due to a decline in its US business and an “under-performance” in the Middle East. The UK countered the doldrums with a 10.9 percent jump in LFL revenues due to client wins. Grayling shaved the first-half loss to \$120K from \$360K a year ago.

Red (consumer, digital, content shop) improved LFL revenues by 1.5 percent to \$10.2M, while financial firm Citigate Dewe Rogerson turned in a solid 7.2 percent hike in LFL revenues to \$12.8M sparked by strong performances in Hong Kong, China, France and the U.K.

BALLARD WALKS QATAR TRAFFICKING BEAT

Ballard Partners is working with Qatar, which is under a blockade by Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies, to provide guidance and counsel on matters regarding human trafficking.

The firm of Brian Ballard, who headed Donald Trump’s fundraising drive in Florida during the 2016 campaign, amended its \$50K contract signed a year ago to include the anti-trafficking agenda.

The monthly fee of the revamped pact was upped to \$115K per-month through June 20, 2020.

The pact prohibits Ballard from representing any other state in the Middle East/North Africa region for a year after the termination of the agreement with Qatar.

OBAMA DIGITAL PRO TO 720 STRATEGIES

Tom Cochran, who oversaw digital initiatives for the Obama administration, has been named partner and chief growth officer at 720 Strategies, where he previously served as chief technology officer from 2006 to 2011.

Cochran returns to 720 Strategies from Edelman, where he was general manager, digital and integrated marketing in the firm’s Washington office. He previously served as chief digital strategist and vice president, public sector at computer software company Acquia and chief technology officer at Atlantic Media.



Tom Cochran

While working at the White House, Cochran oversaw an upgrade of the U.S. embassy website and spearheaded the implementation of ShareAmerica, a platform for distributing public diplomacy content to global audiences. He also led the technology team behind the White House’s “We the People” petition platform.

NEWS OF FIRMS

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council has selected **Bob Gold & Associates** to promote and raise awareness of this year’s Think Asia, Think Hong Kong symposium in Los Angeles on Friday, Sept. 20. The event, which is geared toward businesses looking to enter the Asian market, includes a business symposium, business-matching sessions and networking events. Presenters at this year’s conference include Impossible Foods, which makes meat and dairy substitutes from plant-based sources, and others who will share their experiences of doing business in Asia. The event will also address the latest trends and opportunities in such areas as financial technology, digital entertainment and biotechnology.



Brandware has expanded its relationship with homebuilder **Ashton Woods** by being named public relations agency partner to the Texas divisions of the company. The agency has already worked with Ashton Woods for three years, leading media relations for the corporate brand and in the Atlanta market. Brandware’s Atlanta-based team will manage media relations and help establish the brand’s thought leadership to assist in promoting new communities and expanding awareness of Ashton Woods across Texas.

Hill+Knowlton Strategies, in conjunction with **Team GB** (Great Britain’s Olympic team), has launched One Year to Go, a campaign to spread awareness of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which kick off on July 24, 2020. To launch the campaign, Team GB and several Olympians are issuing a newspaper about the countdown to the Olympics in various places across the UK to spread Olympic fever. The campaign will also include such events as a demonstration of some new sports that will appear on the 2020 Olympic lineup and a showreel of highlights from the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games. There will also be an advertising initiative encouraging the nation to come together behind Team GB.

Allison+Partners has launched **Headstand**, an integrated communications consultancy. The new consultancy is positioned to handle

Allison+Partners’ conflict accounts as well as its own book of business. It offers a range of integrated marketing services that includes creative campaign development and execution, brand identity and messaging development, content development, influencer relations, media relations, social engagement and digital programs. Operating in stealth mode for the past six months, Headstand is already working with such clients as SAP North America, NerdWallet, SideChef, Trov and Xiaomi.



Worldcom has brought on Quito, Ecuador-based **MC Comunicaciones** as its newest partner. Founded in 2009 by former television news reporter and producer Mercedes Córdova, MC Comunicaciones has directed communications for such clients as Nestlé, Hyundai, Reebok, UNICEF, Volvo, and Hilton Colon Quito.

PR INDUSTRY GROWTH REMAINS FLAT

The North American PR industry grew by 4.8 percent last year, according to an annual survey conducted by PR merger and acquisition consultancy Gould+Partners.

Gould+Partners' annual poll, which focuses on agency net revenue growth, suggests that revenue gains in the PR industry have remained essentially at a period of stasis for the third year in a row, as growth was also 4.8 percent in both 2017 and 2016, compared to the industry's 6.6 percent growth in 2015 and 7.8 percent growth in 2014.

Midsized firms—or PR firms accounting for between \$3 and \$10 million in net revenues—brought in the highest net revenues last year, growing 9.1 percent (or average annual net revenues of about \$6.4 million). PR agencies boasting between \$10 million and \$25 million in revenue reported growth of 8.6 percent (or about \$15 million). The smallest firms—those with under \$3 million in revenue—were up to 6.4 percent (or about 1.8 million), while the largest firms—those in excess of \$25 million—netted the lowest average growth, gaining only 4.2 percent (or about \$156 million).

The survey also found that PR firms located in the U.S. Northwest lead as the top region for revenue gains, followed by the Northern California, Southwest and Washington D.C. metro regions. Last year, Northern CA topped the list as the leading growth region, followed by D.C., the Southwest and the Southeast.

Gould+Partners' seventh annual Net Revenue Growth report was based on data provided by approx. 250 North American PR agencies.

FINSBURY LEADS ADVENT BID FOR COBHAM

Finsbury is handling Advent International's \$5B bid for Cobham, UK defense & aerospace company, a deal that is expected to go under tough scrutiny by British regulators and politicians.

Silchester International, Cobham's biggest investor, opposes the takeover because it believes the supplier of gear to Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Airbus could fetch a higher price after it completes its turnaround strategy and cleans up its balance sheet.

David Lockwood, CEO of Cobham, said partnering with the Boston-based private equity firm will provide the investment the company needs to further “leverage the quality of our products and services.”

Advent's 165 pence per-share offer represents a 34 percent premium over the pre-announcement closing price.

Finsbury's James Murgatroyd, Dorothy Burwell and Humza Vanderman represent Advent.

Cobham relies on MHP Communications (Reg Hoare, Tim Rowntree and Nesyah Hart).



ON THE MOVE

M&C Saatchi Public Relations has appointed **Emeka McQuade** as senior vice president and **Adam Reader** as vice president. McQuade previously led the agency's consumer and lifestyle division, working from its London headquarters. He has transferred to the US to help to grow M&C Saatchi Public Relations' Los Angeles and New York operations, as well as expand its footprint across America. Before coming to the company, McQuade served as head of communications at Amplify and associate director at 3 Monkeys Communications. Reader will lead the company's New York office, with a focus on providing strategic consultancy. Based in the Group's Pine Street headquarters, his role includes developing integrated campaigns with other M&C Saatchi companies, including Lida, SS+K and M&C Saatchi Performance.



Emeka McQuade

CBS News has named **Lance Frank** vice president of communications. Frank has been with CBS since 2011, most recently as executive director of communications. He has shepherded outreach efforts for “CBS Evening News” under anchors Scott Pelley, Jeff Glor and Norah O'Donnell. In his new post, Frank will oversee communications for both “CBS Evening News” and the division's operations in Washington, D.C., which include “Face The Nation.” He will also lead initiatives for special events and other division-wide editorial priorities.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

McClatchy will help to fill in the gap being left behind by the closure of *The Vindicator*, Youngstown, Ohio's daily newspaper. The paper is set to stop publishing on Aug. 31. The Compass Experiment, a joint initiative between McClatchy and Google with the aim of developing “essential and sustainable local digital news models,” says it will launch a digital news outlet in Youngstown this fall. The company will have a website as its main product and will experiment with publishing frequency and alternative projects. McClatchy will have full editorial control of the outlet, which it will own.



Gannett and **GateHouse Media**, the two largest newspaper chains in the U.S. by circulation, are moving ahead with their plans to merge, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. The report says that the companies are working to negotiate a cash-and-stock deal in which Fortress Investment Group, GateHouse's parent company, would likely purchase Gannett, with GateHouse chief executive Mike Reed assuming control of the combined entity. GateHouse, which is known for slashing costs at the papers it acquires, currently owns nearly 700 papers, 156 of them dailies. In addition to USA Today, Gannett owns more than 100 daily papers and 1,000 weekly papers. Gannett recently spurned a takeover attempt by hedge fund-owned MNG Enterprises, and is also said to have considered a deal with Tribune Publishing Co.

COMMENTARY

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham is the “Where’s Waldo” of the DC political scene.

Where is she? More than a month into the job, Grisham is the cipher of Team Trump.



Stephanie Grisham

Her absence from the arena makes one pine for the return of the irrepressible Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Nah, just kidding.

Sanders was arrogant, antagonistic, rude, dismissive, condescending and downright mean-spirited toward the media.

And that was on one of her rare good days.

Serving America’s most truth-challenged president (e.g., *Washington Post* has Donald Trump approaching

the vaunted 11,000 lies and misleading statements mark), Sanders failed miserably at the press secretary job.

She didn’t even come close to fulfilling the basic requirements of the post: telling the truth and being somewhat of a champion of the media.

Even Ron Ziegler, the second worst White House press secretary of all time, finally fessed up when he told the media that all his statements defending Richard Nixon’s Watergate activities have become “inoperative.”

That confession opened the floodgates, which eventually led to Tricky Dick boarding the presidential chopper and waving goodbye to all of the suckers in DC.

Sanders didn’t have the principles to do a Ziegler. Former special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigators then went on to destroy any shred of credibility that Sanders may have had.

They cited Sanders for making false statements while defending Trump’s firing of FBI director James Comey. She told Mueller’s probers that her claim that “countless” FBI agents had told her that they lost confidence in Comey’s leadership was a “slip of the tongue.”

Loose lips sink both ships and press secretaries. Mueller’s revelation was the beginning of the end for Sanders.

Grisham, whom Politico dubbed “the president’s silent spokesperson,” may ultimately turn out to be the best thing to happen to the media during the Trump era.

The traditional press secretary job is dead, as long as president Trump sits in the White House, Mar-a-Lago or at one of his golf courses.

Trump is his own spokesperson and Twitter is his megaphone.

Sanders wound down her tour of combat at the White House by dodging reporters, auditioning for a job at Fox News and plotting her run for governor of The Natural State, a job once held by her father.

To her credit, Grisham hasn’t demeaned her position by pitching her tent at Fox. She has ceded that role to Trump mouthpieces like Kellyanne Conway who bathe in that media spotlight.

Grisham did earn high marks during Trump’s June pilgrimage to visit Little Rocket Man in North Korea, where she was roughed up by security goons.

The press secretary received some scrapes and bruises after she pushed back at the guards in a bid to pave the way for reporters to cover the photo-op of Trump and Kim Jong Un.

The Associated Press reported that Grisham was caught on video telling the journalists to “go, go” and get the story.

During that single incident, she proved to be more of an advocate for journalists than Sanders ever was during her two-year run as White House press secretary.

Grisham’s low-profile may be just what the DC press corps needs after the tumultuous and contentious reign of Sanders.

She does have one big thing going for her. In taking over the job of the worst White House press secretary in US history, the bar of success is set pretty low for Grisham.

The *New York Times* credited celebrity PR powerhouse Peggy Siegal for helping to rehab the image of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The July 13 paper profiled NYC’s “most prominent professional hostess” for using her gatekeeping savvy to get Epstein into A-List events and screenings.

There is another PR mover & shaker who didn’t make the NYT’s cut. That’s Doug Band, co-founder of Teneo, which modestly bills itself as “the global CEO advisory firm.”

New York magazine included Band in its July 22-Aug. 4 cover story on influential people attached in some way to Epstein’s world.

It brands Band as a “one-time White House intern who climbed his way to being Bill Clinton’s bag carrier, body man, fixer, and all-purpose gatekeeper.”

Connection to Epstein: Band arranged for the former president to use Epstein’s private 727 in 2002 for a trip to Africa.

NYM reports Band went on to help his boss form the Clinton Global Initiative in 2005, “a choice platform from which he launched his own lucrative favor-trading corporate-advisory firm, Teneo.”

Throughout that time, Band “took a number of trips on Epstein’s plane and attended parties at his town-house.”

More recently, he’s been teaching a public service class at NYU.

—Kevin McCauley