

Optimum Publishing International - Advanced Information Sheet

What I Wish I Said

Confessions of a Columnist

Jaime Watt, Andre Pratte, Michael Cooke, Breen Wilkinson

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About What I Wish I Said

Just as they do on those television cooking contests when the bell rings and the contestants' hands go up, at four o'clock on Friday afternoon, the column is filed—ready or not—to the columnist's horror, discomfort, or self-satisfaction. Regardless, one exigent and unrelenting thought remains: what you wish you'd said.

Such is the life of a weekly newspaper columnist.

Unable to ignore the urge any longer, in *What I Wish I Said: Confessions of a Columnist*, author Jaime Watt has collected forty-eight of his most eye-opening, illuminating, and provocative Toronto Star columns and with humour, candour, and wit, he's responded to each with what he wishes he'd said. The collection also features contributions from former senator and columnist André Pratte and from journalist and former editor-in-chief of the Toronto Star Michael Cooke.

Widely regarded as Canada's leading high-stakes communications strategist and the architect of groundbreaking campaigns that transformed politics with their boldness and creativity, Watt brings his insight to bear on some of the most vexing and consequential issues in Canadian life by reappraising his past work.

Across six topical subject areas—civil liberties and human rights, portraits of leaders, the Liberal Party in power, the Conservative Party in opposition, the Donald Trump presidency, and the COVID-19 crisis—this subtle yet accessible collection offers a distinctive look at recent times. Whether he got it right or wrong, Watt pulls no punches when it comes to critiquing—and at times lambasting—his past columns.

Revisiting his best and worst takes, Watt and his co-author Breen Wilkinson look at what might have been said in the columns he has been writing for more than seven years. And as he does, Watt challenges with new perspectives and ideas, inviting readers to consider what they wish they might have said, to consider how their points of views, and even their values, may have changed with time.



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About the author(s)

Jaime Watt is the Executive Chairman of Navigator and Founder of the Canadian Centre for the Purpose of the Corporation. He specializes in complex public strategy issues, serving both domestic and international clients in the corporate, professional services, not-for-profit, and political leaders at all three levels of government across Canada. Currently, Jaime is the Chancellor of OCAD University. He also serves on the board of the University Health Network, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, CANFAR, and the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake. He is a past president or chair of OCAD University, the Canadian Club of Toronto, the Albany Club, Casey House, Literary Review of Canada, Canadians for Equal Marriage, Canadian Human Rights Campaign and Canadian Human Rights Trust, among others. Additionally, he is a past director or governor of many organizations, including the St. Michael's Hospital Foundation. He is an adjunct faculty member of the Directors Education Program, jointly developed and administered by the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) and the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. Deeply involved with efforts to promote equality and human rights issues, he was the inaugural recipient of Egale's Lifetime Achievement Award and has been awarded the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals for service to the community. A highly regarded speaker, Jaime often appears as a public affairs commentator in the media. He is a regular contributor to all CBC platforms across Canada. He also writes a weekly column for The Toronto Star.

André Pratte (born May 12, 1957) is a Canadian journalist and former senator representing the De Salaberry division in Quebec. Before being appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on March 18, 2016, Pratte was a journalist for over 35 years and was editor-in-chief of the Montreal newspaper La Presse.[1] He was a member of the

Michael Cooke is a journalist and publishing executive. He was the editor of the Toronto Star, Canada's largest-circulation daily newspaper. He has had a distinguished career in journalism in both Canada and the United States. He predicted in February 2009 that Conrad Black's pillaging of parent corporation Hollinger International would leave the newspaper with no choice but to file for bankruptcy protection. He left Sun-Media, to return to the Star, where he took over as editor, while Don Hayner replaced him in Chicago. Maclean's columnist Paul Wells wrote in his defence that Cooke "was obsessed with declining readership, declining market penetration, the increasing reluctance of younger generations to take up the newspaper-reading habit", and noted that the Star stood a better chance of success with Cooke at its helm.[27] In April 2009, he joined the International Newspaper Marketing Association.[28] Cooke also sits on the board of Journalists for Human Rights.[29]

Breen Wilkinson is a Consultant at Navigator with over six years of experience at Queen's Park in strategic communications and engagement. Before joining Navigator, Breen was Senior Advisor, Research and Communications, at the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (LGO) where he served as the office's lead writer, managing speechwriting and correspondence operations. Additionally, during his time at the LGO, Breen led a wide range of impactful projects and events, including international goodwill missions, policy symposia, the production of an art exhibition, and constitutional ceremonies. Breen holds a master's degree in English literature from McGill University and an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and English literature from the University of Toronto. Passionate about the literary arts, Breen has presented his scholarship on modern theatre at the annual MMLA Convention, written a published play, and recently completed a novel at the Humber College School for Writers.