

Is Undercover Over?

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[Original link](#)

My latest piece for *Extra!* is now up:

[Is Undercover Over?: Disguise seen as deceit by timid journalists](#)

It's about the rise and fall of undercover journalism. Here's an excerpt:

Undercover reporting has a storied history. Nellie Bly, famous for traveling around the world in 80 days, also did a famed investigation of the conditions in insane asylums for the New York World. Bly feigned insanity for a series of physicians before being committed to a lunatic asylum. There she documented rotten and spoiled food, freezing living conditions, frigid bathwater, abusive nurses and relatively sane fellow residents. "What, excepting torture, would produce insanity quicker than this treatment?" she wondered. The series, later published as the book *Ten Days in a Mad-House*, created a sensation, and Bly was asked to join a government investigation of asylum conditions.