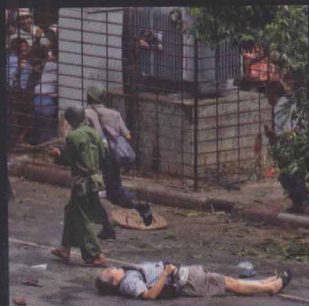
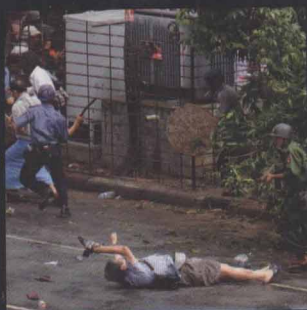


International News Reporting

Frontlines and Deadlines

This book shows there can be no substitute
for first-hand reporting from the field.

Christiane Amanpour, CNN



Edited by

John Owen and Heather Purdey

WILEY-BLACKWELL

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 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

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Nigel Baker is executive director of television news at Associated Press. Prior to helping set up the agency's video wing in 1994, he held senior editorial positions at British broadcasters ITN and Sky News and at Reuters. Field assignments have included the first Gulf War in Iraq, the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, and the break-up of Yugoslavia. In his current role, he negotiated with the North Korean government for the opening in 2006 of the first bureau for a Western news organization in the reclusive communist state.

Anthony Borden is executive director of the Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR), which supports training, reporting and institution-building programmes for local journalists in areas of crisis and conflict around the world. IWPR has established the Sahar Journalists' Assistance Fund, to provide support in cases of exile, disability or death of local

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Mark Brayne is a psychotherapist and trainer specializing in trauma and journalism, having served for 30 years as foreign correspondent and senior editor for Reuters and the BBC World Service. He developed and implemented for the BBC a programme of trauma awareness and support training in which he has also trained journalists, editors and managers at news organizations around the world. From 2002 to 2007, he served as director Europe of the US-based Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, working with journalists, mental health professionals and educators towards improving media coverage of violence and trauma, and mitigating the emotional consequences of such coverage on those who report the stories.

Tony Burman has been the managing director of Al Jazeera English since May 2008. At the time of writing his chapter, he was the editor-in-chief and executive director of CBC News. While head of CBC's news and current affairs operations, he implemented the successful integration of its radio, TV and online operations. He is an award-winning news and documentary producer with field experience in more than 30 countries and several continents.

Chris Cramer was formerly the president and managing director of CNN International and is now a global media consultant. He is the honorary president of the International News Safety Institute. He is also co-author (with John Owen) of *Dying To Tell the Story*.

Ben Hammersley is a print and broadcast journalist who has been one of the leading proponents of new media journalism. He is associate editor of the UK edition of *Wired* magazine. His freelance work includes regular contributions to the BBC and MSN/UK.

Janine di Giovanni is an award-winning war correspondent who has been covering global conflicts since the 1980s. She is a contributing editor to *Vanity Fair* and a columnist and essayist for many publications, including the *Guardian*, the *Evening Standard* and the *New York Times*. She is also the author of four books, the last a book of essays, *The Place at the End of the World*. Her book on the Balkans War, *Madness Visible*, has been optioned for a feature film by Julia Roberts.

Bridget Kendall has been the BBC's diplomatic correspondent since 1998 and a winner of the James Cameron award for distinguished journalism. She was based for a number of years in Moscow and is a Russian-language speaker.

Gary Knight is an award-winning photojournalist, primarily concerned with human rights and issues of crimes and justice. He has written widely on photography and journalism. Knight is a founding member of the VII photojournalism agency. He is also the co-editor of a new quarterly publication, *Dispatches*.

Nick Pollard has been a journalist for almost 40 years, working in print, radio and television news. For 10 years until 2006 he was head of Sky News at BSkyB. Under his leadership, Sky News became the most watched 24-hour news channel in Britain and won numerous awards for its coverage of major stories. He is a fellow of the Royal Television Society and was awarded the RTS's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007.

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David Schlesinger has been editor-in-chief of Reuters since January 2007. He was previously the global managing editor of Reuters. He has been a correspondent and run editorial operations for Reuters in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Vaughan Smith is an award-winning freelance cameraman and video news journalist who has covered conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and Kosovo. He helped found the Frontline News Television agency, which he ran for many years, and is the owner and founder of the London-based Frontline Club and Restaurant. He was a joint winner of the MediaGuardian Innovation Award in 2008 for his independent blog while on assignment in Afghanistan. He is the co-producer of a new film, *Blood Trail*, that will be screened at the Toronto Film Festival.

Preface

John Owen

For the past six years, I have had the privilege of teaching a course in international journalism to postgraduate and undergraduate students at City University in London. It is a course created by the former Reuters correspondent Colin Bickler, who kindly asked if I was interested in taking over his class, as he had decided to cut back on his teaching load. I said yes without fully understanding or appreciating the challenge that I was facing.

It meant trying to devise a course that could prove both interesting and relevant to upwards of 70 students who came from more than 30 countries in all of the continents. Thanks to Colin and Heather Purdey and other highly dedicated professors, City had established an excellent international reputation for attracting outstanding young developing journalists who were already working for leading newspapers and broadcasters in their home countries. Many chose City and London because it is the world's global media headquarters, and they dreamt of working someday for the BBC World Service or one of the top British newspapers. They realized that City and London would help them master English, a key to future employment. Others simply hoped to get the academic credentials that they needed to return home to their own news organizations and the prospect of more senior positions.

Throughout my years of teaching at City, I have found it humbling to be in the company of so many wonderful young journalists, many of whom had already demonstrated courage and resourcefulness working in countries without a truly free and independent press or a culture of free expression. One of my students, Sandra Nyaira, had been the political editor of the *Zimbabwe Daily News* and had won the 2004 International Women's Media Foundation award for courage in journalism. Her newspaper had been firebombed, and she and many of her fellow journalists had narrowly escaped being killed. Another student, Iraqi Shadha Muheissn, had been the BBC's reporter in Baghdad, and this year received the Knight International Journalism Award for service to international journalism.

In the 2007–8 class, one of our students is Salam Abdulmunem, a one-time architecture student in Baghdad who in the war in Iraq became known throughout the world as Salam Pax, the Baghdad Blogger. (Richard Sambrook writes about him in his chapter on citizen journalism.)

I had decided that my international journalism class would be of most value to this highly diverse and ambitious group if I could succeed in doing the following.

- Make the class relentlessly relevant to understanding and working in a global world of journalism and media that was undergoing dramatic change.
- Introduce the students to the best and most respected professional journalists, who were also self-critical and humble about their work, and could serve as role models for them.
- Provoke reflection on ethical journalistic issues that would confront them in their journalistic lives. I've always told my students that if in their journalistic moments of crisis, they remembered a conversation or insight about what was the right thing that they should do, then I'd consider that my course had proven valuable to them.
- Gain insights from analysing the coverage of major international news stories that took place while they were studying at City, hearing from British-based editors who assigned them and the reporters who covered them, and reviewing their own media's comparative coverage.
- Make certain that they understand fully what technological and new media challenges face them – from multi-skilling to blogging to user-generated content.
- Ensure that these young journalists understood all aspects of safety in journalism and what they needed to know in order to take the right risks in pursuing stories that were potentially dangerous, whether covering

conflicts or natural disasters, or pursuing local investigative stories where they were at the greatest risk.

- Provide them with awareness of the new body of journalistic literature about trauma and journalism; how their own impartiality and detachment can be influenced by their exposure to troubling and disturbing stories; how in understanding better those they're covering, they might find new skills in how to gain information and the trust of their sources.

In deciding what chapters should be included in *International News Reporting* and then approaching outstanding journalists to write about them, we had to try and identify those issues and subjects that are fundamental to journalism around the world and essential to grasp in order to be better practitioners, whether in daily journalism or some other media-related career.

It was difficult to narrow the choice to these 14 subjects because there are so many other issues that lend themselves to greater scrutiny. We've had to leave out of this first edition the stories and reflections of journalists who've contributed to our classes, sharing their experiences and exposing themselves to hard questions about how they handled certain assignments.

We are indeed fortunate that so many illustrious journalists who are heading or have headed the most influential broadcast news organizations in the world have agreed to contribute to this book. They did so knowing that they would receive no money for their efforts and be forced to give up what little free time they have to organize their thoughts and write 6,000 words. Many are old friends and colleagues and could easily have told me that there was no way that they could take on any additional commitments. But they did take it on and proved once again that it is those with the biggest and most demanding jobs that somehow find the energy to tackle projects like this one. I am deeply grateful to each of them: Chris Cramer (formerly with CNN), Richard Sambrook (BBC Global News), Nick Pollard (formerly with Sky News), David Schlesinger (Reuters) and Anthony Borden (IWPR).

Also, *International News Reporting* changed emphasis along the way, and we decided later to add additional chapters. Again, we were so impressed by how exceptionally busy news executives like Nigel Baker (APTN), Tony Burman (formerly CBC) and – very close to the deadline – Peter Apps (Reuters) accepted the last-minute challenge and crafted excellent chapters.

We are equally indebted to our 'field journalists' and other experts for their generous support of this book. Not only did Janine di Giovanni (*Vanity Fair*), Gary Knight (VII), Vaughan Smith (freelance and Frontline), Bridget Kendall (BBC), Ben Hammersley (BBC) and Mark Brayne (ex-Reuters and Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma) waive any fee for their contributions, they found time beyond their deadlines and assignments to discuss their craft and share their experiences. They have in effect given the student readers of this book a master class in journalism.

It is our hope that tomorrow's journalists, whether they work inside newsrooms or in the field, or aspire to become news executives, will find this book both insightful and provocative; that they will put into practice what they've absorbed from these outstanding journalists.

As we neared our deadline for this book, I stumbled onto a profound little book, *Liberty and the News*, by the great American journalist and man of letters Walter Lippmann. Writing in 1920 when he was only 31 years old, Lippmann despaired at the poor quality of American journalism. He urged the creation of journalism schools that helped turn journalism from a 'haphazard trade into a disciplined profession'.

Lippmann said what was needed was:

to send out into reporting a generation of men who will by their sheer superiority, drive the incompetents out of business. It means two things. It means a public recognition of the dignity of such a career so that it will cease to be the refuge of the vaguely talented. With this increase of prestige must go a professional training in journalism in which the ideal of objective testimony is cardinal. The cynicism of the trade needs to be abandoned, for the true patterns of the journalistic apprentice are not the slick persons who scoop the news, but the patient and fearless men of science who have laboured to see what the world really is. (Lippmann 2008: 48)

In that spirit, we hope that *International News Reporting: Frontlines and Deadlines* helps to inspire a new generation of young journalists to bear witness to the world as it really is. In doing so, they will keep faith with brave journalists everywhere who believe what they do does matter to a free and democratic society.

City University's MA in International Journalism

Heather Purdey

City University's Master's course in international journalism has been educating and training journalists from all over the world for more than 25 years.

Up to 80 students from 30 different countries attend each year for a practical course which not only teaches them the skills they need to have to work as reporters in print, radio, television and online, but also gives them the opportunity to reflect on some of the issues which are affecting the practice of international journalism today. City's multi-national, multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic student mix reflects the complex, globalized society in which we all now live and encourages an exchange of views and perspectives which broadens their and our minds, and widens horizons.

We want to turn out journalists who are not only highly skilled but thoughtful and critically aware of the major issues faced in international reporting today.

This book complements our teaching. Each chapter, all of which have been written by prominent and experienced journalists, looks at a specific aspect of journalism, from 'bearing witness' to reporting diplomacy; from breaking news stories to the effect of new technology on the work of the international news agencies. Introductions set the context, and at the end of each chapter there are suggested questions for students to work through, either by themselves or under the guidance of their professors. The topics addressed by the contributors, the questions they raise, the practical problems they pose, all affect journalists covering international stories, and newsmen and women today need to consider them if they are to succeed and survive.

We hope lecturers and students alike will find this book a useful tool. It is dedicated to those brave freelance journalists who risk their lives to report the world so that we can understand it better.

Reference

Lippmann, W. (2008) *Liberty and the News*. Princeton University Press.

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Bearing Witness

Janine di Giovanni

Introduction

JOHN OWEN

At the core of this book is the belief that first-person reporting is fundamental to international journalism.

The late David Halberstam, who established his journalistic reputation in Vietnam in the early 1960s with his tough-minded reporting for the *New York Times*, wrote in the Associated Press's tribute to its journalists, *Breaking News: How the Associated Press has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else* (2007: 16):

[To me] that is what journalism is all about, sending good reporters to difficult and dangerous places that are about to become important but are not yet household words, covering stories when coverage means something, not, as all too often happens these days, too late in the story, when it doesn't really matter any more They [journalists] come to a story a little late and then leave a little too early.

We live in a global media world that can, when it chooses, have the capacity to link us all with dazzling technology – the Al Gore Live Earth global rock concert in July 2007 springs to mind – and has the capacity to influence us to care about developments anywhere on the planet.

Yet all that technology is seldom used to enlighten us about what is happening around the world, especially in Africa (Darfur is our most recent shameful example). The more than 100 networks that own and operate 24-hour news channels don't make international news a high priority with the exception of huge breaking news stories like 9/11, the London bombings, the death of Diana, the invasion of Iraq and the tsunami.

There are notable exceptions, and internationally minded networks such as BBC, CNN (I refer to the English-language channels that I can see and understand), Sky News and the new Al Jazeera English-language channel do often commit huge resources to support dedicated news teams to take substantial risks to get to conflict zones and areas where natural disasters are occurring.

Yet few working in mainstream media today are proud of the international news output of their own newspapers or networks. It often falls to NGOs (the non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group and the World Food Programme) to chronicle stories and issues that are not on the radar of the mainstream news media.

But no website, however worthy and informative, or no packaged report, slickly produced in London or New York, will ever be able to surpass the impact of original journalism, the discoveries of a single reporter or documentary maker or photojournalist on assignment somewhere in the world.

For those of us who have worked alongside brilliant correspondents and camera crews and witnessed for ourselves the reality of dramatic stories and major news events, there remains a reverence for those who take the risks to cover the world. Their contributions – their 'rough drafts of history' – are valued by leading historians, are digested by our most insightful policy makers, and do provide a reality check for politicians and office holders who understand that men and women with cameras and notebooks are an indispensable part of democratic societies; that what they write, record and broadcast cannot be ignored even when the reading and viewing is at odds with the official line.

Pontificating so-called experts on 24-hour news channels cannot ever replace or should never replace the reporting that is only possible if men and women continue to be assigned or, in the case of freelancers, independently pursue the stories that give us – in renowned