Freedom Forum European Centre

Journalism safety

Seminar transcript

with

Chris Cramer EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CNN INTERNATIONAL
Peter Preston CHAIR, ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH EDITORS
Quentin Peel FOREIGN EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES
Kate Adie CHIEF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, BBC
Robert Fox CHIEF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
Vaughan Smith FREELANCE CAMERAMAN, FRONTLINE TELEVISION
Robert Ménard SECRETARY GENERAL, REPORTERS SANS FRONTIERES
Kim Gordon-Bates INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
Richard Sambrook HEAD OF NEWSGATHERING, BBC
Andrew Kain AKE LIMITED (PROVIDER OF SAFETY TRAINING)
Kathy Eldon CREATIVE VISIONS (FILM PRODUCTION COMPANY)
Rod Allen HEAD OF CITY UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM
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Colin Bickler LECTURER, CITY UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM
John Foster GENERAL SECRETARY, NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS
Juliet Peck HONORARY SECRETARY, THE RORY PECK TRUST
Claire Fox LM (LIVING MARXISM) MAGAZINE
Charlie Hoff LONDON BUREAU CHIEF, CNN
Alex Moody INDEPENDENT PRODUCER
Nigel Hancock EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, APTV
Scott White PRODUCER, WTN
Ron McCullagh INSIGHT TELEVISION NEWS

Moderator

John Owen DIRECTOR, FREEDOM FORUM EUROPEAN CENTRE

The Freedom Forum Journalists' Memorial, a steel-and-glass monument in Arlington, Virginia, honours those journalists who have died on assignment or been murdered for what they wrote, photographed or broadcast. In late 1997, there were about 1,000 names on the memorial. More are being added all the time. The Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) knows of 19 journalists killed because of their work in the first 10 months of 1997.

According to a 10-year tally prepared by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 474 journalists were killed between 1987 and 1996. The most dangerous countries were Algeria (60 killed), Colombia (41), the Philippines (30), Russia (29), Tajikistan (29), Croatia (26), Bosnia-Herzegovina (21) and Turkey (20).* The CPJ does not include in its annual count all journalists who, like other travellers, die in aeroplane or car crashes. The New York-based group uses one overriding criterion to determine which accidental deaths belong on its list: "whether the nature of the assignment placed the journalist in harm's way".

Are journalists getting the training they need, and the protection they deserve, before being sent in harm's way, be it to a distant war or to a fire in the next street? Newspapers, in particular, have lagged behind broadcasters in training and protecting both their staff journalists and the freelancers they increasingly use.

In this edited transcript of a Freedom Forum European Centre seminar on journalism safety held on 26 September 1997, Chris Cramer, vice-president of CNN International, described proper safety training as being "as much a tool of the trade as a camera or a hire car". But some parts of the media "continue to shirk their most basic responsibilities" by failing to provide such training, he said.

What responsibility do news organisations have towards the freelancers they call on to cover the news from trouble spots -- journalists who may be inclined to take more risks than most, but who are frequently uninsured? "I know some journalists who lost an arm or a leg in Yugoslavia, and when they came back they realised they had no protection whatsoever," said Robert Ménard of RSF. "We cannot use people who are not trained and not insured. It is not acceptable."

Juliet Peck's husband, Rory, was working as a freelance cameraman in Moscow in 1993 when he was caught in lethal crossfire. Juliet helped set up The Rory Peck Trust, which has worked for more than two years to lay the groundwork for an international insurance fund for freelancers. She told the seminar: "With a little push, with a little help, it would be possible to get this insurance thing off the ground."

Kate Adie, chief foreign correspondent at the BBC, urged news organisations to tackle the issue now: "Why on earth can't we get our act together and sort out the insurance? It is not that difficult.... If we can't get that together in this country, that is a disgrace to journalism."

Up-to-date information on journalists killed and injured around the world is available online from RSF (in English, French and Spanish): www.calvacom.fr/rsf/ and CPJ (in English): www.cpj.org. To see the names on the Freedom Forum memorial, click on the Journalists Memorial link at: www.newseum.org.

John Owen

DIRECTOR,
FREEDOM FORUM EUROPEAN CENTRE

Chris Cramer was with the BBC for 25 years and was one of the principal authors of integrated newsgathering and multi-skilling. He helped build what is perhaps the best newsgathering organisation in the world, with all due respect to his present employer. Last year Chris stunned his broadcast colleagues by leaving the BBC, where he was head of newsgathering, and joining CNN. Inside the BBC he became a passionate advocate of training. Outside the BBC, his influence has been enormous. When Chris demanded that his journalists enrol in courses, so did every other network, including my old network, CBC. When Chris bought armoured vehicles and outfitted his people in Bosnia, so did other networks. When the money counted, we could point to the BBC and argue that it was not only the right thing to do, it was the only thing to do to protect journalists. Chris has done more than any news executive in the world to promote the cause of safety in journalism.

Chris Cramer

VICE PRESIDENT, CNN INTERNATIONAL

I no longer have that dread of being woken in the middle of the night to learn that a crew member, a correspondent or a producer has been injured, or much worse, while gathering the news. Someone else at CNN has that terrible responsibility and I don't envy him. Both the BBC and CNN have had their share, maybe more than their share, of tragedies while covering the news around the world. And whether either organisation likes it or not, they will have these tragedies again. It is the price broadcasters pay for being out there where the action is.

My appreciation of safety issues at the BBC did not come easily. As a member of senior management in News and Current Affairs, it was a combination of the unions, the NUJ and BECTU, who provided what you might describe as my conscience on the issue of safety. That, and a very talented safety manger at the BBC -- Peter Hunter, in the audience today -- who convinced me that safety was as much a managerial responsibility as ensuring that people had the right equipment and the right journalistic background.

What also convinced me was the tragic fact that more newsgatherers were being injured or much worse as the world seemingly became a more wretched and dangerous place, and as the dangerous places became more accessible.

In the early nineties, we set out at the BBC to change the culture when it came to safety. We wanted the staff and managers to understand that it was OK to discuss safety issues, that it was not wimpish, that we did not want to have a macho culture when it came to newsgathering. We stated and we meant it, that no story was worth someone's life, that no picture sequence or audio recording was worth an injury. We said it over and over again.

A little later we went much further. We banned staff from travelling to war zones without the requisite battlefield and First Aid training, or without firsthand experience of that particular hotspot. It wasn't a popular move with some of the staff or with many of the editors. A lot of people set out to flaunt the policy. They also tried to ridicule the decision or seek to demonstrate that we were somehow undermining the BBC's newsgathering role, that we might lose an exclusive, that we

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were wasting licence payers' money. And the worst one of all: that we were armchair generals with no experience of the frontline. That, in particular, stung many of us who had plenty of experience, though we had never been given safety training. The criticism went much further: that we were simply covering our collective arses and also the BBC's, that it was an affront to personal choice and should be left up to the individual. Those years at times were bloody, but we did stick to our guns.

I am accustomed to every single excuse on God's earth for not wearing a flakjacket. It makes me a target. It is too heavy to run in. It is offensive to locals who can't afford to buy one. It looks bloody stupid on television when you do a stand-upper. And we were never there as mangers to enforce the policy. But we did persist with our safety policy and we put our money where our mouths were. We, and the BBC Board of Governors, invested hundreds of thousands of pounds in protective clothing, armoured vehicles and the best safety training that money could buy. Our standards have become the industry standards. The BBC led the way when it came to safety and safety training, and many other broadcasters followed.

When we felt that we had addressed safety we moved into the much more delicate area of post-traumatic stress disorder. Many folk have ridiculed the programme we introduced at the BBC, a free service available to all, which enables staff and freelancers -- and even people who don't work for the BBC -- to go to an expert when they return from covering something profoundly unpleasant, which doesn't have to be a war. It can be, and has been, something as disgusting as the Frederick West murders. And those people who have been, tell me that it has done them considerable good, which for me is all that matters.

I am now at CNN, but I am very proud of what the BBC has done in all these fields in the last few years. They have raised safety and stress to a professional and proper level, as subjects which are OK to talk about without appearing wimpish. The BBC -- like other broadcasters, like CNN -- quite properly included freelancers in that programme. Neither organisation makes any distinction between staff and freelancers when it comes to safety training. Nor should they. No newsgatherer wants to work alongside a gung-ho, untrained cowboy freelancer, someone with no regard for his or anyone else's safety. They are very dangerous to themselves and others, and are to be avoided at all costs.

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The broadcast industry, as well as the media in general, is also inhabited by other organisations that feel less strongly about safety, who think it is all a management posture to avoid real responsibility. They even call it a feeble fad by the overprotective, that real newsgatherers know how to look after themselves, that safety in dangerous areas cannot be taught, only learned at the sharp end. And that it is all a waste of valuable money, which may be the real reason they don't invest in it in the first place.

There are still many broadcasters who, amazingly, send their staff into the most dangerous areas without basic safety training or equipment. They will know who they are. And there are other parts of the media who continue to shirk their most basic responsibilities by failing to provide training and equipment for the people who gather the news for them. These organisations and their managers have still not grasped that proper

safety training is as much a tool of the trade as a camera or a hire car. That has got to be mandatory for all of us who call ourselves newsgatherers. I'd like to think we could talk about this today openly and even aggressively.

John Owen

Broadcasters, especially the BBC, Reuters, ITN and others, have done their part. But why do print editors and publishers, foreign editors and reporters have a different perspective on training? Peter Preston, why is print dragging its feet?

Peter Preston

CHAIR, ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH EDITORS

Because I think newspapers are not an industry in the same way that when the BBC does something, therefore ITN does something. There is a corporate standard. And also because newspapers are different in the way they operate their foreign affairs. I am just talking about the British context.

A long time ago I did some war reporting, with no training. I got shattered, dived into ditches, failed to get out of them, got taken hostage, all of that stuff. But that was a very different time. Compare that period of the middle sixties with the way things are now. My first job was in Cyprus, having never been on a foreign assignment before. I stopped in Athens, changed planes and wandered around the park. And I met someone else sitting in the park, a nice fellow called Gary Rice from The Daily Telegraph. He said: "What are you doing, young man?" I said I was on my way to Cyprus. "Oh," he said, "it's jolly easy. You just sit in the Ledra Palace Bar and when you see the bar emptying, you know there's a story, so you follow it."

That was an era when Fleet Street operated with what were called firemen. They were by and large experienced foreign reporters who went out when there was a big "shoot 'em up story" and you followed around. I didn't like that very much. As I got into it, I preferred to go on my own and see what I could find. But that was the style of the era. I think that has fallen away now. If I look at The Guardian or The Observer, we don't have recognised firemen, because the conflicts are more scattered, and the foreign coverage is more consistent and more regionally based. You only have very experienced people going to those areas.

I don't disagree with anything Chris Cramer said. I can see that in television, you have got to have the pictures of the action. But for broadsheet newspapers – and, vestigially, for tabloids, because there is very little foreign coverage there -- you are not talking about the old "bullets whizzed over my head" style. You don't have to be there getting shot at. You have to be there interpreting, reporting and giving people a deeper perspective, by which I mean more than two minutes of what it is about.

Of course it is dangerous, but I don't think we have started to think about it as an industry. In my own organisation, the people currently employed to do these jobs know the regions far better than anybody else. There is no point talking to Chris McGreal about safety in Central Africa -- he can teach me infinitely more. He has all the books, all the insurance, all the protection he wants and needs, but there is no formal training.

> "*In my own organisation, the people employed to do these jobs know the regions far better than anybody else.*"
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> *Peter Preston*

Is this a good idea? I don't think it is anything I am particularly proud of, but equally you are not talking about a whole cast of people, including camera crews. You are talking about a relatively few

individuals, who for 95 per cent of the time are covering the political aspects of stories. When you say: "Here are the pictures of the city blowing up" that is vital, but it is now much more [the role of] television. I am not proud of print being different, but I think it is different. Has the press done enough? No it has not, but I am trying to explain a bit why it is different.

Quentin Peel

FOREIGN EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

The only time I have ever been under fire was in Southern Angola, on a Southern Angolan government-organised trip. You could not get into Southern Angola any other way to see that the South Africans were bombing the place. It was about six o'clock in the morning and there was a tiny silvery thing up in the sky, which looked like a pretty aeroplane on a sunny day, and suddenly somebody said: "Get out of the cars and run into the bush." We walked rather leisurely into the bush and stood gazing around, wondering what was happening, and then a few missiles hit the ground. And I thought: "Shit! I am from the Financial Times -- I am not supposed to be under fire!" And I rather decorously went down on one knee. Mike Wooldridge was standing about 10 feet away and he said: "Quentin, have you been hit?" And I said: "No, have you?" And we discovered a tiny sliver of shrapnel had lodged in his pullover and broken the skin by his left nipple. "BBC man wounded in South African bombing raid" was the headline we all read! It wasn't funny really, because one of the Angolan soldiers was quite badly hurt. But I am just trying to show how alien it is to all of us.

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> *Quentin Peel*

I am responsible at the Financial Times for the largest team of foreign correspondents of any newspaper in this country and, I think, of any in Europe. I realise, therefore, that I have a responsibility. Not only that, but I am responsible for people who by definition are not war correspondents. If they do get caught up in that sort of situation, they are probably likely to be pretty ignorant. So I suddenly realise that I have a responsibility.

Peter, I regret to disagree with you, but we must not be smug. We are not always sending experienced people into war zones. If I may, to be invidious, cite an example from your own newspaper. You have a young lady covering for you from Albania who came to ask me for a job, who had never even been a journalist before. She was an academic. And Albania is a very hairy place these days. I have a correspondent there who has done 15 years with Reuters. Thank God for Reuters! I didn't train him, but he is good.

We have people like this all over the world coming through our doors and saying: "I want to go to hairy places and cover the frontline." To be honest, I am not very interested in many of those people, but they are out there. And there is an added danger, because the people who want to cover those stories tend to have an element of a death wish. They actually want to be in hairy situations. Or if they don't want to be, they don't want to be seen not to be.

The story you told about when the bar empties you know there is a story, that still is rather the scene. There is a tremendous pack instinct. Our Africa editor told me a rather nice story about trying to keep his correspondents under a bit of control in the field. There was one particularly energetic young correspondent who very much wanted to get into Mogadishu with a whole pack of journalists. And Michael Holman, sitting in London, said: "No. I am not prepared to let you go there. It is too bloody

dangerous, and we don't need it." And this young man said: "I can't possibly [not go]." Michael said finally: "I am going to send you a fax telling you in writing not to go." And the fax arrived and the next morning Michael rang up and he said: "I am sorry. How did you face up to your colleagues?" And the young man said: "They saw your fax and they all decided not to go."

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We are being driven in the print media, I think excessively, by the electronic media's agenda. I don't think television needs to have quite as much absolutely frontline coverage as it does. It means they ignore the behind-the-frontline coverage more than they should. They should spend more time finding out why people are fighting and less time finding out about the blood and guts of them shooting each other. I don't think we get enough explanation. But certainly that is the role of the print media, to get the explanation, and I do not need my correspondents out there in the frontline. Having said that, I recognise they should be trained. I recognise that at the very minimum they have got to have serious experience of first aid. But they should have more.

We have to tread a very careful line. There was an excellent article in The Times the other day which had one very good quote: "We must not turn our journalists into visibly trained guerrillas, because this is asking for trouble, too." You have got to go in knowing you are a civilian.

I say to any correspondent going to a dangerous place: "Are you a coward?" And when they say: "Good God, no," I say: "Well, you can't go." Because they have got to be a coward. And then I say: "I want your cowardice to be top of your agenda. If you want to get under a table, that is what I want you to do. I don't want you to be looking out of the bloody window when the bomb goes off." The quote [in The Times] was actually from Andrew Horton: "Every country is different, but one should try to cover a story, not become it, and displaying overt guerrilla training is probably not the safest way to behave." We want to keep our people under cover.

My Africa editor colleague, Michael Holman, gives A-Z advice to every one of his correspondents. I am talking about correspondents who are often on their own in these areas. I am not talking about correspondents who travel with a pack. My correspondents are all over on the ground, and so they have got to be able to deal with the situation on their own, when there are no others around.

A is for Accreditation. Ensure your credentials are in order.
B is for the Brits. Make contact with the British high commission or embassy on arrival in case you get into trouble.
C is for Contact numbers. Make bloody sure you have left contact numbers with everybody.
D is for Damages to life and limb. Of course, we have to get life insurance on anybody.
E is for Evacuation. You must have emergency medical cover, which provides for evacuation to the nearest source of decent medical treatment.
F for Forewarn. Before going into what I loosely call a war zone, talk to me (Michael Holman) or to the Foreign Editor (and usually I say you can't go).
G is for God forbid, that you leave us the next of kin details and draw up your will.
H is for Help, as in don't be afraid to ask for it.
I is for Inoculations, as in vaccinations, including rabies.

J is for Judgement. Don't rush in or don't rush to judgement.
K is for Kit. Always have a small first aid kit.
L is for Life and limb. Do not risk it. No story is worth even an injury. Choose your colleagues carefully. Don't get into a pecker contest; if you want to balk out, blame me.
M is for Money. Get your US dollars.
N is for Never lose your temper (see Patience), and also never drive at night.
O is for Organise in advance. Protect your plane bookings.
P is for Patience. It is essential. My first piece of advice, when I was Africa editor, was: "When you arrive in Africa, something will go wrong. Sit on your suitcase and wait, and it will work out."
Q is for Queues. Don't jump them -- even if your skin may help you to get away with it -- if you have to explain to those around you.
R is for Roadblocks. Always be polite. Don't initiate a bribe but have a gift ready.
S is for the Switchboard. Leave your contact numbers with the FT's switchboard.
T is for Tickets. Never set off without a return ticket.
U is for Urgent. It is an overused word, so please use it in messages to me only if it is really urgent.
V is for Visas. Apply in good time.
W is for Water. Carry purifying tablets.
X as in extra care when tired or irritated -- when you think you have got the story right and the rest of the world has got it wrong.
Y is for "Why am I here?" -- a question that comes up when one has spent too many nights in hotels or has seen too many nasty things.
Z is for, as I said before, "zzzzzz" -- when the plane doesn't arrive or when you're sitting in the outer office of a Nigerian cabinet minister.

We must slow people down. The trouble is, I know that all of that is a print world and not the electronic media world -- get there first, get the big story. The other danger we have driven into is too many parachutists going to do stories who don't know the situation on the ground.

I am spending a great deal of the Financial Times's money in having people on the ground wherever I can. That is why we have more correspondents than anybody else. They are usually the people some of you may go to when you arrive, to ask: "What the hell is going on here?" That is a huge advantage.

And, Peter, I come back to your "they are all experienced." They are experienced, but they don't know the local situation. They are going in for three days or a week and suddenly expected to discover. And they are not well briefed, and they don't really know the difference between the different sights. I think we are in danger of too much of this instant journalism, when we send people in and pull them out again. People on the ground understand.

Kate Adie

CHIEF NEWS CORRESPONDENT, BBC

The reason we are here discussing this is that the graphs the Committee to Protect Journalists produces every year about the number of journalists injured and the number killed are going up like that in the nineties. I could run through what I believe are three or four reasons for this.

They might be useful to people when trying to explain either to accountants -- who have to pay for the training courses or flakjackets -- or to their staff just why they need to take more care these days.

You can go back 50, 100 years, and

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> *Quentin Peel*

correspondents have always gone to daft places and been shot at, so what has changed? Three things, mainly. First, the proliferation of small arms -- cheap and available and accessible. The AK-47 rifle, which has been available since 1947, used to cost at least $1,000 for a decent one. The price now, quite near to London, would be $50. This is something you can bury in the sand, get out three days or three years later, and still fight. It can be used by a seven-year-old -- and is, to great effect, in some countries. Cheap guns are one of the reasons small wars have become nastier. Years ago all kinds of people used to have guns which fired intermittently and did not really hit their target. Now there is something which could remove a room full of people in a matter of seconds.

Newspapers may not use firemen as much as television people do in war zones, but these cheap weapons are now making their way into the criminal world. You are as likely to face an AK-47 in a smart restaurant in Moscow these days, wielded by a gangster from the proliferating Russian mafia. It is getting into crime in a big way. The American police forces will tell you this, that they are facing appalling weaponry. So a crime reporter is likely to run up against this in some areas.

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Small incidents, attempted coups, little civil disturbances -- a few shots fired used to be the pattern, but this is no longer the case. There are an increasing number of bullets around and they are sprayed around. Nine-tenths of the world that gets an automatic has no idea about a single shot and just uses the thing as a hosepipe and sprays. That is why injuries are occurring, and not just in war zones. These things matter to reporters who are facing what used to be difficult areas, but now there are a lot of guns.

Robert Fox

CHIEF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT,
DAILY TELEGRAPH

I feel pretty redundant here, because I have been told by Peter Preston and Quentin Peel that gung-ho specialist war corespondents went out probably with the Korean War. I think they are talking nonsense, and I think their papers show they are talking nonsense. Covering combat at all levels is a specialised trade. I am not saying that everybody that covers every war must be specialised, but I would like to see in my colleagues greater awareness of what goes on, on a battlefield.

I would say that you do need expert war correspondents, first of all, to know your weapons. Whatever the military experts can offer in terms of safety training, it will not be enough for the people who come into the field to know what they are up against. In some ways, this is a thing that you can learn and you must be aware that at times the instinct to know what is going on in a battlefield is God-given. I have known very good soldiers rising to the rank of lieutenant general who actually can't read a battlefield in a way that others can. My former boss, Max Hastings, was an absolute wizard. He could visualise what was going on over the hill.

If you don't have specialised war correspondents, you are going to miss the story. I covered the Falklands war for the Financial Times, but the paper did not seem to know too much about it at the time. It had no idea what the real achievement of the Falklands was. We -- for reasons that still defeat me, knowing the general innumeracy of most educated soldiers -- are believed to be the great wizards of logistics. The Israelis think it, the Russians think it, and the Americans think it. How on earth could we get a broken-down

navy -- which had not gone to war for 25 years -- 8,000 miles and beat a bunch of Argentinean thugs is still a mystery to me. But that is the story. And we missed that story by not understanding the battlefield.

We did not really report properly what went on at the end of Desert Storm, because you had to read what the air assault battle was going to do. And why did George Bush, James Baker, Colin Powell stop? I still don't have a very good idea, but it was not reported terribly well -- and, I am sorry to say to Chris, it was not terribly well reported on the BBC.

> ***"There was great concern after poor John Schofield was killed in Croatia, but he had had the battlefield training. It really is not an insurance policy."***
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> *Robert Fox*

Finally, I would like to give you another example of understanding the battlefield. How could Richard Holbrooke, like the fairy at the feast, wave and produce Dayton. It was bombing, we are told. Nonsense. As General Rupert Smith told his wife when the bombing was going on at the end: "As usual, the boys from the air are missing everything. They are trying to do microsurgery with a bacon slicer." What was really going on was that there was a major land campaign in the context of modern warfare, sponsored by the Americans, which rolled up the Serbs' Western flank. It was hardly reported at all.

I contend that there are not enough good war correspondents in the field. They are dying out. The Americans used to be among the best, but they are dying out there.

I do think it is very worrying that by giving safety training and saying we look after you, that you don't have to put yourself in harm's way, that you will be OK. There was great concern after poor John Schofield was killed in Croatia in the Krajina campaign, but he had had the battlefield training. It really is not an insurance policy. There are things that worry me desperately about colleagues from the BBC who go on the road. I am not saying you should not do it [training], far from it. But you should be aware of its limitations.

Shrapnel, largely from mortars, rocketry, artillery will all blow you away. Probably a flakjacket will do for small arms up to AK-47 level. But if you have an armour-penetrating anti-aircraft gun, which they fire a great deal, nothing can withstand that. You must know the battlefield. If you know the stuff is out there, you must not go down open roads, because an open road does not mean it is peaceful. As a colleague at the Telegraph said: "Why are people going down that road? It is very quiet." Because if the soldiers are going off the road as well, it means something is going to happen.

I don't think the war correspondent is defunct, a dinosaur of the reporting trade. I think he or she has their role in reporting and also in helping us understand the limitations and practicalities of safety training.

Kate Adie

The battlefield technology thing is frightening when any reporter faces it, because very few come from a military background these days. Some camera crews do, increasingly so, but there are very few specialists.

A second technology point -- and this is where I think the newspapers were a bit slow off the mark. Television is laden down with technology. There is a nightmare of cameras and satellite dishes and bits of editing gear. Television people spend their entire time obsessed with logistics, with something like lifting a generator onto a truck. But we are at

least aware of the technology, and so we took precautions when we knew we were taking £250,000 worth of satellite gear into the field. We then realised at the beginning of the nineties that this was meaning we did not ever get back to the hotels. We literally all sat in the field with the gear, digging up latrines, using some ruin, cooking.

That is the sort of thing that we have been facing and will face for the next 10 years, because we take all of our stuff into the field. And when you stay there 100 per cent of the time, you immensely increase the odds of being hit. You get more tired, more exposed, people learn where you are.

I felt that the press people weren't quite as conscious that this huge change had occurred. They were thinking, "We are just fine, we don't have all this gear." But, in fact, they were sitting in the field with us because they had just acquired the new satellite telex, then the satphone.

The press seems to be more resistant to thinking about the technology, so it is a sort of add-on when they go into the office, and they buy it the way we bought it: "Don't lose it." Off they went with it and did not realise that it was changing their way of operation, that they, too, would be sat in the field, days and nights on end, with no excuse to move back to the centre of communication where the PTT used to be. That is another reason I think the injury and death rate is going up, because you are exposed now 100 per cent of the time you are sent. Newspaper editors took a little bit longer to get around to realising that this had happened. We were aware of it -- if you had sat in a ruddy field it was fairly obvious how life had changed -- but it took the press a little longer.

Peter Preston

I wasn't for abolishing war correspondents. I merely said that the nature of foreign correspondency had changed, and the vociferous nature of the coverage in competing newspapers does produce a situation where the industry does not think of getting together.

There is no point in the foreign editors of the Financial Times and the Sun getting together to discuss training for war correspondents, because the Sun does not have any war correspondents. These are some of the reasons why it is different.

As somebody who used to send people off to foreign jobs, a question haunts me at this moment. There are some situations so dangerous it seems to me that you should not send anybody anywhere near it. To which, as Robert [Ménard] says, Algeria is the first. They are basically indigenous journalists [being killed].

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> ***I am haunted by Algeria. I think it is a terribly important story, but it has not got the play it deserves because it is too dangerous to send people.***
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> *Peter Preston*

Part of the reason the number is growing is that journalists are becoming targets and are being killed in their own countries. So, statistically, [journalists being killed] is not primarily a Western thing.

I am haunted by Algeria. I think it is a terribly important story but it has not got the play it deserves on television or in newspapers, because it is too dangerous to send people. Here is a story that ought to be reported, and it is not being reported properly because of these considerations. All the training in the world, all the protection, and you're still asking journalists to take an unacceptable risk in Algeria, yet somehow that story needs to be told.

Robert Fox

I am terribly worried about young stringers. We hire these people on the cheap, they come as part of a contract, and it is a way of getting into mainstream media. Both understandable motives. But I am worried that the young stringer who, say, has been covering the implementation of peace in Bosnia suddenly goes to Albania -- which is not really a war, but on the Richter scale it is between Sarajevo for much of the time and southern Algiers, which is the most frightening killing zone at the moment.

I have picked up a phone when I have known the stringer involved: "Has the foreign editor told you what you are expected to do?" And I said: "Can I tell you, as an old fart of 30 years at this game, you are not expected to get killed, you are not expected to get out there to get frightened, and you are not there to show off." But there is an imperative in a certain kind of "tabloidised" action journalism, and I am not talking about The Guardian and the FT. "I travelled the road of fear" or words to that effect. If I had a fiver from each of you for every time I have read that headline -- well, I am into early retirement.

But I do think that the Freedom Forum and this meeting could tell editors that they are responsible even for the day-hire photographer. They do have to have the bare modicum of training, protection, advice and -- I hate to say, because at times we have been casual about it -- insurance. It is not only high-minded and right -- we owe it to these brave young men and women. It also makes economic sense. When the thing falls apart, as Chris was saying, these people, if they get badly shot and damaged, are entitled to compensation for psychological as well as physical damage.

Vaughan Smith

FREELANCE CAMERAMAN,
FRONTLINE TELEVISION

I agree with Robert Fox that experienced personnel have got to be the bedrock of any policy of sending people out, though I am a little concerned about the notion of war reporters. Many of the people who seem to want to be them are not suitable in the first place.

I don't think training is the tonic people may hope it is. I have come across a variety of courses run by a variety of armies that certain broadcasters are using, where people learn how to get into armoured personnel carriers and helicopters. They get thrown on assault courses, so the army can snigger at them. The rest of the course is run by press officers. It actually achieves very little.

You get another type of course, run by companies that sound as if they run Africa, where they send these prospective war heroes running around the countryside and sleeping out, and they fill their day with the most unlikely simulated occurrences and attacks. Then you have fresh journalists walking around these areas expecting to die horribly at any minute, as they certainly would have done on their course. Then you get others with little experience, emboldened by their courses and set on derring-do. I believe that you should always send someone with experienced people. If you haven't got them, hire them in with the team.

> ***"There are good courses. The best involve feedback from experienced journalists and don't promise to do too much."***
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> *Vaughan Smith*

There are good courses. The best involve feedback from experienced journalists, and they don't promise to do too much. If you want a course on kidnapping, you need a course on kidnapping. And you can't have it as: you get thrown into the field, get beaten about a bit and now you know what to do.

A course that promises to offer excellent first aid is probably the one to go to. In addition, a course that will offer information on what might be happening around you, rather than advice on what to do when somebody shoots at you from the lefthand side or whatever, because no situation is the same. In fact, the only thing you can really do is encourage people to be prepared and anticipate what might happen.

For example, I don't know a journalist who has ever encountered a booby-trap. Yes, you need information, but the wrong information can be bad. As an ex-soldier myself, I would caution people against listening too much to soldiers. Soldiers in war face different problems. Has anybody heard of a journalist going on a reconnaissance for a story? Has anybody ever heard of a journalist with a clear objective? I do want to stress that there are good courses. But if management, however well intentioned, think they will solve problems just by training people, they will not. They must look very hard at the courses and they must find the best ones.

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> ***Of the 59 journalists who were killed in Algeria [between May 1993 and August 1996], 58 were Algerian.***
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> *Robert Ménard*

As a freelancer, I feel very strongly about insurance. The industry has a responsibility to ensure that freelancers are covered by insurance. There are a number of people trying to sort this out. However, it will not work unless responsible broadcasters ensure that sufficient business goes through and unless they pressure the insurers to provide something that is sufficiently cheap and good enough for freelancers.

The notion that freelancers are an uncontrolled, unguarded weapon is not good enough. Freelancers are used all the time and increasingly so. The best freelancers are absolutely the right people to send out on these things. They should be used. Finally, if you do not credit us as freelancers, as most of you do not, then we are part of you when you use us. You are therefore morally obliged to ensure we are insured.

Robert Ménard

SECRETARY GENERAL,
REPORTERS SANS FRONTIERES

Of the 59 journalists who were killed in Algeria [between May 1993 and August 1996], 58 were Algerian. When we talk about the safety of journalists, if we look at the statistics, we are not talking about Western journalists. I have been to Algiers on a number of occasions and I had 100 per cent more protection than any local journalist had.

I had a close friend in Algeria who owned a paper called Le Quotidien. For three years he decided he was going to be careful and he never slept in the same place two nights running, and when he was asleep, friends watched over him. Then one night he decided he was fed up with living that way and he decided to go and eat a pizza. That night, he was hit by two bullets and died.

Safety is, of course, important for Western journalists, but at least we have certain means to protect ourselves. But how are we going to be able to help those hundreds of journalists who have died over the past 10 years? And 99 per cent of these journalists don't have the means to obtain this kind of protection. For example, when the Mafia wants to assassinate you, when fundamentalist groups want to kill you, how are you going to protect yourself? You can be shot by just two bullets -- how can you protect yourself from that?

I believe that the nature of conflict has totally changed. For example, during the Vietnam war

-- the two Vietnam wars, against the French and against the Americans -- there were 60 deaths over the 15 years. In just four years in former Yugoslavia, there were 50 deaths.

> ***Chechnya will become like Algeria, which means the people responsible for the conflict will have won, because they will manage to get the press out.***
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> *Robert Ménard*

I think the reason Vietnam was different was because journalists were not specifically targeted. Obviously a bullet is not going to distinguish between a military person and a journalist, and if you are in the trajectory of a bullet you are going to be hit, but there they were not specifically targeted. That was not the case in former Yugoslavia. Nor in Chechnya, where there was a team that wanted to show images that one of the groups involved in the conflict did not want them to show. And so they were targeted.

In that kind of situation, how can you protect yourself? Because we are not just talking about the risks of the job, but about a situation where you yourself are targeted. In that kind of situation, equipment such as flakjackets, armoured cars and training no longer helps. On the contrary, it helps to identify the target people want to aim at.

Most of the journalists who were killed in former Yugoslavia were freelancers, and the people who employed them were totally irresponsible. Most of the time freelancers are not insured. Major radio stations called us at Reporters Sans Frontières and said: "What are we going to do? He is not covered. We haven't got any insurance for him." They were really naïve about this.

I know some journalists who lost an arm or a leg in Yugoslavia. And when they came back they realised they had no protection whatsoever, and that they never had had any kind of protection. We are not talking just about small fry here -- we are talking about major radio stations and major French newspapers as well. We are talking about professional ethics, codes of conduct. We can't use people who are not trained and not insured. It is not acceptable.

Another problem is that hostage-taking is increasing. What part of the media is now going to take the risk of sending someone to Chechnya, where so far this year 13 journalists have been taken hostage? Their employers have paid $1 million on average to get them out, even if they don't admit to it. In the end, nobody will be sent to those zones, because no employer will want to take that kind of risk. And Chechnya will become like Algeria, which means the people responsible for the conflict will have won, because they will manage to get the press out.

Kim Gordon-Bates

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

Prior to joining the ICRC, I was a foreign correspondent in Asia and Africa for more than a decade. I would like to preface my remarks by saying that I don't want to misjudge Her Majesty's consular services, but if you are a foreign correspondent working in a war zone, you tend to find that the ICRC's presence there is more helpful than Her Majesty's consular services, if you do happen to be wounded or something like that.

If you do go to places where we are working and there is a hospital run by us, make contact. Contact the head of delegation -- you might want to interview him or her. And, if in need, we will assist, because you are considered civilians in a situation of conflict and therefore covered by the Geneva Conventions and entitled to assistance. And we will do everything we can to help you.

That said, we do train our delegates and we only work in situations of conflict, so we presumably have some experience in that respect. For a long time our training course was not covered by the press. We kept it secret, simply because we did not want to be seen as Rambo-type figures. But today the press has been witnessing our training programme. We think that it does help.

It might surprise you to know that journalists are actually part of the obstacle course -- they are seen as dangerous for us. This is where my unease comes in. It is something I used to know as a journalist -- that you don't burn your sources, that if you are a foreign correspondent or just in for the assignment, you go, but other people stay.

Last year a mainstream British programme put the life of one of our people and his family in severe danger. That person is still suffering the consequences of overexposure as a source in a very tricky situation. Similarly, I see rather frequently on television, interviews which I would consider irresponsible, which put the local, named source in a dangerous situation.

In a recent programme on French television, somebody was complaining that in Afghanistan they could not get their films out properly so they had to use a disguise. The picture that followed was of an ICRC vehicle heading towards the Pakistan border. We did not take those pictures out, but anybody looking at that would assume that the ICRC was instrumental in smuggling stuff out. We would pay the consequences of that. It so happens that the authorities concerned belong to a regime that does not believe in television.

I keep hearing stories -- and, again, as a journalist I probably would have done the same thing, so it is probably not quite fair for me to say this. But people misuse diplomatic bags, where the line between spying and gathering information becomes blurry. This can have serious consequences for you as journalists, because then you are no longer civilians, no longer covered by the conventions, and we can do nothing. Safety is not just knowing what the gun is or how to tackle a crowd that has got a bit angry or just not going to a place which is hot. It is also thinking about those who stay behind to try to do some work.

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> ***I see rather frequently on television, interviews which I would consider irresponsible, which put the local, named source in a dangerous situation.***
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> *Kim Gordon-Bates*

Richard Sambrook

HEAD OF NEWSGATHERING, BBC

I am slightly disturbed by the notion expressed by a couple of speakers that the training we offer somehow emboldens our journalists or is designed to help them feel immune from risk. That is certainly not the basis of the training and is certainly not what they hope they will get. Our courses are very much about risk avoidance and defensiveness. It is about bullet penetration, so that people understand what it is and isn't safe to take cover behind. Earlier this year in Afghanistan, one of our correspondents came under sustained gunfire and said that it was our training which helped him to make the judgement about where to take cover. It may well have contributed to saving their lives.

It is about how to find your way out of a minefield or at least have some idea of how to find your way out of a minefield. Thanks to the training on that course, at the end of last year one of our camera crews, I think it was in Cambodia, managed to work out that they were close to a minefield and avoid driving further into it. It is practical guidance of that kind -- weapon

recognition, first aid, map reading, and other things that have been mentioned. It is about reducing the risk of the situation you are in, not about making people feel they are somehow immune or can stand in a flakjacket and won't get hurt or killed.

> ***[Training is] not about making people feel they are somehow immune or can stand in a flakjacket and won't get hurt or killed.***
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> *Richard Sambrook*

We use freelancers a great deal in the BBC, and they make a very valuable contribution to our output. And we acknowledge that we do have a responsibility towards them. There is the issue of insurance, and certainly I would want to try and find a more satisfactory basis for covering people that we take on a freelance basis and put at risk in that way. I am quite happy to acknowledge that we have a lot of responsibility.

Andrew Kain

AKE LIMITED

The Falklands is a good starting point, because the reality is that superior training won it. We did not have the logistics, it was touch and go all the time. The thing that turned it around was training.

How did we get involved in training with journalists, particularly the branch of the service I came from? I spend my life ducking and diving and avoiding journalists. In 1993 a freelance cameraman who had an association with the Committee to Protect Journalists approached us. We devised a course and brought in the skills they thought we had that would benefit them. Journalists require a different emphasis in training than soldiers do. When we first got involved I was surprised that in an industry that has been reporting wars since I was a lad there was no system of training.

I would consider myself someone who understands what weapons do, and over the years I have been surprised about some of the reports in the press about what was supposed to be happening. It was clearly a misunderstanding of what was going on, due to a lack of appreciation of what weapons can and cannot do.

The clearest benefit of our training is that we can demonstrate that a number of lives have been saved as a result. In one case, a journalist administered emergency first aid to his colleague. In another case, a journalist helped save the lives of two children in Bosnia.

Over the past three years we have been trying to get some sort of agreement with insurance companies so that the freelancer who finds the premiums prohibitive can still get insured. Previously in some cases they could not even get insurance, far less pay the premiums. We have had an agreement with Lloyds since January this year, which has just been extended, where we can provide up to 40 per cent reduction in premiums for all war risk throughout the world.

The two main areas of training are safety and understanding what goes on militarily, but the greatest area is medical. Any medical training you get from, say, the Red Cross or the ambulance service will be geared towards a situation in an inner city where an ambulance is going to turn up within 20 minutes. Even in some of the military, you will get greater assistance within six hours. In the situation some of you may be aiming for, it may be two days before you get sophisticated medical treatment.

There are some things which are a requirement, such as the application of tourniquets. Now 90 per cent of courses around the world will tell you not to use tourniquets. I will give you three situations for

journalists in which it is an absolute necessity to use tourniquets and therefore to have an understanding of their application. One is if you are on your own, and you are the person injured. Second, if you have more than two casualties who have got primary injuries. If you do not know the application of tourniquets one is certainly going to die. The third is when you have to move because the situation is deteriorating and you have got a bleeding casualty. We put a great deal into the training -- we put two pounds in a one-pound bag over four and a half days. This could be better handled if some of that training, which is basic life skills, was done at journalism school.

Kathy Eldon

CREATIVE VISIONS

We are making a documentary called "Dying to Tell the Story", which was inspired by John Owen's seminar last year. I think a lot of you were probably here when the panel that Veronica Guerin was supposed to be on was entitled "Dying to tell a story".

I have just come back from Mogadishu and South Africa and Kenya, about two days ago. And I would like to thank the person who ran the Somerset hostile environment training course for my daughter Amy, who is 23, a year older than Dan was when he was killed.

When we were in a hotel in Nairobi, someone banged on the door in the middle of the night. Amy, very well trained by the hostile environment course, dove on to the floor, elbowed her way to the door, did not turn on the light, and discovered later that it was just our producer trying to get in.

When we got to Mogadishu we landed on an airstrip about 50 km from town and were met by Aidid's people. There were 30 teenagers, and one was only about nine years old, with AK-47s. Kate was talking about the challenge of these AK-47s. Amy, who had been ably instructed, just said: "Stay out of the way of the gun barrel." I probably would not have thought of that. So the training was excellent, and I am very grateful.

My more serious point is about Dan, who was 22. Some of you may think: "brave stringer who did not really know what he was doing". But he had been brought up in Africa, was very streetwise and was one of the people that people wanted to travel with, because he knew what was going on.

After a United Nations bombing, journalists were brought to the place where they were supposed to photograph the carnage. The crowd turned on the journalists, a mob situation. Dan was wearing a flakjacket, he had been trained in guns, and he knew what was going on. But the neighbours of the people who were killed, killed him. We went back to the same place three days ago. We were taken to that very compound and within minutes we were surrounded by the neighbours who had killed my son and we had to leave very quickly.

Kate Adie

At the root of this appears to be particularly what -- and I very much respect it -- Reporters Sans Frontières said. We are looking here at the status of journalists. I think the status has not so much changed, as been brought into sharper focus in the last 20-30 years. I suppose the responsibility has been borne by television because a larger number of people in the world are now aware of journalism, and they have television. Television has spread worldwide and with it the ability for people to see what journalists are doing.

> ***"Within minutes we were surrounded by the neighbours who had killed my son and we had to leave very quickly."***
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> *Kathy Eldon*

And they associate it with power and influence. When journalists turn up in a difficult situation, a huge number of people see the journalist as in some way part of the business. And that is adding to the number of attacks on journalists. They are seen as part of one side of the argument -- the government, the authority, the warlord, the dictator or the foreigner. They are now associated with that, which is nothing new. But I think the sheer proliferation of mass media has convinced the mobs that they know what the journalist is up to. I don't know how we tackle that.

Even in this country, I find myself addressing groups of people who fondly believe this stupid illusion that somehow journalists are inviolate, that they are travelling the world in a grand manner. And that everybody either respects them or stays away from them, or recognises that they are doing this objective job unconnected with any of the other passions and hatreds and furies that are going on in that situation. We know it is just not true. But we could at least dispel the illusion a little more. They have this idea, and it is a deeply rooted notion, that somehow journalists have safe passage and neutral status, accepted and acknowledged by all. I think the opposite is happening, with a vengeance.

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> ***When journalists turn up in a difficult situation, many people see them as in some way part of the business. That is adding to the number of attacks.***
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> *Kate Adie*

I would welcome any thoughts on the matter, as to how on earth editors and organisations can do something to protect journalists. Because I think this lies at the root of the aggression towards journalists and the direct attacks on them and, as pointed out by Reporters Sans Frontières, the huge number of attacks on journalists in their own communities. Particularly television is seen as part and parcel of what is going on. We have thought about this in Bosnia: is the answer to have the word "Press" on your T-shirt -- or the opposite, not to have it and pretend you haven't anything to do with the press? I don't know the answer.

Robert Fox

Journalism is a risky business, particularly conflict journalism, and we have to accept that. When I get on a plane and know I am going to a war, I think: "Is this the one?" We all think that. It is risky and I think if we deny that, if we think it is going to be risk-free, we are kidding ourselves.

I absolutely agree with the kind of training that is been offered that teaches you about weapons and how to take care of yourself. And I agree in detail with what Mr Kain said about first aid training. The interesting thing about soldiers' training, as Vaughan Smith was saying, is that they train by drills. They train and train until they can do it as a reflex. I was terrifically impressed all through the Falklands: the navy, the marines and the paratroopers -- how they could operate so quickly. The regimental aid post at Goose Green is a thing you could just never forget. Everybody, including people from rifle troops, came in and they knew what to do. That is why I think that for people to know a modicum of first aid, it can't all be done in four days. You forget very easily. A journalist has to think multifarious thoughts, whereas a soldier is thinking about the aim of the mission. I agree with Mr Kain that training is not a one-shot, that you must have refreshers for journalists who are going to do a lot of this.

There is a very powerful image that our colleague from Reporters Sans Frontières has brought up. I will give it a sub-heading and it is not terribly romantic: mafia. Organised crime is increasingly a feature of my conflict reporting, and has been for the past 15 years, both in sophisticated, industrialised societies

and in developing societies. I speak with some feeling here because I lost two very close colleagues to the Mafia in Italy. I would just like to say something to the editors here -- an appeal.

It is a terribly important area; it is a cancer in the Balkans. The reason there will be a sub-clinical level of conflict in the western Balkans for generations to come is because it is part of mafia business. Southern Italy, similarly. It is just part of the daily routine economy. The shift lines that produce the Fiat Panda car are run by the Cosa Nostra, so we have to know about this. If you can write about it generically and as a social, criminal phenomenon, as I do, I do it reasonably assured. But if you are going to investigate a few millimetres beneath the surface and if you are doing a serious business, you will, over time, be at risk.

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> ***The most dangerous area for a journalist to investigate is arms. You stick your nose in there and you are in the wrong place at the wrong time.***
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> *Robert Fox*

There is one very dangerous area. The obvious commerce, of course, is drugs, but the most dangerous one for a journalist to investigate is arms. You stick your nose in there and you are in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have seen stuff unloaded in Croatia and particularly in the ghastly so-called Herzog-Bosna. And it is just a very small plea, but I owe it to my friends. You must get them out. Don't let people do this business for too long, because they do become marked men.

One of the bravest anti-Mafia journalists was Giuseppe Fava. He had an anti-Mafia journal called I Siciliani -- The Sicilians. He was so angry at the level of criminality on the streets, he said: "I know who is doing the bombing, I know who is the agent provocateur." Two days later he went to pick up his granddaughter from a matinee performance at a local cinema. As he was sitting at the wheel, waiting to pick up his granddaughter, someone blew his face away.

I had six very exciting months at Corriere on exchange from the BBC. I was part of a team of special correspondents, the leader of which was a man who wrote a lot about the Red Brigades. He was not actually an investigative journalist, but he was president of the Lombard region of journalists, so he was prominent. He was someone seen as representing journalism. He was going to chair the National Order of Journalists conference on terrorism in Venice. He got up early, went down to the garage below his flat, and somebody blew him away. It is thought that the group Frontline, a spawn of the Red Brigades, was tipped off by people associated with the print room in the Corriere della Sera. I want to emphasise the risks. It can be much closer than we think. These endeavours are worth doing, but don't go on too long when it is really hot.

Chris Cramer

The session this morning has been illuminating and has touched most of the points I thought it would touch. But let me just share some anxieties with you. Of course we must train the staff -- newspapers, broadcasters, all newsgatherers must train their staff. It is absurd that they are not trained.

I have an anxiety about efficiencies, cutbacks, re-engineering, whatever you choose to call it around the world. Neither the BBC nor CNN is immune from it, of course. These things go in cycles. And I am concerned that safety, if it is not ring-fenced, will fall foul of efficiencies. They will take its four percent, its 20 per cent, its 30 per cent or whatever the target is that year, and it will apply uniformly across all

budgets. My view is that it is real folly. No organisation in this room will be immune from that and probably one or two are suffering it already.

I am uncomfortable about insurance. I think the BBC and broadcasters like CNN have a pretty good track record. But I think that broadcasters and print folk should do exactly what the Israeli army does -- we should look after our folk. That means that policy can go hang. It means that we get the chequebook out, it means that we don't wriggle. It means that if there is an imprecise definition of what someone is entitled to, we err always on the side of generosity. That is not happening in this country or around the world.

There are people in this room who have suffered because folk who died did not get the type of compensation that was due to them. Organisations wriggled. I am really worried about that. We can talk intellectually about insurance, but at the end of the day it comes down to cash and a chequebook and a management prepared to put their money where my mouth is now.

Peter Preston and Quentin Peel will forgive me, but I would be concerned if we let print off the hook today. I think both of you have been extremely generous in what you said, but I think you ought to be saying to us that you will be taking back to your respective and extremely distinguished newspapers some practical ways forward.

I don't buy the notion that people covering stories for print are all experienced. It is rubbish. I don't buy it because they are going to retire and they are going to die, hopefully of natural causes, and the next generation to come along will have had no training. With the greatest affection to both of you, I want you to take away from here some practical policies in your head. You need to train your staff. You need to get your chequebooks out, and so do other broadcasters. Stop wriggling off the hook, because it's going to come back to haunt you. It will be a stringer in Algeria who is working in your name, and who you are going to pay money to come up with an exclusive. And that stringer may at this moment be putting his or her life on the line for your newspaper. Stop wriggling.

Rod Allen

HEAD OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM

It is interesting and inspiring to hear from Kate and Robert about the frontline of war reporting. But journalists who are covering all kinds of stories, in all kinds of situations, expose themselves to dangers and risks. There are riots, fires, police incidents and road traffic accidents. They are getting punched in the queue to sign Diana's book of condolences. There are all kinds of risks that journalists are exposed to -- and for which they are not prepared, by and large, by their training.

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> ***Journalists covering all kinds of stories expose themselves to risks. There are riots, fires, police incidents. They are getting punched in the queue to sign Diana's book of condolences.***
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> *Rod Allen*

I am not happy about the content of the training that is offered to journalists, both in pre-entry and mid-career, to help them judge the risks they are taking and act accordingly. I will not pretend that even at City University's well-thought-of courses we get it right -- although we are teaching these issues, particularly in the international postgraduate course, because there is a demand among students for it.

The hostile environment training we have been hearing about today seems to me -- and this training sounds terrific -- the kind of training

that was described here as simulating being taken hostage. It does not sound to me as though it has been constructed by educators, but rather by people who like to give a good time, which we don't give in education.

What is needed is to bring together understanding about the needs of journalists, employers and employees, and knowledge about how to train, about educational techniques that put understanding rather than information into journalists' heads, so they can retain that understanding. That is what we do in universities in all kinds of areas, and we can do it in this area. What we are proposing -- with, I hope, the help of the Freedom Forum -- is to spend a little time on a research project, bringing together the needs of journalists and of employers, and the ability of the journalism education community to create courses in response to those needs.

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> ***We have had people recently in Zaire and Rwanda, and have the terrible health risks they are exposing themselves to been considered?***
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> *Peter Hunter*

What we hope to do with the help of Colin, who is a specialist in my department on risk and safety, is to design curricula for pre-entry, mid-career and refresher courses. This would be material that can be incorporated into the long NCTJ and other pre-entry courses, as well as stand-alone courses for professional journalists who need initial or refresher training. Those courses will be taught at City University, but the intention would be to make them available to the industry, so the understanding of what's needed can be shared.

Peter Hunter

HEAD OF BBC SAFETY UNIT

About 20 years ago, when I first started talking about safety training, I was invited to speak to some journalists who were being trained. I went along there, expecting to have half an hour to speak, possibly longer, and they said: "Sorry, we're running a little short of time. Do you mind doing it during our coffee break?" Things haven't changed too much. This is not only the case at universities, but also when kids are doing their A levels. My daughter did her A level in Media Studies, and her teacher sent her off on assignments. She was very keen to study the right-wing element of our society with her camera. I persuaded her that that was a risk and had a word with her teacher. They were not thinking about the risks involved.

I take great exception to the idea that we don't know anything about training. When I was first starting to do training courses, I was explaining that you could easily get shot. But we have got a lot of journalists at the BBC very keen, just wanting to get out there and be another Kate Adie, another Martin Bell, and they were saying: "You are talking rubbish. We will hide behind a car door." I said: "Bullets go through car doors." They just didn't understand the risks. So one of the reasons we put together our training course is to show people what actually happens.

I would suggest that most of your lecturers at City University -- and I fully accept that they are better than most of the others -- have got no idea of the real risks involved, even if they claim they have been to war zones. And it is very important to know not only about physical dangers but also about the health risks. We have had people recently in Zaire and Rwanda, and have the terrible health risks they are exposing themselves to been considered?

This is something that should be part of the basic training for all journalists and I think it is an issue that we really have to crack. I don't think we need to spend five years and a few

million pounds on a research project. We have got a system up and running now. We have got ways of actually helping people, practical ways. If you think it is just people like me, or our battlefield first aid team, and that we have no idea about the real life of journalists, that is not true. We have gone to a great deal of trouble to get constant feedback from our journalist colleagues, to refine the course, improve it, put in their own experiences. And with people like Richard Sambrook and Chris Cramer saying "this is important," we have managed to make a difference. We all need to share this information and support one another.

> ***"In Bosnia people on the Serb side would very often hold you personally responsible for the actions of your own government."***
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> *George Eykyn*

George Eykyn

NEWS CORRESPONDENT, BBC

I have been on the courses, some of them more than once, that Peter is referring to. They are about putting understanding, not just information, into people's heads, in a way that they will never forget. I challenge you to come on a bullet-penetration demonstration, or come and see some of the scenarios that are run through. Many of them are based on real events that have actually happened to journalists, because of the feedback system, because these guys are willing to learn from the experiences of journalists and not just see it as a one-way transaction. Come and see!

It is about awareness. It is about being a coward, yes, but being an informed coward. It is not about taking risks -- it is about knowing how to assess a risk. On the wider issue of what sort of training should be available to people who work abroad for newspapers, I can't believe that there are people employed by news organisations abroad that haven't been given, for instance, a basic first aid course. Or, even better, a hostile environment course as well.

There are two particular ways journalists are getting killed and injured now. One is the targeting that was mentioned earlier. The other is where the mundane becomes lethal, because of where you are. Without naming the organisation concerned, there is one instance I would like to share with you, where somebody I knew was killed in a road traffic accident, hundreds of miles from the nearest town, at the wrong time of night, on a road that would have been busy in the daytime. The person with him had no first aid training. He had, but it was no use, he was the injured party. They had no communications, no way of letting anyone else know. And the person, who tried to do his best without any training, made the bleeding worse, and my friend died. That is an example of something that in Surbiton would have been dealt with by the ambulance in 14 minutes, but where he was, it was a matter of life and death.

On why we are targeted, we need to remember that people see us as influencers of opinion, and there are more of us about, and more of us about with cameras doing multi-skilling. We need to keep an eye on that ball. I am not saying we should not do it, but we need to be aware of that when we send people in with a camera, perhaps on their own or with only one other person. Or even sometimes not acknowledging publicly that they are a journalist. We need to bear in mind there are consequences.

In Bosnia people on the Serb side would very often try and hold you personally responsible for the actions of your own government. The other thing which I think is a danger is the new fashion of polemical journalism. In a war zone, no thank you.

Rod Allen

I am sorry if I have been misunderstood. I have not been attacking the hostile environment training of the kind that George and Peter were talking about. What I said was the hostile environment training seemed to me to be excellent and to meet the needs of the war reporter and, by and large, the foreign correspondent. What I was saying was that journalism training in general does not teach risk assessment for all journalists, for journalists who work locally on police stories, crime, fire, road traffic accidents, who are likely to be called on to cover a riot, as a normal part of their duties. Not people who are going out to war zones, but people who are going out to the next street. That is the kind of training that I think is missing from what we do, and I want to put it right.

Colin Bickler

LECTURER, CITY UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM

I would like to thank the Freedom Forum for getting off the ground something that we have been trying to do on the UK Journalism Safety Committee for the last couple of years. I am happy that we are actually getting round a table to do this. Much of the initiative for achieving it has come from the BBC.

One hears, particularly from print editors, that "we don't hire people and send them off to these situations unless they have experience". Which always begs the question: how do these people get the experience?

It also worries me to hear it suggested that editors can't get together. They can get together to discuss paparazzi, or things like privacy. But for some reason the issue of the safety of their staff, the insurance of their staff, the use of freelancers in difficult situations, is something they apparently can't get together on. This worries me because I think this is precisely an area where they could get together, whether they are in print or in broadcasting. What is more, it will be helpful to the educators if they did get together, if there was some clear idea of what was expected and how the educators can help in preparing people.

I was a foreign correspondent for 36 years before going into teaching for Reuters. One of the reasons I got interested is that early in my career I had to move two bodies of colleagues out of Saigon. They were killed in situations which I now know need never have happened. Had we all had more awareness then of what we ought to be doing, this might never have happened.

What I have tried to do at City on the international course -- and it is still very unsatisfactory -- is to introduce the concept of risk awareness. I do not believe that I can teach what is being taught in the hostile environment or first aid courses. But what a university can do is make journalists aware of the risks they may face. What I would expect from the industry is that they then follow that up and provide more detailed assistance before they send people out.

We all know that situations arise and it may just be a demonstration in Hyde Park, where it is the person in the room who gets sent there, whatever experience or training they have. If we had a framework in which the educators and the industry had some concept of how to handle this at the beginning, we would be that much further along. It would raise editors' awareness, as well

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> ***Editors can get together to discuss things like paparazzi or privacy. But for some reason they apparently can't get together on the issue of the safety of their staff.***
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> *Colin Bickler*

as the awareness of the journalists themselves. If we could get away from the idea that it is not macho to learn how to take care of oneself, that in itself would be helpful.

Without the help of the BBC, I could not have done even what little I have done at City. This worries me a bit, too, because how do we spread it around the universities or the other courses? There aren't enough people around who are aware of the need to be aware, who can then pass this on to other journalists.

We need to make people aware that they must be aware and that there is a way of dealing with risk. Then we can build from that. We need to get the educators and the industry together, to devise some way of taking this forward -- but not to stop people, not to make people think that risk is actually the reason for not covering the story.

John Foster

GENERAL SECRETARY,
NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

I have been involved with this problem for some time. I was broadcast organiser for the NUJ for 10 or 12 years. I was then given responsibility for the national newspapers. A young person who had been injured in a war zone came to me, and I, in my naïveté, phoned the newspaper and said: "This person has been injured. What are we going to do?" And he said: "It's a freelancer -- he's not covered." Because I had dealt with the BBC and ITN before, this was frankly a rude awakening for me.

I then started to set up a committee, much smaller than this, inviting newspapers, BBC, Reuters, etc., to a meeting about training. I had a letter from the editor of The Star, which was rather like a joke letter from John Foster. He said: "What sort of training do you need? I have been to war zones, and journalists did dive into ditches." This was his attitude to the coverage of war zones. I was also told that only staff people were covered by insurance. So we set up the Safety Committee. And here I would like to thank the Freedom Forum, on behalf of the NUJ and the Safety Committee, for getting this meeting going. It is very important.

We have been talking about war zones and all of you are experts. War zones are one facet of it, but this isn't a "safety in war zones" seminar; it's a journalism safety seminar. At very few colleges do they actually say: there is a potential for journalists to go into dangerous situations. I could tell you loads of stories. A BBC local radio reporter goes to interview a man. The guy leaves and locks her in the room. She is in there for two hours and has to climb out a window to get out. When she goes back, the editor says: "Well, you should not have got locked in the room." What journalists aren't aware of, and nobody actually makes them aware, is that there are lots of potentially dangerous situations, not just the riots, not just Bosnia.

I believe, first of all, that courses should raise the awareness of journalists that even when it is the most mundane situation, there is always a potential danger. The problem is that, as I understand, in most newspapers only staff people are covered by insurance. Most newspapers say: "That has nothing to do with us, they are freelancers, they must cover themselves." If freelance rates are very bad -- and they certainly have fallen over a number of years -- they can't afford to pay either for their own training or for insurance cover. For about five years now the NUJ has been talking to insurance people about coverage. Most of them say: "Yes, we do it -- £15 a head, £20 a head."

> ***"If freelance rates are very bad – and they have fallen over a number of years – freelancers can't afford to pay either for their own training or for insurance."***
>
> *John Foster*

We have got 7,000 freelancers, and 30,000 members. But when I say: "Will you sign it for the freelancers?" "Oh no, no." So it is £15 a head for 30,000 members. How to do that from our budget?

I believe what we should talk about at this meeting is setting up a fund on the model of SKILLSET in television, which finances freelancers. It would finance safety training, so that it isn't a cost for the individual freelancer but a responsibility for the industry. Secondly, the fund should be used to negotiate with an insurance company a reasonable war zones accident cover.

I would invite anybody here, particularly the FT and The Guardian, to come onto the Safety Committee, which has Reuters, ITN and BBC, and notably no newspapers. If you want to contact me at the NUJ, and John [Owen] is on the committee, we welcome any newspaper people there. We could develop a discussion out of today and I think that would be a positive step forward from this meeting.

Rod Allen

I don't understand how Reuters and the BBC, for instance, are able to add freelancers to their insurance policies when they hire them. I discovered accidentally that one of the Swedish papers does the same thing. Why is that option not available to people hiring freelancers outside of the BBC or Reuters? Once a freelancer is engaged they cannot be added to the insurance policies for the period of that engagement.

Quentin Peel

All our freelancers [at the FT] are covered by war zone insurance. The moment they tell us, they are put on an insurance policy.

Rod Allen

Some people are complaining that some employers don't do that. And that may be a practical way of following up how to handle this problem.

Juliet Peck

HONORARY SECRETARY, RORY PECK TRUST

A couple of my colleagues and I have been working on this insurance issue now for at least two years. It has been going up and down, mainly through a certain amount of non-cooperation from a number of the large unions and corporations. I think that we have a very good understanding of the issues and that, with a little push, with a little bit of help, it would be possible to get this insurance thing off the ground. But to do anything worthwhile costs money. To get good people to work on it costs money. To start the whole ball rolling, if it had the support of some of the major organisations in all the different types of media, then we might actually get somewhere.

But between meetings, people change their minds or they fall away. If it was possible to have a meeting where we got senior people from different corporations and organisations along, who were prepared to discuss this issue and take it forward and, furthermore, back it financially, then maybe we could crack it. That would support not just the journalists from this country who have suffered and will suffer, but all the journalists mentioned earlier, who are native to their own countries and who at the moment are not covered. In many cases, they are the ones who really suffer.

Claire Fox

LM (LIVING MARXISM)

As a media commentator and also someone who has been involved in education for some years, I am a bit worried about what the training might contain. When you look at what is happening to training generally -- and I am sure the academics will back this up -- it is being destroyed. If the training that journalists get is, for example, National Vocational

Qualifications, I can assure you, you will be a lot less safe then you are now.

Chris Cramer talked about counselling and trauma and so on. I think there is a real danger that training can just become part of the victim culture of journalists. I can imagine that the kind of training we are going to get is – "It is terrible to see a dead body" -- and a kind of half-hearted training in first aid. I am a bit weary of journalists as victims being the new into-the-millennium phrase. I am not saying there aren't risks.

> ***"I want there to be decent training, but I don't want us to develop a general panic about the risks awaiting us."***
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> *Claire Fox*

It was interesting what my colleague from Reporters Sans Frontières said, when he reminded us that Western journalists are not largely at risk. I have a fear of exaggerating the risks. I want there to be decent training, but I don't want us to develop a general panic about the risks awaiting us. Because it does dawn on me that the best journalism we have seen over the years has required risk-taking -- and the idea that coming from this will be safe journalism, banal journalism, rather than safety of journalism.

There is a broader cultural point outside the narrow issue of training and safety that I think we can't ignore in this debate. Somebody was talking before about polemical journalism, or what I call attached journalism, which I think is problematic for us and puts people at risk.

Charlie Hoff

LONDON BUREAU CHIEF, CNN

It seems ironic that we are preaching to the choir here. Look who is not here. I think we should take note of that -- it is rather appalling,

An academic curriculum, journalism school or what have you, needs to be so incredibly broad at that point, just so that it raises the issue and creates an awareness. There is no substitute, of course, for experience, except that you have to start somewhere.

One of the real dangers that we face -- and something that perhaps should be addressed on the academic front and in every newsroom and in every job interview and in every assignment process -- is the naïveté we are faced with. People go out there and really don't know what they are up against, even if they have been there before. Kate Adie talked about how people see us as inviolate -- we see ourselves that way. We see ourselves as crusaders. I think we sometimes feel that everyone understands how we are only trying to tell the story, only trying to get to the bottom of it, to tell the world what is going on. The problem is that these people, whether they are in war zones, areas of unrest, guerrilla wars -- which are probably the worst -- they don't discriminate. If you get caught in somebody's sights, they are not going to check your ID card.

That is one of the things we have to stress here, and that is what these training courses are doing. Our experience with it has been excellent. We are getting people to think. This is not just about first aid, not just about weapons, not just about war stories. It is about thinking -- and not only thinking at the moment but also thinking ahead.

John Owen

On your point about who is not in the room. In my experience of trying to organise meetings like this, and what I have been told by others who have tried, is that it has been impossible to get major players from the print industry. So I think it is important also to acknowledge who has come today, because obviously print has to explain more extensively than broadcasting what it is doing and not doing.

Peter Preston

At the risk of making myself even more unpopular, it is worth feeding into this conversation something which I am sure some people who are not here would have said, had they come. I think there are very real issues here. I think we have been too sleepy about them for a great deal of time and we need to get our act together. So I am not backing away from any of that. But there are two things that occur to me to say in the aid of greater understanding. We have had a bit of the ritual telebashing of the print media, and it goes on all the time.

I am all for training, but I think industries have their defects. Just as the print industry has its defects, so the training industry has its defects. It is also making sure that cheques pass and that there are bums on seats and the courses run and the people are paid. Just bear that in mind.

I am, as John Foster will know, one of his most loyal and devoted members, shelling out large amounts of boodle every month, for which I get nil benefit and we really are friendly. One of the reasons Fleet Street or the print industry is the way it is, is that The Guardian, and to an extent the FT, recognise the NUJ. Reuters, BBC, ITN, God bless them, all are part of it, but the rest of them, by and large, aren't.

And if those managers think that health and safety is the means by which John Foster and the guys get back into the act, there is going to be suspicion. John is working on two levels: he needs to protect freelancers, and freelancers need to be protected. But he also needs to get freelancers to become members of the NUJ, to make that organisation, which has had its dodgy financial situation, more and more viable.

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> ***It would not be beyond the wit of man to find a way to get the various organisations who send people off to high-risk zones to work together to subscribe to a single insurance policy.***
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> *Alex Moody*

Alex Moody

INDEPENDENT PRODUCER

I have done a fair amount of research over the years on insurance as a part of safety. The really critical thing to understand is that it is simply a numbers game. The only way of making sure that insurance is commercially viable, and not a scheme that falls flat on its face after a year of sponsorship and good will, is if people work together and don't fall out.

The number of journalists who go off to war zones is not many in global terms. It will be very difficult to make that number of people as individuals pay for their own insurance. The way larger companies make this possible is by offsetting those risks against a larger number of people they are insuring under their corporate policies. Freelancers unfortunately tend not to fall under these corporate umbrellas.

It would not be beyond the wit of man to find a way to get the various organisations, the unions and the corporations who send people off to high-risk zones to work together to subscribe to a single insurance policy, which would reduce their insurance costs. It makes commercial sense for those organisations to work together, which both protects their own people and provides the opportunity for people who are not part of their organisations to receive the same or similar insurance cover. So, please, if we can take one thing with respect to insurance away from this meeting, it is that insurance is a numbers game. You help yourself by working together.

Nigel Hancock
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, APTV

My fear is that the numbers that put themselves at risk will increase rather than decrease, as the cost of entry into television newsgathering is now much cheaper because of new technology. Before it used to be purely a preserve of big TV news organisations, because the equipment would cost tens of thousands of pounds or dollars. But now a broadcast-quality camera costs merely £2,000, and this will allow lots of people, who possibly have no experience and no training, to be tempted to enter into this world.

Robert Ménard

If, according to what I hear is going on in the UK, you think you have problems, don't worry about it. Because in France we are about 10 centuries behind you. In France I have never heard somebody running a newspaper or somebody working in a university teaching journalism even raising any of the questions that have been raised today. It would not even enter their mind. When I heard Peter [Hunter] talking in Sofia about the BBC looking after the safety of their personnel, people around me were absolutely flabbergasted, because they had no idea this went on. And they were delighted that this was happening.

At the time of the Bosnia conflict, there was a slight amount of effervescence, for a very brief time, when the French and German and Belgian armies organised three-day training programmes, but that is all there was. So what is going on here is really positive. And I think this is something which not only should be given out to British journalists -- I think this should be spread and you should be telling foreign journalists about it as well.

On the other hand, I agree with what the gentleman from APTV said, that the freelancers who are taken on by the main media bodies are not the main problem. We are talking about the freelancers who are going off on their own back. The people who were the most seriously wounded in Bosnia-Herzegovina were people who wanted to make a name for themselves, who thought they suddenly could become famous war correspondents. After all, a plane ticket to Bosnia is pretty cheap. You can even go there by car. It is certainly a lot cheaper than getting to Vietnam. The problem as far as those people are concerned is to find insurance that is affordable. We contacted all kinds of insurance companies in France, and it was impossible to find one which would make it affordable.

I am sorry to go on about this, but it is something we must not forget: that the people who are killed are mainly not Westerners. Westerners are really the minority. Since the beginning of the year there have been 19 journalists killed, and not one of them was a Westerner. The people who have been killed in Chechnya are Russians. The people who are killed in Algeria are Algerians, Mexicans in Mexico, and Colombians in Colombia. We have a moral duty to these people and we really must not forget them.

John Owen

Vladimir Skossyrev made the point to me that it is fine for us to sit here and worry about the training of Western news organisations, but that no one is considering how to train journalists from his country -- Russian journalists who go to Chechnya, journalists from developing countries who have no access to training. I want to go back to what training means to individuals in the field. Scott White, you had a horrific experience in Algeria. Would training have made a difference?

Scott White
PRODUCER, WTN

In the circumstances, I doubt if training would have helped. I represent everybody's worst nightmare come true. But, at the same time, everybody's amazing

miracle. I was shot in the head and survived. My cameraman was not so lucky -- he was killed. I was commissioned to go there. I am sure that journalists who work in war zones do need training. But I am not convinced that in my particular incident it would have made any difference.

As others have said, the risk will be greater now because the cost of technology to cover these war zones is becoming cheaper. For £2,000 you can buy a broadcast-quality camera, go out and cover something with no training whatsoever. You just do it on spec, and you do not need a commission. You are counting on fortune, with no insurance. You cannot possibly insure yourself to go and cover these stories unless you have a commission, because the numbers don't add up to get that insurance.

In my own circumstances, I was commissioned. I was and still am a member of the NUJ, and we went for legal advice after the incident and their comment was: "If you get any money as a freelancer (even as one who has been commissioned) from the broadcaster, please let us know. You will be the first freelancer we know of to get money from an insurance company."

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I am sure journalists who work in war zones do need training. But I am not convinced that in my particular incident it would have made any difference.

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Scott White

As Charlie said, to a great degree we are preaching to the choir here. We need somehow to involve the people who do go out without training. It is all very well for freelancers who have been commissioned to go out and cover stories -- they possibly do get the training. Staff members are definitely getting it, and I have great admiration for the BBC who pioneered this.

To a degree we have got to thank a war in Europe, the first one since the Second World War, for this training. Bosnia brought it home to broadcasters, mainly, that training was required. There were all these conflicts in Asia, in Africa, but it did not matter until war was on our doorstep. This is why the issue is coming to the forefront -- because we have war in Europe. I do believe that people from outside the scenario that we are presently discussing need to be involved because the people who are counting on fortune are the ones at greatest risk.

Kate Adie

I can't see why people can't get together on insurance. We have unions, newspapers and broadcasting organisations represented here, and we have people from The Rory Peck Trust -- people who know about this. Why on earth can't we get our act together and sort out the insurance? It is not that difficult. It does not mean huge amounts of money.

I think we ought to get our act together within six months and have a plan somehow jointly worked out. And if we can't get that together in this country, that is a disgrace to journalism and to evolved and sophisticated press organisations. Somebody please come up with a basis on how we can do this.

That would assure so many people. I used the word assure, because I think assurance follows insurance. Assurance of those people who are freelancers, assurance that they will be included, that they are not going to be left on their own devices. Again, it is not beyond the wit of a rich Western country like this one, and many of the organisations represented here, to get together on that.

We also have vast numbers of young people literally dying to get out to an exciting job in the media. There are hundreds of them coming

out of colleges and courses, longing to get into the now fashionable world of journalism. It is frightening what some of them may go and do. At least some aspect of what can happen in the more dangerous, difficult areas ought to be built into the training courses. And they should be actively discouraged from heading out to try and win their spurs on the first go. I don't want to discourage determined, risky journalism. But on the other hand, I did not go out there when I was 18. I was first hit determinedly over the head with a very nasty object in a very dangerous zone -- and that was a saucepan in a housewife's kitchen in Plymouth during a strike.

I have got bits of metal in my body and I have been in nasty places like everybody in the room here who is a practitioner. But I don't regard the world as a hostile place. I particularly don't see my own society as hostile. I would be extremely concerned if young trainee journalists full of hope and ideas and adventure were given the idea that somehow they are at war with their own society or the people on whom they are trying to report. There is some conflict involved, some risk-taking, some dreadful things. But it is probably a less risky job in this country than being a traffic warden, and probably involves fewer assaults. Don't let us get the idea into young journalists' heads that, God, it is hell out there and they are going to be ducking behind things all the time in the general run of journalism. You only function well in a society if you are overt and have sympathy with it. I try to go out, even in the nastiest places, with a sense of friendship or understanding of what is going on.

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> ***Don't let us get the idea into young journalists' heads that, God, it is hell out there and they are going to be ducking behind things all the time in the general run of journalism.***
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> *Kate Adie*

But coming to the serious bit, when there *is* risk. There are dreadful things happening and the graph is going off the scale. And it is, understandably, [most dangerous for] those journalists who are nearest to their society which has turned nasty. When it comes to that, we need the training, the insurance and the assurance. But can we make a start quite simply on the insurance? I think that it is not beyond the wit of all the people in this room today. [Applause]

Quentin Peel

I would like just to say that to be here today has been a very valuable experience. It does not on the face of it look dramatically relevant to me. But of course it is, because I have got journalists out there who will, possibly by mistake, get themselves into very dangerous situations. And they have got to know what to do about it.

As you were all talking about insurance, I started scribbling down one or two of the journalists that I have got in the field who I ought to just check. I know that we give them war zone insurance, but perhaps I should check what the insurance situation is for them. I wrote down: Nairobi, Belgrade, Kiev, the Philippines, Indonesia, Jerusalem, Cairo, Brazil, Mexico, Vietnam, Bangkok. Then I put down: all Latin America, all Asia, all Eastern Europe, all Africa and all the Middle East. It is everybody. And I don't know what the insurance policy is I am giving them. And there's Jeff Dyer in Sao Paulo, who is in a bloody dangerous place on a daily basis.

And I think about the most dangerous story in the FT today, about a slightly peculiar payment that has been made by the biggest bank in Russia to the Privatisation Minister for a book. And that banker could shoot the

correspondent who wrote the story, which is why I went through it with a fine-tooth comb last night.

> ***We get in the way, we attract gunfire, and we can cause riots. We have got to try not to be part of the problem. That should be part of the training, too.***
>
> *Quentin Peel*

Every single one of them has got to feel at least reassured that we care. So I am going back to the FT now to say: "Right, I know that we are doing nothing. We are doing bugger-all to train people to deal with these situations." And that is wrong.

What experience can these young people Kate talked about, these incredibly bright, young, trusting, terrifying, far more energetic than me, correspondents get when I say: "Bugger off. I don't want you until you have got experience." I, like Kate, learned being bashed over the head with a saucepan. I want them to get that sort of experience, rather than go to Chechnya or somewhere like that. Because they are not actually going to produce very good copy for me from there. They are not going to know what they are doing.

But they can go out and work, for example, for English-language newspapers in Beirut or Moscow or Prague and get some experience there. They can work for British provincial newspapers. Perhaps one of the problems we have is the demise of the rather strong British regional newspaper culture that was training young people and producing good people. I am totally cynical -- I am afraid I hire as many people as I can get from Reuters. They have had the training at Reuters and then I grab them.

I am worried at the extent to which we are all dragged into what I might call bang-bang journalism. I don't think we are asking the right questions about where these conflicts and wars are coming from. We are spending far too much time just on the explosions. And I am worried -- let me bring up a little bugbear of mine -- that the journalistic awards that are presented in this town and in most other places tend to go to bang-bang journalism. The FT is very close to the point of not bothering to submit any of our correspondents to press awards, because we just get every single time: "It is boring, dull, irrelevant." The press awards tend to go to people who are in the bang-bang places, and this is encouraging bang-bang journalism. I know, because I have won one. It is crazy that it is not going to people in difficult places doing much more investigative, tough, hard-nosed stories, in places that don't look exciting, but they do bloody good journalism.

The friend from the ICRC raised a point which I think should be brought into training courses, which is how do journalists stop being part of the problem for people who are trying to solve it? We are part of the problem, we get in the way, we attract gunfire, and we can cause riots. I remember when I was a student at a university demonstration, and a freelancer from The Daily Telegraph said: "Don't call us until there is trouble." Then I saw the television cameras arrive -- and the trouble started. We have got to try not to be part of the problem. That should be part of the training, too.

Ron McCullagh

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We are a news feature production and distribution company. This business of insurance -- I don't get it. We have insurance for all the people who go out the door. It doesn't cost that much. It is only £50,000 on death. I agree it is not that much, but it happens to be more than a lot of freelancers get.

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