

# Bulletin

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB OF AMERICA, NEW YORK, NY • March-April 2016

## Awards Dinner to Honor Reporting in a Year of Crisis

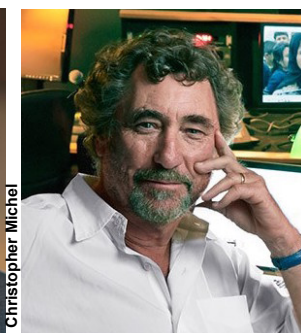
### EVENT PREVIEW: April 28

By Chad Bouchard

Europe's refugee crisis and deadly terrorist attacks are in focus in this year's *Dateline* magazine, which will be shared at the OPC's Annual Awards Dinner on April 28. The issue – and the gala event – honors the work of international journalists covering upheaval in the face of growing threats, which OPC President Marcus Mabry said makes the work of correspondents harder and ever more essential.

Kai Ryssdal, host and senior editor of American Public Media's Marketplace, will be our presenter. Ryssdal joined Marketplace in 2005, and has hosted the show from China, the Middle East and across the United States. This year's 22 award winners were selected from more than 480 entries in categories including news coverage, print, cartoons, photography, broadcast, books, commentary and multimedia.

Mabry selected David Fanning, founder and executive producer at large of PBS investigative series FRONTLINE, to receive this year's



Left to right: Kai Ryssdal of Marketplace, David Fanning of PBS FRONTLINE and Jason Rezaian of *The Washington Post*.

President's Award. In a message to Fanning offering the award, Mabry praised FRONTLINE and Fanning's "extraordinary, defining" work since the show's first season in 1983. Fanning retired as executive producer last year after 33 seasons, and still serves at the series' executive producer at large.

Increasing dangers in the profession remained in the spotlight for the OPC over the last year as terrorists continue to target journalists and governments detain and intimidate colleagues.

Jason Rezaian, journalist and former Tehran bureau chief for *The Washington Post* who was released from Iran in January after more than 18 months in prison, will light the

press freedom candle in memory of journalists who have died in the line of duty in the past year and in honor of those injured, missing and abducted.

The dinner will be held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel on Columbus Circle, and begins with a reception at 6:00 p.m., sponsored by multinational computer company Lenovo. International news agency Reuters is sponsoring a "Meet the Winners" reception immediately following the dinner. Tickets for this year's dinner are \$295 for OPC members and \$295 for a member's guest; \$750 for non-members. Table prices are \$7,500 (Friend), \$9,000 (Sponsor), \$14,000 (Patron), \$18,000 (Fellow). Dress for the event is black tie. The Annual Awards Dinner will be streamed live.

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## Book Night: Andrew Nagorski's *Nazi Hunters*

### EVENT PREVIEW: MAY 18

The OPC will celebrate the publication of OPC member Andrew Nagorski's latest book, *The Nazi Hunters*, on Wednesday, May 18 at the offices of Marketplace at 747 Third Ave. (47th Street) at 6 p.m. Come

raise a glass to Andy! Interviewing Andy will be Deidre Depke, who worked with Andy many years at *Newsweek*. Andy was *Newsweek's* bureau chief in Hong Kong, Moscow, Rome, Bonn, Warsaw and Berlin and the author of many books. To RSVP, contact Eva Fryscak at: [Eva.Fryscak@marketplace.org](mailto:Eva.Fryscak@marketplace.org).



Panelists Analyse Crackdown on Press Freedom in Turkey

EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has waged an aggressive campaign to silence critics and clamp down on press freedom as he moves increasingly toward authoritarian rule.

On March 30, the OPC sponsored a program to analyze the recent seizure of two key Turkish news outlets and to discuss the fate of free expression in the country.

Kerim Balci, recently the editor-in-chief of *Turkish Review*, a bimonthly journal published by Zaman Media Group, left the country before police raided and took control of *Zaman*. He now lives in self-imposed exile. His family remains in Turkey, however, and his name remains on the top of a list of wanted journalists and many of his colleagues are in jail or had their passports confiscated. Those who escaped are lost, he added.

“They don’t have the hope or courage to start again.”

Repercussions of the government seizure are far-reaching. Zaman Media Group had conducted news trainings around the country, had correspondents in 120 countries around the world and shared content with 87 local stations in Turkey for free. The only other source of such free content is the government, Balci said.

Agnès Callamard, the director of Columbia University’s Global Freedom of Expression initiative, spoke about the global trend of defamation and terrorism charges being used to silence journalists and opposition groups.

She said the crackdown in Turkey includes the academic sector, political parties, cultural and artistic centers, non-



Kerim Balci, left, and Agnès Callamard

governmental organizations and the judiciary.

“It’s not just about the press,” she said. “what’s happening in Turkey is about dissent and political opposition.”

She said between 30 and 33 journalists are currently in jail in Turkey, many of them on national security charges.

Turkey has also stepped up attacks on social media as people increasingly seek online sources of information amid the crackdown on traditional media.

Turkey has the “most egregious” record in the world when it comes to pulling content from Twitter, Callamard said. Between January and June 2015, there were 408 Turkish court orders to Twitter for removal of content – which constituted 90 percent of the number of requests worldwide for the same period.

The OPC has written a letter to Erdoğan calling for an end to the press crackdown. Please consider adding your name to the list of more than 600 supporters on [Change.org](#). To read more details about the recent takeover of major media outlets in Turkey, see page 14.

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Panelists Discuss Security, Privacy and Intelligence Gaps

EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

Terrorist groups are using more sophisticated tools than ever before to carry out attacks and recruit supporters via social media campaigns. Using encrypted communication and new mobile message platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram, terrorists such as those who planned the November 2015 attacks in Paris have left law enforcement groping in the dark.

On March 2, the OPC and New York University’s Center for Global Affairs co-hosted a panel to discuss recent intelligence failures and the increasing tension between security and privacy.

In an interview with Michael Isikoff, chief investigative correspondent for Yahoo News, National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers confirmed that the terrorists in Paris used encrypted communications to dodge surveillance.

The panelists discussed the pitched battle between Apple and the Federal Bureau of Investigation over access to contacts and other data on a cell phone from one of the suspects in the San Bernardino attack in December 2015.

“This is really an inflection point,” said Daniel Klaidman, OPC governor and Yahoo News deputy editor who



Left to right: Dan Klaidman, Michael Isikoff and Alexis Gelber.

has covered the FBI for much of his career.

The FBI demanded that Apple develop software to help them unlock the device, but Apple refused and has invoked free speech and public privacy rights in its defense.

The panelists said both sides were using the case for their own larger agendas. Calls to and from the phone are already available to investigators through metadata, Isikoff said. “The basic idea that the FBI needs this phone unlocked to find out whether there was a co-conspirator really doesn’t hold up to the evidence.”

He added that instead of leaving the decision to Con-

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Russia Hands Explore Country’s Past and Look to Future

EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

President Vladimir Putin’s authoritarian domestic leadership and aggressive use of force in Ukraine and Syria has Russia watchers wondering – what is his long-term plan? Is the former KGB officer trying to shape the country into a grand vision, or is he just seizing opportunities and reacting to crises like a well-trained field agent?

On Feb. 24, more than 180 former Moscow correspondents, OPC members and Russophiles gathered at Columbia University’s Harriman Institute to grapple with these and other questions. The Russia Hands Reunion was an opportunity to discuss Putin and the country’s trajectory, and to put current developments in historical context.

The afternoon included two pan-

els. One focused on current events in “Putin’s Russia.” The other, titled “Communism and the Fall of Communism,” featured former correspondents in Moscow with postings that span more than six decades.

During the panel on Putin, Carol Williams, longtime *Los Angeles Times* correspondent, said that the Russian president “changed Russia’s narrative” by focusing on what he portrayed as threats from the West and a need to restore the country’s status on the world stage.

She said he did this by increasing control over media, returning



Left to right: Alexander Cooley, Timothy Frye, Vladimir Lenski and Carol Williams.



Left to right: Robert Kaiser, Ann Cooper, David Hoffman, Tom Kent and Seymour Topping.

to one-party rule, framing human rights as alien Western values and “systematically stifling all dissent-

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# Gannon Urges Foundation Scholars to Follow Curiosity

## EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

The OPC Foundation Scholar Awards Luncheon this year highlighted a diverse crop of winners with on-the-ground reporting experience that spans the globe.

OPC Foundation President Bill Holstein, in his introductory remarks, said the panel of judges selected winners who had the right “motivations and attitudes” that align with key values for a good journalist.

“We ask ourselves, if you were a foreign editor, would you send this person out to get the story?”

For the second time, the OPC Foundation offered a day of risk assessment and situational training for scholars at the Associated Press headquarters. Frank Smyth, president and founder of Global Journalist Security, a hostile environment training outfit based in Washington DC, lead the program.

The event featured a keynote speech from Kathy Gannon, who has covered Pakistan and Afghanistan for The Associated Press as a correspondent and bureau chief.

Gannon is all too familiar with reporting in hostile conditions. She survived an attack while covering elections in Pakistan in April 2014, but her friend, AP photographer Anja Niedringhaus, was shot and killed.

Her message for luncheon guests focused on the need for more objectivity in journalism, and lamented the blurring of lines. She said many journalists have become advocates or champions for one side of a conflict.

“When we look at a story through the prism of good and evil, our stories are colored, or questions are weak and in the end it impacts the information the reader receives, it skews the recording of history.”

Gannon urged the scholars to follow their curiosity and focus on the journalist’s “primary mission to investigate, question and report.”

Scholars spoke about some of the stories that first piqued their interest, and about their ambitions for future work.

H.L Stvenson winner Gabrielle Paluch talked about her reporting on the opium trade in Myanmar that funds a long-standing civil war between ethnic groups. She said while reporting she interviewed a woman named Olive, the “octogenarian bisexual war lady of royal Chinese descent, the first drug lord of the Golden Triangle, [who] is in fact still alive and not dead as erroneously presumed.”

Paluch plans to revisit Olive when she reports for The Associated Press in Bangkok on an OPC Foundation Fellowship.

Annika Hammerschlag received the Irene Corbally Kuhn Scholarship. She wrote about “untouchables” in the Hindu caste system who have left the faith and converted to Buddhism and Christianity, and found that Buddhism converts were better able to escape their past. She’ll be going to Senegal to write about polygamy and gender issues.

Roy Rowan Scholarship winner Isma’il Kushkush re-



Kathy Gannon

counted his experience in his ancestral homeland of Sudan, where he lived for 8 years and worked as a stringer for *The New York Times*, CNN and others. He said he was inspired by coverage of the Arab Spring, but grew concerned about the lack of coverage of the refugee crisis in eastern Sudan.

He recalled talking to a man who expressed despair that summed up Kushkush’s reporting on the story: “I’m not respected. I have no life, because I’m a refugee,” the man told him.

Flora Lewis Fellowship winner Katie Riordan traveled to Somaliland to report on how climate change is worsening the effects of drought.

“Part of the story is how the traditional pastoral way of life in Somaliland is being imperiled as global temperatures rise,” she said. Riordan has an OPC Foundation fellowship in London for *The Wall Street Journal* this summer.

Neha Thirani Bagri won the Jerry Flint Fellowship for International Business Reporting. She spent four years as a staff reporter in the South Asia bureau of *The New York Times*. Her essay focused on Agnelo Valdaris, a man suspected of stealing a gold chain who was tortured and killed in police custody in Mumbai. She said the case “shed light on the pervasive use of torture in police custody in India and also on the widespread culture of impunity.”

She said she wants to tell stories of marginalized communities for a global audience, “a task that seems ever more pressing in the face of the crackdown on dissent in India today.”

Nathan S. Bienstock Memorial Scholarship winner Russel Midori, who learned skills while serving as a Marine Corps videographer, submitted a short documentary about security issues surrounding the presidential election in Haiti.

He recalled first being inspired about international journalism during a conversation with Getty Images photographer Chris Hondros, who was killed in Libya in a mortar attack in 2011. Midori told Hondros he wanted to try reporting overseas, but wasn’t sure how to start.

“If you can’t figure out how to get there, you really don’t belong there,” he remembered Hondros saying.

# 2016 OPC Foundation Scholarship Winners



Left to right: Levi Bridges, Russell Midori, Annika Hammerschlag, Neha Wadekar, Isma’il Kushkush, Neha Thirani Bagri, Gabrielle Paluch, Kanyakrit Vongkiakajorn, Pete Vernon, Alizeh Khohari, Dake Kang, Alissa Greenberg, Jesse Coburn, Wei Zhou and Katie Riordan.

*Following is a list of the fifteen 2016 scholarship and fellowship recipients, their affiliations, the prize they won, the presenter, and a brief description of their winning applications. The winners were selected from a highly competitive field of 175 applicants from around 55 different colleges and universities.*

**Alissa Greenberg**  
UC-Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism  
**DAVID R. SCHWEISBERG MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Sponsored by the Schweisberg Family; presented by David’s brother, Matthew Schweisberg*

An ardent traveler, Alissa once spent a year traveling solo around the globe, including a trek on the Trans-Mongolian railroad from Helsinki to Beijing. Fluent in Spanish and proficient in Mandarin, she wrote about how the spread of palm oil plantations in Malaysia was crowding out other forms of life and livelihood, specifically its impact on the indigenous Mah Meri tribe. She is a graduate of Wesleyan university

**Neha Wadekar**  
University of Southern California  
**REUTERS FELLOWSHIP**  
*Sponsored by Reuters and funded by The Correspondents Fund; presented by David Rohde, National Security Investigations Editor, Reuters*

After graduating from Tufts University, Neha spent two years as a management consultant acquiring the technical and analytical expertise that will aid her in her career in international journalism, preferably in Eastern or Central Africa. In her essay, she wrote about complex cul-

tural issues surrounding the beauty industry and skin-lightening products in Kenya. A multimedia journalist with Spanish language skills, she has an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Reuters bureau in Nairobi.

**Jesse Coburn**  
New York University  
**HARPER’S MAGAZINE SCHOLARSHIP in memory of I.F. STONE**  
*Endowed by John R. MacArthur and the Pierre F. Simon Charitable Trust; presented by Rick MacArthur, publisher, Harper’s Magazine*

In his essay, Jessie wrote about how tensions eventually subsided in the historically Protestant city of Hamburg as a Lutheran church underwent conversion into a mosque. Having lived in Berlin for several years, some as a student and later as a journalist for a German architectural magazine and intern at *The New York Times*, he is fluent in German and proficient in French. A graduate of Wesleyan University, he intends to report on Europe for American audiences.

**Annika Hammerschlag**  
Columbia Graduate School of Journalism  
**IRENE CORBALLY KUHN SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Endowed by the Scripps Howard Foundation; presented by Pamela Howard of the Pamela Howard Family Foundation*

A photojournalist and endurance athlete, Annika was afflicted with dengue fever while reporting on the story that was the essence of her winning essay. In the northeast Indian town of Bodh Gaya and elsewhere, she observed how some Dalits, or untouch-

ables, have renounced Hinduism and converted to Buddhism and Christianity as a means of escaping the social trappings of the caste system. Fluent in French and proficient in Spanish, the UCLA graduate intends to report on India’s social issues and cover health issues in West Africa.

**Gabrielle Paluch**  
Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism  
**H.L. STEVENSON FELLOWSHIP**  
*Funded by the Gamsin family and sponsored by family and friends; presented by Sharon Gamsin*

In her winning essay, Gabrielle told the story of Olive, a former drug dealer, prisoner and survivor, whose story encapsulates Myanmar’s endless civil war. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, she speaks German, Mandarin, Spanish, French, and a bit of Thai and Burmese. While reporting from Myanmar, she broke the story of female genital mutilation in hospitals in Thailand. A multimedia journalist and stand-up comic, she has an OPC Foundation fellowship in The Associated Press bureau in Bangkok.

**Levi Bridges**  
UC-Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism  
**STAN SWINTON FELLOWSHIP**  
*Endowed by the Swinton Family; presented by John Daniszewski, Vice President of International News, The Associated Press*

Levi’s interest in Russia was piqued by a 6,000 mile bicycle journey from the Sea of Japan to Moscow, a city he will return to as an OPC Foundation fellow in the AP bureau. Fluent in Spanish, he spent the last decade in Mexico City covering immigration and labor. In his essay, the Alfred University graduate and former Fulbright grantee wrote about the mistreatment of carnival workers from Tlapacoyan on H-2B visas in the U.S., an experience he shared working as an undercover reporter.

**Kanyakrit Vongkiatkajorn**  
Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism  
**EMANUEL R. FREEDMAN SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Endowed by family; presented by Alix Freedman, Manny’s daughter and Ethics Editor, Reuters*  
A native of Thailand and a grad-

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(‘Russia Hands’ Continued From Page 5)

uate of Wesleyan University, Kan-yakrit was back in Bangkok last August when a bomb rocked the Erawan shrine. She wrote about its impact on Thai people living in both Bangkok and New York City. A multimedia journalist, she is committed to covering the stories of Southeast Asia. Proficient in French, she has an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Reuters bureau in Bangkok.

#### Pete Vernon

Columbia University Graduate  
School of Journalism

#### THEO WILSON SCHOLARSHIP

*Sponsored by donations from family and friends; presented by family friend Barbara Burns*

As a high school teacher in Gabarone, Botswana, Pete observed firsthand the uncertain future of this modern, relatively wealthy country as its economy and infrastructure struggle with the impact of drought and desertification. Formerly with Teach for America, he taught 8th grade in the Bronx. A graduate of William & Mary, where he captained the baseball team, Pete will return to South Africa with an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Reuters bureau in Johannesburg.

#### Isma’il Kushkush

Columbia University Graduate  
School of Journalism

#### ROY ROWAN SCHOLARSHIP

*Endowed by family, friends and admirers; presented by Roy Rowan*

Isma’il’s career began as a four-month visit to his ancestral homeland of Sudan that turned into an eight-year stint in East Africa as a stringer for *The New York Times* and CNN, among others. There he covered the Eritrean refugee crisis, the subject of his essay. Fluent in Arabic and a graduate of UC-Davis, he is interested in covering Africa, the Middle East and diaspora communities. Isma’il has an OPC Foundation fellowship in The Associated Press bureau in Jerusalem.

#### Katie Riordan

University of Montana-Missoula  
**FLORA LEWIS INTERNSHIP**

*Endowed by the Pierre F. Simon Charitable Trust; presented by Michelle LaRoche, Editor of Development, The Wall Street Journal*

After being deported from Yemen, Katie headed to Somaliland where she covered, among other environmental and political stories, the effects of drought on the nomadic tribes in this Horn of Africa nation, the subject of her winning essay. Her interest lies in reporting the impact of climate change and the growing number of climate refugees. A graduate of the University of Colorado, Katie has an OPC Foundation fellowship with *The Wall Street Journal* in London.

#### Wei Zhou

University of North Carolina  
**S&P AWARD FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS REPORTING**  
*Endowed by Standard & Poor’s; presented by David Guarino, Global Head of External Communications, McGraw Hill Financial*

A third-year business journalism student, Wei believes that Western audiences need to better understand today’s China, a country rapidly growing into a capitalist state but where the process of industrialization comes at a price. In her essay, she wrote about how China’s stock market plunge last June affected individual investors. A native Mandarin speaker, she has an OPC Foundation fellowship in *The Wall Street Journal* bureau in Shanghai.

#### Neha Thirani Bagri

Columbia University Graduate  
School of Journalism

#### JERRY FLINT FELLOWSHIP FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS REPORTING

*Endowed by family and friends; presented by Kate McLeod, Jerry’s wife and Joe Flint, his son*

Neha spent four years as a staff reporter in the South Asia bureau of *The New York Times*. Intent on a career in long-form, narrative journalism, she is drawn to stories about marginalized communities. Fluent in Hindi, she is a graduate of Northwestern. In her essay, she told the story of Agnelo Valdaris, a young man who was tortured and killed while in police custody in Mumbai and his father’s fruitless efforts to exact justice. She has an OPC Foundation fellowship with the GroundTruth Project.

#### Alizeh Kohari

New York University

#### THE WALTER & BETSY CRONKITE SCHOLARSHIP

*Funded by Daimler and Supported by CBS News and friends; presented by Tony Cavin, Deputy Foreign Editor, CBS News*

A native of Karachi and currently a Fulbright scholar, Alizeh’s interest lies in documenting lives impacted by environmental change. In her essay, she wrote about the villages along the Indus River in Pakistan that bore the environmental consequences of the 1967 construction of the Tarbela dam. A graduate of the London School of Economics, she is fluent in English, Urdu/Hindi with some Punjabi, French and Spanish. She has an OPC Foundation fellowship with Reuters in Mexico City.

#### Russell Midori

Columbia University Graduate  
School of Journalism

#### NATHAN S. BIENSTOCK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

*Endowed by the Richard Leibner and Carole Cooper Family Foundation; presented by Richard Leibner, Co-President, Bienstock, a UTA Company*

Russell learned cinematography as a Marine Corps combat videographer before earning his degree in broadcast journalism from Brooklyn College. His application contained a compelling short documentary on the security issues surrounding the recent presidential election in Haiti. As field producer and on-camera host, he focused on whether the Haitian National Police had succeeded in establishing safe, fair and violence-free polling stations.

#### Dake Kang

University of Chicago  
**THE FRITZ BEEBE FELLOWSHIP**

*Endowed by Anne and Larry Martz; presented by Larry Martz*

Pursuing a combined bachelor/master degree in economic history in four years, Alex is intent on a career in business journalism. Fluent in French and learning German, he analyzed the explosive growth of low-cost airline carriers in Europe and the rest of the world and asked why their growth has not been as great in the U.S. He has an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Reuters bureau in Brussels.

## OPC Foundation Scholar Awards Luncheon

Photos by Michael Dames



Kathy Gannon, left, and OPC Foundation President Bill Holstein.



Kathy Gannon, left, and Jane Reilly, executive director of the OPC Foundation.



Left to right: Roy Rowan, Isma’il Kushkush and Marc Rowan.



Jesse Coburn and Alizeh Kohari.



Levi Bridges and Alissa Greenberg.



Left to right: Allan Dodds Frank, Neha Wadekar and Pete Vernon.

## THANK YOU

The OPC Foundation is especially grateful for its Patrons and Friends who supported the 2016 Scholar Awards Luncheon. Their contributions ensure the continued success of our scholarship/fellowship program.

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The Wall Street Journal



(*'Russia Hands' Continued From Page 3*)

ing voices and restoring tsar-like omnipotence to the presidency.”

Vladimir Lenski, anchor for Russian TV International, said that Putin lacks long-range vision and has made risky moves with unknown consequences, such as military operations in Syria and an aggressive standoff with Turkey.

“There is no plan, no endgame. It’s very dangerous, however, because here we have the situation of two strongmen.”

Timothy Frye, a professor at the Harriman Institute, cautioned against too much concern in the West over Putin’s stranglehold on domestic media and his fervor for global “information wars.”

“I think we need to take a step back and recognize that there are real limits on the extent to which governments can simply put out a message and have people respond to it,” Frye said.

During the reunion’s second panel with veteran correspondents, Seymour Topping, longtime OPC member and former correspondent and editor for *The New York Times*, recalled reporting on the first signs of division in the Communist world soon after his arrival in Moscow for the *Times* in 1960, and on the Cuban Missile Crisis near the end of his stay in 1962.

“It was very much a frightened city during the crisis,” he said. “I would look at my four kids in double-deckers in our small apartment and wonder if there was a possibility of a missile.”

Robert Kaiser, former managing editor and Russia correspondent for *The Washington Post*, landed in Moscow in

1971, when he said relations with the U.S. were “lousy.”

He said the KGB was aggressive toward American correspondents, and the Soviets were fed up with the administration of President Richard Nixon, who was serving in his second year when Kaiser arrived.

Tom Kent, who works for The Associated Press and the Harriman Institute, covered Russia from 1976 to 1981 for the AP when Leonid Brezhnev was at the country’s helm. He said Western correspondents were barely tolerated then; getting government interviews was difficult, and ordinary people were “programmed” to avoid foreigners.

“In being isolated from ordinary people, and being cut off from official organizations, a lot of correspondents missed out about the general acceptance of the system and some of the accomplishments of the Soviet state.”

Ann Cooper, a professor at the Columbia Journalism School who served as NPR’s first Moscow bureau chief from late 1986 to late 1991, called her era “the good years.”

“At some point I realized the story I most wanted to do while in Russia was the disappearance of fear,” she said. “For me that was the story of my era.”

David Hoffman, *The Washington Post*’s Moscow correspondent from 1995 to 2001, said he had expected a closed society, but was shocked by the free flow of information.

“We had no concept about how thin, how reversible, and how unsustainable it was,” Hoffman said. But he added that there is some hope despite growing restrictions under Putin.

“Vladimir Putin is not all of Russia. There’s a kernel left. Those green shoots have not been completely destroyed.”



Peter Osnos, left, with Robert Kaiser.



Seymour Topping, left, with Serge Schmemmann.



Ann Imse, left, with Jeff Trimble.

Photos this page: Chad Bouchard



Left to right: OPC Governor Charles Wallace, Gordon Joseloff and Andy Katell.



Pete Galuszka and OPC Executive Director Patricia Kranz.

## Japan Pressures Media and Wiends Censorship Law

By Toshio Aritake

China and Russia are making headlines because of crackdowns on their domestic media. But it seems to be happening in Japan as well, although in a slightly more opaque fashion.

On April 1, the first day of a new business year in Japan, three longtime popular newscasters of network television news shows will be quitting in a highly unusual coincidence.

They are Hiroko Kuniya, anchor of Close-up Gendai (Today’s Close-up), a half-hour prime-time news show of the national broadcasting station NHK; Ichiro Furutachi, newscaster managing the Hodo (reporting) Station of TV Asahi; and Shigetada Kishii of the NEWS23 show of Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) Television.

They have been known for not mincing words when tossing questions at interviewees, including politicians, and departing from the country’s notoriously junky variety show and soap opera formats. Kuniya, for example, did a show on why hate speech against Koreans is still pervasive 70 years after World War II ended, a very sensitive subject in Japan.

The three networks said only that they are making changes, including the replacement of the newscasters, as part of their routine, spring refreshing policy, a plausible explanation in a country where a new business year starts when the cherry trees start to blossom.

The real story may be self-censorship by the net-

works’ CEOs, who have been intimidated by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. His cabinet minister in charge of the broadcasting law, Sanae Takaichi, told a parliamentary session on Feb. 9 that she can order television stations to stop broadcasting programs that are politically biased. The law, she said, requires that the broadcasting media must be “politically neutral” and “report facts without altering them.” The law was enacted under Gen. Douglas McArthur’s U.S. occupation forces.

Kazuo Kobayashi, a former NHK Moscow bureau chief who had worked with Kuniya, told me Feb. 23 that Kuniya’s departure would mean that Close-up Gendai is no longer a serious news program. “I am totally against replacing her,” he said.

There are several reasons the Abe cabinet seems to be seeking to intimidate the media. Some journalists have questioned Abe’s military buildup and re-interpretation of the nation’s constitution to allow Japanese military forces to operate outside of Japan. Abe also campaigned on promises to rescue Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korea and to improve the economy through “Abenomics.” But both initiatives are faltering: North Korea cut off bilateral talks on investigations to find and return Japanese abductees to Japan and Abenomics is not creating the 2 percent economic growth rate Abe promised.

*Toshio Aritake is a member of the Foreign Correspondent’s Club of Japan, which is an affiliate of the OPC.*

(*'Intelligence Gaps' Continued From Page 3*)

gress, the FBI would prefer to bring the case to court to establish legal precedent that would favor law enforcement down the road.

The National Security Agency’s perspective, Isikoff said, is more sympathetic to Apple.

“Encryption is a very important part of our cyber defenses, and the more you might open the door to a weakening of encryption, so that the FBI and law enforcement can get into phones, you’re also opening the door for foreign hackers and foreign intelligence agencies to get the same information,” he said.

Klaidman said tensions between free expression and security are also playing out in social media. The US government has pressured platforms like Twitter and Facebook to police their sites and block propaganda from groups like ISIS.

Klaidman cited an incident where Twitter, reluctant to be seen as coop-

erating with the government, refused to return calls to the chief homeland security advisor for the White House.

He said ISIS has gotten sophisticated in its manipulation of security rules for its own aims. The terrorist network invoked terms of service agreements to get graphic anti-ISIS videos made by the State Department taken down from Twitter and YouTube – because the government ran afoul of the platforms’ rules banning violent content.

“It’s basically like Ju-Jitsu, using our strengths against us,” Klaidman said. “Which al-Qaeda also did by using our openness and our technology to attack us on 9-11.”

Alexis Gelber, former OPC president and longtime top editor at *Newsweek* who moderated the discussion, asked the panelists to address Hillary Clinton’s use of private email servers for communication while serving as Secretary of State.

Isikoff said FBI Director James

Comey indicated in a recent press conference that he was getting “briefed regularly” on the case – a sign that investigators could be gathering evidence.

“I think there is a reasonable chance, based on what we know, that the FBI has something here,” Isikoff said.

He said while criminal charges for Clinton were probably unlikely, some of her senior aides who wrote emails on a classified server could face charges of mishandling classified information. Isikoff said that, as recently reported by Reuters, the language used in some emails was similar to that of classified intelligence reports.

“Which means, if you follow the logic, that some people were reading intelligence reports on the classified system, and then laundering them, or writing a sanitized version with the same language on the unclassified system.”



## PEOPLE... By Trish Anderton

### OPC SCHOLARS

Congratulations to 2008 Flora Lewis winner **Devon Haynie** and 2014 H.L. Stevenson fellow **Caelainn Hogan**, who are among the eleven international journalists chosen by the International Reporting Project to report from southern Africa in May. Caelainn is a freelance journalist in Ireland whose work has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, Al Jazeera English, *VICE*, *The Guardian* and *The Irish Times*. Devon is now an international news editor for *U.S. News & World Report*. Both were OPC Foundation fellows in Africa for The Associated Press – Devon in Johannesburg and Caelainn in Lagos.

**Meng Meng**, the 2014 David R. Schweisberg Memorial Scholarship winner, is now working as a reporter/researcher in the Reuters bureau in Beijing.

2013 Nathan S. Bienstock Memorial Scholarship winner **Jacob Kushner** has spent more than a year documenting the impact of Uganda's notorious anti-gay law on the lives of lesbians and gay men. His story, published by *VICE* in March, takes us into small communities of LGBT refugees in Kenya, where they still face danger and discrimination while waiting years to find out whether they will be allowed to emigrate.

**Fatima Bhojani**, the 2015 Theo Wilson scholarship winner, landed a story in *Foreign Affairs* in March. "How Isis Makes IEDs" explores the supply chain that produces the terrorist group's "unprecedented" numbers of improvised explosive devices.

### WINNERS

OPC member **Nisid Hajari's** book *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* has won the William E. Colby Award. The prize is given annually by Norwich University to recognize a book from a first-time author that has contributed to military history, intelligence operations, or international affairs. Carlo D'Este, executive director of the Colby Symposium, called *Midnight's Furies* "noteworthy, superbly readable, and very timely." Hajari oversees Asia coverage for Bloomberg View, the editorial page of *Bloomberg News*.

OPC member **Alissa Rubin** received a Hillary Clinton Award in February for her reporting on women in war zones. "[T]oday we honor her not just for her courageous reporting but for her commitment to illuminating women's experiences during violent conflict," said Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace and Security executive director Melanne Vermeer, presenting Rubin with the Global Trailblazer Award. Rubin is currently Paris bureau chief for *The New York Times* and headed the paper's Afghanistan bureau from 2009 to 2014. GIWPS launched the awards in 2014 to honor "individuals devoted to the cause of women, peace and security in the world."

2015 John Faber Award winner **Bulent Kilic** has received a third-place prize in the World Press Photo Contest. His photo showed Syrian refugees crossing over a broken border fence to enter Turkey. Kilic is a photographer with the AFP.

### UPDATES

**NEW YORK:** **Peter S. Goodman** is returning to *The New York Times* as a London-based economics correspondent. Goodman, an OPC governor, was previously global editor in chief of *The International Business Times*. He has also worked at Huffington Post and *The Washington Post*, and is the author of *Past Due: The End of Easy Money and the Renewal of the American Economy*. "Peter's posting in London signals our continued commitment to global business and economics coverage of the highest standard," wrote *Times* business editor Dean Murphy in an announcement to staff quoted on TalkingBizNews.com.

OPC member **Michael Moran** has been named Visiting Media Fellow, Peace and Security at Carnegie Corporation of New York. Moran worked in international news at MSNBC and the Center for Foreign Policy before going into global risk analysis for Renaissance Capital and Control Risks. His books include *The Reckoning: Debt, Democracy, and the Future of American Power*.

OPC Governor **Lara Setrakian** has launched another immersive news site as part of her fast-growing News Deeply line. Refugees Deeply will cover the ongoing refugee crisis in Syria and around the world. "Syria is just the tip of it," Setrakian told *USA Today*. "It's happening in Asia, Africa, Latin America. Sixty to 70 percent are not from the Middle East. There are a lot of places the refugee crisis is unfolding, and we never hear of it." RefugeesDeeply.org, which launched on March 15, features traditional journalism and analysis, maps and data visualiza-



Goodman



Blumenstein

tion, and firsthand reporting from refugees themselves. Setrakian was also the subject of a lengthy profile in Mashable, which said she was "ready to change the news industry. Again."

OPC member **Rebecca Blumenstein** has a new role at *The Wall Street Journal* as the organization continues evolving to a more digital focus. As deputy editor in chief, Blumenstein oversees newsgathering operations; all bureaus report to her through the bureau chiefs and coverage chiefs. Blumenstein has been with the *Journal* since 1995. Her previous roles include deputy managing editor of international and head of the China bureau.

Former Al Jazeera America deputy photo editor **Vaughn Wallace** is moving on to a position as senior photo editor at *National Geographic*. Wallace, an OPC member, has previously worked at *Time*. He also recently served on the jury of the World Press Photo Contest.

OPC member **Brett Forrest's** investigation into international soccer-match fixing is headed to the big screen. 20th Century Fox and Chernin Entertainment have signed directing team Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah to oversee the film. Forrest initially wrote about match fixing for *ESPN Magazine*; in 2014 William Morrow published his book, *The Big Fix*.

OPC Governor **Abigail Pesta** recently profiled Malala Yousafzai's father for *The New York Times' Women in the World* website. "I tried my best to treat my daughter as myself," schoolteacher Ziauddin Yousafzai told Pesta. "I gave her a lot of freedom." Malala won the Nobel Prize in 2014 as an advocate of education for girls in Pakistan. Pesta

is currently working on a book with teenage Congolese war survivor Sandra Uwiringiyimana.

OPC Governor **Martin Smith's** latest PBS Frontline documentary aired in February. "Chasing Heroin" examines the ongoing effects of the drug war and "what happens when addiction is treated as a public health issue, not a crime."

Former OPC governor **Andrew M. Rosenthal** is stepping down as editorial page director at the *New York Times*. Rosenthal will write an online column about the presidential election and other topics.

The Dutch-based news app **Blendle** is bringing its pay-by-the-story model to the U.S. market. The company launched its American service in beta form in late March with plans to enroll 10,000 initial subscribers. It will charge 10 to 50 cents per article, with content coming from 20 high-profile news outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, TIME Inc., *The Economist*, *Financial Times* and *The Washington Post*. *The New York Times* has issued a new policy tightening its use of anonymous sources. *Times* executive editor and OPC member **Dean Baquet** explained the rules in an email to staff. A story based primarily on an anonymous source will require an in-depth conversation with a major masthead editor, while "every other instance of anonymity has to be approved by a department head" or deputy. "We have no intention of reducing our urgency in getting news to our readers," Baquet wrote. "But we are prepared to pay the price of losing an occasional scoop in order to protect our precious credibility."

The *International Business Times* has laid off at least 15 employees in New York and California, says recode.net, citing "multiple sources." The digital news outlet is owned by IBTMedia, which also

owns *Newsweek* – but the magazine will reportedly not be hit by cuts.

**WASHINGTON, DC:** An FCC bandwidth auction set for the end of March could make billions for TV station owners, OPC member **Kimberly Adams** recently reported for public radio's Marketplace. Instead of selling off space on the broadcast spectrum to stations, the agency will be paying stations to give up their space in order to make more room for streaming data to mobile devices. Many of the small stations taking the payout won't be going off the air; they're looking at channel sharing and other ways to retain their programming.

Is Donald Trump serious about changing the nation's libel laws to make it easier to sue news organizations? OPC member **Marcus Brauchli**, who talked Trump out of numerous lawsuits as a top editor at *The Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post*, thinks the presidential hopeful's statements to that effect are more likely "a kind of pandering rhetoric designed to woo frustrated voters." Nonetheless, he writes in a recent *Post* op-ed, these are "ominous and foreboding" times in U.S. politics. Brauchli adds that persuading Trump not to sue involved listening to a "barrage of profanity" and occasionally inviting him to come meet with the editorial team to vent his frustrations.

**LOS ANGELES:** *Los Angeles Times* Deputy Managing Editor — and OPC member — **Scott Kraft** is playing a key role as the paper's newsroom shifts to a "news hub" mode. The hub functions as a "nerve center where assigning editors, photo editors, social media specialists, data visualizers and practitioners of the other newsroom crafts" identify and report the biggest stories of the

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Adams



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day, according to a January memo from Editor Davan Maharaj that was published in the L.A. Observed blog. Kraft's role is to "shepherd and polish the top stories of the day" for web and print. Kraft has spent more than two decades with the paper, as a national and foreign correspondent as well as a news department head.

**SAN FRANCISCO:** **Thomas Fuller**, who has spent a decade covering Southeast Asia for *The New York Times*, has taken a new posting as the paper's San Francisco bureau chief.

Longform publisher **Matter** is spinning off from Medium.com to become a stand-alone company called Matter Studios. "Essentially: Matter is going to be for digital storytellers what HBO and Amazon Studios are for TV makers, or what the best incubators are for startups," Matter Studios co-founder Mark Lotto wrote in a blog post. Lotto added that the company would produce everything from "multiplatform digital journalism, to podcasts and books, to live events, to streaming film, TV, and video, to new things we haven't thought of yet."

**PULLMAN, Wash.:** OPC member **Lawrence Pintak** is stepping down as head of the Edward R. Murrow School of Communications at Washington State University. Pintak, the school's founding dean, will wrap up his duties by the end of the spring semester in order to spend a year researching and reporting on Islam and the U.S. presidential election. During Pintak's seven-year tenure, the size of the faculty roughly doubled; student enrollment increased by 50 percent; faculty research output doubled; and research grants quadrupled.



Pintak

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va.:** *The Virginia Quarterly Review* is putting Instagram at the forefront of its new series of nonfiction stories from around the world. OPC member **Paul Reyes**, the magazine's deputy editor, tells the Nieman Lab blog that he hopes writers will use the #VQRTrueStory project to "push the limits of what can be done on this platform." The stories go first to Instagram, then to the website, with excerpts following in the print magazine. The series has reported from places including India, Lesotho, Greece and the U.S.

**MIAMI:** OPC member **Jonathan Katz** was part of Miami's The Big Read celebration in February. Katz discussed his book about the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*. Katz is currently writer in residence at Duke University's Franklin Humanities Institute.

**SEDONA, Ariz.:** OPC member **Deborah Camiel's** documentary *(Dis)Honesty: The Truth About Lies* played at the Sedona International Film Festival in February. The movie, which Camiel produced, explores how and why people lie. Camiel currently produces long-form documentaries for CNBC; she has previously worked at CBS and Reuters.

**LESBOS, GREECE:** OPC member **Micah Garen** and partner Marie-Hélène Carleton are working on a documentary about the impact of the refugee crisis on Lesbos. They published a story and a video excerpt on the *Vanity Fair* website in mid-March about the crossing from Turkey to Greece known as the "Route of Death": "Refugees and migrants pay smugglers an average of \$1,000 per person to get on rub-

ber dinghies stuffed with as many as 60 people and then cross treacherous waters in freezing conditions," they write. "Often there isn't enough fuel to make it out of Turkish waters. Other times an inexperienced driver guns the engine to get to Greek waters as quickly as possible, and burns out the motor." Garen and Carleton are fundraising for the film at [lightonthesea.com](http://lightonthesea.com).

**LONDON:** Journalists at *The Independent* are being asked to take steep pay cuts as the newspaper ends its print edition and goes online-only, *The Guardian* reports. The last issue of the *Independent on Sunday* was published in late March. More than 100 of the 160 journalists on staff are expected to lose their jobs, and the National Union of Journalists complained in a statement that for the remaining jobs, "pay and conditions on the digital side are worse."

**DOHA, QATAR:** Just months after revealing plans to shut down its U.S. cable channel, Al Jazeera revealed further job cuts. The network announced an "optimization initiative" on its website on March 27, saying "around 500 positions worldwide will be affected, the majority of which are in Qatar." CNN reports that the Qatar-owned network has been hit by the falling price of oil.

#### PEOPLE REMEMBERED

Editor, correspondent and media critic **Ben Bagdikian** died on March 11 at age 96. Bagdikian began his journalism career in 1947 and did a stint as a Middle East correspondent before joining the *Saturday Evening Post* and eventually *The Washington Post*. He played a key role in obtaining and publishing the Pentagon Papers at the *Post*. His book *The Media Monopoly*, which warned about corporate control of the news, went through several editions.

## PRESS FREEDOM UPDATE...

Journalist and author **Florence Hartmann** was dragged screaming from the Hague in late March and jailed for five days while trying to attend the sentencing of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić. Hartmann was fined €7,000 in 2009 for disclosing confidential information about the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The fine was later converted to a one-week sentence, even though Hartmann says she deposited the money in a French account. She argues that her book containing the information revealed the court's attempts to cover up Serbia's responsibility for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.



Arnaud Favier

Hartmann

The **Obama administration** set a record in 2015 for unfulfilled Freedom of Information Act searches, according to the AP. In more than one-sixth of FOIA requests, government researchers said they were unable to find any relevant records. The administration also set a record for censoring and denying access to requested materials, which it did 77 percent of the time.

An annual survey from the **Foreign Correspondents Club of China** shows some improvement in wait times for correspondents' visa and press card renewals in 2015, though intimidation of journalists continues. About 87 percent of survey respondents received new residence visas within 10 working days, compared to a standard wait time of 15 days in 2014. Less than 4 percent reported problems renewing their press cards or visas. But the report notes that Chinese authorities abuse the press card and renewal process to punish journalists for content unfavorable to the government.

A Honduran court has sentenced journalist **David Romero Ellner** to 10 years in prison for defaming a prosecutor. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the court found that Romero had insulted Sonia Inez Gálvez Ferrari and reported inappropriately on her private life as part of a personal vendetta against her. Romero, who directs Radio Globo and Globo TV, maintained that he was covering corruption.

The **Republic of Congo** blacked out telecommunications the day before the country's March 21 presidential election and kept the ban in place for several days, preventing free and fair reporting on the vote, according to Reporters Without Borders. In addition, three French journalists – one from *Le Monde* and two from Agence France-Presse – were reportedly attacked and had their equipment and passports seized by men who identified themselves as police. The items were later returned. The government reported that President Denis Sassou Nguesso had won re-election, but the opposition rejected the results and accused the administration of fraud.

A Venezuelan newspaper that had been in print for 82 years ended its run in mid-March, saying the state paper company had refused to supply it with newsprint. In a March 17 editorial, regional newspaper *El Carabobeño* wrote: "Today, a vile blow has materialized against one of the most sacred rights of a human being: the right to be informed." The Knight Center at the University of Texas at Austin reports that the paper continues publishing on its website and through an internet radio station.

Australian journalists **Linton Besser** and **Louie Eroglu** were arrested in Malaysia after attempting



Nicky Loh/Getty Images

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak

to question Prime Minister Najib Razak about corruption allegations. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation reporter and cameraman were accused of breaking a security line in Kuching and refusing to follow police orders – allegations they deny. Authorities initially told the journalists they would face charges, but later deported them without taking legal action.

Iraqi authorities have shut down pro-Sunni satellite channel **Al-Baghdadia TV** after revoking its broadcast license, the CPJ reports. On March 18 security guards were reportedly ordered to eject staff from the channel's offices across 18 cities. The Ministry of Interior cited orders from the Iraqi Commission of Media and Communications, which in 2013 accused the station of encouraging attacks against security forces. The director of Al-Baghdadia's London office said the station did not incite violence, and added that he believes it has run afoul of authorities because of its reporting on corruption.

#### MURDERS

• Journalist **Moisés Dagdug Lutzow** was found stabbed to death inside his home in Villahermosa, Tabasco, southeastern Mexico, on Feb. 20. Dagdug, 65, was director and owner of Grupo VX, a media company. He owned radio station XE-VX-AM La Grande de Tabasco and hosted a program at the TVX televi-

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sion station, which he founded. The Knight Center at the University of Texas at Austin quoted local media as saying Dagdug had reported receiving threats because of his work.

- Filipino radio journalist **Elvis Banggoy Ordaniza** was shot dead in his home on Feb. 16, Global

Journalist reports. Ordaniza, 49, had covered topics including illicit gambling and the drug trade as a reporter for a radio station in the town of Pitogo. The Philippines ranks fourth on the CPJ's Global Impunity Index – a list of countries where killers of journalists go unpunished; the organization says at least 44 murders have taken place since September 2005 “with complete impunity.”

- 23-year-old community radio host **Nicolás García** was murdered by gang members on March 10 in the village of El Carrizal, Ahuachapán, according to Reporters Without Borders. Garcia allegedly refused the gang's demand that go on their payroll and report to them about police activities in the area. He had been hosting a local radio program advising residents on how to keep themselves safe.

## Erdoğan Steps Up Crackdown on Press Freedom in Turkey

By Trish Anderton

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's simmering hostility toward the media has boiled over in recent days, culminating in the seizure of the country's largest newspaper and its second-largest news agency.

The government took over the Cihan news agency on March 7. The move came just days after police took control of the newspaper Zaman, forcing their way into its offices while firing tear gas and using water cannons to repel protesters.

The seizure of Cihan is “another nail in the coffin of journalism in Turkey,” journalist and free speech advocate Yavuz Baydar told The Guardian. The news agency, he added, “was known for independently monitoring each and every election in Turkey. The real effects of its closure cannot yet be understood, neither by the local nor by the global public.”

Both Zaman and Cihan belong to the Feza Gazetecilik Media Group, which is linked to influential cleric Fethullah Gülen, a former Erdogan ally now living in self-imposed exile in the United States. Gülen and Erdogan had a falling out in 2013 over accusations of corruption at the highest levels of the national government. Turkey has since labelled Gülen a terrorist, and Erdogan has accused him of plotting to overthrow the government – a charge the cleric denies.

The latest media crackdown is about more than hamstringing a political foe, however, according to prominent newspaper editor Can Dunder.

“Erdogan wants to control all of the opposition media and is taking them over one by one,” Dunder told the Deutsche Welle news agency. “Of course taking over a newspaper is a threat to all the others, it's a message that they should stay in line.”

Dunder himself was released from prison just days before the crackdown, when the nation's Constitutional Court ruled that his rights had been violated. The Cumhuriyet newspaper editor was arrested in November for publishing video that purported to prove the administration was sending arms to Islamists in Syria.



Photo: Gokhan Tan/Getty Images

**Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, left, has escalated his crackdown on media with seizure of the country's largest newspaper and its second-largest news agency.**

Dunder still faces charges of espionage and seeking to overthrow the government. Prosecutors have requested multiple life sentences for him and his colleague, Erdem Gul.

“Erdogan will do his best to put me away,” Dunder told Deutsche Welle.

U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby called the Zaman takeover “the latest in a series of troubling judicial and law enforcement actions taken by the Turkish government targeting media outlets and others critical of it.” Reporters Without Borders accused Erdogan of “moving from authoritarianism to all-out despotism.”

More than 15 journalists are currently jailed in Turkey, according to The Guardian. That number grew on March 8, when an Istanbul court sentenced newspaper editor Barış İnce to 21 months in prison for “insulting” Erdogan.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu claimed the crackdown on the Feza Gazetecilik Media Group initiated solely in the judicial system. “Our government has no bearing in this,” he said. “It is completely a legal process. No one should have hesitation about press freedom in Turkey.”

## Meet the OPC Members: Q&A With Valerie Hopkins

By Trish Anderton

**Valerie Hopkins** is a Kosovo-based journalist for the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. She also freelances regularly from across the Balkans for *Foreign Policy* and Al Jazeera. Previously, she worked as web editor for the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a 2013 winner of the OPC Foundation's Jerry Flint Internship for International Business Reporting, she interned for Thomson Reuters in Belgrade, Serbia. Before launching her career as a journalist, Hopkins worked for the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and for a boutique election lawfirm in Washington, DC.

**Hometown:** Washington, D.C.

**Education:** M.A. Politics, Columbia Journalism School; B.A. International Relations (Post-Soviet Studies), College of William and Mary.

**Languages:** English, Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, Russian, Spanish.

**First job in journalism:** Reporting on trials from the war crimes chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state court for the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network.

**Countries reported from:** Russia, Ukraine, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Belgium, Albania, U.S.A.

**Year you joined the OPC:** 2013.

**Why are you drawn to reporting on the Balkans?** The Balkans have been out of the global focus since the end of the brutal wars of the 1990s but the effects of those wars remain and continue to be a primary component of political, economic and cultural life here. As a journalist interested in covering conflict, I hope the lessons I have learned covering the lingering effects of wars will enrich my reporting in the future. The religious and cultural mosaic of the Balkans has produced turbulent history but also powerful beautiful examples of solidarity and coexistence.

**Major challenge as a journalist:** With the global focus on Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere, it can sometimes be difficult to convince American editors that Balkan stories are not only relevant but important. However, Kosovo and Bosnia especially are both models of post-conflict state-building that will be examined and emulated in Syria, Ukraine and other countries emerging from war, and the United States and Western European powers continue to play an outsize role in everyday governing matters, about which our public should be informed.



Photo: Petrit Prenaj

**Valerie Hopkins, right, on assignment for *The New Yorker* at the Kosovo Assembly in February 2016 after opposition MPs released tear gas.**

**Best journalism advice received:** Be accurate. Your credibility is all you've got.

**Hardest story:** One of the first important stories I did several years ago was a feature in the *Guardian* about victims of wartime rape in Bosnia. I had been volunteering with the Sarajevo Association of Concentration Camp survivors, but it was my first time writing about the effects of sexual violence so many years on. I was conscious about trying to interview victims without re-traumatizing them while also making sure I got accurate and complete information that would do justice to their stories.

**Advice for journalists who want to work overseas:** Read as many books as you can before you go, and try to learn the language – at least basic phrases – so that people see that you're serious about understanding their country. That will open a lot of doors.

**Dream job:** Staff writer at *The New Yorker*.

**Place you're most eager to visit:** The place I am most eager to visit is Sanaa's Old City. I hope that once the bombing stops I will be able to visit the buildings which are still standing. While I'm there I hope also to visit Socotra.

**Most over-the-top assignment:** Since October 2015, opposition parties in Kosovo have been setting off tear gas during Assembly meetings. Covering parliamentary sessions was once normal but has now turned into a circus, with many journalists now coming prepared with gas masks, scarves and water bottles.

**Twitter handle:** @Valeriein140

*Want to add to the OPC's collection of Q&As with members? Please contact [patricia@opcofamerica.org](mailto:patricia@opcofamerica.org).*



# New Books

## HISTORY

**I**N 1972, BEATE KLARSFELD

flew to La Paz in search of former Nazi Klaus Barbie. Since Barbie was being protected by the dictatorship of Hugo Banzer, Klarsfeld had no power to get the so-called “Butcher of Lyon” arrested or extradited. So she used the powers she did have: bravery, theatricality, and a talent for PR. Klarsfeld chained herself to a bench in front of Barbie’s workplace, along with another woman whose children Barbie had sent to their deaths.

As Andrew Nagorski’s *The Nazi Hunters* [Simon and Schuster, May 2016] shows, Klarsfeld and her husband Serge had already invested considerable effort in Barbie. They had lobbied prosecutors in Munich to reopen his case, traced the former Nazi to Bolivia using a single photograph, and compiled a thick file of evidence proving his identity. The chaining stunt succeeded in drawing attention to Barbie. But it took the Klarsfelds many more years of work before he was convicted in 1987.

Barbie is just one of many former Nazis tracked down by Nazi hunters – some serving in official positions, and others working on their own. As Nagorski writes, “These pursuers demonstrated tremendous determination and courage as they kept up their fight even when the govern-

ments representing the victors and the rest of the world grew increasingly indifferent to the fates of the Nazi war criminals.”

The Nazi hunters, like their prey, are passing away. As Nagorski points out, that “is why their stories can and should be told now.” His book captures their work in vivid and detailed prose. For journalists, it provides the added enjoyment of reading about other people’s investigative tricks and tools. *The Nazi Hunters* stands as both a tribute to, and a record, of a unique handful of people who devoted their lives to justice.



## RWANDA

**I**N 2013, *THE NEW YORK*

*Times* termed Paul Kagame “the global elite’s favorite strongman.” Kagame’s successes in Rwanda are undeniable; since conquering the capital and ending the horrific genocide of the early 1990s, he has turned Rwanda into an orderly and increasingly prosperous nation. Under his rule, child mortality has fallen by two-thirds while economic growth has chugged along at seven or eight percent.

But Kagame has eliminated dissent and stifled free speech with similar efficiency. As a result, writes Anjam Sundaram about his years there, the nation’s

“beauty was corrupt. ... It was possible to live here and love the calm eternally, but one would have to avoid knowing its center, avoid approaching it.”

In *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship* [Doubleday January 2016], Sundaram describes the journalism training program he ran for nearly five years in Rwanda. One by one, promising students are murdered or forced into hiding. One is driven to the edge of madness; others give up and join the regime’s propaganda machine; still others are imprisoned. Eventually, the program itself is shut down.

Now, having written the book, Sundaram does not expect to return to Rwanda. “I don’t think I’ll be able to go back until the regime changes,” he recently told NPR.

This oppression, Sundaram points out, does not exist in a vacuum; it is supported by plentiful foreign aid. That does not appear likely to change

anytime soon. “I have no problem with giving money to a dictator,” one diplomat tells Sundaram. “I’m proud to be giving him money... we will influence the government in the right direction.”

Foreign Affairs calls *Bad News* “an unsettling account of journalists under fire.” *The Guardian* praises it as “an important

book that should shatter any lingering faith people might hold in Kagame’s hideous regime.”

— By Trish Anderton



## Upcoming Events

**Mixer at The Half King**  
6:00 p.m. April 21

**Annual Awards Dinner**  
6:00 p.m. April 28

**Book Night: Nazi Hunters**  
6:00 p.m. May 18

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Jonathan Masters  
Deputy Editor  
Council on Foreign Relations  
Associate Resident

Graciela Mochkofsky  
Director of Spanish-Language  
Masters Program Concentration  
CUNY Graduate School  
of Journalism  
Associate Resident

Kim Murphy  
Asst. Managing Editor, Foreign  
News  
Los Angeles Times  
Active Non-Resident

Jesse Pesta  
Enterprise and Project Editor  
*The New York Times*  
Active Resident

Chris Tyree  
Multimedia Journalist  
ORBmedia, Inc.  
Active Non-Resident