

Dangerous and Challenging Reporting Honored by OPC

EVENT RECAP

By Trish Anderton

Foreign correspondents gathered to celebrate a year of powerful reporting on the world's most pressing issues at the Overseas Press Club's Annual Awards Dinner on April 28.

The pioneering PBS documentary series *FRONTLINE* won two awards, and its founder, David Fanning, was honored with the President's Award for lifetime achievement. The Associated Press, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, *Foreign Policy*, Reuters and *The New York Times* also took home multiple prizes.

"This work is more vital every day even as it is more dangerous and yet we – you – do it every day," said OPC President Marcus Mabry, opening the festivities at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Manhattan.

"You confront slaveholders and corporations that abandon their own ideals. You confront governments and you confront terrorists in the field – and sometimes even in our offices," he added. "In carrying out our mission and adapting it for these times, we continue a proud tradi-

tion – a tradition embodied by the giants of our profession, who dared to challenge the world to be better."

The impacts of terrorism and the plight of refugees were among the biggest stories of the year.

"I would like to dedicate this award to every single refugee I came across last year – people oppressed by wars and social injustice," said Mauricio Lima, winner of the John Faber Award. Lima shared the honor with three *New York Times* colleagues – Sergey Ponomarev, Daniel Etter and OPC member Tyler Hicks – for their photographs of Syrian refugees. He went on to speak with obvious emotion about the Majid family, who "accepted for 29 days a stranger with a camera as part of their family" while they traveled from Greece to Sweden to seek asylum.

The Best Investigative Reporting Award went to Erika Solomon, Sam Jones, Ahmad Mhidi and Guy Chazan of the *Financial Times* for the series, "ISIS, Inc." Erika Solomon



OPC President Marcus Mabry presents the President's Award to David Fanning.

spoke about their struggle to capture the moral complexity of the story's landscape.

"I believe that reporting this series was not just about numbers or confirming the fear that is so easy to feel when we write about jihadi groups," she said. "For me it was really about the insight we got into the lives of very normal people who get caught up in chaos: a young man so desperate to feed his family that he would take a job at an ISIS-run gas plant or a courageous aide worker who keeps fueling his drills with ISIS oil so he can pull victims out of bombing wreckage." Solomon said she hoped the series succeeded in showing "how so many people are

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OPC Book Night: Garrels' 'Putin Country'

EVENT PREVIEW: June 7

The OPC is pleased to host a book night for *Putin Country: A Journey into the Real Russia*, a conversation with author Anne Garrels, former NPR Moscow bureau chief, and Bill Keller, editor-in-chief of The Mar-

shall Project and former Moscow bureau chief of *The New York Times*.

Putin Country is based on more than two decades of reporting by Garrels in Russia – in particular her frequent and lengthy visits to Chelyabinsk, a gritty, military-industrial

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Book Night: 'Nazi Hunters'

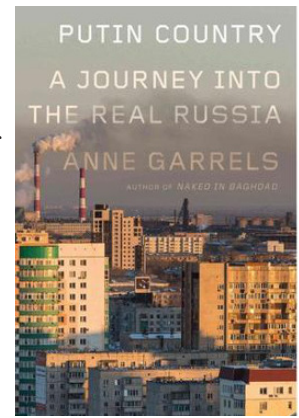
EVENT PREVIEW: June 7

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 6:00 p.m. OPC Secretary Deidre Depke, who worked with Nagorski at *Newsweek*, will moderate. Nagorski served as *Newsweek's* bureau chief in Hong Kong, Moscow, Rome, Bonn, Warsaw and Berlin and is the author of many books. To RSVP, contact Eva Fryscak at: efryscak@marketplace.org.

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center a thousand miles east of Moscow. Her stories from Chelyabinsk in the Russian heartland help illuminate the aftershocks of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of Vladimir Putin.

The program will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Club Quarters, with a reception at 6:00 p.m. [Click here to RSVP for the 'Putin Country' Book Night.](#)



Panel Reflects on 'Shifting' Industry on World Press Freedom Day

EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

As part of World Press Freedom Day on May 3, the OPC joined The GroundTruth Project and Freedom House for a panel discussion on the need for safety amid rising risks to journalists around the world.

Charles Sennott, founder and executive director of The GroundTruth Project, told attendees at the International House in New York that on average a journalist is killed somewhere in the world every two weeks. Two-thirds of those killed are murdered outright and

one-third are killed while pursuing stories. Ninety percent are local journalists reporting in their home countries, and 90 percent are killed with impunity – with no prosecution or resolution to the crime.

A report from Freedom House released on the same day found that only 13 percent of the world's population enjoys a free press.

Sennott spoke about shifts in the industry that have caused media to rely more heavily on freelancers. He called on news organizations to shoulder more responsibility for giving the freelancers they depend on training, safety and support.

"We live in a time of rising journalistic peril, but also we live in a time of limited resources, when the business models are challenged and when how we're going to sustain journalism is a big question on the table."

He lauded the Global Safety Principles and Practices, a movement started by GroundTruth, the OPC and other organizations in 2014 to foster worldwide protection standards for freelancers.

During a discussion, Sennott asked veteran ABC News correspondent Bob Woodruff, who was

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OPC Bulletin

ISSN-0738-7202
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Overseas Press Club
of America

40 West 45 Street, New York, NY 10036 USA • Phone: (212) 626-9220 • Fax: (212) 626-9210 • Website: opcofamerica.org



Steve Moore

Jason Rezaian of The Washington Post lights the Candle of Concern.

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not simply criminals or victims: they're just the real human face of war – people with impossible choices.”

For some winners, that landscape of impossible choices is also home.

“My country is dying,” said Najibullah Quraishi of FRONTLINE, accepting the Edward R. Murrow Award for the episode “ISIS in Afghanistan.” “As you have seen from our film, the next generation is in incredible danger. Education these days is becoming how to use weapons, how to behead, and how to blow yourself up.”

Quraishi, who shared the award with Jamie Doran and Raney Aronson, added this plea: “When you sit down on Monday to decide which stories you will cover, please don't forget Afghanistan.”

David Fanning, who founded FRONTLINE in 1983 and is now executive producer at large for the show, reminisced about growing up in the 1950s in a small town in South Africa – a country that did not allow television until the 70s. He credits the books his mother brought home from the local library with kindling his desire to know the world. That spark eventually led him to journalism.

“There is a wonder to this business, a privilege: the license granted to be curious,” he said. “And with it, an obligation to the purpose.”

Over the years, FRONTLINE has filed in-depth reports on everything from U.S. criminal justice system, to the Iraq invasion, to unsafe conditions imperiling American workers. In addition to numerous OPC Awards, the show has won 18 Peabody Awards and 75 Emmys.

“The ideas, the concerns and the purpose that the Overseas Press Club represents is at the very heart of FRONTLINE,” said Fanning. “I don't have to tell you what you already know: that if we want to understand who we are, we have to know how we live and how the rest of the world has to survive.”

When The Associated Press decided to tackle what Esther Htusan called the “open secret” of slavery in the Southeast Asian seafood trade, the reporting team fretted about how to produce a story that would seize people's

CALL FOR 2016 BOARD NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations of candidates for the 2016 Board of Governors' election. This year, the membership will elect nine (9) Active members of the board and three (3) Associate members to begin two-year terms. Candidates are requested to file a statement of candidacy, which should combine an overview of the candidate's qualifications and a sense of what one might contribute to the OPC board.

The OPC is only as strong as the board of directors who guide it, and it is our goal to elect directors who reflect the great diversity of experience of the OPC's membership.

The deadline to file your candidacy is **Monday, May 23, 2016**. Please send nominations to Brian Byrd at bibyrdi@gmail.com.

attention. Later, as they began connecting with people who had been enslaved for decades, they realized that goal was too modest.

“They wanted to be interviewed, they wanted their stories to be told. When we slept at night they'd knock on our door,” recalled Htusan's colleague, Robin McDowell. “They would call off the sides of the trawlers when we pulled up, trying to pass messages, saying ‘Our families, please tell our families we're alive.’”

“So at that point it wasn't just about making a link to the American dinner table and getting Americans outraged. We wanted to help find a way to make the story so powerful that these men would be rescued.”

Htusan and McDowell shared the Malcolm Forbes Award and the Hal Boyle Award with Martha Mendoza and Margie Mason. A few days earlier, the series won a Pulitzer.

Last year's Annual Awards Dinner featured an impromptu tribute to Jason Rezaian of *The Washington Post*, who at the time was imprisoned in Iran. This year Rezaian himself came to light the Candle of Concern for journalists killed, injured or missing; he was freed in mid-January after spending more than a year in captivity.

“So thankful for @jrezaian being here,” tweeted Marcus Mabry.

Patrick Chappatte of *The International New York Times* won the Thomas Nast Award for editorial cartooning. Last year was, of course, a year of particular anguish for political cartoonists; in early January, two gunmen from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula stormed the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris, killing 11 people and injuring 11 others. Chappatte presented a selection of his spare, incisive drawings. He ended with one showing a man preparing to place a flower on a Charlie Hebdo memorial. “Without humor we are all dead,” the man is saying.

OPC Awards Dinner

Photos by Steve Moore



Guests mingle during a reception after the awards dinner.



OPC President Marcus Mabry.



Left to right: David Rohde of Reuters, OPC Executive Director Patricia Kranz and Joel Simon.



From left: Ali Rezaian, Yegana Rezaian and Jason Rezaian.



Left to right: Tracey Samuelson, Deborah Clark, awards presenter Kai Ryssdal and OPC Secretary Deidre Depke, all from Marketplace.



From left: Roberta Thomson of Facebook, OPC Governor Mary Rajkumar and Awards Dinner co-chair Sarah Lubman.



Left to right: Leah Spiro, Awards Dinner co-chair Bill Holstein and Deidre Depke.



Left to right: Audrey Topping, Cyma Rubin and Seymour Topping.



From left: OPC Governor Minky Worden, Kathleen Hunt, Evelyn Leopold and Koh Gui Qing of Reuters.



Left to right: David Fanning, Renata Simone and Patricia Kranz.



OPC Treasurer Tim Ferguson, left, Emily Glazer and Ken Sweet.



From left: Milanka Muecke of Lenovo, Sarah Lubman and former OPC President Michael Serrill.



Former OPC President Roy Rowan, left, and OPC Governor Liam Stack.



From left: Quynhanh Do, Adam Ellick and Deborah Acosta, members of the New York Times team that won the David Kaplan Award.

2015 AWARDS AND WINNERS

THE HAL BOYLE AWARD

Best newspaper, news service or online reporting from abroad

Martha Mendoza, Margie Mason, Robin McDowell and Esther Htusan

The Associated Press
"Seafood from Slaves"

CITATION:

Patrick McDonnell, Christopher Goffard, Laura King,
Kate Linthicum and Henry Chu
Los Angeles Times
"Fleeing Syria"

THE BOB CONSIDINE AWARD

Best newspaper, news service or online interpretation of international affairs

Reuters Team

Reuters

"The Long Arm of China"

CITATION:

The Washington Post Staff
The Washington Post
"Confronting the Caliphate"

THE ROBERT CAPA GOLD MEDAL AWARD

Best published photographic reporting from abroad requiring exceptional courage, enterprise

Bassam Khabieh

Reuters

"Field Hospital Damascus"

CITATION:

Jerome Delay
The Associated Press
"Burundi Unrest"

THE OLIVIER REBBOT AWARD

Best photographic reporting from abroad in magazines or books

Stephen Dupont

Steidl

"Generation AK: The Afghanistan Wars, 1993-2012"

CITATION:

David Guttenfelder
National Geographic Magazine
"Damming the Mekong: Harnessing a River or Killing It"

THE JOHN FABER AWARD

Best photographic reporting from abroad in newspapers or news services

Mauricio Lima, Sergey Ponomarev, Tyler Hicks and Daniel Etter

The New York Times

"Exodus"

CITATION:

Santi Palacios
The Associated Press
"Coming Ashore"

THE FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Best feature photography published in any medium on an international theme

Daniel Berehulak

The New York Times

"High in the Himalayas, a Search After the Nepal Quake Yields Grim Results"

CITATION:

Mario Tama
Getty Images
"Brazil's Afflictive Prison System"

THE LOWELL THOMAS AWARD

Best radio or audio news or interpretation of international affairs

Molly Webster and team, in collaboration

with Israel Story

Radiolab/WNYC

"Birthstory"

THE DAVID KAPLAN AWARD

Best TV or video spot news reporting from abroad

Emiland Guillaume, Ben Laffin, Spencer Wolff, Deborah Acosta, Yousur Al-Hlou, Pamela Druckerman, Stefania Rousselle, Ben C. Solomon, Leslye Davis, Taige Jensen, Quyn Do, Adam B. Ellick,

Steve Duenes

The New York Times

"Paris"

CITATION:

Charlie D'Agata, Heather Abbott, Erin Lyall
and Lynne Edwards
CBS News

"Desperate Journey: Europe's Migrant Crisis"

THE EDWARD R. MURROW AWARD

Best TV or video interpretation or documentary on international affairs

Jamie Doran, Najibullah Quraishi and Raney Aronson

PBS Investigative Series FRONTLINE

"ISIS in Afghanistan"

CITATION:

David Scott and Chapman Downes
HBO's Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel
"The Killing Fields: The Plight of the African Elephant"

THE ED CUNNINGHAM AWARD

Best magazine reporting in print or online on an international story

Tristan McConnell

Foreign Policy

"Close Your Eyes and Pretend to Be Dead"

CITATION:

Matthieu Aikins
Harper's Magazine
"Gangs of Karachi: Meet the Mobsters Who Run the Show in One of the World's Deadliest Cities"

THE THOMAS NAST AWARD

Best cartoons on international affairs

Patrick Chappatte

The International New York Times

2015 AWARDS AND WINNERS

THE MORTON FRANK AWARD

Best magazine international business news reporting in print or online

Christina Larson

Foreign Policy

"The Zhao Method"

CITATION:

Nizar Manek and Jeremy Hodge

Africa Confidential/Angaza Foundation for Africa Reporting
"Opening the Black Box of Egypt's Slush Funds"

THE MALCOLM FORBES AWARD

Best international business news reporting in newspapers, news services or online

Martha Mendoza, Esther Htusan, Margie Mason and Robin McDowell

The Associated Press

"Seafood from Slaves"

CITATION:

Wei Lingling

The Wall Street Journal

"A Changing China"

THE CORNELIUS RYAN AWARD

Best non-fiction book on international affairs

Tom Burgis

PublicAffairs

"The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, Corporations, Smugglers, and the Theft of Africa's Wealth"

THE MADELINE DANE ROSS AWARD

Best international reporting in the print medium or on-line showing a concern for the human condition

Patrick McDonnell, Christopher Goffard, Laura King, Kate Linthicum and Henry Chu

The Los Angeles Times

"Fleeing Syria"

THE DAVID A. ANDELMAN and PAMELA TITLE AWARD

Best international reporting in the broadcast media showing a concern for the human condition

Evan Williams, Edward Watts and Raney Aronson

PBS Investigative Series FRONTLINE

"Escaping ISIS"

CITATION:

Marine Olivesi

PRI/The World

"Trauma and the Syrian War"

THE JOE and LAURIE DINE AWARD

Best international reporting in any medium dealing with human rights

David Rohde and Charles Levinson

Reuters

"Guantanamo Bay"

THE WHITMAN BASSOW AWARD

Best reporting in any medium on international environmental issues

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists/The Huffington Post/Other Media Partners

"Evicted and Abandoned: The World Bank's Broken Promise to the Poor"

CITATION:

Ian James, Steve Elfers, Steve Reilly

The Desert Sun/USA Today

"Pumped Dry: The Global Crisis of Vanishing Groundwater"

THE ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN AWARD

Best reporting in any medium on Latin America

Eduardo Castillo, Christopher Sherman and Dario Lopez-Mills

The Associated Press

"Thousands of Mexican Families Mourn the 'Other Disappeared'"

BEST MULTIMEDIA NEWS PRESENTATION

Best use of video, interactive graphics and slideshows to report on international news

Eleanor Bell Fox, Will Fitzgibbon and Chris Zubak-Skees

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists/Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting

"Fatal Extraction: Australian Mining in Africa"

CITATION:

Ken Dornstein, Brian Funck and Michelle Mizner

PBS investigative series FRONTLINE

"My Brother's Bomber, Inheritance, The Libya Dossier, A Brother's Quest"

BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Best investigative reporting in any medium on an international story

Erika Solomon, Sam Jones, Ahmad Mhidi and Guy Chazan

Financial Times

"ISIS Inc."

CITATION:

Ken Dornstein, Brian Funck and Raney Aronson

PBS investigative series FRONTLINE

"My Brother's Bomber"

BEST COMMENTARY

Best commentary on international news in any medium

Mark Lilla

The New York Review of Books

"On France"

CITATION:

Bobby Ghosh

Quartz

"What the Iran Nuclear Deal Means for the Middle East"

PEOPLE... By Trish Anderton

OPC SCHOLARS

Jenny Starrs, the 2015 Nathan S. Binstock Memorial Scholar, has won the Exceptional Merit in Media Award from the National Women's Political Caucus. Her award-winning entry, "Women in Politics: How the US Compares with the World," was produced for The GroundTruth Project as part of her OPC fellowship. The awards recognized journalists who inform, engage and educate the public about critical issues impacting women and girls in the U.S. and globally. Starrs currently works for *The Washington Post*.

Mariano Castillo, who won the *Harper's Magazine* Scholarship in memory of I.F. Stone in 2008, has published a long-form project on CNN about the ongoing tensions between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. "Faces of a Divided Island" looks at the restrictive immigration laws in the Dominican Republic that have stripped many Dominicans of Haitian descent of their citizenship. Castillo is a writer and supervising editor at CNN Digital. He previously worked as Border Bureau Chief at the *San Antonio Express-News*.



Mariano Castillo, left, with OPC Foundation President Bill Holstein.

2015 Emanuel R. Freedman Scholarship winner **Ben Taub** has landed an in-depth exclusive in *The New Yorker* about hundreds of thousands of documents smuggled out of Syria that tie President Bashar al-Assad to mass torture and killings. An independent body called the Commission for International Jus-

tice and Accountability is archiving and organizing the documents as part of a war crimes investigation. Taub was also invited onto PBS News Hour to talk about the story. He is a freelance contributor at *The New Yorker*.

After three years in the Moscow bureau of *The Wall Street Journal* covering Russian politics, business and society, **Paul Sonne**, the Stan Swinton Scholarship winner in 2008, is now the *Journal's* national security correspondent in Washington DC. Paul began his career with the *Journal* in the London bureau where he covered technology, media and consumer industries. While there, he and his colleagues won the Malcolm Forbes Award for best international business reporting in newspapers for a series describing how Iran, Egypt, Libya and Syria used technology from Western and Chinese companies to spy on dissidents and conduct surveillance. He had an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Associated Press bureau in Moscow.

Marina Villeneuve, the Irene Corbally Kuhn Scholarship winner in 2013, has been appointed state government reporter in Maine for The Associated Press. She is known for using data and public records to hold officials and institutions accountable around the Northeast, most recently for *The Record* in New Jersey. Marina had a foreign reporting fellow in Bogota, Colombia, for *The Washington Post* as well as internships with the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday* and the New England Center for Investigative Reporting.

WINNERS

OPC Governor and *New York Times* reporter **Rukmini Callimachi** has won the inaugural Integrity

in Journalism Award from the International Center for Journalists. The award "celebrates the courage, commitment and impact of a reporter on the front lines of the world's crisis zones." In particular the ICFJ noted the Callimachi "has exposed the horrific institutionalization of sex slavery by ISIS, linked child labor in gold mines in Senegal to banks in Switzerland, and revealed massacres committed by government forces from the Ivory Coast to Mali."

OPC member **Alissa J. Rubin** has won the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for a series of stories about women in Afghanistan. The stories include an in-depth examination of the beating death of Farkhunda, a woman who was falsely accused of burning a Koran in Kabul in early 2015. The jury called the series "thoroughly reported and movingly written accounts giving voice to Afghan women who were forced to endure unspeakable cruelties." Rubin is the Paris bureau chief for *The New York Times*.

Rubin has also been honored with Atlantic Media's Michael Kelly Award for her stories about Afghan women. The annual \$25,000 prize highlights work that demonstrates "the fearless pursuit and expression of truth." "In a year with an unusually large number of exceptional entries," the judges wrote, "her stories stood above the rest."

David Rohde, who received the OPC President's Award in 2015, has won a James W. Foley Freedom Award. The annual awards are being given out for the first time this year. They honor "compassion, courage, commitment and advocacy for American hostages, freelance conflict journalists, and vulnerable children." Rohde, a national security investigations editor at Reuters, was held by the Taliban for seven months

in Pakistan in 2008. He has gone on to lead the successful drive for an industry-wide code of conduct to help protect journalists in danger zones.

OPC Governor **Azmat Khan** is a finalist for the Livingston Award for Young Journalists in the International Reporting category. The \$10,000 awards, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the University of Michigan, honor “the best professionals under the age of 35 in traditional and new forms of journalism.” Khan’s story, “Ghost Schools,” found that the U.S. was exaggerating the success of its school-building program in Afghanistan. Khan is a freelance investigative journalist. She has previously worked for BuzzFeed, Al Jazeera America and PBS’s FRONTLINE.

UPDATES

NEW YORK: OPC member **Rita Cosby** has been named political editor at New York City news/talk radio station WABC. In addition to hosting her weekly “The RITA COSBY Show,” she is hosting a weekly show on the elections. The Emmy-winning TV host and author is also a special correspondent for TV news magazine “Inside Edition.”

John Daniszewski is among the 16 people who decided how to dole out Pulitzer Prizes this year. Daniszewski told the *Journal News of the Lower Hudson Valley* that he spent countless hours preparing for the votes, reading 15 novels in addition to journalism and other kinds of entries. All Pulitzer board members vote on all prizes, including fiction, poetry, drama and music. Daniszewski, an OPC member, is vice president and senior managing editor for international news at the Associated Press.

2007 Madeline Dane Ross Award winner **Lydia Polgreen** has been named associate masthead editor and editorial director for NYT Global, *The New York Times*’ new \$50 million

international digital expansion. NYT Global is tasked with expanding the *Times*’ footprint in international markets in several major languages.

OPC member **Gary Regenstreif**, former editor-at-large at Reuters, has become executive editor at S&P Global Market Intelligence. His mandate is to improve the journalism at the business information division of S&P Global, until recently called McGraw Hill Financial. Based in New York, he serves as a combination of news editor and standards/ethics editor. Regenstreif also chairs the advisory board of non-profit startup Press Start, which will crowd fund support for independent journalists in countries where the press cannot report freely (www.pressstart.org).

OPC Treasurer **Tim Ferguson** wrote about this year’s class of OPC Foundation fellows for *Forbes*. After celebrating the varied and interesting backgrounds of this year’s winners, Ferguson muses about the fragile state of the industry. “It isn’t clear how big of an audience there actually is for the stories that explain why the world is as it is. It’s even less clear who is going to pay for this effort, either by purchasing the ‘content’ or sponsoring it,” he concludes. “Yet today I saw 15 great investments in that very uncertain future.” Ferguson oversees Asia-Pacific content at Forbes Media.

New York Times executive editor and OPC member **Dean Baquet** will speak at Columbia College’s Class Day – the school’s annual event honoring rising seniors. Baquet attended the College from 1974 to 1978 and left before graduating to take a full-time reporting job. He spent several years at the *Los Angeles Times* before moving to *The New York Times* in 1990. Columbia College is the oldest undergraduate college at Columbia University.

The New York Times will eliminate up to 70 positions in Paris, fo-

cusing editing and print production functions in New York and Hong Kong in a bid to cut costs. The paper will maintain its Paris news bureau and advertising office, according to Bloomberg News.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: A medical fund has been established for longtime freelancer **Ray Thibodeaux**, who is battling cancer. Thibodeaux has reported from more than a dozen countries in South Asia and Africa, including Darfur, Bhutan and Sudan. He is married to Emily Wax, a national reporter at *The Washington Post*, with whom he is raising two toddlers. The address for donations is www.gofundme.com/raymedfund.

YEMEN: While the West has focused its efforts on defeating Islamic State, its rival Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has been quietly gaining ground in Yemen, writes OPC member **Alessandria Masi** in IBTimes.com. AQAP has built bridges, drilled wells and provided other services to win public trust, while sharing power with local government institutions. More than half of Yemen’s population lives in poverty. Life in the country has gotten even more difficult since last year, when Saudi Arabia launched a coalition to overthrow the Houthi rebel force that seized the country’s capital, Sanaa, in 2014.

PEOPLE REMEMBERED

Longtime CBS news reporter **Eric Engberg** died on March 27 in Palmetto, Florida at age 74. Engberg was a political and investigative reporter in the network’s Washington bureau. His role took him overseas to cover stories including the fall of the Berlin Wall, IRA hunger strikes in Northern Ireland and the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests. More recently, Engberg publicly jostled with FOX’s Bill O’Reilly over the latter’s claims to have reported on the Falkland Islands conflict from a war zone, saying O’Reilly had actually been in an “expense account zone.”

PRESS FREEDOM UPDATE...

There has been a “deep and disturbing decline” in respect for journalistic independence worldwide, **Reporters Without Borders** finds in its 2016 World Press Freedom Index. The annual report, released shortly before the May 3 celebration of World Press Freedom Day, finds the overall level of media freedom has dropped nearly four percent since last year and over 13 percent since 2013. The organization cited “increasingly authoritarian tendencies of governments in countries such as Turkey and Egypt, tighter government control of state-owned media, even in some European countries such as Poland,” and difficult “security situations” in Libya, Burundi and Yemen.

“In the space of two hours we have experienced two assassination attempts: one was done with a gun, the other was judicial,” said noted Turkish journalist **Can Dündar** after being sentenced to 5 years and 10 months in prison on May 6. Shortly before the punishment was announced, a gunman attacked Dündar outside the courthouse in Istanbul, failing to harm him but injuring another journalist. Dündar, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, and **Erdem Gül**, its Ankara bureau chief, were convicted of publishing secret state documents. Gül received a sentence of five years. The trial focused on video footage obtained by the newspaper that allegedly showed Turkey’s state intelligence agency transporting arms into Syria in 2014.

Authorities in Thailand have charged the mother of a prominent student activist with defaming the monarchy by failing to rebut messages deemed insulting to the royal family. According to Human Rights Watch, **Patnaree Chankij** was arrested after receiving Facebook messages from a friend of her son’s.

Thailand’s military junta has used lese majeste laws aggressively since assuming control of the country in a 2014 coup, bringing 57 cases, of which 44 involved online commentary, the rights group says.

The parents and sister of slain journalist **Steven Sotloff** are suing Syria in U.S. court, claiming it provided support to the ISIS militants who executed him in 2014. The lawsuit seeks \$90 million in compensatory damages and up to three times that in punitive damages. It charges that the regime of Bashar al Assad helped ISIS with “financial support, provision of materiel, and military air support.” If the controversial theory prevails, the *Daily Beast* reports, the Sotloffs may be able to collect some compensation from the \$78 million of Syrian government assets currently being blocked by the U.S.

Security forces in Egypt detained at least 33 members of the media in and near Cairo during protests on April 25, according to the **Committee to Protect Journalists**. The journalists were covering demonstrations against a deal giving Saudi Arabia control over two islands in the Red Sea. Most were released the same day. “Rather than repeating its predecessors’ mistake of trying to silence dissent, the government should ensure reporters can do their jobs safely and without fear of reprisal,” CPJ Middle East and North Africa program coordinator Sherif Mansour said from Washington.

Press freedom groups in Canada are sounding the alarm over a recent court ruling requiring VICE reporter **Ben Makuch** to surrender background materials related to interviews with an accused terrorist. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police won a court order seeking copies of all communication between VICE and Farah Shirdon on the Kik instant

messenger application. Police want the material as part of an ongoing investigation against Shirdon, who is accused of involvement with ISIS.

China rejected nearly three-quarters of journalists’ requests to visit Tibet last year, according to the **Foreign Correspondents Club of China**. While the government appears to be growing somewhat more tolerant of group reporting trips, only one of the 142 respondents said he or she had gotten permission for a solo visit. More than 90% of respondents said whether or not they were able to go, they did not feel they could report freely on issues surrounding Tibet. “Although China may be ‘opening up’ – ever so slightly – in allowing more China-based foreign reporters to visit Tibet in groups, the region remains effectively closed to outside media coverage,” the FCCC concluded.

MURDERS

- Journalist **Francisco Pacheco Beltrán** was shot to death on April 25 outside his home in the southern state of Guerrero. Beltrán, 55, founded the *El Foro de Taxco* newspaper and also reported for the Acapulco daily *El Sol* and Capital Maxima radio in the state capital of Chilpancingo, the *Latin American Herald Tribune* writes.

- ISIS has claimed responsibility for the fatal April 10 attack on Syrian journalist **Zaher al-Shurqat** in the southern Turkish town of Gaziantep. *The Washington Post* reports that Shurqat was “the fourth prominent Syrian critic of the Islamic State to be assassinated in the past six months in southern Turkey.” Over the last two years, the 36-year-old former rebel brigade leader had hosted shows on the Aleppo Today television channel that were critical of both ISIS’s actions and its religious justifications.

Meet the OPC Members: a Q&A With Kim Hjelmgaard

By Trish Anderton

Kim Hjelmgaard is a European correspondent and deputy world editor at *USA TODAY*, where he has worked from London and Berlin. He has also worked as a London bureau chief, editor and writer for *The Wall Street Journal's* MarketWatch.

Hometown: At anchor on my father's boat.

Education: English Masters, St Andrews University.

Languages: Danish.

Year you joined the OPC: 2015.

What drew you to international reporting? The food.

You recently visited Chernobyl for the 30th anniversary of its nuclear disaster. What was that experience like? Bureaucratic, initially. In terms of getting all the paperwork to get there, particularly for access to the Exclusion Zone in Belarus (Ukraine's Exclusion Zone is more well-known). Once I got there it was frighteningly ordinary. It looked like a national park.

Major challenge as a journalist: Always knowing the difference between affect and effect.

Best journalism advice received: All advice is prejudice.

Worst experience as a journalist: Not sure I have had it yet (knock on wood).

When traveling, you like to ... Do as much of my reporting as I can from my phone: writing, images, podcasts, video and social media.

Hardest story: They are all hard.

Most memorable interview: Mohamad Helani, 12, Syrian refugee, in southern Serbia.

Journalism heroes: Studs Terkel.

Advice for journalists who want to work overseas: If



Courtesy of Kim Hjelmgaard

Kim Hjelmgaard reporting in Belarus near the border with Ukraine in March.

not a staffer at a news org, be prepared to go to where you want to be and set yourself up as an expert on the country/region.

Dream job: Carpenter, shoe maker or anything that involves being good with your hands (I am terrible with my hands).

Favorite quote: Although you work hard you are still lucky (from a fortune cookie).

Place you're most eager to visit: South Pacific – by boat; Iran.

Most over-the-top assignment: I “delivered” two royal babies in London (my contribution: waiting outside the hospital with hundreds of other reporters for Kate Middleton to give birth).

Country you most want to return to: In Europe: Greece.

Twitter handle: @khjelmgaard

Want to add to the OPC's collection of Q&As with members? Please contact patricia@opcofamerica.org.

(‘Press Freedom’ Continued From Page 2)

seriously wounded while reporting in Iraq in 2006, to give safety advice to young journalists.

“Duck,” he joked. “It’s best to find local people who know the country well, know the neighborhoods well.”

The program included an afternoon panel, moderated by NPR correspondent Deborah Amos, with experienced young journalists.

Ben Taub, a 2015 OPC Foundation scholar and contributor to *The New Yorker* who writes about jihadism in Europe and the war in Syria, urged young journalists to avoid run-

ning blindly into war zones.

“You don’t have to go to where the shooting is happening in order to cover the war. There are refugees coming out, and they know the war a lot better than you’re going to know just by showing up.”

Isma’il Kushkush, OPC Foundation’s 2016 Roy Rowan scholar, talked about reporting in his ancestral homeland of Sudan and working as a fixer in Darfur. He said while he was often able to blend in with local people more easily, he was also beaten and nearly killed when he was mistaken for a member of pro-government militia because of his ethnicity.

“It’s important to evaluate how you will be perceived,” he said.

Tracy Jarrett, NBC News producer and former GroundTruth reporting fellow, pointed out that the hazards of reporting are not limited to conflict zones abroad. She said that while covering unrest in Ferguson, Missouri last year, she found herself in the crossfire between police and protesters who targeted journalists covering the story.

“What happens when the rioters start shooting at and throwing things at the journalism compounds? You weren’t even safe in the safe areas that they set up for you.”

New Books

ASSASSINATION

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1995, law student and far-right activist Yigal Amir shot then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin twice in the back while the latter was leaving a rally supporting the Oslo peace process in Tel Aviv. Rabin died less than an hour later on an operating table at nearby Ichilov Hospital. The killing, Dexter Filken argues in *The New Yorker*, may be “one of history’s most effective political murders”; it achieved Amir’s goal of derailing the peace process, and ushered in an era dominated by the right-wing Likud party.

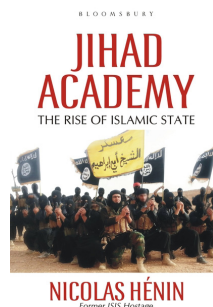
In *Killing a King: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel* [W. W. Norton & Company, October 2015], former *Newsweek* Jerusalem bureau chief Dan Ephron details the actions of both Rabin and Amir over the two years leading up to the assassination. He examines court records and police files and conducts extensive interviews to create a detailed portrait of this turning point in Middle East history.



Along the way, he faults Israel’s internal security service for failing to recognize the danger within. “For decades, the protection unit was certain of only one thing when it came to assassination scenarios: The shooter would be an Arab,” Ephron writes. He also points to a political and religious climate that made it easy to rationalize murder. “Amir clearly stood on the margins of the right-wing camp,” Ephron argues. “But its mainstream leaders had goaded the extremists with their ugly rhetoric and its rabbis had furnished the religious justification for violence.”

Killing a King won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for History and was named a *New York Times* Notable Book. In his review for *Moment Magazine*, David K. Shipler calls the book a “page-turner,” adding that “even though you know the outcome, Ephron does such diligent reporting ... that practically every page carries the tense energy of fresh insight.” *Publisher’s Weekly* calls it simply “the best account to date of the Rabin assassination and its aftermath.”

2016] he gives us an in-depth exploration of the conditions that led to the rise of Islamic State, and how the U.S. and other nations helped fuel that process.



Hénin faults the West for creating instability and violence in Iraq with the 2003 invasion, and then failing to act in 2011 as the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad launched ever-intensifying attacks against its own citizens.

“The most shameful action followed the chemical bombing of the Ghouta in August 2013, which resulted in 1,400 deaths,” he writes. Hénin asserts that the Assad government initially panicked and may have prepared to flee, believing intervention was imminent. “But on the contrary, the absence of reaction was finally taken as giving the regime carte blanche,” he concludes; “it realised that the West would never do anything.”

Given the horrific violence unleashed on the Syrians, he argues, it’s no surprise that some have embraced the jihadist movement. But he cautions against overestimating the organization’s strength: “Islamic State will one day be considered unbearable by local people who will reject it as an alien transplant.”

What to do now? Bombing Islamic State without attacking Assad is useless, Hénin recently told Brooke Gladstone of WNYC’s “On the Media.” “[W]e have to fight ISIS but we have also to counter the Syrian regime,” Hénin explained, “because I don’t know what the future of this country will look like, but there is one thing I know for sure. It is not possible to destroy ISIS as long as the Syrian regime is in place.”

— By Trish Anderton

Upcoming Events

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

**Book Night:
Putin Country**
6:00 p.m. June 7

SYRIA

FRENCH FREELANCER
Nicolas Hénin was kidnapped and held captive by Islamic State for 10 months in 2013-2014. During that time he spent a week handcuffed to American reporter James Foley, whose videotaped execution sparked worldwide outrage. Hénin could easily have written a tell-all book about his captivity. Instead, in *Jihad Academy: The Rise of Islamic State* [Bloomsbury, February