



# Overseas Press Club of America

## BULLETIN

### Panel Reflects on Uncertain Future of Afghanistan

BY CHAD BOUCHARD

**A**FGHANISTAN HAS been the staging ground for proxy wars among world superpowers and its neighbors for centuries, with several conflicts grinding on since the late 1970s. Despite these foreign influences, Afghans have benefited little and the country remains poorly understood, particularly in the West, panelists told attendees at Club Quarters on Oct. 10.

During a discussion the OPC co-sponsored with Ford Motor Co., participants representing decades of experience in the country expressed frustration with relentless violence, lack of democratic progress, and dim prospects for peace in the near future.

"Afghanistan is very easy to enter, but it's very hard to leave," said Jere Van Dyk, quoting an old Afghan adage. Van Dyk covered the Afghan-Soviet war for *The New York Times* in the early 1980s and



Left to right: Jere Van Dyk, Bill Holstein, Kathy Gannon and David Rohde.

was kidnapped by the Taliban and held for ransom for 45 days in 2008. As the second American journalist captured by the Taliban after Daniel Pearl, he said surviving his ordeal sparked a deep conviction to investigate what really happened.

"I feel a tremendous obligation to those who did not survive. I feel a need to seek redemption for all the trouble we've put people through and all that has happened. In a way to try and resolve problems, make it better," he said.

The FBI closed the investigation of his kidnapping in 2012, a move *Continued on Page 5*

### Special Screening 'The Journey Is The Destination'

**EVENT PREVIEW: OCT. 30**

**O**N OCT. 30, the OPC will co-sponsor a special screening of *The Journey is the Destination*, which depicts the true story of Dan Eldon, the youngest photojournalist ever to work on the frontlines for Reuters. The film follows Dan's personal struggle to create positive change in an increasingly violent and dangerous world.

OPC members can use a Comp Code on Eventbrite to attend for free. Check email inboxes for the code. The event costs \$50 for non-members.

A red carpet and reception begins at 6:30 p.m. at the SVA Theatre, 333 West 23rd Street in New York, and the showing begins at 7:30 p.m. OPC member John Daniszewski will moderate. ❖

Click here  
to RSVP for the  
screening.

### INSIDE

Kim Wall Memorial 2

GroundTruth's  
Report for America 2

OPC Press ID  
'A Lifesaver' 3

International Press  
Institute 3

Jim Foley's  
Public Service 4

Abductions  
in Dhaka 5

People Column 6-8

Press Freedom  
Update 8-9

New Books 10

Q&A:  
Tanya Bindra 11

### OPC Launches New Membership Fund for Freelancers

BY PATRICIA KRANZ

**P**LEASE CONSIDER supporting the work of international freelance journalists by donating to the Membership Fund of the Overseas Press Club of America. Accurate, unbiased reporting is more important now than ever. But much of the work is being done by freelancers who

have little institutional support from news organization.

The OPC has stepped into the breach by providing services to independent journalists including photo press IDs that help them get visas and access to sources; OPC Connect, a closed Facebook group open only to OPC members that allows reporters and editors to network and discuss assignments

and issues relevant to international journalism; and training programs that offer tips on how to protect yourself and sources in crisis zones.

Now, the OPC is setting up a fund that will be used exclusively to subsidize dues for freelancers who have trouble financing membership. Freelancers can apply and the funds will be distributed

according to need by the membership committee. A donation of \$375 will pay annual OPC dues for a freelance journalist whose home base is New York. \$175 will pay annual dues for a journalist based outside the U.S. Contributions of any amount are appreciated. They are not tax-deductible. Please text 646-891-4672 to make your pledge or send a check to the OPC. ❖

# Remembering Kim Wall

## EVENT RECAP

BY PATRICIA KRANZ

**F**RIENDS, FAMILY, and teachers remembered Kim Wall at a memorial service at the Columbia Journalism School on the evening of Oct. 11. Those giving tribute to Kim, who graduated from the journalism school in 2013, focused on her love of journalism and her eclectic body of work rather than on her horrific death.

"Kim was inventive and persistent as a child," said her mother, Ingrid Wall. "For Kim there were no boundaries." Ingrid explained that both she and her husband are journalists in Sweden, and said Kim went on reporting trips with them when she was young. Ingrid remembered how Kim, while still an adolescent, wrote an article for a local newspaper, saying: "I want to know how the world works."

That curiosity and hunger for experience took her to from Sweden to several countries including Sri Lanka, China, Uganda, Haiti and the United States. "She was a magical presence," said Nina Berman, a photojournalism professor at Columbia. "She was fiercely smart, but had a childlike curiosity and sense of wonder."

Lonnie Isabel, a senior lecturer at the journalism school, said he met with Kim in late June when she told him she had decided to move to China this fall. "She told me how Donald Trump had ruined the lives of freelancers because editors don't want stories about anything else."

Wall was a member of the OPC and reported from the Marshall Islands in 2015 with fellow OPC members Hendrik Hinzel and Coleen Jose on the leaking Runit Dome that houses radioactive waste.



Tom Wall, the brother of Kim Wall, speaking at a memorial service at the Columbia Journalism School.

At the memorial, seven of Kim's friends read excerpts from her work. Kim disappeared after meeting Peter Madsen, a submarine builder, for an interview and a trip on his homemade submarine on Aug. 10. Her torso was later found on a beach near Copenhagen. Madsen has been charged with manslaughter, which in Danish law is the equivalent of murder.

Kim's brother Tom said she loved Muji pens, using them to take notes and write stories. "Armed with nothing but her wits, a notepad and a Japanese gel ballpoint pen, she gave a voice to those who had something to say," said Tom.

Columbia is accepting gifts to establish a scholarship named for Kim. Gifts may be made online at [journalism.givenow.columbia.edu](http://journalism.givenow.columbia.edu) or by mailing a check to Brandon Glosser, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 2950 Broadway, New York, NY 10027 and putting "Kim Wall Scholarship" in the memo field. ❖

# On a Mission to Listen and Report in Appalachia

BY CHARLES SENNOTT

*The following is an excerpt from a piece written for the GroundTruth Project website, used with permission. To read more about Report for America, visit [thegroundtruthproject.org](http://thegroundtruthproject.org).*

**L**ISTEN TO people who live here in the heart of rural Appalachia and it doesn't take long to hear just how tired they are of reporters coming from outside to tell their story.

Sure, they'll tell you, this town is struggling as it transitions out of an economy that revolved around a coal industry now in steep decline. Jobs are scarce. The opioid crisis is real. People worry about the future. Young people who are proud to be from here too often end up moving away for work even as the mountains pull their hearts to stay.

But, if you give the conversation a bit more time, those same people will hasten to add that the reality of this place is that it is also finding a voice for innovation, developing an eye for new ideas, and relying on a

grit and resiliency that has always pulled the generations through hard times. And they've definitely known hard times.

For the last two weeks, we've had our 'Crossing the Divide' team of five reporters, from a mix of red states and blue, on the ground here in the mountains of Appalachia listening to people talk about the future of work, about a determination to create new industries, and about an urgent need to reimagine healthcare in a way that will address a surging crisis of opioid addiction. We've listened to a great diversity of views, but one feeling that courses through just about every conversation is that people here do not feel heard by the rest of the country, especially by the national news media.

Today we are proud to announce that we are going to stick around in rural Appalachia and do some more listening.

With support from the Galloway Family Foundation, The GroundTruth Project is partnering with three prominent regional news organizations to deepen coverage on issues that impact the communities here in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky and southern West

Virginia.

We're opening a call for applications effective today for three, 12-month-long reporting positions at the Lexington Herald-Leader, the Charleston Gazette and Mail, and West Virginia Public Broadcasting. This is part of GroundTruth's new initiative called "Report for America," a call to public service for local journalism that will serve communities in under-covered parts of the country where more reporting resources are needed to unearth big challenges that lie ahead.

Backed by the Google News Lab and a host of others who are providing early-stage funding, including the Knight Foundation, the Solutions Journalism Network, the Center for Investigative Reporting and several regional funders, our hope is that Report for America will become a movement with up to 1,000 journalists deployed into local news organizations over the next five years.

And the movement starts here.

In Kentucky, the Report for America "corps member," as we are calling the reporters, will be assigned to Pikeville, with a

*Continued on Page 9*

## OPC Press ID: 'A Lifesaver'

BY ANAND GOPAL

**I**N THE winter of 2013, I heard a story about U.S.-backed forces burying a child alive in a remote village in Kandahar, Afghanistan. While investigating, I was arrested by forces loyal to the brutal police chief Abdul Raziq, America's man in Kandahar. I was expelled from Kandahar and barred from ever returning. But the report haunted me, and I figured that the same phenomenon that allowed insurgents and drug lords to slip in – gross incompetence – might enable an independent journalist to return unnoticed. I spent months making calls, charting locations of every police checkpoint, and mapped a route avoiding them, all the way to the village.

When I returned, on assignment for *Harper's*, I travelled with my Afghan colleague through back alleys, judiciously avoiding checkpoints. We emerged onto a bridge heading out of the city when suddenly a hulking man in a bandolier stepped onto the road and stopped our car. I told him I was a journalist, but he demanded to see identification. This is always a moment of panic for freelancers the world over; we don't have press cards, or any type of identification that can pass muster with officious local authorities. Sometimes, we get a letter of assignment, but those impress few people in places like Afghanistan, where they expect a well-laminated, official looking ID. Almost no freelancers I knew possessed such a card; in desperation, some even tried to make their own.

I knew that if I tried to explain the pitiful plight of the freelancer to the gunman, I'd likely not get very far. So I fished out the only substitute I could think of: my library card. The gunman studied it, impressed by the heavy lamination, the New York University torch logo, the passport-sized photo, the fine print on the back. It was clear he could not read English. He flashed a giant grin and said, "I love journalists." He waved us on.

As any freelancer can attest, we are often not so lucky. In Iraq, I was detained by militiamen for investigating abuses U.S.-backed Iraqi forces had committed against civilians in the name of fighting ISIS. I spent hours trying to convince a gunman



Anand Gopal

that I was a journalist, not a spy or ISIS operative, when he finally asked to see the last article I'd written. This happened to be the *Harper's* piece on Kandahar's murderous U.S.-backed forces – not exactly the type of story I wanted *these* murderous U.S.-backed forces to associate me with. I tried to dissuade him but he found *Harper's.com* and located my article – and realized that it could not be accessed. I'd never been so grateful for a paywall.

Not long after, I became a member of the Overseas Press Club. There's a lot to commend the OPC, such as its dedication to international news at a time when foreign coverage is eroding, and the community of foreign correspondents it fosters. But the OPC's Press ID has become a lifesaver. With the word PRESS brandished across the top (in English and Arabic), the ID is something I wish I had earlier in my career. It allows me to cross checkpoints, enter government offices, even obtain journalist visas. But most important, the OPC Press Card gives me a sense of security. In a world that's growing ever more dangerous for journalists, and especially freelancers, nothing could be more valuable.

*OPC member Anand Gopal is a journalist and author of No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban and the War Through Afghan Eyes. He won the OPC Best Magazine Reporting Award this year for his piece "The Hell After ISIS," published in The Atlantic.* ❖

## Defending Truth in a Post-truth World

BY PATRICIA KRANZ

**T**HE VIENNA-BASED International Press Institute has sent representatives to meet with government officials in countries like Turkey, Myanmar and Egypt to promote press freedom and defend journalists since its founding in 1950.

Next January, in response to the Trump Administration's attacks on the media here at home, IPI will join a press mission to the United States, headed by the Committee to Protect Journalists.

In advance of that meeting, the ICI's North American Committee held an informal discussion with a small group of journalists and free press advocates in Washington on Oct. 6. The purpose was to "brainstorm ways to mount a concerted effort to counteract the recent attempts to mount public opinion against the press, limit access to public data or broadly interfere with the journalists' ability to perform the duties of bringing truth to light."

John Daniszewski, an OPC member who is vice president at The Associated Press and editor-at-large for standards, gave a detailed and frightening analysis on "The state of truth in a post-truth world."

Here some excerpts from his remarks:

"Aside from the assault on truth by some politicians, we are also living through an era of intense and sophisticated propaganda. As we have seen in recent days, there is evidence that hackers from Russia were buying political messages and feeding them directly into people's social media feeds – into their heads in other words, because so much of life now is lived in virtual space.

"Russian troll farms are creating posts using false identities specifically targeted to geographic areas. It is orchestrated by Russia and ISIS.

"Because it's new, our brains haven't really adjusted to it. We don't know we're being propagandized. They look like any other social media posts but they are created perhaps by a robot just for you. The technology makes it cheap to create and disseminate. Google and Facebook haven't created tools to vet this propaganda.

"On one side, the pursuit of facts is being questioned. On the other side is insidious propaganda.

"As journalists, we need to be on the front line of the defense against propaganda. We need to counter it with factual information. This is why fact-checking has become such an important role for our profession. The AP is one of many news organizations that are amping up their fact-check operations. And those stories are among the stories that are most popular and engaged in by our audiences.

"We need to up our game with debunking stories in real time, both for the politicians who would try to confuse the public about facts for their political ends, and the sophisticated propagandists from Russia, the ISIS group and other despotic countries and extreme actors who now have the ability to target us one by one through the open door of social media." ❖





## Jim Foley's Legacy of Journalism and Public Service

BY CHARLES SENNOTT

**T**HESE DAYS, many people don't think of journalism as a defense of liberty, not with President Trump labeling us "the enemy of the people." They aren't thinking of the media as courageous in bearing witness, when they are served cat stories on BuzzFeed. And they aren't likely to think of what we do as a public service with polls indicating that trust in the media is as low as it has ever been.

But then again most people never had a chance to meet Jim Foley.

James W. Foley was one of the most passionately committed journalists I've worked with through more than 30 years in this craft, and he was definitely driven by a sense of public service, and a moral courage fueled by the belief that journalism in its heart is about bearing witness and about giving a voice to the voiceless.

On Oct. 14, Jim was remembered during the 2017 James W. Foley Freedom Run/Walk 5K, a charity run in his hometown in New Hampshire intended to mark his birthday and to honor his memory. The money raised through this third annual "Foley 5k" will help support the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation which is dedicated to advocacy for freelance journalists and for the families of those held hostage. Please consider giving.

From that terrible moment when Jim was taken hostage while reporting in Syria on Thanksgiving Day

in 2012 to the darkest day when he was executed by the so-called Islamic State in 2014, Jim's parents, John and Diane Foley, and their four surviving children have consistently been a source of light. They have focused on Jim's sense of a calling to bear witness as a journalist.

Their extraordinary faith has led them to never question Jim's belief that what he was doing as a reporter covering a war zone mattered, that bearing witness was an act of moral courage and ultimately, public service. GroundTruth is honored to be partnering with the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation with a new fellowship in Jim's name for freelance reporters working in the Middle East. Please check out our call for applications to the fellowship here.

Jim's life was all about service. He went to college at Marquette University, where the message of service is woven into the teaching of the Jesuit tradition. And right out of college, he joined Teach for America and offered four years of service to students in a troubled, inner-city school where his fluency in Spanish allowed him to get close to a group of kids who, at the time of his death, shared with unbearable poignancy how they have never forgotten the lessons Jim taught them. He went to the University of Massachusetts where he entered a master's program in writing, but spent much of his time in the Pioneer Valley at a center for unwed mothers in Holyoke which has a poverty rate that stands in stark

contrast to the pleasant campuses of the five colleges that surround it.

And during his studies for a master's degree in journalism at the Medill School at Northwestern University, he once again found a path to service by volunteering in the Jumpstart program in Chicago which helped convicted felons transition back into society.

Jim's family is centered on service, although they don't really seem very comfortable calling it that. His father is a doctor, his mother is a nurse and three of his siblings served in the military.

"He just found meaning in helping others," said Jim's father.

"He wanted to be a part of something bigger," said Jim's younger brother, John. "He wanted to know he was doing what's right and giving a voice to those who didn't have one."

And the way all of them have shouldered the grief and the loss of Jim has served as an inspiration to all of us in the tribe of journalism who knew Jim, and who miss him.

They as a family seem to be living out a shared commitment to service, by being there to continue supporting the best kind of journalism that is not opinionated or loud, that is not trite or about click bait, but that is all about being there on the ground and bearing witness to people suffering from injustice and violence.

Journalism has been struggling financially for well over a decade as Jim knew all too well. In Jim's

*Continued on Page 5*



**'Jim Foley'**  
*Continued From Page 4*

work for us at GlobalPost and at The GroundTruth Project, he was often struggling to get by. He was among a legion of freelancers who set out to cover the Arab Spring at a time when staff jobs, particularly on the foreign desk, are hard to find at newspapers and networks which are increasingly hollowed out by a collapsing business model.

We've all heard about the failures of traditional media as a business, but something we are thinking about a lot more these days is the deeper failing of journalism to remember that in the end of the day it is all about public service. In the end of the day, it's about bearing witness not only in conflict zones in foreign countries but also right here in American cities and towns where the ravages of a fading industrial economy and failing schools and corrupt politicians are leaving huge swaths of the country fearful for their future and distrusting of a media that too often just isn't there to listen to what they have to say.

This year, GroundTruth fielded a team of 25 participants in the Foley 5k in New Hampshire and from remote locations around the world from Boston to Istanbul. I will be running in Ireland where I'll be on assignment with my brother, a photographer who also worked in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Every step of the way, we will be thinking of Jim and, yes, when we are pulled into the comforting shadows of a pub for a velvety Guinness we will also be thinking of Jim. We think of him all the time. And we like to think that Jim would have really liked this idea of Report for America. Cheers, Jim, and happy birthday.

*This piece was used with permission from the GroundTruth Project. To read the entire story, visit [thegroundtruthproject.org](http://thegroundtruthproject.org).* ❖

**'Afghanistan'**  
*Continued From Page 1*

that also helped spur him to examine the case on his own.

Van Dyk said a key problem with American policy in Afghanistan is that diplomats, FBI and other US officials are only in the country for a 90-day rotation. Under British rule in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he pointed out, officials remained in the country for 16 years.

Van Dyk's new book, *THE TRADE: My Journey into the Labyrinth of Political Kidnapping*, was released on the day of the panel.

Kathy Gannon, senior correspondent for Pakistan and Afghanistan for The Associated Press, covered the region since 1987 and was the only western journalist in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan during the U.S.-led invasion that followed the 9-11 attacks.

She said foreign influence makes the country extremely complicated, with Russia's increasing anxiety about a growing ISIS presence in former Soviet states and Iran possibly supporting the Taliban while recruiting both Pakistanis and Afghans to fight in Syria.

"The danger always to me seems to be this desire to oversimplify a very complicated situation," she said. "Every nation has their own agendas in Afghanistan, and it's getting more so."

Gannon was shot and wounded while covering an election in Afghanistan in 2014. Her friend and colleague Anja Niedringhaus was mortally wounded in the attack.

She said regular Afghans consider foreigners, including Americans and Western partners, as part of the problem.

David Rohde, online news director for *The New Yorker* and former reporter at Reuters and *The New York Times*, said with the Pentagon committing more troops and a spike in US attacks in Afghanistan, the death toll on civilians will continue climbing.

"What upset me about the Trump strategy was that it was not a solution. What's constantly driven the American approach to Afghanistan, and it's logical, is domestic American politics."

He cited George W. Bush's aborted revenge operation after 9-11, a limited surge under the Obama administration, and now Trump's increased attacks and use of the "Mother of All Bombs" as examples of strategies rooted in the desire to satisfy constituents in the US.

"Last year I believe maybe 15 American soldiers died in Afghanistan, and I think at least 5000 Afghan police and soldiers died. So this is a holding pattern, what Trump is doing will not lead to a resolution."

Rohde was kidnapped by the Taliban in 2008, escaping after 7 months.

William J. Holstein, who covered the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979 and moderated the panel, asked Rohde what a viable strategy would be.

"I think you are either all in, which we're not going to do, or you leave. This kind of middle of the road thing is just costing Afghans their lives." ❖

Click here to see video clips from the program.

## Abductions Rise in Bangladesh

BY HASAN MAHMUD

**T**HE BANGLADESHI capital of Dhaka has seen a rash of kidnappings over the last few months, a trend that has been climbing steadily over the last few years.

Among the missing are politicians, businessmen, journalists, poets and students.

On Sept. 25, Rokonzaman Rokon, the mayor of the northern city of Sharishabari, was abducted from Uttara, a suburb of Dhaka. Rukon, a leader in the Awami League political party, went missing for two days and was found more than 100

miles away in a tea garden.

On Aug. 22, Syed Sadat Ahmed, a businessman and leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party was forced out of his car and into a microbus with an unknown driver. There has been no trace of him so far. Also still missing is the Belarus Honorary Consul in Bangladesh, Anirudda Kumar Roy, who was last seen on Aug. 27.

On April 21, Hemonto Costa, also a businessman, was abducted while on his way to his office in the city of Savar. Costa is the younger sibling of Proshanto Costa, the high school principal in My-

*Continued on Page 10*

# PEOPLE

By Amy Russo

## OPC SCHOLARS

The OPC Foundation's 2014 Stan Swinton Fellowship winner, **Sam Kimball**, is working on a podcasting project dedicated to telling the personal stories of everyday Iraqis titled *UNHEARD: The Voices of Iraq*. Through a Kickstarter campaign that met its \$6,000 goal, Kimball will begin training in storytelling and radio production and pass those skills on to local journalists who will help him to carry out his vision for the project. Kimball arrived in Iraq in January 2017 with an eye to reporting stories that go deeper than typical narratives about ISIS and jihad to reveal a more complete picture of how ordinary Iraqis are grappling with terrorism and government corruption. He will enroll in Transom's Storytelling Workshop in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where he'll learn about audio equipment, editing, writing and other aspects of production.

## UPDATES

**NEW YORK:** OPC Treasurer **Abigail Pesta** received two awards from The Newswomen's Club of New York, one for her magazine feature "First Do No Harm" in *Women's Health Magazine* and another for her *Mother Jones* essay, "My Daughter Was Murdered in a Mass Shooting. Then I Was Ordered to Pay Her Killer's Gun Dealer." "First Do No Harm" is an investigative report exposing sexual abuse by physicians. The article explores the aftermath of sexual assault and outlines resources to seek help. Pesta reported that in a 500-person survey, 27 percent of participants had been violated during a doctor's visit. Pesta's piece for *Mother Jones* recounts a story told to her by Sandy Phillips, whose daughter Jessi was killed during the 2012 movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado. Phillips attempted to sue the person who sold thousands of rounds of ammunition to the gunman, but lost the suit and was forced to pay the defendant's legal fees, rendering her bankrupt.

OPC Governor **Bill Collins** accepted a buyout offer and wrapped up a 28-year communications career re-

cently with Ford Motor Co. Bill has been an active OPC supporter since joining the Board in 2002, publicizing the OPC Awards and contributing to the Freedom of the Press Committee. He's recently joined the OPC Foundation Board. "In the next chapter, I'll continue working on press freedom projects and PR consulting," said Collins, a former journalist. He was honored in a farewell event at God's Love We Deliver in New York on Oct. 12.



Left to right: David Ludwigson, God's Love vice president and chief development officer; Jim Vella, president of the Ford Fund, Karen Pearl, president and CEO of God's Love; and OPC Governor Bill Collins of Ford Motor Company.

A small group of friends and family gathered Oct. 15 at the apartment of Patti Kenner to celebrate the spirit and accomplishments of longtime OPC member **Ruth Gruber**, who died Nov. 17 at 105. Kenner was a close friend of Ruth's and the producer of the documentary "Ahead of Time: the Extraordinary Journey of Ruth Gruber." Gruber joined the OPC in 1959 and remained a member until her death. A photojournalist and author, she also worked as a human rights advocate. "Acting for President Franklin D. Roosevelt, she escorted nearly 1,000 refugees from 19 Nazi-occupied nations to a safe haven in the United States on a perilous trans-Atlantic crossing in 1944. They included the only large contingent of Jews allowed into America during World War II," according to the memorial program. Gruber is one of ten women profiled in the

book *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females*, by Linda Stein. A tapestry made by Stein was displayed at the



PATRICIA KRANZ

A memorial tapestry by Linda Stein displays a collage of photos from Ruth Gruber's life.

event, showing photos and scenes from Ruth's life. Kenner closed the program with a quote from Gruber: "If something has to be done, just go ahead and do it. Don't let obstacles get in your way."

This year's OPC Feature Photography Award winner, **Meridith Kohut**, was recently interviewed by Image Republiq on her experience working in Venezuela over the last decade. Recounting how her work there began, she recalled a 2006 phone call with **David Furst**, international picture editor at *The New York Times* and newly elected OPC Governor, who proposed that she travel to Venezuela to document the everyday lives of its citizens. She told Image Republiq that when she arrived she discovered a population in a downward spiral of starvation and inflation under authoritarian oppression from then-President Nicolás Maduro. Kohut recently presented her work at a panel co-sponsored by the OPC, the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and the Professional Prizes department. A video of her interview can be found on Image Republiq's Facebook page.

NYU journalism professor **Mohamad Bazzi** was featured in *The New York Times* last month for his op-ed on his experience with the university's Abu Dhabi campus. Bazzi was scheduled to teach a course at the site when he was denied entry into United Arab Emirates by the government. The university made an unsuccessful appeal. Bazzi suspects



that the school made only a half-hearted attempt to solve the issue. He believes the root of the issue to be his background, being a Lebanese-born Shiite Muslim. Bazzi's op-ed alleged discrimination and said NYU failed to adhere to principles of academic freedom upon which its New York campus was built. Bazzi spoke at an OPC panel at International House earlier this year about the crisis in Syria.

**Kate Webb**, a former correspondent for Agence-France Presse, has been featured on an Australian stamp. Webb, who died at the age of 64 in 2007, reported in Asia and is known for her coverage of the Vietnam War. In 1971, it had been mistakenly reported that she was killed following her capture in Cambodia by North Vietnamese troops who detained her for 23 days, prompting an obituary to be published on the front page of *The New York Times*. The honorary stamp is one of five in a set unveiled last month to recognize the roles played by women in conflict zones. The set was issued on Oct. 6.

**SAN FRANCISCO: Elizabeth Dwoskin**, who was part of a team that won this year's Bob Considine Award, has continued ongoing work with *The Washington Post* about the presence of Russian ads on Facebook and other online platforms. Her reporting, part of a group project shared with colleagues, exposes that Russians have spent tens of thousands of dollars in advertising to spread disinformation on social media and across Google's platforms, including Gmail and YouTube. The stories outline ways that disinformation focused on key voting states during the 2016 presidential election. Dwoskin's byline also appeared in a *Washington Post* story last month detailing how some of the Russian-linked Facebook ads were directly intended to drive a wedge between racial and religious groups.

**MEXICO CITY:** Photographer **Wesley Bocxe** suffered serious injuries during last month's earthquake in Mexico City when his apartment building collapsed. He is expected to

survive and his 5-year-old daughter, Amara, was at school at the time and survived. But Bocxe's wife, Elizabeth Esguerra Rosas, was with him and did not survive the collapse. A Gofundme page has been set up to assist Bocxe and his family. The page has generated more than \$110,000 in funds, and around \$30,000 of the \$150,000 goal remains.

**ROME:** In September, former OPC Governor **Yvonne Dunleavy** received a tour of the Rome press club, Stampa Estera, by active officer Chris Warde-Jones. Occupying a spacious, multi-story building in the heart of the city, the club has comprehensive facilities for journalists, a bar and extensive exhibition space and an auditorium for conferences with newsworthy people "from the Pope on down," Dunleavy said. She noted an irony: the premises were an inadvertent gift from dictator Benito Mussolini during his fascist regime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the government dismantled democratic institutions and created a law to consolidate and monitor the press from a single location. "Victim of his own megalomania and failed swaggering vows to return Italy to its ancient glory, Mussolini was executed in 1945 toward the end of the Second World War," Dunleavy wrote to the Bulletin.

#### PEOPLE REMEMBERED

Former OPC member and longtime foreign correspondent **Wilbur Landrey** died on Sept. 29 in Largo, Florida from pneumonia complications. He was 93. Landrey joined the OPC in 1959, continuing a career shared by three family generations of newspapermen before him. Born in Kansas City on Nov. 16, 1923, Landrey embarked on his reporting career while in high school, writing for the *Kansas City Kansan*. During his time at the University of Kansas, he began working for the *Kansas City Star*, eventually joining the United Press International news service the year he graduated. Landrey spent the bulk of his career with UPI, traveling throughout the world in regions including Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Finally, he joined the *Tampa Bay Times* in 1975 where he



LEE TOWNSEND

worked for nearly 20 years. He is survived by his wife, Beverly Landrey.

Legendary Associated Press reporter **Richard Pyle** died in a hospital on Sept. 28 from lung fibrosis and obstructive lung disease, according to his wife, actress-writer Brenda Smiley. He was 83. Pyle's 49-year career included top stories on the presidency of John F. Kennedy, the Vietnam War, the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon, revolution in the Philippines and the 9-11 terrorist attacks. He covered Vietnam from 1968 to 1973, serving as Saigon bureau chief for the last few years of his tenure there. AP's executive editor, Sally Buzbee, told the wire agency that Pyle maintained "his passion for great stories and never lost his insistence on strong, probing journalism." He authored the 1991 book, *Schwarzkopf*, on the 1991 Gulf War commander H. Norman Schwarzkopf, and co-authored *Breaking News: How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else*, which was published in 2007. He retired in 2009.

**Diana Kaff**, journalist and wife of past OPC member **Albert Kaff**, died on Sept. 22. She was 85. Diana had written for Chinese language newspapers and married Albert in 1960. Two years later, Albert, a longtime UPI correspondent, joined the OPC and was given honorary status in 1998 for writing the *Bulletin's* People column. He passed away in 2011. Diana is remembered for her travel writing and human interest stories in Hong Kong's *Sing Tao Daily News* and New York's *World Journal*. ❖

- Dario Bosio**  
Freelance  
Torino, Italy  
Active Overseas, Young  
(29 or under)
- Antoine Goldet**  
Freelance  
Paris  
Active Overseas, Young  
(29 or under)
- Wudan Yan**  
Freelance  
Seattle, Wash.  
Active Non-Resident, Young  
(29 or under)
- Elaine Díaz Rodriguez**  
Editor-in-chief  
Periodismo de Barrio  
Havana, Cuba  
Active Overseas, Young  
(30-34)
- Congcong Zhang**  
Columbia University  
New York  
Student

# PRESS FREEDOM UPDATE...

On Oct. 10, *Wall Street Journal* reporter **Ayla Albayrak** was convicted on terrorism charges in Turkey and sentenced to two years and one month in prison. Albayrak, who has both Turkish and Finnish citizenship, was arrested in connection with a 2015 article she wrote on the struggle between the government forces and the Kurds. She was accused of supporting the Kurdish rebels through her work. In a letter condemning the conviction, the OPC quoted a statement from Gerard Baker, the paper's editor-in-chief, who called on news organizations and others to denounce the conviction. "This ruling against a professional and respected journalist is an affront to all who are committed to furthering a free and robust press," Baker said. More than 100 reporters have been persecuted in Turkey and 200 media organizations closed since the government's crackdown began.



Ayla Albayrak

**Edgar Daniel Esqueda Castro**, a photographer working in Mexico, was found dead with gunshot wounds on Oct. 6 in San Luis Potosí. He had been abducted by men wearing police uniforms the day before, according to his wife. She reported that armed assailants took Esqueda Castro captive, removing him from their home at gunpoint and stealing their cellphones. Local prosecutors said they are looking into the case, but rejected claims of police involvement. Esqueda Castro had been working as a freelancer, shooting photos for several local news sites.

**Ramón Nsé Esono Ebalé**, a

cartoonist and blogger, is still being detained in Equatorial Guinea without charges following his Sept. 16 arrest. He was taken into custody along with two of his friends, both of whom were released and are Spanish nationals. Ebalé, whose material has been blocked on the internet by authorities, is a critic of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and his government. Ebalé's friends said police had been searching for him and wanted him to explain his work and political commentary. He was accused of counterfeiting and money laundering. He denies both charges.

After disappearing in Uzbekistan on Sept. 27, reporter **Bobomurod Abdullaev** has been placed on trial in a Tashkent criminal court. A local news site reported that he has been charged with "attacking" the country's "constitutional order" and is currently being detained. If convicted, Abdullaev could spend 20 years in prison. He had worked as a freelancer for the local branch of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Institute for War & Peace Reporting based in London. The news website he founded, Ozod Ovoz, or 'free voice', was shut down by Uzbek authorities. Abdullaev has been critical of the government in his work.

A journalist is facing charges in Pakistan after writing a column critical of the regional legislative assembly in the country's north. A Gilgit-Baltistan anti-terrorism court summoned **Shabbir Siham** on Oct. 7 and accused him of extortion and fabrication following a 2016 article alleging some of the assembly members were connected with gang activity involving prostitution and human trafficking. Government officials urged him to stop writing, and gang members tried to bribe him, threatening to kill him after he refused. Islamabad police have raided Siham's home. He has written for the English-language *Daily Times* and the Urdu-language *Daily Jinnah*.

Police arrested U.S. journalist **Jon Ziegler** on Oct. 3 in St. Louis after he filmed and livestreamed a

protest against police brutality. The demonstration closed Highway 40 as marchers presented an obstacle to traffic. The event was a reaction to the murder of Anthony Lamar Smith, an African-American man who was shot and killed by local police officer Jason Stockley. Ziegler was reporting on the protest when authorities approached, arresting participants and Ziegler himself, along with other journalists.

Three reporters in India received death threats via WhatsApp that directly referenced the Sept. 4 murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh who was shot in Bangalore. The messages, sent to **Deeksha Sharma**, **Mohammed Ali** and **Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor**, all reporters for local media, warned that anyone criticizing the Bharatiya Janata Party currently ruling the country would be "finished off." The journalists were told that Lankesh's murder occurred because she raised issues with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. The messages were received from mid to late September.

Amid Morocco's growing effort to hamper press freedom, British reporter **Saeed Kamali Dehghan** was arrested and deported while on assignment covering Marrakesh's Women in Africa summit. Dehghan entered the country on Sept. 25 and was arrested two days later while interviewing activists in the northern region of Rif. He was then taken to Casablanca and expelled to the U.K. It is unclear what reasons were given for Dehghan's deportation; however, his fate was similar to that of José Luis Navazo, a reporter who faced the same treatment while in Rif in July.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has publicly urged Jordan to drop charges against the **Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists** (CDFJ), a regional watchdog group advocating for press freedom. CDFJ was accused of failing to register for nonprofit status on Sept. 10 by Jordan's trade regulation body. The organization's funding and



legal status were both threatened and the case was brought to the Attorney General's office. CDFJ has widely reported on increasing censorship by the Jordanian government, leading CPJ to recognize the charges as retaliation for calls for press freedom.

**Bram Ebus**, a Dutch freelance reporter, was detained in Venezuela for 18 hours with his driver and two human rights workers with whom he'd been traveling while on assignment in Bolívar, according to Espacio Público, a free speech advocacy group. The country's National Guard held all four individuals, interrogating them before releasing them the following day without charges. Ebus had been investigating mining and land use, which is impacting indigenous groups.

NewsDay reporter **Kenneth Nyangani** was arrested and detained on Oct. 2 for 18 hours in Zimbabwe after his story appeared stating that First Lady Grace Mugabe made a clothing donation including used underwear to supporters of Zanu-PF, the country's ruling party. Nyangani was scheduled to appear in court on Oct. 4 after being charged with criminal nuisance.

**Nina Ognianova**, coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists' Europe and Central Asia Program, reported this month that declining press freedom in the U.S. and Europe has encouraged Russia to further restrict its own media. Former Soviet nations including Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan have followed suit, attempting to silence journalists for their reporting. Ognianova called for the U.S. to embrace its position as a symbol of press freedom and support persecuted journalists around the world with solidarity at a time when the media remains under fire. ❖

### **'On a Mission'** *Continued From Page 2*

population of about 6,000, reestablishing a bureau for the *Lexington Herald-Leader* in Pike County for the first time since 2011.

"Appalachia is a place with amazing and important stories to tell, and we're thrilled to be involved in a project to get more journalists on the ground to tell them," said Peter Baniak, editor of the *Herald-Leader*.

There are existing local newspapers like the *Appalachian News-Express* here in Pikeville which cover the community now with a fair and steady hand, and which will be offered a content sharing agreement as part of this initiative. There are also digital news organizations like the Daily Yonder out of the Center for Rural Strategies in nearby Whitesburg which provides in-depth coverage of rural issues. The hope is that the increased coverage of Eastern Kentucky through Report for America will find a place here and help to enlighten and inform local audiences as well as readers statewide about life in Appalachia.

In West Virginia, the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* and West Virginia Public Broadcasting both plan to have their RFA reporters in the southern coalfields and will be working with the communities to assess the best place to base the coverage.

"West Virginia Public Broadcasting is proud to partner with newsrooms with such outstanding track records in covering Appalachia. Southern West Virginia is an amazing place, with a rich culture and history. It's also a place that has valuable lessons to teach the rest of the country when it comes to resilience and finding a path forward through adversity. I'm eager to share our passion for telling these kinds of stories with a new generation of journalists," WVPB News Director Jesse Wright said.

This partnership in Appalachia is a pilot project for Report for America, which has established a unique funding formula to embed reporters for up to two years in local news or-

ganizations. The formula combines national and regional philanthropies with buy-in from the participating newsrooms as well. RFA will provide 50 percent of a full year salary and local funders will provide 25 percent and the newsroom 25 percent. We hope to have a mix of local reporters serving their own communities, and reporters from afar coming in to learn about and serve in a part of the country they don't know. A training and mentoring program will be key to the program's success and RFA will call on veteran reporters to serve as mentors to a new generation.

We plan to begin small with a total of 12 RFA corps members deployed in 2018, with an emphasis on the public service role that journalism can and should play in a local community.

That means at least 9 more year-long RFA corps member positions will be announced in other regions in the coming weeks and months. Our host newsrooms on this initiative will include traditional newspapers, digital startups, radio stations, community access channels, and non-profit news collaborations of all shapes and sizes.

The project will begin with a one year reporting position for an RFA corps member, and a second year will be possible if the newsroom and the reporter both want to keep working together. If there is a second year, the funding formula will shift with the newsroom taking on half the costs and RFA and a regional funding providing the other half.

So if you're thinking about serving as a reporter in a local community; or if you represent a newsroom that would like to participate; or if you'd like to contribute in any way, please go to our website and sign up a [www.reportforamerica.org](http://www.reportforamerica.org). We hope you'll answer this call for public service and join the movement to help us 'Report for America.'

*OPC member Charles Sennott is the founder and CEO of The GroundTruth Project and the co-founder of GlobalPost and Report for America.* ❖

# NEW BOOKS

By Amy Russo

## RUSSIA

**R**USSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin has maintained a grip on power unprecedented since the time of Joseph Stalin, serving as the country's leader for 17 years and counting. With no indication he'll be stepping down in the near future, his rise to power has become a point of fascination for politicians, policymakers and reporters seeking to explain the Putin phenomenon. OPC award winner Masha Gessen's new book, *The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia* [Riverhead Books, October 2017], provides a thorough analysis that explores power dynamics and the decline of freedom in her native country.

"*Budushego net*," Russian for "there is no future," serves as the book's unofficial tagline, a phrase that captures the sentiment of hopelessness under Putin's oppressive regime. Gessen surveys four decades of history to shed light on the former Soviet nation's transformation over time. She carefully selects a cross section of seven personalities to illustrate these changes. Four are from younger generations that have spent nearly their entire lives under Putin's reign, while the other three are old enough to recall the Soviet era.



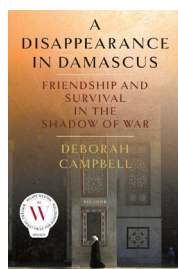
Through each of these characters, Gessen explores the rise of old Soviet attitudes and the country's modern-day mafia state which wields thuggish authority. It is from these social and political conditions that the concept of

"*budushego net*" is born. Gessen reveals that the so-called Homo Sovieticus, a term for people shaped by the experience of Stalinist terror, has not become extinct, but has become an integrated component of the fabric of society, a characteristic that Gessen said enables people to surrender to the abuses and control of their president. While Gessen paints a grim portrait of today's Russia and its prospects for the future, the book provides an honest perspective at a crucial moment in history.

*The Future Is History* has been shortlisted for the 2017 National Book Award in Nonfiction. Gessen was a panelist in January this year at the OPC's Russia Hands Reunion and in April received the OPC's Best Commentary Award for work in 2016. ❖

## SYRIA

**C**ANADIAN CORRESPONDENT Deborah Campbell arrived in Syria several years before it plummeted into civil war, when Iraqis were still fleeing into the country amid a spike in violence that started in 2007. In *A Disappearance in Damascus* [Picador, September 2016] she details her work following the plight of Iraqi refugees while posing undercover as a university professor in Syria. But the book soon shifts focus to a personal crisis – the kidnapping of her Iraqi friend and fixer.



After arriving in Damascus, Campbell began to establish local contacts. She eventually met Ahlam, a 40-something Iraqi refugee. The two soon become friends, and Ahlam began to serve as Campbell's fixer and guide to Sayeda Zainab, a suburb where hundreds of thousands of Iraqis had fled. Ahlam, educated and unusually independent among her peers, had not married until age 29 and was the only person in her hometown in Iraq to earn a university degree. After the U.S. invasion in 2003, Ahlam escaped an abduction by paying a costly ransom and fled for Syria.

Although neither realized it at the time, Ahlam's work with Campbell and other foreign journalists drew attention from the government. She was soon arrested and disappeared into the country's prison system. Campbell began to investigate, applying her skills as a journalist to track down her friend. The story portrays the harsh reality of life in a police state and the lives of refugees who are rendered stateless in Damascus while still providing a few lighter anecdotes and vivid detail.

Campbell has written for *Harper's*, the *Economist* and the *Guardian*, and is a three-time winner of the National Magazine Award. Last year, *A Disappearance in Damascus* won the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Non-Fiction, which honors the best nonfiction book published in Canada. ❖

## 'Dhaka' Continued From Page 5

mensingh. His cell phone is turned off and there is no news of his whereabouts.

"We're looking for him and praying for him," Proshanto Costa said. "He knew many creditors because of his job, but we cannot imagine who it was."

The number of cases of kidnapping for ransom in Bangladesh is steadily increasing. An investigation from the English-language newspaper The Daily Star found more than 330 people were kidnapped in Bangladesh between January 2013 and March 2014. Kidnappers demand ransom of between 40 thousand and 10 million taka (between \$585 and \$121,000).

Many do not survive.

The body of Abdul Gafur, mayor of the Nohata municipality, was found in March at a graveyard in Dhaka.

According to his son, Faisal Ahmed Runu, Gafur went to Dhaka on Dec. 31 and stopped answering his phone Jan. 3 onward.

"Afterwards, text messages saying he was well were sent to us. My mother filed an abduction case with Poba police station on Jan. 19," Runu said.

Police tracked the mobile phone and on Jan. 23 detained a woman claiming to be his wife. The woman and two of her sisters later confessed to the murder.

Meanwhile, police are still investigating the abduction of journalist, writer and poet Farhad Mazhar, who went missing from an area of Dhaka in July, and was rescued from a bus 125 miles away in Jessore later that day.

In July this year, Human Rights Watch released a report indicating law enforcement illegally detained at least 90 people in 2016, with hundreds more cases of secret detention since 2013. In 21 cases, the detainees were later killed. Nine others remain missing. In the first five months of 2017, 48 disappearances were reported, according to the group. HRW called for the Bangladesh government to immediately end the practice of unlawful detention and invite the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate. ❖





## Meet the OPC Members: Q&A With *Tanya Bindra*

BY AMY RUSSO

**T**ANYA BINDRA is a freelance photographer and filmmaker based in Brooklyn. For the last five years, she has reported on conflict, postcolonial politics, and migration in over 20 countries across West Africa, South Asia, and Europe. Her work has been published *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *The Associated Press*, *UNICEF* and others. In 2016 she won the inaugural Ali Mustafa Memorial Award for People's Journalism.

**Hometown:** A bit complicated – Chur, Switzerland (place of birth), Oakville, Canada (growing up) and Randolph, NJ (where I went to high school), and a few other countries in between.

**Education:** I studied international development and gender studies at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

**Languages you speak:** I speak French and German (though it's more Swiss-German than German).

**First job in journalism:** Filing photos for the AP during election protests and riots in Senegal.

**Countries reported from:** The Philippines, Mali, India, Nigeria, Central African Republic, the U.S., Italy, Greece, Germany, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Canada, Senegal, Democratic Republic of the

Congo, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mauritania, a few more...

**Year you joined the OPC:** 2017.

**How did you become interested in reporting from West Africa?**

My father's family is part of the South Asian diaspora in East Africa, so in school I was always interested in learning about the continent. I started gravitating towards West Africa though through music and film. I loved films by Abderrahmane Sissako, Djibril Diop Mambéty, Ousmane Sembène, and I loved music from Mali and Guinea Bissau, so I went. I didn't plan on becoming a journalist or a photographer. I would also say that my interest in reporting from West Africa, and other regions more generally, is also a function of not having a particularly rooted idea of where I am from or who I am culturally. My parents are from two very different cultures. They grew up in different countries than me. They have lived abroad all of their adult lives and now so have I.

**Major challenge as a journalist:** Staying in a place long enough to start understanding the nuances of everyday life while maintaining fresh eyes.

**Worst experience as a journalist:** Falling into a river of sewage while filming, eating fish in the desert (my fault) and getting sick while on a military patrol, routinely having to unpack my big bag of equipment and dirty socks in front of security agents

at small airports. More seriously, losing colleagues to the job, finding myself after a job.

**Hardest story:** Covering Ebola in Sierra Leone and Liberia. I think it's important for journalists to be mindful of the stereotypes that exist about the region when covering conflict or emergencies here, and to not perpetuate them. It was necessary to cover the scale of human suffering during Ebola but it was also important to find narratives that dug a bit deeper. I was most proud of a little story done for *The Washington Post* on clubbing in a small town in Liberia during the peak of the outbreak. There was a curfew at 11:00 p.m., patrons had to disinfect their hands with chlorine before entering the club, but an 18-year old girl still celebrated her birthday with friends.

**Journalism heroes:** There are many journalists I admire but I will mention photographers who work in the documentary/photojournalist vein. Carolyn Drake, Raghubir Singh, Glenna Gordon, Harry Gruyaert, Emilie Regnier, Guy Tillim, and Stephen Shore are a few that come to mind, whose photos I keep coming back to and who make me want to go out and find my own.

**Advice for journalists who want to work overseas:** Question why you really want to go where you want to go, make peace with it, then decide. If you go, become an expert.

**Dream job:** Making experimental documentary art films...

**Favorite quote:** "Death would not be called bad, O people, if one knew how to truly die." – Guru Nanak

**Most common mistake you've seen:** Reportage guided by ego.

**Country you most want to return to:** Now? And to report from? Since elections last year, the United States.

**Twitter handle:** @tanyabindra but more active on Instagram: @tanyakbindra ❖

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

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Special Screening 'The Journey is the Destination'

SVA Theatre, 333 West 23rd Street  
Red Carpet and Reception at 6:30 p.m.  
Program at 6:30 p.m.  
Oct. 30



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