



Overseas Press Club  
*of America*

## Weekly Bulletin: Aug. 21, 2020

### Greetings!

We hope you enjoy this week's digital newsletter, which includes:

- A reminder of the upcoming online Annual Meeting on Sept. 8 and our discussion with OPC [Edward R. Murrow Award winners on Sept. 17](#).
- [Resources](#) and webinars for journalists covering COVID-19 and protests in the U.S.
- [People Column](#).
- [Press Freedom Update](#).

Scroll down for more content, summaries and links to items online.



## Upcoming OPC Events

### Sept. 8: OPC Annual Meeting

**Time:** Sept. 8 at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

**Place:** Online via Zoom

The OPC Annual Meeting, open to all members, will be held online on Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time via Zoom. Results of this year's Board of Governors election will be announced at the meeting. The deadline for voting is Monday, Sept. 7 at noon Eastern Time. The OPC is using the online voting website Balloteer again this year to host its secure election. The system allows one voting ballot and delineates between Active and Associate members. There will be no paper ballots this year.

This year, the OPC will elect officers, ten (10) Active board members and three (3) Associate board members to begin two-year terms.

To cast your vote, please keep an eye out for a ballot reminder later today with links to Balloteer, which lists all of the candidates. For eligible Active and Associate voters, your Voter ID is the email address we have on file, .

Please call Chad Bouchard at 480 745-9250 if you have any problems voting online.

Thank you again to those who have already voted.



## Sept. 17: OPC Award Winners Share Their Stories The Edward R. Murrow Award

**Time:** Sept. 17 at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time

**Place:** Online video conferencing (platform TBD)

Join the OPC for an online discussion with winners of this year's Edward R. Murrow Award for best TV, video or documentary interpretation of international affairs with a run time up to 30 minutes.



RSVPs are required. Links to the video conference call will be emailed to registrants before the program begins.

Winners participating in the call include: **Singeli Agnew**, **Rukmini Callimachi**, **Geoff O'Brien** and **Victor Tadashi Suarez** of The New York Times for "Collision," a video series episode covering the murders of two cyclists who

were touring the world when ISIS ran them down and stabbed them to death. **Vivienne Walt**, Paris-based reporter for TIME magazine and head judge for this year's Edward R. Murrow Award, will moderate.

Judges for the Edward R. Murrow Award said:

"This episode of The New York Times' The Weekly series tells a tale of poignant tragedy, through meticulous reporting and strong visual imagery. The narrative arc takes viewers from the open joyfulness of two young Americans, into the heart of a cold-blooded ISIS outpost in the wilds of Tajikistan. From the victims' excited dispatches home, to the chilling cell phone videos from the killer, the film leaves the audience moved and disturbed, with a lot to contemplate once it ends."

Watch the winning piece here:

[Collision >>](#)

RSVP Now

Photos above, clockwise from upper left: Singeli Agnew, Rukmini Callimachi, Victor Tadashi Suarez and Geoff O'Brien.

## New Resources for Covering COVID-19 and Protests

### GRANTS AND FUNDING

The **Rory Peck Trust** has created a dedicated COVID-19 Hardship Fund to "provide practical and financial support to active freelance news journalists whose work and livelihoods have been directly affected by COVID-19." Successful applicants receive a single grant of between £200 to £500 to contribute to home and food costs for themselves and their dependents. [Read more and apply here.](#)

### TRAINING AND GUIDELINES

On Aug. 26 at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the **International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)** will host a webinar titled "Covering Our Communities: The Mental Toll on Journalists of Color." Guests include psychologist Sumi Raghavan and health, diversity and equity reporter A. Rochaun Meadows-Fernandez. [Read more and register here.](#)

On Aug. 27 at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time, **First Draft** will host a panel with psychology experts for insight into how misinformation works and its relation to the pandemic. The discussion will cover coronavirus hoaxes and conspiracy theories, and tips for reporting, fact checking, or designing technology. [Read more and register here.](#)

On Aug. 27 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time, **Threshold Conversations** will host a live

discussion with photojournalist Ami Vitale, a National Geographic photographer, who will talk about her wildlife conservation work in Africa, stories behind some of her award-winning photographs, “and her commitment to ‘living the story’ through her work in over 100 countries.” Amy Martin, Threshold's executive producer, will moderate. This is a ticketed event. [Read more and register here.](#)

On Aug 28 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the **Association of Health Care Journalists** will host a webinar on COVID-19 vaccine research and deployment. Panelists include Margaret A. Hamburg, a former FDA commissioner; Seema K. Shah, professor of medical ethics at Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago and the Department of Pediatrics at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine; and Nicole Lurie, a former assistant secretary for preparedness and response for the Department of Health and Human Services. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, will moderate. [Read More and register here.](#)

On Sept. 2 at 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the **National Press Foundation** will host a session on poverty and inequality amid an economy straining under the weight of the pandemic, with keynote speaker William J. Barber II, president of Repairers of the Breach. This event is part of a series of briefings that will be accompanied by nine new journalism prizes of \$4,000 each to be awarded for the best reporting on poverty and inequality for work published in fall 2020. Details of the prizes will be announced during the Sept. 2 program. [Read more and register here.](#)

On Sept. 15 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the **Freedom Forum** will host a webinar titled “Do You Qualify as an Ally?” for “men who want to be allies to women, people of privilege who want to do more to fight inequity and powerful individuals who want to be better advocates for change.” [Read more and register here..](#)

## More Resources

- **First Draft** has been hosting a series of presentations on COVID-19 for journalists, and you can [browse the archives here.](#)
- **Columbia University’s Brown Institute for Media Innovation** has compiled a large repository of documents on COVID-19 via FOIA requests. [Explore the database here.](#)
- **ACOS** [assembled](#) a substantial list of COVID-19 resources for journalists, including links to practical safety advice, funding opportunities, hardship and emergency funds, and reporting resources such as guides for fact checking.
- **ICFJ** [launched](#) a page for COVID-19 resources for journalists.
- **Rory Peck Trust** has a [resource page](#) for pandemic coverage. It includes safety guidelines, funding sources, job opportunities and online training

The OPC has added these links to a special COVID-19 section on the member-only [Resources](#) page available to members who have logged in. Watch that page as we share more. Click the button below to go directly, or find it in your Member Dashboard under "Resources."

**If you have any issues accessing the resources page, please contact Chad Bouchard at [chad@opcofamerica.org](mailto:chad@opcofamerica.org) for credentials.**

## OPC Members Reporting on COVID-19

OPC member **Dana Thomas** of The Washington Post wrote [on Aug. 9](#) about the closure of two hot spots in Saint-Tropez after four staff members reportedly tested positive for the virus. A week later, 20 out of one bistro's 30 employees tested positive for COVID-19, Thomas wrote. The news came after widespread reports of flouting social distancing and other safety measures at the French Riviera resort town. She quoted Saint-Tropez Deputy Mayor Sylvie Siri as saying she hoped venue closures would "serve as an electroshock" to reckless tourists and business owners.

OPC member **Elena Becatoros** wrote from Greece for The Associated Press about the effects of COVID-19 on a traditional Greek Orthodox pilgrimage on the island of Tinos [on Aug. 15](#), the feast day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the most revered holiday after Easter. She wrote that while the celebration is "normally a resplendent and crowded affair, with a navy band and honor guard leading a procession carrying the icon down the hill from the church to the port," this year the icon stayed inside the church and an attendant inside the church disinfected the glass case surrounding it each time a visitor kissed the icon. She wrote that Greece is experiencing a surge in cases, from daily new cases in the double digits at the beginning of the summer rising to more than 200 per day in recent days.

OPC member **Stanley Reed**, a London-based journalist who has been writing for The New York Times about energy, the environment, and the Middle East since 2012, has been [reporting on](#) European oil companies like British Petroleum and Shell stepping up efforts to produce cleaner energy in part due to the pandemic. "For some executives, the sudden plunge in demand for oil caused by the pandemic — and the accompanying collapse in earnings — is another warning that unless they change the composition of their businesses, they risk being dinosaurs headed for extinction," Reed wrote in an Aug. 17 article. He said U.S. companies have been slower than European counterparts to commit to climate-related goals for green energy. Before writing for the Times, Reed served as London bureau chief for BusinessWeek magazine.

OPC member **Alice Driver** wrote an [op-ed piece for CNN](#) about the effects of the pandemic on America's reputation abroad, saying that "for the first time in my life, I am witnessing how the lack of US leadership on COVID-19 is devaluing the US passport I carry." She cited several cases in which U.S. tourists have been barred from entering countries due to ballooning infection rates at home. Driver is a freelance journalist whose work focuses on migration, human rights and gender equality.

***Please send us your personal anecdotes, photos, and links to published pieces related to COVID-19 to [info@opcofamerica.org](mailto:info@opcofamerica.org), and we will publish***

*them on our website and share with members. You can also share those stories directly with members on our [OPC Connect](#) group on Facebook, or tweet us [@opcofamerica](#).*

## Welcome New Members

### Annalisa Quinn

Freelance  
Washington, DC  
Active Non-Resident, Young  
(29 or under)

### Amanda Sperber

Freelance  
Mamaroneck, New York  
Active Resident, Young  
(30-34)

## People by Chad Bouchard

### SCHOLARS

**Georgia Wells**, the 2012 Emanuel R. Freedman Scholarship winner who is now a reporter for The Wall Street Journal's San Francisco tech bureau, is also a long-distance open water swimmer. Last Saturday, she swam the 12 miles across Lake Tahoe in approximately seven hours. She has completed several long-distance swims, including ones around Alcatraz, Washington's Mercer Island, a 9.3-mile trek in the South China Sea, and 24-hour marathon relay races, among many others. Before her current position at the Journal, she was an editor for WSJ.com and covered emerging markets for the paper. She also freelanced in Cairo during the Egyptian revolution.

**Kantaro Komiya**, the 2020 Stan Swinton Fellowship winner, amassed a total of 42 byline stories during the 10 weeks of his remote internship with BarronsOnline this summer. He has an OPC Foundation fellowship with The Associated Press in Tokyo.

### UPDATES

OPC member **Campbell MacDiarmid** has been reporting on the aftermath of the massive explosion in Beirut for The Telegraph, writing [on Aug. 12](#) that protesters blame politicians for corruption and mismanagement leading to the blast. She said in the days immediately following the blast on Aug. 7, volunteers started clearing rubble and rebuilding, "filling the void of an absent government." [On Aug. 18](#), MacDiarmid filed a story about a United Nations-backed tribunal's conviction of a member of the Lebanese group Hezbollah for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in a bomb blast in 2005. She wrote that the tribunal found no evidence that Hizbollah leadership or the Syrian government were involved in the bombing.

OPC member **Kathy Gannon** reported from Kabul for The Associated Press [on Aug. 14](#) that Afghanistan has released the first 80 of a final 400 Taliban prisoners, paving the way for negotiations between the warring sides in Afghanistan's

ongoing conflict. Gannon wrote that prisoner releases on both sides are part of an agreement signed in February between the U.S. and the Taliban calling for the release of 5,000 Taliban held by the government and 1,000 government and military personnel held by the insurgent group, “as a good will gesture ahead of intra-Afghan negotiations.” She reported that Afghan leaders told the AP talks could begin by Aug. 20.

OPC member **Simcha Jacobovici** is director and executive producer for a docuseries on the Epix network titled “[Enslaved](#),” which will feature three storylines, including a historical investigation led by Jacobovici, along with colleague Afua Hirsch, that will track sunken slave ships using 3D mapping and ground-penetrating radar to shed new light on a chapter of history that is often marginalized or suppressed. The series will also follow actor Samuel L. Jackson’s personal journey to identify his ancestral tribe. “Enslaved” is set to premiere on Epix on Sept. 14. The trailer is available to watch [on YouTube here](#).

**Karen Toulon**, secretary of the OPC Foundation, has been [honored](#) with the title of “2020 Business News Visionary” by her peers at Bloomberg News. Toulon was appointed chief of the organization’s New York bureau after serving eight years as team leader overseeing Bloomberg’s newsmaker and broadcast interviews. She currently, serves as a senior writer on Bloomberg’s global team dedicated to exploring inequality in all its forms. Toulon was the presenter at this year’s Scholar Awards Luncheon in February.

## MEDIA NEWS

The **Jerusalem Press Club** has launched a series of interviews on its YouTube channel titled “Journalism is Alive and Kicking” to cover some of the “biggest names in the international media.” The first episode [featured](#) Israeli TV anchor Jacob Eilon as host interviewing Thomas Friedman, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for The New York Times. Addressing the title of the series and the fate of journalism in general, Friedman said the pandemic presents an opportunity for the industry to dramatically reorganize, adding that “these are the big moments – 9-11, 2008 and 2020 – where you can really define yourself as a news organization and as a journalist.” The second episode [featured](#) Jeremy Bowen, the Middle East Editor for the BBC. Discussing the explosion in Beirut, Bowen said that “straight away, Lebanese people were saying this is a lot more than an explosion. It’s a sign of a terrible cancer that is in our society, a cancer of corruption and ineptitude.”

People Column August 2020

## Press Freedom Update

by Bill Collins chair, press freedom committee, Overseas Press Club

*This week’s OPC Press*

*Freedom update focuses on the Philippines as journalist Maria Ressa is denied yet again by the court system in her bid to travel to the United States.*

### **Maria Ressa's Travel Bid to the U.S. denied by Filipino Court**



Press freedom suffered another loss this week when an appeals court in the Philippines denied Rappler CEO Maria Ressa's request to travel to the United States.

The court stated that Ressa failed to show the "necessity and urgency" of her intended travel to the U.S. from Aug. 23 to Sept. 19, according to news reports.

In addition to championing the cause of press freedom globally, Ressa has been fighting for her personal freedom in the Philippines amid numerous foreign ownership and tax lawsuits filed by the government of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Ressa and her Rappler colleague, Reynaldo Santos, were found guilty in June of cyber libel offenses. The co-founder of Rappler faces up to six years in prison after her conviction and subsequent denial for her case to be reconsidered.

Ressa recently filed an appeal for permission to travel abroad to Washington D.C. and attend the theatrical release and panel discussions associated with the documentary film "A Thousand Cuts."

The film deals with Ressa's ongoing fight for press freedom. Ressa was also scheduled to be given the 2020 International Press Freedom Award on Aug. 24.

Ressa's motion to travel was opposed by The Office of the Solicitor General, which argued that Ressa's travel rights should be held to stricter standards because of her June conviction.

The appeals court cited the Supreme Court stating that "the conviction...warrants the exercise of greater caution in allowing a person admitted to bail from leaving the Philippines."

"Other than her brief narration," said the Appeals Court, "[Ressa] has not presented further evidence to warrant her physical presence at the theatrical release and in the panel discussions of the documentary 'A Thousand Cuts.'"

The court suggested that Ressa could use video conferencing as a means of fulfilling her obligations as a media practitioner.

Ressa is already scheduled as a featured speaker among many newsmakers and journalists participating in a World News Day event on Sept. 28. The virtual meeting is a production of the Canadian Journalism Foundation and will be



broadcast from Toronto.

## Philippines...by the Numbers:

### Reporters Without Borders

World Press Freedom Index: Philippines ranks **136th** among 180 countries

RSF ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists.

### Freedom House

Global Freedom Report: Philippines scores **59** out of 100; Rating – Partly Free

Freedom House rates people's access to political rights and civil liberties

### The Committee to Protect Journalists

Global Impunity Index: Philippines ranks **No. 5**

CPJ's 2019 Global Impunity Index spotlights countries where journalists are slain, and their killers go free. Currently, there are 41 unsolved journalist killings in the Philippines.

[Read and Share via the OPC Website](#)

**Photo above: Maria Ressa, editor and CEO of Rappler, leaves a regional trial court after being convicted for cyber libel on June 15 in Manila. Photo: Ezra Acayan/Getty Images**

