



Overseas Press Club
of America

Weekly Bulletin: Sept. 19, 2020

Greetings!

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

- A recap and video clips from Thursday's program with winners of this year's [Edward R. Murrow Award](#).
- Details of two upcoming programs from our series with winners of this year's awards, including the [Ed Cunningham Award on Oct. 1](#) and the [Peter Jennings Award on Oct. 7](#).
- [Resources](#) and webinars for journalists.
- COVID-19 Coverage by OPC members.
- [People Column](#).
- [Press Freedom Update](#), this week with a focus on Mexico.

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



Murrow Award Winners Discuss Challenges in Reporting 'Collision'

by Chad Bouchard

In July 2018, a group of cyclists were touring the

world when, during a leg through Tajikistan, five ISIS attackers ran into them with their car, stabbed four of them to death and injured two others. New York Times correspondent and OPC member Rukmini Callimachi covered the story as breaking news at the time, but soon found herself drawn into the stories of two of the cyclists, Jay Austin and Lauren Geoghegan, and wrote a longer profile about the couple that she “fell in love with.”



Later, she joined forces with the team at a Times video program called “The Weekly,” now renamed The New York Times Presents, to produce a film titled “Collision” that delved deeper into the story and brought them face to face with one of the couple’s killers.

On Sept. 17, the OPC hosted an online discussion with the film’s producers, whose work won 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.

Callimachi, who has reported extensively on Islamic terrorism for the Times, said the story resonated with her because the values she found the couple embodied, of openness and belief in the goodness of others, provided a stark contrast to the terrorists’ world view.

“Everything that they believed in was the diametrical opposite of what ISIS stands for,” she said.

[Read More](#)

Photo above, clockwise from upper left: Vivienne Walt, Rukmini Callimachi, Geoff O’Brien and Singeli Agnew. Watch video clips from the event on our YouTube channel or by clicking the windows below.



Upcoming OPC Events

[OPC Award Winners Share Their Stories](#)

Oct. 1: The Ed Cunningham Award

Time: Oct. 1 at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time

Place: Online via Zoom

As the OPC continues a series of online panels with this year's award winners, please join us for a discussion with **Alex Perry**, the winner of this year's Ed Cunningham Award for best magazine-style, long-form narrative feature in print or digital on an international story.

Perry won for his piece for *Outside* magazine, titled "The Last Days of John Allen Chau." **Megan Stack**, the head judge for this year's Ed Cunningham Award, will moderate. Stack is author of *Women's Work* and *Every Man in This Village Is a Liar*. She was part of the Los Angeles Times team that won the OPC's 2006 Hal Boyle Award for coverage of war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Judges for the Ed Cunningham Award called Perry's article a "superb feat of compulsively readable storytelling. Alex Perry weaves a deeply humanizing portrait of a young man with a deadly missionary zeal and illuminates the ongoing effects of missionary work, adventurism and the exoticism of the world's remote peoples."

You can read "[The Last Days of John Allen Chau](#)" [here](#).

RSVP Now

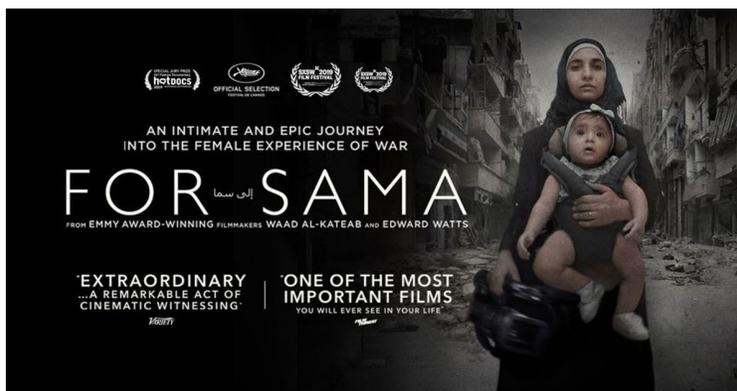


Oct. 7: The Peter Jennings Award

Time: Oct. 7 at 12:00 p.m.
(noon) Eastern Time

Place: Online via Zoom

Please RSVP to join an online program with one of the producers of the award-sweeping film "For Sama," which garnered the Peter Jennings Award for best TV, video or documentary about international affairs with a run time over 30 minutes.



On hand will be one of the co-directors, **Waad Al-Kateab** of FRONTLINE PBS. Moderating the program will be **Robert Friedman** of Bloomberg News, who served as head judge for the Jennings award jury.

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

The winning team also included Edward Watts, Dan Edge and Raney Aronson-Rath. "For Sama" also won a BAFTA Award for best documentary, as well as a Peabody Award, a British Independent Film Award, an Academy Award nomination and many other accolades.

Judges for the Peter Jennings Award said:

"A powerful personal story about a mother's love for her young daughter, a city on the brink of destruction and a war that unleashes a terrible humanitarian disaster. Waed Al-Kateab didn't start out as a journalist -- she was driven by her desire to save the city of Aleppo -- but she ended up doing what journalists do: telling a compelling story based on witnessing a human tragedy. Her camera captures stories of love, loss and survival. This is a beautiful documentary about horrible events that continue to wreak havoc on the people of Syria."

[You can read more and watch the trailer here >>](#)

RSVP Now

New Resources

TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

The **International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)**, in partnership with the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, is organizing the 2020 Road Safety Reporting Training of Trainers for Africa, Asia and Latin America. Participants will attend a series of online workshops beginning for the first cohort in October. Each cohort

of 10 to 15 selected journalists will attend three online workshops, followed by an online summit for all participants from across the regions. To apply, participants must submit a short proposal, with a deadline of Sept. 30. [Read more and apply here.](#)

On Sept. 24 at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time, the 2020 **Peter Mackler Award** ceremony will be held virtually to honor photojournalist Masrat Zahra in Srinagar, Kashmir. A panel of experts will discuss the history of the Kashmir conflict and how it has disrupted daily life in the territory for decades. [Read more and RSVP here.](#)

On Sept. 24 starting at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the **Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting** will host a free virtual film festival to honor the work of the center's reporting fellows who have covered stories of the migrant experience that "illustrate the challenges of weighing complex risks, preserving memory, and building community in unfamiliar countries." The event will feature three films and discussion with panelists. [Read more and register here.](#)

On Oct. 5, the **International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)** will host an online tribute to journalists to "honor the achievements of intrepid colleagues whose outstanding news reports and analyses are having tremendous impact." CNN's Wolf Blitzer will be the presenter. [Read more and register here.](#)

The Tow Center at the Columbia Journalism School has posted a video of their program on "Redefining the Local News Crisis" about crises facing local news with panelists who have examined challenges "from a national perspective, an industry perspective, and in the context of legacy state and metro-area daily news organizations." [Watch the video here.](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

CNN London is looking for interns to serve at its headquarters in the U.K. The next intern program will run from Jan. 1 to April 30, 2021. Candidates must be British/EU citizens or have the right to work in the United Kingdom long term. The deadline to apply is Nov. 1. [Read more and apply here.](#)

The **Reuters Institute** is calling for applications for two News Trust Fellowships for journalists from India, Brazil, the UK or the US, to serve during the first six months of 2021. Applicants must have at least five years of journalism experience. The deadline to apply with ideas to enhance trust in the news media is Sept. 28. [Learn more and apply here.](#)

ProPublica is organizing a Diversity Mentorship Event at the Online News Association conference this fall, which will be virtual over the weekend of Oct. 8. The program is designed "to connect people from communities that are historically underrepresented in journalism with people at the top of the field." Past mentors have included newsroom leaders, startup founders, highly accomplished reporters, producers, designers, editors and more. [Read more and apply here.](#)

The **Magnum Foundation** is supporting short-term visual projects responding to

stories and issues related to the 2020 US elections. Up to ten projects will receive \$1,500 in direct funding, editorial support, and publication opportunities. The deadline to submit is Sept. 23. [Read more and apply here.](#)

GUIDELINES AND SOURCES

The **Committee to protect Journalists** on Sept. 10 posted a guide to the rights of journalists when confronted by law enforcement officers while covering a protest or other political event. Recommendations include carrying press credentials, knowing restrictions before covering events, how to avoid obstructing law enforcement, and what is appropriate to record. [Read the tips 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 for credentials.

[OPC Resources Page](#)

Welcome New Members

Mariana Castro

Journalist/Fact Checker
Polygraph.info
New York
Active Resident, Young
(29 or under)

Shakti Langlois-Ortega

Freelance
New York
Active Resident, Young
(29 or under)

Seth Herald

Freelance
 Photojournalist
 Ypsilanti, MI
 Active Non-Resident, Young
 (29 or under)

OPC Members Reporting on COVID-19

OPC member **Aurora Almendral** wrote for The New York Times [on Sept. 9](#) from Bangkok about the effect of the pandemic on sailors around the world who are stuck with no way to get home after borders closed and many ports refused to allow sailors to come ashore. The United Nations called the situation a growing humanitarian crisis in June, Almendral wrote. She writes about the growing risk of injury and disaster from fatigued workers on extended contracts, citing examples such as a bulk carrier that ran aground off Mauritius in late July, spilling 1,000 tons of oil into the sea. Almendral won the 2017 David A. Andelman and Pamela Title Award along with Ed Ou for coverage of the drug war in the Philippines.

OPC member **Anita Snow** wrote a piece for The Associated Press [on Sept. 5](#) about the struggles of refugee families trying to continue schooling with online resources in Phoenix, where Snow is based. She wrote that parents and students who speak more than a dozen languages once attended the Valencia Newcomer School, but when it shut down due to the pandemic they organized remote classes to keep students learning. She wrote that coronavirus paused resettlement of refugees who are vetted by the U.S. State Department and other agencies but “a trickle of arrivals has begun again, according to those who work with refugees.”

Please send us your personal anecdotes, photos, and links to published pieces related to COVID-19 to 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](#).

People by Chad Bouchard

SCHOLARS

New America has named **Yi-Ling Liu**, the Fritz Beebe Fellowship winner in 2017, as the organization’s ASU Future Security Fellow for 2021. Liu’s work has appeared in the New York Times Magazine, Harper’s Magazine, Foreign Policy, the Economist, the New Yorker, and elsewhere. She is now writing a book about people in China who are navigating the boundaries of the Chinese internet, a project this fellowship will support.

Devon Haynie, the 2008 Flora Lewis Scholarship winner, wrote a piece [on Sept. 11](#) for U.S. News & World Report about the U.S. decline in global rankings in its annual report on quality of life. She wrote that the U.S. was one of only three countries in the world to slide backward in the Social Progress Index over the last

decade, along with Brazil and Hungary. The U.S. dropped 12 spots to number 28 on the list in the index measuring quality of life in areas such as personal safety; health and wellness; environmental quality; personal freedom and choice; and inclusiveness. OPC member **Nicholas Kristof** also wrote about the decline in a New York Times opinion column, calling the news “a reminder that we Americans face structural problems that predate President (Donald) Trump and that festered under leaders of both parties.” Haynie earned a master’s degree at the Columbia University School of Journalism, and had an internship with The Associated Press bureau in Johannesburg.

On Sept. 21 at 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time, OPC member **Krithika Varagur**, the OPC Foundation's 2019 Sally Jacobsen Fellowship winner, will discuss her book *The Call* during an online event hosted by the organization Speakeasy. Tickets are \$15. [Read more and register here](#)

UPDATES

OPC member **Rachel Donadio** [filed](#) a longform piece for the October issue of the Atlantic covering the saga of Nicola Gratteri, an Italian prosecutor who has spent the last three decades fighting a powerful Calabria-based criminal organization known as the 'Ndrangheta. Donadio called the secretive group “the least telegenic and most publicity-shy of Italy’s Mafias [and] the most aggressive.” In December last year the prosecutor orchestrated a police dragnet that rounded up 334 people, including “lawyers, businesspeople, accountants, a police chief, the president of the Calabrian mayors’ association, and a former member of the Italian Parliament” on charges related to 'Ndrangheta activity.

Several of OPC member **Max Becherer’s** photos of New Orleans residents preparing for Hurricane Sally were featured [on Sept. 14](#) in a slide presentation on The Times-Picayune website NOLA.com. With the storm bearing down, residents boarded windows, bolstered with sandbags and prepared levees. Emergencies were declared in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama ahead of the storm’s arrival and New Orleans was among the cities with evacuation orders. Ultimately the storm made landfall on the Alabama coast and veered suddenly eastward, hitting hardest in near Mobile and Pensacola.

OPC member **Dana Thomas** wrote the script for a documentary about shoe designer Salvatore Ferragamo that premiered [on Sept. 5](#) at the Venice Film Festival. “Salvatore: Shoemaker of Dreams” surveys the designer’s life and work, and was directed by Italian filmmaker Luca Guadagnino. Thomas is a fashion and culture journalist based in Paris and has been an OPC member since 2002. Her book *Fashionopolis* about visionaries in the industry focused on sustainability and improving human rights was released in paperback [on Sept. 11](#).

Katherine Eban, the Cornelius Ryan Award winner this year, was interviewed on Forbes India [on Sept. 16](#) about *Bottle of Lies*, the book about fraud in the Indian pharmaceutical industry that won the OPC award. Her book tracked down whistleblower claims in a decade-long investigation into Indian makers of generic drugs such as Ranbaxy manipulating the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and selling billions of unsafe drugs to the U.S. “I was able to piece together that there had been a very explosive PowerPoint that had been shown to [Ranbaxy’s] board

of directors, the result of an internal probe that said Ranbaxy had falsified data for over 200 drug products,” Eban said during the interview.

OPC award winner **Clarissa Ward** [on Sept. 8](#) published a memoir, titled *On All Fronts*, recounting her career as a conflict reporter covering wars in Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine with postings in Baghdad, Beirut, Beijing, and Moscow. She told Brian Stelter on CNN Business about her stint at Fox News in the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, remembering how producers focused on her appearance. “I’m sure you can appreciate the absurdity of being in Baghdad, being in a war zone, and getting an email telling you that you should be wearing your hair down.” She also talked about war correspondents’ need to care for their mental health and to talk about trauma covering war and “the absolutely inevitable toll that it takes on an individual.” Ward won the OPC’s 2016 David Kaplan Award for her coverage of rebel-held territory in Syria.

PEOPLE REMEMBERED

Longtime OPC member **Linda Goetz Holmes** died [on Aug. 18](#) at the age of 87. Holmes, who served as membership committee member for the OPC, wrote extensively about Allied POWs in Japanese custody during World War II, and penned three books on the topic, *4000 Bowls of Rice: A Prisoner of War Comes Home*, *Unjust Enrichment: American POWs Under the Rising Sun*, and *Guests of the Emperor: The Secret of Japan’s Mukden POW Camp*.



In 2014 she spoke at an OPC storytelling evening about her memory of the news of attacks on Pearl Harbor, which you can watch by clicking on the YouTube frame above right. A remembrance from Past President William Holstein follows.

“Linda penetrated into the inner sanctums of both Japanese and American institutions. In 2008, she gave me a copy of the cable that Gen. Douglas MacArthur sent from Tokyo to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington on Jan. 24, 1946. The Pentagon wanted MacArthur to put Emperor Hirohito on trial for war crimes. As most historians agree today, the Emperor was a driving force behind Japan's war effort. It wasn't just his generals who promoted the war.

“But MacArthur warned the Joint Chiefs that if he put Hirohito on trial, ‘it would be absolutely essential to greatly increase the occupational forces. It is quite possible that a minimum of a million troops would be required which would have to be maintained for an indefinite number of years.’ The Joint Chiefs acquiesced and MacArthur proceeded to foster the myth that Hirohito wasn't directly involved. He feared that if he put the emperor on trial, the Japanese people would rise up against the American occupation. It was a decisive moment in history and Linda knew how to dig out documents that explained what really happened.”

OPC member **Donald Shannon** died [on July 17](#) in a hospice facility in Summerville South Carolina following a weeklong stay in intensive care battling COVID-19. He was 97 years old. He served on the eastern front in World War II and in 1947 began reporting for the Rio Herald in Rio de Janeiro, launching a long career as a reporter and foreign correspondent that took him to London, Sub Saharan Africa, Paris and Tokyo, first for United Press International and then for many years for the Los Angeles Times, and later worked as senior editor for Georgetown & Country in Washington DC. He joined the OPC in 1972.

OPC member **Duncan MacDonald** died [on July 18](#) in Martha's Vineyard at the age of 104. After a start in the early days of television, she served as a longtime on-air host and interviewer for the New York Times radio station WQXR, and was executive director and founding trustee of the National Friends of Public Broadcasting, and was the New York president of American Women in Radio and TV. A collection of her recordings and writings is housed at the 20th Century Archives of American Journalism at the University of Wyoming. She joined the OPC in 1960.

People Column September 2020

Press Freedom Update

by Bill Collins, OPC Press Freedom Committee Chair

This week's OPC Press Freedom update focuses on Mexico as the world's deadliest place for journalists following reporter Julio Valdivia's brutal murder.

Press Freedom: Mexico

World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders)

- **Mexico** ranks **143rd** among **180** countries

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

"Although not at war, Mexico is one of world's deadliest countries for the media. Collusion between officials and organized crime poses a grave threat to journalists' safety and cripples the judicial system at all levels," says RWB.

Global Freedom Report (Freedom House)

- **Mexico** scores **62** out of **100**; Rating – **Partly Free**

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

"Violence perpetrated by organized criminals, corruption among government officials, human rights abuses by both state and nonstate actors, and rampant impunity are among the most

visible of Mexico's many governance challenges," says Freedom House.

Global Impunity Index (The Committee to Protect Journalists)

- **Mexico** ranks **7th** among the **13** countries rated as the worst impunity offenders.

CPJ's annual list spotlights countries where journalists are slain, and their killers go free.

Mexico had 30 unsolved killings as of the latest CPJ impunity report in 2019.

Mexico Deadliest Place for Journalists in 2020 After Another Grisly Killing

Mourners gathered on September 17 to pay their respects to Mexican newspaper reporter Julio Valdivia, 41, who was tortured and beheaded in an execution style killing in the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz where residents have been tormented by violence at the hands of organized crime.

Valdivia, who leaves behind a wife and four children, was a regional news reporter for *El Mundo* who focused on 'nota roja' journalism, a genre that focuses on the violent crime, which has become a regular feature across parts of Mexico in recent decades.

Valdivia is reportedly the fifth journalist to be killed in Mexico his year, making it the deadliest country for reporters in 2020. Last year, Mexico was the deadliest country in the world as 11 journalists were killed.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said in a Sept. 17 news briefing that he recognizes the "heroic" work of journalists in Veracruz and other states in Mexico.

"That is why all cases must be investigated and those responsible punished," he said.

The gruesome death prompted United Nations chief António Guterres to condemn the numerous attacks against media workers around the world.

Secretary-General Guterres cited Valdivia's killing as a brutal example of the hazardous and difficult conditions in which many journalists work globally.

"No democracy can function without press freedom, which is the cornerstone of trust between people and their institutions. When media workers are targeted, societies as a whole, pay a price," said Guterres.

He also emphasized that a free press "is essential for peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights.

The press freedom community called for immediate action by the Mexican authorities.

The CPJ demanded that the Mexican government "undertake a thorough and

credible investigation into the killing of journalist Julio Valdivia and bring the perpetrators to justice,” said Jan-Albert Hootsen, CPJ’s Mexico representative.

“Federal and state authorities cannot stand idly by and continue to allow Veracruz’s vicious cycle of impunity and violence against in the press,” said Hooten.

Hugo Gutierrez, the state security minister in Veracruz, condemned the "cowardly murder" and promised to "exhaust all resources to find those responsible."

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