

WOMEN IN JOURNALISM

THE FIRST GLOBAL NETWORK OF MENTORS FOR WOMEN JOURNALISTS



Editor's note: This issue highlights the discrimination young journalists face throughout the world. These stories can be found on pages 1 and 4. Also, our #HeforShe mentor, Mark Scialla, shows his support by speaking to women at PBS Newshour and voicing their concerns on page 13.

MEET DOMINIQUE: EXAMPLE 1

BY: DOMINIQUE MARIA BONESSI
[@DBONESSI](#)

“You know, you’re really young. So, being a freelancer will probably be really difficult.”

Those were the first patronizing words spoken to me as a fresh out-of-college journalist—they would not be the last. Needless to say, after hearing these words, I began to break down, cry, and reconsider my entire post-grad life. It was through the supportive help of professors, mentors, and friends that I’ve learned how to overcome obstacles.

Let me start from the beginning. In early 2016, I was working at a nightly news program in

Washington, D.C. as a six-month temp desk assistant. Like all my internships before this, I knew my time at this organization was short. I began looking toward the future and trying to figure out what my next move would be. I knew I wanted to get abroad again and maybe even report. But I had all these questions: How much would it cost? Could I find someone to fund it? Should I do freelancing? Am I cut out for freelancing?

I reached out to a start-up news organization—that shall remain nameless—in Istanbul, Turkey covering women’s issues; ironically, this news outlet also boasts supporting female journalists. I thought the project was something I could get behind, so I sent a cold email to the editor-in-chief laying out my resume and my cover letter. She responded back and offered me an interview via Skype.

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Photo by: Corrina Gramma

AN INTERVIEW WITH ASPEN MATIS, AUTHOR OF GIRL IN THE WOODS. PAGE 7



Photo by: Jessica Worthington

After speaking with her and her associate in D.C., I was softly offered a reporter position with them.

Over the next five months, I kept asking for a contract to see what I was going to be paid and what my hours would be like. After all, I was putting aside my life in the U.S. with my newly engaged fiancé for a year to go to a foreign country and work for a news outlet—dream come true! The editor-in-chief would respond and say things like, “Well we are a start-up so you can’t expect a contract” and “We might need to find grants to raise money for your salary.” So I applied for a reporting fellowship with the International Center for Journalists that would afford me at least a month in Turkey. I thought everything was set. I received the reporting fellowship, I was going to be reporting for the publication that shall remain nameless, and I was on my way to Turkey for a year—easy!

Wrong! A month before, the editor-in-chief of the publication called me up to inform me that she couldn’t provide me with a job. Even informing me that I had “force[d] her to give me a job.” At the time I did not have the vocabulary to say that: 1.) That was no excuse for stringing me along for six months 2.) You are the founder of your company—shouldn’t you know if you can hire employees or not?

3.) Even though you are a start-up, asking for a contract is not obscene. So after her telling me I was too young, inexperienced, and not well enough connected to be a freelancer, something snapped. First, I broke down, slumped over onto the couch, and curled up into a ball. I felt like I had no idea what I was doing anymore. But after talking to my dad over the phone, and explaining to him what happened, he said, “Dominique, you have to do this.” I knew I had no reason to turn back now with this fellowship, but I wanted to see if I had what it took to be a freelancer—probably had something to do with someone telling me I couldn’t.

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After speaking with my former college professor one morning over breakfast in D.C., I felt a little more confident to hit the ground running on my first real freelancing assignment—that I liked to call foreign freelancing 101. I spent the next month calling and e-mailing news editors, international NGOs, and Turkish NGOs. I created an excel spreadsheet of my contacts to keep track of everything. I sent cold pitches of my project idea out to multiple publications and managed to reel in three that said they would take my work. Honestly, it was then that I learned that while many news organizations are strapped for resources, they rely heavily on foreign freelancers for their news. Thus, news organizations do not have the resources or funding to pay for international news.

After three months in Turkey, I had produced at least a dozen feature stories and multiple radio bits. I also managed to make friends with other freelancers that were covering similar topics and began to find a community to support me. While I managed to keep myself afloat financially as a freelancer, it was not sustainable. The savings I had prior to my trip were drying up. The work I was producing was high quality, but the pay reflected the end product and not the behind-the-scenes reporting. Additionally, the pay would always come at least a month or more after I had finished the article. I have had one publication that made me wait four months to be paid for an article that I wrote. Pay was also difficult to come by. Each news organization had a new process I would have to go through to get paid. Some organizations would give me \$300 for 1000+ word articles, while others would pay me a dollar a word.

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WOMENINJOURNALISM

GELAREH KIAZAND



[@gelarehkiaz](#) is a photographer and filmmaker based in Tehran. Born in Iran and educated in London and Toronto, Kiazand has been working in Hollywood, Afghanistan and Tehran through photojournalism, feature films and documentary since 2010. She worked in Iran's film industry for six years during which she was nominated 3 times for Best Film Photographer, won best cinematographer at the Basij film festival as well as best documentary at the Tehran film festival. She became Iran's first female Director of Photography for a Cinematic feature film post revolution.

VALERIE PLESCH



[@valerieplesch](#) is an American independent photojournalist, writer and videographer currently based in Prishtina, Kosovo. Valerie has produced multiple feature stories and reported breaking news from Kosovo, Afghanistan, Greece and Nepal. Her multimedia work has appeared in Al Jazeera America, Al Jazeera English, The Washington Post, USA Today, The Washington Times, Religion News Service, VICE, and others. Some of the themes that Valerie has been exploring in Kosovo for the past two years is religion and post-war life.

MARIA DE LA GUARDIA



[@thegobetweengoat](#) is an American, multi-awarded professional video and photojournalist based in Afghanistan. She has resided in Africa, the Middle East and Asia for nearly a decade covering conflict, disasters, and focusing largely on women's issues, migration, poverty, and human rights. Her work has taken her to countries including Sierra Leone, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Mexico and Mongolia. Her work has been published by the Guardian, BBC, Al Jazeera, Upworthy, AFAR, the Diplomat, and Narratively among others.

MEET ANNAM:

EXAMPLE 2

BY: ANNAM LODHI
CFWIJ INTERN
@ANNAMLODHI

In South Asia, the media at large has been labeled as a place not for women. Girls who show interest in the field are usually discouraged and the ones who enter it are labeled with cruel tags and titles.

I did not realize this until I started my higher education in Lahore, Pakistan. I was born and brought up in the UAE and was always encouraged to chase my dreams. When I landed in Pakistan to start my Bachelors in mass communication, I saw, heard and experienced things I thought were just stereotypes we had as we lived abroad.

Then I moved to Pakistan, and saw it for myself. Harassment and discrimination against women, and especially women who work, are deeply real in the fabric of this country. It is also subtle. People, bosses or colleagues do not come to you and pontificate how they feel about your presence, but they do it in the undertones. You are not discriminated directly, and often you cannot prove the discrimination. It is what you feel and find in the attitudes of people. Discrimination or being discriminated is not an action anymore, but has become a feeling. The dilemma being, it cannot be pointed out, even if it is as evident as day break. Your aunt would ask you where are you going, why you are going, who you are meeting, why you are meeting, and not asking your male cousin, any of it. It can be seen, in the ways other people see you. 'Are you secular?' they would ask - as if secular is something evil - if you question



the norms or express your anger towards something largely acceptable in society. It could be your editor pretending not to understand your pitch.

My first incident of discrimination was in my university class when one of the lecturers during an argument on women rights said, "You won't understand the ways of women here, you aren't from here," that came as a shock, made me feel like a second class citizen. It was a clear statement - the one that came to me from different people time and again - you are not entitled to have an opinion, because 'so and so and so.' Plenty of reasons, hovering around me, taking away my freedom of thought, my freedom to question. The truth is even if I was not from Pakistan per say, I could see what every other woman felt, and I spoke out about it. I knew others weren't speaking, and I saw firsthand, why. They were told, they were not entitled to opinion, to ideas, to questions, to wisdom, to anything that clashed with the norms. I realized one of the horrors. That woman in Pakistan had been so accustomed to this discrimination, and they had forsaken their own right to think. They had become the purveyors, or patriarchal discrimination.

As I made my journey into the world of journalism, I started working for a TV channel, where discrimination and harassment

were rampant issues. Me befriending my female colleagues more often was made fun of, "she leans the other way" - which in that culture was to suggest I am a lesbian. There is nothing wrong with me being a lesbian, but what offended me, that people objected of things so personal, and so manipulative, for no reason. No one cared if I felt uncomfortable with men there and no one asked why. They were more interested in my sexual preferences, and took liberty to talk at my back.

My working style being progressive and female oriented my personal life would be the butt of all jokes, "You are such a feminist, don't get married don't have a boyfriend and don't clean the house," as if that is what patriarchy is all about.

I remember once when our salary was delayed and I asked for it. A colleague replied, "You aren't even married, why does a single girl living alone need money. Plus doesn't your dad send you money?"

I realized, to survive in this field I have to be very self-aware and confident, I started to be more vocal about my opinions be it on current issues, human rights or people making fun of me.

This too became a huge issue for the men. Every time I would raise a point I would be labeled a feminist; as if that was a bad thing. Labelling, rejecting, and gossiping; it is quite a fight to put oneself up against.

The good ones, the well wishers, or those who pretended to be such, would take it upon themselves to teach me the norms.

Continued on page 17

GRANTS / FELLOWSHIPS

Thomson Foundation: Young Journalist Award

Open to emerging journalists aged 30 or under from countries with a gross national income per capita of less than \$20,000.

Deadline: 8/18/17

The Innovation in Development Reporting Grant

Grants for production of out-of-the-box stories on international development topics.

Deadline: 9/16/17

Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellowship

An academic year of overseas travel and storytelling in one, two, or three countries on a globally significant theme.

Deadline: 10/6/17

NEWS BRIEF

President Trump Announces Transgender Ban

On Wednesday, July 26, 2017, Mr. Trump announced on Twitter that the United States will no longer “accept or allow” transgender people to serve in the United States military.

Coalition Mentor Wins Media Award

Mentor Jessica Hatcher-Moore won the Print Award at One World Media Awards on June 6, 2017. Hatcher-Moore's winning piece, a Long Read for the Guardian, sheds light on a murder mystery of three elderly Italian nuns in Bujumbura in September 2014 and the under-reported plight of the Burundi press.

Staff Members of The New York Times Walkout

On Thursday, June 29, 2017, employees of The New York Times held a walkout to protest cuts to the editing staff. The Times is aiming to make a shift in their structure that would eliminate more than 100 copy editor positions.

Fields Medal's First Woman Recipient Dies from Cancer

Maryam Mirzakhani, the first woman to win the Fields medal in mathematics, died from breast cancer at 40 years old on July 15, 2017. Maryam, a Stanford professor, won the prestigious Field medal in 2014— a medal that is considered maths' equivalent of the Nobel.

Female Stars at BBC Demand Equal Pay

More than 40 female BBC stars signed an open letter to Tony Hall, the director-general of BBC, demanding equal pay after pay details were released in an annual report.

London Fire Engulfs Tower

On Wednesday, June 14, 2017, a fire broke out at a 24-story building in north Kensington, England called Grenfell Tower. It is estimated that 80 people have lost their lives while a number remain injured in hospitals— emergency services are continuing to look for bodies.

For my first article produced in Turkey, I took photos to accompany the article and thought I would be paid for them. It wasn't until I submitted three photos that the editor said I had to negotiate those prior to getting approval for my article. Needless to say, they ended up getting three free photos. There were weeks that I would put off paying for rent or my fixer because I had not been paid yet by a particular news organization.

After three months, I left Turkey regretful that I would not be able to continue freelancing, but proud of my accomplishments. I came back to Washington, D.C., and started to find a salary-paying job in journalism. my five-month job search, I finally found a reporter position in Baltimore. This job is just as challenging as freelancing in Istanbul. Everything I had learned in foreign freelancing 101 was because I had to go through an experience with very little guidance from a mentor that

could explain to me how things work. In my first few months of reporting in Baltimore, I've had learned about the city, the people, and the issues, but also how to be a beat reporter. There is no handbook in journalism school that you can read on how to be a reporter. I've had to do a lot more listening and reading than asking questions, and I've had to keep in mind those around me probably know what is going on more than I do. That being said, I've also dealt with my fair share of ageism and sexism.

While covering the mayor's office, I've had the communication director interrupt my questions in a press conference, disregard my presence when I approached him in a public hall, and show me very little respect compared to my older male colleagues. Same with other institutions in Baltimore. The police department's communications director scolded me in an e-mail for asking him to clarify his previous e-mail and told me I can't ask for follow up

because he didn't have the time for my questions. Side note, the police departments communications director has had other instances of patronizing and disrespecting female reporters in the past. I realize I'm just a young reporter, but I still need the same respect as my senior colleagues.

In these incidents, I've always tried to back up my questions with a bit of a report or reading. The other older more seasoned female reporters around me have been a huge asset; they swap notes, talk shop with me, and work through confusing jargon. To the seasoned female reporters out there, find a young reporter, take them under your wing, and help them realize their potential. To young reporters, don't be discouraged when someone tells you you're wrong, don't have enough experience, or too young to understand; seize those moments to kick up your reporting and always know your worth.

SELF CARE IS IMPORTANT. ONE OF THE BEST WAYS – AND NEUROSCIENTISTS AGREE WITH US – TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF YOUR BRAIN IS MEDITATION!

WE WILL BE OFFERING COST-FREE MEDITATION PACKS TO TWENTY FEMALE JOURNALISTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO START A ROUTINE, BUT CANNOT AFFORD TO. FREELANCERS AND WOMEN FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WILL BE GIVEN A PRIORITY.

MANY THANKS TO DAN HARRIS, AND CEO OF 10% HAPPIER, BEN RUBIN, AND TO SAMUEL JOHNS, FOR HELPING US WITH LOGISTICS.

***MEDITATION GRANT
FOR TWENTY
JOURNALISTS EVERY
YEAR***



Q&A WITH ASPEN MATIS

INTERVIEW BY: KIRAN NAZISH
@KIRANNAZISH

Aspen Matis is the author of the critically acclaimed, bestselling memoir *Girl in the Woods*, the story of a hike she took from Mexico to Canada when she was 19, which is becoming a scripted television series of the same name. Her short form writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and *Psychology Today*. She lives in New York, where she is a writing instructor and teaches policy reform at Columbia University, an educator at the Ivy Policy Conference 2017; for her own personal interest, she is a student of philosophy and physics, also at Columbia—learning of "reality's" nature as she works on a novel, following the thread of her fascination.

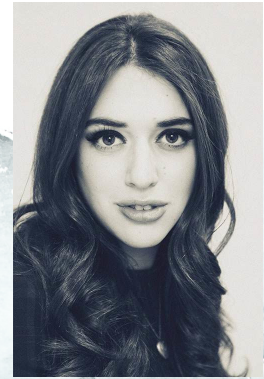


Photo by: Corrina Gramma

Let's talk about your writing process first. How do you write hundreds of pages in weeks? How many hours? Is it in continuity; how often do you take breaks?

The nature of insight is mysterious, but the formula of creativity isn't; it is simple, a clean function of time. By this I mean that writing spawns writing—ideas trigger ideas. And so, one day off, removed from the interactive thought-dance called "writing"—is really two days lost.

So, some days I write for 3 hours, and others I will write for 12 or 14, until dreams. Often I wake with a sentence to write down, desperate to capture it before it's gone—and I do, typing into my phone's Notes, in the dark with wild thumbs.

And in the morning I will wake to discover a 4,000-word Note—which is everything I'd needed.

(Witchcraft, almost.)

The key (for you, also) is to keep the phone-Notes or the pen close, always—each whole, complete vision strikes, but only once. Insight never comes back, the same way twice.

Failing to write a sharp thought down when it comes is a choice, and a poor one for we creators; you won't forget the essence of the lessons, but the language will be lost, forever.

I tell you—because you are also a creator.

What's it like to be in your head?

Creation is often violent and is almost never possible as a state of human comfort. And so, an individual's personal work of creation is almost never comfortable. Creating requires confrontations with the Self, which is the (difficult!) enactment of one's courage.

But remember: a sudden stroke of tears will never end your day.

In other words, if your mind's will is present, you are limitless in your power to make your vision for reality, "the" reality—beyond yourself. For all humanity. For all beyond, inside the reality we name the world.

It is ours to define.

We able to material our dreams for our humanity—by our humanity.

All that we must know it to persist through the inevitable pains of creation, which are the discomfort of newness.

Your uncertainty is not your "wrong"—and in fact if you are feeling shame and love in the action of just writing—if tasting the rust of dread in your lungs like your blood, flavors of your animal fear—then you are creating something alive.

Creation is what is occurring—that is all.

And any pain is only the constant, the birthright of your fiercest work—like a bright reminder: that you are human. And so, discomfort's work is not worthless work—but opposite.

And you'll find: the work made by this discomfort of confrontation (with one's self) becomes the real cherry of your mind, in truth. This practice is blood-work, arduous, and seldom fun—yet here exist the makings of art.

All sudden strokes of tears will never end your day, if your mind's will is present.

Which means, if you are brave enough to allow your mind to see

–that you are already everything you’ve needed.

Which is, to recognize the truth.

Holding this truth in the past weeks, my thoughts are of one continued chain; words are really tools, to use to dig. And so, creating my next line, a new inquiry of a creation word–picks–when hit with grace–punctures and taps the realms of “reality” and the nature of the “real.”

And now within my study of “reality”–inside this course of mind, beyond my Self–I am interested in the essential lines of scientific and social inquiry, those that are global in relevance and value.

For just one example, human beings hear and hear and watch and watch the bombs go off, breaking news again and again called “terrors of the Other,” always generated by the other, further breaking us from the other, others (which is, the world) –never exploring our complicity.

I want to note that any rigorous study of “the reality” is an exploration that is always enacted within the work of actually creating–possible for me, personally, in the creative action of new writing.



Photo by: Michael "Mystic" Smith

Can you describe anger? and who is it for?

Anger is the curse. Anger is the passion of love, transmuted. The transfiguration from fire-like-light to fire-like-burning is a cursed pattern for humanity, the burnt-to-nothingness houses of 100 families in Syria last week, and of bridges between siblings, and of war.

I do not honor anger, as that color of action is a dim hue, that only further dims–burning out the human lights, which our future. The “evil other” is actually unreal, not existent, in truth. The “others” are neighbor creators, alike to us.

Victimhood is a landscape without power, the neighborhood of eternal wallowing, to no end of change.

Anger is the energy of dissonance and killing.

The access to peace exists in giving up the story that something is wrong here. Putting down the sharp weapon at that myth’s end.

How do you describe love? and who is it for?



Pretended love is wooden like a tree made out of floorboards from the tree’s dead repurposed twin. If the phrase “I love you” did not arrive in a dream, coming sharp and complete and perfect, then (I think) the speaking would be forced–dead at the root of breath. The blossom of any invented flower composed in this laborious manner must at the next minute transmute to black and withered mold–by chemical law, of truth.

Love is the act of being a contribution for the sake of human connection, which is selfless.

I love all humans–there is no such thing as a “bad” one.

My personal world is lit up for very many people, but if you crave names, the list begins: my nephew Ben, my mom and dad, my infant nieces Melissa and Alastair, my brothers Kenny and Michael, and my sisters-in-law Kelly and Wellesley, and Justin (my ex-husband)...and more and more!

What does journalism, writing non-fiction, exploring new ideas mean to you?

These are three different inquiries, and my present cumulative answer requires the space of a book.

So I will answer the third—your question of the “meaning” of ideas.

An idea is like a chemical element, and when it enters the current global atmosphere, it reacts—and that reaction revolutionizes “the way it is.” Again like an element of physical matter, a powerful idea reacts with the atmosphere of “now” and creates a new property, a new state; after the thought’s induction into the way things “are,” the world is permanently altered. Reality is not of the same fabric pattern.

It was an idea that was the catalyst of the genesis of all human systems.

And systems dictate human beings ways of being.

For all people’s clarity, I will put this insight of creation into terms that are concrete, real to us.

Some prominent examples of reactive and revolutionary ideas relevant to the formation of the climate of America are: 1) Democracy, 2) the invention of currency as a medium of commerce, and 3) determination—and declaration—that Black people living in the United States are five fifths human beings.

In short: Word generates reality, thought is powerful beyond itself —transforming the world that sees it like a chemical element or like sun on seeds.

What is the most recent wildest idea you have had, and did you share it with someone?

The last wild idea? To create the world’s first democratized think tank, one that is global in scope.

Yes, I’ve shared this possibility with strangers on airplanes... and with people at the cafés where I write, and also with bright and inspired friends I find. And more.

– END



Photo by: Michael "Mystic" Smith

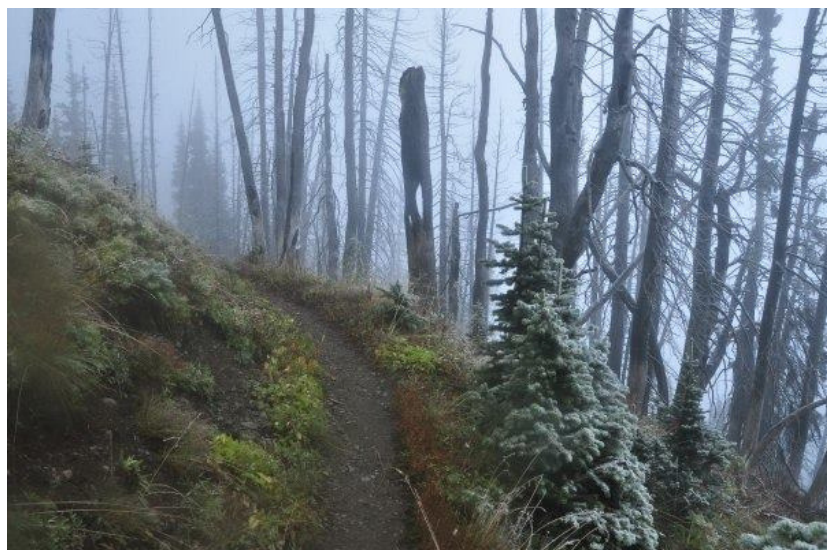


Photo by: Michael "Mystic" Smith

Advice for male colleagues:

“Young male journalists can be better allies to their female counterparts in the newsroom or in the field by understanding the unique situations they often face, like being hit on by a source that they need for a story, not being taken seriously in the field, or having their technical skills scrutinized more than a man’s. Also, when working on a team, avoid splitting tasks or responsibilities along gendered lines. Be aware of that unconscious bias.”

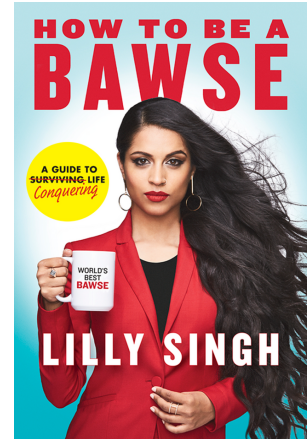
- Rhana Natour, 31, National Affairs Reporter / Producer

BOOKS

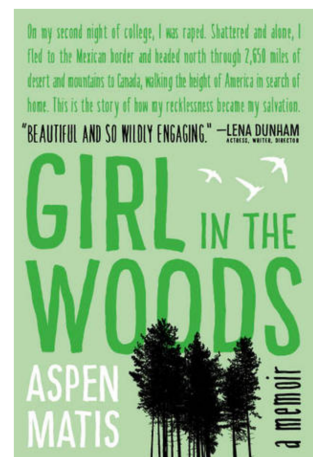
SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL BY POWERFUL WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Information collected by Annam Lodhi

Lilly Singh's *How to Be a Bawse*, a #1 New York Time's Bestseller, is described as the definitive guide to being a bawse: a person who exudes confidence, reaches goals, gets hurt efficiently, and smiles genuinely because he or she has fought through it all and made it to the other side. Singh lays out rules to follow to get yourself into the game and conveys the message to conquer one's life with no shortcuts to success.



Aspen Matis is the author of the critically acclaimed, bestselling memoir *Girl in the Woods*, the story of a hike she took from Mexico to Canada when she was 19, which is becoming a scripted television series of the same name. A deeply personal account of overcoming emotional devastation, Matis chronicles her five-month long journey, the dangers, and the transformation as she conquers the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail. With each step, she reclaims her life and creates a future she wants.



A memoir of Rania Al-Baz, a Saudi television reporter, mother, wife, daughter, and sister who became the international icon for ending violence against women in Saudi Arabia after her abusive husband beat her into a coma and left her for dead. She later underwent thirteen operations to reconstruct her face and rose against all odds to achieve a greater cause. Rania's intimate memoir doesn't focus solely on the violence she suffered, but weaves through her childhood experience growing up in Saudi Arabia, the downfall of her first marriage, her life as a T.V. journalist and her eventual decision to become an activist for women.

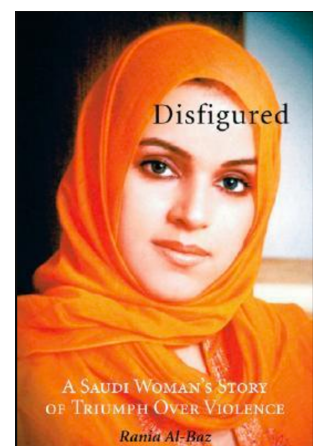




Photo by: Jessica Worthington

FORGET ME NOT: ENTERING THE WORLD OF ADVOCACY JOURNALISM

BY: JESSICA WORTHINGTON
@JLWPHOTO20

I've always struggled with certain concepts in journalism. To me, bearing witness and documenting humanity's problems just didn't seem like enough. I wanted to do something about the horrors in the news and the devastating pictures that would accompany those sad stories. I wanted to act as an agent of change in the lives of my subjects rather than just a passive documentarian. I just didn't know how to do it.

Early last year, while recovering from a car accident that initially made it impossible for me to lift my camera to use it, I was reminded of how much I wanted to be a storyteller. I had decided after graduation that I didn't want to get stuck shooting mundane news events as a way of getting into the field. I had watched friends of mine make that choice and then become burned out and unable to pursue the stories and personal projects that drove them to journalism in the first place. I knew that if I didn't want to go this route, the only other way was to freelance with little experience and try to create contacts as I went. Because of this, I hesitated.

Perhaps it was the constant feeling of being held back by my injuries that ignited the fire under me and allowed me to see what looked impossible in a different light. In no way did I feel prepared to do what my heart and mind were set on, but I've learned that determination can get you quite far.

I decided to meet up with Virginia Tieman, a close friend from my university, who has an undeniable talent for photojournalism. We sat at a cafe and I told her about my desire to travel abroad and document what had become the largest refugee crisis since World War II. She indulged me while I threw around ideas on how to make it all happen. But the more I talked, the more inspired she became about the prospect. After a few more lunch meetings and hours of researching foreign reporting (a style never taught to us in school and one I urge the journalism program to have), an idea began to formulate.

But it wasn't until I came across a YouTube video of seasoned photojournalist Ed Kashi during our hours of research, that I had

my "ah-ha!" moment. In his talk, Kashi said while it's necessary to bear witness, we must go beyond that as journalists. We have to find a way to instill hope and spark action if we want to see change. I realized that was exactly the type of journalism I had always wanted to pursue—Virginia agreed. We didn't want to drop in, get a sad story, and then present it to the world. Instead, we had to change the narrative somehow if our purpose was to see these lives transformed for the better. That's when we decided to go the advocacy route.

Forget Me Not, a long-term documentary series focused on the mental health and educational needs of refugee children, was born. Our project focuses on highlighting the organizations and individuals who are actively on the ground supporting these children and doing whatever they possibly can to see them thrive once again. Virginia and I consider ourselves the middlemen. We bring forth the important stories that need to be told but go one step further to provide a way in which others can get involved to help.



Photo by: Jessica Worthington

We travel to wherever refugee children are in need of mental health and educational services and shine a light on their stories. By also focusing our stories on those individuals and organizations that are actively on the ground helping, we hope that humanity will take the initiative to step up and be part of the solution. Our goal is to spark a movement and a community in which people from all over the world can join together to show these children that they aren't forgotten; that a nine-year-old-girl and her six-year-old-brother, working in a garment factory for twelve hours a day, can dream of a life beyond a windowless, mildew-infested basement.

During our first meeting, Virginia and I decided to focus our project on children because we both had extensive experience as caretakers. I was a nanny for 15 years, while Virginia has worked as a nanny and camp counselor for a combined eight years. That affinity for children has been an asset for us as we speak to some of the most traumatized children in the world. We use our years of experience to make the children we meet comfortable around us. Families, who had previously rebuffed other journalists, were

willing to let us sit down and interview their children. Their trust in us and support for our project reinforces our belief that we're on the right track. But it goes deeper than that for me.

Journalists are often perceived to be people with healthy, affluent backgrounds. This makes my background quite untraditional and complex. My desire to be a journalist first started as a longing to simply lift up someone else; to be a platform on which to allow those who experience injustices to be heard. I'm a survivor of childhood trauma. I understand how it feels to be betrayed by a system that's supposed to keep you safe. I understand fear and violence and how they can affect a young child's brain. When I was given a platform to speak on, change happened – my violent father was forced to leave our home. He took all of our money, the car, and left my mom on foot with four children, seventy-two cents and a stack of maxed-out credit cards. I started working at 10 years old to help pay my life insurance and by thirteen, I had three jobs.

I remember what it was like to be a child in distress. For every

person who refused to believe my family's struggle, there was always someone who believed, stood up, and helped us. I know with complete certainty that I wouldn't be where I am today, had it not been for that handful of people who took initiative to help us rebuild our lives.

I will never be able to fully understand the true extent of what the refugee children have gone through and it would be insensitive for me to compare my trauma to theirs. But I can say that I know trauma and its lasting effects. I've been asked many times why I chose to follow this topic, one that is so dark and sad. Simply put, these children deserve to have what was taken from them. They shouldn't have to choose between an education or going hungry. When I'm sipping on a tea that is offered to me and realize a young girl worked so that it could be in my hands, that's when I'm reminded of why I'm there.

... "THAT A NINE-YEAR-OLD-GIRL AND HER SIX-YEAR-OLD-BROTHER, WORKING IN A GARMENT FACTORY FOR TWELVE HOURS A DAY, CAN DREAM OF A LIFE BEYOND A WINDOWLESS, MILDEW-INFESTED BASEMENT. "

It's in helping others that we help ourselves. There's a constant bombardment of barriers, divisions between groups of people, reasons for why some deserve help and others don't. Reasons to hate, fear, and hurt – to think about one's self and not humanity as a whole. We're slowly becoming numb to the pain of others and allowing false perceptions to create a collective mood of intolerance. We're passionate about doing our part to help alleviate those misperceptions through our storytelling.

This is why Virginia and I sold everything we owned, packed our camera equipment, and moved to Turkey this past March. We cannot afford to sit back and allow societal norms and people in power to reduce an entire population to a single identity to create distance between us and those who are hurting. It may take us a while, but we'll build those bridges that bring humanity back together. We hope you will join us in that journey.

There's still so much progress to be made and Virginia and I are too stubborn to give up. Please join us by following our project, sharing our story, and/or donating to our [GoFundMe](#).

WHY #HEFORSHE MATTERS

BY: MARK SCIALLA
[@MARKSCIALLA](#)

Male colleagues don't often know how to talk about being supportive to women. There's an awkwardness and confusion about it, and a reluctance to personally own this solidarity.

Maybe it's out of fear of not knowing where to begin or being wrong. The result is more of a passive support, rather than acknowledging the various ways we are already or could begin engaging actively. When the *Coalition for Women in Journalism* asked me to write for this month's newsletter I immediately agreed, and then quickly regretted it. As a male journalist, what could I possibly say about the importance of my female colleagues that wouldn't seem patronizing or self-congratulatory? Who am I to give advice to young men in journalism?

The importance of the #HeForShe campaign lies in the opportunity for men to show their solidarity with women in their struggle for equality in this field. I've learned that the best way to support our women colleagues is to listen to and amplify their voices. I asked some of the young women in the newsroom at PBS NewsHour how they want to feel supported.

Here's what they have to say:

“Let us know that you trust us. I sometimes face excessive questioning when pitching a story or starting a new task or responsibility. Say that we've got your back. Stand up for us when someone is being patronizing or misogynistic. When misogyny goes uncorrected or unaddressed it erodes trust and working relationships.” - Meredith Garretson, 28, Production Assistant

“This is something that's really important to me as a female journalist, and especially as a woman of color. While the number of women in newsrooms has improved, we are still entering a space where our

voices are often the minority. I listened to a panel discussion where one panelist talked about this idea of combatting the invisibility of black women by making ourselves hyper-visible and entering spaces you wouldn't expect to see black female faces. I think her message goes beyond journalism, but also applies here. My advice for my male colleagues would be to support those women however you can. Be aware that a meeting is missing critical female voices and then welcome them in. Let them know that they have allies in the room.”
- Pamela Kirkland, 31, Politics Producer

“My immediate thoughts on this are not about what male colleagues can do, but what they can not do. Not constantly interrupting or mansplaining, sure. Not assuming that I can't cover a story because it's dangerous, but a male reporter can. Not using positions of power to keep women in the place they're at, instead of letting them advance in their career. (This last one happens super often.) But really, the overwhelming thing that male colleagues can not do is bring sex into the workplace. To me, this includes sexual harassment that's overt or subtle -- the second actually being much harder to address. We're all here for one reason, which is to do good work, right? To be a good ally means respecting that.”
- Liz Flock, 31, Artsbeat Reporter / Producer

It's a pretty simple but often neglected way men can actively show our solidarity, and perhaps a place to begin talking about what we as male colleagues, friends and mentors can do to be better at striving for equality in the newsroom and in the field.

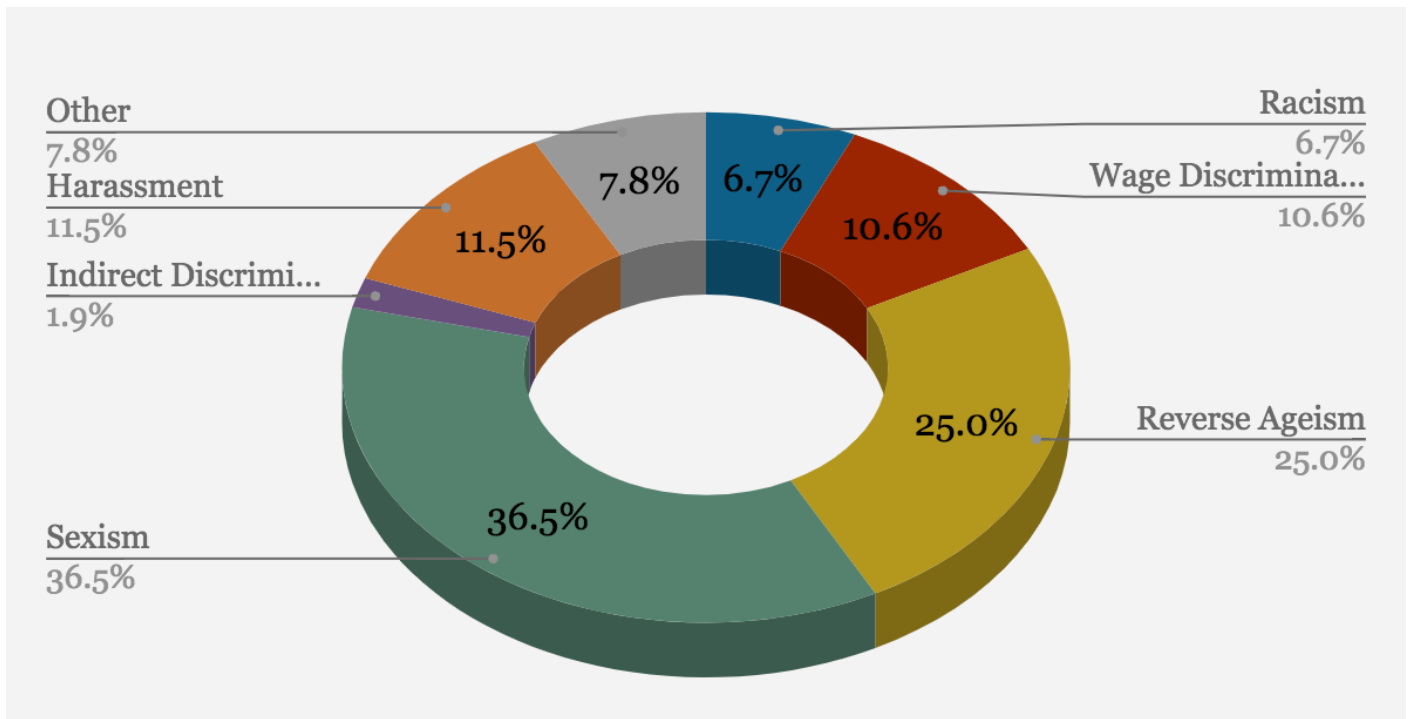


'We can't send a little girl to a conflict zone.' A statement like this has been repeated in newsrooms decades after decades by editors to women in their 20s, 30s and sometimes even 40s. Somehow, it is always convenient to imagine young professional, efficient women as little girls conveniently by editors. This never happens with young men who probably start their first reporting assignments from police stations, local municipal bodies or a political party. This kind of gender stereotyping, in the initial years of a journalist, plays a big role in determining the trajectory of their career paths. The best way to deal with it is to nip such predeterminations in the bud itself. Incessant underestimation on the basis of gender has existed for time immemorial. In a newsroom, this converts into not giving good assignments to young women journalists, not giving them opportunities to hone their skills in hardcore reportage. This serves as an obstacle in reaching decision making positions in the long run. There is no reason to put up with it and make a stunted journey. Young women must check this stereotyping, sometimes in a confrontational manner and sometimes through subversion by getting the story despite denial, to exercise their own agency in charting their career path.

~Neha Dixit is an independent journalist based in New Delhi, India.



MOST COMMON TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION 100 YOUNG JOURNALISTS (18-35) ENCOUNTER



- Sexism - 36.5%
- Reverse Ageism - 25%
- Harassment - 11.5%
- Wage Discrimination - 10.6%
- Other - 7.8%
- Racism - 6.7%
- Indirect Discrimination - 1.9%

**"You're too young to know/understand."
 "Do your parents know where you are?"
 "Does the carpet match the drapes?"**

**"I've been hit on, groped at, and had undermining comments made in front of older, mostly male colleagues. All "in fun," of course."
 "Everyone sees me as the immigrant in the newsroom."
 "Overly touchy men that have repeatedly made me uncomfortable."
 "The mayor of my town has on multiple occasions hit on me in exchange for information."**

PRESS RELEASE: URGENT CALL ON DANISH AUTHORITIES TO FIND JOURNALIST KIM WALL.

The Coalition for Women in Journalism calls out the Danish authorities to immediately take rigorous action to investigate the disappearance of Swedish freelance journalist Kim Wall.

Sunday, Aug. 13, 2017 - Swedish journalist, Kim Wall was reported missing, under suspicious circumstances on August 12th, while reporting on an amateur-built submarine that had sunk off the coast of Copenhagen.

The Coalition for Women in Journalism called out on Danish authorities to immediately take rigorous action to investigate the disappearance of Swedish freelance journalist Kim Wall. Wall was reported missing under suspicious circumstances, on August 12th, while reporting on an amateur-built submarine that had sunk off the coast of Copenhagen.

"There should be a vigilant investigation. So far, we are disappointed with the amount of information being released by the authorities, considering they have access to individuals who were on board the submarine," said the Coalition's Director, Kiran Nazish.

The police report stated that the man reported dropping her off on a redeveloped island in Copenhagen's harbor into their Thursday night trip. The statement indicated suspicions of murder of the missing journalist, but as ABC News reported, the statement "did not identify the submarine's owner, Peter Madsen, 46, but the Danish inventor's financing of the project through crowdfunding and first launch of the UC3 Nautilus in 2008 made headlines."

Denmark is on our list of responsible countries, and the Coalition for Women in Journalism expects the police to release more information for the family and friends of Kim Wall. "Her disappearance and the police report is alarming to the journalist community worldwide and we will continue to get involved in investigating her case further," said Kiran Nazish.

"As a community, we all need to call on the Danish authorities for a thorough and rigorous investigation for our missing colleague Kim Wall. The safety and security of our colleague is of utmost importance and we will not be taking it lightly," said the Coalition's Head of Advocacy and Collaborations, Elle Toussi.

"Although Denmark is not considered a dangerous region for journalists to be on assignment, there are clear definitive answers that need to be reached in regard to her whereabouts," Elle Toussi said.

The Coalition for Women in Journalism will be involved in investigating this disappearance until answers are found.

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Because I was verbal about my narrative, people would come and educate me, "You are a girl you will be getting married and your in-laws won't be happy about how you speak." Some went to the extent of saying, "You would be divorced before you know it if you carry on like this."

And these are not aunts in your neighborhood. These are my colleagues in journalism. In the professional world, where the men are allowed make rape jokes but if a woman stands up against it, she will be labeled as the girl who has no shame, but never as the girl who doesn't fear their taboos.

Everyone thought it was their duty to explain to me that me speaking my mind could mean a crooked married life, "You speak too much, your husband would get tired of you soon."

I used to laugh them off, in the beginning, I felt horrible as a person and tried to change myself. I saw myself turning into a miserable person, always persevering to behave how people expected me to behave.

Then I realized that they were trying to undermine me and I was giving them the leeway.

Like the women I refer to, right above, the women who become the purveyors. Now I was the purveyor.

Women are not only told what to say they are also told what to think.

During all this, my ideas, my work, and my progress didn't matter. I was being discriminated on two accounts; I was young so I could be told how to behave and I was a girl so getting married should be my ultimate goal and I needed to prepare for that.

So who was I, if I was a machine trying to keep up with social expectations. Unappreciated for my own capabilities of innovation and creation, of delivering ideas, that to me at least, could change the world.

I have been fighting discrimination like many other women in Pakistan, who never get an outlet to speak, and when they do, are labeled before they are heard. It is tiring to walk into a world with purpose everyday, and be bogged down. I am in my early twenties, and I feel exhausted.

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