

Killed in the line of duty:

Who is killing foreign
correspondents and why?

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Attestation of Authorship:

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree of diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment is made in the acknowledgements.”

Candidate signature

Verena Barton

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Abstract

The world of journalism is becoming increasingly dangerous, as figures published by international media organisations demonstrate. But the Western news media suggests, that particularly Western foreign correspondents are facing incredibly high risks and cases of abducted, tortured and murdered foreign correspondents are reported regularly. The question arises “Have they become targets?” Foreign correspondence has been a dangerous occupation since it first emerged during the Crimean War, when the first consistent war reporting was established. Ever since then, foreign correspondents have had to face opposition, criticism and harsh realities. However, they have also always been highly valued journalists and well-respected for their courage to travel overseas, often into conflict-riddled areas, to report important news to their audiences back home. Sometimes they have even lost their lives in the pursuit of truth. Daniel Pearl, Christian Struwe and Karen Fischer or Trent Keegan are just a few examples of the many correspondents and journalists who have died as martyrs for their profession. As the actual data published by international media organisations, such as Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists or Freedom House, suggests, it has rapidly become worse for all journalists in the last 20 years and there is worse to come. It appears as if the factors leading to their deaths are increasing and will be contributing to even higher death tolls in the future. The thesis will consider such questions as: Who is there to protect journalists and foreign correspondents? Independent media organisations are trying their best. The international press is bemoaning the many deaths and governments have promulgated laws to protect their reporters, but does that actually help? Will those attempts make it better in future? And can the Western news media apparatus itself be held partly responsible for some of the deaths?

Introduction

The thesis *Killed in the line of duty: Who is killing foreign correspondents and why?* investigates why journalism, and particularly the work of foreign correspondents, has become more dangerous today than in the past and tries to find out the reasons behind this development.

The thesis is divided into four standalone pieces of journalism that could be published consecutively. It has been the fulfilment of my studies for a Master of Arts in Communication Studies at AUT University. Each part contains independent topics, which can be combined as a series, but can also stand by itself. They are written in the style of longer magazine articles, and are meant to be published within an appropriate medium. The thesis aims to present precise, current and newsworthy figures in combination with vivid and colourful stories.

Research has shown that the main literature about journalism and the role of the foreign correspondent focuses on the history of journalism, the coverage of wars, the role of journalists and foreign correspondents in general and in war time, or critically assesses the way the media reports the news. Little research has been published about the actual numbers of journalists dying worldwide. Particularly, recent casualty rates are not so well explored within the literature and it is the main aim of this thesis to help fill the gap.

The basic idea for this project arose during previous studies in Germany, when one of my professors stated that journalists only had an average life expectancy of 30-40 years, and that it would be lower than in many other professions. It appeared to be an interesting challenge for me, to find out the reasons behind this low life expectancy, as I was studying to be a journalist myself. During a conversation with journalism lecturer, Brad Mercer, at AUT the issue came up again. Our general interest in the deaths of journalists, and particularly foreign correspondents, led to the final decision to write about it in practical thesis form.

The focus was on correspondents, because of the high profile these deaths have had recently in Afghanistan and Iraq. The question to be investigated was why foreign correspondents faced such high risks. The general expectation of this thesis was to prove that foreign correspondence was the most dangerous of all journalistic occupations.

Each part of the work endeavoured to look at different areas of research and cover important aspects regarding foreign correspondents' and journalists' deaths worldwide. Part one *A lethal occupation* discusses the overall topic and provides information about how many journalists have died since monitoring started. It explains that journalism and particularly foreign correspondence have always been dangerous occupations, but that statistics show that it has got worse, mainly in the last two decades. The Western news media leads audiences to assume that Western foreign correspondents are facing the highest risks and the thesis investigates whether this is true or not. *Censorship, bad reporting and rumours*, goes back to the roots of foreign correspondence and its first "hero" William Howard Russell, who reported the Crimean War. It reflects the development of the occupation during subsequent wars and the problems which have accompanied war reporting ever since. It makes a short excursion into New Zealand's history of foreign correspondence and then evaluates where the occupation stands today. The importance of foreign and war reporting is highlighted along with the difficulties correspondents have to face when covering the news.

Part two, *Losing their lives in the pursuit of truth*, takes a closer look at the lives and stories of four foreign correspondents who have died on overseas assignment. It investigates the background to their deaths and looks for reasons why and how they were killed. Their cases are representative examples for the many other correspondents who have died abroad and help the reader to identify with the victims. This part also includes some correspondents who have been lucky enough to escape with their lives and it explores their feelings about those experiences.

The third part, *A deadly profession*, investigates the actual numbers of journalists who have died while reporting. It goes back to the first journalist who is listed to have lost his life,

while on assignment. According to the Newseum, Elijah Parish Lovejoy died in 1837. From his death onwards the research examines the history and points out peaks, when the casualty rate has risen rapidly. It discusses the large number of local journalists being killed within their national borders and looks at those countries which are responsible for the most deaths among journalists. Argentina is the first hot spot country, which in 1974 suddenly became lethal for journalists without a war ever taking place. From that time onwards, more countries have joined the list of hot spots. This part also aims to find out if foreign correspondents are being killed in higher numbers than other journalists. It reveals the changes that occurred for journalists after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the new hot spots which have evolved since then, such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

In part four, *New dangers*, an attempt is made to answer the question why more journalists are dying today than ever before. This article offers an in-depth investigation of the reasons for journalists' deaths and the new dangers they have to face worldwide. It also examines why Western audiences receive the impression that more Western foreign correspondents are dying than any other journalists and takes a closer look at the news coverage of their deaths.

Killed in the line of duty:

Who is killing foreign correspondents and why?

A lethal occupation

Beheaded and cut into 10 pieces, this was the tragic end to the life of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. An experienced correspondent, Pearl was only 39 with a pregnant wife when he was brutally murdered in 2002 by a radical group in Karachi, Pakistan. Pearl's fate is not unique by any means. Nearly 2,000 journalists have died, or been killed in the course of doing their jobs since 1837. This was when the grim task of counting such deaths worldwide began. Of that 2,000 more than half have died in the last 20 years. Between 1988 and 1998 a total of 586 reporters died while on assignment; from 1998 to 2008, 542 more journalists were killed.

These statistics published by the Newseum in 2008 confirm an alarming upward trend in the number of journalists who have lost their lives while on the job. The Newseum in Washington is a news museum which is dedicated to keeping track of journalists killed worldwide. Its database is the farthest reaching one among all other media organisations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists or Reporters Without Borders; it dates back to 1837. The Newseum's research started in 1993 and its work is financially supported by many media companies such as Bloomberg, News Corporation and ABC News.

Reporting from war, crisis and disaster zones has, obviously, always been dangerous. But recently that danger has escalated alarmingly. The huge increase in journalistic fatalities has provoked outrage and revulsion within the press and international media organisations, not only because the death toll is unacceptably high, but also because most of the journalists who have lost their lives have been deliberately targeted.

More than 72% of the 1,128 reporters who have died during the last two decades were

murdered, often to prevent them from publishing their findings. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, in most cases the killers have never been found and 88.8% of the crimes remain unpunished.

To most of us it may seem incredible that war and foreign correspondents continue to pursue their dangerous profession - going in to hot spots, reporting from dangerous areas and revealing controversial information which may have repercussions, possibly lethal. While the occupation is becoming progressively more hazardous, this is especially true for foreign and war correspondents. For them, the prospect of leaving their homes to report from the other side of the world is becoming increasingly fraught. However, the compulsion to uncover the truth and tell untold stories from their own perspective remains, to many of them, paramount. And if they don't do it on others' behalf, who else will?

Recent examples such as the murder of Daniel Pearl in 2002, the attack on veteran foreign correspondent Robert Fisk by a crowd of Afghan refugees just a year before, the shooting of embedded correspondents Christian Liebig and Julio Anguita Parrado in Iraq in 2003, the murder of the Australian journalist Harry Burton in Afghanistan in 2001 and just recently, closer to home, the unexplained death of New Zealander Trent Keegan in Kenya in 2008 prove that there must be complex factors which make the occupation of journalism today even more hazardous than in the past.

It appears that Western correspondents are increasingly being targeted with a new and virulent hatred and rage. It has not always been like that. In the past they were usually regarded as neutral beings, not quite civilians, but certainly not identified with the enemy. In many countries they seem to have lost that neutral status and with it any sense of security.

Was there a turning point in attitudes towards journalists, if so where and when and what brought it about? Is it really true that Western foreign correspondents are deliberately targeted today? Or is our media making much more of its own dead than it would of others?

Part 1:

Censorship, bad reporting and rumours

Live from the battlefield. Close to the action. Stories full of heroes, glory, blood, guts and dead bodies. Great Britain was at war and the public was desperate for news from the front. It was time to send independent witnesses, who were also storytellers, into the field to get it. The birth of the occupation of the war correspondent occurred in the 18th century when the first consistent war reporting began during the Crimean War of 1853 to 1856. Very quickly it produced its first hero.

The first war correspondent

William Howard Russell was “the first and greatest” war correspondent, according to his epitaph in London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral. His coverage of the Crimean War marked the beginning of an organised effort to report a war to the civilian population at home using the services of a civilian reporter. British citizens were shocked by the sudden outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Britain on the Crimean Peninsula and they were desperate to know how the fighting was going. *The Times* of London’s then manager and the editor, Mowbray Morris and John Delane, felt not having their own people to report on the action, directly from the field, was a failing. *The Times*, the most popular and powerful paper of the day, thus set about filling the void, thereby creating a new journalistic genre. It gave an explanation for the employment of its first real foreign correspondent in its journal *The history of The Times*, published in 1939. “The public expects that we shall have our own agents, and as it has long been accustomed to look to *The Times* . . . for the truth in all things, we disappoint a reasonable expectation when we offer nothing better than reports from other journals, however authentic.”

Since then foreign correspondents have accompanied soldiers to war, reported disease and disasters, as well as the toppling of governments and the birth of revolutions.

The first foreign correspondents largely covered wars and the two fields of journalism have

overlapped and often merged ever since.

The development of the occupation began slowly and the war correspondent didn't really hit his stride until the American Civil War of 1861 to 1865. Five hundred journalists reported the grim tussle between north and south and the newspapers started to spend huge amounts of money on their reporters in the field. The *New York Herald* alone is said to have spent approximately \$1 million on the 63 journalists reporting for it from the battlefield. This sort of frenzy, unsurprisingly, led to some hyperbolic journalism. "Send rumours" was the instruction from editors, if there wasn't any hard news to report. The population lapped up everything that was written in the newspapers and circulations increased rapidly. It seemed the public had developed a taste for war reporting.

This era, described as the "Golden Age" for war correspondents, lasted roughly from 1860 to 1910. It was distinguished by the rise of the popular press, an increase in the use of the telegraph and the flourishing of the occupation of the war correspondent. Around 30 correspondents had covered the Crimean War; the American Civil War was being covered by more than 500 reporters. However, the public appetite for news of the fighting was so keen and the circulations so high that editors pressured their correspondents to send as much news as they could get, regardless of the quality.

A lack of quality and depth and inaccurate and fabricated stories was the outcome. In his book *The first casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam*, author Phillip Knightley described the majority of reporters at that time as "ignorant, dishonest, and unethical" and their dispatches as "frequently inaccurate, often invented, partisan, and inflammatory".

Censorship imposed

War was good copy and good for newspapers. But governments and the military often had quite different agendas from foreign correspondents and didn't like the fact that details from the battlefield were available for publication so easily. The authorities set up a system of control of information and introduced widespread censorship to stop curious reporters from publishing unwelcome facts.

During the first Anglo-Boer War from 1880 to 1881 a rigid system of censorship was instituted, which prevented journalists from publishing undesirable stories about the war or the military that could harm morale at home. The Anglo-Boer War served as a role model for the wars that followed. The strict censorship by the military, the control over means of communication, the limitations placed on journalists who didn't meet expectations and the fear of repercussions instilled in newspaper editors who dared to fight against the restrictions, have sadly accompanied war reporting ever since.

During World War I and World War II the military further developed its strategic censorship with the aim of keeping reporters quiet. The wars were marked by strict media censorship, state propaganda, silencing of errant journalists and a tense relationship between the media and military.

The Vietnam War, which began in 1959 and didn't end until 1975, changed war reporting drastically, if only briefly. It was the first time since the introduction of formalised military censorship, that journalists could move freely and publish their stories unhindered. This later drove the military to blame the outcome of the war partly on the journalists and their publications. The results of the freedom granted to foreign correspondents in Vietnam convinced the military never to allow such license again. The following wars accordingly saw the re-introduction of heavy censorship and restrictions that made it hard for foreign correspondents to dig deeper to find the hidden truth.

New Zealand signs up

New Zealand has always prided itself on its peaceable isolation. News from overseas was often old by the time it got here and the employment of its first war correspondents came fairly late in comparison to other countries. When New Zealand became involved in its first war, with South Africa, in 1899, newspapers sent out two correspondents, J.A. Shand and J.D. Moultray, to report from the front.

With the abrupt start of World War I, New Zealand was in a desperate need to know what was going on outside the islands' borders and to find out how the nation's troops were coping.

Freelance journalist Malcolm Ross was considered the right man for the job to report on the war actions for the country. Chosen as the first official war correspondent for New Zealand in early 1915, he was sent to the front at Gallipoli. Ross was financed by the government as newspapers at that time were unable to afford a foreign correspondent. Ross' reports were used and printed by 85 New Zealand newspapers. He received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal for his efforts. Employing foreign correspondents abroad has been patchy ever since, up to today's dismal showing.

Journalism today: Fragile freedoms

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”.

This is enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19, and it is a right journalists frequently refer to and rely on. In 2008 this Declaration had its 60th anniversary, but it still faces challenges all over the world and in reality can do nothing to protect journalists from being attacked, silenced, injured or even killed. A long time before the UN Declaration was composed, The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1929 tried to set standards for the protection of reporters. They ruled that correspondents and reporters who fell into the hands of the enemy were entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, while at the same time keeping the status of civilians. Unfortunately those conventions don't seem to be respected by everyone and journalists are still denied their human rights and killed, or held in captivity.

Since its inception the occupation of the journalist and particularly the foreign correspondent has come a long way and the world has, at times of crisis granted it a high degree of importance and value. In most countries there is a realisation that journalists keep the public informed and act as their eyes and ears, and sometimes their consciences. Only a

properly informed population is able to understand government decisions and the complex factors underlying them.

If a population is denied a free press, and therefore freedom of speech, it is denied a basic requirement for an independent and self-determined life. This is why it is so important for many organisations and democratic governments to protect the freedom of the press worldwide.

A lot of governments have already enshrined Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration within their own constitutions and made it their duty to ensure freedom of speech by law; they consider an independent and vigorous press as the “fourth estate” of their constitution. Other countries however have consistently failed to do so.

Ann Cooper, executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), explained in a special report from 2006 that: “People in these countries are virtually isolated from the rest of the world by authoritarian rulers who muzzle the media and keep a chokehold on information through restrictive laws, fear, and intimidation.”

In those countries, journalists are at particularly high risk and often killed in large numbers.

Many news organisations worldwide are doing their best to pressure reluctant governments as well as trying to protect journalists and press freedom. Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists and Freedom House, are a few of the non-governmental bodies which try to act as watchdogs and do their best to safeguard journalists worldwide. They cannot prevent journalists from being killed, but they certainly raise awareness and help to uncover crimes committed against the press. They single out those countries that ignore journalists’ rights and call on their governments and the international community to punish offences against reporters and highlight state censorship.

However, these organisations can’t be everywhere at the same time, protect each journalists’ life individually or this potentially deadly occupation in general.

The good, the bad and the ugly

War has always been a magnet for reporters. War reporting and its sibling, foreign correspondence, have shaped contemporary journalism.

Correspondents leave their countries, go overseas and witness events with their own eyes to report them back to their homelands. They take the challenge to go overseas, to cover a war or conflict, to report on a humanitarian catastrophe, to write stories about global events like the Olympic Games or political summits. It could be to prick the conscience, open eyes to new things or just report the facts.

“The very nature of war confuses the role of the journalist,” former British Broadcasting Corporation reporter, the redoubtable Kate Adie, explains in *Reporting war: Journalism in wartime*.

Adie is referring to the exceptional pressures that weigh on the shoulders of foreign correspondents and which distinguish their jobs so greatly from those of other journalists. They are the ones who are confronted with the shocking, sometime unforgettable images and the harsh realities of war and conflict. She, among others, believes it is a hard task for correspondents to keep their distance and objectivity in some situations and they can't always succeed in following the golden rules of their occupation. BBC colleague Martin Bell adds that sometimes humanity is more important than textbook reportage.

The foreign correspondent is often portrayed as a risk-taker or adrenaline junkie, but regardless of whether this image is justified, it is a fact that he or she faces more challenges than most other journalists.

The closest they can get to danger

Reporters need to be close to the action to report it adequately, while keeping enough distance to stay safe. They must be able to give a voice to the victims and witnesses, but remain detached enough to see both sides of the story. Their journalistic work is characterised by operating at the highest possible speed to meet their audience's urgent

demand for news while at the same time trying to find a balance between reporting their stories in an unbiased, accurate and honest fashion. Often they face political, military, economic and technological limitations which make it hard to obtain reliable information and get close to events in war-torn regions. These are crucial factors with which the foreign correspondent has to deal often while being under pressure from their own consciences and their deadlines.

Martin Bell, British UNICEF ambassador and former war/foreign correspondent, said in 2003 that the 24 hour news service was particularly to blame for some of the more facile overseas reporting that is becoming increasingly common on television.

“They aim to be first and fastest with the news. Their nature, too often, is to be fearful, feverish, frenzied, frantic, frail, false and fallible”.

It appears that journalism will always be plagued by the same problems: trouble with objectivity, a lack of depth, pressures from all sides, censorship and self-censorship and the merciless drive to get breaking news first. Bell makes a profoundly significant recommendation that the importance should not be so much on the “We got it first!” but rather on “We got it right!”

Dicing with death

“Voyeuristic travel writing” is how magazine editor Bill Buford described war correspondence in Michelle Ferrari’s *Reporting America at war: An oral history* and added: “War correspondents are some of the sickest people you’ll ever meet. I’ve been lucky enough to publish quite a few of them.... War correspondents do everything that we don’t do. If there’s a fight, they try to get close to it... You know, there is nothing more exciting than violence.”

It is undeniable that there is more than an aura of glamour as well as danger associated with the world of the war and foreign correspondent and many of its practitioners justifiably share the sense that they belong to a reporting elite which is brave enough to look death straight in the eye.

In 2006 alone 59 journalists were killed while on assignment. The US's *ABC News* president David Westin remembered and honoured their efforts in his speech on March 3, 2006, World Press Freedom Day. "They step forward to learn the things that they believe we should know, to see for themselves what is going on in some place or some circumstance that the rest of us can't reach, to report back to us so that we all could live better lives as individuals and as citizens."

He paid tribute to those 59 journalists who lost their lives and noted that most other journalists would have never come face to face with the dangers that had confronted them. "We will not have to put our lives on the line in support of our belief that reporting the news is the very foundation of true security and the general welfare of the people. But, we are confronted daily with those in power who deny this core belief. Too often we hear these days from governments — our own and others — that a stable and secure future depends much more on what the people are not told than on what they are told. Many insist it is better that people know less, rather than more, and some of these people are no doubt well-intentioned."

Westin said he was sure those 59 journalists who had been killed on assignment knew better and were aware that people would be best served and most secure when they know more — more about what was going on around them, more about abuses of power and position, and more about what governments were doing. "This is the central meaning that these fine men and women revealed by giving up their lives in reporting the news. It remains for us who are left behind to embrace that meaning and carry it forward, every day gathering the news and reporting the news even when there are those in power who would have us keep quiet."

Story versus life

A "toxic mix" faces journalists when their stories are both dangerous and important at the same time. This dilemma described by Bill Spindel of the *Wall Street Journal* confronts many reporters and the question is whether the story they are following is worth the danger

they are putting themselves in. There is no universal answer to that question. Susan Chira of the *New York Times* explained in *Killing the messenger: Journalists at risk in modern warfare* that: “I think it’s the safety question that we have to ask ourselves over and over again. You weigh the risk versus the story.”

Adi Ignatius from *Time Magazine* added to Chira’s viewpoint that in high risk situations editors would leave it up to their reporters to decide whether to chase the story or to leave it. For him, the journalists would have to make the decision when a risk was worth it. “We think hard about whether there’s going to be a payoff, whether they go into a dangerous situation that’s not going to lead to something major in the magazine.”

Certainly there are many stories that to most people are obviously not worth the risk of getting injured or killed, if that risk is ever worth taking. But it seems there will always be journalists aplenty eager enough to cover them anyway. They will try everything to convince their editors to send them out to get the story. Stuart Loory, editor of the *Global Journalist*, criticised those reporters and their editors in his journal. “Despite all the publicity the safety problem gets, reporters continue to take chances, and their editors and producers apparently do not do enough to stop them. Part of the calculation that has to be made today in deciding whether or not to go after a story is solving the equation of whether or not the particular information sought is worth the life-threatening danger of going after it.”

Gavin Ellis, editor-in-chief for the *New Zealand Herald* from 1996 to 2005, expressed another view. “You are always worrying about the safety. I don’t know any editor who would knowingly put a reporter into a situation where their life was in imminent danger.” Stuart Loory shared this viewpoint and added that there were times “when the risk is not at all justified and at those times, the reporter cannot be criticised for turning away from the story. Editors and producers must understand this. They must take steps to temper the zeal of journalists who might be described as overly committed to a story that is not worth the risk.”

There are uncountable stories in the world’s most dangerous regions which urgently need to

be brought to light, crimes and injustice that have to be investigated and political skulduggery revealed. The American journalist and winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Philip Caputo, was kidnapped in 1973 while on assignment in the Middle East. In 2005 he argued that despite the greatest of risks, it was important that reporters continue to cover stories. “To do otherwise would be a total victory for, call it, the forces of darkness. Press organisations cannot allow these forces to prevent journalists from covering these stories through terror and intimidation. Obviously, journalists have to be well prepared for such dangers. I wouldn’t call it cautious because of the connotation of timidity, but I would say that journalists have to be a lot smarter about the lay of the land than they have been in the past.”

The *ABC*’s David Westin shared a similar viewpoint to Caputo, which he expressed on World Press Freedom Day. “We never, ever want anyone to lose their life in reporting the news. But the simple, harsh fact is that there are stories so important that journalists volunteer to take the risk on behalf of all of us.”

He honoured his colleagues’ lives and deaths and explained why journalists are still sent out into the most dangerous places on the earth, knowing the dangers they will face.

“This may seem incongruous, that we would put others in harm's way despite the proven danger. The worst thing that we could do in remembering the colleagues we've lost would be to pull back on our news coverage and fail to cover important stories because there is risk involved. To do so would deny the very meaning that those who have gone before have shown us in the most powerful way that they can.”

New twists

Apart from a plethora of technological changes William Howard Russell may not notice many differences from the work he did to that of his latter day colleagues, until relatively recently that is, when a couple of new hybrid foreign correspondents entered the scene. One, the parachuting correspondent, for cost cutting reasons, the other one, the embedded

correspondent, because government and military bosses are up to their old information controlling ways.

The first of the hybrids is the parachuting correspondent, who is sent on short in and out again exercises and who appears due to rigorous cost cutting across the media worldwide. The number of correspondents permanently based overseas is declining, while the number of parachuting correspondents, is going up. Permanently based correspondents cost a lot, and generally only report from one country, while parachuting correspondents can be sent wherever disaster strikes at a fraction of the cost.

The fact the parachutist may have little more understanding of the country he or she is about to visit other than the clippings they crammed while on the flight is of little importance to many of today's media moguls.

Television New Zealand (*TVNZ*) reflects an international trend, with only three full-time permanently based foreign correspondents, one in London and two in Sydney. Another reporter works permanently in New York, but he is not a full-time employee. *TVNZ*'s other foreign correspondents, fly in and out of countries to cover multiple stories or events.

Cameron Bennett, the veteran correspondent for *TVNZ*, explained:

“New Zealand, I can only talk for *TVNZ*, its foreign news coverage is contracting not expanding, which is in line with a lot of international agencies. I find that very frustrating, but that is how it is. And coupled with that there have been budget cuts on all spending including foreign correspondents. Quite a lot of stories that I have covered in the past are not there now.”

While most media experts and journalists complain about the steady decrease of foreign bureaus, Barbara Dreaver, the Pacific correspondent for *TVNZ*, explained why it is simply not always possible to have based foreign correspondents. In certain areas, such as the Pacific Islands, she regarded the use of parachuting journalists as more useful.

“Stories break all the time around the Pacific and you have to be on a plane really quickly and you have to come back to Auckland to get where you want to go. There is no direct flight between the Pacific Islands. It is impossible to get anywhere quickly from the

Islands.” She said the most logical place for a based correspondent would be in Fiji, but this correspondent would still have to come back to Auckland, to get to the other islands. In the Pacific region, based correspondents would be unreasonable in her view. “You can do that in Europe easily because you can fly everywhere. But you can’t do it in the Pacific. The other reason why I think it is important to be based in Auckland, is because Auckland is the biggest Polynesian city in the world.”

However other journalists continue to argue that permanently based correspondents have the advantage of knowing the country and the people and are able to evaluate the situation and dangers far better than someone who quickly arrives, reports and then leaves.

The second of the hybrids is the embedded journalists. Some would say, an even more dangerous development for quality journalism; where a journalist trades his or her independence, and perhaps integrity, for access and security.

These journalists are not allowed to use certain words or report certain topics and they are closely attached to their military hosts. These restrictions remind us of the rigid concept of censorship introduced earlier in the history of war reporting, but it now goes under a different name. The term embedded reporter was first used officially in 2003, with the start of Gulf War II. Historically there have always been journalists closely attached to the military in order to get closer to the front and to be better protected. However, the concept of embedded journalism was only introduced later by the US Pentagon. Media critics, like Danny Schechter, the executive editor of MediaChannel.org, believe the introduction of this concept has made the news media a tool of the psychological warfare of the US and interferes with the idea of an independent press.

Officially 662 correspondents were directly connected to armed services units during Gulf War II. The US provided the reporters with accommodation, food and medical attention and helped them with their communications. They also set the agenda for the news and the journalists’ work was supervised by public affairs specialists. Each reporter had to agree to a contract that included a list of topics they could not cover. They were, for example, not

allowed to mention dead bodies.

The original idea behind the embedded reporter was that he could go with his unit wherever the action was taking place, thus ensuring a better, more extensive and accurate coverage of events. Shortly after its introduction the concept aroused fears of the reporters being too dependent and influenced by the military and therefore lacking objectivity.

Oliver Burkeman, a journalist for the *Guardian*, UK, stated in 2003: “Embedding has been an astounding PR success for the Pentagon. Reporters use the words “we” and “us” profusely, identifying themselves with the military, and while this has prompted concerns about objectivity among US commentators, it is not surprising, given their very personal stake in their unit’s success.”

But the Gulf wars have not only been covered by the embedded press force, there were also many “unilateral” journalists in the field who reported from the area independently. They arguably offered more balanced perspectives and published contrary viewpoints to those of the embedded correspondents. However, the risk for those “unilateral” reporters was, at times, unjustifiably high. They faced grave danger not only from Iraqi attacks, but also from so-called “friendly-fire”.

Media academics agree that the number of embedded journalists will increase in the future. Howard Tumber, author on war journalism, explained in his book *Journalists under fire*: “Governments and military will plan more embedding formats with all the associated risks for objective reporting, increase warnings to non-embedded journalists about their safety, and continue the usual policies of censorship, misinformation and delay in confirmation of events. For the future, the struggle for news organisations will be in resisting these increasing pressures and, for journalists, a continuation of the current reassessment about the nature of witnessing, truth and objectivity.”

We can’t know what William Howard Russell would make of embedded journalists but we can be reasonably certain that the proud tradition of the independent war and foreign correspondent will continue to have sufficient numbers to fill its ranks, no matter the dangers.

Part 2

Losing their lives in the pursuit of truth

The life of a foreign correspondent may be prestigious, glamorous and exciting but it's also dangerous and sometimes deadly. To leave the safety and comfort of home to report from an unknown area overseas requires a lot of courage.

Many hundreds of journalists have already lost their lives in the pursuit of their craft. Sadly, many more will pay the ultimate price through accident, a misunderstanding of circumstances or at the murderous hand of others. The following examples look at how journalists with vastly different backgrounds died, were captured or had lucky escapes while doing a job they loved.

The murder of Daniel Pearl

“If you kill an innocent man ... it is as if you kill all of humanity“ (Quoran 5:32).

Foreign correspondents and journalists in general have long held a fairly neutral position in the eyes of the world, even in the eyes of extremists, terrorists and religious fanatics. They embodied the role of intermediaries and uncommitted, unbiased witnesses. But all of that has changed.

In 2002 Daniel Pearl, an experienced 39-year old American journalist of Jewish origin, was taken hostage and decapitated by a militant group in Karachi, Pakistan. Pearl was found beheaded and cut into 10 pieces in the suburbs of Karachi on May 16.

Susanne Koelbl, foreign correspondent of *der Spiegel*, commented on his death: “The murder of Daniel Pearl is an example for me that marked a turning point in the relationship between Western journalists and extremists.”

The life of a correspondent

“Danny of Arabia”, as his colleagues from the *Wall Street Journal* used to call him, left

behind a pregnant wife, and devastated friends and family.

Born on October 10, 1963 in Princeton, New Jersey, Pearl grew up in a Jewish family and as a child showed a keen interest in the world around him. His growing curiosity eventually led him to found his first newspaper while studying at Stanford University. *The Commentator* still exists today. Pearl had a passion for journalism with a strong interest in international issues, especially human rights, which dominated much of his reporting. Pearl had developed a great sympathy for Iran, Muslims and the region of the Middle East, which he visited about 13 times.

He began work for the *Wall Street Journal* in 1990. His reporting was always investigative and his articles about the Middle East often challenged official US Government statements and positions. One of his articles was about a chemical factory in Khartoum, Sudan, which was destroyed by the US on August 21, 1998 because it ostensibly had connections to Al-Qaeda and was being used as a clandestine laboratory for chemical and bacterial weapons. Pearl investigated the story thoroughly and looked for evidence for and against the US-theory. He was one of the first journalists to find out that the attack was a tragic error and that the US in fact had hit a medicine factory which had a UN contract. The US Government was furious.

On the other side of the world, another man embarked on a very different path, a path which would one day fatally collide with that of Daniel Pearl. Omar Saeed Sheikh was born in 1973 and grew up in Britain within a Muslim and Pakistani culture. He was described as “one of the hardest and toughest guys in school” and “obsessed with strength”. Sheikh was always bound to Britain in a relationship that was a mixture of love and hate. But unlike Pearl, Sheikh’s world vision became narrower and hostile. He aborted his studies in Britain and left for Pakistan to do military training and become a warrior to fight for the ‘jihad’, the holy war of radical Muslims against nonbelievers.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 on New York in 2001 changed the world in general and journalism in particular, and for Daniel Pearl they were a death sentence. Shortly after the

attacks on the New York World Trade Centre he flew with his wife, the French journalist Mariane Pearl, to Pakistan. He wanted to investigate the links between Richard Reid, a British national who was arrested in 2001 after he had tried to detonate a shoe bomb on a plane, Al-Qaeda and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

Although Pearl was later often described as a war correspondent, he never considered himself one. He explained why he chose to go to Pakistan to investigate the background of jihadists - rather than joining the majority of foreign correspondents covering the fighting in Afghanistan. "You have to be in practice to cover a war, I'm not in practice. That is why I didn't go to Afghanistan and preferred to go to Pakistan."

The location of Pearl's main investigation was Karachi, a city notable for its lack of Westerners and women on its streets. Through his investigations into Richard Reid, he hoped to get clues about who was financing the radical Islamic groups which had been involved in the attacks on New York. Shortly after he arrived he caught the attention of both the Pakistani Government and radical Muslim groups not only because he was American, but also because he was a foreign journalist. Pearl had earlier reported on Pakistan's failure to take action against Islamic groups and after several such critical articles he had become a marked man. The alleged connection between Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and Al-Qaeda made Pearl a threat both to some government officials and the terrorists.

Pearl's last case

Pearl's investigation led him to a religious leader by the name of Mubarak Ali Shah Gilani, who had suspected connections to Reid. Pearl tried to set up an interview with the man. When he asked his contact, Khalid Khawaja, how to find Gilani, he was told: "Daniel – he is not willing to come to an interview." However, Pearl remained persistent; he was not willing to give up on the story easily and was determined to meet Gilani personally.

Out of the blue Pearl was contacted by a man calling himself Bashir Ahmad Shabbit, who informed him by email that he might know how to get in touch with Gilani. It seemed like a breakthrough.

Pearl, a very experienced reporter, hitherto known for his good risk management, was walking into a trap. The person who had called himself Bashir was in reality Omar Sheikh, the man who had turned his back on his British roots years ago and had become a religious fanatic. He had not only been imprisoned for abducting several British nationals in India in 1994, but also had strong connections with the Taliban, which had brought him into Pakistan with the help of a hijacked *Indian Airlines* plane. *The Times* described him as “no ordinary terrorist but a man who has connections that reach high into Pakistan's military and intelligence elite and into the innermost circles of Osama Bin Laden and the al-Qaeda organization”.

Pearl arranged to meet Bashir/Sheikh in the middle of Karachi in the evening of January 23, 2002.

Mariane Pearl and her husband had just been to a Pakistani doctor and found out they were going to have a baby boy. Pearl dearly wanted to get out of this dangerous country and had decided that this would be his last investigation in Pakistan.

But he had followed this case for a long time and was determined to pursue the possible breakthrough and proceed with the proposed meeting. He kissed his wife goodbye for the last time and left to meet the man who was to become his kidnapper.

Pearl had tried to minimise any risk involved by arranging to meet with Bashir Ahmad Shabbit at a public place, the Village Garden Restaurant in Karachi, as Jamil Yusaf, head of the police had advised him to do. He had talked to Randall Bennett of the US consulate and the Karachi police to seek their advice before he decided to go ahead and meet Shabbit. The consulate advised against going but Jamil Yusaf explained to Pearl that he would be safe, if he would meet the informant in a busy place, because no one would dare to harm him in public, witnessed by many people.

However, none of Pearl's precautionary measures helped to prevent what followed. Two hours after he was supposed to meet his informant, his wife Mariane tried to ring him on his cell phone. She had no luck; his phone had been switched off. As she later told the press that was the moment she started to get worried. Another two hours passed and still she had neither reached her husband nor received a message from him. Mariane contacted Asra

Nomani, a friend and colleague of the Pearls', and they began to investigate his disappearance together.

Karachi is the ninth largest city in the world with a population of around 14 million people. To find one man was like looking for a needle in a haystack.

After a sleepless night, Mariane contacted the US consulate and as soon as it received the news that an American journalist had gone missing staff started working on the case, supported by the police in Karachi. It was not long before FBI agents had also been assigned to search for the missing man.

After the first days had gone by and there was no sign of Pearl or his possible kidnapers, hope began to fade. His mother Ruth would explain later in a documentary about her son, that she "just could not believe that there was no trace of him".

After several days the kidnapers finally got in touch. They called on the US Government to release all prisoners from the war in Afghanistan immediately.

"We give you one more day. If America will not meet our demands we will kill Daniel. Then this cycle will continue and no American journalist could enter Pakistan."

The demands, sent to the *Los Angeles Times*, were accompanied by a photograph of Pearl with a gun pointed at his head, but still smiling.

For Pearl's family it was a ray of hope and his mother, Ruth Pearl, explained the mixed feelings she had. "The pictures came and we started crying and laughing at the same time, because we knew that he might be alive."

Colin Powell, the former US Secretary, responded to the kidnapers in a public message on January 31, 2002 saying these demands would not be met. Mariane Pearl made a public appeal to the kidnapers and said her husband was an honest man who had gone to Pakistan because he wanted to tell the world about the people there. All he had wanted to do was report the truth. She called it Pearl's religion. Six months pregnant, Mariane was torn between hope and fear. "If somebody has to give their life to save him, I'll do it. Please get in touch with me. I'm ready."

Soon after Mariane Pearl's public appeal, the FBI was able to make some progress. Agents had found the addresses of the computers from which the kidnappers' emails had been sent. By analysing them thoroughly they were able to capture four people believed responsible for Pearl's kidnapping. They also discovered that the man who had met Pearl under the name of Bashir was in reality Omar Sheikh. However, they were unable to track him down immediately.

The search is over

"America is going to be destroyed. Sell your dollars!" Omar Sheikh yelled as the police led him away on February 12, 2002; almost three weeks after Pearl had been abducted. The FBI immediately tried to obtain information about Pearl's whereabouts.

Sheikh had to face harsh interrogation as officials questioned him about the whereabouts of the reporter. He changed his story about the missing man every day. He would tell the police that Pearl was still alive, just to withdraw this statement the next day, saying that he was dead.

At the end of the fifth week after the journalist's abduction the search for him was finally over. The police received a phone call from someone who claimed he had a videotape recording of Pearl's death. Investigators rushed to the hotel where they were supposed to meet him and received a camera and tape.

What they saw was shocking.

Close friend Asra Nomani described her emotions to Amit Roy: "After that message I went home and it started raining and I felt like the heaven would have opened and the angels were crying and I started to weep."

Pearl had been murdered just a week after his kidnapping, on January 31, when the US Government had refused to comply with the demands of the kidnappers. He had begged his murderers to leave him alive and told them his wife was expecting, but they had showed no mercy. The men forced Pearl to make a statement for the camera and then cut off his head while the tape was still running. His remains were found in 10 parts on May 16. They had been buried in a shallow grave in the outskirts of Karachi. Omar Sheikh was found guilty of

murdering the journalist. His death sentence, however, has been delayed 33 times and he is still alive. *The New Yorker* commented in August 2007: “The Pakistani government, not known for its leniency, had stayed his execution. Indeed, hearings on the matter had been delayed a remarkable number of times, possibly because of his reported ties to the Pakistani intelligence service, which may have helped free him after he was imprisoned for terrorist activities in India.”

Aftermath

Pearl’s murder marked a turning point for foreign correspondents and all journalists worldwide. It was an extraordinarily brutal murder of a journalist, whose reports had tried to give an accurate and balanced reflection of the lives of the people in the Middle East and additionally had been critical of American policy in the region.

Pearl had tried to temper hatred and intolerance with his honesty and criticism of the West. The inscription on his gravestone remembers him as: “Journalist – Musician – Humanist. Lost his life in the pursuit of truth.”

Pearl’s case is just one of the many, where correspondents have been deliberately targeted, tortured, badly injured or killed over the last years.

The international media has tried to find answers to Pearl’s death and to analyse its meanings for the future of journalism. One of those analysts was Bernard-Henri Lévy, who travelled to Karachi in the spring of 2002, under cover, posing as a tourist.

“The role of an ordinary tourist suits me fine,” Lévy explained in his book *Who killed Daniel Pearl?* “At least it allows me to ward off the real risk of being taken for a ‘journalist’: a category not only defamatory, but unintelligible in a country which I know is drugged on fanaticism, doped on violence, and has lost even the very idea of what a free press could be.”

Lévy referred to the numerous cases of journalists who had been attacked recently in the area, such as the group of English journalists stoned in December 2001 in the Pashtun hills of Chaman, the *BBC* team attacked on the Afghan border in the same year or the case of *The Independent* columnist Robert Fisk, who had been beaten by a crowd of angry Afghan

refugees in Pakistan in December 2001, and the editor of the *Karachi News*, Shaheen Sehbai, who had been threatened with death by the secret service after publishing details from the interrogations of Sheikh Omar about the killing of Daniel Pearl. Sheikh Omar had linked ISI operatives to the planning, financing and execution of several attacks. According to Sehbai, who was quoted in the *Global Journalist* in April 2002, this is why they told him to “either get in line or be ready for the stick”. Sehbai resigned a month later. “So, low profile. I’m content with a low profile,” Lévy explained.

Pearl was posthumously honoured with the Edward R. Murrow Award in 2003. Pearl’s career and death exemplified the highest ideals of journalism, director Alex Tan explained at the Murrow Symposium in 2003. “The faculty of the school thought it especially fitting to make the award posthumous this year to honour Pearl not only for his journalistic achievements but for his efforts at building bridges between cultures.”

The right to kill

They thought they knew the country. They thought they knew its people and they felt comfortable and safe. But on October 6, 2006, Karen Fischer and Christian Struwe, two German correspondents for the *Deutsche Welle* television company, were killed in their tent in the Baghlan province of Afghanistan, shot dead with AK-47 machine guns.

It was not the first time the two had visited Afghanistan. They had been on several assignments for *Deutsche Welle* in the area before, but this time they went on a private trip. Struwe and Fischer, aged 30 and 38 respectively, had just visited the German NATO troops based in the north of Afghanistan when they decided to stop for the night and put up their tents on the roadside. They camped in Tala wa Barfak, a small village populated by about 20 families and about 20km away from the nearest police station. The reporters thought it would be the perfect spot for their overnight stay. They planned to continue their travel the next morning and visit the area’s historic sites, including the largest Buddha statues in the world, which had been blown up by the Taliban in 2001. However, the two reporters never

managed to get there. In the early hours of October 6, they were surprised by their attackers and shot dead without warning.

A bullet-riddled car and two corpses were left at the correspondents' campsite. Fischer and Struwe had been shot dead within seconds and their attackers had neither been interested in their expensive equipment nor their passports. This had not been a robbery.

Shortly after the killings had been made public, the German Government and the international press called on the Afghan authorities for an immediate investigation. In a public statement, the organisation Reporters Without Borders expressed its horror at the deaths. "We are deeply saddened by this tragedy, which took place on the day that a Journalist's Memorial was inaugurated in Bayeux, in Western France, to pay homage to the dozens of journalists who are killed each year in the course of their work."

"The Islamic right to kill journalists"

Mullah Dadullah, one of the Taliban's military chiefs, announced only weeks before the killings that the group would kill every journalist who used information provided by the NATO forces operating in Afghanistan. "We have the Islamic right to kill these journalists!" he told the Associated Press.

Erik Bettermann, the director of *Deutsche Welle*, publicly commenting on the deaths of the two reporters said: "It is tragic that Karen Fischer and Christian Struwe had to die in the country they had dedicated so much of their personal efforts to supporting."

His organisation praised Struwe's efforts to support the establishment of an international editorial department at Radio Television Afghanistan. Struwe's partner, Karen Fischer, had worked for the past three years for *Deutsche Welle's* radio programmes as a freelancer. Her work was focused on conflicts in the Middle East and the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The international press lamented the deaths of Fischer and Struwe and international organisations called on the Afghan Government to take strict measures to maintain the safety of reporters. Koïchiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, explained in an

official statement that it would be essential that journalists, whether Afghan or foreign, could carry out their professional activities safely. “Their ability to exercise their basic human right of freedom of expression is essential to the establishment of democracy and rule of law in Afghanistan.”

However, it may be that Struwe and Fischer unwittingly contributed to their own murders. They were travelling without a guide, though they had tried to obtain one; are reported to have worn swimsuits in a strictly Muslim village and were publicly cooking food during Ramadan. We will never know if any of this contributed to their killing but at the very least none of it was wise, and was perhaps tempting fate.

Christian Reuter, who had reported on the area for more than 10 years, can't understand why the murdered couple had committed so many fatal errors. He said it didn't matter whether they knew the area or not, they should have “at least had a driver, translator or another local accompanying them”.

In case something happens

A man is found dead in a drainage trench. His badly beaten body, with visible injuries to the head, lies near the main highway that runs through Nairobi.

New Zealander Trent Keegan, a 33-year-old photojournalist from New Plymouth, was murdered on May 28, 2008 for unknown reasons in the capital of Kenya. This was yet another journalist's death where robbery was not the motive. His cameras and laptop were missing, but his wallet containing all his credit cards and money was still in his pockets when he was found.

The award-winning photojournalist had moved to Ireland where at first he worked as a carpenter, but later found his passion was the camera. He took his talent to more than 40 countries, including some of the roughest places in the world and his dream was to become a professional combat photographer. With the help of his images he wanted to give a voice

to the suffering people of the world and his aim was to raise international awareness about those living with poverty and abuse. In the end, he paid the ultimate price for it. Before Keegan went on his last trip to Kenya he had visited his family and friends in New Zealand, unaware that he was saying goodbye forever.

The last two months of his life Keegan had spent in Kenya and at the time of his death, he was investigating a sensitive story about the mistreatment of the indigenous Maasai people. It is believed that he may have lost his life because he was about to publish his findings.

Digging up the truth about the Maasai

“Keep this safe mate. In case something happens.” Those were the last words of an email which Keegan had written to one of his closest friends, just days before he was murdered. Although official sources tried to explain his death as a robbery gone wrong, friends and family doubted this was the case.

Other emails which Keegan had sent to one of his best friends, two weeks before he died, stirred up speculation that he was deliberately murdered to keep him from publishing details about a US-based safari company’s dispute with local Maasai. He had told his friends he no longer felt safe, because his investigations appeared to have come to the attention of the safari company’s security guards.

In March Keegan had arrived in Mombasa and initially dedicated his time in the country to reporting about an Irish-Kenyan-based charity Sponsor of an African Scholar. He then decided to head towards Nairobi, where he stayed with his friend, Brian MacCormaic, in northern Tanzania, an area popular among tourists. The photojournalist had lived in the village of Ololosokwan, near the natural wonders of the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater.

While there Keegan heard about land disputes between a Maasai tribe and the Massachusetts-based Thomson Safaris Company and began following up on the story. Disagreements over land rights were known to be common between Maasai tribes and tourist companies. While most cases appear to have been settled peacefully, Keegan wanted to prove that violence had been used against this particular tribe to get hold of land rights.

He told his friends about Maasai who had been beaten and arrested and about two pregnant women who had suffered miscarriages because of mistreatment. He stated that the company's security guards and even the police would try to bribe Maasai families to keep quiet. In one email to his colleague and friend, Tim Gallagher, a journalist for the Irish newspaper *Sunday World*, he also reported that one Maasai had been shot dead. He assumed that other deaths also had something to do with the disputes between the safari company and the local people and believed the police were acting in favour of Thomson Safaris. He realised the involvement of the police and local officials could be very dangerous for him.

He first became aware he was in real danger after security contractors linked to Thomson Safaris came to visit and question him. He spoke to his family every day to tell them he was alright and told his father Mike Keegan he "saw someone shoot a pregnant lady in front of him and he wanted to reveal all." Keegan believed he was onto a story with international significance.

On the evening of his death Keegan went out with his friend David Redmond to the Zebra bar in a shopping centre in Nairobi. He talked about his concerns regarding the story he was investigating and explained he was afraid he might get into big trouble if he published it. He left the bar at around 9.30pm and tried to catch a taxi back home. This was the last time his friend saw him alive.

Independent inquiry demanded

Keegan's death has not only left his family distraught but also angry at the quality of its investigation. They have called for an independent inquiry. They told the international press that it was not because they did not trust the Kenyan police with the investigations, but it would be "difficult to be happy with an investigation 10,000 miles away. We are working with our own sources to make sure the investigation is being carried out and is ongoing," Keegan's sister Nikki told the press. The case had some odd elements which needed to be further investigated, she added.

Keegan had accused the police of working together with the safari company and even if the police were not directly involved, he questioned the level of corruption that might exist

within the force.

The case remains unsolved and the Committee to Protect Journalists along with Keegan's family is helping to investigate his death. It is not known when it will be possible to name the first suspects and the Kenyan police have as yet been unable to provide the hard drives and computer equipment that the family expected to have been in Keegan's apartment. It is probable that the information on those hard drives would reveal more about the case on which Keegan was working and maybe help to solve his murder.

Brave reporters lucky to escape with their lives

They looked death straight in the eye, and survived to tell their tales. There are hundreds of stories about journalists who have been under fire while simply trying to do the work they were assigned to. Many of them have come very close to losing their lives and some have been severely injured. Others have escaped with a terrible shock and have to live with the resulting trauma and nightmares.

Grenade attack in Afghanistan

In 2001 Kathleen Kenna was covering the US offensive in Afghanistan known as Operation Anaconda, and was travelling in a van with three other people on a road leading through the province of Gardez. A grenade was thrown through their open car window and rolled directly under Kathleen's seat. It immediately exploded and severely injured the Canadian reporter. She was rushed by a helicopter to the Bagram Air Force Base in Northern Afghanistan. She had lost part of her back and her thigh, but the only thing she could think of was her husband who had been sitting in the van with her. She told the press later on, that she believed that she would die, but she thought: "I can't leave my husband here alone." Luckily he and the other people in the van survived this attack, which happened shortly after a reporter from the *Washington Post* overheard a conversation by two unknown gunmen nearby who had been talking about taking foreign correspondents

hostage.

Even though Kenna has been dreadfully scarred for life, she would like to go back some day and she continued to be committed to the country, its people and its stories.

“I think about the Afghan people a lot. I read everything I can about the country. I worry about their future.”

Abducted in Gaza

“It's going to be all right. You are going to come home to me.” Olaf Wiig’s wife, Anita McNaught, told the cameras in a video appeal to his kidnappers. The New Zealander, another photojournalist, was kidnapped, together with his American colleague, the journalist Steve Centanni, while he was working as a freelance cameraman for Fox News in Gaza. On August 14, 2006 the two were on their way home when four men with Kalashnikovs forced them out of their car. They were taken hostage by a radical group calling itself the Holy Jihad Brigade.

Wiig thought that he was going to die in Gaza. The kidnappers forced the men to make a video with a message for the Western world. They had to dress up in beige Arab-style robes and tell the world they had converted to Islam. Their abductors demanded that all Muslims in US jails should be released within 72 hours.

Their captors made threats to kill Wiig’s American colleague, but told him they would spare him, because he was a New Zealander and there was no bad feeling between the Muslim world and New Zealand. Wiig feared they would kill him too and didn’t believe he would get out of there alive. His wife, in her video appeal, reminded the kidnappers that their hostages were in the Middle East to tell their story. “The bottom line is, there is no good reason for these two men to be held. They are friends of the Palestinians. They are here telling the Palestinian story for weeks now, when the rest of the world's media has not been here.”

Both men were unaccountably set free after two weeks. Wiig is still not sure why they were released and what their abductors gained from their kidnapping. When he was interviewed

by the BBC three days after he was set free, he said he was unsure if he would ever go back to Gaza, although it was important that someone should report from this region. “It's dangerous there for various reasons and for a lot of people now - for a lot of networks - probably Gaza is now a no-go area and I think for the people of Gaza that's just such a tragedy because their story needs to be told and the best way of telling that is to have international journalists walking the streets and being able to tell the story of everyday people in Gaza and the minute that story is not being told, then I think that's a great tragedy.”

One good deed

Taliban military commander Mullah Dadullah proclaimed on September 4, 2006 in Afghanistan that the Taliban would have an Islamic right to kill Western journalists, who would distribute misleading information. It seems as if his viewpoint is shared by an increasing number of groups and their adherents worldwide.

Dadullah insisted that every reporter who uses “incorrect information” from coalition forces or NATO will be targeted and killed. However, the final judgement as to whether information is incorrect would appear to lie with the Taliban alone and it would also pass down the sentence of death.

Italian freelance photojournalist Gabriele Torsello appeared to be one of the many victims of the Taliban leader's warning when he was abducted in Afghanistan in October 2006. The abductors threatened to kill Torsello unless Italy both returned Abdul Rahman who was an Afghan Christian convert who had been given asylum in the Mediterranean country, and withdrew its soldiers from Afghanistan. In a bizarre twist, Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, another Taliban spokesman, made the announcement that they had not abducted Torsello. He said the reporter was an innocent man and the Taliban wouldn't kidnap an innocent. Ahmadi claimed the kidnappers took the journalist only to defame the Taliban and accused the Afghan Government of hiding the reporter. In his outrage he added: “When we kidnap someone, we immediately inform the media. And if the person is proven guilty after interrogation, our supreme council decides his fate.”

Ahmadi's statement acknowledged how valuable Western correspondents are for terror organisations today. These groups deliberately target and use correspondents to achieve their goals, or kill them because they are counted among the enemy. Terrorists and insurgents are aware of how important Western journalists are to the media and if they kidnap them, they are guaranteed a large and attentive audience.

Whether it is to blackmail Western governments, to obtain ransom or just to make a point of their strength and their opinion about the Western world – kidnapped foreign correspondents are their trump card to get what they want.

In Gabriele Torsello's case the confusion about whether a Taliban group abducted the correspondent or not luckily ended on November 3, 2006. He was released unharmed and in good health. The man who thought he was going to be murdered by his abductors was set free and continued to do what he loved, being a reporter. Torsello's release was praised by the media as he was well-known for his humanitarian photojournalism in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Just before his kidnapping he had helped an Afghan infant of nine-months get the surgery she needed. He had paid for the removal of a tumour on her eye, which her parents could not afford. The journalist, who had seen the baby suffering from the tumour, offered his help without even knowing the family. Once again we cannot know whether his actions, in this case altruistic, affected his fate.

After his release, Torsello would not say if he would ever go back into the dangerous area. For now he had clearly other priorities. "Now I want to go home and hug my son."

No story was worth this

"I think you'll be wanting this," said the man to Rory Carroll as he fetched a beer can out of his pocket. Carroll took the can gratefully; he had just survived the shock of his life.

It was October 19, 2005 when foreign correspondent Carroll, a 33-year-old Irish correspondent for the British *Guardian* newspaper, ran into the arms of his kidnappers. He had just finished an interview with victims of Saddam Hussein's regime and had left their house in Sadr City, Baghdad when cars came speeding around the corner and several

gunmen jumped out. Carroll's drivers and translator were attacked and he was handcuffed, and forced into the attackers' vehicle.

Carroll was fearful, knowing that kidnapping was a potential death sentence for Iraqi staff as well as the foreign correspondents who were the targets. "Since hostages started having their heads sawn off we have all been obsessed by it."

The correspondent was led into a house and locked up in a dark concrete passageway furnished only with a rug and a pillow and left in darkness. He was told he had been abducted to force the freeing of a Shia militiaman who had been imprisoned by the British. "I sat down and tried to remember why I volunteered for Iraq. Curiosity, ambition and hoping to clear my head after a broken relationship, among other things. It wasn't feeling clear now. No story was worth this."

The experienced correspondent had been based in Baghdad for nine months and had reported the disputes between the US army and the civilians as well as the violence and suffering within Iraq's borders. He had also investigated the killings of journalists by friendly fire by the US military and noted that the US forces would not recognise the independent media's right to work in Iraq and were hostile towards journalists who were not embedded.

On the second morning after his abduction, Carroll was allowed to have a shower and was given something to eat. His treatment was good, compared to many other cases. His kidnapper came to him and told him with a grin on his face that he was a celebrity now and on the news everywhere. In the evening he was forced into the boot of a car and driven to an unknown destination. When the boot was opened again he looked straight into the eyes of a policeman. The officer shook the kidnapper's hand and Carroll was allowed to climb out of the vehicle. He was a free man again, but not only him. His captor also drove off into the night. Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Ahmad Chalabi, later met the journalist and explained that it was his lobbying which had been responsible for setting him free and that he had been released just before he was due to be sold to the jihadists.

This journalist luckily survived his abduction, unharmed and with no ransom paid for his release. Two days after his kidnapping, his father received a call from his son to let him know that he was alive. "He sounded in terrific form, and he told me that he had a beer in his hand," Joe Carroll told the BBC after the release of his son.

Surviving on rice, goat meat and Rothmans

"I gave up smoking in 1992 and somehow decided now would be a good time to start up again," British correspondent Colin Freeman said of his abduction in 2008. He and his Spanish colleague were held by their kidnappers in the mountains of Somalia for almost six weeks, after they had been abducted on November 26.

Freeman, a reporter for the *Sunday Telegraph* in London, and his Spanish colleague, freelance photographer Jose Cendon, had been following up on a story about piracy in Somalia. They were about to head for the Bossasso airport, when they were abducted by their own heavily-armed bodyguards, who they had hired for \$US 20 a day. The two reporters were taken to caves in the south-west of the city where they were held, fearing for their lives. Freeman explained to the *Guardian*:

"Grim memories of the half-dozen colleagues who were abducted in Iraq danced into my head. While all had been eventually released, some had been held for months, their haunted, terrified faces paraded on terrorist video nasties released on the internet. Would I end up like them?"

Freeman and Cendon were lucky. They were not mistreated and received food and water. Their diet was mainly rice, goat meat and cigarettes. The reporters said later they relied on each other to cheer themselves up and smoked Rothmans to settle their nerves. They were threatened by their kidnappers and Freeman had a Kalashnikov put to his head, but they were never hurt. The men were even able to call their families on several occasions and tell them that they would be alright. However, not knowing how long their ordeal would continue was an extremely difficult thing for them to deal with.

After 40 long days, they were finally set free. The media and government officials

explained that no ransom had been paid and that some local elders had protected the lives of the reporters. However, it is not certain what the reason behind the release of the hostages was. That doesn't bother the two correspondents, they were just happy to be alive and to have escaped unharmed. "We're absolutely fine and delighted to be out. We've absolutely no problems at all either physically or mentally," Freeman told the BBC.

An open case

One of the most recent abductions remains, unfortunately, open-ended. Twenty-seven-year old Canadian foreign correspondent Amanda Lindhout and Australian cameraman Nigel Brennan were kidnapped in August 2008 in Somalia and are currently still in the hands of their abductors. The Secretary General of the National Union of Somali Journalists, Omar Faruk Osman, said in an interview with the press from Mogadishu, that foreign journalists are favoured targets in that country. Reporters could be used to create a lot of noise in the media and their abductions would further prove that no authorities are able to control Somalia.

Another major reason for kidnapping Western media staff in Somalia is the money they are worth in ransom. In the case of Lindhout and Brennan, the abductors asked for \$US 2.5 million on September 8, 2008. Since then, no further progress has been made with the case and the international press is still fighting for their release.

After almost five months of negotiations, the kidnappers unexpectedly lowered the ransom for the release of the two journalists to \$US 100.000. Dad Abdi Daud, executive director of the Somali Journalists Rights Agency, said it was a very positive development in the case. Ambroise Pierre, from Reporters Without Borders, said although the drop in ransom could be positive, the circumstances remained very tense. "Their situation is very worrying. They have been held for more than 180 days."

Kidnapped, tortured, threatened and killed – the fatal cases reported in this chapter are an example of the exceptionally brutal treatment of some foreign correspondents.

Sometimes the journalists exposed themselves to unnecessary risks and committed fatal

errors, but often they were cautious enough but still became the targets of attacks.

It seems as if correspondents would have to abandon their naïve viewpoint that no one would dare to harm them, because they are on assignment for humanity. The cases of Daniel Pearl, Trent Keegan and the others show that being a journalist no longer guarantees them civilian status.

It is obvious journalists have become targets and this is a new development. Journalism might have always been dangerous and several journalists might have fallen victims to targeted attacks, but now they are dying in unconscionably high numbers, as the following chapter will show.

Part 3

A deadly profession

Daniel Pearl, Trent Keegan, Karen Fischer and Christian Struwe are as diverse a group of people as you might find, but they all share two things in common. They were all dedicated to their craft and they were all murdered in the honest pursuit of it.

And they are only a fraction of the journalists who have lost their lives in part, or wholly because they were reporters. It may not be hyperbole to say they died as martyrs in the cause of truth and freedom of speech.

But is it, as it seems, actually getting more dangerous for foreign correspondents to report the news, or is it just the impression which we get from the way the media focuses on these cases?

Hasn't journalism in itself always been a dangerous occupation? If it has become worse, when did that occur?

And how do the deaths of foreign correspondents relate to the numerous other local journalists killed worldwide?

Overstatement, drama and a highly developed sense of the tragic are some of the hallmarks of much newspaper copy today. The effect is that audiences can lose track of the wider picture and its context. It is easy to get confused about what is really going on in the world of journalism.

A roll call of honour

More than 1,900 journalists have been killed while on assignment and all of their names are recorded on a glass panel of the Journalists' Memorial at the Newseum in Washington. The huge two-story monument was erected in 1996 by the Freedom Forum, a nonpartisan foundation dedicated to free press, free speech and free spirit for all people, which acts as

the main funder of the work of the Newseum.

The Journalists' Memorial serves as a reminder of those who have lost their lives fighting to publish the truth. It aims to record all the names of journalists killed from 1837 onwards, when records first began. It is one of the only organisations in the world whose data reaches that far back.

Liberty's first martyr

Elijah Parish Lovejoy is the first reporter whose life we know for sure was taken while following this profession. The Newseum records him as being killed in 1837, shortly before his 35th birthday, by a pro-slavery mob. Lovejoy was a Presbyterian minister and had dedicated his journalistic work to the fight against slavery. He was shot dead while trying to protect the new press of his newspaper against the mob and was later described by his newspaper as "liberty's martyr".

Back then journalism was no more dangerous than many other occupations. Until the start of the Crimean War in 1853 only three more journalists died while covering the news. During that war, the first consistent war reporting was established and around 30 reporters covered the combat actions.

William Henry Stowe was the first war correspondent who officially died during the hostilities. However, he did not die in the line of fire, but succumbed to "camp fever", which took his life on June 22, 1855.

The next war correspondent lost his life during the China War, between the British, the French and the Chinese, in 1860. Thomas William Bowbly, a British correspondent of the *Times*, died from harsh treatment in a Chinese prison, after being captured by the Tartar general, San-kolin-sin. The year in which he died, in a sad irony, also marked the beginning of the so called "Golden Age" for journalism. This was when the number of reporters employed by newspapers and media organisations increased exponentially. Along with a higher number of journalists worldwide, the number of journalists killed grew as well, although not remarkably.

Journalists were killed sporadically, but not in very high numbers over the subsequent years.

In 1856 one working journalist was killed and in 1860 two journalists lost their lives. However, during the American Civil War from 1862 to 1865, eight reporters died while reporting on this bitter struggle. This was not surprising, as the number of journalists on the battlefield had increased to more than 500.

After the war was over, the casualty rate among journalists, unsurprisingly, went down again. Ridgeway Glover was the next victim. He was killed, scalped and mutilated by hostile American Indians in 1866, during the Indian Wars in the American West from 1860 to 1890. Four years later, in 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, Christopher Pemberton, a British correspondent, was shot dead by a French rifleman. In 1878 two journalists were murdered while covering the Russo-Turkish War from 1877 to 1878.

Typhoid fever, assault by the Arab forces and ambushes claimed more correspondents' lives during the Sudanese War, which lasted from 1883 and 1885 and killed six reporters.

In the years after the Sudanese War it remained fairly quiet and the next murder did not occur until 1896, more than 10 years after the war had ended. Charles Govin, an American journalist, was found bound to a tree and hacked to death by Spanish soldiers. He had become the first victim of the Cuban Insurrection. A year later, Charles Crosby was killed while he was observing a battle between Spanish soldiers and Cuban insurgents. The Spanish-American War, which was a battle about the issue of liberating Cuba, followed in 1898 and it claimed the lives of three reporters.

The Second Anglo-Boer War and World War I

The Second Anglo-Boer War from 1899 to 1902 killed 13 of its journalistic witnesses. It was the first two-digit number of casualties among journalists that had so far occurred during a war. One of its victims was the Australian correspondent William John Lambie of the *Melbourne Age* who was also the first Australian war correspondent killed while reporting.

The Russo-Japanese War from 1904 to 1905 was not that lethal and only two of the

estimated 200 journalists died. One was shot dead by Chinese soldiers and the other one died, like many others covering the battlefield, of dysentery.

World War I followed and surprisingly turned out to be a relatively safe war for reporters. Only two reporters officially lost their lives during those four harsh years in the trenches. War correspondent Henry Beach Needham died in June 1915, when his plane crashed near Paris and Philip J. S. Dadd was killed in action on August 2, 1916 on the Western front of France.

The *Historical dictionary of war journalism* suggests there may have been a few other casualties among the reporters who have been unaccounted for.

World War II - Their only weapons were their typewriters

World War II, which lasted from 1933 to 1945, was covered by 3000 reporters worldwide. More than half were Americans. Sixty-eight of them died while covering the fighting.

The war's first victim, Ralph W. Barnes, was killed in Yugoslavia in November 1940, when the Royal Air Force bomber carrying him crashed. The other 67 journalists whose lives were taken by the war died under various circumstances. They drowned on torpedoed ships, were murdered in concentration camps, were killed by friendly fire or died from various diseases they caught while working.

The first British correspondent who died, Alexander Massy Anderson from *Reuters*, was described by his colleague Larry Allen of the *Associated Press* as "the bravest and most courageous newspaperman" he had ever known. "He took all the risks, often more than the men who fought. Yet his only weapon was his typewriter." Anderson drowned when his ship HMS *Galatea* sank in the Mediterranean Sea in December 1941. Many other correspondents died in the same way during World War II.

Its last journalistic victim was John Cashman, who died on July 31, 1945, when the bomber he was in crashed during takeoff.

The Korean War

Many reporters who had survived WWII were, remarkably, prepared to put themselves in the line of fire yet again. More than 1,550 reporters covered the Korean War, which broke out in 1950. Seventeen of them never returned from the front. One of those who had been lucky enough to survive World War II was Maximilien Philonenko. He had managed to escape from a German labour camp six times, and joined the *Agence France-Presse* after the war was over. His luck ran out while reporting on the divided Asian nation when he was killed in a military plane crash off the coast of Japan. Again many of his colleagues would share a similar fate.

The Vietnam War

The Vietnam War saw 66 journalists killed while covering the hostilities. The war started as a conflict between communist North Vietnam, backed by China, and South Vietnam, supported by the US, in 1959. The first US combat units were only deployed in 1965, and that was when the first correspondents died. Jerry Rose, who worked as a freelance reporter for *Time Magazine* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, was one of the first to die. His plane was shot down in April 1965 and he died in the central highlands of Vietnam.

An estimated 5,000 reporters covered Vietnam, 2,000 more than for the whole of World War II. A reason for the high number of reporters in the field was because this was a remarkably accessible war.

Brass and charm, the rise of the female reporter

Many of those in Vietnam were women, three and a half times as many as had reported World War II. It is believed that 467 women reported Vietnam.

Prior to 1970, only around 6% of foreign correspondents were women. Today, more than one third are female, as estimated by the *Brookings Institution*. The Vietnam War contributed to this major breakthrough by female journalists.

The first female reporter who died on the Vietnamese front was the highly experienced Dickey Chapelle. She was killed by a booby trap on November 4, 1965. She had earlier

covered World War II, the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, conflicts in Algeria and Lebanon and the fighting in Cuba. She had worked as a war photojournalist and died at the age of 47, not only as the first female journalist in Vietnam, but as first American female journalist to be killed on assignment.

The next woman killed during the Vietnam War was Marguerite Higgins who died on January 3, 1966 of a tropical ailment. She had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1951 for her frontline reporting during the Korean War and was later described by the *New York Times* as a combination of “masculine drive, feminine wiles and professional pride. She had brass and she had charm, and she used them to rise to the top of a profession that usually relegates women to the softie beats of cooking, clothes and society.”

Many of the women who had left for Vietnam went there as freelancers or even as girlfriends who ended up reporting on the conflict. Vietnam was a paradise for freelancers because it was an undeclared war and it was easy to get to the front. There were no harsh restrictions and admittance was easy for almost everyone.

However, at that time war was still considered to be men’s business and women were tolerated, but not much respected as serious reporters. This made it difficult for female reporters to get appreciation for their work in the field from the rest of the newsroom. Women proved they were quite capable of reporting from the front. Because of their accomplishments during Vietnam, female reporters are today treated with respect and appreciation, as some famous examples like Christiane Amanpour and Katie Adie show.

By the time the Vietnam War ended a total of 66 reporters, male and female, had lost their lives while covering the events. And it would get only worse for the media.

The 70s and 80s, local reporters are in the line of fire

There hadn’t been a war. There hadn’t been a natural disaster or epidemic, yet 93 journalists died in Argentina between 1976 and 1983.

Argentina’s “dirty war” claimed the lives of 49 journalists in 1976 alone, from a total of 53 killed journalists worldwide. This made 1976 a year of the worst sort of records; it was the

first time that more than 20 journalists had been killed in just one year and the first time in history that such a huge number of journalists died in one single country not at war. And the fatalities would continue to grow alarmingly, many of them, as in Argentina, local journalists working on domestic stories, murdered by their countrymen.

1977 saw 37 journalists killed, 30 of them again in Argentina. In the following year 19 newsmen and women died. Ten were murdered in Argentina.

But from 1980 onwards, more countries would join the roll call of dishonour as killers of their reporters. Two Central American countries, Guatemala and El Salvador, murdered 25 of their journalists, more than half of the 43 reporters who died worldwide that year.

Another 25 journalists were killed in 1981 by both countries, making up most of the 33 who died worldwide.

In 1982, 24 reporters died and in 1983, 33 more journalists were killed while on assignment. Eight of them died during the Peruvian Civil War. They were killed because they worked for an opposition newspaper. Eight more died in Thailand, because they revealed illegal land deals, illegal business practices and exposed gambling and prostitution. In none of these cases would a suspect be identified.

In 1984, 38 journalists died in countries such as in Brazil, Bangladesh, Thailand, India, Peru, Cyprus and the Philippines. In 1985, 33 reporters were killed, 16 of them in the Philippines. 1988 was another average year for the decade with 33 journalists killed worldwide. Four of them died during the Soviet-Afghan War, in Afghanistan; five died in the Philippines, four in Mexico and several others in countries such as Colombia, India, Pakistan and Peru.

The 80s saw an average death toll of around 30 to 35 journalists killed worldwide each year and the numbers tended to increase slightly but steadily over the years. Certain countries contributed more to the annual toll than others, but it generally got progressively hazardous for journalists worldwide.

Shocking peaks in the 1990s

The start of the 1990s had an unpleasant surprise in store for journalists. The new decade started with the shocking number of 93 dead reporters in 1991, the biggest jump ever.

The war in the former Yugoslavia, and the eruption of the volcano, Mt. Unzen in Japan, were partly to blame for the high death toll. Twenty-four reporters died in Croatia and Slovenia during the Yugoslav War, Colombia murdered 10 of its reporters and Peru killed six in that year. Another six died in the Soviet Union and five more in India.

Gulf War I claimed the lives of four reporters in the same year and Mexico and Haiti each killed three journalists; several others died in countries such as Pakistan, Israel, Guatemala and Kuwait. Ninety-three dead reporters would mark a tragic new benchmark.

Several more countries developed into continuously dangerous places in the 1990s.

Tajikistan, Turkey and Algeria were among the most dangerous places on earth and many of their reporters were killed on assignment.

In 1992, 63 died, and in 1993, a total of 75 reporters were killed worldwide.

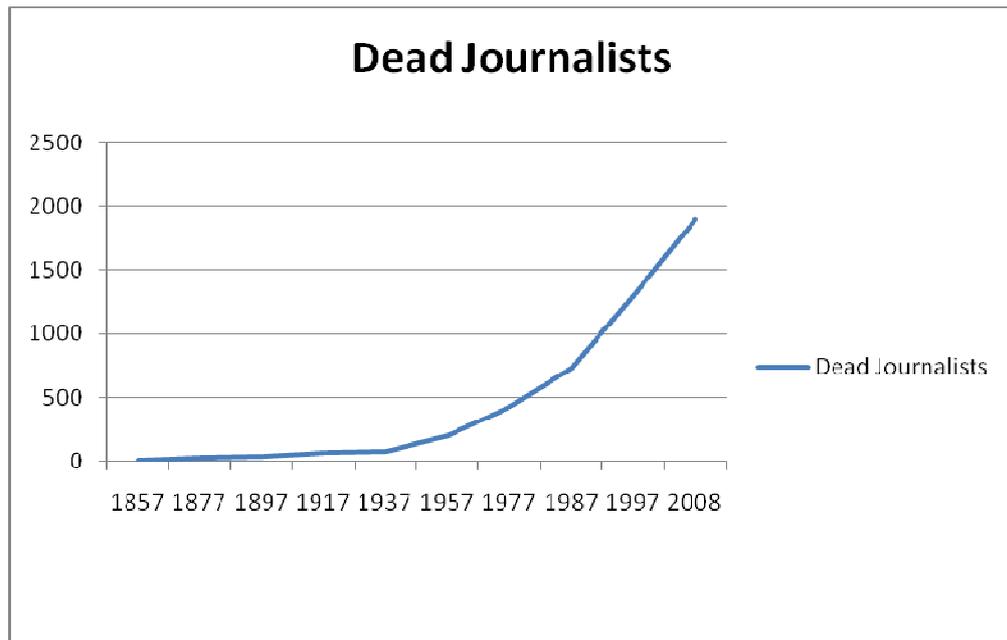
1994 saw a new peak in the annual casualty rate with 94 dead journalists around the globe.

Journalists got shot in Tajikistan, had their throats cut in Algeria, were ripped to pieces by landmines in the Yugoslav War in Bosnia and annihilated during the genocide in Rwanda.

In 1995, 68 journalists died and Algeria killed most of them, but Russia proved to be deadly, too, with 15 reporters killed in that country.

From 1996 onwards the figures tended to ease off and a drop in the number of victims appeared. Only 45 journalists died in this year, which was half the number of casualties compared to two years before. In 1997, 28 reporters died while on assignment. Sadly, the hiatus was short lived and the toll began steadily rising again.

Journalists killed between 1837 and 2008



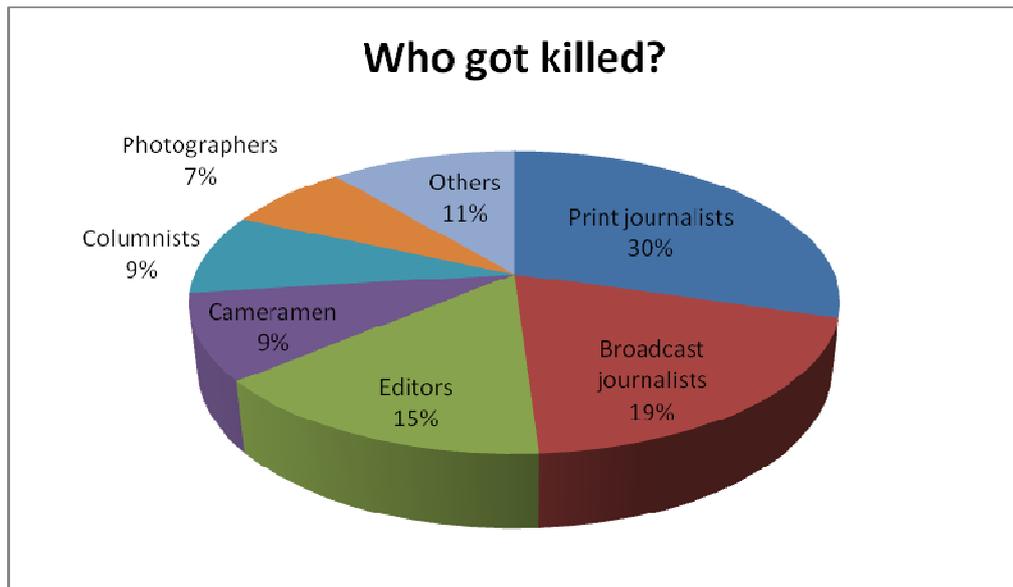
Source: *The Newseum's database* (www.newseum.org/scripts/journalist/main.htm)

The present

In the new century death tolls of 60 journalists a year and more have become a tragic normality. Journalists are having an increasingly hard time doing their job when they are seemingly targeted from so many diverse quarters. It is outrageous that 27 dead journalists, as in 2000, can be considered a relatively good year.

Although the figures of dead reporters fluctuate from year to year, the trend is still a steady increase. In 2001, 51 journalists were killed; a year later 32 reporters died and 2004 claimed the lives of 79 reporters. In the year 2007, 93 journalists were killed, just short of the record of 1991. A year later 62 died on assignment. How many more must follow?

Media organisations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists have made it their task to analyse the data of reporters killed and can make general statements about who died, how, where and why. It found that most of the dead reporters between 1992 and 2008 were print journalists. They made up around 30% of the total death toll, just over 300 print reporters of the more than 1,000 killed journalists.



Source: *Committee to Protect Journalists (January 1, 1992—December 31, 2008)*

Broadcast journalists were at a much lower risk with around 19%, of the murdered journalists worldwide having worked for TV or radio. Editors were often targeted if their companies criticised the government, published too many stories about local corruption or investigated local crimes. Regardless if they were working for a TV station or a newspaper, they belonged to the group of journalists which were the third likeliest to be killed. Cameramen and the group of columnists/commentators each contributed 9%, around 90 victims to the overall death toll, closely followed by photographers, who made up just over 7%.



Source: *Committee to Protect Journalists (January 1, 1992—December 31, 2008)*

In most murder cases over the last decade journalists have been killed by small arms, such as handguns and rifles. Around 53%, respectively, approximately 530 reporters died of a shot fired from a close distance. Heavy arms, including artillery and air strikes, were responsible for the deaths of around 14.1%, more than 140, of the murdered journalists. A 10th of the reporters were killed by explosives, and almost 7% got stabbed. In 5% of the cases, reporters have been bodily attacked and strangulated or beaten and died from their injuries. In fact, around 50 reporters between 1992 and 2008 died in that way.

The most tragic of these statistics published by the Committee to Protect Journalists in early 2009 is that 88.8% of the murders among journalists remained unpunished. Around 6.5 % have been brought to partial justice and only 4.7% to full justice. According to CPJ it considers justice as fully served when both the perpetrators and masterminds are convicted.

The research has shown the numbers of journalists killed worldwide has increased dramatically over the past years and countries can turn into deadly zones for journalists at almost any time, and one critical article can result in death. Many countries have been deadly in the past and even more are highly hazardous today.

Of the 194 countries that make up the modern world, 130 are credited with at least one dead

journalist since monitoring began. New Zealand is, for example, one of the safest countries in the world and no journalist has officially lost his life within its borders.

However, there are now more hot spots than ever and more journalists get killed each year. But is it the foreign correspondents, whose cases are so well-illustrated in the Western news media, or the local reporters, who face the higher risk? And why are some places so much more dangerous than others?

Hot spots – Whose lives are the deadliest countries taking?

Many reporters have paid the ultimate price for simply pursuing and publishing the truth, and the general impression which the Western news media often generates is that the casualty rate of their foreign correspondents is rising particularly rapidly.

Examples like Daniel Pearl, Enzo Baldini, who was killed in Iraq in 2008 or Trent Keegan, evidently prove that the cases of extremely brutal treatment, cold-blooded murders and targeted abductions of foreign correspondents are increasing. Foreign correspondents particularly seem to be the victims of blind rage, prejudice and are used as a tool against the Western world. But what do the actual numbers tell us? Apart from the growth of brutality against foreign correspondents, are they dying in higher numbers than other journalists?

The answer is surprising. They are not. Foreign correspondents are facing increasingly rough and vicious treatment and surely are targeted, but not more than the ordinary local journalist. In fact, foreign correspondents only make up 14% of the total death toll. The number of dead journalists worldwide is rising at staggering levels and the number of dead foreign correspondents is rising evenly alongside the total casualty rate.

Between 1978 and 1988, 284 reporters were killed; 42 of them were foreign correspondents, 14.8 % of the total number. In the following decade, 11.6 % of the journalists killed worldwide were foreign correspondents, 66 out of 568 reporters. From 1998 to 2008, 81 of the 542 dead newsmen and women were foreign correspondents on

assignment, which makes 14.9 % of the total death toll.

It is clear that there are far more ordinary journalists who are getting killed in the line of duty than their foreign based colleagues.

So why do Western audiences get the impression that their foreign correspondents are more vulnerable than any other journalists?

The Western media is presenting a distorted image of reality. Its selective news coverage highlights the killings of Western correspondents, while ignoring the deaths of other, non-Western journalists.

The case of Daniel Pearl is a good example. The *New York Times* alone published 124 news articles about him from the time he was abducted. Certainly this was an extraordinary case, but it still is a huge concentration on one single man.

Nava Raj Sharma, editor of the Nepali-language weekly *Kadam*, shared a similar fate. He was kidnapped too, in the same year as Pearl. He had his eyes gouged out, as part of his torture, before he was killed by Maoist rebels. The difference is, he didn't get a single line in the *New York Times*.

TV producer, Hamid al-Duleimi, also did not appear within the news context of the paper. He, like Pearl, was abducted and also left a pregnant wife behind, along with three children, when he was killed and dumped on a pile of garbage in Baghdad, in 2007.

It appears as if these people count for less in the Western media, and the lives of Western journalists are considered more valuable.

When looking at those countries where most of the journalists get killed each year, it becomes strikingly obvious they are exclusively non-Western, developing, third world or non-democratic countries. Journalists were and still are at a much higher risk in those countries than they have ever been in Western democratic and developed countries, even when working abroad. The lack of respect for press freedoms in many of the non-Western countries is contributing to an appalling death toll. However, the Western news media in general finds the deaths of local, non-Western reporters, to be largely un-newsworthy. They hardly get any attention within the news agenda of the international press. Revelations of

the often grisly and gruesome killings among their colleagues go unreported.

Argentina

When the ruling president Juan Peron died in 1974, a military coup overthrew Argentina's Government and started ruling the country. In just one decade the lives of almost 100 journalists were wiped out.

It was a massive slaughter of reporters and civilians by a military regime which made approximately 30,000 citizens "disappear". Everyone who was opposed to the new military government was silenced or vanished and was later listed among the "los desaparecidos", the disappeared ones.

El Salvador and Guatemala

From 1980 onwards the Central American countries of El Salvador and Guatemala stood out with their large numbers of murdered journalists. Shaken by an enduring Civil War from 1960 onwards, Guatemala was not able to provide any security for its journalists and they became victims of politically motivated murders and military raids.

El Salvador's civil war lasted from 1980 to 1992 and left the country in a state of continual unrest and hostility. It claimed the lives of at least 70,000 civilians, among them numerous journalists who had dedicated their lives to reporting the brutality all around them. In both countries an estimated 50 journalists were killed in 1980 and 1981.

Foreign correspondents were only occasionally caught between the lines in the conflicts. The Dutch media men Jan Kuiper and Hans Ter Laag lost their lives during the actions of the civil war in El Salvador. However, the main targets were local reporters who were murdered by the police, the military, right-wing death squads and leftist guerrillas. Since then El Salvador and Guatemala have remained lethal for journalists. Reporters get killed in the area almost every year.

The Philippines

In 1984, six of the 38 dead journalists worldwide were murdered in the Philippines. A year later 16 reporters died there. Tim Olivarez was just one of them. He had exposed drug

smuggling for his journal *Tempo* and was abducted in February 1985. The gunmen who kidnapped him, stabbed him and then burned his body and scattered the remains into the ocean south of Manila. Many of the other dead reporters died in similar ways. Most were killed by military gunmen for investigating corruption of local politicians or the police and publishing human rights violations within the country.

In 1986 only two journalists lost their lives in the Philippines, but in 1987 the death toll climbed to 11 journalists. In the following year five reporters died and in 1990 another seven journalists were killed. Since then the situation in the Philippines has remained tense and not a single year has gone by without at least one dead reporter.

More hot spots in the 1990s

In the 1990s it got much worse for journalists and it started with the war in Yugoslavia, which contributed to many of the deaths. While in many wars before, journalists had mainly been killed through impersonal attacks, such as crossfire, bombings and land mines, in Yugoslavia they were targeted and some killed point-blank. Targeted were mainly the local journalists, who had to carry yellow press cards and thus were harassed by Bosnian and Serb forces. Foreign correspondents had obtained blue press cards from the United Nations Protection Forces and were treated differently. Croatia became the deadliest country of the year in 1991, when it killed 22 of its reporters. The outbreak of the Yugoslav War had led to the high number of casualties in the country and until its end in 1995 the war had claimed more than 50 journalists' lives. In the same year the Committee to Protect Journalists called on the UN to end the double standard caused by the labelling of local and foreign journalists and the UN agreed to introduce one card for all reporters.

In the same decade Tajikistan, Turkey and Algeria developed into hazardous hot spots and many of their reporters were killed on assignment. However, they were not the only countries which were dangerous to journalists.

Turkey

In 1992, 13 journalists died in Turkey. In 1993, three more were killed, and in 1994 two reporters got murdered. In most cases the murderers have never been found and one can only speculate why the reporters died. Some journalists had written critical articles about

government counter-guerrilla forces, others had exposed the collaboration between the mainstream press and the government or composed articles that had been critical of Islam. The most recent victim is one of the most famous and did receive some coverage in the Western media. Hrant Dink, a 52-year-old reporter, was shot outside his newspaper office in 2007. He had published an article about the massacre of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire from 1915–17 and was called a traitor by some nationalist Turks. He was assassinated in public and his murderer, the 17-year-old nationalist Ogun Samast, yelled as he ran away: “I have shot a nonbeliever.”

Tajikistan

In Tajikistan the killings of journalists began during its civil war in March 1992, when 12 of its reporters died on assignment. The country would remain a hot spot over the next years and another 17 Tajik journalists have followed their colleagues’ fate since then. In 2003 the Committee to Protect Journalists wrote a formal letter to Tajikistan’s Deputy Prosecutor-General Azizmat Imomov in which it requested information about the murders of 29 journalists since 1992. Although it is sure that most journalists died for political reasons and in retaliation for their journalism, most of the cases remained unsolved and unpunished. The CPJ needed to uncover what has happened to those journalists and asked Imomov for his support. It has got better in Tajikistan when the conflict ended in 1996 and the killings stopped as suddenly as they had appeared.

Algeria

Algeria turned into a most deadly country in 1995. Its bloody civil war, which had started in 1991 as an armed conflict between the Algerian Government and several Islamist rebel groups, had left the country in chaos and devastation and particularly journalists were treated with hatred.

In 1993, eight reporters were killed from a total of 75 worldwide. In 1994, 19 reporters died within the country and in the following year 26 were killed. A similar thing which had happened in Turkey shortly before, appeared to be happening in Algeria now. Islamist groups called upon the population to return to their religious roots and resign from secular values. In many killings of Algerian journalists, Muslim extremists were suspected of being

involved and death lists had been put up at mosques which included the names of several journalists. Since the beginning of the 1990s, 64 reporters have been killed in Algeria. After the end of the civil war in 2002, no more reporters were killed within the country's borders.

Russia

The death of Anna Politkovskaya is the disgraceful and tragic monument marking Russia's relationship with its journalists. Politkovskaya was found shot dead in October 2006 in the elevator of her apartment block in Moscow. She had been a critical journalist and investigative author and had won several awards, such as the Amnesty International Global Award for Human Rights Journalism in 2001. The reporter had written several critical books about former President Putin and the Russian system and investigated human rights violations committed by the Russians in Chechnya. Russian state authorities are suspected of her murder which was committed only two years after an unsuccessful poisoning attempt on her in 2004. In the same year Politkovskaya had documented the awful situation for journalists in Russia in her book *Putin's Russia*. She said in her book:

“All we have left is the internet, where information is still freely available. For the rest, if you want to go on working as a journalist, it's total servility to Putin. Otherwise, it can be death, the bullet, poison, or trial — whatever our special services, Putin's guard dogs, see fit.”

Almost 70 reporters have been killed within Russia since the 80s, gunned down, killed by hammer blows to the head or beaten to death with metal rods. The reasons were diverse, but certainly the Chechen conflict played a big part in many of the deaths. Journalists' investigations and coverage of economic and organised crimes were among the other reasons which made journalists targets in the country.

Not much has changed in Russia since Anna Politkovskaya death. Just recently journalist Anastasia Baburova and human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov were shot in broad daylight on January 19, 2009. Markelov had been Politkovskaya's lawyer.

Rwanda

1994 was a record year with 94 dead journalists worldwide. Up until then only one reporter had officially been recorded as killed in Rwanda. But in that year, 20 reporters were murdered in the country as part of the mass genocide which claimed the lives of at least 500,000 people.

Andre Kameya's wife and son were killed along with the journalist, an opposition Liberal Party official, during a Hutu-led massacre. Gratien Karambizi shared a similar fate; he was shot at home along with two of his children. Karambizi had worked for a newspaper opposed to the Hutu-dominated government. Many of the other killed journalists died in similar ways, and often whole families were extinguished.

Columbia, Thailand, India, Peru, Brazil and Mexico are just a few of the other countries which killed journalists in small, but continually growing numbers every year since then.

The watershed of 9/11

The terrorist attacks in New York on September 11, 2001 led to tremendous changes for the world of the media and made it even more dangerous. They had such a huge impact on journalism that they transformed the everyday contexts within which many reporters operate.

Press critic and journalism professor Jay Rosen believes 9/11 changed the principles of journalism, including the level of attachment journalists occupied in their coverage. Many journalists felt connected to the victims and wrote their stories in a personal way. The attacks erased the boundaries separating the professional position of journalists from the personal position of average citizens. American academic sociologist Michael Schudson stated in *Journalism after September 11* that post-9/11 journalism was "a prose of solidarity rather than a prose of information".

And, most of all, 9/11 focused the media on one particular country: Afghanistan. Eager to cover the invasion by the US, Western correspondents were waiting impatiently to get their stories, not aware of the dangers they would have to face within the country.

Afghanistan turned out to be disastrous for journalists and Scott Peterson of the *Christian Science Monitor* realised the incredible dangers the country posed in late 2001.

“With eight journalists killed ... Afghanistan is now the deadliest place in the world to practice this profession... The risks are rising now, in part, because the battle lines are vague... Most journalists feel a professional competitive pressure to test the limits of safety to get a story... sometimes crossing the line between observer and combatant.”

There was an outcry within the media. Wars had claimed lives of reporters before, but now Western correspondents seemed to be deliberately hunted in Afghanistan and that was a major change from previous wars.

Afghanistan became the ultimate hot spot from 2001 onwards and the highly dangerous climate was fuelled by the anarchy and chaos which broke out in the country shortly after the beginning of the war.

Dead zone Afghanistan

The invasion of Afghanistan by the US began on October 7, 2001 and soon the conflict claimed the first lives of foreign correspondents. Johanne Sutton of *Radio France Internationale*, Pierre Billand of *RTL*, and Volker Handloik of the *Stern* magazine from Germany were killed in an ambush by Taliban forces in November 2001, just one month after the war in Afghanistan had been officially declared by the US and the UK. Their car was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade and, although it was armoured, was totally destroyed. The three correspondents died at the scene. The attack marked the beginning of a series of deaths.

Eight days later the next journalists were murdered when their eight-vehicle convoy was attacked by unidentified gunmen. Harry Burton, Maria Grazia Cutuli, Julio Fuentes and Azizullah Haidari were forced out of their car and executed, after their assailant hit them with their gun butts and yelled at them: “What do you think? It’s the end of the Taliban? The Taliban are still here!”

A day later, three other journalists were threatened with guns on the same street. Luckily their Afghan translator was able to convince their attackers not to kill them.

After those shocking episodes, many press organisations decided to get their correspondents out. Afghanistan became a “No-Go” for many journalists.

In 2003 things suddenly changed when the US decided to invade another country. Within a short period, Iraq became another living hell for reporters.

Iraq: Stories from hell

“Let’s start with one simple fact about the war in Iraq: Statistically, journalists were ten times more likely to die than the 250,000 American or British soldiers,” Bill Katovsky and Timothy Carlson stated in their book about embedded journalists in Iraq in 2003.

From the time the invasion started, Iraq was highly lethal. Even experienced correspondents like Robert Fisk declared the situation in Iraq so dangerous they would not know how to continue reporting from there. “Fisk, who has previously accused colleagues of practising ‘hotel journalism’ in Iraq, said that ‘mouse journalism’ is now the best he can do in the country,” Matthew Lewin, editor of the *Hampstead & Highgate Express*, explained in an internet blog.

Iraq has not always been that dangerous. The country had been shaken by several wars, but it had never posed such a great risk to reporters as during Gulf War II. In Gulf War I, from 1990 to 1991, only four journalists lost their lives. In Gulf War II an estimated 159 reporters are recorded as being killed up to December 2008.

In October 2004, Terrence Smith, correspondent for the *Online NewsHour*, stated:

“The security situation in Iraq has grown so perilous in recent months that several areas of the country are virtually inaccessible to Western reporters ... Covering Iraq has proven to be a deadly job. In all, 46 reporters have been killed in the 19 months since the start of the war. Reporters from many European countries have packed up and left, fearing for their safety. They have good reasons.” And there was even worse to come.

Media academics are searching for explanations for the many deaths. Certainly the more than 6,000 journalists who had flooded the country by the end of 2004 was one of the

reasons. Most of the reporters stayed in the official military 'Green Zone' of Iraq, but some decided to remain outside and created their own areas of safety by employing private security guards or living in hotels protected by the US military. However, nowhere has proven to be safe so far and journalists are still killed in high numbers, both outside and inside the Green Zone.

Peter Spiegel, reporter for the *Financial Times* explained in *Killing the messenger: Journalists at risk in modern warfare* why Western correspondents in particular were targets in Iraq.

“They’re looking for American faces or Western-looking faces. The problem is, after having talked to friends and colleagues who are there now, there is a lot of nervousness that journalists are being targeted because, as Danny Pearl proved, there’s more media attention when you kidnap a journalist.”

In the beginning of the Iraq War, as in Afghanistan, Western correspondents were at especially high risk, but now every reporter is on the hit list. In early 2005, CPJ’s spokesman, Joel Campagna, stated: “Obviously, our current attention is directed on Iraq, which, in our opinion, is the most dangerous place in the world for journalists.”

Reporters die today in huge numbers, not only in Iraq, but worldwide and they are targeted on all fronts. Almost 2,000 journalists have been killed on assignment since monitoring started. More than a quarter of them, namely 594 reporters, died in the last decade. Many media academics and organisations have tried to find explanations. The central question, which needs to be answered is, which new dangers make journalism more deadly today than ever before in history.

Part 4

New dangers

It is a wonder anyone wants to be a journalist these days, when 60 or more die on average each year? The risks of the profession have increased dramatically in the last few years. It becomes particularly obvious when comparing historical and recent wars. In World War I two reporters died, World War II claimed the lives of 68 journalists. The Vietnam War took the lives of 66 journalists and gave a hint of how hazardous it would get in future conflicts. Gulf War I was the quiet before the storm. It took the lives of only four journalists. But its bigger brother, Gulf War II, slew around 160 reporters in just six years.

Between 1968 and 1978, 184 journalists lost their lives; the increase became more dramatic in the following decade from 1978 to 1988, when 284 reporters were killed. The peak of casualties among the reporting elite, however, was reached only in the last two decades with a total of 1,128 dead journalists worldwide between 1988 and 2008. But, what may surprise many people, journalists included, is that of the overall total, only around 15% have been foreign correspondents or those on war or overseas assignment. It's clear that local journalists are facing a markedly higher risk than their globetrotting colleagues. The reasons for this are complex, surprising and do not make pleasant reading.

Obviously, there are more reporters covering the news today than ever been before. Sadly, it is axiomatic that they are also dying in higher numbers.

The history of foreign correspondence started with about 30 war reporters covering the Crimean War and climbed up to more than 500 during the American Civil War. More than 1,550 journalists covered the Korean War, 5,000 were in Vietnam and the current war in Iraq is flooded by more than 6,000 accredited reporters. These figures can only give an indication of the total number of journalists operating worldwide. It is hard to estimate the actual figures. There are too many freelancers and independent journalists who are not accredited with media companies operating worldwide.

Nonetheless, the increasing pool of journalists worldwide, the growing advances in the development of transmission technologies, and the emphasis on proximity to the action and being first with the pictures cannot be seen as the only reasons for the high casualty rate, especially the huge increase in mortality for those who are killed within their own national borders.

Friendly fire

It sounds like an oxymoron saying someone is killed by “friendly fire”. The military claims that friendly fire deaths are unavoidable accidents, but media critics, such as Robert Fisk, and many independent media organisations, such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF), believe that in some cases journalists were deliberately targeted. “We can only conclude that the US Army deliberately and without warning targeted journalists,” RSF stated in a report about the killings of three journalists by friendly fire in Iraq in April 2003.

The most notorious case during Gulf War II was perhaps the bombing of the Palestine Hotel in April 2003, when two *Reuters*’ correspondents died and many others were injured. The attack had been carried out by an American tank and was sharply criticised by media organisations all over the world. Investigations revealed it was not a deliberate attack, but an avoidable one. US troops thought they were firing on an Iraqi forward artillery observer when they hit the hotel, which was well-known to accommodate international journalists. Another direct missile strike on *Al-Jazeera*’s Baghdad offices on March 8, 2003, claimed the life of Tariq Ayoub, a Palestinian Jordanian correspondent working for the Arab TV station and injured several others. It caused an outcry within the international press, because the US military was well aware that the building contained Arab journalists critical of the invasion.

In 2003, Mazen Dana, a Palestinian journalist and *Reuters*’ cameraman died because US soldiers confused his camera with a rocket launcher and shot him.

Terry Lloyd, a highly experienced British television journalist, died in 2003 from friendly fire. He was reporting in Iraq as a “unilateral” correspondent who was not embedded with the military. He was caught in crossfire and died of his wounds. No one was charged as the

military said the person who fired the fatal bullet could not be identified.

A year later, another two journalists were killed by the US military. Cameraman Ali Abdel-Aziz and reporter Ali Al-Khatib from the TV channel *Al-Arabiya* were shot while filming the Burj al-Hayat Hotel, this despite having the permission of the US troops. When a car ran through the US checkpoint without stopping, soldiers opened fire and killed both men.

After several accidental killings of reporters by US troops, the International Federation of Journalists charged the military with “incompetence, reckless soldiering, and cynical disregard” for reporters' lives, particularly for those who were not embedded with their troops. Critics believe the military's attitude towards independent journalists was, and still is, almost hostile. Rory Carroll, correspondent for the *Guardian* and a victim of kidnapping himself, described the US troops as “out of control” in an article for his paper in September 2005 and stated that deaths by friendly fire too often remained unsolved. Rodney Pinder, director of the International News Safety Institute (INSI), confirmed Carroll's viewpoint. “Whitewashes. There have been no satisfactory investigations that we know of.”

Veteran correspondent Robert Fisk even raised the question “Is there some element in the US military that wants to take out journalists?”

Fisk, along with other media organisation, not only asked whether those incidents could have been avoided, but also wondered if those attacks had been purposefully directed towards inconvenient journalists. “Is there some element in the American military that has come to hate the press and wants to take out journalists based in Baghdad, to hurt those whom our Home Secretary, David Blunkett, has maliciously claimed to be working ‘behind enemy lines’,” Fisk wrote in an article in April 2003. Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, at least 18 reporters have been killed by troops by what is called “friendly fire”.

New technology and more competition

Journalists are closer to the action than ever before. Not only more journalists are about trying to get the news first, but they also want to be as close as they can get to it. They have the technology for better pictures, faster transmission and improved sound and they want to make the most of it.

There is not only competition among the reporters themselves, but also among the different types of media. And in the 24/7 news business, everyone is eager to get the news first. Will television, internet, radio or newspapers publish the story before anyone else can?

Preferably live!

And who will get the best shots? Eager to belong to the best of the reporting elite and to beat the competition, journalists are willing to risk more and more, and to knowingly put themselves into very dangerous situations.

British television journalist Nik Gowing stated in 2003 that although media reporting of war has been a dangerous business for a long time, it is now more dangerous than ever. “The new insidious development is that because of the impact of our real-time capability to bear witness immediately, we are being actively targeted by warriors, warlords and forces of even the most highly developed governments who do not want us to see what they are doing.”

A sense of Hollywood, inexperience and money

“It is like Hollywood now,” Robert Fisk remarked referring to those correspondents and journalists who come to the front wearing military uniforms, flak jackets and other war accessories, and looking for some action, but not packing much in the way of experience. Being a foreign correspondent, particularly for TV, has become a trendy job.

It definitely brings thrilling elements with it and Hollywood presents a wide variety of movies about journalist heroes who live an adventurous life and try to save the world. The recent 24/7 live reporting from war zones often focuses the attention of a whole nation on a single journalist and places that journalist under considerable pressures to perform, particularly in respect to time pressures. Martin Bell, who retired from the BBC after more than 30 years in TV current affairs journalism, bemoaned the increasing obsession with fast turnarounds in 2004. “Some mistakes are bound to be made, as they have always been, by journalists seeking to discover the truth in the fog of breaking news; but those mistakes do not have to be as systemic as they have become in the rolling news business, rumour masquerades as fact, and networks compete wildly with each other to get their speculations in first.”

Inexperienced and parachuting journalists move ahead

Many of the journalists looking for the big story, and a buzz, are sometimes, unfortunately, inexperienced and may have never been to a war zone before. Some of the blame must be borne by the media companies, who too often are happy to hire young journalists at the expense of their better paid senior colleagues. Having your own correspondent in any remote location is expensive. So instead they send in the so called parachute correspondents who don't know the area as well as a permanently based reporter would, and don't know its dangers either.

The costs for a full-time correspondent are around \$US 150,000 each year, when salary, housing, health care, and education allowances are included. Equipping and staffing small overseas bureaus cost an estimated \$US 1 million each year. Gavin Ellis, former editor of the *New Zealand Herald*, admits that "The maintaining of foreign correspondents in the field is very expensive." The decision to send out parachuting journalists instead, or to rely on freelancers, saves a lot of money and that is why conflicts are now "covered by people who come in for a short period of time, write a number of stories and then come out of it again".

Parachute journalism is a worldwide trend. Foreign press bureaus are shut down and the number of permanently based correspondents declines. Media organisations are facing the pressures of increased competition, particularly in the area of getting the story to air first. Growing media concentration, and the increasing focus on profitability which comes along with it, worsens the situation. Al Goodman and John Pollack explained in their book *The world on a string: How to become a freelance foreign correspondent*, that contractions in both print and broadcast have meant fewer opportunities. "Hiring and salaries are flat or down. Career mobility is limited. And foreign reporting suffers from a triple whammy. There is less of it, done by fewer people who must skip from place to place and story to story, often under dangerous conditions."

The fulltime foreign correspondent who reports from the country he knows best is in retreat.

The disappearance of journalistic neutrality

The loss of journalistic immunity is a new and major contributing factor to the targeting of newsmen and women, particularly for those operating overseas. But it is bad news for every reporter everywhere as media academics Stuart Allen and Barbie Zelizer pointed out in their book, *Journalism after September 11*.

“It is this basic immunity from action that makes the whole regime of neutrality, objectivity and detachment even thinkable, let alone practical for journalists.”

The loss of immunity has a crucial impact on the occupation of journalism. It deprives journalists of their fundamental tool of work and their greatest protection. The neutral observer status, precondition of journalistic immunity, has always been attached to reporters like an invisible shield.

Now it is gone and Daniel Pearls’ murder is regarded as the most shocking manifestation of this loss of immunity. Many analysts and journalists consider his death a major turning point, that he was specifically targeted, murdered in the most brutal way and his own medium used to publicise his grisly end.

It marked the beginning of a new era of dangers that journalists would have to face.

Journalists have lost their neutral status in the eyes of radical groups and terrorists. They are no longer immune. They are considered as spies and as the enemy who needs to be destroyed. Reporters who are employed by the Western press are automatically seen to be working for Western governments in the eyes of many radical groups. They believe there is nothing that distinguishes a journalist from a CIA agent. To them a “free journalist” is a contradiction in itself and people declaring themselves as such are regarded with suspicion and disbelief. They don’t understand the journalistic concept of intermediation between different cultures or the journalists’ ultimate and selfless aim to give a voice to the poor and suffering. And how could they? They may have never experienced a free press within their country, so how should they be able to tell what distinguishes a foreign correspondent from a CIA agent?

International human rights laws, which are aimed at protecting freedom of speech, and regulations such as The Hague and Geneva Conventions, which grant immunity to journalists, are either unknown or ignored by terror groups and insurgents.

The enemy is now the West, and reporters are representing the hated Western governments and news media. They are not neutral and are deserving of no immunity in this post-9/11 world.

Cases like Pearl's are now not uncommon.

Robert Fisk first sensed the changing attitude towards journalists a long while ago when he was on a road trip with his colleague Terry Anderson. They both showed their press ID cards to pass a military checkpoint. The militia men took them, threw them on the ground, and said: "They don't count anymore."

This incident, which occurred before Anderson was kidnapped in 1985 and held hostage for almost seven years in Lebanon, made Fisk aware of something. He realised for the first time that a big change for the reporting world was about to happen and he had the feeling that things were about to get very bad for journalists.

Jerry Levin, a former CNN correspondent who was also kidnapped in Lebanon, admitted the paradigm shift has been long coming. He, his colleague Terry Anderson and some other reporters were abducted in 1984 and 1985 and he described this experience almost 20 years later, in Herbert Foerstel's book about the risks of modern warfare, as "pretty tough and pretty mean". But he added that most of the reporters emerged from that experience alive with all 10 fingers and 10 toes. "Back then, this response by the terrorists, our adversaries, was seen as unprecedented and brutal. But as bad as that was, compare it to what's happening to journalists now and you find that the level of danger back then was infinitely less consequential than it is now."

Susanne Koelbl, correspondent for *der Spiegel* in Germany, agrees with him and says the killing of Daniel Pearl has been a sharp turning point. Pearl's murder was the first clearly visible sign that something had happened, something that seems irreversible.

By losing their neutral status, journalists have lost a basic assumption of the profession. Jerry Levin remarked that he knows why this has happened.

"In my opinion, it is because, back in the 1980s, the level of violent American involvement

was, relatively speaking, infinitesimal compared to what it is now. As this exponential increase of American violence in Iraq has occurred, there has been a logical and directly proportional general terrorist or guerrilla response.” He believes that if the violence against Western journalists is unprecedented “it is because of the unprecedented level of violent involvement in the Middle East by America and its fellow traveller governments”.

In 2004, Philip Bennett, assistant managing director for foreign affairs of the *Washington Post*, warned his staff in the Baghdad bureau about the new dangers. “For journalists, the familiar rules of engagement have been stripped away. Gone is the assumption that correspondents are more valuable as witnesses than as targets, and they share only the risks that all civilians face in wartime. To insurgents, foreign journalists are ... just another element of an occupying force to which we don't belong.”

Journalists are now considered the enemy. This development was stimulated by the war on terrorism in Afghanistan after 9/11. And the war has clearly boosted terrorist violence towards Westerners. Frank Smyth from the Committee to Protect Journalists, said in 2006 the notion that journalists were neutral and were there to report what was going on used to be accepted by many around the world. “And now there are some actors who see journalists as hostile merely by their presence in terms of the media they are representing. Journalists are getting targeted largely because of their association with the United States, particularly in Middle Eastern countries which is something we haven't seen in the past and that's a new phenomenon and it is something we're concerned about.”

The loss of immunity is a bit like the elephant in the newsroom. No one wants to mention it, because it's just too complex to contemplate the loss of something so integral to the process of newsgathering in dangerous places. Like the typewriter it may now belong to a long lost past. Robert Fisk seems to believe so. “How do you buy immunity back? I don't know.”

A distorted truth

In the course of this investigation it has been a depressing discovery, to find out just how many journalists are dying in the course of their work. The audiences of the Western media get to hear about the deaths of their own reporters, almost always on foreign assignment, which is shocking enough. But they are not aware of the slaughter of everyday jobbing journalists who are killed within their own national borders, in much larger numbers.

Many Western readers would be surprised to learn that of the hundreds of reporters who have died within the past years, not even a quarter were foreign correspondents. Western audiences mainly know about deaths of their reporters and the countries with which they generally associate themselves. Their media is doing the right thing by expressing its deep concerns about the increasingly brutal and inhuman treatment of their foreign correspondents. So why are those many non-Western journalists, who are facing intimidation and death every day, not mentioned in the Western press? News agendas being what they are it would seem as if the media simply doesn't care about their foreign colleagues.

And the Western media can also be accused, by its sometimes hysterical coverage of murdered fellow reporters, of actually making the situation worse. They are unwittingly contributing to the deaths of their own correspondents, by giving a voice to their murderers. Tom Kunkel, president of the *American Journalism Review* told the *Los Angeles Times*: "Those are the individuals who are essentially finishing the work of the terrorists, by delivering their grisly 'message.'" And in fact, the Western media can be accused of encouraging terrorists, extremists and radical groups to continue their abductions, torturing and killings, because they provide such a large audience for them. They are aware that their message will be displayed if they abduct and kill Western correspondents.

Josh Devon, an analyst at the SITE Institute in Washington, said in 2004: "The point of terrorism is to strike fear and cause havoc — and that doesn't happen unless you have media to support that action and show it to as many people as they can".

Tom Kunkel supported this viewpoint “Any news outlet or any private individual, for that matter who makes available footage of the actual beheadings is, to my mind, an accessory to the crime itself”.

And yet, every media company tries exactly to do that, tries to get the most attention from the audience by presenting the best pictures, the cruellest facts and the saddest tragedies.

Robert Thompson, director of Syracuse University’s Centre for the Study of Popular Culture, told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2004:

“The terrorists are directing a movie for the world to see, yet the media has to cover it, and the world does in fact see it.”

Unaware that it is contributing to the further deaths of its reporters, who are becoming the main actors of this grim spectacle, the media continues to display tragic events, abductions and killings. Furthermore it transports the messages of terrorists to millions of people worldwide. Terrorists feel affirmed and continue to use the Western media apparatus to get attention. The best way to get it, is by abducting and killing Western correspondents. The media encourages terrorists to target specifically correspondents, because they are the only journalists whose deaths it reports on. This is why the Western world gets the impression that only Western correspondents are at a higher risk than anyone else.

Also coming in for criticism is the Western media’s simplified tale of good versus evil, which leaves out many important facts and caveats, especially when the victims are from the third world, or Arab.

Media critic Herbert Foerstel pointed out that the popular wisdom after 9/11, that Islamic fundamentalists were the killers and innocent Western civilians were the targets, is not true.

“Western journalists are a minority among the war correspondents killed there in recent years and American and Coalition troops are prominent among the killers.”

The death toll will mount

While the West will continue to think that its reporters are continually being targeted and therefore must be in the most danger worldwide, it seems as if the only hope for any balanced and objective reporting of the true situation will be the work of independent media monitoring organisations which keep track of the accurate numbers of deaths and try to investigate each one of them. They are eager to protect all journalists' lives, regardless of nationality, and closely observe countries which flout press freedoms and threaten the people who seek to uphold them. Those organisations have dedicated themselves to safeguard journalists and make sure that reporters worldwide are able to inform humankind independently and unharmed.

Journalism has never been a safe occupation. The main characteristics of journalism, to report honestly, scrutinize the rich and powerful and to be critical of the few with influence over the majority are also the main features which can get them killed. Their investigations are often a thorn in the side of rulers, vested interests and criminals. In countries where corruption and crime are an everyday business, reporters have little or no safeguards. For those who want to take out a local reporter getting too close to their corrupt or criminal operations, it seems all too easy to find someone to silence them permanently. Currently those killings have reached unconscionably high numbers but there are still so many brave reporters prepared to keep searching for the truth. In the end someone has to do it, and journalists seemingly still feel it is their duty to report the news, regardless of the price they may have to pay.

Robert Fisk suggests a solution. Dispense with the "them" and "us" forms of reporting that are so divisive and destructive. "All of us helping to erode the shield of neutrality and decency which saved our lives in the past. If we don't stop now, how can we protest when next our colleagues are seized by ruthless men who claim we are spies?"

For Frank Smyth of the Committee to Protect Journalists the key to stop all forms of

repression against journalists is cooperation between all media groups worldwide and the abandonment of discrimination.

"We need to start working with Western media groups, with Arab media groups and other groups around the world to build solidarity and defend the notion that journalists have the right to do their jobs.

He highlighted for example the organisation's defence of a Sudanese cameraman with *Al-Jazeera* who was picked up in Pakistan and who is now in Guantanamo after being held by US military forces for more than four years without being formally charged.

"When we defend people like the Sudanese cameraman from *Al-Jazeera* it also sends the message to journalists around the world that journalists as a community need to defend themselves against any kind of actors, whether they are government or non-governmental, insurgents or not, that are encroaching or threatening press freedom."

Since Daniel Pearl's murder, the Western media feels a fierce sense of danger and it is obvious that Western correspondents have become favourite targets. However, the same risks have been long faced by local journalists around the world and it has become clear, that they are the ones who get killed more often than any other journalists.

While cases of murdered Western foreign correspondents and journalists are well publicised and investigated, local journalists do not get much attention and their deaths often remain unpunished. Media academics and journalists, who bemoan the loss of immunity among foreign correspondents, have to realise that this commodity had been taken from local journalists, working in non-Western or totalitarian countries, a long time ago, and for some it never existed at all. In those countries not the journalists, but rather the "killers of journalists enjoy 100% immunity," as Guy Delva, Haiti's high-profile reporter told the *Guardian* in 2006. Haiti is just one of the many countries where press freedom doesn't count and where, according to Delva, "jailing and beating journalists is normal".

On World Press Freedom Day in 2004 the dangers for local journalists were identified and emphasised by Rodney Pinder, the director of the International News Safety Institute (INSI). "In far too many countries authorities seem to be more interested in criminal investigations of journalists, for alleged libel, defamation, corruption, tax fraud and the like,

than in bringing their killers to justice.”

However, he expressed his positive belief towards a united effort to change things. “With the help of the global news community, and those who appreciate the critical importance of press freedom worldwide, we just might begin to apply the brakes to this accelerating cycle of bloodshed and violence.”

The good-willed efforts of the INSI and other similar organisations will hopefully lead to better protection of local journalists and foreign correspondents in the future. But no one is expecting miracles and the dangers, often fatal, will almost certainly remain for journalists worldwide.

The media has to realise that less money means less training, more inexperienced reporters, less protection and definitely more deaths among all journalists, local reporters and foreign correspondents alike. On the other hand do the audiences have to realise how important an in-depth and investigative, but most of all, a foreign news coverage is for them. Pamela Constable of the *Washington Post* affirmed this viewpoint in a newspaper article in 2007. “If newspapers stop covering the world, I fear we will end up with a microscopic elite reading Foreign Affairs and a numbed nation watching terrorist bombings flash briefly among a barrage of commentary, crawls and celebrity gossip.”

Exegesis

Some scholars say Western foreign correspondents are becoming extinct because of the increasing cost of maintaining them abroad and a declining interest by audiences in foreign news. However, others argue that rather than becoming extinct the nature of the occupation has changed. What hasn't changed is the danger foreign correspondents face in pursuing their craft. What this thesis demonstrates is that this danger is greater than ever. In fact in the last two decades just over 1,000 journalists have died. Some of the reasons for this increasing death toll include the targeting of journalists by terrorists, state opposition to press freedom and the inexperience or risky behavior of the journalists themselves. The dangers which Western foreign correspondents have to face are high, but it is not so much the deadliness out in the field, which lead scholars to say that they are becoming extinct, but more the risks they face from their own newsrooms. This is the opinion of Danny Schechter, the executive editor of MediaChannel.org:

The dangers faced by today's correspondents extend beyond the battlefield to the news world, where media messengers are being killed by corporate indifference, as well as reader disinterest that is fed by years of downplaying stories from around the world. (Schechter, 2006, p. viii)

In 1989, journalism historian Michael Emery described the decline of international news sections, and the space and time dedicated to those sections. In the *Gannett Center Journal* he called foreign correspondents an "endangered species" (Emery, 1989, pp. 151-164). A year later Marvin Kalb, a former diplomatic correspondent himself, even went as far as to say: "The genre known as 'foreign correspondent' is becoming extinct" (Kalb, 1990, p. xiv).

The elite, fulltime, based foreign correspondent is in decline, a tendency which is affirmed by many media academics and journalists. Reasons for this development are seemingly obvious. Foreign correspondents are generally very expensive for media organisations and the cost of a full-time correspondent can be more than \$US 150,000 per year once salary, housing, health care, and education allowances have been included. Equipping and staffing small overseas bureaux cost approximately \$US 1 million each year. Considering these

costs in addition to a charge of up to \$US 100 for each minute of satellite transmission, it is not surprising that many news media organisations have decided to cut down on permanently based foreign correspondents (Goodman & Pollack, 1997, p.xix – xx). Cameron Bennett, veteran foreign correspondent for TVNZ, is concerned audiences are not interested in news from abroad anymore. “Viewers are not so interested in international affairs, so its priority place in bulletins is being scaled out” (Bennett, 2007). Reasons for this lack of interest can perhaps be found in the distorted news agenda of the Western media, which overstates stories about celebrities, personal fates of its citizens and mainly focuses on local stories.

Parachuting correspondents, freelancers, stringers or the reliance upon news agencies are replacing the fulltime based foreign correspondents and making them redundant. However, many media critics are convinced the correspondent cannot be replaced and is too important to ever become extinct. Bennett described foreign correspondence as the “pinnacle of journalism”. New Zealand correspondent Jon Stephenson explained why the world depends on correspondents.

On a moral level (and I like to think there is a strong moral aspect to foreign affairs reporting), people need to be aware of what is happening to others internationally so they can have the opportunity to aid those in need - whether by personally donating money during a famine or in the aftermath of an earthquake, or by putting pressure on their government to contribute aid. (Stephenson, 2007)

Media academic John Maxwell Hamilton highlighted the importance of the occupation in a journalistic journal in 2002. “The foreign correspondent for traditional news media enjoys prestige among professional peers and is a figure to be reckoned with by public policy makers” (Hamilton, 2002, p. 1).

Regardless of the threats which foreign correspondents have to face in the newsroom and the assumption of some that they will become extinct, they are rather endangered by other lethal threats, which have changed the nature of their job and made it a deadly occupation. The extraordinary murder of Daniel Pearl in 2002 evoked an outcry within the international press, and he was just one of the many Western foreign correspondents, who were killed for

trying to report the truth. His death, however, was considered as the beginning of a new era of dangers for journalists and particularly Western correspondents. “That correspondents are taken hostage and being decapitated is a novelty which is used as a means to shock, and I would say this is a turning point” (Koelbl, 2008).

The documentary *The journalist and the jihadi* made by Amit Roy and Farrukh Dhondy in 2006 investigated the background to Pearl’s murder. It pointed out clearly that Pearl was targeted, kidnapped and beheaded because he was a Western journalist. Bernard-Henri Lévy concluded that Pearl acted carefully enough and didn’t commit mistakes, and that his death was caused by the unpredictable new dangers which correspondents have to face today (Lévy, 2003, p. 64). Craig Copetas, a former *Journal* correspondent who worked with Pearl in Kosovo, supported Lévy’s view. “If you were in the field, you wanted to be with Danny. He was very prudent, very cautious” (Copetas, 2006, p. 68). Media academics and experienced correspondents conclude that the immunity which has always protected journalists has gone and from Pearl’s murder onwards correspondents have been frequently used by terrorists and insurgents as a means to reach their goals and get attention from the media. The general assumption drawn from Pearl’s and other correspondents’ killings was that foreign correspondence is the most dangerous of all journalistic occupations. The aim of the thesis was to investigate why foreign correspondents were facing such high risks. It is clear that the circumstances of their work have changed dramatically and there are new dangers at hand, where they can be targeted and killed.

One of those changing circumstances can be seen in the rapid decline in press freedom in some countries. In 2008 Freedom House published a survey which demonstrated that press freedom has declined worldwide in 2007, and that journalists were facing harsh working conditions in an increasingly hostile environment. Almost every region in the world was affected by those trends and the retreat of a free press occurred in authoritarian countries and established democracies alike (Freedom House, 2008).

Jennifer Windsor, the Freedom House executive director, explained in a press release that:

For every step forward in press freedom last year, there were two steps back. When press freedom is in retreat, it is an ominous sign that restrictions on other freedoms may soon follow. However, journalists in many countries of the world are pushing

the boundaries, crossing the red-lines, demonstrating commitment and courage against great odds and we are seeing a greater global flow of information than ever before. (Windsor, 2008, p. 1)

The concept of press freedom, which had first been established during the 17th century in England, has always faced threats and dangers worldwide, but recently it has, according to the Freedom House, become worse than ever.

Attempts to ensure a free press by law are almost as old as the occupation of journalism itself. One of the first efforts to protect freedom of speech was made in 1791, when the First Amendment became part of the new constitution of the US. It ruled that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (US senate, 1789)

Other countries made similar efforts to guarantee press freedom within their constitutions. The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1929 tried to legislate that “correspondents, newspaper reporters, who fall into the hands of the enemy, shall be entitled to be treated as prisoners of war”. Those conventions occurred at a time when Western states began to realise how important journalism was for their democracies. Around the same time, in 1905, the importance of press freedom was certified by the Scottish historical writer and satirist, Thomas Carlyle, who described the press as the fourth estate of democratic constitutions.

There were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact, Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is that he has a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite. (Carlyle, 1905, pp. 349-350)

Since 1948 freedom of speech has been a human right and protected by Article 19 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights developed by the United Nations General Assembly. Ever since, freedom of speech is counted among the 'erga omnes', universal norms and laws, which apply to everyone within the world community. Brian McNair, professor of journalism at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, explained in 1998 that "a liberal democratic political system demands journalistic criticism of elites as a condition of its legitimacy" (McNair, 1998, p. 84). However, the world's universal laws and conventions have often been disregarded and bypassed since they were promulgated.

The decline of press freedom is not the only factor which has led to the increased deadliness of the occupation of foreign correspondence. The development of technology has also had a big impact on the occupation and changed its practices dramatically. Transmission technologies have improved constantly since journalists first started to write their dispatches. Technologies are more sophisticated and versatile today and allow a 24/7 news reporting at a relatively low cost. Technological developments enable journalists to spread the news easier and faster, and reach more people than they have ever reached before. On the one hand, this makes journalists more powerful and enables them to publish the truth faster than ever. Criminals, major players and some other groups have realised this potential and often try to silence journalists, before they can spread unpleasant details. On the other hand the question has to be asked "Does the strong competition arising from new means of technology quicken the journalistic ambition to get closer to the front, closer to the action and therefore to danger?"

The media's rigorous cost cutting, downsizing of based foreign correspondents and shutting of overseas bureaus are partly to blame for the high increase in inexperienced journalists. The media is replacing experienced, based correspondents with parachuting correspondents and relying on freelancers rather than on their own expensive staff. These correspondents are not able to assess situations accurately and lose their lives in conflict-riddled areas, not only in crossfire, but also during investigations, interviews and trips throughout the countries. And their number is increasing. John Hughes from the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote in 2007:

The Boston Globe announced that it would close its last three foreign bureaus – in Berlin, Bogotá, and Jerusalem. The Baltimore Sun is closing its bureaus in South Africa and Russia after closing its bureaus in Britain and China earlier. In the television news field, CNN is maintaining its position abroad, but the other major networks have long since been closing foreign bureaus and withdrawing resident correspondents. Instead, they resort to ‘parachute journalism’. (Hughes, 2007, p. 1)

Former-editor-in-chief of the *New Zealand Herald* Gavin Ellis said parachuting correspondents “come in for a short period of time, write a number of stories and then come out of it again” (Ellis, 2008). They do not only have a lack of depth and knowledge compared to someone living in the community, but they also often don’t have enough experience to be fully aware of the dangers. Ellis therefore called them “visiting farmers”. The same problem occurs with the news from freelancers, who work on their own and haven’t been fully trained and prepared for the dangers the occupation entails. The number of freelancing journalists has increased rapidly, too. Before 1970 only 13% of foreign correspondents regularly filing stories to American media were freelancers. By the early 1990s, the number of freelancers had increased to 30%, according to Stephen Hess from the Brookings Institution in the US (Hess, 1996, p. 1). Al Goodman and John Pollack estimated that in 1997 there were already more than 2,000 freelance correspondents operating worldwide, and their number was growing (Goodman & Pollack, 1997, p. xxi).

Although all those factors are leading to a high casualty rate among foreign correspondents, further research has shown that they are not the only ones facing increasing risks. This thesis was set up to investigate, in particular, the numerous deaths among Western foreign correspondents, because of their visibility within the news media. Information about them was easier to access and there were more sources available to undertake a funded research about their deaths. The concentration on Western correspondents who died abroad was made to narrow the research and to focus on several representative cases about dead journalists, highlighted in the Western media. But the choice to focus on them was also made because it was assumed that they faced the highest risk out of all journalists operating worldwide. This assumption was used as hypothesis underlying the research and it was supported by the large news coverage about their deaths, abductions and torments within the Western news media.

However, research of the actual data proved something different. According to the Freedom Forum, foreign correspondents contributed only around 15% to the overall death toll of journalists worldwide, and local reporters are facing a much higher risk than correspondents. This fact was not displayed within the literature. It was simply not covered. The actual data published by international media organisations disproved the hypothesis that foreign correspondents were facing the highest risk. It became clear that it would be necessary to include the killings of local journalists within the thesis, because they are facing the most dangers. With 1,128 reporters killed within the last two decades, it was obvious that it has become increasingly dangerous for all journalists. Jean Seaton from the University of Westminster in the UK elaborated:

More journalists have been killed in recent conflicts than ever before, and there is evidence that they are more frequently deliberately murdered than in the past. Reporting is also difficult because profiteers have nothing to gain from publicity and are secretive. (Seaton, 1999, pp. 56/57)

The annual death tolls of journalists are best recorded by international media organisations such as Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Freedom Forum. The main task of those organisations is to protect journalists worldwide and act as safeguards for press freedom. CPJ is regarded as one of the most protective organisations and it is fierce in its attempts to ensure a free press without restrictions and suppressions. The association was founded in 1981 by US foreign correspondents and works independent of any governmental or media influence, on a non-profit base. An important part of its work is the protection and monitoring of local journalists from non-developed and non-Western countries, where the freedom of the press does not count, and democracy may exist only on paper. Particularly in those countries the deaths of hundreds of local journalists remain unpunished and sometimes they also remain unreported. The Western media doesn't cover the atrocities among reporters in those countries and the local media is often simply too scared to report the killings, or military and government forces suppress the information.

All of the independent media organisations publish detailed information about each

reporter's deaths from the past 20 years. However, only one of the many organisations' databases reaches back to 1837 and was best suited for a funded research about journalists deaths from past to present. The Freedom Forum started its research in 1993 and established the Newseum in Washington, which displays the names of all journalists who have been killed on assignment since 1837. It holds the names of more than 1,900 journalists during their search for truth.

Every year on May 3, journalists worldwide are honoured on World Press Freedom Day and at the Newseum's Journalists Memorial in Arlington the names are read aloud of those who have died while dedicating their lives to a free and vigorous press. The Memorial, which is located in Freedom Park, contains the names of all those reporters who have lost their lives while being on assignment. The names are engraved into the huge glass panels of the monument. The Newseum is also helping to monitor and investigate the deaths of journalists worldwide and contributes to the other organisations' efforts to get a clearer picture about the actual casualty rate. However, the numbers of dead journalists which are published by independent media organisations are slightly different. Don Ross, senior editor of the Newseum, knows why.

We all have our own criteria. CPJ, for example, does not include those who lose their lives in accidents. We do — providing that the accident occurred while the journalist was on an assignment. We would not count someone, for example, who was killed in traffic on his way home from the office. Other groups count what they call 'media workers'—that is, translators, drivers or 'fixers' in foreign countries. We and CPJ do not. (Ross, 2008)

This makes it difficult to say how many journalists have died exactly, but it is important for consistency to base the main research on the figures of only one organisation, in this case, the Newseum. Its figures seemed to be the most accurate and the parameters of its research were explained in detail and authenticated by Don Ross. However, he acknowledged that some of its data might be fallible, and no organisation would be able to claim a complete research of journalists' deaths in history.

This thesis discovered that most of the killed journalists were local reporters in non-Western, non-democratic or totalitarian countries, which did not consider the freedom of

the press in their laws or out on the streets. Those findings were affirmed by the other independent news organisations. The Committee to Protect Journalists investigated reporters' deaths from 1992 until the present and found that 86.1% of the killed journalists were local and died in non-Western countries. Furthermore it stated that 72% of all journalists' deaths had been caused by murder. Only around 18% had been caused by crossfire or were combat related and approximately 10% of the reporters had died during other dangerous assignments (CPJ, 2009).

Don Ross knows why the job of local journalists is so much more dangerous.

There's greater risk because in so many parts of the world there are corrupt governments (local and national) that do not place any great value on law and order except to the extent that the regime is protected. The murders of journalists routinely go uninvestigated in many places, or are investigated only superficially and then attributed to some other crime, such as robbery, or even listed as 'suicide'. (Ross, 2008)

Despite the finding that local journalists are facing much higher risks than foreign correspondents, the thesis' main focus remained concentrated on Western correspondents and examined the Western news media coverage about them. The research questioned why Western foreign correspondents are increasingly targeted and the thesis would have gone beyond its scope to have also included the deaths of local journalists. Further research could take a closer look at the appalling death toll of local journalists and the main reasons for it. Recent cases, such as the murders of Anna Politkovskaya and Hrant Dink could be analysed in-depth to exemplify the developments taking place for local journalists. This thesis is mainly based on research about foreign correspondents, but it includes some important figures about other dead journalists. What the thesis does not include are the numbers of journalists and foreign correspondents who are actually employed worldwide. The comparison of the numbers of employed journalists and the numbers of dead journalists and the relation of those numbers to each other would have been interesting. However, none of the mentioned organisations was able to provide those numbers.

Foreign correspondents have always faced criticism. Author Phillip Knightley has once described the majority of correspondents of history as "ignorant, dishonest, and unethical"

and their dispatches as “frequently inaccurate, often invented, partisan, and inflammatory” (Knightley, 1975, p. 140). That might be true and still appropriate for some foreign correspondents today. However, they have not only always faced criticism, but also constant dangers on the battlefield, and now even from their own newsrooms. Even though some scholars have written the occupation off, it has survived.

On a positive note Herbert Foerstel wrote that foreign correspondents also “have the opportunity to do the kind of reporting that alters and illuminates our times” (Foerstel, 2006, p. ix). And Cameron Bennett adds that the world desperately needs them because they are the “eyes and the ears” of the world for their local communities. “If we wouldn’t have them we would have propaganda” (Bennett, 2007). He says he would follow the call of his occupation over and over again, like he did in Bosnia, and take the risk after all he had experienced. “Was it all worth it? I strongly believe it was. Eyewitness accounts of the injustice and inhumanity still going on in Bosnia are an essential means of sparking our consciences and determination to do something about it” (Bennett, 1995, p. 101).

The future of the occupation is uncertain, considering the numerous dangers which journalists and particularly foreign correspondents have to face. Susanne Koelbl, German foreign correspondent for *der Spiegel*, is sure the number of foreign correspondents will decrease further “because fewer people can afford to employ them” (Koelbl, 2008). Don Ross from the Newseum is not sure what the future will hold for the occupation.

I gave up predicting the future about 40 years ago. The potential for danger in certain parts of the world certainly is not going to diminish anytime soon. Where tyrants and despots rule, there will journalists be in danger. It’s that simple. Equally simple is realizing that even in countries like yours and mine, journalists will at least come under criticism for the work they do—sometimes justifiably, sometimes in retribution. (Ross, 2008)

In an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* in 2007, editorial page editor Fred Hiatt of the *Washington Post* stated that his concerns about the future of foreign correspondents might only be the “the nostalgia of a dinosaur” (Hiatt, 2007). Correspondent John Hughes answered: “Let us hope not. A troubled world needs a steady flow of

information about the challenges – and how to resolve them” (Hughes, 2007).

It is evident that the foreign correspondent remains a very significant figure in the journalistic world. Any suggestion of extinction would be a tragic development, which can hopefully be reversed when media organisations and audiences discover how important reliable news from overseas is. Trudy Rubin of the *Miami Herald* shared those concerns in an article from March 2009.

We don't know who will provide the rich foreign coverage we need at a time when the world is entering more dangerous times than most of us have ever known. The question I was asked in Peoria is one many Americans may be asking in the near future: Why can't we find out what's happening in countries whose turmoil affects our lives? (Rubin, 2009)

In conclusion, foreign correspondence and journalism in general, have always been dangerous occupations, but are now more dangerous than ever.

No one is able to predict what the future holds, but recent tendencies such as the rigorous cost-cutting efforts by the media, the shutting down of overseas bureaus and the steady decline of experienced reporters, leads one to assume the situation will only get worse in the future. With a worldwide economic downturn, it can be foreseen that the highly concentrated media corporations worldwide will reconsider their need for own correspondents and try to get news from even fewer based foreign correspondents, with increased use of local journalists, freelancers and stringers.

Another indicator of a bleak future is the decline in press freedom and the dramatic loss of journalistic immunity, which goes along with hatred towards the media by terrorists and insurgents. However, the increase of independent journalists distributing their news over the internet and enabling audiences worldwide to access their stories, investigations and revelations online, can be seen as a positive development and a ray of hope with regards to an informed world population. Although internet technologies are a bonus, they will never be able to replace the reliability, trustworthiness and authenticity of the fulltime foreign correspondent, reporting the news from his or her perspective to the audiences in their home country. This is why journalists must try to find a way to re-

establish their immunity and significant status in the world, so they are neither targeted by insurgents, nor by their own newsrooms.

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