

## **Journalism in a Violent World**

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### Professional Contribution

It was variously described: A conference that would have been unthinkable five years ago. A conference on climate change – in the newsrooms of Canada. Exhilarating. Frightening. One academic participant called it “the birth of a movement”.

The inaugural conference of the Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma was all of the above. Held at the University of Western Ontario on a February weekend, *Journalism in a Violent World* resisted all attempts to pigeonhole it. Nothing about it was typical. Blending traditional academic and professional formats, the conference was funded from a combination of peer-reviewed and professional sources. It attracted senior journalists, media managers, union leaders, journalism students, and academics and from Canada, the United States and Britain.

One hundred and twenty delegates focused for two days on the “elephant” that dwells in newsrooms across Canada and around the world: when violence and trauma are plainly part of the daily currency of journalism, why has the profession so resolutely avoided seriously considering its impact on journalists themselves, those they deal with in their quest for information and, ultimately, the audiences and readerships they serve? Delegates considered all three issues, but a consensus emerged: journalists who

acknowledge the emotional impact of covering violent and traumatic events *on themselves* are more likely to give serious attention to the other two aspects of the question. Soldiers, police officers, firefighters, paramedics – none of these any longer attempt to brush aside the emotional toll that comes with their jobs. By comparison, journalism can be seen as the last bastion of the “Hemmingway brigade”. Adept at probing the motivations of others, many journalists still demonstrate a remarkable unwillingness to scrutinize themselves as closely, or to admit to human feelings that might, as they appear to believe, bring into question their success in striving for detachment. And, of course, there’s the powerful fear that any admission of emotional vulnerability in the face of the daily onslaught will lessen a reporter’s career prospects. Meanwhile, the high rates of job attrition, divorce, alcohol and substance abuse and even suicide within journalism are facts that many journalists still choose to ignore.

Violence and trauma are most obvious, of course, in the context of armed conflict. And it is among journalists who cover wars that the first revealing studies have been conducted, notably by Dr. Anthony Feinstein, a keynote speaker at the conference. Yet war correspondents tend to be a self-selecting group and it may be that the impacts of violence and trauma on those journalists who choose not to cover wars, or are not given the opportunity to do so, represent the much larger part of the iceberg. In many ways, reporters covering traffic accidents, child abuse or horrific murder cases are far less prepared for the emotional consequences.

Chris Cramer, who recently retired as head of CNN International, said the conversation begun at the conference on the effects of emotional trauma on domestic reporters in particular “would have been unthinkable five years ago.” Arnold Amber,

President of CWA/SCA Canada, said teaching journalists how to deal with trauma is necessary for the quality of their work, while failing to do so “is actually cruel and unusual punishment.”

The Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma was not conceived as a membership organization. The inaugural conference was not designed to start an annual series. Rather, the Forum seeks to bring together and work with a wide variety of professional and academic groups. Conferences may be held from time to time, but much of the Forum’s work will consist of targeted programs of safety and trauma education, often conducted in collaboration with others. The Forum has established strong links with the International News Safety Institute (headquartered in Brussels) and the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma (at the University of Washington in Seattle). It is supported by the Graduate Program in Journalism at Western and is reaching out to other journalism schools and professional organizations such as the Canadian Association of Journalists and the Association of Electronic Journalists (RTNDA Canada).

Delegates at the inaugural conference endorsed this concept, devising and passing the following declaration:

**This inaugural conference:**

- **Endorses the formation of the Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma to set an example to the international news community;**
- **Urges the development and inclusion of content dealing with violence, safety and emotional trauma in all university and college journalism programs;**
- **Affirms the Forum’s intention to act inclusively, drawing support from and extending programs to all elements of the Canadian journalistic community including professional organizations, education programs, employers, unions, and freelancers; and**

• ***Recommends* the confirmation of partnerships with news organizations, journalist support groups, individual journalists and like-minded organizations in Canada and abroad and the continuation of the Forum's work through the creation of a representative Board of Trustees.**

Following up on this, the Forum is currently being legally constituted as an educational trust which will seek charity status from the Canada Revenue Agency. The board of about 15 trustees will be asked to approve a series of on-going educational programs, in support of which it will mount a fundraising campaign in 2009.

Major funding for the inaugural conference was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Mary Brown Lecture Series and Reader's Digest. Other sponsors included The Canadian Press, CBC News, CNW Group, CWA/SCA Canada, the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at Western, The Record, and Research Western. Full details of the conference program, together with abstracts and available papers, can be accessed at <http://journalismforum.fims.uwo.ca>

The organizers of the conference received much supportive feedback from delegates. One e-mail from Dr. Charles Hays, Associate Professor of Journalism at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia, read: "I can honestly say it was the most challenging, difficult, poignant, powerful, beautiful and useful conference I have ever attended. Not many people are so fortunate to be present at the birth of a movement. I came with more questions than answers, I found that some people needed my answers, and I found some answers for some of my questions. I also found acceptance and understanding and ultimately a measure of peace about the difficult paths we tread on that knife-edged balance between our consuming passion for journalism and the danger of being consumed by it."

Reports on specific aspects of the conference were compiled by students in the Graduate Program in Journalism at Western and are appended below:

### **Trauma training needed for future journalists**

By Jennett Mays

(This article first appeared in *The Reporter*, February 2008)

Future journalists should be exposed to trauma training at university and college before they start their careers, according to a panel at the Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma...The three panelists, who all research the effects of trauma on journalists, agreed training was necessary because management in media organizations has not always known how to deal with journalists who have had traumatic experiences. Journalists can often have a hard time dealing with the violence they see regularly in their profession. But as the moderator pointed out during the Sunday afternoon panel at the University of Western Ontario, there are conflicting ideas when it comes to the best way to help those journalists. Just as the idea of trauma and media is new, so is the idea of teaching journalists about trauma, said moderator Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma.

Panelist Max Grubb said trauma training is about providing journalists with useful information for not harming victims, and how to deal with the effects of trauma on themselves. "Most new journalists encounter violence within five years. Young journalists can suffer on their first violent assignment," said Grubb, referring to the potential to develop post traumatic stress disorder, something many journalists at the conference had dealt with first-hand. Grubb discussed a study at Kent State University,

where he teaches in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, that involved members of the student media who had attended a death penalty trial where they were exposed to graphic testimony and evidence. Afterwards, the students were given the opportunity to speak with a counselor so that their experiences dealing with trauma could be studied. “Those who had an internship were a little better prepared,” said Grubb.

Linda Kay, from the Department of Journalism at Concordia University, suggested role playing is the most popular solution for teaching coping strategies to future journalists. Kay used to use handouts to teach students how to deal with violent situations but quickly found they weren't effective. “It was very sterile,” she said. “A handout is just a piece of paper.” Instead, Kay began using role-playing to teach her students how to respond to traumatic events. The students were not only entertained, but also informed. Kay received one student evaluation telling her that the trauma role-playing was the “best two hours of university I've had yet.” Her research backs up the results that she shares anecdotally. “Simulations are one of the most effective ways to ensure information is retained,” she said.

Meg Spratt, also from the Dart Centre, has been a journalist and journalism educator for more than 20 years. Her trauma training was a little less structured than what she recommends to professors today. While completing her master's degree in the early 1980s, Spratt's instructor told the class: “I'm going to teach you to get the story, write the story, and file the story. Even if your mother just died,” she recalled. “Trauma lesson number one,” she joked Sunday afternoon. Spratt's research at the Dart Centre looked at what obstacles existed to including formal trauma training in journalism education. Early

findings from her research show that there is a lot of work to do to implement trauma training, but that there's also willingness to make the effort, said Spratt.

Arnold Amber, Director of Communications Workers of America Canada, responded to the panel by cautioning students in the crowd that being a journalist was not all about trauma and violence. "It is part of what we're doing, but it's not all of it," he advised. As Director of CWA Canada, Amber said he will be taking the issue of trauma training, and pushing for it to be included in future contracts for media professionals. When it comes to training in schools, Amber is adamant. "The question isn't whether we should be teaching this in schools, but how," he said.

### **Between the Eyes**

By Alice Wu

Audible gasps filled the room after Ian Stewart finished his story, and a satisfied smile crept into the corners of his mouth as he looked around at the audience members' faces. "I love the reaction I get when I tell people I've been shot in the head," said Stewart after allowing a moment for people to absorb the story he just told. His comment brought about a short but welcome bit of laughter amongst the listeners, because the 25 minutes before that point, Stewart was recalling the traumatic things he witnessed as a seven-year war correspondent in Africa. Like the time when he met Maria, a little girl whose arms were severed by rebels because she refused to give up the location of her family. Or the child soldier in Sierra Leone responsible for putting that bullet in his head. People asked him if he was angry at the kid, but he couldn't be angry, said Stewart. This was a country where violence pitted one child against another.

Stewart was one of an ensemble of journalists, doctors and officers whom attended the weekend conference on violence and trauma in journalism hosted by the University of Western Ontario. He was the first day's keynote speaker. News gatherers from all over the world attended the conference, entitled *Journalism in a Violent World*, to speak about the ordeals journalists go through when reporting on distressing events. And Stewart's experiences in Africa drove home the point that journalists—just like war veterans or police officers—are also susceptible to emotional difficulties when exposed to violence. Daily carnage took its toll, and he eventually became an ill-tempered, chain-smoking wreck battling what would later be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder, said Stewart. His days in Africa culminated with the shot to the head and the death of his colleague during an ambush on their convoy in Sierra Leone. Stewart's contribution to the conference highlighted the fact that journalists were not only witnesses to bloodshed, but can become casualties of it as well.

When he returned to Canada, Stewart sought the help of a psychiatrist who helped him deal with PTSD and got him to where he is now, he said. But despite his battle with PTSD, Stewart is still concerned with how little coverage the violence in Africa receives. The stories he wrote about Sierra Leone were never published, although articles about the attack on his convoy were printed everywhere, said Stewart. And this really bothered him. "We have to make sure these stories don't go unheard," he said. It was difficult knowing he was covering "a heinous conflict that no one cared about." "It's paramount that we represent the human condition to our readers." Stewart also stressed the fact that overseas wars aren't the only places where journalists encounter violence. Reporters here at home contend with car crashes, pedophiles and other forms of violence every day.

And the residual trauma felt by both international and domestic journalists isn't something that can be ignored by the networks that send them into these situations. "Bosses know they can't nurse a traumatized journalist with a bottle of Scotch or two more weeks' vacation.

### **War's Other Casualties**

By Marc Capancioni

Charged with being the public's eyes and ears, journalists often find themselves in sticky situations. When covering war zones, for example, they usually report on the people victimized by the conflict. But what happens when journalists themselves are victims of the violence they cover? This question was posed at the Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma in its first panel discussion, War's Other Casualties. The conference took place at the University of Western Ontario Feb. 9 and 10.

CBC cameraman Brian Kelly began the discussion. While covering the Lebanese civil war in 1983, Kelly watched as his friend and fellow journalist, Clark Todd, lay dying beside him. "I got into this business because . . . I wanted to witness history," said Kelly. Witnessing would cost him dearly, though. His life would never be the same. "These things stay with you," he said. "But with the proper treatment, you can integrate them into you." Therapy is something journalists rarely got 20 years ago. And changing this policy is the answer, said Kelly, who advocated for other changes as well. "I don't want to see anyone punished for not going (to a war zone)," he said, adding that, in the past, journalists were often pressured to go and sometimes fired for refusing. "We've all been there. That's the culture we want to change."

Also advocating for change was panelist Dr. Anthony Feinstein, a biological psychiatrist at the University of Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Feinstein first saw a traumatized journalist almost by accident. A woman was rushed to Sunnybrook in 2000, suffering from symptoms of a stroke. Her functions later returned to normal, and she was released. A few days past and the woman returned with the same symptoms. Feinstein later learned that she was a former war correspondent in Africa. What appeared to be a stroke was actually post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a condition that can develop after being exposed to a terrifying event. From here, he began to study the effects of trauma on war reporters. "Journalists are a very interesting group to study," said Feinstein. "They go back repeatedly to the most dangerous places on Earth. "Along the way, a percentage becomes traumatized," he added. "That shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone." Journalists have a 25 to 28 per cent chance of developing PTSD, said Feinstein. The rate for the general population is four to five per cent.

The third panelist, Ian Stewart, former West African bureau chief for the Associated Press, is also no stranger to violence. In 1999, while covering the civil war in Sierra Leon, he was shot in the head. Fellow journalist Myles Tierney died in the attack, but Stewart beat all odds and survived. The incident took its toll, though. He had little to no training on how to deal with violence and trauma before he went to the war zone and found little help to deal with his problems when he left. This is what should be changed, said Stewart. Former CBC senior editor John Owen, who moderated the session, admitted that mistakes were made in the past and that journalists weren't given the proper training to deal with trauma – before and after it happened. "None of us are very proud of that," he said. But times are changing, he added.

“There’s no excuse today for any executive running any news organization” not to be aware of their responsibilities, said Owen, founding executive director of News Xchange and a visiting professor at City University in London, England. The panel also discussed the use of local journalists. Too often, Western media outlets exploit African and Middle Eastern reporters, paying them very little for risking their lives and providing them with little support and safety gear for their efforts, said Stewart. “We are exploiting local labour as much as any other company that we write about.” This is another practice that should be changed, Stewart added.

### **The Cost of Bearing Witness**

By Carli Whitwell

Speakers in the panel entitled *The Cost of Bearing Witness* discussed how journalism can affect the people who share their story – the interviewees – many whom can be victims of trauma. Moderator John Owen, founding executive producer of News Xchange, said it the journalist’s responsibility to get the story, but he or she also has to speak carefully to a person who has suffered great trauma as not to retraumatize them. Panellists Giselle Portenier, Kathleen Kenna and Sgt. Debbie Bodkin each spoke about this task.

“One of the biggest responsibilities I feel is [to ensure] whoever’s testimony I am taking is fully aware his/her testimony may become public in his/her own neighbourhood and to be prepared to face that risk when that day comes,” said Giselle Portenier.

Portenier is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who began her career in London, Ont. In the past 20 years she has produced and directed documentaries such as *Murder in*

*Purdah, Killer's Paradise, and Condemned to Live.* In her documentary, *Condemned to Live*, she interviewed a 32-year-old Rwandan woman who was brutally raped by several dozen men. Even worse, the woman's entire family was murdered. Before being interviewed by Portenier, she had never uttered her story aloud because of her feelings of shame. But, once she realized someone was listening, she was happy to tell her story.

This is common, said Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the DART Centre for Journalism and Trauma. "Victims of violence are people who have been radically disempowered by experience. Basic control over themselves or their loved ones – and indeed control over everything except their story - have been taken away." The discussion also raised questions on human rights issues: what if, in telling someone's story, they are threatened, hurt or killed? Journalists have to give witnesses the power to make their own decisions to tell their story – even if it means harm to them, said Portenier. "I have interviewed people who are fully aware when talking to us, they might get killed – and they are prepared to die for it."

Kathleen Kenna agreed. "I can't say that as a journalist I ever thought that I walked away and left someone in comfort and safety. I was there to get a story...and that's the business and what drives a lot of people in it. I don't think we can change the business. But I do think that just listening makes a difference." Kenna worked at *The Toronto Star* for 20 years. In 2002, she was left disabled in an IED attack in Afghanistan. She now works with homeless and disabled veterans in San Francisco. Sgt. Debbie Bodkin offered a different perspective. Bodkin has worked with the Waterloo Regional Police for 20 years and has travelled overseas to Kosovo, Chad and Darfur where she interviewed victims of the genocide in Darfur. While watching some social workers

interview victims of the genocide, she noticed some were – quite innocently – retraumatizing the victims by forcing them to tell their stories.

The second half of the discussion raised questions about what types of images are appropriate for viewers to observe. Portenier spoke about a particularly controversial clip in her *Killing Paradise* documentary, a film about a Guatemalan serial killer who murdered two women a day. The documentary showed a naked corpse surrounded by a crowd of spectators – including children. Portenier said the dead body shows the trauma these youth unwittingly undergo and the indifference of the Guatemalan people to the dead woman – who because of her red nail polish – is written off as a prostitute. She stressed the need for these troubling images. “We sanitize our images too much – our audience is not being shown what is really going on.”

Both panellists and audience members noticed trends in Western media: photos of dead Westerners, or violence in developed countries will rarely make the page, but images of foreigners or violence in foreign countries are treated with a different set of rules. There are no right or wrong answers as to what should run, said Kevin Newman, anchor of Global National and a moderator at the conference. Decisions must be made on a case-to-case basis, said George Hoff, managing editor for the parliamentary bureau of the CBC, to which Kathleen Kenna agreed.

### **Building Awareness: The Impact of Trauma on Others**

By Kate Daley

Images of trauma can have negative affects on the public’s health as well as the journalists who report it. In the panel entitled Building Awareness: The Impact of Trauma

on Others at the inaugural Journalism in a Violent World conference, the first panel speaker Dr. Elana Newman, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Tulsa, looked at the effect of mass disaster coverage on the public.

Dr. Newman's work found that while trauma sells it focuses on the extraordinary events rather than the ordinary and contains biases of gender, age, and class. The coverage of traumatic events often does not reflect actual crime rates and their context is limited for the public. The public needs a way to think through disaster, said Dr. Newman, because viewers rate their distress as higher after viewing such images. Anxiety and distress are associated with viewing terrorism-related clips, and people reported remembering the negative images better than the positive. In an event such as the 9/11 attacks in New York City, those who experienced a personal loss were the most distressed by the images in the media. In adults, those who were directly affected by a traumatic event had the highest distress levels when watching news. In children, most had problems settling down after viewing trauma, but heroes are also created out of this stress and Dr. Newman found that older children and those who use the Internet are at a greater risk. Dr. Newman spoke about how those who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may access more news and how trauma-related news may intensify PTSD if it acts as a reminder. Dr. Newman said that there have been very few studies on how people view trauma coverage and how mental health and mass disaster are co-relational.

The second panel speaker Linda Kay, an associate professor of journalism at Concordia University, looked at what impact the media can have on a community after a traumatic event. Kay looked at the Dawson College shooting and its direct effects on the community in Montreal. She discussed whether journalists could inflict secondary trauma

through their reporting, and whether journalists could impair recovery. Her research team studied a murder in Hemingford, Quebec in 2005, where a 16-year-old was killed. They went into the community to try to find resources to support the neighbourhood after the trauma murder and found that the media had a large influence. The study found that many individuals felt estranged from their own community because of the media coverage and they were angry at the media's construction of their community. The residents felt that they were being painted inaccurately in the media, like an attraction in a zoo, which triggered feelings of loss and grief. Kay discussed how it was important to balance the tensions of the public's need to know versus the privacy of the traumatized.

Sara B. Tiegreen, a doctoral student in psychology from the University of Tulsa, was the third panel speaker, and she discussed the framing of news. Tiegreen looked at the way a story is told. There are two different ways stories are framed- the traditional model and the public health model. The traditional model of storytelling involves reporting on just the facts, whereas the public health model adds context, discusses prevention strategies and looks at themes. Tiegreen found there was a lack of context for single events and that they often ignored social issues, risk factors and prevention strategies, and use police as the sole source for the story. There were often distorted perceptions of salient features, such as those like the mentally ill. In the public health model of reporting, the stories try to shift a reader's perceptions to focus on risk factors and prevention rather than making it look random and scaring the public. The problem with the public health model story is that because it is not sensationalized, readers often don't like it and it can be difficult to write. In a study of over 300 college students who looked at a public health model story and a traditional story they found that there were no

significant differences in measures of fear and risk in the students. The best way to report trauma needs to be further examined, said Tiegreen, to figure out the best way to frame stories.

Responder to the conference panel, Rodney Pinder, the director of the International News Safety Institute, found that journalists are often viewed as “vultures.” Pinder said that he was deeply concerned with the values of journalism and how journalists are viewed in such situations. He wanted journalists to become more self-critical and to examine themselves within a professional framework.

### **The Emotional Health of Journalists**

By Alexandra Stadnyk

Dr. Anthony Feinstein, a leading authority on trauma in journalists, presented his research at the inaugural conference “Journalism in a Violent World” of the Canadian Forum on Violence and Trauma at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada. „In his keynote address, Dr. Feinstein, a professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, presented his research on the emotional well-being of journalists. His presentation focused on how journalists are emotionally affected by their work in war zones, and what motivates them to pursue such a dangerous occupation. He examined two groups in his research: 140 war journalists and 107 non-war (domestic) journalists.

Researchers have conducted countless studies on how soldiers, policemen and fire fighters have psychologically dealt with the trauma that they have been exposed to while on the job, said Feinstein. But, no research on war journalists exists, he explained. Feinstein began his research on journalism and trauma in 2000 and wrote a book about

his findings titled *Dangerous Lives: War and the Men and Women Who Report It*. He hopes that his research will help to better understand why some individuals choose riskier lives, and to understand both the positive and negative consequences of these choices, he said.

Dr. Feinstein found that war journalists are 28 percent more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) compared to the general population which psychiatrists believe have only a 4-5 percent chance of suffering from PTSD. War journalists also have a higher rate of alcohol and drug use and a higher depression rate Dr. Feinstein found. However, “the war journalists that suffered from PTSD, depression and excessive drinking were *not* more likely to have received psychological help than non-war journalists,” he said. Of the journalists surveyed, most of them were men, Dr. Feinstein said, and more than 60 percent of them had covered the war in the Balkans. The rest of the group surveyed had covered wars in Iraq, Rwanda, Congo, Chechnya, Somalia, Gaza, Lebanon, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

Dr. Feinstein collected personal profiles from journalists that included basic demographic information including: age, gender, marital status, years as a journalist and type of journalist. Journalists also had to provide information about the conflicts they covered and their alcohol and drug use. The profiles also asked them to self-assess their psychological well-being by recording their sleep patterns, anxiety levels, social behaviour and provide information about their personality.

Dr. Feinstein also sought to examine why some individuals chose war reporting as a profession, he said. The motivation of journalists to go back to war zones is a new element of his research that he is presently working on, he said. “What has struck me

over the last five years about this group is a relentless drive for individuals to go back. They want to do it very much despite the risk and dangers. It doesn't seem to put them off," said Feinstein, about the ongoing motivation for journalists to return to the frontline. He presented a risk taking study on a set of twins he conducted in partnership with the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma. Dr. Feinstein wanted to look at why two individuals with the same genealogical make-up chose different paths. One twin was a war correspondent and one was not.

### **Trauma: a workplace hazard**

By Stefania Moretti

(This article first appeared in *The Reporter*, February, 2008)

Narrowly escaping death in a hostage situation by faking a heart attack.

Witnessing senseless crimes against humanity.

Routinely waking up in a cold sweat from incessant nightmares.

No journalist is immune to trauma or impervious to harm.

That was the theme of "Any Time, Any Place, It Could Happen To You" - a panel session at the first-ever Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma, held Feb. 9 and hosted by the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. "Trauma will absolutely happen to you," Kevin Newman, TV anchorman for Global National, told a group of more than 40 student and dozens more professional journalists Newman's opening remarks captured the urgency conveyed by guest panellists: Chris Cramer, former head of CNN International and president of the International News Safety Institute, Rodney Pinder, former foreign correspondent and

director of the INSI and Ethan Baron, reporter for the Vancouver Province. "War reporting is exotic; this is the un-exotic part," said Cramer who spoke passionately about instilling a "culture of safety" in newsrooms. Cramer admitted to losing his nerve and quitting field reporting after he and other journalists were held hostage at the Iranian Embassy in London, England in 1980. Cramer, who was reporting for the BBC at the time, escaped with his life by faking his own death.

Since then, Cramer has worked as head of CNN International and is the president of the INSI, a Brussels-based non-profit organization committed to training journalists in safety, with the wider objective of removing the element of competition from the most dangerous news stories. Pinder emphasized that like most journalists, Cramer's traumatic experience on the job happened not in a war zone, but in his own local reporting environment and during peacetime. Pinder said that the vast majority of the 1,200 news workers killed in the past decade died in their home countries. In all, 171 news workers were killed while on duty in 2007, the biggest loss over a single year since the INSI started recording industry deaths in the early 1990s. "There can be no more excuses; the world is too dangerous," said Pinder. He reminded the audience that around the world journalists die at a rate of two per week.

Pinder, a veteran foreign correspondent for Reuters, has worked in the world's most volatile regions including wars in Northern Ireland, Sub-Saharan Africa, Indonesia, and the Persian Gulf. He condemned a journalism culture where there is pride in being an amateur correspondent hungry for the day's story without consideration for personal safety. He remembered being appalled at the sight of a journalist firing the gun of a fallen combatant into the sky for "kicks." While Newman said he hadn't the "guts" to be a war

correspondent, he also recognized that as a local reporter, he hasn't been exempt from trauma. "I have baggage too, although not as deep or penetrating as some of our panelists," said Newman.

Baron's experiences as a city reporter in Vancouver echoed Newman's sentiments, and illustrate the extent to which any reporter can be affected by trauma associated with the job. Baron has covered natural disasters in the U.S., conflict zones in Africa and the war in Afghanistan, but it is his time as a local crime reporter that has left the biggest scars. He spoke candidly about his two years covering the Robert Pickton trial, a grisly serial-murder case, admitting that he still has horrific dreams about the killer. Baron explained that working the local beat often means telling the story of other people's suffering. "Anything I feel pales in comparison," he said. Baron's strategy for coping with trauma is being hyper-aware of his own feelings associated with his coverage and taking time between big stories to decompress and enjoy the softer side of life. Baron enjoyed a family vacation following the verdict in the Pickton trial and has since been preparing to return to Afghanistan. "I'm attracted to extreme situations and extremes in human behaviour. A lot is the pursuit of thrills," said Baron.

Both Cramer and Pinder applauded Baron for his courage in acknowledging the effects of trauma in his life and on his family. "I was too stupid to admit that I was affected by what I covered," said Cramer who also pointed out that this type of conference on safety and trauma would have been unthinkable in the past. Pinder suggested widespread and mandatory counseling for news media would lessen the stigma-surrounding trauma in journalism. And while some disagreed with Pinder's opinion on obligatory debriefing, Cramer did stress the need for news executives to

address trauma in the workplace with all levels of staff—from the courtroom reporter to the control room editor. "It's a cop-out, and almost criminal, to say the responsibility lies with the reporter," he said.