

INTRODUCTION

You could say my field arrived at my doorstep every morning, back in the time when most people who regularly read the newspaper had home delivery. But it was at Dulles International Airport near Washington, D.C. that I truly felt a beginning for my fieldwork on U.S. journalism during the second Intifada. I was awaiting the arrival of Mazen Dana, a cameraperson for the Reuters news agency who was based in the West Bank city of Hebron. Mazen was coming to the United States to receive a freedom of the press award from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a New York-based organization. I was making a short documentary—my first—about CPJ and Mazen’s work. It was November 2001, just months after the Al-Qaeda attacks of 9/11, and the airport was a place of some anxiety for Arabs and those hoping to receive them. The embrace between Mazen Dana and Joel Campagna, CPJ’s Middle East director, exuded momentary relief. But no one was really at ease. As we drove home from the airport, Joel and Mazen talked about the news of the day. The United States had just bombed Al-Jazeera’s office in Kabul as part of the war in Afghanistan.

Mazen Dana was an unusual candidate for CPJ’s award. The organization usually honors journalists from around the world who investigate, write, and publish stories about corruption, conflict, or human rights abuses. Mazen did not write, edit, or publish. He had worked in his hometown for over a decade carrying a heavy video camera on his shoulder day after day to report on some of the most pernicious violence in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹ In the year before Mazen received the award, as CPJ recounted,

Dana was shot in the leg with a rubber-coated bullet while filming Palestinian youths throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers. Two months later, Jewish settlers beat

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him unconscious while he tried to film a conflict. The next day, an Israeli police officer smashed Dana's head in the rear door of an ambulance while he was filming the evacuation of a Palestinian youth wounded in clashes. Dana was shot again last October, in the same leg, two days in a row.²

His story called attention to the often grueling work of gathering the images that flow behind a correspondent's televised report. Mazen's work made evident that journalism is not only about ideas and analysis, the lone reporter and a notebook, but also about physical labor and risks. These are some of the underrecognized dimensions of journalistic labor.

A few days after his arrival, Mazen, Joel, and I were at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York City for the awards ceremony. Hosted by Tom Brokaw, then the anchor of *NBC Nightly News*, the dinner gathered about a thousand journalists to recognize Mazen and the other awardees. It was a critical time for American journalism. As Ann Cooper, then CPJ's executive director, told me that evening, "All of these American journalists [have come] together after a couple of months covering really the story of their lives."³ A day before the dinner, four journalists had been ambushed and killed by gunmen in Afghanistan. For now, the journalists in the Waldorf-Astoria's great ballroom were far from the front lines, but in the coming years, many would encounter such dangers firsthand, and their relationships with journalists from the places they covered would be crucial.

The audience watched a video of Mazen being shot by Israeli soldiers, beaten by Israeli settlers, and hit by errant Palestinian stones directed at Israeli soldiers. In our New York formal attire, we saw him wiping his bloodied lip and heaving a belabored breath as he was wheeled into an ambulance. Then Mazen appeared before us, smaller in real life than on the screen, wearing a suit. Mazen's speech, delivered in Arabic and translated into English by Joel, drew heavily on themes of professional identity, emphasizing what he shared with his audience rather than what separated them:

I am happy to be here and proud to receive this prestigious award from the Committee to Protect Journalists. It is the result of fourteen years of continuous sweat and toil.

It gives me strength to know that our colleagues around the world are supporting us in the quest for truth against those who seek to stifle it. . . .

Being here, I leave behind my colleagues of whom I am very proud and who are no less courageous and deserving of this award, especially my close Reuters colleague Nael Shiyoukhi who has worked by my side for eight years.

Words and images are a public trust and for this reason I will continue with my work regardless of the hardships and even if it costs me my life.

Yesterday, a tragedy befell four of our colleagues in Afghanistan. This tragedy illustrates just how costly uncovering the truth can be. The bitterness of this event is only alleviated by the knowledge that journalists around the world continue to strive for the truth. And your support for us on the front lines gives us hope.⁴

Mazen received a standing ovation from the assembled journalists, the longest of the evening.

This book is an ethnography of U.S. journalism during the second Intifada and its aftermath. The second Palestinian Intifada, an uprising against Israeli occupation that started in 2000, is a vital context for the study of journalism; likewise, journalism is an important lens through which to understand the second Intifada. This ethnography examines two dynamics that are generally obscured by the time news texts arrive in the United States. First, this book builds on a robust literature about knowledge production that recognizes that facts and knowledge do not exist preformed in the world, but rather are created through individual and collective labor, in specific cultural, political, and ethical contexts. This book analyzes epistemic practices, or the practices related to knowledge and its production, in circumstances shaped by geopolitical hierarchies and outright military conflict. The everyday realities of news-making in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip necessitate collaboration between the foreign correspondents, who usually receive authorial credit, and the Palestinian translators, reporters, fixers, guides, and photojournalists who gather information and record images. Palestinians are integral to the production of U.S. news in the occupied territories, even though they are only occasionally recognized as authors of U.S. news, and though they rarely shape its narratives. Beyond the issue of recognizing Palestinian labor, looking at Palestinian journalists' work encourages a reexamination of objectivity and distance as key values and stances of knowledge production in journalism and beyond. Palestinian journalists also employ a wide range of skills necessary for knowledge production, only some of which are conventionally acknowledged. This book asks what we can learn about knowledge production, violence, and state authorities when we place Palestinian journalists at the center of an inquiry about journalism.

Second, because foreign correspondence was so pervasive as an on-the-ground practice during the second Intifada, the production of news itself—

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apart from journalistic texts—has had a critical political and social impact as well. So many people harbored hopes from encounters with the media or nursed grievances following such encounters. Seeing journalists working in their cities, villages, and refugee camps helped Palestinians to imagine the world beyond the occupied territories, and it also prodded people to think about how they represented themselves to other Palestinians. This book considers what we can discern about logics of protest and statecraft by studying interactions among activists, officials, journalists, and other members of the public.

These questions were in the back of my mind during Mazen's visit, but more simply I wanted him to enjoy his time in two American cities I knew well. Joel showed him around Washington and New York. They visited the White House and the United Nations. They shopped. I went with them to the Brooklyn Bridge and took a picture of them as they held a handwritten greeting to Mazen's soundperson, Nael Shiyoukhi (Figure 1). Mazen and Joel had a warm



Figure 1 2001 International Press Freedom awardee Mazen Dana and Committee to Protect Journalists Middle East director Joel Campagna. They hold a greeting to Mazen's soundperson Nael Shiyoukhi as they pose on the Brooklyn Bridge in November 2001. *Source:* Amahl Bishara.

rapport, established during Joel's visits to the West Bank and solidified over their many phone calls over the years about incidents in Hebron. Joel was visibly pleased to be the host this time around. Both were welcoming to me as well. Mazen offered to carry extra equipment and gave me, a novice documentarian, advice on working with video ("Always, always remember the white balance!").

Mazen's visit illuminated the various ways that people with overlapping epistemic and political projects can connect with each other: the formal professional acknowledgment of Mazen's ovation at the Waldorf-Astoria; the camaraderie between Joel, the human rights worker, and his subject Mazen, the journalist; Mazen's quiet but persistent recognition of his soundperson, Nael; their extension of this epistemic fellowship to me, a young researcher and filmmaker. CPJ produces and is fueled by the networks that grow around the category of the journalist and the value of press freedom. A human rights organization established in 1981 by a group of U.S. foreign correspondents who sought to support their foreign colleagues working in restrictive conditions, CPJ's mission is to "promote press freedom worldwide by defending the rights of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal."⁵ Their work takes for granted the idea that journalists of different nationalities must collaborate in order for press freedom to flourish globally. CPJ relies on journalists around the world for information about attacks on the press. Those same journalists depend on CPJ to put pressure on their governments when they face trouble.

The camaraderie among Joel, Mazen, and me is also an important reminder that throughout my research on journalism I, as an anthropologist, *write alongside* other writers and media makers. This is not quite what Laura Nader has called "studying up,"⁶ although I was, generally speaking, professionally junior to the journalists I worked with when I did this research. It is more akin to what Ulf Hannerz, also writing about journalists, termed "studying sideways," writing about a parallel craft.⁷ Indeed, anthropology bears many similarities to journalism, and like other anthropologists who have studied journalism, I believe anthropologists can benefit from a reflexive approach to our own work in light of a study of journalism.⁸ But writing alongside implies more than just a similarity of practice. I regularly depend on journalists for perspectives on the world, which they offer me. I start my days reading their words and listening to their voices, whether they fascinate me or frustrate me. Writing alongside is a kind of ethnography that involves recognizing one's indebtedness to other knowledge producers while at the same time maintaining a critical stance toward institutions, the broader cultural norms that situate them, and indi-

viduals within these institutions, too. It can also involve epistemic fellowships: collaborations in knowledge production in which people with different disciplinary or professional backgrounds and different epistemic standards, styles, and ultimate goals can say certain things together, even if they disagree on other topics.⁹ Mazen, Joel, and I each sought to share with our own audiences something about freedom of the press, especially in contexts of struggle as during the second Intifada, though this is not the only goal any of us have had.

I am also interested in analyzing practices of collaboration *within* the field of journalism, especially among journalists of different nationalities. Developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have rendered such journalistic collaboration more vital than ever. For example, for years when parts of Iraq lacked basic security, U.S. journalists there who did not look Arab or speak Arabic were unable to do much of their own reporting, and so they relied on Iraqi (and other Arab) reporters, fixers, and camerapeople to be their eyes and ears.¹⁰ Usually without knowing it, we in the American public relied on these Arab journalists too. In the West Bank, foreign correspondents and other internationals do not face the same general threats to their lives as did journalists in Iraq. Still, staying safe and managing Israeli restrictions demand special expertise. Similar dynamics of collaboration are at work in the West Bank because most U.S. journalists require linguistic and cultural interpreters and guides. These forms of collaboration remain hidden in journalism's public texts.

Thus the first major aim of this research project has been to elucidate exactly what Palestinian journalists contribute to the production of U.S. news in terms of information, images, and pure sweat and blood. In dominant spheres in the United States and elsewhere, Palestinians are *epistemic others*, regarded as constitutively different in how they relate to knowledge: less capable and less trustworthy. This is a corollary of broader orientalist presuppositions of an essential difference between Arabs and Euro-Americans.¹¹ Palestinians are outside the bounds of the U.S. public sphere, not only geographically but because they are non-Westerners, Arabs during the "War on Terror," and on top of that stateless during an era when, as Hannah Arendt has famously observed, "being citizens of some commonwealth" grants "that tremendous equalizing of differences" that accords one rights and recognition.¹² Scholarship on the need for Palestinians to demand "permission to narrate,"¹³ and on their alternative ways of making history as stateless people,¹⁴ has examined the issue of knowledge production from a position of statelessness. Critical studies of knowledge

production in Israel highlight the ways in which state power facilitates the production of knowledge that supports the nation-state.¹⁵ This study, complementarily, looks at how Palestinians help to constitute the building blocks of Americans' public sphere—basic journalistic texts and images—even if they have not yet attained permission to narrate in these spheres.

In doing so, it also considers the topic of epistemic others from another angle. Palestinians—especially those living in the occupied territories—generally do inhabit an epistemic difference. They have different kinds of knowledge as well as different perspectives about knowledge compared to American journalists or the news-reading public, albeit not for reasons orientalists might imagine. Many Palestinian journalists see little conflict between their duty to report objectively and their duty to tell people about the injustice of occupation, because this is the primary “story” they have been hired to cover over the last decades. In most cases, legal barriers prohibit these journalists from doing reporting in Israel that might provide “balance” to this narrative. Even more fundamentally, Palestinians are less likely to conceive of political knowledge as a reified body of knowledge set apart from their lives. Both because of how the U.S. public sphere sees them and because of their actual epistemic difference, their contributions to journalism open important questions about journalistic values. In understanding their work, we can probe assumptions about who can (and does) participate in dominant public spheres, and on what terms. We can trace the contours of transnational public spheres¹⁶ in an era of media conglomeration, when knowledge is often presumed to be something indistinguishably “global.” Mazen’s statement at the Waldorf-Astoria that “words and images are a public trust” rings true—but determining who is or should be in that public is a highly political issue.

Aside from my hours in the editing room with footage of Mazen’s visit, I did not see Mazen again. In August 2003, weeks before I was bound to make my own arrival at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv for my fieldwork, I opened a Yahoo! webpage to find the headline, “British Journalist Killed in Iraq.” When I clicked on the headline, I saw a familiar press photo of Mazen in a leather jacket in front of what looked like London greenery. Later headlines corrected the mistake of confusing Mazen’s national identity with the national base of his news organization, but nothing would change the fact of Mazen’s death. U.S. soldiers had shot him as he was working just outside Abu Ghraib prison. Although his crew had alerted the guards to their presence in the area, U.S. soldiers said that they thought his camera was a rocket-propelled grenade

launcher. He fell to the ground while his camera was rolling. Next to him was his soundperson and best friend Nael Shiyoukhi.

The first years of the twenty-first century have been dire for global press freedom. Not only have unstable or authoritarian states impeded journalists' work, but democratic states claiming to be motivated by national security have as well. The U.S. wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan have presented ominous challenges to journalists.¹⁷ Israel, known to many as the only democracy in the Middle East (though this claim deserves to be problematized on several accounts), has been cited by free press organizations for its restrictions on journalists in the occupied territories.¹⁸ In creating a global index of press freedom, Reporters Without Borders has taken to examining separately how the United States and Israel deal with press freedoms within their recognized borders and in territories they control. In 2003, for example, the United States and Israel, respectively, ranked 31 and 44 on the index "at home," but 135 and 146 for territories they controlled.¹⁹ Investigating the occupied Palestinian territories as they are implicated in Israeli and even U.S. democracies urges an inquiry into the "margins of the state."²⁰ A second major aim of this book, then, is to examine the relationship between press freedom and violence on the fringes of recognized democratic systems, where the necropolitical, or "the subjugation of life to the power of death,"²¹ can be as relevant as the electoral.²² Following an anthropological tradition of using ethnography to expand on concepts of human rights,²³ I argue that to fully identify limitations on freedom of the press, we need to go beyond the usual (and indeed, undeniably important) categories of restrictions on the press that a human rights organization might catalogue—like censorship, newspaper closure, and journalists' beatings and arrests—to look more expansively at conditions that promote or inhibit the production of news. Journalists' work, like that of other knowledge producers, is not only mental; it is also embodied, and in this sense material conditions like the ability to move freely have a profound effect on journalists' abilities to work. In this book, I seek to uncover some of the manifold and often pernicious connections between violence, broadly defined, and speech.

When I arrived in Israel and the West Bank a few weeks after Mazen's death, one of my first stops was to visit his family in Hebron. I met Mazen's wife and four young children, as well as his extended family. They welcomed me with an immense platter of *mansaf*, a Hebron specialty of lamb, yoghurt, and rice topped with sautéed almonds on a bed of bread dumplings. I delivered a humble assembly of photographs of Mazen's stay in the United States and a col-

lection of condolences from people in New York City, especially those at CPJ. The photographs in front of the White House took on a devastating new set of meanings now that Mazen had died at the hand of an American soldier. Mazen's eldest son, who was about ten and had inherited his father's penchant for photography, snapped pictures of me. Mazen's youngest daughter, not yet two, toddled cheerfully. His widow showed me snapshots of her charismatic, handsome husband playing volleyball in college and laughing with his children. His nephew took me for a walk in Hebron's old city, its narrow passages knitted together with archways. I remembered Mazen describing the acrobatics of rooftop commutes during Israeli curfews. It had seemed unlikely, but now I understood.

The family wanted me to stay a few days and come back soon. I was riven by their grief, grateful for their kindness. I was also confounded by aspects of my visit. Tens of posters and postcards of Mazen plastered his street, his relatives' homes, and his own home. I saw in a long video of his funeral that thousands of people had accompanied his body from the mosque to the graveyard before his widow and children bade him a wrenching farewell. As a newcomer, it somehow took a while for me to understand that these were the mediated forms of martyrdom in the second Intifada.

These many years later, I am no longer surprised when Mazen Dana is identified as "*al-shahid*" (the martyr) rather than "*al-sahafi*" (the journalist). But the visit was one of my first indications that a third major aim of my research would need to be understanding the effects U.S. and other Western news institutions had on Palestinian politics and society. What was the importance of journalism in Palestinian society during the second Intifada that qualified Mazen, a journalist slain in Iraq, to be regarded as a martyr for the Palestinian national cause? How are journalists, especially those who work for foreign news organizations, regarded in Palestinian society? Are they professionals or political activists, both or neither? Why did Mazen's brothers and wife and nieces and nephews do so much for a young American documentary maker they had never met before? What are Palestinians' assumptions about what foreign journalists and anthropologists can do for them on both personal and national levels?

On the way from Hebron back to Jerusalem, carrying a bundle of Hebron grapes from the Dana family's patio vines, I traversed the checkpoints and piles of dirt that were part of Israel's system of closure. As I traveled a route that had been illegal for Mazen and was still out of reach for his children, I knew that I had to understand the many ways that living in Palestinian society under military occupation affected journalists. I had to examine how geographical

and political isolation framed Palestinians' views of foreign journalists and the field of politics in general. I could not study journalists without accounting for the surrounding society. Far beyond the image of the solitary journalist with his notebook, I soon discovered, was the brawny cameraperson working with his best friend, who held the boom; the producer whose birthday party was her celebration of a vast collection of acquaintances from government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and media organizations throughout Palestinian society in the West Bank and Israel; the reporter who wept more than once in a hard day of interviewing. And they all had families and homes that were integral to their work.

The news I was accustomed to reading and seeing in the United States looked quite different from the dirt mounds outside Hebron than it had from my New York apartment. The overarching objective of this book, then, is to analyze how our understandings of journalism as a form of knowledge production change when viewed from Palestinian society in the occupied territories.²⁴ What is the place of journalism in Palestinian society, and what can this tell us about journalism as a whole? How can we characterize the multifaceted and understudied relationship between mainstream news media and state institutions? The occupied Palestinian territories are an especially rich place for a study of journalism—especially international journalism read and viewed in the United States—because of presumptions in the United States about Arabs, recent U.S. wars in the Middle East, and Palestinians' statelessness.

For decades, academic consideration of journalism in the United States primarily investigated how domestic news institutions functioned. Outside of the academy, writing on journalism—sometimes authored by journalists, especially foreign correspondents—has emphasized the heroic individual reporter. Recent ethnographic work on journalism has expanded beyond U.S. borders to examine how foreign correspondents work abroad,²⁵ the effects of globalization, media conglomeration, and technological changes on news-making practices,²⁶ and how various national and regional journalisms manage relationships with state authorities.²⁷ As a complement to these fruitful approaches, viewing major U.S. and European institutions from the occupied territories—and focusing on the neglected topic of local journalists who work with foreign correspondents²⁸—underscores how many more contributors there are to international news texts than foreign correspondents and their editors, even if these other contributors do not necessarily have the power to set the narrative for news coverage. Palestinian journalists might be regarded

as frontline workers in our public sphere, even though they are geographically marginal to the United States. The skills and values of these journalists expand our understandings of practices and ideals that go into the news we read and view every day. Palestinian journalists also have different relationships to the news events they cover than do foreign correspondents and editors. The vantage point of the occupied territories also reveals that the news Americans read and watch is not only the product of economic considerations²⁹ or narrative frames.³⁰ It is also the product of deeply material processes and things. Some of them, like flying bullets or all too immobile piles of dirt, impede the flow of information. Others, like the embodied skills journalists have developed to manage restrictions, enable the production of knowledge. Still others shape processes of news production in more subtle ways. A rich tradition of studying journalism has analyzed how political movements are influenced by how they are covered in the news media.³¹ Examining journalism from the occupied Palestinian territories illuminates the ways international journalism has profound cultural and political effects for the communities in which it is produced, even if community members rarely read the *New York Times*.

Finally, looking at journalism from this vantage point sheds new light on knowledge production in general. In recent years, science studies scholars have argued against the reification of scientific knowledge. They have used ethnography, among other methods, to confirm that knowledge is cultural and political, a result of institutional processes as well as broader social contexts. They have argued that these qualities do not in themselves undermine the reliability of knowledge because all knowledge is situated; that is, it comes from a location or perspective.³² If, as science studies scholars have found, processes of scientific production are influenced by society's norms and national politics,³³ this is even more blatantly the case for journalism. Journalism is what Bruno Latour might consider one of the ultimate hybrids between science and society.³⁴ Not only do journalists cover topics like climate change as hybrids—science on the politics pages, and politics on the science pages—but also, as I show here, producing journalism involves methods and ideas about how to properly produce knowledge taken from the sciences and applied to that ultimate non-laboratory, the street. A science studies approach to journalism informs investigation of the minute processes of journalism—where to place a tripod to cover an event—as well as the values of journalism, especially because these values have been modeled off of ethics in the sciences. Examining journalism, particularly from the perspective of media workers who usually go unrecognized, contrib-

utes to a broader understanding of processes of knowledge production, too: of the implications of geopolitical and institutional hierarchies among producers, and the relationships among knowledge, violence, and the body.

WORLDS OF MEDIA PRODUCTION:

A METHODOLOGY FOR STUDYING KNOWLEDGE IN CONTEXT

Examining the place of U.S. journalism in Palestinian society demands an approach that accounts for journalists' practices but also situates these practices in broad cultural context. Faye Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin's concept of "media worlds" recognizes "the necessity of linking media production, circulation, and reception in broad and intersecting social and cultural fields: local, regional, national, transnational."³⁵ The concept of media worlds establishes the ways in which media can cultivate, renew, challenge, or sever social relations. Building on this multifaceted approach but focusing on production, I look at how news-making creates social and political worlds. That is, a foundational argument in media theory holds that media texts can shape cultural processes and beliefs; these then later influence the production of media, yielding a feedback loop.³⁶ I argue that even before texts are published, media production itself can be transformative, drawing people together, shaping discourses and silences, producing forms of security and danger, molding subjectivities. This is partly because media production itself entails circulation and consumption of other, preceding media texts.³⁷ Journalists are constantly re-contextualizing existing texts, removing them from one framework or environment and placing them in another,³⁸ such that feedback loops can exist *within* processes of media production, too. Another reason that media production has social and political effects is that, far from occurring only in isolated environments like a studio, soundstage, or newsroom, media production happens in society.³⁹ Journalism draws in government officials, victims, and activists; farmers, mothers, factory owners, and children. All of them bring their own goals and perspectives to this enterprise. Many Palestinians are deeply concerned about how they and their struggle are represented in U.S. and other Western media. They have a kind of double consciousness.⁴⁰ Palestinians see themselves both through the lens of their own social and political values *and also* through what they know of the values and narratives of the United States and Europe. In a place as thick with journalists as the West Bank was during the second Intifada, those working with Western journalistic institutions have deep political and social influence.