

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CATHLEEN COLVIN *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC,

Defendant.

Civil No. 1:16-cv-01423 (ABJ)

Declaration of John Moore Witherow

I, **John Moore Witherow**, of 1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF, declare as follows:

1. I am the Editor of *The Times*, a London newspaper which was first published in 1785. From 1995 to 2013 I was Editor of *The Sunday Times*, where I met and worked with Marie Colvin. *The Sunday Times* and *The Times* are owned by the same publisher but are formally separate newspapers.
2. I submit this declaration to describe to the Court the circumstances of Marie's last assignment to the Syrian Arab Republic and the reactions to her killing in the world of journalism; the breadth and success of her career; and my expectations about what more she might have done had she not been killed in Homs on February 22, 2012.
3. All of my statements are based on personal knowledge unless otherwise indicated.

My background and career

4. I have been in journalism since I was 19. I started my career when I went to Namibia (then South West Africa) in 1970 hoping to teach in Ovamboland on the Angolan border, and ended up working on a development project and working freelance for the BBC Africa Service when I was denied the necessary entry permit. In 1977, after university, I joined the Reuters News Agency's graduate trainee programme, and was sent to the Cardiff School of Journalism, where I obtained a distinction. I worked in Madrid for a year for *Reuters* before joining *The Times* as a reporter in 1980. In my first few weeks at *The Times*, I covered the Iranian embassy siege; and two years later in 1982, I covered the Falklands war, where I came under bomb attack and witnessed the strike on RFA Galahad that killed 48 servicemen and became the biggest single loss of the war. In 1982 I wrote a book about my experiences, *The Falklands: the Winter War*, with Patrick Bishop, a war correspondent for *The Observer* newspaper who was later married for a period to Marie. In the same year, I also spent six months in Boston and Washington for the *Boston Globe*.

5. In 1983, I moved to *The Sunday Times* under the editorship of Andrew Neil and served in several positions, including defence correspondent, diplomatic correspondent, foreign editor, and head of news. I covered the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. I became Acting Editor of *The Sunday Times* after Mr Neil's departure in 1994. I was confirmed as Editor the following year and edited the newspaper for 18 years. In January 2013 I was appointed Acting Editor of

The Times and confirmed in the post in September. As Editor of *The Times*, I am in charge of the newspaper's content and staff.

6. We at *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* believe that newspapers play an important part in a free society, and we take our responsibility seriously to report accurately and to pursue vigorous journalism. We believe such journalism is vital for a flourishing democracy through its acts of exposing wrongdoing and holding people in positions of power to account. This is especially true of reporting from within wars zones and from hostile environments, an increasingly challenging and daunting mission for any reporter and media organisation.

Marie Colvin's last assignment

7. I knew Marie Colvin for over twenty-five years as a colleague and dear friend. I first met her in the newsroom at *The Sunday Times* sometime in 1985, when she joined the newspaper from United Press International in Paris. My first impression of Marie has stayed with me. She was a whirl of black curls, a force of nature. I came to know her as committed to her vocation, wilful and determined, and, while prepared to take risks, never foolish.
8. Marie had a quiet authority and immense charm and wit. When she arrived, the newspapers in London were caught in the turmoil of industrial action by print workers. Pickets circled the building from which *The Sunday Times* was printed. Marie quickly made her views known: "My god", she said, "I'm not hanging around here. I need a real war to go to". Marie died on 22 February 2012 in the Baba Amr neighbourhood of Homs, Syria, covering such a "real" war.

9. *The Sunday Times* had been reporting on Syria's descent into war since 2011. In Dera'a that year, the Syrian government opened fire, killing four people in a peaceful protest following anti-government slogans appearing on walls about the arrest and alleged torture of 15 young people. The city of Homs became the seat of opposition as Syria descended into chaos.
10. On February 5th, three weeks before Marie was killed, she and her colleagues filed an article about the escalating violence in Syria from Beirut, Lebanon. They reported that "[t]he fighting in Syria spiralled yesterday into the worst violence since protesters began their uprising against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad almost a year ago. More than 200 men, women and children were killed in Homs . . .".¹ "There are growing fears of a civil war, with the FSA not only controlling parts of Homs, but also fighting in Damascus, the capital".²
11. Marie reached Syria on or around February 15th, even though we knew that foreign journalists were unwelcome there and that Homs was becoming increasingly dangerous. It was typical that Marie felt compelled to be in Syria as it tipped towards civil war. In November 2010 she gave a speech in commemoration of war reporters at the church of St Bride's on Fleet Street in London, known as the journalists' church. She said, "Covering a war means going to places torn by chaos, destruction and death, and trying to bear witness. .

¹ Marie Colvin, Peter Kellier & Annasofie Flamand, 'Bombs fell like rain. You could only pray', THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 5, 2012, at 27 (Ex. A-1). As Editor of *The Sunday Times*, I oversaw the publication of this and the other *Sunday Times* articles exhibited with this declaration. I personally managed the publication of all articles from the 26 February 2012 issue of *The Sunday Times*, which commemorated Marie. Each of the articles exhibited herewith is a true and correct copy of the original publications.

² *Id.*

... It has never been more dangerous to be a war correspondent, because the journalist in the combat zone has become a prime target.”³ She saw it as her job to bear witness and I know she believed passionately in the importance of her work.

12. On February 19th we published her first on-the-ground report from Homs. She was the only journalist with a British newspaper inside the city and was accompanied by our photographer, Paul Conroy. She wrote in detail of the growing despair as “international diplomats dither”.⁴ Five thousand Syrian soldiers were believed to be on the outskirts, with residents fearing a ground assault. She told the Foreign Editor, “It is sickening that the Syrian regime is allowed to keep doing this”.⁵
13. Marie and Conroy were working from a makeshift media centre in Baba Amr run by anti-government activists. They left Baba Amr temporarily, so they would not be there when their report was published on Sunday February 19th. Marie dictated that report to our newsroom by satellite phone, offering a haunting glimpse into the battered city: “Crammed amid makeshift beds and scattered belongings are frightened women and children trapped in the horror of Homs, the

³ Marie Colvin, ‘*Our mission is to report these horrors of war with accuracy and without prejudice*’, transcript available at THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 10, 2010) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/feb/22/marie-colvin-our-mission-is-to-speak-truth>.

⁴ Marie Colvin, ‘*We live in fear of a massacre*’, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 19, 2012, at 18-19 (Ex. A-2); see also Marie Colvin, *Vet offers only hope for Syrian wounded*, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 19, 2012, at 1 (Ex. A-3).

⁵ Features, *Marie Colvin: the Last Assignment, News*, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012, at 22-23 (Ex. A-4).

Syrian city shaken by two weeks of relentless bombardment.”⁶ Marie and Conroy returned to Homs on the 20th.

14. On the evening of February 21st I remember Marie giving interviews from the media centre to CNN and the BBC; she told ITV news, "The Syrians are not allowing civilians to leave . . . anyone who gets on the street is hit by a shell. If they are not hit by a shell they are hit by snipers. There are snipers all around on the high buildings. I think the sickening thing is the complete merciless nature. They are hitting the civilian buildings absolutely mercilessly and without caring and the scale of it is just shocking".⁷
15. Unknown to Marie, Conroy had written to *The Sunday Times* foreign editor, Sean Ryan, "I suspect that Marie's high profile due to this week's material in paper and TV interviews also compromises our safety". Ryan replied that they should leave at the first opportunity.⁸ Marie resolved to leave Homs with Conroy on February 23rd, but was killed by what appears to have been coordinated shellfire in the early morning of February 22nd.
16. I heard about Marie's death on the morning of February 22nd, 2012, as I came out of a breakfast meeting with a chief executive at a hotel in London. My phone rang and I was told by the Managing Editor at *The Sunday Times* that reports were reaching us from Syria that Marie had been killed. I could not initially believe the news. Rumours like this often come back from the field and are often

⁶ Colvin, 'We live in fear of a massacre' (Ex. A-2), *supra* note 4.

⁷ See Roy Greenslade, *Marie Colvin obituary*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 22, 2012), <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/feb/22/marie-colvin>.

⁸ Features, *Marie Colvin: the Last Assignment* (Ex. A-4), *supra* note 5.

exaggerated. As I reached my office at the newspaper, I was told that the reports had been confirmed through Conroy. Remi Ochlik, a French photographer, had died with her. Edith Bouvier of *Le Figaro* and their translator, Wael al-Omar, were injured alongside Conroy.

17. I was hugely shocked by the news on a personal and professional level. The reaction to Marie's death from friends, colleagues, politicians and the media was immediate and overwhelming: grief, disbelief, a profound sense of loss. The loss to society was recognized by then-Prime Minister, David Cameron, who told Parliament shortly afterward that "[t]his is a desperately sad reminder of the risks that journalists take to inform the world of what is happening and the dreadful events in Syria and our thoughts should be with her family and with her friends".⁹ News of Marie's death spread rapidly around the world.

18. While the press inquiries flooded in and the world reported the deaths, at *The Sunday Times* we tried to focus on getting Conroy out alive. We and Marie's family were also still faced with the enormous task of recovering Marie's body. Sean Ryan and I, together with other senior staff, worked with the British Foreign Office and contacts in Syria, including the British ambassador to Syria, Simon Collins, and his French counterpart, Eric Chevallier. We were in constant contact with Marie's family and with Conroy's family. Ray Wells, our picture editor, and Miles Amooore, a foreign correspondent, were dispatched to Beirut to help coordinate the rescue operation. Hala Jaber, another foreign correspondent, left for Damascus to liaise with Syrian officials. We received scores of letters of

⁹ See *id.*

support from readers for publication, expressing distress at Marie's death. We also turned to our duty to report what happened. All this amidst our personal shock and grief.

19. I wrote a piece entitled "The silver girl sails off into the night" drawing on my personal memories and the many reactions and tributes I received over the few days after she died from friends, family and colleagues.¹⁰ In it, I shared my memories of Marie, which I believed captured her zest for life and fun and wit; and her tremendous commitment and contribution to our understanding of human plight in war. I wrote how in a conversation on *The Sunday Times* website two years before, she had said: "I am always moved by the people I encounter in horrific situations. But that is what war is all about. The mothers, kids, soldiers".¹¹
20. The edition of February 26 was our tribute to Marie. My piece was accompanied by others who worked with her. Jon Swain, a distinguished former *Sunday Times* war correspondent, wrote about Marie's final movements, her communications with the foreign desk, the moment of the shelling.¹² Christina Lamb, another of our foreign correspondents, wrote that we suspected that the media centre had been targeted. "If, as we suspect, it was targeted because they were telling the world what the Syrian regime was doing to its own people ... we should be outraged". Lamb further explained in her piece that repressive regimes knew that

¹⁰ John Witherow, *The silver girl sails off into the night*, THE SUNDAY TIMES (Feb. 26, 2012), at 1-3 (Ex. A-5).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Jon Swain, *Colvin's final hours inside stricken city*, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012, at 1 (Ex. A-6).

killing journalists could deter others from reporting the story. She also observed the limitations of social media, which is now widely used and can fill information gaps when journalists cannot get in, but cannot carry the power of the words which Marie had shared.¹³ Experienced and well known reporters capture the public's imagination in a way which citizen journalists cannot. Hala Jaber in Damascus and Miles Amooore in Beirut wrote about Conroy's injuries and the attempts to rescue him and the injured French journalist.¹⁴

21. I attended Marie's funeral in her home town of Oyster Bay, Long Island, on 12 March 2012. On May 16th a memorial was held for her at the Church of St Martin-in-the-fields in London, attended by family, friends, colleagues and dignitaries. The attendance at both services showed the tremendous esteem in which Marie was held. In Long Island, the ceremony was a low key affair, but outside, I remember how Syrians opposing Assad congregated. In London, friends and fellow journalists attended to pay their tributes. The foreign secretary, William Hague, was present.

Marie's career in journalism

22. Marie worked hard and deservedly had a truly extraordinary career. Her articles speak for themselves. She covered the Iran-Iraq war, reported from the West Bank in the 1990s, remained in Baghdad through the Gulf War bombing in 1991, and witnessed the American bombing of Tripoli in 1992. She was the first

¹³ Christina Lamb, *The despot's new rule: kill the messenger*, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012, at 5 ("Who will forget the report of her final hours when she said 'I saw a baby die today?'" (Ex. A-7).

¹⁴ Hala Jaber & Miles Amooore, *Last-ditch bid to save journalists*, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012, at 1 (Ex. A-8).

reporter to enter Kosovo from Albania in 1999, with a special forces unit trying to open up a supply line. She reported from Chechnya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone. She knew and interviewed Gaddafi and Arafat.

23. In 1999, during the East Timorese crisis, Marie and two other journalists refused to leave a compound in Dili, East Timor, where over 1,000 women and children and staff were left without United Nations protection from Indonesian forces. Her television broadcasts spread the news across the world: due to her visible presence, the compound was spared from the attack and the refugees were eventually evacuated. Marie wrote:

"It was horrific but I stayed because the women and children in the compound were going to be deserted by the United Nations and I was not willing to countenance another Srebrenica. It was a difficult decision and led to one funny moment. When my press colleagues evacuated, I decided to stay but did not get on my satellite phone to ask permission from my foreign editor, who I should have consulted. I called him when all the trucks had left for the airport, and stayed with the rear guard and East Timor families. He went ballistic, and rightly so. "What do you mean all the other newspapers have left?" Well, they have. "What do you mean all the wire services have left?" Well they have. "What do you mean ALL THE MEN HAVE LEFT?" To his credit he printed my response, "I guess they don't make men like they used to."¹⁵

It was just one example of the real impact Marie had on world affairs.

24. In 2001 Marie was the first foreign reporter in six years to enter the dangerous Vanni region of Sri Lanka. She was ambushed returning from an interview with Tamil Tiger leaders and seriously injured, losing sight in one eye. She wore her signature black eye patch from then on. It was a distressing price to pay for the

¹⁵ *Marie Colvin: Q&A on life as a foreign correspondent*, THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 22, 2012 (Ex. A-9).

work she loved. She wrote after the event, "WHY do I cover wars? I have been asked this often in the past week. It is a difficult question to answer. I did not set out to be a war correspondent. It has always seemed to me that what I write about is humanity in extremis, pushed to the unendurable, and that it is important to tell people what really happens in wars – declared and undeclared. My job is to bear witness. I have never been interested in knowing what make of plane had just bombed a village or whether the artillery that fired at it was 120mm or 155mm. War is also about propaganda. Both sides try to obscure the truth".¹⁶ With unending resilience she wrote, "I am not going to hang up my flak jacket as a result of this incident".¹⁷

25. Marie received a legion of accolades for her work. The glittering prizes testified to the high esteem with which she was regarded by her colleagues and reflected my own view of what an exceptional and accomplished war reporter she was. Few reporters have the temerity to be a war correspondent; even fewer display the insight and sensitivity with which Marie wrote. After her death, *The Sunday Times* collated her published work in a volume entitled *On the Front Line: The Collected Journalism of Marie Colvin*. I am sure it will be well read by students of journalism and young reporters hoping to pick up all the skills Marie had. Marie was and continues to be a source of inspiration for young war reporters, including many young female reporters who currently work for Times Newspapers. Some of them knew her personally. All of them admired and respected her.

¹⁶ Marie Colvin, *The Shot Hit Me*, MARIE COLVIN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL REPORTING (Apr. 22, 2001), <http://mariecolvincenter.org/stories-by-marie-colvin/the-shot-hit-me/>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

Marie's role in war reporting

26. Only a handful of newsroom reporters can become successful war correspondents, not least because it requires huge bravery. Marie followed in a long line of war correspondents, including at *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Her contribution has to be seen in context to be fully appreciated. She more than lived up to the traditions she contributed to and was in my view the leading war correspondent of her generation.
27. War reporting has always held a special place in journalism. It has become essential for democracy that independent journalists, whose reports can be trusted by the public, can speak truth to power and report the truth from places which are otherwise inaccessible. Without the presence of reporters on the ground in hostile environments, news reports would be limited to propaganda from repressive regimes and from third-hand tales of atrocities. Eye witness accounts, such as those Marie wrote, add another dimension altogether to information which is otherwise controlled by governments in its content and distribution.
28. *The Times'* records show that overseas events were, until the 18th century, haphazardly reported, with newspapers relying on personal letters, journals or navy or military bulletins for information. In 1807 *The Times* appointed its first staff correspondent, Henry Crabb Robinson, who reported from the Peninsular War. William Howard Russell of *The Times* reported from the Crimean War, returning to England a hero in 1856, and is widely credited as the original war correspondent.

29. The role of war correspondents like Marie has not been diminished by changes in technology and the increase in the use of social media. Social media proliferates, but well-written, reliable reports from inside war zones are unique to the traditional press. Our correspondents still have the unique advantage of being deployed with the backing and contacts of a large news organisation. These help our war correspondents reach difficult territories and find the truth with all its rich context. In fact, Marie's writing was made all the more unique because of the proliferation of social media. The importance of war reporting could not be greater in our age of misinformation.
30. Although the nature of the challenges which reporters face in the field has changed over time, the tremendous personal risks they must take remain. Marie's death had a significant impact on war reporting. Only major news organisations can afford to provide the backup, security, and support required to deploy reporters to hostile zones. A death deters future assignments by less well-resourced organisations. After Marie's death I had to think long and hard before deciding to continue to send my reporters to Syria. Morale was low and there was a sense of vulnerability, as well as shock. Syria was becoming impossible to cover.
31. But we determined that we could not allow that to be Marie's legacy. If we were to cease reporting from countries whose regimes try to prevent accounts of their terror from reaching the international community, we would be conceding defeat. Marie would have been outraged at the prospect. Thus, despite Marie's death, Times Newspapers and their staff remain committed to war reporting, even

though this often comes with a high price. For example, Anthony Loyd, war reporter, and Jack Hill, photographer for *The Times*, were shot and kidnapped by a rebel gang while on assignment in Syria in May 2014. Incredibly, they escaped and continue to report from dangerous zones. Loyd, another leading war correspondent of our generation, had won the Foreign Reporter of the Year award earlier in 2014, for exposing the use of chemical warfare by the Assad regime. Those reports would not have been possible had we called a halt to sending reporters to Syria.

32. However, we do not know what Marie would have gone on to report, given her experience and contacts. I have no doubt that had she survived, she would have continued to be at the forefront of reporting on this and other conflicts. Without Marie, there is one less voice – one of exceptional experience, insight, and compassion – explaining what is really happening in a conflict which continues to tear Syria apart with devastating consequences for its people.

Marie's future

33. Marie's future would without a doubt have been as remarkable as her career already was. She was world-renowned for her reporting and for her resilience, warmth and humour. She commanded professional respect and would have continued to cover Syria and world events had she survived the attack in Homs.
34. After her injury in Sri Lanka Marie asked to become freelance for a short period. Her contract with *The Sunday Times* in subsequent years allowed her to work freelance as well, albeit subject to some conditions. It would have been possible for her to make even more time to pursue her own projects which could have

included books or documentaries. And she had no dearth of stories to tell. In 1990 she appeared in the BBC documentary *Arafat: Behind the Myth*. She also featured in the 2005 documentary film *Bearing Witness* along with four other female war journalists.

35. Marie never discussed retiring with me and I was not aware of her plans to reduce the number of assignments she took on. She showed no signs of slowing down and was in good physical health – her prior injuries had never interfered with her work. There was no ceiling on her reporting for *The Sunday Times* and I had no plans to reduce her assignments unless she asked me to. Dedicated journalists tend to work as long as they enjoy their work, and for someone like Marie, her work was a huge part of her life. As long as I remained her Editor I would have been willing and keen to ensure she worked for as long as she could, even until her seventies if she wished. That could have included shorter or less risky assignments or allowing her to take longer breaks.¹⁸

36. It is hard to imagine Marie doing anything other than what she wanted to do, which was to be in the field. But if she had chosen to, as the years went by, she could have picked up any number of commissions, projects or speaking engagements. There are certainly reporters of Marie's calibre who have successfully done this and been well paid. There would have been few more desirable or experienced insightful speakers than Marie, and she would have been highly paid and in demand. Her earning capacity in that sense is

¹⁸ I doubt such shifts in assignments would have affected her income, as I would very probably have compensated her experience at that stage at a higher rate.

exceptional; her selling point, uniquely above most others. She had, as I described in my piece to her when she died, a winning combination of “guts and glamour”¹⁹ which would have translated easily into the speaking circuit.

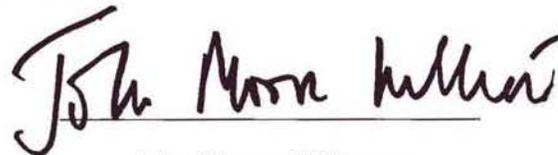
37. I cannot imagine that Marie would have retired to a quiet life, hanging up her boots. Again, in Marie’s words, “Going to these places, finding out what is happening, is the only way to get at the truth. It is not perfect, it is a rough draft of history. But historians come later. You see such huge injustices happening and, as a reporter, you have the chance to tell people about that. . . . The point is to try to report as truthfully as you know how, about what you see and make that part of the record. You can’t get that information in a war without going to a place where people are being shot and they are shooting at you. The real difficulty is having enough faith in humanity to believe that someone will care”.²⁰
38. The Syrian attack of February 22, 2012 cut short Marie’s exceptional contribution to journalism and her work opening the world’s eyes to hidden atrocities. With Marie’s death we all lost a remarkable, indefatigable reporter.

¹⁹ Witherow, *The silver girl sails off into the night* (Ex. A-5), *supra* note 10 (internal quotation omitted).

²⁰ Marie Colvin, *Bravery is not being afraid to be afraid*, Woman of the Year Award Speech, London (Oct. 21, 2001), *reprinted in* ON THE FRONT LINE: THE COLLECTED JOURNALISM OF MARIE COLVIN 211, 214 (2012) (Ex. A-10).

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my recollection.

Executed in London on 16 March 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Moore Witherow", written over a horizontal line.

John Moore Witherow

Exhibit A

INDEX OF EXHIBITS TO THE DECLARATION OF JOHN WITHEROW*

| Exhibit | Description |
|---------|---|
| A-1 | Marie Colvin, Peter Kellier and Annasofie Flamand, <i>'Bombs fell like rain. You could only pray'</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 5, 2012 |
| A-2 | Marie Colvin, <i>'We Live in Fear of a Massacre'</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 19, 2012 |
| A-3 | Marie Colvin, <i>Vet offers only hope for Syrian wounded</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 19, 2012 |
| A-4 | Features, <i>Marie Colvin: the Last Assignment, News</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012 |
| A-5 | John Witherow, <i>The silver girl sails off into the night</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012 |
| A-6 | Jon Swain, <i>Colvin's final hours inside stricken city</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012 |
| A-7 | Christina Lamb, <i>The despot's new rule: kill the messenger</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012 |
| A-8 | Hala Jaber and Miles Amooore, <i>Last-ditch bid to save journalists</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 26, 2012 |
| A-9 | <i>Marie Colvin: Q&A on life as a foreign correspondent</i> , THE SUNDAY TIMES, Feb. 22, 2012 |
| A-10 | Marie Colvin, <i>Bravery is not being afraid to be afraid</i> , Woman of the Year Award Speech, London (Oct. 21, 2001), <i>reprinted in ON THE FRONT LINE: THE COLLECTED JOURNALISM OF MARIE COLVIN</i> , 211 (2012). |

* For the convenience of the Court, Declarant provides an index of the individual exhibits to his declaration. The entries in the index are hyperlinked to the cover page of each exhibit listed.

Exhibit A-1

'Bombs fell like rain. You could only pray'

As the Syrian opposition steps up its attacks on the regime, a stand-off in the city of Homs claims more than 200 lives

**Marie Colvin, Peter Kellier
and Annasofie Flamand**
Beirut

THE fighting in Syria spiralled yesterday into the worst violence since protesters began their uprising against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad almost a year ago. More than 200 men, women and children were killed in Homs, a northern city that has become the centre of the opposition, rebel sources said.

Wounded civilians sprawled bleeding in a makeshift clinic

at a mosque in the Khalidiya district, which appeared to have borne the brunt of mortars and tank shells fired by government forces.

Independent journalists have been banned from the area but desperate inhabitants got the information out in brief, fearful telephone calls. "We have just buried 50 martyrs," said Abu Jihad, an opposition activist. "We've had to build a new graveyard for them because the old one was full."

He said the residents had named the new burial site

Maqebrat al-Shohadaa, or "graveyard of the martyrs".

The attack on Homs came at a critical moment, hours before the United Nations security council met in New York to consider endorsing Arab League demands for Assad to step down and transfer power to his vice-president. Thirteen countries including Britain and America supported the resolution but it was vetoed by

Russia and China.

An anti-government activist from Homs who asked to be identified only as Muhammad gave a graphic account of the build-up to the onslaught.

He said an armed opposition group, which he thought was a unit of the rebels' Free Syrian Army (FSA), attacked a checkpoint in Khalidiya and kidnapped 17 soldiers. At roughly the same time, he said, another armed opposition

group struck at a Syrian air force security base in the area. Shortly after that, the army responded by attacking the opposition in Khalidiya.

"The sudden escalation was on both sides," he said. "There were victims on both sides, but the bombing was indiscriminate."

Separate accounts spoke of four apartment blocks being largely destroyed in the bombardment and dozens of bodies being pulled from the rubble.

Residents of Homs described a night of terror. "It was like a machinegun shooting randomly, only much, much heavier," said Omar Shakir. "The bombs fell like rain. You didn't know where they would fall. You could only pray."

Shakir said his best friend, Madher Tayyara, 23, a civil engineering student and volunteer

medic, had died in his home after being hit by shrapnel in his chest and head.

Several hospitals treating the dead and dying were raided by security forces, according to

activists' reports gathered by Avaaz, a human rights group, which described the humanitarian situation as "appalling".

Small field hospitals set up to treat injured protesters were overwhelmed with hundreds of injured, according to activists. They accused security forces of preventing medical supplies from reaching the wounded and warned that many of the 1,000 injured would die because there was no way to treat them.

Another witness, Waleed Fares, said that when the shelling began at around 10pm on Friday most residents stayed indoors. Then an enormous crashing sound prompted many to run outside where

they saw the first two apartment blocks collapse.

Two further buildings, each containing about 30 flats, had subsequently been devastated, with others partially destroyed.

As he tried to dig out the bodies of the dead and injured, Fares heard more shells exploding from the rooftops as the cry of "God is great" rang out from minarets.

"There were children crying, women screaming, standing in their nightclothes because they had not had time to dress," said Fares. "We took the bodies and the injured to a nearby park. I counted around 40 bodies from the building collapse. The injuries were appalling: people missing limbs, people crushed so badly you couldn't recognise them, people pierced by metal."

According to Fares, three bombs fell on the park, killing about 30 people, including his

friend Omar Zarour, who left his home to help rescue those trapped.

Government sources said the army had reacted strongly to the kidnapping of its soldiers, in part because it has been losing increasing numbers of young men who do not want to fight their own people.

Residents described intolerable conditions in Homs. "We're building a hospital in one of the houses but there's little medicine," said one. "We're afraid the army will come back."

A 19-year-old boy who has spoken to The Sunday Times from Khalidiya over the past few weeks said residents had been living with little food, and heating oil had become prohibitively expensive.

"For much of the day, the electricity is cut," he said. "People are so poor that

burglars broke into the local school and stole the windows."

Sources in Homs and other predominantly Sunni cities warned that the regime appeared to be arming the minority Alawite community, to which the Assad family belongs.

There are growing fears of a civil war, with the FSA not only controlling parts of Homs, but also fighting in Damascus, the capital.

An FSA spokesman said it had lost 27 soldiers in the past four days and claimed the death toll from the shelling in Homs exceeded 350.

"We capture soldiers to show how weak the regime is," said



Abu Ali, an FSA commander.
“Their soldiers fight for one person: Bashar al-Assad. We fight for a cause: the nation.”

Additional reporting: Hugh Macleod and Sara Hashash



Residents of Homs attend a mass burial of victims of the shelling. One witness said 'bombs fell like rain', right. The attack took place after a Syrian rebel group captured soldiers from the army and displayed them on video, top right

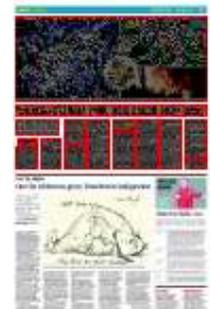


Exhibit A-2

'WE LIVE IN FEAR OF A MASSACRE'

The only British newspaper journalist inside the besieged Syrian enclave of Baba Amr reports on the terrible cost of the uprising against President Assad

MARIE COLVIN
HOMS

PICTURES:
PAUL CONROY



They call it the widows' basement. Crammed amid makeshift beds and scattered belongings are frightened women and children trapped in the horror of

Homs, the Syrian city shaken by two weeks of relentless bombardment.

Among the 300 huddling in this wood factory cellar in the besieged district of Baba Amr is 20-year-old Noor, who lost her

husband and her home to the shells and rockets.

"Our house was hit by a rocket so 17 of us were staying in one room," she recalls as Mimi, her three-year-old daughter, and Mohamed, her five-year-old son, cling to her abaya.

"We had had nothing but sugar and water for two days and my husband went to try to find food." It was the last time she saw Maziad, 30, who had worked in a mobile phone repair shop. "He was torn to pieces by a mortar shell."

For Noor, it was a double tragedy. Adnan, her 27-year-old brother, was killed at Maziad's side.

Everyone in the cellar has a similar story of hardship or death. The refuge was chosen because it is one of the few basements in Baba Amr. Foam mattresses are piled against the walls and the children have not seen the light of day since the siege began on February 4. Most families fled their homes with

only the clothes on their backs.

The city is running perilously short of supplies and the only food here is rice, tea and some tins of tuna delivered by a local sheikh who looted them from a bombed-out supermarket.

A baby born in the basement last week looked as shellshocked as her mother, Fatima, 19, who fled there when her family's single-storey

house was obliterated. "We survived by a miracle," she whispers. Fatima is so traumatised that she cannot breast-feed, so the baby has been fed only sugar and water; there is no formula milk.

Fatima may or may not be a widow. Her husband, a shepherd, was in the countryside when the siege started with a ferocious barrage and she has heard no word of him since.

The widows' basement reflects the ordeal of 28,000 men, women and children clinging to existence in Baba Amr, a district of low concrete-block homes surrounded on all sides by Syrian forces. The army is launching Katyusha rockets, mortar shells and tank

rounds at random.

Snipers on the rooftops of al-Ba'ath University and other high buildings surrounding Baba Amr shoot any civilian who comes into their sights. Residents were felled in droves in the first days of the siege but have now learnt where the snipers are and run across junctions where they know they can be seen. Few cars are left on the streets.

Almost every building is pock-marked after tank rounds punched through concrete walls or rockets blasted gaping holes in upper floors. The building I was staying in lost its upper floor to a rocket last Wednesday. On some streets

whole buildings have collapsed — all there is to see are shredded clothes, broken pots and the shattered furniture of families destroyed.

It is a city of the cold and hungry, echoing to exploding shells and bursts of gunfire. There are no telephones and the electricity has been cut off. Few homes have diesel for the tin stoves they rely on for heat in the coldest winter that anyone can remember. Freezing rain fills potholes and snow drifts in through windows empty of glass. No shops are open, so families are sharing what they have with relatives and neighbours. Many of the dead and injured are those who risked foraging for food.

Fearing the snipers' merciless eyes, families resorted last



week to throwing bread across rooftops, or breaking through communal walls to pass unseen.

The Syrians have dug a huge trench around most of the district, and let virtually nobody in or out. The army is pursuing a brutal campaign to quell the resistance of Homs, Hama and other cities that have risen up against Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, whose family has been in power for 42 years.

In Baba Amr, the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the armed face of opposition to Assad, has virtually unanimous support from civilians who see them as their defenders. It is an unequal battle: the tanks and heavy weaponry of Assad's troops against the Kalashnikovs of the FSA.

About 5,000 Syrian soldiers are believed to be on the outskirts of Baba Amr, and the FSA received reports yesterday that they were preparing a ground assault. The residents dread the outcome.

"We live in fear the FSA will leave the city," said Hamida, 43, hiding with her children and her sister's family in an empty ground-floor apartment after their house was bombed. "There will be a massacre."

On the lips of everyone was the question: "Why have we been abandoned by the world?"

Ban Ki-moon, the secretary-general of the United Nations, said last week: "We see neighbourhoods shelled indiscriminately, hospitals used as torture centres, children as young as 10 years old killed and abused. We see almost certainly crimes against humanity." Yet the international community has not come to the aid of the innocent caught in this hell.

Abdel Majid, 20, who was helping to rescue the wounded from bombed buildings, made a simple plea. "Please tell the world they must help us," he said, shaking, with haunted eyes. "Just stop the bombing.

Please, just stop the shelling."

THE journey across the countryside from the Lebanese border

to Homs would be idyllic in better times. The villages are nondescript clusters of concrete buildings on dirt tracks but the lanes are lined with cypresses and poplar trees and wind through orchards of apricot and apple trees.

These days, however, there is an edge of fear on any journey through this area. Most of this land is essentially what its residents call "Syria hurra", or free Syria, patrolled by the FSA.

Nevertheless, Assad's army has checkpoints on the main roads and troops stationed in schools, hospitals and factories. They are heavily armed and backed by tanks and artillery.

So a drive to Homs is a bone-rattling struggle down dirt roads, criss-crossing fields. Men cluster by fires at unofficial FSA checkpoints, eyeing any vehicle suspiciously. As night falls, flashlights waved by unseen figures signal that the way ahead is clear.

Each travelling FSA car has a local shepherd or farmer aboard to help navigate the countryside; the Syrian army may have the power, but the locals know every track of their fields.

I entered Homs on a smugglers' route, which I promised not to reveal, climbing over walls in the dark and slipping into muddy trenches. Arriving in the darkened city in the early hours, I was met by a welcoming party keen for foreign journalists to reveal the city's plight to the world. So desperate were they that they bundled me into an open truck and drove at speed with the headlights on, everyone standing in the back shouting "Allahu akbar" — God is the greatest. Inevitably, the Syrian army opened fire.

When everyone had calmed down I was driven in a small

car, its lights off, along dark empty streets, the danger palpable. As we passed an open stretch of road, a Syrian army unit fired on the car again with machineguns and launched a rocket-propelled grenade. We sped into a row of abandoned buildings for cover.

The scale of human tragedy in the city is immense. The inhabitants are living in terror. Almost every family seems to have suffered the death or injury of a loved one.

Khaled Abu Salah, an activist who took part in the first demonstrations against Assad in Homs last March, sat on the floor of an office, his hand broken and bandages covering shrapnel wounds to his leg and shoulder.

A 25-year-old university student, who risked his life filming videos of the slaughter of Baba Amr residents, he narrowly escaped when he tried to get two men wounded by mortar fire to a makeshift clinic.

He and three friends had just taken the wounded to the clinic, which was staffed by a doctor and a dentist, and stepped away from the door when "a shell landed right at the entrance", he recalled last week.

"My three friends died immediately." The two men they had helped were also killed.

Abu Ammar, 48, a taxi driver, went out to look for bread at 8am one day last week. He, his wife and their adopted daughter had taken refuge with two elderly sisters after their home was hit by shells.

"When I returned the house was obliterated," he said, looking at all that remained of the one-storey building. Only a few pieces of wall still stood. In the ruins a woman's red blouse was visible; bottles of homemade pickled vegetables were somehow unscathed. "Dr Ali", a dentist working as a doctor,

said one of the women from the



house had arrived at the clinic alive, but both legs had been amputated and she died.

The clinic is merely a first-floor apartment donated by the kindly owner. It still has out-of-place domestic touches: plasma pouches hang from a wooden coat hanger and above the patients a colourful children's mobile hangs from the ceiling.

The shelling last Friday was the most intense yet and the wounded were rushed to the clinic in the backs of cars by family members.

Ali the dentist was cutting the clothes off 24-year-old Ahmed al-Irini on one of the clinic's two operating tables. Shrapnel had gashed huge bloody chunks out of Irini's thighs. Blood poured out as Ali used tweezers to draw a piece of metal from beneath his left eye.

Irini's legs spasmed and he died on the table. His brother-in-law, who had brought him in, began weeping. "We were playing cards when a missile hit our house," he said through his tears. Irini was taken out to the makeshift mortuary in a former back bedroom, naked but for a black plastic bag covering his genitals.

There was no let-up. Khaled Abu Kamali died before the doctor could get his clothes off. He had been hit by shrapnel in the chest while at home.

Salah, 26, was peppered with shrapnel in his chest and the left of his back. There was no anaesthetic, but he talked as Ali inserted a metal pipe into his back to release the pressure of the blood building up in his chest.

Helping tend the wounded was Um Ammar, a 45-year-old mother of seven, who had offered to be a nurse after a neighbour's house was shelled. She wore filthy plastic gloves and was crying. "I'm obliged to endure this, because all children brought here are my children," she said. "But it is so hard."

Akhmed Mohammed, a mili-

tary doctor who defected from Assad's army, shouted: "Where are the human rights? Do we have none? Where are the United Nations?"

There were only two beds in the clinic for convalescing. One was taken by Akhmed Khaled, who had been injured, he said, when a shell hit a mosque as he was about to leave prayers. His right testicle had had to be removed with only paracetamol to dull the pain.

He denounced the Assad regime's claim that the rebels were Islamic extremists and said: "We ask all people who

believe in God — Christians, Jews, Muslims to help us!"

If the injured try to flee Baba Amr, they first have to be carried on foot. Then they are transferred to motorbikes and the lucky ones are smuggled to safety. The worst injured do not make it.

Though Syrian officials prohibit anyone from leaving, some escapees manage to bribe their way out. I met refugees in villages around Homs. Newlywed Miriam, 32, said she and her husband had decided to leave when they heard that

three families had been killed and the women raped by the Shabiha militia, a brutal force led by Assad's younger brother, Maher.

"We were practically walking on body parts as we walked under shelling overhead," she said. Somehow they made it unscathed. She had given an official her wedding ring in order to be smuggled out to safety.

Abdul Majid, a computer science student at university, was still shaking hours after arriving in a village outside

Homs. He had stayed behind alone in Baba Amr. "I had to help the old people because only the young can get out," said Majid, 20, wearing a leather jacket and jeans. He left when his entire street fled after

every house was hit.

"I went to an army checkpoint that I was told was not too bad. I gave them a packet of cigarettes, two bags of tea and 500 Syrian pounds. They told me to run."

Blasts of Kalashnikov fire rang out above his head until he reached the tree line. He

said the soldiers were only pretending to try to shoot him to protect themselves, but his haunted eyes showed he was not entirely sure.

IF THE Syrian military rolls into Baba Amr, the FSA will have little chance against its tanks, superior weaponry and numbers. They will, however, fight ferociously to defend their families because they know a massacre is likely to follow any failure, if the past actions of the Assad regime are anything to go by.

The FSA partly relies on defectors from Assad's army because it does not accept civilians into its ranks, though they perform roles such as monitoring troop movements and transporting supplies. But it has become harder for soldiers to defect in the past month.

Abu Sayeed, 46, a major-general who defected six months ago, said every Syrian military unit was now assigned a member of the Mukhabarat, the feared intelligence service, who have orders to execute any soldier refusing an order to shoot or who tries to defect.

The army, like the country, may well be about to divide along sectarian lines. Most of the officers are members of the Alawite sect, the minority Shi'ite clan to which the Assad family belongs, while foot soldiers are Sunni.

The coming test for the army will be if its ranks hold if ordered to kill increasing numbers of their brethren.

The swathe of the country that stretches east from the Lebanon border and includes



Homs is Sunni; in the villages there they say that officers ordering attacks are Alawites fighting for the Assad family, not their country.

The morale of Assad's army, despite its superiority, is said to be low as it is poorly paid and supplied, although this information comes mostly from defectors. "The first thing we did when we attacked the house was race to the refrigerator," said a defector.

Thousands of soldiers would be needed to retake the southern countryside. Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father and former president, crushed his problems with Islamic fundamentalists in 1982 by shelling the city of Hama into ruins and killing at least 10,000 men, women and children. So far his son appears to have calculated that a similar act would be a step too far for his remaining allies of Russia, China and Iran.

For now it is a violent and deadly standoff. The FSA is not

about to win and its supplies of ammunition are dwindling.

The only real hope of success for Assad's opponents is if the international community comes to their aid, as Nato did against Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. So far this seems unlikely to happen in Syria.

Observers see a negotiated solution as perhaps a long shot, but the best way out of this impasse. Though neither side appears ready to negotiate, there are serious efforts behind

the scenes to persuade Russia to pull Assad into talks.

As international diplomats dither, the desperation in Baba Amr grows. The despair was expressed by Hamida, 30, hiding in a downstairs flat with her sister and their 13 children after two missiles hit their home. Three little girls, aged 16 months to six years, sleep on one thin, torn mattress on the floor; three others share a second. Ahmed, 16, her sister's eldest child, was killed by a

missile when he went to try to find bread.

"The kids are screaming all the time," Hamida said. "I feel so helpless." She began weeping. "We feel so abandoned. They've given Bashar al-Assad the green light to kill us."



PLEASE TELL THE WORLD TO HELP US. JUST STOP THE BOMBING

Loyalties of 'desert rose' tested

Asma, the British-born wife of President Bashar al-Assad, may well be feeling a sense of divided loyalty as the violence continues in the Syrian city of Homs. Her family are from the area, which has been a focal point for many of the recent protests against her husband's regime and the Syrian army's brutal response.

Despite growing up in Acton, west London, Asma visited her family's home in Homs every year throughout her childhood. She is also a Sunni Muslim, unlike her husband, who comes from the country's minority Shi'ite community.

Asma, 36, has been criticised for displaying an "ostrich attitude", keeping a

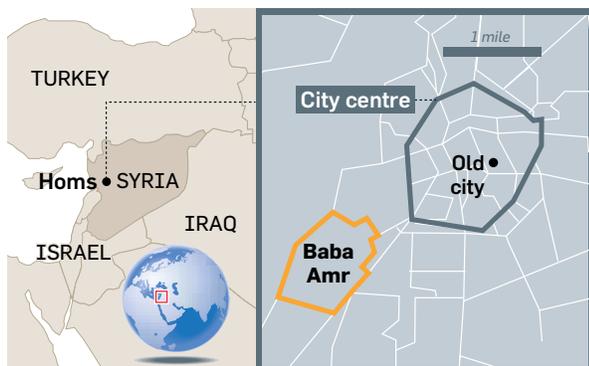
low profile as the conflict has intensified. She has refused to comment on the way her husband's regime has used tanks and other lethal means to crush protesters. In an email sent earlier this month, her office merely said: "The first lady's very busy agenda

is still focused on supporting the various charities she has long been involved with as well as rural development and supporting the President as needed."

The daughter of a consultant cardiologist and a retired diplomat, Asma was born in London. She attended a Church of England state school in Acton and gained a BSc in computer science and a diploma in French literature from King's College London.

She went on to work for Deutsche Bank and married Assad in Syria in 2000. Now a mother of three, she was once described by Vogue as a "rose in the desert". In Homs, the beleaguered people may now take a different view.





Marie Colvin at a house in Homs destroyed by a blast that killed four women





Exhibit A-3

Vet offers only hope for Syrian wounded

Marie Colvin
The only British newspaper reporter in Homs

WOUNDED civilians arriving at a makeshift clinic in the Syrian city of Homs are relying on a vet to save their lives because there is no doctor to treat them.

I found the vet struggling to treat patients who had been injured by shelling and sniper fire in the district of Baba Amr, a besieged enclave where 28,000 people are trapped by relentless bombardment. He was using his knowledge of sheep anatomy to treat life-threatening wounds in the sitting room of a house.

One of his patients, a 32-year-old mobile phone repairman named Mohammed Mohammed, had been shot in the back by a sniper. The bullet had come to rest in his chest. Fear filled Mohammed's eyes as the vet stuck a tube into his chest to siphon off blood and relieve pressure on his heart.

Another patient, Zaccharia Mutlaq, a carpenter aged 26, had a thigh wound and a broken foot from shell fire. The vet said his priority was to keep the man's wounds clean.

Neither the vet nor his location can be identified. Three so-called field clinics in Baba Amr, an opposition stronghold, have been destroyed by the Syrian army since the siege began 15 days ago.

Mohammed and Mutlaq were injured after going into a house that had exploded to find a mother decapitated, a father ripped apart by shrapnel and the couple's two daughters dead or dying.

The men's plight reflects the desperation of the civilians cowering in basements or scurrying from house to house to avoid shelling by the forces of President Bashar al-Assad as troops build up around Homs for a possible ground offensive.

*'We live in fear of a massacre',
pages 18-19*



Exhibit A-4

MARIE COLVIN: THE LAST ASSIGNMENT

She braved the dangers of Syria to tell the world the truth about its horrors. **Jon Swain** reveals the inside story of how his friend and colleague paid the ultimate price

Reporting team

Miles Amooore, Hugh McLeod, Ray Wells and Annasofie Flamand, Beirut

Jon Ungoed-Thomas and Lucy Fisher, London

Edited by Richard Woods

Inside the makeshift “media centre” in Baba Amr, the journalists had retreated to the ground floor. It was an ordinary building, chosen because the narrow streets and surrounding structures offered some protection from the rockets and shells.

The top floor had been hit by the Syrian forces besieging the district, part of the city of Homs, but the others had largely escaped — so far.

On the ground floor, Marie Colvin was asleep in a room on her own last Wednesday morning when the lethal rain of explosives resumed. An American who had worked as a foreign correspondent for The Sunday Times for 25 years, Marie was used to war zones and was expert in the ways of the Middle East.

The streets were littered with rubble, many houses wrecked, nowhere was safe. Yet the media centre was her

temporary home and, true to local custom, Marie had left her shoes in the hall.

It was a gesture that would cost her life.

Also in the building were Paul Conroy, a Sunday Times photographer; Javier Espinosa, a Spanish journalist; Edith Bouvier and William Daniels, a French couple; and Rémi Ochlik, an award-winning French photographer. They were in the care of seven Syrian activists.

“Two rockets hit near the house,” said Abu Haneen, one of the activists reached last week. “Then a third.” The explosion ripped through an upper room. Part of the floor caved in, crashing onto the journalists below. “Dust was everywhere. Everyone was terrified.”

Believing the building was being targeted and more rockets were likely, Haneen shouted at the others to get out. Grabbing belongings, the journalists gathered in the main room, trying to formulate a plan.

It was the safest part of the building, towards the front side that had not been hit before. Previously all the damage to the media centre had come from another direction, striking the back. This time the Syrians had changed their angle of fire.

Marie and the others knew they had to get to the safety of another building. But first she needed her shoes. She made a

dash for the entrance hall. At that moment Hussein, another of the activists, heard a distant “puff” — the sound of a rocket leaving its launcher.

IT WAS early this month that Marie decided she had to go to Syria. The uprising against Assad’s regime was gathering force and the backlash was becoming more violent. The Syrian government was trying to hide its brutality by keeping journalists out. Marie felt the truth needed to be told.

When the Syrians obfuscated over a visa, she flew to Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, on February 7, planning to find her own way across the border. She stayed one night at Le Bristol, but moved to the Gefinor Rotana hotel, which was more to her taste and where other contacts were based. Even as she prepared for the horrors of Homs, Marie, whose life flitted between

combat kit and cocktail dresses, had certain standards.

In an email on Friday February 10, she explained her hopes and motives to Sara Hashash, a friend and young journalist in Cairo. “The overall picture I have been told about is that Homs is ringed by the army and tanks, and the army is stopping anyone from entering and leaving. I may have found a way in. . .

“The people inside, and the surrounding villages, fear they



are about to be overrun. . . So, no pressure then." She wanted to help before it was too late.

Other journalists had previously sneaked in to Syria across the border with Lebanon, but Marie had identified the area that seemed hardest hit as Assad's crackdown intensified. In an email the following day to Sean Ryan, foreign editor of The Sunday Times, she outlined the situation in Homs: "Heavy shelling again. . . Trying to get more detail, seems it is mostly in Baba Amr and Ishaat neighbourhoods, the main strongholds of the FSA [Free Syrian Army]".

Though parts of Syria are largely hostile to Assad, his forces still have checkpoints everywhere. Getting in would require the help of Syrian activists opposed to Assad.

Marie's years of covering the Middle East had brought her numerous contacts in the region, from high-ranking politicians to well-connected fixers. The latter were what she needed now. Later that afternoon she sent another email: "I am meeting Syrian 'transporter' (read smuggler) tonight. The fixer came earlier today, and reading between the lines, it increasingly looks like tonight's meeting will not be actual transport but a discussion of logistics, inspection of gear (ie no flak jackets or helmets, can you fit three on a motorbike, yes, if it is that or walk)."

Her plans delayed, she had time to catch up with old friends in the field and swap the latest local intel. In Beirut she dined with Neil MacFarquhar of The New York Times, revealing her concerns about the looming trip across the border. "I cannot remember any story where the security situation was potentially this bad, except maybe Chechnya," she told him.

She dined, too, with Lindsey Hilsum, international editor of

Channel 4. Last week Hilsum recalled: "I told Marie that I would not sneak across the border into Homs because it was too dangerous. She said she was going to have a go anyway. She felt it was important. 'Anyway, it's what we do,' she said."

Days later Marie slipped over the border and was guided by activists through back roads and fields into Homs. It was dark and dangerous, cold and wet; the final leg of her journey into the besieged neighbourhood of Baba Amr she promised to keep secret to protect the smugglers.

Though she knew certain types of communication were risky, late on Thursday, February 16, she contacted Ryan: "This is a secure line so I am taking advantage to send you a quick message to say I have arrived safely at the heart of Baba Amr. The journey was eventful to say the least. Pretty much every kind of danger, cold, wet and muddy, but we made it! We are in what seems to be the one place in the city that has electricity. There is a lot of shelling, and snipers during the day."

Conroy, a photographer who had worked extensively with Marie in Libya last year, had also been smuggled in.

The only way to get communications out was via satellite. Marie had decided to use a Thuraya satphone as a little as possible because its calls could easily be intercepted and its location identified. Instead, she was mainly sending messages via Skype, which is harder to track, on another system.

To do so, however, she was making use of equipment at the makeshift media centre set up in Baba Amr where the activists had been uploading videos to the internet. The centre had already come under fire and internet security, Marie suspected, "was out the window". Whether the Syrians were

already targeting the site deliberately or not, it was inevitably at risk as the Assad's troops bombarded the district.

Early on Friday, February 17, Marie sent another message to Ryan: "Cupla [sic] technical things. Forget that number I sent you, it was knocked out when the top floor of building I am in was hit yesterday."

The top floor was badly damaged, but the activists kept operating from the other two. Marie continued: "Heavy shelling this morning. I counted 45 shells in 7 minutes nearby. When it lets up I will try to get out to the field clinic."

That day she braved the snipers to interview locals huddled in houses and basements and to visit a makeshift clinic treating the wounded. The scenes she witnessed were grim.

In an email to a young friend, Lucy Fisher, she admitted her fears, writing: "I did have a few moments when I thought, What am I doing?" Then she added: "Story incredibly important though. Mx."

That night she was smuggled out of Baba Amr and the next day, from a safer location, she filed a searing account of what what had seen. It appeared across two pages of The Sunday Times last weekend and could leave no one in any doubt of the indiscriminate violence being meted out by the Syrian army.

Marie, however, was never one to give up on a story. Last Sunday she spoke to Ryan and they discussed her next move. Should she go to another area, he asked. Hama, he suggested, another city about 30 miles north. Marie thought Baba Amr

remained the epicentre. The residents were terrified they would be slaughtered if the Syrian army forced its way in.

Then last Tuesday another email dropped into Ryan's inbox. "I am in Baba Amr, the shelling started at 6.30am." She



had gone back.

FOR all Marie's glamour and impressive connections, she remained down to earth, a defender of the oppressed and the wronged. The next part of her message to Ryan made clear why she was risking her life by returning to Baba Amr.

"It is sickening that the Syrian regime is allowed to keep doing this," she wrote. "There was a shocking scene at the apartment clinic today. A baby boy lay on a head scarf, naked, his little tummy heaving as he tried to breathe. The doctor said 'we can do nothing for him'. He had been hit by shrapnel in his left side. They had to just let him die as his mother wept."

She knew that, in a voraciously competitive media, there was a risk she might be regarded as repeating her earlier report. Determined that the world should not ignore Syria, she added: "I feel strongly that we have to include these stories of the suffering of civilians to get the point across."

Supplies of water and electricity were short. The shelling was wreaking havoc. Two cars driven by activists had been hit that day, she had emailed, one destroyed. Growing increasingly concerned for her safety, Ryan responded: "I'm alarmed to read what happened to the two cars. . . the first [question] is whether it's safe to move at all."

The three of them, Marie, Conroy and Ryan, discussed the situation over Skype. Marie wanted to stay, arguing that it was an important story and she was the only British newspaper journalist there to tell it.

Shortly afterwards, Conroy, unknown to Marie, sent a further email to Ryan, expressing his reservations. "The situation here is extreme," wrote Conroy, a former soldier who had served

in the Royal Artillery. "The shelling is only getting worse and expect it to continue. . . I suspect that Marie's high profile due to this week's material in paper and TV interviews also compromises our safety."

He added: "As I am sure you are aware Marie can be tricky to convince once she has the bit between her teeth."

When communications allowed, Ryan again discussed the options with both Marie and Conroy. They should get out of Baba Amr at the first opportunity, he said.

Instead, Marie had a message to get out first, a message for the world about the truth of Baba Amr. In links to the BBC, Channel 4 News and to CNN, the US news network, she described the misery she was witnessing. She told the CNN presenter Anderson Cooper how she had watched the baby die. "It is a complete and utter lie they're only going after terrorists. The Syrian army is simply shelling a city of cold, starving, civilians," she said.

David Remnick, editor of The New Yorker, saw her CNN broadcast and noted the next day: "There was cool but profound rage in her voice."

After her report in The Sunday Times a couple of days earlier, Marie's broadcasts rammed home the point: atrocities were being committed. Assad and his generals could no longer conceal the horrors of their three-week assault on Baba Amr.

A Facebook group of fellow journalists sent Marie a message applauding her courage for being in Homs. One of them thought she had already left the battered city and expressed relief that she was safe.

"I think the reports of my survival may be exaggerated, Colvin responded. "I'm in Baba

Amr. Sickening, trying to understand how the world can stand by and I should be hardened by now."

She told the Sunday Times that she wanted to stay one more day, saying in an email to Ryan sent at 10.36pm on Tuesday that she wanted to go back to the clinic the following morning. "We would stay as long as possible; once inside we are pretty safe," she said.

Her message included a wry afterthought: "I have spent tonight gathering stories from some FSA guys from the front. Everyone I meet invites me to the front, what is it with me?"

Trouble and Marie had often gone together, but this time she had decided there was no point risking a visit to the front line. "It is a line of destroyed buildings. I don't see the point in going, nor Paul, especially after the discussions you and I had (about the risk)."

Ryan messaged back: "But I still think you should be ready to leave Wednesday night if conditions deteriorate and a ground offensive is coming."

One more day and they would be out. That was the plan.

All the journalists were sleeping when, early the next morning, the shelling erupted

again. After the broadcasts had Assad ordered the troublesome critics silenced? It was clear foreign journalists had got into Baba Amr — and the Syrians are known to be able to locate satellite transmissions. The means to target the journalists were there, but no one can be sure whether they were used.

For the first time the Syrian forces started firing at the media centre from a new direction. As explosions shook the building and the ceiling fell in, the journalists gathered their belongings.

Marie was not the only one who had left shoes in the hall. Espinosa, 47, a reporter with the Spanish daily El Mundo, grabbed his and raced back inside, crouching in a corridor on the far side of the living room wall with Daniels.

As Marie ran to the entrance

to get her footwear, another rocket landed at the front of the building, a few yards away. The blast killed her and Ochlik instantly, rubble falling on their bodies in the hallway.

Espinosa and Daniels, sheltered by a wall inside, escaped virtually unscathed. Conroy and Bouvier, in the living room near the hall, were hit by the blast and shrapnel.

Bouvier was the most seriously wounded, with multiple fractures to her leg. Conroy tried to staunch blood pouring from his leg. An activist tried to help him up. "No, leave me here. Save yourself," Conroy replied.

"They are words I will never forget," the activist said later.

Espinosa helped up a wounded activist and fled the house through a haze of dust and smoke. Such was the chaos and confusion, he unwittingly stepped on the bodies as he went.

"This for me was the most horrible thing. I stepped on their bodies. I didn't know it was them," he said.

As Williams stepped over them to leave, he slapped Ochlik's face to see if he was alive. There was no response and he moved on.

The journalists and activists struggled into a house opposite the media centre and the shelling continued. They managed, with the help of a car, to get the wounded to a field clinic.

For several hours no one dared to recover the bodies of the dead. Later, when the bombardment and gunfire eased, two of the activists ran

back into the media centre where Marie and Ochlik lay, and wrapped them in a shroud.

AS SOON as the deaths were confirmed, tributes poured in from politicians, friends and colleagues around the world. In Britain, David Cameron said: "This is a desperately sad



reminder of the risks that journalists take to inform the world of what is happening and the dreadful events in Syria.”

In France, President Nicolas Sarkozy said the deaths of Colvin and Ochlik amounted to

“murder”. He urged that those responsible be found and held accountable.

For Peter Bouckaert, the emergencies director of Human Rights Watch, the killing of the journalists was a crime whether or not they had been deliberately targeted. “There are two possibilities,” he said. “Either it was a targeted attack on the building and it was a crime, or the journalists were the victims of the same kind of criminal attacks that have killed hundreds in Homs, which is also a crime.”

On Wednesday evening friends and journalists who had worked with Marie gathered at the Frontline club in London of which she was a founder member. There were tears but also much laughter as they celebrated her extraordinary life and listened to Jon Snow pay a closing tribute on Channel 4 News. “She was a one-off and one of the most courageous of our age,” Snow said.

From New York, Marie’s mother, Rosemarie, said: “She was totally, totally committed to what she did and the importance of telling the story and writing it and getting it out to the world. That was her life.”

For Conroy and the other survivors, the ordeal continued. Trapped inside Baba Amr, they were patched up by the activists as best they could. Bouvier needed urgent specialist treatment; Conroy, though suffering three large wounds to his leg, appeared calm in a video he posted to the internet, saying that “any assistance would be welcome”.

A team of young activists from a few miles away set out to smuggle medical supplies to them by crossing through an

area controlled by the Syrian army. They never arrived. A search party later found seven of them shot dead, their hands tied behind their backs. Medical supplies were strewn in the street around them. There was no trace of two other members of the team, one a foreign paramedic.

When one opportunity for the walking wounded to escape did arise, Conroy refused to go. He did not wish to leave behind Bouvier or Marie’s body.

From London to Beirut and Damascus, desperate talks went on to try to secure a ceasefire or any means of allowing in rescuers and medical help. When members of the Red Crescent aid service finally made their way to the wounded

on Friday, Conroy again refused to accompany them, apparently fearing a trap and that he might be handed over to the forces of Assad.

Attempts to bring out the wounded, and the bodies, continued yesterday. Ambulances from the Red Crescent made their way through Homs, seeking to extract both civilians and the journalists.

Syria’s conflict remains far from over. After diplomats and politicians from numerous countries failed to agree any firm action at a conference in Tunisia on Friday, there is little solution in sight to the clashes between Assad’s regime and the popular opposition to it.

As the killing went on, Haneen, who had pulled Marie’s body from the rubble, expressed growing despair. “We cannot count the ones that die in the shelling and are buried under rubble. No one knows of them,” he said.

“We are all waiting for our turn to die. Every evening we tell each other, ‘Thank God for your safety. Another day has passed and we have not been killed’.”

But sadly, not for Marie.

Syria must call an immediate

ceasefire, Editorial, page 26

“

I TOLD MARIE IT WAS TOO RISKY. SHE SAID SHE WOULD HAVE A GO ANYWAY

“

EXPLOSIONS SHOOK THE BUILDING AND THE CEILING FELL IN





ETIENNE DE MALGLOIVE

The Sunday Times photographer Paul Conroy, lying wounded in Baba Amr last week, and, right, covering the uprising that led to the overthrow of Colonel Gadaffi last year

Into the danger zone

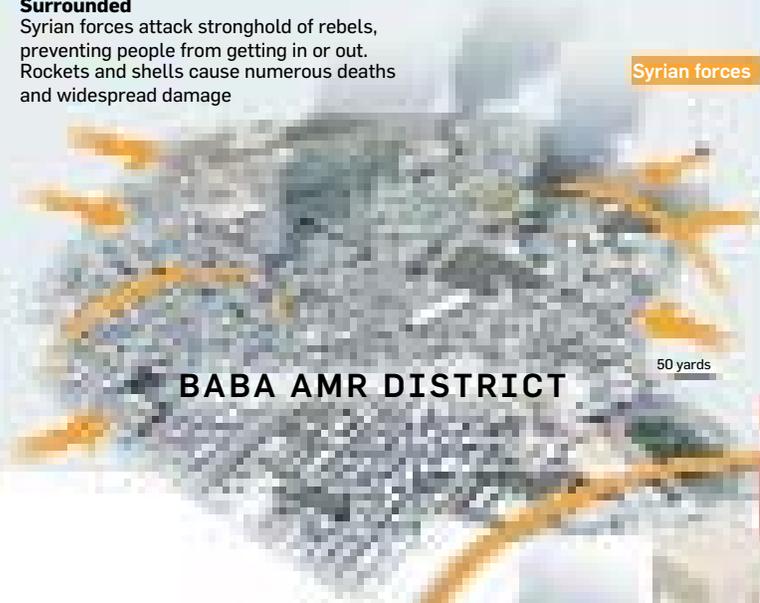


1

Smuggled in
Marie Colvin taken across border from Lebanon and guided across fields and ditches to Homs by opponents of Assad regime. Smuggled into besieged district of Baba Amr

2

Surrounded
Syrian forces attack stronghold of rebels, preventing people from getting in or out. Rockets and shells cause numerous deaths and widespread damage



Syrian forces

BABA AMR DISTRICT

50 yards



1 **Targeting**
From 6am, shells and rockets target rebel media centre's street

2 **8.30am: building hit**
About three shells or rockets explode close to the centre. One blast strikes upper room. Ceiling falls onto journalists sheltering on ground floor. Marie goes into main room

3 **Filing stories**
After gathering eyewitness evidence of suffering, Marie filed report published in The Sunday Times last weekend. In the following days she gave television interviews, including to Channel 4 and CNN via satellite communications

4 **Targeting**
From 6am, shells and rockets target rebel media centre's street

5 **8.30am: building hit**
About three shells or rockets explode close to the centre. One blast strikes upper room. Ceiling falls onto journalists sheltering on ground floor. Marie goes into main room

6 **8.45am: two killed**
Preparing to escape, Colvin goes to grab shoes from entrance hall. She and photographer Rémi Ochlik killed instantly as rocket lands outside

Communication dangers

- Satellite phone** Relatively cheap equipment can locate a satellite phone from its signal. Surveillance software can intercept calls, texts and other data
- Broadband internet** Often accessed in conflict zones via satellite connection. Emails and other data vulnerable to interception with widely available equipment
- Skype** Calls made over satellite broadband or ground-based internet connection. Considered more secure because data is automatically encrypted for transmission

Labels in infographic: Syrian forces, 50 yards, DISTRICT, Media house, Bathroom, Marie's room, Stairs, Main room, Entrance hall, Marie Colvin and Rémi Ochlik killed here, Two journalists protected behind wall, Photographer Paul Conroy and journalist Edith Bouvier wounded

Graphic: Gary Cook, Rafael Hoer





Marie Colvin, notebook in hand, in Baba Amr shortly before she died. Right, activists in the district recovering another casualty





Exhibit A-5



HAVING HIS CAKE AND EATING IT

► Eleanor Mills meets well-connected entrepreneur James Middleton

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The silver girl sails off into the night

The editor of The Sunday Times salutes a woman of guts and glamour who loved to party but did not flinch from her dangerous occupation

John Witherow, Editor of The Sunday Times Published: 26
February 2012

Marie and I had a wacky plan to sail the Atlantic this year, and Marie was excited. “Joohhnn,” she said in her lazy New York drawl, “this is going to be so much fun”, her one eye twinkling with mischief. We had decided that Marie would be the skipper as she had sailed the Fastnet race twice and the Middle Sea race around Sicily.

“That means, John, you have to do what I say. No arguments. This is serious.” Other crew members had been recruited. In typical Marie style, the plan was to sail hard and party even harder at the end.

“We need a song to sing as we’re going down mid-Atlantic,” I said.

“I love Bridge over Troubled Water,” said Marie. “I want to be the silver girl.”

Sailing for Marie was a release from war reporting. She could stand behind the wheel of a boat and worry about the wind, currents and rigging and she would never have to think about her other life of blood and bombs. It had saved her after she lost an eye in Sri Lanka, the freedom of the seas helping to erase the memories of being alone in the dark, deafened, her face and chest blasted by a grenade, and the long and painful operations that followed to save her one good eye. “I remember lying in the middle of a field, blood coming out of my mouth, and thinking: this is taking an awfully long time to die,” she recalled.

She didn’t confine herself to ocean sailing. She loved pottering around on the Thames and had bought a house close to a sailing club in Hammersmith in west London. Helen Fielding, the author of the Bridget Jones books and a good friend, remembers how Marie persuaded her to go on a fishing boat to a barbecue near the Houses of Parliament. After cooking sausages, they lurched over the side, ruined their handbags, rowed ashore and teetered through the mud to dry land, all the while accompanied by Marie’s infectious and throaty laugh.

Ever since I have known her, from when she first walked into the newsroom of The Sunday Times 25 years ago, she was a force of nature. Marie had swapped the boulevards of Paris, where she had been a bored bureau chief of the news agency United Press International (UPI), for the mayhem of Wapping, caught in the midst of the print revolution and with hundreds of protesters laying siege to the building. The newspaper was then housed in an old rum warehouse.

“My God,” said Marie. “I’m not hanging around here. I need a real war to go to.”

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And she found real wars aplenty. During her quarter of a century on the paper, she covered a dozen conflicts, from the chaotic Iran-Iraq war, to the intifadas of Palestine, fighting in Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Chechnya, Sri Lanka, East Timor and anywhere else where brutal regimes were oppressing their people. Marie had a powerful compulsion to go to places where bad things were happening and to tell the world about them.

She had a Catholic sense of right and wrong. And she did this year after year, rarely expressing her fears. Jim Muir, the BBC correspondent, recently detected a vulnerability in her that he had not seen before. But it was not enough to stop her going into Syria. "They're doing terrible things there," she told him. "We *have* to be there."

One of the last people to speak to her was Peter Bouckaert of Human Rights Watch. "Marie got in touch to tell me how horrible the situation was in Homs," he said. "She was one of the most fearless and dedicated reporters I have ever met in my 14 years of covering war, and someone I looked up to as a hero and an inspiration. But despite everything she had seen and experienced, first and foremost she remained a wonderful human being. It always put a smile on my face to run into her in one of the world's rough spots."

She was indeed a wonderful human being. Newspapers and websites have been full of heartfelt tributes. Words such as "warm, funny, loving, vulnerable, caring" keep cropping up. Far from being the caricature of a hard-bitten war correspondent, she was generous and compassionate, willing to help younger journalists and newcomers.

Marie had a quality that she shared with few others, says her former husband Patrick Bishop. She could make a room light up when she entered it. "She was the most generous person I have known," he says. "Her instinct was always to give, materially and emotionally. She was incredibly hospitable and open-handed, partly because she was just made that way and partly because money didn't mean much to her. What was really important — as important to her as her work — was friendship. She had a genius for making friends, and paid the same attention to maintaining friendships as she did to getting stories.

"A friend said to me that Marie never grew up. She meant it as a compliment and it was. Despite everything she had seen and been through, she kept a kind of innocence, and underneath the chic exterior you could always glimpse the eager little tomboy, cheerfully setting off to work weekends at the local yacht club to make the money she needed to fulfil her first dream of owning her own dinghy.

"Time and bitter experience never rubbed away that childlike quality. She was always able to find wonder in things. Like a child, she seemed barely to notice pain, discomfort and hunger. She rarely complained about anything unless it was the way her work had been treated.

She looked at life with an American peppiness that seemed clean and fresh compared with the cynicism of the old world she spent most of her life living and working in. She did not do qualification. She was a full-on, turbocharged enthusiast — both for her own projects and those of her friends.

"That youngness of heart made the young love her," Bishop says. "She gave them encouragement and advice and the great wisdom of her experience. We met again, after a long separation, in Albania in the spring of 1999. I heard that she was in a town called Kukes, up on the border with Kosovo, and planning some risky venture and I went up there to talk her out of it.

"When I arrived I was told that it was too late — she'd already been in on a clandestine mission with the rebels and was back. In fact she was down the road at the town's only bar, at a table stacked with beer bottles, surrounded by a cluster of young male reporters hanging on her words. Her eyes were shining and the story was punctuated by that delicious earthy chuckle of hers. That is how I will always remember her: generous, funny and so beautiful and alive."

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Marie could always see the funny side. Muir recalls how she had got lost on a 100-yard walk from her hotel to his flat in Beirut and he suggested it was because her one eye meant she was walking in circles. She just chuckled. She would laugh about how the way to get powerful men to return her calls would be to tell their PAs that it was Marie Helvin — the model — calling. They would put her through and when the men discovered their mistake, they would be too embarrassed not to talk to her.

When she deliberately stayed behind in a UN compound in East Timor to save 1,500 women and children and prevent a massacre, she was berated by the foreign editor after he heard all the men had left. Marie replied insouciantly: “I guess they don’t make men like they used to.”

Much to the frustration of her rivals, she had an extraordinary knack of being first to a trouble spot and often stayed there long after other journalists had left. Paul Danahar of the BBC says: “Imagine a real life Katharine Hepburn heroine, but braver and funnier. Marie Colvin was everywhere I was in Libya, only she always got there first.”

In fact, says her sister Cat, “we used to joke that danger followed her wherever she went. Other reporters thought she always got to a story first. We said she got there, and then the bombing started.”

Marie built up an extraordinary circle of friends, many of them outside journalism. Jane Wellesley, daughter of the Duke of Wellington, became her closest friend. The Liberal Democrat peer Jane Bonham Carter was another, as were Sabrina Guinness and Alex Shulman, editor of Vogue. They all adored Marie for her warmth, bravery and passion.

Her love life was more complex. When she arrived in Wapping, I was sitting next to Bishop, then a journalist who had covered the Falklands war and now a successful military historian. “Who’s that attractive woman who’s just joined Foreign?” he asked. It was the start of a long and complicated relationship, in which they married, divorced and then got together again before finally parting.

In between, Marie had married an eccentric Bolivian journalist called Juan Carlos Gumucio, who shot himself in the heart late one night in Bolivia 10 years ago. Juan Carlos was married four times, his only regret being that it had to be sequentially. Although they had split up, Marie was devastated.

In recent years she had found some happiness with Richard Flaye, who shared her love of sailing. She used to introduce his daughter, Ella, to friends as her stepdaughter; she never had her own children — which, as she used to joke, was just as well. “What would I do with a baby? Put it in a backpack and take it into a war zone?”

That didn’t mean she didn’t like children. “One of the things people are always surprised by about Marie was how good she was with children,” says Cat. “She wasn’t one for remembering birthdays but she would send little presents from wherever she was in the world, and when she was here she’d play games, endlessly.

“I remember her locking herself in the bathroom, with my kids all yelling and knocking on the door; then she climbed out of the window, shinned down a tree and appeared behind them and persuaded them she could teleport herself.”

She also doted on her Palestinian cat, Billy Smith, a huge tortoiseshell creature who lorded it over her Hammersmith house. Living in Jerusalem in the 1990s, she found him as a kitten in the street. He followed her home; she took him in and ended up taking him to London. A neighbour fed him when she was away.

Marie was the oldest of five children, brought up in the idyllic surroundings of Oyster Bay on the north coast of Long Island, New York. It was here that she acquired her love of sailing. Her

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parents, Bill and Rosemarie, were schoolteachers of Irish stock. She was a natural rebel who threw herself into the protest movements of the late 1960s.

“In those days there was a green in the middle of Oyster Bay and people used to sit in a circle and sing,” says Cat. “We were always down there. Marie was 10 years older than me, so she was like a second mother. She took me everywhere with her. She took control of my wardrobe. Mom would want me in something neat but Marie dressed me up like a hippie and taught me all the protest songs.

“She was so passionate and so full of life. She taught me how to drive when I was about 11. If she took up a cause, she would become devoted to it and threw herself in 100%. She was trying to save the planet long before anyone in Oyster Bay heard of recycling.”

Her zeal sometimes exasperated her parents but they encouraged her political convictions. Her father, a former marine who had served in Korea, campaigned for Kennedy’s Democrats.

“When most parents were trying to restrain their kids, ours were out protesting against the Vietnam war,” says Cat. “Marie went on an anti-war march in Washington when she was about 14 and I don’t think many other parents we knew would have allowed that. She had a lot of freedom.”

None of the family travelled far from Oyster Bay but they hosted exchange students who broadened their knowledge of the world. “When I was little, Marie used to tell me bedtime stories she called ‘postage stamp kisses’, says Cat. “They were stories about different countries like Australia or Brazil and she’d give me kisses according to how long it would take to get to them by plane — there were six kisses for England. I didn’t travel to any of those countries as a child but she made them real in my mind.”

Just before she went to Yale to study American literature, her father died. Marie took charge of her younger siblings while her mother was consumed with grief. Claire Enders, an old friend, says Marie had imagined her father saying, “Be brave,” almost every day, and that drove her on.

At Yale she partied hard. Enders says her favourite memory of her at that time was seeing her in the famous New York nightclub Studio 54, in a gold miniskirt and high-heeled sandals, dancing under the disco balls and strobe lights.

Her first real job was a curious one, on the in-house magazine for the notorious Teamsters union. She became “acting editor”, and when she asked when the “real editor” would return, she was told that he would be away for five years, perhaps less with good behaviour.

Marie then switched to UPI and became a local reporter in New Jersey. She soon became bored and pressed for a foreign posting, landing the plum job of Paris.

Her first big story came in 1986, when she was reporting from the Libyan capital, Tripoli, as US aircraft bombed the city. There, she was spotted by David Blundy, the dashing Middle East correspondent of The Sunday Times. Blundy had decided to leave the paper over the Wapping dispute but made sure his successor was going to be someone as talented as Marie. He too would be killed, shot by a sniper in El Salvador three years later.

Marie quickly established her own style and caught the eye of Colonel Gadaffi, the Libyan dictator. It was an on/off relationship that was to last the rest of their lives; the colonel was clearly beguiled by her.

Marie recalled their first meeting in 1986, when Gadaffi summoned her at 3am from her hotel bed. She was taken underground and left alone in a room. “The door opened. In walked Gadaffi, dressed in a red silk collarless shirt, white silk pyjama trousers and lizard-skin slip-ons. Over it all he wore a gold cape. He turned, locked the door, put the key in his pocket and said, ‘I am Gadaffi.’

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I remember saying to myself, 'No kidding.' But I think I was just stunned."

The American journalist Judith Miller recalls meeting Gadaffi in the late 1980s and him demanding: "Where is she? When will she return to Libya? I miss her." He had left out a little white dress and green shoes for Marie to wear.

More than a decade later she was startled again when Gadaffi told her he had fallen for Madeleine Albright, the American secretary of state, then in her sixties. Could Marie get the number of her bedside telephone?

Marie was well aware that being a woman had its advantages in a war zone. She once wrote: "I don't have to dab Chanel under my ears or play dumb for it to be easier for me to get through a checkpoint manned by surly militiamen with automatic weapons. They do react differently to me simply because of my sex. They feel less threatened by a woman, and, however crazed they are, some vestigial feeling of protectiveness toward the 'weaker sex' means they are more likely to help, or at least less likely to hurt."

She was braver than many men. In 1999 it was Marie and two other female journalists who stayed behind at the United Nations compound in East Timor to safeguard the lives of 1,500 refugees camped out in its garden.

East Timor was in tumult as Indonesian militias tried to halt its bid for independence. Journalists had poured into the tiny colony but many had fled when it became horribly violent. UN staff wanted to withdraw, but by reporting the plight of the refugees, Marie shamed the UN into staying and forced western governments to put pressure on Indonesia to give safe passage to the refugees. Marie's defiance made her an internationally renowned figure. She later said that "staying in the compound was one of the moments in my life of which I am most proud".

A few months later Dmitry Beliakov, a Russian photographer, saw her less angelic side when he prepared to go into Chechnya with her on a dangerous assignment. "I met her off the plane in Tbilisi, Georgia. She was drunk. She'd lost her suitcase and was stumbling around. She was playing up to the image of a bad girl: she drank a lot and smoked a lot and swore a lot. The Chechens who came to take us were shocked. She was a woman and it was Ramadan.

"The next morning she knocked on my door, pale from a hangover, and we talked. Or she talked and I listened. It was clear she knew what she was doing. She said, 'If you're doing this to try to prove something to yourself, don't go. If you aren't sure of me, don't go.'

"We were smuggled into Chechnya. There was trouble with the Islamic radicals from the start. I was Russian. One said that if he had had his way, he would have cut off my head with a knife. The leader would not shake hands with Marie as she was a woman. She calmed things down by saying to him, 'There is no woman in this room; only a journalist.' Some of them thought we were working for the Russian security services or the CIA.

"We had successes in finding and interviewing Chechen leaders who had never spoken before, but danger was always there. We documented many casualties: one unforgettable interview was with a family whose two children had been killed by drunken Russians, shelling for amusement."

They were pinned down for several days by rocket-firing Russian aircraft, and on the way out their escape route was cut off. "We were zigzagging through a mountain pass under heavy mortar fire. Shells were landing 20ft from us. We had to abandon the car we were travelling in. It was stuffed with ammunition. If it had been hit, we would have evaporated."

They were forced to set off on foot over a 12,000ft mountain pass in subzero temperatures, wading through snow, and suffered hunger and exhaustion. They had jackets and boots but little else.

"For the next eight days we walked over the mountains towards Georgia. The conditions were

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unbelievable. A group who came behind us — one froze to death; another stepped on a mine and was killed. It was like a horror movie. We were starving. One day we came to a shepherd's hut and we found flour and some old, frozen vegetables. We melted snow to make soup. It smelt disgusting but I made myself eat it. Marie tried to make bread with the flour but it was inedible. We found three little jars of peach jam and we were so happy.”

At the Georgian border they were picked up by a helicopter from the US embassy in Tbilisi, which had been sent by her colleague, Jon Swain. “By the time the helicopter rescued us, Marie's boots were falling apart, she was coughing and she had hurt her back. I told her that after what we'd been through she would always be like a sister to me. She said, ‘No, Dima, you're too young. I'm more like your babysitter.’

It remains the greatest adventure of my life. That woman was tougher and braver than me. She gave me a few lessons then, in Chechnya. Lessons I have always remembered.”

In 2001 Marie managed to reach the strongholds of another rebel group, the Tamil Tigers, in Sri Lanka, which was at the time a divided country. She was the first foreign reporter in the area for six years.

She found 500,000 Tamil civilians, 340,000 of them refugees. She described it as “an unreported humanitarian crisis — people starving, international aid agencies banned from distributing food, no mains electricity, no telephone service, few medicines, no fuel for cars, water pumps or lighting”.

Once she had sent her story, the greatest danger was getting out. Marie was taken by rebels to a crossing point perilously close to the danger zone where Tiger and government positions met. Soldiers opened fire and she took cover in an open field behind “a clump of tall weeds”.

“The moon had not yet risen and the night was pitch black,” she recalled. “Every five minutes or so a flare, fired from the nearby Sri Lankan army base, seemed to expose every blade of grass. Advancing soldiers intermittently raked the field with automatic weapons fire. They had to be as scared as I was.

“I just wanted to lie still and wait for it all to go away. I thought, ‘I would not mind lying here for hours.’ I noticed little things. One of my trouser legs had come up to my knee and that meant my white calf might draw attention in the dark.”

When Marie shouted that she was a journalist she was promptly shot at accurately with a rocket grenade that sent shrapnel slicing into her face and chest.

She lost the sight in her left eye and her hearing was also affected. “She got her hearing back,” her mother, Rosemarie, told The New York Times last week. “She still had shrapnel in her brain they couldn't remove.”

Marie's mother hadn't even tried to dissuade her from going to conflict zones. “If you knew my daughter,” she said, “it would have been such a waste of words. It just wasn't something that would even be on the plate at all. She was determined; she was passionate about what she did; it was her life. There was no saying, ‘Don't do this.’ This is who she was, absolutely who she was and what she believed in: cover the story. Not just have pictures of it, but bring it to life in the deepest way you could.”

Although Marie took to wearing an eye patch that added a swashbuckling edge to her habitual elegance, she was unable simply to shrug off the effects of the Sri Lankan ambush. Her friends and closest colleagues knew that she suffered from constant nightmares, and three years after being wounded she sought medical help for post-traumatic stress disorder.

She took up competitive sailing as a therapy and kept a dinghy by the Thames near her house, which by now she had stylishly furnished and decorated.

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Her overseas assignments were fewer and, turning 50, she seemed to be moving into a role as a journalistic elder stateswoman, taking time off to lecture, sail and think about writing the book that, sadly, was never written.

But the lure of conflict was still powerful. She got into Basra, revealing that British forces in the southern Iraqi port were floundering against ruthless Islamic militias, and she added Afghanistan to the dozen or so wars she had reported on.

Nor had the Tamil Tigers forgotten her. Facing certain death as government forces overran their stronghold and cornered them three years ago, the rebel leaders talked to her by satellite phone almost to the last moments of their lives. Her reports on the final days of the Tamil rebellion helped to win her the foreign reporter of the year award for the second time in 2010.

It was the Arab spring last year that brought the old Marie bouncing back. Peter Nicholls, a photographer, remembers how happy she was. "I was sent out to Cairo to cover the demonstrations in Tahrir Square. Marie had been abroad for a while so I was asked to take some money out for her.

"She knocked on my door at the InterContinental hotel first thing and we had a brief chat about what had been happening in the city. Then she left, carrying a big, fat envelope full of money.

"Half a second later she put her head back around the door and there was a big grin on her face. 'There's a cleaner in the corridor. I wonder what she thinks I'm doing, leaving a man's room with a fistful of money. That must have been some night, huh?'"

Lyse Doucet of the BBC says that Marie had "guts and glamour" and was "brave and beautiful — whatever Marie did, she did with style".

Marie, she says, "lived life passionately. Great shoes, great storytelling. We have this expression . . . among female journalists we talk about a girl's girl, which is girl spelt with a 'u'. She was a gurl's gurl.

"If I was going to be somewhere on the front line, I'd want to be with Marie Colvin."

"For Marie," she adds, "telling the story wasn't a job; it was the life that she lived. I remember a conversation with her where at one point she tried to stay on in London to live a more orderly life. Her friends wanted her to live a more orderly life, and so did her partner, but she just said, 'It's not me.' That wasn't her. Classic Marie Colvin is being out there telling human stories and telling them so well they made people care."

It wasn't just "gurls" that Marie helped. David Remnick of The New Yorker, one of America's most distinguished journalists, recalls her reaction on seeing him "wandering with other journalists through Jenin, a West Bank city that had been ravaged during an Israeli military incursion" a decade ago.

"She had taken up living in a small house, and when she saw me and a few more experienced colleagues walking down an empty street marked by tank tracks, shuttered shops and spent ammunition, she recognised a fool at risk.

"She called me into the house — a strong, clear American voice — fed us, let me file from her miraculously still-working satellite phone and gave good, stern advice on how to get through town without getting detained.

She'd made a life of this work; I was a relative rookie. She was generous and funny and knew precisely the risks she was running. When I came home and mentioned to more experienced reporters that I'd run into Marie Colvin, they all spoke of her as someone of genuine honesty, intelligence and bravery."

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On a live chat on The Sunday Times's website a couple of years ago Marie was asked how she kept her professional distance.

"Total objectivity is a myth," she replied. "I am always moved by the people I encounter in horrific situations. But that is what war is all about. The mothers, kids, soldiers." Being a foreign correspondent, she said, was "the best job in the world . . . you can really feel you make a difference."

The flip side of her dedication to war reporting — and to such an active social life when she was home — was an absolute refusal to be ruled by such petty matters as deadlines. As her foreign editor in the early 1990s, I learnt quickly that Marie worked by her own clock and that a deadline for filing her story would be a cue for her to vanish.

Her phone would go dead. Messages would be unanswered. On many Saturdays at The Sunday Times, the foreign desk would be in a frenzy trying to find her. The copy, when it came (though sometimes it didn't), would be accompanied by excuses such as "Yasser Arafat sent for me" or "I fell asleep".

If anything, the problem got worse. Last year she was on strict instructions to finish a long-overdue profile of Colonel Gaddafi before flying out to report on the Libyan uprising. She announced that she had filed it (she hadn't) and then went Awol. As usual when in London, she had refused to come into the office, so a search party was dispatched to her house. She wasn't there, of course, and she eventually resurfaced en route to Libya. She filed the Gaddafi profile, in her own time, months later, after he had been overthrown. It was brilliant. As usual, she was forgiven.

Not so long ago a former colleague of Marie met her at one of her favourite bars, the Frontline club in west London. After a panel discussion, they went downstairs for a cigarette. An admirer approached and said: "My God, you smoke. You beautiful ladies, you should not be smoking." Marie just said to him: "I promise you, that is not how I am going to die."

"Sail on, silver girl
Sail on by
Your time has come to shine
All your dreams are on their way."

Reports of my survival may be exaggerated

How can you be lying there?
Immodestly, among the rubble
When we want you to be here
In some other kind of trouble —

Luffing up, in irons, perhaps,
Just downstream from the Dove,
Lost in South London, without maps,
Or capsized in love.

What's keeping you? A kind of dare?
Come back and tell us how you stayed
One step ahead, how you gave fear
The slip, how you were not afraid —

As we are. Look — here's my idea.

13/03/2012

The silver girl sails off into the night | The Sunday Times

Come back — this time, for good.
 Leave your flak jacket and your gear
 In that burnt-out neighbourhood,

 And fly home, via Paris. You'll be met.
 I'll buy a bottle from the corner store,
 Like old times. You can have a cigarette.
 'Rie, get up off that bloodstained floor!

Tonight you threw your thin brown arm
 Around my shoulders, and you said
 (There was this unearthly calm)
 'Can't you take in that I am dead?

Learn to expect the unexpected turn
 Of the tide, the unmarked reef,
 The rock that should be off the stern
 On which we come to grief?

The lies, the ignorance and hate —
 The bigger picture? No safe mooring there,
 In Chechnya or Chiswick Eyot.
 Those nights I drank my way out of despair,

And filling ashtrays filed the copy
 You would read — or not read — with
 A brackish taste and your first coffee
 Contending on your tongue; while Billy Smith,

My street cat rescued from Jerusalem,
 Barged in, shouting, from his wars . . .
 As many lives as his — and now I've used them.
 I wish I'd made it back to yours.'

The poet Alan Jenkins was a friend of Marie's and wrote this poem as a tribute to her

An inspiration and mentor to young journalists

Last weekend I emailed Marie to tell her that her harrowing report from Homs was the sort of article that had made me want to become a journalist, *writes Sara Hashash*. "Thanks!" she replied. "It's hard work keeping ahead of talented young whippersnappers such as yourself."

This summed up Marie: upbeat even in great danger and striving to get the best story — but also modest and solicitous of her colleagues. "It is carnage here," she wrote. "Unbelievable the international community is doing nothing."

Her article had had a special resonance with me. I grew up in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war in the 1980s, wondering whether anyone in the outside world cared that my building was being bombed as I huddled with my family on the stairwell. Marie did. In fact she was already there. She made it her life's work to bear witness to human tragedy and make sure that the world learnt about the horrors of war.

From my first week as a trainee on the foreign desk I was in awe of this formidable but friendly

13/03/2012

The silver girl sails off into the night | The Sunday Times

woman who treated me as an equal and asked my opinions on the Middle East. She became a mentor. I am far from alone in having had the privilege of such guidance. Last week I raised a glass to her with two freelance journalists who had crossed paths with her during the Libyan uprising last year.

Sarah Topol, 27, who is based in Cairo and covered the war in Libya, was moved by Marie's selfless will to encourage young writers. "In an industry known for its competitiveness, she was one of the most helpful veteran reporters I met," she said.

"No matter how close her deadline may have been, she would take a moment and ask how you were and openly offer advice," said Rachel Anderson, 27, a documentary film-maker who had never been in a war zone before. "Even under the most stressful conditions — being under siege or surviving 40 degree heat without water — there was always a kind word and a smile on her face."

Marie's definition of bravery was not being afraid to be afraid. "This is perhaps more important for a woman because you are often with men trying to prove they're macho and watching you for signs of cowardice," she said, when accepting an award at the Women of the Year lunch in 2001.

Marie was at the forefront of a new breed of female war correspondents daring to go further to reveal the truth. Since she began her career there has been a steady rise in the number of female reporters in conflict zones, self-evident among Sunday Times staff alone which counted Christina Lamb and Hala Jaber alongside Marie as award-winning correspondents.

"She really blazed a trail for women war reporters," said Lamb, who has covered conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Lamb cited Marie as the reason she joined the newspaper: "I thought Marie and Jon Swain were the best in the business and wanted to be part of the same team."

Deborah Haynes of The Times encountered Marie on one of her most daring missions after the Iraq war, when she went to Basra in 2007 — a time when the city was out of bounds to foreigners. "I remember reading her piece with utter admiration," Haynes said. "She made you realise nothing was impossible, provided you had the courage and the contacts."

I will miss Marie's unfailing humour. She designated herself "pirate correspondent" and in a recent message said "let's keep our eye(s) on developments". It is largely thanks to her that four years after joining the paper I realised my dream of becoming a foreign correspondent, now based in Cairo.

The Marie Colvin Fund

Marie's family has set up a fund that will support charitable organisations in her memory and be administered through the Long Island Community Foundation (LICF).

If you would like to donate, please send a cheque made payable to The Marie Colvin Fund at LICF and post it to The Managing Editor's Office, The Sunday Times, 3 Thomas More Square, London E9 8 1ST

Exhibit A-6

Colvin's final hours inside stricken city

Jon Swain

MARIE COLVIN, the Sunday Times war correspondent killed in Syria last week, died trying to retrieve her shoes so she could flee from a murderous army bombardment.

Details of her final hours emerged yesterday as efforts continued to rescue the journalists who were injured alongside her in the besieged Baba Amr district of Homs.

All had followed the Middle Eastern custom of taking off their shoes on entering a building that housed a rebel press centre, and they scrambled to recover them as rockets rained down.

Colvin, 56, whose written and broadcast reports on the plight of Baba Amr's residents had provoked international protests to the Syrian government, was on the ground floor of the press centre on Wednesday morning when rockets hit the upper floors and exploded.

The journalists — who included Paul Conroy, a photographer working for The Sunday Times alongside Marie, three French nationals and a Spaniard — were covered in dust but unhurt.

Fearing that the building was being targeted, they prepared to flee but had to retrieve their shoes first.

Colvin ran to the hall, where she had left hers. As she reached it, a rocket landed at the front of the building, a few

yards from her. The blast killed her and Rémi Ochlik, a French photojournalist, instantly, burying them in debris.

Conroy, who was in a nearby room, was hit by shrapnel in the leg and stomach; and Edith Bouvier, a French journalist, suffered multiple leg fractures. William Daniels, also French, and Javier Espinosa, a Spaniard, escaped unhurt deeper inside the building.

The survivors managed to reach a field clinic with the help of anti-government activists who were able to retrieve the bodies hours later after the rocket and shellfire had subsided.

Colvin, who had left Baba Amr to send a harrowing report published in The Sunday Times last weekend, returned on Monday and based herself in the press centre, which had equipment that enabled her to talk to several international broadcasters.

Colvin discussed her safety with Sean Ryan, the Sunday Times foreign editor, but sent a message that she intended to return to the clinic before 6.30am on Wednesday when she expected the daily bombardment to resume.

In the event, the shelling started again at 6am and she was trapped in the building. It intensified at about 8am and by 8.30 the building was under direct fire.

*The last assignment,
Focus, pages 22-23*



Exhibit A-7

The despot's new rule: kill the messenger

Regimes now deliberately target war reporters in a bid to hide their brutality, writes **Christina Lamb**

The most essential piece of kit for a war correspondent, aside from a telephone, a notebook and an overwhelming need to know the truth, is a blue flak jacket with the word "Press" emblazoned in white across the front.

British soldiers often find it amusing to press the front — an experience Marie Colvin and I would bemoan together — but the jackets have a serious purpose. First, of course, to protect us from shells, but also to distinguish us from those in khaki — in other words, to identify us as non-combatants, witnesses rather than participants.

These days, however, the jackets identify us as targets. In my 25 years of being a

foreign correspondent there have been some large changes for the better — namely, the improvements in technology, enabling us to file stories from remote mountaintops or deserts. But there has also been an enormous change for the worse and that is finding that we ourselves are the front line.

The impromptu media centre in Homs was being used by a handful of incredibly brave journalists. If, as we suspect, it was targeted because they were telling the world what the Syrian regime was doing to its own people, an attack which killed Marie and the French photographer Rémi Ochlik, we should be outraged.

Of course covering wars is a

risky business. When I started out as a foreign correspondent

in 1987, travelling with the Afghan mujaheddin, my concerns were of accidentally stepping on landmines or being caught up in a bomb attack. We never imagined we could be deliberately killed by those whose atrocities we were documenting. Under the Geneva conventions, journalists covering a conflict have the same rights as civilians — deliberately killing them is a war crime.

Before 9/11 most of the friends and colleagues I lost in the field died in car accidents — crazy drivers, vehicles held together by string and broken roads were a hazard of the job. A few died through tragic bad luck, such as stepping on a landmine.

Over the past decade that has changed. Militants know they will get far more publicity from killing a journalist — or an aid worker — than a soldier.

This became brutally clear in February 2002 when Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal correspondent, was beheaded in Pakistan by Al-Qaeda. Two months earlier I had met the

same Karachi contact. It had never for a moment occurred to me that I might be killed.

Nor is the risk just from militants. The most dangerous places are those where the state itself is complicit, for then it is extremely difficult to know who the enemy is any more.

Repressive regimes which are set on killing their own

civilians to put down rebellions know that if they kill journalists they may deter others from reporting the story. Our job, after all, is to get into places where people don't want us. Simply denying us visas — which Syria, Iran, Zimbabwe and other despotic regimes do as a matter of course — is not enough to stop those as determined to get to the truth as Marie was.

Indeed, so determined was she that she agreed to go to Homs without a flak jacket as the rebels advised against it.

For those to whom transparency is a threat, shooting the messenger may seem the most effective way to stop the flow of information. I was told on

Friday by a British intelligence contact that: "At the start of conflicts 90% of our information flow comes from journalists. In Syria we have a real information gap."

After the killing of Marie and Rémi and the regime's refusal even to sanction a humanitarian corridor for two hours to allow a Red Crescent ambulance to extract their bodies and their injured colleagues, only the most foolhardy would venture in.

If the attack was deliberate, Syria has not stopped the flow of information. Another change over the past few years is the spread of social media, which in some ways means that anyone can be a journalist.

Rebels and activists against the regime are putting out YouTube videos showing the assault by forces loyal to

President Bashar al-Assad on Homs and other cities.

What they don't give is the power of words and the context that Marie brought. Who will forget the report of her final hours when she said "I saw a baby die today"?





The deadly price of truth

Nicholas Tomalin, 41, right, was covering the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war for The Sunday Times when he was killed by a Syrian rocket on the Golan Heights in October 1973. He was married to the writer Claire Tomalin, and they had five children. He famously said that journalists needed "rat-like cunning" to succeed.



sniper in San Salvador while covering a military offensive for the now-defunct Sunday Correspondent. Blundy, pictured below, a former Sunday Times journalist who recruited Marie Colvin to the paper, was shot while walking with other reporters down a street in the working-class Mejicanos district.

vehicle came under fire in Basra. A coroner recorded a verdict of unlawful killing after an eight-day hearing.

Rupert Hamer, 39, defence editor of the Sunday Mirror, was the first journalist to be killed reporting on the war in Afghanistan in January 2010. Hamer, a father of three, was travelling with British troops in the Nawa district of Helmand when their vehicle drove over a roadside bomb.

David Holden, 53, a foreign correspondent for this paper, was murdered in Egypt, shot through the heart shortly after arriving at Cairo airport in December 1977. Holden, who was working on a book about the Saudi royal family when he died, was rumoured to have been killed by a foreign intelligence agency. A year-long investigation by this paper failed to reach a conclusion.

David Blundy, 44, was killed in November 1989 by a

Ian Parry, 24, a freelance photographer, died in December 1989 in an aircraft crash in Romania during the overthrow of Communism while on assignment for The Sunday Times.



Terry Lloyd, 51, an ITN reporter, was killed by a US marine's bullet in March 2003 during the invasion of Iraq. Travelling with two cameramen and an interpreter, the crew's

Tim Hetherington, 41, was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in April 2011 while he was filming fighting between the forces of Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, and the rebels hoping to overthrow him. The film-maker was best known for his documentaries, including Restrepo, about a platoon of soldiers in Afghanistan.



Exhibit A-8

Last-ditch bid to save journalists

Syria's cycle
of hate traps
wounded
Sunday Times
photographer

Hala Jaber Damascus
Miles Amore Beirut

HOPES remained last night for a desperate attempt to rescue Paul Conroy, a wounded Sunday Times photographer, and three other journalists trapped in the besieged Syrian city of Homs since the killing of Marie Colvin, the war correspondent, on Wednesday.

Medical treatment was urgently needed by Conroy, who has shrapnel injuries to his legs and abdomen, and Edith Bouvier, a French journalist suffering from multiple leg fractures.

Reports from Damascus said an evacuation attempt had run into trouble soon after getting under way because of the distrust between the two sides during a ceasefire. Syrian officials said the rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA) had prevented Syrian Red Crescent ambulances from reaching the journalists.

Yesterday's rescue mission — mounted with assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the British and French embassies and high-level Syrian sources — was the second in two days.

After the first attempt on Friday, the Syrians reported that the journalists had refused to leave, fearing the evacuation was a trick. A message of reassurance was sent to their refuge overnight.

In the three days since they were hit by rocket fire in the heavily bombarded Baba Amr

district of Homs, there has been a tense struggle to get them out and to retrieve the bodies of Colvin and Rémi Ochlik, a French photojournalist killed alongside her.

Conroy was reported to be refusing to leave without Colvin's body despite being in danger of potentially life-threatening infection if his wounds were not treated.

Colvin's boyfriend sent an emotional message saying she had always been concerned about the living and "please let no more people die . . . for her body".

Seven rebels were found dead with their hands bound after trying to smuggle medicines into Baba Amr to help the journalists and other injured civilians. The medicines were scattered and two other rebels were missing.

Colvin died at about 8.30am on Wednesday when rockets fired by the Syrian army hit a building where she was using a makeshift rebel press centre.

Her death triggered a rescue operation by The Sunday Times which began negotiating for the Syrian government's co-operation.

The British ambassador in Damascus, Simon Collis, and his French counterpart, Eric

Chevallier, a doctor and former member of Médecins Sans Frontières, were deeply involved.

The goal was a ceasefire around Homs so Red Crescent ambulances could get in. Immediate medical assistance had to be ready for the journalists once they came out. As Colvin was an American citizen, the Polish embassy, which represents Washington's interests

in Damascus since US diplomatic staff were withdrawn, helped to clear the legal process for repatriating her body.

The Syrian Red Crescent had already been seeking a two-hour daily halt in the fighting to allow humanitarian assistance to reach civilians in Baba Amr.

After long discussions with officials, three ambulances of

Continued on page 2 ▶▶





PAUL CONROY

Paul Conroy in Homs before he was wounded in a Syrian attack. He has shrapnel injuries and is in danger of infection if he does not receive treatment



Exhibit A-9

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

MIDDLE EAST

Marie Colvin: Q&A on life as a foreign correspondent

Marie Colvin reflects on a lifetime spent reporting from some of the darkest and most dangerous war zones on the planet

The Sunday Times

22 Feb 2012 13:06:21

ST News

Welcome to the Sunday Times Live chat where we're very happy to be joined today by Marie Colvin, the current British Press Awards foreign correspondent of the year. Please start sending your questions for Marie about what life is like on the frontline and anything else you want to ask.

Jules, staffs

You recently spent time with the Afghan Army, and noted how professional and committed they had become to their task of fighting the Taliban and working with foreign armies. Was yesterday's attack hopefully a one-off, or is it possible that the Taliban have more influence among the ANA than previously thought?

Marie Colvin

Yesterday's attack was so disheartening, Jules, for the reasons you say in your question. The Afghan soldiers I was with have a long way to go but their commitment was something you rarely see in our pampered times - tears in their eyes for example when they described how they had learned to read and a ferocious desire to remake their country.

Not all the details of yesterday's attack are clear yet but it was very much the act of an individual. I, and people I have spoken to in Helmand today where the attack took place and where I spent

three weeks recently, believe it is a one off. Several junior soldiers I have contacted in Lashkar Gah say their Afghan counterparts have come up and hugged them in a desire to shown their solidarity.

Ben

Will there ever be enough political will in the Middle East - and beyond - to solve the Israeli/Palestinian impasse?

Marie Colvin

Hi Ben. That is a great question because while the world is focused on Afghanistan and Iraq the Israeli-Palestinian issue is at the heart of Islamic anger and spreads to create conflicts across the Muslim world and feeds their anger with the West as we are seen to be supporting Israel./

I think there is hope for political will in the change we are seeing in the Obama administration . The Israelis, even though they now have a right wing government in Netanyahu, now know there is no free pass. It remains for the Palestinians to get their act together and quickly - you can't have two negotiating addresses, one in Gaza,, one in Ramallah.

Mariella, London

What's the closest you have come to being killed in the line of duty? And what makes you go back for more?

Marie Colvin

Hmmm. that's an easy one! being hit by an RPG and losing an eye. I remember lying in the middle of a field, blood coming out of my mouth, and thinking this is taking an awfully long time to die. So I yelled doctor.

Mr Davids, London

The 15th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre has just passed, do you think the Yugoslav wars as a whole - and that incident were so shocking to Westerners because the events unfolding involved white Europeans? I would be keen to hear your point of view Marie

Marie Colvin

Mr. Davids you have a good point. It was shocking because we are a bit holier than thou, aren't we? Tut tut those barbaric Muslims etc go to the Daily Mail. It was a real wake up call wasn't it?

#That said, I certainly write about massacres in the Middle East and places like East Timor, such as the mass graves I found when I was in Iraq after the fall of Saddam, and I am proud to write about them and proud that I work for a paper that prints them in all their horror.

Richard, London

What do you miss most about Britain when you are covering a long conflict abroad and how do you keep sane?

Marie Colvin

A drink! Most of the places I report from are alcohol free, which is probably good for the liver.

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Seriously Richard, I miss friends and the freedom to wake up and wander to a book shop without a worry that I will be kidnapped, shot or blown up. So I guess the answer is the great relief of not having to be wary all the time.

Rod Stanley, Old Street

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission appeared to take a country which could have tipped over into civil war into a situation where the formerly opposed communities are content to live peacefully together. Was this solution something exclusive to SA, or could/have other countries used it?

Marie Colvin

It's an apposite question, Rod, because it would be the best model in Afghanistan. Military and diplomats and pretty much every Afghan agree that the solution cannot be military which means that the Taliban must be brought back into the equation of government. But for that, they would have to be forgiven great violence. As the saying goes, one mans terrorist is another mans freedom fighter so I think it could work in Afghanistan. What is missing is a Nelson Mandela - his strength and courage really showed how one man can make a difference to history, didn't it?

Rod Stanley

And on a completely different note, I would be interested to know how you personally have adapted to working in the digital era. What challenges have you faced and dealt with, and how do you think readers' expectations of international reporting has changed? Many thanks.

Marie Colvin

Well Rod that is a question that couldn't be more relevant to me because I am pretty much a senior citizen in this game - I started filing from Beirut on a telex, believe it or not. (Younger readers, you will have to google for yourselves to know what a telex is).

I think to start I was a bit of a technophobe - but not only do I have to adapt to keep my job, it makes it faster and better. I file by satellite phone for example from Helmand. It means I can stay longer, and get out the story I really care about in a timely fashion. For example, when I was covering the Ethiopian Eritrean war I had to drive a full day to the front line, and then report, and then drive all the way back to the capital (another day) to file.

The down side is the foreign editor can always get me! It no longer works to say sorry all phones were down!

Grace Ackroyd, London

Do you find it difficult to maintain a professional distance from the situations where you are reporting from? Or are you serving the people in an under-attack area better by presenting an unembroidered version of their misery than if you went for the full emotion?

Marie Colvin

Total objectivity is a myth. I am always moved by the people I encounter in horrific situations, but to me that is what war is about - the mothers, kids, soldiers, in other words always remember people fight wars not the guys who press buttons somewhere in Tucson Arizona. That's why I

That said, I think I don't help either the victims in a conflict, or my readers, by giving one long harrowing witness statement. I try to make the reader aware of what is happening, but also to put it in some kind of political context. Hope that answers your question Grace?

Frank, Brighton

Your time in the UN compound in East Timor sounds unbelievably horrendous. How did you get through it?

Marie Colvin

It was horrific but I stayed because the women and children in the compound were going to be deserted by the United Nations and I was not willing to countenance another Srebrenica. It was a difficult decision and led to one funny moment. When my press colleagues evacuated, I decided to stay but did not get on my satellite phone (see earlier!) to ask permission from my foreign editor, who I should have consulted.

I called him when all the trucks had left for the air port, and stayed with the rear guard and East Timor families. He went ballistic, and rightly so. "What do you mean all the other newspapers have left?" Well, they have. "What do you mean all the wire services have left?" Well they have. "What do you mean ALL THE MEN HAVE LEFT?" To his credit he printed my response, "I guess they don't make men like they used to."

Staying in the East Timor compound was one of the moments in my life of which I am most proud. I refused to leave until the women and children were evacuated. They got out safely, finally, because I kept broad casting (again, thank you satellite phone!) that the UN was about to do a final evacuation of staff and leave them behind.

Charles Woolf

Marie, what's the best way to become a foreign correspondent...find the most remote newsworthy place you can, buy a ticket out there and start writing?

Mary in Wokingham

Marie - how on earth did you get in to foreign reporting? Was it a passion or did you fall into it by accident? Would love to know

Marie Colvin

Hi there Charles and Mary, do I detect budding foreign correspondents? Your parents will probably be more of a threat to me than the Taliban when they read my answer, but I think it's the best job in the world. Interesting, and you can really feel you make a difference in the world which I believe we all want to do,

Practical: number one, do NOT go to journalism school. That works for careers like political reporting maybe but it just loses you time if you want to go to foreign reporting. You can do it two ways. Fly off to a place like Kabul, making all the contacts before you go with editors to tell them you will be there, and making lots of safety checks before you go. That is what our young man in Kabul did (Miles Amooore) and he is a star.

The other way is to get any job at all on a newspaper or television, even if it is just the back up coffee deliverer, and work hard.

Hugo Evans

Marie, this may seem like an odd question, but where do you go on holiday? It must be somewhere that there is no chance of anything interesting happening!!

Marie Colvin

This will seem even odder than your question, Hugo, but I ocean race for my holiday - I sail boats through storms and the Fast Net and Middle Sea race and boy does it clear the head! Just in case life gets too safe...

Sean, Berkshire

Don't you ever want to settle down and write book reviews? How much longer can you keep doing this for?

Marie Colvin

Forever, Sean. We know who you are. Tough luck.

ST News

Much amusement after Marie's last answer as we have a sneaking suspicion that Sean from Berkshire may be Marie's boss...

Eve, Brixton

You presented a documentary about Martha Gellhorn - is she one of your heroes, and why? And who are your other heroes and influences?

Marie Colvin

Martha is my hero, Eve, well spotted. I take her book on war reporting with me on assignments, and it gets me unsuck just reading her simple and powerful her prose, Of all my awards, I was proudest that this year I won the Martha Gellhorn award for stories that "cut through the official drivel". You ask why - because she reported just the way I think is important, put on your boots and get out on the ground where people are.

Oh and also, because the last time I saw Martha was at dinner, she was ill and in pain, and I asked her how she was. She said old age was awful, she could not drink whiskey anymore, just beer.

Donald, Edinburgh

Do you need to have a black sense of humour to deal with the scenes you find yourself in?

Marie Colvin

A quick final answer for this hour - gosh, thought it was going to be like a party, nobody comes, nobody loves me, and it's been great and interesting questions.

Black sense of humour really keeps one alive. After a long day, week, whatever, you have to

ST News

Well that's our hour up, we have a million more questions to ask but sadly we're out of time. A massive thank you to Marie for her fantastic answers, and thanks to everyone for a brilliant session.

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Exhibit A-10

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The Collected

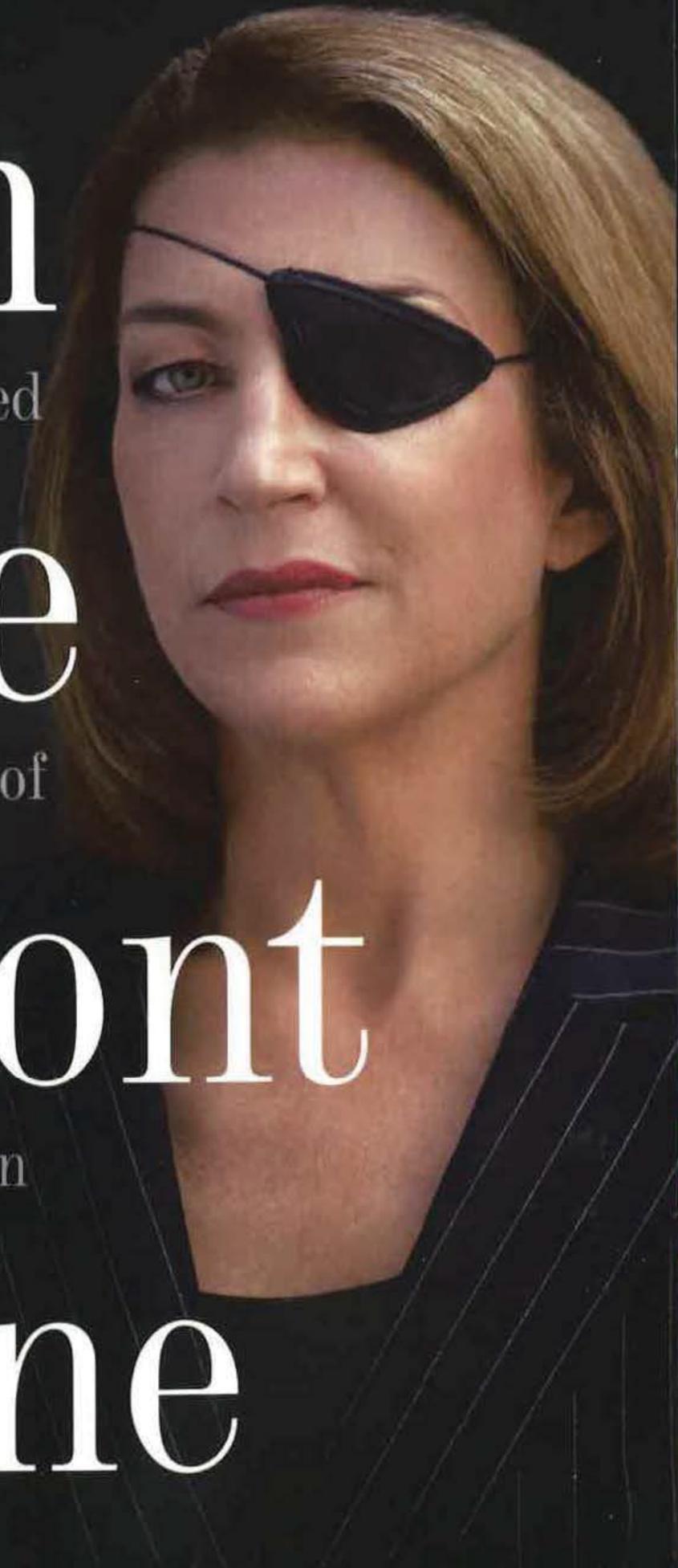
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Journalism of

Front

Marie Colvin

Line



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The Colvin family has established a memorial fund in honour
of Marie. The fund will direct donations to charitable and
educational organisations that reflect Marie's lifelong dedication
to humanitarian aid, human rights, journalism and education.

We thank you for sharing this information with others
who may be interested.

Donations may be made payable to:

The Marie Colvin Fund at LICF
1864 Muttontown Road
Syosset, N.Y. 11791

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www.mariecolvin.org

self-determination.' The government siege had turned people to the Tamil Tigers. 'I know you in the West say they are terrorists,' he said. 'Here, they are the only people that have protected us Tamils from being chopped up.'

Weeks after my operation, a letter arrived wrapped in brown paper. It had been smuggled out somehow by Father Xavier – no doubt at great risk, there being in the Vanni no electricity, few cars, much less any postal service.

'I was sorry to hear of your injuries,' he wrote. 'You are remembered here as a brave and honest person.' It meant a lot to me.

A surprising amount of mail arrived from Sri Lanka during my weeks of recuperation. Messages from Tamils were mostly sympathetic. None was under the impression that I supported their cause, but they sent heart-rending appreciations for providing the first report on their homeland in years.

The Sinhalese majority was divided. A man wrote from Colombo: 'I am not a Tamil, but if there were more journalists reporting the truth as you did, this war would be over in 24 hours.'

Others were less kind. One of the more printable Sinhalese critics – a woman claiming to be a doctor – wrote: 'If you sleep with dogs, you wake up with bugs.'

So, was I stupid? Stupid I would feel writing a column about the dinner party I went to last night. Equally, I'd rather be in that middle ground between a desk job and getting shot, no offence to desk jobs.

You can only describe what I do as 'stupid' if you agree wars shouldn't be covered by journalists, or think they should be reported by way of government press conferences. If journalists are to report on what really happens in war, on the atrocities and pain and death, they are going to face risks.

For my part, the next war I cover, I'll be more awed than ever by the quiet bravery of civilians who endure far more than I ever will. They must stay where they are; I can come home to London.

Bravery is not being afraid to be afraid

21 October 2001

Marie Colvin, Woman of the Year, defined in her acceptance speech the complex nature of courage.

Receiving the Woman of the Year award is a great honour – not least because I got to meet Ellen MacArthur, who's done the only thing I ever really wanted to do – sail round the world. And also Pam Warren, whose experience embodies the concept of the award: bravery.

This is a tough time to be a war correspondent (let alone a grounded one, as I am, for medical reasons). The need for front-line, objective reporting has never been clearer. We are engaged in a war that will affect us all, yet know almost nothing about events on one side.



Marie reporting from the mountains of Chechnya, 1999.

Photograph by Dmitry Beliakov.

There are no western journalists in Taliban-held Afghanistan.

Equally, the risks of going and getting that information has been made clear by the experience of Yvonne Ridley, who could have paid with her life. What level of risk should we take? What is bravery, and what is bravado?

I, too, almost didn't make it. In April I was hit by shrapnel from a grenade fired by the Sri Lankan army. I had gone to the northern Tamil area to report on the plight of 500,000 people under government siege. There was no medicine, little food, an unreported war that had left 340,000 of them refugees. The government had not allowed journalists into the area for six years. I entered illegally, and lost the sight of my eye. Worth the risk? Brutal question – one I've thought about a lot. I did think so at the time, and have to say I do now.

Simply: there's no way to cover war properly without risk. Covering a war means going into places torn by chaos, destruction, death and pain, and trying to bear witness to that. Not so much as to what kind of toys are being used – I've never been able to figure out if that is a MiG or a Tornado shooting at me, or 105mm or 155mm artillery. I care about the experience of those most directly affected by war, those asked to fight and those who are just trying to survive.

Despite all the videos you see on television from Pentagon or Nato briefings, what's on the ground has remained remarkably the same for the past 100 years. Craters. Burnt houses. Women weeping for sons and daughters. Suffering. In my profession, there is no chance of unemployment.

There is no easy way to cover a war. In Chechnya, the war could not be reported from the Russian side, so I travelled into Chechnya from Georgia to report on the indiscriminate bombing of civilians. I stayed with Muslim fighters in the mountains: as I walked in to their base, little more than a one-room hut with a 20-foot bed for everyone, the commander put his devout Muslim fighters at ease by saying: 'There is no woman here, only a journalist.'

I went from village to village. I remember an old man, lying in a basement, his skull cracked and brains leaking out and somehow he was still breathing. His wife sat next to him holding his hand. She knew he would die: there were no doctors, no medicine, the Russian planes would come again soon, but she wanted to be there to his last breath. That's bravery.

One of the rules I have in covering war is: don't be afraid to be afraid – perhaps more important for a woman because you are often with men trying to prove they're macho and watching you for signs of cowardice. In Chechnya, I was pinned down in a snowy field as Russian planes came back, over and over, bombing the field. After hours of this, a Chechen fighter lit a fire, saying with great bravado that impressed his fellow rebels: 'It is better to die warm than to live cold.' I said: 'Put the fire out, you idiot.' They all thought me a coward. I thought I'd rather survive.

My strongest memory of East Timor is walking through the besieged United Nations compound and being stared at, with fear, by all the women and children who were camping on the ground under palm trees. They knew that, if I stayed, they had a chance to live. If I left, they would die. I was a kind of human shield.

The compound was besieged by militiamen wielding machetes and guns, and likely to be overrun at any moment. The UN decided to evacuate, leaving 1,500 women and children behind. Except for two Dutchwomen, my journalist colleagues made the decision to get out on the last flight. I decided to stay – and had the most irritating conversation with my foreign editor. 'What do you mean everyone's left and you're staying?' he asked.

'Don't know. I'm staying.'

'Well, why have all the men left?'

In exasperation, I said: 'I guess they don't make men like they used to.' To his great credit, and my embarrassment, he printed that comment in the paper. It's been tough getting dates ever since.

I stayed, and reported to anyone I could over my satellite phone – CNN, BBC, Australian television – that the UN evacuation was a death sentence for these women and children. Women barred

from entering the compound threw their babies over the walls, into barbed wire, to save them from the militia. Three days later, the UN reversed its decision and evacuated all 1,500 women and children. That risk was certainly worth it.

The war in Afghanistan worries me. Let me make clear, I am not from the 'yes, but' brigade. I despise what Osama Bin Laden stands for. I despise the ways of the Taliban. But this war is being fought in our names, and it is our business. Explaining something, trying to help people to understand it, does not mean support. I wish there was reporting from both sides – at the least, it keeps governments and generals honest. In the words of Martha Gellhorn, one of the bravest war correspondents of her generation: 'Never believe governments, not any of them, not a word they say; keep an untrusting eye on all they do.'

I worry when I hear phrases from the Pentagon that American missiles destroyed the 'command and control centre' at Kandahar airport. I was there – there's a mud building and a guy with a phone that can take only incoming calls.

Going to these places, finding out what is happening, is the only way to get at the truth. It is not perfect, it is a rough draft of history. But historians can come later. You see such huge injustices happening and, as a reporter, you have the chance to tell people about that.

To me, bravery is not something gigantic and definitive. I don't go into a war thinking I have to prove myself brave: that would be about me and that would be bravado. Bravery is secondary. When you are covering a war, you have to be 'brave' over and over again because it means going to places where you could be killed, and where people are being killed, and putting one foot in front of the other – however afraid you are.

The point is to try to report as truthfully as you know how, about what you see and make that part of the record. You can't get that information in a war without going to a place where people are being shot and they are shooting at you. The real difficulty is having enough faith in humanity to believe that someone will care.

Middle East

A bitter taste for vengeance

RAMALLAH

7 April 2002

Marie Colvin, Uzi Mahnaimi, Tel Aviv; Tony Allen-Mills, Washington;
Peter Conradi and Tom Walker, London

Behind its campaign to crush militant Palestinian factions, Israel has embarked upon a brutal conflict that has escalated into all-out war. As the death toll mounts, Marie Colvin reports from Ramallah on the human impact of the political posturing.

Soraida Abu Gharbieh probably died because she believed that Israeli soldiers would not shoot civilians. She was born in America and had idealistic views. But as her husband drove her around the corner to her father's house, she was shot in the head and killed. When he pried their 10-month-old son from her arms, the baby was chuckling. He thought it was a game.

Last week Soraida was buried in a mass grave in the car park of Ramallah hospital. The city was under curfew, her family could not retrieve her body and the mortuary was overflowing with the dead. Soraida's husband remembers the last word that she spoke – his name, Murad – as she keeled forward, her body around the chubby boy in her lap.

The family's crime was to be frightened. When Israeli tanks began shelling buildings on the first night of the incursion nine days ago, Soraida thought they should go to her father's house because it was larger and lower down the hill.