



The AIBs

2020

#theAIBs

**Winners and
finalists**



ALJAZEERA

Al Jazeera Proud Event Partner of AIBs 2020

Amidst our challenging times due the COVID pandemic, journalists around the world are struggling to carry out their jobs to inform and increase public awareness of the key issues that affect our turbulent times. They continue to do so in the face of unrelenting restrictions and harassment by governments.

According to Reporters without Borders, as of March 2020, there are 320 journalists detained across the globe, with the largest numbers being imprisoned in China, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. These figures include 202 professional journalists; 107 citizen journalists; and 17 other media professionals.

Egypt continues to be one of the leading violators of press freedom. Last year, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that over 60 journalists were being held in detention in Egypt.

Of those detained in Egypt is Al Jazeera journalist, Mahmoud Hussein, who continues to languish in prison, and has completed more than 1400 days behind bars. Hussein was arrested in December 2016 during a visit to his family in Cairo, and has been imprisoned, without charge, trial or conviction in sight.

In addition to incarcerating Mahmoud Hussein, the Egyptian regime has also sentenced in absentia six additional Al Jazeera journalists; two renowned British journalists and four Egyptian journalists, all of whom were tried and sentenced to ten years each. As a result, our journalists continue to live in constant fear of being detained, arrested and deported to Egypt when traveling around the world.

Mahmoud contracted COVID19- recently whilst in prison and fortunately recovered. But his health situation is a clear indicator that the risk of transmission and reinfection in crowded prison conditions remains imminent and the consequences could be fatal. Combined with little to no medical attention in many prisons and the health threats aligned with COVID19- that may need immediate and drastic emergency health care, we believe the time has come for the international community to pressure all governments to free unjustly detained journalists and reaffirm the importance of media freedom and expression.

Amid this pandemic, we implore all industry professionals to allow their voices to be heard and join our call to stand up for Mahmoud Hussein and all detained journalists, demanding their immediate release.

At Al Jazeera we stand firmly in solidarity with all our imprisoned colleagues; we will continue to hold the line with Maria Ressa and all our harassed and intimidated colleagues whilst also upholding the pennant of truth. We believe that no journalist should be intimidated, persecuted or imprisoned for carrying out their duty. We believe in the fundamental right to freedom of speech and that it is the basic pillar pivotal to upholding the values of democracy.

The safety of journalists should be addressed as a global priority, and freedom of expression should not be regarded as a luxury but rather as a fundamental right.

We implore you to Stand up for Mahmoud Hussein. Your support will go a long way to break-down the walls of silence and make a critical difference, allowing him to return to his family and loved ones.

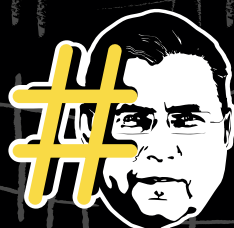
Industry leaders call for the release of Mahmoud Hussein: Commenting on Mahmoud Hussein imprisonment, the Executive Director of the International Press Institute, Barbara Trionfi, said, "We have been observing the unjust imprisonment of Mahmoud Hussein in Egypt. We are appalled at his imprisonment and we have repeatedly called for his release. IPI is a global network of editors and journalists around the world, and Mahmoud Hussein is one of our most respected members. The conditions in which he has been detained are unacceptable and the way Egypt has been disregarding international standards in imprisoning journalists is a crime."

Standing in solidarity with Mahmoud Hussein and calling for his immediate and unconditional release, Agnes Callamard, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Arbitrary Execution and the Director of Columbia Global Freedom of Expression stated that, "at the UN, the working group on arbitrary detention, the special rapporteur on freedom of expression, and the special rapporteur on counter terrorism have all denounced the continued arbitrary detention of Mahmoud Hussein."

The Executive Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Joel Simon, said, "Every journalist who is imprisoned is an individual tragedy, but the collective imprisonment of hundreds of journalists around the world is a form of censorship, it is depriving us of essential information that we need. We have to free journalists imprisoned around the world, we must free Mahmoud Hussein."

The founder of the Ethical Journalism Network, Aidan White, said, "The scandalous continuous detention of Mahmoud Hussein is something that affects journalists the world over. He is a journalist who is being detained and victimized for his work, and used partially in a political struggle. Mahmoud should not spend another day behind bars; he should be released immediately."

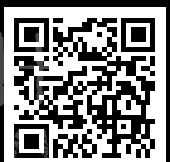
RELEASE HIM NOW



#FreeMahmoudHussein

1400

Days





WELCOME

As the world slowly woke up to the true nature and far-reaching impact of Covid-19 in the early part of 2020, planning for regular annual events suddenly turned into a major challenge. There was a moment when we at the AIB feared that the 16th *AIBs* – the international awards for journalism and factual content organised by the Association for International Broadcasting – might not take place. But after a moment's pause, we agreed that – now more than ever – it was important to recognise the work of journalists and programme makers in this challenging, extraordinary time.

Their work has not stopped because of the virus. On the contrary, because of the virus their work is vital in bringing us news and insights. And of course at times when wholesale anxiety and a blanket of low-level depression descend on vast swathes of the population, what we need from programme makers are not only hard-hitting facts but also some kind of release. Some topic other than coronavirus – inspiring, uplifting stories to regenerate our energies.

In the light of all this our AIB team decided to go ahead with the launch of the *AIBs* 2020. And to our surprise and delight the response from programme makers was enthusiastic – entries to the 19 *AIBs* categories were submitted from all over the world. After careful shortlisting and subsequent judging by our international panel of 48 judges, the verdict on who the winners are is now out. So, while we cannot hold our traditional live event this year, we are celebrating the vitally important work of the news, current affairs and factual programme producers with a two-part awards show that showcases the finalists' work and introduces the winners of the coveted AIB awards in 2020 via the *AIBs* website at <http://theaibs.tv>.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the AIB cannot organise these awards without the support and involvement of the industry. So firstly, my special thanks go to the many media professionals who served on the international judging panel and gave their time and expertise so generously this year. I also extend my particular thanks to our event partner, Al Jazeera Media Network, and to our sponsors RTI for their support of the *AIBs* in in this challenging year. And I would like to thank our studio host for the two programmes, Kim Vinnell from Al Jazeera English.

Congratulations to all our finalists and to the winners! The 2021 *AIBs* awards season will open in April next year.

Simon Spanswick
Chief Executive, AIB

Politics and business

Continuing news reporting TV and video

Single news report TV and video

News reporting radio and audio

Short documentary

Human interest TV and video

Human interest radio and audio

Factual podcast

Domestic affairs documentary

News agency of the year

Natural world

Science and technology

Investigative documentary radio and audio

Investigative documentary TV and video

Arts and culture TV and video

Arts and culture radio and audio

International affairs documentary

Young journalist

Channel of the year

Impact awards



ALJAZEERA

EVENT PARTNER



SPONSOR

The Voice of Taiwan

www.rti.org.tw

Radio **T**aiwan **I**nternational

客家語 Hakka, 粵語 Cantonese, 英語 English, 法語 French, 德語 German, 俄語 Russian, 西班牙語 Spanish, 印尼語 Indonesian, 泰語 Thai, 越南語 Vietnamese, 日語 Japanese, 閩南語 Taiwanese, 華語 Mandarin, 粵語 Cantonese, 英語 English, 法語 French, 德語 German, 俄語 Russian, 西班牙語 Spanish, 印尼語 Indonesian, 泰語 Thai, 越南語 Vietnamese, 日語 Japanese, 閩南語 Taiwanese, 華語 Mandarin, 客家語 Hakka, 粵語 Cantonese, 英語 English, 法語 French, 德語 German, 俄語 Russian, 西班牙語 Spanish, 印尼語 Indonesian, 泰語 Thai, 越南語 Vietnamese, 日語 Japanese, 閩南語 Taiwanese, 華語 Mandarin





JUDGES

Shehzad Hameed Ahmad – Documentary Filmmaker – Channel NewsAsia, **Saadatu Albashir** – News Editor – Radio Nigeria, **Vyara Ankova** – General Director – NOVA Broadcasting, **Anna Averkiou** – International Media Consultant, **Tim Axford** – Executive Editor – BBC Arabic, **Doug Boynton** – Principal – Boynton Media Partners, **Göksen Büyükbezi** – Head of Programming/Deputy editor-in-chief – n-tv, **Eugen Cojocariu** – Head – Radio Romania International, **Juan Pablo Córdoba** – Producción Artística – Radio Mitre, **Jean Di Marino** – Correspondent/Producer, **Heaton Dyer** – Executive Director of Strategy and International Relations – CBC/Radio-Canada, **Mouhssine Ennaimi** – Director/Producer – TRT, **Leo Faber** – Executive Producer, Documentary, Factual and Entertainment – ABC – Australian Broadcasting Corporation, **Leeza Fathimath** – Programme Manager – AIBD, **Walter Fernandez** – Editor-in-Chief – Mediacorp, **Nigel Fry** – Director Distribution – BBC World Service, **Mihai Gîdea** – CEO – Antena 3, **Carlson Huang Chia-shan** – Manager of International Language Division – Radio Taiwan International, **Mustafa Isaid** – Management – Berlin4Media, **Amy Katz** – Senior Executive Producer – VoA News Central, **Parisa Khosravi** – Speaker/Award winning journalist, **K Rashi Kumar** – Faculty for Radio Journalism – University of Allahabad, **Francine Lacqua** – Anchor & Editor at large – Bloomberg TV, **John Lippman** – Deputy for Programming – Voice of America, **Artyom Liss** – Editorial Adviser and Programme Manager – Internews, **Rozita Lotfi** – Head of BBC Persian – BBC World Service, **Emmanuel Maduabuchi** – Broadcast Journalist – Info Fm Radio, **John Maguire** – Director International Relations and Cooperation – France Médias Monde, **Izak Minnaar** – Consultancy and Training: Journalism, Digital Media and Elections, **Alexey Nikolov** – Managing Editor – RT, **Tetiana Ovdiienko** – Media Expert and Consultant, **Shawn Powers** – Chief Strategy Officer – U.S Agency for Global Media, **Angela Robson** – Creative Director, Journalist and Lecturer, **Alan Rook** – Managing Director – BlackRook Media, **Juliana Ruhfus** – Senior Presenter – Al Jazeera English, **Juan Señor** – President of Innovation – Media Consulting Group, **Peter Shevlin** – Director/Producer – BlokMedia, **Joanna Spiteri** – CEO – Malta Broadcasting Authority, **Mr Sunil** – ADG(IR) – Prasar Bharati, **Perna Suri**, **Moera Tuilaepa-Taylor** – RNZ Pacific Team Leader, **Ebenazar Wikina** – Editor – Niger Delta Link (ND Link), **Xiaoying Zhang** – Deputy Head, International Relations – Deutsche Welle

HOST



Kim Vinnell is a presenter for Al Jazeera English. As an international correspondent she has covered some of the major news stories of the last decade, including the war in Syria and Eastern Ukraine, Iraq's fight against ISIS, the political fallout from the 2014 war in Gaza and the Mediterranean migrant crisis.

As an anchor she leverages her field experience to ask the hard questions. Kim has anchored major events ranging from the

inauguration and impeachment hearing of US President Donald Trump to the death of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi. She frequently hosts Al Jazeera's flagship shows "Inside Story" and "Newshour" and has played a pivotal role in the Network's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests.

Kim has previously anchored for TRT World in Turkey, worked as a freelance correspondent covering East Africa from Tanzania, and was a senior correspondent for TVNZ and TV3 in New Zealand. A proud kiwi with Maori heritage, of Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Raukawa descent, she is a fierce global advocate for gender equality and indigenous rights. She believes brave journalism is needed now more than ever and has committed her career to putting truth to power and to conveying untold stories.

VOICE



Jane Copland has over 25 years experience in broadcasting and voice overs.

Working mainly in television she has been a newsreader, presenter and continuity announcer. She has voiced many commercials and numerous documentaries for both the BBC and Channel 4. She was the original voice on the Orange mobile phone for 14 years, and has to date narrated over 25 audiobooks.



POLITICS AND BUSINESS

Perfect Storm Productions for Channel 4



As Britain has turned into a nation of coffee lovers, Starbucks and Nespresso have become two of the world's biggest coffee brands. They have revolutionised what we drink and how we consume it. On the back of their success both make bold claims about how their beans are

ethically sourced and, in particular, that child labour is not used in their supply chains. But as Dispatches travelled to Guatemala it discovered young children working long hours in gruelling conditions to pick coffee beans that supply these two coffee giants. **Starbucks & Nespresso: The Truth About Your Coffee** lays bare the sad truth that the children can earn little more than the price of a Starbucks latte or a pack of pods made by Nespresso for a whole day's work. Our judges were impressed with the thorough research and access. "A great piece", they said and a deserving winner.

Highly commended

Al Jazeera English

101 East: Selling Out West Papua

Selling Out West Papua exposes the controversial dealings of resource companies in a region of the world usually shut off from outside scrutiny. It shines a light on the plight of tribes often forgotten in the rush to transform pristine forests into lucrative palm oil plantations whose products are sold around the world. AJE gained rare access to investigate. A visually stunning production, said the judges, with material gathered under difficult conditions.

Alhurra Television

Alhurra Investigates: Collapse of the Lebanese Economy

In 2019 and 2020, Lebanon witnessed a collapse of historic proportions. During its investigation into the causes, Alhurra found corruption and mishandling of the economy – and exposed the underhanded cashing of cheques with as much as 35% interest. Our judges liked the straightforward treatment of what could have been a complicated story.

CONTINUING NEWS REPORTING TV and video

CNN



What started as a protest against an extradition bill escalated into violent street battles that shut down Hong Kong long before the coronavirus did. CNN had reported on the volatile story from the beginning – which meant ongoing coverage as the demonstrations spread over months,

paused during the pandemic measures, and were recently muted by legislation enacted by China to make most aspects of the protests illegal. After three weeks of steady protests, the 1st July public holiday in 2019 – commemorating the Chinese takeover of Hong Kong – became a set-piece for a dramatic turn of events that took everyone by surprise. CNN covered the July 1st events live over a period of 20 hours, examined the motivations of the protesters, the impact on businesses and the effects on young people, as well as providing analysis and government perspectives. Our judges thought that CNN's **Coverage of the Hong Kong Protests** was "journalism at its very best" – a clear winner that provided extraordinary insight. They were impressed with the diverse perspectives, passionate correspondents, exceptional cinematography and investigative depth that all contributed to create a tension that kept audiences gripped.

Highly commended

BBC World News

Australian Bushfires

Australia's devastating bushfires became a major global news story in late 2019. BBC World News stayed with the story through and beyond its peak. As the emergency reached its climax in early January, the BBC team embarked on extensive coverage from the worst hit state of New South Wales, showing the full impact on wildlife, homes and livelihoods. Exceptional news coverage through diverse angles and perspectives, said the judges.



SINGLE NEWS REPORT TV and video

BBC World News



Yemen, in its sixth year of war, is now the world's worst humanitarian crisis. In early 2020 BBC World News gained rare and exclusive access to both sides of this punishing conflict: areas controlled by the government backed by a Saudi-led coalition;

and territory controlled by Houthi rebels aligned to Iran. Travelling the length of the country for three weeks, across countless checkpoints and risky frontlines, Lyse Doucet and her team highlighted in their reports the devastation of natural beauty, the diseases, poverty and pain wrought by multiple crises. ***Yemen: Inside a Dangerously Divided 'City of Snipers'*** is their report from Taiz, Yemen's third largest city and "cultural capital," now the country's longest running and most intense battlefield. Taiz is a symbol of a country torn in two, a city besieged by all sides. While the spirit of a proud dignified people has not been crushed, the anguish of Yemenis who feel they've been forgotten by the world is palpable. The judges called this "real frontline reporting from a war zone" – they said it provided insight, impact and emotional appeal while directly transporting the viewer to the place of action. A deserving winner.

Highly commended

CNN

Go There: Fear and Anxiety in Epicenter of Wuhan Coronavirus Outbreak

The epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak – Wuhan – was declared off limits to international news crews. CNN managed to report from the city just before it went into lockdown. Our judges liked the multiple perspectives and nuanced reporting, all contributing to the authentic feeling of the report.

Radio Free Asia Burmese Service

The Life of Female Fighters in Myanmar's Arakan Army

Risking arrest for entering the rebel zone, RFA obtained exclusive access to a jungle camp in northern Myanmar to report on the hundreds of young ethnic Rakhine women who are training to fight for the rebel Arakan Army against the feared Myanmar military. The conflict, which has intensified sharply during 2019, is the latest and currently the bloodiest of the many armed struggles for ethnic autonomy that have roiled Myanmar. Judges commented on the refreshing angle of a story missed by other news outlets and were impressed by the camera work.

NEWS REPORTING radio and audio

World at One, BBC Radio 4



President Trump held his first rally for three months in Tulsa, Oklahoma on Saturday June 20th. The White House says a million people applied for tickets. The head of the Health Department in the city had asked the President to cancel the event, as did black

leaders. The big election rally had already been shifted back. The original plan was to hold it on June 19th, known in the States as "Juneteenth" – the day celebrating the end of slavery - but that caused offence. As Mark Mardell explores in ***Trump's Tulsa Rally and a Massacre in 1921***, Tulsa is a city with a troubled history. In 1921 it was the scene of one of the worst incidents of racial violence in American history when during the Tulsa Race Massacre (also known as the Tulsa Race Riot) a white mob attacked residents, homes and businesses in the predominantly Black Greenwood neighbourhood of Tulsa. Our judges chose this as the winner, describing it as a "balanced and coherent work with breadth, depth, boldness, originality and impact". They also praised the craft skills that support the narration.

Highly commended

Bloomberg

The Coronavirus Outbreak Spreads Outside of China

On February 24, the world woke up to South Korea raising its disease alert to the highest level and Italy putting 50,000 residents on lockdown. This was the day when the coronavirus epidemic went global. Bloomberg Radio covered the spread, the government response, and the economic fallout, with reports from across the world. A dynamic report, with excellent use of voices that build the international picture, commented the judges.

Radio Television Hong Kong

Battle Hymn of Angels in White and Hongkongers: A Legend of Self-Rescue Power

Even though Hong Kong has been less badly affected by the pandemic than other countries, residents of Hong Kong – scarred by the last SARS outbreak – were worried when the coronavirus pandemic struck. Here doctors and nurses working in the frontline team talk of their experiences with general public health awareness, official guidelines and Hongkongers' amazing self-rescue power. Judges praised the editorial concept and the coherent narrative, peaks throughout the film.



SHORT DOCUMENTARY

Al Jazeera Digital



In *Fly on the Wall: The Virus* filmmaker Raul Gallego Abellan took audiences to the frontline of coronavirus treatment in his native Barcelona in March 2020, as doctors, nurses and paramedics suffered from what is believed to have been the highest rate of Covid-19 infections

amongst health care workers in Europe at the time. The programme weaves a tapestry of sound and visuals, with no outside narration, encompassing what went on in hospitals, morgues, and elder care facilities. Unprepared for the thousands of sick and dying, doctors and nurses worked double shifts with no days off and for weeks on end. In *The Virus* medical staff open up about the stress of not having adequate protective gear or resources to be able to handle the numbers of dying, or of having to ration limited resources and to make excruciating decisions about who will be administered life-saving treatments. The programme brings into focus the personal quandaries brought on by a pandemic nobody expected – everything from the constant worry of bringing the virus home to loved ones to the fear of dying alone in sterile hospital environments. Our judges felt this was a clear winner as the piece perfectly reflected the eerie and bizarre atmosphere of this early stage of Covid-19. A bold story very well told, great visuals and incredible soundtrack, were their comments.

Highly commended

BBC News Arabic

Coronavirus by Air: The Spread of Covid-19 in the Middle East

The film documents how Iran's Mahan Air brought the first confirmed coronavirus cases to Iraq and Lebanon and circumvented flight bans with China, spreading the virus across the Middle East, as well as the airline's measures to silence its cabin crews. Judges were impressed by the robust journalism – "dry facts well told".

BBC London

Cab Fraud

Most people would assume that their cab driver is safe and qualified. In London this might not be the case. So can you trust your taxi driver? The dark secrets of how qualifications are obtained fraudulently were uncovered by Guy Lynn for BBC London. "A simple but efficient investigative technique that nails it", remarked the judges, with good production standards.

HUMAN INTEREST TV and video

één for VRT



Across the world, young people are using hidden Instagram groups to share disturbing posts about self-harm, eating disorders and suicide. **PANO: Secret on Instagram** examined the devastating consequences by telling the story of three people in their early twenties who are active in these hidden

groups – sharing messages not through their public account but through a second, private profile their friends and family know nothing about. Two of the three young women featured in this programme, Amber and Hanne, died in September last year. "The messages in the hidden communities lead you to become caught up in your own negative emotions," explains Mika who was in the network and allows *PANO* a look in. It involves groups of thousands of youths, ranging far beyond Belgium's borders. How can society help these vulnerable youths? It's a difficult task for the professionals if you are not aware of your patient's other 'world'. And is it enough to offer online help through anonymous chats or phone numbers like the suicide hotline? Judges said this was an important story of our times, treated in a compelling and enlightening way – altogether a powerful piece of investigative journalism that had great impact on the viewer.

Highly commended

Very! for CNA Mediacorp

The Skin We Wear

Harlequin Ichthyosis is a rare genetic disorder causing thick and scaly skin that is prone to cracking and infections. The sufferers' struggles are physical, social and emotional – from constant moisturising to stares and judgement from strangers. *The Skin We Wear* offered a glimpse of what life is like for the affected. Judges praised the compassionate story treatment that makes for captivating viewing.

TRT WORLD

Off the Grid: Missing Babies

In Serbia from the late 1960s until the early 2000s there were many unexplained cases of newborn babies that seemed to simply disappear. Parents were prevented from seeing the body or burying it. Were these children stolen and given away for illegal adoption? A new law offers reparations to eligible parents but does not order any investigation into how a child went missing. A moving tale, said the judges, with a strong narrative and beautiful visual effects.



HUMAN INTEREST radio and audio

TBI Media for BBC Radio 4



In Britain, having a “stiff upper lip” is a well-known national characteristic. In *Virtues of Vulnerability with Ed Balls*, former UK cabinet minister and Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls explores the benefits and pitfalls of being honest about ourselves. Ed has a severe stammer that sometimes

presented difficulties when he was delivering ideas confidently on extremely high-profile public platforms. So, with his own stammer in mind, he often wondered how other people that have a ‘vulnerability’ but are in the public spotlight might feel – and whether their personal story might differ from the careful and confident soundbites we hear from these public figures. He spoke with veteran broadcaster Nick Robinson, activist Scarlett Curtis, Paralympic gold medallist Will Bailey, and actor/author Michael Palin to seek revealing and inspirational insights arising from moments of turmoil in their lives. The end result is a programme that asks the listener: just how much should we celebrate our greatest challenges? Our judges felt this was a worthy winner, a “top feature with impact – full of optimism and hope”, where the concept and execution were the perfect fit, with clever use of music and accurate selection of soundbites and programme excerpts.

Highly commended

BFBS - The Forces Station *VE Day 75: Sound Stories*

The journey from D-Day to Victory in Europe took 11 long months in which radio played a vital role. This documentary uses original archive recordings of the events that take us from the beaches of Normandy to the end of the War in Europe – exactly how the countdown to VE-Day sounded, to everyday people on both sides of the Atlantic. Judges called it “powerful”, “brilliantly designed”, creating an almost cinematic feeling.

BlokMedia for BBC Radio 4 *Writing's on the Wall*

Martin Perry has spent years coaching sportsmen and women to build confidence and handle the psychological demands of their game. Here he lifts the lid on some of the secretive superstitions of leading sports professionals that reveal much about the mindset of the player – from tattered lucky socks and perplexing pre-match rituals to Nadal's perfectly placed water bottles. Judges loved the boldness of this entertaining piece which owes much to a presenter able to hit the right tone.

FACTUAL PODCAST

Tortoise Media



In 2017 Daphne Caruana Galizia, Malta's pre-eminent investigative journalist, died in a car bomb. She was known for asking big questions and working on big stories, exposing corruption in her home country. In an EU member country, how was such a political

assassination even possible? How closely implicated in the plot were high-ranking members of the government and business? The questions only deepened as it began to appear that the people behind the murder might get away with it. Amidst growing uncertainty about whether justice would ever be done, Daphne's son Paul Caruana Galizia returned to Malta to investigate. Our judges thought that *My Mother's Murder* deserved to be the winner in this category. They were impressed by the painstaking investigative work and natural style of delivery – a simple format, unobtrusive but immensely effective in engaging and moving the listener.

Highly commended

Somethin' Else for Audible Originals *Nut Jobs*

Over just a few weeks, almost ten million dollars was stolen in California ... \$10 million worth of nuts as truck drivers were re-directed to surreptitious drop-offs. By unpicking this unusual crime, *Nut Jobs* uncovered alarming truths about organised crime exploiting food production, shipping and processing. “A bold and creative production on a fascinating subject”, said the judges, with humorous delivery that does not undermine the story's impact.

Sky News StoryCast *Polonium and the Piano Player*

Piano player Derek Conlon crosses into the murky world of international espionage when he accidentally drinks from the same radioactive cup used to poison Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006. We follow the separate journeys of both Conlon and Litvinenko to the hotel on the day of the attack, before the series focuses on the impact of the poisoning on Conlon's life. The judges thought merging the two stories was a brilliant idea – story-telling at its best.



DOMESTIC AFFAIRS DOCUMENTARY

BBC Northern Ireland



Spotlight on the Troubles: A Secret History retold the story of the bloody 30-year conflict in Northern Ireland on the 50th anniversary of the start of the hostilities – the UK’s most significant internal conflict of the 20th century. Over nine hours, the eight-part series told the story of

the Troubles from outbreak to settlement, using the methods of investigative journalism. Building on previously available historical information, the series found new voices and new evidence to tell the story of a conflict that claimed more than 3,700 lives. It followed a broadly chronological narrative – from the 1960s to the 1990s – but along the way used important events as a platform to explore key themes of the conflict like weapons smuggling and secret intelligence. The judges felt this production deserved to be the winner: strong research and outstanding reporting which shed new light on historical events and make an important contribution to our understanding of these events was coupled with gripping background scores and infused with deep humanity.

Highly commended

Antena 3

In the Name of the State

In Romania, everything seems to be for sale. Human trafficking is rife and officialdom is often closely linked to criminal activities. The kidnapping of 15-year old Alexandra Macesanu brought the issue into sharp relief. Judges said this was a film that was often hard to watch – but brilliant investigative journalism and sensitive handling of a delicate issue.

BBC News Persian

Afghanistan’s Open Secret: Stigma and Shame of Child Sex Abuse

The film’s reporter and producer Kawoon Khamoosh has been following stories of child abuse across Afghanistan for years. Child abuse is rife in the country – in villages, in mosques, in schools and in homes. If the victims speak up, they are blamed, not the attackers. In this conservative, hierarchical society people prefer to avoid the stain of the shame by believing the offenders over the victims. Judges applauded the courage and skills of the local journalists covering such a taboo subject.

NEWS AGENCY OF THE YEAR

AFP



2020 has shown the importance of news agencies for frontline news coverage. AFP have covered in depth not only the pandemic but also all the other major stories that have defined 2019 and 2020 as momentous news years. With their network of 1,700 journalists in 151 countries AFP are well placed to ensure they can supply their clients with the most important stories. As the first agency into Wuhan city, AFP gave us first-hand reports as the pandemic spread and brought to life the challenges, implications and fateful consequences of the Covid-19 threat. Prior to the pandemic AFP were making their mark with comprehensive

and high-quality coverage of what had been a “year of protest” ranging from Tahrir Square in Baghdad – the ground zero of anti-government protests – to the Hong Kong riots. AFP’s expanded US team covered the Black Lives Matter movement as it exploded with the death of George Floyd and the agency was also present in South America to cover the feminist rallies that swept the continent, giving a voice to women fighting domestic violence and other injustices. Our judges commented that AFP’s global approach, voluminous coverage of topics and reliability made them a worthy winner in this category. Judges pointed to the exceptional quality of the footage that showed an eye for detail and brought news to life. Some images were shocking but true to the eventful course of 2020. AFP showed people’s emotions and made news content interesting to a wide range of consumers.



Sponsored by



NATURAL WORLD

Wild Pacific Media for Australian Broadcasting Corporation and ARTE France



Ocean currents are the arteries and veins of planet Earth – a vital planetary life support system. The East Australian Current stretches the length of Australia's east coast, flowing 3000 km all the way from the Great Barrier Reef to Tasmania, bringing warm tropical waters to cold southern

seas, and in doing so it transforms the lives of every living thing in the region. The EAC is responsible for the fish we eat, the rain that feeds our crops, even the air we breathe. It was made famous by the antics of a determined clownfish in the Pixar film 'Finding Nemo' but the true story of the EAC is even more magical. ***Australia's Ocean Odyssey: A Journey Down the East Australian Current*** takes the spectator on a journey with a migrating pod of humpback whales as they travel the full length of this marine river. We witness the power of ocean currents to shape and transform whole ecosystems, and we see how the ocean and her currents make our lives possible. But as the Earth's climate changes, the ocean and her currents are changing too. Our judges said the programme was "epic photography worthy of a mighty topic" and succeeded in visualising the bigger picture and impact of the current. A deserving winner.

Highly commended

RT

Freed to be Wild

Rising temperatures, deforestation and poaching are some of the problems in the Russian Far East where WWF is working to save a range of rare, endangered species. The joint project between RT and WWF, which was filmed in extreme environments, gives a glimpse into the natural worlds that are under threat and shows how committed WWF workers and volunteers try to minimise human-inflicted damage. Judges said the insightful and educational programme did an excellent job of raising awareness.

CNN

Borneo is Burning

In 2019, more than two million acres of Borneo's land burned. The fires are largely a man-made phenomenon: forests are burned to grow the lucrative palm oil. A CNN team reported from the fire's frontline and on its effects on one of the world's most endangered animals, the orangutan. Judges praised the strong editorial and storytelling values.

SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY

Sponsored by



AI Jazeera English



Science is the domain of white men. Artificial intelligence, the latest revolution of the scientific age, has been created and engineered by white men. So does A.I. embody many of the biases inherent within the world of science, and beyond? Does A.I. preserve the underlying status quo that preserves inequalities based on

race, gender, socio-economics and assigned ethnicity? In ***The Big Picture - The World According to A.I.*** people of colour, the poor, the disenfranchised are at the heart of AI Jazeera English's examination of the A.I. revolution. In America, A.I. is helping to keep LA's rich white areas white and poor areas black. In Xinjiang the repressive technology of tomorrow helps to control, monitor and punish China's minority Muslim population. Facial recognition software – with algorithms trained on white male faces – struggles to recognise the faces of women, especially women of colour. A.I. is being touted as a great job-creator by its champions but the reality is that those jobs will be among the lowest paid and most precarious, most likely to be carried out by women of colour and immigrants. By highlighting the complex issues and dangers, *The Big Picture* mounts a challenge to the white, male world of A.I. Our judges placed it as the winner in this category, saying it was an example of complete story-telling and in-depth treatment of an issue which touched on many aspects and opened viewers' eyes.

Highly commended

Peddling Pictures for CNA Mediacorp Coded World

Algorithms are everywhere and changing everything – including changing what we will become in tomorrow's world. Are they good or bad? *Coded World* illustrates the impact of code in our lives. Judges commented on the high production levels and original presentation which keep your interest throughout.



INVESTIGATIVE DOCUMENTARY radio and audio

Sky News StoryCast



In 2005, the body of a 30-year-old Swedish woman was discovered on a beach in Scotland. Annie Börjesson, a talented linguist and musician, had left her apartment in Edinburgh less than 24 hours earlier to catch an evening flight to Sweden from Prestwick Airport. But

after travelling all the way to Prestwick she failed to board her flight. Instead, she died on a lonely beach. It looked like suicide. But Annie's mother would not believe this. And as the weeks and months wore on, Annie's family began to unearth a series of troubling discoveries. Before long the family were questioning if Annie had even drowned at Prestwick beach. Had her body and bag been placed there? When the family took the investigation into Annie's death into their own hands, they quickly discovered an alternative explanation to their daughter's death that pointed not to suicide, but murder, cover-up and one of the world's most notorious intelligence agencies - The CIA. The judges thought ***What Happened to Annie?*** a worthy winner. It was a clear and logically built piece of work, giving an intriguing subject a masterly treatment.

Highly commended

Al Jazeera Media Network ***Diplomats for Sale***

This four-part series reports on how a lucrative but legal practice of selling citizenship has been "upgraded" by corrupt actors to the sale of ambassadorships, and the immunity and other privileges that come with such a post. The investigation explored the corrupt practice of delivering ambassadorships in return for large sums in several Caribbean countries. Judges praised the quality of the journalism and excellent variety of voices and soundbites.

BBC Radio Current Affairs ***My Fake News Whodunnit***

When a name very similar to journalist Michelle Madsen's was used as the cover for a fake news hatchet job on a Senegalese politician, she found herself entangled in a web of deception. Michelle travels to Senegal to find out what's behind it all. Our judges liked this first-person programme that captures the reality of the growing abuses of the media across the globe - excellent journalistic approach and perfectly constructed, they said.

INVESTIGATIVE DOCUMENTARY TV and video

CNN



Abuse and Scandal in the Catholic Church: The Case of the Predator Priest

is the result of a 17-month investigation into clerical child abuse that spanned continents, decades and cultures. It exposes a long-hidden blind spot at the heart of the Catholic Church, allowing its religious orders

to police themselves. It found that the Salesians of Don Bosco - a Catholic order established to protect children - had repeatedly covered up abuse by its priests and brothers, moving them from post to post. One particular priest, Father Luk Delft, a convicted paedophile, was sent by the Catholic Church to Central Africa to serve as the head of Caritas, a leading Catholic charity, to help some of the world's most vulnerable children. Acting on tips about fresh allegations of abuse, a CNN team tracked him down. Their reporting ultimately forced the priest's recall to Belgium, encouraged other victims to come forward, and formed the basis for a Belgium Federal Police investigation. Judges were impressed by this dynamic, presenter-driven investigation with its thorough research and compelling evidence and chose it as the winner in this category.

Highly commended

BBC Africa Eye ***Sex for Grades***

In West Africa, stories of university professors sexually harassing their students have circulated for generations. Women who speak out are routinely victimised, while the perpetrators continue their abuse with impunity. BBC Africa Eye gathered irrefutable evidence. Judges had high praise for the brave exposé that keeps the viewer hooked.



ARTS and CULTURE TV and video

Deutsche Welle



In 1817, the Royal Philharmonic Society in London commissioned Beethoven to compose his Ninth Symphony. Today it is recognised, and performed, across the globe, as DW discovered in ***Beethoven's Ninth: Symphony for the World***. Among the protagonists featured in the seven stories that make

up this film are Chinese composer and Oscar prize-winner Tan Dun, English composer Gabriel Prokofiev, and the Greek-Russian conductor Teodor Currentzis. The documentary traces different renditions of the symphony around the globe: while The Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste in Kinshasa approaches the work under difficult conditions, in Osaka the work is being staged with 10,000 amateur singers, and in Barcelona hearing-impaired young people feel their way to Beethoven's work together with deaf musicologist Paul Whittaker and members of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Our judges felt this programme was the deserving winner as it explores in a comprehensive, many-faceted approach what Beethoven means to so many people in so many countries.

Highly commended

Blue Chalk Media for the Red Door Project *Evolve*

In the USA, relationships between communities of colour and law enforcement are tense. The Evolve Project attempts to effect reconciliation and rapprochement through theatre by showing each side the other side of the coin. Judges praised the use of original sound bites, the dense camera work and the courageous but always appropriate editing.

Banyak Films for Witness, Al Jazeera English *The Dancer Thieves*

Aguibou Bougobali Sanou is sharing his love of dance with an unexpected group of students – the inmates of a prison in Burkina Faso. He aims to give them something that is in short supply in their overcrowded cells: hope. Judges called this a film that is successful in all respects and has a lasting effect, commenting on the sensitive, respectful camera work that gets close to the protagonists.

ARTS and CULTURE radio and audio

New Normal Culture for BBC Radio 4



Eugene Schieffelin – Bronx resident, drug manufacturer and theatre aficionado – was a member of the American Acclimatization Society which aimed to introduce European species into the US. In 1890/1, Schieffelin released 100 starlings in New York's Central Park. Today, 130

years later, there are 200 million starlings in North America – and they are causing devastation to indigenous habitats and farmers' crops. In 1962, a flock got caught in a plane's engine, bringing it down and killing 62 people, and every year almost \$1 billion of crop damage is done by this invasive species. In ***Shakespeare's Starling*** Zoë Comyns explores the legacy of Schieffelin's ill-fated deed and the serious and yet at times humorous attempts to eradicate the bird over the past one hundred years. It also explores how Shakespeare has become subsumed into American culture, in part due to acts such as the release of the starlings. The programme features a number of experts, including Pip, the talking starling. The judges felt this was the clear winner – remarking it was “exactly what radio should be: surprising and impactful”.

Highly commended

World at One, BBC Radio 4 *Black Culture, Civil Rights and Change*

In the wake of George Floyd's death, many artists have come forward to re-spark the debate of the African American experience. *Black Culture, Civil Rights and Change* explores the effects on politics in the past and today. “Beautifully mixed, great music and captivating story”, were the judges' comments.



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DOCUMENTARY

ITN Productions for PBS and Channel 4



As the conflict raged in Aleppo, Waad al-Kateab picked up a camera to capture a very personal story: falling in love, getting married and giving birth, all against a terrifying backdrop of gunfire and bombs. **For Sama**, the feature documentary by Waad al-Kateab and Edward Watts,

is both an intimate and epic journey into the female experience of war. A love letter from a young mother to her daughter Sama, the film tells the story of Waad al-Kateab's life through five years of the uprising in Aleppo, Syria. Her camera captures stories of loss, laughter and survival as she wrestles with an impossible choice - whether or not to flee the city to protect her daughter's life, when leaving means abandoning the struggle for freedom for which she has already sacrificed so much. One of the judges commented: "One of the most powerful things I've seen this year - I felt like I was living the author's journey with her". "Authentic - vivid - compelling - feels like a motion picture - painstaking curation" were some of the other comments which singled this production out as the clear winner.

Highly commended

SBS Australia

Dateline - Hong Kong: Behind the Frontline

The world's media descended on Hong Kong in 2019 to cover street protests which have been some of the most coordinated in history. Dateline got under the surface to explore the different threads, both cultural and organisational, of the protest movement and the human faces behind it. Judges praised the production for its strong images, storytelling and access to interviewees.

Al Jazeera English

Al Jazeera Correspondent: Fascism in the Family

In a personal journey tracing her own family's historic links to fascism, Italian Barbara Serra asks whether anti-immigration sentiment, rising intolerance and attacks on free media mean fascism is on its way back. Insightful interviews, excellent production with skilful camera work and use of archive material made this production special, said the judges.

YOUNG JOURNALIST

Yong Xiong



The AIBs' Young Journalist award recognises an individual aged under 30 who is heading to the top of the factual media industry. Against a strong field of contenders, the judges chose Yong Xiong as the winner in this category. "Clearly fearless", said the judges noting that not all great journalists are in front of the camera. They were impressed by his journalism and story-telling skills, as well as his ability in managing a news team to great effect. His contribution was crucial to CNN's coverage of the Hong Kong protests and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Yong Xiong is a native of China - he was born in Sichuan and grew up in Zhejiang province. After graduating with master's and bachelor's degrees in engineering in 2018, he joined CNN's Beijing bureau as an associate producer to cover daily news and feature stories about China. He also provided research for in-depth investigative stories by CNN correspondents, like the conditions of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. Xiong has reported on the coronavirus outbreak, including the early situation in Wuhan. He travelled to the epicentre and documented the unprecedented lockdown, leaving the city hours before it took effect. Upon returning to Beijing, quarantining in a hotel with his team, he continued to work the contacts he had made in Wuhan. Among the stories Xiong uncovered was that of Dr. Li Wenliang who had tried to warn others about the potential severity of the illness in December 2019 only to be reprimanded by local police, silenced and sent back to work where he contracted the disease. Dr. Li, reluctant to speak with foreign media, eventually agreed to a phone interview with Xiong from his hospital bed. The recording of his cough and weakened voice is the only such audio known to exist of Dr. Li - he died a week later. Xiong also covered the Hong Kong protests, the controversy between China and the NBA, and the missing Peking University activists. Beyond writing for CNN Digital and producing TV stories, he also shoots video and takes photos as a visual journalist.



CHANNEL OF THE YEAR

CNA, MediaCorp Pte Ltd



2020 started as a busy year for CNA covering the Hong Kong riots and the global implications of the relationship with China – a story well and truly “on their doorstep”.

CNA’s workload became even heavier as a once in a lifetime event hit the entire planet. Not only was the pandemic a major story, it also brought immense challenges to the way broadcasters themselves could work. CNA rose to these challenges and covering COVID-19 has become another defining moment in their history. They are well positioned to ‘Understand

Asia’ and have reported on global developments, with Asian perspectives, for over two decades. CNA made good use of its transmedia, multiplatform channel to allow viewers to watch and interact with their content on television and radio, as well as on digital and social channels. Beyond the news coverage CNA was actively engaging its audiences with the Celebrate Asia campaign. Launched in June 2019, the campaign sought out user-generated submissions to create online chatter about what they love about Asia, with the intention to evoke a sense of pride that resonates with the fact that CNA is an Asian brand. Our judges noted the clear and coherent news editorial values. They also observed that CNA had more local correspondents covering the news, which is more reflective of their audience. Judges were impressed with the varied content on offer, the channel’s meaningful engagement with multiple social media platforms and the presentation of a clear cultural identity. That coupled with compelling on-air talent and polished and demonstrable production skills made CNA a deserving winner.



The AIBs
2020

Watch the AIBs 2020 awards shows at www.theaibs.tv



AIB IMPACT AWARD Sponsored by ALJAZEERA

BBC Africa Eye ***Sex for Grades***



Stories of university professors sexually harassing their students on a vast scale have circled for generations in West Africa. But they are rarely proven. Women who speak out are routinely victimised, while the perpetrators of abuse continue year after year with impunity. BBC Africa Eye's investigative documentary, ***Sex for Grades***, sought to expose this epidemic of harassment with irrefutable evidence.

Over a period of 12 months, a team of female journalists went undercover posing as students, capturing shocking secret footage of sexual harassment first-hand in two of the region's top universities: the University of Lagos in Nigeria and the University Ghana in Accra. More than 60 university students were covertly interviewed across two countries, providing prima facie evidence which would pave the way for the eventual exposure of four senior lecturers. These testimonies also led the team to discover the so-called "cold room," a secret location above the University of Lagos senior staff club where students were allegedly groomed and groped by staff.

For Nigerian journalist Kiki Mordi, taking part in this investigation was deeply personal. As a teenager, Kiki was sexually harassed by her lecturer and forced to drop out of university to escape the abuse.

Sex for Grades was an original investigation which shed light on an international crisis in education. It was the top trending issue in the world on Twitter on the day of broadcast and led to the suspension of all the academics exposed in the film. It also changed the law in Nigeria. Since the programme was broadcast the country has created a Sexual Offenders Register and passed a Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Institutions Bill which will criminalise sexual harassment by university lecturers. Femi Gbajabiamila, Leader of the House of Representatives in Nigeria said: "We owe a debt of gratitude to the BBC Africa journalists whose efforts have exposed this scourge. Their efforts are a reminder of what can be achieved when good people say 'enough is enough' and act to make it so #SexForGrades."

The AIB judges felt this brave exposé which had lasting and far-reaching effects is a deserving recipient of this year's AIB Impact Award.



AIB IMPACT AWARD Sponsored by ALJAZEERA

CNN

Abuse and Scandal in the Catholic Church: The Case of the Predator Priest



The Case of the Predator Priest is the result of a 17-month investigation into clerical child abuse that spanned continents, decades and cultures. It exposes a long-hidden blind spot at the heart of the Catholic Church, allowing its religious orders to police themselves. Gathering hard to obtain court documents and securing rare interviews with victims as well as church insiders, the CNN team found that the Salesians of Don Bosco – a Catholic order established to protect children – had repeatedly covered up abuse by its priests and brothers, moving them from post to post. One particular priest, Father Luk Delft, a convicted paedophile, was sent by the Catholic Church to Central Africa to serve as the head of Caritas, a leading Catholic charity, to help some of the world's most vulnerable children. Acting on tips about fresh allegations of abuse, a CNN team led by Nima Elbagir tracked him down and exposed him.

The team's reporting ultimately forced the priest's recall to Belgium and the Catholic Church in Belgium to launch internal inquiries, encouraged other victims to come forward, formed the basis for a Belgium Federal Police investigation, and led to the UN suspending its

work with Caritas in the Central Africa Republic. The documentary aired with additional interactive stories on CNN's digital platform and was widely picked up by global media outlets and newswires. Corresponding videos were viewed more than a million times on Facebook and the story of Luk Delft was shared globally on Twitter.

This investigation came with its own particular challenges. Throughout the writing process, correspondent Nima Elbagir was working against a public relations campaign that was preemptively sending apology letters to victims who had been ignored for decades and moving perpetrators in order to challenge her characterization that they remained in close proximity to children. She and her team had to resist the pressure to water down the journalism in the face of intimidation. With the Salesian Order known to be an extremely litigious entity, every single word choice in the documentary was rigorously scrutinized by CNN lawyers and had to be defended by Elbagir and her team in order for the documentary to retain its emotional impact. The fact that the Church and the Salesians have made no serious rebuttal of the film's findings affirms the choice of every word and frame in the piece.

The AIB judges felt that this fearless and tenacious investigation on a subject that affects us all achieved worldwide, tangible impact and for that it deserves to be the recipient of this year's AIB Impact Award.



IN CONVERSATION

Waad al-Kateab

When you meet Syrian filmmaker Waad al-Kateab it is difficult to reconcile the image of this unassuming mother of two with that of Waad the activist and fearless journalist caught up in the living hell of a besieged Aleppo. For five years, Waad kept her camera rolling, documenting everything that happened to her and around her in graphic detail, as the forces of Assad's regime closed in on those citizens who were holding out for freedom. Her raw footage, which fills 12 hard drives, forms the basis of *For Sama* (1'20") - a documentary narrated by Waad and co-directed with Edward Watts. It is a powerful, haunting film that lets you live Waad's incredible journey with her

Pared back to the bare bones, Waad al-Kateab's story is one that resonates with many of us. Left home at 20 to go to university, got caught up with student protests, fell in love, had a baby, moved abroad. But in Aleppo, Syria, in the early days of the revolution, the story is not that simple. For Waad, all these life milestones played out against a backdrop of regime violence – meaning massacres, air strikes, and chlorine gas attacks were part of daily life.

HOPE OF CHANGE

Ever since Waad was little she was taught that Assad would stay forever. There was no freedom in the country, instead it was mired in corruption, injustice and oppression. Like most of her generation, Waad too was planning to leave Syria after her graduation to live a free life elsewhere, perhaps in Germany. But in her fourth year at university, when the Syrian revolution started, everything changed. Initially, when the student protests swept through Aleppo university, the Syrian regime denied they were happening. Waad felt for the first time that she had a stake in her country, that there was

a hope of changing things. But she had to be there, remain there to the end. And her way of being an activist was to film everything, all the time. Did she have a plan? No, she was simply filming to make sense of the nightmare around her. She got really close up, capturing the horrific, heartbreaking, poignant and joyous moments with the stillness and detachment of the lens. The camera was her constant companion and perhaps unconsciously an emotional crutch – she could talk to the camera when the rest of the world would not listen to the plight of the Syrian people.

Waad and her friends were first living in West Aleppo, then moved to the eastern part to avoid being arrested or shot. And it was after armed rebels had freed the eastern part of the city from the regime's control that the regime's violence grew more extreme. In East Aleppo people lived like in a free country but they had to do everything for themselves – there were no schools, no medical facilities. So Waad's friend Hamza, one of the few doctors who stayed in East Aleppo, set up a hospital to

“
We never thought the world would allow this to happen
”

treat the wounded. Hamza was to become Waad's husband. They had a small, beautiful wedding ceremony while bombs were falling outside. Hamza said: “This is the road we are taking. A long road full of danger and fear but freedom waits for us at the end!” The hospital would practically become Waad's and Hamza's home, the stream of injured and dying civilians needing to be treated simply relentless. Waad's camera lets us witness this, in a way that is very different from the short clips of rubble and dust covered injured civilians we have seen in news bulletins. Two young boys rush into the hospital with their brother – too late, nothing can be done for him. The camera rolls, in real time, it gives us context. We as the viewer finally get a small sense of what the surviving and the helpers must be feeling in that moment.

INNOCENT COMPANION

The hospital that Hamza set up with the help of friends is also the hospital where Sama is born. The Sama in the documentary's title is Waad's and Hamza's daughter, born during the siege. Intimate close-ups of her adorable, innocent face punctuate the film. Even though she is too young to



understand what is happening Waad thinks that she does, she can see it in Sama's eyes. And Sama never cries like a normal baby would. Waad talks to Sama via the camera: "Sama, will you blame me for staying in Aleppo?" "Will you blame me for leaving?" Of course there is no answer.

Sama is always by Waad's side. Even in the blood-covered emergency room in the hospital with its severely wounded and dead. One of the most gripping episodes of the documentary shows the couple's hasty return from Turkey after visiting a sick relative. On hearing that the regime has launched an offensive in Aleppo, backed by Russian firepower, they rush back to care for the wounded. The last part of their journey back is via a narrow path close to the frontlines, with Sama strapped in a baby sling. Darkness falls and Sama starts to cry - then Waad and Hamza begin to sing lullabies for her.

IMPACT

It is moments like this intimate footage that create a deep and lasting impact for the viewer. It is an immensely personal scene yet at the same time stands for something greater - man's compassion and bravery in the midst of man's atrocities against his fellow men. That ties in with Waad al-Kateab's reply to Simon Spanswick [in the *AIBs* 'In Conversation' interview] when he asks whether *For Sama* has a message for other editors and producers. Waad says that she understands about the importance of neutrality in journalism but feels that the personal stories which have the power to change things are often the most important.

HORROR AND JOY

The narrative in *For Sama* is not linear. The film shifts between different time planes before and after Sama is born. Slow static shots and hand-held shots on the move make for different rhythms. There is horror to be witnessed but also joy which finds little chinks in the grim reality. Children painting a burnt-out bus and playing in it, children throwing snowballs in a devastated inner cityscape, someone writing 'I love you' in the freshly fallen snow, finding a persimmon fruit, planting a garden. Life is fragile, and when Waad finds out she is pregnant with Sama, it seems even more so. Talking intimately to the camera Waad confesses that she does not want to die - "Don't let anything happen to the baby or Hamza, I can handle everything else".

“

In Aleppo there is no time to grieve

”



SIEGE CHILDREN

It is her portrayal of how children experience the siege that is particularly moving. Children don't know what a siege is. They are just used to bombs falling and friends dying or friends leaving to escape. One boy says of his departed friends: "May God forgive you for leaving me here alone." The children don't want to leave their home. And for the adults this means leaving the city would set a bad example for the children – saying that it is better to be selfish and run and save yourself. But staying in Aleppo with them means putting them through hell. And what does a little boy want to be when he grows up? An architect so that he can rebuild Aleppo.

Some of the footage in *For Sama* is difficult to watch. After an airstrike, a heavily pregnant woman is brought into the hospital – doctors are fighting to save her life and that of her baby, hastily extracted by caesarean. The camera is there, witnessing it all. How the baby comes out, how it is rubbed and slapped for what seems like an eternity to elicit a sign of life. Finally, finally, a cry – he will be okay. One night, Hamza's hospital gets bombed, damaging it beyond repair. A new building is found which looks suitable: "In Aleppo there is no time to grieve".

In November 2016, five months into the siege and five years into the struggle for freedom, every single person in that small community in East Aleppo feels they have a role to play

in supporting justice against oppression. But conditions are tough. Supplies are running low, there are no vegetables or fruit, it is hard to find milk and nappies for babies. And Waad discovers she is pregnant again. Where can she find healthy food? Hamza's hospital is the only one left in East Aleppo, treating 300 patients each day. Blood is everywhere, seeping into everything as Waad's camera graphically shows us – "Even when I close my eyes I can see the colour red". Regime forces are now advancing into the rebel area, using chlorine gas to subdue them. They are squeezing Waad and her friends into a small pocket, just a few kilometres square.

TELLING THE WORLD

Hamza, the doctor, is talking to news channels frequently, via Skype. Millions of people watch Waad's reports which she sends to Channel 4 News. For her, the camera is her way and means to participate in this revolution – in the hope that others, some government, will see her reports and take action. Looking back Waad says that Channel 4 News was vitally important to her when she was working in Aleppo: she felt there was someone behind her, a kind of lifeline to the outer world. At the time of writing this, Waad is working as a journalist in the offices of Channel 4 News in London – she is still trying to process this altered state of reality. It's something she never imagined she would see, she admits emotionally.

Back in 2016, in Aleppo, her

“
A long road, full of danger and fear but freedom waits for us at the end
”

struggle for freedom is drawing to an end. The regime forces are only one street away. Hamza suggests the unthinkable: to abandon baby Sama for she has a better chance of surviving if the regime forces don't know that Hamza and Waad al-Kateab are her parents. Waad can't do it but she admits to the camera that she wishes she had not given birth to Sama whose only crime is to have a mother who is a journalist and a father who is a doctor.

Then the UN calls Hamza with a message from the Russians, saying 'Surrender and we will spare your lives but you must go into exile'. There is no electricity or food and this option is the only chance to survive. But it means that all their sacrifices were for nothing, their future is no longer in their hands. So in December 2016, in the sixth month of the siege, as everyone packs for their exile before being taken away by bus, Waad's camera shows us the emotions, in long, lingering close-ups. Saying goodbye to Aleppo seems worse than death. And even the leaving is fraught with danger. Hamza's face is well-known from giving interviews to foreign media outlets but they manage to pass the regime checkpoints. They have made it.

NEW LIFE ABROAD

Today, Waad and her husband Hamza and their two daughters Sama and Taima live in London, having been granted political asylum in the UK in 2018. Waad says she doesn't regret anything: "Everything we did was for you – Sama". They fought for the most important cause – freedom – so that her daughter and her children



would not have to live as they did. Waad says her old life is lost but she still has her footage – the people she filmed will never leave her. It was not until she was out of Syria that she realized how different her life had been. The images she captured show how human beings can cope in difficult circumstances, and falling in love and laughing about the things we are scared of are just the things that make us survive in the end.

After moving to London, when Waad discussed with Channel 4 News what could be done with the mass of material, she had the strong urge to do something bigger, not just a brief report. For two years she worked on the documentary with Edward Watts, and it was released in 2019 as *For Sama*. To her astonishment the film found a huge resonance. Having been told that people had reached saturation point with stories out of Syria they found instead that people wanted to see the film. And more than that. After the screenings people came up to Waad and asked: what can we do? That, she says, showed her that in making the film she had done something really important. And, the experiences depicted in the film are not that far removed from what other people remember who faced a struggle, be it in Sarajevo or Northern Ireland. For those who ask “What can we do?” Waad has set up the tools with ‘Action for Sama’ (www.actionforsama.com). The goal is to increase awareness of the continued targeting of healthcare facilities in Syria and to build pressure for this to end. Currently as part of the impact campaign court cases are pending against Russia and the Syrian regime for attacking hospitals.



What of the future? The war in Syria is ongoing. Will justice ever come to Syria? Waad says she really believes this, nothing lasts forever. She has learnt so much from her experience, it has given her a different perspective on life. She hopes to go back to Syria one day. ■

The AIBs 2021

We're looking forward to our 17th annual competition for factual television, radio and online productions.

Here are the key dates to note

12 April | The *AIBs* launch

2 July | Closing date

July-August | Shortlisting

Mid-September-October | Judging

12 November | Awards night

If you would like to **support** the *AIBs* 2021 or be one of our **judges** then please contact us to discuss further.

Full information will be available on the dedicated website **theaibs.tv**



The AIBs



The AIBs

About the AIB

The Association for International Broadcasting is the only “not for profit” trade association that represents international media organisations across the globe.

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The AIB offers a constantly evolving range of services to assist and support its international membership and has been doing so since 1993.

Among our services are the provision of market intelligence briefings helping Members make sense of the fast-moving marketplace, through to mission-critical support in areas such as cyber security and pandemic recovery.

As a result of the increased attacks on our members, the AIB launched a media freedom initiative in 2018 to combat these. We will collate and co-ordinate intelligence on threats to media freedom from across the operations of AIB Members and also work to promote media freedom to governments and the public as well as rapidly responding to issues as they arise. The AIB is a Member of the intergovernmental Media Freedom

Coalition Advisory Network, representing the needs of broadcasting and media companies.

In addition, the AIB is a key advocate for our members on issues such as channel licensing in post-Brexit Europe, sustainability and journalist safety.

We are working with Royal Holloway University of London on the development of a major broadcasting cyber security research programme to help ensure that media companies are protected from cyber threats.

The Association’s industry briefings – that provide reports and information on Members’ activities – reach more than 27,000 people in key leadership and editorial roles in media companies in over 160 countries, as well as opinion-formers in regulators, parliaments and other key market areas.

Please talk to us about how the Association for International Broadcasting can help your organisation.

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