Hello and welcome to the National Press Club and to another edition of The Kalb Report. I'm Marvin Kalb and our subject tonight: Diane Sawyer: A Life in News. I don't remember the exact day, but about 35 or 40 years ago, a very bright young woman, a graduate of Wellesley College, I believe, walked into the CBS newsroom in Washington. Everyone looked up and realized instinctively that someone special had just entered, someone likely to be on a very fast track, as indeed she has been.

ABC News has kindly provided us with a brief promotional film about Diane’s career, so let’s take a look.

[VIDEO]

Diane, it is my pleasure to welcome you to The Kalb Report, especially tonight as we open this conference of the International Women’s Media Foundation, many of whose members are in the audience eager to hear about your career and your take on the news business, which remains troubled these days, as we know, but also remains indispensable to the functioning of a free society.

So let’s begin. You're clearly at the top of your career, you're the anchor of World News, et cetera. I know that first and foremost you consider yourself a journalist. But you're also an anchor, and in the world of television news, being an anchor is something very special. So describe for us what's so special about being an anchor.

Well, first of all, I have to say it’s very special just to be sitting here with you. And I want to say something-- oh, you have to hear this. You have to hear this, because if you remember when I first walked into CBS News, all I remember is when I was sent to cover the State Department with Marvin Kalb. And I came in and Secretaries of State were calling you and I couldn't get a phone call returned from an answering
machine for the Costa Rican desk. There was nothing I did, so for me, this is a true pinnacle. This is a kind of dream, to be back home with you.

MARVIN KALB: Now.

DIANE SAWYER: Okay, now. Now, hijacking your interview, is that what you're worried about? [laughter] To be an anchor really is, in my view, is to try as much as possible to be the 360 degree radar of the day, of the morning, of the question, the driving question that has to take you through a broadcast. And it is such a gift to be able to throw to incredible correspondents like Jim Sciutto sitting out here, in Iran, moving through the streets of Iran with his small camera in such danger. It is such a gift to be able to report the stories that some of the women I know you have here in the conference, report with such incredible bravery.

So it just seems to me that to be an anchor is to be a witness to the world in its varying questions, in the way it presents itself in terms of priorities during the day. It’s to get a chance to make decisions that you hope at home somebody will look up and say a couple of things. “I didn't know that,” which Don Hewitt of 60 Minutes always taught me is the single first and most wonderful question. And then the second thing is, “This has helped me live my life. Now I understand. This wakes me up. It wakes me up to the world.” And if anything at all, I see the job of an anchor is to say, “How do we wake up ourselves, our questions and our reporting today.”

MARVIN KALB: So in waking up the world, what do you see as your own special responsibilities? When you arrive in the office, what is it that you're looking for?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, I'm persistent. I have strong opinions. I think really the job, in a way, is to have opinions that can excite a conversation. I don't make the decisions, all of the decisions. We are very much, as you know, a collegial operation. John Banner is the
executive producer, we are a group of people sitting around a rim every day talking to the correspondents in the field.

And I only think that my job is sometimes to try to be as fearless as I can be in saying, “Let’s do this. Let’s try this.” Heaven knows I’m old, and what have I got to lose? Let’s do something fearless today. Let’s try something today.

MARVIN KALB: Has a general called you at a certain point, or a President, and said, “Hey Diane, I know that you guys are about to run story X. Please don’t do that.” What would your response be? Has that ever happened to you?

DIANE SAWYER: It has never happened to me. I know that it happens in the capacity at World News, and Charlie has told me in the past about the dilemma. I do think that every one is a careful decision weighed heavily with our dual responsibilities not to put lives at risk, at the same time to stay true to our contract with the American people, that we tell you what we know.

MARVIN KALB: You probably know that according to the Pew Research Center, more Americans under the age of 30, and a lot of people in our audience here, get their news from the internet, not from television news. So how do you as an anchor adjust to this new reality? What is it that you do? How do you play the game?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, we're on Twitter, we are, at World News. I am not on Twitter at World News, but I am on Facebook. And I think it’s the most exciting vitality during the day to see all the different ways-- and we can see it right at World News-- we can see all the different conversations going on at once. And so at the same time that we're getting ready to put a piece on the air, or I interviewed Secretary Clinton today, at the same time we're getting ready to do that, we're taking a picture, there are pictures going out and we're saying something about what's happening at that moment. I also think it’s a
great opportunity to take people behind the scenes and often to hear that-- I cannot tell you how often-- we hear from Facebook or something coming into the World News tweets. A question that you say, “Of course that's a question. Of course that's what everyone wanted to know.” So the giant cacophony, the giant democracy, the giant chorus that is the country can sometimes just reach right through to you at the moment you need it most.

MARVIN KALB: So do you see the new world of the internet as your major competition at this point? Or is it still CBS and NBC?

DIANE SAWYER: I don't think it’s a-- it's still you. I'm going to go back to the State Department and see if I can get a Secretary of State to return my call. [laughter] No, I don’t see it as a competition with the internet.

MARVIN KALB: You do not?

DIANE SAWYER: I really do not. I don’t. I think that if we don’t figure out what we do uniquely, then that is the forum of ideas. We have to be out there creating a unique and important conversation answering questions in a unique and important way so that you also want to come to us.

MARVIN KALB: And I do notice that you do carry on a conversation with the audience as opposed to the old days when we would broadcast to the audience. Is that deliberate on your part?

DIANE SAWYER: No, that's just me. First of all, I don’t have one of those voices.

MARVIN KALB: Oh yes, you do.
DIANE SAWYER: Oh no, I don’t. I said to Charlie, when Charlie would do what we call the headlines, the opening of the show. “Tonight on World News,” and I'd go, “I can’t do that. I can only just go, ‘Tonight on World News.’” And I always wish I had one of those. But I just don't have it. So some of that is just a function of the physiology of the vocal cords.

MARVIN KALB: I think also what I'm trying to get at is how do you as an anchor make World News-- and this is the same, by the way, for Katie Couric out of CBS, and Brian Williams at NBC, but how do you persuade so many people who are now absorbed in the new world of information and communication not to perceive you as a relic of the past, but rather to see you--

[laughter]

DIANE SAWYER: A relic of the past?

MARVIN KALB: No, I mean the program, not you.

DIANE SAWYER: There was a gesture my way. I saw that emerging from my archeological dig. Let me tackle that question. I think by breaking some of the conventions of the formulas, we are still in the moment when the news is breaking. And you come to broadcast television and we are-- we are as immediate and alive as how the story feels and tastes and smells. When you are there with us, we don't have to make an argument.

MARVIN KALB: That's a good point, that's a good point. You've recently come back from a trip to Japan. And we're now here in Washington talking as we tape this, but you were there to cover another extraordinary story overseas and you've done a lot of that. What I'm trying to understand is in a way why did you make that trip? And if you answer
me, “Because it was a great story,” it’s not enough. Why do you make the trip? As an anchor, you have so many responsibilities that cut in to a decision, because it costs a lot to send you and a lot of people overseas. Why do you do that? Why, for example, did you make the trip to Japan?

**DIANE SAWYER:** I wish that I could say it was a science and a theory; it's not. A lot of it is I feel impelled to go. It's not just that I covered the tsunami in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, but I felt that that was a story I had to experience tangibly and to see, and as we said, this incredible constellation of disasters. And I felt at the time, at that moment, too, that there was a reason for the entire broadcast to be there. And part of being an anchor, as you know, is a decision about where are you best there anchoring? Isn’t it Don Hewitt of 60 Minutes who also coined the term anchor from the relay race, the anchor of a relay race who hands it off?

And when are you best there? Simply a center of the axis of great people and when is it best for you to take the whole broadcast and go overseas? Because it does change that balance. In the Middle East, for instance, Christiane Amanpour was there, Jim was there, there were a host of correspondents who were there and who were fantastic.

**MARVIN KALB:** They were, indeed.

**DIANE SAWYER:** And I was here for that and I was here as the story moved from Tunisia to Egypt and we followed it straight through. So it’s a case by case decision, but it’s so much about the entire broadcast going.

**MARVIN KALB:** Tell me about, if you can, about the cuts that are taking place at networks these days? At ABC, to the best of my knowledge, in the year 2010, there was a 25 percent cut in staff. Did people have to be cut from World News?
DIANE SAWYER: Yes. Everyone.

MARVIN KALB: Really?

DIANE SAWYER: Everyone was involved.

MARVIN KALB: How many people are on the staff at *World News*?

DIANE SAWYER: Oh Kathy, where are you? I'm thinking that we have close to 100, 80 to 100, at any given time. We have freelance people coming in, freelance editors coming in as well also, too.

MARVIN KALB: And people had to be cut from that number?

DIANE SAWYER: We did have to cut from that number. You know, it was anguishing for everybody there. Everybody at every part of the network.

MARVIN KALB: Did the program itself lose money in its annual budget?

DIANE SAWYER: I do not know. I don’t do the budget.

MARVIN KALB: You don’t do budgets?

DIANE SAWYER: No.

MARVIN KALB: You don't do money?
DIANE SAWYER: I don’t do budgets, I never have. I've never done that. I've never asked how much it costs to go to Japan. I don't want to know. It’s not my problem. It's not my problem. You have to talk me out of it.

MARVIN KALB: But this you would probably know, and that is do the cuts in staff at a certain point in the day as you're looking around and hoping you could get Joe to go here and Mary to go there, but you may not have Joe and Mary anymore because they're cut. Does it affect the quality of what it is that you are giving to the American people?

DIANE SAWYER: I think sometimes initially for sure it has, and does, affect, our exhaustion and our tension and our feeling, “Oh Joe and Mary did this. Joe and Mary did this. How are we going to do this in a new way?” But, and this is in no way to say that it was not a true heartbreak for everyone whose colleagues left, our responsibility is to look at what we're doing and to say, “Are we deploying our resources on what we really believe the future to be?” And to sharpen and hone those within it.

And I always look back, gosh, I can’t believe this. One of the first stories I ever did was in Africa and I went out and I remembered I was with the Masai and I was out way in the middle of the night in the desert on some story. Oh, I know, it was Richard Leakey and we were going out and exploring lots of archeological digs again. And I looked up, and we have a crane that has been flown in and the crane is swooping in over the trees in the middle of the Masai Mara in Africa. And it never occurred to anyone to say, “Is this the right expenditure of money for a network, or should we be concentrating on the correspondents? Should we be concentrating on deploying on the stories that we want to bring you as opposed to that one shot?” Even the Masai, I still remember them standing there because, of course, they're so-- they have those beautiful and expressive faces and they're going-- [laughter] So, I think some of it has forced us to rededicate to the things that we know are at the heart of what we believe we should be doing as well as we can.
MARVIN KALB: At this particular point, there's a lot of an eruption of stories all over the world in this year 2011. We have seen just in the first three months of the year probably more than for the entire year. Do you feel the American people are really interested in foreign news? Foreign news that does not include American casualties and American troops, like the Masai, for example, or what's happening in Indonesia? Are the American people absorbed in the world?

DIANE SAWYER: I believe the American people are absorbed in anything new and that will make them feel smarter and will make them feel more part of a community on this globe and give them better grasp of this globe. I will believe it until the last countdown on the last broadcast I ever do. I know it’s true, I know it’s true.

MARVIN KALB: Okay. And do you believe that there's a-- do you yourself, as anchor of World News, sort of divide up the show? I know that when there's a major story you'll do the whole program on that one story. But on a normal day, do you divide it up foreign/national?

DIANE SAWYER: No.

MARVIN KALB: No?

DIANE SAWYER: No. No. There is no explicit or implicit quota of any kind. It’s only the complex of what we're telling you and are we World News tonight? Are we doing what World News does this evening? And I remember someone saying to me when I was out with Richard Nixon working on his memoirs. Just remember, this is not the book, this is a book, and we know this is not the broadcast we have tomorrow night, this is a broadcast and we’ll be back again tomorrow night with more.

MARVIN KALB: Now, if you don't look after the budget, do you look after the ratings?
DIANE SAWYER: I know you won't believe this, I know you won't believe it.

MARVIN KALB: I don't.

DIANE SAWYER: Ratings sail in to me occasionally when I see TVNewser, our ratings sail in to me because someone looks very glum. But I don’t check them, I don't check them myself. I don't because I just--

MARVIN KALB: Nobody comes running in Tuesday morning and saying, “Hey Diane, look.”

DIANE SAWYER: I've told John Banner, our executive producer, to check them someplace else because I study his face afterwards too intently and I can misread all sorts of things. I'd rather not. I get as excited as anyone when I know something that we cared about connected with an audience. I love that. But I simply don’t want to be hostage to that.

MARVIN KALB: What about ABC the corporation itself?

DIANE SAWYER: Do they study the ratings? I assume they do. I certainly assume they do.

MARVIN KALB: And they don't talk to you about it?

DIANE SAWYER: No, only in the most general terms, really truly.

MARVIN KALB: At the end of the year, they're not going to sit down and say, “Diane, if we had done this and not that, we could have--“
DIANE SAWYER: No.

MARVIN KALB: “If you had not spent all that money going to Japan.” No?

DIANE SAWYER: No.

MARVIN KALB: That simply doesn't come up?

DIANE SAWYER: I honestly can say to you, and this is-- I know this is Candide, but I do not know a single time in my entire career when I could not cover the story I wanted or a broadcast I was on could not cover the story they wanted because of money. Never have heard it. Never have said, “We can’t afford to cover that story,” ever.

MARVIN KALB: But do you remember 30 years ago, as you were saying before, with the derrick coming in, you could do these kinds of things without anybody questioning it because the budget was so much larger and there were fewer people watching after you on money. But there are many more people today watching after you on money. But you seem to be in the middle of the storm without it affecting you?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, I'm not insulated, I'm sure, because there are broadcast decisions all around me. All I'm saying is I believe if we go to the management and we say, “We need to cover this story,” we get to cover that story.

MARVIN KALB: Okay.

DIANE SAWYER: I think that, again, there are decisions probably made that don’t always come to me, but you can bring them to me. And again, if we feel that this is central to what we do, we can go and say, “Let’s do it.” Look at the way we covered the
Middle East. Truly, with the number of people deployed in the number of countries and the number of nights, I have no idea how much that cost. It was never asked. It was never asked, and never questioned and never doubted that that's what we do.

MARVIN KALB: Did you have an urge yourself with Christiane Amanpour was in Egypt, “I want to go there, too?”

DIANE SAWYER: I wanted to go there, but I thought, “She's Christiane Amanpour.” And I've interviewed Mubarak, but she's interviewed him more than I have and if anybody can get through that Tahrir Square and get to Mubarak, it’s going to be her.

MARVIN KALB: She's extraordinary, really great.

DIANE SAWYER: Truly.

MARVIN KALB: Let’s take a quick break so that I can remind our viewing and listening audiences that this is The Kalb Report. I'm Marvin Kalb, and I'm talking with Diane Sawyer, anchor of ABC’s World News. Women, women. Do you feel that women in the business have fully arrived? They're there and they don’t any longer feel that they have to break ceilings and all, that they’ve arrived?

DIANE SAWYER: I think that women have arrived in many ways in many venues. I think if you look around at management, I think by and large business, the business part of what we do, is not as accelerated as the on air part of what we do and that I always think that some of it has to do with we're on TV and you can see who’s doing what. You can make your decision on the air who’s doing what. I know there's a feeling, because I hear from it at some local stations, that it’s still sometimes a bit of a struggle. And heaven knows, around this globe it is an inconceivable mountain that we all have to climb together, linking arms to climb together.
But I think looking at Judy Woodruff and thinking about those days when we were-- I wonder how many women we were when we were out in those convention floors? Not so many of us were there with those giant headsets on running around, trying to nab people. And I do believe that with-- every broadcast at ABC News has a female anchor on it now. And not shy female anchors, in any way. And I do think that that is an achievement and it makes a big difference.

I had to do a conference once at-- got to do-- at Sun Valley, Idaho, in front of corporate, the big corporate moguls. And I called Jack Welch and I said, “Tell me what you have learned about putting rocket fuel behind women in the workplace. What do you really know about it? Because we see all the catalyst statistics which show that the more women that you have in management, the more women you have on the board. You have a direct correlation to the success of the company. I mean, there it is, that's a business piece of evidence you've got. And what have you learned about it?” And he said, “Numbers.” And I said, “What do you mean?” And he said, “I have learned that it’s not about having women, it’s about having some number of women,” and I don't know what it is yet.

But if you get women in a room, including a newsroom, and you have a certain number, is it a third, is it a third to a half? Is it more than a half? It is a different newsroom. And he said, “That's what we've got to concentrate on. It is that number, not just having women, but having the number that actually controls the GPS of a great organization.”

MARVIN KALB: Sure. And if you look at the number of women who are now covering so many of the war zones, tsunamis, whatever it is that's happening that is very dangerous, my sense watching television now is that there are more women out there than men covering the news. I don't know if that's right. And the numbers, I'm sure the foundation could provide the numbers on this, that's my impression. So there has been just extraordinary progress in that one area.
DIANE SAWYER: And getting to go to every story. I don't think there's any hesitation anymore. You get to go to every story. And they're so good that you remember them.

MARVIN KALB: When you were first at CBS, and you were the first female reporter, anchor, at 60 Minutes, what was it like then?

DIANE SAWYER: Oh, I had no idea what I was walking into, let me tell you. Mike Wallace, Mike Wallace, incredible Mike Wallace. I said once I knew I was in trouble when the entire group of the 60 Minutes correspondent walked down the hall on something really important, said, “Here's what we're going to do,” and ended it in the men’s room. [laughter] And I'm standing outside thinking, “Well, it must be very useful to know what it is they're going to do next.” All I can say is I had a certain obliviousness because I think they were--

MARVIN KALB: Did you?

DIANE SAWYER: I think they were setting up-- not because necessarily it was a female, but because new kids always got a bit of an initiation rite.

MARVIN KALB: But ten years later when you went over to ABC, was it much better by that time?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, ABC was different because 60 Minutes, again, I had walked in as the first on air correspondent there, and it was a lot of learning. And I have to say it was hilarious and wonderful, too. And I like to think I gave as good as I got. I like to think that it was just like going into a circuit training course and by the end of it, I had muscles I didn't even know I had.
But when I got to ABC, I was a co-anchor with Sam Donaldson. So going in, it was understood that we were there and we were starting together and it was nail biting and it was-- as you know, it was a disaster in the beginning. I mean, we were actually a *Saturday Night Live* skit. [laughter] Many, many, many nights we were a skit on *Saturday Night Live*, we were so bad.

**MARVIN KALB:** You were not that bad.

**DIANE SAWYER:** We were pretty bad and we had to figure it out as we went along.

**MARVIN KALB:** You were not that bad, Diane.

**DIANE SAWYER:** Well, then why did you call me and tell me how to fix it?

[laughter]

**MARVIN KALB:** Jumping channels, I want to ask you now about social media. We've seen and discussed a lot of that and it’s a rather major role, as a matter of fact, in the coverage of some of the stories in the Middle East. You on your program have used footage provided by people you don't know pointing in this direction when something even more important might have been happening behind the person holding up that cell phone camera. How do you feel about using that kind of material on your show when you really don’t know the origin of a lot of the stuff?

**DIANE SAWYER:** First of all, we always tell you where we got it, that we got it in-- it was YouTube and we got it in through YouTube.

**MARVIN KALB:** I know, but if you say, “I got it from YouTube, that doesn't mean you know--“
DIANE SAWYER: No, I understand that, I understand that. But I do think that our viewers do know the different frames of pedigree that you have on footage like that. We do also call and do our very best to verify everything that we're putting on the air. And there have been many things that might have been electrifying television we do not put on the air because we cannot verify that it’s a true representation of what was happening at that moment.

MARVIN KALB: Because it is a question when you get into something that is so fast moving.

DIANE SAWYER: It definitely is.

MARVIN KALB: And you pick up footage because you don't have your own people there. The tendency on television is to show something. And if you have something, it seems to me that the temptation sometimes would be to use it even without that extra check, though I'm sure you do provide that?

DIANE SAWYER: We really do try, and we really do-- we try to be as judicious as we can when we are looking at something that is not a lot of people singing in American Idol, which is a different kind of standard.

MARVIN KALB: Right, sure.

DIANE SAWYER: But we try to be as careful as we can because we have seen it and we have seen it, and we have seen it in situations where we never want to change the story based on something we don’t know as much about as we can.
MARVIN KALB: Well, it’s interesting. I don’t know whether you recently saw Brent Scowcroft on the air on some program talking about the power of this new means of communication in terms of fashioning a new political outcome, or attempting to, throughout the Middle East. And that that new communications revolution has had more to do with the changes in the Middle East than anything else Brent Scowcroft said. And I’m wondering from your vantage point as anchor, do you share that view?

DIANE SAWYER: Oh, it’s impossible not to see. It is impossible not to see and be stunned by the immediate pilot light of hope that goes on when people are hearing from people who are connected to them and who are going to stay online with them. And when those first signals start coming out and somebody is responding and you know there is a voice there and that voice is hearing you, it is impossible not to believe it. It’s a whole new force in the world and Mark Zuckerberg, whom I interviewed, always said, “This will be a—“ this was before the recent round of democracy fever, as they have called it. But he said, “This will be a giant force for democracy. You can pummel me all you want and you can hammer me all you want for believing that we have to go big, bold and broad rather than being driven by such privacy,” he would argue against privacy constraints. But being driven by such considerations of privacy about do you have to unfriend somebody to send them that thing, that he would take his chance on friending (sic) the world and seeing what the world has to say. And I have to say, he believed it. He absolutely believed that this would happen.

MARVIN KALB: Oh, it’s fascinating. In this whole new world of communication, there is Fox News. I was just wondering what you thought of Fox News?

[laughter]

DIANE SAWYER: You know, I watch Fox News. I watch Fox News, I watch MSNBC, too, I watch CNN. I am going to be in rehab for serial news watching some day. I’ll have
to go to some Betty Ford wing someday and cure myself. But I think that, again, I think you can learn so much from the excitement of the people on Fox News about what they're telling you and about what they are bringing to every story. And I think the American people are enormously smart and they are enormously collectively so discerning about making their own judgments as they move from MSNBC, as they move to Fox News as well.

And I just don’t think ideas can be labeled with the people who hold them on any spectrum. I think people can make their mind up about ideas. And I do think that people who hear something are surrounded by a lot of information and can check it in a lot of ways we couldn’t even check things before.

MARVIN KALB: Diane, that's the--

DIANE SAWYER: So I am not going to-- I am a full-- I'm not kidding. I am a universal watcher and I learn. I learn.

MARVIN KALB: It is a noble sentiment on your part, and I applaud it completely.

DIANE SAWYER: Do you not watch?

MARVIN KALB: I watch it all the time. I get up in the morning, go to bed, I'm constantly-- I'm in Fox. No, I'm just kidding. What I'm getting at is not really so much Fox News as it is opinion in the world of news and that you have a stunningly upbeat--

DIANE SAWYER: But don’t you think people know when they're getting opinion in the world of news?

MARVIN KALB: And getting news and they get the distinction between the two?
DIANE SAwyER: I think they know, I think they know. And I think people like to be challenged. And just as you like to be challenged by someone at a dinner table who has a contrary opinion, you like to say, “I couldn't disagree with you more. I can’t believe you said that.” And that's also, as Socrates might have said, that's how we learn, too.

MARVIN KALB: That is how we learn, there's no question about that. I'm talking about the world of news where you were raised and where you have been at a very high pinnacle for a long time. In the world of news, people might like to believe, Neanderthals that we are, that the news is where you get information, not opinion. And we are now in a world where there is so much more opinion, it seems, than straight, hard news. And no matter how gloriously intelligent every person is, it may be difficult on occasion to distinguish one from the other. I'm listening to you say the American people will make that distinction.

DIANE SAwyER: I believe they do, and I believe-- I don't know about news, I think facts are still the currency of what you and I want to deal in. And we know that we have to bring to the facts that we seek out every day the same degree of passion and enthusiasm and “you don't know this, but I cannot wait to tell you this,” that we see in opinion journalism. I see it, I know how Pollyanna this may sound to you, but I see it as a way for us to strengthen how much we believe in the fact that we’ll anchor your opinion and keep introducing those and that we are not subsumed by opinion journalism. We're not.

MARVIN KALB: I hope you are right, I really do. I hope you are right. What are your sources of information?

DIANE SAwyER: You mean where do I look every day?
MARVIN KALB: Where do you learn things from?

DIANE SAWYER: I don't know where to begin. I at least scan, read much of about six papers in the morning. I watch *Good Morning America* on my TiVo because I get to sleep late. I don’t have to get up at 3:45 in the morning anymore, which I did for 11 years. Every time I see that up there, I drop off again. I get into the office, of course we're scanning the emails that are coming in from our team around the world and they are fantastic. I wish we could simply introduce you sometimes to the debates that go on at ABC News between Terry Moran and Jake Tapper. That alone is worth stopping everything you're doing to see how they're contending over what has happened during the day.

I, of course, read The Daily Beast and I read Huff Post, and I read Drudge and I stay all day long, I can see a complete quilt of screens up on the air and I can see what's going on and we click in and out all during the day.

MARVIN KALB: Do you have a favorite website, a place where you feel you must go to every day?

DIANE SAWYER: Check in every day?

MARVIN KALB: You mentioned The Daily Beast. I'm wondering if that's it?

DIANE SAWYER: I check in with each of them. Of course, the *New York Times* website throughout the day, too, and the *Washington Post* website and *L.A. Times*. And before I go to bed at night, I check into those three, just to make sure there's nothing I missed.

MARVIN KALB: Do you eat during the course of the day also?
DIANE SAWYER: Do I what?

MARVIN KALB: Do you eat?

DIANE SAWYER: Copiously.

MARVIN KALB: Let me ask you a couple of questions about ethics and journalism. The WikiLeaks story, if you were Bill Keller, the editor of the *New York Times*, and you have the chance to get hundreds, and possibly thousands, of interesting, even fascinating, but top secret cables from the U.S. government, what would you do? Would you do what Keller did and put them on the air?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, each of us has our own star we steer by. We reported on them.

MARVIN KALB: No, no, but that's--

DIANE SAWYER: We reported on the content of them which, again, I want to say is a way of putting them on the air. So, of course, we did put them on the air.

MARVIN KALB: Yes, but that was after the *New York Times* had first broken the story?

DIANE SAWYER: Yes, but if they had come to them, I'd like to think that we would have made a reasonable decision--

MARVIN KALB: But put yourself in Bill’s position.
Diane Sawyer: --and that we would have done what Bill did, that we would have been deliberate about it. Is it William Sloane Coffin who said once that he most trusts sad revolutionaries and that you have to somewhat live in the contradiction in these moments in journalism, as you know. And if you are reluctant, if you are like Plato, the philosopher being dragged out of the cave, if you are duly reluctant to do anything that might even inadvertently compromise a life because you don't know who’s being exposed, then that is your beginning. And I assume that they did everything that they possibly, absolutely could.

Marvin Kalb: They did due diligence, no question about it.

Diane Sawyer: Then you just have to make your individual news organization decision about how much time you have and what the proportion is at the time you have to spend on the content. There was a lot of it that was-- you and I know this because we know that a lot of those guys around the world-- the one guy has one moment of fame is writing that cable that suddenly shows up in WikiLeaks, and I'm sure he assumed that nobody had even read his cable a lot of the time.

So, I think that what we learned from them, and what we would have broadcast from them, is what we thought truly illuminated the world. But because we are in a-- what is the proportion of what we do, it probably would have been less by virtue of that.

Marvin Kalb: Now Bill, who was sitting in this same chair not too long ago, argued that he did it because it was news. And after due diligence, he felt that however embarrassing it might have been to the U.S. government, it was news and he wanted to run with it and he did it and he’s not sorry about that. Do you buy into that? Do you accept that rationale?

Diane Sawyer: Do I accept his reasoning?
MARVIN KALB: Yeah?

DIANE SAWYER: For him? Yeah, I do.

MARVIN KALB: Does that mean that almost anything after due diligence is publishable or broadcastable (sic)?

DIANE SAWYER: No, and we don’t know where the no is.

MARVIN KALB: Where do you think it is?

DIANE SAWYER: Because we do make decisions. We do make decisions about some forms of criminal brutality. We make decisions that they are not broadcastable by our particular show. Again, I don't think-- I think we have to watch out for universals. We are in the business, I hope, of looking at the constellation of the question presented to us every time. And if I thought there were a universal standard you could apply to everything, I'm not sure I would know how to behave as a reporter.

But we do make judgments about what encourages-- at times-- what encourages copycat criminal behavior. We make those judgments.

MARVIN KALB: Right. And I think what I'm trying to get at also was it’s not only universal values, but there are national interests that are involved. And I'm wondering whether you think that an anchor, because the anchor does have a series of special responsibilities at a broadcast, that the anchor also has a responsibility to the national interests of the country? Does that run through your mind also?

DIANE SAWYER: Yes, of course. Of course.
MARVIN KALB: But to the point of saying that, “Because of that, I'm not going to run those cables, no. They were put out there basically to embarrass the United States, and I don't want to participate in it.”

DIANE SAWYER: Would you have run the Pentagon Papers?

MARVIN KALB: Different story.

DIANE SAWYER: Would you have done it?

MARVIN KALB: Absolutely.

DIANE SAWYER: Because?

MARVIN KALB: The Pentagon Papers was released to the public by one person angry at one war that he thought was unjust. Julian Assange appears to have a broader mandate in mind. He has said he is there to embarrass, to bring down, to illuminate all kinds of things. Is Assange a journalist? Is he like Diane Sawyer and entitled to all of the privileges of a journalist?

DIANE SAWYER: Does someone have to be a certified journalist before you will accept the information they bring you?

MARVIN KALB: No. But wait a minute, I'm interviewing you.

[laughter]

DIANE SAWYER: And if they--
MARVIN KALB: Wait a minute, wait a minute. I'll tell you what, let's go to another subject. In the 1970s, when you worked for President Nixon, you were both in the White House then. You followed him out to California. Those were extraordinary times and you had a great seat on history as it was unfolding right in front of you. But I do have this question. Please help me understand your continuing loyalty to a President who had embarrassed the country, had lied to the American people, gave birth to the Watergate scandal. Help me out.

DIANE SAWYER: Well, you know, it wasn't even just about that. It was, in a funny way, how I lived up to what my father had always taught me, which is if you walk away from someone at the worst time of their life, that is also a choice that has implications for who you are and who you want to be. And I had been there to go to China with your brother, and I had been there through all of the times that the end of the signing of the treaty of the Vietnam War, and I had been there through those times and there were a handful of us who were asked to go. And I was asked to go for a very specific reason, which is mysteriously I had-- because I get up and read everything in the morning-- I had read so many things that for the first round, one of the lawyers said to me, “You can tell us if what we're saying is true or not based at least on what the reporting has been. So go out as that kind of traffic light on what we're saying and not saying.”

And for me to say no in that moment was for me to assume that I had some-- that I had some, I guess, personal sanctimony that I don't have. I do believe that people can redeem themselves. I saw what was done, I saw it and I saw it on the inside and we all know how-- what a ghastly bruise that was. But, I was one person asked by one other person in the worst moment for them and I don't know-- I just wouldn’t have known how to say no.

MARVIN KALB: No, I understand. And obviously there was another answer, you could have said no.
DIANE SAWYER: I could have said no, and I did think I was going out for a few months. And as my mother always pointed out, “You went out at 28 and came back 32.” So, I didn't know what was going to happen at each stage and the choices that were made to stay and do it. I could have said no, but there were people who resigned, as we know. There were people who resigned and wrote books and wrote letters, and I will never do that. I just won't.

MARVIN KALB: You know that President Nixon had an enemies list.

DIANE SAWYER: Yes.

MARVIN KALB: And I know it because I was on it. But, for example, would you have known about an enemies list at the time?

DIANE SAWYER: No.

MARVIN KALB: No, that was not a part of your world?

DIANE SAWYER: No.

MARVIN KALB: How difficult was it for you to make the journey from political partisanship to objective journalism? Because you have done that quite well.

DIANE SAWYER: Well, even though my father was in Republican politics in Kentucky, which not many people were, believe it or not, I didn’t go to the White House as a partisan. I really didn't. I went because I had been a weather girl and I had been a really bad weather girl. You can't talk me out of this one, I was a bad weather girl. And my father died and I was with my mother for a year at home, and she asked me if I would
go and do something else because she felt that I was staying there for her. And I began to
look at other things I kind of wanted to do. And truly, I looked around and I thought,
“Well, working in the White House, that might be interesting.”

I came to Washington, I interviewed with the news division at the same time and was
rejected. And ended up at the White House because I thought it would be interesting. To
me, it wasn’t one President or the other, it was to learn what that crucible could possibly
be like.

MARVIN KALB: If you had one more interview to do as a pro, who would it be with?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, I think the Pope.

MARVIN KALB: Good.

DIANE SAWYER: Don’t you think the Pope?

MARVIN KALB: Yeah. I would have liked the other Pope, John the 23rd.

DIANE SAWYER: John. But this Pope would be very--

MARVIN KALB: John Paul II. This one’s very interesting, too.

DIANE SAWYER: This Pope would be very interesting, too, in his academic--

MARVIN KALB: Have you tried to get him?

DIANE SAWYER: We've written letters and we have written. I suspect I won’t. I
suspect I'm not at the top of his list.
MARVIN KALB: We've got about a minute and a half left. What is your sense of the future of American journalism? Up, down?

DIANE SAWYER: Me?

MARVIN KALB: Big time.

DIANE SAWYER: I think every one of these students in this room, I swear, is going to go out and change the world through American journalism.

MARVIN KALB: Really?

DIANE SAWYER: You are going to do it. [applause] I know it.

MARVIN KALB: Spell that out a little? Spell it out a little bit.

DIANE SAWYER: I think we simply don’t begin to know the enormous power of passion delivered in all of these different fora online and off. I think we don’t begin to know what it’s going to be like when we are connected globally in a way that we've never been collective before, and that we see that what we say here on the air is going to make a difference and help those women who are dying of maternal mortality in Afghanistan if we simply believe we can do it. Because I think we have not yet-- we have not yet experienced what it is to stand arm in arm as journalists on facts that we know can be the lever on which you can simply move the globe.

MARVIN KALB: Diane, we are out of time. I am very unhappy to acknowledge that. Let me first thank our wonderful audience, including the International Women’s Media Foundation, all of you here. To the many people all over the country and the world who
watch The Kalb Report, to those of you out there who still cherish the role of a free press in stimulating a free society. And finally, my thanks to the incomparable Diane Sawyer: A Life in News. Bless you, thank you so much. I'm Marvin Kalb, saying what Ed Murrow used to say, good night and good luck. [applause]

Okay, ladies and gentlemen, what we're going to do now is have 15 minutes of questioning, your opportunity to ask Diane a question. You know what that means, of course, is you ask a question, you don't make a speech. And if you go on too long, I'll be impolite and cut you off. So we will start here. Please give us your name and any organizational association that you may have. Please?

SARAH SNYDER: Hi, I'm Sarah Snyder. I'm a sophomore SMPA student, at GWU. And my question for you is what is the most fun part of your job, and also what is the most difficult part of your job?

MARVIN KALB: Good. I should have asked that, thank you.

DIANE SAWYER: Oh, wow. The most fun is the colleagues and getting to wrestle a story together. That's how you know you're intellectually alive. The hardest part is hair and makeup, and let me tell you, if I could do radio, I'd be doing radio in my bathrobe because when they come at you, particularly at four in the morning, with those little eyeliner thingies, it was really misery a lot of mornings. So I've never liked the grooming part of television. I have always loved what we get to talk about every day. People are paying you to be curious, people are paying you to say, “Oh, I want to know about that.” Or, “You have to tell me more about that.” So, what is greater career bliss than that every day?

MARVIN KALB: Thank you very much. Now, next question over here, please?
ELLEN LEVINE: Hi, my name is Ellen Levine. I'm a freshman at George Washington. You've had such a great career. I just wanted to know, was there any definitive moment or opportunity that you had that got your career jumpstarted?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, looking at this go by and thinking, of course, of just coming back from Japan, my first story was Three Mile Island when I got to CBS. I had been there a few months and I had been so paralyzed with fear because I'd watched Marvin Kalb, because of all the people who were there and the great history and the Edward R. Murrow. And the first thing they gave me to do was a radio, a little radio story to write, 30 second radio and two hours later I'm still there like this trying to write it. And Susan Zirinsky came in to me and said, “It’s okay, I threw up a lot my first year.” She helped me.

But my first assignment was Three Mile Island, and some of my friends know, this is really true. I am speeding up in my little car to Three Mile Island and they're giving me this, and then I thought, “They think the reactor's going to blow up. Wait a minute. Nobody-- Roger Mudd isn’t going up there, no, no, no. They think I'm expendable and that's why I'm going up there.” So it was Three Mile Island probably, and I started there, I covered the story. Knees knocking, but I covered the story because there's a lot of intricate nuclear information to impart.

And then I decided I would simply take the list of everybody I could get a hold of. I got every single name of anybody who’d ever worked at Three Mile Island who knew anybody and I would call them when I got home and just see what they knew. And then eventually, worked my way through to some people who told me, really, what was going on inside.

MARVIN KALB: Terrific. Yes, please?
JAMES REED: Good evening, Diane. My name is James Reed. I'm a student at George Washington University, also a part time reporter for WRGW News, the campus radio at George Washington University. My question in regards to the Nixon Administration was previously answered, so I quickly spiffed up a new one. I'm a member of the GW College Republicans and I know that earlier in your career you were involved in Republican politics helping Nixon write his memoirs. I was wondering today what role do you have in politics aside from reporting the news of politics? I know that your colleague, Keith Olbermann, was recently booted off the air for donating to three Democratic campaigns. I was hoping-- aside from reporting the news, what involvement do you have?

DIANE SAWYER: You know, one of my proudest things is that my husband, and he will tell you if you want to call him at home, will tell you he does not know my politics. He has no idea, and no one has any idea. And by the way, I meant what I said to you earlier. I didn't come as a partisan. I love it, but I love it as someone who loves hearing all sides all the time.

MARVIN KALB: Okay. Yes, please?

EMILY SPORN: Hi, my name is Emily Sporn and I'm a freshman at GW as well. And I was wondering what advice do you have for young people, especially women, looking to break into the realm of media?

DIANE SAWYER: Well, I'm a big believer that you can still go to small markets and learn a whole lot about becoming a reporter, the truth about becoming a reporter. I sent my godson to a teeny, weenie-- I didn't get him the job, he did-- teeny, weenie little market out someplace in Nebraska. And he wrote me a note and he said, “You told me how to handle everything except the sheep gnawing through my microphone.” That was way out in Nebraska when he started.
But I love local coverage and I learn what you learn at local coverage. I also think that the more you can actually believe in your heart that it is not about technique on the air, it’s about what you have to say.

MARVIN KALB: Absolutely.

DIANE SAWYER: It is about the confidence in your eyes and it’s about whether you love the subject matter. And I always say to people if they are not curious and they don’t have the stamina that drives them to answer that question, don’t do this for a living. Do something else.

MARVIN KALB: Law is a great profession, a backup profession. [laughter] Very good. Yes, please?

MATT CARLSON: Good evening, Miss Sawyer. Thank you so much for coming this evening. My name’s Matt Carlson, I'm a senior at the George Washington University. There was a point when you started anchoring World News Tonight that you were also still working and anchoring Good Morning America. And I was really curious as to how you were able to manage doing both of those at the same time?

DIANE SAWYER: Really grumpily. I find the same thing every day, and after 11 years of Good Morning America and those hours, it was sometimes a physical achievement just to made it out in the morning. It was six different wakeup calls that I would have to have stationed in different places. But I found the same thing, I'm just bone tired. Sometimes, I think I cannot make it through a day, an interview, some of you have seen me as recently as today in this mood. And I think, “I can’t do it.” And by George, when I get there and start reading and thinking about what it is I'm going to get to learn and answer, I swear it takes care of you. It's just better than a B12 shot. That was the only thing that enabled me to do it. Really, truly, because I just came back from South Dakota on a story I was doing
where we stayed up all night, came back, it was Japan. Went to Japan, stayed up all night every night, came back, it was Libya. And came in to work on the weekend on Libya. So if you didn't love the material, I don't know what you'd do.

**MARVIN KALB**: Ask for a raise. [laughter] Yes?

**BIJAN KORVANDI**: Hi there. My name is Bijan Korvandi [?] and I'm a freshman at the George Washington University. And my question is in the beginning of your career, being such a pioneer for women in the industry, did you ever anticipate the amount of success that you've acquired thus far?

**DIANE SAWYER**: Oh, you're very kind but I never thought in those terms at all. No, I didn't know where it was going, I always was just doing in a modicum of panic the thing I was doing at the time. And in fact, I remember-- do you remember Ed-- well, I won’t give you his name, I'll give you his name afterwards. But he was in the Washington bureau at CBS and he pulled me in one day and he said, “Are you sure you want to do this? Because I just don’t think you're going to be able to go very far here.” And I remember me looking at him and thinking, “Well, that's okay, that's all right. I like covering the postal negotiations, too, that's just fine by me.” I never saw a career, I just saw what I got to do that day, that year.

**MARVIN KALB**: Good for you. Yes, please?

**ZEKE MCKEE WILLIAMS**: Hi, Zeke McKee Williams, I'm a GW alum. And my question for Miss Sawyer would be when Marvin asked where you get your information, you only mentioned U.S. or American-based media. Is that to say that you do not obtain information from foreign-based media outlets?
DIANE SAWYER: I do, but I tend to do that through our overseas bureaus who report in every moment. In every morning, they're reporting what's in the local newspapers, what they've been seeing on television, what the stories are. And they're really, really good.

MARVIN KALB: We've got about four minutes left, and I notice at least 15 questioners. What I'm going to just arbitrarily decide right now is let me hear some of the questions from you, like the first three people in a row, ask your questions.

AUDIENCE: I'm curious, I've heard a lot of stories of reporters who reported at 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina who had a difficult time doing their job because of all the human suffering they were witnessing. Have you had those moments in your career, and what were they?

MARVIN KALB: Hang on to the answer. Yes, please?

AUDIENCE: Hi, Miss Sawyer, Mr. Kalb. To many of us here tonight, especially to students, you are our role model and personally someone I highly admire. And I just want to know, when you were our age or a college student, who was someone you admired and found influential?

MARVIN KALB: Third?

LEOSA LING: Hi, my name is Leosa Ling [?], I'm an international student from Taiwan. I would like to know that when you are at age 25, what's the special qualification that you think the White House want to hire you from a weather girl that-- [laughter] I really want to know, you are my model.

MARVIN KALB: Diane, see if you can do all three in one minute?
DIANE SAWYER: Okay, I'll try to do all three in one moment. So the woman I admire the most, this may seem a stock answer, I have a mother and an aunt who are as intrepid as exists on the face of the Earth. And at the White House, I have no idea what they thought I was going to do, I didn't either. And again, I wasn't, as I said earlier, I wasn't just a bad weather girl, I didn't have contact lenses and didn't even bother with the west coast half the night because I couldn't even see the west coast. It just seemed so unimportant to me. “Go look it up yourself.”

And the other one was in school, when thinking about what you do? What was the third one? A friend of mine said the other day I still have a photographic memory, I don't have same day service. I almost remember the third question.

AUDIENCE: What were tragedies?

DIANE SAWYER: Oh, covering tragedy. Thank you very much, you young whippersnapper you. Sure. It pulverizes you, it practically takes you down and if you believe that your job is to make other people feel something and maybe respond, then you just pick yourself up and go do it, but sure.

MARVIN KALB: Three in a row.

AUDIENCE: Actually, Marvin, we're going to go in here because we haven't heard from any delegates yet and we have two delegates with questions.

MARVIN KALB: Please?
MAY SON: Hi, my name is May Son from Palestine. I'm not a student, but I had a question. As a woman and over all those years, have you had moments when you felt discriminated against as a woman? Thank you.

MARVIN KALB: Good.

DIANE SAWYER: Yeah, it is good.

AUDIENCE: Another delegate’s question.

NATALIE KALADA: My name is Natalie Kalada [?], I am from Belarus free [01:10:25] coming from the last dictatorship in Europe. I just have a question. Would you be interested to stay with people of Belarus and pay attention to this country when it’s in the worst position now and this is the last dictatorship in Europe? People are kidnapped and killed there. Journalists are in jails there. Seven presidential candidates from democratic forces are arrested, 56 people are facing 15 years in jail. We still have KGB. Would it be interesting for you to come there and make the reportage from there.

MARVIN KALB: Hang on, let's get those two questions answered first. Go ahead.

DIANE SAWYER: Yes, it would. And I have seen-- I did a story once on what we called Have a Nice Day Racism, and we were sitting outside Saddam Hussein’s palace and the producer and I said we've always wanted to see if we could capture on camera the ultra high frequency racism. And we did the story and I believe it’s still being shown in some places in some universities. I've always felt that there were reflexes that I encountered that weren't discrimination as such, but were embedded reflexes and that you have to sometimes steer around them, come back three times, come back four times, prove yourself another way.
But I know, again, that it is there in endemic ways. And it is part of the job of all of the rest of us to make sure that we go out and be those hands that I was talking about, those hands who go out and say, “We now what you're experiencing. Look, we are here. And we are here a billion strong to be on your side.”

**MARVIN KALB:** Okay. Yes, the third person?

**CHANTELLE HAVEY:** Hi, my name’s Chanelle Havey. I'm a student from the George Washington University. Miss Sawyer, over the years you've encountered and reported on so much devastation, whether it be a disaster, poverty, killings. How have you remained so strong and persistent when reporting such heart-wrenching stories?

**DIANE SAWYER:** Again, I think they're the people who need us the most. That's why we do it. And they're the ones counting on us the most. How can we possibly say it’s too tough for me? I'd say that.

**MARVIN KALB:** Right. Two or three in a row, go ahead?

**KASEY DEAMAR:** My name’s Kasey Deamar. I'm a journalism student at Ithaca College, I'm currently interning here. I think what a lot of journalism students these days are worried about with so much downsizing, it seems that the only way to break into the journalism industry and make it a career is to be unpaid for very long periods of time. And I'm wondering how you suggest us to break into the industry and really get our foot in the door and make it a career rather than something that we're lucky to be paid to do?

**MARVIN KALB:** Second person, please?

**ROSEMARY SEGERO:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Rosemary Segero, I'm the president of Hope for Tomorrow, our organization for empowering
women through micro finance. Diane Sawyer, thank you so much, I've admired you throughout your career. And as a woman, as an anchor and as a woman, I come from Kenya. How do you look at Africa being called that country with women in media in Africa when you are anchoring? How do you look at women in Africa compared to men as journalists and you as an anchor? How do you advise or how can you work with them locally in Africa as anchors? Thank you.

MARVIN KALB: One more question. We've only got a minute left of time.

ROSIE ORTEGA: Hello, Miss Sawyer. My name is Rosie Ortega, a 17 year old from East Los Angeles, California. And my question to you is you mentioned that student journalists are inheriting a new media that can change the world. What would be your advice to someone like me that comes from a community that's full of negative press like gang violence?

MARVIN KALB: Okay pal, you got 30 seconds. [laughter]

DIANE SAWYER: It’s like TV, isn’t it? First of all, I just want to say to the journalists and the women in Africa we meet a journalists, it’s only the most profound respect. Boy, do we salute you. But also when we travel, we depend so much and often on the women journalists, to be there with us helping us being our eyes and ears so that's true.

On not being paid, I think that that-- I do think there is this seismic shift and in it is a whole lot of anxiety about getting the job that locks in because there's so much general uncertainty out there. I would only say this little thing. If you can, if you possibly can sometimes, try to even spend those two weeks, or a month, doing something, even if they can’t pay you. Because I know too many people in those two weeks and that month who got the job. And it’s simply someone getting to see what you can do and being willing to
come in and do anything. So, yes, I know that there is that uncertainty, but I know also that a lot of the people we see at ABC News had a door open that way, too.

And then the gang violence for another time. I'm getting a wrap.

**MARVIN KALB:** No, we're really out of time. My apologies to all of you who did not have a chance to ask a question. We're just out of time. I just want to extend goodbyes to all of the people, all of the women reporters and executives from all over the world who were here tonight. God bless you and continue to do all of the work that you're doing. And Diane, thank you all very much. [applause]

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