MARVIN KALB: Hello, and welcome to the National Press Club and to another edition of The Kalb Report. I’m Marvin Kalb. And our guest tonight is Lara Logan, who is CBS News chief foreign affairs correspondent and a 60 Minutes correspondent as well. To state merely that Lara Logan has enjoyed a meteoric career is to understate the obvious. After working for a few newspapers in South Africa where she was born, she joined Reuters Television, then Britain’s ITV before freelancing for ITN, Fox and CNN. Then in 2002, after reporting for CBS Radio news, she joined the network itself, CBS News, and her career since then has skyrocketed. First reporting on the war in Iraq for the CBS Evening News and 60 Minutes II, and then in 2006, only four years later, she was named chief foreign correspondent for CBS and a regular contributor to 60 Minutes.

During the Egyptian revolution in early 2011, she was brutally assaulted and beaten while covering this tumultuous story, but she bounced right back and along the way winning many prizes and the admiration and respect of her colleagues. Lara Logan, welcome to The Kalb Report. It’s a pleasure to have you here.

LARA LOGAN: Thank you very much.

MARVIN KALB: Tell us about the beginning of the Lara Logan story. Durban, South Africa, journalism, your parents. How did it all fit together?

LARA LOGAN: Well, I think the first thing that I was filled with, even before I really understood what was going on around me, was a great sense of injustice of apartheid. And that was probably instilled in me at home because we were taught to treat people with respect at home, no matter who they were.

MARVIN KALB: We ought to point out, apartheid was the official policy of the South African government separating--
LARA LOGAN: Of segregation.

MARVIN KALB: Whites from blacks, segregation indeed.

LARA LOGAN: Treating black people as second class citizens, if citizens at all, in their own country. And I remember as a very young child standing in the grocery store with some candy, my dad would take us every weekend to get 20 cents worth of candy. And there was an old black man standing at the counter with a loaf of bread and a handful of pennies. And everyone kept going past him. And I remember asking my father why. And when we got to the front, my father wouldn’t let us pay for the candy until the shopkeeper served this gentleman standing there. And it was that kind of thing around me that taught me there was something very wrong. But I think it was the values instilled me as a young child that taught me to stand up for what was wrong.

And so at 17, I got a job at a local newspaper and no one would send me into the township, so I did all the silly stories. And so I used to go in with the photographers. I asked the photographers to take me with them at night or in the daytime or the weekends. And when most of the other kids at school were at the beach, I was at the newspaper. And really, it was—I went into the foreign media not long after that because I knew that there was a whole world that the South African government wouldn’t allow us to see.

It was kind of—I ended up in the front lines in Afghanistan for a British TV station, everybody—people noticed me then because no one else was reporting from the front line and I was living with the Afghan soldiers and no one else was doing that. And then all these articles were written about—it was as if I'd just begun my journalism career then. But I'd spent months in Angola living with the soldiers of the resistance there with nothing. I mean literally nothing. We would dig in the ground for food.
MARVIN KALB: You've been associated in the public mind with being a war correspondent.

LARA LOGAN: Yes.

MARVIN KALB: And I'm wondering, in your mind, how would you define being a war correspondent? Is this something different? What are the qualities that you need?

LARA LOGAN: I think there is something true to all people who do the kind of work that I do, all journalists who choose to do that kind of work. I think that the story is bigger than you. That's what you’re really motivated by. If you're motivated by being on television or seeing your byline in the newspaper, then you're not there. You're not the one that's there on the sharp edge, on the razor’s edge of the true side of the war. Not just all the hundreds of people that flocked into Baghdad the day the city fell, I'm talking about the hundred journalists that stayed when the city was under attack.

And I think we're motivated by the same thing that Murrow was motivated by: a passion for, and a belief, in being an observer, a witness to history, a witness to our times. And one of the most fundamental tenets of any democracy, how can your government go to war, do anything in your name if you're not there to first witness it and then to decide where you stand?

MARVIN KALB: So you feel you're there as a sit in for the people of the United States, in this case?

LARA LOGAN: If you imagine that there are things that happen out there, and if no one is there to witness it, they never happened. I mean, I would spend time with people in the war in Angola. No one cared about that war. Who was recording what was being done to those people if we weren't there? When Reuters would go in once every few months to
Angola, that would be the only time anyone ever reported on the Angolan war and people were being tortured and massacred and slaughtered. You know, most people don’t care about what happens in Angola, but I cared. I never did it because that was the thing that was going to make me famous. I did it because I believed in it.

MARVIN KALB: Was there ever in your mind a role model that you looked up to as a war correspondent?

LARA LOGAN: You know, there were so many people that I respected, but I never wanted to be somebody else. I always wanted to be my own person. And I didn’t grow up in the arms of the American media. I respected what Christiane Amanpour did for CNN in Beijing in Tiananmen Square. When the first Gulf War happened, I knew that was where I wanted to be. But I think the people that I really respected most were the ones in the trenches with me who taught me everything that I know.

MARVIN KALB: You mean the reporters who were there with you, or the soldiers?

LARA LOGAN: The people, just side by side, the reporters. You know, in South Africa, in the fight against apartheid, it wasn’t like the media is in a lot of other places. People cared about the story. People were there because they believed that apartheid was wrong and that if we could bring-- if you could expose what was happening that it would change. There was something truly noble in what all of us did. And great correspondents, great journalists, great cameramen from all over the world would come there to work. That's who taught me my craft. Even down to the young black guy who didn’t even have an education or a license, but could find a way to get your tape in and out of that township and get that out and would risk everything. We would hide tapes in our mattresses and hide from the secret police. There was a bond of something great and something noble that we were doing, and we all believed in it.
MARVIN KALB: As the chief foreign affairs correspondent for CBS, you will of course, and you have been, called upon to cover stories that not only mean war, but summitry or diplomacy or State Department gobbledygook.

LARA LOGAN: That's a good word, right? [laughter]

MARVIN KALB: How do you see--

LARA LOGAN: Otherwise known as politics.

MARVIN KALB: How do you see that yourself? Do you find yourself more comfortable doing the war than the summit?

LARA LOGAN: Yes, without question, and more invested in it. It requires more of you, it asks you to find out who you are and it asks you what's truly important. I would give up a toilet and a hot meal and a bed any day for a story that's real. I can't stand to dabble in things that are not real. They don’t mean anything. I mean, politics is critically important, but it doesn't burn that fire in the way it does to be out there in the most impossible situation doing something that is truly the difference between life and death.

MARVIN KALB: But couldn’t it be argued that the President of this country and the President of that sitting there making a decision about war and peace are doing something that's quite a burning issue as well?

LARA LOGAN: Sure. Oh, absolutely, there's no question about that. It just doesn't burn in me the same way. It’s painfully boring sometimes.

MARVIN KALB: I see, okay.
LARA LOGAN: And I can't stand interviewing people who lie to you all the time, or wrap what they have to say in so much diplomatic speak that you spend hours just trying to work out what the hell they just told you. I prefer people that are straight talking.

MARVIN KALB: Do you think the military people when they talk to you are straight talkers?

LARA LOGAN: Not always, not always. But I've become very adept at sorting out the talking points from what's real. And over the years, I've acquired a reputation for having some depth of knowledge, so they're a little more nervous about serving me up a plate of- - this is recorded, right?

MARVIN KALB: Yes. [laughter]

LARA LOGAN: And also, I have to be quite honest with you, when you're dealing with those kind of people, they sort of don’t really mind when you call them out on it, you know. They kind of expect it. But when you call a politician out on it, they don’t appreciate it the same way.

MARVIN KALB: No, they don’t.

LARA LOGAN: No, they don’t.

MARVIN KALB: Let’s talk a little bit about embedded journalism. And you yourself have been embedded with American forces any number of times. And you've spoken about “the unwritten rules” of embedded journalism.

LARA LOGAN: Of all journalism, really, to be honest with you. I don't think that applies just to embedded journalism.
MARVIN KALB: Well, I'm just quoting you.

LARA LOGAN: Yeah. Because it was that context. But I'm expanding my quote.

MARVIN KALB: Okay. Well, let me go back to the quote. But you've embedded many times. I'd like to ask you what you think are those unwritten rules of embedded journalism?

LARA LOGAN: I think they're the same rules that apply to anything. They're rules of integrity. That's really what I'm talking about. If you are a crime reporter, if you're a justice reporter, I mean there's a certain amount of trust that develops in any of those situations. If a lawyer or a policeman says to you, “Can you not report on this right now because you're really going to jeopardize this case?” I mean, very often reporters make those judgment calls. And I think what I meant when I was talking about that is I think when I spend weeks on end with soldiers, when they're talking about very personal things, I don't think they think that I'm going to go and put that in the media. I think there's a bond of trust that develops with you over time where there are certain things that are understood.

And I don’t mean that in a sense that you ever compromise your journalist integrity, I really and truly don’t. But if I give my word that I'm not going to report something, or I give my word that this is the reason that I'm here, I need a very compelling reason to shift that. I think your word is your bond and the story’s never been more important to me than who I am. I have to be able to live with myself before anything else. I have never encountered a story that was more important than my integrity.

MARVIN KALB: Good. A blogger, you probably know this already and I'm not breaking any big story.
LARA LOGAN: I don’t read many blogs.

MARVIN KALB: There is a blogger who referred to you as the Pentagon’s favorite journalist, and I don’t think he meant it as a compliment.

LARA LOGAN: I don’t think he did, no.

MARVIN KALB: But why do you think he said it?

LARA LOGAN: You know, I think he probably said it because when General Stanley McChrystal was relieved after the Rolling Stone magazine article, I came out and said something stinks here, I don’t get it. I didn’t fall into line with everybody else and say, “Oh, this is horrendous.” And that's partly because I know the man that Stanley McChrystal is. I've never met him, I didn’t have anything invested in saying what I said. But I know when something feels wrong, and it felt wrong. I don't believe that that was a true report, I don't believe that it was truly accurate of the situation. I don't think what was described was presented in the right context. And it didn’t add up. Michael Hastings said, “I emailed them and they just invited me to Paris to come into these pubs and see them in the most open situation.”

And I think if General Stanley McChrystal has you at an event in which is his wedding anniversary where he hasn’t seen his wife for something on a year, that's an incredibly personal environment and I'm quite sure-- you know, there was never any mention that Stanley McChrystal was drinking. But the impression that you were left with, if you read the article, was that it was a free for all. It was a free for all, big drinking party. So, I think there was a distinct-- I think there was something dishonest about that article, and I'll say it again and again and I don't care what the blogs say, I don't care what Rolling
Stone magazine says. And if we weren't on television, I'd tell them what they could go do with themselves.

MARVIN KALB: I think we get the spirit of that.

LARA LOGAN: I just like to be very clear.

MARVIN KALB: I gather from what you've said in the past that you think journalists ought to share their personal opinions with the public? And hang on; 2009, you're quoted as saying, “Every true journalist at heart wants to change the world. I think it's game playing to say, ‘oh, reporters shouldn’t give their informed opinions.’ That's been a function of journalism forever.” Now, I could argue that point with you, but I don't think I'll do that now. But do you give your opinions in news reporting?

LARA LOGAN: I think what you're talking about was in reaction to-- I was on an internet show and I was asked for my opinion and analysis, I wasn’t reporting. I was there as a guest to offer my opinion. And so what I was trying to say-- when I said that journalists have always given their opinion, I was talking about the editorial pages of a newspaper, that from the time newspapers existed, there was an op ed. page where analysis and opinion were given.

I don't think that those things should be confused. I think they are very distinct and it’s very important that those lines remain forever drawn. I don't think my job is to stand on the CBS Evening News and give my opinion. I think my job there is to be a true journalist and reporter and stay true to the facts. But I think when you're asked for your opinion, you should be entitled to give it and not be vilified for giving it. And you're asking me for my opinion on this show, right?

MARVIN KALB: No, but I'm going to ask your opinion right now.
LARA LOGAN: I'm just checking, see we're okay.

MARVIN KALB: You have this reputation for being outspoken, you've already demonstrated that. What's your opinion, then, about the quality of American television coverage of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

LARA LOGAN: I think it varies wildly. I think it’s very hard to just paint it all with one brush. I don’t like hearing academics and analysts who are talking from Washington, D.C., for example, and have spent very little time on the ground in those countries and who clearly have had a very controlled experience when they have gone out there. They go for a week and they're flown in and they're shepherded from meeting to meeting. I don't think that-- if you haven't had time to taste the dirt of Afghanistan with Afghan people, if you haven't had time to bleed in that dirt, and by bleed I don’t mean literally, I don't think that you can ever have a true understanding.

So for me, I don’t like shows when I listen to a bunch of academics with access to the White House debating policy because usually, I don't think they know what they're talking about most of the time. And, you know, I think there is a lot to be said for reporters who spend time on the ground and I think there have been some great reporting. I have worked shoulder to shoulder with incredible, really great journalists that--

MARVIN KALB: Like who?

LARA LOGAN: Like Dexter Filkins from The New York Times, like Richard Oppel from The New York Times. This is not a New York Times promo, I just happened to think of people that I've worked closely with that I respect. You know, Richard Engel’s done some great work, I don’t always agree with everything-- his analysis, but I think he’s done incredible work out there. There are other journalists from foreign networks and
we've had our own CBS people who have spent a lot of time out there and done great stuff.

But of course, I'm sitting here in Washington, D. C. now because I've been asked to do much more for the network than-- if I didn’t have a family, if I didn’t have husband and two small children, I'd be in Afghanistan right now. You would need an armored division to dislodge me from that position. And I believe that you would see some reporting that you're not seeing right now. But that doesn’t mean that I have the answer to everything.

I think that it’s patchy, I think there's a lack of commitment and I think this idea that war turns people off is nonsense. *60 Minutes* has reported consistently and repeatedly on the war and our ratings have never suffered for it.

**MARVIN KALB:** Because you once did say, “If I watch the news that you're watching here in the United States, I would blow my brains out. It would drive me nuts.”

**LARA LOGAN:** Yes, I stand by that. [laughter]

**MARVIN KALB:** Okay. Take one step back and go from comments about the media to comments about policy. The invasion of Iraq in 2003, good or bad idea?

**LARA LOGAN:** Terrible idea.

**MARVIN KALB:** Why?

**LARA LOGAN:** One of the worst ideas in history. Because it was based on lies, first and foremost, that we never went into Iraq to help the Iraqi people. Let’s just be frank about that up front. But more than that, because it was never set to achieve anything good. I mean, you could argue if you're a Shiite who now is in power and who never had
a chance even of a decent life under Saddam Hussein, that something good came from it. But I'm talking about from an American perspective. And when I say an American perspective, I really mean from a western perspective because the world has been quick to divide this fight into American and non-American. And I don't believe in that division. I think the division is between western and non-western. I don’t want to put simply a religious name on it. It’s for people who believe in the way of life that we believe in, and people who believe in an alternative way of life that goes back centuries to what I call a very dark time.

And I think that it’s been an abject failure. I think the true depth of the failure of the Iraq invasion has never been honestly and openly talked about. And I think that’s the lie--

MARVIN KALB: What do you think is missing there?

LARA LOGAN: Well, we’d like to pretend that General Petraeus came in with a surge and suddenly saved the day. And what he did was he stopped the bloodletting, but not because of the surge. He did it because he made an agreement with the Sunnis that was on the table from the first day of the invasion.

MARVIN KALB: That he could have made it earlier?

LARA LOGAN: Oh, absolutely. But it wasn’t until there was so much blood on the Sunnis hands that it couldn’t be supported politically that we finally had the political will to make that kind of agreement. And what the surge did was prevent all those Sunnis who came forward from being massacred by the Iraqi government and the Iranians because they wanted them dead. Believe me, every single last one of them. And so it was really-- and I went on raids like this. It was really the Sunni who was hand in hand with al-Qaeda saying, “Here's the wrap line, here are the weapons. This is the guy you want to shut down.” That's what stopped the bloodletting.
But in terms of strategy, in terms of national security, in terms of strategic interests? The invasion of Iraq was an abject failure. It empowered Iran to a degree that we've never been honest about, and it did nothing to serve American interests. Not to mention what it- - I don’t want to get into what it inflicted on the Iraqi people because it depends which side of the line you came from in Iraq. There are many Iraqis who benefited from the invasion of Iraq.

MARVIN KALB: Let me ask you about Afghanistan, since you've been so blunt about your views on Iraq. I recently with my daughter did a book called Haunting Legacy, and it’s about the effect of the Vietnam War on presidential policymaking. And when we talked to people at the U.S. embassy in Kabul, they told us that American policy right now could be defined as good enough. If they could come up with some kind of formula that is politically acceptable to the American people, that's good enough. And what I'm wondering about is did you hear the same kind of thing from embassy people? And do you feel that good enough at this stage of the war is good enough?

LARA LOGAN: I think that's an indictment on the U.S. embassy. I expect nothing more from politicians, quite frankly, and from that embassy in particular. It was headed by Karl Eikenberry. He almost destroyed U.S. policy when he was a general in command there, and he set about systematically destroying what was left of it when he was ambassador. And the fact that they can say good-- what is good enough? What's good enough for the Afghan people? What's good enough for the American soldier that's out there? I mean, has anyone been to Walter Reed in this room? Has anyone seen what the debris of this war, the human debris actually looks like?

I was shocked the first time I went there, because I'm used to being on the battlefield with robust soldiers. I'm used to seeing them wounded and leaving in a medivac chopper. As long as you hear they're going to make it, you sort of breathe a sigh of relief and think it’s
okay. But it’s not even close to okay. And so for me, I don't think that is a policy that's
good enough for anybody that's involved in this. If you're not in it to fight, if you don’t
believe it can be won, and when I say won, people say, “Oh, what does that mean? And
now we don’t think it can be won,” and everybody’s got a different definition of success.

MARVIN KALB: But what does it mean in Afghanistan?

LARA LOGAN: What it means, what we originally-- go back to your original aims
when you invade-- well, it wasn't an invasion. The Afghans are very quick to point out
that they were actually the ones that toppled the Taliban with U.S. help. There were less
than several hundred U.S. personnel on the ground at the time. But the original aim was
to defeat al-Qaeda and the Taliban and to insure that they were never able to threaten the
national security interests of the United States ever again. That clearly is not the case.
And when you're sitting down and you're avoiding the hypocrisy of not putting the
Taliban on the terror list because you want to preserve the right to sit down and negotiate
with them and they’ll bring out every academic in Washington that they can find who
will tell you that every insurgency in history has been won through negotiation and
settlement, you don’t win it on the battlefield. Well, tell that to the Sri Lankans. I believe
they just won their insurgency on the battlefield.

So, I mean for me, if you're not-- people think when I say this, that I'm advocating for
war, I'm not advocating for war. I think if you're going to go to war, you better go to war
and you better win. But if you're not, if you're just going to loiter on the battlefield and
mess around with one disastrous political strategy after another, then get the hell out
because you have no right to ask people to go and fight in your name because you're
lying to them.

The best analogy I can give you, what you're doing to your U.S. troops on the ground,
line up all hundred thousand or so of those troops, handcuff them behind their backs, give
them a shove, send them straight into the Taliban guns. Because that's effectively what you're doing. The enemy is not in Afghanistan. The low hanging fruit, the expendable people, are in Afghanistan. The real enemy is across the border in Pakistan, and I'm not advocating for war in Pakistan. But there are a thousand things you could do to address that. As long as you are not going after the command and control and the true source of the enemy-- and by the way, we have the capacity and the information to do that and we have not because of our foreign policy towards Pakistan-- then you have no business being in the fight.

And when people say Karzai is not a strategic partner and he’s corrupt, really? So 30, 40 guys will strap on suicide bombs and they’ll go and blow themselves up in an attack on a U.S. base because they're pissed off that the government's corrupt? Give me a break. This is not about corruption. This is not about whether Karzai is a reliable strategic partner. That's an excuse. That's all it is.

MARVIN KALB: Cut it down to the chase. What do you think is really at the heart of the American effort now in Afghanistan?

LARA LOGAN: Get the hell out. That’s all we care about. It’s costing too much. We don’t want to pay for it, we don’t think the Afghans are worth a fight, it's their problem and we want to get out of here.

MARVIN KALB: And at this particular point, if the U.S. were to work out a way of getting out without having accomplished its original purpose, then it sounds to me that you think it’s just been a waste?

LARA LOGAN: Yeah, it has, it's been a waste. I mean, you have the locations. The Quetta Shura runs the Afghan war from the city of Quetta inside Pakistan.
MARVIN KALB: But to go in there, you're crossing a national border.

LARA LOGAN: You don't have to go in there, there's plenty of ways. If you've got their phone numbers, as I know we have had for years, you don't need to go across the border.

MARVIN KALB: What do you do?

LARA LOGAN: You take them out the same way you took out al-Loki and Nek Muhammad and all the others that have been killed that way.

MARVIN KALB: Well.

LARA LOGAN: And you do it, you target not just the Quetta Shura, you target the Miran Shah Shura, the Peshawar Shura, the Haqqani Network. You take 24 to 48 hours out of your day where you target all the people who you know where they are and you send a message to the Pakistanis that putting American bodies in Arlington Cemetery is not an acceptable form of foreign policy.

MARVIN KALB: Okay. Let's take a brief moment now for what I think is called station identification. [applause] To tell our radio, television and webcast viewers and audiences that this is The Kalb Report. I'm Marvin Kalb, and I'm talking with Lara Logan, CBS News chief foreign affairs correspondent.

Lara, let me raise what is probably a difficult subject for you. Early on in the Egyptian revolution in Tahrir Square, you were sexually assaulted and beaten and for a time you couldn’t do your job. You're now back full time, and I'm wondering whether that experience has affected you as a journalist? And I have in mind a comment that you made to Scott Pelley in an interview with 60 Minutes. You said, “I have a fear now in me that
I've never had before. I don’t want to let it stop me, but it’s going to be difficult.” Explain that.

**LARA LOGAN:** I think that all of us, you have this-- you carry with you this idea that it’s not going to be. I know this could happen, but you don’t really believe it’s going to be you. And then one day, it is you. And you can't lie to yourself anymore, I guess, is the best way to describe it. So, I'm afraid of things that I wasn’t afraid of before. I think about things I wasn’t afraid of before. I've lived with Afghan soldiers on their front line for three months with nobody with me, just two Afghans that I just met who didn’t even speak English. So would I do that again?

But I think the thing that's most difficult is that it reminds you of the price that the people you love have to pay for what you do. I could do this for me, if it was just me, I'd have gone back to Libya. I would be testing myself and finding my limits. But it’s not just me. When you come that close to dying, and that doesn't even really describe it because I've said I was in the process of dying. I was already half dead before it stopped and I somehow was able to live. And so I look at my children now and I look at my husband and I think, “How could I do that to them?”

So the journalism is the same. You believe in the same things. I believe in the work as much as I ever have. But I'm conscious of how selfish that decision is, and I'm conscious of the price that the people I love pay. And that makes you afraid. And I don't know that being afraid enables you to do the things that I've done. I mean, I just went back to Afghanistan, so it’s not like I'm chained to the desk.

**MARVIN KALB:** Of course. I was still a little puzzled, though, because a couple of days before you actually went back and faced that awful experience, I believe a few days before, you were on the Charlie Rose program. And one of the things you told Charlie
was that you felt that you and your crew were targeted and you didn’t feel that-- “We were not safe,” you said.

LARA LOGAN: That was when I was arrested in Egypt the week before.

MARVIN KALB: Right. And my point here is so feeling that you were targeted having been arrested, but you still went back?

LARA LOGAN: Yes.

MARVIN KALB: So what is it about Lara Logan that can face something that is obvious and says, “Hey Lara, amber light, let’s slow down.” But you went back anyway?

LARA LOGAN: I mean, journalists are anarchists at heart and we don’t like to be told what to do, even if it is by the Egyptian government and the Mukhabarat. If they're going to throw you into prison and intimidate you, my producer is-- he looks like he works for the State Department every day. You know, it drives us all crazy because we can be in the deserts of Darfur and he still looks like he just rolled out of Washington. But, he said we were sitting in this room in this secret-- not really secret, but intelligence facility prison in Egypt and I was on a drip because I had been very, very sick. I think I started vomiting before the interrogation began. I don't think the Egyptians really knew-- I think they're used to making people vomit and not having-- not starting out the interrogation with that kind of behavior. And eventually, they put a drip. They just stuck a needle in my arm and threw a bag on a table and left me in a filthy, filthy room.

And when I woke up finally, my producer and my cameraman were with me. My cameraman was ready to get out of there. His grandmother was Jewish and they had worked that out and they had made him sign a confession. But my producer was like, “Screw these guys, right? I'm not going to the airport. I feel like who are they to tell me
what to do?” And then that's that kind of feeling. You don’t want to be stupid about it, but this was a major story. I mean, we're talking about one of the most fundamental shifts in the strategic map of the world that we've ever seen in our lifetimes. And so, there's part of you as a journalist that thinks you need to be there to witness it.

And my husband and I talked about it, and we took that decision together. I didn’t make that decision on my own and I had to say, and I had to mean it, “If you tell me no, if you ask me not to go, I won’t.” And he didn’t.

MARVIN KALB: You have spoken openly about that experience now in quite a few times and I don’t want to belabor the point.

LARA LOGAN: Not so many times, actually; only publicly once.

MARVIN KALB: I have a larger question in mind which is sort of more than Lara Logan. It’s that women reporters have, I've been told many times, suffered many different forms of sexual violence. And yet, they don’t want to talk about it. So why don’t they want to talk about it? Explain that to me.

LARA LOGAN: Well, the media is a big boy’s club, just to start. So, women always are conscious of that. That frames the environment in which you're working. Women are good for a bit of fluff as anchors and women fulfill a particular role. But it's taken a very long time for women to be taken seriously on the same playing field, like for example in war.

MARVIN KALB: But I have to tell you that many, many young women, as you know very well, are now covering the wars.

LARA LOGAN: Now.
MARVIN KALB: Now.

LARA LOGAN: But not ten years ago.

MARVIN KALB: No, not at all.

LARA LOGAN: Not when I was starting out, not when I was coming up through the ranks. And if you did, you expected to be kind of manly. You weren't allowed to wear makeup or be feminine. You had to fulfill a certain image of what a female war correspondent looked like. And I didn’t know how to be that. That was never in my DNA, to try and be something else for somebody else. So I never tried. And I was told repeatedly that I would never make it, and that someone with my hair would never-- I thought about cutting my hair for about three seconds after that interview and that's how long it lasted.

But I think that it’s not just hard for women to speak about it, it’s harder for men to speak about it than it is for women to speak about it. Because it’s not just women who are raped in horrible prisons around the world, it's men, too. And I've had men write to me since Egypt happened. But I think women live with a degree of sexual harassment, right? It’s not just in your work, it’s in your personal life, too. And so part of you just thinks it comes with the territory of being a woman. And part of you thinks-- if I came out of the Afghan War and told you that on the push for Kabul as the Afghan soldiers were taking Kabul, the guys I'd been living with stopped to take a photograph and one of them-- somebody came out of the crowd and grabbed my breast and the general halted the invasion and they hunted this guy down and brought him to my feet and put a gun to his head and said, “Just say yes.” That would have overshadowed everything that I ever did. That's all people would have talked about.
So, I didn’t hide it, you know. But the first time I talked about it, and there were big headlines in the newspapers in Britain, I thought, “Oh boy, wow. That’s not what I want to be remembered for.” And there's a lot of things that you take with the territory. I don’t come back whining about every risk I took or about how close it was or about how hard it was. You shut up and you take it and you do your job. In Afghanistan, everyone was complaining about what a terrible war that was to cover. Let me tell you, compared to Angola and Mozambique, that was fairly luxurious.

MARVIN KALB: Well. So, you're not saying that it’s more difficult for a woman to cover a war, are you?

LARA LOGAN: Oh no, I'm not. I think there are certain risks that women face, but when the New York Times team were arrested in Libya, there were things that happened to the men in that team that were never talked about of a sexual nature. So men are just at risk as women.

MARVIN KALB: You know, in preparing for this interview, I read a lot about you and a lot of things that you've said and what people have said about you. And I come away with the impression that a lot of people seem more fascinated by your personal life, what kind of person is Lara Logan, than about your professional accomplishments, which are so obvious. So, why do you think that's the case?

LARA LOGAN: I don't know. I think they think a photograph of me can sell a newspaper, apparently, I've been told that. So, I don’t really have a good answer to that question. One thing I will say, though, I had no idea until Egypt happened that there were so many of my colleagues that were interested in the work that I do and respected it. Because you get so used to covering your back in this business and waiting for the next knife that you forget about that aspect of it. And people, as my mother-in-law said,
people don't usually say those nice things about you until you're dead. She said, “You're kind of lucky.” And I thought, “Oh, really? It's funny. Not feeling so lucky right now.”

**MARVIN KALB:** But you said something, though, a minute ago. Do you think that the industry now is loaded up with people who go for your back, who want to do you harm? I mean, do you live in that kind of environment?

**LARA LOGAN:** Not more so than a lot of journalists. I think that's part of the nature of the industry. Didn't Roone Arledge write a book about how he would foster competition and set his producers and correspondents and people against each other? That he thought that that brought out the best in them? I think there's lots of people who are subjected to it, I'm not unique.

**MARVIN KALB:** Let’s talk about foreign reporting for a few minutes. I have the impression lately that in terms of foreign reporting on networks, that aside from reporters who are living somewhere and covering that environment, big shot journalist will fly in, do a couple of interviews, spend a week, then leave, go back home. And I'm wondering, since your career is very, very much on the ascendancy, that you're going to find yourself almost inevitably in a situation where you're going to go in, so your best instincts, you're going to want to stay somewhere and soak it up and they're going to say, “Hey buddy, you've got to be back on Friday because on Sunday you're going on the air.” And so what do you think about the inevitability of Lara Logan moving into a time where she's going to have to do what producers tell her to do because she's a big shot now and she's going to be on television and draw many more eyes to the network. How are you going to deal with that Lara Logan, huh? Free spirit?

**LARA LOGAN:** I think sometimes I might give in and then other times I'm going to really piss people off. And to be honest with you, I'm more inclined to come back to see my babies than I am because somebody wants me on air on Monday. I mean, it wouldn’t
be the first time I've disappeared. When I covered Ramadi, no one would send me. When I was living in Baghdad and we would get these constant press releases and I saw how many soldiers were dying in Ramadi and we couldn't-- contrary to what the Bush White House wanted people to believe, it wasn't that journalists weren't willing to go out and about, it was that you just physically couldn't most of the time because it was so dangerous. And CBS didn't have any interest in sending me.

So I called up one of my producers at 60 Minutes and said, "Don't ask any questions. Just get on a plane, we're going to Ramadi." And I told CBS News I was going for 60 Minutes, and I told 60 Minutes I was going for CBS News. And off we went and we just disappeared for three weeks. And I remember coming to a base at one point in Ramadi where they said to me, "Oh, there's someone from New York that's been trying to reach you." So every journalist knows, right? We're adept at disappearing when we need to.

There is something very uncomfortable about that reality that really bothers me. I think that so much of your truly good reporting comes from your gut. And if you haven't had time on the ground, you haven't had time to really-- to grow that innate sense of what something is. I know Afghan people because I've spent so much time with them. And so when somebody tells me something in Washington that doesn't fit, I know it doesn't fit, you know what I mean? I don't need to read some report. I don't need to refer to anybody else. I know here that it doesn't fit.

And so I don't want to become one of those people that, as they say, parachutes in and parachutes out. I think that there are ways around that. I don't think there's a perfect way around that because nothing can substitute for the five years I spent living in Baghdad or the years I've spent in Afghanistan, in Kabul. But I think that's one of those things that I'm going to have to deal with as it comes. And when I go to Afghanistan, I don't go for three days. I just spent 2 ½ weeks there, and that's nothing compared to the years I've
spent there, and the months I've spent on trips. But it’s not three days. And hopefully, I'm going to find a way around that.

MARVIN KALB: I keep wondering how that's going to happen, actually, and I don’t see it, but--

LARA LOGAN: Well, you know, I'm not driven by my hours and minutes on air, I'm really not. That's never been the motivation for me. I mean, of course if you do a story, you want it to be out there and you want people to be watching and pay attention. But if it means that I do a few less pieces a year, or that I'm not as famous as I could be, I don’t really care.

MARVIN KALB: And 60 Minutes doesn’t bother if you do fewer pieces than they would like you to do?

LARA LOGAN: 60 Minutes is run by journalists.

MARVIN KALB: Right.

LARA LOGAN: It’s not run by corporate executives or businesspeople or anything else, it's run by journalists. Jeff Fager is a journalist just like me.

MARVIN KALB: But it still has to make money.

LARA LOGAN: Yeah, it does. But Jeff understands, he knows what's important. And if I say to him, “I got to spend three weeks in Afghanistan because it’s really important,” then he says, “Fine, make it work.” I mean, he doesn't say, “Okay, sure. We’ll make it work for you.” He says, “Make it work. If that's what you want, if that's the decision
you're going to make, make it work.” And then God help you, you better make it work or you ain't going to have a job.

**MARVIN KALB:** How do you prepare for a story for *60 Minutes*?

**LARA LOGAN:** It depends, it really depends. I realized the reason I spent my entire academic career crashing for exams was preparation for my career at *60 Minutes*. Because inevitably, I'll be on an airplane with a book like this. I have a good short-term memory because I literally made my academic career through remembering everything that I ever studied. And I use the same thing at *60 Minutes*. I will sit down and do a two, three, four, sometimes even five hour interview and never look at a piece of paper. I did the story, the Medal of Honor story, where we just won the Emmy for best interview. We never had a single written question for that piece, for all the interviews. And I never even thought about it until my producer said to me, “Not bad for a piece without a single written question.”

And so, we do a lot of research. We try not just to rely on what's out there in the open. Of course, you read everything that moves, but you also try to go beyond that to the people who are experts in their field. And you really have to master an extraordinary amount of detail. You have to know much more than ever comes out in the story. And it's tough. I did three *60 Minutes* pieces in three days, and I had to be a medical expert one day, I had to be a polo expert another day, and I had to be an economic and IMF expert on another day. And I still had to be mom.

**MARVIN KALB:** But you're the one who kept on talking about not wanting to be an instant expert. You want to soak up everything.

**LARA LOGAN:** I do, I do want to soak it up. But I think there's a difference there between-- I mean, when you really immerse yourself in the level of detail that you need
to do a strong *60 Minutes* interview, that's kind of different to popping up on a 24 hour channel all over the world and being the instant expert when you really are just reading a wire, a two-line wire and you have no idea if it's correct or not.

**MARVIN KALB:** So tell me, Lara, when you run out of wars to cover, what are you going to be doing?

**LARA LOGAN:** Well, I just filmed a profile with Aerosmith in Colombia. And I was up in Canada doing a profile on Michael Buble. My last piece on *60 Minutes* was the best free solo climber in the world. I've been shooting this story on polo. I know more about polo than I ever cared to know. So, *60 Minutes* is a magazine program, so it's about the richness of life, it’s not just about war. And I smile to myself because I very condescendingly get this whole thing about, “Oh boy, she can do something other than war.” Well, for God sake, of course I can do something other than war. What do you think, I never read a book? I've never been to a museum and admired a beautiful painting? I don’t like going to the movies? I mean, come on. If you can sit down and interview a President and a Minister of Defense and street kids and sleep on the streets of Angola with the street kids so you can really understand what they're going through, you can do those things.

You have to give of yourself as much-- that's what people-- they want to know what are you made of? Because that's what *60 Minutes* is. Mike Wallace, Ed Bradley, why do people love to watch them? Because they could see what they were made of. They didn’t hide and they were good people as well as some of the greats. So I'm still trying to walk in those shoes.

**MARVIN KALB:** No, I understand. And they're big shoes, they're big shoes. But you're also the foreign affairs correspondent for CBS. So you seem to be spending-- am I wrong? Correct me-- most of your time doing *60 Minutes* pieces.
LARA LOGAN: I'm spending most of my time doing *60 Minutes*, yeah.

MARVIN KALB: So do you find yourself-- when do you find yourself having the time to do something for the Evening News?

LARA LOGAN: You know, sometimes I'll do something. I'll have a meeting with a good contact or a source and I'll find something critical out and pass that onto the Evening News, and that leads to something important.

MARVIN KALB: But what I'm getting at, it’s not a day to day sense of responsibility that you have to the program?

LARA LOGAN: No, because fortunately Scott Pelley understands what it takes to do 12 to 15 *60 Minutes* pieces a year. So he doesn’t put pressure on me to deliver to him every day. And my boss understands that. Because people think it’s easy, you know. But they don’t really understand. Every one of these pieces is like giving birth to triplets, it really is. And sometimes that's pleasant in comparison. You rewrite everything a thousand million times, you fight with each other, you hate each other, you love each other. You go without sleep, you go without-- I remember when I was 8 ½ months pregnant working on a two-part piece and a young 22 year old producer staggering into the office and saying, “I would complain about how tired I am, but she's eight months pregnant.”

That's what every one of them is like and you're a real team. You work through those hard nights together. And it’s tough, but it’s rewarding.
MARVIN KALB: You mentioned a moment ago about reading books, and I don’t want to put you on the spot. But what are the kinds of books that you enjoy reading? I mean, are you a mystery reader type or a history reader?

LARA LOGAN: You know, I do like mysteries. But most of my life is occupied by reading things that are going to help me do a better job. So I'm reading a book now, Every Patient Tells a Story. And it’s about a fascinating medical story that I'm working on. And I always said famously I hate medical stories, but this is one of the best stories I've ever done. And it’s about undiagnosed diseases and what it’s like. And one of the people I interviewed for this, boy, she took my breath away. She's this beautiful woman sitting there telling me how for the last 26 years of her life she’d been tortured by her muscles and no one could give her an answer.

So, most of the time I'm reading for my work. Peter Thompson, if anyone hasn’t read it, has written a book like this about all the wars of Afghanistan, which is fascinating. And I'm usually reading Ghost War, Steve Coll. Or people out there, Forever War, Dexter Filkins sent me his book. So usually it's books like that. I don’t like trashy novels just because I feel like I don’t have the time to spend on them. But I just read another book by a journalist that I got in Chicago when I was there for something, and it was all about his mother who was a Holocaust survivor and how he discovered after his father died, he had to discover his mother’s past.

MARVIN KALB: You don’t do much fiction?

LARA LOGAN: No. I love fiction, though. I grew up with a great love for--

MARVIN KALB: You just don’t have the time for it?
LARA LOGAN: I just don’t have the time for it. But there's nothing greater than being transported by a novel, nothing greater. I think that’s one of the greatest pleasures of my life. And I was inspired by Faulkner, you know, when he wrote *As I Lay Dying*. My dream as a young girl was to write a book like that, that you could read over and over again and never have the same understanding twice. You know, the shortest chapter written in literary history was, “My mother was a fish.” Which was a fascinating line about how this boy’s mother had just died and this child was fishing at the time. And that was how he related it, how he understood it. “My mother was a fish.” That was his attempt to grapple with the concept of death.

And that book was written through the eyes-- every chapter was written through the eyes of somebody else. And it took you-- I had to read the first, I don't know, 40 pages about 16 times before I knew where I was. And I thought, “How great to write a novel like that.” So that's something I still want to do. I hope that I will one day.

MARVIN KALB: Can you imagine being finished with working on television?

LARA LOGAN: Yes, I can.

MARVIN KALB: And what sort of life do you see yourself leading then?

LARA LOGAN: Well, hopefully my husband and I don’t hate each other by then. [laughter] And we have a life to share. I think for me, I've always had a restless soul and I don’t pretend to know the meaning of life or have any grand ideas about the universe or the world of television and where it’s going. But I just know that when my husband and I had children and had a family, the sea stopped moving, shifting all the time. It was the first time I really had that peace in me and I found the meaning of my life. So that's much more important to me than television. And as long as I can do work that means something
to me, whether that's written work or in television or anything else, that's all that I care about.

You know, you have to feel when you go to bed at the end of the day that you did something that meant something. Because otherwise, what's the point?

**MARVIN KALB:** Is that something that you feel every day or once a week or once a month? What would satisfy you? What ratio?

**LARA LOGAN:** I think I feel that every day because I'm true to myself every day.

**MARVIN KALB:** You really feel that you make-- what is it? That you've learned something new in the course of a day, that you've helped somebody in the course of the day? That you have disappointed people in the course of the day? What is it that carries you forward?

**LARA LOGAN:** I think what really carries me forward is that I'm always trying to do better. The thing about journalism is that I could work, and I very frequently do, work from seven in the morning until two, three, four, five in the morning. And day after day after day, Christmas, Easter, birthdays, whatever it was. And I didn’t do it for the promotion, I didn’t do it for the company. I didn’t do it for anyone but myself because the greatest experience you can ever have of life is in that job where they ask you to experience everything about life. And then to try and understand it and then to communicate something that means something.

And it’s the same with my children. If I can get to the end of the day and feel like I was the best mom I could be, and I did everything that’s expected of me that day, then I don't care if I'm staggering into bed at 11:00 and my children have been asleep hours ago. I
know my son has gone to bed with that feeling of absolute love. And those moments that we had before he closed his eyes were-- I mean, there's nothing to compare with that.

MARVIN KALB: That's marvelous. There are many young journalists in the audience and we've got just a couple of minutes left. And I'm wondering what kind of advice would you give them? Because they face a journalism of enormous uncertainty. Right now, it seems to be finding a way forward rather difficult because of technological pressures, money pressures. What would you tell them?

LARA LOGAN: I would say that I have to believe that the one thing that will endure about journalism is that people demand to know the truth. That whatever people think about the journalism profession, however scathing they are about big media, that at the end of the day, our society functions on the flow of information. And so if you believe in that, if you believe in the First Amendment, if you believe in what you're doing, then I wouldn't worry too much about where it's going. Find your niche and give everything you have to that. Don't expect somebody to do it for you. Don't say, "I'm not going to do this, or I'm not going to do that." You have to be prepared to do everything.

I did sound, I did camera work, I drove cars, I did satellites, I did editing. I did everything. And that's why I have this certainty. I know what I believe in, I know who I am. I didn’t get that from the three letters of a corporation. You know, there's no greater honor in my life than being able to work for 60 Minutes. But 60 Minutes doesn't define my work. I try to live up to a standard of journalism there, but it doesn’t make me who I am. I'm going to be who I am with or without, whatever job it is that I have.

And I think that's very important. Don’t take yourself too seriously. Don’t start thinking that-- you know, the moment I start thinking I'm as important as 60 Minutes? Come on, come on. The worst journalists are the ones who think that they matter more than the story or that they're somehow-- I have no illusions about my place in the world, no
illusions whatsoever. For me, what's an achievement is if it’s a woman in the middle of the bush in Africa and I've told her a story and nobody watches it, you know, of course what have I really changed and affected? But there's a record of history that now exists, and that's what I'm doing it for.

Don't take no for an answer. Don’t listen to the people that tell you that you've got to do it this way or you've got to do that way, or you can't do it this way. You can only do it on your own merits. And the harder you work and the more you understand about what you're doing, people can't take that away from you. They can't make me insecure when they write stories about, “Oh, she just got here because of her looks or whatever else.” When they say that kind of thing publicly or behind your back, they can't make me insecure because I know it didn’t come from there. I know nobody did me any favors. I know nobody took me under their wing and said, “Here, let me make this easy for you.”

I don’t have any aversion to slogging my guts out. Even now, we all do it. 60 Minutes wouldn’t make air if we didn’t all slog our guts out for every story. And so people told me that I didn’t have the right color skin to be hired by a newspaper in South Africa, so I went to television because they needed more people there. My boss was semi literate. I mean, he was a cameraman who couldn’t-- he couldn't write a sentence, so I wrote it for him. I worked for nothing. I worked for what they were prepared to pay for me. I interviewed for jobs I'd done for two years by that time. I ate humble pie. I never did it for anybody but myself.

And one of the presidents of CBS told me once, “The hardest thing you're going to have, the biggest problem you'll face in this job is staying true to yourself.” And I smiled inwardly because I thought, “That's not going to be my hardest problem. My hardest problem is going to be keeping my mouth shut.” [laughter] Being who I am is going to be the easy part because I don't know any other way to be. And that's because I know what I believe in. I'm prepared to stand up for that and I don’t want people to think that an easy
thing. When I say that, I've never-- my mother said, “For God’s sake, child, do you have
to choose the hard road every single time?”

MARVIN KALB: Choose the--?

LARA LOGAN: The hard road.

MARVIN KALB: Why?

LARA LOGAN: Because I could never just shut up and say, “Yes, Mom, I'll drive
carefully and I'm not going to speed.” I was the one that said, “Oh no, Mom, I'm going to
put my foot down and head for the first wall I can find. Of course I'm going to drive
carefully. Why would you ask me such a thing? Do you think that I'm that kind of
person?” Because for me, it was an injustice that she could think that I would do anything
other than drive carefully because that was what was expected of me. And I try to do
what's expected of me, and I try to do the right thing. And that's not always popular.
There were a lot of people who didn't like what I said about coverage of the Iraq War. A
lot of people didn’t like what I said about Stanley McChrystal. And this isn’t about me, it
really isn’t about me. I don’t want opinion to overshadow the work, because the work is
really what matters.

And I just think that people who want to be on television, if you want to be on TV, if
that's your aim, don’t be a journalist. Don’t be a journalist, that's not the right job for you
because you're never going to be the journalist that you think you want to be.

MARVIN KALB: Lara, I am really sorry that our time is up, but it is. I want to thank a
wonderful audience first for sitting here and enjoying this, I think. [applause] And, of
course, I want to thank you, Lara Logan, for sharing your thoughts and your experiences
with us, and for keeping alive the flame of the free and vigorous press as being the best
guarantor of a free and vigorous society. But our time’s up. I'm Marvin Kalb, and as Ed Murrow used to say, good night and good luck. [applause]

**LARA LOGAN:** Thank you, Marvin.

**MARVIN KALB:** We do have two microphones, one there and one there. And you can get to the microphone and ask a question. I'm going to insist, by the way, that it is a question and not a speech. And I'll probably cut you off if it is a speech or if I sense it’s that way. But why don’t we start right here? Identify yourself, please?

**JEFF JACOBSON:** Sure. My name is Jeff Jacobson, I'm from the George Washington University. I go to the school of media and public affairs. You offered some pointed criticisms of our role in Iraq and Afghanistan. I'm just curious how you feel about our involvement in Libya?

**LARA LOGAN:** Well, Libya’s interesting because, I mean let’s face it, the only reason we went after Gaddafi is because everybody hates him and we knew we could get away with it politically. It doesn’t mean that what Gaddafi was doing wasn’t wrong. The real question for me is what are we doing about Syria? Because we have a different relationship with Syria. The whole world, you know, the relationships are much more interwoven and complicated. And Syria’s kind of the little brother to Egypt in terms of our friends in the war on terror.

So, of course, there was a degree of hypocrisy in Libya. Not surprising. The world’s been waiting for a chance to get rid of Gaddafi. But I think the real tragedy of the Middle East right now is the fact that so many people are dying in Syria and so little has been done about it. And if I didn’t have my situation, I guess that's where I would be trying to be. I'd be on the border in Lebanon, I'd be breaking-- you know, are we still trying to find ways-- there are inroads into that society that you can try and access from the outside. But I
guess that's what I'd say, is that I would urge people not just to focus on Libya, but to look at Libya in the context of Syria and maybe that would be the story that I would be pushing every day if I was doing daily news.

MARVIN KALB: Would you imagine the U.S. involving itself militarily in Syria?

LARA LOGAN: You know, because of Syria's relationship with Iran, it's obviously very different. I think they've shown no indication that they have any intention of doing that. So I think it's extremely unlikely. But can you ever rule anything out? You can't rule it out.

MARVIN KALB: Yes, please?

STEVE LOCKET: Hi, I'm Steve Locket, a producer and editor here in the city, as it happens a neighbor and acquaintance of Lara. Congratulations on Medal of Honor, Lara.

LARA LOGAN: Thank you.

STEVE LOCKET: January 2007 was pretty heavy for you on a number of levels. A lot of people here might not know the story, so could you unpack and review a little or a lot of what you learned from Haifa Street?

LARA LOGAN: You know what I learned from Haifa Street was really quite interesting because Haifa Street was an area of central Baghdad where al-Qaeda had been very, very entrenched. And the U.S. military kept announcing major campaigns to clean up Haifa Street. And all that really was was the Iraqi government making a deal with the al-Qaeda and Sunni leaders on Haifa Street to attack elsewhere so the violence would appear to go down and they would appear to have cleaned out Haifa Street. And none of
those deals ever held, so violence would come up and go down and come up and go down.

And then what happened in January 2007 was that there was a major, major push to go back into Haifa Street and the Iraqi army unit that was stationed on Haifa Street systematically raped, tortured and murdered the people there to punish them for having al-Qaeda in their midst. And al-Qaeda and the Sunnis in return slaughtered as many of the Iraq army as they wanted to.

We were living on Haifa Street, we could hear the battles day in and day out. And I was contacted once by-- I don't remember how it came to me, but an Iraqi physician who had met with-- gone to the White House, met with George Bush, was a very lovely man. And his family who were prisoners in their apartment in Haifa Street in the middle of the fighting, in the midst of the fighting, begging for help. And I was trying to get the U.S. military to help them. And actually, found out from a friend that the U.S. ambassador was meeting with the Iraq president. So, I arranged an interview with the Iraq president around the same time. And when I bumped into the ambassador, I asked him in front of the president if he would help me with this family because I knew once he publicly gave his word like that, he would be screwed.

And so we did. We ended up going down on Haifa Street with an Iraqi unit, and everybody kept asking me what the apartment was and who this family were and I had absolutely no idea because I'd never met them and I'd never been there. I just knew that there was a family that was in-- they were eating dog food, their pet’s dog food and they were living in the shower with their children and everything and it was a horrific situation to be in.

So, I did what I could. I used the leverage that I had and went with the unit down Haifa Street and actually they rescued them, the Karesh family. And I'm still in contact with
them. And you're probably referring to the report that I did which had very graphic images showing both sides of the violence. And I had so many people on Haifa Street that were talking to me about the rapes and the tortures and everything that was going on. And I had managed to access video.

And CBS News at the time didn't want to air the report because they thought it was too graphic. So I, in my wonderful, naïve fashion, emailed everybody I knew and said-- well, first I emailed the web people who were desperate for anything and will put anything on. And they said yes, they would put it on. And then I emailed everybody I knew and asked them to look at the report and whatever they felt about it, to let CBS know. And that was picked up and it was used by the left wing media first to show what a terrible place CBS News was, how they were censoring the coverage of the war for their own agenda, for a right wing agenda.

And then for some reason, the right wing decided they hated me, too, and they used this. I was used as a political football for the right for, I don't know, for however the left was trying to skew the image of the war. And all of that was nonsense. It had nothing to do with any of that. And I really resented being used as a political football by everybody, but it goes with the territory. And I was not trying to say that CBS was censoring the war. It was a personal decision by the editor at the time who really thought those images were too graphic. And I felt strongly that they should be seen. But that's my job as a reporter. I'm not the editor of the CBS Evening News, and I never will be. Because the big picture is not my strength. I'm a reporter on the ground fighting for my story and I wanted it out there.

But CBS have been extremely good to me, and they have let me go to the furthest flung places of the world and say what it is I truly think about it time and time again. And there is no evil man, Dr. Evil sitting there saying, “We're going to guide CBS policy in this direction or another.” It's a place of real journalism and that was one of those battles that
didn’t go my way. And I'm never going to send a mass email again, I don't think.

[laughter]

MARVIN KALB: Yes, please?

LINDSAY LIGHT: Hi, I'm Lindsay Light, a senior at the George Washington University studying journalism. Thank you, Lara, for being here tonight. My question is as an embedded journalist and someone who tries to constantly soak up your environment where you are, how difficult is it to not get emotionally invested in a story or a person that you're covering?

LARA LOGAN: I get emotionally invested in everything. It doesn’t matter whether you're embedded or not embedded. I lived in Baghdad with the Iraq people for nearly five years. I was very invested in them. I think it’s important to be invested. I had a veteran journalist once tell me in the midst of a flood in Mozambique, and we were doing a story and there were 20 or 30 children who’d been separated from their parents. And I remember coming out of that building and crying. I had tears rolling down my cheeks and he said, “Oh for God sake, you think that's bad? You're never going to make it in this business if you're going to be crying all the time,” kind of thing.

And I thought, “Hmm, beep beep you,” because that's the person that I am. And people say to me all the time, “How do you cope with everything that you've been through?” Well, you cope with it by confronting it, I think, not denying it. And I care very much about what I do. I think I owe the people that I talk to honesty, I owe them integrity, I owe them a fair hearing. There's a huge responsibility and I've explained this to American soldiers. “I'm not here to wave the flag on your behalf. I have a responsibility to you, but I have a responsibility if we're in Iraq to the Iraqi people whose lives you're affecting, to the Iraqi government, to the U.S. government. I have a responsibility to a whole lot of different people when I do my work.”
And I think it's important to be invested in it. I'm very invested in it emotionally and I don't try to hide that. I don't try to hold back on that. I give everything to his. And sometimes, you know what? The only thing you have to give someone is of yourself. You give them respect, you give them understanding, you give them a chance to tell it to you in their words, in their way. People think because I'm a big talker that I'm not a big listener. It's one of the biggest mistakes you can make. I'm a very, very, very good listener, a much better listener, actually. I really pay attention. When I sit down with you, you have everything that I have, you have all of me.

And Ed Bradley used to say that, you know? And I think he was right. You owe people that. You don’t owe people half an ear or I'm going to stay removed from this so I can be the objective third party. Nonsense. I mean, how can you not be moved by someone who’s suffered something incredible and incredibly difficult? You have to be moved by it to understand it, I think.

MARVIN KALB: Excellent, thank you. Yes, please?

EDWARD ROEDER: Hi, Edward Roeder from Sunshine Press. Thank you for your presence and your example. You spoke about the experts and academics who have just talked to someone in the White House and the Pentagon and come on the air. And I wonder if you could tell us as listeners and viewers more about how to identify the phony experts? It used to be that the good looking blonds were easy to spot and then you and Lesley Stahl and such came along, how do we spot these folks who are perhaps credentialed, but don’t really know anything and they're just ripping wire reports, or whatever?

LARA LOGAN: I think it's tough. I mean, one important thing to say is that not every expert is phony. Bruce Riedel is one of the best voices on Afghanistan. He has an
incredible depth of experience there, and he’s somebody that I turn to. And so there are some very real-- there are some people who know a lot and have years and years, decades, of experience. And I think that if you're a conscientious person who’s always reading all the time, you have to pay attention to the name and the institute. You have to look. Does this institution sit on the left or do they sit on the right? What's their motivation? You should evaluate, it's what journalists do, you evaluate somebody’s motivation for why would they be saying that? Why would they think that?

If you don’t have an experience of a place, firsthand experience and knowledge, it’s very hard to know when someone is slipping into academia and history and it’s easy to be intimidated by that because they often know a lot more about something that you have no idea about and you're impressed by that.

So, I don’t have an easy answer for you. I think you get-- you know, come on, journalists half the time are lazy. You go back to the same people over and over and over again. And you keep spotting a guy on CNN that annoys the holy crap out of you, there's probably a good reason for it. And so, when you listen and watch over time and you see what somebody predicted and you see what somebody said about Iraq and then the truth emerges eventually because usually it does come out, even though it takes time, if you're paying attention you remember that.

I just think take it with a grain of salt half the time, you know? And actually, a lot of these institutions are very clearly aligned with different administrations and things like that. So, you just have to be aware. But it’s tough. I don't think it’s an easy thing. That's why they get away with it.

MARVIN KALB: Yes, please?
ERIC BREESE: Hi, Eric Breese. I'm a freshman at the GW school of media and public affairs. And you described graphic images that you saw in Iraq. In the case of Gaddafi or the death of bin Laden, do you think that specifically in the case of bin Laden, do you think that the public should see the individual pictures, as graphic as they are, of someone's dead body? Do you think that's important?

LARA LOGAN: You know, yes and know. I think it's laughable, the people that say, “Oh, we didn't see the body. Therefore, it didn't happen.” I mean, come on. I know that the government, this administration, made that decision because they were afraid that it would inspire lone wolf attacks that people who were sitting on the fence, the hardest attacks to prevent, someone who is going to be motivated to go out and open up with a machine gun in Times Square. I think that's a decision that's made out of weakness and fear, if that's your basis for it. I'm not really sure, I'm not an expert, I'm not a counterterrorism expert. I'm not really sure that that is the strongest base on which to make a decision like that.

Does the world need to see a picture of bin Laden’s body? I don't know. What I find more incredible is that one of bin Laden’s wives was 14 years old when he married her and no one’s calling him a pedophile. I mean, that's what everybody’s focused on, whether or not you can see bin Laden’s body? That's really the most important thing to have come out of this?

So it gives all the conspiracy theorists all the ammunition they want to say this didn't really happen. What does it serve to see bin Laden’s body? Do we really need to? There is an argument to be said, do you need to dance on his grave? Because that's really what the body-- that's what seeing the body means, right?

So, I'm not really sure whether the world-- do you have an innate right to see bin Laden’s body? Does it serve a greater purpose? Because you do ask yourself those questions when
you're doing this work. What is the greater purpose I'm serving in doing this? Am I making a name for myself by being the only person to have this story that's going to live and die and be gone, but I've ruined all these people's lives? I think that's a consideration that comes into your work that's important. So I don’t really have a good answer for you on that, but I didn't need to see his body. Just knowing that he was dead was enough.

MARVIN KALB: Okay. Our last question, please?

JONATHAN HELLMANN: I'm Jonathan Hellmann. I am a GW grad and presently with CNN. War reporting in this country has been here since the earliest days. I think it was Edward R. Murrow who was the first to bring it to us live. The last 20 years, we've seen technology advance so fast where everything is so instantaneous. With the 24 hour news cycles, with the internet, with Twitter, with Facebook, with all these different technologies, you can see how it may assist what you do. Have you found it to be a hindrance in any way, and do you think it becomes harder for people to really connect with your story when there's so much information brought to them at any given point?

LARA LOGAN: You know, CNN didn’t play to my strengths; being an instant expert, rushing off here, there and everywhere. It wasn’t really a place that I was very comfortable. I had followed Northern Ireland, for example. I knew what happened there, but Northern Ireland is a mine field. You call somebody with one name and it means something on one side of the border and it’s something else somewhere-- and it has huge implications. So I really didn’t feel comfortable on reporting on something like that. And just reading off the wires the moment something hits.

So I think that there's a huge downside to the technology in the sense that it doesn't give you-- even a day disappears very fast when you're on a deadline for the evening news. But at the same time, there's something great about what the technology has brought. That instant news has changed the world; it's changed politics, it's changed national
security policies, it’s changed the strategic relationships. I mean, it's changed everything about how we live. So the power of it is undeniable.

You can't go backwards. I'm not much one for-- this event is sponsored by the ethics and standards. I mean, where are they for the bloggers, by the way? Where are they for Twitter? Where are they for Facebook? They don’t exist. And that's something, I think, is very egregious. That's very serious. You can start a blog and put any rumor you like out there and people think that the mainstream media is so evil and so controlled and so regulated and all the rest of it. That has not been my experience of it. And I know without a doubt that there are standards and ethics that we try and adhere to and try to live up to.

I don't know if you can ever see that in the blogosphere, but it needs to be there. This idea that special interests are served only in the mainstream media, who’s paying for half those blogs? Special interests, come on. And the worst part is they put themselves out there as “We are the true guardians of free speech. We're the ones that are going to give you the truth, not those evil lying bastards in the mainstream media who are pushing one agenda after another.”

So, I think that there's undeniable upsides to the technology. What a fast, exciting, fascinating place they’ve made the world. How they’ve connected the world in a way that has never been seen before. You can't put the genie back in the bottle. So you have to live with it. But there's no doubt there's a downside to it. There's a downside to the 24 hour news cycle. There's a blurring of opinion and analysis in reporting and all these talk shows that have sprung up that just give people what they want to hear and don’t worry about the facts and don’t worry about reporting and real journalism.

So that part of it is depressing to me. That part of it is really depressing. So I don’t listen to it, and I don’t read it and I just kind of shut it out. And besides which, I don’t have the time. I'm too busy trying to keep my job.
MARVIN KALB: Lara, you're a very special reporter.

LARA LOGAN: Thank you.

MARVIN KALB: It's been a pleasure having you on The Kalb Report. And I'll let you go only if you promise to return?

LARA LOGAN: Okay, I promise.

MARVIN KALB: It's a deal. Thank you all very much for being here, been a pleasure. Good night, and good luck. Thank you. [applause]

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