WAR REPORTING AS A MEDIA INDUSTRY: The Invisible Labor of News “Fixers”

Dr. Lindsay Palmer
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In recent years, film and media scholars have produced fascinating research on the media industries (Caldwell, 2008; Mayer, Banks, & Caldwell, 2009; Holt & Perren, 2011). These studies have examined the labor of media producers through the lens of media and cultural studies, looking at topics such as gender, race, political economy, globalization, digitization, and the construction of professional narratives. Yet, fewer media industry scholars have deployed these critical frameworks in an effort at exploring the complex professional cultures of war reporters. This talk examines the media industry of war reporting from the perspective of film and media studies, focusing on the often invisible labor of the news “fixers”—the local news employees who arrange interviews, translate copy, and help foreign war correspondents navigate the site of conflict.

Bio: Lindsay Palmer is an assistant professor of global media ethics in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her work has appeared in Genders, Feminist Review, Television and New Media, Continuum, Critical Studies in Media Communication, and the International Journal of Cultural Studies. She is currently working on a book entitled Surviving the Story: the Precarious Labor of Conflict Correspondence after 9/11 (University of Illinois Press).