

## Enter at Your Own Risk: The Dangers of a Career in Journalism

Thomas CW\*

Associate Professor, Mass Communication Department, The Robertson School of Media and Culture, USA

\*Corresponding author: Clarence W Thomas, Associate Professor, Mass Communication Department, The Robertson School of Media and Culture, USA, Tel: 804-827-3772; E-mail: [cwthomas@vcu.edu](mailto:cwthomas@vcu.edu)

Received date: April 02, 2015; Accepted date: April 03, 2015; Published date: April 10, 2015

Copyright: © 2015 Thomas CW. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

### Introduction

As a College Media Professor, I often speak to students who are interested in a career in journalism. I also teach some of the first classes that new journalism majors are required to take. Most of said potential and new journalism students are very confident and eager to enter and work in the field. Such students (Print and Broadcast) often look forward to the glory, recognition, and even potential celebrity that could come from a career in journalism. However, most do not think of the dangers (threats, attack, even death) that could come along with the job. For example, it is not unusual for reporters who cover organized crime or even big business and government corruption to be pressured and/or threatened by parties who wish to quash an investigation or story.

On the first day of class, I frequently ask the students: Do you know that your future career in Journalism could result in death? Many look up in amazement—ready for more information.

History (especially in Europe) is full of examples where early day journalists attempted to provide truth to society only to be banished, tortured, or killed by a King or other monarch who did not want such information to be released. Even in recent times, several journalists have been beheaded live on the internet by terrorist seeking to make a point or follow an agenda.

During times of war journalism can be especially dangerous. For many years, and wars (Civil War, WWII, Middle East, etc.) reporters have tended to cover war on location. The notion of embedded coverage allows for first hand depth coverage. However, such reporting can result in danger and death for the journalists.

One such reporter, Pulitzer Prize winner Ernie Pyle, covered and reported on U.S. troops during WWII. His reporting was beloved by the troops to the extent that they considered him one of them. He covered the war with dedication and as such was always in very close contact with the troops and the battlefield. Pyle's journalism resulted in his being shot and killed by enemy machine gun fire while covering a story. As a result of the high esteem in which he was held by the military, his body was buried with the fallen U.S. troops.

Journalism is a serious business. According to Reporters without Borders, so far in 2015, eighteen journalists (around the world) have already been killed. Fame and glory can result from an outstanding journalism career. However, a career in journalism should not be based on a desire for glory of fame. It should be based on the desire to seek and report the truth, and as such, facilitate a better society and world. Like Pyle, your life could depend on it.